

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

## James O'Kon



**JAMES O'KON, P.E.** has pursued a lifelong passion for Maya archaeology; he has combined his unique professional engineering experience with the search for lost Maya technology. He has applied his diverse engineering talents to explore and investigate nearly inaccessible Maya sites located deep in the dense rainforest. Traveling by dugout canoe, hacking his way through the tangled jungle while fighting off millions of insects and sleeping in tents, his search went on for lost secrets of Maya technology. With the collected field data he was able to utilize digital tools, along with his creative engineering skills, to verify feats of Maya engineering and virtually reconstruct the mystery of lost Maya technology.

After several years of experience as a structural engineer designing aerospace structures like rocket launch towers and vertical assembly buildings, he elected to take a yearlong sabbatical to live in Spain. This was an exciting time visiting ancient cities for a man who grew up in Atlanta, the only American city that was ever completely destroyed by war; just the sight of a building constructed before 1865 was a thrill. Returning to the USA he designed industrial plants for two years until the call of ancient Maya ruins called, and he and his family headed south of the boarder through Mexico and into British Honduras where he explored and lived among ancient Maya cities. This is when he first felt an affinity with the Maya engineers that had constructed these wondrous cities. He had questions about their construction that could not be answered by archaeologists. This began his quest for the truth surrounding the brilliant Maya technology.

Returning to the United States, he worked in New York City designing landmark structures, like the Roosevelt Island Tramway, aviation projects and aerospace structures. In 1973 he returned to Atlanta to operate a branch office of the firm he worked for in New York. He subsequently bought the firm in 1977 and expanded the practice to include architecture and design in addition to engineering. He led this firm to develop a national reputation for designing award winning aviation facilities and as a forensic engineer in the investigation of high profile building failures.

His investigation of Maya technology continued on a parallel track with his creative design projects. He often traveled to the Yucatan ranging across the domain of the ancient Maya exploring remote sites. His breakthrough revelation in Maya technological projects was the discovery of the ruins of a Maya suspension bridge over the Usumacinta River at the ancient

Maya city of Yaxchilan. Additional investigation revealed other examples of Maya technology that are outstanding examples of engineering achievements but were constructed in advance over European technology by a thousand years. He has assembled his discoveries of Maya technology in a logical order to develop this book.

His discoveries in Maya technology have been recognized by *National Geographic Magazine* and a production on *The History Channel* among other publications. He has delivered scientific papers dealing with his discoveries in Maya technologies at international scientific and archaeological symposia. The audiences at these symposia have been fascinated with the subject.

The author's Civil Engineering education at The Georgia Institute of Technology and an advanced degree from New York University have given him an excellent background for his professional career which has been devoted to bringing high-tech science to engineering. He is a registered Professional Engineer in over 15 states and has developed new computer techniques for engineering design and new methodologies for investigating distressed structures. This experience gave him the ability to "reverse engineer" complex distressed buildings and identify the cause of the distress. This experience has enhanced his ability to discover, dissect, analyze and reconstruct lost Maya technology. He is also a gifted artist who has the ability to sketch examples of Maya technology in the field and begin unraveling the mysteries of Maya technology while investigating the site. He led his multi-disciplinary firm of engineers and architects for thirty years, carrying out state-of-the-art engineering designs and resolving problems of distressed structures. His leadership of an award-winning engineering firm with extraordinary talents enabled him to think outside the box and solve issues for complex projects. He brought this special talent to the research and writing of this book.