IBBY Yamada Project 2018: Progress report

1. A brief frield report from Nepalganj ( Chidimar).

A group of researchers left Kathmandu on May 6, 2018 for Nepalaganj to study the Chidimar people , arrange storytelling programs in the community and collect stories for publication. The group consisted Professor C.M. Bandhu, Mr. Tej Prakash Shrestha, Dr. Shaildendu Prakash Nepal, Dr. Dhruva K. Ghimire amd Mr. Kartikeya Ghimire. Prier to leaving for Nepalganj, the team contacted Mr. Bala Krisha Regmi, a lecturer at the local college for contacts with the Chidimar people.

On May 7, 2018 the team contacted Mr. Regmi and left for Bilaspur village to meet the Chidimar people with the help of the guide Mr. Ramu Chidimar. The group met some old men and women as well as some young men from the community to collected basic information regarding their populaion, their tradition and occapution. The goup found that there were about one hundred families in the village who spoke a local language called Awadhi.The group also found that they are bilingual and most of them can speak Nepali. They also informed us that the Chidimars ( Bird-hunters) have left their occapation of bird hunting and are now engangaed in agriculture occasionally working as labourer.

On the 8th of May the group met some Childimar students at Sarashwati High School . Then the group visited and talked to the children of Bagishwari Basic School of Bilaspur where large mumber of Chidimar students were studying. Mr. Ramu Chidimar also arranged story telling sessions on this day and on the next day with local elders and children.

There were elder men and women who told stories and personational narratives. They were Mr. Darawar Chidimar of 65 years, Mrs. Budhuni Chimar of 75 years, Mrs. Sunita Chdimar of 60 years, Sarashwati Chidimar of of 50 years, Mrs. Sukiya Chidimar of 65 and Mr. Ramu Chimar of 50 years.

The students of Chimar community also participated in storytelling activities. Some of them tried to write down their stories. The story telling sessions were quite imteresting,

Chidimar people were settled recently. They have relations with the Childimars living in the neighbouring Indian districts. Many of them have no land, but they have their homes to live in. Some work for the landlords. Many of them go for jobs to Nepalganj, the Children go to nearby schools. The practice of hunting of birds is almost stopped.

After attending story telling sessions, taking photographs and interviewing individuals the team returned back from the field on May 9.

2. A brief field report from Dolkha ( Thami)

 After the group of researchers returned from Nepalganj, a group of five researchers headed towards Dolakha to study and collect materials from the Thami people. The group consisted Mr. Amar Kumar Pradhan, Dr, Mrs. Jayanti Rupakheti, Mr. Pramod Pradhan, Mr. Yashu Shrestha and Mrs. Shashi Thapa Pandit. The group left on 30th of May and returned on the 4rd of June.

On the 1st of June the field researchers met the local leader, tradition bearers, story tellers and children who will participate in the program. The program was conducted at the Tripurasudari lower middle school. The research group explained the objectives of the study visit, its importance and the whole program. Preliminary interviews were held and storytelling activities were started.

On the 2nd of June more elderly people were involved in order to tell the traditional tales, children were asked to listen to them carefully, to retell and rewrite the stories they heard.

On the 3rd of June the elderly people were requested to tell varieties of traditional tales, some of the children retold them carefully and others wrote them on paper. The elderly villagers also supplied some more information on their culture.

 The elderly people involved in the program were Mr. Lal Krishna Thamai, Mr. Ram Bahadur Thami, Mr. Dham Bahadur Thami, Mr. Bir Man Thami, and Mr. Dabal Bahadur Thami. Ms. Bimba Thami, Ms. Mausami Thami and Ms. Manta Thami.

The school children (10-12 years) involved in the program were Rashmi, Sujata, Inu, Suman, Susmita, Amar, Rasbari, Krishna Kumar, Ramila, Ram Bhadur, Yuvaraj, Lakshmi, Viraj, Navin, Tara. All boys and girls from Thami community.

The achievement of the fieldwork was that it made 8 elderly people aware of the importance of continuing the traditional story telling practices, involved 15 children in the program encouraging them to listen, retell and recreate the stories, made them aware of preserving and promoting their tradition. The research groups collected 15 folk tales and interviews for editing and preparing the book. The group of researchers returned from the field on the 4th of June, 2018

The Thami people (30,000 in number) have no written tradition and their children are sent to Nepali medium schools. The field researchers felt that the time was short for a field study of an ethnic group like Thami. However, they are eagerly waiting for their stories being printed.