

Origami at Tezpur Air -Force Station

Tezpur is a place in Assam where Azad Hind Sena had hosted the flag by reaching it from Burma. This place has a big Air force station comprising of 3 Squadrons of fighter pilot training plus one Squadron of chopper (helicopter unit.) This will indicate that it is a place full of activity. Due to geographical situation Sun rises at around 5.30 hrs and sets around 17.00hrs. At 7.00 pm (19.00 hrs.) in evening it is pitch dark. Hence the numbers of hours available to work are very less. The weather was cold with mercury in single digit with frequent heavy showers. This coupled with frequent power cuts and load shading made life really tough.

My stay with my son Squadron Leader Hrushikesh was of duration of about 3 months, and till our first outing to Kaziranga and other places the station was not aware of Origami. It was after my folding some models daily some news had spread and the things happened this way.....

The first session of Origami work shop was held at Officers Mess on 21 Jan for children club Attended by the first lady at the Station Mrs. Abolish Gupta, chief of AFWWA at the station and wife of Air Commodore Abhay Gupta and wives of various officers and 30 children in the age group of 6 years to 16 years. It lasted for two and half hours. There was a small display of models like Scorpion, Fighter aircrafts, Giraffe, Kangaroo, Ground beetle, Roses, Swan, Elephant, and Lord Ganesha mounted in pyramid at the center. The emphasis was to tell them that Origami is not just a craft to make animals, birds, decoration etc but is used in space technology also. 4/5 models were taught like Sampan, Samurai hat, Cup and Flapping Bird. Everybody wanted to continue but the further engagements prevented it. This became news in the station next day.

This mouth publicity created one more opportunity in one of the fighter squadrons. This was purely a special function attended by Air Comm. Abhay Gupta, and all the sectional heads of rank Group Captain like Mr. Sinha and Mr. Rai and Wing Commanders of 4 squadrons. Some what detail discussions were held with Air Comm. Abhay Gupta as to how Origami has been used by NASA for space exploration. A bunch of roses was distributed to all important invitees. Like Flight Lt. Supreet who had just finished her chopper sortie and walked down to Squadron. She praised the roses and hence was offered the rose of her choice.

After some days she had hosted a party to celebrate her rank received as Squadron Leader. During the whole party she had carried the branch of Rose of Origami proudly which resulted in wider publicity and Origami became the topic of the party. It was explained to all that this art needs to be considered from different angle and were told as to how it is used by NASA for space research. In this party Talking Lips were shown but with a different name as Kissing Lips and this was heartily appreciated.

Then at the visit of Air Marshal Joshi on 29th Jan it was arranged to display the Origami models with major emphasis on models taught to them such as the cup, samurai hat, purse, dart, table, chair, plucking chicken, hooded sampan etc. Special enquiries were made by Mrs. Geetanjali Joshi, Head of the AFWWA in eastern region. She offered to send the papers for Origami from Shillong as good quality papers were not available in Tempura.

There after the invitation was received from Principal Mrs. Sarita Sarin of Air force school to hold workshops. This was done on 26th Jan and 4th Feb. Each workshop was attended by 45 students of class 7th and 8th along with the 10 teachers of the school. Each workshop lasted for 2 hrs 30 min. The models starting from Diaper Fold to Fish Base were taught. Each and every body praised the wonders of Origami and wanted to learn more. The school was given a photocopy of the models taught and also of some models that they can do further.

This station has a long runway and on the other side of the runway is dense forest with wild elephants and Rhinos as inhabitants. Visit to Kaziranga also was like a night mare. One of the squadrons of fighter planes had its LOGO as Rhino. This prompted me to fold the Rhinoceros and the same was presented to Sqn Leader Saswadkar when he gave a send off party to us.

Many expressed their views that they were not aware of such activity. Most of them came to know of this activity just when we were about leave and had already finalized our departure program. Hence many of them could not continue learning which they wanted the most. In fact the daughter of the principal had put it by saying, "**Ye Dil Mange More**"