

## Yoga & Nawa Shibari

The workshop combines principles of Yoga with the tying technique Nawa Shibari. This Japanese term is usually translated with winding, knotting or to binding a rope. It refers to the ancient Japanese practice to tie up a person and was originally developed by Samurais in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Today it is a technique to play physically, to perform or to experiment with the body and restriction. The styles in Shibari are noticeably versatile, yet one can say that there are basic figures to use ropes effectively.

A crucial aspect of this is the combination of functionality with aesthetic rules. There are particular shapes and angles to tie rope, which create a certain look and a sense of solid limitation at the same time. This is comparable to a moment of embracement, which supports the body and enables the tied person to relax into the ropes. In this sense the material can be understood as an extension of arms. A firm hug.

Then there is the Kinbaku side in Shibari which is more concerned with the biochemical or psychological effects. In Japanese tradition they speak of capturing a persons heart, to connect to the partners spirit or to touch them soulfully. This experience of fragile intensity can happen in both directions. The tying person and the person being tied can direct the scene from their individual angle. The notion of power shifts within the constellations and is often not as straightforward as it appears from the outside.

To guide the mind in an enjoyable way and to bring it back on the ground is a matter of sensitive touch with ropes and care. To shape the figure from inside is an equally minimal and a seductive task. Beside the serious and almost orthodox way of Shibari technique there is an utterly playful and animal like experience in rope play.

By starting the 3,5 hours with a 90 minutes Yoga session, the perception of the body gets refined before we engage into partner work. The Asanas ( Yoga postures) focus on the efficient use of muscles or on alignment of the torso, head and limbs. Rotation of the spine or balance exercises can be tried in variously challenging postures. The levels in both practices can be mixed, so that everybody works within the personal and anatomical realm.

