

南鳥島周辺EEZ内におけるレアアース泥研究の最新成果

The progress of research on REY-rich mud within the Minamitorishima EEZ

*加藤 泰浩^{1,2,3}、藤永 公一郎^{3,1}、中村 謙太郎^{1,2}、安川 和孝^{1,3}、大田 隼一郎¹、高谷 雄太郎^{4,1}、飯島 耕一²、町田 嗣樹^{2,1}、野崎 達生^{2,1}、木村 純一²、鈴木 勝彦²、岩森 光^{2,5}

*Yasuhiro Kato^{1,2,3}, Koichiro Fujinaga^{3,1}, Kentaro Nakamura^{1,2}, Kazutaka Yasukawa^{1,3}, Junichiro Ohta¹, Yutaro Takaya^{4,1}, Koichi Iijima², Shiki Machida^{2,1}, Tatsuo Nozaki^{2,1}, Jun-Ichi Kimura², Katsuhiko Suzuki², Hikaru Iwamori^{2,5}

1.東京大学大学院工学系研究科システム創成学専攻、2.海洋研究開発機構、3.千葉工業大学、4.早稲田大学創造理工学部環境資源工学科、5.東京工業大学

1.Department of Systems Innovation, Graduate School of Engineering, University of Tokyo, 2.Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology, 3.Chiba Institute of Technology, 4.Department of Resources and Environmental Engineering School of Creative Science and Engineering, Waseda University, 5.Tokyo Institute of Technology

Three years have passed since the amazingly fruitful research cruise KR13-02 resulted in a discovery of deep-sea mud extremely enriched in rare-earth elements and yttrium (REY) within the Japanese exclusive economic zone (EEZ) surrounding Minamitorishima Island. The mud with maximum total REY content of ~8,000 ppm strongly attracts our attention as an unconventional and highly promising deep-sea mineral resource. Subsequent six cruises, i.e., MR13-E02, KR14-02, MR14-E02, MR15-E01 Leg 2 and Leg 3, and MR15-02, have highlighted that the southern part of the Minamitorishima EEZ appears to be the unique area where the "extremely REY-rich mud" lies at very shallow depth (2 to 4 m) below the seafloor. In the presentation, we report a general overview of our latest findings from various approaches to REY-rich mud in the Minamitorishima EEZ including chemical, physical, statistical and engineering techniques.

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