

Five hundred years before Zarathustra

Alexander Goryachev, famous Almaty archeologist, discovered a unique construction which reaches age of more than three thousand years at the bottom of a mountainous plateau Assy. Presumably, that temple is the most ancient among those which had been previously found on the territory of our country.

Big boulders on the burial place are laid out in a spiral. Sepulture itself is located in its center. Similar spirals were found in some other Wusun burial mounds. Spirals is a symbol of Argali horns, it is common element for all Turkic cultures in Zhetysu. Some experts in history of culture conform, that some elements of traditional ornaments in Central Asia date back to the Wusun times.

Alexander Goryachev believes that there are even more ancient traditions, i.e. before Wusun period, this region had been occupied by Saka, famous tribes who had been waging war with Persian tsars, and before them this territory had belonged to cattlemen, who had been representatives of a wide circle of Andronov culture. They had arrived here from the territory of Central Kazakhstan and Western Siberia about four thousand years ago. In Zhetysu, people of Andronov culture had settled in areas of foothills, but with time, after gradual climate changes local cattlemen had moved to mountains. In the middle of the 2nd millennium B.C. they had reached Assy plateau.

Goryachev is sure, that Saka were descendants of local Andronov people. Their burial mounds had been found more than once, but in Assy Goryachev managed to discover something even more interesting, i.e. a temple complex of the Bronze Age. It was constructed in 12th -10th B.C., presumably even earlier. Those who took part in construction were contemporaries of Homeric Troy.

Inner structure of the building is quite ordinary: central room, though unusually big and lateral passages. Still, it does not resemble a domestic house, as there are no hollows on the floor and there is not a dip, also going toward its center, quite the contrary a central part is raised half a meter higher than lateral passages, which are 1.5-2 meters high, there is not a trace of housing premises. In front of health, archeologists found burial of a goatling, which had been cut in two. Paleozoologists found out, that one half of it belonged to do goatling, while the other part belonged to female goat. It is a kind of primitive yin-yan.

Two big hearths divided by a partition with an air duct were found near Northern lateral exit of the building. One hearth contained burnt animal bones, and another – cremated human remains.

Under floor, archeologists found air duct channels, which probably had been used for air injection.

There is a path leading directly to a burial ground of the Bronze Age. It is possible that hearth had been used for cremation of the deceased, after cremation their remains had been placed into a figuline and had thoroughly sealed up; it resembles rites of early Zoroastrians. A. Goryachev suggested that it had been a Temple of Fire. He did not want to imply that Bronze Age tribes from the Upper Turgan and Assy plateau had practiced Zoroastrism which appeared five centuries later in the eastern part of Asian Near East, but it is undutiful, that any religious system is founded on the basis of previous epoch' traditions.

A.Goryachev believes that Kazakhstan is insufficiently explored from the archeological point of view. Large-scale explorations demand a hundred and hundred-fifty years of analysis, while our excavations' history coves a period of sixty years at the most. Virtually there were not any explorations conducted along Ili River, while its characteristics are not worse than those of many rivers which had become a cradle for ancient civilizations. A famous archeologist said following about Paleolithic monuments, "A fact that we do not know them does not mean that they do not exist, it means that we just have not found them".

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