

Mrs Kóró, founding chairman of Matyo House

József Kiss:

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✖ The book by teacher József Kiss – due to his personal respect and love for the past of the matyos – is an emotional and subjective piece of work. He is much more than a professional historian or ethnographer. Being a teacher and a local patriot his work is far from being objective and dull but he is showing a deep understanding for local traditions and an open-hearted love for their history. The book is about the voice of those who remembered , the author's personal feelings, his warning thoughts to appreciate the past.

The book is valued as piece of ethnographical and local history work and by picturing a piece of Hungarian history , is also treasured from a general cultural point of view. The first chapter's autobiographical narrative by Mrs Kóró is an outstanding piece of writing in the field of ethnography. By allowing the main character to speak in the first-person narrative before the factual presentation shows the writer's excellent editorial skill. This brings Mrs Kóró's character, her dramatic life and the cathartic power of her tragical fate, close to the reader. The book makes enjoyable picturing of the contrast between the poverty of seasonal peasant workers and the matyo people's flashy lifestyle through their fancy folk art, which provided the background as well as fostering soil for many talented people, including the self-taught folk artists of Matyóház in the 20th century.

Viewed in the context of local history and Hungarian cultural history, the way of presenting the foundation and the first 15 years of the of the 'Matyo Folk Art and the Homecraft Cooperation' is so valuable that it sets an example for similar endeavours. The characteristics of modern history writing are ' micro history' and the memoir-based ' oral history'. These are the genres that help the readers to picture the late period of matyo folk art. You can have an idea of the history of the institution through the lives of the staff, their personal roles, their everyday life recalled by their memories.

In the 1950s and 1960s, besides the state-run, professionally managed folk art of mass production, individual artists were being active same time. Part 3. deals with biographies and ouvres of outstanding artists awarded with the title 'Master of Folk Art'. Along with these merits, the key message of the book is the very same issue as that of the writer's latest books, that is with talent, faith, commitment, and hard work even people from the simplest background managed to create something lasting and world-famous in Mezőkövesd. In order for this work of revealing and preserving cultural heritage to be continued, may God bless you, and give you the energy and good health. This is what I wish also on behalf of my colleagues.

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The book is available in Hungarian!