

#MountainEchoes



MOUNTAIN ECHOES 2018 FESTIVAL REPORT

Presented by Jaypee Group

An India-Bhutan Foundation Initiative

Powered by Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan

In association with Siyahi

AUGUST 23-25, 2018

Thimphu, Bhutan

The ninth edition of Bhutan's annual festival of literature, arts and culture, Mountain Echoes, was held from August 23 to August 25, 2018. As each year, the festival celebrated '**Untouched Beauty, Unexplored Ideas and Unstoppable Voices**' from the heart of the Himalayas. It brought together writers, spiritual leaders, environmentalists, scholars, journalists, poets, musicians, artists, film-makers and storytellers alike to create some wonderful memories as they exchanged ideas and engaged in conversations over three days in the mountains of Thimphu.

Chief Royal Patron: Her Majesty the Royal Queen Mother Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck

Festival Directors: Namita Gokhale, Pramod Kumar KG, Tshering Tashi and Siok Sian Dorji

Producer: Siyahi

One of the special themes at this year's edition was the celebration of the 50th anniversary of establishment of formal diplomatic relations between Bhutan and India. Through different sessions and experiences, the festival looked at the shared roots and cultural narratives of the two countries and how aspects such as music, dance, films, poetry and literature have brought the neighbors closer, thus strengthening ties.

The festival this year drew larger crowds (approximately 18,000 people over the course of three days) as compared to the previous years, with enthusiastic participation from schools and colleges in Thimphu and across Bhutan, including College of Language and Culture Studies, College of Science and Technology, Gedu College of Business Studies, Jigme Singye Wangchuck School of Law, Norbuling Rigter College, Royal Thimphu College, Samtse College of Education, Sherubtse College, Chang Rigphel Lower Secondary School, Chapcha Middle Secondary School, Chundu Armed Forces Public School, Damphu Central School, Dashiding Higher Secondary School, Dechentsemo Middle Secondary School, Dr. Tobgyel School, Druk School, Gedu High Secondary School, Karma Academy, Pakshikha Middle Secondary School, Tendruk Central School, The Royal Academy and Tsirang Higher Secondary School.

The sessions were held at the auditorium of the **Royal University of Bhutan** on all three days – August 23 - 25. Workshops were held simultaneously at **Tarayana Centre** from August 23 - 25, and **Hotel Taj Tashi** on August 23 and August 25. The festival also showcased two artistic exhibitions at the **Royal Textile Academy** of Bhutan namely *Colors of Nature* by Penjor Dorji; and *Tree of Life: The Tree of Immortality* created by inmates of Jaipur Central Jail and curated by Malvika Singh. The exhibitions were inaugurated on August 21 by Her Majesty the Royal Queen Mother Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck and were open for public through the festival days. One of the highlights of the festival was an exciting roundtable on Bhutanese and Indian cinema. It was held at **Taj Tashi** on the concluding day and witnessed names such as Naseeruddin Shah, Ratna Pathak Shah, Vani Tripathi

Tikoo, L Somi Roy, Tandin Bidha, Chenchu Dorji, Dechen Roder, Druksel Dorji in conversation with Kunga Tenzin Dorji. The evening of August 25 saw **Mojo Park** play host to the Open Mic night.

Mountain Echoes 2018 drew big names from the world of literature and culture, with sessions of speakers like Her Majesty the Royal Queen Mother Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck, Dr. Sonal Mansingh, Kunzang Choden, Sarah Kay, Dave Goulson, Usha Uthup, Sanjna Kapoor, Chador Wangmo, Ajoy Bose, Kezang Dorji, Sonam Chopel among others.

The festival witnessed Her Majesty the Royal Queen Mother Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck, the Chief Royal Patron of the festival, address the visitors from India, Bhutan and across the globe. She spoke about how the strong friendship between the two nations has flourished over the last five decades. She also highlighted how Mountain Echoes literary festival has widened the canvas of the relationship between the two nations by fostering goodwill and friendship. Celebrated theatre personalities Sanjna Kapoor and Ratna Pathak Shah discussed the theatre culture of contemporary India, drawing from their experiences as actors and directors.

Veteran singer Usha Uthup regaled the audience with stories of her initial days in the music industry and brought forth her enriching experience of growing and carving a niche for herself in the film business. The singer also brought alive the era of The Beatles in another exciting session with columnist Ajoy Bose and musician Dawa Drakpa that discussed the influence of music across West and the East, drawing a connect with the audience.

Spoken word poetess Sarah Kay performed her famous works *B* and *The Type* invoking a strong sentiment in the audience. Her session also highlighted the ideas and concept of strong and powerful womanhood.

Legendary actor Naseeruddin Shah and writer Vani Tripathi Tikoo brought to the fore the former's acting career, discussing his journey, challenges and achievements. Talking about the myth of the Yeti, environmentalist Daniel C Taylor, festival co-director Tshering Tashi and author Karma Singye Dorji connected with the audience about the elusive abominable snowman. The panelists discussed the various expeditions undertaken to find the Yeti. Daniel spoke about his trips across the valleys in Nepal, China and Bhutan, gathering evidence to prove the Yeti's existence.

The festival was widely covered by the media. The publications that wrote about Mountain Echoes 2018 include:

- Bhutan Times
- Bhutan Today

- Business Bhutan
- Business Standard
- Daily World
- Deccan Herald
- Deccan Chronicle
- Elle
- Hindustan Times
- IANS
- India Times
- India Today
- Kuensel
- NDTV
- News 18
- Outlook Traveller India
- PTI
- Punjab Kesari
- Sunday Financial Express
- Telangana Today
- The Economic Times
- The Hindu
- The Indian Express
- The New Indian Express
- The New York Times
- The Pioneer
- The Quint
- The Statesman
- The Telegraph
- The Times of India
- Travel + Leisure
- Yahoo News

INDIA BHUTAN FOUNDATION

The India Bhutan Foundation was established in August 2003 by the Royal Government of Bhutan and the Government of India with the objective of enhancing exchange and interaction among the people of both countries through activities in the areas of education, culture, science and technology.

JAYPEE GROUP

Jaypee Group is a well-diversified infrastructural industrial conglomerate in India. Over the decades it has maintained its salience with leadership in its chosen line of businesses. Transforming challenges into opportunities has been the hallmark of the Jaypee Group, ever since its inception five decades ago. The group is a diversified infrastructure conglomerate with business interests in engineering and construction, cement, power, real estate, expressways, fertilizer, hospitality, healthcare, sports, information technology, and education (not-for-profit).

GOVERNMENT OF RAJASTHAN

Rajasthan is a kaleidoscopic state where tradition blends with modernity. The land of kings tells historic tales of warriors and their chivalry, romance, glory and tragedy. Today, it boasts of heritage properties, spectacular sand dunes, tiger trails, and much more. With its rich art, culture and the many vibrant and colourful festivals held across the state, Rajasthan is one of the most sought-after tourist destinations in India. Known for its array of unique, colourful and mouth-watering cuisine, Rajasthan has something for everyone.

SIYAH

Siyahi in Urdu means ‘ink’, the dye that stains the shape of our thoughts. Siyahi is India's leading literary agency that constantly seeks out talented voices whose stories must be shared. They also organize literary events of all types - from international literary festivals to intimate readings and book launches.

THE PROGRAMME

THURSDAY, AUGUST 22, 2018

WELCOME DINNER AT NORKHIL HOTEL, THIMPHU

Guests: 200



The ninth edition of Mountain Echoes literary festival started out with a welcome dinner in Thimphu on August 22.

Festival co-director Namita Gokhale opened the evening paying tribute to the late Atal Bihari Vajpayee, former Prime Minister of India, and shared anecdotes about his love for poetry. Namita further remembered how in 1977 Atal ji visited Bhutan and read out a poem in Hindi in his impromptu style. She also spoke about how Mountain Echoes encourages audiences to interact with the speakers without any barriers, in a way which allows a free exchange of thoughts and ideas.

Further, the Indian statesman was also remembered by writer and festival co-director Tshering Tashi, who said, for the Bhutanese, Atal ji's best poem was the one that he composed in 1977 at the India House in Bhutan. Overwhelmed by the "warmth and hospitality" of the Bhutanese people, the former Prime Minister, in his poem, had "generously praised Bhutan", Tshering Tashi said.

Her Majesty the Royal Queen Mother Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck spoke about the current edition of Mountain Echoes literary festival being "very significant" as the number nine is considered very auspicious for the Bhutanese. She encouraged all attendees to make the current chapter of the festival an "interesting, vibrant" one.

The highlight of the evening was three performances. The first one by veteran singer Usha Uthup who sang the timeless classic song *Yeh Dosti* from the movie *Sholay*, describing the unbreakable bond between India and Bhutan. In between the performance, Usha also spoke of the wonderful bond that connected the two countries. Her performance was followed by a rap by Kezang Dorji. Renowned singer Karma Phuntsho also regaled the audience with the song *Tere Jaise Yaar Kahan* from the movie *Yaarana*.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 23, 2018

AUDITORIUM, ROYAL UNIVERSITY OF BHUTAN

9:30 am - 9:40 am | **MELODY OF FRIENDSHIP**

Performance by the students of Royal Academy of Performing Arts

Audience: 350



The RAPA performance was an evocative chronicle of the fifty years of enduring friendship between Bhutan and India. The performance traced the journey from Buddhist roots, when the Buddha Sakyamuni, the Lotus-born Pema Jungney, blessed the two countries with his teachings. A fitting tribute to the collective efforts of the two countries, the dance incorporated an earnest prayer.

9:40 am - 9:50 am | **OPENING ADDRESS**

Festival Co-director Pramod Kumar KG

Audience: 375



Festival co-director Pramod Kumar KG delivered the opening address of the festival, formally declaring the ninth edition of Mountain Echoes open. Pramod spoke about the transition of the written word - from print to digital, and that the festival is open to hosting all forms of ideas and expressions whether scribal, oral, visual or perhaps soon, even the artificial intelligence. Addressing the audience, he said “The power of imagination, of hopes, emotions, histories and all ideas big and small find expression here (at Mountain Echoes), the medium is not our concern, your ideas are.” He concluded that the festival is not just about the written word, but “about everything that shapes today’s lived realities, in real time and amongst real people, from Thimphu to Timbuckto and everywhere in between.”

9:50 am - 10:00 am | **INAUGURAL ADDRESS**

Her Majesty the Royal Queen Mother Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck

Audience: 375



The festival witnessed Her Majesty the Royal Queen Mother Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck, the chief royal patron of the festival, address visitors from India, Bhutan and across the globe in her inaugural speech. Her Majesty started by paying her tributes to Late Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, former Prime Minister of India. As a mark of respect, the audience observed a minute-long silence.

Her Majesty then spoke about how the strong friendship between the two nations - Bhutan and India - has flourished over the last five decades. She shared that Mountain Echoes is close to her heart, “The growth of Mountain Echoes is in no small measure due to the patronage and support we have received from friends and literary enthusiasts like you who are assembled here for the love of literature and perhaps festival too.” Her Majesty dedicated the ninth edition of the festival to the golden jubilee anniversary of establishment of formal diplomatic relations between Bhutan and India. “It is a matter of immense satisfaction and happiness for people of Bhutan and India that our two countries enjoy excellent and exemplary friendship — A friendship that is anchored on unwavering trust, goodwill, understanding, and mutually beneficial cooperation.” Her Majesty added.

The speech introduced the common thread of Buddhist teachings that connected Bhutan and India, tracing the linkage with the Indian prince Siddhartha transforming the world with his teachings as Lord Buddha, thereby joining India and Bhutan in an eternal bond of love and trust.

Her Majesty also spoke of the frequent official visits that took place between Bhutan and India and how those became the bedrock of a solid relation between the two countries. Her Majesty mentioned that these visits played a vital role that “nurtured bilateral relations and set the environment for cooperation” and also “expressed the depth of solidarity and friendship in times of distress.” The recent being His Majesty the King of Bhutan Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck’s visit to Delhi a few days ago to attend the funeral service of Late Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, former Prime Minister of India.

Through her speech, Her Majesty put the spotlight on how Bhutan is developing from a least developed country to a middle-income country, with unwavering support from India. Her Majesty spoke at length about Bhutan’s history, and shared examples of how His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo Jigme Singye Wangchuck voluntarily abdicated the Golden Throne after 34 years of glorious reign in favour of His Majesty the King of Bhutan Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck and “how the winds of change heralded the change of guards.”, as well as how Bhutan was a nation where the monarch introduced democracy upon a ‘reluctant population’.

In conclusion, Her Majesty spoke of how the Mountain Echoes literary festival has widened the canvas of the relationship by fostering goodwill and friendship between the two nations. She said that the shared culture between both countries has given them this unique platform to engage and discuss art, literature and traditions.

9:40 am - 9:50 am | **TASHI TSEKPA: AN AUSPICIOUS PRAYER**

Chanting by the nuns of Bhutan Nuns Foundation, introduced by Kunzang Choden

Audience: 370



Kunzang Choden introduced the Bhutan Nuns Foundation and gave audiences a brief glimpse into the history of the foundation. The nuns then began to recite the prayer *Eight Noble Auspicious Ones*, with the enthusiastic audience joining in.

10:10 am - 10:25 am | **I BELIEVE**

Her Majesty the Royal Queen Mother Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck

Audience: 375



Her Majesty the Royal Queen Mother Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck spoke of her convictions, beliefs, ideals and aspirations. Drawing from her life and the spiritual and cultural values of Bhutan, Her Majesty shared her thoughts on what shaped her commitment to the service of her country. Her Majesty spoke at length about compassion and how it is the bedrock on which all human values are built. Her Majesty then spoke of the compassion of Bhutan's kings, its people and also shared anecdotes from her life where compassion played a key role. One of the instances that stood out the most during Her Majesty's session was from the time when she went on a steep hill for a trek. Everyone had warned her about the difficulty of the trek. Her Majesty spoke of how an old woman saw her panting when she was trekking, and came up to her and offered to hoist on her back and carried her towards the mountaintop. Her Majesty expressed, "Where there is compassion, wisdom and love cannot be far behind," and asked the audience to do one act of kindness every day.

10:30 am - 11:10 am | **TREASURES OF FRIENDSHIP: 50 YEARS OF BHUTAN-INDIA TIES**

His Excellency Ambassador General V. Namgyel, His Excellency Ambassador Jaideep Sarkar in conversation with Zimpon Wom Chewang Rinzin

Audience: 400



February 1968, the All India Radio station in Delhi rung with the words “The friendship between India and Bhutan is solid as a rock and I have no doubt will always remain so.” With these words, His Majesty the Third Druk Gyalpo Jigme Dorji Wangchuck planted the seed of diplomatic commitments between the two countries. 50 years later the sapling has grown and branched through history, culture and geopolitical realities.

The session highlighted the golden jubilee celebrations of establishment of formal diplomatic relations between Bhutan and India. Zimpon Wom Chewang Rinzin described the relationship as “most friendly, cordial, exemplary, mutually beneficial based on trust and cooperation”. He further stated how the relations have been evolving between both the countries and that they are important to safeguard and protect their national interests. His Excellency Ambassador Jaideep Sarkar spoke of the inception of the relations with His Majesty the Third Druk Gyalpo Jigme Dorji Wangchuck being invited by the then Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, to attend India’s Republic Day celebrations as the Chief Guest in 1954.

He also spoke of how this set the template for the relationship between both the countries, and the visit by the late Prime Minister Nehru in 1958 led to “development and security cooperation” between the two countries.

His Excellency Ambassador General V. Namgyel spoke of Bhutan’s earlier foreign policy that was aimed at protecting the nation’s sovereignty and security while the remaining subcontinent was being colonized by the British. He also spoke of late Prime Minister’s Nehru visit to Bhutan in 1958 and the invitation from him to Majesty the Third Druk Gyalpo Jigme Dorji Wangchuck for India’s Republic

Day celebrations that deepened the ties between the two countries and encouraged Bhutan to come out from its self-imposed exile. General Namgyel also read out the historical speech from the late Prime Minister Nehru's visit that brought forth the goodwill and spirit India bore for Bhutan.

The session also detailed the significance of late Prime Minister of India Indira Gandhi endorsing Bhutan's membership to the United Nations Security Council, giving full support to Bhutan. Ambassador Sarkar, in turn, spoke of the establishment of formal diplomatic relations that ushered in a new phase with Bhutan gradually developing its independent economic value system. He said, "The establishment of formal diplomatic relations did provide the platform for the next phase of the maturing of relations between our two countries. It's been a long political and economic road that we have travelled together." He highlighted India supplementing the natural resources of Bhutan to implement the development plans and the grant system that India provided for projects which were commercially viable, giving the example of the hydro sector in Bhutan. Ambassador Sarkar mentioned in his concluding remarks the need to build ties for "interdependence with Bhutan and not dependence".

In his concluding remarks, General Namgyel added, "When people ask me if I can summarise India Bhutan relations in just one sentence, I always respond by saying genuine goodwill and friendship based on mutual trust and understanding is the hallmark of India Bhutan relations."

11:05 am - 11:20 am | **TEA**

11:20 am - 12:00 noon | **84000: TRANSLATING THE SUTRAS**

Khenpo Sonam Phuntsok in conversation with Veer Singh

Audience: 380



"You should do your own work, for I can teach only the way."- Buddha.

The session was dedicated to the translation of Buddhist sutras through the 84,000 project and how it is serving to spread the spirit of Buddhism. 84,000 is a global non-profit organization, dedicated to the translation of the Buddha's teachings, to make it available to all.

Khenpo Sonam is assisting the project and through the session, he shared insights on and the intentions of this major translation project: spreading the Buddhist sutras in humanity today. In conversation with Veer Singh, Khenpo Sonam evoked spiritual wisdom as the two spoke of reviving meaningful traditions.

Khenpo Sonam spoke about the importance of discipline while undertaking the translation of the Buddhist sutras. He shared his experiences with Veer Singh, of keeping the subject of the text alive in translation and brought forth the form and language of the sutras being in Sanskrit. During the session, Veer Singh also spoke of his personal endeavor of Vana Foundation that aims to draw a spiritual connect with people.

Acclaimed scholar Khenpo Sonam threw light on the significance of teachings in Buddhism and the system of education being the core of the religion. "Teaching is the most important act." said Khenpo Sonam. He elaborated the teachings of the sutras that signified the training of the mind and how it requires discipline. Khenpo Sonam spoke about the monastic system in the Himalayas across Nepal, Bhutan and certain parts of India that help one in becoming a Khenpo – a philosophy teacher. He shared his personal experience of how a natural interest towards the study of spirituality led him to explore this further across universities in Bhutan and India.

The discussion shared the aim of the 84000 project, under Khyentse Foundation, which is to translate the sutras into modern languages, making it accessible for the common man. He mentioned that the project will be underway for 100 years for completion and that till date, 25,000 pages have been translated. Once done completely, the texts will play a crucial role in the survival and revival of Buddhism.

Additionally, Khenpo Sonam also highlighted each sect of Buddhism and the value it brought to human life. The most significant aspect came through when Khenpo Sonam discussed how happiness comes through truth as explained in the religious texts with the core purpose of these teachings being to destroy belief of independent existence; and promote an interdependence that will lead to greater understanding of each other. This will help in inculcating heightened feelings of compassion, joy and kindness, mentioned Khenpo Sonam. "If we go by the teachings of Buddha, the most important wish of every being is happiness and happiness has to come from knowing the truth, and truth is dependent on others." he added. Veer opined that it becomes challenging to combat the feeling of individualism

which is very intrinsic to human nature, while Khenpo Sonam spoke of the need for one to contemplate hard and long before making decisions and thinking about their self-goals.

The session also hinted at new age sessions gaining popularity over traditional teachings, to which Khenpo Sonam mentioned that it is important to give attention to new philosophies and thoughts emerging across the world. Veer also brought to attention the precise skill required of scholars in translating the sutras and how such proficient scholars are declining in numbers which could cause a hindrance in the project.

12:05 pm - 12:45 pm | **BEE QUEST: SIBJAM ECOLOGY AND CONSERVATION**

Dave Goulson, Karma Samdrup (Angku) in conversation with Debanjan Chakrabarti

This session was supported by British Council – IELTS

Audience: 395



The panel set the pace for discussing ecology and preservation of bumblebee in our environment. Debanjan Chakrabarti, Director British Council, East and Northeast India, opened the discussion with literary references of the bumblebee across popular works of Roald Dahl, Lord Tennyson and William Shakespeare to name a few.

Dave Goulson, author of *A Sting in the Tale*, discussed his study of bumblebee ecology, conservation projects and agro-ecosystems. Dave took the audience through a presentation on the variety of bumblebee species. "Most bees are actually solitary creatures. There are about 20,000 different species of bees in the world. My specialty is actually the bumblebee." he added. He laid emphasis on the bees being "widely important to people" and a vital source of nutrition to the planet. Karma Samdrup, bee conservation expert, spoke about the sound environmental and bee-ecology practices in

Bhutan to establish a shared common value system. Over the years, a loss of wildflower, meadows and hedgerows along with the rampant use of agrochemicals have caused a significant decline in the bee-species all over the planet. Karma firmly believes that, "Bees and humans, are similar in so many ways and there's a lot that we can learn from bees especially how they are strong as a unit."

Debanjan spoke of celebrating 70 years of British Council with the opening of a special garden in London with the Himalayan blue poppy being the centrepiece, connecting to the fascinating subject of bee studies. Karma spoke about his experience of understanding the bee anatomy through his early days as a bee keeper. He spoke about his learning of the bees through his time spent in Nepal. Karma detailed his understanding of the honey bee, breaking down the life cycle of this fascinating species.

Dave also lauded Bhutan's natural beauty that he attributed to the conservation of natural species as opposed to the rest of the world where bees are now endangered. Karma then also spoke of the commercial aspect of selling honey and the need to limit it to a smaller scale to continue the good quality as well as preserve bee hives. Both Dave and Karma spoke of the significance of human support in enabling and prolonging survival of the bee species.

12:50 pm - 1:30 pm | **ONE, TWO, CHA-CHA, CHA**

Usha Uthup in conversation with Kunga Tenzin Dorji

Audience: 400



Music came alive at One Two Cha – Cha Cha with artist Usha Uthup and Bhutanese rock musician Kunga Tenzin Dorji. The enthralling discussion began with Usha Uthup remembering her old days, growing up with her sisters, each of whom was a singer and inspired her to take on singing as a

profession. "Radio Ceylon has been my biggest inspiration besides my sisters." said Usha. She mentioned that during her school days she learned the art of percussion playing.

Usha and Kunga shared an easy camaraderie and gave the audience a fun throwback of the music from the 80s and 90s. Usha remembered her old days and told the crowds about how she started her singing career at Kolkata based club Trincas. "When I got the announced for my first show at Trincas in Calcutta, I walked up in a sari and everyone wondered what is this *amma* going to do, and when I got done, they were blown." she said. Usha Tai, as she is fondly known, also spoke about her turning a playback singer for many leading ladies of the Indian cinema such as Rekha and Hema Malini.

Through the conversation, she also mentioned that "women are the biggest friends" in her life. Usha told the audience that her first break came through with the film *Hare Rama Hare Krishna* and that paved the way for her to grow into the funky Indian generation from the 80s and 90s who grooved to her voice.

In between the session, Usha broke into singing old timeless numbers such as *I Just Called to Say that I Love You* by Stevie Wonder, *Dum Maaro Dum* from the movie *Hare Rama Hare Krishna*, and *Darling* from the movie *7 Khoon Maaf*. Kunga also remembered Usha Uthup's first performance in Bhutan, setting the stage on fire to which Usha replied that the song is bigger than the artist and that her love for the country is everlasting.

1:35 pm - 2:15 pm | **LUNCH**

2:15 pm - 2:55 pm | **CONSIDERING BREAKTHROUGH: CONNECTING WITH SPOKEN WORD POETRY**

Sarah Kay, introduced by Snigdha Poonam

Audience: 400



Poetry took center stage with American poet Sarah Kay, who introduced the power of spoken word poetry on the first day of the festival. Part performance and part speech, Kay created magic on stage and mesmerized audiences with a power-packed performance that included her popular works 'B' and 'The Type'. 'B' reiterated the importance of the strong womanhood, talking of the trials and the tribulations of a woman's journey.

Her performance evoked a strong connect with the audience and brought alive the power and belief of self-confidence and persistence. Sarah spoke of her first tryst with poetry during her college days and led audiences through her journey as a spoken word poet. Sarah also spoke of her visit to India and its bearing on her role and work. The session also witnessed Sarah perform love poems like *Love Letter from a Toothbrush to the Bicycle Tire* and another one which she wrote on behalf of an Indian boy Ravi for his girlfriend.

"Being loved is not the same thing as loving. When you fall in love, it is discovering the ocean after years of puddle-jumping.", lines from one of Sarah's poems that she wrote for her friend. Post her performance, Sarah was in conversation with Snigdha Poonam. Speaking with Snigdha on how she uses language as a tool of inclusion, Sarah said "I think poetry unfortunately has a bad reputation of being an art form that is elite and elitist and is reserved only for the highest of academia. I fell in love with poetry at a dive bar in NYC. So my version of poetry is about community and people... I try to use language not as a weapon to keep people out. But, trying to use language as a way of inviting people, is a huge part of the way that I write and the way that I teach."

3:00 pm - 3:40 pm | **AND THEN ONE DAY**

Naseeruddin Shah in conversation with Vani Tripathi Tikoo

Audience: 400



And Then One Day saw a candid chat between Vani Tripathi Tikoo and veteran actor Naseeruddin Shah, on the latter's life, his journey as an actor, his love for theatre and his memoir. The session started with a short video clip created by Vani that had photos of Naseeruddin's theatre plays and films viz *Ismat ki kahaniya*, *Dear Lear*, *The Caine Mutiny Court Martial*, *Jaane Bhi Do Yaaron*, *A Wednesday* and some old pictures from his days at the National School of Drama (NSD). He remembered his father and the relationship he shared with him, his formative years at NSD and Film and Television Institute of India, and his admiration for Shammi Kapoor and Dara Singh.

Remembering his early days, he said, "I was 16 when I moved to Mumbai and I was told I was too old to play a child and too young to play a man. So I applied for a job at a restaurant near Worli." The actor also shared how he began his career with Shyam Benegal's movies. He spoke of his romance with the camera, playing a skill in front of the audience and the importance of craft for an actor. Theatre was also a subject of discussion at the session with the actor throwing light on the form shaping his film career. Speaking to Vani, he added, "The greatest influence on me was Mr Geoffrey Kendall who visited our school with Shakespeare -- somehow Shakespeare came alive when the Kendalls handled it. I used to dream of joining them."

The legendary actor further added that it was a self-invented system that guided him while acting in films and taught him how to make friends with the camera. He lamented the presence of the odd song and dance act in Indian films which looked very real in certain Hollywood classics such as *Sound of Music*, *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, *Wizard of Oz* among others.

Vani also discussed the comparison between art-house films and commercial cinema, to which the actor replied how it was fashionable for films to take a mild anti-establishment stance. He mentioned that the filmmakers were not equipped to make the kind of commercial movies that were being made at that point so they opted for these small, committed movies. He also added that the record proved that any artist, whenever got a chance, jumped on to the bandwagon of the commercial cinema.

In the end, the actor voiced his opinion about the various mediums through which the audience are consuming films and the future of celluloid virtually disappearing due to digital inroads.

3:45 pm - 4:25 pm | **LIVING MUSEUMS: THE FABRIC OF CULTURE**

Tshering Uden Penjore, Aparajita Jain in conversation with Malvika Singh

Audience: 370



Culture became an integral part of the festival with panelists Tshering Uden Penjore, Aparajita Jain and Malvika Singh discussed the living entities of heritage and culture in art across monuments, literature and exhibitions. The panelists looked at the infinite possibilities of showcasing histories and material culture through real and virtual spaces to create a vital dialogue.

“Culture is everywhere. It encompasses not only the way we dress or the way we talk, it’s in our etiquette, our code of conduct, it’s everywhere.” said Tshering Uden Penjore. She spoke of the significance of culture resonating strongly in the architecture of Bhutan, seen in the landscape and buildings of the country. “We have very stringent architectural rules that help us keep our country the way they are.”she added. She further elaborated on the need for the country’s culture to evolve and be in tune with current changes, saying it must “change to be relevant to present day society”. Tshering informed the audience that the first museum opened in 1968 in Paro and for three decades it was the only museum in Bhutan until Her Majesty the Royal Queen Mother Ashi Sangay Choden Wangchuck established the Royal Textile Museum. Bhutanese Textile Arts gained international recognition for its displays of various Bhutanese textiles, mentioned Tshering.

Malvika Singh threw light on the challenges of preserving heritage while working with various governments in India. Aparajita spoke of culture landmarks in India and the need to make art spaces more accessible for the public, such as National Gallery of Modern Art, adding the emergence of places like Bikaner House to showcase artwork by new artists that have not opened their shows yet.

Speaking of laws and regulations for the museums, Malvika said, “You have to open museums preferably at dawn and close them at eleven at night so the people in the evenings can take their families and visit these treasures of legacy.”

The session also threw light on the need to preserve culture icons, support from government and corporates to retain historical landmarks and educating the public about homegrown art. A visual presentation was shown to the audience that showcases the wide array of work that is done by the government of Rajasthan. This included art in public places, reinvention of heritage sites, state museums, conservation projects, and cultural activities undertaken by the Rajasthan government. The concluding highlight of the session came through with the idea of adopting crowd-funding to support and preserve a country's culture treasures.

During the Q and A with the audience, when asked about restoring old monuments by archivists and maintaining aesthetics, Malvika said "In Rajasthan, the government has set certain norms so there curators, there is Archaeological Survey representatives, there are archivists, there is a committee of professionals and the government actually acts as the landlord of that property. So it's not government who is restoring and therefore the aesthetic changes depending on who is the present director. We create a new template of professionals who come in and work with the government to recreate with a consensus on the plan."

4:30 pm - 4:45 pm | **TEA**

4:45 pm - 5:25 pm | **THE WILDINGS MEETS DAWA**

Nilanjana S Roy, in conversation with Kunzang Choden

Audience: 350



Author Nilanjana Roy spoke of understanding the city and its landscape through the eyes of the animal while Kunzang spoke about the complex relationship shared between Bhutanese and dogs.

In the session, Kunzang Choden spoke of her inspiration behind the character Dawa and how her travels between Thimphu and Bumthang gave her the chance to see the city dogs. This is what encouraged her to pen down the story of Dawa. She further added that she went around Thimphu observing dogs and that is what ended up making her story a “dog project”. "Writing about dogs and animals comes back from where I come from as a child. People of my age and older come from when there was no written literature, only oral literature. Where there was no difference between humans and animals." said Kunzang.

Nilanjana spoke about the challenges of writing on a subject such as cats in her books *The Wildings* and *The Hundred Names of Darkness*. She further mentioned that the subject becomes difficult “since you are not the same species.” She added, “Writing about animals is not different from writing about human beings. On one hand you're worried about hypothetically offending cats, on the other hand cats won't get on the internet and say rude things.”

Nilanjana also said that she has been following Kunzang’s work for a long time and found her way of making history a part of her stories very interesting and important. Kunzang concluded by saying that as per ancient belief, cats have a very special purpose and recounted an old tale about how the cats were sent from heaven to protect the words of Buddha.

5:30 pm - 6:10 pm | **NATURAL TREASURES OF RAJASTHAN: BLUEPRINTS FOR REVIVAL**

Valmik Thapar

This session was powered by the Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan

Audience: 325



Noted conservationist Valmik Thapar spoke of the endeavors undertaken by the Rajasthan government in preserving natural resources. He mentioned his task of “minimizing damage” and lauded Chief Minister of Rajasthan Smt. Vasundhara Raje in taking steps towards ecological preservation and how it’s important to get the highest order involved in conservation efforts. He walked the audience through a visual presentation focused on the wildlife protected areas in Rajasthan and the projects undertaken by its government for conservation of natural resources, which he refers to as “the root of his learning”. The presentation threw light on many areas such as the success story behind the Ranthambore National Park, importance of tourism, village wildlife volunteers, animal-people conflict, and the research and training centres in the state.

He spoke of a project being created by the Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje which had a group of empowered and confident individuals who were tasked to “go and make a difference”. Through his session, Valmik Thapar laid emphasis on Ranthambore National Park and how with a boost in tourism, the population of tigers saw a spike. “Tourism became a very important revenue earner to make the park (Ranthambore National Park) self sufficient. The money tourism generates gives the state of the art protection.” said Valmik. He also spoke of the assistance of local aid in the form of village volunteers that work closely with organizations to save and sustain the flora and fauna of the state. He said that rehabilitating tigers was also a vital point and gave the example of Mukandra Tiger Reserve where many tigers have been placed and equipped with amenities.

He also spoke of how over the last few decades, the Indian state has formulated hundreds of schemes aimed at conserving and replenishing forested lands. He spoke of the Van Dhan Yojna which is the convergence of all prevalent schemes in different government departments both central and state governments towards a green mission and modifies existing schemes to dovetail into the objective of protecting our best forest areas with the participation of local people.

Valmik also spoke of building communities and engaging greater human support for nurturing and protecting our natural resources including internship programmes across SAARC countries.

6:30 pm - 7:10 pm | **GURUDAKSHINA**

Aditya Roy, introduced by Druksel Dorji

This session is supported by Mahindra Rise

Audience: 350



Gurudakshina, can best be described as an amalgamation of martial arts, music and storytelling. The theatrical performance by Aditya Roy, celebrated the relationship between the Guru (Master) and the Shishya (Student). The performance explored Aditya Roy's deep respect and gratitude to all his gurus who have brought him to the juncture of learning, being fearless and achieving the near impossible.

TARAYANA CENTRE

10:30 am - 12:00 noon | **ELEMENTS OF FICTION: HOW TO CRAFT A STORY - I**

Sonam Wangmo Jhalani

Audience: 100



In this workshop, Sonam Wangmo Jhalani read from the works of Willa Cather, one of America's well-known novelists, and Michael Ondaatje, one of five contenders for the title of the greatest-ever winner of the Man Booker Prize award. She connected with young minds to teach them how to craft elements of fiction: character, plot, dialogue, setting, and point of view. The workshop also included fun writing exercises for the attendees.

12:05 pm - 12:45 pm | **MEET THE MONGOLS**

Nayanika Mahtani

Audience: 150



Revisiting history through an engaging manner was writer Nayanika Mahtani who spoke about her latest book, *The Gory Story of Genghis Khan a.k.a. Don't Mess with the Mongols*. Mahtani took the children through a delightful voyage into the history of the Mongols. The session, based on her novel, invited children for a closer look at this most fascinating Khan – prompting them to think about how history depends on who is telling the story. The session was packed to the seams, both in numbers as well as excitement. It included a book trailer, a reading of an extract from the book, and a fun quiz for the kids in the audience.

12:50 pm -1:05 pm | **BOOK LAUNCH**

Release of Dr Rinzin Rinzin's *Dewdrops in the Sun- A Treasury of Poems*, by Dasho Dr Sonam Kinga

Audience: 50

Well known Bhutanese writer and poet Dr. Rinzin Rinzin's latest work, *Dewdrops in the Sun: A Treasury of Poems* was released by Dasho Dr Sonam Kinga, in a reunion of old friends and co-parliamentarians. Dasho Dr Sonam Kinga praised the new work and spoke of how it is an inspiration

for many young minds to follow course, to understand both poetry and prose. He also spoke about Rinzin's work at length and with passion, which was symbolic of their long friendship.

HOTEL TAJ TASHI

2:30 pm - 4:00 pm | **STAGECRAFT: MUSIC**

Usha Uthup

Audience: 200



Usha Uthup set the tone right for the workshop with eclectic performance of the song *I Believe in Music, I Believe in Love*. Post this she threw light on various aspects of stagecraft - how to manage the stage, how to conduct oneself on stage and how to deal with stage-fright. She also invited two school children from the audience to come on the stage and share their experiences and what they have drawn from the workshop. Usha also explained how an artist draws energy from the audience and an artist's response to that energy. One of the attendees performed the song *Kaisi Paheli Hai Zindagani* from the movie *Parineeta* with Usha. Bhutanese singer Kinley Phyntso also regaled the audience with Bruce Springsteen's iconic song *Dancing in the Dark*.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 24, 2018

AUDITORIUM, ROYAL UNIVERSITY OF BHUTAN

9:40 am - 9:50 am | **DRAMETSE NGACHAMM: DANCE OF THE DRUMMERS FROM DRAMETSE**

Performance by the students of Royal Academy of Performing Arts

Audience: 400



Dancers from the Royal Academy of Performing Arts performed *the dance of the drums*, witnessed by the 16th century yogic master, Lama Kuenga Gyaltsen, in a mystical trance. The dance depicted how upon his (Lama Kuenga Gyaltsen) return, he introduced the celestial dance to his fellow practitioners. UNESCO recognizes the dance as “a masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity”. It is believed that the mere sight of this dance is enough to overcome the elements of delusion.

9:55 am – 10:00 am | **ADDRESS BY FESTIVAL PRODUCER MITA KAPUR**

Mita Kapur, Producer, Mountain Echoes and CEO, Siyahi, shared with the audience that Mountain Echoes has crucially been a forum for nine years for everyone to share their deep inflection points in their lived and shared realities. She expressed that that no forum for a world of ideas exists better than here in Bhutan, where everyone is surrounded by incredible calm giving a perfect setting for exchange of ideas.

Addressing the audience, she stated that this year is special for Bhutan and India as the two countries celebrate the golden jubilee of their formal ties. “While the historic ties between our people go back much longer, the 50th year is a rare opportunity to affirm our continued partnerships and we at Mountain Echoes are incredibly proud for facilitating people to people contact in our own small way.” she added.

She expressed her gratitude to all the people who helped make Mountain Echoes what it is today.

- Her Majesty the Royal Queen Mother Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck
- His Excellency Jaideep Sarkar, Ambassador from India to Bhutan
- His Excellency General V Namgyel, Ambassador from Bhutan to India
- India Bhutan Foundation
- Presenting Sponsors Jaypee Group
- Powering sponsors Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan
- Gold Partner, Mahindra Rise
- Tarayana Foundation
- Druk Air
- Tourism Council of Bhutan
- Hospitality Partner, Taj Tashi
- Cox and Kings
- Forest Essentials
- Diva Divine
- Bhutan Coca Cola
- British Council - IELTS
- Embassy of Switzerland
- Print Partner Penguin Random House India
- HarperCollins Publishers India
- Hachette India
- Oxford University Press
- Westland Books
- PHPA
- Druk Holding and Investments
- Ministry of Culture, Royal Government of Bhutan
- MHPA
- Royal Insurance Corporation of Bhutan
- Druk Hotel
- Le Meridien

- Happy Holidays
- Yangphel Tours
- Bhutan National Bank
- Bhutan Development Bank
- Department of National Properties
- Thimphu Thromde
- Media in Bhutan
- Media Partner Kuensel
- Television Partner BBS
- Radio Partner Radio Valley
- Kuzoo Fm
- Mobile Partner Tashi Cell
- The Royal University of Bhutan
- Royal Textile Academy
- Mojo Park
- Bhutan Foundation
- Pernod Ricard
- Army Welfare Project
- Play Clan
- Association of Bhutanese Tour Operators
- Bhutan Post
- City Bus service
- Royal Academy of Performing Arts
- The Reading Retreat Project
- Bhutan Street Library
- Terton Travel
- Assam Tourism

She also thanked the following for their unwavering support:

- Smt. Esha Srivastava the Deputy Chief of Mission
- Shri S. Koventhan, HOC
- Shri R. P. Bhatnagar, First Secretary, IBF
- Shri Sameer D. Akolkar, Counsellor
- Mrs. Nidhi Dhiman, Third Secretary
- Shri Laxman Prasad Gupta, Attache
- Shri Manoj Kumar, Attache

And friends and well wishers of Mountain Echoes:

- The Advisory Committee – Dasho Karma W Penjor, Malvika Singh, Meru Gokhale, Sonam Wangmo Jhalani, Kelly Dorji, Pavan K Varma and Kunzang Choden
- Festival Directors – Namita Gokhale, Pramod Kumar KG, Tshering Tashi and Siok Sian Dorji

10:00 am - 10:40 am | **ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE**

Sanjna Kapoor, Ratna Pathak Shah in conversation

Audience: 380



Theatre forms an essential part of the performing arts and noted theatre personalities Ratna Pathak Shah and Sanjna Kapoor, who brought alive the magic of theatrical aesthetics to the stage.

Both celebrated theatre artists, Sanjna Kapoor and Ratna Pathak Shah, initiated a conversation around staging plays and acting in them.. The panel discussed the theatre culture of modern day India, fused with their experience as actors and creators.

Sanjna Kapoor, as an artist and educator, laid emphasis on stimulating performances that weave together the diverse cultures, thoughts, histories and practices that make up her country (India).

Ratna spoke of her childhood where her mother and aunt were active in Gujarati plays, where she grew up looking at green rooms and backstage action in theatre. They were, Ratna said, “fun, wonderful spaces to grow up in.” She also spoke of Satayadev Dubey who had an impact on her

career, who introduced her to a different kind of theatre that did not rely on gimmickry and spoke of contemporary issues. "Satyadev Dubey really opened my eyes to the possibilities of what theatre could be." she added.

Sanjna said, "I wanted the life of adventure, the traveling theatre company, where you traveled, you met new people, you went to new places." She aspired of seeing traveling theatre companies with Prithvi theatres and Shakespeareana due to her grandparents. She mentioned how she had to imagine the theatre era of her family and yearned for the adventure of it as she missed seeing the company in its full bloom. She said, "For me there is no greater joy than seeing the birth of a new theatre space." Speaking of her late grandfather Prithviraj Kapoor, she said, "Prithvi Theatre was built by my parents to honour my grandfather. He always wanted a theatre but he never had one."

Sanjna also mentioned that it was a challenge for her to choose her career between theatre and films, and revealed that clarity came through while working in the movie *Hero Hiralal*. That is when she realized that theatre was her true calling and went to New York and learnt the craft of theatre.

Ratna Pathak Shah spoke about her time in theatre that helped her develop her career in the Indian film industry and looking at doing meaningful cinema. She further spoke about how she worked on her craft when she was struggling as an actor and that eventually helped her get strong roles. She stated that the idea of "committing to the skill, hardwork of acting" is the foundation for any actor. She went on to mention that television was a game-changer for her, as she realized that it "released her".

Speaking of the importance of theatre, Ratna said, "The more industrial life takes over in our country, we are going to have to find ways to counter these things with human interaction. Theatre is one way to go about it."

10:45 am - 11:25 am | **YETI: THE ECOLOGY OF A MYSTERY**

Daniel C Taylor, Tshering Tashi in conversation with Karma Singye Dorji

Audience: 370



Karma Singye Dorji introduced the session by asking the audience their idea of the abominable snowman, Yeti, which till date remains wrapped in a mystery. This led in to the discussion on Daniel C Taylor's book, *Yeti: The Ecology of a Mystery*, which documents his journey as he explored the snow footprints of the mysterious Yeti, and its snowclad Himalayan habitat. Daniel mentioned, "At age 11, I started searching the Indian Himalayas for the Yeti. But I kept searching year after year."

Festival co-director Tshering Tashi joined the panel and helped shed light on the existence of the Himalayan Yeti. He detailed how the Yeti is known by different names across the world and shared some interesting tales about the supposed gender of this elusive creature. He (Tshering) asked Daniel what would he do if he ran into a Yeti, to which Daniel responded saying, "I would speak to him in the language of food. I would get down and offer him some food."

Tshering further elaborated the expeditions undertaken to find the Yeti across countries, speaking about Austrian mountaineer Reinhold Messner, who went looking for a carcass of a Yeti known to be residing within the inner sanctum of a sanctuary in Bhutan, which in turn led to his book *My Quest for the Yeti*. He also spoke of how another mountaineer Harry Marshall, was fascinated by the Yeti and spent one month in Bhutan with his team and collected hair which could possibly belong to a Yeti. However, Tshering mentioned that it could not be determined whether it belonged to a Yeti.

The discussion concluded with Daniel speaking about how he discovered hidden gems while travelling through the Bhutan and witnessed many possible leads to the presence of the Yeti. Daniel examined the physical evidence of the Yeti through a series of photographs that was shown to the audience. He also added, "We must encourage the growing of new life. We must protect the habitat, the species so that they can be born again. Humans are starting to have too big of a footprint."

Speaking on the impact of human civilization on the wildlife, Daniel pointed, “It is our responsibility to take care of the wild, because it is the wild where we have come from. We have to create a rainbow over this preservation, it is our human responsibility. If we do that we'll have a sunrise on human civilization.”

11:30 am - 11:45 am | **TEA**

11:45 am - 12:25 pm | **ACROSS THE UNIVERSE: BEATLES FOREVER**

Ajoy Bose, Usha Uthup in conversation with Dawa Drakpa

Audience: 400



The session started with Dawa Drakpa, vocalist and guitarist of the band Baby Boomrs, singing lines from the The Beatles’ popular song *Can’t Buy Me Love*. Dawa shared with the audience that his musical journey began with this song. He mentioned that he sang this song to a friend, who enjoyed it so much that he encouraged him (Dawa) to form a music band. “The Beatles got me through my emotional sessions of high school days, my college days and it got my into Baby Boomrs. And most importantly, it developed by character.” he said. The panelists Usha Uthup, Ajoy Bose and Dawa Drukpa then charted the music revolution of The Beatles. With a focus on the band’s connections with India from their first encounter to their Rishikesh retreat in 1968, they engaged in a conversation around their music still playing and still loved 50 years on and the impact on cultures east and west.

Taking the discussion forward, “The Beatles story is also the story of the 60’s” said Ajoy. He spoke of how the hippie culture evolved and grew because of The Beatles. Speaking of the Beatlemania, he

said, “I came across this fan, this really old lady, who in her teens was so crazy that when Lennon came first to India, she managed to come near his car and she claims that Lennon blew a kiss at her. She got so carried away, she fell down, hurt herself.” Usha added, “I started the same time as The Beatles. When we were much younger, The Beatles didn't appeal to our parents.” She also spoke that the reason her generation became well-versed with Pt Ravi Shankar was because he (Pt Ravi Shankar) and his girlfriend took George Harrison and his wife on a trip around India, made them experience Indian culture, its music, leaving the young couple simply smitten.

Later, Naseeruddin Shah joined the panelists on stage and along with Usha Uthup broke into the iconic Beatles numbers *Come Together* and *With a Little Help from My Friend*. Naseeruddin Shah spoke of the “simplicity and beauty of their lyrics” that connected with him.

The panel further discussed the changing tempo and current of The Beatles songs and their gradual change from their early music that was very popular with their listeners. The session concluded with an impromptu concert with audience waving their cellphone lights and the panelists singing the famous song *Imagine* by John Lennon.

12:30 pm - 1:10 pm | **THE HIMALAYAN ARC: EAST OF SOUTHEAST**

Sanjoy Hazarika, Tshering Tashi, L Somi Roy in conversation with Namita Gokhale

Audience: 300



“The effort of Mountain Echoes is to find who we are from our own voices” said festival co-director Namita Gokhale at The Himalayan Arc: East of Southeast session. Joined by Sanjoy Hazarika, L Somi

Roy and Tshering Tashi, Namita Gokhale set the pace of the session by asking the audience to think about the lofty mountains, their interconnected geographies, culture, narratives in music, folktales and the spirit of the mountain people.

The discussion began with L Somi Roy talking about how the culture and traditions of Bhutan have transformed in the contemporary era. He also stressed on the fact for creating an identity for the North-east region of India and that it's the time when the people unite and refuse to give in to the perception of outsiders.

This was followed by Sanjoy Hazarika reading excerpts from his book *Strangers No More: New Narratives from India's North East* that traces the transformation of the North East journey and covers a major portion on Bhutan. He spoke highly of Bhutan for taking the hit for India and setting an example for the world to see what solidarity is.

The reading followed a discussion among the panelists where Sanjoy mentioned that while researching on the book he was “incredibly struck by the openness from the Prime Minister to His Majesty.” Namita Gokhale also mentioned Tshering Tashi to have contributed to the anthology with an essay called *Khunkar Phutsun: the world's highest unclimbed mountain* that explained the Himalayan as a form of religion, therefore decrying mountaineering as sacrilege since in this part of the world.

Tshering specifically spoke about the peak of Mount Chomolhari in the Paro valley which is “so symmetrical that it is fit to be the throne of the gods”, highlighting the two summits undertaken to the mountain in 1937 and in 1970. The 1970 summit stood out because of use of bamboos and the dramatic appearance of three mountaineers.

Tshering also spoke of mountaineering laws and rules in Bhutan, establishing a complete ban on any expeditions in the country. L Somi Roy also spoke of bringing sports as means of transforming the Manipur region with influx of Baseball and Polo to bring awareness to the sacred and natural part of the state, while Sanjoy talked of the work he is doing with the Boat clinics in Assam.

Namita Gokhale lauded the efforts of the panelists for making a difference in the lives of ordinary people in their respective regions, concluding with thoughts on how the “centre of true Buddhist thoughts remains in Bhutan and how the Himalayan must remain in recognition of each other.”

1:55 pm - 2:25 pm | **IF RIVERS WERE TO SPEAK**

Esther Syiem, Namgyal Tshering in conversation with Chador Wangmo

Audience: 350



The session began with bestselling author Chador Wangmo welcoming audiences and asking them to keep their hearts open for the river of poetry that was about to flow through the session. She said that the two people on stage write poetry just as rivers flow and went on to recite a poem which she wrote and thought best described them.

Chador then introduced Esther, who is a professor at the Northeastern Hill University in Shillong, as a poet who keeps her state and her region alive in her stories. Namgyel Tshering, author of *Dragon Delights* was also introduced by Chador.

Esther said that the determination to never give up is something which is very characteristic of people in the Himalayan regions. She spoke of her own writing by bringing forth instances from her childhood and how her childhood readings taught her of concepts such as ‘pensam’, which is an in between space in people’s hearts where the life of a man is equal to the sailing of a boat. She spoke of the sense of magical realism and how one realizes the importance of one’s roots, forests and streams only when they grow older.

Esther took audiences through her journey as part of a ‘speaking community’ and the oral laws which inspired her work. Taking cue from this, Chador asked Namgyel Tshering how important he thought it is to take inspiration from one’s roots. Namgyel went on to say that poetry is a very powerful medium that can be sung by hearts and minds that have clarity and the sharpness of a philosopher. He said that poetry can be used to talk about things happening in our villages that nobody talks about. Namgyel emphasized that if we do not share stories, we will lose the subtle meaning of life. He said that we need to reconnect ourselves and our truest selves are manifested in the past stories shared through the ages.

He drew examples from Sarah Kay's session from the previous day to talk about how poetry is a powerful medium.

Esther spoke about how, while writing, she looks at poetry only as a medium of communication to speak to her community, especially to young people. She said she sees poetry as an important communicating link which has to be established, as we transition from being an oral community. Esther also spoke of how one must not trivialize the spoken word and how she is giving life to the oral tradition on paper.

The conversation then moved on to Namgyel Tshering's poetry. He mentioned how he feels that if a poem does not rise out of a strong inspiration, then one is literally writing nothing. He said that writing a poem is not like writing an essay on a predetermined topic. According to him, poetry is the shortest way of making something clear for a person.

The trio also discussed the various authors who have inspired Esther and Namgyel through their journeys. The session ended on a light hearted note with Chador asking the other two panelists how they would define poetry for a four year old.

2:30 pm – 2:55 pm | **NASEERUDDIN SHAH AND RATNA PATHAK SHAH PRESENT
BEASTLY TALES FROM HERE AND THERE**

Naseeruddin Shah, Ratna Pathak Shah, introduced by Sanjna Kapoor

Audience: 425



The session began with a quick introduction by Sanjna Kapoor, who invited Naseeruddin Shah and Ratna Pathak Shah on stage.

Naseeruddin began by giving the audiences a background of the performance – he mentioned that it was part of their endeavor to rely on the essential elements to communicate the text to an audience. They attempt to rid the stage of all extraneous ‘magic’ and retain only which is functional. The duo then performed ‘*The Frog and the Nightingale*’, followed by solo performances of James Thurber’s ‘*The Owl who was God*’, ‘*The Little Girl and the Wolf*’ and ‘*The Tiger who would be King*’ by Naseeruddin Shah; and Vikram Seth’s ‘*The Louse and the Mosquito*’ and James Thurber’s ‘*The Tigress and her Mate*’ by Ratna Pathak Shah.

3:00 pm – 3:30 pm | **CHRONICLES OF WANDERLUST**

Tony Robinson-Smith in conversation with Nishtha Gautam

Audience: 350



The session began with Nishtha Gautam reciting a quote by Leo Tolstoy where he said that all great literature is one of two stories; a man goes on a journey or a stranger comes to town. Tony spoke about how his book, *The Dragon Run*, was born when his wife and him moved to Bhutan for two years to teach in a remote town. He expressed that he wanted to race across the Kingdom of Bhutan and his then boss – the principle of the college – encouraged him to take some of their students with him. Tony then goes to recount how his “Baker’s Dozen” was created – how he handpicked the students for the run, and how a dog attached himself to the crew.

The session also explored how historically travel writing was a privilege of the white colonials, and how this is now changing. Tony spoke about how the experience of travel is now changing and how people are connecting differently from previous times.

Tony and Nishtha then spoke about the former's experience with Bhutanese food, and what he thought of the various delicacies. The conversation then turned to Bhutanese culture, and the elements which left Tony intrigued during his stay.

Tony then spoke about how he hopes his book changes the perception of Bhutan in a Western mind. He feels it is not a Shangri-La or fictional idea, as most people perceive it to be. He said Bhutan carries with it the baggage of a mystical enchanting land full of secrets, which gives all visitors a chance to achieve enlightenment. In fact, he mentioned that he hopes that visitors now come to Bhutan for a host of other reasons, such as the pristine environment and how the nation is dealing with development.

The two then discussed how a travel writer can do justice to their job by giving a fair representation of what is happening in a place and not just focusing on the idyllic parts of a place. Tony pondered over how it is difficult to write literature dealing with real things and real people.

He also spoke about the similarities between his homeland Canada and Bhutan, and how the two cultures came together through the run, despite a few moments of disparity. Tony concluded by saying how the entire experience of the run across the kingdom would have been less meaningful if he hadn't been accompanied by local Bhutanese people.

3:35 pm – 4:10 pm | **THE INNER DANCE**

Dr Sonal Mansingh in conversation with Sujata Prasad

Audience: 350



Dancer and scholar Dr. Sonal Mansingh was introduced by author Sujata Prasad, who said that the former's dance embodies the settings of movement and takes watchers to the level of *drishya kavya* or visual poetry. She then went on to speak about the various nuances of Dr. Mansingh's dance and how the quest to discover the persona behind the art led her to write the dancer's biography, *Sonal Mansingh: A Life Like No Other*.

She spoke about how the task was easy and yet not easy since Dr. Mansingh is a remarkable storyteller and has the capacity to turn the most ordinary story into a memorable parable. However, she said that it was difficult because at times she had to defreeze the dancer's memory.

Dr. Mansingh began the session by describing the meaning behind the word 'namaskar' and how the gesture of folding hands brings together the energies of the male and female as well as of the five elements. She spoke of how dance taught her to respect the guru.

The conversation then turned to the symbols of dance and the values Dr. Mansingh imbibed through her years as a dancer. The duo then discussed Dr. Mansingh's *arangetram* or her dance baptism and how she and her dance tutor worked to better her expressions right before her debut.

Dr. Mansingh then spoke of her debut in Delhi and how she travelled through the years with her dance across 90 countries including Switzerland, France, Germany and Belgium. She also shared an anecdote of her time in Mexico, where she performed pieces from both Bharatnatyam and Oddisi dance, as well as a dance on the story of *Mary of Magdalene*, post which members of the audience came to her to say that they saw Christ through her performance. Dr. Mansingh then shared a powerful statement with members of the audience, one which she had said to the audience, including the Archbishop during a performance of *Mary of Magdalene* in Argentina. She said that Jesus and Mary, Krishna and Meera, Budha and Amrapali all say the same thing to her – they say, 'loving devotion'.

Sujata asked Dr. Mansingh how she combined genre oddball dances in her choreography. The dancer said that her two styles of dancing are diametrically opposite, and the body intelligence needs to be trained to perform both. She also spoke about the different texts she read while researching for her dance music. One of the dance songs she studied was by the Buddhist saint Milarepa.

The session concluded with Dr. Mansingh talking about her experience of performing in Mcleodganj on the invitation of His Holiness the Dalai Lama; performing at Kailash Mansarovar; her work on the natya kathas; and the story of Mahabharata's Draupadi.

As the session drew to an end, Dr. Mansingh left the audience with a single thought to ponder over – what would be the fate of humankind without women?

4:15 pm – 4:30 pm | **TEA**

4:30 pm – 5:10 pm | **WE THAT ARE YOUNG**

Pema Euden, Zuni Chopra in conversation with Charmi Chheda

Audience: 400



The engaging, youthful session began with Charmi leading the audience in a song of ‘Happy Birthday’ for Pema Euden.

Charmi recited a few lines before formally opening the session, which she had penned on the theme of the session We That Are Young. She spoke of how Zuni published her first book when she was 9, while Pema was 12 when she published hers.

Zuni and Charmi first spoke about her journey as a writer. Zuni’s latest book *The Island of the Day Before* has an overarching ‘modern fairytale’ theme.

Pema began speaking about her journey as the author of the books *Coming Home* and *Lomba*. She described the stories of each book, and how she was inspired to write books which were written for young Bhutanese by the Bhutanese.

The trio spoke about how the world needs stories and storytellers, as well as how storytelling takes different forms for different people. Zuni spoke about the similarities between films and books and how both chronicle human emotions. She mentioned that she is an emotional person and that allows her to empathize with others and describe emotions through her books. Pema, on the other hand, spoke of how she isn't a very emotional person in real life and writing for her is a way to share her emotions.

Both Pema and Zuni spoke of how their parents supported them throughout their journey – for Pema, her first book *Coming Home* was a family production, with different members of the family pitching in and supporting her with different aspects of the book. Zuni thanked her parents for always helping her become the best version of herself.

Through the conversation, the audience discovered the different routes each of the two authors – Pema and Zuni – take when they begin writing their books. Zuni begins with a free style of writing on her laptop while Pema writes down her thoughts on paper. They also spoke of the expectations that existed for their work and how they both dealt with it.

5:15 pm – 5:45 pm | **ROOTS OF HEALING**

Dr. Bjorn Melgaard, in conversation with Drungtsho Dorji Gyeltshen

Audience: 300



The session explored Dr Melgaard's book *Medical History of Bhutan*. Drungtsho Dorji Gyeltshen began with a brief description of the traditional medicine of Bhutan, which he called a conglomeration of science, art, philosophy and religion. He said that the practitioners of traditional medicine are an epitome of the physical, mental and spiritual virtues. They defined health as the state of being mentally happy, socially secure, and spiritually elevated with all senses functioning perfectly.

Dr. Melgaard spoke of how we look at the past so that we can make the future better. He said that while we use the term traditional medicine and modern medicine to denote two systematically delivered health systems in the country, modern medicine is as traditional as traditional medicine, both in terms of development and age.

He detailed how both forms of medicine made their way to Bhutan, and how they have grown together. The conversation then turned to the current medical system in Bhutan, with more hospitals coming up and a gradual decrease in the manpower shortage. He said that the health status of the Bhutanese has improved tremendously over the last few decades, outstripping any other nation in the world. According to him, Bhutan is now entering a phase where certain diseases are a thing of the past and yet, newer ones such as diabetes and hypertension are entering the public health space. The status of Bhutanese will improve in the coming years but not at the same pace as it has in the past as the burden of non-communicable diseases will continue to grow.

The conversation then turned to the collaboration between the traditional and modern medicine systems, and how the benefits of one accrue to the other. Drungtsho Dorji spoke of the challenges in traditional medicine, such as insufficient regulatory system, but despite challenges, the people involved in the traditional medicine system are building capacities within the system. Over the last few years, there has been increased training in traditional medicinal practices, as well as research methodology. Drungtsho Dorji also said that soon there will be several evidences about the use and effectiveness of traditional medicine. He spoke of how they wish to cross reverse the patient by having the two systems work together.

Dr. Melgaard then brought forth some of the cultural nuances of illness in Bhutan. The duo spoke of how it may do well to teach the population to seek qualified medical help when they are seriously ill. The session also explored the role of religion and monks in medicine. It also briefly dwelled upon the future of traditional medicine in Bhutan.

The session ended with questions from an engaged and motivated audience.

5:50 pm – 6:05 pm | **ONLY A DANCER WOULD KNOW**

A performance by GOKAB, introduced by Dr. Tenzin Dorji

Audience: 425



The session was opened by Dr. Tenzin Dorji, who spoke of his love for dance and how a chance encountered five years ago led to the birth of GOKAB, a dance project based in Bhutan. He took audiences through the various dances which make up the street dance genre. Tenzin mentioned that although street dance is a Western influence, he and his troupe dance to keep young Bhutanese filled with good energy and to keep them away from trouble and drug abuse.

He spoke of how dance and music are two things which can keep the young Bhutanese engaged positively and can help them find an empowered sense of self belief. He then introduced GOKAB's 'Dancing for Books' project, which uses dance for a social cause. It was born in 2015, the Reading Year of Bhutan. GOKAB wanted to draw a young crowd, inspire them to dance and get them to work on their minds. He spoke of how the troupe travels to different locations, where children are deprived of good reading materials, begin dance mobs and eventually break those away to form reading circles.

Tenzin then opened the floor for GOKAB's performance *Only a Dancer Would Know*.

TARAYANA CENTRE

10:30 am – 12:00 noon | **ELEMENTS OF FICTION: HOW TO CRAFT A STORY – II**
[WORKSHOP]

Sonam Wangmo Jhalani

Age Group 14-17

Audience: 90



"Reading is crucial to increase your knowledge, to increase your ability, but you have to understand what the author is trying to express." said Sonam Wangmo Jhalani during Day 2 of the workshop Elements of Fiction: How to Craft a Story.

This workshop was exclusively for teenagers. Sonam interacted with teen audiences and read to them from the works of Willa Cather, one of America's well known novelists, and Michael Ondaatje, one of five contenders for the title of the greatest-ever winner of the Man Booker Prize award. Attendees learnt how to craft elements of fiction, right from character, plot and dialogue to setting and point of view. The workshop included several writing exercises to help attendees get hands-on experience.

2:00 pm - 2:30pm | **ONE AMONGST TWENTY-TWO: THE DZONGHKHA SCRIPT**

Prof. George van Driem

This session was supported by the Embassy of Switzerland

Audience: 100



Professor George Van Driem's session was an insight into the fundamentals of Dzongkha calligraphy and language. The session began with him taking the audience to the old lanes of Dzongkha history. He showed a presentation mapping the historical and social aspects of Dzongkha. It began with the basic Dzongkha characters and alphabets and their different combinations.

Later on, he familiarised the audiences with the efforts put in by the Royal Family of Bhutan for the development of language. Professor Van Driem during the informative session gave out interesting facts like when two secular schools were opened during the reign of His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo Ugyen Wangchuck's reign, Hindi was chosen as the medium of instruction. And Choke language was being used in Lamastery schools.

In 1961, His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo Jigme Dorji Wangchuck decreed Dzongkha as the national language of the Kingdom of Bhutan. Professor Van Driem also shared the misconceptions that were popular around that time regarding Dzongkha and Choke. The perception was that Choke was the written form of Dzongkha while these two are entirely different languages.

Languages throughout the world have undergone changes since their origin and Dzongkha has had the same fate. The use of Choke spellings for modern Dzongkha was challenged by two Bhutanese scholars namely, Lobo Nado and Lobo Pemala. Even The Central Monastic Body opposed changes to the spellings because at that time many people mistakenly equated Dzongkha with Choke in their minds.

He talked about the growing concerns that have been highlighted in the Bhutan media regarding the difficulty in reading Dzongkha. The people are fluent with Dzongkha but when it comes to writing it down they find it not so easy. In the end he left it to the audience to decide how they would want to look at their language and how they'd like to represent it at the global level.

2:30 pm – 4:30 pm | **CELEBRATIONS OF NAMES – MODERN CALLIGRAPHY (DZONGKHA TSHUGYIG SCRIPT) [WORKSHOP]**

Karma Jurmi

Audience: 40



In this uniquely designed workshop, Karma Jurmi, introduced the audience to the basics of calligraphy, including an explanation of flat and broad pen calligraphy tools; how to use them; the concepts of pressure, release and rotation for thin tapering strokes; as well as structuring an entire alphabet (Tshugyig script).

The workshop centered around the idea of developing one's own calligraphy style in addition to improvising with the writing instrument. It also focused on providing inspiration and motivation by teaching students how to write and design inspirational words, phrases and quotes.

SATURDAY, 25TH AUGUST 2018

AUDITORIUM, ROYAL UNIVERSITY OF BHUTAN

9:40 am – 9:50 am | **SONG OF ENDURING FRIENDSHIP: COMPOSED BY GYONPO TSHERING**

Performance by the students of Royal Academy of Performing Arts

Audience: 430



The final performance, *Song of Enduring Friendship*, composed by Gyonpo Tshering, by the RAPA dancers, on the last day of the festival, was a celebration and an ode to the bond shared by Bhutan and India. Through the song, the artists prayed for the continuous peace and prosperity of the two countries.

10:00 am – 10:40 am | **THE SONGS OF MILAREPA**

Andrew Quintman, Chimi Wangmo in conversation with Deki Choden

Audience: 370



The session began with a reading of Milarepa's work, with Andrew Quintman speaking of what he went through while translating the saint's work. He spoke of different aspects of Milarepa's life and how he came to the realization that he needed to study the dharma and voluntarily left his family estate to live a solitary life.

Chimi Wangmo performed a song by Milarepa, about impermanence. Post the performance, the conversations turned to what inspired Chimi to take up singing devotional songs, especially those of Milarepa. She said that singing devotional songs has three reasons for her – the first being that from a Buddhist country and having grown up listening to stories of Buddhism and dharma, she got spiritually attached and devoted to religious songs. She said she feels blessed whenever she sings such songs.

The second reason shared by Chimi was that songs such as the ones she sings are important because they are the musical representation of the historical representation of the nation. She felt that the songs continue to preserve the tradition and, she is inspired and motivated to sing such songs. Singing religious songs has become her passion over the years.

Chimi then steered the conversation towards Andrew's book, *The Yogin and the Madman*, and how Tsangnyön spent his life meditating and earned the title of a madman.

Andrew concluded the session by saying that the life of Milarepa gives everyone something to aspire to and provides a blueprint of what one can hope to be.

10:45 am – 11:25 am | **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE: QUESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE**

Daniel C. Taylor

Audience: 400



The session began with Daniel C. Taylor speaking about how life and the planet earth has been going on its own path but now the change process is accelerating dramatically, and this needs people to move from causing the impact to optimizing the results.

Through the session, Daniel led audiences through a simple, easy to understand route to how humans can adapt. He spoke of the global research project he is involved in and how common process can help find answers to the question of environmental justice.

He further spoke of the importance of community in bringing about environmental justice; the three way partnership needed to bring about change in the community; and how behavior change is essential. He mentioned the need to use the top down approach to move forward towards environmental justice.

Daniel then took audiences through his visit to Bhutan as a 17 year old and juxtaposed how there are more trees in Paro now than there were during his first trip. He brought forth how the people of Bhutan have optimized life and brought in modernization, but at the same time improved their environment. According to him, the people of Bhutan have always lived with the environment. Daniel spoke of how as the nation starts to change its behaviors to get a healthier, wealthier and happier.

He concluded by saying that environmental justice is a journey and that while Bhutan has begun its journey of environmental justice, it needs to bring in more focus towards the scholarship of the topic, as community based evidence will help people understand the subject and encourage them to change their behaviors.

The session ended with comments and questions from the audience about how Bhutan can participate in the global socio-economic-info biosphere.

11:30 am – 11:45 am | **TEA**

11:45 am – 12:15 pm | **CHALLENGES OF JOURNALISM**

Suhasini Haidar, Tenzing Lamsang in conversation

Audience: 350



The session between the two eminent journalists began with Suhasini saying how it is not often that journalists get the opportunity to speak at a literary festival.

The insightful discussion then went to explore the challenges of journalism. It began with Suhasini saying that anyone who wishes to come into the field of journalism needs to answer three questions – are you good at one specific thing?; do you talk to strangers?; and do you want to work standard hours and earn good salaries.

She said that anyone coming into the profession needs energy, compassion, empathy and integrity. According to her, these elements are important to be able to tell someone else's story and portray it without hurting them in anyway, while still telling the truth.

Tenzing spoke about the challenges of journalism. He began by citing the example of his trip to Germany where he got to interact with journalists from multiple countries and how this led him to understand that journalism is not isolated from the society and state one lives in. He speaks of how Bhutanese journalists don't face threats such as the ones faced by their foreign counterparts. He then delved into how 171 journalists were killed last year and this year 47 journalists have been killed in the line of duty. Tenzing then delved into the challenges journalists face in Bhutan – the primary one being sustainability of private media in the face of state owned broadcast media and newspaper.

The next challenge he brought forth was the 'Small Society Syndrome', a problem which he felt was specific to Bhutan. He also discussed how over regulation can hamper creativity as well as the problem of how advertisers sometime pull content from private newspapers because they do not like the coverage.

Tenzing mentioned that in 2003, Bhutan ranked 157 out of 180 in the Press Freedom Ranking, while the current ranking has improved multifold and stands at 84 out of 180. He also discussed new age challenges of journalism, especially that of social media.

The conversation then turned to how fake news was on the rise and how this adversely affects journalism. The next challenge which Suhasini spoke about was the problem of hyper nationalism and how the journalists are sometimes forced into playing a dual role in such situations, that of a citizen and of a journalist. She also spoke of the challenge of competition and how it is now as important to get the story first as it is to get it right - speed is now the biggest danger to authenticity.

She spoke of how it is important to ensure that during all this, there is still positivity in reporting. Tenzing shared a few recent examples of how fake news affected the actions of people in Bhutan. He also spoke of how evidence based journalism is critical and his experience with the same.

The session concluded with the two reiterating the fact that journalism is an agent of change.

12:20 pm – 12:50 pm | **BINODINI: A PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMOIR**

L Somi Roy in conversation with Pramod Kumar KG

Audience: 350



Pramod Kumar KG introduced the session by speaking of how the story of Binodini is being brought alive by her son L. Somi Roy. He said that the story was chosen to be a part of Mountain Echoes because in the larger firmament of histories, the smaller stories get subsumed, which may be important in parts of the nation. Pramod went on to say that the story of India can only be told through these smaller stories.

The duo spoke of the impact of the camera on the visual history of Manipur and how the work of L. Somi Roy has helped bring the voice of his mother as well as the people of Manipur into the larger firmament.

L. Somi Roy began by speaking of the history of his home state Manipur and how his mother began her literary journey. The session discussed the book *The Maharaja's Household: A Daughter's Memories of Her Father*, and how it opened a window into erstwhile royal household of Manipur.

L. Somi Roy, through the photographic memoir, enchanted the audience with nostalgic tales of a bygone era. The mostly visual session explored the recreation of history and imagination of kingdoms long lost.

12:55 pm- 1:35 pm | **LUNCH**

1:35 pm – 1:55 pm | **A BARREL OF LAUGHS**

Gyem Tshering, Phurba Thinley

Audience: 450



Gyem Tshering and Phurba Thinley performed a lozey act. The lozey is a creative form of poetry that almost resembles a rap battle but except instead of rap, words are wittily used in verse that is eloquently performed. The comedians, with their hilarious jokes, had the audience laughing through the session. Considering that these lozey are made up on the spot and improvised on the opponent's response, Phurba Thinley and Gyem Tshering showed off their humour and sharp wit.

2:00 pm – 2:30 pm | **THE GOLDEN DAKINI**

Charu Singh in conversation with Andrew Quintman

Audience: 300



The session saw the duo discuss Charu Singh's book of the same name. Andrew began the session with a brief introduction of Charu and her career. They discussed how the trilogy of which *The Golden Dakini* is a part, follows the life of a senior Tibetan master and his young attendant as they travel on a secret mission.

Andrew said that the book uses evocations of the Himalayan world, written in the form of a fantasy novel. Charu then read a portion from the novel for the engaged audiences. She told audiences how the first book of the trilogy was based in the mystical land of Shambala, and the second one is set in current world Tibet. Through Charu's reading, audiences were introduced to the various characters in the book and understood the settings it speaks of.

Andrew mentioned the evocation of various landscapes and asked Charu how much she drew inspiration from her own life in Sikkim while describing the geographies in her book. Andrew also drew parallels from Indian epics such as the Ramayana to Charu's stories.

They discussed what compelled Charu to write the stories and how the narratives of her stories are drawn heavily from the Buddhist mythological world. The duo also discussed the concept of spiritual fantasies and how the genre has recently emerged.

The session concluded with a discussion on the authors who inspired Charu. They also spoke about the upcoming book in the trilogy and the new project that Charu is working on.

2:35 pm – 3:15 pm | **YOUNG DREAMERS**

Snigdha Poonam, Sonam Chopel in conversation with Tsedon Lhamu Dorji

Audience: 370



Tsedon Dorji opened the discussion by asking Snigdha Poonam about how her first book *Dreamers: How Young Indians are Changing Their World* came about. Snigdha shared that as a journalist she has been reporting on youth issues such as - elections from the point of view of the youth who seem frustrated with the political system; several riots where young people were the centre of action. And all of these stories led to the same conclusions - the issues that the youth faced across the country were common. The youth wanted change, bigger and better lives, but they did not know how. The book follows the lives of some fortune-seekers as they take journeys towards their dreams.

Talking about his story, Sonam Chopel shared how he started as a traditional artist, and later launched his work through VAST Bhutan - a creative society for artists. Looking from a Bhutanese perspective, there were lot of opportunities and also big challenges. He came to a realization where he wanted to support his fellow artists. His idea was to bring together all Bhutanese artists and create a marketplace where they (artists) are empowered. This gave rise to Druksell - online marketplace for artisanal products made in Bhutan. His aim for the next 4-5 years is to connect with all the artists in

every part of the country and create a marketplace where he can support them and create a harmonious society, and also give opportunities to young people to join them.

Tsedon also spoke of the common link between the two speakers as Sonam was a dreamer who gave up a job to chase his dream of having his own company and doing something different. The session delved into how successful people are often ambivalent to morals. Drawing comparisons between Bhutan and India, Sonam spoke of how he would like to see more Bhutanese youth become dreamers and represent possibilities by challenging themselves.

Tsedon then spoke of the difference in today's generation versus previous generations – she mentioned that the dreamers of today are much bolder than they were a few years ago.

The conversation then turned to the architectural project Sonam is currently working on. It concluded with a discussion on the cultural narrative and influences of the two nations and what the youth of each feels. The session also explored how there is a discrepancy in the jobs available and those desired in both nations.

3:20 pm – 3:25 pm | **BHUTAN MEETS HIP HOP**

A performance by GOKAB

Audience: 425



The scintillating performance saw dance troupe GOKAB performed a hip-hop piece. It began with a quick description of the history of hip hop and what the dance form represents world over. The dance performance followed and was received with resounding applause.

3:25 pm – 3:55 pm | **HIP HOP: THE RHYTHM OF RAP**

Kezang Dorji, Maynia Dhubee OG in conversation with Kinley Phyntso

Audience: 425



The session opened with a short rap by Kinley Phyntso:

*When music never stops, where there is always a beat to drop,
In the land where the Mountains echo, the return of song,
I saw children walk around with hands stretched out,
Clutching pen, paper and markers,
Asking writers and speakers for their second hand, second nature signatures
On pamphlets and brochures.
Unsure if they can collect all of them today.
But, for the sake of their tomorrows, I hope they do.*

Kinley explained to the audience how rap is a form of music where people spit words over music and melody. He also took them through the history of the genre and how it gained popularity in Bhutan.

After a quick introduction of the rappers, the trio delved into how they entered the world of rap. Kezang spoke of his difficult childhood and what inspired him to turn to music. He mentioned how he

heard a music video of American rapper Eminem and that was how he was introduced to the world of rap.

Maynia, on the other hand, entered the world of rap while studying in college in Bangkok. It then explored the different aspects one should keep in mind if they want to make a career in rap – Kezang said that it's very important for aspiring rappers to improve their visibility as audiences are now increasingly watching performances rather than just listening to them. He also said that he feels people should 'keep it real' while rapping and not be afraid to try something different.

Maynia on the other hand, felt that aspiring rappers should learn from every artist they can.

The conversation turned to the concept of rappers dissing each other in their songs. Kezang said that the concept worked well in Bhutan because it got more young people interested in the genre.

The session concluded with performances by both the rappers, as well as by Kinley.

4:00 pm – 4:15 pm | **TEA**

4:15 pm – 4:55 pm | **OVER THE MOON WITH MOON MOON**

Moon Moon Sen in conversation with Nishtha Gautam

Audience: 300



The session explored the life of veteran actress Moon Moon Sen. Journalist Nishtha Gautam spoke to the actress about her journey in the film industry for the past three decades and how she juggled multiple roles through the years – first of that of an actor, followed by that of a politician – all while maintaining her personal life.

Through the conversation, Moon Moon admitted that of the many roles she played in her life, her favourite was being a mother. The engaging conversation left audiences rejuvenated. The actress rounded off the session with a single advice for students “Be there for your mothers and fathers and look out for your parents as they get old.”

5:00 pm – 5:40 pm | **EATING BOOKS: READING, WRITING AND CREATIVITY**

Nilanjana S Roy

Audience: 400



Nilanjana began the session by saying that she felt it appropriate to close the festival by paying tribute to the many writers whose lives and works were celebrated.

She spoke of her childhood, which was spent in a sprawling house filled with books. Her session explored what makes people turn to writing. Speaking on writing, Nilanjana said, “It’s like a magic trick. You see it done, you read a book. But, you’re not sure how the magic happens.” She shared an anecdote of how she once ate a book, and then delved into video presentations by bestselling authors who spoke about what it takes to write good books. She showed videos of Stephen King, Kiran Desai, Elizabeth Gilbert, Salman Rushdie, George Saunders and Mary Oliver.

The informative session ended with several questions from an engaged audience. One of the questions was on the rewriting process, to which Nilanjana responded, "A lot of writers don't stop (*rewriting*) and then they end up not being writers. You can fool yourself into rewriting a book 15 times and then the grand project is going to take 15 years. At some point you do have to push your baby out into the world and let other people take care of it."

5:55 pm – 6:05 pm | **CLOSING ADDRESS**

Siok Sian Dorji

Audience: 400



Mountain Echoes literary festival came to an end after three days of celebrating ‘Untouched Beauty, Unexplored Ideas and Unstoppable Voices from the heart of Himalayas.’ Festival co-director Siok Sian Dorji brought an end to the event with a vote of thanks. She said that the festival brought forth a wealth of ideas and that it takes on greater significance in today's world of instant gratification. Siok spoke of how the world needs stories and narratives so that people may understand the world and changes around them.

She spoke of how the three days were enlightening as they contemplated the nation's spiritual traditions, focused on the need for compassion and remembered the nation's interdependence on nature. She also touched upon the friendship between Bhutan and India, how the two nations celebrate 50 years of formal diplomatic relations as well as how the countries have a lot to learn from one another.

She spoke of how Mountain Echoes helps seed ideas which help to set free one's imagination. She then thanked Her Majesty the Royal Queen Mother Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck, the volunteers, supporters, and well-wishers who made Mountain Echoes possible.

Her Majesty the Royal Queen Mother Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck then thanked everybody for the exhilarating ninth edition of Mountain Echoes. She expressed her happiness that people came from far away to attend the festival and contributed to it. "I'm leaving enriched by the knowledge that I received in the last three days." She concluded by saying that the tenth edition of Mountain Echoes will challenge everyone's mind and will be the most special edition yet. "Mountain Echoes is really going to challenge all our minds now. We have to start thinking, we have to start preparing, we have to make it really, really the most special one next year." she said.

TARAYANA CENTRE

11:00 am – 12:35 pm | **DO YOU KNOW YOUR CHILD [WORKSHOP]**

Tshering Chhoden introduced by Passang Tshering

Workshop for pairs of parents and children aged between 6 to 15 years only

Audience: 50



The workshop explored how parents tend to overlook several things and yet tend to believe that they know their child the best. The workshop aimed to show how communication goes a long way in building a strong relationship between parents and children.

12:45 pm – 1:25 pm | **STORY TELLING THROUGH BHUTANESE SIGN LANGUAGE**

Sushila Gurung, Tenzin Dralha and students of Wangsel Institute for the hearing impaired

Audience: 60



The session engaged audiences through visual storytelling, voiced in both English and Dzongkha. The instructors showed attendees how the sign language is indigenous, not universal, and showed videos of the Dzongkha language through sign.

2:00 pm – 4:30 pm | **JUST IMAGINE: THEATRE FOR CHILDREN [WORKSHOP]**

Sanjna Kapoor (aided by Charmi Chheda)

Age Group 10 – 12

Audience: 30



The energetic session explored the endless possibilities of imagination and creativity, through theatre games, exercises, and improvisations led by theatre doyenne Sanjna Kapoor. She helped young

enthusiasts create magical worlds of their own using the tools of voice, memory, observation, communication and concentration.

HOTEL TAJ TASHI

10:30 am – 12:00 pm | **SPOKEN WORD 101 [WORKSHOP]**

Sarah Kay

Age Group 20-25

Audience: 40



Through the workshop, spoken word poet Sarah Kay took participants on hands-on tour of spoken word poetry, leaving them with the tools they need to begin writing and performing their own work. She tackled questions such as ‘What can I write about?’ to ‘How do I perform well?’ and gave enthusiastic participants an opportunity to deep dive into the world of spoken poetry.

2:30 pm – 4:45 pm | **MOVING IMAGES | CROSSOVER NARRATIVES [ROUNDTABLE]**

Naseeruddin Shah, Ratna Pathak Shah, Vani Tripathi Tikoo, L Somi Roy, Tandin Bidha, Chencho Dorji, Dechen Roder, Druksel Dorji in conversation with Kunga Tenzin Dorji

Audience: 300



The power packed roundtable saw eminent personalities from the Bhutanese and Indian film industries come together to discuss the successes, trials and tribulations of their respective industries.

Speaking about the screenplays, L Somi Roy, media curator and author, said “We created a scenario where we did a screenwriting workshop for young people in Manipur. We gave them a short story well-known in Manipur and said, "Why don't you all write a screenplay based on this story?"

Kunga Tenzin Dorji asked filmmaker Dechen Roder what is that drives her into filmmaking, to which she responded, “My filmmaking is not so much a need to express my personal experience. I’m not representing a personal experience. It’s much more of my personal perspective and what I wish to share with an audience.”

Film censorship in both countries was passionately discussed as the panelists compared and debated the functions certification boards play in various countries. Vani Tripathi, member of Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC), said that she has been very vocal about her thoughts and opinions about what the CBFC should do. “The business of certificate is a societal one and not a creative one.” she said. Naseeruddin Shah, actor and director, added that “There's always a way to fool the censors. Through emergency, when even press was censored, RK Laxman found a way.”

Speaking about the certification in Bhutanese film industry, filmmaker Druksel Dorji said, “There's just one type of certification that we finally get, the reason maybe that there is no proper system in place. In terms of policy and systems, a lot needs to change.”

Talking about her recent film *Lipstick Under my Burkha*, Ratna Pathak Shah said, “A film that is good gets across to its audience regardless of its genre and *Lipstick Under My Burkha* was certainly one of those films.” She also said that, “A film that provokes you into talking about your own life, a film which makes you see what you have experienced on the large screen, and to connect directly with that is the film that appeals to an audience in a way no song or dance film can.”

The session also touched upon the need for finding authentic voices that tell genuine stories of the respective cultures instead of blindly aping superficialities of Hollywood cinema.

Speaking of Bhutan India relationship, Vani said “Let us find another collaborative initiative where we (*Indians*) can look at your (*Bhutanese*) films, understand what those narratives are, and you can look at the diversity of the cinema from India, not just Hindi, but Bengali, Assamese, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, etc.”

MOJO PARK

7:30 pm onwards | **YOU CAN HAVE THE LAST WORD**

Open mic – poetry, stand-up comedy, music

Audience: 60



Writers, musicians, performers, artists and the people of Thimphu headed to Mojo Park to showcase their talents at the Open Mic night. The audience took to the stage to celebrate the successful

completion of the ninth edition of Mountain Echoes literary festival. Some of the talents who performed at the open mic were poet Saray Kay and Ngawang Gyeltshen, musician Kunga Tenzin Dorji, and rappers Tsherie and Ngawang Gedhar.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 21, 2018

ROYAL TEXTILE ACADEMY

5:30 pm | **EXHIBITIONS INAUGURAL**

Audience: 60

22-25 August 2018 | **COLOURS OF NATURE BY GREEN PIGMENT**

An exhibition of paintings created by Penjor Dorji

This exhibition was in collaboration with the Bhutan Foundation

Penjor Dorji aims to revive the traditional way of painting with natural dyes and creates dyes using natural pigments from organic sources such as plants and trees in Bhutan. His exhibition showcased paintings using different materials, highlighting religious symbols.

22-25 August 2018 | **TREE OF LIFE: THE TREE OF IMMORTALITY**

An exhibition of paintings created by the inmates of Jaipur Central Jail, curated by Malvika Singh

This exhibition was power by Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan.

The Tree of Life exhibit gave audiences a glimpse into the manifestations of the idea in tent panels; wall hangings; tribal art and, motifs and emblems hand block printed and painted on fabrics both secular and religious. The artwork was created by inmates of the Jaipur Central Jail.

Both the exhibitions were inaugurated by the chief royal patron Her Majesty the Royal Queen Mother Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wagchuck. Festival co-director Pramod Kumar KG opened the evening and thanked the Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan, Bhutan Foundation and the Royal Textile Academy for their support for the two exhibitions. Artist, Penjor Dorji, took Her Majesty for a walk-through of the exhibition and shared the process of creating colours using natural pigments. Her Majesty then tried her hand at painting on a blank canvas using the natural dyes that were created by Penjor.

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Malvika Singh, the curator of the *Tree of Life* exhibition, created by the inmates of Jaipur Central Jail, also did a walk-through with Her Majesty and the attendees. She spoke about the jail shop *Aashayein*, which means ‘hope’, in Jaipur which retails the products such as durries, furniture, paintings, pickles, etc., created by the jail inmates. The shop is a rehabilitation initiative by the government of Rajasthan to reinvent the creation of legacy products in the jails and at the same time equipping the inmates with skill that will enable them financially.