J|A|C|S COMMUNICATIONS

Published on Web 05/04/2010

Metalloradical-Catalyzed Aliphatic Carbon−Carbon Activation of Cyclooctane

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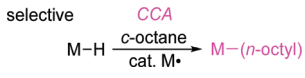
Alkane functionalization in a homogeneous medium is an important and challenging process which involves either carbon−hydrogen activation (CHA)[1] or carbon−carbon activation (CCA)[2] with organic, inorganic and organometallics reagents. Although aliphatic C−C bonds are weaker than aliphatic C−H bonds, CCA of alkanes is much less reported due to the steric hindrance of the C−C bond by the attack of a transition metal complex.[3]

Cyclooctane (*c*-octane) is a relatively unstrained cycloalkane and therefore serves as a commonly investigated substrate in alkane functionalization, mostly involving CHA. Some examples of CHA of *c*-octane are the iridium(I) pincer dihydride-catalyzed dehydrogenation to *c*-octene,[4a] the $FeCl_3$-catalyzed aerobic oxidation to *c*-octanol and *c*-octanone,[4b] and the MnO_2-catalyzed bromination to *c*-octyl bromide.[4c] Examples of CCA of *c*-octane are rarely reported. A CCA of *c*-octane in a heterogeneous medium requires a very high reaction temperature of 530 °C and consequently results in both CHA and CCA.[3a] An oxidative CCA of *c*-octane catalyzed by *N*-hydroxyphthalides/Co(II)/Mn(II) at 100 °C in 14 h gives α,ω-dicarboxylic acids in 2% yield only.[3b]

We have recently discovered the base-promoted CHA of alkane with Rh(III) porphyrin[5] as well as the aliphatic CCA of nitroxides by Rh(II) porphyrin.[6] We now report the selective aliphatic CCA of *c*-octane by rhodium(III) porphyrin hydride to give a high yield of rhodium porphyrin *n*-octyl under mild reaction conditions and the mechanistic studies identifying the unique catalytic role of Rh(II) porphyrin (Scheme 1).

Scheme 1. CCA of *c*-Octane with MH



Initially, *c*-octane was found to react poorly with Rh(ttp)Cl (ttp =5,10,15,20-tetratolylporphyrinato dianion) to give Rh(ttp)(*c*-octyl) **1** and Rh(ttp)(*n*-octyl) **2** in 5% and 8% yields, respectively (eq 1). A 72% yield of Rh(ttp)Cl was recovered, and a trace amount of Rh(ttp)H **3** was observed. Both CHA and CCA products formed, but the reaction was inefficient. When K_2CO_3 (10 equiv) was added,[7] Rh(ttp)Cl was consumed in 7.5 h and Rh(ttp)(*n*-octyl) **2** and Rh(ttp)H **3** were obtained in 33% and 58% yields, respectively. The CCA product **2** is the formal 1,2-addition product of Rh(ttp)H into *c*-octane. The structures of **1** and **2** were confirmed by independent syntheses.[8] **2** was further characterized by X-ray crystallography (Figure 1).

Rh(ttp)Cl + *c*-octane $\xrightarrow[15\text{ h, }N_2]{120\ ^\circ\text{C}}$ Rh(ttp)(*c*-octyl) + Rh(ttp)(*n*-octyl) + Rh(ttp)H (1)

Recovered	Time		1	2	3
72%	2d	no base	5%	8%	trace
0%	7.5h	K_2CO_3(10 equiv)	0%	33%	58%

To investigate whether the CHA product is an intermediate for CCA,[9] Rh(ttp)(*c*-octyl) **1** was heated in benzene-d_6 in both neutral and basic conditions separately. Without K_2CO_3, Rh(ttp)(*c*-octyl) **1** gave Rh(ttp)(*n*-octyl) **2**, Rh(ttp)H **3**, and *c*-octene **4** in 10%, 76%, and 36% yields, respectively after 21 h (eq 2, Figure S1, Table S1). In the presence of K_2CO_3 (10 equiv), Rh(ttp)(*n*-octyl) **2** was isolated in a higher yield of 21% in 16 h (eq 3, Figure S2, Table S2). However, both reactions were low yielding and incomplete. Therefore, the CHA product is not a major intermediate leading to the CCA product.

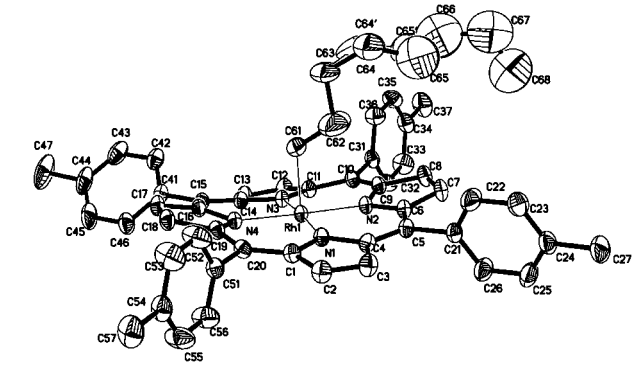


Figure 1. ORTEP presentation of Rh(ttp)(*n*-octyl) **2** (30% probability displacement ellipsoids). Rh−C = 2.03 Å, R = 0.0522.

Rh(ttp)(*c*-octyl) $\xrightarrow[120\ ^\circ\text{C, 21 h}]{\text{benzene-}d_6}$ Rh(ttp)(*n*-octyl) + Rh(ttp)H + *c*-octene (2)

1 11% recovered; **2** 10%; **3** 76%; **4** 36%

Rh(ttp)(*c*-octyl) $\xrightarrow[120\ ^\circ\text{C, 16 h}]{\text{benzene-}d_6,\ K_2CO_3\text{ (10 equiv)}}$ Rh(ttp)(*n*-octyl) + Rh(ttp)H + *c*-octene (3)

1 30% recovered; **2** 21%; **3** 40%; **4** 42%

To enhance the CCA reaction of Rh(ttp)Cl with *c*-octane based on mechanistic understandings, the reaction was monitored by ^{1}H NMR spectroscopy in a sealed NMR tube (eq 4, Figure S3, Table S3). Initially, Rh(ttp)Cl was first converted to $Rh_2(ttp)_2$ **5**.[5] **5** then slowly and completely reacted with the gradual formation of Rh(ttp)H **3**. Finally, Rh(ttp)(*n*-octyl) was generated in prolonged heating and still, Rh(ttp)H was consumed slowly and mostly remained unreacted. Therefore, both $Rh_2(ttp)_2$ and Rh(ttp)H are possible intermediates. The observed ^{1}H NMR upfield signals at δ = −5 to 1 ppm (Figure S4) were assigned to Rh(ttp)-incorporated *c*-octene oligomers (about 15% NMR yield), which indicate the occurrence of Rh^{II}(ttp)-initiated oligomerization of *c*-octene.[10]

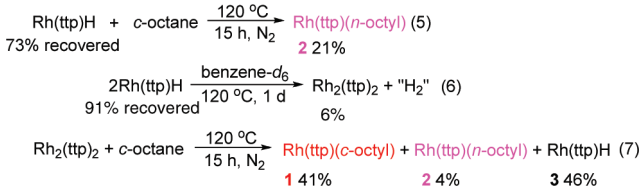
Rh(ttp)Cl + *c*-octane (20 equiv) $\xrightarrow[120\ ^\circ\text{C, 62 h}]{\text{benzene-}d_6,\ K_2CO_3\text{ (10 equiv)}}$ Rh(ttp)(*n*-octyl) + Rh(ttp)H + *c*-octene (4)

2 29%; **3** 54%; **4** 50%

To investigate the intermediacy of Rh(ttp)H and $Rh_2(ttp)_2$, Rh(ttp)H **3** and $Rh_2(ttp)_2$ **5** were then separately reacted with *c*-octane. Rh(ttp)H **3** indeed reacted with *c*-octane at 120 °C in

10.1021/ja101586w

15 h to give Rh(ttp)(*n*-octyl) **2** selectively, though in only 21% yield, and was also recovered in 73% yield (eq 5). As Rh(ttp)H underwent slow dehydrogenative dimerization to give 6% yield of $Rh_2(ttp)_2$ at 120 °C in 1 day, similar to the report by Wayland and co-workers (eq 6),[11] the small amount of $Rh_2(ttp)_2$ formed in eq 5 likely facilitates the 1,2-addition of Rh(ttp)H into *c*-octane.[12] The other possible intermediate $Rh_2(ttp)_2$ **5** was also reacted with *c*-octane. Rh(ttp)(*c*-octyl) **1**, Rh(ttp)(*n*-octyl) **2**, and Rh(ttp)H **3** were formed in 41%, 4%, and 46% yields, respectively (eq 7) with a very low yield of CCA product. Therefore, both Rh(ttp)H **3** and $Rh_2(ttp)_2$ **5** gave low yielding reactions and are likely only minor reaction intermediates by themselves.



Based on the mechanism of the Rh^{II}-catalyzed insertion of Rh(oep)H (oep = octylethylporphyrin dianion) into styrene reported by Halpern et al.,[12] we proposed that the CCA, being a 1,2-addition reaction, is catalyzed by Rh^{II} (Scheme 2). $Rh_2(ttp)_2$ **5** formed from thermolysis of Rh(ttp)H initially undergoes homolysis to give Rh^{II}(ttp) (eqs 8 and 9).[11] Rh^{II}(ttp) then reacts with *c*-octane in parallel CHA (pathway iii, eq 10) and CCA (pathway iv, eq 11). Rh^{II}(por) (por = porphyrinato dianion) has been shown to undergo CHA with alkane to give Rh(por)R and Rh(por)H.[5,13] For the CCA pathway, Rh^{II}(ttp) can cleave the C−C bond of *c*-octane to generate the alkyl radical **6** (pathway iv, eq 11) which can also reverse back rapidly.[14] **6** can then abstract a hydrogen atom from the weak (ttp)Rh−H bond[15a] to form a strong alkyl C−H bond,[15b] providing the driving force of the reaction (pathway v). The proposed mechanism can be validated qualitatively by increasing the ratio of Rh(ttp)H/$Rh_2(ttp)_2$ for more efficient trapping of **6** to **2** (Table 1, eq 12).

Indeed, mixtures of Rh(ttp)H and $Rh_2(ttp)_2$ were more efficient reagents and enhanced the total yields up to 79% (Table 1, entries

Scheme 2. Proposed Mechanism of Rh^{II}-Catalyzed 1,2-Addition of *c*-Octane with RhH

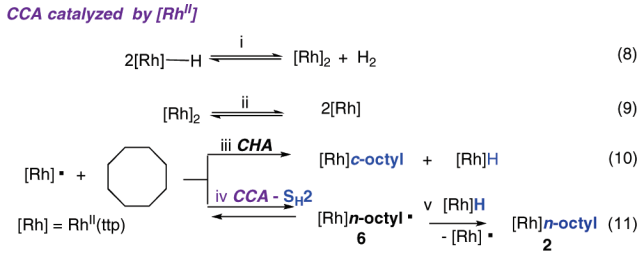
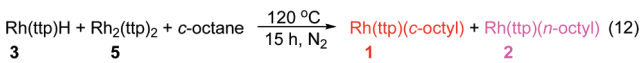


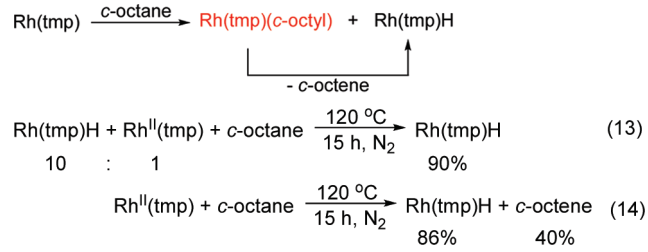
Table 1. Rh^{II}(ttp)-Catalyzed CCA of *c*-Octane wih Rh(ttp)H



Entry[a]	3:5	Yield **1** (%)	Yield **2** (%)	Total yield (%)
1[b]	1:0	0	21	21
2	2:1	60	18	78
3	5:1	53	26	79
4	10:1	0	73	73

[a] The results are the average of at least duplicate. [b] 73% Rh(ttp)H recovered.

Scheme 3. Formation of Rh(tmp)H from CHA of Rh^{II}(tmp) and *c*-Octane



2−4 vs 1). The selectivity toward CCA was further enhanced by an increase of the Rh(ttp)H:$Rh_2(ttp)_2$ ratio. The CCA of *c*-octane with the mixture of Rh(ttp)H/$Rh_2(ttp)_2$ in a 2:1 ratio gave Rh(ttp)(*c*-octyl) and Rh(ttp)(*n*-octyl) in 60% and 18% yields, respectively (Table 1, entry 2). When the Rh(ttp)H/$Rh_2(ttp)_2$ ratio increased to 5:1, the yield of Rh(ttp)(*n*-octyl) increased to 26% yield but that of Rh(ttp)(*c*-octyl) decreased to 53% yield (entry 3). Rh(ttp)(*n*-octyl) was selectively obtained in 73% yield from the reaction with the 10:1 ratio of Rh(ttp)H/$Rh_2(ttp)_2$ (entry 4). The aliphatic CCA of *c*-octane was thus achieved successfully with the Rh^{II}-catalyzed 1,2-addition of Rh(ttp)H.

The sterically more hindered Rh(tmp) was not effective for CCA (tmp = 5,10,15,20-tetramesitylporphyrinato dianion). When the mixture of Rh(tmp)H and Rh^{II}(tmp) (10:1) was reacted with *c*-octane at 120 °C for 15 h, no reaction occurred and 90% yield of Rh(tmp)H was recovered (eq 13). Rh^{II}(tmp) only underwent CHA with *c*-octane to give Rh(tmp)H and *c*-octene in 86% and 40% yields, respectively (eq 14). The formation of *c*-octene likely results from the CHA product Rh(tmp)(*c*-octyl) which rapidly undergoes facile β-hydride elimination to give *c*-octene and Rh(tmp)H (Scheme 3). Indeed, the attempted synthesis of Rh(tmp)(*c*-octyl) by reductive alkylation ($NaBH_4$/*c*-octyl bromide) gave Rh(tmp)H and *c*-octene in 89% and 77% yields, respectively.

In conclusion, we have discovered the mild, selective Rh^{II}-catalyzed 1,2-addition of Rh(ttp)H to *c*-octane via an aliphatic CCA. Further studies are ongoing.

Acknowledgment. We thank the Research Grants Council of the HKSAR, the People's Republic of China (CUHK 400307) for financial support. We thank reviewers for helpful suggestions and Mr. Kwong Shing Choi for helpful discussions and assistance.

Supporting Information Available: Detailed experimental section, ^1H and ^{13}C NMR data of **1** and **2**, reaction time profiles of eqs 2−4, and details of crystallographic studies of **2** (including CIF file). This material is available free of charge via the Internet at http://pubs.acs.org.

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(7) Rh(ttp)Cl reacted with alkane in basic medium to give $Rh_2(ttp)_2$ and Rh(ttp)H as intermediates. See ref 5.

(8) **1** and **2** were fully characterized. The chemical shifts of ^{13}C NMR of Rh—C of **1** and **2** were $\delta = 40.62$ (d, $^{1}J_{Rh-C} = 26.4$ Hz) and 15.69 (d, $^{1}J_{Rh-C} = 26.8$ Hz), respectively.
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(15) (a) The estimated bond dissociation energy (BDE) of (ttp)Rh—H is ~60 kcal mol^{-1}. See ref 14b. (b) The BDE of *n*-octyl—H is ~100 kcal mol^{-1}; see: Luo, Y. R. *Handbook of Bond Dissociation Energies in Organic Compounds*; CRC Press: Boca Raton, FL, 2003.

JA101586W