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Design, synthesis and application of a new type of bifunctional Le-Phos in highly enantioselective γ -addition reactions of N-centered nucleophiles to allenates†

Haile Qiu,‡^a Xiaofeng Chen,‡^a and Junliang Zhang,†^{a,b}

A novel class of cyclic phosphine derived bifunctional catalysts (**Le-Phos**) is reported, which can be readily prepared from inexpensive and commercially available starting materials and exhibit good performances in enantioselective γ -addition reactions of N-centered nucleophiles and allenates under mild conditions. The salient features of this reaction include high product yields, good enantioselectivity, mild reaction conditions, and broad substrate scope and gram-scale scalability.

Introduction

Over the past few years, asymmetric phosphine-catalyzed reactions have emerged as powerful and versatile tools for the construction of C–C and C–X bonds,¹ which relies very much on the evolution of various new chiral phosphine catalysts.² There are mainly two types of chiral phosphine catalysts developed: highly nucleophilic monofunctional phosphine catalysts such as cyclic phosphines **P1–P5** (Fig. 1, Type 1) and diphenylphosphine-derived bifunctional catalysts bearing a hydrogen donor such as **P6–P9** (Fig. 1, Type 2). Both displayed good catalytic activities and were effective in enantiomeric control in asymmetric phosphine catalysis.^{1a,g,3} Recently, we developed several novel diphenylphosphine-derived bifunctional phosphines from commercially available chiral sulfonamide.⁴ To further advance a new catalyst design, we aimed to combine the advantages of the aforementioned two types of phosphine catalysts, thus developing a novel bifunctional cyclic phosphine catalyst. We report herein the design and synthesis of **Le-Phos**, and its application in highly enantioselective phosphine catalyzed γ -addition of N-centered nucleophiles to allenates.

Results and discussion

Fortunately, we found that **Le-Phos** could be easily prepared from commercially available inexpensive *tert*-butylsulfonamide,

^aShanghai Key Laboratory of Green Chemistry and Chemical Processes, School of Chemistry and Molecular Engineering, East China Normal University, 3663 N. Zhongshan Road, Shanghai, P. R. China (200062). E-mail: jlzhang@chem.ecnu.edu.cn

^bDepartment of Chemistry, Fudan University, 2005 Songhu Road, Shanghai, P. R. China (200438). E-mail: junliangzhang@fudan.edu.cn

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‡ These authors contributed equally to this study.

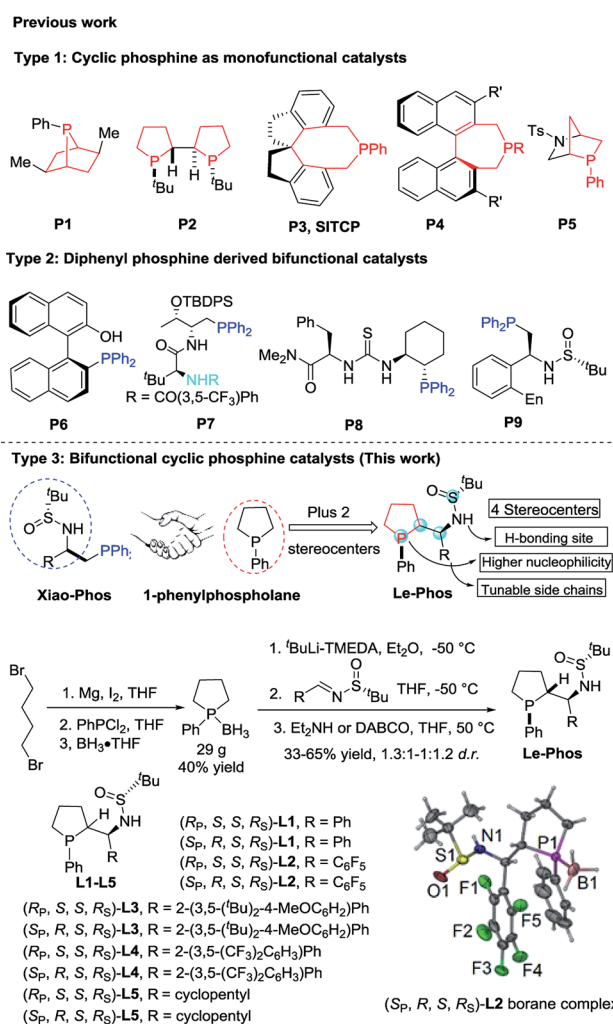


Fig. 1 Different types of chiral phosphine catalysts.



aldehyde and 1-phenylphospholane borane complexes in simple steps. Treatment of 1-phenylphospholane borane complexes⁵ with ^tBuLi in the presence of TMEDA at $-50\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ for 4 h gave the lithium intermediate, which added to chiral (R_S)-sulfinimines, furnishing a pair of major diastereomers of **Le-Phos L1–L5** in 33–65% total yields after removal of borane.⁶ To our delight, these two major diastereoisomers could be separated by flash column chromatography on silica gel. The absolute configurations of (R_P,S,S,R_S)-**L2** and (S_P,R,S,R_S)-**L2** were established by single crystal X-ray diffraction analysis.⁷

Asymmetric phosphine-catalyzed γ -addition reactions of various nucleophiles to allenates have attracted much attention in the past few years.^{8–10} In 1998, Zhang and co-workers reported the catalyzed asymmetric γ -addition of 1,3-dicarbonyl compounds to terminal allenates using bicyclic phosphine **P2** for the first time.⁹ Furthermore, Fu, Jacobsen, Lu and our groups have successfully expanded the scope of nucleophiles such as alcohols, thiols, carbon, amides and ketimines by the employment of different types of phosphine catalysts.¹⁰ The asymmetric γ -addition^{8–11} of N-centered nucleophiles with pK_a values between 8 and 10 (in H_2O) to γ -substituted allenates has been only partially realized by the group of Jacobsen, in which **P8** was used as the catalyst.^{10m} Very recently, Guo and coworkers successfully extended N-centered nucleophiles to pyrazoles and imidazoles with the use of (*S*)-SITCP and (*S*)-BINOL as cocatalysts.¹³ However, there still lacks a robust catalyst system for the asymmetric γ -addition of various N-centered nucleophiles to allenates. For example, (*S*)-SITCP, **P8** and our developed Xiao-Phos **P9** could not yield satisfactory results for the asymmetric γ -addition of 2-oxazolidone **1a** to allenate **2a** (Table 1, entries 1–3). Interestingly, (S_P,R,S,R_S)-**L1–L4** showed much higher catalytic activity and much better enantioselectivity than their diastereoisomers (R_P,S,S,R_S)-**L1–L4** (Table 1, entries 4–11). To our delight, 54% yield of **3aa** with 97% ee and $E/Z > 20 : 1$ could be achieved with the use of (S_P,R,S,R_S)-**L4** (Table 1, entry 11). Due to the competitive isomerization and partial kinetic resolution,^{10f} increasing allenate **2a** to two equivalents could improve the 68% yield (Table 1, entry 13). Changing the solvent from toluene to PhCF_3 , DCM and DCE led to around 90% yield with 96–97% ees (Table 1, entries 14–17).

Having identified the optimal reaction conditions, the substrate scope was then examined and it proved to be quite general (Scheme 1). Linear alkyl (**3ab–3ad**), branched alkyl (**3ae**), and various alkyl groups bearing functional groups such as phenyl (**3af**), esters (**3ag** and **3ak**), terminal alkenes and alkynyl (**3ah–3ai**), and halogen (**3aj**) were well tolerated and provided high levels of yields and enantioselectivities (94–98% ees). Cyclic alkyl groups such as cyclopentyl (**3al**), cyclohexyl (**3am**), and NPhth groups (**3an**) could also be well compatible, delivering the corresponding adducts in high yields with 95–96% ees. It seems that the ester moiety did not affect the reaction much, furnishing **3ao–3aq** in high yields with 93–97% ees and $E/Z > 20 : 1$.

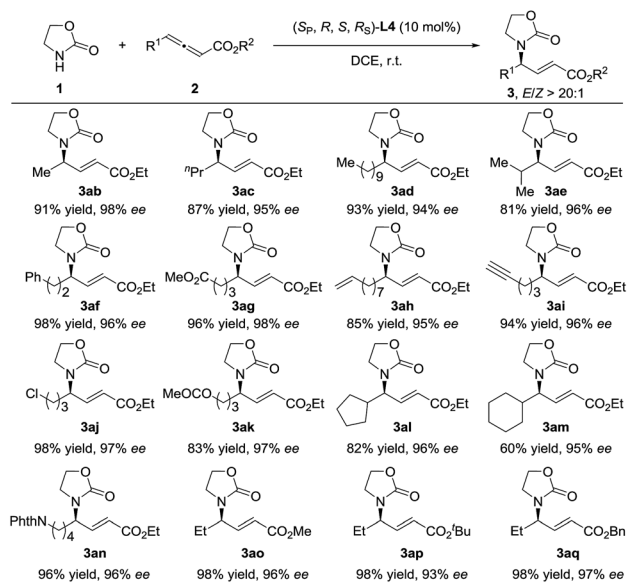
The reactions of chiral 2-oxazolidones also proceeded well, delivering **3ca–3ea** in satisfactory yields with high *des* and $E/Z > 20 : 1$ (Scheme 2). The addition of racemic 2-oxazolidone **1f** did

Table 1 Screening reaction conditions^a

Entry	Catalyst	Solvent	E/Z^b	Yield ^b (%)	ee ^c (%)
1	(<i>S</i>)-SITCP	Toluene	5 : 1	39	87
2	P8	Toluene	4 : 1	11	72
3	P9	Toluene	2 : 1	21	57
4	(R_P,S,S,R_S)- L1	Toluene	3 : 1	7	19
5	(R_P,S,S,R_S)- L2	Toluene	—	NR	—
6	(R_P,S,S,R_S)- L3	Toluene	2 : 1	5	46
7	(R_P,S,S,R_S)- L4	Toluene	2 : 1	9	11
8	(S_P,R,S,R_S)- L1	Toluene	>20 : 1	40	86
9	(S_P,R,S,R_S)- L2	Toluene	>20 : 1	10	69
10	(S_P,R,S,R_S)- L3	Toluene	>20 : 1	46	97
11	(S_P,R,S,R_S)- L4	Toluene	>20 : 1	54	97
12 ^d	(S_P,R,S,R_S)- L4	Toluene	>20 : 1	60	97
13 ^e	(S_P,R,S,R_S)- L4	Toluene	>20 : 1	68	97
14 ^e	(S_P,R,S,R_S)- L4	Et_2O	>20 : 1	60	97
15 ^e	(S_P,R,S,R_S)- L4	PhCF_3	>20 : 1	90	97
16 ^e	(S_P,R,S,R_S)- L4	DCM	>20 : 1	89	96
17 ^e	(S_P,R,S,R_S)- L4	DCE	>20 : 1	90	97

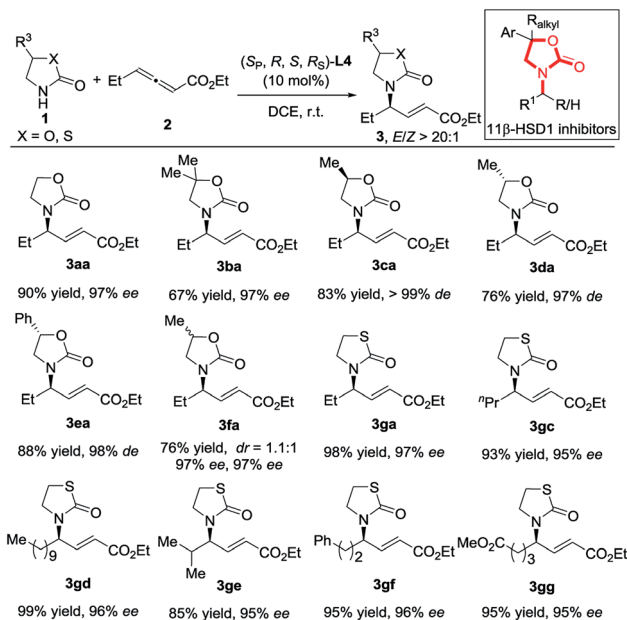
^a Reaction conditions: **1a** (0.10 mmol), **2a** (0.12 mmol), and the catalyst (0.01 mmol) in toluene (1.5 mL) at room temperature. ^b NMR yield with the use of CH_2Br_2 as the internal standard. ^c Determined by HPLC analysis on a chiral stationary phase. ^d Performed with **2a** (0.15 mmol). ^e Performed with **2a** (0.20 mmol). DCM = dichloromethane, DCE = 1,2-dichloroethane.

not show good diastereoselectivity but still delivered high enantioselectivity. Then, the reactions of thiazolidin-2-one ($pK_a \sim 12.8$) with various allenates also proceeded smoothly, furnishing products **3ga** and **3gc–3gg** in 85–99% yields with 95–



Scheme 1 Investigation of the scope by variation of the allenate component.

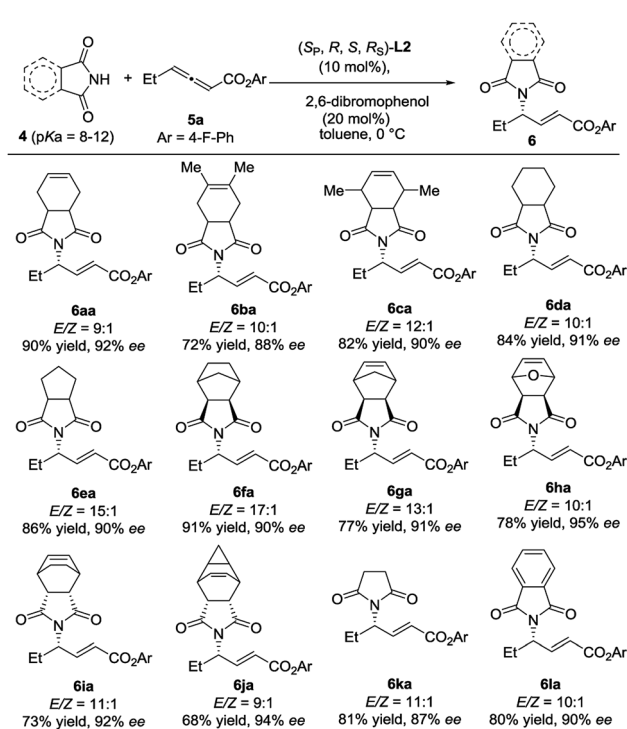




Scheme 2 Investigation of the scope by variation of 2-oxazolidone.

96% ees. It should be pointed out that these products share the same skeleton with patented 11 β -HSD1 inhibitors (11 β -hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase type 1 inhibitors).¹²

The scope of N-centered nucleophiles was then extended to much weak nucleophilic pyrrolidine-2,5-diones (Scheme 3). In this case, (*S*,*P*,*R*,*S*,*R*_S)-L2 was found to be the most efficient catalyst, indicating that the reaction is quite sensitive to the

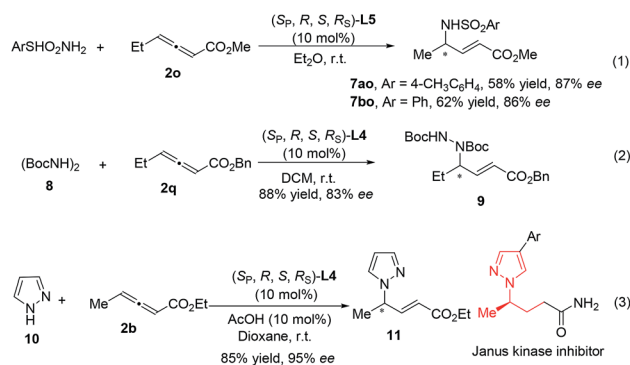


Scheme 3 Investigation of the scope of pyrrolidine-2,5-diones.

structure of N-centered nucleophiles, which further supports that the development of new catalysts with structural diversity is quite important. The reactions of various substituted pyrrolidine-2,5-diones with 5a delivered the desired γ -addition adducts in 68–91% yields with 87–94% ees. The absolute configuration of 6ba was established by single crystal X-ray diffraction analysis.⁷ It is interesting to find that the absolute configuration of 6ba is different from that of compound 3; despite this, the catalysts have the same absolute configuration.

We next examined the reaction scope with respect to the allenolate component (Scheme 4). A variety of γ -substituted allenolates (*R*¹) were applicable to this asymmetric γ -addition. In general, both linear and branched cycloalkyl groups at the γ -position were well tolerated. For example, allenolates 5b–5g with various acyclic and cyclic alkyl groups at the γ -position could be well compatible, and the desired adducts were obtained in high yields with up to 93% ee. Satisfactorily, various functional groups such as halogens (5h and 5i), ester (5j), phenyl (5k), and terminal and internal alkenes (5l–5n) were well tolerated and the desired adducts were obtained in moderate to good yields with up to 92% ee and >20 : 1 *E/Z* selectivity.

Additionally, the additions of TsNH₂ (*pK*_a ~ 10.2), PhSO₂NH₂ (*pK*_a ~ 10.1), (BocNH)₂ (*pK*_a ~ 8.7) and pyrazole (*pK*_a ~ 2.5)¹³ also proceeded smoothly under the catalysis of **Le-Phos** with different *R* groups (eqn (1)–(3)).



We were pleased to find that the desired product 3ga could be obtained in 96% yield, 94% ee and *E/Z* > 20 : 1 with only 2.5 mol% catalyst loading on a 10 mmol scale (Scheme 5). The synthetic utilities of the representative product 3ga were then showcased. The hydrolysis of the ester moiety was realized with NaOH/H₂O₂¹⁴ to give acid 12 in 73% yield without loss of enantioselectivity. The corresponding amide 13⁷ could be further delivered in 94% yield with 95% ee. The copper-catalyzed conjugate borylation of 3ga proceeded smoothly at room temperature, furnishing the desired product 14 in 94% yield with 98% ee and 5 : 1 d.r.¹⁵ Reduction of the double bond furnished the product 15 in 98% yield with 95% ee. Moreover, we could obtain an amino alcohol derivative 16 through reductive ring-opening of 15, which afforded the diester 17 after further esterification. Furthermore, with the use of *m*CPBA,¹⁶ the C–C double bond of 6aa would undergo epoxidation to deliver the corresponding product 18 in good yield without loss of the enantioselectivity. The amidation reaction of 6aa with BnNH₂/AcOH¹⁷ proceeded smoothly at room temperature,



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