

From Invisible to Visible: The Evolution of Space Formation of the Nineteenth Century Christian Missionary Work in Taiwan

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Abstract. The nineteenth century, Priest Mackay carried out the missionary work in Taiwan with the permission from The Presbyterian Church in Canada. The purpose of this study was to investigate how Mackay in a foreign land pioneer the missionary gathering space. MacKay gathered believers at temples, under trees or in hotels at the early stage. As the believers became more, some families started to provide gathering space and donated. In small towns the churches were usually built in private homes or with small size while they were built tall and with Western-style in densely populated towns. Mackay established small schools where it was densely populated in order to cultivate future missionaries. Also in many churches drug stores were installed, by which it facilitated the distribution of western medication in northern Taiwan. The evolution of missionary spatial form reflected the attitude of Taiwanese people toward the foreign religion. And from the change in space it also reflected that the relationship between Taiwanese and Christianity were gradually being recognized.

Keywords: Priest Mackay · The Presbyterian Church · Church · Missionary

1 Introduction

George Leslie Mackay is an important figure in the Presbyterian Church's missionary activities in northern Taiwan. As written in the 1892 publication, *From Far Formosa*, George Leslie Mackay, who was both a frontier and a leader, had established a total of 60 churches. The five churches established by Mackay after his arrival in Tamsui, northern Taiwan, in 1872 included the churches in Gō-kó-khin (五股坑), Sin-káng (新港社), Chiu-nih (洲裡), and Sai-thâm-tóe Church (獅潭底). Before his first return to Canada to report his work, Mackay had established 21 churches in northern Taiwan.

After returning to northern Taiwan in 1882, Mackay further established over 40 churches in the Kabalan Plain, most of which were churches for Taiwan's Pingpu Aborigines and Han Chinese. Before his second return to Canada to report his work in August 1893, Mackay had established eight churches in the Taipei Basin and nine churches on the west coast of northern Taiwan, making this time period the heyday of Mackay's missionary work. However, as a result of damages caused by the Sino-French War and Taiwanese people's fear and anti-foreigner sentiments, at least seven mission stations in Tōa-liong-tōng (大龍峒), Bang-kahe (艋舺), Sek-khán (錫口), Sin-tiàm (新店), Chiu-nih (洲裡), Pat-li-hun (八里坌), and Gō-kó-khin (五股坑) were damaged or destroyed. Through the reconstruction of churches, the influence of Mackay's missionary work was strengthened.

When Mackay returned to northern Taiwan from Canada in November 1895, the regime in Taiwan had shifted from the Ching Dynasty to the Japanese Colonial Period, and the environment had undergone a drastic change, and Mackay made every effort to keep churches running in order to conciliate worshippers and keep mission stations running.

From his arrival in northern Taiwan for his missionary work in 1872 to dying of throat cancer in 1901, Mackay spent nearly 25 years in Taiwan, not counting his furlough to Canada for four and a half years. During his stay in Taiwan, Mackay successfully promulgated a foreign religion in northern Taiwan and established 60 mission stations. This study focuses on discussions of how 60 to 70 mission stations and preaching points, where Mackay's missionary activities were conducted, were built from intangible to tangible. Furthermore, this study examines the source of the spaces for Mackay's missionary activities, the reasons why these spaces were adapted, and the style changes of these spaces.

2 Literature Review

The literature review mainly addresses issues in relation to changes in architecture and space arrangements in the course of Mackay's missionary work.

2.1 Discussions on a Single Architecture

Publications, such as *The Blueprint for the Investigation and Repair of Tamkang Mackay Cemetery*, *The Blueprint for the Investigation and Repair of Oxford College (1999)* by Li Chien-Lang, *The Blueprint for the Research and Repair of a Taipei County Monument - Tamsúí Presbyterian Church (2005)* by Chou Ke-hwa and Chou Tsung-hsien, and *Architectural Treasures Designed by Mackay (2006)* by Li Chien-ling are largely historical research on a chosen architecture constructed by Mackay. Most of these publications, which cover the chosen architecture's contributions in the course of Mackay's missionary work, are merely analysis and research on a single architecture.

2.2 Discussions on the System and Architectural Styles of Presbyterian Churches in Northern Taiwan

The publication *Local Characteristics of Mackay Architecture Series in Tamsui* (1994) by Kao Tsann-rong covers a series of Mackay architectures in two different time periods. Mackay architectures in the earlier period were built by Mackay, while construction of Mackay architectures in the later period was led by Rev. William Gauld and Kenneth W. Dowie. This publication is centered on changes in the function and style of architectures, and Mackay architectures as a fusion of Chinese and Western architectures. *Christian Architectures in Tamsui in the 1880s-1930s* (1999) by Li Chien-lang consists of two parts: Mackay's architectural ideas in the first part and Rev. William Gauld architectures in the second part. Using isometric drawing to produce a pictorial representation of the Mackay Architecture series in Tamsui (including Mackay Mission Hospital, Oxford College, and Tamsui Presbyterian Church), and offering a brief explanation of individual architecture's distinctive features, this publication is more of an analysis on construction materials and architectural features than a discussion on historical elements.

The Development of Protestants in Hsinchu in the Ching Dynasty (2002) by Chiang Tien-Chien, which was published in the 5th issue of *the Journal of Social Studies Education*, expounds on the development of churches in the Tek-chhàm (竹塹) area and the ethnic group distributions at that time. For example, the church in Sin-káng (新港) was mainly attended by the Pingpu aborigine people, while the church in Sai-thâm-tóe (獅潭底) was mainly attended by the Shēngfān (生番) aboriginal savage people. The church in Yueh-mei (月眉) was the head of all Hakka churches, and other Hakka churches in Lung-t'an (龍潭), Hsien-ts'ai-weng (鹹菜甕), and Hsin-p'u (新埔) were subsequently established.

In conclusion, existing relevant studies have no systematic analysis and discussions on all spaces where Mackay carried out his missionary activities in Taiwan.

3 Methodology

By scrutinizing historical texts that document Mackey's missionary activities in Taiwan, this study compares, analyzes, and summarizes the establishment and construction of spaces for Mackay's missionary activities. These spaces include mission stations, missionary residences, mission hospitals, and missionary training schools. In addition, regarding how spaces hidden amongst private residences were converted to western-style churches, this study offers a brief explanation on the sources of these spaces and the key to their transformation. A brief description of obtainable relevant literature: *From Far Formosa, The History of Presbyterian Churches in Northern Taiwan, and Elder John Lai's Archives* are as follows:

From Far Formosa was dictated by Mackay, and its translated version was published by Aletheia University. *From Far Formosa* documents Mackay's journey from San Francisco on November 1, 1871 to Yokohama in Japan, Guangdong in China, Hong Kong, and finally arriving in Taiwan for his missionary work. The last documented date in *From Far Formosa* is February 10, 1901. With the exception of a

missing diary from 1883, *From Far Formosa* offers a complete record of Mackay's nearly three-decades of medical and missionary activities in Taiwan, and provides a window into the course of Mackay's missionary work in Taiwan, as well as important events regarding the establishment of the churches.

From Far Formosa (the Chinese translation version: *A Chronicle of Events in Formosa: Memoirs of George Leslie Mackay in Taiwan*) was dictated by Mackay, edited by J. A. MacDonald, and published in London, the United Kingdom, in 1896. *From Far Formosa* was not written by Mackay himself; instead, it was written by those who considered Mackay's experiences in Taiwan worth recording and being told to future generations when Mackay returned to Canada for his second furlough and described his experiences and work in Taiwan to people in Canada. As Mackay would rather dedicate himself to the arduous missionary work than have the patience to record it, all relevant information was collected and organized by compilers, and both the initial and final manuscript of *From Far Formosa* were revised according to Mackay's instructions. *From Far Formosa* is a book centering on Mackay's various experiences and memories in Taiwan.

Elder John Lai's Archives, an archive of the history of churches in Taiwan, primarily consists of three sections, and includes seven volumes of church history, Professor Lai Yung-hsiang's relevant studies, and other scholars' historical texts and documents regarding the history of churches in Taiwan. Through the collected data and literature about the development of churches in Taiwan in the era of Spanish Formosa and Dutch Formosa, as well as research papers on the development of the Presbyterian Church of England and the Presbyterian Church of Canada in Taiwan, Elder John Lai's Archives provide valuable insights into the historical setting of Taiwan at that time, and other important missionary events.

4 Results

Missionary Mackay arrived in Takao (打狗) in southern Taiwan on December 29, 1871 to meet Rev. Hugh Ritchie from the Presbyterian Church of England, and wished to learn and understand the way missionary work was carried out in Taiwan. On March 9, 1872, Mackay, Rev. Hugh Ritchie, and Dr. Matthew Dickson travelled to Tam-súi and embarked on their over-a-month surveillance excursion in the parish. During the nearly-90-day surveillance excursion, Mackay spent 26 days at the residence of Rev. Hugh Ritchie and the remaining days at different churches, village houses' storage areas, or spaces where domesticated animals were raised. As a result, shortly after his arrival in Taiwan, Mackay had already experienced life in a variety of environments.

4.1 Early Spaces for Mackay's Missionary Work (Early 1872 to Late 1874)

At his second arrival in Tam-súi on April 8, 1872, Mackay leased a barn as his first dwelling place through the introduction of English businessman John Dodd. His residence in Tam-súi became the first space for his missionary activities (Kuo 1971).

Mackay subsequently used “the 10 Commandments” flyer as a medium for his missionary work. He posted the flyer on the door of his residence, distributed copies of this flyer all across Tam-súi, and successfully recruited his first disciple and follower - Giam Chheng Hoa. In the beginning of June 1872, Mackay officially started his medical practice and built a bamboo cottage next to his residence to house patients that required medical treatments. This bamboo cottage was the first space extended from Mackay’s house. After receiving treatments, patients usually participated in Mackay’s worship services. Mackay used to say his small hut was like a dwelling place, a church, a hospital, and a school at the same time, although there were not many students yet (Mackay 2012).

In early days, spaces used as a mission station came from two resources. The first source was barns and spaces at home, as offered by Mackay’s followers, to perform missionary activities. Some believers also offered land for the construction of mission stations, such as the mission stations in Gō-kó-khin (五股坑), Chiu-nih (洲裡), Pat-li-hun (八裡坌), Sin-káng (新港社), and Sin-tiàm (新店). Mackay also handed out flyers of “the 10 Commandments” to his followers in order the followers could post the flyers on their house doors to declare their belief in Christianity.

Another source was self-built thatched huts. Mission stations of this type included the mission stations in San-teng-po (三重埔) and Sai-thâm-tôe (獅潭底). The mission station in Sai-thâm-tôe (獅潭底), which was located in the inner mountainous area of Miaoli County, and a habitat of the Shēngfān aboriginal savage people, only lasted for three months because a missionary was mistakenly slain by the Shēngfān aboriginal savage people. In addition, in towns and cities without any mission stations, Mackay usually performed his missionary activities and handed out flyers of “the 10 Commandments” on streets, outside temples, or under the shade of large tree.

Early locations for Mackay’s missionary works were mostly hidden amongst private residences, and these mission stations looked nothing like western-style mission stations. Built with simple and crude construction materials (soil blocks and thatches), these mission stations could easily be destroyed by pagans. However, such “intangible” mission stations provided Mackay with space for living and teaching. As mentioned in a record at the end of 1874, Mackay suffered from physical discomfort due to having a fever 11 times, as well as skin ulcers and abscesses twice, the cause of which were allegedly Mackey’s visits to unhygienic places. However, during his illness, Mackay stayed at neighboring mission stations, where the living conditions were better. Therefore, mission stations also became an important space for living.

4.2 Spaces Built for Mackay’s Early Missionary Work (Early 1875 – Late 1879)

In 1875, Rev. J.B. Fraser came to Taiwan as a doctor/pastor to assist Mackay with missionary work. Rev. J.B. Fraser also brought subsidiary funds from the Canadian Presbyterian Church for construction. Planning of the construction of two mission houses commenced in 1875, and the construction was completed in 1876 or 1877. The two mission houses were both comfortable and modern buildings, the construction of which was under the charge of Rev. J.B. Fraser, as Mackay was itinerating for his

missionary work. According to historical records, Mackay converted one room of his residence into a classroom, while Rev. J.B. Fraser converted one room in his residence into a dispensary.

Mission stations built in the period between 1875 and 1870 were located primarily in the Taipei Basin, and secondarily on the west coast of northern Taiwan. Prosperous cities were sought-after locations for renting a place to set up a mission station. Mackay himself took up the matter of leasing most of time, while some followers came forward to deal with leasing matters from time to time; however, not many followers offered their own residence. At that time, the residents of two large cities, Bang-kahe (艋舺) and Tek-chhàm (竹塹) (Mackay 2007) in northern Taiwan, were swamped with anti-foreigner sentiment. The second day after Mackay hung a “Christianity” board outside his rental premise, the board was attacked and smashed. Local gangsters also threatened residents and banned them from leasing or selling their properties. Mission stations in Tōa-liong-tōng (大龍峒) (Zuo 1997), Keelung, and San-kak-éng (三角湧) (Lai 1995) were finally established after local residents’ ferocious protests and the intercession of local influential people. Before returning to Canada in 1879, Mackay had set up a total of 20 churches, most of which were in the Taipei Basin. Each mission station contained a space for religious services, a space for teaching, a free private school (elementary school), a space for living, and a dispensary.

Mackay had been treating patients in both cities and rural villages, and sometimes he treated patients at patients’ houses and other times on the streets. The earliest hospitals, which were established in Keelung and Tam-súi in 1879, (Mackay 2012) had only one bedroom. The hospital in Tam-súi, the location of the medical headquarters, was funded by a donation of Madame Mackay in Detroit to memorialize her late husband Captain Mackay. The hospital was equipped with hospital wards and necessary medical facilities (Mackay 2007). In addition to recruiting doctors from foreign firms to assist the hospital, Mackay organized students’ internship at the hospital. In addition to providing medical treatment, the hospital was also where students received training.

4.3 Spaces for Missionary Work After Mackay Returned to Canada to Report His Work (Early 1881 – Late 1884)

Mackay left Tam-súi for Canada on December 27, 1879 to report his work, and returned from Canada to Tam-súi on December 19, 1881. After returning to Taiwan, Mackay established the Oxford College, a girls’ school, Bang-kahe (艋舺) Mission Station, and Sin-tiàm (新店) Mission Station through fundraising. As the mission stations in San-chiao-p’u (三角埔) had fewer Christian followers, the mission station in San-chiao-p’u was moved to Tsúi-tng-kha (水返腳).

While carrying out his missionary work, Mackay spared no effort to educate and cultivate future missionaries. Mackay considered evangelizing to local men by local evangelists and local females by local female catechists a quick way to promulgate Christianity as there was neither language barriers nor issues with adaptation to a new environment. Finally, the Oxford College and a girls’ school were built in 1882 and 1883, respectively, and male and female missionaries from the two schools were

dispatched to all preaching points to preach Christianity. Both the Oxford College and the girls' school were boarding schools, which emphasized students' competency to carry out missionary work and discipline in life.

Along with a gradual increase in the number of followers in Tsúi-tng-kha (水返腳), some people offered space at their own shops as Mackay's mission stations. Furniture, including the tables and chairs at the mission station in San-chiao-p'u (三角埔), was moved to Tsúi-tng-kha (水返腳) (Lai 2002). The brick-roof mission station in Bang-kahe (艋舺) was built in 1884 on land purchased by Mackay (Mackay 2007). Spaces in the mission station included a space for religious services, a living space, a dispensary, a space for teaching, a space for operating a free private school, and dormitories for students in the free private school. Another mission station in Sin-tiàm (新店) had a total of five spaces, a pastor's bedroom, a pastor's lounge, a small lounge, a guest room, and a small room (mainly for storing medical equipment). There were five beds in four rooms, 1,000 copies of the Bible, and 100 big and small Holy Scriptures, (Chinese Academy 1962) showing the significant role of the mission station in Sin-tiàm during the course of Mackay's missionary work. However, both new mission stations were torn down in the outbreak of the Sino-French War.

As recorded in Mackay's diary in 1883, people closed their ears to Mackay's sermons, so Mackay took students to Kavalan (the modern-day Yilan County) to carry out his missionary work. Both adults and children in several villages averted and even blasphemed against him. When Mackay finally arrived in the Fan-she-t'ou (番社頭) coastal area and ran into a person who previously listened to his sermon, this person escorted Mackay and Mackay's companions to his village. A makeshift church was constructed that night and all villagers came out to listen to Mackay's sermon. Several weeks later, neighboring communities heard of Mackay and became willing to invite Mackay's missionary services to their villages, and through the chanting of hymns, aborigines in the Kavalan Plain gradually accepted Christianity. Most of the 15 mission stations set up by Mackay in 1883-1884 were self-built.

4.4 Spaces for Missionary Work After the Sino-French War (Early 1885 to 1894)

After the Sino-French War, Mackay was forced to take sanctuary in Hong Kong in October 1884 and return to Tam-súi on April 19, 1885. Most churches in northern Taiwan had been torn down. After negotiation, the Ching government made a compensatory payment in the amount of 10,000 Mexican dollars. Mackay subsequently used the compensatory payment to build six sturdy and steady mission stations. Signs and logos denoting "burned yet not ruined" were placed next to the words and logos of "Christianity". The architectural styles of the six churches can be classified into two types. The churches in Sin-tiàm (新店), Bang-kahe (艋舺), Toā-tiū-tiā (大稻埕), and Sek-khán (錫口) were western-style mission stations with a steeple and a tall tower rising above the roof of the building. In addition to decorations, such architectural style especially dismissed Chinese feng shui as mere superstition. Another style of western-style mission stations were in Pat-li-hun (八里坌) and Chiu-nih (洲裡). Each of the six mission stations consisted of three buildings, each of which had different

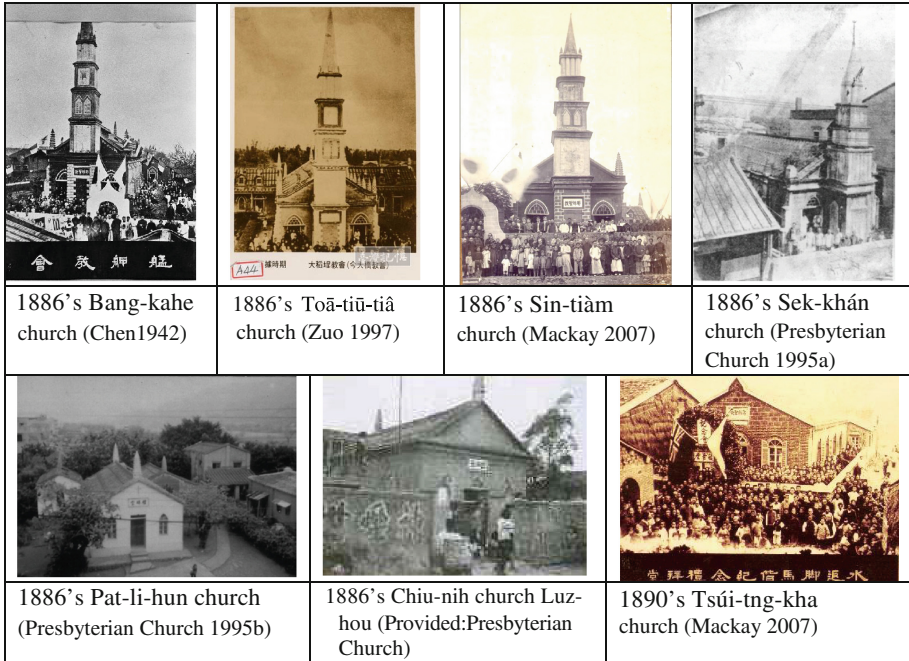


Fig. 1. 1886 ~ 1890's churches along the bank of Tamsui river

functions: religious services, free private school, and space for living. Mackay attempted to use the modularization of architecture to declare that Christianity had taken root and grown robustly in northern Taiwan (See Fig. 1).

In 1890, the mission station in Tsúi-tng-kha (水返脚) was the voluntary donation of followers in Taiwan, and land and construction costs were covered by donations from local mission stations. Both the architectural design and construction of this mission station was supervised by Giam Chheng Hoa (嚴清華) (Mackay 2007). The property rights of the mission station belonged to churches in Taiwan, showing the self-sufficiency of churches in Taiwan at this time and missionaries' autonomy.

In 1892, the Ching government became alert to westerners' growing activities in Taiwan, and decreed that there should be a full investigation of the use of all architectures built by western missionaries in Taiwan. Among the 24 mission stations in the Tam-súi River drainage basin, there were 15 western-style architectures and nine Chinese-style architectures. Only medicine was handed out in Kavalan at that time. Among the total of 23 churches, there were 18 western-style churches (three brick houses and 15 thatched huts) and five Chinese-style churches (four thatched huts and one with unidentified construction materials). In the documented four mission stations on the west coast of northern Taiwan, one had a free private school, two had a dispensary, and all were Chinese-style mission stations established on a rental premise. Among the total of 53 mission stations in northern Taiwan, there were 35 western-style architectures and 18 Chinese-style architectures. This period was considered the peak of MacKay's endeavor in setting up churches.

4.5 Spaces for Missionary Work in the Japanese Colonial Period (1895 -1901)

At Mackay's second return from Canada to Taiwan in late 1895, Taiwan was under Japanese rule. Witnessing the majority of churches being destroyed or occupied by Japanese soldiers and most assemblies being held at private residences, Mackay resorted to the following strategies. First, Mackay strived to build a good relationship with the Japanese government in order to solicit government aid and keep the mission stations intact. Secondly, Mackay traveled to each mission station to encourage followers to donate money to repair the mission stations. In the process of soliciting for protection and financial aid, Mackay went from place to place to assist with various matters, rendering Christianity welcome by many people in many places.

At the same time, the Presbyterian Church of Japan entered Taiwan. Initially, both Japanese and Taiwanese worshipers attended the same religious services. In late 1896, the first Japanese mission station was established in Taiwan with Mackay's assistance. Mackay's residence also played an important role at this time. Influential Japanese of all ranks frequently visited Mackay's museum in order to have a better understanding of Taiwan. Mackay's residence became the headquarters of his missionary activities, and all internal church meetings were held in Mackay's study room, thus, in addition to being a representative of Christianity in northern Taiwan, Mackay's residence was also a religious center for followers.

5 Summary

5.1 The Importance of Living Conditions

After Mackay returned to northern Taiwan to continue his missionary work, he gave a clear description of his temporary lodgings while visiting different preaching points, most of which were next to domesticated animals. He often recorded "spending his night in a dark, dirty, and ramshackle space". In his diary, which recorded his early missionary work in 1872-1875, he wrote that he had suffered from fever 14 times, on average five times a year. According to the record, Mackay also had smallpox, furuncles, and abscesses once a year on average (George Leslie Mackay 2012). Given the hostile living environment at the time, each preaching point became the best sanctuary for Mackay to rest and recuperate from illness, as he never stopped evangelizing and teaching activities even during his illness.

5.2 The Extension of the Teaching Space

"The Peripatetic College, a.k.a. the Itinerant College, is the first school established by Mackay in northern Taiwan. Due to Mackay's constant missionary itineration, the work of training students was performed at any time, meaning a classroom could be anywhere, such as under a banyan tree, next to a bamboo forest, seashore, mountain, valley, riversides, plain, a residential house, temporary lodging, etc. Upon the establishment of a mission station, the teaching space extended into the mission station. In addition, Mackay

set up free private schools (elementary school) at several mission stations to teach male and female students over the age of 12 (Chang 1987; Lai 1992). Setting up free private schools not only provided a channel for scouting the right candidates to become future missionaries, but also eased teenagers' aversion to Christianity.

5.3 Setting up a Dispensary in Each Mission Station

In the early phase of Mackay's missionary work, he not only promulgated Christian doctrine, but became close to Taiwanese people by providing "medical treatments". In the first year, bamboo cottages were built for hospitalized patients, and there were recorded medical treatments provided at the mission stations. In 1879, Mackay subsequently established hospitals in Keelung and Tam-súi (淡水). However, the assistance provided by these establishments to followers was limited, as all medical treatments called for professional doctors. According to the records of relevant literature, the six mission stations in Sin-tiàm (新店), Bang-kahe (艋舺), San-kak-éng (三角湧), Ho-shang-chou (和尚洲), Tsúi-tng-kha (水返腳), and Sek-khán (錫口) all had a dispensary in 1885. Despite having no dispensary, the mission station in Tōa-liong-tōng (大龍峒) had a box full of western medicine books, (Chinese Academy 1962) as Mackay wished to help patients in need when medical treatments were unable to be performed. The establishment of dispensaries symbolized continuous medical aid.

5.4 The Evolution of Mission Stations

Mackay's missionary activities were initially carried out in his own residences, as well as outdoor areas, under a big tree, or next to a temple. After Mackay started to attract followers in small towns, mission stations were built hidden among private residences or makeshift and self-built. Upon starting his missionary activities in large cities, Mackay started to establish mission stations on rental premises. After obtaining funds during his trip to Canada, Mackay built two mission stations. Following the tearing down of mission stations by mobsters in the Sino-French War, and its subsequent reconstruction, re-built mission stations started to have geo-specific distinctive styles. For example, mission stations in the Taipei Basin were built like western-style churches, mission stations in the Kavalan Plain were mostly self-built thatched western-style mission stations, and mission stations on the west coast of northern Taiwan were mostly built on rental premises. After mission stations across Taiwan were destroyed in the Japanese Colonial Period in 1895, Mackay began to request that each mission station repair their own building, which ushered in a period of self-sufficient mission stations. In Mackay's 25 years in Taiwan, he had encountered various difficulties at different stages. Political power, which was key in the destruction of mission stations, accidentally became a crucial element for the reconstruction of wrecked mission stations. By setting up both tangible and intangible mission stations in cities and villages across northern Taiwan, and turning mission stations from ramshackle thatched huts to rock-solid brick buildings, Mackay had successfully planted Christian culture in northern Taiwan.

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