

MAGNETIC PHASE TRANSITIONS OF T'-PHASE Gd₂CuO₄ SINGLE CRYSTAL

I.M. Sutjahja^{1,2}, M. Diantoro^{2,3}, A.A. Nugroho^{1,2}, A. Menovsky¹ and M. O. Tjia²

¹Van der Waals-Zeeman Instituut, Universiteit van Amsterdam,
Valckenierstraat 65, 1018 XE, Amsterdam

²Department of Physics, Institut Teknologi Bandung
Jl. Ganesha 10, Bandung 40132

³Department of Physics, Universitas Negeri Malang
Jl. Surabaya 6, Malang 65145

ABSTRACT

MAGNETIC PHASE TRANSITIONS OF T'-PHASE Gd₂CuO₄ SINGLE CRYSTAL. The magnetic properties of T'-phase Gd₂CuO₄ Single crystal grown by the Traveling Solvent Floating Zone (TSFZ) method have been investigated by means of ac-magnetic susceptibility and dc-magnetization measurements. The result of these studies revealed an anomaly in the temperature dependent magnetization at temperature of T = 6.5, 290 and 20 K, associated respectively with the long-range antiferromagnetic ordering of the Gd and Cu ions and Cu-spin reorientation transitions. The complex magnetic structure of this compound shown by the weak ferromagnetic behavior below the copper ordering temperature (T_N(Cu) = 290 K) is induced by an effective field due to exchange interactions between the ordered copper moments and the rare-earth ions. These results, together with the previous neutron diffraction measurement, establishes the existence of ferromagnetic Gd layers in the ab-plane which are stacked antiferromagnetically along c-direction, indicating a quasi-two dimensional antiferromagnetic nature of Gd₂CuO₄.

Key words : Gd₂CuO₄ single crystal, Traveling Solvent Floating Zone (TSFZ) method, magnetic properties.

ABSTRAK

TRANSISI FASE MAGNETIK PADA KRISTAL TUNGGAL FASE-T'Gd₂CuO₄. Telah ditelaah dalam studi ini sifat-sifat magnetik dari kristal tunggal fase-T'Gd₂CuO₄ melalui pengukuran susceptibilitas AC-magnetik dan magnetisasi DC. Hasil-hasil dari studi ini menunjukkan sebuah anomali pada kebergantungan temperatur dari magnetisasi pada suhu 6,5, 290 dan 20 K, masing-masing diasosiasikan dengan *ordering* antiferromagnetik berjangkauan panjang dari ion-ion Gd dan Cu dan transisi reorientasi spin dari ion-ion Cu. Struktur magnetik yang kompleks dari sistem ini seperti diperlihatkan oleh kelakuan ferromagnetik lemah pada temperatur di bawah suhu *ordering* Cu (T_N(Cu) = 290 K), disebabkan oleh sebuah medan efektif dari interaksi tukar antara momen-momen magnetik Cu yang terorder dan ion-ion tanah jarang. Hasil-hasil eksperimen ini bersama-sama dengan hasil pengukuran defraksi neutron terdahulu, menkonfirmasi kehadiran dari lapisan ferromagnetik Gd pada bidang-ab yang tersusun secara antiferromagnetik sepanjang arah-c, mengindikasikan sifat quasi-dua dimensi dari sistem Gd₂CuO₄.

Kata kunci : Kristal tunggal Gd₂CuO₄, metoda *Traveling Solvent Floating Zone (TSFZ)*, sifat-sifat magnet.

INTRODUCTION

The magnetic properties of R₂CuO₄ (R = Pr, Nd, Sm, Eu, Gd) crystallize in the tetragonal T'-phase structure of Nd₂CuO₄ [1] with the Cu sublattice presents three-dimensional antiferromagnetic (AF) order below T_N = 250-290 K [2]. Among them, the compound Gd₂CuO₄ occupies a unique place in this family for some reasons: first, although it is easily doped with Ce or Th, it does not become superconducting as the other members; second, the square array of oxygen ions surrounding the Cu atoms is rotated around the c-axis, leading to a

reduced orthorhombic symmetry (space group Acam) [3,4]. As the result, the AF order is not perfect in this case and weak ferromagnetism (WF) appears due to canting of the Cu moments in the CuO₂ planes [5-7]. The origin of this canting has been attributed to an antisymmetric exchange interaction of Dzyaloshinskii-Moriya (DM) type [8] allowed in this case by the orthorhombic distortion.

We present in this study the magnetic properties of a Gd₂CuO₄ single crystal grown by means of the

Traveling Solvent Floating Zone (TSFZ) method. The magnetic properties have been explored by ac-magnetic susceptibility and dc-magnetization measurements. In ref. [6] it has been suggested that the in-plane anisotropy Gd_2CuO_4 compound was relatively small. For that reason we ignore the in-plane anisotropy in our measurement. The detailed study about the in-plane magnetization anisotropy has been reported in ref. [9].

EXPERIMENTS

The T'-phase Gd_2CuO_4 single crystal was grown by the Traveling Solvent Floating Zone (TSFZ) method using a four-mirror furnace from Crystal system, Inc. The quality of the as-grown crystal was examined by X-ray LAUE diffraction pattern using DIFFRACTIS 582 of ENPAF NONIUS, and Electron Probe Micro Analysis (EPMA) using JEOL JXA-8621. The AC-susceptibility measurement has been carried out in a homemade system using a mutual inductance technique. With this system, the measurements can be performed in the temperature range between 4.2 and 300 K at an appropriate cooling or heating rate by manipulating the vacuum in the heat-exchange space of the measurement insert. The dc-magnetization measurements were measured by a commercial Quantum Design (SQUID) MPMS 5 magnetometer. Both of these measurements were performed at the Van der Waals-Zeeman Institute, University of Amsterdam.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the temperature dependent AC-susceptibility and dc-magnetization measurements are given in Fig. 1. The development of anisotropy is readily apparent from this figure. The AC-susceptibility

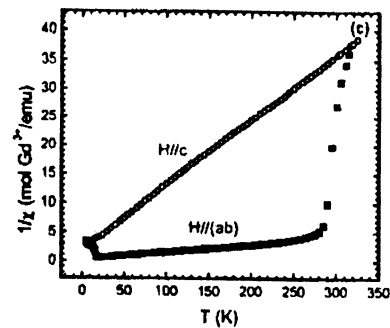
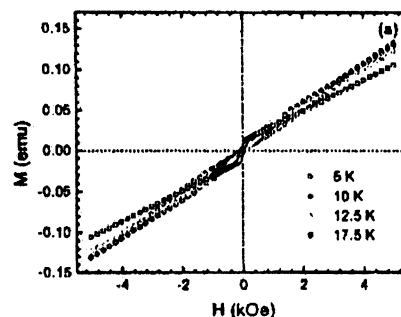
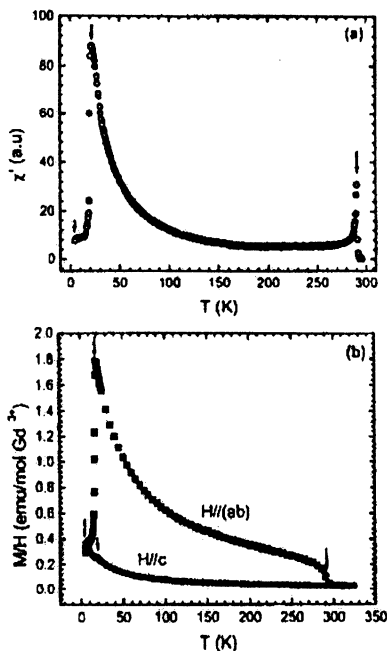


Fig. 1(a). Temperature dependent AC-magnetic susceptibility, (b). dc-magnetization measurements and (c). inverse molar susceptibility for field direction in the plane (χ_{ab}^{-1}) and along the c-axis (χ_c^{-1}).

and dc-magnetization measurement for field parallel to the plane ($H//ab$; χ_{ab}) show an anomaly at $T = 6.5, 20$ and 290 K, in good agreement with the previous report [5,10-13]. The dc-magnetization measurement for field parallel perpendicular to the plane ($H//c$; χ_c) on the other hand, shows the anomaly at 6.5 and 20 K only. The Currie-Weiss behavior is shown by $1/\chi_c$ curve for $T > 20$ K as depicted in Fig. 1(c). The effective magnetic moment determined from this plot is $\mu_{\text{eff}} = 8.37 \mu_B/\text{Gd}^{3+}$ -atom and paramagnetic Curie temperature $\theta = 15.51$ K. These values are to be compared with previous reports [2,5] and close to its free ion value of $\mu_{\text{eff}} = 7.94 \mu_B/\text{Gd}^{3+}$ [14]. We note that for H parallel to the planes and temperature less than ~ 200 K, $\mu_{\text{eff}} = 25.3 \mu_B/\text{Cd}^{3+}$ -atom and $\theta = 27.37$ K; these values are bigger than the previous report by Thompson et al. [5]. The reasons for the lower and higher anomalies are associated with the antiferromagnetic ordering of Gd and Cu ions. At $T_N(\text{Cu}) = 290$ K, the Cu magnetic moments order to a La_2NiO_4 -like antiferromagnetic (AF) structure with spin direction of Cu ions parallel to $[110]$. At $T_N(\text{Gd}) = 6.5$ K the Gadolinium ions order antiferromagnetically with special configuration, namely the two centrosymmetrically related Gd atoms in the primitive unit cell are oppositely oriented. The explanation for the mid temperature anomaly $T_c = 20$ K will be presented in the following paragraph.

The plots of field dependent magnetization at certain temperature, $M(H)_T$, for $H//(\text{a,b})$ is shown in Fig. 2 and 3 associated respectively for temperature range below and above $T_c = 20$ K. Two important features



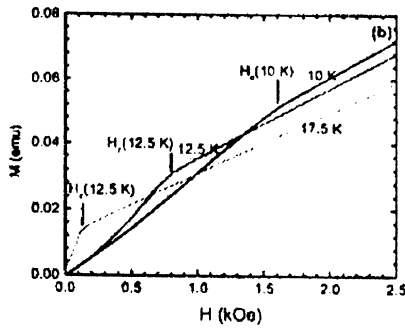


Fig. 2(a). Isothermal magnetic hysteresis loop of a Gd_2CuO_4 single crystal measured at various temperature below $T_c=20$ K. (b). The $M(H)$ curves in the temperature range of $T_N(Gd) < T < T_c$, showing two linear parts of the curves with different slope, intersect each other at H_c . See text for discussion.

observed which indicate the presence of a phase transition: (1) The small but significant hysteresis at $H \approx 0$, which is present at all temperatures below $T_N(Cu)$ and gradually disappear below $T_c = 20$ K. This behavior is clearly seen in Fig. 3(b) for $T = 25$ K. The form of the $M(H)$ curves in the temperature range of $T_N(Gd) < T < T_c$ have two almost linear parts with different slopes, intersect each other at H_c as depicted by arrowheads in Fig. 2(b). From this figure one can see that the value of H_c decreases with increasing temperature. Further, the lower part of the $M(H)$ curves ($H < H_c$) passes through the origin when extrapolated to $H = 0$, indicate a pure AF phase is stable when $H < H_c$. These results clearly show that the WF phase only exists in Gd_2CuO_4 in zero-field for $T > T_c$, although below T_c it can be induced by a magnetic field applied in the ab-plane. We concluded that a WF-AF phase transition does occur in zero-field at $T = 20$ K. An important characteristic of the WF phase is the value of the internal field H_{int} , which induces the weak

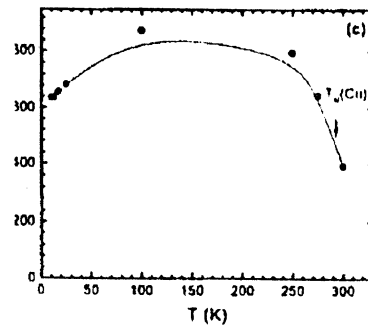


Fig. 3(a) Isothermal magnetic hysteresis loop of a Gd_2CuO_4 single crystal measured at various temperature above T_c . (b). The schematic picture showing the determination of internal field H_{int} , for $T = 25$ K. (c). Temperature dependent internal field $H_{int}(T)$. See text for discussions.

ferromagnetic moment in the ab-plane. We determined the H_{int} values by extrapolating the linear high-field part of the curves (according to linearity criterion of $R=1$) to $M=0$ as illustrated in Fig. 3(b) for $T = 25$ K. The temperature dependent internal field $H_{int}(T)$ is shown in Fig. 3(c).

Having gone through the above analysis, we are attempting now to discuss the complex magnetic structure of this Gd_2CuO_4 compound. In the temperature region of $T_c < T < T_N(Cu)$, the Cu-spins have long-range antiferromagnetic order with a significant weak ferromagnetic moment parallel to the ab-planes, arises from polarization of the paramagnetic Gd sublattice by exchange interaction with the ordered Cu subsystem. The weak ferromagnetism results from a strong intraplanar spin-spin interaction. At $T = T_c$ a phase transition to a purely antiferromagnetic state with weak ferromagnetism behavior takes place. These weak ferromagnetic moments in the temperature region of $T_N(Gd) < T < T_c$ are easily induced by relatively weak magnetic fields applied perpendicular to the c-axis. Such behavior suggests that a weak ferromagnetic moment exists independently in each CuO_2 plane and that the phase transition at T_c is associated with the appearance of substantial antiferromagnetic correlation between weak ferromagnetic moments of adjacent CuO_2 planes. The role of the

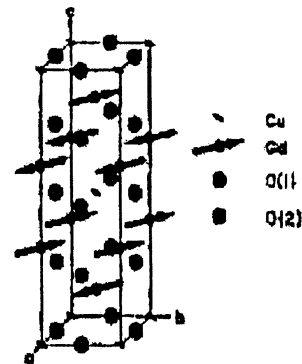
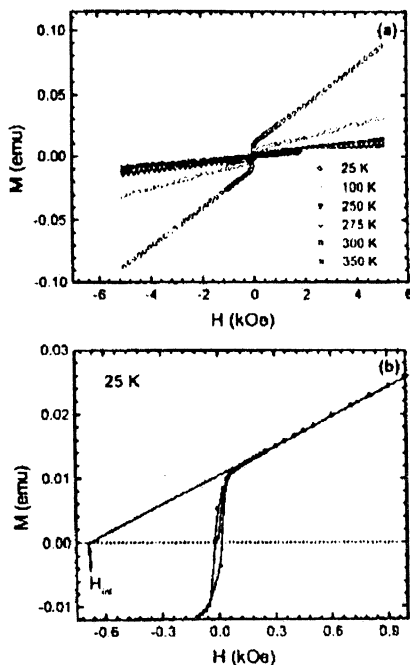


Fig. 4 The proposed magnetic structure of Gd_2CuO_4 in the antiferromagnetic phase at $T < T_N(Gd) = 6.5$ K

relatively weak interplanar interaction is to produce some correlation between the orientation of the weak ferromagnetic moments in neighboring CuO_2 planes. The crystal structure of Gd_2CuO_4 deduced from neutron diffraction measurement [11] and in conformity with the above analysis is shown in Fig. 4. This figure establishing the existence of ferromagnetic Gd layers in the ab-plane which are stacked antiferromagnetically along c-direction, thus indicating a quasi two dimensional antiferromagnetic nature of Gd_2CuO_4 system.

SUMMARY

We have presented in this study the magnetic properties Gd_2CuO_4 single crystal grown by the TSFZ method. Temperature dependent magnetization shows a clear anomaly at $T = 6.5, 290, \text{ and } 20 \text{ K}$, associated respectively with the long-range antiferromagnetic ordering of the Cd and Cu ions and Cu-spin reorientation transitions. In addition, a weak ferromagnetic behavior induced by an effective field due to exchange interactions between the ordered copper moments and the rare-earth ions was developed below the copper ordering temperature ($T_N(\text{Cu}) = 290 \text{ K}$). These results establishes the existence of ferromagnetic Gd layers in the ab-plane which are stacked antiferromagnetically along c-direction, indicating a quasi-two dimensional antiferromagnetic nature of Gd_2CuO_4 in concurrent with neutron diffraction results.

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