環境に優しい難燃性定形目地材の開発

Development of Eco-friendly Fire-Retardant Joint Seal Material for Continuous Casting System

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1 緒言

連続鋳造装置では溶鋼が通過する多数の耐火物が 連接して使用されている。これら連接部からのエアー 巻込みは酸化や窒素のピックアップ等により鋼の純 度、品質に悪影響を及ぼすため、ここに適用する目 地材(図1)の役割は大きい。このため従来より、 図1(b)に示すような下部ノズル~ロングノズル間では ウールパッキンが使用されている。セットが容易で熱 間での発炎が無く、使用後ロングノズルへの焼付きが 皆無で剥離性が良好という利点がある一方、これは 熱間シール性に劣るという欠点がある。さらに、これ らの大部分は特定化学物質障害予防規則(特化則) の対象となる繊維状物質である。

そこで我々は、ウールパッキンの有する上記利点は維持した上で、熱間シール性を高め、上記法規制の対象外である環境に優しい新しいタイプの定形目地材(以下、改良品)の開発を試みた。 改良品は、ウールパッキンと比較して高い熱間シール性を有し、作業性の改善や鋼の品質向上に対する効果が期待できる。

2 改良品の検討

従来の定形目地材(以下,従来品)はアルミナ,シリカ粉末等を主原料に,粘土,ガラスフリット,金属アルミニウム粉末,カーボン系粉末を副原料に使用し,フェノール樹脂をバインダーとして混練,連接部の形状に成形された製品である(図1)¹⁾。

これらを連接部に適用した場合、昇温によりフェノール樹脂が起因の激しい燃焼がおこりノズル同士の連接が困難となる場合もある(図1)。さらに使用中の昇温により低融点のアルミニウムやフリット粉末が双方のノズルと融着する。よってウールパッキンと比較

1 Introduction

Continuous casting system uses several types of teeming refractories for flowing molten steel and they are connected with a joint seal material. Air inclusions from such joined parts have negative impacts on the purity and quality of the steel due to oxidization and nitrogen pickup; thus, role of the joint material employed here (Fig. 1) is notable. For this reason, usually, wool packing is used between the lower nozzle and long nozzle shown in Fig. 1 (b). The refractory ceramic fiber like wool packing is easy to set, without flaming during hot work, and is easy to remove after the use because there is no burning onto the long nozzle. Meanwhile, it has a disadvantage of poor sealing during hot work. Most wool packing is fibrous materials that are subject of the ordinance on prevention of hazards due to specified chemical substances.

Thus, we have tried to develop a new environmentally friendly joint material (improved product) that would not be the subject of the above ordinance, where with maintaining advantages of wool packing, hot sealing performance was improved. The new material has higher hot seal properties compared to wool packing, and is anticipated to improve workability and quality of steel.

2 Examination of the improved product

Conventional joint seal materials (hereafter referred to as conventional product) were kneaded, molded, and processed into the joint shape by using fire-retardant powders such as alumina and silica as the primary raw materials, clay, frit, aluminum powder, and carbon-based powder as the secondary raw materials, and phenolic resins as the binder (**Fig. 1**) ¹⁾.

When these materials are applied to a joint, elevated temperature causes violent combustion from phenolic resins, making difficult joining the nozzle (**Fig. 1**). Temperature elevation during the use causes aluminum and frit powder with low melting point to fuse to both nozzles. Although better hot sealing characteristics compared to the wool packing is observed, peeling of the used joint material is difficult, causing problems in nozzle

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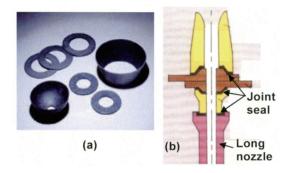


Fig.1 Appearance of improved joint seals (a) and their application to c.c. system (b).

して熱間シール性には優れるものの,使用後の目地材の剥離が困難でノズル交換作業に支障をきたす問題がある。

このため従来品は、毎 ch 交換必要なロングノズルには適用されず、鋳造操業中の交換が無く目地材の剥離性を問題にされない浸漬ノズルに主として使用されている。

これに対し、ウールパッキンは各種樹脂バインダーをアルミナ - シリカ質のファイバーに混入し各種充填材を配合して成形したものであり、主として毎 ch ノズル交換が必要なロングノズルに適用されている。これはウールパッキンは適用時に発炎が無く、またノズルとの融着も無く使用後は層状に剥がれ剥離性が良好なためである。こうした理由から当該目地部にはウールパッキンが使用されてきた。しかしこれは気孔率が高く、十分な熱間シール性が得られず鋼の品質への悪影響そして耐火物連接部の保護機能に乏しく、ノズル耐用性の低下をもたらすなどの問題があった。

そのため、熱間シール性は維持した上で、セットが容易で発炎がなく確実にノズル連接ができ、使用中(鋳造中)にノズルへ融着せず、使用後の剥離が容易な難燃性の定形目地材を目標に開発を実施した(図2)。改良品は水酸化アルミニウムを主原料に、粘土、カーボン系粉末を副原料に使用し、水溶性エマルジョンバインダーと可塑剤を加えて混練、成形、加工後、乾燥の工程を経て得られるものである。

2・1 水酸化アルミニウム

一般に難燃剤としては、金属水酸化物、ハロゲン系、リン系、そしてアンチモン系化合物、さらにホウ酸亜鉛などが知られている。図3に金属水酸化物も含めた各種難燃剤の吸熱量と分解温度との関係²⁾を示すが、

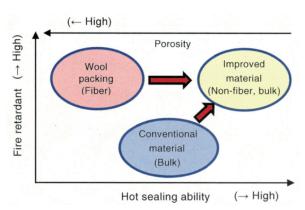


Fig.2 Concept of development of improved material.

replacement.

Therefore, the conventional product is not used for long nozzles that require replacement after each charge. Instead, it is mainly used for immersion nozzles for which replacement is not necessary during casting, and there is no problem in the peeling of the joint materials.

On the other hand, wool packing is fabricated by mixing each type of resin binder with alumina-silica fibers, and blending each type of fillers. It is mainly used for long nozzles that requires replacement after each charge. This is because wool packing does not catch fire in hot process, does not fuse with the long nozzle during the use, and peels in layers after use. For these reasons, wool packing has been used for the joint. However, wool packing is highly porous material, and sufficient hot sealing ability cannot be obtained. Thus, there were problems with quality of steel, protection of the joint, and durability of the nozzles.

Therefore, we developed fire retardant standard joint material that retains hot seal characteristics, is easy to set, does not produce a flame, allows for accurate joining of nozzles, does not fuse onto the nozzles while use (casting), and peels easily after use (Fig. 2). The improved product consists of aluminum hydroxide with clay and carbon-based powder as secondary raw materials. It was kneaded with water-soluble emulsion binder and plasticizer, molded, processed, and dried.

2.1 Aluminum hydroxide

Generally, metal hydroxide, halogen compounds, phosphorus compounds, antimony compounds, and zinc borate are well known as fire retardants. Metal hydroxides, such as aluminum hydroxide and magnesium hydroxide, are ideal since they do not release toxic gas and do not contain heavy metals harmful to human bodies²⁾.

Aluminum hydroxide starts dehydration at relatively low temperature about 200°C for a metal hydroxide, which is close to the starting temperature of thermal decomposition of water-soluble emulsion (resin combustion). Thus, it releases moisture when the resin burns, and heat absorption associated with this dehydration

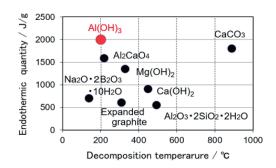


Fig.3 Various fire retardant materials²⁾.

有毒ガスを発生せず人体に有害な重金属を含まないという観点から水酸化アルミニウムや水酸化マグネシウムなどの金属水酸化物系が望ましい。その中でも水酸化アルミニウムは脱水開始温度が約200℃と金属水酸化物の中では低温度であり、水溶性エマルジョンの熱分解(樹脂燃焼)開始温度に近いことから樹脂が燃焼する時期に水分を放出し、この脱水反応に伴う吸熱量が約2000 J·g¹と大きいため(図3),発炎抑制が可能と考え、定形目地材の主原料に選定した。

この水酸化アルミニウムには**図4**に示すように熱分解(DTA)特性より①~③の3ヵ所の吸熱ピーク(脱水反応に相当)があり、特に、②に示す260℃近傍から始まり320℃がピークの急激なギブサイトの脱水反応が定形目地材の難燃化に大きく寄与すると考えられる。その他を含めて各ピークでの脱水反応は以下の式で表すことができる。

① 245 ℃: 2Al (OH)₃ → Al₂O₃·H₂O + 2H₂O (一部ベーマイト転移)

② 320 °C : 2Al (OH)₃ → Al₂O₃ + 3H₂O

(ギブサイトの脱水反応)

③ 550 ℃: Al₂O₃·H2O → Al₂O₃ + H₂O (ベーマイトの脱水反応)

2・2 エマルジョン有機バインダー

エマルジョンは乾燥時の成膜機構(ポリマー粒子の連結,変形,融着及びポリマー鎖の相互拡散による連続被膜の形成)が目地材の定形化,組織の緻密化に寄与すると考え選定した。さらにこうした目地材は連接時の熱間加圧により軟化変形することで目地部を良好に充填できシール性を維持できる。図5に成膜メカニズムを示す³⁾。

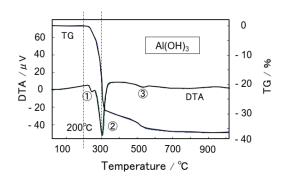


Fig.4 Result of TG-DTA analysis of Al(OH)₃.

reaction is high (about 2,000 J/g) (Fig. 3).

Thus, it was assumed that the flame caused by water-soluble emulsion could be suppressed. For this reason, it was selected as the primary raw material of joint seal material. Aluminum hydroxide has three heat absorption peaks (actually downward peaks) due to its thermal decomposition properties. Specifically, rapid dehydration reaction of gibbsite that begins around 260°C and the peaks at 320°C greatly contributes to the increased flame-retardant nature of joint seal materials. The peaks ① to ③ in **Fig. 4** are reflecting the following dehydration reactions;

① 245 °C : 2Al (OH)₃ → Al₂O₃ · H₂O + 2H₂O (partial boehmite transition)

② 320 °C: 2Al (OH)₃ \rightarrow Al₂O₃ + 3H₂O

(dehydration reaction of gibbsite)

③ 550 °C : $Al_2O_3 \cdot H2O$ → $Al_2O_3 + H_2O$ (dehydration reaction of boehmite)

2.2 Emulsion organic binder

Emulsion was selected since deposition mechanism on drying (connection, deformation, fusion of polymer particle and continuous film formation by ieterdiffusion of polymer chain) contributes to stylization of joint materials and refinement of the organization. In addition, these joint materials can fill the joint by plastic deformation due to hot compression during joining, while maintaining the seal. **Fig. 5** shows the film formation mechanism³.

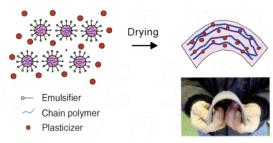


Fig.5 Forming mechanism for the improved joint seal.

Table 1 Characteristics of improved joint seal.

| | Improved | Conventional | Wool packing |
|-------------------------------------|----------|--------------|-----------------|
| Chemical composition /mass% | | | |
| Al ₂ O ₃ | 79 | 78 | 43 |
| SiO2 | 3 | 18 | 55 |
| F.C. | 17 | 4 | _ |
| Binder type | Emulsion | Phenol | Organic |
| Plasticizer | 0 | _ | _ |
| Bulk density /g·cm ⁻³ | 1.7 | N/A | 0.3 |
| Apparent porosity/% | 25.7 | N/A | 87.7 |
| Appearance | | | 0 |

*F.C.: Free Carbon

2・3 可塑剤

可塑剤では一般に、フタル酸エステル系物質が使用されてきたが、規制が厳しくなり、2019年の改正RoHS指令に伴う規制物質にも指定されている。このため可塑剤としての具備特性であるエマルジョンとの相溶性や可塑化効率は備えた上で、安全面や環境問題にも配慮してノンフタル酸系のものを適用した。これにより目地材自身の常温での作業性、柔軟性が得られている40。

3 改良品の評価結果

3・1 常温保形性

加硫ゴム物理試験方法(JIS-K6301) 準拠のゴム 硬度計による指数が 60-70 であり柔軟性を有し, 表 1 の写真で示すように片手で十分もてるだけの保形性を確認した。

3・2 熱間可塑性

800 ℃に加熱されたれんが上に従来品と改良品の各目地材サンプルを放置して軟化及び硬化状態を観察したところ,図6に示すように従来品は時間の経過と共に単調にそして比較的短時間でその可塑性を失う

2.3 plasticizer

Generally, phthalate esters have been used as plasticizer, but these plasticizers are tightly regulated. In the amended RoHS directive that has come into effect in 2019, these esters are designated as regulated substances. Therefore, we used non-phthalate with plasticizer properties, such as compatibility with emulsion and plasticization efficiency while considering safety and environmental issues. This allowed for workability and flexibility of the joint material at room temperature⁴.

3 Evaluation of the improved product

3.1 Shape retention at a room temperature

The index on the rubber hardness measuring device in compliance with the physical testing methods for vulcanized rubber (JIS-K 6301) was 60 to 70, which means it is flexible. As the photograph on **Table 1** shows, it retains shape sufficiently to be held by one hand.

3.2 Hot plasticity

Conventional and improved joint materials were left on a brick heated to 800°C, and softening and hardening were observed. As shown in **Fig. 6**, the conventional product monotonically loses its plasticity over a relatively short period of time. In contrast, plasticity increased in the improved product, which was gradually lost over time. Joint materials must be set between refractory materials while still possessing plasticity. Such

のに対して改良品では可塑性は一端上昇し、その後、時間の経過と共に比較的緩やかに可塑性を失う特異な挙動が見られた。目地材は可塑性を有する状態のうちに耐火物間にセットされる必要がある。そこで、そのような状態を呈する時間を可使時間と定義すると以下のようになる。

(可使時間) = (完全に軟らかくなるまでの時間) + (硬くなるまでの時間):改良品 = (硬くなるまでの時間):従来品

すなわち改良品は、適用時に、エマルジョン有機 バインダー成分の熱軟化と共に次第に軟らかくなり、 目地材の内部まで完全に軟化したあと、その燃焼消 失と共に目地材を構成する原料同士の焼結が進行す るために次第に硬化していく。したがって無炎燃焼し ている間、つまり「可使時間」において熱間可塑性を 有するため、この間での連接作業が可能である。

表 2 に 600 ~ 800 ℃の各温度に加熱されたれんが 上での改良品の可使時間を従来品のそれとともに示 time is defined as usable time:

(Usable time)=(Time it takes to completely soften)+
(Time it takes to harden): Improved product
(Time it takes to harden): Conventional product

In other words, the improved product gradually becomes soft as the emulsion film begins to burn, becoming completely soft in the inside of the joint materials. This is followed by raw materials of the joint materials sintering as the combustible emulsion film is reduced, and joint materials gradually hardens (**Fig. 6**). Thus, it presents hot plasticity during flameless combustion, making jointing work possible during that period. At temperatures of 600°C or higher, the improved product has longer usable time, presenting hot plasticity (**Table 2**).

3.3 Hot sealing ability

Hot sealing ability was evaluated by a model experiment of a closed system that assumed actual jointing of the lower and long nozzles.

Fig. 7 is the schematic diagram of the test apparatus¹⁾. A joint material sample (SM) was set on the metal AB, which simulated a long nozzle within a chamber heated to 600°C. Then, metal MC (hollow) that simulated

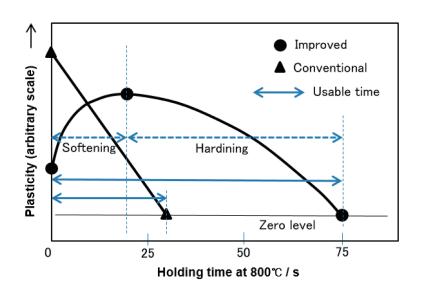


Fig. 6 Difference in usable time between improved and conventional materials.

Table 2 Usable time for improved joint seal material at 600 to 800 ℃, showing also comparison with that for the conventional material.

| Temperature / °C | Usable time / s | | Increased ratio (a/b) |
|------------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| | Improved (a) | Conventional (b) | Increased ratio (a/b) |
| 600 | 150 (35*+115**) | 130 | 1.15 |
| 700 | 110 (25*+85**) | 60 | 1.83 |
| 800 | 75 (20*+55**) | 30 | 2.50 |

^{*}Softening time, **Hardening time (in Fig. 6)

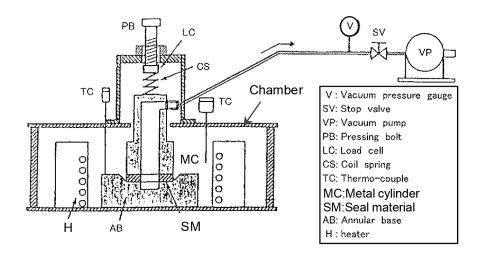


Fig.7 Cross section of the testing apparatus¹⁾.

すことにより熱可塑性の比較を示している。表において、800 ℃でのデータは、図6に示したものの再示であるが、各温度における増加比は、600~800 ℃間において高温ほど高く、800℃では改良品は実に2.5倍の可使時間であった。

3・3 熱間シール性

熱間シール性は下部ノズルとロングノズルとの実際の接合を想定した閉じた系でのモデル実験にて評価した。**図7** は試験装置の模式図である¹⁾。

600 ℃に加熱したチャンバー内のロングノズルを模擬したメタル AB 上に目地材サンプル SM をセット後、下部ノズルを模擬したメタル MC (内部が空洞)を被せ上部から 0.39MPa まで加圧する。この状態で 3 分間保持した後、このメタル MC に連結している真空ポンプにより MC 内部空洞部を減圧。その後、ストップバルブ SV を締め MC 内部空洞部を閉じた状態とし、真空圧ゲージ V の値がゼロとなるまでの真空保持時間を測定した。

図8は600 \mathbb{C} , 0.39 MPa における 0.1 atm から 1.0 atm までの真空保持時間を示す。改良品は従来品に比べ約4倍,ウールパッキンに比べ約10倍以上もの優れた熱間シール性を示した。これは両者の組織の緻密性と熱間可塑性の違いによるものと思われ,改良品のほうが600 \mathbb{C} において,より変形しやすく目地部の充填性,ノズルとの密着性に優れるためと考えられる。また,改良品では試験後の剥離性も良好であった。

the lower nozzle was placed on top, and a pressure of 0.39 MPa was applied. After maintaining this state for 3 minutes, the hollow part of the MC was decompressed using a vacuum pump connected to the metal MC. Then the stop valve (SV) was closed resulting in closure of the hollow part of the MC. In this state, the vacuum retention time was measured until the vacuum pressure gauge V read zero. A joint material sample (SM) was set on the metal AB, which simulated a long nozzle within a chamber heated to 600°C. Then, metal MC (hollow) that simulated the lower nozzle was placed on top, and a pressure of 0.39 MPa was applied. After maintaining this state for 3 mins, the hollow part of the MC was decompressed using a vacuum pump connected to the metal MC. Then the stop valve (SV) was closed resulting in closure of the hollow part of the MC. In this state, the vacuum retention time was measured until the vacuum pressure gauge V read zero

Fig. 8 shows the vacuum retention time from 0.1 atm to 1.0 atm at 600° C and 0.39 MPa. Hot sealing ability of the improved product was four times better than the

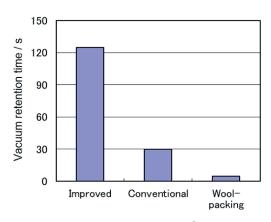


Fig.8 Vacuum retention time from 0.1 to 1 atm at 600°C in the air leakage test.

3・4 難燃性と熱処理後の剥離性

難燃性の評価は目地材を800℃加熱れんが上に置いて1分間,発煙や発火の状況を確認した。**図9**にその結果を示すが,従来品はセット後,数秒で発火して激しく燃焼(有炎燃焼)した。これに対し改良品は一瞬火は着くが水蒸気ガス放出に伴う冷却による自己消火機能にて消炎した(無炎燃焼)。ちなみにウールパッキンも微かな白煙のみの無炎燃焼であった。

1 分後に同じ800 ℃加熱れんがを被せ1000 ℃の熱間加圧試験機にセットし,0.39 MPaで5分間加圧キープ後取り出し加熱れんがの剥がし易さで熱処理後の剥離性を評価した。結果を図10に示すがウールパッキンは層状に剥がれ剥離性は良好だった。従来品は加熱れんがに強固に焼付き(融着),無理に剥がすと凝集破壊した。これにより実炉での結果が本ラボ評価で再現出来たことが確認された。その上で、改良品での評価を実施したところ、容易に加熱れんがが外せ目地材の焼付き(融着)は無く、目地材は治具を軽くあてるだけで容易に剥がれる(界面剥離)ことが確認できた。

3・5 耐食性

1600 ℃でミルスケールを使用した回転侵食試験にて評価を実施した。改良品の耐食性は従来品同様良好で目地溶損に対する抵抗性が確認できた。なお、ウールパッキンについては実操業での使用結果を鑑み、安全第一のため評価していない。

4 まとめ

今回, 水酸化アルミ原料やエマルジョンバインダー と安全な可塑剤, カーボン系粉末の効果的な使用に

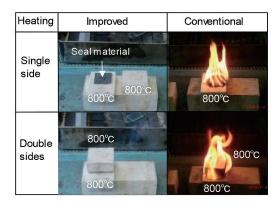


Fig.9 Comparison of fire retardant properties.

conventional product and 10 times better than wool packing. This is likely due to different packing and hot plasticity, where the improved product deforms easier at 600°C with superior packing of the joint and adhesion with the nozzle. The improved product also peeled well after the test.

3 • 4 Fire-retardant properties and peelability after thermal treatment

To evaluate fire-retardant properties, we placed joint materials on a brick heated to 800°C for one minute and observed smoking and flames.

Fig. 9 shows the result. The conventional product combusted several seconds after the set up and burned violently (combustion with flame). In contrast, the improved product combusted for a moment but the flame was extinguished by cooling associated with steam (self-extinguishing emission function: combustion). Wool packing was also flameless combustion with a small amount of white smoke. 1 minute later, the same brick heated to 800°C was placed on top, and the sample was placed in the hot compression test device at 1,000°C. After maintaining the compression at 0.39MPa for five minutes, the sample was removed and peelability after thermal treatment was evaluated by the ease of peeling the heated brick. The result is shown in Fig. 10. Wool packing peeled in layers, presenting good peelability. The conventional product was strongly burned onto the heated brick (adhesion), and cohesive failure occurred when forcibly removed. This result confirmed that the result from the real furnace was recreated in this present laboratory evaluation. We then evaluated the improved product, and confirmed that the heated brick could be removed easily, joint materials did not burn onto the brick (adhesion), and joint materials could be peeled by gently applying a jig (interfacial peeling).

3.5 Corrosion resistance

In the result of the rotational erosion test that used

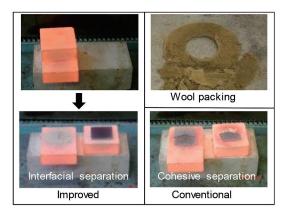


Fig.10 Detachability test through comparison of appearance after removal from furnace.

より、ウールパッキン並の難燃性で使用後の剥離性にも優れる上、熱間シール特性を備えた新しいタイプの定形目地材を開発した。水酸化アルミ原料は脱水吸熱による難燃化、エマルジョンバインダーは成膜機構による組織の緻密化、常温での保形性向上に寄与し、安全な可塑剤は常温での柔軟性付与、カーボン系粉末はノズル焼付き防止にそれぞれ効果を発揮する。この改良目地材の使用によりノズル連接部の保護機能が強化されたばかりでなく、熱間シール性の格段の向上によりエアー巻き込みを最少限に抑えることができた。さらに使用後のノズル交換も安全かつ迅速に行えることから、鋼の品質向上と操業効率の改善の両方に対する効果が期待できる。

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本論文は以下の報文を翻訳・加筆・再構成して転載 したものである。

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mill scale at 1,600°C, corrosion resistance of the improved product was as good as the conventional product, and resistance to joint corrosion was confirmed. In view of the results from actual operations, wool packing was not evaluated for safety reasons.

4 Conclusions

With effective use of raw aluminum hydroxide, emulsion binder, safe plasticizer, and carbon-based powder, a new joint seal material with fire-retardant properties equivalent to wool packing, superior post-use peelability, and hot seal characteristics was developed. The raw aluminum hydroxide contributes to flame-retardant properties through dehydration and heat absorption, emulsion binder contributes refinement through deposition mechanism and shape retention at room temperature, and safe plasticizer contributes to flexibility at room temperature, and carbon-based powder contributes to prevention of burning onto the nozzles. Using of this improved joint material, protective function of the nozzle joint was enhanced, and air inclusion was minimized by improved hot seal characteristics. In addition, since used nozzles can be replaced safely and quickly, positive impact on both steel quality and operation efficiency is anticipated.

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