

# Nikon Research Report Vol.6 2024

## 刊行の趣旨

株式会社ニコンが行った研究開発活動の成果を,広く紹介することが刊行の趣旨である.ニコン のコア技術である「光利用技術」と「精密技術」をベースにした研究開発成果として,新製品に 盛り込まれた技術と,学会等の機関から評価を頂いた技術を中心に紹介している.

#### 巻 頭 言



専務執行役員 CTO, Deputy CFO 大村 泰弘

自然環境や社会情勢の変化により、私たちを取り巻く環境は日々変化し、様々な課題に直面しています. そのような中でも、サステナブルな社会に向けて事業を通して貢献できる様、お客様の欲しいモノやコト の本質を理解し、解決策を一緒に考え、お客様のイノベーション創出を支援していきたいと考えています. 2030年のありたい姿「人と機械が共創する社会の中心企業」を踏まえて策定した中期経営計画も折り返 し点を過ぎました.計画に沿ってさらに成長し、次の時代においても社会やお客様の期待に持続的に応え られるように、価値提供の源泉である技術革新を進めて行きたいと思います.



エグゼクティブ・フェロー 先進技術開発本部長 土肥 正明

ニコングループの研究・開発成果として、今年も本レポートを皆さまにお届けします.中期経営計画に おける戦略事業のデジタルマニュファクチャリング事業では、新たにグループ会社となった Nikon SLM Solutions AG の業界最大・最速クラスの金属3D プリンターの開発と、サステナブルな社会の実現に向け た風力発電へのリブレット適用技術(サメ肌構造を模した生物模倣技術の一種)を、ヘルスケア事業では、 創薬と病理診断に貢献するデジタル顕微鏡技術をお伝えします.主要事業である映像事業では最先端技術 を結集させたテレコンバーター内蔵大口径超望遠レンズについて、他にも将来の宇宙光通信に向けた光源 技術、基盤技術である材料技術についてお伝えします.

ニコングループの技術開発の一端ではありますが,我々の取り組みを皆様に知っていただくとともに, ニコングループの技術が社会や環境に役立つ契機になれば幸いです.

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## PBF 式 Additive Manufacturing 装置 NXG 600E の開発

Sebastian Feist, Daniel Brück, Christoph Wangenheim

## Development of PBF Additive Manufacturing Machine NXG 600E

Sebastian FEIST, Daniel BRÜCK and Christoph WANGENHEIM

レーザー粉末床溶融(L-PBF) などの積層造形(AM)技術は、長い間プロトタイピングや研究用途での使用にのみ適 しているという評判を乗り越えてきた.現在、Nikon SLM Solutionsは、これまでに製造された中で最も複雑な金属 部品の連続生産に注力する世界中の高度な目利きの顧客にAM ソリューションを提供している.NXG 600E マシンの開 発により、Nikon SLM Solutionsは、最大 600 mm × 600 mm × 1500 mm の寸法の部品を製造できる、最も生産性 と信頼性の高い L-PBF プロセスの提供に努めており、多くの技術的課題に直面してきた.本稿では、これらの個々の課 題を詳細に説明し、金属 AM の分野で革新的な機能を導入することで、これらの課題をどのように克服したかについて 説明する.

Additive Manufacturing (AM) technologies such as Laser Powder Bed Fusion (L-PBF) have long surpassed the reputation of only being suitable for use in the context of prototyping or research applications. Today, Nikon SLM Solutions already provides AM solutions to highly discerning customers around the world, who are focused on serial production of the most complex metal components that have ever been manufactured. With the development of the NXG 600E machine, Nikon SLM Solutions faced many technical challenges while striving to provide the most productive and reliable L-PBF process, capable of producing parts with a dimension of up to 600 mm x 600 mm x 1500 mm. This paper describes these individual challenges in detail and how they were successfully overcome by introducing innovative features which are novel in the realm of metal AM.

Key words レーザー粉末床溶融 (L-PBF), 積層造形 (AM), SLM Solutions, NXG 600E laser powder bed fusion (L-PBF), additive manufacturing (AM), SLM Solutions, NXG 600E

## **1** Introduction

Laser Powder Bed Fusion (L-PBF) is a cutting-edge metal additive manufacturing technology revolutionizing industries like aerospace, automotive, and healthcare. Nikon SLM Solutions is a market leading manufacturer of metal L-PBF machines for serial production and prototyping applications, seeking to drive the mass adoption of this manufacturing technique forward and enabling the creation of previously impossible components. Additionally, L-PBF allows for customization and on-demand production, making it ideal for small- to medium-batch manufacturing and customized products.

Since its very inception as "SLM Solutions GmbH" in 2011, Nikon SLM Solutions has been focused on pushing metal additive manufacturing towards commercial and serial production maturity by implementing innovative technology solutions to boost productivity, stability, and part quality. In 2013, the German company launched the SLM®500, which was the first system to feature 4 lasers that could generate a single part simultaneously. The patented multi-laser approach quickly became an industry defining standard for highest productivity, shaping the forefront of metal additive manufacturing capabilities.

In 2020, the company reshaped the market by launching the NXG XII 600, a revolutionary machine which at the time tripled the industry adopted maximum number of lasers from 4 to 12 in a single step, as well as increasing each laser's maximum output power from 700 W to 1000 W. This machine's capabilities in a build envelope of 600 mm x 600 mm x 600 mm (XYZ) are still unmatched by the rest of the market in terms of productivity and robustness. Now, with the launch of the NXG 600E (shown as Fig. 1), the NXG system platform has been expanded to allow for



Fig. 1 Picture of the NXG 600E machine

the manufacture of components with a z-height of up to 1500 mm. This endeavor came with several technical obstacles that may seem small to the uninitiated, nevertheless posed significant challenges during the development and qualification phase.

### **2** Technology Background

The process of metal Laser Powder Bed Fusion (L-PBF) begins with a digital 3D model (as Fig. 2) of the desired part, which must be prepared accordingly to make it compatible with the generative process within the L-PBF machine. The 3D model is placed inside of a virtual representation of the machine's build envelope, while proper orientation and support structures are already considered. Next, a software processor slices this model, along with its orientation data and support structures into thousands of individual layers. These thin layers contain the cross-sectional data for a specific section of the part which is to be created. The thickness of each layer typically ranges from between 30  $\mu m$  and 90  $\mu m$ , depending on whether the focus lies on part quality or process speed. However, as even more productivity is desired in the future, layer thicknesses of beyond 120 µm are already used.

The finalized data is transferred to the L-PBF machine, where the selective melting procedure occurs in a controlled inert gas environment, preventing oxidation (Fig. 3). This procedure begins with the spreading of a fine metal powder layer onto a build platform (Substrate Plate) by the Recoater. Afterwards, one or multiple high-powered lasers, guided by



Fig. 2 A 3D model being prepared for layer generation



Fig. 3 Layout of a typical L-PBF machine process chamber



Fig. 4 Active laser exposure of metal powder within the NXG 600E machine process chamber

individually controlled mirrors, selectively melt the powder according to the individual cross sections of the digital model. As the lasers move across the powder on the build platform, they fuse melted metal particles together, forming a solid cross-section of the part. Powder which is not melted remains loose and can be reclaimed later for a future process. The build platform then descends by the thickness of one layer and new metal powder is spread on top. Laser exposure of powder material again occurs as in the previous sequence, now guided by the data from the next part crosssection. Each new cross-section is solidified and fused with the solidified sections from previous layers, allowing the metal part to grow vertically as the L-PBF process continues.

Figure 4 shows active laser exposure of metal powder within the NXG 600E machine process chamber. This layerby-layer procedure is repeated until the entire part is fabricated. Any required support structures are generated simultaneously to prevent the deformation of complex geometries. After completion, the part is removed from the L-PBF machine and undergoes post-processing steps such as unpacking, support removal, and heat treatment. Machining for dimensional accuracy, as well as surface finishing for desired surface qualities can also be completed separately. The result is a high-precision, complex metal part ready for use in various industries like aerospace, automotive, medical, and more. The concept of additive part generation sounds simple but each step along the process chain poses unique technical challenges, all of which had to be approached in a new way for the large-scale printer NXG 600E.

## **3** Challenges to Overcome for Large-scale Metal AM

3.1. Multi-laser Segmentation and Alignment For Data preparation, new algorithms needed to be devel-



Fig. 5 Laminar shield gas flow within the sealed process chamber

oped and validated to handle the complex task of assigning segments of the individual part cross sections to one or more of the 12 lasers. The goal here was to find the fastest melting strategy to satisfy the highest demands for part quality properties. Another factor that plays into these quality characteristics is the ability to accurately align each of the 12 lasers to one another so that they melt the powder at precisely the location which they are being instructed to travel to. For this purpose, a novel alignment method was developed which guarantees flawless build quality and reduces risks from optical drifts. The result is that each position of the process chamber's build area can be reached by accurately aligned lasers, enabling a laser utilization of up to 100%.

#### 3.2. Process Stability within Each Layer

Another technological feat to achieve was designing a large process chamber that would be able to contain a stable shield gas environment in which 12 lasers could melt the powder material consistently. Figure 5 shows laminar shield gas flow within the sealed process chamber. Build chamber sizes are not infinitely scalable; lower gas flow stability will require a reduction in laser power and thus productivity. During melting, a large amount of soot and sparks are generated which need to be ejected from the process chamber via a steady gas flow. The way the lasers move to melt the powder is calculated very precisely so that none of the soot from one active laser exposure travels into the region of another. For these calculations to be feasible and predictable, the gas flow must be laminar and persistent during the entire run-time of multiple days or even weeks. Generating a laminar flow is very difficult to ensure over such a large build area of 600 mm x 600 mm. Nikon SLM Solutions already began developing new shield gas flow principles for their smaller machines, incorporating a patented sintered wall technology which was enhanced and further optimized for the NXG XII 600 platform.



Fig. 6 Two 1500 mm tall jet engine pylons, made of nickel alloy In718, produced within 169 hours

#### 3.3. Process Stability across 25.000 Layers

A controlled melting procedure within each individual layer is not enough. An industrial scale metal additive manufacturing machine must also deliver a stable process which can be kept consistent over tens of thousands of layers. For a standard NXG XII 600 with a build envelope of 600 mm x 600 mm x 600 mm this was already very challenging, as the extracted build job after production includes a finished part and loose powder with a combined weight of over 2000 kg. Figure 6 is a photo of built parts. When extending the z-height for the NXG 600E to 1500 mm, the maximum weight could exceed 5000 kg. This has severe implications for both the accuracy level within each layer, as well as the structural integrity requirements for the entire system as a whole unit. Typically, extending the z-height of a metal additive manufacturing system is simple to achieve because the process chamber and optical components do not need to be changed. However, at this scale, the z-drive robustness and overall machine architecture also required additional consideration.

#### 3.4. Part Characteristics Consistency

The result of the previously elaborated process and machine characteristics combined is a solidified metal part which needs to perform as desired in a variety of different scenarios. These applications can vary widely in their needs for alloy composition and geometrical complexity, resulting in increased capability needs for the AM system. Depending on how well factors like laser alignment, gas flow stability, process stability are fine-tuned to one another, the solidified



Fig. 7 Seventeen vertically stacked sample part levels from a single NXG 600E L-PBF process

part may display varied levels of mechanical strength, elongation at break or surface quality. Such a variability is undesired, as the expectation is that the part will feature a level of homogeneity across its entire z-height. To ensure customer expectations are met, Nikon SLM Solutions carried out rigorous material parameter and process validations during the development of the NXG 600E using stacked sample parts as Fig. 7. This approach will be elaborated in the following chapter.

#### **4** Testing and Validation of Process Stability

#### 4.1. Laser Allocation Strategies

Wherever any laser melts powder material, large amounts of soot and spatter ejections will form. These pose a risk to the overall process stability, as well as part characteristics and therefore need to be removed by the shield gas flow. Naturally, any soot and spatter travelling downstream towards the gas flow outlet may also interact with exposure areas from other lasers. To prevent this, characteristics of soot and spatter creation need to be predicted, as well as the travel trajectory towards the gas flow outlet. This is a general problem of the metal L-PBF technology that Nikon SLM Solutions overcame with optimized machine design experience, accrued over the last 3 decades.

During the NXG XII 600 early development phase, testing with only 6 lasers was performed to understand the complex interactions between fume and spatter, which increase tremendously with every added laser. The following study was divided into a first setup where all 6 lasers were exposing a



Fig. 8a Six lasers exposing synchronously with maximum soot and spatter interaction



Fig. 8b Asynchronous exposure leading to less soot and spatter interaction for



Fig. 9 Roughness (a) increases/(b) decreases with the distance for (a) synchronous/(b) asynchronous exposure and (c) Sample distribution for the test setup

secluded area of powder synchronously (Fig. 8a) and into a second setup which features asynchronous exposure (Fig. 8b). In both cases, the performance characteristics of the laser furthest to the left were observed. During the first setup, the exposure from the laser on the left side is heavily influenced by soot and spatter ejections from the remaining lasers on the right side. As shown in the figure below, the distance of the 5 lasers further to the right side was then increased significantly for the second test setup. The left laser was subsequently only influenced by spatter on the powder bed and no longer by any foreign soot ejections.

The results of a detailed sample analysis show that surface roughness on the part which was exposed by the laser on the left side increases significantly for synchronous exposure (Fig. 9a and Fig. 9b). Figure 9c is a sample distribution. When the distance between laser exposure areas is increased (asynchronous approach), surface roughness decreases to a level which users of the L-PBF technology are familiar with.

However, in a real production scenario, the highest possible level of quality needs to be achieved on all parts and samples. The assessment of multiple individual part crosssections for each layer and how to allocate the 12 lasers is a complex task which only very advanced software algorithms can solve. For use in serial production scenarios, the goal was not only to achieve best part quality but also to minimize overall exposure time. Lower exposure times result in lower cost per part and make the entire process viable. As emphasized by the test setup above, a maximized utilization rate for all 12 lasers is desired. A high amount of additional test scenarios were conducted to acquire more data which could be used to derive the best laser allocation algorithms.

The result is a variety of strategies that can be chosen during the data preparation phase. Different scanner allocation strategy options need to be made available, due to the high amount of unique cross-section characteristics that differ from one application to the next. The outcome of maximizing either productivity or part quality will vary greatly, even for the same part.

- Maximized productivity and less quality (fastest scanning time)

- Mixture of high productivity and high quality (+35% scanning time)

- Maximized quality and low productivity (+90% scanning time)

Ultimately, the goal was to offer users of the L-PBF

technology a spectrum of scanner allocation approaches, eliminating the need for compromises.

#### 4.2. Gas Flow Optimization for Laminar Flow

The task of managing up to 12 individual lasers and their interactions could only be achieved if the underlying process conditions were managed in a consistent and repeatable way. Therefore, it was crucial to supply the process chamber with a highly laminar shield gas flow across the entire powder bed. An active shield gas flow within a metal L-PBF machine' s process chamber has been used since the technology was first developed. However, as the number of lasers increased steadily, new approaches had to be found to prevent the need for sacrificing part quality for higher productivity.

Initially, the shield gas was introduced from one side of the process chamber via two separate inlets. One inlet was located at the bottom of the chamber, to produce a stable flow across the powder bed, while the second inlet was located towards the top of the chamber, to prevent soot ejections from reaching the area where the laser enters the chamber. Both gas streams exit the chamber through an outlet located at the bottom of the opposite side, carrying soot and spatter ejections with them. This setup however contains flaws that become more apparent when the number of lasers increases. The two separate streams do not cover the entire z-height of the chamber and a turbulent zone with considerable back flow starts to form in the center of the chamber. A simulation of this inlet setup can be seen in Fig. 10a, where gas enters the chamber on the right and exits at the left.

With multiple active exposure areas, soot will have the opportunity to accumulate in this turbulent zone before it is ejected. The result is a temporary 'soot cloud' formation which lasers will have to pass through before reaching the powder bed. This effectively causes a decreased amount of laser power to arrive where it is needed for melting, leading



Fig. 10 (a)Turbulent gas flow resulting from two separate inlets, (b) Laminar gas flow resulting from sintered wall inlet approach

to an unstable exposure process and inconsistent part properties.

Nikon SLM Solutions already tackled the investigation into alternative shield gas flow principles prior to the development of the NXG XII 600. The solution was to ensure a steady gas flow via the entire z-height, as opposed to only at the very top and bottom. This was achieved by incorporating a patented sintered wall technology, where the gas flow inlet itself comprises a major part of one process chamber wall. Figure 10b shows a gas flow simulation which includes only a reduced amount of additional inlet points in the middle of the right wall. The difference in process chamber environment quality is obvious. The turbulent zone in the middle can be eliminated effectively.

Even though this approach was already implemented on smaller L-PBF machines such as the SLM®280 and SLM®500, an identical setup could not be adapted without major modifications. Previously, the distance which the laminar gas stream covered was only around 280 mm. With the increased size of the NXG XII 600 process chamber, a highly laminar flow had to be ensured over a distance of 600 mm.

The chosen approach was to iteratively design, simulate, build, and test various process chamber configurations in virtual and real-life environments. This process contained multiple stages, comprised of complex design adaptations, individual unit and system tests. In summation, the targeted performance characteristics to optimize revolved around three aspects:

- Achieving a highly homogenous flow profile in y-direction (process chamber front to back)

- Minimizing the gas flow speed reduction above the powder in x-direction (as it travels from inlet to outlet)

- Eliminating the risk for laser inlet contamination at the top of the process chamber

Multiple variables for each property needed to be assessed individually and in combination. These variables included but were not limited to gas inlet geometry, gas outlet geometry, process chamber design, gas volume flow rate, background gas flow design, as well as distribution between background flow and lower jet flow. One additional design guideline was the need to remove all unnecessary obstacles to the gas, for the purpose of isolating dead cavities. The result was a highly symmetric chamber where even the streamlined powder Recoater has a hidden parking position in both back and front positions, so as not to disturb the overall flow.

Figure 11a-c demonstrates the iterative process, where



Fig. 11 (a) Simulation results of the unchanged inlet concept applied to a large process chamber, (b) Redesigned gas flow inlet leads to significant improvements in laminar flow (c) Redesigned gas flow outlet further reduces drop in speed and backpressure effects

different development stages can be compared. Initially, the existing sintered wall technology from smaller L-PBF systems was applied to the enlarged process chamber of the NXG XII 600, with less-than-optimal results (Fig. 11a). After continuously improving the inlet geometry, gas flow homogeneity in y-direction was greatly improved and the risk for laser inlet contamination was reduced (Fig. 11b). However, the overall backflow characteristics and decreasing gas flow speed profile were not yet satisfactory. To achieve the desired state, several modifications needed to be made to both the gas flow outlet, as well as the process chamber wall located closest to the outlet. Testing was conducted over a period of several years, with the result being a homogenous gas flow profile in x- and y-direction (Fig. 11c).

#### 4.3. Z-Drive Accuracy and Structural Integrity

In addition to overcoming technical challenges influencing stability and productivity within a single cross-section exposure, consistent performance and part quality over thousands of layers had to be achieved. With the development of the even larger NXG 600E, the total z-height of the build envelope was increased from 600 mm to 1500 mm, resulting in an increase from 10.000 to 25.000 individual layers for a slice thickness of 60  $\mu$ m. To make this feasible, two separate aspects were investigated:

- Z-Drive accuracy during substrate plate movement from one layer to the next

- Structural integrity of the NXG system frame for increased total load

For the investigation of the first aspect, clear requirements had to be established to what level of accuracy repeated substrate plate movements needed to be achieved. Ultimately, the desired precision had to be reflected in the additively manufactured metal part, as opposed to just the L-PBF machine itself. The expectation from users of this technology is that the 3D part model can be replicated to a specific tolerance level that is defined within an ISO standard. Therefore, part accuracy in terms of permissible length deviation was defined according to class F of DIN ISO 2768–1. With regards to straightness, this was specified in accordance with class H of DIN ISO 2768–2. The main influencing factor here was the Z-Drive responsible for moving the substrate plate. To verify that the chosen Z-Drive could achieve high demands for movement accuracy under complex loads, a laser interferometer was used to measure incremental movements in all positions along the z-axis (Fig. 12, 13).



Fig. 12 XM-60 laser interferometer



Fig. 13 Schematic representation of the test setup with laser interferometer



Fig. 14 Structural deformation calculation results from finite element method

Additionally, the accuracy measurements were also carried out for both the x-axis and y-axis along the full stroke of 1500 mm.

The measurements confirmed that Z-Drive accuracy was well within class F and H specifications, in accordance with DIN ISO 2678. One remaining influence on final part accuracy is the resulting material shrinkage after cool-down occurs towards the end of the L-PBF process. Luckily, this factor can be mitigated by rescaling the 3D model before it is sliced into individual layers, thus decoupling shrinkage compensation from the actual machine hardware.

For the investigation of the second aspect, structural integrity, ample use was made of finite element analysis tools shown as Fig. 14 to perform calculations on key structural components within the NXG 600E. This was crucial, as many components are affected by the increased build envelope, including those which had to be moved into and out of the system regularly, such as the build cylinder and plate package. Overall, the total load to be handled safely could reach 52,3 kN or 5334 kg, while the maximum allowed deformation for continuous and safe operation should not surpass 0.5 mm. As an example, the simulation results for the track are shown in Fig. 15. This track is needed to transport the build cylinder (containing the finished part) from inside of the machine to the external extraction location.

#### 4.4. Analysis of Part Consistency

As previously demonstrated, a variety of technical innovations were developed to increase productivity, reliability, and repeatability within the metal L-PBF process. The final step was to validate that all innovations were operating in tandem to not only allow for the entire process to run in a stable manner for weeks without interruption, but also to guarantee that the solidified metal parts met the high expectations regarding part characteristics. A rigorous procedure to



Fig. 15 Deformation positions along the linear track from inside to outside position



Fig. 16 Seventeen vertically stacked sample part levels, over 1800 individual samples in total

develop, test and validate unique part generation parameters had to be carried out within each alloy category, that either focused on part quality or productivity. For the sake of simplification, the following descriptions and tables will only showcase the approach and results for Inconel 718 and a single parameter variant which features a balance between highest part characteristics and productivity. Furthermore, sample parts were subjected to three different heat treatment profiles:

- No heat treatment, machined surface

- Solution annealing + aging, machined surface

- Hot isostatic pressing + solution annealing + aging, machined surface

The showcased sample results are those which were solution annealed and aged as per AMS 2774 S1750DP. Emphasis was placed on ensuring that the entire NXG 600E build envelope across its full height of 1500 mm was assessed. For this purpose, the sample generation was repeated over 17 individual levels, which each feature the same specimen geometries and layout in x and y directions. These layers can be seen in Fig. 16 (corresponding to Fig. 7).

In this process, the main focus was placed mainly on part density, hardness, and tensile properties. These characteris-



Fig. 17 3D models of a standardized CT specimen

tics are crucial to ensure the highest quality of additional secondary properties, which could be investigated at a later stage.

For density investigations, ample use was made of nondestructive material testing, in which information on external and internal defects was acquired. Potential defects include porosities and inclusions, among others. One such technology is Micro-CT, for which hundreds of CT-specimens (Fig. 17, 18) were scrutinized down to a voxel size of just 15 µm, enabling the detectability of anomalies down to 45 µm. This is sufficient to identify defects or inclusions with serious implications for a solidified part's long-term stability. To accelerate the analysis of hundreds of specimens, an automatic sample changer was utilized, which allowed up to 63 samples to be run in one single batch. For each sample, the result was an elaborate report offering insights into the total number of pores, pore sizes, pore distribution, sphericity characteristics of individual pores, and pore distance to the part surface. Additionally, localized porosity hotspots were visualized, in which a pre-defined porosity threshold is exceeded. This was then assessed to enable further fine tuning of L-PBF process parameters for either maximized productivity or part density. Figure 19 shows a histogram of density distributions for one sample level, where a MEAN value of 99,97% was achieved. This corresponds very well to



Fig. 18 Visual representation of Micro-CT results for a single specimen



the sample analysis of all remaining levels from the same L-PBF process.

For the validation of tensile properties and hardness, each level within the previous layout features over 60 dedicated samples that can be subjected to multiple tests. The main characteristics of interest were Ultimate Tensile Strength (UTS), Yield Strength (YLD), Elongation at Break, and Hardness. As can be seen from the results in Fig. 20a-d, the L-PBF process within the NXG 600E delivers highly stable properties over the full build height in each level, especially for UTS and Elongation. Within the narrow distribution of mechanical properties, there is no upwards trend visible, the standard deviation also behaves consistently from one level



Fig. 20 Histograms of (a) Ultimate Tensile Strength, (b) Yield Strength, (c) Elongation, (d) Hardness

to the next. Furthermore, Vickers testing across all sample levels reveals a high degree of overlap in hardness with low anisotropy characteristics. This is a testament to the overall homogeneity within the machine's technological capabilities, resulting from years of testing and iterative improvements.

## **5** Conclusion

The NXG 600E expands on the initial capabilities of the NXG XII 600 system to deliver state-of-the-art productivity, reliability, output quality and will accelerate the adoption of

L-PBF technologies across a variety of industries such as aerospace, automotive, defense, energy and healthcare. Through rigorous testing and design validation procedures, innovative solutions for multi-laser alignment, laminar gas flow generation and part consistency management were incorporated without sacrificing process performance or part characteristics. By pushing the boundaries of existing technology approaches within the L-PBF process, Nikon SLM Solutions will continue to develop products which exceed customer expectations and enable the use of AM technologies for novel applications in entirely new industries.

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## ニコン「NIKKOR Z 400mm f/2.8 TC VR S」 「NIKKOR Z 600mm f/4 TC VR S」の開発

猪原祐治,山下雅史,坂本祐輔

## Development of the 'NIKKOR Z 400mm f/2.8 TC VR S' 'NIKKOR Z 600mm f/4 TC VR S'

Yuji IHARA, Masashi YAMASHITA and Yusuke SAKAMOTO

ニコンの最先端技術を結集させ,高解像と美しいボケ味による臨場感あふれる描写力と高速・高精度オートフォーカスを備えた,テレコンバーター内蔵大口径超望遠レンズ「NIKKOR Z 400mm f/2.8 TC VR S」「NIKKOR Z 600mm f/4 TC VR S」をそれぞれ2022年2月,2022年11月に発売した.ここでは,上記2製品の様々な開発要素について説明する.

In 2022, we launched 2 super-telephoto prime lenses with built-in teleconverter, NIKKOR Z 400mm f/2.8 TC VR S and NIKKOR Z 600mm f/4 TC VR S. With cutting edge NIKKOR technologies, we provide photographers outstanding quality pictures that has high resolution and smooth bokeh. Furthermore, the newly developed high speed and high accurate VCM makes sure of that.

In this paper, we introduce some stories developing these lenses, technical features and backgrounds.

Key words ニコンZマウント,交換レンズ,超望遠レンズ,内蔵テレコンバーター,VCM Nikon Z mount, interchangeable lens, super-telephoto lens, built-in teleconverter, VCM

## 1 はじめに

2022年に内蔵テレコンバーターを搭載した Z マウント 大口径超望遠レンズ「NIKKOR Z 400mm f/2.8 TC VR S」 (以下 Z400/2.8),「NIKKOR Z 600mm f/4 TC VR S」(以下 Z600/4) を発売した (Fig. 1). Z400/2.8, Z600/4ともに, 1.4倍の内蔵テレコンバーターを備えており, Z400/2.8は 400mm と 560mm, Z600/4は 600mm と 840mmの焦点距離 を切り替えることが可能である.



Fig. 1 上:NIKKOR Z 400mm f/2.8 TC VR S 下:NIKKOR Z 600mm f/4 TC VR S

## 2 内蔵テレコンバーター搭載の背景

望遠レンズの使用において,焦点距離をより望遠側に伸 ばすためにテレコンバーターを用いることはユースケース として多い.その際に,汎用的な外付けテレコンバーター はレンズとカメラボディーの間に挟む必要がある為,一度 レンズとカメラボディーを外す必要がある.この機材交換 をしている間にシャッターチャンスを逃す恐れがある事, また荒天時の取り外しにおいてはレンズやカメラボディー 内部へ水滴等が侵入しないよう,注意して作業する必要が ある事などから,望遠レンズの内蔵テレコンバーター搭載 はプロのフォトグラファーから強く要望をされている.こ のような背景から,ニコンでは2018年にFマウントのズー ムレンズ [AF-S NIKKOR 180-400mm f/4E TC1.4 FL ED VR」で内蔵テレコンバーターを採用したが,単焦点レンズ への搭載も望まれていた.

写真(Fig. 3)はZ400/2.8をZ9に装着し,手持ちで構え ているフォトグラファーである.内蔵テレコンバーター切 り替えスイッチはカメラグリップを持っている右手側に配 されている(Fig. 2).右手の中指で操作可能な場所に配置 していることで,撮影姿勢を保ったまま内蔵テレコンバー ターの使用,非使用を容易に切り替えることが可能である. また,内蔵テレコンバーター使用時と非使用時でレンズ全 長や重心なども変わらない為,フィールドでの撮影におい て内蔵テレコンバーター使用時も非使用時と同様の取り回 しが可能というのも特徴の1つである.

機材の取り扱い時の利便性のみならず,性能面において も内蔵テレコンバーターは汎用テレコンバーターに対して アドバンテージがある.一般的な外付け汎用テレコンバー ターはそのテレコンバーターが装着可能な何れのレンズに おいても性能を崩すことがないようバランスを取り設計す るケースが多いが,内蔵テレコンバーターは各機種専用で の設計となっているため,設計性能を高める事が可能とな る.それだけでなく,生産工程においてピント調整などの 各種調整や,解像性能の検査なども内蔵テレコンバーター 使用時,非使用時それぞれ行っている為,内蔵テレコン バーターの使用,不使用を問わず高画質な写真を撮影でき る.



Fig. 2 内蔵テレコンバーター切り替えスイッチ



Fig. 3 Z400/2.8と Z9を用いた手持ち撮影

### 3 堅牢性と軽量化の両立

本2機種の開発において内蔵テレコンバーターの搭載 と同様に重要視したもう一つの開発のテーマが, 鏡筒の 軽量化である.大口径超望遠レンズにとって軽量化され ることは,撮影においても機材持ち運びにおいても大き なメリットとなる.Fマウントの現役機種である「AF-S NIKKOR 400mm f/2.8 FL ED VR」(以下 AF-S400/2.8), 「AF-S NIKKOR 600mm f/4 FL ED VR」(以下AF-S600/4)から, それぞれおよそ 850 g, 550 gの軽量化を実現している.

軽量化を進めるにあたって、これまでニッコールレンズ が培ってきた高い描写性能と堅牢性を有し、フォトグラ ファーに信頼されるカメラシステムであることは大前提で あったため細心の注意を払う必要があった.

従来の鏡筒構造に対して構造自体の見直しや,部品点数 の削減と合わせて部品そのものの軽量化も図っている.こ こでポイントとなったのが,今までの開発および検証にお いて蓄積してきた様々なデータを用いたシミュレーション 技術である.これを活用して,部品の厚みと構造体として の強度,適した材料の選定を行い,軽量化と堅牢性を兼ね 備えた製品を実現している.

例えば、部品を軽量化するためには、部品の体積を減ら すか、密度を下げる必要がある.ただ部品の厚みを薄くす れば剛性が下がり、密度の低い材料を選べば、ヤング率が 下がる.そこで、アルミ合金、マグネシウム合金、エンジ ニアリングプラスチックなど幾つかの素材を効果的に使い 分けることで比重とヤング率のバランスをとることを試み た.その際に、シミュレーションでの強度解析を繰り返し 行うことで、構造体の強度を保ちつつ、徹底的に無駄な厚 みを排除している.

最終的には試作機での衝撃試験を行い,シミュレーショ ンの確からしさを確認するとともに,ユーザーの手元で想 定される必要強度の保証を行っている.こうした検討によ り,ニコン製品の大きな長所の一つである堅牢性,これま で培ってきた道具としての信頼感を維持したまま,大幅な 軽量化を実現することができている.

### **4** テレコンバーター内蔵化, Zマウント化に伴う 課題

今回のZマウントへのリニューアルにおいては光学設計 もFマウントから大幅に刷新している.その理由は鏡筒全 長を適切な長さに抑える事と,軽量化の2つに対応する為 である.

内蔵テレコンバーターの搭載を実現するうえで、Zマウ ントの存在は有利な点不利な点どちらも併せ持っていた. 有利な点としてはZマウントによってマウントの口径が大 きくなったことで、内蔵テレコンバーターの搭載にあたっ ても周辺光量を確保することが容易となった点である.

一方不利な点としてはショートフランジバックになった ことによる鏡筒全長の増加である. 鏡筒全長が伸びるとい う事は質量の増加を招くだけでなく,使用時の取り回しも 悪化する. プロフォトグラファー向けのレンズやカメラボ ディーなどの機材には非常に高価なものもあり,輸送時の 紛失,盗難,損傷などはユーザーにとって心配の種である. そのため遠征時の移動において飛行機を利用する際は,機 内への手荷物として持ち込みをしたいというニーズが多い. この要望はより高価な超望遠レンズではなおさらである. したがってレンズの全長が手荷物として持ち込めるバッグ に収まるサイズであることは強く求められている.

しかし、ただ鏡筒全長を短くするだけでは個々のレンズ にパワーを持たせる必要があるため、逆に質量の増加や光 学性能の低下を招くことになる.ここで、光学設計におい て最前面のレンズからセンサーまでの距離を光学全長、光 学全長を焦点距離で割った値をテレ比と呼ぶが、テレ比が 小さくなればなるほど、光線を収斂させるパワーに伴う収 差発生量も増大する為、収差補正の難易度は高くなる.ま た、収斂パワーを増大させるためには、レンズの曲率半径 を小さくする、レンズに使用するガラスの屈折率を上げる などのアプローチがあるが、前者は体積が増加する方向に なり、後者はガラスの比重が高いものになる傾向になるた め、軽量化という観点でも不利な方向となる.

つまり「内蔵テレコンバーターを搭載しつつも」「大幅な 軽量化を実現する」ことを、「鏡筒全長を抑え」「光学性能 も維持/向上させる」ことを条件に達成する最適解を見極 める必要があった.

#### 5 カギとなった光学材料と設計のアプローチ

超望遠レンズにおいては色収差補正が設計性能を握るカ ギとなっている. 色収差とは、レンズを通過した光の色 (波長)ごとの結像位置がずれ、写真上で色がにじんで見え る現象をいう.光学設計では様々な種類のガラスの凹レン ズと凸レンズを組み合わせて色ごとの結像点を補正するこ とを行っている.それぞれの時代において Extra-low Dispersion (ED) ガラスや蛍石といった色収差補正に優れた素材 を採用し、超望遠レンズの進化を図っている.

ED ガラスや蛍石といった素材が優れているのはその異 常分散性による.可視域の光を取り扱うカメラレンズの設 計において,異常分散性というと主に青や紫などの短波長 光線の振る舞いを指すが,ED ガラスや蛍石は一般的なガ ラスと比較してその振る舞いが異なる.それゆえ,異常分 散性を有する素材を適切な箇所に用いることで赤から紫ま で,つまり可視域全体において色収差を良好に補正するこ とが可能となる.

さらに今回の設計では、ニコングループ独自開発の素材 である Short-wavelength Refractive (SR) ガラスを採用し た. SR ガラスも異常分散性を有する特殊なガラスである. 従来の蛍石や ED レンズは分散が小さい領域で異常分散性 を有した素材であったが、この SR レンズは分散が大きい 領域で、青や紫といった波長の短い光を大きく屈折させる という特徴を持っており、蛍石や ED レンズと組み合わせ ることで可視域全域での色収差補正に大きく貢献している. さらに比重も軽いため、軽量かつ高性能という今回のテー マに沿った設計には欠かせない素材である.

続いて、これらの素材を用いた具体的なアプローチ手順 を説明する.従来のFマウントレンズでは最前面にほとん ど屈折力を持たないレンズを配置していた.このレンズは 後に続く蛍石を保護する役割を果たしていた.今回このレ ンズを凸レンズとし、レンズの最前方部分に蛍石を含めた 2枚の凸レンズを採用する事で、保護ガラス+蛍石で構成 していた時よりも発生する収差を低減させている.結果と して、前方の2枚から大きく間隔をあけて後続レンズを配 置することが可能となり、レンズ径を小型化でき、体積と 質量の大幅な低減を実現している.一般的には、中間部の レンズ群を後方に下げることで収差は悪化するが、収差補 正能力の高いSRレンズとスーパーEDレンズを後方部分 に適切に配置することで前方での収差補正不足を補い、光 学系全体として良好な収差バランスを実現している.

従来のFマウントレンズでは、フォーカシング時の収差 変動を抑えるためにフォーカス群に3枚程度のレンズを使 用していたが、フォーカス群より物体側のレンズ構成を最 適化したことにより、より少ない枚数のフォーカス群でも 近距離撮影時の収差変動を抑えることが可能となった. フォーカスレンズが軽量化できたことにより、フォーカス のアクチュエーターの設計自由度が増え、高速・高精度・ 静音駆動の実現への検討を進めることができた.

テレコンバーター内蔵の光学設計においては、光学系全体のみならず部分的なレンズ系での収差補正が重要となる. 具体的には①テレコンバーターより物体側のレンズ系、② テレコンバーター部、③テレコンバーターよりカメラ側の 3つの部分系に分けた際の①と②の2つの部分群である. テレコンバーターは焦点距離を拡大する際に、光学系の持つ収差も拡大してしまう.テレコンバーター使用時と非使 用時の収差変動を抑えるためには、テレコンバーター非使 用時に発生する①の収差量と、テレコンバーター使用時に 発生する①の収差が②のテレコンバーターで倍率分拡大さ れた収差量+②部分系の収差量の差を抑える必要がある. 光学系全体としての収差、これら部分系の収差に注意しな がら設計を進めることで、テレコンバーター使用時、非使 用時間わず高い光学性能を実現している.

これまで述べた設計の結果を,実際の写真としてご覧頂 きたい.

写真(Fig. 4) は色のにじみが目立ちやすい水しぶきを含 む被写体を,同じく 600mmの状態と,内蔵テレコンバー ターを使用した 840mmの状態で撮影したものである.特 殊ガラスで色収差をしっかり補正したことで,絞り開放か ら内蔵テレコンバーター使用,非使用にかかわらず水しぶ きが透明に映っている.特に,撮影距離が 4~5 m と近い 場合,色収差による色にじみが発生しやすいが,撮影距離 に関わらずクリアな描写ができる点がフォトグラファーか ら好評であった.



Fig. 4 色収差補正の効果

写真(Fig. 5)は同じ被写体を 600mm の状態と,内蔵テ レコンバーターを用いた 840mm の状態で撮影したもので ある.動物の体毛のような線の細かい被写体でも,絞り開 放から1本1本細やかに描写しており,内蔵テレコンバー ター使用,非使用にかかわらず高い解像感が得られている と実感いただけると思う.羊もハシビロコウも目の前にい るかのように錯覚させられる.この表現力が大口径超望遠 レンズをつい撮影に持ち出したくなってしまう魅力である.



Fig. 5 内蔵テレコンバーター使用時の画質

#### 6 軽量化を支えた要素技術開発

設計と並行して,前方の大径レンズの質量の低減の為, 大径レンズの薄肉加工の技術検討やその薄肉レンズを保持 する技術検討も実施し,鏡筒質量の低減を図っている.

先に,超望遠レンズにおける設計時の色収差補正につい て述べたが、レンズ加工時や組立時にレンズ面の精度を保 持することも、超望遠レンズのものづくりにおいては非常 に重要なポイントとなる、レンズの研磨という観点では、 そもそも大径レンズを精度よく加工すること自体が技術的 に高難易度であることに加え、軽量化の為にレンズの厚み を薄くしたいという考えもあったため、さらに加工難易度 を高めることになった.

また、このレンズをレンズ室に保持することにも課題が あった.大径レンズはそれ自身の質量が大きいため、ユー ザーが撮影現場でレンズを使用した際に、意図せず衝撃や 振動を与えてしまったとしても性能を保てるようにするた めには、適切にレンズを保持する機構と組み込み条件が必 要となる.レンズが動いてしまわないように十分な力で保 持する必要がある一方で、レンズに力をかけすぎるとレン ズが歪み、加工時に出したレンズ面の精度を崩してしまう ことになるため、光学性能の劣化を招いてしまう可能性が ある.この信頼性と性能のバランスを見極めることが重要 であった.

これらの検討を進めるにあたって、レンズ加工について は軽量化および加工精度に関する目標を技術メンバーと設 定し、加工実験結果のフィードバックをもらいながら性能 と質量のバランスを確認しながら設計を進めた.レンズ保 持については設計、製造、組立が協力し、シミュレーショ ンと試作での確認を通じて、高い性能を維持しつつ信頼性 を確保できる構造を採用している.

### 7 撮影チャンスを逃がさないオートフォーカス

スポーツや野生生物といった高速で動く被写体は,超望 遠レンズの撮影シーンとして欠かせない存在である.超望 遠レンズにはそうした被写体の一瞬を正確に切り取るため のオートフォーカス(以下AF)性能が求められる.一口に AF 性能といっても,そのアウトプットは様々な要素によっ て左右される.例えばサッカーの撮影において,細かいパ ス回しなどでボールが別のプレーヤーにわたった場合には, 瞬時にピントを合わせられる瞬発力が必要になり,一人の プレーヤーがドリブルなどで相手選手をかわすシーンをと らえるには,不規則な動きをとらえ続ける追従力が必要と なる.

上記のようなニーズに合わせて本機種を設計するにあた り、フォーカスユニットは大きなブレイクスルーを必要と していた.大きなレンズをレスポンスよく駆動し、高精度 に停止できるアクチュエーターを採用し、光学性能をより 高く維持するために、フォーカス群のチルトを極力抑える 機構が求められていたのである.様々な構成の設計検討と 試作を経て、直接レンズ室に駆動力を与えることのできる VCM、ガタが少なく摩擦を抑えたガイド機構、高剛性のエ ンジニアリングプラスチックを採用したシルキースウィフ ト VCM が誕生したのである (Fig. 6).



Fig. 6 シルキースウィフト VCM

さらにレンズ位置エンコーダーとして採用した光ABSエ ンコーダーは、精密なスケールを光で読み出すことでレン ズの位置を検出することにより、従来比約20倍もの細かさ で位置検出が可能となる.このエンコーダーとシルキース ウィフト VCM とあわせて精密な位置制御が可能となって いる. この駆動システムはZ400/2.8のフォーカスレンズに 初搭載し,Z600/4でもレンズ配置,駆動仕様に合わせた最 適化設計を行い,採用している.

このようにしてフォーカスレンズのアクチュエーター性 能は向上しているが、これだけでは AF 性能の向上は達成 されない.レンズの光学性能はもちろん、Z9の像面位相差 AF 含めたカメラシステムとしての協調により、AF 精度が 向上し、先に例として挙げたサッカー選手のように高速、 高精度なレンズ位置制御が求められる被写体においても撮 影の歩留まりを改善している.

### 8 優れた逆光耐性

Z400/2.8にて初採用したメソアモルファスコートは,要 素開発から生まれた独自の素材を用いて,NIKKORレンズ 史上最高の反射防止性能を実現したコーティングである. メソアモルファスコートはナノクリスタルコートの粒子よ りもさらに小さいサイズのアモルファス構造を有する粒子 が連結した嵩高い構造体が堆積することにより,メソ孔と 呼ばれる粒子隙間が膜全体に形成され,膜の高空隙率化が 達成される.この多数のメソ孔に空気が含まれることで, ナノクリスタルコートよりもさらに低い屈折率を実現して いる.また,微細粒子を用いて嵩高い構造体を精密に構成 することで,ナノクリスタルコートでは達成できない高空 隙率・低散乱の膜構造を簡便な手法で実現することができ た[1].

その効果として、斜入射光に対して高い反射防止効果を 持つナノクリスタルコートを凌駕する性能を有しつつ、直 入射光に対してもアルネオコートと同等以上の反射防止効 果を有するため、様々な入射光に起因するゴーストやフレ アを大幅に低減することが可能である.

今回は新規開発のメソアモルファスコートに加え,ナノ クリスタルコート,アルネオコート,スーパーインテグ レーテッドコーティングそれぞれの特性を把握したうえで, 適切な箇所に適切なコートを採用し,ゴーストの影響を低 減している.また,機構部品によるゴーストやフレアにつ いても,設計段階で光線追跡によるシミュレーションを行 い,形状と配置の最適化を図っている.



Fig. 7 画面内に強い光源のある作例

写真(Fig. 7) は夕日を背景にキリンをシルエットでとら えた作例である.「メソアモルファスコート」や「アルネオ コート」を搭載し,さらにゴースト,フレアに配慮して設 計したメカ部品を採用しているため,このようなシーンで も抜けの良いクリアな画像が得られる.

#### 9 視覚に頼らない操作性と機動性

本2製品は、プロのフォトグラファーが日常でストレス なく使用ができるように、ユーザビリティーにもこだわっ た設計をしている.

各種リング,スイッチやボタンなどの操作部材は以下の ものが実装されている.レンズファンクション(以下 Fn) ボタン2,Fnリング,コントロールリング,フォーカスリ ング,レンズ Fnボタン1,各種スライドスイッチ,メモ リーセットボタン,内蔵テレコンバーター切り換えスイッ チである.

これらの操作部材は撮影においてユーザーに様々な撮影 体験を提供できる. 例えば、本機種で初搭載した Fn リン グは左右の回転方向それぞれに異なるフォーカス位置を記 録し、被写体の変化に合わせて瞬時にフォーカスの位置を 呼び出せる機能を割り当てられる. 従来機種であれば, フォーカス位置の呼び出し機能をレンズ Fn ボタン2に割 り当てることができたが、呼び出しできるフォーカス位置 は1か所であった.本機種ではFnリングでフォーカス位 置を呼び出せることにより,レンズ Fn ボタン2には FX/ DX 切り替えなど異なる機能を割り当てることができ、撮 影体制を維持したまま撮影できる構図、シーンが格段に増 える. また, ハイレゾズームをコントロールリングに割り 当てることで、単焦点レンズにもかかわらず、まるでズー ムレンズを使っているかのように構図を変更可能である. 発売以降もファームウエアのバージョンアップを通して ユーザーの声にこたえる操作性向上にも対応している. フォーカスリングとコントロールリングの機能入れ替えも その一つである、このように今までの常識を覆す撮影方法 を実現するために、各種操作部材を配置しているため、ぜ ひ世界に一つだけの自分に合った設定を探求し、今まで以 上に歩留まりの高い撮影体験をしていただきたい.

操作部材の配置もこだわって決定した.撮影をする際に, 手持ち撮影でも,三脚撮影でも操作しやすいよう,3Dモデ ルの作成,モックの作成を繰り返し,様々な使われ方に対 応できる操作部材配置を実現している.さらに,操作部材 は手の感触で区別ができ,視覚に頼らない操作をできるよ うな細かい配慮も行っている.また,本2製品の操作部材 はカメラから見てまったく同じ配置にしており,こだわっ た操作性を2機種に統一して実装できていることになる.

機動性,取り回しに対してはレンズの重心位置の変更 が大きく寄与している.FマウントのAF-S400/2.8, AF-S600/4に対して,前側のレンズ部品,機構部品を軽量 化することで,鏡筒としての軽量化を実現できただけでな く,重心をカメラ側に大きく移動させることができた.結 果として,手持ち撮影,一脚撮影にてレンズをパンニング したときの慣性力が小さくなり,滑らかな構図変更,流し 撮りが可能になった.実際にレンズをカメラに装着し手持 ち撮影をしたときの印象は軽量化された質量の数値以上の 効果を感じていただけるはずである.

製品全長はZ600/4のほうが長いが、2 機種の重心位置の 差を小さく設計できているため、撮影時の使用感を統一で きている.撮影シーンによって本2機種を使い分けるユー ザーにとっても、直感的に使っていただきやすい製品に仕 上がっていると考える.

## **10** まとめ

Z400/2.8, Z600/4は機動力, 描写性能, 機能性を兼ね備 えたレンズとなっており, 内蔵テレコンバーターを用いる ことで機材交換なく2本の大口径超望遠レンズをスイッチ ングするような撮影体験をユーザーに提供する.

多くのフォトグラファーに使用いただき,操作性,描写 性能,AF性能,取り回しの良さに関して高評価をいただい ている.引き続き,ユーザーと新しい撮影体験を繋ぐ製品 を作り続けたいと考えている.

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## デジタル倒立顕微鏡に搭載した HCA 用 アプリケーションの技術と実施例の紹介

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## Introduction of HCA Application Technology and Examples Installed on Digital Inverted Microscopes

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創薬分野において、High Content Analysis (HCA) と呼ばれる顕微鏡観察により薬剤の効果を評価する技術は、重 要性を増してきている。一方で、HCA を実施するためには、細胞培養、画像取得、解析等の高度な専門知識が必要とな る。ニコンは、誰でも簡単にHCA を実施できるようにするため、デジタル倒立顕微鏡 ECLIPSE Ji と、本顕微鏡専用ソ フトウェア、NIS-Elements SE (Smart Experiment)を開発した。本稿では、Smart Experiment に搭載された技術 の紹介と、実際の撮像例に関して紹介する。1章にて背景を説明し、2章では Smart Experiment を利用したときの画 像取得から解析結果表示までのシステムワークフローを紹介する。3章では、Smart Experiment のシステムワークフ ローを実現するために開発した、CellFinder.ai によるオートフォーカス技術と NIS.ai による細胞セグメンテーション 技術を紹介する。4章では、Size and Morphological analysis と Cytotoxicity の実施例を紹介することで、Smart Experiment にてどのような実験結果を出力できるか示す。最後に5章では、本技術を振り返って、今後の展望につい て説明したい。

In drug discovery, High Content Analysis (HCA), a microscope-based drug efficacy evaluation screening approach, is becoming increasingly important with imaging technology development. However, performing HCA requires advanced expertise in several fields (e.g., cell culture, image acquisition, analysis, etc.). Nikon developed a digital inverted microscope, ECLIPSE Ji, and corresponding software, NIS-Elements SE (Smart Experiment), for easy HCA execution using this microscope. In this study, we introduce the technology installed in Smart Experiment, along with actual imaging examples. Chapters 1 and 2 introduce the background and workflow from image acquisition to analysis result display when using Smart Experiment, respectively. Chapter 3 discusses the autofocus and cell segmentation technologies by CellFinder.ai and NIS.ai, respectively (both developed to realize Smart Experiment). Chapter 4 presents size and morphological analyses as well as cytotoxicity examples as actual assays. Finally, Chapter 5 provides a future outlook.

Key words 顕微鏡, 深層学習, 自動化, ライフサイエンス, 創薬 microscope, deep learning, automation, life science, drug discovery

## 1 はじめに

創薬分野において, High Content Analysis (HCA) と呼 ばれる, 顕微鏡観察による, 薬剤の効果を評価する画像解 析技術は, イメージング技術が発展する中で, 重要性を増 してきている [1]. 一方で, HCA を実施するためには, 様々な高度な専門知識が必要となる. 細胞サンプルの準備 及び薬剤評価用の実験系の構築知識, 定量的な顕微鏡画像 を取得するための知識, 撮像した画像から特徴量を抽出す るための画像処理の知識, 抽出した特徴量から薬剤効果を 示すための統計解析の知識である. これらの複合的な知識 が必要なため, HCA に初めて取り組むにはハードルが高い という課題が存在する. ニコンは本課題を解決するため, HCA の複雑なワークフローを自動化したシステムとして, デジタル倒立顕微鏡 ECLIPSE Jiと,本顕微鏡専用のソフト ウェア NIS-Elements SE (Smart Experiment)を開発した. 本稿では, Smart Experiment に搭載された技術の紹介と, 実際の HCA 実施例について紹介する.

### 2 Smart Experiment のシステムワークフロー

本章では,Smart Experiment のシステムワークフローを 簡単に紹介する.NIS-Elements SE では,ユーザーが種々 の設定をせずにアッセイを実行できるように,Fig.1のシ ステムワークフローに従って撮像および解析が進行する. 以下,各ステップを説明する.



Fig. 1 Smart Experiment のワークフロー概要

#### (1) Select Assay

まず,サンプルを調整後,Jiのステージにサンプルを セットする,その後,NIS-ElementsのSEモードから,該 当のアッセイを選択する.

#### (2) Overview Imaging

ユーザーが設置したサンプルが,何ウェルプレートか判 定し,設置されたプレートのXY 傾きを補正する.

各ウェルの中心で画像を取得し,細胞の有無を検出する. また,本画像の視野内の細胞密度および偏りを解析し,高 倍観察時の最適な視野を検出する.

#### (3) Preview Imaging

ユーザーが選択したウェル,または撮像範囲のすべての ウェルに対して,Autosignal.ai (AIを利用した自動照明条 件調整)を実行する.この結果をもとに,走査したウェル の中で,一番明るいウェルが輝度飽和しない照明条件 (LEDパワー,露光時間)を算出する.また,最初に走査 するウェルにて,明視野でオートフォーカスを実施したの ち,撮像する各蛍光チャネルにてオートフォーカスを実行 する.これらのオートフォーカスの結果から,軸上色収差 により発生する明視野における合焦位置と,各蛍光チャネ ルの合焦位置のオフセット値を算出する.明視野のフォー カス算出には,CellFinder.ai (AIを利用した明視野用のオー トフォーカス)を利用している.

#### (4) Scan

Overview で決定した XY 位置および,Preview にて決定 した照明条件,明視野からの各蛍光チャネルのオフセット 値を利用し,解析に利用するための画像を取得する.

#### (5) Analysis

Scan 時に撮像した画像に対して,各アッセイで定義された解析レシピを実行する.

#### (6) Show Result

最後に, 解析結果を結果表示画面に表示する.

#### 3 Smart Experiment に利用している AI 技術

本章では, Smart Experiment に搭載した AI 技術に関し て紹介する.

#### 3.1. CellFinder.ai によるオートフォーカス

#### 3.1.1. 原理概要

顕微鏡で用いられる従来のオートフォーカスでは、Z方 向に画像を取得しながら、各画像の輝度情報などからピン ト面を探し出す方法が使われてきた. 従来の手法では、Z の操作範囲内にピント面が存在している必要があるため、 あらかじめ適切なZ範囲を設定しなければならない. この 範囲が狭ければ、Zの操作がピント面に届かず、オート フォーカスに失敗する. 一方で、Z範囲を広く設定しすぎ てしまった場合、必要以上に時間がかかってしまう.

上記課題を回避するため, Smart Experiment 向けに,新 しいオートフォーカス手法を開発した.本手法では,Fig.2 に示した通り,Z位置の異なる2枚の画像情報から,ピン ト面までの距離を推定する方法を採用した.ピント面の推 定には,Deep Neural Network (DNN)を利用した.



Fig. 2 CellFinder.ai 原理

#### 3.1.2. 学習方法

対物レンズごとに、Zスタック画像を取得し、Z位置の 異なる2枚の画像に対して、ピント面までの距離をラベル 付けして学習した、学習には、Table 1 の細胞種を利用し た.

明視野観察におけるピント面は,コントラストが極小値 となる Z 位置と定義した.

Table 1 CellFinder.ai に利用した細胞種

細胞種	由来
HeLa	RIKEN BRC, RCB0007
HepG2	JRCB cell bank, JCRB1054
HT-29	ATCC, HTB-38
COS-7	RIKEN BRC, RCB0539
СНО-К1	JRCB cell bank, JCRB9018
A-431	NIHS, JCRB 0004
Neuro2a	ATCC, CCL-131
iPSC derived Neurons	Elixirgen Scientific, EX-SeV-CW50065
BS-C-1	NIHS, JCRB9126
J774.1	NIHS, JCRB0018

#### 3.1.3. 性能

ピント面からの誤差を3×SD (Standard Deviation 標準偏 差)にて評価した. 検証にはピント面から±250 μmの範囲 を対象とした. Table 2 に評価結果を示した.

Table 2 CellFinder.ai 評価結果

対物レンズ	ピント面からの誤差範囲(±3×SD)
Plan Apo λD 4x	$<$ ±10 $\mu$ m
Plan Apo λD 10x	$< \pm 8 \ \mu m$
Plan Apo λD 20x	< ±5 µm

## 3.2. NIS.ai を利用した細胞のセグメンテーション3.2.1. 原理概要

顕微鏡で撮像した画像を解析する最初のステップとして、 細胞核や、細胞領域などの計測対象をセグメンテーション すること必要である.一般的には、輝度の閾値を設定する ことで画像を二値化し、さらにモルフォロジー変換等の後 処理を加えることで、計測対象のオブジェクトのみをセグ メンテーションすることが行われる.しかし本手法では、 撮像条件や微妙なサンプル作成条件の違い(例えば染色時 間や染色試薬の濃度、試薬開封からの時間)によって、閾 値などのパラメーターを微調整する必要がある.また、明 視野や位相差画像から、細胞核や細胞領域を抽出するには、 複雑な画像処理プロセスを検討する必要がある.

一方で近年, Pixel2PixelやU-netなどの, DNNを利用し たセグメンテーション手法が登場し,細胞サンプルにも利 用され始めてきている [2].弊社が提供する NIS-Elements においても, NIS.ai に Segmentation.ai と ObjectSegment.ai という形で,上記 DNN を利用したセグメンテーション技 術を搭載している.本手法のメリットとして,実験条件の 違いにより発生するサンプルの差異をあらかじめ学習して おくことで,パラメーターの調整が不要となることや, GPU ベースでの演算のため,従来手法よりも解析時間がか からないことが挙げられる.本手法の詳細の原理および応 用例は, Nikon Research Report Vol.3 に掲載しているた め,本稿では割愛する.

#### 3.2.2. 学習方法

NIS-Elements SE では、蛍光画像から細胞核、細胞領域 をセグメンテーションする学習モデルと、明視野画像から 細胞核、細胞領域をセグメンテーションする学習モデルの 4種類を搭載した. 蛍光画像からのセグメンテーションモ デルの作成には、教師画像として従来の手法で蛍光画像か らセグメンテーションした二値化画像を利用した.明視野 画像からのセグメンテーションモデルの作成では、蛍光染 色したサンプル準備して明視野像と蛍光像を撮像し、蛍光 画像を従来の手法にてセグメンテーションすることで、教 師画像とした.細胞核のセグメンテーションには Hoechst33342 (ナカライテスク, 京都, 日本, 19172-51) で細胞核を染色した画像を利用し、細胞領域のセグメン テーションには、CellMask<sup>TM</sup> Deep Red (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Massachusetts, US, C10046) にて細胞領域を染色 した画像を利用した.細胞核の学習には SegmentObject.ai 機能を、細胞領域の学習には主に Segment.ai 機能を使用し た. また、Table 3 に、学習に利用した細胞種の一覧を掲載 する.

Table 3 NIS.ai に利用した細胞種一覧

細胞種	由来
HeLa	RIKEN BRC, RCB0007
HepG2	JRCB cell bank, JCRB1054
COS-7	RIKEN BRC, RCB0539
CHO-K1	JRCB cell bank, JCRB9018
A-431	NIHS, JCRB 0004
J774.1	NIHS, JCRB0018
Neuro2a	ATCC, CCL-131

#### 3.2.3. 評価方法

NIS.ai を用いて作成したセグメンテーションモデルは、 学習した細胞種の画像に適用した際の検出領域の外観の確 認による官能評価と定量的な評価を実施した。評価には学 習データと別に取得したデータを使用した.細胞核を検出 するためのモデルでは、Hoechst33342 (ナカライテスク) の蛍光画像から検出された細胞核数に対するセグメンテー ションモデルで検出された核数の割合を算出し、その割合 が90-110%の範囲に収まることを確認した (Fig. 3 (B)). また、細胞領域を検出するためのセグメンテーションモデ ルについても、CellMask<sup>™</sup> Deep Red (Thermo Fisher Scientific)の蛍光画像から検出された細胞領域の面積に対す るセグメンテーションモデルで検出された細胞領域面積の 割合が90-110%の範囲に収まることを確認した(Fig.3 (C)). セグメンテーションモデル単独の精度評価に加えて, アッセイの想定用途に対しニコンが推奨する条件で作製さ れた陽性・陰性対照間の差異が十分に検出可能かを確認す る解析の総合評価も実施した.実施した評価の採用基準として,系の安定性を示す指標であるZ-factorが挙げられる[1].



Fig. 3 NIS.ai セグメンテーションモデルによる領域検出
(A) NIS.ai ヘ入力した明視野画像. スケールバーは50 μm. (B) 左から NIS.ai による核領域の推論結果 (黄領域), Hoechst33342蛍光画像から検出した核領域のグランドトゥルース (水色領域), Hoechst33342の蛍光画像 (青).
(C) 左から NIS.ai による細胞領域の推論結果 (黄領域), CellMask<sup>TM</sup> Deep Red 蛍光画像から検出した細胞領域のグランドトゥルース (マゼンダ領域), CellMask<sup>TM</sup> Deep Red の 蛍光画像 (赤).

#### 4 Smart Experiment を利用したアッセイの実施例

本章では, Smart Experiment を実際に利用して, 計測し た例を紹介する.

#### 4.1. Size and Morphological Analysis を利用した細胞の 形態解析

#### 4.1.1. アッセイ概要

細胞は生理現象の中で様々な形態変化を引き起こす.例 えば、DNA 損傷や酸化ストレス,がん遺伝子の活性化によ り、細胞の老化が進むことで、細胞の肥大化が進行するこ とが知られている [3]. このような、細胞形態変化に関連 するカスケードをターゲットにした薬剤のスクリーニング や、細胞形態を指標とした細胞への毒性評価は重要である. 本アッセイは、細胞および細胞核の大きさや周囲長、真円 度などの形態的特徴量を算出可能なアプリケーションを提 供することを目的としている.

本アッセイでは,画像解析用に10倍の対物レンズを利用 して画像を取得し,細胞核,細胞領域の蛍光画像からそれ ぞれ細胞核領域,細胞領域をセグメンテーションし,形態 的特徴量を計測することが可能である.

#### 4.1.2. 評価実験概要

本アッセイの評価実験では、DNAトポイソメラーゼIの 阻害剤である Camptothecin (Sigma-Aldrich, Missouri, US) を用いた、細胞サイズの濃度依存性の検証により実施した. HeLa 細胞を96ウェルプレート (AGC テクノグラス、静岡、 日本5866-096) に播種し培養後、Camptothecin (SigmaAldrich)の希釈系列(0~1000 nM, 10濃度点)を添加した 培地にて24時間培養した. その後,4% PFA にて固定し, 細胞核を Hoechst 33342,細胞膜を CellMask<sup>™</sup> Deep Red (Thermo Fisher Scientific) にて染色した [4].

本サンプルプレートを Ji にセットし, Size and Morphological analysis アッセイを実行した. Z-factor を算出するた め,ネガティブコントロールとして Camptothesin (Sigma-Aldrich) 0 nM の区分を,ポジティブコントロールとして Camptothecin (Sigma-Aldrich) 333 nM の区分を設定した. 各濃度に対し6つのリプリカントウェルを設定した.また, 生物学的複製実験として,本実験は3 回実施した.

#### 4.1.3. 評価結果

Fig. 4に, 評価結果を示した.



Fig. 4 Size and Morphological analysis 評価結果 (A) 左から 0, 12.7, 333 nM 濃度点における細胞画像.上 段に輝度のみの画像(青:Hoechst 33342,赤:CellMask<sup>TM</sup> Deep Red),下段に、セグメンテーションしたマスクを示し た(青:細胞核領域,赤:細胞領域).スケールバーは 20  $\mu$ m. (B) 細胞面積をヒートマップに示した図. (C) 細胞面 積を指標としたときのZ-factor および EC50の算出結果. (D) 縦軸に細胞面積,横軸に Camptothecin 濃度をとった濃度依 存曲線.エラーバーはリプリカント間の標準偏差.青線はプ ロットに対してシグモイドカーブにフィッティングした結果.

Fig. 4 (A) に示した,各濃度点における代表的な画像例, Fig. 4 (B) に示した細胞面積のヒートマップ,Fig. 4 (D) に示した濃度依存曲線の結果から,濃度依存的に,細胞の 面積が大きくなることが確認できた.またFig. 4 (C) に示 した通り, Z-factor>0.5 (0.52) であることから,アッセ イとしても十分な性能が出ていることが確認できた.また, 本実験での EC50は 12.8 nM となった.

#### 4.2. Cytotoxicity を利用した薬剤の毒性評価結果 4.2.1. アッセイ概要

細胞毒性を評価することは、薬剤の評価や、培養条件や 環境の評価、その他細胞へのストレスを評価する上で重要 である.本アッセイでは、染色した死細胞の割合を算出す ることを目的としている.

本アッセイでは,画像解析用に10倍の対物レンズを利用 して画像を取得し,細胞核および死細胞の蛍光画像から, 全細胞数,死細胞数を算出し,生細胞,死細胞の割合を算 出することが可能である.

#### 4.2.2. 評価実験概要

本アッセイの評価実験では、プロテインキナーゼの阻害 剤である Staurosporine (Sigma-Aldrich, Missouri, US) を 利用して細胞死を誘導し、死細胞数の濃度依存性の検証に より実施した [5]. HeLa 細胞を96ウェルプレート (AGC テクノガラス) に播種し培養後、Staurosporine (Sigma-Aldrich) の希釈系列 (0~1000 nM, 10段階) を添加した培 地で48時間培養した.

その後, 細胞核を Hoechst 33342 (ナカライテスク), 死 細胞を Ethidium homodimer-I (EthD-1) (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Massachusetts, US, L3224) にて染色した.

本サンプルプレートをJiにセットし, Cytotoxicity アッ セイを実行した.ネガティブコントロールとして Staurosporine (Sigma-Aldrich) 0 nMの区分を,ポジティブコン トロールとして Staurosporine (Sigma-Aldrich) 1000 nMの 区分を設定し, Z-factor を算出した.各濃度に対し6つの リプリカントウェルを設定した.また,生物学的複製実験 として,本実験は3回実施した.

#### 4.2.3. 評価結果

評価結果を Fig. 5 に示した.

Fig. 5 (A) に示した,各濃度点における代表的な画像例, Fig. 5 (B) に示した死細胞率のヒートマップ, Fig. 5 (D) に示した濃度依存曲線の結果から,濃度依存的に,死細胞 率が上昇することが確認できた.またFig 5 (C) に示した 通り, Z-facotr > 0.5 (0.923) であることから,アッセイ としても十分な性能が出ていることが確認できた.また, 本実験での EC50は 56.43 nM となった.



Fig. 5 Cytotoxicity 評価結果

(A) 左から 0. 37, 1000 nM 濃度点における細胞画像. 上段 に輝度のみの画像 (青:Hoechst33342,赤:EthD-I),下 段に,セグメンテーションしたマスクを示した (青:生細 胞,オレンジ:死細胞).スケールバーは 100 μm. (B) 死 細胞率をヒートマップに示した図. (C) 細胞面積を指標と したときの Z-factor および EC50の算出結果. (D) 縦軸に死 細胞率,横軸に Staurosporine (Sigma-Aldrich) 濃度をとっ た濃度依存曲線.エラーバーはリプリカント間の標準偏差. 青線はプロットに対してシグモイドカーブにフィッティング した結果.

## **5** まとめ

NIS-Elements SE では新しく搭載した種々の AI 機能によ り簡単にアッセイを実行できる.本稿では、NIS-Elements SE に搭載している AI 技術と、Size and Morphological analysis と Cytotoxicity の2つのアッセイを例に、どのよう な計測が可能かを紹介した.本稿記載時にはその他11種の アッセイが搭載されており、多くの細胞評価実験に利用可 能である.今後も機能の拡張や、アッセイ種の拡張を行う ことで、特に創薬分野での研究の効率化、新規薬剤の探索 への貢献を目指す.

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## デジタル正立顕微鏡を用いた複数免疫染色 標本の位置合わせ機能の開発<sup>†</sup>

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## Position Alignment Function Development of Multiple Immunostained Specimens using a Digital Imaging Microscope

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病理診断では病変部位から細胞や組織のサンプルを採取し、薄くスライスして染色を施すことで病理標本を得て、病 理医が顕微鏡を用いて細胞や組織の形態を観察することで、病気の原因や進行状況を明らかにする。特定のたんぱく質 やその他の物質を抗体を用いて特異的に染色する免疫染色では、組織のサンプルを連続に薄くスライスすることで近接 した位置の連続標本を得て、各標本1枚ずつに1種類の染色を施し、総計3~20枚程度の免疫染色標本を観察して診断 に供する.さらに各標本で同じ位置を顕微鏡で観察しながら探索して結果を記憶する必要があり、病理医の負担となっ ている.

デジタル正立顕微鏡では標本全体のデジタル画像を取得可能である.標本全体の画像を用いて標本間の位置ずれを自動検出し,同じ位置を自動探索する位置合わせ機能を開発した.さらに各標本の同一位置における拡大画像をモニター に並べて表示する機能を開発することで,顕微鏡観察時の探索や記憶といった病理医の負担軽減を目指した.

本稿では、複数免疫染色標本の位置合わせ機能に関して、デジタル正立顕微鏡の特徴及びデジタル画像を用いた位置 合わせ方法について解説する.

In pathological diagnosis, pathologists routinely examine stained cell or tissue samples, extracted from lesion sites, to identify disease causes and assess progression. This process often involves immunohistochemical staining, where antibodies are used for selectively staining specific proteins or other substances within the samples. However, this approach can be demanding for pathologists as locations must be consistently observed and the results from identical locations should be memorized across multiple specimens.

To mitigate this challenge, we leveraged digital imaging microscope capable of capturing digital images of the entire specimen in a single shot. We developed a function that uses these images to detect any positional shift between the specimens automatically and, subsequently, automatically search for identical locations for alignment. Furthermore, we aimed at alleviating the burden on pathologists during microscopic observation by developing a feature that displays microscopic images of higher magnification from identical positions across different specimens side by side on a monitor.

In this study, we present digital imaging microscopic features and the alignment approach using digital images related to the alignment function for multiple immunostained specimens.

Key words 顕微鏡, 位置合わせ, 自動化, 病理切片, デジタルパンロジー microscope, alignment, automation, pathological specimen, digital pathology

### はじめに

病理診断では,病変部位から細胞や組織のサンプルを採 取し,それを薄くスライスして染色することで病理標本を 作製する.その後,病理医が顕微鏡を用いて細胞や組織の 形態を観察し,病気の原因や進行状況を明らかにする.抗 体を用いて特定のタンパク質やその他の物質を特異的に染 色する免疫染色技術の発展により,各種の病態をより詳細 に理解し,病状をより精密に診断することが可能となった [1].免疫染色では、3~20種類の異なるタンパク質等を染 色するため,同数の病理標本を準備する必要がある.その ため,組織のサンプルを連続してスライスし,組織上の同

<sup>\*</sup>本稿は特定の医療機器の広告を意図しておりません.

一座標の連続標本を得て、各標本に異なる免疫染色を施し て観察する.しかしながら、記憶に頼り各標本で組織上の 同じ位置を顕微鏡で観察しながら結果を記録する作業は、 病理医の負担となっている.

ニコンは顕微鏡でありながら接眼レンズをなくし、ディ スプレイで観察画面を確認可能であるデジタル正立顕微鏡 を開発した、このデジタル正立顕微鏡では、標本全体のデ ジタル画像を取得することが可能であり、取得した画像を 用いて標本間での同じ位置を自動で探索する位置合わせ機 能を開発した. さらに、各標本の同じ位置における顕微鏡 拡大画像をモニターに並べて表示する機能も開発し、病理 医の負担軽減を目指した.

本稿では、このデジタル正立顕微鏡による複数の免疫染 色標本の位置合わせ機能について、デジタル画像を用いた 位置合わせの手法に焦点を当てて説明する.

#### 免疫染色標本の利用と課題

特定のタンパク質やその他の物質を特異的に染色する免 疫染色は、医学研究および診断・治療の発展に寄与してき た.免疫染色の基本的な原理は、抗体と抗原の特異的な結 合を利用することである.抗体は特定の抗原に対して高い 親和性を持つため,特異的に抗原を標的とすることが可能 である.特定のタンパク質の存在と位置を明確に把握する ことが可能なため、多くの分野で広く使用されている。特 に,疾患の診断や治療の効果予測,新しい薬物の開発など の医学的応用において、免疫染色は不可欠な技術となって いる.

医学研究や病理診断において、免疫染色により特定可能 なタンパク質の種類が増えることで、新規メカニズムの解 明や診断精度が向上する可能性がある.以下に、病理診断 および医学研究において行われる標本の作成から評価まで のプロセスの概略および課題(下線部 A-D)について述 べる.

■標本準備(Fig. 1)

- ① 標的とする臓器から摘出したサンプルへ固定等の処理 を行い、パラフィンに包埋してブロックを作製する.
- ② 厚さ約4µmで薄切した切片をスライドガラス上に貼り 付ける (ブロックから連続して薄切, 3-20枚を作製).
- ③ スライドガラス上の切片を染色する(HE 染色, Ki67, CD3等の免疫染色).

·染色





サンプルをパラフィンに 包埋してブロック作製

Fig. 1 標本の準備

④ カバーガラスと封入剤を用いて切片を保護する.

### ■標本観察と評価(Fig. 2)

以下のプロセスは通常,正立顕微鏡を用いて行われる.

- ① HE 染色標本を観察して注目地点を 3-5 箇所決定する. このとき観察者は注目地点の位置と見え方を記憶する (A).
- ② 1つ目の免疫染色標本を観察して、HE 染色で記憶し た位置や見え方から同じ位置を探して観察する(B). 所見(標的たんぱく質の有無など)を記憶する(C).
- ③ 2つ目の免疫染色標本を観察して、HE 染色で記憶し た位置や見え方から同じ位置を探して観察する(B). <u>所見(標的たんぱく質の有無など)を記憶する(C)</u>.
- ④ 上記の免疫染色標本の観察を最大で約20標本で実施し、 結果を解析する。すべての所見を一度に記憶すること は困難であるため、例えば数標本ごとにレポートに記 録を取る.再度確認したい場合などは,標本を再観察 する (D).



このような記憶力に偏重した標本観察・評価法を病理診 断では日常的に繰り返し実施するため、病理医の大きな負 担となっている.

#### **?** デジタル正立顕微鏡を用いた位置合わせ機能

デジタル正立顕微鏡は標本をセットしてロードボタンを 押すと、標本ロード時に標本全体を俯瞰できるマクロ画像 を撮影する.標本は観察位置にロードされると対物レンズ を通した観察画像(ミクロ画像)がライブでディスプレイ に表示され、マクロ画像も同時に表示される(Fig. 3)、マ クロ画像の観察位置はシステムが記憶可能であり、観察位 置におけるミクロ画像は保存可能である.

デジタル正立顕微鏡の標本ロード時に取得されるマクロ 画像を用いて、複数の標本のずれを検知して補正すること で、同じ位置を探索して表示する方法を考案し、Fig.4の システムワークフローを実現した。以下、各ステップを説 明する.



**Fig. 3** デジタル正立顕微鏡のディスプレイ表示 (中心画像がミクロ画像(上),マクロ画像(下))



①~②:1枚目の標本のマクロ画像取得

観察者は1枚目の標本をセットしてロードする.システムは1枚目の標本のマクロ画像を取得する(Fig.5).1枚目は組織形態を把握するためにHE染色が選択されることが多い.

③-④:1枚目の標本の注目地点の登録

観察者はミクロ画像を目視して、1枚目の標本における 注目地点をシステムに登録する.システムは登録された地 点におけるミクロ画像を撮像して記憶する(Fig.5).注目 地点は複数登録され、3-5箇所ほど登録されることが多い (最大12箇所登録可能).

 1枚目の標本のアンロード 観察者は1枚目の標本をアンロードする.

#### ⑥-⑦:m枚目の標本のマクロ画像取得

観察者はm枚目の標本をセットしてロードする.システムはm枚目の標本のマクロ画像を取得する(Fig.5).2枚目以降は免疫染色の標本が選択されることが多い.病理診断においては最大で約20枚の免疫染色の標本が準備される.



Fig.5 マクロ画像とミクロ画像

⑧:マクロ画像を用いた位置合わせ

システムは1枚目とm枚目の標本のマクロ画像を用いて 位置合わせを実施する (Fig. 6). 位置合わせのアルゴリズ ムは Scale-Invariant Feature Transform (SIFT) [2] を用い ており、マクロ画像間の位置ずれ・角度ずれ量 ( $\Delta XY, \Delta \theta$ ) を算出する. SIFT の詳細については後述する.



・平面方向の位置ずれ(ΔXY) ・回転方向の角度ずれ(Δθ)

#### Fig. 6 SIFT を用いたマクロ画像のずれ量検出

⑨-10:m枚目の標本のミクロ画像取得

システムはステップ⑧で得られた位置ずれ量 ΔXY をス テップ③の1枚目の標本の注目地点の座標に反映すること で,m枚目の標本における同一注目地点の座標を得て更新 する.システムは新規座標におけるミクロ画像を取得し, 角度ずれ量 Δθ を反映した回転画像を記憶する.2~m枚 目の標本に対して⑥~⑩の工程を繰り返し,各標本におけ る同一注目地点のミクロ画像を取得する.

Fig.7に示すように1枚目とm枚目のミクロ画像は同じ 位置であるので形態が近く,m枚目のミクロ画像は回転の ずれ量に応じて回転した画像が記録される.





1枚目の標本(HE染色) m枚目の標本(免疫染色) Fig. 7 1枚目とm枚目のミクロ画像

 m 枚目の標本のアンロード 観察者はm枚目の標本をアンロードする.

12:ミクロ画像を並べて表示

観察者は記録されたミクロ画像から最大10枚のミクロ画 像を選択して、並べて表示を選択する.システムは選択さ れた各標本における同一注目地点のミクロ画像をディスプ レイ上に並べて表示する (Fig. 8).

並べて表示された画像は、観察者がいずれかの画像を拡 大縮小または XY 方向に移動させると、すべての画像が連 動して動作する (Fig. 8). 観察者は画像を拡大しながら各 地点の詳細を比較可能となる.



**Fig. 8 ミクロ画像を並べて表示** (上:標準,下:デジタルズーム)

以上のデジタル正立顕微鏡の位置合わせ機能のワークフ ローにより, Table 1 に示すように HE 染色及び複数免疫染 色標本の課題に対する解決策が得られ,特に病理診断にお ける病理医の負担軽減が期待できる.

Table 1 HE 染色及び複数免疫染色標本の課題と解決策

課題・解決策	内容
課題 A	観察者は位置と見え方を記憶する
解決策 A	システムが位置と見え方を記憶する
課題 B	観察者は同じ位置を探す
解決策 B	システムが同じ位置を探索する
課題C	観察者は観察像から所見を記憶する
解決策 C	システムが画像を記憶する
課題 D	観察者は標本を再観察する
解決策 D	システムが一度に画像を並べて表示する

#### **4** 位置合わせ機能のアルゴリズムと精度評価

デジタル正立顕微鏡における位置合わせのアルゴリズム として SIFT を採用した. SIFT は, David G. Lowe によっ て1999年に発表された画像認識における特徴検出手法であ る [2]. スケール変化,回転,視点変化,照明変化に対す る強力な不変性を持つ特徴を検出する能力があるため,画 像の位置合わせや物体認識など広く利用されている.以下 では,標本画像における位置合わせ機能のアルゴリズムに ついて説明する.

はじめにマクロ画像の特徴点を抽出する. Fig.9に示す ように、マクロ画像を平滑化し、スケール(ほかしの強度) を変更した画像間の差分である Difference of Gaussian (DoG) 画像を作成する. 注目画素に対して、スケール方向 も含めた26近傍の画素値を比較し、DoG 値が極値を取る画 素を探索する. DoG 値が極値を取る画素は、コントラスト の変化量が大きいことを示すため、情報量が多いと判断で きる. このようにして情報量が多い画素を特徴点の候補と して抽出し、上位の特徴点を位置合わせに利用する.



Fig. 9 SIFT を用いた標本画像の特徴点の抽出

次に,特徴点の特徴量を計算する. Fig. 10 に示すよう に,特徴点の周辺を 4×4 のブロックに分割し,各ブロッ クごとに8方向の輝度の勾配強度を算出する. ブロック数 と勾配強度より,128次元の勾配強度の情報として特徴量化 する.



Fig. 10 SIFT を用いた標本画像の特徴量の算出

最後に,特徴点を対応付け,2つの画像間の位置ずれ・ 角度ずれ量(ΔXY,Δθ)を算出する.Fig.11に示すように, HE 染色の1つの特徴量と,免疫染色のすべての特徴量の ユークリッド距離を計算する.ユークリッド距離が最も小 さい特徴点を対応する特徴点として決定する.ユークリッ ド距離が最も小さいとは,上記の128次元の勾配強度を比較 した際にその差が最も小さいことを示す.

対応する特徴点が最低2つ存在する場合,これらの特徴 点が一致するように画像を重ね合わせることで,2つの画 像間の位置ずれ・角度ずれ量(ΔXY,Δθ)を得ることができ る.





デジタル正立顕微鏡における位置合わせ機能のアルゴリ ズムでは、上述の各工程におけるパラメーターを多数の標 本を用いて最適化した.以下では、この位置合わせ機能の 精度を評価した結果について説明する.

精度評価には、デジタル正立顕微鏡の10倍対物レンズの 画像を使用した.位置合わせ後に取得された2つの標本の ミクロ画像について、画像の微細構造が完全に重なるよう に目視で手動での重ね合わせを行った.Fig.12に示すよう に、重なった面積(青色斜線)をミクロ画像の全面積(緑 枠)で割った値を精度指標とした.この指標は0から1の 範囲をとり、1に近いほど位置合わせの精度が高いことを 示す.

44標本から22対の標本セットを準備し、位置合わせ機能

によって得られたミクロ画像の位置合わせ精度を評価した ところ, Fig. 12 の箱ひげ図に示すように, 位置合わせ精度 は約0.95と高い精度を示した. 一方, 標本は形状や色味な どが非常にバラエティーに富んでおり, これらの標本にも 対応できるように, 引き続き精度とロバスト性の向上を検 討する.



## 5 まとめ

デジタル正立顕微鏡は、標本全体のマクロ画像と注目地 点の拡大ミクロ画像を取得することが可能である.本稿で は、マクロ画像を用いた位置合わせ機能により、複数の免 疫染色標本における注目地点の探索とミクロ画像の表示を 実現できる可能性を示し、位置合わせのアルゴリズムにつ いて詳細に説明した.位置合わせ機能による観察支援が観 察者の負担を軽減できると期待している.今後、位置合わ せ機能の精度とロバスト性をさらに向上させることで、現 在求められている、より微小な病変に対する複数の免疫染 色標本の観察・評価の精度を高め、医学研究や病理診断の 発展に寄与することを目指す.

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# 風車翼型へのリブレット適用による 揚力改善効果検証<sup>†</sup>

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# Verification of Lift Improvement by Applying Riblets to Airfoil for Wind Turbines

Naho YANASE, Takaya HIGASHINO, Takahiro KURASHIMA, Shintaro TSUCHIHASHI, Noritsugu KUBO and Motofumi TANAKA

リブレットは、流体機器の粘性摩擦抵抗を低減する生体模倣技術であり、風車ブレード表面に適用することで要素翼の揚抗比の改善が見込まれ、風力発電効率の向上が期待できる。効率向上の基礎的な評価として、二次元断面の風車翼 模型に対してリブレットを加工したフィルムを貼付け、風洞実験にてまずは揚力性能の改善量を評価した。その結果、 失速前の広範囲の迎角において、揚力が平均3.4%増加することを実証した。

Riblets are a biomimetic technology that reduces the viscous friction resistance of fluid machinery. By applying riblets to the surface of wind turbine blades, an improvement in the lift-to-drag ratio of the blades is expected that, in turn, can enhance the efficiency of wind power generation. As a fundamental evaluation of the efficiency improvement, a film with riblets was attached to a two-dimensional sectional model of a wind turbine blade, and its lift performance improvement was assessed through wind tunnel experiments. The results demonstrated an average increase of 3.4% in lift across a wide range of angles of attack prior to stall.

Key words リブレット, レーザー加工, 流体解析, 粘性抵抗低減, 揚力改善, 風力発電, 風洞試験 riblet, laser processing, CFD, drag reduction, lift improvement, wind turbines, wind tunnel

# 1 はじめに

現在,地球温暖化の進行に伴い,世界各国で脱炭素社会 の実現に向けた再生可能エネルギーの導入が推進されてい る.日本では"2050年カーボンニュートラルに伴うグリー ン成長戦略"が2020年に宣言されており,風力発電は今後 成長を期待される分野の一つとされている.このような状 況下で,国内の風力発電供給の拡大を維持するためには, 風力発電の効率向上が重要な課題となる.

風力発電の効率を向上させる有効な方法の一つに風車ブ レードの揚抗比改善がある.揚抗比は、ブレード翼素断面 における揚力の向上、および抗力の低減により改善される. 風車ブレードをはじめとする流体機器が受ける流体抵抗は、 圧力抵抗(慣性抵抗)と摩擦抵抗(粘性抵抗)に大別され る.特にレイノルズ数が高い流れ場は壁面境界層が乱流化 しやすく、境界層が乱流化した流れ場は層流に比べて壁面 において大きな摩擦力を生じる[1].この壁面摩擦力は抵 抗として流体機器のエネルギーを損失させるので、これを 低減することは揚抗比の改善につながり, さらには流体機 器の効率を向上させることを可能とする.

ところで、速く泳ぐ種のサメにおいては、鱗の一つ一つ の表面に 35~100 µm 程度の微小な縦溝が存在することが 知られている [2], [3]. この流れに沿った縦溝構造はリブ レット (riblet) と呼ばれ、平滑面に対して 8~10%程度の 摩擦抵抗の低減をもたらすことが実験的に明らかにされて いる [4].

リブレット構造によって摩擦抵抗が低減することは,物 体表面に形成される境界層内の速度分布が変化しているこ とを意味する. 異素において境界層速度分布が変化すると 摩擦抵抗だけでなく,圧力抵抗および揚力も変化する可能 性がある.

しかしながら,実際の流体機器の表面に対してリブレットを適用した例は少ない.リブレットは,そのサイズと形状を流体機器の表面の流れ場に合わせて成形する必要があり,これが実用化の難易度を高くしている.株式会社ニコンでは,自社のコア技術である光・精密技術を発展させ,

<sup>\*</sup>本稿は、著者の引用文献[5]の日本風力エネルギー学会より転載の許諾を得ている.

レーザー加工による任意形状のリブレットを適用する技術 を開発した. Fig.1 にレーザー加工したリブレットの SEM 画像を示す.



Fig. 1 リブレット加工表面 SEM 画像

現在,我々は様々な流体機器へのリブレット適用の可能 性を見出し,その一つとして風車へのリブレット適用に関 する研究を進めている.

リブレット適用の困難さから国内における中・大型風車 へのリブレット適用の事例は未だなく、それら風車ブレー ドでの実用化においてはリブレット効果の定量的評価がま ず課題として挙げられる.そこで我々は、代表的な風車翼 型の二次元翼模型に対して、風洞実験を行い、リブレット 適用による翼素の性能特性変化を評価した.本報告では、 その中でも特に揚力性能の変化に関する結果を紹介する.

## 2 実験セットアップ

#### 2.1. 実験装置

風洞実験は,産業技術総合研究所が所有するつくば北風 洞にて実施した.本風洞は試験部流路断面 1.4 m×1.4 m を有する回流式風洞である.最大風速は 48 m/s, 乱れ度は 風速 10 m/s 以上において0.5%以下である.

実験対象として用いた翼型は、将来フィールド実証試験 に使用予定の SUBARU 15/40(定格出力 40 kW)のブレー ドにおける代表翼型 MEL18M31を用いた.供試翼は、コー ド長 0.3 m,スパン長 1.4 m のものを使用し、風洞流路中 央に上下壁の端から端までを渡すように配置した.翼は



Fig. 2 つくば北風洞 写真

ピッチ軸をモーターつなぎ,迎角を任意に変化させた.迎 角は絶対式ロータリーエンコーダーを用いて測定した.ま た翼表面にはコード方向に直径 0.5 mm の静圧孔を開け, 電子式多点圧力スキャナーを用いて表面圧力分布の測定を 行った. Fig.2 に本風洞のテストセクションの外観写真を 示す.

#### 2.2. 実験方法

本研究では、5種類の実験条件による揚力特性を比較す ることで、リブレット効果の定量評価を行った.実験条件 ごとにフィルムを用意し、それぞれを同一の翼型に貼り付 けて風洞試験を実施し、翼表面の静圧分布を取得した.静 圧分布の取得中、翼型は流れの中で静止状態におき、圧力 測定が終了する都度、次の迎角姿勢に変化させた.取得し た翼面静圧分布をコード方向に積分することで揚力を算出 し、同時に取得した流入気流の情報を用いて揚力係数に無 次元化して比較した.

リブレット設計にあたり,まず,対象風車ブレードにつ いて MEL18M31翼型を持つ翼素断面において,設計点であ る迎角7 deg で二次元翼の流体解析を行った.その結果を もとに最適なリブレット形状を算出した.設計形状をレー ザー加工によりフィルム上に成形し,表面がリブレット成 形されたフィルムを翼面に貼り付けた.フィルムには,風 車エロージョン保護シートとして実績のある3M 社製のポ リウレタンフィルムを使用した.

#### 2.3. 実験条件

風洞実験は風速 u = 40 m/s, レイノルズ数 Re = 800,000, 迎角 AoA = -6~27 deg で行った. リブレット貼付条件は Table 1 に示す通りである. 流体条件は対象風車の通常の運 転条件に相当する. 以下に実験条件の一覧を示す.

(1) Reference

フィルム貼付なし ② Smooth-Full

未加工フィルムを翼模型全体に巻き付けるように貼付

③ Riblet-Full
 部分的にリブレット加工が施されたフィルムを全体に
 巻き付けるように貼付



Table 1 実験条件

- ④ Smooth-Cut 未加工フィルムを翼後縁側にのみ貼付
- ⑤ Riblet-Cut
   リブレット加工フィルムを翼後縁側にのみ貼付

# 3 結果および考察

3.1. リブレットによる揚力の変化

まずは純粋なリブレット効果を評価するために条件 ① Reference, 条件② Smooth-Full および条件③ Riblet-Full を比較する.

 Fig. 3 に揚力係数と迎角の関係を, Fig. 4 に Reference 条件に対する他 2 条件の揚力係数の増加割合 K<sub>d</sub> を示す.







Fig. 4 リブレットが揚力係数の増加割合に与える影響

Fig. 3 より,最大揚力を示す迎角よりも浅い迎角となる, 0 ≤ AoA ≤10 deg の範囲において,Riblet-Full は他のリブ レットなし条件に比べ高い揚力係数を示す.その増加割合 は Fig. 4 に示す通りであり,Reference に対し Riblet-Full は 平均6.7%であった.一方 Reference と Smooth-Full を比べ ると,同様に揚力係数は増加するものの,Fig. 4 よりその 増加割合は1.4%であり,リブレットが翼素の揚力を増加さ せる効果を持つことは明らかである.

リブレットによる揚力増加の要因を特定するには今後さ

らなる研究が必要であるが, 現時点で考えうる要因の一つ として翼後縁側における境界層の整流が挙げられる. リブ レットにより整流され,境界層の運動量損失が抑えられる と,翼型後縁部での運動量が回復する. これが流れ方向を正 とする右手系でみたときの時計回りの翼の循環を増加させ, 揚力の増加につながったと考えられる. 実際,翼の循環増加 は本実験結果における翼面圧力分布にも現れている. Fig.5 に迎角7 deg における翼面圧力係数 (Cp) 分布を示す.



Fig. 5 にて,Smooth-Full と Riblet-Full を比較すると、 $0 \le x$ /Chord  $\le 0.5$ の領域で,圧力が負圧面において低下し、一方で正圧面においては上昇する.この結果はリブレットにより Fig. 5 において時計回りの翼の循環が増加したことを示している.

#### 3.2. Riblet-Cut フィルムよる揚力の変化

次に既存の実機風車にリブレットフィルムを貼り付ける ことを想定して、良好な施工性を備える小面積なフィルム の実験条件⑤ Riblet-Cut の揚力性能変化を評価する.

Fig. 6 に Reference と Riblet-Cut の揚力係数と迎角の関係 を, Fig. 7 に Reference に対する Riblet-Cut フィルムの揚力 係数の増加割合  $K_d$  を示す.

Fig. 7より Reference に Riblet-Cut を適用することで,設 計点の迎角 7 deg において揚力係数は2.9%増加し,さらに 最大揚力付近よりも浅い迎角 0 deg < AoA <10 deg の範囲に おいて平均4.5%の揚力係数の増加が示された.従って, Riblet-Cut を貼付けた場合でも,設計点である 7 deg だけで はなく,最大揚力よりも浅い広範囲の迎角において揚力増 加を得られ,リブレットは迎角に対してロバストな効果を 示すと言える.

一方で,最大揚力の迎角(12 deg)では揚力係数の減少が みられた.その程度は Fig. 7 に示す通り2.8%であった.こ れは, Riblet-Cut による揚力係数の変化が単純なリブレット





Fig. 7 小面積カットフィルムが揚力係数の増加割合に与える 影響

による効果だけではないことが要因と考えられる.次節では この要因が Riblet-Cut フィルム端部の段差にあると考え,端 部段差が揚力係数に与える影響を評価した.

#### 3.3. フィルム端部の段差が与える影響

Riblet-Cut フィルムの端部は翼素コード方向の中央付近 に位置するため、この端部の段差が流れを乱し、翼素の性 能が低下する可能性がある.この影響を評価するため、条 件① Reference と条件④ Smooth-Cut フィルムの揚力係数を 比較した.Fig.6 に両者に関する揚力係数と迎角の関係を 示す.Fig.7 に揚力係数の増加割合 *K*<sub>d</sub> を示す.

Fig. 6より, Reference に対し Smooth-Cut フィルムを適 用することで揚力係数の減少が迎角11≤ AoA ≤14deg の範囲 でみられた.特に迎角6度を境に揚力係数の勾配が変化し, 最大揚力となる迎角で最も大きな差が見られた.Fig. 6に 示す通り, 段差の影響はリブレットの効果を低下させ,最 大揚力となる迎角(12 deg)で揚力係数は2.7%低下した. この結果は,Fig. 7 に示した最大揚力付近における Reference に対する Riblet-Cut の揚力係数の減少と定量的にも一 致する.従って,3.2節で評価された Riblet-Cut の最大揚力 付近での揚力係数減少はフィルム端部の段差によることが 分かった.

## **4** まとめ

本研究は,風車ブレードにおけるリブレットの実用化に 向け,リブレット成形されたフィルムの揚力係数へ効果を 二次元翼の風洞試験により定量的に評価した.その結果, 以下に示す3つの結論を得た.

- リブレットによる純粋な効果として、迎角最大揚力よりも浅い迎角範囲で平均6.7%の揚力係数増加が示された。
- II. 実用化に向け有力な Riblet-Cut フィルムにおいても,設計点の迎角7 deg だけではなく,広範囲の迎角で平均4.5%の揚力係数増加を得て,迎角に対するロバストな効果が示された.
- II. フィルム端部に段差がある場合、その影響はリブレットの効果を減じ、最大揚力付近の迎角で顕著に表れることが示唆された。

今後は、本実験結果から抗力を算出し、揚抗比の観点か らリブレットがブレード空力性能へ与える影響を評価する. また、この評価結果をもとに風車ブレードへのリブレット フィルム適用による Annual Energy Production (AEP) 改 善量を見積る計画である.

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# 宇宙空間光通信用 連続波単一横モード偏波保持 10 W Er/Yb 共添加ファイバー増幅器の開発

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# **Development of a Continuous Wave Single Transverse** Mode Polarization-Maintaining 10 W Er/Yb-Codoped **Fiber Amplifier for Space Communications**<sup>†</sup>

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宇宙空間でのデータ通信量の増加に伴い、宇宙空間光通信への注目が高まっている.ニコンと JAXA は、大容量宇宙 光ネットワーク開発の一環として,変調連続波信号用の単一横モード動作,10 W 偏波保持 Er/Yb 共添加ファイバー (EYDF) 増幅器の開発を進めてきた.現在,エンジニアリングモデル(EM)の開発を完了し,2024年に国際宇宙ステー ションにて、光通信実証実験を行う予定である.

光増幅器は、耐放射線性 EYDF を用いた3段の後方励起構成からなる。励起用レーザーダイオードと寄生発振防止の ためのモニター用フォトダイオードを備え、いずれも十分な放射線耐性を確認した、また、制御基板も含んでいる、外 形寸法は, 300 mm×380 mm×76 mm, 重さは 6.3 kg であった.

室温大気圧下, -3 dBm の信号光入力時に, 合計 34 W 励起で 10 W の光出力を得, ウォールプラグ効率10.1%を達 成した.また,室温大気圧下で,出力光量10W,2000時間の動作を達成した.

宇宙用コンポーネントとしての信頼性を確保するため、振動試験と熱真空試験を実施した.動作温度範囲の上下端,

± 0℃と+50℃で、出力光量 10 W, 偏光消光比(PER) 16 dB 以上を達成し、性能劣化は認められなかった.

Space optical communications have attracted growing attention as space data traffic volumes continue to increase, and as part of ongoing efforts to develop high-speed optical space networks, Nikon and JAXA have been developing a single-transverse-mode 10 W polarization-maintaining Er/Yb-codoped fiber (EYDF) amplifier for modulated continuous-wave signals. We have finished developing the engineering model (EM) and plan to demonstrate this amplifier as a part of optical communication system on the International Space Station in 2024.

The EM amplifier has a three-stage backward pumping structure with radiation-hardened EYDF. It also includes pump laser diodes, and power monitoring photodiodes to avoid parasitic lasing, both of which have been confirmed to have adequate radiation tolerance, as well as a control driver circuits. The overall dimensions are 300 mm  $\times$  380 mm  $\times$  76 mm, and it weighs 6.3 kg.

The EM amplifier achieved optical output power of 10 W at pumping power of 34 W in total under standard temperature and pressure conditions (STP: room temperature, 1 atm) with a -3 dBm signal input. The total wallplug efficiency reached 10.1%. The amplifier achieved an operating time of 2000 hours at 10 W under STP.

We conducted a mechanical vibration test and an operating thermal vacuum test to ensure the reliability of the amplifier as a space component. At the upper and lower end of the operation temperature range, ± 0 and +50°C, the output power and polarization extinction ratio (PER) were > 10 W and > 16 dB, respectively, without any degradation of the amplification gain or PER.

Key words 自由空間光通信,高出力光ファイバー増幅器,宇宙運用,真空,放射線耐性 free space optical communications, high power fiber amplifiers, space operations, vacuum, radiation tolerance

## Introduction

The volume of data traffic in space communications continues to increase. However, the channel capacity of conventional radio waves is reaching to its limit, and the carrier frequency has been extended to millimeter-wave band.

Free-space optical communications have attracted attention in recent years as a means of exceeding this limitation

<sup>†</sup> This paper is reprinted with permission from SPIE, the international society for optics and photonics [6].

by increasing the carrier frequency dramatically. In 1994, the Communications Research Laboratory (CRL, now the National Institute of Information and Communications Technology, NICT) in Japan achieved the first ground-tospace optical communication using the Laser Communication Equipment (LCE) on ETS-VI [1], which was developed and launched by the National Space Development Agency (NASDA, now part of JAXA). Following that, the European Space Agency (ESA) achieved the first space-to-space optical communication between SPOT-4 and ARTEMIS in 2001 [2]. JAXA and ESA also achieved the first space-to-space bidirectional optical communication link between OICETS and ARTEMIS in 2005 [3].

Since these demonstrations were in the early days of freespace optical communications, the signals were transmitted by  $0.8 \ \mu m$  laser diodes (LDs) using the intensity modulationdirect detection (IM-DD) method [4]. The data transfer rate limitation can be increased by applying advanced modulation methods, such as phase-shift keying, compared with IM-DD.

Today, data transfer rates on the ground have exceeded 100 Gbit/( $s \cdot fiber$ ). Our goal is for the space-based backbone network to communicate as rapidly as ground-based optical communications, and the optical high-power amplifier (OHPA) is one of the key components.

JAXA is developing an optical data relay system named "LUCAS," which stands for the Laser Utilizing Communication System [5]. To promote faster communication with smaller size, weight, and power (SWaP) optical communication terminals in the near future, compared with the present LUCAS, we began to develop a 10 W OHPA and to install and evaluate it on the International Space Station (ISS). In this article, we provide details of the developed engineering model (EM), which was used to evaluate the environmental tolerances required in order to advance to the proto-flight model (PFM) to be launched.

## **2** Amplifier Design

To achieve the aims described above, we designed the amplifier as follows.

#### 2.1. Target Specification

We set the target specifications as shown in Table 1, with reference to the overall system requirements and the ISS Japanese Experiment Module (JEM) interface specifications.

#### 2.2. System Structure

The amplifier contains the optical fiber amplifiers and the electrical control driver board in a single package (Fig. 1). The PDs monitor the optical power and protect the amplifier by detecting anomalies such as parasitic lasing.

#### 2.3. Amplifier Optical Structure

The amplifier has three stages of Er/Yb-codoped fibers (EYDFs) (Fig. 2). All of these stages have backward pumping configurations. The passive optical components, the LDs, and the photodiodes (PDs) are commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) products. The radiation tolerances of the EYDFs were confirmed by the manufacturer. The booster LDs (#2 & # 3) are driven together by one control driver.

Item		Unit	Target specification	Achieved value
Input optical power level		dBm	-3.0 to +3.0	
Output optical power level		dBm	>+40.0	> +40.0
Optical power gain		dB	37 to 43	
Signal wavelength		nm	1560.606	
Signal modulation		_	RZ-DPSK	
Modulation rate		GHz	> 2.5	
Polarization extinction ratio (H	PER)	dB	> 15	> 16
Return light at 10 W operation	1	dBm	< -39	< -45
Total power consumption (EO	L at 25°C, see §5)	W	< 151	103
Wall-plug efficiency (EOL at 2	5°C, see §5)	_	> 8%	9.7%
Storage temperature		°C	-40 to +70	
Operating temperature		°C	± 0 to +50	
Dimonsions	Width	mm	< 360	300
(Protrusions not included)	Depth	mm	< 300	300
(1100 usions not included)	Height	mm	< 100	76
Weight		kg < 7.0		
Operating period		year	> 3	
Operating duty			5%	

Table 1 Target specifications for evaluation on the ISS and actual measured values of the OHPA



Fig. 1 System block diagram of the optical transceiver: the letter symbols on the connecting lines represents, the electrical (E), mechanical (M), optical (O), and thermal (T) interfaces.



Fig. 2 Optical block diagram

#### 2.4. Mechanical and Electrical Design

The total dimensions of the amplifier are 300 mm  $\times$  380 mm  $\times$  76 mm, and its appearance is shown in Fig. 3. The amplifier weighs 6.3 kg, including the control driver board and the electrical components. It has one optical connector for the input signals, one optical output pigtail, and 3 electrical connectors for a DC 28 V power supply and telemetry & command communications.



Fig. 3 Appearance of the amplifier

### **3** Radiation Tolerance of Semiconductor Components

#### 3.1. Radiation Dose Condition

To ensure radiation tolerance, experiments were conducted in which radiation was applied to the semiconductor electro-optical (e-o) components.

Table 2 describes the radiation dose conditions for the ISS experiment, assuming 1 year of operation on the ISS with a 50% margin. Table 3 describes more severe conditions, which anticipate future changes in operating conditions, such as 10 years of operation in geostationary orbit (GEO).

The tests confirmed that the changes in the characteristics were sufficiently small for the target operating period of the amplifier (see §5).

#### 3.2. LDs Exposed to Gamma Ray Radiation

Four samples of the same LD products were irradiated with gamma rays. The results in Fig. 4 shows output power degradations of < 2.8% and < 4.7% at exposures of 30 Gy and 1000 Gy, respectively.

#### 3.3. LDs Exposed to Proton Radiation

Four samples of the same LD products were irradiated with protons. The results in Fig. 5 show output power degradations of < 0.8% and < 1.4% at exposures of  $1.5 \times 10^9 \text{ p}^+/\text{ cm}^2$  and  $1.0 \times 10^{11} \text{ p}^+/\text{ cm}^2$ , respectively.

#### 3.4. PDs Exposed to Gamma Ray Radiation

The measurement was conducted at the same time as the experiment described in §3.2. Four samples of the same PD products were irradiated with gamma rays. The results in Fig. 6 show e-o conversion efficiency decreases of < 1.3% and < 1.3% at exposures of 30 Gy and 1000 Gy, respectively.

#### 3.5. PDs Exposed to Proton Radiation

Four of the same PD products were irradiated with protons at the same time as the experiment described in §3.3. The results in Fig. 7 show the e-o conversion efficiency decrease of almost 0% and < 4.9% at exposures of  $1.5 \times 10^9$  p<sup>+</sup>/cm<sup>2</sup> and  $1.0 \times 10^{11}$  p<sup>+</sup>/cm<sup>2</sup>, respectively.

### **4** Test Results for the OHPA

#### 4.1. Optical Output Power under STP

The amplifier emitted output power of 10 W with a -3 dBm input and a total booster pumping power of 31.5 W under standard temperature and pressure (STP: room temperature, 1 atm) (Fig. 8). The input signal was a 1.5  $\mu$ m continuous-wave (CW), and the linewidth was ~5 GHz. The pumping power for the preamplifier was fixed to 2.3 W. The total power pumping of the LDs was 33.7 W, which means the total (from the preamplifier to the booster amplifiers) optical-optical (o-o) conversion efficiency was 29.7%.

Туре	Energy	Flux	Fluence
Protons (p <sup>+</sup> )	70 MeV	$1.0 \times 10^7 \text{ p}^+/(\text{cm}^2 \cdot \text{s})$	$1.5 \times 10^9 \text{ p}^+/\text{cm}^2$
Gamma rays ( <sup>60</sup> Co)	1.17 & 1.33 MeV	62 Gy/h	30 Gy

 Table 2
 Radiation dose conditions for the ISS experiment



Table 3 Radiation dose conditions for future plans with more severe conditions

Fig. 4 Output power at 9.0 A operation versus radiation dose (left) and LD case temperature versus radiation dose (right): three in-operation samples (filled blue circles), one out-of-operation sample (open blue circle), and one non-irradiated control sample (open gray diamond)



Fig. 5 Output power at 9.0 A operation versus radiation dose (left) and LD case temperature versus radiation dose (right): three in-operation samples (filled blue circles), one out-of-operation sample (open blue circle), and one non-irradiated control sample (open gray diamond)



Fig. 6 Output power at 150 μW input versus radiation dose: three in-operation samples (filled blue circles), one out-of-operation sample (open blue circle), and one non-irradiated control sample (open gray diamond)



Fig. 8 Output power versus pumping power for inputs of -3 dBm (filled) and +3 dBm (open)

#### 4.2. Energy Conversion Efficiency

The estimated energy conversion efficiency at each part of the amplifier at output power of 10 W is shown in Table 4. The amplifier achieved a total wall-plug efficiency of 10.1% measured at 10.8 W operation under STP.



Fig. 7 Output current at 150 μW input versus radiation dose three in-operation samples (filled blue circles), one out-of-operation sample (open blue circle), and one non-irradiated control sample (open gray diamond)



Fig. 9 Output power (solid line) versus elapsed time: at elapsed times of 990 and 1870 hours (dashed line), the amplifier was restarted.

#### 4.3. Long-Term Operation under STP

Under STP, long-term operation was applied to an experimental model of the amplifier, which has the same optical structure as the one described in §4.1. No power degradation was observed (Fig. 9). This indicates that the photodarkening effect was sufficiently small. Additionally, although the input signal had high coherence, this caused

Item	Input (W)	Output (W)	Efficiency	Consumption (W)
LD driver #1	0.4	_		0.4
LD #1 DC-DC	5.9	4.2	71.3%	1.7
LD #1 e-o	4.2	2.2	52.9%	2.0
Preamplifier o-o	2.2	0.3	12.9%	1.9
LD driver #2 & #3	11.4	_		11.4
LD #2 & #3 DC-DC	75.0	54.8	73.0%	20.2
LD #2 & #3 total e-o	54.8	31.5	57.5%	23.3
Booster amplifiers #2 & #3 o-o	31.5	10.0	31.8%	21.5
Other electrical components	5.4	_	_	5.4
Total wall-plug efficiency	98.1	10.0	10.1%	88.1

 Table 4
 Estimated energy conversion efficiency at each part of the amplifier under STP: the total input power consists of the items shown in bold. Upright: electrical power; italic: optical power



Fig. 10 Communication test system setup: DPSK Tx: DPSK transmitter, Attn: optical attenuator, DPSK Rx: DPSK receiver, and BERT: bit-error-rate tester

Table 5 Communication test conditions.

Item	Value
Modulation method	DPSK (RZ-33%)
Transfer rate	2.5 Gbps
Signal pattern	PRBS 2 <sup>15</sup> -1

almost no higher-order transverse mode instability (HOMI), and no power degradation.

#### 4.4. Communication Test

The amplifier was subjected to a communication test with the setup shown in Fig. 10 and conditions shown in Table 5. No error was observed throughout 30 s measurement duration, and it shows that the bit-error-rate (BER) value was below  $4 \times 10^{-11}$  with the 95% confidence level.

#### 4.5. Vibration Test

The amplifier was subjected to a vibration test in the order of *z*-axis, *x*-axis, and *y*-axis excitation (Fig. 12). Almost no power degradation was observed (-0.5% as a measured value) throughout the three-axis test (Fig. 11).

#### 4.6. Thermal Vacuum Test

The amplifier was subjected to a thermal vacuum test (Fig. 13) followed by the vibration tests. The test sequence



Fig. 11 Output power versus pumping power: before excitation (filled circle), and after *z*-axis (filled triangle), *x*-axis (open circle), and *y*-axis (open triangle) excitation

is shown in Fig. 14. During the cycle #1, some function checks with turn-on and turn-off were performed. The temperature range was set to  $\pm 0$  to  $\pm 56^{\circ}$ C, taking into account the test margin. Throughout the test, the atmospheric pressure was maintained at  $< 1.3 \times 10^{-3}$  Pa.

There was an 8% power degradation observed after vacuuming (Fig. 15). At +56°C, the slope efficiency decreased 12% compared with that at +25°C, while at  $\pm$  0°C, the efficiency increased 2%. The change between the initial and post-test measurements was caused by temperature difference. As the OHPA reached the temperature equilibrium, the output power returned. The amplifier emitted over 8.7 W throughout the test in the temperature range of  $\pm$  0 to +56°C (Fig. 16). The PER values at  $\pm$  0 and +56°C were > 16 dB (Fig. 17). The power limitation was caused by the temperature of the booster LDs becoming higher than the set upper limit, due to the large thermal resistance and temperature variation of the vacuum chamber. In the operating temperature range of  $\pm$  0 to +50°C, however, the amplifier emitted > 10 W.



Fig. 12 Power spectral density (PSD) versus vibration frequency: measured values (bold solid) and target conditions ± 3 dB (thin dashed)



Fig. 13 Setup for the thermal vacuum test



test sequence for the mermar va



Fig. 15 Output power versus pumping power: initial measurement under STP (open dark gray circle), initial measurement at +25°C in vacuum (filled dark gray circle), ± 0°C in vacuum (filled light gray circle), and +56°C in vacuum (filled black circle), and post-test measurement at +25°C in vacuum (open dark gray diamond)

In the next step, development of the PFM, we plan to revise the design and evaluation setup to improve the thermal conductivity, thereby suppressing the temperature of the LDs.

### **5** Estimated End-of-Life (EOL) Characteristics

The target lifetime of the OHPA is 1500 hours of operation (Table 1). We estimated the EOL characteristics at 25°C of the amplifier. The estimated total wall-plug efficiency was 9.7% and the output decrease factor was expanded, as shown in Table 6.



Fig. 16 Optical output power and temperature profiles throughout the test: the dashed lines show suspensions.





Input	BOL	EOL	Difference
LD #1 e-o	52.9%	51.0%	-1.9 pp
Preamplifier o-o	12.9%	12.7%	-0.2 pp
LD #2 & #3 total e-o	57.5%	55.6%	-1.9 pp
Booster amplifiers #2 & #3 o-o	31.8%	31.3%	-0.5 pp
Other electrical components	12.0 W	13.2 W	+1.2 W
Total wall-plug efficiency	10.1%	9.7%	-0.4 pp

Table 6 Output decrease factors, BOL and EOL specifications, and decrease rates

## **6** Conclusion

We have described our CW single-transverse-mode polarization-maintaining 10 W EYDF amplifier.

The beginning-of-life (BOL) power consumption was 98.1 W at an optical output power of 10 W. The LDs and PDs were subjected to radiation tests, and < 4.7% power degradation of the LDs and almost no changes in the e-o characteristics of the PDs were observed. The amplifier was also subjected to vibration and thermal vacuum tests, and no power degradations were observed. These degradations had little influence on the amplifier's performance. Due to undesirable thermal conditions in the vacuum chamber, the output power was limited to 8.7 W at +56°C, but in the operating temperature range, the amplifier emitted > 10 W. The estimated EOL (1500 hours) power consumption was 102.9 W and the total wall-plug efficiency was 9.7%.

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# 高性能反射防止膜 "メソアモルファスコート"用 超低屈折率多孔質シリカ薄膜の作製

鈴木涼子

# Fabrication of a Porous SiO<sub>2</sub> Thin Film with an Ultralow Refractive Index for High Performance Anti-reflective Coatings "Meso Amorphous Coat"<sup>†</sup>

Ryoko SUZUKI

光学機器を製造・販売しているニコンにおいて、反射防止膜は透過率向上や迷光の抑制のために欠かせない重要な技術である.工業的に広く用いられている多層反射防止膜のなかでも、最上層の低屈折率化はその性能向上に最も大きな影響を与える.低屈折率層には空気を含む多孔質構造が求められるが、光の散乱を防ぐためにはその構造は微細なものでなくてはならない.本稿では簡便なゾル-ゲル法を用いた多層反射防止膜の最上層用の低屈折率薄膜の作製について説明する.反応に用いる原料に適切な分子構造の溶媒と高い塩基性を有する塩基触媒を選択することにより、微細な多孔質構造を有する屈折率1.17の多孔質シリカ薄膜を作製することに成功した.膜構造の観察とシミュレーションにより、低散乱および超低屈折率の形成要因を明らかにした.さらに、作製した膜に疎水性官能基を導入することにより空気中の水分の吸着による屈折率変化を低減した.この薄膜は"メソアモルファスコート"の最上層としてカメラレンズに搭載されている.

Anti-reflective coatings are a key technology in Nikon Corporation, which manufactures optical equipment, for improving transmittance and reducing stray light. A lower refractive index of the top layer in the multilayer antireflective coatings, which is widely used in industry, has the greatest effect on improving its performance. The top layer must have a porous structure containing air, but the structure must be fine to prevent light scattering. This paper describes a simple sol-gel method for fabricating a thin film with a low refractive index for the top layer of a multilayer anti-reflective coating. By selecting solvent with appropriate molecular structures and base catalyst with high basicity as raw materials for the reaction, porous  $SiO_2$  thin films with a refractive index of 1.17 and a fine porous structure were successfully fabricated. Observation of the film structure and simulation revealed the formation process of low scattering and ultra-low refractive index. Furthermore, by introducing hydrophobic functional groups into the fabricated films, the variation of refractive index due to the adsorption of moisture in the air was reduced. This thin film is applied to camera lenses as the top layer of "Meso Amorphous Coat".

Key words 反射防止膜,低屈折率膜,光学薄膜,多孔質シリカ,ゾル-ゲル法 anti-reflective coating, low refractive index film, optical thin film, porous silica, sol-gel method

## **1** Introduction

Anti-reflective (AR) coatings are used in various optical products, such as cameras, microscopes, and display panels [1]-[3]. A multilayer AR coating comprises several stacked layers with varying refractive indices [4]. Among these layers, the top layer contributes the most to AR performance. Decreasing the refractive index (n) of the top layer is necessary to improve AR performance.  $MgF_2$  has the lowest refractive index (n = 1.38) but is not sufficiently low for AR coatings [5].

Most low refractive index materials possess a porous structure. The total refractive index of an AR film can be reduced by forming pores containing air (n = 1) in the film. To date, various porous materials, such as CaF<sub>2</sub>, MgF<sub>2</sub>, and Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> have been synthesized [6]–[8]. In particular, SiO<sub>2</sub> was

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>†</sup> This paper uses the following copyrighted work with modifications (\*).

Ryoko Suzuki, "Fabrication of a porous SiO<sub>2</sub> thin film with an ultralow refractive index for anti-reflective coatings," *J Sol-Gel Sci Technol*, vol. **106**, pp. 860–868, 2023. (https://doi.org/10.1007/s10971-023-06108-8) ©Suzuki, R. 2023 Licensed under CC BY 4.0 (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) \* Main content of the modifications

The title, abstract, and author are translated into Japanese, and both English and Japanese are printed.

focused on materials for preparing porous structures [9]– [11]. The use of large amount of air to decrease the refractive index of a film tends to cause considerable scattering of light [12], [13]. Moreover, these materials have unstable refractive indices because their pores adsorb moisture from the air easily [14]. To prevent the adsorption of moisture, hydrophilic Si-OH groups of the film surface are often capped. However, the refractive index of the film increases unless the amount of capping agent is controlled [15], [16].

Many studies have reported that a multi-coating of a porous film that contains SiO<sub>2</sub> and whose refractive index is lesser than 1.20 can achieve high transmittance [17], [18]. Therefore, a thin film with n < 1.20 is required for AR coating. However, porous SiO<sub>2</sub> thin films prepared via sol-gel reactions often contain large SiO<sub>2</sub> particles (several tens of nanometers) in their inner structure and exhibit large Rayleigh scattering, which decreases the transmittance of the film [5], [19], [20]. Therefore, a finely structured thin film of porous SiO<sub>2</sub> is required for optical applications. In this study, an easy sol-gel method was used to prepare porous SiO<sub>2</sub> thin films. The obtained porous SiO<sub>2</sub> films exhibited low light scattering and were humidity resistant. In addition, structural analysis and calculations were conducted, and the factors responsible for the low refractive index and scattering were discussed.

## **2** Experiment

#### 2.1. Materials

Tetramethyl orthosilicate (TMOS; Tokyo Chemical Industry Co., Ltd., Tokyo, Japan) was used as the silica source. 1-Methoxy-2-propanol (PGME; FUJIFILM Wako Pure Chemical Corporation, Osaka, Japan) was used as a solvent. Triethylamine (TEA; Tokyo Chemical Industry Co., Ltd., Tokyo, Japan) was used as the catalyst for the sol-gel reaction. Hexamethyldisilazane (HMDS; Tokyo Chemical Industry Co., Ltd., Tokyo, Japan) was used for the surface treatment of the porous SiO<sub>2</sub> thin films.

#### 2.2. Sample Preparation

The typical preparation methods are described in this section. First, PGME (54.43 g) was poured into a polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE) bottle. H<sub>2</sub>O (1.731  $\mu$ L), TEA (36.10  $\mu$ L), and TMOS (7.310 g) were then added into the bottle at a molar ratio of TMOS : H<sub>2</sub>O : TEA = 1 : 2 : 0.01 and stirred for ~27 h at the room temperature. The as-prepared coating liquid containing 4.54 wt% of SiO<sub>2</sub> was filtered using a PTFE filter having a pore size of 5.0  $\mu$ m and then spin-coated onto a substrate. The films thus obtained were heated to 160°C for 3 h to obtain a film denoted as SiO<sub>2</sub>\_PGME\_TEA. After heating, the SiO<sub>2</sub>\_PGME\_TEA was treated with HMDS to enhance its hydrophobicity. Subsequently, the film, which was coated on a substrate with 30 mm diameter, was sealed in a closed vessel with HMDS (0.6135  $\mu$ L) for 24 h at room temperature. Finally, the product was heated at 60 °C for 0.5 h to form SiO<sub>2</sub>\_HMDS.

## **3** Results and Discussions

#### 3.1. Effect of Solvent on SiO<sub>2</sub> Thin Films

The relationship between the sol-gel reaction time and the refractive index of the films was investigated. In addition, the experiment was repeated with different solvents namely, PGME, methanol, 1-propanol, and 1-pentanol, to investigate the effect of a solvent on the relationship. Figure 1 shows the relationship between the sol-gel reaction time and the refractive index of the prepared films. In all cases, the refractive index decreased with reaction time. This behavior was consistent with previously reported results [21]. The behavior is attributed to generating a bulky structure that consists of SiO<sub>2</sub> and enlarges over time in the reaction mixture. The bulkier the SiO<sub>2</sub> structure, the more the number of and larger pores, formed that contain air. Therefore, the refractive index of the thin films decreases over time. The largest decrease in the refractive index was observed when 1-pentanol was used as a solvent. The refractive indices of the thin films prepared using methanol and 1-propanol were almost equal (n ~ 1.20).



Fig. 1 Relationship between the sol-gel reaction time and the refractive index of thin films prepared with (a) PGME, (b) methanol, (c) 1-propanol, and (d) 1-pentanol as solvents

Figure 2 shows the relationship between refractive index of the film prepared from the coating liquid reacted for an arbitrary time and transmittance at 350 nm of the same coating liquid for different solvents. In all cases, the transmittance and refractive index decreased with reaction time simultaneously. As shown in Fig. 1, SiO<sub>2</sub> structures grew and aggregated in coating liquid during the sol-gel reaction, which increased the porosity of the  $SiO_2$  thin films. Figure 2 provides data to consider how SiO<sub>2</sub> fine structure can be formed without particle growth and aggregation, increasing scattering and decreases transmittance. The transmittance corresponding to PGME was higher than that corresponding to methanol and 1-propanol when the refractive indices of the thin films were almost the same; for example, the refractive index was approximately 1.20. The reaction mixture containing 1-pentanol exhibits the highest transmittance. These results indicate that finely structured SiO<sub>2</sub> was formed when PGME and 1-pentanol were used as solvents.



Fig. 2 Relationship between refractive index of the thin film and the corresponding transmittance at 350 nm of the same coating liquid prepared using (a) PGME, (b) methanol, (c) 1-propanol, and (d) 1-pentanol

The results showed transesterification occurred between the methoxy group of TMOS and the solvent during the solgel reaction. The reactivity of silanes that underwent transesterification was lower than that of TMOS, possibly because silanes contain a bulkier alkoxy group than TMOS. The bulky alkoxy group on the surface of the SiO<sub>2</sub> structure prevented the aggregation of the SiO<sub>2</sub> particles. The transesterification reaction also prevented the growth and aggregation of SiO<sub>2</sub> structures. In addition, PGME is considered a suitable solvent for controlling the refractive index of AR coatings because it tends to reduce the refractive index near

#### 1.20 gradually.

Figure 3 shows the photographs and optical microscopic images of the thin films prepared in this study. As shown in Fig. 3a-b, radial striations can be observed in the  $SiO_2$  thin film surface prepared using methanol. In contrast, thin films prepared using 1-propanol (Fig. 3c-d), 1-pentanol (Fig. 3e-f), and PGME (Fig. 3g-h) exhibit smooth surfaces.



Fig. 3 Appearance of a thin film prepared using a coating liquid containing (a) methanol, (c) 1-propanol, (e) 1-pentanol, and (g) PGME; (b), (d), (f), and (h) represent the corresponding optical microscopic images. (Scale bar in b, d, f, and h represents 200 μm.)

From the above results, PGME can be considered a suitable solvent for fabricating porous silica thin films as AR coating from view points of control of refractive index and appearance.

#### 3.2. Effect of the Base on the Structure of Porous SiO<sub>2</sub> Thin Films

To investigate the effect of the base on the structure of  $SiO_2$  thin films,  $SiO_2$  thin films were prepared using NH<sub>3</sub>,

propylamine (PA), and diethylamino (DEA) in place of TEA in the original preparation method. In each experiment, the refractive index of the thin films was adjusted to n = 1.17 by controlling the reaction time.

Figure 4 shows the cross-sectional SEM images of the thin films. A SiO<sub>2</sub> framework comprising small connected particles was observed in all porous SiO<sub>2</sub> thin films. In Fig. 4, the diameter of a SiO<sub>2</sub> primary particle was considered corresponding to the thickness of the framework. Therefore, the SiO<sub>2</sub> primary particle diameter was measured at four points and averaged in each SEM image. SiO<sub>2</sub>\_PGME\_NH<sub>3</sub> (Fig. 4a) and SiO<sub>2</sub>\_PGME\_PA (Fig. 4b) possessed thick frameworks. The second thinnest and thinnest frameworks were observed in SiO<sub>2</sub>\_PGME\_DEA (Fig. 4c) and SiO<sub>2</sub>\_PGME\_TEA (Fig. 4d), respectively. The thicknesses of the SiO<sub>2</sub>\_PGME\_TEA (Fig. 4d), respectively. The thicknesses of the SiO<sub>2</sub>\_PGME\_TEA frameworks, measured using their SEM images, were 15.8 nm, 15.3 nm, 11.0 nm, and 9.8 nm, respectively.



Fig. 4 Cross-sectional SEM images of (a) SiO<sub>2</sub>\_PGME\_NH<sub>3</sub>, (b) SiO<sub>2</sub>\_PGME\_PA, (c) SiO<sub>2</sub>\_PGME\_DEA, and (d) SiO<sub>2</sub>\_ PGME\_TEA

Table 1 shows the amount of scattered light at 350 nm by thin films. The amount of light scattered by  $SiO_2\_PGME\_PA$  was the highest, whereas that scattered by  $SiO_2\_PGME\_TEA$  was the smallest.

Figure 5 shows the viscosity of the reaction mixture to reaction time. The viscosity increased with reaction time for samples prepared using PA, DEA, and TEA catalysts. Nota-

 Table 1
 Amount of scattered light at 350 nm by the porous SiO<sub>2</sub> thin films

	Amount of scattering at 350 nm/ppm
SiO <sub>2</sub> _PGME_NH <sub>3</sub>	248
SiO <sub>2</sub> _PGME_PA	388
SiO <sub>2</sub> _PGME_DEA	265
SiO <sub>2</sub> _PGME_TEA	204

bly, the maximum increase in viscosity is observed for TEA. The type of basic catalyst affected the formation of SiO<sub>2</sub> because of the inductive effect, steric hindrance of the catalysts and solvent [22]. The pKa values of NH<sub>3</sub>, propylamine, diethylamine and triethylamine in water are 9.21, 10.53, 10.98 and 10.65, respectively [23]. It means that basicity decreases in the order diethylamine > triethylamine > propylamine > NH<sub>3</sub>. However, the pKa values listed here are those in water, which have been widely reported, and these values vary with the solvent. It has been reported that tertiary amines may have a higher pKa than secondary amines in organic solvents [24]. This is owing to the stability of the generated cationic species in the solvent and other factors. Therefore, it must be noted that the reaction of this study was carried out in an organic solvent, mainly PGME. Furthermore, the composition of solvent was changed with the progress of reaction owing to methanol produced by hydrolysis. Therefore, discussing the reactivity of the base from the pKa value of a particular solvent is difficult. However, TEA has the highest reactivity in PGME than other bases. This may be because TEA has three alkyl chains, which are electron-donating groups, and the NH(C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>5</sub>)<sup>3+</sup> generated from TEA has stability in organic solvents owing to its three alkyl chains. SEM images and viscosity measurements showed that small SiO<sub>2</sub> nanoparticles were simultaneously generated and interconnected when TEA was used as a basic catalyst.

These results indicate that the structure of the porous  $SiO_2$  thin films differed depending on the organic base used. In particular, a fine-structured low-scattering film was obtained using a highly basic catalyst (TEA). However, gelation did not



Fig. 5 Viscosity of the reaction mixture containing (a) TEA, (b) DEA, (c) PA, and (d) NH<sub>3</sub> as the catalyst to reaction time

proceed when  $NH_3$  was used as a basic catalyst. The refractive index of the thin film could be decreased by interlinking small SiO<sub>2</sub> nanoparticles using TEA and by growing SiO<sub>2</sub> nanoparticles using  $NH_3$ . In conclusion, TEA is a suitable catalyst for synthesizing porous SiO<sub>2</sub> thin films for AR coating.

#### 3.3. Inner and Surface Structure of a Thin Film

The Structural characteristics of  $SiO_2\_PGME\_TEA$  (n = 1.17) were investigated. Figure 6 shows the pore distribution measured via positron annihilation spectroscopy. Two peaks were observed at 0.48 nm and 2.4 nm. The peak at 0.48 nm could be attributed to the gap in the siloxane framework [25] and that at 2.4 nm could be ascribed to the presence of pores in  $SiO_2$  films.



Fig. 6 Pore size distribution of SiO<sub>2</sub>\_PGME\_TEA (n = 1.17) measured using positron annihilation spectroscopy

Figure 7 shows a 3D-TEM image of SiO<sub>2</sub>\_PGME\_TEA. The colored areas represent pores that were detected by image analysis. Several pores were distributed inside the film. Image analysis also revealed the pore distribution, which showed that the pore diameter was in the range of 2-3 nm. This is consistent with the results induced via positron annihilation spectroscopy. Additionally, porosity was calculated to be 65 vol % via image analysis. Considering that the refractive index calculated from the reflectance measurement was n = 1.17, the porosity of the film was calculated from the Lorentz-Lorentz formula using the refractive index of SiO<sub>2</sub> and air and their volume fractions [26]. The porosity calculated using the refractive index was 62.2 vol %. This result indicates that a 3D-TEM structural analysis was appropriate. Therefore, SiO2\_PGME\_TEA was confirmed to possess abundant pores of diameter 2-3 nm and a high porosity of over 60 vol%. This high porosity was attributed to

the bulky colloidal  $SiO_2$  structure grown in the coating liquid. If  $SiO_2$  in the coating liquid were mono-dispersed spherical particles, the porosity of porous  $SiO_2$  thin films would be 49.4 vol%, as calculated using Structure of NAno Particles (SNAP) simulation [27], [28]. This shows that the  $SiO_2$  in the coating liquid possessed a bulky structure formed by connecting small  $SiO_2$  nanoparticles. Because bulky  $SiO_2$  structures could not be densely packed like mono-dispersed spherical nanoparticles, they formed a highly porous  $SiO_2$  thin film.



Fig. 7 3D-TEM image of SiO<sub>2</sub>\_PGME\_TEA The refractive indices of the films were adjusted to n = 1.17. Colored areas were detected pores using image analysis.

The size of the pores in SiO<sub>2</sub>\_PGME\_TEA (2–3 nm) was smaller than the wavelength of visible light, indicating that SiO<sub>2</sub>\_PGME\_TEA can exhibit a low scattering of light [29].

#### 3.4. Enhanced Hydrophobicity of SiO<sub>2</sub>\_PGME\_TEA

The adsorption of moisture from air into porous SiO<sub>2</sub> was reported to increase the refractive index [14]. When porous SiO<sub>2</sub> is used for AR coating, increasing the refractive index affects the optical properties. Therefore, the Si-OH groups in SiO<sub>2</sub>\_PGME\_TEA should be capped by hydrophobic groups. HMDS was used for capping the Si-OH groups because it is commonly used for hydrophobization [30].

In the infrared reflection-absorption spectra (IR-RAS) (Fig. 8) of SiO<sub>2</sub>\_PGME\_TEA and SiO<sub>2</sub>\_HMDS, an adsorption band at 1250 cm<sup>-1</sup> was observed in only SiO<sub>2</sub>\_HMDS, which was assigned to v(Si-C) [31]. It showed that HMDS was introduced into SiO<sub>2</sub>\_PGME\_TEA.

In addition, the contact angles of SiO<sub>2</sub>\_PGEM\_TEA and SiO<sub>2</sub>\_HMDS were measured to be 8.7° and 65°, respectively (Fig. 9). This indicated that SiO<sub>2</sub>\_PGEM\_TEA possessed a hydrophilic surface, whereas SiO<sub>2</sub>\_HMDS possessed a hydrophobic surface. These results revealed that HMDS successfully capped the Si-OH group and increased the



Fig. 8 IR-RAS spectra of SiO2\_PGME\_TEA (a) before and (b) after HMDS treatment



Fig. 9 Contact angle measurement of SiO<sub>2</sub>\_PGME\_TEA (a) before and (b) after HMDS treatment

hydrophobicity of SiO2\_PGME\_TEA.

The refractive indices of SiO<sub>2</sub>\_PGME\_TEA and SiO<sub>2</sub>\_ HMDS are listed in Table 2. The refractive index of SiO<sub>2</sub>\_ HMDS was higher than that of SiO<sub>2</sub>\_PGME\_TEA. It probably indicated that HMDS was introduced into the pores of SiO<sub>2</sub>\_PGME\_TEA. Moreover, the changes in refractive indices after keeping the films at 24°C and 35% relative humidity for 7 d were compared. The increase in the refractive index of SiO<sub>2</sub>\_HMDS was smaller than that of SiO<sub>2</sub>\_ PGME\_TEA for 7 d.

Table 2 Refractive indices of SiO<sub>2</sub>\_PGME\_TEA and SiO<sub>2</sub>\_HMDS on 0, and 7 d

	n on day 0/ -	n on day 7/ -	Increase in n after 7 d/ -
SiO2_PGME_TEA	1.170	1.212	0.042
SiO <sub>2</sub> _HMDS	1.197	1.209	0.012

Hence, the HMDS treatment prevented an increase in the refractive index of the porous SiO<sub>2</sub> thin films via the capping of the Si-OH groups.

## **4** Conclusion

Porous SiO<sub>2</sub> thin films having low refractive indices were successfully prepared via a simple sol-gel method. The

choice of solvent and basic catalyst is a key factor for controlling the reactivity of the coating liquid and forming a smooth film that exhibits low scattering. The porous SiO<sub>2</sub> thin film fabricated in this study could be used as a broadband AR coating with stacked undercoating and as a lens and sensor in various optical devices.

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# フッ化物リン酸塩ガラスの光学特性と 局所構造に対する O/P 比の寄与

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# Impact of the O/P Ratio on the Optical Properties and Structures of Fluoride–Phosphate Glass<sup>†</sup>

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フッ化物リン酸塩ガラスは、低屈折率・低分散、良好な紫外域透過率、正の異常分散など特異な光学特性を有することから光学材料として多用されている。しかし、その組成の複雑さのためか、光学特性や構造の組成依存性に関する系統的な知見は少ない、本研究では、Ca(PO<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>-AlF<sub>3</sub>-CaF<sub>2</sub>-BaF<sub>2</sub>-BaO 系フッ化物リン酸塩ガラスを熔融急冷法により 作製し、その光学特性や構造の組成依存性を O/P 比に着目して評価した。結果、ガラスの光学特性や局所構造が、O/P 比に対して非線形的な挙動を示すことが明らかとなった。例えば、O/P=3.0-3.4におけるバンドギャップエネルギーは 概ね一定であるが、O/P 比が3.6から4.0にかけて急激な低下を示した。また、Lorentz モデルに基づく屈折率分散の解 析から、バンドギャップエネルギーと同様に紫外域の共鳴周波数も O/P=3.6-4.0において急激に低下することが明ら かになった。さらに、赤外吸収分光法およびラマン散乱分光法によるガラスの局所構造解析から、O/P 比が3.6から4.0 にかけて、リン酸鎖の切断や孤立 Q<sup>0</sup> 構造の増加など、劇的な構造変化が生じることも示唆された。前記光学特性と局 所構造の特徴的な O/P 比依存性を包括するメカニズムを示すため、電気陰性度や光学的塩基度の考え方を活用して原子 間の化学結合状態に基づく考察を行った。

 $Ca(PO_3)_2-AIF_3-CaF_2-BaF_2-BaO$  glasses were prepared by the melt quenching method, and the effects of the O/P ratio on the optical properties and glass structure were investigated. The bandgap energy showed no significant change at O/P = 3.0-3.4 but drastically decreased with the increase in the O/P from 3.6 to 4.0. In addition, the refractive index dispersion was analyzed based on the Lorentz model, and it was found that the decrease in the resonance frequency in the ultraviolet region with the increase in the O/P ratio resulted in an increase in the refractive index and dispersion. Analysis of the infrared absorption and Raman scattering spectra revealed that the phosphate chains were broken, and isolated  $Q^0$  units were generated with the increase in the O/P ratio from 3.6 to 4.0. Based on the structural change of the glass, the origin of the nonlinear dependence of the optical properties on the O/P ratio was discussed.

Key words フッ素化合物、ガラス、光学材料/光学特性、リン酸、構造 fluorine/fluorine compounds, glass, optical materials/properties, phosphates, structure

## **1** Introduction

Fluoride-phosphate glass is widely used as an optical material owing to its unique optical properties, such as high optical transmittance in the ultraviolet (UV) to infrared (IR) range, low refractive index dispersion, and positive anomalous partial dispersion, which are not obtained with oxide glasses [1]-[4]. Although fluoride is not a typical glass-forming system, the addition of a small amount of phosphate dramatically improves its glass-forming ability and thermal and chemical stabilities while maintaining the unique optical

properties resulting from the highly ionic cation-fluorine bonds. Owing to its excellent optical properties, the fluoride-phosphate system was commercially melted as optical glass at Schott in the 1960s [5], and many studies have since been conducted on the structure and physical properties of fluoride-phosphate glasses [1]–[4], [6]–[13]. Phosphorus oxide, which is a glass-forming oxide, plays an important role in constructing the glass network in fluoride-phosphate glass. It has been established that the phosphate units in phosphate glass exhibit various structures depending on the O/P ratio, such as networking ultraphosphate,  $Q^3$  (O/P =

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>+</sup> This paper is reprinted with permission from John Wiley and Sons of reference [34]. We acknowledge John Wiley and Sons for the permission.

2.5), chain-like metaphosphate,  $Q^2$  (O/P = 3.0), dimer-like pyrophosphate,  $Q^1$  (O/P = 3.5), and isolated orthophosphate,  $Q^0$  (O/P = 4.0) [14], where  $Q^n$  denotes tetrahedral PO<sub>4</sub> unit with *n* bridging oxygens. To the best of our knowledge, however, most studies on fluoride – phosphate glasses have focused on the metaphosphate (O/P = 3.0) composition, whereas very few studies have focused on the effects of the O/P ratio. In this study, we investigate the influence of the O/P ratio on the optical properties of fluoride – phosphate glasses and discuss the results based on the structural analysis of the glass.

## **2** Experimental Procedures

Fluoride-phosphate glasses were synthesized using an ordinal melt-quenching technique. The raw materials of Ca(PO<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub> (Rasa Industries, Ltd., Tokyo, Japan), AlF<sub>3</sub> (Morita Chemical Industries Co., Ltd., Osaka, Japan), CaF<sub>2</sub> (Hakushin Chemical Laboratory Co., Ltd., Tokyo, Japan), BaF<sub>2</sub> (Hakushin Chemical Laboratory Co., Ltd., Tokyo, Japan), and BaCO<sub>3</sub> (Nippon Chemical Industrial Co., Ltd., Tokyo, Japan) were weighed and mixed to obtain a glass weight of 100 g and then melted under the ambient atmosphere at 1223 K for 1 h in a platinum crucible. The glass compositions synthesized in this study are listed in Table 1. Hereinafter, the sample names of the  $Ca(PO_3)_2 - AlF_3 - CaF_2 BaF_2$ -BaO glasses are abbreviated as OPX, where X denotes the O/P ratio. A platinum lid was used during melting to prevent volatilization from the molten glass. After stirring and homogenization with a platinum propeller, the mixtures were poured into a steel mold, rapidly cooled, and immediately transferred to an annealing furnace maintained near the glass transition temperature,  $T_{\rm g}$ . After holding at approximately  $T_{\rm g}$  for 3 h, the glass was slowly cooled to room temperature at a rate of 16 K/h. The compositions of the glass samples were quantitatively analyzed by X-ray fluorescence (XRF) analysis, ZSX Primus II (Rigaku Corp., Tokyo, Japan). The impurities of the glass samples were quantitatively analyzed

Table 1 Composition of OPX glasses

	Ca(PO <sub>2</sub> )	CaEa	BaE	BaO	AIE	0/P
	(mol%)	(mol%)	(mol%)	(mol%)	(mol%)	0/1
OP3.0	10	30	20	0	40	3.0
OP3.2	10	30	16	4	40	3.2
OP3.4	10	30	12	8	40	3.4
OP3.6	10	30	8	12	40	3.6
OP3.8	10	30	4	16	40	3.8
OP4.0	10	30	0	20	40	4.0

by inductively coupled plasma-mass spectrometry (ICP-MS), Agilent 7700 × (Agilent Technologies Inc., California, United States of America). For the ICP-MS analysis, the glass samples were dissolved by acid decomposition method. The crushed glass was placed in a platinum cell, and thermogravimetry-differential thermal analysis measurements, Thermo plus EVO2 TG8121 (Rigaku Corp., Tokyo, Japan), were performed at a heating rate of 10 K/min in the ambient atmosphere. The glass density was determined using the Archimedes method with deionized water as the immersion medium. For optical measurements, the glass was optically polished, and transmittance spectra were obtained in the range of 200-700 nm using a UV-Vis-NIR spectrophotometer, UH4150 (Hitachi High-Tech Science Corp., Tokyo, Japan), and in the range of 120-300 nm using a vacuum UV (VUV) spectrophotometer, KV-2004J (Bunkoukeiki Co., Ltd., Tokyo, Japan). The refractive index dispersion of the glass was measured using a Kalnew precision refractometer, KPR-3000 (Shimadzu Corp., Kyoto, Japan), at 11 wavelengths (i, h, g, F, e, d, C, r, and t lines and 1310 and 1550 nm). IR reflection spectra were measured using microscopic Fourier transform IR spectroscopy, Nicolet iN10 (Thermo Fisher Scientific Inc., Massachusetts, United states of America), in the range of 400–4000 cm<sup>-1</sup> with reference to a gold mirror. The absorption spectra were obtained through the Kramers-Kronig transformation of the reflection spectra. Unpolarized Raman scattering spectra were measured at an excitation wavelength of 532.11 nm using a micro Raman spectrometer, NRS-5000 (JASCO Corp., Tokyo, Japan).

## **3** Results

Table 2 shows the results of an XRF analysis of OPX glass. The analyzed composition shows that almost linear correlation with the nominal composition, and no significant decrease in F occurred. The analyzed composition tends to be about 1 at% lower in cations and about 5 at% higher in oxygen than the nominal composition. However, similar trends were observed for Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> (Nippon Light Metal Co., Ltd., Tokyo, Japan) and AlF<sub>3</sub> (Morita Chemical Industries Co., Ltd., Osaka, Japan) powders measured as standard samples, so these discrepancies between nominal and analyzed values are due to some systematic error in the measurements not due to the sample. Therefore, the results of XRF show that there were no serious compositional changes by the evaporation of fluorine.

Table 3 lists the thermal properties, densities, and optical properties of the OPX glasses. The increase in  $T_g$  with

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	Nominal composition							Analyzed composition				
	Р	Al	Ca	Ba	0	F	Р	Al	Ca	Ba	0	F
	(at%)	(at%)	(at%)	(at%)	(at%)	(at%)	(at%)	(at%)	(at%)	(at%)	(at%)	(at%)
OP3.0	5.0	10.0	10.0	5.0	15.0	55.0	3.5	8.6	8.8	4.1	19.4	55.6
OP3.2	5.1	10.1	10.1	5.1	16.2	53.5	3.7	8.6	8.8	3.9	20.4	54.6
OP3.4	5.1	10.2	10.2	5.1	17.4	52.0	3.9	8.4	8.6	4.0	22.3	52.9
OP3.6	5.2	10.3	10.3	5.2	18.6	50.5	4.0	8.5	8.7	4.0	23.3	51.4
OP3.8	5.2	10.4	10.4	5.2	19.8	49.0	4.0	8.4	8.6	4.0	24.8	50.1
OP4.0	5.3	10.5	10.5	5.3	21.1	47.4	4.0	8.5	8.6	4.0	26.0	48.8
$Al_2O_3$		40.0			60.0			33.4			66.5	0.1
AlF <sub>3</sub>		25.0				75.0		21.8			3.8	74.4

Table 2 Results of the quantitative analysis of glass composition by X-ray fluorescence (XRF)

Table 3 Thermal and optical properties of OPX glasses

	$T_{\rm g}$	$T_{\rm x}$	$\Delta T$	ρ	$E_{ m g}$	$n_{ m d}$	$v_{\rm d}$
	(K)	(K)	(K)	$(g/cm^3)$	(eV)		
OP3.0	712	844	132	3.59	7.03	1.46381	89.2
OP3.2	716	834	118	3.57	7.06	1.46638	88.6
OP3.4	719	846	127	3.58	7.04	1.47072	87.5
OP3.6	733	863	130	3.60	6.96	1.47711	86.9
OP3.8	744	870	126	3.62	6.92	1.48436	85.7
OP4.0	746	871	125	3.64	6.77	1.48946	85.0

increasing O/P ratio is due to the decrease in fluorine content in the glass. In the case of fluoride ions of fluorophosphate glasses, only one cation is enough for charge compensation of terminal F, such as P-F bonds. In the case of oxide ions, however, at least two cations are required to compensate the negative charge of an oxide ion, except for P = Odouble bonds. Thus, electrostatic interactions among structural units, such as  $P(O, F)_4$ ,  $Al(O, F)_n$ , and cations of Ca and Ba, are supposed to be stronger in oxygen-rich OPX glasses, resulting in higher viscosity and  $T_g$ . Similar to  $T_g$ , the crystallization onset temperature,  $T_x$ , also increases with an increase in the O/P ratio.  $\Delta T = T_x - T_g$  is often considered a measure of the thermal stability of glass against crystallization [15], [16], but no significant dependence on the O/P ratio is observed. The glass density increases slightly with increasing O/P ratio.

Figure 1 shows the 10-mm-thick internal optical transmittance spectra of OP3.0 and OP4.0. There is no significant difference in the position of the absorption edge between OP3.0 and OP4.0; however, OP4.0 shows a lower transmittance at 300–400 nm than OP3.0. As can be seen in the inset of Fig. 1, the 80% transmission wavelength,  $\lambda_{80}$ , does not change significantly with the O/P ratio at O/P = 3.0–3.4, but it exhibits drastic redshifts with the O/P ratio at O/P = 3.6–4.0.

Figure 2 shows the optical absorption spectra of OP3.0







Fig. 2 Optical absorption spectra of OP3.0 and OP4.0 glasses in the vacuum ultraviolet (VUV) region. The inset shows the O/P dependence of  $E_{\rm g}$ . The dashed line is shown to guide the eye.

and OP4.0 in the VUV region. The large absorption below 170 nm is the intrinsic interband absorption of the glass, and the absorption edge of OP4.0 is located in a longer wavelength region than that of OP3.0. The bandgap energy,  $E_{\rm g}$ , is estimated from the Tauc plot according to the following equation, and the results are listed in Table 3:

$$\chi h \nu = A (h \nu - E_{\rm g})^2 \tag{1}$$

0

where  $\alpha$ , *h*, *v*, and *A* are the absorption coefficient, Planck's constant, light frequency, and an energy-independent constant, respectively. The values of  $E_g$  for OPX glasses are close to those of other fluoride–phosphate glasses reported in the literature [4]. As shown in the inset of Fig. 2,  $E_g$  is almost constant at O/P = 3.0–3.4; however, at O/P = 3.6–4.0, it decreases rapidly as the O/P ratio increases.

Figure 3(a) shows the results of the spectral deconvolution of the absorption spectra of OP3.0 and OP4.0. The absorption spectra can be successfully reproduced with three Gaussian functions. The absorption near 180 and 260 nm is due to the charge-transfer state (CTS) of O  $2p \rightarrow Fe^{3+}$  3d [2], [17], [18], where Fe ions are trace impurities present in the glass. Because the CTS is a parity-allowed transition, it has a large absorption coefficient, even at low concentrations of Fe<sup>3+</sup> ions. Table 4 summarizes the results of the ICP–MS analysis of the OPX glasses. It can be seen that Fe is present as a trace impurity in the glass at a concentration of approximately 20 mg/kg in each sample, and the contents of other transition metals and Pt are significantly lower than that of Fe. Therefore, the effect of impurity elements other than Fe on the UV absorption is considered negligible.

The O/P dependence of the absorption peak positions near 180 and 260 nm is shown in Fig. 3(b). Neither peak position shows a significant change in the range of O/P = 3.0-3.4, but both peaks shift drastically toward lower wave numbers with an increase in the O/P ratio from 3.6 to 4.0. As shown in Fig. 3(a), the absorption in the region below 5 eV is dominated by the CTS of O  $2p \rightarrow Fe^{3+}$  3d and is almost unaffected by the inherent absorption. Therefore, it is considered that the decrease in transmittance at 300-400 nm shown in Fig. 1 is due to the redshift of the CTS absorption as the O/P ratio increases. Figure 4(a) shows the refractive index dispersion of OPX glasses. As indicated in Table 3, as the O/P ratio increases, the refractive index increases, and the Abbe number decreases. Here, the Abbe number is defined as  $v_d = (n_d - 1)/(n_F - n_C)$ , where  $n_d$ ,  $n_F$ , and  $n_C$  are the refractive indices at d (587.56 nm), F (486.1 nm), and C



Fig. 3 (a) Spectral deconvolution of the optical absorption spectra for OP3.0 and OP4.0 glasses;(b) relationships between the peak positions and O/P ratio. The dashed and solid lines in(a) are the experimental and fitted data, respectively, and the dashed lines in (b) are guides for the eye.

Table 4 Results of the quantitative analysis of trace impurities by inductively coupled plasma-mass spectrometry (ICP-MS)

	Cr (mg/kg)	Mn (mg/kg)	Fe (mg/kg)	Co (mg/kg)	Ni (mg/kg)	Cu (mg/kg)	Mo (mg/kg)	Pt (mg/kg)
OP3.0	1.3	0.2	21.9	< 0.1	0.3	0.2	< 0.1	0.5
OP3.2	1.0	0.1	16.9	< 0.1	0.2	< 0.1	< 0.1	0.2
OP3.4	1.2	0.1	20.8	< 0.1	0.2	< 0.1	< 0.1	< 0.1
OP3.6	1.3	0.2	21.3	< 0.1	0.2	< 0.1	< 0.1	< 0.1
OP3.8	1.2	0.1	18.7	< 0.1	0.1	< 0.1	< 0.1	< 0.1
OP4.0	1.1	0.1	17.5	< 0.1	0.1	< 0.1	< 0.1	< 0.1

(656.3 nm) lines, respectively. Figure 4(b) shows the correlation between  $n_d$  and O/P ratio. It is noted that Fig. 4(b) shows that  $n_d$  increases nonlinearly with the O/P ratio: The increase of  $n_d$  with respect to the O/P ratio is greater at



Fig. 4 (a) Refractive index dispersion of OPX glasses; (b) O/P dependence of  $n_d$ . The solid lines in (a) represent curves fitted using the Lorentz model, and the dashed line in (b) is guide for the eye.

O/P = 3.6-4.0 than at O/P = 3.0-3.4. The refractive index dispersion is fitted using the Lorentz model, as represented by the following equation:

$$(n+jk)^2 = 1 + \frac{e^2}{\varepsilon_0 m} \sum_i \frac{N_i}{(\omega_i^2 - \omega^2 - j\omega\gamma_i)}$$
(2)

where *n* is the refractive index, *j* is the pure imaginary complex number, *k* is the extinction coefficient, *e* is the elementary charge,  $\varepsilon_0$  is the electric permittivity of a vacuum, *m* is the mass of the electron, *i* is the type of oscillator,  $N_i$  is the number density of the oscillator,  $\omega$  is the angular frequency,  $\omega_i$  is the resonance frequency, and  $\gamma_i$  is the damping coefficient. Here, *k* and  $\gamma_i$  are assumed to be zero because the samples are optically transparent at the measured wavelength. Additionally, Eq. (2) can be simplified as the following equation, assuming that there are only two resonance terms in the UV and IR regions:

$$n^{2} = 1 + \frac{e^{2}}{\varepsilon_{0}m} \left( \frac{N_{\rm UV}}{\omega_{\rm UV}^{2} - \omega^{2}} + \frac{N_{\rm IR}}{\omega_{\rm IR}^{2} - \omega^{2}} \right)$$
(3)

where  $N_{\rm UV}$  and  $N_{\rm IR}$  are the number densities of oscillators in the UV and IR regions, respectively, and  $\omega_{\rm UV}$  and  $\omega_{\rm IR}$  are the resonance frequencies in the UV and IR regions, respectively. As shown in Fig. 4(a), the refractive index dispersion of OPX glasses can be well represented by the two-term Lorentz model given in Eq. (3).

Figure 5 shows the O/P ratio dependence of the fitting



Fig. 5 Dispersion parameters of the OPX glasses: (a)  $N_{\rm UV}$ , (b)  $\omega_{\rm UV}$ , (c)  $N_{\rm IR}$ , and (d)  $\omega_{\rm IR}$ . The dashed lines are guides for the eye.



Fig. 6 (a) Infrared (IR) absorption and (b) Raman scattering spectra of the OPX glasses. The inset in (b) shows an enlarged view.

parameters determined using Eq. (3). As O/P increases,  $N_{\rm UV}$ seems to increase from O/P = 3.0 to 3.4 but remains almost constant at O/P = 3.6-4.0 (Fig. 5(a)). On the other hand,  $\omega_{\rm UV}$  shifts to lower wave numbers as the O/P ratio increases, and the slope becomes considerably larger at O/ P = 3.6-4.0 than that at O/P = 3.0-3.4 (Fig. 5(b)). The dependence of  $\omega_{\rm UV}$  on the O/P ratio is consistent with the compositional change of  $E_g$  presented in Table 3 and Fig. 2. The above results indicate that the increase in the refractive index with the increase in the O/P ratio at O/P = 3.0-3.4and O/P = 3.6-4.0 is mainly due to the increase in  $N_{UV}$  and the shift in  $\omega_{IIV}$ , respectively. As for the oscillator parameters in IR region, with an increase in the O/P ratio,  $N_{\rm IR}$  increases almost monotonically, and  $\omega_{\mathrm{IR}}$  shifts to lower wave numbers, but the slope of  $\omega_{IR}$  at O/P = 3.6-4.0 is slightly larger than that at O/P = 3.0-3.4. Therefore, the compositional dependence of the dispersion parameters in the UV and IR regions is considered to reflect changes in the electronic states and network structures of the OPX glasses, respectively.

Figure 6(a) shows the IR absorption spectra of the OPX glasses. There is no significant change in the spectrum at O/P = 3.0-3.4; however, at O/P = 3.6-4.0, the peak at 650 cm<sup>-1</sup> shifts to a slightly lower wave number with an increase in the O/P ratio. In addition, the intensities at 950 and 1200 cm<sup>-1</sup> decrease, whereas those at 1100 cm<sup>-1</sup> increase. Because

the spectrum in the range of 800-1250 cm<sup>-1</sup> is attributed to the structure of the phosphate units, these changes in the spectrum at O/P = 3.6-4.0 reflect a drastic structural change in the phosphate groups that form the glass network. As shown in Fig. 7(a), the IR absorption spectrum at 800-1250 cm<sup>-1</sup> can be deconvoluted into four Gaussian functions. Band A (1150-1190 cm<sup>-1</sup>) corresponds to asymmetric stretching ( $v_{as}$ ) of P–O bonds in PØ<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup> ( $Q^2$ ) units [10], [13], [19], band B (1130 cm<sup>-1</sup>) is  $v_{as}$  of P–O bonds in PØO<sub>3</sub><sup>2-</sup> (Q<sup>1</sup>) units [10], [13], [19], [20], band C (1080 cm<sup>-1</sup>) is the symmetric stretching ( $v_s$ ) of P–O bonds in PØO<sub>3</sub><sup>2-</sup> ( $Q^1$ ) units and  $v_{as}$  of P–O bonds in PO<sub>4</sub><sup>3-</sup> ( $Q^0$ ) units [10], [13], [19] and band D (960 cm<sup>-1</sup>) is v<sub>as</sub> of P-O-P bonds [10], [19], [20]. Here,  $\emptyset$  is bridging oxygen. The absence of a band at 1350 cm<sup>-1</sup> assigned to  $v_s$  of P = O double bonds in PØ<sub>3</sub>O (Q<sup>3</sup>) units [14] indicates that the fraction of  $Q^3$  units is very small in the OPX glasses. As shown in Fig. 7(a), the peak position of band A ( $v_{as}$  P–O in  $Q^2$ ) is located at 1189 cm<sup>-1</sup> in the OP3.0 glass and 1156 cm<sup>-1</sup> in OP4.0 glass, showing a shift to a lower wave number as the O/P ratio increases. This suggests a decrease in the length of the phosphate chains containing  $Q^2$  units with increasing O/P ratio [21]. The fraction of each peak area in Fig. 7(a) is shown in part (b). The fractions of bands A ( $v_{as}$  P-O in  $Q^2$ ) and D ( $v_{as}$  P-O-P) are largely constant at O/P = 3.0-3.4; however, at O/P =3.6-4.0, they decrease monotonically as the O/P ratio increases. On the other hand, the fraction of band C ( $v_s$  P-O in  $Q^1$ ,  $v_{as}$  P–O in  $Q^0$ ) increases with the increase in the O/ P ratio from 3.6 to 4.0. The fraction of band B ( $v_{as}$  P–O in  $Q^{\rm l}$ ) does not show a clear dependence on the O/P ratio.

Figure 6(b) shows the Raman scattering spectra of the OPX glasses. Similar to the IR absorption spectra, no significant change is observed in the Raman spectra at O/P = 3.0-3.4; however, with an increase in the O/P ratio from 3.6 to 4.0, the intensities at 540, 750, 1060, and 1200 cm<sup>-1</sup> decrease, whereas those at 460 and 1000 cm<sup>-1</sup> increase. Figure 7(c) shows the result of spectral deconvolution of the Raman spectra at 800–1250 cm<sup>-1</sup> using four Gaussian functions. Band E (1160-1180 cm<sup>-1</sup>) is  $v_s$  of P-O bonds in  $PØ_2O_2^-$  (Q<sup>2</sup>) units [6], [10], [13], [19], [22], band F (1110) cm<sup>-1</sup>) is  $v_{as}$  of P–O bonds in PØO<sub>3</sub><sup>2-</sup> (Q<sup>1</sup>) units [6], [10], [22], band G (1050 cm<sup>-1</sup>) is  $v_s$  of P–O bonds in PØO<sub>3</sub><sup>2-</sup> (Q<sup>1</sup>) units [10], [13], [19], [22] and pyrophosphate  $P_2O_7^{4-}$  groups [19], and band H (1000–1020 cm<sup>-1</sup>) is  $v_s$  of P–O bonds in PO<sub>4</sub><sup>3-</sup>  $(Q^0)$  units [6], [10], [13], [19], [22]. The fraction of each peak area in Fig. 7(c) is shown in Fig. 7(d). The ratio of each peak area is almost constant at O/P = 3.0-3.4; however, at O/P = 3.6-4.0, the fractions of bands E ( $v_s P-O$  in



Fig. 7 Spectral deconvolution of (a) infrared (IR) absorption and (c) Raman scattering spectra for the OP3.0 and OP4.0 glasses, and the fraction of each peak area in the (b) infrared (IR) absorption and (d) Raman scattering spectra. The dashed and solid lines in (a, c) are the experimental and fitted data, respectively, and the dashed lines in (b, d) are guides for the eye.

Table 5 Assignments of infrared (IR) and Raman bands attributed to phosphate units in OPX glasses

IR				Raman			
Band	Wavenumber (cm <sup>-1</sup> )	Assignment	Ref.	Band	Wavenumber (cm <sup>-1</sup> )	Assignment	Ref.
А	1090-1150	$v_{\rm as}$ P–O in $Q^2$	[10], [13], [19]	Е	1160-1180	$v_{\rm s}$ P–O in $Q^2$	[6], [10], [13], [19], [22]
В	~1130	$v_{\rm as}$ P–O in $Q^1$	[10], [13], [19], [20]	F	~1100	$v_{\rm as}$ P–O in $Q^1$	[6], [10], [22]
С	~1080	$v_{\rm s}$ P–O in $Q^1$	[10], [13], [19]	G	~1050	$v_{\rm s}$ P–O in $Q^1$	[10], [13], [19], [22]
		$v_{\rm as}$ P–O in $Q^0$	[10], [13], [19]			$v_{s} P_{2}O_{7}^{4-}$	[19]
D	~960	$v_{\rm as} P - O - P$	[10], [19], [20]	Н	1000-1020	$v_{\rm s}$ P–O in $Q^0$	[6], [10], [13], [19], [22]

 $Q^2$ ) and G ( $v_s$  P–O in  $Q^1$ ,  $v_s$  P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>7</sub><sup>4-</sup>) decrease, and that of band H ( $v_s$  P–O in  $Q^0$ ) increase as the O/P ratio increases. On the other hand, band F shows an almost constant fraction regardless of the O/P ratio. The assignments of IR and Raman bands attributed to phosphate units in OPX glasses are summarized in Table 5.

The results in Fig. 7 strongly indicate a structural change of  $Q^2$  units to  $Q^0$  units with an increase in the O/P ratio at O/P = 3.6-4.0. The Raman spectra additionally support the breakage of the phosphate chains with increasing O/P ratio because the band at 750 cm<sup>-1</sup>, which is assigned to the symmetric stretching mode of P-O-P bonds in the phosphate

chains [6], [10], [19], [22], decreases in intensity with the O/P ratio at O/P = 3.6-4.0 (Fig. 6(b)). In addition, a slight band is confirmed at 850 cm<sup>-1</sup> in the Raman spectra (inset of Fig. 6(b)), and its intensity decreases as the O/P ratio increases, almost disappearing at O/P = 3.6-4.0. Because this band is attributed to the symmetric stretching of F–P–F bonds [6], [23], it indicates that P–F bonds are present at low O/P ratios. The symmetric stretching vibration of P–F bond is reported to appear around 760 cm<sup>-1</sup> [6], [13], [23], but it is difficult to evaluate it independently because it overlaps with the peak of the symmetric stretching vibration of P–O–P (750 cm<sup>-1</sup>).

The evaluation of the low-frequency region ( $< 700 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ ) in the IR and Raman spectra of OPX glasses is more complicated. In aluminofluoride-phosphate systems, various modes due to the Al-(O, F) and P-(O, F) networks overlap in this region, and their frequencies also depend on the degree of polymerization [24]. The IR bands due to the vibrations of AlO<sub>6</sub>, AlO<sub>4</sub>, AlF<sub>6</sub>, and AlF<sub>4</sub> appear at 535, 730, 540-570, and 620 cm<sup>-1</sup>, respectively [25], and the asymmetric stretching modes of the Al-F-Al groups appear at 630 and 680 cm<sup>-1</sup> [13]. Furthermore, in the IR absorption spectra, the bending vibrations of O–P–O units and  $\delta(PO_2)$ modes of  $(PO_2)_n$  chains show a band at approximately 480 cm<sup>-1</sup>, and the band at 540 cm<sup>-1</sup> is described as a fundamental frequency of  $Q^0$  units or as harmonics of P = O bending vibrations [20]. In Raman spectroscopy, the vibrations of  $AlF_6$ and AlF<sub>4</sub> units appear at 570 and 625 cm<sup>-1</sup>, respectively [13], and the vibrations of F<sub>3</sub>Al-O-AlF<sub>3</sub> groups appear at 530  $cm^{-1}$  [13]. In addition, the bending mode of O–P–O in  $Q^0$ units, bending mode of phosphate chains, and symmetric stretching mode of P–O–P bonds in  $Q^2$  units show Raman bands at approximately 440, 560, and 620 cm<sup>-1</sup>, respectively [19]. From the above, the shift of the IR absorption peak at  $650 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  with an increase in the O/P ratio (Fig. 6(a)) may reflect structural changes, such as a decrease in P-F bonds, an increase in  $Q^0$  units, and a transformation from AlF<sub>6</sub> and  $AlF_4$  to  $Al(O, F)_6$ . In addition, the decrease in intensity at 550 cm<sup>-1</sup> and increase at 480 cm<sup>-1</sup> in the Raman spectra (Fig. 6(b)) possibly reflect the structural changes of phosphate groups, such as the increase in  $Q^0$  units and breakage of the phosphate chains with the increase in the O/P ratio.

### **4** Discussion

The IR and Raman spectroscopy results strongly indicate that the increase in the O/P ratio from 3.6 to 4.0 leads to the breakage of the phosphate chains, causing a decrease in  $Q^2$  units and an increase in isolated  $Q^0$  units. The increase in N<sub>IR</sub> and decrease in  $\omega_{IR}$  with increasing O/P ratio (Figs. 5(c, d)) are also consistent with the spectral changes caused by the decrease in  $Q^2$  units and increase in  $Q^0$  units (Fig. 6(a)). This nonlinear structural change with the variation in the O/ P ratio can be understood by considering the structure of phosphate glass, which is well described using the O/P ratio [14]. At O/P = 3.0-3.5, metaphosphate groups [(PO<sub>3</sub>)<sub>n</sub>] are obtained, and the structure can be described as chains formed by PO<sub>4</sub> tetrahedra. In contrast, when the O/P ratio is between 3.5 and 4.0, isolated orthophosphate units (PO<sub>4</sub><sup>3-</sup>) are generated. It should be noted that these orthophosphate units are separated from other  $P(O, F)_4$  tetrahedra but are expected to be linked to Al-(O, F) polyhedra because previous structural analyses of fluoride–phosphate glass have shown that  $Al(O, F)_6$  octahedra interconnect with phosphate monomers and dimers [26], [27]. In this study, however, oxygens in P–O–Al bonds are classified as non-bridging oxygens because the differences in electronegativities between Al (1.61) and O (3.44) are significantly larger than that between P (2.19) and O (3.44), resulting in more the ionicity of Al–O bonds than P–O bonds [28].

Although OPX glasses have a much lower oxygen content than fluorine content, structures in phosphate groups are strongly dependent on the O/P ratio, similar to phosphate glass. Therefore, it is suggested that P preferentially coordinates with oxygen, and this is also supported by the fact that the Raman intensity of F-P-F bonds is very weak compared with that of P-O-related bands (Fig. 6(b)). Such selectivity has also been reported in oxyfluoroborate glass, and its origin was discussed using the concept of electronegativity by Shinozaki et al [29]. The Pauling electronegativity values are Ba (0.89) < Ca (1.00) < Al (1.61) < P (2.19) < O (3.44) < F (3.98) [28]. Ba and Ca, which have low electronegativities, strongly attract fluorine and preferentially form ionic bonds. In contrast, P, which has a higher electronegativity than other cations, is more likely to form covalent bonds with oxygen, which has a more similar electronegativity than fluorine.

From the results of IR and Raman spectroscopy, almost no structural change was observed at O/P = 3.0-3.4, but significant structural changes were confirmed at O/P = 3.6-4.0. One possible explanation for this nonlinear trend is the effect of P-F bonds. Although the intensity of the Raman peak is small, Fig. 6(b) suggests the presence of F-P-F bonds at O/P = 3.0-3.4, and its intensity decreases with the increase of O/P ratio. Therefore, at O/P = 3.0-3.4, it is suggested that terminal fluorines in P-F bonds are replaced by oxygen as the O/P ratio increases. According to Ref. [26], fluorine preferentially replaces bridging oxygen on the phosphate tetrahedra [26]. If so, when the O/P ratio increases at O/P = 3.0-3.4, the introduced oxygen is expected to preferentially replace the fluorine in the P-F bonds to form the bridging P-O-P bonds. From Fig. 7, it can be seen that the fraction of IR band A ( $v_{as}$  P–O in  $Q^2$ ) and Raman band E ( $v_s$ P-O in  $Q^2$ ) slightly increase with O/P ratio at O/P = 3.0-3.4, supporting the formation of bridging P-O-P bonds by  $F \rightarrow O$  substitution. Similarly, it is also expected that IR band D ( $v_{as}$  P-O-P) and Raman band at 750 cm<sup>-1</sup> ( $v_s$  P-O-P) increase with O/P ratio at O/P = 3.0-3.4, but the results do not show a clear increase. This might be due to the overlap of these bands with vibrational components originating from the fluorophosphate units because it has been reported that the F–P–F and P–F bonds exhibit vibrational peaks at 980 cm<sup>-1</sup> in IR spectra [11], [25], and 760 cm<sup>-1</sup> in Raman spectra [6], [13], [23], respectively. At O/P = 3.0-3.4, the fraction and peak intensity in vibrational spectra of these fluorophosphate units should decrease with increasing O/P ratio.

According to the previous study [13], [23], the vibrational energy of non-bridging oxygen connected with P in  $P(O, F)_4$ strongly depends on the number of non-bridging oxygens. This is because the bond order of terminal oxygen is averaged over the total number of non-bridging oxygens, so  $POO_2F^-$ ,  $PO_2F_2^-$ , and  $PO_2O_2^-$  ( $Q^2$ ) units have almost the same bond order of 1.5 between P and the terminal oxygen atoms. Similarly, less polymerized  $PO_3F^{2-}$  and  $POO_3^{2-}$  (Q<sup>1</sup>) units would have almost the same bond order as 1.33. Therefore, even if the terminal fluorines in the P-F bonds are replaced with bridging oxygens at O/P = 3.0-3.4, it is estimated that the vibrational energy is hardly changed. At O/P=3.6-4.0, on the other hand, there should be almost no P-F bonds remaining due to the substitution to P-O-P bonds, so the oxygens introduced by increasing the O/P ratio preferentially form P-O<sup>-</sup> and P-O-Al bonds, leading the drastic structural change of phosphate units  $(Q^2 \rightarrow Q^0)$ .

Finally, we discuss the relationship between the structural changes in the OPX glasses and their optical properties. Using the concept of optical basicity proposed by Duffy and Ingram, the optical basicities of the  $Q^2$ ,  $Q^1$ , and  $Q^0$  units are 0.50, 0.57, and 0.63, respectively [30]. This indicates that the electron-donating ability of oxygen increases as the number of non-bridging oxygen atoms in the PO<sub>4</sub> tetrahedron increases. This is because non-bridging oxygen generally has a smaller binding energy of outer electrons than bridging oxygen, resulting in a higher energy level of the O 2p orbital, which forms the upper valence states of the glass [31], [32]. In the OPX glasses, it is strongly expected that the energy level of the O 2p orbital shifts to a higher energy owing to the non-bridging oxygen generated with the increase in the O/P ratio at 3.6-4.0. The high-energy shift of the O 2p level reduces the transition energy to the conduction band, resulting in a decrease in the bandgap energy, as indicated in Table 3 and Fig. 2. This mechanism is also important for the refractive index dispersion because the redshift of the intrinsic resonance frequency,  $\omega_{\rm UV}$ , can be explained in the same manner. As for the CTS transition band, the relationship between the electron-donating ability

of ligand anions and the CTS transition energy has been discussed in other studies [18], [33]. Considering this, the nonlinear decrease in the CTS transition energy from O 2p to  $Fe^{3+}$  3d (Fig. 3) can also be explained by the drastic increase in the electron-donating ability of oxygen by the generation of non-bridging oxygen at O/P = 3.6-4.0. As for the refractive index, Fig. 4(b) clearly shows that the increase of  $n_d$  with respect to the O/P ratio is greater at O/P = 3.6– 4.0 than at O/P = 3.0-3.4. At O/P = 3.0-3.4, it is estimated that  $n_d$  increases simply due to the increase in the number density of oxide ions with higher polarizability than fluoride ions because there is no significant change in the  $Q^n$ distribution. On the other hand, at O/P = 3.6-4.0, in addition to the effect of an increase in the number density of oxide ions, the increase in optical basicity (number density of non-bridging oxygens) caused by a drastic change in the  $Q^n$  distribution should contribute to increase  $n_d$ .

## **5** Conclusion

Ca(PO<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>-AlF<sub>3</sub>-CaF<sub>2</sub>-BaF<sub>2</sub>-BaO glasses were prepared using the melt-quenching method, and the effects of the O/P ratio on the absorption spectrum and refractive index dispersion were evaluated. The bandgap energy determined from the intrinsic interband absorption edge was almost constant at approximately 7.0 eV at O/P = 3.0-3.4, but it rapidly decreased to 6.77 eV with the increase of O/P ratio at 3.6-4.0. Furthermore, the glass contained approximately 20 mg/kg Fe ions, and absorption peaks due to CTS from O 2p to Fe<sup>3+</sup> 3d were observed at approximately 180 and 260 nm; their peak positions also showed a redshift as the O/P ratio increased from 3.6 to 4.0. We also investigated the refractive index dispersion of the glass using the Lorentz model and clarified the nonlinear O/P dependence of refractive index  $n_{\rm d}$ , the number density of oscillators, and resonance frequencies. IR and Raman spectroscopy suggested that, at  $\rm O/P$  = 3.0-3.4, P-F bonds were substituted by bridging P-O-P bonds with an increase of O/P ratio, whereas at O/P = 3.6-4.0, the  $Q^2$  units drastically decreased, and  $Q^0$  units were generated as the O/P ratio increased, indicating the breakage of phosphate chains in the glass. From these results, it was concluded that the nonlinear changes in the optical properties with respect to the O/P ratio were due to an increase in non-bridging oxygen associated with the breakage of the phosphate chains: The increase in non-bridging oxygen with a high electron-donating ability enhanced the energy level of the upper valence band, resulting in a decrease in the transition energies from the O 2p level to the conduction band and Fe<sup>3+</sup> 3d level.

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