

TRAVELS IN INDIA

BY

JEAN BAPTISTE TAVERNIER

BARON OF AUBONNE

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL FRENCH EDITION OF 1676

WITH A

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR,
NOTES, APPENDICES, ETC.

BY

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CHAPTER VIII

Route from AGRA to PATNA and DACCA, towns of the Province of BENGAL; and the quarrel which the author had with SHÁISTÁ KHÁN, uncle of the King.

I PARTED from AGRA for BENGAL on the 25th of November 1665¹ and lay the same day at a poor *cara-vansarái* distant from AGRA 3 *cośś*.

The 26th [Nov.] I reached BERUZABAD (FERO-ZÁBÁD), 9 *cośś*.

It is a small town, where, on my return, I received 8000 rupees of the balance of the money which ZAFAR KHÁN owed me for the goods which he had bought from me at JAHÁNÁBÁD.²

The 27th [Nov.] to SERAIL MORLIDES (?)	. 9 <i>cośś</i> .
28th „ „ ESTANJA (ETÁWAH ³)	. 14 „
29th „ „ HAI-MAL (AJIT-MÁL)	. 12 „
30th „ „ SEKANDERA (SIKANDRA)	. 13 „
1st of Dec. to SANQUAL (near MUSANAGAR)	14 „

I met on this day 110 waggons, each drawn by 6 oxen, and there was upon each waggon 50,000 rupees.

¹ Tavernier, in Book I, chap. x, describes how he witnessed the Mogul's festival on the 4th to the 9th of November, and then saw the jewels. Soon afterwards he must have left Delhi so as to reach Agra for this start. (See *Joret, op. cit.*, p. 193.)

² See for account of this purchase, p. 137.

³ Elsewhere I have suggested that by Kadioue, Etáwah was also intended. (See pp. 96, 115.) The name is, I find, mentioned by Bernier.

It was the revenue of the Province of BENGAL, of which all charges being paid and the purse of the Governor well filled, amounted to 5,500,000 rupees.¹ At one league on this side of SANQUAL you cross a river called SENGÁR,² which flows into the JUMNÁ, which is only half a league distant. You cross this river SENGÁR by a stone bridge, and when you arrive from the BENGAL side, to go to SIRONJ and SURAT, if you wish to shorten the journey by ten days, when quitting the road to AGRA you must come as far as this bridge, and cross the river JUMNÁ by boat. Nevertheless the route by Agra is generally taken, because by the other there are five or six days' stony marches, and because one must pass through the territories of *Rajas* where there is danger of being robbed.

The 2d [December] I came to a *caravansarái* called CHEROURABAD,³ 12 *cośś*.

Halfway you pass JAHÁNÁBÁD,⁴ (?) a small town near which, about a quarter of a league on this side, you pass a field of millet, where I saw a rhinoceros eating stalks of this millet, which a small boy of nine or ten years⁵ presented to him. On my approaching

¹ Tieffenthaler places the revenue of Bengal at 13,006,590 rupees in Akbar's time, and he says that it was 40,000,000 rupees according to "Manouzzi," *i.e.* Manouchi, in the time of Sháh Jahán, subsequently it fell to 8,621,200 rupees. (*Géog. de l'Ind.*, p. 443.)

² Saingour in the original.

³ Not identified.

⁴ Gianabad in the original, to west of Korá.

⁵ Tame rhinoceroses, to which a good deal of freedom was allowed, were formerly not uncommonly kept by the *Rajas*. Sometimes, as at Baroda, they were performers in the fighting arena, and on such occasions were commonly painted with divers bright colours. Elsewhere I have shown that the *Kartazonon* of Megasthenes and the "Horned Ass" of Ktesias were probably this animal; in the latter case the colours which have puzzled so many commentators were, I believe, artificial pigments applied to the hide of the rhinoceros seen by Ktesias,

he gave me some stalks of millet, and immediately the rhinoceros came to me, opening his mouth four or five times; I placed some in it, and when he had eaten them he continued to open his mouth so that I might give him more.

The 3d [December] I came to SERRAIL CHAGEADA (SARÁI SHÁHZÁDÁ), 10 *coss*.

The 4th, to SERRAIL ATAKAN (HUTGÁON), 13 *coss*.

The 5th, to AURANGÁBÁD,¹ a large town, 9 *coss*.

Formerly this town had another name, and it is the place where AURANGZEB, who reigns at present, gave battle to his brother Sultan SHUJÁ, who held the government of the whole of BENGAL. AURANGZEB having been victorious gave his name to the town, and he built there a handsome house with a garden and a small mosque.

The 6th [December] to ALINCHAN (ALUM CHAND), 9 *coss*.

About two leagues on this side of ALUM CHAND you meet the GANGES. Monsieur BERNIER,² Physician to the King, and a man named RACHEPOT, with whom I was, were surprised to see that this river, of which they make so much talk, is not larger than the SEINE

as they are on elephants at the present day. (*Proceed. Roy. Irish Academy*, 2d Ser., vol. ii, No. 6, 1885.) Chardin describes and figures a rhinoceros from Ethiopia which he saw at Ispahan. He says he did not know whether the animal was found in India. (*Voyages*, Amsterdam ed., 1711, vol. viii, p. 133.)

¹ Aurangábád, not now on the maps. Perhaps same as Kadioue. See pp. 96 and 113.

² M. Bernier, the well-known historian of the Mogul Empire, was born at Joué-Etiau, in Angers, in September 1620. In 1654 he went to Syria and Egypt, and from Cairo, where he remained for a year, he went to Suez and embarked for India, where he took service as physician to the Great Mogul (*Voyages*, t. i, p. 9). In 1668 he returned to France, and died in 1688.

On the 4th [January], one hour below PONGANGEL, I met a great river called MART-NADI (KALINDRY?), which comes from the north, and I slept at RAGE-MEHALE (RÁJMAHÁL¹), 6 *coss*.

RÁJMAHÁL is a town on the right bank of the GANGES, and when you approach it by land you find that for one or two *coss* the roads are paved with brick up to the town. It was formerly the residence of the Governors of BENGAL, because it is a splendid hunting country,² and, moreover, the trade there was considerable. But the river having taken another course, and passing only at a distance of a full half league from the town, as much for this reason as for the purpose of restraining the King of ARAKAN, and many Portuguese bandits³ who have settled at the mouths of the GANGES, and by whom the inhabitants of DACCA, up to which place they made incursions, were molested, — the Governor and the merchants who dwelt at RÁJMAHÁL removed to DACCA, which is to-day a place of considerable trade.⁴

On the 6th, having arrived at a great town called DONAPOUR,⁵ at 6 *coss* from RÁJMAHÁL, I left M. BERNIER, who went to KÁSIMBÁZÁR,⁶ and from thence to HUGLI⁷ by land, because when the river is low one

¹ Rájmahál, a well-known town on the Ganges. Made the capital in 1592.

² There is still a considerable amount of sport to be had in this neighbourhood, though the rhinoceros has become extinct since 1843.

³ Portuguese at Noákhálí. (See *Imp. Gaz. of India*, vol. x, p. 341.)

⁴ This change was made in the time of Jahángír, according to Tieffenthaler.

⁵ Donapour, situated on the farther bank of the Ganges at six *milles* east of Bakarpour, according to Tieffenthaler.

⁶ Casenbazar in the original. Kásimbázár (Cossimbazar). (See p. 130 *n*.)

⁷ Ogouli in the original. Hugli. (See p. 132.)

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CHAPTER XVIII

Concerning the Kingdom of SIAM

THE greater part of the Kingdom of SIAM is situated between the Gulf of the same name and the Gulf of BENGAL, adjoining PEGU on the north and the peninsula of MALACCA on the south. The shortest road and the best which Europeans can take to reach this Kingdom is to go from ISPAHAN to HORMUZ, from HORMUZ to SURAT, from SURAT to GOLCONDA, and from GOLCONDA to MASULIPATAM, where they should embark for DENOUSERIN,¹ which is one of the ports of the Kingdom of SIAM. From DENOUSERIN to the capital town, which bears the name of the Kingdom, there are about thirty-five days' journey; one part is traversed by ascending a river, and the remainder in a cart or upon elephants. The road both by land and water is uncomfortable, because on the land portion one must always be on guard against lions² and tigers; and by water, as the river makes rapids in many places, it is difficult to make the boats ascend, which is nevertheless accomplished by the aid of machinery. It is the route

¹ This appears to be Tenasserim, which, however, was included in the Kingdom of Pegu, though at times conquered and held by Siam. (See *Anglo-Indian Glossary*, Art. "Tenasserim.")

² There are no lions in Siam.

which I recommended, on the return from one of my voyages to INDIA, to three bishops whom I met on the road. The first was the Bishop of BERYTE,¹ whom I met at ISPAHAN ; the second the Bishop of MEGALOPOLIS,² when crossing the EUPHRATES ; the third the Bishop of HELIOPOLIS,³ who arrived at ALEXANDRETTA as I was leaving it for EUROPE. The whole of SIAM abounds with rice and fruits, the principal of which are called *mangues*, *durions*, and *mangoustans*.⁴ The forests are full of deer, elephants, tigers, rhinoceros, and monkeys, and everywhere is to be seen an abundance of bamboos, which are large and very tall canes, hollow throughout, and as hard as iron.

At the ends of these canes you find nests, of the size of a man's head, suspended ; they are made by ants from a fat earth which they carry up. There is but a small hole at the base of these nests, by which the ants enter, and in these nests each ant has his separate chamber, like honey bees. They build their nests on the canes, because if they made them on the ground, during the rainy season, which lasts four or five months, they would be exterminated, all the country being then inundated. One must take precautions after night-fall against snakes. There are there some snakes which are 22 feet long and have two heads,⁵ but the head at

¹ Beyrout, in Syria.

² Metellopolis of Finlayson, *Mission to Siam*, p. 257.

³ Heliopolis or Bambyke, near Carchermish on the Euphrates. Le Blanc identifies Hieropolis with Aleppo (*Voyages*, Paris Edition, 1648, p. 8).

⁴ Mangoes, Durians, and Mangosteens.

⁵ This fable of two-headed snakes is common in India ; sometimes it is said of the *Daman* snake—*Ptyas mucosus*. The statement that the head, at the tail end, has no movement, and that the mouth does not open, is a charmingly ingenuous admission. Like the case of the birds-

ACHIN, who ruled the state during the minority of the King, her son. And in order to honour him still more, the General desired Madame la Générale to kiss the ambassador. The King and Queen of ACHIN did not receive the ambassador who was sent to them from BATAVIA less well. He was M. CROC, who for fifteen years suffered from a languishing sickness; and it was believed that some one had administered to him some kind of slow poison. On the occasion of the third audience which he had with the King, who knew that he had lived for so long a time in languor and without appetite, he asked him if he had ever formerly kept any girl of the country, and how he had left her, if by mutual agreement or whether he had sent her away by force. He admitted that he had left one in order to get married in his own country, and that since that time he had always been languishing and indisposed, upon which the King said to three of his physicians, who were by his side, that having heard the cause of the ambassador's sickness he would give them fifteen days to cure him, and that if they did not accomplish it in that time he would cause them all to be executed. These physicians having replied that they would answer to him for the cure of the ambassador, provided he consented to take the remedies which they would give him, M. CROC resolved to consent. They gave him in the morning a decoction, and in the evening a small pill, and at the end of nine days a great fit of vomiting seized him. It was thought he would die of the strange efforts which he made; and at length he vomited a bundle of hair as large as a small nut, after which he was at once healed. Subsequently the King took him to a rhinoceros hunt, and invited him to give the

mortal shot to the animal. As soon as it was killed they cut off the horn, which the King also presented to the ambassador; and at the conclusion of the hunt there was a great feast. At the end of it the King drank to the health of the General of BATAVIA and his wife, and ordered one of his own wives to kiss the ambassador. On his departure he presented him with a pebble of the size of a goose's egg, in which large veins of gold were to be seen as you see the tendons in the hand of a man, and it is thus that gold occurs in this country.

M. CROC, when at SURAT as chief of the factory, broke the pebble in two, and gave half to M. CONSTANT, who, subordinate to him, held the highest authority there, to whom, when he was returning to Holland, I offered 150 *pistoles* for it in order to present it to the late Monseigneur LE DUC D'ORLEANS, but he would not consent to part with it.