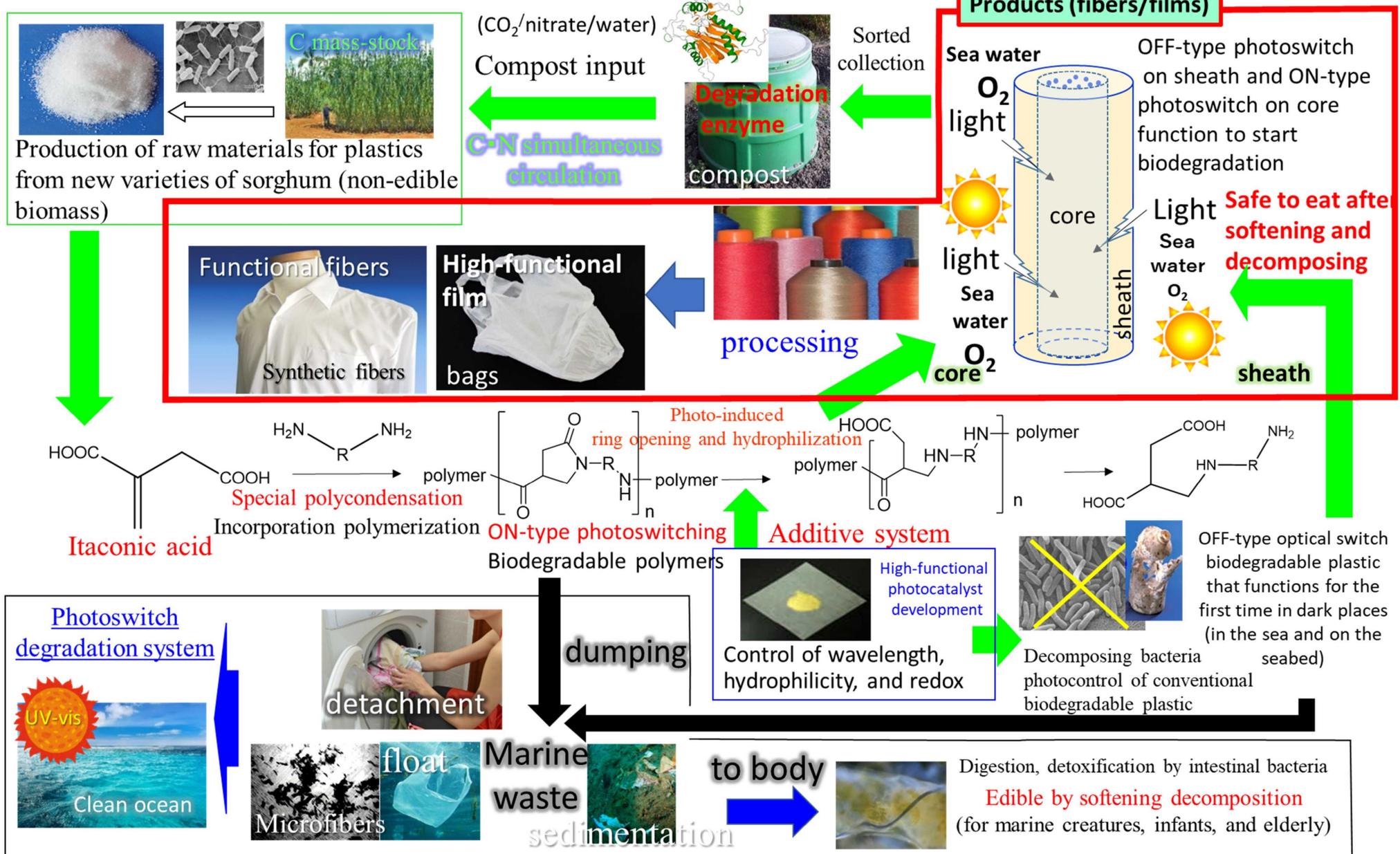
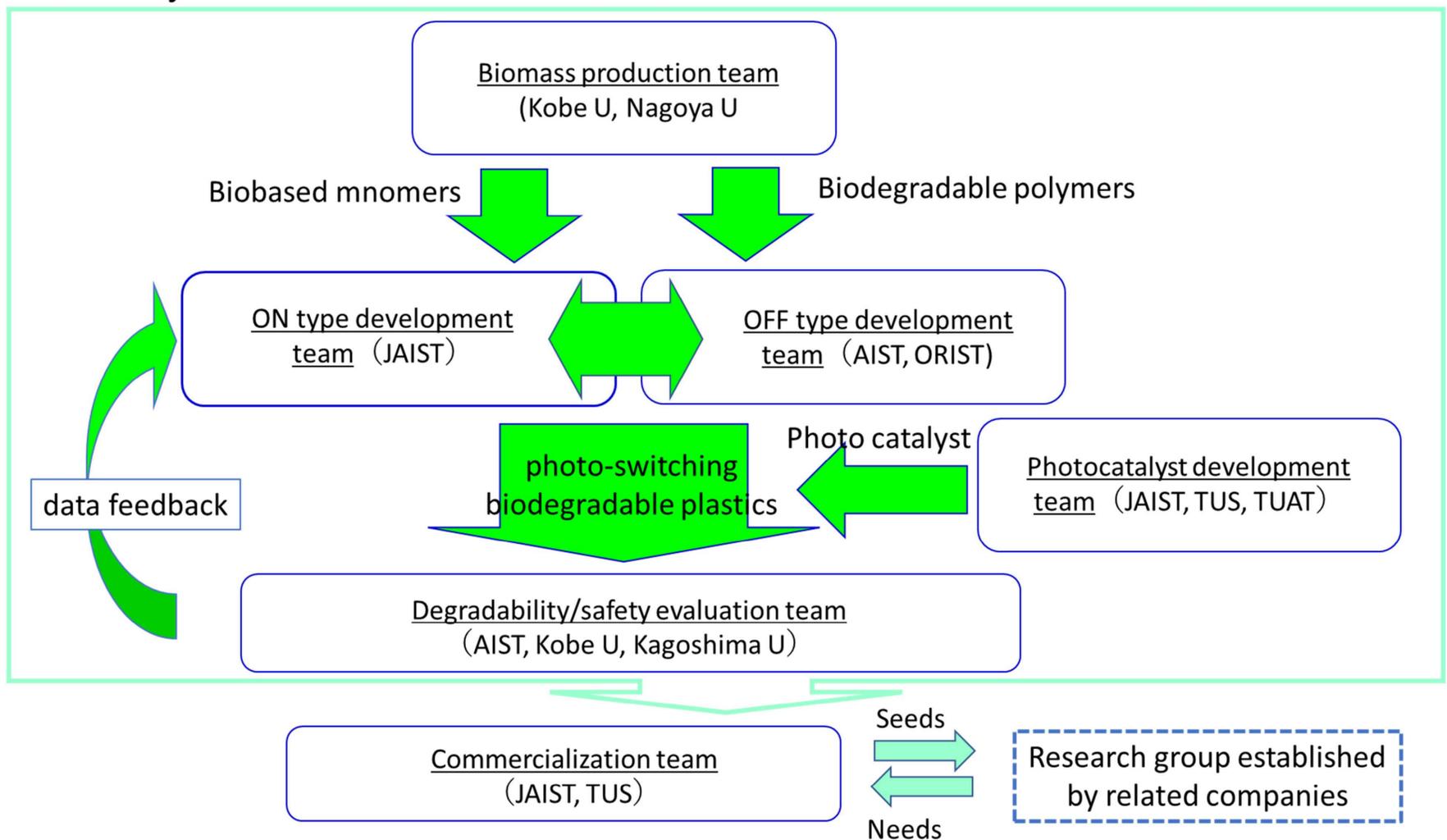


【Final goal】 Using itaconic acid produced from a new cultivar of sorghum and a biodegradable polymer, a newly developed high-performance photocatalyst is composited to develop a photoswitching ocean-biodegradable plastic with edibility.



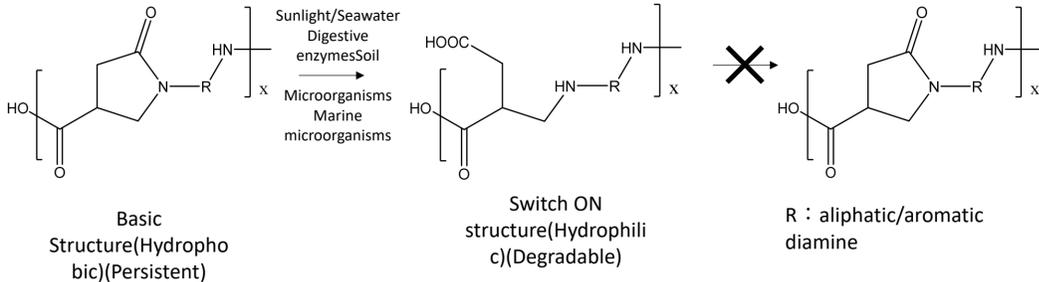
Research system

FY2020-2023



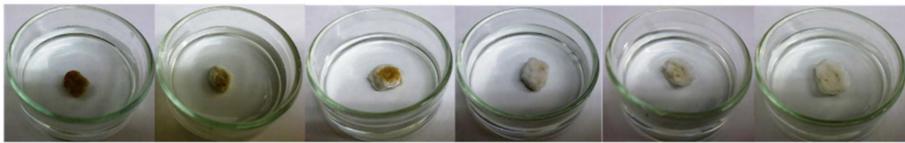
1. Synthesis of Polyamide

Functions of ON-type Bio-Nylon

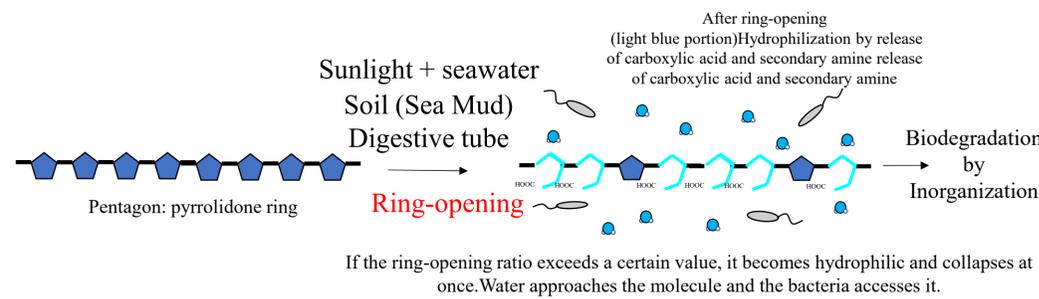
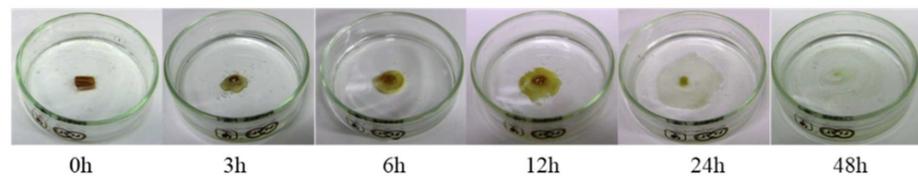


Disintegration by stimulation of light and water (carbonyl excitation, reactive oxygen species, OH, etc.)

R: nonamethylenediamine

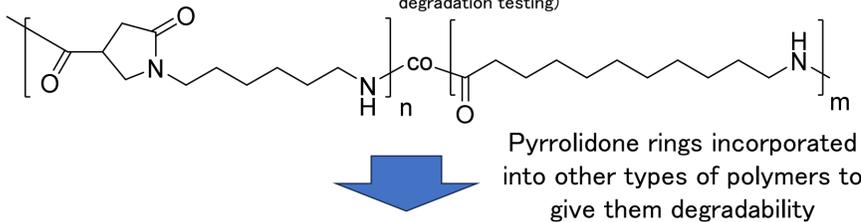


R: m-xylenediaminediamine

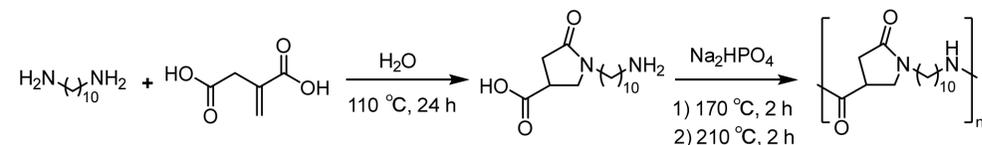


✓ Found conditions under which 11-aminoundecanoic acid can be introduced and polymerized

(10L bench scale synthesis conditions were also established → provided for molding processing and degradation testing)

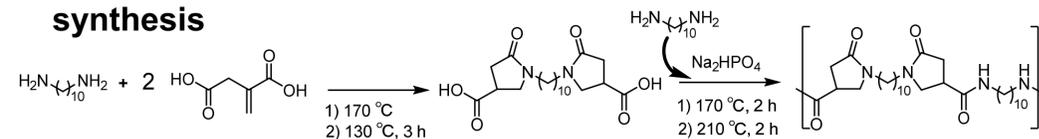


1. Amino acid type monomer (10i-1) and polyamide synthesis



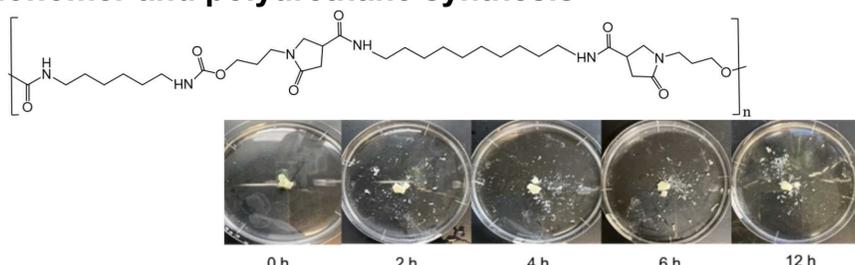
Scheme 1. Synthesis of 1-(10-aminodecyl)-5-oxopyrrolidine-3-carboxylic acid (10i-1) and polyamide 10i-m0 (PA10i-m0).

2. Dicarboxylic acid type monomer (10i-1.5) and polyamide synthesis



Scheme 2. Synthesis of 1,1'-(decane-1,10-diyl)bis(5-oxopyrrolidine-3-carboxylic acid) (10i-1.5) and PA10i-m100.

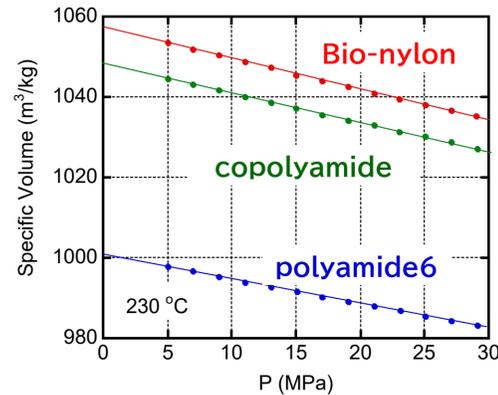
3. Diol monomer and polyurethane synthesis



2. Processability

Nylon 6i-11-50% (Bio-nylon)

Pressure-Volume relation



Bio-nylon

Melt density 946 kg/m³
Bulk modulus 1.40 GPa

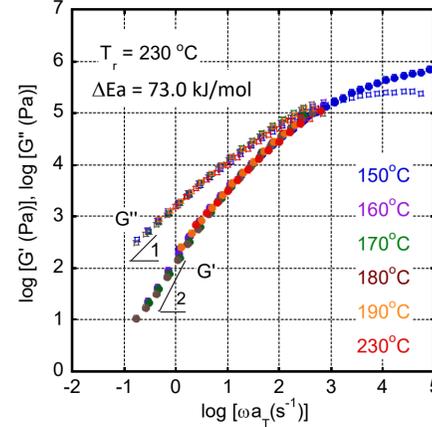
copolyamide*
Melt density 954 kg/m³
Bulk modulus 1.47 GPa

PA6

Melt density 999 kg/m³
Bulk modulus 1.66 GPa

* copolyamide PA6 55 mol
PA66 13 mol
PA610 32 mol

Oscillatory shear modulus



Processability

Spinning

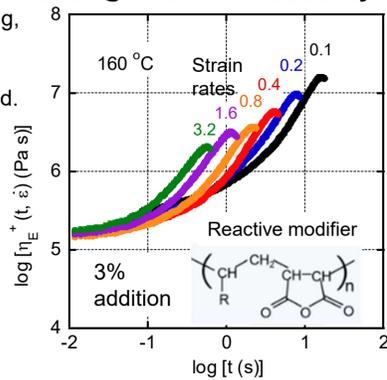
- Melt spinning is available (diameter 15-50 μm)
- It is possible to obtain a sheath-core fiber.

Film, foaming, and blow-molding

- A small addition of reactive modifier provides strain-hardening in elongational viscosity, leading to good processability.

Elongational viscosity

Strain hardening, i.e., viscosity increase with time, is detected.



Viscoelastic properties of bio-nylon are similar to those of conventional nylons.

Entanglement molecular weight

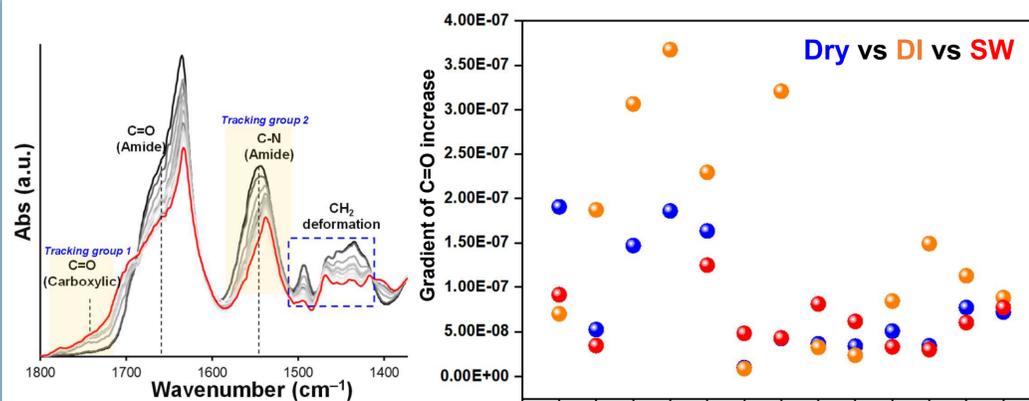
M_e = 2700 PA6 M_e = 2490
PA66 M_e = 2000

3. Photodegradation

Aging in dry air, pure water, and sea water (~12 weeks)

Xenon lamp (550 W/m², 35 °C)

Uniform dispersion and film appearance



- Bio-nylon degraded via the oxidation of CH₂ next to pyrrolidone N and amide scission.
- The pyrrolidone groups selectively promoted degradation in pure water.
- The TiO₂ addition accelerated the photodegradation by 2-3 times.
- The addition of CuI largely suppressed the degradation, while the degradability in water could be recovered by TiO₂.

[Challenges] Further acceleration, particularly in saline water

Marine degradability of photo-switched biodegradable plastics

1. Biodegradability of ON type sample (Nylon6i11(33), <2 mm) in water, irradiated with ultraviolet lamp, was evaluated in natural seawater using a BOD test (Joint research with AIST).

- The absorbance of water increased depending on the light irradiation time, and it seemed organic matter eluted from the plastic (Fig. 1).
- No change was observed in the infrared spectra of the sample surface exposed to UV light in water for 8 hours.
- Approximately 4% of the irradiated plastic samples in natural seawater was biodegraded after one month, but no significant difference was observed in the biodegradation rate between samples with/without UV irradiation (Table 1).

2. OFF-type samples (PHBH, PBSA, PCL, and CA-L) showed disintegration of more than 50% after 2 months in field seawater, and PCL in particular had about 90% disintegration within 1 month (Fig. 2, Joint research with AIST and ORIST).

3. Other test plastics were immersed in field seawater to evaluate their disintegration properties (Joint research with AIST and ORIST).

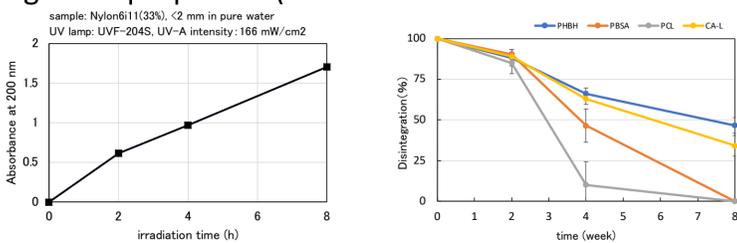


Fig.1 Change in absorbance with irradiation time

Fig.2 Disintegration of test plastics in natural seawater at ship mooring pond of Kobe Univ.

Table 1 Biodegradation of pre-irradiated plastic in natural seawater*

Test specimen	UV lamp	UV-A Intensity (mW/cm ²)	irradiation time (h)	Biodegradation rate (%) after 1 month
Cellulose	no	0	0	67 ± 3.1
Nylon6i11(33), <2 mm	no	0	0	0.93 ± 1.4
Nylon6i11(33), <2 mm	HL400BH	50	8	3.9 ± 3.0
Nylon6i11(33), <2 mm	UVF-204S	166	8	4.0 ± 3.0

*BOD test with NP strengthened seawater using OxiTop (2023.11.27-12.27)

Environmental risk of plastic decomposition products

1. The estimated no-effect concentration (PNEC) of water-soluble degradation products derived from ON-type resins was calculated for marine and freshwater organisms (Table 2).

- Closed ring dicarboxylic acid type 1.5mer: 370 µg/l
 - Closed ring amino acid monomer: 3,800 µg/l
 - Open ring amino acid monomer: 4,400 µg/l
- The degradation products are considered to be ecotoxic if they remain in the aquatic environment at concentrations exceeding the above PNEC.

2. No acute toxicity of ON type samples (particulate Nylon6i11(50), Nylon6i11(50)+NaNbO₃) to freshwater crustaceans (*Daphnia magna*) and freshwater fish (zebrafish) was observed (Fig. 3). However, some *D.magna* died due to particles adhering to their bodies.

3. No acute toxicity of OFF type samples (particulate PCL, PCL+P25, TiO₂, gC₃N₄, heat-treated gC₃N₄) to *Daphnia magna* and zebrafish was observed.

Table 2 Acute toxicity of degradation products from bionylon on aquatic species (EC₅₀, LC₅₀ in µg/l, initial pH adjusted)

test organisms	Closed ring		Open ring
	Dicarboxylic type 1.5 dimer	Amino acid type monomer*	amino acid type monomer*
Marine luminescent bacteria	> 1,000	>10,000	>10,000
Marine microalgae	> 1,000	7,200	7,100
Brine shrimp	> 1,000	>10,000	>10,000
Marine rotifer	> 1,000	>10,000	>10,000
Freshwater microalgae	> 1,000	3,800	4,400
Freshwater crustacean	820	>10,000	7,600
Freshwater rotifer	370	>10,000	6,300

*including salt

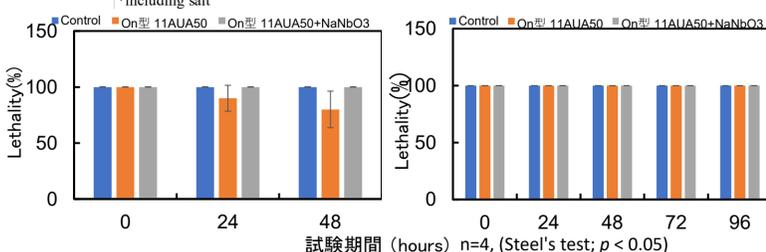
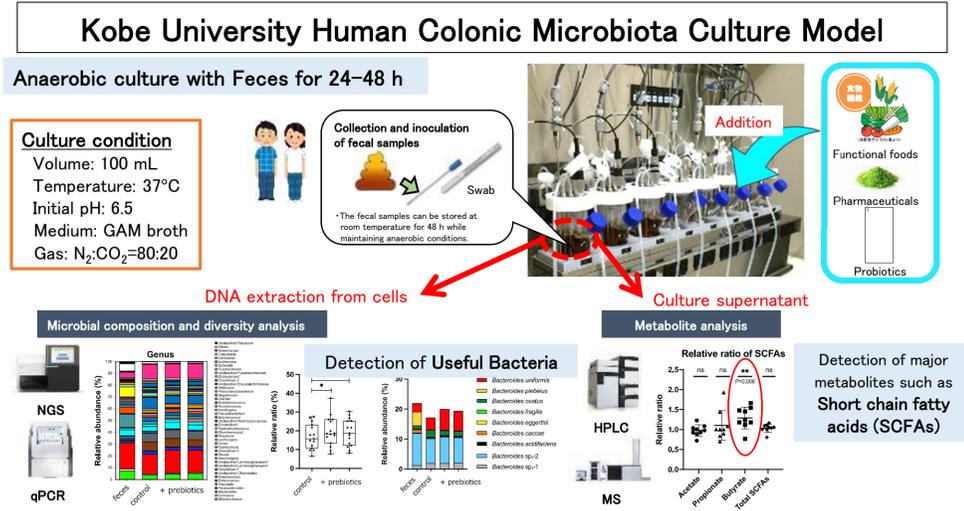


Fig. 3 Acute toxicity of ON-type particulate plastics to *Daphnia magna* (left) and zebrafish (right)

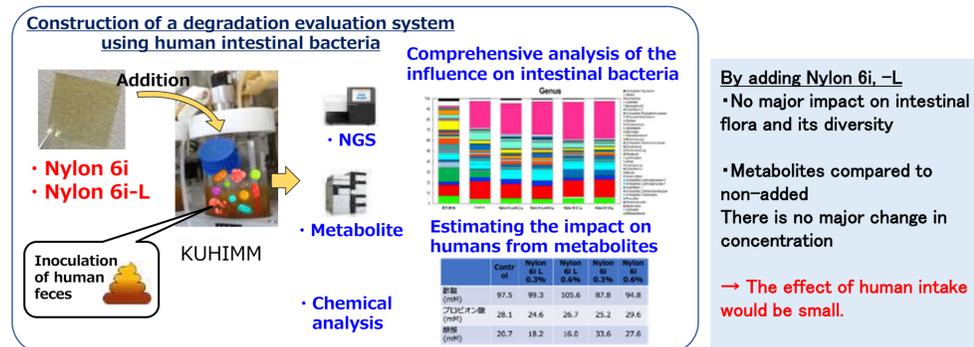
Degradability and safety evaluation in simulated intestinal environment

1. We have previously developed the "Kobe University Human Colonic Microflora Culture Model" (KUHIMM), which can successfully reproduce and culture the human colon microflora.



Evaluate the effects of functional ingredients, drugs, and probiotics easily.

2. We used KUHIMM to study the effect of Nylon6i addition on the human colon microbiota.



Chemical analysis

A) Results of total carbon content (TOC) analysis of culture supernatant without bacteria

	Before (mg/L)	After (mg/L)	Differences
Control (非添加)	16,000	13,500	2,500
Nylon-6i-L (0.3%添加)	16,500	15,000	1,500
Nylon-6i-L (0.6%添加)	19,500	17,000	2,500
Nylon-6i (0.3%添加)	15,500	12,500	3,000
Nylon-6i (0.6%添加)	16,500	14,179	2,321

B) Suspended solids (SS) analysis (→ amount of Nylon decomposed not dissolved)

Bacterial cells after culture + Nylon 6i Dry Solid - Dry bacterial weight (control) = SS (Amount of decomposition)

Although the initial concentration was 6.0 g/L, the residual SS was 10.0 g/L.

Carbon before and after cultivation would be constant → Possibility of microbial utilization of dissolved components is low → The possibility of weight loss due to decomposition is low. It is necessary to reconsider the analysis method in the future.

There is little interaction between human intestinal bacteria and Nylon 6i/Nylon 6i-L.

3. We constructed a model of marine mammals (Marine-KUHIMM) and tested the biodegradable plastic with a Marine-KUHIMM.

- Based on the conditions of KUHIMM, culture conditions (preparation of marine mammal feces, inoculum volume, reducing agent, medium composition, etc.) were examined and Marine-KUHIMM was being developed.
- The following condition was used to conduct the Nylon 6i-11 addition test.

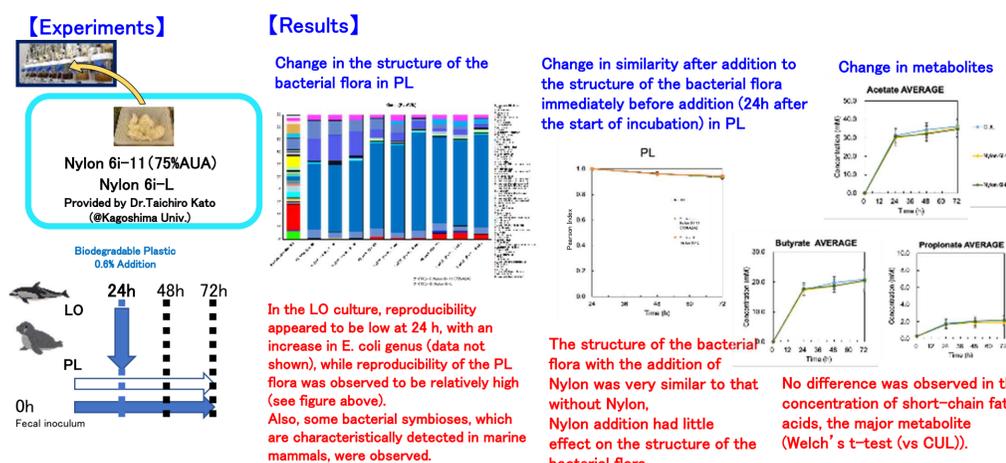
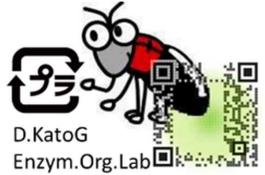


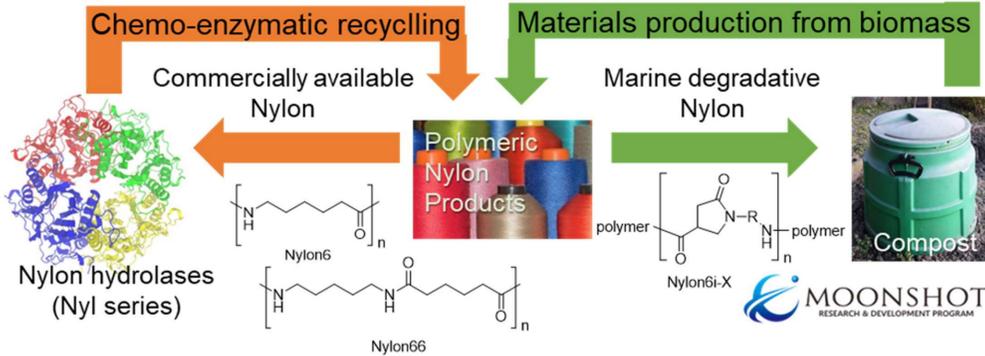
Fig. 3 Acute toxicity of ON-type particulate plastics to *Daphnia magna* (left) and zebrafish (right)

Initiatives in Kagoshima University :

Clarify the biodegradation pathway of iNylon in the ocean environment.

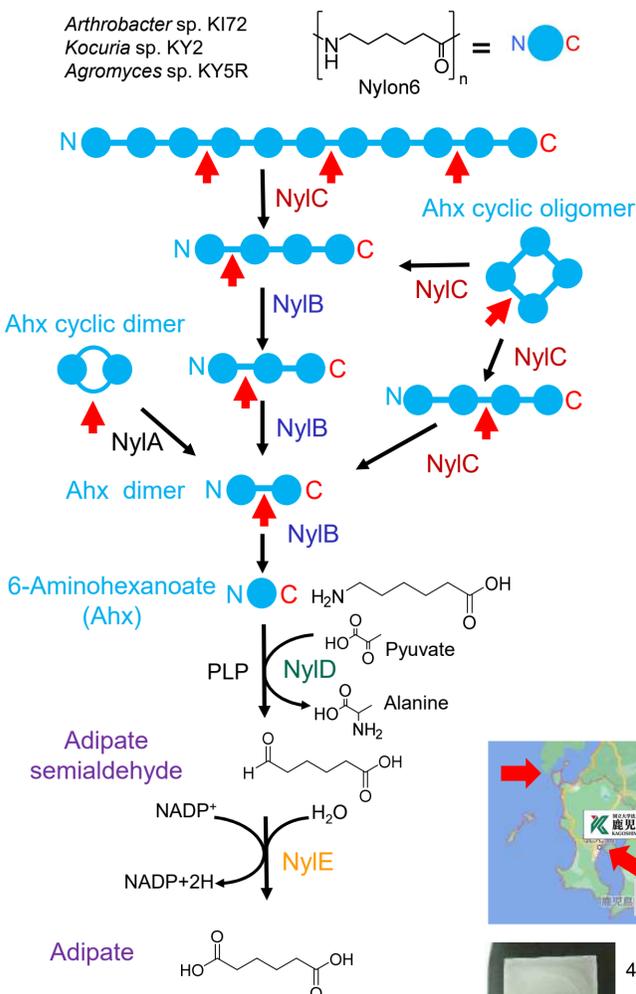


Contribution to this PJ: Providing basic scientific data for exploring biodegradable structures of photoswitchable ocean degradative nylon, and developing the methods of enzymatic nylon recycling



- 1st Enzymatic degradation of iNylon using nylon-hydrolysing enzymes (Nyl series)
2nd Screening new nylon-degradative bacteria/enzymes
3rd Screening marine bacteria degrading monomer unit
4th Elucidation of photo-solubilization mechanism of iNylon
5th Development into Nylon recycling demonstration study

Nylon degrading microorganisms and degradation pathway



NylA : cyclic dimer hydrolase
NylB : exo-type hydrolase
NylC : endo-type hydrolase (p2-GYAQ)
Structure of p2-GYAQ (tetramer)
Unique enzymes that only we have in the world

Complete monomerization of commercially available nylon

Table with 4 columns: Treatment, Conversion ratio to monomers (%), Nylon6, Nylon66. Rows include No treatment, Homogeneous dispersion, Chemical fragmentation, and Combined methods 2 and 3.

Nyl series enzyme degradability of iNylon

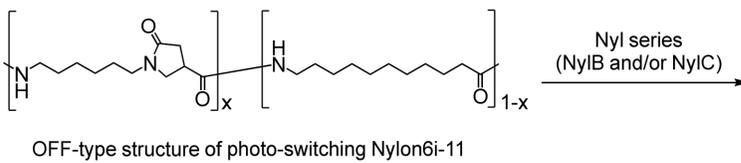
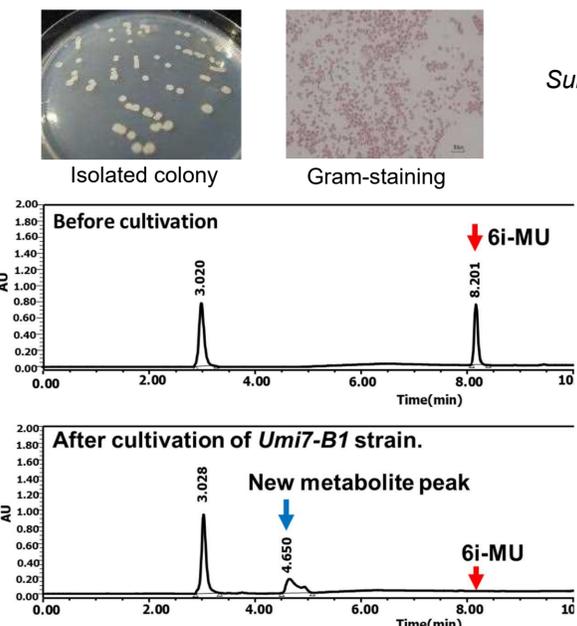


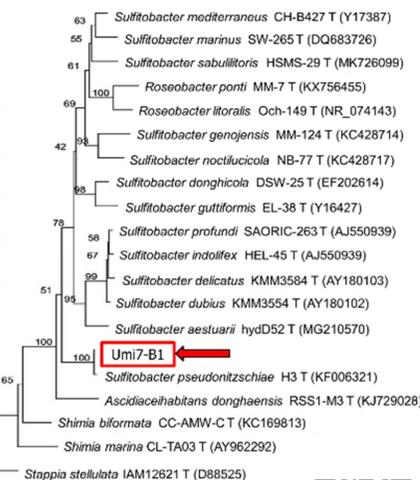
Table showing Photo-switching Nylon properties: x, Mw, Pretreat., Monomerization (%). Rows include H-Nylon6i, Nylon6i-11(50%), and Nylon6i-11(75%).

Isolation of iNylon degradation bacterium



Sulfitobacter gulosus Umi7-B1

Table with 2 columns: protein, Identities toward K172 enzymes. Rows include NylA (28%), NylB (35%), NylC (-), NylD (33%), and NylE (41%).



2024/2/28, 29
The 1st CPQ Summit will be held in Tokyo.

JP2022-034081

Nylon recycling demonstration study ~Circular Park Kyushu (CPQ)~

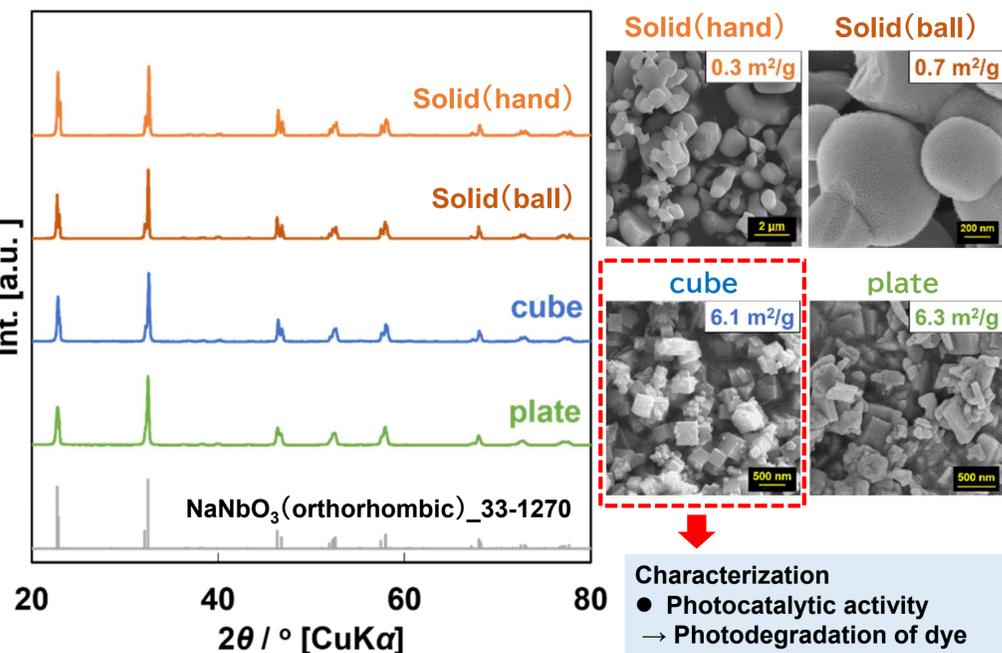
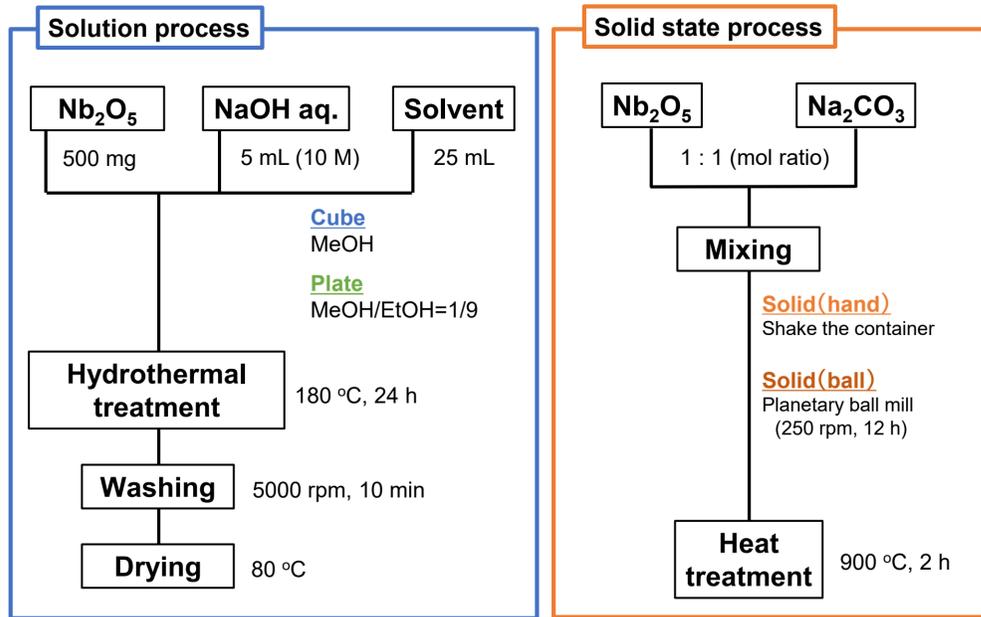
Recycling campus using the former site of the Kawauchi Thermal Power Plant in Satsumasendai, Kagoshima

Roadmap for CPQ from 2023 to 2030, including milestones like '2023年7月 新会社設立予定' and '2030年度の構想実現を目指し、段階的に各事業を推進します'.

2023.04.06_press release: https://www.kyuden.co.jp/press_h230406-1.html

Startup of Nylon chemical recycling from Kagoshima!

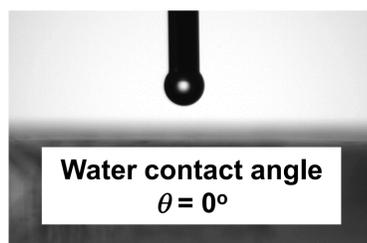
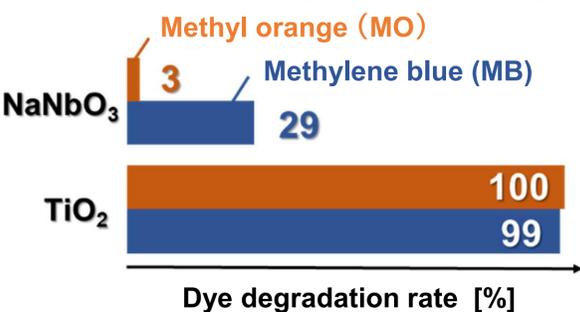
1. Synthesis of ON-type photocatalyst



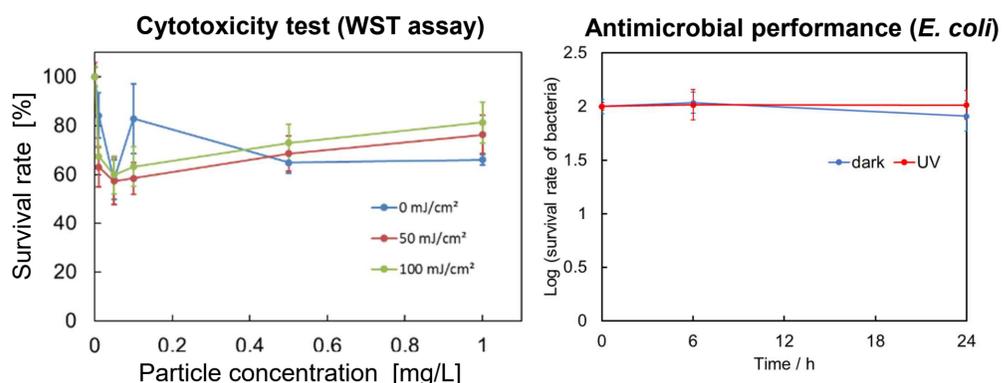
The same NaNbO_3 can be prepared.

- Characterization**
- Photocatalytic activity
 - Photodegradation of dye
 - Photoinduced hydrophilicity
 - Cytotoxicity test
 - WST assay
 - Antimicrobial performance
 - *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*)

2. Photocatalytic activity



NaNbO_3 has lower degradation activity than TiO_2 .
 NaNbO_3 exhibits photoinduced superhydrophilicity.



NaNbO_3 has little or no cytotoxic under light irradiation.

※Ack. Prof. C. Ogino (Kobe-U)

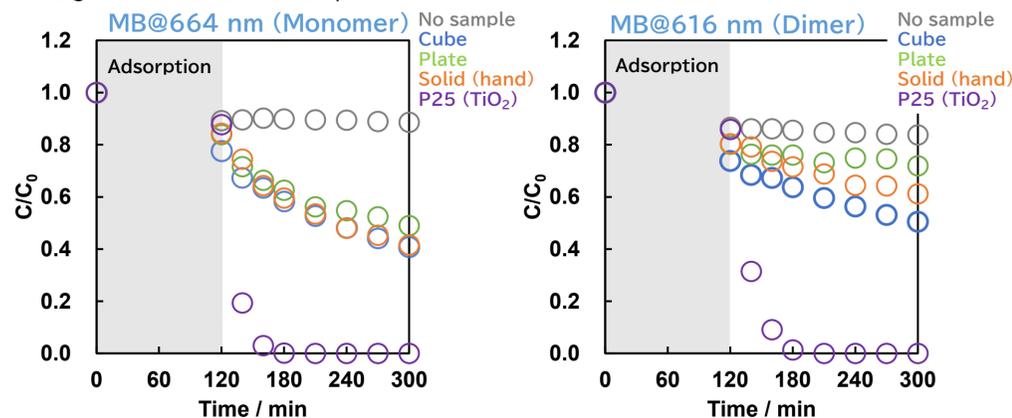
NaNbO_3 has little or no antimicrobial performance under light irradiation.

※Ack. Prof. K. Nakata and Dr. S. Usuki (TUAT)

3. Mechanism of ON-type photocatalysis

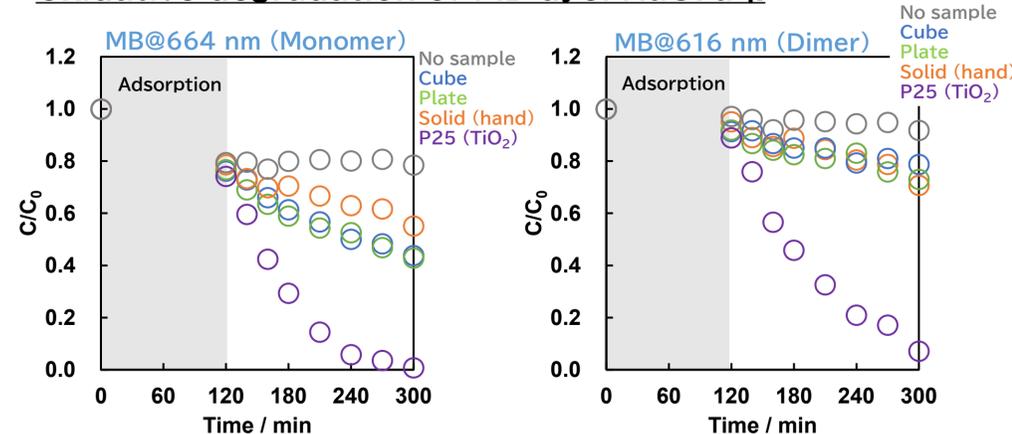
Oxidative degradation of MB dye: Water

Amount of catalyst: 50 mg Concentration of dye: 10 mmol/L
 Light source: UV-B lamp



- MB was adsorbed by Solid (hand), Cube, and Plate, and degraded by photoirradiation.
- Solid (hand) and Cube degraded MB dimers, while Plate hardly degraded MB dimers.

Oxidative degradation of MB dye: NaCl aq.

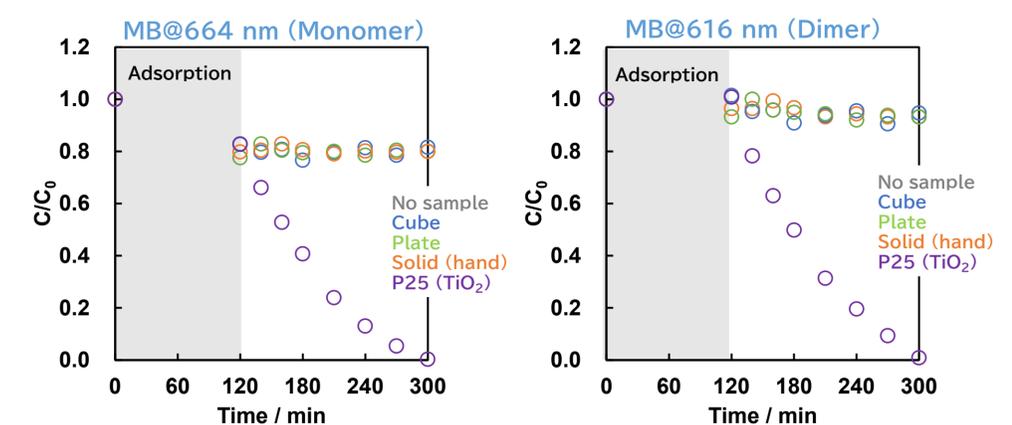


- Solid (hand) phase, Cube, and Plate adsorbed MB and degraded by photoirradiation.
- Solid (hand), Cube and Plate degraded MB dimer.

With the addition of NaCl,

- The adsorption and degradation of MB monomer were not significantly affected.

Oxidative degradation of MB dye: Artificial seawater



- Solid (hand), Cube, and Plate adsorbed MB but showed no degradation upon photoirradiation.
- P25 (TiO_2) showed MB degradation in artificial seawater.

4. Summary and Acknowledgment

We investigated the synthesis process of NaNbO_3 photocatalyst, which exhibits low degradation activity and light-induced hydrophilicity, and were able to synthesize NaNbO_3 with controlled particle size and morphology. The photocatalyst was found to have lower oxidative degradation activity, highly hydrophilic, and almost no cytotoxic and antibacterial properties compared to titanium dioxide. It is considered to be effective as an assist material for plastic degradation by microorganisms.

The researches were supported by Grant-in-Aid from moon-shot project (JPNP18016) of New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization (NEDO), Japan.

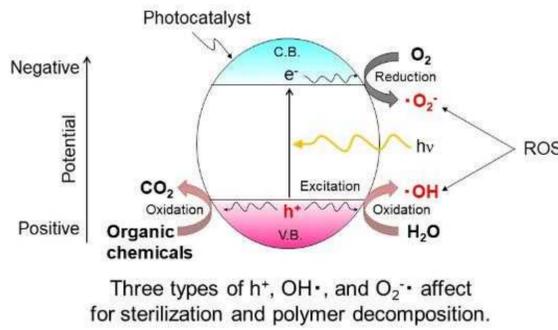
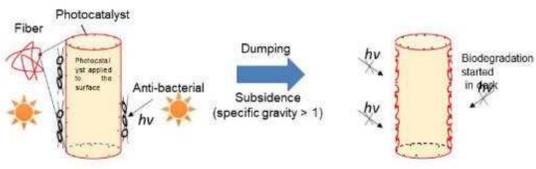
Introduction

Bio-degradable plastics with OFF-type photo switch system

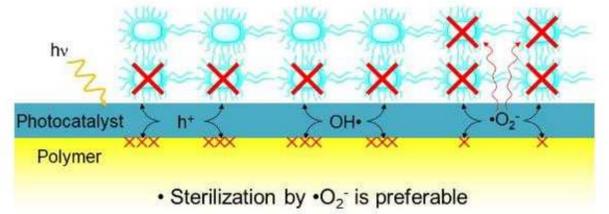
What kind of photocatalyst is required?

Comparison of ROS

- (1) Under visible light, (2) without decomposing polymer, (3) sterilizable photocatalyst

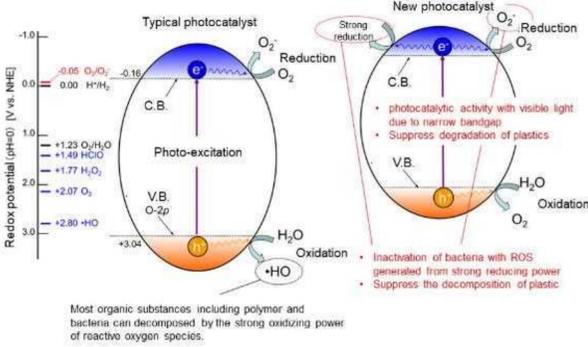


ROS	Life time	Diffusion length	Redox potential (vs. NHE)
h^+	<1 ns	In photocatalyst	Depends on photocatalyst
$OH\cdot$	70 ns	20 nm	+2.8 V
$\cdot O_2$	5 s	100 μm	+0.16 V



Development of antibacterial photocatalyst

Photocatalyst that can be sterilized under visible light without decomposing polymer

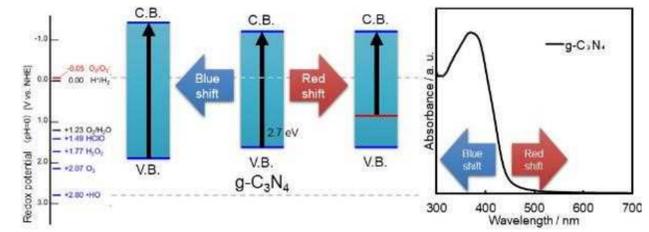


g-C₃N₄ photocatalyst



- Visible-light-responsive photocatalyst composed of carbon and nitrogen
- Metal-free and low toxicity
- Layered structure stacking 2D sheets
- 2D sheet can be peeled off by various treatments
- It is possible to dope elements, allowing control of the electronic structure
- Easy to generate O₂·⁻ than OH radicals

Improvement of g-C₃N₄



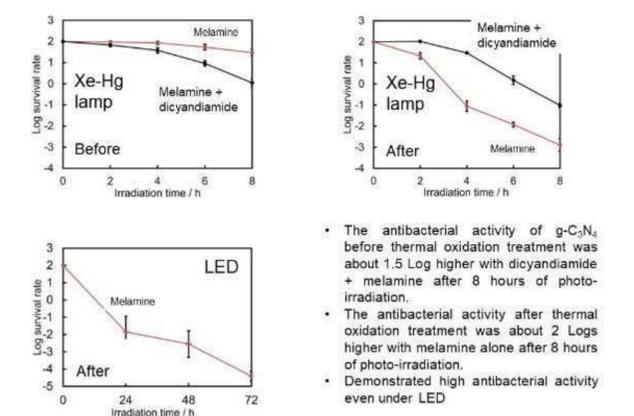
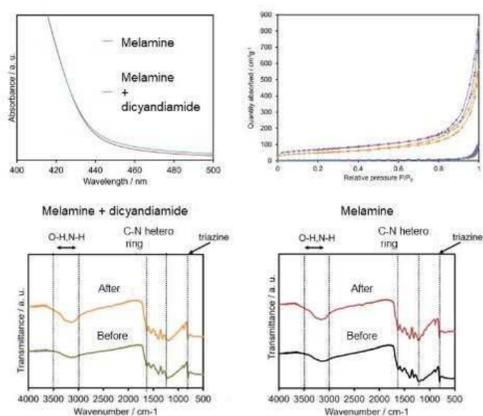
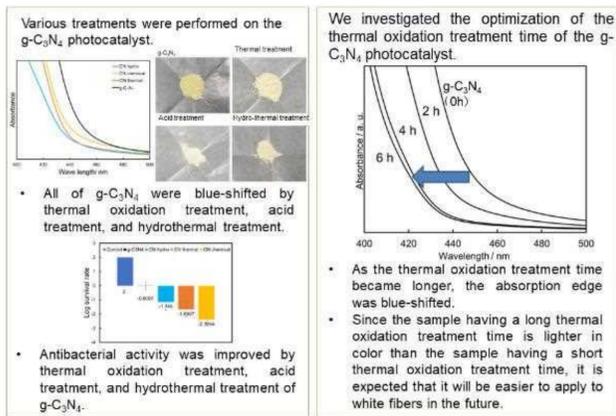
	Blue shift	Red shift
Adv.	High activation by improving oxidation ability (less amount of sample necessary)	Works in environments where short wavelength light is not present (Can be used in a wide range of environments)
Disadv.	Inactivated in the absence of short wavelength light	Low activation due to decreased oxidation ability
Method	Delamination by thermal oxidation treatment	Doping

Development of blue-shift type photocatalyst

Effect of treatments

Characterization

Antibacterial activity

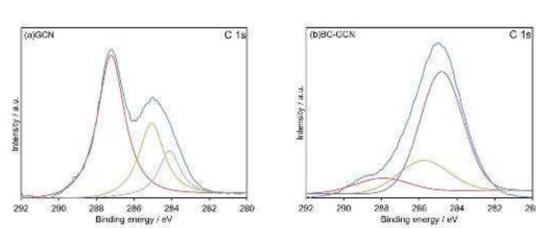
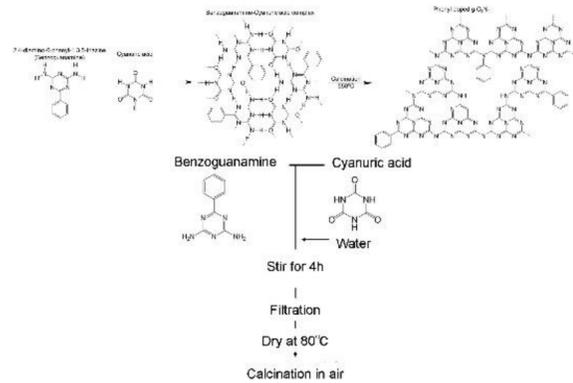


Development of red-shift type photocatalyst

Synthesis of BC-GCN

XPS

Antibacterial activity



Sample	C(atm %)	N(atm %)	O(atm %)
GCN	37.75	45.08	17.17
BC-GCN	61.54	26.79	11.67

Test conditions: E. Coli. in physiological saline solution $\lambda > 420$ nm 1000 W/m²

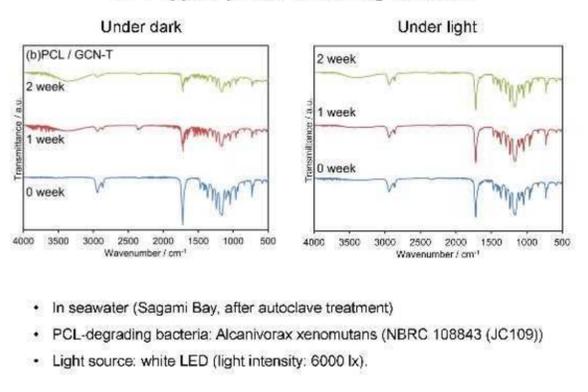
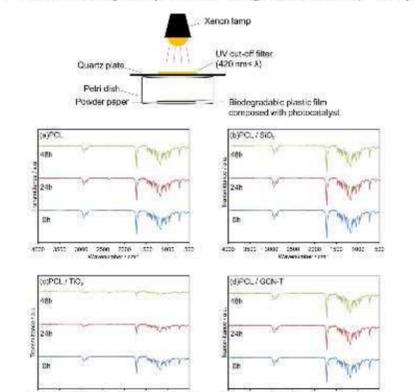
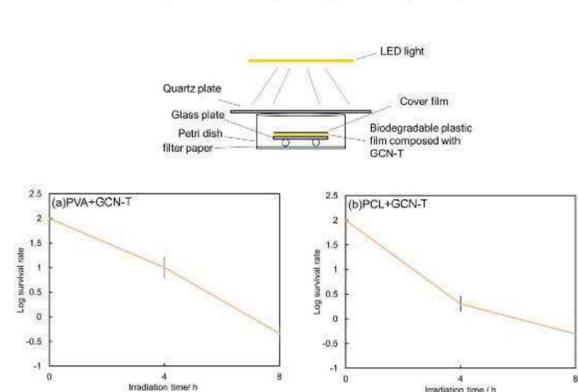
Test conditions: E. Coli. in physiological saline solution $\lambda > 650$ nm 1000 W/m²

Development of red-shift type photocatalyst

Antimicrobial performance of plastic/photocatalyst composite films

Photocatalytic plastic degradation (PCL)

OFF-typed photo-switching function



- In seawater (Sagami Bay, after autoclave treatment)
- PCL-degrading bacteria: Alcanivorax xenomutans (NBRC 108843 (JC109))
- Light source: white LED (light intensity: 6000 lx).

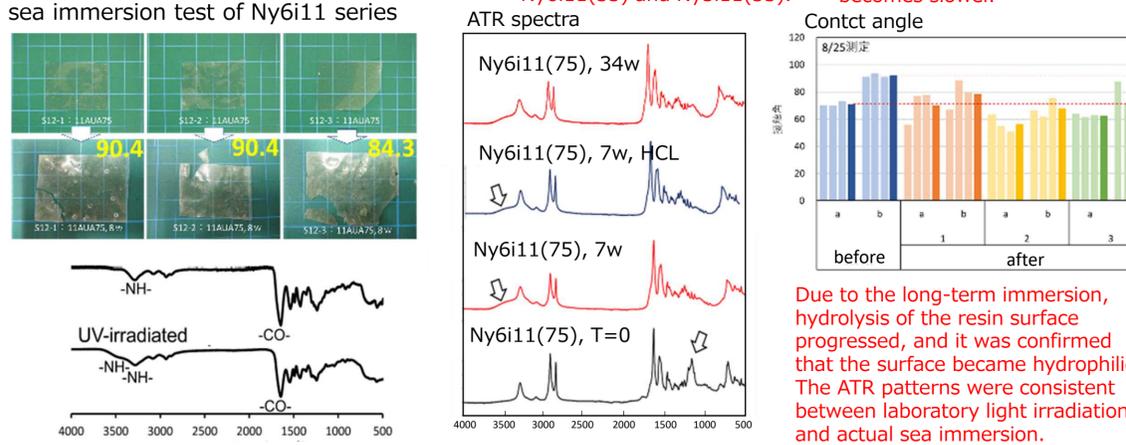
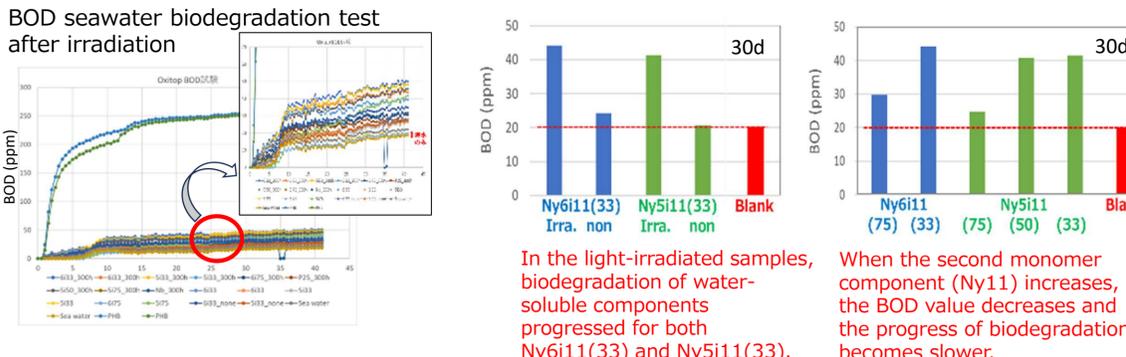
Photo switch operability and biodegradability...ON type

Ny6i : [*]C(=O)NCCCCCN[*] (閉環型 Ny6i-c) \leftrightarrow [*]C(=O)NCCCCCN[*]C(=O)O (開環型 Ny6i-o)

Light irradiation of ON type polymer

Water-soluble components are generated and increased by light irradiation (by NMR)

NMR spectrum of light irradiated sample



Pigment-based OFF type resin

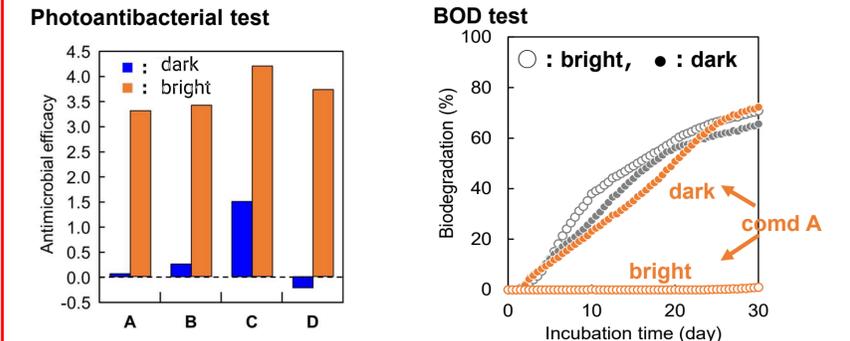
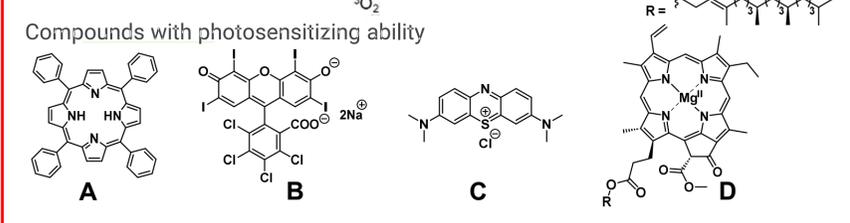
Utilization of organic photosensitizers

Jablonski diagram

Cell damage Antibacterial

Utilizes singlet oxygen, which is not a radical but has strong oxidizing power.

Because it has a very short lifespan, it can effectively exert its antibacterial power on the material surface.



Antibacterial activity value exceeds 2 under light irradiation conditions \Rightarrow Exhibits photo-antibacterial properties

Seawater biodegradability (BOD test) is significantly suppressed in resins containing Substance A, which has strong photo-antibacterial properties.

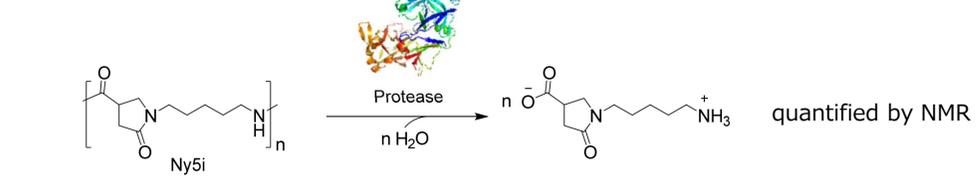
The number of bacteria in the test seawater containing compound A and under light irradiation conditions was significantly reduced. \Rightarrow Sterilized by active oxygen

Photo-antibacterial activity contributes to suppression of decomposition

Bacteria count after test (cfu/mL)	Irrad. ($\times 10^3$)	Control ($\times 10^3$)
Blank	915	10
Polymer	7,725	6,417
+compd. A	50	2,045

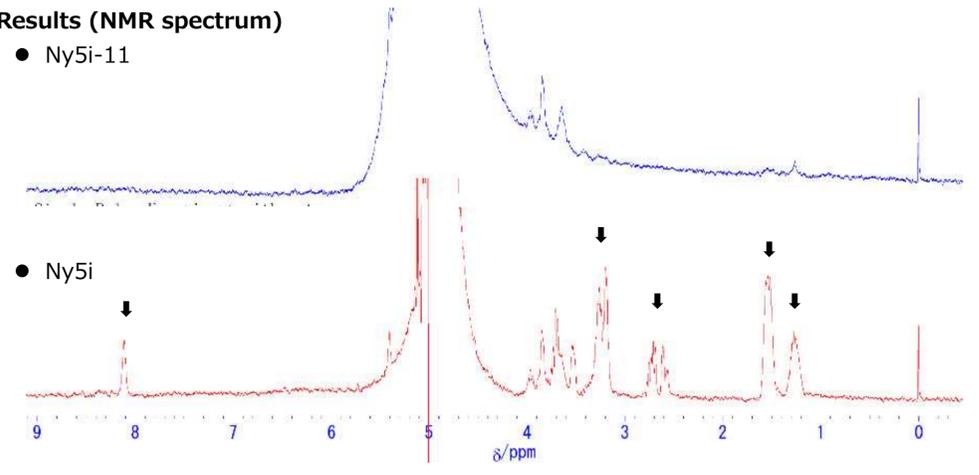
Enzymatic degradation evaluation of polymers

An evaluation method for the enzymatic degradation of synthetic polymers possessing amide bonds was developed. Proteases, which digest proteins and peptides in living organisms, were chosen for hydrolysis of the peptide bonds within the targeted polymer. The generated monomers could be detected by NMR spectroscopy.



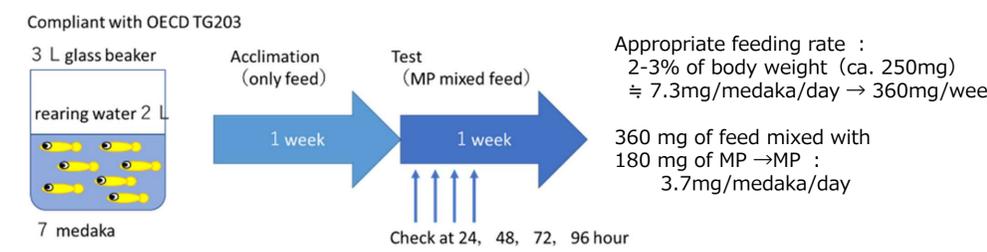
- Tested proteases**
1. Trypsin (aspartic protease), optimum pH1-3, cleave the bond neighboring acidic or aromatic amino acids
 2. Papain (cysteine protease), optimum pH7-8, cleave the bond neighboring basic or Glycine or Leucine
 3. Trypsin (serine protease), optimum pH7-8, cleave the bond neighboring basic amino acids
 4. Chymotrypsin (serine protease), optimum pH8-9, cleave the bond neighboring aromatic amino acids

Method
A protease and the polymer (Ny5i or Ny5i-11) were mixed in a buffer with the optimum pH. After the reaction, the solid was filtered off, and the resultant solution was analyzed by NMR spectroscopy to detect soluble monomers.



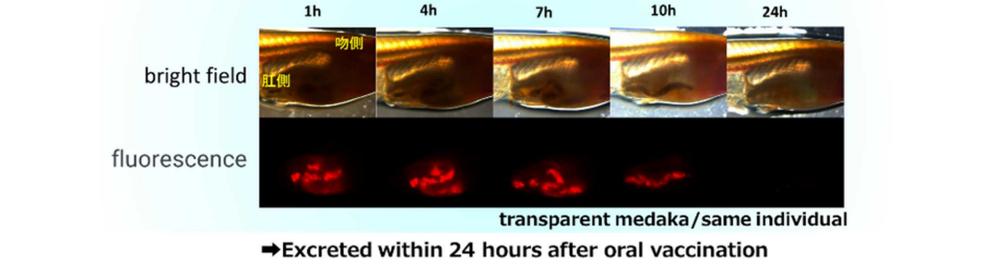
When Ny5i-11 was tested as a substrate, any peaks other than the enzyme were not observed. When Ny5i was tested as a substrate, characteristic peaks were detected, which are being assigned.

Oral ingestion/acute toxicity study by medaka

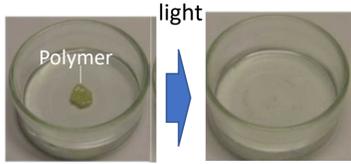
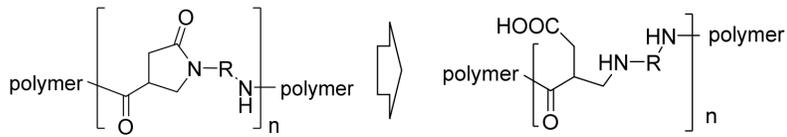


Kind of MP	acute toxicity	Kind of MP	acute toxicity
Ny6	No	PS	No
Ny6-L	No	PCL	No
Ny6i(0.5%TiO ₂)	No	PCL 5% Anatase	No
Ny6i(1%TiO ₂)	No	PCL 5% P25	No
Ny6i(1.5-mer)	No	PCL 5% gC ₃ N ₄	No
Ny6i 75%	No	PCL 5% heat treatment gC ₃ N ₄	No
Ny6i 11 50%	No		
Ny6i 11 50% CuI NaNbO ₃	No		
Ny6i11-33	No		
Ny5i11-33	No		
Ny5i11-50	No		
Ny5i11-75	No		

<Monitoring until the plastic powder is discharged after consumption>



ON type photo switching biodegradable plastic

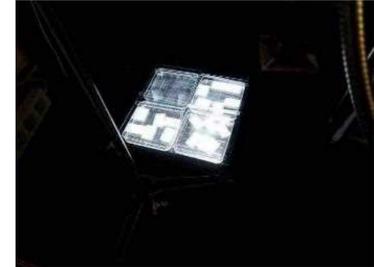


→When the photo switch is turned on, polymer becomes low molecular weight (solubilized). (under mercury lamp irradiation)

To evaluate the long-term degradability of samples, realistic and accelerated switching sample is required. Obtain knowledge for long-term evaluation of biodegradable plastics by using accelerated switching sample.

ON type accelerated switching sample

- Polymer : bionylon(Ny5i11-33)
- Photocatalyst : Two inorganic types, One organic type
- Accelerated switching samples : Ny5i11-33 + photocatalyst
- Light irradiation conditions :
Xenon lamp irradiation (8,000 lx, 0.45mW/cm²) 60h/120h
No Xenon lamp irradiation (dark condition) 60h/120h

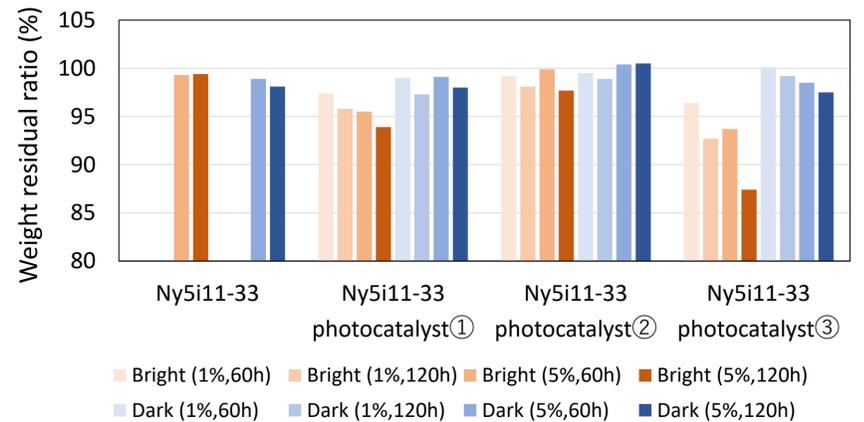


Xenon lamp irradiated sample (immersed in artificial seawater)

Laboratory degradability test

Weight residual ratio after Xenon lamp irradiation (%)

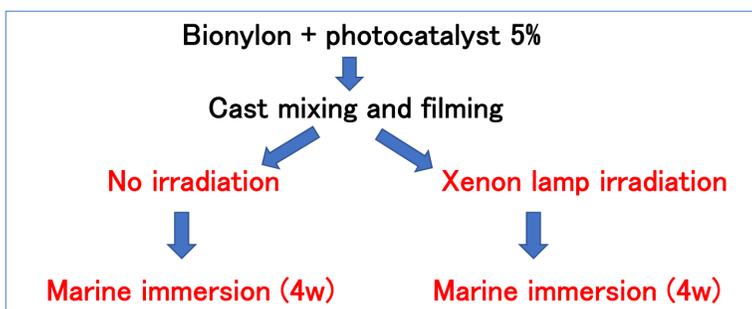
	Bright condition				Dark condition			
	Photocatalyst 1% Irradiation 60h	1% 120h	5% 60h	5% 120h	1% 60h	1% 120h	5% 60h	5% 120h
Ny5i11-33			99.3	99.4			98.9	98.1
Ny5i11-33 photocatalyst①	97.4	95.8	95.5	93.9	99.0	97.3	99.1	98.0
Ny5i11-33 photocatalyst②	99.2	98.1	99.9	97.7	99.5	98.9	100.4	100.5
Ny5i11-33 photocatalyst③	96.4	92.7	93.7	87.4	100.1	99.2	98.5	97.5



Ny (bionylon) only films do not decompose under Xenon lamp irradiation (8,000 lx, 0.45 mW/cm²). Weight residual ratio decreased with the addition of photocatalyst.

Marine immersion test

ON type accelerated switching sample



Weight residual ratio after marine immersion

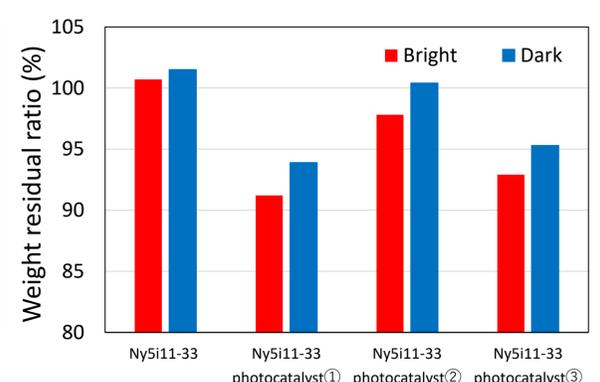
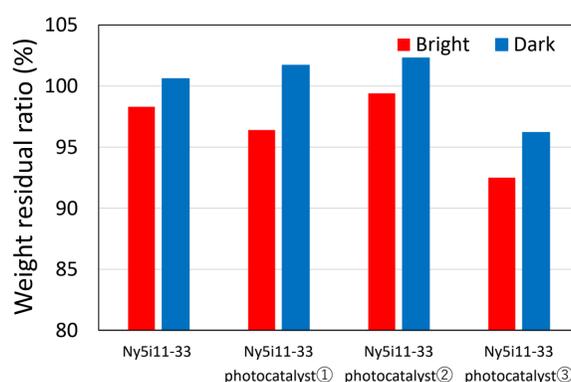
No irradiation + Marine immersion (4w)

	Weight residual ratio (%)	
	Bright	Dark
Ny5i11-33	98.3	100.6
Ny5i11-33 photocatalyst①	96.4	101.7
Ny5i11-33 photocatalyst②	99.4	102.3
Ny5i11-33 photocatalyst③	92.5	96.2

Xenon irradiation (0.45 mW/cm², 120 h) + Marine immersion (4w)

	Weight residual ratio (%)	
	Bright	Dark
Ny5i11-33	100.7	101.5
Ny5i11-33 photocatalyst①	91.2	93.9
Ny5i11-33 photocatalyst②	97.8	100.4
Ny5i11-33 photocatalyst③	92.9	95.3

Marine immersion test



Ny (bionylon) only films, with or without prior Xenon lamp irradiation had no difference in weight residual ratio after marine immersion. Photocatalyst composited films showed a decreasing effect on weight residual ratio by Xenon lamp irradiation.

