# **Electronic Supplementary Information**

### The study of a novel high selectivity pyrenyl-based fluorescence probe for Fe<sup>3+</sup>

## detection designed by structure modulation strategy

Sen Liu<sup>1,2</sup>, Jun Li<sup>1</sup>, Tianjiao Hou<sup>1\*</sup> and Xuan Shen<sup>1,2\*</sup>

- State Key Laboratory of Materials-oriented Chemical Engineering, College of Chemical Engineering, Nanjing Tech University, Nanjing 211816, P. R. China.
- 2. Zhangjiagang Institute of Nanjing Tech University, Suzhou 215600, P. R. China.

\*Corresponding Author E-mail: hou\_tianjiao@njtech.edu.cn, shenxuan@njtech.edu.cn

#### Materials and reagents

1-Pyrenylboronic acid, 2-bromo-5-(trifluoromethyl)pyridine, 2-bromo-5-methylpyridine, and Pd(PPh<sub>3</sub>)<sub>4</sub> were purchased from Shanghai Haohong Biomedical Technology Co., Ltd. NaOH, FeCl<sub>3</sub>, AlCl<sub>3</sub>, FeCl<sub>2</sub>·4H<sub>2</sub>O, CrCl<sub>3</sub>·6H<sub>2</sub>O, NaCl, MgCl<sub>2</sub>·6H<sub>2</sub>O, CuCl<sub>2</sub>·2H<sub>2</sub>O, ZnCl<sub>2</sub>, CaCl<sub>2</sub>, MnCl<sub>2</sub>, ZrCl<sub>4</sub>, SrCl<sub>2</sub>·6H<sub>2</sub>O, BaCl<sub>2</sub>·2H<sub>2</sub>O, CdCl<sub>2</sub>·2.5H<sub>2</sub>O, InCl<sub>3</sub>, LiCl·H<sub>2</sub>O, KNO<sub>3</sub>, AgNO<sub>3</sub>, Co(NO<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>·6H<sub>2</sub>O, Pb(NO<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>, Ni(NO<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>·6H<sub>2</sub>O, Eu(NO<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>·6H<sub>2</sub>O, La(NO<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>, Er(NO<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>·6H<sub>2</sub>O, Tb(NO<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>·6H<sub>2</sub>O, Dy(NO<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>·5H<sub>2</sub>O, Sm(NO<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>, Y(NO<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>·6H<sub>2</sub>O, HgSO<sub>4</sub>, KF·2H<sub>2</sub>O, NaCl, NaBr, Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>, Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>3</sub>, NaHSO<sub>3</sub>, NaHSO<sub>4</sub>·H<sub>2</sub>O, Na<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>, NaHCO<sub>3</sub>, CH<sub>3</sub>COONa, KNO<sub>3</sub>, NaNO<sub>2</sub>, and NaClO<sub>4</sub>·H<sub>2</sub>O were purchased from Shanghai Lingfeng Chemical Reagent Co., Ltd. Hydrochloric acid and acetonitrile were purchased from Wuxi Yasheng Chemical Co., Ltd. Silica gel (200-300 mesh) was purchased from Qingdao Dingkang silica gel Co., Ltd.

#### Instruments

<sup>1</sup>H NMR, <sup>13</sup>C NMR, and <sup>19</sup>F NMR spectra were recorded on a Bruker AM 400 MHz in chloroform-d solution, and the tetramethylsilane (TMS) signal as an internal standard. FT-IR spectra were measured on a Thermo Nicolet 380 FT-IR spectrophotometer with KBr pellets at room temperature. The electrospray ionization mass spectra (ESI-MS) were accomplished by Agilent 6200 series TOF/6500 series. The crystallographic data were collected on a Bruker SMART APEX II CCD area detector diffractometer. UV-Vis absorbance spectra were measured by a SHIMADZU UV-3600 spectrophotometer. Fluorescence spectra were performed by using a Hitachi F-7000 fluorescence Spectrophotometer, and 350 nm was used as an excitation wavelength throughout the experiment ( $E_X$  Slit = 2.5 nm,  $E_M$  Slit = 5 nm). Particle size distribution analyses were performed by dynamic light scattering (DLS) measurements at room temperature on a Brookhaven 90Plus/BI-MAS (USA). Transition electron microscopy (TEM) images were recorded on a Hitachi H7700 at a voltage of 120 kV. Samples for the TEM studies were perjared by using pHS-3C pH meter. Time-resolved fluorescence decay curves and PLQY were measured on an Edinburgh FLS 980 fluorescence spectrometer.



Fig. S1 The <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectrum of pypyr-CF<sub>3</sub> in CDCl<sub>3</sub>.



Fig. S2 The <sup>13</sup>C NMR spectrum of pypyr-CF<sub>3</sub> in CDCl<sub>3</sub>.



Fig. S3 The <sup>19</sup>F NMR spectrum of pypyr-CF<sub>3</sub> in CDCl<sub>3</sub>.



Fig. S4 The <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectrum of pypyr-CH<sub>3</sub> in CDCl<sub>3</sub>.



Fig. S5 The <sup>13</sup>C NMR spectrum of pypyr-CH<sub>3</sub> in CDCl<sub>3</sub>.



Fig. S6 The FT-IR spectrum of pypyr-CF<sub>3</sub>.



Fig. S7 The FT-IR spectrum of pypyr-CH<sub>3</sub>.



Fig. S8 The ESI-MS spectrum of pypyr-CF<sub>3</sub>.



Fig. S9 The ESI-MS spectrum of pypyr-CH<sub>3</sub>.



Fig. S10 The UV-Vis absorption (a) and fluorescence (b) spectra of pypyr-CF<sub>3</sub> and pypyr-CH<sub>3</sub> in acetonitrile.



Fig. S11 The dihedral angles in the crystal structures of pypyr-CF<sub>3</sub> (a) and pypyr-CH<sub>3</sub> (b).



Fig. S12 (a) Fluorescence spectra of pypyr-CH<sub>3</sub> (10  $\mu$ M) in MeCN/H<sub>2</sub>O mixtures with different water fractions; (b) Plots of fluorescence intensity at 390 nm versus water fractions; (c) Photograph of pypyr-CH<sub>3</sub> solution taken under 365 nm UV-lamp.



Fig. S13 The packed C-H<sup> $\dots$ </sup> $\pi$  interaction of pypyr-CF<sub>3</sub> (a) and pypyr-CH<sub>3</sub> (b). (H atoms are omitted for clarity)



**Fig. S14** Fluorescence spectra of (a) **pypyr-CF**<sub>3</sub> (10  $\mu$ M) and (b) **pypyr-CH**<sub>3</sub> (10  $\mu$ M) in pure MeOH or MeOH/Glycerol (7:3) mixture.



**Fig. S15** The photograph of **pypyr-CF**<sub>3</sub> and **pypyr-CH**<sub>3</sub> (10  $\mu$ M) in the presence of partial metal ions ([M] = 1 mM) in MeCN/H<sub>2</sub>O solution under 365 UV lamp.



Fig. S16 The <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectra pypyr-CH<sub>3</sub> in the absence and presence of  $Zr^{4+}$  and  $Hg^{2+}$  in DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>/D<sub>2</sub>O.



**Fig. S17** Fluorescence intensity ( $\lambda_{em} = 433 \text{ nm}$ ) of **pypyr-CF<sub>3</sub>** (10 µM) in the absence and presence of different anions (1 mM) in MeCN/H<sub>2</sub>O (v/v = 7:3, 1 mM Tris-HCl buffer, pH = 7) solution. Black bar represents the response without Fe<sup>3+</sup>, and red bar indicates the response upon the addition of 100 equiv. of Fe<sup>3+</sup>.



**Fig. S18** UV-Vis absorption spectra of **pypyr-CF**<sub>3</sub> (10  $\mu$ M) upon the gradual addition of Fe<sup>3+</sup> in MeCN/H<sub>2</sub>O (v/v = 7:3, 1 mM Tris-HCl buffer, pH = 7) solution.



**Fig. S19** UV-Vis absorption spectra of Fe<sup>3+</sup> (1 mM), **pypyr-CF**<sub>3</sub> (10  $\mu$ M) and **pypyr-CF**<sub>3</sub> + Fe<sup>3+</sup> (100 equiv.) in MeCN/H<sub>2</sub>O (v/v = 7:3, 1 mM Tris-HCl buffer, pH = 7) solution.



Fig. S20 Fluorescence spectrum of pypyr-CF<sub>3</sub> in solid state. Inset: photograph of pypyr-CF<sub>3</sub> in solid state under 365 nm UV lamp.

Probes	pypyr-CF <sub>3</sub>	pypyr-CH <sub>3</sub>
Empirical formula	$C_{22}H_{12}F_{3}N$	C <sub>22</sub> H <sub>15</sub> N
Formula weight	347.33	293.35
Crystal system	Monoclinic	Monoclinic
Space group	<i>P</i> 2 <sub>1</sub> /c	$P2_1/c$
a (Å)	26.910(6)	17.626(3)
<i>b</i> (Å)	6.4608(15)	7.6841(13)
<i>c</i> (Å)	9.318(2)	11.574(2)
$\beta$ (°)	94.442(3)	100.988(2)
$V(Å^3)$	1615.2(6)	1538.9(5)
Ζ	4	4
$D_{\rm c} ({\rm g}\cdot{\rm cm}^{-3})$	1.428	1.266
$\mu (\mathrm{mm}^{-1})$	0.108	0.073
F (000)	712	616
Crystal size (mm)	$0.19 \times 0.13 \times 0.11$	$0.16 \times 0.14 \times 0.08$
$\theta$ Range (°)	1.518-24.997	1.177-25.000
Reflections collected	10777	10732
Independent reflections	$2841 [R_{int} = 0.0518]$	$2710 [R_{int} = 0.0448]$
Reflections observed $[I > 2\sigma(I)]$	2082	1764
Data/restraints/parameters	2841 / 6 / 235	2710 / 1 / 209
Goodness-of-fit on $F^2$	1.088	1.023
$R_1/wR_2 \left[I > 2\sigma(I)\right]$	0.0566/0.1494	0.0468/0.1103
$R_1/wR_2$ (all data)	0.0773/0.1598	0.0791/0.1234
Max., Min. $\Delta \rho$ (e <sup>·</sup> Å <sup>-3</sup> )	0.448, -0.358	0.185, -0.161

Table S1 The crystallographic data for pypyr-CF<sub>3</sub> and pypyr-CH<sub>3</sub>.

21	8 ( )		10 0
pypyr-CF <sub>3</sub>	pypyr-CH <sub>3</sub>		
F(1)-C(22)	1.310(4)	N(1)-C(17)	1.341(2)
C(20)-C(22)	1.482(4)	N(1)-C(21)	1.335(2)
N(1)-C(17)	1.343(3)	C(18)-C(19)	1.374(2)
N(1)-C(21)	1.339(3)	C(16)-C(17)	1.487(2)
C(16)-C(17)	1.496(3)	C(20)-C(22)	1.505(2)
C(17)-C(18)	1.379(3)	C(2)-C(3)	1.371(3)
C(21)-N(1)-C(17)	117.0(2)	C(13)-C(14)	1.385(2)
F(2)-C(22)-F(1)	107.0(3)	C(21)-N(1)-C(17)	117.76(15)
C(2)-C(1)-C(10)	121.2(2)	C(2)-C(1)-C(10)	120.91(18)
F(1)-C(22)-C(20)	112.8(3)	C(19)-C(20)-C(22)	122.23(17)

Table S2 Patial typical bond lengths (Å) and bond angles (°) for pypyr-CF3 and pypyr-CH3.