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The following note has been extracted from the 1829 publication, *Journal of an Embassy from the Governor-General of India to the Court of Ava in the Year 1827*, by John Crawfurd, the envoy on this mission. It was originally organized within the sixteenth chapter, but has been separated and included here under the present title as its information is self-contained within that chapter and because it has a topical interest to those currently researching the history of animals of Southeast Asia.

M.W.C.

Quadrupeds and Other Animals of Burma

John Crawfurd

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The useful Quadrupeds domesticated by the Burmese are, the ox, the buffalo, the horse, and the elephant. Both oxen (Nwa) and buffaloes (Kuwe) are used throughout the country; but the latter greatly prevail in the lowlands, and the former in the upper. Both are of a very good description, and commonly in high order; indeed, the rural economy of the Burmans appears nowhere to so much advantage as in their care of these animals. With respect to oxen, the males are commonly emasculated, and these, for the most part, only are used; in labour, the females being neither fed nor worked. The cost of rearing them is comparatively high; a circumstance to be accounted for, from the religious prejudice, which interdicts their use as food, and which, therefore, leaves no

profitable means of disposing of the old or imperfect cattle. The buffalo, a more docile animal than the ox, except to strangers, is not emasculated, and both males and females are used in labour. In places congenial to it, it is also more easily reared than the ox, being satisfied with coarser pasture; and it is consequently much cheaper. Notwithstanding superior strength, however, the buffalo is slow, impatient of heat and drought, and therefore incapable of long-continued exertion. Its use is therefore confined to agricultural labour; and the ox, whether for burthen or draught, is alone used in conveying goods and merchandize on long journeys.

The full-sized horse is unknown in Ava, as in every country of tropical Asia, east of Bengal. The Burman horses rarely exceed thirteen hands high. They are somewhat larger and stronger than the races of the Indian islands, but inferior to these in symmetry, spirit, and action. They are also much more costly. It is the general practice to castrate the males, which is contrary to the usage of the Indian islanders. Horses are rarely used by the Burmese as beasts of burthen, and never for draught; and their chief use is for the saddle. In the alluvial districts, where, indeed, there is seldom any footing for them, horses are rarely to be seen; but they prevail in every other part of the Country, and appear to be most numerous in the hilly country of Lao, from whence they are brought for sale to the capital. The true Burman horse, however, is preferred to that of Lao.

Respecting the elephant, I have communicated, in the Journal¹ whatever came under my observation. In Ava, this animal is at present, a mere object of royal luxury and ostentation; for, unless probably in Lao, I do not find that it is any where used as a beast of burthen; although, as such, it might, no doubt, be very advantageously employed in many parts of the country. The hog is domesticated among the Burmese, but being used only as a scavenger, and taken no care of, its habits are offensive and disgusting to the last degree. The dog is seen, unknown and uncared for, as in other parts of the East. These animals prowl about the villages unmolested, their numbers being kept down only by disease and famine. At the capital, they are the most miserable and half-starved creatures that can be imagined. Cats are numerous, and generally of a similar breed with the Malay cat; that is, having half a tail only; they are excellent mousers. The ass

¹ Reprinted in the present issue of the *SBBR* [editor].

(Mré), the sheep (Tho), and the goat (S'hait), although apparently bearing native names, are little known in the domestic economy of the Burmese. About the capital there are a few goats and sheep, of a puny race, kept more for curiosity than use. I saw there also a few asses, which were ascertained to have been brought from China. The camel, although a beast of burthen sufficiently well suited to the upper portion of the country, is not known to the Burmese.

Of poultry, a few common fowls and ducks, alone are reared, chiefly, I believe, for the purpose of being clandestinely sold to the Chinese, Christian, and Mohammedan residents.

In a country so abounding in deserts and forests, and so little under the dominion of man, wild animals and game are numerous. The most remarkable quadrupeds are the elephant, rhinoceros, hog, deer, oxen and buffaloes, bears, otters, the tiger, leopard, with wild and civet cats. The elephant is found in all the deep forests of the country, from one extremity to the other, and is peculiarly abundant in those of Pegu. The varieties do not differ specifically from the common Asiatic elephant of naturalists, as was, proved by the comparison of some teeth, which I brought home, with those of the Bengal elephant. The rhinoceros is the common Indian one, with a single horn. This animal is sufficiently abundant in the forests of Pegu, but probably less so than the elephant. Both are hunted by the Karyens, and their flesh held not only to be esculent, but delicate. The hog, as in other parts of the East, is spread all over the wild parts of the country. Several species of deer exist, such as the Indian roe and stag. The latter is more frequent in the forests of Pegu, than I have ever heard of its being in any other part of India. Notwithstanding, their religion, these are hunted by the natives for their flesh. The common mode of doing so is as follows;—the hunters assemble in a large party in the grassy plains, which are the favourite haunt of the deer, and forming a circle, gradually contract it, until the terrified animals are reduced within a very small compass. A fence of very frail materials but quite sufficient to confine them in their terror, is then constructed; and into these the hunters enter, and cut down the game with their swords. A party of English gentlemen that had just returned from a hunting-party of this description, when I last visited Martaban, informed me that a surprisingly small number escaped over the fence, and that about thirty were killed. Another

mode of hunting them was described to me by the natives. The hunter, in this case, goes into the forest, in a dark night, with a torch in one hand, and his sword in the other. The deer, attracted by the light, are said to come up to it fearlessly, and are cut down without difficulty. No species of the antelope is found in the Burman territory, not even in the dry plains of the Upper country, where their appearance might have been looked for.

Oxen and buffaloes are both of them natives of the Burman forests. The first are known by a distinct name (Saing) from the domesticated breed, but there is no good reason to believe that they differ specifically. Of the feline tribe, the royal tiger, the spotted leopard, and several species of cats, are numerous in the forests of Ava, especially in those of the southern provinces. It is remarkable, that none of the canine family, so frequent in the neighbouring country of Hindostan, are, so far as is known, to be found within the Burman dominions. There are neither wolves, jackals, foxes, nor hyenas; and this zoological feature is said to extend to all the countries of tropical Asia lying east of Bengal.

Game is probably less abundant in the Burmese dominions than in Hindostan. The variety, however, is considerable. The hare is not known in Pegu, but makes its appearance in the high-lands before the disembogement of the Irawadi. It is a small animal, similar, in all respects, to the Indian hare. The flesh of both, in comparison with that of the European hare, is insipid. Of gallinaceous birds, the wild cock is very generally spread over the country. It is of the same species as the wild fowl of Hindustan, and is invariably an inhabitant of the forests, where it is to be found in coveys, like our partridge and moor game. Two species of pheasants, I imagine undescribed, are sufficiently numerous in the forests of Pegu. They are both small birds, and much inferior in size and beauty of plumage to the pheasants of China and Nepal. The other birds of this family ascertained to exist are the peacock, and some partridges and quails. The snipe, a bird which seems to abound in every part of the world where there are marshes, from the arctic to the antarctic circle, is sufficiently abundant in Ava. Geese and ducks, many of them birds of passage, are numerous in the upper provinces. In the lower the goose does not appear, and ducks are not numerous.

