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## L-M BRIC News

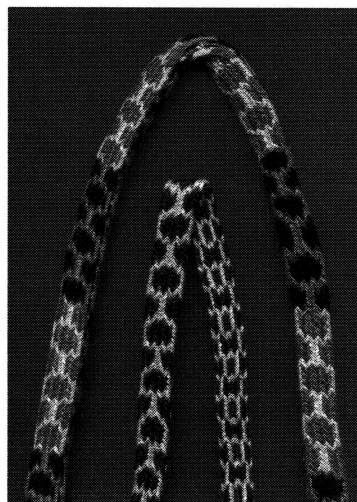
### ILLUSTRATED INSTRUCTION SERIES no. 7

#### Single-face Tortoise-shell Design Braids

KUTE-UCHI presents a simple and elegant method of replicating the highly developed decorative Japanese braids from the Middle Ages, including the double-face kikko braids as well as the single-face (s-f) kikko braids found on tie belts (KURISHIME-NO-O) or trimmings on medieval armor.

There are two types of the medieval kikko braids, one with the kikko pattern on the two faces and another with the pattern only on obverse face. (Photo 1) The former is of a 4-layer structure while the latter is of a two-layer structure. The former may be created by connecting two of the latter with their reverse sides facing each other.

Photo1: Two types of kikko braids, outside double-faced, inside single-faced



There are three possible methods that could have been used for producing the s-f kikko braids. In all three methods, the braiders exchange the adjacent loops of the next neighbor and connect two neighboring braids.

The three methods of making the s-f kikko braid:

Method 1 (Fig 1 top center): Four braiders cooperate and interconnect the "TWIN SQUARE BRAIDS" sideways.

Method 1 produces two two-layer quadruple-square braids, one on top of the other.

the four braiders use 4-step procedure (AACC·OO).  
IAL is predominantly 9 or 7 for historical braids.

Method 2 (Fig 1 top right): Two braiders cooperate and interconnect the "TWIN SQUARE BRAIDS" sideways producing two two-layer double-connected square braids. The right-hand braider uses "cross" transfers "G" and "D" at the right selvage thus connecting the two braids in reversed "C" fold.

The left braider use 4-step procedure (AACC·OO).  
The right braider use 4-step procedure (AGCD·O-O).

Method 3 (Fig. 1 bottom right): Four braiders cooperate and interconnect the " SQUARE

BRAIDS" sideways.

The four braiders use 2-step procedure (BB) or (DD).

クテ打ちによる片表亀甲組紐を組成する3法

THREE L-M METHODS OF CONSTRUCTING THE INFINITE-HEXAGON-PATTERN BRAID

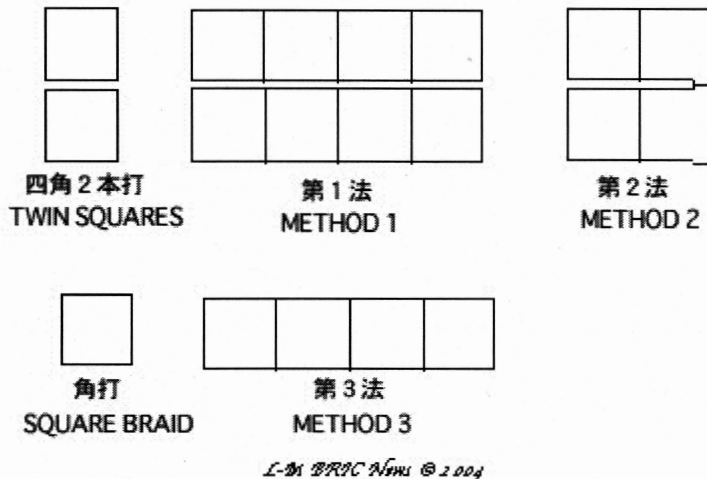


Fig. 1: The three methods of making the s-f kikko braid

The cross OA transfer "G" at the right selvage for method #2 is different from basic manipulation "B." As explained in the last paragraph of ILLUSTRATED INSTRUCTION SERIES:KUTE-UCHI, the outermost loop on the right hand of the right-hand braider is first twisted a half turn and then OA transferred to the left hand, whereas for "B" the loop is first OA transferred and then crossed. We have designated this manipulation "G," one of supplementary basic manipulations.

The majority of the medieval double-face (d-f) kikko braids has two color schemes while maintaining the same kikko figure pattern. The scheme on the reverse face is the same except it is the opposite of that on the obverse face. (Photo 1) This design reversal scheme is a characteristic seen on all 4-layer braids made earlier than the extant kikko braids, as far as we know. This is the reason why we consider that the d-f kikko with a color reversal scheme precedes those with no color reversal and the s-f kikko.

To make a d-f kikko braid with the color reversal, you use two-color loop. Two separate 2-layer braids form while you repeat the same color pattern area. The two braids connect and form into a 4-layer braid where the two color patterns interchange. By repeating these processes, you braid a d-f kikko with a color reversal scheme.

Method #1 which simultaneously produces two s-f kikko braids in one color pattern is a modified form of the above in which the same color pattern is repeated all the way through. By using one-color loop, you get a pair of mirror image s-f kikko braids with an identical color pattern.

N. Speiser conceived Method #2 in 1986. It is a variation of the procedure for making a 4-layer quadruple square braid. It produces a 2-layer double square braid in a C-fold. The C-fold causes the braid to have a groove running through its spine on the inside of the fold. This intriguing idea was first thought a little far-fetched. The searches conducted by Kinoshita and Nishioka at the time did not come up with such kikko braids. The idea, however, soon found justification when we realized some artifacts from the same period but which look entirely different from s-f kikko can be replicated using methods slightly modified from method #2.



Photo 2 Replica samplers for two braids from the 14th century (National Treasure) made using methods slightly modified from method #2. (Made by Masako Kinoshita)

Omura's discovery marks the first evidence of the actual practice of method #2.

All four corner ridges of the braids constructed using method #1 or #2 have an identical number of floats. This is one of the structural characteristics of the 4-layer construction method of kute-uchi. This contrast to the braids constructed using method #3 which show a difference by one skip at the corner ridges of the obverse face than those of the reverse.

Today, takadai and also marudai are occasionally used to make single-face kikko braids. Since no evidence of takadai usage before the mid 16th c. was found, the marudai has been accepted as the braiding method in the earlier era. Detailed observations of medieval s-f kikko braids, however, revealed their structural characteristics do not agree with that of s-f kikko made using marudai.

As for the economy of the methods, method #1 simultaneously produces two s-f kikkos with four workers whereas method #3 produces only one with the same number of workers. Yet method #3 is more economical as it does not require highly skilled braiders as method #1 or #2 would. We presume that methods #1 and #2 along with all 4-layer braid construction methods were the highest level skills allowed to practice only for a few veteran braiders. We still do not know when method #3 was started. Although s-f kikko braids can be seen on numerous examples of armor, lack of adequate samples for examination hampers farther study.

