

## **Beliefs and cults**

Numerous ceremonies and rituals accompanied the everyday life of Andronovo tribes, filled the real world of their life with gods, ancestors and heroes.

Thus, the house building began with sacrifice. Vessels with milk, a bull or a ram were used for sacrifice. Meat was eaten, milk was drunk and pots and bones were dug at the place of the future dwelling – near the hearth place, under a rod post or under a threshold. During roof erection the top beam was sprinkled with blood of sacrificial animal and again people arranged a feast. The main rod post symbolized a connection of people with the sky. During holidays it was decorated with flowers; during weddings the groom and the bride sat near it and in usual days the elder sat in this place of honor.

The hearth was considered a sacred thing. The most terrible deed was to destroy the hearth. The hearth was provided with sacrifices; a new bride had to walk round the hearth; the departed was carried round the hearth before funerals. The ashes from hearth was prohibited to be thrown out to wind, therefore, there were special ashpits near the dwellings. All these rituals with ash and fire were conducted in order to deserve health, wellbeing and wealth for the family from gods. Cult of fire and hearth accompanied the human being both in ancient time and new time.

Religion was the main determinant in arts. People of Bronze Age were in the stage of mythological thinking. They viewed life as a change of repeating nature cycles –spring equinox, tillage, then autumn harvesting, lambing, winter and then again a warm spring sun emergence. They believed that in order not to disturb this harmony they had to accompany each of these events by sacrificial offerings to gods, by prayers and special rituals. They were conducted in special sanctuaries – in picturesque mountain gorges, near sacred springs and rivers.

During Bronze Age the stones in these sacred places were covered with pictures reflecting the views of Andronovo tribes on the surrounding world. This is the most valuable source of information about the spiritual culture of human and his world outlook.

In the early period of Andronov culture (XVIII-XVI centuries BC) the deceased was burnt in fire and his ashes together with personal belongings was placed into the stone box. This ritual was connected with a fire cult. In view of ancient people, the ritual of cremation of dead bodies corresponded to the law of nature renovation, rebirth for the new afterlife.

Ancient holy writings describe a burning rite. The deceased is laid to pile of logs covered by reed. His personal belongings, vessels with food, bow and arrows and mace are laid near him.

At the following stage of history, in XV-XII centuries, the custom of cremation was replaced by a new ritual: the deceased was put in a stone crypt in the writhed condition, on his left or right side.

With a greater carefulness Andronovo tribes built “houses of the beyond live” – funeral constructions which were enclosed with stone fencings of the rectangular, round or oval form made of vertically driven or put stone plates.

According to view of Andronovo tribes, in a next world there were also leaders and simple community people, wars were waged, the cattle was bred and fields were cultivated.

Therefore, vessels with food, weapon, clothes, ornaments and other subjects were put in a tomb. All this must have provided the dead man with a worthy existence in a next world.

The spirits of the deceased were worshipped, people trusted in their protection and patronage, the tombs were considered as the sacred.

*Used materials:*

- 1. Treasure of ancient and medieval Taraz and Zhambyl region / K. M. Baipakov, G. A. Kapekova, D. A. Voyakin, A. N. Maryashev.*