

Tibet Looking Glass - A Unique Opportunity to Explore 3000 Years of Tibetan Civilization with John Vincent Bellezza

May 14 - May 31, 2009



John Vincent Bellezza is a visiting scholar at the University of Virginia where he specializes in the pre-Buddhist phase of Tibetan civilization. Bellezza, a fellow of the American Council of Learned Societies and Explorer's Club, has spent 25 years exploring the most remote parts of the Great Western Himalaya and Tibet. His latest book, *Zhang Zhung: Foundations of Civilization in Tibet*" (Austrian Academy of Sciences, 842 pp.), provides comprehensive treatment of the pre-Buddhist civilization he discovered single-handedly. No ordinary academic, John is a great story teller and entertainer, skills he developed during his long years of wandering around the Himalaya. John is one of the 120 outstanding individuals in Jason Schoonover's "Adventurous Dreams, Adventurous Lives".

This is an unique opportunity to see Tibetan civilization in all its splendor with John Vincent Bellezza, one of the world's leading authorities. From Buddhist monasteries to Eurasian animal art, this journey reveals Tibet in all her depth. John, an affable, sensitive and highly experienced expeditionary and tour leader, will guide a select group of people to Tibet's rarest cultural treasures. John, who has spent a quarter of a century intensively exploring the Himalaya and Tibetan Plateau, will share some of his most brilliant discoveries with us for the very first time.

This is an unparalleled view of Tibet, providing extraordinary insights into the culture and people of this charmed land. In addition, to visiting the great heritage sites, there will be plenty of time to get to know the Tibetans and enjoy their fun-loving spirit. John, who is fluent in various Tibetan dialects, encourages his fellow travelers to intensively interact with the Tibetans and ask those questions one has stored up for years. And what better way to get answers than to ask the people themselves.

The journey begins in Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal and the heart of the Himalaya. With John, we will spend two days exploring special cultural sites in the Kathmandu valley. At Changu Narayan, Swoyambhunath and the old city state of Bhaktapur, witness how Himalayan civilization took root and grew layer by layer into its present form. In addition to visiting well known Hindu and Buddhist places, John will lead us to hardly-known Iron Age sites, where we can appreciate the links between the Newar and Tibetan cultures before the rise of Sanskrit influences. We will have plenty of time to chat with the experts and ordinary people of all persuasions.

After three days we fly to Lhasa, Tibet's famous capital. We will visit a rich array of cultural and archaeological treasures throughout the area. John will lead us to spectacular places such as the Potala and Jokhang, revealing their most ancient aspects. There will also be time to explore fascinating pilgrimage sites on the edge of the Lhasa valley. En route to Shigatse, Tibet's second city, we will stop at the most important monasteries of the Bon religion. While there are many superficial similarities, through art, design and literature, John will show us how Bon and Buddhism differ from one another.

In Shigatse we will have time to see the city's greatest spectacles, gaining a deeper appreciation of the depth and breadth of Tibetan civilization. From Shigatse we will head north through the majestic Transhimalaya range. In the Shang valley we will pass a string of Buddhist centers and natural power sites. At Sokpo see one of the region's greatest cave hermitages and have a chance to talk to the inhabitants.

Above Sokpo, we traverse the Transhimalaya and enter the vast plains of the Changthang, Tibet's empty northern quarter. Yet, it is not as empty as it first seems. Hidden away in sheltered valleys and on escarpments are the remnants of the early inhabitants of the region. At places such as Mutig and Shawa Drag, these ancient hermitages have devolved to the Buddhists. Here is a great opportunity to peel back the strata of Tibetan civilization and come to better understand its march over the millennia.

On the Changthang, John will introduce us to the drokpa nomads, some of whom he has known for over 20 years. We will get to know their way of life, interests and aspirations as can be shown only by someone who has long lived among them. We will move in an eastern direction, stopping at key archaeological and cultural sites along the way. Our Changthang adventure will culminate in Nam Tsho, the Celestial Lake (an object of study in John's first book, *Divine Dyads*). Not only is Nam Tsho very beautiful (she is envisioned as a young goddess), she is home to a stunning series of sacred headlands and islands dating back 3000 years and more. It is an easy return drive to Lhasa via the southeast corner of Nam Tsho. From Lhasa we return to Kathmandu so that the participants can catch their outbound flights.

Itinerary

May 14, 2009 - Thu

Fly from USA.

May 15, Fri

En route to high Asia.

May 16, Sat

Arrive in Kathmandu. Transfer to our hotel. In the evening John will talk to members about the trip over refreshments.

May 17, Sun

We explore Bhaktapur in the morning to see prehistoric Kiranti sites, Newar Buddhist temples and more. Changu Narayan is the afternoon excursion, where we will see a 2000-year panorama of history in this core Himalayan region.



Bhaktapur

May 18, Mon

Our morning trip is to delightful Swoyambhu, Nepal's first cultural site, according to legend. In the afternoon we will visit select cultural and archaeological nooks in hidden corners of the valley. Expect some surprises.



Swyambhunath Stupa

May 19, Tue

Fly to Lhasa. We drive one hour to Lhasa and our hotel. There will be a welcome dinner and trip briefing in the evening.

May 20, Wed

In the morning visit the Potala Palace and some of its most unusual chapels. In the afternoon we will go the Jokhang, the geomantic heart of Lhasa. There is also plenty of time for shopping in the Barkhor market, where authentic treasures and tourist kitsch await the discerning eye.

May 21, Thu

A day trip to Drak Yerpa, an ancient Bon holy site that devolved to the Buddhists in the 7th century. In the afternoon we will tour the Tibet Provincial museum, seeing some of Tibet's most important artifacts.



Potala Palace, Lhasa

May 22, Fri

We drive to Yungdrungling in Tsang province. This is the site of one of Bon's most important and sumptuous monasteries. We will camp in the Tsangpo valley along the mighty Brahmaputra river.

May 23, Sat

We proceed to Menri monastery in the remote Topgyal valley. Menri, the nerve center of the Bon religion, is the ideal place to see alpine Tibet in all its majesty. We reach Shigatse in the evening.

May 24, Sun

Tashilhunpo, Shalu, Shigatse Dzong and other great Tibetan cultural hubs around Shigatse city are on today's agenda. This is a fine opportunity to see Buddhist civilization in one of its most refined and grand manifestations.

May 25, Mon

We travel up the rugged Shang valley and cross the lofty Transhimalaya range to the Changtang, the vast northern quarter of Tibet. We make camp in the midst of a pristine lake-filled basin.



A village on the sacred lakes of Upper Tibet

May 26, Tue

Visit Mutig monastery, spectacularly set on the end of a long promontory jutting into Pearl Lake. In the afternoon we drive and camp at Lutsang, a cave sanctuary and Buddhist monastery sheltered in a colorful limestone escarpment. Among the greatest attractions are the Tibetan nomads themselves. John will introduce us to some of his old friends among them.

May 27, Wed

In the morning we explore Deer Rock, the site of a Kagyud monastery and the ruins of a Bon hermitage occupied by the master Nangzer Lodpo in the 8th century. Here the breadth of Tibetan civilization is revealed in a way that few religious centers can offer. In the evening we set up camp on the western shores of Lake Nam Tso.

May 28, Thu

Today we enjoy the views of Nam Tso (the Celestial Lake) from Dokya Gonpa, an amazing vantage point. We also visit Chedo to revel in 3000 years of Tibetan rock paintings. Later in the day we drive along the north side of Lake Nam Tso and make camp at one of its many sacred sites. Expect more stunning scenery.



Semo Do, the biggest island in Lake Nam Tsho

May 29, Fri

We reach Tashido, a very important cultural site in Upper Tibet. After beholding rock art secreted in caves, we return to Lhasa for our last evening in Tibet.

May 30, Sat

Fly Lhasa to Kathmandu. From Kathmandu connect to your flight home.

May 31, Sun

Arrive USA

Costs:

US\$ 3885 per person for land only
Single room supplement: US\$ 455 per person
Group size: 10 to 20 persons

Cost includes:

- ⌘ 3 nights accommodation at Hotel Yak & Yeti (Deluxe room) on full board basis.
- ⌘ All sightseeing tour and transfer as per the itinerary with our local English speaking guide including entrance fees in Nepal.
- ⌘ 4 nights accommodation at Hotel Kyichu or similar in Lhasa on full board basis and best available en-route.
- ⌘ 5 nights at tented camp on full board basis in Tibet.
- ⌘ All transfers and sightseeing tours as per the program with local English speaking Tibetan guide throughout the trip by deluxe bus in Lhasa and 4WD 4500 model land cruiser with oxygen in a car and support truck, camping support, kitchen staff, sherpa, trek sirdar etc.
- ⌘ Tibet visa fee.

Cost excludes:

- ⌘ Airfare for the sector Kathmandu - Lhasa - Kathmandu (US\$ 650 per person, subject to change).
- ⌘ Nepal re-entry visa fee.
- ⌘ International airfare.
- ⌘ Airport tax.
- ⌘ Photography charges.
- ⌘ Refreshment, bottled drinks, tips, cost arising due to unforeseen circumstances.
- ⌘ Expenses of personal nature.
- ⌘ Any kind of insurance and other not mentioned in the above cost.

Please fill-in the form given below and mail or fax it to:

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info@AdventuresWithinReach.com



Ever seeing eyes of Buddha

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Please complete and return this signed application form and enclose or forward a non-refundable \$500 deposit by Check, Money Order or Credit Card in U.S. funds to secure your place on the Pilgrimage.

Name (As in Passport) _____

Passport # _____

Name (As you like to be called) _____

Issue Date _____ Exp. Date _____

Address _____

Place of Issue _____ Citizenship _____

City/State/Zip _____

Birth Date: Day ____ Month _____ Year _____

Country _____

Place of Birth _____

Phone: Daytime (_____) _____

IMPORTANT: In Case of Emergency Please Notify :

Evening (_____) _____

E-mail _____

Phone: Daytime (_____) _____

Occupation _____

Evening (_____) _____

Closest major airport to you: _____

E-mail: _____

Dietary Preference: Vegetarian Non-Vegetarian

Relationship to participant _____

Do you smoke? Yes No Quit

Accommodations: Check one of the following:

Communications Preference: Postal Mail Email

Rooming with: _____

Both Other: _____

Traveling alone, but willing to share

Prefer single accommodations at extra cost

How did you hear about the pilgrimage?

What is your previous travel experience?

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Date

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Check enclosed, already on file, or copy faxed with my application in U.S. funds payable to **Adventures Within Reach** or:

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Exp. Date: _____ Card Security Code: _____ (Mandatory)

Note: If all the payments are by check, there's a discount of \$125 per person (room sharing) or \$140 (single room).

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Booking Information

We will set up a payment plan which will be detailed in your acceptance letter. The balance of the land cost must be paid in full no later than 90 days before departure or you will be charged a service fee.

After we receive this **application** and your **physician's certificate** we will send you a trip package containing: **Trip Notes, Trip Itinerary, Packing List, and Reading List**. We will help you with your airline reservations. You can extend your stay after the pilgrimage but we would like for you to fly over with the group.

The descriptions, dates, and prices in the brochure and on our website were compiled with reasonable care and accurate at the time of publication. Due to currency fluctuations, political conditions, and the rising cost of services, Adventures Within Reach reserves the right to change any of the above. In addition, Adventures Within Reach reserves the right to change the itinerary of a trip at any time; for example, if it is advisable for the safety of the group or in order to comply with governmental restrictions. Finally we reserve the right to change leadership.

We require you to carry travel insurance to cover emergency evacuation and medical costs. We strongly suggest that you carry insurance that also covers trip cancellation or interruption, baggage and other personal possession losses.

Photographs for the purpose of publicity may be taken while you are traveling with us. These photographs may be used for marketing purposes. Note, you may be contacted after your trip by prospective clients for references unless you let us know that this is not okay.

A valid passport and visas for the countries to be visited are required. Details on applying for a passport and visas will be supplied, however obtaining them is your responsibility. If you decide to cancel and notify us in writing before departure, we will refund your money after subtracting the following fee:

Days Before Departure	Fee
More than 60 days	\$500 (non-refundable)
Between 31 and 60 days	35% of the land cost
Between 15 and 30 days	55% of the land cost
Less than 15 days	No Refund

General Information

Tibet Hotels: In Tibet the hotels we use are mostly privately owned and are of 2-3 star category. In Lhasa we will be accommodated at the Kyichu Hotel in the old part of Lhasa, which is only a few minutes walk from the Jokhang Temple. Outside of Lhasa there is not much choice with the hotels and those that we are using are privately owned. All the hotels that we use have attached bathroom facilities. All hotels have running hot water in the morning and evening if not 24 hours.

Weather: Generally daytime temperatures range between 60 and 70 degrees and evening temperatures are between 40 and 50 degrees. After you sign up for the trip you will receive a detailed Trip Package which will include information on weather conditions and a packing list.

Health Precautions: Make sure you are as healthy as possible before you leave home. Check that your teeth are in good shape and get all your immunizations at the right times. The most common health problem is mild altitude sickness. It is very hard to avoid completely but one can minimize the risks by taking precautions. Kindly consult your doctor about high altitude sickness. We will attempt to secure, but do not guarantee, the services of emergency medical personnel. Medical facilities in most areas are limited.

Food: We would like you to try the local cuisine. We will be eating all of our meals in quality restaurants and hotel dining rooms. The food is nutritious and delicious. A vegetarian diet can easily be accommodated. We recommend that you bring some food with you such as energy bars, dry fruits, cookies etc.

Difficulty: Long days traveling by vehicle can be fatiguing. Some walking will be required. If you have any questions regarding your ability please contact us.

Booking: Adventures Within Reach will take your booking for the trip. They accept trip payments by credit card, check or money order. Once you have filled out the booking form Adventures Within Reach will also help you with all your travel arrangements including flights and travel insurance. Adventures Within Reach phones are usually answered live from about 9 A.M. to 6 P.M. Mountain time Monday through Friday. You are also welcome to email Adventures Within Reach with questions about the trip.