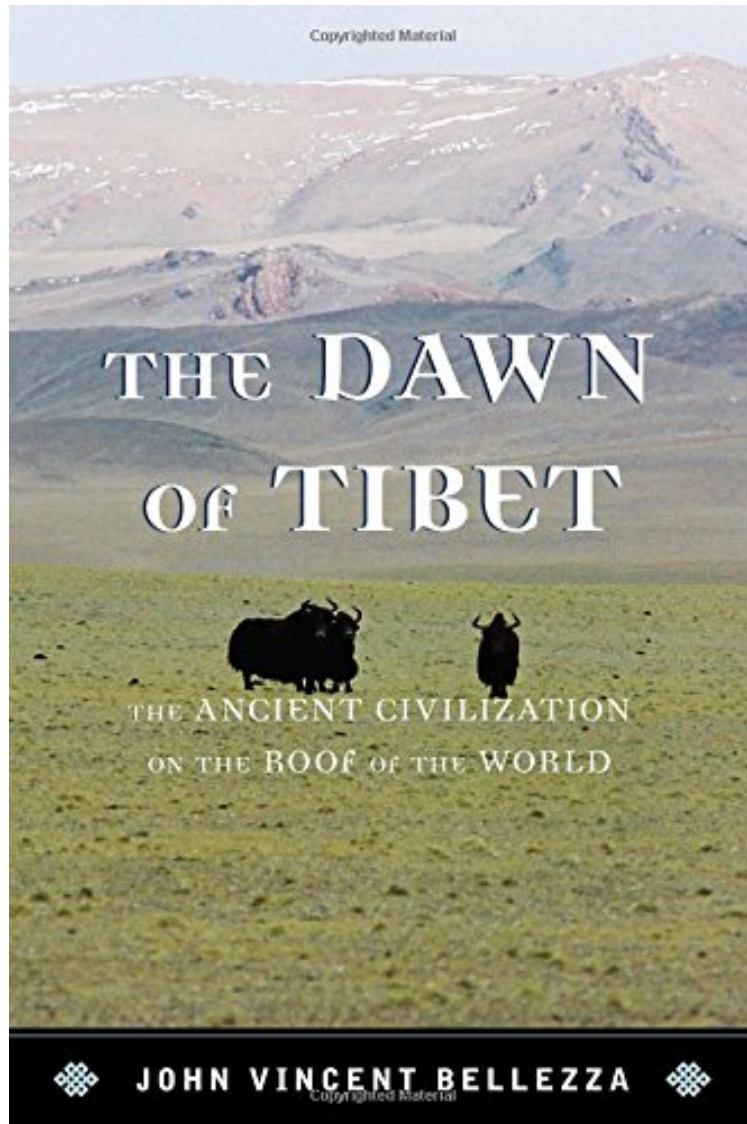


[Library ebook] The Dawn of Tibet: The Ancient Civilization on the Roof of the World

The Dawn of Tibet: The Ancient Civilization on the Roof of the World

John Vincent Bellezza

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John Vincent Bellezza : The Dawn of Tibet: The Ancient Civilization on the Roof of the World before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Dawn of Tibet: The Ancient Civilization on the Roof of the World:

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Comprehensive and groundbreakingBy Michael WhiteJohn Vincent Bellezza's scholarship into the pre-Buddhist history of Tibet is unparalleled and completely groundbreaking.

He has spent over three decades exploring the hidden reaches of Tibet often in areas over 14,000 feet above sea level. He has produced a unique body of scholarship that is summarized and expanded in this volume including archaeological research showing the ancient stone palaces, fortresses and monuments of pre-Buddhist Tibet. He has shown scientific information on the extent of the kingdom of Zhang Zhung. He has done more with documenting the ancient religion of Bon with its pantheon of mountain deities than any other extant scholar.. He has done extensive ethnological work with the nomads and villagers and, what could be the last generation, of oracles who channel these local deities to cure illness, make prophecies and help the dead on their afterlife journeys. Finally he has done linguist work with ancient manuscripts that date from the beginning of literature in Tibet showing where and how these earliest text reflect pre-Buddhist religions in Tibet. His many previous publications have been scholarly documents written primarily for specialized students of ancient Tibet. This is his first major work that is written for the general public and utilizes his many years of research and writing condensing it into a highly readable inclusive and comprehensive survey of Zhang Zhung and pre-Buddhist Tibet.0 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Near excellentBy Joe O'LaughlinA little repetitive, but where else would you find this local detail?0 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Don't botherBy DudleyMany errors and the tone is quite condescending.

This unique book reveals the existence of an advanced civilization where none was known before, presenting an entirely new perspective on the culture and history of Tibet. In his groundbreaking study of an epic period in Tibet few people even knew existed, John Vincent Bellezza details the discovery of an ancient people on the most desolate reaches of the Tibetan plateau, revolutionizing our ideas about who Tibetans really are. While many associate Tibet with Buddhism, it was also once a land of warriors and chariots, whose burials included megalithic arrays and golden masks. This first Tibetan civilization, known as Zhang Zhung, was a cosmopolitan one with links extending across Eurasia, bringing it in line with many of the major cultural innovations of the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age. Based on decades of research, *The Dawn of Tibet* draws on a rich trove of archaeological, textual, and ethnographic materials collected and analyzed by the author. Bellezza describes the vast network of castles, temples, megaliths, necropolises, and rock art established on the highest and now depopulated part of the Tibetan plateau. He relates literary tales of priests and priestesses, horned deities, and the celestial afterlife to the actual archaeological evidence, providing a fascinating perspective on the origins and development of civilization. The story builds to the present by following the colorful culture of the herders of Upper Tibet, an ancient people whose way of life is endangered by modern development. Tracing Bellezzas epic journeys across lands where few Westerners have ventured, this book provides a compelling window into the most inaccessible reaches of Tibet and a civilization that flourished long before Buddhism took root.

This fascinating read is an effort to bridge the gap between prehistory and history and resurrect the long-lost cultural links between Central Tibet and Upper Tibet. In chronicling this long-lost civilization, Bellezza braves the challenges of inclement weather and rugged terrain and assiduously explores the mountains, lakes, rivers, tombs, citadels, shrines, and temples that define the geography and rituals of the remote highlands of the Tibetan frontier. Notwithstanding the paucity of historical details, Bellezza maps the region by drawing upon oral traditions, decoding religious texts, exploring remote archaeological sites, and narrating/memorializing fantastic folk literatures to reveal the central characteristics of the land and its people. In showing the linkages between the Lamaist traditions of Central Tibet and the Eternal Bon practices of the Tibetan highlands, the author encourages the renegotiation of the roots of Tibetan identity and self-understanding. The true value of this research can be assessed in light of the damages wrought by environmental changes, the policies and neglect by the People's Republic of China, and the unsavory activities of opportunists in the highlands of Tibet. This admirable addition to the field of Tibetology is a plea to preserve the ancient archaeological sites of Upper Tibet before they are lost to posterity. Summing Up: Recommended. Graduate students, faculty, researchers, and anyone interested in Tibetan studies. (CHOICE)John Vincent Bellezzas lifelong project to explore and document the religion and culture of Tibets earliest, pre-Buddhist civilization, is uniquely ambitious. In a series of publications he has used the techniques of archaeology, anthropology and textual scholarship to shed light on this world, obscured as it is by the passage of time and the dominance of Buddhism in Tibetan culture for the last thousand years. Bellezza is particularly interested in the civilization known to Tibetan tradition as Zhang Zhung, which was based in western Tibet, also known as Upper Tibet. . . .The Dawn of Tibet is the best introduction to his work so far. (The Silk Road)The Dawn of Tibet presents the cumulative efforts and progression of a seasoned scholar going beyond what archaeology is able to provide, armed with the support of literature, history, religion, and ritual customs. This is a work for a general audience.... The Dawn of Tibet takes the reader on a journey that is not one of linearity, but one that spreads out in several directions until meeting at one point. It also has much to offer the scholar with its insights on Tibetan civilization and thus stretches beyond the confines of the familiar, creating a complex journey of discovery. (Asian Highlands Perspectives)John Bellezza is one of a vanishing breed of scholars, an independent archaeological explorer whose work is pioneering in the truest sense of the word. His expeditions over the course of decades to the remotest and least-known regions of Tibet have unearthed a precious body of evidence for

the interpretation of Tibet before Buddhism, with profound consequences for our understanding of the Tibetan world. (Stephen Jenkins, Humboldt State University) For over two decades John Bellezza has supplied the scientific community with spectacular findings from the historically little-explored world of Upper Tibet. His unique contacts with locals through many years of extensive travels throughout the western and northern plateau have given him access to hundreds of cultural sites, many of them clearly of prehistoric origin. Comparative analysis of these sites has led him to the recognition of an advanced early Metal Age civilization in Upper Tibet going back to c.1000 BCE. Regardless the caution of some researchers concerning the authors suggested shared genealogy of this complex with the entities of the historical Zhang Zhung and Bon, these meticulously recorded discoveries remain outstanding testimonies to Tibets prehistoric cultural history. This insightful book recapitulates the key points of Bellezzas long survey of this ancient world. Combining extensive references to later, mainly non-Buddhist or Zhang Zhung-related textual sources and ethnographic details of the traditional life of Upper Tibets nomadic communities, *The Dawn of Tibet* is a must for anyone interested in the cultures of the Tibetan highlands beyond their Buddhist horizons. (Guntram Hazod, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna) About the Author John Vincent Bellezza is senior research fellow at the Tibet Center, University of Virginia, Charlottesville. An archaeologist and cultural historian focused on the pre-Buddhist heritage of Tibet and the Western Himalaya, he has lived in high Asia for three decades. Bellezza has published widely on archaic ritual traditions in Bon and Old Tibetan literature. Since 1992, he has comprehensively charted the monuments and rock art of the ancient Zhang Zhung and Sumpa proto-states. The first non-Tibetan to have explored both the geographic and ritual sources of each of the four great rivers that emerge from the Mount Tise region, Bellezza has also visited nearly every main island and major headland in the great lakes region of the Changthang.