

## *Lost in the Rainforest, an Undiscovered Maya Structure Reveals New Evidence of Ancient Technology*

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**San Francisco, CA (April 22, 2012)---** In 1995, James O'Kon shocked the archaeological world with the discovery of a massive, lost landmark of Maya engineering, the long span suspension bridge at the ancient city of Yaxchilan in Mexico. Now considered to be the longest bridge of the ancient world, the structure was overlooked by scientists who had studied the site for more than a century.

In his new book, *The Lost Secrets of Maya Technology*, O'Kon recounts the thrilling realization of his discovery and how he used modern methods to examine and prove the existence of the spectacular bridge.

The dugout canoe slid through the swirling waters of the Usumacinta River. Spider monkeys swung through the vines, and toucans and macaws flew amid the towering tropical rainforest. We were traveling downriver to the Maya city of Yaxchilan. Sitting in the bow, I did not realize that I would make a discovery that would change my life forever.

My first glimpses of the riverine city were tall palace structures high on green hills above the river. As we prepared to land on the south bank, I noticed a large ruined structure rising above the water. To the north, a similar, less defined structure was visible.

I said, "*Hey, those two structures look like bridge piers. I think the Maya built a bridge across here.*"

"*Impossible,*" retorted the archaeologist behind me.

I turned to him and asked, "*Why do you say that?*"

He replied "*Because the Maya were a Stone Age culture, without the technological capabilities to build such complex structures.*"

Pointing to the hills, I said, "*Who built those?*"

He said, "*They are simply stone and mortar, typical of a stone age culture.*"

Author, lecturer, and award-winning structural engineer, James O'Kon PE has explored more than 50 remote Maya sites and researched Maya technological accomplishments for more than 40 years. Combining his talents as a forensic engineer with evidence gleaned from his archaeological investigations, he lifts the veil of mystery from the lost technology of the Maya.

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Former chairman of the forensic council of the American Society of Civil Engineers, O'Kon used computers to integrate archaeological studies, aerial photos and maps to develop a 3-dimensional model and determine the exact positioning and dimensions of the bridge. What archaeologists had assumed was an insignificant rock pile turned out to be two piers 12 feet high and 35 feet in diameter, which supported a 600-foot-long, hemp rope span connecting Yaxchilan with its agricultural domain in the Peten, now Guatemala and where Tikal is situated--a breakthrough in Mayan history and culture.

*The Lost Secrets of Maya Technology* is an exciting documentation of O'Kon's exploration, research, forensic engineering and virtual reconstruction of lost technological achievements that enabled the Maya to construct cities towering above the rainforest, water systems with underground reservoirs, miles of paved jungle tracks, and the longest bridge in the ancient world.

He also explains how Maya engineers built multi-story buildings that were not exceeded in height until the first skyscraper erected in the U.S. in 1885, how they invented the blast furnace 2,000 years before it was patented in England, and developed the vulcanization of rubber more than 2,600 years before Goodyear.

**About the Author:** James A. O'Kon, P.E. is a professional engineer with decades of experience designing award-winning projects. His 40 years of investigating the engineering feats and technology of the Maya have been presented in numerous presentations to scientific symposia, and he was inducted into the Explorers Club as a National Fellow for his work on the Maya. His discoveries of the Maya have been recognized by *National Geographic Magazine* and on the History Channel, among other media.

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