The Former Hokkaido Government Office Building

AKARENGA

The symbol of Hokkaido

The Former Hokkaido Government Building, whose red appearance contrasts beautifully in every season, has gained wide popularity with its nickname akarenga, or “Red Bricks”. Completed in 1888, the American neo-baroque style brick building was designed by engineers of the Hokkaido Government and was constructed with many local building materials.

It played a pivotal role in Hokkaido over the 80 years until the new government building was constructed. Measuring 61m in frontage, 36m in depth and and 33m in height up to the tower top, akarenga is equivalent in size to a present-day 10-story building.

At that time, it was one of the largest buildings in Japan. The octagonal dome towering on the building was constructed in 1873 according to the plan by Capron, an American advisor to the Development Commission, modeling for the octagonal dome of the Hokkaido Development Commission Sapporo Main Office, which was burned down six years later.

In those days, an architectural style of topping buildings with domes was popular in the U.S.A. as the symbol of independence and enterprising spirit. In1886, the Hokkaido Government was established and 1st Governor Michitoshi Iwamura, nostalgic about the octagonal dome, ordered the construction of a dome on top of akarenga when the government building was built.