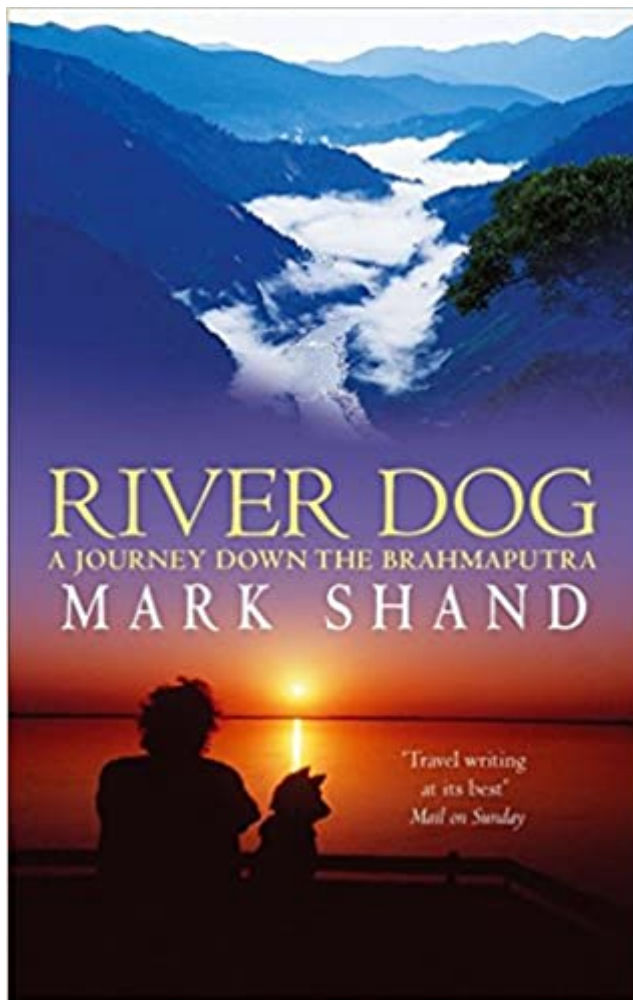


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# River Dog



## Synopsis

The Brahmaputra is one of the world's great rivers. Beginning as a tiny glacial stream in Western Tibet it flows through India and Bangladesh before gushing out into the Bay of Bengal. Unable to reach the northern part of the river due to Chinese intransigence, Mark Shand nonetheless set out to attempt what no foreigner had ever done: complete the huge journey from the unexplored jungles of the Indo-Tibet border to the largest river delta in the world. RIVER DOG is a chronicle of that journey, a remarkable story encompassing sublime landscapes - in Assam where the River begins to broaden into its full majesty - and rather odd encounters - including a bizarre group of identical-looking monks in Majuli (the largest river island in the world). But it is also a celebration -- of a river that flows with mystery and legend, the men who have set out to discover it and a rather charming canine travelling companion called Bhaiti.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A rare blend of humour, humanity and eloquent description. At its heart is Shand himself, an adventurer with strains of brilliant madness running through his veins • LITERARY REVIEW Travel writing at its best. RIVER DOG takes us on a journey where the tempo never flags • MAIL ON SUNDAY Shand finds comic potential in every situation. Utterly readable • HARPER'S & QUEEN Old-fashioned, ripping stuff • TLS

Birthplace of legends, the mighty Brahmaputra River begins its journey as a tiny glacial stream high on the desolate plateau of western Tibet; it sweeps 1,800 miles through three countries, to end its

journey, as wide as a sea, in the Bay of Bengal. In *River Dog*, celebrated travel writer Mark Shand chronicles his attempt to complete the last great Asian adventure. • Lively and evocative, it is a marvelous account of an epic journey and a touching portrait of the friendship between a traveler and his dog. Mark Shand is the author of *Travels on My Elephant*, which earned him the British Book Awards Travel Writer of the Year Award.

I had high hopes for 'River Dog' as the Brahmaputra is a unique wonder of a river, but this is more of a personal diary than a travel log. We get to know a bit about the adventurous Mr. Shands and his new dog Bhaiti. Hints of the troubled history of India's eastern states peek through, but there's disappointingly little that describes the role the river played. And Mr. Shands is admittedly not taken with Bangladesh, so while it's almost half of the distance he traveled, the Bangladesh part of his journey gets about 10% of the pages. It's far from a waste of time, though. It's a fast read and it opened my eyes to this incredible river. The first part of his adventure as he joins a hunt for Shangri La is edgy and exciting, and we get a great feel for the roots of this river at the top of the world. But after that we need to wade through altogether too much material about his new pooch. Clearly, the dog had a great time on this trip. As for us, we do get glimpses of the river and snippets of quotes from some early British explorers. And we have several detailed descriptions on how to deal with government administrators. But while we learn that eastern India is a disputed area, we don't get a lot of insight beyond that. He mentions in passing, for example, that the Chinese army had made its way far into what is now India. This must have some kind of residual impact on the people who live there now. But we wouldn't know that through this work. We also get bits of Hindu culture that flow throughout as he occasionally mentions a religious foundation to what is driving actions for his fellow travelers and himself. It's hard to tell for this novice, though, how much of this is real and how much is just for fun. When he, for example, encourages his friend to help him find a pet by invoking a heritage of dog worship. Sure this was funny. But it's hard to tell if there was any real foundation. So *River Dog* is a fun fast read, and it relays a touch of cultural insight while you learn a bit about this incredible river as it roams through eastern India. Just don't pick it up if you're looking to learn anything about Bangladesh.

Excellent condition - good adventurous read - delivered on time -

I bought *River Dog* because I am taking a trip on the Brahmaputra River in India and hope to get some insight into my trip.

This is essentially a party book. Mr. Shand is a man with great connections. He used them all and had a 'yuppie' adventure down the mighty Luit. He never got to the tough parts of the Brahmaputra (Namcha Barwa and the likes) and neither did he write about any of the ethnic tribes who live a life off the river. I still give this book 3 stars as being an Assamese myself, I feel grateful to him that he has shown great respect and love for the river. Not many authors of international repute write popular travelogues about Assam. And of course many of my parent's friends have been mentioned, so connection! :) It's a good intro to Assam & North-Eastern India at large but a lot more could be experienced and written.

I found the main observations in this book fairly interesting. But overall I found his attitude to the locals fairly arrogant unless they happened to help his journey. If you read the book then you will notice a few pieces of information don't check out e.g. the first cane bridge that he walks on and falls through he describes the pieces of wood being 30 cm apart, however in the picture in the book you can clearly see in the photos taken by himself that the only space close to that is the hole he fell through the rest were closer to 10 cm. To be honest this book has stirred an interest in this genre but I will be looking for books by an open minded writer, unlike Mark Shand.

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