

Japanese Flora

1865

Mss.581.952.J27

American Philosophical Society

2003

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Summary Information

Repository	American Philosophical Society
Creator	Tyson, George
Title	Japanese Flora
Date	1865
Call number	Mss.581.952.J27
Extent	0.25 Linear feet 1 vol. (300 watercolors)
Extent	1 vol. (300 watercolors), 0.25 lin. feet
Location	LH-MV-E-16
Language	English
Container	1
Abstract	<p>From 1856 to 1868, George Tyson was a partner of Russell and Company, a firm that had engaged in the tea and opium trade, and the most powerful American commercial house in China. Originally from Boston, Tyson is credited with helping to introduce steamboats to the Yangtze River, and like John Murray Forbes, his better-known predecessor in Russell and Co., when he returned to the United States he joined the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad, eventually rising to become Director and General Auditor.</p> <p>Prior to October 1865, Tyson collected these 300 exquisitely detailed watercolors of Japanese plants painted by local artists in Nagasaki. Each watercolor is identified by name and month of blooming, some with brief</p>

additional descriptive notes. An index at the front of the volume provides transliterations of the Japanese names.

Preferred Citation

Cite as: George Tyson, Japanese Flora, American Philosophical Society.

Background note

From 1856 to 1868, George Tyson was a partner of Russell and Company, a firm that had engaged in the tea and opium trade, and the most powerful American commercial house in China. Originally from Boston, Tyson is credited with helping to introduce steamboats to the Yangtze River, and like John Murray Forbes, his better-known predecessor in Russell and Co., when he returned to the United States he joined the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad, eventually rising to become Director and General Auditor.

Scope & content

Prior to October 1865, George Tyson collected 300 exquisitely detailed watercolors of Japanese plants painted by local artists in Nagasaki and assembled them into the present volume. Each watercolor is identified by name and month of blooming, some with brief additional descriptive notes. An index at the front of the volume provides transliterations of the Japanese names.

In the letter of donation that accompanied the gift of the Tyson volume, the donor, William Morris Davis, wrote:

You will observe that, while the foliage and leaves are given in a free off hand manner, with good effect, The flowers are in many instances given with a minuteness of detail truly microscopic, in fact the wonderful delicacy of execution, of the work can only be appreciated by examining it with a lens of high magnifying power."

Administrative Information

Publication Information

American Philosophical Society 2003

Provenance

Acquisition Information

Gift of William Morris Davis, Feb. 16, 1883.

Processing Information

Recatalogued by rsc, 2003.

Related Materials

Related Material

See William Morris David to J. Peter Lesley, Feb. 11, 1833 (APS Archives) for information on the donation.

Indexing Terms

Genre(s)

- Watercolors

Subject(s)

- Botany--Japan
- Botany--Pictorial works

Bibliography

Tyson is briefly mentioned in Fairbank, John, K., "Assignment for the 70s," *American Historical Review* 74 (1969): 861-879.