

### Organic Chemistry Research in the Chinese Mainland and Hong Kong SAR

In the past decade we have witnessed an explosive growth of basic research in nearly all disciplines of science in the Chinese mainland, and an outpouring of publications in chemical journals by authors from universities and research institutes in China. The reasons for this growth are

Chemistry has always been a key subject in universities in China because of a constant demand for qualified chemists by the rapidly expanding chemical and pharmaceutical industries. Consequently, research in chemistry has received a good share of government support. In the Chinese mainland, chemists are instrumental in developments in areas related to life science, materials science, environmental science, and energy production. In the field of organic chemistry, in China as in the West, the active research areas are in organic synthesis, physical organic chemistry, natural products chemistry, organometallic chemistry, computational chemistry, agricultural chemistry, medicinal chemistry, chemical biology, and organic materials chemistry.



threefold. Firstly, the central government, the provincial governments, the municipal governments and various other funding agencies have all stepped up funding. At the national level, the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) and the National Natural Science Foundation (NNSF) are the two most important funding organizations, which also attend to the planning of major national science policy. Secondly, the older generation of devoted Chinese scientists has worked with admirable stoic fortitude to produce many groundbreaking results in spite of indigent conditions and unbelievably meager earnings.

Thirdly, a new generation of young and talented researchers who were trained either locally or abroad have emerged.

In the Chinese mainland, support for basic research in chemistry is two-pronged: the universities are funded by the Ministry of Education, and research institutes by the Chinese Academy of Sciences. In the universities, good work is being done at Lanzhou University, Nankai University (in Tianjin), Nanjing University, Peking University, Wuhan University, and Zhejiang University (in Hangzhou), to name just a few (see Figure). Institutes under the Chinese Academy of Sciences, such as Shanghai Institute of Organic Chemistry, Shanghai Institute of Materia Medica, Kunming Institute of Botany, and the Institute of Chemistry in Beijing are highly rated research centers for organic chemistry. In addition, the Institute of Materia Medica in Beijing, under the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences, is recognized for its excellence in medicinal chemistry research.



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Hong Kong, due to historical reasons, has a strong tie with the Western World and its tertiary education system has been very close to that of England. Chemistry has always been one of the strongest research areas amongst all science and non-science disciplines in the now Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). Currently there are eight government-supported tertiary institutions in Hong Kong, and six of them have chemistry and combined chemistry-biology departments. The oldest university is The University of Hong Kong and its organic chemistry research program has a strong focus on natural product and asymmetric synthesis, as well as the design and synthesis of organic-based compounds for materials or medical applications. The Chinese University of Hong Kong also has a strong research track record in organometallic chemistry, natural products synthesis, host-guest chemistry and chemistry of functional organic and organometallic molecules. Chemistry departments in the other universities are also establishing themselves as key players in various areas. For example, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology has strengths and depths in organic synthesis and organic computational chemistry, while the Hong Kong Polytechnic University is a leading center on asymmetric synthesis. Synthetic methodologies and chemical sensors are the two main research domains of Hong Kong Baptist University, and the City University of Hong Kong has expertise in various aspects of chemistry at the interface of organic and inorganic chemistry.

The establishment of a regional office in China by **SYNLETT** signifies recognition of the high quality of synthetic organic chemistry research originating from this area. We strongly believe that this regional office can serve as a platform to facilitate the rapid and timely publication of original articles on organic synthesis from research institutes in the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong. One of the advantages of having a local editorial office is to allow the editorial process to be dealt with by the Regional Editors in the shortest time possible. The Regional Editors will strive to ensure that the handling of manuscripts is done in a swift and fair manner, as well as to provide assistance, if necessary, to the Chinese authors. Ultimately, our goal is to ensure the presentation of high quality organic synthesis research articles from the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong to the chemistry community worldwide.

We are delighted to witness that the chemistry research community in the Chinese mainland has been able to produce research of significant impact in the past decade. We have every reason to believe that exciting results will continue to materialize, and we look forward to receiving manuscripts from our Chinese colleagues.

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