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FOLK ARTS AND CRAFTS OF THE HUTSUL REGION AS A FACTOR OF AESTHETIC AND NATIONAL EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

Among the numerous centres of folk arts and crafts in Ukraine, the villages of the Hutsul region – Yavoriv, Richka, Brustury, Snidavka, Shepit, and others – hold a special place. They continue to preserve the uniqueness and originality of the natural environment, forests, and mountain pastures (polonyny); the language, ornamentation, musical, and artistic-material culture, as well as types of folk decorative and applied arts: weaving, carpet-making, and the processing of wood and metal, specifically woodcarving and inlaying, which possess ancient family artistic traditions.

The Hutsuls have long been famous for the production of artistic handicrafts. For most, these crafts have become a vital sphere of activity. There was a certain degree of secrecy from outsiders among the masters, and often competition. However, there is no force in the world that can separate a true artist from their art, even when it does not provide adequate means of subsistence. Observers of the masters' work are amazed at how complex ornamental compositions appear on the products without any preliminary drawing on paper. They mark the general structure of the ornament with a sharp tool, much like embroiderers outline the general scheme of a pattern with a needle on linen. Individual elements are highlighted with colored wood, mother-of-pearl, metal, and horn.

Decorative forms of carved ornamentation are dictated by aesthetic needs, religious beliefs, symbolism, as well as the material and the method of execution. Geometric ornament is widespread in all types of artistic crafts in the Eastern Carpathians, possessing its own unique characteristics in embroidery, pysankarstvo (Easter egg painting), woodcarving, and brasswork (*mosiazhnytstvo*). For instance, the ancient solar sign – the circular rosette – is a reflection of the sun and a flower. These names point to the worldview of Ukrainians and their close connection with celestial bodies and nature – an ancient material and spiritual world.

This topic remains relevant today. Modern education is focused more on theoretical and computer-innovative teaching methods and largely neglects practical work with materials. In this context, the experience of renowned educators and artists (Petro Losiuk, Kateryna Medvid, Mykola Yosypenko, Mykola Hrepyniak, Mykhailo Hnatiuk, and others), proven by years of practice, is of great importance. They have demonstrated that engaging in artistic crafts has a significant positive impact on children. Attending decorative and applied arts clubs not only fosters the mastery of the basics of artistic craft but also cultivates positive traits. Children become more creatively active and resilient to modern challenges; they develop appropriate aesthetic criteria, which positively influences their academic performance in other subjects.

Hutsul woodworking traditions were studied in vocational schools at the beginning of the 20th century, where such famous masters as M. Mehedyuniuk, V. Shkribliak, V. Devdiuk, and I. Semeniuk worked at the time. In the second half of the 20th century,

specialized art colleges and institutes were established, which also utilized the creative achievements of renowned Hutsul masters in the process of professional training.

One of the prominent educators of Ukraine, who demonstrated in practice the possibilities of using folk arts and crafts in the educational process, was Petro Vasyliovych Losiuk – Honored Teacher of Ukraine and Director of the Yavoriv General Education School (now a Lyceum). In his book «Decorative and Applied Arts in School», he highlighted his own experience in organizing students' artistic craft activities in specialized senior classes, including the mastery of «dry» carving and inlaying, cooperage (*bondarstvo*), weaving, embroidery, and *pysankarstvo* (Easter egg painting). During his experiment in the secondary schools of the Kosiv region, tasks in composition, design, and product decoration were expanded. This fostered adolescents' interest in crafts and contributed to the formation of positive moral qualities.

The process of studying crafts at the Yavoriv school began with introducing students to the work of fellow villagers – the Shkribliak-Korpanyuk family and other masters of the Hutsul region. It is known from history that Yuriy Shkribliak, a prominent woodcarver of the second half of the 19th century, mastered woodturning and «dry» carving, and utilized inlaying with ebony and horn, as well as ornamentation with twisted wire and studs. His son, Vasyl, further improved the decorative properties of the products by introducing multicolored wood and mother-of-pearl. Similarly, Marko Mehedyniuk, known as the «father of the bead technique», used porcelain beads to create patterned designs.

Brothers Yuriy and Semen Korpanyuk, while still teenagers, crafted *rakhvy* (wooden containers), caskets, plates, frames, *kushky* (whetstone holders), various candlesticks, and crosses decorated primarily with «dry carving», similar to those they saw from their Shkribliak relatives, and took them to fairs and exhibitions. Advertising postcards from the 1920s show that their compositions harmoniously emphasize the shape of the products, giving them individual stylistic features.

In the mid-20th century, woodcarvers began training at the artistic woodworking department of the Kosiv College, and later the Technical School of Folk Handicrafts. Consequently, in addition to self-taught artisans, many masters with formal art education emerged. However, the most renowned masters from the common people in the 1970s worked as home-based artisans, creating artistic products from wood, metal, and clay that have become part of the «golden fund» of many museums. Their work is well-known in Ukraine today, and their products serve as excellent models for imitation and for training students in such specialties as: Secondary Education: Art, «Fine Arts», «Decorative and Applied Arts», «Design» and especially «Pre-school...» and «Primary Education», where specialists in artistic disciplines are often lacking.

In general, Ukrainian folk art has a clearly defined national character. It is based on collective experience and artistic traditions passed down from generation to generation. Therefore, its practical study in school involves turning to primary sources, spiritual roots, and connections with the environment: nature, everyday life, folklore, and ethnography, as well as the use of traditional materials and tools – which is particularly important in today's computerized world. Through their work,

folk artisans create an authentic and unique educational environment favorable for the aesthetic, national, and vocational upbringing of children.