



Osaka Castle

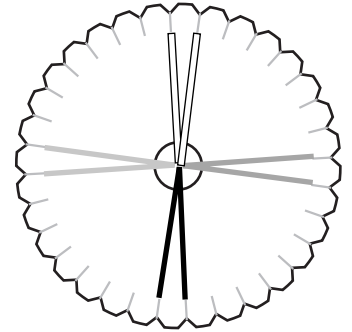
In Japan, braiding is more than just a novelty. The famous Domyo school in Tokyo, for instance, is devoted exclusively to the art of Kumihimo. Becoming a master plaiter is a four year course of study, at the end of which, the person is allowed to teach. Many braids were done by monks, and Kumihimo can be seen as a kind of meditation.

If you don't have a special loom, you can make a very simple loom by cutting a piece of cardboard into a circle and making 32 notches around the edge.

"Kongo Gumi" BASICS!

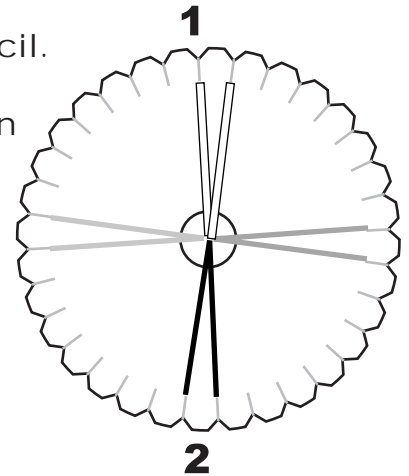


PICTURE 1



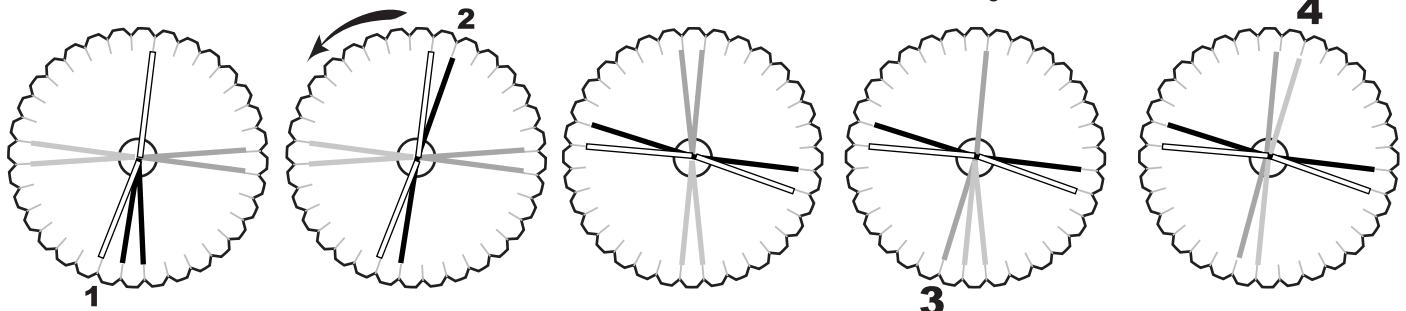
Before you start a sixteen strand braid, make an 8 strand practice using four different colors.

1. Cut four pieces of string about 20". Yarn will work.
2. Hold the strings together. Fold them in half around a pencil.
3. Tie an overhand knot so you have a loop. The loop goes in the middle of the wheel.
4. Arrange pairs of string like PICTURE 1.
5. Always start with the string just to the right of the top (marked with a 1).
6. In the "Kongo Gumi" method, a pair of opposing threads get moved... then two of the next set of four.



Move them in the order of the numbers:

Rotate the wheel counter-clockwise so that the next pair are at the top. Moves 3 & 4 are just like 1 & 2.



And now you've performed the basic Kongo Gumi moves!

Continue going around and around 'til you run out of string, and tie a knot.

This same pattern works for 16 and even 32 strand braids.

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