Asymmetric Hydrogenation of Isoguinolines and Pyridines Using Hydrogen Halide Generated in Situ as Activator

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S Supporting Information

ABSTRACT: By employing halogenide trichloroisocyanuric acid as a traceless activation reagent, a general iridium-catalyzed asymmetric hydrogenation of isoquinolines and pyridines is developed with up to 99% ee. This method avoids tedious steps of installation and removal of the activating groups. The mechanism studies indicated that hydrogen halide generated in situ acted as an activator of isoquinolines and pyridines.

hiral piperidines and tetrahydroisoquinolines are common structural motifs present in biologically active compounds, and the development of efficient methods for their synthesis has attracted increasing attention.² One of the most straightforward and atom-economic methods is direct asymmetric hydrogenation of the corresponding pyridines^{3–7} and isoquinolines.⁸ However, the resonance stability and inhibiting effect of nitrogen atom on chiral catalyst impeded efficient asymmetric hydrogenation of these compounds.

In the past decades, chemists have made tireless efforts to overcome these difficulties. A number of effective strategies, including substrate activation and catalyst activation, have been developed. In 2005, an elegant asymmetric hydrogenation of the N-iminopyridinium ylides was reported by Charette's group.^{4a} Next, the chloroformates, benzyl bromides, and Brønsted acids were successfully used as substrate activators for asymmetric hydrogenation of pyridines⁴⁻⁶ and isoquinolines⁸ (Scheme 1). However, installation and removal of activating groups are the major drawbacks for further synthetic applications. In addition, some activating groups cannot be installed on the substrates due to steric hindrance and electronic effects. Therefore, developing an ideal activator for the direct asymmetric hydrogenation of aromatic N-heterocycles is highly desirable. In this respect, an ideal activator should possess the advantages of high efficiency, simplified operation, and low cost. Furthermore, the crucial point is the circumvention of tedious steps of installation and removal without forming or breaking a covalent bond. An ideal activator with these characters can be called a traceless activator. Herein, we report a general enantioselective hydrogenation of isoquinolines and pyridines using trichloroisocyanuric acid (TCCA) as a traceless activator with excellent enantioselectivity (Scheme 1), and the salient features of this method are as follows: (1) simple operation and (2) avoidance of tedious installation and removal of activating groups.



Scheme 1. Enantioselective Hydrogenation of Isoquinolines and Pyridines via Substrate Activation

Previous Work: Substrate activation (preparation in advance) Activation with alkyl chloroformates, benzyl bromides and Brønsted acids



This Work: Traceless activation (in situ and transient)



Halogenides (such as NIS and TCCA) are commercially available, stable, cheap, and low-toxic reagents, which have been widely applied in organic synthesis.⁹ In 2007, a halogen-bonding interaction involving the C=N bond and NIS was reported by the Vaquero group.¹⁰ The halogen bond, an important noncovalent interaction between an electrophilic halogen substituent X (X = Cl, Br, I) and a Lewis base, forms an interaction angle close to 180°. Over the past decades, the halogen bond has been applied to a variety of research disciplines including crystal engineering and material sciences.¹¹ Meanwhile, the application of the halogen bond in the field of organic synthesis and catalysis also receives important attention but is

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still quite rare. For example, the reduction of quinolines with Hantzsch ester using perfluorinated iodoalkanes or bis-(iodoimidazolinium) compounds as halogen-bond activators was reported by the groups of Bolm and Tan,¹² respectively. In addition, halogen-bond donors could also serve as activators in the Morita–Baylis–Hillman reaction,^{13a} Diels–Alder reaction,^{13b,c} and so on.^{13d–h} Considering that the halogenides easily form halogen-bond interactions with Lewis basic isoquinolines and pyridines, the halogenides could act as the desirable traceless activators. These activators might enhance the reactivity of pyridines and isoquinolines and provide a new opportunity for asymmetric hydrogenation of isoquinoline and pyridine derivatives.

With this hypothesis in mind, 1-phenylisoquinoline (1a) was chosen as a model substrate. We tested asymmetric hydrogennation of 1a with NIS as substrate activator and $[Ir(COD)-Cl]_2/(R)$ -SegPhos as catalyst in THF under hydrogen gas (1200 psi) at 80 °C (Table 1). Gratifyingly, the reaction proceeded

	(),	[Ir(COD)CI] ₂ /ligand, solvent		- CNH			
	°	halogenide, 8	0 °C, H ₂ (1200 psi)	2a Ph			
entry	solvent	ligand	halogenide	$\operatorname{conv}^{b}(\%)$	ee^{c} (%)		
1	THF	L1	NIS	95	91		
2	CH_2Cl_2	L1	NIS	40	63		
3	toluene	L1	NIS	78	90		
4	dioxane	L1	NIS	>95	94		
5	dioxane	L2	NIS	75	85		
6	dioxane	L3	NIS	>95	94		
7	dioxane	L4	NIS	91	89		
8	dioxane	L5	NIS	81	73		
9 ^d	dioxane	L1	NIS	17	71		
10	dioxane	L1	NBS	>95	95		
11	dioxane	L1	NCS	>95	94		
12	dioxane	L1	TCCA	66	96		
13	THF	L1	TCCA	>95	95		
14 ^e	THF	L1	TCCA	>95	95		
15 ^e	THF	L1	TCCA	>95	95		
O PPh2 O PPh2 FO PPh2 MeO PPh2 PPh2 PPh2							
$ \begin{array}{c} O \\ O \end{array} \\ \end{array} \\ \begin{array}{c} O \\ O \end{array} \\ \begin{array}{c} O \\ O \end{array} \\ \begin{array}{c} O \\ O \end{array} \\ \end{array} \\ \end{array} \\ \begin{array}{c} O \\ O \end{array} \\ \end{array} \\ \end{array} \\ \begin{array}{c} O \\ O \end{array} \\ \end{array}$							
14: (P) Sea Phoe 12: (P) Sup Phoe 12: (P) Diffuer Phoe 14: (P) Mac Riphon 15: (P) PINAD							

L1: (R)-SegPhos L2: (R)-SynPhos L3: (R)-DifluorPhos L4: (R)-MeO-Biphep L5: (R)-BINAF

^{*a*}Conditions: **1a** (0.125 mmol), $[Ir(COD)Cl]_2$ (2.0 mol %), ligand (4.4 mol %), H₂ (1200 psi), solvent (3.0 mL), halogenide (1.0 equiv), 48 h, 80 °C. ^{*b*}Determined by ¹H NMR spectroscopy. ^{*c*}Determined by HPLC analysis of the corresponding N-benzoyl derivatives. ^{*d*}NIS (5.0 mol %). ^{*c*}TCCA (0.36 equiv). ^{*f*}**1a** (0.25 mmol), $[Ir(COD)Cl]_2$ (1.0 mol %), (*R*)-SegPhos (2.2 mol %). NIS = N-iodosuccinimide, NBS = N-bromosuc-cinimide, NCS = N-chlorosuccinimide, TCCA = trichloroisocyanuric acid.

smoothly, and excellent conversion as well as enantioselectivity was obtained (entry 1). Subsequently, the solvent effects were examined (entries 1–4). It was found that solvents played a crucial role, and dioxane was more suitable than the others (entry 4). Some commercially available chiral bisphosphine ligands were also evaluated, and the best result was achieved with (R)-SegPhos L1 and (R)-DifluorPhos L3 (94% ee; entries 4 and 8). Notably, poor reactivity was observed without stoichiometric halogenide activator, and this result showed the halogen-bond interaction might improve reactivity (entry 9). Encouraged by

the above results, some other halogenides were tested (entries 10-12). TCCA gave the most favorable 96% ee, albeit with slightly low reactivity. Fortunately, the reactivity increased obviously using THF instead of dioxane with the identical enantioselectivity (entry 13). To our delight, no loss in conversion and enantioselectivity was observed with the decreased loadings of catalyst and TCCA (entry 15). Therefore, the optimal reaction conditions were established as [Ir(COD)-Cl]₂/(*R*)-SegPhos/TCCA/THF.

After establishing the optimal conditions, we examined the substrate scope, and the results are summarized in Scheme 2. A

Scheme 2. Substrate Scope of Isoquinolines a^{a-c}



^{*a*}2c-g: $[Ir(COD)Cl]_2$ (2.0 mol %), (R)-SegPhos (4.4 mol %). ^{*b*}2ho: TCCA (1.0 equiv). ^{*c*}2p-q: dioxane/^{*i*}PrOH (v/v = 5:1, 3.0 mL), H₂ (600 psi), TCCA (1.0 equiv), 20 h, 30 °C.

series of 1-aryl-substituted isoquinolines could be smoothly hydrogenated, giving the corresponding tetrahydroisoquinolines with excellent yields and enantioslectivities (2a-d) regardless of the electronic properties of 1-aryl substituents. Moreover, the position of substituents on 1-aryl had a marginal effect on the reactivity and enantioselectivity (2d, 2e). When the aryl substituent on C1 was replaced with an alkyl substituent, good enantioselectivity and reactivity were obtained (2f). Introducing an electron-donating methoxy substituent on the isoquinoline core (2g) resulted in slightly lower enantioselectivity. Then, more challenging 1,3-disubstituted isoquinolines were tackled to deliver two stereocenters in one step. To our delight, 1,3-diaryl-(1h-m), 1-aryl-3-alkyl- (1n), and 1-alkyl-3-aryl-disubstituted isoquinolines (10) can be hydrogenated with high enantioselectivities and diasteroselectivities. For example, the hydrogenation of 1,3-diphenylisoquinoline furnished the desired product 2h in 99% yield and 98% ee. To further explore the scope of substrates, the hydrogenation of fluorinated 3,4disubstituted isoquinolines was evaluated, providing the corresponding hydrogenation products with 92-93% ee, and no defluorination products were detected. To demonstrate the practicality of this method, the asymmetric hydrogenation of 1a was performed on gram scale under the standard conditions with 94% yield and 94% ee without loss of reactivity and enantioselectivity.

The success of asymmetric hydrogenation of isoquinolines encouraged us to apply this strategy to more challenging substrate, pyridines. Initially, we investigated the feasibility of this approach by evaluating asymmetric hydrogenation of 6-methyl-2-phenylpyridine (**3a**) under conditions of $[Ir(COD)Cl]_2/(R)$ -SegPhos/TCCA (0.36 equiv) in THF at 80 °C. The desirable hydrogenation product **4a** could be obtained with 68% conversion, moderate 76% enantioselectivity, and excellent diastereoselectivity (>20:1). Fortunately, the 86% ee value and full conversion were obtained by adjusting the amount of activator TCCA from 0.36 to 1.0 equiv.

Having identified the optimal reaction conditions, we commenced the extension of substrate scope (Table 2). A series

Table 2. Substrate Scope of Pyridines^a

	R'	[Ir(COD)CI] ₂ /(R)-SegPhos		
	R N Ar	TCCA, THF, 80 °C H ₂ (1200 psi)	R ^{WIN} Ar H 4	
entry	R, R′	Ar	yield ^b (%)	ee^{c} (%)
1	Me, H	C ₆ H ₅	81 (4 a)	86
2	Me, H	$4-CF_3C_6H_4$	90 (4b)	85
3	Me, H	$3-MeC_6H_4$	64 (4 c)	85
4	Me, H	$3,5-F_2C_6H_3$	75 (4d)	85
5	Me, H	1-naphthyl	86 (4e)	73
6^d	Me, CF ₃	C ₆ H ₅	98 (4f)	90
7^d	Me, CF ₃	$4-MeC_6H_4$	97 (4 g)	90
8 ^d	Me, CF ₃	$3-MeC_6H_4$	96 (4h)	89
9 ^d	Me, CF ₃	4-MeOC ₆ H ₄	85 (4i)	90
10 ^d	Me, CF ₃	$4-CF_3C_6H_4$	91 (4 j)	87
11 ^d	Me, CF ₃	$4 - C_6 H_5 C_6 H_4$	98 (4k)	88
12 ^d	Me, CF ₃	2-naphthyl	91 (4 l)	89
13 ^d	Et, CF ₃	C ₆ H ₅	82 (4m)	89
14 ^d	ⁿ Bu, CF ₃	C ₆ H ₅	96 (4n)	85

^{*a*}Conditions: **3** (0.25 mmol), $[Ir(COD)Cl]_2$ (2.0 mol %), (*R*)-SegPhos (4.4 mol %), H₂ (1200 psi), THF (3.0 mL), TCCA (1.0 equiv), 48 h, 80 °C. ^{*b*}Isolated yield. ^{*c*}Determined by HPLC analysis of the corresponding *N*-benzoyl derivatives. ^{*d*} $[Ir(COD)Cl]_2$ (2.5 mol %), (*R*)-DifluorPhos (5.5 mol %), H₂ (800 psi), DCM:^{*i*}PrOH (v:v = 3:1, 3.0 mL), TCCA (1.0 equiv), 36 h, rt.

of 2,6-disubstituted pyridines were successfully converted to the chiral piperidines with good to excellent enantioselectivities. The electronic properties and steric effects on the 6-arylpyridines had a marginal effect on the yields and ee values (entries 1-5). Notably, this method can provide higher enantioselectivities compared to previous method using pyridium chloride as substrates (for example, **3a**: 86% ee vs 78% ee^{6b}). Furthermore, to demonstrate the versatility of this method, we turned our attention to the asymmetric hydrogenation of trifluoromethylsubstituted pyridines. After a condition reoptimization, a range of 2,3,6-trisubstituted pyridines bearing a trifluoromethyl group could be well hydrogenated with high enantioselectivities (entries 6-14). The steric and electronic nature of the aryl substituents had little influence on the outcome of the reaction, giving the corresponding products with 85–90% ees (entries 6– 12). To our delight, pyridines bearing longer alkyl chain groups instead of a methyl group at the 6-position were also good partners with 85-89% ees (entries 13-14). In the previous method,^{6b} we could not obtain the target product 4n because the 3n·HCl could not be prepared.

To gain more insight into the reaction mechanism, the following investigations were performed (Scheme 3). We began

Scheme 3. Control Experiments



our studies on the basis of the hypothesis that the asymmetric hydrogenation of isoquinolines and pyridines was activated by halogenide through halogen-bond interactions. Fortunately, the stable 1:1 halogen-bond complex was formed by mixing 1phenylisoquinoline 1a and NIS in CH₂Cl₂, and the structure was confirmed by single-crystal X-ray crystallography (eq 1). The angle of N(2)-I(1)-N(1) is 175.86 (9)°, almost linear disposition, and the bond length of I(1)-N(1) is 2.502(3) Å and I(1)-N(2) is 2.086(3) Å. However, the partially hidden Brønsted acid activation could not be completely ruled out in the application of halogen bond in the field of organic synthesis and catalysis.^{13b,14} Furthermore, the desired product **2a** was obtained by direct asymmetric hydrogenation of 1a•NIS complex (eq 2) under the standard conditions with identical results (Table 1, entry 4). In addition, the hydrogenolysis of NIS was conducted under the standard conditions (eq 3), giving the succinimide and hydrogen iodide with full conversion. Surprisingly, hydrogenation of 2-phenylisoquinolinium chloride 5 was conducted (eq 4), and identical reactivity and enantioselectivity were obtained under the standard conditions. The above experimental results support the asymmetric hydrogenation of isoquinolines and pyridines using hydrogen halide generated in situ as activator.

In summary, a general and highly enantioselective iridiumcatalyzed asymmetric hydrogenation of isoquinolines and pyridines has been successfully developed with up to 99% ee. This work features a traceless activation strategy and circumvents the tedious steps of installation and removal of the activating reagents. This hydrogenation reaction can be easily scalable and is valuable for the preparation of chiral tetrahydroisoquinolines and piperidines with multiple stereocenters. The mechanism studies indicated that hydrogen halide generated in situ acted as the activator of isoquinolines and pyridines. Further investigation on the application of the related traceless activation strategy to other substrates and detailed mechanistic studies are currently ongoing in our laboratory.

ASSOCIATED CONTENT

Supporting Information

The Supporting Information is available free of charge on the ACS Publications website at DOI: 10.1021/acs.orglett.7b02502.

Experimental procedures, characterization data, and NMR spectra (PDF)

X-ray data for 1a•NIS (CIF)

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Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

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