

**Kinematic Characteristics of PKIKP and its Derived Phases
Based on the IASP91 Earth Model**

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Key Points:

- PKIKP and its derived phases
- Upper mantle transition zone
- Velocity discontinuity
- Kinematic characteristics

Abstract

Since PKIKP is a teleseismic phase with small angle arrived at station, almost vertical to the surface, it is an important phase for establishing the earth's structure interior, including its derived phases reflected from discontinuity boundaries at the 410 km and 660 km in the upper mantle transitional zone. In this paper, based on the IASP91 Earth velocity model and raytracing technique, the kinematic characteristics of the PKIKP and its derived phases are numerically simulated and analyzed. The results show that the arrivals of the pairs of P_4 PKIKP and PKIKPP₄, pP_4 PKIKP and p PKIKPP₄, P_6 PKIKP and PKIKPP₆, pP_6 PKIKP and p PKIKPP₆ derived from PKIKP are coincided each other, respectively, enhancing the energies for phase identification. The phases p PKIKP, p PKIKPP₄, and p PKIKPP₆ arrivals are parallel to each other and phases PKIKP, PKIKPP₄, and PKIKPP₆ arrivals also are parallel to each other for the events with different source depths, and that the time differences between PKIKPP₄ and PKIKP, PKIKPP₆ and PKIKP always parallel each other and independent of the source depth. When the velocity discontinuity of the upper mantle transitional zone is inclined toward the increasing epicenter distance direction, the travel time of phases PKIKPP₄ or PKIKPP₆ will increase with distance increasing; Conversely, the travel time will decrease with distance increasing.

1 Introduction

The upper mantle transition zone with its discontinuities is an important part in studying the deep structure within the earth (Dziewonski and Anderson, 1981; Flanagan and Shearer, 1998; Shearer, 1995; Tibi and Wiens, 2005). Near the depths of 410 km and 660 km in the upper mantle, there are obvious discontinuities in the seismic velocities, and the material between the two discontinuities constitutes the upper mantle transition zone, and that these two discontinuities have been observed and confirmed by many seismic observations in a global scale [Shearer and Flanagan, 1999; Benz and Vidale, 1993; Wang and Niu, 2010; Day, 2013; Zhang et al., 2019]. Usually, the discontinuities mainly are studied by using SS or PP waves [Deuss et al., 2006; Lee and Grand, 1996], ScS multiples [Bagley et al., 2013; Courtier and Revenaugh, 2006, 2007; Katzman et al., 1998; Revenaugh and Jordan, 1991; Wang et al., 2017], and receiver functions [Agius et al., 2017; Ai et al., 2003; Wei and Chen, 2016], etc.

However, as a teleseismic phase, PKIKP (also known as PKP_{df}), the ray path of which almost through the crust, upper mantle, lower mantle, outer core and inner core [Larry, 2001], has a clearly visible energy in many strong earthquakes. The phase is important to shape the structure of the transitional zone in upper mantle, especially the radial velocity variation, and its ray arrives at station with a small angle, almost vertical to the earth's surface. If the PKIKP phase is reflected from discontinuities at the depth of 410km and 660km in the upper mantle beneath the source or station to produce a reflection sub-ray, noted as P_4 and P_6 , respectively, and some derived phases are then generated, such as P_4 PKIKP, P_6 PKIKP, pP_4 PKIKP, pP_6 PKIKP phases reflected from the discontinuities beneath event source, PKIKPP₄, PKIKPP₆, p PKIKPP₄, p PKIKPP₆ phases reflected from the discontinuities beneath receiver station, and mixed phases P_4 PKIKPP₄, P_6 PKIKPP₆, pP_4 PKIKPP₄, pP_6 PKIKPP₆ reflected from the discontinuities beneath both source and station. At the same time, due to the deep propagation through core, PKIKP and its derived phases arrive station almost vertical to the surface [Gutenberg, 1960; Cleary and Hales, 1971], so that they should be the best data for establishing the velocity structure of the Earth's interior without any transformation, especially epicentral distance beyond 160 degree.

Based on existing standard Earth models [e.g., PREM model, *Dziewonski and Anderson 1981*; IASP91 model, *Kennett and Engdahl 1991*; AK135 model, *Kennett, 1995*] and using ray tracing [*Steck et al., 1998*; *Bijwaard and Spakman, 1999*; *Keyser et al., 2002*; *Zhao and Lei, 2004*; *Vidale and Helmberger, 1988*; *Vidale, 1990*; *Rawlinson and Sambridge, 2004*], the travel times or the differential travel times of the phases can be used to investigate the radial velocity structure of the Earth's interior.

In this paper, the kinematic characteristics of these phases and their interrelationships will be discussed based upon the IASP91 Earth velocity model and by using numerical modeling technique.

2 Kinematic characteristics of PKIKP and its derived phases

For a strong teleseismic earthquake, the ray paths of PKIKP and its derived phases within the Earth's interior are shown in Figure 1, and the rays arrive station with a small angle, almost vertical to the earth's surface.

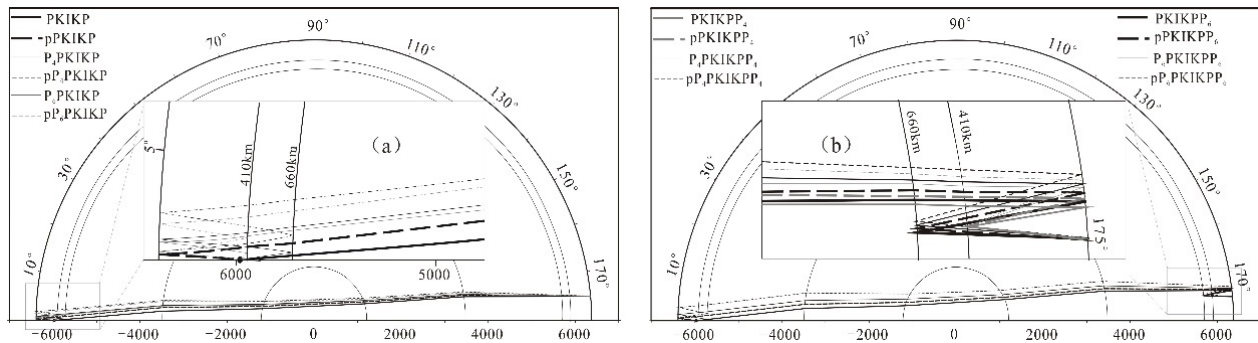


Figure 1. Ray paths of PKIKP and its derived phases in the Earth's interior

(a and b correspond to the reflection from the discontinuity beneath source and station, respectively)

Based on the IASP91 Earth velocity model, the travel times and ray paths of PKIKP and its derived phases were calculated for two cases by using ray tracing [*Jiang et al., 2019*] with a ray tracing accuracy of 0.01s (table 1, and table 2). The first case sets the distance range of 160° ~180° with step 5 degree and source depth of 300km (Table 1), and second case fixes the station at 175 degree to change the source depth from 20km to 600km (Table 2), and the travel times are shown in Figure 2.

Table 1a. The travel times and angles out of surface for PKIKP and its derived phases

(Source at depth of 300 km)

distance(deg.)	160		165		170		175		180	
phase	travel time(s)	Angle (deg.)	travel time(s)	Angle (deg.)	travel time(s)	Angle (deg.)	travel time(s)	Angle (deg.)	travel time(s)	Angle (deg.)
PKIKP	1162.56	3.76	1167.55	2.89	1171.17	1.95	1173.37	0.98	1174.09	0.00
pPKIKP	1238.22	3.87	1243.32	2.99	1247.03	2.03	1249.28	1.02	1250.02	0.00
P ₄ PKIKP	1263.03	3.61	1268.17	2.78	1271.92	1.88	1274.19	0.95	1274.94	0.00
P ₆ PKIKP	1313.86	3.98	1319.14	3.08	1322.99	2.10	1325.33	1.06	1326.10	0.00

pP ₄ PKIKP	1338.68	3.72	1343.94	2.87	1347.78	1.95	1350.10	0.98	1350.87	0.00
pP ₆ PKIKP	1389.49	4.11	1394.89	3.20	1398.84	2.18	1401.24	1.10	1402.03	0.00
PKIKPP ₄	1263.03	3.61	1268.17	2.78	1271.92	1.88	1274.19	0.95	1274.94	0.00
PKIKPP ₆	1313.86	3.98	1319.14	3.09	1322.99	2.10	1325.33	1.06	1326.10	0.00
pPKIKPP ₄	1338.68	3.72	1343.94	2.87	1347.78	1.95	1350.11	0.98	1350.87	0.00
pPKIKPP ₆	1389.49	4.11	1394.89	3.20	1398.84	2.18	1401.24	1.10	1402.03	0.00
P ₄ PKIKPP ₄	1363.48	3.72	1368.79	2.87	1372.66	1.95	1375.02	0.98	1375.79	0.00
P ₆ PKIKPP ₆	1465.08	4.22	1470.67	3.30	1474.78	2.25	1477.28	1.14	1478.11	0.00
pP ₄ PKIKPP ₄	1439.11	3.84	1444.54	2.98	1448.51	2.02	1450.93	1.02	1451.73	0.00
pP ₆ PKIKPP ₆	1540.68	4.36	1546.41	3.43	1550.62	2.35	1553.19	1.19	1554.04	0.00

86

87

Table 1b. The travel times for the source at different depth (station at distance of 175°)

depth(km) travel time(s)	20.00	100.00	200.00	300.00	600.00
PKIKP	1207.88	1197.49	1185.21	1173.37	1141.28
pPKIKP	1214.77	1225.16	1237.44	1249.28	1281.36
P ₄ PKIKP	1308.70	1298.31	1286.03	1274.19	--
pP ₄ PKIKP	1315.59	1325.98	1338.26	1350.10	--
P ₆ PKIKP	1359.84	1349.45	1337.17	1325.33	1293.24
pP ₆ PKIKP	1366.73	1377.12	1389.40	1401.24	1433.32
PKIKPP ₄	1308.70	1298.31	1286.03	1274.19	--
pPKIKPP ₄	1315.59	1325.98	1338.26	1350.10	--
P ₄ PKIKPP ₄	1409.53	1399.14	1386.86	1375.02	--
pP ₄ PKIKPP ₄	1416.43	1426.81	1439.09	1450.93	--
PKIKPP ₆	1359.84	1349.45	1337.17	1325.33	1293.24
pPKIKPP ₆	1366.73	1377.12	1389.40	1401.24	1433.32
P ₆ PKIKPP ₆	1511.79	1501.41	1489.12	1477.28	1445.20
pP ₆ PKIKPP ₆	1518.68	1529.07	1541.36	1553.19	1585.27

88

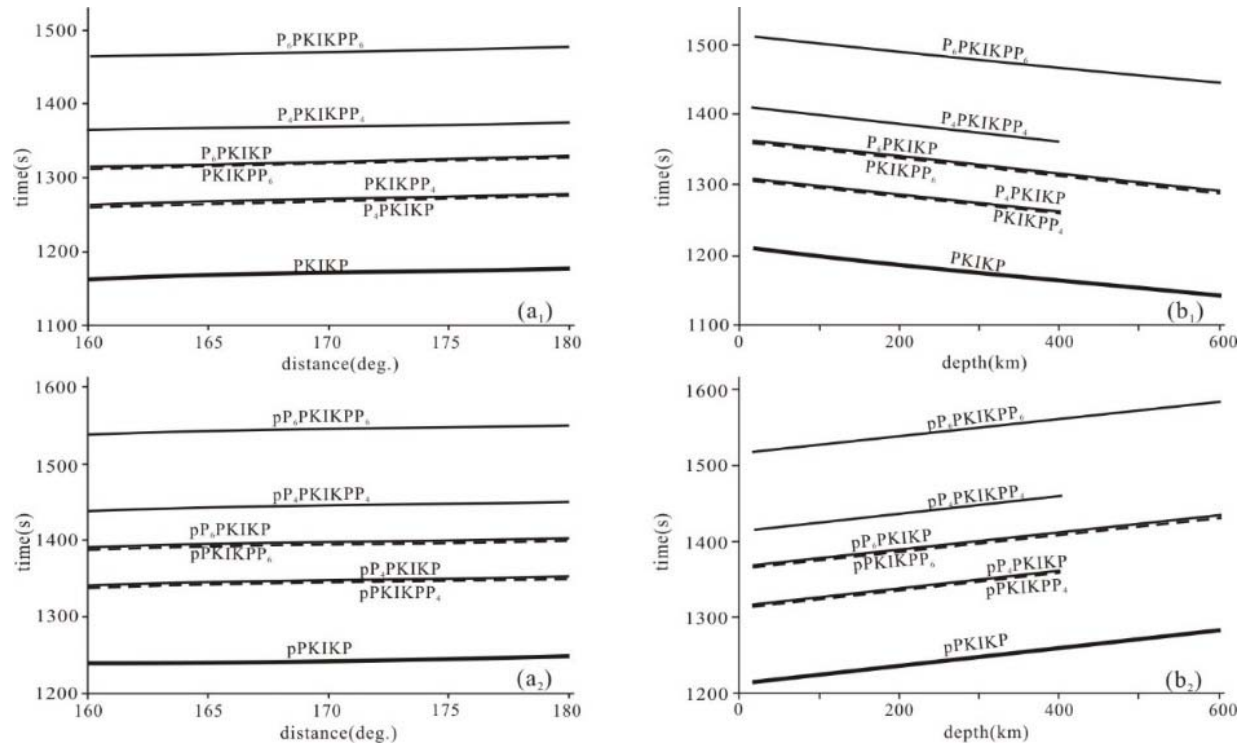


Figure 2. travel times of PKIKP and its derived phases

(a and b are corresponding to first case and second case, respectively)

From the numerical modeling results (Table 1 and Figure 2) for PKIKP and its derived phases, it can be seen that for an earthquake at a depth of 300 km, the travel time increases with distance increasing regardless of the presence of p phase (Figure 2a). For a fixed station at distance of 175 degree, the travel time for each phase decreases with source depth increasing when there is no p phase occurred (Figure 2b1), otherwise, the travel time for each phase increases with source depth increasing when p phase occurred and a series of derived phases are formed (Figure 2b2). Also, it can be seen from Table 1 and Figure 3 that all angles that rays arrive at station are less than 4.5 degree and decreases with distance increasing.

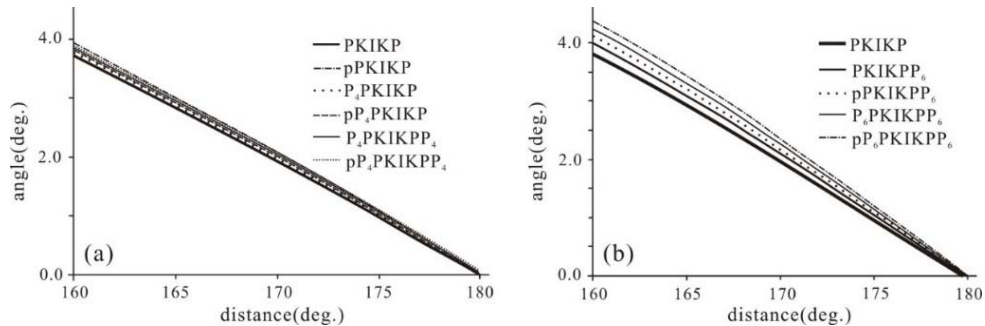


Figure 3. Variation of angles rays arrive at station with distance

(a and b correspond to the reflection from 410 and 660km discontinuity, respectively)

Table 2a. The kinematic features of phase P_4 PKIKP and PKIKPP₄, P_6 PKIKP and PKIKPP₆ for source at depth of 300km

distance (deg.)	160.00	165.00	170.00	175.00	180.00
time/difference (s)					
P_4 PKIKP	1263.03	1268.17	1271.92	1274.19	1274.94
PKIKPP ₄	1263.03	1268.17	1271.92	1274.19	1274.94
P_4 PKIKP- PKIKPP ₄	<0.005	<0.005	<0.005	<0.005	<0.005
P_6 PKIKP	1313.86	1319.14	1322.99	1325.33	1326.10
PKIKPP ₆	1313.86	1319.14	1322.99	1325.33	1326.10
P_6 PKIKP- PKIKPP ₆	<0.005	<0.005	<0.005	<0.005	<0.005

Table 2b. The kinematic features of phases P_4 PKIKP and PKIKPP₄, P_6 PKIKP and PKIKPP₆ for fixed station at distance of 175 degree

depth(km)	20.00	100.00	200.00	300.00	600.00
time/difference (s)					
P_4 PKIKP	1308.70	1298.31	1286.03	1274.19	--
PKIKPP ₄	1308.70	1298.31	1286.03	1274.19	--
P_4 PKIKP- PKIKPP ₄	<0.005	<0.005	<0.005	<0.005	--
P_6 PKIKP	1359.84	1349.45	1337.17	1325.33	1293.24
PKIKPP ₆	1359.84	1349.45	1337.17	1325.33	1293.24
P_6 PKIKP- PKIKPP ₆	<0.005	<0.005	<0.005	<0.005	<0.005

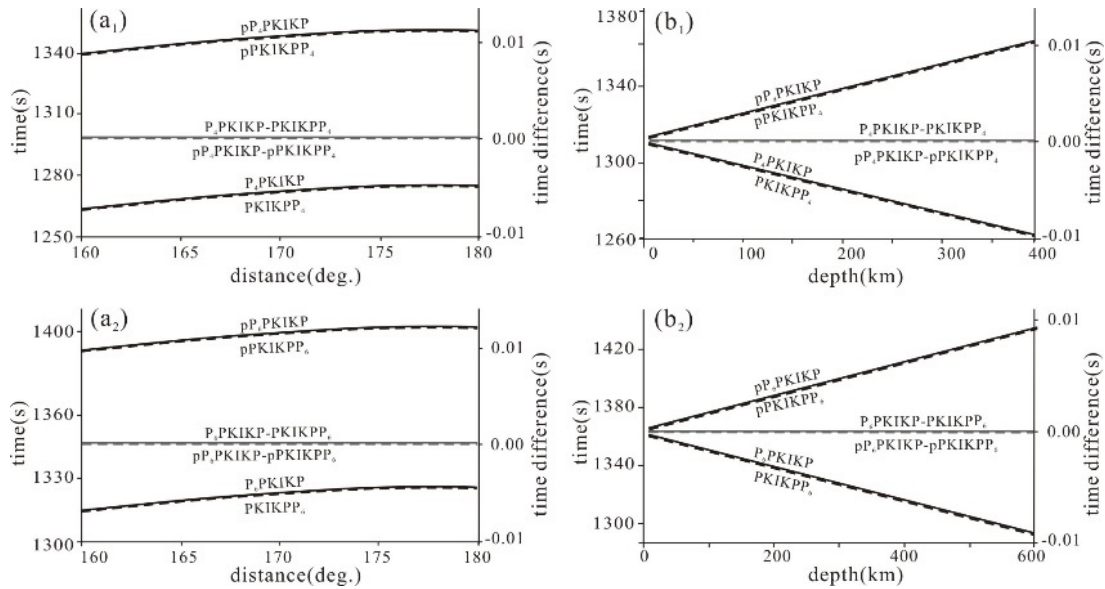


Figure 4. The Kinematic features of corresponding phase pairs
(a and b are corresponding to the first case and second case, respectively)

For the same source at depth of 300km, the travel time difference between P_4 PKIKP and PKIKPP₄, pP_4 PKIKP and $pPKIKPP_4$, P_6 PKIKP and PKIKPP₆, pP_6 PKIKP and $pPKIKPP_6$ are less than 0.005s (Table 2a and Figure 4a), which is much smaller than the ray tracing precision (0.01s), and it can be considered that the phases for each phase pair arrives same time at station.

On the other hand, for a fixed station at distance of 175 degree (Table 2b and Figure 4b), when the source depth varies from 20km to 600km, the travel times of the derived phases above are exactly the same. Therefore, the derived phases for each phase pair of P_4 PKIKP and PKIKPP₄, pP_4 PKIKP and pPKIKPP₄, P_6 PKIKP and PKIKPP₆, pP_6 PKIKP and pPKIKPP₆ arrive at the same time, respectively. This case implies that the energy of each pairs will be double to make the phases stronger to be identified easily. For discussion convenient, we only use the one phase of each pairs, PKIKPP₄ and pPKIKPP₄, pPKIKPP₆ and PKIKPP₆, and ignore others of PKIKPP₄ and pPKIKPP₄, pPKIKPP₆ and PKIKPP₆ in the later discussion.

Table 3a. Travel time differences relative to time the from the source of 200km
(received at same distance of 175 degree)

depth(km) time difference(s)	20.00	100.00	300.00	600.00
PKIKP	22.67	12.28	-11.85	-43.93
pPKIKP	-22.67	-12.28	11.85	43.93
PKIKPP ₄	22.67	12.28	-11.85	--
pPKIKPP ₄	-22.67	-12.28	11.85	--
PKIKPP ₆	22.67	12.28	-11.85	-43.93
pPKIKPP ₆	-22.67	-12.28	11.85	43.93

Table 3b. time difference between derived phases and PKIKP for different source depths

depth(km) time difference(s)	20.00	100.00	200.00	300.00	600.00
PKIKPP ₄ -PKIKP	100.82	100.82	100.82	100.82	--
PKIKPP ₆ -PKIKP	151.96	151.96	151.96	151.96	151.96
pPKIKP-PKIKP	6.89	27.67	52.23	75.91	140.08
pPKIKPP ₄ -PKIKP	107.71	128.49	153.05	176.73	--
pPKIKPP ₆ -PKIKP	158.85	179.63	204.19	227.87	292.04
PKIKPP ₆ -PKIKPP ₄	51.14	51.14	51.14	51.14	51.14
pPKIKPP ₄ -pPKIKP	100.82	100.82	100.82	100.82	--
pPKIKPP ₆ -pPKIKP	151.96	151.96	151.96	151.96	151.96

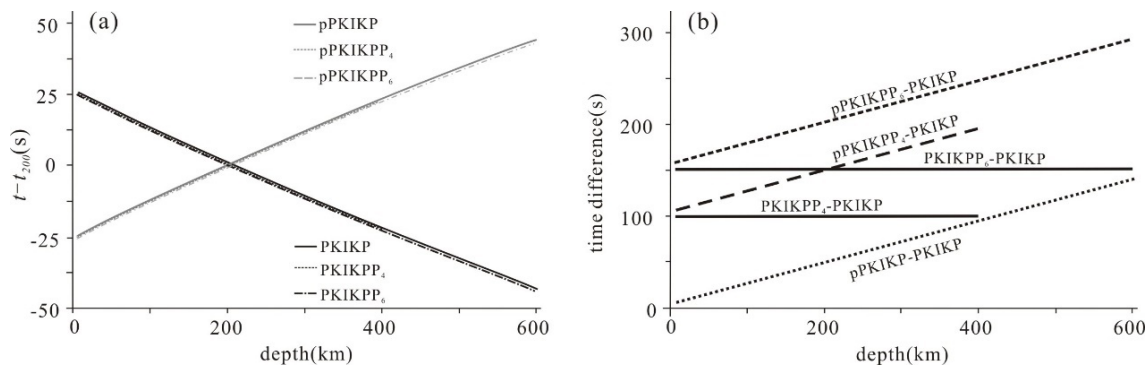


Figure 5. Kinematic characteristics of PKIKP and its derived phases
for different source depth at distance of 175 degree

If all travel times from different source at distance of 175 degree in Table 2 subtract the travel time of corresponding phase produced by the source at depth of 200km to form a Table 3a and Figure 5a, which indicate that the time differences for PKIKP, PKIKPP₄, and PKIKPP₆ phases decreases with source depth increasing, and the time differences for pPKIKP, pPKIKPP₄, and pPKIKPP₆ phases increases with source depth increasing.

Meanwhile, if all travel times from different source at distance of 175 degree in Table 2 subtract the travel time of PKIKP to form a Table 3b and Figure 5b, two group paralleling lines, one group includes pPKIKP, pPKIKPP₄, and pPKIKPP₆ which parallels each other and the time difference increases with the source depth increasing; and another group of PKIKP, PKIKPP₄, and PKIKPP₆ phases not only parallels each other but also the time differences have no variation with constants, the phase PKIKPP₄ at 100.82s and the phase PKIKPP₆ at 151.96s. This strongly suggests that the time difference between the phase PKIKPP₄, PKIKPP₆ and PKIKP respectively has no relationship with the source depth, i.e., if setting the arrivals of PKIKP as zero, the phases pPKIKP, pPKIKPP₄, pPKIKPP₆ parallels each other, and PKIKPP₄ and PKIKPP₆ will keep constant of 100.82s and 151.96s, respectively.

According to the feature between the phases PKIKP, PKIKPP₄ and PKIKPP₆, all data from different events with PKIKP, PKIKPP₄ and PKIKPP₆ can be put together to form a longer align to use as a databank to shape the topography of the discontinuities of 410 km and 610 km in the upper mantle transition zone.

Usually, the discontinuity of 410km or 660km in upper mantle transitional zone is not horizontal. Supposing an inclined discontinuity of 660km keep 660km at a distance of 167 degree for a source at depth 400km, and then let the discontinuity incline 8 degree toward distance increasing direction and reversed direction with the same dip angle, we calculate the travel time from 165 degree to 170 degree for PKIKP and PKIKPP₆, and take $dt = t_{PKIKPP6} - t_{PKIKP}$ calculations (Table 4 and Figure 6).

Table 4 The time differences between PKIKPP₆ and PKIKP

dip (deg.)	Distance (deg.)	165.00	166.00	167.00	168.00	169.00	170.00
8.00	$dt(s)$	145.01	148.05	151.10	154.15	157.18	160.23
	boundary depth(km)	628.74	644.37	660.00	675.63	691.25	706.88
0.00	$dt(s)$	152.99	152.90	152.80	152.70	152.62	152.54
	boundary depth(km)	660.00	660.00	660.00	660.00	660.00	660.00
-8.00	$dt(s)$	156.53	153.31	150.10	146.90	143.71	140.53
	boundary depth(km)	691.26	675.63	660.00	644.37	628.75	613.12

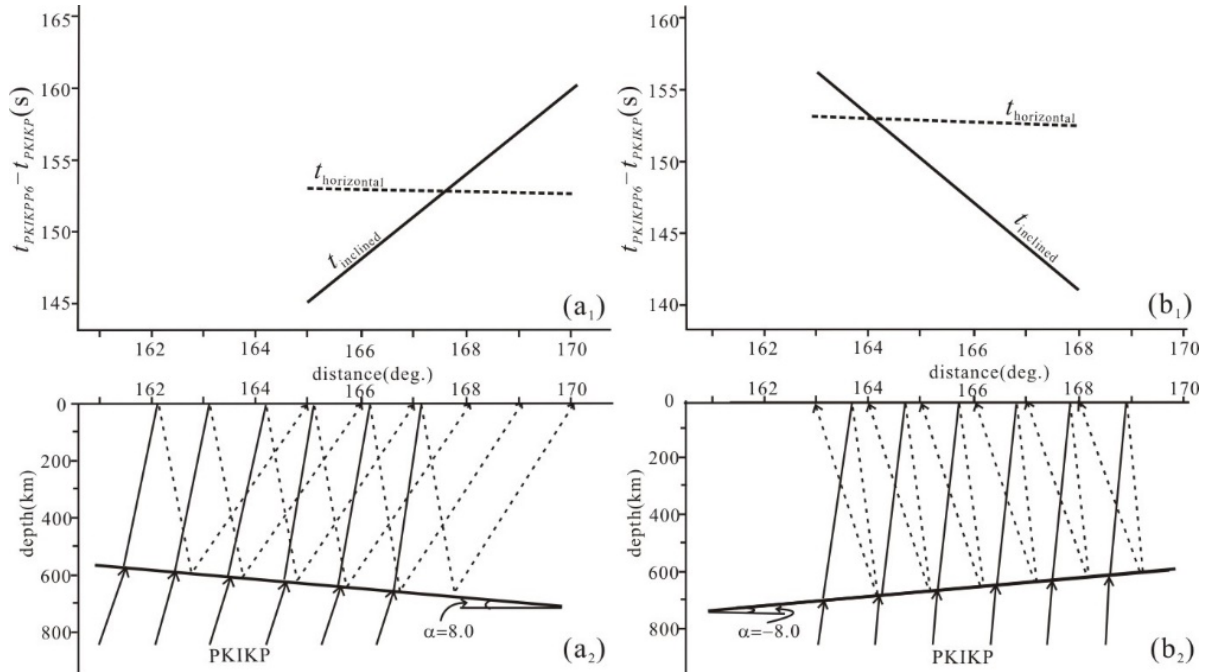


Figure 6 Dip discontinuity of 660km and the travel times of PKIKPP₆ and PKIKP

The numerical modeling results (Table 4, Figure 6) show that the time differences between PKIKPP₆ and PKIKP increases with the distance increasing when the discontinuity dips toward the direction of distance increasing, and decreases with the distance increasing when dipping toward the direction of distance decreasing. Similarly, the discontinuity of 410 km also shares the same feature. Therefore, the occurrence of the discontinuity, either 410km or 660km can be shaped by the feature of the time differences of PKIKPP₄-PKIKP and PKIKPP₆-PKIKP, respectively.

3 Conclusions

Based upon the IASP91 Earth velocity model and ray tracing technique, this paper discusses the kinematic characteristics for PKIKP and its derived phases, either along distance align or variation with the source depth. After analyzing and discussion, the conclusion can be given as following:

(1) for each of the phase among the pairs P₄PKIKP and PKIKPP₄, pP₄PKIKP and pPKIKPP₄, P₆PKIKP and PKIKPP₆, pP₆PKIKP and pPKIKPP₆, the travel time is equal each other, so the waveform of the phase can be enhanced for identification easily.

(2) for different source depths, the arrivals of PKIKP, PKIKPP₄ and PKIKPP₆ phases decrease with source depth increasing and are parallel to each other, whereas increase with source depth increasing for pPKIKP, pPKIKPP₄, and pPKIKPP₆ phases and are parallel to each other.

(3) arrivals of PKIKPP₄ and PKIKPP₆ from different source depths are both parallel to the PKIKP, and their travel time relative to PKIKP are independent of the source depth.

(4) if setting the arrival time of PKIKP as zero, all data from different events with PKIKP, PKIKPP₄ and PKIKPP₆ can be put together to form a longer align to shape the topography of the discontinuities of transition zone in the upper mantle.

(5) When the discontinuity of the transition zone in the upper mantle inclines toward the direction of distance increasing, the travel time will decrease with distance increasing, and will increase with distance increasing when dipping toward the direction of distance increasing.

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Open Research

The code used in this article is written by the author and has been uploaded as an .exe executable file.

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