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### MUSEUM COLLECTIONS OF CHUVASH CHILDREN'S CULTURE: NEW APPROACHES IN SUBMISSION OF MATERIALS

Oksana Veniaminovna Egorova (a)\*, Inga Valerievna Dmitrieva (b)

\*Corresponding author

(a) Moscow International University, Leningradsky Prospekt 17, Moscow, Russia  
eoks71@rambler.ru,

(b) Chuvash State University named after I.N. Ulyanova, Moscow Avenue 15, Cheboksary, Russia ingadmit@mail.ru

#### *Abstract*

This article discusses the specifics of museum collections of objects of the Chuvash children's culture based on the analysis of the material (museum exhibits), field sources, and published literature. Museums in Russia store unique items and documents about the world of the material culture of the childhood of the Chuvash. The authors analyzed children's museum collections. Museum materials on childhood are grouped according to the following criteria: childcare and play activities. New approaches to the presentation of stock materials, focused on the use of modern information technologies in order to improve the efficiency of museums, especially with children's audience, have been identified. Modern site-building is needed, which will be created to create a particular image, a complete and holistic view of the totality of objects, visual sources in the museum space. In the life of modern society, the role of traditional culture is declining. However, the appeal to humanistic opportunities is necessary for the rethinking of the material and spiritual culture popularization. Practical work on the study and collection of ethnographic material related to the children's cycle is practically not conducted. Among the population, there are practically no objects from the life and life of the Chuvash that could replenish the collections of museums. Virtual electronic collections are created through modern information technologies. Software products allow immersing children and adults in the world of the childhood of the Chuvash in a traditional society in virtual reality mode.

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## 1. Introduction

This article discusses the specifics of museum collections of objects of the Chuvash children's culture based on the analysis of the material (museum exhibits), field sources, and published literature. Museums in Russia store unique items and documents about the world of the material culture of the childhood of the Chuvash. The authors analyzed children's museum collections. Museum materials on childhood are grouped according to the following criteria: childcare and play activities. New approaches to the presentation of stock materials, focused on the use of modern information technologies in order to improve the efficiency of museums, especially with children's audience, have been identified.

## 2. Problem Statement

One of the conditions for the development of museum business is information technologies. New forms of interactive displays, special programs make the museum more attractive for young people and children. New forms of expositions recreate the virtual world of exhibits (the world of the past) and immerse children and adults in an interactive space. Children's culture objects are presented in a digitalized systematized form. Today, the rich world of items of children's culture is kept in various museums. However, modern technologies make it possible to form informative and elaborate thematic expositions, including digital ones. This study seems to be useful for both the museum and the scientific community. Studies of museum collections of subjects of the Chuvash children's culture have not previously been conducted. In recent years, many researchers have raised issues of creating independent children's museums or centers. The problem statement is described here.

## 3. Research Questions

The subject of the study is the most efficient use of objects of children's material culture of the Chuvash people in the education and upbringing of the young generation. As an object of study, the authors chose the works of researchers of the Chuvash children's culture and the items of children's material culture of the Chuvash people stored in museums of Russia.

## 4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this article is to propose new approaches and forms of their use to increase the efficiency of education, training and the formation of ethnic identity of youth and children based on an analysis of the works of scientists devoted to the children's material culture of the Chuvash and collections of objects stored in museums of Russia. The article is based on published literature, ethnographic field materials collected by the authors, and museums' data on available items.

## 5. Research Methods

The following methods are applied in work: comparative-historical, oral-historical, and interpretive.

## 6. Findings

In recent years, much attention has been paid in Russia to the revitalization of museum and exhibition activities. Modern museums perform not only the function of preserving, studying, and presenting exhibits, but also become a platform for communication on various topics. Museum-collection resource is a relatively stable base of the educational process. Knerr (2001) noted that museums should make every effort to create a pleasant atmosphere and constant surprise for visitors, creating the opportunity for them to choose between a package of certain content and more active interaction with exhibits. Museums are actively developing cognitive and educational forms of work, using virtual forms of expositions and excursions. Thus, exhibits can be presented more visually and attractively. Modern information technologies, an interactive approach to the presentation of material can significantly increase the efficiency of museums, especially with children's audiences.

Museums in Russia store unique items and documents about the world of the material culture of the childhood of the Chuvash. Material sources have been collected for several centuries by different generations of researchers. Revealing the high value of a material source, Medushevskaya (2008) notes that the real world of "things" is the information resource of museums that arose during the historical process, interconnected human activities. This resource only at first glance, appears as an unstructured array, the chaos of human-made "remnants." It is a holistic, interconnected informational corps in which communications, interconnections, and structures are traced. Therefore, the material projection of the historical process has unique information potential. The presentation of this resource in the museum makes it possible to obtain reliable information about a person, society, and, in general, the realized experience of human existence (Medushevskaya, 2008).

Researchers' interest in the world of the child was reflected in the composition of museum collections. The collection of material on childhood, including children's utensils, costumes, toys, was carried out during fieldwork in combination with other objects of traditional household culture. The creation of museum collections on this topic was somewhat tricky due to the existence of prohibitions among the Chuvash people regarding the transfer of children's items to unauthorized persons. In particular, this prohibition applied to things related to religious and ceremonial actions. Besides, children's items are poorly maintained by their owners, and sometimes by manufacturers-children. Children made products evoke unique feelings and respect for elders for the mastery classes provided to children. Some museologists urge respect for handicrafts that carry important information about traditional culture and the need to cooperate on this issue at the national and international levels (Ila, 1988).

The most valuable collection of Chuvash collections on childhood ethnography is in the Russian Ethnographic Museum in St. Petersburg. Museum funds were created as a result of field ethnographic expeditions. Museum materials on childhood can be grouped according to the following criteria: childcare and play activities. The "child care" group includes ritual actions aimed at preserving the life of the child, feeding, swaddling, lying in a cradle. They are fragmentary and descriptive. The collections of the Russian Ethnographic Museum feature original children's rugs. In the central part of the rugs, a geometric ornament is indicated – squares, broken lines, rhombuses. There is also a patch of white canvas, rolled up

in the form of an eyelet, which the inhabitants of Tsivilsky district threw a newborn's mother or grandmother, in order to safely drop the navel of the child.

Chuvash "zybka" is one of the well-preserved items of children's accessories to date. A hanging "zybka" was everywhere. In the summertime, the Chuvash widely used a field stroller. Today we can find them in school and rural museums in Chuvashia, as well as in the Archaeological and Ethnographic Museum of Chuvash State University.

The collections of the Chuvash National Museum (Cheboksary) contain a variety of collections of children's furniture, a nurse in the form of a cart on casters. The fund stores two- and four-wheeled carts for transporting young children in the summer and sleds, which were used in winter for skiing from the mountains, on snow and ice, as well as for domestic needs.

The museum collection related to childcare includes children's clothing collections. In the collections of the Russian Ethnographic Museum, a children's dress from linen is stored, and in the fund of the Ethnographic Museum of the Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University – a children's linen costume decorated with rare embroidery, made at the Algeshev Factory, in the fund of the Archaeological and Ethnographic Museum of the Chuvash State University a children's shirt and apron are stored .

In almost all museums, there are instances of children's bast shoes from bast. They are all typical, with a square foot. Rope charges are inserted into the side holes or at the back. The Russian Ethnographic Museum presents a unique children's belt woven from dark woolen brown, pink, and pale yellow threads with a herringbone pattern. The ends of the belt are decorated with large tassels.

Modern informants remember sewing traditional Chuvash clothes, a sense of joy that arose when dressing a new dress for Easter. With a smile, they recall the pants "without a backside," which they had to wear up to 3–5 years. Unfortunately, due to deterioration, lack of need, children's clothing turned into a rag and then thrown away.

Folk toys represent game activity. Ragdolls were the leading toy of girls and existed in all areas of Chuvashia. Several faceless dolls in Chuvash clothes are stored in the funds of the Saratov Regional Museum of Local Lore. A baby doll and a female doll made of textiles are stored in the collections of the Russian Ethnographic Museum. Crossing threads are located on the faces of both dolls. The informants noted that they did not mainly try to portray facial features, especially the eyes, since they could, according to the Chuvash, negatively affect the child. The most diverse collection of rag dolls, which were the leading toy of village girls. In the wealthiest collection of folk toys of the Russian Ethnographic Museum, there are several whistles made with varying degrees of stylization. The vast majority of them depict birds, mainly ducks, and animals, such as horses, rams, dogs. These toys were made using auxiliary objects. A wooden spatula was used for smoothing the surface of a clay toy and final grinding. There were wooden sticks for applying ornament and paint on similar toys. Particular difficulties are associated with the study of child socialization of an in the traditional culture. There is a lack of formalized information about toys, differences in the names of toys in different places of residence of the Chuvash, and other differences. The collections of the Kazan (Volga) Federal University contain a doll with wooden legs dressed in a Chuvash shirt with a masmak.

The fund of the Saratov Regional Museum of Local Lore contains two photographs that are very valuable to ethnographers. In the first photograph, the ritual of consuming a sick throat of a child is

recorded. In the second photo – children were riding on a "vargan'." Unfortunately, the photos are poorly saved. Modern informants practically do not remember this type of swing. In 1929, unique photographs were taken by P.A. Petrov-Turing, who led a whole expedition to study the culture and life of the Bashkir Chuvash in the Belebeyev canton of Bashkiria. The following are recorded in the photographs: the Chuvash boy observation over the preparation of beer; the children participated in field prayers, the clothes of the infant sitting on the lap of the mother, and other stories from the population life (Petrov, 2008). Thanks to new technologies, it is now possible to digitize existing materials, transfer to a variety of multimedia formats. Digitized materials are made available to researchers through the creation of computer catalogs and systems. Also, the old photograph and exhibits allow saving a unique original, which can be in a very fragile or damaged condition.

## 7. Conclusion

Researchers' interest in the child world was reflected in the composition of museum materials. In recent years, many items of traditional culture are being utilized. This process is associated with a change in life and the active reconstruction of dwellings in the countryside. Much work on the collection and storage of various items is carried out by rural school museums with the active participation of teachers of the Chuvash language and history. Back in the 90s. XX century noted that a survey among visitors shows that they like small museums that can be bypassed in a couple of hours or less (Hudson, 1998). However, at present, focused work on the study and collection of ethnographic material related to the children's cycle is practically not conducted. There is still the opportunity to collect and store in museums of various types of individual objects from the life and life of the Chuvash people related to the world of childhood, as some of them could be preserved in their homes. It seems that this work should be organized and carried out purposefully, clearly classifying the necessary materials and determining the subject of the search. Up-to-date information and Internet technologies would make it possible to create a single site containing a catalog of such museums with a brief description of the collections. The results obtained in this study. The authors of the article conducted many field expeditions, collected items related to the ethnography of the Chuvash childhood, studied and analyzed the collections in museums that reveal the lives of children in the Chuvash social, cultural environment. The work carried out led to the following conclusions:

1. Different museums of Russia store unique items that, if combined into a single collection, could give the complete picture of the Chuvash children's culture.
2. The museum space can serve as a venue for a variety of cognitive, educational, and educational interactive events with children (workshops, lectures, and other types of events). It is possible to conduct master classes with clothing designers who use elements of national ornaments. In this way, the museum can facilitate ethnic continuity.
3. Museums can become one of the venues for the Olympiads, which allow identifying interest and educating young people with a penchant for science.
4. Modern information technologies make it possible to develop virtual (electronic) collections, unique software products that immerse children and adults in the world of Chuvash children in

traditional society in virtual reality mode. The presence of Web sites makes the museum around-the-clock international audience.

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