Response of the D-region ionosphere to lightning using Asia VLF observation network (AVON) and VLF/LF data in Japan

Hiroyo Ohya1, Fuminori Tsuchiya2, Kozo Yamashita3, Yukihiro Takahashi4, Kazuo Shiokawa5, Yoshizumi Miyoshi5

1Graduate School of Engineering, Chiba University, 2Planetary Plasma and Atmospheric Research Center, Graduate School of Science, Tohoku University, 3Department of Electrical Engineering, Salesian Polytechnic, 4Graduate School of Science, Hokkaido University, 5Solar-Terrestrial Environment Laboratory, Nagoya University

It is known that the electromagnetic pulse (EMP) originated from cloud-to-ground and inter-cloud lightning discharges can couple directly into the D-region ionosphere. The conductivity in the D-region changes due to the EMP. When VLF/LF waves propagate under the disturbed D-region, the amplitude and phase or the reflection height of the VLF/LF waves varies largely. For example, ‘early VLF events’ show large variations in amplitude and phase and are caused by the coupling between the D-region and lightning. Early/fast events, early/slow events, and long recovery events are included in the term of ‘early VLF events’. The descent (rise) of VLF/LF reflection height corresponds to increase (decrease) in electron density in the D-region. We have conducted Asia VLF observation network (AVON) in South-East Asia: Taiwan, Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines, and Vietnam since 2007. The observations in Taiwan, Thailand, and Indonesia are performed at present, while we will construct a new observation system in Philippines in February, 2013. We also have a plan of a new observation system in Vietnam after the Philippine construction within 2013. The aim of the AVON is to monitor the lower ionosphere and lightning in South-East Asia. We observe North-South and East-West broadband magnetic components with loop antennas, a vertical broadband electric component with a dipole antenna, and amplitude and phase of narrowband LF transmitter signals with a monopole antenna. We investigate the VLF/LF perturbations associated with the lightning discharges using both the AVON data and the VLF/LF data observed in Japan. In the presentation, we show several early VLF events and discuss the coupling between the D-region and lightning.