

Society Report 2017

Herschel Society of Japan

Sadaharu UEHARA

We would like to celebrate the Annual General Meeting of the William Herschel Society and express our appreciation for your invitation of a report from our Society.

Personal affairs

We had no fresh member in the year.

Activities

(1) Society member Ms Nobuko IIZAWA is a professional cloisonné artist. She held an exhibition of her works at Ginza, Tokyo in December (*1). Some of the works shown in the exhibition are motivated by astronomical themes, as the Pleiades, constellations of Ainu people in Hokkaido with a mixed shape of their mythology and the western astronomy, and Uranus with a ring and satellites. They are finished by her original interpretations with lucid bluish colors.

(2) Society member Sadaharu UEHARA submitted two articles to the Society web page, studying on importation of the western modern astronomy to Japan in the late 18th and the early 19th centuries. He presented that he found the primary source of “*UISUTON Taiyo Mei-kai Zu*” (Whiston’s figure of the solar bright zone) which were introduced by YAMAGATA Banto (1728-1821) in his manuscript without name of a western document (*2). The data of the planets and comets quoted in by Banto are the same as those printed in the figure “Mr. Whiston's Solar System Epitomis'd” drafted by John Senex with data provided by William Whiston and included in a scientific book published in London (*3). The other article (*4) is a status report of his continuing explorations on importation of the discovery news of Uranus and of the following observations and ephemeris calculation for the planet achieved by Japanese in the first quarter of the 19th century.

Other activity

Mr Tamao TSUNODA of HSJ displayed some of his collection related to history of astronomy at an event held at Jimbo-cho, Tokyo hosted by several antique shops in March. The general theme of the whole exhibition was “A reception room of natural history collectors, a picture diary of a travel” (*5). Among many show cases and

exhibition shelves, he tried to spot appearance of the astronomy itself as a traveler; the astronomical ideas that had started from ancient Greece and Orient and traveled for Europe, or transferred to India and China, were symbolically expressed by some display products – they were a clay tablet of ancient Orient, a book describing construction rules of Islamic calendars, a scroll of Indian astrology, an old calendar from Mongolia, an astrolabe, a quadrant, several old books on astronomy and so on (regrettably some of them were replicas). Finally, a series of the displays was ended by a model rocket conceived by Tsiolkovsky, which implied that the travel would continue long afterwards.

Many visitors, particularly young people, came to the exhibition and watched displays of Tsunoda and those from other antique shops with interest. Our Society expects such events to contribute to populate history of astronomy in many people.

References

*1) Exhibition information at Ginza Art Space

<http://artspace.jansem.info/exhibit2017/z171212-iizawa.html>

*2) Digital Archives, Herschel Society of Japan

http://www.ne.jp/asahi/mononoke/ttnd/herschel/a-text/Banto_Whiston.htm

*3) John Theophilus Desaguliers "A course of experimental philosophy" Vol.1, London (Edition in 1734), Internet Archive.

<https://archive.org/details/0027ACOU>

*4) Digital Archives, Herschel Society of Japan

http://www.ne.jp/asahi/mononoke/ttnd/herschel/a-text/Uranus_in_Japan.htm

*5) Event information at Jimbo-cho main shop, Books Sanseido

<http://jinbocho.books-sanseido.co.jp/events/2492>