

Making a Chinese Braid on the Karakumidai



Introduction

During a recent Braid Society See and Share day, I learned about this Chinese Braid. I found it in “The basic book of Fingerweaving” by Ester Warner Dendel, 1974, ISBN 0 17 149039 8. The braid has a repeating diamond pattern and thus resembles a simple karakumi braid (karakumi means Chinese braid) – although structurally it is different. I started a sample using finger weaving. I then decided to complete the braid on the karakumidai. I present below my working method.

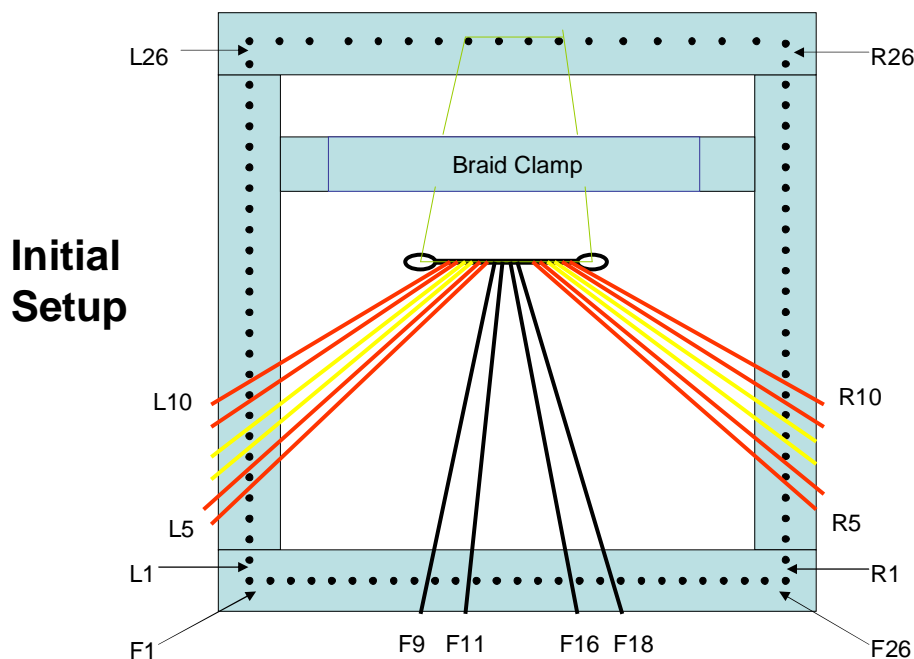
The instructions treat the karakumidai as a large kumihimo braiding disk. I refer to the gaps between the karakumidai pegs as “slots” and number these F1 to F26 (front, numbering from left to right), L1 to L26 (left, numbering from front to back) and R1 to R26 (right, numbering from front to back). See Diagram below. As with braiding disks instructions refer only to the slots (i.e. the thread in slot A must be moved to slot B).

Setup

The completed setup is shown in the diagram below. For the warp, you will require 8 lengths of yarn. Each length should be at least 3 times the length of the required braid plus any allowances end tassel. The suggested colour scheme will require 2 lengths of a **Dark** colour (e.g. black), 4 lengths of a **Mid** colour (e.g. red) and 2 lengths of a **Light** colour (e.g. yellow).

Thread a length of yarn through both eyes of a double eye needle (or a length of thin dowel with a hole in either end). Tie the yarn into a loop, pass loop through braid clamp and hang over pegs at back of the karakumidai. Attach mid point of each warp yarn to double eye needle using a lark’s head knot. Warp yarns should be attached in the order **M L M D D M L M**. Attach bobbin to each end of each warp yarn. Arrange warp into karakumidai slots as follows:

M to L10, **M** to L9, **L** to L8, **L** to L7, **M** to L6, **M** to L5
D to F9, **D** to F11, **D** to F16, **D** to F18
M to R5, **M** to R6, **L** to R7, **L** to R8, **M** to R9, **M** to R10



Braiding Instructions

Step 1 – Weave dark warps

Weave F16 over F11, under F9 to F3. Weave F18 under F11, over F9 to F5.
Move F11 to F24. Move F9 to F22.

Step 2 – Weave dark through left mid and light

Make shed over L5, under L6, over L7, under L8, over L9, under L10.
Pass F3 through shed to L21. Pass F5 through shed to L20.

Step 3 – Weave dark through right mid and light

Make shed over R5, under R6, over R7, under R8, over R9, under R10.
Pass F24 through shed to R21. Pass F22 through shed to R20.

Step 4 – Readjust left hand side

Move L9 to L18. Move L7 to L17. Move L5 to L16.
Move L10 to L14. Move L8 to L13. Move L6 to L12.

Step 5 – Readjust right hand side

Move R9 to R18. Move R7 to R17. Move R5 to R16.
Move R10 to R14. Move R8 to R13. Move R6 to R12.

Step 6 – Cross mid and light warps

Move R12 to L9. Move R13 to L7. Move R14 to L5.
Move L12 to R9. Move L13 to R7. Move L14 to R5.
Move R16 to L10. Move R17 to L8. Move R18 to L6.
Move L16 to R10. Move L17 to R8. Move L18 to R6.

Step 7 – Tension dark warps

Pull to tension R21, then R20, then L21 then L20.

Step 8 – Weave dark through left mid and light

Make shed under L5, over L6, under L7, over L8, under L9, over L10. (Note – this is the opposite shed to that of step 2).
Pass L20 through shed to F11. Pass L21 through shed to F9.

Step 9 – Weave dark through right mid and light

Make shed under R5, over R6, under R7, over R8, under R9, over R10. (Note – this is the opposite shed to that of step 3).
Pass R20 through shed to F16. Pass L21 through shed to F18.

Step 10 – Tension Braid

Pull to tension R10, then R9, then R8, then R7, then R6, then R5.
Pull to tension L10, then L9, then L8, then L7, then L6, then L5.
Pull to tension F9, then F11, then F16, then F18.

Repeat from Step 1