

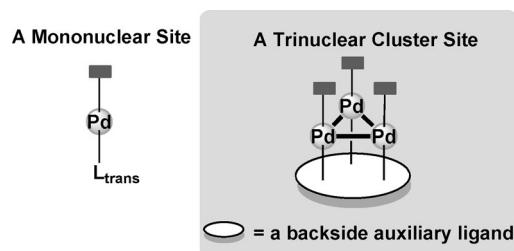
Modulation of Benzene or Naphthalene Binding to Palladium Cluster Sites by the Backside-Ligand Effect**

Yuki Ishikawa, Seita Kimura, Kohei Takase, Koji Yamamoto, Yuki Kurashige, Takeshi Yanai, and Tetsuro Murahashi*

Abstract: The backside-ligand modulation strategy to enhance the substrate binding property of Pd clusters is reported. The benzene or naphthalene binding ability of Pd₃ or Pd₄ clusters is enhanced significantly by the backside cyclooctatetraene ligand, leading to the formation of the first solution-stable benzene- or naphthalene Pd clusters. The present results imply that the ligand design of the metal clusters, especially for the backside ligand of the metal cluster site, is crucial to acquire a desired reactivity of metal clusters.

Much attention has been focused on the roles of metal clusters in catalysis. It is of particular interest to explore the substrate binding and activation modes at the bridging coordination sites of metal clusters, as multiple metal atoms of a metal cluster site may facilitate some elementary reactions in catalytic cycles, or bring new modes of substrate binding and transformation.^[1] Despite the importance of palladium in catalysis, however, the way that Pd clusters bind substrates at their μ_n -bridging coordination sites ($n \geq 3$) has not been extensively investigated and thus poorly characterized.^[2] This is mainly due to the difficulty to generate reactive molecular Pd clusters in homogeneous systems.^[3] To overcome this problem, it is necessary to develop a ligand system which not only supports a Pd cluster core, but also bring a suitable environment for substrate binding at a Pd cluster site through electronic and/or steric effects. In designing the

ligand systems for reactive Pd clusters, we focused on the roles of the backside auxiliary ligand, as the property of a metal cluster site may be largely affected by electronic effects of the backside ligand, in view of the well-established *trans* influence and *trans* effect in the mononuclear metal systems (Scheme 1).^[4] Herein, we report that the backside



Scheme 1. The *trans* ligand of a mononuclear Pd site and the backside ligand of a trinuclear Pd cluster site.

carbocyclic ligands have a large effect on the substrate binding property at a Pd₃ cluster site, through demonstration of the significantly enhanced benzene binding ability of a Pd₃ cluster as compared to known Pd complexes. Furthermore, it was also confirmed that the backside-ligand-modulation strategy can be applied to the naphthalene binding at a μ_4 -Pd₄ cluster site.

We chose benzene as the target substrate in examining the backside-ligand effect on the substrate binding at a μ_3 -Pd₃ cluster site, as benzene is one of the weakest coordinating substrates in organopalladium chemistry. In fact, mononuclear Pd complexes that bind benzene stably in solution have not been reported.^[5,6] The lack of solution-stable benzene-Pd complexes would have raised a question on the involvement of benzene-Pd π -adducts in Pd-catalyzed benzene transformations.^[7] The μ_3 -benzene coordination to molecular Pd clusters is unprecedented, while the potential ability of Pd clusters to bind benzene may be indicated by the Pd surface chemistry; that is, it has been proposed that adsorbed benzene on Pd surface adopts μ_3 - or μ_4 -bridging coordination modes.^[8] Our laboratory recently addressed the arene binding ability of Pd₃ clusters,^[9] and disclosed that [2.2]paracyclophane, which is a distorted and intramolecularly π -stacking arene having much stronger coordinating ability than benzene, afforded the μ_3 -arene Pd₃ cluster, through the redox-condensation of [Pd₂(CH₃CN)₆][BF₄]₂ and [Pd₂(dba)₃] in the presence of the cyclophane. In this case, however, a similar reaction using benzene instead of [2.2]paracyclophane did not afford any benzene-Pd₃ cluster (Scheme 2a).

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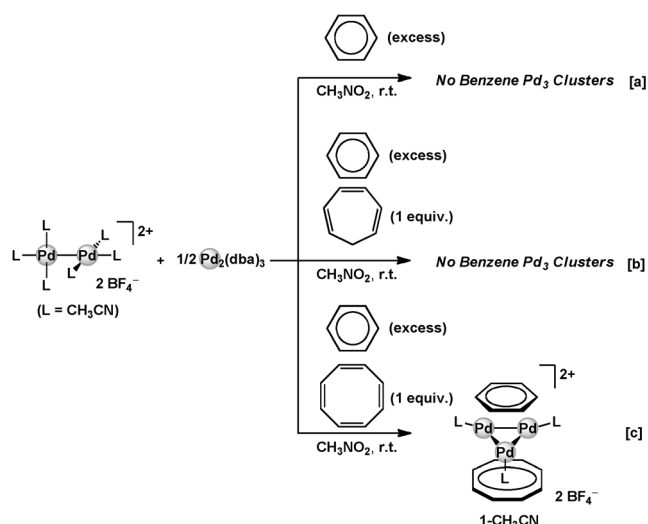
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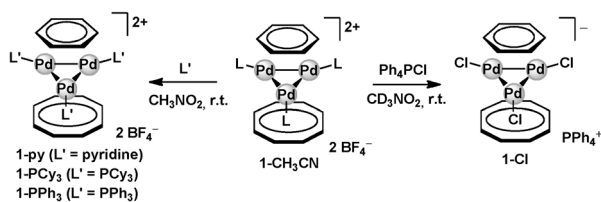
[**] This work was supported by MEXT Japan, JST, and Tokuyama
Science Foundation. We thank Prof. H. Kurosawa and Prof. S.
Ogoshi for discussion.

Supporting information for this article is available on the WWW
under <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/anie.201409499>.



Scheme 2. Examination of potential backside carbocyclic ligands for the formation of μ_3 -benzene Pd_3 clusters.

We sought to develop the backside ligand which enhances the arene binding ability of Pd_3 clusters. Several unsaturated carbocyclic compounds were tested as the additive for the reaction in Scheme 2a. Addition of a cyclic π -conjugated triene, 1,3,5-cycloheptatriene (CHT), which is known to behave as an excellent μ_3 -binder of a Pd_3 cluster,^[9b,10] to the redox-condensation reaction mentioned above did not yield any benzene- Pd_3 complex (Scheme 2b). We then tested a larger neutral π -carbocyclic ligand, cyclooctatetraene (COT), as the potential backside ligand.^[9b,11,12] Interestingly, addition of COT (1 equiv) to a mixture of $[\text{Pd}_2(\text{CH}_3\text{CN})_6][\text{BF}_4]_2$, $[\text{Pd}_2(\text{dba})_3]$, and excess benzene gave the unprecedented μ_3 -benzene Pd_3 complex $[\text{Pd}_3(\mu_3\text{-benzene})(\mu_3\text{-COT})(\text{CH}_3\text{CN})_3][\text{BF}_4]_2$ (**1-CH₃CN**) in 83 % yield (Scheme 2c). The benzene- Pd_3 complex **1-CH₃CN** remained intact in CD_3NO_2 solution for two days at ambient temperature,^[13] even in the presence of CH_3CN (10 equiv). To our further surprise, the μ_3 -benzene ligand remained intact in the presence of more strongly coordinating ligands such as pyridine, phosphines, or chloride. Thus, in each case, substitution of the equatorial CH_3CN ligands took place to afford $[\text{Pd}_3(\mu_3\text{-benzene})(\mu_3\text{-COT})(\text{L})_3][\text{BF}_4]_2$ (**1-py**, **1-PCy₃**, **1-PPh₃**) or $[\text{Pd}_3(\mu_3\text{-benzene})(\mu_3\text{-COT})\text{Cl}_3][\text{PPh}_4]^+$ (**1-Cl**) (Scheme 3). It was confirmed that the benzene ligand in **1-PPh₃** or **1-py** remained coordinated in CD_3NO_2 solution in the presence of excess free PPh_3 or pyridine (7 equiv) at ambient temperature.^[14] In contrast, the known mono- and dinuclear palladium complexes of benzene



Scheme 3. The μ_3 -benzene Pd_3 clusters containing pyridine, phosphines, and chloride ligands.

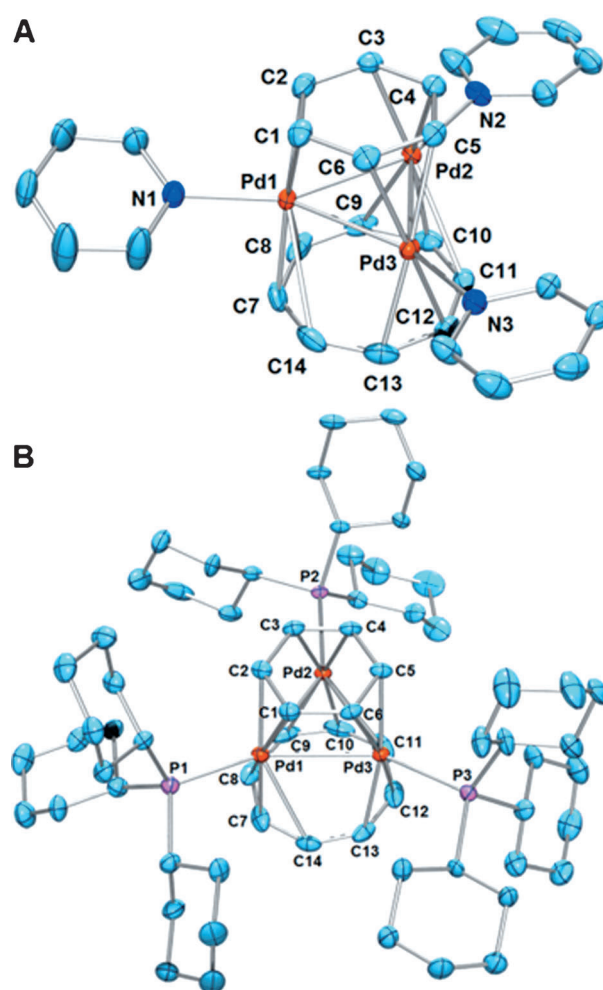


Figure 1. A) ORTEP of $[\text{Pd}_3(\mu_3\text{-C}_6\text{H}_6)(\mu_3\text{-C}_8\text{H}_8)(\text{py})_3][\text{BF}_4]_2$ (**1-py**) (ellipsoids set at 50% probability, BF_4 anions are omitted for clarity). Selected bond lengths [Å]: Pd1-Pd2 2.7331(3), Pd2-Pd3 2.7624(3), Pd3-Pd1 2.7519(3), Pd1-C1 2.197(3), Pd1-C2 2.202(3), Pd2-C3 2.208(3), Pd2-C4 2.202(3), Pd3-C5 2.214(3), Pd3-C6 2.203(3), C1-C2 1.420(5), C2-C3 1.428(4), C3-C4 1.421(4), C4-C5 1.426(5), C5-C6 1.416(4), C6-C1 1.435(4), C9-C10 1.420(4), C10-C11 1.406(5), C11-C12 1.405(5), C12-C13 1.426(5), C13-C14 1.403(4), C14-C7 1.421(6). B) ORTEP of $[\text{Pd}_3(\mu_3\text{-C}_6\text{H}_6)(\mu_3\text{-C}_8\text{H}_8)(\text{PCy}_3)_3][\text{BF}_4]_2$ (**1-PCy₃**) (ellipsoids set at 30% probability, BF_4 anions and a solvent molecule are omitted for clarity). Selected bond lengths [Å]: Pd1-Pd2 2.8979(9), Pd2-Pd3 2.8784(8), Pd1-Pd3 2.9169(9), Pd1-C1 2.203(11), Pd1-C2 2.208(10), Pd2-C3 2.198(10), Pd2-C4 2.221(10), Pd3-C5 2.187(10), Pd3-C6 2.193(10).

immediately release the benzene ligand in the presence of these strongly coordinating ligands.^[5,6]

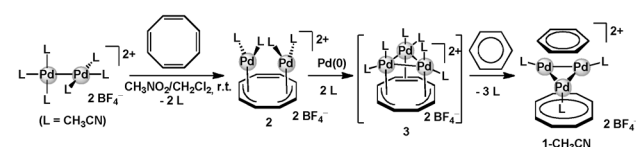
The structures of **1-py** and **1-PCy₃** were determined by X-ray crystallographic analysis (Figure 1). The benzene ring capped the nearly equilateral Pd_3 triangle (Pd-Pd = 2.7331(3) Å, 2.7624(3) Å, 2.7519(3) Å in **1-py**; Pd-Pd = 2.8979(9) Å, 2.8784(8) Å, 2.9169(9) Å in **1-PCy₃**) through the $\mu_3\text{-}\eta^2\text{:}\eta^2\text{:}\eta^2$ -coordination mode. The C-C lengths (1.416(4)–1.435(4) Å) of the μ_3 -benzene ligand in **1-py** are slightly longer than those of free benzene, where a reduced bond length alternation was retained.^[15,16] Such trend of C-C lengths in the μ_3 -benzene ligand is comparable to that

predicted for the μ_3 -benzene adsorbed on a Pd(111) surface.^[8] The planar COT ligand supported the Pd₃ triangle at the backside through μ_3 - η^3 : η^3 : η^2 -coordination mode.

Apparently, COT might play important roles in the formation of μ_3 -benzene Pd₃ complex **1**, as any μ_3 -benzene clusters were not obtained in the absence of COT, as mentioned above (Scheme 2). To gain insights into the stabilization effect of the backside COT ligand, we carried out DFT calculations^[17] on the model ions [Pd₃(benzene)-(COT)(CH₃CN)₃]²⁺ (**A**) and [Pd₃(benzene)₂(CH₃CN)₃]²⁺ (**B**), where the latter is a model of the expected but unobtainable product in Scheme 2a.^[18] The calculation results supported that the backside coordination of COT stabilizes the benzene-Pd₃ cluster effectively; that is, the benzene dissociation energy for **A** ($D_{\text{calc}} = 105 \text{ kcal mol}^{-1}$) is larger than the first benzene dissociation energy for **B** ($D_{\text{calc}} = 88 \text{ kcal mol}^{-1}$). The replacement of one of the benzene ligands in **B** with COT to form **A** and free benzene was calculated to be exothermic ($\Delta H = -43 \text{ kcal mol}^{-1}$). The different electronic effects of the backside COT and benzene ligands exerting on [Pd₃L₃]²⁺ is reflected by the distinct geometries of the Pd₃ core in **A** and **B**; that is, pseudo- C_{3v} symmetry in **A** (a nearly equilateral Pd₃ triangle; Pd-Pd = 2.79 Å, 2.79 Å, 2.82 Å); C_{2v} symmetry in **B** (a distorted isosceles Pd₃ triangle; Pd-Pd = 2.77 Å, 2.77 Å, 2.68 Å; Figure 2a,b).^[19] MO analysis suggested that this geometrical difference of the Pd₃ core is related to the difference of the π -electron number of the backside ligand: The highest occupied molecular orbital (HOMO) and the next-HOMO of **A** are essentially degenerated as a result of the MO interactions between the degenerated e' orbitals of

the pseudo- C_{3v} symmetric [Pd₃L₃] fragment^[5c,20] and the in-phase combination of the COT-benzene ligand orbitals (Figure 2c). When two 6π benzene ligands are the sandwich ligands, where the sum of the ligand π -electrons (12 e) are two less than that of the COT-benzene ligand system (14 e), these degenerated orbitals are each half-occupied, and hence the structure is subjected to Jahn–Teller distortion as found in **B**.

It is noted that COT may assist the Pd assembly not only with a thermodynamic cause but kinetic one in the formation of **1**-CH₃CN (Scheme 2c). As the binding of benzene by [Pd₂(CH₃CN)₆][BF₄]₂ is thermodynamically unfavorable,^[6d] and [Pd₂(dba)₃] did not react with benzene, [Pd₂(CH₃CN)₆][BF₄]₂ might have reacted with COT to afford the dinuclear complex **2**.^[21] We confirmed that the dinuclear adduct **2** did not react with benzene. Thus, a reactive half-sandwich Pd₃-COT species **3** can be formed by addition of an Pd⁰ moiety to **2** (Scheme 4). When compared with [Pd^I]₂²⁺ in [Pd₂-



Scheme 4. A plausible mechanism of COT-assisted benzene binding by a Pd₃ cluster.

(CH₃CN)₆][BF₄]₂ or [Pd^{II}]₂²⁺ in **2**, the low-valent [Pd₃]²⁺ moiety in **3**, that is, formally +2/3 for each Pd, might have advantage in binding benzene and releasing CH₃CN ligands, in view of the weaker coordination ability of CH₃CN to Pd in lower oxidation states.

The μ_3 -Pd₃ cluster site supported by the backside COT ligand showed the arene-exchangeable property, while known μ_3 -benzene M₃ clusters (M = Ru, Os, Rh) did not show exchange of the μ_3 -benzene ligand with free arenes even at elevated temperature.^[15,16] The exchange of the μ_3 -benzene ligand in **1**-CH₃CN with free arenes took place at 80 °C in CD₃NO₂ with [D₆]benzene, toluene, *p*-xylene, mesitylene, *tert*-butylbenzene, anisole, and methylbenzoate representing substrates (Scheme 5).^[22] The equilibrium constant K_{eq} for each substituted benzene was smaller than 1, indicating that steric effects contributed to the thermodynamic stability of μ_3 -arene Pd₃ complexes.

The backside-ligand modulation strategy can be applied to the naphthalene binding by a Pd₄ sheet cluster. Thus, the

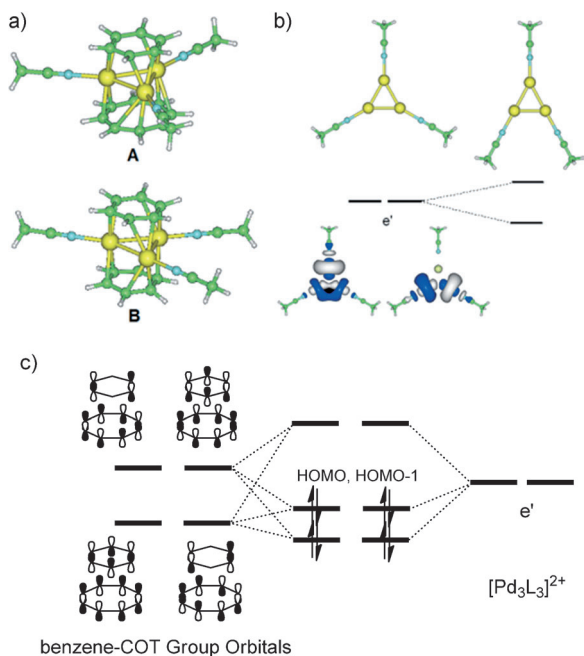
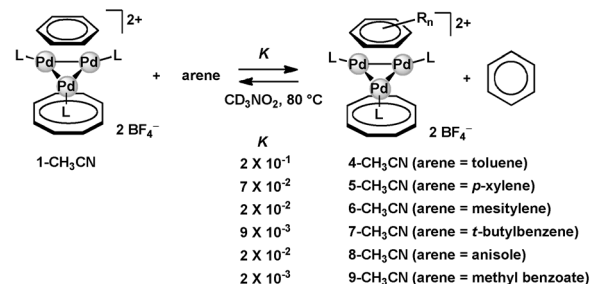
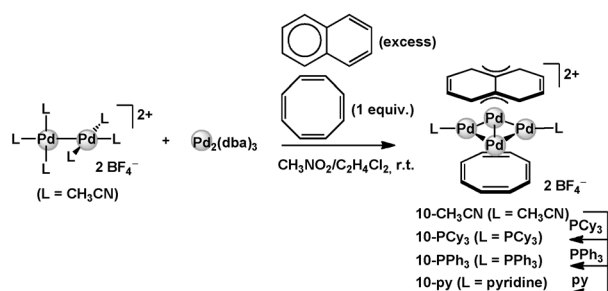


Figure 2. a) The optimized structures of [Pd₃(benzene)(COT)L₃]²⁺ (**A**) and [Pd₃(benzene)₂L₃]²⁺ (**B**). b) The degenerate e' orbitals of the C_{3v} -symmetric Pd₃L₃ triangle, which are resolved by the Jahn–Teller distortion. c) A qualitative molecular orbital diagram between the ligand π -orbitals and the e' orbitals of [Pd₃L₃]²⁺ fragment in [Pd₃(benzene)(COT)L₃]²⁺.



Scheme 5. The μ_3 -arene exchange equilibrium of the Pd₃ clusters.

tetranuclear complex $[\text{Pd}_4(\mu_4\text{-naphthalene})(\mu_4\text{-COT})-(\text{CH}_3\text{CN})_2][\text{BF}_4]_2$ (**10-CH₃CN**) was formed by the reaction of $[\text{Pd}_2(\text{CH}_3\text{CN})_6][\text{BF}_4]_2$ and $\text{Pd}_2(\text{dba})_3$ (1 equiv) in the presence of excess naphthalene and COT (1 equiv) in 62 % yield (Scheme 6).^[23] It is noted that any naphthalene Pd_4



Scheme 6. Naphthalene binding by a Pd_4 sheet cluster supported by the backside COT ligand.

complex was not obtained in the absence of COT. The PCy_3 complex **10-PCy₃**, PPh_3 complex **10-PPh₃**, or pyridine complex **10-py** was prepared by treatment of **10-CH₃CN** with 2 equiv of PCy_3 , PPh_3 , or pyridine, and the structure of **10-PCy₃** was determined by X-ray crystallographic analysis (Figure 3). The naphthalene ligand facially capped the rhombic Pd_4 sheet through $\mu_4\text{-}\eta^3\text{:}\eta^2\text{:}\eta^3\text{:}\eta^2$ -mode. To the best of our knowledge,

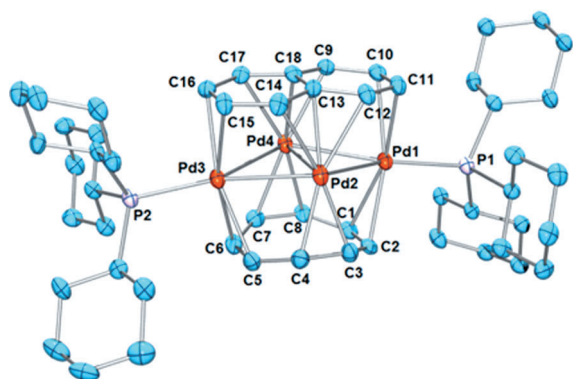


Figure 3. ORTEP of $[\text{Pd}_4(\mu_4\text{-C}_{10}\text{H}_8)(\mu_4\text{-C}_8\text{H}_8)(\text{PCy}_3)_2][\text{BF}_4]_2$ (**10-PCy₃**) (ellipsoids set at 30% probability, BF_4 anions are omitted for clarity). Selected bond lengths [Å]: Pd1–Pd2 2.8161(8), Pd2–Pd3 2.7990(8), Pd3–Pd4 2.8181(8), Pd4–Pd1 2.7906(7), Pd2–Pd4 2.8506(7).

the μ_4 -bridging coordination of naphthalene to a tetranuclear cluster was unprecedented for any metal elements. The COT ligand coordinated to the Pd_4 sheet through $\mu_4\text{-}\eta^3\text{:}\eta^2\text{:}\eta^2\text{:}\eta^2$ -coordination mode.^[24] During the formation of μ_4 -naphthalene Pd_4 cluster **10-CH₃CN**, COT could assemble Pd on its face, but naphthalene may also work as the directing ligand for the Pd assembly. Indeed, **10-CH₃CN** was formed by the reaction of **1-CH₃CN** with naphthalene at 80 °C, where decomposition of a portion of **1-CH₃CN** might provide Pd^0 .

In summary, it has been shown that the backside COT ligand of the Pd_3 clusters significantly enhances the benzene binding ability at the Pd_3 cluster site, leading to the first μ_3 -

benzene- Pd_3 clusters that are stable in solution. Theoretical analysis supported the electronic stabilization effect of the backside COT ligand. The naphthalene binding by Pd_4 clusters was also attained by using a Pd_4 sheet bearing the backside COT ligand. These new aspects might represent a promising backside-ligand-modulation strategy to control the reactivity of metal clusters. Further reactivity study on the backside-ligand-modulated metal clusters are now ongoing in our laboratory.

Received: September 25, 2014

Revised: November 7, 2014

Published online: January 21, 2015

Keywords: benzene · clusters · ligand effects · naphthalene · palladium

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- [12] Previously, we observed that a (μ_3 -[2.2]paracyclophane)-Pd₃-(μ_3 -COT) complex was formed by treatment of a bis- μ_3 -[2.2]paracyclophane Pd₃ complex with excess COT.^[9a] This implied the relatively stable arene-Pd₃-COT structure compared to the bis(arene) Pd₃ structure.
- [13] A ¹H NMR spectra of **1**-CH₃CN in CD₃NO₂ showed two sharp singlet signals for benzene protons (δ = 5.43 ppm) and COT protons (δ = 4.79 ppm) in high-field region compared to that of free benzene or COT. The ¹³C NMR signals for the benzene and COT ligands also appeared at high-field region (δ = 73 ppm for C₆H₆; δ = 82 ppm for C₈H₈).
- [14] In the case of PCy₃, gradual decomposition of **1**-PCy₃ was observed. When less than 3 equiv of PPh₃ was added to the solution of **1**-CH₃CN, gradual decomposition of the μ_3 -benzene-Pd₃ framework was observed. This result may reflect the unstable nature of [Pd₃(benzene)(COT)(PPh₃)₂L]²⁺ or [Pd₃-(benzene)(COT)(PPh₃)L₂]²⁺.
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- [18] The composition of the model ion **B** containing three CH₃CN ligands is reasonable, in light of the composition of a related complex [Pd₃(μ_3 -[2.2]paracyclophane)₂(CH₃CN)₃][B(Ar^F)₄]₂.^[9a]
- [19] An isosceles triangle geometry of [Pd₃L₃]²⁺ core was experimentally identified in the structures of related bis(cycloheptatriene) M₃ complexes [Pd₃(μ_3 -C₇H₇(*t*Bu))₂(CH₃CN)₃][BF₄]₂ and [Pd₂Pt(μ_3 -CHT)₂(CH₃CN)₃][BF₄]₂.^[10]
- [20] The HOMO and HOMO-1 (e' orbitals) of a neutral D_{3h}-symmetric [Pd₃L₃] fragment are degenerate: M. T. Reetz, E. Bohres, R. Goddard, M. C. Holthausen, W. Thiel, *Chem. Eur. J.* **1999**, *5*, 2101.
- [21] T. Murahashi, N. Kato, S. Ogoshi, H. Kurosawa, *J. Organomet. Chem.* **2008**, *693*, 894.
- [22] The (μ_3 -substituted benzene)-Pd₃ complexes were prepared according to the reaction shown in Scheme 2c, where each substituted arene was used instead of benzene. See the Supporting Information.
- [23] The ¹³C NMR analysis in CD₃NO₂ showed the upfield-shifted signals for all naphthalene carbons (δ = 93 ppm, 85 ppm, 84 ppm) and COT carbons (δ = 68 ppm), indicating the structure found in the crystalline state was retained in solution.
- [24] a) T. Murahashi, R. Inoue, K. Usui, S. Ogoshi, *J. Am. Chem. Soc.* **2009**, *131*, 9888; b) T. Murahashi, N. Kato, T. Uemura, H. Kurosawa, *Angew. Chem. Int. Ed.* **2007**, *46*, 3509; *Angew. Chem.* **2007**, *119*, 3579.