

Міністерство освіти та науки, молоді та спорту України
Полтавський національний педагогічний університет
імені В.Г.Короленка
Факультет філології та журналістики
Кафедра англійської філології

Сосої Галина Станіславівна

HISTORY AND TRADITIONS OF UKRAINIAN CHRISTIAN HOLIDAYS AND RITES

*Навчально-методичний посібник
з англійської мови
для студентів II-III курсів
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Укладач – Сосої Г.С., ст. викл. кафедри англійської філології.

Рецензенти:

Вишня Н.Г., кандидат філологічних наук, доцент, зав. кафедри загального та слов'янського мовознавства та іноземних мов ПНПУ ім. В.Г. Короленка.

Парій А.В., кандидат філологічних наук, доцент, зав. кафедри іноземних мов Полтавської державної аграрної академії.

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Навчально-методичний посібник “History and Traditions of Ukrainian Christian Holidays and Rites” являє собою збірник текстів і вправ, складений з урахуванням програми з англійської мови для студентів II-III курсів факультету філології та журналістики денної та заочної форм навчання.

Метою посібника є розвиток навичок читання, усного мовлення, літературного перекладу, збагачення тематичної лексики та словникового запасу студентів у цілому, закріплення студентами граматичного матеріалу з англійської мови.

Загальна кількість текстів – 15. Тексти подаються в комплексі з вправами на засвоєння тематичної лексики. Для полегшення розуміння текстів до кожного з них доданий міні-словник, крім того, посібник містить загальний тест на закріплення лексико-граматичного матеріалу.

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ПЕРЕДМОВА

Україна чітко визначилась та зорієнтувалась стосовно входження до освітнього простору Європи, наполегливо працює над практичним приєднанням до Болонського процесу. Відповідно до вимог нової програми впровадження новітніх ідей щодо мети Болонського процесу, випускники вищих навчальних закладів повинні зокрема на високому рівні володіти мовними знаннями, навичками, вміннями.

На етапі формування незалежної європейської держави важливого значення набуває якісна підготовка спеціалістів зі знанням англійської мови, оскільки її опанування стає нагальною потребою в усіх аспектах життя європейського суспільства.

За цих умов, вдосконалення процесу навчання іноземним мовам потребує нових навчально-методичних посібників, різноманітних словників, тестів, інших засобів навчання та контролю.

Посібник містить 15 основних оригінальних текстів, пов'язаних з українськими християнськими народними святами та традиціями, а також весільними ритуалами. Посібник має додаток «TRADITIONAL DISHES OF UKRAINIAN CUISINE». Використані в посібнику тексти, зображення та рецепти запозичені з журналів «Welcome to Ukraine» за 1998-2010 р. Глибоке знання й розуміння національних обрядів і традицій, вміння донести їх до співрозмовника, дає можливість більш повно розкрити особистий потенціал студентів. Запропоновані тексти дають змогу молоді ознайомитися з скарбами української історії і культури, зрозуміти глибинне коріння тих або інших витоків національних християнських свят, а також більш повно й барвисто розкрити ці явища української культури при спілкуванні з представниками інших держав і носіями інших культур.

Основні тексти супроводжуються лексико-граматичними вправами, що мають на меті закріпити та активізувати навчальний матеріал, розвивати навички читання та усного мовлення. Засвоєння відповідного матеріалу дає можливість, з одного боку, глибше вивчити англійську мову, з іншого – розширює кругозір студентів, сприяє їх патріотичному та культурно-естетичному вихованню.

Перед початком роботи над розділом студент повинен уважно прочитати всі нові слова, словосполучення та терміни, звертаючи особливу увагу на вимову, потім прочитати і перекласти тематичний текст (передбачається, що студенти володіють достатнім лексичним запасом, який у поєднанні з поданим до тексту словами дозволить їм зрозуміти зміст тексту; в окремих випадках студенти можуть користуватися англо-українськими словниками).

Після цього потрібно перейти до виконання вправ. Матеріал і система вправ забезпечує оволодіння навичками читання та говоріння (в основному монологічного мовлення), письма та аудіювання.

Вправи зібрані наступним чином:

- 1) вправи для закріплення активного словника;
- 2) вправи для розвитку навичок мовлення.

Питання про послідовність виконання вправ може бути вирішене викладачем і студентами.

Цей методичний посібник може бути використаний як для роботи у навчальних закладах, так і для самостійного вивчення англійської мови.

Feast of Ivan Kupalo: Pagan and Christian



John the Baptist baptizes Jesus
Christ in the River Jordan.

This feast was — and is — celebrated in Ukraine on July 7 and it marks the birth of John the Baptist who, in the Ukrainian tradition, is called Ivan. The word “Kupalo” (or “Kupaylo”) got attached because originally, on that day, a pagan feast of bathing had been celebrated, and to bathe in Ukrainian is kupaty. It is not the only case when a pagan feast got merged with a Christian one.

According to the Gospels, John was a holy man who baptized Christ and who later died a martyr’s death. The story that the evangelist John tells differs in many details from the stories related by the other three evangelists. “There appeared a man named John, sent from God; he came as a witness to testify to the light that all might become believers through him. He was not himself the light; he came to bear witness to the light. The real light, which enlightens every man, was even then coming to the world.”

This light was Jesus. “Here is John’s testimony to him: he cried aloud, ‘This is the man I meant when I said, “He comes after me, but takes rank before me” for before I was born, he already was.’”

The evangelist Luke says, “I baptize ... with water [said John]; but there is one to come who is mightier than I. I am not fit to unfasten his shoes. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire...”

“During a general baptism of the people, when Jesus too had been baptized, and was praying, heaven opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove...” “John... announced the good news. But Prince Herod, when he was rebuked by [John] over the affair of his brother’s wife Herodias and his misdeeds, crowned them all by shutting John up in prison” and later he had John beheaded.

“John was a lamp,” says Jesus in John’s Gospel, “burning brightly.”

Such is, basically, the story of John the Baptist as it is presented in the Gospels.

But Christianity came to the Lands of Kyiv much later than the feast of Kupalo had begun to be celebrated. In all likelihood its origins can be traced to the earliest times of the Slavs in the territory of Ukraine.

The Feast of Ivan Kupalo has retained, after over thousand years of Christianity in this land, many of its primordial, heathen features.

On that day, in the evening, when the dark came, bonfires were lit and young people jumped over these fires in an ostentatious show of their agility and courage. The jumpers sang as they took leaps over the fire,

*Oh, Ivan Kupala,
May my jumps take away
All the evil from under my feet!*

In other words, the leaps over the fire were symbolic acts of being cleansed by the fire.

Girls plaited wreaths of grasses and wild flowers and threw them on the water in the rivers and streamlets, with lit candles attached to the wreaths. The girls then watched the wreaths — if the wreath that you made and launched got carried by the current back to the same shore and the candle kept safely burning, it meant that you had a good chance of getting married to a young man from your own village. If the wreath got carried away and far, it foretold a chance of getting married too, but your fiancé would come from a faraway place. If, God forbid, the candle got blown off by the wind, or the wreath overturned, it portended all kinds of personal misfortunes, local or even general disasters.



Kupalo celebrations.

There was a lot of singing and group dancing too. Vigorous games were played. “Communal” bathing in rivers and lakes was a characteristic feature of the Feast of Ivan Kupalo.

Land tillers would take some food to the fields and have their repast there; they also would reap a symbolic sheaf, asking for God’s blessing.

The pagan feast of Kupalo was of an orgiastic nature and indiscriminate and random sex was part of the feast. Naturally, this part was eliminated by Christianity, but characteristically, only single young people were allowed to take part in the festivities which retained a vigorous and active character. The young married couples were allowed only to bring the food cooked for the feast and give it out to the celebrants, and then retire.

There was a traditional belief that on the night of Ivan Kupalo ferns produced blooms (it is well known that ferns never grow flowers). The one who spotted such a magic fern bloom, which shone with its own light, and was lucky to get it, would become rich or would understand the language of animals and plants.



Flower wreaths are launched as part of fortune telling done at the fest of Ivan Kupalo.

Fortune telling was part of the Ivan Kupalo rituals. Also, weather forecasts were made. If, on Ivan Kupalo, millet showed signs of yielding a good crop, then it was believed that all other crops would also be good and plentiful. If a thunderstorm poured rain on

Ivan Kupalo, then the nut shells would grow half-empty and the cores would be shrivelled and not good for eating.

On the feast day nobody worked, but the next day was to be a day of hard work at the end of which wholesome and big meals were served right in the fields — pork fat (instead of meat) — fresh, boiled or salted; eggs, fish, pancakes, garlic, onions, boiled potatoes, cucumbers and reddish in great abundance were shared by the toilers.

The nineteenth-century Ukrainian ethnographer M. Markevych described the Feast of Ivan Kupalo and the next day that followed it: “The whole village would come to the field for early harvesting or haymaking; people were dressed in white loose trousers and white shirts; men wore straw hats and had with them pipes for smoking, tobacco, whetstone and their scythes. I am sure the scythes looked exactly the same way a thousand years ago too. If there was an ancient barrow in the field, then all the wagons would be arranged around it. A shallow pit was dug and fire was made in it; over the fire, big pots would be hung with soup and gruel cooking in them; a barrel of horilka (vodka) would be close at hand.”

During the Kupalo night, desirably still before dawn, medicinal herbs were looked for and collected. It was believed that their curative properties were the best if the herbs were collected on the Kupalo night. The herbs were put in safe and dry places to dry. Brews and potions made from these dry herbs were widely used in folk medicine.

Some of the Kupalo traditions and rituals have survived to this day. One can even say that there is a certain revival of the pagan elements of the Ivan Kupalo celebrations in some parts of Ukraine, though, of course, it remains to be a Christian feast.

Word List:

pagan – язичник
to merge – злитися
martyr – мученик
to retain – зберегти
primordial – відвічний
heathen – язичник
to rebuke – дорікати
fiancé – наречений
testimony – доказ
ostentatious – показний
agility – спритність
to plait – заплести
wreath – вінок
misdeed – злочин
streamlet – струмочок
to overturn – перекидатися
to portend – провіщати
tiller – фермер
sheaf – пачка
blessing – благословення
disaster – біда
vigorous – енергійний
to eliminate – усунути

bloom – розквіт
fern – папороть
toiler – трудівник
whetstone – точильний камінь

Answer the following questions:

1. When is the feast of Ivan Kupalo celebrated in Ukraine?
2. What did John the Baptist do?
3. What happened to him after that?
4. What do the people do during Kupalo celebrating?
5. What was there a traditional belief on the night of Ivan Kupalo?
6. What was a characteristic feature of the Feast of Ivan Kupalo?

Use the following words and word combinations in the sentences of your own:

Feast, Baptist, Gospel, to baptize, holy man, martyr, evangelist, believer, testimony, the Holy Spirit, to pray, traditions and rituals, primordial, to plait wreath, to portend, fern.

Velyky Pist – Lent in Ukrainian Tradition



Velyky Pist, literally — Great Fasting, begins seven weeks before Easter. It is one of the four periods of fasting in the Christian calendar in Ukraine.

This tradition of fasting for a certain period of time before certain religious feasts goes back to the early stages of the development of Christianity in Kyivan Rus, but it may have had a pre-Christian, pagan origin.

In Christian tradition, Lent was more than just eating only limited amount of specified food — the faithful were to abstain from all the earthly pleasures thus cleansing the soul from sin and preparing it for celebrating Easter — the Feast of Resurrection of Christ.

In later centuries, women with infants and badly ill people were allowed to eat some of the food that was forbidden for the rest.

Some of the traditions of Lent have survived among the Christians into the twenty-first century. What follows is a description of some of the Lent food and ritual prescriptions which were observed in the Ukrainian countryside in the late nineteenth–early twentieth century.

During Lent, porridge-like dishes were particularly popular. They were made from various grains — wheat, buckwheat, corn or millet. Pancakes, varenyky (stuffed dumplings), deruny (potato pancakes), beans, vegetables, pickles, drinks made from dried fruit constituted the major part of the Lent diet.

All the pots were cleansed with boiling water and steam so as to remove completely whatever might have been left in them from cooking meat and other food forbidden during Lent. Richer people kept pots especially for cooking Lenten food in them.

On the first Monday of Lent nothing hot was cooked or eaten, and that meant there was no borsch eaten on that day, the only day of Lent when “lean” borsch with no meat in it, was not eaten. On the first day of Lent, no breakfast was made either.

Pancakes were made from rye flour without salt, with only water added to the flour. Such stiff pancakes were decorated with a cross, which was cut with a knife into its top side. Every member of the family had to eat at least one such cake. Grated radish or horseradish, sauerkraut, and pickled cucumbers were served to go with the pancakes.

Lent traditions varied in various parts of Ukraine, but everywhere the first day of Lent was particularly strictly observed as a day almost without any food at all.

The first week of Lent was also quite strict as far as food was concerned — no varenyky (stuffed dumplings) were made, no fish was eaten. Borsch, pancakes, kasha (porridge-like dish) and pickles were the dishes of everyday food. But garlic, onions, and reddish were allowed and they provided some spiciness to the bland food.

Herb teas were taken without any sugar or honey, and in general, sweetmeats were frowned upon, but restrictions against sugar were not very strict.

The first Saturday of Lent was the day of remembrance of the dead relatives. The names of the dead were written on pieces of paper which were given to the priest who mentioned them during the service. It was believed that the dead, if they were “properly” remembered, would have a better chance of entering the Kingdom of God.

During the second week of Lent it was allowed to eat fish and mushrooms, and vegetable oil was used for cooking. Different kinds of drinks were made from dried fruit with some of the grain malt added to them. Garlic and onions were consumed in large quantities — they provided vitamins.

During the second week of Lent young people were allowed to meet in the streets rather than stay at home most of the time. They engaged in games, and in singing and dancing.

During the fourth week, so-called “khresty” (“crosses”) were made from flour. The dough was shaped into a cross and baked. Every member got his own “khrest” to eat — eating it was believed to give health. In some of the Ukrainian lands, in Poltavshchyna, for example, “khresty” were used for fortunetelling. A short length of red thread and a small periwinkle leaf were put inside “khresty”, and if, after baking, the leaf and thread were not blackened, it was believed to be a sign of good fortune. Also, instead of leaves and threads, coins were used, and

those who discovered a coin in their “khresty” were believed to be blessed with good luck. In some regions, “khresty” were buried in the garden or field “for a good yield.”

During the fifth week of Lent “Pokhvala” — Giving of Thanks to the Virgin Mary was the main event. No work was to be done except for planting vegetables in the vegetable gardens. It was generally believed that certain vegetables were to be planted on a certain day and, for example, cucumbers to be tasty had to be planted on “Pokhvala”.

The sixth week of Lent ended on Verbna Nedilya — Palm Sunday. There were no further restrictions on food observed during that week, but the final week of Lent was special. It was called Strastny tyzhden — Passion Week, Bily or Chysty tyzhden — White or Pure Week.

On the Thursday of that week, people washed themselves in rivers, lakes or in the absence of any lakes or rivers, they poured on themselves water taken from wells.

The seventh week of Lent was particularly strict as far as food was concerned — no fish, no vegetable oil, no dairy products, preferable no hot meals were allowed.

At the end of the week a lot of cooking was done so that on Easter Sunday people would be free of having to do any cooking. The cooked food could be just warmed in the oven.

The candles lit during the Easter night service in the church were taken home (it was very important not to let the wind blow off the flame on the way home). At home, crosses were painted on the window frames, doorframes, stoves and other places in the house with the soot from the candles’ flame. The crosses painted with soot and the burning candles were believed to be protection against evil forces, lightning in particular.

Word List:

lent – піст
to abstain – стриматися
earthly – земний
cleansing – чищення
to forbid – заборонити
horseradish – хрін
sauerkraut – квашена капуста
pickle – розсіл
spiciness – прянощі
bland – м'який
sweetmeat – цукерка
malt – солод
periwinkle – барвінок
dough – тісто

Answer the following questions:

1. When does Velyky Pist begin?
2. Who was allowed to eat some of the food that was forbidden for the rest in later centuries during Lent?
3. What dishes were particularly popular during Lent?
4. What dishes constituted the major part of the Lent diet?
5. What was not made on the first day of Lent?
6. What were pancakes made from?
7. What was served to go with the pancakes?
8. In what way were herbal teas taken?
9. What kind of the day was the first Saturday of Lent?
10. What was it allowed to eat during the second week of Lent?
11. What were so-called “khresty” (“crosses”) made from?
12. What were “khresty” used for in Poltavshchyna?
13. What was the main event during the fifth week of Lent?
14. During which week were there no further restrictions on food?

Give the English equivalents:

Velyky Pist; varenyky; deruny; Strastny tyzhden; Bily or Chysty tyzhden; “Pokhvala”.

Use the following words and word combinations in the sentences of your own:

lent; to abstain; restrictions on food; to forbid; dough; religious feast; lent traditions.

Traditional Holidays Celebrated in Spring: Feast of Svyata Yavdokha; the Day of Forty Saints; the Annunciation (Blahovishchennya)



For centuries, up to the late nineteenth century, Ukraine was a land of husbandry and farming, and this close connection to nature and annual cycles gave rise to many feasts. Holidays and rituals, which reflect the seasonal variations of agricultural work, spring rituals and feasts which have its roots in the pre-Christian times, were aimed at ensuring good crops and abundant yields. Among these rituals and feasts were also those of Christian origin but heavily influenced by the pre-

Christian past: Svyata Yavdokha, Sorok Svyatykh, Blahovishchennya and Easter — arguably the most important ones.

Feast of Svyata Yavdokha

The ancient Slavs who lived in the territory of Ukraine welcomed the New Year in March but there seems to have been no particularly lavish celebrations of the coming of the New Year. Instead, it was Easter that became to be the major spring feast with its idea of resurrection, revival of nature. The unity of man and nature was felt particularly keenly.

In Ukrainian, the word for the month of March is berezen — from bereza which means “birch tree.” The birch tree is among the first to come back to life after winter dormancy. It was in berezen that the birch tree juice was collected. This juice was used for making a refreshing drink (until recently, it was collected, sugared a little, bottled, and sold as “birch juice,” but the commercial pressure seems to have ousted birch tree from the market).

The feast of Svyata Yavdokha (St Yavdokha) coincided with the beginning of actual spring. Potatoes that had been kept in the cellars as seeds for planting in spring, were taken out and their planting began when the potatoes would develop shoots. Ancient chants and folk songs accompanied the planting “Yavdokha will see to a good crop you’ll have potatoes aplenty”.

No wonder that during the potato planting season dishes made from potatoes stood out prominently on the peasants’ table — deruny (potato pancakes), kartoplyanyky (stuffed potato cakes), potatoes stewed with other vegetables, and other dishes. It was also the time of pre-Easter Lent, and only vegetable oil was used for cooking.

By the end of the nineteenth century, potatoes had become one of the major crops in Ukraine. Potato became known in Europe in the mid-sixteenth century but it came to Ukraine much later, in the early eighteenth century. In fact it was the Czar Peter I who introduced the potato and had to actually use force to make peasants grow it. Resistance to the potato was considerable and by the end of the eighteenth century, the potato was still “an exotic fruit” in many parts of Ukraine. Even the name of the potato varied – bulba, barabolya, ripa, or zemlyani yabluka, or “ground apples” — literal translation from the French pommes de terre.

After the war with Napoleon in 1812, lean years that followed induced the peasants to rethink their attitude to the potato and gradually it became the second — after bread — most important food in Ukraine. Potatoes were relatively easy to grow, crops were abundant, a variety of dishes could be cooked from them and their nourishing qualities kept increasing its popularity. It has become Ukraine’s staple diet and it’s hard to imagine Ukrainian cuisine without dishes made from potatoes.

On the day of Saint Yevdokiya people expected to be informed about the weather in summer — if the wind was warm on that day, you should expect a warm summer; if the wind was strong enough to rotate the blades of windmills, you should expect high yields. If the wind blew from the west, you could expect

good fishing; if the wind blew from the east, it was a sure indication of bees' productive swarming; if the wind blew from the south, it indicated a good grain harvest. The wind "na Yevdokiya" was a decisive factor in deciding in which manner wheat and poppies should be planted.

There were sayings connected with the wind on that day, like "It's strong enough to ruffle the tops of sheaves."

Sorok Svyatykh

The Day of Forty Saints, also called sorok muchenikiv (Forty Martyrs), which was marked around March 22, was the time when the birds started coming from the warm lands. Kalachyky, bublyky and other breads were made in the shape of birds, complete with stylized beaks, wings and tails. Some bread products were made to look like birds sitting on their nests. The eyes of the bread birds were made of berries or raisins; in some cases, the bread figurines were sprinkled with sugar powder or honey. Also, in baking these bread birds, they were skewered on twigs which served as sticks which children could hold onto while eating them.

The children were running around the village holding these "birds" in their hands, and singing,

*"Come birds, come,
Bring spring to us!"*

It was believed that the migrating birds had a God's blessing on them and thus could bring this blessing to the domestic birds too.

Blahovishchennya

The Annunciation was celebrated on April 7. It was one of the most revered feasts on the religious calendar of the Ukrainians.

Though the early month of April was still within the long Lent period, some food relaxation was allowed for Blahovishchennya — fish could be added to the Lent diet. Among the dishes made on that day were hrechani or pshonyani holubtsi (cabbage leaves stuffed with buckwheat or millet), hrechanyky (buckwheat cakes), hrechani pampushky (small rolls made from buckwheat flour) with garlic; pies, fish and potato dishes.

Usually, no work on land began before Blahovishchennya, because "God has not yet blessed this work." It was believed that God was just in the process of "making the earth soft" and that "God warms it with His breath, leaning all the way from heaven."

Sowing began after Blahovishchennya. A special attention was given to cabbage, the most conspicuous crop in the vegetable garden. Cabbage featured in many dishes — tushkovana kapusta (stewed cabbage), kapusnyak (cabbage soup), zavyvanyky (cabbage pies) and other dishes.

On Blahovishchennya people did not work, doing only what had to be done at home; it was believed that on Blahovishchennya, "birds do not make nests, neither do hens lay eggs."

Word List:

arguably – можливо
abundant – удосталь
yield – урожай
lavish – щедрий
keenly – гостро
dormancy – дрімота
shoot – полювання
chant – скандування
aplenty – багато
lean – мізерний
staple – головний продукт
to rotate – обертатися
windmill – вітряний млин
swarming – роїння
to ruffle – гарячитися
sheaf – пачка
raisin – родзинка
figurine – статуетка
sprinkle – обприскування
twig – лозина
Annunciation – Сповідання
sowing – сіяння
conspicuous – помітний

Answer the following questions:

1. When is the feast of Svyata Yavdokha celebrated?
2. When was the Day of Forty Saints, also called sorok muchenikiv (Forty Martyrs), marked?
3. In the shape of what were kalachyky, bublyky and other breads made?
4. When was Blahovishchennya celebrated?
5. What food was allowed for Blahovishchennya?

Give the English equivalents:

Sorok Svyatykh; Blahovishchennya; sorok muchenikiv; kalachyky; bublyky; hrechani pampushky; kapusnyak; zavyvanyky.

Use the following words and word combinations in the sentences of your own:

feast; spring ritual; sowing; Annunciation; the Day of Forty Saints; ancient chants and folk songs.

Winter Holidays and Winter Food: Christmas; Bountiful Evening; Baptism in Water (Epiphany, Vodokhreshche)



The period from Christmas and well into the New Year, is marked in Ukraine, a predominantly Christian Orthodox land for the past millennium, by a string of holidays which are often collectively referred to as Svyatky — Holiday Season. Though thoroughly Christianized, these holidays still reveal a deeply traditional character, with some rituals and customs dating from the pre-Christian times. There's hardly anyone

who is not looking forward to Svyatky — the festive season can hardly fail to affect both the old and the young, believers and atheists.

The calendar of the traditional winter festivities in Ukraine is different from that which is used in the European countries or in America. The thing is that the Orthodox Church still sticks to the old, Julian calendar, whereas the state and all the secular institutions use the “new” Gregorian calendar. The difference between the “old” and the “new” calendar is thirteen days — that is why Christmas is celebrated by the Orthodox on January 6 rather than on December 25.

Svyatvechir (Holy Evening), or Christmas Eve, was a very special occasion. Didukh — a sheaf of oats or rye was carefully and neatly arranged for the occasion, and then it was brought into the house and decorated with colorful ribbons, candies, flowers cut from paper, and red berries (Christmas tree is a much more recent feature). When the first star appeared in the sky, the families sat down to the Svyatvechir dinner. It had to have twelve dishes, to correspond to the number of months in the year.

The table was strewn with fragrant dried herbs and hay and covered with a fresh table cloth and decorated with embroidered rushnyky — decorative towels. Kutya was an obligatory dish. Christmas being a family holiday, the most popular drink was nonalcoholic uzvar. All the dishes were still Lenten fare, and only one meal, Svyatvechir dinner, was allowed (only small children could have something to eat during the day).

Rizdvo, or Christmas, was quite a different thing as far as food was concerned.

But the day began with attending the Christmas service in church.

At table, tradition did not allow the use of knives, so one had to do without them.

Meat and fish were welcome on Christmas day, and all kinds of deserts made their cheerful appearance — verhunyy, medivnyky (dishes made with honey), and sweet pies were thoroughly enjoyed.

Alcohol was also allowed to be had on Christmas. Traditional alcoholic drinks were all kinds of nalyvky and nastoyanky. Horilka (vodka) began to be widely consumed at a much later date.

Novy Rik — New Year was celebrated in Ukraine on various dates, but then the 1st of January came to be a universally accepted date (the “Old Style” calendar moves the New Year to January 14).

Shchedry vechir — Bountiful Evening is the New Year Eve. Those who went from house to house, greeting the hosts, were called shchedruvalnyky (it can be rendered as “well-wishers”), and the songs they sang were shchedrivky.

The food served at the Shchedry vechir dinner included all kinds of dishes, both with meat and meatless. In the times of old, people in the countryside had their Shchedry vechir dinner rather early in the evening and when shchedruvalnyky came knocking at their doors, some of the food and drink was shared with them, and gifts exchanged. It was considered best to “see the New Year in” on your sleep.

On January 1, social visits were exchanged, well-wishing continued, ample festive meals were consumed.

Vodokhreshche, or Baptism in Water (also Epiphany) was of a much less boisterous nature. On the day before Vodokhreshche, people went without food until dinner when they could have meatless dishes, borsch, varenyky, cabbage and fish. Kutya was also made and ritually eaten. Dinner could be eaten after the nightfall.

Tradition required that as much noise as possible was to be made after dinner — children and grown-ups repeatedly armed themselves with sticks and struck wooden fences, empty pots or anything else that could produce loud sounds (in later times, guns were fired). It was believed that all this racket would be conducive to future well-being, fertility of the land and of the cattle.

Didukh, which had been kept in the house since before Christmas, was taken out and burned “to produce warm air” — an invitation for the spring to come soon.

On the day of Vodokhreshche itself, the water in the lakes and rivers (if there were not any in the vicinity, then the wells would do) was blessed by priests. The blessed water was believed to possess healing properties. After it was blessed, it was taken in containers home and kept in front of the icons for the whole year, until next Vodokhreshche. Cattle and fowl were sprinkled with this water; it was given as medicine against deceases; the newlyborn were washed in it; the newlyweds were sprinkled with it, as well as the graves on the day of the funerals. Young girls washed their faces in the blessed water of the rivers and lakes, right in the holes cut in the ice.

In other words, the blessed Vodokhreshche water was a feature of life that followed one from birth to grave.

Vodokhreshche dinner was supposed to be meatless, but a variety of dishes was supposed to be served — the more dishes the better.

Word List:

bountiful – рясний
boisterous – несамовитий
nightfall – сутінки
conducive – сприяючий
fertility – достаток
vicinity – близькість
decease – смерть
newlywed – наречений

Answer the following questions:

1. What dish was an obligatory one for Christmas?
2. What is Didukh?
3. What was the most popular drink for Christmas?
4. When was the water in the lakes and rivers blessed by priests?
5. How is Christmas celebrated in your family?

Give the English equivalents:

Svyatky; Svyatvechir; Didukh; rushnyk; Shchedry vechir; shchedrivky; Vodokhreshche.

Use the following words and word combinations in the sentences of your own:

bountiful; boisterous; Christmas; Didukh; water; to bless; shchedrivky; Epiphany; didukh; to celebrate.

Pokrova and Other Virgin Mary Feasts

There are several religious feasts widely celebrated in Ukraine that are dedicated to Presvyata Bohorodytsya, Most Holy Mother of God or the Virgin Mary; among them: **Persha Prechysta**, First Most Pure Feast is celebrated on August 28; it is the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary.



Icon of the Virgin Mary in Zarvanytsya.

Druha Prechysta, Second Most Pure Feast is celebrated on September 21; it is the feast of Rizdvo Presvyatoyi Bohorodytsti, the Birth of the Virgin Mary;

Tretya Prechysta, Third Most Pure Feast is celebrated on December 4; it is the feast of the Presentation in the Temple of the Virgin Mary;

Pokrova, Protecting Veil of the Virgin Mary, is celebrated on October 14; it is the Feast of the Patronage (Protection or Intercession) of the Most Holy Mother of God.

The Virgin Mary has always been regarded in Ukraine as a protectress, a mediator between man and God, and people turned to Her with their prayers, thanking Her for intercession or seeking her help.

A special, festive meal was a natural part of the celebrations.

Persha Prechysta Feast was celebrated within a stretch of time known as Spasivka fast, but the absence of meat dishes did not prevent lean dishes to be cooked. Beans, peas, mushrooms, eggplants, squash and fish were widely and ingeniously used to make the table truly festive. Sweet peppers were stuffed with vegetables; fish was boiled, fried or baked; all kinds of vegetable salads provided a colorful and wholesome touch.

Druha Prechysta, the feast of Rizdvo Presvyatoyi Bohorodytsti, the Birth of the Virgin Mary was celebrated particularly lavishly. After a church service, a festive meal was prepared which included all kinds of meat and fish dishes: borsch with meat or chicken; vegetables stuffed with minced meat (for example, holubtsi — minced meat wrapped in cabbage leaves); meat pies, pancakes, varenyky, soft cottage cheese cooked in various ways, and fruit.

Tretya Prechysta, the feast of the Presentation in the Temple of the Virgin Mary, celebrated on December 4, falls on the time of fasting and that is why no meat was cooked but a wide variety of dried or pickled mushrooms, pickled cucumbers, tomatoes, apples and water melons, varenyky stuffed with poppy seeds, potatoes, buckwheat, cabbage, berries or fish, borsch and pancakes provided enough nutrition to the body and joy to the palate.

Pokrova, the feast of The Protecting Veil of the Virgin Mary, celebrated on October 14, is believed to have been borrowed from Byzantium where it originated in the tenth century.

The Ukrainian Cossacks believed that the Virgin Mary extended her protection over them and they built churches dedicated to her. Cossacks usually carried around with them small icons of the Virgin Mary as a protective charm. In the medieval and later times, Ukrainian women looked to the Virgin Mary for help and protection.

On Pokrova, long-term weather forecasts were made. If on that day, the wind blew from the south, then a mild winter was expected; if the wind came from the east, then it was a sign that the winter would be severe; a strong wind on the Day of Pokrova suggested a windy spring. If on Pokrova cranes had not started yet flying away to the warmer climes, then a long warm autumn was predicted. It was considered to be desirable to finish all the work in the fields and vegetable gardens before Pokrova. Those who had not finished the work in the fields sowing the winter crops, were looked upon disapprovingly as “lazy-bones” and, by sowing the seeds so late into the season, were said to be in danger of waking up venomous snakes that had already gone to sleep in their holes underground — the snakes, it was feared, very much annoyed by their rude awakening could attack the disturbers.

Those who had finished all the field and vegetable garden work were praised; also, it was believed that such diligence was essential for enjoying a good health in winter. Pokrova was considered to be a turning point in weather — from that day on freezing temperatures could be expected.

The time of autumn up to Pokrova was a period of arranging marriages and celebrating weddings. It was considered to be desirable to have a marriage arranged before Pokrova and to celebrate the wedding not later than early December, before the Feast of Dmytro.

The girls who were getting married indicated the change in their marital status by donning head kerchiefs (namitka, or khustka). Married women could appear in public only with their heads covered. The girls of marriageable age who did not get married before Pokrova were often made fun of, and indeed they did feel the threat of spinsterhood becoming quite real.

On Pokrova, it was hoped that the next two weeks would be a pleasant time of *babyne lito* — literally — the women's summer, or Indian summer. It was the time when people were saying goodbye to the last warm days of the year and bracing up for the cold to come.

There are a great many Ukrainian folk sayings, proverbs and songs connected with Pokrova and the changes in weather and in life it brought with it: Pokrova has come, leaves and grass will die soon; Pokrova comes — make sure you heat your house; Pokrova comes — stay at home; Pokrova, Pokrova, cover my head (that is, help me get married); Pokrova, Pokrova, I'm tired of being unmarried, give me the wedding crown; Pokrova has come and gone — the girls lament their lost chances, plus many others (unfortunately, so much is lost in rendering ancient rhyming sayings and proverbs into a modern tongue that translation gives only a very general idea of what they are all about – tr).

There are a great many churches in Ukraine which are dedicated to the Virgin Mary and to the feasts associated with her — it would require a separate article just to mention the most important of them.

Probably worthy of a separate mention here are churches and monasteries carrying the name of Pokrova that can be found in Kyiv — the Pokrovskia Church in Podil, built in the mid-eighteenth century by the prominent architect Ivan Hryhorovych Barsky and the Pokrovsky Nunnery, built at the end of the nineteenth century.

An important part of the celebrations of the Virgin Mary feasts were festive dinners which were held communally and privately. The families participating in communal feasts brought some food and drinks with them; all this food and drinks were put on the tables set up in the open and were shared by all those present. These celebrations were good occasions for socializing, enjoying the food and respite from hard work. The communal festive dinners featured homemade bread, *pyrohy*, *varenyky*, sour cream, *ryazhanka* (fermented baked milk), *holubtsi*, fish, cooked cabbage, pickles, fried marrow, all kinds of pancakes with honey, sweet pies with berries, apples or poppy seeds. Some of the dishes were cooked right at the place where festive meals were held — for example, *borsch*, cabbage soup, *kulich*, potatoes baked with meat.

Word List:

temple – храм
mediator – посередник
palate – небо
intercession – заступництво
venomous – отруйний
lament – плач
nunnery – жіночий монастир

Answer the following questions:

1. When is Persha Prechysta celebrated?
2. When is Second Most Pure Feast celebrated?
3. What feast is Tretya Prechysta?
4. What feast is celebrated on October 14?
5. What dishes are made on Pokrova?
6. What was cooked during celebrating the Birth of the Virgin Mary?
7. What was cooked during celebrating the feast of the Presentation in the Temple of the Virgin Mary?
8. What was cooked during celebrating the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary?

Give the English equivalents:

Pokrova; Persha Prechysta; Rizdvo Presvyatoyi Bohorodytsti; babyne lito; ryazhanka.



A monument to St Andrew in Kyiv.

Fortunetelling Rituals on the Feast Day of St Andrew

Among the Christian religious feasts, which are celebrated in Ukraine in the fall and winter, the Day of St Andrew stands as one of the more important ones. This feast, which absorbed some of the pre-Christian traditions, is celebrated on December 13. St Andrew's Day was the time of fortunetelling and get-togethers, at which young people looked out for prospective spouses.

Christian tradition has that it was St Andrew, one of the apostles of Jesus Christ, who was the first to bring the Christian teaching to the lands which later became known as Ukraine.

The night before the Feast Day of St Andrew in the countryside engaged in fortunetelling, trying to find out who their prospective husband might be. They hoped that the saint would help them in this.

One of the fortunetelling rituals involved a hen. A girl put a bowl with grain and a bowl with water on the floor and brought in a hen from the hencoop. It was believed that if the bird flopped its wings and clucked, the girl's husband-to-be would be unkind to her and might even beat her. If the hen pounced on the food, the girl's fiance would be fat and greedy for food; if, however, the hen rushed to the bowl with water, the girl's future husband might turn out to be a drunkard. If the bird just walked quietly around the house, it gave hope to the girl that her husband would be kind and well-disposed to her, and would not pick up fights or drink too much.

Another fortunetelling ritual was called *mosty* (bridges). Girls poured water into a bowl and then put several straws across the bowl thus forming "a bridge." Next, they placed the bowl under their bed. In their dreams they hoped to see their sweetheart cross the bridge. If the bridge broke, it prophesied some misfortune in the future — the couple would either break up or one of them would die.

Many fortunetelling rituals involved bread, pancakes or pastries. A girl cut off a piece of a loaf, sprinkled it with salt and hid under the pillow. If in her dreams she saw a young man with whom she would share the bread, it would be the one with whom she would share her life. Or a girl would eat a salted slice of bread; at night she would get thirsty and if she saw a man in her dreams who would give her water to quench her thirst, he would be her future husband.

The girls, who wanted to learn the name of their fiance made pancakes, picked the largest one and ran outside with it. They then addressed the first male they saw in the street: "What is your name?" If his name was Vasyl, the girl's husband would be called Vasyl, if the stranger's name was Mykola, the girl's husband would be Mykola, etc. Yet, more often than not, men made fun of the gullible girls by giving them some silly, ridiculous names.

The most wide-spread Ukrainian fortunetelling ritual involved *balabushky* (bread shaped like a small ball). Girls gathered at someone's house and brought flour to make the dough for *balabushky*. For making the dough they needed water — and they had to bring water from the nearest well in their mouth. On their way back inside, the girls were surrounded by the young men who did their best to make the girls with water in their mouths laugh. The girls either swallowed the water or spit it on the ground with laughter. Sometimes, the girls had to take many trips to the well before they finally succeeded to bring enough water for the dough. In some cases, the girls had to give the boys *kalachi* (padlock-shaped buns), *halushky* (dumplings) or *varenyky* (stuffed dumplings) as a fee to let them deliver the water in their mouths safely.

After making the dough, they made *balabushky* and baked them. Each girl marked her *balabushka* in her own special way. Then they let a hungry dog into the house. The girl whose *balabushka* was the first the dog ate would be the first to get married. If the dog ignored somebody's *balabushka*, it meant that the girl who had marked it would have no chance of getting married any time soon. A half-eaten *balabushka* prophesied a divorce or an illegitimate child. Smarter girls resorted to all sorts of tricks to cheat the dog. They stuffed their *balabushka* with

a piece of fat, thus inducing the dog eat their balabuska ahead of other balabushky.

During still another fortunetelling ritual, girls poured melted beeswax into a bowl with water. If the wax shaped into a sort of the wedding crown, it gave hope to the girl who poured the wax that she might get married soon.

On the Feast Day of St Andrew and on the following day young men and girls usually played a game called kalyta. The name of the game coincides with the word for a flat dry bread called kalyta. It had a hole in the centre and was decorated with poppy seeds, dried cherries or raisins. Then it was smeared with honey and hung in the middle of the house.

The young men who were invited to the party took part in the kalyta game doing their best not to laugh or even smile at the funny situations that developed or at the jokes that were meant to make them laugh. Those who managed to suppress a smile while acting out their part would be allowed to take a bite of the bread. Those who joined the general roar of laughter, would have their faces daubed with soot and were not allowed to come close to the kalyta bread. With all the boys having taken their turn in the game, the kalyta bread was taken off the hook and was shared among all the guests. Then a festive dinner followed.

The rituals connected with the kalyta bread could have been an echo of a pagan feast that celebrated ‘the birth of the new sun’. The sun-like shape of the round flat bread that featured in the games the young people played during several days before the winter solstice, may be regarded as evidence that these rituals had ancient pre-Christian roots. After the conversion to Christianity, the bread rituals were performed on the Feast day of St Andrew, St Andrew being the patron of the young.

A blind eye was turned to mischief and pranks which were played by the young people on the Feast Day of St Andrew — such pranks would be punished on any other day. If it was known that in a certain household, there was an unmarried young woman whose parents did not allow her to go out with boys, the young men, for example, could take the gate off its hinges, take apart a fence or a wagon, steal a plough and throw it on the roof or take it to a different place in the village. Ethnographers believe that such pranks were part of rituals connected with courting and marriage proposals — such barriers, for example, as gates or fence were removed “to clear the way to marriage.”



Kalyta, a flat dry bread used in playing ritual game kalyta.



Word List:

fortunetelling – ворожіння
get-together – зустріч
prospective – передбачуваний
spouse – чоловік
hencoop – курник
well-disposed – розташований
to cluck – кудкудакати
to prophesy – проорокувати
to sprinkle – обприскати
to quench – подавити
gullible – легковірний
ridiculous – смішний
dough – тісто
illegitimate – незаконнонароджений
beeswax – віск
to smear – зганьбити
to daub – розмазувати
solstice – сонцестояння
prank – жарт
to cheat – одурювати

Answer the following questions:

1. When is the Day of St Andrew celebrated?
2. What fortunetelling rituals do you know on the Feast day of St Andrew?
3. What game did young men and girls usually play on the Feast Day of St Andrew and on the following day?
4. What was kalyta decorated with?
5. What did girls pour into a bowl with water during one of the fortunetelling ritual?

Give the English equivalents:

Balabushky; kalachi; kalyta.

Use the following words and word combinations in the sentences of your own:

to decorate; fortunetelling rituals; Christian religious feast; to prophesy; beeswax; prank; kalyta.



A religious service in honour of St Varvara in the Mykhailivsky Zlatoverkhy Cathedral.

St Varvara – History and Tradition

Once upon a time there lived a girl, good-looking, inquisitive, considerate, self-denying and gentle. Many rich, clever, and noble men tried to court her but she chose to be the bride of a poor maverick who was crucified alongside two robbers...

St Varvara (or Barbara) is seventeen again — and never mind those zeros in the years of her anniversary. The saints are not subject to time and their age does not change. The Orthodox Church marks the feast day of St Varvara the Martyr on the 17th of December because it was on that date she suffered and died for her Heavenly Bridegroom — Our Lord Jesus Christ.

St Varvara's life on earth was short but dramatic and glorious. She was born in the town of Heliopolis of Phoenicia (now Baalbek in Lebanon) at the end of the third century AD. At that time the Eastern Roman Empire was ruled by Galerius (Gaius Galerius Valerius Maximianus; ruled as Augustus 305– 311). This emperor was one of the most unrelenting persecutors and harshest heathen enemies of Christianity. A ruthless ruler, Galerius imposed the poll tax on the urban population and maintained the persecution of the Christians. He kept issuing decrees which demanded that Christians be searched for and exposed, and then made to make sacrifices to the ancient gods, emperor included. In case, they refused to do so, Christians were to be tortured and executed. Many of the local governors were only too glad to follow the orders, but some were rather lenient. In the winter of 310–311, however, he became incapacitated with a painful disease. Fearing, perhaps, that his illness was the vengeance of the Christian God, he issued on April 30, 311, an edict grudgingly granting toleration. Shortly afterward he died.

Varvara was one of those who were happy to come to know God and embrace Christianity. Dioscor, her father, kept the beautiful girl locked most of the time in a tower — in this manner he thought she would be in safety both from the unwanted courtship and pernicious influences, of which, he thought, Christianity was the most dangerous. But he could not keep the girl locked in the tower all the time. The girl kept asking all kinds of questions about God and true religion but neither her father nor anyone else in the household were able to provide answers that would satisfy the girl. When he found a suitable fiance' for his daughter, Dioscor, hoping that she would now be safe both from other suitors and Christian influences, went away on a long business trip.

But Varvara used her newly-found freedom in a way very much different from what Dioscor had expected she would — instead of venerating the old traditions and worshiping pagan gods, Varvara found the True Faith of Christianity. She preferred to spend most of her time with her new friends, the Christians, in prayer rather than in revelry with her age peers. An itinerant Christian priest baptized the girl, and when her father returned, Varvara did not conceal her new faith from him. Dioscor tried to talk the girl out of it, but neither his threats nor his pleas could shake her faith. Then the angered and frightened man — he was afraid of persecution — repudiated his daughter. She was arrested and brought before the local governor who was captivated by the girl's beauty. He even tried to seduce the girl; he offered her money, he threatened torture in attempts to

make her abandon her faith but she remained firm in her convictions. She was thrown into prison and tortured. In the prison cell, where she was incarcerated, a miracle happened — her wounds were healed and she was promised a great reward in heaven — at least, it is what the hagiography says. On discovering Varvara's wounds healed, the jailers decided to execute the girl, and according to tradition, it was her father who chopped off her head.

The retribution was swift — both Dioscor and the governor were killed later on the same day by a bolt of lightning. Varvara was buried like a Christian thanks to the ministrations of a pious man. Later, she was canonized and in the 6th century, St Varvara's remains were moved to Constantinople where churches were built in her honour, and a district of the city was named after her.

For a person who has not made the Orthodox Church part of his or her existence, and particularly for those who are atheistic, it is difficult to read hagiographic stories. There are a lot of things in these stories that may seem to them bolt. In stories about saints, the reader will find characters who want to depart from this life and unite with God rather than fear death; instead of demagogic proclamations, one finds profound reflections about the meaning of life and death, moral teaching and words of forgiveness addressed to the torturers. The tortures themselves, surprisingly enough, are described in great detail and in rather naturalistic terms, but in a somewhat detached even “monotonous” manner.

Even more difficult to atheists and those who are not quite firm in their faith is to understand the idea of worshipping the sacred relics. But this worship is very important for a true Christian. Icons, which are also worshipped, are regarded by atheists, at best, to be works of art, and at worst, no more than just crudely painted pictures, and the worshipping of the sacred relics of saints is dismissed as silly superstition.

There is a spark in every human soul that can be fanned into a life-giving fire of Divine Love. The fire burning in the souls of saints and religious devotees cannot be extinguished by the outside circumstances no matter how stormy these circumstances may be; the fire of lesser mortals is like a candle's flame — if it is not properly cared for and protected it can be blown out by a gust of wind.

There are a lot of sacred relics to be found in the city of Kyiv as well, St Varvara's among them. Her relics were brought to Kyiv in 1108 by a daughter of the Byzantine Emperor Alexis Comnene, also named Varvara (Barbara). The princess came to Kyiv to be married to the Grand Duke Svyatopolk-Mykhailo Izyaslavovych, the one who had the Mykhailivsky Zlatoverkhy (St Michael's Golden-Domed) Cathedral built, one of the three great churches in Kyiv of those times. It was all but natural that the relics were put in St Michael's. During the Mongol invasion of the thirteenth century, when Kyiv was captured and destroyed, some of the churches survived, St Michael's among them. The relics were well hidden in the church and remained intact. In the 1930s, when St Michael's was pulled down by the communist barbarians during their atheistic campaign, the relics of St Varvara were moved to the Church of St Andrew, and

later when St Andrew's was turned into a museum, the relics were taken to St Volodymyr's where they are to be found now.

In 2006, when St Varvara's anniversary was being marked, the saint's relics were taken to various cities all across Ukraine to make it possible for the pious to worship these sacred relics. At the time when life in Ukraine continues to cause anxiety among so many people in this country, the faithful does need a support of a much venerated saint to improve their spiritual strength and sustain them in hope, faith and love.

Word List:

inquisitive – допитливий
considerate – уважний
self-denying – що жертвує своїми інтересами
maverick – індивідуаліст
to crucify – замучити
martyr – мученик
heavenly – небесний
bridegroom – жених
unrelenting – невблаганний
persecutor – переслідувач
harshest – найрізкіший
heathen – язичник
ruthless – безжальний
to impose – накласти
to maintain – підтримати
persecution – переслідування
lenient – поблажливий
incapacitated – виведений з ладу
vengeance – помста
grudgingly – неохоче
courtship – залицяння
pernicious – згубний
venerating – пошана
worshiping – поклоніння
revelry – гульня
suitor – позивач
itinerant – мандруючий
to conceal – приховати
plea – прохання
to repudiate – анулювати
to seduce – спокушати
to incarcerate – ув'язнювати
jailer – тюремник
hagiography – агіографія

to chop – розколоти
retribution – відплата
swift – швидко
pious – побожний
to dismiss – відхилити
superstition – марновірство
gust – порив
sacred relics – священні реліквії
to pull down – скидати

Answer the following questions:

1. When and where was St Varvara born?
2. Who kept the beautiful girl locked most of the time in a tower?
3. When and by whom were Varvara's relics brought to Kyiv?
4. Where are Varvara's relics to be found now?

Use the following words and word combinations in the sentences of your own:

considerate; self-denying; to crucify; martyr; heavenly; bridegroom; sacred relics; persecutor; harshest; heathen; ruthless; incarcerate; to heal; jailer; superstition; to dismiss; superstition.



The Feast of St Peter and St Paul Celebrated in Ukraine

The Feast of St Peter and St Paul which is celebrated by the Orthodox Christians in Ukraine on July 12 is the last one in the series of big religious markings of the spring and mid-summer.

The Feast of “The Glorious and Most Laudable and Most Superior Apostles Peter and Paul” is of a special importance in view of the significance that both St Peter and St Paul have in Christian tradition and in Christian teaching. Like many other Christian feasts in Ukraine, this particular one has absorbed in itself the Christian and pre-Christian constituents. The Orthodox Christian Church seems to be rather tolerant to those folk traditions which do not have the formal sanctity of the Church but yet constitute a vital segment of national culture, and the Orthodox Church has not made any vigorous attempts to suppress them.

According to folk beliefs, St Peter and St Paul saw to it that the harvest would be taken in on time — the date of the feast coincides with the beginning of the harvesting season in most of Ukraine.

*“Saint Peter is in the field
Plowing the earth,
And Saint Paul is driving the oxen*

That is pulling the plow... ”

says one of the folk songs.

The Feast of St Peter and St Paul marks the end of a period of fasting that has lasted for several weeks, but it is not severe fasting like in Lent or in the Pylypivka pist. The peasants' stocks of flour and grains had been exhausted by July and the products of the new harvest were not yet available — that is why new vegetables, mushrooms, parsley and other green things were a significant addition to the families' daily rations. Zeleny borshch (dill soup), kholodnyk (cold vegetable soup), holubtsi (stuffed young red beet leaves) were among the popular dishes. Butter, dairy products and dishes made from them were also allowed and appreciated.

Before the Feast of St Peter and St Paul the houses were whitewashed, cleaned and tidied; the icons were given fresh decorative rushnyky (towels); the pich (combination of stove, oven and resting place) was given a fresh coat of paint and decorated with stylized painted flowers and animals and ornaments. On the day of the Feast, the faithful put on their Sunday best to go to church; girls made flower wreaths to wear on their heads.

The folk beliefs also attributed to St Peter and St Paul the protection of domestic animals, and their feast was also the Feast of Shepherds. Since most of the shepherds were children in their early teens, they were treated to sweets and dainties.

Mandryk, a sort of a small cake made from cottage cheese and flour, used to be a treat. On the Feast of St Peter and St Paul, mandryky were especially popular with young people. Mandryky were the favorite food of cowherds who took these cakes with them if they planned to be away from home for a long time. Mandryky were exchanged as a form of greeting; mandryky were on the table as the first dish to be eaten upon return from church on the feast day of St Peter and St Paul; it was even believed that eating mandryky on that day would protect you from fever for the next twelve months. The folk etymology explains the name of mandryky as being derived from the word mandry, which means travel. One of the folk legends tells a story of traveling Jesus and Peter whose staple food on their meanderings was mandryky.

Another folk legend has it that once St Peter and St Paul who often traveled together to distant lands — they were itinerant saints — stopped to rest in the shade of a big tree; resting, they dozed off and a cuckoo bird stole a mandryk from their food bag. But the moment it began eating the mandryk, the bird gagged on it. There is a saying: “The cuckoo bird gags on a mandryk on Petro and Pavlo (that is, on the feast day of St Peter and St Paul),” which is a sort of folk explanation of why cuckoo birds tend to stop cuckooing for a certain period of time in summer. In fact, it was considered to be a bad omen to hear the cuckooing after the Feast of St Peter and St Paul.

On the feast day of St Peter and St Paul, a sort of a picnic was organized. The place was chosen on toloka, that is a field used for grazing domestic animals, usually on the top of a mound to keep a watchful eye on the animals. Holes were dug in the ground, deep enough to put the feet and legs up to the knee in; people,

their feet in the holes, sat around “a table” — the ground surrounded by the holes — which was covered with a clean white tablecloth; the food and gifts to be exchanged were laid out on the cloth. The feast could last for several hours, with funny and edifying stories being told and songs sung. The young played games and danced dances. When the dusk began to creep in, flower wreaths were made and put on the heads of the grazing cattle.

The end of the feast was announced by blowing the horns — actually, these horns were made from bovine horns. The young cowherds were ceremoniously welcomed by villagers on their return from the grazing fields. This tradition has survived in some of the villages of Prykarpattya and the Carpathians.

Driving the cattle to and from grazing was accompanied by singing songs which were called *latkanky*. In general, the cattle were treated with great care. This, in many cases, tender care is reflected in many folk songs, sayings, behavioral patterns and habits (“when the cow gives birth to a calf, you should not take anything out of the house in order not to upset the calf”; “when you drive young cows to graze, put willow branches around their horns for the horns to grow strong”; “when you drive cows to graze for the first time, take a boiled egg with you, for the cows to be smooth and fat like an egg the whole year round”).

The summer was the time when the *chumaky* (salt traders; they were also engaged in other kinds of trading) set off on their long journeys to Crimea and other places. They were absent from home for several months. The *chumaky*, hunters and fishermen had to cook over the open fire and at the makeshift “stoves,” and some of such cooking traditions have survived until our days.

Word List:

laudable – похвальний
sanctity – недоторканність
constituent – елемент
vigorous – енергійний
dainty – витончений
cowherd – пастух
itinerant – мандруючий
meandering – блукання
omen – ознака
to gag – зав'язати рот
dug – виритий
edifying – повчальний
bovine – бичачий

Answer the following questions:

1. When is the Feast of St Peter and St Paul celebrated?

2. What dishes were among the popular ones on the Feast of St Peter and St Paul?
3. What do the people do before the Feast of St Peter and St Paul?
4. What dish was especially popular with young people on the Feast of St Peter and St Paul?
5. What folk legends do you know?
6. What tradition has survived in some of the villages of Prykarpattya and the Carpathians?

Give the English equivalents:

Kholodnyk; pich; mandryk; chumaky.

Use the following words and word combinations in the sentences of your own:

cowherd; itinerant; chumaky; omen; significance; folk legend; popular dishes; to treat; to derive.

St Michael the Archangel and Leader of the Heavenly Armies



The Feast of St Michael the Archangel and Leader of the Heavenly Armies is celebrated in the Christian Orthodox Church on November 21, though there are several other days in the year when St Michael is venerated.

The Orthodox Church also celebrates The Day of St Michael's Miracle — the miracle being the water of a spring near the Church of St Michael in Phrygia acquiring healing properties; St Michael was credited with doing that and also with preventing a flood which would have destroyed the church. Traditionally, on that day, the faithful in Ukraine did not work. In fact, you could only make food, take your cattle to pasture, feed your livestock and do some simple home chores — any other work was strictly forbidden by the Christian tradition — no tilling, no cutting wood, no whitewashing the house, no baking bread, or anything else that would involve considerable exertion.

Ukrainian folklore provides stories galore about punishment that was inflicted upon those who ignored the Church's injunction not to work on St Michael's Day. Here is one of such stories from the Land of Cherkashchyna. Once, a farmer decided he did not want to lose a whole day of good work and went to his field to do the fall seeding. His job done, he returned to his house and suddenly began scattering around salt, flour, cereals, dried berries and whatever else could be scattered — he must have imagined he was sowing seeds rather than scattering foodstuffs. He emptied all these food reserves onto the floor of the house, in the vegetable garden, in the barn and in the backyard — nobody could

stop him from doing it. The priest was called; it was only after the priest, who came running, read a prayer that the farmer, who had seemingly gone insane, stopped his frenzied scattering bout and became his old self. He swore he would never work again on St Michael's Day.

St Michael the Archangel began to be venerated in Ukraine in the times of Kyivan Rus when the first churches dedicated to the Archangel, Leader of the Heavenly Host, were built.

St Michael has been a patron saint of the city of Kyiv since probably the eleventh century.

At least two churches dedicated to St Michael were built at that time and a little later. One was in the Vydubetsky Monastery built in 1088, and the other one was built in the Monastery of St Michael in the early twelfth century. The latter was a magnificent church indeed which became known as Mykhaylivsky Zolotoverkhy Sobor — The Golden-Domed Cathedral of St Michael. It did have its domes covered in gold leaf.



Icon of St Michael, the Leader of the Heavenly Host. The icon comes from the iconostasis of the Church of St Michael in the village of Dorohynka in the Land of Kyivshchyna. Early 18th century. Photo by D. REDCHUK

On the ancient coat of arms of Kyiv you can see St Michael holding a sword. In Ukrainian icons, St Michael is usually shown trampling the devil underfoot, and holding a green branch of a date tree in one hand and a spear with a white banner or a burning sword in the other. As a fighter against evil, St Michael was believed to control the lightning and the wind.

In Ukrainian folklore he was described as carrying the moustached wind on his shoulder; by pulling the ends of the wind's moustache. St Michael could direct the blowing of the wind to whatever side he wanted; a strong pull would make the wind cause a storm or a hurricane.

The wind was believed to have been originally the creation of the devil and it was St Michael who took it away from the evil one — if not for the Archangel, the wind would have destroyed everything on the surface of the earth. St Michael used the bolts of lightning to shoot at the small devils and every time he scored a hit, the thunder would explode. The hunters considered St Michael to be their heavenly protector.

In the Ukrainian church tradition, the Day of St Michael, celebrated on November 21, was also the day of remembrance of the dead in prayer (there were several other such remembrance days in the year, in addition to St Michael's Day).

In the Land of Polissya, on the Day of Remembrance of the Dead, a dinner was organized for close relatives with no guests invited, but if an outsider, no matter who he or she could be, happened to come to the house on that day, the stranger was treated to a good meal in honour of the dead.

The traditional dishes on the Remembrance Day were the borsch or cabbage soup, chicken with pasta, braised cabbage, boiled peas, holubtsi (stuffed cabbage), varenyky (stuffed dumplings), pancakes, and jellied fruit juice; special bread, pies and cookies were also made. If Remembrance Day fell on

Wednesday or Friday, fish, beans and mushrooms were cooked instead of meat. However, the traditions varied in different parts of Ukraine.

Before the November Feast of St Michael, starting from the Day of St Kozma and St Demian (November 14), the young people in the countryside began to get together for vechornytsi — evening parties. The girls cooked chicken and pasta, or fried eggs and made other dishes that contained eggs, and the young men provided home-made liquor. St Kozma and St Demian were the patron saints of poultry breeders — hence the tradition of cooking chickens on their day.

On Saint Michael's day, in those villages which had churches dedicated to St Michael, the villagers would make mead with spices right in front of the church, cook cabbage and pea dishes, and then they would sit down to a communal feast. In many villages, the communal feast was followed by individual parties at home to which people tried to invite as many guests as possible — the more guests you had, the more you were respected.

Word List:

to venerate – поважати
acquiring – придбання
healing – загоєння
galore – удосталь
injunction – заборона
livestock – худоба
to dedicate – присвятити
barn – сарай
exertion – застосування
to inflict – заподіювати
trampling – розтоптування
sword – меч
hurricane – ураган
to explode – вибухнути

Answer the following questions:

1. When is the Feast of St Michael the Archangel celebrated in the Christian Orthodox Church?
2. What may people do on The Day of St Michael's Miracle?
3. What city has St Michael been a patron saint since probably the eleventh century?
4. When was the church dedicated to St Michael built in the Vydubetsky Monastery?
5. How was St Michael described in Ukrainian folklore?
6. How is St Michael usually shown in Ukrainian icons?
7. What dishes were traditional ones on the Remembrance Day?

8. Who was the patron saint of poultry breeders?

Give the English equivalents:

Mykhaylivsky Zolotoverkhy Sobor; vechornytsi; holubtsi.

Use the following words and word combinations in the sentences of your own:

holubtsi; patron saint; St Michael the Archangel; poultry breeders; to venerate; acquiring; to dedicate; sword; Remembrance Day; ancient coat of arms.

Triytsya – Ukrainian Traditional Holiday



The Feast of Triytsya, (Trinity Sunday), which commemorates the Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles (Pentecost) falls on the seventh Sunday after Easter. In English, it is also called Whitsunday, and in Ukrainian it is also known as Pyatydesyatnytsya (derived from the word p'yatdesyat, that is fifty) because it is celebrated on the fiftieth day after Easter. In Ukraine, a predominantly Orthodox Christian country for more than a thousand years, there are many age-old traditions connected with church holidays which combine the Christian spirit with the pre-Christian folk customs and lore.

Orthodox Christians see in Triytsya a celebration of the fullness of God who opens Himself to man. It is with Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles that the New Testament Church came into being, a church as an institution that should bring all the nations and peoples to salvation. Pyatydesyatnytsya is a link between those unlettered fishermen who were turned by Christ into sagacious apostles, and who then carried the word of God to peoples and nations. Orthodox Christians believe that they are direct descendants of the first Christians who are called upon to continue to spread the Word of God. Triytsya celebrates, in fact, a new era that began after the Descent of the Holy Spirit after the Savior had completed His mission on earth. Orthodox Christians believe that after his Ascension to heaven, Christ, as a part of the Trinity, sent the Holy Spirit down to earth to direct the church and its adepts to the righteous path, the path to eternity. On Pyatydesyatnytsya the Apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit, and those who were meek and undecided, found new strength, determination and resolution to start spreading the Word of God with zeal and vigor.

The time when Triytsya is celebrated coincides with the Feast of Zeleni Svyata, Green Holidays (also called Klechalni Svyatky), and though the latter is

definitely of a pre-Christian origin, in the collective consciousness of the people the two feasts have merged.

Triytsya is the time when the vegetation comes into full force in Ukraine; the grass is mowed for hay, the meadows, liberally sprinkled with wild flowers, are a joy to behold. Peasant houses and village squares used to be and still are adorned with leafy branches of birches, maples and ash-trees. The gates and the rooms were festooned with flower garlands and fragrant grasses which were believed capable of protecting against the evil forces. The icons were adorned with garlands of flowers and grasses too, and the floors were covered with carpets of wild flowers and grasses.

The day before Triytsya, that is Saturday, was called *Didova subota*, the day of the commemoration of the dead. It differed from all the other commemorative days of the year. On that day prayers were said for all the dead — baptized and not baptized, those who died of old age and those who took their life. Bread or honey or other sweets were taken to church to be blessed; the old and disabled were treated to food, and at the cemeteries food was left near the graves for the dead to take part in the festive repast.



In the central square of the village a whole tree, the bole of a tree or a large branch was erected and adorned with garlands of flowers and grasses, and the place was the focal point of the *Zeleni svyata* week-long holidays, particularly popular with the young. The girls would cook food — fried eggs with bacon, pies stuffed with cottage cheese or cabbage, bread in the shape of braided ropes, and sweet pastry, and the young men would bring beer and other drinks. The girls spread tablecloths on the ground and laid the food on them, and then everybody would sing and dance in a ring. You were supposed to touch the leaves or the branches every so often. The picnic over, everyone proceeded back home to continue celebrations.

Traditions in different parts of Ukraine differed but little; in the lands of *Slobozhanshchyna* and *Poltavshchyna*, usually the trunk of a dead tree was erected instead of a leafy one, and a wheel was fixed to the top of the trunk. The wheel and the songs about nature's revival in the spring symbolized the change of seasons with the sun being the major force, the life giver.

In the Land of *Polissya*, a good-looking girl was chosen to be the central figure in the rite of *kust* (bush). She was adorned in leaves, flowers and herbs which were sewn and fixed together so as to form a green skirt and a green shirt. Her head was crowned with a garland of flowers, fragrant grasses and ribbons. The festive crowd of the villagers would then walk around the village with the "bush" girl at the head of the procession. Songs were sung and dances were danced.

*"We take this bush
To the river.*

*Oh river,
Give us water,
Give us rain,
Golden and copious,
So that we have a harvest Rich.”*

In the lands of Poltavshchyna and Slobozhanshchyna instead of “the bush,” the festive processions were led by “the poplar” (there is a Ukrainian phrase, “slender as a poplar” to describe a svelte girl). Though honorary, the role of the poplar also involved a considerable physical strain — the girl had to be walking around with her arms raised straight up, all wrapped up in garlands, beads and decorative shawls. The celebrants wished those they met on the way a good harvest and well-being, and were given in return ribbons, beer and other drinks, pies and pancakes.

*“We walk the poplar
We drink mead and beer.
Grow, poplar, grow,
Be strong to withstand the wind,
Never break,
Only bow to the field of grain.”*

The week of Zeleni svyata was the time of meat eating — right after it was over, another period of fasting began which lasted until the Day of St Peter. In addition to meat, a lot of onions, garlic and reddish were consumed too. Soups were made with sorrel, spinach, pigweed, nettles, tops of beets; these green things were also used as stuffing for pies.

Triytsya was — and to a great extent is — one of the major Christian feasts in Ukraine. There are many churches in Ukraine which are dedicated to the Holy Trinity. In Kyiv alone there are several churches of the Holy Trinity, the best known of which is the one which is situated right above the gate to the Kyiv Pechersk Lavra Monastery. It was built in the twelfth century.

Voznesinnya Hospodnye, or The Ascension of Our Lord Jesus Christ, which falls on a Thursday, is celebrated ten days before the Pentecost (Ascensientide). It used to be — and in many places of Ukraine still remains — a very joyous and boisterous feast. After the religious ceremony was over at church, the second half of the day was devoted to feasting. Guests were welcome, and the guests were supposed to bring some food with them — bread, pies, cookies, bacon, sour cream, cottage or hard cheese. The most popular dishes cooked for this holiday were cabbage or beet soup, jelly made with rooster meat and bones, baked meat, home-made pasta and jelly-like berry dessert. A particular care was taken to make cookies of various shapes and ingredients. There were tiny pies made which were called drabyanky, or “steps,” — with rolled-up pancakes placed on them, they symbolized “the stairway to Heaven.” Some of these drabyanky were taken to the grain fields and left there “to encourage the grain to grow and become bread.”

Drabyanky also reflected the pre-Christian Ukrainian motif of the World Tree (which is also called The Cosmic Tree) as the centre of the world. It is a

widespread motif in many myths and folktales among various preliterate peoples, by which they understand the human and profane condition in relation to the divine and sacred realm. Two main forms are known and both employ the notion of the world tree as centre. In the one, the tree is the vertical centre binding together heaven and earth; in the other, the tree is the source of life at the horizontal centre of the earth. In the vertical, tree-of-knowledge tradition, the tree extends between earth and heaven. It is the vital connection between the world of the gods and the human world. Drabyanky were the steps to climb up or down The World Tree.

Pilgrimages to the Pochayivsky Monastery in the Land of Ternopilshchyna, and the Pechersk Lavra Monastery in Kyiv were taken to worship and pray for “good weather for the harvest season.”

Word List:

descent – спуск
testament – заповіт
salvation – порятунок
meek – покірливий
zeal – завзяття
vigor – енергія
consciousness – свідомість
to mow – косити
to behold – споглядати
maple – клен
to festoon – прикрашати
garland – гірлянда
wheel – колесо
strain – напруга
honorary – почесний
procession – процесія
shawl – хустка
to bind – зв'язувати

Answer the following questions:

1. When is The Feast of Triytsya celebrated?
2. How was the day before Triytsya called?
3. Tell about traditions on the Feast of Triytsya in different parts of Ukraine.

Give the English equivalents:

Triytsya; Pyatydesyatnytsya; Zeleni Svyata.

Use the following words and word combinations in the sentences of your own:

preliterate; shawl; to bind; testament; salvation; unlettered; meek; to festoon; to behold; Trinity Sunday; ascension; direct descendants.

The Celebrations of the Feast of Malanka

Malanka is mostly a rural feast but lately it has begun to make inroads into cities as well. Basically, Malanka is celebrated — or performed, or whatever other verb would be proper to use — in accordance to a set pattern which differs in certain details in different parts of Ukraine.

The celebrations of the Feast of Malanka begin on the night of January 14 (which happens to be the New Year's Day by the Old Style Calendar). The central character in the celebrations is Malanka, "a girl of many talents and of exceptional beauty." Who actually this Malanka girl was, and what she did to earn a public celebration, nobody knows for sure. All my enquires produced little result — except for some information that I obtained from some old-timers according to whom the day of January 13 is a feast day of St Malania the Roman Martyr. But evidently, it was an ancient pagan holiday of uncertain origin which was "adjusted" to the Christian ritual.

There were times when Malanka was celebrated in virtually all the villages and towns of Ukraine but these days only some places have managed to maintain the traditional Malanka celebrations. It is in western Ukraine that the Malanka traditions have been preserved best. Malanka is also called there Pereberiya and has acquired features of a true folk carnival. The climax of Malanka celebrations is best to be watched — or participated in — in the city of Chernivtsi. Hundreds if not thousands of people wearing masquerade costumes of Devils, Gypsies, Bears, Goats and other creatures pour out into the streets engaging the passers-by and spectators in their boisterous and sometimes wild fun. The participants and spectators let themselves go — but there is never any violence or "violations of public order" to such an extent that it would require the police interference.

According to ethnographers though, the most interesting celebrations of Malanka are held in the town of Vashkivtsi, in the Land of Bukovyna. In recent years, both Vashkivtsi and Horoshevo have begun to attract a lot of tourists, both from Ukraine and even from abroad, who come to see Malanka celebrated there.

There are many places worth going to see Malanka celebrated. In the village of Horbivtsi, for example, a very old tradition of "horse visits" has been preserved. Two young men, wearing the horse costumes, several other people posing as "warriors," Malanka herself and a band of musicians go from house to house, greeting the hosts; if they come across an unmarried girl of marriageable age, they engage her in dancing, and keep dancing until she "buys her freedom" with candies, cookies or money.

In some villages of the Land of Vinnychchyna, people cook a dish which they call “malanka” and bake ritual bread which is called “malanka” and “vasyl.” During the celebrations, the villagers go around their gardens at night asking the trees to bring more fruit. It is believed that the plants understand human speech during the Malanka night, and animals can talk. Incidentally, if you do not treat your pets well, they may complain to God about the mistreatment during the Malanka too.

In some villages, women tidy up and whitewash the pich (the traditional Ukrainian pich is a special place in the house — it is much more than just an oven and stove combined; it is a brick platform, on which you can rest or sleep) because it is believed that on the Night of Malanaka the pich will want to join a dance. One must not lie on it during the Malanka night; some oats should be put on the pich for it to have what to feed the horses with; horses will take the pich to the neighbouring town for it to have fun.



The Old Man — one of the personages in the Malanka performances. The town of Vashkivtsi, Chernivtsi Oblast.

Probably, the most spectacular Malanka celebration is in a village in the Land of Bukovyna.

In the evening before the Malanka night, young men put on all kinds of costumes, some of them weird and bizarre — Devils, Warriors, Police, Witches, Old Women and Men, Death, Blacksmith, Jews, Gypsies, Turks, Hutsuls and representatives of other nationalities. All of these people in their disguise move from house to house performing their little plays and improvisations for those who would care to see their performance. They make very much noise, and in addition to music, they play practical jokes on people — but no one ever gets harmed in any way. Well, the celebrants can attempt to kiss a beautiful girl, or do some mischief, but it’s all in jest.

The role of Malanka is usually played by a witty young man of a cheerful disposition. He chooses a woman from the village whom he will mimic or parody, and then he does it in such a way that everybody immediately recognizes the original who is parodied.

Malanka is a clumsy girl — she inadvertently overturns things or knocks them down, drops things, spills water; she also does some preposterous things like whitewashing the furniture instead of the pich, she litters, and does other things that one should avoid doing. All this is done to encourage us to be careful and diligent, and thus avoid being a laughingstock.

Preparations for the Malanka celebrations begin long before the actual date. Costumes and accessories have to be made and it may take quite some time to do it. Some of these accessories are funny enough in themselves — for example, necklaces for the Gypsies or other female personages can be made of potatoes or beans; the tails for those who are supposed to sport them can have prickly sections to prick the hands of those who might have a wish to grab and pull that tail.

Some of the costumes in some of the villages are passed from generation to generation — the bear skins, for example, which are worn by those Malanka “performers” who impersonate bears. The strongest and most robust young men are chosen to play the role of the Bears who are to protect Malanka and defend her dignity.

The Malanka performers hide their faces under the masks that make them unrecognizable, and in order to completely conceal their identity, the masked performers speak in voices that are changed. Those who are nevertheless recognized by the onlookers have to stop their performance and abandon their direct participation — they can continue taking part in the fun but only in the status of viewers.

The masks and personages that take part in the Malanka performances often reflect the recent happenings, current political events, or fads. Politicians or prominent figures can be made fun of; the masks and costumes can ridicule or represent pop stars, protagonists in popular films, or well-known television presenters. That makes no two Malanka performances alike — every one of them will have its own distinctive features.

Malanka performances start with the coming of the dark. The first to be paid a visit are girls who are of the marriageable age; but the households where someone has died within the last year are avoided. While Malanka is carolling, someone from her crowd makes some mischief, hiding things in the house they come to, or misplacing them, or overturning things. But everything must be done “within limits of decency” so as not to offend the hosts. After the songs are sung and jokes are told, the Malanka performers are treated to food and drink. As the Malanka company departs, good wishes are exchanged and sometimes fireworks are set off.

Depending on the size of a village, Malanka performances can go on through the night until midday the next day. In some villages, the Malanka performers make a big bonfire into which they throw the spoiled masks and straw which was used for stuffing the hunches of “hunchbacks,” and then they, one by one, jump over the fire in an age-old ritual.



The Malanka Bears — the young men who are chosen to play their roles must be physically very strong. The village of Velyky Kuchuriv.



Two Old Men of Malanaka personages in the village of Vashkivtsi

Word List:

inroad – нашестя

adjusted – пристосований
boisterous – несамовитий
weird – фантастичний
bizarre – химерний
inadvertently – необережно
to overturn – перекидатися
robust – здоровий
fad – чудасія
to carol – виспівувати різдвяні гімни
hunchback – горбань

Answer the following questions:

1. When do the celebrations of the Feast of Malanka begin?
2. How is the Feast of Malanka celebrated in different parts of Ukraine?
3. Who usually plays the role of Malanka?
4. What traditions deal with the celebrations of the Feast of Malanka in your village (town)?
5. Have you ever taken part in the celebrations of the Feast of Malanka in your village?

Use the following words and word combinations in the sentences of your own:

feast of Malanka; fad; to carol; weird; bizarre; to make a big bonfire; to bake ritual bread; to encourage.

SYMBOLIC WORLD OF PYSANKA



Pysanka (in Ukrainian the word "pysanka" is derived from the verb "pysaty", that is "to write" or "to paint") is an egg painted with bright colours in geometrical patterns or stylized figural, animal and floral designs. The tradition of painting chicken - or some other birds' - eggs is so old that no one would be able to tell when it started. Christianity adopted this pagan tradition and Easter eggs have become an indelible feature of the feast commemorating the Resurrection of Christ.

In many parts of the world one finds ancient myths in which the Egg features as a symbol of the Sun, Spring and Revival of Nature. Ethnologists of the 20th century have discovered that the ancient beliefs of many peoples regarded the Egg of Light as a source from which the world had sprung, developing from Chaos to Order. In Ukraine the tradition of painting eggs goes back at least thirty three hundred years - clay eggs, once evidently painted and dating from the 13th or 12th century B.C., were unearthed by archaeologists in the vicinity of the village of Pustynka at the Dnister River. Painted eggs must



have been used as charms guarding against evil. There were pysankas of many kinds to fit many occasions. For it to have magic powers, a pysanka must be painted at a specified time, in certain colours and patterns, and chants must be sung while it was being painted. It was also very important to give it as a present to the right person. Pysankas were mostly painted by elderly women, late at night, after everything had grown quiet. It was desirable to do it at the end of the day which had passed without any rows, scandals or emotional upheavals. It was a sort of a ritual in which one had to observe the rules whose origins had long been lost in the mists of time. One had to be very careful in preparing the paints and "pysachok", that is a small wooden stick with a foil spiral on one end to be used for painting the egg. (Now, of course, paint brushes are used but you can't create a "real" pysanka with a brush). The egg itself had to be either a fertilized one, taken from under a hen, or if the fertilization could not be ascertained the egg to be painted had to be sucked out. To do it one has to make two tiny holes with a needle at the opposite ends and then by eggs of its contents. The symbolism of colours, patterns and designs varied from area to area but were certain patterns and designs which were of a more universal character. If the colours, patterns, chanting and other things were right, if the eggs had been properly chosen and treated before being painted, if the time of the day when the painting was done was correct, then the painted eggs were believed to be powerful charms against fire, lightning, illnesses and other mishaps.

Christianity imbued the painted egg with new meanings transforming it into the Easter egg and giving it a new symbolism but it could not eradicate the elements of pagan beliefs associated with the painted egg. Easter eggs, blessed in church by a priest, were continued to be used as a sort of charms for many different occasions: to be placed under the corner stone of a house; to help making bees to give more honey; to guard against misadventure on a journey; to secure happiness in marriage; to promote multiplication in the animal, floral and human worlds, to a name but a few of its functions.

By the end of the nineteenth century the art of painting eggs began to decline throughout Ukraine and unfortunately very few of the eggs dating from the 19th or earlier times have been preserved in private collections or in museums. Now, at the end of the century and of the millennium, a certain revival of pysankas is observed. Hopefully it is part of the general revival of interest in the Ukrainian national traditions many of which go down into a very distant past.

Looking at pysankas one can derive purely aesthetic pleasure from the colours and patterns. One can marvel at the skill and ingenuity of the artists (absolute majority of whom are, of course, amateurs) who have painted them. But it's a much greater fun to know the hidden meaning of the combination of colours used, of patterns and designs. Some of the signs seem to be obvious but even the more obvious, like, say, all kinds of that go beyond their Christian significance.

Rings painted on pysankas were believed to bring concord and conciliation into family life; representations of birds were painted on the light background (pink, light green and blue) if the pysanka was meant for children and on the dark background if was to be given to grown-ups; "belts" were against unfaithfulness; floral patterns helped gain success. About a hundred patterns and designs were used and in the times of old it was strictly forbidden to change them to suit one's artistic whims. But in our times new patterns and designs have begun to creep in. It is still a controversial issue. If one cannot change the words of an established prayer, can one change the patterns crosses, have meanings and designs that have long been established by tradition as the only acceptable ones?

Some of the patterns and signs on pysankas have symbolism that has come down to us probably from the pre-historic times. Wavy patterns symbolize rain; dots - grain which is about to sprout; squares and rhombi - earth and its fertility; the Greek cross - the Sun, and originally a god of the Earth; a zigzag with rounded angles - the snake which was a symbolical representation of a god of the Nether World; a tree - the sacred Tree of Life; a female figure - the Great Goddess; Goddess of the Sky, Protectress of all Life on Earth; a fish - health, fertility, life and death; birds - creatures that are able to fly high and thus carry messages to the gods; oak leaves - Perun, god of Thunder, of human and solar energy, of life. All the figural representations, of course, are highly stylized.

Pysankas and krashankas (eggs uniformly painted in one colour, with no patterns or designs) used to be an important element in the Ukrainian country life. A lot of their symbolic meanings have been forgotten, they are not used as universal charms as much as they used to be. But they remain joy to the eye and an exiting field for ethnographic studies. And for very many people pysankas, no doubt, have retained their special significance as an integral feature of Easter. Even those who do not care for pysankas pre-historic and Christian symbolism cannot help enjoying pysankas art.



Word List:

resurrection – відновлення
chant – скандування
upheaval – переворот
foil – фольга
to fertilize – запліднити
mishap – невдача

to imbue – наповнювати
to eradicate – знищити
to decline – зменшитися
marvel – диво
ingenuity – винахідливість
concord – згода
conciliation – примирення

Answer the following questions:

1. What does an egg symbolize?
2. What is a pysachok?
3. What patterns helped gain success?
4. What do wavy patterns on pysankas symbolize?
5. What does the Greek cross on pysankas symbolize?
6. Have you ever made pysankas and krashankas?

Give the English equivalents:

Pysanka; pysachok; krashanka.

Use the following words and word combinations in the sentences of your own:

concord; conciliation; marvel; resurrection; patterns; pysankas and krashankas; symbolic meanings; to symbolize; ancient myth; colours.

VELYKDEN: GREAT DAY, EASTER, UPLIFTING OF THE SOUL



Velykden' is Ukrainian for Easter. Though it is not the only word for Easter used in the Ukrainian language it is probably the most proper. Literally it means "Great day". Easter is the biggest Christian holiday in Ukraine whose population in its majority are Orthodox Christians.

Every religious holiday in Ukraine is marked by the ringing of church bells. But on the Velykden' the bells sound particularly majestically and solemnly. Tintinnabulation announces to the whole world glad news: Christ is risen! Why is there so much rejoicing? Resurrection of Christ proclaims immortality of soul. Christ rises from the dead, and we,

those who believe in Him, shall also rise after death to eternal life. Man gets accustomed to the idea of mortality of flesh. Resurrection gives us hope.

Resurrection is a victory over death. Resurrection is the Evangel, Bringing of Good News. Church bells all over the land announce Good News of Christ's Resurrection, of Victory of Life Eternal over Death.

Many poetic lines have been written about the joyous holiday of Easter. Some remain anonymous, some are sung during the church service; others have been created by notable figures of Ukrainian poetry. All of them sing the glorious event of overcoming death, of rising from the dead to give life. Faith, hope and love have helped the Ukrainian people to persevere and survive the times of great trials and tribulations, famines and wars. The Orthodox Christian Church has helped Ukrainians overcome hardships in the past, it will help them to make Ukraine forever independent and prosperous.

There are many traditional beliefs, legends and stories connected with Easter. Not all of them have come down to us from the centuries that have gone by, but those that have, have gone into the heart and blood of Ukrainian people. Some of them have been recorded, collected and published by ethnographers. Following are a couple of them, particularly revealing, poetic and emotionally uplifting.

Easter Legends

One of the most popular legends which used to be traditionally told by the head of the family at Easter, holds it that at the time when the faithful leave the church during the Easter service to go around it several times and then return to go back in again, Angels of the Lord raise the Saviour from the Sepulchre and the Saints come down from the sacred icons on which they are depicted and all of them «khrystosuyut'sya», that is, exchange triple kisses as Easter salutation and expression of fraternal love.

Another one runs like this: Right after His Resurrection the Saviour put Beelzebub the Satan, head of all the devils, into a deep underground pit, beneath the rock in which His Tomb was, and ordered Beelzebub to gnaw at 12 iron chains into which he was cast, at 12 iron doors and at 12 padlocks on the doors. If Beelzebub bites through all of the doors, all the padlocks and all of the chains before the Velykden', then the end of the world will come. In the twelve months from Easter to Easter the Evil One eats his way through all of it except one last link in the last chain. At the moment when the devil is about to pounce on this last link Velykden's chanting begins «Christ is risen!» and everything, all the chains, doors and padlocks become whole again as it was before the Satan had begun his gnawing effort. So, if people stop chanting «Christ is risen!» on Easter, then the end of the world will come.

There are several traditional explanations, «folk etymology,» of why Easter is called in Ukrainian «Velykden'». One of them says that at the time when Christ was born the days were long and full of bright sunshine, seven days longer than nowadays. After Christ was crucified the days of sunlight grew much shorter. On Easter, the days grow long again (the word «velyky» in Ukrainian means «great,» «long» and «big») and the central gate of the iconostasis (tall partition with tiers of

icons in an Orthodox church separating the altar from the nave) stays open for several days, from Easter Sunday till next Sunday.

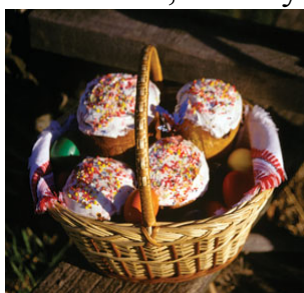
Easter Traditional Customs

Some of the traditional customs associated with Easter are no less interesting and edifying than the legends. In many Ukrainian villages there was a tradition to make bonfires on Easter night. Either it was done at the foot of the hill on which the village church stood (in most cases churches used to be built on the tops of hills) or on the top of a hill beyond the village so that the light of the fire could be seen from afar, announcing the glad news to the Universe.

Easter Service

In Orthodox Christian churches Easter service begins at about 8 o'clock at night and lasts till 5 or 6 o'clock in the morning. Those who do not go to church to attend the Easter service and stay at home (mostly the very young and the very old) are not supposed to lie down in beds either and should find some cosy places to while the night away, as it is not considered proper to lay out the beds to lie in for the night. Lights should not be turned off or extinguished as light is needed to illumine the way «for the Angels of the Lord who are flying over the village».

Easter service in church differs considerably from the liturgy on any other occasion (in fact, the whole week after Easter as far as church service is concerned, is very special). The Gospel, read on Easter should be, and most often is, chanted in Greek, Latin, Church Slavonic and Ukrainian. The Easter service proper begins with a procession of the faithful around the church. At midnight sharp all the lights in the church are lit, and at first the priest than after him the entire congregation begin to sing: «Thine Resurrection, Christ, Our Lord and Saviour is sung by the Angels in Heaven, and here on Earth we have been granted a Happy Occasion to sing Thee, oh Lord, our praises!» The congregation headed by the priest leave the church and three times go around it. The priest is holding in his hands a special Easter triple candle, a cross; members of the congregation carry a big processional cross, banners, icons, gospels and paskha (Easter cakes). It is an extremely solemn sight, with singing in praise of Christ's Resurrection uplifting the souls of all who come to this service.



When the congregation returns to the church's door they find it shut. Everybody begins chanting «Christ is risen!» and after a while the priest, with appropriate words, touches the door with his cross and the door swings open. The priest enters, followed by the rest. Easter service resumes and lasts till after the sunrise. After the service is over, the priest, reading appropriate prayers, blesses the things that the members of the congregation have brought with them and laid out in the church's yard, by sprinkling them with holy water: Easter eggs (Pysanky and Krashanky), Easter cakes (paskha), roasted piglets, sausage and a great variety

of other meats.

The priest greets the congregation repeating many times over: «Christ is risen!» and the congregation replies in chorus «Indeed He is risen!» People exchange triple kisses of Easter greeting and little gifts, mostly Easter eggs. An Easter egg



that you get at the first «Khrystosuvanni» (exchange of triple kiss), is kept at home as a great treasure because it is considered to be a thing possessing a great spiritual power.

When people return home in the morning, they sit down at tables, laden with food, read prayers pertaining to the occasion. After a long period of the Lent which is not exactly fasting but that of rather severe limitations as far as food and alcoholic drinks are concerned, people are eager to «razhovetsya», that is to eat and drink making it up, so to say, after weeks of abstention from many kinds of food and drink. The tables are covered with snow-white table-cloths, and each family go out of their way to put on the table all the best food and drinks they can get. At the place of honour on the table one can see Pysanky. A candle must be burning in one's home during the entire Easter week. There are prescriptions of age-long tradition that regulate people's behaviour at the Easter table; for example, you are supposed to throw the pieces of the shell of the first egg, blessed after the Easter service, into the running water. On Easter everyone (mostly in the countryside) wants to ring the church bells and nobody is forbidden to do so. It is a popular belief that ringing the church bells on Easter brings the ringer happiness. There is a widely spread popular belief in Ukraine that the sun rising on Easter morning is «playing», that is giving out a particularly cheerful light, and people open all the windows on the eastern side, pull all the curtains aside to let the sunshine in, the Easter sunshine, which is believed to give people an extra measure of happiness and health. Now we are living through the time when many traditions are being revived. It concerns some of Easter-holiday customs too.

Pure Joy

Velykden' is a source of pure joy. It uplifts the soul and brings rejoicing to the heart. Velykden' gives hope. Both in the country and in the town people do their best to make their homes look beautiful and create a festive mood. «Christ is risen!» resounds over the land. There is pure faith and love in these words. «Indeed He is risen!» rejoices the soul.

Word List:

solemnly – урочисто
tintinnabulation – дзвін дзвонів
resurrection – відновлення
salutation – привіт
pit – яма

beneath – нижче
to gnaw – гризти
to cast – кидати
padlock – замок
to pounce – атакувати
congregation – конгрегація
to pertain – належати

Answer the following questions:

1. When is Easter celebrated this year?
2. What traditional beliefs, legends and stories connected with Easter do you know?
3. What does «khrystosuyut'sya» mean?
4. When does Easter service begin in Orthodox Christian churches?
5. What do you know about Easter service in Orthodox Christian churches?
6. What must be burning in one's home during the entire Easter week?

Give the English equivalents:

Velykden'; «khrystosuyut'sya»; to «razhovetsya»; paskha.

Use the following words and word combinations in the sentences of your own:

Easter; solemnly; tintinnabulation; resurrection; service; traditional beliefs and legends; Church bells.

Rituals and Traditions of the Ukrainian Wedding



Tetyana Poshyvaylo, art historian,
ethnographer and deputy director of the Ukrainian
Folk Culture Center Muzei Ivana Honchara.

Wedding in the Ukrainian countryside used to be — and to a large extent still is — an event that involved the whole village in which it took place, and lasted for days on end. The traditional marriage rites, the rituals of the wedding ceremony and of the wedding party were strictly observed. In recent years, some of the ancient wedding traditions have begun to be coming back.

Marriage is a legally and socially sanctioned union, usually between a man and a woman that is regulated by laws, rules, customs, beliefs, and attitudes that prescribe the rights and duties of the partners, and gives status to their offspring. Through the ages marriages have taken a great number of forms.

The rituals and ceremonies surrounding marriage in most cultures are associated primarily with fecundity and validate the importance of marriage for the continuation of a clan, people, or society. They also assert a familial or communal sanction of the mutual choice and an understanding of the difficulties and sacrifices involved in making what is considered, in most cases, to be a lifelong commitment to and responsibility for the welfare of spouse and children.

Marriage ceremonies include symbolic rites, often sanctified by a religious order, which are thought to confer good fortune on the couple. Because economic considerations play an essential role in the success of child rearing, the offering of gifts, both real and symbolic, to the married couple is a significant part of the marriage ritual.

Fertility rites intended to ensure a fruitful marriage exist in some form in all ceremonies. Some of the oldest rituals still to be found in contemporary ceremonies include the prominent display of fruit or of cereal grains that may be sprinkled over the couple or on their nuptial bed, the accompaniment of a small child with the bride.

The most universal ritual is one that symbolizes a sacred union. This may be expressed by the joining of hands, an exchange of rings or chains, or the tying of garments. However, all the elements in marriage rituals vary greatly among different societies, and components such as time, place, and the social importance of the event are fixed by tradition and habit.

From its beginning, Christianity has emphasized the spiritual nature and indissolubility of marriage. Some Christian churches count marriage as one of the sacraments, and other Christians confirm the sanctity of marriage but do not identify it as a sacrament. Since the Middle Ages, Christian weddings have taken place before a priest or minister, and the ceremony involves the exchange of vows, readings from Scripture, and a blessing.

Ukrainian traditional marriage rites fit the general picture of what marriage rituals are about, but at the same time, there are things which differ them from such rites observed by other peoples and nations.

Marriage Arrangements in Ukraine

Until the late 20th century, marriage was rarely a matter of free choice. However, we shall not deal with the issue of love between spouses, which in more recent times came to be associated with marriage — it is a separate and vast subject to discuss. What follows is a description of the age-old Ukrainian marriage rites and wedding rituals. As a general observation, one can say that in most cases romantic love was not the primary motive for matrimony in the past, and one's marriage partner was usually carefully chosen.

It was believed that a marriage would be happy if certain rituals were carefully observed at all the stages of courting, at the wedding ceremony and at the wedding reception by the betrothed and their kin. Some of these rituals, or probably most of them, including songs and dances, must have had their origin in the very distant pre-Christian past.

The Ukrainian word for “wedding” is “vesillya”; the root of the word, “vesil” suggests something “vesele”, that is “joyous.” The traditional wedding ceremony, which with the advent of Christianity began to include the ceremony performed in church, was a sort of a folk performance with many participants each of whom played their roles prescribed by tradition. Some of the wedding rituals, songs and dances also had some symbolic meaning; others were of a “magical” nature, performed to assure fertility, luck and happiness.

Marriage rituals and traditions, and attitudes within the wedlock, and attitudes to those people who become related by marriage began to be formed at some early stages of the development of the institution of marriage of the Ukrainian nation. One of the early medieval chronicles states, for example, that “The Polyany (one of the proto-Ukrainian tribes) were of a benevolent disposition and adhered to the habits and traditions of their ancestors; they greatly respected their in-laws and their kin.”

Christianity was adopted in Kyivan Rus-Ukraine at the end of the ninth century but it took centuries before the church wedding was firmly established.

In contrast to the traditions of many other peoples and nations, in Ukraine it was not so much the father of the girl, who wanted to get married, who had the last word in finalizing the marriage decision, but the girl herself and her fiance. Also, not only young men had the right to “svatatysya”, that is to court and propose marriage, but unmarried girls as well.

Girls would go the house of the parents of the young men they wanted to marry and would insist that marriage be arranged there and then, adding that they would not leave the house until their demands were met.

Betrothal Rituals

When it was a young man who did the proposing, the first thing he was supposed to do was to find a respected person who knew well all the rituals. This man, svat in Ukrainian, was sent to talk to the prospective bride’s parents (this mission was called svatannya). The chief svat usually had other svats to accompany him. Properly dressed (their dress proclaimed their purpose), the svat delegation would begin their “performance” from the moment they arrived at the door of their destination. Their mission was variously described as “a hunt” or “trade” in which they were the merchants asking for the “goods” — that is the girl. At the time when the svats were declaring their purpose, the girl was supposed to be standing by the pich (a combination of a cooking stove and a heating installation) and silently addressing the ancestors with a request to bless her marriage.

If she accepted the proposal, she would give the svats long embroidered towels which they would put over their shoulders and chests as sashes. If she turned the proposal down, the girl would present the svats with a pumpkin (hence the Ukrainian idiom — daty harbuza which literally means: “to give somebody a pumpkin” and metaphorically — to refuse to do something).

If the first stage of the svatannya was successful, the second stage, ohlyadyny (“inspection”) began. The bride’s parents went to the bridegroom’s house to

have a good look around and ascertain that he could support his wife. If the bride's parents were satisfied with what they saw, the third stage, *zaruchyny* ("betrothal") was declared. The bridegroom's parents went to the bride's parents' place, and in the presence of their parents, the bride and bridegroom announced their intention to get married. Usually, at such meetings, the village elder was present and he would wind an embroidered towel around the betrothed hands. The parents then blessed their children, and presents were exchanged. If any of the parties involved declared some time after the *zaruchyny* that they refused to go ahead with the marriage, they would have to pay a fine "for causing an offense."

Usually two weeks elapsed between the *zaruchyny* and the *vesillya* (wedding). The bride was supposed to make a wreath of flowers and colorful ribbons and whenever she appeared in public, she had to wear such a wreath.

The preferred day of the week for weddings was Sunday. On Friday, the *korovay* (big loaf of bread) to be given to the newlyweds at the wedding ceremony was baked, as well as other ritual biscuits and cakes. The whole process of *korovay* making was accompanied by singing of songs appropriate for the occasion. In the Land of *Halychyna*, a figurine of *baran* (ram) made of bread was presented to the newlyweds. This *baran* was a symbolic substitute of a real animal that used to be sacrificed at weddings in the pagan times. In the Carpathians, instead of the *baran*, two geese made of bread were presented.

The *korovay* presentation ceremony was performed by women who were of cheerful disposition and happy in marriage; no unmarried girls or widows were allowed to take part in the presentation.

Also on Friday, the *vesilne hiltse* — "wedding ritual tree" — was decorated in the bride's house. It was a sapling or a big branch that the bridegroom had to cut and bring to his fiancée's house. This tree symbolized the Tree of Life, and was decorated by the bride's parents or the next of kin, or girls, friends of the bride, with multicolored ribbons and red berries.

At the hen party on Friday night before the wedding, the girls present at the party were wearing wreaths made of periwinkle or myrtle which symbolized virginity and purity. Songs were sung; the bride loosened her braids (if she had an elder brother, it was he who did the unbraiding) as a gesture of farewell to her unmarried life. During the ritual called *posad*, which was performed that night, the bride was led to the *chervony* ("beautiful") corner in the biggest room of the house where the icons were displayed and where she paid symbolic homage to her ancestors.

On Saturday, the bride with her friends and the bridegroom with his friends went separately around the village with bread inviting people to come to their wedding, and saying "My mother, and my father and I, too, ask you to come to my wedding tomorrow!"

Wedding Day

On Sunday, the *molody* (bridegroom; literally — the young one) was to go to his bride's house whence they would go to church. The bridegroom's mother

walked him to the gate of their household, blessing him and throwing grain or small coins over him.

At one point on the way to the bride's house, the bridegroom's progress was barred and "ransom" for the bride was demanded by a group of the bride's friends. The bridegroom had to give out presents, food and drink, or money, and then he would be let through. This ritual was called "pereyma" — "interception."

When he arrived at the bride's place, the bridegroom was supposed to take her in his arms and carry her some distance from the house to the waiting carriage or wagon. The wedding train consisted of many horse-drawn wagons and other similar vehicles which were decorated with flowers, ribbons and rugs. In one of the wagons was carried the vesilne hiltse — the Tree of Life which also symbolized the continuity of generations (a sort of "genealogical tree"). Traditions of arranging the wedding trains varied from region to region. In the Carpathians, for example, the participants, including the molodi (the betrothed; literally — "the young ones") rode on horseback rather than in wagons. The procession looked noble and impressive, and the bride and the bridegroom were referred to as "knyaz" — "Duke," and "knyahynya" — "Duchess." The bride carried a dyven — bread roll in the shape of a wheel, or rather a tire, through which she would ceremoniously look in the four directions of the world and see what the future held for her with her husband-to-be. The bridegroom carried figurines of an ox and a plow made of bread which symbolized husbandry and the work he would be doing.

After the wedding ceremony in church, the couple proceeded to the bride's place where a huge wedding reception was held. Rituals of the wedding party varied in different parts of Ukraine, but usually, the newlyweds would go around the korovay (wedding bread) three times and then sit on a bench covered with a sheep skin coat, the fur outside — it was a symbol of prosperity. Then the newlyweds were given bread and healthy and good-looking children to hold in their arms — for good luck in having healthy children.

Dances, in which all the guests were involved, were part of the wedding celebrations; mostly, people danced not in pairs but all together in a circle.

There were hundreds of different songs sung at the wedding parties, most of which consisted of good wishes for a long happy life of the newlyweds, of thanks to the parents, of asking God to grant a happy destiny to the newlyweds, of expressions of sorrow of the parents parting with their children. Some of the things were of quite a bawdry nature, or teasing.

Closer to the evening, the wedding wreath was removed from the bride's head and a headscarf was put on instead. This ritual, called "pokryvannya" — "covering", symbolized the bride's transition from girlhood to the status of a married woman. The karavay, which was of a very big size, was then cut into small pieces and everybody present at the pokryvannya ceremony was given a piece, the newlyweds included.

The newlyweds were to spend their first night together in a komora — a store-room or store-house. As they were not supposed to eat or drink anything

during the wedding party, the newlyweds were given a baked chicken and a bowl of honey to eat.

Wedding celebrations continued for a week or more, with customs and rituals differing from region to region, but in spite of the local differences, the general pattern remained more or less the same.

Word List:

rite – обряд
to sanctify – освячувати
offspring – нащадки
fecundity – родючість
to validate – затвердити
to assert – затверджувати
familial – сімейний
sacrifice – жертва
lifelong – довічний
commitment – зобов'язання
welfare – добробут
spouse – чоловік
to confer – радитися
rearing – вирощування
fertility – достаток
to ensure – гарантувати
fruitful – плідний
nuptial – весільний
vow – клятва
Scripture – Священне писання
matrimony – шлюб
betrothed – суджений
kin – сім'я
advent – поява
wedlock – шлюб
benevolent – доброзичливий
adhered – притримуваний
finalizing – завершення
betrothal – змовини
hunt – полювання
ancestor – предок
sapling – молоде дерево
sashes – пояси
to elapse – протікати
periwinkle – барвінок
myrtle – мирт
homage – пошана

barred – перегороджений
ransom – викуп
interception – перехоплення
horse-drawn – гужовий
rug – килимок
impressive – значний
wheel – колесо
tire – шина
to grant – надати

Answer the following questions:

1. Who had the right to “svatatysya”?
2. Who was sent to talk to the prospective bride’s parents?
3. What was the mission of the svat delegation?
4. What would the girl give the svats if she accepted the proposal?
5. What would the girl give the svats if she turned the proposal down?
6. What is the second stage of the svatannya?
7. What was the bride supposed to make during two weeks elapsed between the zaruchyny and the vesillya?
8. What was the preferred day of the week for weddings?
9. When was the korovay (big loaf of bread) to be given to the newlyweds at the wedding ceremony baked?
10. What was a symbolic substitute of a real animal that used to be sacrificed at weddings in the pagan times?
11. What was decorated in the bride’s house on Friday?
12. What did the bride with her friends and the bridegroom with his friends do on Saturday?
13. Describe the ritual which called “pereyma” — “interception”.
14. What is a dyven?
15. What did figurines of an ox and a plow made of bread symbolize?
16. What did the ritual called “pokryvannya” — “covering” symbolize?
17. How long did wedding celebrations continue?

Give the English equivalents:

Vesillya; svatannya; daty harbuza; ohlyadyny; zaruchyny; korovay; molody; “knyahynya”; dyven; “pokryvannya”.

Use the following words and word combinations in the sentences of your own:

rite; to sanctify; fecundity; ransom; sashes; wedding celebration; svat delegation; bride; nuptial; sacrament; vow; Scripture; matrimony; betrothed; kin; advent; wedlock; bridegroom; nuptial; wedding wreath.

Traditional Hutsul Wedding in Western Ukraine



The land of the Hutsuls is full of mysteries. There is no established or generally accepted opinion as to the ancient ethnic background of the Hutsuls whose culture contains elements of the pagan and Christian traditions (on Easter, they pray always facing east, and on Christmas they invite the Frost to come in and partake of their holiday feast), and reflect the Ukrainian and Celtic and even nomadic past. Their relative isolation in the mountains must have contributed to the uniqueness of their culture which has developed over the centuries.

Their wedding ceremony is a sacred ritual which reflects their age-old attitude to the eternal human values, to the world and to God. Every word of the wedding songs and every little detail of the wedding ceremony are pregnant with meaning. Every generation in the long line since time immemorial added something of their own, at the same time retaining the most essential part.

There is a special embroidered towel, which is spread on the floor of the church for bride and groom to step on — the embroidery on it must not contain any black or yellow threads since these colours symbolize death and separation. The blue is the colour of abstinence and fasting and thus no blue shirts are to be worn. The red — the colour of love — in all of its shades, is the colour of the wedding which must be such a memorable event that will remain a guardian of Love to the very end of the married couple's life. This — and many other things — was told to me by a very old woman whose stories were like patterns of the embroidery that her wrinkled hands must have done hundreds of.

The traditional wedding dresses are colourful and diverse in all the parts of Ukraine but in the land of Hutsulshchyna they seem to be the most impressive. In fact, every village in Hutsulshchyna seems to have a style of its own as far as the dress and everything else that makes part of the wedding ceremony is concerned — the differences are not considerable but they do exist. In Kosmach, for example, zapasky (woolen skirt) are brightly red and seem to emit bright light when hit by the sun rays, and in Verkhovyna they are more subdued with silver thread dominant. The girls present at the ceremony wear zgardy (small- and large-sized crosses on chains around their necks), necklaces and corals. With the Hutsuls, it is not only the girls present at the wedding who put a lot of effort into making their appearance the best attainable, but also the young men do their best to make themselves look as good as they possibly can. Traditionally, men sew all kinds of things onto their dresses — coins, pieces of tinfoil, pieces of glass, pom-poms, multicoloured buttons, feathers painted in different colours, metal fasteners and other things in the same line.



The bride wants to put on as many necklaces as possible because together with peremitky (embroidered headscarves) their number is significant in showing the richness of the bride (the bride can cover her head with several peremitky, one on top of the other). It takes several hours to get the bride properly dressed, with women wailing all the time as though in mourning. The Hutsul wedding songs are more mournful than their dirges. It is because the parents and relatives bemoan the hard work and life their daughter will face after the wedding. Also, the young wife in many cases will

not be able to see her husband too often since he may be working far away from home, returning to her only once in a while. By contrast, the Hutsuls dance gaily at the funeral, thus celebrating the deceased's happy departure to a better world, to God.

The traditional Hutsul wedding goes through several stages: svatannya (match-making); zaruchyny (engagement); pletennya vinka (making of the wedding wreath); zaplitannya molodoyi (the braiding of the bride's hair); vyazannya derevtsya (decoration of the hiltse); shlyub (the actual marriage ceremony); zavyvannya (wailing); perepiy (drinking the health of the newlyweds) and other stages, and the wedding party may last up to two weeks.

Four days before the wedding, the hiltse — the tips of pines — were brought to the houses of the bride and groom, and put into the kalach (the wedding cake with a hole in the centre) on the table covered with a table cloth. The hiltse are symbols of the fun the wedding will bring. The tops of the hiltse were decorated with little tufts of oats or with guelder-rose berries, symbols of good harvest and well-being; the rest of the hiltse was decorated with garlic, basils, periwinkles, fragrant grass, carnations, red, white and blue strands of wool, pieces of coloured paper, coloured feathers, gilded nuts and coins. The decorating was

done in turn by the father, mother, brothers, sisters, other relatives and then by friends and other guests.

Wool and woollen threads symbolize the warmth, human and physical (winters in the Carpathians can be very severe). The bride's mother who put several woollen pellets under the bride's dress, kept chanting, "May it give warmth to your breast," and expressed a wish that her daughter's husband's love would always keep her warm. The periwinkle is another feature of great importance at the traditional Hutsul wedding. We made periwinkle wreaths for the newlywed's good fortune and the making of them was a ritual in itself — the women were singing songs appropriate for the occasion, and



each member of the family and female guests of honour added their contributions to the wreaths.

The groom was also dressed and prepared to go to church to be wed. The young men danced arkan, the dance performed only by men. According to the Hutsul tradition, during the dance, the men performing the dance should stomp their feet so hard that the earth and sky would shake. The sky would thus be induced to pour rain upon the earth which would be good for the next harvest and falling upon the newlyweds it would make them fertile so their family would have many children. It took the young men who were to perform arkan four weeks to learn how to do it properly, and their stomping and wild cries did provoke rain — though, of course, it could have been just a coincidence.

After they were pronounced husband and wife in church, the newlyweds went back home, each to their own, with the husband having to go to his wife's house later to "ransom" his wife from her brothers. There is a similar tradition observed in many ethnic groups and peoples, but this "ransom" is usually paid before the wedding rather than after as it is with the Hutsuls.

The young husband arrived at his young wife's house on horseback, passing into the yard under a long rushnyk (towel) attached to the kalach. His young wife was sitting at the table with her head resting on the kalach and one of the brothers holding the braid of her hair. The young husband and his friends kept putting silver coins on the braid, asking the young wife's brothers to "give her to him," and when at last they managed to talk the brothers into letting their sister go, the kalach which has a hole in the centre is lifted from the table and put in front of her face. The young woman looking through the hole answered the question put to her, "Do you see anything nice?" by saying, "Yes, everything is fine, particularly so at the place where the moon has risen." The same question is put to the young husband who answers, looking at his bride, "Yes, I see nice people around, and the best is where the sun is shining in this house." Then both of the newlyweds look through the hole together. Looking at this scene, I remembered what one Hutsul sage once said, "To be in love is not to look at each other but to look in the same direction."

After the looking through the hole bit is done, the kalach is broken in two and the one who gets the bigger part is be head of the family.

The wedding party is a tradition known and observed in many parts of the world. With the Hutsuls it begins from the moment the newlyweds arrive home back from church. The propiy (drinking ceremony) at the wedding we observed began with horilka (vodka) and medovukha (mead) being poured into earthenware and wooden bowels, and then all those present were invited to have some from two spoons attached to each other by a ring (the symbol of a married couple). Everyone wished the newlyweds the best, and the toasts were accompanied by words “I drink your health,” and in reply the one toasted said, “May this drink be good for you.”

The wedding train added its own characteristic note. It was headed by a group of young men on horseback who were carrying the hiltse; they were followed by the bride and groom, also riding horses and holding hands; riding behind them were bridesmaids and best men. The next came all the relatives and guests, on foot, accompanied by the musicians. This noisy and cheerful procession hardly left anybody who happened to be around indifferent.



The Hutsul dances are something special indeed — you need a lot of physical stamina to perform them, not only because of the time they last but also because of the almost acrobatic steps they involve. One of the dances, kolomyika, is so vigorous that only well trained dancers can hope to raise their legs and jump from foot to foot in the way and as long as the dance requires, but even for those who could not join in, it was a most exhilarating spectacle to watch. In another dance, the young men, standing in a wide circle, hold the girls tight by the waste and the girls put their hands on the young men’s shoulders, and the circle begins to rotate, moving faster and faster, until the girls’ feet lift from the ground pulled up by the centrifugal force. In still another dance, the young men form a circle, hold each others’ hands firmly with the girls sitting on these linked hands — and the circle begins to rotate at a speed which makes your head spin even just watching it.

Word List:

to sanction – санкціонувати
to partake – взяти участь
uniqueness – унікальність
nomadic – кочовий
diverse – різноманітний
isolation – ізоляція
abstinence – стриманість
guardian – опікун

to wrinkle – зморщитися
to emit – випускати
to subdue – підпорядкувати
attainable – досяжний
headscarves – косинки
wailing – що стенає
mournful – тужливий
dirge – панахида
to bemoan – оплакати
funeral – похорони
deceased – покійний
tuft – пучок
well-being – добробут
pellet – кулька
periwinkles – барвінки
fragrant grass – духмяна трава
carnation – гвоздика
gilded – позолочений
newlywed – наречений
to stomp – топати
bridesmaid – подружка нареченої
stamina – стійкість
ransom – викуп
exhilarating – підбадьорювання
spectacle – видовище
to rotate – обертатися
vigorous – енергійний

Answer the following questions:

1. What is spread on the floor of the church for bride and groom to step on?
2. What do the girls present at the ceremony wear?
3. What things do men traditionally sew onto their dresses?
4. What stages does the traditional Hutsul wedding go through?
5. What was brought to the houses of the bride and groom four days before the wedding?
6. What do wool and woolen threads symbolize?
7. What shows the richness of the bride?
8. What do you know about Hutsul wedding traditions?

Give the English equivalents:

Zapasky; zgardy; peremitky; svatannya; zaruchyny; pletennya vinka; zaplitannya molodoyi; vyazannya derevtsya; shlyub; zavyvannya; perepiy; kalach; arkan; kolomyika.

Use the following words and word combinations in the sentences of your own:

wool and woolen threads; wedding traditions; bridesmaid; newlywed; to partake; embroidered towel; engagement; kalach.

Test

Chose the right variant:

1. The feast of Ivan Kupalo was — and is — celebrated in Ukraine

- a) on November 7; b) on July 7; c) on March 7.
2. ... of Lent was particularly strict as far as food was concerned — no fish, no vegetable oil, no dairy products, preferable no hot meals were allowed.
a) The seventh week; b) The sixth week; c) The second.
3. ... became known in Europe in the mid-sixteenth century.
a) Corn; b) Potato; c) Pine-apple.
4. The Annunciation was celebrated
a) on July 7; b) on January 7; c) on April 7.
5. Didukh — a sheaf of oats or rye was carefully and neatly arranged for
a) Svyatvechir; b) Pokrova; c) Triytsya.
6. ... is celebrated on December 4; it is the feast of the Presentation in the Temple of the Virgin Mary.
a) Persha Prechysta, First Most Pure Feast;
b) Druha Prechysta, Second Most Pure Feast;
c) Tretya Prechysta, Third Most Pure Feast.
7. The Day of St Andrew is celebrated
a) on December 13; b) on October 14; c) on December 15.
8. St Varvara was born in the town of ... at the end of the third century AD.
a) Kyiv; b) Heliopolis of Phoenicia (now Baalbek in Lebanon); c) Rome.
9. ... and dishes made from them were also allowed and appreciated on the Feast of St Peter and St Paul.
a) Meat and fish; b) Oats; c) Butter, dairy products.
10. The Feast of St Michael the Archangel is celebrated in the Christian Orthodox Church
a) on November 21; b) on June 21; c) on May 21.
11. The day before Triytsya, that is ... , was called Didova subota, the day of the commemoration of the dead.
a) Monday; b) Wednesday; c) Saturday.
12. The most spectacular Malanka celebration is in a village in the Land of
a) Poltavshchyna; b) Slobozhanshchyna; c) Bukovyna.
13. Painted eggs must have been used as charms guarding against
a) evil; b) bad weather; c) bad mood.

14. The Ukrainian word for “wedding” is
a) “vesillya”; b) “svatannya”; c) “zaruchyny”.
15. According to the Gospels, John was ... and who later died a martyr’s death.
a) a holy man who baptized Christ;
b) one of the apostles of Jesus Christ;
c) the Archangel and Leader of the Heavenly Armies.
16. During Lent, ... were particularly popular.
a) varenyky; b) porridge-like dishes; c) pancakes.
17. Usually ... elapsed between the zaruchyny and the vesillya (wedding).
a) two days; b) two years; c) two weeks.
18. Velyky Pist begins ... weeks before Easter.
a) seven; b) eight; c) nine.
19. The eyes of the bread birds were made of
a) nuts; b) berries or raisins; c) beans and corns.
20. The most popular drink was nonalcoholic ... for Christmas.
a) juice; b) kvas; c) uzvar.
21. If the girl turned the proposal down, she would present the svats with
a) a pumpkin; b) a pine-apple; c) a water-melon.
22. On the Feast day of St Andrew one of the fortunetelling rituals involved
a) a rabbit; b) a cat; c) a hen.
23. The Orthodox Church marks the feast day of ... on the 17th of December.
a) St Varvara the Martyr; b) St Andrew; c) St Michael the Archangel.
24. The Feast of St Peter and St Paul is celebrated by the Orthodox Christians in Ukraine
a) on March 8; b) on July 12; c) on May 2.
25. The church dedicated to St Michael was built in the ... Monastery in 1088.
a) Pechersky; b) Poltavsky; c) Vydubetsky.
26. The celebrations of the Feast of Malanka begin on
a) the night of January 14; b) the morning of April 1; c) the night of March 8.
27. The Egg features as a symbol of
a) the Moon and Night;
b) the Sun, Spring and Revival of Nature;
c) the Winter and Snow.

28. ... was sent to talk to the prospective bride's parents.
a) Boy-friend; b) Svat; c) Teacher.
29. Pancakes, varenyky (stuffed dumplings), deruny (potato pancakes), beans, vegetables, pickles, drinks made from ... constituted the major part of the Lent diet.
a) meat; b) fish; c) dried fruit.
30. On the day of Saint Yevdokiya people expected to be informed about ...
a) the harvest in autumn; b) snowfalls in winter; c) the weather in summer.
31. ... were welcome on Christmas day.
a) Meat and fish; b) bananas and pine-apples; c) Spaghetti.
32. Balabushky is bread shaped like ...
a) a bird; b) a small ball; c) a butterfly.
33. Persha Prechysta, First Most Pure Feast is celebrated ...
a) on August 28; b) on July 28; c) on June 28.
34. The folk etymology explains the name of mandryky as being derived from the word ... , which means travel.
a) mankind; b) many; c) mandry.
35. In Ukraine the tradition of painting eggs goes back at least ...
a) forty four hundred years;
b) fifty five hundred years;
c) thirty three hundred years.
36. In Orthodox Christian churches Easter service begins at about ...
a) 9 o'clock at night and lasts till 9 o'clock in the morning;
b) 8 o'clock at night and lasts till 5 or 6 o'clock in the morning;
a) 8 o'clock at night and lasts till 10 o'clock in the morning.
37. The traditional Hutsul party may last up to ...
a) two months; b) two years; c) two weeks.
38. On the first Monday of Lent ... was cooked or eaten.
a) nothing hot; b) nothing sweet; c) nothing bitter.
39. The feast of Svyata Yavdokha (St Yavdokha) coincided with the beginning of actual ...
a) spring; b) summer; c) winter.

40. ... was an obligatory dish for Christmas.
a) Borshch; b) Kutya; c) Varenyky.
41. Pokrova, ... , is celebrated on October 14.
a) Protecting Veil of the Virgin Mary;
b) the Presentation in the Temple of the Virgin Mary;
c) the Birth of the Virgin Mary.
42. On the Feast of St Peter and St Paul, ... were especially popular with young people.
a) mandryky; b) varenyky; c) deruny.
43. St Michael has been a patron saint of the city of ... since probably the eleventh century.
a) Lviv; b) Kyiv; c) Odesa.
44. On the Feast Day of St Andrew and on the following day young men and girls usually played a game called
a) Svyatky; b) Shchedry vechir; c) kalyta.
45. If the girl accepted the proposal, she would give the svats ... which they would put over their shoulders and chests as sashes.
a) gloves; b) hats; c) long embroidered towels.
46. The first Saturday of Lent was the day of
a) remembrance of the dead relatives;
b) celebrating New Year;
c) dancing.
47. Hrechani pampushky are small rolls made from ... flour.
a) rye; b) buckwheat; c) wheat.
48. On the day of ... itself, the water in the lakes and rivers was blessed by priests.
a) Pokrova; b) Easter; c) Vodokhreshche.
49. Druha Prechysta, Second Most Pure Feast is celebrated on September 21; it is the feast of
a) the Presentation in the Temple of the Virgin Mary;
b) the Birth of the Virgin Mary;
a) the Feast Day of St Andrew.
50. On the Feast Day of St Andrew one of the fortunetelling ritual was called
a) mosty (bridges); b) didukh; c) vodokhreshche.

51. Fearing, perhaps, that his illness was the vengeance of the Christian God, Gaius Galerius Valerius Maximianus issued ... , an edict grudgingly granting toleration.
a) on September 30, 331; b) on April 1, 113; c) on April 30, 311.
52. ... were among the popular dishes on the Feast of St Peter and St Paul.
a) Zeleny borshch (dill soup), kholodnyk (cold vegetable soup), holubtsi (stuffed young red beet leaves);
b) Pancakes, varenyky (stuffed dumplings), deruny (potato pancakes);
c) Paskha.
53. Mandryky were the favorite food of
a) teachers; b) cowherds; c) sportsmen.
54. The day of January 13 is a feast day of
a) St Varvara the Martyr; b) St Malania the Roman Martyr; c) St Andrew.
55. The role of Malanka is usually played by ... of a cheerful disposition.
a) a beautiful young girl; b) an old man; c) a witty young man.
56. The preferred day of the week for weddings was
a) Sunday; b) Saturday; c) Monday.
57. ... painted on pysankas were believed to bring concord and conciliation into family life.
a) Flowers; b) Crosses; c) Rings.
58. During Lent ... were made from rye flour without salt, with only water added to the flour.
a) deruny; b) borshch; c) pancakes.
59. An itinerant Christian priest ... the girl, and when her father returned, Varvara did not conceal her new faith from him.
a) baptized; b) taught; c) blessed.
60. In the Ukrainian church tradition, ... , celebrated on November 21, was also the day of remembrance of the dead in prayer.
a) the Day of St Michael; b) the Day of St Peter and St Paul; c) St Yavdokha.
61. ... were mostly painted by elderly women, late at night.
a) Portraits; b) Pysankas; c) Landscapes.
62. The ... carried figurines of an ox and a plow made of bread which symbolized husbandry and the work he would be doing.
a) svat; b) bride; c) bridegroom.

63. There was a traditional belief that on the night of Ivan Kupalo ... produced blooms.
a) roses; b) tulips; c) ferns.
64. On the first day of Lent, ... was made either.
a) no lunch; b) no breakfast; c) no supper.
65. ... , which was marked around March 22, was the time when the birds started coming from the warm lands.
a) The Day of Forty Saints;
b) The feast of Svyata Yavdokha;
c) The Annunciation.
66. Some bread products were made to look like ... sitting on their nests.
a) birds; b) snakes; c) crocodiles.
67. Floral patterns helped gain
a) work; b) health; c) success.
68. The third stage of the ... is “betrothal”(“inspection”).
a) “vesillya”; b) “svatannya”; c) “zaruchyny”.
69. ... on pysankas symbolize earth and its fertility.
a) Rings; b) Squares and rhombi; c) Floral patterns.
70. During the second week of Lent young people were allowed ... rather than stay at home most of the time.
a) to go to the discotheque;
b) to go the restaurant;
c) to meet in the streets.
71. ... began after Blahovishchennya.
a) Sowing; b) Decorating the house; c) Singing and Dancing.
72. During the fourth week, so-called “khresty” (“crosses”) were made from
a) flour; b) fruit; c) beans.
73. Traditional alcoholic drinks were all kinds of ... for Christmas.
a) brandy and cola; b) nalyvky and nastoyanky; c) vodka and whisky.
74. On Pokrova, ... were made.
a) long-term harvest forecasts;
b) long-term weather forecasts;
c) short-term weather forecasts.

75. ... of Lent it was allowed to eat fish and mushrooms, and vegetable oil was used for cooking.
- During the first week;
 - During the second week;
 - During the last week.
76. The girl whose ... was the first the dog ate would be the first to get married.
- didukh;
 - balabushka;
 - kalyta.
77. Varvara's relics were brought to ... by a daughter of the Byzantine Emperor Alexis Comnene, also named Varvara (Barbara).
- Moscow in 1118;
 - Kyiv in 1108;
 - Poltava in 1981.
78. On the feast day of St Peter and St Paul, a sort of ... was organized.
- a picnic;
 - a meeting;
 - a discotheque.
79. St Kozma and St Demian were the patron saints of
- writers and poets;
 - poultry breeders;
 - teachers.
80. The time when Triytsya is celebrated coincides with the Feast of
- Zeleni Svyata;
 - Malanka;
 - Vodokhreshche, or Baptism in Water (also Epiphany).
81. Malanka performances start with
- the coming of the dark;
 - the coming of the morning;
 - the coming of the summer.
82. Wavy patterns on pysankas symbolize
- rain;
 - sea;
 - roads.
83. ... goes through several stages: match-making; engagement; making of the wedding wreath; the braiding of the bride's hair; decoration of the hiltse; wailing; drinking the health of the newlyweds.
- The traditional Hutsul wedding;
 - The musical concert;
 - The traditional circus performance.
84. On Friday, ... to be given to the newlyweds at the wedding ceremony was baked.
- the plum cake;
 - the korovay (big loaf of bread);
 - a scone.
85. The sixth week of Lent ended on

- a) Feast of Svyata Yavdokha;
- b) the Day of Forty Saints;
- c) Verbna Nedilya — Palm Sunday.

86. ... on pysankas symbolizes the Sun, and originally a god of the Earth.

- a) Floral pattern; b) Wavy pattern; c) The Greek cross.

87. Wedding celebrations continued for a ... or more.

- a) year; b) week; c) month.

88. During the fifth week of Lent “ ... ” — Giving of Thanks to the Virgin Mary was the main event.

- a) the Annunciation; b) Pokhvala; c) Verbna Nedilya.

89. A zigzag with rounded angles on pysankas symbolizes ... which was a symbolical representation of a god of the Nether World.

- a) the snake; b) the dragon; c) the fish.

90. The priest is holding in his hands ... , a cross during Easter service in Orthodox Christian church.

- a) a special Easter triple candle; b) a Bible; c) a slogan.