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Table S1. Crystallographic data and structure refinements for **1-3**

|                          | Ce-fdh ( <b>1</b> )                                                             | Pr-fdh ( <b>2</b> )                                                             | Nd-fdh ( <b>3</b> )                                                             |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Molecular formula        | C <sub>34</sub> H <sub>38</sub> O <sub>6</sub> N <sub>2</sub> F <sub>9</sub> Ce | C <sub>34</sub> H <sub>38</sub> O <sub>6</sub> N <sub>2</sub> F <sub>9</sub> Pr | C <sub>34</sub> H <sub>38</sub> O <sub>6</sub> N <sub>2</sub> F <sub>9</sub> Nd |
| Mr                       | 881.77                                                                          | 882.57                                                                          | 885.91                                                                          |
| Crystal system           | triclinic                                                                       | Triclinic                                                                       | Triclinic                                                                       |
| Space group              | $P\bar{1}$                                                                      | $P\bar{1}$                                                                      | $P\bar{1}$                                                                      |
| $a$ , Å                  | 9.5494(3)                                                                       | 9.5517(3)                                                                       | 9.5480(4)                                                                       |
| $b$ , Å                  | 12.2844(6)                                                                      | 12.2277(4)                                                                      | 12.2023(5)                                                                      |
| $c$ , Å                  | 17.9636(5)                                                                      | 17.9577(5)                                                                      | 17.9158(7)                                                                      |
| $\alpha$ , °             | 99.984(3)                                                                       | 99.871(2)                                                                       | 99.810(3)                                                                       |
| $\beta$ , °              | 104.048(3)                                                                      | 103.967(3)                                                                      | 103.867(3)                                                                      |
| $\gamma$ , °             | 101.288(3)                                                                      | 101.416(3)                                                                      | 101.481(3)                                                                      |
| $V$ , Å <sup>3</sup>     | 1949.93                                                                         | 1941.4                                                                          | 1933.07                                                                         |
| $Z$                      | 2                                                                               | 2                                                                               | 2                                                                               |
| $T$ , K                  | 180                                                                             | 180                                                                             | 180                                                                             |
| $F(000)$                 | 886                                                                             | 888                                                                             | 890                                                                             |
| $\lambda$ , Å            | 0.71073                                                                         | 0.71073                                                                         | 0.71073                                                                         |
| $R_1(I \geq 2\sigma(I))$ | 0.0433                                                                          | 0.0336                                                                          | 0.0453                                                                          |
| w $R_2$ (all data)       | 0.0921                                                                          | 0.0751                                                                          | 0.0947                                                                          |
| $S$                      | 1.052                                                                           | 1.060                                                                           | 1.070                                                                           |

Table S2. Selected bond lengths (Å) and angles (°) of **1-3**

|               | Ce-fdh ( <b>1</b> ) | Pr-fdh ( <b>2</b> ) | Nd-fdh ( <b>3</b> ) |
|---------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Ln-O(1)       | 2.426(2)            | 2.410(2)            | 2.395(3)            |
| Ln-O(2)       | 2.433(2)            | 2.415(2)            | 2.402(3)            |
| Ln-O(3)       | 2.436(3)            | 2.409(2)            | 2.395(3)            |
| Ln-O(4)       | 2.460(3)            | 2.442(2)            | 2.429(3)            |
| Ln-O(5)       | 2.422(3)            | 2.400(2)            | 2.384(3)            |
| Ln-O(6)       | 2.437(3)            | 2.416(2)            | 2.403(3)            |
| Ln-N(1)       | 2.655(3)            | 2.631(3)            | 2.609(4)            |
| Ln-N(2)       | 2.696(3)            | 2.670(3)            | 2.652(4)            |
| O(1)- Ln-O(2) | 70.08(8)            | 70.73(8)            | 71.08(10)           |
| O(1)- Ln-O(4) | 74.75(8)            | 75.06(8)            | 75.03(10)           |
| O(1)- Ln-O(6) | 123.19(9)           | 122.43(8)           | 122.86(10)          |
| O(1)- Ln-N(1) | 147.06(9)           | 147.60(8)           | 147.62(12)          |
| O(1)- Ln-N(2) | 145.17(9)           | 144.53(8)           | 144.14(11)          |
| O(2)- Ln-O(4) | 133.86(8)           | 134.72(8)           | 135.25(10)          |
| O(2)- Ln-O(6) | 76.47(8)            | 75.72(8)            | 75.52(10)           |
| O(2)- Ln-N(1) | 87.72(8)            | 87.38(8)            | 87.26(11)           |
| O(2)- Ln-N(2) | 144.74(9)           | 144.74(8)           | 144.78(11)          |
| O(3)- Ln-O(1) | 80.80(9)            | 81.43(8)            | 81.36(11)           |
| O(3)- Ln-O(2) | 76.15(8)            | 76.32(8)            | 76.29(10)           |
| O(3)- Ln-O(4) | 69.48(8)            | 69.96(7)            | 70.42(10)           |

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|               |           |           |            |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| O(3)- Ln-O(6) | 133.15(8) | 133.10(8) | 132.73(11) |
| O(3)- Ln-N(1) | 70.16(9)  | 70.08(8)  | 70.04(11)  |
| O(3)- Ln-N(2) | 103.59(9) | 103.96(8) | 104.19(11) |
| O(4)- Ln-N(1) | 107.73(9) | 107.77(8) | 107.80(10) |
| O(4)- Ln-N(2) | 74.71(8)  | 74.19(8)  | 73.81(10)  |
| O(5)- Ln-O(1) | 86.94(8)  | 85.35(8)  | 84.97(11)  |
| O(5)- Ln-O(2) | 117.27(8) | 116.60(7) | 116.49(10) |
| O(5)- Ln-O(3) | 157.44(9) | 157.14(8) | 156.95(10) |
| O(5)- Ln-O(4) | 89.10(8)  | 88.67(8)  | 88.18(10)  |
| O(5)- Ln-O(6) | 69.34(8)  | 69.75(8)  | 70.31(10)  |
| O(5)- Ln-N(1) | 125.52(9) | 126.51(8) | 126.91(11) |
| O(5)- Ln-N(2) | 76.24(8)  | 76.71(8)  | 76.77(11)  |
| O(6)- Ln-O(4) | 149.47(8) | 149.33(8) | 149.02(10) |
| O(6)- Ln-N(1) | 71.47(9)  | 71.75(8)  | 71.46(11)  |
| O(6)- Ln-N(2) | 79.18(9)  | 79.64(8)  | 79.57(10)  |
| N(1)- Ln-N(2) | 60.35(9)  | 60.90(8)  | 61.16(12)  |

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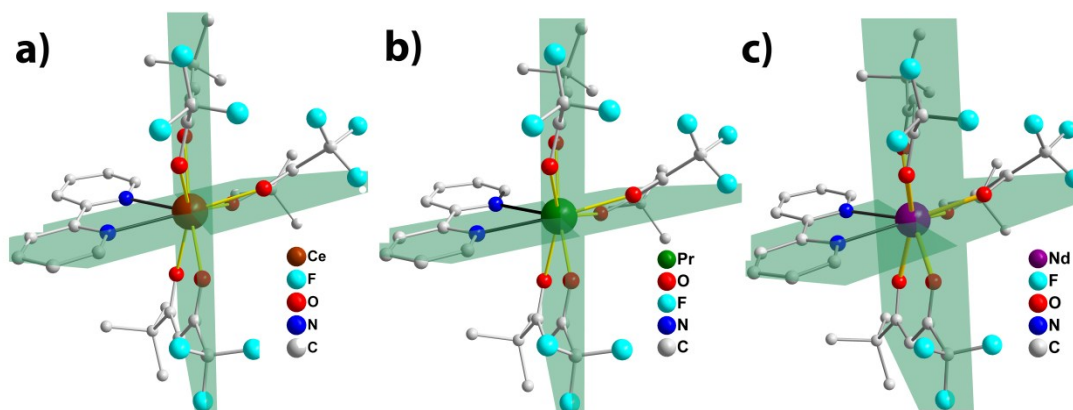


Figure S1. View of molecular structures of **1-3**. The green planes represent the planes described in the main text.

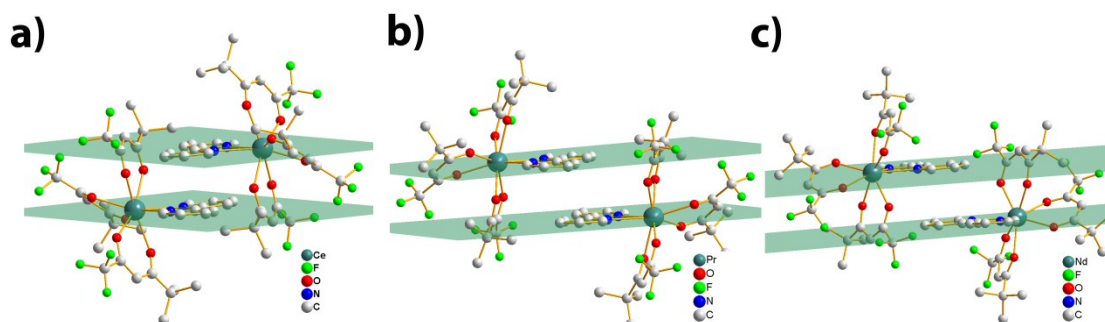


Figure S2. View of  $\pi$ - $\pi$  stacking in **1-3**. The green planes represent the bpy planes described in the main text.

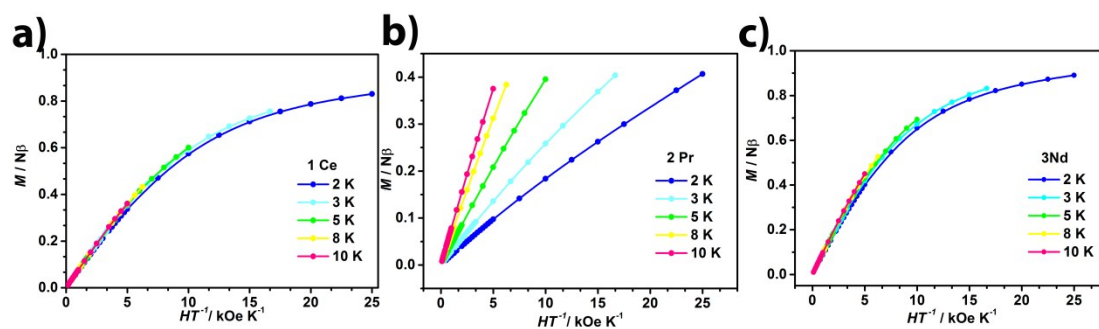


Figure S3.  $M$  versus  $H/T$  plots for **1-3**

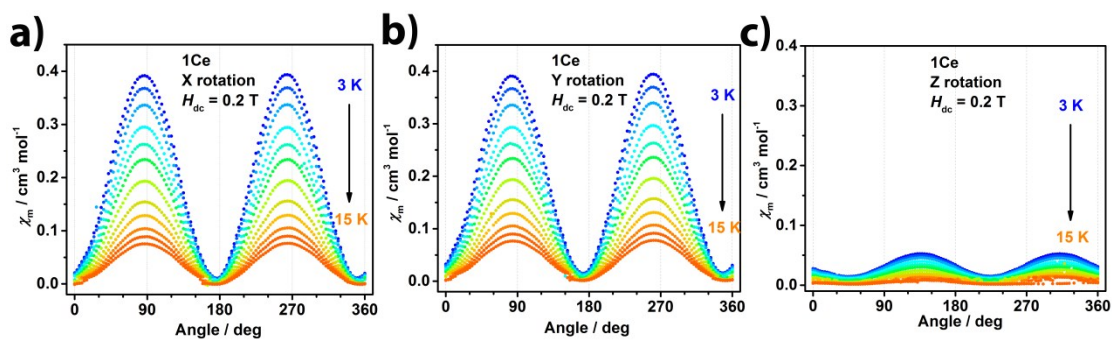


Figure S4. Angular dependence of magnetic susceptibility along XYZ rotation for **1**

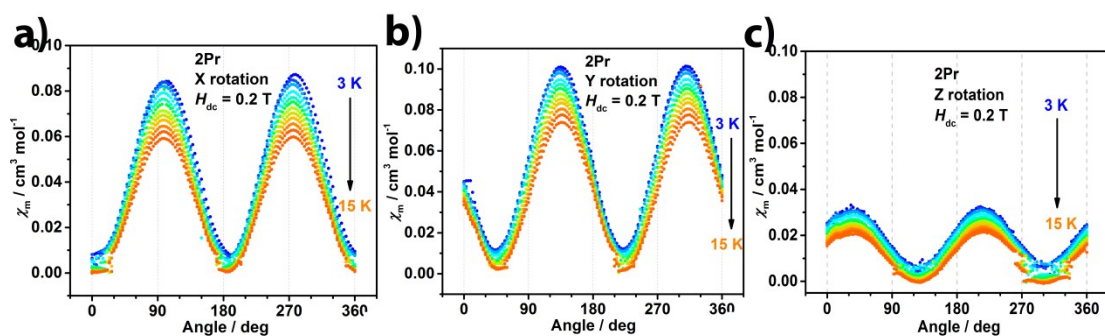


Figure S5. Angular dependence of magnetic susceptibility along XYZ rotation for **2**

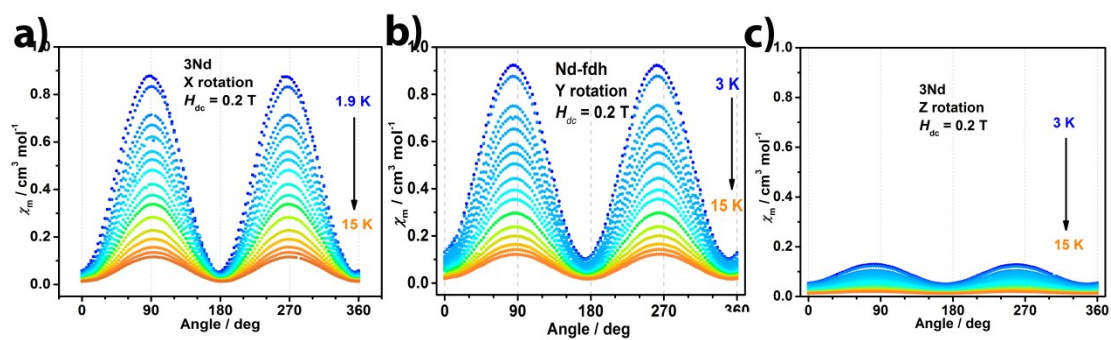


Figure S6. Angular dependence of magnetic susceptibility along XYZ rotation for **3**

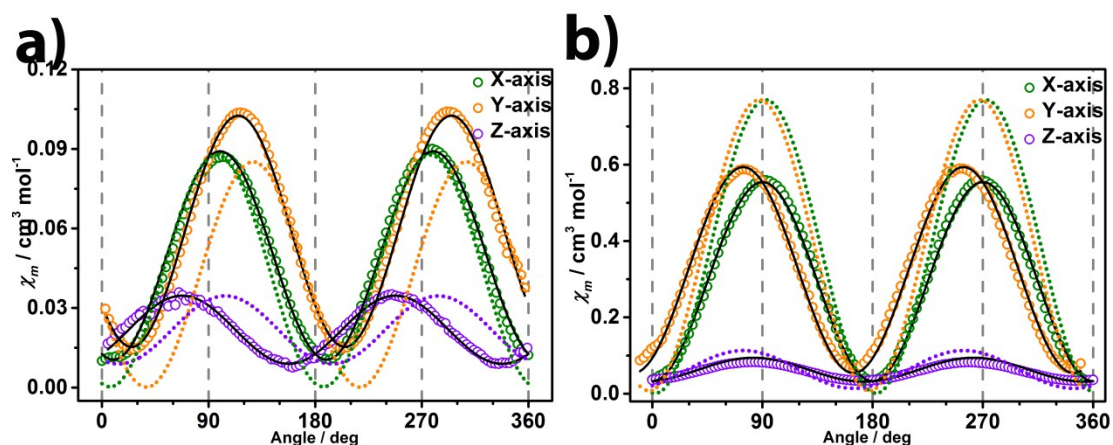


Figure S7. Angular dependence of susceptibility at 3 K under 2 kOe for a)Pr and b)Nd. Experimental (circles), fitting (solid) and *ab initio* calculation (dashed).

Table S3. Values ( $\text{cm}^3 \cdot \text{K} \cdot \text{mol}^{-1}$ ) of corresponding principal axis of **1-3**

|              | <b>1 Ce<sup>III</sup></b> |             |             | <b>2 Pr<sup>III</sup></b> |             |             | <b>3 Nd<sup>III</sup></b> |             |             |
|--------------|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| <i>T</i> / K | $\chi_{zz}$               | $\chi_{xx}$ | $\chi_{yy}$ | $\chi_{zz}$               | $\chi_{xx}$ | $\chi_{yy}$ | $\chi_{zz}$               | $\chi_{xx}$ | $\chi_{yy}$ |
| 3.0          | 0.4020                    | 0.0254      | 0.0122      | 0.1052                    | 0.0164      | 0.0089      | 0.58299                   | 0.05969     | 0.02852     |
| 3.2          | 0.3770                    | 0.0254      | 0.0122      | 0.1026                    | 0.0181      | 0.0072      | 0.54616                   | 0.05717     | 0.02673     |
| 3.5          | 0.3450                    | 0.0241      | 0.0111      | 0.1008                    | 0.0173      | 0.0068      | 0.49895                   | 0.05278     | 0.0258      |
| 4.0          | 0.3016                    | 0.0228      | 0.0102      | 0.0978                    | 0.0159      | 0.0053      | 0.43655                   | 0.04638     | 0.02188     |
| 4.5          | 0.2684                    | 0.0188      | 0.0085      | 0.0954                    | 0.0145      | 0.0038      | 0.38961                   | 0.04067     | 0.01901     |
| 5.0          | 0.2400                    | 0.0164      | 0.0063      | 0.0937                    | 0.013       | 0.0029      | 0.3489                    | 0.03636     | 0.01738     |
| 6.0          | 0.1994                    | 0.0137      | 0.0056      | 0.0911                    | 0.0119      | 0.0025      | 0.29067                   | 0.03038     | 0.01471     |
| 7.5          | 0.1599                    | 0.0112      | 0.0037      | 0.089                     | 0.0113      | 0.0012      | 0.23261                   | 0.02441     | 0.01228     |
| 9.0          | 0.1335                    | 0.0096      | 0.0024      | 0.0869                    | 0.0101      | 0.0012      | 0.1941                    | 0.02048     | 0.01047     |
| 11.0         | 0.1086                    | 0.0076      | 0.0015      | 0.084                     | 0.0096      | 0.0006      | 0.15891                   | 0.01667     | 0.00889     |
| 12.8         | 0.0929                    | 0.0061      | 0.0007      | 0.0813                    | 0.0088      | 0.0005      | 0.13608                   | 0.01431     | 0.00782     |
| 15.0         | 0.0791                    | 0.0040      | 0.0006      | 0.0776                    | 0.0083      | 0.0004      | 0.11626                   | 0.01286     | 0.00683     |

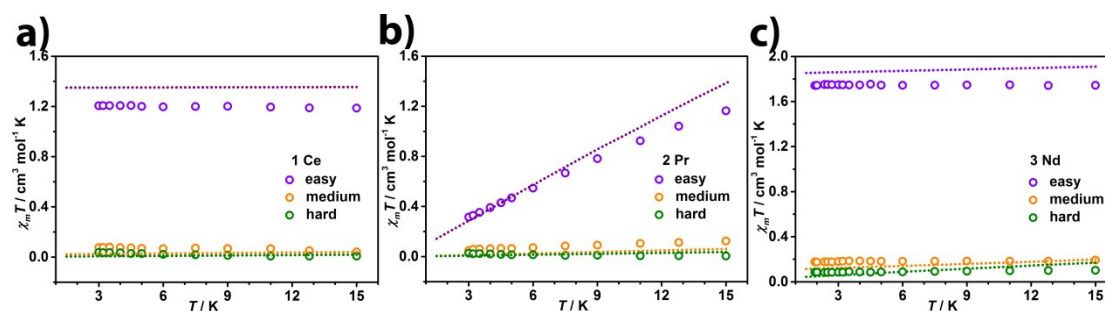


Figure S8. Comparison of the  $\chi_m T$  values along easy/medium/hard axes of **1-3** from experiments (circle) and *ab initio* calculations

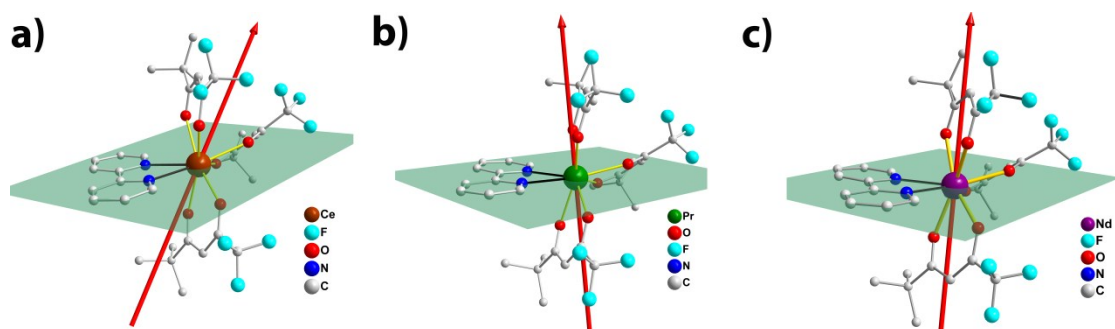


Figure S9. Easy axis (red) direction of **1-3**; The green plane represents the bpy plane as described in the main text.

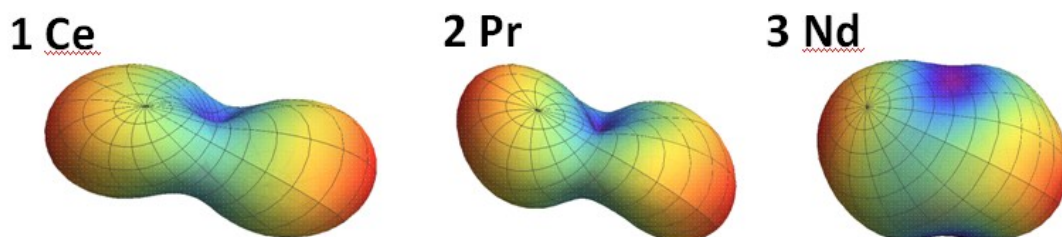


Figure S10. Electrostatic potential surface of Ising ground states. From left to right represented  $|\pm 5/2\rangle$  for  $\text{Ce}^{\text{III}}$ ,  $|\pm 4\rangle$  for  $\text{Pr}^{\text{III}}$ , and  $|\pm 9/2\rangle$  for  $\text{Nd}^{\text{III}}$ .

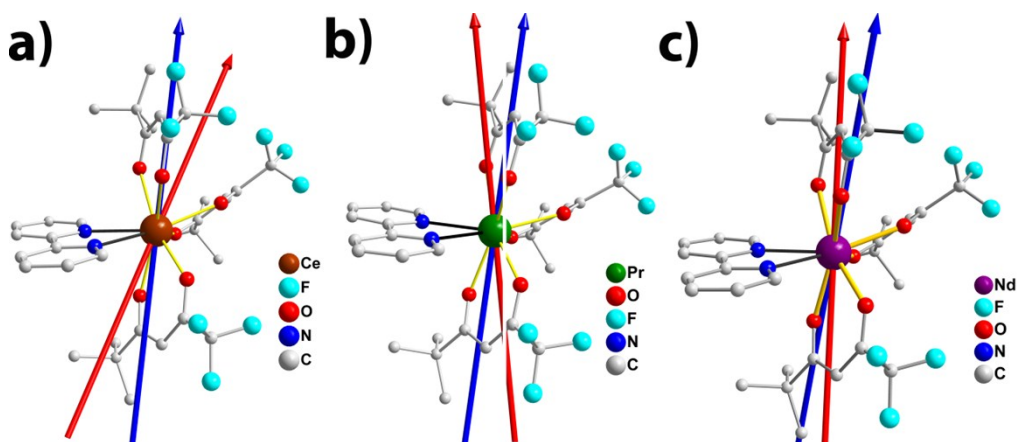


Figure S11. The red and blue arrows indicate the magnetic easy axis directions of **1-3** determined from experiments and electrostatic simulations, respectively.

Table S4. Energy levles determined by *an initio* for **1-3**

| Energy State (cm <sup>-1</sup> ) | 1Ce <sup>III</sup> | 2Pr <sup>III</sup> | 3Nd <sup>III</sup> |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>1</b>                         | 0                  | 0                  | 0                  |
| <b>2</b>                         | 0                  | 45.10              | 0                  |
| <b>3</b>                         | 339.63             | 234.41             | 106.42             |
| <b>4</b>                         | 339.63             | 330.21             | 106.42             |
| <b>5</b>                         | 685.46             | 453.23             | 166.40             |
| <b>6</b>                         | 685.46             | 582.04             | 166.40             |
| <b>7</b>                         |                    | 628.24             | 268.87             |
| <b>8</b>                         |                    | 789.06             | 268.87             |
| <b>9</b>                         |                    | 830.86             | 408.62             |
| <b>10</b>                        |                    |                    | 408.62             |

Table S5. *g* tensors of the ground state for **1-3**

|                             | 1Ce <sup>III</sup> |      | 3Nd <sup>III</sup> |      |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|------|--------------------|------|
|                             | Ab initio          | Exp  | Ab initio          | Exp  |
| <b><i>g<sub>x</sub></i></b> | 0.176              | 0.28 | 0.56               | 1.04 |
| <b><i>g<sub>y</sub></i></b> | 0.46               | 0.66 | 1.06               | 1.43 |
| <b><i>g<sub>z</sub></i></b> | 3.79               | 3.56 | 4.78               | 4.31 |

Table S6. Wave function composition of two low-lying states for **1-3** calcaulted by *ab initio*

| 1Ce <sup>III</sup>                        |                |        | 2Pr <sup>III</sup>   |        |        | 3Nd <sup>III</sup>   |                |       |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------|--------|----------------------|--------|--------|----------------------|----------------|-------|
| Wave function Composition of ground state |                |        |                      |        |        |                      |                |       |
| <i>M<sub>J</sub></i>                      | Ground doublet |        | <i>M<sub>J</sub></i> | State1 | State2 | <i>M<sub>J</sub></i> | Ground doublet |       |
| <b>-5/2</b>                               | 25.38%         | 66.57% | <b>-4</b>            | 36.12% | 44.03% | <b>-9/2</b>          | 62.27%         | 0.25% |
| <b>-3/2</b>                               | 1.22%          | 0.21%  | <b>-3</b>            | 1.51%  | 1.99%  | <b>-7/2</b>          | 0.21%          | 0.52% |
| <b>-1/2</b>                               | 3.38%          | 3.25%  | <b>-2</b>            | 8.07%  | 3.56%  | <b>-5/2</b>          | 12.14%         | 0.95% |
| <b>+1/2</b>                               | 3.25%          | 3.38%  | <b>-1</b>            | 2.11%  | 0.23%  | <b>-3/2</b>          | 12.47%         | 0.56% |

|             |        |        |          |        |        |             |       |        |
|-------------|--------|--------|----------|--------|--------|-------------|-------|--------|
| <b>+3/2</b> | 0.21%  | 1.22%  | <b>0</b> | 4.38%  | 0.40%  | <b>-1/2</b> | 8.99% | 1.64%  |
| <b>+5/2</b> | 66.57% | 25.38% | <b>1</b> | 2.11%  | 0.23%  | <b>+1/2</b> | 1.64% | 8.99%  |
|             |        |        | <b>2</b> | 8.07%  | 3.56%  | <b>+3/2</b> | 0.56% | 12.47% |
|             |        |        | <b>3</b> | 1.51%  | 1.99%  | <b>+5/2</b> | 0.95% | 12.14% |
|             |        |        | <b>4</b> | 36.12% | 44.03% | <b>+7/2</b> | 0.52% | 0.21%  |
|             |        |        |          |        |        | <b>+9/2</b> | 0.25% | 62.27% |

Composition of Ground states calculated by *ab initio*

$$\text{Ce}^{\text{III}}: 0.92 | \pm 5/2 > + 0.014 | \pm 3/2 > + 0.066 | \pm 1/2 >$$

$$\text{Pr}^{\text{III}}: 0.72 | \pm 4 > + 0.03 | \pm 3 > + 0.16 | \pm 2 > + 0.04 | \pm 1 > + 0.05 | 0 >$$

$$\text{Nd}^{\text{III}}: 0.62 | \pm 9/2 > + 0.01 | \pm 7/2 > + 0.13 | \pm 5/2 > + 0.13 | \pm 3/2 > + 0.11 | \pm 1/2 >$$

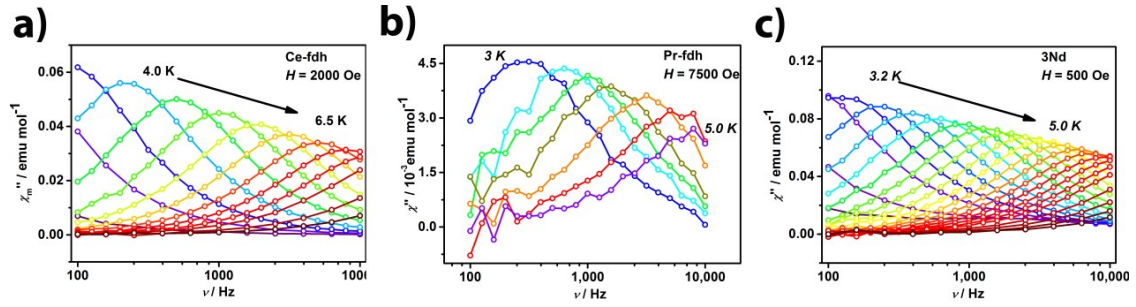


Figure S12. Out-of-phase signal ( $\chi''_m$ ) versus frequency ( $\nu$ ) plots for **1-3**.

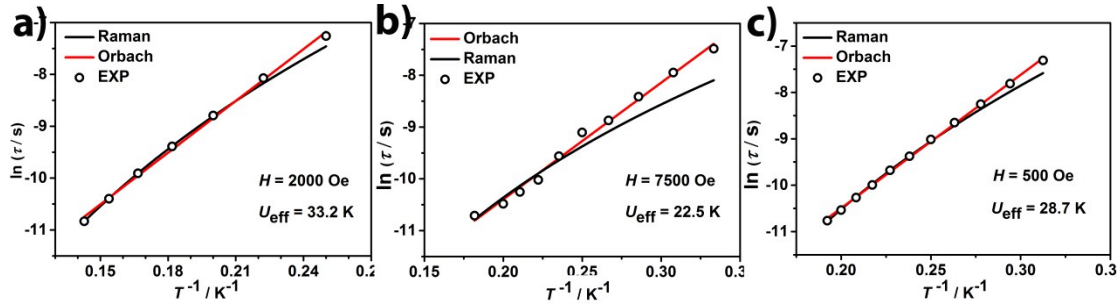


Figure S13. Relaxation time ( $\ln \tau$ ) versus inverse of temperature ( $T^{-1}$ ) plots for **1Ce(a)**, **2Pr(b)** and **3Nd(c)**. The solid lines represent the fitting Orbach process (red) by  $\tau^{-1} = \tau_0 \exp(-U_{\text{eff}}/T)$ , and Raman process (black) by  $\tau^{-1} = CT^n$ .

# Discussion:

The effective energy barriers are as shown in table below by fitting  $\ln\tau$  vs  $1/T$  using a linear Orbach process, but much smaller than the theoretical ones depicted in the main text. Raman process fitting plots for **1** and **3** feature as identically as Orbach plot in the studied temperature and frequency range, with parameter  $n$  in the common range of 4~9. However, it may be more complicated for **2** with over-large standard error for parameter  $C$  and smaller  $R^2$  probably due to the non-Kramers nature of  $\text{Pr}^{\text{III}}$ . Considering the much smaller  $U_{\text{eff}}$  than theoretical energy levels, we may prefer a Raman process dominated relaxation in **1** and **3**. However, seriously speaking, due to insufficient experimental data points and *ab initio* calculation errors, we must take into account the inaccuracy of the results above.

Table S7. Detailed parameters fit by Orbach and Raman process for **1-3**

|            | <b>Orbach</b> $\tau^{-1}=\tau_0\times\exp(-U_{\text{eff}}/T)$ |               |                             |                       |       | <b>Raman</b> $\tau^{-1}=C\times T^n$ |          |     |          |       |
|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-------|--------------------------------------|----------|-----|----------|-------|
|            | $\tau_0 / \text{s}^{-1}$                                      | $St.E.\tau_0$ | $U_{\text{eff}} / \text{K}$ | $St.E.U_{\text{eff}}$ | $R^2$ | $C$                                  | $St.E.C$ | $n$ | $St.E.n$ | $R^2$ |
| <b>1Ce</b> | 1.8E-7                                                        | 0.14          | 33.3                        | 0.74                  | 0.997 | 0.40                                 | 0.05     | 6.0 | 0.07     | 0.999 |
| <b>2Pr</b> | 3.3E-7                                                        | 0.17          | 22.5                        | 0.69                  | 0.991 | 25.1                                 | 15.0     | 4.4 | 0.36     | 0.963 |
| <b>3Nd</b> | 9.2E-8                                                        | 0.07          | 28.8                        | 0.28                  | 0.999 | 0.93                                 | 0.12     | 6.6 | 0.08     | 0.999 |

(*St.E.* abbreviated for Standard Error)