

L-M BRIC News No. 11

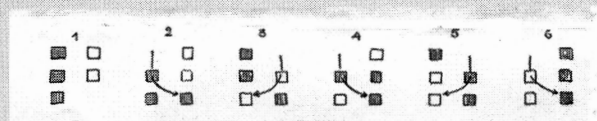
Finnish Finger-Held Loop-Manipulation Braiding Operated by the Small Finger

Masako Kinoshita

The Finnish technique for making braids with an unorthodox pattern is the small-finger-operated finger-held (f-h) l-m braiding in which the lower shank of the running loop is scooped to make a *crossed* transfer. (Note 1)

ELSE GUDJONSSON, in her report on the Icelandic finger-held l-m braiding (Note 2) gave references to three papers on the Finnish l-m braiding techniques (Note 3). The first two papers, which introduced the index-finger operated f-h l-m, have been reported in the *L-M BRIC News* No. 6, 2003. Our report here is on the third, *ISKETYT NAUHA* by SAARTA, MARTTA, which we were not able to obtain at the time. This paper reports, according to Gudjonsson, *A Finnish f-h l-m that is operated using the small or ring finger*. Fortunately with the aid of my old friend from the Olin Library at Cornell University, Meeri Kaaret, we now have the report as well as an English translation.

We call the index-finger-operated f-h l-m technique Method 1 and the small-finger-operated f-h l-m Method 2 (Note 4). Method 1 is known to have been used in England based on several 15th- and 17th-century records, and also from North Africa, Central and South America, and others where instances of actual practice have been reported. The use of Method 2 has been found from reports of actual practices in India, Indonesia, Japan, Thai and an isolated case from eastern Slavic region of western Russia. The same l-m braiding seems to be the most likely activity that a pair of Chinese bronze figurines excavated from a first century B.C. tomb are doing. This fact has given us the impression that the world distributional pattern of the two methods is skewed (Note 5). It seemed to us, however, that the time has come to rethink this view: there are now three reports of the use of method 2, if this report of the Finnish technique is added to previous reports from western Russia, and from Colombia in which both methods were recorded (Note 6).



According to Martta Saarta, the Finnish small-finger operated

f-h l-m uses 2 to 10 loops.

An illustrated instruction shows 5-, 7- and 9-loop procedures.

(Fig. 1 at left)

She adds that 5 or 7 loops are used more often because it is a bit clumsy with 9 loops when the thumbs are joined in the operation.

The loops are mounted on the fingers, starting from the index finger (a-finger) towards the small finger (d-finger). The operator, the finger used for transferring the loop, is the ring finger (c-finger) for 5-loop procedures and the d-finger for those with the number of loops larger than 7. Thus, it is confirmed that method 2 is used in Finland in addition to the two examples of method 1 that were reported previously.

There is no explanation, however, about how the thumbs are used in the case of 9-loop procedures. While the Ingrid Crickmore's 9-loop method, published in the ILUSTRATED INSTRUCTION SERIES in this issue was born independently of the Finnish method, it presents an example of how the 9-loop can be worked out.

It is not clear whether the two methods are used mixed in one area or used separately in different regions.

How to braid:

With 5 loops (Fig. 1 top two rows)

- 1-1. 3 loops on the left hand, red for example, and 2 white on the right.
- 1-2. The right operator (c-finger) skips over the left c-loop, goes through the left b-loop and takes the left a-loop. The left a-loop now becomes the right c-loop. Beat the braid and then shift the left loops to free the left c-finger to become the new operator.
- 1-3. Now the left operator skips over the right c-loop and goes through the right b-loop and takes the right a-loop. The right a-loop now becomes the left c-loop. Beat the braid and shift the right loops.

After 12 repeats of the above steps, the original color sequence comes back.

With 7 loops (Fig. 1 the left three of the bottom row)

- 2-1. 4 loops on the left hand, and 3 on the right.
- 2-2. The right operator (the d-finger) skips over the left d-finger, goes through the left c- and b-loops and takes the left a-loop. The left a-loop now becomes the right

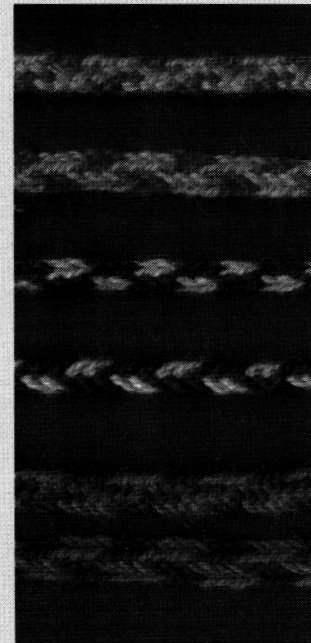
d-loop. Beat the braid and then shift the left loops to free the left d-finger to become the new operator.

Work the second step with the mirror images of the first.

These small- or ring-finger (inner-finger)-operated braiding methods are the reverse of the index-finger-operated method that produces the two best known braids with unorthodox patterns. (Note 7) Saarta, however, made a fairly common oversight seen in the instruction of l-m braiding: she wrote merely *take the loop*, never specifying which one of the two shanks or how to take the loop. Therefore there is no way for us to know which one of the two UO braids was intended. There is, however, a description of the braids thus made as *the front face looks like a knitting and the reverse face braiding*. This proves that the braid has a similar appearance to UO(oo) or UO(cc) fashioned using method 1. (Note 8)

We have reported earlier in relation to the braids made by the Khantys living in western Siberia that some UO braids made using method 1 and 2 have drastically different appearances. (Note 9) We have also learned that the only braid made using method 2 that has a similar appearance to its method-1 counterpart is one that is made using crossed (C) transfer by *scooping the lower shank*. (Note 10) From these facts, we have concluded that the l-m braiding reported by Saarta is the UO(cc) for which the loop transfer is made by taking *the lower shank as if scooping*. The image of braids in the original publication and our sample swatches do seem to agree on this feature. (Photo 1 at right)

In conclusion, the inner-finger-operated finger-held l-m technique (Method 2) is practiced in Finland as well as the index-finger-operated (or outer-finger-operated) technique (Method 1). For Method 2, only *the loop transfer by taking the lower shank by scooping* seems to be the one used.



Acknowledgement: We thank Meeri Kaaret for aiding us to obtain and translating the report.

Braids in Chinese Classics

And

Excavated Braids from the Warring States Chu Cemetery

Mari Omura ([Note 11](#))

In writing the original treatise, I examined articles in the Chinese classics that are concerned with the braids and threads to help us understand the mind of the people who prepared and used them.

I have found, in Chinese classics that braids were used as much for symbolic purposes as for their utilitarian function. I was also amazed and impressed very much that such detailed accounts of braids had been meticulously recorded and survived, albeit short on specifics about their structural aspects of them.

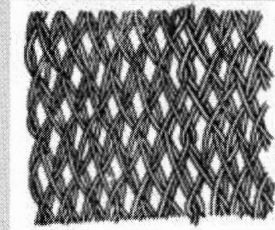
While all bands, strings and ties appearing in these records may not have been braids (obliquely interlaced narrow ware), they were used, for example, in furniture, arms and armor, horse trappings and clothes including bonnets and sashes. They also served an important role as exchange gifts between nations and/or states, and even as the symbol of surrender to the enemy.

According to the Chinese Classic *Shih Ching*, Book of Odes (ancient folksongs), it seems that loop-braiding techniques in China may date back to at least about the middle of the Warring States period (5th-3rd C. B.C.). Some folksongs in the *Shih Ching* date as far back as to about the Chou Dynasty (11th-7th C. B.C.).^① A phrase, *Taking reins as if braiding*, found in two songs in the *Shih Ching* came from two regions, one on the south side and the other on the north side of the Yellow River, indicating that the technique was used in widely spread areas. This phrase intimates that the posture of the driver of a chariot resembles to that of braiders, suggesting that the braids were made by such a technique as loop-braiding, like the method we know today that utilizes the loops held on one's hands with out-stretched arms for keeping the tension and order of the threads.

While the oldest sure evidence of the loop braiding at present time in China is from the Early Han dynasty (202 B.C.~9 A.D.) ([Note 12](#)), evidence of the practice of l-m braiding techniques can be traced back to much older excavated braids from Baoshan

cemetery of the Chu State, (323~292 B.C.). The Baoshan cemetery is located in Jingmen city, Hubei Province near Jinancheng, the Chu capital of the Warring States period (463~222 B.C.).

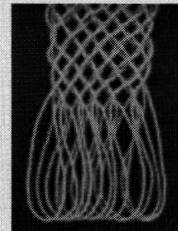
Some excavated braids from tomb no. 2, the best preserved among the five tombs from the Baoshan cemetery, have the characteristic pattern of plain oblique twining (POT) that could most likely have been made using loop-manipulation technique (Note 13).



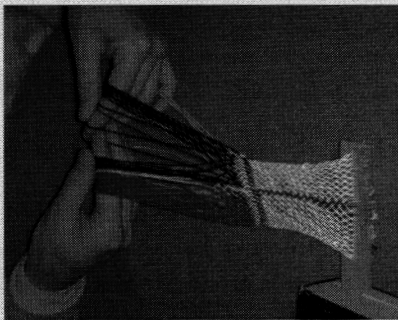
(Fig.1 Diagrammatic drawing of an excavated sash of POT fabric)

(Photo 2 Model of the POT fabric made using l-m braiding)

I also found at the museum a portion of a harness that is of a double-layer plain oblique interlacing (DLOI) fabric made wider by inter-linking the two narrower strips of the same pattern.



This evidence suggests that a series of the *chien chin* = *thousand gold lace* on three pairs of mittens excavated from the Han Tomb No.1 at Ma-Wang-Tui (2nd c. B.C.) could have also been made by related techniques of this kind, in this case using two-color loops (Note 14).



The materials are basically two layers of fabric that can be made using the l-m procedure for making "plain oblique twining" with two-color loops, i.e. the top shanks of the loops in one color and the bottom shanks in another. By optionally exchanging the upper and lower shanks while braiding, stripes, lightening patterns, or the characters

chien chin (*thousand gold*) can be figured out on its obverse and reverse faces. (Photo 3)

Further research of these types of fabrics excavated from No. 1 Chu tomb at Jianglin Mashan and No. 2 Chu tomb at Baoshan in Hubei Province may help recover one of the most interesting lost ancient braiding techniques.

(Mari Omura)

Loop-Manipulation Braids

Found among Yi People in Sechuan Province, China

Akiko Yoda

Object: Needle cases of Yi people

Woolen braid with tubular bone needle case: A needle is pierced into the braid and

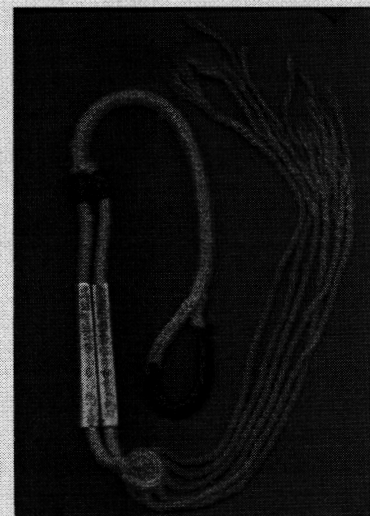
the tubular bone needle case slides over the braid and covers the needle.

Collected: Bought from a Yi merchant at Zhaojue, Liangshan Autonomous State of the Yi Nationality people, Sichuan.

Braid parts consist of 2-ridge flat, square and 4-ridge flat braids that turned out to be 5-loop l-m braids. They are made by a method similar to one used by Mrs. Kumeda of Aomori-ken, Japan. (*L-M BRIC News* No. 6, 2003) Braiding starts after securing the braiding head of 5-loop skein of yarn to a support. Needle case 1 has a small braided ring at the head formed with a twin 2-ridge braid. The stitches of the braid along the outside of this starting ring of 2-ridge flat braid is A-shaped indicating the technique used to make the braid was the same as those used in India, Indonesia, etc., i. e. the inner-finger-operated palms-facing-each-other method, in short, METHOD 2.

Needle Case 1. (Photo 4)

Starting with 7 cm of TWIN 2-RIDGE FLAT BRAIDS, FOLLOWED BY 20 cm of SQUARE BRAID (i.e. 4-RIDGE TUBULAR BRAID). The loops are divided into two groups of 5 loops, and then two 17 cm thinner square braids made using the two groups of 5 loops follow. Each square braid is inserted with a bone tube with carved patterns of concentric circles. A small disk of 2.5 cm in diameter and about 0.5 cm thickness made of the braiding yarn ties the bottom end of the square braids together. Six ends of tightly twisted string of the same woolen yarn, about 30 cm long, hangs from the edge of the disc. The technique used to make the disk could not be discerned because of its compact structure. All together the object is approx. 75 cm long.



The other needle case has approximately 6 cm of the initial ring of twin 2-ridge flat braids, and 10 cm of a 4-ridge twill flat braid. Then it separates into three approximately 17-cm-long

square braids. Each of the three threads through a bone tube with the identical design pattern to the first needle case. The bottom ends of the three braids are sewn in a row into the longest side of a fabric triangle decorated with good luck symbols worked with reverse appliqué. Three fabric tassels, 25 cm, hang from the two sides of the upside down triangle. This one has total length of approx. 62 cm.



Since Yi women are in general tall, they have no trouble hanging this long decorative needle case daily from the waistline, which would no doubt get into my way if I were to wear it.

(Photo 5 A young Yi girl dressed up in full regalia.)

Although I saw some examples of free-end braids, I rarely saw loop braids. I saw many Yi women wearing needle holders with triangular pochette on their long pleated skirt, but never those of l-m braids.

After having acquired these needle holders, I frequently asked Yi people I met in villages and towns where I visited showing my samples. Most

didn't even know what a needle holder was. I also looked up several books specializing in Yi costumes. I found nothing of the kind. I suspect that they may be known by terms such as "needle tube" or "thread and needle wrapper," which were mentioned occasionally in the books.

The Yi Nationality people and The Autonomous State of the Yi Nationality people in Liangshan, Sichuan:

The Yi Nationality people occupy the sixth place in the population (7,800,000: in the year 2000) among the minority Chinese living in Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan, Hunan, and Guianxi Zhuang Nationality Autonomous Region. They also live in scattered regions of the northern Indochinese Peninsula close to the national boundary of China.

The Autonomous State of the Yi Nationality people in Liangshan, Sichuan, was established in 1978, Xichang as its capital after their slave system and the tribal system were

abolished under the lead of the Communist Party between 1955~58.

It still is possible, however, to trace the old customs that are still alive, such as the existence of shamans, called "Bimo" or "suni," or the class differences in their everyday life and segregated living areas.

They live in the mountainous regions at elevation of 1,500~3,000 m, grow buckwheat, barley, corn and potatoes and raise goats, sheep, hogs and cattle.

Women wear a straight sleeved short top and a long pleated skirt with patchwork of 3~5 colors. Embroideries and/or appliques of traditional motifs of sheep-horn, wave, the sun and rainbow, decorate the edges of the sleeves, neck openings and hems. They wear a triangular purse decorated with tassels on the right side of the waistline over the skirt. They wear a woven or felt woolen shoulder cover. It may also be a patchwork of a double layer of woven and felt fabric. Hairstyle, a hood, a hat or a turban\head decorations show a wide range of regional varieties.

(Akiko Yoda)

Idiosyncratic Appearances of Braids with an Unorthodox Pattern

Masako Kinoshita

Some readers of this Newsletter must already be familiar with the name such as Braids with an Unorthodox Pattern (UO braids). Those who are not please refer to ILLUSTRATED INSTRUCTION SERIES FOR FINGER-HELD LOOP MANIPULATION BRAIDING NO. 1: INTRODUCTION.

The UO braids are rare instances in that their production technique, loop-manipulation (l-m), is identifiable from their structural characteristics because of the unusual construction scheme such that is uncommon for most other methods of braid making. The two simplest braids among l-m braids, which we call UO(oo) and UO(cc), are reported more often than other UO braids that they are regarded as the hallmark of the l-m braiding (Note 7).

Ever since the long forgotten loop-manipulation braiding

technique was rediscovered, discoveries of UO braids excavated from archeological sites or those stored unnoticed in churches, museums, etc., have begun to be reported. Because of the academic value of these two braids, UO(oo) and UO(cc), as reference material, it is important that their characteristics be recorded correctly and reported.

In the past, the construction method of the UO braids, either from old records or more recent ethnographical reports, has been limited to Method 1 (Note 15). Because of this fact, we have not paid much attention to the UO braids made using Method 2 have radically different appearances from those made using Method 1 (Note 16).

Because Method 1 and Method 2 are exact reverse operation to each other, it is puzzling why braids made using one method so different from braids made with the other method. We think that the time has come to look into these strange phenomena.

This report lists the observation of the braids made using Method 1 and 2 with photographic images showing obverse and reverse side of 8 braids.

We refrain from analyzing the cause or trying to find an answer to these puzzling phenomena at this time.

There are two variations in the way the active loop is picked for each *O* and *C* transfers. One is *hooking a shank from above*, and the other *scooping a shank from below*. Each one gives either *O* or *C* transfer depending on which one of the two shanks is picked. These *picking methods* are well known among l-m braiders. Thus far they have been used innocently as entirely neutral to the result. Consequently little attention has been paid to their effect on the braids.

Since the reports we have had so far of UO(oo) and UO(cc) were of those made using Method 1, the difference in the shapes of braids made using Method 2 have not been in our attention until recently. We, therefore, had no reservation about offering the UO braids (made using Method 1) as identification reference. For the braids made using Method 2, there was no identification reference offered because these had never been reported.

As the saying goes, *if it is possible, it will happen*, we learned, though belatedly, that the Guajiro Indians living in Colombia make UO braids using both Method 1 and 2. (L-M BRIC News No. 10, 2007)

The Finnish f-h L-M braiding in the first article in this issue is Method 2. The information missing from this report was

provided by the facts resulting from our experiment, proving that our experiments serve for a practical purpose.

The first time we noticed that UO braids had different appearances depending on whether they had been made using Method 1 or 2 was when, in 1998, we experimentally made braids using the two methods to find out which method had been used to make the braids attached to a jacket of the Khantys living in western Siberia. (*L-M BRIC News* no. 2, 1999) At the time, there was not much thought of making UO braids using Method 2 because the information we had had of UO braids, whether, from historical records, artifacts, or ethnographic collections, had exhibited no contradiction to those produced using Method 1.

We think it is about time to offer the information we now have, although its necessity is still a theoretical possibility since no specimens but our own of UO(oo) and UO(cc) made using Method 2 have been found, as far as I know (Note 17).

For the survey, we asked the participants of one of Kinoshita's 2006 fall workshops to braid independently 16 sample swatches using Method 1 and 2, one swatch each for all their possible variations. The fact that the shape changes occur in the braids that have essentially identical structure indicates that the structure of the braids is unstable. To eliminate the error occurring differences from individual peculiarity, we had the sample swatches made by a number of people working independently.

A catalog containing five sets, each containing 16 sample swatches of various variations of UO(oo) and UO(cc) braids, has been made. Each set contains sample swatches of:

1. The obverse and reverse faces of UO(oo) made Method 1 and 2, with the loop transfer of the upper shank scooped from beneath.
2. The obverse and reverse faces of UO(oo) made Method 1 and 2, with the loop transfer of the lower shank hooked from above.
3. The obverse and reverse faces of UO(cc) made Method 1 and 2, with the loop transfer of the upper shank hooked from above.
4. The obverse and reverse faces of UO(cc) made Method 1 and 2, with the loop transfer of the lower shank scooped from beneath.

Diagrams showing how to pick a shank of the loops accompany the following lists.

Material: Cotton Z4ply for crocheting

With this catalog, we are able to see that, in the majority of cases, the idiosyncrasies in the shape of braids when made using Method 1 or 2 do not depend on the maker. There are two instances that suggest its dependency with the maker. Coincidentally, I received an e-mail (09/12/07) from I. Crickmore reporting the same phenomena she has observed with her UO braids. From her description, we concluded that her experiences agreed with ours. It is good to know that there are people out there who are as interested in the l-m braiding as we are.

Result of Comparative Experimental Survey of the Appearance of Braids Constructed Using Method 1 and 2

For the experiments, 5-loop procedures with two-color loops were used. Here we describe the first step only ([Note 18](#)). The second step is the same as the first in the mirror image.

Method 1: Ra (operator) goes thru Rb, over Rc and takes Lc (O or C)

Method 2: Rd (operator) goes over Ld, thru Lc and takes Lb (O or C)

Regardless of the method used to construct them, the braids made using O transfer from both sides are called UO(oo), and those made using C transfer from both sides are called UO(cc).

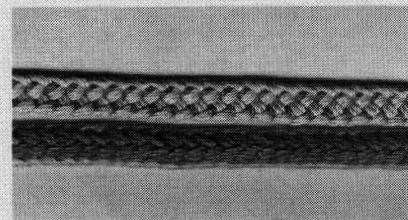
The face of a braid that comes on top while constructed is called the obverse face, and the opposite face the reverse face. Thus they may not coincide with generally accepted notion of the right- and wrong-side of these braids.

Each photo shows four sample swatches of l-m braids. The top two are the obverse and reverse faces of swatches made using Method 1, the lower two those made using Method 2.

UO(oo) (5-loop) is a Combination braid consisting of a 4-Ridge flat braids with a plain-weave-pattern and a 2-ridge braid with a 2/2 Twill pattern.

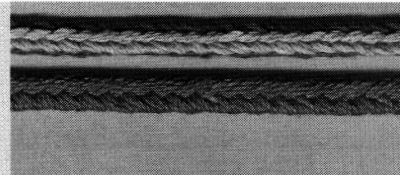
Photo 6: UO(oo) the upper shank scooped from beneath.

a. Method 1 Obverse Face, Reverse



Face

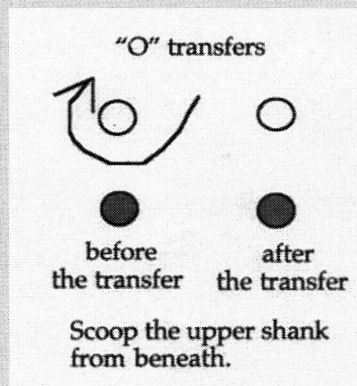
b. Method 2 Obverse Face, Reverse Face



1. UO(oo) with the upper shank scooped from beneath.

Swatch *a*: Method 1 UO(oo) with the upper shank scooped from beneath.
(Fig. 3)

Obverse Face reveals its upper component braid, a 4-ridge flat braid with plain-weave pattern, in the color of upper shanks. The upper and lower shanks are braided together in the stitches of the center two ridges.



Reverse Face reveals bottom-side component braid, a 2-ridge flat braid, in the color of lower shank, which is flanked by narrow ridges that are the outer 2 ridges of the braid on the obverse face.

Swatch *b*: Method 2 UO(oo) with the upper shank scooped from beneath.

Swatch *b* is narrower than Swatch *a*.

Obverse Face has an appearance so different that it is hard to believe it has the same structure as Swatch *a*, Method 1 UO(oo).

The outer 2 ridges of the braid on the reverse-side flank the two narrow ridges running through the center giving the obverse face an appearance of 4-ridge braid with a protruding two center ridges. Upon closer observation, however, you realize that the elements of the center two ridges are not interlaced: the two ridges simply run parallel to each other. If these two ridges are pulled side ways, you see that the inside is hollow, and the two ridges actually are the outer 2 ridges of the upper component braid of a UO(oo), 4-ridge flat braid.

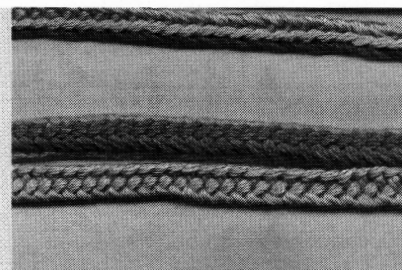
Reverse Face has an appearance of a 2-ridge flat braid. The elements that compose the obverse face occasionally peek through at the cross of the spine.

Photo 7: UO(oo) the lower shank hooked from above.



Swatch *c*: Method 1 Obverse Face
Reverse Face

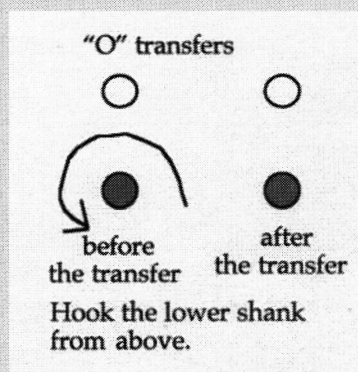
Swatch *d*: Method 2 Obverse Face
Reverse Face



II. UO(oo) the lower shank hooked from above.

Swatch *c*: Method 1 UO(oo) the lower shank hooked from above. (Fig. 4)

Obverse Face looks similar to Swatch *a*, revealing the top component braid, a 4-ridge flat braid with plain-weave pattern, in the color of upper shanks. The upper and lower shanks can be seen braided in the stitches of the center two ridges.



Reverse Face has the two center ridges narrower than those of Swatch *a*. The outer 2 ridges of the obverse face flank both selvages making this face looking like a 4-ridge braid with rounded center 2 ridges.

Swatch *d*: Method 2 UO(oo) the lower shank hooked from above.

Obverse Face has a similar appearance and the same feature of Swatch *b*.

Reverse Face looks very similar to Swatch *b*. It has an appearance of a 2-ridge flat braid. The elements that compose the obverse face occasionally peek through along the spine of the 2-ridge flat braid.

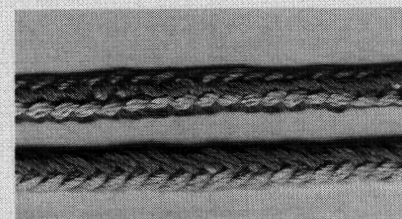
UO(cc)

UO(cc) (5-loop) is a Combination braid: two mirror image 3-Ridge Twill Flat Braids obliquely cross each other.

Photo 8: UO(cc) the upper shank hooked from above.

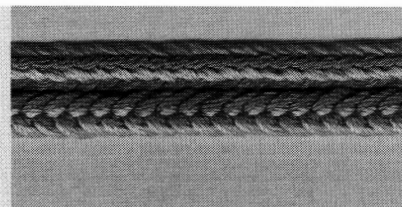
Swatch *e*. Method 1 Obverse Face
Reverse Face

Swatch *f*. Method 2 Obverse Face



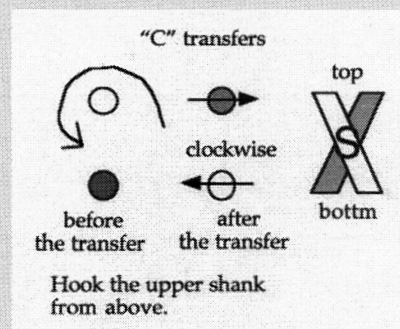
Reverse Face

UO(cc) the upper shank hooked from above.



Swatch e; Method 1 UO(cc) the upper shank hooked from above. (Fig. 5)

Obverse Face has the appearance of that of Swatch *a*, a 4-ridge flat braid, despite the fact that this is not. The outer two ridges show a slight tendency to get pulled in. Out of 5 swatches made, one swatch has the appearance of Swatch *b*, the Method 2 UO(oo), with the outer two ridges of obverse face having been pulled in. Crickmore also reports the same effects with her sample of Method 1 UO(cc). There also is another swatch that shows the same tendency, although pulled two edges are not completely closed like the other examples.



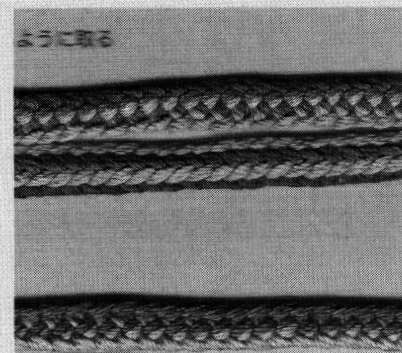
Reverse Face is flat and has two ridges, similar to Swatch *a*, Method 1 UO(oo). The elements of obverse face peek out once in a while.

Swatch *f*. Method 2 UO(cc) the upper shank hooked from above.

Obverse Fac has a similar appearance to Swatch *b*, Method 2 UO(oo), despite the structural difference between UO(oo) and UO(cc). The composition on the obverse face is also similar to that of Swatch *b*.

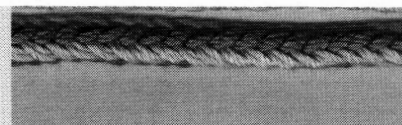
Reverse Face shows a strange pattern that looks as if two 2-ridge braids, one twice as wide as the other, have been braided overlapped; one pair of ridges span the full width of the reverse face and another narrower 2 ridges span half the width.

Photo 9: UO(cc) the lower shank scooped from below.



Swatch *g*. Method 1 Obverse Face Reverse Face

Swatch *h*. Method 2 Obverse Face Reverse Face

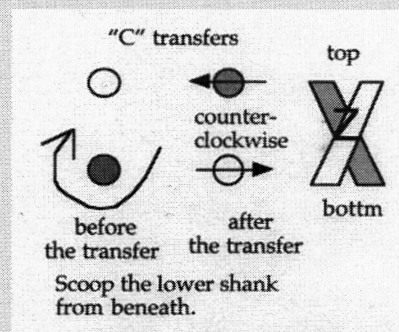


IV. UO(cc) the lower shank scooped from below.

Swatch *g*: Method 1 UO(cc) the lower shank scooped from below. (Fig. 6)

Obverse Face resembles that of Swatch *c* Method 1 UO(oo) the lower shank hooked from above: the obverse face looks like a 4-ridge flat braid, although it is not.

Reverse Face also resembles that of Swatch *c*: the center two ridges flanked by two outer ridges of the obverse face.



Swatch *h*: Method 2 UO(cc) the lower shank scooped from below.

Obverse Face looks very much like Swatch *g*, i.e. the counterpart of this braid made using Method 1.

Reverse Face is also similar to the reverse face of Swatch *g*.

To summarize the above observation,

1. The majority of the swatches made using the procedure are consistent in their appearance.
2. There are substantial difference in the appearances between UO braids made using methods 1 and 2.
3. We find that there are subtle differences between some of those made using the same method but with the shank picked differently, a distinction to which not much attention had been paid in the past.
4. Obverse face of Swatch *e* (Method 1 UO(cc), hook the upper shank from above) shows a tendency of becoming like Swatch *f*, its Method-2 counterpart. The reverse face, however, has no tendency of becoming like Swatch *f*.
5. Swatch *g* (Method 1 UO(cc) scoop the lower shank from below) and Swatch *h* (Method 2 UO(cc) scoop the lower shank from below) have identical appearance. These are the only pair that has the same appearance regardless of the construction method used.

At this point, we refrain from speculating over the reason why

the braids made using Method 1 and Method 2, which are exact inverse process to each other, do not duplicate themselves. Some obvious rationale we have to the question do not address to more subtle yet possibly related phenomena.

<>Here, we report that the UO braids may look entirely different depending on whether they are made using Method 1 or 2, and advise caution when applying examples as reference material for identifying UO braids. This information may also be useful to distinguish which one of the methods was used to make a certain UO braid specimen.

Acknowledgement: We thank the collaborators of the experiment, Hiroko Kasuga, Chikayo Kawabe, Haruko Sato, Setsuko Sumiura, Nobuko Takeshita. We also thank Ingrid Crickmore for her information.

Survey Report Part Three

MEN'S POTE

Two-person Braiding of double Square-braids in sadan Toraja

by KEIKO KUSAKABE

Young People Enjoying Braiding

Yuriko Kimura (Note 19)

I have participated in civic events as well as school programs as a teacher of hand braiding at the request of Utsunomiya City where I reside. I also receive occasional invitations to teach from women's groups.

While a class for making mobile phone straps are the requests I get most often, among the teens-and-younger crowd friendship bracelets, mobile phone straps and anklets are the three most popular items.

I teach l-m braiding using 3 or 5 loops and free-end finger braiding using 4-8 strands. For the younger crowd, I use store-bought cotton yarns. For classes of grownups, I use fairly thick plant-dyed plied silk yarn. I take about 20 variety of colored yarns wound on wooden spools.

The time it takes for deciding the color selection is at the same time enjoyable chance to chatter and make friends. When everybody has decided what color yarn to use, the yarns are cut,

knotted together at one end and set to a support such as a clamp or taped securely on the desk top by cello tape. First-timer children would start from a pigtail braid using loop or the regular pig-tail baiding technique. Grown-ups would start with several kinds of 3~4 ends braiding, which is the base of the braiding technique.



Utsunomiya Municipal Takaragi Middle-school has adapted as a part of its general education curricula to invite traditional craft artisans to give students experiences in craft skills.

(Photo 10)

My assignment is to teach third graders (i.e. ninth graders). Since the majority of pupils have little idea what braids are, their teachers or parents give some information about them beforehand. I can't help but be amazed, however, that how little even the grownup people are informed, or rather misinformed that one needs a braiding stand to make braids.

I usually choose to teach in these occasions finger braiding such as loop-manipulation, which I consider to be more appropriate for teaching in schools or with a large number of participants. Whereas it is difficult to prepare the required number of braiding stands, with loop braiding, all you need is several rolls of cello tape and several pairs of scissors. It also takes less time to set up.

The third graders prepare beforehand for this once-a-year 2-and-a-half-hour class with their homeroom teacher. They search the internet, read reference books, come up with questions. They also assign monitors for phone liaisons with me and to meet and welcome me at the gate of the school, etc.

Although the majority of pupils want to make friendship bracelets, I do not teach how to make them at school because the school prohibits wearing them at school, saying that their bright coloring showing off over sleeves is distracting. Accordingly I teach the next most popular item, mobile phone straps.

<>Some kids equate the idea of loop braiding to that of the cats cradle game, and have trouble handling the loops. Some are quick to pick up the idea and move on to a second braid or teach other kids. It is interesting to note that there always are kids who have rhythmical movement and produce a good braid. Once in a while there are kids who come prepared with beads and work them in to their braid. Some kids choose a color combination that break my fixed color sense. Their color choice proves to me that

they are not bound much with the traditional color distinction between sexes. I learn a lot from these children.

To make the finished braid of 25–30 cm (10–12 inches) into a strap, it is folded in two and the two ends are threaded through a metal finding and knotted into a traditional decorative knotting. And then I would show them how to shape the whole work to make them look attractive.

<>I tell them the meaning of each knotting: why a knot that resembles scales of fish is considered the good-luck protector; another that has the shapes of the Chinese character that signifies *mouth* on one face and the numeral 10 on the other has a power to fulfill your wishes. Children love to listen to these stories and seem to hold special attachment to their own works.

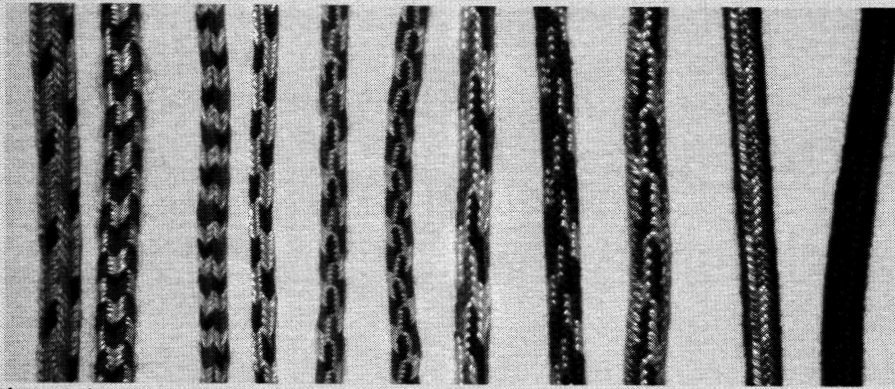
Thank you notes I receive from them show me many other ways of using straps. While friendship bracelets are not allowed in school (anklets that are covered under the pants are allowed), I hear that they make them at home anyway for siblings and friends. This proves to me that they like what I taught. I feel quite satisfied knowing that my purpose of spreading the interest in braiding has been accomplished. As the result, children are learning that braiding is a familiar enjoyable activity, not a difficult work as average grownups think.

I also talk to the children about the history and tradition of braiding in Japan, its unique developments and beauty. On the other hand, I hope to help them to find the interest in braiding and keep that interest in their daily life. It is in a way looking at Japanese history and culture from a different angle. They may also find a joy in creating things and at the same time develop power of concentration or color senses. I dream in these kids with the widely open future that they some day send out in the world their uniquely original braids born of their creative power. I truly appreciate the opportunity given to me to help introduce and popularize braiding. (Yuriko Kimura)

GUIDELINES FOR RECORDING L-M TECHNIQUES

ILLUSTRATED INSTRUCTION Series N0. 11:

Fingerloop Braiding with 9 (and more) Loops, Using Method 2 by Ingrid Crickmore



(Photo11)

Finger-Held (f-h) L-M Method Basic Instructions

ACTIVITIES COLUMN:

FORCAST: From 01/2008 to 03/2009

Study Group for Reconstruction of Ancient Japanese Braids Using Kute-uchi=KKFK 2008 Bi-monthly meetings, 2/24, 4/27, 6/22, 8/24, 10/26, 11/30.

Activities in the past year (01/2007-03/2008)

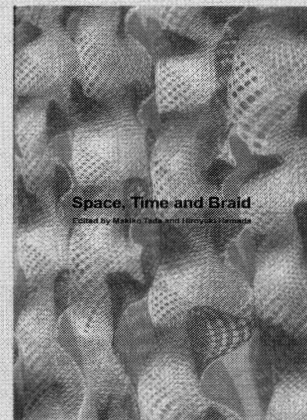
Publications: *Proceedings of the First International Conference on Kumihimo: Space, Time and Braid.* (Photo12)

Copies are available through:

Posie Price, 29 Carston Grove, Calcot, Reading, Berks, RG31 7ZN, UK. Price: British pound 20.00 + S&H 2.00 for the orders in UK, 3.00 other European countries, others 3.00 (surface), 5.50 (air). Paypal may be used.

Contact: [sjessett\[at\]hotmail.com](mailto:sjessett@hotmail.com) Include your address label in your order. The proceed will be used for the next International Conference planned in 2012. May also be ordered from Tekusutosha, Japan. See the Japanese language section of the News for details.

Ingrid Crickmore, "The Whole 9 yards - A Low-Tech Method for Longer Loop Manipulation Braids," *Braid Society Newsletter*, 2007/12, No. 59, p. 9-10.



International Conference on Kumihimo

(11/12-16/2007) was held at the Future Applied Conventional Technology Center, Kyoto Institute of Technology with a huge success. Subjects relating to L-M braiding: keynote lecture by M. Kinoshita, seminar by M. Omura, slide presentation by Y. Kawada, demonstrations by members of L-M Kumihimo Group, 5 workshops by M. Kinoshita.

Exhibits:

C. Kawabe, Sakai Municipal Greenify Center, 03/02-04/2007: Sample Swatches of L-m Braids and Photographic Materials at Annual Exhibit of Natural Dye Works by C Kawabe, and also, 04/16-27/07: L-m Braid Sample Swatches and A. Yoda's Collection of East Asian Ethnic Textiles. Makiko Tada, 2008/1/17~3/4, Exhibition *Series To Create (5)*:

Beauty of Tradition and Technology, Naruse Memorial Hall, Japan Women's University. Tada's Works of Kute-uchi braids were also exhibited among her numerous works on various techniques of kumihimo.

Lectures, workshops and study groups : KKFK 2007 Bi-monthly meetings, 2/26, 4/23, 6/25, 8/27, 10/22, 12/3. Y. Kawada at Sennan Municipal Center for Buried Cultural Properties; Field trip of municipal elementary school kids, Teacher Learning Session, Open Sessions for Area Residents, etc. all had full registrants and more. C. Kawabe, See & Do Session, for the exhibit at SMGC. As a result of C. Kako's efforts as a volunteer, Hyogo Prefectural Archaeology Museum, Hyogo-ken, Kako-gun, Harima-cho, Japan, opened a regular See & Do Session for the I-m braid. Kako reports that volunteer teachers are busy everyday teaching. M. Kinoshita, One-day lecture and workshop, *The Legacy of Masunari Ozeki: Archaic Braiding Techniques of Japan*, 11/23/2007 Basho Manor at Kurobane, Ootawara-shi, as well as workshops at Wako and Nara: 9-10/2007.

Again this year, we received information from many readers, giving us yet stronger convictions of I-m braiding having been used long in time and wide in area. It is encouraging to see that many people are exposed to the technique through demonstrations given by volunteers.

Acknowledgement: for Contribution of articles -I. Crickmore, Y. Kimura, M. Omura, A. Yoda; For monetary contributions -- H. Aihara, T. Hine, M. Kamei, C. Kawabe, R. Ward, S. Yoda; and those who sent us letters, faxes and e-mails of encouragement.

L-M BRIC News are accessed through the internet. (English version) <http://www.lmbric.net> , (Japanese version) <http://www.lmbric.net/njindex.html> We no longer issue hardcopy version. For those who have difficulty to access the internet or wish to have hardcopy version, please send a request to the editor. We will be happy to make a full hard copy set from the web and mail it to you, free of charge.

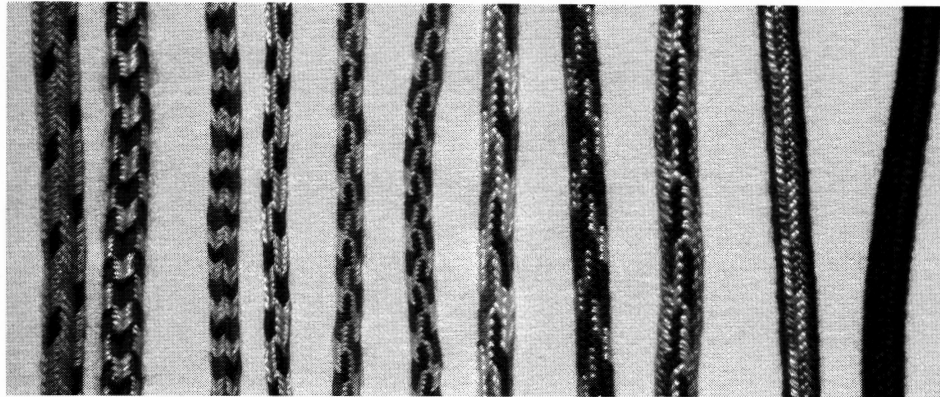
L-M BRIC News is a totally self-supported publication by the Loop-Manipulation Braiding Research and Information Center founded by Masako Kinoshita to promote the study of L-M braiding. Donations from interested readers, however, will be appreciated. Please send donations to Masako Kinoshita, 5 Winthrop Place, Ithaca, NY 14850, USA. As for a contribution, please send by Japanese postal money order, account no. 00360 3 2586, title Masako Kinoshita. Thank you.

L-M BRIC News

ILLUSTRATED INSTRUCTION SERIES No. 11

Fingerloop Braiding with 9 (and more) Loops, Using Method 2

Ingrid Crickmore



The first and the fourth swatches from the left are of 9 loops, and the second of 10 loops. All others are of 11 loops. The farthest right two are the obverse and reverse side of a braid. Made by Ingrid Crickmore.

Using your thumbs you can add 2 more loops to the usual upper limit of 7 loops (with the possibility of eventually using 11 loops). Thumbs can hold and shift loops, they just can't be the operators.

That is not a problem with Method 2 as the lowermost finger is the operator.

The little finger (d-finger) of one hand can easily reach through the loops on the d, c, b and a fingers of the other hand, take the thumb-loop and pull it off and through the other loops.

Braids made using 9 loops have 18 elements; those made using 11 loops have 22 elements. A lot of structural and pattern possibilities open up with that many elements!

Glossary:

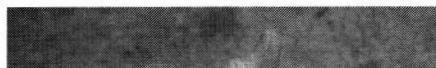
Left hand=L, Right hand=R, a=index, b=middle, c=ring, d=little/small finger. Accordingly, the left index finger=La, etc.

The two shanks of a loop when held on fingers (not thumbs) are in an upper-and-lower relationship (**upper** and **lower** shank)

With my method for more than 7 loops, however, the loop on the thumb is held with the shanks in a horizontal orientation to each other (when the thumb is pointing upward). In this situation, I call the shank that is closest to the mid-point between the two hands the **inner shank** and the other shank the **outer shank**. (The **inner** shank on the thumb corresponds to the **upper** shank when the loop is on the fingers, as will be explained below.)

Editor's note: For the undefined braiding terms used in this article, those used in our publication are given in parenthesis following each term. For the terms appearing in the parenthesis, please refer to ILLUSTRATED INSTRUCTION SERIES FOR FINGER-HELD LOOP-MANIPULATION BRAIDING: NO. 1 INTRODUCTION where the definition of the terms used in the News is given.

Loop arrangement :



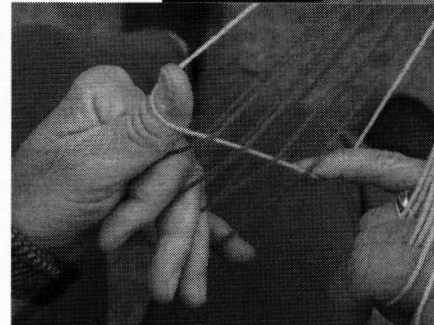
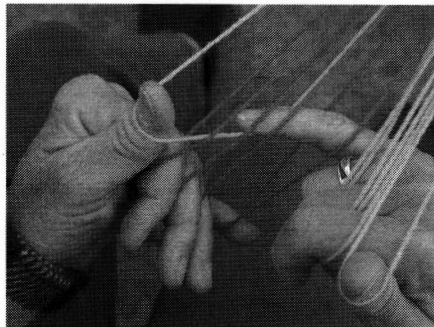
Start with 5 loops on the left hand (one per digit) and 4 on the right (no loop on Rd). (Photo 1 at left)

The following instructions are for a square braid.

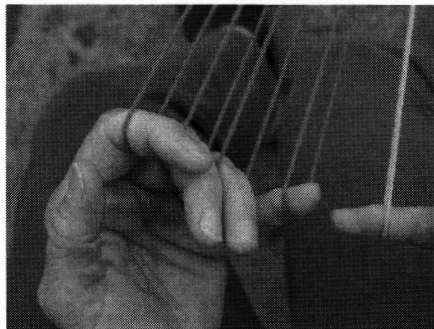
First take (take = loop transfer):

Rd goes through the loops Ld, Lc, Lb and La; takes Lthumb-loop reversed. (Photo 2 at right)

How to do a reversed take of a thumb-loop
(reversed take= crossed (C) loop transfer):



Bringing Rd up
in front of
(NOT through)



the thumb-loop, and then insert Rd **from above** down into the thumb loop and pull the **inner shank** of that loop back through all the other loops, while allowing the loop to drop off the thumb. What was originally the left thumb-loop will end up on Rd, with the loop flipped a half-turn clockwise. (Note 1)

See Photo 3, 4 and 5 here and the daigram below (C transfer I).

The diagram below also shows the other method for making a reversed take, as well as the methods for making an unreversed take (= Open (O) loop transfer). For smoother reading, skip the following paragraph for now and go to the next paragraph, **Shift**

the left loops.

How to hook/scoop the active loop mounted on the thumb for OPEN or CROSSED transfers

The purpose of the diagrams is to show how a loop mounted on the Lthumb can be transferred to the right small finger (Rd):

1. With the position of the shanks unchanged (Open or "O" transfer)
2. With the position of shanks reversed (Crossed or "C" transfer)

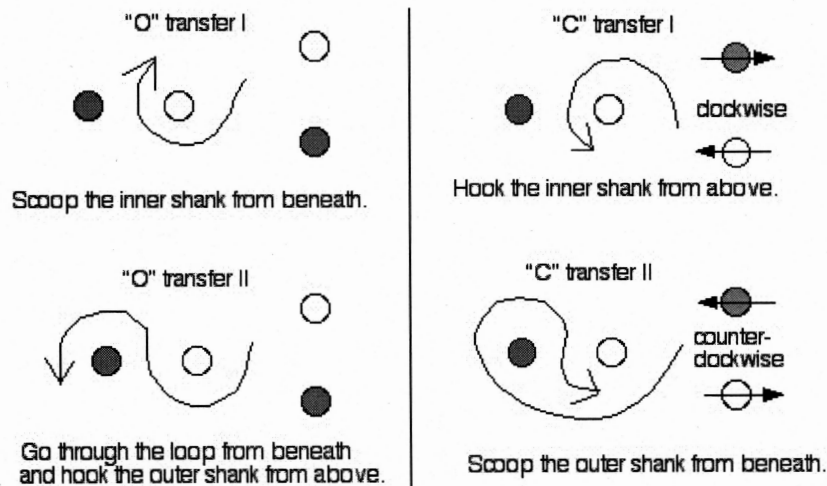
The arrows through the circles represent the direction of reversal.

The circles represent the cross sections of the shanks of a loop. To the left of the each pair of diagrams below, white and gray circles in a horizontal alignment respectively represent what had been the **upper** and **lower** shanks of a loop on the left index finger (La) before it was shifted to the thumb as instructed by Ingrid Crickmore. The upper shank (white) has now become the **inner** shank and the lower shank (gray) the **outer** shank, and held relatively horizontally on the thumb.

The two white and gray circles in vertical alignment (to the right) represent these same two shanks of the active loop after being transferred from the Lthumb to the Rd. using the various transferring methods illustrated here.

In actual practices, the alignment of the shank pairs may somewhat tilted.

The operator (rd) takes the shank to be transferred inserting the tip of the finger first in the direction of the arrow and retrieve itself back through the shed.



Masa Kinoshita Weaving Studio Publications 080307 © 2008

The first example on the right-hand side (C transfer I) shown above produces a **loop reversal from above**; it is also possible to do a **reversal from below** by hooking the outer shank: bring Rd BENEATH the Lthumb-loop and hook (scoop) the outer shank from the back (from the left side of the left thumb-loop). The diagram above (C transfer II). (Note 2)

The 2 types of loop reversals are opposite in their rotational direction. (Clockwise vs. counterclockwise) Either type of reversal can be used but stick to one type for the whole braid. These two types of C transfers give no significant difference on the final outcome of braids with an orthodox pattern such as square braids.

For an **unreversed** take (unreversed=open (O), i.e. not turned), insert Rd up *through* the Lthumb-loop from below, then *either* turn the R hand and hook the outer shank of the thumb-loop from above (O transfer II)(Note 3), *or* hook (scoop) the inner shank (O transfer I)(Note 4). Pull the thumb-loop back through the other loops and off the thumb. These two types of O transfers give no difference on the outcome of braids with an orthodox pattern.

Shift the left loops:

Now the remaining loops on the left hand must be shifted upward one finger-position, freeing Ld to perform the next take.

First shift the La-loop onto Lthumb. (Photo 6, 7 and 8 below)
This is a very different move than the rest of the loop-shifts.



Move the tip of

Lthumb and La toward each other, and insert the thumb into the a-loop (moving the thumb from the fingertip toward the knuckle, i.e. in the opposite direction to the way the finger is inserted) and lift the loop off the finger and onto the thumb.

(You *must* shift the a-loop this way if you are doing the loop reversals as described above.)

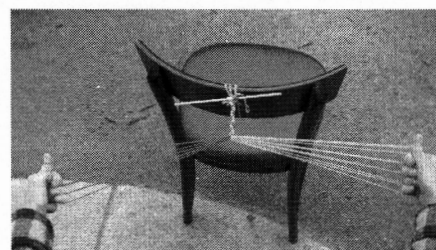
Continue, now shifting the rest of the loops in the regular manner: insert the empty a-finger into the b-finger's loop and remove the b-finger. Repeat with all the fingers in turn. (Photo 9 and 10 below)



Tighten the

fell: (Photo 11 at right)

Spread both hands apart so the interlaced loops tighten up at the fell of the braid. Eventually this move and the shifting of the loops will probably happen simultaneously.



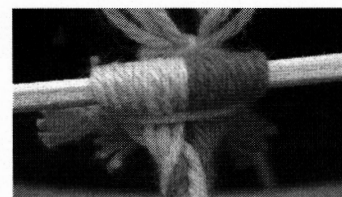
Second take (mirror-image of first take):

Ld (now empty) goes through Rd, c, b and a loops and takes R thumb-loop reversed.

Shift R loops upward one finger-position, freeing Rd-finger (remember to insert thumb into index loop in the *opposite* direction to the finger.)

Tighten the fell.

Finished square braid swatch. (Photo 12 at right)



Braids with unorthodox structures (UO braids):

With 9–11 loops many variations of UO braid structures are possible, with interesting color pattern possibilities. Over-whole-loop moves as well as under-whole-loop moves are both possible with Method 2. These are plaiting (two-ridge flat braid) moves, which can be combined with fingerloop through-loop moves to make UO braids. Two very nice 9-loop UO braids are:

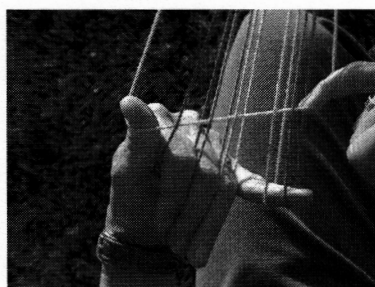


1. Through 2 loops (d, c), over 2 loops (b, a), take thumb-loop reversed (from above).
2. Over 2 loops, through 2 loops, take thumb-loop reversed (from above).

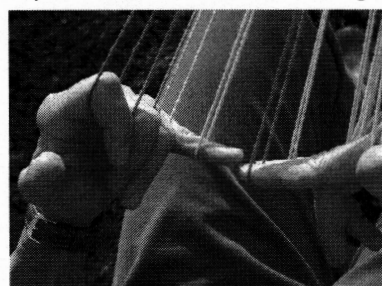
With many UO braids there will be a noticeable to extreme difference in the braid's appearance depending on which direction you reverse the transferred loop (number 2 above especially), but either type of reversal will work.

11-loop braids: Yes, they are possible, and in fact they can become as automatic and enjoyable to make as 7 and 9-loop braids.

*[In 11-loop braids there are 3 distinct loop positions for the d-loops: The operator d-finger holds one loop in **low** position (at the base of the finger). The other d-finger holds 2 loops, one in **mid** (middle of finger) position and one in **high** (closer to the tip) position. This arrangement is important for ease of passing the operator finger through all the loops.]*



Place 5 loops on the right hand (one per digit), and 6 loops on the left hand (1 loop each on Lthumb, La, Lb, Lc, and 2 loops on Ld (one mid and one high). (Photo 13 Above left)



The operator will be Rd, with its loop held in low position. Rd goes through *both* loops on Ld *and* through Lc, Lb, La loops in **one pass** to take the Lthumb-loop and hold it in high position. Rd now has two loops--the original Rd loop in low position, and the just-transferred loop in high position.



You will have one extra move during the shifting of the Left loops: Ra will temporarily lift off and hold the high (tip-end) Ld-loop until the loop-shifts are done, and then replace the loop back onto the now-empty Ld in **low** position (Ld will be the next operator, so this

single Ld loop must be held low). Tighten the fell, and ease the low-position Rd loop up a bit to mid-position. It will then be in the correct position for the next take. (Eventually this shifting upward of the low d-loop will probably happen during the tightening of the fell, not as a separate move.)

Prerequisites for using 11 loops:

Complete automaticity with 9 loops, using thumbs.

Other helpful hints from Ingrid:

It's important to have a holder of some kind that you can set your loops down on and pick them up later in the correct orientation. (Can be quite simple: clothespins attached to the edge of a ruler, or wide clips and a piece of cardboard, etc.)

Be able to fix mistakes: know how to check a dropped loop to make sure it is in the correct orientation before placing it back on the correct finger, and how to unbraid back to a mistake to fix it.

Please email me if you have any questions: I am always happy to correspond about braiding.

ingridcrickmore[at]earthlink.net

*Replace [at] with an @ symbol and please put the word **braiding** in the subject line, thanks!*

Ingrid Crickmore © 2008