



# FOCUS

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# EDITORIAL

The human urge to communicate, includes and supersedes all other sensory impulses. The word *communication*, from Latin *commūnicāre*, meaning "to share", is defined as the act of conveying intended meanings from one entity or group to another through the use of mutually understood signs and semiotic rules. From the very first signs of life, communication commences, progressing from rudimentary demands to satisfy basic needs to more and more nuanced, sophisticated coding and encoding of requests and of receipts thereof. While verbal communication demands a shared language, non-verbal communication, that vast hinterland of unspoken connectivity, is a rather more universal language system, one that can be understood beyond the barriers of linguistic affiliations, nationality, gender, community and age. With the advent of social media, there comes in addition, a battery of emoticons that have created a whole new language ecosystem of instantaneous communication that is ubiquitous in its resonance and reach. Yet despite the plethora of avenues, and a variety of personalized means to communicate, interpersonal communication has at its core a simple premise that requires the establishment of a rapport between one person and another or amongst several persons at once. While communicating, there are always two types of messages sent: a *content* message about the topic at hand and a *relational* message about the relationship between the sender and the receiver. How a message is conveyed is conditioned by who the message is sent to and when and why! The causality of all communication is therefore what makes the act of communication itself, at once precious and precarious. A fine underlying grammar holds it all in delicate balance, one that involves harmony in tone and timbre of register, respect and equanimity in delivery, precision and transparency in intent. Any imbalance, in any of these key aspects, results in a steep and unforgiving descent into potential misunderstanding, often with stressful consequences. As we turn a corner, to welcome a new year, we as a cultural organization, engaged in meaningfully networking with artists, partners and audience members across India and Korea, remain acutely aware of the vital role of communication to sustain what has become a throbbing conduit for intercultural dialogue.

In this issue of *focus*, read about the multiple manifestations of this interpersonal, cross-cultural exchange. Following a research phase of interactive workshops in Auroville and Bangalore, *Fish, Tree, Moon*, a unique Indo-Korean Children's production, inspired

by Korean and Indian folktales and complemented with puppets and props drawing inspiration from Madhubani and Gond tribal art traditions, premiered at Ranga Shankara in December 2017. Directed by the acclaimed Korean Director, Yosup Bae, this visually and aurally striking production, co-produced by InKo Centre and Ranga Shankara, brings together talented Indian actors and musicians and a set, lighting, costume and prop team from Korea. Following the premiere, the production will be presented across this quarter at Ranga Shankara and will then aim to travel further afield, across India, on Ranga Shankara's travelling theatre circuit. Read about our research project initiated in association with the Academy of Korean Studies, Korea, with support from The Korean Cultural Centre, New Delhi, to examine the deep-rooted links between Korea and India, both the ancient trajectories as well as the modern manifestations of what is a significant ongoing intercultural dialogue. Titled *The Turtle Trail - Indo-Korean ties from antiquity to the contemporary: a new perspective*, the project aims through rigorous research, to position the southern sea route from India to Korea as the genesis of a relationship that starting in circa 48 CE continued to manifest itself across time and over myriad forms and routes of interaction. Read about the artistic conversation between an Indian Gond artist and Korean calligraphist at the exhibition titled *Snowman*, curated by Insang Song at The Gallery @InKo Centre. Meet young, aspirational musicians at our Access Music platform and listen to their original compositions that are inventive, playful and often, subversive. Join the next edition of the popular *Film Music Appreciation Circle* led by Divakar Subramaniam from the School of Indian Film Music, a unique institution, dedicated to creative music practices in India's film music industries. We invite you to poetry and voices of women from around the world at our *Heart of Matter* series of reflective conversations. Do drop in to check out our educational, creative and wellness-oriented courses and stay abreast with what's trending at InKo Centre as new offerings at the Café and Craft Shop and customized outdoor activities and interactive opportunities unfold this quarter.

I look forward to greeting you at our events and courses, to receiving your feedback in person or virtually and to deepening this dialogue with your participation and support.

Best wishes for a creatively stimulating and wholly fulfilling 2018!

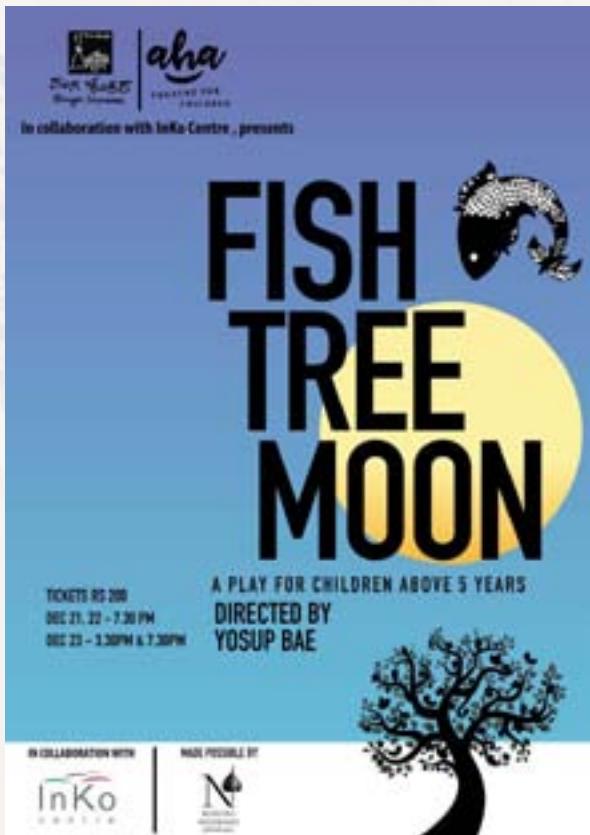
**Season's Greetings.** 계절 인사말.

**Dr. Rathi Jafer**

Director, InKo Centre

# FISH, TREE, MOON

## AN INDO-KOREAN CHILDREN'S THEATRE PRODUCTION.



Written and Directed by **Yosup Bae**

Artistic Director: **Juya Lee**

Assistant Director: **Shruthi Sunder**

Puppet Assistant: **Varsha Bafna, Shravana P M**

Light Designer: **Junghee Kang**

Light Consultation & Operator: **Parthasarathi S**

Costume Design: **Divya Harish Runwal**

Production Manager: **Anil B**

### Actors:

Sachin Gurjale,

Anuradha Venkataraman

Anitha Santhanam

Deepika Arwind

Kiran Naig

### Musicians:

Vasu Dixit,

Viswa Bharat

**Co-produced and presented by InKo Centre and Ranga Shankara.**

This is a visually rich and aurally strong production that narrates a simple, endearing story about what constitutes happiness. This production is inspired by Indian and Korean folktales and Madhubani and Gond art folk painting vocabularies. It follows a girl who goes on a journey to look for a fortune and shares a simple truth that everything that one wants is already within, in one way or another - a brave girl, a fish transformed into a dragon, a shy boy who wants to have a family, a tree wishing to reach full bloom and an ascetic looking for truth. Movement, music, puppets, props coalesce to transport the audience to a place of magic and wonder even as they refract from the story and reflect on what constitutes happiness in their own lives.





**Following the premiere at Ranga Shankara on 21 December 2017, these are the performance dates up to March 2018:**

**January 19 - 7.30pm | January 20 - 3.30 pm & 7.30 pm**

**February 15 - 7.30pm | February 16 - 7.30pm**

**March 30 - 7.30 pm | March 31 - 3.30 and 7.30pm**

*The production will further tour extensively on Ranga Shankara's travelling theatre circuit.*

For further information and to book tickets, please contact :

**Ranga Shankara, No. 36/2, 8th Cross Road, JP Nagar, 2nd Phase, Bengaluru, Karnataka - 560078.**

T: 080 2649 3982

# THE TURTLE TRAIL

Indo-Korean ties from antiquity to the contemporary: a new perspective.



InKo Centre is delighted to initiate a project in association with the

- Academy of Korean Studies, Korea with support from The Korean Cultural Centre, New Delhi, that brings together researchers to examine the deep-rooted links between Korea and India, both the ancient trajectories as well as the modern manifestations of what is a significant ongoing intercultural dialogue Titled **The Turtle Trail - Indo-Korean ties from antiquity to the contemporary: a new perspective**, the project aims to include the historical, linguistic, religious, trade, commercial as well as cultural links between India and Korea, with a particular focus on southern South Korea (particularly the Gaya kingdom, current day Gimhae region) and Southern India (particularly the ancient Ai kingdom, current day region stretching from Kanyakumari to Trivandrum).

This project aims, through rigorous research, to position the southern sea route from India to Korea as the genesis of a relationship that starting in circa 48 CE - with the marriage of the legendary Princess Heo Hwang-ok to King Suro of the Gaya kingdom - continued to manifest itself across time and over myriad forms and routes of interaction.

The project will include approximately 12 researchers from Korea, India, Malaysia and Canada. Researchers will be working in 6 groups, based on the focus of their current research.

The research groups will broadly cover the following sectors:

1. Historical links
2. Language and linguistics
3. Buddhist links
4. Anthropological and Cultural links
5. Maritime and trade links
6. Contemporary links- commercial / political / socio-economic ties between Korea and India.

A workshop will be held in Chennai from **7 to 9 February 2018** with all researchers invited to share their research findings. Specific group and inter-group discussions will be held during the 3-day workshop to draw up a draft plan for further research and due publication.

For further information, please contact InKo Centre - T: 044-24361224 E: [enquiries@inkocentre.org](mailto:enquiries@inkocentre.org)



한국학중앙연구원  
THE ACADEMY OF KOREAN STUDIES



# **SNOWMAN**

## Imagining the Winter Olympics!

### Curated by Insang Song.

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Japani Shyam, a Gond artist from India and Song Dong Ock, a Korean calligraphist, present a unique exhibition that coalesces traditional art forms from India and Korea to commemorate the spirit of the Winter Olympics, a landmark event that opens in Pyeongchang, Korea in February 2018.

India is a country with the most abundant manifestations of traditional culture in the world. There are many different cultures and traditions within India. With reference to painting, there are dozens of tribal and traditional arts. Among them, Gond painting is an example of Indian tribal art that is perhaps most widely known and acclaimed abroad.



This exhibition is an attempt to conceptually complement Gond painting from India with Korean traditional art. The Winter Olympics as a concept is unfamiliar to Indian artists. The exhibition aims to present the winter of Korea and the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics (February, 2018) with art works by an Indian indigenous artist who has not experienced winter.

This exhibition aims to coalesce the traditional arts from India and Korea with the theme of the Winter Olympics in celebration of the Pyeongchang Winter Olympic, a global festival of sporting excellence. An Indian Gond painting artist and Korean calligrapher will commemorate the spirit of the Winter Olympics in their works. Gond painting is one of the representative tribal arts in India and calligraphy is a representative art genre with roots in Korea's long traditional culture.

The 2018 Winter Olympics is a major international multi-sport event scheduled to take place from 9 to 25 February 2018 in Pyeongchang County, South Korea.



This will be South Korea's second Olympic Games and its first Winter Games. Seoul hosted the Summer Games in 1988. Pyeongchang will be the third Asian city to host the Winter Games.

In South India, where the snow cannot be seen, the Winter Olympics is just a representative picture. But I hope that this exhibition will make it somewhat more real and become another opportunity to deepen friendly ties between Indian and Korean artists and the general public.

- **Insang Song**

## **About the artists:**

### **Japani Shyam**

Japani Shyam is a famous Gond artist who lives and works in India. Daughter of the famous Gond artist Jangarh Singh Shyam, Japani's art took a route different from that of her father's. Her world is inhabited by animals and rituals and the forests within which these animals dwell. In 1999, aged eleven, she was awarded the Kamala Devi Award in recognition of her talent.



### **Song Dong Ock**

Song Dong Ock is a famous Korean artist, excelling both in calligraphy and painting. He has presented 15 solo exhibitions abroad and in Korea and has participated in many major exhibitions over the last 40 years. In particular, he has presented calligraphy complemented with performance.



### **About the curator: Insang Song**

Insang Song is an independent curator based in Seoul and New Delhi. He has worked in the Art Museum of Seoul Art Center for more than 22 years during which time he planned more than thirty exhibitions and events. He has curated many international exhibitions, including Hybrid Trend (Seoul Arts Center, Seoul, 2006), INDIAVATA (Sun Contemporary, Seoul, 2008), The Lamp of the East (Lalit Kala Akademi, Chennai, 2010), Pink City Art Project, 2011 (Jkk, Jaipur, India, 2011).

While working as Art Director at the Korean Cultural Centre in India (2012-2016), he curated Moving Korea (Korean Cultural Centre India, 2012), AMMA UMMA (India International Centre, Delhi, 2013). KKUM.DDANG. INDIA (Korean Cultural Centre India, Niv Art Centre, 2015), I Lotous 8 (Korean Zen Buddhism and Bodhidharma, National Museum New Delhi, 2015) Currently, he is curating independent art projects and researching Indian tribal and traditional art.

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The exhibition will be on view  
at The Gallery @ InKo Centre  
from **19 January to 20 March 2018.**

# HEART of matter

**Heart of Matter** is a series of reflective conversations that dwell on holistic living, wellness, history, philosophy, literature, art and culture. Presented by InKo Centre as quarterly editions, in association with partner organisations, these direct and inspirational conversations will focus on lived experience rather than theoretical abstractions.

We invite you to explore what lies at the heart of matter, what matters most and why.

To commemorate International Women's Day and to celebrate the month with a salute to the extraordinary courage of women worldwide, we are delighted to present **Monologues by Women** curated by N.S. Yamuna at 6.30 pm on Friday, 16 March 2018 at InKo Centre. These monologues are from original writings by women , from across the world. Racy, chatty, irreverant, disruptive and yet deeply sensitive, compassionate and humane, there powerful voices that are at once deeply personal yet wholly universal in appeal and significance.

## MONOLOGUES by WOMEN

We find these accounts of women's courage universally relevant and exciting to perform, because of the attitude they portray. They are raw and realistic and yet not tear-jerking or melodramatic. They are short, but deep and layered with experiences and emotions. Their distinguishing quality is a mitigating thread of sassy, albeit dark humour.

These monologues are from original writings by women, from across the world. To empathize with these deeply personal accounts of women, we have evolved a presentation style, which we might even call a genre of theatre, which is minimalistic, where the actor is sole and complete. The setting is intimate, the tone is chatty, while

the portrayal is one of controlled emotion. The actor has none of the usual supports systems such as costumes, makeup, props, sound or light effects. She speaks in the first person singular and an entire universe is created with just the actor's voice and a few gestures. And, anchoring all this is just a chair. We are now scouting women's stories in India and Asia and invite writers, who will write in a similar vein, to join us. We believe that by presenting stories of depravation and degradation, of terror and pain with an empathetic dose of humour, we will be able to contribute to a more sensitive understanding of the plight of women. And we hope this will generate the desired response towards a more amenable gender balance. - **N S Yamuna**

## MONOLOGUES by WOMEN will be presented by:

**Geetha Lakshman**, with her love for words and images, she is actively involved in theatre. **Jaya Mahbubani** is an aspiring writer and poet, currently teaching at Goethe-Institute, Chennai. **Nikhila Kesavan** acts and directs in English theatre, while focusing on original stage adaptations of novels. **Raena Reddy** is a homemaker, social worker, yoga practitioner and a meditator, with a love for gardening. **Shaan Katari Libby**, is a lawyer at the Madras High Court, acts and directs in Theatre and runs theatre/debate classes for children. **Susan Thomas** is an HR professional, who runs an NGO for children's education, and is actively interested in music and theatre. **Tehzeeb Katari's** passion for theatre and poetry has been a constant and she has successfully combined it with designing and also running NUR, an NGO focussed on female education. **N S Yamuna** is a founder trustee at Tejaswi, Theatre for Self-Expression, and has been an all-rounder in Theatre since her school days.

# ACCESSMUSIC

*Connecting to and through music...*

**AccessMusic** is a series that aims to provide talented emerging musicians with a space to share original scores and songwriting with those who relate to music as essential and energizing. The ambience is relaxed, intimate, so that the musical connect is immediate, meaningful and inclusive. Presented in collaboration with Unwind Centre, this series which is all about access to and through music, places creativity and musical prowess centre stage even while recognizing the power of the arts as a critical enabler, to foster inclusion and reflection to change hearts and minds.



Shilpa Natarajan is a Singer- songwriter and a Music Presenter on Chennai Live 104.8FM. She is an independent musician and has released 'Bubblewrap' - an EP produced by Naveen Samson Benjamin with 7 tracks and is also a playback singer who works with composers like GV Prakash, Girishh Gopalakrishnan, Vishal Chandrasekhar and Darbuka Siva.

Shilpa Natarajan is actively involved in the playback and film circuit. Starting with demos for music directors, Shilpa has rendered various title tracks, TV shows, movie tracks, jingles and ads.

With her own and collaboratively produced singles such as *Dirty Little Secret*, *Don't Give Up*, *Thedal* and *Avaladhigaram*, Shilpa is also a song-writer who works with other independent musicians like Naveen Samson Benjamin, Ramshanker S., G.D. Prasad to name but a few. She has also found the spotlight in the new media world with her parody band '*Beef Sappad Trio*'.

**Thursday | 7.00 pm | 15 February 2018 | InKo Centre**

**Unwind Center**, with a track record of over twenty years, has been teaching music including Drums, Guitar, Keyboard and Vocals to young aspirants in Chennai and Bangalore. The Centre runs a DJ Academy and aims to inspire musicians by providing them with a platform to perform their work, interact with their peers and to share their compositions with those musically inclined.

InKo Centre, in association with Unwind Center, is delighted to present AccessMusic on a bi-monthly basis.







# THE LOST WAX PROJECT

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**We are delighted to support The Lost Wax Project, conceptualised and choreographed by Chennai-based dancer, Preethi Athreya. Korean lighting designer, Jeonghee Kang's unobtrusive yet compelling lighting plot complements Preethi and her dancers' contemporary movement vocabulary to create a presentation that is provocatively abstract, evocative and disruptive.**

There is no space and time before movement. The body does not move into space and time – it creates space and time. Every time the body moves, it is reaching out towards something, constantly creating different worlds. Constantly reaching for a relation that will re-invent itself.

To think of the body as that which is constantly sensing and changing, is to shift the question from what our bodies are to what they can do. Without a commitment to how we move, our bodies are no more than types – normalised within pre-decided categories – like citizen, anarchist, refugee, wife, homeless, believer, atheist, man, lesbian, etc. The moving body may be the only recourse where we attempt to touch what is not yet. When we engage in the potential of an individual – to become beyond identity.

This potentiality is what exposes difference in systems that appear to be organised and unchanging. Potentiality appears every time language exceeds its syntax, every time an other exceeds my reach, every time I sense more than I comprehend. This potentiality is necessary for the times we live in.

- **Preethi Athreya (Choreographer).**

## The Lost Wax Project - Artistic team:

### **Preethi Athreya (Choreographer)**

A Chennai-based contemporary dancer, Preethi Athreya trained in Bharatanatyam and later went on to do a postgraduate degree in Dance Studies (Laban Centre, London, 2001). Between 1999 and 2011, she worked with Padmini Chettur from where she inherited the evolving legacy of Chandalekha and a strong commitment to constantly redefine the Indian body.

Working within the Indian contemporary dance scene as a performer, choreographer and facilitator, Preethi belongs to a league of dance-makers in India today who use dance as an agent of change. Her initial training in Bharatanatyam and her subsequent training to unlearn the strictures that this classical form placed on the body can be traced across many of her works. Her art is process-driven in a manner that makes it evident within the structure of the works she creates.

This also leads to a demystification of the choreographic work – something that Preethi consciously aims for.

She regards her own oeuvre as 'an attempt to reclaim the body from numerous kinds of anaesthetization that it is constantly subjected to.'

### **Avantika Bahl Goyal (Performer)**

Avantika Bahl is a dance practitioner based in Mumbai where she makes her own work and teaches. She studied at the London Contemporary Dance School and has previously made a full-length work wonkot and two short solos, 11048, M81 and Here at the Gati residency and Facets residency respectively. She also helps run Dance Dialogues, an initiative that connects dance makers and dance lovers to provocative and diverse ideas, individuals and institutions. Say, What? is her current work.

### **Dipna Daryanani (Performer)**

Dipna is a dancer, educator and clothing designer. She is deeply interested in understanding the body, and communication of the body through the arts. She works extensively with preschoolers, primary school students and teachers to help take movement and

theatre to the classroom. She also runs a sustainable and ethical clothing line for children - 'Love the World Today' in the capacity of designer and co-founder.

### **Kamakshi Saxena (Performer)**

Kamakshi Saxena is a dance practitioner with 15 years of dance, performance and teaching experience. She received her education in ballet, jazz and contemporary dance styles with The Danceworx Performing Arts Academy in New Delhi and performed extensively with The Danceworx Company. She further trained in modern dance techniques at the Alvin Ailey School, New York City and got the opportunity to work and perform with several dance companies in New York. She continues to explore further into the realms of movement and divides her time between teaching dance, performing and choreographing.

### **Sanchita Sharma (Performer)**

Sanchita is a Delhi-based dancer trained in Jazz, Contemporary, Modern and Classical ballet. She holds a Masters in Performance studies from Ambedkar University. She has worked with The Danceworx Company from 2002-2013, and was part of the MASA dance Intensive with the Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company, in Israel in 2013-14. She has performed at The Fringe Festival, The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo (UK), Colors of India Festival (China), Release 4.0 with Maya Dance Theater (Singapore), Delhi International

Arts Festival, Salaam India (USA) and has been an artist-in-residence in The Chrysalis Project and at the Gati Dance Forum.

### **Jeonghee Kang (Lighting Designer)**

Kang Jeong-hee is a lighting designer based in Seoul, Korea. After completing a Bachelor of Arts in Stage Design from the prestigious Korea National University of Arts in 2002, Kang was a Teaching assistant in Lighting design at the Korea National University of Arts from 2005 to 2007, a Lighting Director in a Martial arts company 'Yeagam' in 2008 and a Lecturer in Lighting Design at the Seoul Arts College in 2015. She has been part of several landmark performing arts projects such as - Creative Group Tuida's 'Hamlet Cantabile', and 'Bahucharamata-Beyond Binary' in Korea and in India which was commissioned by InKo Centre, Creative Group Noni's 'Kokdu', at the Puppet Theater Festival in Germany; Pansori Musical Group TAROO's 'The Tiger with White eyebrows'; Martial Arts Group 'Jump', at Bangkok; the Musical 'Agatha', the play 'Cherry Orchard'; the Musical 'Brooklyn'; Dance company Trust's 'Third turn', Guerrilla theater and several other noteworthy productions. Kang's lighting is strong yet unobtrusive and always remains an intriguing, integral presence, a counterpoint that balances and complements the actors, dancers and musicians on stage.



### **CHENNAI**

Feb 23, 24, 2018

Time: 7 pm. Open to all.

(Cholamandal Artist Village)

[www.cholamandalartistvillage.com](http://www.cholamandalartistvillage.com)

### **MUMBAI**

Feb 26, 27, 2018

(G5a gallery)

[www.g5a.org](http://www.g5a.org)

### **KOLKATA**

March 8 and 9, 2018

(Pickle Factory Festival Season I

at GEM Cinema)

[www.picklefactory.in](http://www.picklefactory.in)

This production is co-produced by Goethe Institute Mumbai and Alliance Francaise of Madras.

# THE FILM MUSIC APPRECIATION CIRCLE

*In the second edition of the Film Music Appreciation Circle at InKo Centre in association with the School of Indian Film Music, we aim to unlock and understand the distinct vocabulary and purpose of film music, one of the most iconic signposts of popular culture.*

## Evolution of romantic melodies in Tamil cinema

Romantic songs are a significant part of most Tamil films. They have contributed tremendously to the development of popular music and literary culture in the region. How did these songs come about? What shaped creativity in this genre? What were the key milestones in the evolution of "kaadal" songs? What governs notions of aesthetics related to these songs? What are the relationships between the romantic lyric and its melody? Come; join us to listen and discuss Tamil Nadu's most celebrated musical culture.

## About the School of Indian Film Music

The School of Indian Film Music is a pioneer institution, dedicated to creative music practices in India's film music industries. Founded by Divakar Subramaniam in 2011, SIFM's industry-oriented academic programs include Indian film music composition, Playback singing, Creative music technology, Recording engineering and Audio post-production. In addition to a research informed approach and emphasis on learning by doing, SIFM's curricula adopt a unique ethnomusicological approach to course design. Apart from one year, part-time certificate courses, the school also conducts seminars, master classes and workshops on various aspects of creative music practice for Indian cinema.

These discourses and debates elaborate scientific approaches and regional musical meanings, while emphasizing identification and continual development of individual artistic voice. For further information visit [www.sifm.co.in](http://www.sifm.co.in)

The founder of the School of Film Music, *Divakar Subramaniam*, is a music composer/producer, percussionist and academic researcher. He works as a music composer in India's creative music and film industries and has more than 200 projects that include a wide range of radio and television commercials and film songs to credit. Concerts across India, in the United States of America, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom and collaborative work with musicians from Srilanka, Switzerland, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, England, Wales, Scotland, Nigeria and the USA, have had a significant influence on his compositions. He is one of the very few privileged Indians who have performed at the United Nations, New York.

Divakar holds a Master of Science degree in Advanced Music Production from the University of Glamorgan. After working as a lecturer at the Department of Drama and Music, Cardiff School of Cultural and Creative Industries, University of Glamorgan for six years, Divakar returned to India to establish the School of Indian Film Music (SIFM). He is also attached to the Skillset Screen Academy, Wales, a member of the British Forum for Ethnomusicology and the Association of British Scholar Divakar will lead the Film Music Appreciation Circle discussions at InKo Centre.

**Friday, 23 February at 6.30 pm at InKo Centre.**



## NEWSPICKS

### COMIC BOOK 'ALONG WITH THE GODS' HITS THE BIG SCREEN.



'Along With the Gods: The Two Worlds,' a movie based on the comic strip of the same name by Joo Ho-min, (Photo courtesy, Dexter Studios).

Being dead is not the end of existence. In Buddhism, there's a ritual in which an offering is presented to the Buddha when a person dies. The ritual is performed by reciting a sutra seven times every seven days for 49 days after the death. Some Buddhists perform this ritual as they believe that the dead must take part in seven trials within the 49 days, to determine whether they will spend the rest of eternity in the afterlife.



Director Kim Yong-hwa (second from right) and the main actors in the film 'Along With the Gods: The Two Worlds' pose for a photo during a press conference at Lotte Cinema in Gwangjin-gu District, Seoul. (Photo courtesy, Kang Gahui).

Taking a cue from this ritual, cartoonist, Joo Ho-min's smash-hit comic strip "Along With the Gods: The Two Worlds" depicts a deceased man who is judged in seven hells for 49 days, guided by grim reapers and dark angels. The comic strip has now been turned into a movie.

Kim Yong-hwa, Director of the film, said at a press conference that, "I imagined what Hell looks like, and it's where there's no human existence and no relationships. I've chosen the salt flats of Salar de Uyuni, Bolivia, or a desert in Mongolia as the setting, where the vastness of an endless natural plain unfolds with no being in sight, giving a feeling of being in Hell."

"Dramatic issues that everyone struggles to get through in their life, like death and life, crime and punishment, are dealt with in the film, which gives us powerful messages. After being part of this production, I realized that I should see the world in a proper light," said actor Ha Jung-woo who played the role of one of the angels of death in the movie.

"Along With the Gods: The Two Worlds" is a two-part series. The first installation, depicts the afterlife of the dead. The second one, still untitled, will depict this life and is set to premiere in the summer of 2018 year.

This film has already garnered attention on the global scene, too. The screening rights for the film were sold in 103 countries last year at the Busan International Film Festival and at the American Film Market.

# EXCHANGES BETWEEN ANCIENT KOREAN NATIONS AND THE ISLAMIC WORLD:

A two-part interview by Korea.net with Professor Lee Hoo Soo, Department of Cultural Anthropology, Hanyang University, Korea.



Professor Lee Hee Soo from Hanyang University's Department of Cultural Anthropology talks about exchanges between ancient Korea nations and the Islamic world. (Photo courtesy, Kim Sunjoo)

Korea and the Islamic world have had exchanges ever since the Three Kingdoms of Korea period (58 B.C.-A.D. 668) which included Silla (57 B.C.- A.D. 935), Baekje (18 B.C.-A.D. 660) and Goguryeo (37 B.C.-A.D. 668).

Professor Lee Hee Soo, from Hanyang University's Department of Cultural Anthropology has been researching exchanges between ancient Korean nations and the Islamic world for 37 years. Korea.net sat down with him to learn more about the history of these exchanges, as seen through ancient records from Korea and from Muslim countries.

## **Part I: King Sejong the Great listens to a Quran recitation.**

"King Sejong the Great received an Islamic welcome by listening to a recitation of the Quran."

Professor Lee Hee Soo of Hanyang University, read this phrase written in the "Annals of the Joseon Dynasty" (Joseon Wangjo Silok, 조선왕조실록), a record of all the actions by Joseon kings, collected between 1413 and 1865. Professor Lee has been studying the history of exchanges between ancient Korea and the Islamic world by deciphering such historic documents. He has been

studying the Middle East and Islam for 37 years, since 1978. He is the first Korean to have received an M.A. in History of the Middle East and Islamic Culture from the Istanbul University in Turkey.

Professor Lee explained to Korea.net how the Arabic world was depicted in ancient Korean texts, and spoke about the history of exchanges between ancient Korean nations and Islamic regions.

**Q: Isn't it is surprising to hear that there is a record in the "Annals" saying that King Sejong the Great heard a recitation of the Quran?**

**A:**As is customary in terms of national protocol to which diplomatic envoys are invited, King Sejong the Great, did invite Muslims to attend key events, such as a New Year's greeting or a coronation ceremony for a crown prince. Records about such events are found in the "Annals of the Joseon Dynasty." One of such excerpt is as follows:

The court rites minister reports that, "Priests and Muslims enter the garden to praise the king." When it is finished, a royal protocol officer kneels to inform the king that, "they paid homage." The court ceremony management officer informs the king that the reception is over. Then the king comes down from the throne and the court musicians begin to perform. --September 1418, the year of King Sejong the Great's enthronement.

This is one piece of evidence that a Muslim leader was invited to attend a royal court ceremony where he said an Islamic prayer to celebrate the king. This actually means that the invited Muslim leader recited the Quran in court. Other similar records about Muslims are also found several times in the "Annals."

**Q: I wonder if Muslims were on the Korean Peninsula before Joseon times (1392-1897)?**

**A:**In early Goryeo times, Arabic traders came to the region. In the late Goryeo, people from the Middle East and Turkish Muslims entered the country.

In the book "The History of Buddhism in Joseon," written by Lee Nung-Hwa, the author quoted a historical record that Muslims built a "worship palace" in Gaegyeong, the Goryeo capital, today's Gaeseong. Considering the fact that there would be no word like "mosque" in Goryeo times, the Goryeo people seemed to confuse a Buddhist temple with a mosque by describing the place as being a "palace to pay worship."

Backed by such historic sources, after the unification of Korea, I have a dream to go to Gaeseong and to unearth this archeological site.

**Q: Looking back at the records about Muslims who settled on the Korean Peninsula, I wonder if they had any effect on ancient Korean society?**

**A:**From the late Goryeo to early Joseon period, before King Sejong the Great, political turmoil continued across the Korean Peninsula due to Mongolian invasions, wars to establish Joseon and the Strife of the Princes, the fight between the sons of Joseon-founder Yi Seong-gye, concerning the right to succession.

During the reign of King Sejong the Great (r. 1418-1450), many scientific inventions were made, such as the honcheonui optical telescope (흔천의,) and the angbuilgu hemispherical sundial (양부일구). I believe such phenomena were backed by science from the Islamic world, as these were rooted in the late Goryeo and early Joseon period.

**Q: What future plans do you have to unveil the history of exchanges between ancient Korean nations and the Islamic world?**

**A:**Traces of the Islamic world are found in many historical Korean documents to some extent. However, hundreds of old Arabic documents that deal with Silla and Goryeo still remain unopened. Research has been ongoing to unearth and decipher them.

I believe that my goal is to find a treasure that is hidden in the history of exchanges between ancient Korea and the Islamic world

## **Part 2: Silla, Oasis of the East.**

“A total of 23 books written by 18 Arab scholars described Silla as a utopia in the East,” said Professor Lee Hee Soo while explaining to Korea.net the common features he discovered in ancient Arabic documents. Lee has been studying the ways in which ancient Korea was depicted in ancient documents written in Arabic, Turkish and Persian.

Professor Lee spoke of the Islamic world’s views of ancient Korea, as seen in the historical documents written in those three languages that have so far been unearthed.

**Q: What can be learned about Korea through these ancient Middle Eastern texts?**

**A:**The first record concerning Silla is found in “The Book of Roads and Kingdoms” written by Persian scholar Ibn Khurdhadbih (c. 820-912).

“And in the last China there is a kingdom named Silla, a land full of gold. Due to a clean natural environment, Muslims do not want to leave, while hoping to settle there for long.”

According to that record, Silla was considered a utopia where visitors could drink ample amounts of clean water without having to find an oasis.

**Q: Last year, the epic poem “Kush Nama,” a well-known Persian collection of myths and poems, mentioned the ties between ancient Persia and Silla. This got a lot of attention in Korea after a Korean broadcaster mentioned this. Please tell us about the “Kush Nama” epic poem.**

**A:**“Kush Nama” is a love story between a Persian prince and a Silla princess based in Silla. About 500 of its 820 pages contain Silla-related content. In the story, the Silla kingdom is called “Basilla.” Ba means “better” or “more beautiful” in Persian.

Currently, I’ve been working on a joint project to decipher and translate the “Kush Nama.”

**Q: How did we get the English word “Korea” and how did the name spread around the world?**

**A:**Persian historian Rashid al-Din (1247-1318) wrote Korea as Kao-li, based on the ancient Chinese pronunciation of “Goryeo.” This was in his book on world history titled “Compendium of Chronicle.” Since then, when Muslims served as a bridge between Europe and the Far East, the book was introduced in English-speaking countries, which led the world calling this place “Korea.”

**Q: Are there are many positive accounts of Korea in the ancient Middle Eastern documents that you mentioned?**

**A:**Based on these historical documents, Muslims thought of Silla and other ancient Korean countries as being places of their imagination, a type of paradise. The reason why Korean pop music and TV shows are popular today in the Middle East is related to this idealistic image of Korea that many Muslims still have.

**Q: Tell us you what you thought about studying ancient Arabic, Turkish and Persian documents that focused on Korea-Islamic world exchanges.**

**A:**This is something about which we don’t know very much. Today’s Korean society sees the Middle East in three key words: construction, oil and terrorism. However, if you look at the region from the point of view of historical Korea-Islamic world exchanges, you reach a turning point and you can see Islam and its many countries and cultures in a much more desirable manner, not just as defined by those three limited images.

# TRENDING @ InKo Centre

If cultural engagement is a sensory, textured and organic experience, then we cordially invite you to discover, engage and connect at InKo Centre.

We invite you to share our space and make it your own !

Join our courses /classes.  
Experience these spaces.

## HANJI STORY

The Craft Shop @ InKo Centre



**The Craft Shop** @ InKo Centre offers hand-crafted gift items, an array of handmade Hanji paper and interesting bric-a-bracs. Also on offer is a unique Korean gift-wrapping counter with paper and silk options with subtle, beautiful finishing touches.

Touch, feel and enjoy the gift of harmony and balance...

**The Cafe** @ InKo Centre, serves home-cooked, organic fresh food and beverages, blending traditional Korean cuisine with contemporary variations. Whether aromatic tea and coffee blends, traditional Korean ice-cream, juices or light refreshments, the Cafe epitomizes slow food, in a cosy, energized space. Eat, drink, taste, relax and re-energise...



## CAFE MORI

The Cafe @ InKo Centre

## HISTORY CLUB



**The History Club**, exclusively for Korean residents in Chennai, aims to introduce aspects of Indian tradition, culture and history. The members of the club meet every Monday at InKo Centre.

Interactive sessions include an introduction to ancient Indian architectural monuments, historical sites, textiles, art, craft, cuisine, spices and other topics pertaining to everyday life in India, as well as visits to places of interest in and around the city of Chennai.

**Strike 12** is a functional training programme with each set consisting of 12 different exercises, combining Cardio, Strength, Endurance, Conditioning, Stabilizing, Building, HIIT and Core.

**Silambam** is a weapon-based Indian martial art requires an effective alignment combination of mind and body and is defined by intricate and graceful footwork.

Course duration : 2 months.

Course timing : 5.00pm - 7.00pm.  
on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

## STRIKE 12. SILAMBAM.



To register for these courses or for information regarding our regular Korean and English language classes, Taekwondo and Yoga courses, please contact:

T: 044 26361224 E: [enquiries@inkocentre.org](mailto:enquiries@inkocentre.org) or visit InKo Centre, No: 18, Adyar Club Gate Road, Chennai-600 028.

## EVENTS

### January

#### 19 January to 20 March 2018

##### Snowman

an Indo-Korean exhibition  
curated by Insang Song  
at The Gallery @ InKo Centre, Chennai.

#### 19 to 20 January 2018

##### Fish, Tree, Moon

An Indo-Korean Children's Theatre production  
at Ranga Shankara, Bengaluru.

### February

#### 7 to 9 February 2018

##### The Turtle Trail

a research workshop  
at InKo Centre, Chennai.

#### 15 to 16 February 2018

##### Fish, Tree, Moon

An Indo-Korean Children's Theatre production  
at Ranga Shankara, Bengaluru.

#### 15 February 2018

##### AccessMusic VI

featuring Shilpa Natarajan  
at InKo Centre, Chennai.

#### 23 February 2018

##### The Film Music Appreciation Circle

curated by Divakar Subramaniam  
at InKo Centre, Chennai.

#### 23 to 24 February 2018

##### The Lost Wax Project

at Cholamandal Artist Village,  
Chennai.

#### 26 to 27 February 2018

##### The Lost Wax Project

at G5a Gallery, Mumbai.

### March

#### 8 to 9 March 2018

##### The Lost Wax Project

at GEM Cinema, Kolkata.

#### 16 March 2018

##### Heart of Matter

Monologues by Women  
curated by N.S. Yamuna  
at InKo Centre, Chennai.

#### 30 - 31 March

##### Fish, Tree, Moon

An Indo-Korean Children's Theatre production  
at Ranga Shankara, Bengaluru.

## CLASSES

### Korean Language-Elementary Level 1A / 2A Korean

	Mon	Wed								
January	08	10	-	17	22	24	29	31		
February	05	07	12	14	19	21	26	28		
March	05	07	12	14	19	21	26	28		

### Korean Language-Elementary Level 1B / 2B Korean

	Tue	Thu								
January	09	11	16	18	23	25	30			
February	01	06	08	13	15	20	22	27		
March	01	06	08	13	15	20	22	27	29	

### Korean Language-Elementary Level 1C Korean

	Tue	Thu								
January	09	11	16	18	23	25	30			
February	01	06	08	13	15	20	22	27		
March	01	06	08	13	15	20	22	27	29	

### Korean Language Intermediate Level 2D Korean

	Fri	Sat								
January	05	06	12	13	19	20	26	27		
February	02	03	09	10	16	17	23	24		
March	02	03	09	10	16	17	23	24	30	31

### Korean Language for Business Purposes

	Tue	Thu								
January	09	11	16	18	23	25	30			
February	01	06	08	13	15	20	22	27		
March	01	06	08	13	15	20	22	27	29	

### English for Social Purposes

	Tue	Thu								
January	09	11	16	18	23	25	30			
February	01	06	08	13	15	20	22	27		
March	01	06	08	13	15	20	22	27	29	

### History Classes

	Fri	Fri	Fri	Fri	Fri
January	05	12	19		
February	02	09	16	23	
March	02	09	16	23	30

### Yoga

	Mon	Wed	Fri									
January	03	05	08	10	12	-	17	19	22	24	-	29
February	02	05	07	09	12	14	16	19	21	23	26	28
March	02	05	07	09	12	14	16	19	21	23	26	28

### Calligraphy

	Mon	Tue	Thu	Fri	Mon	Tue	Thu	Fri	Mon	Tue	Thu	Fri
January	02	-	-	08	09	11	12	15	16	18	19	22
February	01	02	05	06	08	09	12	13	15	16	19	20
March	02	05	06	08	09	12	13	15	16	19	20	22

### Strike - 12 / Bollywood Dancing / Silambam

	Mon	Wed	Fri									
January	03	05	08	10	12	-	17	19	22	24	-	29
February	02	05	07	09	12	14	16	19	21	23	26	28
March	02	05	07	09	12	14	16	19	21	23	26	28





InKo Centre is a registered, non-profit society, supported primarily by TVS Motor Company and Hyundai Motor India Limited; the Korean Association in Chennai and a host of Indian and Korean companies based in Chennai.

