

Supporting Information

A Potassium Diboryllithate: Synthesis, Bonding Properties, and the Deprotonation of Benzene

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General

All manipulations involving the air- and moisture-sensitive compounds were carried out in glovebox (KIYON, Korea and ALS Technology, Japan) under argon atmosphere. *n*-Hexane was purified by passing through a solvent purification system (Grass Contour). Benzene, cyclohexane, purified *n*-hexane, 2,2,4,4-tetramethylpentane were degassed and were dried by stirring with Na/K alloy at room temperature in the glovebox prior to use. Benzene- d_6 was dried over Na/Ph₂C=O and was distilled under reduced pressure. Cyclohexane- d_{12} was dried by filtering through a pad of activated alumina and subsequent stirring with Na/K alloy at room temperature in the glovebox prior to use. Lithium dispersion (purchased from Kanto Chemical Co., Inc., containing 1% sodium) was washed with *n*-hexane before the use to make a lithium powder. Na/K alloy (1/4 molar ratio) was prepared by contacting two metals (Na: Kanto Chemical, K: Strem Chemical), which were freshly pealed to remove the inactive outside layer, in glovebox (endothermic reaction). Adamantane was used as received. NMR spectra were recorded at 22 °C on 500, 400, or 300 MHz spectrometers unless otherwise noted. Solid-state ⁷Li NMR spectra were recorded on JEOL JNM-ECA800 MHz spectrometer in Tohoku University with setting of ⁷Li: 310.96 MHz; single pulse/MAS; 2.5 mm sample tube; 10000 Hz. Chemical shifts are reported in ppm relative to the residual protiated solvent for ¹H, external LiCl in D₂O for ⁷Li, deuterated solvent for ¹³C, and external BF₃·OEt₂ for ¹¹B nuclei. Data are presented in the following space: chemical shift, multiplicity (s = singlet, d = doublet, t = triplet, sept = septet, m = multiplet, br = broad, brs = broad singlet), coupling constant in hertz (Hz), and signal area integration in natural numbers. Bromoborane 1 and hydroborane 3 were synthesized according to the literature.^[1] Elemental analyses were performed at the A Rabbit Science Co., Ltd. Melting points (m.p.) were determined with a MPA100 OptiMelt (Tokyo Instruments, Inc.) and were uncorrected. X-ray crystallographic analysis was performed on VariMax/Saturn CCD diffractometer.

Preparation of 2 in cyclohexane

In a glovebox, a suspension of lithium powder (208 mg 30.0 mmol, containing 1% sodium) in cyclohexane (3.50 mL) was stirred with glass-coated stirring bar for 4 h at room temperature to give Li grains exhibiting metallic luster. To the resulting suspension, **1** (1.17 mg, 2.50 mmol), Na/K (1/4 in molar ratio, 179 mg, 4.99 mmol) and cyclohexane (9.00 mL) were added at the room temperature. The resulting suspension was further stirred at room temperature for 47 h to afford a gray suspension. The resulting suspension was filtered through pad of Celite to remove an excess amount of reductant and the volatiles were removed from the filtrate under reduced pressure. Recrystallization of the residue from cyclohexane/*n*-hexane yielded a

pale yellow microcrystal of **2** (651 mg, 63%). Crystals suitable for X-ray analysis were separately prepared (see below). ¹H NMR (C₆D₁₂, 500.2 MHz) δ 0.87 (d, *J* = 7 Hz, 24H), 1.04 (d, *J* = 7 Hz, 24H), 3.13 (sep, *J* = 7 Hz, 8H), 6.14 (s, 4H), 6.98 (d, *J* = 8 Hz, 8H), 7.07 (dd, *J* = 7 Hz, 7 Hz, 4H); ⁷Li{¹H} NMR (C₆D₁₂, 194.4 MHz) δ 4.7 [brs, fwhm (full width at half maxima) = 67 Hz]; ⁷Li{¹H} NMR (CPMAS, 310.96 MHz) δ 5.5 [brs, fwhm = 243 Hz]; ¹¹B{¹H} NMR (C₆D₁₂, 160.5 MHz) δ 43 (brs); ¹³C{¹H} NMR (125.8 MHz) δ 24.4 (CH₃), 24.9 (CH₃), 28.6 (CH), 118.9 (CH), 123.3 (CH), 126.1 (CH), 146.4 (4°), 147.9 (4°); mp: 92.4-100.5 °C; Anal. Calcd. for C₅₂H₇₂B₂KLiN₄: C, 76.09; H, 8.84; N, 6.83. Found: C, 76.09 (coincidentally matched to the calculated value); H, 9.17; N, 6.80.



Figure S1. Pictures for setup the reaction: (left) glass-coated stirring bar and lithium powder in a 30 mL vial; (center) after addition of solvent; (right) the resulting Li grains after stirring Li powder at RT.



Figure S2. Pictures after the reaction: (left) just prepared reaction mixture; (center) crude solution by filtration through a pad of Celite; (right) residue of the excess reductant and salts.



Figure S3. Pictures during recrystallization: (left) crude solution left at -30 °C for overnight; (right) yellowish solids of **2** after quick pipetting out of solvent with precooled Pasteur pipette and washing twice with cold hexane. (If a saturated solution was used for recrystallization, it is very difficult to remove mother liquor. We recommend to use unsaturated solution for obtaining **2** with high purity.)

Preparation of single crystals of 2 suitable for X-ray crystallographic analysis

In a glovebox, a suspension of lithium powder (41.6 mg, 6.00 mmol) in 2,2,4,4-tetramethylpentane (0.100 mL) was stirred with glass-coated stirring bar for 2 h at room temperature. To the resulting suspension, **1** (234 mg, 0.500 mmol), Na/K (1/4) (53.8 mg, 1.50 mmol), and 2,2,4,4-tetramethylpentane (2.50 mL) were added at room temperature. The resulting suspension was further stirred for 24 h at room temperature to afford a gray suspension. The resulting suspension was filtered to remove an excess amount of reductant and the filtrate was cooled down to -30 °C to give pale yellow single crystals of **2** suitable for X-ray crystallographic analysis.

Solid state ⁷Li NMR study for 2

Solution ⁷Li NMR spectrum of **2** was illustrated in Figure S4(a). Solids of **2** was placed into a 2.5 mm sample tube, then ⁷Li NMR spectrum was recorded with 10000 Hz rotation [Figure S4(b)]. A broad signal at 2.2 ppm may be a signal of trace LiOH in **2**. Then, the sample tube was opened and **2** was exposed to the air for 5 min. Then the sample tube was closed and ⁷Li NMR spectrum was measured again [Figure S4(c)]. In Figure S4(c), a broad signal appeared at 1.0 ppm may be assignable to LiOH derived from hydrolysis of **2**. The slightly different chemical shift of this signal from that of the authentic LiOH [Figure S4(d)] may be caused by a slightly different environment of LiOH surrounded by organic molecules.



Figure S4. ⁷Li{¹H} NMR spectra referenced with solid LiCl as 0 ppm (all the spectra were processed with 1.0 Hz of broadening factor): (a) **2**: C_6D_{12} solution, (b) **2**: solid state, (c) **2** after exposure to the air for 5 min: solid state, (d) LiOH (authentic sample): solid state

NMR yield for the formation of 2 in C₆D₁₂

In a glovebox, lithium powder (16.6 mg 2.40 mmol) was added to cyclohexane- d_{12} (0.100 mL). The resulting suspension was stirred for 1 h with glass-coated stirring bar at room temperature to give silver grains. To the resulting suspension, **1** (93.4 mg, 0.200 mmol), Na/K (1/4) (21.4 mg, 0.596 mmol), LiBr (52.1 mg, 0.600 mmol), and cyclohexane- d_{12} (0.900 mL) was added. The resulting suspension was further stirred at room temperature for 24 h to afford a gray suspension. To the resulting mixture was filtered to remove an excess amount of reductant. An aliquot of the resulting filtrate was taken into a screw-capped NMR tube. The resulting sample was analyzed by ¹H NMR spectrum to determine the NMR yield of **2** (92.1 µmol, 92%, Figure S5). Because of overlapping two septet signals of **2** and byproduct **3** around 3.1 ppm, half of the integral ratio for each signal was compared with the sum of signals (16H) for adamantane around 1.8 ppm.



Figure S5. ¹H NMR spectrum to estimate the NMR yield for the formation of 2

Reaction of 2 with benzene

In a glovebox, isolated crystals of **2** (20.0 mg, 24.4 μ mol) was dissolved in benzene (200 μ L) at room temperature. The resulting solution was stirred at room temperature for 10 h and the volatiles were removed under reduced pressure. To the reaction mixture, an adamantane/C₆D₆ solution (89.2 mM, 620 μ L, 55 μ mol) was added, followed by filtration to remove the insoluble salt. An aliquot of the resulting filtrate was taken into a screw-capped NMR tube. The resulting sample was analyzed by ¹H NMR spectrum to determine the NMR yield (Figure S3, 4: 41.5 μ mol, 85%, 3: 7.3 μ mol, 15%) by comparison with spectroscopic data of previously reported 4 and 3.^[1-2] The ¹H NMR spectrum for estimation of the yields is illustrated in Figure S6.



Figure S6. ¹H NMR spectrum to estimate the NMR yield for the reaction of 2 with benzene

Kinetic analysis for the reaction of 2a with benzene and benzene-d₆

In a glovebox, isolated crystals of **2** (10.2 mg, 12.4 µmol for C₆H₆, 11.2 mg, 13.6 µmol for C₆D₆) was dissolved in 106 µM adamantane/C₆D₁₂ (383 µL, 5.50 µmol) at room temperature and the subsequent addition of benzene (218 µL, 2.44 mmol) or benzene- d_6 (216 µL, 2.44 mmol). Decay of **2** was monitored with the integral ratio of alkene protons over that of adamantane by ¹H NMR spectrum at 20 °C. The observed rate constants k_{obs} were determined by pseudo-first order plot resulting from concentration of unsaturated diboryllthate depending on time as summarized in Figure S7.



Figure S7. First-order plot for consumption of 2 reacting with benzene and benzene-d₈ at 20 °C

Details for X-ray crystallography

In each case a suitable crystal was mounted with a fluorinated mineral oil to the glass fiber and transferred to the goniometer of a VariMax Saturn CCD diffractometer with graphite-monochromated Mo K α radiation ($\lambda = 0.71070$ Å). All the following procedure for analysis, Yadokari-XG 2009 was used as a graphical interface.^[3] The structures were solved by direct methods with (SIR-2014)^[4] and refined by full-matrix least-squares techniques against F^2 (SHELXL-2014).^[5] The intensities were corrected for Lorentz and polarization effects or NUMABS program (Rigaku 2005). The non-hydrogen atoms were refined anisotropically. Hydrogen atoms were placed using AFIX instructions. The resulting CIF file was deposited to Cambridge Crytallographic Data Center. All the details about crystallographic data for $2 \cdot C_9 H_{20}$ are summarized in Table S1.

	$2 \cdot C_9 H_{20}$
CCDC deposit #	865529
formula	$C_{52}H_{72}B_2KLiN_4 \cdot C_9H_{20}$
fw	1077.29
T (K)	93(2)
λ (Å)	0.71075
cryst syst	Monoclinic
space group	C_2/c
a, (Å)	32.60(4)
b, (Å)	12.845(10)
c, (Å)	22.01(2)
α , (deg)	90
β , (deg)	131.977(3)
γ , (deg)	90
V, (Å ³)	6852(12)
Ζ	4
Dcalc, (g / cm^3)	1.044
$\mu (mm^{-1})$	0.118
F(000)	2368
cryst size (mm)	0.18×0.15×0.15
2θ range, (deg)	3.172-24.998
reflns collected	22897
indep reflns/Rint	5946/0.0682
params	409
GOF on F^2	0.999
$R_1, wR_2 [I \ge 2\sigma(I)]$	0.0612, 0.1448
R_1 , wR_2 (all data)	0.0925, 0.1758

Table S1. Crystallographic data and structure refinement details for $2 \cdot C_9 H_{20}$

Details for computation

For structural optimization of 2 at the ground state, NMR chemical shift (GIAO) calculation, AIM analysis, and NBO analysis

From the obtained crystal structure of **2**, the molecular geometry of **2a** was optimized at B3LYP^[6]/6-31+G(d)^[7] level by using Gaussian 09 (rev. D.01) package.^[8] The optimized structure was confirmed to have no imaginary frequency and could reproduce the X-ray structure (Figure S8 for labels of atoms, XMol file for visualization is also available as Supporting Information). The HOMO orbital of the optimized structure was illustrated in the main text. At the optimized structure, natural bond orbital (NBO) analysis was performed at the same level of calculation by using NBO 3.0 package embedded in Gaussian program.^[9] The ⁷Li NMR chemical shift calculation was achieved by using the Gauge-Independent Atomic Orbital (GIAO) method^[10] at B3LYP/6-311++G(2d,p) level. The obtained GIAO nuclear magnetic shielding tensor was corrected with that of the independently calculated Li(H₂O)₄⁺. From the formatted checkpoint file of the structural optimization, atoms-in-molecule (AIM) analysis was also performed by using AIMALL program^[11] to form molecular graph of **2** (Figure S9) as illustrated in the main text. The obtained NPA charges and parameters on the bond critical points (BCPs) are summarized in Tables S2 and S3.



Figure S8. Optimized structure of **2** with labels of atoms (hydrogen atoms are omitted for clarity, labeling can also be found in XMol file)



Figure S9. Molecular graph of **2** produced by AIM analysis [gray: carbon, white: hydrogen, blue: nitrogen, pale orange: boron, light purple: lithium, purple: potassium; red spheres: bond critical points, solid lines: bond paths; , numberings are based on the result illustrated in Figure S8]

atom	label	natural	atom	label	natural	atom	label	natural	atom	label	natural
К	1	0.65877	н	3/	0.22474	н	67	0.22615	C	100	
 	2	0.51631		35	-0.66636	B	68	0.22013	<u> </u>	100	0.2424
 	2	0.01001	 	36	0.24244	N	60	-0.7205	- 1	107	0.2424
N	1	-0.72056	ч	37	0.24244		70	-0.7203	- 11 Ц	102	0.23942
	5	0.11700	- 11 - Ц	30	0.23334		70	0.23558	п С	103	0.22013
	6	0.22572		30	0.22700	С С	72	0.2000	0 C	104	0.17002
	7	-0.00317		40	-0.02033	ч	73	0.23887	0	105	-0.02023
	7 Q	-0.09317		40	-0.02033	N	73	0.23007		107	0.23508
 N	0	0.23004		41	0.23607		74	0 17028	п С	107	0.23300
	10	-0.71121		42	0.23307		75	0.02224		100	-0.23475
	10	0.17944		43	-0.23407		70	-0.02324		110	0.23090
	10	-0.02405		44	0.23092		70	-0.24319		110	-0.23306
	12	-0.24396		45	-0.23313	н	78	0.24474	н	111	0.23638
	13	0.24494	H	40	0.23623		79	-0.24356		112	-0.01944
<u> </u>	14	-0.24391		47	-0.01928	н	80	0.24746		113	-0.29968
	15	0.24762		48	-0.29949		81	-0.24746	H	114	0.26562
<u> </u>	16	-0.24704	H	49	0.26587	н	82	0.24385	<u> </u>	115	-0.66165
<u> </u>	1/	0.24389	С 	50	-0.66182	C	83	-0.0369	н	116	0.23962
C	18	-0.03595	Н	51	0.23951	С	84	-0.3025	Н	117	0.23209
C	19	-0.30276	Н	52	0.23236	H	85	0.27738	H	118	0.22625
<u> </u>	20	0.27768	Н	53	0.22607	С	86	-0.66773	С	119	-0.66694
С	11	-0.02405	С	54	-0.66694	Н	87	0.22633	Н	120	0.22801
С	12	-0.24396	Н	55	0.22803	Н	88	0.2396	Н	121	0.23175
H	13	0.24494	Н	56	0.23174	Н	89	0.24261	Н	122	0.24031
С	14	-0.24391	Н	57	0.24033	С	90	-0.65665	С	123	-0.2986
Н	15	0.24762	С	58	-0.29871	Н	91	0.23684	Н	124	0.26488
С	16	-0.24704	Н	59	0.26472	Н	92	0.24371	С	125	-0.66621
Н	17	0.24389	С	60	-0.66622	Н	93	0.22374	Н	126	0.22814
С	18	-0.03595	н	61	0.22806	С	94	-0.30575	Н	127	0.23875
С	19	-0.30276	н	62	0.2387	н	95	0.27726	Н	128	0.23278
Н	20	0.27768	н	63	0.23279	С	96	-0.65539	С	129	-0.66232
С	31	-0.65564	С	64	-0.66209	Н	97	0.2262	Н	130	0.23322
Н	32	0.22581	н	65	0.23301	Н	98	0.24523	Н	131	0.24331
Н	33	0.2449	Н	66	0.24332	Н	99	0.22327			

Table S2. Summary of natural population analysis for 2 (labels corresponds to those in Figure S8)

atoms for BCP	$ ho(r)~(e/a_0^{-3})$	$\nabla^2 \rho(r) \ (e/a_0^5)$	ε
K1–B3	0.009453	0.021209	0.110517
Li2–B3	0.026049	0.068228	0.017073
K1–C10	0.00954	0.035475	0.824388
K1–B68	0.009664	0.021771	0.10649
Li2–B68	0.025859	0.067572	0.017814
K1–C75	0.00944	0.035044	0.865435

Table S3. Summary of parameters obtained by AIM analysis for **2** [electron density $\rho(r)$, Lapacian of $\rho(r)$, bond ellipticity ε at bond critical points related to B, Li, K, and C(ipso to N) atoms]

For elucidation of detailed reaction pathway for deprotonation of benzene by 2

The full models for the species involved in the reactions were employed in the calculations. The molecular geometry optimizations were performed without constraints at the Becke3LYP (B3LYP) level of density functional theory.^[6] The 6-31G(d) basis set was used for all the atoms, except for Li and K atoms (the 6-31+G(d) basis set was used) and H atom that involved in the C–H bond cleavage (the 6-31G(d,p) basis set was used).^[7] Frequency calculations at the same level of theory were performed. The nature of the calculated stationary points were verify as minima (zero imaginary frequency) and transition states (one imaginary frequency). For the NBO analysis of **TS**₂₋₆, single point calculation was performed with the same level of theory.

To reduce the overestimation of the entropy contribution in the gas-phase results, corrections of -2.6 kcal/mol (or +2.6 kcal/mol) in free energies were made for 2-to-1 (or 1-to-2) transformations.^[12] To take dispersion and solvation effects into account, we carried out single-point energy calculations at the B3LYP-D3/6-311+G(d,p) level with the optimized structures,^[6-7,13] employing a continuum medium using UAKS radii on the conductor-like polarizable continuum model (CPCM).^[14] Following the reaction conditions, benzene was employed as the solvent in these single-point energy calculations. Unless specifically noted, the entropy- and solvation-corrected free energies were used in all of the discussions. All the calculations were performed with Gaussian 09 (rev. D.01) package.^[8]

All the obtained structures are attached as Supporting Information in .xyz format.

Pathways not described in the main text

Less probable TSs for deprotonation of benzene by 2 and subsequent formation of phenylborane 6

One can expect 2 deprotonates benzene through a π -coordination of benzene to Li⁺ to give 7 as other possible pathway for deprotonation of benzene (Scheme S1). However, the **TS**₂₋₇ has activation energy of 31.6 kcal/mol, which is 3.0 kcal/mol higher than that of **TS**₂₋₆. As another possible pathway, we also found nucleophilic attack of boryl anion to benzene coordinating to K⁺ to give potassium (boryl)[(boryl)cyclopentadienyl]lithate intermediate **18**, which may liberate (boryl)(hydrido)lithate **10** and phenylborane **4** via hydride migration to Li⁺. However, the activation energy of this process further higher than that of deprotonation with coordination of Dip ring to K⁺.



Scheme S1. Energy profiles calculated for the possible activation of benzene by 2. The relative Gibbs free energies and electronic energies (in parentheses) are given in kcal/mol.

Two TSs for complexation of 6 with 3

The complexation of **6** with **3** to give **7** was calculated to have two small TSs (Scheme S2). Hydride on the boron atom in **3** directly access to the positively charged K^+ with an activation energy of 9,8 kcal/mol to afford **19**. Then, rotation of hydroborane moiety in **19** induced coordination of Dip ring to K^+ and dissociation of B–H moiety from K^+ to result in the formation of **7** through **TS**₁₉₋₇ with activation energy of 2.5 kcal/mol.



Scheme S2. Energy profiles calculated for complexation of 6 with 3. The relative Gibbs free energies and electronic energies (in parentheses) are given in kcal/mol.

Possibility for deprotonation of benzene with 6 followed by hydride/phenyl exchange to form phenyborane 4

From (boryl)(phenyl)lithate intermediate 6, several possible pathways were found to produce phenylborane 4 (Scheme S3). The most straightforward pathway is initiated by a coordination of benzene to 6 to afford 20 through red-colored route. The resulting 20 undergoes deprotonation of coordinating benzene molecule by boryl anion moiety to give 21 through TS_{20-21} (24.6 kcal/mol from 6). Although coordination of Dip group to potassium in 21 is weak as confirmed by that the dissociation of potassium diphenyllithate 22 requires only small difference in energy (1.8 kcal/mol), the phenyl group in diphenyllithate moiety can attack to the boron atom in 21 through TS_{21-23} . The intermediate 23 is further rearranged with small activation energy of 7.2 kcal/mol at TS₂₃₋₂₄ to result in the formation of 24, which further liberates phenylborane 4 and potassium (hydrido)(phenyl)lithate 13. As alternative route, a pathway involving the second equivalent of benzene molecule was also found (blue-colored). Sequential double solvation of $\mathbf{6}$ with two benzene molecules affords the intermediates 25 and 26, in which the latter undergoes deprotonation of benzene by boryl anion moiety through TS₂₆₋₂₇ (22.4 kcal/mol from 6). Loss of one benzene molecule from 27 and subsequent rearrangement of 28 through dissociation of potassium diphenyllithate 22 generates 21, which is the identical intermediate the red-colored route. The intermediate 28 is also accessible through deprotonation of benzene in 25 possessing one benzene molecule through TS_{25-28} with an activation energy of 23.5 kcal/mol from 24. All the activation energy at the highest TSs in these possible pathways are higher than that (18.1 kcal/mol) of the most feasible pathway which is described in the main text.



Scheme S3. Energy profiles calculated for deprotonation of benzene by 6. The relative Gibbs free energies and electronic energies (in parentheses) are given in kcal/mol.

Less probable TSs for deprotonation of the second benzene by 10

The red-colored pathway (10, 11, TS_{11-12} , 12, 13, 14, TS_{14-15} , 15) in Scheme S4 is the most probable pathway, which is described in the main text. From the intermediate 11, another possible (blue-colored)

pathway was also found. Similar to the blue-pathway in Scheme S3, second equivalent of benzene coordinates to K^+ in **11** to form the intermediate **29**. The subsequent deprotonation of benzene by boryl anion moiety through TS_{29-30} afforded the intermediate **30** with a slightly (1.2 kcal) higher activation energy than that of TS_{11-12} . Liberation of benzene from **30** afforded the intermediate **12** which is linked to the red-colored pathway. Also, coordination of benzene to Li^+ in **10** resulted in the formation of an intermediate **31**, which underwent deprotonation of coordinating benzene to be connected to the intermediate **14** via **TS**₃₁₋₁₄. This route has much higher activation energy at **TS**₃₁₋₁₄. Thus, the pathway described in the main text is the most probable pathway.



Scheme S4. Energy profiles calculated for deprotonation of the second benzene by **10**. The relative Gibbs free energies and electronic energies (in parentheses) are given in kcal/mol.



Figure S10. Natural orbitals (a) 243, (b) 242, (c) 228, (d) 225, (e) 223, and (f) 220 on the optimized transition state TS_{2-6} for the deprotonation of benzene by **2**, showing donor-acceptor interactions (isovalue = 0.02); hydrogen atoms except for those being deprotonated are omitted for clarity; white: hydrogen, gray: carbon, blue: nitrogen, yellow: boron, deep purple: potassium, light purple: lithium)

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