

News of the arts

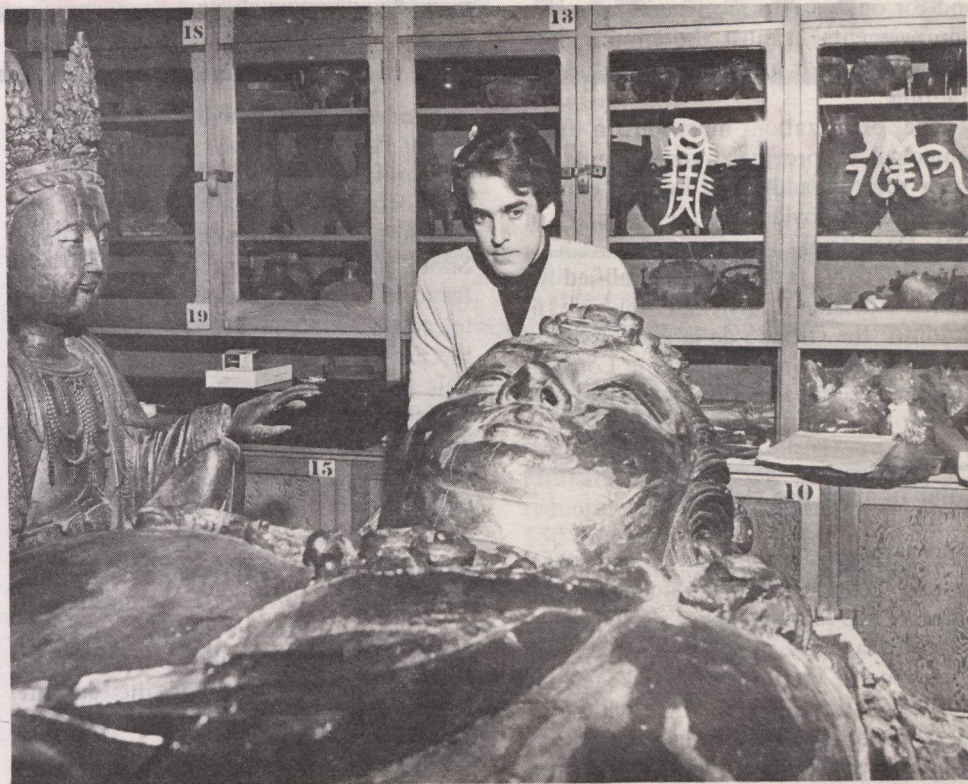
Canada lends Chinese art to Japan

Three massive carved figures and a small bronze Buddha are back in the Far East for the first time since the Royal Ontario Museum of Toronto acquired them in the early twentieth century. The objects sent to the Nara National Museum in Japan for an exhibition, constitute one of the most important loans in the history of the ROM.

They will be displayed as part of an extensive exhibition opening on April 29 which traces the development of the art associated with Buddhism in Japan and shows how foreign influences affected the evolving art style.

Dr. Bunsaka Kurata, Director of the Nara National Museum, first approached the ROM's Far Eastern Department to discuss the possibility of the loan last autumn. The objects he sought were all from China, of outstanding quality, which would help provide comparative material for the Japanese exhibition.

Thomas Quirk, Acting Head of the Far Eastern Department, says: "We agreed to the loan only when we were assured that we could transport these large, heavy and fragile pieces in absolute safety. We investigated the packing technology used to ship the Pieta to New York in 1964 and we have modified the Pieta packing tech-



Thomas Quirk, Acting Head of the Royal Ontario Museum's Far Eastern Department ponders the shipment of this ten-foot tall Buddhist figure. The piece, dating from the fourteenth century A.D., is one of four from the ROM's Far Eastern collection on loan to the Nara National Museum, Japan.

niques to suit our own loan."

Quirk points out, "This loan is tremendously important because it affords the ROM with an opportunity to present its Far Eastern collections to the world and for international view in a way that's not been possible before. The loan reflects not only on the Royal Ontario Museum but on Canada as well."

One of the loan objects is a carved marble figure of a monk, dated to the twelfth century A.D., which stands approximately five feet six inches. Two massive carved and painted wooden figures were also sent. One of them, Kuan-

Yin, a richly attired Buddhist figure representing the quality of mercy, is considered by Dr. Kurata to be one of the largest surviving examples of its type. The fourth piece is a six-inch high gilt bronze Buddha, which was originally an altar piece in a household shrine.

Barbara Stephen, Associate Director of the Royal Ontario Museum, stated: "The ROM has been asked to approve the reproduction of one of the ROM loan pieces for souvenir tickets for the Kintetsu Railway line which services Nara." Dr. James E. Cruise, ROM Director, has approved this commemorative gesture.



A carved wooden figure receives some restoration to its polychromed surface by Gillian Moir of the Royal Ontario Museum. The twelfth-century figure represents a Bodhisattva, or divine attendant of the Buddha, and is one of four major art objects on loan to the Nara National Museum in Japan.

Theatres receive facelift

Some 35 Canadian theatres have received grants totalling \$11.5 million under the Secretary of State Department's theatre capital-grants program in the past five years.

The money has gone towards purchasing, renovation and construction of facilities and equipment, with emphasis put as far as possible on upgrading of auditoriums, security facilities, rehearsal

and audition halls, and facilities for the public.

Eligibility

To be eligible for a grant, a theatre must be a non-profit company performing music, drama, pantomime, ballet, opera or a related discipline. The company must have been operating successfully for three years in order to receive aid for major improvements to existing facilities or for construction of new or additional ones,