

EARTH SCIENCE EDUCATION IN JAPAN IN 20TH CENTURY AND ITS PROSPECTS FOR 21ST CENTURY

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The state of Earth Science research and education in Japan has changed significantly in recent years, the principal change being a diminution in the teaching of Earth Sciences. The problems currently facing Earth Science education in Japan are difficult to define because they are related to numerous aspects of the social environment. We hope, however, to solve these problems by the end of this century, and to welcome a new era of Earth Science education in the new millennium. The problems facing Earth Science education are not only related to current concerns about disaster and environment education, but they are also those which will influence the course of Earth Science education in the future. These problems, therefore, have to be examined from all possible perspectives, and solutions have to be found before we can suggest what the future of Earth Science education should be. After consultation with a broad spectrum of people, a "Forum of Earth Science Education in the 21st Century, in Osaka" has been planned in collaboration with thirty Earth Science academic institutes. This forum will be held on 29th July 2000. In the year proceeding the forum continuous discussions will be carried out with individual groups, including those involved in school education, technical and academic education and social education, using the Internet. Problems or particular issues suggested by these groups will be brought forward for discussion at the forum. It is hoped that the forum will highlight the current problems affecting Earth Science education, and will suggest their solutions