

JUDO RON 38 -Let us talk about “Shime Waza” or strangulation techniques

STRANGULATION, not a good story to make an opening with, but history tells us that humans have been strangling each other for thousands of years, and evidence of such have been found in numerous archaeological sites all over the world. It is known that many cultures have utilized this technique at war and in peace time for executions, either by hanging or garrote. Strangulations have been used in religious rituals, ceremonial sacrifices and executions of all sorts.

Strangulation is an activity in which someone's neck is constricted, with the goal of cutting off blood flow or the person's air supply which may lead to unconsciousness or death by causing an increasingly hypnotic state in the brain.

When someone is strangled, death can occur in several different ways. Many people associate strangling with asphyxia, in which the supply of air is cut off, but strangulation can also involve ischemia, in which the blood flow to the brain is restricted, and the brain dies. There is also a controlled form of strangulation used in martial arts like judo and within the justice and law enforcement agencies with the goal of suppressing an opponent without killing him or her.

There are different ways to effect strangulation according to the mechanisms used: **Hanging** — suspension from a cord wound around the neck; Ligature strangulation — strangulation without suspension using some form of cord-like object called a **Garrote** or by **Manual strangulation** — Strangulation using the fingers, hands, wrists or other part of the body to make pressure as practiced in judo. Depending on how the strangling is performed, it may compress the airway, interfere with the flow of blood in the neck, or work as a combination of the two.

The chosen mechanisms are used to either interfere with the normal flow of oxygen into the brain such as when applying different compression areas: Compression of the carotid arteries or jugular veins — causing cerebral ischemia. Compression of the laryngo pharynx, larynx, or trachea— causing asphyxia, and stimulation of the carotid-sinus reflex — causing bradycardia, hypotension, or both. Depending on the type of strangulation, one or several of these mechanisms typically occur in combination; however, vascular obstruction is usually the main mechanism. The estimated time from application of the strangulation to a state of unconsciousness may vary from 7-14 seconds when properly applied and can take up to one minute in other cases.

In judo, it is common to make a further distinction within the types of strangulation techniques (Shime Waza) being applied: Strangulation is a technique which interferes with the flow of blood to the brain while a choke will be applied to block the airway.

The use of manual strangulations techniques in wrestling matches has been recorded for centuries. Many civilizations such as the Ancient Greece have left some texts which made references to its use in wrestling spectacles and unarmed combat training to subdue an opponent. Several of these techniques have even made their appearances into the current judo curriculum. Let us take one example where strangulation is being described by the grec poet and author Nonnus of Panopolis in the fifth century B.C. when composing the 48 volumes of the epic tale of Dionysus:

(Nonnus, "Dionysiaca". Volume 37)

*"... And having thrown the man completely spread out in the dust
Aiakos got on the middle of his opponent's back
And sending his outstretched feet along under the spread out stomach,
Binding together a bent bond around just above the knees,
He pressed sole on sole and encircled the ankles to their outermost tips;
And having quickly stretched himself over his opponent's back,
And winding his hands over each other like a wreath,
He cast a bond on the neck with his arm, having bent his fingers;*

*He drenched the heaped up sand with soaking wet sweat,
Cleaning off the running drops with dry sand,
So that the entwined man might not slip through the knot of his hands
While sending hot moisture down from his squeezed neck.
And while he was being squeezed by the sharp palm
The heralds chosen as overseers of the games wandered over,
So that the forearm with the yoked-together lifting-strap would not kill him.
For there was not at that time such a rule, which their
descendants made later on, that when a man is overwhelmed
by the strangled pain of necks being stretched by bonds
he gives over the victory to his wrestling opponent with sensible silence,
having tapped the winning man with a shameful hand. "*

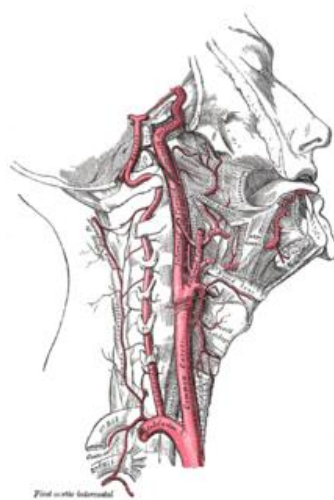
This description translated by Christopher Miller of Toronto in 2004ⁱ has some resemblance to our judo's "Ushiro jime" the back strangle and "Hadaka Jime" or naked choke where the two hands are not connected but instead the hand of the choking forearm grasps the bicep of the other arm and the hand of this other arm is used to put pressure either at the top of the opponent's head or to the back of his neck. Ancient text also referred to a variation on this technique that we know as "Ebi Garami" when it is applied from the front with the opponent's head clamped under the armpit of the choking arm: the back of the head being squeezed into the armpit and the front of the throat being squeezed by the sharp edge of the forearm.

You will note that in the text noted above, there is the mention of tapping the opponent to signal submission. If one thinks about it, tapping is the only possible recourse to signal to stop while one is being strangled. One cannot shout and the opponent is not likely to notice another form of noise signal. Tapping several times with the hand is immediately noticeable and has been incorporated in the ethics of the judo. (Tapping the mat with the feet or hands is also legitimate).

The general description of choking techniques is expressed on page 117 of the official Kodokan Judo by Jigoro Kanoⁱⁱ as: "*In strangulation techniques or choke locks, you use your hands, arms or legs on the opponent's collar or lapels to apply pressure to his neck or throat.*"

These methods are known as *Shime Waza*. The word *Shime* means constriction and *Waza* can be translated as technique. We sometimes used the terms "choking-choke" to refer to the constriction or blockage of the windpipe which prevents breathing, and use the expression "strangulation" to refer to compression of the arteries to prevent blood from reaching the brain.

We normally make use of two ways to perform the strangulation at the vulnerable zones of the neck and throat and one system working on the thoracic area :



Vulnerable zone of the neck (Grey Anatomy plate)

1. Compression of the carotid arteries on one or both sides of the neck restricting the flow of blood and oxygen to the brain.
2. Compression of the windpipe (trachea) stopping or reducing the flow of air to the lungs.
3. Compression of the chest and lungs preventing the opponent from inhaling. (This technique "Do jime" is now forbidden as it may cause serious damage to the rib cage.)

Shime Waza can be performed against all kinds of opponents and are reasonably safe to use under supervision. You can use some variations including: rising, descending and wringing actions.

In 1956, the Kodokan scientific research group headed by Professor Y. Matsumoto produced the report of a study on the physiological aspects of choking in judoⁱⁱⁱ with the assistance of three other professors from local Medical Schools. Some of their findings revealed that the change observed while the subject was in a state of unconsciousness resulting from a quick choking was identical to those observed in a patient during an epileptic seizure. They also noted that when the period of unconsciousness is short, the return to normal will occur within one minute after release and with no substantial after effects. They noted however that when performing Hadaka jime, the subject did not lose consciousness immediately and if the performer had strengthened his hold in order to induce the loss of consciousness, the receiver would undoubtedly have experienced excruciating pain.

The team of researcher cautioned that there are some dangers accompanying choking actions since the load for the heart and the rise of blood pressure is marked and therefore it would be dangerous to perform the choking hold on subjects with heart trouble or with hypertension. It is also dangerous for youngsters whose central nervous system and heart have not yet attained complete development. They nevertheless concluded: "*for those trained in the field, it is quite harmless, although care must be taken, not to continue the hold after the subject falls unconscious.*"

Other medical tests have established that the amount of pressure needed to occlude the arteries is six times less than the pressure needed to collapse the airway. Directly stopping the blood supply to the brain may results in loss of consciousness about six times faster than indirectly reducing oxygen in the brain through restricting breathing or the flow of air to the lungs.

Carotid strangulations are normally considered safer and involve less pain than the other choking methods making them easier to practice. A well executed technique will give the Judoka the ability to produce a state of unconsciousness or obtain a quick submission with little pain or forewarning to the opponent.

Strangulation is an effective technique in shiai and commonly practiced by many elite judoka. For more detailed applications, you may choose to read *Best Judo* by Isao Inokuma^{iv}.

Within the original Kodokan judo instructions of the early 1900's there were generally seven general groups of strangulations:

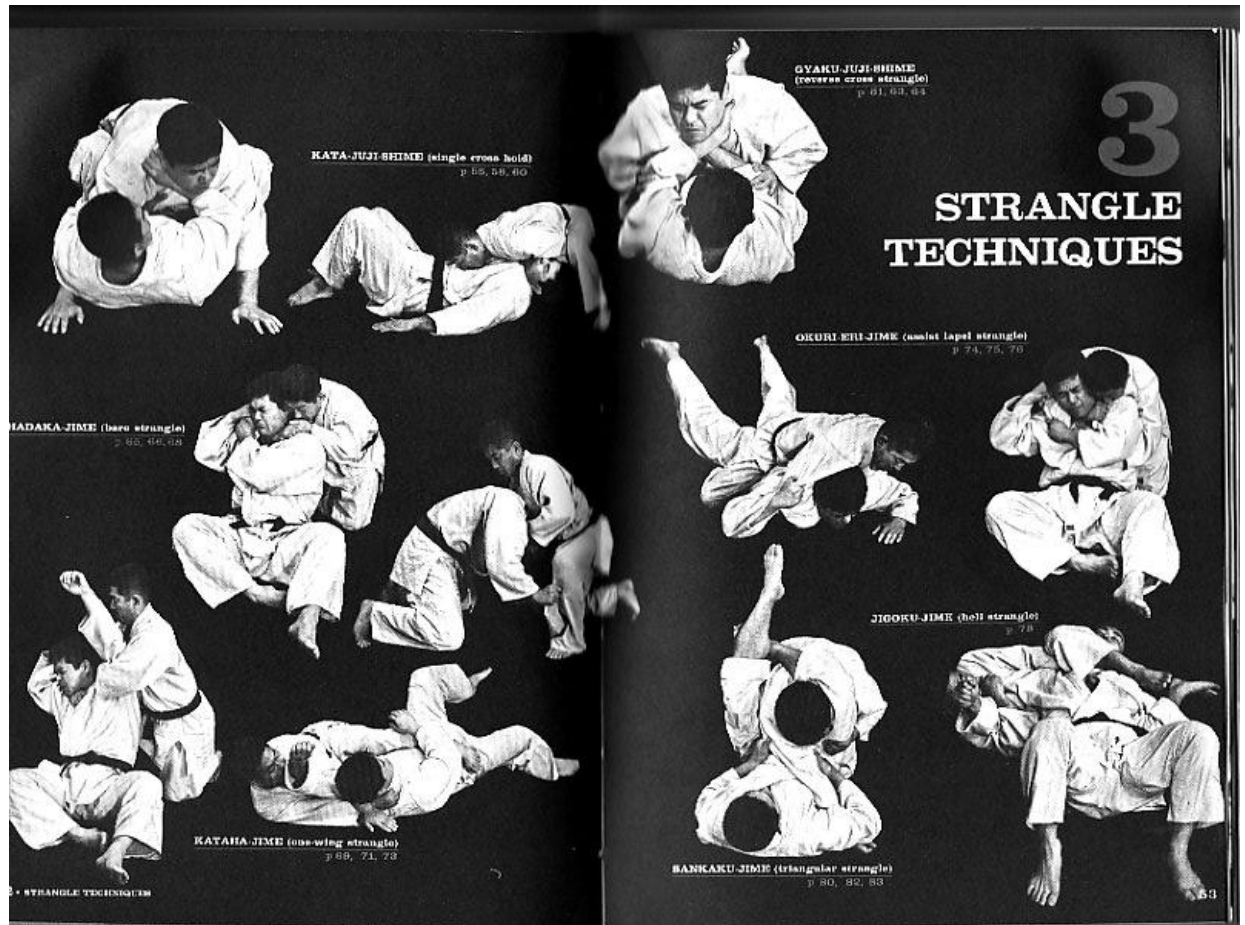
1. The cross strangles: Juji jime: Kata juji jime, Gyaku juji jime and Name juji jime
2. The sliding collar: Okuri eri jime.
3. The forearm strangle: Hadaka Jime.
4. The side control strangle: Kata Ha jime
5. The one hand choke: Katate jime
6. The two hand choke: Morote jime.
7. The leg chokes: Ashi gatame jime and Sankaku or kata jime

In the revised 1956 syllabus, there are 12 Shime Waza listed as follow:

<u>Nami-juji-jime</u>	<u>Gyaku-juji-jime</u>	<u>Kata-juji-jime</u>
<u>Hadaka-jime</u>	<u>Okuri-eri-jime</u>	<u>Kata-ha-jime</u>
<u>Do-jime</u>	<u>Sode-guruma-jime</u>	<u>Katate-jime</u>
<u>Ryote-jime</u>	<u>Tsukkomi-jime</u>	<u>Sankaku-jime</u>

Other variations of the above have been taught under the Mikinosuke Kawaishi shi-han system^v prevailing in Europe in the period 1940-60 of which we can identify 29 different adaptations all aimed at rendering the opponent unconscious. They are: Kata juji jime, Gyaku juji jime, Yoko juji jime, Ushiro jime, Okuri eri jime, kata ha jime, Hadaka jime, Ebi garami, Tomoe jime, Eri jime, Kensui jime, Kata jime, Do jime, Hiza jime, Tsukkomi jime, Ebi jime, Hasami jime, Ohten jime. A second group contains Narabi juji jime, Katate jime, Sode guruma jime, Hidari Ashi jime, Kagato jime, Kami shiho jime, Kami shiho ashii jime, Kami shiho basami, Gyaku Okuri eri jime, Kaeshi jime and Giaku gaeshi jime.

Sensei Kazuzo Kudo who taught many judo celebrities such as Toshio Daigo, Isao Inokuma and Anthon Geesink has left us a detailed description of the 20 strangulations techniques he favored best in his work entitled "Judo in Action" and from which we show the composite abstract that follows.



Compendium of strangulation techniques from *Judo in Action* by Kazuzo Kudo 9th Dan^{vi}

The general conditions as recommended by most judo teachers with regards to the application of the strangulation are:

- Make sure your own body always has complete freedom of action. Your position should be stable so that in applying the technique you can use your entire body.
- Be sure the opponent is unstable and under your control.
- Lead your opponent into a position in which it is most difficult to put up resistance, and control all of his or her actions. Your opponent must be unstable and under your control as much as possible.
- Before applying, take a deep breath and tense your entire body, particularly the lower abdomen (hara).
- Make your strangulation work in a very brief time by making use the narrow inside or outside area of the wrist.
- Train your hands to get an accurate hold the minute you begin a technique, make your choke work as soon as possible and once you begin the pressure refrain from continually releasing or adjusting your position. Apply constant pressure.

- Choking techniques should be applied only where there is sufficient supervision . Chokes are potentially fatal and should be treated seriously.
- Chokes may be practiced from either a standing position or on the ground but the ground is inherently safer.
- As a receiver, learn to defend against the arm that is doing the strangulation and give up in proper time to avoid the risk of unnecessary periods of unconsciousness. .
- The most important safety rule when applying a choking technique is to release pressure immediately when the opponent submits.

Shime Waza or sometimes called Shibori Waza are a group of strangulation techniques used to force the opponent to surrender, give up or abandon at the risk of being strangled by either a respiratory (pressure against the wind pipe or larynx) or a blood strangulation (pressure against the carotids arteries). Professor Neil Ohlenkamp observed in *Judo unleashed*^{vii} that :” *since choking and strangulation are subtle techniques that require more attention to detail than most other judo skills because the targets are usually small, specific areas of the neck that are often well protected by your opponent.*” He recommended that accuracy and not brute strength is the required ingredient in applying them correctly.

It is not our intention to enter into a detailed description of each technique as this article is more oriented towards providing the general highlight from which you may be encouraged towards further lecture and practice.

There are some other key points to try to understand that are applicable to most strangulations, noteworthy are the followings:

1. In the cross strangle and half cross strangles, there are several forces that act on your opponent. The first is the pull sideways of the hand which is followed by the pressure of the little finger’s edge against the carotids, then the added pressure produced by the lowering of the upper body towards the opponent’s face. The movements of the arms must be smooth and parallel with the pressing forward with the chest. (if you need to roll sideways, always turn towards the side of the hand that is over the other)
2. You should pay attention to apply pressure with the entire body. As in Kata juji jime, the body weight is placed on the elbow rather than toward the face.
3. When attempting to escape, try pulling your chin in and rising your shoulders up, stopping the dominant arm, turning your head to find a breathing whole, taking hold of a sleeve or part of the jacket and pulling away or twisting and extracting you body away from the opponent to brake free.

4. To prevent rearward application, never give your opponent your back or let him control you from behind.
5. Should you try to apply a standing choke, try to make the opponent fall to the ground where you can exercise better control of his movements.

Recovering from strangulation may happen naturally after a short period of rest or the recovery can be assisted with the use of traditional first aid techniques such as:

- The direct massage of the carotid triangle on the neck to open up a collapsed artery or to manually stimulate the carotid sinus.
- To assist the unconscious person in waking up and focusing his attention by a short and crisp shout performed in close proximity, light shaking or slapping the victim or striking the sole of the foot.
- Make use of more formal methods of inducing or simulating breathing through massages of the chest or diaphragm, expanding and contracting the lungs.

For safety measures, the teaching of these incapacitating techniques is the purview of a qualified black belt instructor and the TASK SHOULD BE ADDRESSED WITH THE UTMOST OF SERIOUSNESS. As we mentioned before, these techniques should not be part of the curriculum for children and when instructors teach a technique, they should also have the student practice the various escapes and defenses at the same time.

For the senior grade judokas and for those undertaking tournament training, feeling different chokes or strangles, recognizing preparation scenarios, understanding the effects of chokes and attempting to develop ways and means to protect oneself as well as learning when to submit and admit defeat are all important facets to shiai preparation. Strangulation techniques are powerful tools in the judo arsenals and one should not be scared to apply them or defend against them.

It is through combat experience and proper guidance that the judoka will grow his skills acquisition and gain greater maturity.

I wish you all a good practice.

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Références

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