

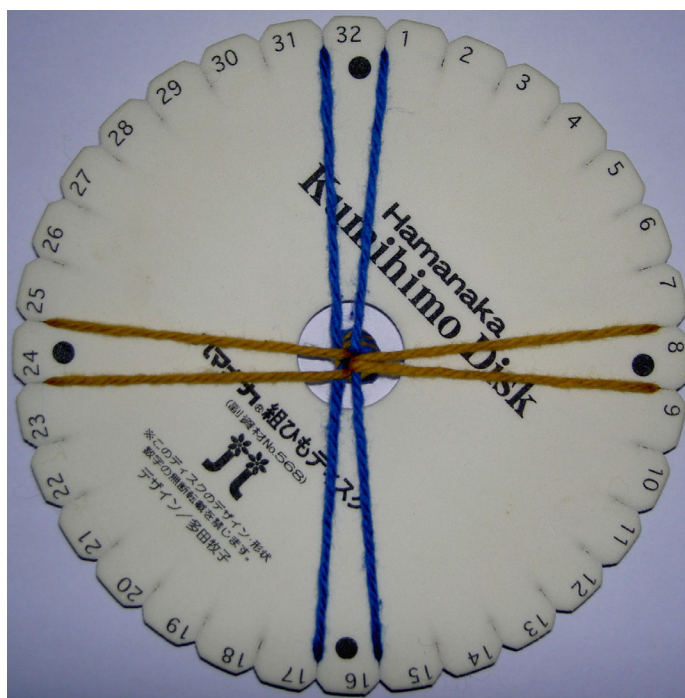
Kumihimo on a Plate

Working with the Braiding Disk

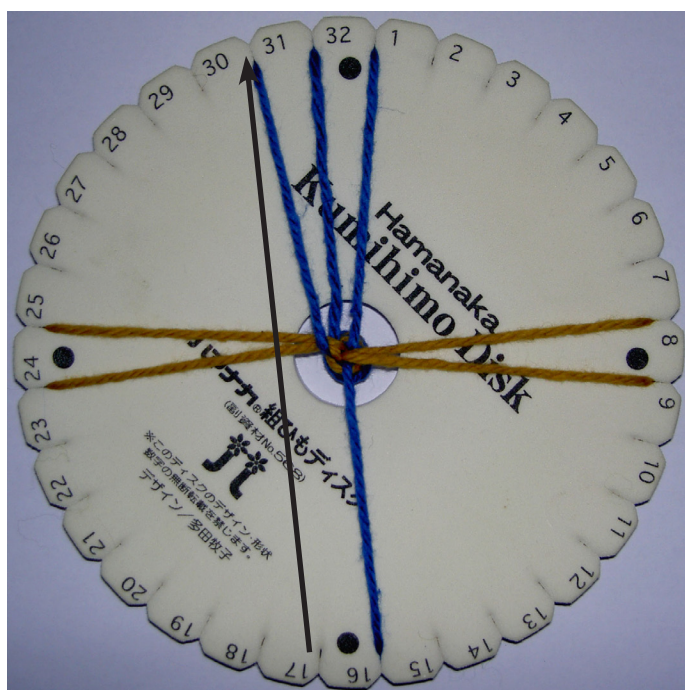
by Steve Pretty

Z Spiral Kongoh-gumi

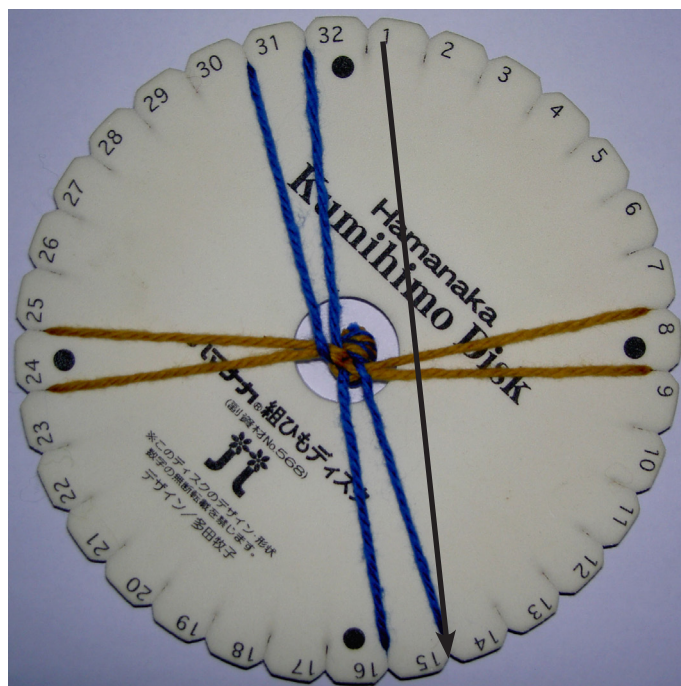
This is a braid from the Japanese Kumihimo tradition. It is one of the simplest braids to make on the braiding disk - in fact it is as easy as 1 2 3. Make up a warp of 8 elements (50 to 60 cm is good for samples). For this example, I have 4 elements in colour A and 4 in colour B. Load up the disk as shown below:



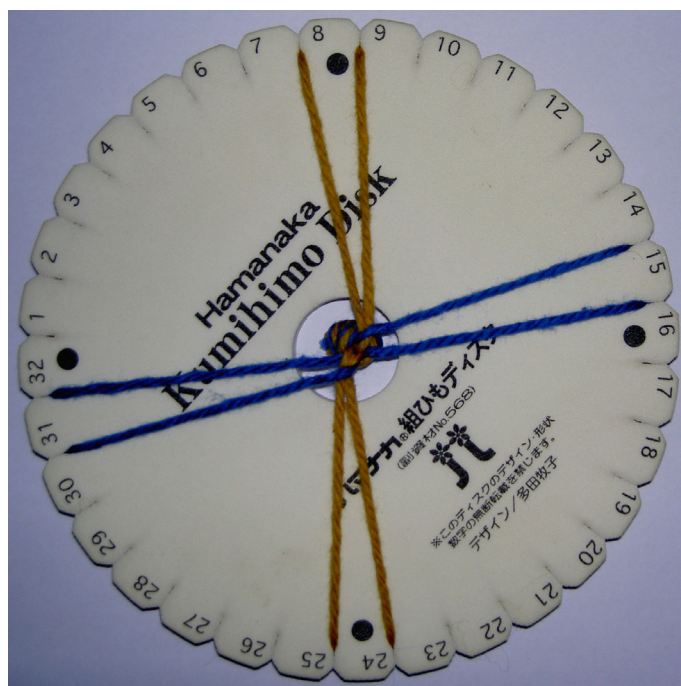
Step 1: Move bottom left to top left:



Step 2: Move top right to bottom right:



Step 3: Rotate disk 90 degrees anti-clockwise. Braid the new top / bottom group as in steps 1 and 2.



Braiding Tips

- Pull the emerging braid periodically (or hang a weight from it).
- If you get lost, look at the point of braiding (centre of disk). Which elements are on top? They are in the group that was braided last. Start braiding with the other group.
- Finishing - when you have used up all the warp, finish the braid with a knot, stitch it or make a wrapping.

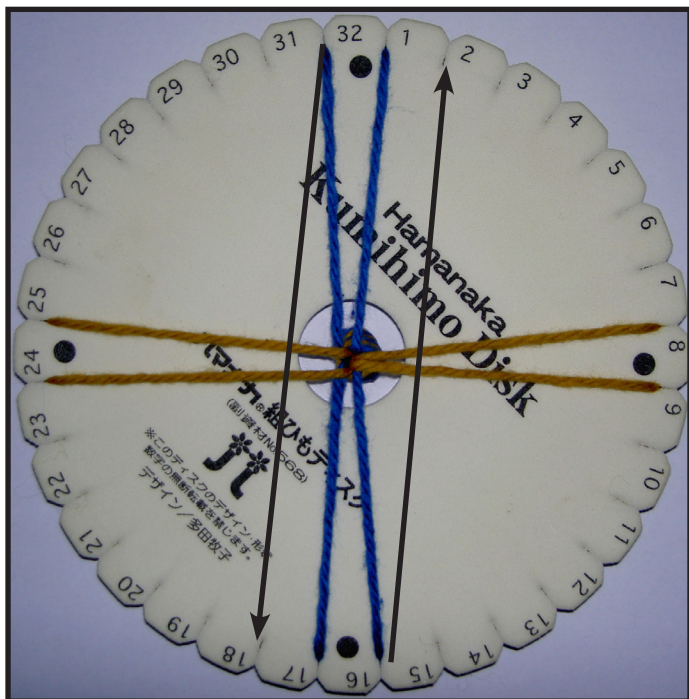
S Spiral Kongoh-gumi

This is similar to the Z spiral, but the moves are:

Step 1: Move bottom right to top right.

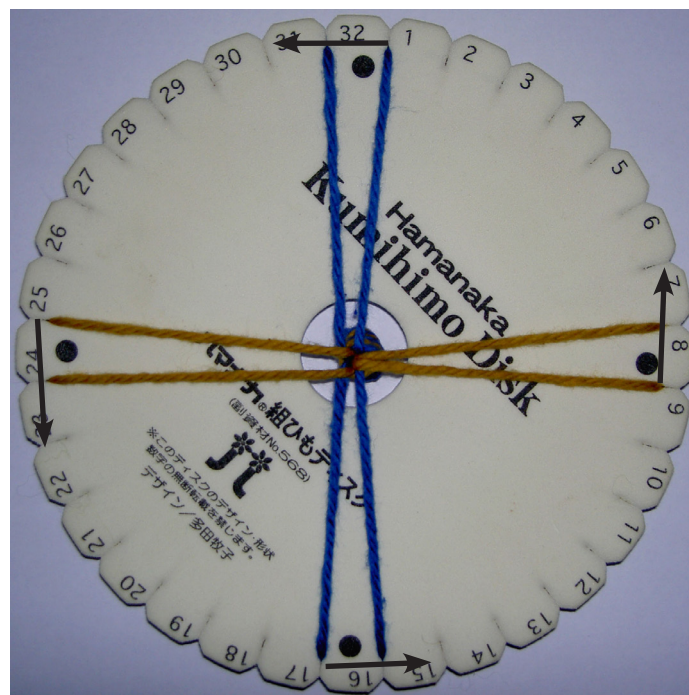
Step 2: Move top left to bottom left.

Step 3: Rotate disk 90 degrees anti-clockwise.



Changing Spiral Direction

In each pair of elements, one has always moved more recently than the other. This can be called the Upper, and the other the Lower. The next element to move should always be a Lower. To change braiding direction, we must first exchange Upper and Lower, to ensure a smooth transition. E.g. When changing from S to Z spiral, the most clockwise element of each pair is moved two slots anticlockwise:



16 Element Z Spiral Kongoh-gumi

Prepare a warp of 16 elements. Set up the disk as for the 8 element braid, but add extra pairs at the 45 degree positions. Braiding proceeds as with the 8 element braid, except for step 3, where the disk is turned 45 degrees anticlockwise.

Many different patterns can be created, simply by adjusting the initial colour set up. Some examples are shown in the picture below:



Some suggested "recipes" are:

- 4 Colour spiral: AA BB CC DD AA BB CC DD
- Flower: AA BB CB BA AA AA AB AB
- Diamonds: AA BB CB BA AA BA AB BB
- Rose Bud: AA BB CB BA AA BA AC DC

Suggested Reading

1. Makiko Tada - Color design diagrams for Kongoh-gumi. Sold for a donation to help the Japanese Red Cross Tsunami appeal. Covers 16, 24 and 36 element braids.
2. Makiko Tada - Comprehensive Treatise of Braids VI: Kumihimo Disk and Plate. Approx 20 designs for disk, and similar number of flat braids for the plate. Also of interest would be volume 1 of the treatise (120 Japanese structures for the marudai) and volume 2 (64 Andean sling braid structures).
3. Rodrick Owen - Braids, 250 patterns from Japan, Peru and Beyond. Shows how to make these on both Marudai and braiding disk.
4. Jacqui Carey - Beginner's guide to Braiding. This book is an ideal introduction to setting up and using the Marudai. It encourages experimentation with colour and texture.