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Relationship between crustal stress field and fault slickenlines due to the 2011 Iwaki earthquake

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After the occurrence of the 2011 Mw 9.0 off the Pacific coast of Tohoku Earthquake (March 11, 2011), a Mw 6.8 (Mj 7.0) aftershock occurred on April 11, 2011 in Iwaki-city, Fukushima Prefecture, NE Honshu, Japan. The earthquake on April 11, 2011 (hereafter, 2011 Iwaki earthquake) occurred in temporal seismicity gaps and it was one of the major aftershocks after the 2011 Tohoku earthquake. To investigate the stress field before the 2011 Iwaki earthquake, we applied the multiple inverse method to the focal mechanisms during one month before the earthquake. Using 12 focal mechanisms during the one month, the multiple inverse method (Otsubo et al., 2008) revealed normal-faulting stress state with the NE-SW trending Sigma3-axis. The small angular misfits (7 degrees) between the slip direction predicted from the stress and that observed for fault plane of the 2011 Iwaki earthquake shows that the NW-SE trending extension is concordant with the slip motion of the 2011 Iwaki earthquake (Otsubo et al., 2011). We then succeeded measured co-seismic slip directions during the rupture of the 2011 Iwaki earthquake. Slickelines caused by the 2011 Iwaki earthquake are observed extensively over a wide range of the fault ruptures along the Itozawa Fault (Active Fault and Earthquake Research Center, 2011; Ishiyama et al., 2011; Otsubo et al., in press). Especially, the curved or cross-cutting fault slickenslins are observed at 8 localities along the Itozawa fault. The co-seismic slip have the curved slickenlines that the direction of fault motion during the rupture of the 2011 Iwaki earthquake shifted from a normal faulting with a left-lateral component to that with a right-lateral component. The angular misfits between the slip direction predicted from the NW-SE trending extensional stress and that predicted from the each component of the curved slickenlines on the fault scarps are ~33 to 65 degrees and ~2 to 17 degrees, respectively. Misfit changes show that the co-seismic slip direction shifted to normal faulting explained by the regional stress in the process of the faulting. These results suggest that co-seismic rupture processes near surface is a key to understand the gradual stress accumulations in the overlying plate associated with the huge trench type earthquake.

Acknowledgements:

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Reference:

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Keywords: Stress, Surface rupture, Fault striation, 2011 off the Pacific coast of Tohoku Earthquake, Fore arc, NE Japan