In-situ x-ray observation for the pressure-induced self-insertion reaction of RhSb₃ under high temperatures and high pressures

Chihiro SEKINE*, Kazuki MATSUI, Yusuke HORIZI, Takuma ISHIZAKA, Tomokazu KAWATA
Muroran Institute of Technology, Muroran, Hokkaido 050-8585, Japan

Introduction

The unfilled skutterudite compounds \( TX_3 \) (\( T = \text{Co, Rh, Ir, } X = \text{P, As, Sb} \)) crystallize in a body centered cubic structure of space group \( \text{Im}3 (T_5^h \text{ No.}204) \). The structure has a vacancy, which can be partially occupied by rare-earth ions. In spite of the presence of large voids in the structure, earlier studies indicate that the binary skutterudite compounds are quite stable under high pressure. However, recently the structural change of CoSb₃ in high pressure has been reported [1]. They reported that above 20 GPa, CoSb₃ at room temperature (RT) undergoes an irreversible isosymmetric transition to another phase that, upon pressure release, exhibits a volume greater than that of pristine CoSb₃. This anomalous behavior could be interpreted as a pressure-induced self-insertion reaction of CoSb₃, in which antimony atoms from the compound framework partially fill the voids. This phenomenon of CoSb₃ has been verified by synchrotron powder x-ray diffraction and similar behaviors have been observed for isostructural compounds RhSb₃ and IrSb₃ [2]. Furthermore, the same phenomenon of CoSb₃ was observed at lower pressure (7.7GP) and higher temperature (550ºC) [1]. In this study, we have tried to observe the pressure induced self-insertion reaction of unfilled skutterudite compound RhSb₃ in-situ at high temperatures and high pressures.

Experimental

In-situ x-ray diffraction patterns were taken by an energy-dispersive method using the synchrotron radiation. High pressure was applied using the multi-anvil high-pressure apparatus, MAX80, installed at the beam line AR NE5C. Pressure was determined by the lattice constant of NaCl internal pressure marker. The details of the in-situ observation method were described in our reports [3]. The sample of RhSb₃ was prepared at 2GPa and 550ºC using a cubic-anvil high-pressure apparatus.

Results and Discussion

Figure 1 shows x-ray diffraction patterns of RhSb₃ at 8GPa and room temperature. Figures (a) and (b) show the diffraction patterns before and after annealing at 550ºC for 30 min, respectively. Figure 2 shows the temperature dependence of the relative shift (\( E/E_0 \)) for 422, 431, 433 Bragg peaks of RhSb₃. The peaks show a significant shift toward lower energy around 400ºC. This result suggests that the self-insertion reaction occurs around this temperature at 8GPa. Consequently, the annealed sample at RT has a larger volume than that before annealing because the diffraction peaks appear displaced toward lower energy.

References


* sekine@mmm.muroran-it.ac.jp