

Traditions of the Yakut winter clothing

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Abstract—This article gives an analysis of Yakut winter clothing and personal protective equipment against the cold (protectors), which were obsolete in the early 20th century, and are now stored in various museums. The authors focus on the description of the material, manufacturing technology, and functional heat-protective properties of traditional winter clothing and protectors.

Keywords—clothes, fur, protection from cold, originality, uniqueness, technology of processing

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the scientific interest in the complex analysis of clothing in the general system of material and spiritual culture of the Yakuts has increased. There are quite thorough studies of historical-ethnographic, art criticism and culturological nature devoted to the analysis of structural-semantic and artistic-constructive features of Yakut traditional clothing. First of all, the work of art critic R.S. Gavrilieva should be noted [1], which dedicated to the historical and ethnographic study of traditional Yakut clothes. In the first chapter, R.S. Gavrilieva examined the everyday and ceremonial functions of the elements of clothing: leggings, *nataznik*, *nabedrennik*. L.N. Rastorgueva [2] in her studies considered a very important problem of modern development and methods of designing clothes based on the traditional technology of making Yakut clothes. However, in her work, the analysis of traditional means of individual protection against cold (protectors) was very fragmentary; the main emphasis was placed on modern technological methods of manufacturing protectors. The semantic structure and symbolic complex of ritual kinds of Yakut clothes were examined, but the heat-protective function of clothing remained unstudied, since the main emphasis was placed on the ritual-ceremonial function of clothing [3]. Some elements of antique protectors, such as fur boa, *nagrudnik* were considered in the work of M.A. Tyrylgina [4]. Art criticism of the Yakut folk costume is reflected in the works of art critics Z. Ivanova-Unarova [5] and Z.M.

Zabolotskaya [6], in which some types of outerwear and special heaters from the collection of the American Museum of Natural History are analyzed from the point of view of art criticism. Despite this, there are some problems in the reconstruction of clothing and traditional individual means of protection from the cold, and its adaptation in the modern sociocultural space.

The purpose of this article is to analyze traditional winter clothes and reconstruct the complex of personal protective equipment from cold according to materials of republican and Russian museums and on the materials of the authors.

II. METHODOLOGY

In this article, ethnographic materials collected by researchers from the department of folklore of culture from the collections of the Russian Ethnographic Museum (hereinafter referred to as the REM, St. Petersburg, 1997), the Asian sector of the American Museum of Natural History (hereinafter AMNH, New York, USA, 2015.), Khabarovsk Territory Museum named after N.I. Grodekova (KTM, 2014) and field materials of the culturological expedition to the state of Nepal (2003) were used. Interesting materials were taken from the collection of funds of republican and ulus museums of the local lore of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia). Some types of winter Yakut clothes and protectors have been preserved in the collections of these museums.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Yakutia in terms of its natural and climatic conditions is the most severe territorial and climatic zone for living. Nevertheless, the peoples inhabiting this vast territory, including the Yakuts, effectively engaged in all types of hunting, economic activities. Their necessary adaptation to low temperatures, strong frosts sometimes reaching up to 50-60 degrees below zero, influenced the need to dress in multi-component clothes, mainly from fur and skins of domestic and

wild animals. In such unusually harsh climatic conditions, the Yakuts were very resourceful in terms of the utilitarianity and suitability of their traditional clothes for low temperatures, and devised a complex of various individual protective equipment against cold - protectors.

Formation of traditional clothing occurred in several stages:

Ancient ritual clothing (until the middle of the XVIII century) during the heyday of traditional ritual culture refers to the first stage. The connection of clothes with religion was great: horned headgear, fur coats with an eagle, sleeveless "tangalay", etc. The ethnic features of the philosophical world view were vividly expressed in the wedding women's and men's suits of this period. Materials of clothing were fur, a skin of domestic and wild animals, processed by special, hand-made leather technology. Clothing of this time was distinguished by the absence or presence of a small standing collar, the presence of side incisions and a shorter length. Additional types of fur insulation - protectors used widely.

The second stage was formed from the middle of the XVIII to the XX century, when the appearance of clothing actively changed in separate elements, reflecting the cultural influence of other peoples. In clothes, the quantity of beadwork was reduced, due to cheaper imported finishing materials such as tinsel, silk thread. The craftsmen introduced European elements into the cut of clothing: a collar, a pocket, pouffe and cuffs. From the middle of the XIX century, a general dress changed, which acquired a significantly Russified look, still satisfying the national taste, it became more original in style, acquired a colorful brightness, a beautiful shape.

The third stage is the stage of the disappearance of traditional clothing, including wedding clothes, during the Soviet era. From the beginning of the XX century, in connection with the development of public life of the people, clothing took a decorative character. The fur original elements and clothes additions, designed to protect from the cold, disappeared; religious rituals gradually began to be forgotten; and together with them, the types of ceremonial clothing disappeared. The dressing was completely Russified. Metal decorations disappeared. Traditional clothing, thus, lost its functional significance.

The fourth stage began from the 1990s of the XXth century, in connection with the implementation of the policy of state sovereignty in the republic. The people began to show interest in the origins of their national culture, including traditional clothing, as cult rites, folklore, material and spiritual culture revived. Craftsmen and fashion designers began the reconstruction of Yakut clothes. Due to modern fashion requirements, types of model, stage, avant-garde clothing with elements of folk costume appeared.

Modern work on the study of the features of technological processing of Yakut clothes show that the sewing technology (duplication, i.e., the fur coating

of fur), the constructive decision of clothes (large volume) and its decorative finish (wide fringing in two or three fur row on the edge of the bottom of clothing, sleeves, rear incision of the back and forearm) [3, 6].

Treated skins of domestic and wild animals used outside the outer clothing, as decorative finishes, and on the inside - as insulation materials. Ancient masters tried to convey to the rough skin of any animal a special softness and elasticity, which was achieved by giving them pleasant qualities, such as cleanness of the pile, smoothness and beautiful coloring. The first contradictory descriptions of the traditional fabrication of materials for clothing made of leather and skins belong to K.K. Neiman and V.L. Seroshevsky. According to the first, the skin "made in Yakutsk" had a very low quality [7], and, in the opinion of V.L. Seroshevsky, the Yakuts were dressed in beautiful, soft leather with good quality, which is hardly subject to the influence of dampness [8]. Materials from museum collections show that the Yakuts used quality leather like other northern peoples; this is an indisputable proof of their age-old originality of manufacturing technology.

Fur archaic types of clothing are mainly mentioned in the documents of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. On a long journey, men and women wore a fur coat (fur outside) (*sangyjah (arbagas, kennyugehs, hotojdoooh son)*) over fur, leather short coats. In many cases, these fur coats are without lining, but sometimes the inner lining of them is cloth [8, 9]. Road coats are long, which contributed to protection from the cold along the entire length of the person. They are sewn from fox skins or from the skins of a deer, a beaver, a lynx; a lining is made from a combination of skins squirrels and an ermine, since they are more wear-resistant. For the lining of one fur coat, mostly used about 250-300 hides of squirrels or an ermine. In the past there were also cloth fur coats with fur lining, which necessarily had a cut from behind with a fur edge on the whole edge of the clothes, so that the inside of the clothes did not penetrate the cold air. The lower part of the fur coat greatly expanded, due to additional inserts (*kokuora onoo*). Such inserts were used for practical purposes: by expanding the clothing with such inserts, when riding on horseback or sitting on a sleigh, the front of the clothing was tightly wrapped, thus protecting well from the cold feet and inguinal part. As described in the material of the All-Russian Hygienic Exhibition "The sleeves on the shoulders have pouffe with free space for accumulation of air warmed by the shoulder joints, which significantly protects these joints from the common cold ..." [4]. The buffers on many fur coats from the museum funds also have a fur edge, which undoubtedly protected the shoulder from the cold. The front part of the fur coat is fastened with a two-sided deep odor, thus protecting the chest from the strong wind. Fur collars are wide to protect the occipital part of the head, and the sleeves are long and also are trimmed with fur.

These kinds of clothes include a smart fur coat (*buuktaah son*), which became the property of the richer, eminent representatives of the society, since in

the decoration of clothing other than expensive furs, mainly used silver and gold embroidery, expensive silk and cloth fabrics that were inaccessible to the poor population. Richly decorated coats are stored in the funds of REM, AMNH, KTM. A special feature of the costume is the protruding wing-shaped inserts on the side seams along the waist line of the fur coat (*kokuora onoo*), which were used for practical purposes as an element that widens the lower part of the clothing and simultaneously protects the lower body from frost during long riding [3].

There is a similarity of the Yakut fur coat (*buuktaah son*) with a Khakas wedding fur coat (*idektig ton*) with fur lining, rim and with the women's outerwear among some ethnic groups of Tibetan nationalities. According to the author's observations, they are identical in the use of the material, in the cut and decorating. The Yakut fur coat (*buuktaah son*) was lined with silk fabric and fur along the edges, it has a wide collar. Butanaev V.Ya. describes that the collar of the Khakass fur coat, from the otter's or the beaver's fur, was lined with an expensive silk rim [10].

In some cases, men's outerwear is covered with sable fur along the sides, hem and rear incision (4 cm) and tied with three to four pairs of buckskin straps. She also had a fur lining [11].

A distinctive feature of Yakut clothing is multi-structure. Men and women wore a double headdress: the lower bonnets of fur tightly fitted their head, the top fur hats had a large volume. Usually, several types of fur caps, wolves, foxes, wolverines and sables were used in the design of the hats; they also had internal padding from the fur of small animals-hares, squirrels, ermine or from the fox's legs, which facilitated strengthening the heat-protective function of clothing. Detailed descriptions of the headgear can be found in archival materials. For example, the ethnographer S.I. Bolo noted that the edge of the cap (*nuogajdaah behrgehseh*) was sewn from the skin of a black one-year-old foal with fluffy fur. Its occipital part was sewn from the thin skin of a black colt, without the undercoat, and the rim of the occipital part - from the skin of a solitary one-year-old foal with fluffy hair. Summer versions of the headdress were sewn from various pieces of fur, leather and fabric, which were also worn in the winter, under the top hat. The poor were wearing headdresses from duck skins (*kus battaga behrgehseh*), from calf skin (*torbos battaga behrgehseh*), from the processed bladder of animal (*habah behrgehseh*); however, the design of these headdresses was very original.

The hat of *djabaka* also had an interesting design, which consisted of several parts. The front fur part of the hat was called *kharata* (black side), which reliably protected the frontal part of the head. The back of the fur cap was called *jurune* (white side). The trimmed fur of the cap was called *buoduta*, and the fur lower part of the back was called the *khadiaasina*, which was long and completely covered the occipital part of the head and shoulder [9]. In the nineteenth century, a fox hat was a man's smart headgear. It had a cylindrical shape

and resembled the hat of the Southern Altaians - *altai berik*. Inside, the hat was lined with fur, covered with fox fur on the outside. On the lower edge, it was covered with fur of a fur seals or Kamchatka beaver.

In the harsh winter conditions, the Yakuts protected themselves from the cold by original and convenient devices - personal protective equipment such as a fur collar, *nalobnik* (a special piece of processed skin to protect one's forehead from cold), *nanosnik* (a special piece of processed skin to protect one's nose from cold), *zapyastnik* (a special piece of processed skin to protect one's wrist from cold), *nabedrennik* (a special piece of processed skin to protect one's thigh from cold), *nagrudnik* (a special piece of processed skin to protect one's breast from cold), *nataznik* (a special piece of processed skin to protect one's pelvis from cold), etc. They were very simple in design, mostly rectangular and cylindrical in shape; their inner lining was necessarily padded with fur and snugly fit so that cold air did not penetrate.

Heaters, which were put under their clothes, were mainly made of rabbit fur; heaters, which in addition to the main function, had an aesthetic function, especially women, sewed from sable skins, foxes and decorated with beads, embroidery, metal plaques. For example, the complex of the *nalobnik - syys sabyyta* with a chin warmer - *seniye samnaga* from the Yakut collection of V.Iohelson (AMNH) is embroidered with gold embroidery. In winter, fur wrists, *nanosnik* were also convenient.

The Yakuts protected respiratory organs with a long fur collar (*boa*) - *moyotoruk* and *nagrudnik* - *tyusyulyuk*. "They hide a chin, a mouth, cheeks, a part of a nose in a collar. They breathe through the collar; the coldness of the swallowed air is slightly tempered in the severe cold. When the breath moistens the collar so much that touching it becomes unpleasant, they turn the collar with the other side; while the wet part quickly dries up in the frosty air and, when shaken, completely clears the fur". (12, p. 262) The collar was very comfortable and versatile, well protected from the cold by the anterior thoracic part, throat and occiput. Traditional Yakut *boa-moyotoruk* sewed from 100-150 pretreated squirrel tailings, by threading on a string. Depending on the number of strung tailings, they are of different lengths, sometimes reaching 1.5-2 m. The length of the *boa* from the historical and local lore museum of the Maya village has a length of 115 cm in the outer circle, the diameter of its cross section is 11 cm. Collars of rabbit hides and fox tails are rarely found in museum funds.

There were *boa* with a kind of element used to shake ice from the collar. The only copy of such a fur *boa* is kept in the Museum of Ethnopedagogy of the Upper-Viluisky ulus. The element consists of seven brightly colored patches of silk fabrics and has an elongated pentagonal shape with tassels at the bottom.

Fur *nagrudnik - tyusyulyuk* has a trapezoid shape. It can be short or long in its construction. Long *nagrudniks* were tied behind the neck and lower at the waist and thus perfectly protected the chest from the

cold. Female *nagrudniks* were usually embroidered with colored thread or beads. Also in the book of V.L. Seroshevsky, there is a material about a man's *nagrudnik* decorated with metal plaques [8].

Interesting additional elements of outer clothing are waist types of clothing: abdominal band - *baacchy*, *nabedrennik* - *belepchi*. The first of them is a wide fur belt with fur inside, perfectly protecting the lower part of the abdomen from cold. V.F. Troshchansky notes that the Yakuts "carry the abdomen band all winter" [12]. According to the description of Z. Ivanova-Unarova, interesting specimens of the abdominal cavity are stored in the American Museum of Natural History. As the author notes the first of them is sewn from a rabbit hide, and the second is made of fox skin and decorated with metal plaques from the outside [5].

Early information about the *nabedrennik* was in the work of Sarychev G.A. He pointed out that "sufficient Yakuts in excess of the dress wear two *nabedrenniks* tied to the waist, consisting of two quadruple scraps of red and blue cloth" [13]. *Nabedrenniks* were fur-trimmed. The materials of the album "The National Decorative and Applied Arts of Kyrgyzstan" contain interesting information about the fact that this kind of clothing of the Yakuts and Western Buryats probably inherited from the Kurykans - their common Turkic ancestors in the Baikal region and the Kirghiz from the Yenisei Kyrgyz. The name derived from the ancient Turkic language "bel", which means the lower back [14]. The Yakutian *nabedrennik* - *belepchi* was mainly designed to protect fur coats from rubbing while riding, and also had a function of protection from the cold.

A warm *nataznik* - *sialdia*, worn in the winter, was sewn from the skin with fur inside, and a summer *nataznik* - *saryy sialdia* was sewn from soft silken suede. There is information that in the long journey, the Yakuts were put under the *nataznik* - heater with fur on the outside for the inguinal part - *haba khata* (literally translated "sac for the bladder"). Its design was interesting, it had the shape of cowards, but it was completely open from two sides, tied side by side with four leather ties. The most interesting part was the back, in which there was a special incision cut. Such an original kind of warm clothes, for sure, was convenient during cold long trips and perfectly warned against diseases of female organs and kidneys.

Yakuts in the old days had many kinds of household, road and hunting gloves. The latter sewed from the claws of a fox, a wolf, a dog's fur.

The mittens were fur outside and inside. For the lining of the inner side, hare, fox and squirrel were used. Northern reindeer herders of Yakut were spreading mittens, reached the elbow, were sewn from bear hide or deer fur to the outside, with hooded mittens embedded in the inside [15]. Children's mittens were sewed with fur inside and without fingertips, with long roving matings; they were called *kupchuu*.

Almost all kinds of mittens had a cross-section at the wrist from the palm and hand - *uostaah yitylyuk* (literally: mittens with a slit), which allowed to take out

hands for work without removing mittens, while the back of hands remained covered. A more detailed description of the meaning of the mitten with a slit was left by R.K. Maak: "During the road or hunting, it is necessary to put out hands in severe frosts to tie or untie a belt, to fix the traps set for small animals, to take fish out of the nets. In all such cases, the incision on mittens is a very practical adaptation" [9]. Mittens of this type were also padded with fur.

In winter, during work in the frost, it was very convenient to wear fur lining without fingers with straps - *balepchi*, which were worn under the mitt. Information on the existence of lining from the skin of a water rat is available in the dictionary of E.K. Pekarsky [16]. "The Yakuts were wearing furry fingertips from a rabbit hide on each finger on a long road under the mittens."

The Legguard and the lining for the back of the hand have a common name - *belepchi*.

Hunting fur shoes with high bootlegs - fur *kuruma* and *buurpeh* of suede refer to warm footwear. One copy of this kind of footwear is stored in the REM funds. These shoes were usually worn by hunters, it was very convenient for passing in deep snow, in swampy places; it was processed in such a way that it did not get wet.

The winter footwear also included fur leggings - *suturuo*. The fur leggings are usually attached to *nataznik*, reach the ankles of the legs. The upper edges deeply covered the armholes of *nataznik*. They were sewn from suede or fur depending on the season. Such a peculiar kind of clothing from the component parts was due to harsh climatic conditions. Interesting leggings from the fur of the loon was found in the Zhigansk historical local history museum. Obviously, the fur of the loon was used because of the waterproof properties. *Nataznik* with fur leggings made up a uniform, replacing the pants.

Special types of winter shoes include fur knee pads, stockings and very short fur shoes - *oloochchu*. Yakuts sewed this shoe fur inside and were worn over the main fur shoe in winter on a long trip. *Oloochchu* was very convenient for long journeys; *oloochchu* was removed and dried at the stake at stops. The winter road shoe kit consists of stockings sewn from cloth or from deer legs - *charaas keenchi*. The Yakuts put on a second pair, warmer fur stockings - *iesteh keencha*, over such stockings; only after that they put on the main footwear of reindeer skin - *eterbes*. *Keenchi* made of veal, foals and tansy skins were sewed in fur inside. Cloth stockings were sewn inside a rabbit skin, sometimes with a lining of fine fabric. Cut of *keenchi* were almost the same as that of leather shoes, but more simplified form and without socks. Samples of such stockings were found in the man's burial No. 27 by I.V. Konstantinov. These were two pairs of stockings made of veal hides inward. The third pair is made up of scraps of fox skins with fur inside [11]. Hunters are putting on fur *keenchi* at the present time.

Legs were also warmed with linings made of dry hay or fur. In the same way, the mittens were also insulated with the embedding of hay and fur into the inside. Also there were lining of horsehair - *ugunnya*. In addition, they were available and perfectly preserved heat-shielding properties. Interesting notes about the order of dressing shoes from the Yakuts was written by VL. Seroshevsky: "Gathering on the road, the Yakut, first of all, will change the lining from the dry grass in the shoes, then put on the bare leg stockings from the hare or calfskin skin with fur down, then put on small slippers of the same fur with hair outside, and pull the boots on top of everything. Knee pants are always thrust into the shanks; and on them stretch the road fur knee - *suturio*, wool outside. The knee pads are pulled tight under the knee, and tie up to the copper rings of the pants at the top. They reach the groin and freely grip the thigh and protect them from snow, rain, wind, because the bottom dress must remain dry. Arriving at the place, the Yakut, first of all, removes the *suturuo*" [8].

IV. CONCLUSION

Thus, the ancient Yakut winter clothing was very practical and convenient in low temperatures. The heat-protective function of clothing was determined by the use of fur materials and the constructive cut of the clothing itself. Its unique design, finish and unique additional means of individual protection from the cold, gave a large volume to the figure, but they reliably provided a comprehensive protection of the person from the cold and cold. Yakuts used fur, hide of domestic animals, wild animals, fur-bearing animals as material for clothing. By the beginning of the 20th century, these unique types of clothing were out of use, due to the import and spread of European types of clothing. As artifacts of material culture, they become only a matter of consideration and admiration. It should be noted that at present, hunters use certain elements, like fur lining of shoes. When making winter clothes and their additional elements, the wizards used to pay special attention to their life-supporting function, but the aesthetic function was not forgotten. Winter clothes were decorated with embroidery of colored and gold threads, beads in combination with silver metal plaques, they were not only very warm, but were beautiful, elegant and comfortable to use.

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