

SHERMAN EMERY LEE

In enabling Americans to enhance their understanding of world art, especially that of Japan, China, and the Orient, few have contributed more in the past fifty years than Sherman Emery Lee. He has done so by gathering, interpreting, and encouraging the collecting of Asian art throughout this country.

Director for a quarter-century of the Cleveland Museum of Art, he transformed it into one of the most distinguished fine arts museums in the United States. William Agee, former director of the Houston Museum of Fine Arts, has called him "our greatest museum director."

He is author and co-author of sixteen books on Oriental art, including the standard and widely respected Chinese Landscape Painting (1954) and History of Far Eastern Art (1982), now in its fourth edition. From 1948 to 1952 he was an adviser to the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers in Tokyo for Collections, Arts, and Monuments in Japan. Twenty years later, he led the first United States delegation of art historians to the People's Republic of China.

His advocacy in helping others to see and to value the artifacts of the East has led him throughout his career into the university classroom. Having earned his Ph.D. degree from Western Reserve University in 1941, he became Lecturer in Art History at the University of Washington while serving as Assistant Director of the Seattle Art Museum, and he was Adjunct Professor of Art at Case Western University for twenty-one years while at the Cleveland Museum. Since 1983, he has been Adjunct Professor of Art at this University and at Duke University where he continues to lecture and to advise students and colleagues. For the Ackland Art Museum on this campus, he has been instrumental in the significant enlargement of the Oriental art collection through yearly visits to the Far East and through contributions from his personal collection.

For his tireless efforts to collect, preserve, and exhibit the finest art and to bring the subtleties of Eastern Art into the ken of the Western eye -- acting as director of art museums, diplomat, teacher, and scholar -- we salute Sherman Emery Lee by bestowing upon him this degree of Doctor of Letters.