

## **Platform of Anatolian Religions and Beliefs Platform / Those who are backing our cultural heritage Vanguards of Our Cultural Heritage / Part 21**

Kenan Yavuz Ethnography Museum

**TOPICS:** The Birth Foundation and Development of the Ethnographic Museum, Cooperation with the Local Community, New Trend; Cultural Tourism

**Nükhet Everi: In this episode, I'm taking you to a very special museum, the Kenan Yavuz Ethnography Museum in Bayburt. Kenan Yavuz, who founded the museum, and his son Furkan Yavuz are with us. In this interview, we discussed many topics from the establishment of the Kenan Yavuz Ethnography Museum to the award process, from the contributions of Kenan and Furkan Yavuz to future projects. Throughout the interview, it was emphasised that the museum is not only a cultural heritage, but also an economic and social transformation project for the region. Mr Kenan, first of all firstly, could you introduce yourself, and then let's hear from you how you please explain how you founded this museum.**

Kenan Yavuz: I was born and grew up in the village of Beşpınar in Bayburt. My family was farming were farmers until I finished my university years, so I therefore spent every summer here with my father, mowing scythes in the fields and tying vineyards until I completed my university studies. I worked as a shepherd in my childhood, and there is not a single point in the mountains and plains of the geography I have not set foot on. After completing my university education, I completed my master's degree in Istanbul in 1985 and then started working at Koç Group Holding. I worked at various levels of Koç Group Holding, especially in the automotive sector, for nearly 20 years.

We started by collecting souvenirs. For example, today we went to a nearby village. People we didn't know invited us in, we entered their houses and barns. We brought many materials toof the dowry chest of a women called Mrs Binnaz, who passed away in 1957. This fits the argument of being with the local people, which is the meaning of the Siletto Award. Because being a child of this place and being intertwined with the culture of this place brings a great acceptance. Over time, we started to attract the attention of new generations with the feedback and appreciation we received. Every couple who got married in the region started to come here and have their photos taken. An incredible ambience was created and this excited us a lot.

We collect the stones of the demolished houses in the villages around us and clean the villages. We aim to maintain the architectural texture and the phenomenon of migration, to increase the quality of social life here and to become a centre of attraction for young people. We organised events such as open-air cinema, concerts, and theatre nights. We said, "I don't need to go to Istanbul, Istanbul is coming here." The process dragged directed us, and we were dragged directed by the feedback we received. We are now a museum consisting of 26 different spaces on 15,000 thousand square meters. This space we built created an incredible ambience and received great acclaim.

**Nükhet Everi: You preserve the cultural heritage of your region. You don't want customs, and traditions and customs to disappear. You want to prevent people from emigrating. However, it is not enough to talk about these things, you need to offer people a profession, a job, an opportunity.**

Kenan Yavuz: As of today, we have 16 employees in our museum. All of them are from Bayburt and most of them are from my village.

**Nükhet Everi: Furkan, let's get to know you a little bit please briefly introduce yourself. How did you get involved in this process and what have you done?**

Furkan Yavuz: I live in Dublin, I work as a corporate consultant for LinkedIn and I'm responsible for the management of over thirty30 countries, including TurkeyTürkiye. My job is very active and busy, but it's is not my only job. I am also on the board of the Kenan Yavuz Ethnographic Museum, where we try to carry out all projects as best we can. I usually finish my LinkedIn work around five or six in the morning, then I open my second laptop and continue my work related to the museum. I spend more time at the museum when it is busy induring the summer. We try to spend especially the summers in particular to the fullest. I set up my office in the museum using the opportunity to work from home brought by CoronaCovid-19.

During the establishment process, we had always been travelling to the village since childhood, I knew the village life with my grandmother and grandfather. We experienced the change of the village together. The idea of establishing the museum developed spontaneously. At the end of a nine9-year process that has been ongoing on since 2012, we received the award and we are very happy. However, there is a lot of labourwork behind it. We built a mansion for more people to come, we built an open-air cinema, we saved the mills that were destroyed. We encouraged people and they donated their belongings to the museum. Now everyone wants to give something to our museum. Last year, despite the pandemic, we became the most visited private museum in TurkeyTürkiye induring the summer. We were a finalist in the European Museum of the Year award process and won the Siletto Award. This award process carriedpropelled us to a greater success.

**Nükhet Everi: Well, after becoming a museum, you are also building a beautiful guest house here. What will you offer to people? BecauseSince you have created a tourism destination,. P people will not only come here to visit, they will stay here. Could you tell us a little bitbriefly about this project?**

Kenan Yavuz: Before receiving the award, I listened to countless experts in January and February and tried to learn. I am a person with an industrialist background, I was not very interested in art and museums. What we learned and listened to there pushedencouraged us to be more assertive. New trends in tourism after the Covid-19 pandemic were describing what we were doing. This situation pushed us to be assertive. We collected the stones with our hands and stacked them on top of each other. People ask who built the architecture of this place. We say that we levelled the stones and covered the trees. We can be number one in the world in thewith a new heading called culture and experience tourism. One of our accommodation facilities, Loru Han, is almost finished. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of July, we will officially open thefor reservations. We will host our guests in Seljuk inn style, with 10 rooms and high service quality.

**Nükhet Everi: Furkan, what do you think? It's is a village, but it could even be a city candidate.**

Furkan Yavuz: Yes, especially with the addition of Loru Han, we keep the quality very high. For example, there are sofas in the rooms, but we do it in such a way that when they close the door, they will still feel like they are staying in a luxurious environment. And they should always remember that it is Bayburt. Not only my circle from Ireland, but also many people from outside want to comevisit. Together with Loru Han, they can make all kinds of reservations and come after the 10<sup>th</sup> of July.