



## An Interview with Prof. Jie Jack Li

Conducted by Robin Padilla (26.02.2013)



Prof. Jie Jack Li  
University of San Francisco  
*Science of Synthesis* Author and Volume Editor

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*RP: What are some of your current research interests?*

JL: I am interested in the C–H activation of heterocycles and in medicinal chemistry.

*RP: What do you think are the biggest chemistry challenges of today? Of tomorrow?*

JL: One big chemistry challenge of today is funding. The allocation to basic scientific research in chemistry from the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation has become less and less. Another big chemistry challenge is attracting the best and brightest to chemistry. The recent economic downturn has made the employment of chemists, usually an excellent profession in most attributes, a challenge.

*RP: What's your favorite scientific discovery (or discoveries) and why?*

JL: The discovery of a novel carbamylsulfonation reaction using the Burgess reagent.<sup>[1]</sup> It was an unprecedented, unexpected, and pleasant surprise.

*RP: What is your dream reaction?*

JL: Sometimes when I am frustrated with my inability to carry out a certain transformation, I dream that I could have a pair of “bond scissors” to cut the bond and rearrange the molecule using a magic “bond glue”.

*RP: How did you become involved with Science of Synthesis?*

JL: Prof. Al Padwa (Emory) recruited me to be an author for *Science of Synthesis* Volume 27 (Heteroatom Analogues of Aldehydes and Ketones) in 2003.<sup>[2]</sup> Prof. Gary Molander (UPenn) then invited me to be a volume editor for the *Science of Synthesis* Volume 16 Knowledge Updates (Six-Membered Heteroarenes with Two Identical Heteroatoms) in 2010.

RP: *What hobbies/interests do you have outside of the lab?*

JL: Philately and World War II history.

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Some of Prof. Li's own favorite, recent publications:

*Drug Discovery: Practices, Processes, and Perspectives*. Li, J. J.; Corey, E. J., Eds.; Wiley: Hoboken, NJ, 2013.

Li, J. J.; Johnson, A. R. Selective MMP13 Inhibitors. *Med. Res. Rev.*, (2011) **30**, 863.

Li, J. J.; Wang, Z.; Shanmugasundaram, V. Smoothed Antagonists for Hair Growth Inhibition. *Bioorg. Med. Chem. Lett.*, (2010) **20**, 4932.

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[1] Li, J. J.; Li, J. J.; Li, J.; Trehan, A. K.; Wong, H. S.; Krishnanathan, S.; Kennedy, L. J.; Gao, Q.; Ng, A.; Robl, J. A.; Balasubramanian, B.; Chen, B.-C. A Synthesis of *N*-Bridged 5,6-Bicyclic Pyridines via A Mild Cyclodehydration Using the Burgess Reagent and Discovery of A Novel Carbamylsulfonylation Reaction. *Org. Lett.*, (2008) **10**, 2897

[2] Li, J. J., In *Science of Synthesis*, Padwa, A., Ed.; Thieme: Stuttgart, (2004); Vol. 27, p 583.