Geodynamics Seminar

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Numerical investigations of effects of spatial variations in physical properties on the mantle convection patterns

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主催：愛媛大学地球深部ダイナミクス研究センター
日時：6/8（金）午後 4時30分～
場所：総合研究棟 4F 会議室

EHIME UNIVERSITY GRC GEODYNAMICS RESEARCH CENTER

Abstract

A series of numerical simulations is carried out on the onset of thermal convection of Boussinesq fluid of an infinite Prandtl number in a planar layer in the presence of spatial variation of physical properties such as viscosity, thermal conductivity and expansivity. The viscosity of the fluid is exponentially dependent on temperature, while thermal conductivity and expansivity are linearly dependent on pressure (or depth). We seek for the condition for the onset of convection by changing the horizontal wave number of perturbation as well as the amplitudes of spatial variations in physical properties (viscosity, thermal conductivity and thermal expansivity). Then, we examine influences on both the critical conditions and the dominant flow patterns of spatial variations in those physical properties. From the changes in flow patterns with increasing the amplitudes of temperature dependence of viscosity, we successfully identified the transition into the “stagnant lid” (ST) regime, where the convection occurs only beneath a thick and stagnant lid of cold fluid at the top surface. We also found that the transition takes place regardless of the spatial variations in thermal conductivity and/or expansivity.

However, detailed analysis of the numerical results showed a quantitative difference in the critical condition for the onset of ST convection due to the presence of spatial variations in thermal conductivity and expansivity. Especially we focused on the horizontal wave number of perturbation which is largely decreased by the introduction of spatial variations in these properties. In particular, the variation in thermal conductivity can significantly reduce the wave number: the horizontal length scale of convection can be enlarged by up to 50% when viscosity is strongly dependent on temperature. We further developed an analytical model of convection cells which consider the thickness of stagnant lid and convective vigor beneath it. The model successfully reproduced the mechanism of increasing horizontal length scale of ST regime convection cells for each condition of spatial variations in physical properties. Same effect and mechanism induced by the spatial variation in physical properties are confirmed by the finite amplitude convection simulations.

The results of present studies indicate that, under certain conditions, the convection of fluids with strongly temperature-dependent viscosity takes place which is characterized simultaneously by (i) large horizontal length scales of convective cells and (ii) thick stiff lid of highly viscous fluid above it. This is in a stark contrast with earlier numerical studies using constant thermal conductivity and expansivity where the convection beneath stagnant lids is always associated with cells with small horizontal length scales. Our findings therefore highlight the essential roles of the spatial variation of the thermal conductivity and thermal expansivity on the convection patterns in the mantle of terrestrial planets.

詳細は当センターホームページ: http://www.ehime-u.ac.jp/~grc/をご覧ください
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