

## DOCTORAL THESIS

### Synthesis, Characterization and application studies of new aggregation-induced emission (AIE)-active materials

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## Abstract

The structural design, synthesis and characterization of luminogens with aggregation-induced emission (AIE) properties are studied in this thesis. The remarkable emission properties, thermal stability and biocompatibility of the AIE-active materials demonstrate the promising applications in bioimaging and organic light-emitting diodes (OLEDs).

Chapter 1 introduces the existence of aggregation-caused quenching (ACQ) effect in most conventional organic dyes as well as phosphorescent transitional metal complexes. Discovery of AIE and its mechanism study allow further exploration of usage in organic luminescent materials. This chapter also gives some examples and the applications these AIE-active compounds.

In Chapter 2, a series of cyanostilbenes with simple electron donor (D)- $\pi$ -electron acceptor (A) structure are presented and synthesized. They exhibit remarkable AIE effect as well as deep red emission peak in 95 % water fraction in THF. These results indicate that attachment of these electron acceptors provides alternative strategy for designing highly emissive AIE-active materials.

In Chapter 3, strongly emissive cyanostilbenes with phenothiazine unit are designed and synthesized. This chapter also investigates the effect of substituents in phenothiazine and terminal cyanostilbene on the photophysical properties and

AIE effect. The results suggest that they are AIE-active with different sizes in nano-aggregates. Furthermore, these dyes exhibit clear and strong fluorescence in live cell imaging with excellent biocompatibility.

In Chapter 4, a series of AIE-active phosphorescent Pt(II) complexes made up of C<sup>N</sup>C tridentate ligands are designed and synthesized. They exhibit different morphologies and emission properties upon aggregation in 90 % water in acetonitrile although similar tridentate ligands are applied. One of the complexes in this chapter show nano-rod formation with the highest quantum efficiency in aggregated state, suggesting that rapid self-assembly process occurs to prevent non-radiative decay and oxygen quenching.

In Chapter 5, a series of bis-cyanostyryl fluorophores are designed and synthesized. They are emissive in solid state with colour range from orange to NIR region. Furthermore, they are AIE-active and some of them may contain hybridized local and charge transfer (HLCT) excited state to achieve highly efficient emission upon solvatochromic investigation. Some bis-cyanostyryl thiophenes are fabricated in OLED devices show deep-red to NIR emission, indicative of a promising way to design solid-state NIR-emissive compounds using bis-cyanostyryl derivatives.

Finally, Chapter 6 and 7 present the concluding remarks and the experimental details of the work in Chapters 2 to 5, respectively.

## Table of Contents

<b>DECLARATION</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Abstract</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>List of Tables</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>List of Figures</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>List of Schemes</b>	<b>xx</b>
<b>List of Abbreviations and Symbols</b>	<b>xxi</b>
<b>Formula Index</b>	<b>xxv</b>
<b>Chapter 1 Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Aggregation-Caused Quenching	2
1.3 Aggregation Induced Emission	5
1.3.1 Phenomena	5
1.3.2 Mechanism of AIE	7
1.4 Types of AIE-active Compounds	9
1.4.1 Hydrocarbons	10
1.4.2 Heteroatoms	14
1.4.3 Polymer	23
1.4.4 Metal Complexes	24
1.5 Applications	30
1.5.1 Optoelectronics	31
1.5.2 Sensors	34
1.5.3 Biological Applications	38
1.5.4 Mechanochromic Materials	43
1.6 Scope of Thesis	44
References	48
<b>Chapter 2 Synthesis and Characterization of D-<math>\pi</math>-A Based Cyanostilbenes with Aggregation-Induced Emission Properties</b>	<b>57</b>

2.1.	Introduction	57
2.2.	Synthesis of Cyanostilbenes	60
2.3.	Spectroscopic and Structural Characterization of Cyanostilbenes	65
2.4.	Photophysical Properties of Cyanostilbenes	75
2.4.1.	Absorption and Emission Properties	75
2.4.2.	AIE Properties	78
2.5.	Electrochemical Properties of Cyanostilbenes	86
2.6.	Concluding Remarks	88
	References	89

### **Chapter 3 The Effect of *N*-substituents and Terminal Functional Groups in Phenothiazine-Based Cyanostilbenes in Photophysical and Aggregation-Induced Emission Properties** **91**

3.1	Introduction	91
3.2	Synthesis of Phenothiazine-Based Cyanostilbenes	95
3.3	Spectroscopic and Structural Characterization of Phenothiazine-Based Cyanostilbenes	98
3.4	Photophysical Properties of Phenothiazine-Based Cyanostilbenes	111
3.4.1	Absorption and emission properties	111
3.4.2	Solvent effect	113
3.4.3	AIE effect	117
3.4.4	pH effect	125
3.5	Electrochemical Properties of Phenothiazine-Based Cyanostilbenes	127
3.6	Biological Imaging using Phenothiazine-Based Cyanostilbenes	131
3.7	Concluding Remarks	137
	References	138

### **Chapter 4 Synthesis and Characterization of Neutral Cyclometalated Platinum(II) Complexes with Aggregation-Induced Emission and Self-Assembly Properties** **141**

4.1.	Introduction	141
4.2.	Synthesis of Platinum(II) Complexes	146
4.3.	Spectroscopic and Structural Characterization of Platinum(II) Complexes	151
4.4.	Photophysical Properties of Platinum(II) Complexes	163
4.4.1.	Absorption and Emission Properties	163

4.4.2.	AIE Properties	167
4.5.	Morphology of Pt(II) Complexes in Aggregated State	175
4.6.	Electrochemical Properties of Platinum(II) Complexes	184
4.7.	Concluding Remarks	188
	References	190

## **Chapter 5 Efficient Red/Near Infrared Emitting Materials Based on Bis-Cyanostyryl Derivatives with Aggregation-Induced Emission Properties** 193

5.1.	Introduction	193
5.2.	Synthesis of Bis-Cyanostyryl Derivatives	199
5.3.	Spectroscopic and Structural Characterization of Bis-Cyanostyryl Derivatives	205
5.4.	Photophysical Properties of Bis-Cyanostyryl Derivatives	221
5.4.1.	Absorption and Emission Properties	221
5.4.2.	Solvent Effect	227
5.4.3.	AIE Properties	237
5.5.	Electrochemical Properties of Bis-Cyanostyryl Derivatives	244
5.6.	Thermal Properties of Bis-Cyanostyryl Derivatives	248
5.7.	OLED Devices	250
5.8.	Concluding Remarks	254
	References	255

## **Chapter 6 Concluding Remarks and Future Work** 259

## **Chapter 7 Experimental Section** 264

7.1	General Procedures	264
7.2	Synthesis of D- $\pi$ -A Cyanostilbene Molecules for Chapter 2	267
7.3	Synthesis of Phenothiazine-Based Cyanostilbenes for Chapter 3	284
7.4	Synthesis of Neutral Platinum(II) Complexes for Chapter 4	293
7.5	Synthesis of Bis-Cyanostyryl Compounds for Chapter 5	300
	References	309

## **CURRICULUM VITAE** 310