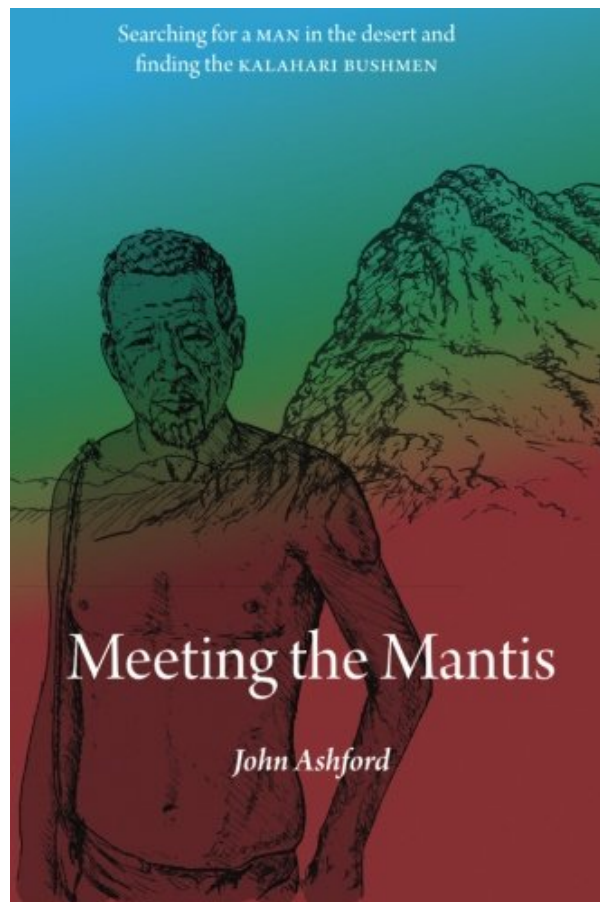
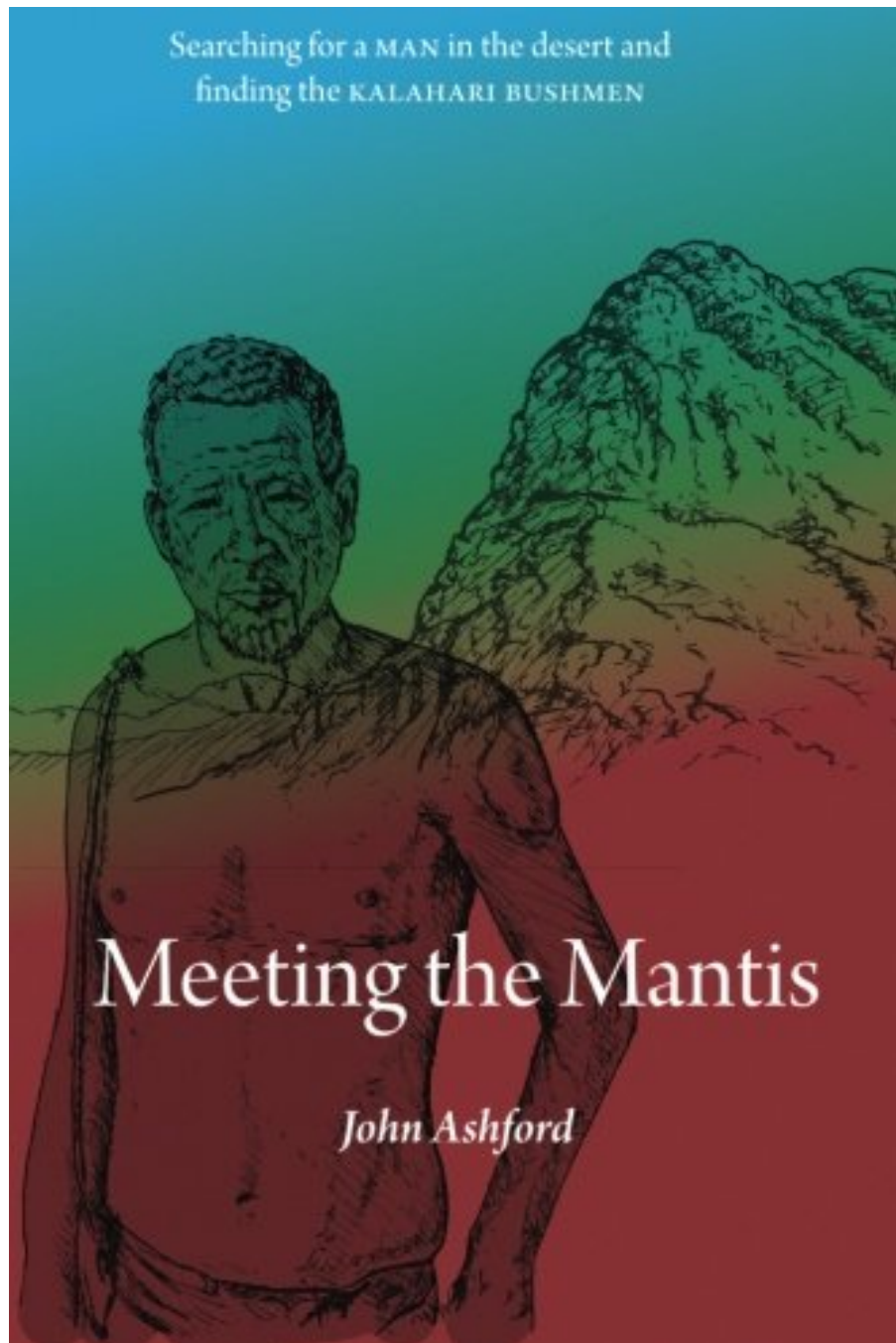


# MEETING THE MANTIS: SEARCHING FOR A MAN IN THE DESERT AND FINDING THE KALAHARI BUSHMEN BY JOHN ASHFORD



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## About the Author

John Ashford grew up in Seattle, Washington, and graduated from the University of Washington. After a lengthy career in teaching and then as the director of a library, he began looking for a change. In 1990, he went to Botswana with the Peace Corps and served as a teacher. When he returned to Seattle, he taught at Seattle Community College part-time until his retirement. His articles and stories have appeared in the anthology ONE BY ONE: REMEMBERING THIRTY-ONE YEARS IN BOTSWANA, in Silk Road Review and in Seattle-area newspapers.

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In the 1962, in a college anthropology class, John Ashford was introduced to the Kalahari Bushmen. Their peaceful way of life and John's childhood memories of listening to field recordings of chants by indigenous cultures resulted in a life-long fascination with these people. Years later, in the 1990s, John and his wife, Gen, find themselves in Botswana as Peace Corps Volunteers and middle-aged adventures. Toward the end of their service in the Peace Corps and restless about returning to the States, John discovers he is eager to resolve his lingering questions about the mysterious Bushmen. An article in a Botswana newspaper about an elderly white man named Freddy Morris, who has lived with the Bushmen for over 70 years, has sparked John's curiosity, and he persuades Gen to set out into the vast Kalahari to find Freddy. Encounters with locals and African wildlife weave in and out of their journey. A prominent activist working on behalf of the Bushmen speaks with them, and John soon finds himself receiving a whirlwind education about the life of the Kalahari Bushmen in the modern world.

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3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

John had a wonderful sense of respect and curiosity for all the people ...

By RPeternell

I've been waiting for years for John Ashford to write his book. Here it is...once I started to read it, I could not put it down! As a fellow Peace Corps Volunteer in the early 1990s, I'd travelled some of those dusty, sandy Kalahari paths with John and his wife, Gen. John had a wonderful sense of respect and curiosity for all the people we met, including the San. The rock paintings seen at Tsodilo Hills and John's prior knowledge of these indigenous people were enticements to go back and visit. He wanted to know more! John writes with humor, reflection and sensitivity about the indigenous people of Botswana.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

Conversation with the author

By Raymond F. Copes

I just finished the book, "Meeting the Mantis." My first reaction was, "What a direct and open conversation John is having with me." I appreciate that feeling of connection when I am reading. As I finished it I was of two minds. One, I was sorry that the adventure and experience, albeit vicarious, was over. Secondly I was so happy that I got to follow his vision and make this trip to the people of the bush. His sharing, openness and special insight are a gift.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Opened my eyes to a world I had hardly ever considered

By Kraig Pencil

A wonderful story: part travelogue, memoir, history and anthropology journal. This is the first-person account of John Ashford's personal journey in Africa ... and a glimpse into the lives and journey of today's Botswanan bushmen. John presents his journey through the eyes of the many people he met or interviewed in Botswana. And yet, this book flows like a novel. Although the questions John raises are unsettling, he avoids simple answers, leaving room for his readers to ponder these questions on their own. I highly recommend Meeting the Mantis.

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