

A Short Note for Dr. Omote's Review in 1973

In the preceding article, I have reviewed from my very personal point of view the changes in earthquake disaster mitigation and earthquake engineering issues which took place mainly in the last quarter of the 20th century in Japan, with a strong emphasis on the influences of the 1995 Kobe earthquake.

Having read the review by Dr. Omote published in 1973, I was impressed by his comprehensive understanding of the issue which appears fresh even today. He covers from topics on seismology to earthquake design methods which were available and most advanced at that time. His understanding on the general principles of earthquake resistant design was very sound when he wrote, "The ultimate purpose of antiseismic design and construction of structures is to protect human lives. But, such structures may become too expensive from the practical point of view." He stresses then, "Firstly, try to protect human lives from earthquake destruction, secondly, construct structures strong enough not to be damaged by destructive earthquakes, and thirdly, never let structures severely collapse even though some damage may be allowed for extremely strong motions." If these principles had been observed by engineers concerned, we would not have experienced such a disaster in Kobe in 1995.

Tsuneo Katayama
Professor, Tokyo Denki University