

Outreach Services by the Seismological Society of Japan after the Great Hanshin and Awaji Earthquake

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<http://wwwsoc.nii.ac.jp/ssj/>

1. Introduction - A short history of Public Information Committee of the Seismological Society of Japan-

The Seismological Society of Japan (SSJ) was founded in 1880 and has been contributing much to development of seismology. But the Great Hanshin and Awaji Earthquake in 1995 or the 1995 Hyogo-ken Nanbu earthquake showed that even elementary knowledge in seismology was not popular to general people. For example, 'Large earthquakes never occur in the Kansai area, Japan', which is clearly wrong in seismology, had been believed by many people in the Kansai area until the Great Hanshin and Awaji Earthquake occurred. This means that outreach services by SSJ had not been enough until the Great Hanshin and Awaji Earthquake. Based on this recognition, Public Information Committee of SSJ was founded in October 1996.

2. Present outreach services by the Public Information Committee

Our main purpose is 'Through the outreach services, SSJ contributes to reduction of earthquake disasters.' For this purpose, we are mainly doing following 4 activities; (1) Public magazine named 'Naifuru', which was an old Japanese word for earthquake, (2) Homepage of SSJ (<http://wwwsoc.nii.ac.jp/ssj/>), (3) Formal and informal meetings between SSJ and journalists, which are held about twice a year, and (4) Mailing list between seismologists and general people, which is named 'nfml'.

The 'Naifuru' is issued every two months or 6 times a year. The first 'Naifuru' was published in March 1997 and the latest one was No.47 in January 2005. The number of issues of 'Naifuru' is usually 3,000. About 1,500 of them are sent to school, museum, local governments and ministries without charge. 'Naifuru' can also be freely downloaded from the homepage of SSJ. In the homepage, we are also making FAQ or frequent asked questions and answers related to seismology. 'nfml' is an interactive outreach service. In the 'nfml' seismologists, general people, journalists and government officials responsible for disaster prevention often make discussion and exchange information.

3. Evaluation of present outreach services of Public Information Committee of SSJ

As described above, the Great Hanshin and Awaji Earthquake promoted the foundation of the Public Information Committee of SSJ. As ten years have passed since the Great Hanshin and Awaji Earthquake, we have recently been doing questionnaire investigation to the delegates and directors of SSJ to evaluate outreach services of SSJ from the foundation of the Public Information Committee. A summary of the preliminary result of the investigation is that the outreach services of SSJ is better than before but not enough. For the improvement of the present outreach services of SSJ, we need more cooperation of the researchers in SSJ. The problem is how we suitably get more cooperation of the researchers in SSJ.