

LOOKING FOR A CHANGING TRADITION: KAZAKH TRADITIONAL DOLL IN CEREMONY, RITE, GAME AND ART PRACTICE *

**Değişen Bir Gelenek Arayışı İçinde:
Tören, Ritüel, Oyun ve Sanatsal Uygulamada Kazak Bebek**

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ABSTRACT

The study of the doll and its place in the lives of children allows us to more deeply realize its role in any traditional culture, as well as to comprehend the reasons for the modern "doll boom." The Kazakh traditional doll "quyrshaq," balancing between ritual and play practice, has always been the prerogative of the institution of female subculture. Starting from early childhood, transforming, it accompanied its mistress in direct and indirect form up to the very old age. The traditional Turkic doll, considered on the example of Kazakh "quyrshaq," demonstrates not only the chronology of women's life but also characterizes the purely female process of communication with higher powers - deities and spirits of the dead from the perspective of the aforementioned aspects. Consideration of "quyrshaq" as an integral part of women's subculture in the historical retrospective through the prism of sacred and secular will reveal its peculiarities, specify the historical and cultural interrelations between neighboring and related peoples, as well as trace the transformation of this tradition. In order to reveal the designated topic, the research utilized retrospective, comparative, structural-functional, and semiotic approaches. Additionally, a cross-disciplinary analysis was incorporated to enrich the understanding of the cultural nuances surrounding the traditional doll. Nowadays, the traditional doll has fallen out of use due to the extinction of ritual and ceremonial tradition, as well as the appearance of industrial samples of children's dolls of European type in the middle of the twentieth century and their complete dominance in the market in modern times. Information about the Kazakh doll and domestic idols as its cultural prototypes was collected by the authors during the study of archaeological and ethnographic museum exhibits, as well as during field research among the residents of Almaty, Karaganda, and other regions of Kazakhstan in 2017-2019. Thus, the present study has shown that the doll has always reflected certain ethnic and regional traditions or innovations in culture. Through playing with a doll, children reproduced various life situations in accordance with the socio-normative culture of the Kazakh ethnic norms and rules of behavior of the ethnic group. Children through playing with dolls received vital lessons of socio-psychological harmony of personality with the outside world, which in a broad sense can be interpreted as the basis of ritual and ceremonial practice in traditional society. In the present period, designer or art dolls are one of the markers of national revival, characteristic of the whole artistic life of modern Kazakhstan. This resurgence is indicative of a broader cultural renaissance, with these dolls serving as symbolic artifacts embodying the rich heritage and artistic identity of the nation.

Keywords

Turkic doll, female deity, tradition, quyrshaq, female subculture, ritual and ritual practice.

ÖZ

Oyuncak bebeğin ve onun çocukların hayatındaki yerinin incelenmesi, herhangi bir geleneksel kültürdeki rolünü daha derinden anlamamızı ve modern "oyuncak bebek patlamasının" nedenlerini kavramamızı sağlar. Ritüel ve oyun pratiği arasında denge kuran geleneksel Kazak bebeği kuirşak (oyuncak bebek), her zaman kadın alt kültürü kurumunun ayrıcalığı olmuştur. Erken çocukluktan başlayarak, dönüşerek, çok ileri yaşlara kadar doğrudan ve dolaylı olarak sahibine eşlik etmiştir. Kazak kuirşak örneğinde ele alınan geleneksel Türk bebeği, sadece kadın yaşamının kronolojisini göstermekle kalmaz, aynı zamanda yukarıda belirtilen yönler açısından yüksek güçlerle - tanrılar ve ölülerin ruhları - tamamen kadınlara özgü iletişim

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sürecini de karakterize eder. Yukarıda özetlenen yönleriyle kadın alt kültürünün ayrılmaz bir parçası olan kuirşak'ın kutsal ve seküler prizması aracılığıyla tarihsel bir retrospektif içinde ele alınması, onun özelliklerini ortaya çıkaracak, komşu ve akraba halkları arasındaki tarihsel ve kültürel ilişkileri belirleyecek ve bu geleneğin dönüşümünün izini sürecektir. Araştırma, belirlenen konuyu ortaya çıkarmak için retrospektif, karşılaştırmalı, yapısal-işlevsel ve semiyotik yaklaşımlardan yararlanmıştır. Ayrıca, geleneksel bebeği çevreleyen kültürel nüansların anlaşılmasını zenginleştirmek için disiplinler arası bir analiz de dahil edilmiştir. 20. yüzyılın ortalarında Avrupa'da çocuklar için yapılmış bebek oyuncakların ortaya çıkmasından dolayı, günümüzde geleneksel bebek oyuncakları ritüel ve törensel geleneğin kullanımından çıkmıştır. Kültürel prototipleri olarak Kazak bebeği oyuncakları ve ev idolleri hakkındaki bilgiler, yazarlar tarafından arkeolojik ve etnografik müze sergilerinin incelenmesi sırasında toplanmıştır. 2017-2019 yıllarında Almatı, Karaganda ve Kazakistan'ın diğer bölgelerinde yaşayanlar arasında yapılan saha araştırmaları sırasında «Kazak bebeği» oyuncaklarıyla ilgili belgeler alınmıştır. Bu çalışma, oyuncak bebeğin her zaman belirli etnik ve bölgesel gelenekleri veya kültürdeki yenilikleri yansıttığını göstermiştir. Çocuklar oyuncak bebekle oynayarak, Kazak etnik grubunun sosyo-normatif kültürüne, etnik grubun normlarına ve davranış kurallarına uygun olarak çeşitli yaşam durumlarını yeniden üretmiştir. Çocuklar bebeklerle oynayarak kişiliğin dış dünya ile sosyo-psikolojik uyumu konusunda hayati dersler almışlardır ki bu da geniş anlamda geleneksel toplumdaki ritüel ve törensel uygulamaların temeli olarak yorumlanabilir. Dolayısıyla bu çalışma, oyuncak bebeğin her zaman belirli etnik ve bölgesel gelenekleri veya kültürdeki yenilikleri yansıttığını göstermiştir. Çocuklar oyuncak bebekle oynayarak, Kazak etnik normlarının sosyo-normatif kültürüne ve etnik grubun davranış kurallarına uygun olarak çeşitli yaşam durumlarını yeniden üretmiştir. Çocuklar bebeklerle oynayarak kişiliğin dış dünya ile sosyo-psikolojik uyumu konusunda hayati dersler almışlardır ki bu da geniş anlamda geleneksel toplumdaki ritüel ve törensel uygulamaların temeli olarak yorumlanabilir. İçinde bulunduğumuz dönemde, tasarım veya sanat bebekleri, modern Kazakistan'ın tüm sanatsal yaşamının karakteristiği olan ulusal canlanmanın işaretlerinden biridir. Bu canlanma daha geniş bir kültürel rönesansın göstergesidir ve bu bebekler ulusun zengin mirasını ve sanatsal kimliğini somutlaştıran sembolik eserler olarak hizmet etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Türk bebeği, kadın tanrısı, gelenek, kuirşak, kadın alt kültürü, ritüel ve ritüel uygulama.

Introduction

The Turkic doll in its many variations has become the object of research in numerous studies - such as the Altai domestic fetish (Dyrenkova (1937); 'Karagöz' Turkish shadow puppet theatre (Martinovich (1910), Serebryakova (2015); Turkic fetish for yagmur duasy (rain-bringing) (Serebryakova (1998); the Uzbek toy doll and its accessories (Peshchereva (1957); doll fetish and toy doll of the Siberian Tatars (Faizullin et al. (2016); toys of the Khakas children and related rites (Kustova (2018), etc.

Thus, the Kazakh doll remains an undefined phenomenon, and its specific characteristics have been studied only sporadically and inadequately. Some clues can be taken from the publications of Potanin (1883) and other researchers of the Kazakh ritual doll – tool. Karutts (1903) mentioned the traditional types of Kazakh children's toys in Mangyshlak; Stassevich (2007; 2008) described children's play education and training in traditional Kazakh culture; and Nurpeis (2012) provided studies on the Kazakh puppeteer phenomenon. However, a perceptual unit of the Kazakh puppet role was not conducted, and it left this component of the female subculture outside of historical and ethnographic consideration.

The primitive Kazakh doll disappeared long ago from children's play practices and rites; today it can be observed in Baksylyk shamanic practices. Recently, however, the kuirshak has been revived in the form of creative art and unique handicrafts. One can point to the well-known Kazakh puppet festivals and exhibitions, such as the Kuralai Festival (Almaty, 2018), the International Puppet Festival (Nur-Sultan, 2019), and sporadic Orteke festivals held in various Kazakh provinces. 'Puppet Universe Center' regularly conducts haute-couture exhibitions of puppets and marionettes, such as 'The Puppets Invites You-2018', 'Together Forever' (Almaty, 2018 and 2019), where the artistic creativity of puppet makers attracted many visitors.

While it would be necessary to study the sources and generic factors of this modern phenomenon, its nature remains a challenge. Is it short-lived entertainment, the creativity of women artists, and/or an art business? Or is it a major phenomenon rooted in the depths of historical memory, the genetic code, and the natural nature of women? Considering the Kazakh kuyrshak phenomenon as an integral part of the female subculture can make it possible to trace the changing tradition without breaking the unity of sacred and profane aspects.

Cultural model of the Kazakh doll: etymology of ‘kuyrshak’

In symbolic terms, the traditional doll (and toys in general) reflects the life-historical aspects of the ethnic group, including well-known folk customs about sacred and secular aspects. Analysis of ethnographic materials (Peshchereva: 1957; Botyakova: 1995; Kidieikova, Kustova: 2012, etc.) indicates that the Turkic doll was used in rituals and games. Some types of traditional Kazakh dolls used in rituals and games are presented in Table 1; we identified them by studying ethnographic, archeological and other materials (Gryaznov: 1962; Tokhtabaeva: 2017; Seidembek: 2011; Stasevich: 2007 etc.).

Table 1. Traditional Kazakh Dolls Types

Ritual and sacred doll (sacral context)		Doll for children (profane context)		
Household deity (idol)		Soft body doll and its subtypes		
Anthropomorphic bone carvings (horse pastern)	Anthropomorphic stone carvings (soapstone, alabaster, etc.)	Cindery doll	Chee grass doll	Twig frame doll
Tul – ritual doll - twin of deceased		Wooden doll «Orteke»		
Nauryz ritual dolls		Images of animals (mountain goats, etc.) made of clay and other materials	Anthropomorphic figures (clay, wood and other materials)	
Shaman doll for healing purposes		Felt doll		
Magic doll for use in witchcraft or corruption rites				

Based on the available ethnographic and folklore data, we suspect that the cultural phenomenon of the doll dates back to the ancient Turkic (and Kazak) peoples' notions of female guardian spirits. Table 2 contains some brief comparative analyses (Potanin: 1883; Karutz: 1903; Dyakonova: 1982; Kustova: 2018 and others). Even the scanty and sparse information about the Kazakh doll from written sources offers some possibilities to reconstruct its essential components.

Table 2. female guardian spirits as prototypes of child dolls

Ethnicity / Peoples	Doll Name and Type	Types of actions (manipulation)
Teleuts	The doll was called <i>emendeger</i> . It was made of wooden blocks or sacks filled with grass. The eyes were made of sewn-on beads, and the body was adorned with a dress. The elongated body was made of <i>kendyr</i> fabric (hemp). The face line was outlined with red colour.	These dolls were passed from mother to daughter, and the latter took them with her when she married. The dolls were kept, cared for and used for rituals (feeding, sprinkling, etc.). Usually, once a decade, the owner sacrificed a white sheep for Emengeder. The dolls embodied the female ancestors and patronesses of the tribe. They were supposed to take responsibility for the welfare and development of the tribe.
Baraba Tatars	The dolls were treated as deities. Worship also included the sacrifice of animals.	The dolls were dressed in colourful clothes and placed in a corner. When a cattle or bird was killed for sacrifice or meals, the doll was sprinkled with its blood. Special boxes were made to take the dolls outside or to the field. During harvest rituals, the dolls were placed in a specially dug hole.
Chukchi	The doll was called <i>alochelkyt</i> . It depicted human beings - men and women, mostly children and infants. Visually, they looked realistic.	Dolls had a dual function as toys and patron saint of female fertility. Young girls took them from the parental home when they married and placed them at the head of the bed to encourage the birth of a child. The doll was associated with the promise of fertility and could not be transferred to anyone else. The Chukchi mother gave these dolls to her daughters to play with, and they were passed down from generation to generation. If it was a single doll, it was given to the eldest daughter when she married, and new dolls were made for the younger daughters.

Ethnicity / Peoples	Doll Name and Type	Types of actions (manipulation)
Siberian Tatars	The fetish doll <i>kurtsak</i> or <i>kurchak</i> , made of wood, was nailed to the roof of the house.	The family fed the fetish, gave it drink and dressed it. <i>Kurtsak</i> could be a male and a female.
Kazakhs	Various types of ritual dolls (usually cloth dolls) associated with a female counterpart	Widows made a ritual doll double of the deceased husband. The widow fed and watered the doll at a certain time and took it to sleep. Two types of larger ritual dolls were made for Nauryz. One doll was usually tied to an animal (a stallion or a young bull), the other doll symbolized <i>Sukatyn</i> (the water woman). The doll was actively used in shamanistic rituals (<i>baksy</i>) in the treatment of infertile women or sick children.

The statements in Table 2 can be arranged in a certain chain: - animate being, 'she is alive'; - dolls are passed from mother to daughter; - the doll is a kind of proof of the mother's inheritance; - the doll must accompany the owner (move to the future husband's house); - it is necessary to take care of the doll (feed it, sew new clothes, etc.), which means performing certain ritual actions; - the doll is the patroness of its owner; - the doll is associated with a sacral femininity; - the doll is a guide to the other world and a mediator in healing treatments.

Interesting information about traditional Kazakh dolls can be found in archaeological and ethnographic researches. (Gryaznov: 1962 and Chernyakov: 1960). It was found that the crafts and carvings were made from the pasterns of horses. The figures were considered to be representations of female domestic spirits. These anthropomorphic figures had cylindrical beaded eyes in special holes drilled in the doll heads. Gryaznov pointed out that 'not long ago, Khakass and Kazakh girls played with dolls made of pasterns, dressed in sewn clothing. It is likely that these children's games, like some others, are relics of ancient spiritual practises ... it is also possible that the original pasterns served as idols or spirits, i.e., without holes and beads' (Gryaznov: 1962, 27). This could explain the presence of a relatively large number of pasterns excavated at archaeological sites.

Yu.G. Kustova (Kustova: 2018), in turn, pointed out a large number of *tõs'eyes* (idols) in the khakass houses, which were made of pasterns and decorated with patches for worship. These dolls were associated with the female world and were made by the owners themselves, and they were not shown to anyone. They were kept next to the bed in a special shelf under the pillow and mattress. Khakass girls often used them for household games.

Informants in our studies confirmed the use of horse pasterns by Kazakh children in play practice. Sisters M. and A. Shalenov (1983; 1989), residents of Zhanarkinsky

district in Karaganda region (central Kazakhstan), noted that in their childhood they played with topay (horse or cow pastern) and used them as assyks (lamb bones). The sacral significance of the ankle can still be observed today in the Kazakh children's and youth game bet tobyk zhasyru ('hiding the ankle'). Briefly, the game begins with the exchange of ankles (usually of small animals) between two players, who have the right to claim them from the "opponent" at any time. In the exchange, each player promises to give his opponent the expensive item. The player who cannot provide the ankle at short notice loses the game.

Traditional Kazakh culture has vividly depicted the cult of the female goddess in decorative art. The ornament of Uly Ana (Great Ancestress), used in most stone carvings and figurines, reflects "the stylized representation of a woman with a beloved child in the womb of his mother" (Kazhgali uly: 2003, 329). The private collection of Mrs. AR. Akilbekova, employee of the Kasteev Art Museum, contains a unique piece of jewelry from Western Kazakhstan, dated to the end of the XVIII - early XIX century. It is a silver pendant of anthropoid shape with clearly outlined head, torso and legs and (lost) hands, most likely formed into a necklace due to special settings. A large oval stone is set in the center of the body, framed by an ornamental thread, emphasizing the female hypostasis (see Fig. 1). It probably represents pregnancy or indicates the life-giving 'female organon'.



Figure 1. jewel: late XVIII - early. XIX Centuries
Private collection of A.R. Akilbekova. Photo by Shaigozova Zh.N.

Researcher O.B. Belyakova noted that 'Umai was depicted in later tradition primarily as the patroness and protector of pregnant women, expectant mothers, newborns, nursing mothers, and young children, as well as a domestic goddess, and was referred to as the goddess of fertility' (Belyakova: 1999, 251). The visible protuberances on her head have the shape of horns - the oldest symbol of the deity. In our opinion, the design of this pendant in its entirety could correspond to an ancient visualization of the female deity, and probably Umai - the ancient Turkic goddess.

Thus, the horse's pastern as a precursor to a child's doll connects sacred rite and play practice: 'ritual arises from play, while play is decadent ritual' (Tsiyvan: 2008, 58). It seems that in archaic and traditional culture, children were included in cult practice, which was an integral part of family or tribal life. Therefore, we can assume that girls who use cult-related objects (such as horse pastern) for their play practice are in some way modeling or mimicking female-adult life by entering the sacred world of adult women. The beliefs and rituals of the so-called 'child world' are, in fact, part of the 'female sphere'; women assume responsibility for protecting and performing most of the family's religious customs and rites (Toleubaev: 1972, 40). From today's point of view, such a simple object as a horse pastern in the archaic traditional society became an anthropomorphic fetish for an adult woman and a valuable toy for a child (motif of duplicity).

Origin of *Kuyrshak* terminology. Certain etymological versions of the term *Kuyrshak* are based on the linguistic and cultural approach. The term itself consists of two parts – '*kuyr*' and '*shak*'. The first part means 'charred' or 'burned' in a broader sense. Kazakhs use the suffix '*shak*' to emphasize something insignificant, small. The folk version connects the origin of '*kuyrshak*' with the meaning 'burned'. Another narrative about the origin of the doll refers to the legend of the first shaman personality Korkyt-Ata in Kazakh (Turkic) mythology. In the epic tale it is said that Korkyt-Ata introduced children's play practice. On the occasion of the wedding of Korkyt's children, he once decided to organize a party. Unable to find food for the reception, Korkyt simply designed clay cakes for dastarkhan (tablecloth for the reception) to replace real meals. Since that time, children have been making kogurchak while playing (Encyclopedic Handbook: 1999, 77).

Another theory links a possible origin of Kazakh *kuyrshak* to Tatar *kurtzak* (*konyrsak*), *kurchak* (*konyrchak*), and Kyrgyz *kurchak*. This term goes back to '*korsac*' – pot belly, '*korsaklu*' — pregnant (*kursaklu*, *korsaklu kal* — to become pregnant; (Kidekova, Kustova: 2012, 155). In Kazakh language the word *kursak* means not only *belly* and *abdomen*, but also symbolizes *uterus*, *womb*, *bosom*. It could be a simple phonetic form coincidence of Kazakh words *kursak* and *kuirshak*, but also a long forgotten mythological character on the symbolic-semantic level could play a role. It is probably a multi-level system of interrelated expressive terms. The identification of the *kuirshak* doll with the *womb* (or the transformation from the *womb*) has been confirmed. Semantically, the concepts are linked to the archetype of the Great Ancestral Woman (Uly Ana in Kazakh mythology), whose global essence is a 'begetting womb'. The woman/girl creates or 'gives birth' to the doll, and this is an act of creating and materializing her ideas/conceptions in the art form. In a way, this is a life experience in dealing with a 'childlike' object.

Analyzing the 'otherworld' in Turkic folklore, M. Sembi pointed out that the name *qurijagi* or 'sunset side' was used to name the dolls used in the treatment of infertile women or sick children (Sembi: 2013, 57). The use of dolls by Kazakh shamans in healing procedures has been frequently reported in ethnographic literature (Divaev: 1899, Karutts: 1903; Toleubaev 1991: 54; Basilov 1992: 152-154, etc.). The doll usually represents a girl or a young married woman. However, in the Russian Museum of Ethnology there is a horse skull found in 1907 in Kustanai uyezd (Oblast) by P.E.Ostrovsky. The explanation says: 'A *bak*sy (healer) wrapped a horse's head in the rags of an old dress of a sick woman and threw it on the road together with a picture of *djinns* as dolls (Basilov 1992: 152- 154). We examined the given skull and dolls in the exhibition 'Magical World of Dolls: Play, Ritual, Theater' (Russian Museum of Ethnology, February 27-September 8, 2019). They were two dolls as babies in white diapers with red heads (Fig. 2). The explanatory notes state, 'The nomads of Central Asia and Kazakhstan, the Kazakhs and the Kyrgyz, used dolls in their shamanistic practices ... Ritual dolls were made without a wooden centerpiece. They were woven from cotton fabrics and symbolized only a head and a body.' M. Sembi wrote about the Kazakh ritual dolls: '...they hid the doll, threw it far beyond the boundaries of the aul (settlement) or let it float down the river into the 'other world', i.e. west or north; the doll was designed in case of a child's sickness or a barren marriage; finally, they called a doll that became 'sick' due to the sick child 'west' - as the western cardinal direction to which the souls of the deceased children were transmigrated (Sembi: 2013, 58).



Figure 2. Horse skull with ritual dolls. Kazakhs. Early XX-th century. Eastern Kazakhstan, Akmola region., Pavlodar uyezdi. Russian Museum of Ethnography, photo by Shaigozova Zh.N.

Another explanation for the word *kuirshak* should be mentioned. In the same semantic and phonetic chain (as mentioned above) there is the expression '*köris shak*' which means '*someone who meets relatives*'. Probably, in the Turkic culture (see Table 2), a doll from the family of a young married woman's mother should remind her of her mother's hearth and sayings.

We would like to mention other types of dolls that are also part of the female sub-culture. One of them is closely connected with the funeral tradition. The 'toul' - the transfer of the soul to a doll - was widespread among the Turkic peoples of Central Asia as late as the beginning of the 20th century. According to travelers, among the Kazakhs '... the effigy of the deceased husband was usually made of a pillow, dressed in his clothes, and placed vertically in a corner behind a curtain. The common expression 'to make a toul' meant 'to become a widow'. ... the widow takes the doll to her bedside (Potanin 1883: 120). The women (wife, daughters, daughters-in-law, etc.) fed the dolls at a certain time; in addition, the women cried and praised the deceased, as was the rite.

The doll was an important symbolic figure in the Kazakh ceremonies of the Nauryz festival. A. Seydembek noted that the dolls occupy a special place in these festivals. For this purpose they bring an untrained stallion and put a worn saddle on its back; then a felt doll dressed in old clothes is placed on the stallion, an old bucket is tied to its tail. Then the stallion is let loose with the words '*Ulys tan atyp kaldy, bar elge khabar ber!*' (Seidembek: 2001, 216). Ethnographer Sh. Tokhtabaeva reports another type of Kazakh doll for the Nauryz festival: the large doll was dressed in a black costume to reflect the symbolic image of the *sukatyn* (water woman). This doll was used for visits to the houses of neighbors and for ritual music performances (Tokhtabaeva: 2017, 130). Most likely, the use of the water woman doll in Nauryz ceremonies goes back to the image of Zher-Su (earth-water), the ancient Turkic deity symbolizing the worship of water as the source of life.

In summary, the toy doll of the Kazakhs most likely goes back to the cult of the oldest female goddess. The 'dressed' horse pastern probably served as a cultural model. Its sacral substance and status have never been questioned. The doll played an essential role in various rites and cult ceremonies, as evidenced by numerous ethnographic studies and folk beliefs that have survived to the present day. It was firmly believed that if a girl did not play with dolls or did not possess them, she could become infertile. In other words, the doll was considered 'alive' and capable of stimulating fertility; traditional society encouraged play with dolls whenever possible. The practice of playing with dolls was forbidden in the evening, when evil spirits (gennies, devils, etc.) could 'awaken' and enter the doll and manipulate its owners.

The Kazakh kuyrshak: game practice as a female future prospect

The Kazakh soft-bodied doll or kuyrshak comes in various forms. In this article, three of them are mentioned: the cindery doll, the chee-gras doll, and the twig frame doll. There are few descriptions of the cindery doll by informants. Well-preserved specimens of Kazakh soft-bodied dolls made of twigs with wooden centerpiece are located in the Kuntskamera (Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography of the Russian Academy of Sciences), in the Russian Ethnographic Museum or in the Central Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan. In Kazakh museums there are only three dolls (museum pieces) from the middle of the twentieth century.

The Kuntskamera owns the oldest museum pieces of Kazakh Kuyrshak, which belong to two chronological periods: those designed before 1910 and those created after this date, but still at the beginning of the XX century. The present Kazakh doll collection was gathered during ethnographic fieldwork in selected Kazakh provinces (Semipalatinsk, South Kazakhstan and Akmola). These dolls have no facial markings. The head was wrapped with cotton and covered with cloth (mainly white cloth); the head was attached to a cross frame. The clothing followed the traditional costume, so it was possible to determine the sex and age status of the doll. For example, the collection contains the groom doll (no. 1287-102), the woman doll (no. 1749-13), the girl doll (no. 1749-11), the young married woman (no. 1287-74), etc. Clothing and headgear of the dolls corresponded to the costume, gender and age. The hairstyles of the dolls were made of threads or horsehair, the clothes were decorated with false jewelry.

There are about 50 specimens of Kazakh dolls exhibited in the Russian Ethnographic Museum (early XX century), which were also examined during the survey. Most of the dolls resembled the kuntskamera collection, but there were also some pieces with decorated faces: embroidered or painted eyes, lips and noses. These patterns are dated back to the 1930s.

In our surveys, we were unable to find any patterns of a Cindery doll (or a so-called Ash doll). Two of our informants - Aizhan Bekkulova (b. 1954) and Madeniet Nurlanova (b. 1951) – told us that this type of doll was used in rituals and sacred ceremonies related to the household. A ritual was semantically connected with a sacred ash substance. When moving or changing houses, a small amount of hearth ash was placed in a doll to protect it when moving to a new residence. There are also traditions about a chee-grass doll (so-called shi kuyrshak). During field research in Russian museums, the authors found a few specimens of simply made dolls with a chee-gras stem inside. They were primitively constructed and decorated with cloth patches, but their anthropomorphic form can be easily recognized. The length of the dolls varies between 20 and 25 cm. Chee-grass stem allows the toy to turn in all directions.

Generally, adults and children made the soft-bodied dolls themselves, using patches of cotton cloth. Grandmothers, mothers or older sisters designed dolls for younger girls. Then, when they were older, the young girls made them themselves, acquiring their first artistic and craft skills.

Most likely, the children's play itself is a construction of various domestic scenarios and a reproduction of adult life in a fictional mental reality. R. Karutz noted: '... A child is not occupied all day with intellectual pursuits and household activities; he still has enough time to relax, sleep, and play. This triple facilitates the child's preparation for entry into Kyrgyz (*Kazakh*) adult life. Here (and elsewhere), children acquire the skills necessary for later life: Girls dress dolls, boys carve small horses. Also, the girls design pets out of rags or bones, which are quite funny: A cattle lower jaw wrapped in

rags represents a camel, sometimes with saddle and reins. It is used for playing during the time of nomadic migration – for loading and unloading household luggage, etc. The horses are made of either local soft limestone or wood, often with movable legs. The saddles are marked by patches' (Karutz: 1903, 86).

Such «reproduction" of adult life in children's games explains the presence in archaeological and ethnographic finds of miniature versions of household objects, classified by experts as children's toys. During the excavations of the medieval settlement of Talgar in Zhetysu, fragments of animal figurines or various small bowls used as children's toys were found. The ceramic cradle from Otrar (about 6-7 cm long) was given to the Regional Museum of Local History in Shymkent. Kunstkamera and the Russian Ethnographic Museum have a large number of children's toy sets or scaled-down replicas of large household items (doll household): Cradles, yurts and their building parts, felt and embroidery rugs, all kinds of quilts (korpé), etc.

Toys and dolls that embodied small children, girls and boys, women and men, and also animals coexisted. In this way, children could participate in role-playing games that dealt with all aspects of the traditional nomadic way of life. Russian ethnographer I.V. Stasevich noted the lack of ethnographic material on children's games with dolls in XIX - mid XX century. She suggested that '... the essence of play was to re-enact scenes from everyday life. By playing with dolls, girls learned the basic social rules, the principles of age and gender composition in traditional society, and the norms of etiquette; they also learned to make and decorate clothes' (Stasevich: 2007, 167).

Thus, girls began to play with dolls at age 3; by age 5-6, girls were involved in homework and babysitting younger brothers and sisters. At this age and until the age of 10-11, girls applied their doll-playing skills with real objects. A 13-year-old girl was considered adult enough for marriage, and so the Kazakh proverb says '*On ushte – otau iesi*' (At 13 - mistress of the house), meaning the girl was sufficiently trained in house-keeping, crafts, etc. Since entering adulthood, the girl used the skills acquired while playing with dolls.

In traditional Kazakh society, numerous female relatives played an important role in the education of girls and in training and adapting their skills during their childhood and adolescence. From the very beginning, girls' education was aimed at preparing them for their future life as women. At that time, *kuyrshak* in its entirety was of great importance. Playing with dolls and later with younger siblings, the girl learned most of the inner and outer aspects of her future role as wife, lover and mother. Therefore, we believe that the doll/*kuyrshak* shouldn't be considered only as an educational tool. It goes back to the existential essence of the Great Ancestress - *Uly Ana* - and reflects the original female role - *caring for the offspring, the husband and the community as a whole*. It could be that the girl stopped playing with dolls at the age of 13 because another life lay ahead of her.

Original (artist) kuyrshak or the phenomenon of doll art in Kazakhstan

The events in the art life of Kazakhstan in the last three or four years have finally shown the revival of doll art. Currently, a number of doll art enterprises are successfully operating, such as Creative Seasons (director: Elena Borovikova), Dolls Universe Center (director: Larissa Sologub), Kazakhstan Dolls (director: Gulfarida Dzhanियarova) and others. Modern artisans use a variety of materials, techniques and methods for doll making. The dolls produced embody different eras and styles, characters and themes. Most of these dolls reflect Kazakh identity.

Aizhan Bekkulova, a famous artisan who makes traditional Kazakh dolls, is also an experienced master in designing traditional textiles. Her doll creations are made of wood, ceramics, fabric and felt. She decorates the doll costumes with beads, coins and national ornaments. A distinctive feature of Bekkulova's dolls are the huge eye amulets. Each doll has its own name, for example: *Magripa-apa*, *Pagan*, *Apotrope*, *Big-eyed Goddess* and others. Aizhan Bekkulova believes that the doll frame made of two cross-shaped rods symbolizes the sun and the four corners of the earth. Therefore, the dolls weren't placed in a cradle for playing, but to protect the family from evil spirits.

Another famous Kazakh doll maker – Mrs. Gulfarida Dzhanıyarova – is a member of the International Organization of Original Dolls. Her collection includes more than 250 dolls. The artist decorates the costumes of the dolls with modern materials: DAS fimo, paper glue, natural fur, gold embroidery, semi-precious stones, rhinestones. The special series 'Dolls in Kazakh Costumes' aims to reconstruct and portray the characters of Kazakh folk tales, myths and legends. The most outstanding doll portraits are: Hunter with Golden Eagle; Tomiris, the Queen of Saka; Genghis Khan, Warlord; the White Shaman and other great figures from the history of nomadic civilization. This project was awarded numerous Kazakh and international diplomas and awards for handicraft design. As the artist noted, she tried to design a separate world and environment for each doll; she was also confident that the White Shaman doll was able to fulfill any sincere desire of the applicant.

The dolls created by Mrs. Gulnara Hamza are in great demand among the connoisseurs. The artist makes only doll brides, and the dolls are dressed in the national Kazakh wedding suits with *saukele* (traditional women's hat). The dolls' clothes are decorated with beads following ancient symbolic Kazakh ornaments. The artist uses a variety of decorative elements, and the dolls' clothes are always in bright and bold colors - red, green, blue, white, etc. As a rule, the dresses are decorated with traditional jewelry - rings, bangles, *sholpy* (traditional hair ornaments), earrings and *alka* (chest-like amulets).

Ms. Kulbayram Auezbayeva is a hereditary artisan: her father was a blacksmith and also passed on to her the skills of making clay and wooden toys. Now the artist has her own small workshop (atelier) for making traditional toys with emphasis on dolls. Wood, felt, beads - these are the main materials used for doll making. Doll suites are always elegant and bright. The artist named her favorite doll Karlygash (*a swallow*). This is one of the most common female names in Kazakhstan. The artist hopes that her doll "Karlygash" will become one of the first swallow (sign of good) in "doll" making business in Kazakhstan.

Ms. Rakhata Sapargalievna, a stage painter and set designer of the Zhambyl Provincial Theater, has a passion for making traditional dolls. She is the author of numerous stage designs and stage dresses for Kazakh epics such as 'Enlik-Kebek', 'Kos zhebe' and others. In her collection of authors there are a number of unique dolls. One of them - *the Amazon of the Steppe* - was made of felt. A young girl is sitting on her knees, stretching a bowstring. The girl's back is as straight as the bowstring; she has a proud posture with her head held high, her gaze directed forward. The miniature doll is similarly detailed as a textile sculpture. She conveys a unique feeling of warmth and lightness with her elegance and soft pastel colors.

In general, modern Kazakh doll designers draw inspiration from folk figures and tend to express national identity through material, technique and personality. One can recognize in the dolls the well-known figures from Kazakh myths, legends and fairy

tales such as Aldar Kose, Kozy Korpesh and Bayan Sulu. Therefore, the artisans also create doll talismans and symbolic mascots, special doll symbols and doll amulets. These special dolls are universal and universally recognized. This is a new approach to the traditional doll. Most artisans consider the process of doll design as a kind of rite, where they can leave behind the hectic modern life with its daily routine and vanity.

Conclusion

Consideration of the Kuyrshak phenomenon as an integral part of the female subculture has revealed the unity of sacred and secular aspects in the transformation of the cultural practice of the traditional Kazakh doll. The traditional doll functioned both as a cult attribute in ritual practices and in children's play practices - as a means of education and a socialization tool. Comparative study of routine female rites in the household with children's play practices revealed numerous relics of matriarchy, such as fertility, blessing, protective care, and domestic skills, that continued almost to the beginning of the XX century.

The traditional doll always reflected existing ethnic or local traditions. In play, children recreated various life situations, naturally taking into account the norms and rules of behavior of each ethnic group. Starting from the homemade dolls they played with, the children learned the important lessons of socialization and harmony with the environment in the outside world, which, we believe, are the foundations of the way of life of the traditional nomadic society and the ritual practice that supports it.

This is also supported by the etymology of the Kazakh word 'oiyn' (game). The semantics of the root word '-oi' means 'thought', and its derivation 'oiyn' (play) as the result of imagination and thinking, then the word 'oiynshyk' carries a semantic object for the work of imagination, the result of imagination, the means of developing intellectual abilities (Nurpeis 2012: 18). This process of playing and learning facilitated the acquisition of visible and profound features of ethnic culture. Perhaps this was a cultural mechanism of the Kuyrshak until the mid-20th century, when European-style dolls dominated the scene.

As part of the revival of Kazakhstan's traditional culture, the renewal of doll art should also be mentioned. The characters of these art dolls vary from folk personalities to symbolic figures, each of them being considered a valuable gift and work of art. The medieval and modern Kazakh dolls preserve the same specific, reverent feminine attitude of a woman, even a genetically deep affection, which they carry into the 21st century.

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