

HUNTIA

A Journal of Botanical History



Volume 10 Number 2
1999

Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation
Carnegie Mellon University
Pittsburgh

Huntia publishes articles on all aspects of the history of botany and is published irregularly in one or more numbers per volume of approximately 200 pages by the Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213-3890.

Executive Editor	Robert W. Kiger
Managing Editor	Scarlett T. Townsend
Book Reviews and Announcements Editor	Charlotte A. Tancin
Associate Editors	Gavin D. R. Bridson T. D. Jacobsen Anita L. Karg James J. White

Editorial correspondence should be directed to the Managing Editor. Books for announcement or review should be sent to the Book Reviews and Announcements Editor.

External contributions to *Huntia* are welcome. Please request our "Guidelines for Contributors" before submitting manuscripts for consideration. Page charge is \$50.00. The charges for up to five pages per year are waived for Hunt Institute Associates, who also may elect to receive *Huntia* as a benefit of membership; please contact the Institute for more information.

Subscription rate is \$60.00 per volume. Orders for subscriptions and back issues should be sent to the Institute.

Typeset, printed and bound by Allen Press, Inc., Lawrence, Kansas.

Copyright © 1999 by the Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation
All Rights Reserved

ISSN 0073-4071

Nineteenth-century lithography at the Government College of Art and Craft, Calcutta

James J. White

Abstract

Except in publications such as *Annals of the Royal Botanic Garden, Calcutta*, no record exists of the splendid botanical lithographs produced at the turn of the century by students of the Government College of Art and Craft in Calcutta. A preliminary list of artists and lithographers has been gleaned from a cursory look at selected publications.

The Government College of Art and Craft in Calcutta, which played a vital role in the development of contemporary Indian art at the turn of the century, currently occupies the building that was constructed for it in 1892 at 28 Jawaharlal Nehru Road, adjoining the Indian Museum.

The school was responsible for many of the fine lithographs of plant subjects produced during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. However, at the college itself there is no record of this work except for scant mention in *Centenary: Government College of Art and Craft, Calcutta 1864-1964* (Calcutta, 1966) by ex-Principal Chintamani Kar, Jogesh Chandra Bagal and Mukul Dey.

Of the superb botanical lithographs produced by students of the school, the centenary publication records only that "we also find the lithographic class engaged in the illustration of a monograph on figs by Dr. George King of the Botanic Gardens and of a work on the agriculture of Behar by Mr. G. A. Grierson . . ." and that the lithography and wood engraving classes "did a good deal of useful work comprising botanical plates for the Royal Botanic Garden. . . ." George King was the British botanist who was superintendent of the

Calcutta Botanic Gardens from 1871-1898 and director of the Botanical Survey of India from 1891-1898. Ray Desmond adds that King in 1887 launched the *Annals of the Royal Botanic Garden, Calcutta*, a "vehicle for impressive and profusely illustrated botanical monographs" (*The European discovery of the Indian flora*, Oxford, 1992).

In 1901, John Cameron, superintendent of the Lalbagh Botanical Garden, Bangalore, wrote in his "Notes on a tour in northern India" that "at the School of Arts the aluminum department has attained considerable importance."

In a scant sampling of publications such as George King's *Annals of the Royal Botanic Garden* (Calcutta, 1888), C. B. Clarke's *Commelinaceae et Cyrtandraceae Bengalenses* (Calcutta, 1874), John Scott's *Plates to accompany Annual report on the experimental culture of the opium poppy for 1874* (Calcutta, 1875), and King and Robert Pantling's *The orchids of the Sikkim-Himalaya* (Calcutta, 1898), the following names of artists and/or lithographers are found on the lithographs:

Adhecary, K. D.
 Alvis (also Alves), H. D.
 Banarjee (also Banarji, Banerjee and Banerji), S.
 Banerjee, A. N.
 Basu, Chundra
 Bhattacharje (also Bhattacharji and Bhattacharya), J. K.
 Bose, H. D.
 Bose, Lolit (also Lalit) Mohun (also Mohon)
 Bose, Nogenndra Nath

Chakerbooty (also Chuckerbutty), Jaduf
 (also Jadab) Chundra (also Chandra)
 Chandra, K. D.
 Chowdhury (also Chaudhuri), N. (also D.
 N.)
 Chuckerbutty, J. C.
 Chundra (also Chunder), K. D.
 Daas, K. P.
 Das (also Dass), Gopal Chandra (also G. C.)
 (also Chundra)
 Das, B. N.
 Das, Chuni Lal (also C. L. and Chunilal)
 Das, F. B.
 Das, K. H.
 Das, K. P.
 Das, Kedar Nath
 Das, Kristohari
 Das, R. N.
 Das, Romanath
 Dass, Dhir Lall
 Dass, G. C.
 Datta (also Dutta), H. C.
 Dutt, H. C.
 Dutta, B. K.
 Gangooly, D. C.
 Ghose, Poorne Chunder
 Gopal (also Ghosal), H. C.
 Govindoo
 Habizoodin
 Hormusji (also Hormasji), H.
 Hosein, Inayat
 Idrees, M.
 Inayatoolah
 Majid, Abdool
 Manna, Hem Chunder
 Mitter, A. T.
 Mitra, N. D.
 Mockerji (also Mookerjee and Mukerjee),
 Behary Lall (also B. L.)
 Mockerji, S. P.
 Molla (also Mulla), A. D.
 Mondel, Jadu Nath
 Mondul, S. C.
 Mukarji (also Mukarjim), Jagendranath (also
 Jagendra Nath)

Mukerjei (also Mukerjai), A. C.
 Mullah, S. Abdool
 Nath, Bhootnath
 Nath, Dinonath
 Neogy, D. B.
 Pal, H. L.
 Pal, Kali Das
 Pal, Kamakha Nath
 Pal, Tulsu Das
 Paul, H. D.
 Rassik
 Roy, B. K.
 Rungia (also Rungiah)
 Samanta, Udaya Chand
 Schaumbury, J.
 Singh, Aghore Lal
 Singh (also Singie), Lutchman (also Lech-
 man)
 Singha (also Singh?), A. C.
 Sinha, P. N.
 Tamizoodin
 Yasin, Mahomed

The lithographs identified some of the artists as students at the Government College and others from the Botanical Garden, Calcutta and Surveyor General's Office. The examined lithographs also identified the following companies: "Chitra Silpi Co.; J. Schaumburg Lith.; S. Sedgfield and W. H. Irving; W. Newman & Co. Ltd Imp.; Winchester; Romeo Lith.; and Dumphy Lith." Better known as British artists and botanists, M. (Matilda) Smith, R. Pantling, D. Prain, J. D. Hooker and R. Wight produced Indian botanical lithographs, a number of which were included in the examined collection. I. H. Burkill commented on Pantling's work in India: "[He] brought from the hillsides all the orchids that he could get and, being a good draughtsman, he drew and supplied the plates for a volume, conjointly with Sir George King, of the *Annals of the Royal Botanic Garden, Calcutta*" (*Chapters on the history of botany in India*, Calcutta, 1965).

We hope that the above names, compiled

from a few random volumes, will inspire someone with access to an appropriate library to pursue the history of botanical lithography in India.

Acknowledgments

I am most grateful to Mr. Manoj Sharkar, head of the Department of Painting, and to lecturer Badhan Das of the Government College of Art and Craft for receiving me so cordially during my visit in March 1994. My

thanks also to Cecil J. Saldanha of St. Joseph College in Bangalore, the library staff at the Lalbagh Botanical Garden, Bangalore, and Dr. D. S. A. Wijesundara at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, for showing me some of their finely illustrated volumes. I also acknowledge the overwhelming generosity and hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Shri Dhar of Calcutta.

Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation
Carnegie Mellon University
Pittsburgh, PA 15213-3890

