

The paper entitled as "The First Planetarium in Japan" by Hiroshi Tatsumi, a former director of the Osaka Electric-Science Museum, read in the I. P. D. C. (International Planetarium Directors Conference) held at Nagoya Science Center in 1976 is shown here.

The First Planetarium in Japan

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Good morning Mr. Chairman and planetarium friends!

For the economy of time translating into English, I'll try to make speech in my poor English directly.

If it'll be difficult for you to understand, then pardon me please.

Now, the theme of this conference is "The Planetarium for Today and Tomorrow", but what I'm going to say here looks like "Planetarium in yesterday." Because our science museum has the Japanese oldest planetarium, and the circumstances to install it was rather interesting. So here I'd like to introduce this story for your reference.

Well, the first planetarium in Japan was set in 1937 when Osaka Municipal Electric Science Museum was inaugurated, some forty years ago. This was not only the first in Japan, but also in the Far East.

Seeing Western countries at that time, 24 cities already had planetariums, 12 of them were in Germany, 4 of them were in U. S. A., 2 in Italy and U. S. S. R., and 1 each in other 4 countries(Argentina, Austria, Holland and Sweden). As the result, the Japanese first Planetarium was the 25th apparatus in the world made by Carl Zeiss.

Backing to the origin, in 1923 Osaka City Government began to supply electric power as a public enterprise, and after 10 years when they celebrated the 10 years anniversary in 1933, they planned to build a science museum of electrical engineering using the profit from the electric power supply of past 10 years. Therefore this was planned as a pure "electric" science museum, but not including planetarium at first.

After beginning the construction work, the overseas inspection team sent by Osaka City Government reported that in Western countries there are many splendid and very effective devices for science education which is called "Planetarium." The members of that team strongly emphasized that although this good opportunity to build a new science museum for the prosperity of the citizens as a monument of municipal electric power supply.

Today in Japan, even small children know that planetarium is a device to project the celestial phenomena, but at that time most Japanese people did not know what is planetarium. So it was very difficult to get the approval of the city assembly, because the members of the city assembly also did

not know the planetarium, and could not understand well its effectiveness on education.

But fortunately, after long discussions stopping the construction work on halfway, this plan was realized due to the enthusiasm and efforts of city mayor and other staffs concerned. While, of course, it took a long time from the planning to the opening.

On account of the unexpected and abrupt changes from the original plan and budget, this museum could not help but omit the supplementary exhibition on astronomy. As it is difficult to fix the astronomical knowledge only by planetarium in science museum, this omission is regarded as a conspicuous weak point today from the viewpoint of educational effectiveness. But at that time the existence of the planetarium itself had a great value on account of the poor interest about social education in Japan.

Moreover, despite the Carl Zeiss's standard type planetarium had the power to project in 20 meters dome, they had to use it in 18 meters dome. Because the foundation of the building was already completed and the maximum adoptable diameter was limited in such size.

Anyway, it was Osaka City that installed the first planetarium in Japan, and one year and a half later, the second one was set up in Tokyo. But this one was destroyed in 1945 by air raids during the World War II. Thereafter, Osaka had still remained as the only one city in Japan which possessed the apparatus of this kind until 1957 when another one was re-established in Tokyo. The details after that was already reported in the day before last by Dr. Sato, the Director of Nagoya Science Museum.

I'm afraid that I've told you only the past things. But Chinese old philosophical proverb says that "Research the old, and you can get the new." I believe it is true even today. So I hope that my report will be useful for the development of planetarium today and tomorrow .

Thank you!