Lithographs on landscapes and people of India by the British artists in the 19th century

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Abstract

In this paper, the brief survey of lithograph prints including tinted lithograph, uncolored lithograph, hand-color lithograph and chromolithograph done by some foreign artists in the 19th century is discussed. Some of the prints of famous lithographers like Louis Henri De Rudder, Joseph Nash, Louis Haghe, David Roberts etc. are studied with the picture of the prints. All scenes of the prints are of India's places, people, historical buildings etc. As a student of visual art, specialized in printmaking, it is very interesting to fine something which is related to my subject. I have been subscribing a website called "StoryLTD". One of the emails was auction of 19th century lithograph prints by William Wood. I was surprised to see the prints because it was totally different from what I have seen in my career. The prints were so detailed and smooth. It has a painterly feel rather than a lithograph print. I was so curious to know more about it and started researching about it. I found many prints of that time. In this paper, only selected prints are there because of the limitation of words in the journal. There may be many art students who don't know about these prints, because all prints are done and published in western countries. My aim of this paper is to acknowledge them about these beautiful prints. Information of my research paper are all collected from online databases.

Keywords: Lithography, Gum Arabic, Nitric acid, Chromolithograph, Lithotint, Gazette, Illustrator,

Research paper

Lithography is a method of printing which is based on the fact that grease and water do not mix. The image is drawn to a flat grained surface of a stone or aluminum sheet by using a greasy medium like oil-based ink (tusche, crayon, pencils, lacquer or synthetic materials). After the drawing is completed, a mixture of gum arabic and nitric acid is applied all over the surface of the stone. It produces water receptive non-printing area and grease-receptive image area. An oil-based ink is applied on a roller and roll it on the wet surface of the stone. The ink only sticks to the greasy area and finally transfer to a paper with the help of a lithographic printing press.[1]

Lithography was invented by a German author Alois Senefelder in the year 1796 from Bavaria Hill. He firstly used the lithographic stone as a cheap means to publish theatrical works. Lithographic printing flourished in India from 19th century to the first decade of the 20th century. It expanded widely due to the establishment of book publishing house in different parts of India. Persian were the only part of production at that time.[2]

Lithograph prints by some selected foreign artists:
Fig. 1. Chowringhee Road (Theatre Road), Circa 1833

This is one of the prints of the series "Views of Calcutta". In the lower Choringhee area of Calcutta, private residences and government apartments were built together. This print shows the theatre on the corner of Theatre Street. This theatre was later destroyed by a fire in 1839.[3]

Fig. 1. Chowringhee Road (Theatre Road)

Fig. 2. The Fort, Circa 1833

The fort in the print was built in Gobindpore. Large areas of the jungle were cleared to build this fort. This fort was designed by John Brohier. It has an irregular octagon with scene gates, surrounded by extensive defenses. The fort is so large that it has an enough space to be a refuge for entire population of Calcutta.[4]

Fig. 2. The Fort

These two prints are from series of prints on "Views of Calcutta" by William Wood. William Wood (1774-1857) was a surgeon. zoologist and entomologist by profession and practiced for several years at Wingham. He left the medical profession and became a natural history bookseller, publisher and naturalist.

Fig 3. Environs de Calcutta, Octobre 1842. (A road with a rich Indian's carriage passing a colony of sannyasis)

This is a scene of the carriage of a rich Indian couple passing a colony of sanyasis. In Hinduism, sanyasis are the holy men who have taken the path of renunciation. Sanyasis needs a calm environment to meditate. So, they mostly stay at jungle. In this print, a peaceful environment with nature is seen. At that time, a man's life was divided into four stages; brahmacharya or

Fig. 3. Environs de Calcutta, October 1842.
(A road with a rich Indian's carriage passing a colony of sannyasis)

childhood and celibate youth, grihastha or householder, vanaprastha or householder devoted to spiritual pursuits and sanyasa or ascetic. Sanyasa was in essence the culmination of an ideal life, when a human being practiced austerity and tried to discover life's truths and oneness with god. As they have sacrificed their life to the god, they turned their back on material comforts. Sanyasis in this print have unshorn hair and beards, meditating and performing rigorous penances and retreating to isolated caves, forests and hills.[5] This print was done by Louis Henri Rudder after a drawing by Alexei Dmitrievich Saltykov.

Fig. 4. Raja of Tranvancore's Elephants

This is a drawing of prince Alexei Dmitrievich Saltykov in 1841and recreated as a lithograph print by Louis Henri Rudder in 1848. When prince Saltuikov visited Trivandrum in 1841, he noted several details about meeting with the Hindu Maharaja of Travancore. This one is also an uncolored lithograph done by Louis Henri Rudder.[6] This print shows village men and women standing on side of the road and watch a group of elephants coming with East India Company soldiers. Louis Henri De Rudder (1807-1881) was a French painter and lithographer. He studied at Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris in the year 1827. In 1842 he produced series of lithographs called "Voyages in India" from the original drawings of prince Alexis Soltykoff, which included around forty plates.

Fig. 4. Raja of Tranvancore's Elephants

Tinted lithographs by some selected foreign artists:

Tinted lithography is a color printing method which is different from a lithotint (A lithotint is an ink wash or monochromatic watercolor. In this process, oily lithographic printing ink was diluted with water to create

varying tonal values and then applied to the stone by brush). Color was invented in lithographic printing after the process was invented and can be separated into two categories: tinted and color lithography. It resembles line drawing with a background wash or tint. Two or three lithographic stones were prepared – one with the line image or drawing itself and one or two with broad areas of solid tone to accentuate the original drawing.[7] Some of the lithographs done by foreign artists are:

Fig. 5. A Tigris Fris Nyomara Akadt Vadaszok Murserabat Videken/Chasse Au Tigre Aux Environs de Murserabat. Circa 1853

The title is in Hungarian and French (meaning "tiger hunting in the neighborhood of Murshidabad). It is a hunting scene of tiger by British officers along with Indian village men. They are riding on the palace elephants. This print was done by Count Emanual Andrasy (Mano Andrasy). Count Emanual Andrasy (1821-1891) was a Hungarian nobleman, huntsman and artist. He participated in the Hungarian Revolution of 1848, but fled Budapest in 1849 during the Austrian invasion. He arrived in England, from where he travelled further east to the Indian subcontinent and neighboring countries.[8]

Fig. 5. A Tigris Fris Nyomara Akadt Vadaszok Murserabat Videken/ Chasse Au Tigre Aux Environs de Murserabat

Fig. 6. Tinted Lithograph of Maharaja Duleep Singh, Circa 1870s

It is a portrait of the Maharaja Duleep Singh (1838-1893). He was the last king of the Sikh Empire. There is a signature of Duleep Singh printed below the image. This print was printed and published by Maclure and Macdonald from Stereoscopic and Photographic Company Chromolithographs.[9] Andrew Maclure and Archibald Gray Macdonald were engravers and lithographers. They set up lithographic printers in Glasgow in 1835. In 1851, these two lithographers imported a Sigl machine from Germany which was capable of printing 600 sheets an hour and the firm is believed to be the first in the UK to use steam power for lithographic print. They introduced a power-driven lithographic printing press in 1853.[10]

Fig. 6. Tinted lithograph of Maharaja Duleep Singh

Fig. 7. Mahavellipore: The Five Raths, Circa 1845

This is one of the "Illustrations of Rock Cut Temples of India by James Fergusson and lithograph print was done by Thomas Colman Dibdin. These five raths are carved out of granite blocks dating back from the 17th century during the reign of Narsimhavaram Mahamalla of Pallava Dynasty. The five raths are namely Draupati Ratha, Arjuna Ratha, Nakula and Sahadeva Ratha, Bhima Ratha and Dharmaraja Ratha. Despite being unfinished, they reveal the finely balanced combination of architectural elements and sculptural decoration of the Pallava style.[11]

Fig. 7. Mahavellipore: The Five Raths

Fig. 8. Ajunta, Vihara Cave No.7

This one is also from James Fergusson's "Illustrations of The Rock Cut Temples of India". The lithograph print was done by Thomas Colman Dibdin. This vihara has been dated to the end of the 5th century. It has no internal hall. The overhanging roof of the cave has decorative horse-shoe shapes. A shrine in the rear wall holds both a seated and a standing buddha.[12]
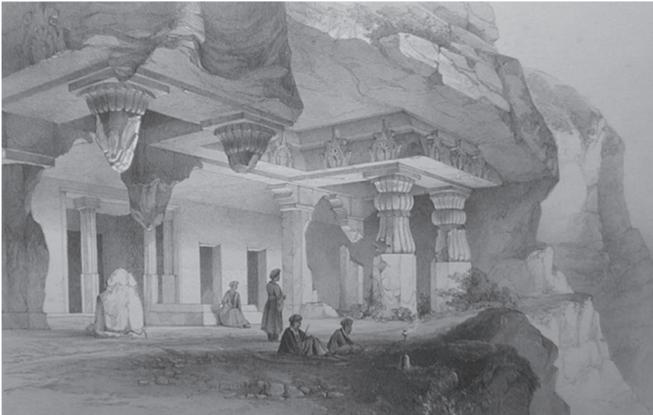

Fig. 8. Ajunta, Vihara Cave No.7

Thomas Colman Dibdin (1810-1893) was an English artist. He travelled widely throughout many countries and interested in drawing old towns and attractive buildings. Later he adopted the chromolithography techniques and converted his illustrations into chromolithograph prints. He not only converted his drawings into prints, but also James Fergusson's drawings. James Fegusson (1808-1886) was a Scottish-born architectural historian. He was known for his interest in Indian historical architecture and antiquities. He published many books related to Indian art and architecture like

-   Illustrations of Mythology and Art in India
-   History of Indian and Eastern Architecture etc.[13]

Chromolithograph prints by some selected foreign artists:

Chromolithography is a chemical method of making multicolor prints. It was invented by a French painter Godefroy Engelmann in 1837. It is based on the rejection of grease by water. In chromolithograph, eight to forty stones are used for each color separately. Some of the chromolithographs made by foreign artists are:

Fig. 9. A Street Scene in Bombay, Circa 1862

It is a chromolithograph from the series of "Illustrations of the country and people of India and adjacent territories". A busy and crowded street of Bombay where a Parsi priest is seen wearing a white turban and reading a book.

They are the followers of the Zoroastrian religion. At this time, they began to adopt western fashions along with their traditional attire. A beautifully carved wooden pillars and beams of houses can be seen in this print. It was done by William Simpson (1823-1899). He was a Scottish artist, war correspondent and war artist. He is known for his lithograph series "The Seat of The War in The East". In 1850s, he was sent to India to produce an illustrated publication of Sepoy Revolt similar to the Crimean portfolio which was done by him in the beginning of the 1850s. He travelled in Calcutta, Punjab, Sutlej, Lucknow, Cawnpore, Himalayas, Kashmir, Madras and Bombay. After that, he left India and went to Day&Son publishing house. From there, he produced a large volume of colored lithographs called "India ancient and modern". He was not the actual lithographer; his drawings were transferred to stone by the lithographers of Day&Son.[14]
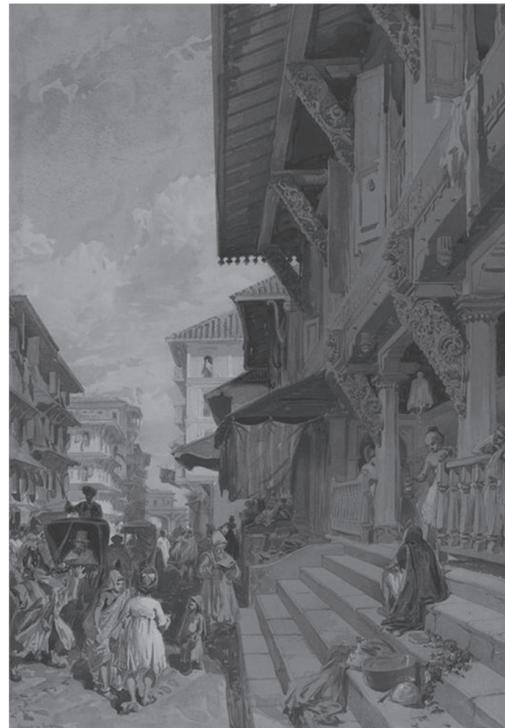

Fig. 9. A street scene in Bombay

Fig. 10. Two chromolithographs of "The Great Exhibition of 1851"

The prints of this great exhibition of 1851 were highly detailed and colorful. These prints were published as a part of pictorial record of this successful exhibition. The exhibition was held at "Crystal Palace" which is designed by Joseph Paxton.[15] These beautiful chromolithograph series were done by Joseph Nash, Louis Haghe and David Roberts together.

Fig. 10. The Great Exhibition of 1851

Joseph Nash (1809-1878) was a watercolor artist and a lithographer. His main interest was in historical buildings. He was mainly known for his skillful lithography techniques. Louis Haghe (1806-1885) was a Belgian lithographer. Another lithographer of that time, William Day, and Louis formed a partnership of publishing house called "Day&Haghe". It became the most famous early Victorian firm of lithographic printing in London. They pioneered the new technique for chromolithography and tinted lithograph. The firm came to known an "Day&Son" after the death of William. David Roberts (1796-1864) was a Scottish painter. He is known for his series lithograph prints of Egypt and the Near East- the Holy Land, Syria, Idumea, Arabia, Egypt and Nubia. The three artists together made many detailed chromolithograph prints on "The Great Exhibition of 1851"

Fig. 11. The Queen's Own Madras Sappers and Miners Review Order, Circa 1890s

Fig. 11. The Great Exhibition of 1851

This is one of the postcards from the series of chromolithographs published as supplements to the "Army and Navy Gazette" between 7th January 1888 and 6th September 1902. The series was done by Richard Simkin. Richard Simkin (1850-1926) was a British artist and illustrator of military uniforms. Simkin was employed by the War Office to design recruiting posters and to illustrate the "Army and Navy Gazette". He also made illustrations to numerous publications including the Boy's Own magazine, The Graphic and others, many were published by Raphael Tuck and Sons.[16]

Fig. 12. The Queen's Own Madras Sappers and Miners Review Order

Meanwhile in the late 19th century in India, Raja Ravi Verma was the first Indian artist to adopt lithographic printing methods. He established a lithographic printing press in Mumbai in the year 1894. It was Devan of Travancore, Madhava Rao's suggestion to established his own printing press due to increase in demand of his paintings in Europe. After that, he first started producing chromolithographic prints on Hindu gods and goddesses and the two famous Indian epics Mahabharata and Ramayana. Some of his oleographs are goddesses Lakshmi and Saraswati, Shakuntala Janm, Tilottama etc. Mass reproduction of prints on gods and goddesses played a great role in the society where there is untouchability among the people. Lower caste people could not enter the temple and worship god. His prints on gods reached almost each and every households of lower classes. It was like god came to home of everyone.

The following are lithograph prints of Raja Ravi Verma :

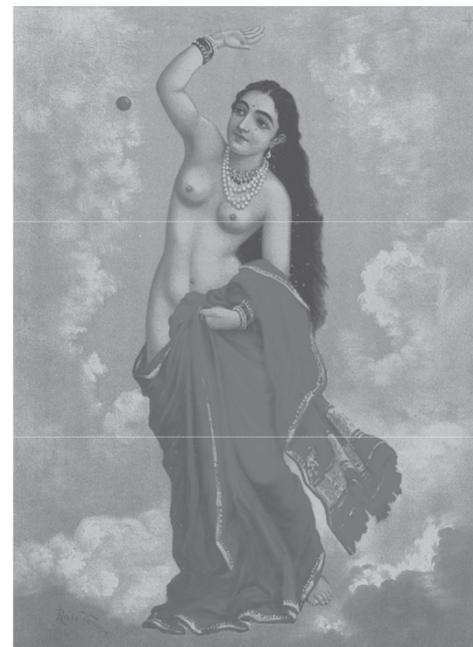*Fig. 13.Saraswati*

Fig. 15. Shakuntala

Fig. 16. Tilottama

Fig. 14. Lakshmi

Conclusion:

Though lithography was used as a means of publishing books in India in the 19th century, many foreign artists who visited India during that time had already adopted lithography as a medium of expression of their art. Only Raja Ravi Varma used oleograph as a means of commercial purpose in the 19th century in India. In the beginning of the 20th century, Gagendranath Tagore had an interest in lithography and set up his own lithographic printing press in 1917 for his cartoon works.

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