

Date: Monday, September 12, 2011 7:17 AM

From: Mr. Howard Lee

RE: Mr. Sammy Yukuan Lee (October 14, 1902 - September 8, 2011)

Dear Friends and Family:

I regret to announce the passing of my father, Mr. Sammy Yukuan Lee on Friday, September 9, 2011, in Qingdao, China.

He was devoted to the research of Chinese art and culture and he will be greatly missed by his family and friends.

A memorial service will take place at the Qingdao City Museum on September 15, 2011.

Attached please find a brief biography of my father's extraordinary life. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that any donations be made to the UCLA Center for Chinese Studies in honor of Mr. Sammy Yukuan Lee and mailed to:

Ms. Joy C. Yang

Assistant Director of Center for Chinese Studies

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Sammy Yukuan Lee

(October 14, 1902 – September 9, 2011)

The following is an excerpt from the US Congressional Record from Friday, September 27, 1996 as read by The Honorable David Funderburk, former United States Ambassador to Communist Romania (1981-1985) and former member of the United States House of Representatives from the 2nd Congressional District of North Carolina (1995-1997).

I rise today to honor Sammy Yukuan Lee, a world renowned scholar of Chinese antiquities, who has been a United States citizen since June 28, 1984. Even in his youth Sammy Lee was strongly principled and highly disciplined. Gifted with extraordinary foresight, he was able to take advantage of the many opportunities he encountered. His accomplishments demonstrate that hard work and discipline can be a formula for success.

A native of Da Lao Wa village in Zhaoyuan county of Shandong province, China, Sammy Lee is the youngest of five sons in a rural farming family. Village life offered little chance of obtaining a higher education and few prospects for earning a good livelihood. Armed with a sixth grade education, Sammy Lee who was then in his teens, was sent by his father, Lee Quande, to Beijing to learn a trade from Mr. Teng, the owner of Ji Zhen Xiang, an antique shop. There, Sammy Lee met a fellow apprentice, David Techun Wang, with whom he developed a life-long partnership and close friendship.

In China in the 1920's, most of the workers were illiterate. Sammy Lee and David Wang, fortunate enough to have a basic education, looked beyond their immediate environment. In Beijing, they saw the need for communicating with many foreign residents to expand their business. Therefore, besides their daily work activities, they also taught themselves English, German, and Japanese from whatever books or methods they could obtain.

In the early 1930's, through his skill and knowledge in Chinese antiques, Sammy Lee met Dr. Hands Bidder, the First Secretary of the German Embassy; Dr. Grand, Chief of Staff of Peking Union Medical College Hospital; and Drs. Ecket and Huwer, who were on the staff of the German Hospital. They were all very much interested in Chinese antiques including carpets, bronzes, ceramics, and furniture. Despite his limited command of foreign languages, Sammy Lee was able to interact well with his customers. He established an enduring friendship with each of them built upon mutual trust. His relationships with Europeans and Americans exposed him to Western culture and opened his mind to new opportunities.

Sammy Lee's quest for knowledge and his desire to satisfy his customers prompted him to travel throughout China in search of sources of antique carpets. In those days, any place outside of Beijing proper was beyond the reach of most Chinese merchants, who maintained a traditionally centric view of China. Sammy Lee endured considerable hardship during these days, but found his travels into adjacent provinces to be rewarding.

The most difficult time for Mr. Lee was probably the years between 1935 and 1938, when he was diagnosed with tuberculosis, a prevalent disease at that time. Before the development of the miracle drug for this infection disease, most of its victims had little hope of recovery. Sammy Lee, true to his character, was determined to overcome this dreadful obstacle. Under the personal care of Dr. and Mrs. Grand in their home, he followed Dr. Grand's professional advice to the letter – total rest and inactivity. For an energetic and ambitious young man, the treatment was drastic. Fortunately, he completely recovered and was able to return to work in the antique shop.

After World War II, Sammy Lee and David Wang decided to expand the business to Nanjing and Shanghai; and, of course, Mr. Lee was always ready to take on new challenges. However, because of the political turmoil in China, Mr. Tenberg, a close friend, strongly advised him to leave China. In 1947, the Lee's and the Wang's moved from Shanghai to Hong Kong along with several friends and a few of their employees.

Relying upon their own resilience and determination, Sammy Lee and David Wang capitalized on their knowledge of Chinese art and became partners in a new enterprise, the Sammy Y Lee and Wang's Company Limited, specializing in Chinese antiquities and the manufacture of furniture.

Foreseeing an opportunity for expansion, Sammy Lee ventured to Tokyo, Japan, and established the Oriental House Limited, providing Chinese carpets, furniture, tablecloths, and artifacts to American Armed Forces stationed in Japan. Mr. Lee moved his family to Tokyo, while Mr. Wang and his family remained in Hong Kong to manage Sammy Y. Lee and Wang's Co.

During the mid-1950's, leaving his eldest son, King Tsi, in control of his interests in Tokyo, Sammy Lee eagerly explored new markets in Germany and America. Having a loving wife to take care of their home and four younger sons in Tokyo, Sammy Lee was free to travel throughout the world expanding his business contacts and searching for art objects. In 1957, he organized an exhibition and

sale in Lempetz Gallery in Koln. In 1964, Mr. Lee held his first lacquer collection exhibition at the Royal Scottish Museum.

By this time, the Japanese economy was well on its way to recovery, enabling many Japanese to rekindle their love of collecting Chinese works of art. Oriental House was able to thrive by meeting the demands of the Japanese for art objects.

Sammy Lee devotes his spare time to research and writing about Chinese antiquities. His knowledge of and experience with Chinese lacquer, blue and white porcelain, and carpets have been incorporated into one catalog, four books, and three articles and monographs, some of which are listed below.

Sammy Lee has always emphasized the importance of education because he felt the inadequacy of his own formal training. A forward thinker, he insisted that his children attend American schools. In the late 1980's, to honor their father, his five sons established and endowed the Sammy Yukuan Lee Foundation for the purposes of promoting the study of Chinese culture and providing financial assistance to qualified student of Chinese descent.

Publications in English by Sammy Yukuan Lee:

- "Catalogue of the Collection of Chinese Lacquer," Edinburgh, Scotland 1964.
- "Preliminary Study of Chinese Ceramics in Blue and White (Ching Hau)," Tokyo, 1971.
- "Oriental Lacquer Art," Tokyo. 1972.
- "Art Rugs from Silk Route and Great Wall Area," Tokyo, 1980.
- "A Study of Sung Underglaze Blue and Red Porcelains," Tokyo, 1982.
- "Some Problems of Yuta Yao, Shuidong Yao, Bohai Yao, Tingchou Yao, and Hengfeng Yao," Scientific and Technological Insights on Ancient Chinese Pottery and Porcelain, Beijing. 1986.

Sammy Lee lived his later years in southern California with his youngest son, King Yang (John), near his second son King Hao (Howard), and third son King

Sum (Sam), dividing his time between his latest research into Chinese archaic jades and his pursuit of the art of golfing. At least twice a year, he traveled to Tokyo to see his oldest son, King Tsi, and to Hong Kong to visit his fourth son, King Kong.

As he approached his 100th birthday, Sammy Lee retired to Qingdao in the Shandong province where he enjoyed the company and care of his niece, Liu Lee Xiuying, and her family.

He is survived by his four sons and daughters-in-law, seven grandchildren, and eight great grandchildren. His reverence for Chinese art and culture, the importance of education, and the enjoyment of a full and vibrant life leaves a legacy for us all to follow.