Sructure of the Lunar Ionized Exosphere Observed by KAGUYA MAP-PACE

Shoichiro Yokota¹, Yoshifumi Saito, Takaaki Tanaka¹, Kazushi Asamura¹, Masaki N. Nishino¹, Hideo Tsunakawa² and SECOND S. AUTHOR² ¹Institute of Space and Astronautical Science/JAXA ² Tokyo Institute of Technology

The Moon has no global intrinsic magnetic field and only has a very thin atmosphere called surface-bounded exosphere. Some ground-based measurements have revealed the structure of the lunar exosphere since the discovery. The alkali components such as Na or K have especially been observed to understand the generation process and the transport mechanisms. The ground-based measurements and laboratory experiments have confirmed that the alkali exospheric components are produced by ion-induced desorption (sputtering), photon-stimulated desorption, meteorite-induced vaporization and/or thermal desorption from the surface. One of the loss processes of the exospheric particles is photoionization and ion-pickup process. The ionized exospheric particles are transported by the surrounding electric field. Here we propose that ion measurements made from lunar orbit is another way to study the lunar exosphere as well as interactions between the solar wind and the planetary surface. SELENE(KAGUYA) is a Japanese lunar orbiter which was launched on 14 September 2007 from Tanegashima Space Center in Japan. MAP is one of the scientific instruments onboard SELENE(KAGUYA). MAP consists of LMAG (Lunar MAGnetometer) and PACE. PACE consists of two electron sensors and two ion sensors. One of the ion sensors is equipped with a mass analyzer. The MAP-PACE measurements have elucidated that the ions originate from the lunar surface and exosphere and that the ions are at least composed of He+, C+, O+, Na+, K+ and Ar+. The measurements of ions from the Moon enable us to continuously monitor the lunar exosphere. The 1.5-year observation of SELENE(KAGUYA) shows that the ions from the Moon have been detected both when the Moon is exposed to the solar wind and when it is in the Earth's lobe region. The observation suggests that the solar wind is not the dominant source mechanism for the lunar exospheres. Moreover, the MAP-PACE observation shows the dependence on the solar zenith angle and the dawn-dusk asymmetry of the lunar exosphere. We report the features of the lunar exospheres obtained by the SELENE(KAGUYA) observation and discuss the source mechanism of the lunar exospheres.

Keywords: Lunar exosphere; Mass analysis; SELENE(KAGUYA).