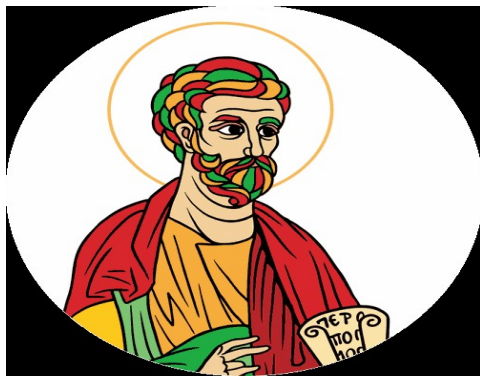


HANDOUT

Poem 5- A Legend of the Northland (Class-IX)

Module 1/2



Introduction to the poem-

'A legend of the Northland' is a ballad. A ballad is a poem narrating a story in short stanzas. Ballad is such kind of poem which tells a story in short stanzas and in the poem all the stanzas comprise four lines. In total, there are 16 stanzas in this poem and these stanzas will tell us a story. Ballads are a part of folk culture or popular culture and are passed on orally from one generation to the next. (Folk culture is a story of any area and is known as ballad). Folk culture comprises of traditional stories which are passed on from one generation to next generation.

This story is of the Northland area, the area which is near the North Pole. This exact place is not specified but 'Northland' means the area in the northernmost part of the earth i.e., near the North Pole. 'Legend' means a historical story, one which is very old and has been passed on from generation to generation.

Summary of the poem-

The poem is a legend about an old lady who angered Saint Peter because of her greed. The story goes on like this. One day, Saint Peter was preaching around the world and reached the door of a cottage where this woman lived. She was making cakes and baking them on a hearth. St. Peter was fainting with hunger. He asked the lady to give him a piece of cake. The cake that she was baking then appeared to be too big, so she did not give him that and instead, she baked another smaller one. That also appeared to be big so she did not give him that also. The second time she baked yet another smaller cake but found it too big to give away. In the third attempt, she took an extremely little scrap of dough and rolled it flat. She had it as thin as a wafer but was unable to part with that also. This angered St. Peter a lot. He said that she was not fit to live in human form and enjoy food and warmth. He cursed her and transformed her into a woodpecker bird who had to bore in hard, dry wood to get its scanty food. She can be seen in the trees all day boring and boring for food.