

# Vehement Competition of Multiple Superexchange Interactions in Cu(OH)F

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The mixed anion copper compound Cu(OH)F was studied in measurements of magnetic susceptibility, static and pulsed field magnetization, specific heat, X-band electron magnetic resonance and muon-spin spectroscopy. In variance with its layered structure, the magnetic behavior shows no evidence of low-dimensionality. Cu(OH)F reaches short range static antiferromagnetic order at  $T_N = 9.5 \div 11.5$  K and experiences the spin-flop transition at  $B \sim 3.5$  T. This behavior is in a sharp contrast with physical properties of earlier reported isostructural compound Cu(OH)Cl. The first principle calculations reveal highly competitive nature of ferromagnetic and antiferromagnetic superexchange interactions, the details being rather sensitive to choice of magnetic structure employed in the extraction of magnetic interaction. Rather broad anomaly in  $C_p(T)$  dependence at phase transition and smeared magnetization curve  $M(B)$  at low temperatures suggest static disorder in the ground state. Zero-field  $\mu$ SR data are consistent with Cu(OH)F experiencing a transition into a static magnetically disordered state.

## 1. Introduction

Among numerous building blocks of inorganic chemistry the polyhedral units of divalent copper in oxygen coordination attract most attention in a quest for low dimensional magnetism and superconductivity.<sup>1)</sup> The copper polyhedra appear to be heavily distorted due to Jahn – Teller effect inherent for electronic  $3d^9$  shell of  $Cu^{2+}$  ions. The pseudo-octahedral coordination units  $CuO_6$  may differ in their distortion. It could show symmetric or asymmetric shortening and elongation of basal and apical bonds. The positions of the apical ligands may heavily deviate from the normal to the basal plane and the basal plane itself may be bent. In this sense, better description for these units could be given in terms of pyramids  $CuO_5$ , pseudo-tetrahedral  $CuO_4$  units or planar squares  $CuO_4$ .<sup>2)</sup> The lower coordination of copper facilitates the reduced dimensionality of magnetic subsystem in the crystal structure. In complex oxides, the copper polyhedra linked through corners, edges or faces frequently form isolated chains or layers separated by nominally non-magnetic structural units. These quasi-one-dimensional and quasi-two-dimensional structures develop short-range correlations but may be prevented from reaching a long-range magnetic ordered state. The non-magnetic units providing rather efficient pathways for the exchange interactions help to overcome this difficulty which may result in formation of three-dimensional magnetic order at lowering temperature.<sup>3)</sup> Similarly the tendency to form low-dimensional magnetic structures is rather pronounced in complex cupric halides and the role of side groups is also important in these compounds.

Despite the fact, that both cupric oxide CuO and cupric halides  $CuX_2$  ( $X = F, Cl, Br$ ) have been the topic of research due to their low dimensional magnetic structures, there is renewed interest in these compounds. To some extent, this is due to observation of multiferroicity in these compounds.<sup>4-6)</sup> In spite of their chemical simplicity, the magnetism in cupric oxide and cupric halides is rather tricky. The structure of copper monoxide, CuO, is monoclinic of space group  $C2/c$ . Each copper is coordinated to four coplanar oxygens at the corners of a square. The  $CuO_4$  squares form infinite ribbons which are linked to adjacent chains by sharing corners.<sup>7)</sup> CuO reaches the magnetically ordered state through succession of three distinct antiferromagnetic phase transitions into

incommensurate collinear structure at  $T_{N3} = 229.8$  K, incommensurate spiral structure at  $T_{N2} = 229.2$  K and commensurate collinear structure at  $T_{N1} = 213$  K.<sup>8,9)</sup> The broad maximum in magnetic susceptibility found near 550 K has been treated as manifestation of linear chain antiferromagnetism.

Both  $\text{CuCl}_2$  and  $\text{CuBr}_2$  crystallize in a  $\text{CdI}_2$ -type structure with a monoclinic lattice of space group  $C2/m$ . This crystal structure consists of  $\text{CuCl}_2$  ( $\text{CuBr}_2$ ) slabs made up of  $\text{CuCl}_2$  ( $\text{CuBr}_2$ ) chains. The slabs are interconnected via van der Waals interactions. The copper chloride (bromide) shows one-dimensional antiferromagnetic behavior and reaches magnetically ordered state at  $T_N = 23.9$  K (73.5 K).<sup>10,11)</sup> The incommensurate spiral antiferromagnetic structure in these halides results from competing ferromagnetic nearest-neighbor and antiferromagnetic next-nearest-neighbor exchange interactions along the spin chains. The copper fluoride  $\text{CuF}_2$  crystallizes in a monoclinically distorted rutile structure of  $P2_1/c$  space group with square planar coordination of copper by fluorine. It is canted antiferromagnet with Neel temperature  $T_N = 69$  K.<sup>12)</sup> It was established that the antiferromagnetic order arises from the coupling of one-dimensional subunits which themselves exhibit a very small ferromagnetic coupling between Cu neighbor cations.<sup>13)</sup>

In the list of “simplest” cupric compounds are less investigated cupric hydroxide  $\text{Cu}(\text{OH})_2$  and mixed hydroxide halides  $\text{Cu}(\text{OH})\text{X}$ , which needs attention. The crystal structure of non-centrosymmetric  $\text{Cu}(\text{OH})_2$  is orthorhombic of  $\text{Cmc}2_1$  space group. The copper ions in this compound are in a strongly distorted octahedral environment. The chains of octahedra build up the corrugated layers by sharing edges of apical and equatorial hydroxide ions.<sup>14)</sup> Concerning magnetism in  $\text{Cu}(\text{OH})_2$  it is established only that it shows typical low-dimensional antiferromagnetic behavior,<sup>15)</sup> and orders at  $T_N = 21$  K.<sup>16)</sup>

The mixed anion copper based compounds are cupric hydroxide halides  $\text{Cu}(\text{OH})\text{Cl}$  and  $\text{Cu}(\text{OH})\text{F}$ . The copper hydroxide chloride crystallizes in monoclinic space group  $P2_1/c$ .<sup>17)</sup> It was found that the magnetic properties of  $\text{Cu}(\text{OH})\text{Cl}$  can be described by a quasi-two-dimensional spin model. Layers of divalent copper ions are arranged in a distorted Shastry-Sutherland lattice, i.e. square lattice with extra diagonal bonds that introduce frustration. The cupric hydroxide chloride orders antiferromagnetically at  $T_N = 11$  K.<sup>18)</sup> In this study, we present the first experimental and theoretical study of magnetism in  $\text{Cu}(\text{OH})\text{F}$ .

## 2. Experimental

The structure of  $\text{Cu}(\text{OH})\text{F}$  is shown in Fig. 1. It is formed by corrugated layers of edge-sharing  $\text{Cu}(\text{OH})_3\text{F}_3$  polyhedra in the  $ab$  plane which are interconnected by hydrogen bonds along the  $c$  axis. The ions of divalent copper  $\text{Cu}^{2+}$  are octahedrally coordinated, these units are heavily distorted due to the Jahn-Teller effect. The vertexes of octahedra are occupied by three fluorine ions  $\text{F}^{1-}$  and three oxygen ions  $\text{O}^{2-}$  belonging to hydroxyl groups  $\text{OH}^-$ .<sup>19)</sup>

The synthesis of copper (II) fluoride hydroxide,  $\text{Cu}(\text{OH})\text{F}$ , was carried out in accordance with the reaction  $\text{CuF}_2 + \text{H}_2\text{O} = \text{Cu}(\text{OH})\text{F} + \text{HF}$ . All treatments with solutions containing fluorine ions were performed in a Teflon ware. To prepare the precursor  $\text{CuF}_2 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$  the copper carbonate hydroxide,  $\text{Cu}_2(\text{OH})_2\text{CO}_3$ , was dissolved in the excess of hydrofluoric acid water solution under heating and stirring with subsequent filtration and evaporation upon cooling. Then, the hydrolysis of  $\text{CuF}_2 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$  was undertaken by the boiling and stirring of saturated water solution. It is important to note that throughout the process in the system remained an excess of solid  $\text{CuF}_2 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ . The final product as the precipitate of the light olive color was separated from the solution and washed repeatedly with water to remove residual  $\text{CuF}_2$ . Separation of the precipitate from the solution was carried out by centrifugation. In the final stage the precipitate was washed twice with acetone and dried in air. By powder X-ray diffraction (XRD), it was found that the resulting sample is a single phase. The XRD pattern did not contain impurity lines, the monoclinic unit cell parameters found as a result of indexing were in agreement with published data.<sup>19)</sup>

Electron spin resonance (ESR) studies were carried out using an X-band ESR spectrometer CMS 8400 (ADANI) ( $f \sim 9.4$  GHz,  $B \sim 0.7$  T) equipped with a low temperature mount, operating in the range  $T = 5\text{--}300$  K. The effective  $g$ -factor has been calculated with respect to a BDPA ( $a, g$  - bisdiphenylene- $b$ -phenylallyl) reference sample with  $g_{\text{et}} = 2.00359$ . The measurements of

thermodynamic properties, i.e. magnetic susceptibility  $\chi$ , magnetization  $M$  and specific heat  $C_p$  were done on pressed (not sintered) pellets using “Quantum Design” Physical Properties Measurements System PPMS-9T. The pulsed magnetic field measurements were done on home-made magnetometer and calibrated using the PPMS data. Zero-field  $\mu$ SR measurements were performed on a pressed pellet of Cu(OH)F at the GPS spectrometer at the Laboratory for Muon Spin Spectroscopy, Paul Scherrer Institute, Switzerland.

### 3. Electron spin resonance

The temperature evolution of the powder ESR spectra of CuOHF is shown in Fig. 2. Over the whole temperature range studied the ESR powder pattern is characteristic of  $\text{Cu}^{2+}$  ions with an anisotropic  $g$ -tensor, while the hyperfine structure expected from natural  $^{63}\text{Cu}$  and  $^{65}\text{Cu}$  isotopes ( $I=3/2$ ) is suppressed, presumably due to the presence of weak exchange interactions. The amplitude of signal increases monotonously upon cooling the sample down to  $\sim 15$  K, then the signal weakens in amplitude and eventually its degradation occurs, which is indicative of the onset of static magnetic order at low temperatures.

In order to evaluate the main ESR parameters of the line we have fitted the experimental spectra by sum of two components corresponding to the principal values of the  $g$ -tensor in accordance with Lorentzian function of the type

$$\frac{dP}{dB} \propto \frac{d}{dB} \left[ \frac{\Delta B}{\Delta B^2 + (B - B_r)^2} \right] \quad (1)$$

where  $P$  is the power absorbed in the ESR experiment,  $B$  is the applied magnetic field,  $B_r$  is the resonance field and  $\Delta B$  is the linewidth. The results of fitting are shown by red solid lines in Fig. 2. A representative fit of the ESR data is given in Fig. 3(a) with the resolved resonance modes denoted by dashed lines and their sum is shown by the solid line. The temperature dependence of the effective  $g$ -factor and linewidth derived from this fitting are shown in Fig. 3(b,c). The principal  $g$ -values of the anisotropic  $g$ -tensor shown in Fig. 3(b) remain almost temperature independent over the whole temperature range investigated with averaged values  $g_{\parallel} = 2.26 \pm 0.01$  and  $g_{\perp} = 2.12 \pm 0.01$  resulting in  $g = 2.17 \pm 0.01$ , which is consistent with typical values for  $\text{Cu}^{2+}$  ions in other copper oxides.<sup>20,21)</sup> The slight deviation of the  $g$ -factors from their high-temperature values below  $\sim 30$  K, see Fig. 3(b), is indicative of the development of internal fields upon approaching the ordered phase.

The ESR linewidth  $\Delta B_{\parallel}$  demonstrates just small deviation from the almost constant value only below  $\sim 40$  K (Fig. 2(c)), while the temperature dependence of linewidth for perpendicular component  $\Delta B_{\perp}$  of anisotropic spectra is more obvious. The latter one increases with decreasing temperature and passes through a maximum at  $\sim 40$  K. This behavior can be phenomenologically explained in terms of fluctuating internal field which adds to the applied field altering the resonance condition. The slowing down of the fluctuation rate of this field may produce a progressive broadening of the resonance line as the temperature decreases. The occurrence of such fluctuating fields might be traced to the noticeable short-range correlations in the system which is present at temperatures essentially higher the ordering temperature. The difference in behavior of  $\Delta B_{\parallel}$  (T) and  $\Delta B_{\perp}$  (T) indicates that the correlations in Cu(OH)F are evolving in an anisotropic manner. Typically, ESR spectra tend to broaden monotonically upon lowering temperature as spin correlations develop. Nevertheless, the linewidth  $\Delta B_{\perp}$  passes through a maximum and then decreases smoothly upon approaching the Néel temperature. Similar behavior was observed in  $\text{Cu}^{2+}$  based antiferromagnets,<sup>22,23)</sup> it may reflect the saturation of the spin correlation length and the depletion of the spin fluctuation density.<sup>24)</sup>

### 4. Thermodynamics

The temperature dependences of magnetic susceptibility  $\chi$  in various samples of Cu(OH)F are shown in Fig. 4. At elevated temperatures, the magnetic susceptibility of Cu(OH)F follows the modified Curie-Weiss law

$$\chi = \chi_0 + \frac{C}{T - \Theta} \quad (2)$$

which takes into account the presence of temperature-independent term  $\chi_0$ . The fit of  $\chi(T)$  dependence in the range  $T = 200 - 300$  K gives  $\chi_0 = 2.15 \times 10^{-5}$  emu/mol,  $C = 0.44$  emu/molK and  $\Theta = 15$  K. The temperature-independent contribution is due to summation of individual Pascal's constants of constituent ions in the structure of Cu(OH)F  $\chi_0^{\text{dia}} = \sim 3.2 \times 10^{-5}$  emu/mol,<sup>25)</sup> plus paramagnetic van Vleck contribution of  $\text{Cu}^{2+}$  ions  $\chi^{\text{vV}}$ . This contribution is about  $5.5 \times 10^{-5}$  emu/mol in cupric coordination compounds.<sup>26)</sup>

The value of Curie constant  $C$  defines the effective magnetic moment in Cu(OH)F as  $\mu_{\text{eff}} = 1.87 \mu_B$  which should be put into correspondence with the effective magnetic moment of free electron  $1.73 \mu_B$ . This, in turn, defines the  $g$  – factor as  $g = 2.17$  which is in good agreement with experimentally found values in ESR measurements at room temperature. The positive Weiss temperature  $\Theta$  indicates predominance of ferromagnetic interactions in the magnetic subsystem of Cu(OH)F at elevated temperatures. At lowering temperature, the contribution of antiferromagnetic exchange interactions rapidly strengthens, as shown in the Inset to Fig. 4.

In various samples of Cu(OH)F the temperature dependence of magnetic susceptibility demonstrates peak in the range  $T_N = 9.5 \div 11.5$  K which indicates formation of static magnetic order. The spread in Neel temperature we attribute to the presence of some non-reproducible disorder in the structure of Cu(OH)F. At  $T < T_N$ , the field dependences of static magnetization, shown in Fig. 5, evidence anomalies typical for the spin-flop transition in polycrystalline sample. The pulsed field measurements of magnetization up to  $B = 31$  T resulted in  $M_{\text{sat}} = 0.86 \mu_B/\text{f.u.}$  at 2.4 K, indicating significant reduction of saturated magnetic moment in the ground state of Cu(OH)F. While the spin-flop transition at 2 K can be identified at  $\sim 3.5$  T, no sharp spin-flip transition is seen in  $M$  vs.  $B$  dependence, as shown in the Inset to Fig. 5.

The transition into magnetically ordered state is further confirmed by specific heat measurements  $C_p(T)$ , as shown in Fig. 6. In contrast to standard lambda-type peak the phase transition in Cu(OH)F is seen as relatively broad anomaly at low temperatures. With increasing magnetic field the transition shifts to lower temperatures indicating rapid suppression of antiferromagnetic order. Fitting the phonon contribution by polynomials and extracting it from  $C_p(T)$  curve allows estimating the magnetic entropy. The temperature dependence of magnetic entropy  $S$  is shown in the lower Inset to Fig. 6. It saturates only at the temperatures four times exceeding the ordering temperature. The magnetic entropy released in the whole temperature range  $4.44$  J/molK constitute about 80% of the expectancy value  $R \ln 2 = 5.76$  J/molK. This roughly corresponds to reduction of  $\text{Cu}^{2+}$  magnetic moment seen in magnetization data. The magnetic phase diagram of Cu(OH)F extracted from  $M(B)$  and  $C_p(T)$  dependences is shown in the upper Inset to Fig. 6.

## 5. Muon-spin spectroscopy

The temperature evolution of the muon spin polarization  $P(t)$  in Fig. 7 shows a defined increase of the relaxation rate around 10 K indicative of the onset of static magnetism. Furthermore, the appearance of a minimum in the depolarization curves at lowest temperatures together with the increase to a 1/3 tail at longer times unambiguously proves the existence of static local fields. In a magnetically ordered polycrystalline sample  $1/3^{\text{rd}}$  of the muon spin component points along  $B_{\text{loc}}$  due to the powder average and does not undergo precession while the remaining  $2/3^{\text{rd}}$  component of the spin precesses around  $B_{\text{loc}}$ . Magnetic disorder results in a distribution of local magnetic fields  $B_{\text{loc}}$  and the precessing part of the polarization is damped with the transverse relaxation rate  $\lambda_T$ . If the magnetic disorder is strong  $\lambda_T$  becomes large and the oscillations over-damped. The phase transition is however still visible from the sharp increase of  $\lambda_T$ .<sup>27)</sup> Because of the absence of a clear oscillation signal in Cu(OH)F the order can be described as rather short-ranged. The fact that a local minimum is visible in  $P(t)$  before the oscillations become over-damped allows to estimate a magnetic correlation length that is larger than about ten nearest neighbor Cu-Cu distances.<sup>28)</sup>

To validate these observations the muon spin polarization measured in the temperature range 1.6 – 21.2 K was fitted to the following polarization function

$$P(t) = \frac{1}{3}e^{-\lambda_L t} + \frac{2}{3}e^{-(\lambda_T t)^\beta} \cos(\gamma_\mu B_{loc} t). \quad (3)$$

Here,  $B_{loc}$  is internal field at the muon site,  $\gamma_\mu$  is the gyromagnetic ratio of the muon,  $\lambda_T$  and  $\lambda_L$  are the transverse and longitudinal relaxation rates respectively and  $\beta$  is the stretching exponent of the former. The fitted muon spin polarizations are shown by the black lines in Fig. 7. The transverse relaxation rate  $\lambda_T$  as a function of temperature is plotted in the inset of Fig. 7 together with the development of the internal magnetic field  $B_{loc}$ . The onset of static magnetism is clearly visible from the increase of  $\lambda_T$  and the development of a static internal field at the muon site below 10 K. The stretching exponent of the transverse relaxation rate approaches  $\beta=0.5$  at the transition temperature showing a root exponential relaxation while it is almost Gaussian ( $\beta \approx 2$ ) below and above the transition temperature. The relaxation below 10 K is explained by the static local fields while the relaxation above the transition is ascribed to a strong dipolar coupling between the muon spin and the fluorine nuclear spin. Positive muons implanted into materials containing F<sup>-</sup> ions forms an F- $\mu$ -F bond with a characteristic relaxation function.<sup>29)</sup> Additional dynamic fluctuations observed by the muon spin are described by a damping of non-precessing part of the polarization with the longitudinal relaxation rate  $\lambda_L$ . As expected, critical fluctuations near the phase transition are evident from an increase of  $\lambda_L$  at about 10 K in Cu(OH)F.

## 6. First Principles Calculations

In order to gain microscopic understanding, we carried out first principles density functional theory (DFT) calculations of Cu(OH)F. Calculations have been carried out using plane wave basis as implemented within Vienna Abinitio Simulation Package (VASP)<sup>30)</sup> as well as muffin-tin orbital (MTO) based N-th order MTO (NMTO)<sup>31)</sup> and linear MTO (LMTO)<sup>32)</sup> calculations implemented in Stuttgart code.

The non-spin polarized density of states calculated within generalized gradient approximation (GGA) of exchange-correlation functional shows half-filled Cu  $d_{x^2-y^2}$  states crossing the Fermi level which is strongly admixed with O- $p$  and F- $p$  states, as shown in Fig. 7. Inclusion of missing correlation effect beyond GGA (+U) and spin-polarization makes the system insulating in agreement with experimental observation.

Using NMTO-downfolding procedure, we construct the effective Cu  $d_{x^2-y^2}$  Wannier function by keeping active only Cu  $d_{x^2-y^2}$  degrees of freedom, and integrating out all other degrees of freedom. Fig. 8 shows the plot of this Wannier function which has the central part shaped according to  $d_{x^2-y^2}$  symmetry and the tails shaped according to integrated out O- $p$  and F- $p$  degrees of freedom. Finite mixing with H- $s$  character makes the lobes of the O- $p$  like tails asymmetric. We further see that the wavefunction extends to neighboring layers, in terms of weights at O and F in the neighboring planes suggesting rather three dimensional nature of the compound. Construction of the real-space Hamiltonian in the effective Cu  $d_{x^2-y^2}$  Wannier function basis provides the information of effective Cu-Cu hopping interactions which appears to be rather long ranged. The predominant interactions are,  $t_1$ , the inplane Cu-Cu interaction via two O,  $t_2$ , the inplane Cu-Cu coupling via one F and one O,  $t_3$ , the inplane Cu-Cu interaction via two F, and two out of plane interactions,  $t_5$  and  $t_6$ , which proceeds through interaction between H in a given plane and F or O in the neighboring plane.  $t_4$ , the inplane Cu-Cu coupling via one F and one O forming a part of the uniform chain, is found to be small. The corresponding magnetic interactions, J1 – J6, are shown in Fig. 9. We carried out total energy calculations of a 2 $\times$ 1 $\times$ 2 supercell containing a total of 16 Cu atoms for 12 different spin configurations in GGA+U scheme with choice of U = 8 eV. Different J values were extracted by mapping the total energies of the different magnetic configurations into a Heisenberg model. The precise values of J's turn out to rather sensitive to choice of magnetic configurations suggesting highly competitive nature of different magnetic interactions. The general trend is found as follows, J1 is of antiferromagnetic (AFM) nature, J2 is AFM while J3 is ferromagnetic (FM). The out of plane interaction J6 is FM while J5 is AFM. This clearly shows the presence of competing FM and AFM interactions. Calculating  $J_{eff}$  defined as  $\sum J_i z_i$  ( $z_i$  being the number of neighbors for a given interaction) we find a small AFM value

of  $J_{\text{eff}}$ , ( $\sim 2$ -5 meV) the precise value being dependent on the precise choice of set of  $J$ 's. This stresses once again the delicate balance between competing interactions present in this compound. This should give an ordering temperature of the order of tens of Kelvin, as found experimentally.

## 7. Conclusion

Basing on available data it is difficult to judge which magnetic configuration is realized in  $\text{Cu}(\text{OH})\text{F}$ . Rather broad anomaly in  $C_p(T)$  dependence at phase transition and smeared magnetization saturation curve  $M(B)$  at low temperatures suggest some disorder in the ground state. The presented zero-field  $\mu\text{SR}$  data are consistent with  $\text{Cu}(\text{OH})\text{F}$  experiencing a transition into a static but magnetically short range state. The critical temperature obtained in  $\mu\text{SR}$  measurements is slightly lower than the center of the broad maxima observed in the specific heat and dc-susceptibility data at around 11.5 K.

Surprisingly, the properties of isostructural compounds,  $\text{Cu}(\text{OH})\text{Cl}$  and  $\text{Cu}(\text{OH})\text{F}$ , appear to be quite different. In cupric hydroxide chloride the anomalies in magnetic susceptibility and specific heat are quite sharp as compared to those in cupric hydroxide fluoride. Unlike situation in  $\text{Cu}(\text{OH})\text{F}$ , the specific heat anomaly in  $\text{Cu}(\text{OH})\text{Cl}$  is virtually non-sensitive to magnetic field and the magnetization is very far from saturation even at 60 T.<sup>18)</sup> Tentatively, this can be attributed at least partially to the difference of O/F and O/Cl ionic size ratio which allows or prevents the mutual substitutions.

One more mixed anion cupric compound to be compared with is  $\text{Cu}_2(\text{OH})_3\text{Cl}$  which exists in three distinct polymorphs, atacamite,<sup>33)</sup> botallackite<sup>34)</sup> and clinoatacamite.<sup>35)</sup> Atacamite undergoes an antiferromagnetic transition at  $T_N = 9$  K having disordered magnetic ground state. In contrast, botallackite possesses long-range magnetic order below  $T_N = 7.2$  K. The clinoatacamite undergoes an antiferromagnetic transition at  $T_N = 18.1$  K, below 6.4 K it transits into a disordered spin-glass-like state. The variations in copper coordination and geometric frustration of the quantum  $\text{Cu}^{2+}$  spins are suggested to be responsible for the formation of these disordered and ordered phases.<sup>36,37)</sup>

Overall, the magnetism of mixed anion transition metal compounds represents largely uninvestigated field. The chemical disorder with regards to positions of halide and hydroxide ions may provoke magnetic disorder at low temperatures. The powerful microscopic probes including nuclear magnetic resonance and neutron scattering seems to be necessary to establish quantum ground states in these seemingly simple compounds.

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### Figure captions

Fig. 1. The crystal structure of Cu(OH)F in polyhedral representation in  $bc$  plane. The hydrogen ions are shown by green unbounded circles.

Fig. 2. Evolution of the ESR spectra with temperature in Cu(OH)F: the circles are experimental data, the lines are fits of the data as described in the text.

Fig. 3. (a) The representative example of ESR spectra (circles) decomposition at 40 K with the fits to the data as described in the text shown by the lines. The dashed and dash-dotted lines show the individual Lorentzian fit components and the solid line is the sum of two components. (b) The temperature dependence of principal values of  $g$ -tensor. (c) The temperature dependence of the ESR linewidth for two resolved components of the ESR spectra in Cu(OH)F.

Fig. 4. The temperature dependences of magnetic susceptibility in various samples of Cu(OH)F at  $B = 0.1$  T. The fit by Curie-Weiss law is shown by solid line. Inset: the temperature dependences of Curie constant  $C = (\chi - \chi_0)/(T - \Theta)$ . The dashed line represents the limiting value  $C = 0.44$  emu/molK.

Fig. 5. The field dependences of magnetization in Cu(OH)F in the range  $T = 2 - 20$  K. Inset: the pulsed field magnetization curve at  $T = 2.4$  K.

Fig. 6. The temperature dependences of specific heat in Cu(OH)F taken at various magnetic fields in the range  $B = 0 - 9$  T. The dashed line represents the phonon contribution. Lower Inset: the temperature dependence of magnetic entropy  $S$ . Upper Inset: the magnetic phase diagram of Cu(OH)F.

Fig. 7. Time-dependent muon spin polarization  $P(t)$  of Cu(OH)F at selected temperatures measured in zero-field. Solid lines are fits to the data using equation (3). The inset shows the temperature dependence of the fit parameters internal field  $B_{loc}$  and transverse relaxation rate  $\lambda_T$ .

Fig. 8. Non-spin polarized GGA density of states of Cu(OH)F projected onto Cu  $d$ , O  $p$ , F  $p$  and H  $s$  states. Zero of the energy is set at Fermi energy.

Fig. 9. The plot of effective Cu  $d_{x^2-y^2}$  Wannier function. The oppositely signed lobes of the wavefunction are colored as orange and violet. Plotted is the isovalue surface. The black, red, cyan, small green balls represent positions of Cu, O, F and H in the structure.

Fig. 10. Various intra- and inter-layer Cu-Cu magnetic exchanges in Cu(OH)F. The black, red, cyan and green balls represent Cu, O, F and H atoms.



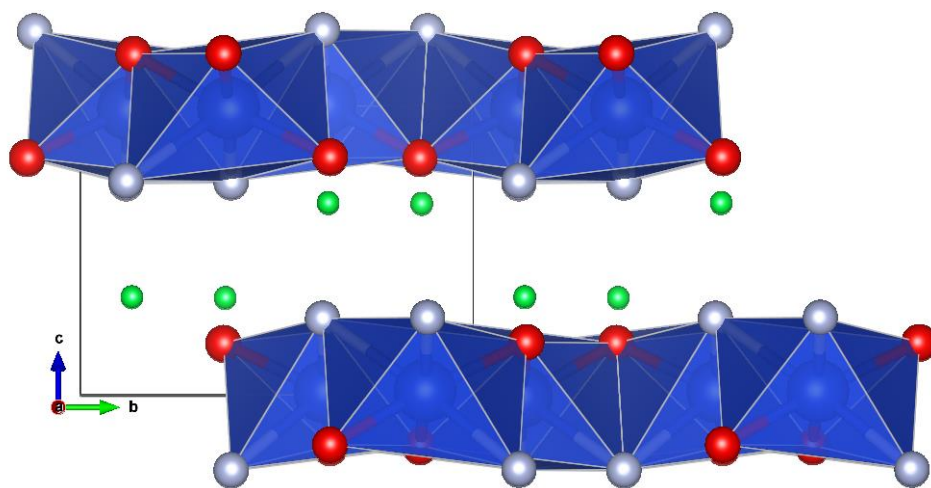


Fig. 1.

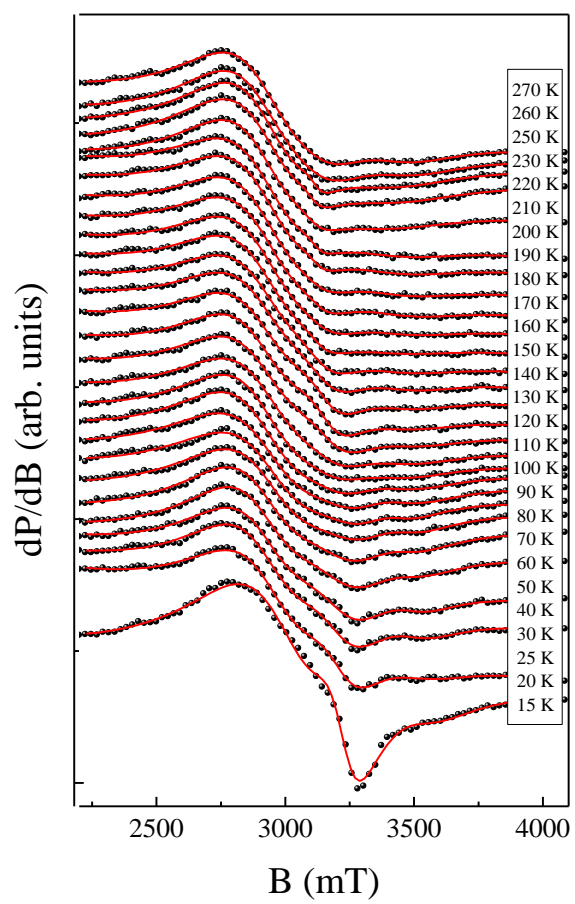


Fig. 2.

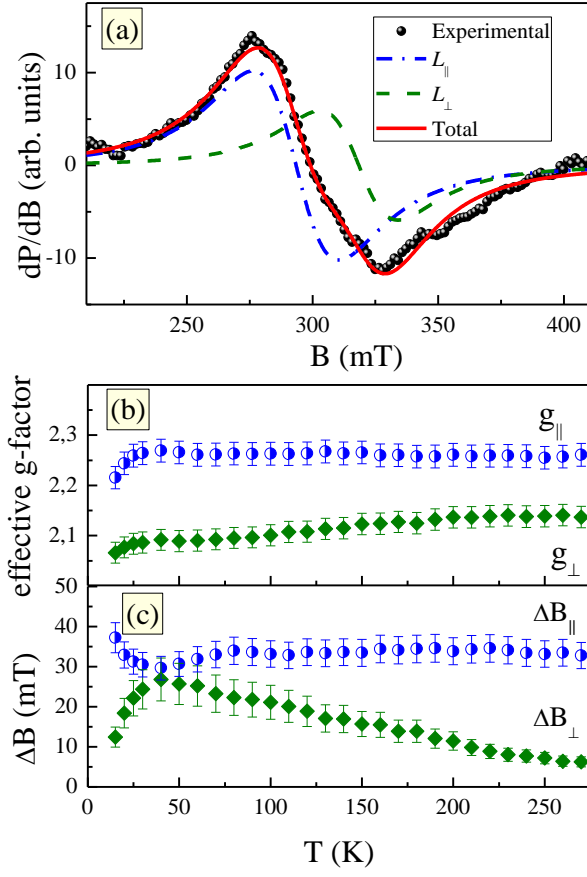


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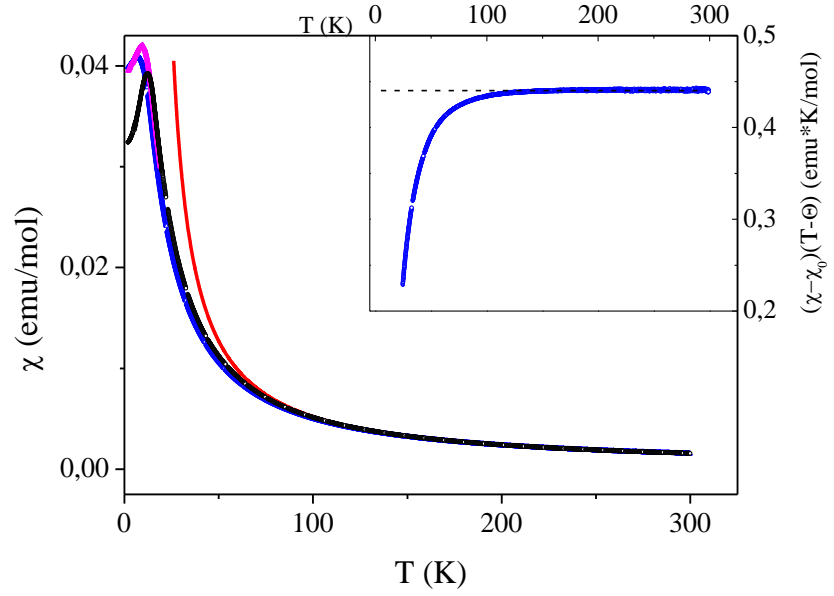


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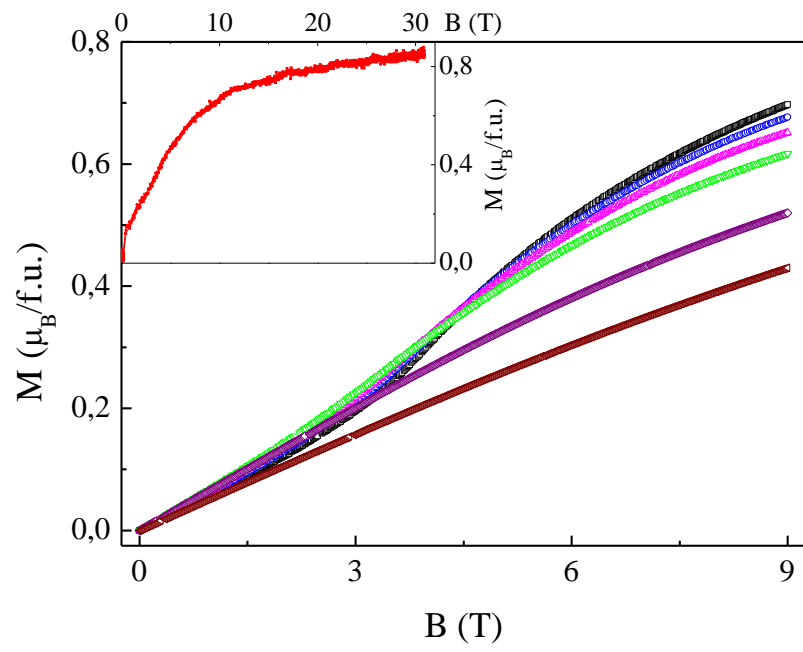


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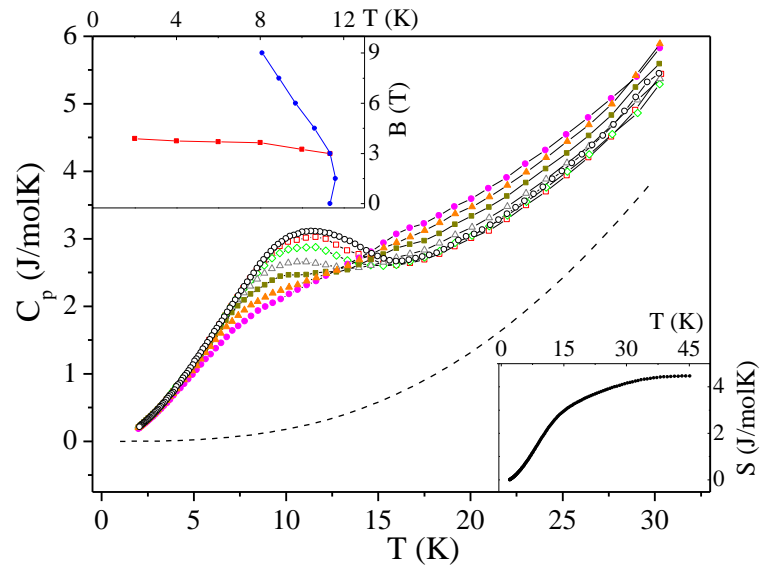


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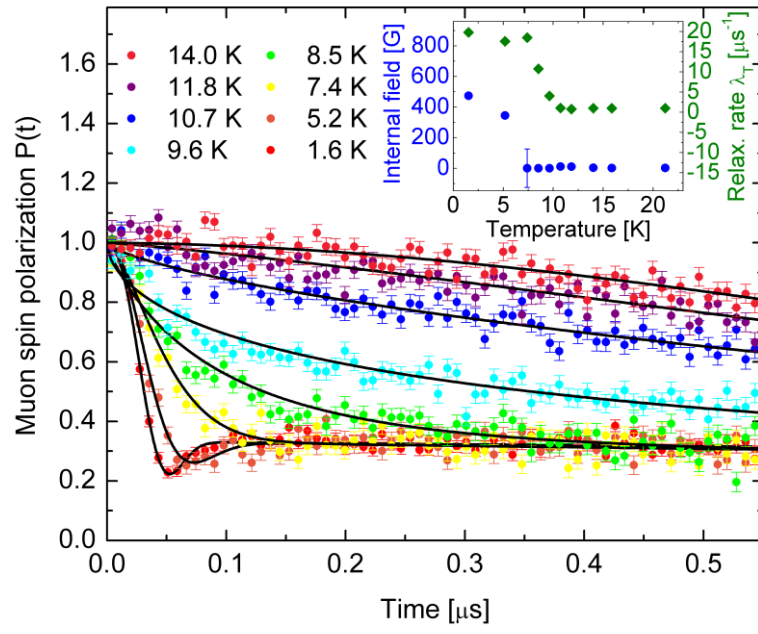


Fig. 7.

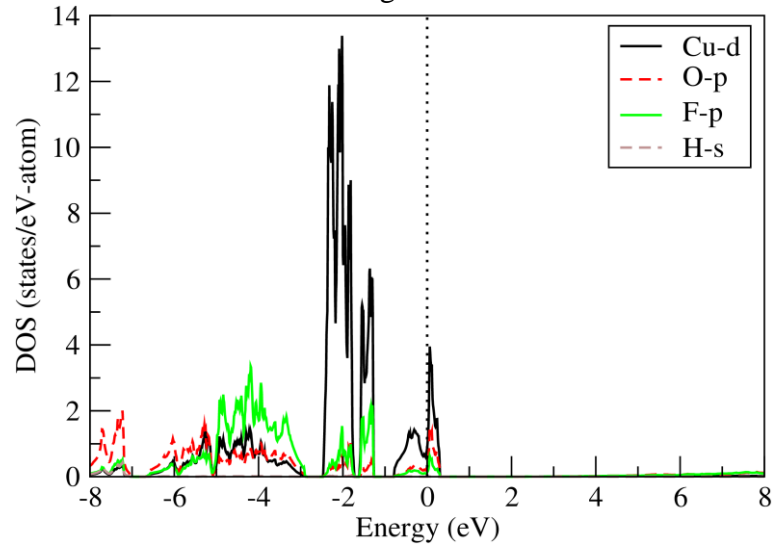


Fig. 8.

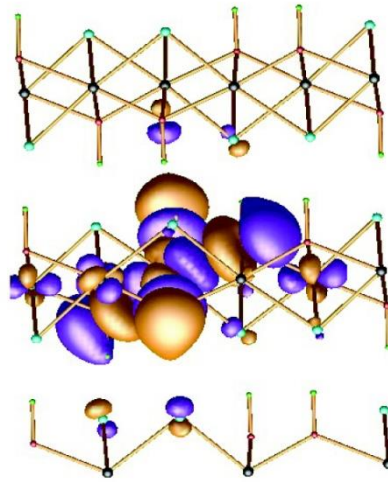


Fig. 9.

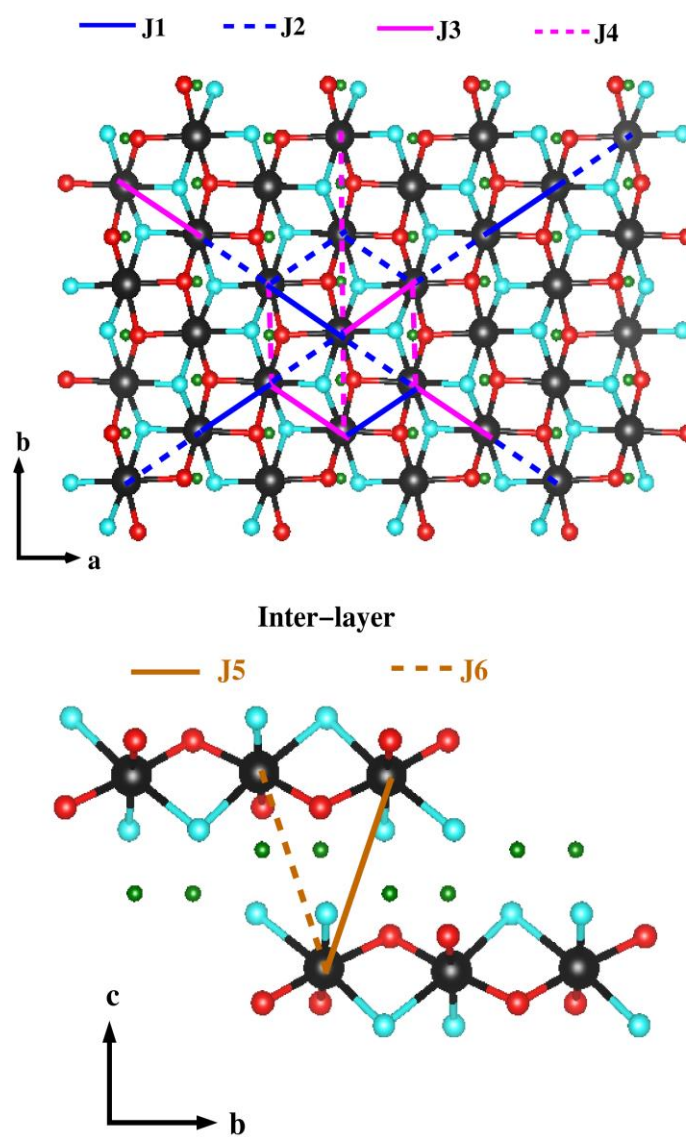


Fig. 10.