

Meet Dr. Zhonglin Tao, Thieme Chemistry Journals Awardee 2025!



Dr. Zhonglin Tao received his PhD from the University of Science and Technology of China. In 2016, he moved to the University of Illinois (USA) as a postdoctoral research associate. Since 2020, he has been establishing his independent career at Hunan University (P. R. China).

Thieme: Which field of organic chemistry are you interested in the most and why?

Dr. Tao: I am deeply fascinated by asymmetric catalysis because advancing precise and sustainable methodologies is a central goal in modern organic chemistry. The term ‘asymmetric’ embodies the demand for precision, while ‘catalysis’ serves as a critical tool for enabling sustainable transformations.

Thieme: Following that, what is the focus of your current research activity?

Dr. Tao: Right now, our group’s pursuit is to develop new transformations from readily available starting materials and realize the stereocontrol of fundamental transformations using earth-abundant transition metals.

Thieme: What do you think about the modern role and prospects of organic chemistry?

Dr. Tao: I think for method development in organic chemistry, providing more straightforward disconnection and realizing stereochemistry with the assistance of AI are the frontier areas.

Thieme: Which difficulties are there for young upcoming chemists in your field? Do you have any tips?

Dr. Tao: I think one difficulty for young upcoming chemists is to find a unique research area that can be studied for a long period of time. Actually, I don’t have tips and I am still looking for such myself.

Thieme: What is your most important scientific achievement to date and why?

Dr. Tao: My most important scientific achievement to date is realizing the first α -alkylation of ketones with unactivated alkyl electrophiles. This project led us to bimetallic asymmetric catalysis, an area I didn’t expect before this project.

Thieme: Could you tell us something about yourself outside the lab, such as your hobbies or extra-work interests?

Dr. Tao: Outside the lab, I like fishing.