Populization of Astronomy under Cooperation between Students and Educators in Japan: the TENPLA project (2)
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ABSTRACT

The TENPLA project is a Japanese unique activity in populization of astronomy under cooperation between students of astronomy, young astronomers, and social education facilities such as science museums (see also poster by M. Hiramatsu, SPS2-95). In this poster, we present our individual activities for public in detail. Our aim is to provide bridges between astronomy and public, especially people who are unfamiliar with astronomy, directly by students and young astronomers at many scenes of life such as in schools, cafes, hospitals and so on. Examples of our activities are as follows (1) Learning astronomy with local people, by local people, for local people. (2) Science cafes about astronomy at book stores, small restaurants and local airport. (3) Traveling lecture of astronomy for hospitalized children.

Science Cafe

Science cafe is derived from “Café Scientifique” held in UK. In recent years, various science cafes have been held in Japan by various organizers such as universities, NPOs and groups of students. We, TENPLA, have also carried out some science cafes in order to spread latest astronomy among public people and give them opportunities to enjoy astronomy. Examples are as follows.

Science Cafe @ Book Store

2005.10.8
TENPLA’s first science cafe was held at entrance hall of a big book store in the downtown of Sapporo city in collaboration with “Communicators in Science and Technology Education Program (CoSTEP)”, which is a science communicator training course in Hakkaido University. We had a lot of audiences as much as 200. They first enjoyed talks by Dr. J. Watanabe and a few students who specialize astronomy. Then around 20 students went into the audiences and discussed freely about astronomy, lives in their study, and so on. It was great success and wonderful experience for TENPLA, although we had moments of reflection such as site layout, detail progress of the contents, and handling of too many audiences, etc.

Science Cafes @ Small Restaurants

We held a few science cafes in local small restaurants. They are better place for talking and discussing freely between scientists (students) and public people than large hall. Although we met the audiences – they happen to visit the restaurant at that time – for the first time, we enjoyed each other’s company in a friendly atmosphere and there were a lot of questions and fruitful discussions.

Science Cafe @ Art Museum

2006.4.23
Ohara Museum of Art is located at the historical town in Kurashiki city. Surrounded by famous paintings (such as Monet, El Greco, …) in an exhibition room, our science cafe started with 30 minutes of talk between Prof. N. Kafu (ex-director of National Astronomical Observatory of Japan) and Prof. M. Aoyagi (director of the National Museum of Western Art). Then, all lecturer and audiences moved to the other exhibition room and enjoyed free talk session with drinks and cookies. All of audiences could talk with the lecturers and our staffs in buffet style.

Science Cafe @ Local Airport

Have you ever watched stars lying on an airport runway? We have held event of science cafe and star party at Chofu airport, a local small airport in western Tokyo, in collaboration with “propeller cafe” which is a nice cafe adjacent to the runway and aircraft hanger. The participants of about 50 (families, couples, groups of students, and so on) first had a dinner in the cafe while talking about astronomy and science with TENPLA staff. When it got dark, we set up some amateur telescopes and started star party session on the airport runway. After some short talks about astronomy, constellation, and airport, the participants enjoyed star watching in their own style, for example simply lying on the runway, watching some objects with telescopes, etc. Particularly the first one was held on Dec. 14, 2005 when the Geminids meteor shower was at peak, so we could find a lot of meteors across the airport’s wide sky.

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