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A SELECTIVE CATALOGUE OF THE PUBLICATIONS ON THE INDIAN BOTANIC GARDEN

U.P. SAMADDAR AND D.N. GUHA BAKSHI

Botanical Survey of India, Howrah

Two hundred years of botanical history of our country is largely centred round the Indian Botanic Garden (formerly Royal Botanic Garden). In the commemoration volume of the 150th anniversary, which was held in January, 1938, there is a detailed documentation about the establishment, development and genesis of this world famous botanic Garden.

Colonel Robert Kyd of the Bengal Infantry, a keen horticulturist, was the pioneer in establishing the garden in 1787 with 310 acres of land at the present site of the garden. Actually, the garden now occupies 273 acres of land as the rest of the land was transferred to the Bengal Engineering (B.E.) College, for its establishment (formerly Bishop College) at the time of Dr. Nathaniel Wallich.

Sir William Roxburgh, father of Indian Botany, was the first to draw up a catalogue of about 3500 plants then growing in the garden. This Catalogue : *Hortus Bengalensis* (1814) — in two parts was published by his equally famous friend Rev. Dr. William Carey. the celebrated missionary. Roxburgh's *Flora Indica* and *Plantae Coromandelianae* (in) 3 volumes and his wonderful large folio-size coloured illustrations, 2382 in number and in 35 volumes were prepared between 1794-1813 with the help of *(our)* Indian artists and formed the nucleus of Hooker's Flora of British India and subsequent publications on Indian Botany.

Thereafter, Dr. N. Wallich published in three volumes *Plantae Asiaticae Rariores* with coloured illustrations, which acclaimed him as a pioneer botanist. Dr. William Griffith who officiated during the absence of Dr. Wallich from 1842-1844, died suddenly in 1845 at Malacca, while making a botanical expedition. Griffith's extensive notes and drawings were published by the Government in 9 volumes after his death.

Sir George King, a name to conjure with, in Indian Botany and the father of the Botanical Survey of India (BSI) made very significant and enormous contributions towards Indian Botany. It was he who initiated the publication of the famous Annals of the Royal Botanic Garden, Calcutta in 1887. The first volume of Records of the Botanical Survey of India appeared in 1893. W.S. Kurz's *Forest Flora of British Burma* was also a milestone of publication.

Sir David Prain's valuable botanical contributions on Bengal plants (2 volumes) and on *Dioscorea* in collaboration with I.H. Burkill made him world famous.

Lt. Col. A.T. Gage, who succeeded Sir David Prain, published a catalogue of non-herbaceous phanerogams cultivated in the Royal Botanic Garden, Calcutta, for facilitating the exchange with other botanical institutions.

C.C. Calder's monograph on *Oxalis* is another pioneer work which originated from this botanic garden.

Among the Indian Superintendents (which have been redesignated as the Deputy Director later on since its merger with the Botanical Survey of India on 1st January, 1963) K.P. Biswas's work on Algae and Systematic Botany and taxonomic work on the flora of Eastern Himalaya, D. Chatterjee's work on Endemism, Plant geography, Plant taxonomy, S. K. Mukerjee's work on revision of Labiatae, J. Sen and J.N. Naskar's work on non-herbaceous plants of the Indian Botanic Garden, S.N. Mitra and his collaborators' contribution to Horticulture, D.B. Deb's revisional works of Rubiaceae, Solanaceae and Liliaceae with his students are very worth mentioning. Last but not least, the works of R.K. Chakraverty *et al.* on Plant physiology and horticulture may also be mentioned.

The role of Indian Botanic Garden in the dissemination of plants and saplings are noteworthy. On this happy occasion of its completion of 200 years of existence, different scientists and enlites would pay their respectful homage to this *ulma mater* of Indian Botany.

Apart from the above role of the Botanic Garden for the purposes of germination, growth, flowering, adaptation, education, recreation, growing of drug plants, exotic plants, horticultural and vegetable resources the Garden is most important from the point of strategy of conservation as a back up and stand by. The Botanic Garden serves as a centre for the preservation of rare and endangered species. There are hundreds of plants which have their own unusual characteristics and it is considered that the only way to protect these plants is to cultivate them in the Gardens as there is large scale habitat loss. It should be possible to develop controlled conditions for introduction, reintroduction and study of their possible uses of endangered species in the garden which may otherwise be lost forever. As a rescue centre botanic garden serves the purpose of preventing plant extinctions and thereby to benefit mankind at large.

A systematic bibliography of the workers is appended below for the benefit of the scientists, researchers and the students as well. The arrangement is chronological and list of authors is arranged chronologically in the present work.

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