

Preface

Polymer-metal complexes are increasingly important and have gained much interest due to their extraordinary properties such as binding of small molecules, electron transfer processes, therapeutic effect compared to pure organic polymers, which arise from the synergism between the properties of the components.

One of the significant properties of polymer-cobalt complexes is the specific and reversible oxygen-binding ability. Therefore, cobalt complexes as oxygen carriers play an important role in helping to elucidate the biochemical activity of hemoglobin. Furthermore, the cobalt complexes indicate the potential applications for air separation membrane and oxygen electrode in metal/air batteries and fuel cells.

It was found that cobaltporphyrins fixed in polymer membranes could facilitate oxygen transport relative to nitrogen, therefore, both the permeability and selectivity can be remarkably improved. However, cobaltporphyrins often irreversibly oxidize and their lifetimes are limited. Furthermore, physicochemical properties and chemical reactivities of metal complexes are strongly affected by interactions with the matrix polymers. From this viewpoint, various matrix polymers including fluorine-containing copolymers were carefully designed and synthesized. The effect of matrix polymers on the oxygen-binding affinity, facilitated transport efficiency, permeability and selectivity, and the operational lifetime of cobaltporphyrin membranes were discussed.

In addition, the design of oxygen electrodes with improved performance in metal/air batteries and fuel cells is one of the important goals in electrochemical oxygen technologies. Because the supply of air (oxygen) is virtually inexhaustible, the oxygen electrode can, in principle, function indefinitely and its capacity can be considered infinite. However, the reduction of oxygen is so rapid because of the extensive studies of catalysts that even with the recent gas-diffusion electrode the discharging current is often limited by the transport of oxygen. In the second part of this thesis, the author aimed at modifying oxygen electrodes with cobalt complexes, and expected to accumulate oxygen from aqueous electrolyte solutions, therefore, improved the performance of oxygen electrodes.

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Contents

<i>Preface</i>	iii
Chapter 1 General Introduction	1
1.1 Polymer-Metal Complexes and their Functions	2
1.1.1 Structure features of polymer-metal complexes	2
1.1.2 Functions and potential applications of polymer-metal complexes	5
1.2 Cobalt Complexes and their Oxygen-binding Properties	9
1.2.1 Formation of polymer-cobalt complexes	10
1.2.2 Oxygen-binding properties of polymer-cobalt complexes	12
1.3 Oxygen Transport through Polymeric Membranes	15
1.3.1 Oxygen/nitrogen separation through polymeric membranes	16
1.3.2 Facilitated oxygen transport through cobaltporphyrin membranes	19
1.4 Oxygen Electrode and its Applications	23
1.4.1 Metal/air batteries and fuel cells	23
1.4.2 Oxygen reduction at the cathode	27
1.4.3 Combination of the electrode with an oxygen enriching system	31
References	33
Chapter 2 Facilitated Oxygen Transport Membranes of Picket-fence Cobaltporphyrin Complexed with Various Polymer Matrices	37
2.1 Introduction	37
2.2 Experimental Section	39
2.2.1 Materials	39
2.2.2 Membrane preparation	39
2.2.3 Spectroscopic, absorption, and permeation measurements	40
2.3 Chemically Specific Oxygen-binding and -absorption	40
2.4 Oxygen Permeation through the Cobaltporphyrin Membranes	43
2.5 Analysis of the Facilitated Oxygen Transport	45
References	47
Chapter 3 Improved Stability and Oxygen Permselectivity of a Perfluororesin- Coated Cobaltporphyrin Membrane	49
3.1 Introduction	49

3.2	Experimental Section	51
3.2.1	Materials	51
3.2.2	Membrane preparation	51
3.2.3	Permeation measurements of oxygen, nitrogen, and water vapor	51
3.2.4	Other measurements	52
3.3	Reversible Oxygen-binding to the Cobaltporphyrin Complex in the Perfluororesin-coated Membrane	52
3.4	Oxygen Permeability of the Perfluororesin-coated Cobaltporphyrin Membrane	54
3.5	Water Vapor Permeability and Lifetime of the Cobaltporphyrin of Perfluororesin-coated Membrane	55
	References	56

Chapter 4 High Oxygen Permeation and Persistent Oxygen-Carrying in a Poly(vinylimidazole-*co*-fluoroalkyl methacrylate)–Cobaltporphyrin Membrane

59

4.1	Introduction	59
4.2	Experimental Section	60
4.2.1	Materials	60
4.2.2	Membrane preparation	61
4.2.3	Spectroscopic measurements	61
4.2.4	Oxygen permeation measurements	61
4.3	Reversible Oxygen-binding to the CoP Complex in the FIm Membrane	62
4.4	Oxygen Permeation through the Membranes	64
4.5	Operational Lifetime of the CoP Complexed in the Membrane	65
	References	66

Chapter 5 Increased Reduction Current of Oxygen at the Cathode Modified by Cobaltporphyrin Liquid Membrane

69

5.1	Introduction	69
5.2	Experimental Section	71
5.2.1	Materials	71
5.2.2	Membrane preparation	71
5.2.3	Apparatus and procedures	71
5.3	Reversible Oxygen-binding to Cobaltporphyrin in an Electrolyte Solution of Benzonitrile	72

5.4	Reduction of Oxygen at the Electrode Modified by Cobaltporphyrin Liquid Membrane	73
5.5	Mechanism of the Oxygen Reduction at the Modified Electrode	75
	References	77
Chapter 6 Electroreduction of Oxygen Enriched in a [Poly(ethyleneiminato)]Cobalt(II) Complex		79
6.1	Introduction	79
6.2	Experimental Section	81
6.2.1	Materials	81
6.2.2	Apparatus and procedures	82
6.3	Oxygen Enrichment by the Solution of the PEI-Co Complex and Reduction at the Electrode Catalyzed by MnO_2/C	82
6.4	Oxygen Electroreduction at the Electrode Modified by the Crosslinked PEI-Co Membrane	86
	References	88
Chapter 7 Electroreduction of Oxygen at Pt/C-Modified Electrodes with Oxygen-Enriching Cobaltporphyrin Layer		91
7.1	Introduction	91
7.2	Experimental Section	92
7.2.1	Materials	92
7.2.2	Preparation of a modified oxygen electrode	92
7.2.3	Apparatus and procedures	92
7.3	Oxygen Enrichment by a CoTPP Complex	93
7.4	Oxygen Reduction at the Electrode Modified by a Combination of a CoTPP Complex with Pt/C	93
	References	96
Chapter 8 Future Prospect		97
	References	101
	<i>Abstract</i>	103
	<i>List of publications</i>	109
	<i>Acknowledgement</i>	