Helical structures of **homo-chiral** isotope-labeled α -aminoisobutyric acid peptides

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ABSTRACT

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The chiral deuterium- and ^{13}C -isotope-labeled α -aminoisobutyric acids $\text{CD}_3\text{-Aib}$ and $^{13}\text{CH}_3\text{-Aib}$ were enantioselectively synthesized from L-Ala aldimine using simplified Maruoka chiral phase-transfer catalysts. **Homo-chiral** (*S*)- $\text{CD}_3\text{-Aib}$ homopeptides, up to decamers, were prepared. A (*R*)- $\text{CD}_3\text{-Aib}$ polymer and (*S*)- $^{13}\text{CH}_3\text{-Aib}$ polymer were also prepared. Conformational studies on homopeptides using CD spectra and an X-ray crystallographic analysis revealed that the preferred conformations were 3_{10} -helical structures comprising equal amounts of right-handed (*P*) and left-handed (*M*) helical-screw structures. The α -carbon chiral centers induced by the D- or ^{13}C -isotope substitution of Aib were incapable of controlling the helical-screw directions of their oligopeptides and short polymers.

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1. Introduction

α -Aminoisobutyric acid (Aib; α -methylalanine, α,α -dimethylglycine) is an achiral α,α -disubstituted α -amino acid, in which the α -hydrogen atom of alanine is replaced with a methyl substituent.¹ Aib peptides preferentially form 3_{10} -helical structures,² and Aib is often used to design conformational-freedom restricted peptides in the fields of medicinal and organic chemistry.³ Aib is achiral as are its homopeptides; therefore, these helical structures of Aib homopeptides exist as enantiomeric right-handed (*P*) and left-handed (*M*) helical-screw conformers in a ratio of 1 to 1.⁴ Incidentally, if the isotope of an atom is taken into consideration in Aib, for example, the ^{13}C -isotope of a methyl substituent at the α -carbon atom accounts for approximately 2% in nature, then approximately 2% of Aib exists as the racemic chiral $^{13}\text{CH}_3$ -Aib.

Regarding the relationship between deuterium (D^2H) isotope-induced chirality and the polymer helical-screw direction, Green and co-workers reported that the side-chain chirality of isocyanate caused by the replacement of H with the D isotope was capable of controlling its isocyanate polymer (chiral pseudo-peptoid polymer) helical-screw direction.⁵ However, a relationship between an α -carbon chiral center induced by a replacement with an isotope (D or ^{13}C) and the helical-screw direction of its peptides has not yet been reported. Thus, we synthesized chiral Aib; CD_3 -Aib and $^{13}\text{CH}_3$ -Aib, by replacing a methyl substituent of Aib with CD_3 ⁶ or $^{13}\text{CH}_3$,⁷ and examined the effects of the isotopes (D and ^{13}C) on their homopeptide helical-screw directions (Fig. 1).

Fig.1. Chemical structures of Aib, CD_3 -Aib, and $^{13}\text{CH}_3$ -Aib.

2. Results and Discussion

2.1. Enantioselective synthesis of optically active CD_3 -Aib and $^{13}\text{CH}_3$ -Aib

We synthesized both enantiomers of optically active (*S*)- and (*R*)- CD_3 -Aib using (*R*)- and (*S*)-simplified Maruoka catalysts[®], respectively, as the chiral phase-transfer catalyst (Scheme 1). According to Maruoka's procedure, the alkylation of the aldimine Schiff base **1**, derived from an L-alanine *tert*-butyl (Bu^t) ester, with CD_3I (2.1 equiv) and $\text{CsOH}\cdot\text{H}_2\text{O}$ (5 equiv) in toluene in the presence of 0.5 mol % (*R*)-simplified Maruoka catalyst[®] {(*R*)-4,4-dibutyl-2,6-bis(3,4,5-trifluorophenyl)-4,5-dihydro-3*H*-dinaphto[7,6,1,2-*cde*]azepinium bromide} at -40°C , and a work-up with acidic aqueous citric acid, gave (*S*)- CD_3 -Aib-OBu^t (**2a**) in a quantitative yield. In contrast, the reaction of **1** using the (*S*)-simplified Maruoka catalyst[®] produced enantiomeric (*R*)-**2a** in a quantitative yield. We attempted to examine the % ee of **2a** using chiral HPLC; however, the separation of enantiomers did not work well. The % ee of **2a** was established as 90% ee, after the conversion of (*S*)-**2a** into a (*R*)- α -methoxy- α -trifluoromethylphenylacetic acid (MTPA) amide and by measuring the ^1H NMR spectrum.⁹

Both enantiomers of $^{13}\text{CH}_3$ -Aib were subsequently synthesized in a similar manner to those of CD_3 -Aib. The alkylation of **1** with $^{13}\text{CH}_3\text{I}$ (1.2 equiv) and $\text{CsOH}\cdot\text{H}_2\text{O}$ (5 equiv) in toluene in the presence of 0.5 mol % (*R*)-simplified Maruoka catalyst[®] at -40°C and a work-up under acidic conditions gave (*R*)- $^{13}\text{CH}_3$ -Aib-OBu^t **2b** in a quantitative yield.¹⁰ While, the reaction using (*S*)-simplified Maruoka catalyst[®] produced enantiomeric (*S*)-**2b** in quantitative yield. The % ee of (*R*)-**2b** was established after the conversion of **2b** into (*R*)-MTPA amide and by ^1H NMR measurements. The enantiomeric excess of (*R*)-**2b** was *ca.* 82% ee.⁹

Scheme 1. Enantioselective syntheses of (*S*)- CD_3 -Aib and (*R*)- $^{13}\text{CH}_3$ -Aib. Abbreviations: *p*-chlorophenyl (*p*-Cl-Ph); tetrahydrofuran (THF).

2.2. Preparation of homo-chiral CD_3 -Aib homopeptides

We prepared homopeptides, up to the (*S*)- CD_3 -Aib decapeptide and (*R*)- CD_3 -Aib octapeptide, using solution-phase methods, as follows (Scheme 2). The N-terminal-protected Cbz-(*S*)- CD_3 -Aib-OH **3a** was synthesized from (*S*)-**2a** by benzyloxycarbonyl (Cbz) protection and C-terminal deprotection in 77% yield. The coupling between (*S*)-**2a** and (*S*)-**3a** using 1-ethyl-3-(dimethylaminopropyl)carbodiimide hydrochloride (EDC) and 1-hydroxybenzotriazole (HOBt) gave the dipeptide (*S*)-**4a** in 78% yield. The removal of the protecting groups at the N terminus and C terminus produced the dipeptide amine (*S*)-**5a** and dipeptide carboxylic acid (*S*)-**6a**, respectively. Fragment coupling between (*S*)-**5a** and (*S*)-**6a** using *O*-(7-azabenzotriazol-1-yl)-1,1,3,3-tetramethyluronium hexafluorophosphate (HATU) and 1-hydroxy-7-azabenzotriazole (HOAt) gave the tetrapeptide (*S*)-**7a** in 63% yield. The octapeptide

(*S*)-**10a** (23%) was prepared from the tetrapeptide amine **8a** and tetrapeptide carboxylic acid **9a** in a similar manner to that of (*S*)-**7a**. Furthermore, the decapeptide (*S*)-**12a** was prepared by coupling between the octapeptide amine (*S*)-**11a** and dipeptide carboxylic acid (*S*)-**6a** in 48% yield.

Enantiomeric (*R*)-CD₃-Aib homopeptides were prepared in a similar method as that described for (*S*)-CD₃-Aib homopeptides.

Scheme 2. Preparation of homo-chiral (*S*)-CD₃-Aib homopeptides.

2.3. Conformational analysis of homo-chiral (*S*)-CD₃-Aib homopeptides

The (*S*)-CD₃-Aib tetrapeptide **7a** and octapeptide **10a** provided crystals suitable for an X-ray crystallographic analysis following slow evaporation of the solvent (MeOH/H₂O) at room temperature.

An X-ray crystallographic analysis is incapable of discriminating between isotopes D and H because X-ray diffraction is caused by electrons, and the D and H atoms both have the same electron. The bond lengths of C–H and C–D are slightly different because zero-point energy differs for the C–H and C–D bonds.¹¹ However, the difference in the two bond lengths is markedly smaller than X-ray analysis precision. Therefore, even if the X-ray crystallographic analysis exclusively showed a one-handed helical structure for (*S*)-CD₃-Aib peptides in the crystal state, we cannot establish the right-handedness or left-handedness of the helix. However, if the crystal structure was solved in the chiral space group and only a one-handed helical structure existed, the helical-screw sense may be controlled by chiral centers at the α -carbon atoms to one-handedness, although its right-handedness or left-handedness cannot be clarified.

The crystal and diffraction parameters of (*S*)-**7a** and (*S*)-**10a** are summarized in Table S1.⁹ Their molecular structures are given in Figures 2 and 3. The relevant backbone and side-chain torsion angles as well as the intra- and intermolecular hydrogen-bond parameters are listed in Tables 1 and 2.^{12,13}

Table 1. Selected torsion angles of **homo-chiral** (*S*)-CD₃-Aib homopeptides **7a** and **10a**.^a

Torsion Angle	(<i>S</i>)-CD ₃ -Aib tetramer 7a	(<i>S</i>)-CD ₃ -Aib octamer 10a			
		<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>
ω_0	175.7	−170.0	−176.1	176.9	167.0
ϕ_1	−56.9	−59.5	−59.1	54.3	64.0
ψ_1	−36.2	−33.3	−32.0	34.0	24.7
ω_1	−174.5	−178.4	−179.7	176.2	176.8
ϕ_2	−55.6	−46.2	−51.1	55.5	54.8
ψ_2	−31.2	−36.3	−35.0	30.5	36.4
ω_2	−176.3	−175.4	−176.1	178.6	175.3
ϕ_3	−59.8	−61.0	−56.0	56.1	54.2
ψ_3	−31.0	−19.7	−23.4	27.9	26.1
ω_3	−172.4	176.1	179.8	180.0	−178.9
ϕ_4	50.9	−52.5	−56.9	53.3	50.5
ψ_4	41.7	−31.7	−24.4	22.4	25.0
ω_4	177.0	179.9	173.6	−174.7	177.9
ϕ_5	---	−51.4	−50.9	47.9	57.0
ψ_5	---	−26.3	−23.9	35.3	25.8
ω_5	---	178.1	−177.0	176.2	180.0
ϕ_6	---	−51.5	−53.4	45.2	52.1
ψ_6	---	−28.7	−35.5	41.9	28.0
ω_6	---	−179.2	−170.8	169.6	178.8
ϕ_7	---	−54.3	−69.0	61.6	56.9
ψ_7	---	−28.0	−15.6	19.9	26.7
ω_7	---	−176.3	175.1	179.3	170.6
ϕ_8	---	54.0	56.0	−51.9	−51.0
ψ_8	---	42.2	40.1	−44.2	−42.7
ω_8	---	174.0	167.8	−167.9	−176.3

^a The number of amino acid residues begins at the *N* terminus of the peptide chain.

Table 2. Intra- and intermolecular H-bond parameters for (*S*)-CD₃-Aib peptides **7a** and **10a**.

Peptide	Donor D–H	Acceptor A	Distance [Å] D···A	Angle [°] D–H···A	Symmetry operations
Cbz-[(<i>S</i>)-CD ₃ -Aib] ₄ -OBu' (7a)					
	N ₃ -H	O ₀	3.04	153	x,y,z
	N ₄ -H	O ₁	2.99	159	x,y,z
	N ₁ -H	O _{M'}	2.83	140	2−x,1−y, −z
	N ₂ -H	O _{4'}	3.03	121	−1/2+x, 3/2−y, −1/2+z
	O _M -H	O _{2'}	2.72	175	3/2−x, −1/2+y, 1/2−z
Cbz-[(<i>S</i>)-CD ₃ -Aib] ₈ -OBu' (10a)					
<i>A</i> (<i>P</i>)	N _{3a} -H	O _{0a}	3.15	157	x,y,z
	N _{4a} -H	O _{1a}	3.01	160	x,y,z

		N _{5a} -H	O _{2a}	3.04	164	x,y,z
		N _{6a} -H	O _{3a}	2.92	165	x,y,z
		N _{7a} -H	O _{4a}	3.05	165	x,y,z
1		N _{8a} -H	O _{5a}	3.00	166	x,y,z
2	<i>B</i> (<i>P</i>)	N _{3b} -H	O _{0b}	2.93	151	x,y,z
3		N _{4b} -H	O _{1b}	2.95	162	x,y,z
4		N _{5b} -H	O _{2b}	3.03	164	x,y,z
5		N _{6b} -H	O _{3b}	2.90	167	x,y,z
6		N _{7b} -H	O _{4b}	3.10	164	x,y,z
7		N _{8b} -H	O _{5b}	3.02	161	x,y,z
8	<i>C</i> (<i>M</i>)	N _{3c} -H	O _{0c}	2.95	155	x,y,z
9		N _{4c} -H	O _{1c}	2.92	159	x,y,z
10		N _{5c} -H	O _{2c}	2.98	165	x,y,z
11		N _{6c} -H	O _{3c}	2.86	163	x,y,z
12		N _{7c} -H	O _{4c}	3.03	162	x,y,z
13		N _{8c} -H	O _{5c}	3.07	163	x,y,z
14	<i>D</i> (<i>M</i>)	N _{3d} -H	O _{0d}	3.10	154	x,y,z
15		N _{4d} -H	O _{1d}	2.88	161	x,y,z
16		N _{5d} -H	O _{2d}	2.98	170	x,y,z
17		N _{6d} -H	O _{3d}	2.99	165	x,y,z
18		N _{7d} -H	O _{4d}	2.92	167	x,y,z
19		N _{8d} -H	O _{5d}	2.96	171	x,y,z
20						
21		N _{1a} -H	O _{7a} ^a	2.90	160	x, -1+y,z
22		N _{1b} -H	O _{7b} ^a	2.81	176	x, -1+y,z
23		N _{1c} -H	O _{7c} ^a	2.80	173	x, 1+y,z
24		N _{1d} -H	O _{7d} ^a	2.87	163	x, 1+y,z
25		O _{M4} -H ^a	O _{4c}	3.02	176	x,y,z
26		O _{M1} -H ^a	O _{4b} ^a	2.86	177	x,y,1+z
27		O _{M2} -H ^a	O _{M1}	2.87	153	x,y,z

31 ^a O_M: O atom of MeOH.

32 The (*S*)-CD₃-Aib tetrapeptide **7a** was solved in the space group *P*2₁/*n* to form a 3₁₀-helical structure in the asymmetric unit. The
33 space group *P*2₁/*n* is centrosymmetric; and therefore, right-handed (*P*) and left-handed (*M*) helical enantiomers existed in the crystal.
34 Figure 2 shows a right-handed (*P*) 3₁₀-helical structure, in which reversal of the C-terminal torsion angles occurred, *i.e.*, the signs of the
35 ϕ and ψ torsion angles of the C-terminal residue (residue 4) were opposite to those of the preceding residues (1–3). This phenomenon is
36 frequently observed in 3₁₀-helical Aib and related peptides.¹⁴ The average values of the torsion angles ϕ and ψ of residues (1–3) were
37 -57.4° , -32.9° . The intramolecular hydrogen bonds of the *i*←*i*+3 type (3₁₀-helix) were found between H–N(3) and the C(0)=O(0)
38 oxygen atom of the Cbz-group, and between H–N(4) and the C(1)=O(1). In the packing mode, the (*P*) conformer is connected to the
39 symmetry-related ($-1/2+x$, $3/2-y$, $-1/2+z$) (*M*) conformer by one intermolecular hydrogen bond [H–N(2)⋯O(4')].

51 **Fig. 2.** A right-handed (*P*) 3₁₀-helical structure of the (*S*)-CD₃-Aib tetrapeptide **7a** by an X-ray crystallographic analysis. An enantiomeric left-handed (*M*) 3₁₀-
52 helix also existed. Views (a) along the helical axis, and (b) perpendicular to the helical axis.

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55 The structure of the (*S*)-octapeptide **10a** was solved in the space group *P*1. Two right-handed (*P*) 3₁₀-helices and two left-handed
56 (*M*) 3₁₀-helices existed in the asymmetric unit, along with methanol molecules. The space group *P*1 is chiral and non-centrosymmetric;
57 therefore, the right-handed (*P*) helices and left-handed (*M*) helices are not enantiomeric, but diastereomeric. This result may be due to
58 solvent molecules disturbing the symmetry of the helical molecule arrangement. Reversal of the C-terminal torsion angles occurred in
59 conformers *A*–*D*, *i.e.*, the signs of the ϕ and ψ torsion angles of the C-terminal residue (residue 8) were opposite to those of the
60 preceding residues (1–7). The average values of the torsion angles ϕ and ψ of residues (1–7) were *A*: -53.8° , -29.1° ; *B*: -56.6° , -27.1° ;
61 *C*: 53.4° , 30.3° ; *D*: 55.6° , 27.5° . Conformers *A*–*D* showed six intramolecular hydrogen bonds of the *i*←*i*+3 type (3₁₀-helix) between H–
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N(3) and the C(0)=O(0) oxygen atom of the Cbz-group, between H–N(4) and C(1)=O(1), between H–N(5) and C(2)=O(2), between H–N(6) and C(3)=O(3), between H–N(7) and C(4)=O(4), and between H–N(8) and C(5)=O(5). In the packing mode, an intermolecular hydrogen bond formed between the H–N(1) peptide donor and C7'=O7' of a symmetry-related conformer (*A* and *B*: $x, -1+y, z$) or (*C* and *D*: $x, 1+y, z$). Thus, the chains of intermolecularly hydrogen-bonded right-handed (*P*) 3_{10} -helices; $\cdots A \cdots A \cdots A \cdots$ and $\cdots B \cdots B \cdots B \cdots$, and left-handed (*M*) 3_{10} -helices; $\cdots C \cdots C \cdots C \cdots$ and $\cdots D \cdots D \cdots D \cdots$, were formed in a head-to-tail alignment.

Fig 3. Right-handed (*P*) and left-handed (*M*) 3_{10} -helical structures of the (*S*)-CD₃-Aib octapeptide **10a** by an X-ray crystallographic analysis. Views (a) perpendicular to the helical axes, and (b) along the helical axes.

The X-ray crystallographic structure of the achiral Aib octapeptide *p*-BrBz-(Aib)₈-OBu^t (*p*-BrBz: *p*-bromobenzoyl) has already been solved in the centrosymmetric space group *P*-1, and enantiomeric (*P*) and (*M*) 3_{10} -helices existed, together with three methanol molecules.^{4e} These differences in the X-ray crystallographic results between the achiral Aib octapeptide^{4e} and our chiral CD₃-Aib octapeptide **10a** may be attributed to the difference in the N-terminal protecting groups of peptides, but not to the effects of CD₃-induced chiral centers. These X-ray crystallographic results suggest that chiral centers at the α -carbons of (*S*)-CD₃-Aib peptides are incapable of controlling their helical-screw sense to one-handedness up to an octapeptide length.

The FT-IR absorption spectra of Cbz-[(*S*)-CD₃-Aib]_{*n*}-OBu^t {*n* = 4 (**7a**), 8 (**10a**), 10 (**12a**)} showed weak bands in the 3420–3440 cm⁻¹ region, which were assigned to solvated free peptide NH groups, and strong bands at the 3350–3370 cm⁻¹ region to peptide NH groups with N–H $\cdots$ O=C intramolecular hydrogen bonds of different strengths.⁹ These FT-IR spectra are almost the same as those of the reported Aib homopeptides, which formed 3_{10} -helices.⁴ The CD spectra of the (*S*)-CD₃-Aib octa- and decapeptides **10a** and **12a** in 2,2,2-trifluoroethanol (TFE) solution (0.10 mM) did not show maxima (208 and 222 nm) for the one-handed helical structure (Fig. 4). These results also suggest that right-handed (*P*) and left-handed (*M*) 3_{10} -helices exist in equal amounts.¹⁵

Toniolo and coauthors reported that right-handed and left-handed helices of achiral Aib homopeptides rapidly interconverted in solution at room temperature.¹⁶ Therefore, the right-handed and left-handed helices of chiral (*S*)-CD₃-Aib homopeptides also might rapidly interconvert in solution at room temperature.

Fig. 4. CD spectra of (*S*)-CD₃-Aib homopeptides Cbz-[(*S*)-CD₃-Aib]_{*n*}-OBu' [(a) *n* = 8 (**10a**), (b) *n* = 10 (**12a**)] in TFE solution (0.10 mM).

2.4. (*R*)-CD₃-Aib and (*S*)-¹³CH₃-Aib polymer syntheses based on *N*-carboxy anhydride methods and their CD spectra

We attempted to prepare a (*R*)-CD₃-Aib polymer and (*S*)-¹³CH₃-Aib polymer based on *N*-carboxy anhydride method. According to Deming's procedure,¹⁷ the Cbz-protected CD₃-Aib (*R*)-**3a** was converted to the *N*-carboxy anhydride (*R*)-**13a** in 91% yield by a treatment with SOCl₂ in THF at 65 °C. Furthermore, the Cbz-protected ¹³CH₃-Aib (*S*)-**3b**, which was prepared from (*S*)-**2b**, was similarly converted to the *N*-carboxy anhydride (*S*)-**13b** in 69% yield.

Initiators for polymerization: *n*-hexyl amine, triethylamine (Et₃N), and 1,8-diazabicyclo[5.4.0]undec-7-ene (DBU), were examined using the achiral Aib *N*-carboxy anhydride **13**.^{18,19} The MALDI-ToF-MS spectra of products showed molecular ion peaks of *m/z* 1230 (14 mers) by *n*-hexyl amine, *m/z* 2594 (30 mers) by Et₃N, and *m/z* 3443 (40 mers) by DBU. The use of the strongest base DBU as an initiator in *N,N*-dimethylformamide (DMF) gave the highest polymerization degree. Thus, we polymerized the isotope-labeled chiral Aib *N*-carboxy anhydrides **13a,b** under these reaction conditions.

Scheme 3. Preparation of (*R*)-CD₃-Aib and (*S*)-¹³CH₃-Aib *N*-carboxy anhydrides and their polymerization.

The MALDI-ToF-MS spectrum of the (*R*)-CD₃-Aib polymer **14a** showed larger molecular ion peaks than 42 mers {3744.3: (M+Na)⁺}, and these peaks appeared at regular intervals of *m/z* 88, which corresponded to the monomer unit of –HN-C₃H₃D₃-CO–. On the other hand, the MALDI-ToF-MS spectrum of the (*S*)-¹³CH₃-Aib polymer **14b** showed larger molecular ion peaks than 30 mers {2635.5: (M+K)⁺}, and the interval of these peaks was *m/z* 86, corresponding to the monomer unit of –HN-¹³CC₂H₆-CO– (Fig. 5).

Fig. 5. MALDI-ToF-MS spectra of (a) the (*R*)-CD₃-Aib polymer and (b) (*S*)-¹³CH₃-Aib polymer.

The CD spectra of the (*R*)-CD₃-Aib polymer **14a** and (*S*)-¹³CH₃-Aib polymer **14b** in TFE solution did not show any positive or negative maxima for the one-handed helical structure. These CD spectra suggest that these polymers form right-handed and left-handed helical structures in almost equal amounts, and the control of the helical-screw sense of polymers is not possible at these polymer lengths (Fig. 6).

Fig. 6. CD spectra of (a) the (*R*)-CD₃-Aib polymer **14a** (0.3 mg in TFE 1.0 mL) and (b) (*S*)-¹³CH₃-Aib polymer **14b** (0.4 mg in TFE 1.0 mL).

Helical-screw control by chiral centers due to isotope substitutions were different between Green's pseudo-peptoid polymers and our Aib oligomers. In Green's study,⁵ isocyanate polymers showed an excess of one-handed helical-screw structures in the CD spectra. In our study, neither (*R*)-CD₃-Aib peptides nor (*S*)-¹³CH₃-Aib peptides had a bias for the one-handed helical-screw direction detected in the CD spectra; however, they had right-handed and left-handed helical-screw directions in equal amounts. The most prominent difference between isocyanate polymers and Aib polymers is molecular weight, and thus, the numbers of existing chiral centers. The average molecular weight (*M_w*) of Green's isocyanate polymers was 870,000; therefore, *ca.* 6,800 unit polymers and nearly 6,800 chiral centers existed. However, our Aib polymers were 30-50 mers, with only 30-50 chiral centers existing.

3. Conclusion

Optically active isotope-labeled Aib **2a** and **2b** were synthesized using simplified Maruoka catalysts[®]. The (*S*)-CD₃-Aib homopeptides, up to decamers, were prepared by peptide-fragment coupling using a solution-phase method. Homo-chiral CD₃-Aib and ¹³CH₃-Aib polymers, up to *ca.* 30-40 mers, were also prepared by the polymerization of *N*-carboxy anhydrides. The conformational analysis of these peptides demonstrated that right-handed and left-handed helical structures existed in equal amounts, and 30-40 chiral centers caused by D and ¹³C isotope substitutions were incapable of affecting the helical-screw directions of their oligopeptides.

Isotope-labeled drugs have recently attracted the attention of medicinal chemists.²⁰ Therefore, these results demonstrate that isotope-labeled drugs have negligible effects on conformational changes.

4. Experimental Section

4.1. General

Optical rotations $[\alpha]_D$ were measured using a 1.0-dm cell. Circular dichroism spectra (CD) were measured using a 1.0-mm path length cell. Infrared spectra (IR) were recorded for conventional measurements (neat or KBr), and the solution (CDCl₃) method was performed using the 0.1-mm path length of a NaCl cell. ¹H NMR spectra were determined at 400 MHz at room temperature. EI(MS) and HRMS(FAB) spectra were taken in the dual-focusing sector field mode, while HRMS(ESI), HRMS(DART), and MALDI-MS spectra were measured in the ToF mode.

4.2. Synthesis of isotope-labeled amino acids

4.2.1. tert-Butyl 2-(4-Chlorobenzylideneamino)propionate (1).²¹ A mixture of H-Ala-OBu^t·HCl (30.0 g, 165 mmol), NaHCO₃ (10 g) in H₂O (200 mL), and CH₂Cl₂ (200 mL) was stirred at room temperature for 2 h. The organic layer was separated, *p*-chlorobenzaldehyde (13.3 g, 14.6 mmol) and anhydrous MgSO₄ (16 g) were then added, and the whole mixture was stirred at room temperature for 4 days. After filtration, the filtrate was evaporated and diluted with diethyl ether. The ethereal solution was washed with brine and H₂O, and then dried over MgSO₄. After removal of the solvent, the residue was recrystallized from *n*-pentane to give the imine **1** (20.1 g, 79%) as colorless crystals: mp 25–27 °C; IR (neat) ν 2982, 1732, 1645, 1217, 1155, 1090, 770, 747 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 8.26 (s, 1H), 7.72 (d, *J* = 8.3 Hz, 2H), 7.38 (d, *J* = 8.3 Hz, 2H), 4.04 (q, *J* = 6.8 Hz, 1H), 1.48 (d, *J* = 6.8 Hz, 3H), 1.47 (s, 9H); HRMS(DART): [M+H]⁺, found 268.1111. C₁₄H₁₉ClNO₂ requires 268.1104.

4.2.2. tert-Butyl (S)-2-Amino-2-(trideuteriomethyl)propionate [H₂(S)-CD₃-Aib-OBu^t; (S)-2a]. CD₃-I (2.00 mL, 32.0 mmol) was added dropwise to a stirred solution of **1** (4.00 g, 14.9 mmol), (R)-simplified Maruoka catalyst[®] (0.5 mol %, 56 mg, 0.075 mmol), and CsOH·H₂O (12.5 g, 74.7 mmol) in toluene (80 mL) at -40 °C, and the solution was stirred for 24 h. The solution was diluted with water, and extracted with CHCl₃. Evaporation of the solvent afforded the oily residue, which was dissolved in THF (250 mL) and 0.5 M aqueous citric acid solution (250 mL), and the solution was stirred for 4 h. After removal of THF, the residual solution was washed with *n*-hexane, basified with Na₂CO₃ (ca. 44 g), extracted with diethyl ether, and dried over MgSO₄. Removal of the solvent gave an oily residue, which was distilled under reduced pressure using Kugelrohr apparatus to leave **2a** (2.45 g, quantitative) as a colorless oil: bp 100–110 °C/300 mbar (oil bath temp.); $[\alpha]_D^{30} \pm 0.0$ (c 1.31, CHCl₃); IR (neat) ν 3422 (br), 2980, 2878, 1717, 1636, 1275 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 1.74 (br s, 2H), 1.46 (s, 9H), 1.29 (s, 3H); HRMS(DART): [M+H]⁺, found 163.1532. C₈H₁₅D₃NO₂ requires 163.1526. Enantiomeric (R)-**2a** was synthesized using (S)-simplified Maruoka catalyst[®], and racemic (±)-**2a** was synthesized using tetrabutyl ammonium iodide instead of Maruoka catalyst[®].

4.2.3. Determination of enantiomeric excess of 2a. A mixture of amine **4a** (9 mg, 0.057 mmol), (R)-MTPA (16 mg, 0.068 mmol), and EDC (13.6 mg, 0.071 mmol) in CH₂Cl₂ (0.5 mL) was stirred at 50 °C for 4 days. After removal of the solvent, the residue was purified by short column chromatography on silica gel to give an MTPA amide. Enantiomeric excess of **2a** was determined by the ¹H NMR spectrum of the corresponding MTPA amide.⁹

4.2.4. tert-Butyl (R)-2-Amino-2-(¹³C-methyl)propionate [H₂(R)-¹³CH₃-Aib-OBu^t; (R)-2b].⁷ ¹³CH₃-I (56 μ L, 0.90 mmol) was added dropwise to a stirred solution of **1** (200 mg, 0.75 mmol), (R)-simplified Maruoka catalyst[®] (0.5 mol %, 4.2 mg, 0.006 mmol), and CsOH·H₂O (66 mg, 4.40 mmol) in toluene (4 mL) at -40 °C, and the solution was stirred for 24 h. The solution was diluted with water, and extracted with CHCl₃. Evaporation of the solvent afforded the oily residue, which was dissolved in THF (13 mL) and 0.5 M aqueous citric acid solution (13 mL), and the solution was stirred for 4 h. After removal of THF, the residual solution was washed with *n*-hexane, basified with Na₂CO₃, extracted with ether, and then dried over MgSO₄. Removal of the solvent gave an oily residue, which was distilled under reduced pressure using Kugelrohr apparatus to leave (R)-**2b** (120 mg, quantitative) as a colorless oil: bp 100–110 °C/380 mbar (oil bath temp.); $[\alpha]_D^{29} \pm 0.0$ (c 1.10, CHCl₃); IR (neat) ν 3372 (br), 1724, 1369, 1142 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 1.66 (br s, 2H), 1.46 (s, 9H), 1.30 (d, ⁴*J*_{CH} = 4.4 Hz, 3H), 1.29 (d, ¹*J*_{CH} = 128 Hz, 3H); HRMS(DART): [M+H]⁺, found 161.1329. C₇¹³CH₁₈NO₂ requires 161.1371. Enantiomeric (S)-**2b** was synthesized using (S)-simplified Maruoka catalyst[®], and racemic (±)-**2b** was synthesized using tetrabutyl ammonium iodide instead of Maruoka catalyst[®].

4.2.5. Determination of enantiomeric excess of 2b. A mixture of amine **4b** (9 mg, 0.057 mmol), (R)-MTPA (16 mg, 0.068 mmol), and EDC (13.6 mg, 0.071 mmol) in CH₂Cl₂ (0.5 mL) was stirred at 50 °C for 4 days. After removal of the solvent, the residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel to give an MTPA amide. Enantiomeric excess of **2b** was determined by the ¹H NMR spectrum of the corresponding MTPA amide.⁹

4.3. Preparation of (S)-CD₃-Aib homopeptides

4.3.1. (S)-2-(Benzyloxycarbonyl)amino-2-(trideuteriomethyl)propionic acid [Cbz-{(S)-CD₃-Aib}-OH; (S)-3a]. A mixture of (S)-**2a** (2.00 g, 12.3 mmol), Na₂CO₃ (1.57 g, 14.8 mmol), and benzyloxycarbonyl chloride (Cbz-Cl; 2.60 mL, 18.4 mmol) in acetone-water (1 : 1; 50 mL) was stirred at room temperature for 4 days. After removal of acetone, the aqueous solution was extracted with ethyl acetate (EtOAc), and dried over Na₂SO₄. After removal of the solvent, the residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel (20% EtOAc in *n*-hexane) to give Cbz-protected amino ester (3.00 g, 83%) as colorless crystals. Cbz-{(S)-CD₃-Aib}-OBu^t: mp 60–62 °C; $[\alpha]_D^{20} \pm 0.0$ (c 0.99, CHCl₃); IR (KBr) ν 3372 (br), 2976, 1711 (br), 1518, 1302, 1260, 1146 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.30–7.36 (m, 5H), 5.46 (br s, 1H), 5.08 (s, 2H), 1.51 (s, 3H), 1.43 (s, 9H); HRMS(DART): [M+H]⁺, found 297.1913. C₁₆H₂₁D₃NO₄ requires

297.1894. A mixture of Cbz-[(S)-CD₃-Aib]-OBu^t (1.38 g, 4.66 mmol) and anisole (0.9 mL, 8.30 mmol) in 2,2,2-trifluoroacetic acid (TFA; 9.2 mL) was stirred at room temperature for 3 h. Removal of the solvent afforded a solid, which was purified by short column chromatography on silica gel (20% EtOAc in *n*-hexane) to give (S)-**3a** (1.11 g, 99%) as colorless crystals: mp 70–71 °C; [α]_D²⁸ ±0.0 (c 1.00, CHCl₃); IR (KBr) ν 3333 (br), 2988, 2945, 2907, 1750 (br), 1653, 1543, cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 9.20 (br s, 1H), 7.30–7.40 (m, 5H), 5.39 (br s, 1H), 5.10 (s, 2H), 1.57 (s, 3H); HRMS(DART): [M+H]⁺, found 241.1251. C₁₂H₁₃D₃NO₄ requires 241.1268.

4.3.2. Cbz-[(S)-CD₃-Aib]₂-OBu^t [(S)-**4a**]. A mixture of amine (S)-**2a** (353 mg, 2.17 mmol), carboxylic acid (S)-**3a** (447 mg, 1.86 mmol), EDC (432 mg, 2.25 mmol), and HOBt (308 mg, 2.28 mmol) was stirred at 60 °C for 3 days. After removal of the solvent, the residue was diluted with EtOAc, washed with 3% aqueous HCl, 5% aqueous NaHCO₃, and then dried over Na₂SO₄. After removal of the solvent, the white solid was purified by column chromatography on silica gel (20% EtOAc in *n*-hexane) to produce a terminally-protected dipeptide (S)-**4a** (558 mg, 78%) as colorless crystals: mp 136–137 °C; [α]_D³¹ ±0.0 (c 1.00, CHCl₃); IR (KBr) ν 3406, 3294 (br), 2978, 1721, 1659, 1535 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.31–7.36 (m, 5H), 6.91 (br s, 1H), 5.36 (br s, 1H), 5.09 (s, 2H), 1.52 (s, 3H), 1.49 (s, 3H), 1.45 (s, 9H); HRMS(DART): [M+H]⁺, found 385.2626. C₂₀H₂₅D₆N₂O₅ requires 385.2610.

4.3.3. H-[(S)-CD₃-Aib]₂-OBu^t [(S)-**5a**]. A mixture of (S)-**4a** (951 mg, 2.47 mmol), and 10% Pd-C (760 mg) in MeOH (70 mL) was rigorously stirred under a H₂ atmosphere at room temperature for 13 h. After filtration, the filtrate was evaporated to give a crude amine (S)-**5a** (619 mg, quantitative), which was used for the next reaction without purification. ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 8.09 (br s, 1H), 1.73 (br s, 2H), 1.51 (s, 3H), 1.45 (s, 9H), 1.34 (s, 3H); HRMS(DART): [M+H]⁺, found 251.2256. C₁₂H₁₉D₆N₂O₃ requires 251.2242.

4.3.4. Cbz-[(S)-CD₃-Aib]₂-OH [(S)-**6a**]. A mixture of (S)-**4a** (113 mg, 0.294 mmol) and anisole (60 μL) in trifluoroacetic acid (0.6 mL) was stirred at room temperature for 4 h. Removal of the solvent afforded a white solid, which was used without purification.

4.3.5. Cbz-[(S)-CD₃-Aib]₄-OBu^t [(S)-**7a**]. A mixture of (S)-**5a** (242 mg, 0.968 mmol), (S)-**6a** (273 mg, 0.832 mmol), HATU (597 mg, 1.57 mmol), HOAt (217 mg, 1.59 mmol), and diisopropylethylamine (Pr₂EtN) (0.40 mL) in MeCN (5 mL) was stirred at 50 °C for 5 days under an Ar atmosphere. After removal of the solvent, the residue was diluted with EtOAc, washed with 3% aqueous HCl, 5% aqueous NaHCO₃, and then dried over Na₂SO₄. Removal of the solvent gave a white solid, which was purified by column chromatography on silica gel (40% EtOAc in *n*-hexane) to produce a terminally-protected tetrapeptide (S)-**7a** (293 mg, 63%) as colorless crystals: mp 184–185 °C; [α]_D²⁶ ±0.0 (c 1.00, CHCl₃); IR (CDCl₃) ν 3426, 3358 (br), 2982, 1717, 1674, 1519 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.30–7.40 (m, 6H), 7.24 (br s, 1H), 6.59 (br s, 1H), 5.51 (br s, 1H), 5.09 (s, 2H), 1.44 (s, 3H), 1.43 (s, 3H), 1.43 (s, 9H), 1.39 (s, 3H), 1.26 (s, 3H); HRMS(DART): [M+H]⁺, found 561.4002. C₂₈H₃₃D₁₂N₄O₇ requires 561.4041.

4.3.6. H-[(S)-CD₃-Aib]₄-OBu^t [(S)-**8a**]. Amine (S)-**8a** was prepared from (S)-**7a** in a manner similar to that described for the preparation of (S)-**5a**, and used for the next reaction without purification.

4.3.7. Cbz-[(S)-CD₃-Aib]₄-OH [(S)-**9a**]. Carboxylic acid (S)-**9a** was prepared from (S)-**7a** in a manner similar to that described for the preparation of (S)-**6a**, and used for the next reaction without purification.

4.3.8. Cbz-[(S)-CD₃-Aib]₈-OBu^t [(S)-**10a**]. Terminally-protected octapeptide (S)-**10a** was prepared by coupling between (S)-**8a** and (S)-**9a** in a manner similar to that described for the preparation of (S)-**7a**. 23%; colorless crystals; mp 241–243 °C; [α]_D²² ±0.0 (c 1.00, CHCl₃); IR (CDCl₃) ν 3316 (br), 2984, 1713, 1661, 1530 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.69 (br s, 1H), 7.66–7.67 (br s, 2H), 7.58 (br s, 1H), 7.52 (br s, 1H), 7.44 (br s, 1H), 7.28–7.42 (m, 5H), 6.64 (br s, 1H), 5.58 (s, 1H), 5.11 (s, 2H), 1.48 (s, 3H), 1.46 (s, 6H), 1.45 (s, 15H), 1.44 (s, 3H), 1.38 (s, 3H), 1.30 (s, 3H); HRMS(FAB): [M]⁺, found 912.6824. C₄₄H₄₈D₂₄N₈O₁₁ requires 912.6827.

4.3.9. H-[(S)-CD₃-Aib]₈-OBu^t [(S)-**11a**]. Amine (S)-**11a** was prepared from (S)-**10a** in a manner similar to that described for the preparation of (S)-**5a**, and used for the next reaction without purification.

4.3.10. Cbz-[(S)-CD₃-Aib]₁₀-OBu^t [(S)-**12a**]. Terminally-protected decapeptide (S)-**12a** was prepared by coupling between (S)-**11a** and (S)-**6a** in a manner similar to that described for the preparation of (S)-**7a**. 48%; colorless crystals; mp >250 °C; [α]_D²³ ±0.0 (c 1.00, CHCl₃); IR (CDCl₃) ν 3321 (br), 2984, 1715, 1661, 1530 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.70 (br s, 1H), 7.66 (br s, 1H), 7.65 (br s, 1H), 7.64 (br s, 1H), 7.61 (br s, 1H), 7.53 (br s, 1H), 7.39 (br s, 2H), 7.35–7.38 (m, 5H), 6.43 (br s, 1H), 5.63 (br s, 1H), 5.12 (s, 2H), 1.53 (s, 3H), 1.47–1.48 (m, 21H), 1.44 (s, 12H), 1.31 (s, 3H); HRMS(FAB): [M]⁺, found 1088.8254. C₅₂H₅₆D₃₀N₁₀O₁₃ requires 1088.8259.

4.4. Synthesis of *N*-carboxy anhydrides of chiral CD₃-Aib and ¹³CH₃-Aib

4.4.1. (R)-4-trideuteriomethyl-4-methyloxazoline-2,5-dione [(R)-**13a**]. Thionyl chloride (SOCl₂; 40 μL, 0.55 mmol) was added to the stirred solution of (R)-**3a** (32.0 mg, 0.133 mmol) in THF (1 mL) at 65 °C under an Ar atmosphere. After being stirred for 6 h, the solution was evaporated, and the residue was recrystallized from *n*-hexane/EtOAc (5/1) to give (R)-**13a** (16.0 mg, 91%) as colorless crystals: mp 95–96 °C; [α]_D²⁸ ±0.0 (c 0.50, MeOH); IR (KBr) ν 3568 (br), 2974, 2862, 1856, 1782 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 6.37 (br, 1H), 1.58 (s, 3H); MS(EI): *m/z* 132 [M]⁺.

4.4.2. (S)-2-(Benzyloxycarbonyl)amino-2-(¹³C-methyl)propionic acid [Cbz-[(S)-¹³CH₃-Aib]-OH; (S)-**3b**]. A mixture of (S)-**2b** (107 mg, 0.670 mmol), Na₂CO₃ (87 mg, 0.82 mmol), and benzyloxycarbonyl chloride (Cbz-Cl; 142 μL, 1.0 mmol) in acetone-water (1 : 1; 50 mL) was stirred at room temperature for 2 days. After removal of acetone, the aqueous solution was extracted with EtOAc, and the extract was dried over Na₂SO₄. After removal of the solvent, the residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel (20% EtOAc in *n*-hexane) to give Cbz-protected amino ester (159 mg, 80%) as colorless crystals. Cbz-[(S)-¹³CH₃-Aib]-OBu^t: mp 58–59 °C; [α]_D³¹ ±0.0 (c 1.00, CHCl₃); IR (KBr) ν 3372 (br), 2976, 1711 (br), 1520, 1306, 1260, 1150 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.25–7.36 (m, 5H), 5.46 (br s, 1H), 5.08 (s, 2H), 1.51 (d, ¹J_{CH} = 129 Hz, 3H), 1.51 (d, ⁴J_{CH} = 4.4 Hz, 3H), 1.43 (s, 9H); HRMS(DART): [M+H]⁺, found 295.1739. C₁₅¹³CH₂₄N₁O₄ requires 295.1739. A mixture of Cbz-[(S)-¹³CH₃-Aib]-OBu^t (137 mg, 0.466 mmol) and

anisole (0.1 mL, 9.2 mmol) in TFA (1 mL) was stirred at room temperature for 4 h. Removal of the solvent afforded a white solid, which was purified by short column chromatography on silica gel (20% EtOAc in *n*-hexane) to give (*S*)-**3b** (87.5 mg, 79%) as colorless crystals: mp 64–65 °C; $[\alpha]_D^{29} \pm 0.0$ (*c* 0.71, CHCl₃); IR (KBr) ν 3333 (br), 2990 (br), 1724, 1694, 1535 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.30–7.38 (m, 5H), 5.32 (br s, 1H), 5.11 (s, 2H), 3.10 (br, 1H), 1.59 (d, ¹J_{CH} = 130 Hz, 3H), 1.59 (d, ⁴J_{CH} = 4.2 Hz, 3H); HRMS(DART): [M+H]⁺, found 239.1128. C₁₁H₁₆N₁O₄ requires 239.1112.

4.4.3. (*S*)-4-¹³C-methyl-4-methyloxazoline-2,5-dione [(*R*)-**13b**]. Thionyl chloride (SOCl₂; 40 μ L, 0.55 mmol) was added to the stirred solution of (*S*)-**3b** (32.0 mg, 0.134 mmol) in THF (1 mL) at 65 °C under an Ar atmosphere. After being stirred for 7 h, the solution was evaporated, and the residue was recrystallized from *n*-hexane/EtOAc (5/1) to give (*S*)-**13b** (12.0 mg, 69%) as colorless crystals: mp 95–96 °C; $[\alpha]_D^{28} \pm 0.0$ (*c* 0.24, MeOH); IR (KBr) ν 3356 (br), 3175 (br), 2978, 2870, 1855, 1786 cm⁻¹; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 5.84 (br s, 1H), 1.58 (d, ¹J_{CH} = 131 Hz, 3H), 1.58 (d, ⁴J_{CH} = 4.1 Hz, 3H); MS(EI): *m/z* 130 [M]⁺.

4.5. Polymerization Procedure of *N*-carboxy anhydrides

4.5.1. A solution of the chiral Aib *N*-carboxy anhydride (*S*)-**13** (0.160 mmol) and DBU (1.14 μ L) in DMF (1 mL) was stirred at room temperature overnight under an Ar atmosphere. Evaporation and concentration *in vacuo* gave a polymer.

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- See supplementary data.
- The priority rule of the CIP nomenclature is N > ¹³C > ¹²C, and, thus, *R/S* descriptors are different between CD₃-Aib and ¹³CH₃-Aib. The absolute configurations of products were assumed based on the reaction mechanisms of the simplified Maruoka catalyst[®].
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- CCDC-1482529 (**7a**) and 1482530 (**10a**) contain the supplementary crystallographic data for this manuscript. These data may be obtained free of charge from The Cambridge Crystallographic Data Centre via: www.ccdc.cam.ac.uk/data_request/cif.
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