

A Science Service Feature

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! WHY THE WEATHER ?

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Authority on Meteorology

RAIN-GAUGES OF LONG AGO

"In the twenty-fourth year of the reign of King Sejo the king caused to be constructed of bronze an instrument for measuring the rain. It is a vessel 1 shaku, 5 sun deep and 7 sun broad, set on a pillar. The instrument was placed at the observatory, and each time it rained the officials of the observatory measured the depth of the rain and made it known to the king. Similar instruments were likewise distributed to the provinces and the cantons, and the results of the observations were reported to the court."

Thus reads a passage in the ancient chronicles of Korea. The twenty-fourth year of King Sejo corresponds to the year 1442 of the Christian era. It appears that ten of these rain-gauges were set up in different parts of the country, and the practice of measuring rainfall, especially important in Korea in connection with the cultivation of rice, was probably a common one from that period onward, as gauges similar to the one above mentioned were made in the eighteenth century and are now preserved at the observatory of Chemulpo.

The Koreans were not, however, the first people to construct rain-gauges. According to Hebrew records contained in the Mishna, such instruments were used regularly in Palestine during the first or second century of our era. The Mishna gives figures for the rainfall of Palestine that agrees fairly well with modern observations.

Still earlier were the rainfall measurements made in India. These are described in considerable detail in a Hindu work of the 4th century B.C.

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