

## Epp, Weldon -TAPEI -GR

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**From:** Mitchell, James -TAPEI -GR  
**Sent:** September 5, 2001 9:03 AM  
**To:** Epp, Weldon -TAPEI -GR  
**Subject:** FW: Celebrating Mackay II: Royal Ontario Museum Exhibition

Weldon --- here's a copy of the report for your records.

Jimmy

-----Original Message-----

**From:** McDowell, Mark -TAPEI -GR  
**Sent:** July 4, 2001 5:21 PM  
**To:** Pepin, Yves -ACA; Reyburn, Karen -PKE; Summers, David -PKE  
**Cc:** Santerre, Luc -ACA; Delaney, Anne -ACA; Barlow, Curtis -ACA; EXTOTT (ACA); Riel, Patrick -BCM -ACA; Lord, Wayne -AGA; EXTOTT (AGA); Mendel, Barbara -PNSP; Cremonese, René -PNSP; Epp, Weldon -BEJING -GR; Mitchell, James -TAPEI -GR; Wawzonek, Caroline -TAPEI -GR; Bohrsen, Jessica -TAPEI -GR; Mulroney, David -TAPEI -HOM/CDM  
**Subject:** Celebrating Mackay II: Royal Ontario Museum Exhibition

### **The Royal Ontario Museum's "Mackay Collection of Taiwanese Aboriginal Artefacts: Treasures Preserved Abroad" Opens in Taiwan**

#### **Summary**

After nearly two years of intensive preparation in both Canada and Taiwan, the "Mackay Collection of Taiwanese Aboriginal Artefacts: Treasures Preserved Abroad" opened on June 2 at Taipei's Shun Ye Museum of Formosan Aborigines. Guiding this exhibit to completion was the most complicated cultural project that CTOT has yet undertaken, but the results were worth it, in terms of the huge media success, 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.

The exhibit imparts a new understanding of Taiwan's pre-colonial history and of Taiwan's indigenous culture before efforts to assimilate the aboriginal population by Japanese colonial rulers (1895-1945) and the KMT (1945- ca. 1970). It is also a unique collaboration between Canadian and Taiwanese Museums, and the cornerstone of CTOT efforts to celebrate the centennial of Canadian medical missionary and educator George Leslie Mackay, who died in Taiwan on June 2, 1901, and has become a revered historical figure in Taiwan.

#### **Background**

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. While parts of the collection have been studied, there had never been a public display of the artefacts, and their provenance and meaning had been largely forgotten. The collection came to the CTOT's attention in 1999, through Michael Stainton (a doctoral candidate in anthropology at York University) who, along with Canadian historian Alwyn 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, throughout the last two years, 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