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JAXA'S HAYABUSA SAMPLES OF ASTEROID 25143 ITOKAWA: FIVE YEARS LATER

Takashi Mikouchi, an associate professor of mineralogy in the Department of Earth and Planetary Science at the University of Tokyo (Japan), is studying extraterrestrial samples from the 25143 Itokawa asteroid (FIG. 1). In June 2010, samples of this asteroid were returned by the Japan Aerospace Exploration agency (JAXA)'s *Hayabusa* spacecraft and are currently being investigated to better understand the evolution of the Solar System.

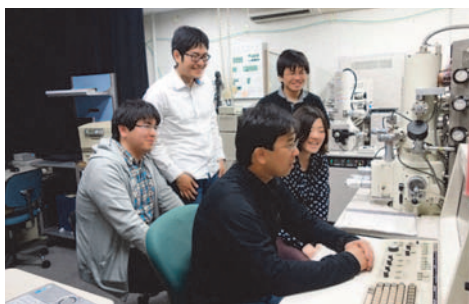


FIGURE 1 Members of Dr. Takashi Mikouchi's laboratory in front of the field emission gun scanning electron microscope at the University of Tokyo (Japan).

Although some of the returned particles are as large as 300 μm , most are smaller than 50 μm . Following initial analysis by the *Hayabusa* Asteroidal Sample Preliminary Examination Team, the particles are now being distributed to the international community under the International Announcement of Opportunity (referred to as "AO") program.

Particles from asteroid Itokawa are of great scientific interest because they are the first asteroidal materials to be returned to Earth and because they contain important information on the evolution of small objects in the Solar System. A direct link has now, and for the first time, been made between meteorites and their parent asteroid. The particles have also revealed that the original parent body, which was much larger than the present Itokawa asteroid (535 m \times 294 m \times 209 m) experienced a break-up and a subsequent re-agglomeration into one or more rubble-piles (e.g. Nakamura et al. 2011). Most importantly, some Itokawa particles contain evidence that they were once on the surface of the asteroid and have been affected by space weathering (e.g. Noguchi et al. 2011; Nagao et al. 2011). Such findings would not have been possible from studying meteorite samples alone.

Mineralogical and crystallographic studies were conducted on several Itokawa particles received following the first AO in 2012 (FIG. 2). Synchrotron radiation X-ray sources were used

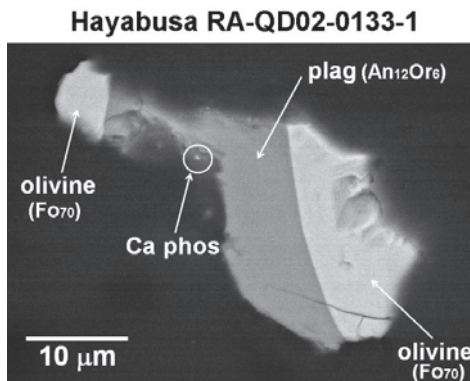


FIGURE 2 Back-scattered electron image of an analyzed particle from asteroid Itokawa, as returned by the *Hayabusa* spacecraft. Ca phos (calcium phosphate particle); Plag (plagioclase)

to investigate their thermal and shock histories (Mikouchi et al. 2014). At the Super Photon ring – 8 GeV Beam Line 37XU (SPring-8, BL 37XU) facility in Hyōgo Prefecture, Japan (the world's largest synchrotron), an energy-scanning X-ray diffraction (XRD) technique has been developed that can analyze crystals as small as ~1 μm in thin sections (FIG. 3) (Hagiya et al. 2010). Using this technique, plagioclase grains from several Itokawa particles were analyzed and crystal structure refinements were performed revealing that they had undergone high-temperature metamorphism at ~800°C. This result is consistent with initial analyses, which suggested that the original parent body size was greater than 20 km in diameter (Nakamura et al. 2011). X-ray absorption near edge structure (XANES) measurements were carried out at the Photon Factory of the High Energy Accelerator Research Organization (KEK) (using a 5- μm beam on line BL-4A) at Tsukuba (Japan) on the same plagioclase grains to determine their iron valence, which is a good indicator of redox state (Satake et al. 2014). Approximately 50% of the iron in the Itokawa plagioclase crystals is present as Fe³⁺, suggesting formation under relatively oxidizing conditions. This result is

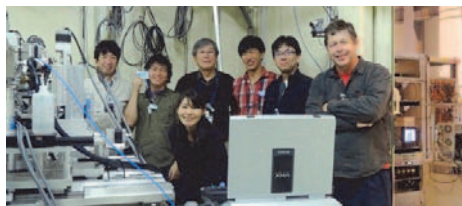


FIGURE 3 Synchrotron radiation XRD instrument at the Super Photon ring – 8GeV Beam Line 37XU (SPring-8, BL 37XU) facility in Hyōgo Prefecture, Japan

consistent with reports that Itokawa particles show a similarity to LL chondrites, which themselves were formed under relatively oxidizing conditions.

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Original Article

The reactions between iron and magnetite at 6 GPa and 1273–1873 K: Implication to reduction of reduced carbonate in the deep mantle Naira S. MARTIROSYAN, Konstantin D. LITASOV, Anton SHATSKIY and Eiji OHTANI

Letters

Local structure around Ge in lithium germanate glasses analyzed by AXS and EXAFS techniques Hiroshi ARIMA, Toru KAWAMATA and Kazumasa SUGIYAMA

Geochemical and Sr–Nd isotopic characteristics of Quaternary Magmas from the Pre-Komitake volcano Tomoyuki SHIBATA, Mitsuhiro YOSHIMOTO, Toshitsugu FUJII and Setsuya NAKADA

New finding of paragonite–clinzoisite association in garnet from the type locality of Sanbagawa belt (Kanto Mountains, Japan) Atsushi MIYASHITA

Ruby-bearing feldspathic dike in peridotite from Ray-Iz ophiolite, the Polar Urals: Implications for mantle metasomatism and origin of ruby Satoko ISHIMARU, Shoji ARAI, Makoto MIURA, Vladimir R. SHMELEV and Evgeny PUSHKAREV

Effect of clinopyroxene composition on Fe–Mg distribution coefficient between garnet and clinopyroxene Daisuke NAKAMURA, Madoka OKADA and Takao HIRAJIMA

XAFS study of Zr in Cretaceous–Tertiary boundary clays from Stevns Klint Tsubasa TOBASE, Akira YOSHIASA, Ling WANG, Tatsuya HIRATOKO, Hidetomo HONGU, Maki OKUBE and Kazumasa SUGIYAMA

The effect of curing temperature of high alumina cement on the crystallization of stratlingite: In the case of curing temperatures of 10°C and 60°C Toshio SHINMEL, Makio OHKAWA, Makoto IYAMA, Christoph WOHRMEYER and Chris PARR