

# 障がい者武道への招待

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## An invitation to Budo for the disabled

Is Budo good for the disabled?

Is Budo for the disabled good for Budo?

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### Let's practice Budo together

Budo is a term that describes traditional Japanese martial arts such as karate, judo, kendo, and aikido. The majority of people think that people with disabilities can practice Budo. However, most people believe that Budo instructors have to give disabled students special attention and treatment in the dojo and in competitions. Through practicing Budo with the disabled, instructors are able to obtain a greater understanding of the original intention of Budo techniques.

### Budo has an open system for the disabled

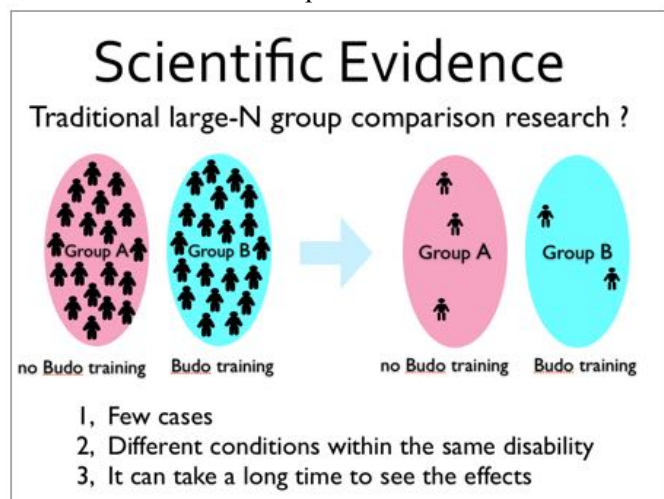
The way in which a practitioners body is moved in Budo stems from the battlefield techniques of ancient Japan. On battlefields there were no referees to say "Stop!" to call a halt to the conflict, so samurai had to fight if they had a disability, such as an eye or arm injury. This therefore means that since its inception, Budo had been open to persons with disabilities.

When discussing Budo, we cannot help but mention "Budo for the disabled". Additionally, the different training methods in Budo can be shared between people with disabilities and those without. For example, training methods used for the mentally disabled are also suitable for beginners or elderly practitioners. I think that not only the disabled population, but also Budo as a whole could gain a lot from "Budo for the disabled".

### Is Budo good for people with disabilities?

I have collected many personal testimonies from disabled practitioners regarding the rehabilitative benefits of practicing Budo, but these are just single cases. Most disabled practitioners and their families require some type of scientific evidence in order to start practicing a type of Budo.

As the father of a mentally disabled daughter, I understand their doubts. Families of the disabled have a history of trying many different methods without success, so they always doubt whether something is effective or not. Comments such as "This is a special case", "Maybe this person has a special talent", or "These cases are not fit for my child" are quite common. I therefore needed to acquire some scientific evidence.



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I initially envisioned a study which compared two large groups of disabled people: those who practiced Budo and those who did not. However, this experiment was never able to be realized.

There are three research problems:

1. The number of disabled people that are willing to participate a scientific study of Budo are very few.
2. There is a large range of symptoms and conditions within the same disability. For instance, there are many different manifestations of cerebral palsy (wheelchair users, stick users and people who are able to walk on their own), all of which are put within the same category. This makes designing large studies, which usually require a certain degree of homogeneity, practically impossible.
3. It can take a very long time to see the results of rehabilitation. For example, it took the student in the picture six years to learn how to raise his left arm.



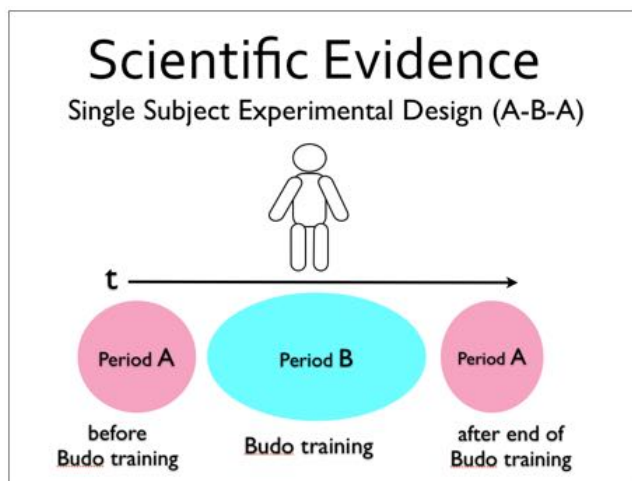
I gave up the traditional large-N group comparison type of research and decided to carry out a single case study using a single-subject experimental design (SSED) test. It features an A-B-A experimental structure to test Budo-based rehabilitation.

Period A: Baseline measurements were taken two weeks before Budo training.

Period B: During Budo training, data was taken twice a week.

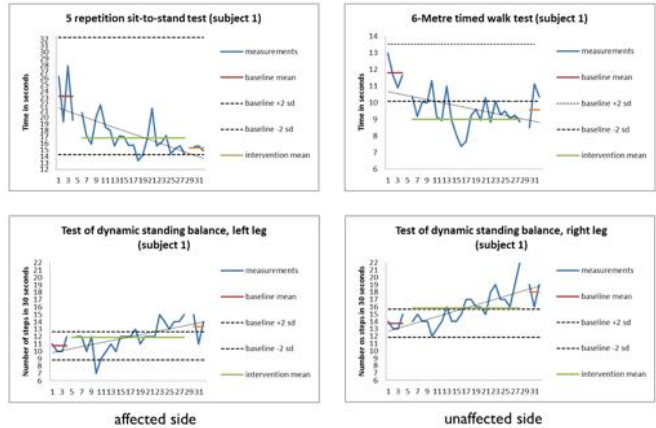
Period A: A final measurements were taken one month after the end of budo training.

With this experiment we could compare data before and after Budo training.



In this experiment, we found six participants who had suffered strokes. The tests included four kinds of motor test, a few self-reported tests, and interviews. From these tests we were able to obtain “scientific evidence”.

The data clearly showed that Budo rehabilitation effectively delivered general quantitative improvements. Not only could the patients perform daily life tasks better as a result of Budo rehabilitation, they also showed less fear, more self-efficacy, and a healthier self-image. The interviews suggest that Budo-based rehabilitation is qualitatively different from other forms of rehabilitation.

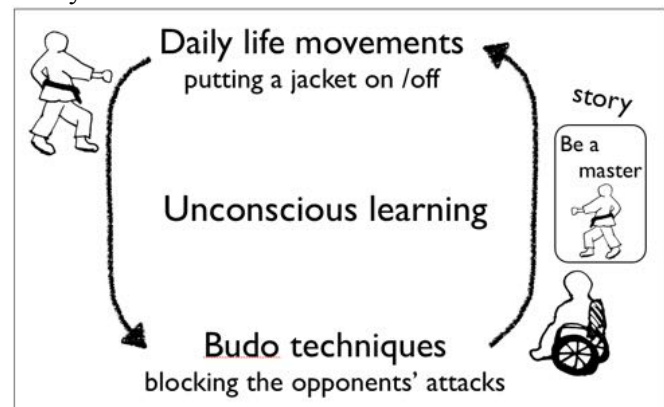


“Budo practice for post-stroke patients – reflections on historical and scientific issues” Kantaro Matsui, Agneta Larsson, Yoshimi Yamahira, Annika Näslund [http://proceedings.archbudo.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/21\\_ArchBudoConfProc.pdf](http://proceedings.archbudo.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/21_ArchBudoConfProc.pdf).

## Why is Budo good for the disabled?

### Unconscious learning

In the movie *The Karate Kid* (1984), Master Miyagi makes the boy repeat movements from daily life, for instance washing a car, painting a wall, or in the 2010 remake with Jackie Chan, taking a jacket on and off every day. The boy becomes bored with the routine, but the master shows him that some movements in one’s daily life are a part of some techniques in the martial arts. This is an example of acquiring a skill without realizing it, and this movie shows how the boy unconsciously acquires skills through doing only regular daily life movements. In Budo for the disabled, it is vice versa, the other way round from *The Karate Kid*. While practicing Budo, people with disabilities are unconsciously able to perform daily life activities with ease, for example, they can put a jacket on and take it off by themselves.



### Story

The movements used in practicing Budo are not very special in terms of physiotherapy. Similar movements of the body are shared with physiotherapy. But unlike physiotherapy, Budo practice has a “story” = “By practicing Budo I am on the way to becoming a samurai, a karate master...and so on”. This story helps the students to stay motivated. It recontextualizes the rehabilitation in a very powerful way, and the story challenges the disabled to push themselves in ways they did not think possible.

The rehabilitation done by physiotherapists does not have such an empowering “story”, so it becomes very boring, not only for a person with disabilities, but also Jackie Chan’s student. For this reason, I hypothesize that the dojo protocol of “*seiza - mokusō - rei*” (sit down, meditate, bow) at the beginning and end of practice is very important.

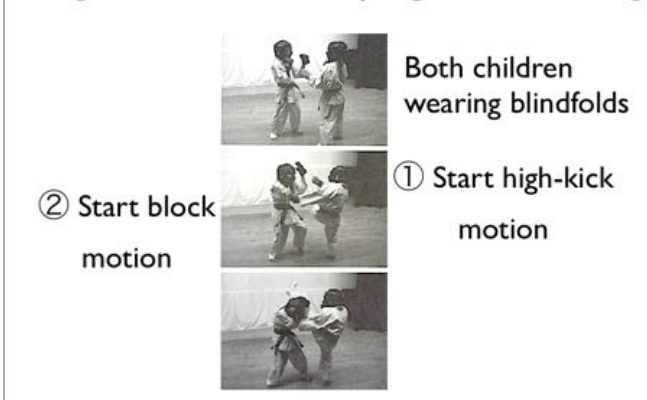
### Is Budo for the disabled good for Budo?

#### *Persons with disabilities give us a training chance*

Why should a dojo accept mentally disabled people if they cannot follow the basic rules of behaviour in a dojo? For instance, people with hyperkinesia move and talk while other students in the dojo are meditating. However, this is a good chance for other students in the dojo to practice focusing in noisy surroundings. According to my experience, students in the dojo can adjust to this kind of surroundings in a day.

Able-bodied people believe that a blind person cannot practice karate’s *kumite*, a fight with an opponent, but there is a blind track & field Paralympian who practices Kyokushin Karate style *kumite*. I told this story to the head instructor of a karate dojo, and he consequently made a new type of sensory training. The boys in his dojo now practice karate while wearing blindfolds.

#### Using senses other than eyesight when training



The boy on the right starts to attack with a high-kick motion. The boy on the left, using his sense of hearing, senses that his opponent will attack him with a high-kick so assumes a blocking position.

Because we have a tendency to rely mostly on visual information, we can be fooled by feints made by our opponents. This type of training makes the students become aware of the other senses that they can use.

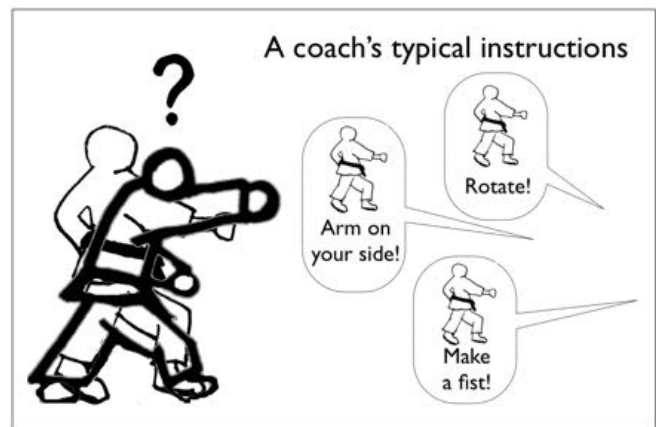
#### *People with disabilities give us new coaching methods*

It is difficult for beginners to punch (*tsuki*) while rotating the arms, and beginners tend to not be able to do this. Learning to punch with a rotation of the arms is especially difficult for the intellectually impaired. In one specialized school for the disabled in Japan, there is a good teacher who is able to teach this to intellectually impaired students in a total of 30 minutes. His coaching method is very simple.



“Hold both your arms in front of you, make fists with the right fist facing up and the left down. Switch! Right fist facing down, left fist facing up. Switch. Switch. Switch. Switch. Now swing your upper body! Switch. Switch. Switch.”

Through this method of instruction, everybody can punch naturally with a rotation of the arms.



When students with an intellectual impairment receive more than two instructions, they become confused and cannot perform all of them. This method uses only one instruction: “Switch”. This method is also very good for beginners and elderly practitioners.

#### *The disabled make us act as a true martial artist*

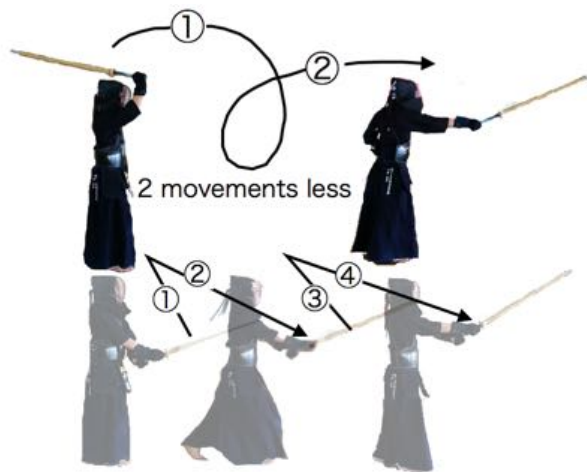
A “true” martial artist is concerned not only with keeping the traditions, philosophy and ways in which their masters practiced, they also want to develop new techniques. Able-bodied people believe that we need to give leverage to the disabled because of their mental or physical weaknesses. However, there are very strong budoka (martial artists) with disabilities.

For example, a one-armed student at the International Budo University became a Kendo champion. I asked him, "Why are you so strong?" Because of the lack of his right arm, he pointed out three reasons:

1. Nobody can strike his *kote* (right wrist).
2. He is able to control his *shinai* (bamboo sword) with one arm in a high position, making his reach 30cm longer than that of an average person who uses both arms.



3. To make a "*kote-men*" (right wrist followed by head) attack, an able-bodied practitioner swings the *shinai* 4 times (1-2-3-4), but he swings it only 2 times (1-2). His rhythm is different by 2 beats.



### *The disabled make us act as good coaches*

There is a video on YouTube (Shiwari by wheelchair user) of a karate performance by a person with cerebral palsy who uses an electric wheelchair. He tries to break a wooden board with a punch (tsuki).



Why did I show you this video? Is it because I want to say that this kind of person is able to do this kind of performance? The answer is, "NO!"

My question is, "Could you wait for him?", or "Could you keep your focus the entire time?"

Actually, I could not. I edited this video to make it shorter for my presentation. I then recognized that I am not a good coach of Budo. This dojo could wait for him for 2 minutes 56 seconds. Why can we not wait only 3 minutes? This dojo succeeded in building up his self-confidence by waiting for him almost 3 minutes.

### **Closing remarks**

I believe that there is beneficial relationship between the disabled and Budo because "Budo for the disabled" is not only for the disabled, but for Budo, too.

I was recommended that I use the term "Para-Budo" instead of "Budo for the disabled", but this was unacceptable to me. There should not be a label such as "Para-Budo" only for disabled practitioners because Budo has been for everyone since its beginnings. This is the correct attitude to have.

If I were to change its name, I would use the title "An invitation to Budo for everyone", instead of "An invitation to Budo for the disabled".

## **An invitation to Budo for the disabled**

### 障がい者武道への招待

The Japanese government is committed to creating our future through the power of sport with more than 10 million people of over 100 countries from 2014 until 2020. With the Sport for Tomorrow programme, Japan aims to be involved in the promotion of sporting values, including assistance to developing countries; train future sport leaders at the new international sport academy; and further protect and promote the values of sport by extending anti-doping initiatives globally.

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