

HRTEM STUDY OF TAAFFEITE CRYSTALS FROM MOGOK (MYANMAR)

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Taaffeite ($\text{BeMg}_3\text{Al}_8\text{O}_{16}$) and musgravite ($\text{BeMg}_2\text{Al}_6\text{O}_{12}$) are members of the rare group of Al-Mg-Be oxide minerals occurring in high-grade metamorphic rocks and their alluvial deposits (SCHMETZER *et al.*, 2005). In most cases taaffeite group of minerals are linked to metamorphic processes. In Mogok (Myanmar), taaffeite crystals are associated with euhedral spinel crystals (MgAl_2O_4) in the Mogok marble belt that developed in metamorphic processes along the contact of more or less dolomitic limestones with granitic intrusives, which served as a source of beryllium. Taaffeite group minerals are also found near Stubenberg in Styria (Austria), where they formed as a replacement product of spinel in veins within polymetamorphic dolomitic marbles (BERNHARD *et al.*, 2008). Here, the origin of beryllium could be Be-rich fluids from granites or pegmatites generated during the contact metamorphism or by mobilization of Be by the fluids formed during the metamorphic processes.

Taaffeite-group minerals comprise basic structural elements that are found in spinel (MgAl_2O_4) and chrysoberyl (BeAl_2O_4). Spinel (*s.g.* $Fd\bar{3}m$) has *ccp* arrangement of the oxygen sublattice along the $\langle 111 \rangle$ directions. In these directions, the structure is composed of alternating kagome (Al) and mixed (Mg and Al) layers, where the Al^{3+} ions occupy the octahedral and Mg^{2+} ions the tetrahedral sites (SICKAFUS *et al.*, 1999). On the other hand, chrysoberyl (BeAl_2O_4) has a slightly distorted *hcp* stacking of the oxygen sublattice along the $[0001]$ direction (*s.g.* $Pbnm$) with Al^{3+} and Be^{2+} ions located in the corresponding octahedral or tetrahedral interstices (TABATA *et al.*, 1974). A recent study of (111) twins of spinel (DANEU *et al.*, 2007) revealed that the stacking across the twin boundary is hexagonal (*hcp*) and Mg^{2+} near the boundary tetrahedral sites are locally replaced by Be^{2+} . This indicates that Be^{2+} in fact causes the hexagonal stacking fault in an otherwise perfect cubic structure. Local structure of (111) twin boundaries in spinel is closely related to chrysoberyl and taaffeite-group of polysomatic minerals and can be understood as an initial stage of taaffeite-type phase transformation. In this view we can under-

stand the alternation of *ccp* and *hcp* sequences at the unit-cell level in these structurally correlated systems.

In the present work, the atomic structure of taaffeite crystals from Mogok was studied by X-ray powder diffraction (XRD), electron diffraction (ED) and high-resolution transmission electron microscopy (HRTEM). XRD analysis confirmed that the sample in fact corresponds to taaffeite ($\text{BeMg}_3\text{Al}_8\text{O}_{16}$). Two slightly different structural models for this compound were reported (MOOR *et al.*, 1981; NUBER & SCHMETZER, 1983). In both models, the stacking sequence of the oxygen sublattice (ABCABA...) along the crystallographic *c*-axis is identical, they differ only in the occupancy of the interstitial sites within mixed layers. In Moor's model, all Al^{3+} ions lie in octahedral positions and all Mg^{2+} ions in tetrahedral positions, whereas in the Nuber's model, the positions of Al^{3+} and Mg^{2+} ions within the mixed layers are switched. At the present state of investigations, we can not confirm the validity of either model from HRTEM images.

References

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See the figure on the following page.

