

L-M BRIC News No. 8

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L-M Braiding Research & Information Center / Masako Kinoshita  
5 Winthrop Place, Ithaca, NY 14850 U. S. A.  
Phone & Fax 607-257-0886 e-mail mkinoshi@twcny.rr.com

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## L-M BRIC News

### L-m Braiding Instructions Found in a Seventeenth-c. Printed Book

Lois Swales (Note 1) has notified us that her l-m-braider friend, Lisa Fogelman (Note 2), discovered mid-17th-c. English instructions for "the Making of Laces" while searching on-line information for old knitting techniques.

The instructions were found in a book titled *Natura Exenterata: or Nature unbowelled by the most exquisite anatomizers of her* (Author: Philiatros=Love of Science), published in 1655. (Fig. 1)

It is available online (Note 3).

(Fig. 1: Left Etching by W. Hollar, 1626, of Lady Alathea Talbot, the compiler of the book; Right the cover of *Natura Exenterata*.)



*Natura Exenterata* is a huge book filled with remedies and recipes for all

sorts of ailments, with alphabetical references. Instructions for the making of laces occupy 29 pages (p.410-p.438), covering about as many as those recorded in the 15th-c. Treatise for Making of Laces (Note 4). It also has a chapter each on dyeing (p.404-p.407) and net making (p.407-p.419). The book has no reference to the name of the technique, either loop(-manipulation) braiding or fingerloop braiding.

Before printed books became generally affordable to the public, books were borrowed and hand copied, and the copies were passed down in the family. Among them are "household books" containing information necessary for every day life. Handcraft techniques are often found in this kind of books. Earlier we reported l-m braiding recipes found from household books of the Marquis of Dorset and of German nunneries (Note 5).

Among European records of l-m braiding known today are those that have an appearance of notes written by high society ladies at braiding lessons in the 17th c. England. (See bibliography.) These notes give us a distinct impression that LMB was popular at the time.

We don't know the source book(s) of *Natura Exenterata*. We know, however, that the contents of the l-m braiding records are very similar to those in the Tollemache book, although we don't know how the other part compares with it. (The Harley book does not have as many recipes.) For the LMB portion, N. Speiser and Joy Boutrup have determined that an original 15th-c copy, the Tollemache book or one very similar, had been revised by Elizabeth Serene. They have therefore decided to call this edition "the Serene." The fact that *Natura Exenterata* was commercially published and sold suggests that there had been a demand of this kind of book at the time, although demand might not have extended to the braiding technique.



Here is an added little episode. The original book of the Tollemache Book of Secrets has a signature of Lady Catherine Tollemache that attributed her as the author of the book. According to E. Benns, the hand of the signature is obviously in the style of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, not one of the 15<sup>th</sup> c. (Note 17). This means that there was a reason in the 17<sup>th</sup> c. that had compelled Lady Catherine Tollemache to put her signature on the book. Could it be that the book was about to be lent out for the publication of *Natura Exenterata*? We can't help but be curious that there had been a person who had paid special attention to it.

## Comparison between the Tollemache book and the Serene book (Note 6).

The Tollemache book has sixty-three instructions out of 64 items where item 1 is set as the glossary. Of the 63 items, 52 are instructions dealing with braids with distinctive structures with a few duplications (Note 7). Instructions for braids with a common structural feature are not necessarily grouped together. Whenever procedures that are used commonly in various braids as a part of a braiding procedure, such as connecting two braids between two braiders (duo braiding), appear in later instructions, they are referred to the procedure in which they appear for the first time. This makes it rather tedious to refer back.

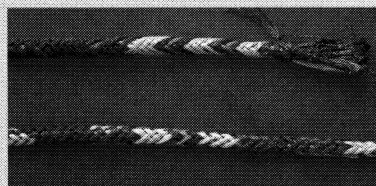
In the Serene collection, on the other hand, these procedures are presented at the beginning along with a glossary. Braids with the same structural features have been grouped together and arranged in the order of the number of loops required, making the instructions easier to follow. A few new procedures and a variety of color designs that were not in the Tollemache repertory have been introduced, while some that were present have been eliminated. The duplications have been eliminated. Thus, the Serene contains fewer distinctive instructions, 49, out of the larger number of entries, 69, than the Tollemache.



Before the discovery of the Serene, instructions for oblique twining have been found only in the 15<sup>th</sup>-c. records (Note 8). In contrast, the 17<sup>th</sup>-c. records contain many duo braiding recipes with color designs based on the reversal of two-color loops. These types of recipes are not at all present in the 15<sup>th</sup>-c. records. (Photo 1)

(Photo 1: top 2, Single course oblique twining, flat and round examples; the 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Crown and Staffe; bottom, Bucks Hones. Swatches and images: produced by M. Kinoshita.)

Despite this seemingly strong tendency seen in the pattern books from the earlier half of the 17<sup>th</sup> c., the mid-17<sup>th</sup>-c. Serene follows the tradition of 15<sup>th</sup>-c. records. Could this be an effort to preserve old tradition? Lady Serene, however, was not merely an old-fashioned traditionalist. She proves her creativity by adding a couple of designs with entirely new features (#17 and #66). (Photo 2a and 2b).



(Photo 2a: Vice of Three Colors; 2b: Top 2-ridge; Bottom: 6-ridge compound covert braids. The swatches and photos: J. Boutrup © 2004)

### Braids with an unorthodox pattern in English records

Types of l-m braiding techniques most often reported by field research are those that are worked by mounting the loops on the finger



(finger-held (f-h) l-m). Those that hold the loops around the hands (hand-held (h-h) l-m) have been found only in Oman (Note 9).

There are three reported methods in the f-h l-m: In the first (Method 1), the loops are held with the "palms facing to each other (or up) and operated by the index fingers;" in the second (Method 2), with the "palms facing to each other (or up) and operated by the ring or small fingers;" and in the third (Method 3), with the "palms facing down and operated by the index fingers." The first method is used mainly in Europe, northern Africa and Latin America, the second in Asia and the third only in a couple of reports from Scandinavian countries.

The braid types produced by Method 1 f-h l-m collected from field researches are limited to three common braids with an orthodox pattern, which Speiser has nicknamed "trinity," and two braids with an unorthodox pattern (Note 10). The trinity braids are twin 2-ridge twill flat braids, 4-ridge twill tubular braid and 4-ridge twill flat braid. We tentatively call the two unorthodox pattern braids UO#1 and UO#2.

The world distribution pattern of UO#1 and #2 is extensive, and indeed they are always found wherever Method 1 l-m braiding is practiced. In some places, UO braids are the only kinds known. There are also places, such as Panama and Colombia, where UO braids have developed beyond the basic #1 and #2.

In contrast to the distribution pattern of today's practice of l-m braiding, old records from England shows as high degree of development of braids with an orthodox pattern, whereas little development seems to have taken place in the unorthodox type. Although the Tollemache book contains altogether four recipes for the UO braids, the Serene book includes only two, one of single and another of duo braiding recipes for UO #2.

Thus, the impression from the English records is a decline in the popularity of the UO braids against the high degree of development of those with an orthodox pattern.

With the Serene collection, we have an added insight to the state of braiding in 17th c. England.

#### Braiding Techniques of Toraja People

### (1) Mamasa Region Survey of 2005/2/12-19

Keiko Kusakabe (Note 11)

#### How I Have Come to Encounter the L-M Braiding of Toraja

Since 1997, I have commuted to the Sulawesi (Celebes) Is., Indonesia, to learn about the textile products, in particular the card weaving, of the Toraja who live in mountainous region of the island. Among them, the woman's funerary hood, "pote", with various intricate weave techniques, such as net-like woven slits, card-woven edges and long fringed ends of braids, drew my strong attention. My curiosity in the braided fringes were partly answered when I met the editor of *L-M BRIC News*, M. Kinoshita, in the fall of '04 and showed her the pote. Her opinion was that the braided fringes were strongly likely to be l-m-made because of the shape of their cross section.

A few years earlier in Mamasa I saw a demonstration of a "braiding with the hands and feet." I also remember a friend telling me that her mother knew of

a technique known as "Ma kabi" which meant "to manipulate yarns by shaking the hands up and down as if beckoning." These bits and pieces started coming together during my latest research trip.

#### The Toraja and Their Culture

The Toraja live in the mountainous region of southern part of the Sulawesi Island. The term



"Toraja" means "People on the mountain" in Buginese, the language of the Sulawesi majority, which occupies the coastal region. In a broad sense it includes all peoples who live in the highland of Sulawesi. My research, however, deals only with the Sadan Toraja People who live in the area of the upper reaches of the River Sadan and the Mamasa Toraja People who live in that of the upper reaches of The River Mamasa.

The Toraja are agricultural people who practice ancestor worship and hold various rituals, which may be classified into two categories, Funeral and Thanksgiving.

The funeral is regarded as the most important, the occasion for which they sacrifice their sacred animal, the water buffalo.

They build "tongkonang" the traditional ship-shaped house to represent the family and use "sacred cloths" at their rituals. They also share the Toraja language.

Here, in this issue of the *L-M BRIC News*, I report on the l-m braiding of the Mamasa, leaving the account on that of the Sadan Toraja for the next issue.

#### Mamasa Textile Arts and Braiding

In Mamasa, women keep themselves busy weaving sarungs (skirts) with stripes and warp-pattern weave on a back-strap loom, and selling them at the "pasar" (the local market) held every Monday. They are a good source of income. Another characteristic textile product of Mamasa is the betel bag nicknamed Sepu Susu (Note 12). This is a shoulder bag for carrying betel chewing paraphernalia.

The bag has a hook-like design, sungki, of supplementary-weft-patterned weave in the center flanked on both sides with striped fabric, also hand-woven.



The bottom two corners are covered with red spirally stitched embroidery. The top opening of the bag is gathered and a band is sewn on covering the gathered edge. The band may be a flat braid with a thin round braid threaded through the stitches of the flat braid. When a card-woven band covers the gathered edge, a thin round braid is darned on to it. The fringes at the ends of the thin round braid dangle a few cm from the sides of the bag. The hand strap of the bags is either of card-woven or braided bands.

(Fig. 2. Sepu Susu. Illustration by Keiko Kusakabe © 2004)

I have visited Mamasa for the last 5 years to learn card-weaving techniques, Palawa. Yet this is the first time I

discovered that every veteran card weaver knew the l-m braiding!

The West Balla region is the only place in Mamasa where card weaving is still practiced. A new question arises as to where else in this region l-m braiding and the pattern weave, sungki, for sepu susu, are practiced.

## Field Report on the L-M Braiding Practice in Mamasa

### I. Tasuma from R Village is in her late twenties.

Her talent in card weaving has been known since her childhood. She demonstrated l-m braiding at my request in her new home in the state capital, Makassar. She told me that the technique is called "mang ka bi" in Mamasa. It is obvious that it agrees with the Sadan Toraja word "ma kabi" (Note 13).

Tasuma showed me three procedures with a name to go with each of them.

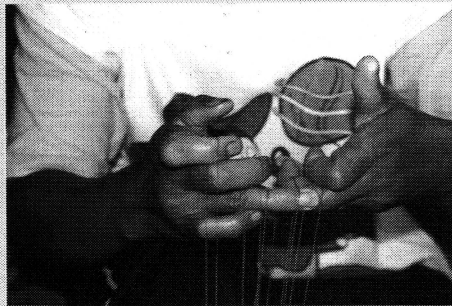
I recognized that these were the same as the methods that had been demonstrated to me some years before also in Mamasa (Photo 3).



With the palms facing each other, 5 loops are mounted on the index, middle and ring fingers of both hands leaving a ring finger empty. The empty ring finger goes through the ring and middle fingers of the opposite hand and takes the loop on the index finger.

There are two ways of taking the loop on the index finger:

1. Hook the upper shank from above
2. Hook the bottom shank from above



Take both ways as 1, you get a round braid: mang ka bi kalebu

Take one way as 1 and the other way as 2, you get flat braids: mang ka bi tumpepan

Take both ways as 2, you get two braids: mang ka bi siluang

(Kalebu means round, tumpepan flat, and siluang divided in Mamasa term.)

Photo 3. L-M braiding demonstration: Hooking the upper shank from above

(Photo: K. Kusakabe © 2004)

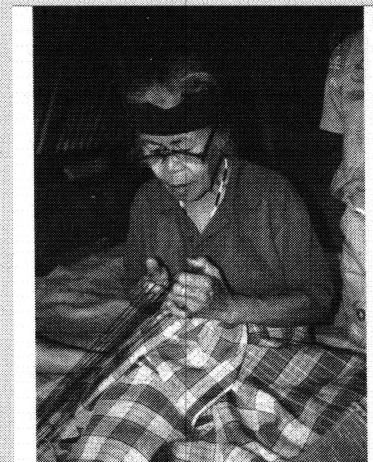
## II. Nene from T Village. She is about 78-year old.



She is the aunt of my first card-weaving teacher, Mama Uto. She is an excellent weaver and known by her pet name, Nene. She gave me a pair of traditional-style pants she had woven when she was young as a token of her appreciation to my gift of a pair of reading glasses. (Photo 4a) The rib-weave pants of natural white are decorated with three red braids: two are round and the other is flat. The rib weave is called "bamban kede".

In the afternoon on the terrace of tongkonang, Nene demonstrated the l-m technique using the cotton yarn I brought for her. (Photo 4b right)

(Photos: K. Kusakabe © 2005)



### A Braid with Holes, Rante rante

Counting three, she takes the upper shank of the loop mounted on the index finger from above, right and left. Then again counting three, she takes the bottom shank of the loop mounted on the index finger from above, right and left. She is making a 'round' and then "twin flats." When repeated, she gets a round braid with holes. She told me that she stitches it on a bag as an edging and threads another braid through the holes. Her exclamations of "wo wo" as she braided made an impression on me. "Rante rante" is the name of the braid, she told me (Note 14).

I stayed over night with her. She made a tie string for the pants, "pursan", in the tongkonang.

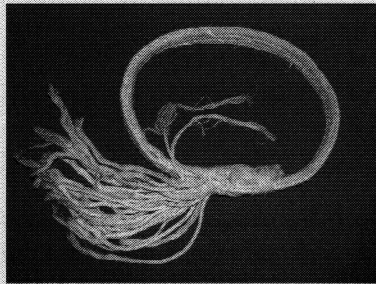


The pants have a casing for a tie string. Using 5 loops with 2 ends of cotton yarn about 1 meter long, she made a round braid by taking the upper shank from above. A neighbor sat facing her and helped her by tightening the stitches at the fell. It looked obvious that she was very much used to doing this. The beating is known as "mangngarrai." The finished string went perfectly with the pants.

#### A Party for the Card Weavers

I gave a party wishing for preservation of traditional weaves for the weavers I had met in the past 5 years. Seven weavers came. Everybody appreciated that Mama Palla, the eldest at about 60 among them, who came from far away village, generously brought old embroidery and braid works and showed them to attendees of the party.

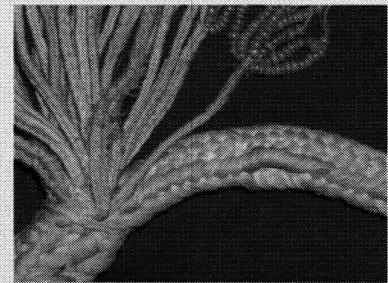
### III. Demonstration of Duo L-m Braiding by Mama Palla and Mama Butu



The pote-moane, man's funerary head band. Photo: K. Kusakabe © 2005

I showed Mama Palla the pote (for men) I had acquired earlier in Sadan Toraja. It is a headband made of a thick cotton braid (which Kinoshita pointed out may have been constructed with the l-m duo braiding technique) with a decorative fringe of many thin square braids.

(Photo 5a, 5b above.)



As soon as she saw it she started braiding with Mama Buntu, who came from a village near hers. While Mama Buntu needed some direction from Mama Palla, they had no trouble working in duo. (Note 15)

(Photo 6 right: Mama Palla working on the right-hand side of Mama Buntu as the two demonstrate "duo braiding" at Kusakabe's party. Photo: K. Kusakabe © 2005)



Mama Palla (L-left) and Mama Buntu (R-right)

**Step 1.** Braider L L3 goes through three loops on her right hand and hooks up the upper shank of loop I1 of Braider R.

**Step 2.** Braider R I1 scoops the upper shank of loop r1 of Braider L.

**Step 3.** Braider L Shifts up loops r2, r3 then R3 goes through loops I3, I2 and hooks up the upper shank of I1.

**Step 4.** Braider R R3 goes through loops I4 and I3 and hooks up the upper shank of I1.

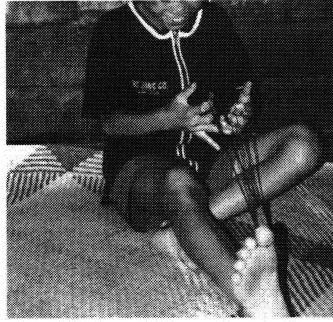
**Step 5.** R Shifts up loops 2 and 3. Then R3 goes through the loops I3 and I2 and hooks up loop I1.

Repeat steps 1-5.



After returning to Japan, I carefully compared the braid that Mama Palla had made with the pote-moane from Sadan Toraja. The pote has a neat slightly trapezoidal cross section whereas the braid from Mamasa looks skewed. The elements of a ridge, instead of coming out from under two





elements, goes under and seem to form a sunken ridge. According to Kinoshita, when braider R takes loop R1 of braider L by scooping the upper shank and then transfers to R3 by hooking the upper shank, the loop gets twisted twice in a row in the same direction. This seems to be the cause of the Mamasa braid being different from the pote. It could be the way it is meant to be. Or could Mama Palla have gotten a bit mixed up?

(Photo7 A boy jumps in and shows off his skill. Photo by K. Kusakabe, 2005)

Before leaving for the trip, I received some technical guidance from Ms. Kinoshita, which helped in the success of my research. When I checked my collection of Toraja textiles since coming back from the trip I recognized many l-m braids among them.

L-m braiding must have played an indispensable role in Toraja People's tradition and their lives and been an integral part of their textile arts. That they have the word "ka bi" to represent the technique seems to prove this hypothesis.

A 2005 Art and Culture Grant of Nomura International Culture Foundation have supported this survey and research.

#### Bibliographical references:

K. Kusakabe, 'Textile Arts of Toraja, (1)' and '(2)', *Senshoku Alpha*, No. 241, 243, 2001; 'Precious Card-Weaving Technique of Toraja, (1)' and '(2)', *Senshoku Alpha*, No. 253 and No. 255, 2002; In Search of Unknown Mamasa Card Weaving Technique, (1)', '(2)', and '(3)', *Senshoku Alpha*, No. 265, 267, 269, 2003. 'Tablet Weaving from Sulawesi in Indonesia,' *TWIST*, Fall 2002, Spring 2003; 'Pattern and Technique in Mamasa Tablet Weaving,' Fall 2003, Spring 2004; 'Learning in Holland/Experimenting with the Two Thread technique,' Summer 2004.

Hetty Nooy-Palm, The Sacred Cloths of the Toraja -Unanswered Questions (included in 'To Speak with Cloth') J.Tammu & Dr.H.van der Veen, *KAMUS TORAJA-INDONESIA*, 1970.

Hetty Nooy-Palm , *THE SA'DAN-TORAJA*, The Hague: Martinus Nijoff, 1979.

#### [Editor's note]

The Mamasa technique shares the same trait of the l-m braiding technique used among the people living in the Asian Continent, ancient China, India, Japan and Thai: Method 2, that is, the palms facing each other (or up) and operating with the ring or small fingers. The kinds of braids they make, round (square), 2-ridge flat, and 4-ridge flat, also are the same as those produced in the area (Note 15).

Special attention should be given to Kusakabe's report of the duo braiding technique for pote moane, a man's funerary headband, in Mamasa. This is the first report ever of the duo braiding that is practiced today. It is known from historical records as well as from old braid specimens that collaborative braiding by multiple numbers of braiders was practiced in England, Germany and Japan. No present-day example, however, has previously been reported.

The demonstrated procedure differed at some point from that we have known from historical examples or the one used for the pote-moane from Sadan Toraja in Kusakabe's collection, a double square braid. The question of whether or not the demonstrated method is actually being used among them, we would like to leave to the future survey.

Finding the word that seems to indicate loop-braiding, 'ka bi' in "*KAMUS TORAJA-INDONESIA*," a Toraja-Indonesian dictionary, was quite unexpected. This is, however, similar to our so-called "discovery" of l-m braiding of Toraja people. Although technique, after all, may not have been such a big secret to the Toraja, we find setting it on our world distribution map meaningful.

It is particularly interesting that the Toraja term "to braid" is descriptive of the working manner of



the l-m technique. The fact that this is the common term, "to braid," may indicate that this technique has been their sole means of braid making throughout their history.

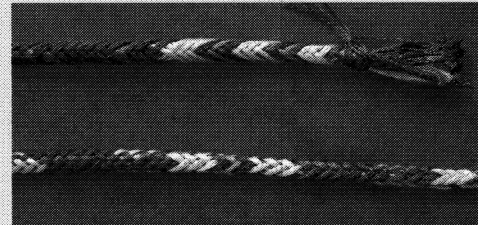
The fact that some weavers who cooperated with the research knew the names of the braids but not the technique, suggests that the technique has commonly been used at the near past but declining for some period of time.

Kusakabe's research brings to light the fading memory of participants of the survey at a time when their traditional textile arts are fast disappearing. Their arts are only supported by their love and pride towards them and the income they produce. The l-m braiding only survives as an integral part of their arts. We hope that Kusakabe's research helps to raise their consciousness and appreciation of their native arts and leads to a resurgence.

**ILLUSTRATED INSTRUCTION FINGER-HELD LOOP-MANIPULATION;  
BASIC TECHNIQUES II: Covert Braids and Compound Braids (Note 16)**

Photo 2b Top: Compound Covert 10-loop 2-ridge braid  
Bottom: Compound Covert 12-loop 6-ridge braid

Both works and photo by J. Bourtoup © 2004.

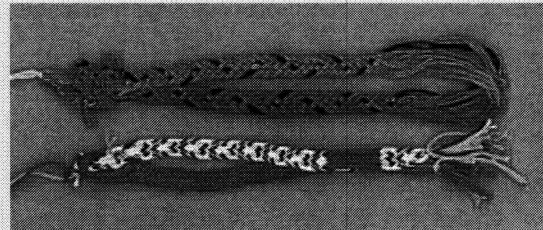


**ILLUSTRATED INSTRUCTION SERIES: NO. 8**

FINGER-HELD LOOP-MANIPULATION:

Photo 8  
Top: 7-loop Twin Flat Braid with a 2/1/1/2 Twill Pattern  
Bottom: 12-loop Twin Flat Braids with a Twill Pattern

Both works and photo by M. Kinoshita © 2005



**LIST OF OBSERVATION POINTS FOR  
RECORDING L-M TECHNIQUES**

**§ Publications relating to L-M techniques:**

**Monographs:** L. Swales, one of the authors of "Fingerloop Braiding" (Series:Compleat Anachronist 108) and S. Goslee ("Phiala's String Page" [www.stringpage.com](http://www.stringpage.com)) are writing the braiding procedures and related topics that were not included in her first book and plans to publish with the same publisher. Publication time is not set yet.

**Periodicals or Journals:**

**§ Internet:** *L-M BRIC News* <http://www.lmbric.net> Japanese Lang. version: <http://www.lmbric.net/njindex.html>. Masako Kinoshita's Home Page URL: <http://www.geocities.com/lmbric/index.html>

Greg Lindhal, URL: <http://www.fingerloop.org> web copy of the errata for Swales' "Fingerloop Braids." web copies of "Natura Exenterata." In the future, he plans to include "Treatise for Making of Laces." Lois Swales@ <http://www.lightlink.com/rhiannon> : click Fingerloop Braiding: Gothic secrets and Modern delights. Has downloadable pdf of Texts of Swales' workshops, The errata for "Fingerloop Braids."

**§ News-paper reports:** R. Kumeda, one of the five holders of the native f-h l-m technique of Japan was the subject of the first page report of Eastern Oshu Daily, 3/4/05 evening issue. It reports about Kute-uchi and how Kumeda



realized the value of the skill she had inherited from her grandmother after she had reported her knowledge to M. Omura of Gangoji Institute for research of Cultural Property, and announces her workshop to be held the next day.

## § Activities (April, 2004 to March 2005)

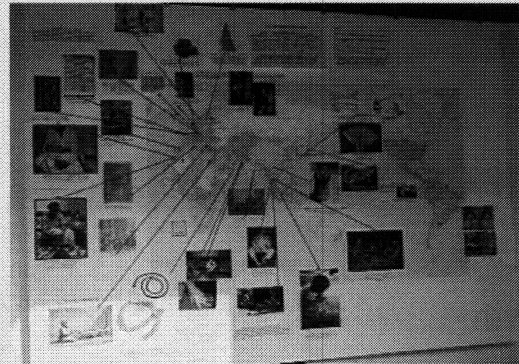
### Lectures, reports given at conferences:

**§ Lecture:** M. Omura, 12/16/04, The Ancient Braiding Technique, Special Meeting for Preservation Science at Nara Institute for Cultural Properties.

**§ Poster presentations:** M. Omura, M. Inoue, N. Kisawa, A. Shimura, M. Sato, Y. Sasaki, "Survey on yarns used for ancient to medieval braids," Japan Society for Conservation of Cultural Property. M. Omura, "Special property of ancient to medieval braids," 12/6/04, Special Meeting for Preservation Science at Nara Institute for Cultural Properties. S. Inoue, "Preliminary survey of the reconstruction technique of braids on Heike Nokyo at Itsukushima Shrine, National treasure," 11/6/04, The Special Meeting Commemorating the Heisei 16 Annual Meeting of the National Treasure Restorers Association.

**Exhibits:** T. Hine, M. Kinoshita and S. Sumiura, Small octangular-eye lace wall pieces, The 10th Anniversary Exhibits of the Braid Society, Through Aug. 2004. C. Kawabe, Exhibit at the Garden Center of Sakai, 3/04-6/05, accessories and a sample notebook.

"Exhibit 2004: Invitation to L-M Braiding," 10/23-27/04, Nara, Japan, The L-M Kumihimo Group. 12-panel presentation of L-M related research materials with over 90 photo images, a world distribution map of l-m techniques, over 30 reconstructed samples of ancient and medieval braids, 2 sets of panel presentation on reconstruction process of old armor, a panel presentation of ethnic material collection, 7 ethnic materials. Approx. 100 original works of members: 3D objects, baskets, mobile, framed and unframed wall hangings, table mats, stole, pochettes, obi ties, accessories, sample notebooks. Demonstrations and free mini-workshops were given everyday



(Photo 9: World Distribution Map of L-M Braiding Techniques, M. Kinoshita © 2004, Photo by O. Okubo). (Exhibition 2004 "Invitation to L-M Braiding" Photo Gallery)

**Workshops :** The Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc. (SCA), 03/'05 Introduction to Fingerloop Braiding, Allison Sarnoff; an intermediate class on the loop exchange technique, Kate Dixon; 7-Loop Fingerloop Braids: Managing Two Loops on One Finger, Lisa Fogelman; Doing it Yourself: Multi-person Fingerloop Braids for the Lone Braider, Sarah Goslee. C. Kawabe, Family Workshop at Izumi Otsu OriAmuKan, 9/11/04; Otani Women's Junior College Special course in 01/05; M. Kinoshita, 2 1-day courses for F-H L-M and H-H F-M beginners, 11/14-15/04, International Nara Study Seminar House, Nara, Japan; R. Kumeda, the Pinky Braiding, 1./22, 2./5, 3/ 5/05, Community Meeting Room at Heiwa-dai Appt. Complex, Aomori.

**Survey:** Keiko Kusakabe, Field research of card weaving and l-m braiding



techniques practiced in Toraja, the Sulawesi Is., Indonesia, supported by Nomura International Arts and Culture Research Grant, 2005.

**§ Acknowledgement:** Contribution of an article: K. Kusakabe; Information and advise : J. Boutrup, L. Fogelman, K. Selden, R. J. Smith, L. Swales. Monetary contribution: S. Sumiura, E. Yamabe. Thanks also to those who wrote letters of encouragement.

**Editor's note:**

**Our new URL:** <http://www.lmbric.net>

Please note that we no longer mail a hard copy version of English edition of the News starting from the year '04, Issue No. 7.

\* For further information, please get in touch with the News editor.

*L-M BRIC News* is totally self-supported publication by the Loop-Manipulation Braiding Research and Information Center founded by Masako Kinoshita to promote the study of L-M braiding. Donations from interested readers, however, are welcome.