

Evaluation of long-term tropospheric NO₂ data obtained by GOME over East Asia in 1996–2002

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[1] Long-term tropospheric nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) column data obtained by the Global Ozone Monitoring Experiment (GOME) (*G*-NO₂) are evaluated to confirm the trends found in tropospheric NO₂ abundances over East Asia between 1996 and 2002. For three locations in Central and East Asia, the *G*-NO₂ values are compared with tropospheric columns estimated from coincident observations of total NO₂ by ground-based UV/visible spectrometers and stratospheric NO₂ by satellite solar occultation sensors (*E*-NO₂). The comparisons show a slight linear drift in *G*-NO₂ data from 1996 to 2002. However, it is much smaller than the standard deviation of the differences between *G*-NO₂ and *E*-NO₂ and much smaller than the increasing trends in NO₂ seen by GOME over the industrial areas of China, demonstrating the validity of the trends estimated using the GOME data. **Citation:** Irie, H., et al. (2005), Evaluation of long-term tropospheric NO₂ data obtained by GOME over East Asia in 1996–2002, *Geophys. Res. Lett.*, 32, L11810, doi:10.1029/2005GL022770.

1. Introduction

[2] It is well known that nitrogen oxides (NO_x = NO + NO₂) play a crucial role in the Earth's atmosphere. As a result of rapid economic growth in East Asian countries, an increase in the anthropogenic emissions of NO_x from these countries is thought to be occurring, due mainly to rising consumption of fossil fuels [Akimoto, 2003]. While tropospheric NO_x abundance should respond to the changes in emission from adjacent regions, its temporal evolution over East Asia has not yet been quantified due to the lack of continuous long-term observations by a single instrument. The Global Ozone Monitoring Experiment (GOME) onboard the European Remote Sensing-2 (ERS-2) satellite measured tropospheric NO₂ column abundances over East Asia from July 1995 until June 2003 [Leue et al., 2001;

Richter and Burrows, 2002; Martin et al., 2002, 2003; Beirle et al., 2004; A. Richter et al., Significant increase in nitrogen dioxide levels over China observed from space, submitted to *Nature*, 2005, hereinafter referred to as Richter et al., submitted manuscript, 2005]. Recently, Richter et al. (submitted manuscript, 2005) have combined the GOME tropospheric NO₂ column data (*G*-NO₂) with those of the Scanning Imaging Absorption Spectrometer for Atmospheric Chartography (SCIAMACHY) to show a highly significant increase in NO₂ of ~50% over the industrial areas of China (30°–40°N and 110°–123°E) between 1996 and 2004. In Europe from 1996 to 2001, *G*-NO₂ has shown a reduction consistent with the pronounced reduction of NO_x emissions (Richter et al., submitted manuscript, 2005). *G*-NO₂ has been compared to independent measurements over Europe and the U.S. [e.g., Heland et al., 2002; Petritoli et al., 2004; Martin et al., 2004], and good agreement was found. For East Asia, however, despite a large uncertainty in emission estimates, no validation comparison has been made so far. In the present study, the long-term *G*-NO₂ data obtained in Central and East Asia are evaluated by comparing monthly-mean *G*-NO₂ tropospheric column data with those estimated from long-term observations by ground-based UV/vis. zenith-sky spectrometers and satellite-borne solar occultation sensors (*E*-NO₂). The comparisons support the results of Richter et al. (submitted manuscript, 2005) indicating a significant increase in NO₂ over the industrial areas of China between 1996 and 2002.

2. GOME Tropospheric NO₂ Column (*G*-NO₂)

[3] The GOME instrument, a nadir-viewing UV/vis. spectrometer, was launched aboard the ERS-2 satellite in April 1995 [Burrows et al., 1999]. GOME observations with a spatial resolution of 40 km (in latitude) × 320 km (in longitude) are made three times across the flight track using a scanning mirror, achieving nearly global coverage within 3 days. The satellite crosses the equator at 10:30 am local time in the descending node, so that GOME observations at northern mid-latitudes occur around 11:00 am. For the *G*-NO₂ tropospheric column data used in this study, the retrieval technique was described in detail by Richter and Burrows [2002] and recent improvements were given by Richter et al. (submitted manuscript, 2005). To minimize the shielding effects of clouds on the retrieval, we used GOME data with a cloud fraction less than 0.2, based on a cloud retrieval algorithm (FRESCO) [Koelemeijer et al., 2001]. It has been shown that *G*-NO₂ tropospheric column data was tightly correlated with surface NO₂ concentration in highly-polluted regions (tropospheric NO₂ reaching 200 × 10¹⁴ cm⁻²) in Italy throughout the year 2000 under optimized comparison conditions (well-mixed boundary layer

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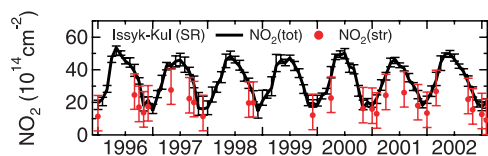


Figure 1. Time series of NO₂(tot) (black) and NO₂(str) (red) values for Issyk-Kul at sunrise (SR). The SAGE II- and HALOE-based NO₂(str) values have been unified for each month.

and low cloud coverage) [Petritoli *et al.*, 2004], indicating the sensitivity of the GOME observations to NO₂ near the surface. The present study uses monthly-averaged $G\text{-NO}_2$ data derived on a 0.5° (in latitude) \times 0.5° (in longitude) grid. We focus on the years 1996–2002, when nearly complete seasonal cycles were observed by GOME. Uncertainty in $G\text{-NO}_2$ arises primarily due to errors in the a-priori NO₂ profiles used and the tropospheric air mass factor calculations. Uncertainty in a single $G\text{-NO}_2$ value was estimated to be $\sim 15 \times 10^{14} \text{ cm}^{-2}$ [Richter and Burrows, 2002] or 35–60% under highly-polluted conditions [Boersma *et al.*, 2004], suggesting that there is much smaller uncertainty in the monthly-averaged $G\text{-NO}_2$ data.

3. Estimate of Tropospheric NO₂ Column ($E\text{-NO}_2$)

[4] To estimate $E\text{-NO}_2$ values for the period 1996–2002, we combine observations by ground-based UV/vis. zenith-sky spectrometers and satellite-borne solar occultation sensors (Stratospheric Aerosol and Gas Experiment II (SAGE II) and Halogen Occultation Experiment (HALOE)) with the Chemical Atmospheric general circulation model for Study of Atmospheric Environment and Radiative forcing (CHASER) [Sudo *et al.*, 2002]. $E\text{-NO}_2$ is defined as:

$$E\text{-NO}_2 = (\text{NO}_2(\text{tot}) - \text{NO}_2(\text{str})) \times F,$$

where NO₂(tot) is the total (troposphere + stratosphere) NO₂ vertical column derived from a UV/vis. spectrometer at a local time of sunrise (SR) or sunset (SS), NO₂(str) is the stratospheric NO₂ vertical column derived from SAGE II (ver. 6.2) and HALOE (ver. 19) observations at SR or SS, and F is a diurnal correction factor defined as the ratio of the modeled tropospheric NO₂ column at the time of the GOME measurements to that at SR or SS.

[5] For estimating $E\text{-NO}_2$ values, we focus on three sites, (1) Moshiri (44.4°N, 142.3°E, 200 m asl), Japan, (2) Issyk-Kul (42.6°N, 77.0°E, 1650 m asl), Kyrgyzstan, and (3) Zhigansk (66.8°N, 123.4°E, 50 m asl), Russia, where UV/vis. spectrometer observations at SR and SS were made as part of the Network for the Detection of Stratospheric Change (NDSC) during the 1996–2002 period. These sites are located in or closer to East Asia than other UV/vis. spectrometer observation sites available in the NDSC database for the period. We used the differential optical absorption spectroscopy (DOAS) technique and air mass factor for ground-based observations (AMF) to derive NO₂(tot) at SR and SS from the spectra measured. Constant AMF values of 17.0, 16.5, and 15.86 over 1996–2002 were used for Moshiri, Issyk-Kul, and Zhigansk, respectively.

These AMF values were taken from the NDSC database. It should be noted that the use of constant AMF values may contribute to the uncertainty in NO₂(tot), because AMF can vary depending on season. It should also be noted that an additional uncertainty in NO₂(tot) may arise depending on season, because the sensitivity of the observations at SR and SS to the troposphere is much less than that to the stratosphere and varies according to the vertical profile of NO₂. Moreover, the retrievals of NO₂(tot) for the three sites have not been performed in a fully consistent manner, including the same NO₂ cross sections and a radiative transfer model. The effect of these uncertainties on the $G\text{-NO}_2/E\text{-NO}_2$ comparison is discussed in the results and discussion section below.

[6] We next selected stratospheric NO₂ vertical profiles observed by SAGE II/HALOE at SR or SS within 2° latitude, 500 km distance, and 1 day of the ground-based UV/vis. spectrometer observations. For every coincident stratospheric observation, the NO₂(str) value and its uncertainty were calculated by integrating the vertical profiles of observed NO₂ concentrations and their errors, respectively, for altitudes between 18 and 50 km. For both SAGE II and HALOE data, integrations including altitudes below 18 km sometimes led to NO₂(str) values that were larger than NO₂(tot), especially for Zhigansk, which is characterized by a lower pollution level than Moshiri and Issyk-Kul. At lower altitudes, the relative errors in the SAGE II and HALOE NO₂ concentration data increase and exceed 100% below 18 and 14 km, respectively, even in the summer when stratospheric NO₂ abundances are largest. This suggests that the discrepancy could be accounted for by the SAGE II and HALOE NO₂ concentration profile errors. The summertime NO₂ amounts between the tropopause and 18 km were calculated assuming that the NO₂ concentration decreased monotonically from 18 km to the tropopause, where the concentration was set to zero. The calculated NO₂ amounts (~ 4 , ~ 4 , and $\sim 10 \times 10^{14} \text{ cm}^{-2}$, for Moshiri, Issyk-Kul and Zhigansk, respectively) are considered as the maximum uncertainty in NO₂(str) due to exclusion of NO₂ between the tropopause and 18 km.

[7] For each ground-based measurement site at SR and SS, the above calculations give two sets of NO₂(str) stratospheric column values, one from SAGE II and one from HALOE. To check consistency between these two sets, we used the criteria of a 2-hour difference and a 500-km distance between the SAGE II and HALOE observations to identify coincident SAGE II- and HALOE-based column data within 2° latitude of the ground-based measurement locations. Comparisons between the two sets of NO₂(str) columns showed that the median values of the differences (SAGE II minus HALOE) ($\pm 67\%$ range) were $0.0 (+3.3/-2.7) \times 10^{14}$ and $6.6 (+2.2/-5.0) \times 10^{14} \text{ cm}^{-2}$ for local SR and SS, respectively. For local SS, the median of the relative differences was 20% (+13%/–17%). Since the NO₂ data obtained by SAGE II at SS could be biased [Bracher *et al.*, 2005], the SAGE II NO₂(str) stratospheric column values at SS were adjusted to agree with the HALOE values at SS. The tropospheric NO₂ columns at SR or SS were then estimated by subtracting the SAGE II- or HALOE-based NO₂(str) values from the corresponding NO₂(tot) values. For example, the estimated NO₂(str) and NO₂(tot) values for Issyk-Kul are shown in Figure 1. In most of the cases over

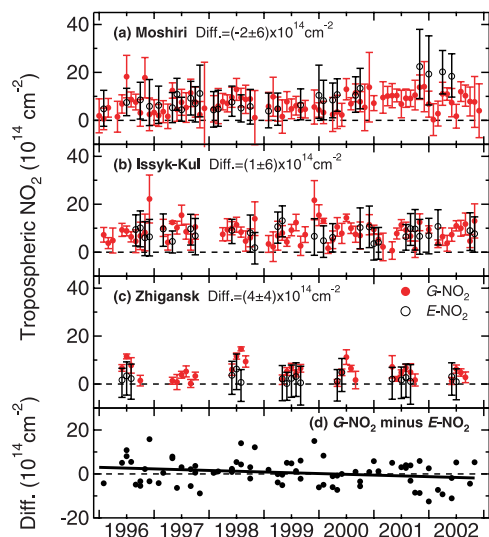


Figure 2. Time series of $G\text{-NO}_2$ (red) and $E\text{-NO}_2$ (black) values for (a) Moshiri, (b) Issyk-Kul, and (c) Zhigansk. For each site, the mean difference ($G\text{-NO}_2$ minus $E\text{-NO}_2$) (\pm standard deviation) is also shown. (d) The differences between $G\text{-NO}_2$ and $E\text{-NO}_2$ are all shown. The line is the linear least-square fit to the data.

the three sites, $\text{NO}_2(\text{tot})$ is greater than $\text{NO}_2(\text{str})$, indicating some contribution of tropospheric NO_2 to $\text{NO}_2(\text{tot})$.

[8] To derive F values, we used a global tropospheric chemistry model, CHASER [Sudo *et al.*, 2002], with 32 vertical layers (surface to ~ 5 hPa) and T42 horizontal resolution ($\sim 2.8^\circ$ latitude \times $\sim 2.8^\circ$ longitude). CHASER includes 53 chemical species and 139 reactions, including gas, liquid, and heterogeneous reactions, and takes into account $\text{O}_x\text{-NO}_x\text{-HO}_x\text{-CH}_4\text{-CO}$ chemistry and the oxidation of non-methane hydrocarbons. For each of the ground-based observation sites used in this study, we calculated daily F values ($\sim 0.5\text{--}0.6$ on average) by dividing the modeled tropospheric NO_2 column at the times of the GOME measurements by that at SR or SS. One- σ standard deviations (s.d.) of the monthly-averaged F values ($\sim 13\text{--}24\%$) are assumed to represent the uncertainty in the daily F value. After multiplying the F values with the above-estimated tropospheric NO_2 column abundances for both SR and SS, the $E\text{-NO}_2$ values were estimated and averaged for each month, yielding monthly-mean $E\text{-NO}_2$ values for each of the ground-based observation sites.

4. Results and Discussion

[9] The comparisons between the monthly-mean $G\text{-NO}_2$ and $E\text{-NO}_2$ tropospheric column amounts over Moshiri, Issyk-Kul, and Zhigansk are shown in Figures 2a–2c, respectively. Error bars for the $G\text{-NO}_2$ values represent 1σ s.d. of the monthly-mean $G\text{-NO}_2$ values over a 2° (in latitude) \times 2° (in longitude) region centered on the ground-based measurement sites. Error bars for $E\text{-NO}_2$ represent the uncertainties in $\text{NO}_2(\text{str})$ and F , as described above. As shown in the figures, most of the $G\text{-NO}_2$ values agree with the $E\text{-NO}_2$ values to within their combined error ranges. The differences are nearly independent of season, suggesting that the uncertainty in $E\text{-NO}_2$, due to the use of

constant AMF values and the seasonal change in sensitivity of the UV/vis. spectrometer observations to the troposphere, is smaller than the errors shown in the figures. Over 1996–2002, the mean differences ($G\text{-NO}_2$ minus $E\text{-NO}_2$) ($\pm 1\sigma$ s.d.) were $-2 (\pm 6) \times 10^{14}$, $1 (\pm 6) \times 10^{14}$, and $4 (\pm 4) \times 10^{14}$ cm^{-2} , for Moshiri, Issyk-Kul, and Zhigansk, respectively. Thus, since no significant difference in the $G\text{-NO}_2/E\text{-NO}_2$ comparison results was found among the three locations, we next averaged all the differences between $G\text{-NO}_2$ and $E\text{-NO}_2$ values for all the locations. The mean difference was estimated to be 0.6×10^{14} cm^{-2} , with a 1σ s.d. of 6×10^{14} cm^{-2} , suggesting that a $G\text{-NO}_2$ variation exceeding 6×10^{14} cm^{-2} can be interpreted as being statistically meaningful over East Asia. We note that the values of $E\text{-NO}_2$ could be affected systematically by the errors in AMF and the weak sensitivity of UV/vis. spectrometer observations to the troposphere. However, the result may suggest that the systematic bias in the retrieved $G\text{-NO}_2$ data is less than 6×10^{14} cm^{-2} , if one considers previous validation studies made by Heland *et al.* [2002] and Martin *et al.* [2004]. They estimated the differences between $G\text{-NO}_2$ and the tropospheric NO_2 columns derived from aircraft observations to be less than 7×10^{14} cm^{-2} over Austria in spring of 2001 [Heland *et al.*, 2002] and less than 6×10^{14} cm^{-2} on average over eastern Texas and the southeast U.S. in the summers of 1999 and 2000 [Martin *et al.*, 2004].

[10] These previous comparisons have been made under polluted conditions (tropospheric NO_2 columns reaching 60×10^{14} cm^{-2}), whereas relatively clean sites have been used in the present study, due to the lack of ground-based UV/vis. spectrometer observation at polluted sites in East Asia. In addition, the UV/vis. spectrometer observations in East Asia were available only at SR and SS. Observations at SR and SS are generally less sensitive to tropospheric NO_2 than those in daytime. Thus, a ground-based UV/vis. spectrometer observation in polluted regions in daytime is highly desirable over East Asia to perform precise validation of future observations by nadir-viewing satellite instruments.

[11] The magnitude of the additional errors in $E\text{-NO}_2$ depends mainly on season and is almost constant for the same seasons. Therefore, we can assess a possible long-term drift in the $G\text{-NO}_2$ data over years 1996–2002 by

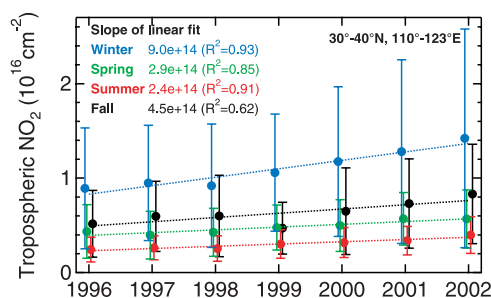


Figure 3. Time series of the mean $G\text{-NO}_2$ values in industrial areas of China ($30^\circ\text{--}40^\circ\text{N}$ and $110^\circ\text{--}123^\circ\text{E}$) for winter (December–February) (blue), spring (March–May) (green), summer (June–August) (red), and fall (September–November) (black). Error bars represent standard deviations of $G\text{-NO}_2$ over the region. The lines are the linear least-square fits to the data.

investigating the year-to-year variations in the differences between $G\text{-NO}_2$ and $E\text{-NO}_2$ for each season. Since the differences are nearly independent of season as described above, all the differences are plotted in Figure 2d. We find that the differences tend to decrease, at a rate of $\sim 0.7 \times 10^{14} \text{ cm}^{-2} \text{ year}^{-1}$ on average (Figure 2d). However, this trend is much smaller than the 1σ s.d. of all the differences estimated above and is negative, showing a counter trend towards the reported increasing trend in the industrial areas of China ($30^\circ\text{--}40^\circ\text{N}$ and $110^\circ\text{--}123^\circ\text{E}$) (Richter et al., submitted manuscript, 2005). Since insignificant, negative trends were seen in the time series of the $G\text{-NO}_2/E\text{-NO}_2$ differences at each site (not shown), the result is not affected by the different retrieval procedures employed at each site.

[12] We take into account the drift in $G\text{-NO}_2$ and estimate the linear trend in tropospheric NO₂ amounts over the industrial areas of China for each season (Figure 3). The most significant increasing trend in NO₂ occurred in wintertime ($\sim 9.0 \times 10^{14} \text{ cm}^{-2} \text{ year}^{-1}$) with a correlation coefficient (R^2) of 0.93. As the observed trends are much greater than the estimated drift, these results are very similar to those of Richter et al. (submitted manuscript, 2005) and confirm their trend analysis. Accounting for the drift estimated above, the mean relative trends from 1996 to 2002 are estimated to be 8, 6, 8, and 7% year^{-1} for winter, spring, summer, and fall, respectively. Thus, a continuous increase in tropospheric NO₂ abundances likely occurred in the industrial regions of China between 1996 and 2002, at a rate of $7 \pm 1\% \text{ year}^{-1}$. This trend may be greater than that over the whole country, but is likely to represent the qualitative tendency over China. This additional information from GOME will be useful to reduce uncertainty in bottom-up emission estimates for China.

5. Conclusions

[13] To evaluate the long-term tropospheric NO₂ column data obtained by GOME ($G\text{-NO}_2$) in East Asia, we used tropospheric NO₂ abundances estimated based on observations by ground-based UV/vis. spectrometer and satellite-borne solar occultation sensors (SAGE II and HALOE) ($E\text{-NO}_2$) for three locations in Central and East Asia (Moshiri in Japan, Issyk-Kul in Kyrgyzstan, and Zhigansk in Russia). The mean differences between $G\text{-NO}_2$ and $E\text{-NO}_2$ were $(0.6 \pm 6.0) \times 10^{14} \text{ cm}^{-2}$, suggesting that there is no significant bias in the $G\text{-NO}_2$ data in East Asia. For making more precise comparisons, however, ground-based observations in polluted regions during daytime would be more suitable than those used in this study. The comparisons between $G\text{-NO}_2$ and $E\text{-NO}_2$ show that a slight drift in $G\text{-NO}_2$ data occurred, at an average rate of $-0.7 \times 10^{14} \text{ cm}^{-2} \text{ year}^{-1}$ from 1996 to 2002. However, this is much smaller than the observed increases in NO₂ over the industrial areas of China ($30^\circ\text{--}40^\circ\text{N}$ and $110^\circ\text{--}123^\circ\text{E}$), confirming the trend estimates made here and by Richter et al. (submitted manuscript, 2005). This multi-year $G\text{-NO}_2$ data showing a large increasing trend of $7 \pm 1\% \text{ year}^{-1}$ over the region will be useful for reducing the uncertainty in bottom-up emission estimates for China.

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