

Authors from Alps, Himalayas discuss mountain literature

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Author Robert Hutchison from the Alps met his counterparts from the Himalayas, Shekhar Pathak and Ganesh Saili, in Mussoorie and discussed several issues concerning mountain literature today.

The three authors met at the launch of the latest book by Robert Hutchison, "Garden of Fools" based on the life of Sir Proby Cautely, the builder of 530-mile-long Ganga canal during the British Raj. The venue was a hotel in Mussoorie. They remembered the contribution of Sir Proby Cautley for conceiving and supervising the construction of the Ganga canal despite severe opposition from what he considered as fools.

Robert Hutchison, the Canadian author who has made Switzerland his home, said that Sir Proby Cautley was an Englishman with an Indian heart, who helped in removing the famine in the Doab region through this canal.

Ganesh Saili, an eminent author from Mussoorie, commended the efforts of Robert Hutchison in immortalising Sir Proby Cautely for his work that is considered as the eighth engineering wonder of the world despite facing turmoil in his family life, and that, too, without expecting any reward or golden parachute in return.

He further said that the importance of Sir Proby Cautley increases as he was the pioneer in designing the drinking water supply system of Mussoorie at the request of Captain Young during the British period.

Shekhar Pathak said that the story of Sir Proby Cautely's genius, perseverance and betrayal would make a compelling reading.

It was a sheer coincidence that all the three authors, who have also worked and researched on another character, Fredrick Wilson or Pahari Wilson, from the Hills of Garhwal, were present during the launch of the book. All the three authors in unison said that it was important to preserve the remaining documents and artefacts related to Pahari Wilson by the government as it was an important part of history of Garhwal.

Ganesh Saili, showing the rare coins minted by Pahari Wilson in his name, said that such artefacts were important for making the future generations aware of the history of the region, and the government should take pains in preserving them at any cost.

He said that the authors from the Alps and the Himalayas had many common concerns, and needed to strengthen the bond by more interaction.