Conduit flow dynamics during high-flux lava effusion events at Sakurajima volcano, Japan

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The ascent of multiphase magma in a volcanic conduit (a conduit flow) involves many complex processes such as vesiculation, gas escape, and crystallization, and it strongly controls eruption styles. By combining the modeling of conduit flow with some geological, petrological, and geophysical observations for eruptions, we can obtain detailed information on subsurface magma plumbing system. In this study, we investigated the conduit flow dynamics during lava effusion events in the historical eruptions of Sakurajima volcano, Japan by combining a 1-dimensional conduit flow model with the observed features of the lava effusion processes.

Lava effusion events during the four historical eruptions at Sakurajima volcano (1471-1476, 1779-1781, 1914, and 1946) are commonly characterized by effusions of andesitic magma from newly opened fissure vents radiating from the main summit, and the vents of the first three eruptions are symmetrically distributed with respect to the summit. Because these observations imply dike-like magma plumbing system during the lava effusion events, we added the effects of dike-like conduit geometry with an ellipsoidal cross-section to the previous conduit flow model by Kozono and Koyaguchi (2012). In the 1914 eruption, the lava effusion from the western flank showed an exponential decrease in the magma discharge rate. In the analyses of the conduit flow model, we obtain the relationship between chamber pressure (P) and magma flow rate (Q) in the steady conduit flow. When this relationship has a positive correlation, the conduit flow system becomes stable, leading to an exponential change in the magma flow rate. Therefore, we can identify magmatic and geological conditions for the exponential decrease in the magma flow rate to occur during the Sakurajima lava effusion event using the conduit flow model.

In the P-Q relationship, there are regions of positive correlation in the low-Q and high-Q ranges, whereas the negative correlation region is generated in the intermediate range by the effects of magma viscosity change due to crystallization and magma density change due to gas escape. When we define the maximum flow rate of the positive correlation region in the low-Q range (referred to as "Q_{cr}"), the region of $Q < Q_{cr}$ corresponds to the Taisho lava effusion phase. The results show that Q_{cr} strongly depends on the parameters related to the conduit geometry such as conduit radius and the ratio of the major to minor axes of the ellipsoidal cross-section. There are two competing effects of the change in the conduit radius on Q_{cr}. First, as the conduit radius decreases, vertical gas escape is promoted because of the suppression of the ascent of the liquid due to the increase in wall friction force, and lateral gas escape is also promoted because of the increase in the ratio of the perimeter to the area of the conduit cross-section. These promotions of gas escapes lead to more stable effusive eruptions, which corresponds to the increase in Q_{cr}. Second, as the conduit radius decreases, the area of the conduit cross-section decreases, leading to the decrease in Q_{cr}. When the ratio of the major to minor axes changes for a given minor axis, the second effect becomes predominant. We found that a drastic increase in Q_{cr} with increasing the ratio of the major to minor axes is necessary for satisfying the condition that Q_{cr} becomes greater than the observed maximum flow rate during the Taisho lava eruption (about 2400 m^3/s). This suggests that a dike-like conduit geometry played a key role on the high-flux lava effusion processes in the Sakurajima eruptions.

Keywords: Conduit flow, Sakurajima, Lava effusion

Lava effusion modeling by a conduit flow model coupled with the brittle-ductile transition of magma

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Silicic magma forms a magmatic fault in volcanic conduits via the brittle–ductile transition of the magma. The formation of the fault changes the type of magma flow from viscous flow to friction of the magma plug (e.g., Okumura et al., 2015). Frictional stress decreases with ascent of the magma because of the reduction of normal stress on the fault, while viscous shear stress increases because of the decrease in water content and dehydration-induced crystallization. Hence, the shear stress on magma has a maximum at the bottom of the magma plug. This maximum stress may control crustal deformation during lava effusion. Here, we investigate the flow dynamics of silicic magma by coupling a one-dimensional conduit flow model (Kozono and Koyaguchi, 2012) with an experimentally calibrated brittle–ductile transition (Cordonnier et al., 2012). The results demonstrate that the length of the magma plug at which friction becomes the main flow type depends on the magma flux, because of crystallization kinetics and the ductile–brittle transition. Under high mass flow rate, the plug becomes short, because non-equilibrium crystallization inhibits an increase of magma viscosity. This results in the effusion of less viscous lava and large shear stress at the shallow part of the conduit. In contrast, the long plug that forms under low magma flux cannot maintain large shear stress due to weakness of the magmatic fault, which may cause the extrusion of a solidified lava spine. These results indicates that the transition from viscous flow to friction should be included in modeling to predict crustal deformation caused by magma ascent and understand the behavior of lava effusion.

Keywords: Lava effusion, Brittle-ductile transition, Conduit flow model

Exsolution and dissolution of CHO fluids upon isobaric magma mixing

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Understanding the behavior of volatile components upon magma mixing is important to comprehend the eruption dynamics, especially the triggering mechanism, as it controls the density of magmatic systems through exsolution or dissolution of fluids (bubbles). However, due to the non-ideality of the H_2O–CO_2 binary solution, the behavior of volatiles is not easy to understand. Yoshimura and Nakamura (2010) showed that H_2O-rich melt may vesiculate by CO_2-fluxing owing to a decrease in the H_2O fugacity in the silicate melt. Magma vesiculation is expected to occur through a similar mechanism by mixing with CO_2–rich magma, although the detailed conditions have not been clarified. In this study, we calculated the changes in the solubility of the volatile components in the H_2O–CO_2 binary system upon magma mixing, and also the changes in the amount of bubbles (free-fluid phase) at 100 MPa and 100°C. In the mass balance calculation, it was assumed that magmas consist of melt and bubbles, and crystallization of basaltic melt was excluded from the preliminary calculations. The changes in the bubble content before and after the mixing were obtained for the following three initial situations. Case (1): basalt contained bubbles, but rhyolite was bubble-free, though saturated with volatile components; Case (2): rhyolite contained bubbles, but basalt was bubble-free, though saturated with volatile components; and Case (3): both basalt and rhyolite contained bubbles. The changes in solubility were investigated by employing various mixing ratios in each case.
Our findings showed that the total bubble content in the system increased under the following conditions. In Case (1), when the basaltic system is CO_2–rich, and the rhyolite melt is H_2O–rich; in Case (2), when the rhyolitic system is CO_2–rich and the basaltic melt is H_2O–rich; in Case (3), when the bubble content in the basaltic system is large, both the basaltic and rhyolitic systems are CO_2–rich; and when the bubble content in basalt is small, the basaltic system is H_2O–rich, and the rhyolitic system is CO_2–rich. These results suggest that the total amount of bubbles may increase during the course of mixing of magmas with different volatile compositions. Injection of CO_2–rich basalt into H_2O–rich rhyolite, which is common in arc volcanoes, may trigger volcanic eruptions.

Keywords: H2O–CO2 binary solution, triggering mechanism

Estimation of the re-equilibrium depths of the Sakurajima vulcanian eruption magma from 2010 to 2015

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Recent studies on melt inclusions (MIs) revealed that phenocrysts are not a perfect containers of volatile components; especially water diffuses out through crystal upon decompression quickly (Mann et al.,2013). Water contents in MIs therefore record final storage pressure at which magmas were stagnant in a duration longer than that required for MIs to be reequilibrated with surrounding melts in terms of water fugacity. In the Sakurjima volcano, vulcanian explosions have occurred repeatedly since 1955. Determination of magma storage depths just prior to the explosions is useful to understand the eruption mechanisms. In this study we analyzed water contents and major element compositions of MIs in juvenile pumices from vulcanian eruptions from 2010 to 2015. The water contents of MIs were analyzed with FT-IR micro-reflectance spectroscopy (Yasuda, 2014). Most of the MIs have dacitic to rhyolitic compositions. Water contents of the MIs were mostly less than ca. 1 wt.%. Assuming water solubility of rhyolitic melt (Newman and Lowenstern, 2002) and density of the overlaying magma in the conduit to be 2400 kg/m^3 , this water content corresponds to below a few hundred meters.
Based on the geohygrometry of Putirka (2008), the equilibration between MIs and their host plagioclase was finally established at water contents of 1.3–2.8 wt %; this range is higher than the directly analyzed water contents of MIs, and the corresponding saturation depths were calculated to be 0.5–1.7 km. The difference from the final water reequilibration depth (< a few hundred meters) shows that the growth of plagioclase did not catch up with the magma ascent and resultant decompression and degassing prior to the explosions.
The depths of pressure sources of explosion earthquakes were estimated at 1–3 km from the crater (Iguchi, 2013), which is in between the water-reequilibration and plagioclase-reequilibration depths. Because the magma residence time at this depth is shorter than that required for the plagioclase reequilibration, degree of magma outgassing might be limited. This suggests a possibility that degassing of stagnated magma may causes pressurization to drive vulcanian explosions.

Keywords: melt inclusion, Sakurajima volcano, Vulcanian eruption

Textural relaxation and permeability evolution of bubble-bearing magmas

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Textural relaxation driven by interfacial tension is one of the fundamental processes in the microstructural evolution of bubble-bearing magma. A series of heating experiments of andesitic pumices by Otsuki et al. (2015) revealed that expulsion of bubbles to the outside of the system results densification and self-contraction of magma glob. In larger system, extracted vapor from the contracted melt glob may form "inter-glob pore" inside the system. Because this process may effect on the evolution of gas permeability of bubble-bearing magma, the textural relaxation process controls the outgassing within a volcanic conduit.

In this study, we examined the 3D bubble microstructure and gas permeability of the pumices after heating experiments to investigate the outgassing process from magma. The andesitic pumices of the 1914 Plinian eruption of Sakurajima were used for the starting materials. We prepared two types of the starting materials to investigate the size effect; cubes of pumice with sides 9 mm and non-shaped pumice pieces with 3–6 cm^3 in volume. The pumices were heated in silica glass tubes at a temperature of 1000°C under 0.1 MPa vapor pressure for up to 32 hours (Otsuki et al., 2015), and then their gas permeability and 3D bubble microstructure were examined. The permeability of the run products was determined with the method of Takeuchi et al. (2009) and bubble microstructure was investigated using micro X-ray CT (Otsuki et al., 2015).

Gas permeability of the pumice clasts ranges between 10^{-13} and 10^{-11} m^2. We found that time evolution of the gas permeability depends on sample size. The permeability of the run products from cube-cut pumice with 9 mm side concentrates in relatively low value (10^{-16}–10^{-15} m^2) after 8–32 hour heating, while the permeability of the run products after <2 hour run shows wider and lower ranges (10^{-16}–10^{-11} m^2). The 3D analysis of the bubble microstructure shows the development of inter-glob pores formed by multiple-contraction in a run product with short heating time (~30 min). No remarkable inter-glob pore is recognized in the run products after longer run duration (8–32 h). Some run products from the large pieces of pumice kept high permeability up to 10^{-11} m^2 after 8–32 hour heating. The 3D analysis shows that some inter-glob pores still survive in these samples. Based on the 3D analysis of bubble microstructure we infer that the time scale of permeability reduction were longer due to the larger (longer) size of inter-glob pores in larger samples. Therefore, the relaxation time of the inter-glob pores seems to control the evolution of gas permeability in relaxing magma at a shallow part of a volcanic conduit.

Keywords: Textural relaxation, Gas permeability, magma

The rapid increase of SO_2 emission rate observed in the Aso volcano before an explosive eruption on October 8, 2016.

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Fukuoka regional headquarters, JMA is observing the SO_2 emission rate as one of the data for estimating the volcanic activity at Aso volcano. Although we are observing the SO_2 emission rate about once in one week, depending on weather conditions, the observational data cannot be obtained two weeks or more.

The observational data from August 31 to September 26 was not obtained before the explosive eruption on October 8, 2016 for weather conditions. On September 26 when the volcanic tremor was shifting on the high amplitude level, the SO_2 emission rate increased to 3,100 ton/day. We were worried about the rise of a volcanic activity, and shortened the measuring interval of the SO_2 emission rate. However, the wind velocity and direction around the Aso volcano of the beginning of October were unstable. Additionally, the detection of the high column density more than 2000ppmm made difficult the analysis of the emission rate by the present analysis method.

In this study, the observational data on October 3, 4, 6, and the 7th was re-analyzed using the absorption spectrum for every sample. The accuracy of the SO_2 emission rate improved by creating a calibration curve using a high column density. Although the SO_2 emission rate of the day before explosive eruption was calculated with 15,000 ton/day in the preliminary analysis, average rate became 16,700 ton/day (Max: 20,800ton/day, Min: 11,800ton/day) as a result of the re-analysis. Additionally, it proved that the SO_2 emission rate in the Aso volcano was a clear upward tendency from October. This fluctuation corresponded with the increase in the amplitude level of a volcanic tremor, and the expansion of the ground. It is assumed that a large amount of volcanic gas accumulations at the shallow region of the crater following the rapid increase in the degassing from magma had occurred in the process in which it results at the explosive eruption on October 8.

Keywords: Aso volcano, SO2 emission rate, explosive eruption

Ground deformation preceding to the explosive eruption eruptions of Aso Volcano, Japan, October 8, 2016.

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On October 8, 2016, an explosive eruption occurred at the first crater of Nakadake, Aso volcano. This eruption produced ash plumes up to a height of 11000 m asl.that drifted ESE. Prior to the eruption, remarkable ground deformation was detected by super invar-rod extensometers and water-tube tilt meters and which were installed in a 30m observation tunnel, 1km southwest from the first crater. In this presentation, we report time series of the deformation and deformation sources which could be closely related to a preparatory process of a phreatic explosion.

The first crater of Nakadake erupted at 21:52 on October 7, 2016, and was followed by an explosive eruption at 01:46 on October 8. Prior to this volcanic activity, the radial component of the extensometers at observation tunnel showed dilatation from Sep.20. This deformation accelerated on Oct. 1 and was accompanied by swarm of volcanic earthquakes and tilt change showing subsidence of the crater.
Since 1990s, observations using broadband seismometers have revealed that the source of long period tremors (LPT) or very long period (VLP) events is a crack-like conduit located at depths of 1-1.5 km beneath Nakadake, with a length of 1km and width of 2.5km. It is also revealed that at this depth a pressure source was located and caused long-period displacements a few minutes before phreatic eruption in 1993 and 1994.
Furthermore, remarkable ground deformations were detected by extensometers and tiltmeters in Sep.2013, Jan. 2014 and July 2014, which corresponded to an expansion of the crack, especially shallower than 1km below the crater.

However, it is found that observed deformation in 2016 could be attributed to the expansion of the deeper portion of the crack-like conduit. Although this expansion accelerated on Oct.1,propagation of expansion to the shallower portion was not observed although this propagation was observed in Sep. 2013 event.

Keywords: Aso Volcano, explosive eruption, crack-like conduit, ground deformation

Hypocenters of earthquakes associated with rapid magma intrusion into Sakurajima volcano in August 2015 - Estimation by the amplitude source location method -

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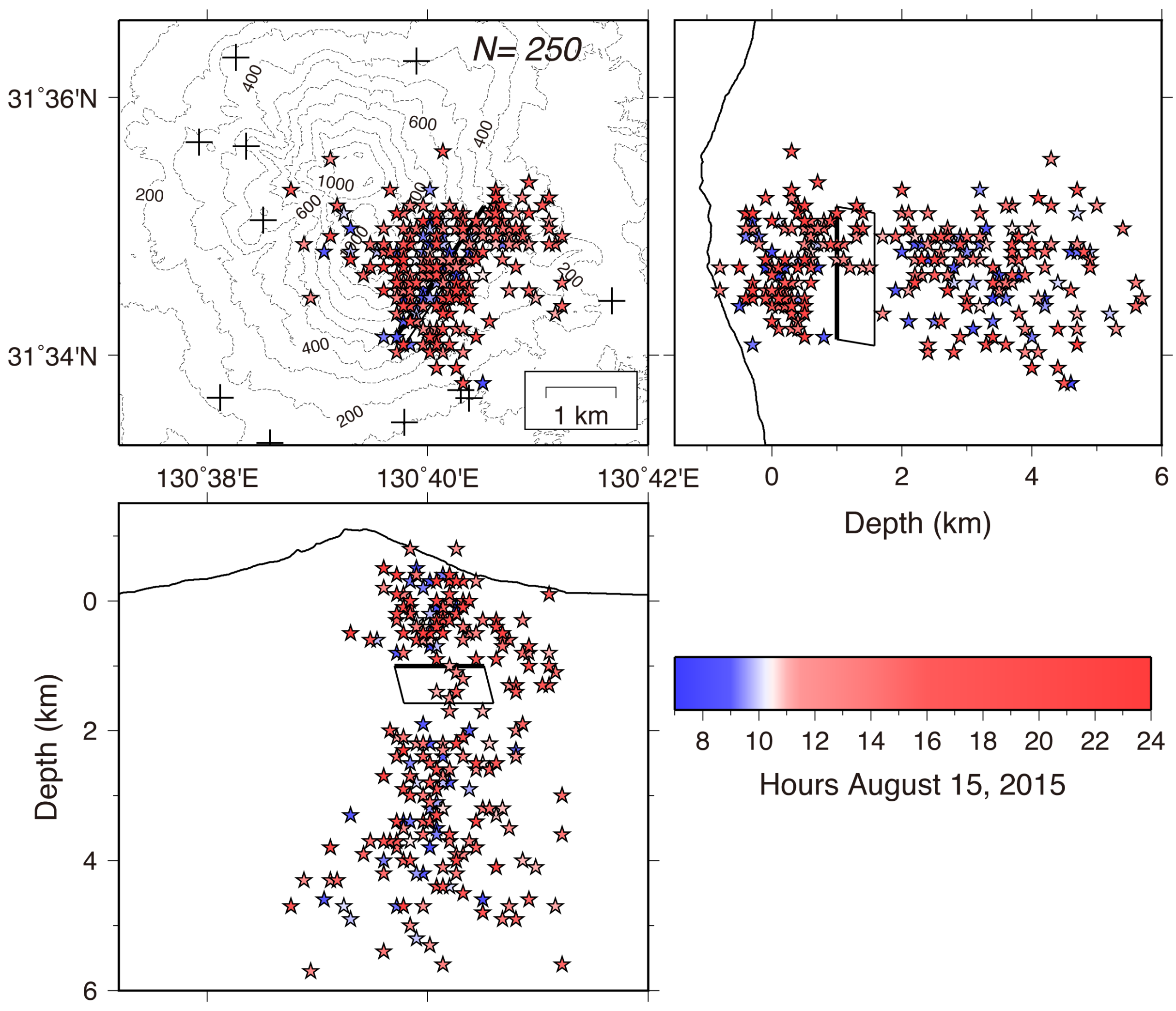
We estimated 250 hypocenters of earthquakes that occurred on August 15, 2015 beneath Sakurajima Volcano, southwest Japan by using the amplitudes source location (ASL) method. A plot of residuals for a hypocenter by the ASL method shows that horizontal locations were well constrained compared with the depths. The epicenters of the earthquakes distribute in and around the dike source which is estimated by geodetic measurements (See Figure). However, the depths of the earthquakes are poorly constrained and widely distribute at -1 to 6 km below sea level. The temporal change of the hypocentral distribution is weakly seen and should be carefully examined.

Keywords: Sakurajima volcano, Hypocenter, Earthquake swarm



Intense Swarm Activity in the Vicinity of the Sakurajima Volcano, Kyushu, Japan, in August 2015, detected by the Matched Filter Method.

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Seismic activity in the Vicinity of the Sakurajima Volcano, Kyushu, Japan was analyzed by using the Matched Filter Method (MFM). This swarm activity started on August 2015 and lasted for two days. Other authors reported that this activity was caused by a magma intrusion beneath the Sakurajima volcano by analyzing the crustal deformation data. In our analysis, we implemented MFM as a pseudo-automatic hypocenter determination system that enables to locate earthquakes one by one. Our interest is if the MFM is a useful tool for immediate grasp of an ongoing intense seismic activity.

In the MFM analysis, selection of the template earthquakes is important since the spatial distance and magnitude difference among the template earthquakes affect the detectivity of earthquakes. For this purpose, we separately implemented the conventional event detection algorithm using STA/LTA to detect possible template earthquake in order to configure a set of template earthquakes. In this stage, we set STA/LAT to a pretty large value than usual so that we can only detect those events that have rather higher S/N ratio. Then we manually inspect the hypocenter of a possible candidate of a template event to add it as a new member of the template earthquakes. When we obtained a new template, all the continuous record in the test period (48 hours starting from 00:00 August 15) are scanned by the new template to detect new earthquakes. We repeated this procedure during 4 hours from 9:00 to 13:00, August 15 to select template earthquakes. We finally selected 56 template earthquakes in this manner.

During the test period of 48 hours, about 1,900 earthquakes are detected and located with 56 templates. Automatically located hypocenters by MFM and manually inspected ones by JMA (Japan Meteorological Agency) indicates similar hypocenter distribution, and therefore the MFM possibly provide a useful information to understand the outline of the activity in the early stage. Although the manually inspected catalogue data is essential for the precise evaluation of a seismic activity, we suppose MFM is one of the powerful tools for an immediate grasp of the ongoing intense swarm activity.

Keywords: Sakurajima volcano, swarm activity, Matched Filter Method, pseudo-automatic hypocenter locating system

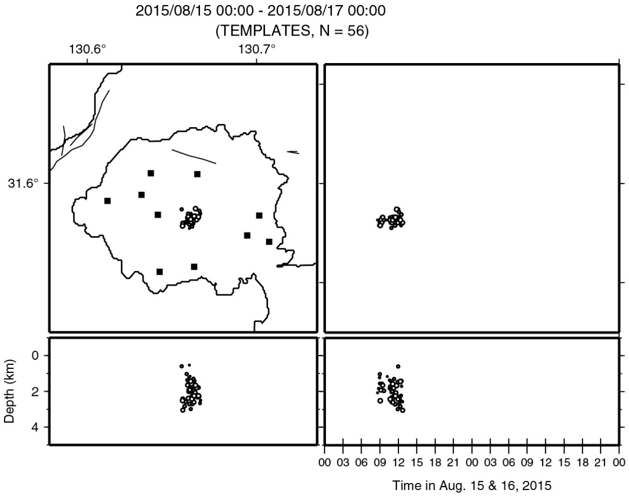
2015/08/15 00:00 - 2015/08/17 00:00
(TEMPLATES, N = 56)
130.6°
130.7°
31.6°
31.65
31.60
31.55
Depth (km)
Time in Aug. 15 & 16, 2015

Fig.1

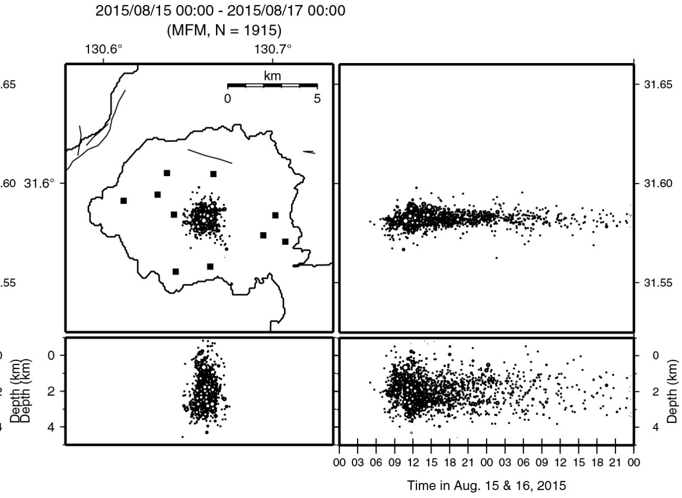
2015/08/15 00:00 - 2015/08/17 00:00
(MFM, N = 1915)
130.6°
130.7°
km
31.6°
31.65
31.60
31.55
Depth (km)
Time in Aug. 15 & 16, 2015

Fig.2

Seismic analyses of Vulcanian eruption at Sakurajima volcano: Spectral ratio analyses of explosion and Volcano-tectonic earthquakes

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Spectra ratios of direct and coda waves between large and small earthquake represent the differences of source time function, and have been used to evaluate the corner frequencies and magnitudes of tectonic earthquakes. We applied the spectral ratio method to explosion earthquakes observed at Sakurajima volcano, and found the spectral ratio changes with the lapse time. We inferred that the seismic waves of explosion earthquakes are generated mainly by initial rapid pressure release in the conduit but also by successive oscillations of the magma system during continuous ash emission. This observation is contrary to the results of tectonic earthquakes in many previous papers which show almost same spectral ratio between the direct and coda waves. In the present study, we further apply the spectral ratio method to the volcano tectonic earthquakes (VTs) observed at Sakurajima to examine whether or not the characteristics of explosion earthquakes represent the source process and are not affected by volcanic structures.

We analyze VTs occurring during a significant swarm in August 2015. The seismograms recorded at three JMA stations located at distances about 3 km away from the active crater (Showa crater) are used. We pick up the VT waveforms that are not disturbed by other event, and select the waveforms from large events. Then, we classify them into 2 classes according to their maximum amplitudes: the amplitudes of class I are ranging from 2×10^4 –6×10^4 nm/s and those of class II are ranging from 8×10^4– 11×10^4 nm/s. Then, we calculate spectral amplitude ratios of large event (class II) to the small event (class I) by setting a time windows of about 5 s for the S- direct wave and coda waves at a lapse time of 5-10 s. The results show that the amplitude ratios of VTs are similar to each other between direct and coda waves. This is well consistent with the results of previous studies that analyzes tectonic earthquakes. However, VTs during the August 2015 swarm are not large enough to analyze later coda with lapse times of > 20s when the explosion earthquakes show different spectral ratios. We will analyze large tectonic earthquakes occurring around Sakurajima volcano, which generate long coda waves, to examine whether or not volcanic heterogeneous structure affect the spectral ratios.

Keywords: Spectral ratio method, VT earthquake, Explosion earthquake, Sakurajima volcano

Triggering of volcanic eruptions: stress transfer by large earthquakes

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It is often said that large eruptions may trigger new volcanic eruptions. Previous studies using historical data as well as recent observation results indicate that volcanic eruptions likely occur within a few days of the occurrence of large earthquakes locating close to the volcanoes (e.g., Linde and Sacks, 1998; Manga and Brodsky, 2006). However, historical data may be biased or disturbed by human activity such as world-war II. Triggering mechanism is also discussed at several volcanoes with the crustal stress changes generated by large earthquakes that may introduce magma upward migrations, but systematic research has not yet been done. The present study, therefore, analyzes recent reliable data of large earthquakes and volcanic eruptions to obtain empirical relations between the large earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. Global CMT catalog from 1976 to 2010 and Smithsonian data base of volcanic eruptions from 1966 to 2015 are used for the analyses. Large earthquakes with a magnitude of >=7.5 are selected after removal of aftershocks of other large earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions nearby the large earthquakes are searched. The results show that occurrence rate of volcanic eruptions at volcanoes located within 200 km distance from large earthquakes increases about 50 % after the occurrences of large earthquakes. The large earthquakes with M>=7.5 and locating 200 km far from the volcanoes or with M<=7.5 do not affect the occurrence rate of volcanic eruptions. The volcanic eruptions occurring within 5 years after the occurrences of large earthquakes with M>=7.5 at a distance of less than 200 km are further analyzed to examine whether the volcanic edifice are compressed or dilated by the large earthquakes. The results show that about 60 % of the volcanic eruptions occurred at volcanoes that are subject to dilatation after the large earthquakes. However, almost same percentages of the eruptions occurring before the large earthquakes are located at the dilated regions. Not only the dilatation that may lead gas bubble nucleation and growth in magma to get buoyancy force, but also the contraction that may squeeze up the magma may be the mechanisms to trigger new eruptions at volcanoes nearby large earthquakes.

Keywords: volcanic eruption, large earthquake, triggering

