Identification of jet lubrication oil as major component of aircraft exhaust nanoparticles

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Abstract. Jet engine aircraft are ubiquitous and significant sources of atmospheric nanoparticles. Using size-resolved
10   particulate samples collected near a runway of the Narita International Airport, Japan, we clearly demonstrate that organic compounds in the ambient nanoparticles (diameter: <30 nm) were dominated by nearly intact forms of jet engine lubrication oil. This finding provides direct evidence for the importance of unburned lubrication oil as a source of aircraft exhaust nanoparticles and also has an implication for their environmental impacts near airports and in the upper troposphere.

1 Introduction

15   Jet engine aircraft are a significant source of atmospheric nanoparticles and exist ubiquitously from ground level to the upper troposphere (Masiol and Harrison, 2014). A new particulate emission standard for turbofan and turbojet aircraft engines will come into effect from 2020 (International Civil Aviation Organization, 2017). Previous studies have shown that the impacts of aircraft on the distribution of nanoparticles in ambient air may range over a horizontal scale of approximately 16 km near airports (Hudda et al., 2014). Nanoparticles can penetrate deep into the human respiratory tract and may have adverse effects
20   on human health (Oberdorster et al., 2000; Biswas and Wu, 2005). The nanoparticles in diesel vehicle exhaust comprise mainly of organic compounds with relatively high saturation vapor pressures (alkanes, alkenes, etc.), and their lifetimes may be shorter than those of submicron particles owing to their evaporation and coagulation (Fushimi et al., 2008; Harrison et al., 2016). To understand the mechanisms of formation of nanoparticles emitted from jet engines and their physical/chemical transformation in ambient air, it is important to determine the size distribution and chemical composition of nanoparticles
25   emitted from in-use commercial aircraft under real-world conditions.

Previous studies have suggested that aircraft exhaust nanoparticles mainly comprise volatile particles. For example, the fraction of particles that completely evaporate below 300 °C are approximately 70–95%, and the number concentrations below 20 nm was found to decrease with an increasing ambient temperature (Wey et al., 2006). Bulk-level chemical analyses of aircraft exhaust particles showed that the particle compositions were dominated by organic compounds under low engine
30   thrust conditions and elemental carbon under high engine thrust conditions (Presto et al., 2011; Yu et al., 2017). This feature

is contradictory to the volatility of aircraft exhaust nanoparticles. Sulfur compounds originating from jet fuels are also known to be the major components of aircraft exhaust particles (Masiol and Harrison, 2014; Yu et al., 2017). Particle emission factors show a strong dependence on the contents of sulfur and aromatics in jet fuel (Wey et al., 2006; Masiol and Harrison, 2014). On the other hand, some qualitative markers of jet engine lubrication oil were commonly found in aircraft exhaust
5   particles (Timko et al., 2010; Yu et al., 2012). The contribution of lubrication oil to the total organic mass may range from 5% to 100% (Timko et al., 2010; Yu et al., 2012). While such previous studies have provided useful insights into the characteristics of aircraft exhaust particles, little is known regarding the origin and detailed chemical composition of size-resolved particles and especially nanoparticles (Presto et al., 2011; Kinsey et al., 2011; Masiol and Harrison, 2014).

The purpose of this study is to determine the size-resolved chemical composition of particles emitted from jet engine aircraft
10   during take-off and landing in real-world conditions, and to estimate the contribution of jet fuel and lubrication oil to the nanoparticle mass. We have therefore collected particulate samples from an area near a runway at the Narita International Airport, Japan, during the daytime and nighttime using low-pressure cascade impactors. We used thermal-desorption gas chromatography mass spectrometry (TD-GC/MS) to identify the chemical composition of nanoparticles having diameters smaller than approximately 30 nm originating from real-world aircraft emissions, which is unprecedented.

15 2 Methods

2.1 Jet fuels and lubrication oils

To investigate the emission sources of the nanoparticles in aircraft exhausts, we obtained two Jet A1 fuels and two jet engine lubrication oils (Mobil Jet Oil II and Mobil Jet Oil 254, ExxonMobil, Irving, TX, USA) from Ishinokoyu Co. Ltd. (Mitaka, Tokyo, Japan). The Mobil Jet Oil II has a market share of 49% (Winder and Balouet, 2002), and the Mobil Jet Oil 254 is a
20   newer generation oil.

2.2 Measurement site

Field measurements were conducted at a distance of 140 m west of runway A of the Narita (Tokyo) International Airport, Japan in winter (February 5–26, 2018, Fig. S1). The instruments used for obtaining the particle number size distributions and size-resolved particulate samplers were installed in a container. The airport has two runways. The runways A and B had an
25   average of 401 and 290 flights per day, respectively, in 2017. Aircraft operations are allowed from 6:00 to 23:00.

2.3 Particle number size distribution

The size distributions of the particle number concentration were measured every 1 s using the engine exhaust particle sizer (EEPS, Model 3090, D = 0.006–0.560 μm, TSI, Shoreview, MN, USA; flow rate: 10 L min^{-1}) during the entire measurement period. A copper tube (inside diameter: 10 mm, and length: 2 m), electrically conductive tubes (inside diameter: 6.35 and

9.53 mm, total length: 1 m; Part 3001788, TSI), and a glass manifold (inside diameter: 40 mm, total length: 600 mm) were used to transport the ambient air at a ground height of 3 m to the EEPS. To avoid particle deposition onto the sampling tubes and to increase the response speed, an extra pump (flow rate: 30 L min^{-1}) was used to vacuum the air inside the glass manifold.

5   The size distributions of the particle number were also measured every 5 min using a scanning mobility particle sizer (SMPS, Model 3936, D = 15–660 nm, TSI, Shoreview, MN, USA), which consists of an electrostatic classifier (Model 3080), differential mobility analyzer (DMA, Model 3081), and a condensation particle counter (CPC, Model 3022A). Ambient air was aspirated from the roof of the container through a stainless-steel tube (inner diameter: 10 mm, length: approximately 3 m, inlet height: approximately 3 m above ground level) and was split into the main sample flow (approximately 0.8 L min^{-1}) and

10   bypass flow (approximately 20 L min^{-1}). The bypass flow was used to reduce the possible loss of nanoparticles due to Brownian diffusion. The main sample flow was diluted with particle-free air (approximately 2 L min^{-1}) and further split into the individual sample flows for the SMPS (approximately 0.3 L min^{-1}) and other CPCs (approximately 2.5 L min^{-1}). We used the dilution flow to reduce the effects of particle coincidence in the CPCs at higher concentrations.

2.4 Sampling

15   Size-resolved particles in the ambient air at a height of approximately 3 m from the ground were collected using two low-pressure cascade impactors (NanoMoudi II, Model 125B, MSP, Shoreview, MN, USA; flow rate: 10.2 L min^{-1}) simultaneously. To distinguish the effect of aircraft emissions, the samples were collected during the daytime (during aircrafts operation hours) and nighttime (during non-operation hours). Three daytime (7:00–22:00) samples were collected from 16:24 on February 9, 2018 to 13:09 on February 13, 2018 (duration = 56.8 h, sample #1), from 17:33 on February 13,

20   2018 to 9:37 on February 17, 2018—except for 13:30–16:45 on February 15, 2018 (duration = 48.8 h, sample #2)—and from February 19 to February 20, 2018 (duration = 30.0 h, sample #3). One nighttime (0:00–6:00) sample was collected during February 22–26, 2018 (duration = 30.0 h, sample #4).

For one of the two NanoMoudi II impactors, a gold (Au) foil (diameter: 47 mm, Mitsubishi Materials, Tokyo, Japan; "NanoMoudi II-Au", hereafter) was used as the collection substrate for the impaction stage, and a quartz-fiber filter

25   (diameter: 47 mm, 2500QAT-UP, Pall, East Hills, NY, USA) was used as the substrate for the backup filter. In the other NanoMoudi II, a polycarbonate membrane filter (Nuclepore; pore size: 0.05 μm; diameter: 47 mm; Whatman, GE Healthcare UK Ltd., Buckinghamshire, UK; "NanoMoudi II-PC," hereafter) was used as the collection substrate for the impaction stage. At each impaction stage, a nitrocellulose membrane filter (AAWP04700, pore size: 0.8 μm; diameter: 47 mm; Merck Millipore, Billerica, MA, USA) was set under the PC filter. A polytetrafluoroethylene with non-woven fabric

30   polyethylene/polyethylene terephthalate membrane filter (TFH-47; diameter: 47 mm, Horiba, Kyoto, Japan, for samples #1 and #2) or a quartz-fiber filter (diameter: 47 mm, 2500QAT-UP, Pall, for samples #3 and #4) was used as the substrate for the backup filter. Using NanoMoudi II, the particles were separated into 14 size fractions. For the NanoMoudi II-Au, for example, the equivalent cut off aerodynamic diameters at a 50% efficiency (D50) of the impaction stages were as follows:

0.010, 0.018, 0. 032, 0.057, 0.105, 0.170, 0.290, 0.560, 1.00,1.80, 3.10, 6.20, and 9.90 μm. Au foils were rinsed with acetone (dioxin analytical grade, Wako Pure Chemical Industries, Osaka, Japan) before use. A copper tube (inside diameter: 10 mm, length: 3 m) was used as the sampling line. Before each sampling, the impactor nozzles and the support rings of the NanoMoudi II were cleaned using acetone and blown off with an air-duster.

5 The NanoMoudi II-Au samples were used for particle-mass weighing, elemental/organic carbon (EC/OC) analysis, and organic analysis. The NanoMoudi II-PC samples were used for elemental analysis. The NanoMoudi II with aluminum foil as a collection substrate can be used to collect particles with a reasonable size distribution, and the aluminum foil and PC filters have comparable collection efficiencies (Fujitani et al., 2006). Therefore, we assumed that the NanoMoudi II-Au and NanoMoudi II-PC collected particles with reasonable size distributions, and their size distributions were comparable with

10 each other. In this paper, the data for the backup filters are not presented because their collection characteristics (especially adsorption of gaseous compounds) are remarkably different from those of the impaction substrates.

2.5 Organic composition

The organic compounds in the NanoMoudi II-Au samples were analyzed using thermal desorption gas chromatography/mass spectrometry (TD-GC/MS), which is sensitive and suitable for trace-level particulate samples (Fushimi et al., 2011). A

15 thermal desorption unit (TDU; Gerstel GmbH & Co. KG, Mülheim an der Ruhr, Germany), a cooled injection system as a GC inlet (CIS 4; Gerstel), 6890 GC (Agilent Technologies, Palo Alto, CA, USA), and a double-focusing magnetic sector mass spectrometer (JMS-700K, JEOL, Tokyo, Japan) were used. For the GC columns, a DB-5MS (length: 30 m, internal diameter: 0.25 mm, film thickness: 0.25 μm; Agilent Technologies, Palo Alto, CA, USA) was used.

The NanoMoudi II-Au samples were cut into a fan shape (1/8–3/8 of 28 mm Φ, PM mass per sample: 1–20 μg) and were

20 placed in a glass liner (length: 60 mm, outside diameter: 6 mm, inside diameter: 5 mm, Gerstel). The samples were transferred into the TDU and 1 μL of the internal standard mixture of ^{13}C-labeled polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (approximately 0.5 μg mL^{-1} for each compound; US EPA 16 PAH cocktail, Cambridge Isotope Laboratories (CIL), Andover, MA, USA) and deuterium n-alkane mixtures (10.7 μg mL^{-1} of $C_{24}D_{50}$ n-alkane and 11.0 μg mL^{-1} of $C_{30}D_{62}$ n-alkane) were injected onto the surface of the samples using an autosampler (MPS-TEX, Gerstel). The samples were then thermally

25 desorbed using the TDU; the temperature was increased from 30 °C (held for 0.5 min) to 350 °C (held for 3 min) at 50 °C min^{-1}, using a helium desorption flow at 50 mL min^{-1} in splitless mode. The interface temperature was maintained at 350 °C. During desorption at the TDU, the desorbed compounds were focused at 0 °C on a quartz wool inside the glass liner (inside diameter: 2 mm) in the CIS 4 for subsequent GC/MS analysis. The CIS 4 was then programmed to increase the temperature from 0 °C (held for 0.75 min) to 150 °C at 960 °C min^{-1} and from 150 °C to 350 °C (held for 3 min) at 720 °C min^{-1} to

30 inject focused compounds into the GC column. The injection was performed in splitless mode with a 3-min splitless time. The GC oven was programmed to increase the temperature from 40 °C (held for 3 min) to 150 °C at 20 °C min^{-1} and to 320 °C at 10 °C min^{-1} (held for 15 min). Helium was used as a carrier gas at 2.5 mL min^{-1} in a constant flow mode. The temperature of the transfer line between the GC and MS was 320 °C. The samples were ionized using the electron ionization

method (ionizing voltage: 70 V, ionizing current: 600 μA, ion source temperature: 260 °C). The MS was operated in scan mode (m/z 35–400) with a mass resolution of 1000 to obtain comprehensive information regarding the organic compounds in the particulate samples. The accelerating voltage was 10.0 kV, and the detector voltage was 0.40 kV.

The Jet A1 fuels and the jet lubrication oils were diluted by approximately 1000 times with n-hexane (dioxin analytical grade,
5   Wako Pure Chemical Industries) and then analyzed with TD-GC/MS under the same condition as the particulate samples.

3 Results and discussion

3.1 Particle number size distribution

Typical examples of the size distributions of particle number concentrations measured with an engine exhaust particle sizer (EEPS) are shown in Fig. 1A. When the aircraft exhaust plumes were transported from the runway to the measurement site
10   during take-off or landing, large enhancements of nucleation-mode particles were observed. The modal diameters were approximately 10 nm or smaller (see the supplement). In contrast, without the aircraft exhaust plumes, nucleation-mode particles were not observed. The number size distributions at 40–500 nm with aircraft exhaust plumes did not show a significant difference as compared to those without aircraft exhaust plumes. The mass size distributions, as estimated from the measured number concentrations while assuming a density of 1.0 g cm^{-3}, showed significant enhancements in the
15   nucleation mode and a slight increase in the accumulation mode (Fig. 1B). These results clearly indicate that nanoparticles of diameters <30 nm contribute to the major fraction of aircraft exhaust particle mass.

3.2 Organic composition of size-resolved particles

A chemical analysis of the size-resolved ambient particles suggests that nanoparticles having diameters of 10–32 nm (S12 and S13 of the impactor stages) mainly comprise organic carbon (see supplement for details). We thus focus on the chemical
20   characteristics of organic compounds for this size range, in comparison with those of jet fuels and jet lubrication oils.

A series of n-alkanes was detected in the mass chromatograms (m/z 85, an indicator of hydrocarbons) of Jet A1 fuels (Fig. 2). The carbon numbers of these n-alkanes were in the range of C_{11}–C_{18}, with the largest peak for C_{14}. Interestingly, "humps" (baseline elevations) in the mass chromatograms at m/z 85—which is often detected in mineral-oil-based lubricants commonly used for automobiles—were not detected in jet lubrication oils (Mobil Jet Oil II and Mobil Jet Oil 254). Instead,
25   approximately 25 distinct peaks (likely fatty acid esters of pentaerythritol) were detected at the retention time of approximately 21–29 min (corresponding to molecular weights of approximately 380–530) from two jet lubrication oils (Fig. 2). This is considered to be reasonable because the base stocks of jet lubrication oils are essentially a mixture of C_5−C_{10} fatty acid esters of pentaerythritol (Timko et al., 2010; Yu et al., 2012). Furthermore, three compound groups (N-phenyl-1-naphthylamine, alkylated diphenyl amines, and tricresyl phosphate) were detected, which are reported as toxic substances in
30   the material safety data sheet of lubrication oils. These three compound groups and fatty acid esters can be used as good

markers for jet lubrication oil or jet exhaust because they are not usually contained in mineral-oil-based lubricants. In fact, these markers for jet lubrication oil were not detected from a mineral-oil-based lubricant for diesel vehicles with our TD-GC/MS analysis. *n*-Alkanes were not detected from two jet lubrication oils.

The mass chromatograms (*m/z* 85) of size-resolved particles collected during the daytime (7:00–22:00, aircraft operation

5   hours) and nighttime (0:00–6:00, non-operation hours), a jet lubrication oil, and a Jet A1 fuel are shown in Fig. 2. The daytime nanoparticle samples (S13: 10–18 nm, S12: 18–32 nm, and S11: 32–57 nm) clearly show the presence of oil-marker peaks at a retention time of approximately 21–27 min (likely fatty acid esters of pentaerythritol). The intensity ratios of these peaks at 22.3 min or later were very similar to those of a jet lubrication oil (Fig. 3). However, the intensities of the peaks at 22.3 min or earlier in the case of the daytime samples were lower than those of a jet lubrication oil. This may be due to the

10   partial evaporation of more volatile compounds in the atmosphere, which was found to be the case for diesel exhaust nanoparticles in roadside atmospheres (Fushimi et al., 2008; Harrison et al., 2016). The mass spectra of peaks at 21–27 min in nanoparticles collected during the daytime were very similar to that of a jet lubrication oil (an example is shown in Fig. 4). In contrast, the oil-marker peaks were very small in larger particles collected during the daytime (e.g., S9: 105–170 nm or S7: 290–560 nm) and were not detected in nanoparticles collected during the nighttime (Fig. 2). The other marker

15   compounds for jet lubrication oil mentioned above were also detected in the daytime nanoparticle samples but not in the nighttime samples. C_{22}–C_{33} *n*-alkanes were detected in the daytime S9 and S7 samples but were weak or not detected in nanoparticles.

4 Conclusions

From the aforementioned results, we conclude that approximately half the organic compounds in the <30-nm particles

20   detectable using TD-GC/MS can be attributed to nearly intact forms of jet lubrication oil. This has not been identified in previous studies. Jet lubrication oil is released into the atmosphere through a centrifugal breather vent, located in bypass air flow, as a droplet smaller than approximately 1 μm or as vapor (Timko et al., 2010). The vented lubrication oil may be mixed with hot combustion gas at the exhaust area or in the atmosphere.

Our findings have an important implication for environmental issues from the ground level to the upper troposphere. The

25   development of superior technologies for controlling oil emissions (e.g., through a breather vent) may greatly reduce aircraft exhaust nanoparticles. A reduction in the oil contributions would be beneficial in mitigating the health risk caused by aircraft exhaust nanoparticles as jet lubrication oils contain some toxic materials. Furthermore, a detailed knowledge of aircraft emissions is also required for improving our understanding of the origin and fate of ambient particles in the upper troposphere, which can potentially affect the radiative balance of the atmosphere (Righi et al., 2016).

Data availability

For the data shown in this paper, please contact the corresponding author via email (fushimi.akihiro@nies.go.jp).

Supplement

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5   **Author contributions**

AF contributed to conceptualization, validation, investigation, resources, data curation, original manuscript draft preparation, manuscript review and editing, visualization, and supervision. KS contributed to conceptualization, validation, investigation, resources, data curation, and manuscript review and editing. YF contributed to validation, investigation, resources, data curation, and manuscript review and editing. NT contributed to conceptualization, validation, investigation, data curation,

10   manuscript review and editing, supervision, project administration, and funding acquisition.

Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

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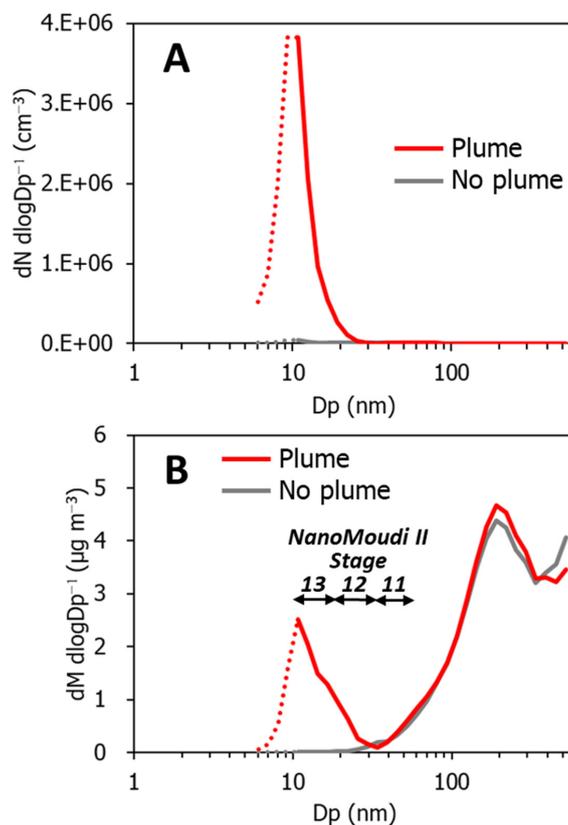
Figure 1: Size distributions of particle concentrations with and without aircraft exhaust plumes. (A) Particle number concentrations. (B) Estimated particle mass concentrations. The averaging times are approximately 20 s for both events. The measurement periods were 11:43:42–11:44:01 on February 15, 2018 and 11:43:11–11:43:30 on February 15, 2018 for the "plume" and "no plume" events, respectively.
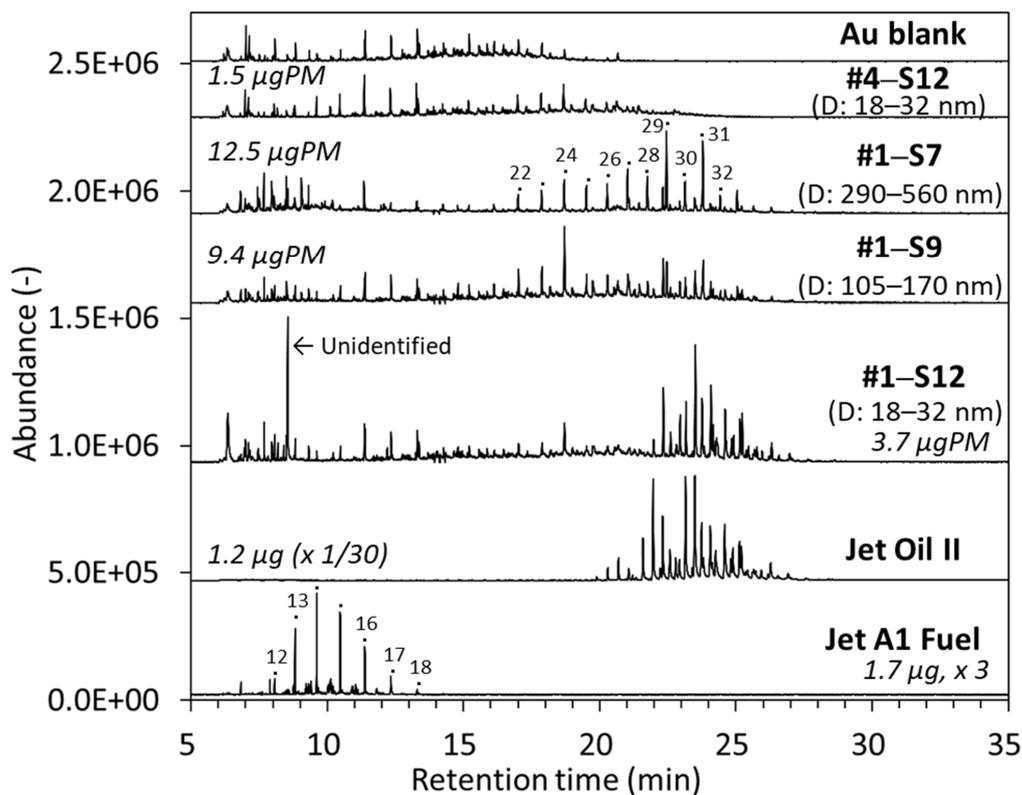
Figure 2: Mass chromatograms (m/z 85) of size-resolved ambient particles collected during the daytime (sample #1, February 9–13, 2018) and nighttime (sample #4, February 22–26, 2018) at the Narita International Airport. Mass chromatograms of Jet Oil II, Jet A1 fuel, and Au-foil blank are also shown for comparison. The mass values (in μg) presented in the plots indicate the mass of the samples that were analyzed using TD-GC/MS. The carbon numbers of *n*-alkanes are shown in the chromatograms of the S7 particles and Jet A1 fuel.
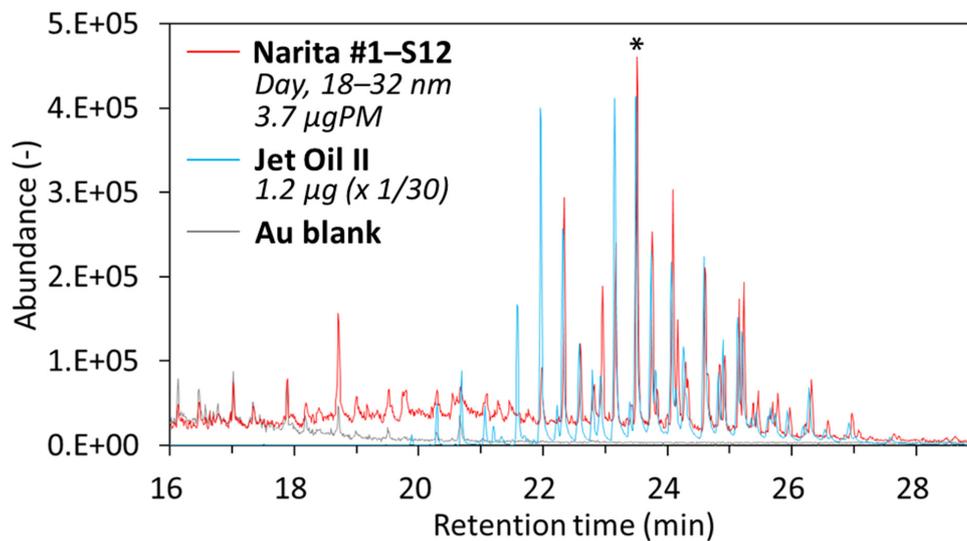
Figure 3: Mass chromatograms (m/z 85) of a nanoparticle sample collected during the daytime (sample #1, February 9–13, 2018; S12, diameter: 18–32 nm) at the Narita International Airport, Jet Oil II, and Au-foil blank. The mass spectra of the peaks at 23.51 min of Narita #1–S12 sample and Jet Oil II with an asterisk are shown in Fig. 4.
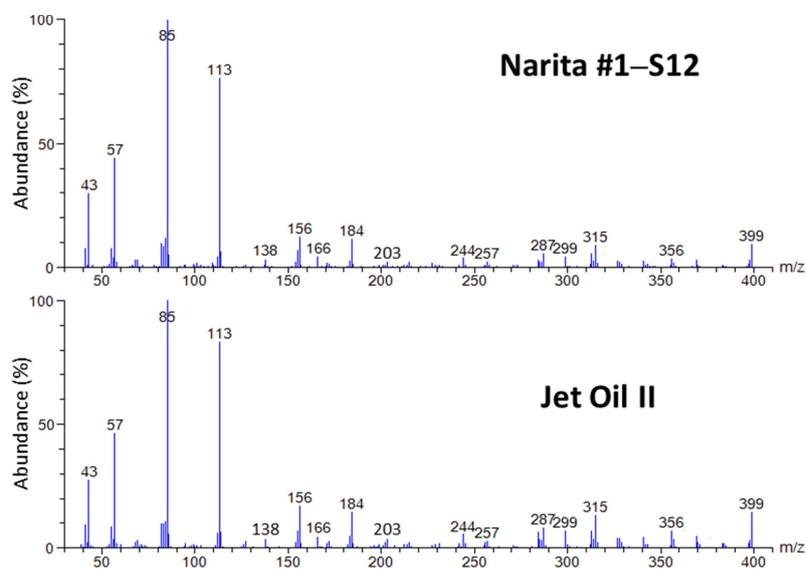
Figure 4: Mass spectra of a nanoparticle sample collected during the daytime at the Narita International Airport (sample #1, February 9–13, 2018; S12, diameter: 18–32 nm) and Jet Oil II at 23.51 min of the TD-GC/MS chromatograms. The chromatographic peaks are indicated in Fig. 3. The instrument background spectrum was subtracted for the Narita #1–S12 sample.