

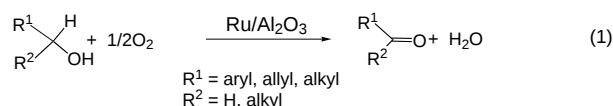
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Supported Ruthenium Catalyst for the Heterogeneous Oxidation of Alcohols with Molecular Oxygen**

Kazuya Yamaguchi and Noritaka Mizuno*

Although catalytic oxidation of alcohols to carbonyl compounds has attracted much attention both in industrial processes and in organic syntheses,^[1–3] alcohols are traditionally oxidized by non-catalytic methods with stoichiometric oxidants such as dichromate and permanganate.^[1–3] These methods produce enormous amounts of metal salts as wastes. Much effort has been made to develop homogeneous catalytic systems to solve these problems.^[4–6] However, most systems

are applicable only for the oxidation of activated benzylic and allylic alcohols, or large quantities of additives such as NaOAc, NaOH, and K₂CO₃ are needed.^[7–10] There is little known about the oxidation of alcohols with molecular oxygen, which could be applied to a wide range of alcohols. If these oxidation reactions could be performed by using solid-supported catalysts (heterogeneous catalysis), they would be considerably cheaper and environmentally more friendly because of the ease with which the catalysts could be separated from products and recycled.^[11–14] Examples of solid-supported catalysts that have been tested include tetrapropylammonium perruthenate (TPAP)/MCM-41,^[15] Ru/CeO₂,^[16] Ru-hydrotalcite,^[17] Ru-hydroxyapatite,^[18] [RuCl₂(*p*-cymene)]₂/activated carbon,^[19] Pd-hydrotalcite,^[20] and Pd or Pt on activated carbon.^[21] However, heterogeneous oxidation reactions are limited to activated alcohols and/or have turn over numbers (TONs) which are very low (less than 20).^[15–21] If oxidation reactions could be carried out without solvents, then the system would facilitate the separation of catalyst from products. Despite the advantage of using solid catalysts without solvents or additives for oxidation of both activated and non-activated alcohols, nothing has been reported on the use of highly active solvent-free heterogeneous catalysts with only molecular oxygen. Herein we report an effective aerobic heterogeneous oxidation reaction of both activated and non-activated alcohols, which may have a sulfur atom, a nitrogen atom, or a carbon-carbon double bond, by using molecular oxygen or air catalyzed by Ru supported on alumina (Ru/Al₂O₃) and demonstrate the use of solvent-free oxidation reactions [Eq. (1)]. The results we present offer a strategy for the design of heterogeneous alcohol-oxidation catalysts for use in conjunction with molecular oxygen.

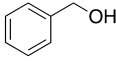
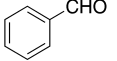
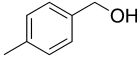
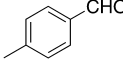
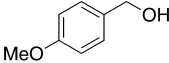
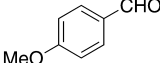
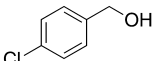
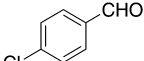
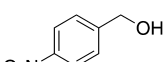
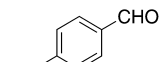
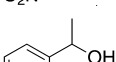
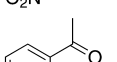
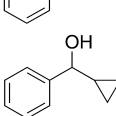
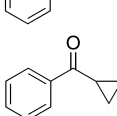
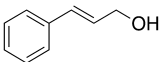
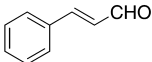
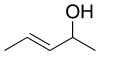
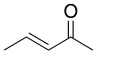
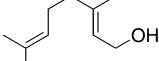
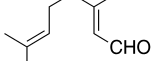
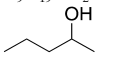
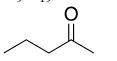
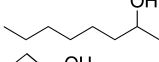
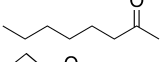
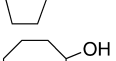
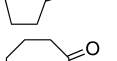
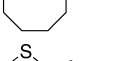
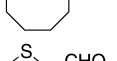
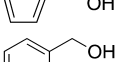
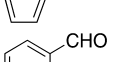
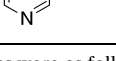
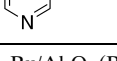


The Ru/Al₂O₃ system had high catalytic activities for the oxidation of activated and non-activated alcohols with only 1 atm of O₂ as shown in Table 1. Reaction selectivity was over 97% in all cases and all primary and secondary benzylic alcohols were converted quantitatively into the corresponding benzaldehydes and ketones, respectively. Primary and secondary allylic alcohols afforded the corresponding enals or enones without intramolecular hydrogen transfer or geometrical isomerization of the double bonds. Additionally, the catalytic system efficiently oxidized non-activated alcohols to the corresponding carbonyl compounds: for the oxidation of 2-octanol, 2-octanone was produced in a 91% yield (entry 14). Similarly, alicyclic alcohols such as cyclopentanol and cyclooctanol were selectively oxidized to the corresponding cyclic ketones (entries 15 and 16). Less reactive aliphatic primary alcohols, 1-octanol and 1-decanol, were also oxidized. However, increasing the reaction time did not improve the yields of the aldehydes because of successive oxidation to the corresponding carboxylic acids. The addition of a small amount of hydroquinone (1 equiv based on Ru) completely

[*] Prof. Dr. N. Mizuno, Dr. K. Yamaguchi
Department of Applied Chemistry,
School of Engineering
The University of Tokyo
7-3-1 Hongo, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 113-8656 (Japan)
Fax: (+81)3-5841-7220
E-mail: tmizuno@mail.ecc.u-tokyo.ac.jp

[**] This work was supported in part by a Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology of Japan.

Table 1. Results of oxidations of various alcohols catalyzed by Ru/Al₂O₃ with molecular oxygen.^[a]

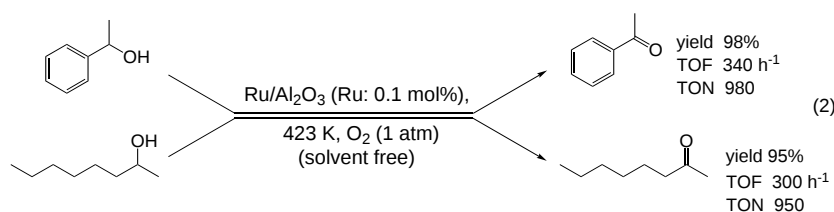
Entry	Substrate	Product	<i>t</i> [h]	Conv. [%]	Selectivity [%]
1			1	> 99	> 99
2			1	> 99	> 99
3			1	> 99	> 99
4			1	> 99	> 99
5			3	97	> 99
6			1	> 99	> 99
7			1	> 99	> 99
8			1.5	> 99	98
9 ^[b]			6	84	> 99
10			6	89	97
11 ^[b,c]	C ₇ H ₁₅ CH ₂ OH	C ₇ H ₁₅ CHO	4	87	98
12 ^[b,c]	C ₉ H ₁₉ CH ₂ OH	C ₉ H ₁₉ CHO	4	71	99
13			5	90	> 99
14			2	91	> 99
15 ^[b]			8	92	> 99
16 ^[b]			6	81	> 99
17			1.5	> 99	> 99
18 ^[b]			2	93	> 99

[a] Reaction conditions were as follows: alcohol (1 mmol), Ru/Al₂O₃ (Ru: 2.5 mol %), PhCF₃ (1.5 mL), 356 K, under 1 atm of O₂; conversion and selectivity were determined by gas chromatography with an internal standard. [b] Ru/Al₂O₃ (Ru: 5 mol %). [c] Hydroquinone (1 equiv based on Ru) was added.

suppressed the over-oxidation, which afforded only aliphatic aldehydes in fairly good yields. Ru/Al₂O₃ catalyzed the oxidation of alcohols also containing nitrogen or sulfur atoms to the corresponding aldehydes in high yields (entries 17 and 18), while monomeric Ru complexes cannot affect catalytic oxidation of these alcohols because of the strong coordination to the metal center.^[10]

Among various Ru catalysts tested, Ru/Al₂O₃ showed the highest catalytic activity for the oxidation of benzyl alcohol at 356 K. Ru(OH)₃·*n*H₂O gave benzaldehyde in a 29% yield (TON = 12) after 20 h and other Ru compounds of RuCl₃·*n*-H₂O, [RuCl₂(PPh₃)₃]₂, [RuCl₂(*p*-cymene)], and RuO₂ showed no catalytic activity.

The heterogeneous oxidation of alcohols without solvents would be more feasible for industrialized processes. The Ru/Al₂O₃ catalyst system efficiently facilitated the oxidation of non-activated 2-octanol and activated 1-phenylethanol without the use of solvents. The solvent-free oxidation of 2-octanol, and 1-phenylethanol at 423 K had turn over frequencies (TOFs) of 300 h⁻¹ and 340 h⁻¹, and TONs of 950 and 980, respectively [Eq. (2)]. These TOFs and TONs are higher than those reported for the aerobic oxidation of 2-octanol by other Ru catalysts: ([RuCl₂(PPh₃)₃]/TEMPO (TON and TOF, 466 and 104 h⁻¹),^[10] Ru/quinone/Co-salen (194, 97 h⁻¹),^[8] TPAP (20, 6 h⁻¹),^[15] Ru/CeO₂ (30, 5 h⁻¹),^[16] Ru-Co-hydroxalcite (9, 5 h⁻¹),^[17] and Ru-hydroxyapatite (6, 1 h⁻¹)^[18]. Furthermore,



air can be used instead of molecular oxygen in the present system without changes in conversion and selectivity values.

It was confirmed by induced coupled plasma techniques (ICP) that the Ru content of the used Ru/Al₂O₃ catalyst was the same as that of the fresh catalyst and that no Ru was in the filtrate. In addition, the oxidation of benzyl alcohol was completely stopped by the removal of Ru/Al₂O₃ from the reaction solution. These results indicate that any Ru species that leached into the reaction solution is not an active homogeneous catalyst and that the observed catalysis is truly heterogeneous in nature.^[22] The Ru/Al₂O₃ catalyst system is reusable (Figure 1). When the oxidation of benzyl alcohol was repeated seven times with the same sample of catalyst, benzaldehyde was quantitatively produced at the same rate as that of the first run.

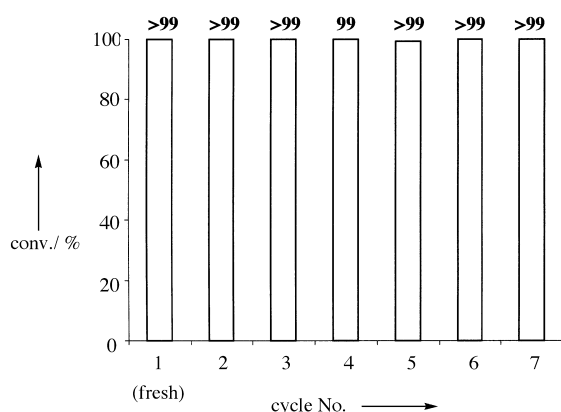


Figure 1. Recycling of Ru/Al₂O₃ catalyst for the oxidation of benzyl alcohol. Reaction conditions were as follows: benzyl alcohol (1 mmol), Ru/Al₂O₃ (Ru: 2.5 mol %), PhCF₃ (1.5 mL), 356 K, under 1 atm of O₂, 1 h.

The conversion and selectivity were not changed by the addition of a free-radical trap, for example, 2,6-di-*tert*-butyl-4-methylphenol, and hydroquinone. The skeletal isomerization of a cyclopropyl ring used as a radical clock did not proceed at all. This evidence shows that a radical is not involved in the oxidation reaction. Primary alcohols were selectively oxidized even in the presence of secondary ones, an equimolar mixture of benzyl alcohol and 1-phenylethanol gave a mixture of benzaldehyde and acetophenone in 90% and 24% yields, respectively. Similarly, competitive oxidations of 1-octanol and 4-octanol showed 84 and 8% conversions, respectively. These faster oxidations of primary alcohols show that Ru-alcoholate **II** (see scheme 1) is formed as an intermediate, since the formation of metal-alcoholate species is well known for such selective oxidation of primary hydroxy groups.^[23,24] Competitive oxidations of *para*-substituted benzyl alcohols

gave a Hammett ρ value of -0.461 ($r^2 = 0.99$; Figure 2), which suggests that hydride abstraction from **II** to form the carbocation-type intermediate is involved in the oxidation path.

The number of moles of water produced was equivalent to that of acetone produced for the oxidation of 2-propanol (19.6 mmol, at 343 K) by using Ru/Al₂O₃ and molecular oxygen. This 1:1 stoichiometry suggests that the simple dehydrogenation does not proceed. Under anaerobic conditions, the number of moles of acetone produced was approximately the same as those of Ru loaded on Al₂O₃,

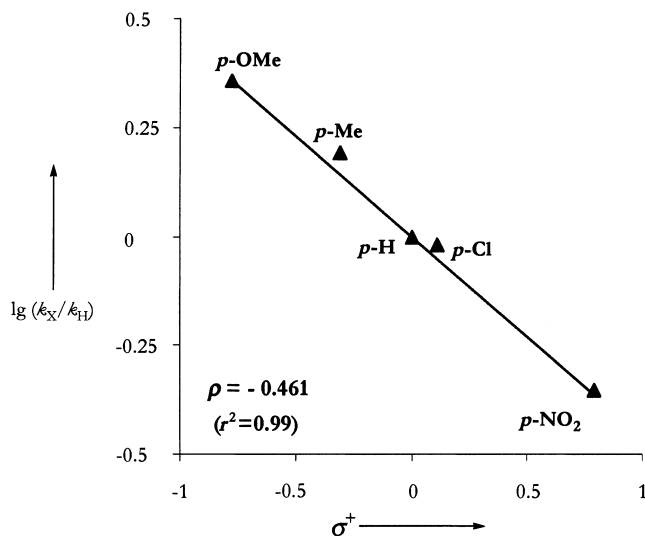
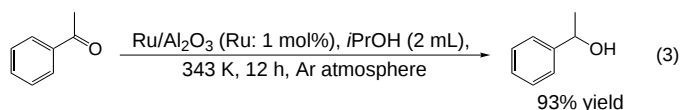
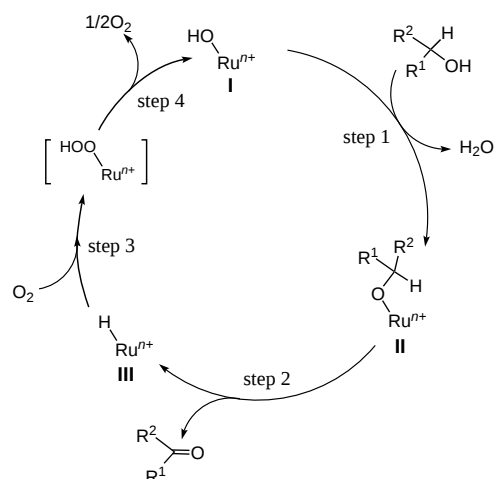


Figure 2. Hammett plots for the aerobic oxidation of *p*-substituted benzyl alcohols by using Ru/Al₂O₃ catalyst. Reaction conditions were as follows: alcohol (1 mmol), Ru/Al₂O₃ (1 mol %), PhCF₃ (1.5 mL), 333 K, under 1 atm O₂.

and water produced. When acetophenone (1M) was treated in 2-propanol under Ar, almost equimolar amounts of acetone and 1-phenylethanol were produced, which shows that transfer hydrogenation takes place [Eq. (3)].^[25] These facts suggest that a Ru-H species **III** is formed. On the basis of all the results, Scheme 1 is proposed: Ru-alcoholate species **II** is formed by ligand exchange between Ru-hydroxide **I** then, an alcohol undergoes typical β elimination to afford the corresponding carbonyl compound and **III**. The hydride species is then reoxidized by molecular oxygen.^[26]



The rate did not change with a decrease in oxygen partial pressure (P_{O_2}) from 1.0 to 0.2 atm (air). Kinetic data could well be expressed by the Michaelis-Menten type equation.^[27] The kinetic isotope effects (k_H/k_D) were 5.0 and 2.4 for the intramolecular competitive oxidation of α -deuterio-*p*-methylbenzyl alcohol and for the intermolecular competitive



Scheme 1.

oxidation of benzyl alcohol and benzyl [D₇]alcohol (C₆D₅CD₂OH) at 333 K, respectively. The apparent activation energies for steps 1 (alcoholate formation) and 2 (β elimination) were 40.0 and 54.9 kJ mol⁻¹, respectively. On the basis of these facts, step 2 is rate-determining.

In summary, Ru/Al₂O₃ can act as an efficient heterogeneous catalyst for the oxidation of alcohols with 1 atm of molecular oxygen or air, without additives. The high activity of, and ease with which, the catalyst can be recovered and reused raise the prospect of using this type of simple supported catalyst for organic syntheses and the industrial oxidation of alcohols. The catalyst would be considerably cheaper than organometallic and inorganic compounds.

Experimental Section

The Ru/Al₂O₃ catalyst was prepared by the modification of a literature preparation of Ru(OH)₃·*n*H₂O.^[28] γ-Al₂O₃ (2.0 g, JRC-ALO-4, BET surface area: 174 m² g⁻¹) was vigorously stirred with an aqueous solution of RuCl₃ (60 mL, 8.3 × 10⁻³ M) for 15 min at room temperature. The initially brown aqueous phase became lighter, and the alumina powder turned dark gray. The solid was separated by filtration and washed with a large amount of water, then dried in vacuo. This solid was added to deionized water (30 mL), the pH of the solution was adjusted to 13.2 by the addition of an aqueous solution of NaOH (1.0 M) and the resulting slurry was stirred for 24 h. During this period, the powder changed from dark gray to dark green. The solid was separated by filtration and copiously washed with water, then dried in vacuo to afford 2.1 g of Ru/Al₂O₃ as a dark green powder. The contents of ruthenium and chloride was 1.4 and 0 wt %, respectively, and the BET surface area was 182 m² g⁻¹. The ESR spectrum had a signal at *g* = 2.11, which is assigned to Ru³⁺ with low-spin d⁵ electron configuration.^[29] The XRD pattern was the same as that of the γ-Al₂O₃ support and no signals arising from ruthenium metal or dioxide were observed. Particles of ruthenium metal or dioxide were not detected by TEM. The IR spectrum showed a very broad ν(OH) band in the range of 2900–3700 cm⁻¹. These facts suggest that ruthenium(III) hydroxide is highly dispersed on γ-Al₂O₃. Thus, the Ru/Al₂O₃ catalyst can be easily prepared in a quantitative yield and the content of Ru can be controlled.

Oxidations of alcohols were typically carried out as follows. A suspension of Ru/Al₂O₃ (0.11 g, Ru: 2.5 mol %) in trifluorotoluene (1.5 mL) was stirred for 5 min. Benzyl alcohol (0.108 g, 1 mmol) was added to the reaction mixture and the suspension was purged with molecular oxygen. The resulting mixture was heated at 356 K for 1 h, and benzaldehyde was produced in > 99% yield determined by GC. After the reaction, the catalyst was separated by filtration (or centrifugation) and was further washed with acetone. The filtrate was evaporated in vacuo, and the crude product was purified by column chromatography on silica gel, which gave

0.101 g of pure benzaldehyde (95% yield). The separated Ru/Al₂O₃ was washed with an aqueous solution of NaOH (1.0 M) and water (30 mL), and dried in vacuo before recycling.

Received: July 16, 2002 [Z19744]

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- [27] The catalytic rate (R) of the oxidation of benzyl alcohol was expressed by $R = k_2[C]/(1 + k_2/(k_1[A]))$, where $[C]$ and $[A]$ are the amount of $\text{Ru}/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$ and the concentration of benzyl alcohol, respectively, and k_1 and k_2 are the rate constants for step 1 and step 2, respectively, and at 356 K these were $38 \text{ h}^{-1} \text{ g}^{-1}$ and $42 \text{ M h}^{-1} \text{ g}^{-1}$, respectively.
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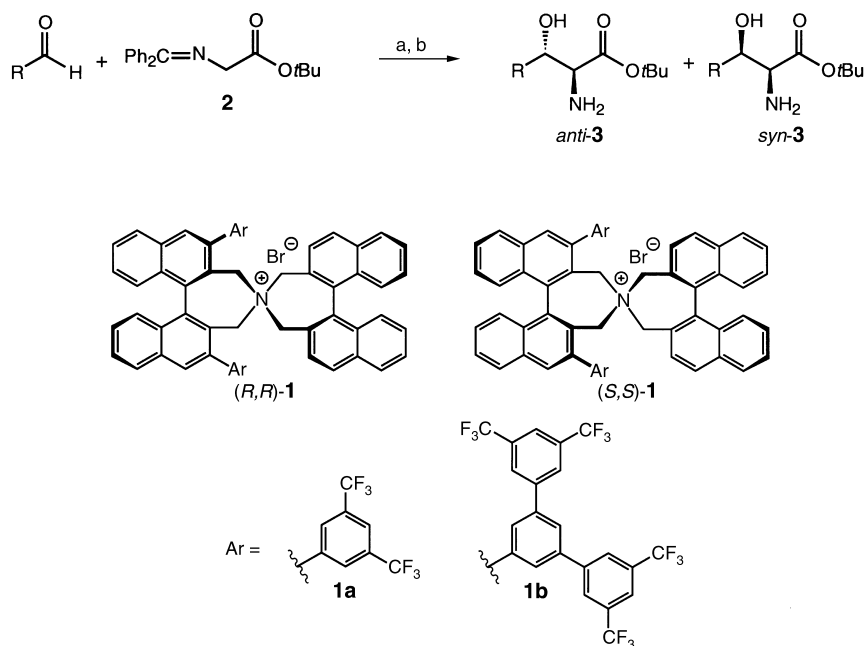
Direct Asymmetric Aldol Reactions of Glycine Schiff Base with Aldehydes Catalyzed by Chiral Quaternary Ammonium Salts**

Takashi Ooi, Mika Taniguchi,
Minoru Kameda, and Keiji Maruoka*

As naturally occurring α -amino acids as well as components of many complex biologically active cyclic peptides and enzyme inhibitors, optically active β -hydroxy- α -amino acids are extremely important chiral units, especially from the pharmaceutical viewpoint.^[1] Furthermore, they are useful chiral building blocks in organic synthesis^[2] as exemplified by their transformation into β -lactams,^[3] β -halo- α -amino acids,^[4] and aziridines.^[5] Accordingly, numerous methods for the asymmetric synthesis of β -hydroxy- α -amino acids have been elaborated, most of which unfortunately involve multistep procedures and/or the inevitable use of a stoichiometric amount of chiral auxiliaries.^[6–8] In this regard, the construction of their primary structure with the correct stereochemistry by the direct catalytic asymmetric aldol reaction of a glycine donor with aldehyde acceptors has been considered to be an ideal protocol.^[9] However, there have been few successful examples to date,^[10,11] except for the chemoenzymatic process with glycine-dependent aldolases.^[9b,12] We report herein an efficient and direct asymmetric aldol reaction of glycine Schiff base **2**^[13] with aldehydes under organic/aqueous biphasic conditions by using enantiomeri-

cally pure, C_2 -symmetric chiral quaternary ammonium salt **1**^[14] as a phase-transfer catalyst (Scheme 1). This approach provides a practical and environmentally benign chemical process for the synthesis of optically active β -hydroxy- α -amino acids.

Initially, we examined the direct asymmetric aldol reaction of prochiral glycine Schiff base **2** and 3-phenylpropanal as a representative acceptor under phase-transfer conditions. Thorough optimization of the catalyst structure and reaction conditions revealed that treatment of **2** with 3-phenylpropanal (2 equiv) in toluene/aqueous NaOH (1%) (v/v 1.25:1; 2 equiv of base for **2**) in the presence of chiral quaternary ammonium



Scheme 1. Direct catalytic asymmetric aldol reaction of glycine Schiff base **2** with aldehydes in the presence of **1** under phase-transfer conditions. a) (R,R) -**1** (2 mol %), toluene/aqueous NaOH (1%), 0°C, 2 h; b) HCl (1N)/THF.

ally salt (R,R) -**1a** (2 mol %)^[14d] at 0°C for 2 h and subsequent hydrolysis with HCl (1N) in THF resulted in the formation of the corresponding β -hydroxy- α -amino ester **3** ($R = \text{PhCH}_2\text{CH}_2$) in 76% yield with the *anti/syn* ratio of 3.3:1. The enantiomeric excess of the major *anti* isomer was determined to be 91% by chiral HPLC analysis (Table 1, entry 1). Significantly, use of (R,R) -**1b** (which contains a 3,5-bis(3,5-bis(trifluoromethyl)phenyl)phenyl substituent) as a catalyst enhanced both diastereo- and enantioselectivities in this system (*anti/syn* 12:1; 96% *ee* for *anti* isomer) (Table 1, entry 2).^[15]

A variety of aldehydes were examined for this direct asymmetric aldol reaction with (R,R) -**1** and the results are listed in Table 1. Generally, the reaction proceeded smoothly at 0°C for 2 h to afford the *anti* isomer predominantly, with excellent enantioselectivity. Heptanal, an aliphatic aldehyde with a long hydrocarbon chain, was found to be a good candidate (Table 1, entry 3), thus indicating the feasibility of direct asymmetric synthesis of a variety of lipo β -hydroxy- α -amino acids, a useful component for the preparation of lipophilic peptides and glycopeptides with characteristic high

[*] Prof. K. Maruoka, Dr. T. Ooi, M. Taniguchi, M. Kameda
Department of Chemistry
Graduate School of Science, Kyoto University
Sakyo, Kyoto, 606-8502 (Japan)
Fax: (+81)75-753-4041
E-mail: maruoka@kuchem.kyoto-u.ac.jp

[**] This work was partially supported by a Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology, Japan. M.K. is grateful to the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science for Young Scientists for a Research Fellowship.

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