

Detection of recurrent fluorescence photons emitted from C_4^-

Mai Yoshida*¹, Takeshi Furukawa*², Jun Matsumoto[†], Hajime Tanuma*, Toshiyuki Azuma*, Haruo Shiromaru[‡], and Klavs Hansen^{§¶}

*Department of Physics, Tokyo Metropolitan University, Hachioji, Tokyo 192-0397, Japan

[†]Department of Chemistry, Tokyo Metropolitan University, Hachioji, Tokyo 192-0397, Japan

[‡]AMO Physics Laboratory, RIKEN, 2-1 Hirosawa, Wako, Saitama 351-0198, Japan

[§]Department of Physics, University of Gothenburg 41296 Gothenburg, Sweden

[¶]Tianjin International Center of Nanoparticles and Nanosystems, Tianjin University, China

Synopsis We detected recurrent fluorescence (RF) in the region of visible light emitted from small carbon cluster anions C_4^- and C_6^- stored in an electrostatic ion storage ring. The observed RF decay profile for C_4^- is consistent to our simulation under the assignment that the RF is associated with the $C^2\Pi_g-X^2\Pi_u$ transition. In addition, observation of the RF at two different wavelengths suggests that the RF band is rather broad.

Cooling dynamics of isolated molecules plays an important role in molecular physics, photochemistry and molecular evolution in universe. The major cooling process of isolated molecules has been considered to be infrared radiation associated with vibrational transition. It is usually slow and of the order of ms or longer in the time scale.

For the last few years, a much faster pathway of radiative cooling associated with electronic transition has been confirmed experimentally for some isolated molecules, for example, chain-form small carbon cluster anions C_4^- and C_6^- [1,2] and polycyclic hydrocarbon (PAH) cations [3]. It is the visible-photon emission process via the electronic transitions after inverse internal conversion, converting the vibrational energy to the electronic energy. This process is referred to as recurrent fluorescence (RF) or Poincaré fluorescence. At first, the RF process has been studied not by detecting the emitted photon, but by observing the statistical delayed detachment or dissociation process of the molecular ions, which provides the information on the evolution of the internal energy and the cooling rate: the unusually fast cooling is a signature of the RF [1-3].

Recently we have succeeded in direct measurements of the RF photons from the C_6^- stored in an ion storage ring [4]. We observed energy-resolved photons by employing a photomultiplier tube combined with a bandpass filter-I (CWL: 607 nm ($h\nu = 2.04$ eV), FWHM: 35nm) suitable for 2.04eV photons corresponding to the $C^2\Pi_g - X^2\Pi_u$ electronic transition of C_6^- .

In this report, we show new results of the RF photons from C_4^- . Hot anions produced in the

ion source, from C_2^- to C_6^- , were simultaneously stored in the ring. The time profile of the photon intensities detected by the photomultiplier tube, i.e., the synchronized periodic structure to the ion revolution, contributed to exclude uncorrelated background signals.

As is the case for the C_6^- anions, we detected the significant number of the 2.72 eV RF photons associated with the $C^2\Pi_u - X^2\Pi_g$ electronic transition of C_4^- anions by using a bandpass filter-II (CWL: 460 nm ($h\nu = 2.69$ eV), FWHM: 7 nm), and confirmed that the decay profile of the fluorescence is consistent with the simulated evolution of the level population based on the detailed balance theory. However, to our surprise, we found that the substantial amount of the RF photons for the C_4^- anions are detected with a bandpass filter-I.

The obtained experimental evidence is so far limited, however, this observation suggests that the RF band may be equipped with a non-negligible tail component to the longer wavelength side. This behavior is expected to be a crucial clue to clarify vibrational structures both on the high- and low-energy sides of the band origin of the RF spectrum, and they may imply transitions from the initial vibronic state to other states accompanying the vibrational excitation or deexcitation for several modes [4]

References

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¹ E-mail: yoshida-mai3@tmu.ac.jp

² E-mail: takeshi@tmu.ac.jp

