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L-M BRIC News

ILLUSTRATED INSTRUCTION SERIES No. 9

L-M Braiding in Sulawesi Island, Indonesia

Keiko Kusakabe recorded on the survey trip in the spring of 2005 the l-m braiding practiced among the Mamasa people in the Indonesian island of Sulawesi. Her report on the subject was published in *L-M BRIC News*. No. 8. Her reports of the three basic procedures explained in it, however, were not discussed further in ILLUSTRATED INSTRUCTION series No. 8 because it didn't fit in topically with the subject, covert and compound braids found in the 17th-c. English book. Here in the IIS No. 9, we present all the techniques Kusakabe has discovered so far in Mamasa and Saddan Toraja in 2005 as one package for easier reference. They include the first report of 2-person braiding practiced today.

The l-m technique used both in Mamasa and Saddan Toraja is:

the second (the V-fell) method of finger-held (f-h) l-m, i.e., the palms facing each other and transfer the loops with the ring (inner) fingers.

When using 5 loops in method 2, you typically mount the loops on either fingers a, b and c, or b, c and d, with c in the former case and d for the latter being the operator. According to Kusakabe, the former is the prevalent method in Mamasa and Saddan Toraja

To transfer the loops, you hook up either the upper shank or the lower shank of the loop. The former transfer exchanges the position of the upper and lower shanks of a loop (the C transfer) while the latter does not (O transfer).

In the following, the terms follow the convention of the IIS.

1. The Trinity (Note 1)

The procedures represent the typical l-m for making the three basic braids, the Trinity;

- A. Twin 2-ridge twill flat,
- B. 4-ridge twill tubular (square),

C. 4-ridge twill flat braids.

All three can be made using the same pattern of opening the shed. The difference comes only from the way you take the transferred loop, either hook up the upper or the lower.

Prepare 5 loops, about 1.7 to 2 times as long as you want the finished braid to be. For a trial run, any color(s) you want.

Mount the loops as follows:

La	Lb	Lc	Rc	Rb	Ra
X	X		X	X	X

(Fig. 1 right: Twin 2-ridge twill flat, far right: 4-ridge twill tubular)

A. Twin 2-ridge twill flat braids:

Step 1. Rc goes through Lc and Lb and pulls La out by hooking up its lower shank from above. Now, La has become rc

Shift up the Lb and Lc.

Step 2. Do the mirror image movement using Lc. Now, Ra has become Lc

Shift up the Rb and Rc.

By hooking the lower shank from above the transferred loop, you create a braid in two separate layers, i.e., Twin 2-ridge twill flat braids. (Note 2)

B. Four-ridge twill tubular braid = square braid:

Step 1. Rc goes through Lc and Lb and pulls La out by hooking up its upper shank.

Shift up the Lb and Lc.

Step 2. Do the mirror image movement using Lc.

Shift up the Rb and Rc.

By hooking the upper shank of the transferred loop, you connect the two separate layers creating a tubular braid.

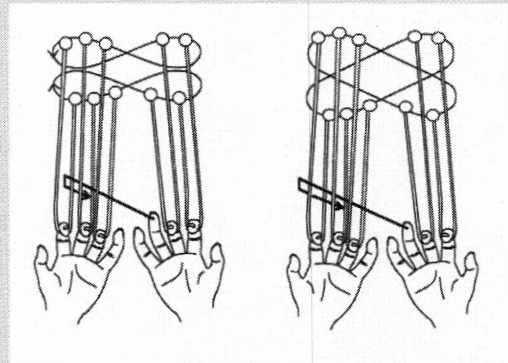
C. Four-ridge twill flat braid

Step 1. Rc goes through Lc and Lb and pulls La out by hooking up its lower shank.

Shift up the Lb and Lc.

Step 2. Lc goes through Rc and Rb and pulls Ra out by hooking up its upper shank.

Shift up the Rb and Rc.



By hooking up the lower shank in step 1 and then the upper shank in step 2, you connect selvage ridges only at one end you create a 4-ridge twill flat braid.

2. Facings and shoulder straps of betel bags

Braids for facings

Both in Mamasa and Saddam Toraja, the top opening of a betel bag is customarily faced by a 4-ridge twill flat braid. Another flat braid or square braid is threaded poking through between stitches of the facing braid and acts as the closure and carry strap. Some of the facing braids are made with slits to accommodate the closure braid. The latter kind of braid is called *rante rante* in Mamasa.

Prepare 5 loops 1.7 times to twice the length of the opening.

Braid using A and C; Repeat C as many times as you want for the length between slits, and then, 3-4 times of A for the slit openings.

Carry straps

Betel bags typically seen in Mamasa and Saddam Toraja have a 4-ridge twill flat or tubular braid as the carry strap. In Saddam Toraja, however, Kusakabe found carry straps with a novel idea as she explains in her report.

The length of the loops should be 1.7 times to twice the length of (twice the width of the bag + length of the carry strap).

Braid a little bit longer than the width of the bag using A.

Switch to B or C and braid till the length of the loops left on your hands becomes about twice of the width of the bag.

Switch to A and braid till the length of the strap is achieved.

Two-person 8-ridge Flat Braid with Slits

A New Discovery at Sadan Toraja

Keiko Kusakabe

By coincidence, I bought two similar small purses, *sepus*, one of white fabric and the other of red. Both are from villages in the eastern region.



(Photo 1: White sepu. The braid swatch lying on top was made in cooperation with Ms. L and myself following the instruction given here.)

The flat braid is used in the same manner on sepus as those I have seen before. Upon closer examination, however, I noticed that the braid attached around the top opening had eight ridges, rather than four as those I had seen before. Moreover,

it had slit openings for threading through a handle strap. The slits divide the eight-ridge braids into two four-ridge braids. It has a natural cream ground with a row of red-diamonds. The red diamonds split lengthwise into two whenever the red yarn comes to the center of the braid. Yarns are of chemical-dyed red cotton and pale green fibers of wild pineapple. Pineapples growing naturally in the mountains provide a fiber that is well known as the favorite textile material in these regions. The handle strap is also of pineapple fibers, with the center portion of square braid. Both ends are of twin braids. The body of the white purse is woven of natural cotton with thin widely spaced black stripes. The plain-weave fabric with uneven ribs caused by uneven thickness of the weft yarn has been one of the traditional textile products known as **bamban**.

Curious to know how these braids had been made, I found, hidden in the inside corner of the purse, looped ends of the braid, 4 red and 5 white.

When I acquired these purses, I had already learned from Nene E that people here had known the 9-loop 2-person braiding technique (for making double-square braids used for men's pote). I successfully tried the technique with her. (Note 3) It was, therefore, not difficult to figure out a procedure for making a 2-person 8-ridge flat braid.

We will use f-h l-m braiding method 2, i.e., palms facing each other and operating with the ring (inner) fingers. This is the method used in Saddam Toraja, as is in Mamasa,

Unlike the 10-loop 2-person braiding method used in Mamasa and that recorded in English documents, the Saddam method of using 9 loops eliminates the irregularity that produces one extra float at one of the connected ridges,

The following is my idea of 9-loop 2-person method for making 8-ridge twill flat braid with slits. Basic ideas have been borrowed from the l-m technique of the 10-loop 2-person method and others that I have learned in the past several years.

How to Make 8-ridge Flat Braid Baba Sepu with a Red-Diamond-Pattern.

The braid is composed of two sections: the ground and the slit.

The ground section: Braid using 2-person 8-ridge flat braid procedure.

In this section, the braider on the right-hand side (RB) uses the 4-ridge flat braid procedure, while the braider on the left-hand side (LB) braids uses the twin 2-ridge flat braid procedure. The two connect the braids by passing loops between each other producing one 8-ridge flat braid (double folded in inverse-C-shape).

The slit section: Braid using 2-person twin 4-ridge flat braids procedure.

Here, both braiders (RB and LB) use "twin 2-ridge flat braids" procedure. The two keep connecting the braids by passing loops between each other.

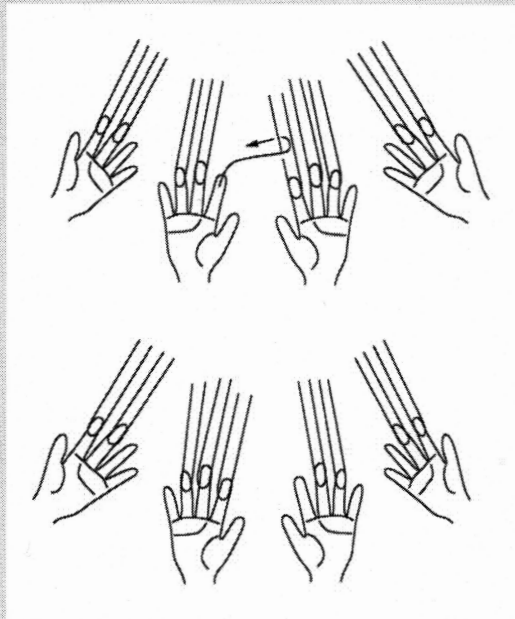
HOW TO MAKE

Prepare 9 one-color loops: 4 scarlet and 5 white. (Note 4)

Initial distribution of loops: 5 Whites for RB, 4 Scarlets for LB.

LB				RB							
La	Lb	Lc	Rc	Rb	Ra	La	Lb	Lc	Rc	Rb	Ra
S	S		S	S		W	W	W		W	W

Ground section: Use 8-ridge flat braid procedure (Steps 1–6) when a white loop is mounted on RB's Ra. **Stage 1: RB braids a 4-ridge flat braid**



Step 1. Rc goes through Lc and Lb, and hooks up the lower shank of La from above. (O transfer) La is transferred to Rc.

Shift up Lb and Lc to La and Lb.

Step 2. Lc goes through Rc and Rb, and hooks up the upper shank of Ra from above. (C transfer) Ra is transferred to Lc.

Shift up Rb and Rc to Ra and Rb.

Step 3. LB using his/her Ra, hooks up the upper shank of Ra's Ra from above. RB's Ra is now LB's Ra.

(Fig 2 Top: LB takes Ra's Ra. Bottom: Ra's Ra is now on LB's Ra.)

Stage 2: LB braids twin 2-ridge flat braids

Step 4. Lc goes through Rc and Rb, and hooks up the lower shank of Ra from above. (O transfer) Ra is transferred to Lc.

Shift Rb and Rc to Ra and Rb.

Step 5. Rc goes through Lc and Lb, and hooks up the lower shank of La from above. (O transfer) La is transferred to Rc.

Shift Lb and Lc to La and Lb.

Step 6. RB using his/her La, hooks up the upper shank of La's Ra from above. LB's Ra is now RB's Ra.

Repeat steps 1–6 until a scarlet loop comes to RB's Ra.

Slit section: Use twin 4-ridge flat braids procedure (Steps 7–12) when a scarlet loop is mounted on RB's Ra.

Stage 3: Both RB and LB braid twin 2-ridge flat braids while a scarlet loop is on the Ra of RB.

Step 7. Rc goes through Lc and Lb, and hooks up the lower shank of La from above. (O

transfer) la is transferred to Rc.

Shift Ib and Ic to La and Lb.

Step 8. Lc goes through rc and rb, and hooks up the lower shank of ra from above. (O transfer) ra is transferred to Lc.

Shift rb and rc to Ra and Rb.

Step 9. LB using his/her Ra, hooks up the upper shank of Ra's la from above. RB's la is now LB's ra.

Stage 4: LB braids twin 2-ridge flat braids

Steps 10-12. the same as steps 4-6.

Repeat steps 7-12 until a white loop comes to RB's ra.

Editor's note: Kusakabe reports of a 9-loop 2-person braiding technique in Saddam Toraja in addition to her report in 2005 of the actual practice of the 2-person 10-loop method among the Mamasa people.

1. The 2005 report is the first time ever that a 2-person l-m technique has been recorded. Since we have known that the 15th c. English documents record the 10-loop 2-person technique, one would think that 9-loop 2-person method is a rather obvious direction in which to go to produce a braid with a more regular twill pattern. However, it has never been found so far in old records or in practice elsewhere.

2. It is, however, a different matter whether one of the two methods is more advantageous in practice. With no obvious advantage of using 9 loops, a preference for using nine (an odd number) loops over ten (an even number) might have something to do with the Saddam Toraja people's embedded ideas, as Kusakabe suggests.