



Писанки

P Y S A N K Y

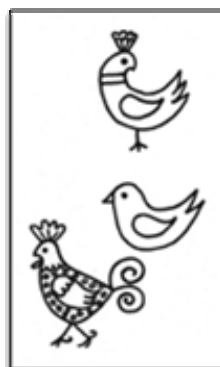
what do the
Colors
& Symbols
really mean?

by

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Plants: *Flowers* symbolize love, charity, beauty and wisdom. *Sunflowers* wish us health. *Evergreens* mean eternal youth and health; *Wheat* bestows a bountiful harvest (prosperity) and also good health. *Petals* or teardrop shapes mean the same as the whole flower.



Birds symbolize fulfillment of wishes and fertility. The *hen* is the bearer of the talismanic egg, and the *rooster* brings good fortune, exultation and vigilance. As a symbol of masculinity, the rooster also predicts a rich married life with many children. *Song birds* represent spring and the pushing away of evil. Birds are most seen at rest, rarely flying, so that the powers of their symbolism remain and are not temporary.

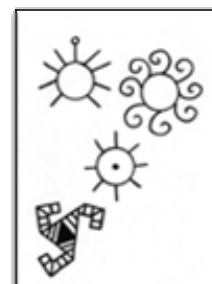


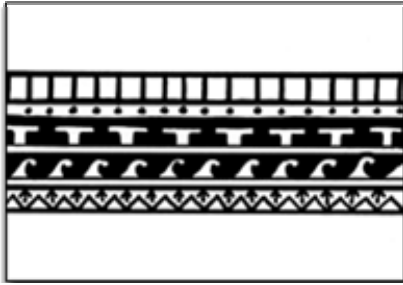
Animals: The *Stag*, in the old Trypillian culture, represented leadership, victory, joy and masculinity. *Horses* in ancient times, during the cult of the sun, were believed to pull the sun along in its daily journey. They stand for speed, endurance and prosperity. Understandably, the Cossacks especially revered the horse, and its symbolism is deeply enmeshed in Ukrainian lore. Another male symbol, the *Ram*, represents leadership and strength in the face of opposition. Rams also stand for perseverance and dignity. The *Dog* means loyalty, guardianship, and good hunting.



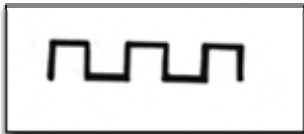
Fish: Ancient in its early symbolism for fertility, it has evolved to mean Christ in Christian representation. Fish and hens for a bride, roosters for the groom are very popular for weddings.

Spiders are highly stylized and incorporate the sun symbol. They signify patience and good luck.





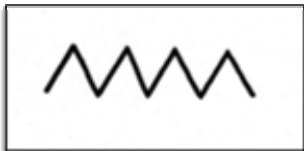
Ribbons or Meanders are running designs that have no end. In the western world they mean the hero's quest and long life. On pysanky they represent eternity and long life. Water meanders wish prosperity forever, for without water your crops will fail. Around a central design that has a specific wish, the meander makes that wish eternal. Examples of these are:



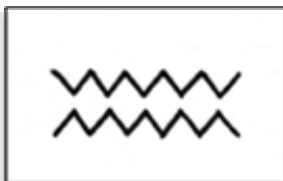
Miandyr, the embattled line, signifies a forest or enclosure, something that is to be contained.



Zubchasta, engrailed and inverted lines, suggest a place of meeting or union of opposites, such as land meeting water.



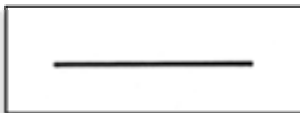
Lomana, the saw, indicates fire as the symbol of the sun or life-giving heat. It may also represent water or waves with growth and cleansing properties.



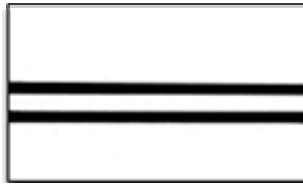
Wolves Teeth offer protection from harm.



Kucheri, bends, signify defense or protection.



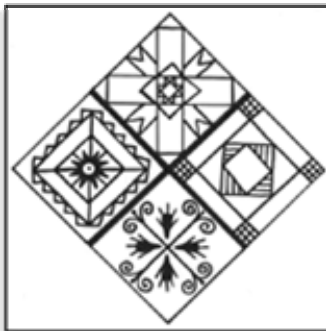
Prjama, a straight line encircling the egg, symbolizes eternity or the continuous thread of life.



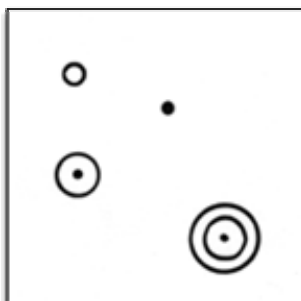
Doroha-Smuha is the ribbon or belt. It also mean eternity, and is almost always seen in unbroken form so that the thread of life will not be broken. It is used to separate one ribbon from another or to surround the symbolism within each ribbon for eternity.



Bezkoniecznyk, another meander, is an ancient form that is very popular in all regions of Ukraine. In the isolated mountainous areas, it is small and delicate. In the central and eastern regions, it is more expansive, reflecting the influences of open spaces and water. It means harmony, and motion depicting infinity, waves and immortality. The different styles of this symbol are all reflected in negative and positive space, so that looking at any Bezkoniecznyk, whether right side up, or upside down, you still see the same design, much like the Yin and Yang symbol.

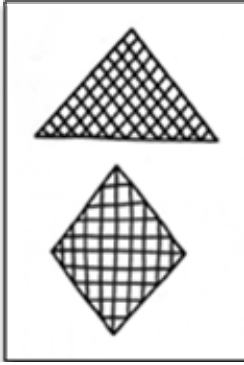


Diamonds are the symbol of knowledge that is being sought. It's a good idea to add flowers or yellow with diamonds so that the knowledge contains wisdom. However, if a person is seeking knowledge about something in particular, the diamonds would then help the recipient of the egg to gain that knowledge.



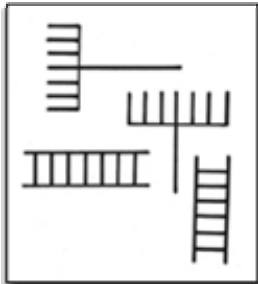
Dots, in the Christian sense, are the fallen tears of Mary as she wept for Jesus at the cross. In ancient times they represented the stars in the heavens. A dot within a circle represents the axis of the universe - eternity within the Orphic egg.

Symbols



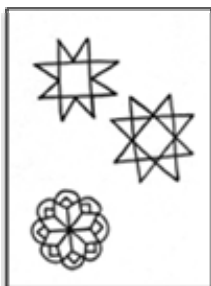
Sieves are made with vertical and horizontal crosshatching. They signify the separation of good and evil.

Baskets are triangles or diamonds with diagonal crosshatching, and represent contained knowledge, motherhood as well as the giver of life, and gifts.



Rakes and **Ladders** mean good husbandry and prosperity.

Combs suggest putting things in order. Three teeth can represent the three stages in life, as did the old symbol of the triangle: birth, adulthood and old age/death. A more ancient meaning of the triangle stood for “female”, “woman”.



Stars mean success. Second in importance to the sun, stars are the most frequently drawn symbol. They are usually drawn in eight points, but six are also used. The points are always in even numbers as even numbers foretell good fortune. Stars incorporate crosses. If the upright cross is used to begin a star pattern, the center of the star will be a square. If the X pattern, or St. Andrew’s cross is used, the star will have a diamond shape in its center.

Rozha (the Rose) is interchangeable with the star motif, but also means love and affection.



Butterflies stand for the resurrection and rebirth. They also announce the coming of spring, so they stand for metamorphosis, change and regeneration