

Communicating Astronomy in a Metropolis and Disaster Area – Activities of the Tenpla Project

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Abstract. We present recent activities delivering astronomy to the public by the Tenpla project in Japan. One is voluntary activities in the disaster area of the Great East Japan Earthquake. The other is holding tens of star parties and public lectures in the central area of Tokyo.

Keywords. communicating astronomy, star party, lectures

The Tenpla project (tenpla.net) is a cooperative network among researchers, students, museum staffs, educators, designers, and those who engage in popularization of astronomy in Japan. The aims are providing a chance to enjoy the latest astronomy for the public and making relationship among astronomy, society, and us (individual persons) by communicating each other. Since it was founded in 2003, various activities have been carried out for example developing science goods such as Astronomical Toilet Paper, holding science cafes, lectures and workshops, some of which were reported by Hiramatsu *et al.* (2008) and Kamegai *et al.* (2008) in SpS2 of 26th IAU General Assembly in Prague.

We have performed voluntary activities in the disaster area of the Great East Japan Earthquake since May 2011. Some Tenpla members visited Iwate prefecture where is one of the most heavily suffered area, and held star parties, workshops, plays and talks at several evacuation centers in cooperation with a few science volunteer groups. Even in such tough situation, attendees enjoyed our events. When we focused on distant astronomical phenomena, we all were able to communicate each other based on equal point of view. Through these experiences, we confirm that astronomy is an effective communication tool even in such a situation.

On the other hand, we have arranged various events at the central area of Tokyo. The purpose is to offer opportunities to enjoy astronomy for people who work in the center of city and/or who have no chance to communicate with astronomy in their daily life. For example, more than 60 star parties have been held at rooftop deck of one of the Tokyo's highest skyscraper. On some night of the star party we have a public astronomy lecture in the same building. In addition, a series of talks by young astronomers has been held at small shop in the center of city. Participants of the lectures are mainly office workers in their 30's – 50's, which means the events are successfully accepted by targeted people.

References

- Hiramatsu, M., *et al.* 2008, *Innovation in Astronomy Education*, 198
Kamegai, K., *et al.* 2008, *Innovation in Astronomy Education*, 199