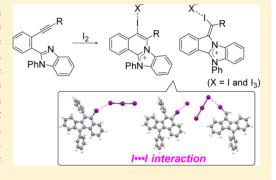


## Formation of Benzimidazoisoguinolinium and Benzimidazoisoindolinum Cyclic Systems by the Reaction of 2-(2-Alkynylphenyl)benzimidazoles with Iodine and Iodine-Iodine Interaction Including Halogen Bonding in Their Crystal Structures

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## Supporting Information

**ABSTRACT:** The reaction of 2-(2-alkynylphenyl)benz[d]imidazoles with molecular iodine constructed 5- and 6-membered rings as novel organic salts in high yield. The constituted number of ring systems was influenced by the substituent at the triple bond: 6-membered rings were formed from compounds bearing aryl substituents, whereas 5-membered ones were obtained from compounds with hydrogen or alkyl substituents. The products were obtained with triiodide as a counteranion; however, compounds with iodide were also obtainable under certain conditions. We also revealed that they had an iodine-iodine interaction included in halogen bonding between an iodo moiety of the cation and a triiodide or iodide of the counteranion. The iodine-iodine interaction was formed with greater preference than the electrostatic interaction between the cationic atom and triiodide or iodide.



#### INTRODUCTION

Ring formation is one of the most important reactions to utilize the synthesis of various cyclic compounds including natural products, biologically active compounds, functional materials, and so on. 1-3 Intramolecular nucleophilic cyclization reaction yielded heterocyclic compounds when a heteroatom was used as a nucleophile. Iodine-induced cyclization reactions<sup>4,5</sup> were reported to form heterocycles such as (benzo)furans,6 pyrroles, indoles, (benzo)thiophenes, and (benzo)selenophenes. 10 Those reactions yielded compounds in neutral form because the reaction was completed by the removal of a proton or alkyl substituent on a heteroatom. Recently, we reported that the ionic heterocycle, benzo[c]thiophen-1aminium iodide, was obtained by the reaction of 2-alkynylbenzothioamide with iodine (Scheme 1).<sup>11</sup> On the basis of our result, we suppose that cyclization reactions yield ionic heterocycles even if there is no leaving group on the heteroatom. However, there were few reports about salt formation by the reaction of halo-cyclization. 12 We herein report the reaction of 2-(2-alkynylphenyl)benz[d]imidazoles (1) with molecular iodine to give the corresponding ionic heterocycles, benz[4,5]imidazo[2,1-a]isoquinolin-7-ium (2<sup>+</sup>) and benz[4,5]imidazo[2,1-a]isoindol-10-ium (3<sup>+</sup>). Furthermore, we revealed an interaction including halogen bonding between iodine atoms on the cation and the counteranion (triiodide or iodide) by single-crystal X-ray analysis. The halogen bond<sup>13,14</sup> has the potential to be utilized in the

construction of crystal structures,  $^{15}$  application as an organic catalyst,  $^{16}$  molecular recognition,  $^{17}$  etc.  $^{18}$ 

#### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

lonic Heterocycle Formation with  $I_2$ . We tried to synthesize the reactants (1a-e) using the Sonogashira coupling reaction (Scheme 2). The compounds (1a, 1b, and 1e) were prepared by the condensation reaction of 2-aminodiphenylamine and 2-bromobenzaldehyde, followed by the Sonogashira coupling with ethynylene derivatives. The removal of a hydroxylisopropyl group of 1e was utilized to obtain 1d. It was possible to form 1c by reaction with p-bromoanisole and 1d prepared in situ from 1e even in low yield, because 1c was not obtained by the coupling reaction with p-methoxyphenylacetylene.

We first examined the reaction of 1a (R = Ph) with 1 mol equiv of I<sub>2</sub> in CHCl<sub>3</sub> at ambient temperature. During the reaction progress, the precipitate was obtained. However, we found that 1a remained even after a period of 67 h by TLC analysis. From <sup>1</sup>H NMR analysis of the precipitate, we observed two discrete peaks at 9.26 and 8.54 ppm with a ratio of 22:78, and no other byproduct was observed (see Figure S1). Such a downfield shift of the proton peak was also observed in the case of benzo[c]thiophen-1-aminium iodides (ca. 9.4 ppm), which have 5-membered cationic cyclic system. 11 Therefore, we

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# Scheme 1. Formation of Various Heterocyclic Systems by Iodocyclization Reaction

Our previous work

## Scheme 2. Preparation of 1

thought that two types of the cyclization product ( $2a^+$  and  $3a^+$ ) would be obtained, and the minor peak with 9.26 ppm would have a 5-membered cyclic cation ( $3a^+$ ). We could obtain a good crystal for measuring by single-crystal X-ray analysis (*vide infra*), and revealed that the major product was benz[4,5]-imidazo[2,1-a]isoquinolin-7-ium triiodide ( $2a^+$ ·I $_3^-$ ). Furthermore, from the elemental analysis of the precipitate, the wt % of C (obtained with C, 38.67%; H, 2.02%; N, 3.13%) were larger values compared to the product with triiodide ( $I_3^-$ ) as a counteranion (calculated with C, 36.93%; H, 2.07%; N, 3.19%). Therefore, other compounds with iodide ( $I^-$ ) as a counteranion

would also exist. The yield of the cation part could be calculated from the integration of  $^1H$  NMR with dibenzyl as an internal standard. Because there was no method to determine the ratio of  $I_3^-$  and  $I^-$  directly, we estimated it from the yield of the cation part and the weight of the product using simultaneous equations as follows

$$\begin{split} \text{From material balance: } W &= (Y_{2^+} \times M_{2^+} + Y_{3^+} \times M_{3^+}) \\ &+ (Y_{\text{I}_3^-} \times M_{\text{I}_3^-} + Y_{\text{I}^-} \times M_{\text{I}^-}) \end{split}$$

From charge balance:  $Y_{2^+} + Y_{3^+} = Y_{L^-} + Y_{1^-}$ 

where W is the weight of the obtained precipitate;  $Y_2$ ,  $Y_3$ ,  $Y_{I_3}$ ,  $Y_{I_3}$ , and  $Y_{I^-}$  correspond to the number of moles (ions) of the obtained compounds; and  $M_2$ ,  $M_3$ ,  $M_{I_3}$  (=380.7), and  $M_{I^-}$ (=126.9) are molecular (ion) weights. In the case of  $\mathbf{1a}$ , both of  $M_2$  and  $M_3$  are 498.4.  $Y_2$  and  $Y_3$  were obtained from the  $^1H$  NMR analysis using an internal standard (dibenzyl or terepthalaldehyde). Finally, we could determine the yield of each component both in cations and in anions within  $\pm 1\%$  error (Table 1, entry 1). Although 1 mol equiv of  $I_2$  was treated,  $I_3$  was a major component in the reaction in CHCl $_3$ . The total yield of the cyclized product was 51%, and the recovery of  $I_3$  was obtained in 49%. On the basis of the consumption of molecular iodine, this cyclization reaction proceeded efficiently.

To examine the influence of the solvent, the reaction was conducted in various solvents. In EtOAc and CH3CN, the products with I<sub>3</sub> were obtained as a major anion with the precipitate formation in medium yields (entries 2 and 3). When the reaction was treated in DMF, the ratio of I was increased (entry 4). By raising the reaction temperature, the reaction yielded no precipitate after the reaction, and the products bearing I were obtained in 74% yield, although the reaction period for 72 h was required to disappear 1a on TLC (entry 5). When 1a was treated with 2 mol equiv of I2, which is an efficient amount to give the compound with I<sub>3</sub> counteranion, the products with  $I_3^-$  were obtained in excellent yield within 1 h (entry 7). We also found that the complete conversion to the products with I<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> based on molecular iodine was achieved within 1 h in the case of 1 mol equiv of I<sub>2</sub> in CHCl<sub>3</sub> when the reaction was stopped for 1 h even in remaining 1a (entry 6). All of the reactions with 1a gave the benz[4,5]imidazo[2,1a]isoquinolin-7-ium structure (2a+) as major products. A sole countercation (2a+) was obtained from the reaction with a raised temperature (entry 5).

The reaction mechanism was proposed as follows (Scheme 3). The triple bond on 1a was activated by coordination of  $I_2$  to yield an iodonium cation (A). An intramolecular nucleophilic attack at the  $sp^2$  nitrogen atom in intermediate A occurred, creating the cyclic structure ( $2a^+$  and  $3a^+$ ). The cyclized cation part will possess  $I^-$  as a counteranion at first, but equilibrium between  $I^-$  and  $I_3^-$  should exist at the beginning of the reaction because there is an excess amount of  $I_2$ . The triiodide compound is excluded as a precipitate from the reaction solution except for warming DMF solution. As a result, the cyclized product with  $I_3^-$  was obtained as a major product. Where there is no precipitate formation (entry 5), the equilibrium between  $I^-$  and  $I_3^-$  serves  $I_2$  in the reaction conditions. Therefore, all of  $I_2$  can react with the substrate to yield the cyclized product with  $I^-$  as a major product.

We tried to examine the reaction of compounds with aromatic substituents with electron-donating groups and

Table 1. Reaction of 1 with Iodine

						yield of cation $(\%)^b$		yield of anion $(\%)^c$		recovery of 1 (%)
entry		R	solvent	mol equiv of $I_2$	time (h)	2+	3 <sup>+</sup>	I <sub>3</sub> <sup>-</sup>	I_	
1	1a	Ph	CHCl <sub>3</sub>	1.0	67	40	11	45	6	49
2	1a	Ph	EtOAc	1.0	67	31	14	45	0	46
3	1a	Ph	CH <sub>3</sub> CN	1.0	67	40	8	48	0	44
4	1a	Ph	DMF	1.0	67	44	13	27	30	43
5	1a	Ph	$\mathrm{DMF}^d$	1.0	72	84	0	10	74	0
6	1a	Ph	$CHCl_3$	1.0	1	38	12	50	0	50
7	1a	Ph	CHCl <sub>3</sub>	2.0	1	75	18	93	0	0
8	1b	$p ext{-} ext{MeC}_6 ext{H}_4$	$\mathrm{DMF}^d$	1.0	72	90	0	6	84	0
9	1b	p-MeC <sub>6</sub> H <sub>4</sub>	CHCl <sub>3</sub>	2.0	1.5	83	9	71	21	0
10	1c	p-MeOC <sub>6</sub> H <sub>4</sub>	$\mathrm{DMF}^d$	1.0	72	92	0	7	85	0
11	1c	p-MeOC <sub>6</sub> H <sub>4</sub>	CHCl <sub>3</sub>	2.0	1	100	0	100	0	0
12	1d	Н	$\mathrm{DMF}^d$	1.0	72	e				0
13	1d	Н	CHCl <sub>3</sub>	2.0	1	0	92	92	0	0
14	1e	$C(CH_3)_2OH$	$\mathrm{DMF}^d$	1.0	72	e				29
15	1e	$C(CH_3)_2OH$	CHCl <sub>3</sub>	1.0	72	0	51	49	2	39
16	1e	$C(CH_3)_2OH$	CHCl <sub>3</sub>	2.0	24	0	100	100	0	0

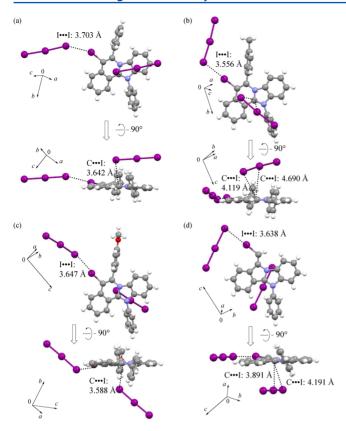
<sup>a</sup>Reaction conditions: 1 (0.3 mmol), solvent (3 mL), room temperature. <sup>b</sup>Determined by the integration of <sup>1</sup>H NMR with an internal standard (dibenzyl or terephthalaldehyde). <sup>c</sup>Determined by the relation of material and charge balance. See the text. <sup>d</sup>Reacted at 100 °C. <sup>e</sup>A complex mixture.

Scheme 3. Plausible Mechanism of the Reaction and the Formation of the Products

aliphatic substituents at the triple bond because the electronwithdrawing substituent would decrease the reaction ratio to inhibit the coordination of  $I_2$  at the triple bond. A *p*-tolyl substituted compound (1b) increased the ratio of 6-membered products (2b<sup>+</sup>) (entries 7 vs 9), and complete control of the 6membered cyclization was achieved by the compound bearing a p-anisyl substituent (1c) (entry 11). The electron-donating substituent stabilizes the positive charge at the benzyl position. Thus, reaction path a in Scheme 3 was enhanced to yield the 6membered cyclization product  $(2c^+)$ . When no substituted compound at the triple bond (1d) was treated with iodine in CHCl<sub>3</sub>, 5-membered cyclization products  $(3d^+)$  determined by single-crystal X-ray analysis (vide infra) were obtained as the sole cation part via path b (entry 13), although a complex mixture was obtained in DMF (entry 12). In the case of the reaction of 1e bearing a bulkier substituent,  $-C(CH_3)_2OH$ ,  $3e^+$ was also obtained as the sole cation part, although a prolonged reaction time was required (entries 15 and 16). Therefore, the preference of the cyclic system was determined by the stabilization of positive charge in intermediate A, especially when stabilized with a benzylic position.

In the case of the reactions of  ${\bf 1a}$ ,  ${\bf 1b}$ , and  ${\bf 1c}$ , the ratio of counteranion could be switched to inhibit the precipitate formation by raising the reaction temperature (entries 5, 8, and 10). The reaction of  ${\bf 1d}$  and  ${\bf 1e}$  yielded a complex mixture under those conditions (entries 12 and 14). However, surprisingly, the reaction of  ${\bf 1e}$  in CHCl<sub>3</sub> yielded a product with  ${\bf I_3}^-$  as a counteranion, even in the presence of 1.0 mol equiv of  ${\bf I_2}$  without the precipitate formation after the reaction (entry 15). There is no clear explanation for this result, but it suggested that the reaction was restricted toward the less reactive  ${\bf 1e}$  with  ${\bf I_2}$  by the equilibrium between  ${\bf I}^-$  and  ${\bf I_3}^-$  in CHCl<sub>3</sub> under ambient temperature.

**Crystal Structure of Cyclic Compounds.** We were interested in the crystal structure of products because the compounds may possess the possibility of a halogen bonding between the iodine atom on the cationic and anionic parts. Good crystals could be obtained to measure the single-crystal X-ray structure of  $2a^+\cdot I_3^-$ ,  $2b^+\cdot I_3^-$ ,  $2c^+\cdot I_3^-$ , and  $3d^+\cdot I_3^-$  by recrystallization from CHCl<sub>3</sub> by diffusion of hexane vapor. The structures are summarized in Figure 1. All fused rings were aligned in the same plane, and phenyl rings on nitrogen were oriented perpendicularly. Distances and angles around imidazolium and iodovinyl moieties are listed in Table 2. Focusing on the benzimidazolium structure, little difference



**Figure 1.** Molecular structures of (a)  $2a^+ \cdot I_3^-$ , (b)  $2b^+ \cdot I_3^-$ , (c)  $2c^+ \cdot I_3^-$ , and (d)  $3d^+ \cdot I_3^-$  with the situation of  $I_3^-$  around the cation part obtained by single-crystal X-ray crystallographic analysis.

between two C–N bonds was observed within 0.03 Å. To the best of our knowledge, the smallest difference between C–N bond lengths of N-arylimidazole was 0.043 Å,  $^{19}$  and the largest one of benzimidazolium was 0.028 Å.  $^{20}$  Therefore, the imidazole moiety of the products possesses a resonance character such as imidazolium cation. On the contrary, the C–N bond formed by the cyclization reaction ( $N^2$ – $C^2$ ) was observed at around 1.40 Å. It is longer than the general  $C(sp^2)$ –N(planar) and C(aromatic)–N(planar) single bond lengths (1.36 and 1.37 Å, respectively). The distance of the

 $C^2$ – $C^3$  bond was shorter than that of the resonance C–C bond (1.38 Å). Thus, it was revealed that there was little resonance between imidazolium and C–C bonds derived from the triple bond in 1.

As  $I_3^-$  possesses a negative charge, the interaction with the cationic imidazolium moiety should be attractive. However, the two crystal structures  $(2b^+\cdot I_3^- \text{ and } 3d^+\cdot I_3^-)$  showed no interaction between  $I_3^-$  and the cationic carbon  $(C^1)$  on the imidazolium moiety with longer distances between  $C^1$  and  $I_3^-$  (Figure 1b,c), whereas the distance between  $C^1$  and iodine of  $I_3^-$  in  $2a^+\cdot I_3^-$  and  $2c^+\cdot I_3^-$  was observed within the sum of van der Waals radii [3.75 Å = 1.98 Å (I) + 1.77 Å (C)] (Figure 1a,c).

Focused on the halogen-halogen interaction, the edge of the iodine atom on I<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> was situated in close contact with the iodine atom on the iodovinyl moiety of the cation structure. The distance between two iodine atoms was shortened about 10% compared to the sum of van der Waals radii of iodine [3.96 Å =1.98 Å (I) + 1.98 Å (I)]. 22 Bartashevich and co-workers report that the halogen bonding in the compounds of heterocyclic cations and I<sub>3</sub> was mainly observed in the range of 3.7-3.8 Å.<sup>23</sup> Such a halogen bond was reported in terms of "chargeassisted halogen bond", which gave significant contraction of halogen-halogen distance. <sup>17b,24</sup> Mentioned above, there was little conjugation between iodovinyl and benzimidazolium moieties in  $2a-c^+\cdot I_3^-$  and  $3d^+\cdot I_3^-$ . Therefore, the driving force to make the interaction between two iodine atoms would be the inductive electron-withdrawing ability of the benzimidazolium cation. The three atoms  $(C^{\bar{3}}, I^1, \text{ and } I^2)$  were almost in linear alignment. It is reasonable for halogen bonding, although the C-I...I angle was slightly tilted from the ideal angle (180°). <sup>13,25</sup> On the basis of the difference in the two angles  $(C^3-I^1\cdots I^2)$  and  $I^1\cdots I^2-I^3$  reported by Desiraju et al., 15b the compounds were categorized in  $2a^+ I_3^-$  as type I contact and in  $2b^+\cdot I_3^-$ ,  $2c^+\cdot I_3^-$ , and  $3d^+\cdot I_3^-$  as type II contact, which are actually halogen bondings. <sup>26</sup> Furthermore, it was found that  $I_3^$ was located on various positions in crystalline structures in keeping with that interaction (Figure 1). These results suggested that the I...I interaction in those compounds has the ability to overwhelm both the electrostatic interaction between cationic and anionic atoms and the requirement of crystal packing.

Table 2. Selected Distances and Angles of Products in Single-Crystal X-ray Structure

			angle (deg)				
compound	$N^1-C^1$	$C^1-N^2$	$N^2-C^2$	$C^2-C^3$	$I^1 \cdots I^{2a}$	$C^3-I^1\cdots I^2$	$I^1 \cdots I^2 - I^3$
$2a^+ \cdot I_3^-$	1.355	1.354	1.399	1.363	3.703 [93.5]	154.36	148.33
$2b^+ \cdot I_3^-$	1.344	1.372	1.403	1.342	3.647 [92.1]	170.75	106.73
$2c^{+}\cdot I_{3}^{-}$	1.350	1.363	1.403	1.352	3.556 [89.8]	169.01	130.70
$3d^+ \cdot I_3^-$	1.337	1.353	1.433	1.332	3.638 [91.9]	174.16	79.05
$2a^+\cdot I^-$	1.353	1.360	1.401	1.342	3.496 [88.3]	165.87	

<sup>&</sup>quot;Value in parentheses was percentage of the contraction against the sum of van der Waals (vdW) radii (distance  $I^1 \cdots I^2/3.96$  (sum of vdW of iodine)  $\times$  100).

After trying different recrystallization conditions, a single crystal included in pyridine was obtained by recrystallization of  $2a^+ \cdot I^-$  from pyridine solution with diffusion of hexane vapor. An almost identical structure of the benzimidazolium part was present in  $2a^+ \cdot I_3^-$  and  $2a^+ \cdot I^-$  (Figure 2 and Figure S3). Contact between cationic carbon (C¹) and iodine atom was observed. An I···I halogen bond also existed with a 3.496 Å distance and with a nearly linear angle (165.87°). Therefore, the preference of I···I interaction would also be affected in the case of I<sup>-</sup> as a counteranion.

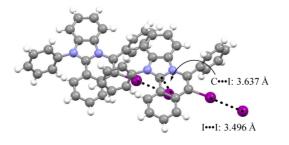
#### CONCLUSION

The reaction of 2-(2-alkynylphenyl)benz[d]imidazoles (1) with  $I_2$  gave novel 5- and 6-membered ring structures bearing iodine substituents as organic salts. The cyclization with activation of the triple bond by iodine occurred through a nucleophilic attack by a nitrogen atom at the benz[d]imidazolyl group toward the carbon atom in a benzylic position with the electron-donating substituents. The compounds with  $I_3^-$  were selectively obtained by the precipitate formation or by reaction with 2 mol equiv of  $I_2$ . Furthermore, by investigation of their crystal structures, it was revealed that the I···I interaction such as halogen bonding between iodine atoms in the iodovinyl moiety of the cation part and anion part was formed with greater preference than the electrostatic interaction between the cationic atom and triiodide or iodide.

#### EXPERIMENTAL SECTION

General Information. Melting points were uncorrected. NMR measurements were recorded with a 300 MHz spectrometer for <sup>1</sup>H NMR and with a 75 MHz spectrometer for <sup>13</sup>C NMR. Chemical shifts  $(\delta)$  of <sup>1</sup>H NMR were expressed in parts per million downfield or upfield from tetramethylsilane in CDCl<sub>3</sub> ( $\delta$  = 0) or DMSO- $d_5$  ( $\delta$  = 2.49) as an internal standard. Multiplicities are indicated as s (singlet), d (doublet), t (triplet), m (multiplet), and bs (broadened singlet), and coupling constants (I) are reported in hertz units. Chemical shifts ( $\delta$ ) of <sup>13</sup>C NMR are expressed in parts per million downfield or upfield from CDCl<sub>3</sub> ( $\delta = 77.0$ ) or DMSO- $d_6$  ( $\delta = 39.6$ ) as an internal standard. Analytical thin-layer chromatography (TLC) was performed on glass plates that had been precoated with SiO<sub>2</sub> (0.25 mm layer thickness). Column chromatography was performed on 70-230 mesh SiO<sub>2</sub>. Anhydrous CHCl<sub>3</sub> was distilled from CaCl<sub>2</sub> after washing with aq. NaOH and was stored with MS 4 Å. Anhydrous CH3CN was distilled from sodium hydride and was stored with MS 3 Å. Anhydrous DMF was distilled from P2O5 under reduced pressure and was stored with MS 4 Å. All other materials were used without further purification. The reactions were performed under a nitrogen atmosphere.

Preparation of 1. 2-(2-Bromophenyl)-1-phenyl-1H-benz[d]-imidazole.<sup>27</sup> To a solution of 2-aminodiphenylamine (0.923 g, 5.01 mmol) in H<sub>2</sub>O (10 mL) was added 2-bromobenzaldehyde (1.85 g,



**Figure 2.** Interactions of  $2a^+ \cdot I^- \cdot (pyridine)_{0.75}$  obtained by single-crystal X-ray crystallographic analysis. Pyridines were omitted for clarity.

10.0 mmol). The mixture was stirred for 22 h under refluxing conditions. The reaction mixture was extracted with EtOAc (5 mL  $\times$  3), and the organic layer was dried with MgSO<sub>4</sub>. After filtration and evaporation, the residue was subject to column chromatography on SiO<sub>2</sub> (hexane:EtOAc = 4:1) to give 2-(2-bromophenyl)-1-phenyl-1*H*-benz[*d*]imidazole (1.02 g, 2.92 mmol, 58%) as a colorless solid: mp = 158–159 °C; ¹H NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 300 MHz)  $\delta$  7.22–7.39 (m, 10H), 7.46 (dd, J = 1.8 and 7.4 Hz, 1H), 7.54 (d, J = 7.9 Hz, 1H), 7.92 (diffused d, J = 7.5 Hz, 1H); ¹³C NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 75 MHz)  $\delta$  110.6, 120.3, 122.9, 123.6, 123.7, 126.7, 127.0, 128.1, 129.3, 131.0, 132.3, 132.5, 132.8, 135.6, 135.9, 142.8, 151.5; IR (KBr disk) 3057, 1597, 1496, 1455, 1428, 1384, 1324, 1272, 1261, 1251, 1073, 1030, 1002, 772, 758, 742, 729, 709, 698 cm $^{-1}$ . HRMS (ESI, orbitrap) m/z: [M + H] $^+$  Calcd for C19H14N2Br 349.0335; Found 349.0321.

1-Phenyl-2-(2-(phenylethynyl)phenyl)-1H-benz[d]imidazole (1a). To a solution of 2-(2-bromophenyl)-1-phenyl-1*H*-benz[*d*]imidazole (0.268 g, 0.767 mmol) in THF (0.8 mL) and NEt<sub>3</sub> (1.1 mL) were added ethynylbenzene (87.8 mg, 0.860 mmol), Pd(PPh<sub>2</sub>)<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (12.6 mg, 0.018 mmol), CuI (6.3 mg, 0.033 mmol), and PPh<sub>3</sub> (9.3 mg, 0.035 mmol). The mixture was stirred for 24 h under refluxing conditions. After filtration with pads of Celite and Florizil and evaporation, the residue was subject to column chromatography on SiO2 (hexane:EtOAc = 4:1) to give 1-phenyl-2-(2-(phenylethynyl)phenyl)-1*H*benz[d]imidazole ( $\overline{1a}$ ) (0.256 g, 0.692 mmol, 90%) as a yellow oil:  $^{1}$ H NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 300 MHz)  $\delta$  7.14–7.40 (m, 15H), 7.50 (diffused dd, J = 2.0 and 7.1 Hz, 1H), 7.55 (diffused dd, J = 2.5 and 6.5 Hz, 1H), 7.94 (diffused d, I = 8.6 Hz, 1H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 75 MHz)  $\delta$  87.7, 93.1, 110.3, 120.0, 122.8, 123.3, 123.9, 126.6, 127.7, 127.9, 128.1, 128.2, 129.0, 129.2 (broadened), 129.3, 130.8, 131.4, 132.2, 133.0, 125.8, 136.2, 143.0, 151.9; IR (NaCl plate) 3061, 2957, 2218, 1597, 1495, 1455, 1380, 1327, 1264, 1216, 1191, 1085, 1071, 1027, 1009, 979, 906, 825, 753, 691 cm<sup>-1</sup>. HRMS (ESI, orbitrap) m/z: [M + H]<sup>+</sup> Calcd for C<sub>27</sub>H<sub>19</sub>N<sub>2</sub> 371.1543; Found 371.1525.

2-((2-(4-Methylphenyl)ethynyl)phenyl)-1-phenyl-1H-benz[d]-imidazole (1b). This compound was prepared in 32% isolated yield (0.125 g, 0.325 mmol) for 1 day under refluxing conditions according to a procedure similar to that mentioned in 1a: Colorless solid; mp = 53-54 °C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 300 MHz) δ 2.26 (s, 3H), 6.99 (d, J = 8.2 Hz, 2H), 7.04 (d, J = 8.2 Hz, 2H), 7.18–7.23 (m, 2H), 7.27–7.38 (m, 8H), 7.45 (diffused dd, J = 2.6 and 6.3 Hz, 1H), 7.55 (diffused dd, J = 2.9 and 6.0 Hz, 1H), 7.94 (d, J = 8.7 Hz, 1H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 75 MHz) δ 21.4, 87.1, 93.4, 110.4, 119.8, 120.1, 122.8, 123.3, 124.1, 126.7, 127.7, 127.8, 128.9, 129.1, 129.4, 130.9, 131.4, 132.2, 132.9, 135.8, 136.3, 138.5, 143.1, 152.1; IR (KBr disk) 3059, 2922, 2216, 1597, 1499, 1452, 1380, 1326, 818, 752, 696 cm<sup>-1</sup>. HRMS (ESI, orbitrap) m/z: [M + H]<sup>+</sup> Calcd for C<sub>28</sub>H<sub>21</sub>N<sub>2</sub> 385.1699; Found 385.1689.

2-Methyl-4-(2-(1-phenyl-1H-benz[d]imidazol-2-yl)phenyl)but-3-yn-2-ol (1e). This compound was prepared in 86% isolated yield (0.861 g, 2.44 mmol) for 1 day under refluxing conditions according to a procedure similar to that mentioned in 1a: Colorless solid; mp = 143–144 °C; ¹H NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 300 MHz) δ 1.31 (s, 6H), 3.15 (bs, 1H), 7.20–7.40 (m, 12H), 7.89 (dd, J = 1.4 and 6.7 Hz, 1H);  $^{13}$ C NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 75 MHz) δ 31.0, 65.0, 80.2, 98.3, 110.4, 119.9, 122.9, 123.4, 123.8, 126.8, 127.7, 128.0, 129.3 (large intensity), 130.5, 132.3, 132.8, 135.6, 136.1, 142.6, 151.6; IR (KBr disk) 3232, 2976, 2224,1733, 1597, 1499, 1452, 1389, 1330, 1172, 1137, 968, 764, 750, 698 cm $^{-1}$ . HRMS (ESI, orbitrap) m/z: [M + H] $^+$  Calcd for  $C_{24}H_{21}N_2O$  353.1648; Found 353.1640.

2-((2-(4-Methoxylphenyl)ethynyl)phenyl)-1-phenyl-1H-benz[d]-imidazole (1c). To a solution of 1e (0.856 g, 2.43 mmol) in toluene (4 mL) were added 4-bromoanisole (0.466 g, 2.53 mmol), CuI (49.7 mg, 0.261 mmol), Pd(PPh<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (0.172 g, 0.244 mmol), nBu<sub>4</sub>NI (89.7 mg, 0.2463 mmol), and a 5 M aqueous solution of NaOH (1.6 mL, 8.0 mmol). The mixture was stirred at 80 °C for 14 h. After filtration with pads of Celite and Florisil and evaporation, the residue was subject to column chromatography on SiO<sub>2</sub> (hexane:EtOAc = 4:1) to give 2-((2-(4-methoxylphenyl)ethynyl)phenyl)-1-phenyl-1H-benz[d]imidazole (1c) (92.7 mg, 0.232 mmol, 10%) as a yellow solid; mp = 48–50 °C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 300 MHz) δ 3.76 (s, 3H), 6.74 (d, J = 8.9 Hz, 2H),

7.09 (d, J = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 7.21 (d, J = 6.3 Hz, 1H), 7.22 (d, J = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.28–7.40 (m, 8H), 7.47 (diffused dd, J = 2.2 and 6.9 Hz, 1H), 7.55 (diffused dd, J = 1.9 and 7.1 Hz, 1H), 7.95 (d, J = 7.2 Hz, 1H);  $^{13}$ C NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 75 MHz)  $\delta$  55.2, 86.5, 93.3, 110.4, 113.8, 115.0, 120.1, 122.8, 123.3, 124.3, 126.6, 127.6, 127.8, 129.1, 129.4, 130.8, 132.1, 132.7, 132.9, 135.8, 136.3, 143.1, 152.1, 159.6; IR (KBr disk) 3059, 2934, 2836, 2215, 1600, 1511, 1500, 1452, 1380, 1288, 1250, 1175, 1028, 833, 752, 696 cm<sup>-1</sup>. HRMS (ESI, orbitrap) m/z: [M + H]<sup>+</sup> Calcd for  $C_{28}H_{21}ON_2$  401.1648; Found 401.1642.

2-(2-Ethynylphenyl)-1-phenyl-1H-benz[d]imidazole (1d). To a solution of 1e (0.115 g, 0.326 mmol) in 2-propanol (1.5 mL) was added KOH (5.81 mg, 0.103 mmol). The mixture was stirred for 3 h under refluxing conditions. To the reaction mixture was added H<sub>2</sub>O (20 mL), and was extracted with EtOAc (10 mL × 3). The organic layer was dried with MgSO<sub>4</sub>. After filtration and evaporation, the residue was subject to column chromatography on SiO<sub>2</sub> (hexane:EtOAc = 2:1) to give 2-(2-ethynylphenyl)-1-phenyl-1*H*-benz[*d*]imidazole (1d) (40.2 mg, 0.136 mmol, 42%) as a yellow solid; mp = 141–142 °C; <sup>1</sup>H NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 300 MHz)  $\delta$  2.95 (s, 1H), 7.24– 7.51 (m, 12H), 7.93 (d, I = 8.0 Hz, 1H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 75 MHz)  $\delta$  81.3, 81.5, 110.5, 120.3, 122.8, 122.9, 123.4, 126.9, 127.9, 128.5, 129.2, 129.3, 130.9, 133.1, 133.6, 135.9, 136.2, 143.0, 151.6; IR (KBr disk) 3288, 3066, 2107, 1597, 1495, 1472, 1456, 1432, 1386, 1323, 1254, 1087, 762, 753, 742, 700 cm<sup>-1</sup>. HRMS (ESI, orbitrap) m/z: M + H]<sup>+</sup> Calcd for C<sub>21</sub>H<sub>15</sub>N<sub>2</sub> 295.1230; Found 295.1216.

Procedure for the Cyclization of 1 with Molecular lodine. To a solution of 1 (0.3 mmol) in solvent (3 mL) was added  $I_2$  (1.0 or 2.0 mmol) at the appropriate temperature (see Table 1). After being stirred at that temperature, the precipitate was obtained. If no precipitate was obtained, n-hexane (30 mL) was added to give the precipitate. After collection of the solid and drying in vacuo, the corresponding cyclic compounds (2 and/or 3) were obtained. The yield of the cation part was estimated from the integration of  $^1$ H NMR by dissolving the cyclic compound (5.0–10.0 mg) and terepthal-aldehyde or dibenzyl (ca. 10 wt % of the cyclic compound), as an internal standard, in DMSO- $d_6$ . The method for the estimation of counteranion was described in the text.

5-lodo-6,12-diphenyl-12H-benz[4,5]imidazo[2,1-a]isoquinolin-7ium Triiodide ( $2\mathbf{a}^+ \cdot \mathbf{I}_3^-$  ( $X = \mathbf{I}_3$ )) and Iodide ( $2\mathbf{a}^+ \cdot \Gamma$  ( $X = \mathbf{I}_3$ )): Same NMR Spectra Were Obtained from  $2\mathbf{a}^+ \cdot \mathbf{I}_3^-$  and  $2\mathbf{a}^+ \cdot \Gamma$ . <sup>1</sup>H NMR (DMSO- $d_6$ , 300 MHz)  $\delta$  5.87 (d, J = 8.7 Hz, 1H), 7.34 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 7.40 (t, J = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.46 (d, J = 8.5 Hz, 1H), 7.65–7.74 (m, 3H), 7.77 (t, J = 7.4 Hz, 1H), 7.86 - 7.89 (m, 5H), 7.96 (m, 3H), 8.16(t, J = 7.4 Hz, 1H), 8.54 (d, J = 8.3 Hz, 1H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (DMSO- $d_{6}$ , 75 MHz)  $\delta$  96.1, 113.0, 116.0, 116.2, 125.0, 125.8, 127.4, 127.9, 129.0, 130.1, 130.3, 130.4, 131.8, 132.0, 132.3, 134.1, 134.2, 134.6, 135.48, 135.54, 137.0, 139.3, 141.9. 2a+·I<sub>3</sub>-: 0.340 g of collected precipitate (entry 6 in Table 1); brown solid; mp = 244 °C (decomp.); IR (KBr disk) 3118, 3051, 2356, 2337, 1616, 1587, 1516, 1446, 756, 747, 715, 700 cm<sup>-1</sup>. Anal. Calcd for C<sub>27</sub>H<sub>18</sub>I<sub>4</sub>N<sub>2</sub>: C, 36.93; H, 2.07; N, 3.19%. Found: C, 36.83; H, 1.97; N, 3.00%. 2a+·I-: 0.165 g of collected precipitate (entry 5 in Table 1). Further purification was achieved by the recrystallization from CHCl<sub>3</sub> and hexane; yellow solid; mp = 329-330 °C; IR (KBr disk) 3120, 3051, 3026, 1617, 1518, 1482, 1466, 1448, 1325, 1025, 759, 716, 701 cm<sup>-1</sup>. Anal. Calcd for C<sub>27</sub>H<sub>18</sub>I<sub>2</sub>N<sub>2</sub>: C<sub>27</sub>H<sub>28</sub>I<sub>2</sub>N<sub>2</sub>: C<sub>27</sub>H<sub>28</sub> 51.95; H, 2.91; N, 4.49%. Found: C, 51.75; H, 2.97; N, 4.48%.

5-lodo-6-(4-methylphenyl)-12-diphenyl-12H-benz[4,5]imidazo-[2,1-a]isoquinolin-7-ium Triiodide ( $2\mathbf{b}^+$ · $I_3^-$  ( $X=I_3$ )) and lodide ( $2\mathbf{b}^+$ · $I_3^-$  ( $X=I_3$ )). Same NMR spectra were obtained from  $2\mathbf{b}^+$ · $I_3^-$  and  $2\mathbf{b}^+$ · $I^-$ :  $^1$ H NMR (DMSO- $I_6$ ), 300 MHz)  $\delta$  2.59 (s, 3H), 5.98 (d, I=8.6 Hz, 1H), 7.34 (d, I=8.3 Hz, 1H), 7.42 (t, I=8.1 Hz, 1H), 7.46 (d, I=8.1 Hz, 1H), 7.56 (d, I=8.0 Hz, 2H), 7.67 (m, 3H), 7.76 (t, I=7.7 Hz, 1H), 7.88–7.97 (m, 5H), 8.15 (t, I=7.9 Hz, 1H), 8.54 (d, I=8.3 Hz, 1H); I=1.510 NMR (DMSO-I=1.520, 125.8, 127.5, 128.0, 129.0, 130.0, 130.2, 130.8, 131.9, 132.3, 134.1, 134.2, 134.3, 134.6, 135.4, 135.6, 139.4, 141.5, 141.9. I=1.520 (cellected precipitate (entry 8 in Table 1). Further purification was achieved by the recrystallization from CHCl3 and hexane; brown solid; mp = 267 °C (decomp.); IR (KBr disk) 3121, 3049, 1616, 1521, 1506, 1481, 1448, 1324, 824, 743, 698 cm<sup>-1</sup>. Anal.

Calcd for  $C_{28}H_{20}I_4N_2$ : C, 37.70; H, 2.26; N, 3.14%. Found: C, 37.53; H, 2.15; N, 2.96%.  $2b^+\cdot I^-$ : 0.184 g of collected precipitate (entry 7 in Table 1); yellow solid; mp = 327–329 °C; IR (KBr disk) 3027, 1618, 1522, 1508, 1482, 1466, 1448, 1322, 1025, 823, 744, 702 cm<sup>-1</sup>. Anal. Calcd for  $(C_{28}H_{20}I_2N_2)_{0.93}(C_{28}H_{20}I_4N_2)_{0.07}$ : C, 51.26; H, 3.07; N, 4.27%. Found: C, 51.00; H, 3.07; N, 4.14%.

5-lodo-6-(4-methoxylphenyl)-12-diphenyl-12H-benz[4,5]imidazo[2,1-a]isoquinolin-7-ium Triiodide ( $2c^{+}I_{3}^{-}$  ( $X = I_{3}$ )) and *lodide* ( $2c^+ l^- (X = l)$ ). Same NMR spectra were obtained from  $2c^+ I_3^$ and  $2c^+\cdot I^-$ : <sup>1</sup>H NMR (DMSO- $d_6$ , 300 MHz)  $\delta$  3.99, (s, 3H), 6.09 (d, J = 8.7 Hz, 1H), 7.35 (d, I = 8.3 Hz, 1H), 7.41 (d, I = 8.7 Hz, 2H), 7.45-7.48 (m, 2H), 7.58 (d, J = 8.7 Hz, 2H), 7.68 (t, J = 7.7 Hz, 1H), 7.75 (t, J = 7.4 Hz, 1H), 7.61-7.90 (m, 2H), 7.95-7.97 (m, 3H), 8.15 $(t, I = 7.5 \text{ Hz}, 1\text{H}), 8.53 (d, I = 8.2 \text{ Hz}, 1\text{H}); {}^{13}\text{C NMR (DMSO-}d_{6}, 75)$ MHz)  $\delta$  55.7, 96.9, 112.8, 115.6, 116.1, 116.2, 124.9, 125.9, 127.5, 127.9, 128.9, 129.2, 130.2, 131.6, 131.9, 132.3, 134.1, 134.2, 134.5, 135.4, 135.6, 139.3, 141.9, 161.3. 2c+ I<sub>3</sub>-: 0.156 g of collected precipitate (entry 10 in Table 1). Further purification was achieved by the recrystallization from CHCl<sub>3</sub> and hexane; brown solid; mp = 255 °C (decomp.); IR (KBr disk) 3118, 3052, 2927, 1616, 1507, 1481, 1448, 1294, 1255, 1175, 1025, 835, 744, 699 cm<sup>-1</sup>. Anal. Calcd for C<sub>28</sub>H<sub>20</sub>I<sub>4</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O: C, 37.03; H, 2.22; N, 3.08%. Found: C, 37.24; H, 2.06; N, 2.97%.  $2c^+\cdot I^-$ : 0.186 g of collected precipitate (entry 9 in Table 1); light brown solid; mp = 278–280 °C; IR (KBr disk) 3118, 3026, 2932, 2835, 1616, 1523, 1507, 1482, 1448, 1324, 1293, 1253, 1175, 1024, 835, 744, 701 cm<sup>-1</sup>. Anal. Calcd for (C<sub>28</sub>H<sub>20</sub>I<sub>2</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O)<sub>0.88</sub>(C<sub>28</sub>H<sub>20</sub>-I<sub>4</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O)<sub>0.12</sub>: C, 49.11; H, 2.94; N, 4.09%. Found: C, 48.94; H, 2.82; N,

(E)-11-(Iodomethylene)-5-phenyl-5,11-dihydrobenz[4,5]imidazo-[2,1-a]isoindol-10-ium Triiodide (3 $d^+$ · $l_3^-$ ). 0.185 g of collected precipitate (entry 12 in Table 1); brown solid; mp = 213-214 °C; 

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (DMSO- $d_6$ , 300 MHz) δ 7.25 (d, J = 7.7 Hz, 1H), 7.60 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.68 (t, J = 7.3 Hz, 1H), 7.73 (t, J = 7.5 Hz, 1H), 7.80 (t, J = 7.4 Hz, 1H), 7.85-7.94 (m, 5H), 7.98 (t, J = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 8.71 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 8.95 (s, 1H), 8.98 (d, J = 8.1 Hz, 1H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (DMSO- $d_6$ , 75 MHz) δ 65.4, 82.3, 114.0, 122.8, 123.5, 125.4, 126.8, 126.9, 127.5, 127.9, 131.0, 131.3, 131.79, 131.83, 134.2, 135.3, 136.8, 138.1, 149.3; IR (KBr disk) 3067, 1559, 1497, 1478, 1458, 1439, 1143, 743, 711, 693 cm<sup>-1</sup>. Anal. Calcd for C<sub>21</sub>H<sub>14</sub>I<sub>4</sub>N<sub>2</sub>: C, 31.45; H, 1.76; N, 3.49%. Found: C, 31.32; H, 1.69; N, 3.21%.

(E)-11-(2-Hydroxy-1-iodo-2-methylpropylidene)-5-phenyl-5,11-dihydrobenz[4,5]imidazo[2,1-a]isoindol-10-ium Triiodide ( $3e^+$ · $I_3^-$ ). 0.228 g of collected precipitate (entry 15 in Table 1); brown solid; mp = 74–76 °C; ¹H NMR (DMSO- $d_6$ , 300 MHz) δ 1.92 (s, 6H), 5.90 (s, 1H), 7.07 (d, J = 7.8 Hz, 1H), 7.41 (d, J = 8.2 Hz, 1H), 7.57 (t, J = 7.3 Hz, 1H), 7.63 (t, J = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.67 (t, J = 7.4 Hz, 1H), 7.86–7.94 (m, 6H), 8.30 (d, J = 8.5 Hz, 1H), 9.29 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 1H);  $^{13}$ C NMR (DMSO- $d_6$ , 75 MHz) δ 32.5, 79.6, 112.5, 119.9, 121.1, 122.8, 123.4, 125.8, 125.9, 126.7, 127.3, 130.6, 130.7, 131.1, 131.5, 131.9, 132.0, 133.7, 136.6, 143.3, 150.7; IR (KBr disk) 3420, 2993, 1622, 1569, 1498, 1478, 1456, 1331, 1172, 755, 696 cm $^{-1}$ . Anal. Calcd for C<sub>24</sub>H<sub>20</sub>I<sub>4</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O: C, 33.52; H, 2.34; N, 3.26%. Found: C, 33.53; H, 2.34; N, 2.98%.

**X-ray Crystallography.** Data collections were carried out on a commercial X-ray diffractometer with Mo K $\alpha$  or Cu K $\alpha$  radiations. All structures were solved by a direct method using SHELXS-97, <sup>28</sup> and the non-hydrogen atoms were refined anisotropically against  $F^2$ , with full-matrix least-squares methods using SHELXL-97. <sup>29</sup> All hydrogen atoms were positioned geometrically and refined as riding.

#### ASSOCIATED CONTENT

### S Supporting Information

The Supporting Information is available free of charge on the ACS Publications website at DOI: 10.1021/acs.joc.6b00607.

<sup>1</sup>H and <sup>13</sup>C NMR spectra of the products, list of X-ray crystallographic data, <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectrum of precipitate (Figure S1), ORTEP drawing of crystal structure (Figure S2), and single crystal structures of 3e<sup>+</sup>·I<sub>3</sub><sup>−</sup> (Figure S3) and 2a<sup>+</sup>·I<sup>−</sup>·(pyridine)<sub>0.75</sub> (Figure S4) (PDF)

- X-ray crystallographic data of  $2a^+ \cdot I_3^-$  (CIF)
- X-ray crystallographic data of 2b<sup>+</sup>·I<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> (CIF)
- X-ray crystallographic data of  $2c^+\cdot I_3^-$  (CIF)
- X-ray crystallographic data of 3d<sup>+</sup>·I<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> (CIF)
- X-ray crystallographic data of  $3e^+ \cdot I_3^-$  (CIF)
- X-ray crystallographic data of  $2a^+ \cdot I^- \cdot (pyridine)_{0.75}$  (CIF)

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#### Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

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