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K. Munakata, T. Kiuchi, S. Yasue, C. Kato, S. Mori,
K. S. Hirata, K. Kihara, Y. Oyama, M. Mori, K. Fujita, S. Hatakeyama,
M. Koga, T. Maruyama, A. Suzuki, T. Ishizuka, K. Miyano, H. Okazawa,
Y. Fukuda, T. Hayakawa, K. Inoue, K. Ishihara, H. Ishino, S. Joukou,
T. Kajita, S. Kasuga, Y. Koshio, T. Kumita, K. Matsumoto, M. Nakahata,
K. Nakamura, K. Okumura, A. Sakai, M. Shiozawa, J. Suzuki,
Y. Suzuki, T. Tomoeda, Y. Totsuka, T. Horiuchi, K. Nishijima, M. Koshiba,
T. Suda, A. T. Suzuki, T. Hara, Y. Nagashima, M. Takita, T. Yamaguchi,
Y. Hayato, K. Kaneyuki, T. Suzuki, Y. Takeuchi, T. Tanimori, S. Tasaka,
E. Ichihara, S. Miyamoto and K. Nishikawa
(Kamiokande collaboration)

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**INSTITUTE FOR COSMIC RAY RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF TOKYO**

3-2-1 Midori-cho, Tanashi, Tokyo 188, Japan

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Large-scale anisotropy of the cosmic-ray muon flux in Kamiokande

K.Munakata,¹ T.Kiuchi,¹ S.Yasue,¹ C.Kato,¹ S.Mori,¹ K.S.Hirata,² K.Kihara,² Y.Oyama,²
M.Mori,³ K.Fujita,⁴ S.Hatakeyama,⁴ M.Koga,⁴ T.Maruyama,⁴ A.Suzuki,⁴ T.Ishizuka,⁵
K.Miyano,⁵ H.Okazawa,⁵ Y.Fukuda,⁶ T.Hayakawa,⁶ K.Inoue,⁶ K.Ishihara,⁶ H.Ishino,⁶
S.Joukou,⁶ T.Kajita,⁶ S.Kasuga,⁶ Y.Koshio,⁶ T.Kumita,^{6a} K.Matsumoto,⁶ M.Nakahata,⁶
K.Nakamura,^{6b} K.Okumura,⁶ A.Sakai,⁶ M.Shiozawa,⁶ J.Suzuki,⁶ Y.Suzuki,⁶ T.Tomoeda,⁶
Y.Totsuka,⁶ T.Horiuchi,⁷ K.Nishijima,⁷ M.Koshiha,⁸ T.Suda,^{9c} A.T.Suzuki,⁹ T.Hara,¹⁰
Y.Nagashima,¹⁰ M.Takita,¹⁰ T.Yamaguchi,¹⁰ Y.Hayato,¹¹ K.Kaneyuki,¹¹ T.Suzuki,¹¹
Y.Takeuchi,^{11d} T.Tanimori,¹¹ S.Tasaka,¹² E.Ichihara,¹³ S.Miyamoto¹³ and K.Nishikawa¹³

(Kamiokande collaboration)

¹*Department of Physics, Shinshu University, Nagano 390, Japan*

²*National Laboratory for High Energy Physics (KEK), Ibaraki 305, Japan*

³*Department of physics, Miyagi University of Education, Miyagi 980, Japan*

⁴*Faculty of Science, Tohoku University, Miyagi 980, Japan*

⁵*Department of Physics, Niigata University, Niigata 950-21, Japan*

⁶*Institute for Cosmic-Ray Research, University of Tokyo, Tokyo 188, Japan*

⁷*Department of Physics, Tokai University, Kanagawa 259-12, Japan*

⁸*Institute of Research and Development, Tokai University, Tokyo 151, Japan*

⁹*Department of Physics, Kobe University, Hyogo 657, Japan*

¹⁰*Department of Physics, Osaka University, Osaka 560, Japan*

¹¹*Department of Physics, Tokyo Institute of Technology, Tokyo 152, Japan*

¹²*Department of Physics, Gifu University, Gifu 501-11, Japan*

¹³*Institute for Nuclear Study, University of Tokyo, Tokyo 188, Japan*

Abstract

The large-scale anisotropy of cosmic-ray primaries in the celestial coordinate was studied using cosmic-ray muons recorded in a large water Cherenkov detector, Kamiokande. The right-ascension distribution of the muon arrival directions deviated from an isotropic distribution with a 2.8 standard deviation, and agreed well with the first harmonics with an amplitude of $(5.6 \pm 1.9) \times 10^{-4}$ and a phase of $8.0^\circ \pm 19.1^\circ$. This was the deepest underground observation of the large-scale anisotropy of cosmic-rays, and agrees with observations with other underground experiments and extensive air-shower array experiments.

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The time variations of the cosmic-ray muon flux in deep underground observatories are of interest in both geophysics and astrophysics. In geophysics, the cosmic-ray muon rate reflects a change in the density distribution of the upper atmosphere in the process of the production and decay of parent pions [1]. In a previous paper [2], a significant correlation between the time variation of the cosmic-ray muon rate observed by the Kamiokande-II underground water Cherenkov detector and the time variation in the Matsushiro underground muon observatory was reported. It was also discussed that these time variations agree well with numerical calculations based on the atmospheric-temperature data from the Wajima Observatory of the Japan Meteorological Agency.

In astrophysics, the sidereal time variation of the muon flux is interpreted as the right-ascension distribution of the primary cosmic-ray flux in celestial coordinates, which provides information about the large-scale anisotropy of the primary cosmic-ray intensity in and around the solar system. Several shallow underground observatories have reported [3–14] on the anisotropy of cosmic-ray muons with a primary proton energy range of $\sim 10^{11}$ eV to $\sim 5 \times 10^{12}$ eV. On the other hand, extensive air shower-array experiments [15–18] have also observed anisotropies in the primary proton energy range from $\sim 10^{13}$ eV to $\sim 10^{14}$ eV. Accordingly, no underground observation in the energy range of around $\sim 10^{13}$ eV has been reported which would connect the results of two different observation methods in two different primary energy ranges. In this paper, the large-scale anisotropy of the cosmic-ray muon flux in the Kamiokande detector recorded over 7 years is presented.

The Kamiokande(-II and -III) detector is located 2700 m.w.e. underground in the Kamioka mine (36.42°N, 137.31°E), about 250km west of Tokyo. A cylindrical steel tank contains 2400 tons of water viewed by 948 20-inch photomultiplier tubes (PMTs) covering 20% of the tank inner surface. This inner detector is surrounded by a 4π steradian water anticounter that is at least 1.2 m thick, viewed by 123 20-inch PMTs. The muon energy threshold at the detector site is 1.2×10^{12} eV [19], which corresponds to a primary cosmic-ray proton energy of 1.2×10^{13} eV [20]. More detailed descriptions of the Kamiokande-II and Kamiokande-III detectors are given in Ref. [21] and Ref. [22], respectively.

Events with a total photoelectrons larger than 1000 p.e. were selected as cosmic-ray muons. In fact, all of the events which satisfied this condition were cosmic-ray muons, except for small contamination of events from atmospheric neutrinos, whose rate was less than 1 event per day, about 3×10^{-5} of the muon flux. Systematic errors due to the change of the PMT gain, the attenuation length of the water and history of dead PMTs, were corrected to be less than 0.1%.

Data from January 1987 to December 1989 (Kamiokande-II) and from January 1991 to December 1994 (Kamiokande-III) were used in the analysis. The total observation time was 1.790×10^8 seconds, which corresponded to 81% of the elapsed time. The number of muon events in this period was 58840472, and the averaged muon rate was 0.33 Hz. The non-uniformity of the observation period in the sidereal time was less than 3%.

Most of the muons in Kamiokande travel almost downward, because of a large rock overburden in the horizontal direction. The average of the angular difference between the right-ascension of the muon arrival direction (α_μ) and the right-ascension of the zenith (α_z) was found to be $|\overline{\alpha_\mu - \alpha_z}| = 28^\circ$. To calculate the right-ascension, we fixed the muon arrival direction to be zenith, since this does not cause a large error in the right-ascension distribution, for which we divide the data into 8 bins only. The anisotropy of the muon flux is obtained in the following way. The observation period (T_i) and the number of muon events (N_i) from the i -th right-ascension bin are counted on a second-by-second basis. The relative error of T_i is less than 10^{-6} . The relative muon rate from the i -th celestial bin ($R_{data}(\alpha_i)$) and its statistical error ($\Delta R_{data}(\alpha_i)$) are calculated using

$$R_{data}(\alpha_i) = N_i/T_i / \overline{(N_i/T_i)}. \quad (1)$$

and

$$\Delta R_{data}(\alpha_i) = \sqrt{N_i/T_i} / \overline{(N_i/T_i)}. \quad (2)$$

$R_{data}(\alpha_i)$ is plotted in Figure 1. The distribution shows a clear first Fourier harmonics with the phase in the direction of $\alpha = 0^\circ \sim 45^\circ$ bin.

This sidereal-time distribution ($R(\alpha)$) is compared with the isotropic distribution plus the first Fourier harmonic:

$$R_{fit}(\alpha) = 1 + r_0 \cos(\alpha - \alpha_0), \quad (3)$$

where r_0 is amplitude of the first Fourier harmonic, and α_0 is the phase in the right-ascension. The agreement between $R_{data}(\alpha)$ and $R_{fit}(\alpha)$ is examined using χ^2 , defined by

$$\chi^2 \equiv \sum_{i=1}^8 \left(\frac{R_{data}(\alpha_i) - R_{fit}(\alpha_i)}{\Delta R_{data}(\alpha_i)} \right)^2. \quad (4)$$

The amplitude and the phase, which minimize χ^2 , were calculated to be $r_0 = 5.6 \times 10^{-4}$ and $\alpha_0 = 8.0^\circ$. The minimum χ^2 (χ_{min}^2) was obtained to be 0.269. On the other hand, χ^2 for the isotropic distribution ($r_0 = 0$) was calculated to be $\chi_0^2 = 9.554$. Since χ_{min}^2 is smaller than χ_0^2 by 9.285, the anisotropy of the right-ascension distribution is statistically significant. The standard errors of the amplitude and phase were obtained from $\chi^2 = \chi_{min}^2 + 2.3$. Finally, r_0 and α_0 were found to be

$$r_0 = (5.6 \pm 1.9) \times 10^{-4} \quad (5)$$

and

$$\alpha_0 = (8.0^\circ \pm 19.1^\circ), \quad (6)$$

respectively.

The following analysis was performed in order to check for any possible systematic errors related to the stability of the observation. The period of ‘‘sidereal one day’’ was changed from 23h55m05.11s to 23h57m03.07s in every 0.92 seconds. The corresponding fake right ascension distributions were calculated in the same way as in the method for the real one sidereal day. Among 130 amplitudes of the first Fourier harmonics of the right-ascension distributions, the amplitude for the real one sidereal day (23h56m04.09s) is the largest. This supports the idea that the sidereal anisotropy observed in Kamiokande is not due to systematic errors related to the instability of the observation.

Figure 2 shows the amplitude (Fig.2-(a)) and phase (Fig.2-(b)) of the first Fourier harmonics obtained by the Kamiokande experiment together with observations by other deep underground muon experiments [3–14] and extensive air-shower array experiments [15–18]. The Kamiokande result is the deepest underground observation, and agrees with other experiments in both amplitude and phase.

The following interpretation for the amplitude and phase shown in Figure 2 is widely accepted [23,24]. The anisotropies from shallow underground muon observatories show an amplitude of $\sim 2 \times 10^{-4}$ and a phase of $\sim 100^\circ$. These are thought to be modulated by the solar magnetic fields because cosmic-ray primaries with an energy of $\sim 10^{11}$ eV are completely diffused in the solar system, and lose their original direction from outside of the solar system. On the other hand, the anisotropies in the energy range $\sim 10^{14}$ eV, obtained from extensive air-shower array experiments, show an amplitude of $\sim 10^{-3}$ and a phase of $\sim 30^\circ$. Since primaries with an energy larger than 10^{13} eV maintain their original direction in the solar magnetic field, they are thought to be as reflecting local structure of the galactic magnetic field around the solar system. Underground muon anisotropies of between $\sim 10^{11}$ eV and $\sim 5 \times 10^{12}$ eV are just in between, and reflect the effect of the solar magnetic field as well as that of the galactic magnetic field.

The Kamiokande results agree well with the air-shower experiments of a similar energy range, and smoothly connect from an energy range of $\sim 10^{12}$ eV to that of $\sim 10^{14}$ eV. This result may provide some knowledge about theoretical models [15,24], which explain the structure of the galactic magnetic field and its interference with the solar magnetic field.

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^a Present address : Department of Physics, Tokyo Metropolitan University

^b Present address : National Laboratory for High Energy Physics, Ibaraki 305, Japan

^c Deceased

^d Present address : Institute for Cosmic Ray Research, University of Tokyo, Tokyo 188, Japan

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FIGURES

FIG. 1. Cosmic-ray muon rate as a function of the right-ascension of the arrival direction in Kamiokande. The average muon rate was normalized to be 1. The solid line shows the best-fit curve, assuming the first Fourier harmonics: $R(\alpha) = 1 + r_0 \cos(\alpha - \alpha_0)$, where $r_0 = 5.6 \times 10^{-4}$ and $\alpha_0 = 8.0^\circ$.

FIG. 2. Anisotropy of the cosmic-ray primaries obtained by an underground muon observation and extensive air-shower array experiments. The amplitude (a) and phase (b) of the first Fourier harmonics in the sidereal time variation are plotted as a function of the primary cosmic-ray energies. They are Kamiokande (\bullet), other underground muon observatories (\circ), and extensive air-shower array experiments (\square). The experimental groups in the figure are Bo (Bolivia vertical[6]), So (Socorro vertical[6]), Mi (Misato vertical[5]), Bu (Budapest[5]), Hob (Hobart vertical[5]), Ya (Yakutsk[5]), LoV (London vertical[5]), Sa (Sakashita vertical[9]), LoS (London south[4]), Li (Liapootah vertical[12]), Ma (Matsushiro vertical[13]), Ot (Ottawa south[3]), Po (Poatina vertical[11]), Ut (Utah[10]), Ho (Hong Kong[7]), BaS (Baksan south[8]), Ba (Baksan air-shower[17]), No (Mt. Norikura[15]), Pe (Peak Musala[16]) and Ea (EAS-TOP[18]).

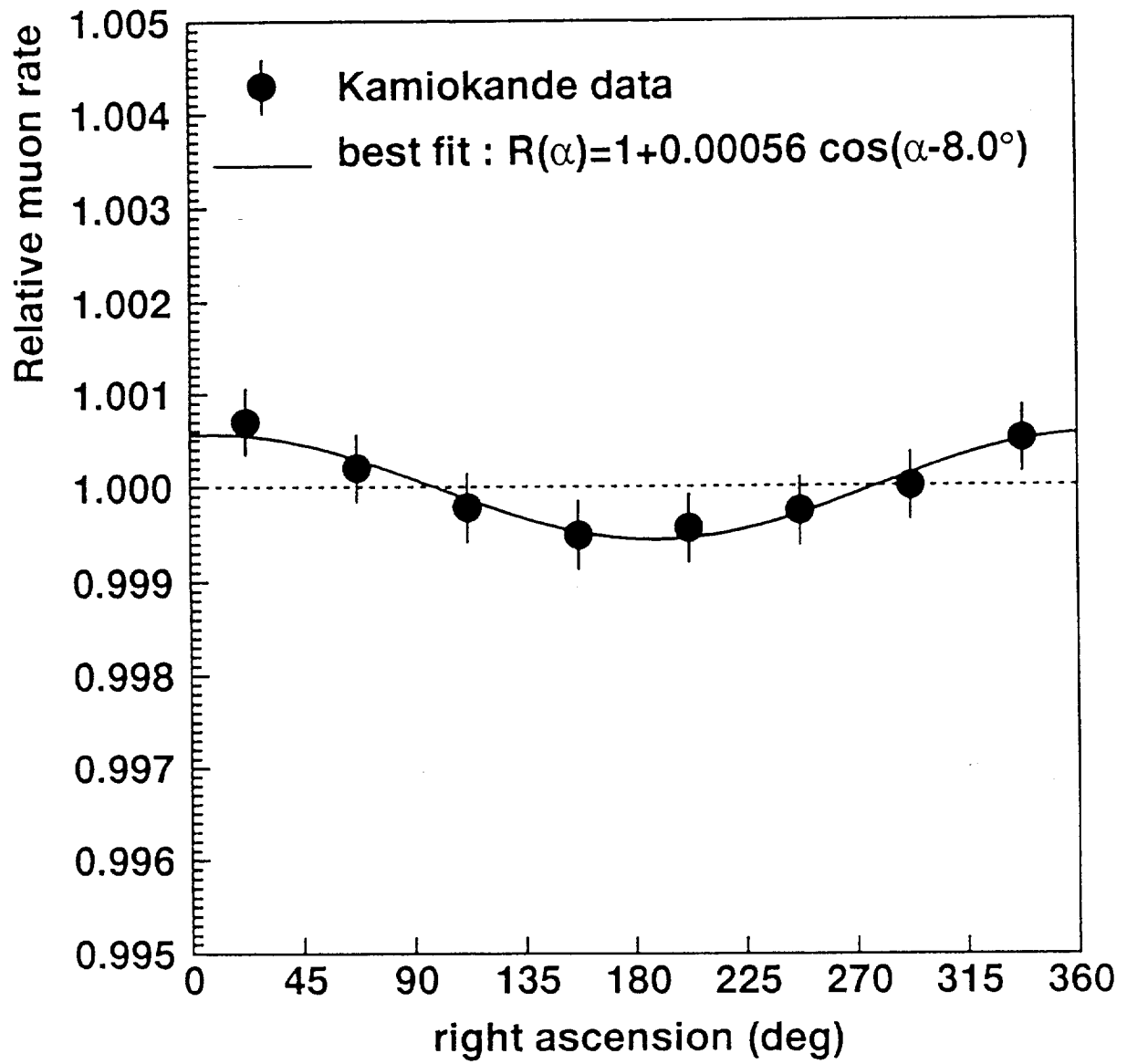


Fig.1

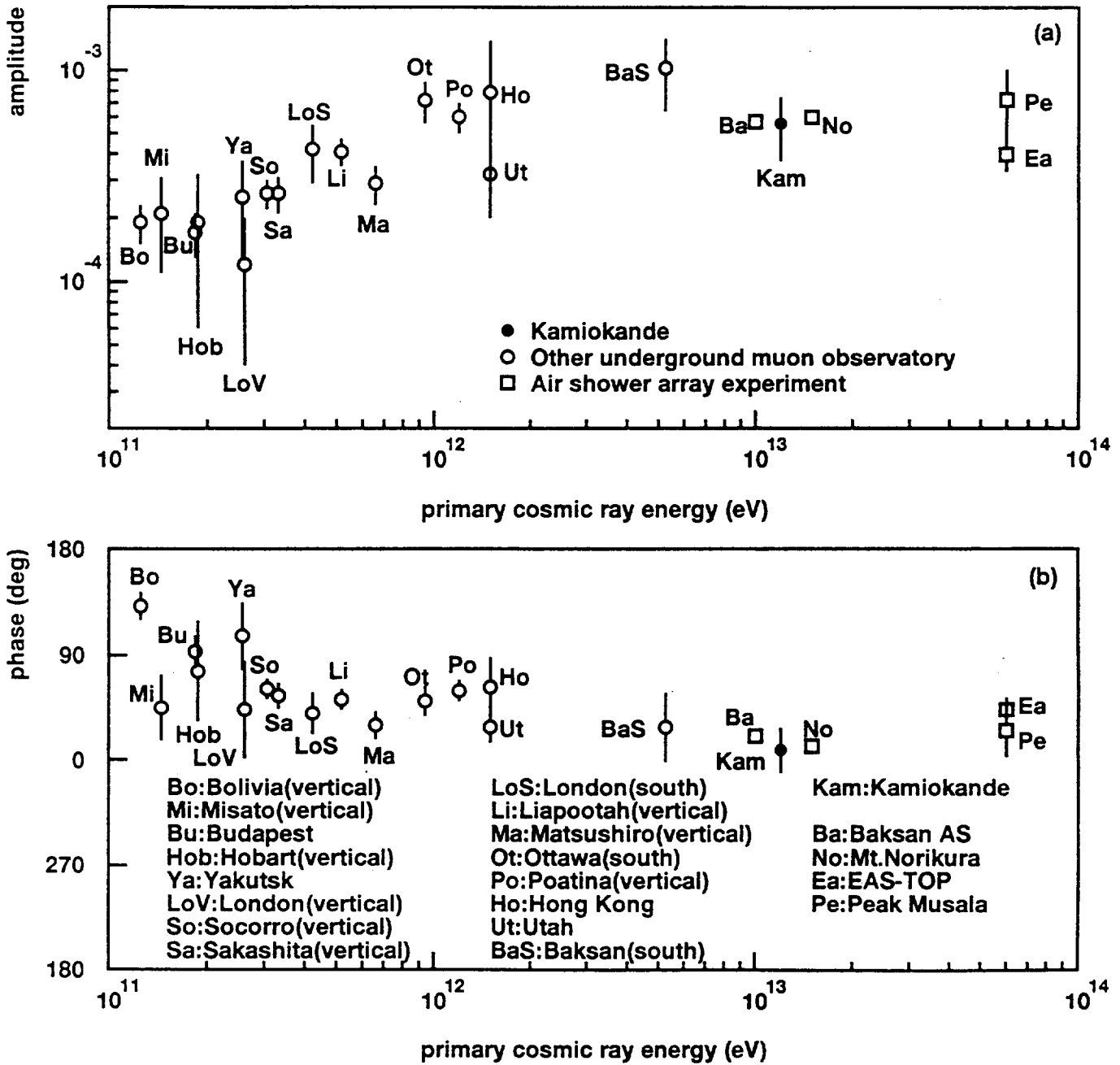


Fig.2

