

in terms of the ties cemented with important figures in Taiwan's cultural, academic, and political spheres, and in terms of taking part in a project with real historical significance. It was also a unique collaboration between Canadian and Taiwanese Museums, and the cornerstone of CTOT efforts to celebrate the centennial of George Leslie Mackay's death on June 2, 1901. The exhibit is part of a much larger set of Taiwanese aboriginal artefacts collected by Mackay between 1872 and 1893, which he brought back to Canada on his furlough in 1893. The collection was turned over to the ROM in 1915 and has remained in storage there since that time. The collection came to the CTOT's attention in 1999, through York University's Michael Stainton who, along with Canadian historian Alvyn Austin had come across parts of the collection in their research. CTOT sought the guidance of Shun Ye Museum, Taiwan's only museum devoted exclusively to aboriginal culture. Shun Ye immediately recognised the significance of the project and remained indefatigable partners.

Mackay collected what were, at the time, common items such as clothing, bags, pipes, necklaces, wicker vessels, and so on. Such items that remained in Taiwan over the last century have not withstood the ravages of a humid climate, neglect, and wilful destruction. Thus many are now *sui generis*, and the collection as a whole is the only assemblage of pre-1895 items in the world. It therefore offers insight into daily life in pre-colonial Taiwan, and more importantly, a clearer idea of what "real" aboriginal culture - as opposed to versions filtered through Japanese and Chinese eyes -- was like.

Shun Ye began the laborious research and contracted the ROM to carry out the physical preservation work that would enable delicate items to see the light of day again. The CTOT's first task was getting the ROM on board. The CTOT invited ROM curator Trudy Nicks to Taiwan, having her meet with indigenous leaders, and see the Shun Ye facilities firsthand. The CTOT and Shun Ye also landed a wide array of financial sponsors including Taiwan's Council for Cultural Affairs, the Council of Aboriginal Affairs, Taipei City Government, Air Canada, the Intercontinental Hotel, Mitsubishi Motors Taiwan, and Taian Insurance.

The June 2 opening was a major success. Leading the list of dignitaries in attendance was former President Lee Teng-hui, with Council of Aboriginal Affairs Chairman Yohani Isqaqavut, ROM Curator Nicks, Mackay's octogenarian grandson John Mackay, Shun Ye Foundation Chairman Lin and CTOT HOM David Mulroneu rounding out the line-up. Lee eulogised the important legacy GLM left behind, pointing out his contributions to educational and medical development, as well as his love for all of Taiwan's people. Yuhani thanked Canada for preserving part of Taiwan's aboriginal heritage, and praised Canadians for their international vision and conscience dating back to Mackay's era. The importance of the event was evident in the huge turnout by Taiwan's news media --- television stations carried much of the event live, and nearly all the major newspapers, both Chinese and English, gave it considerable importance.

Since the opening on June 2, 2001, it continued to generate media reports; in early September, Shung Ye personnel estimated the exhibit attracted more than 12,000 visitors. It closed on September 30. Plans are now being made to ship the collection back to the ROM, where curators have indicated they plan to mount a major exhibit for a Canadian audience.

000392