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Neoproterozoic accretionary complex exposed in the Anglesey island and Lleyn peninsula, northwestern Wales

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Accretionary complex is formed by subduction of oceanic plate, and records a history of the subduction. Subduction-related Precambrian rocks crop out in central England to Wales. The subduction with eastward polarity is considered to have continued from the Neoproterozoic to the Ordovician. Those are supported by three evidences: existences of (1) 680-480 Ma calc-alkaline volcano-plutonic complexes, (2) a high-P/T metamorphic belt formed by regional metamorphism, which has barroisite 40Ar/39Ar ages of 560-550 Ma (peak ages), (3) pelagic to hemipelagic-sedimentary rocks and mafic to ultramafic rock in Monian Supergroup. Based on these evidences, previous studies suggested that the region from the central England to the Wales had been formed by subduction-related orogeny. However, there have been a few constraints on a depositional age in the Monian Supergroup. The age constraint is necessary to reveal tectonic history of the central England to the Wales.

The Monian Supergroup is exposed in the Anglesey island and Lleyn peninsula, northwestern Wales. This complex is divided into three groups; South Stack Group (Gp), New Harbour Gp and Gwna Gp. This study focuses on Gwna Gp beacause sedimentary rocks consist of lower to middle Cambrian acritarchs. The Gwna Gp has been described as melange since 1919 and is located at structural top than the other two groups. The Gwna melanges include pillow basalts, bedded or jaspery cherts, carbonates, mudstones, sandstones and quartzites, and these rocks are typical rocks of an ocean plate stratigraphy (OPS). At eight areas in the Lleyn peninsula, we conducted geological survey to reconstruct OPSs. In addition, we determined U-Pb ages of zircons from tuffs, mudstones, claystones or sandstones with LA-ICP-MS at the University of Kyoto.

Twenty-six OPSs are reconstructed, and then repetitions of the OPSs by layer-parallel thrusts are confirmed. We separated zircons from three tuffs, two mudstones, four claystones and three sandstones of each OPS. The U-Pb ages of the zircons range from 637 ± 13 Ma (the oldest) to 541 ± 16 Ma (the youngest). We constrained arrival time of each OPS to a trench by the youngest age of detrictal zircons.

Although the Gwna Gp has been treated as a single unit, this group can be divided into three types based on the arrival times. The arrival times of Type1, Type2 and Type3 are 630-610 Ma, 610-570 Ma and younger than 560 Ma, respectively. This result indicates the structural upper sequence is older than the lower. This structurally downward growth is the characteristic of typical accretionary complex, and was formed by the eastward subduction. This trend is also supported by the spatial and temporal relation of both volcano-plutonic complexes and regional metamorphic belt. From these evidences, we concluded that the Gwna Gp is the accretionary complex formed by a series of the subduction-related orogeny.

Keywords: Wales, Neoproterozoic, U-Pb age of detrital zircon, Accretionary complex, Subduction-related orogeny