









Bayan Obo Mining District 白雲鄂博礦區





Bayan Obo Mining District 白雲鄂博礦區

Bayan Obo mine tailing dumping site / 白雲鄂博鉍山 尾鉍処分場



III 号白云岩排土场



Open-pit Bayan Obo Mine

露天掘りの白雲鄂博鉍山



Open-pit Bayan Obo Mine

露天掘りの白雲鄂博鉍山



Open-pit Bayan Obo Mine

露天掘りの白雲鄂博鉍山





Open-pit Bayan Obo Mine
露天掘りの白雲鄂博鉍山

Open-pit Bayan Obo Mine

露天掘りの白雲鄂博鉱山



Huge tailing dumping site /

白雲鄂博鉍山 尾鉍処分場



Ⅲ号白云岩排土场

Solvent extraction (SX) plant / 溶媒抽出工場

湿式製錬

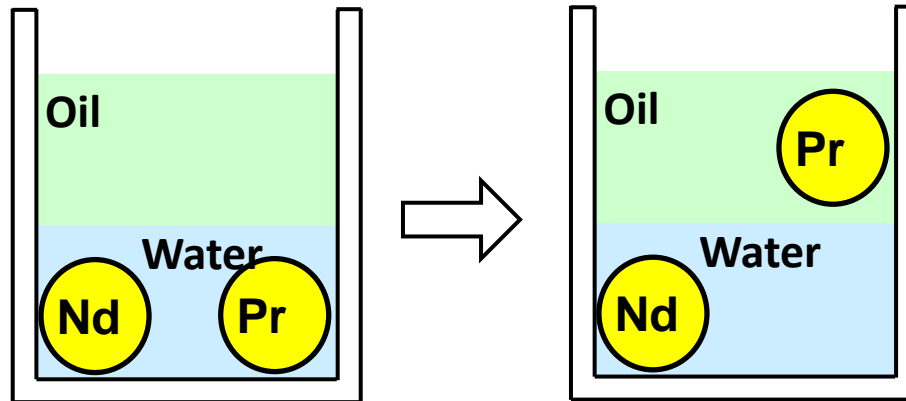
→ 溶媒抽出

Hydrometallurgy

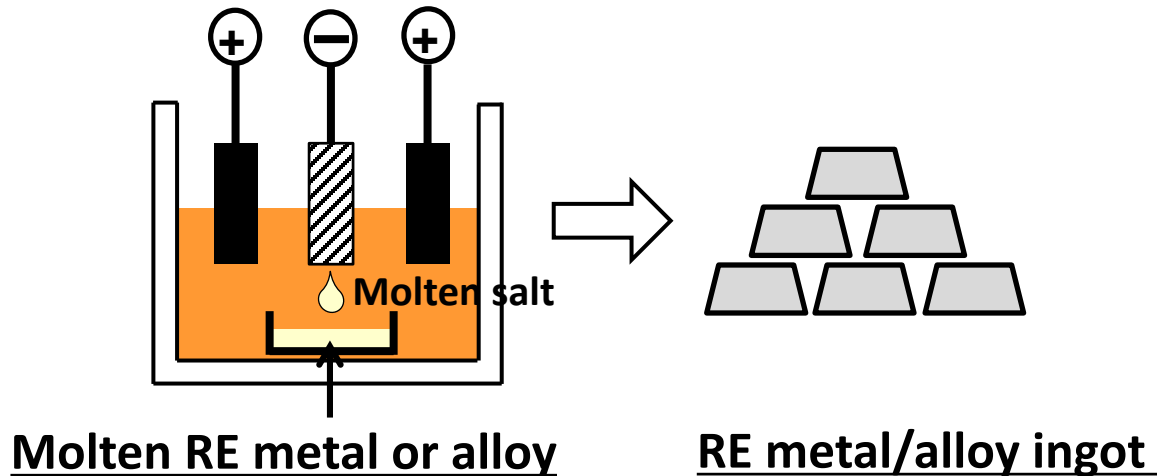
→ Solvent Extraction



Separation / purification of rare earth



Metal production by molten salt electrolysis



**Exchanging anode from
molten salt electrolysis furnace /**

熔融塩電解炉
のアノードの
交換作業

**This process generates HF gas
because it utilizes fluoride molten salt**

Photo by Toru H. Okabe 2014.7, Baotou

Molten salt electrolysis plant / 熔融塩電解工場

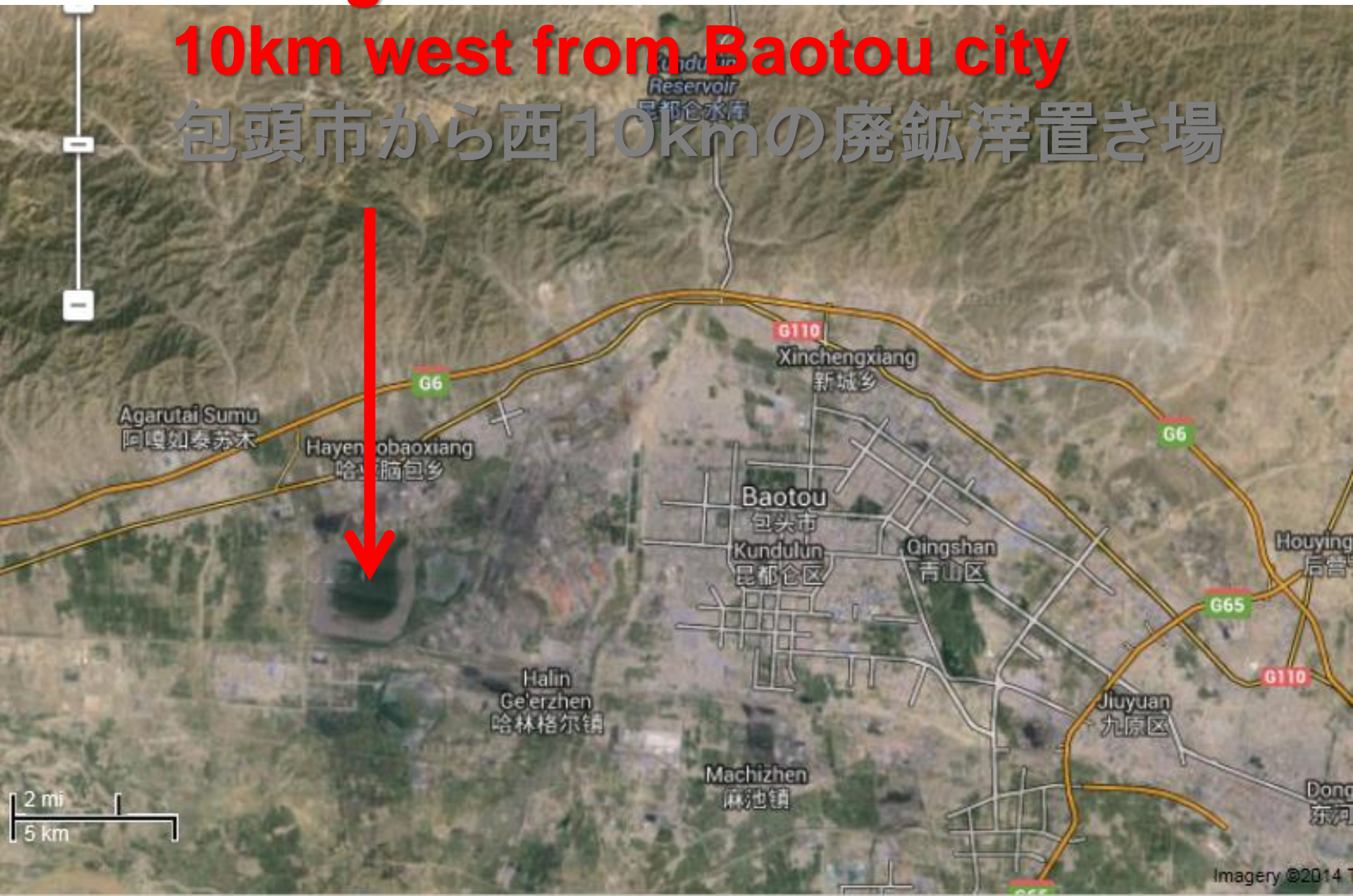


Photo by Toru H. Okabe 2014.7, Baotou

Tailing dam

10km west from Baotou city

包頭市から西10kmの廃鉱滓置き場





Tailing dam / 廃鉱滓処分場



Tailing dam / 廃鉱滓処分場



<http://blogs.unimelb.edu.au/sciencecommunication/2013/09/08/whats-all-this-commotion-about-rare-earth-elements/>

<http://www.rootforce.org/2013/05/01/clean-and-green-rare-earth-elements-and-technology/>

**When googling
“Baotou Tailing Dam”
various images can be
obtained**

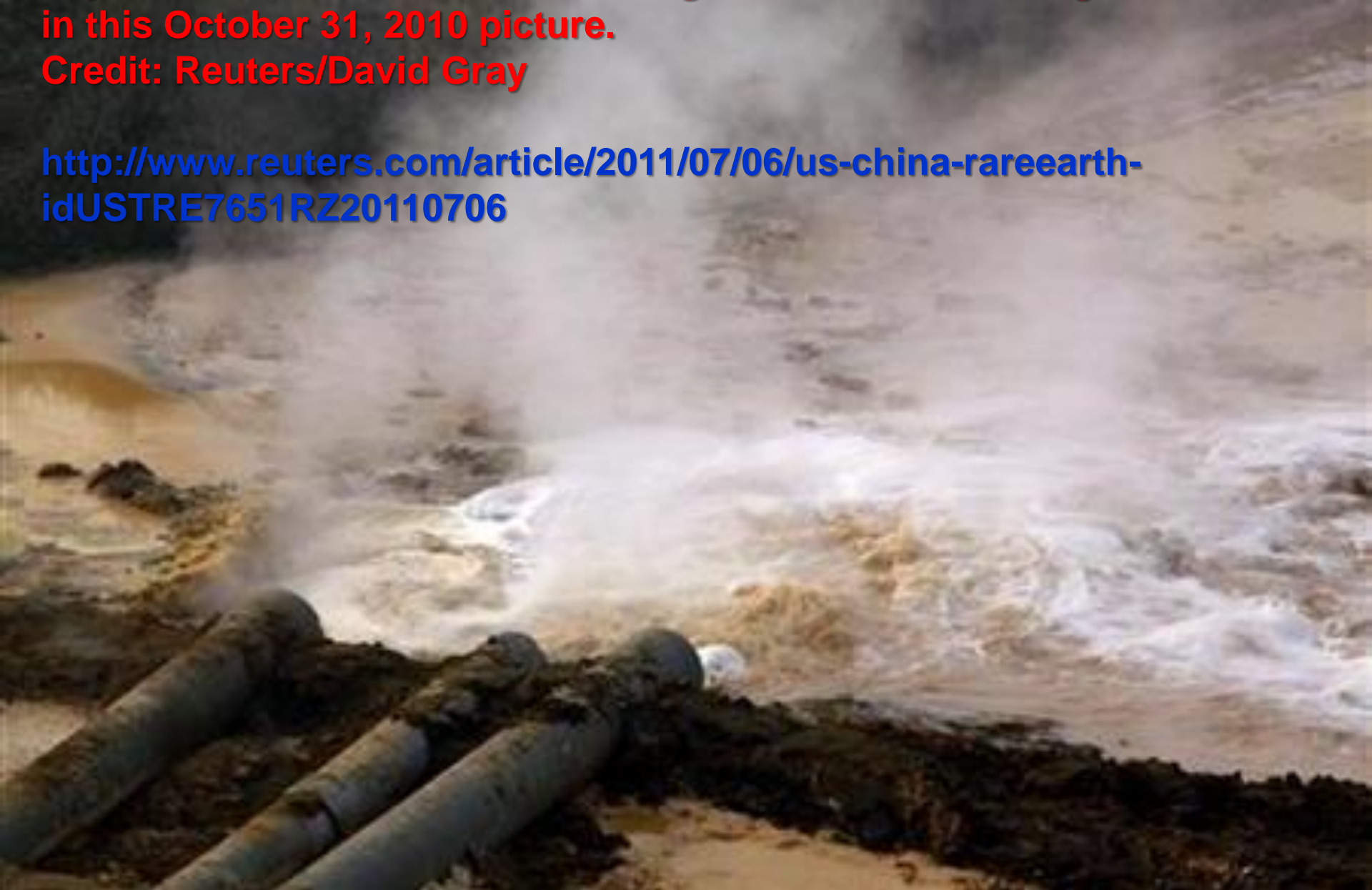


<http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/11/21/us-climate-emissions-idUSTRE6AK1OU20101121>

Pipes coming from a rare earth smelting plant spew polluted water into a vast tailings dam near Xinguang Village, located on the outskirts of the city of Baotou in China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in this October 31, 2010 picture.

Credit: Reuters/David Gray

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/07/06/us-china-rareearth-idUSTRE7651RZ20110706>



Mountain Pass Mine (USA)

**Re-stating
mining operation?!**

**Mountain Pass
Rare Earth Mine
had been
the largest mine
in the past.**

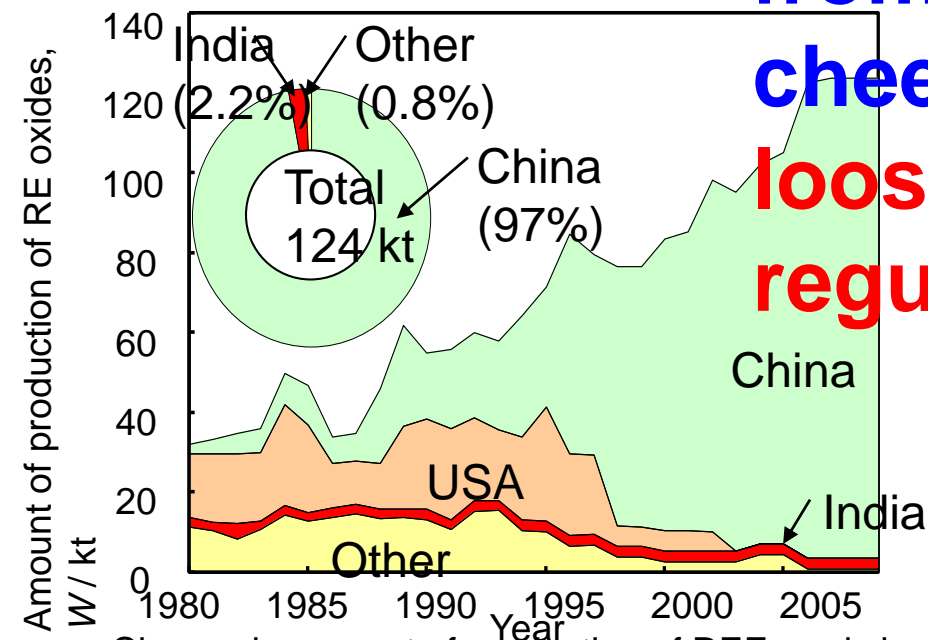
**This mine also has
NORM problems!**



Supply risk of Rare earth:

→ 97% domination of China.

Rare earth resource market is dominated by China because of existence of high grade ore from large mine, cheap labor cost, and loose environmental regulations.

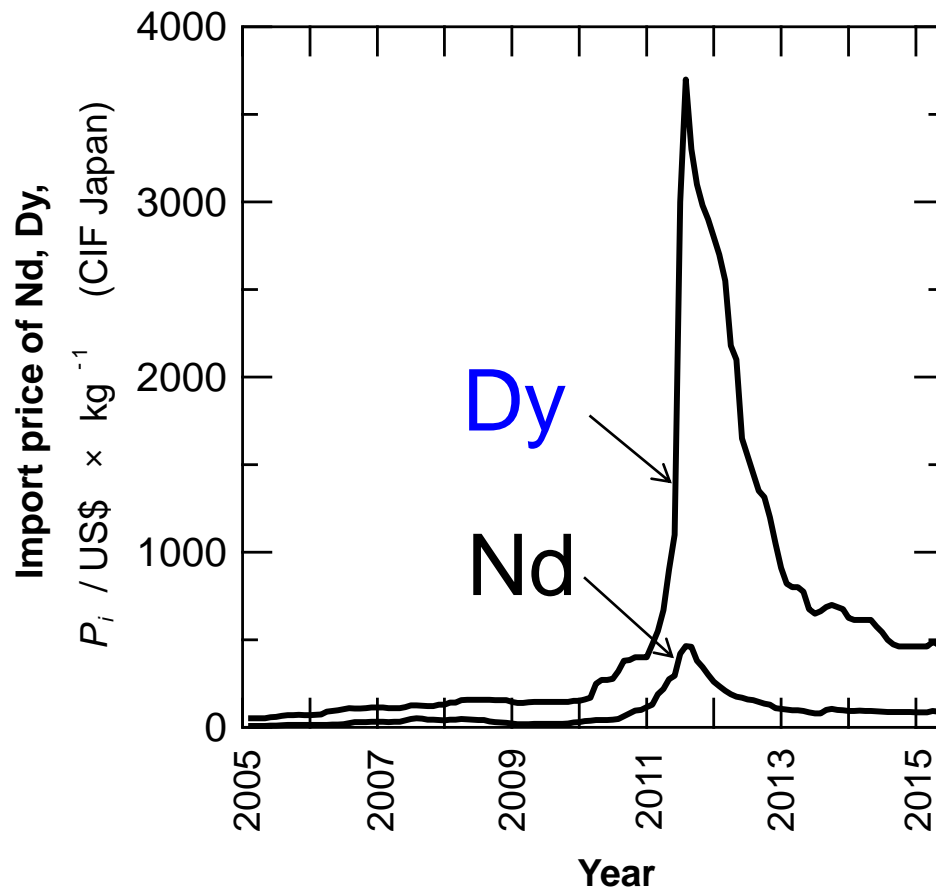


Change in amount of production of REE, and share in supply of REE in 2009

(USGS Mineral Commodity Summaries (2010))

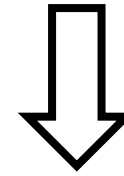
Comparison of costs for producing metal and alloys of rare earth metals

	Japan	US	China	Australia
Feed cost	× high	× high	◎ very low	○ low
Energy cost	× high	○ low	? low	○ low
Environmental cost	× very high	× high	◎ very low	× high
Employment cost	× high	× high	× low	× high



Dy: ~\$ 50 /kg Dy metal

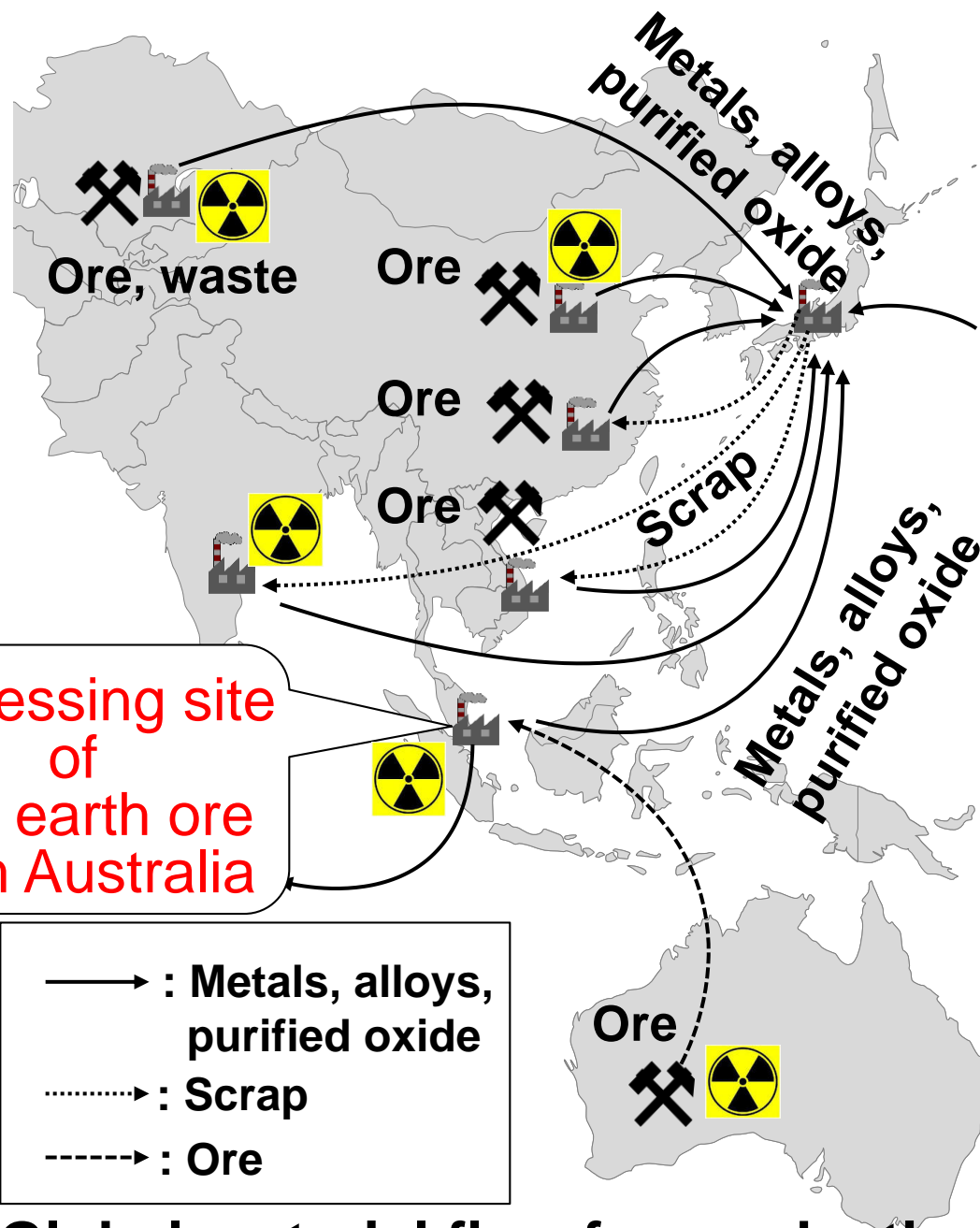
Nd: < \$ 10 /kg Nd metal



Dy: ~\$ 400 /kg Dy metal
 (max. > **\$3500 / kgDy !**)

Nd: ~\$ 100 /kg Nd metal
 (max. **\$450 / kgNd !**)

Price change of rare earth (Nd, Dy) from 2005 to 2015.



Material flow of rare earth metals and alloys in the world.

Japan imports only purified materials.

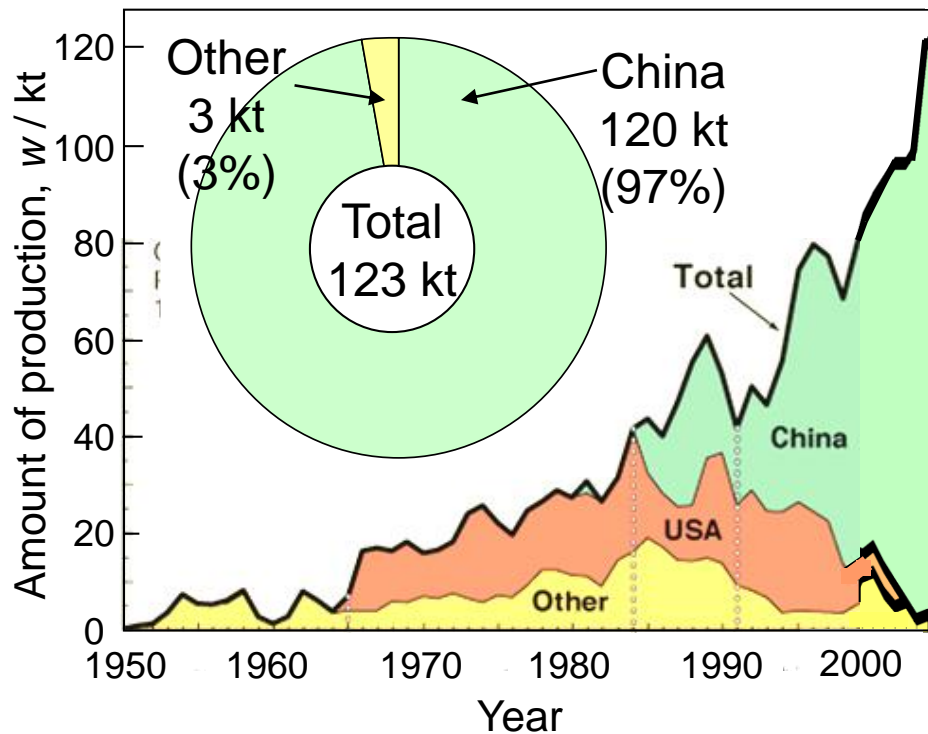
Practically, we can not import ore which contains radio active elements (NORM).

Fig. Global material flow for production of metals and alloys of rare earth metals and waste treatment of the scrap.

China has extremely high quality mineral resource and cheap labor.

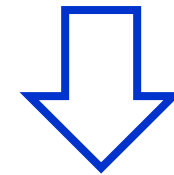
World's 97 % supply is dominated by China.

Problems in supply of REE



Dy: ~\$ 50 /kg Dy metal

Nd: < \$ 10 /kg Nd metal



Dy: ~\$ 400 /kg Dy metal
(max. > \$3500 / kgDy !)

Nd: ~\$ 150 /kg Nd metal
(max. \$450 / kgNd !)

Change in amount of production of REE, and share in supply of REE in 2006.

(USGS Mineral Commodity Summaries (2007))

Grade of Nd & Dy in the ore.

Ore		Ion clay	Bastnaesite		Monazite
Mining Site		Longnan (China)	Bayan Obo (China)	Mt. Pass (USA)	Mt. Weld (Australia)
REO grade in Ore (wt%)		0.05~0.2	6.00	8.90	11.20
Grade in REO (wt%)	Nd	3.00	18.50	12.00	15.00
	Dy	6.70	0.10	trace	0.20
Grade in Ore (wt%)	Nd	0.0015~0.006	1.11	1.068	1.68
	Dy	0.00335~ 0.0134	0.006	trace	0.0224

Dy grade in ore is very low, but
very easy to extract directly from ion clay...



Table 4 Unit mass of rare earth used for industrial products (rough estimate).

Product	Unit mass of RE (kg RE / Unit)
Hybrid vehicle (HV)	0.25~1.25 ^a
Electric vehicle (EV)	1.3~ 1.3 kg RE magnet / EV
Power steering	0.09
Air conditioner	0.12
Hard disk drive	0.01
Mobile phone	0.0005
MRI ^b	1500

a: In the case of hybrid vehicles (HV) unit mass of RE varies with output power of motors.

Small HVs use about 0.25 kg/unit RE and large ones about 1.25 kg/unit.

b: Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) units.

When producing high performance **motors for HEV or EV**, about 1.3 kg of Rare earth magnet (Nd-Fe-B) is necessary.

1.3 kg of Rare Earth magnet contains
21 (~26)% of Neodymium (Nd)
10(~5)% of Dysprosium (Dy)
(Rest: Boron)

→ Magnet with high thermal stability requires large amount of Dy.



Ore grade of Nd is about	1%	(Bastnaesite)
Ore grade of Dy is about	0.01%-0.003%	(Ion cray)

When producing high performance motors:
about 0.27 kg of Nd (31 kg of Bastnaesite ore)

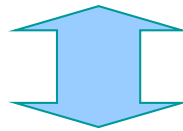
about 0.17 kg of Dy (1 to 4 tons of Ion cray)
are required.

For producing one motor, large amount of ore is required, and environment problems are induced when mining and refining.

Far larger mass of ore compared to the mass is automobile is consumed when producing high performance automobile.

Key points:

- Production of Nd–Fe–B magnet for industrial motors will drastically increase in the future.
- Large amount of magnet scrap will be discarded.

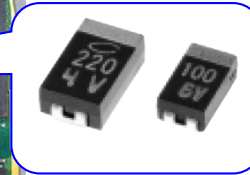
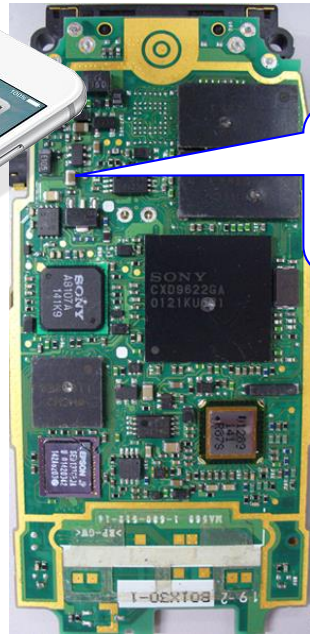


- Resource of Dy (from ion clay) is scarce and limited (**now available only from China**).
- **Production of Nd from mineral ore induces environmental pollution.**
- Minerals for heavy REE, such as Dy, are unevenly distributed in the world.

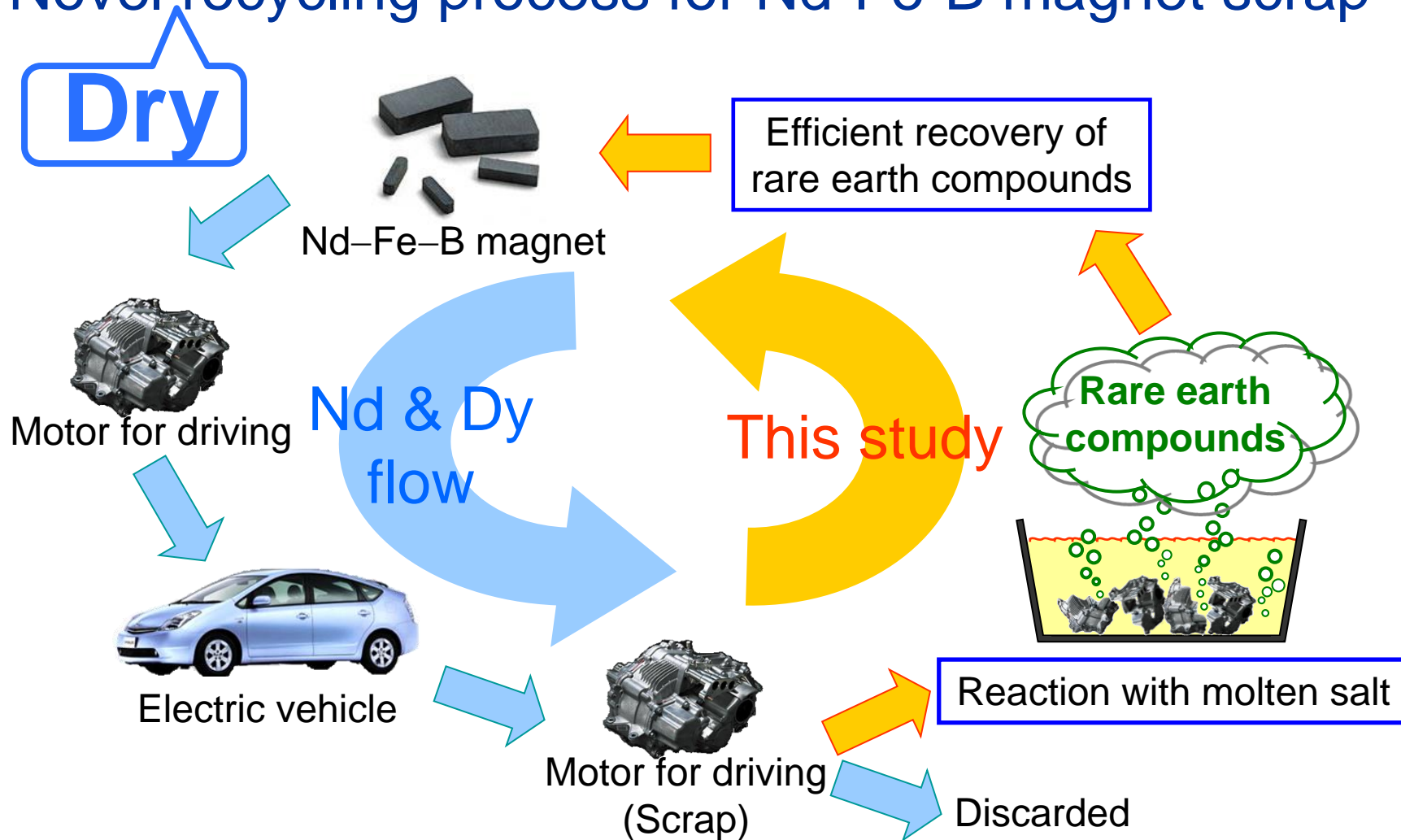


Rare Metals

PGMs, REMs, Ga, Ta...



Novel recycling process for Nd-Fe-B magnet scrap



Development of effective recovery process
by utilizing molten salt as a rare earth extracting agent

Okabe's dream:

Development of efficient and environmentally sound recycling processes:

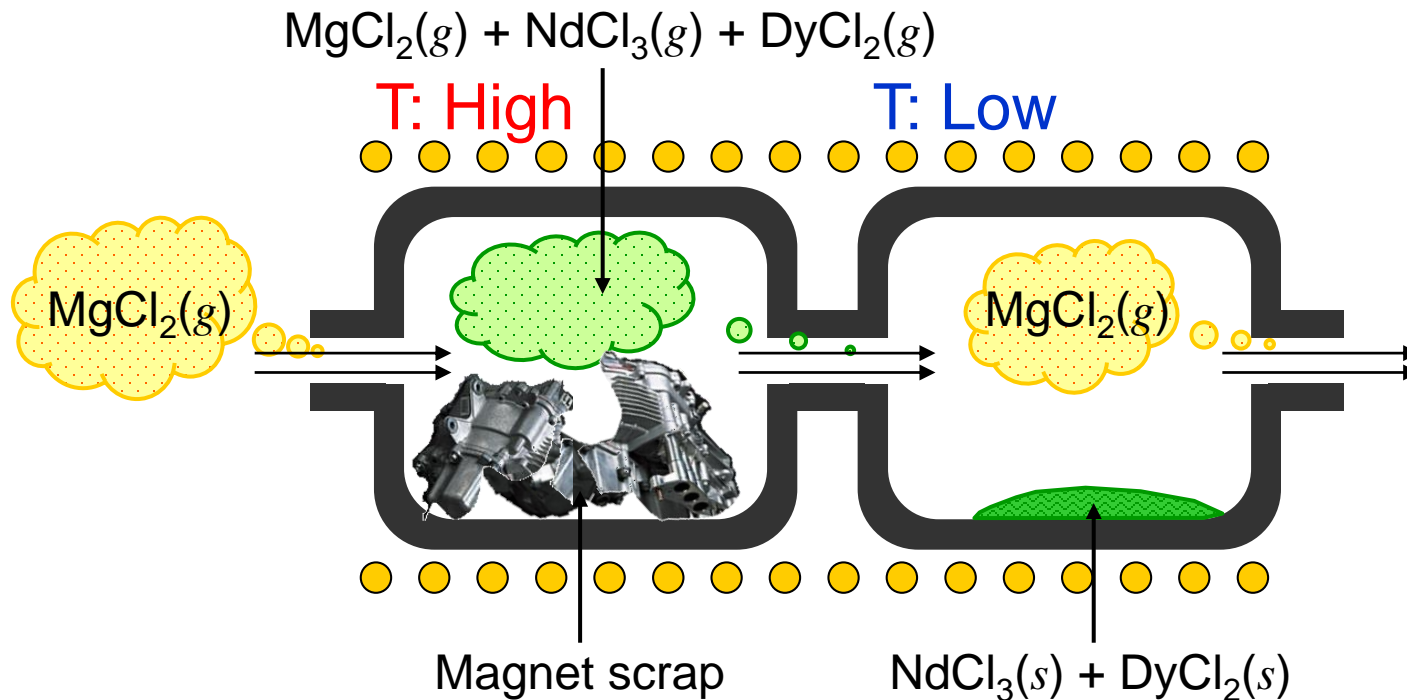


Fig. Schematic illustration of novel recycling process for magnet scrap.

Current status of rare earth production in China and recycling in Japan

Institute of Industrial Science,
The University of Tokyo
Toru H. Okabe



'Current status of rare earth production in China and recycling in Japan',
Toru H. Okabe:

REE4EU Project

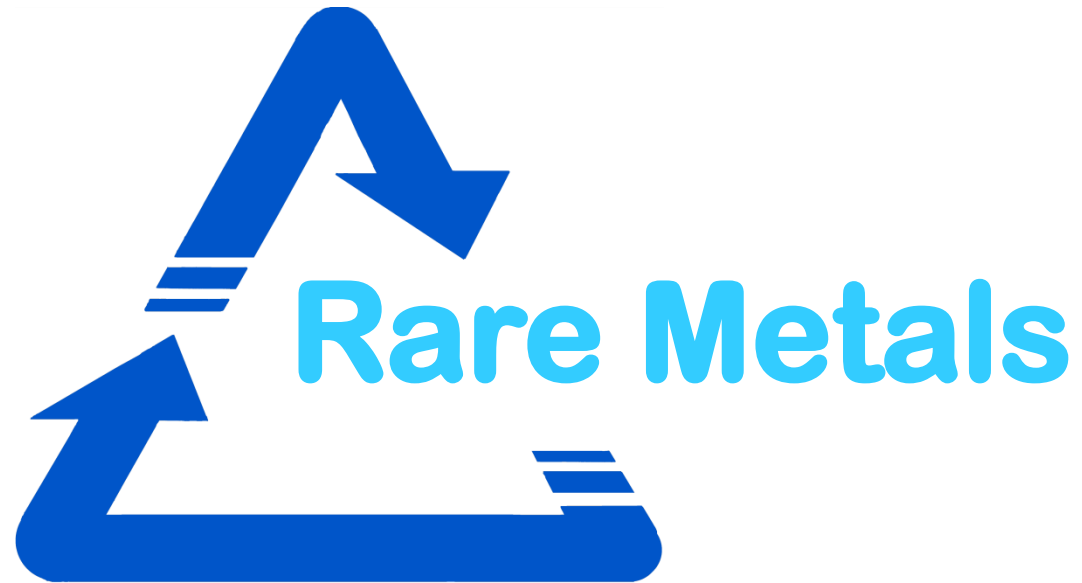
REE4EU Exploitation Workshop

Presentation in the exploitation workshop with external industry and EU-policy participation, Wednesday 24th April, (45 min)

[April 22-25, 2019, Stakeholders workshop, 24 April 2019, Avenue de la joyeuse Entrée 1, 4th floor, 1040 Brussels, Belgium] (2019. 4. 24).

[Invited presentation]

**Development of new recovery
process of rare metals from scraps**



**Environmentally sound technology
for producing and recycling
less-common metals**

Rare metals (or less-common metals, or minor metals) are becoming very important



REMs (Nd, Dy, Sm, ...):

Hard disk for PCs,
vibrators of mobile phones,
motors for hybrid vehicles

PGMs (Pt, Rh, Pd,...):

Catalyst for automobile, and fuel cells

In: Transparent electrodes for displays

Ga: Blue diodes

Ta: High performance capacitors

Li: High performance batteries

Re: Turbine blades for aircraft



Fig. 1

Rare metals (or less-common metals, or minor metals) are becoming very important materials for ensuring a high-quality lifestyle in advanced countries. These metals are essential for producing high-tech industrial products, which will be “scrap” after their lifetime of usage.

Novel recycling process for Nd-Fe-B magnet scrap

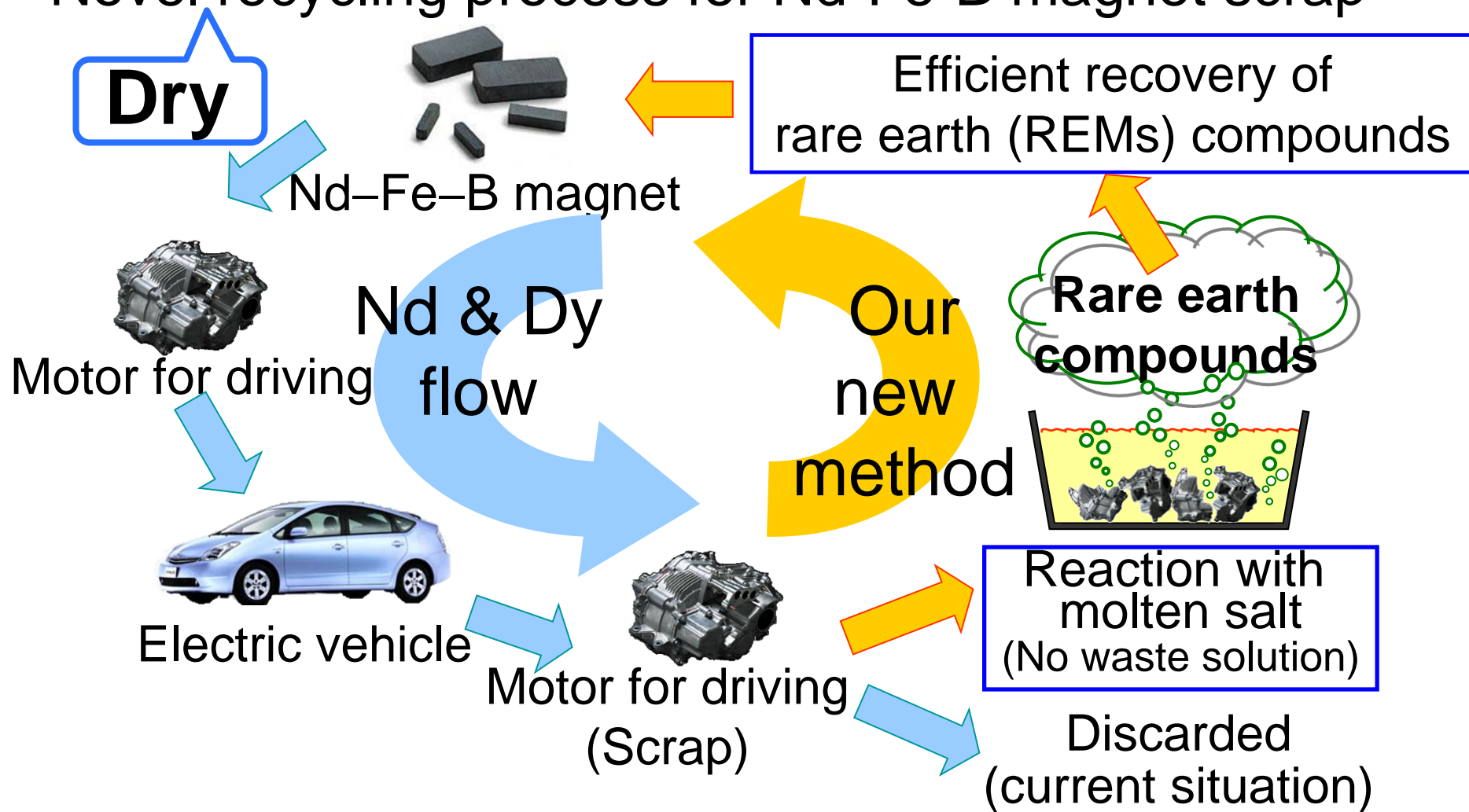


Fig. 3

A representative scheme for the development of an effective recovery process by utilizing molten salt as a rare-earth extracting agent. A novel environmentally sound recycling process for Nd-Fe-B magnet scrap, which does not generate any waste aqueous solution, is currently under development. This research won many awards.

Recycling process of REM magnet scrap

- Oxidation / Hydrometallurgical separation process → Current major process

- Molten salt electrolysis

- Santoku, AIST, Osaka Univ., Kyoto Univ.,
→ Tohoku Univ., etc.

- Slag / Metal separation

- Shinetsu, Santoku, Tohoku Univ.,
→ Akita Univ.

Currently, various recycling technologies are being investigated

- Other pyrometallurgical processes

- Univ. Tokyo, Kyoto Univ. etc.

Recycling process of REM magnet scrap

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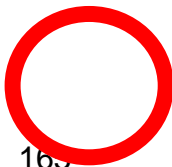
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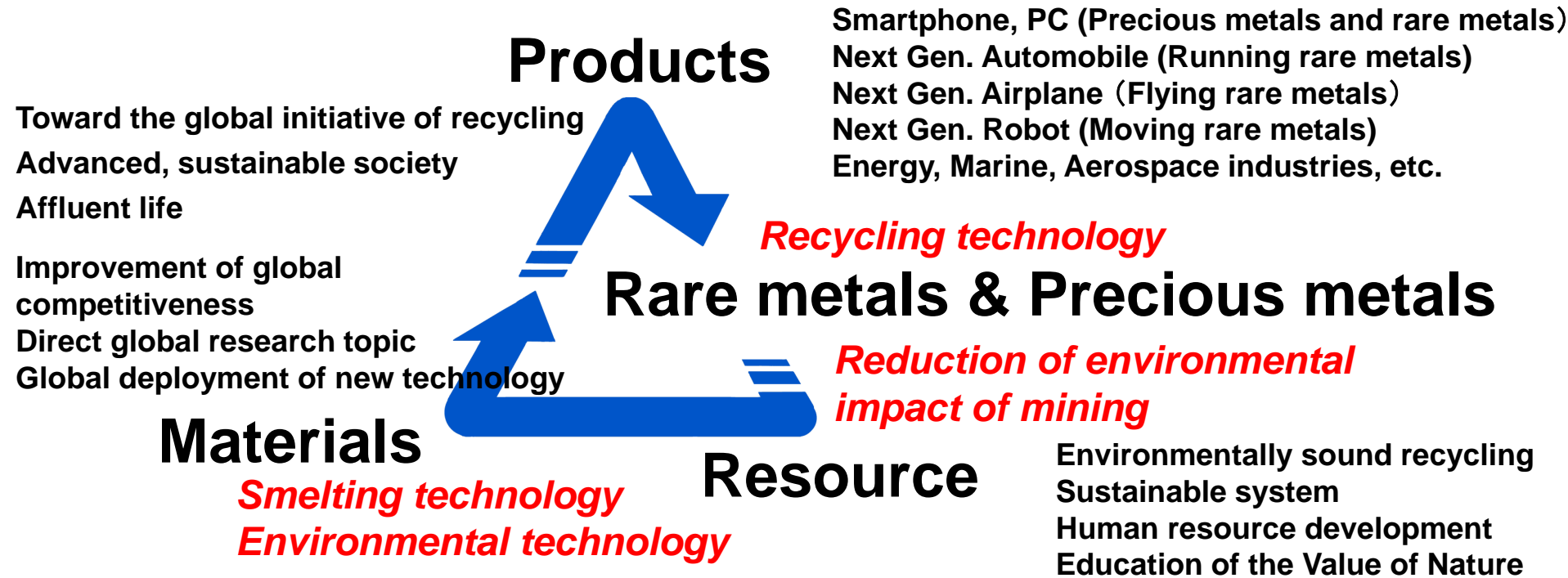
Recycling process of REM magnet scrap

- Oxidation / Hydrometallurgical separation process → Current major process

In Japan, waste water treatment containing heavy metals and organic compounds is costly, and we are trying to develop new environmentally sound processes which does not produce any waste solutions.

→ Dry pyrometallurgical process will be one of the key processes

Background and Keywords for Materials Research for Development of Highly Sustainable Society

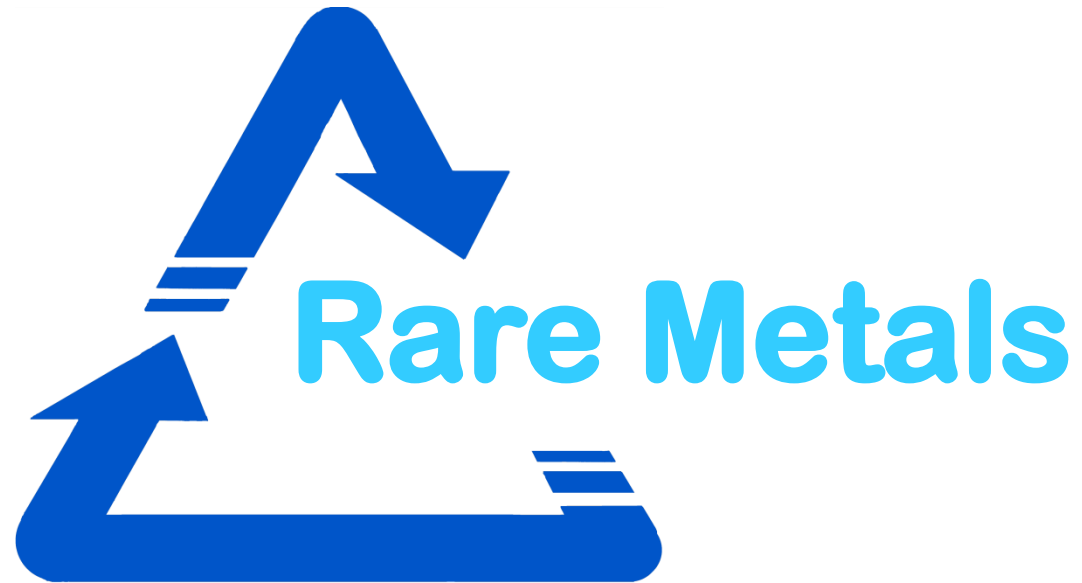


Materials engineering for establishing an advanced sustainable society /
Development of new integrated academic field for resource, environment, and recycling /
Inducing the paradigm shift of global vision related to resources and environment.

Fig. 1

Aiming to establish an advanced recycling society through various approaches, the pivotal items necessary to realize a materials recycling society (rare metals and precious metals are shown as representatives) are listed. In the future, recycling and environmental technologies for rare metals and precious metals will be key for a highly sustainable society.

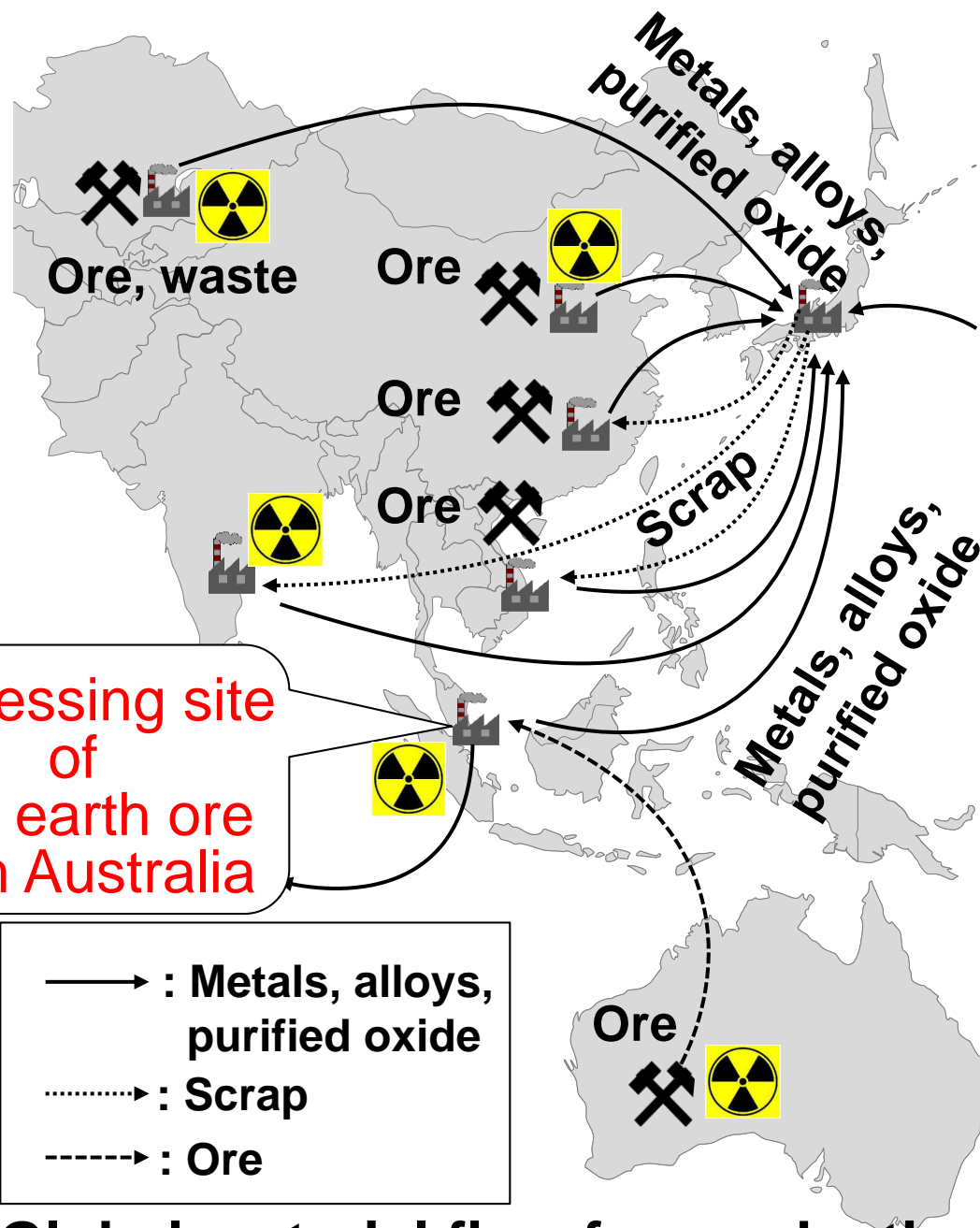
**Development of new recovery
process of rare metals from scraps**



**Environmentally sound technology
for producing and recycling
less-common metals**

Comparison of costs for producing metal and alloys of rare earth metals

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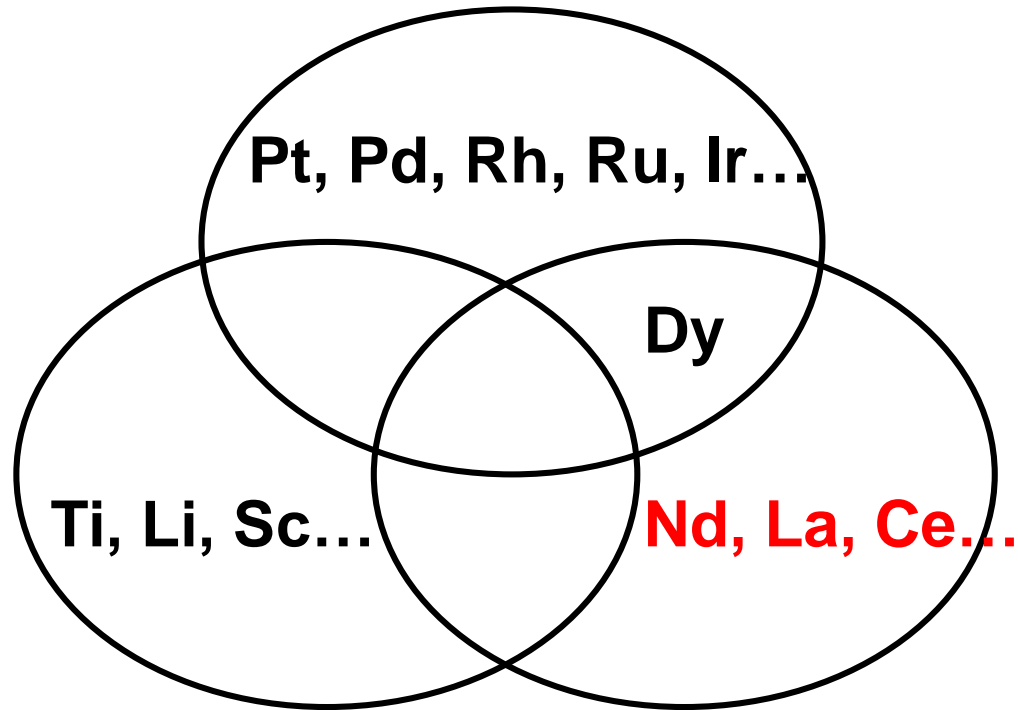
Material flow of rare earth metals and alloys in the world.

Japan imports only purified materials.

Practically, we can not import ore which contains radio active elements (NORM).

Fig. Global material flow for production of metals and alloys of rare earth metals and waste treatment of the scrap.

A: Resource Supply Restriction



**B: Technological
Restriction**

**C: Environmental
Restriction**

Fig. Key factors that determine rare metal supply.

Environmental and technological restrictions are the major practical constraints, not the resource supply restriction, especially for rare earth metals.

Novel recycling process for Nd-Fe-B magnet scrap

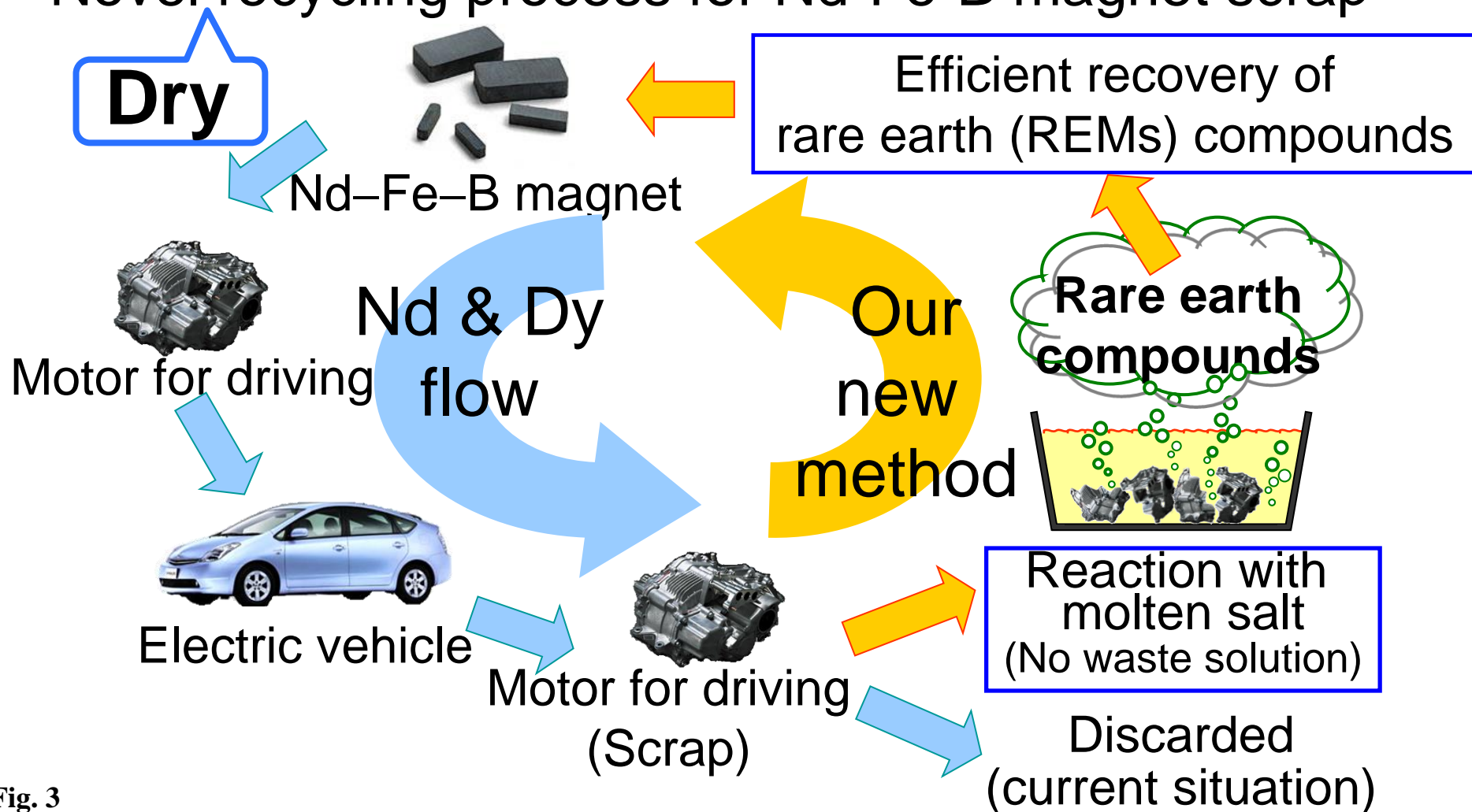


Fig. 3

A representative scheme for the development of an effective recovery process by utilizing molten salt as a rare-earth extracting agent. A novel environmentally sound recycling process for Nd-Fe-B magnet scrap, which does not generate any waste aqueous solution, is currently under development. (T. H. Okabe, S. Shirayama: International patent PCT/JP2009/056079 (2009.3.26), US Patent No. 8323592 (2012.7.19), Chinese Patent No. ZL200980119301.3 (2013.7.10), German Patent No. 60329388.3 (2009.9.23), British Patent No.1512475 (2009.9.23), Japanese Patent No. 5424352 (2013.12.6), Y. Miyamoto, T. Okamoto, T. H. Okabe: Japanese Patent No. 5709164, International patent PCT/JP2012/056032 (2012.3.8), etc.) **This**

When considering the bottlenecks of supply of rare metals (including REMs), many people put heavy weight on the resource constraints of rare metal supply.

However, in practice, environmental and technological constraints are the major bottlenecks, rather than any problem with shortage of resources.

Current status of rare earth production in China and recycling in Japan

**NORM:
Naturally Occurring Radioactive Materials**

Goldschmidt's classification of elements

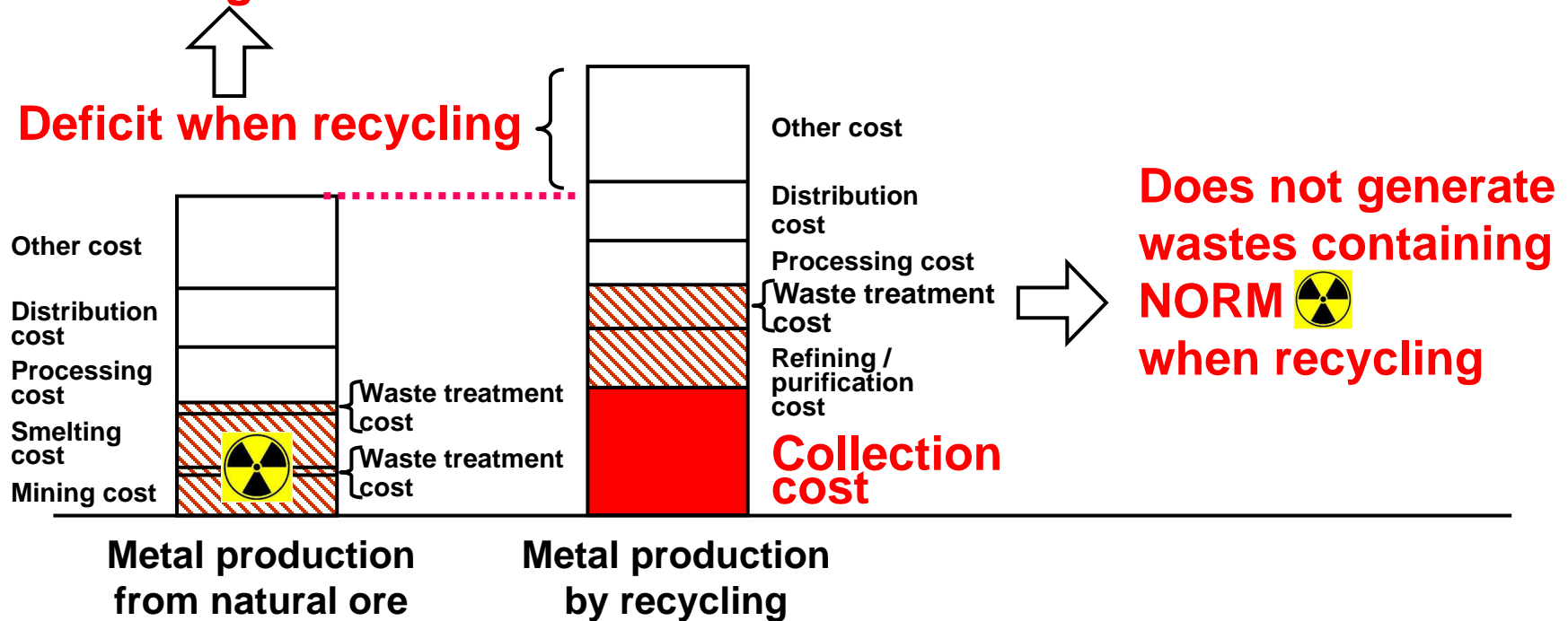
Relationship between main products and by-products.

Value of nature

Value of nature

(a) Nominal value of rare metals based on the current economic principles

When ignoring the “Value of Nature”, economic merits are maximized while abandoning the wastes



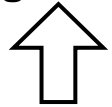
※ Hatched parts in the figure are often carried out in mining countries or regions.

Fig. 9 The concept for evaluating the value of metals. In the current societal system, the value of nature is not considered. Recycling prevents consumption of natural resources and suppresses loss of the value of nature.

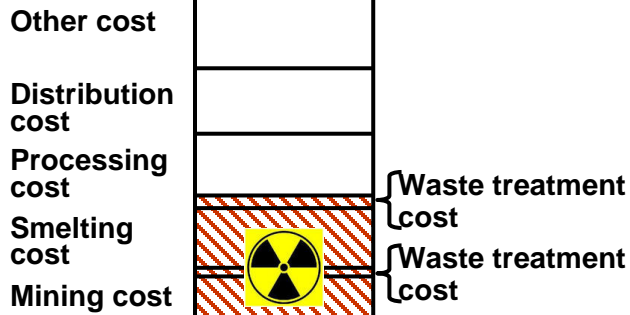
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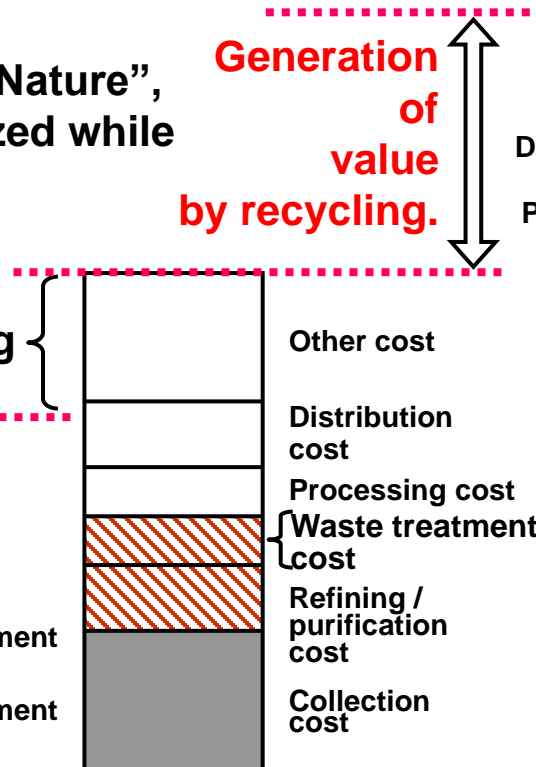
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Deficit when recycling

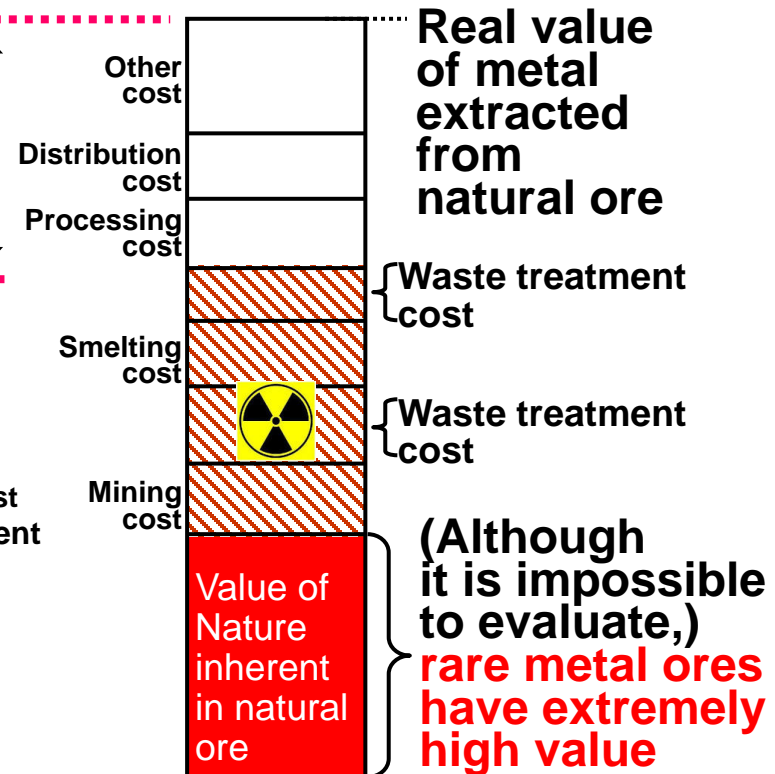


Metal production from natural ore



Metal production by recycling

(b) Real value of rare metals counting the value of nature.



The case of producing metal from natural ore

※ Hatched parts in the figure are often carried out in mining countries or regions.

When considering the value of nature, waste treatment cost also increases

Fig. 9 The concept for evaluating the value of metals. In the current societal system, the value of nature is not considered. Recycling prevents consumption of natural resources and suppresses loss of the value of nature.

When extracting rare metals from recycled feed material, harmful wastes generated from natural ore processing can be avoided.

This is the primary advantage of the cyclical use of rare metal resources.

Bottlenecks in rare metal supply and the importance of recycling – a Japanese perspective

Toru H. Okabe

Integrated Research Center for Sustainable Energy and Materials, Institute of Industrial Science, The University of Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan

ABSTRACT

Rare metals are less common metals that are generally perceived to be scarce. The media often presents one-track thinking on the depletion of mineral resources. Despite this common notion, the supply of most rare metals – including rare earth metals (REMs) – in terms of the amount of minerals available in known deposits is not a serious problem. Key factors that determine the supply of rare metals are the costs of mining and smelting, and related environmental destruction. These are the major practical constraints, rather than the amount of mineral deposits in the earth. When extracting rare metals from recycled feed material, harmful waste on the land from natural ore processing can be avoided. This is the primary advantage of the cyclical use of rare metal resources. In this article, bottlenecks of rare metal supply, and the importance of recycling, are discussed, using REMs as an example.

ARTICLE HISTORY

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KEYWORDS

Rare metals; REMs;
bottleneck; supply chain;
recycling; environmental
destruction

'Bottlenecks in Rare Metal Supply and the Importance of Recycling - a Japanese Perspective', Toru H. Okabe:

Mineral Processing and Extractive Metallurgy,

1. Introduction

Most of the things that generate wealth, including rare metals, have good and bad aspects: light and shadow.

vol.126, no.1-2, (2017) pp.22-32.

2. Misconceptions of the general public about rare metals

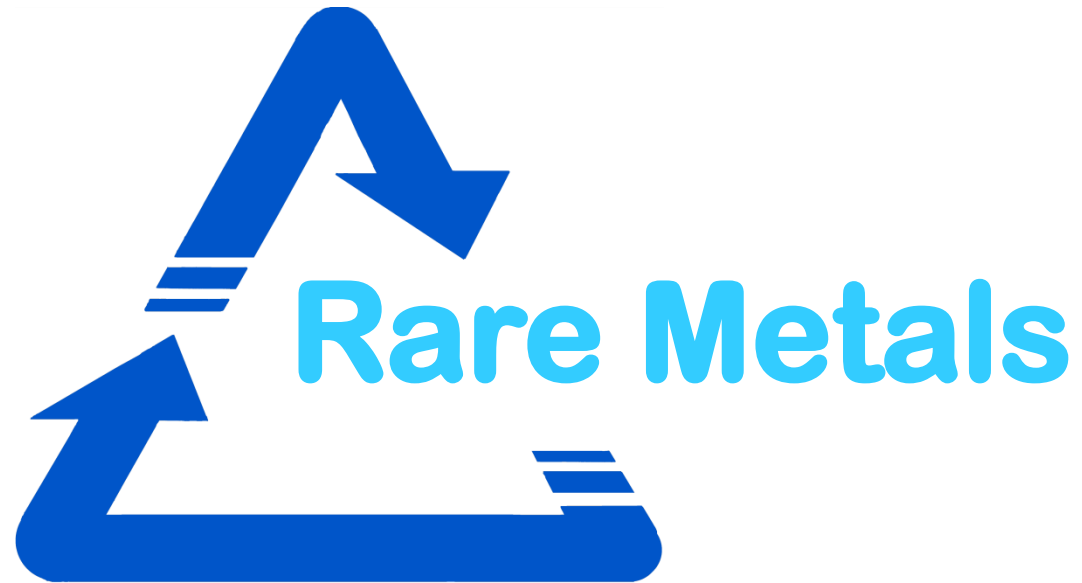
From the words 'rare metals', the majority of the public

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**Development of new recovery
process of rare metals from scraps**



**Environmentally sound technology
for producing and recycling
less-common metals**

Innovation Changes Rare Metal to be recycled efficiently



(Carnegie
Museum of Art,
Pittsburgh,
Pennsylvania,
cover page of
JOM, Nov.
2000)

**Environmentally sound metal
production / recycling technology
has to be developed**

Current status of rare earth production in China and recycling in Japan

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REE4EU Project

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