

Education on the Earthquake Disaster Reduction for International Students at Universities

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More than 100,000 international students are learning in Japanese universities. In contrast to Japanese students, most of the international students have insufficient knowledge and experience in earthquakes and their disasters, and have little opportunities to learn systematically about them. The tragedy of Sumatra-Andaman great earthquake in December 2004 teaches us the importance of the knowledge of natural disasters such as earthquakes or tsunamis. It is one of the responsibilities for universities to provide the opportunity to learn what are earthquakes and their disasters for the international students. As well known, self-help and mutual assistance are as important as government assistance in disaster mitigation. Therefore the effort for education and dissemination should be made for non-specialists as well as specialists. The aim of our project is to increase an awareness of seismic risk to non-specialist of earthquake related disasters with highly educated students. We expect that their knowledge and experience of earthquakes and their disaster reduction will contribute to increase the potential for countermeasures through companies or organizations that they will belong to after they come back to their home countries. Education to the international students can be made with minor additional efforts in most of the Japanese universities if we can make simple textbook and education manual. Last year we have started seminars on earthquake and their disaster reduction for international students in Tokyo area. Four topics are selected for the seminar. 1) What are earthquakes and tsunamis? 2) What buildings are vulnerable to earthquakes? 3) What should we do in case of earthquakes? 4) Risk of Tokyo earthquakes. Seminars in both Japanese and English are held separately for all four topics listed above. More students participated for English seminars than Japanese ones, probably because they have less opportunity to hear about earthquakes in English. Japanese seminars are also necessary though many public lectures on earthquakes and earthquake disasters are held, because special term in earthquake and disasters are not familiar to non-native Japanese speaking students. In this year we will make a webpage including teaching materials in our seminar. This kind of effort should be made in collaboration among universities in the countries of advanced disaster mitigation achievement.