

Korean Calligraphy

Weekend classes at InKo Centre in R. A. Puram

By Abhinaya Mohan

This is news for those with an artistic trait in them.

Would you like to learn Korean calligraphy and water colour painting?

Then you should contact the InKo centre (The Indo-Korean Cultural and Information Centre) in R. A. Puram.

Pak HyonOk, a Korean, has recently begun classes at this centre which has been hosting films, courses and cultural meets.

Pak HyonOk has majored in the Korean language, with literature as her special subject. She has been sent by the Korean government to teach Korean in India and she has been doing so at the Madras University for well over a year.

"Calligraphy is a part of Korean culture. At the classes that we conduct at InKo, we first teach the students Korean style-water colour painting. Then, I plan to teach them the basics of Korean language and then proceed to teach them several styles of calligraphy," explains Pak HyonOk.

Korean water colour-painting is not an easy process and requires only rice paper as the medium to paint on, as it is the only medium that enables a person to create a shadow effect.

Thick brushes are used to paint a variety of subjects like orchids, bamboo, cherry and plum trees and the paint itself is not merely the packaged water colours which are available in our local shops.

"It is called an inkstone," says Pak HyonOk, pointing at a solid bar which gives off an intense perfume. "We dissolve it in water (this process takes nearly half an hour) and use them."

So, what does a person gain



Pak HyonOk displays her creation

out of learning this art?

"Just as you have yoga in India, we Koreans use this art as a relaxing technique. Besides, it builds mental discipline and gives a sense of peace," responds Pak HyonOk.

The inkstone which gives off a strong perfume may well be a form of aromatherapy.

"This art cannot be mastered just over a period of three months. It requires years of practice. Since rice-paper is very expensive, the students practise on newspaper, which has a similar texture as rice-paper," she says.

The small group of students who have been attending the first calligraphy class are Indians and include

college-going students and artists.

"The classes are wonderful. We devote two full hours to painting and then progress to calligraphy. Pak HyonOk is a dedicated and passionate teacher," says Uma, an artist. Sucheta, also an artist agrees with Uma and adds that the art really helps her relax.

Pak HyonOk wants to set up an Indo-Korean culture club and thus promote the culture of both countries.

The calligraphy classes are conducted on Saturdays for two hours.

For any further details, you can contact InKo at 2436 1224.

InKo is at 51, 6th Main Road, Raja Annamalai Puram.