

Non-central chirality in organic chemistry

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Pd-Catalyzed asymmetric allylic amination with isatin using a P,olefin-type chiral ligand with C–N bond axial chirality

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Full Research Paper

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Abstract

In this study, we implemented the P,olefin-type chiral ligand (aR)-(-)-6, which contains a cyclohexyl group and a cinnamoyl group on the nitrogen atom, in the Pd-catalyzed asymmetric allylic amination of allylic esters with isatin derivatives **11** as nucleophiles. The reaction proceeds efficiently, yielding the products (S)-**13** with good-to-high enantioselectivity. A scale-up reaction was also successfully conducted at a 1 mmol scale. Additionally, when malononitrile was added to the resulting product (S)-**13a** in the presence of FeCl₃ as the catalyst, the corresponding malononitrile derivative (S)-**16** was obtained without any loss in optical purity.

Introduction

Isatin is a well-known natural indole derivative. Due to the broad biological activities of its derivatives, extensive research has been conducted on their synthesis. Furthermore, the isatin framework is a versatile starting material for various transformations, including multicomponent reactions and the synthesis of spirocyclic compounds [1-3]. The nucleophilicity of isatin at the nitrogen atom allows it to participate in reactions such as alkylation [4], arylation [5], and *aza*-Michael addition [6-8]. However, the products obtained from these reactions are primarily achiral or racemic, and only a few studies have reported the use of isatin as a nucleophile in asymmetric reactions [9-11]. On the other hand, it has been revealed that com-

pounds in which the carbon bonded to the nitrogen atom of newly constructed *N*-substituted isatin becomes a chiral center exhibit pharmacological properties in medicinal chemistry. For example, racemic compound **1** (Figure 1) was evaluated for its cytotoxicity against human breast cancer cells (MCF7) in comparison to the standard doxorubicin and exhibited excellent activity against the MCF7 cell line [12]. The optically active compound **2** also showed activity against Huh7.5-FGR-JC1-Rluc2A cells, which carry HCV gt 2a [13].



Therefore, developing asymmetric reactions that simultaneously form a carbon-nitrogen bond and construct a chiral center is of great importance. Although a relatively large number of asymmetric allylic amination reactions using palladium catalysts with amines as nucleophiles have been reported [14-25], there have been only a few reports on the N-substitution of isatin using asymmetric methods. Recently, Wolf's group reported a transition-metal-catalyzed (Pd-catalyzed) asymmetric allylic amination of allyl esters using isatin as a nucleophile. In this reaction, bisphosphine-type ligands such as BINAP and SEGPHOS derivatives, as well as P,N-type ligands like oxazoline-type ligands, were utilized as chiral ligands [26]. On the other hand, several groups have recently reported new chiral ligands with axial chirality for Pd-catalyzed asymmetric allylic substitution reactions. For example, the Zhou group reported a P,olefin-type chiral ligand 3 with C-C bond axial chirality for this reaction (Figure 2) [27]. Additionally, we have recently reported chiral ligands with C-N bond axial chirality, such as N-alkyl-N-cinnamyl-type chiral ligands 4 [28,29] and 5 [30], and a P,olefin-type chiral ligand 6 [31] with a cinnamoyl group instead of a cinnamyl group. In particular, the chiral ligand 6 is effective in the Pd-catalyzed asymmetric allylic substitution reaction of allylic esters with indoles. Here, we describe the Pd-catalyzed asymmetric allylic amination of allylic esters with isatin as a nucleophile using chiral ligand 6 and its derivative 7. Compared to chiral ligand 6, which has a secondary alkyl group (cyclohexyl) as a substituent on the nitrogen and has already been reported, compound 7 has a primary alkyl group (n-propyl). This difference reduces steric hindrance and lowers

the rotational barrier around the carbon-nitrogen bond, increasing the likelihood of racemization.



Results and Discussion

N-Propyl-N-cinnamoylamide 7 was prepared from phosphine oxide 8 [32] via an S_NAr reaction with nucleophilic lithium amide from n-propylamine, the reduction of phosphine oxide 9 by trichlorosilane/triethylamine, and the N-acylation of 10 with cinnamoyl chloride in three steps (Scheme 1). We also analyzed amide compound 7 by HPLC analysis using a chiral stationary phase column with a CD detector and found that the C(aryl)-N(amide) bond axial chirality exists in amide compound 7. We attempted the optical resolution of racemic compound (\pm) -7 and obtained (+)-7 and (-)-7 using a semi-preparative chiral HPLC on 50 milligram scales. We also investigated the racemization process associated with the axial chirality of compound 7 (see Supporting Information File 1). The racemization barrier ($\Delta G^{\ddagger}_{rac}$) of (-)-7 in *n*-dodecane was determined to be 25.0 kcal/mol at 25 °C, as calculated using the Arrhenius and Eyring equations [33-35]. Therefore, the half-life of racemization of ligand (-)-7 at 25 °C in n-dodecane is approximately 1.3 days, which is faster compared to ligand 6, which has a halflife of about 3.7 days [31].

We next investigated the ability of optically active amides (aR)-(-)-6 and (-)-7 as chiral ligands for the Pd-catalyzed asym-



metric allylic amination of allylic acetate, such as a 1,3diphenyl-2-propenyl acetate (12) with isatin (11a). We began the investigation under conditions using 5 mol % of $[Pd(C_3H_5)Cl]_2$ (Pd = 10 mol %) and 12 mol % of chiral ligands (Table 1).

The reaction with (aR)-(-)-6 as the chiral ligand and K₂CO₃ as the base in CHCl₃ gave the desired product (S)-13a in 72% yield with 87% ee (Table 1, entry 1). In contrast, the reaction with (-)-7 afforded (S)-13a in significantly lower yield, albeit with an enantioselectivity similar to that of the reaction with 6 (Table 1, entry 2). This result clarifies that (-)-7, with a racemization half-life of only approximately 1.3 days, also has a chiral induction ability. However, improvement is required in terms of the reactivity of the catalytic reaction. Subsequently, we investigated the effect of the base using (aR)-(-)-6 by testing various bases. The reaction in the presence of Na₂CO₃ delivered the product in 99% yield, although the enantioselectivity slightly decreased compared to the reaction using K₂CO₃ (see Table 1, entry 1 vs entry 3). The use of Cs₂CO₃ resulted in a significant drop in the yield (Table 1, entry 4), whereas NaOAc improved the yield but slightly lowered the enantioselectivity (Table 1, entry 5). Other potassium salts such as K₃PO₄ led to a low yield

| Table 1: Optimization of conditions for the Pd-catalyzed asymmetric allylic amination of acetate 12 with isatin (11a). ^a | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| | | [Pc ÇAc | l(η ³ -allyl)Cl] ₂ (Pd = 10 mol %) (a <i>R</i>)-(–)- 6 (12 mol %) base (2.0 equiv) | |
| | | Ph Ph — | solvent (0.2 M) | |
| | 11a | (2.0 equiv) 12 | 20 0, 10 | Ph´ `` `Ph (S)-1 3a |
| Entry | Base | Solvent | Yield (%) ^b | ee (%) ^c |
| 1 | K ₂ CO ₃ | CHCl ₃ | 72 | 87 |
| 2 ^d | K ₂ CO ₃ | CHCl ₃ | 3 | 84 |
| 3 | Na ₂ CO ₃ | CHCl ₃ | 99 | 85 |
| 4 | Cs_2CO_3 | CHCl ₃ | 19 | 86 |
| 5 | NaOAc | CHCl ₃ | 89 | 86 |
| 6 | K ₃ PO ₄ | CHCl ₃ | 12 | 86 |
| 7 | Na ₃ PO ₄ | CHCl ₃ | 60 | 88 |
| 8 | Na ₃ PO ₄ | CH ₂ Cl ₂ | 88 | 92 |
| 9 | Na ₃ PO ₄ | CH₃CN | 75 | 93 |
| 10 | Na ₃ PO ₄ | THF | 74 | 93 |
| 11 | Na ₃ PO ₄ | DMF | trace | - |
| 12 | Na ₃ PO ₄ | PhCF ₃ | 84 | 95 |
| 13 ^e | Na ₃ PO ₄ | PhCF ₃ | 50 | 86 |
| 14 ^f | Na ₃ PO ₄ | PhCF ₃ | 80 | 94 |

^aThe reaction was carried out at 0.1 mmol scale. ^bIsolated yield. ^cDetermined by chiral HPLC analysis using a chiral column. Absolute configuration was assigned by comparison of HPLC analysis with reported data [26]. ^dThis reaction was carried out using (–)-**7** instead of (*aR*)-(–)-**6** as a chiral ligand. ^eThis reaction was carried out using 1,3-diphenylallyl pivalate (**14**) instead of acetate **12**. ^fThis reaction was carried out at a 1.0 mmol scale.

of the product (Table 1, entry 6). Meanwhile, when Na₃PO₄ was tested, the yield decreased, but the enantioselectivity improved to 88% ee (Table 1, entry 7). With Na₃PO₄ as the optimum base, which showed the highest enantioselectivity, we conducted a solvent screening. The reaction in CH₂Cl₂ resulted in better yield and enantioselectivity than in CHCl₃ (Table 1, entry 8). The coordinating solvents, CH₃CN and THF, further improved the enantioselectivity to 93% ee (Table 1, entries 9 and 10). In contrast, the reaction barely proceeded when DMF was used (Table 1, entry 11). The reaction in PhCF₃ afforded the target product in a good yield with the highest enantioselectivity compared to other solvents (Table 1, entry 12). Furthermore, when (E)-1,3-diphenyl-2-propenyl pivalate (14) was tested as the allyl ester, the desired product (S)-13a was obtained with a yield of 50% and an enantioselectivity of 86% ee (Table 1, entry 13). Additionally, the scale-up reaction using 1 mmol of isatin (11a) as the nucleophile under the optimal conditions (Table 1, entry 12) afforded the desired product (*S*)-**13a** with nearly the same yield and enantioselectivity as the 0.1 mmol scale reaction (entry 14).

Next, we investigated the substrate scope of the palladium-catalyzed asymmetric allylic amination of 1,3-diphenyl-2-propenyl acetate (12) with isatin derivatives 11 as nucleophiles under the optimized conditions using (aR)-(-)-6 as the ligand and Na₃PO₄ as the base in PhCF₃ as the solvent (Scheme 2). An isatin derivative bearing a chloro group at the 4-position afforded the desired product (S)-13b with good yield and enantioselectivity. Similarly, an isatin derivative with a methyl group as an electron-donating group at the 5-position gave (S)-13c in good yield, although with slightly decreased enantioselectivity. The introduction of the chloro group at the same position led to a moderate yield for (S)-13d, while the enantioselectivity remained high. In contrast, the reaction with the isatin derivative bearing a nitro group at the 5-position did not proceed, and (S)-13e was not produced. Likewise, no reaction occurred with



Scheme 2: Pd-catalyzed asymmetric allylic amination of acetate 12 (Ar = Ph) or 15 (Ar = p-ClC₆H₄) with isatin derivatives 11 using (a*R*)-(-)-6 as a chiral ligand: The reaction was carried out at 0.1 mmol scale; yields refer to isolated yields.

a trifluoromethoxy-substituted derivative, resulting in no formation of (S)-13f. Reactions using isatin derivatives bearing halogen substituents at the 6-position proceeded efficiently, affording (S)-13g-i in good yields with high enantioselectivities. Conversely, the isatin derivative bearing a methoxy group at the 6-position led to a decreased yield for (S)-13j, though the enantioselectivity remained high. Additionally, we tested the reaction using an isatin derivative with a chloro group at the 7-position and obtained (S)-13k in good yield with moderate enantioselectivity. Furthermore, when (E)-1,3-di(p-chlorophenyl)-2-propenyl acetate (15) was utilized as an allylic acetate, the desired product (S)-13l was obtained in high yield with excellent enantioselectivity. We confirmed that the product 13 from the Pd-catalyzed asymmetric allylic amination of allyl esters with isatin using (aR)-(-)-6 possesses an S-configuration. This stereochemical outcome follows the same reaction mechanism as the Pd-catalyzed asymmetric allylic substitution of allyl esters with indoles using (aR)-(-)-6 [31]. To explore further applications of this product, we treated (S)-13a (94% ee) with malononitrile in the presence of FeCl₃ as a catalyst [36] and obtained the corresponding malononitrile derivative (S)-16 without any loss of optical purity (Scheme 3).



Scheme 3: Transformation of the reaction product (*S*)-13a: The reaction was carried out at 0.1 mmol scale and the yield refers to the isolated yield.

Conclusion

In this study, *N*-propyl-*N*-cinnamoylamide 7 was synthesized in three steps from phosphine oxide **8**. Chiral HPLC analysis confirmed its axial chirality at the C(aryl)–N(amide) bond. The optical resolution of (\pm)-7 yielded (+)-7 and (-)-7. The racemization barrier of (-)-7 in *n*-dodecane was determined to be 25.0 kcal/mol at 25 °C, with a half-life of approximately 1.3 days. The chiral amides (a*R*)-(-)-6 and (-)-7 were evaluated as ligands in Pd-catalyzed asymmetric allylic amination, and while (-)-7 exhibited promising enantioselectivity, its yield was lower than (a*R*)-(-)-6. Further optimization of reaction conditions led to improved yields and enantioselectivities up to 95% ee. Moreover, the reaction was successfully scaled up to 1 mmol. The substrate scope was investigated using various isatin derivatives, yielding high enantioselectivities (up to 95% ee) for most, except for those bearing certain electronwithdrawing groups. Additionally, we demonstrated the further conversion of (S)-**13a** into the malononitrile derivative (S)-**16** without loss of optical purity.

Supporting Information

Data of thermal racemization of **7**, DFT calculations for investigating racemization mechanism of **7**, general methods and materials, experimental procedures and characterization data, ¹H, ¹³C and ³¹P NMR spectra for **9** and **10**, ¹H, ¹³C and ³¹P NMR spectra and HPLC charts for (\pm)-**7**, (+)-**7** and (–)-**7**, ¹H and ¹³C NMR spectra and HPLC charts for (*S*)-**13a–k** (except (*S*)-**13e**) and (*S*)-**16**.

Supporting Information File 1

Experimental section and compounds characterization. [https://www.beilstein-journals.org/bjoc/content/ supplementary/1860-5397-21-83-S1.pdf]

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Author Contributions

Natsume Akimoto: investigation. Kaho Takaya: investigation. Yoshio Kasashima: investigation. Kohei Watanabe: investigation. Yasushi Yoshida: investigation. Takashi Mino: conceptualization; supervision.

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Data Availability Statement

All data that supports the findings of this study is available in the published article and/or the supporting information of this article.

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