

Identifying Precipitation Sources in Northern Mongolia using Back Trajectory Analysis

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Prediction of precipitation variability and understanding of its mechanisms are essential in Northern Asia [Yatagai and Yasunari, 1994]. The objective of this study is to investigate linkages between the interannual variability of precipitation sources and that of precipitation amount in this area.

For this purpose, a back-trajectory model [Merrill et al., 1986] of atmospheric water vapor was developed and applied to the rainfall during the warm season from 2003 to 2009 at semi-arid grassland Kherlenbayan-Ulaan (KBU) in northern Mongolia, where an air parcel is tagged with the ambient potential temperature where it is precipitated, and is tracked adiabatically above the planetary boundary layer (PBL). When a parcel is tracked back into the PBL, its potential temperature is adjusted to the value at the top of PBL. In addition, diffusion process of water vapor evaporated from the ground surface into the atmosphere and the altitude raindrops are formed are calculated using the Monte Carlo simulation [Dirmeyer and Brubaker, 1999]. The model uses JRA-25/JCDAS [Onogi et al., 2007] reanalysis data set with 6hour intervals.

The results show that the major precipitation sources of rainwater at KBU are the local area of Mongolia and the central and the western Asia. Water vapor evaporated from the local area of Mongolia is approximately 20% of the total summer precipitation, and this ratio is particularly higher in Mongolia in compared with the other area on the globe [Dirmeyer et al., 2009]. This result consists with Yatagai and Yasunari, [1995] which suggested that the variability of precipitation in the arid areas in the northeastern Asia has higher correlation with the local atmospheric circulation, and Sato et al., [2007]. Moreover, this paper clearly exhibits that this ratio is fairly constant over the years in spite that the total precipitation varies.

Moreover, it was found that water vapor supply from the central and the western Asia is approximately 30% of the total summer precipitation at the target point, and therefore, the central and the western Asia may explain a major portion of the summer total precipitation.

In addition, the year 2003 and 2004 were found to have an anomalous relation. It is discovered that larger precipitation in the autumn of 2003 [Hirata et al., 2008] was followed by the increased contribution of the local evaporation to the precipitation in the following 2004. Shinoda et al., [2011] claimed that the cold season climate with low evapotranspiration and strong soil freezing acts to prolong the decay time scale of autumn soil moisture anomalies to the next spring over the eastern part of Mongolia. Therefore, it is considered that soil moisture at the local region in the autumn may be preserved during the winter up to the next spring and contribute to precipitation in summer in northern Mongolia.