

Visit of Klaus v. Gadow, Retired Professor University of Gottingen, Germany to the RFRI, Jorhat:

Impressions from Jorhat *RFRI*

We arrived at Jorhat airport from Bangalore on 15th December 2011 at 1:35 pm, and were met by Dr. Ranjeet Kumar and his friend who took us to our spacious apartment at the Rain Forest Research Institute (RFRI). Lunch and dinner were prepared by the Institute's chef, Mr. Vasudev Sharma. Throughout our stay, Marga and I very much enjoyed his healthy and tasty food.



16. December morning



Mr. Vasudev Sharma



2. January morning

Immediately after our arrival, all scientists of the Institute presented their research, covering an impressive range of topics. Mr. Kaushik and Mr. Kalita developed a professional program for the visit, which included seminars on scientific writing, science networking, statistical analysis using R, and several other topics relevant to the particular interests of RFRI staff. The program provided structure and meaning to our activities, and helped to make this visit productive.



Eco Task Force (134 & 135)

We witnessed a continuous coming and going at the RFRI, which is a sign of its high level of interaction and importance. During our visit, RFRI hosted numerous groups and important

individuals, including the Chief Justice of Guwahati, two famous Japanese scientists, the Eco Task Force BtlN 134 & 135 of the North-East, led by Lt. Col. Jaggi, and a group of students from Arunachal Pradesh (who, on their last evening, requested an ad hoc session in the Institute's canteen with me). These visits are an indication of the strategic importance of the RFRI and the expertise and accessibility of its staff.



DEMO village



Director with KG and MB



Director with Prof. Yamamoto

I conducted seminars on scientific writing, scientific networking and an introduction to R, attended a Hindi workshop and visited the Meleng Demo Village and the nearby Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary. The Demo village is a marvellous example of the active involvement of the RFRI in forest fringe communities, and the approaches developed here could serve as a model to other countries. This success story could and should be presented to an international audience of experts. Another highlight of our stay was the excursion to the Kaziranga National Park and the dinner at the old Assam resort "Wild Grass".



Establishing an Observational Study at the Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary

I presented new methods of assessing forest structure and spatial diversity, including a field practical for biodiversity specialists, and assisted several staff members with data analysis. We established a permanent observational study at the Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary with Dr. Druba Jyoti, Dr. Manohara, Mr. Rajbanshi Bhaskar and Mr. Hari Ram Bora. Such observational studies represent the basis for our understanding of ecosystem processes. There are many of such studies in Germany, some of which have been re-measured continuously for more than 100 years, at 5-

yearly intervals. During the past 12 years I have been involved, together with Chinese colleagues, in establishing a network of observational studies in the Republic of China, covering virtually all the important forest ecosystems. This “Green Infrastructure” provides information that the Forest Survey does not have. There seems to be good potential for a similar initiative in India.

On the last day of the year, we visited Majuli island, and afterwards had the pleasure to attend RFRI’s old year’s eve party. We were impressed by the delightful singing and dancing of the staff members and their families.



returning from Majuli



Tara Chand



RFRI ladies singing

The new year brought another professional highlight, a lively interaction with the young scientists on the morning of January 3rd. We discussed identification of wild mushroom, analysis of polysaccharides in Mimosa seed, carbon sequestration of bamboo, soil carbon studies, as well as opportunities for students who wish to study abroad. During the afternoon’s final wrap-up session, the RFRI scientists presented us with precious gifts and made us feel special.

For my wife and me, the days from 15th December 2011 until 4th January 2012, were memorable ones. We enjoyed marvellous hospitality and excellent food, made many friends and obtained new insights regarding forest fringe communities, bamboo research, biodiversity conservation and man-animal conflicts. We are thankful to our friend Dr. VP Tewari, for recommending and planning the visit, and to the Director Mr. NK Vasu and all the colleagues at RFRI who went out of their way to make our stay comfortable and interesting. We left Jorhat with many positive impressions to be shared with colleagues around the world.

Klaus v. Gadow
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