

CHAPTER 4--Synoptic Patterns

4.1. Spring Pattern: March marks the start of transition from the cold dry winter to the summer rainy season (see figure 4-1). Low pressure systems start forming in interior western China. These lows significantly erode the dominance of the Siberian high pressure system. As a result, cloudiness and precipitation increase during the spring months. Korea is occasionally influenced by the "yellow wind" (or "Hwangsa" in Korean) during the spring. The yellow wind occurs when strong winds associated with a front or trough cause sand and dust from the Gobi desert, Taklamakan desert, Alashan desert, and/or Loess plateau (upper Yellow river region) to become suspended in the air, and then transported over Korea. During a strong yellow wind, visibilities can be reduced to less than 1 mile. Spring is also the time for heavy sea fog to form over sea and coastal areas. The sea fog forms as the now warmer air passes over the West Sea (Yellow Sea) and East Sea (Sea of Japan) and is cooled by the waters that are now much cooler than the air. Severe thunderstorms are extremely rare in Korea, but gusting winds up to 59 knots were recorded at Tongduchon (Camp Casey).

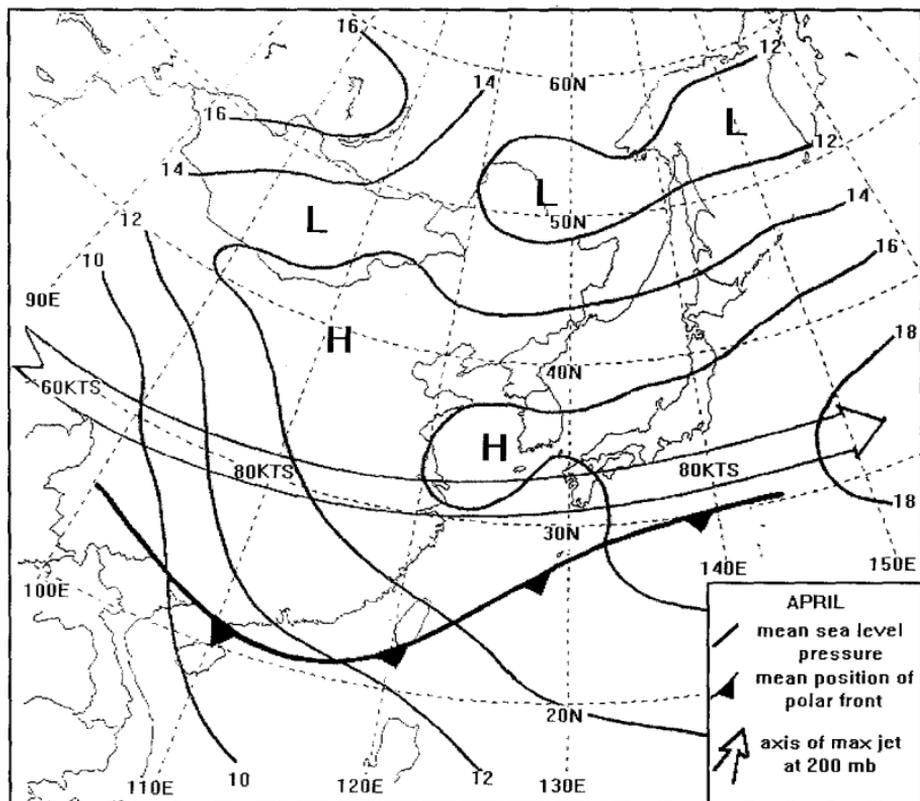


Figure 4-1. April Synoptic Pattern