

## Crustal noble gases anomaly associated with fault movement and aftershock the 3.11 Northeast Japan Earthquake

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Noble gases have unique characteristics that they are rarely combined with other chemicals as their very stable nature. Because its main reservoir is atmosphere, their isotopic composition is well defined and believed to be uniform all over the world insensitive to disturbance from anthropogenic and/or natural emission of geologically trapped noble gases in the earth interior. Based on our preliminary friction experiment, however, detectable amount of noble gases seem to be emitted accompanied with a fault motion (Sato et al., 2009). After the extreme Northeast Japan Earthquake occurred on March 11, 2011, extraordinary increase of seismic activity as numerous aftershocks e.g. over 4000 felt earthquakes in four months, which may be a source of non-atmospheric component preserved in the earth interior. In terms of anthropogenic component, (Nuclear Power Plant) is a potential source, which is frequently monitored by radioactive species of noble gases.

We widely collected atmosphere samples all over Japan from Hokkaido, Honsyu, Chugoku and Kyusyu Is. The atmospheres have been sampled into vacuumed containers, Isotube®, at each sampling site to evaluate time-series changes. The elemental and isotopic compositions of the samples were analyzed mainly by quadrupole residual gas analyzers (RGA-200, SRS Co.) and partly confirmed by sector-type mass spectrometers (GVI-5400, GV instruments). In the duplicated analyses of the selected a few samples, the measured elemental and isotopic compositions were consistent within analytical uncertainties.

The relative elemental abundances were changed at least in heavier noble gases. Argon was enriched to pre-3.11 Earthquake atmospheres associating with a high <sup>40</sup>Ar/<sup>36</sup>Ar ratio. It might be contributed by emission of crustal Ar at aftershock earthquakes, deformation and fault movements. In addition, a frictional melting was occurred in a >M5 earthquake as reported by Kanamori et al. (1998). Further, radioactive Ar isotopes (<sup>42</sup>Ar and <sup>39</sup>Ar) were slightly abundant than those in "pre" 3.11 Earthquake atmospheres. These radioactive Ar isotopes were regarded to be detected limitedly in neutron irradiated geological samples especially in Ar - Ar dating. These altered atmospheric Argon isotopic composition in Eastern Japan area were observed until typhoon season.

Keywords: noble gas, 3.11 Northeast Japan Earthquake, aftershock earthquake, nuclear power plant disaster, Ar Isotope