

THE LAST MOLFAR OF THE CARPATHIANS

The aim of this study was to investigate a part of Carpathian folklore and an important tourist resource in Ukraine.

Molfars, as a unique phenomenon of Ukrainian culture, are not only a part of Carpathian folklore, but also an important tourist resource that attracts travelers with their mysticism and authenticity. Their knowledge related to nature, healing, and spiritual practices arouses interest in modern society, striving for harmony with the surrounding world.

Mykhailo Mykhailovych Nechay (1930–2011) was a prominent Carpathian molfar, folk healer, and Honored Worker of Culture of Ukraine. His activities not only preserved the traditions of Hutsul culture, but also contributed to the development of cultural tourism in the region, opening up new opportunities for the popularization of authentic customs [1].

Biography and activities

Born on February 24, 1930 in the village of Verkhniy Yaseniv, Ivano-Frankivsk region, Nechay studied the properties of plants, folk healing methods and traditions of Hutsul life from childhood, adopting knowledge from older family members. According to local historians, at the age of eight he showed an extraordinary ability to stop bleeding and heal wounds, which laid the foundation for his later work as a healer [1].

Healing and spiritual practice

Throughout his life, Nechay was engaged in healing people with the help of herbs, spells and rituals, providing not only physical but also spiritual support to his compatriots. He was approached by residents not only from the region, but also from other parts of Ukraine, which testifies to his reputation. It is also known that his knowledge was even used for consultations of law enforcement agencies in complex cases, where traditional wisdom helped to reveal the essence of events [2].

Cultural Contribution

In 1964, Nechay founded the folklore and ethnographic ensemble "Struni Cheremosh", where he not only made, but also played the drymba - a traditional Hutsul musical instrument. He was actively engaged in collecting and recording folklore material: legends, spells and tales, which became the basis for preserving the cultural identity of the Carpathians. Of particular importance was his collaboration with director Sergei Parajanov during the filming of the movie "Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors", thanks to which Hutsul life gained wide recognition [4].

Molfars and Tourism

Molfars have always been an integral part of Hutsul culture. The village of Kryvorivnya, where Nechay lived, has become a symbol of the mystical heritage of the Carpathians. Tourists come here not only for the picturesque landscapes, but also to touch the legendary world of folk wisdom, get acquainted with the rituals and listen to stories about real molfars. However, after the tragic death of Nechay in 2011, many people posing as molfars appeared on the market, which creates confusion and complicates access to authentic information for tourists [3].

To effectively popularize authentic molfarism and develop cultural tourism in the Carpathians, it is necessary to implement several key areas, creation of tourist routes that include historical sites associated with the life and activities of prominent molfars, in particular Mykhailo Nechay. Organization of festivals and cultural events dedicated to Hutsul culture and molfarism, which will help attract both local residents and foreign tourists. Information support that will help distinguish authentic bearers of traditions from impostors, providing tourists with reliable knowledge about the history and practices of molfarism. Preservation of the heritage of such outstanding personalities as Mykhailo Nechay is a guarantee of the further development of cultural tourism, preservation of Hutsul identity and popularization of traditional values of the Carpathians [5].

Thus, molfars are not just a page from the past, but a living bridge between tradition and modernity, which makes the Carpathians a special place on the tourist map of Ukraine.

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