

**STRUCTURE OF DWELLINGS AND RELIGIOUS BELIEFS IN THE PLACES  
BELONGING TO THE KALTAMINOR CULTURE**

**Abdrimova S**

Lecturer of history, Khorezm Branch of Asia International University

E-mail: [abdrimova1809@gmail.com](mailto:abdrimova1809@gmail.com)

**Annotation:** This article examines the structure of dwellings and the development of religious beliefs in sites belonging to the Kaltaminor culture within the broader context of Neolithic societies in Central Asia. The study highlights the evolution of early human lifestyles, including the transition to sedentary living, the domestication of animals, and the increasing importance of fire in daily life. Special attention is given to the emergence of early religious concepts such as totemism, animism, and fetishism, as well as their reflection in burial practices and ritual activities.

The research is based on archaeological evidence, particularly materials from the Tumek-Kichikchik cemetery and the Jonbos-4 and Jonbos-5 sites. Burial customs, including the use of red ochre, the placement of grave goods, and the orientation of the deceased, are analyzed to understand spiritual beliefs and social structures. The article also explores ancestor worship, fertility rituals, and the symbolic role of natural elements such as fire, water, and earth.

**Key words:** Kaltaminor culture; Neolithic period; Central Asia; religious beliefs; totemism; animism; burial practices; archaeology; Tumek-Kichikchik cemetery; Jonbos sites; ancestor worship; material culture; early civilizations.

Human society tried to improve the daily life of its inhabitants, to control the forces of nature. The desire of mankind for innovation was the basis for the creation of new civilizations. The discovery of fire was of great importance in the lives of the most ancient people. In fact, this process did not happen all at once. Moreover, people tried to keep this fire going. This process also took many years and required great skill from people. People determined the burning time of fire or the situation of branches or firewood, the duration of the burning of documents. This process itself was also based on the activity of the term. The creation of artificial fire by hitting stone on stone or rubbing wood on wood played an important role in the ingenuity of people. Now cooked meat was much tastier and led to a slight increase in people's life expectancy. The system of breeding developed very quickly, and it was during this period that the budding or religious views of man were formed. During this period, totemism, fetishism, and animism were formed. We can learn about the emergence of the earliest religious beliefs primarily through human burial rituals and cave paintings[1]. According to archaeological data, the first burials appeared in the Middle Paleolithic period. This is confirmed by the bone remains of a Neanderthal child found in the Teshiktash cave. Various animal bones were found around the child's body. This evidence alone confirms the existence of religious beliefs in Central Asia as early as the Middle Paleolithic period. At the end of the Neolithic period and during the Eneolithic period, there were also places of worship for clan communities. They were not divided into separate rooms, but one common room for one clan[2]. By the Neolithic period, we can see the formation of religious beliefs, forms of funeral ceremonies and customs. The reason for this can be attributed to the adaptation of people living in the Neolithic period to new living conditions. The earliest people switched to a sedentary lifestyle. The taming of animals continued during this period, and primitive people used them more[3].

At the end of the Neolithic and the Eneolithic periods, separate places of worship for clan communities also appeared. They were not divided into separate rooms. Fire began to play an important role in human life. That is why our most ancient ancestors worshiped fire and focused

on its symbol in their daily lives. At the same time, zoological religious views were still preserved in the minds of people during this period. Gradually, people began to consider fire, water and earth to be important in their agricultural life. That is why people began to consider these elements sacred and began to worship them, considering them divine. At this time, zoological symbols were preserved only in amulets. By the Neolithic period, totemistic symbols also took on a new meaning. Now primitive people began to consider animals sacred, regardless of the results of the hunt. Totemistic views were inherited from generation to generation in each clan. They also began to imagine the image of the gods as animals[4].

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Another important phenomenon in the Neolithic period was the worship of deceased ancestors within the clan. According to them, the deceased had great power and were believed to help the surviving members of the clan. By the beginning of the Neolithic period, these religious rituals had changed significantly and become more complex. It was believed that after the death of a deceased person, he took with him the objects and food products that he used in this world and would use them in the next world. In this case, the deceased was buried next to his body with ceramic vessels with inscriptions on them, as well as jewelry. On the other hand, burials also changed depending on social status. People who had a high position in the community were buried with more objects, while people from the lower classes were buried with fewer items. Working together led to the accumulation of surplus products in the tribe, which led to the emergence of social stratification in the tribes[6].

One of the important monuments in illuminating the religious imagination of the Kaltamnior culture is the Tumek-Kichikchik cemetery. As we mentioned above, this monument is located in the Sarikamysh basin of the Amu Darya foothills. A total of 30 graves have been discovered and studied during archaeological excavations at the monument. The graves are dug deeper than the width. The corpse was placed at the bottom of the grave, with its shoulders stretched out on the ground, with its arms extended along the body. Sometimes the body was placed in a place where red paint was sprinkled. Sometimes it is possible to observe cases where red paint was also sprinkled on the body. Most often, the corpses were buried with their heads directed to the northeast. No signs of any structures above the grave have been identified or they may not have been preserved to this day. Signs indicating that some graves on the western and eastern sides of the cemetery were surrounded by stones in a circle have been found[7]. Very little archaeological evidence has been recovered from the graves. These sources consist of a number of flint tools and a few scattered pottery vessels. These vessels are not found directly in front of the body bones of the corpse, but are found in an irregular manner among the layers of soil that were

thrown over the corpse. The fragments found in the Tumek-Kicjikjik graves are of scientific importance. During the opening of one grave, archaeologists found a piece of a vessel containing a piece of meat roasted in a bonfire. In addition, the jewelry found in the grave is also of importance. Various ornaments and jewelry were found in the graves. The most valuable artifact among the relics found at this site is a jewelry made of a pig's tusk intended for wearing on the chest. The Tumek-Kicjik cemetery was a burial site typical of the Kaltaminor culture. The stone tools found in these graves show the characteristics of the pottery vessels. In particular, the vessel, assembled from small fragments of pottery, was actually boat-shaped. In addition, the stone tools are exactly the same as those of the Kaltaminorians. This cemetery chronologically corresponds to the middle stage of the development of the Kaltaminorian culture and is very similar to the Tolstov site in terms of material culture[8]. In 1976, two ruined Neolithic tombs were discovered between Jonbos 4 and Jonbos 5, which were excavated by archaeologist A.V. Vinogradov. It is no exaggeration to say that these monuments will also greatly help us to understand the religious customs of the Kaltaminor communities of the Neolithic period. The most surprising aspects are that the tombs are arranged in an orderly manner, the customs associated with the funeral rites were fully carried out, and various archaeological evidence was found inside the tombs, which made it possible to learn about the customs and lifestyle of the people of this period. From the information collected during the excavations of the graves, it became known that in the early stages of the development of clan communities, all the things that the deceased could use (ceramics, jewelry and hunting weapons) and even food for consumption in the afterlife were placed in the graves of the deceased. These customs are clearly visible in the Tumek-Kichikzhik cemetery. In some places, these customs were established in a unique way. If in the places belonging to other Neolithic communities, labor and hunting weapons, dishes were placed on the ground or next to the bones of the deceased or in a specially designated secluded place, then in the Tumek-Kichikzhik cemetery these conditions are not noticeable at all. During the excavations, archaeologists even managed to find fragments of dishes with pieces of fried meat on top of the bodies of the deceased in the graves. In fact, this cemetery is not very large in terms of area. It may have been the cemetery of a small clan community or a community that formed part of a clan community[9].

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