

# Mrs Dog Travels Again



*Visits to Asia and Africa*

*by Bob and Molly Hillery*



# ***More Travels of Mrs Dog***

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*When we last saw Mrs Dog on vacation she was spending time with Grandma and Granddad in Israel and Russia. Do you remember that Israel was a small country but Russia was very BIG?*

*This time, Grandma and Granddad took Mrs Dog to two continents - Asia and Africa.*

*In Asia, they spent a few days in Thailand and Singapore but most of the vacation was spent cruising on a river boat in the country of Myanmar (which used to be called Burma).*

*Later in the year their travels took them to South Africa and Namibia, both at the southern end of the African continent.*

*All countries had many interesting things and we hope that you will enjoy seeing some of the places, people and animals in each.*



***Myanmar (Burma) is a country in Asia. Although it is one of the largest countries in Southeast Asia it is only 1/15 the size of the United States - about the same size as the State of Texas. The United States has about six times more people than Burma.***

***Most of the people in Burma are Buddhist and there are thousands of temples and pagodas in the country, as we will see. Many of these are covered in gold and are very beautiful.***

***The country is also very HOT all the year round and Grandma and Granddad found it quite tiring at times. Mrs Dog didn't seem to mind the heat!***



The trip to Burma was covered almost entirely on a boat sailing down the Irawaddy River from Mandalay (in the middle of the country) to Yangon, in the south.  
This is the boat on which we sailed for 10 days.



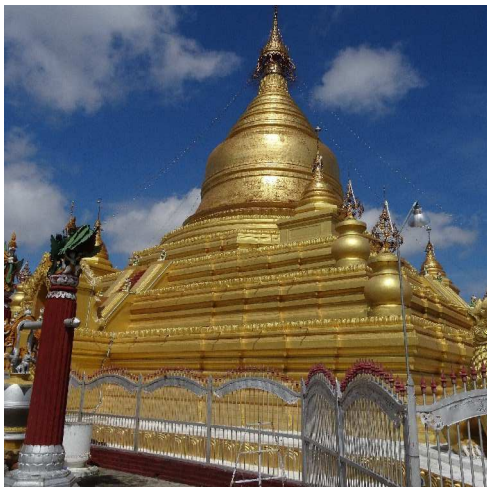
Mrs Dog soon got used to the small bedroom on the ship and liked to spend time in the cabin because it was air-conditioned.  
It looks as though she is about to go outside, however, and is wondering about borrowing Grandma's sunglasses.

*As we said, there are many temples in Burma (Myanmar) and often they are covered with gold which shines in the sunlight.*

*Other temples are white (or other colors) but often have some gold towards the tops of their towers.*

*Whenever we went inside a temple we had to take off our shoes and leave them outside. This may seem strange to us but to Buddhists it is perfectly natural and a sign of respect to their God.*

*There were some days when we visited a number of temples and it seemed that we spent the whole time taking off and putting on our shoes!*





Not all the temples were gold covered. One very beautiful temple that we saw was made entirely of wood and was decorated with beautiful carvings all over the outside (and inside) surfaces.

Can you imagine the amount of time that it took skilled wood carvers to make all those decorations? I wonder how many pieces of wood they had to use - and how many trees it took.



Many of the temples had been built for the kings and queens of Burma over many hundreds of years and were royal palaces as well as places of worship.

In Mandalay we saw the royal palace where the last king lived until the country ended the monarchy.

It is now a museum but is still painted red and gold.





***In Burma,  
most young  
boys become  
monks and  
dress in red or  
brown  
"uniforms".***

***They stay in a  
monastery  
(school) for a  
few weeks or,  
sometimes,  
for life.***



*Little girls do not become monks and live away from home but many go through an "Ear-piercing" ceremony when they are about ten years old.*

*For this, they dress in very ornate costumes and their entire family comes to the ceremony.*

*Some girls help the family at home by selling souvenirs to tourists (like Grandma and Granddad) and will often follow a group around their village trying to make a sale.*

*Perhaps you can also see that these girls decorate their faces with a mud-colored paste. This is common for most girls and women (and even some men) and is a way to protect their skin from the hot sun. But the girls often put it on like make-up and use it as decoration.*

*Grandma tried it but she didn't really like the feel of "mud" on her face.*





*All children in Burma go to school and all wear a uniform of green and white.*

*We visited a school and were greeted by all the children lined up outside as they said their Welcome (in English, which of course is not their native language).*



*Some of the girls dressed up in traditional Burmese dresses and gave us a show of Burmese dancing.*

*We had already seen a group of ladies doing the same kind of dancing in a professional show - but we thought that these girls were better than the adults.*



*Mrs Dog was a big hit in the school and all the children wanted to see her and have their photograph taken with her.*

*Do you think that Mrs Dog enjoyed all the attention?*





While visiting Burma we did some interesting and different things.

One day we were taken for a tri-shaw ride around a town.

A tri-shaw is a three wheeled bicycle which has a very uncomfortable seat for the passenger and Grandma had to hold on tightly as we were taken for our ride. She is smiling in this picture - but that was just for the camera!

But on a very hot day we were grateful that we didn't have to pedal.



On another day we were taken for a ride in a cart pulled by a small horse. This time, Grandma and Granddad got to sit together behind the driver but it was still a fairly uncomfortable ride as the horse pulled us on the rough and muddy streets.

We decided that we much prefer our car!



We also saw an Elephant Show. This wasn't a real elephant (although there are elephants in Burma) but it was a very ornately decorated one in which two men stood.

They were able to make the elephant do all kinds of tricks - like standing on a small stool or dancing on its back legs.

The two men seemed to enjoy doing these tricks but we thought how hot it must have been for them inside that elephant. We were hot just watching.



*One last thing from Myanmar (Burma). Grandma and Granddad were each given a longyi and had to dress in it for dinner one evening.*

*A longyi is a long skirt which is formed from a tube of material and wrapped around the waist. It is used in Burma by almost everyone; boys and girls and men and women. There wasn't one small enough for Mrs Dog.*

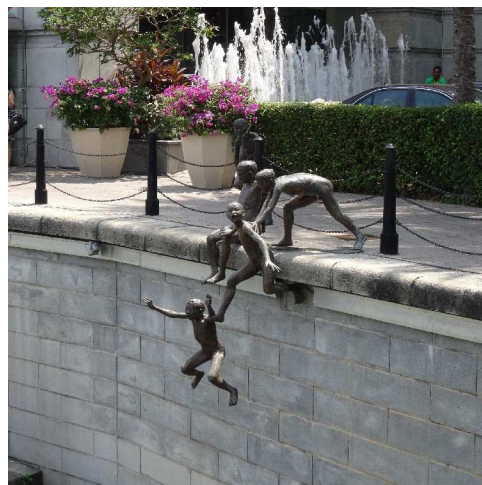
*We were shown how to tie the longyi - different ways for men and women - but it wasn't as easy as it seemed and we were afraid that our "skirts" might fall down at any minute.*

*Fortunately, they didn't! What do you think of our outfits? Should we bring them to Sacramento sometime?*



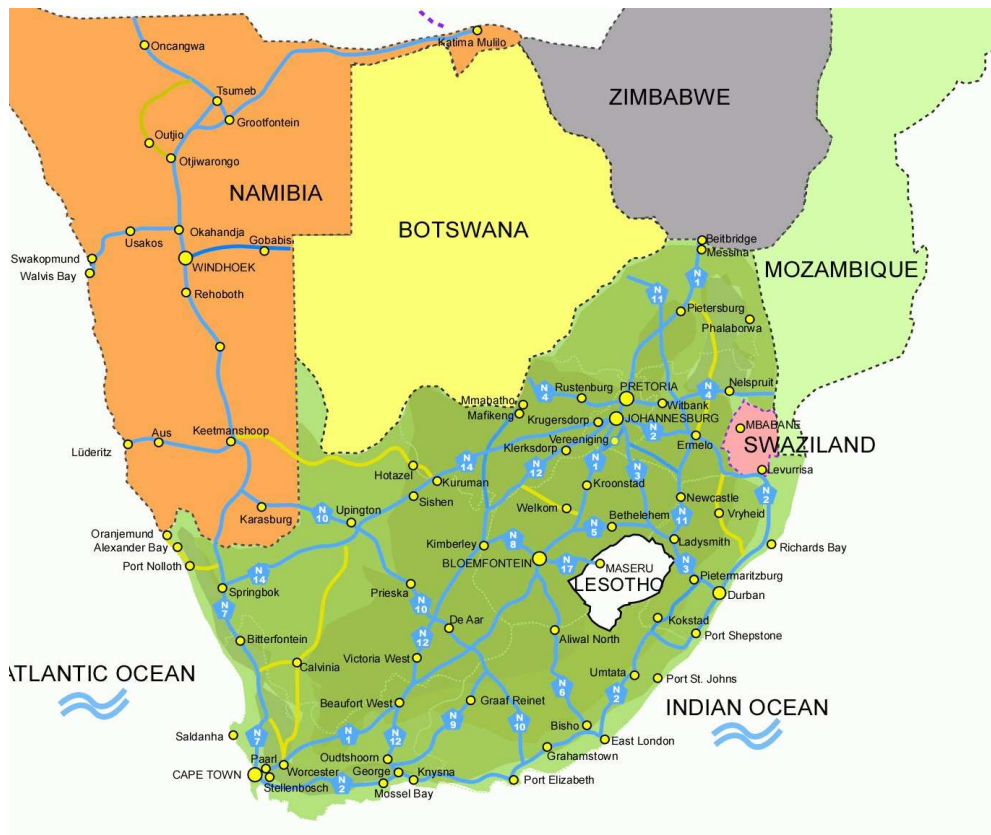
*So, we said goodbye to our river boat, which looked very attractive when it was lit up at night, and goodbye to Burma and the friends we had made on the cruise.*

Following our cruise in Burma we went to Singapore for a few days before returning home. Singapore is a very modern city, not at all like the poor villages we had seen in Burma. Grandma and Granddad have been to Singapore many times and you may remember that they took Peter Rabbit on one of those trips.



We all spent a few days relaxing after our boat trip but we also did some sightseeing. Singapore has a huge Ferris Wheel (they call it the Singapore Flyer) and also has an interesting statue of four boys jumping into the Singapore River. Don't you think they look real?

After three days here, we went home for a while before our next trip.



### ***South Africa and Namibia***

***In November (when it was Winter in Ohio) we took a long journey to the other side of the Equator and visited the countries of South Africa and Namibia, where it was Summer. They are both shown on the map above.***



*The first place we visited in South Africa was the city of Cape Town - perhaps you can find it on the map.*

*Cape Town is not the capital of the country but it is one of the biggest cities and one of the most beautiful cities in the world.*

*We stayed in a very nice house, with three sun decks and a huge swimming pool. It stands on a cliff side overlooking the Atlantic Ocean.*



*Almost in the middle of Cape Town is a large mountain that rises 3000 feet almost straight up from the city center.*

*It is called Table Mountain because it has a flat top. Often the top is covered in mist (just like the mist in San Francisco) so people say that it has a table cloth.*

*Grandma and Mrs Dog stood in a picture frame in front of the mountain.*



*Grandma and Mrs Dog also had their picture taken near a signpost that showed the distances from Cape Town of many cities in the world.*

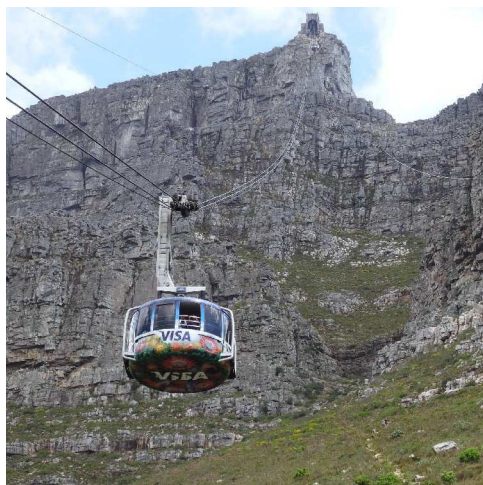
*Can you see how far away from San Francisco we were? Yes, we were about 16700 kilometers from where you live in California. Do you know what that is in miles? The answer is on Page 20.*

*No wonder it took us 30 hours to get there!*



One day we went to the top of Table Mountain. When we left the city in the cable car it was quite sunny and warm but by the time we reached the top it had turned much colder and was raining and there was a strong wind blowing.

Grandma smiled for the picture but she was happy to get back in the cable car and get warm again. Mrs Dog didn't even come out at all.



You have probably been in a few cable cars (certainly you went in one in Alaska) but have you ever been in one that turns round as it takes you up and down the mountain?

It feels a little funny to have the floor below you turning but everyone gets a good view of the mountain and the land below as they take the ride.

*On another day we drove to the very tip of the African Continent to a rocky point called The Cape of Good Hope. Can you guess why it has that name? Well, when it was first discovered by sailors trying to find a sea route to India from Europe, the King of Portugal said that finding it gave him "good hope" of finding the treasures of the countries they visited after passing this point.*

*Mrs Dog and Grandma had their picture taken on the Cape of Good Hope sign but you may notice that it isn't written in English. Have you any idea what that other language is?*

*The answer is on Page 20.*



*On the way back to Cape Town from The Cape we came across several ostriches walking along the side of the road.*

*We didn't want to get out of the car to take a picture of the large ostrich as it was protecting its young chicks and ostriches can sometimes attack people if they think their babies are threatened. However, we did get a close up shot of the babies who didn't seem to mind us being there.*

*We also followed a group of baboons along the road for quite a distance. They were walking along the middle of the road and they didn't want us to pass. Baboons can also be quite vicious and there are signs telling everyone not to feed them.*







*Later on in the trip we went to a town where we could watch whales in the ocean. The whales pass this town on the way to their breeding grounds.*

*The most common whale in this area is the Southern Right Whale and it is easily recognized by its double spout. Can you see that?*



*The town also has a "Whale Crier". This man stands on the shore and, when he spots a whale in the sea, he blows his horn so that everyone can come and take a look.*



*Mrs Dog preferred to stay in the car and watch the ocean from there rather than go for a swim. That was probably very smart as the ocean is not very warm at this point.*

*As we have seen, South Africa has a lot of sea around it, but there are also some very high mountains. We drove up one very steep road over a mountain pass; can you see the narrow dirt road in this picture? South Africa also has one of the world's largest caves which has some beautiful stalactites and stalagmites. Granddad was a little worried about going in caves but it turned out to be okay. Mrs Dog chose not to go in!*



**Here are the answers to the questions on Pages 15 and 17.**

**Page 15: 16,700 kilometers is about 10,000 miles**

**Page 17: the language on the sign is Afrikaans which is very much like Dutch. Either answer is good.**

**How did you do?**



*Finally in South Africa we visited an ostrich farm. There are many ostrich farms in the country, where the bird is raised for its feathers and its meat. However, the farm we visited was set up so that tourists could get close to the ostrich and pet them.*



*Grandma received a neck rub from an ostrich. The keeper held food behind Grandma's back and, as the ostrich reached round, its neck gave Grandma a neck rub. She said that it felt very soft and was not at all scary.*

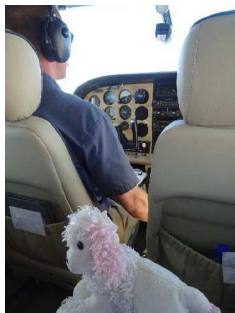


*Ostrich eggs are much bigger than a chicken's eggs and they are VERY strong. None of them cracked when Grandma stood on five of them. Of course, Mrs Dog had to try it too.*

*Namibia was the final country we visited on this trip and it was a very unusual and beautiful place.*

*Much of the country is desert and we flew over hundreds of miles of red and brown sand dunes in a very small plane.*

*Mrs Dog enjoyed the ride and sat right behind the pilot - watching his every move. When we landed after the flight over the dunes, she was allowed to sit on the tail wing of the plane for another photograph.*







*There are also lots of different wild animals and birds in Namibia. We saw oryx and bat-eared fox as well as hundreds of seals as we flew over the coastline. We also saw two goshawks that obviously couldn't read.*





*The lodge (hotel) that we stayed at in Namibia was also very unusual. Every room was a separate building which was away from the main lobby. To get to our room we had to walk on a sandy path.*

*In addition to normal rooms with a bed and a bathroom just like any other hotel, there was an open bedroom on the roof. If you wanted you could sleep up there and watch the stars in the sky as you fell asleep.*



*Granddad did that for a little while but it was a little strange sleeping outside so he soon joined Grandma and Mrs Dog downstairs.*

*From our lodge we were driven to a mountain top to look over the hills as the sun was setting. The driver provided us with a little snack and - as you can see - a glass of wine.*

*We all enjoyed this "Sundowner" and it seems like a good way to end this story of our trip to Namibia and the other three countries on this vacation: South Africa, Singapore and Myanmar.*

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*We hope that you have enjoyed reading about it and will want to send Mrs Dog on more trips around the world with Grandma and Granddad.*

