

Relieving the frustration through Mn^{3+} substitution in holmium gallium garnet

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We present a Rapid Communication on the impact of Mn^{3+} substitution in the geometrically frustrated Ising garnet $\text{Ho}_3\text{Ga}_5\text{O}_{12}$ using bulk magnetic measurements and low-temperature powder neutron diffraction. We find that the transition temperature $T_N = 5.8$ K for $\text{Ho}_3\text{MnGa}_4\text{O}_{12}$ is raised by a factor of almost 20 when compared to $\text{Ho}_3\text{Ga}_5\text{O}_{12}$. Powder neutron diffraction on $\text{Ho}_3\text{Mn}_x\text{Ga}_{5-x}\text{O}_{12}$ ($x = 0.5, 1$) below T_N shows the formation of a long-range-ordered state with $\mathbf{k} = (0, 0, 0)$. Ho^{3+} spins are aligned antiferromagnetically along the six crystallographic axes with no resultant moment, whereas the Mn^{3+} spins are oriented along the body diagonals such that there is a net moment along [111]. The magnetic structure can be visualized as ten-membered rings of corner-sharing triangles of Ho^{3+} spins with the Mn^{3+} spins ferromagnetically coupled to each individual Ho^{3+} spin in the triangle. Substitution of Mn^{3+} completely relieves the magnetic frustration with $f = \theta_{\text{CW}}/T_N \sim 1.1$ for $\text{Ho}_3\text{MnGa}_4\text{O}_{12}$.

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In geometrically frustrated magnets the lattice geometry prevents all the magnetic interactions from being satisfied simultaneously. Two consequences of this are a large degeneracy in the number of possible ground states and a suppression of the long-range magnetic ordering temperature. Experimentally it has been observed that factors including symmetric and antisymmetric exchanges, dipolar interactions, crystal electric-field (CEF) effects, and lattice distortions play a role in determining the magnetic properties. Depending on the relative magnitude of competing interactions, the system may be driven into a long-range-ordered state, thus relieving the frustration, or exist in a disordered but correlated state, such as a spin liquid, spin ice, or one with emergent magnetic order [1–8]. Magnetic frustration can also be relieved through site dilution or site disorder of spins [9–13].

Lanthanide garnets with the general formula $\text{Ln}_3\text{A}_2\text{X}_3\text{O}_{12}$ are a system containing a highly frustrated magnetic Ln^{3+} lattice. They crystallize in a cubic structure, Fig. 1(a), containing three crystallographic sites for the cations: dodecahedral occupied by Ln , octahedral occupied by A , and tetrahedral occupied by X . The magnetic Ln^{3+} ions lie at the vertices of corner-sharing triangles which form two interpenetrating networks of bifurcated ten-membered rings, Fig. 1(b). The magnetic properties of the lanthanide garnets are highly dependent on the single-ion anisotropy of the Ln^{3+} ion and the cations on the octahedral and tetrahedral sites [14–18]. Much of the experimental and theoretical work so far has focused on the spin liquid candidate gadolinium gallium garnet $\text{Gd}_3\text{Ga}_5\text{O}_{12}$ [15, 19–22]. Here we focus on the isostructural holmium gallium garnet $\text{Ho}_3\text{Ga}_5\text{O}_{12}$ (HoGG), which exhibits substantial single-ion anisotropy [23]. $\text{Ho}_3\text{Ga}_5\text{O}_{12}$ was reported to undergo long-range magnetic ordering below 0.19 K in a six sublattice antiferromagnetic structure; however a later neutron-scattering study points to coexistence of long- and short-range magnetic orders below 0.3 K down to 0.05 K [24–26]. We explore the impact of magnetic Mn^{3+} substitution

on the magnetic properties and magnetic structure of holmium gallium garnet.

We show that the magnetic frustration of the Ising garnet $\text{Ho}_3\text{Ga}_5\text{O}_{12}$ is relieved almost entirely by partial substitution of nonmagnetic Ga^{3+} with magnetic Mn^{3+} . In the case of $\text{Ho}_3\text{Mn}_x\text{Ga}_{5-x}\text{O}_{12}$ ($x = 0.5, 1$), the Mn^{3+} spins create a local dipolar field, coupling ferromagnetically with *quasispins* from Ho_3 triangles. The Mn^{3+} spins and the Ho_3 *quasispin* sublattices in $\text{Ho}_3\text{MnGa}_4\text{O}_{12}$ form a long-range-ordered state at $T_N = 5.8$ K, a dramatic contrast to the reported coexistence of short- and long-range orders observed below 0.3 K for unsubstituted $\text{Ho}_3\text{Ga}_5\text{O}_{12}$ [26].

Polycrystalline samples of phase pure $\text{Ho}_3\text{Mn}_x\text{Ga}_{5-x}\text{O}_{12}$ ($0 \leq x \leq 1$) have been prepared and the structure evaluated using x-ray and neutron diffraction as described in the Supplemental Material [27]. Mn^{3+} substitution results in a small increase in the unit cell, however no significant changes in the Ho-O bond lengths are observed (see Tables S1 and S2 in the Supplemental Material [27]). Analysis of the crystal structure shows that Mn^{3+} exclusively occupies the octahedral A sites, located above and below each Ho_3 triangle [Fig. 1(c)]. The preference of d^4 Mn^{3+} to occupy only the octahedral sites is expected from consideration of the CEF for the octahedral A and tetrahedral X sites. No evidence for ordering of the Mn^{3+} ions or a Jahn-Teller distortion is observed, although local Jahn-Teller distortions cannot be discounted. At the maximum substitution, 50% of the A sites are occupied by magnetic Mn^{3+} ions. The connectivity of the A sites has been described by one-dimensional chains propagating along the body diagonal of the cubic unit cell [28], however all the sites occupied by Mn^{3+} spins, including those in neighboring chains, are equidistant from one another in the unit cell.

The zero-field-cooled (ZFC) magnetic susceptibility $\chi(T)$ of $\text{Ho}_3\text{Mn}_x\text{Ga}_{5-x}\text{O}_{12}$ ($0 \leq x \leq 1$), Fig. 2(a), shows a sharp magnetic ordering transition T_N at 3.5 and 5.8 K for $\text{Ho}_3\text{Mn}_{0.5}\text{Ga}_{4.5}\text{O}_{12}$ and $\text{Ho}_3\text{MnGa}_4\text{O}_{12}$, respectively. No ordering is observed in $\text{Ho}_3\text{Ga}_5\text{O}_{12}$ above the limiting temperature of 1.8 K, consistent with previous literature reports [26, 29]. The inverse susceptibility χ^{-1} is linear at high temperatures $T > 100$ K [Fig. 2(a) inset], and fits to the

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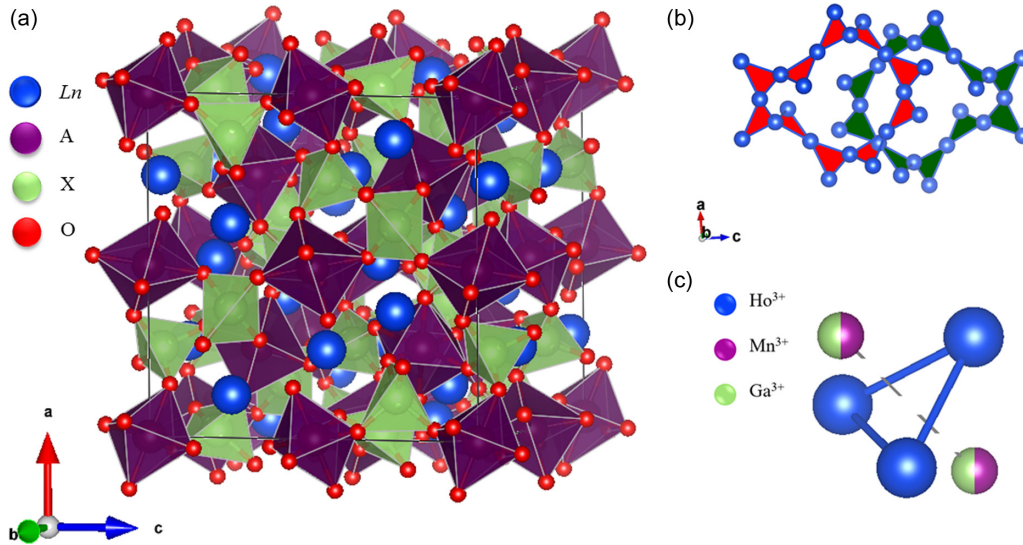


FIG. 1. (a) General crystal structure of lanthanide garnets $Ln_3A_2X_3O_{12}$ with the three cations occupying distinct crystallographic sites—here $Ln = Ho$, $A = Mn/Ga$, and $X = Ga$. (b) Connectivity of magnetic Ho^{3+} ions. The Ho^{3+} ions lie at the vertices of corner-sharing equilateral triangles forming two interpenetrating ten-membered rings. This results in a highly frustrated three-dimensional network. (c) Relative position of Mn^{3+} relative to Ho^{3+} —each triangle with Ho^{3+} at the vertices has a Mn^{3+} atom above and below the centroid of the triangle. Each octahedral site is occupied by Mn^{3+} 25% and 50% of the time for $Ho_3Mn_{0.5}Ga_{4.5}O_{12}$ and $Ho_3MnGa_4O_{12}$, respectively.

Curie-Weiss (CW) law were carried out in different temperature ranges from 100 to 300 K. The difficulty in determining the Weiss temperature θ_{CW} from high-temperature fits to the Curie-Weiss law is well documented for Ho^{3+} containing samples due to the presence of low-lying CEF states [23,26,30]. However, for all compositions, θ_{CW} is negative, indicating net antiferromagnetic interactions. The value of θ_{CW} decreases with an increase in x , indicating weaker antiferromagnetic correlations on Mn^{3+} substitution. The effective moment μ_{eff} , obtained from the Curie-Weiss law (see Table S3 in the Supplemental Material [27]), is underestimated compared to the theoretical moment: $\mu_{th}^2 = 3\mu_{Ho}^2 + x\mu_{Mn}^2$ (this assumes no quenching of the orbital contribution to the effective moment but, partial quenching of the moment would be expected due to presence of low-lying CEF states). However, μ_{eff} increases with x as expected for Mn^{3+} substitution.

Isothermal magnetization curves [Fig. 2(b)] show that the magnetization at 2 K and 9 T, $M_{2K,9T}$, is significantly increased on Mn^{3+} substitution. The size of the increase cannot solely be attributed to the Mn^{3+} ions as it exceeds the maximum contribution from Mn^{3+} [$M_{Mnmax} = g_S S = 4\mu_B$ per formula unit (f.u.)]. The additional increase in magnetization could be due to changes in the underlying magnetism or in the CEF states of Ho^{3+} on substitution. For all samples the observed magnetization at 9 T, $M_{2K,9T}$, is much lower than the saturation magnetization of a Heisenberg system, $M_{sat} = 3 \times 10 + x \times 4\mu_B/\text{f.u.}$ ($3g_J J + xg_S S$ where $g_J = 5/4$, $J = 8$ for Ho^{3+} and $g_S = 2$, $S = 2$ for Mn^{3+}). However, it is consistent with the value expected for powder-averaged Ising Ho^{3+} spins; $M_{sat, Ising} = 3 \times 10/2 + x \times 4\mu_B/\text{f.u.}$ The isothermal magnetization in $Ho_3Ga_5O_{12}$ has previously been shown to be typical of Ising spins [23], and our data are consistent with the Ho^{3+} spins remaining Ising-like on Mn^{3+} substitution. Given their small contribution to the total magnetization, no conclusions can be drawn regarding the isotropy of the Mn^{3+}

spins. At 2 K, a field-induced transition is observed at 0.27(1) and 0.46(1) T for $Ho_3Mn_{0.5}Ga_{4.5}O_{12}$ and $Ho_3MnGa_4O_{12}$, respectively (see Fig. S3 in the Supplemental Material [27]). Similar transitions in Ising garnets containing magnetic ions exclusively on the A site have recently been reported [28]. The plot of dM/dH for $Ho_3Ga_5O_{12}$ also shows a feature at low fields of < 0.2 T (see Fig. S3 in the Supplemental Material [27]), however further measurements are required to understand the nature of these field-induced transitions.

To explore the nature of the magnetic ordering, we carried out low-temperature powder neutron-diffraction experiments on $Ho_3Mn_{0.5}Ga_{4.5}O_{12}$ and $Ho_3MnGa_4O_{12}$. Both samples show strong magnetic Bragg peaks below T_N . No magnetic diffuse scattering is observed for either sample at $T \geq 1.5$ K, suggesting that unlike in HoGG [26], long- and short-range magnetic orders do not coexist. For both samples, the magnetic Bragg reflections are indexed with the propagation vector $\mathbf{k} = (0,0,0)$. All combinations of irreducible representations for Ho^{3+} and Mn^{3+} ions were tested, however only a model with both ions having the Γ_3^1 irreducible representation (see Table S4 in the Supplemental Material [27]) allowed for a good fit to the data [Fig. 3(a)]. For both samples, the magnitude of the Ho^{3+} and Mn^{3+} moments increases on cooling, although the moments are smaller than the theoretical moment [$g_J \sqrt{J(J+1)} = 10.61\mu_B$ for Ho^{3+} and $g_S \sqrt{S(S+1)} = 4.89\mu_B$ for Mn^{3+} respectively] (see Fig. S4 in the Supplemental Material [27]). This may be due to low-lying CEF effects or screening of the moment. Previous studies of $Ho_3Ga_5O_{12}$ and $Ho_3Al_5O_{12}$ also have reported reduced moments, in close agreement with our results [29,31]. Reduced magnetic moments for Mn^{3+} determined from neutron diffraction also have previously been observed [32].

The magnetic structure, Fig. 3(b), has the same long-range-ordered arrangement of the Ho^{3+} spins as that reported for $Ho_3Ga_5O_{12}$ and $Ho_3Al_5O_{12}$ [25,31]. The 24 Ho^{3+} spins in each unit cell are arranged into six sublattices with the Ho^{3+} spins

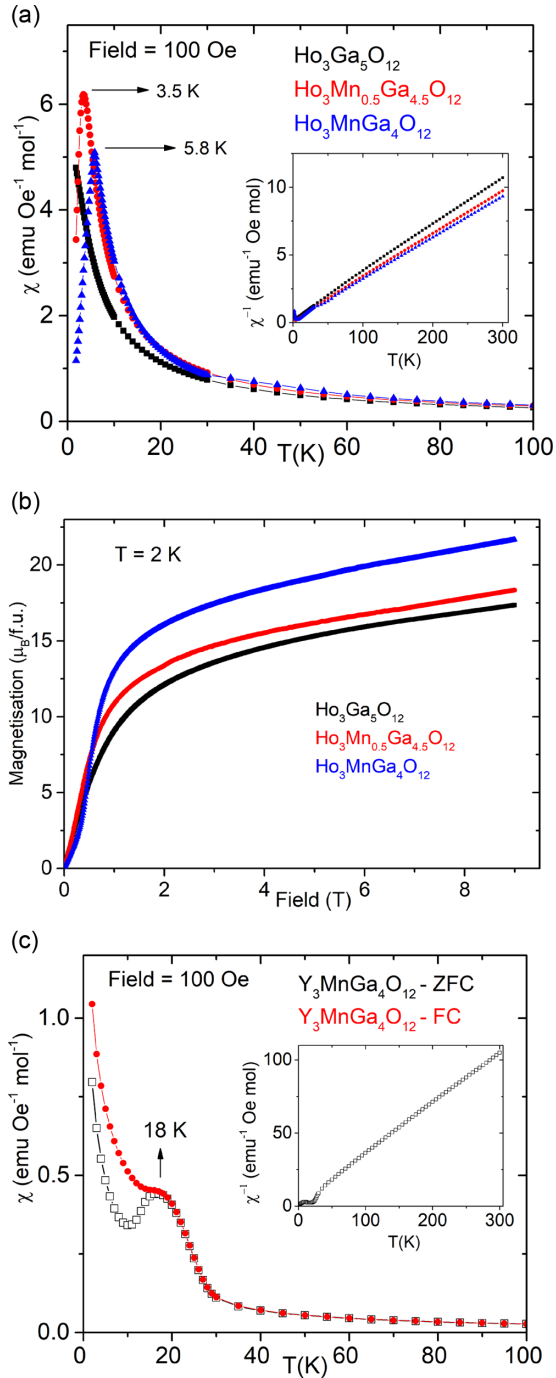


FIG. 2. (a) ZFC magnetic susceptibility $\chi(T)$ measured in 100 Oe for $\text{Ho}_3\text{Mn}_x\text{Ga}_{5-x}\text{O}_{12}$ ($0 \leq x \leq 1$): Magnetic ordering transitions are seen clearly at 3.5 and 5.8 K for $x = 0.5$ and $x = 1$, respectively. The inverse magnetic susceptibility χ^{-1} can be seen in the inset. (b) Isothermal magnetization curves at 2 K for $\text{Ho}_3\text{Mn}_x\text{Ga}_{5-x}\text{O}_{12}$ ($0 \leq x \leq 1$). (c) ZFC and field-cooled (FC) magnetic susceptibility $\chi(T)$ measured in 100 Oe for $\text{Y}_3\text{MnGa}_4\text{O}_{12}$: A broad spin-glass-like transition is observed at $T_0 = 18$ K. The inverse magnetic susceptibility $\chi^{-1}(T)$ can be seen in the inset.

aligned along the crystallographic axes $[100]$, $[\bar{1}00]$, $[010]$, $[0\bar{1}0]$, $[001]$, and $[00\bar{1}]$ such that the net moment is zero. The Mn^{3+} spins in each unit cell are aligned along the body diagonals as reported for the Ising garnet $\text{CaY}_2\text{Co}_2\text{Ge}_3\text{O}_{12}$ [28],

however, their relative orientations are completely different. The Mn^{3+} moments are oriented along $[111]$, $[\bar{1}\bar{1}1]$, $[\bar{1}1\bar{1}]$, and $[1\bar{1}\bar{1}]$ such that there is a resultant moment from the Mn^{3+} spins along $[111]$. The relative orientations of the Ho^{3+} and Mn^{3+} spins assume greater significance when we consider the two interpenetrating networks of the ten-membered triangles of the Ho^{3+} spins, Fig. 3(c). For each ten-membered ring, the net magnetic moment of the Ho^{3+} spins is zero, however, there is a net ferromagnetic interaction between the Ho^{3+} and the Mn^{3+} moments. When these interactions are summed over a Ho_3 triangle, then the resultant Ho^{3+} *quasispin* is orientated in or out of the centroid of the triangle, i.e., along $[111]$ [Fig. 3(d)] and are located directly above or below the site partially occupied by Mn^{3+} . The Mn^{3+} spin aligns co-parallel with the Ho_3 *quasispin* [Fig. 3(e)]. Although the construct of the Ho_3 *quasispins* allows for the magnetic structure to be rationalized, it should be noted that, in the parent material $\text{Ho}_3\text{Ga}_5\text{O}_{12}$, coupling between any two of the Ho^{3+} spins on an individual triangle $\propto \mathbf{S}_1 \cdot \mathbf{S}_2$ results in no net interaction as they are orthogonal, however, in the case of $\text{Ho}_3\text{Mn}_x\text{Ga}_{5-x}\text{O}_{12}$ each individual Ho^{3+} - Mn^{3+} interaction is nonzero.

To our knowledge the concurrent magnetic ordering observed for both Ho^{3+} and Mn^{3+} in $\text{Ho}_3\text{MnGa}_4\text{O}_{12}$ is unique when compared to other rare-earth-transition-metal oxides with complex magnetic structures. Studies on magnetic dopants in lanthanide garnets have been restricted to $\text{Ln}_3\text{Fe}_5\text{O}_{12}$ where Fe^{3+} occupies both octahedral and tetrahedral sites. The two Fe^{3+} sublattices order in a ferrimagnetic structure at ~ 130 – 140 K whereas the Ln^{3+} ions order in an umbellate structure around ~ 10 K [33–35]. In HoMnO_3 , the Mn^{3+} spins order at ~ 72 K, whereas the onset of ordering in the Ho^{3+} spins is seen at the spin-rotation transition for the Mn^{3+} spins ~ 33 K followed by an increase in the ordered Ho^{3+} moments below 5 K [36–38]. However, in $\text{Ho}_3\text{MnGa}_4\text{O}_{12}$, no features are observed in the magnetic susceptibility or neutron-diffraction data corresponding to the individual ordering of the Mn^{3+} spins at $T > T_N$. The ordering mechanism is also distinct from the “ordered spin-ice” structure reported for $\text{Ho}_2\text{CrSbO}_7$ where the frustration is proposed to be relieved through local ferromagnetic correlations between the Cr^{3+} spins as is evidenced by a positive Curie-Weiss constant for isostructural Y_2CrSbO_7 [13,39]. However, in $\text{Ho}_3\text{MnGa}_4\text{O}_{12}$, the Mn-Mn and Ho-Ho exchange interactions are antiferromagnetic, suggesting that the ordering is driven by a different mechanism, the origin of which is discussed below.

The partial substitution of Ga^{3+} for Mn^{3+} in $\text{Ho}_3\text{Mn}_x\text{Ga}_{5-x}\text{O}_{12}$ significantly changes the magnetic interactions which need to be considered. In addition to Ho-Ho interactions present in $\text{Ho}_3\text{Ga}_5\text{O}_{12}$, Mn-Mn and Ho-Mn interactions also need to be considered. First we consider the dipolar and exchange interactions between the magnetic Ho^{3+} spins. As the Ho-Ho bond lengths are not changed significantly on Mn^{3+} substitution (see Table S2 in the Supplemental Material [27]), it can be assumed that there is no significant change in the Ho-Ho dipolar interaction energy, $D \sim \frac{\mu_0 \mu_{\text{eff}}^2}{4\pi R_{\text{HoHo}}^3} \sim 0.9$ K. A *a priori* calculation of the Ho-Ho exchange interactions is complex as the Curie-Weiss constants for the Mn^{3+} substituted garnets contain contributions from multiple interactions. An order of magnitude approximation for the nearest-neighbor exchange energy J_1 in unsubstituted

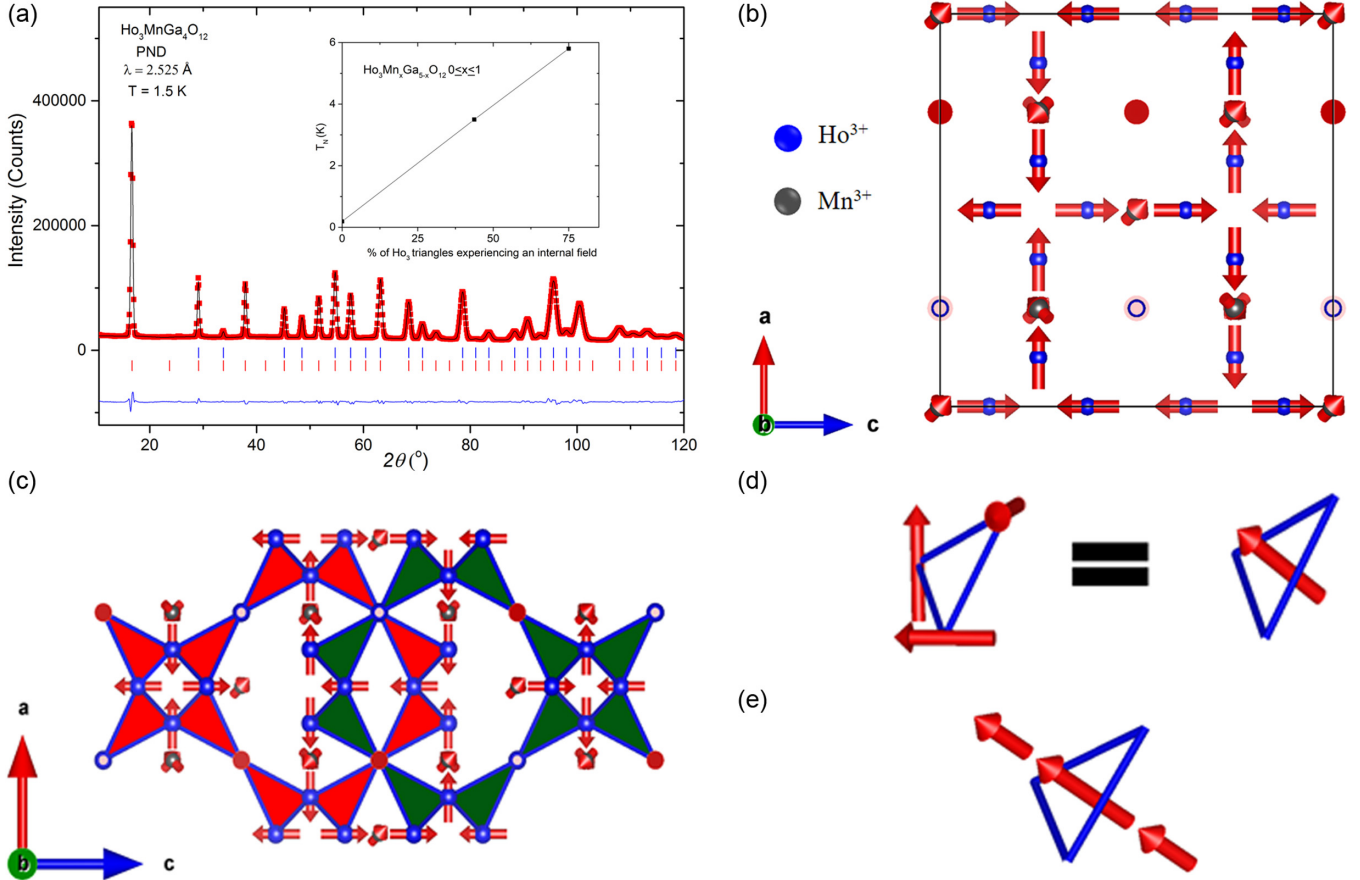


FIG. 3. (a) Rietveld refinement of the neutron-diffraction pattern at 1.5 K for $\text{Ho}_3\text{MnGa}_4\text{O}_{12}$: Blue ticks: nuclear Bragg reflections; red ticks: magnetic Bragg reflections; the inset shows the ordering temperature T_N as a function of the percentage of Ho_3 triangles experiencing the local internal field from the Mn^{3+} spins. (b) Magnetic structure for $\text{Ho}_3\text{MnGa}_4\text{O}_{12}$ ($T_N = 5.8$ K). (c) Arrangement of Ho^{3+} and Mn^{3+} spins for $\text{Ho}_3\text{MnGa}_4\text{O}_{12}$ in the two interpenetrating ten-membered rings in the garnet lattice. (d) Each Ho_3 triangle has three orthogonal spins orientated along the three crystallographic axes, and the Ho^{3+} *quasispin* directed along [111] is shown. (e) The Ho^{3+} *quasispin* couples ferromagnetically with the Mn^{3+} spins located above and below the triangle.

$\text{Ho}_3\text{Ga}_5\text{O}_{12}$ can be obtained as $J_1 \sim \frac{3k_B\theta_{CW}}{2n}$ where $n =$ the number of nearest-neighbor $\text{Ho}^{3+} = 4$. This gives $J_1 = -4.5$ K and an order of magnitude estimation of J_1 for $\text{Ho}_3\text{Mn}_x\text{Ga}_{5-x}\text{O}_{12}$. The Mn-Mn exchange interactions can be approximated by considering isostructural $\text{Y}_3\text{MnGa}_4\text{O}_{12}$ (with an analogous lattice parameter and bond lengths as $\text{Ho}_3\text{MnGa}_4\text{O}_{12}$, see Tables S1 and S2 in the Supplemental Material [27]). Here the only magnetic contribution is from the Mn^{3+} spins. The magnetic susceptibility of $\text{Y}_3\text{MnGa}_4\text{O}_{12}$ is shown in Fig. 2(c). The divergence in the zero-field-cooled and field-cooled data at $T_f = 18$ K is characteristic of spin-glass-like behavior. Given the site disorder, formation of a spin-glass state is not unexpected and has been observed in other systems with dilute spins along [111] [40]. Fits to the Curie-Weiss law between 100 and 300 K give $\mu_{\text{eff}} = 4.83 \mu_B$, consistent with Mn^{3+} spins and $\theta_{CW} = -9(4)$ K, indicating antiferromagnetic interactions between Mn^{3+} spins. This corresponds to $J_1 \sim -6.8$ K if each Mn^{3+} spin is assumed to have two nearest neighbors. Determination of the Ho-Mn exchange interactions is nontrivial, and further inelastic neutron-scattering experiments are required for quantitative analysis. However, the resultant spin structure, although constrained by CEF effects, has a ferromagnetic component between adjacent Ho^{3+} and

Mn^{3+} spins, suggesting the resulting moment is not minimized. Finally we consider the Ho-Mn dipolar interactions. The local internal dipolar fields due to the Mn^{3+} spins above and below the Ho_3 triangles can be approximated as $\mu_0 \mathbf{H} \sim \frac{\mu_0 \mu_{\text{eff}}}{2\pi r^3} = \frac{\mu_0 g_S \sqrt{S(S+1)} \mu_B}{2\pi r^3}$ where $g_S = 2, S = 2$ for Mn^{3+} and r is the distance between the centroid of the Ho_3 triangle and the Mn^{3+} spin = $2.65 \text{ \AA} \sim 0.5$ T and this corresponds to an energy of ~ 3.2 K. We find a direct relationship between T_N and the number of *quasispins* experiencing a local magnetic field [Fig. 3(a) inset] when a random distribution of Mn^{3+} is assumed. This indicates that the local internal dipolar field may play a role in the magnetic ordering. In $\text{Ho}_3\text{Ga}_5\text{O}_{12}$, the formation of a long-range-ordered state is observed on application of a 2-T field along [111] [26], and this can be interpreted as equivalent to 25% of the Ho_3 triangles experiencing a local field. Although the nature of field-induced long-range ordering in $\text{Ho}_3\text{Ga}_5\text{O}_{12}$ is unknown, this highlights the role of an applied field in the magnetic ordering in Ising garnets.

In conclusion we find that, in $\text{Ho}_3\text{Mn}_{0.5}\text{Ga}_{4.5}\text{O}_{12}$ and $\text{Ho}_3\text{MnGa}_4\text{O}_{12}$, the Mn^{3+} moments, disordered on the octahedral site, couple ferromagnetically with the Ho_3 *quasispins* and lift the degeneracy associated with magnetic ordering in Ising garnets. The elevation of the ordering

temperature almost completely relieves the magnetic frustration $f = |\theta_{CW}/T_N|^1$ such that $f \sim 1.1$ for $Ho_3MnGa_4O_{12}$ compared to $f \sim 40$ for $Ho_3Ga_5O_{12}$ (see the Supplemental Material [27]). Susceptibility measurements show similar increases in T_N for $Ln_3Mn_xGa_{5-x}O_{12}$ ($Ln = Tb, Dy$). The Cr^{3+} substituted lanthanide gallium garnets $Ln_3CrGa_4O_{12}$ ($Ln = Tb, Dy, Ho$) also show an increase in T_N by a smaller factor than on Mn^{3+} substitution [41]. Neutron diffraction is required to elucidate the magnetic structure in these cases, but this hints at a universal mechanism for relieving the magnetic frustration in Ising lanthanide garnets, which is

tunable through control of the extent and type of magnetic ion substitution.

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Supporting data can be found in Ref. [42], neutron diffraction data can also be found in Ref. [43].

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