

## The future of the Section of Solid Earth Sciences

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The goal of the solid-earth sciences is to understand the past, present and future behavior of the whole earth system. In order to reach the goal, the solid-earth scientists have gathered to form various scientific societies specialized to some specific fields, and have continued intense discussions in each field. These activities should be continued to develop each specialties in detail. It is also expected, however, to overview the whole fields to build an integrated image of the whole earth system and to predict its future behavior. The section of Solid Earth Sciences should give the occasions of discussions for such integration.

When we try to overview a variety of fields, it is sometimes asked where scientific breakthrough can be expected. Ironically, however, it is also well known that the only reliable prediction about where scientific breakthroughs can be expected is that such predictions will always fail to anticipate discoveries that come out unexpectedly from investigations. Development of plate tectonics since 60's was also brought from discoveries that come out unexpectedly from investigations. Therefore the discussions on what we should do in the future of the solid earth sciences may not be so successful. It is rather important to maintain some level of research activity across the entire field and to ensure the system is responsible to support the new ideas and techniques. The section of Solid Earth Sciences should encourage the community to maintain such systems.

It is also necessary to clarify the task of the section of the Solid Earth Sciences in order to accept the support from the society. Science Council of Japan has recently presented a report on the Status and Research Objectives in the Geoscience in Japan. In that report, the task of the Solid-Earth Sciences is also mentioned. Therefore, our discussions on the future of the Section of Solid-Earth Sciences should be started based on the report.