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BOOK REVIEWS

Waleriy P. Krasilnikov: *Igri i sostyahzaniyah w traditziionnom fizicheskom vospitanii Khantov (Games and competitions in traditional physical education of the Khanty people)*, Yekaterinburg 2002;

Waleriy P. Krasilnikov: *Igri i sostyahzaniyah v vospitatyelnim protsessyeh finno-oogorskikh i samodiyskikh narodov (Games and competitions in education of Finno-Ugric and Samoyedic peoples)*, Yekaterinburg 2003;

Waleriy P. Krasilnikov: *Ethnopedagogicheskiye osnovi traditziinnogo fizicheskogo vospitaniyach koryennikh narodov Sibiri (Ethno-pedagogical foundations of traditional physical education of indigenous peoples of Siberia)*, Rossiyskiy Gosoodarstvyenni Universitet, Yekaterinburg 2004.

W.P. Krasilnikov's three works constitute a three-part monograph devoted to cultural issues and ethnographic uniqueness of physical education among various peoples of Siberia. The monograph is a remarkable study of the "theater of life" of indigenous peoples or ethnic groups of North Siberia. This "theater of life" has been, on the one hand, determined by harsh natural and climatic conditions of Siberia, and on the other hand, by progressive globalization and its impact on the level of civilization of the native Siberians.

Krasilnikov's works reflect the current Russian policy towards its ethnic minorities. In 2006, together with UNESCO Russia commenced a multimedia project called *Living Together, Remaining Diverse: The Faces of Russia* aimed at preservation of the ethnic and cultural legacy of more than 140 nations of the Russian federation. The project promotes cultural diversity and heritage of the indigenous peoples as well as development of intercultural communication. One of its most important postulates is overcoming national stereotypes and prejudices and promoting tolerance and understanding. These are significant aims, especially in the vivid context of manifestations of ethnocentrism or even chauvinism in some social spheres of post-Soviet Russia. One of elements of the current policy of the Russian federal government is providing access to schools for children from nomadic tribes from the outermost regions of Siberia with extreme weather conditions. The newly established nomadic schools are attended by a few students who are provided with a decent education in their natural surroundings. These institutions also try to adapt modern civilization standards to the traditional culture of nomadic peoples.

Krasilnikov's books play an important cognitive function. The author introduces the readers to the complexity of life, history, living conditions, cultural norms of behavior, activities and mentalities of the Siberian indigenous nations. The author's intention is to fully understand this complexity to effectively cross the interethnic and cultural barriers and challenge stereotypes, prejudices and the feeling of superiority to the other "faces." Such unintended haughtiness can be exemplified by the plethora of Russian ethnic jokes about the stereotypical slow-witted Chukchi people.

The contents of the reviewed books can be divided into two parts. The first part includes:

1. ethnographic data on peoples of North Siberia and their history,
2. information about the natural and climatic conditions of Siberia,
3. characteristics of supra-ethnic and specifically ethnic cultural artifacts of the North Siberian peoples.

The second, more extensive part constitutes a detailed description of traditional physical education among the indigenous peoples of Siberia.

There are about 140 non-Russian ethnic groups living in the present-day Russian Federation. The vast majority of them are indigenous, settled or nomadic, peoples which have been inhabiting North and South Siberia and Sakhalin from time immemorial. At present, these peoples live in five republics (Tuva, Yakutia, Altai, Buryatia, Khakassia) and ten autonomous oblasts of the Russian Federation. The most numerous nation are the Yakuts (c. 450 thousand) followed by the Buryats (c. 420 thousand), Altays

(c. 70 thousand), Khakas (c. 80 thousand) and Tuvans (c. 206 thousand). However, the majority of non-Russian Siberians are fairly scarce indigenous groups. Some of these groups number fewer than 1,000 members; others a few thousand.

From the 17th century on the territory of Siberia inhabited by the northern indigenous peoples was gradually incorporated into the Russian state. Formally, this area remained also under jurisdiction of the Eastern Orthodox Church, however, the native non-Christian beliefs were tolerated. The Russian provincial governors expressly prohibited waging wars between Siberian nations (partially, in the interest of Russian administration itself). The toleration of native religious beliefs and the ban on local wars were two positive aspects of Russian imperial rule in Siberia. However, in the Soviet times the traditional ways of life of the non-Russian population of Siberia were systematically restricted. The Soviets tried to introduce collectivization of agriculture in the area, however, to little avail. European and Soviet standards of management and education, including physical education, were forcefully implemented. The Soviet administration began establishing the so-called national boarding schools. Siberian children were taken away from their parents by force to be educated in those institutions. The compulsory implementation of Russian standards led to profound changes in the centuries-old traditional upbringing in Siberia. Alcoholism became a serious social problem; a drastic decrease in population growth was also observed. These policies against the native populations were similar to those of other countries, e.g. Australia. By the end of Soviet rule a slow reversal of the peoples of Siberia to the native cultural standards was noted in the context of protection of human rights and individual freedoms.

W.P. Krasilnikov divides the indigenous peoples in Siberia into six groups depending on their ways of life and habitat: 1) taiga and tree line tundra roaming hunters-fishermen, 2) settled fishermen in the basins of great rivers and lakes, 3) settled hunters of Arctic sea animals, 4) nomadic taiga reindeer herders and fishermen, 5) tundra and tundra tree line nomads, 6) steppe and forest-steppe cattle herders.

In his three books Krasilnikov gives an overview of natural and climatic conditions in different Siberian latitudes. He shows that

extreme weather equally determines the ways of life, material artifacts and occupations of the native inhabitants. The material culture of Siberian peoples includes such elements as:

- dwellings: yurts, chums (mobile conical tents made of reindeer hides), yarangas;
- various sorts of clothing for children, women, men as well as for particular occupations;
- products and tools designed for play, games and physical education for people of different ages;
- hunting and fishing tools.

The author makes a number of interesting remarks about the cultural uniqueness of the indigenous peoples of Siberia. According to Krasilnikov the traditional cultural artifacts of all peoples/ethnicities are related to the creation of the image of an *ideal/perfect man*, who is able to cope with harsh, often extreme, living and working conditions. Some artifacts from traditional cultures of Siberian peoples share common supraethnic characteristics. They include religious beliefs, oral traditions, gender-based traditional social roles and a common mentifact related to the ideal of physical education. The dominant traditional religious beliefs of Siberian indigenous people are shamanism and Tibetan Buddhism. There are also certain totemic forms of belief, e.g. bear cult, and animist worship.

The Siberian oral tradition includes epics, war songs, tales, and legends about ideal heroes. The oral literature is a reflection of the indigenous peoples' spiritual world, their naive life philosophy, national identity, community bonds and, finally, it also presents important models to follow.

What is common for the cultures of all Siberian nations is a well-founded imperative of universal physical education for all. This concept is implemented at each stage of one's life.

On the other hand, some specific, ethnic cultural phenomena are manifested in the diversity of religious worship, folk traditions, and forms of physical culture such as games, pastimes and sports. Other specifically ethnic cultural artifacts may be customs, rituals and artistic products, e.g. sculptures, ornaments, clothing and household objects.

The second, much more extensive, part of the contents of the reviewed books is devoted to an analysis of traditional physical education of Siberian indigenous peoples. In his first two books

Krasilnikov describes games, pastimes and physical competitions of the Khanty and the Finno-Ugric peoples (Chukchi, Koryaks, etc.), respectively. Krasilnikov's third, most comprehensive work is a synthesis of his own research on ethno-pedagogical foundations of physical education of indigenous peoples of Siberia.

The second part of the contents of the three-part monograph focuses on two major subject areas: ethno-pedagogical uniqueness of physical education, and methods and forms of physical education.

According to W.P. Krasilnikov the ethno-pedagogical specificity of physical education among the indigenous Siberian peoples has been determined by the natural, climatic, existential and cultural conditions. From babyhood, through early childhood to adolescence it has always been both parents' obligation to harden the child's body to the cold, e.g. by bathing the baby in snow or ice-cold water. In later stages of life young people develop muscle force in particular body parts, are introduced to physical labor, develop resistance to cold and hunger day and night at different seasons of the year, and build up physical and mental endurance, cunning and courage. The development of all these properties has been regulated and propagated by cultural standards, oral tradition and by following the adults. In the context of parental obligations and survival in harsh conditions the ethno-pedagogical rules of physical education have been formulated.

The ethno-pedagogical foundations of methods and forms of traditional physical education of indigenous Siberian peoples are determined by their living and household conditions, community views, religious beliefs and naïve folk philosophy. All these factors constitute a rich potential of ways to achieve the fundamental objective of physical education: development of an *ideal/perfect man* able to survive in extreme conditions. This *ideal/perfect man* is:

- a perfect hunter and fisherman;
- a great and valiant warrior;
- an accurate archer, spearman, axman, slinger and roper;
- a skillful reindeer herder;
- an assiduous runner, swimmer, jumper and rower;
- a capable weight lifter;

- resistant to hunger, cold, fatigue and other adversities.

The above properties of the popular image of *ideal man* are the constituent aims of physical education and determine its means and methods.

In the broad context of ethno-pedagogical considerations W.P. Krasilnikov presents an impressive inventory of forms and means of physical education. The basic methods of achievement of desired ontogenetic properties include imitation, fitness exercises, the use of acquired skills in ludic activities, competitions, and training the future social roles of a hunter, fisherman, herder, craftsman, etc.

In terms of gender and age (1-3 years, 3-6 years, 6-14 years, over 14 years) the author distinguishes the following forms of physical education: 1. children's plays and games; 2. motor games; 3. strength games; 4. role-playing games; 5. competitive events.

Particular forms of physical education are realized through numerous games and exercises with a plethora of ethnic varieties. Their description and analysis constitute an impressive monograph on forms of physical education developed as a part of centuries-old tradition of indigenous peoples of Siberia.

A great deal of these forms of traditional physical education have been included into modern curricula in Siberian schools for ethnic minorities, e.g. *niedźwiedzi bieg* (bear running), *niedźwiedź w jagodniku* (bear in the berries), discus throw, archery, *zapasy reniferów* (reindeer wrestling) and ball games; and in older grades: chases, high and long jumps, javelin throws, pole catching, stalking, etc.

In consideration of the above comments and opinions, one must agree with the author of these books that the diversity of traditional physical education forms implemented in modern schools for the Siberian indigenous peoples, ensures their versatile physical training and development of skills necessary for living in the harsh natural environment as well as for adapting certain civilization standards.

In conclusion it should be added that W.P. Krasilnikov's three-part monograph has been written up to the highest methodological standards. The list of references includes more than 400 entries, some of them being unique 19th-century sources. The majority of professional

literature referred to by the author are 20th-century sources from the areas of history, ethnography, cultural studies, pedagogy and certainly physical education. Besides, many descriptions of different forms and aspects of traditional physical education have been based on author's own field research, observations and interviews. W.P. Krasilnikov's work is a credible proof of

implementation of postulates of the European Union and UNESCO concerning the preservation of languages and cultural heritage of ethnic minorities.

Władysław Woźniewicz
Professor of Russian Studies
Wyższa Szkoła Humanistyczno-Ekonomiczna
(The Academy of Humanities and Economics)
Łódź, Poland