

# Noble-Metal-Free NO<sub>x</sub> Storage over Ba-Modified TiO<sub>2</sub> Photocatalysts under UV-Light Irradiation at Low Temperatures

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### Supporting Information

**ABSTRACT:** Photoassisted nitrogen oxide (NO<sub>x</sub>) storage was investigated over the barium-modified titanium dioxide (Ba/ TiO<sub>2</sub>) photocatalysts under UV-light irradiation at a high concentration of nitrogen monoxide (NO) of 200 ppm and a high gas hourly space velocity (GHSV) of 50 000 h<sup>-1</sup>. The NO removal efficiency was kept >99% during the 1020 s interval from the start of the reaction over the Ba/TiO<sub>2</sub> photocatalyst. The temperature-programed desorption (TPD) measurement and Xray diffraction (XRD) technique revealed that barium oxide (BaO) species functioned as a NO<sub>x</sub> storage material even at low temperatures, which result in improvement of the performance of the photoassisted NO<sub>x</sub> storage.



KEYWORDS: photocatalyst, nitrogen oxides,  $NO_{x}$  titanium dioxide, barium,  $NO_{x}$  storage, lean  $NO_{x}$  trap

L ean-burn and diesel engines are one of the most important technologies to improve the fuel efficiency of internal combustion engines and reduce carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions. Significant fuel economy can be achieved when the engines operate under lean conditions of an air-to-fuel (A/F) ratio of approximately 20–65.<sup>1</sup> The conventional three-way catalyst is not capable of efficiently decomposing NO<sub>x</sub> in the exhaust gas from the engines, although it can reduce NO<sub>x</sub> in the stoichiometric condition at an A/F ratio of 14.7.<sup>2,3</sup> The NO<sub>x</sub> removal at high A/F ratios was performed using catalytic processes such as selective catalytic reduction (SCR)<sup>4,5</sup> and NO<sub>x</sub> storage and reduction (NSR).<sup>6–8</sup>

In the SCR system, urea is injected into the exhaust gas and decomposes into ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>) and CO<sub>2</sub>. The NH<sub>3</sub> reacts with NO<sub>x</sub> in the exhaust gas to form harmless nitrogen (N<sub>2</sub>) under the lean condition. This technology is widely used in diesel engines and motor vehicles using Fe- or Cu-zeolite catalysts.<sup>9–13</sup> Alternatively, the NSR catalyst (typically, Pt/BaO/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>) operates under lean and rich conditions. NO<sub>x</sub> was oxidized over Pt and stored as nitrite (NO<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup>) or nitrate (NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup>) species under the lean condition, where barium oxide (BaO) functions as a NO<sub>x</sub> storage material.<sup>14</sup> After the NO<sub>x</sub> storage period under the lean condition (approximately 60–90 s), the engines are switched to the fuel-rich condition for a short period (approximately 3–5 s) by injecting fuels, where

the stored NO<sub>x</sub> is released and reduced into harmless N<sub>2</sub> over Pt.<sup>14</sup> The cycling operation of the lean and rich conditions provides high NO<sub>x</sub> removal efficiency.<sup>15</sup> However, these SCR and NSR catalysts cannot reduce NO<sub>x</sub> efficiently below 423 K.<sup>16–18</sup> In the urea-SCR system, according to the reports of the International Council for Clean Transportation (ICCT), urea injection could not start for approximately 800 s during the cold start test in the world harmonized transient cycle (WHTC) because the temperature of the exhaust gas was too low.<sup>16</sup> Controlling the NO<sub>x</sub> emission under the cold start condition is a key and urgent task to lower the total emission of NO<sub>x</sub>.

We have focused on TiO<sub>2</sub> photocatalysts as NO<sub>x</sub> storage materials to reduce NO<sub>x</sub> emissions in the cold start condition from the viewpoint of nontoxicity, low operating temperature, and rapid response to light. Under the cold start condition, utilizing the photocatalysts enable the de-NO<sub>x</sub> system to work at the same time that the engine starts. There are many reports concerning the oxidation of NO over TiO<sub>2</sub>-based photocatalysts under light irradiation.<sup>19–28</sup> In these reports, NO in the gas phase was oxidized to NO<sub>2</sub> and surface NO<sub>x</sub><sup>-</sup> species

Received:January 24, 2015Revised:April 7, 2015Published:April 9, 2015

and stored on the TiO<sub>2</sub> surface. Most of the researchers investigated the oxidation of NO over TiO<sub>2</sub> photocatalysts at very low concentrations of NO (less than 10 ppm) and/or at low gas hourly space velocity (GHSV) of 10–1000 h<sup>-1</sup> because their objective was the removal of  $NO_x$  in air<sup>22,29</sup> and elucidation of the reaction mechanism of NO oxidation.<sup>24,25,30-32</sup> These conditions were quite different from those of practical exhaust gas in lean-burn engines (typically, concentration of NO > 200 ppm and GHSV > 50 000  $h^{-1}$ ). Thus, the potential of the  $TiO_2$  photocatalyst for  $NO_x$  storage materials in the cold start condition has not been investigated. In this research, we investigated photoassisted  $NO_x$  storage at a high concentration of NO and high GHSV to assess the potential of the TiO<sub>2</sub> photocatalyst. In addition, the role of Ba modification was examined in the performance of the photoassisted NO<sub>x</sub> storage.

Anatase TiO<sub>2</sub> powder with a high surface area (ST-01, anatase, 292 m<sup>2</sup> g<sup>-1</sup>) was used in this study. Ba-modified TiO<sub>2</sub> (Ba/TiO<sub>2</sub>) was prepared using a simple impregnation method using  $Ba(NO_3)_2$  as a precursor. Photoassisted  $NO_x$  storage was performed using a conventional fixed bed flow system under atmospheric pressure. A quartz reactor (H12 mm × W10 mm × D1.0 mm, the reactor volume: 0.12 mL) was used for the reaction, and 0.13 g of catalyst granules were introduced into the reactor and then pretreated at various temperatures (298-873 K) in a 10%  $O_2/He$  gas mixture at a flow rate of 50 mL min<sup>-1</sup> for 1 h. The reaction gas composition was as follows: NO (200 ppm), O<sub>2</sub> (3%), and He (balance). A 300-W Xe lamp (PerkinElmer PE300BF) was used as the light source. The outlet concentration of  $NO_x$  (NO + NO<sub>2</sub>) was measured using a portable gas analyzer (HORIBA PG-335). The reaction temperature was monitored by using a thermocouple.

Figure 1 shows the time course of the outlet concentrations of  $NO_x$  (= NO + NO<sub>2</sub>) for NO<sub>x</sub> storage under various reaction conditions after the pretreatment at 773 K in a 10%  $O_2$ /He gas mixture. The reaction temperature increased up to 373 K after the start of the light irradiation, and it was stable during the reaction. without a catalyst, the concentration of NO<sub>x</sub> increased with the introduction of NO and immediately became 200 ppm. However, the concentration of NO was less than 2 ppm during the initial 530 s of the reaction (conversion of NO > 99%) over  $TiO_2$ . After the dead time for the breakthrough of NO<sub>xt</sub> the concentration of NO gradually increased with the reaction time and became 175 ppm after 3 h (not saturated), where N<sub>2</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O products were not detected by the TCD-GCs. (In this research, the dead time for the breakthrough of NO<sub>x</sub> was defined as the time at which the concentration of NO<sub>x</sub> exceeded 2 ppm (99% of the conversion of NO) in the outlet gas.) The concentration of NO became 200 ppm after 20 h of the reaction (see Figure S1 in SI), where the inlet NO gas slipped through the catalyst possibly because of the saturation of the  $TiO_2$  surface by the adsorbed  $NO_x$  species. The total amount of the stored NO<sub>x</sub> species after 20 h was calculated to be 426  $\mu$ mol g<sup>-1</sup> from Figure S1. The surface density of NO<sub>x</sub> species was calculated to be 1.4 nm<sup>-2</sup>. When the TiO<sub>2</sub> (100) surface is considered, the density of the surface Ti atoms was 7.0  $\text{nm}^{-2}$ , and 20% of the surface Ti sites are occupied by the adsorbed NO<sub>x</sub> species assuming a one-to-one relationship between the stored NO<sub>x</sub> species and surface Ti sites.

The addition of Ba drastically enhanced the dead time of the  $NO_x$  slip to 1020 s, which was almost twice as long as that of the TiO<sub>2</sub> photocatalyst. The dead time value meets the demand (800 s) for the cold start condition reported by the ICCT.<sup>16</sup>

The NO<sub>x</sub> storage capability (NSC) is defined as the amount of stored NO<sub>x</sub> after 1 h from the start of the reaction and was calculated to be 252  $\mu$ mol g<sup>-1</sup>. For the typical NSR catalyst, Pt/ Ba/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>, the NSC at 473 and 573 K was reported to be 177 and 581  $\mu$ mol g<sup>-1</sup>, respectively.<sup>7</sup> The NSC of the Ba/TiO<sub>2</sub> photocatalyst was comparable to that of the typical NSR catalyst containing precious noble metals (Pt). Thus, the utilization of photocatalysts enables us to eliminate the use of expensive and rare precious metals from the de-NO<sub>x</sub> catalyst.

The NO<sub>x</sub> storage under light irradiation proceeds via the following equations according to the previous reports.<sup>25,33</sup>

$$NO \xrightarrow{O_2 h\nu} NO_2 \tag{1}$$

$$NO_2 \xrightarrow{O_2, dark} NO_2^-, NO_3^-$$
 (2)

$$NO \xrightarrow{O_2, \text{ dark}} NO_2^-, NO_3^-$$
(3)

$$NO_2^- \xrightarrow{O_2,h\nu} NO_3^-$$
 (4)

In the dark, the activity of the  $NO_x$  storage was low (no dead time), as shown in Figure 1c, although the  $NO_x$  storage



**Figure 1.** Time course of the NO<sub>x</sub> storage under various reaction conditions after the pretreatment at 773 K. (a): over 500  $\mu$ mol g<sup>-1</sup> Ba/TiO<sub>2</sub> catalyst under UV-light irradiation, (b): over TiO<sub>2</sub> catalyst under UV-light irradiation, (c): over 500  $\mu$ mol g<sup>-1</sup> Ba/TiO<sub>2</sub> catalyst in the dark, (d): over 500  $\mu$ mol g<sup>-1</sup> Ba/TiO<sub>2</sub> catalyst under UV-light irradiation without O<sub>2</sub> gas, and (e): without catalyst.

proceeded to some extent, and the NSC was calculated to be 88.4  $\mu$ mol g<sup>-1</sup>. Previous IR investigations revealed that NO<sub>2</sub><sup>-1</sup> and  $NO_3^-$  species were generated on a TiO<sub>2</sub> surface after NO +  $O_2$  coadsorption in the dark (eq 3).<sup>33,34</sup> The NO<sub>x</sub> storage in the dark was possibly due to the oxidation and adsorption of NO represented in eq 3. The reaction hardly proceeded in the absence of  $O_2$  (Figure 1d), which means  $O_2$  molecules involve in the NO<sub>x</sub> storage. Active oxygen radicals such as  $O_2^-$ ,  $O_3^-$ , and O<sup>-</sup>, which are generated on TiO<sub>2</sub> under UV-light irradiation, oxidize NO and  $NO_2^-$  into  $NO_3^-$  species according to eqs 1 and 4.<sup>24,25,29</sup> Thus, the oxidation of NO and/or  $NO_2^$ species is accelerated by UV-light irradiation, which is likely to result in the high activity under UV-light irradiation. In addition, the reusability of Ba/TiO2 was investigated after the pretreatment at 773 K (the experimental detail and the result are shown in SI). Marked deactivation was not observed, which suggests that the stored  $NO_x$  species decompose after the pretreatment at 773 K. We concluded that the catalyst is regenerable and reusable by the pretreatment.

Figure 2 shows the time course of the NO<sub>x</sub> storage at various pretreatment temperatures over the  $TiO_2$  and  $Ba/TiO_2$ 



Figure 2. Time course of the  $NO_x$  storage at the pretreatment temperatures of 673 K (a), 773 K (b), and 873 K (c). NO: 200 ppm,  $O_2$ : 3%, He balance.

catalysts. The NSC and dead time drastically decreased with the pretreatment temperature using the TiO<sub>2</sub> photocatalyst. Only the diffraction pattern of anatase TiO<sub>2</sub> was observed in the XRD patterns of all the TiO<sub>2</sub> samples before and after the reaction (Figure S3). As observed in Table 1 (entries 1–3), the crystalline size of TiO<sub>2</sub> increased from 8.9 to 28 nm, and the specific surface area (SSA) of the catalysts decreased from 292 to 50.7 m<sup>2</sup> g<sup>-1</sup> after the pretreatment at 873 K. The positive correlation of the NSC and SSA strongly indicates that the SSA has a significant effect on the NSC for the TiO<sub>2</sub> photocatalyst.

Ba/TiO<sub>2</sub> exhibits high resistance to the high-temperature pretreatment; the decrease in the activity of the Ba/TiO<sub>2</sub> catalysts by elevating the pretreatment temperature was smaller than that observed for the TiO<sub>2</sub> catalyst (Figure 2 and entries 8, 10, and 11 in Table 1). The SSA of the Ba/TiO<sub>2</sub> catalyst was almost stable up to 773 K and then decreased at 873 K. The pretreatment at 873 K slightly decreased the crystalline size of TiO<sub>2</sub> in the Ba/TiO<sub>2</sub> photocatalyst from 7.7 to 12 nm, although this value largely decreased for the TiO<sub>2</sub> photocatalyst. This result clearly indicates that the Ba modification suppressed the growth of TiO<sub>2</sub> particles. Similar effects were previously reported for metal doping into TiO<sub>2</sub> (e.g., Si, Zr,<sup>35</sup> La,<sup>36</sup> and Al<sup>37</sup>). The Ba loading enhanced the thermal stability of the catalyst, which should be one of the reasons for the higher NSC of the Ba/TiO<sub>2</sub> catalyst than that of the TiO<sub>2</sub> catalyst. The

thermal stability is an advantage in the practical use of leanburn engines.

The effect of the pretreatment temperature on the activity of the Ba/TiO<sub>2</sub> catalyst is summarized in Table 1. In the pretreatment temperature range of 298–573 K, the NSC of the Ba/TiO<sub>2</sub> catalyst (entries 4–6 in Table 1) was lower than that of the bare TiO<sub>2</sub> catalyst after the pretreatment at 773 K (entry 2) even though the crystalline size of TiO<sub>2</sub> in the Ba/TiO<sub>2</sub> catalyst was smaller than that in the TiO<sub>2</sub> catalyst. The generation of crystalline Ba(NO<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub> was observed in the asprepared Ba/TiO<sub>2</sub> catalyst using XRD (Figure 3), which



**Figure 3.** XRD patterns of the catalysts before and after the reaction at various pretreatment temperatures. (a) as-synthesized  $\text{TiO}_2$ , (b) as-synthesized  $\text{Ba/TiO}_2$ , and  $\text{Ba/TiO}_2$  after the reaction at the pretreatment temperatures of (c) 298 K, (d) 473 K, (e) 573 K, (f) 623 K, (g) 673 K, (h) 723 K, (i) 773 K, and (j) 873 K. XRD patterns in the range of  $2\theta = 10-70$  degree are shown in Figure S5 in <u>SI</u>.

suggests that the decrease in the NSC occurs because the  $TiO_2$  surface is covered with the impregnated  $Ba(NO_3)_2$  species. The NSC increased drastically upon increasing the pretreatment temperature from 573 to 673 K. The increase in the NSC was not due to the change in the SSA because the SSA decreased from 187 to 155 m<sup>2</sup> g<sup>-1</sup>. The crystalline size of  $TiO_2$  did not change in the pretreatment temperature region of 573–673 K, which indicates that the growth of  $TiO_2$  particles did not occur during the pretreatment in this temperature region. To investigate the effect of the pretreatment temperature, temperature programed desorption (TPD) experiments were

Table 1. Result of the NO<sub>x</sub> Storage, the BET Specific Surface Area, and the Crystalline Size of the TiO<sub>2</sub> Particle

			$SSA^b/m^2 g^{-1}$		$d^{c}/nm$		NSC <sup>f</sup>	dead time <sup>g</sup>
entry	catalyst	temp <sup>a</sup> /K	as-syn. <sup>d</sup>	AR <sup>e</sup>	as-syn. <sup>d</sup>	$AR^{e}$	/ µmol g <sup>-1</sup>	/ s
1	TiO <sub>2</sub>	673	292	235	7.7	8.9	203	573
2	TiO <sub>2</sub>	773	292	185	7.7	11	177	530
3	TiO <sub>2</sub>	873	292	50.7	7.7	28	83.6	58
4	Ba/TiO <sub>2</sub> <sup>h</sup>	298	180	188	7.7	7.9	156	97
5	Ba/TiO <sub>2</sub> <sup>h</sup>	473	180	188	7.7	7.8	124	33
6	Ba/TiO <sub>2</sub> <sup>h</sup>	573	180	187	7.7	8.0	108	100
7	Ba/TiO <sub>2</sub> <sup>h</sup>	623	180	166	7.7	7.9	125	170
8	Ba/TiO <sub>2</sub> <sup>h</sup>	673	180	155	7.7	8.3	230	727
9	Ba/TiO <sub>2</sub> <sup>h</sup>	723	180	166	7.7	8.3	228	629
10	Ba/TiO <sub>2</sub> <sup>h</sup>	773	180	154	7.7	8.8	225	650
11	$Ba/TiO_2^h$	873	180	108	7.7	12	175	306

<sup>*a*</sup>Pretreatment temperature. <sup>*b*</sup>Specific surface area determined by the BET methods. <sup>*c*</sup>Crystalline size of the TiO<sub>2</sub> particles. <sup>*d*</sup>As-synthesized. <sup>*e*</sup>After the NO<sub>x</sub> storage reaction. <sup>*f*</sup>NO<sub>x</sub> storage capacity after 1 h of the reaction. <sup>*g*</sup>Reaction time after which the outlet concentration of NO<sub>x</sub> was less than 2 ppm. <sup>*h*</sup>Ba loading: 1000  $\mu$ mol g<sup>-1</sup>.

performed using the same experimental setup as the reaction in a  $10\% O_2/He$  gas mixture, and the result of the as-prepared Ba/ TiO<sub>2</sub> catalysts is presented in Figure 4 (experimental details in



**Figure 4.** TPD profiles of 1000  $\mu$ mol g<sup>-1</sup> Ba/TiO<sub>2</sub> catalyst in a 10% O<sub>2</sub>/He gas mixture. NO (calc.) was calculated using the equilibrium constants of eq 5 and the concentration of NO<sub>x</sub> and O<sub>2</sub> (3%) in the TPD experiment.

the SI). By integrating the TPD profiles, the total desorption amount of NO<sub>x</sub> (NO + NO<sub>2</sub>) was calculated to be 242  $\mu$ mol, which was consistent with the loading amount of NO3<sup>-</sup> ions in the Ba/TiO<sub>2</sub> catalyst (260  $\mu$ mol). The TPD spectrum was reasonably fitted using three Gaussian functions with peaks at 694, 806, and 840 K (the fitting result is presented in Figure S4). The intensity of crystalline  $Ba(NO_3)_2$  in Figure 3 decreased after the pretreatment at 773 K and completely disappeared at 873 K. The XRD results reveal that the TPD peaks at the higher temperatures of 806 and 840 K were due to the decomposition of crystalline  $Ba(NO_3)_2$  observed in the XRD patterns. The peak at temperatures below 694 K can possibly be attributed to  $Ba(NO_3)_2$  on the TiO<sub>2</sub> surface. The desorption of NO started at approximately 600 K, which corresponded to the uptake temperature of the NSC of 623 K. The generation of NO was observed in TPD experiments, as shown in Figure 4. In addition, the concentration of NO in thermal equilibrium was calculated using the concentration of  $NO_x$  and  $O_2$  (3%) (TPD experimental condition) and thermodynamic parameters of the following equation from the NIST Chemistry WebBook:<sup>38</sup>

$$NO + 1/2O_2 \rightleftharpoons NO_2 \quad K = P_{NO2}/P_{NO}P_{O2}^{-1/2}$$
 (5)

where,  $P_x$  is the partial pressure of species *x*. The concentration of NO detected was much lower than that calculated especially at temperatures below 760 K, which indicates that NO<sub>2</sub> was first generated at temperatures below 850 K. Thus, the decomposition of Ba(NO<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub> proceeds as described in the following reaction.<sup>39,40</sup>

$$Ba(NO_3)_2 \rightarrow BaO + 2NO_2 + 1/2O_2 \tag{6}$$

Thus, we concluded that the increase of the NSC between 623 and 673 K was due to the generation of BaO, as observed in eq 6, and the generated BaO functions as a NO<sub>x</sub> storage material in the photoassisted NO<sub>x</sub> storage as well as the typical NSR catalyst. The NSC decreased at the pretreatment temperature of 873 K. At this temperature, the SSA decreased, and the crystalline size of TiO<sub>2</sub> increased. In addition, the diffraction peaks of the BaTiO<sub>3</sub> mixed oxide appeared (Figure 3). Thus, the decrease in the NSC at 873 K could be due to the

decrease in the SSA of the catalyst and/or the generation of the  $BaTiO_3$  mixed oxide.

In summary, we have developed an effective NO<sub>x</sub> storage method at a low temperature using TiO<sub>2</sub>-based photocatalysts under UV-light irradiation. We observed that the Ba modification on a TiO<sub>2</sub> surface drastically improved the performance of the catalyst. The Ba/TiO<sub>2</sub> photocatalyst exhibited 1020 s of dead time, which is sufficient for the desired value (800 s) reported by the ICCT. The effect of the pretreatment temperature was also studied, and two positive effects of Ba modification on the NSC were proposed: (i) the Ba modification inhibits the densification of TiO<sub>2</sub> particles, which helped to maintain the high SSA of TiO<sub>2</sub> and (ii) the BaO species, which was generated from the decomposition of  $Ba(NO_3)_2$ , works as a  $NO_x$  storage material over the photocatalysts at low temperatures. We concluded that TiO<sub>2</sub> and Ba/TiO<sub>2</sub> are promising for NO<sub>x</sub> storage materials at low temperatures and have the potential to reduce NO<sub>x</sub> emissions in the cold start condition.

## ASSOCIATED CONTENT

#### **S** Supporting Information

The following file is available free of charge on the ACS Publications website at DOI: 10.1021/acscatal.5b00151.

Experimental details and results of the long-time reaction, XRD patterns of  $TiO_2$  samples, and peak deconvolution of the TPD profile (<u>PDF</u>)

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#### Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study was partially supported by the Program for Element Strategy Initiative for Catalysts and Batteries (ESICB), commissioned by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) of Japan, and the Precursory Research for Embryonic Science and Technology (PRESTO), supported by the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST). A.Y. thanks the JSPS Research Fellowships for Young Scientists.

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