Death and Beyond in Ancient Tibet
Archaic Concepts and Practices in a Thousand-Year-Old Illuminated Funerary Manuscript and Old Tibetan Funerary Documents of Gathang Bumpa and Dunhuang

This monograph brings to light the eschatological patterns and procedural constructs of death rites in ancient Tibet. It is centered on documents written between circa 800 CE and 1100 CE, which include an illuminated funerary manuscript of much rarity, two death ritual texts recently recovered in southern Tibet from the Gathang Bumpa religious monument, and several related manuscripts discovered in the Dunhuang grottoes a century ago. This book builds upon previous efforts of the author to explicate the otherworldly dimension in early Tibetan religion and culture. Many of the documents of this study were written in the Old Tibetan language and represent the oldest known literary sources for research into Tibetan funerary traditions. The work is underpinned by annotated translations, which are critically edited and painstakingly provided with Classical Tibetan word equivalents. Each featured text is described in detail and subjected to a rigorous religious and historical analysis. Other Tibetan literature that supports the comprehension of the foundational texts of this study is also marshaled.

These textual assets complement one another by progressively revealing an indigenous belief system and praxis of great depth and intricacy. The antiquated narrations and rituals concerning death presented in this book furnish a lucid view of cultural forms that circulated around Tibet before its religious universe became saturated with Buddhism and Buddhist-influenced doctrines and practices. Especially when seen through the lens of the archaeological record, the sheer intellectual and material wealth borne in the archaic funerary traditions demonstrates that Tibet was endowed with culturally advanced societies in the time before the spread of Lamaism. Bibliographies and indexes [with glossary] are appended to the main text.

John Vincent BELLEZZA

John Vincent BELLEZZA

John Vincent BELLEZZA is a Senior Research Fellow at the Tibetan Center, University of Virginia. See www.tibetarchaeology.com.

John Vincent BELLEZZA

Print Edition
Denkschriften der Gesamtakademie 454
Beiträge zur Kultur- und Geistesgeschichte Asiens 77
2013, 292 Seiten, 29,7x21 cm, zahlreiche Farbabbildungen, broschiert
€ 85,10
http://hw.oeaw.ac.at/7433-2

John Vincent BELLEZZA

Zhang Chung

Foundations of Civilisations in Tibet
A Historical and Ethno-archaeological Study of Monuments, Rock Arts, Texts, and Oral Tradition of the Ancient Tibetan Upland
Denkschriften der Gesamtakademie 368
Beiträge zur Kultur- und Geistesgeschichte Asiens 61 2008, 841 Seiten, 30x21 cm, broschiert
€ 129,20

Per K. SØRENSEN and Guntram HÅKAN in Cooperation with Tsering GYÖMBÖD

Thundering Falcon
An Inquiry into the History and Cult of Khra-brug
Tibet’s First Buddhist Temple
Denkschriften der phil.-hist. Klasse 333
Beiträge zur Kultur- und Geistesgeschichte Asiens 46 2005, 432 Seiten + 1 DVD, zahlr. Farb- und SW-Abb., 29,7x21 cm, broschiert
ISBN 978-3-7001-3495-4
Print Edition € 99,36
ISBN 978-3-7001-3516-6
Online Edition

e-mail: verlag@oeaw.ac.at
http://verlag.oeaw.ac.at