PROFESSOR TAKEMATU OKADA

寺田寅彦

青空文庫

Prof. Takematu Okada was born on August 17, 1874, In Husa of Tiba P refecture, a sunny and peaceful riverside town of the 〔Great Tone'〕, wit hin forty kilometres of the Pacific coast. When attending the Imperial Uni versity of Tokyo as a student of the College of Science he chose physics as his special course. After graduating in July 1899, he was appointed as an Assistant Meteorologist in the Central Meteorological Observatory of Tok yo. This was at the time when meteorology in our country was still in its in fant stage under the care of its foster-fathers, among whom we especially mention Prof. Kiyoo Nakamura, former Director of the Observatory, and P rof.〔Yu^ji Wada〕, later Director of Zinsen Observatory in Korea. At th at time the great majority of the students of physics cared little for meteoro logy and perhaps no one dreamed of the development of this branch of sci ence in this country, a development reserved for future accomplishment by the hand of this young post-graduate in physics.

The tasks which were entrusted to him were the most difficult ones, --n o less than those of the daily weather forecasting and storm-warnings. A p hysicist confined in his laboratory or lecture room can scarcely imagine th e difficulties met with by those who are in charge of this kind of work, whi ch is in immediate connection with the daily life of people who have little or no understanding of things scientific. He has had, indeed, to endure not only ill-humoured complaints of people but also the most unsympathetic c riticisms by journalists and even by some scientists. He has, however, stoo d manfully in this difficult situation by gradually improving the scientific basis of the method of prediction as well as the organization of the net-wor k system of observation. For example, the reception of observation data f rom ships at sea was first put into practice upon his initiative in 1910, prev ious to any other country, as his insight promptly perceived the urgent nee d of this means of obtaining data from the neighbouring seas, in view of th e peculiar geographical location of this country. Observatories were also f ounded at Sionomisaki in 1912, at Muroto Zaki and at Shanghai in 1919 to facilitate warnings of coming cyclones. In the meantime, he felt the need of founding a Marine Meteorological Observatory for a further developme nt of the system of prediction and succeeded in raising the necessary fund from among the chief shipping companies and ship-owners. The institute was founded in 1919 of which he was appointed the first Director. M. S. " 〔Syunpu^-maru〕" (Spring-Breeze) was constructed for the exclusive us e of the observatory equipped with all the instruments and accessories nec essary for regular oceanographical investigation. The results of research w ork carried out on board this ship have been published in a number of Rep orts and Memoirs. On the other hand Professor Okada was keenly alive to the necessity of a school devoted to the thorough education of the younger meteorologists who were destined to become the staff members of the cen tral as well as of the local observatories. He therefore planned and founded an institution attached to the Central Meteorological Observatory in whic h the students were to attend a system of regular courses in different depar tments of physical and mathematical sciences. Among the list of the teach ers we find the names of a number of the most eminent meteorologists of t his country. In 1919 the installation of the wireless system for meteorologi cal communication was completed in the Imperial Marine Observatory, for

the first time in this country. Further development of this system of comm unication was effected by the installation of the sending stations at Okina wa, Naze and Isigaki, besides those in Tokyo and 〔Ko^be〕, by which th e first forecasting of approaching typhoons was observed and speedily rep orted to the central station.

In 1923 Prof. K. Nakamura resigned and the chair of the Director of the Central Meteorological Observatory was filled by Prof. Okada while at the same time he retained the directorship of the Imperial Marine Observator y.

Seismological observations which were being regularly made from the e arlier dates were established on an entirely new status under his supervisio n, after the bitter experience of the 〔Great Kwanto^ Earthquake of 1923〕, by improving and amplifying the instrumental equipments in a number of selected local observatories. The activity of the seismologists under his gu idance may be judged from the number of the important papers already pu blished.

To provide for the rapid development of aeronautical practices he found ed a special department of aeronautical meteorology in the Central Meteor ological Observatory and, connected with it, a number of branch observato ries in the vicinities of the chief aerodromes and also along the main regul ar routes of aerial communication.

Those local observatories which are situated on islands or promontories and had been notorious for the frequent damage incurred by exceptional se verity of cyclonic storms on account of their frail wooden structures were r ebuilt into massive reinforced concrete buildings, so that they could stand from now on as undaunted sentinels in the face of raging typhoons.

The Magnetic Observatory at Kakioka which was founded by the late Pr of. K. Nakamura, has also been reconstructed and considerably amplified i n its instrumental equipment.

The extent and variety of the routine work officially carried out in the C entral Meteorological Observatory were conspicuously enlarged since the day of his directorship, as may be judged from the increase in the number of the chairs of experts in charge of their respective special branches of wo rk, such as precipitations, thunderstorms, wireless communications, aerona utics, agricultural meteorology, terrestrial magnetism, clocks, tides radiati ons, library and cartography. Moreover, workshops were installed respecti vely for printing, metal and wood working. On the other hand, the Mounta in Observatories on Huzi, Tukuba, and Ibuki were either founded or recon structed under his supervision.

In Prof. Okada we find a happy combination of administrative ability wi th scientific talent, which is, as it seems, rather rarely the case at least in th is country. While busily engaged in his bureau work which his official dut y necessitates he manages somehow to find leisure to be devoted to his fav ourite research work. Among his earlier works, we may mention his paper s dealing with the underground temperature, the conductivity of snow, the evaporation in the Inland Sea districts, the foehn-winds etc. His exhaustive investigations on the origin of the rainy season, "Baiu," is a genuine classi c in this field. His work regarding the typhoon of the Far East comprises th e fruits of his long practical experience of prediction service. It is interesti ng to remark that the most important law of motion of cyclones and anticy clones under mutual influences, which he discovered and later was named

after him by Prof. Fujiwhara, was described not in any of his papers, but in his elementary text-book of meteorology.

There are also some of his papers of a mathematical nature such as those regarding the geometrical construction for finding the centre and track of cyclone. Thanks to his natural sympathy towards the mathematical school of meteorology, a pleiades of able mathematicians have risen up among the younger generation of meteorologists under his unwearying guidance and cordial encouragement.

At the same time he is deeply interested in the practical problem of long period weather prediction, especially in connection with the agricultural problem of the rice crop, a matter of most important national concern in this country. A series of papers have been published by him as well as by his collaborators on the correlation of different meteorological elements in the Far East and also on the prediction of rice crops.

The recent compilation of "Climate of Japan" by Prof. Okada's own hand will be universally welcomed as an inexhaustible source for reference of useful data of which the reliability is insured by his own name, by all those who are engaged in any kind of scientific or practical work, as there is scarcely anything in this world which is entirely free form the influence of meteorological factors. He has also written a number of excellent books on meteorology, among which we may especially mention an elementary textbook for beginners, a treatise for advanced students, a book on rain and a manual for meteorological instruments. These are not only undisputedly the best of the kind ever written in our language, but they may well compete with those written in occidental languages by renowned authors and, besides, they abound with materials typical of the Far East.

A series of short episodes and reminiscences by his fluent pen appears frequently in "Umi to Sora", which afford very interesting reading not only for meteorologists but also for scientist at large, being an embodiment of long year's experiences of a veteran scientist.

Well deserved recognition of his achievements as a man of science is shown by the fact that in 1924 he was awarded the Symons's Gold Medal by the Royal Meteorological Society of London and in 1925 he was elected an Honorary Member of the same Society. Again, in 1931, he was elected a Member of the Imperial Academy of Japan.

Prof. Okada's deep love of science is perhaps connected with his bibliophilistic inclination which is well known among his friends. His private collection abounds with rare books not only in the domains of meteorology and geophysics but also in other fields of the natural sciences. It seems that the library of the Central Meteorological Observatory owes its richness and amplitude to this welcome propensity of the Director. The present writer has involuntarily acquired a wicked habit of appealing at once for Prof. Okada's assistance whenever puzzled in search of literature concerning some matters lying outsides of beaten tracks. Again, his own love of science combined with the cordiality of his personality which is revealed in his prompt assistance and kind encouragement given to any one engaged in any kind of original research, has resulted in fostering a fervent atmosphere of scientific enthusiasm among the younger staff members of the Central Meteorological Observatory as well as of its branch observatories, which have now risen to the level of the most active centres of scientific research of this

country. This latter fact may be recognized also by the remarkable activit y on the part of the members of the Meteorological Society of Japan. Its M eeting which was formerly held once a month is now regularly held twice.

At the age of fifty eight he is still in his prime of youthful activities, wit h his everlasting zeal in weaving together the more and more elaborate net -work of the weather service of Japan, at the same time devoting his spare time as ever to his own research work, as it seems, as his most favourite h obby, and never neglecting his care for his beloved foster-children, who fi nd in Prof. Okada a director, a teacher, a friend and at the same time their most affectionate father. It is merely the humblest expression of the profou nd feeling of gratitude on the part of this younger generation of Japanese meteorologists that they have here undertaken to compile the present Anni versary Volume and to devote it to the commemoration of his thirty years'

service in the Central Meteorological Observatory with their heartfelt de sire that Prof. Okada may always continue his activity in good health, on b ehalf of themselves as well as for the future prosperity of meteorological s cience in Japan. (Geophysical Magazine, Mar. 1932)

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