

The early solar system chronology from the high precision ^{26}Al - ^{26}Mg dating

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The meteoritic samples are derived from asteroidal bodies and they recorded the earliest history of the planetary evolution. The recent chronological studies of meteorites indicate that the formation of solid grains in the solar nebula and the earliest igneous processes on the asteroidal-size bodies took place within 10 million years (M.y.) after the birth of the solar system. The short-lived nuclide ^{26}Al , which decays to ^{26}Mg with a half-life of 0.73 M.y., is useful chronometer to determine the relative time scale of early planetary evolution with fine time resolution (0.1-1M.y.). The initial $^{26}\text{Al}/^{27}\text{Al}$ ratios of individual samples, which are estimated from the correlated ^{26}Mg excesses with the $^{27}\text{Al}/^{24}\text{Mg}$ ratios (^{26}Al - ^{26}Mg isochron), are converted to the age relative to Ca, Al-rich Inclusions (CAI) with the canonical initial $^{26}\text{Al}/^{27}\text{Al}$ ratio of $5\text{E-}5$ (McPherson et al., 1995). In order to determine relative ages precisely, the high precision Mg isotopic measurement technique was developed for the secondary ion mass spectrometer (SIMS) IMS-1270 in Geological Survey of Japan. It is possible to determine a small ^{26}Mg excess of 0.5 permil from a single analysis of 3-12 micron beam size. The recent studies on ^{26}Al - ^{26}Mg dating of chondrules and polymict ureilite are reviewed and the time-scale of the early evolution of the solar system is discussed.

(1) Chondrules from unequilibrated ordinary chondrite: Six-teen chondrules from the least metamorphosed LL chondrites (LL3.0-3.1) showed the range of initial $^{26}\text{Al}/^{27}\text{Al}$ ratios between $4\text{E-}6$ and $2\text{E-}5$, corresponding to the ages 1-3 M.y. after CAIs (Kita et al., 2000; Mostefaoui et al., 2002). These ages correlated with the Si/Mg, Mn/Mg and Na/Mg ratios of bulk chondrules, indicating that older chondrules are depleted in volatile elements (Tachibana et al., 2002). The time scale of chondrule formation is consistent with typical life-time of proto-planetary disk from astronomical observations. The chondrule forming events might cause volatile-controlled chemical fraction to the solid materials in the disk.

(2) Polymict ureilite: polymict ureilite contains plagioclase-bearing clasts, which were derived from missing-basalts in the ureilite parent body. Petrology, oxygen isotopes and trace element analyses of these clasts indicate that they are derived from multiple sources that are produced by fractional melting of the ureilite precursor (Ikeda et al., 2000; Kita et al., 2000; Kita et al., 2001). Several plagioclase-bearing clasts plot on a single isochron with initial $^{26}\text{Al}/^{27}\text{Al}$ ratio of $4\text{E-}7$, corresponding to 5 M.y. after CAIs (Kita et al., 2003). This initial $^{26}\text{Al}/^{27}\text{Al}$ ratio is similar to those of eucrites ($1.2\text{E-}6$; Nyquist et al., 2001) and plagioclase in H4 chondrites ($1.5\text{-}2.8\text{E-}7$; Zinner et al., 2002), and significantly lower than the lowest values observed from chondrules. These results indicate that formation of planetesimal took place about 3M.y. after CAIs. The internal heat in small bodies generated from the decay of ^{26}Al , which caused planetary scale differentiation (eucrite), local scale partial melting (ureilite), and thermal metamorphism (chondrite).

Further investigations on the ^{26}Al - ^{26}Mg systems in meteoritic samples are promising to clarify the time scale of various processes occurred in proto-planetary disk and earliest meteorite parent bodies.