

ATOMIC CARBON MATERIAL AND METHOD FOR PREPARATION THEREOF

FIELD OF INVENTION

The present invention relates to an atomic carbon material which is useful for various carbon materials and a method for preparation thereof.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Carbon is one of the important components of all organic materials and vital activities and, yet it is a nonmetal and has many advantages such that it has not only high conductivity of heat and electricity and small coefficient of thermal expansion but also strong stability against chemicals, so that it is utilized in many fields.

The carbon atom has four valence electrons and three or four hands (dangling bonds) which are not combined.

Moreover, carbon has been conventionally known as molecular, and allotropes which have four crystalline structures such as graphite, diamond, fullerene, and carbon nano-tubes have been known.

Specifically, since fullerene and carbon nano-tubes are fine and have characteristics such as large ion adsorption ability that conventional graphite does not have, they have been drawing attention as a new carbon material in the field of nano-carbons, studied

in various fields, and put into practical use.

However, fullerenes and carbon nano-tubes are manufactured by heating and evaporating coke and a high polymer using, for instance, plasma, lasers, etc. Therefore, fullerenes and carbon nano-tubes are graphitized as a huge carbon allotrope where the covalent bonds made of six carbon atoms are included.

Each carbon material has only one ion adsorption ability, so that the ion adsorption ability of a fullerene composed of 60 carbon atoms is 60 at the most, and that of a nano-tube composed of 1000 carbon atoms is 1000 at the most.

Moreover, the oxidation compound is vaporized by applying heat-treatment to coke at 800 C or higher and an allotrope of carbon can be obtained, but graphitization is accelerated and the coke hardens progressively.

Furthermore, it is known that hydrogen and oxygen are taken by sequentially cutting from the hand which has weak bonding when an organic material is heated, and it gradually changes (carbonized) to a material composed of only carbon. In Japan, "Charcoal" has been made since old times by carbonizing plants.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

"Charcoal" carbonized at low temperatures in a conventional method is generally known as a

non-crystalline (amorphous) material which has low electrical conductivity. However, it is difficult to reduce carbon and oxygen in a conventional carbonization technique if it is not heated up to high temperatures, so that a pure carbon material cannot be obtained.

Moreover, in order to lose oxygen and hydrogen, it is necessary to prepare it at high temperatures and the obtained carbide (charcoal) is one where covalently bonded six carbon atoms are lined in front, back, left and right directions and crystallized (graphitized) to each other; the stacked electrical conductivity is high and becomes extremely stable, and it is difficult to combine it with other materials. Therefore, it continues to be used as a material with excellent physical characteristics.

The problems to be solved by the present invention are to provide an extremely useful atomic carbon material, which has ion adsorption ability (ability to combine with other materials) far better than fullerenes and nano-tubes, and to provide a method for preparation thereof.

The present invention to solve the aforementioned problems provides an atomic carbon material in which carbon atoms or ultra fine particles in a state where from two to five or about ten carbon atoms are linearly bonded (so-called atomic carbon particles) are disorderly congregated with each other with an

interatomic force and appear as an amorphous bulk, or an atomic carbon material having the particle size of ultra fine particles composed of carbon in a state where from two to five or about ten carbon atoms are linearly bonded.

Moreover, a method for preparation in the present invention is characterized in that a covalent bonded organic material which does not contain a carbon unit (preferably, an organic material such as plants mainly composed of carbon, oxygen, and hydrogen) is used and this organic material in an inactive atmosphere (for instance, a nitrogen atmosphere) is heated at a predetermined temperature while sequentially increasing the temperature; expected elements except for carbon (for instance, gaseous elements such as oxygen and water vapor, etc) in the aforementioned atmosphere and the organic material are individually separated from being bonded with carbon by thermally decomposing in order, from an element having a lower decomposition temperature at a temperature of 450 C or lower; and the aforementioned decomposed elements are exhausted each time of separation to outside of the atmosphere under a condition where the inactive atmosphere is maintained. Furthermore, it is characterized by cooling the obtained bulk atomic carbon to 450 C or less in an inactive atmosphere and by grinding ultra fine particles in the state where from two to five or about ten carbon atoms are linearly bonded.

An atomic carbon material of the present invention has an ion absorption ability which is four times the ion absorption ability of a fullerene 60 composed of 60 carbon atoms, that is, 240. Specifically, an atomic carbon material of the present invention has an ion absorption ability which is four times the ion absorption ability of a carbon nano-tube 1000 composed of 1000 carbon atoms, that is, 4000, so that it is very active and can be utilized for various applications.

Moreover, an atomic carbon material of the present invention has particulates or ultra fine particulates, which is different from conventional graphitized carbons. In addition, not only is it fine but also it can create compounds with various materials. Furthermore, being composed of carbon, since it does not possess toxicity relative to the human body, a variety of excellent applications in medicine, health care materials, and beauty products, etc. can be expected.

The above-mentioned purposes and the advantages of the present invention will be explained referring to the accompanying drawings, and will be clarified furthermore by the following embodiments.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a cross-sectional drawing schematically illustrating a configuration of a preferable basic device for a preparation method of an atomic carbon material

in the present invention;

Fig. 2 is an electron micrograph of an atomic carbon material at a magnification of two million times in the present invention;

Fig. 3 is an enlarged micrograph of Fig. 2;

Fig. 4 is an electron micrograph of a carbon material at a magnification of two million times when it is cured for a short time at 550 C under the same conditions as those of the aforementioned preparation method;

Fig. 5 is an enlarged micrograph of Fig. 4;

Fig. 6 is a chart illustrating a result of X-ray diffraction analysis of an atomic carbon material in the present invention;

Fig. 7 is a drawing schematically illustrating an atomic carbon material in the present invention using atomic symbols; and

Fig. 8 is spectral measurement charts of water in which an atomic carbon material of the present invention is added;

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Next, the best modes to execute this invention will be explained referring to accompanying drawings. Fig. 1 shows an example of a device for preparation to execute the preparation method of an atomic carbon material in the present invention. It includes an airtight chamber

1 to which air does not enter and lines having a nitrogen injection shut-off valve 2 and a pyrolysis gas exhaust shut-off valve 3. A heater 4 is mounted inside to raise the temperature up to a predetermined temperature. Moreover, it is formed of a cartridge 5 which has the same atmosphere as the airtight chamber 1 (nitrogen atmosphere) for taking out carbon, an organic material, and a stand 6. The cartridge 5 is detachable from the airtight chamber 1. In Fig. 1, 7 denotes a shutter provided at the gateway of the organic material and the stand 6 in the airtight chamber 1, and, when it is closed, the airtight chamber 1 is kept airtight or in a nitrogen atmosphere. 8 denotes a cover or a shut-off door provided in the cartridge 5, and, when it is closed, the cartridge 5 can be kept airtight or in nitrogen atmosphere.

Next, in order to prepare an atomic carbon material of the present invention, a raw material (organic material such as wood and bamboo, etc.) is first put in the stand 6 and loaded in the airtight chamber 1 in which the heater 4 is mounted. Then, nitrogen is injected from the nitrogen injection shut-off valve 2, and, at the same time, air inside is exhausted from the pyrolysis gas exhaust shut-off valve 3 to generate a nitrogen atmosphere in the inside of the airtight chamber 1 and the cartridge 5, and it is heated up by using the heater 4. As a first step, since the raw material is one

including water, it is kept at a temperature from 100 C to 150 C (150 C is more preferable) to evaporate water sufficiently and the evaporated water is exhausted from the airtight chamber 1. At the same time, it is preferable that the same amount of nitrogen be injected from the nitrogen injection shut-off valve 2 to keep the inside of the airtight chamber 1 in a state where the organic material which is a raw material is not oxidized, that is, an airtight nitrogen atmosphere. Moreover, the raw material being in a fully dried state is successively heated by using the heater 4 up to a temperature from 350 C to 450 C to decompose the elements contained in the raw material. It is necessary that all elements of the raw material generated until the temperature reaches 450 C are exhausted to outside of the airtight chamber and nitrogen is injected every time to keep it in an inactive atmosphere. Then, the elements in the raw material which are bonded with carbon separate the remaining carbon and an atomic carbon material of the present invention which does not evaporate at 450 C remains. Herein, as characteristics of carbon, the excitation energy for allotropic bonding in which carbon in an organic state is crystallized and becomes inorganic, that is, graphitization requires a high temperature of 450 C or higher. Therefore, it is necessary for an atomic carbon material of the present invention to be made at 450 C or lower in order not to form graphite. Then, the

heater 4 is stopped and cold nitrogen is injected from the nitrogen injection shut-off valve 2, and, at the same time, hot nitrogen gas inside is exhausted from the pyrolysis gas exhaust shut-off valve 3 to cool down the inside of the airtight chamber 1 and the cartridge 5 to about 50 C to 100 C. After that, the atomic carbon material is transferred from the airtight chamber 1 to the cartridge 5 with the stage 6, the cover 8 of the cartridge 5 is closed, and it is separated from the airtight chamber 1 while maintaining a nitrogen atmosphere inside of this cartridge 5. The shutter 7 of the airtight chamber 1 is closed for preparing the next operation.

The remaining carbon is composed of carbon atoms or ultra fine particles in a state where from two to five or about ten carbon atoms are linearly bonded (Fig. 2), and amorphous atomic carbon can be obtained in which these ultra fine particles are disorderly congregated with each other with an interatomic force. Moreover, after the atomic carbon material is completed in each process, the cartridge 5 is required to be sealed up and stored while maintaining a nitrogen atmosphere which does not oxidize the carbon in order to make full use of the capabilities as a material. Since the atomic carbon material kept in the cartridge 5 never touches air, it does not combine with oxygen and other materials. The atomic carbon material, which does not combine with oxygen and other

materials, is ground to become particles or ultra fine particles, if necessary. Grinding the atomic carbon material may be carried out in any preparation process after obtaining the atomic carbon material. For instance, it can be ground to be ultra fine particles in an inactive atmosphere at a temperature of 450 C or lower in the airtight chamber 1 in the process before taking it in the cartridge 6 in a sealed state.

Alternatively, after cooling to about from 50 C to 100 C, it may be ground in ultra fine particles in an inactive atmosphere in the airtight chamber 1. Moreover, after the aforementioned cooling, it may be taken in the cartridge 6 and transferred in a sealed state and a grinding process may be applied by using a grinding machine. Since the aforementioned atomic carbon does not combine with oxygen or other materials, it creates highly negative ion water (pH becomes 11 or more) having high reactivity when it is mixed in water.

Fig. 2 is a photograph of an atomic carbon material in the present invention at a magnification of two million times by using a high resolution transmission electron microscope from Toray Research Center Inc. Fig. 3 is an enlarged micrograph of Fig. 2, and, in this figure, there are innumerable amorphous materials within 10 nm. Carbons from about one angstrom to about 2 nm at the largest are congregated within 10 nm and the average size is 1.66 angstroms. According to the diameter of carbon,

one angstrom means one carbon C and a rod-shaped one of 2 nm means that from 5 to 7 carbons are linearly combined, so that it is understood that it is an organic material which does not consist of a graphite carbon hexahedral structure.

Fig. 4 is a photograph at a magnification of two million times when the carbon shown in Figs. 2 and 3 is heated at 550 C for 30 minutes. Fig. 5 is an enlarged micrograph of Fig. 4 illustrating that carbon is aligned in a lateral direction from the surface and forms graphite. Therefore, it is understood that graphitization proceeds dramatically under a condition of temperatures higher than 450 C and the carbon is crystallized to change into inorganic carbon. As a result, the characteristics of an organic material which exists in the atomic carbon material of the present invention are lost.

Fig. 6 is a spectral chart illustrating a result of X-ray diffraction analysis of the atomic carbon material of the present invention by using an X-ray diffractometer in the Ehime office of Sumica Chemical Analysis Services, Ltd. According to the analyses shown in Figs. 2 to 6, it was confirmed that the atomic carbon materials of the present invention were both amorphous and atomic organic carbons (they are submitted as attached document 1 and attached document 2).

Fig. 7 is a drawing schematically illustrating an atomic carbon material in the present invention using

atomic symbols based on the sp orbits of carbon referring to the photograph of Fig. 3. It is known that carbon has physically four electrons and innumerable combinations necessary for vital activities and material configurations can be created. Although the activity of electrons generates various energy, electrons are lost or the number is decreased by crystallization, resulting in it becoming impossible for it to bond to various other materials.

In an atomic carbon material of the present invention, if C exists in 1, it has four electrons and ten electrons can be active, so that the ion adsorption ability thereof reaches from three times to twenty four times that of typical graphite. Moreover, if C of the atomic carbon material of the present invention exists in 1, it is in a state close to an atom with the particle size being 1 nm or less (theoretically 1.66 angstroms), so that it has the ability where four ions are adsorbed per one carbon atom as shown in Fig. 7. Therefore, the atomic carbon material of the present invention has the ion adsorption ability four times the ion adsorption ability of fullerene 60 which is composed of sixty carbon atoms. Moreover, the atomic carbon material of the present invention has the ion adsorption ability four times the ion adsorption ability of carbon nano-tube 1000 which is composed of a thousand carbon atoms, that is 4000, so that it is extremely active and utilized for

various applications. Furthermore, the atomic carbon material of the present invention, which is different from a conventional graphitized carbon, is particulate or ultra fine particulate, and not only is it fine but also it can form compounds with various materials. Furthermore, being composed of carbon, since it does not possess toxicity relative to the human body, a variety of excellent applications in medicine, health care materials, and beauty products, etc. can be expected.

Fig. 8 shows spectral measurement charts of one, in which a particulate atomic carbon material of the present invention is added into tap water, by using a diamond prism. (It is submitted as attached document 3.)

According to this measurement result, carbonate can be observed but carbon cannot be observed. Therefore, the atomic carbon material of the present invention is not one which is graphitized like well-known charcoal, that is, six carbons being cyclically bonded to each other, but it is one which ionizes in water and is bonded to hydrogen ions existing in water, so that it is understood that the atomic carbon material of the present invention has totally different features from a carbide from a conventional organic material.

Moreover, when the electrical conductivity of a bulk atomic carbon material of the present invention is examined, current is not detected. It indicates that it is a complete insulator.

The present invention has been described based on a preferable embodiment referring to the drawings. However, it is clear that this invention may be easily changed or modified by a person skilled in the art, and it is intended that such changed parts are also included within the scope of the invention.

What Is Claimed Is:

1. An atomic carbon material, comprising carbon atoms disorderly clustered together by way of interatomic forces to form an amorphous bulk.
2. An atomic carbon material according to claim 1, further comprising ultrafine particles disorderly clustered with said carbon atoms to form the amorphous bulk, said ultra fine particles consisting of two to ten linearly bonded carbon atoms.
3. An atomic carbon material, substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings, excluding Figures 4 and 5.
4. An ultra fine atomic carbon material formed by maintaining the atomic carbon material according to claim 1, 2 or 3 at a temperature of 450 °C or less and grinding the material to form the ultra fine atomic carbon material.
5. A method for producing an atomic carbon material, comprising the steps of:
heating a raw material composed of an organic material, said organic material containing covalently bonded carbon but being free of carbon allotropes, in a chamber having an inert atmosphere to a predetermined temperature between from 100 to 150 °C;

maintaining the raw material at the predetermined temperature for a period of time sufficient to substantially extract any moisture from the raw material to produce a dried material;

removing any extracted moisture from the chamber and replacing any removed moisture with inert gas so as to maintain the inert atmosphere in the chamber;

heating the dried material to a second predetermined temperature between from 350 to 450 °C and individually separating elements, except for carbon in the inert atmosphere and the dried material, from being bonded with said carbon by thermally decomposing components within the chamber having a lower decomposition temperature at a temperature of 450 °C or below to obtain an atomic carbon material;

removing any separated elements from the chamber and replacing any removed elements with inert gas so as to maintain the inert atmosphere in the chamber;

and

sealing the obtained atomic carbon material in a predetermined chamber so as to maintain the inert atmosphere around the obtained atomic carbon material.

6. A method according to claim 5, comprising grinding the obtained atomic carbon material into ultra fine particles in the inert atmosphere at 450 °C or lower before sealing.

7. A method according to claim 5 or 6, wherein the

raw material is wood or bamboo.

8. A method for producing an atomic carbon material, substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings, excluding Figures 4 and 5.