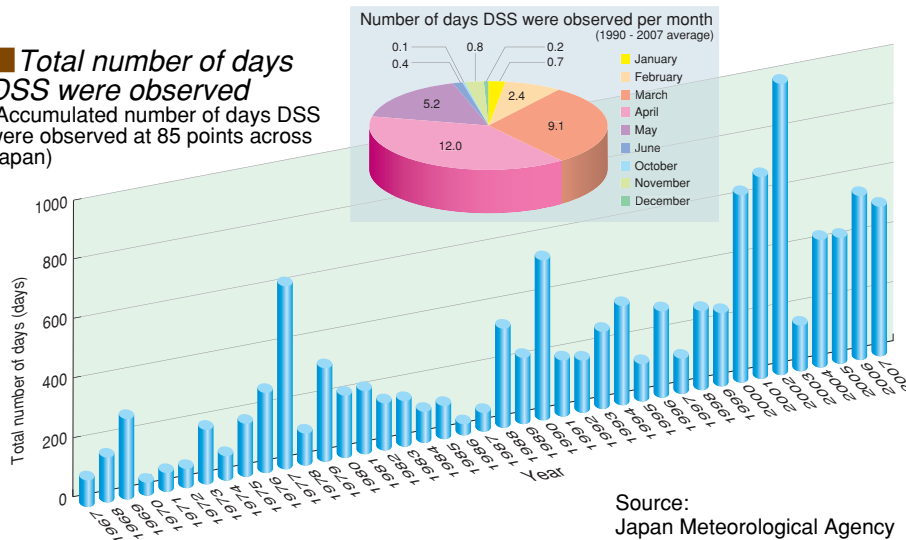


Frequency of Airborne DSS and Resulting Damage

Dust and sandstorms have been a well-known weather phenomenon since ancient times. Recently however, the frequency of DSS and the damage by them have been increasing.

Frequency of DSS

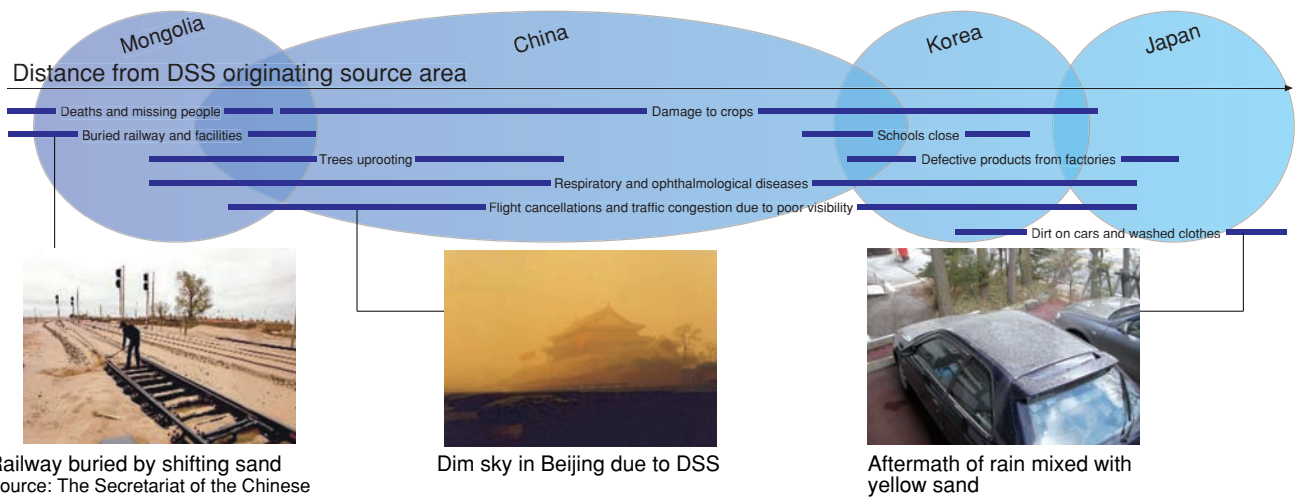
Total number of days DSS were observed
(Accumulated number of days DSS were observed at 85 points across Japan)



Dust and sandstorms fly over Japan throughout the year, but they increase from February and peak in April. From DSS records at 85 meteorological observatories across Japan, until the mid 1980s there were few years when the total number of days exceeded 300. But after 1988, DSS records frequently exceeded 300 and increased especially after 2000 (except 2003).

Damage Resulting from DSS

DSS is a common problem throughout Northeast Asia, however the type and degree of damage by them vary and are dependent on the distance from the originating source area.



Railway buried by shifting sand
Source: The Secretariat of the Chinese National Committee for the UNCCD

Dim sky in Beijing due to DSS

Aftermath of rain mixed with yellow sand

A Social Problem caused by DSS



An April 3rd, 2002, article in the Asahi Shimbun newspaper reported a record number of DSS sightings in Japan during the spring of 2002.

In March 2002, a DSS was observed in Sapporo, a rare occurrence which made wide headlines. The issue attracted public attention and was even discussed in the National Diet. In response to this situation, the regular meeting with related ministries on DSS was established in February 2005. Then related ministries on DSS can liaison with each other; linkages between various countermeasures are being planned.

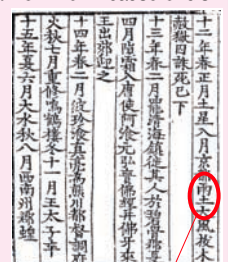
Column 1

Dust and Sandstorm Historical Records: "Dust Rain", "Muddy Rain", and "Red Snow"

Since ancient times dust and sandstorms were a natural phenomenon usually observed in early spring and a well-known cause of disasters. In Chinese scripts dating from 1150 B.C., the expression "dust rain" was already in use.

In ancient Korean texts, the first description of "muddy rain" appeared in 174 A.D. during the reign of King Adalra of the Silla Dynasty. After this, references to DSS appear frequently (See figure on the right).

DSS have been observed since ancient times in Japan, too, and in Honcho Nendaiki (the chronicle of the dynasty), compiled in the Edo era, it was recorded that "red snow" was observed in Japan's northern region in 1477 (Year 9 of Bummei).



"Muddy rain"
Record of "muddy rain" during the Silla Dynasty (Year 850)