

Synthesis of Axially Chiral Olefin–Oxazoline Ligands via Pd-Catalyzed Multiple C–H Functionalization

Ling-Jun Li, Jun-Jie Chen, Chen-Fei Feng, Han-Yuan Li, Xing Wang, Hui Xu, and Hui-Xiong Dai*



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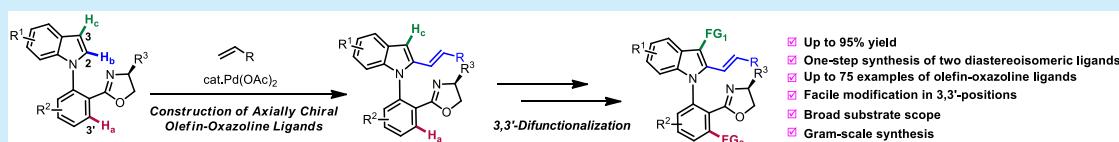
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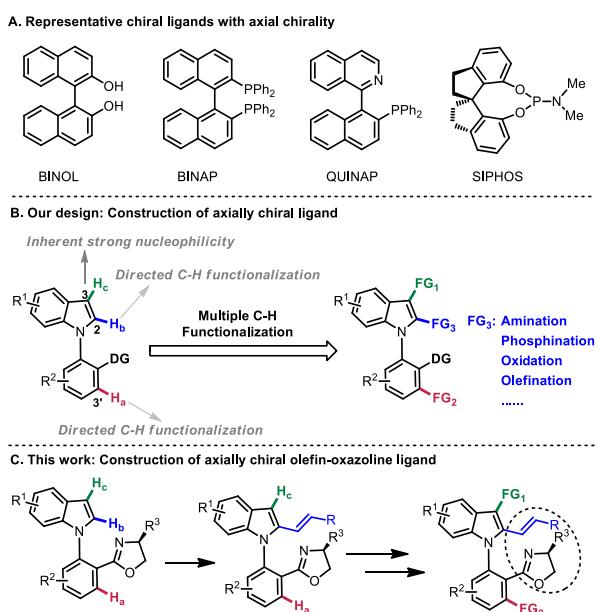
Supporting Information



ABSTRACT: We report herein the Pd-catalyzed oxazoline-directed C–H olefination of the N-aryllindole skeleton, affording two diastereomers of axially chiral olefin–oxazoline ligands in a one-step procedure. Modifications at the 3- and 3'-positions were facilely achieved via electrophilic substitution of the indole fragment and subsequent oxazoline-directed C–H amidation or olefination of the arene fragment.

Chiral ligands possessing axial chirality have been widely employed in transition-metal-catalyzed enantioselective synthesis (Scheme 1A).¹ Many types of axially chiral ligands

Scheme 1. 3,3'-Modification of the Axially Chiral Ligand



have been developed in the past decades. For example, the P,P-ligand BINAP, discovered by Noyori, is a powerful ligand in Ru-catalyzed asymmetric hydrogenation.² The P,N-ligand QUINAP shows broad catalytic utility in Rh-catalyzed asymmetric hydroboration of alkenes and asymmetric cycloaddition.³ The monodentate spiro phosphorus ligand SIPHOS, developed by Zhou, has proved to be highly efficient in

asymmetric hydrogenation and C–C bond formation.⁴ Despite the significant achievements, there has been ongoing interest in ligand modification to improve the catalytic efficiency and enantioselectivity in some asymmetric syntheses. Modifications at the *ortho* positions of the coordinating group are highly appealing because of the significant influence of the electron density and steric hindrance. Zhou demonstrated that 6,6'-diaryl substitution of SIPHOS resulted in remarkable improvement in the Ni-catalyzed asymmetric reductive coupling of 1,3-dienes with benzaldehyde.⁵ Very recently, Shi investigated a series of BINOLs and found that 3,3'-disubstituted BINOLs can significantly enhance the reactivity and enantioselectivity in Pd(II)-catalyzed methylene C–H alkynylation.⁶ However, ligand modifications often require excess organolithium reagents, prefunctionalization of the ligand, and multistep synthesis.¹ Direct C–H functionalization at the 3- and 3'-positions to diversify the axially chiral ligands is the most efficient and straightforward way. However, only a few examples have been reported in the literature.⁷ To develop a practical methodology for ligand modifications, we turned our attention to N-aryllindole, which is an important structure motif in organic chemistry.⁸ We envisioned that direct C2–H amination, phosphination, oxidation, or olefination assisted by a coordination group could be used to construct axially chiral bidentate ligands. The 3- and 3'-positions of the ligand could be facilely modified via electrophilic substitution at the 3-position of the indole fragment and directed C–H

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functionalization at the 3'-position of the arene fragment (**Scheme 1B**).

In recent years, chiral olefin ligands have emerged as powerful ligands in asymmetric catalysis.⁹ In 2003, Hayashi and co-workers reported Rh-catalyzed asymmetric conjugate additions employing bicyclo[2.2.1]heptadiene as the ligand.¹⁰ Since then, chiral diene ligands,¹¹ chiral phosphine–olefin ligands,¹² and chiral sulfur–olefin ligands have been developed.¹³ By combining olefins with oxazolines, in 2010 Glorius and co-workers reported the bidentate olefin–oxazoline (OlefOx) ligands, which were successfully applied in asymmetric 1,4-conjugate addition.¹⁴ Inspired by the successful applications of axially chiral ligands and the bidentate olefin–oxazoline skeleton in asymmetric catalysis, we report herein the synthesis of axially chiral olefin–oxazoline ligands via Pd-catalyzed oxazoline-directed C–H olefination (**Scheme 1C**). The 3- and 3'-positions of the ligands were conveniently modified by electrophilic C–H bromination and oxazoline-directed C–H amidation and olefination.

Over the past decades, several practical strategies have been developed for the synthesis of axially chiral biaryls via transition-metal-catalyzed asymmetric C–H bond functionalization.¹⁵ Considering the wide application of the oxazoline moiety in asymmetric synthesis,¹⁶ we commenced our studies by choosing indole–phenyloxazoline skeleton **1a** as the model substrate for the synthesis of axially chiral olefin–oxazoline ligand **3a**. The optimization of the reaction conditions is shown in **Table 1**. To our delight, in the presence of 10 mol %

palladium salts were also effective, including PdCl_2 , $\text{Pd}(\text{acac})_2$, $\text{Pd}(\text{dppf})\text{Cl}_2$, and $\text{Pd}_2(\text{dba})_3$, albeit in lower yields (entries 3–6). When AgTFA , Ag_2SO_4 , Ag_2CO_3 , and AgBF_4 were employed as the oxidants, 27–53% yields of olefin–oxazoline ligand **3a** were obtained (entries 7–10). Further investigation of solvents, including DCE, DMF, and THF, showed that CH_3CN was the optimal solvent (entries 11–13). Although the *d.r.* value was improved to 4.2:1, the total yield significantly decreased to 54% when we lowered the reaction temperature to 60 °C (entry 14). Furthermore, when the reaction was carried out under a N_2 atmosphere, the desired product was formed in only 34% yield (entry 15). The reason for the low diastereoselectivity may be that the stereogenic center is too far away or the lower rotational barriers of axially chiral scaffolds containing five-membered rings cause racemization of products (see the Supporting information).

With the optimal reaction conditions in hand, we turned our attention to examine the substrate scope of indole–phenyloxazoline derivatives **1** and various acrylates **2** (**Scheme 2**). To our delight, regardless of their electronic properties, methyl-, methoxy-, fluoro-, chloro-, bromo-, and trifluoromethyl-substituted indole–phenyloxazoline derivatives **1** were well-tolerated in the reaction (**Scheme 2A**). The corresponding olefin–oxazoline ligands were obtained in moderate to good

Table 1. Optimization of the Reaction Conditions^a

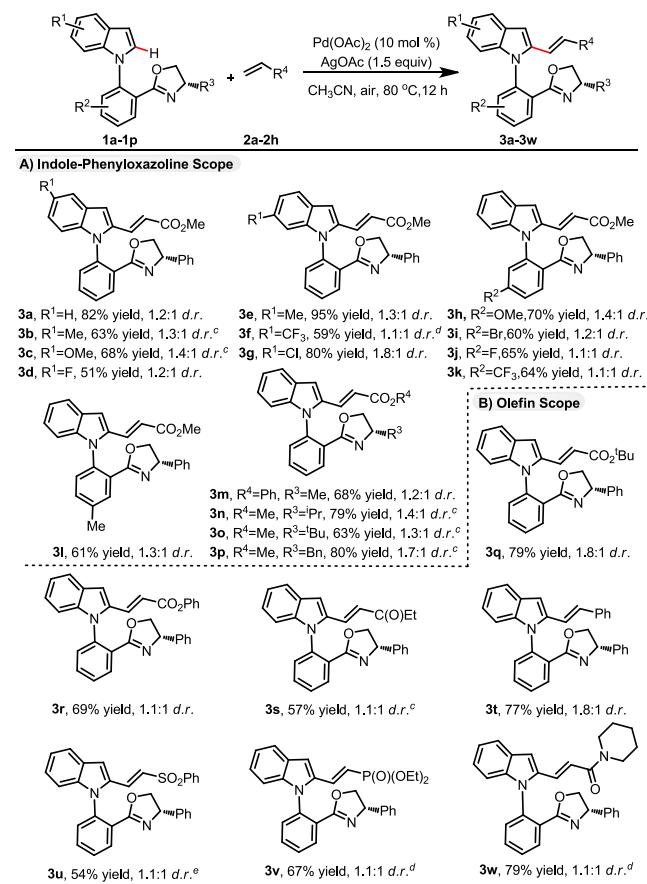
entry	variation from the standard conditions	yield (%) ^b	<i>d.r.</i> ^c
1	none	82	1.2:1
2	no Pd	—	—
3	PdCl_2	52	1.3:1
4	$\text{Pd}(\text{acac})_2$	30	1.6:1
5	$\text{Pd}(\text{dppf})\text{Cl}_2$	46	1.2:1
6	$\text{Pd}_2(\text{dba})_3$	16	1.3:1
7	AgTFA	46	1.3:1
8	Ag_2SO_4	27	1.2:1
9	Ag_2CO_3	53	1.2:1
10	AgBF_4	34	1.1:1
11	DCE instead of CH_3CN	40	1.1:1
12	DMF instead of CH_3CN	43	1.4:1
13	THF instead of CH_3CN	68	1.5:1
14	at 60 °C	54	4.2:1
15	N_2 atmosphere	34	1.2:1

^aReaction conditions: **1a** (0.1 mmol), **2a** (0.15 mmol), $\text{Pd}(\text{OAc})_2$ (10 mol %), AgOAc (0.15 mmol), CH_3CN (1.0 mL), air, 80 °C, 12 h.

^bDetermined by ¹H NMR analysis of the crude products using CH_2Br_2 as an internal standard. ^cDetermined by ¹H NMR analysis.

$\text{Pd}(\text{OAc})_2$ and 1.5 equiv of AgOAc in CH_3CN , C–H bond olefination occurred smoothly, affording two diastereomeric ligands **3a** with (*S,R*) and (*S,S*) configurations in 82% yield with 1.2:1 *d.r.* (entry 1). As expected, no desired product was obtained in the absence of $\text{Pd}(\text{OAc})_2$ (entry 2), indicating that the palladium catalyst was essential in the reaction. Other

Scheme 2. Substrate Scope of Indole–Phenyloxazoline Derivatives^{a,b}



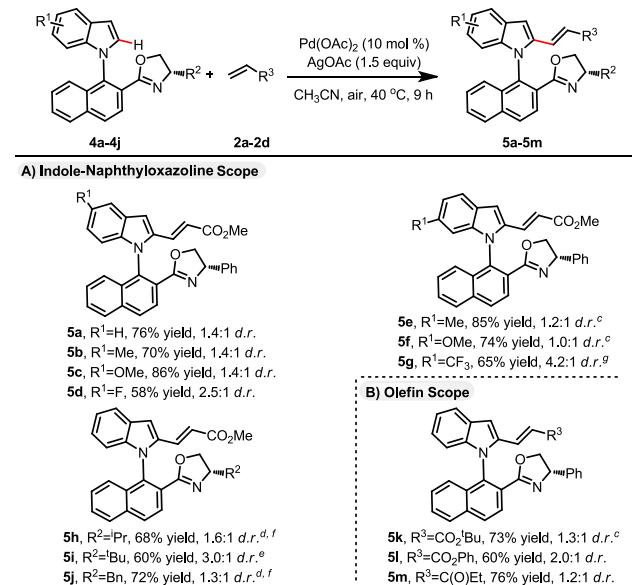
^aReaction conditions: **1** (0.1 mmol), **2** (0.15 mmol), $\text{Pd}(\text{OAc})_2$ (10 mol %), AgOAc (0.15 mmol), CH_3CN (1.0 mL), air, 80 °C, 12 h.

^bTotal yields of two diastereomers are shown. ^c9 h. ^d24 h. ^e100 °C, 36 h.

yields (**3a–l**). The *d.r.* values of diastereomeric ligands ranged from 1.1:1 to 1.8:1. Different chiral oxazoline moieties were compatible with the standard conditions, affording the diastereomeric ligands **3m–p** in 63–80% yield. Next, the scope of olefins was briefly surveyed (Scheme 2B). Olefin coupling partners, including α,β -unsaturated esters, amide, ketone, sulfone, phosphonate, and styrene, afforded olefin–oxazoline ligands **3q–w** in 54–79% yield with *d.r.* values ranging from 1.1:1 to 1.8:1.

Next, we began to examine the scope of indole–naphthyloxazoline derivatives (Scheme 3). As shown in

Scheme 3. Substrate Scope of Indole–Naphthyloxazoline Derivatives^{a,b}



^aReaction conditions: 4 (0.1 mmol), 2 (0.15 mmol), Pd(OAc)₂ (10 mol %), AgOAc (0.15 mmol), CH₃CN (2.0 mL), air, 40 °C, 9 h.

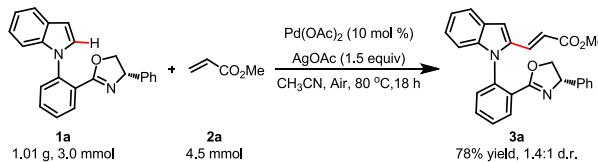
^bTotal yields of two diastereomers are shown. ^c12 h. ^d60 °C. ^e5 h. ^f7 h. ^g130 °C, 24 h.

Scheme 3A, indole–naphthyloxazolines **4** bearing methyl, methoxy, fluoro, and trifluoromethyl substituents were compatible with the standard conditions, giving the corresponding products **5a–g** in moderate to good yields. Substrates **4h–j** with chiral oxazolines bearing *i*-Pr, *t*-Bu, and Bn groups, respectively, were also investigated and substrate **4i** with a *t*-Bu group on the oxazoline gave the highest *d.r.* in the coupling reaction with methyl acrylate. When *tert*-butyl acrylate, phenyl acrylate, and ethyl vinyl ketone were employed as coupling reagents, the desired products **5k–m** were obtained in 60–76% yield (Scheme 3B).

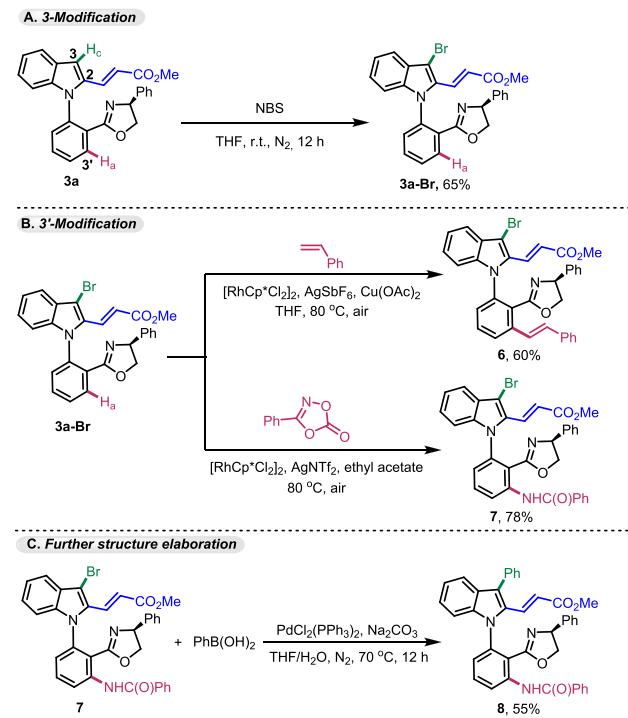
To demonstrate the utility of this protocol, a gram-scale synthesis using substrate **1a** and methyl acrylate **2a** was carried out under the standard conditions, affording the corresponding product **3a** in 78% yield (Scheme 4).

The 3- and 3'-positions of axially chiral olefin–oxazoline ligand **3a** could be conveniently modified via electrophilic bromination at the 3-position and subsequent Rh-catalyzed olefination or amidation at the 3'-position to give compounds **6** and **7** in 60% and 78% yield, respectively (Scheme 5A,B). The brominated products are versatile stepping stones for further structure elaboration at the 3-position. For example,

Scheme 4. Gram-Scale Synthesis



Scheme 5. 3,3'-Modification of Olefin–Oxazoline Ligand **3a**



compound **7** could be further transformed to **8** via Pd-catalyzed Suzuki coupling (Scheme 5C).

In summary, we have reported herein the synthesis of axially chiral olefin–oxazoline ligands via palladium-catalyzed C–H olefination. Two diastereomeric ligands were obtained in a one-step procedure. Our protocol showed broad substrate scope and good functional group tolerance. The 3- and 3'-positions of the axially chiral olefin–oxazoline ligands could be facilely modified via electrophilic bromination at the 3-position of the indole fragment and Rh-catalyzed amidation or olefination at the 3'-position of the arene fragment. Further applications of these ligands in asymmetric synthesis are currently ongoing in our laboratory.

ASSOCIATED CONTENT

Supporting Information

The Supporting Information is available free of charge at <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acs.orglett.0c03093>.

Experimental procedures, characterizations of new compounds, and NMR spectra (PDF)

AUTHOR INFORMATION

Corresponding Author

Hui-Xiong Dai – Chinese Academy of Sciences Key Laboratory of Receptor Research, Shanghai Institute of Materia Medica, University of Chinese Academy of Sciences, Shanghai 201203, China; University of Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing

100049, China;  orcid.org/0000-0002-2937-6146;
Email: hxdai@simm.ac.cn

Authors

Ling-Jun Li – Chinese Academy of Sciences Key Laboratory of Receptor Research, Shanghai Institute of Materia Medica, University of Chinese Academy of Sciences, Shanghai 201203, China; University of Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing 100049, China

Jun-Jie Chen – Chinese Academy of Sciences Key Laboratory of Receptor Research, Shanghai Institute of Materia Medica, University of Chinese Academy of Sciences, Shanghai 201203, China

Chen-Fei Feng – Chinese Academy of Sciences Key Laboratory of Receptor Research, Shanghai Institute of Materia Medica, University of Chinese Academy of Sciences, Shanghai 201203, China

Han-Yuan Li – Chinese Academy of Sciences Key Laboratory of Receptor Research, Shanghai Institute of Materia Medica, University of Chinese Academy of Sciences, Shanghai 201203, China

Xing Wang – Chinese Academy of Sciences Key Laboratory of Receptor Research, Shanghai Institute of Materia Medica, University of Chinese Academy of Sciences, Shanghai 201203, China; University of Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing 100049, China

Hui Xu – Chinese Academy of Sciences Key Laboratory of Receptor Research, Shanghai Institute of Materia Medica, University of Chinese Academy of Sciences, Shanghai 201203, China

Complete contact information is available at:

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Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

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