Enlightened Pleasure
K

inbaku (縛缚) is the Japanese word for “tying tightly”. Kinbaku is the Japanese art of bondage, connecting a person using simple but visually complex models, usually using a few thin ropes in length.

In Japan, natural fiber thread is known as asahi (麻繩). Japanese vocabulary does not distinguish between hemp and jute. The word shibari came into use in the West in the early 1990's to describe the art of bondage Kinbaku. Shibari (縛り) is a Japanese word that literally means “decoratively tying”. There is a lot of controversy between shibari and kinbaku about which one is more suitable than the other. While westerners who want to distinguish these terms refer to shibari to be more visual, decorative and erotic, kinbaku refers to artistic, bondage-oriented, emotional practice as a whole.

Origins of Shibari and Kinbaku

What we know as Shibari or Kinbaku has its origins in an ancient Samurai tradition, Hojojutsu, or tying up prisoners. The shibari knots used depended on the social status of the prisoner, his crimes, and the jurisdiction of the Samurai in charge. It is important to note that Hojojutsu was a method of torture and humiliation. The shibari ties were a method of bondage meant to cause pain.

The traditional view is that the term 'shibari' is a misplaced and abusive use of Japanese vocabulary by westerners. The word indicates that it is not traditionally used in Japanese in years to master and is difficult to spot in the world of mass produced pornography today. Only in the West, the term shibari, which doesn’t refer to any specific type of tying in Japan, is used interchangeably with kinbaku.

Some people see kinbaku as a beautiful and cruel expression of sexual desire, while others see it as a refined performance art. Kinbaku is it common that in the West - much less used to the nuances of the Japanese terms - a word is used incorrectly to simplify and more easily understand the Japanese concept to which it refers. In Japanese "shibari" simply refers to the verb "to tie" and kinbaku to the experience of tight binding: In the West, both terms are used interchangeably to refer to the act of binding. Lightness is the feeling described when shibari suspensions are performed, a sensation of levitation and weightlessness is sought.
After World War II, the occupation of Japan by the United States ensued. This led to the recognition of Japanese Kinbaku (bondage) art in the West. The western (Fusion) style was based on stricter aesthetics, and the combination of this style with the Eastern style revealed the shibari and created a lively, flowing, constantly evolving dynamic and exciting style. Rope bondage lessons began to spread in BDSM circles and shibari workshops became easier to find. The word kinbaku has a much narrower definition but still, it's impossible to translate to English in one word. Bondage doesn't come close to mirroring kinbaku. Communicate clearly before, during and after your session. Ensure that your partner knows where you are both emotionally and physically. Punishment is not about rape, abuse, or degradation. If you don’t care about your submissive’s pleasure and well-being then D/s is not for you. People who consciously play with power exchange tend to spend a lot more time talking about their likes and dislikes than couples who restrict their lifestyle to scenes. If you are the Dominant in your relationship it is your duty to deal out punishment for the well-being of your submissive and your relationship. Punishment is carried out by the Dominant and accepted by the submissive because of the trust the submissive has for the Dominant. It takes the body a good twenty minutes to start producing its natural painkilling endorphins. Therefore you want punishment to be swift, not extending it out for hours. There is no one true way in this lifestyle. The beauty of it is...there are no rules. But we should observe our code of ethics and that is Safe, Sane and Consensual. And we should set out to minimize the risks. Common sense comes into play all the time. And gut instinct. If something doesn’t feel right...get out. It all becomes part of the learning process.

Shibari (繋ぎ), the origins of this culture go back to the Edo period (1600 – 1800). There were no prisons during this period, so prisoners were tied. Later in the Edo era, bondage was used to torture women who were taken prisoner of war or girls of rival masters. Shibari literally means to tie and refers to an ancient, aesthetic form of rope bondage that since the beginning of the twentieth century is practiced with erotic purposes. Although shibari is classified as BDSM, and in particular during performances sadomasochistic elements come to the fore, it also has other meanings. Intimacy and trust are more essential than dominance and submission. By the stimulation of pressure points in the body, the localization of the ropes and the lengthy locking of body parts, also respiration plays an important role and shibari may even get a meditative meaning. The specialists and lovers of shibari see in this Japanese art a form of communication, in which each style defines a way of enjoying shibari.

In shibari there are numerous styles and several different techniques. The extreme ability of the Japanese to ritualize any act, endowed the shibari with multiple meanings depending on the type of knots, the placement of the body, the space or the public before which it is tied.

In shibari, the ropes and knots act as authentic sexual fetishism, since their contemplation and manipulation are decisive in awakening desire.
ROPE ARTIST HAJIME KINOKO

Hajime Kinoko
Contemporary artist, Shibari master,
Rope artist, photographer

Born on October 22, 1977. Not only is binding tied up as erōs, but he is also good at interpreting pop and sublimating into art. In particular, the unique workability that binds nature (trees, rocks, etc.) and even spaces is appreciated. In recent years, in addition to performances, he has enthusiastically announced artworks by photographs and videos. He handles all the binding, shooting, and production. A Japanese rope specialist, Kinoko not only considers Shibari to be erotic but also good at giving it pop interpretation and promote it to art. His unique ties incorporating nature (such as trees and rocks) as well as projects involving the innovative use of space have especially won praise. Kinoko is a rope specialist representing Japan.

For me, Shibari is about connection. When tying someone, it’s not about capturing or tying that person. I cherish the connection with the model the most. To me it feels like I am tying myself with the model like strings connecting two paper cups to make a paper toy telephone. When I tie someone with a strong feeling that the model is important, I can feel many things such as how they want to be tied with rope, at what timing and where. And I can tie depending on the models’ desires. The lines created when I tie that way are like waves that carve rocks and create cliffs. I create lines like those created by nature, and only exist between the model and I. I feel those are wonderful and beautiful. That is the Shibari that I pursue.

Hajime Kinoko is a master of tying up women. As Japan's leading rope artist, the 41-year-old has reinvented the Japanese traditions of Shibari and Kinbaku, using BDSM to explore connectivity and celebrate the human form.
**Bamboo**

Raibusho Shibari is the Japanese term to refer to the live shows of kinbaku

Bamboo is an aesthetic element often used in shibari practices

It is important that you use bamboo that has enough density, and no cracks or sharp parts at the joints. Some bamboo is strong enough even if it is cracked, but burrs and sharp joints can injure the rope bottom or damage the rope. You must be aware to avoid the bamboo hitting the rope bottom, and when tying, always secure at a joint so that the rope will not move or slip.

Shibari provides that mental break all of us need sometimes and like bamboo you can go from rigid to flexible.

Shibari is like meditation. It helps my insomnia and I am able to find peace in me. When I’m hanging everything is quiet. I feel my breath, I feel my body. It helps me sleep.

**Safety**

Practicing shibari can pose a risk of injury, so the first thing they teach in a workshop or introductory course to shibari are basic safety principles. Both tighter and model must know the exercises, techniques, postures and areas to avoid nerve damage.

**Vital Points, nerves or trigger points.** Ropes and knots improperly made, tangled or too tight, can wreak havoc on the veins, muscles, nerves, causing major injuries in addition to unnecessary pain. Work with ropes must be precise and above all with materials that adapt to the contour, and to safety elements for suspensions and ties with certain complication of quick releases, not to mention that the nervous system is a true reflection of our organs. We should always observe our code of ethics and that is Safe, Sane and Consensual. And we should set out to minimize the risks. Be aware that certain health conditions can increase risks. Be very careful to let yourself be tied without being in conditions. They can be for a little alcohol, it can be a simple smoke or some other drug. Common sense comes into play all the time. And gut instinct. If something doesn’t feel right get out. It all becomes part of the learning process.

**Acupuncture, and reflexotherapy are clear examples of nerve activation and its reflexions in the body. Example of the sympathetic / parasympathetic system and its basic reactions.**

Communicate clearly before, during and after your session. Ensure that your partner knows where you are both emotionally and physically. It takes a while to really get to know someone intimately... the way their mind and body works. So until you have that level of intimacy, communicate as much as possible. What feels good, what doesn’t, any discomfort you may be experiencing. If you think you can go a little harder. It all comes back to open and honest communication.

**Security**

Know your ringger
Let the ringger tiemaker know you
Know the limitations of your own body
Art is the triumph over chaos.
The truly modern artist is aware of abstraction in an emotion of beauty.

Wabi-Sabi

It is a Japanese aesthetic trend that describes objects or environments characterized by rustic simplicity. Wabi-sabi is based on Zen and is built on three principles: nothing lasts, nothing ends, nothing is perfect. Kimbaku draws much from this aesthetic current and understanding of the world, which combines, on the one hand, the concept of “wabi”, which means deliberate humility, lack of materialism and deep connection, and on the other, the environment, “sabi.” Whose meaning is to flourish in time. Together, they signify the beauty of imperfect things.

Patience

As a good Japanese practice, shibari is a slow, sophisticated, complex, meticulous, process. Both to learn and master the technique and to be tied. Shibari exercise requires a great deal of patience.

Union

Lovers of shibari/kimbaku see in this art a form of communication, which leads to a strong union - and not only literally - between a tighter and a model. From the bond that is established between the two, regardless of the relationship that unites them offstage, a very strong energetic fusion emerges, which leads them to create deep and very special connections.

Vibration

The models not only find the pleasure that shibari ropes offer them through immobilization, but also thanks to the friction of these in capacious zones and the vibration that the ropes transmit. Rope has a unique way of transmitting energy and intention and because it gives you a reason to be up close and personal, along with providing a roadmap of where to touch someone’s body, it’s a fantastic way to ease into the sensual and erotic with another person.

Art is not what you see but what you make others see.

I am able to ‘touch’ their feelings and respond to their needs, which in turn makes them fulfil their emotions. For example, people are able to focus more for those who lack in concentration. I was able to build an everlasting relationship with my partner.”
Enlightened Pleasure is a magazine dedicated for Shibari/Kinbaku lovers, and enthusiasts. Japanese bondage, is a centuries-old form of BDSM, focused on the aesthetics of being tied up in ropes and the thrill of being completely at the mercy of the person manning those ropes. With Shibari, you’re basically turned into a human sculpture while also being. It’s art!

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