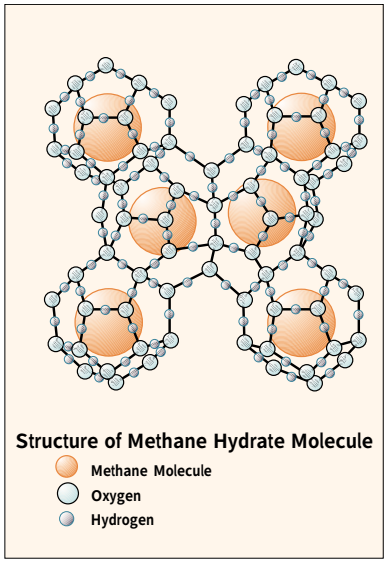
Methane Hydrate

— Enormous Natural Gas Resources to Lead the Next Generation —

Natural methane hydrates are a kind of clathrates. These are solid compounds in which lattices of crystallized water molecules trap methane gas molecules. They are naturally stable in high pressure and low temparature conditions, so that seismic reflection survey profiles obtained by the Geological Survey of Japan, AIST. The total resource potential around Japan could amount to 6 trillion cubic meters as methane gases, more than 100 times the present domestic consumption of natural gases in Japan. AIST investigates such offshore methane hydrates for future development as natural gas resources.



Structure of Methane Hydrate Molecule

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Digital Geological Map: Distribution and Occurrence of Cenozoic Volcanic Rocks

Progressively improved Geological Information System extends the potential use of digital geological maps in Japan. The use of digital geological maps, however, still remains limited to those geologists familiar with the GIS. The digital geological map "Distribution and occurrence of Cenozoic volcanic rocks in Japan" is newly prepared to improve this situation. This publication comprises two CD-ROMs labeled as G-4 A and G-4B. G-4A contains conventional map files for use in the GIS. G-4B contains map-image files directly combined with explanatory files. These files work on any Web browsers, just like an illustrated guidebook and enable those people unfamiliar with both the GIS and volcanology to learn something about the Cenozoic volcanic rocks in Japan.

Cover page of G-4B on a Web browser

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