CHILDREN'S LITERATURE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN NEPAL☆

(The authors would like to remain incognito-Ed.)

Credit naturally goes to the various writers who have contributed to the Nepalese Literature. However as far as the maturity is concerned Nepalese Children's Literature is in its early stage of development. Compared to the other countries' literature it has a shape without any form so that it is rather embarrassing to present itself among the counterparts of other countries. This is obviously because Nepalese Children's Literature has yet to develop its personality. Under the circumstance what can we offer to the world literature! As a matter of fact the present generation of adults had their education without studying any Children's Literature. And whatever literature had been written then was done under the influence of foreign literature. In other words we have failed to exploit our national culture and religion etc. in this regard. The result is that not only our mother tongue has failed to attain maturity but also failed to develop her all-round beauty.

However we are glad to know that the SAJHA PUBLISHERS, a Corporation, are now seriously contemplating production of CHILDREN'S LITERATURE. We hope that this PLAN will be able to contribute its mite in producing a new generation of able citizens equipped with the knowledge of our sacred Monarchy, national culture and religion. SAJHA PUBLISHERS have a THREE-YEAR PLAN for the same and will be bringing out 25 to 30 books on several subjects for different standards in the schools. In this context it may be mentioned that a few attempts had been made previously by some publishers. But it appears that the books brought out then were unfortunately not suitable to the local children's psychology and aptitude, for they were dry, didactic in nature and put up in considerably difficult language so that they neither reflected the modern scientific knowledge nor in any way helped the children to learn the language easily and interestingly. Even the text-books approved by the Education Department of His Majesty's Government have been uniformly of dry kind. Therefore everybody has been sensing the necessity of NEW EDUCATION PLAN and the new method and technique of writing text-books. Under the circumstances it is praiseworthy on the part of a Corporation to venture to tread a new path. Whether or not the plan will be practicable or useful it is premature to forecast at the moment.

☆ *Translated from the original Nepali rather freely by Y.B.S.*

Therefore it is hoped that the SAJHA PUBLISHERS will deliver goods of high calibre which will interest the children and stimulate their creative power when they may utilise their time in reading poems, short stories, novels etc. According to the Plan books will be written in the background of Nepalese history, geography, social life, culture, religion and, above all, of the king and country in general.

Under the Plan the number of books to be published is kept rather low. This is understandable because this venture involves time, money and sufficient writing knowhow which may not be under the command of the publishing house concerned, for the time being. In the first year (2028) *Children's stories* including those from World Literature, and *Children's novels* will be published - 9 books for the first standard (for 7, 8, and 9 year olds), second standard (for 10, 11 and 12 year olds) and third standard (for 13 and 14 year olds). The total number of pages of the books for the first standard will be 20 to 24; 28 to 32 for the second standard and 36 to 40 for the third standard. The materials will be primarily original and some translated ones, special emphasis being put on such texts which instil courage, impart knowledge and build children's character besides being entertaining and easily readable.

In the second year (2029) the total number of books will be the same, the subjects being CHILDREN'S FOLK-LORE OF RAIS, LIMBUS AND NEWARS ETC. OF NEPAL (for second and third standards), LIFE STORIES OF WORLD'S GREAT MEN (for second standard), SCIENCE AND HEALTH PRIMERS (for second and third standards), texts of SPORTS AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT (for second and third standards), GENERAL KNOWLEDGE BOOKS OF NEPAL AND WORLD (for second and third standards). An illustrated book, "RITA'S GARDEN," giving information of various flowers, plants, birds etc. will also be printed for the second standard. All the aforementioned books will be published one from each group. Among these there are two POEM BOOKS for the first and second standards.

In the third year (2030) 9 to 10 books will be brought out, the subjects being ESSAYS, ONE-ACT PLAYS, POEMS, SOCIAL SCIENCE, HISTORICALS and others. Since many children face difficulty in writing essays initially, an ESSAY-BOOK BASED ON STORIES will be printed for the second and third standards. Again two books of ONE-ACT PLAYS based on the principle of "learning by doing" on the stage will be put out for the same. The POEMS are meant for the second standard. Another book, "RITA'S NEIGHBOUR," will inform about Nepal and neighbouring countries for the third standard. For the second and third standards again two books - in two parts each - containing SHORT HISTORY OF NEPAL from the late Majesty Prithwi Bir Bikram Shah Dev uptodate will be published.

These books will be printed in thick papers and specifically so in 8-paged format. In the STORY BOOK multicoloured pictures will be printed with every story. The series will be called CHILDREN'S LITERATURE SERIES, 1, 2, 3, etc. Although the

papers will be thick and of central stitched type the price will be fixed as low as possible, special attention of course being paid to those who buy the whole set. These will be useful reading materials as OUT-BOOKS, REFERENCE BOOKS and, to say the least, as TEXT-BOOKS.

In the above paragraphs an outline of the Plan is presented. This should stimulate the writers and artists. Remuneration will be given mainly as royalties. The SAJHA PUBLISHERS have already advertised to this effect. First standard books will contain 70% pictures, the royalty being 7½% each to the author and the artist. Second standard books will contain 50% pictures, the royalty being 5% to the artist and 10% to the authors. Third standard books will contain 25% pictures, royalty being 15% to the author and cash prize to the artist. The books will have plenty of cartoons as well.

A 3-MEMBER ADVISORY COMMITTEE for the first year has already been formed. This Committee has started selection of Manuscripts with or without the consultation of experts.

Clearly this Plan is in its experimental stage. Nevertheless this does offer the authors and artists a challenge and opportunity to meet the demands of the Nepalese children, the future of Nepal. We hope and pray that all those concerned may fulfil their responsibility with credit.