

Sky burial is a common funeral practice in Tibet. A human corpse is cut into small pieces and placed on a mountaintop (called durtro), exposing it to the elements and animals – especially to birds of prey. In Tibetan the practice is known as jhator (Tibetan bya gtor), which literally means „giving alms to the gods“. As the name implies, jhator is considered an act of generosity: the deceased and his/her surviving relatives are providing food to sustain living beings. Because the majority of Tibetans adhere to Buddhism, which teaches reincarnation, generosity and compassion for all beings are important virtues or paramita in Buddhism. So the function of the sky burial is simply the disposal of the remains. In much of Tibet the ground is too hard and rocky to dig a grave, and with fuel and timber scarce, a sky burial is often more practical than cremation.

This graduation theses enlarge about this ritual in all his connotation, i.e. historical, religious, culturology and philosophical meanings. It also enlighten about Tibetan approach to the death and funeral services in Tibet. The primal problem is the phenomena of sky burial and it's course, sense and other overlaps (like astrology, medicine, ethics, enviromentalism, iconography and so on).