

# Water-induced Diamond Formation at Earth's Core-Mantle Boundary

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## Key Points

- Water reacts with iron-carbon alloy to form diamond at the  $P$ – $T$  conditions expected for Earth's core-mantle boundary.
- Some of Earth's mantle carbon may come from the core through water-induced reactions at the core-mantle boundary.
- Diamonds formed at the core-mantle boundary may result in high seismic velocity structures in the region.

## 23 **Abstract**

24 The carbon and water cycles in the Earth's interior are linked to key planetary processes, such as  
25 mantle melting, degassing, chemical differentiation, and advection. However, the role of water in  
26 the carbon exchange between the mantle and core is not well known. Here, we show experimental  
27 results of a reaction between  $\text{Fe}_3\text{C}$  and  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$  at pressures and temperatures of the deep mantle and  
28 core-mantle boundary (CMB). The reaction produces diamond,  $\text{FeO}$ , and  $\text{FeH}_x$ , suggesting that  
29 water can liberate carbon from the core in the form of diamond ("core carbon extraction") while  
30 the core gains hydrogen, if subducted water reaches to the CMB. Therefore, Earth's deep water  
31 and carbon cycles can be linked. The extracted core carbon can explain a significant amount of the  
32 present-day mantle carbon. Also, if diamond can be collected by mantle flow in the region, it can  
33 result in unusually high seismic-velocity structures.

## 34 **Plain Language Summary**

35 Carbon plays a vital role in geological processes occurring in the Earth's interior. While most  
36 carbon on Earth exists in its core, whether or not the core carbon can be added to the mantle is  
37 unclear due to the lack of knowledge of possible carbon transfer mechanism at the core-mantle  
38 boundary (CMB). We conducted experiments by reproducing the extreme pressure and  
39 temperature conditions of the CMB. Our experiments show that water can react with the metallic  
40 iron core and liberate carbon as diamond, suggesting an important relationship between Earth's  
41 water and carbon cycles on Earth. In addition, our result predicts possible existence of diamond in  
42 some regions of the deepest mantle.

## 43 **1 Introduction**

44 Distribution of carbon in its interior provides important clues for understanding the chemical  
45 evolution of the Earth. During the accretion processes, a vast majority of Earth's carbon could  
46 have been added to the core because of carbon's siderophile nature (Dasgupta et al., 2013; Fischer  
47 et al., 2020). The preferential partitioning of carbon into the metallic core predicts a very small

amount of residual carbon in the silicate mantle after core formation (1–5 ppm; Dasgupta et al., 2013). However, the estimated carbon abundance in the present-day mantle is much greater (~120 ppm for pyrolite; McDonough and Sun, 1995). It remains unclear how the mantle has gained much more carbon (Dasgupta et al., 2013).

Several models for carbon replenishment to the mantle have been proposed to explain the present-day mantle inventory of carbon. For example, the additional carbon might have been delivered through a volatile-rich late veneer that occurred after core formation (Wänke, 1981). This model has difficulties explaining the difference in carbon isotopic composition between CI chondritic materials and the average mantle (Kerridge, 1985; Deines, 2002) and the superchondritic H/C ratio of the bulk silicate Earth in present day (Hirschmann and Dasgupta, 2009). Alternatively, carbon ingassing might have occurred after core formation. Carbon in an early atmosphere might have dissolved into an early magma ocean and precipitated graphite, diamond, or carbide, increasing the amount of the mantle carbon (Dasgupta et al., 2013). Also, some amount of carbon-bearing metallic melts might have been trapped in the mantle if incomplete segregation of metallic liquid from the mantle occurred during core formation (Dasgupta et al., 2013).

The core is the largest carbon reservoir within the Earth (McDonough, 2003), although estimates of the amount of carbon in the core vary, e.g., between 0.09–4 wt% (McDonough, 2003; Dasgupta and Walker, 2008; Wood et al., 2013; Dasgupta et al., 2013; Fischer et al., 2020). Therefore, core carbon loss to the mantle through CMB chemical reactions after core formation could be a viable source for the observed excess mantle carbon. Dasgupta et al. (2013) predicted that if deeply subducted hydrous minerals break down and release water at the CMB, water may react with the iron core. They further speculated that the reaction would form  $\text{FeH}_x$  and liberate carbon from the iron core by forming  $\text{CO}$ ,  $\text{CO}_2$ , or  $\text{FeCO}_3$ . This hypothesis suggests that Earth's carbon, hydrogen, and water cycles may be linked at the CMB. Experiments have demonstrated the plausibility of hydrous minerals in subducting slabs, such as  $\text{AlOOH}$  (Piet et al., 2020),  $\text{FeOOH}$  (Nishi et al., 2017), phase H (Nishi et al., 2014), and hydrous  $\text{SiO}_2$  (Lin et al., 2020; Nisr et al., 2020). Thus, subduction processes can result in the transport and release of water in the deepest mantle, although dehydration processes at the CMB could be more complicated than what has been observed in experiments on simplified chemical systems.

H, O, and C are all light element candidates for the core (e.g., Hirose et al., 2013), which could affect one another's solubility in the region. Experiments showed that  $C_nH_{(2n+2)}$  paraffin reacts with Fe and forms  $Fe_3C$ , which was then replaced by  $FeH_x$  + diamond at 64 GPa and 1,650 K (Narygina et al., 2011) and up to 127 GPa and >2,100 K (Hirose et al., 2019). Hirose et al. (2019) also showed that the same reaction occurs even with liquid Fe at 58–66 GPa and 3,220–3,710 K. It thus appears that hydrogen's strong affinity to iron could lower the solubility of C in the core. However, whether iron carbide directly react with water to liberate carbon at pressure and temperature ( $P$ – $T$ ) conditions relevant to the CMB has never been tested by experiments. In order to understand the possibility of carbon exchange between the core and the mantle induced by the presence of water at the CMB, we conducted experiments on reactions between iron carbide ( $Fe_3C$ ) and water ( $H_2O$ ) at 70–140 GPa and up to 4,050 K (thus bracketing the CMB pressure of 136 GPa) using in-situ X-ray diffraction (XRD) in laser-heated diamond anvil cells (LHDACs). The experiments found formation of diamond from reaction between iron carbide and water, opening up a possibility for the chemical exchange between the core and the mantle.

## 2 Materials and Methods

$Fe_3C$  was synthesized at high pressures using the multi-anvil press at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. The starting material was a mixture of Fe powder (99.9+% purity, Aldrich Chemical Company) and graphite powder (99.9995% purity, Alfa Aesar Company) with an atomic ratio Fe:C = 3:1. The mixture was loaded into a MgO capsule of an 18/12 multi-anvil cell assembly, which was then compressed to 3 GPa and heated at 1,300 K for 8 hours to synthesize  $Fe_3C$ . The  $Fe_3C$  sample was then analyzed by electron microprobe to confirm its purity and composition. The synthesized  $Fe_3C$  was loaded as ~10  $\mu$ m-thick foils in the symmetric-type LHDACs with 150 and 200  $\mu$ m-sized culets using a micro-manipulator (Microsupport Axis Pro SS) at Arizona State University (ASU). Distilled water was loaded as a pressure medium.

In-situ X-ray diffraction (XRD) experiments (Table 1) were conducted at sector 13-IDD of the GeoSoilEnviroConsortium (GSECARS) in the Advanced Photon Source (APS; Prakapenka et al., 2008). X-ray energy was 30 keV. The X-ray diffraction images were collected using a Dectris

**Table 1: Experiment run table for in-situ X-ray diffraction experiments at high pressure ( $P$ ) and temperature ( $T$ ) conditions.**

Sample #	$P$ (GPa)	$T$ (K)	Phase assemblage	$V_{\text{FeO}}$ ( $\text{\AA}^3$ )	$V_{\text{diamond}}$ ( $\text{\AA}^3$ )
Sample #1 <sup>†</sup>	71-74(8)	1,700-1,900	Fe <sub>3</sub> C, FeO, d,f-FeH, C	62.68(4)	
Sample #2	92(8)	2,000	Fe <sub>3</sub> C, FeO, d,f-FeH, C	59.58(1)	
	117(8)	2,200	Fe <sub>3</sub> C, FeO, d,f-FeH, C	56.42(0)	
	127(8)	2,000	Fe <sub>3</sub> C, FeO, d-FeH, C	55.62(1)	
Sample #3 <sup>‡</sup>	120(8)	2,002	Fe <sub>3</sub> C, FeO, d-FeH, C	55.96(1)	38.0(4)
	120(8)	1,998	Fe <sub>3</sub> C, FeO, d-FeH, C	56.02(1)	38.0(4)
	125(13)	2,723	py, f-FeH, C, *		38.1(4)
	126(13)	2,758	py, f-FeH, C, *		38.0(4)
	133(13)	2,818	py, f-FeH, C, *		37.8(4)
	130(13)	2,970	py, f-FeH, C, *		38.0(4)
	131(13)	3,332	py, f-FeH, C, *		38.0(4)
	138(14)	3,862	py, f-FeH, C, *		37.9(4)
	140(14)	4,051	py, f-FeH, C, *		37.9(4)

Pressure was calculated based on unit-cell volume ( $V$ ) of FeO (B1) or diamond by using their equation of state parameters (Fischer et al., 2011; Dewaele et al., 2008). Temperature uncertainties are estimated to be <200 K. d-FeH: dhcp-FeH<sub>x</sub>, C: diamond, f-FeH: fcc-FeH<sub>x</sub>, py: pyrite-type FeO<sub>2</sub>H<sub>x</sub>. \*: X-ray diffraction lines which can be assigned to either dhcp-FeH<sub>x</sub> or tetragonal FeH<sub>2</sub>. <sup>†</sup>Pressure and temperature were maintained in the ranges throughout the sample. <sup>‡</sup> Temperature was increased at the same spot over the runs.

Pilatus detector and analyzed using DIOPTAS (Clemens et al., 2015) and PeakPo (Shim et al., 2017). The exposure time was 5–10 seconds. Typical X-ray and laser beam diameters were ~5 and

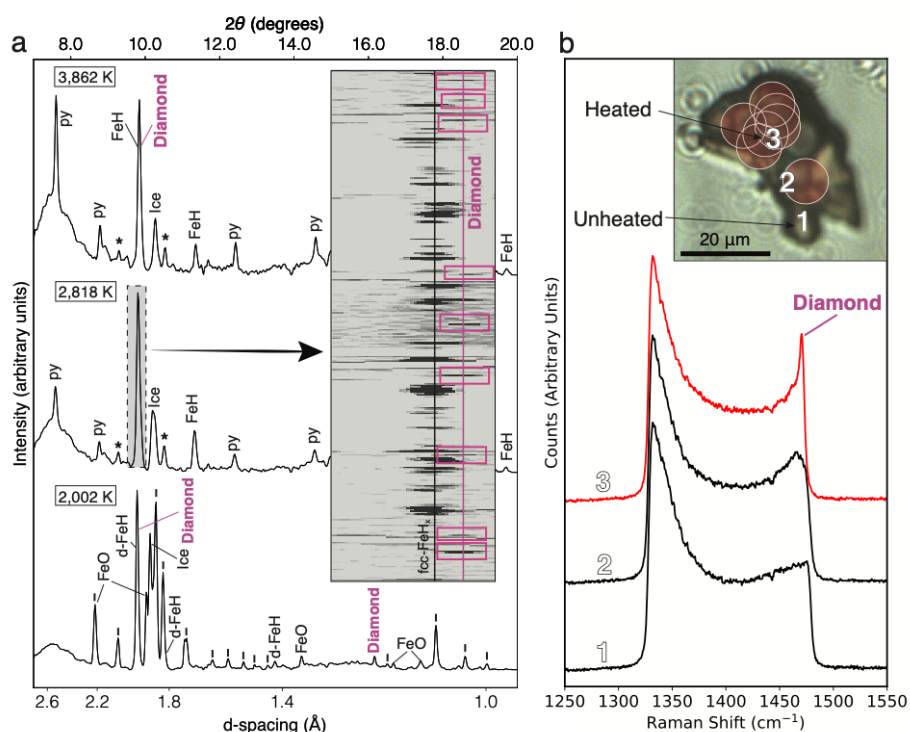
20  $\mu\text{m}$ , respectively. The heating was conducted with a pre-set laser power which was directly applied at the start of the heating and maintained for 5 seconds each heating cycle. This heating method reduces the risk of overheating the diamond anvils particularly with water as a pressure medium, preventing LHDACs from failure during high-temperature heating. For temperature estimations, we fit the thermal radiation spectra measured from both sides of the sample to a Planck gray-body equation for estimation of temperature. The temperature uncertainty is estimated to be  $\sim 200$  K considering the temperature reading difference between the two sides of the sample and the intrinsic uncertainty from the spectroradiometry.

At relatively low temperatures ( $< 2,200$  K), pressure was estimated using the equation of state (EOS) parameters of FeO in NaCl-type structure (Fischer et al., 2011). At higher temperatures ( $> 2,700$  K) for Sample #3 (Table 1), reliable pressures were difficult to estimate, unlike at the lower temperatures where robust diffraction lines of FeO are available. In this case, pressure was estimated from the EOS of diamond (Dewaele et al., 2008) based on its 111 peak position, which was identified more clearly than at lower temperatures. The calculations yield pressures up to 140 GPa (Table 1). The calculated pressures using the diamond at 2,000 K agree within 0.2–1.3% with those estimated using the NaCl-type FeO in the same heating spot in Sample #3. Given the fact that pressures of some runs are estimated from a single diffraction line, we assigned conservative uncertainty (10%) for the pressures at temperatures over 2,700 K. The samples could not be recovered to room conditions because of failure of diamond anvils during decompression or sample loss when  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$  converts to liquid during decompression to  $\sim 1$  bar.

Micro-Raman measurements were conducted for identifying diamond in Sample #1 at high pressures. A solid-state (frequency doubled Nd:YAG) laser was used with a 532 nm monochromatic beam at ASU. The laser power at the sample was  $\sim 3$  mW. The spectrometer was calibrated using the neon emission spectra. Measurements were conducted using an 1,800 grooves/mm grating. We calibrated pixel-to-pixel sensitivity differences in the charge-coupled device (CCD) detector using the spectrum of a glass with well-known fluorescence intensities at different wavenumbers. The exposure time for each spectrum measurement was 1–10 seconds. Pressure was determined using a diamond anvil Raman gauge (Akahama and Kawamura, 2006).

### 3 Results

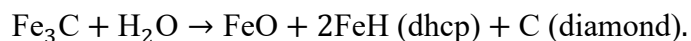
XRD peaks of  $\text{Fe}_3\text{C}$  and ice X were confirmed at high pressures before laser heating. The diffraction peaks were broad because of differential stress. After laser heating of the samples, we found two sets of mineral assemblages depending on heating temperature. At lower temperatures of 1,700–2,200 K at 71–127 GPa (Samples #1 and 2; Table 1), we observed the diffraction peaks of  $\text{FeO}$  (NaCl-type, B1), dhcp- $\text{FeH}_x$ , and possibly diamond (Fig. 1a and S1). Some XRD patterns show fcc- $\text{FeH}_x$  as an additional phase with relatively weak peak intensities (Table 1). The diffraction peaks of  $\text{Fe}_3\text{C}$  were also observed as sharp peaks. The characteristic diffraction line of diamond 111 was difficult to separate from that of dhcp- $\text{FeH}_x$  004. A run at 120 GPa and 2,002 K showed a clear diamond peak at  $2\theta \sim 16^\circ$ , which can be indexed as the 022 line (Fig. 1a).



**Figure 1: (a) In-situ X-ray diffraction (XRD) patterns of the sample at 120–138 GPa and 2,002–3,862 K in laser-heated diamond anvil cell. X-ray energy was 30 keV. The background is subtracted. Py: pyrite-type  $\text{FeOOH}_x$ ; FeH: fcc- $\text{FeH}_x$ ; Ice: Ice X; d-FeH: dhcp- $\text{FeH}_x$ . The black vertical ticks represent  $\text{Fe}_3\text{C}$ . The asterisks indicate a minor iron hydride phase (dhcp- $\text{FeH}_x$  or  $\text{FeH}_2$ ). The inset displays a 2-D diffraction image corresponding to the peak in the grey box for  $2\theta$  angles of (horizontal**

axis) 9.5–10° and azimuth angles of 0–360° (vertical axis). The observed diamond 111 (the magenta rectangles) is clearly distinguished from the fcc-FeH<sub>x</sub> line. (b) High-pressure Raman spectra of the sample at 54.9 GPa and 300 K. The sample was synthesized at 60 GPa and 2,000 K. The semi-transparent red circles in the inset optical image represent heated areas. The locations of the measured spectra are numbered in the inset. The sharp peak of the red spectrum at 1470 cm<sup>-1</sup> is from diamond crystals formed by the reaction between Fe<sub>3</sub>C and H<sub>2</sub>O in the heated part of the sample.

We further examined the sample synthesized at ~72 GPa and ~1,800 K in Raman spectroscopy (Sample #1; Table 1). In order to reduce the signal from the diamond anvils and enhance the signal from diamond formed from the reaction in the sample, we used the confocal micro-Raman technique which blocks out-of-focus light in signal detection. The strong peak at 1,320 cm<sup>-1</sup> is from the uncompressed part of the diamond anvils (Fig. 1b). The right-hand side of the peak extends up to 1,470 cm<sup>-1</sup>, which is from the compressed part of the diamond anvils. Because the diamond inside the sample is at a higher pressure than diamond anvil, the peak would appear at the end of the spectral feature (~1,470 cm<sup>-1</sup>). The heated areas clearly showed a sharp peak at the edge of the spectral feature, whereas the unheated areas do not show such a peak (Fig. 1b), demonstrating the existence of diamond formed from the reaction between Fe<sub>3</sub>C and H<sub>2</sub>O. Raman spectra measured during decompression also showed the consistent results at 64, 55, 41, and 6 GPa (Fig. S2). At a temperature range of 1,700–2,200 K, the reaction can be summarized as:



At higher temperatures of 2,700–4,050 K (Sample #3), we observed the formation of pyrite-type FeOOH<sub>x</sub> (py-FeOOH<sub>x</sub>), fcc-FeH<sub>x</sub>, and diamond at 125–140 GPa (Fig. 1a). The diffraction lines of py-FeOOH<sub>x</sub> and fcc-FeH<sub>x</sub> are robustly observed. There are two unassigned diffraction peaks with weak intensities (labeled with “\*” in Fig. 1a), which can be indexed with either dhcp-FeH<sub>x</sub> or FeH<sub>2</sub> (Fig. 1a). In either case, it is likely that the thermal gradient during laser heating promoted an appearance of additional iron hydride as a minor phase. At 3,860 K, the diffraction patterns remain similar to those measured at 2,720 K (Fig. 1a), but with stronger intensity in general, suggesting higher degree of reaction. The observation of diffraction lines for ice X is likely due to the axial thermal gradients as H<sub>2</sub>O should be molten if excess H<sub>2</sub>O exists (Schwager et al., 2004). Similarly, we infer that the diffraction lines of py-FeOOH<sub>x</sub> came from the cooler sample regions



along the axial thermal gradients because its dehydration temperature is lower (Nishi et al., 2017) than the heating temperatures. We observed diffuse scattering in the diffraction patterns at temperatures over 2,700 K (Fig. S3) caused by melting. Temperatures greater than 2,700 K at 120–140 GPa are higher than the reported solidus of  $\text{Fe}_3\text{C}$  (Mashino et al. 2019), as well as the extrapolated solidus of  $\text{FeH}_x$  (Sakamaki et al., 2009). Therefore, the metallic melt should be rich in H at the heating center. Diamond should be stable under the studied  $P$ – $T$  conditions because of its extremely high melting temperature ( $\sim 7,000$  K at 130 GPa; Wang et al., 2005) as observed in both XRD patterns and Raman spectra.

## 4 Discussion

### 4.1 Chemical Exchange Between the Mantle and Core

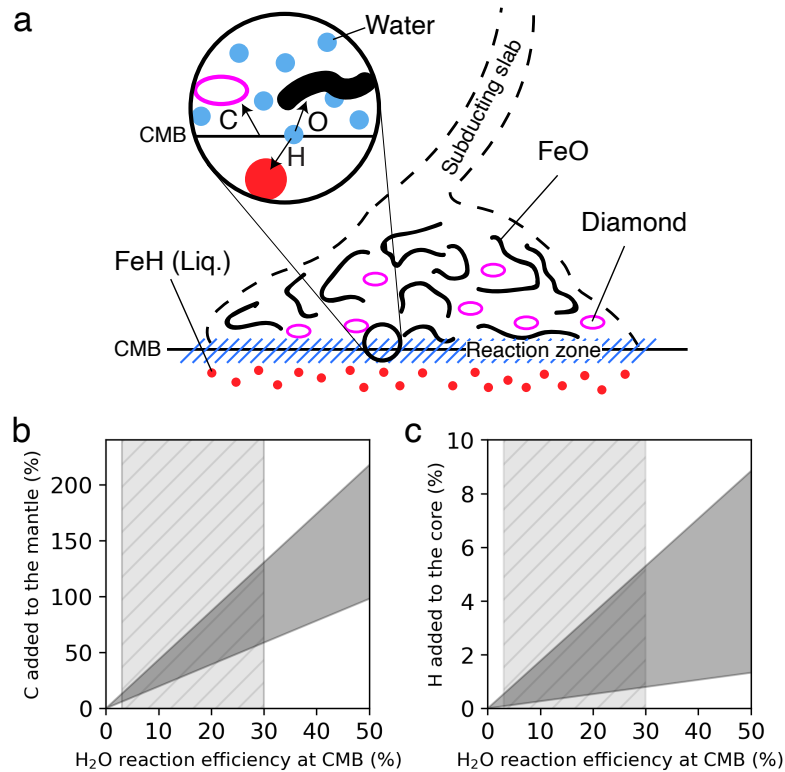
Previous experiments of paraffin + Fe metal showed that H is more siderophile than C, forming diamond at lower-mantle conditions (Narygina et al., 2011; Hirose et al., 2019), although it remains unclear that the reduced hydrogen can be provided to the lower mantle (Hu et al., 2016; Nishi et al., 2017). In our experiments of  $\text{Fe}_3\text{C} + \text{H}_2\text{O}$ , similar partitioning behaviors of H and C resulted in the formation of diamond. The formation of FeO and  $\text{FeH}_x$  observed in our experiments with excess water is consistent with previous experiments of  $2\text{Fe} + \text{H}_2\text{O} = \text{FeO} + 2\text{FeH}$  with less water (6 wt%  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$ ) at similar pressures and temperatures ( $\sim 120$  GPa and 2,000–2,250 K; Nishi et al., 2020). Also, the decomposition of  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$  at the CMB shown in this study agrees well with other experiments (Mao et al., 2017; Yuan et al., 2018).

This study demonstrates that not only water can play a critical role in chemical exchange between the mantle and the core, but also Earth’s carbon cycle is closely linked to the H and O cycles. Our results found that at CMB conditions, metallic melt (rich in Fe and H) would form and most likely be incorporated into the liquid outer core (Fig. 2a). Some amount of O would remain in the mantle as iron oxide (FeO), while the metallic melt may also carry O to the core.

The water release from the dehydration of hydrous minerals in subducting slabs may have been a continuous process from when the hydrated slabs first reached the CMB following the initiation of plate tectonics. Although the timing of the onset of subduction is not well constrained, studies indicate that subduction might have initiated 2.5–3.5 Ga (Laurent et al., 2014; Tang et al., 2016;

Condie and Kröner, 2008). Theoretical and experimental studies have suggested that subducting slabs would have been negatively buoyant in the transition zone and the topmost lower mantle since subduction initiated, thus promoting their descent to the deep lower mantle (Klein et al., 2017; Ko et al., 2020). If water in subducting slabs has been transported to the CMB and released in the region for ~3 billion years, the core-mantle chemical exchange presented here may have occurred during the time.

The carbon transfer from the core to the mantle results in the gradual augmentation of the mantle carbon for a significant portion of the Earth's history. This is consistent with the earlier hypothesis that water may facilitate carbon transfer at the CMB by Dasgupta et al. (2013), which may



**Figure 2: (a) Schematic diagram of the core-mantle boundary (CMB) region. Water (blue droplets in the inset) released from dehydration of a subducted slab causes a chemical reaction with liquid iron core in a reaction zone (blue shade) at the CMB. Diamond (magenta circles) and FeO (black lines) could be incorporated into the mantle, while hydrogen (red dots) could alloy with iron metal in the outer core. (b) The amount of carbon extracted from the core to the mantle for 3 Ga relative to the carbon content in the present-day mantle (120 ppm C; McDonough and Sun, 1995). (c) The**

amount of hydrogen added to the core for 3 Ga relative to the hydrogen content in the present-day outer core (0.3–2.0 wt%; Terasaki et al., 2012; Umemoto and Hirose, 2015; Thompson et al., 2018; Tagawa et al., 2021). (b, c) H<sub>2</sub>O reaction efficiency at the CMB represents the water amount reacting with the core at the CMB divided by the water amount subducted at the surface (Cai et al., 2018; see Supplementary information for detail). The hatched area represents the 3–30% of the reaction efficiency.

account for the present-day mantle carbon content (e.g., 120 ppm C; McDonough and Sun, 1995). However, the form of carbon produced from the CMB reaction in the present study is diamond, different from the oxidized carbon assumed by Dasgupta et al.

The amount of core carbon added to the mantle by the water-induced reaction at the CMB (after core formation) can be estimated. Efficiency of the reaction was defined as the water amount participating in the reaction at the CMB divided by the water amount subducted at the Earth's surface (see Supplementary information for detail). It should be noted that how much subducted water reaches the CMB is poorly constrained because of large uncertainties in dehydration and rehydration processes in the mantle (Walter, 2021). In this estimation, a constant rate of water transport was assumed via subduction from the surface ( $3 \times 10^{12}$  kg/yr H<sub>2</sub>O for the global water flux at the surface in present day; Cai et al., 2018) for 3 Ga. Also, we assumed a constant carbon content in the outer core (0.9–2.0 wt%; Nakajima et al., 2015; Li et al., 2019). If 3–30% of subducted water reaches the CMB and reacts with the core (see Supplementary Information for detail), 7–160 ppm C can be added to the mantle over 3 Ga after core formation.

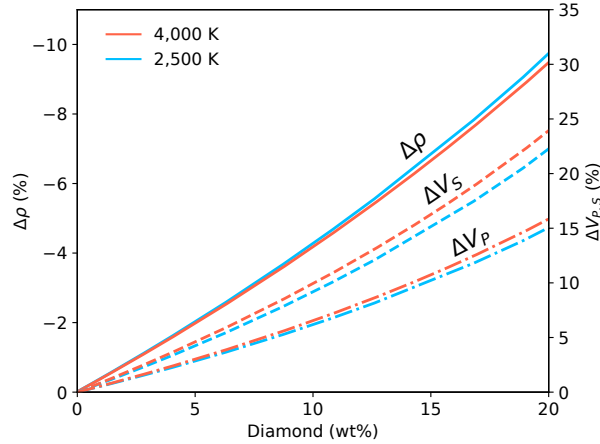
The proposed model thus has the potential to account for a substantial portion of the present-day carbon in the mantle. For example, 120 ppm of the present-day carbon content (McDonough and Sun, 1995) can be explained solely by the water-induced carbon transfer from the core (Fig. 2b), if water has been efficiently transported to the CMB over the last 3 Ga. Yet, this calculated “core carbon extraction” is only 0.2–1.7% ( $0.3\text{--}6.3 \times 10^{20}$  kg C) of the estimated carbon content of the present-day outer core (Nakajima et al., 2015; Li et al., 2019). Therefore, most of the core carbon incorporated during its formation would still remain there. In addition, the model can estimate the amount of hydrogen added to the core through the water-induced reaction. If hydrogen alloys with iron metal with a 1:1 molar ratio (Supplementary Information), for the above assumed water

transport efficiency for the core carbon extraction, our calculation predicts that the amount of hydrogen added to the outer core ( $0.3\text{--}3.0 \times 10^{20}$  kg H) accounts for only 0.1–5.3% of the estimated present-day core hydrogen (Terasaki et al., 2012; Umemoto and Hirose, 2015; Thompson et al., 2018; Tagawa et al., 2021; Fig. 2c). Therefore, the core’s carbon and hydrogen budgets would not be altered significantly by the core carbon extraction and are mainly determined during core formation.

## 4.2 Seismic implications

Diamond formed at the CMB is expected to be advected by mantle flow, ultimately entrained by upwelling mantle currents. This process is facilitated by the anomalously low density of diamond (32% lower than the surrounding mantle). Therefore, diamond residency at the CMB may be limited, but small-scale convection on the CMB may lead to temporary localized accumulations of diamonds even in regions strongly affected by subducted slabs in the lowermost mantle (Solomatov and Moresi, 2002; Li, 2020). Thus, regions with diamonds may not be ubiquitous at the CMB, but we expect their presence in CMB regions of deeply subducting hydrated slabs.

A question pertains whether the lowermost mantle diamond can be advected by upwelling mantle to the uppermost mantle. Diamond may react with metallic iron in the lower mantle to form iron carbide during ascent, but diamond can coexist with  $\text{Fe}_7\text{C}_3$  if the carbon proportion is over 8 wt% (Lord et al., 2009). The upwelling flow would undergo an inevitable redox change when passing the 660-km discontinuity where  $\text{Fe}^{3+}$ -rich bridgmanite is destabilized and diamond is oxidized to carbonatite melts (Rohrbach and Schmidt, 2011). Such a redox change would make the upwelling of the lowermost mantle diamond to the uppermost mantle difficult. However, the carbonatite melt can still carry information about other minerals entrained together with the diamond from the CMB. If the melt crystallizes new diamond that is sent to the surface, diamond inclusions can exhibit geochemical signatures of their deep origin. Some diamond inclusions show low Mg# (0.2–0.6) in magnesiowüstite (Harte and Hudson, 2013; Hayman, et al., 2005; Kaminsky et al., 2009; Wirth et al., 2014) and an association of iron carbide and diamond (Kaminsky and Wirth, 2011), suggesting the possibility of their deep origin at the CMB, as advocated in this study.



**Figure 3: Density (solid lines), compressional (dotted lines), and shear wave velocities (dashed lines) of diamond + pyrolite with respect to pure pyrolite at the core-mantle boundary conditions (136 GPa). The red and blue lines were calculated for 4,000 and 2,500 K, respectively.**

Diamond exhibits higher bulk and shear moduli as well as lower density compared to major mantle minerals (Valdez et al., 2012), and therefore 50–72% and 74–110% higher  $P$  ( $V_P$ ) and  $S$  wave velocities ( $V_S$ ), respectively, than pyrolite in the lower mantle. We calculated the  $V_S$  and density for the mineral assemblage of pyrolite + diamond with varying diamond proportion (0–20 wt%) at the CMB conditions (136 GPa and 2,500–4,000 K) using the *Perple\_X* thermodynamic modeling program (Connolly, 2009) with the SBL2011 dataset (Stixrude and Lithgow-Bertelloni, 2011) and seismic properties of diamond (Dewaele et al., 2008; Valdez et al., 2012). The calculation demonstrates that even a small amount of diamond mixed with the background mantle can dramatically decrease density and increase  $V_P$  and  $V_S$  at the CMB (Fig. 3). Therefore, if diamond-bearing structures exist at the CMB, their exceptionally fast velocities could be detectable in seismic studies. Considering the fact that less dense structures could have longer resident time in regions with strong downgoing flow, the high velocity structures could be found regions associated with subducting slabs in the lowermost mantle.

## 5. Conclusions

We conducted experiments on reaction between  $\text{Fe}_3\text{C}$  and  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$  using LHDACs combined with in-situ X-ray diffraction at 70–140 GPa and up to 4,050 K. We found that the reaction liberates carbon

in the form of diamond as hydrogen and oxygen alloy with iron. This result implies that the Earth's core carbon may have been transferred to the mantle if subducted water has reacted with the core. Our model provides a testable prediction that such diamonds, if locally collected by mantle flow, lead to small-scale high velocity structures near the subducted materials at the CMB.

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## Data Availability Statement

Datasets for this research are available online (<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6040059>).

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