

Promotion of basic research and education of liberal arts

Asahiko Taira[1]

[1] CDEX, JAMSTEC

The promotion of basic research is the foundation of long-term sustainability of any country. Although there is general recognition for the need of persistent and stable support of basic research, the priority within the government financial expenditure is not well established in many countries. This is especially true in Japan. Recent statistics shows that the Japanese government budget for the support of universities declined by more than 5% in last ten years, contrary to the increase recorded in most of other advanced countries. Gloomy evidence is also found in education of basic liberal arts and sciences. Today, almost 100% of the applicants could enter universities exceeding 60% of contemporaneous population in Japan. Most of them enter private universities with minimum requirement for basic education. Education of earth and planetary science is almost invisible in high-school level. We now face crisis in both promotion of basic research and education of liberal arts. The foundation of our country is being gradually self-fractured. It is thus required to build a system to plan and review the science and education policy simultaneously not independently in our government. I believe the Science Council of Japan should take this leadership with help of science community organizations such as this society. At the same time, it is our responsibility to rebuild the people's support for this important and fundamental issue.