

CARL WHITING BISHOP

WITH the death of Carl Whiting Bishop, America's veteran Far Eastern archaeologist, the field of Oriental studies has lost one of its most stimulating contributors. All who knew him must grieve over the death of this princely man.

He was born in Japan in 1881, and almost constantly from 1914, when he became Assistant Curator of Oriental Art at the University of Pennsylvania Museum, he devoted his great intellectual energies to the study and analysis of the civilizations of Eastern Asia. Three times he conducted expeditions in China: once for the University Museum (1915–17), and twice for the Freer Gallery of Art (1923–27, and 1929–34). During the last war he served as Assistant U. S. Naval Attaché in China (1918–20). In (1921–22) he studied and gave instruction in archaeology at Columbia University. From 1922 until his death on June 16, 1942 he was Associate Curator, and Associate in Archaeology at the Freer Gallery of Art in Washington, D. C.

Endowed with a fabulous memory, C. W. Bishop acquired an encyclopedic knowledge of man's culture. With keen analytic ability, rare powers of generalization, and a happy clarity of expression, he was able to extract from this storehouse the essential facts about man's early history and to present them in ordered and highly engaging fashion. His book *Man from the farthest past* is a superb example of elucidation and the best sort of popularization of prehistory. Two themes inspired much of his study and writing: the uniformity of elements on which early civilizations were built; and, the cultural debt owed by the Far East to the older centers of civilization in the Near East. These themes are clearly set forth in a booklet published the week before his death, *Origin of the far eastern civilizations: A brief handbook* (the first in the Smithsonian Institution's "War background studies"). He had the faculty of broadening the perspective on any subject about which he wrote, whether it was the vexed problem of early Chinese chronology, the place of geography in the development of an early culture, or the diffusion of some social or material technique. Not many details of his archaeological work in China are in print aside from his observations on the Hsin-cheng finds—a classic in the field where information is most scanty—and the workmanlike report of his excavation of a disappointingly meager Western Han site. It is all the more difficult to understand why his eagerly awaited report, *Archaeological researches in China 1923–1934*, although completed, should have been withheld from publication.

C. W. Bishop had countless friends. He was kindly, modest, and witty, and generous almost to a fault. Always eager to help younger scholars, he shared freely the knowledge he had acquired through years of study and travel, aided them with their manuscripts, and helped them to become established in their professional fields. Although all who knew him will miss the stimulation of his mind and the warmth of his friendship, death will not end the humanizing influence he brought to studies in the Far Eastern field.

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