

Distribution and internal structure of the nodules occurring in the Shimanto sedimentary rocks, Muroto Peninsula, Shikoku

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Nodules have often been discovered on the deep-sea floor. The mechanism of their formation however is not yet clear. Nodules found in the outcrops of the Tertiary Shimanto belt in Muroto Peninsula are found as concretions that can easily be separated from the host rock. Those nodules very likely record the formation process at the deep-sea floor, and also the accretional process thereafter. This study aims to show the origin of the nodules through the spatial distribution, the occurrence, the shape, and the internal structure of the nodules sampled in Muroto Peninsula.

Spatial distribution of carbonate nodules were investigated along the coastline of Muroto Peninsula. Nodules were found in almost every outcrop, the abundance, however, varied from one locality to another. Outcrops with abundant nodules had more than 50 nodules within the area of 100 m². Six localities were discovered with abundant nodules. Four of them were mudstone outcrops, and two the alternation of sandstone and mudstone. Most nodules occurred in the mudstone layers within the alternation of sandstone and mudstone. It is indicated that the distribution of nodules as are mainly controlled by lithology. The localities were scattered along the coastline of Muroto Peninsula. Comparing the distribution with the temperature estimated using vitrinite reflectance by Laughland and Underwood (1993), the distribution of nodules was not correlated with the thermal structure of the Shimanto Belt.

The length of the long axis of the nodules were 12-250 mm and the length of the minor axis were 10-180 mm, most of them with aspect ratios of 1.3 to 1.4. The aspect ratio is the ratio of the long axis diameter to the short axis diameter of an ellipse. At one outcrop, all nodules with the short axis diameter of 40mm or less were long in shape, with the aspect ratios 3 or larger. This can be explained if the nodules were originally equivalent in size and were deformed during the accretional process. The locality is where high vitrinite reflectance has been reported (Laughland and Underwood, 1993).

Surface of section of 18 nodules were examined. Dark colored matrix, which was similar to the country mudstone, composed most of the interior of the nodules. One of the nodules had small whitish core near the center. The size of the core was approximately 4 mm in length with irregular shape. Triangular or quadrangular pyrite grains, with the length of the sides approximately 50-450 μ m, are often found scattered within the nodules. The shape of the pyrite grains indicated chemical origin. Heterogeneity was observed in the matrix: darker and lighter colored bands with 1 to 2 mm width were observed. The chemical mapping image of the matrix obtained using EDS showed that different colored bands contained different mineral assemblage. One band was mainly composed by quartz and calcite, the other was presumably rich in clay minerals.

In conclusion, nodules were formed mainly in the mudstone layer in Shimanto Belt of Muroto peninsula, indicating that the nodules were originally formed near the surface of the mud of the quiet deep-sea floor. One of the nodules had small whitish core near the center, indicating the origin of the nodules being trace fossils produced by probable annelid worm. Observation of the internal structure indicated that the activity of the habitant of the trace likely accelerated the concretion of the mud in the vicinity.

References

Laughland and Underwood (1993) Geological Society of America Special Paper 273, 1-24, 25-43

Keywords: nodule, Shimanto belt, mudstone layer, pyrite, trace fossil

New localities of fossil cold-seep assemblages from the Pleistocene Otsuka Formation of the Nakatsu Group, central Japan

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We report two new localities of fossil cold-seep assemblages from the Pleistocene Otsuka Formation, Nakatsu Group, exposed along the northeastern bank of the Sagami River, Sagami City, central Japan. The Otsuka Formation is composed mostly of massive mudstones in which pumice-rich lapilli tuff beds (several cm to several dozen cm in thickness) and thin sandstone beds are intercalated.

Our new localities (Locs. 1 and 2) occur lucinid fossils in the massive mudstones associated sporadically with the authigenic carbonate concretions (several cm to several dozen cm in size). In Loc.1, scoria and pumice grains (0.5 to 2 mm in size) are scattered and lenticular fine grained sandstone, 7 cm in maximum thickness, is intercalated. The 17 large bivalve fossils, mostly articulated lucinids, occur sporadically in 0.4 m in height and 1 m in width of the outcrop. Most of the fossils are entirely dissolved in this locality. The commissure planes of articulated bivalves are arranged perpendicular to the bedding plane, with their umbos oriented upward. In Loc.2, scoria and pumice grains (0.5 to 2 mm in size), and granule-size pumice grains are scattered. The 42 articulated and disarticulated bivalve fossils, mostly lucinids, occur sporadically in 2 m in height and 1.2 m in width of the outcrop. Most of the fossils are entirely dissolved as well as in Loc.1. The articulated and disarticulated bivalve fossils are counted, respectively, 27 and 15 in numbers. The commissure planes of many articulated bivalve fossils are arranged perpendicular to the bedding plane, with their umbos oriented upward, whereas the commissure planes of disarticulated shells are arranged parallel to the bedding plane with convex-down (8 in number) and convex-up (4 in number) in positions.

Lucinids are known to live in their umbos oriented upward to the sediment (Stanley, 1970 ; Kondo, 1990 and Kanno, 1993). So that, the many articulated lucinid fossils reported herein are interpreted to be preserved in their life positions.

Keywords: Nakatsu Group, fossil cold-seep assemblage, Pleistocene

Cretaceous chemosynthetic communities in Japan

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The earliest occurrences of many molluscan genera, which are living in modern chemosynthetic ecosystem, were in the late Mesozoic. In addition, the oldest occurrences of chemosynthetic communities on decomposed vertebrate bones and sunken-drifted wood were in Cretaceous. Japanese Islands are located at junction of several continental and oceanic plates since hundreds of millions of years ago and provide many important material to establish evolutionary history of modern-type chemosynthetic ecosystems. Here I review Cretaceous chemosynthetic ecosystems with special focus on Japanese material.

Keywords: chemosynthetic community, whale bone, sunken wood, hydrocarbon seep, hydrothermal vent, cold seep