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Molecular Simulation

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Molecular Dynamics Simulations of NaCl-type Solid Solution Crystals: The First Application of Molecular Dynamics to Solid Solutions

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Note

MOLECULAR DYNAMICS SIMULATIONS OF NaCl-TYPE SOLID SOLUTION CRYSTALS: THE FIRST APPLICATION OF MOLECULAR DYNAMICS TO SOLID SOLUTIONS

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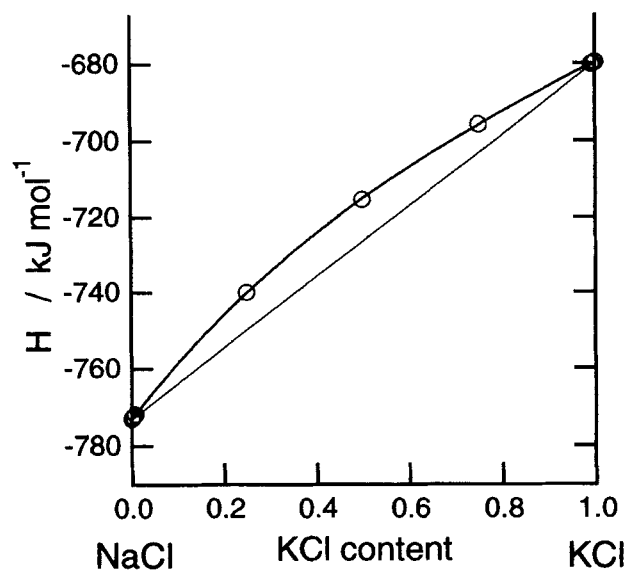
INTRODUCTION

Solid solution crystals appear widely in the fields of earth sciences and inorganic material sciences. The physical properties of solid solutions may vary continuously with chemical composition. Sometimes, linear relationships of the properties with composition are assumed. However, this approximation is not always applicable (e.g., [1], [2], [3]). In order to elucidate the properties of solid solutions, studies on the relation between the macroscopic properties and the atomic configurations (microscopic property) in the crystal are desirable. One of the most effective approaches to the subject is molecular dynamics (MD). However, as far as the authors are aware there have been no molecular dynamics studies on solid solution crystals.

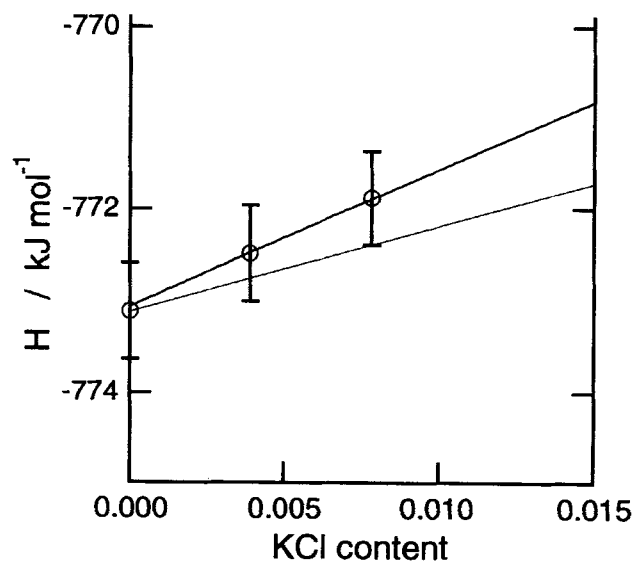
In this preliminary study, we have applied the MD technique to solid solution crystals for the first time, and investigated the variation of molar enthalpy and cell volume along with composition, assuming random mixing of cations.

MOLECULAR DYNAMIC CALCULATIONS

We have adopted binary solid solutions ($\text{Na}_{1-x}\text{K}_x$)Cl and ($\text{Mg}_{1-x}\text{Ca}_x$)O with the NaCl-type structure because of the simplicity of the composition and structure. The total number of particles in the MD basic cell was 512 (= 256 cations + 256 anions).



(a)



(b)

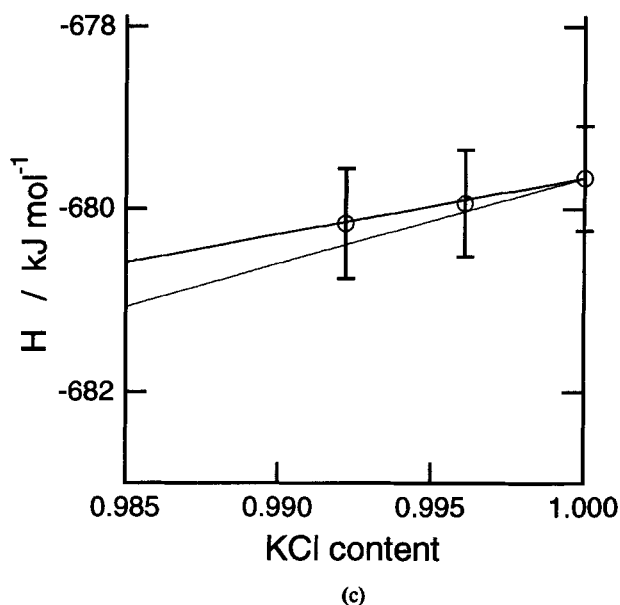


Figure 1 Relation between calculated molar enthalpy and the composition for $(\text{Na}_{1-x}, \text{K}_x)\text{Cl}$ solid solution crystals under 0.1 MPa at 900 K. **a:** $x = 0 \sim 1$, **b:** $x = 0.000 \sim 0.015$, **c:** $x = 0.985 \sim 1.000$. The 'error bars' in **b** and **c** show the magnitude of fluctuation in the MD runs of 8000 steps.

The composition of the solid solutions was varied by substituting some cations of an end member crystal with those of the opposite end member. The compositions adopted are as follows;

Dilute Solutions:

$x = 0.0000$ (no substitution), 0.0039 (1/256 substitution), 0.0078 (2/256 substitution) for the compositions near the end member NaCl or MgO, and 1.0000 (no substitution), 0.9961 (1/256 substitution), 0.9922 (2/256 substitution) for the compositions near the opposite end member KCl or CaO. In the case of 2/256 substitution, two substituted cations were placed so as to be mostly isolated each other.

Intermediate Compositions:

$x = 0.2500$ (64/256 substitution), 0.5000 (128/256 substitution), 0.7500 (64/256 substitution). It is noted that there are so many cases of configurations of smaller (Na^+ or Mg^{2+}) and larger (K^+ or Ca^{2+}) cations in the crystals. In this preliminary study, random mixing of smaller and larger cations was assumed, and such structures were generated by using random number.

Calculations were carried out with the full ionic pair potentials [4] and MD program MXDORTO [5] under constant pressure and temperature [$P = 0.1$ MPa, $T = 900$ K for $(\text{Na}, \text{K})\text{Cl}$ and 2500 K for $(\text{Mg}, \text{Ca})\text{O}$]. The step time was 2 fs throughout the calculations. The initial structures were first equilibrated for 5000 steps, and then the data were collected for the subsequent 8000 steps.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The relation between calculated molar enthalpy and composition for (Na, K)Cl under 0.1 MPa at 900 K is shown as an example in Figure 1.

- (1) Enthalpy varies smoothly along with composition.
- (2) The data points of solid solution crystals ($0 < x < 1$) are above the line passing through the points of end members ($x = 0$ and $x = 1$), indicating the positive excess enthalpy of mixing. This is qualitatively consistent with the experimental results (see *e.g.*, [6]).

The relations like (1) and (2) are also applicable to the cell volume of (Na, K)Cl, enthalpy and volume of (Mg, Ca)O.

The positive excess enthalpy suggests that some cationic clustering occurs in the real crystals of (Na, K)Cl and (Mg, Ca)O, rather than random mixing of cations. The calculations on the crystals with cationic clustering are in progress.

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