

12 April 2013, Shumen

Interview with Katya Ivanova Mineva (born on June, 22, 1931 in the village of Kirkovo). She spent her childhood in the village of Kirkovo and the village of Divdiyadovo. Education: Bachelor, retired teacher. The interview was taken at her home in Shumen.

Interviewer: Veneta Yankova



When you think about your childhood what pictures come to your mind?

When I think of my childhood the first thing that comes to my mind is the house in Kirkovo, which brings such good memories to my mind that I would never forget them. First – the big yard, the vineyard. It is as if I still see these pictures, they are before my eyes. Also: the people who I lived with, for example my grandfather. My father – a teacher from the old generation would read so much, he also taught me how to read. I was reading a book “The Farm Near the Border” and I still can’t forget all these pictures, I wasn’t only feeling while I was reading, I could see them...

Is there something that you have touched and you still remember?

Interesting, I was going upstairs...to the kyoshk¹...and I was opening my grandmother's chest of drawers. There were old clothes of hers which I liked so much, embroideries, some undershirts. And most important: there were three old coins – I had no idea how old they were but she was still keeping them! – I would put them on so often and I would look at myself not in the mirror but in the window-panes. And all this I was connecting with Yovkov, I would read his works so much in my childhood..... And while I was touching them, it was as if I was touching some kind of a relic. It invoked memories of the past and my grandmother who I loved dearly. About my grandfather – there was a waist-belt, waist-belts which were woven. I would take them out often and would put them on. All of these things bring memories of the past to my mind. Why was I so tightly connected to my grandparents' past? Even I don't know, maybe it was because of the books I read. Yovkov's images would pop up before my eyes with all these old clothes which I unfolded...

What sounds, music or songs you remember from your childhood?

Songs of a wooden flute – maybe it was because of the books I had read...

When spring started I could hear different sounds of birds...And when the lambs started bleating..You cannot imagine! I felt so bad, especially when the lambs had to be slaughtered. I would run away, hide somewhere in the rooms, just not to listen...

We were rich people, we owned a lot of land and there were many harvesters coming from the region of Gerlovo. Trust me, I will never forget these moments! My grandmother would prepare food and we would take it to the harvesters for lunch. Here is a story from harvest time I remember:

Some harvesters came and a Turkish young woman came with them. She had two children – 3-4 years old and an infant.....The woman had to work because her family was poor...During the night the baby started crying...Me and my mother heated up water to bathe the baby.

We placed them to sleep in the room upstairs and the baby calmed down and fell asleep. The next day my mother told me: “Let the baby stay here, we will give them milk.” The baby stayed with me – what a memory! My grandmother took milk from the cow and we gave it to the baby with a little spoon and it started smiling...Many years passed, I was a student and one day when I went back home a woman and a little girl came and the woman said: “Here’s the baby you were taking care of...” I think her name was Safie. She left for Istanbul and came back with her father and wanted us to go there...So Safie was my baby for a day or two.

Are there smells you have remembered for long time?

...There are so many smells in the village [She is trying to recall..] Oh, yes! In the back yard there was a nice lilac. We had a plum tree – was it a wild-plum? When the lilac blossomed I would climb up the wild-plum tree just to smell the lilac. The lilac had dark colour, I have no idea where my grandfather had taken it from...

I connect the sea with a trip to Italy, it was very exciting... I connect the sea with music by Straus ...I love his music and I listen to it even now...

The mountain...once we went to Youndola. The smell of pine was so good! We had a pine tree near our house... I can connect the mountain with the sounds of Konstantin Petkanov’s *Goat horn*...My father took me and my sister to the Rila monastery. Then I saw the mountain...I was amazed...

Is there a historical event which has influenced you?

An event which brought influence and disappointment is 9th September. My father was a member of the opposition. Someone said that the Soviet army would go through our village and I took a little bouquet and when I went all the people asked me: “What are you doing, your grandfather is an oppositionist. You have no right to be here!” They told me to stay behind them. I stayed there crying.