TIME-SERIES OBSERVATION FOR BIOGEOCHEMISTRY IN THE WESTERN SUBARCTIC

Honda, M. C.[1], Watanabe, S.[1], Matsumoto, K.[1], Kawakami, H.[1], Wakita, M.[1], Fujiki, T.[1], and Saino, T.[1]

[1] *Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology, 2-15 Natsushima, Yokosuka, 237-0061 Japan, E mail: hondam@jamstec.go.jp*

Based on the time-series observation for the biogeochemistry at station KNOT (44°N / 155°E) between 1998 and 2001, which was Japanese national project under an umbrella of Joint Global Ocean Flux Study (JGOFS), it was verified that the North Pacific Western Subarctic Gyre (WSG) has large seasonal variability in nutrients, pCO_2, primary productivity and particulate organic carbon flux, and that time-series observation is very important in order to quantify carbon cycle in the ocean and air-sea exchange of CO_2 by, especially, the biological activity (biological pump) [1][2]. Since 2001, time-series observation has been conducted at station K2 (47°N / 160°E. Fig.1) by using the new mooring systems and research vessel [3][4]. Our subsurface mooring system consists of various automatic sensor or samplers such as an optical sensor package (BLOOMS) [3], a water sampler (RAS) [4] and sediment traps deployed at multiple layers. Time-series observation of optical field and nutrients at ~ 35 m by BLOOMS and RAS, respectively, revealed that phytoplankton increases and nutrients, especially silicate, decreases largely between late June and early July. During this time, increase of fluxes of particulate organic carbon and biogenic opal at ~ 150 m was observed by sediment trap. It is indicative of that primary produced or assimilated organic carbon is transported quickly to the ocean interior. One year and half long BLOOMS deployment at 35 m and multiple sediment traps deployment from 150 m to 5000 m revealed that 1) Biogenic materials are transported vertically without significant lateral transport (Fig. 2) [5], 2) Sinking velocity of particles increases with depth, and 3) Biogenic opal plays an important role in organic carbon transport. Seasonal observation of primary productivity, nutrients and natural radionuclide (thorium 234) by research vessel has also revealed that new production, export flux and export ratio are higher than those in other oceans, indicating that the biological pump at station K2 is very efficient for uptake of atmospheric CO_2 [6][7]. This effective biological pump at station K2 was supported by comparative observation at station ALOHA [8][9].

On the other hand, long-term increase of dissolved inorganic carbon following increase of atmospheric CO_2 has been observed at station K2. It is noted that increase rate of atmospheric pCO_2 ($pCO_{2(air)}$) in winter was higher than that of sea surface pCO_2 ($pCO_{2(sea)}$) in winter. Though $pCO_{2(sea)}$ in winter has been higher than $pCO_{2(air)}$ in winter until now, it is predicted that $pCO_{2(sea)}$ will be higher than $pCO_{2(air)}$ all year round after the middle 21 century. It is indicative of possibility that the ocean acidification will be accelerated after that period and ocean ecosystem will change in the WSG. In order to predict change in the biological pump and its feedback to the global environment, time-series observation should be continued with a new mooring system (sensor package including CTD, O_2, GTD, fluorometer and FRRF supported by underwater winch) at not only station K2, but also a new station located in the Western Pacific Subtropical Gyre as a counterpart of station K2 (Station S1: 30°N / 145°E).

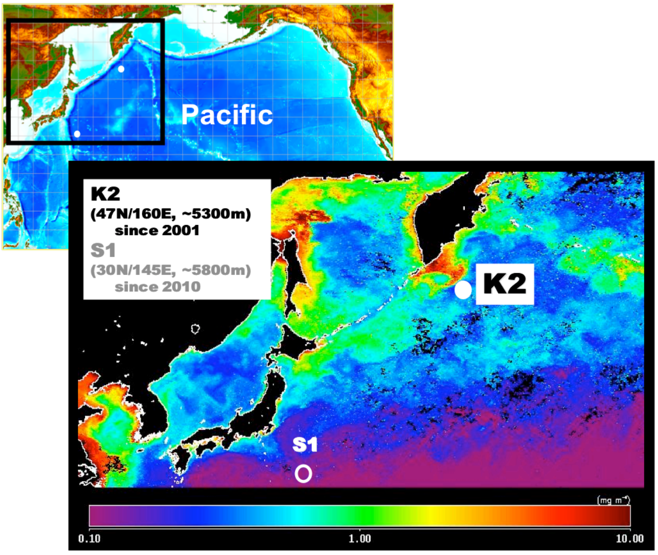

Figure 1. Time-series station K2 (47°N / 160°E, ~5300 m). This station is located in the Western Pacific Subarctic Gyre. Time-series observation for biogeochemistry with mooring systems and R/V has been conducted since 2001. From 2010, time-series observation will be also conducted at comparative time-series station S1 (30°N / 145°E, ~ 5800m) in the Western Pacific Subtropical Gyre. Ocean color is monthly composite of SeaWiFs chlorophyll-a data in October 2001 (courtesy of Sasaoka, JAMSTEC).

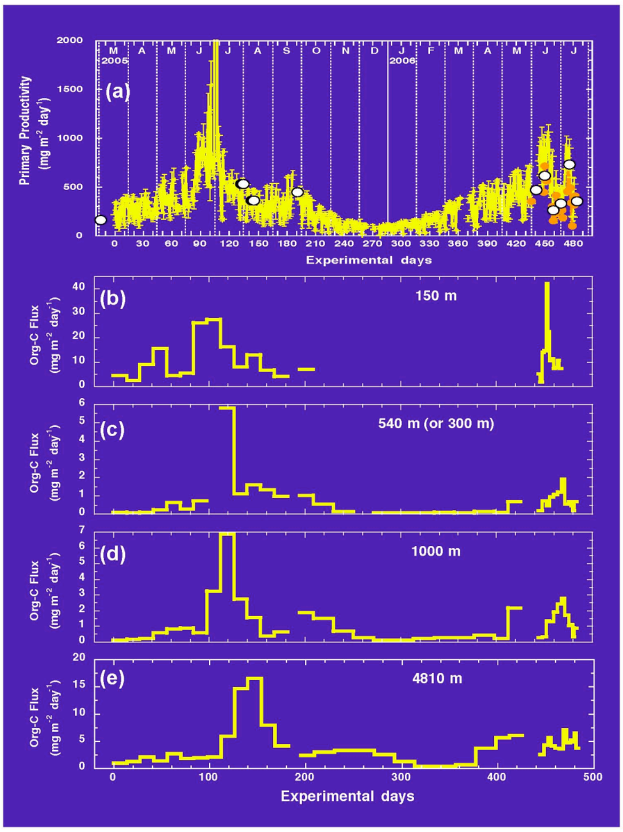

Figure 2(a) Seasonal variability in primary productivity estimated with underwater optical data obtained by BLOOMS between Mar 2005 and July 2006. Circles are primary productivity observed on board. (b) ~ (e) Seasonal variability in POC flux at 150 m, 540 m (or 300 m), 1000 m and 4810 m obtained by time-series sediment traps between Mar 2005 and July 2006. (Honda et al., accepted to Deep-Sea Research I)

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