

Christmas Eve traditions in Bulgaria



The most interesting phenomenon is the traditional Bulgarian blessing said by the koledari (Christmas carol singers). Key words are health, happiness, heart, soul, etc... Here is a blessing made by our student Dessislava (Year 6).

Весела Нова година,
късмет до амина,
здраве занапред,
всичко да е в ред!
Колкото ти е голяма душата
толкова и къщата,
колкото ти е голямо сърцето
толкова здраво детето,
колкото ум имаш
толкова и пари да вземаш!
По вода да ти върви
и нещастен да не си!
От щастие да не се отървеш
и всичко необяснимо да разбереш!

English translation

Merry New Year,
Good luck in the coming year
Health in the future
May everything be OK!
May your house be
As generous as your soul,
May your child be healthy
as good as your heart
May you get as much money
as strong is your mind.
May you be in smooth water,
Unhappy may never you be!
May you grab your happiness
And may you see the inexplicable!

So, this is a tradition to say such kinds of blessings and people believe they have a magical power. In Bulgarian people's superstitions these words become true because they are said during Christmas Eve when there exists a connection between the Sky and the Earth made through the burning Yule log. The Yule-log is an oak log especially chosen and put on fire at Christmas Eve. It is kept to burn all night. Its solemn bringing at home by a bachelor or by the house owner is accompanied by traditional words glorifying God. Having been brought to the fireplace it is greased with consecrated oil, incense and wine.

The other traditional element is the Christmas Eve dinner.

The *kravay bogovitsa** is put in the middle as a symbol of the bloodless sacrifice given to God. The dishes on the table are lenten and odd (seven or nine): stuffed peppers, *sarmi*** , beans, cabbage, pumpkin-pastry, *oshav****, garlic. The abundance of every ritual table is an illustrated example of the desirable world status and this is the reason of the rite made by the Bulgarians.

