Effects of decarbonation on elemental behaviors during subduction-zone metamorphism: Evidence from a titanite-rich contact between eclogite-facies marble and omphacitite

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, we show the effects of subducted carbonates on geochemical processes during subduction-zone metamorphism (SZM) through the study of an eclogite-facies marble coexisting with metabasite from the ultrahigh pressure metamorphic belt of the Chinese Western Tianshan orogen. Between the marble and metabasite is a titanite-rich contact resulting from fluid-facilitated metamorphic reactions between the two lithologies, and recording elemental changes of geodynamic significance. Because this titanite-rich contact is dominated by titanite (an important host for high field strength elements, HFSEs) without white micas (an important host for large ion lithophile elements, LILEs), HFSEs are largely conserved in titanite whereas LILEs are moved away. This observation emphasizes the potential significance of subducting carbonate in retaining HFSEs in the slab through the formation and stabilization of titanite, contributing to the characteristic "arc signature" unique to subduction-zone magmatism (i.e., high LILEs, low HFSEs). The implicit assumption in this interpretation is that the observed lithological assemblage represents residues of subducting oceanic crust that has undergone major episodes of dehydration. Subducted carbonates also have significant implications for the origin of mantle isotopic heterogeneity as revealed from oceanic basalts.

1. Introduction

Arc magmas with characteristic "arc" signatures (i.e., high large ion lithophile elements, LILEs and low high field strength elements, HFSEs) have been interpreted as resulting from slab dehydration-induced mantle wedge peridotite melting ("fluid-flux melting"; McCulloch and Gamble, 1991). The released fluids are thought to selectively carry water-soluble (or mobile) elements (e.g., Ba, Rb, Cs, K, Sr, Pb, U, B, As, Sb) into the mantle wedge, while the water-insoluble (or immobile) elements (e.g., HFSEs, heavy rare earth elements [HREEs]) remain in the subducting slab carried further into the deep mantle (McCulloch and Gamble, 1991). Therefore, to understand behaviors of chemical elements during subduction-zone metamorphism (SZM) is important for better understanding arc magmatism. We have a good understanding of elemental behaviors during SZM on hand-specimen and even meter-scales, which are largely controlled by the formation and stability of relevant element-hosted minerals (El Korh et al., 2009; Hermann and Rubatto, 2009; Beinlich et al., 2010; Xiao et al., 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016). The abundances of fluids and fluid properties (e.g., fluids with dissolved Na-Al silicates or halogen, supercritical fluids above the second critical point) can also control the elemental mobility (Gao and Klemd, 2001; Rubatto and Hermann, 2003; Gao et al., 2007; Zack and John, 2007; John et al., 2008).

Despite all these complexities, we cannot truly understand geochemical behaviors of chemical elements during SZM without evaluating the effects of subducting/subducted carbonate. Carbonate makes up to ~7 wt.% of the global subducting sediments (GLOSS; Plank and Langmuir, 1998), and can indeed subduct mixed with sil-
icate sediments and altered oceanic crust. As a result, carbonation and decarbonation readily happen during metamorphism (Niu and Lesher, 1991). Hence, subducting/subducted carbonate must participate in metamorphic reactions and is likely to influence geochemical processes during SZM most likely in the form of CO₂. The significance of subducting/subducted carbonate has been discussed in the context of global carbon recycling (Kerrick and Connolly, 2001a,b; Caciagli and Manning, 2003; Hayes and Waldbauer, 2006; Huybers and Langmuir, 2009; Manning et al., 2013; Ague and Nicolescu, 2014; Flesia and Frezzotti, 2015; Liu et al., 2015; Thomson et al., 2016) and the petrogenesis of carbonate subduction (Yaxley and Brey, 2004; Dasgupta and Hirschmann, 2006, 2010; Tsuno et al., 2012; Poli, 2015).

In this paper, we report our findings of a titanite-rich contact between the marble and metabasite formed as the result of reactions between the two lithologies during seafloor subduction recorded in the ultrahigh pressure (UHP) metamorphic assemblage of the Chinese Western Tianshan orogenic belt (Xiao et al., 2012; Lü et al., 2013). We discuss the geochemical significance of the titanite lithology in moderating elemental behaviors during SZM and the geodynamic implications of carbonate subduction.

2. Field geology and petrology

2.1. Field geology

The Chinese Western Tianshan orogenic belt has been confirmed to be a typical UHP metamorphic (UHPM) belt as evidenced by findings of coesite and coexisting magnesite and aragonite as the product of dolomite breakdown (Lü et al., 2008, 2009, 2013, 2014; Zhang et al., 2002a,b; Lü and Zhang, 2012). This UHPM belt represents a paleo-convergent margin associated with the successive northward subduction of the South Tianshan Silurian-Devonian-seafloor and the Tarim Plate in the Carboniferous (Fig. 1a; Gao et al., 1999; Gao and Klemd, 2003). In this UHPM belt, both metasedimentary rocks and metabasite coexist, including pelitic schist, marble, blueschist, and eclogite (Zhang et al., 2002a,b; Lü and Zhang, 2012; Lü et al., 2014). The protoliths of metabasite are oceanic basalts, including ocean island basalts (OIB), normal (N)-type and enriched (E)-type mid-ocean ridge basalts (MORB) as well as volcanic arc basalts (Gao and Klemd, 2003; Ai et al., 2006; Xiao et al., 2012).

Our study area is along the Atantayi River (Fig. 1b; Gao et al., 1999; Lü et al., 2014). Abundant marble is closely associated with other metasedimentary rocks (Fig. 2a and b; Lü et al., 2013) and metabasite (Fig. 2c and d). The marble intercalates with the metabasite, mica schist and mica quartz schist, the protolith of which are basaltic rocks, pelite and sandstone respectively. The marble shows well-preserved rhythmical interbeds with mica schist and mica quartz schist (Fig. 2a and c), probably inherited from the protolith assemblage of pelite, sandstone and carbonate as part of turbidite flysch sequence in a deep marine environment despite the subduction-exhumation related deformation (Fig. 2c). The marble also occurs as lenses together with the metabasite (Fig. 2a–c) with their long axes parallel to the orientation of other lithologies of the sequence (e.g., mica schist, mica quartz schist; Fig. 2a and b). The discrete carbonate and basaltic lenses (Fig. 2a–c) reflect disruption of turbidites by within-trench landslides. The entire sequence has experienced SZM. Our sample in this study (12TS-AT-18) is from the contact between a metabasite enclave and the marble host (Fig. 2d).

2.2. Petrography

Between the marble (represented by circles 3 and 5–11 in Layer I; Fig. 3b–f) and metabasite (represented by circles 13–22 in Layer III–VI; Fig. 3i–l) is a titanite-rich contact (Fig. 3g and h; represented by circles 2, 4 and 12 in Layer II) with a large (~8 mm long) titanite crystal (Fig. 3i). The titanite-rich contact is dominated by well-crystallized titanite, clinozoisite (Xps ratios, Fe³⁺/[Fe³⁺+Al], smaller than 0.05; Ps, pistacite; Supplementary Table S.1) and fine-

Fig. 1. Geological sketch of the Chinese Western Tianshan HP-UHP metamorphic terrane (Lü et al., 2013) and our sampling location for this study.
grained aggregates of carbonate + omphacite + apatite (Fig. 3g; Layer II). (Sodic-)calcic amphibole is also occasionally present, replacing omphacite and clinozoisite. The elongation of titanite crystals is parallel to the contact between the marble and metabasite.

The marble (Layer I) is dominated by calcium carbonate (>90 vol.%) with minor omphacite, epidote (with XPs ratio from 0.09 to 0.23, see Supplementary Table S.1), phengite (with Si atom per formula >3.3), and paragonite (Figs. 3b–f and 4a–c). There is no reaction rim of these accessory minerals. Garnet is also present rimmed with epidote overgrowth (Figs. 3b and 4a). Only several tiny titanite inclusions are found in paragonite (Fig. 4c).
nite and rare albite. Mineral modes (mainly omphacite and clinozoisite) vary significantly, and the metabasite can be further divided into omphacite-rich (Layers IV & VI; Fig. 3j–l) and clinozoisite-rich (Layers III & V; Fig. 3i) parts. Sodic-clinalc amphibole is present, replacing clinozoisite and omphacite. No carbonate mineral is observed in the metabasite. Large titanite crystals both from the metabasite and the titanite-rich contact have very-fine-grained residual rutile (Fig. 4d and e).

The occurrence of omphacite and garnet in the marble indicates that the marble has experienced eclogite-facies metamorphism as also evidenced by the close relationship of the marble with the omphacite-bearing metabasite. Epidote overgrown on the rim of the residual garnet (Figs. 3b and 4a) results from the reaction between garnet and calcium carbonate during retrograde metamorphism.

3. Methods

Mineral compositions are analyzed in the Institute of Earth Sciences, Academia Sinica in Taipei. Mineral major elements are analyzed using a field emission scanning electron microscope (FE-SEM, JEOL JSM-7100F) equipped with an energy dispersive X-ray spectrometer (EDS, Oxford instruments Xmax 80) and a cathodoluminescence (CL) image detector (Deben Centaurus). The sample is carbon-coated and the analysis was done at an acceleration voltage of 15 kV with 0.1 nA current under the high vacuum environment (<10^-4 Pa) for 50 s in each run. The working distance is set at 10 mm. The X-ray intensities were corrected for using ZAF on synthetic mineral standards, i.e., wollastonite for Si and Ca, corundum for Al, fayalite for Fe, periclase for Mg, Cr oxide for Cr, InP (alloy) for P, rutile for Ti, Mn oxide (MnO2) for Mn, albite for Na, and orthoclase for K. Analytical results of mineral major elements are given in Supplementary Table S.1, and representative backscattered electron images (BSE) are given in Fig. 4.

Mineral trace elements are analyzed in situ Laser Ablation–Inductively Coupled Plasma Mass Spectrometry (LA-ICP-MS, a Thermo Finnigan Element XR equipped with Photon Machines Analyte G2 Excimer ArF 193 nm Laser sampler) on polished thick (100 µm) “thin” sections. Si is chosen as the internal standard for trace element analysis for all the minerals, but Ca is used for apatite. The repetition rate of laser ablation is 5 Hz, and the spot size is 40 µm. In each run, acquisition times for the background (gas blank) and the sample ablation are 45 s and 75 s respectively. The energy fluence is 4.60 J/cm². The NIST (National Institute of Standards and Technology) glass standard SRM 612 and the USGS (United States Geological Survey) glass standard BCR-2G are analyzed as the reference materials. On the basis of repeated analyses of BCR-2G, the accuracy is estimated to be within ±10% for all the analyzed elements but ~15% for Gd and Tb. The precision for all the analyzed trace elements is better than 10% (Supplementary Table S.2). During the analysis, we purposely avoid mineral inclusions. Analytical results of mineral trace elements are given in Supplementary Table S.3.

4. Results

In chondrite normalized trace element diagram (Fig. 5), the residual garnet with epidote overgrowth (Figs. 3b and 4a) shows highest HREE contents (10 s ppm) with a (HREE > LREE) chondrite pattern for all the analyzed grains (Fig. 5a). Epidote group minerals show variably high contents of REEs (~1–10^3 times the chondritic values; Fig. 5a). Epidote from the marble tends to show the highest REE contents than clinozoisite from the titanite-rich contact or from the metabasite, e.g., up to 407 ppm vs. 119 ppm for La (Supplementary Table S.3). The epidote overgrown on the rim of the residual garnet from the marble displays the lowest LREEs (e.g., only several ppm for La), Th and U (only 10 s ppm vs. up to 10 s ppm), but the highest HREEs (e.g., several ppm vs. mostly <1 ppm for Lu) among all the analyzed epidote group minerals (Fig. 5a).

All the titanite analyses show consistently high Nb and Ta contents, up to ~10^3–10^4 times the chondritic value (Fig. 5b). However, REE contents of titanite are highly variable (from hundreds of ppm to 10 s ppm), even within a single crystal grain (Supplementary Table S.3). All the titanite analyses can be divided into two groups: (1) Group I, with a (HREE > LREE) chondrite pattern, and (2) Group II, with a LREE-rich pattern (Fig. 5b). Compared with Group II, Group I also shows relatively lower Th (10 s of ppm vs. several to 10 s of ppm), U (several ppm vs. 10 s to 100 s of ppm), Pb (several ppm vs. ~10 s ppm), Sr (10 s ppm vs. ~100 s ppm) and L-MREE contents (several ppm vs. ~10 s ppm). Group I with a (HREE > LREE) chondrite Pattern only represents the core composition.
of the large titanite crystals from the metabasite, although some analyzed spots of titanite core from the metabasite can also show LREE-rich feature.

Phengite contains the highest Ba, Rb and Cs (\(\sim 10^4\) ppm, \(10^2\) ppm and several ppm respectively) among all the analyzed minerals (Fig. 5c). Paragonite also contains high Ba-Rb-Pb-Sr, i.e., \(\sim 10^-10^2\) times the chondritic values to different extents (Fig. 5d). Paragonite from the marble shows the lowest Sr contents than other paragonite crystals (\(\sim 100\) ppm vs. \(\sim 300\)–\(500\) ppm; Supplementary Table S3.3). Apatite shows consistently high Th, U, REEs, and Sr (\(\sim 10^2\) times the chondritic value) as well as some Pb (10 times the chondritic value; Fig. 5e). All the omphacite analyses show similarly low contents of all the analyzed trace elements, except for Th, U and Sr (no more than 10 times the chondritic values; Fig. 5f). The Sr contents of omphacite from the marble seem to be lower than those of other analyzed omphacite, 8.09–16.1 ppm vs. 19.7 ppm (Supplementary Table S3.3).

5. Discussions

5.1. Controls on mineral compositional variations

All the above mineral trace element systematics (Fig. 5) generally confirm previous studies (e.g., Tribuzio et al., 1996; Sorensen et al., 1997; Spandler et al., 2003; El Korh et al., 2009; Hermann and Rubatto, 2009; Xiao et al., 2013, 2014). However, Sr contents of omphacite from the marble (e.g., Fig. 3c and d) are lower than those of omphacite from the metabasite and from subduction-zone metamorphosed rocks in our previous studies for the Chinese Western Tianshan orogenic belt (8.09–16.1 ppm vs. up to 135 ppm; Xiao et al., 2014). Paragonite from the marble (e.g., Fig. 3e) also shows the lowest Sr contents among all the analyzed paragonite grains in this study, which are as low as those of paragonite inclusions that together with clinzoisite occur as lawsonite pseudomorphs in our previous studies (Xiao et al., 2014). Given the
fact that calcite has the great potential to host Sr, e.g., $\sim 10^4$ ppm (Spandler et al., 2003), lower Sr contents of silicate minerals (omphacite and paragonite) from the marble is likely resulting from the strong partitioning of Sr to the host marble. REE contents of epidote from the marble (e.g., Figs. 3f and 5a) are significantly higher than those of clinozoisite from the metabasite. The higher REE contents of epidote from the marble likely reflect the stronger preference of REEs for epidote relative to calcium carbonate. In addition, unlike the high (LREE/HREE)chondrite of analyzed clinozoisite from the metabasite and other epidote from the marble, the high (HREE/LREE)chondrite of epidote overgrown on the rim of garnet from the marble (Fig. 3b) clearly reflects the inheritance of HREEs from garnet (Fig. 5a), indicating the significant redistribution of REEs between different mineral phases rather than their loss (Xiao et al., 2016).

As a major element for titanite, Ti contents of titanite are constrained by the stoichiometry (i.e., CaTiSiO$_5$), but trace element contents of titanite are highly heterogeneous, i.e., different spots show variable LREEs, Th, and U contents (Fig. 5b). The significant correlations of U with the immobile elements (e.g., Th; Fig. 6a) and the significant correlation of LREE (e.g., La) with the immobile elemental ratio (e.g., Th/Nb ratio; Fig. 6b) indicate that variations of LREEs, Th, and U in titanite are not caused by the mobilization of these elements. Given the consistent Nb-Ta contents in both of the two titanite groups, the obviously lower LREE-Th-U contents of the HREE-rich titanite group than those of the LREE-rich titanite group reflects less LREE-Th-U available for the growth of the HREE-rich titanite at the analyzed spots. Indeed, many trace elements are only redistributed locally among different mineral phases with metamorphic reactions (e.g., REEs redistributed from garnet to epidote group minerals as discussed above; Xiao et al., 2014); heterogeneous trace element contents of metamorphic minerals are controlled by the availability of their “compatible” trace elements (Xiao et al., 2016). Thus, the inherited bulk rock and precursor mineral compositions and the competition between the adjacent growing minerals in contact can significantly affect trace element contents of metamorphic minerals. Because garnet prefers HREEs and epidote group minerals prefer LREEs, two different trace element patterns of titanite (Fig. 5b) reflect their inheritance from different precursor minerals (garnet vs. epidote). The inherited “garnet” trace element signature in high HREE group titanite offers evidence for complete transformation of garnet in the metabasite sample without garnet. Alternatively, considering the large amounts of clinozoisite in the metabasite and its significance for LREE-Th-U budget (Xiao et al., 2014), the growth of clinozoisite may also strongly result in the LREE-Th-U depletion of the neighboring titanite in contact (shown as Group I titanite).

5.2. Formation of the titanite-rich contact

The large titanite crystals as well as other titanite crystals at the titanite-rich contact between the marble and metabasite contain Nb and Ta as high as rutile. Tiny residual rutile remains in some large titanite crystals (Fig. 4d and e), probably resulting from the following reaction (Niu and Lesher, 1991):

$$
\text{Rt} + \text{Coe/}Qz + \text{Arg/Ca} \Rightarrow \text{Ttn} + \text{CO}_2 \uparrow \tag{1}
$$

$$(\text{TiO}_2 + \text{SiO}_2 + \text{CaCO}_3 \Rightarrow \text{CaTiSiO}_5 + \text{CO}_2)$$

Furthermore, the lithological contact has been proposed to preferentially serve as the major conduit for the fluid flow (Breeding et al., 2003; Fig. 7). The orientation (i.e., parallel to the contact between the metabasite and marble), the large crystal size and the abundant titanite at the titanite-rich contact emphasize its formation through the metamorphic reaction between the two lithologies stabilized by SiO$_2$-rich fluids. The absence of phengite and paragonite (the most important mineral hosts for highly water-soluble LILEs and fluids; Xiao et al., 2014) at the titanite-rich contact between the two lithologies suggests that highly water-soluble elements must have been largely transported away with the fluids, and only immobile elements like Ti-Nb-Ta remain stabilized in the form of titanite in the fluid conduit after dehydration and decarbonation. As no obvious change of hydrous mineral modal abundances in metabasite and the LILEs depletion in the titanite-rich contact, the fluids facilitating the reaction (1) are unlikely derived from the metabasite or externally from the metasedimentary rocks. The fluids externally derived from the subducting serpentinite (uppermost mantle section of the slab equivalent to the “abyssal peridotites”; Niu, 2004), which can continuously dehydrate to depths even up to ~250 km in cold subduction zones (depending on the thermal structure of the slab; Syracuse et al., 2010), is more likely responsible for this reaction.

The replacement of rutile by titanite is commonly thought to represent the retrograde metamorphic process during the slab exhumation (e.g., Chen and Zheng, 2015; Zhang et al., 2016). However, the replacement during the apparent “retrograde” metamor-

![Fig. 6. Co-variation diagrams for titanite: (a) Th–U, (b) Th/La–Th/Nb. The two groups of titanite with different LREE/HREE ratio patterns as shown in Fig. 5b are also reflected as two groups in these figures, i.e., red solid circles (11 analyzed spots) for the HREE-rich group representing the core composition of titanite from the metabasite, while blue solid rectangles (49 analyzed spots) for the LREE-rich group mostly representing titanite from the titanite-rich contact and the rim composition of those from the metabasite. U (a) and LREE (represented by La; b) correlate with the immobile Th and Nb (the critical values of Pearson’s correlation coefficient using one-tail test for 11 samples and 49 samples are 0.5214 and 0.2377 respectively at >95% confidence levels), indicating that the variation of LREE-U in titanite are not caused by the mobility of these elements. (For interpretation of the references to color in this figure legend, the reader is referred to the web version of this article.)](image)
phism can actually happen with the change of geochemical composition of the system (Fig. 7a) rather than with the decrease of pressure or temperature. Considering the effects of CO2 activity on the varying stability of titanite (Ye et al., 2002), titanite instead of rutile can become stable at higher pressures in the system with decreasing XCO2 (Fig. 7a). In addition, the titanite-rich contact in this study represents an open system, possibly affected by externally derived fluids from the subducting serpentinite and releasing this study represents an open system, possibly affected by externally derived fluids from the subducting serpentinite and releasing CO2 as well as other water-soluble elements via the reaction 1 as finally derived fluids from the subducting serpentinite and releasing this study represents an open system, possibly affected by externally derived fluids from the subducting serpentinite and releasing this study represents an open system, possibly affected by externally derived fluids from the subducting serpentinite and releasing this study represents an open system, possibly affected by externally derived fluids from the subducting serpentinite and releasing this study represents an open system, possibly affected by externally derived fluids from the subducting serpentinite and releasing.

Fig. 7. (a) P-T diagram showing phase equilibria of the reaction: \( \text{Rt} + \text{Coe/Qz} + \text{Arg/Cal} \rightarrow \text{Ttn} + \text{CO}_2 \) (after Ye et al., 2002). Numbers at the end of the univariate curves are \( X_{\text{CO}_2} \) values. The red solid circle represents the peak metamorphic condition of the Chinese Western Tianshan, i.e., ~520 °C at 2.7 GPa (Lu et al., 2009). It is below the univariate line with \( X_{\text{CO}_2} = 0.001 \) (in orange) but above the univariate line with \( X_{\text{CO}_2} = 0.01 \) (in blue), indicating titanite can become stable in the system with decreasing \( X_{\text{CO}_2} \) rather than with decreasing pressure or temperature. (b) The schematic diagram for the context of the slab subduction, modified from Niu (2009). The released fluids and the hydrous melts (including supercritical fluids) derived from the subducting slab can carry certain elements into the overlying mantle wedge, and contribute to the petrogenesis of IAB. As a result, the composition of the altered subducting slab after SZM and hydrous melting into the deep mantle cannot be equal to the inputting composition into the trench. (c) The schematic diagram showing diverse lithologies with different mineral assemblages in the subduction channel (marble, other meta-sediments like metapelite, metabasite, peridotite, mélange matrix) and the fluid flow as well as the hydrous melts from the subducting slab (modified from Xiao et al., 2016). (d) The schematic diagram showing reactions between different lithologies, which are facilitated by infiltrated fluids along the lithological contact. (For interpretation of the references to color in this figure legend, the reader is referred to the web version of this article.)

The palaeogeographic distribution of the North Tianshan during the Early Carboniferous (~330 Ma) is located at the latitude of ~30°N or even lower as evidenced by palaeomagnetic studies (Kirschner et al., 2014; Kirschner, 2015), and the ancient South Tianshan Ocean was situated south of ~30°N, which is also supported by the occurrence of abundant carbonates in the Chinese Western Tianshan orogenic belt (Lü et al., 2013). Furthermore, because calcium carbonate dissolves at depths deeper than the carbonate compensation depths (CCDs), and because all trenches are deeper than the CCDs, subduction of carbonates requires silicate mix to enable carbonate protected from the seawater. The forearc basin flysch caused by turbidity currents from shallower depths can result in the presence of deep sea carbonates to subduct (e.g., Ericson et al., 1952; Yamamoto et al., 1988; Tsuboi et al., 2014). Globally heterogeneous distribution of carbonates from one trench to another makes it not straightforward at present to quantify this process and geochemical consequences of carbonate subduction. However, the observations and analysis we present here points to the significance of subducting carbonates in moderating geochemical behaviors of chemical elements during SZM, hence in improved understanding of geochemical consequences of SZM, about which further research is warranted.

Recent studies (e.g., Castillo, 2015) have mentioned that as a result of precipitation from seawater with abundant U but low Pb (>1 ppm vs. 0.003 ppb), marine carbonates are expected to show high U/Pb ratios. Together with the lowest Rb/Sr ratio of marine carbonates among other crustal rocks, he proposed that the subduction of ancient marine carbonates can result in characteristic high \( {^{238}\text{U}}/{^{206}\text{Pb}} \) ratio (U; HIMU) but unradiogenic \( {^{87}\text{Sr}}/{^{86}\text{Sr}} \) isotopic signatures in OIB (Castillo, 2015). Based on significant correlations of U and Th with immobile elements (e.g., HFSEs) for subduction-zone metamorphosed rocks and IAB in our previous studies (Xiao et al., 2012, 2016), we think that U and Th are immobile or much less mobile than Pb during SZM. Although Sr and Rb are both mobilized during SZM as discussed in our previous studies (Xiao et al., 2012, 2016), Sr can be largely hosted by subducting carbonates. Hence, these different behaviors of radioactive parent and radiogenic daughter during SZM can result in the low U/Pb ratios but high Rb/Sr ratios of the released fluids. After being affected by these released fluids from the carbonate-bearing sub-
ducting slab during SZM, the mantle wedge as the source of IAB may also have lower U/Pb ratio and higher Rb/Sr ratio. This is consistent with the lower U/Pb but higher Rb/Sr ratios in IAB relative to MORB (e.g., the average values of U/Pb and Rb/Sr ratios for IAB are 0.1 and 0.04 compared with 0.19 and 0.02 in MORB; IAB data is referred to Elliott, 2003, and MORB data referred to Niu and Batiza, 1997). The high Rb/Sr but low U/Pb in the overlying mantle wedge can further evolve to high radiogenic $^{87}$Sr/$^{86}$Sr and unradiogenic Pb isotopic features of EMI with time.

In addition, based on the petrological and geochemical studies of subducted marble from the Eocene Cycloidal subduction complex on Syros and Tinos islands, Greece, Agu and Nicolescu (2014) reported abundant CO$_2$ release at the lithological contact between metacarbonate and other lithologies (e.g., mantle rocks, blueschist or metapelites in the subduction channel along slab-mantle interfaces). However, instead of decarbonation reactions, these authors prefer a model of fluid-induced dissolution of calcium carbonate for CO$_2$ release, and they proposed that the water activity will be lowered by adding CO$_2$ to the fluids after the dissolution of CaCO$_3$ at high pressures. As a result, silicate minerals will precipitate owing to their lower solubility. Whether subducting carbonates undergo decarbonation or dissolution, the fluid infiltration along the lithological contact is crucial for the CO$_2$ release from the subducting slab. Considering the complex scenarios of the slab-mantle interface (Bebout, 2007a), i.e., different types of blocks with highly variable and hybridized compositions (including marble, other meta-sediments like metapelite, metabasite, and mantle peridotite), the decarbonation/dissolution of carbonate facilitated by fluids at the lithological contact during SZM (Fig. 7) is expected to be common (e.g., reaction 1 or see model of Agu and Nicolescu, 2014), and can release abundant CO$_2$ for global carbon cycling through arc volcanic degassing (e.g., Kerrick, 2001).

6. Conclusions

The titanite-rich contact between the marble and metabasite from the Chinese Western Tianshan UHPM belt provides important information on geochemical behaviors of chemical elements affected by subducting carbonates. The titanite-rich contact is formed as the result of decarbonation reaction between the two lithologies at the presence of SiO$_2$-rich fluids. Such reactions and products are expected to be common in subduction zones, and the release of CO$_2$ during this process can contribute to the global carbon cycling. Importantly, this decarbonation reaction forms and stabilizes titanite that preferentially conserves HFSes over LILs. Although globally heterogeneous distribution of carbonates from one trench to another makes it not straightforward at present to quantify this process and geochemical consequences of SZM, serious effort is in urgent need because such processes may be fundamentally important towards our improved understanding of subduction-zone magmatism and the geochemical consequences of SZM.

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Appendix A. Supplementary material

Supplementary data associated with this article can be found, in the online version, at http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jseaes.2017.01.006.

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