

### **Bookaroo Children's Literature Festival, Gangtok**

Bookaroo's first Gangtok edition in collaboration with Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts North East Regional Centre, Guwahati Assam generated great excitement amongst the children. Held on June 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> at Taktse International School, Day 1 was a Schools' Day while Day 2 was open to families.

For a first-time event, it was a heart-warming response. Fifteen schools from around Gangtok sent their children (of various age groups) to attend 29 sessions from 9:30 am to 3:00 pm on Day 1. It was a blast as the children and their teachers rushed from venue to venue to soak in the stories and tales.

The school was transformed into a typical Bookaroo venue. Various areas of the school had Bookaroo sub-venue names such as The Theatre, The Turret, Doodle Wall, Kahani Tree, Crafty Corner and the Studio. There were two ongoing sessions running right through the day to make sure that even the breaks had something for everyone. From making masks to mapping Gangtok to knowing about wild India to shadow puppetry to listening to tales from the region, Bookaroo Gangtok had a complete package for a child to choose his or her area of interest.

Authors, illustrators and speakers on Children's literature from various places in India, one each from Nepal and Bhutan regaled children with stories, interesting facts, poetry, music and arts. Nearly seven hundred fifty children and their parents attended the festival over the two days. Books by participating authors were put up for sale and were also signed by the respective authors for the children.

Bookaroo's festival directors, Swati Roy and M Venkatesh believe that this year's experiment has been quite heart-warming considering that such a festival was an unknown factor for the children and parents in Gangtok. The fact that fifteen schools made it a point to send their children to the festival made it worth the effort, they said. All of this became possible because of the support of IGNCA NERC Guwahati, Taktse International School and the publishers. .

The speakers were amazed at the response they received from the children as their creativity came to the fore in every interactive session that was held.