

HETEROCYCLES, Vol. 100, No. 1, 2020, pp. 12 - 23. © 2020 The Japan Institute of Heterocyclic Chemistry  
Received, 30th June, 2019, Accepted, 2nd September, 2019, Published online, 24th September, 2019  
DOI: 10.3987/COM-19-14124

## ALTERNATIVE CHIRAL PREPARATIONS OF A SWAMINATHAN KETONE VIA ASYMMETRIC ALDOL REACTIONS MEDIATED BY CHIRAL AMINES BEARING A PYRROLIDINE

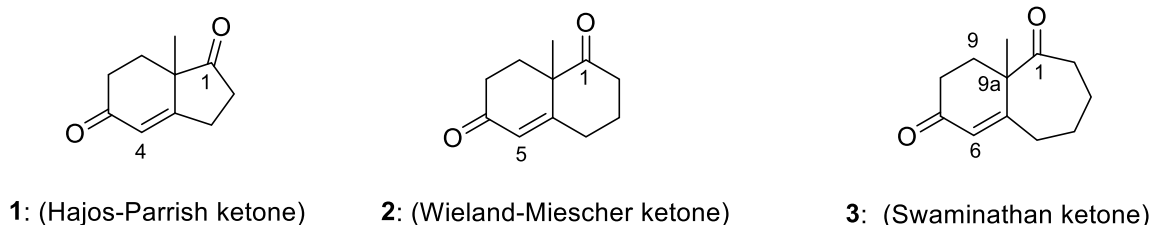
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*This paper is dedicated to the anniversary of achieving Volume 100 of HETEROCYCLES.*

**Abstract** – We established a novel chiral route to provide a Swaminathan ketone (**3**) bearing a 7-membered ring *via* intramolecular aldol reaction of trione (**7**) mediated by chiral pyrroldinylmethylamine derivatives. Despite the moderate enantioselectivity of **3**, we succeeded in increasing optical purities by using a lipase-mediated asymmetric esterification of an alcohol (**16**) at a later synthetic stage. The absolute configuration was determined by Mosher's ester method, and relations between absolute configurations and optical rotations of **3** were clarified.

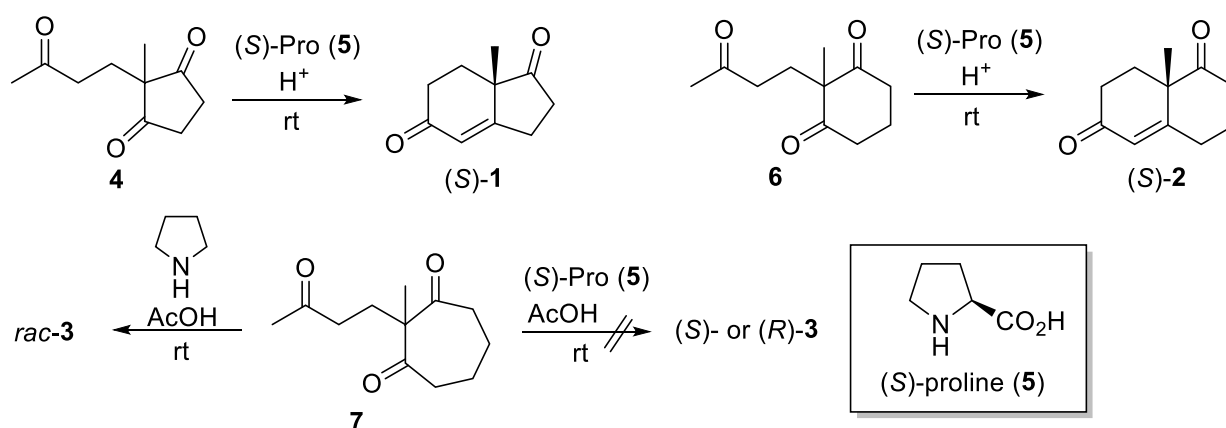
Hajos-Parrish (**1**) and Wieland-Miescher (**2**) ketones, which include carbobicyclic enediones, are highly useful synthons in the total synthesis of many natural products and pharmaceutically important compounds (Figure 1).<sup>1-5</sup>



**Figure 1**

These useful enediones can be easily prepared by proline-mediated asymmetric intramolecular aldol reactions.<sup>6</sup> This asymmetric aldol reaction was first reported by Hajos *et al.* and is widely recognized to involve an enamine-based mechanism.<sup>7-9</sup> However, few reports regarding the preparation of **3** bearing a

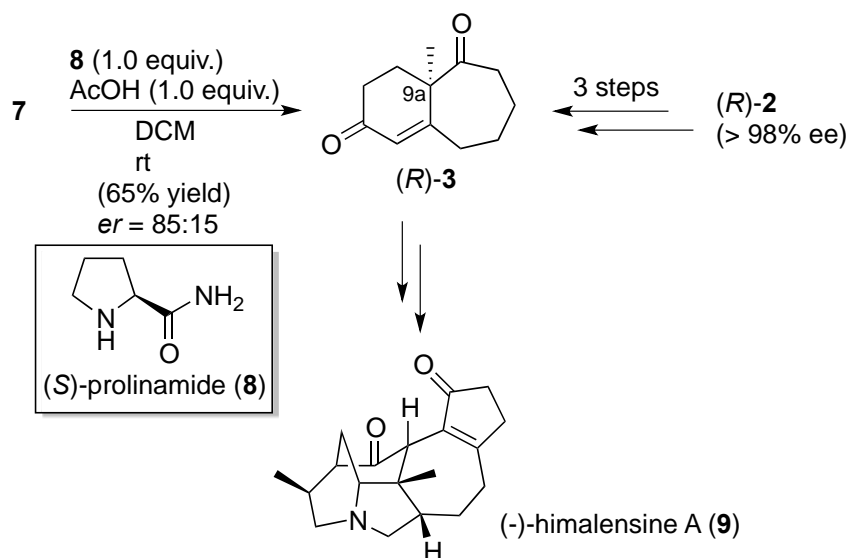
7-membered ring have been published.<sup>10-12</sup> Since many pharmaceutically important natural products containing 7-membered carbocycles have been published,<sup>13</sup> enedione (**3**) is an attractive potential chiral synthon to be used to achieve total synthesis of these important products. The pioneering studies for obtaining **3** were reported by Swaminathan *et al.*,<sup>10</sup> synthesizing **3** as a racemic material *via* a pyrrolidine-mediated aldol reaction of trione (**7**) in the presence of acetic acid (AcOH). The authors also reported that similar reactions mediated by (*S*)-proline (**5**) did not yield the expected optically active **3** (Scheme 1).<sup>10b</sup>



**Scheme 1**

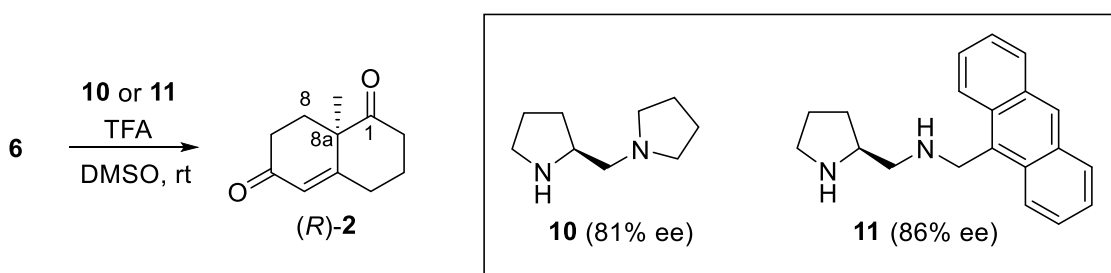
Uwai *et al.* first reported the lipase-mediated aldol reactions of **7** to afford (*S*)-(+)-**3** with a low enantioselectivity (8% ee) and retention times for both enantiomers of **3** on an HPLC instrument equipped with a chiral stationary phase column (Chiralcel OB). However, the authors did not provide any evidence for the determination of an absolute configuration of **3**.<sup>12a</sup> Although Pericàs *et al.* reported catalytic asymmetric aldol reactions of **7** mediated by a polymer-supported chiral amine, affording (*R*)-**3** with 53% ee, they did not discuss the details of its absolute configuration and optical rotation.<sup>12b</sup> Recently, Xu *et al.* reported the practical chiral preparation of (*R*)-**3** (70% ee) using aldol reactions of **7** mediated by (*S*)-prolinamide (**8**), elegantly achieving the total synthesis of (–)-himalensine A (**9**) starting from (*R*)-**3**.<sup>12c</sup> The authors determined an absolute configuration from single crystal X-ray analysis of (*R*)-**3** which was alternatively derived from commercially available (*R*)-**2** (> 98% ee). In their total synthesis, a chiral center at C-9a in (*R*)-**3** was directly reflected to natural (–)-himalensine A (**9**). This study indicated that the absolute configuration of (*R*)-**3** can be unambiguously identified (Scheme 2). However, both optical rotations and retention times of (*R*)- and (*S*)-**3** on the HPLC instrument equipped with a chiral stationary phase column have not been reported. Therefore, a method to determine the absolute configuration of **3** remains to be developed. Additionally, according to Xu's method, (*R*)-prolinamide (*ent*-**8**), which is derived from unnatural (*R*)-proline (*ent*-**5**), is necessary to form (*S*)-**3**. From these

reasons, novel and alternative chiral routes for **3** to clarify the relations among absolute configurations, optical rotations, and behaviors using HPLC of (*R*)- and (*S*)-**3** are required.



Scheme 2

We previously reported the asymmetric intramolecular aldol reaction of **6** mediated by chiral diamines (**10**) or (**11**) in the presence of trifluoroacetic acid (TFA).<sup>1</sup> These reactions afforded (*R*)-**2** in high yield and enantioselectivity (Scheme 3). According to this method, we attempted to use these chiral amines in the aldol reactions of **7**. Herein, we report the details of these reactions, chiral properties of (*R*)- and (*S*)-**3** including optical rotations and HPLC behaviors, and methods to increase optical purities through lipase-mediated asymmetric esterifications for **3** derived compounds.

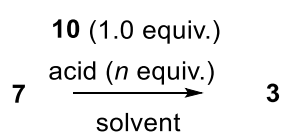


Scheme 3

First, we studied the aldol reactions of **7** mediated by a stoichiometric amount of **10**<sup>14,15</sup> in the presence of a Brønsted acid, and the results are summarized in Table 1. According to Xu's method,<sup>12c</sup> the reactions were performed in dichloromethane (DCM) at room temperature in the presence of AcOH or TFA. The reactions proceeded very slowly to afford **3** in low yields and low enantioselectivities (entries 1-4). Under

these conditions, the reactions did not proceed to completion. The reactions were then performed according to our previously developed method. A similar reaction in dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO) at room temperature slightly improved the yield of **3** accompanied with a high enantioselectivity (entry 5). However, the reaction did not proceed to completion even after 93 h. The same reaction as entry 5 at 50 °C completed after a short time and greatly improved the yield of (*S*)-**3** with an acceptable enantioselectivity (entry 6). Details of the procedure used to determine the absolute configuration of **3** are described later (*vide infra*). The reaction conditions described in entry 6 were used for further studies.

**Table 1.** The aldol reaction of **7** mediated by **10**



| Entry <sup>a</sup> | Solvent | Acid (equiv.) | Temperature | Time (h) | Yield <sup>b,c</sup> (%) | Ee <sup>d</sup> (%) | Absolute configuration of <b>3</b> |
|--------------------|---------|---------------|-------------|----------|--------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1                  | DCM     | TFA (1.0)     | rt          | 44       | trace                    | ND <sup>e</sup>     | ND <sup>e</sup>                    |
| 2                  | DCM     | AcOH (1.0)    | rt          | 44       | 15                       | 14                  | <i>R</i>                           |
| 3                  | DCM     | TFA (0.5)     | rt          | 90       | 9 (19)                   | 2.9                 | <i>R</i>                           |
| 4                  | DCM     | AcOH (0.5)    | rt          | 90       | 18 (31)                  | 6.5                 | <i>S</i>                           |
| 5                  | DMSO    | TFA (1.5)     | rt          | 93       | 47 (63)                  | 64                  | <i>S</i>                           |
| 6                  | DMSO    | TFA (1.5)     | 50 °C       | 26       | 92                       | 55                  | <i>S</i>                           |

<sup>a</sup> 100 mg of **7** was used for all reactions.

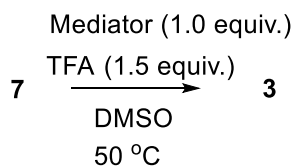
<sup>b</sup> Isolated yield.

<sup>c</sup> Yields based on a recovery of starting **7** were shown in parentheses.

<sup>d</sup> Determined by HPLC equipped with a chiral stationary phase column.

<sup>e</sup> Not determined.

The reactions were studied in the presence of other chiral amines bearing a pyrrolidine and the obtained results are summarized in Table 2. The reaction mediated by (*S*)-proline (**5**) proceeded to afford (*R*)-**3** in a moderate yield and low enantioselectivity (entry 1). The reaction mediated by **8** was also performed to compare the Xu's method. However, lower yield and enantioselectivity were observed than the results reported in Ref. 12c (entry 2). The mediator (**11**),<sup>1b</sup> which exhibited high enantioselectivity in the aldol reaction of **6**, was unsuccessful in this reaction (entry 3), because of the lower yield and enantioselectivity compared to the reaction mediated by **10**. Although enantioselectivities under each conditions were not satisfactory, we planned to use enzymatic reactions focusing on two oxygen functionalities at C-1 and C-7 in (*S*)-**3** to increase the obtained optical purities.

**Table 2.** The aldol reaction of **7** mediated by chiral pyrrolidines

| Entry <sup>a</sup> | Mediator  | Time (h)         | Yield <sup>b,c</sup> (%) | Ee <sup>d</sup> (%) | Absolute configuration of <b>3</b> |
|--------------------|-----------|------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1                  | <b>5</b>  | 17.5             | 54                       | 16                  | <i>R</i>                           |
| 2                  | <b>8</b>  | 398 <sup>e</sup> | 36 (54)                  | 56                  | <i>R</i>                           |
| 3                  | <b>11</b> | 48               | 27                       | 33                  | <i>S</i>                           |

<sup>a</sup> 100 mg of **7** was used for all reactions.

<sup>b</sup> Isolated yield.

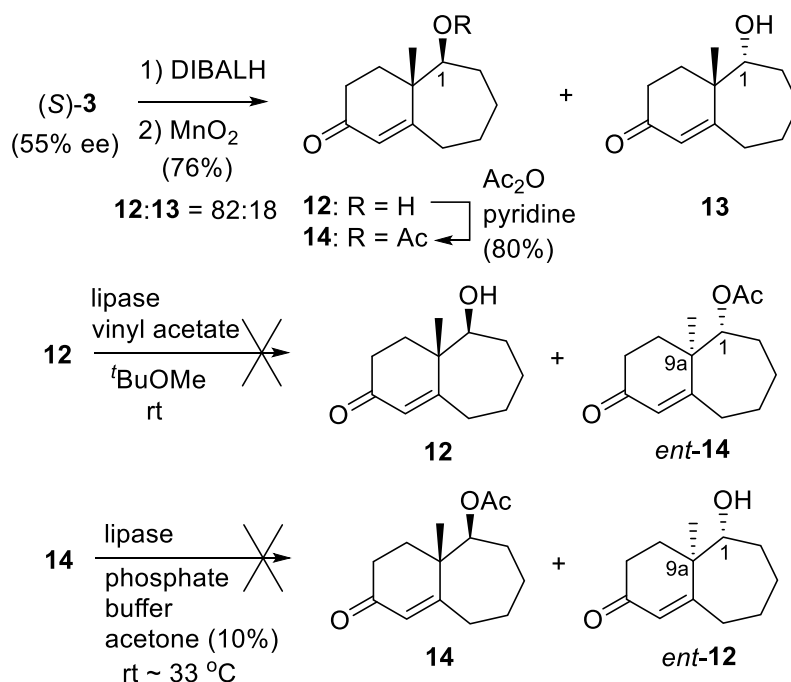
<sup>c</sup> Yields based on a recovery of starting **7** were shown in parentheses.

<sup>d</sup> Determined by HPLC equipped with a chiral stationary phase column.

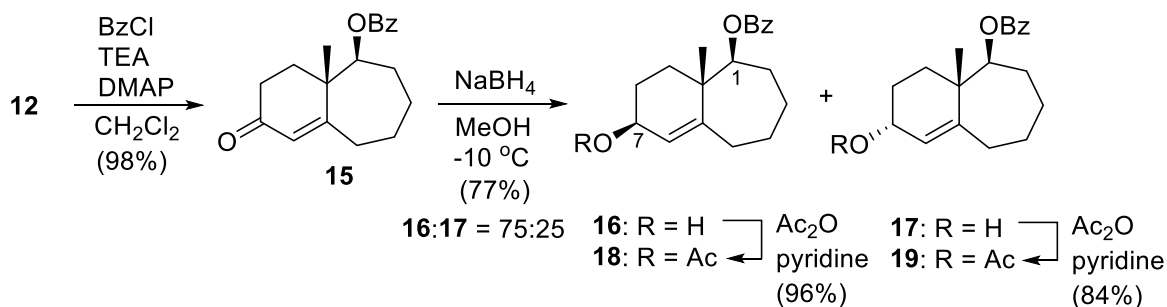
<sup>e</sup> The reaction was performed at rt.

The reduction of both carbonyl groups in (*S*)-**3** with diisobutylaluminum hydride (DIBALH) and following allylic oxidation in the presence of MnO<sub>2</sub> afforded known alcohols (**12**) and (**13**)<sup>11c</sup> with 82:18 diastereoselectivity. The major alcohol (**12**) was converted to acetate (**14**) using a common method. Unfortunately, both lipase-mediated asymmetric esterification<sup>16</sup> of **12** and asymmetric hydrolysis of **14** hardly proceeded to yield the expected alcohol (**12**) or acetate (**14**) with higher ee than the starting materials. In all cases, the starting **12** or **14** was completely recovered. These results indicated that **12** and **14** exist in the *cis*-orientation between the hydroxy group at C-1 and methyl group at C-9a and were unsuitable substrates for the lipases (Scheme 4).

We next focused on the oxygen functionality at C-7. The optical purities were determined using HPLC, so a benzoyl group was introduced to the major alcohol (**12**) as a UV chromophore. Sodium borohydride reduction of **15** in methanol afforded a diastereomeric mixture of **16** and **17** in a 75:25 ratio, which were readily separated by silica gel column chromatography. Acetylations of the obtained alcohols (**16**) and (**17**) using a typical method yielded the corresponding acetates (**18**) and (**19**), respectively (Scheme 5). NOE correlations of **19**, shown in Figure 2, indicated that the angular methyl at C-9a and the acetoxy group at C-7 existed in a *trans*-orientation. Therefore, the other diastereomeric acetate (**18**) must exist in the *cis*- configuration.



Scheme 4



Scheme 5

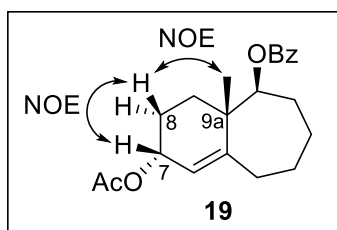
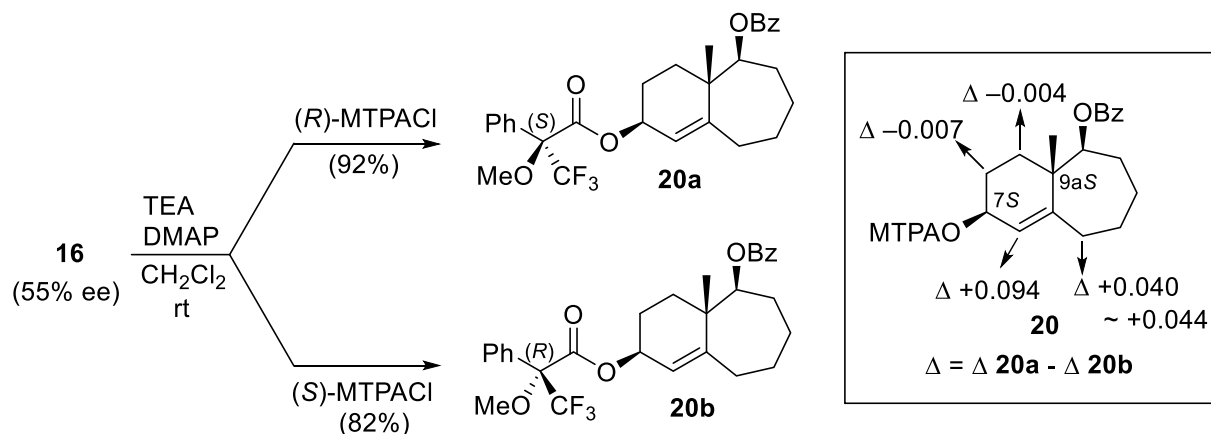


Figure 2

The absolute configuration of **16** was determined using Mosher's ester method.<sup>17</sup> Mosher's esters (**20a**) and (**20b**) were synthesized from **16** using (*R*)- or (*S*)- $\alpha$ -methoxy- $\alpha$ -(trifluoromethyl)phenylacetyl (MTPA) chloride. The difference values ( $\delta = \delta_{20a} - \delta_{20b}$ ) of the chemical shifts in the <sup>1</sup>H-NMR spectra are shown in Scheme 6. We observed high field shifts of the protons on C-8 and C-9 and low field shifts

of the protons on C-5 and C-6. These results strongly indicated that the absolute configuration at C-7 was *S*. Because the relative configuration between the hydroxy group at C-7 and angular methyl at C-9a was *cis* (*vide supra*), the absolute configuration at C-9a must be *S*. This indicated that the aldol reaction of entry 6 in Table 1 afforded (*S*)-**3**.



The lipase-mediated asymmetric esterification of **16** was subsequently examined to increase the obtained optical purities. All reactions were performed in *tert*-butyl methyl ether (*t*BuOMe) in the presence of 2.0 equiv. of vinyl acetate, and the obtained results are summarized in Table 3. All reactions afforded the acetate (**18**) with higher ee than the starting **16**. Especially, lipase AS was effective for increasing the optical purity and affording **18** with high ee (entry 4). In all reactions, the major enantiomer of the unreacted **16** remained in the same *7S* configuration as the starting **16**, but with a lower ee. This indicated that enantioselectivity of lipase at C-7 was not high. However, these results revealed that the obtained (*S*)-**3** can be used a chiral synthon despite of its moderate ee, because it was possible to increase optical purity at a later synthetic stage.

Finally, we clarified the relationship between the absolute configurations, optical rotations, and HPLC retention times of both enantiomers of **3** and the obtained results are summarized in Table 4. It was observed that (*S*)-**3**, prepared from entry 6 in Table 1, exhibited similar optical rotations (*dextrorotatory*), and similar HPLC retention times on a OB-H column (entry 2) as entry 1, which was reported in Ref. 12a. However, the retention times of (*R*)- and (*S*)-**3** on the HPLC equipped with AS-H were different from those reported in Ref. 12b (entry 4 vs 5). Thus, we observed short retention time for (*R*)-**3** and long retention time for (*S*)-**3**, opposite to that of entry 5. Because the optical rotation data for (*R*)-**3** was not reported in Ref. 12b or 12c, we prepared (*R*)-**3** according to Xu's method. The obtained (*R*)-**3**, which exhibited slightly lower ee than that previously reported, exhibited similar retention times for (*R*)- and (*S*)-**3** as entry 4 (entry 6). Additionally, (*R*)-**3** was *levorotatory* and the absolute values of  $[\alpha]_D$  between

(*R*)- and (*S*)-**3** were similar. Therefore, the behaviors of (*R*)- and (*S*)-**3** on HPLC with AS-H (entries 4 and 6), were reliable and it was clear that (*S*)-(+)-**3** was obtained from the asymmetric aldol reactions.

**Table 3.** Lipase-mediated asymmetric esterifications of **16**



| Entry <sup>a</sup> | Lipase <sup>b</sup> | Time (h) | <b>18</b>          |                   | <b>16</b>          |                   |
|--------------------|---------------------|----------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
|                    |                     |          | Yield <sup>g</sup> | Ee <sup>h,i</sup> | Yield <sup>g</sup> | Ee <sup>h,i</sup> |
| 1                  | AK <sup>c</sup>     | 61.5     | 19                 | 75 (7 <i>S</i> )  | 76                 | 50 (7 <i>S</i> )  |
| 2                  | PS-D <sup>d</sup>   | 7        | 53                 | 73 (7 <i>S</i> )  | 42                 | 52 (7 <i>S</i> )  |
| 3                  | AYS <sup>e</sup>    | 22.5     | 33                 | 82 (7 <i>S</i> )  | 54                 | 39 (7 <i>S</i> )  |
| 4                  | AS <sup>f</sup>     | 68       | 23                 | 88 (7 <i>S</i> )  | 76                 | 45 (7 <i>S</i> )  |

<sup>a</sup> 50 mg of **16** was used for all reactions.

<sup>b</sup> All lipases were commercially available from Amano Pharmaceutical Co., LTD.

<sup>c</sup> *Pseudomonas fluorescens*.

<sup>d</sup> *Pseudomonas cepacia* (immobilized on ceramic).

<sup>e</sup> *Candida rugosa*.

<sup>f</sup> *Aspergillus niger*.

<sup>g</sup> Isolated yield.

<sup>h</sup> Determined using an HPLC equipped with a chiral stationary phase column.

<sup>i</sup> Absolute configuration at C-7 of the major enantiomer was shown in parentheses.

**Table 4.** The relations of (*R*)- and (*S*)-**3** among absolute configurations, optical rotations, and HPLC retention times

| Entry          | Compound (ee)                            | $[\alpha]_D^a$ (in CHCl <sub>3</sub> ) | Column <sup>b</sup> | Eluent (v/v)                           | Rt (R, min) | Rt (S, min) |
|----------------|--|--|---------------------|--|-------------|-------------|
| 1 <sup>c</sup> | ( <i>S</i> )- <b>3</b> (8)               | +7.9                                   | OB                  | hexane: 2-propanol = 96:4 <sup>d</sup> | 27.7        | 23.7        |
| 2              |  |  | OB-H                | hexane: 2-propanol = 96:4 <sup>f</sup> | 40.7        | 27.8        |
| 3              | ( <i>S</i> )- <b>3</b> <sup>e</sup> (55) | +49.7                                  | OJ-H                | hexane: 2-propanol = 9:1 <sup>f</sup>  | 15.2        | 17.3        |
| 4              |  |  | AS-H                | hexane: ethanol = 9:1 <sup>f</sup>     | 37.0        | 42.5        |
| 5 <sup>g</sup> | ( <i>R</i> )- <b>3</b> (53)              | NR <sup>h</sup>                        | AS-H                | hexane: ethanol = 9:1 <sup>f</sup>     | 37.0        | 34.4        |
| 6              | ( <i>R</i> )- <b>3</b> <sup>i</sup> (51) | -47.2                                  | AS-H                | hexane: ethanol = 9:1 <sup>f</sup>     | 36.7        | 44.2        |

<sup>a</sup> The observed  $[\alpha]_D$  accompanied with the corresponding enantiomeric excess.

<sup>b</sup> All of chiral stationary phase columns were commercially available as CHIRALCEL<sup>®</sup> or

CHIRALPAK<sup>®</sup> from Daicel Co., LTD.

<sup>c</sup> Data from Ref. 12a.

<sup>d</sup> Flow rate of 0.5 mL/min.

<sup>e</sup> Obtained *via* aldol reaction of entry 6 in Table 1.

<sup>f</sup> Flow rate of 1.0 mL/min.

<sup>g</sup> Data from Ref. 12b.

<sup>h</sup> Not reported.

<sup>i</sup> Obtained using the same method as in Ref. 12c.

In conclusion, we established a novel chiral route to provide a Swaminathan ketone (**3**) bearing a 7-membered ring *via* intramolecular aldol reaction of trione (**7**) mediated by chiral amines bearing a pyrrolidine. Although the enantioselectivity of **3** was moderate, we successfully increased the optical purities by using a lipase-mediated asymmetric esterification of alcohol (**16**) at a later synthetic stage. The absolute configuration was determined by Mosher's ester method, and the relationship between absolute configuration and optical rotation of **3** was determined. Further studies regarding the detailed reaction mechanism and development of a more efficient mediator for the reactions is currently in progress.

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