20. **Seishi Takagi and Kyoze Hayashi**: Studies on the Synthesis of Amino Acids by the Schmidt Reaction. I. Synthesis of Aliphatic Neutral Amino Acids from Alkylmalonic Acid.

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Several methods, including Strecker method, acetamidomalonate method, etc., have been described previously on a general synthesis of amino acids. There were some difficulties in these methods in the isolation of water-soluble amino acids free from inorganic salts.

Synthesis of amino acids by the Schmidt reaction was examined and by reacting alkylmalonic acid with hydrazoic acid, free amino acids were readily obtained in a pure state after ion-exchange resin treatment.

Adamson¹⁾ obtained glycine with the yield of 46% as ester hydrochloride by the reaction of malonic acid with hydrazoic acid catalyzed by conc. sulfuric acid and esterification of that product. This is the only report concerning the synthesis of aliphatic neutral amino acids from alkylmalonic acid by the Schmidt reaction. This method is rather complicated in the isolation of amino acids from reaction mixture and the hydrochloride formed is very hygroscopic.

In the present series of work, alkylmalonic acid, prepared from alkyl halides and diethyl malonate by the usual method, were reacted with hydrazoic acid in chloroform or benzene solution, and amino acids formed were isolated by either of the two methods (A) or (B) in Chart 1.

Method (A)

Method (B)

Chart 1.

In Method (A), the sulfuric acid layer is poured into 3~4 volumes of ice water, the solution is neutralized to pH 2~3 with hot conc. barium hydroxide solution, and barium sulfate separated. The reaction mixture containing the amino acids produced is passed through a column of Amberlite IR-120, followed by elution with 0.3~0.5N ammonia, and the eluate is concentrated *in vacuo*.

In Method (B), the sulfuric acid layer is neutralized to pH 2~3 as described above, the reaction mixture containing amino acids produced is passed through a column of Amberlite IR-4B, and the effluent is concentrated *in vacuo*.

Method (B) has one less step of procedure. Yield of amino acids is shown in Table I.

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1) D. W. Adamson: J. Chem. Soc., **1939**, 1564.

ice water, and unreacted substances were recovered by ether extraction. In these processes, excess hydrazoic acid was separated and thus, it had the advantage of avoiding its toxicity.

The whole procedure of an amino acid synthesis described above is a good method in several points, such as alkylmalonic acid is easily obtainable and amino acid produced is readily isolated in high purity, but there is the problem of strong toxicity of hydrazoic acid.

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Experimental

Formation of Amino Acids from Alkylmalonic Acid and Hydrazoic Acid—Alkylmalonic acid (0.01 mole) was dissolved in 2 volumes of 100% H_2SO_4 , 10~20 cc. of CHCl_3 or benzene was added to it, followed by 0.012 mole of hydrazoic acid (5~10% solution in CHCl_3 or benzene) added slowly under vigorous stirring at 50~60°. There occurred a violent evolution of gas which ceased after about 2 hrs. The reaction mixture was stirred for 8 hrs. After the reaction completed, CHCl_3 or benzene was decanted and H_2SO_4 layer was poured into 2~3 volumes of ice water. After extraction with three 50-cc. portions of ether, the extract was dried with Na_2SO_4 , ether was evaporated, and unchanged material was recovered. Residual H_2SO_4 layer was neutralized to pH 2~3 with a hot conc. $\text{Ba}(\text{OH})_2$ solution and the precipitated BaSO_4 filtered off to obtain a clear solution which was decolorized with activated carbon.

Method (A): This clear solution containing the amino acid produced was passed through a column of Amberlite IR-120 and the column was washed with distilled water until SO_3 ion was no longer found in the effluent. Then the adsorbed amino acid was eluted with 0.3~0.5N NH_4OH and the eluate was concentrated *in vacuo*, followed by precipitation with EtOH, filtration, and recrystallization from dil. EtOH.

Method (B): The same clear solution as described above was passed through a column of Amberlite IR-4B and after the effluent was concentrated *in vacuo* free amino acid was obtained by exactly the same procedure as method (A) (for yields see Table I).

Use of conc. HCl as a Catalyst—Alkylmalonic acid (0.01 mole) was dissolved in 10 cc. of conc. HCl under cooling, 10~20 cc. of CHCl_3 or benzene was added to it, and 0.012 mole of hydrazoic acid (5~10% solution in CHCl_3 or benzene) was added slowly. The reaction mixture was warmed to 40~50° in a water bath and maintained at this temperature for 3 hrs. Reaction mixture was concentrated *in vacuo* to remove excess of HCl, the residue was dissolved in 100 cc. of distilled water, and treated with ion exchange resin in the same manner as described above. Yield of amino acids in the case [of methyl-, ethyl- and propylmalonic acid was less than 1%.

Summary

Several amino acids were synthesized from various alkylmalonic acids by reacting with a little excess of hydrazoic acid in chloroform at 50~60°, catalyzed by 100% sulfuric acid. Reaction products were treated with Amberlite IR-120 or Amberlite IR-4B and the expected amino acids were readily obtained in a considerably pure state. In this reaction it seemed that a large alkyl group in alkylmalonic acid tended to lessen the yield of amino acids.

This method is excellent in some points, namely, the starting material, alkylmalonic acid, is easily obtainable, the procedure is simple, the yield is high, and there is no fear of inorganic salts contaminated in the products.

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- 3) L. H. Briggs, *et al.*: J. Chem. Soc., **1942**, 61.