

## Electronic Supplementary Information

# **Rhenium and Base Co-catalyzed [3+2] Annulations of N-H Ketimines and Alkynes to Access Unprotected Tertiary Indenamines through C-H Bond Activation**

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## 1. General Information

Unless otherwise noted, all reactions were carried out in oven-dried reaction vessels with Teflon screw caps under a nitrogen atmosphere by using standard Schlenk techniques. Reaction temperatures are recorded on the temperature of the bath oil surrounding the Schlenk tubes. Anhydrous solvents were purified and dried following standard procedures. All commercially available reagents were used as received. TLC analysis was performed on pre-coated, glass-backed silica gel plates and visualized with UV light. Flash column chromatography was performed on silica gel (200-300 mesh).

The  $^1\text{H}$  NMR and  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR spectra were recorded on a Bruker 400 AV or 500 AV spectrometers. Chemical shifts for protons are quoted in parts per million downfield from tetramethylsilane and are referenced to the solvent peak (for  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ,  $^1\text{H}$  NMR: 7.26 ppm,  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR: 77.16 ppm); Abbreviations are used in the description of NMR data as follows: chemical shift ( $\delta$ , ppm), multiplicity (s = singlet, d = doublet, t = triplet, q = quartet, m = multiplet), coupling constant ( $J$ , Hz). The mass spectra (MS) were recorded on a LC-MS2010 spectrometer or a GCMS-QP2010-SE (SHIMADZU). The high resolution mass spectra (HRMS) were recorded on a GCT-MS Micromass UK spectrometer or a Bruker Apex IV FTMS.

## 2. General Procedure for the Preparation of N-H Ketimines

All the imines are prepared according to the general procedures above.<sup>1-4</sup>

### General procedure A for the synthesis of N-H diarylimine

In an oven-dried Schlenk tube under N<sub>2</sub> atmosphere, a mixture of the aryl nitrile (20 mmol) and the aryl Grignard reagent (20 mmol) was stirred in THF (20 mL) at 80 °C for 12 h. The reaction mixture was cooled to room temperature and then treated with Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> · 10H<sub>2</sub>O (10 mmol). After stirring vigorously for 0.5 h, the mixture was diluted with Et<sub>2</sub>O (80 mL) and the resulting suspension was filtrated through Celite. The volatile materials were evaporated under vacuum. The residue was further purified by flash column chromatography, with 1.5 mL of TEA added into every 100 mL of eluent (PE/EA).

### General procedure B for the synthesis of N-H arylalkylimines

A stirred solution of the aryl nitrile (20 mmol) in THF (20 mL) under a positive atmosphere of N<sub>2</sub> was cooled to -78 °C and the alkyllithium reagent (32 mmol) was added dropwise over 0.5 h. The mixture was stirred at -78 °C for 2 h, quenched with anhydrous MeOH (5 mL) and then stirred at room temperature for 2 h. The resulting suspension was filtrated through Celite and the solvent was removed by rotary evaporation. The residue was purified by vacuum distillation.

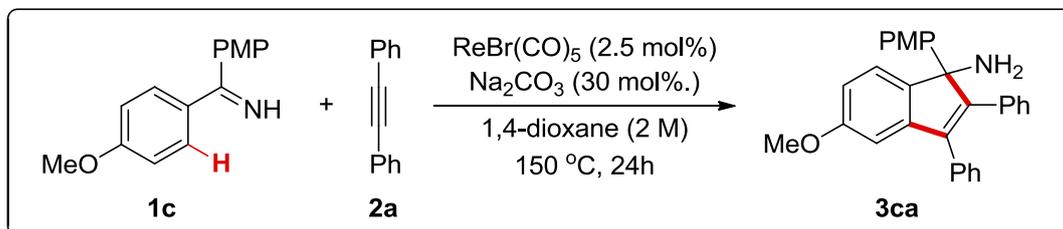
### 3. General Procedure for the Preparation of Alkynes

Alkynes **2a**, **2b**, **2c**, **2j**, **2k**, **2l** are commercially available (from Alfa Aesar) and used as received. Other alkynes are prepared according to the literatures:<sup>5,6</sup>

A round bottom flask with a magnetic stir bar is fitted with a rubber septum and flame dried under vacuum. The flask is purged with nitrogen, and charged with PdCl<sub>2</sub>(PPh<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub> (6 mol%), CuI (10 mol%) and aryl iodide or bromide (1 equiv). Septum is parafilmmed after solids are added. While stirring, dry benzene (0.20 M) is added by syringe under nitrogen atmosphere. DBU (6 equiv) is then added by syringe under nitrogen. Ice-chilled trimethylsilylethyne (0.50 equiv) is then added by syringe, followed immediately by distilled water (40 mol%). The reaction flask is covered in aluminum foil and left stirring at a high rate of speed for 18 h, at the end of which the reaction mixture is partitioned in ethyl ether and distilled water. The organic layer is washed with 10% HCl three times, saturated aqueous NaCl, dried over MgSO<sub>4</sub>, gravity-filtered and the solvent removed in vacuo. The crude product is purified by silica gel column chromatography.

1,2-bis(4-fluorophenyl)ethyne (**2d**)<sup>5</sup>, 1,2-bis(4-chlorophenyl)ethyne (**2e**)<sup>5</sup>, 1,2-bis(4-bromophenyl)ethyne (**2f**)<sup>5</sup>, 1,2-bis(2-fluorophenyl)ethyne (**2g**)<sup>5</sup>, 1,2-bis(3-methylphenyl)ethyne (**2h**)<sup>6</sup> and 1,2-bis(4-fluorophenyl)ethyne (**2i**)<sup>5</sup> are all prepared according to the literatures. And the spectra data are in agreement with the known compounds in literatures.

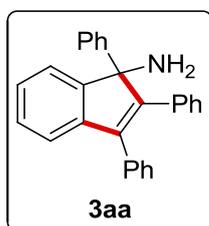
#### 4. Typical Procedure for [3+2] Annulations of N-H Ketimines and Alkynes



A oven-dried Teflon-screw-capped tube was equipped with a magnetic stir bar. ReBr(CO)<sub>5</sub> (0.025 mmol, 2.5 mol %, 10.2 mg), bis(4-methoxyphenyl)methanimine **1c** (1.0 mmol, 135.2 mg), diphenylacetylene **2a** (1.0 mmol, 178.2 mg), Na<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> (0.3 mmol, 30 mol%, 31.8 mg), and 1,4-dioxane (2.0 mL) were added into the reaction vessel under nitrogen. Then the Teflon cap was screwed up and the reaction mixture was stirred at 150 °C for 24 h. After completion of the reaction, the crude mixture was cooled down. The product was pre-absorbed on silica gel and purified by flash column chromatography affording product **3ca** as a light-yellow solid.

## 5. Characterization Data for Unprotected tertiary Indenamines

### 1,2,3-triphenyl-1*H*-inden-1-amine (3aa)



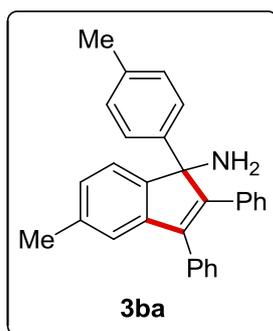
Following the general procedure:  $\text{ReBr}(\text{CO})_5$  (0.025 mmol, 2.5 mol %, 10.2 mg), diphenylmethanimine **1a** (1.0 mmol, 181.1 mg), diphenylacetylene **2a** (1.0 mmol, 178.2 mg),  $\text{Na}_2\text{CO}_3$  (0.3 mmol, 30 mol%, 31.8 mg) and 1,4-dioxane (2.0 mL) were added into reaction vessel with a Teflon screw cap under nitrogen. The reaction mixture was stirred at 150 °C for 24 h. After the workup, The product was pre-absorbed on silica gel and purified by flash column chromatography affording product **3aa** in 94% isolated yield as a brown solid.

**$^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )**  $\delta$  8.05 (d,  $J = 7.2$  Hz, 2H), 7.40-7.42 (m, 2H), 7.16-7.34 (m, 9H), 7.09-7.13 (m, 1H), 6.97-7.06 (m, 3H), 6.85-6.87 (m, 2H), 1.80 (s, 2H);

**$^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (101 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )**  $\delta$  153.1, 151.1, 142.9, 142.8, 139.4, 135.1, 134.5, 129.7, 129.5, 128.7, 128.0, 127.7, 127.6, 127.3, 126.9, 126.8, 125.6, 123.2, 121.0, 71.7;

**HRMS (ESI):** Calculated for  $\text{C}_{27}\text{H}_{20}\text{N}^+$  ( $[\text{M}-2\text{H}+\text{H}]^+$ ): 358.15902, found: 358.15862.

### 5-methyl-2,3-diphenyl-1-(*p*-tolyl)-1*H*-inden-1-amine (3ba)



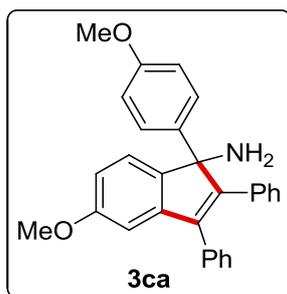
Following the general procedure:  $\text{ReBr}(\text{CO})_5$  (0.025 mmol, 2.5 mol %, 10.2 mg), di-*p*-tolylmethanimine **1b** (1.0 mmol, 209.1 mg), diphenylacetylene **2a** (1.0 mmol, 178.2 mg),  $\text{Na}_2\text{CO}_3$  (0.3 mmol, 30 mol%, 31.8 mg) and 1,4-dioxane (2.0 mL) were added into reaction vessel with a Teflon screw cap under nitrogen. The reaction mixture was stirred at 150 °C for 24 h. After the workup, The product was pre-absorbed on silica gel and purified by flash column chromatography affording product **3ba** in 97% isolated yield as a brown solid.

**$^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )**  $\delta$  7.40-7.44 (m, 4H), 7.35-7.38 (m, 2H), 7.20-7.33 (m, 1H), 7.01-7.11 (m, 7H), 6.96-6.98 (m, 1H), 6.86-6.88 (m, 2H), 2.31-2.32 (m, 6H), 1.81 (s, 2H);

<sup>13</sup>C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 151.4, 150.6, 143.0, 140.0, 139.3, 137.5, 136.4, 135.4, 134.7, 129.8, 129.6, 129.5, 128.7, 128.0, 127.6, 127.5, 127.2, 125.5, 122.9, 121.7, 71.3, 21.7, 21.2;

HRMS (ESI): Calculated for C<sub>29</sub>H<sub>26</sub>N<sup>+</sup> ([M+H]<sup>+</sup>): 388.20598, found: 388.20631.

### 5-methoxy-1-(4-methoxyphenyl)-2,3-diphenyl-1H-inden-1-amine (3ca)



Following the general procedure: ReBr(CO)<sub>5</sub> (0.025 mmol, 2.5 mol %, 10.2 mg), bis(4-methoxyphenyl)methanimine **1c** (1.0 mmol, 241.1 mg), diphenylacetylene **2a** (1.0 mmol, 178.2 mg), Na<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> (0.3 mmol, 30 mol%, 31.8 mg) and 1,4-dioxane (2.0 mL) were added into reaction vessel with a

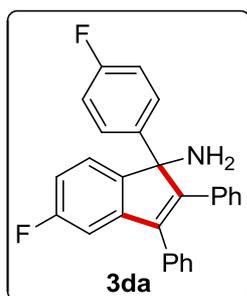
Teflon screw cap under nitrogen. The reaction mixture was stirred at 150 °C for 24 h. After the workup, The product was pre-absorbed on silica gel and purified by flash column chromatography affording product **3ca** in 95% isolated yield as a brown solid.

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.44 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 7.41 – 7.37 (m, 2H), 7.35 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 2H), 7.32 – 7.26 (m, 1H), 7.12 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz, 1H), 7.09 – 6.98 (m, 3H), 6.90 – 6.79 (m, 5H), 6.69 (dd, *J* = 8.2, 2.4 Hz, 1H), 3.77 (s, 3H), 3.75 (s, 3H), 1.80 (s, 2H).

<sup>13</sup>C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 159.8, 158.6, 152.5, 145.5, 144.2, 138.8, 135.1, 135.0, 134.6, 129.7, 129.5, 128.7, 128.0, 127.6, 127.3, 126.8, 123.7, 114.0, 111.6, 107.4, 70.8, 55.6, 55.3.

HRMS (ESI): Calculated for C<sub>29</sub>H<sub>26</sub>O<sub>2</sub>N<sup>+</sup> ([M+H]<sup>+</sup>): 420.19581, found: 420.19592.

### 5-fluoro-1-(4-fluorophenyl)-2,3-diphenyl-1H-inden-1-amine (3da)



Following the general procedure: ReBr(CO)<sub>5</sub> (0.025 mmol, 2.5 mol %, 10.2 mg), bis(4-fluorophenyl)methanimine **1d** (1.0 mmol, 217.1 mg), diphenylacetylene **2a** (1.0 mmol, 178.2 mg), Na<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> (0.3 mmol, 30 mol%, 31.8 mg) and 1,4-dioxane (2.0 mL) were added into reaction vessel with a Teflon screw cap

under nitrogen. The reaction mixture was stirred at 150 °C for 24 h. After the workup,

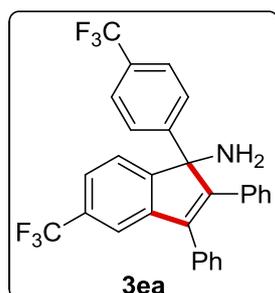
the product was pre-absorbed on silica gel and purified by flash column chromatography affording product **3ca** in 98% isolated yield as a yellow-white solid.

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)** δ 7.48-7.53 (m, 2H), 7.30-7.38 (m, 5H), 7.10-7.14 (m, 2H), 7.05-7.09 (m, 2H), 6.96-7.01 (m, 3H), 6.81-6.86 (m, 3H), 1.81 (s, 2H);

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)** δ 163.2 (q, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>C-F</sub> = 243.1 Hz), 162.1 (q, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>C-F</sub> = 243.9 Hz), 152.8, 148.2, 144.9 (d, <sup>4</sup>J<sub>C-F</sub> = 8.6 Hz), 138.6 (d, <sup>5</sup>J<sub>C-F</sub> = 3.0 Hz), 138.3 (d, <sup>5</sup>J<sub>C-F</sub> = 3.0 Hz), 134.5, 134.1, 129.6, 129.4, 128.9, 128.2, 128.0, 127.7, 127.4 (d, <sup>4</sup>J<sub>C-F</sub> = 8.0 Hz), 124.2 (d, <sup>4</sup>J<sub>C-F</sub> = 9.1 Hz), 115.6 (d, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>C-F</sub> = 21.0 Hz), 113.2 (d, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>C-F</sub> = 23.0 Hz), 108.6 (d, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>C-F</sub> = 24.0 Hz), 70.9;

**HRMS (ESI):** Calculated for C<sub>27</sub>H<sub>20</sub>NF<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> ([M+H]<sup>+</sup>): 396.15583, found: 396.15634.

### 2,3-diphenyl-5-(trifluoromethyl)-1-(4-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl)-1*H*-inden-1-amine (**3ea**)



Following the general procedure: ReBr(CO)<sub>5</sub> (0.025 mmol, 2.5 mol %, 10.2 mg), bis(4-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl)methanimine **1e** (1.0 mmol, 371.1 mg), diphenylacetylene **2a** (1.0 mmol, 178.2 mg), Na<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> (0.3 mmol, 30 mol%, 31.8 mg) and 1,4-dioxane (2.0 mL) were added into reaction vessel

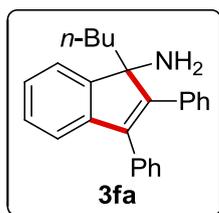
with a Teflon screw cap under nitrogen. The reaction mixture was stirred at 150 °C for 24 h. After the workup, The product was pre-absorbed on silica gel and purified by flash column chromatography affording product **3ea** in 56% isolated yield as a colorless solid.

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)** δ 7.70 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz, 2H), 7.58 (d, *J* = 8.3 Hz, 2H), 7.54 (s, 1H), 7.49 - 7.34 (m, 6H), 7.29 (d, *J* = 7.8 Hz, 1H), 7.15 (t, *J* = 7.3 Hz, 1H), 7.09 (t, *J* = 7.3 Hz, 2H), 6.85 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 1.89 (s, 2H);

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)** δ 155.8, 152.0, 146.4, 143.6, 139.2, 134.0, 133.5, 130.8 (q, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>C-F</sub> = 31.8 Hz), 129.7 (q, <sup>3</sup>J<sub>C-F</sub> = 31.8 Hz), 129.6, 129.4, 129.1, 128.4, 128.3, 128.0, 126.1, 126.0 (q, <sup>4</sup>J<sub>C-F</sub> = 3.8 Hz), 124.4 (q, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>C-F</sub> = 270.8 Hz), 124.3 (q, <sup>2</sup>J<sub>C-F</sub> = 270.3 Hz), 124.1 (q, <sup>4</sup>J<sub>C-F</sub> = 3.9 Hz), 123.5, 118.1 (q, <sup>4</sup>J = 3.7 Hz), 71.6;

**HRMS (EI):** Calculated for C<sub>29</sub>H<sub>19</sub>F<sub>6</sub>N: 495.1422, found: 495.1419.

### 1-butyl-2,3-diphenyl-1*H*-inden-1-amine (3fa)



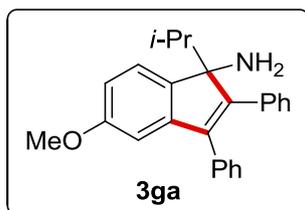
Following the general procedure: ReBr(CO)<sub>5</sub> (0.025 mmol, 2.5 mol %, 10.2 mg), 1-phenylpentan-1-imine **1f** (1.0 mmol, 161.1 mg), diphenylacetylene **2a** (1.0 mmol, 178.2 mg), Na<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> (0.3 mmol, 30 mol%, 31.8 mg) and 1,4-dioxane (2.0 mL) were added into reaction vessel with a Teflon screw cap under nitrogen. The reaction mixture was stirred at 150 °C for 24 h. After the workup, the product was pre-absorbed on silica gel and purified by flash column chromatography affording product **3fa** in 54% isolated yield as a brown solid.

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.46-7.48 (m, 1H), 7.22-7.33 (m, 13H), 1.95-2.02 (m, 1H), 1.84-1.91 (m, 1H), 1.64 (s, 2H), 1.12-1.24 (3H), 0.75-0.89 (m, 4H);

<sup>13</sup>C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 150.6, 149.4, 143.3, 139.6, 135.7, 135.0, 129.7, 129.5, 128.34, 128.26, 127.6, 127.30, 127.28, 126.2, 121.9, 120.7, 69.6, 38.3, 26.0, 22.9, 14.0;

HRMS (ESI): Calculated for C<sub>25</sub>H<sub>24</sub>N<sup>+</sup>([M-2H+H]<sup>+</sup>): 338.19032, found: 338.19008.

### 1-butyl-2,3-diphenyl-1*H*-inden-1-amine (3ga)



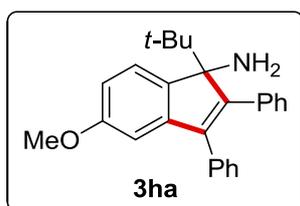
Following the general procedure: ReBr(CO)<sub>5</sub> (0.025 mmol, 2.5 mol %, 10.2 mg), 2-methyl-1-(4-methoxyphenyl)propan-1-imine **1g** (1.0 mmol, 177.2 mg), diphenylacetylene **2a** (1.0 mmol, 178.2 mg), Na<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> (0.3 mmol, 30 mol%, 31.8 mg) and 1,4-dioxane (2.0 mL) were added into reaction vessel with a Teflon screw cap under nitrogen. The reaction mixture was stirred at 150 °C for 24 h. After the workup, The product was pre-absorbed on silica gel and purified by flash column chromatography affording product **3ga** in 86% isolated yield as a yellow-white solid.

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.38 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 7.31 (dd, *J*<sub>1</sub> = 8.4 Hz, *J*<sub>2</sub> = 2 Hz, 2H), 7.21-7.27 (m, 8H), 6.81 (d, *J* = 2.4 Hz, 1H), 6.76 (dd, *J*<sub>1</sub> = 8 Hz, *J*<sub>2</sub> = 2.4 Hz, 1H), 3.78 (s, 3H), 1.99-2.08 (m, 1H), 1.69 (s, 2H), 1.18 (d, *J* = 6.8 Hz, 3H), 0.62 (d, *J* = 6.8 Hz, 3H);

<sup>13</sup>C NMR (MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 159.7, 151.0, 145.4, 141.0, 139.7, 136.2, 134.9, 129.8, 129.5, 128.4, 128.2, 127.3, 123.7, 110.5, 107.1, 72.0, 55.6, 34.5, 17.4, 17.3;

HRMS (ESI): Calculated for C<sub>25</sub>H<sub>26</sub>ON<sup>+</sup> ([M+H]<sup>+</sup>): 356.20089, found: 356.20020.

### 1-butyl-5-methoxy-2,3-diphenyl-1*H*-inden-1-amine (3ha)



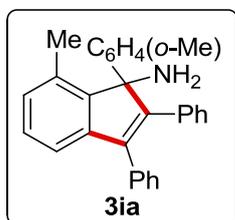
Following the general procedure: ReBr(CO)<sub>5</sub> (0.025 mmol, 2.5 mol %, 10.2 mg), 1-(4-methoxyphenyl)-2,2-dimethylpropan-1-imine **1h** (1.0 mmol, 191.1 mg), diphenylacetylene **2a** (1.0 mmol, 178.2 mg), Na<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> (0.3 mmol, 30 mol%, 31.8 mg) and 1,4-dioxane (2.0 mL) were added into reaction vessel with a Teflon screw cap under nitrogen. The reaction mixture was stirred at 150 °C for 24 h. After the workup, The product was pre-absorbed on silica gel and purified by flash column chromatography affording product **3ha** in 60% isolated yield as a brown solid.

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 7.41 (dd, *J*<sub>1</sub> = 6.8 Hz, *J*<sub>2</sub> = 2.4 Hz, 1H), 7.16-7.29 (m, 8H), 7.11-7.13 (m, 2H), 6.71-6.73 (m, 2H), 3.74 (s, 3H), 1.83 (s, 2H), 0.88 (s, 9H);

<sup>13</sup>C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 159.6, 150.8, 145.7, 142.0, 140.7, 138.6, 134.9, 129.52, 129.50, 128.2, 127.0, 126.9, 125.2, 109.9, 106.6, 74.9, 55.5, 38.0, 26.5;

HRMS (ESI): Calculated for C<sub>26</sub>H<sub>28</sub>ON<sup>+</sup> ([M+H]<sup>+</sup>): 370.21654, found: 370.21680.

### 7-methyl-2,3-diphenyl-1-(*o*-tolyl)-1*H*-inden-1-amine (3ia)



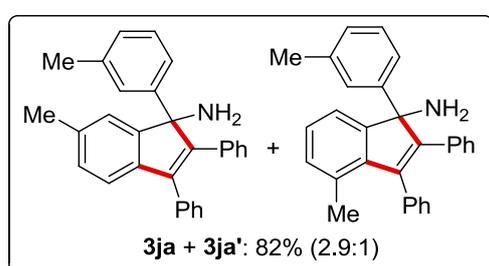
Following the general procedure: ReBr(CO)<sub>5</sub> (0.025 mmol, 2.5 mol%, 10.2 mg), di-*o*-tolylmethanimine **1i** (1.0 mmol, 209.1 mg), diphenylacetylene **2a** (1.0 mmol, 178.2 mg), Na<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> (0.3 mmol, 30 mol%, 31.8 mg) and 1,4-dioxane (2.0 mL) were added into reaction vessel with a Teflon screw cap under nitrogen. The reaction mixture was stirred at 150 °C for 24 h. After the workup, The product was pre-absorbed on silica gel and purified by flash column chromatography affording product **3ia** in 82% isolated yield as a yellow-white solid.

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 8.01 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.18-7.32 (m, 9H), 6.99-7.09

(m, 4H), 6.93-6.95 (m, 1H), 6.71 (d,  $J = 7.6$  Hz, 2H), 1.97 (s, 3H), 1.79-1.84 (m, 5H);  
 $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (101 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  149.6, 147.9, 144.3, 139.3, 139.0, 136.0, 135.3, 134.6,  
134.1, 131.8, 130.0, 129.5, 128.9, 128.7, 128.6, 127.9, 127.5, 127.4, 127.3, 126.0,  
119.1, 72.0, 19.5, 17.8;

HRMS (ESI): Calculated for  $\text{C}_{29}\text{H}_{26}\text{N}^+([\text{M}+\text{H}]^+)$ : 388.20598, found: 388.20655.

**6-methyl-2,3-diphenyl-1-(*m*-tolyl)-1*H*-inden-1-amine (3ja) and 4-methyl-2,3-diphenyl-1-(*m*-tolyl)-1*H*-inden-1-amine (3ja')**



Following the general procedure:  $\text{ReBr}(\text{CO})_5$  (0.025 mmol, 2.5 mol %, 10.2 mg), di-*m*-tolylmethanimine **1j** (1.0 mmol, 209.3 mg), diphenylacetylene **2a** (1.0 mmol, 178.2 mg),  $\text{Na}_2\text{CO}_3$  (0.3 mmol, 30 mol%, 31.8 mg)

and 1,4-dioxane (1.5 mL) were added into reaction vessel with a Teflon screw cap under nitrogen. The reaction mixture was stirred at 150 °C for 24 h. After the workup, the product was pre-absorbed on silica gel and purified by flash column chromatography affording product **3ja** and **3ja'** in 82% isolated yield as a yellow oily liquid. **3ja:3ja'** = 3:1 (determined by  $^1\text{H}$  NMR).

Data of the major isomer **3ja**:

$^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  7.46 – 7.40 (m, 3H), 7.40 – 7.28 (m, 4H), 7.18 (t,  $J = 7.4$  Hz, 2H), 7.11 – 7.01 (m, 6H), 6.85 (d,  $J = 7.7$  Hz, 2H), 2.33 (s, 3H), 2.29 (s, 3H), 1.81 (s, 2H);

$^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (101 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  153.3, 150.3, 142.9, 140.2, 139.3, 138.3, 136.7, 135.4, 134.7, 129.7, 129.6, 128.7, 128.6, 128.3, 128.1, 127.7, 127.6, 127.1, 126.2, 124.1, 122.8, 120.8, 71.5, 21.9, 21.6.

Data of the mixture of **3ja** and **3ja'**:

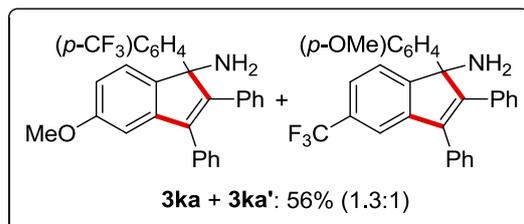
$^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (101 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  153.5, 153.3, 151.7, 150.3, 142.9, 142.8, 141.2, 140.3, 140.2, 139.3, 138.3, 138.2, 138.1, 136.7, 135.4, 134.7, 134.6, 132.3, 131.0, 130.2, 129.73, 129.69, 129.6, 128.7, 128.6, 128.5, 128.3, 128.2, 128.1, 127.8, 127.73, 127.69, 127.6, 127.3, 127.1, 127.0, 126.7, 126.2, 124.1, 122.8, 121.0, 120.8, 71.5, 71.1, 21.9,

21.6, 20.3.

**HRMS (ESI):** Calculated for  $C_{29}H_{26}N^+([M+H]^+)$ : 388.20598, found: 388.20566.

**5-methoxy-2,3-diphenyl-1-(4-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl)-1*H*-inden-1-amine (3ka)**

**1-(4-methoxyphenyl)-2,3-diphenyl-5-(trifluoromethyl)-1*H*-inden-1-amine (3ka')**



Following the general procedure:  
ReBr(CO)<sub>5</sub> (0.025 mmol, 2.5 mol%, 10.2 mg), (4-methoxyphenyl)(4-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl)methanimine **1k** (1.0 mmol,

279.3 mg), diphenylacetylene **2a** (1.0 mmol, 178.2 mg), Na<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> (0.3 mmol, 30 mol%, 31.8 mg) and 1,4-dioxane (2.0 mL) were added into reaction vessel with a Teflon screw cap under nitrogen. The reaction mixture was stirred at 150 °C for 24 h. After the workup, the product was pre-absorbed on silica gel and purified by flash column chromatography affording products **3ka** and **3ka'** in 56% isolated yield as yellow-white solid. The ratio of **3ka:3ka'** was 1.3:1 determined by <sup>1</sup>H NMR analysis.

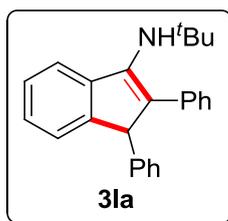
**<sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)** δ 7.68 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz, 1H), 7.55 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz, 1H), 7.51 (s, 0.5H), 7.46 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 1H), 7.45 – 7.30 (m, 6H), 7.16 – 7.05 (m, 3.5H), 6.90 – 6.84 (m, 2.4H), 6.82 (d, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 6.71 (dd, *J* = 8.2, 2.3 Hz, 0.6H), 3.81 (s, 1.3H), 3.78 (s, 1.7H), 1.79 (s, 2H);

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR (125 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)** δ 160.2, 159.0, 156.7, 152.7, 151.8, 148.0, 144.6, 144.3, 143.5, 139.8, 138.3, 134.7, 134.4, 134.1, 134.0, 133.4, 130.12 (q, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 31.9 Hz), 129.7, 129.6, 129.5, 129.4, 129.1 (q, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 32.2 Hz), 129.0, 128.9, 128.3, 128.2, 128.1, 127.9, 127.7, 127.6, 126.8, 126.0, 125.7 (q, <sup>4</sup>*J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 3.6 Hz), 124.5 (q, <sup>2</sup>*J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 272.3 Hz), 124.4 (q, <sup>2</sup>*J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 272.0 Hz), 123.9, 123.8 (q, <sup>4</sup>*J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 4.0 Hz), 123.4, 117.7 (q, <sup>4</sup>*J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 3.8 Hz), 114.3, 111.8, 107.7, 71.4, 71.0, 55.6, 55.3.

**HRMS (ESI):** Calculated for  $C_{29}H_{23}F_3NO^+([M+H]^+)$ : 458.17263, found: 458.17246.

***N*-(*tert*-butyl)-1,2-diphenyl-1*H*-inden-3-amine (3la)**

Following the general procedure: Re<sub>2</sub>(CO)<sub>10</sub> (0.025 mmol, 2.5 mol %, 16.3 mg),



*N*-*tert*-butyl-1-phenylmethanimine (**1**) (1.0 mmol, 161.2 mg), diphenylacetylene **2a** (1.0 mmol, 178.2 mg), Na<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> (0.3 mmol, 30 mol%, 31.8 mg) and 1,4-dioxane (2.0 mL) were added into reaction vessel with a Teflon screw cap under nitrogen. The

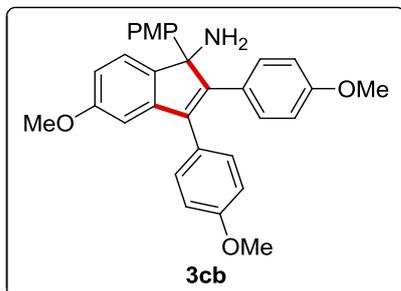
reaction mixture was stirred at 150 °C for 24 h. After the workup, the product was pre-absorbed on silica gel and purified by flash column chromatography affording product **3la** in 54% isolated yield as a yellow solid.

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)** δ 7.48 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.21-7.35 (m, 6H), 7.08-7.18 (m, 6H), 7.03-7.04 (m, 2H), 4.87 (s, 1H), 1.13 (s, 9H);

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)** δ 147.6, 144.5, 143.4, 140.6, 137.2, 136.8, 129.0, 128.6, 128.4, 128.3, 126.6, 126.5, 125.6, 124.0, 120.1, 56.8, 55.1, 31.2;

**HRMS (ESI):** Calculated for C<sub>25</sub>H<sub>26</sub>N<sup>+</sup> ([M+H]<sup>+</sup>):340.2060 , found: 340.2059.

### 5-methoxy-1,2,3-tris(4-methoxyphenyl)-1*H*-inden-1-amine (**3cb**)



Following the general procedure: ReBr(CO)<sub>5</sub> (0.025 mmol, 2.5 mol %, 10.2 mg), bis(4-methoxyphenyl) methanimine **1c** (1.0 mmol, 241.1 mg), 1,2-bis(4-methoxyphenyl)ethyne **2b** (1.0 mmol, 238.1 mg), Na<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> (0.3 mmol, 30 mol%, 31.8 mg)

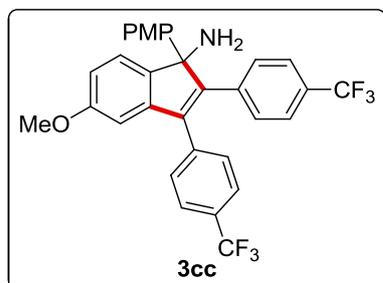
and 1,4-dioxane (2.0 mL) were added into reaction vessel with a Teflon screw cap under nitrogen. The reaction mixture was stirred at 150 °C for 24 h. After the workup, The product was pre-absorbed on silica gel and purified by flash column chromatography affording product **3cb** in 96% isolated yield as a solid.

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)** δ 7.44 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 1H), 7.33 (d, *J* = 8.7 Hz, 1H), 7.09 (d, *J* = 8.1 Hz, 1H), 6.91 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 1H), 6.86 – 6.78 (m, 4H), 6.66 (dd, *J* = 8.2, 2.4 Hz, 1H), 6.61 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 1H), 3.82 (s, 2H), 3.78 (s, 2H), 3.76 (s, 2H), 3.69 (s, 2H), 1.78 (s, 1H).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)** δ 159.8, 159.0, 158.6, 158.5, 151.3, 145.5, 144.6, 137.4, 135.5, 130.9, 130.7, 127.6, 127.0, 126.7, 123.6, 114.2, 114.0, 113.6, 111.2, 107.1, 77.5, 77.2, 76.8, 70.5, 55.6, 55.3, 55.3, 55.1.

**HRMS (ESI):** Calculated for  $C_{31}H_{30}O_4N^+$  ( $[M+H]^+$ ): 480.21693, found: 480.21744.

**5-methoxy-1-(4-methoxyphenyl)-2,3-bis(4-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl)-1H-inden-1-amine (3cc)**



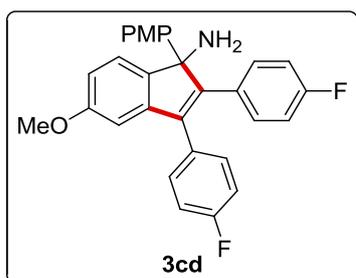
Following the general procedure:  $ReBr(CO)_5$  (0.025 mmol, 2.5 mol %, 10.2 mg), bis(4-methoxyphenyl)methanimine **1c** (1.0 mmol, 241.1 mg), 1,2-bis(4-(trifluoro methyl)phenyl)-ethyne **2c** (1.0 mmol, 314.1 mg),  $Na_2CO_3$  (0.3 mmol, 30 mol%, 31.8 mg) and 1,4-dioxane (2.0 mL) were added into reaction vessel with a Teflon screw cap under nitrogen. The reaction mixture was stirred at 150 °C for 24 h. After the workup, The product was pre-absorbed on silica gel and purified by flash column chromatography affording product **3cc** in 93% isolated yield as a solid.

**$^1H$  NMR (400 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ )**  $\delta$  7.64 (d,  $J = 8.0$  Hz, 2H), 7.50 (d,  $J = 8.0$  Hz, 2H), 7.39 (d,  $J = 8.8$  Hz, 2H), 7.34 (d,  $J = 8.3$  Hz, 2H), 7.14 (d,  $J = 8.0$  Hz, 1H), 6.97 (d,  $J = 8.0$  Hz, 2H), 6.84 (d,  $J = 8.8$  Hz, 2H), 6.81 (d,  $J = 2.4$  Hz, 1H), 6.75 (dd,  $J_1 = 8.0$  Hz,  $J_2 = 2.4$  Hz, 1H), 3.77 (s, 3H), 3.76 (s, 3H), 1.82 (s, 2H);

**$^{13}C$  NMR (101 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ )**  $\delta$  160.1, 158.9, 152.3, 145.6, 143.2, 139.0, 138.4, 138.1, 133.9, 130.1 (q,  $^3J_{C-F} = 32.3$  Hz), 129.9, 129.8, 129.5 (q,  $^3J_{C-F} = 32.2$  Hz), 126.8, 125.9 (q,  $^4J_{C-F} = 3.6$  Hz), 125.1 (q,  $^4J_{C-F} = 3.7$  Hz), 124.2 (q,  $^2J_{C-F} = 270.5$  Hz), 124.1 (q,  $^2J_{C-F} = 270.4$  Hz), 124.0, 114.2, 112.4, 107.5, 71.2, 55.6, 55.3;

**HRMS (ESI):** Calculated for  $C_{31}H_{24}O_2NF_6^+$  ( $[M+H]^+$ ): 556.17057, found: 556.17157.

**2,3-bis(4-fluorophenyl)-5-methoxy-1-(4-methoxyphenyl)-1H-inden-1-amine (3cd)**



Following the general procedure:  $ReBr(CO)_5$  (0.025 mmol, 2.5 mol %, 10.2 mg), bis(4-methoxyphenyl)methanimine **1c** (1.0 mmol, 241.1 mg), 1,2-bis(4-fluoro phenyl)ethyne **2d** (1.0 mmol, 214.1 mg),  $Na_2CO_3$  (0.3 mmol, 30 mol%, 31.8 mg) and 1,4-dioxane (2.0 mL)

were added into reaction vessel with a Teflon screw cap under nitrogen. The reaction

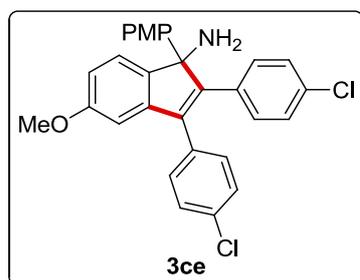
mixture was stirred at 150 °C for 24 h. After the workup, The product was pre-absorbed on silica gel and purified by flash column chromatography affording product **3cd** in 96% isolated yield as a solid.

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)** δ 7.32-7.40 (m, 4H), 7.11 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.05 (m, 2H), 6.81-6.84 (m, 5H), 6.76 (td, *J*<sub>1</sub> = 8.8 Hz, *J*<sub>2</sub> = 2.4 Hz, 2H), 6.70 (dd, *J*<sub>1</sub> = 8.2 Hz, *J* = 2.4 Hz, 1H), 3.78 (s, 3H), 3.76 (s, 3H), 1.78 (s, 2H)

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)** δ 162.3 (d, <sup>2</sup>*J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 245.7 Hz), 162.0 (d, <sup>2</sup>*J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 246.3 Hz), 159.9, 158.7, 151.7, 145.5, 144.0, 137.9, 134.5, 131.4 (d, <sup>4</sup>*J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 7.7 Hz), 131.2 (d, <sup>4</sup>*J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 7.8 Hz), 130.7 (d, <sup>5</sup>*J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 3.3 Hz), 130.5 (d, <sup>5</sup>*J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 3.5 Hz), 126.8, 123.8, 115.9 (d, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 21.3 Hz), 115.2 (d, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 21.0 Hz), 114.7, 111.7, 107.3, 70.8, 55.6, 55.3;

**HRMS (ESI):** Calculated for C<sub>29</sub>H<sub>24</sub>O<sub>2</sub>NF<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> ([M+H]<sup>+</sup>): 456.17696, found: 456.17761.

### 2,3-bis(4-chlorophenyl)-5-methoxy-1-(4-methoxyphenyl)-1*H*-inden-1-amine (**3ce**)



Following the general procedure: ReBr(CO)<sub>5</sub> (0.025 mmol, 2.5 mol %, 10.2 mg), bis(4-methoxyphenyl) methanimine **1c** (1.0 mmol, 241.1 mg), 1,2-bis(4-chlorophenyl)ethyne **2e** (1.0 mmol, 246.0 mg), Na<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> (0.3 mmol, 30 mol%, 31.8 mg) and 1,4-dioxane (2.0

mL) were added into reaction vessel with a Teflon screw cap under nitrogen. The reaction mixture was stirred at 150 °C for 24 h. After the workup, The product was pre-absorbed on silica gel and purified by flash column chromatography affording product **3ce** in 95% isolated yield as a solid.

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)** δ 7.29-7.38 (m, 6H), 7.10 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.04 (dd, *J*<sub>1</sub> = 6.8 Hz, *J*<sub>2</sub> = 1.6 Hz, 2H), 6.77-6.83 (m, 5H), 6.70 (dd, *J*<sub>1</sub> = 8.4 Hz, *J*<sub>2</sub> = 2.4 Hz, 1H), 3.77 (s, 3H), 3.75 (s, 3H), 1.78 (s, 2H);

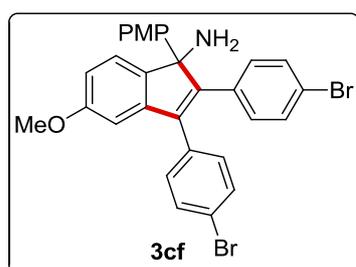
**<sup>13</sup>C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)** δ 159.9, 158.7, 151.7, 145.5, 143.6, 138.2, 134.3, 133.7, 133.4, 133.2, 132.9, 130.9, 130.8, 129.1, 128.4, 126.8, 123.8, 114.1, 112.0, 107.3, 70.8, 55.6, 55.3;

**HRMS (ESI):** Calculated for C<sub>29</sub>H<sub>22</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>N<sup>+</sup> ([M-2H+H]<sup>+</sup>): 486.10220, found:

486.10230.

### 2,3-bis(4-bromophenyl)-5-methoxy-1-(4-methoxyphenyl)-1H-inden-1-amine (3cf)

Following the general procedure:  $\text{ReBr}(\text{CO})_5$  (0.025 mmol, 2.5 mol %, 10.2 mg), bis(4-methoxyphenyl) methanimine **1c** (1.0 mmol, 241.1 mg), 1,2-bis(4-bromophenyl)ethyne **2f** (1.0 mmol, 178.2 mg),  $\text{Na}_2\text{CO}_3$  (0.3 mmol, 30 mol%, 31.8 mg) and 1,4-dioxane (2.0 mL) were added into reaction vessel with a Teflon screw cap



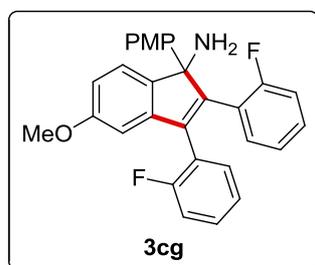
under nitrogen. The reaction mixture was stirred at 150 °C for 24 h. After the workup, The product was pre-absorbed on silica gel and purified by flash column chromatography affording product **3cf** in 78% isolated yield as a solid.

$^1\text{H NMR}$  (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  7.49 (d,  $J = 8.4$  Hz, 2H), 7.36 (d,  $J = 8.8$  Hz, 2H), 7.24 (d,  $J = 8.4$  Hz, 2H), 7.19 (d,  $J = 8.4$  Hz, 2H), 7.10 (d,  $J = 8.0$  Hz, 1H), 6.79-6.83 (m, 3H), 6.69-6.73 (m, 3H), 3.76 (s, 3H), 3.75 (s, 3H), 1.77 (s, 2H);

$^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (101 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  159.9, 158.7, 151.7, 145.5, 143.5, 138.2, 134.2, 133.6, 133.3, 132.1, 131.4, 131.2, 131.1, 126.7, 123.8, 121.9, 121.8, 114.1, 112.0, 107.2, 70.8, 55.6, 55.3;

**HRMS (ESI):** Calculated for  $\text{C}_{29}\text{H}_{22}\text{Br}_2\text{O}_2\text{N}^+$  ( $[\text{M}-2\text{H}+\text{H}]^+$ ): 574.00117, found: 574.00163.

### 2,3-bis(2-fluorophenyl)-5-methoxy-1-(4-methoxyphenyl)-1H-inden-1-amine (3cg)



Following the general procedure:  $\text{ReBr}(\text{CO})_5$  (0.025 mmol, 2.5 mol %, 10.2 mg), bis(4-methoxyphenyl)methanimine **1c** (1.0 mmol, 241.1 mg), 1,2-bis(2-fluorophenyl)ethyne **2g** (1.0 mmol, 214.1 mg),  $\text{Na}_2\text{CO}_3$  (0.3 mmol, 30 mol%, 31.8 mg) and 1,4-dioxane (2.0 mL) were added into reaction vessel with a Teflon screw cap under nitrogen. The reaction mixture was stirred at 150 °C for 24 h. After the workup, the product was pre-absorbed on silica gel and purified by flash column chromatography affording product **3ca** in 76% yield as a

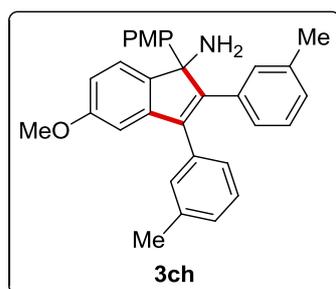
solid.

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)** δ 7.33 (d, *J* = 8.7 Hz, 2H), 7.26 – 7.17 (m, 2H), 7.13 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 1H), 7.11 – 6.98 (m, 3H), 6.88 – 6.74 (m, 4H), 6.72 (d, *J* = 6.8 Hz, 2H), 6.66 (t, *J* = 6.9 Hz, 1H), 3.73 (s, 3H), 3.73 (s, 3H), 1.88 (s, 2H).

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)** δ 160.1 (d, <sup>2</sup>*J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 245.1 Hz), 160.0, 158.6, 149.2, 145.1, 143.8, 133.3, 131.0, 130.84 (d, <sup>5</sup>*J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 2.6 Hz), 129.7 (d, <sup>4</sup>*J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 8.0 Hz), 129.4 (d, <sup>4</sup>*J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 8.1 Hz), 127.2, 124.0 (d, <sup>5</sup>*J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 3.3 Hz), 123.7, 123.5 (d, <sup>5</sup>*J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 3.2 Hz), 122.34 (d, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 16.0 Hz), 122.28 (d, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 16.2 Hz), 115.8 (d, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 21.7 Hz), 115.4 (d, <sup>3</sup>*J*<sub>C-F</sub> = 21.5 Hz), 113.7, 111.8, 107.3, 71.8, 55.5, 55.2.

**HRMS (ESI):** Calculated for C<sub>29</sub>H<sub>24</sub>O<sub>2</sub>NF<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> ([M+H]<sup>+</sup>): 456.17696, found: 456.17698.

### 5-methoxy-1-(4-methoxyphenyl)-2,3-di-*m*-tolyl-1*H*-inden-1-amine (3ch)



Following the general procedure: ReBr(CO)<sub>5</sub> (0.025 mmol, 2.5 mol %, 10.2 mg), bis(4-methoxyphenyl) methanimine **1c** (1.0 mmol, 241.1 mg), 1,2-di-*m*-tolylethyne **2h** (1.0 mmol, 206.1 mg), Na<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> (0.3 mmol, 30 mol%, 31.8 mg) and 1,4-dioxane (2.0 mL)

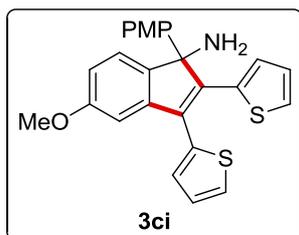
were added into reaction vessel with a Teflon screw cap under nitrogen. The reaction mixture was stirred at 150 °C for 24 h. After the workup, the product was pre-absorbed on silica gel and purified by flash column chromatography affording product **3ch** in 84% isolated yield as a solid.

**<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)** δ 7.44 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 7.23 (t, *J* = 7.5 Hz, 2H), 7.17 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.11 (d, *J* = 8.1 Hz, 2H), 6.89-6.96 (m, 2H), 6.81-6.84 (m, 3H), 6.65-6.69 (m, 3H), 3.77 (s, 3H), 3.75 (s, 3H), 2.32 (s, 3H), 2.07 (s, 3H), 1.80 (s, 2H);

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)** δ 159.8, 158.5, 152.4, 145.5, 144.5, 138.7, 138.1, 137.3, 135.3, 135.1, 134.5, 130.4, 130.0, 128.5, 128.3, 128.0, 127.8, 126.82, 126.77, 126.6, 123.6, 114.0, 111.4, 107.5, 70.7, 55.6, 55.3, 21.6, 21.5;

**HRMS (EI):** Calculated for C<sub>31</sub>H<sub>30</sub>O<sub>2</sub>N<sup>+</sup> ([M+H]<sup>+</sup>): 448.22711, found: 448.22757.

### 5-methoxy-1-(4-methoxyphenyl)-2,3-di(thiophen-2-yl)-1*H*-inden-1-amine (3ci)



Following the general procedure:  $\text{ReBr}(\text{CO})_5$  (0.025 mmol, 2.5 mol %, 10.2 mg), bis(4-methoxyphenyl) methanimine **1c** (1.0 mmol, 241.1 mg), 1,2-di(thiophen -2-yl)ethyne **2i** (1.0 mmol, 190.0 mg),  $\text{Na}_2\text{CO}_3$  (0.3 mmol, 30 mol%, 31.8

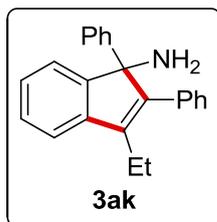
mg) and 1,4-dioxane (2.0 mL) were added into reaction vessel with a Teflon screw cap under nitrogen. The reaction mixture was stirred at 150 °C for 24 h. After the workup, The product was pre-absorbed on silica gel and purified by flash column chromatography affording product **3ci** in 94% isolated yield as a brown oily liquid.

$^1\text{H NMR}$  (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  7.44-7.49 (m, 3H), 7.20-7.22 (m, 1H), 7.16 (dd,  $J_1 = 5.2$  Hz,  $J_2 = 3.6$  Hz, 1H), 7.10-7.12 (m, 2H), 6.79-6.83 (m, 4H), 6.66-6.73 (m, 2H), 3.74 (s, 3H), 3.72 (s, 3H), 1.90 (s, 2H);

$^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (101 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  160.1, 158.8, 148.2, 144.4, 144.0, 135.9, 135.1, 134.6, 131.2, 128.2, 128.1, 127.8, 127.0, 126.8, 126.7, 123.7, 114.0, 112.2, 107.0, 70.7, 55.5, 55.2;

**HRMS (EI)**: Calculated for  $\text{C}_{25}\text{H}_{22}\text{O}_2\text{NS}_2^+$  ( $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$ ): 432.10865, found: 432.10920.

### 3-methyl-1,2-diphenyl-1H-inden-1-amine (**3ak**)<sup>3</sup>



Following the general procedure:  $\text{ReBr}(\text{CO})_5$  (0.025 mmol, 2.5 mol %, 10.2 mg), diphenylmethanimine **1a** (1.0 mmol, 181.1 mg), but-1-yn-1-ylbenzene **2k** (1.0 mmol, 130.1 mg),  $\text{Na}_2\text{CO}_3$  (0.3 mmol, 30 mol%, 31.8 mg) and 1,4-dioxane (2.0 mL) were added

into reaction vessel with a Teflon screw cap under nitrogen. The reaction mixture was stirred at 150 °C for 24 h. After workup, the crude reaction mixture was checked by  $^1\text{H NMR}$  analysis and only one regioisomer was detected. Then the product was pre-absorbed on silica gel and purified by flash column chromatography affording product **3ak** in 79% isolated yield as a solid. The spectra data of **3ak** is in agreement with the known compound in literature.<sup>3</sup>

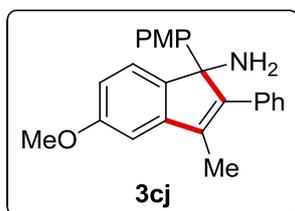
$^1\text{H NMR}$  (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  7.40 – 7.32 (m, 3H), 7.31 – 7.09 (m, 9H), 6.96 – 6.87 (m, 2H), 2.75 – 2.39 (m, 2H), 1.75 (s, 2H), 1.26 (t,  $J = 7.6$  Hz, 3H).;

$^{13}\text{C NMR}$  (101 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  153.3, 150.3, 143.2, 142.5, 140.4, 135.2, 129.3,

128.4, 128.2, 127.7, 127.4, 126.8, 126.4, 125.9, 123.0, 120.0, 71.8, 19.5, 13.8.;

**HRMS (EI):** Calculated for  $C_{23}H_{22}N^+$  ( $[M+H]^+$ ): 312.17468, found: 312.17422.

### 5-methoxy-1-(4-methoxyphenyl)-3-methyl-2-phenyl-1H-inden-1-amine (3cj)



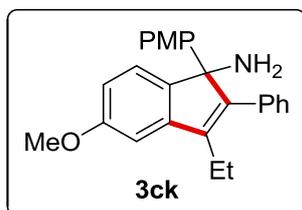
Following the general procedure:  $ReBr(CO)_5$  (0.025 mmol, 2.5 mol %, 10.2 mg), bis(4-methoxyphenyl)methanimine **1c** (1.0 mmol, 241.1 mg), prop-1-yn-1-ylbenzene **2j** (1.0 mmol, 116.1 mg),  $Na_2CO_3$  (0.3 mmol, 30 mol%, 31.8 mg) and 1,4-dioxane (2.0 mL) were added into reaction vessel with a Teflon screw cap under nitrogen. The reaction mixture was stirred at 150 °C for 24 h. After the workup, The product was pre-absorbed on silica gel and purified by flash column chromatography affording product **3cj** in 87% isolated yield as a solid.

**$^1H$  NMR (400 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ )**  $\delta$  7.30-7.34 (m, 2H), 7.21-7.29 (m, 3H), 7.08 (d,  $J = 4.4$  Hz, 1H), 7.00-7.04 (m, 2H), 6.91 (d,  $J = 2.0$  Hz, 1H), 6.78-6.82 (m, 2H), 6.70 (dd,  $J_1 = 8.0$  Hz,  $J_2 = 2.4$  Hz, 1H), 3.84 (s, 3H), 3.77 (s, 3H), 2.18 (s, 3H), 1.74 (s, 2H);

**$^{13}C$  NMR (101 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ )**  $\delta$  159.9, 158.4, 151.7, 145.6, 145.4, 135.2, 134.9, 133.8, 129.3, 128.1, 127.3, 126.9, 123.1, 113.7, 111.0, 106.0, 70.8, 55.5, 55.2, 11.8;

**HRMS (EI):** Calculated for  $C_{24}H_{24}O_2N^+$  ( $[M+H]^+$ ): 358.18016, found: 358.18060.

### 3-ethyl-5-methoxy-1-(4-methoxyphenyl)-2-phenyl-1H-inden-1-amine (3ck)



Following the general procedure:  $ReBr(CO)_5$  (0.025 mmol, 2.5 mol %, 10.2 mg), bis(4-methoxyphenyl)methanimine **1c** (1.0 mmol, 241.1 mg), but-1-yn-1-ylbenzene **2k** (3.0 mmol, 260.2 mg),  $Na_2CO_3$  (0.3 mmol, 30 mol%, 31.8 mg) and 1,4-dioxane (2.0 mL) were added into reaction vessel with a Teflon screw cap under nitrogen. The reaction mixture was stirred at 150 °C for 24 h. After the workup, The product was pre-absorbed on silica gel and purified by flash column chromatography affording product **3ck** in 78% isolated yield as a solid.

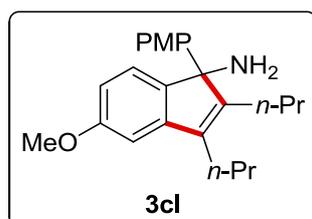
**$^1H$  NMR (300 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ )**  $\delta$  7.21-7.25 (m, 5H), 7.05 (d,  $J = 8.4$  Hz, 1H), 6.90-6.93 (m, 3H), 6.76 (d,  $J = 7.8$  Hz, 2H), 6.66 (dd,  $J_1 = 8.4$  Hz,  $J_2 = 2.4$  Hz, 1H), 3.82 (s, 3H),

3.75 (s, 3H), 2.45-2.60 (m, 2H), 1.70 (s, 2H), 1.24 (t,  $J = 7.6$  Hz, 3H);

$^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (75 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  159.9, 158.4, 151.8, 145.7, 144.7, 139.6, 135.3, 134.7, 129.3, 128.2, 127.4, 127.0, 123.4, 113.7, 110.7, 106.6, 70.8, 55.6, 55.2, 19.4, 13.8;

HRMS (EI): Calculated for  $\text{C}_{25}\text{H}_{26}\text{O}_2\text{N}^+$  ( $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$ ): 372.19581, found: 372.19617.

### 5-methoxy-1-(4-methoxyphenyl)-2,3-dipropyl-1H-inden-1-amine (3cl)



Following the general procedure:  $\text{ReBr}(\text{CO})_5$  (0.025 mmol, 2.5 mol %, 10.2 mg), bis(4-methoxyphenyl)methanimine **1c** (1.0 mmol, 241.1 mg), oct-4-yne **2l** (1.0 mmol, 110.1 mg),  $\text{Na}_2\text{CO}_3$  (0.3 mmol, 30 mol%, 31.8 mg) and

1,4-dioxane (2.0 mL) were added into reaction vessel with a Teflon screw cap under nitrogen. The reaction mixture was stirred at  $150^\circ\text{C}$  for 24 h. After the workup, The product was pre-absorbed on silica gel and purified by flash column chromatography affording product **3cl** in 78% isolated yield as a brown oily liquid.

$^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  7.22 (d,  $J = 8.4$  Hz, 2H), 6.94 (d,  $J = 8.0$  Hz, 1H), 6.74-6.77 (m, 3H), 6.58 (dd,  $J_1 = 8.0$  Hz,  $J_2 = 2.4$  Hz, 1H), 3.79 (s, 3H), 3.73 (s, 3H), 2.44-2.47 (m, 2H), 2.14-2.22 (m, 1H), 1.96-2.08 (m, 1H), 1.61-1.70 (m, 4H), 1.26-1.39 (m, 1H), 1.08-1.21 (m, 1H), 1.01 (t,  $J = 7.3$  Hz, 3H), 0.82 (t,  $J = 7.3$  Hz, 3H);

$^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (101 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ )  $\delta$  159.7, 158.4, 152.4, 146.2, 145.7, 136.3, 135.2, 126.9, 122.4, 113.5, 109.4, 105.9, 70.2, 55.5, 55.2, 28.0, 27.7, 23.1, 22.1, 14.9, 14.5;

HRMS (EI): Calculated for  $\text{C}_{23}\text{H}_{30}\text{O}_2\text{N}^+$  ( $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$ ): 352.22711, found: 352.22755.

In addition, we have conducted the reactions of ketimine **1c** with phenylacetylene and silyl-substituted alkyne ( $\text{TMSC}\equiv\text{CPh}$ ) under the standard reaction conditions. Unfortunately, no reaction took place with phenylacetylene and the expected [3+2] annulation product was only detected in a very low yield (14%) by  $^1\text{H}$  NMR for the silyl-substituted alkyne ( $\text{TMSC}\equiv\text{CPh}$ ), which might be ascribed to the increased steric hindrance of the silyl-substituted alkyne.

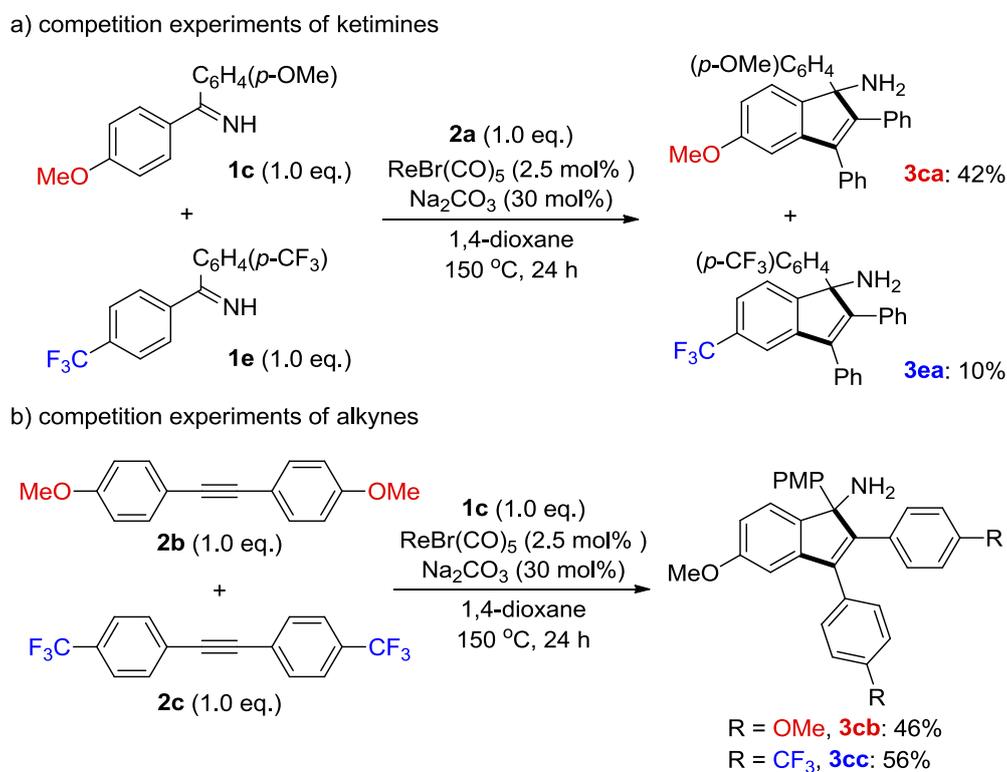
## 6. Mechanistic Studies

### 6.1 Competition Experiments

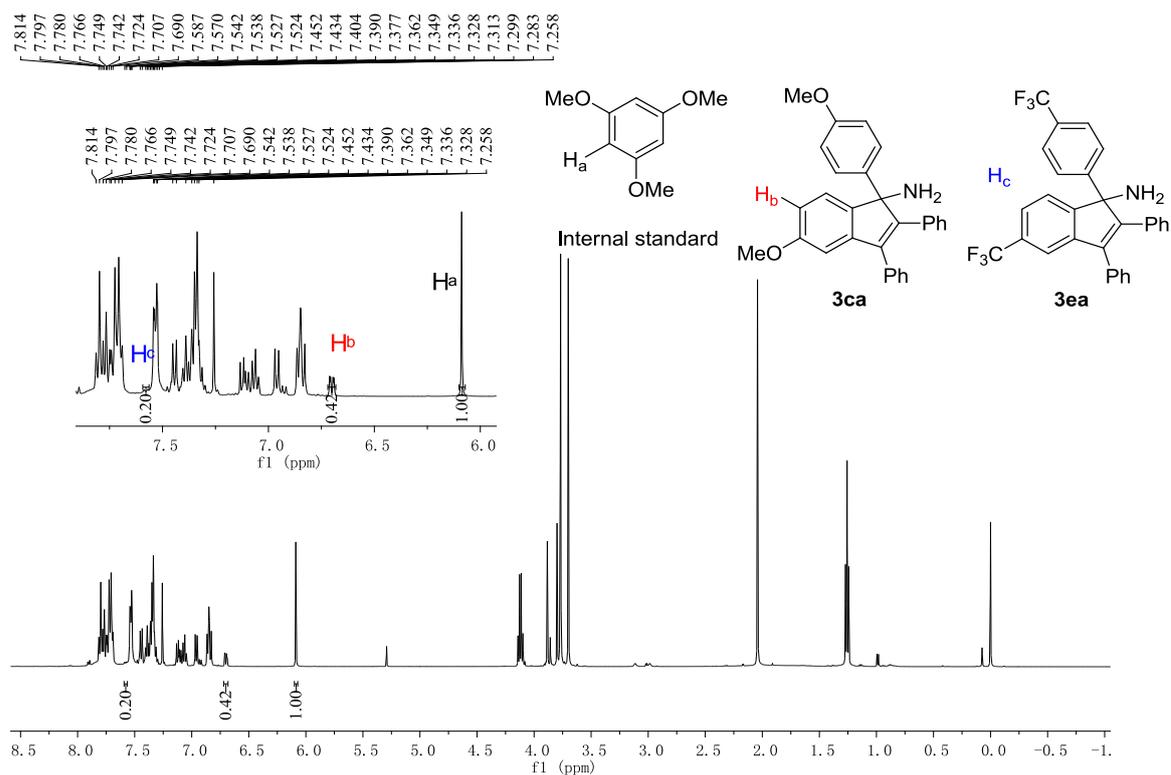
In order to explore the possible reaction mechanism, two competition experiments were conducted (**Scheme S1**).

First, equal molar amounts of ketimines **1c** and **1e** bearing OMe and CF<sub>3</sub> groups at the *para*-position respectively, were treated with an inadequate amount of alkyne **2a** under standard conditions (**Scheme S1a**). The amine **3ca** derived from **1c** turned out to be the major product (**Figure S1**), which suggested the existence of the electron-donating group in ketimines facilitated the reaction.

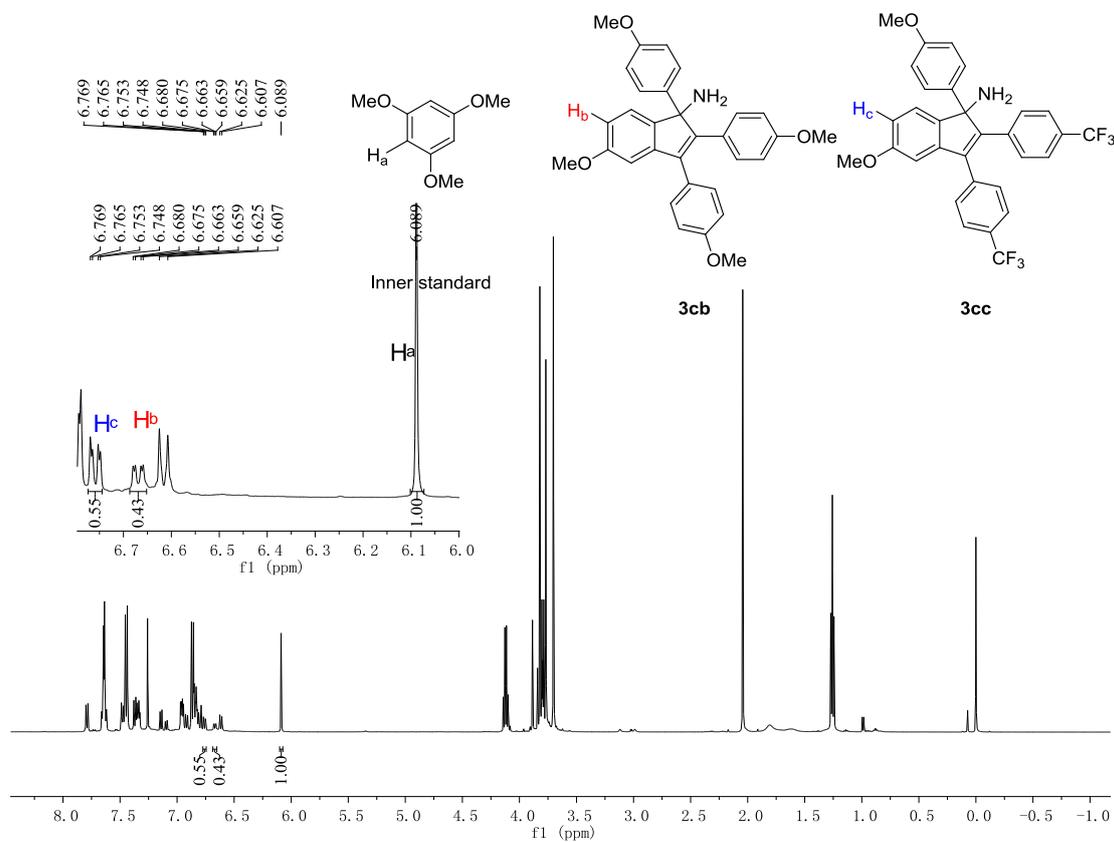
On the other hand, equal molar amounts of alkynes **2b** and **2c** with OMe and CF<sub>3</sub> groups at the *para*-position respectively, were treated with ketimine **1c** under standard conditions (**Scheme S1b**). It was found that the reaction favored alkyne **2c** bearing the electron-withdrawing group CF<sub>3</sub> slightly (**Figure S2**).



**Scheme S1.** Competition Reactions



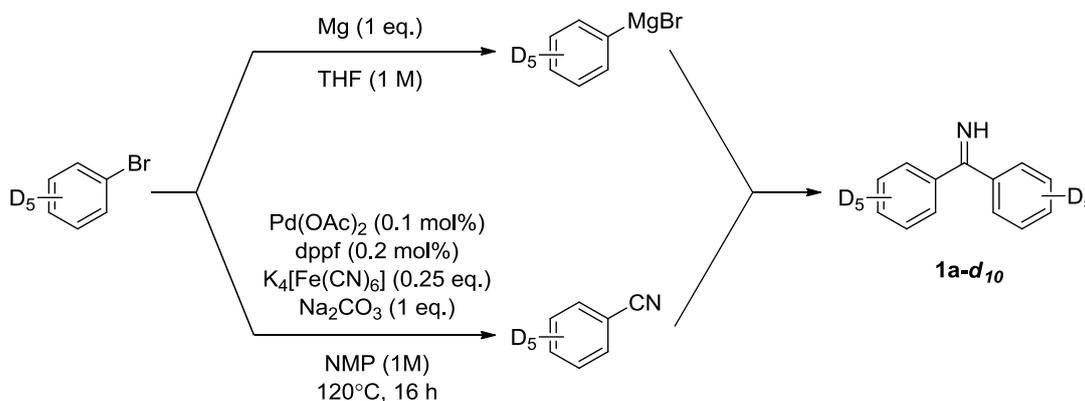
**Figure S1.** Crude  $^1\text{H}$  NMR Spectra of the Competition Reactions Scheme S1a



**Figure S2.** Crude  $^1\text{H}$  NMR Spectra of the Competition Reactions Scheme S1b

## 6.2 Deuterium-labeling Experiments

Deuterated N-H ketimine **1a-d<sub>10</sub>** was prepared from commercially available bromobenzene-*d*<sub>5</sub> (Alfa Aesar, >99% D) according to the following **Scheme S2**.<sup>1,7</sup>



**Scheme S2.** Preparation of Deuterated Ketimine **1a-d<sub>10</sub>**

### Dipentadeuterophenylmethanimine (**1a-d<sub>10</sub>**)

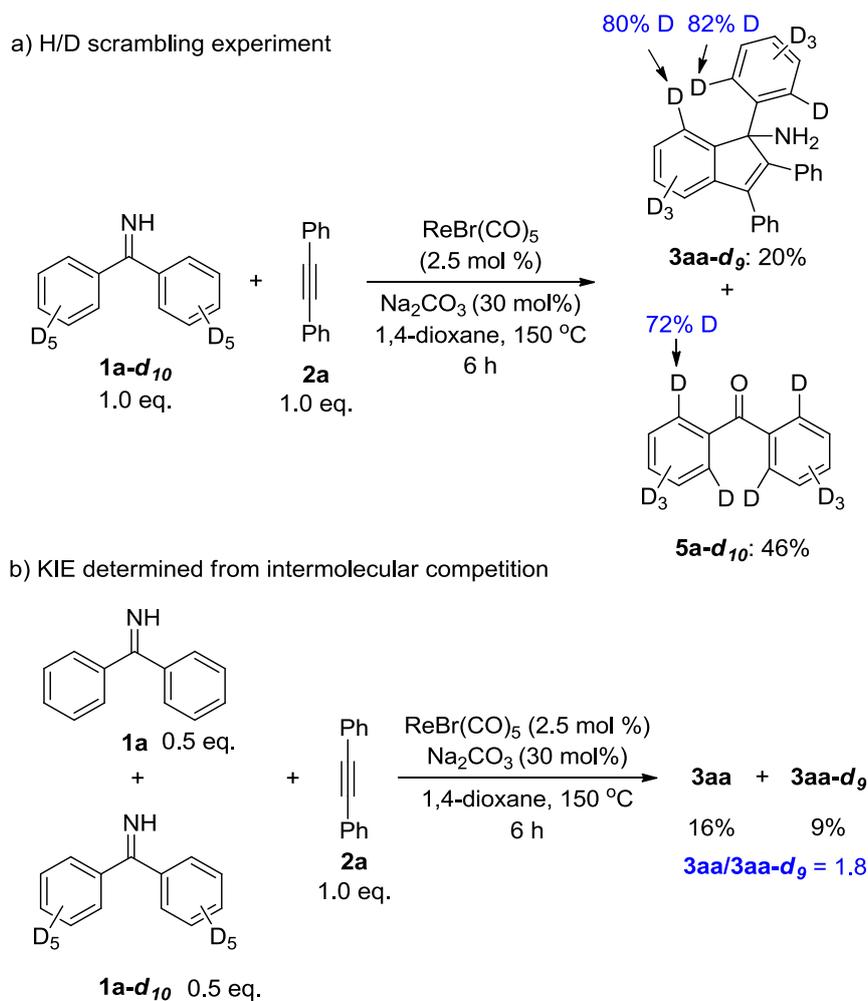
Pentadeuterobenzonitrile was synthesized from bromobenzene-*d*<sub>5</sub> (20 mmol, 3.24 g) by a known procedure and then treated with (Ph-*d*<sub>5</sub>)MgBr (20 mmol) following the previously described general procedure A for the synthesis of N-H diaryl imines. After workup, the title compound was isolated by column chromatography (PE/Et<sub>2</sub>O/TEA = 100/10/1.5).

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 9.72 (br, 1H);

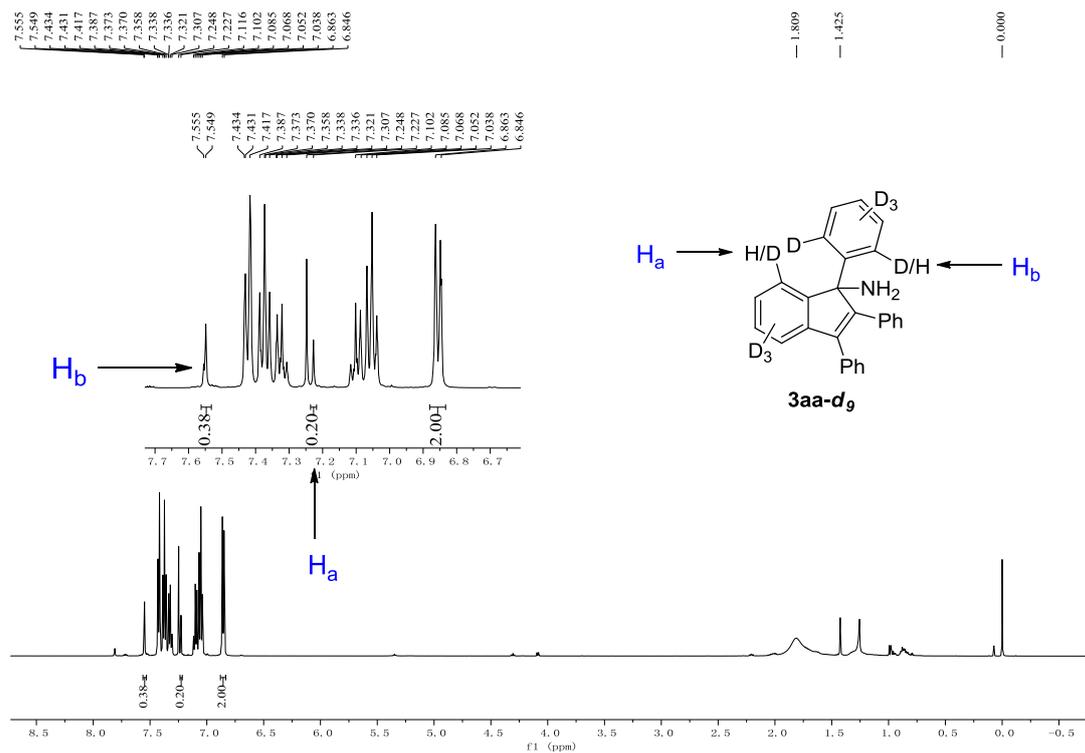
<sup>13</sup>C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ 178.4, 139.3, 129.8 (t), 128.3 (t), 127.9 (t).

With the deuterated ketimine **1a-d<sub>10</sub>** in hand, H/D scrambling experiment and intermolecular KIE experiment were conducted (**Scheme S3**). Firstly, a solution of **1a-d<sub>10</sub>** (1.0 eq.), **2a** (1.0 eq.), ReBr(CO)<sub>5</sub> (2.5 mol%) and Na<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> (0.3 eq.) in 1,4-dioxane (0.5 M) was stirred at 150°C for 6 h under N<sub>2</sub> atmosphere. After workup, the product **3aa-d<sub>9</sub>** and by-product **5a-d<sub>10</sub>** was purified by the column chromatography to reveal the isolated yields to be 20% and 46% respectively. The <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectra of **3aa-d<sub>9</sub>** (Figure 1) indicated there is around 20% deuterium loss at the *ortho*-position of the product. And there is also 28% deuterium loss at the *ortho*-position of the byproduct **5a-d<sub>10</sub>** (Figure S4). Therefore, the C-H activation step might be a reversible process.

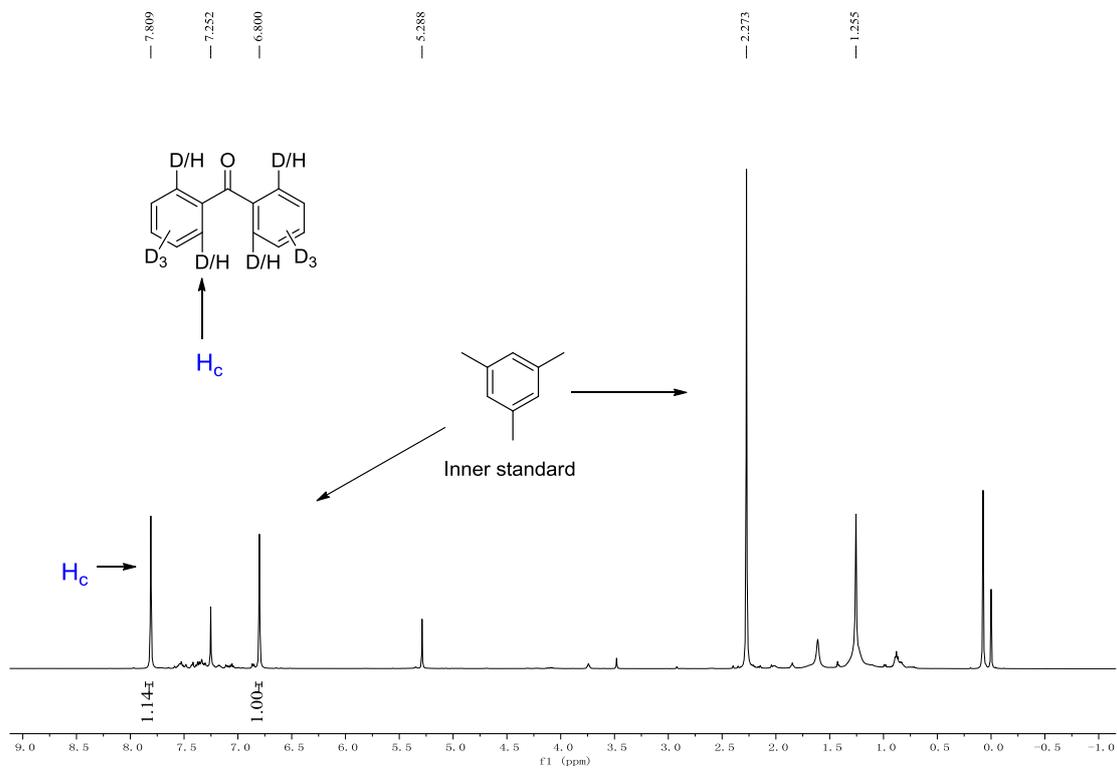
Then the intermolecular competition experiment was conducted. Equivalent **1a** and **1a-d<sub>10</sub>** (0.5 eq.) was added to a solution of **2a** (1.0 eq.) in 1,4-dioxane (0.5 M) under standard conditions. After 6 h, the product (**3aa** and **3aa-d<sub>9</sub>**) was isolated by column chromatography. The <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectra showed that the ratio between **3aa** and **3aa-d<sub>9</sub>** is 1.8 (Figure S5, 0.64/0.36).



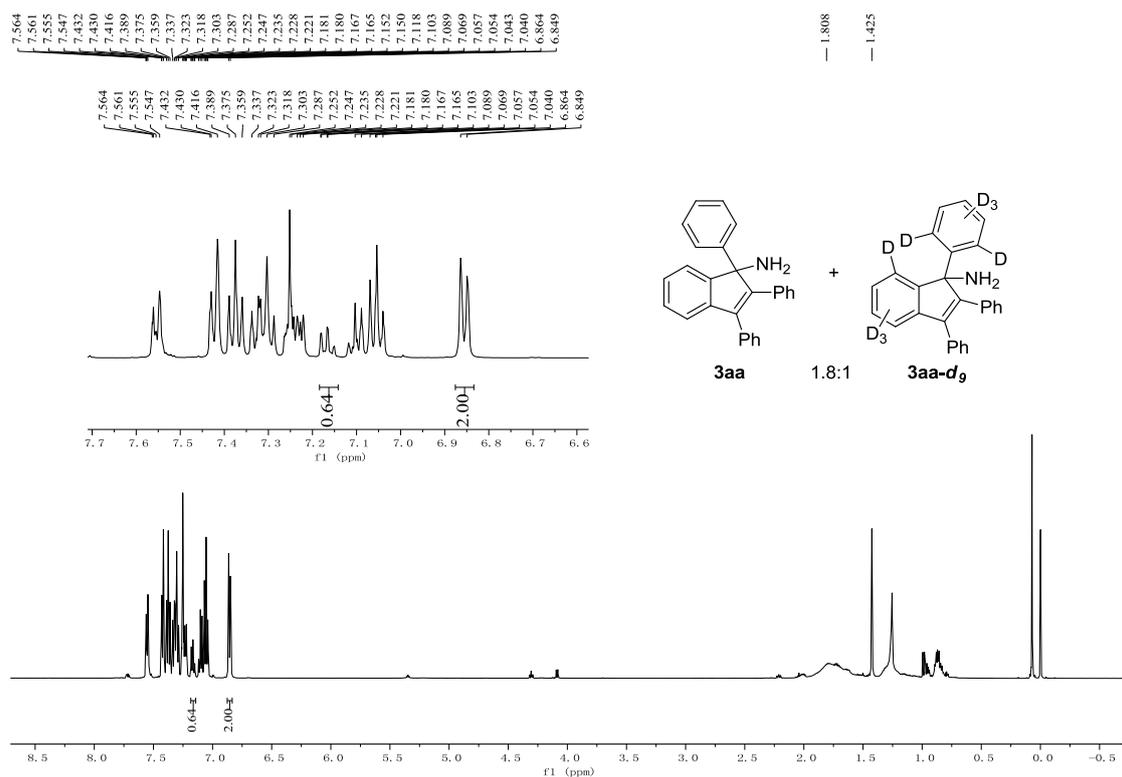
**Scheme S3.** Deuterium-labeling Experiments



**Figure S3.** <sup>1</sup>H NMR Spectra of **3aa-d<sub>9</sub>**

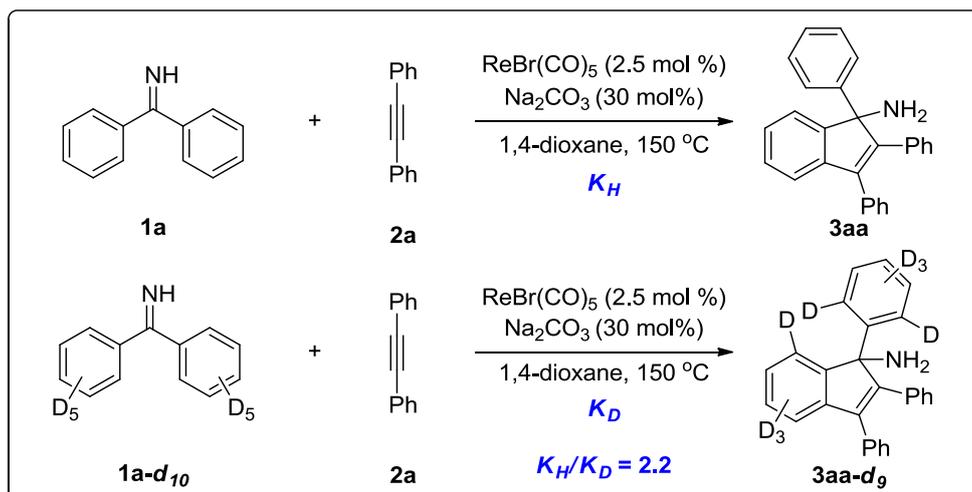


**Figure S4.** <sup>1</sup>H NMR Spectra of **5a-d<sub>10</sub>**



**Figure S5.**  $^1\text{H}$  NMR Spectra of the Mixture of **3aa** and **3aa-d<sub>9</sub>**

In addition, two parallel reactions of **2a** with **1a** and **1a-d<sub>10</sub>** respectively were performed to determine the corresponding KIE value (**Scheme S4**). **1a** (0.2 mmol, 36.2 mg) and **1a-d<sub>10</sub>** (0.2 mmol, 38.2 mg) were placed in an oven-dried Schlenk tube respectively, and then treated with the same mixture of **2a** (0.2 mmol, 35.6 mg),  $\text{Re}(\text{CO})_5\text{Br}$  (0.005 mmol, 2.0 mg), 1,3,5-trimethoxybenzene (internal standard, 0.067 mmol, 11.2 mg) in anhydrous dioxane (0.5 M) at 150 °C under  $\text{N}_2$  atmosphere. Each reaction was sampled at the following indicated points and analyzed by GC. The GC yields were calculated after calibrating the response of GC.



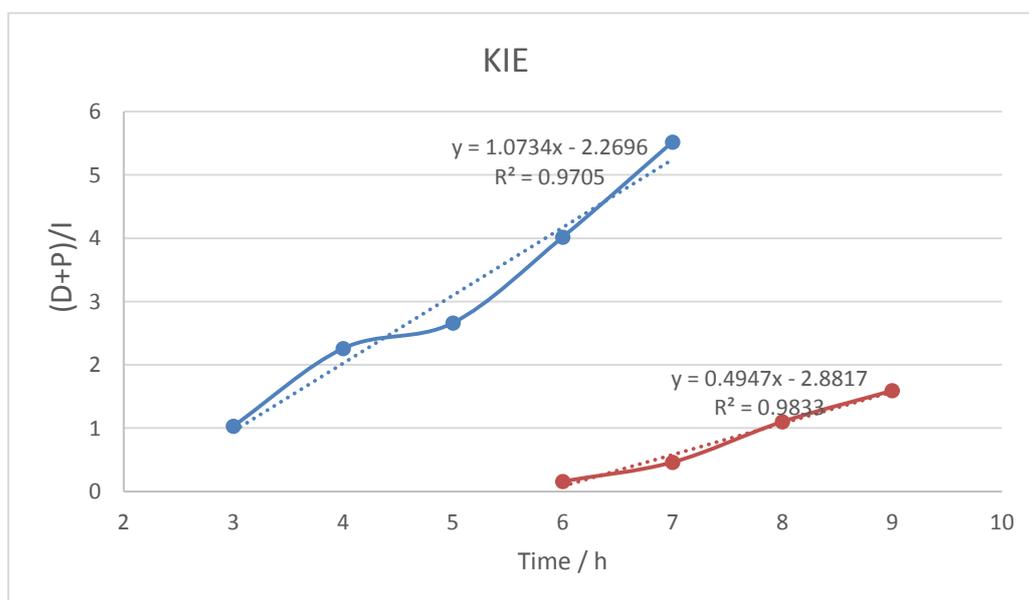
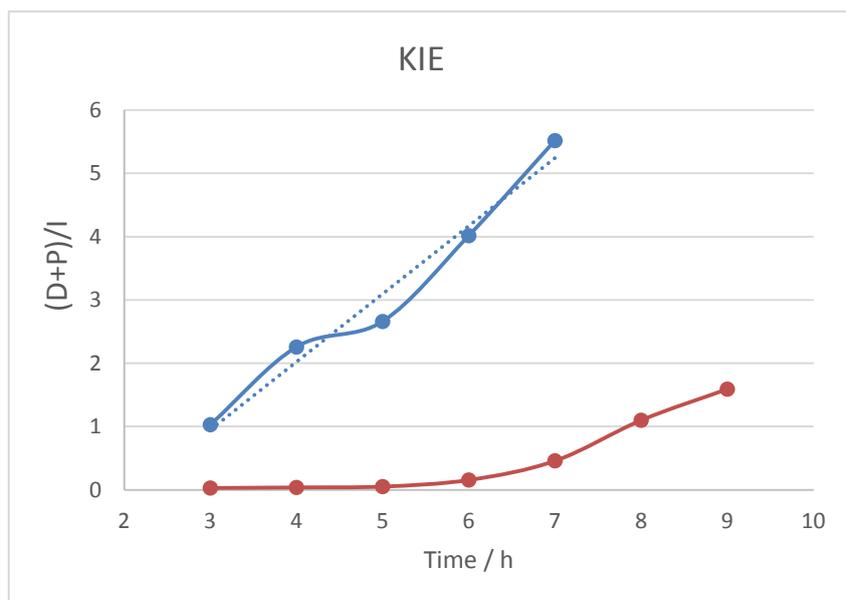
Scheme S4. KIE Experiments

KIE-H

ENTRY	Time/h	Inner Standard	de-NH <sub>2</sub>	P	(D+P)/I
5	3	49.23	16.35	34.42	1.031282
6	4	30.69	22.49	46.82	2.25839
7	5	27.31	21.34	51.35	2.661662
8	6	19.93	29.38	50.69	4.017561
9	7	15.34	16.76	67.9	5.518905

KIE-D

ENTRY	Time	Inner Standard	de-NH <sub>2</sub>	P	(D+P)/I
2	3	96.98	1.71	1.31	0.03114
3	4	96.08	1.72	2.2	0.040799
4	5	94.88	2.45	2.67	0.053963
5	6	86.35	5.71	7.94	0.158078
6	7	68.46	12.91	18.63	0.460707
7	8	47.58	16.28	36.14	1.101723
8	9	38.56	14.16	47.28	1.593361



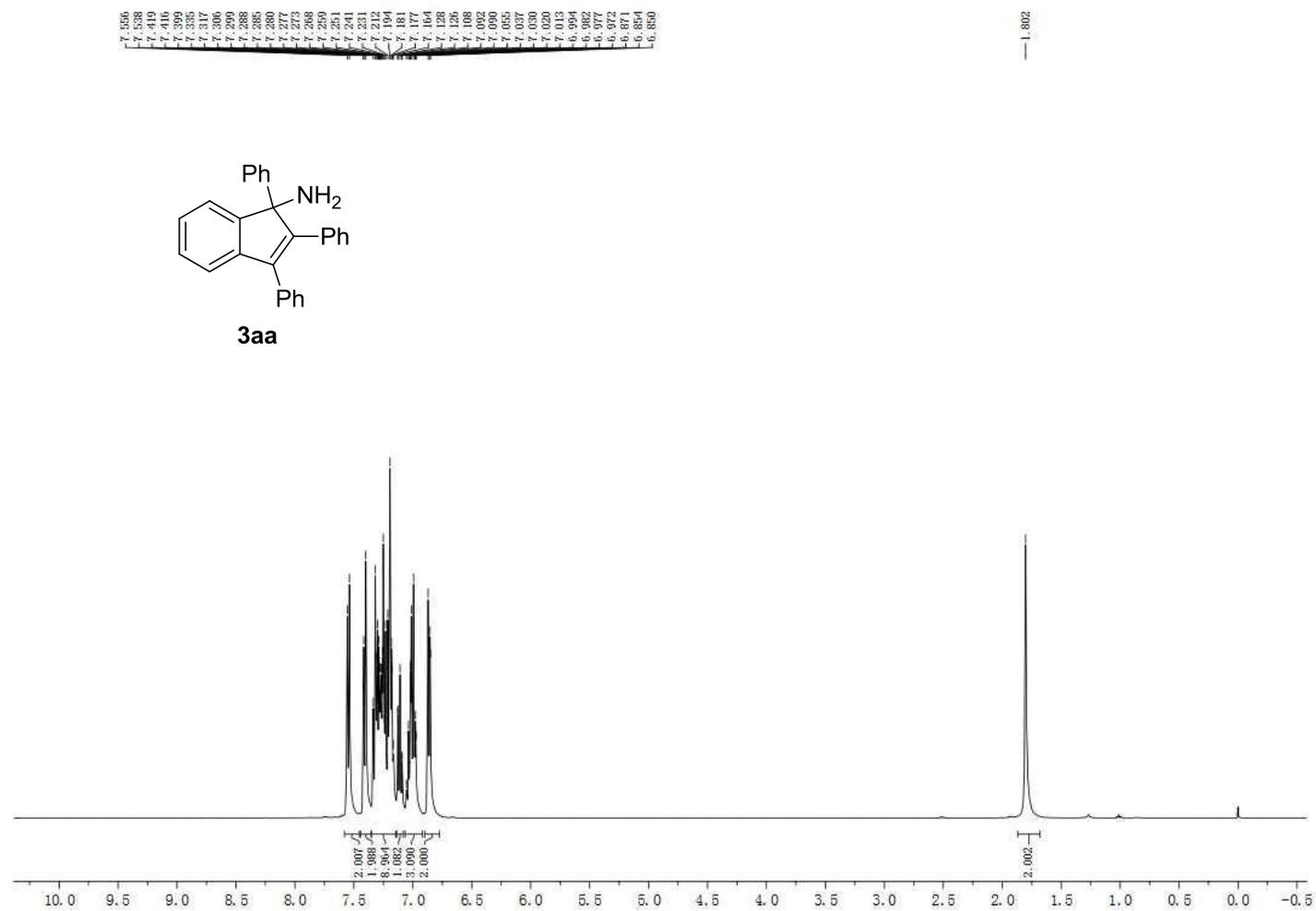
$$\text{KIE} = \frac{K_H}{K_D} = 2.2$$

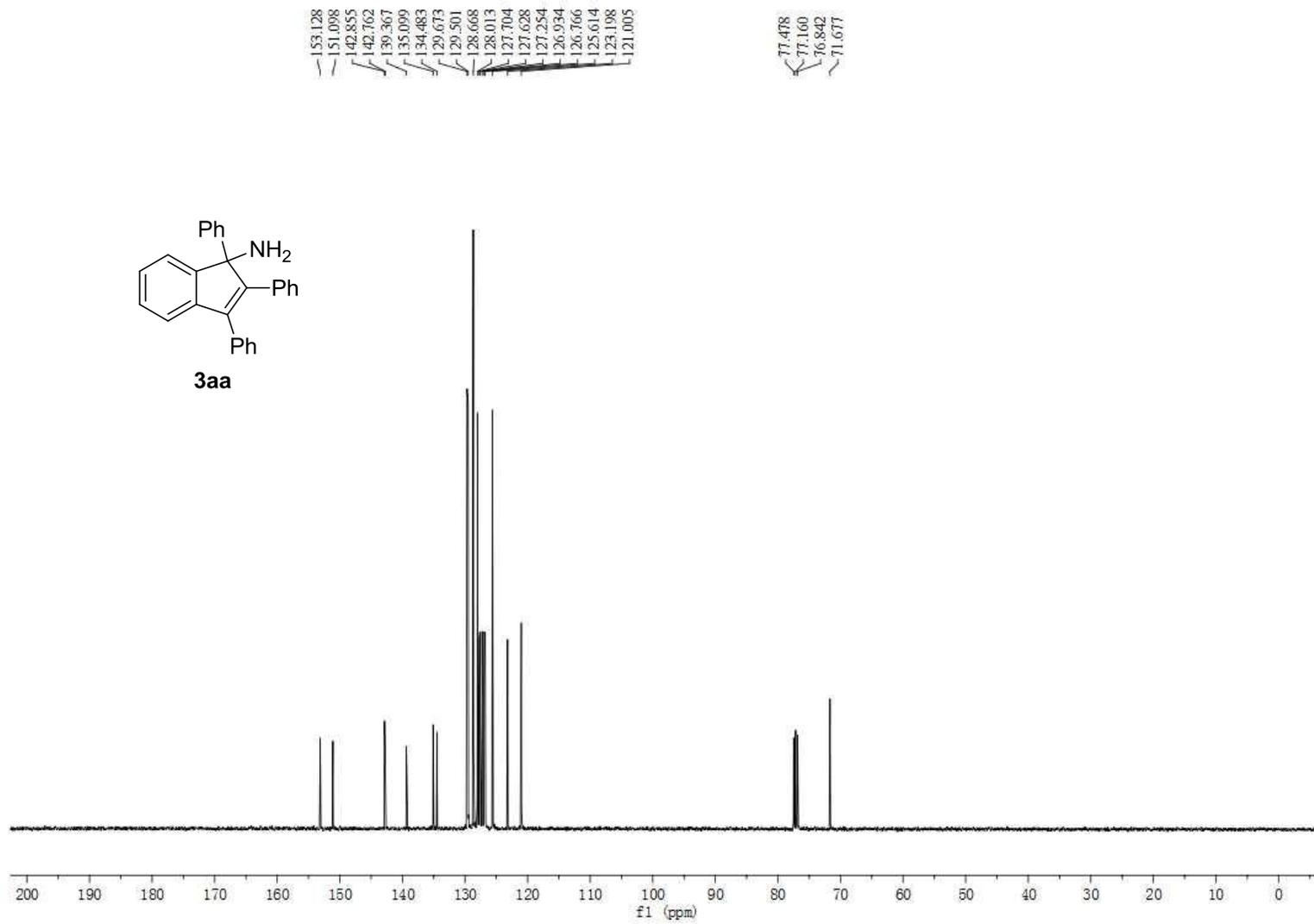
Thus, the KIE value from the two parallel reactions was determined to be 2.2, which indicated that the cleavage of the C–H bond might be involved in the rate-determining step of the reaction.

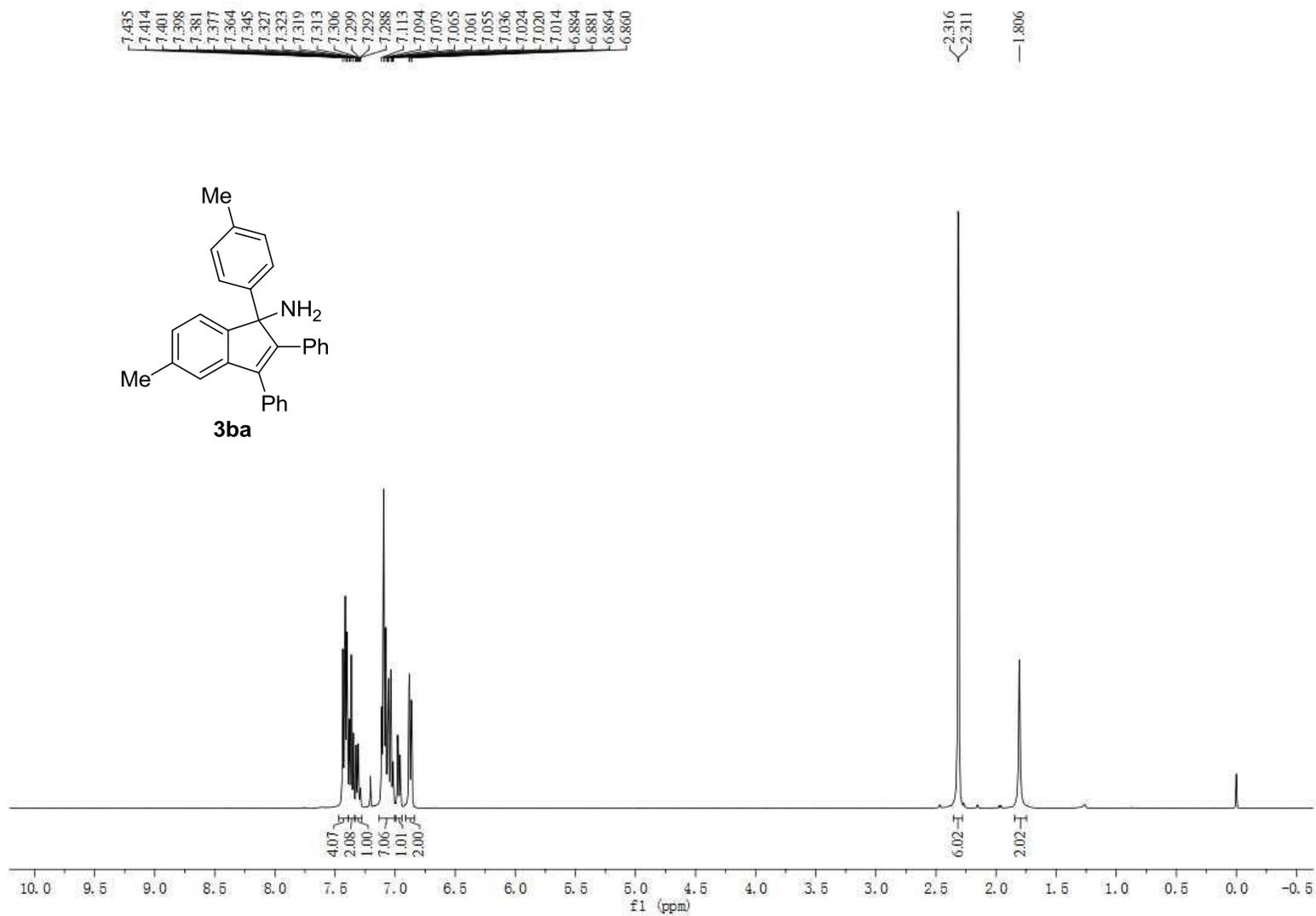
## 7. References

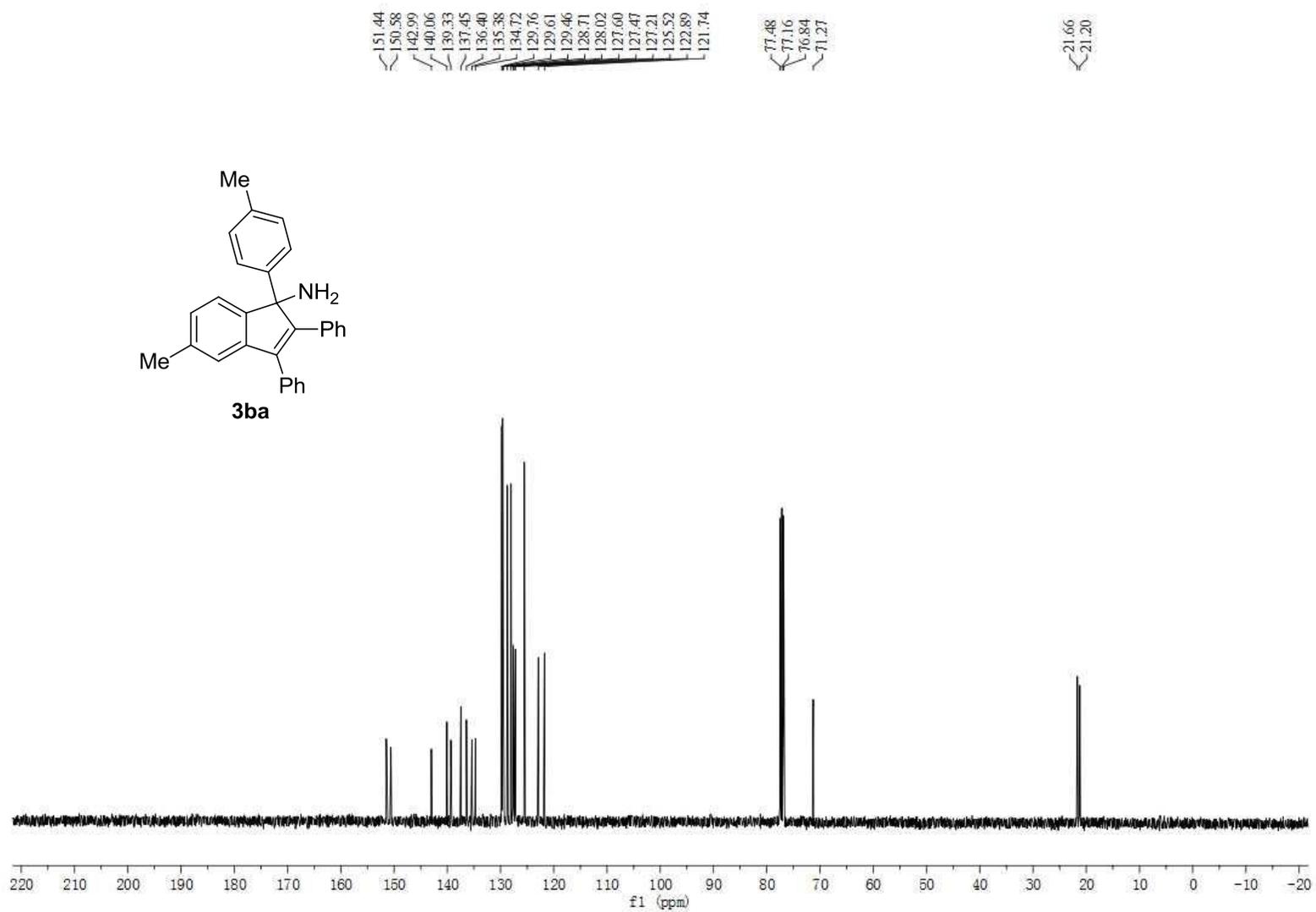
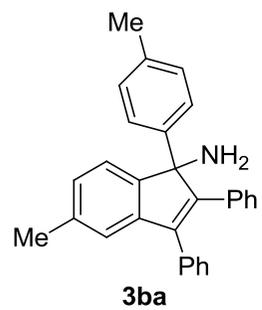
- [1] R. He, Z.-T. Huang, Q.-Y. Zheng and C. Wang, *Angew. Chem. Int. Ed.*, 2014, **53**, 4950.
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- [5] J. H. Lee, S. Gupta,; W. Jeong, Y. H. Rhee, J. Park, *Angew. Chem. Int. Ed.* 2012, **51**, 10851.
- [6] C.-C. Tai, M.-S. Yu, Y.-L. Chen, W.-H. Chuang, T.-H. Lin, G. P. A. Yapc and T.-G. Ong, *Chem. Commun.*, 2014, **50**, 4344.
- [7] T. Schareina, A. Zapf and M. Bller, *J. Organomet. Chem.* 2004, **689**, 4576.

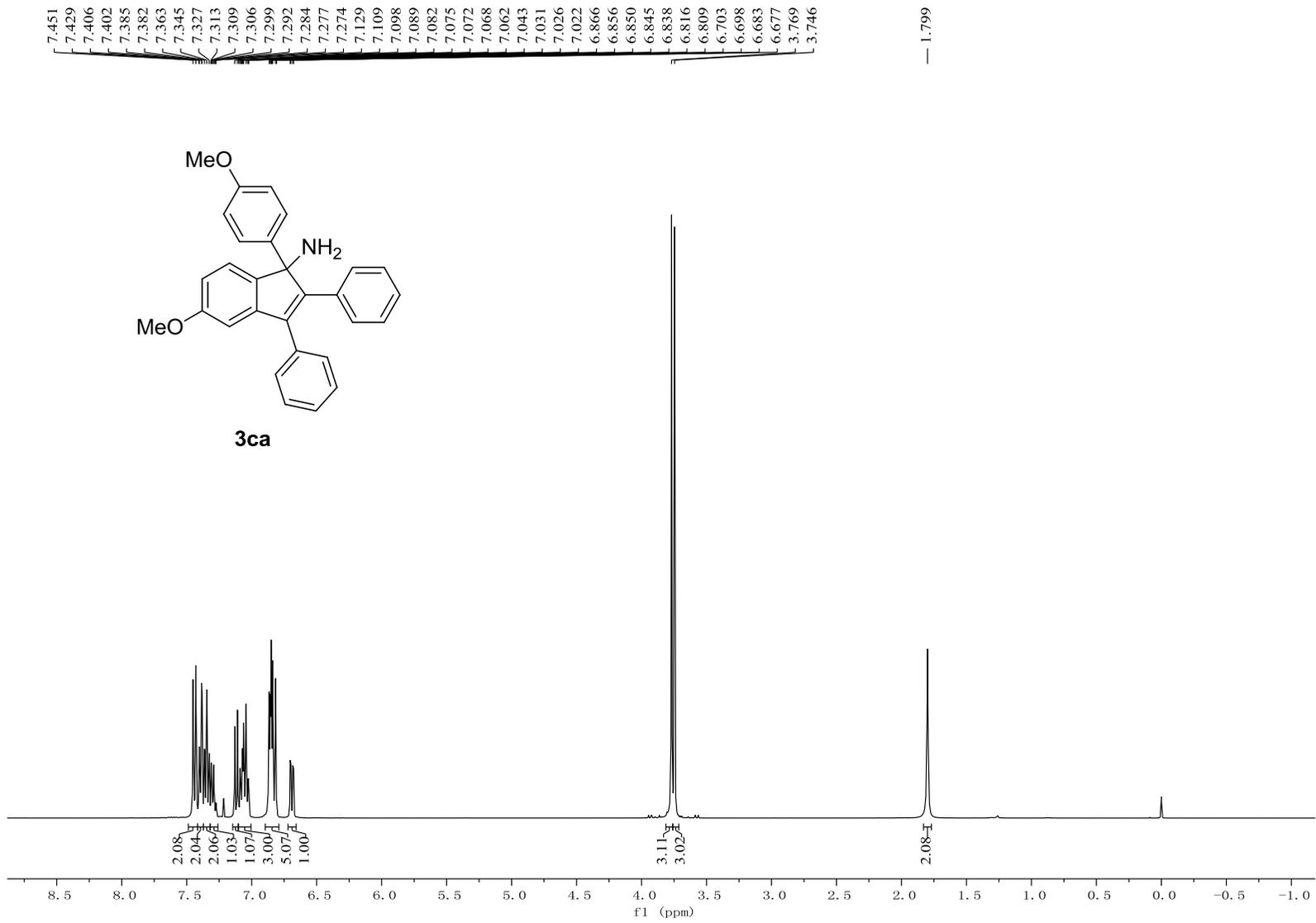
## 8. $^1\text{H}$ NMR and $^{13}\text{C}$ NMR Spectra of Products

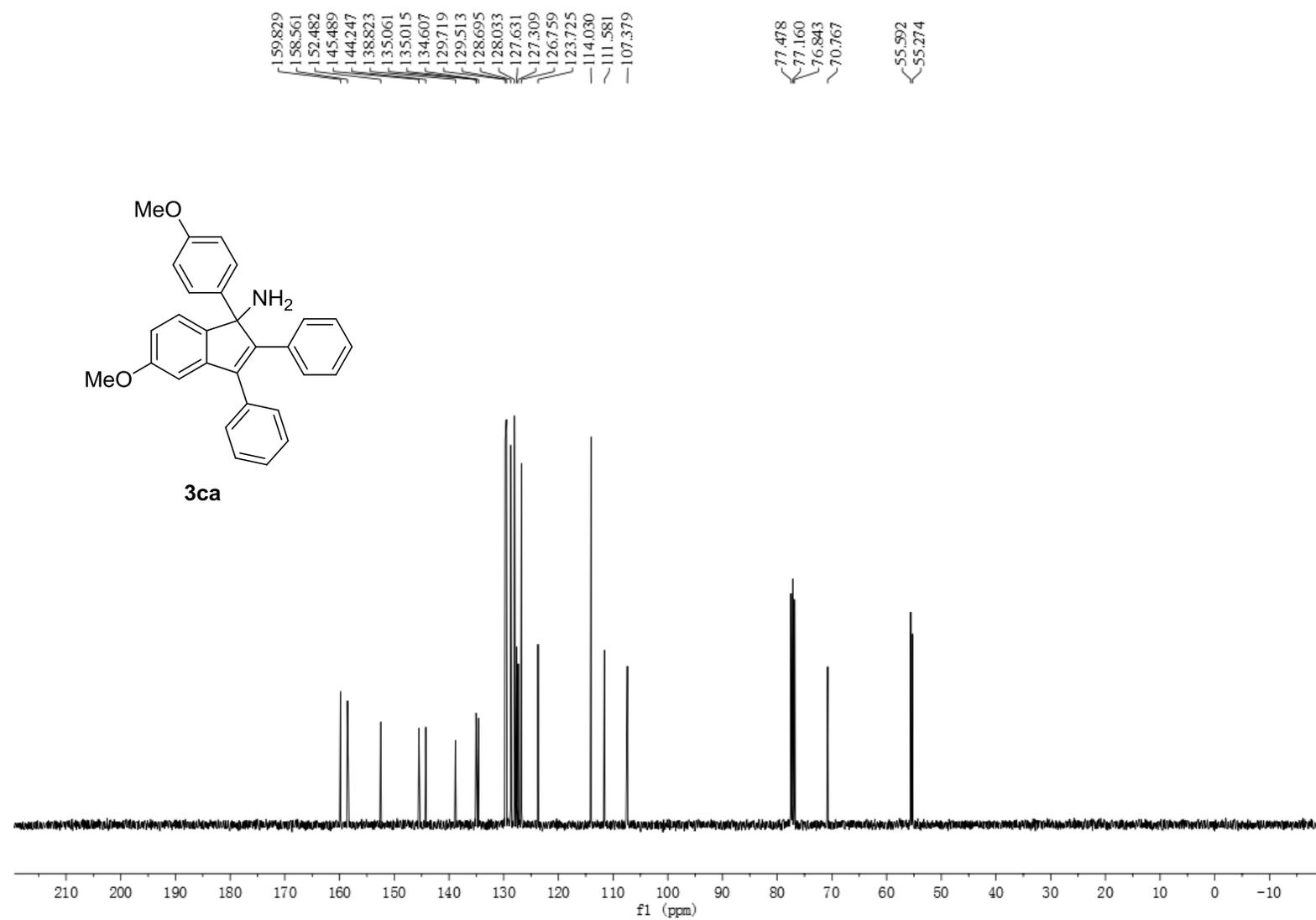


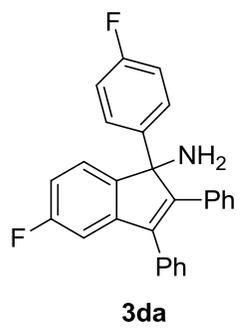
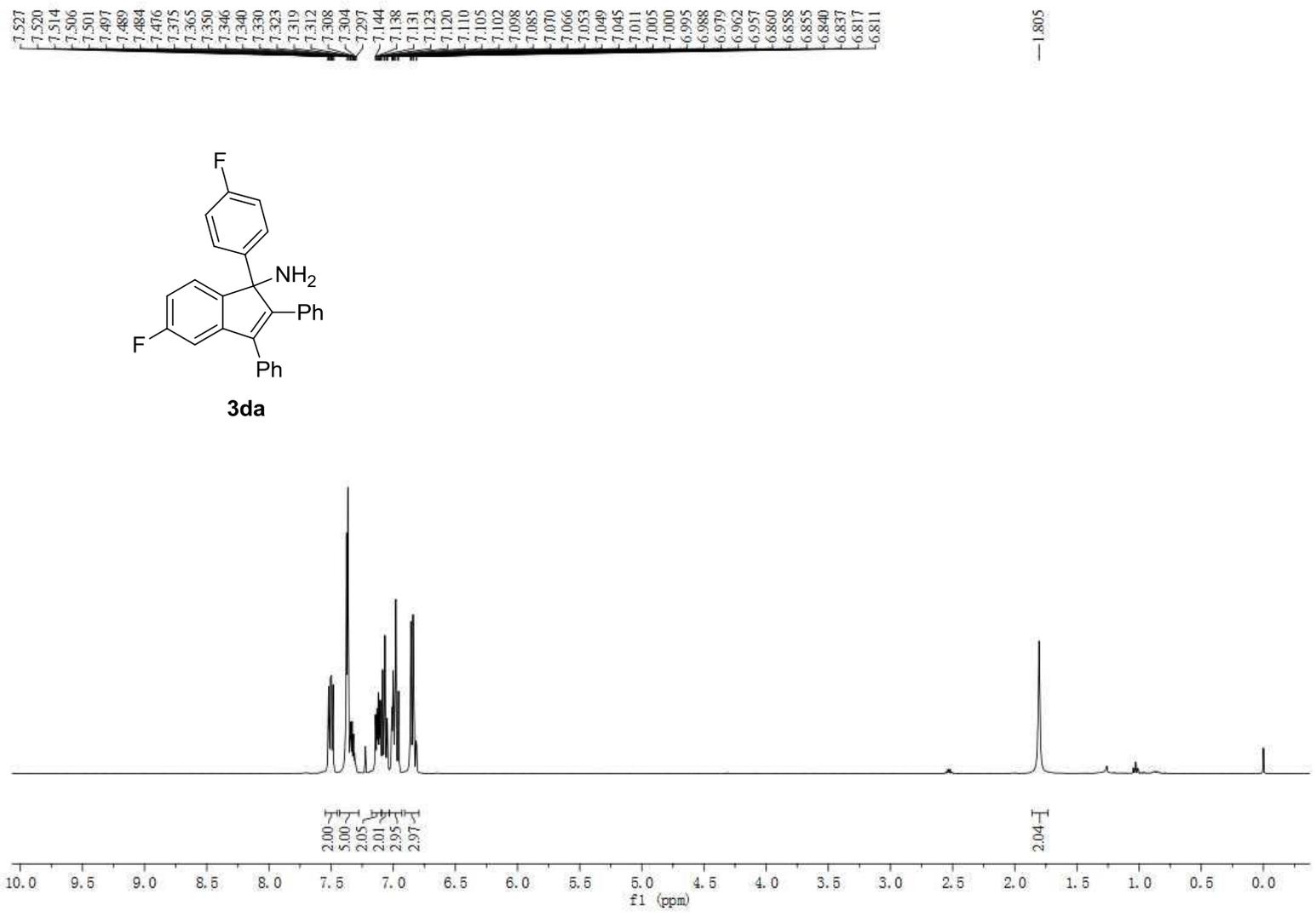


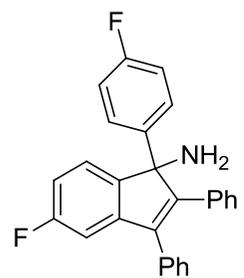




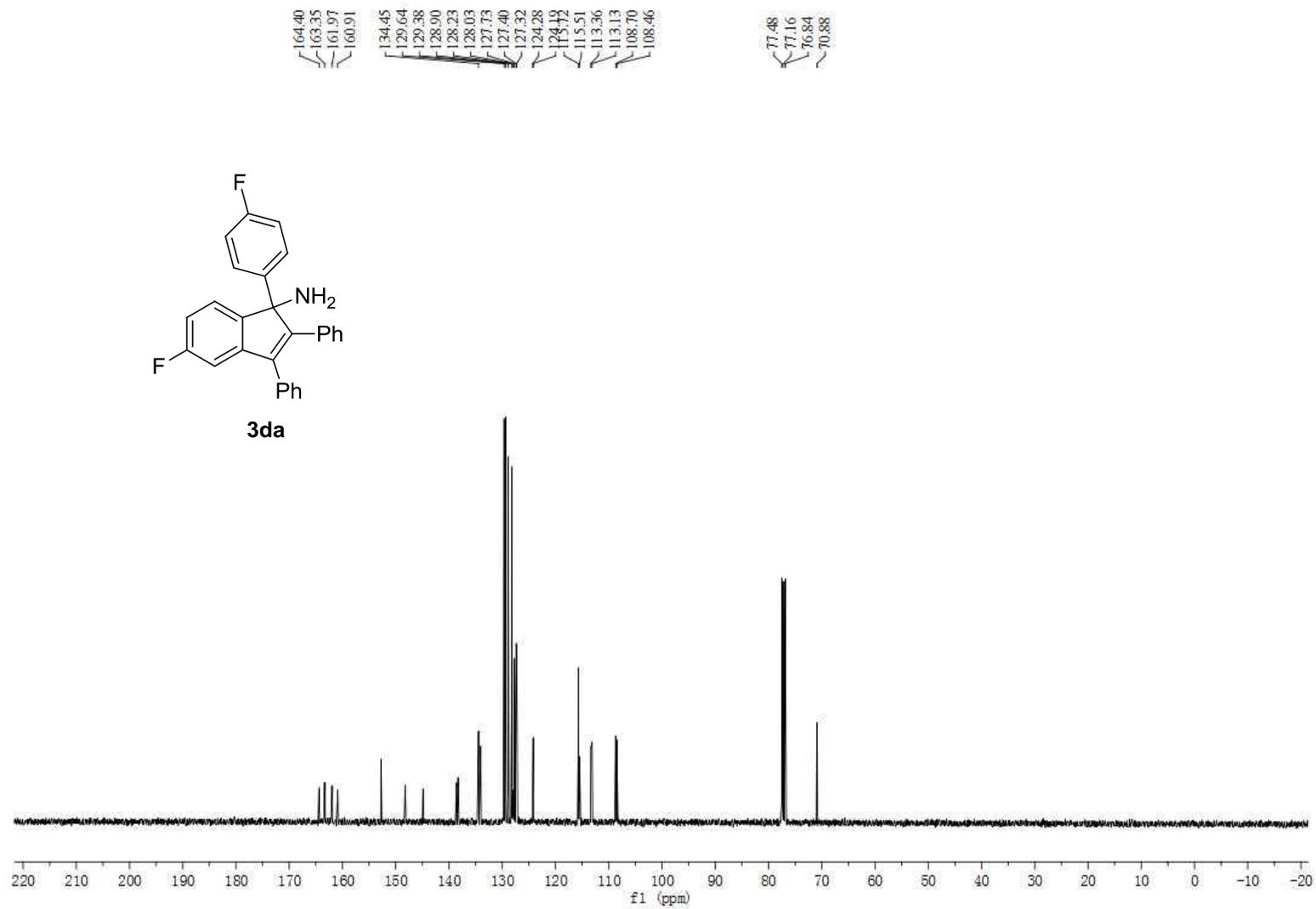


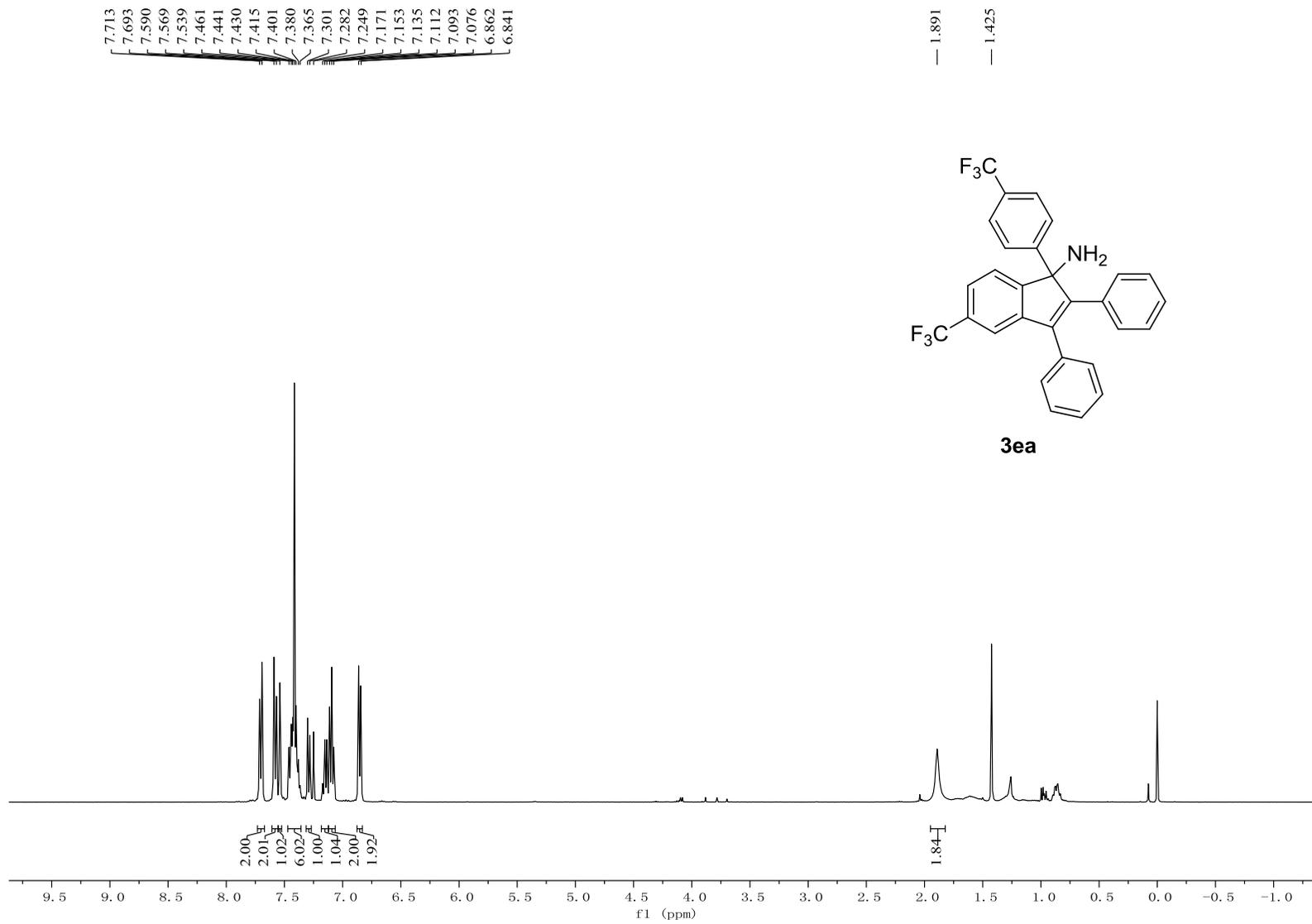


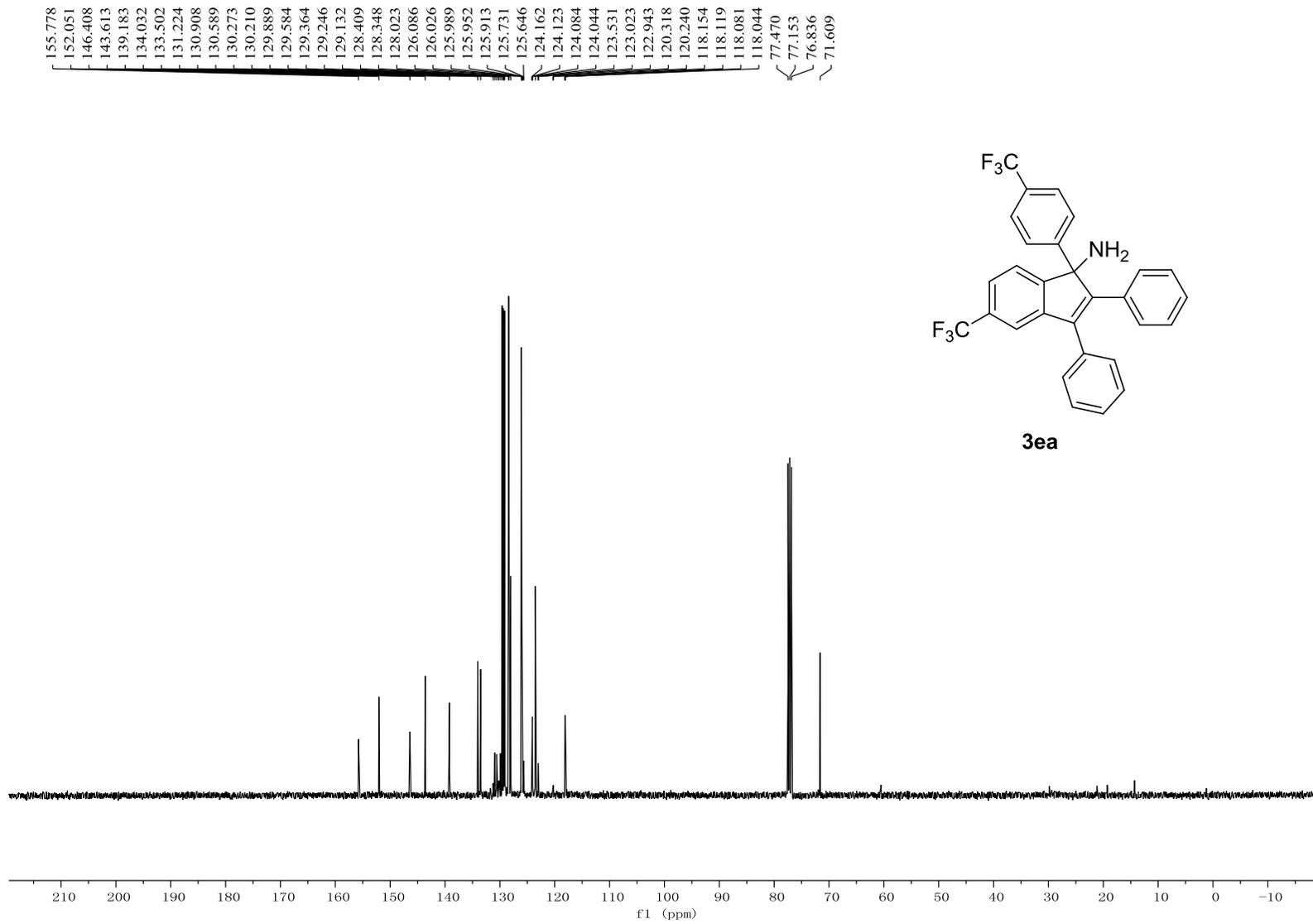


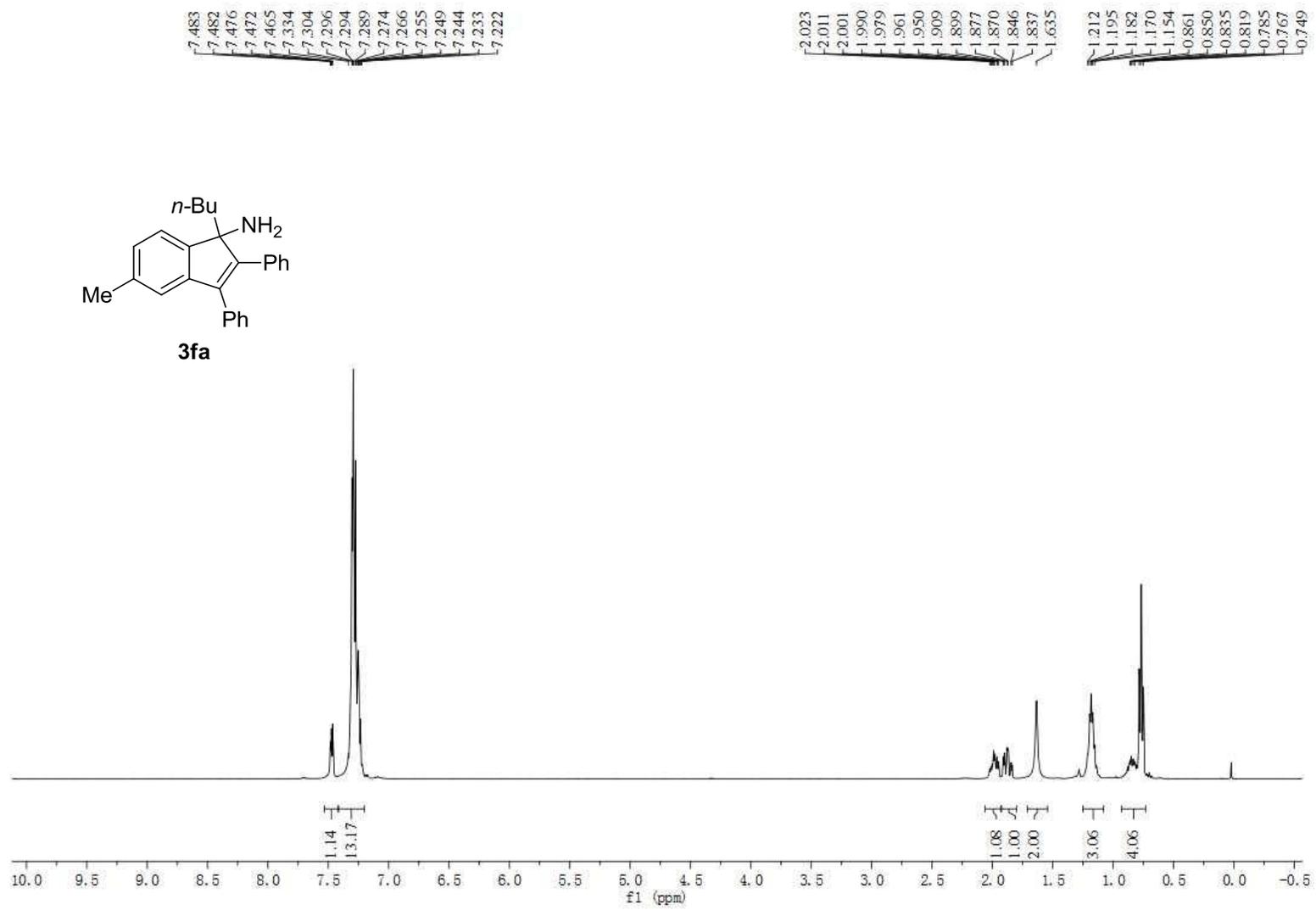


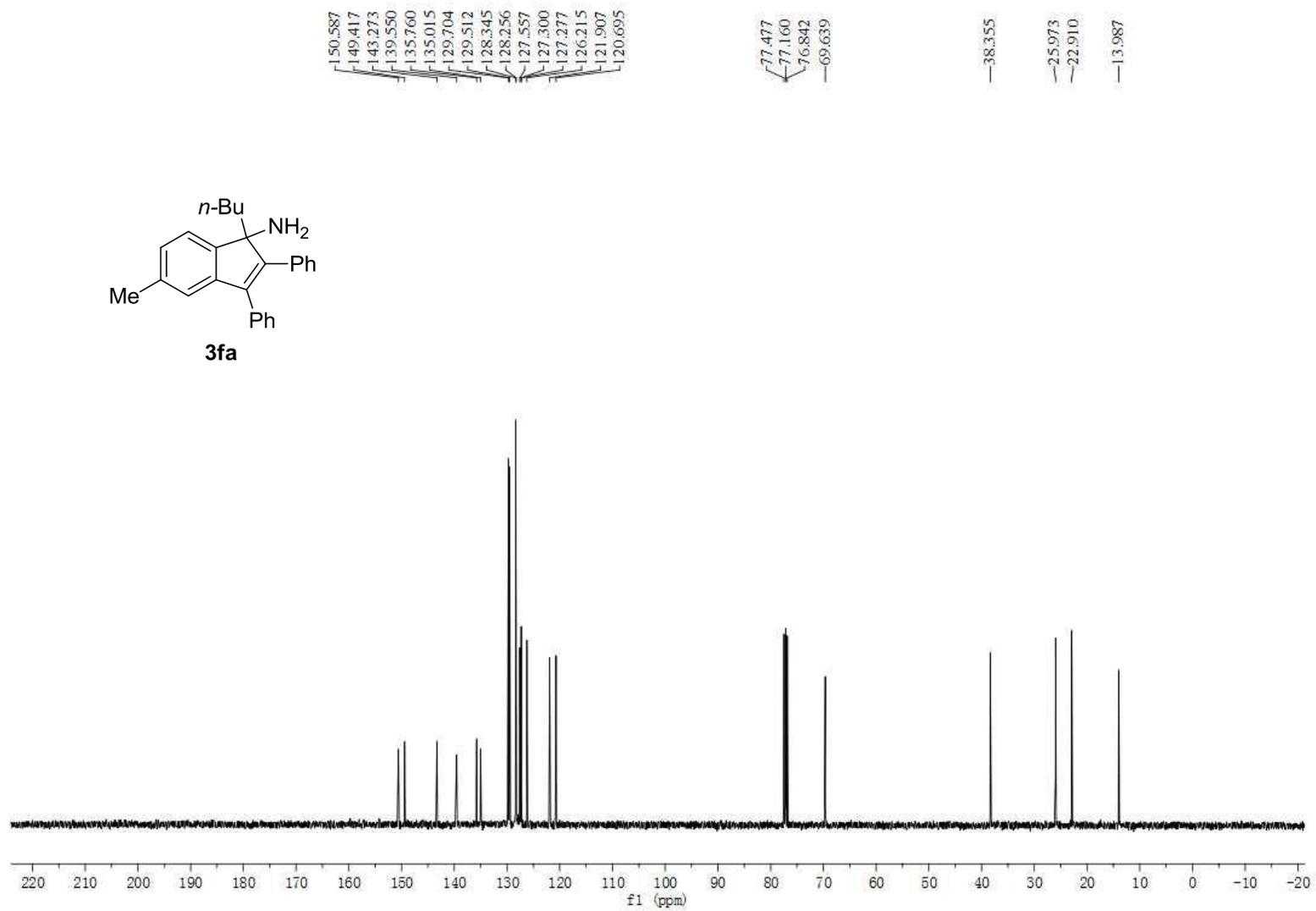
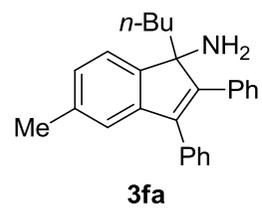
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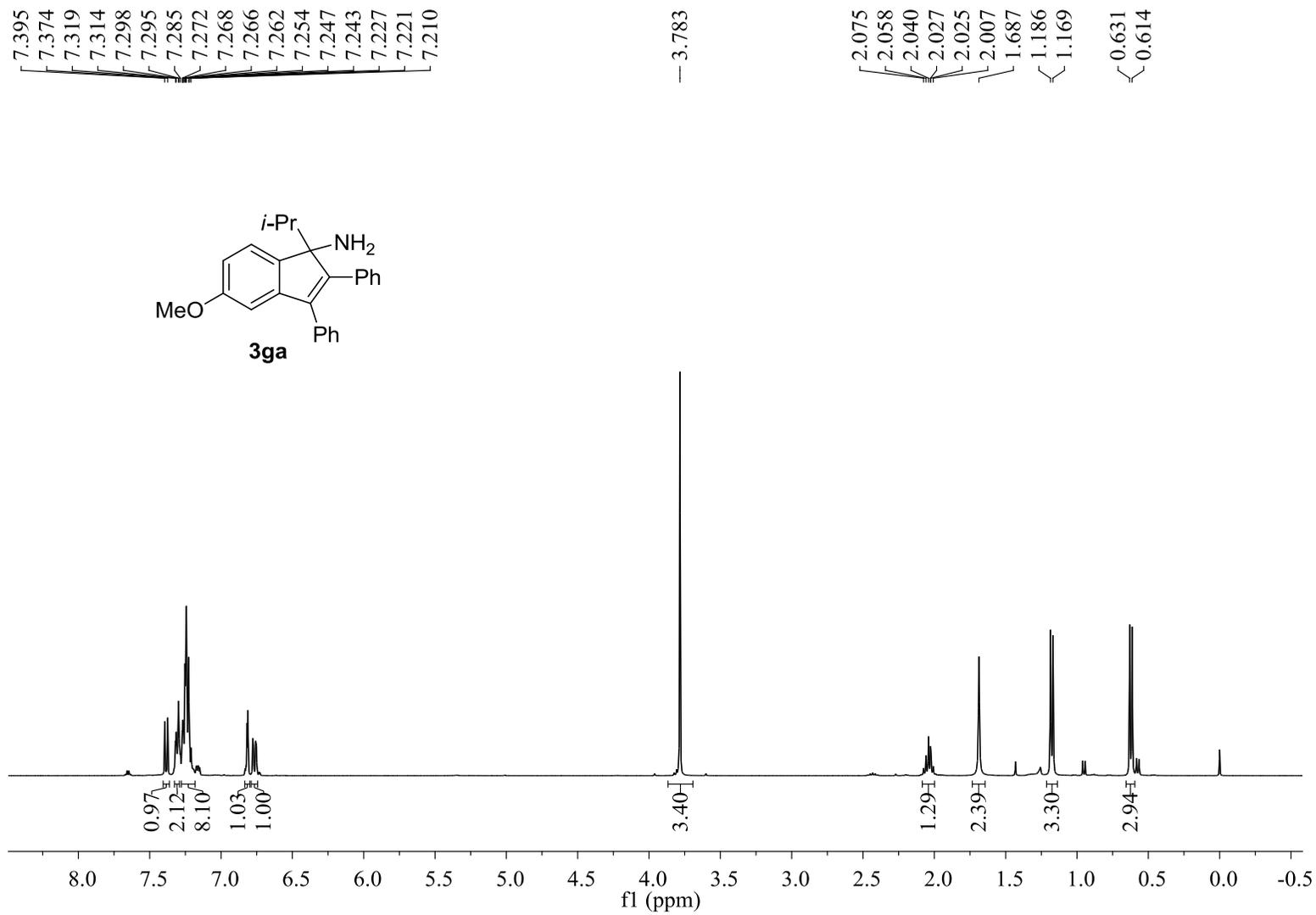


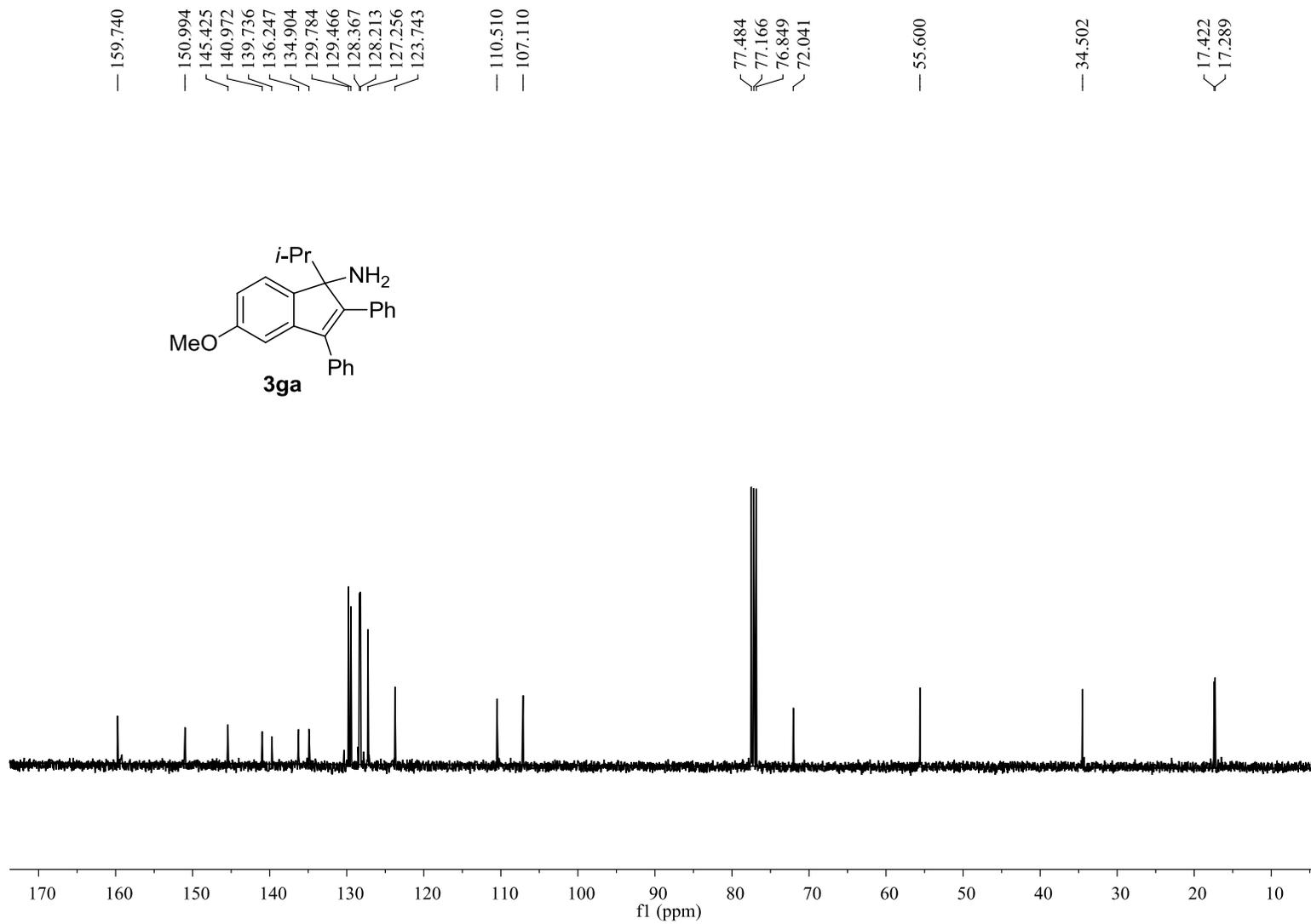
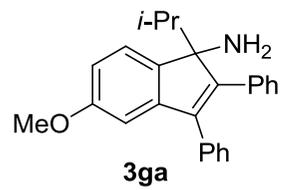




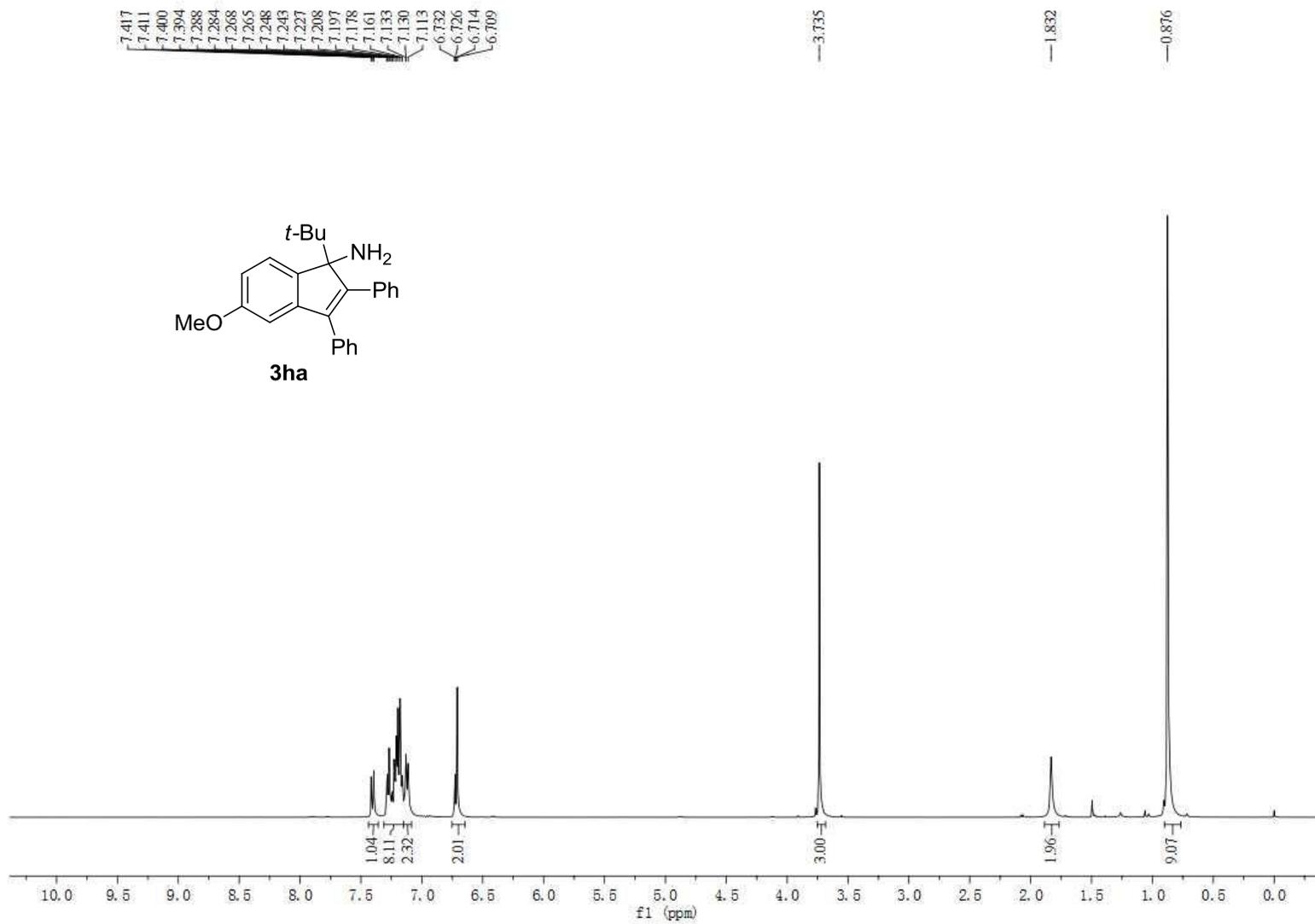
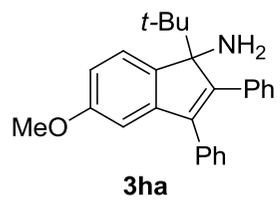


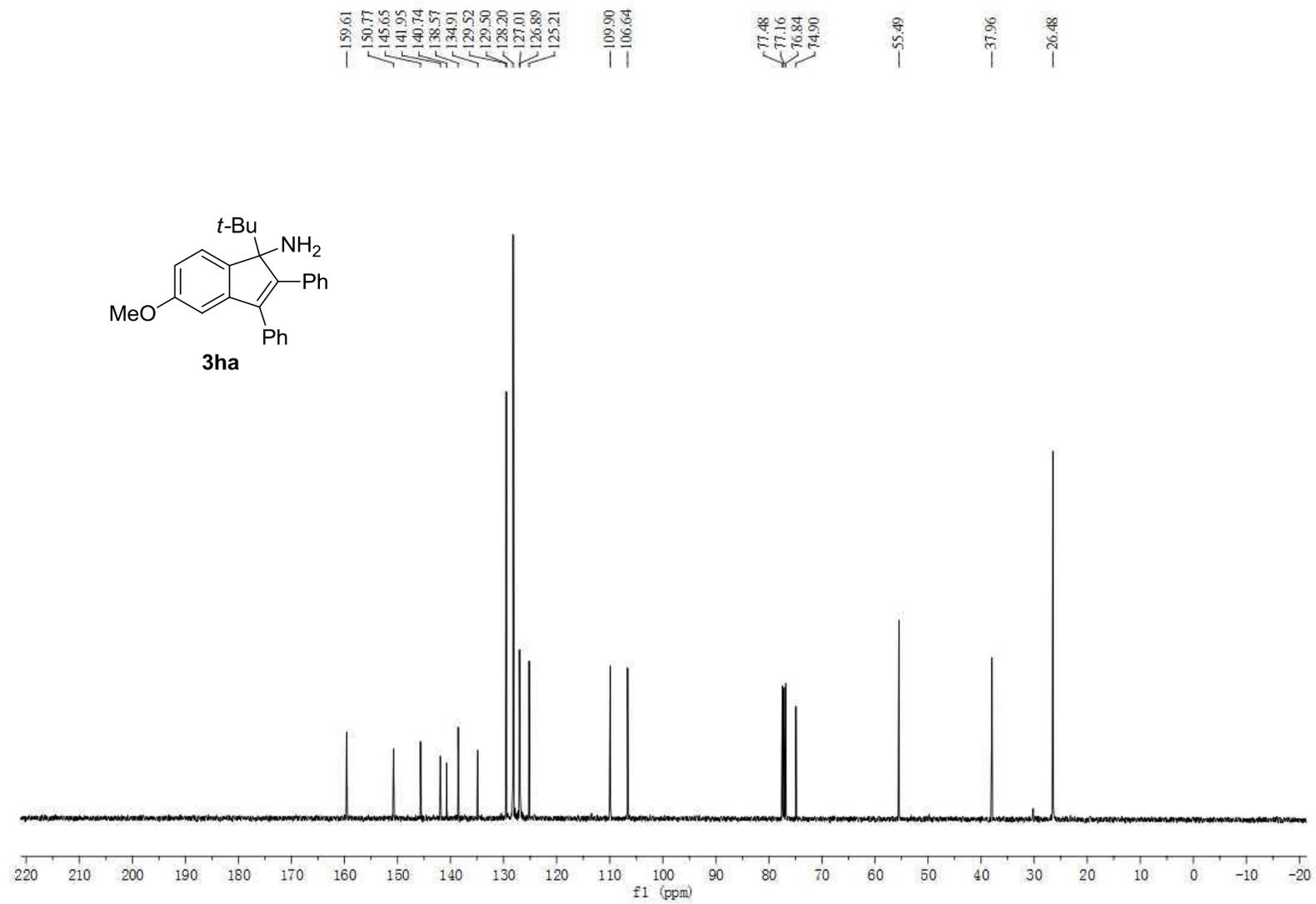


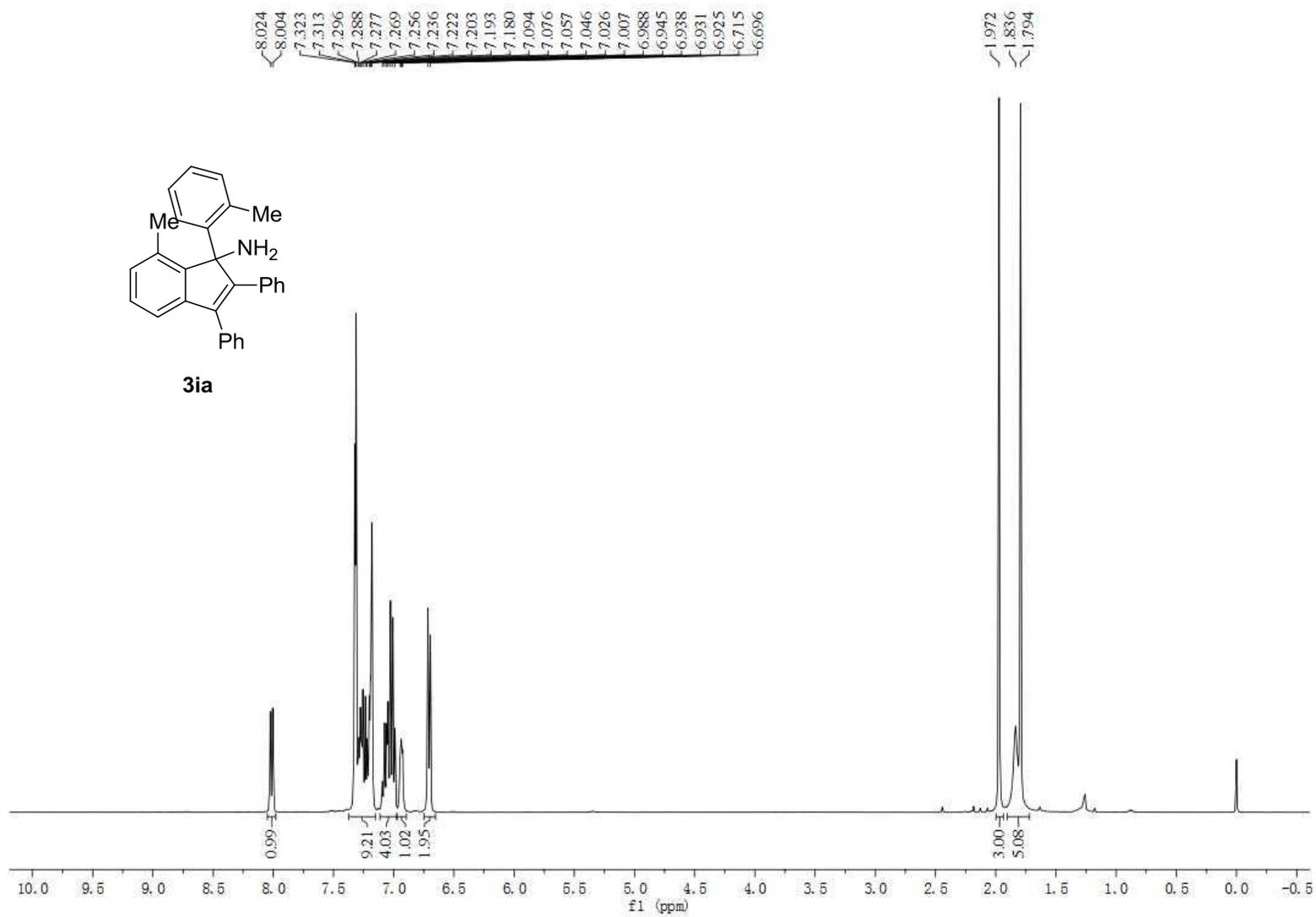


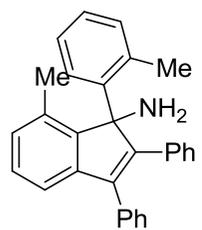


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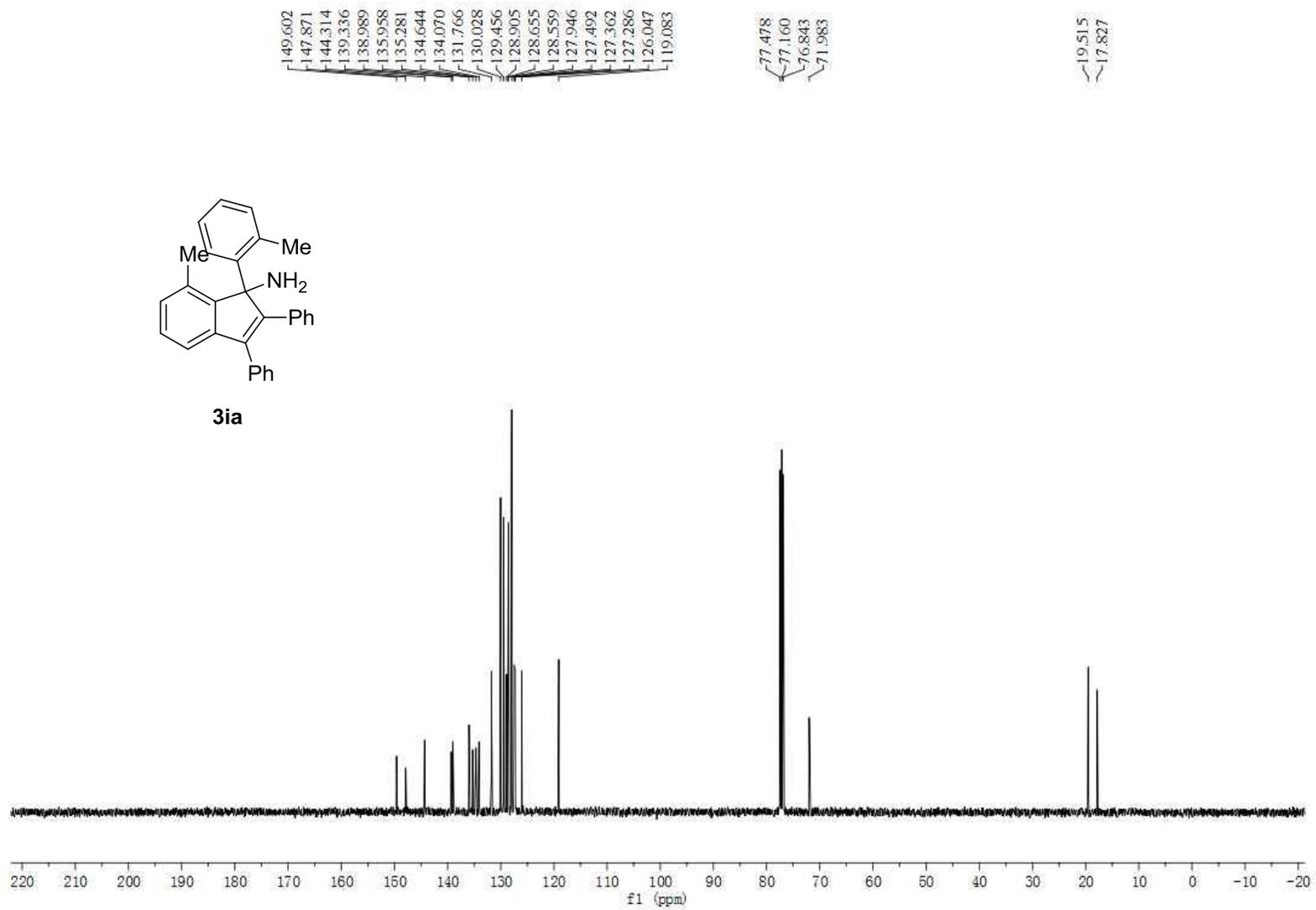


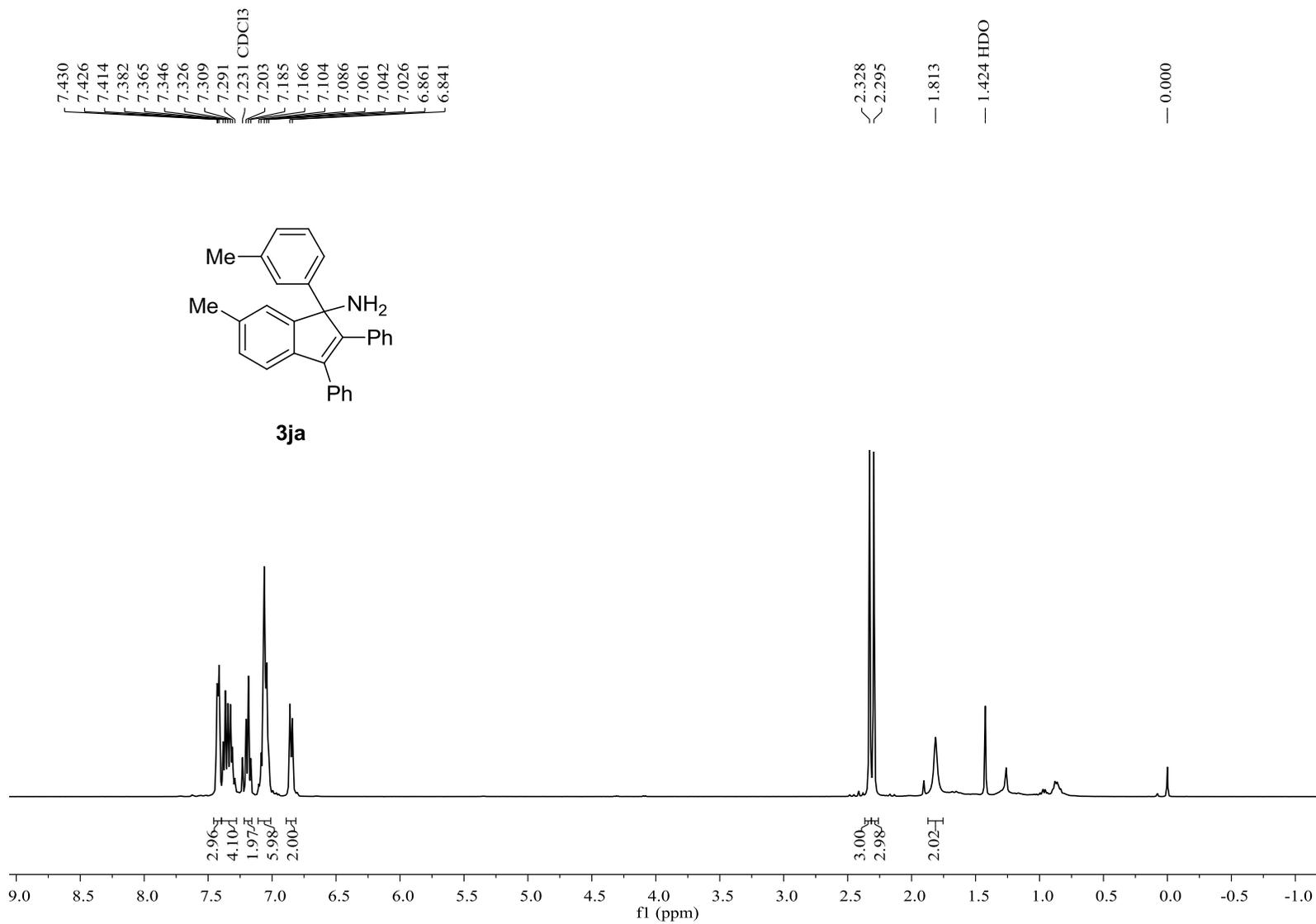


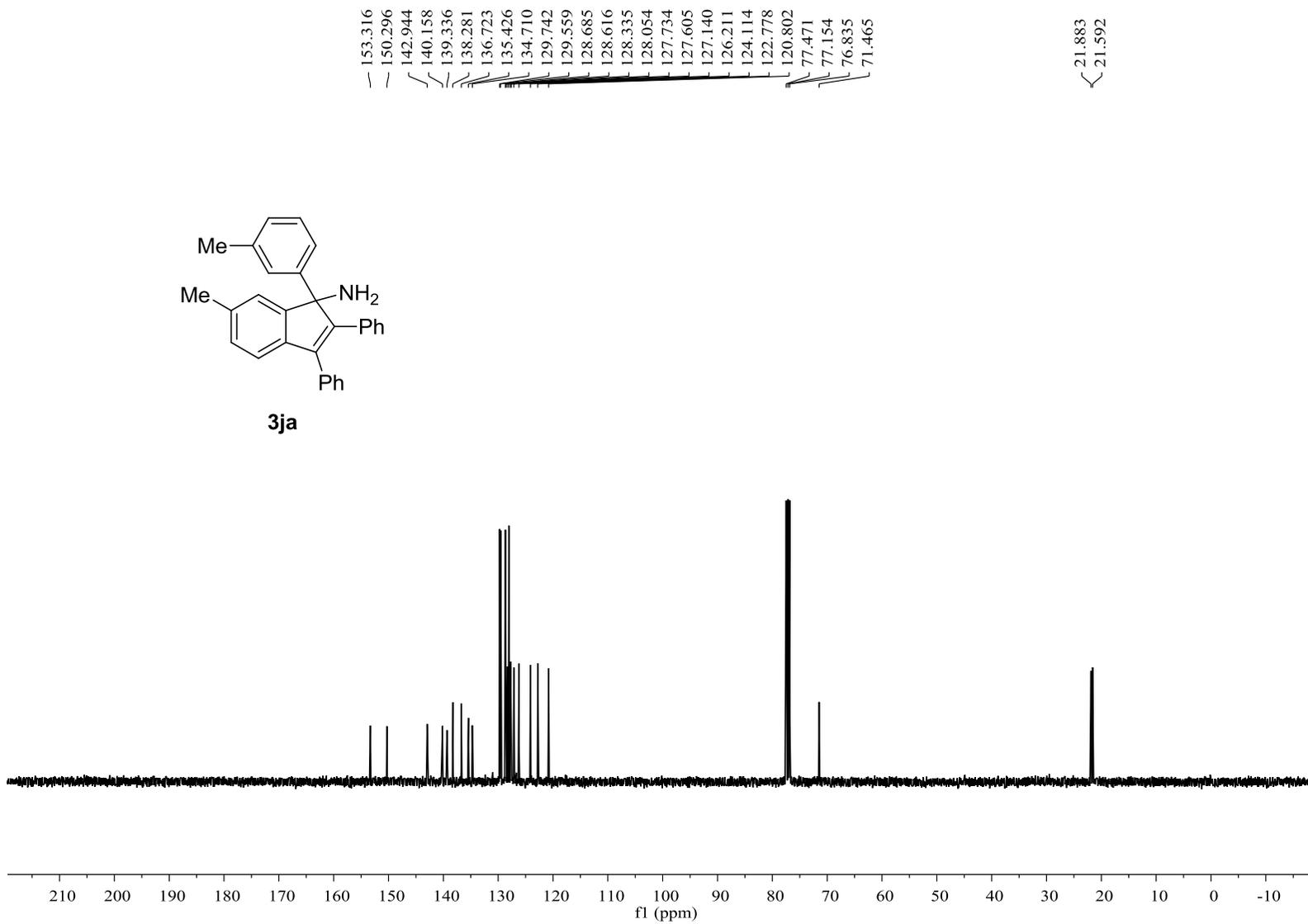
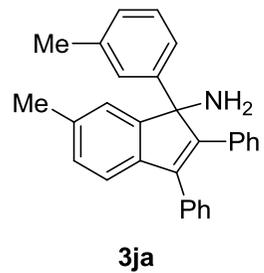


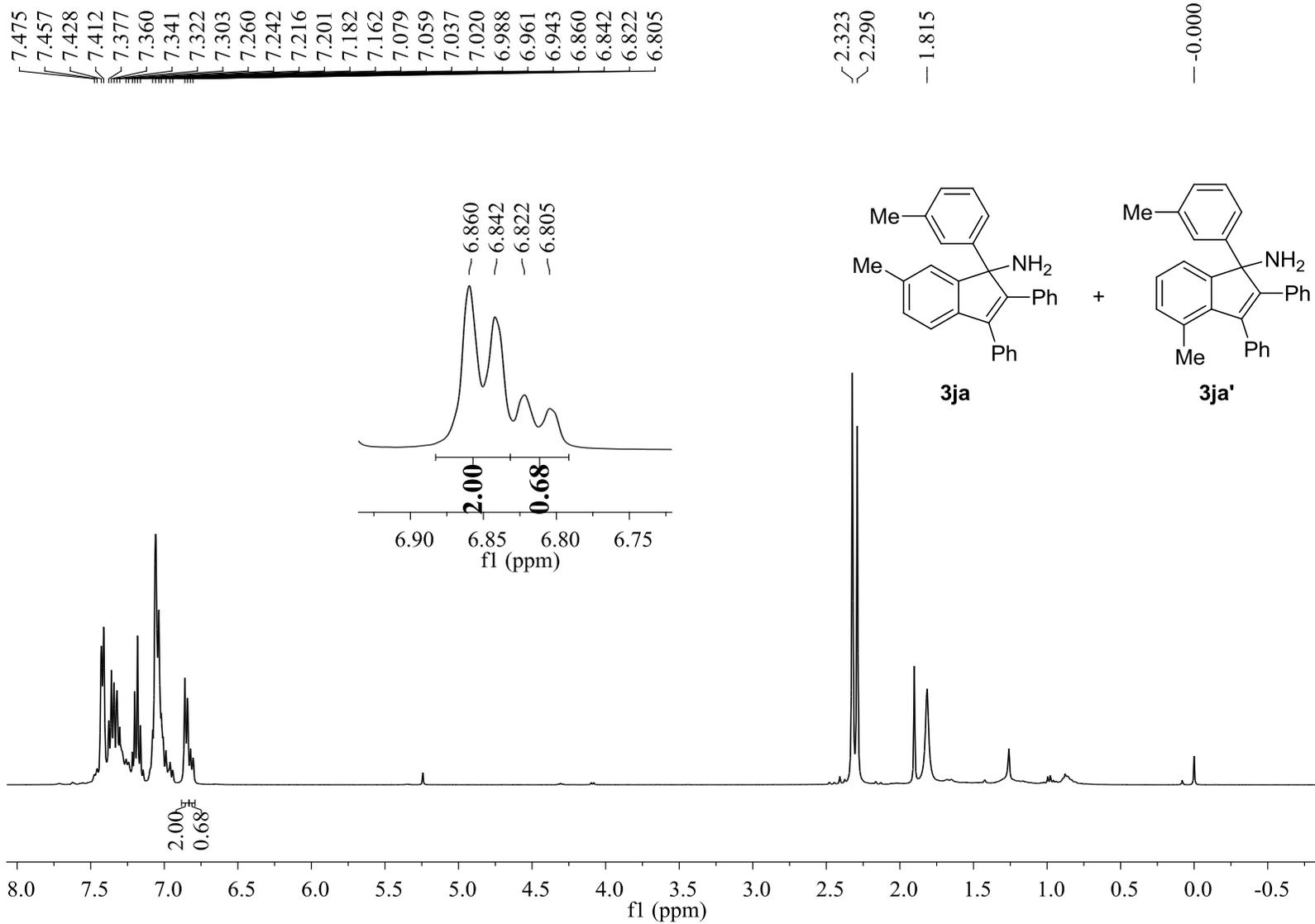


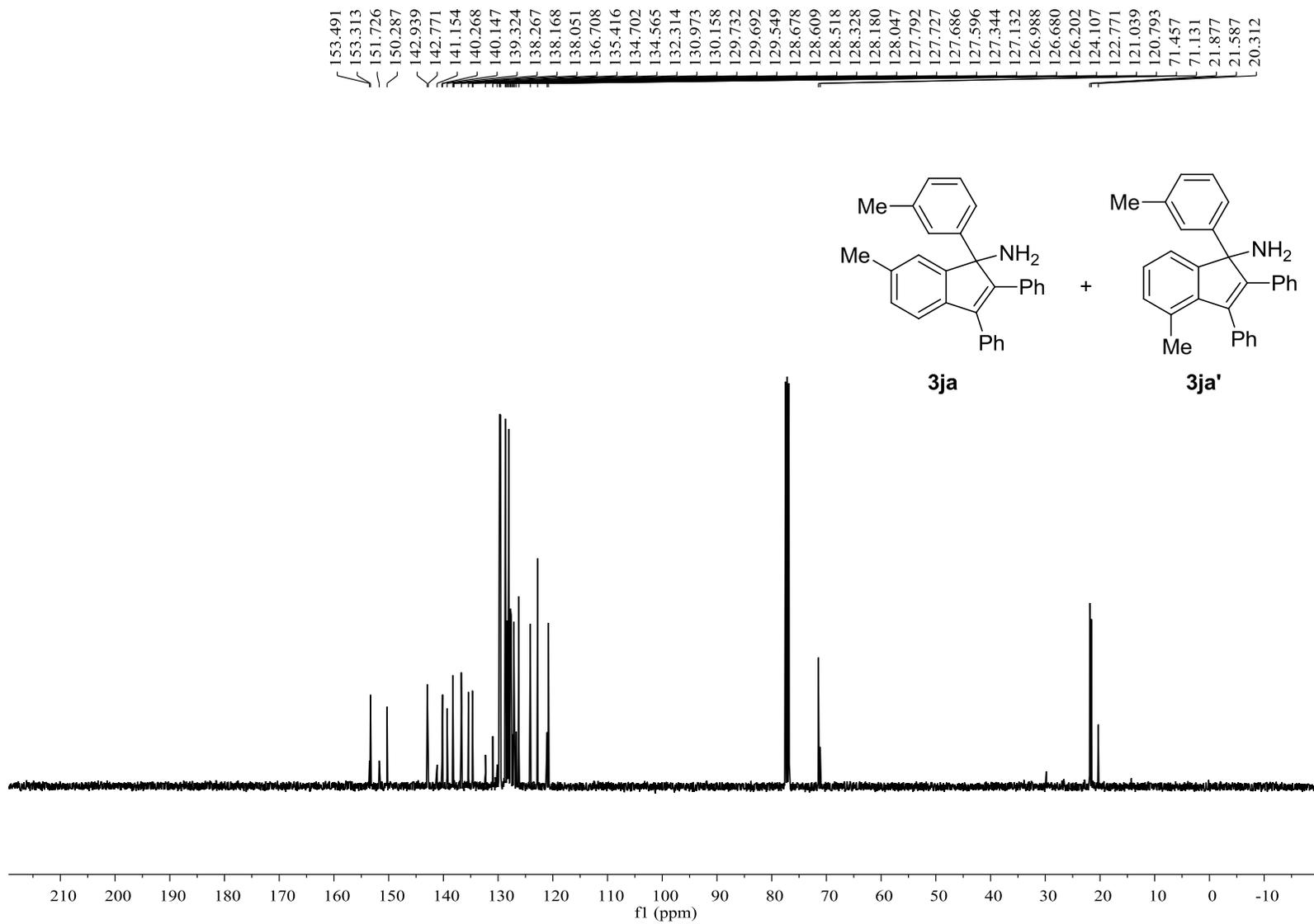
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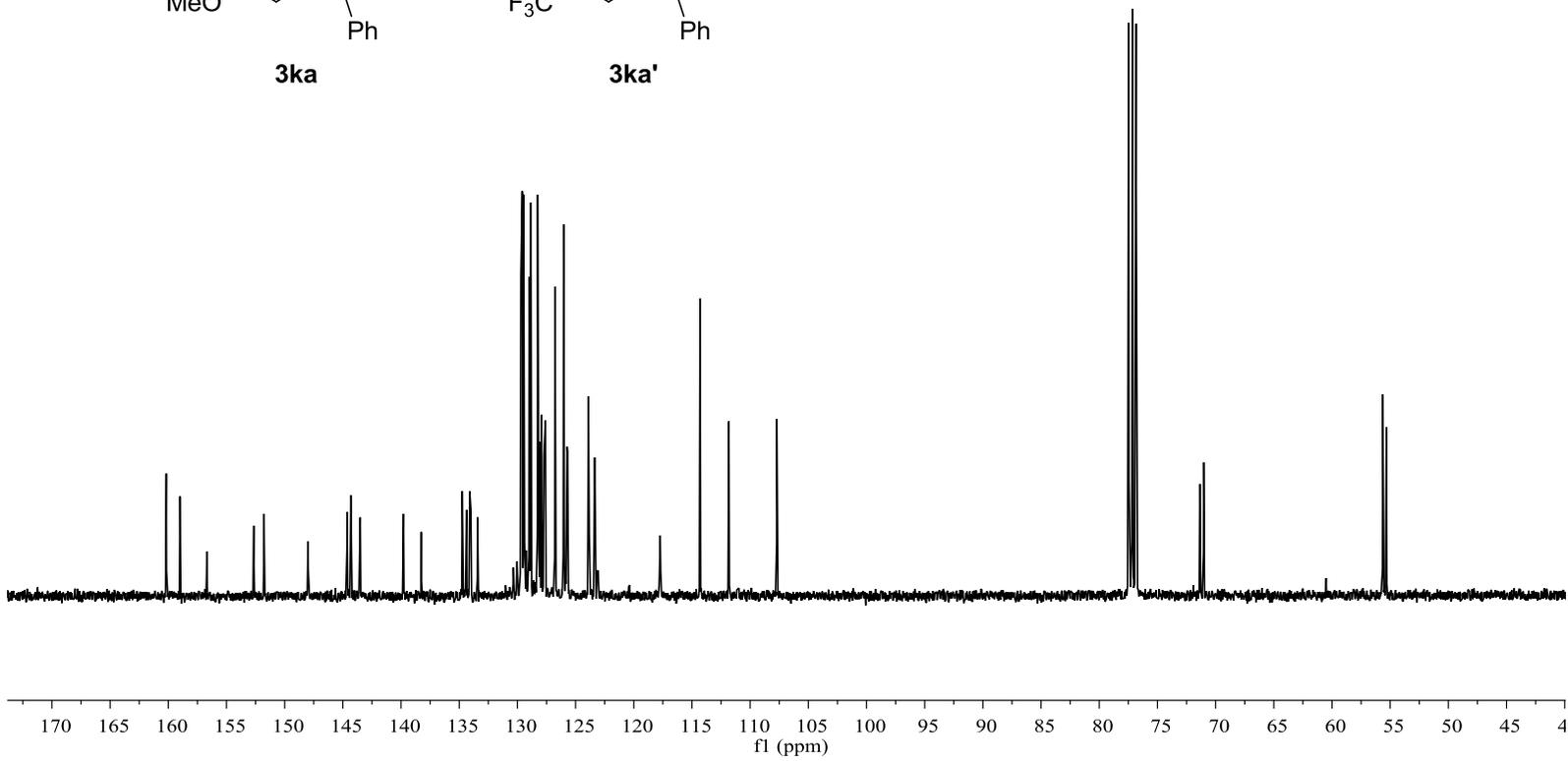
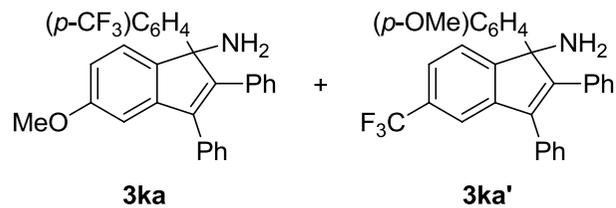


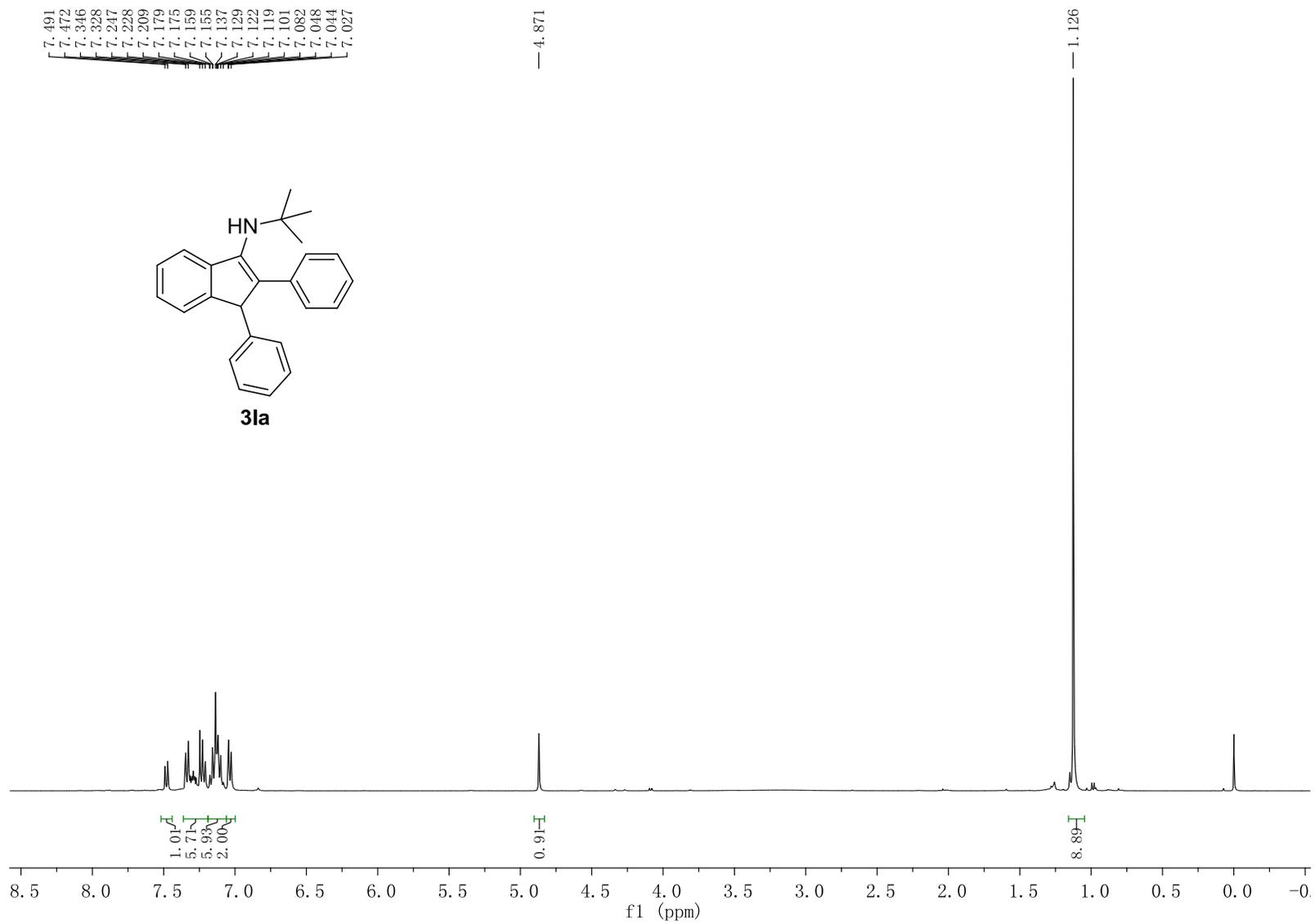


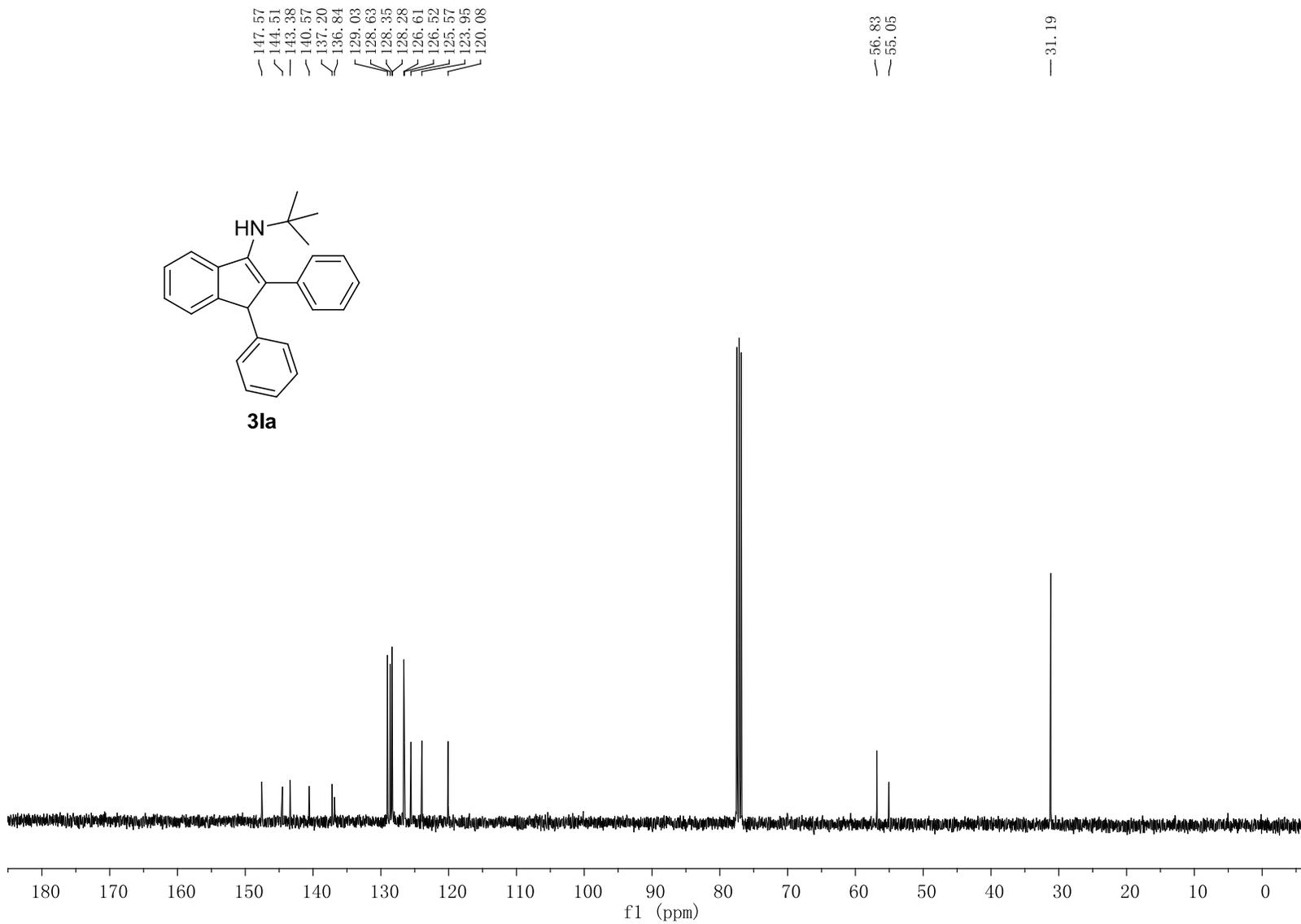
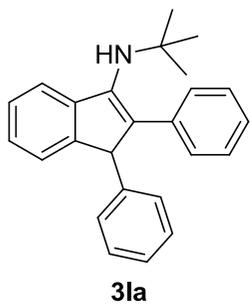


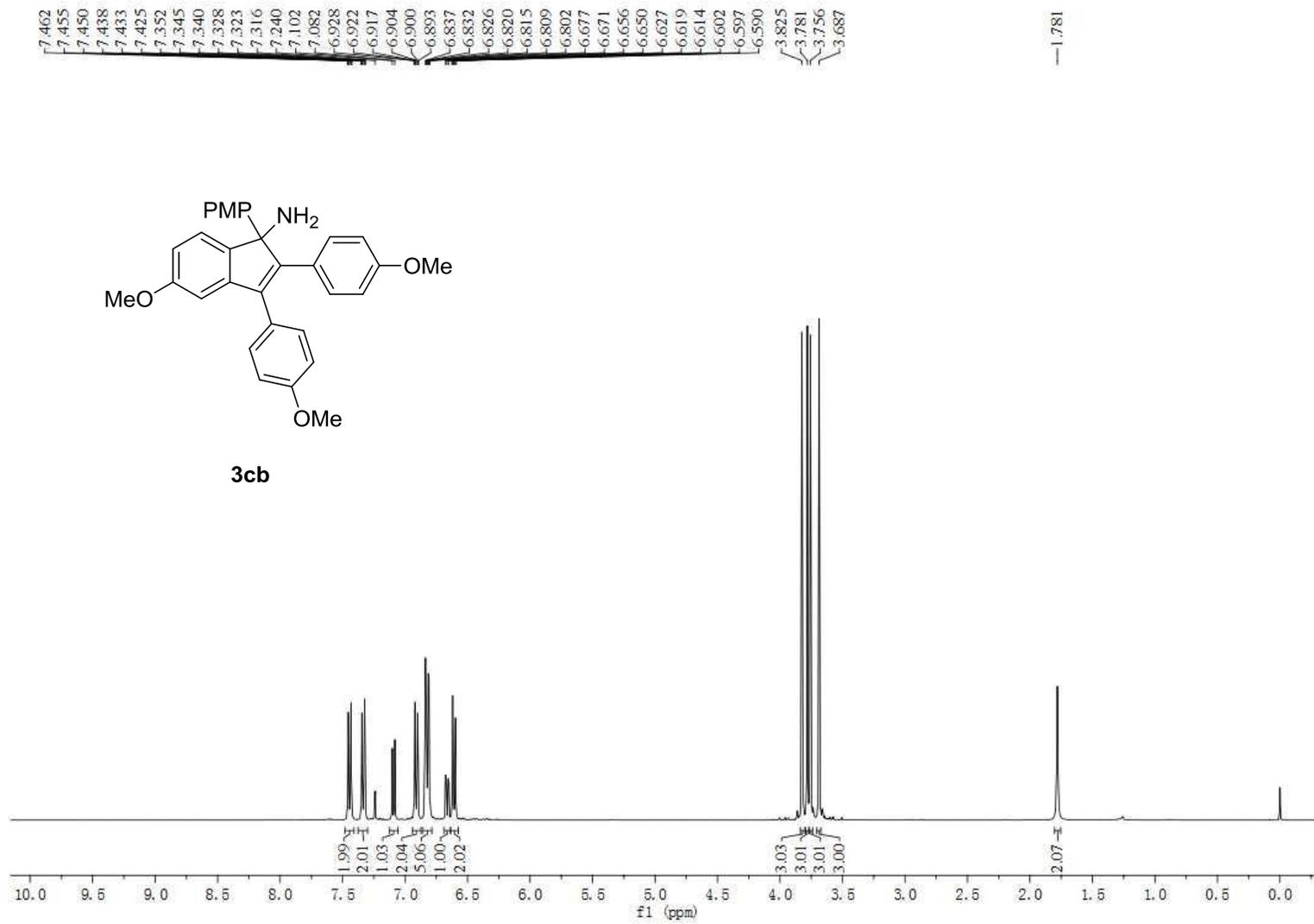


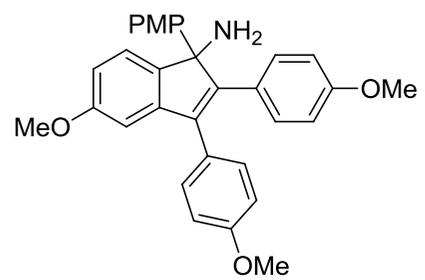
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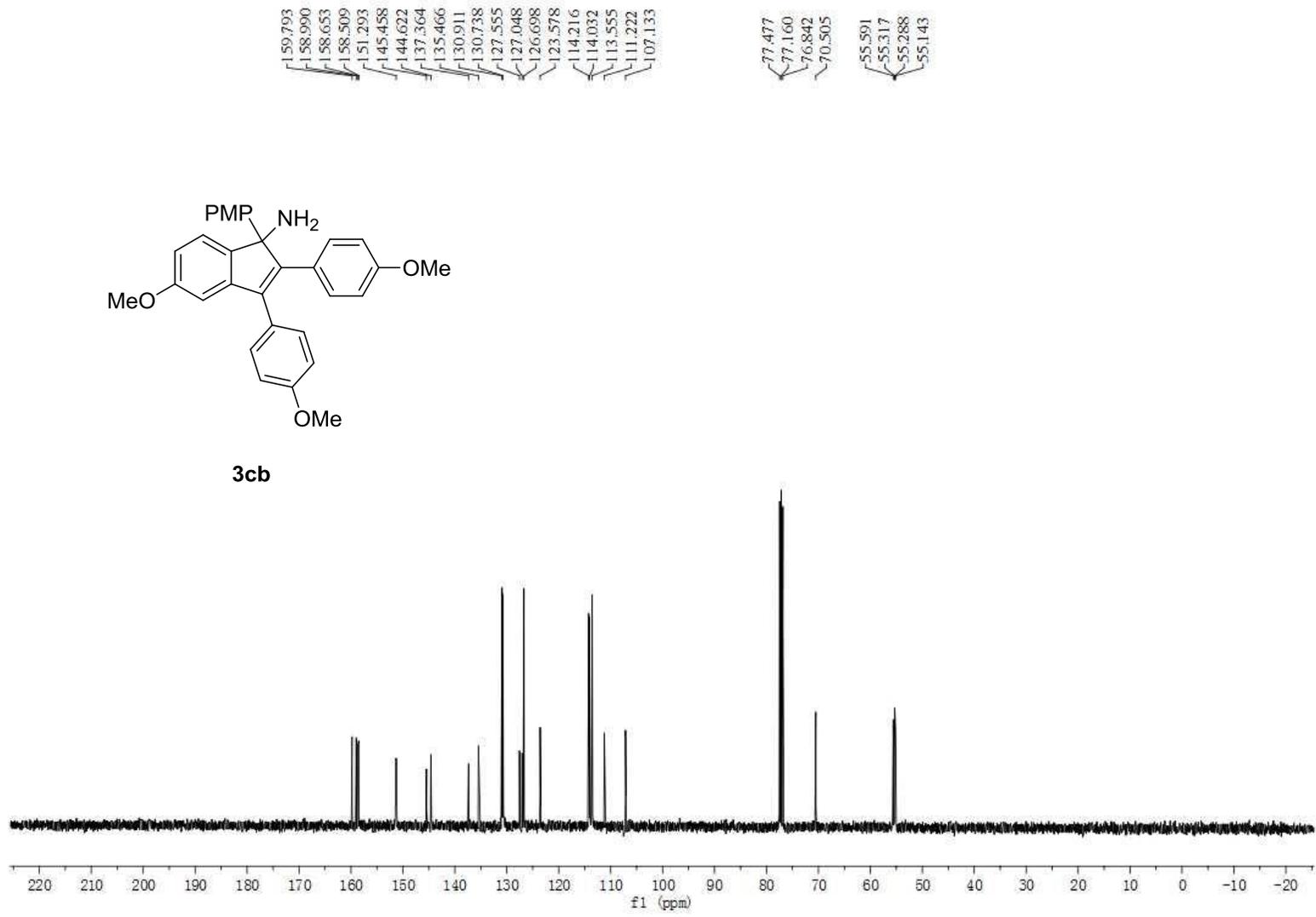


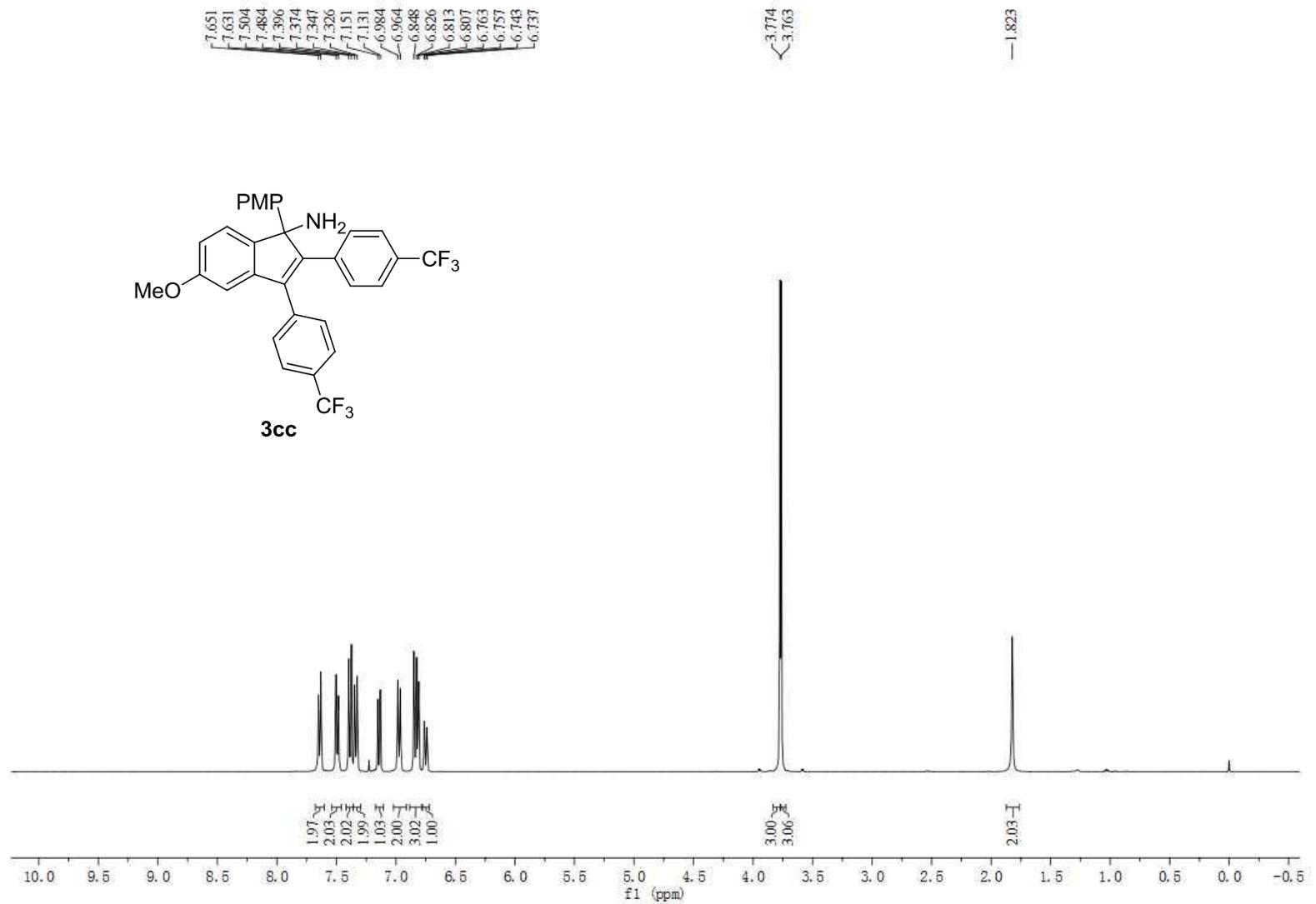


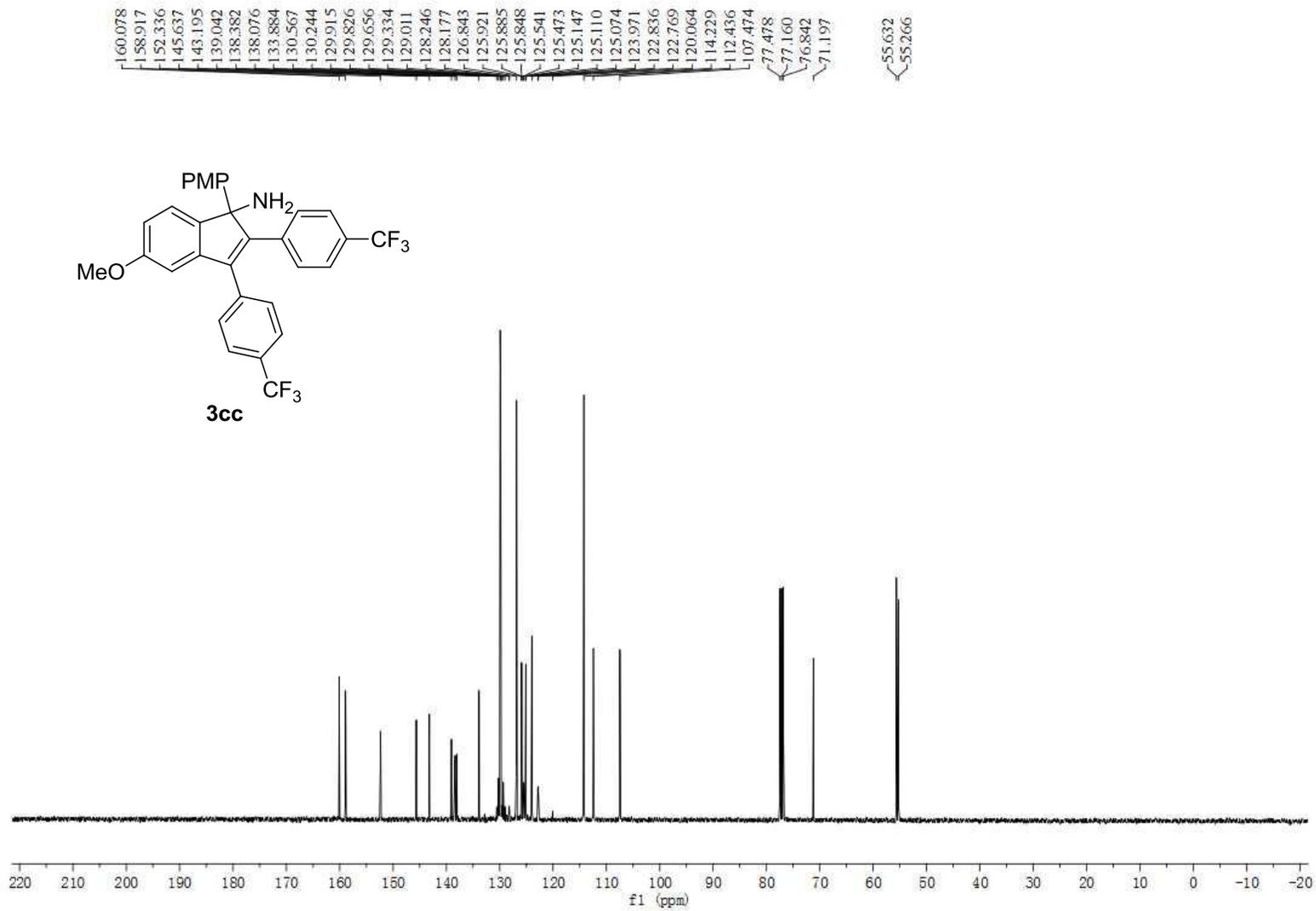


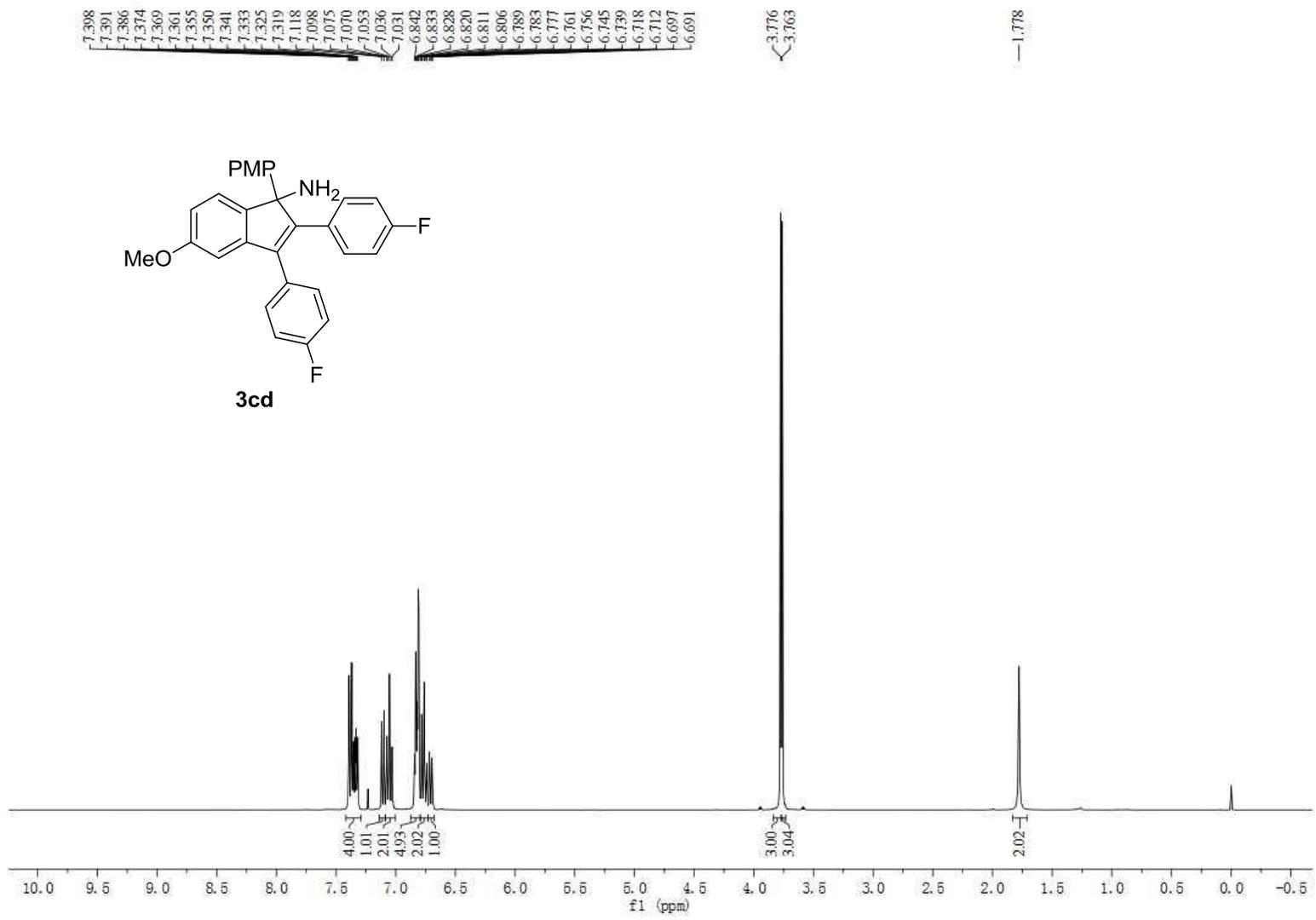


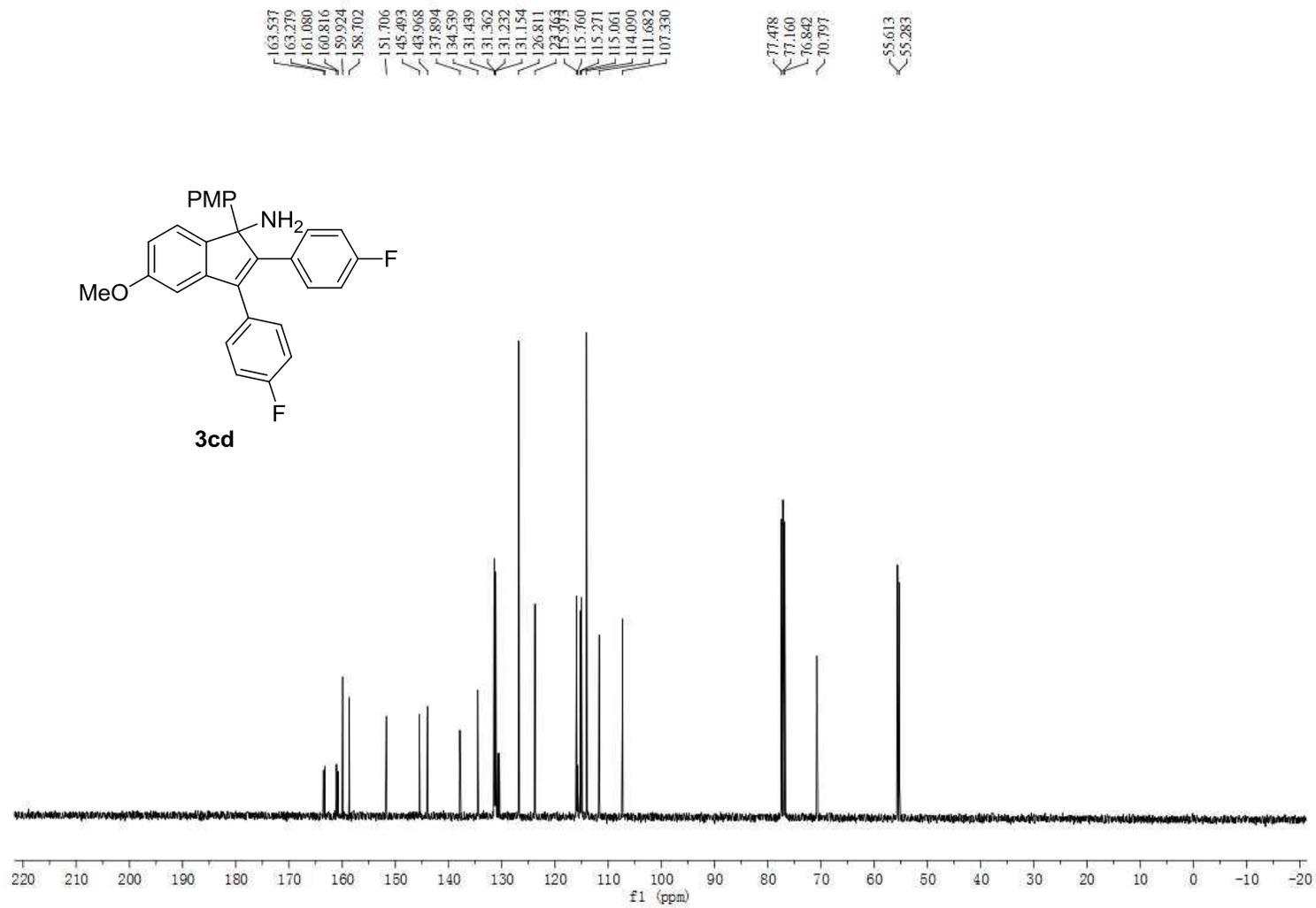
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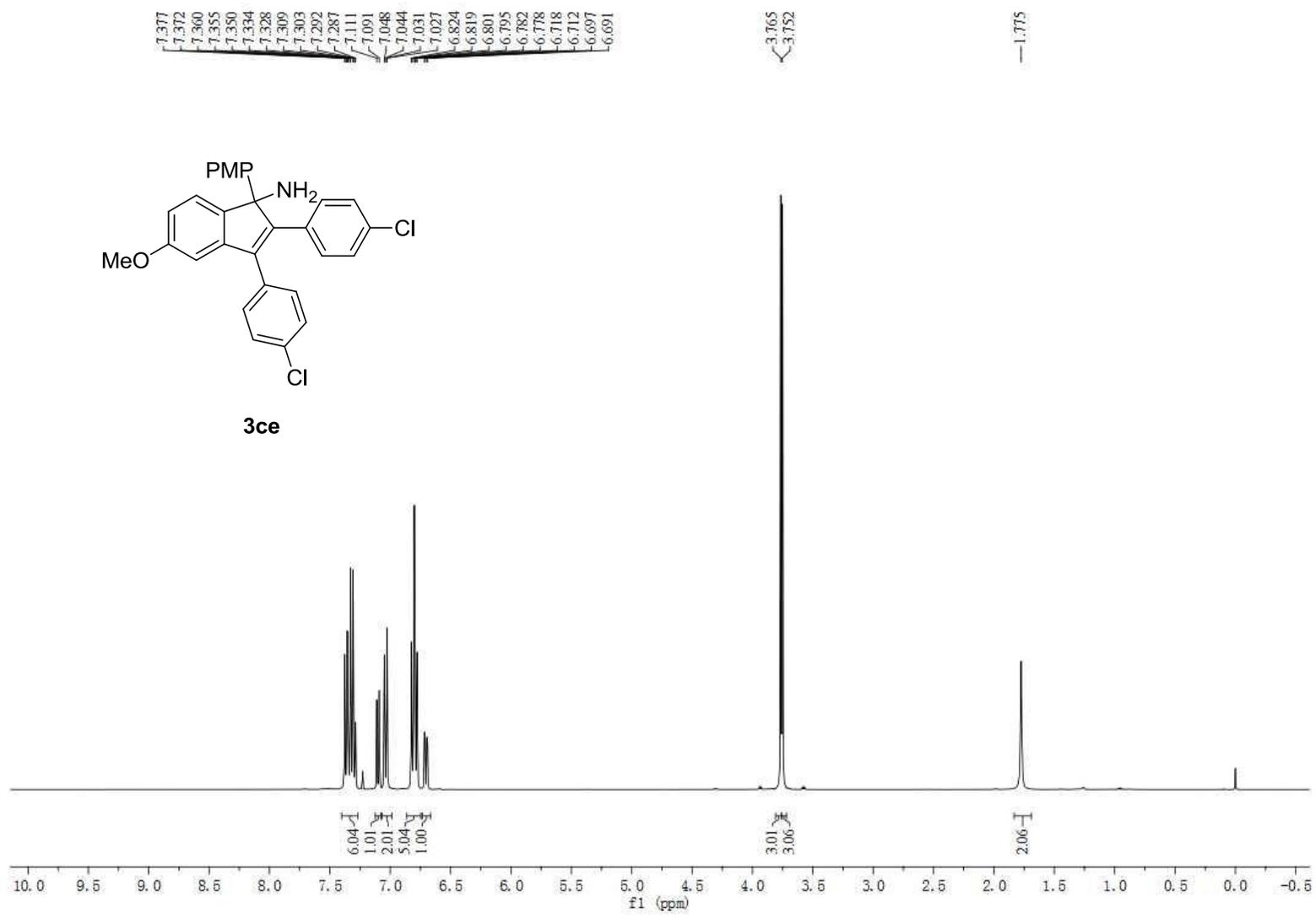


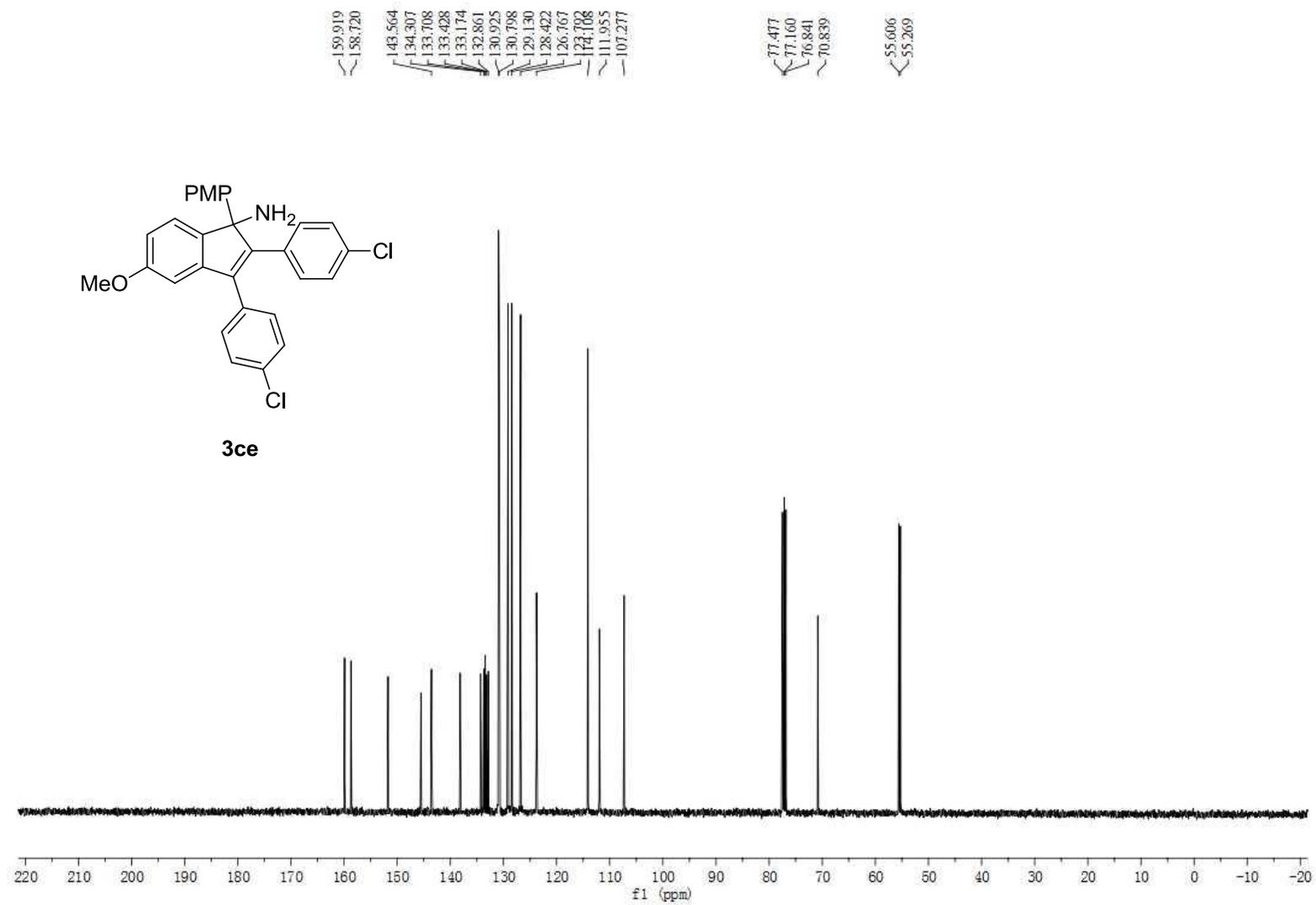


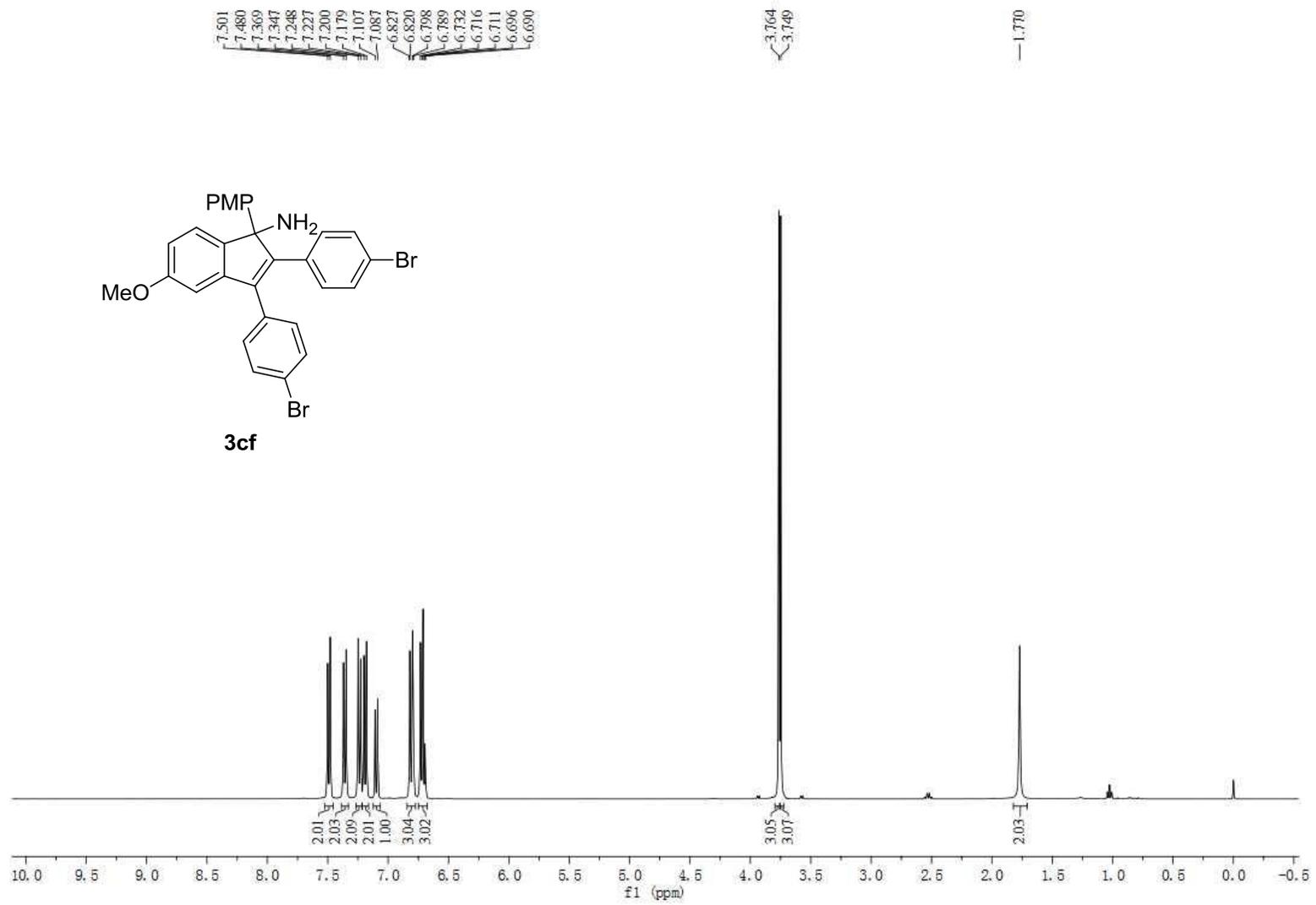


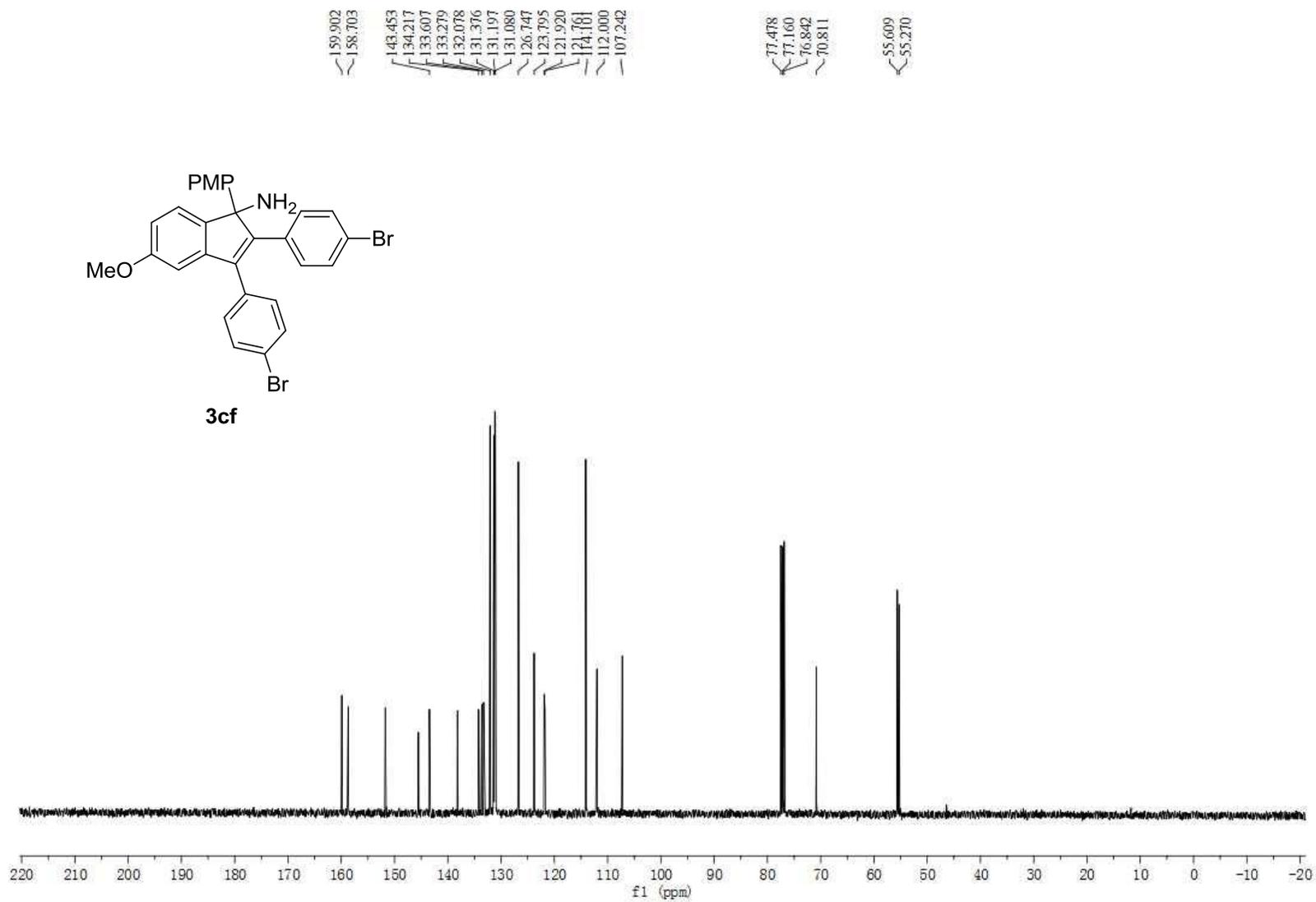
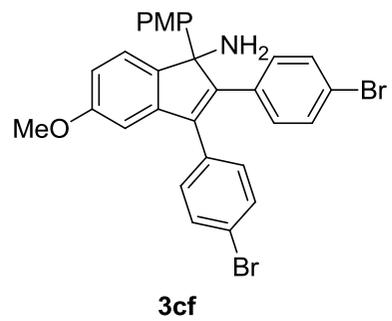


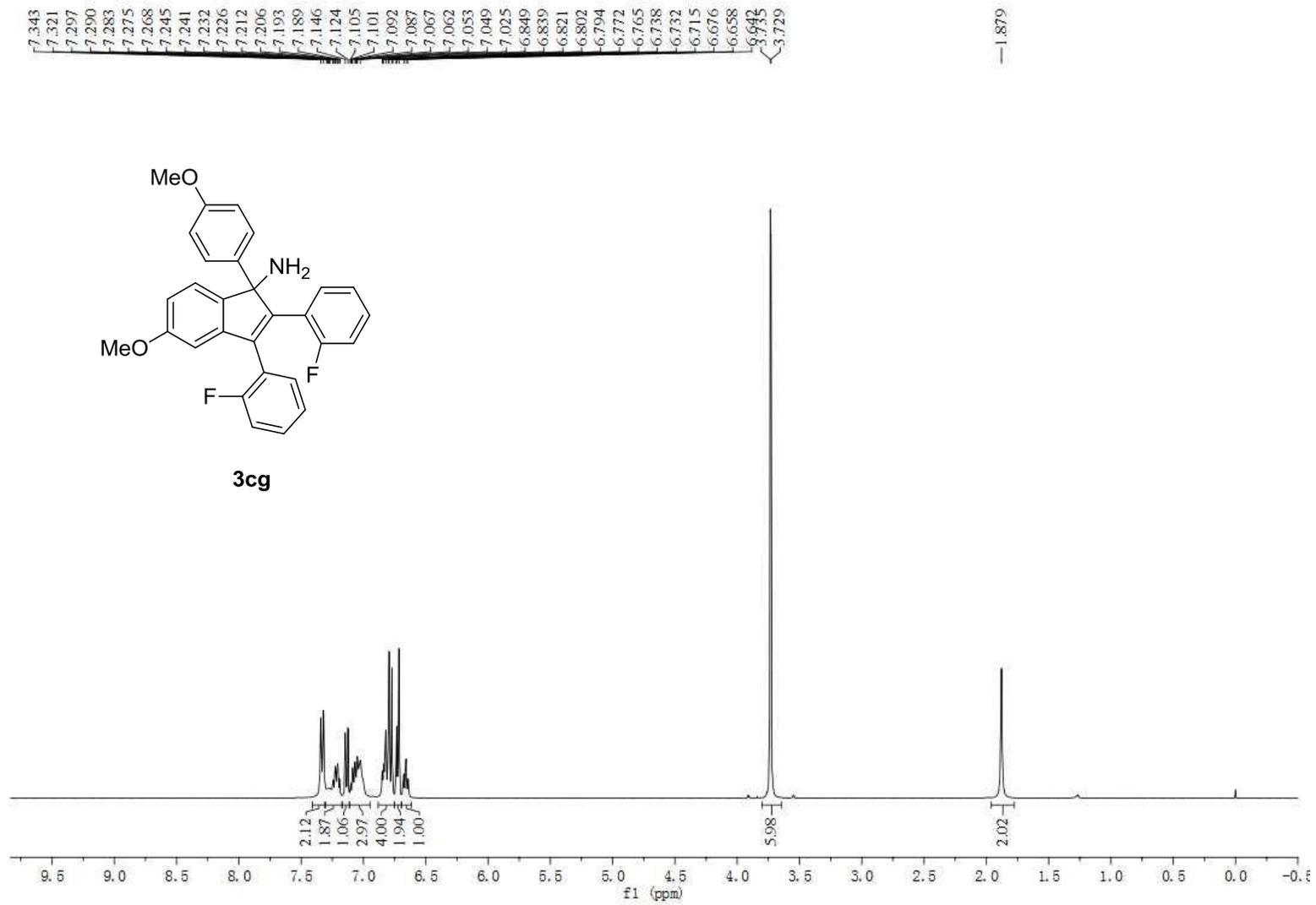


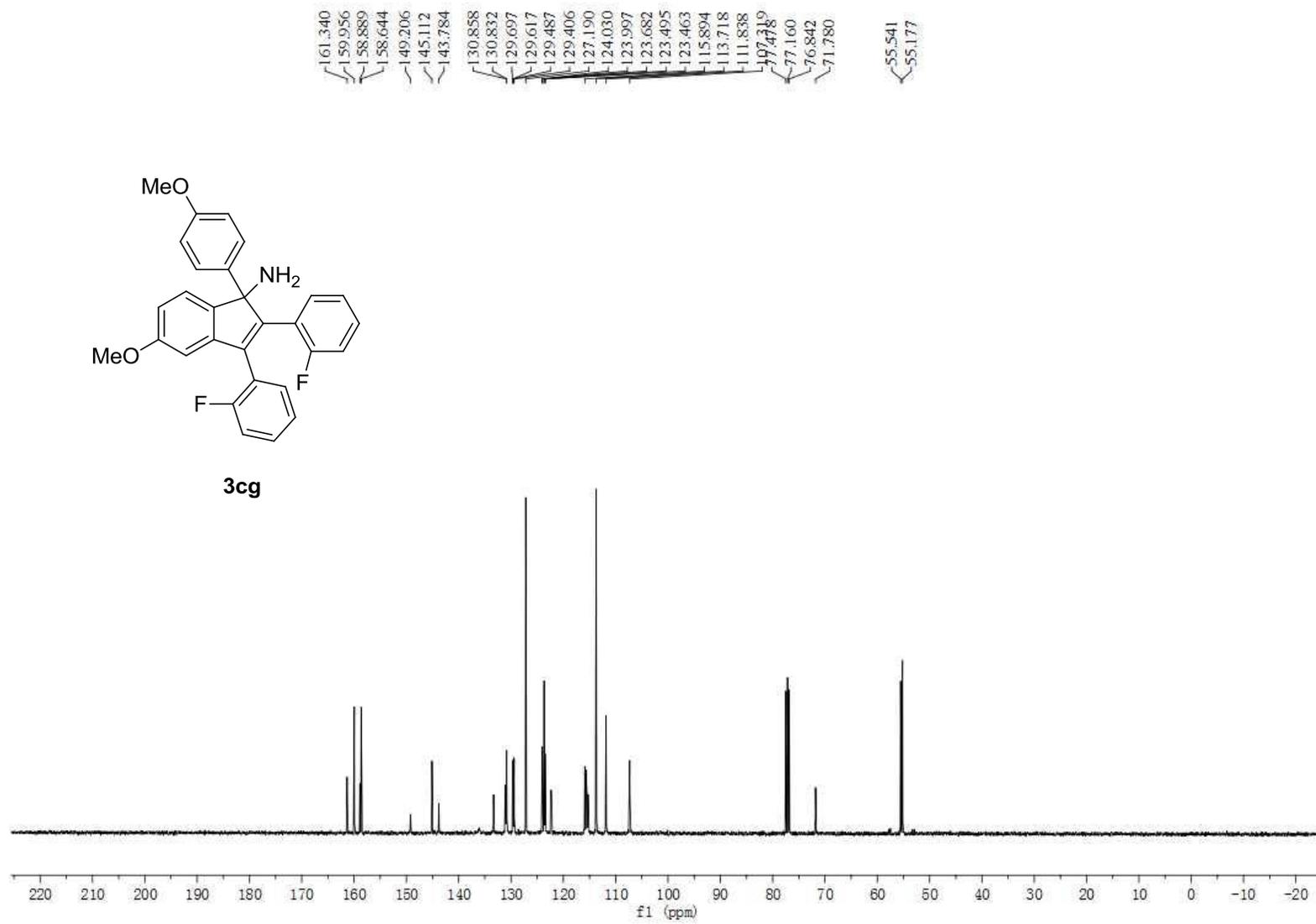


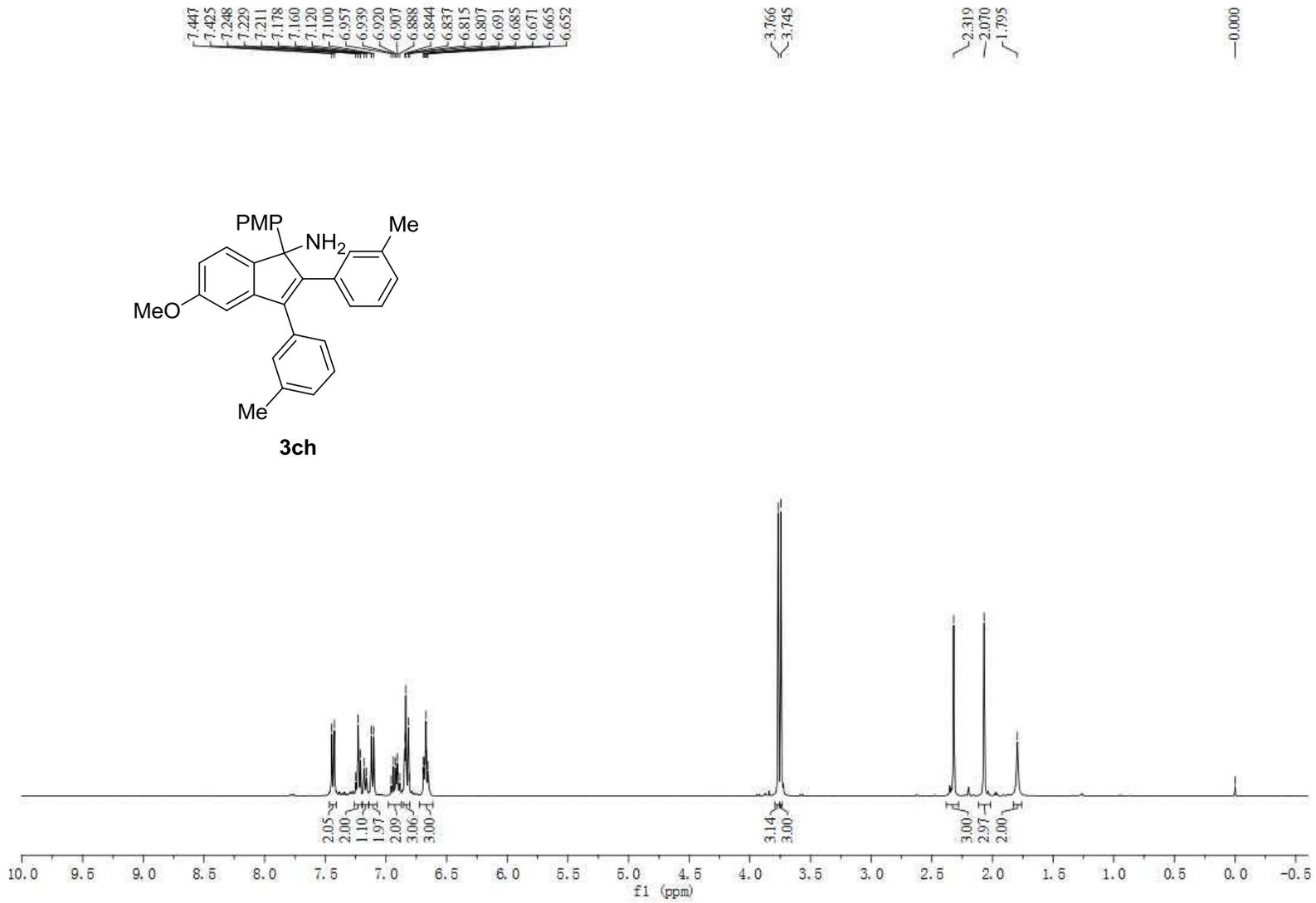
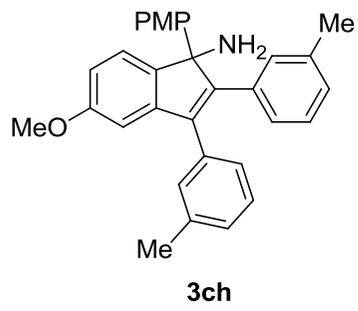


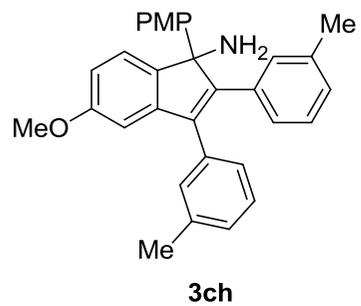












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