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**A new fluorescent sensor containing glutamic acid for Fe<sup>3+</sup> and its resulting complex as a secondary sensor for PPI in purely aqueous solution**

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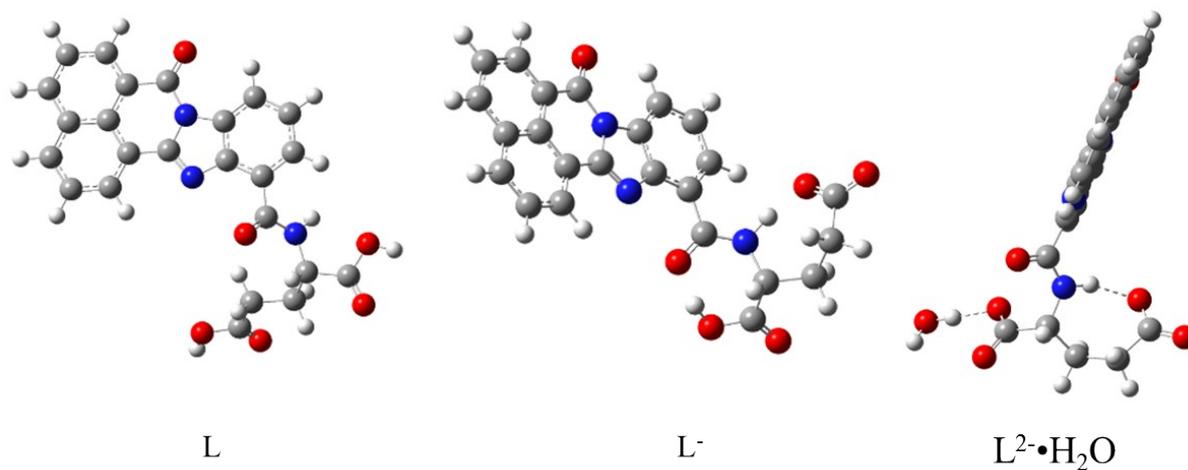


Fig. S1. The optimization of L, L<sup>-</sup> and L<sup>2</sup>·H<sub>2</sub>O using TD-DFT calculating methods.

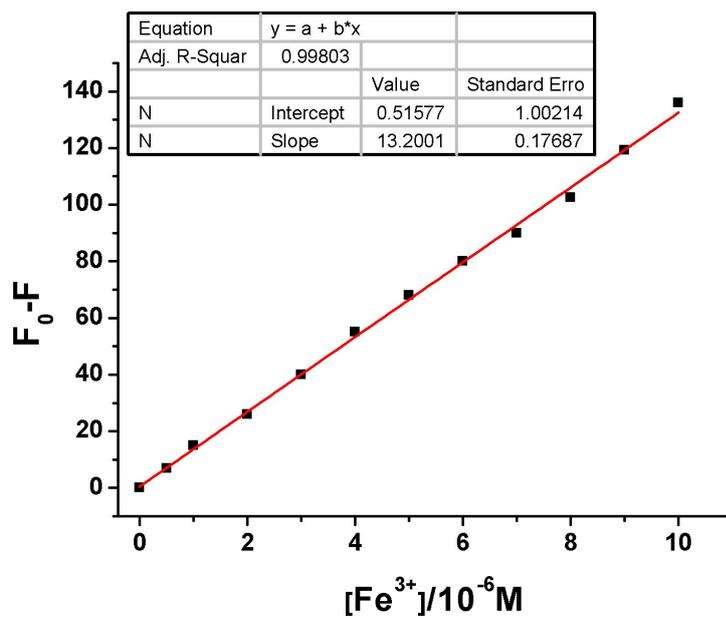


Fig. S2. The linear change ratio between fluorescence intensity (at 524 nm) and different concentration of Fe<sup>3+</sup> in purely aqueous buffer (tris 10 mM, pH = 7.4) solution.

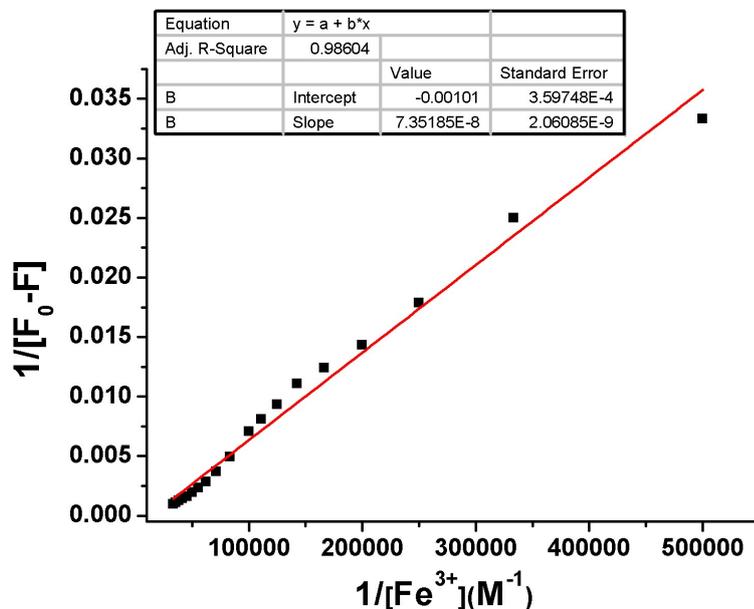


Fig. S3. Benesi–Hildebrand plot based on a 1:1 binding stoichiometry between L and  $\text{Fe}^{3+}$ .

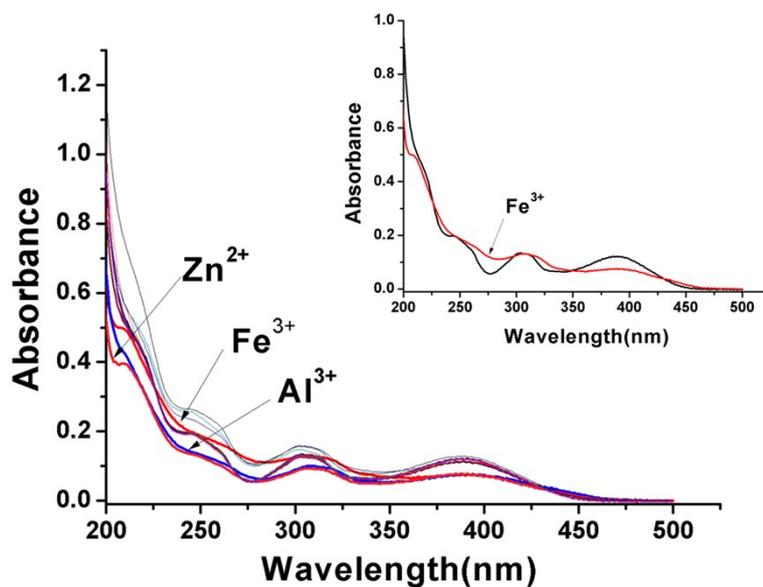


Fig. S4. Absorption spectrum of L ( $1 \times 10^{-5}$  M) towards 5 equiv. of various metal ions including  $\text{Na}^+$ ,  $\text{Li}^+$ ,  $\text{K}^+$ ,  $\text{Mg}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Zn}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Cd}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Fe}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Ag}^+$ ,  $\text{Cu}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Co}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Ni}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Mn}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Cr}^{3+}$ ,  $\text{Sr}^{3+}$ ,  $\text{Al}^+$  and  $\text{Fe}^{3+}$ , only  $\text{Fe}^{3+}$  in purely aqueous buffer (tris 10 mM, pH = 7.4) solution. Insert: Absorption spectrum of free L and L- $\text{Fe}^{3+}$  complex in the presence of 5 equiv. of  $\text{Fe}^{3+}$ .

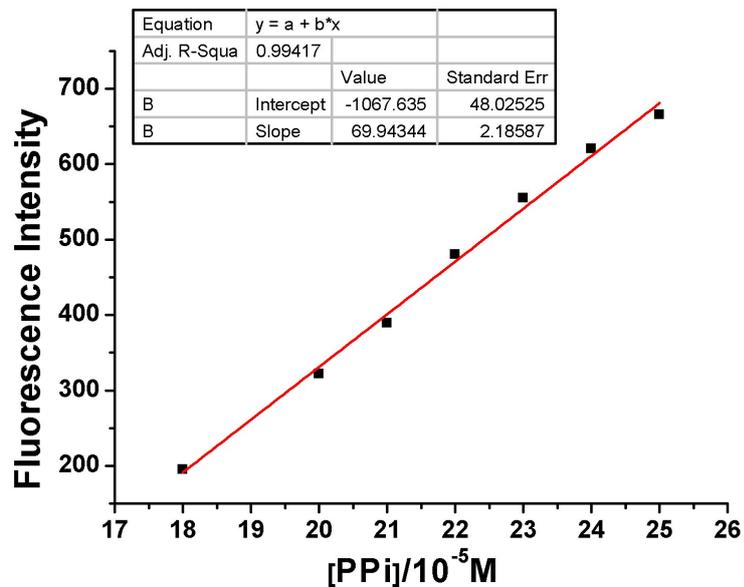


Fig. S5. The linear change ratio between fluorescence intensity of L-Fe<sup>3+</sup> complex (at 524 nm) and different concentration of PPI in purely aqueous buffer (tris 10 mM, pH = 7.4) solution.

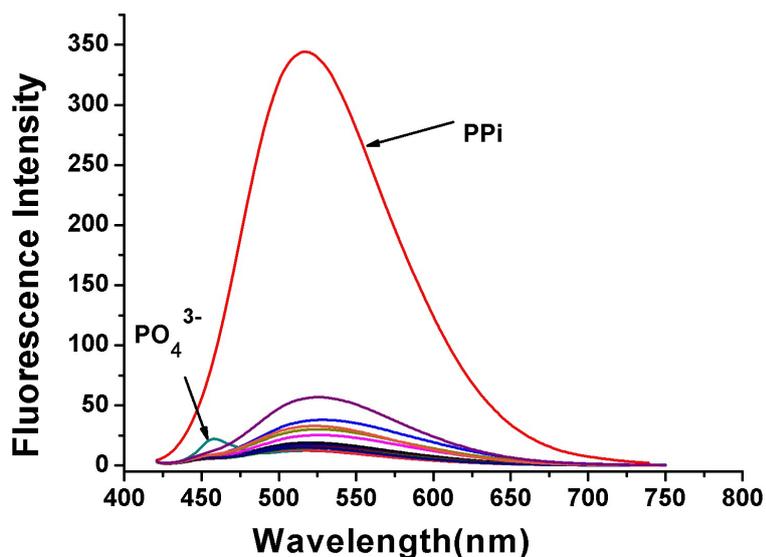


Fig. S6. Fluorescence selectivity of L-Fe<sup>3+</sup> complex towards various anions including PPI, EDTA, PO<sub>4</sub><sup>3-</sup>, H<sub>2</sub>PO<sub>4</sub><sup>-</sup>, S<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub><sup>2-</sup>, HSO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup>, CrO<sub>4</sub><sup>2-</sup>, NO<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup>, NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup>, S<sup>2-</sup>, F<sup>-</sup>, Cl<sup>-</sup>, Br<sup>-</sup> in purely aqueous buffer (tris 10 mM, pH = 7.4) solution.

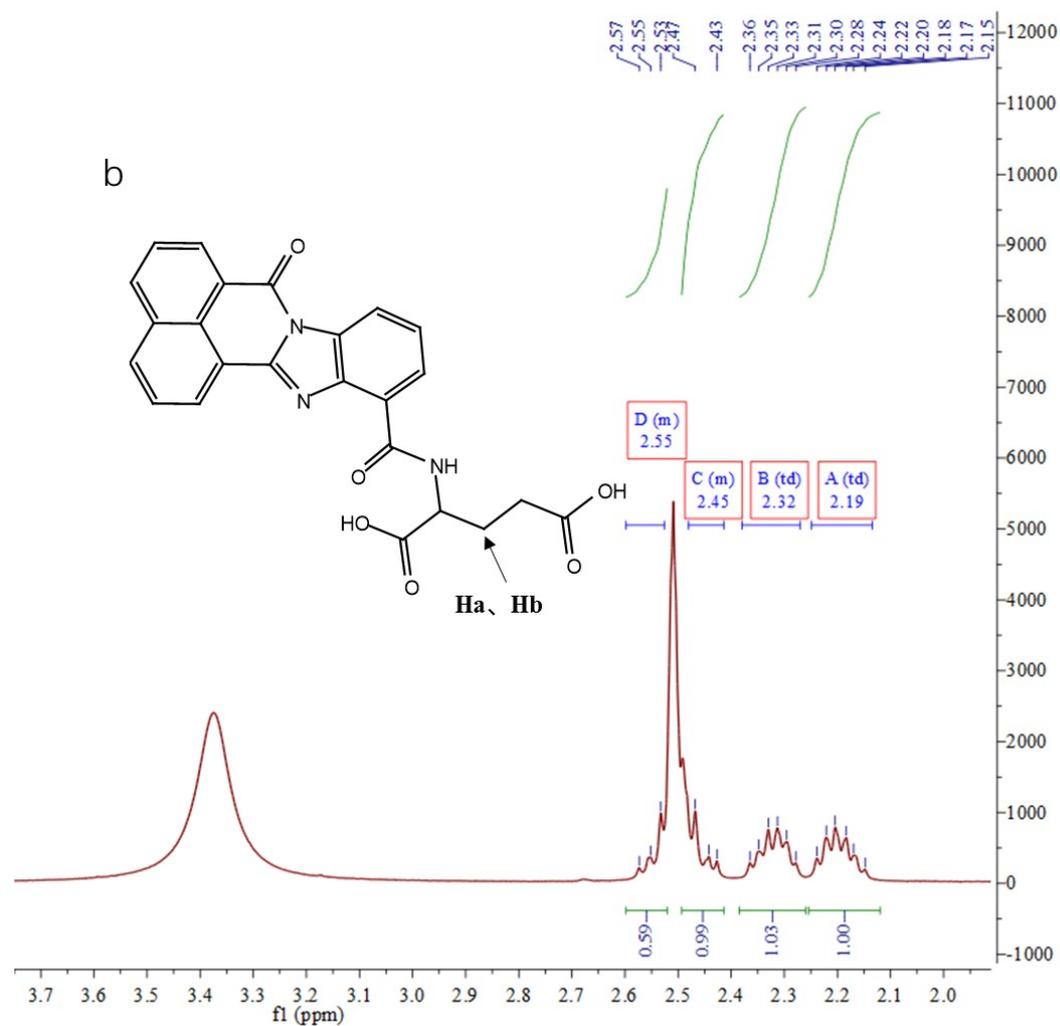
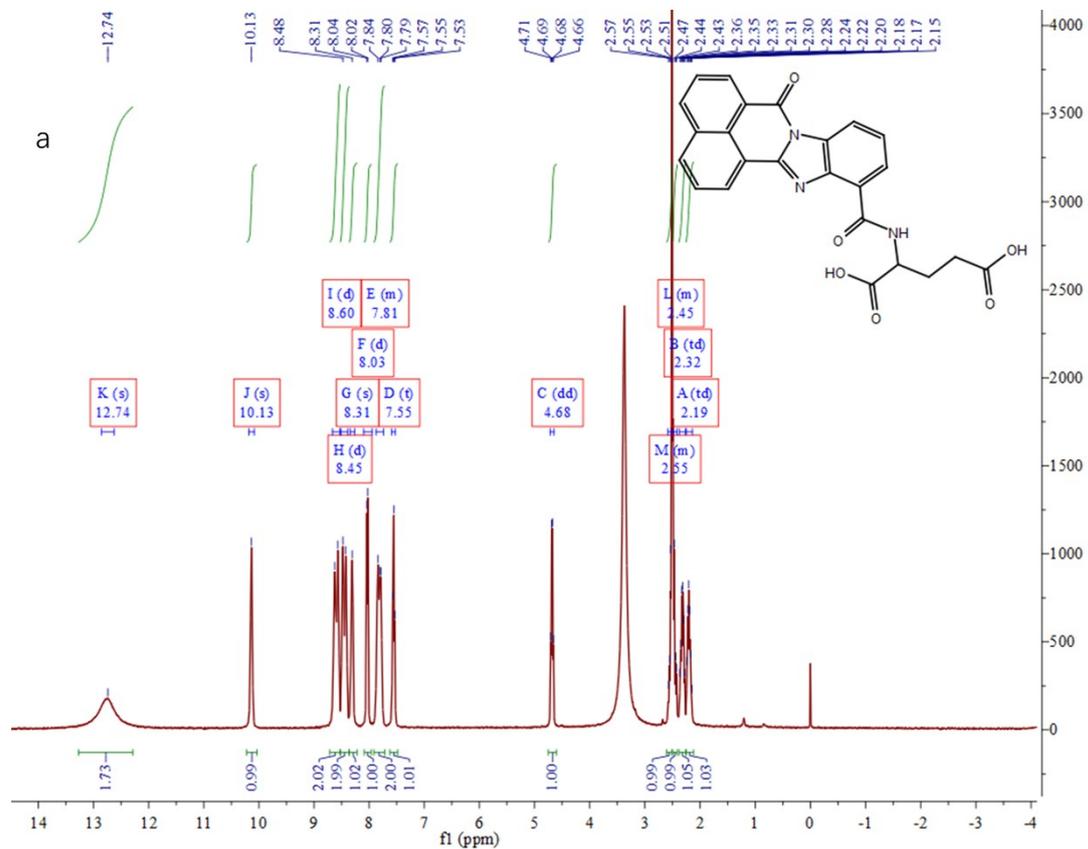


Fig. S7. (a) whole  $^1\text{H}$  NMR spectrum and (b) partial  $^1\text{H}$  NMR spectrum in detail of probe L in  $\text{DMSO-}d_6$ .

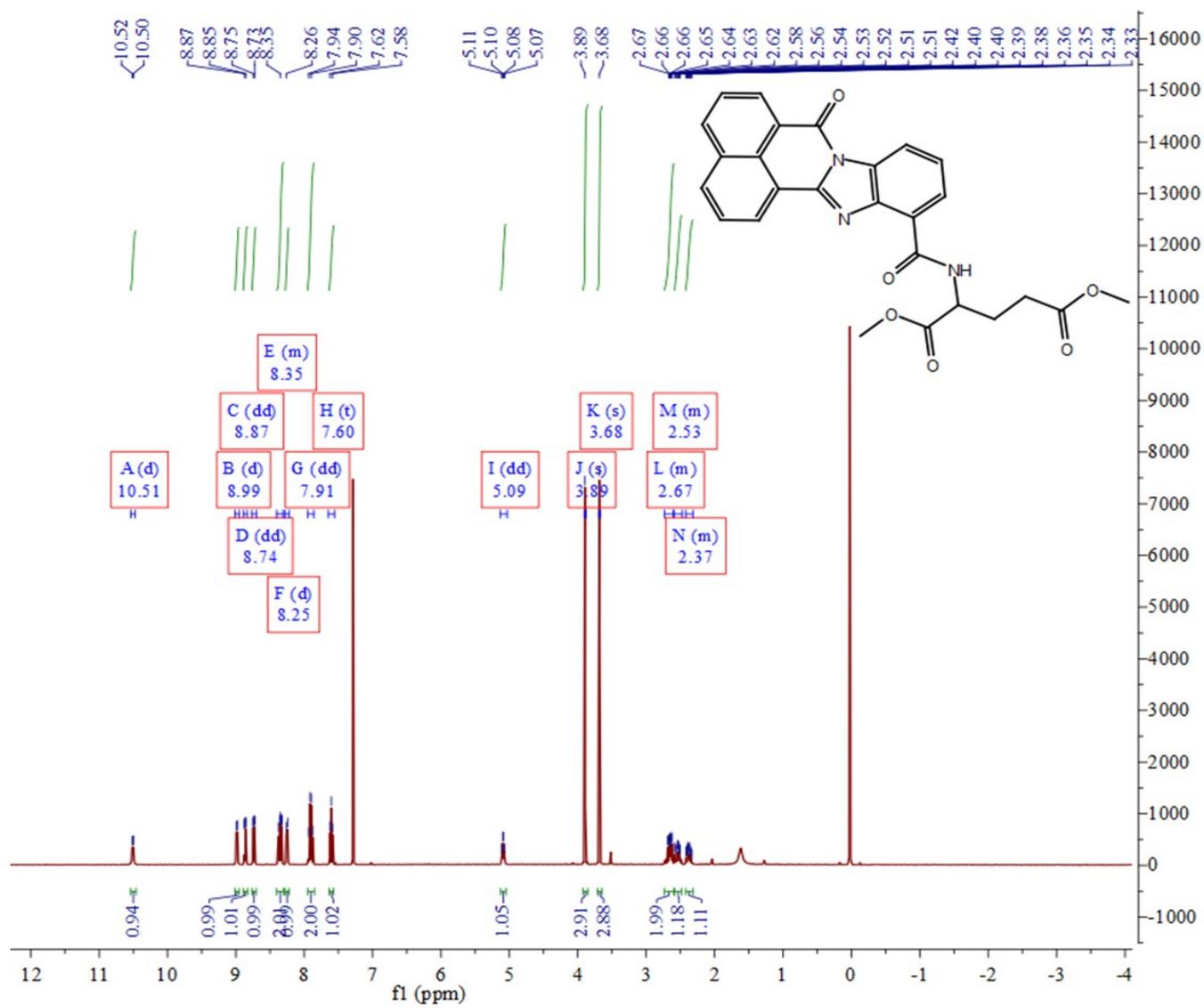


Fig. S8.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR spectrum of compound 3 in  $\text{CDCl}_3$ .

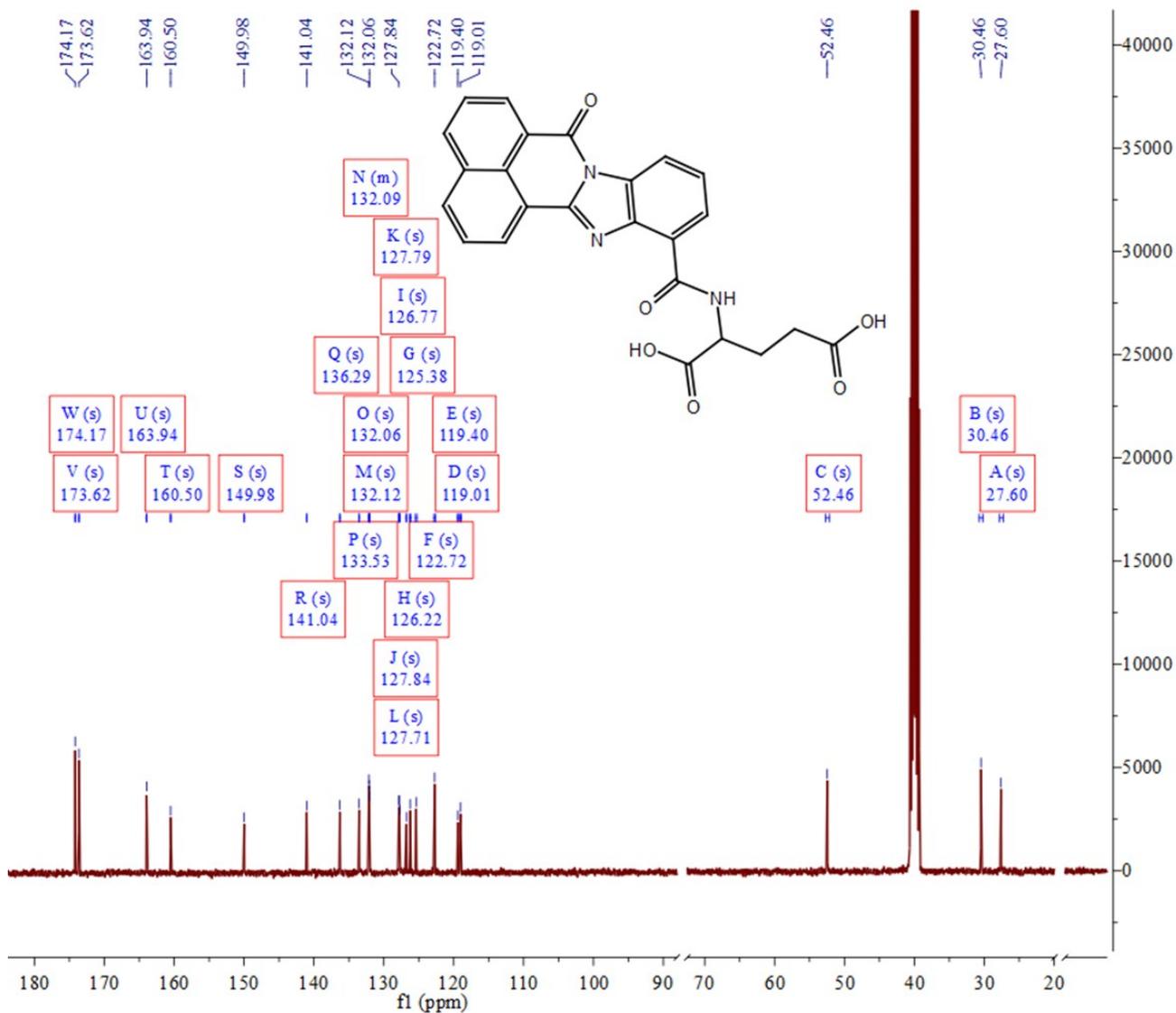


Fig. S9. <sup>13</sup>C NMR spectrum of probe L in DMSO-*d*<sub>6</sub>.

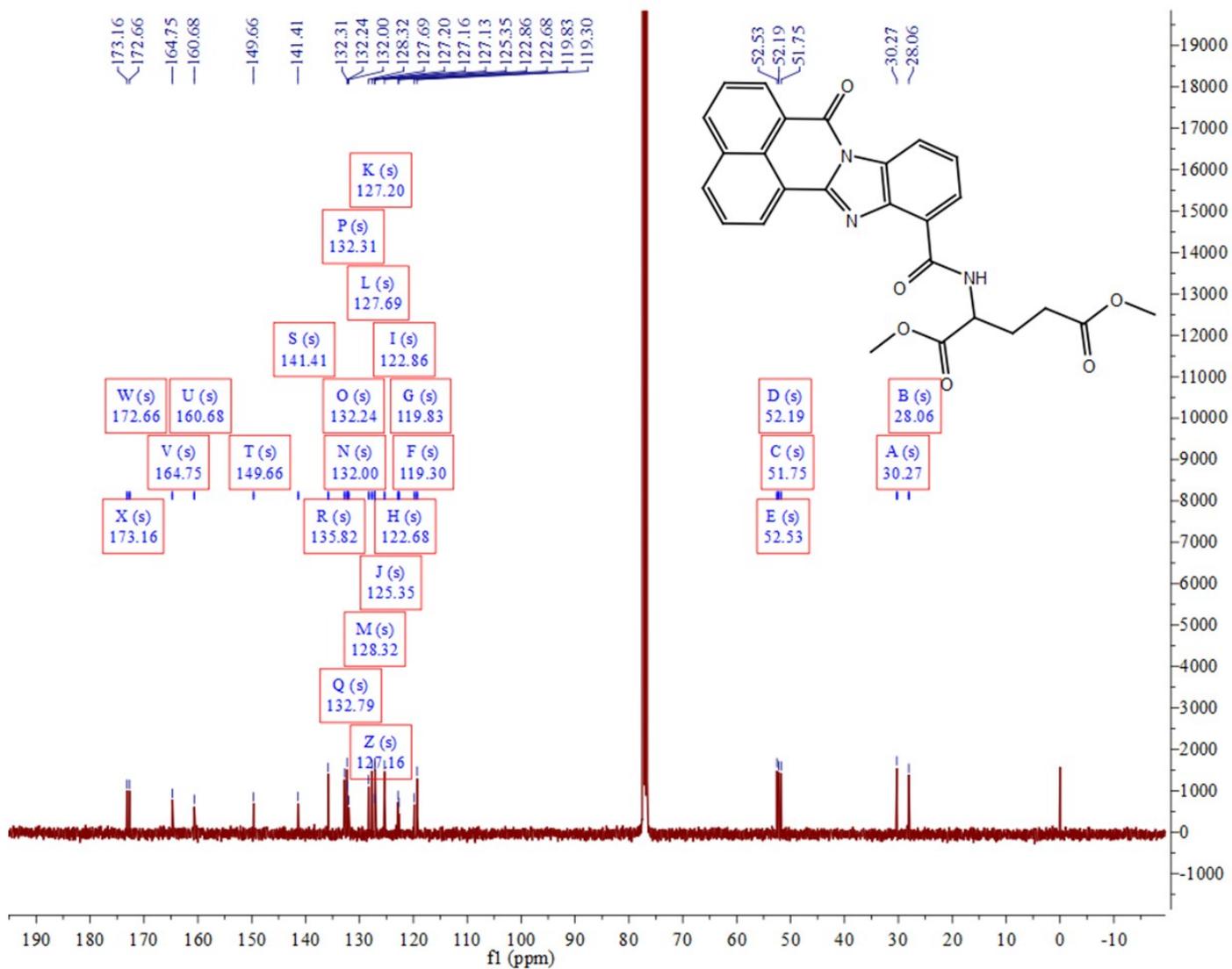


Fig. S10.  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR spectrum of compound 3 in  $\text{CDCl}_3$ .

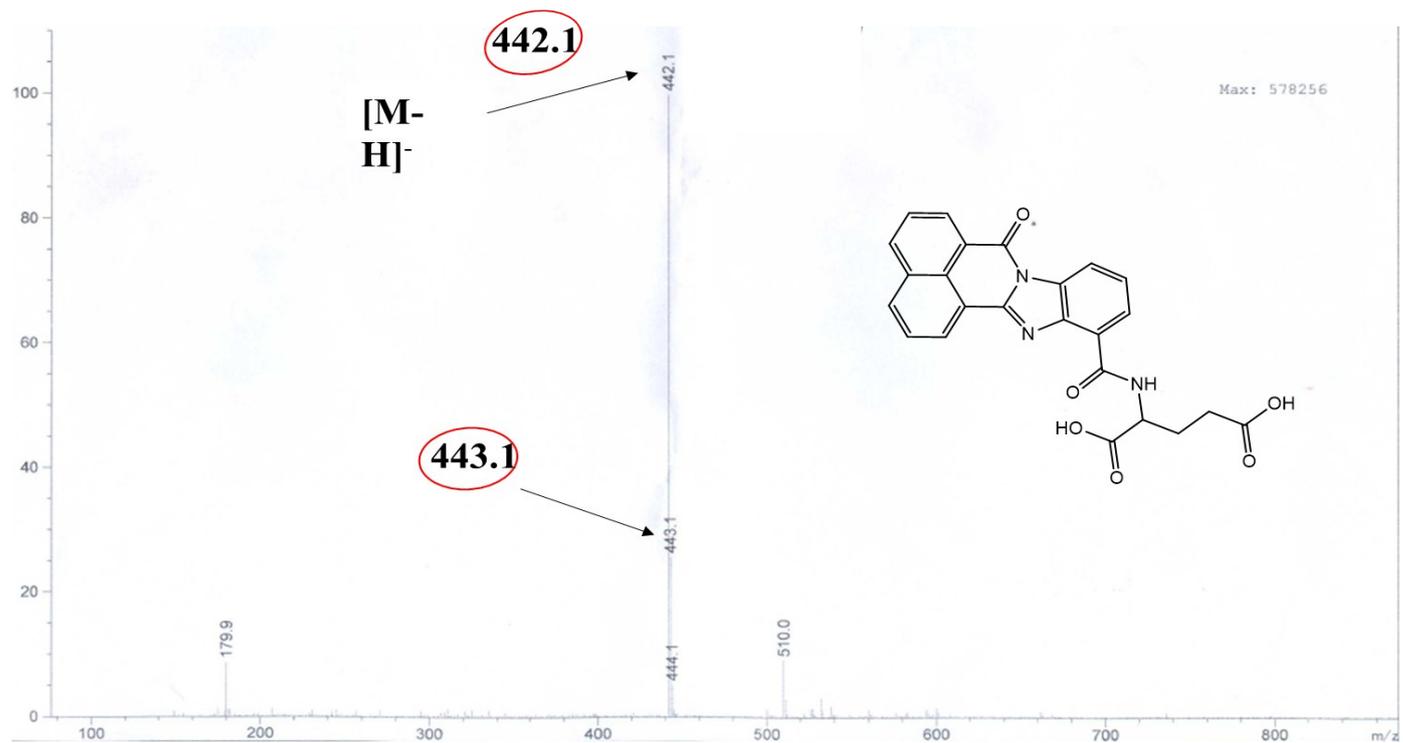


Fig. S11. ESI-MS of complex L.

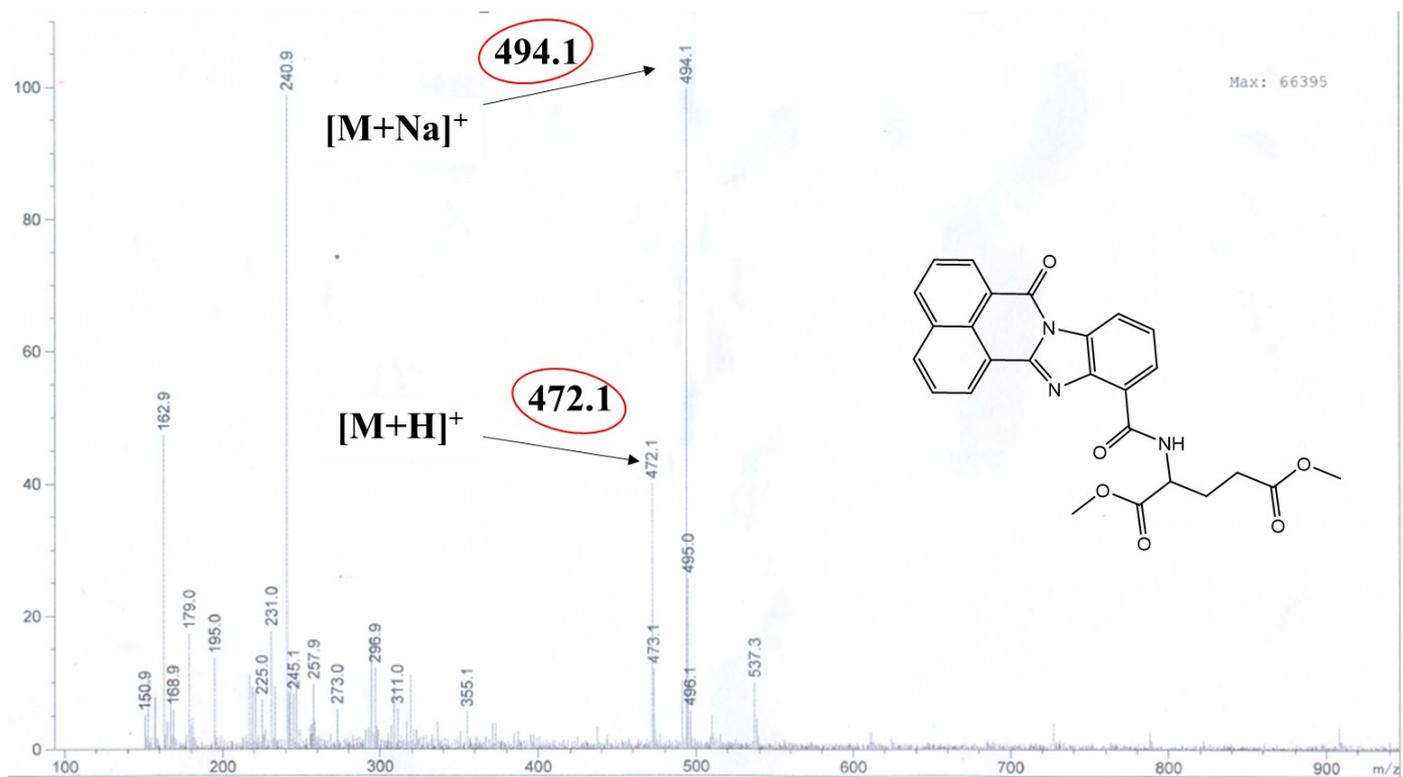


Fig. S12. ESI-MS of complex 3.

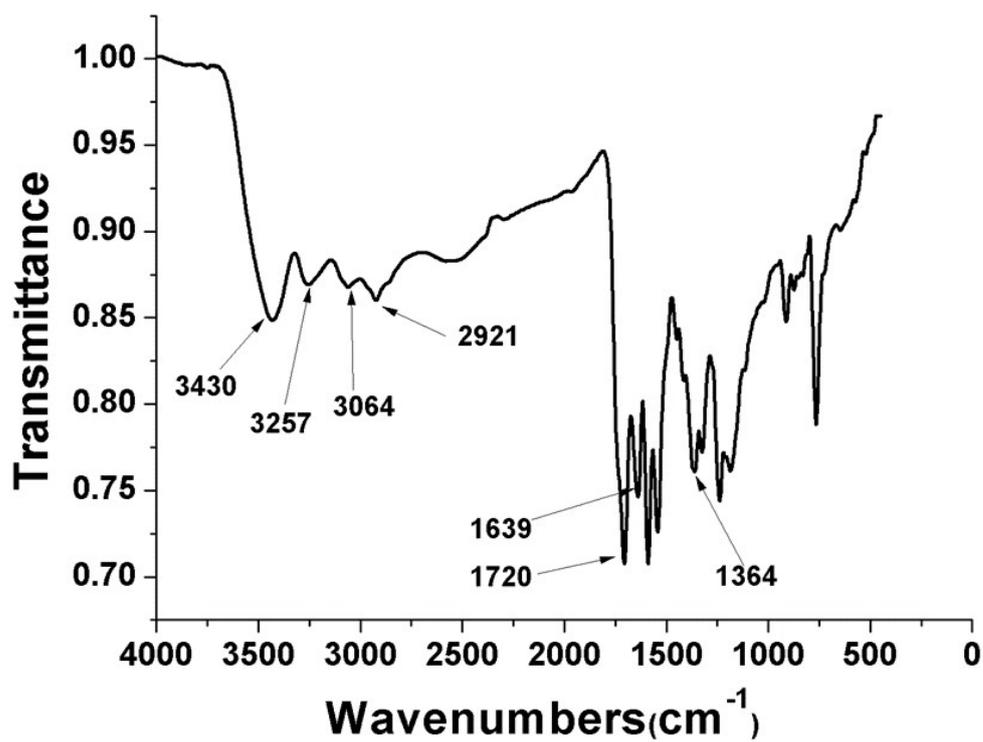


Fig. S13. The FTIR spectra of L.

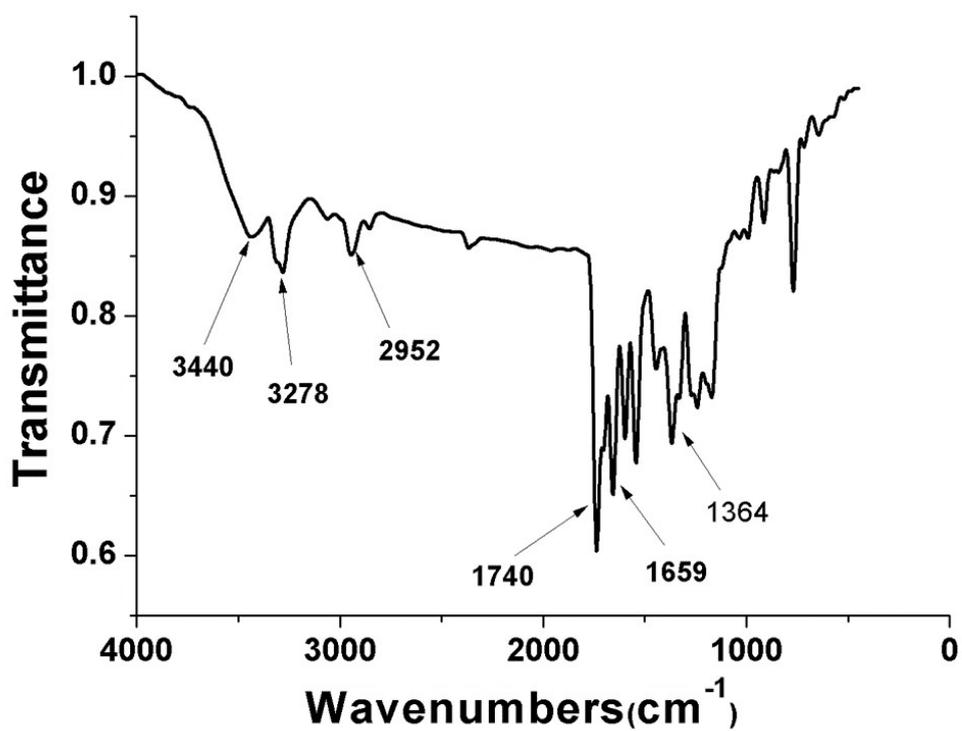


Fig. S14. The FTIR spectra of compound 3.

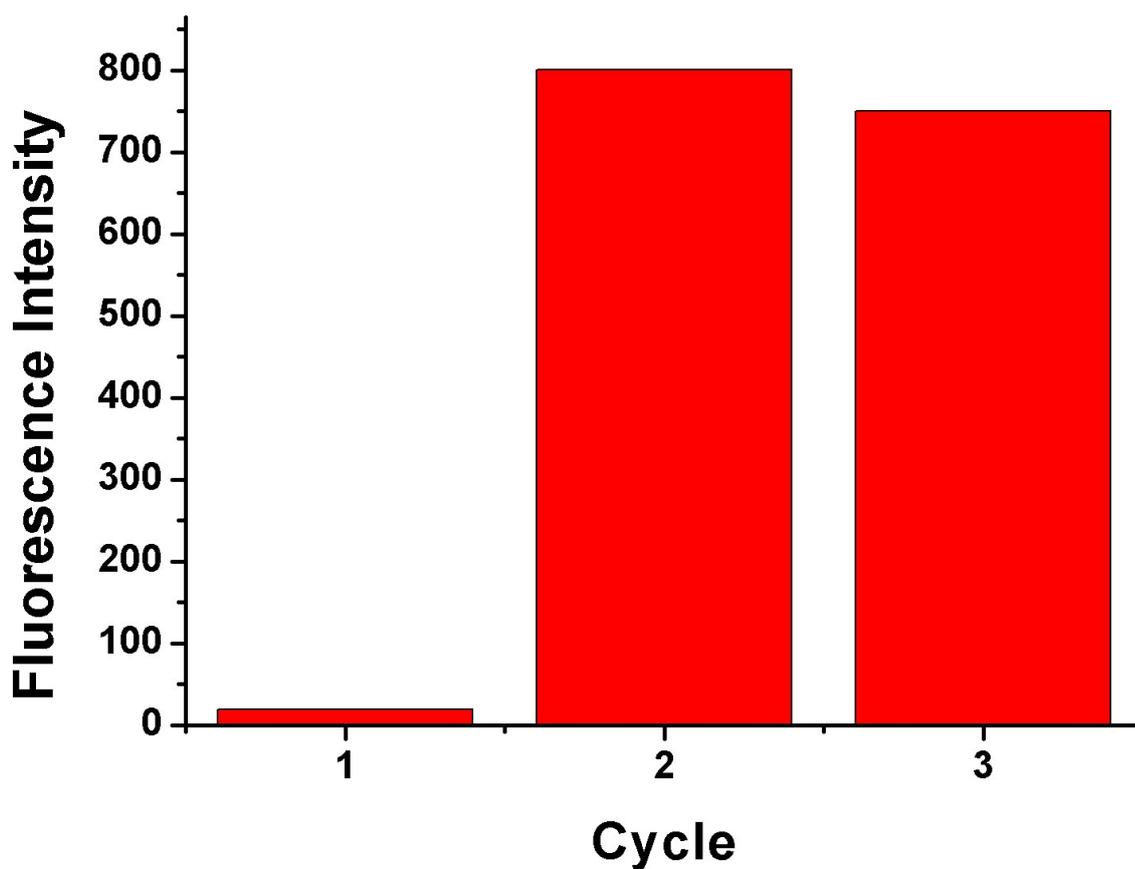


Fig. S15. Reversible switching of the emission of **L** by sequential addition of  $\text{Fe}^{3+}$  and PPI. (1: the fluorescence intensity of **L** in the presence of 3 equiv. of  $\text{Fe}^{3+}$ ; 2: the fluorescence intensity of **1** in the presence of 40 equiv. of PPI; 3: the fluorescence intensity of **2** in the presence of 10 equiv. of  $\text{Fe}^{3+}$ .)