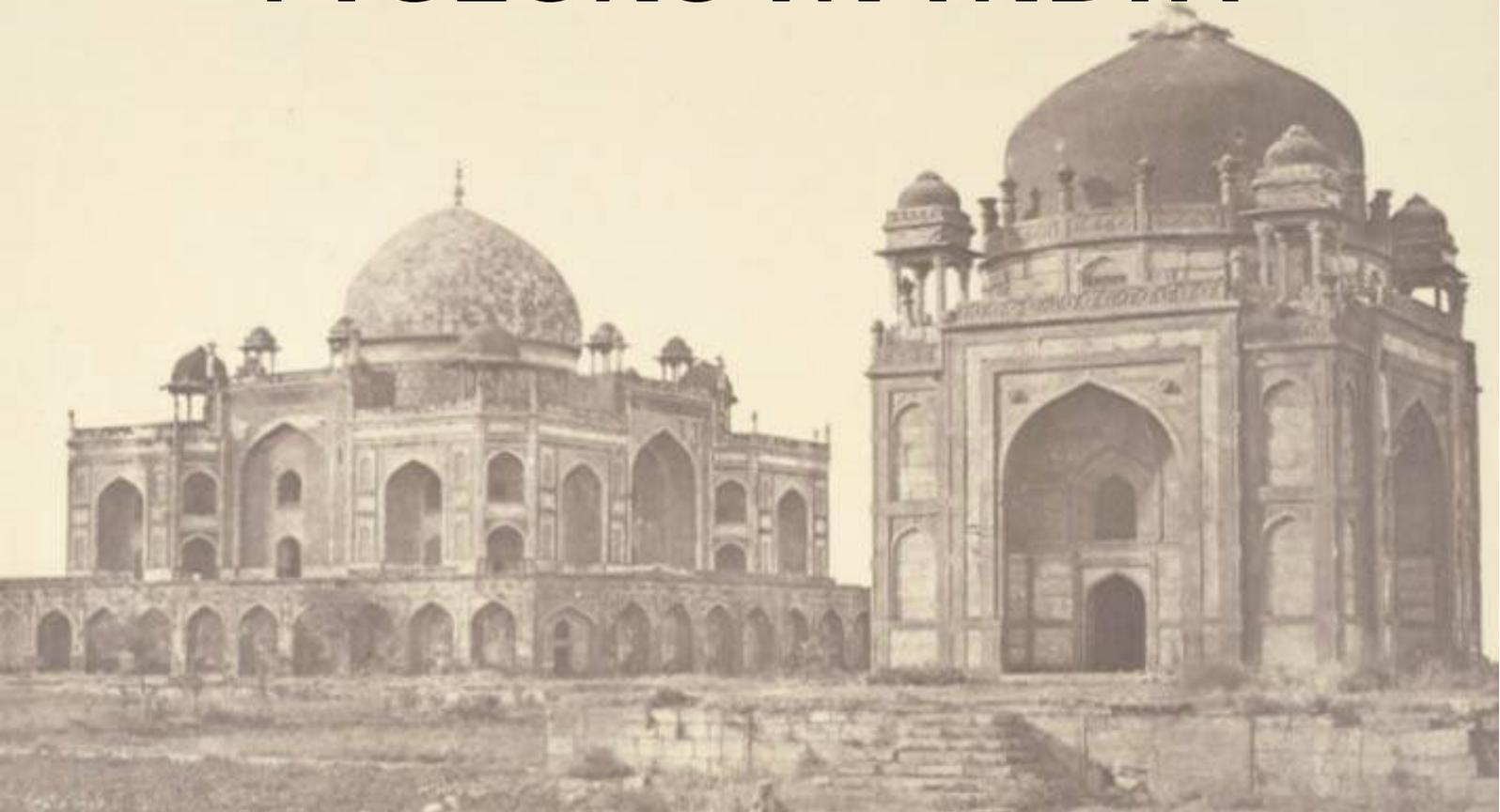


PIGEONS IN INDIA



It is well documented that the flying and breeding of pigeons has been a hobby in India since the Mogul Period - and long, long before that as well. The Mogul Emperors had almost limitless power, they displayed immense wealth and lived with great ceremony in sumptuous palaces, surrounded by exotic gardens. One such Mogul, Umar Shaikh, was also a pigeon-fancier. One day, while tending his pigeons on the parapet of his palace, the parapet crumbled. He was sent flying through the air with his pigeons died from a broken neck. His 11-year-old son Babur became ruler in his place.

Portugal was the first European country to sail the Cape of Good Hope and reach India. They established the colony of Goa there. From the 17th century, England began to influence the situation in India. In 1676 the French established themselves on the east coast of India in Pondicherry, south of Madras. In those years, several known pigeon authors described the Indian pigeon breeds and they were imported into Europe; certainly the Mookkee was in England by 1676.

Sources: David Self, Empire building; Wikipedia.

**The following article on Indian pigeon breeds
has been contributed by: Tanveer (India)
and reviewed by Mick Bassett**

Several pigeon breeds are exclusively found in India. The unique feature of the Indian pigeon breeds is that they are extremely beautiful and also fly very well; the majority of the breeds are High flyer Pigeons. In India there are very few fancy pigeon breeders and shows are not conducted because there are no clubs dedicated to fancy pigeons.



This is a small description about Indian breeds and to my knowledge. I couldn't find any details regarding the history of the breeds.

The pigeons in the photos belong to a friend of mine, his name is K.SENTHIL ARASU, he lives about 40 kms from Coimbatore. (a city in the state of Tamil Nadu, south India). He is a very knowledgeable fancier, who has around 3000 pigeons, in about 100 different breeds, on his farm, which is built in his coconut plantations.

Photo on the left: K.SENTHIL ARASU, owner of almost all of the pigeons presented in this article.

FANTAIL

A medium size bird with peak crest, muffed and neck shaking. Neck shaking is a must. Tail double layered and about 28 to 36 tail feathers is common, 44 is rare. Comes in mostly white colour; other colours are black, brown, blue bar and pied. Blue checker, red checker, dominant red occur but rare.

Right: Indian Fantail. Photo AE.

SHIRAZ

Some general information: In India, the Shiraz is a common breed found in every loft; it is the second most popular after the Fantail. However, the Shiraz is not originally from India, but from the city of Shiraz in Iran.

Shiraz, Sherajee and Lahore are different names of the same original pigeon breed. Lahore is a city which is now in Pakistan; the Lahore pigeon was taken from the city of Lahore (in Pakistan) by the British, thus the name Lahore, although – according to Mick Bassett - in the early days the English name was Sherajee. But in India and Pakistan it is still called Shiraz. I don't know whether they are bred in Iran but it is widely bred in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Gulf (middle east).

Shiraz are mainly used to foster other breeds and are good parents.

It is a good flyer and when left for free flying will fly around the loft. (Not long distance) Here Shiraz comes mostly in black, red, yellow and grey (lavender). Other colours like cream bar, blue bar are present but rare. It is a medium sized bird, heavily built, muffed (normally medium).

Perfectly marked birds are hard to find.

There is also a crested Shiraz but I haven't seen one.



GULDAR SHIRAZ

Same marking as Shiraz but with mottles in chest. Mottles develop with every moult. Mainly found in North India and a rather rare breed. Mostly in black and red colour.



CLEAN LEG SHIRAZ

From the city of Hyderabad, but now used for kit flying competition in city of Pune. Smaller than Shiraz with same marking, but without muffs. This breed may be of different origin, but it is not found outside India.

Left and below: Clean leg Shiraz. Photos: Tanveer.



CAPUCHINE

Capuchine is a Indian breed and was taken by Dutch sailors around 400 years ago. They developed Jacobin from them and the original breed is kept as Old Dutch Capuchine.

In India they come in self white and in monk markings in red, yellow, black and mottles in all the colours.



MOOKEE

Comes in mostly black. You know the markings, but here the 2 white flight feathers is considered a fault, so most of the birds will be without white flight feathers. Grey (lavender), blue bar are other colours. Self white, yellow are very rare. (Never seen red).

Left: Mookee in Germany. Photo: Mick Bassett.

KHAL

A flying breed, mostly bred in Delhi and surrounding regions, comes in black, red and yellow. It is like magpie marking with mottles in its wings. With every moult the mottles in the wings increase. A small amount of white colour around the eye is desired. Still used for flying in areas around Delhi..

There is also an another breed with same marking but without the mottles, it is slightly lengthier than the mottled ones. It is mainly bred in the state of Gujarat.



Above: Khal pigeons. Photo: Tanveer.



GOOLEE/GOOLIE

Goolee is a flying breed, mostly kept in North India. Its size is similar to the Mookee and it comes in black, red and yellow. Back of the head and neck and tail is coloured; rest is white.



Note: See also <http://www.aviculture-europe.nl/nummers/11E02A01.pdf> scroll till you find the Goolee.

Above and right: Goolee. Photos: Tanveer.



LAL BAN GAGHRA

It is still used for flying, comes only in bars and in 2 colour shades only. Eyes are dark red. Mostly bred in North India.

Left:

Lal Ban Gaghra.

Photo: Tanveer.

BADANG

An Indian type carrier pigeon, strongly built with broad chest.

It comes in all self colours and in pied markings. Mostly resembles the English carrier but

not in neck length and stance. Wattle and eye cere develops with age, and a very aggressive bird. Mainly bred in South India.

There is another variety called Basra, which is mainly bred in North India; same type but slightly smaller and beak is also slightly thinner and longer, wattle doesn't develop as in Badang. Mostly comes in white colour.

Right: Badang.

Photo: Tanveer.

Note: Carrier pigeons were still employed in the 21st century by certain remote police departments in Orissa state in eastern India to provide emergency communication services following natural disasters. In March 2002, it was announced that India's Police Pigeon Service messenger system in Orissa was to be retired, due to the expanded use of the Internet; this 'modern' technology being able eventually, to replace the centuries old 'Wing Power' over the almost impassable terrain in parts of those departments (administrative regions).



SHORT BEAK HOMER

A rare breed, only found in South India. Smaller than normal racing homer, comes in all colours of homers, has a short beak, wattle and eye cere develops very slowly with age.



Above: Short Beak Homer. Photos: Tanveer.

BARPAN / DARPAN / AUSTRALIAN RED

A strongly built bird with a broad and full chest, mostly a self coloured bird comes in red, yellow, black and white. Red and yellow are common where as black and white are rare.

It is a Shell Crested or Plain headed.

Shell crest is without rosettes, the crest may be big or small.

Both are muffed. Eyes are yellow.

In size the birds will be about the size of German double crested trumpeter.



**Above:
Shell Crested Barpan.**



**Left:
Plain headed Barpan.
Photos: Tanveer.**

LOTAN

A medium size self white bird with peak crest and muffed. It tumbles in the ground when slightly shaken, to stop it you must blow air in its mouth, a nice flyer.

There are a few coloured ones but very rare, a variety without muffs is also present.

Another variety called KALMI Lotan, said to tumble when touched by a stick or wand, is said to be present, but I haven't seen them.



Above: Lotan. Photo: Tanveer.

ROSHAN CHIRAG

A medium size bird with clean legs, mainly bred in city of Hyderabad. It comes only in colour light blue with grey shade and one marking.

Eye cere should be bright red, but it is hard to find. It also comes in peak crest.



**Above: Roshan Chirag.
Left: Head study of a young bird.
Photos: Tanveer.**

Same bird with a pale eye cere is called American Homer in Kanya Kumari (a different city).

CHUVA CHANDAN / BOSE

This a small bird called Chuva Chandan or Bose. The head and neck are light yellow coloured and the body is shades of grey (lighter or dark). It comes mostly in plain head and rarely in peak crested.

Right: Chuva Chandan plain head and crested (below).

Photos: Tanveer.



GUL MEHENDI

Mostly found in North India, very rare breed. It is the same size as the Shiraz, medium muffs, white is the base colour with 2 or 3 colour spots (= *gul*) all over the body. Looks very attractive, but it takes time to develop fully; with every moult the spots increase. (When young, only its shields are mottled).

YAHOO

A small bird with a different sound, comes in mostly white and the other colour is black.

A muffed Yahoo is also present, and it comes mostly in blue bar only and rarely white. They even make a sound different from the clean legged Yahoo.

There is also a breed called KAKA which is present in Bangladesh which tumbles in ground like the Lotan and makes a sound like the Yahoo. (*This is I believe a relation of the Arabian Trumpeter, Thai and Indonesian Laugher and Kumru. Mick Bassett.*)

Pictures of a few breeds like Yahoo (clean leg and muffed), Kaka (mostly in Bangladesh), clean leg Lotan, coloured Lotan, Guldar Shiraz and Gul Mehendi, I couldn't get now, but I will find them later for you.

There are a few other breeds of which I couldn't get any information, like Chandra Kala, and another breed of pigeon where you pluck the feathers the next feather that grows will come in white colour, by using this the fancier make 2 or 3 bars or a moon marking in a total coloured bird.

Also all OLD TYPES of Oriental Frill (satinette and blondinette) , Owls and Turbits are present throughout India.



Left: Old Type Oriental Frill satinette.
Below: Old Type Oriental Frill
blondinette. Photos: Tanveer.



Left: Old type Owl.
Below: Old type Turbit.
Photos: Tanveer.



Your comments are welcome.
Regards,
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