

Study of the Okesa,

Nyohō-e

Buddha's Robe

Tomoe Katagiri

Study of the Okesa
Nyohō-e Buddha's Robe

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Great robe of liberation
Virtuous field far beyond
form and emptiness
Wearing the Tathagata's
teaching
We vow to save all beings.

Introduction

Eshun Yoshida Rōshi (1907-1982) transmitted the true teaching of the Buddha as transmitted through Ekō Hashimoto Rōshi. Hashimoto Rōshi's teaching, following the *nyohō* tradition of authentic transmission, penetrated Eshun Yoshida Rōshi's whole life. She vowed to guide many people and herself to attain Buddhahood through sewing and wearing the *nyohō okesa*. Her desire and devotion were boundless, and she came to San Francisco Zen Center twice, in 1970 and 1971. She led practitioners in making the *okesa* according to the *nyohō* tradition. At that time Tomoe Katagiri started the practice of *okesa* sewing under the guidance of Eshun Yoshida Rōshi, from whom she received the seven row *okesa* in 1980 at Kaizenji in Japan where Eshun Yoshida Rōshi was abbot.

Tomoe Katagiri has taught *nyohō okesa* and *rakusu* sewing at the Minnesota Zen Meditation Center and other Zen centers in the U.S. and other countries.

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The instructions in this booklet are best used with a teacher's guidance.

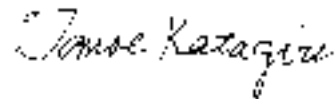
Deep appreciation to:

Eshun Yoshida Rōshi
Dainin Katagiri Rōshi

and to:

Yūkō Conniff
Michael Danio
Janith Hatch
Willa Hathaway
Ejyo Katagiri
Tom Rauschke
Rosemary Taylor
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Lynn Warkov
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Shōken Winecuff
Rosan Yoshida
and others who have helped in various ways.

In gassho,



Tomoe Katagiri
Minneapolis, Minnesota
Fall 2000

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Nyohō-e

Nyohō-e

About 2500 years ago Shakyamuni Buddha was at Rājagrha, a favorite resort of his and the capital of the kingdom of Magadha. At that time, Buddha's disciples wore the same clothes as students of other teachers, so it was very difficult to distinguish between disciples of Buddha and other adherents. Many of them wrapped their bodies with large or small squares of fabric, some white, some made of bright colors and some with decorations.

One day Bimbisāra, the king of Magadha, noticed a man who looked like a Buddhist monk standing by the road in the distance. The king was getting off his elephant to bow to the Buddhist monk when he noticed that the man was not a Buddhist monk but a Brahman. So he asked Shakyamuni Buddha to make clothes for his disciples that were symbolic of their practice. One

day when Shakyamuni Buddha was on his way from Rājagrha to the south to teach with his disciple Ānanda, he stopped to take a look at a rice field and noticed its foot-paths were formed in a marvelous order and neatness. The rice plants were growing together peacefully with other creatures without any discrimination. Shakyamuni Buddha pointed to the rice field and asked Ānanda if he could create a Buddhist robe for the disciples of Buddha that had the same pattern as those rice fields. Ānanda said that he could and went back to Rājagrha for the purpose of making this robe. When Shakyamuni Buddha came back to Rājagrha many of his disciples were already practicing with the robe that took its pattern from the rice fields. This robe was made of long and short pieces of discarded fabric, dyed and sewn together. Shakyamuni Buddha respected the wisdom and intelligence that was revealed in the robe Ānanda created. Ānanda had understood Shakyamuni Buddha's intention very deeply even though he had not told him how to make such a robe. At that time

Shakyamuni Buddha decided that from then on all his disciples would wear this robe (*okesa* in Japanese, *kaśāya* in Sanskrit).

There are three considerations concerning the wearing of the *okesa* for a disciple of Buddha. The first is its practical use as clothing, the second is its ceremonial use as a religious garment, and the third is receiving it as the Buddha's body and mind. In India the *okesa* was used practically as clothing and as receiving the Buddha's body and mind. In Japan, however, its practical use disappeared, and only its uses as a ceremonial garment and as receiving the Buddha's body and mind remained. The formless teaching of the Buddha is contained in the form and shape of the *okesa*. The *okesa* that is made in the traditional way and is one with Buddha's teaching is called *nyohō-e*.

The *okesa* is a big rectangular cloth that Buddhist monks wrap around their bodies. In the history of the various Buddhist schools the *okesa* has changed over time into many

different forms. However, the *okesa* to be discussed here is the original one, *nyohō-e*, which has been handed down from India to China and Japan without changing its original teaching and form.

nyo Nyo is used as “as-it-is-ness” in the sense of showing the law or truth as it really is.
hō Hō means law, truth, or the Buddha’s teaching, or principle.
e E means robe, clothes.

When all three are put together it means that the law, or the Buddha’s teaching, is represented as it really is by means of one’s clothes or robe.

The First Patriarch, Bodhidharma, came from the west and stayed at Shaolin Temple, awaiting an opportunity to propagate the teaching. He sat gazing patiently at a wall until Hui-ko appeared in the last month of the year. Bodhidharma knew that here was a

vessel of the Supreme Vehicle, guided him, and later transmitted to him both the robe and the teaching. His descendants spread throughout the world, and the True Law has been handed down to this day.¹

Nyohō-e was transmitted from Shakyamuni Buddha to Bodhidharma in India, and in China from Bodhidharma to Taiso Eka Zenji (Hui-ko), from Eka Zenji to Dai-i Dōshin Zenji (Tao-hsin), from Dōshin Zenji to Daiman Kōnin Zenji (Hung-jen), from Kōnin Zenji to Daikan Enō Zenji (Hui-neng), the Sixth Patriarch, and on through successive Buddha’s disciples to Tendō Nyojō Zenji (Ju-ching), Eihei Dōgen Zenji’s teacher. Dōgen Zenji transmitted it to his descendents in Japan.

Recently, in May of 1971, the *nyohō-e* was brought by Eshun Yoshida Rōshi to San Francisco Zen Center. It was a great historical event in the transmission of Buddhism to the United States. Yoshida Rōshi was a disciple of Ekō Hashimoto Rōshi, who died on July 10, 1965. She died at the age of seventy-five on December 26, 1982.

Dōgen Zenji, at the age of twenty-five, was at Tien-tung-shan in China, doing zazen with many monks, when at the end of morning zazen he saw that a monk who sat next to him held up the *okesa* with both hands, put it on his head, and with *gassho* recited the verse of the *okesa*:

*Great robe of liberation!
Virtuous field far beyond form and emptiness
Wearing the Tathagata’s teaching
We vow to save all beings.*

After the monk chanted this verse three times he put on the *okesa*. Dōgen Zenji had never seen this great practice before; he was deeply impressed and even shed tears from a mingled feeling of joy and sorrow. He talks about this in the last part of the “Kesakudoku,” saying that his robe’s collar was wet from the tears.

When I was in Japan I read the Āgama-sutras and found the verse of the kesa; I also found that before one puts on the kesa they should put it on their head. I had not known when and how it correctly was to be done as I had asked my master and friends but none of them knew. I felt very sorrowful that

such a long span of time had passed wastefully without knowing how to handle a kesa in spite of having been at Hieizan for three years and at Kenninji for nine years. Now, I fortunately could see and hear with my own eyes and ears the manner in which to wear the kesa due to good deeds accumulated in previous existences. I was grateful and thankful. If I had stayed in Japan, I would not have had a chance to see this great scene. I took pity upon the people in my country because they could not see it.²

At this time, Dōgen Zenji quietly vowed to become a direct disciple of Bodhidharma, correctly transmitting the teaching of Shakyamuni Buddha. He vowed to see, listen to and wear Buddha's pure direct teaching. He vowed that all sentient beings would attain Buddhahood through seeing and wearing the *nyohō-e*, and through listening to the verse of the *okesa*. After he went back to Japan he strongly recommended to people that they wear the *nyohō-e* and by his

earnest vow many lay people and monks began to wear it.

Dōgen Zenji teaches us about the merit of the *okesa* in the *Shōbōgenzō* "Kesakudoku," or the merit of the *okesa*, and "Den-ne," or the transmission of the robe. He says we should understand that the *okesa* is the Buddha's body and Buddha's robe. Since the *okesa* stores the Buddha's pure teaching and the truth of life, it affects us in different ways, according to the circumstances of time and place. It is different from the usual clothes that we wear in our daily life; it is universal. When we assimilate it, the *okesa* works upon us as Buddha-dharma, and we can accept a *okesa* as the Buddha's body and mind, and as a living teacher instead of understanding it through theoretical study. Dōgen Zenji suggested to us that if we want to practice zazen, we, as a disciple of Buddha, should first receive the *okesa* through the ceremony of receiving the *okesa* (*okesa-juji shiki*) and through the ceremony of receiving the precepts (*jukai*). Then we can practice Buddha's zazen wearing the *okesa*. For a disciple of Buddha this is desired for an undeviating practice. It is said that if we

receive Buddha's teaching firmly believing that an *okesa* is Buddha-nature and not just a piece of fabric, then when we put the *okesa* on our body, our eyes become Buddha's eyes, our ears become Buddha's ears and our nose becomes Buddha's nose. We cannot understand this unless we throw away materialistic views of the *okesa*. Dainin Katagiri Rōshi uses the example of a ten-dollar bill to illustrate the same idea.

A ten-dollar bill is just a sheet of paper, but if we believe in its value and know how to deal with it, it works as money and helps our lives.

When doing zazen for even a minute we are Buddha. Dōgen Zenji mentioned the same teaching concerning the *okesa* in "Kesakudoku." The *okesa* is Buddha's robe, the robe is Buddha's body, Buddha's body is Buddha-dharma, and the Buddha-dharma is the *okesa* itself. The same idea is applied to the meaning of the *okesa*, *ōryōki*, and the *sōdō*, the place where we practice zazen. In terms of the external representation, the *sōdō* is regarded as housing, the *okesa* as clothing, and *ōryōki* as food. Each of them has a different form, but they are exactly the same

teaching There are three indispensable things in our life: clothing, food, and housing. For one's life to conform to Buddhist practice, one wears the *okesa* as clothing, uses *ōryōki* for eating and uses the *sōdō* for housing. This follows the discipline conforming to the Buddha's direct teaching, *nyohō*. For this reason, Dōgen Zenji says in the "Kesakudoku" that for one thousand years following Shakyamuni Buddha's entering nirvana, Buddha's disciples, monks and lay people wore the *nyohō-e* in India and China. In Japan, a country far from India, the Buddha's disciples who became monks shaved their heads, but had not received *nyohō-e*, even though they had the appearance of a monk. They did not know how to correctly transmit, receive and wear it nor that the *okesa* is made following three direct teachings of Buddha: *tai*, the material; *shiki*, dyeing color; and *ryō*, the size.

Three Nyohōs

How to take care of our life as a disciple of Buddha is a great problem for us and a great practice for us. If we always put ourselves into a modest life as a disciple of Buddha, naturally this modest attitude will appear in our clothing, food and housing. However, we are prone to the excessive pursuit of fine material, beautiful colors and unique style. This sense of seeking after beauty is not wrong; however, it often invites jealousy, contempt, stealing and the desire for luxury. In order not to cause even a little trace of these mistakes to arise, disciples of Buddha needed to take the most faithful care regarding the design, material, color and size of their clothing, so as to embody the formless Buddha's teaching in the form of the *okesa*.

The *okesa* is made following three important fundamental rules of Buddha's teaching concerning the material, color and size. When we make a *okesa* following these three *nyohōs* the *okesa* becomes *nyohō-e*. For a disciple of Buddha, these three *nyohōs* are contained not only in the *okesa*, but also in every aspect of practice. These three *nyohōs* are the basic attitude toward life.

Tai of Nyohō

(the rule of the material)

The *tai* of the *okesa* is the fabric that is needed to make it. In the "Kesakudoku" Dōgen Zenji says that the best material is called *funzō*. There are between four and ten different types of *funzō*: material that has been chewed by cattle, material that has been chewed by mice, material burned by fire, and material from the clothing or shrouds of the dead. These are perfect as *okesa* material.

Indians throw this cloth in the streets and in the fields just as they do excreta. It is called *pāmsula*. Monks pick up such cloth and wear it after having washed it and sewn the various pieces together. Although some of this cloth is cotton and some silk, no discrimination should be made between the two. We should deeply reflect on the meaning of *pāmsula*, *funzō*.

A monk once asked a famous Zen master, "Was the *Kaśāya* that was transmitted to the Patriarch Hui-neng at midnight on Mount Huang-mei made of cotton or silk?" The master answered, "Neither cotton nor silk." We should realize that this statement that a *kaśāya* is made of neither silk nor cotton is an excellent teaching of the Way.⁴

In order for the *okesa* material to be free from the thought of evil and attachment, the material, donor, and receiver must be perfectly clean spiritually and physically. We should not make distinctions about the material such as that linen is better than cotton, cambric is good, silk and wool are not good, this material is worthless, or this material is acceptable. Senryū Kamatani Rōshi says the following in his book, *Teishō Kesakudoku*: “The true meaning of *funzō* is ‘sweepings.’ *Funzō-e* is the *okesa* made from cast-off rags that were collected from garbage and from the streets. The unusable part was sorted away and the usable parts kept, washed and dyed into a darkish color, then sewn together into the rice-field pattern. You might feel it is dirty because the *funzō-e* was made entirely from material picked up from the garbage, but it is not; it is completely free from attachments such as love and hate. Nobody can create passion toward it, because

there is no value or quality to measure. If people had any attachment to it, they would not have discarded it as garbage.”⁵

It is difficult to determine what is good and what is evil. Laymen say it is good to wear luxurious silks, embroidered garments, and brocades; and bad to wear tattered and discarded rags. But in Buddhism it is the opposite: tattered robes are good and pure, richly embroidered garments are evil and soiled. The same applies to all other things as well.⁶

The *Madhyam-āgama-sūtra* states, “Virtuous men! Suppose that someone acts purely but speaks and things impurely. If a wise man sees this and becomes angry, it is necessary for him to eliminate his anger. Suppose again that someone acts impurely but speaks and thinks purely. If a wise man sees this and becomes angry, it is necessary for him to eliminate his anger. How can he do this? Virtuous men! He can do so by following in the footsteps of a solitary monk who picks up discarded cloth to make himself a *pāmsula*. Like the monk, if he finds the cloth soiled with excreta, urine, nasal mucus or anything else impure, he should pick it up with his left hand and, stretching it out with his right hand, tear off the unsoiled and holeless parts.

“Virtuous men! If someone acts impurely but speaks purely, do not think about his impure actions; rather simply think about his pure speech and thought. If a wise man sees such a person and becomes angry, he should eliminate his anger in the way I have described.”⁷

There are three types of *okesa*. The first type has been explained; it is made from discarded cloth. The second type of *okesa* is made from the feathers of birds or the fur of animals. If practitioners are unable to get hold of the first type of *okesa*, *funzō-e*, they should make this second type. “The third type of *okesa* is made of worn-out cloth that has been re-sewn. Monks should not wear a *okesa* made of fine material prized by the ordinary world.”⁸

In this modern age in Japan nobody throws away *funzōs* in the field or on the street as the people in India did. Even if you went to a dump you would be unable to find any *funzōs*, but in our day they could be found at a rummage sale or at a Goodwill store. When we have to buy the material, the same consideration of mind is needed as the spirit with which the *funzō* material is

collected. According to conditions and circumstances we should try to find less expensive material so as to refrain from luxury. When we offer or are offered material, we have to deal with it with a pure mind free from fame, wealth, love and hate as regards the material, donor and receiver. If the offering is not enough to make an *okesa*, we should devise a way to use it, such as adding other material. We should try to do our best to receive the offering of the donor's faith, whatever it is. This attitude means to be devoted to the Buddha's way.

Shiki of Nyohō

(the rule of the color)

Color that doesn't create sensual desire is in accord with *nyohō*. We create aesthetic impulses from the five primary colors: blue, yellow, red, white and black. Therefore, we refrain from using these colors in the *okesa*. The color that conforms to the *okesa* is modest and does not create a feeling of luxury, greed, or jealousy in the human mind. At the same time this modest color shows the difference between disciples of the Buddha and lay people. The point is to refrain from using people's favorite colors, such as bright colors, because then our life is free from greed, anger, and self-delusion. For this purpose the *okesa* material is dyed to an impure or blended color. A primary color and two or more different colors are blended to create a dull color that is hard to define. This blending of colors is the rule of dyeing.

Roughly speaking, blended colors are grouped into three: a blueish group, a reddish group and a yellowish group. The blueish group consists of a pine leaf-like color (dark green), greenish rust and

blueish black. In the "Kesakudoku," Dōgen Zenji says that the *okesa* the patriarchs transmitted from Bodhidharma was blueish black, and it was made from rough linen material. Senryū Kamatani Rōshi says in his *Teishō Kesakudoku* that the *okesa* Dōgen Zenji received from Nyojō Zenji was also the same color, blueish black.

Dōgen Zenji says in the "Kesakudoku" that Shakyamuni Buddha always wore a reddish black *okesa*. Generally speaking, the reddish black color is called *kaśāya* in Sanskrit, and *okesa* in Japanese. The word *okesa* is derived from this reddish black color, because this was a typical color used for the *okesa* in India. Kamatani Rōshi says in his *Teishō Kesakudoku* that in India monks dyed their *okesa* material into reddish black using the juice made from the bark and nuts of the gandha tree. Gandha trees have been growing here and there in India since the time of Shakyamuni Buddha. The dye obtained from the gandha trees was easy to get and handle and didn't harm the fabric. Each of the monks had to dye their own material,

and even though there was a certain method of dyeing, it resulted in many different tones.

According to Buddha's teaching, the color of the Buddhist robe must be a suitable color for practice. *Nyohō* color has to be that which is free from the expression of fame and reputation. Also dyeing the cloth into the *okesa* color means throwing one's body, mind and thought into the Buddha-dharma.

There is another ceremony of dyeing before a Buddhist practitioner receives a *okesa* that has already been dyed into the *okesa* color. This is called *tenjō* in Japanese. The *tenjō* ceremony is necessary when the *okesa* is made from new material, but it is not necessary when the *okesa* is made from used material. *Ten* means dot or stain, and *jō* means purity or

chastity. *Tenjō* means to reform an ordinary sense of value about clothing, food and housing and to be free from attachment to it. *Tenjō* is the ceremony of purification in which small dotted stains are put on the *okesa* or *zagu*. It is said in *Study of the Kesa*, compiled and edited under the supervision of Echu Kyuma Rōshi, that in the beginning "small dots were put on Buddhist belongings as a mark to distinguish them from the other monks' belongings." This changed into the meaning of purifying a new *okesa* or *zagu*, and today the idea of them as distinguishing marks has disappeared. As we know, Buddhist life makes a point of poverty; however, the offering of the material for the *okesa* was not always used material, sometimes it was new material. As a Buddhist, to take the new material for granted because it is not discarded fabric is not a desirable thing. Also we should reflect on how to use the new material with a modest attitude so as not to become self-indulgent. In this sense, the *tenjō* ceremony symbolizes that the material is no

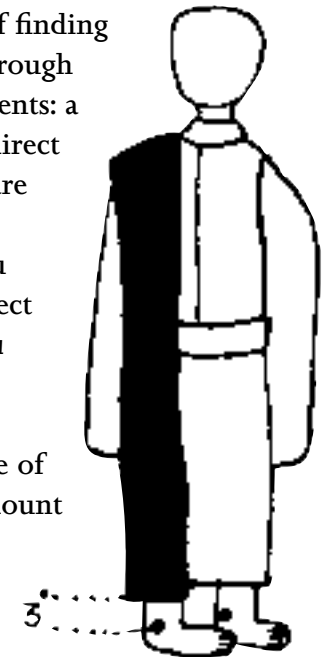
longer new.

Ryō of Nyohō

(the rule of the size)

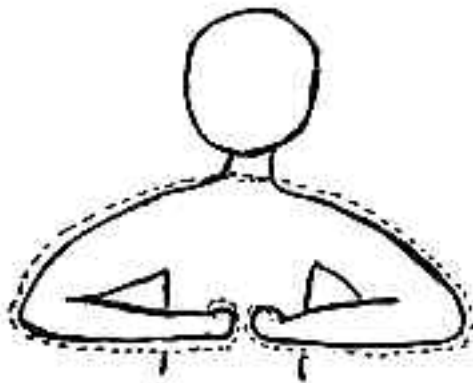
The rule of the size concerns the length and the width of an *okesa*. There are many different body shapes, so it is hard to standardize the size of an *okesa*. To wear an *okesa* practically in the proper way and in a well-kept manner, the *okesa* was made according to individual size through individual body measurements.

There are two ways of finding the size of an *okesa* through one's body measurements: a direct way and an indirect way. These two ways are explained in *Hōbuku-kakushō* by Mokushitsu Ryō yō Zenji. The direct way is by putting *okesa* material on a person who is going to wear it, and finding the size of the *okesa* from the amount of material needed. The person hangs the material vertically



from the top of the shoulder down their back to the ground. The end of the material should come three inches, or the width of four fingers, above the ankle. The fabric's length, from the top of the shoulder to three inches above the ankle, is the *okesa's* width.

To determine the length of the *okesa* one grabs the material on the top corners and drapes it over their shoulders from behind, bringing their fists together in front of them.



The indirect way of finding the correct *okesa* size is to calculate the size using parts of the body as basic units of measurement. The distance from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger or from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger of a fist are the two basic units of measurement. The elbow measurement is called the *chū* size or *chūryō* in Japanese, and it is used to determine the *okesa's* length and width. Basically, three times the *chūryō* measurement is used as the width and five times is used as the length. For determining smaller units of measurement the distance between the stretched thumb and stretched middle finger, the



nobe-chū



ken-chū



taku-shu or chō-shu

width of the finger, and the width of a grain of wheat or a pea are used.

Nyohō-e is often interpreted as the *okesa* that Shakyamuni Buddha and his disciples wore, but *nyohō-e* is also the *okesa* made correctly following the rules concerning material, color, size and sewing according to the teaching of the Dharma.

Each row is made of one short piece and two long pieces. The overlapped parts within each row and between rows are called the *yō*. The top *yōs* always cover the next lower piece and the central rows cover the outer rows. This construction symbolizes the water flowing smoothly in the rice fields, from the center to the right and left sides, and from the top to the bottom.

because it is in a lower position. Buddha-nature really permeates everywhere. What is short is short of itself; what is long is long of itself. There is no difference between a long piece and a short piece.

Decchō-e is made when there is an insufficient amount of material to make a *kassetsu-e*. *Yōs* are made from different pieces of fabric and are sewn onto one *okesa*-size piece of fabric.

Shōyō-e or *kusshō-e* is made from one large piece of fabric. The *yōs* are folds of the *okesa*-size fabric itself. I have never seen a *kusshō-e*, so I hesitate to talk about it.

Man-ne is an *okesa* that does not have any rows or *yōs*; it is just like a big frame of a rice field without a foot path between the fields.

We make one of the four types of *okesa* following the Buddha's teaching of the rule of the material,

the rule of the color and the rule of the size, depending upon the amount and condition of the material allotted to us.

When we sew any of the *okesas* it should always be sewn with a kind of backstitch called *kyakushi* in Japanese. We use running stitches for general hand sewing, but these are different from the stitches used on *okesas*. The *kyakushi* stitch is similar to the backstitch and takes a lot of time, because for every stitch that goes forward, the next goes downward.

Senryū Kamatani Rōshi says in this book *Teishō Kesakudoku* that the *kyakushi* way of sewing, back and forth with every stitch, shows us the truth of Buddha's teaching. Immanent in the *kyakushi* stitch is the practice and teaching of "eko hensho," "Just turn your light inward and reflect." This way of sewing is a stitch forward, and then one backward. We do it this way over and over again. If one has some time for sewing and the vow to make the *okesa* with deep consideration and full devotion for every stitch, even an unskilled person can make an *okesa*. I remember that in 1971 ten children,

ages eight to eleven, made their own *rakus* with their parents. (The *rakusu* is a small version of the *okesa*, primarily for lay people.)

When I practiced *okesa* sewing under Eshun Yoshida Rōshi, I was taught the following sewing manner. At the beginning of each sewing session, we light a candle and offer incense on the altar. Then we bow in front of the altar three times. After that we begin with the same mind as when we do *zazen*, and with every stitch we recite in silence one of the verses of the Triple Treasure, "I take refuge in the Buddha." After sewing we again bow three times.

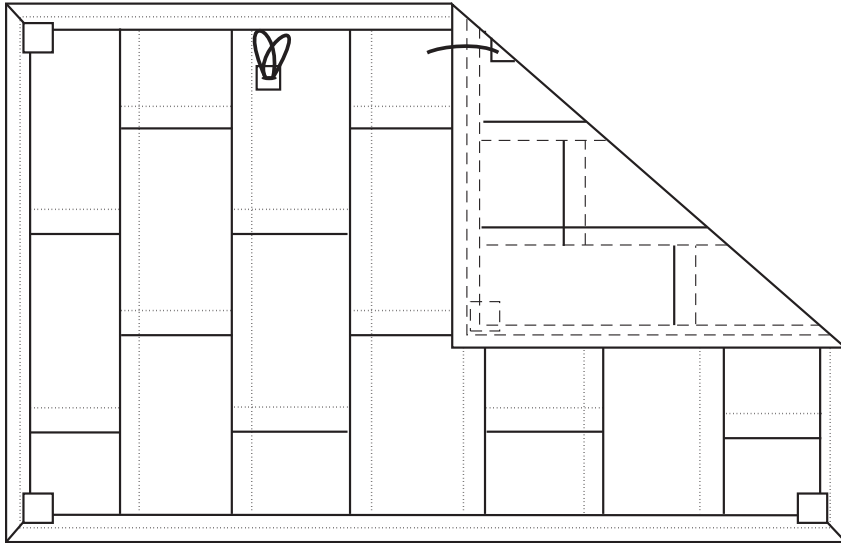
Ian Kishizawa Rōshi says in his book *Kesakudoku Kōwa* that there is a rule for the length of time for sewing the *okesa* (a law made by Shakyamuni Buddha). An *okesa* of nine rows is to be made in five days, an *okesa* of seven rows is to be made in four days and an *okesa* of five rows is to be made in two days. However, Dōgen Zenji says in *Kesakudoku* that this rule concerning the number of sewing days is no longer adhered to.

Senryū Kamatani Rōshi says that when sewing an *okesa*, it is best to do so in a specific length of time. If one starts making an *okesa*, one often has a tendency to become insistent and thoughtless because of the desire to finish it as soon as possible and to ignore other tasks or duties that one has to carry out. During the *shōbō** period, monks took many days to sew an *okesa*; it was an obstacle to the practice of

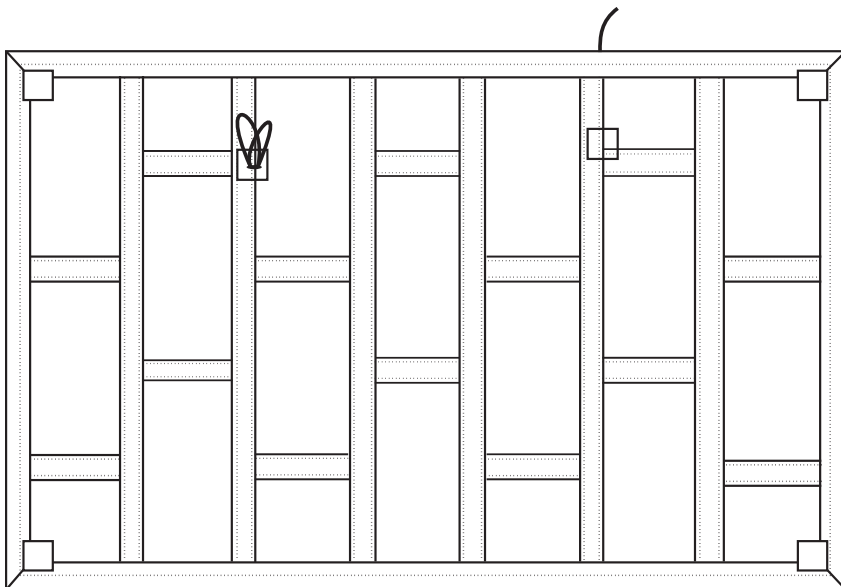
others in the Sangha life, so the sewing time was limited. During the *mappō** period, in the present time, it is a little difficult to follow this law, unless one can sew the *okesa* in the time permitted without disturbing others. One should try one's best to do it within the time permitted. Your faith in making the *okesa* is very important and one should not be neglectful or misunderstand that "I do not have to hurry or I do not have the time now." When you awaken to the thought of making an *okesa*, just find

the sewing time and do it with a vow to complete it with a calm mind. Then you have to receive the *okesa* that you have made by yourself from your teacher in the *okesa*-receiving ceremony.

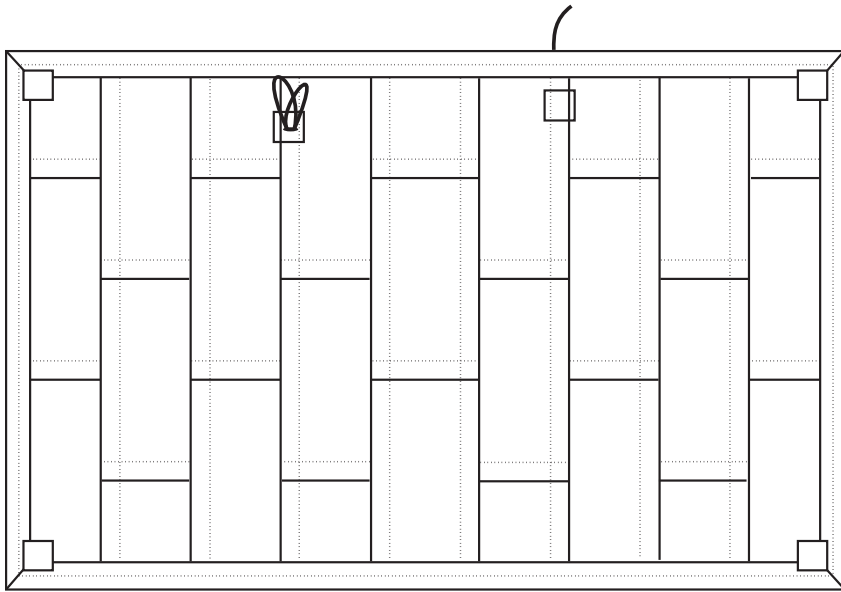
* Three periods after the Buddha's death: *shōbō* period, the period of the correct doctrine, is the period when Buddhist doctrine, practice and enlightenment all exist (for 500 to 1000 years); *zōbō* period, the period of the semblance, is the period when both doctrine and practice still exist, but there is no longer any enlightenment (for 1000 years); *mappō* period, the period of decay and termination, is the last 10,000 years, when the doctrine itself vanishes.



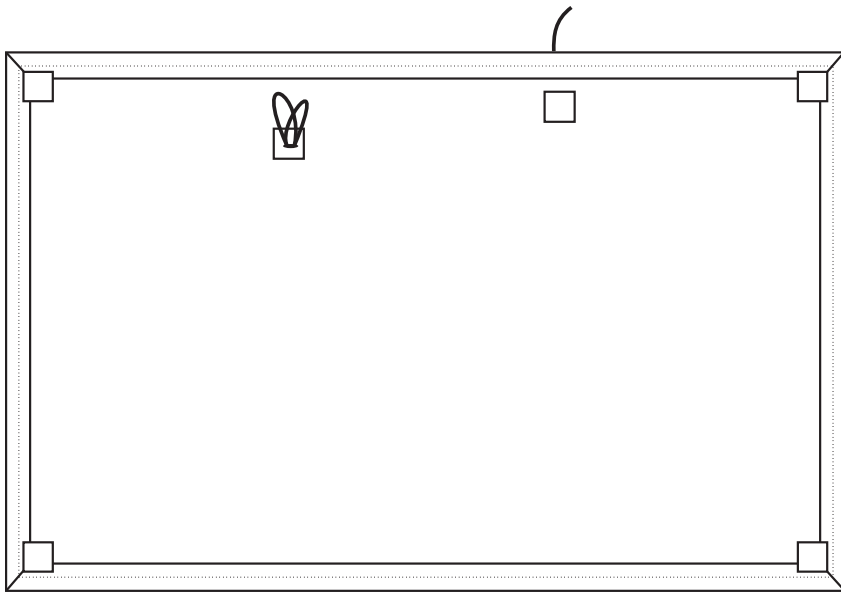
Seven-row *kasāya*,
shichijō-e or *uttarasanga*,
kassetsu-e style



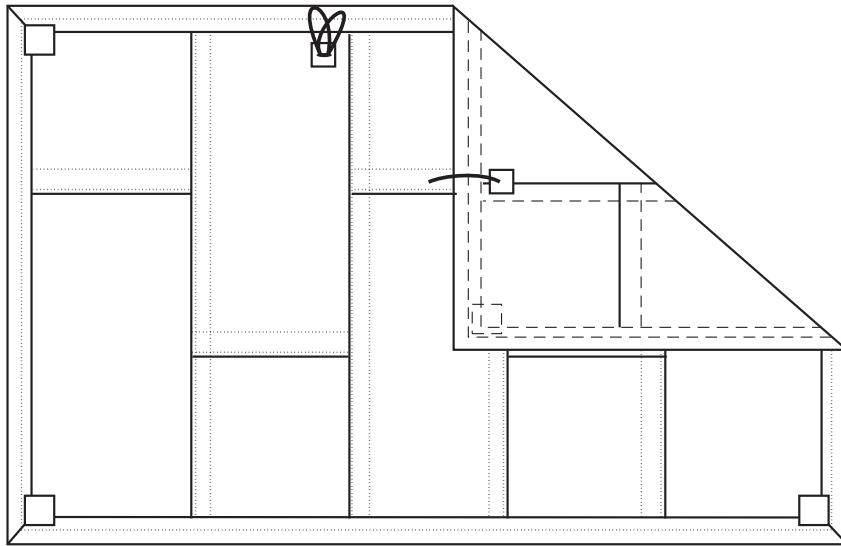
Seven-row *kasāya*,
decchō-e or
chōyō-e style



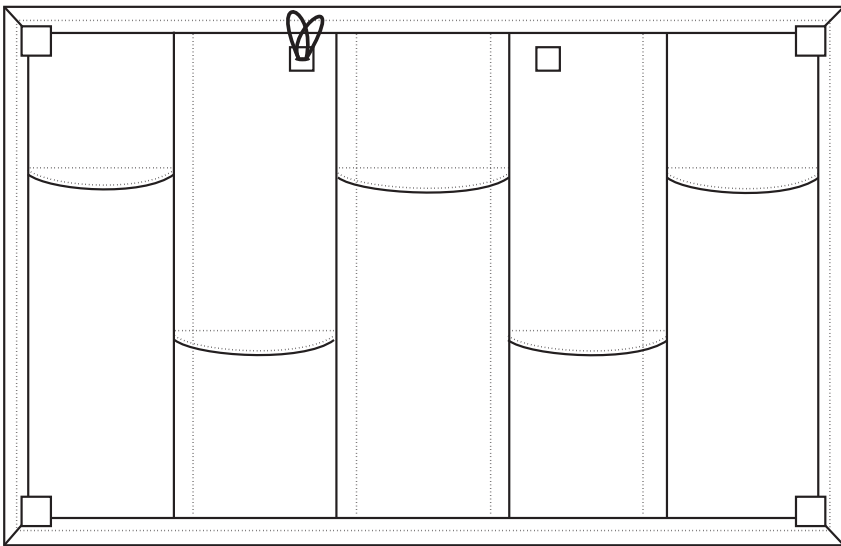
Nine row *kasāya*,
kujō-e or *sanghati*,
kassetsu-e style



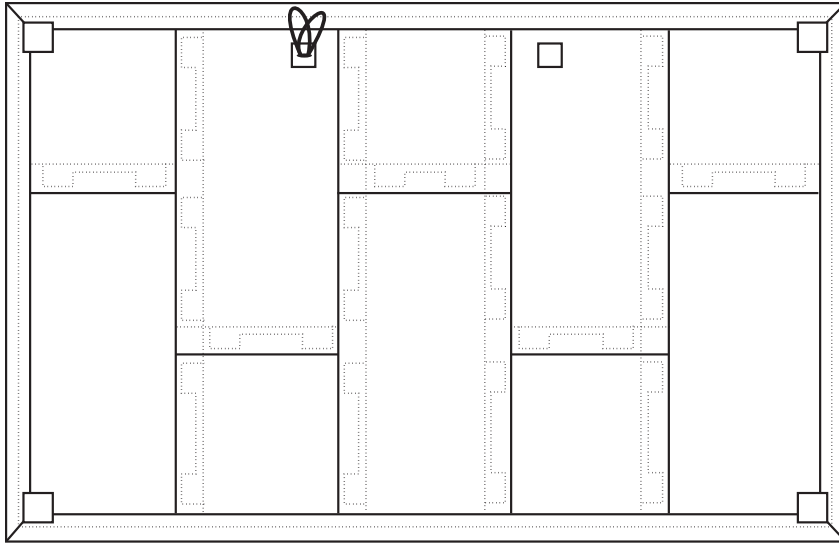
Man-ne or *patta*



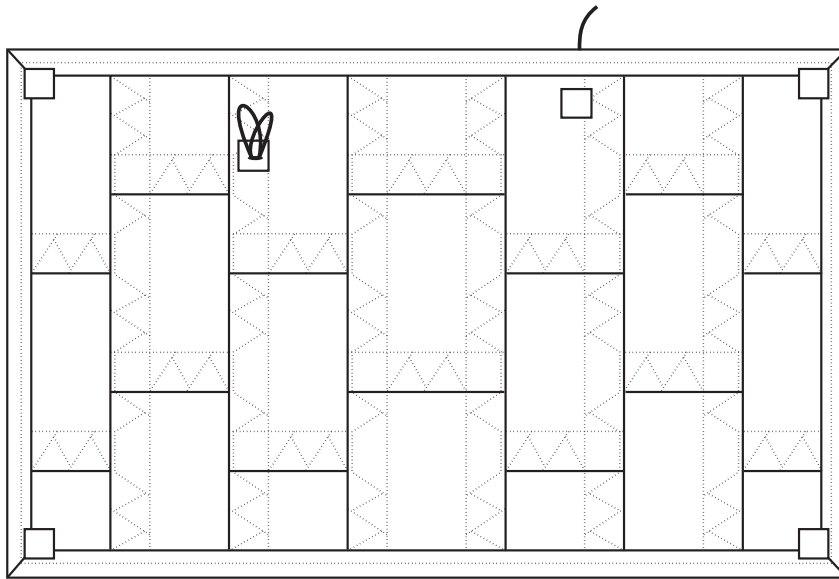
Five-row *kaśāya*,
gojō-e or *antaravasa*,
kassetsu-e style



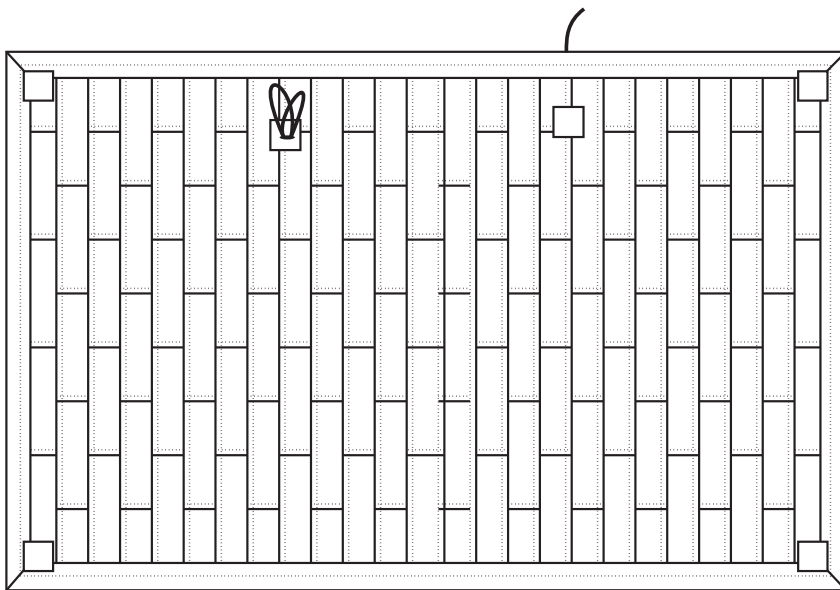
Five-row *kaśāya*,
shōyō-e or,
kusshō-e style



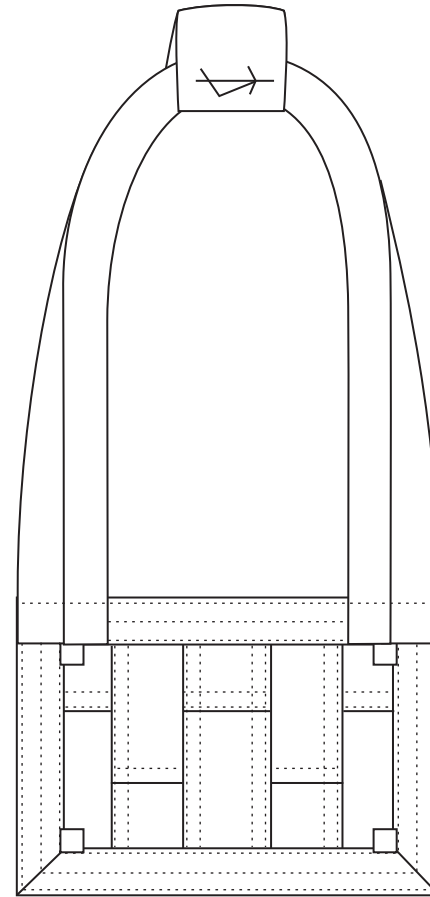
Five-row *kaśāya*,
meshi-nui style
 (*Meshi* means horse's teeth. The stitches go in the manner of a horse's teeth.)



Seven-row *kaśāya*,
chōsoku-nui style
 (*Chōsoku* means bird's feet. The stitches go in the manner of a bird's footprint.)



Twenty-five-row *kaśāya*,
nijugojo-e or *sanghati*,
kassetsu-e style



Rakusu

San-ne

(three regulation garments of Buddha's disciples)

There are three kinds of *okesas*.

The first one is made with five vertical rows, each with one short piece and one long piece. This is called a five-row *kesa*, *gojō-e* in Japanese. The second one is made from seven vertical rows, each with one short piece and two long pieces. This is called a seven-row *okesa*, *shichijō-e* in Japanese.

The third one is made from nine vertical rows, each with one short and two long pieces. This is called a nine-row *okesa*, *kujo-e* in Japanese. *Okesa* with nine or more rows are called *dai-e* in Japanese.

Dai-e are made with 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, and 25 rows; the 25-row *okesa* is the largest. *Dai* means large or big in Japanese; this "large" does not refer to the large SIZE of the *okesa*, but to the large NUMBER of rows.

From the *shōbō* period to the present *mappō* period, in Southeast Asia and India, monks receive only these three kinds of *okesas*, and they have no other possessions except the *ōryōki*, the Buddha bowl.

Shakyamuni Buddha felt that the way of monks was different from that of other practitioners. The practice of Buddhism lies between the extremes of asceticism and hedonism. Also, Shakyamuni Buddha felt that monks should cover the parts of the body that give rise to the impulse of sensual stimulation in others. Followers of Jainism practiced without any clothes for the purpose of being free from their sensual and other worldly desires; therefore they did not feel shy because of their nakedness. They may be free from sensual desire; however, the naked body unconsciously may hinder others by evoking sensual desire in ordinary people. To make others feel shame is a careless act. Shakyamuni Buddha felt that regardless of whether other people were present or not, monks should cover the parts of their bodies that could cause others to feel shame, and that they should wear the *okesa* as their

clothing. In order not to be greedy they are to keep only three *okesas*. Having three *okesas*, we are taught not to pursue more than is necessary for complete knowledge.

Monks have to carry the *san-ne* and *ōryōki* with them wherever they go. To leave the *san-ne* behind is an infraction of the precepts. Dōgen Zenji strictly admonishes us not to wear the *okesa* unless it is in good repair because to do so is the extinction of the Buddha-dharma, Buddha's teaching. We should not forget this mind of Dōgen Zenji, which is bent on the right way. The awareness of the treasure of being disciples of Buddha, Buddha containers, is cultivated by wearing the *okesa*. Out of compassion, so as not to break the rule, monks should not leave the *san-ne* behind. The tradition of the *shōsan-ne* was started in the time of Keizan Zenji (1269-1325, founder of Sōjiji temple in Japan.) *Shō* means small, and *shōsan-ne* is a miniature size *san-ne*. Monks carry *shōsan-ne* with them instead of the *san-ne* when they travel. When they are not traveling it is placed on the altar. There are many kinds of chores in a monk's daily life, such as cleaning,

making firewood, working in the kitchen, gardening, and so on. When monks are doing their chores they wear the five-row *okesa* as a work robe, because it was the clothing of Buddha's disciples in India. The traditional custom of wearing the five-row *okesa* for physical labor has been kept in China and Japan. Also the five-row *okesa* is worn when traveling and when monks stay in their rooms. In Japan, Korea and the West, the small version of the five-row *okesa*, the *rakusu*, may be worn for working and traveling. *Man-ne* can be worn as a substitute for the five-row *okesa*. The seven-row *okesa* is worn when participating in public activities such as services, chanting sutras, listening to lectures, begging, sitting zazen and eating meals. To enter these activities is called *nyūjū* in Japanese. Because the seven-row *okesa* is worn during *nyūjū* it is also called *nyūjū-e*. *Dai-es* are worn when teaching, doing

takuhatsu, conducting ceremonies, and when a priest is asked to give a lecture to the emperor at the palace. The practice of *takuhatsu* may seem to be only a beggar's activity, but the true meaning of *takuhatsu* is a most important way of teaching people. When monks go to towns or villages for *takuhatsu*, people's eyes fall upon their *okesa*. Looking at the forms of the *okesa* makes a deep connection with Buddha-dharma. It can be said that to see the *okesa* is to sow the seed of deliverance, as it is the coming together of conditions, teaching unsurpassed enlightenment. Also *takahatsu* teaches us "giving," which is the first of the Six Paramitas, or perfections. These are the reasons why the *dai-e* is also worn when a monk is doing *takahatsu*.

Each of the three *okesas* also has other uses. When the temperature is warm, the five-row *okesa* is worn next to the skin; as the temperature gets colder, the seven-row *okesa* is worn on top of the five-row *okesa*. When the temperature gets very cold, the *dai-e* is worn on top of the seven-row *okesa*. It is said that on a very cold evening in

December, Shakyamuni Buddha was wearing only a five-row *okesa*. During the night the temperature became colder, so he put the seven-row *okesa* on top of the five-row *okesa*. By daybreak it was very difficult to keep warm with only two layers, so he put on a nine-row *okesa*. It was at this time that Shakyamuni Buddha said that during extremely cold weather monks who cannot withstand the cold may wear these three *okesas* on top of each other.

The custom of wearing the five-row *okesa* next to the skin as an undergarment has been changed in China and Japan, because of the different climates. Monks in these northern countries have worn monk's clothing such as the *koromo* or other clothes between their skin and the *okesa*.

Rakusu

A *rakusu* is made from the basic structure of the five-row *okesa*, so it is a kind of *okesa*. It has a lining and is made from five vertical rows, each with one short piece and one long piece, using the *nyohō* material, color and way of cutting; however, it doesn't follow *nyohō* size. Therefore, strictly speaking, to call it *nyohō-e* is not correct; however, we must not cling too much to form. We need to receive it in the correct way, through the receiving ceremony and precepts ceremony, and then treat it the same as we treat an *okesa*. Ian Kishizawa Rōshi says in his book *Kesakudoku Kōwa* that in the middle of the nineteenth century, in the Meiji Restoration in Japan, the government and the people simplified many things. At that time the *rakusu* was created.

How to Wash an Okesa

Senryu Kamatani Rōshi says the following in his book *Teishō Kesakudoku*:

The way of washing okesa is quite different from washing other clothes. As Dōgen Zenji says in Kesakudoku, when we wash the okesa we totally have to treat the okesa as Buddha's body from the beginning to the end. There are two kinds of substances that can be used for cleaning: lye water made from the ash of burned clean grass or wood (people soak the ash in water, then leach out the ash). This was the best cleaning substance long ago. The other substance is fragrant water which is made by putting incense (not stick incense but a piece of aromatic wood such as sandalwood, china berry or aloes wood) into boiling water. At the present time, we do not have to make lye or fragrant water because there are many good cleaning substances, and we can choose a suitable one for the okesa. First, prepare a clean tub. Then prepare a clean clothes line. Pour boiled lye or fragrant water into the tub and soak the unfolded okesa in the water. Then wait for the water to cool (about two hours). After the water has cooled, empty out the water

and then pour clean water into the tub. Wash the okesa with both hands by dipping it into and out of the water without squeezing it. Then change the water. Repeat this many times until the water becomes clean. At the final washing, the okesa is purified by using cold water containing a piece of aromatic wood.

Dry the okesa on a clean and purified clothes line wiped with the fragrant water or spread the okesa on a clean and purified board wiped with fragrant water.

After it has dried, fold it in the correct way and put it in an elevated place. Offer incense and flowers to the okesa and walk with gassho around it clockwise several times. This walking shows the highest respect to Buddha. Then do three or nine kneeling bows to the okesa. Receive the okesa with both hands, and put it on your head. Recite the verse of the okesa three times with gassho. Then put it on while kneeling or standing, so as not to touch the okesa on the ground.

How to Wear an Okesa

Shakyamuni Buddha admonishes us in a law (Dharmagupta's version of one of four *Vinaya*) about how we should properly wear an *okesa*. The first prerequisite is that the *okesa* needs to be large enough to cover at least the navel and both knees, about one third of the body. Since the monks in India wear nothing underneath their five-row *okesa*, the *okesa* must be the proper length and worn correctly. Second, as practical clothing, it has to be the correct size for each individual. Third, it has to be worn correctly, not carelessly.

At the end of morning zazen, monks gassho to the *okesa*, take it out of the case, hold it up with both hands, and put it on their head. Then with gassho they recite the verse of the *okesa* three times, and then they put the *okesa* on. Every time we are going to wear a *okesa* we do the same thing.

When wearing an *okesa* we should be careful not to sit or step on it. Also make sure the bottom hem is straight when you are standing and sitting so that the *okesa* properly covers your front. If you wear no clothing under the *okesa*, of course your navel and both knees should be covered.

There are two ways of wearing an *okesa*. Ordinarily, the *okesa* is worn so that one's left shoulder is covered, leaving the right exposed. This is the method most often used when wearing the *okesa*. In China, Japan and the United States, monks wear the *koromo* and laypeople wear clothes under the *okesa*, so one's bare shoulder does not show. In India clothes are not worn under the *okesa* so the right shoulder is exposed. This style is the form used in serving, and showing respect to seniors in India. If the right arm is free from the *okesa* or clothing, it indicates that one is ready to serve at any time. This also makes it convenient for monks to work. The other way of wearing the *okesa* is to cover both shoulders. In the latter case, however, even though the

shoulders are covered, the upper part of the chest may or may not be exposed. This way is used by the Tathagata and elderly senior monks. A monk should not use this method when he or she is in the company of seniors. When a senior monk conducts an important ceremony the *okesa* is worn in this way. Dōgen Zenji advises us about the way of wearing an *okesa* in the *Kesakudoku* as follows:

There are many other ways of wearing an okesa. In order to learn, the best way is to closely ask the teacher, who correctly transmitted the teaching of Shakyamuni Buddha, again and again until you understand it.

Taking Care of the Okesa

When we are not wearing the *okesa*, we should put it in a case or wrapper (*fukusa* in Japanese), and put it on an altar. When carrying it we should also put it in a case, and keep it separate from other clothes.

As disciples of Buddha, we should not forget that a *rakusu* or *ōryōki* is Buddha. People forget that they are Buddha and put them in the wrong place because they do not have the Buddha's image on them. This is regrettable as disciples of Buddha, and we need to be more mindful. Even if you cannot understand that the *okesa* is Buddha, just believe it and honestly treat it as such. Doing this is called *sangaku gubu*; literally, *sangaku gubu* means "to learn zazen with concentrated reflection." However, to learn zazen is not to try to understand it through our head.

It is beyond understanding or not understanding: just believe it and try to practice as Shakyamuni Buddha taught.

If our *okesa* needs mending we should repair it immediately. To wear an *okesa* without mending is the same as not wearing it at all. Furthermore it is an infraction of the precepts, which means a lack of reflection on the part of Buddha's disciple. Ejō Zenji asked Dōgen Zenji about what to do with wornout *okesas* in the *Zuimonki*. "If a monk refuses to throw away an old, mended robe, it looks as though he is coveting it. If he throws away an old robe and acquires a new one, he seems to be attached to the new. Both views are wrong. What attitude should one take?" Dōgen Zenji answered, "If you can free yourself from both covetousness and attachment, neither will be wrong. Wouldn't it be better, though, to mend a torn robe and use it for a long time rather than long for a new one?"

Ten Excellent Merits

The Buddha has said, "If one shaves their head and puts on a *kaśāya*, they will be protected by all the Buddhas and venerated by celestial beings." From this, it can be clearly understood that when we shave our head and put on a *kaśāya* we will be protected by all the Buddhas. Through this protection we can completely realize the merit of the supreme Bodhi-wisdom, being venerated by both celestial beings and human beings. The Buddha once told the Bhikṣu Jnanaprabha,

The *kaśāya* of the great virtuous field is endowed with ten excellent merits. Worldly clothing often increases our defilements, but the Tathagata's robe does not. A *kaśāya* has the following merits:⁹

(1) The robe prevents us from being ashamed and allows us to complete repentant life. It becomes the field bringing virtue to us.

(2) The robe protects us from cold, heat, and poisonous insects. By increasing the strength of Bodhi-mind, it leads us to the ultimate identity.

(3) The robe manifests a home-leaver and removes greed. In freedom from the five perverted views, it leads us to the correct practice.

When we see the appearance of a monk, we do not think of doing anything with an unwholesome mind. The *okesa* influences not only the person wearing it, but also others who see the person wearing it. The *okesa*-wearing figure of a monk inevitably evokes a sense of the spiritual joy from merging with Buddha's teaching. The monk's carriage, shaved head and wearing of an *okesa*, are the manifestation of unsurpassed penetrating and perfect Dharma.¹⁰

(4) If the robe is respectfully accepted as a precious banner and paid homage to with bowing, it gives rise to the virtue of the Brahma King.

It is said Brahma is the highest realm in the Rupadhatu, the world of form that is far better than the world of desire we live in. The inhabitants who live there are beyond materialistic desires, specifically carnal desire. They live only on spirituality, that is, in the state of purity and serenity. Brahma is the chief of the first Dhyana heaven in the Rupadhatu. It is said we can be reborn as the Brahma. The idea of being reborn as Brahma seems desirable, but strictly speaking both Brahma and the human world are the deluded world, after all.¹¹

(5) If a disciple of the Buddha wears the robe, whenever he thinks of it as a stupa, it will bring virtue into being, remove karmic hindrances, and create awareness among human and celestial beings.

(6) A true monk is well ordered by virtue of wearing the robe with respect, for his actions are not disgraced by worldly desires.

By wearing dull-colored clothing, monks are kept away from the five desires (the five sense objects). When one becomes freed from the sense objects, the attachment to them disappears naturally. The dull blended color used for the *okesa* is based on the Buddha's compassion, which leads to no stimulation of the five senses that would create attachment to its color. The same applies to a way of selecting *okesa* material and size.¹²

(7) The robe is so adorned that the Buddha names it as a good field, for this is the best way for the benefit and comfort of all beings.

The deluded world is based on ignorance as the bedrock of the five desires and the five hindrances. The five desires are the desires for property, carnality, food, fame, and sleep. These may be called the faculty

of instinct inherent in all living beings. Hindrance means that which conceals the virtuous function of mind and heart. The five are (1) covetousness, the more one eats the more rapacious he is; (2) anger, harping tediously on a trivial matter with anger and becoming blind to true reality; (3) sleep; (4) doubt; (5) drowsiness or torpor, being so tediously anxious about one's mistakes that one feels pitiful and ashamed, and neglects the day-to-day work that one has to fulfill. Ignorance is the root of these five desires and the five hindrances, which make one's understanding of reality obscure or cloudy.

Since the *okesa* is called *fukuden-e*, or "the robe of the field of virtue," we are naturally blessed with virtuous qualities if we wear it every day.¹³

(8) The supernatural power of the robe is inconceivable and plants the practice of Bodhi.

By putting on an *okesa*, our delusions are cut off and, therefore, we no longer produce further suffering. Then unwholesome mind disappears by means of the virtue of the practice of wearing the *okesa*. Learning the precept of the ten excellent doings is practiced by keeping the Ten Grave Prohibitory Precepts. All of our good deeds grow in every moment by the merit of the *okesa*.¹⁴

(9) The sprout of the Way grows like a young plant in spring; the subtle result of the Bodhi resembles fruits in fall.

Since the *okesa* is wholly filled with the Three Pure Precepts, it is free from all evil, and it always works for goodness. Much virtue or merit originates from the *okesa* that you wear. The *okesa* strengthens the practice of cultivating the Six Paramitas: giving, keeping the precepts, patience,

devotion, meditation and wisdom. When we perfectly practice the Six Paramitas we can save all beings including ourselves. So the *okesa* can be called a field of virtue.¹⁵

(10) The true steadfast vajra armor is unable to be damaged by the poisonous arrow of defilement.

This means when we put the *okesa* on, we are never harmed by any kind of persecution or hindrance from the external world, nor can any kind of delusion pass through the strong armor of the *okesa*. By putting on the *okesa* we become free from the five desires, and then we can practice the Bodhisattva's way perfectly. The erroneous mind becomes tranquil, we do not miss awareness of ourselves, and we are perturbed by nothing at any time or any place. We never become unsettled from our original self.¹⁶

Immeasurable merits are contained in these ten excellent benefits.

Senryu Kamatani Rōshi says the following in the *Teishō Kesakudoku*:

Dōgen Zenji says in the Kesakudoku that we should carefully study and learn about the ten excellent merits of the okesa. However, we should not say “I understand well” after reading it only a few times; we should not leave the reading or studying of it even if we feel it is difficult to understand. To understand the true value of okesa is not an easy matter, so we cannot master it over a short period of time. We should seriously consider each word and verse.¹⁷

Dōgen Zenji says, “I could continue talking about the merit of the *okesa* forever, and the merit would not be exhausted. In my entire life I could not fully express it. It is that vast and boundless. Even though

you have read “*Kesakudoku*” or sutras many times, every time you read you will feel the teaching is fresher and your understanding will become deeper and deeper. The same thing can be said about zazen or other practices.”

These are Dōgen Zenji’s most vehement words. The *okesa* does not become worthy of respect nor do its benefits increase or decrease by practice. The benefits come from the attributes of the *okesa* itself. We should not forget this and should believe it is so. How we can smoothly become Buddha, how we can reach supreme perfect Bodhi, is inevitably realized by wearing the *okesa*. Dōgen Zenji says, “I have never heard of any person, in the past or present, who has realized Buddha without wearing a *okesa*; anyone can become a Buddha.” So, Dōgen Zenji honestly recommends that we wear the *okesa*, which has been transmitted to us from Shakyamuni Buddha through successive ancestors.

Notes to Text

1. Reihō Masunaga, *A Primer of Sōtō Zen*, (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1971) p. 63.
2. Dōgen Zenji, *Shōbōgenzō*, “Kesakudoku.”
3. Yūhō Yokoi, *Zen Master Dōgen*, (NY, Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1976) p. 94.
4. Ibid.
5. Senryū Kamatani Rōshi, *Shōbōgenzō Kesakudoku*, “Kesakudoku Teishō,” ed. Eshun Yoshida Rōshi, recorded by Ryūmyō Yoshida, (Kaizenji, 1976).
6. Reihō Masunaga, *A Primer of Sōtō Zen*, op cit., p. 71.
7. Yūhō Yokoi, *Zen Master Dōgen*, op cit., pp. 104-105.
8. Ibid., p. 99.
9. Dōgen Zenji, *Shōbōgenzō*, “Merit of Kaśāya.”
(This footnote applies to all ten excellent merits.)
10. Ian Kishizawa Rōshi, *Shōbōgenzō Kōwa*, “Kesakudoku Teisho,” recorded by Chōshin Kadowaki, ed. Shūken Fukuyama.
11. Senryū Kamatani Rōshi, *Shōbōgenzō Kesakudoku*, “Kesakudoku Teishō,” op cit.
12. Ibid.
13. Ian Kishizawa Rōshi, *Shōbōgenzō Kōwa*
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Senryū Kamatani Rōshi, *Shōbōgenzō Kesakudoku*, “Kesakudoku Teishō,” op cit.

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- Gakusui Nagahisa, “Kesa Ittōroku,” article on monthly reading of “Shuhō,” Sōtō School Headquarters.
- Kōdō Sawaki, *Shōbōgenzō Kōwa*, “Kesakudoku,” (Daihōrinkaku, 1964).
Shōbōgenzō “Den-ne,” (Daihōrinkaku, 1964). Editorial supervisor, *Kesa no Kenkyū* (Study of Kesa), ed. Kyūma Echu, (Daihōrinkaku, 1967).

Okesa

The Way of Finding the Size of the Okesa

Elbow Length Size (Chū size)

The length of one elbow varies according to the individual and is measured separately for each person. It is the distance from your elbow to the tip of your middle finger. This length is the basic unit of measurement. (It does not matter whether measurements are taken with a metric or inch ruler.) The elbow measurement (chū size) is used to calculate the okesa's length vertically and horizontally.

The method for calculating the measurements of okesas is as follows:

Nine (or more) Row Okesa (Dairyō Okesa)

Horizontal measurement = (one elbow length) x 5
Vertical measurement = (one elbow length) x 3

Seven Row Okesa (Chūryo Okesa)

Horizontal measurement = [(one elbow length) x 5] minus [(5 elbow lengths) divided by 20]
Vertical measurement = [(one elbow length) x 3] minus [(3 elbow lengths) divided by 20]

Five Row Okesa (Shōryo Okesa)

Horizontal measurement = [(one elbow length) x 5] minus [(5 elbow lengths) divided by 10]
Vertical measurement = [(one elbow length) x 3] minus [(3 elbow lengths) divided by 10]

Yō and En

The *yō* is the overlapped area of two sewn pieces. The finished overlap is two or three fingers' width, 1.5" or 2.25" (1 sun or 1 sun, 5 bu in Japanese traditional measurements).

The *en* is the border around the edge of the *okesa*. The finished width of the *en* is the same as the *yō*.

For strength, all *ens* should not be narrower than 2 finger widths, 1.5".

Dankyaku

Dankyaku are the finished horizontal and vertical measurements of the short (*tan*) and long (*chō*) pieces. These are the finished measurements that appear between the stitching of *yō* and *yō*, or *yō* and *en*. (See figure 1.)

Horizontal finished measurements for the *dankyaku* are the same for both *chō* and *tan* pieces. The method for determining the horizontal *dankyaku* are as follows:

Nine Row Okesa

$$\left[(\text{one elbow length} \times 5) \text{ minus } [(y\bar{o} \times 8) + (\text{en} \times 2)] \right] \text{ divided by } 9$$

34

Seven Row Okesa

$$\left[(\text{one elbow length} \times 5) \text{ minus } (5 \text{ elbow lengths divided by } 20) \text{ minus } [(y\bar{o} \times 6) + (\text{en} \times 2)] \right] \text{ divided by } 7$$

Five Row Okesa

$$\left[(\text{one elbow length} \times 5) \text{ minus } (5 \text{ elbow lengths divided by } 10) \text{ minus } [(y\bar{o} \times 4) + (\text{en} \times 2)] \right] \text{ divided by } 5$$

Vertical finished measurements for the *chō* and *tan dankyaku* are as follows:

Tan (Short) Dankyaku

Nine Row Okesa

$[(\text{one elbow length} \times 3) \text{ minus } (4 \text{ yō} + 2 \text{ en})]$ divided by 5

Seven Row Okesa

$[(\text{one elbow length} \times 3) \text{ minus } [(3 \text{ elbow lengths}) \text{ divided by } 20] \text{ minus } (4 \text{ yō} + 2 \text{ en})]$ divided by 5

Five Row Okesa:

$[(\text{one elbow length} \times 3) \text{ minus } [(3 \text{ elbow lengths}) \text{ divided by } 10] \text{ minus } (2 \text{ yō} + 2 \text{ en})]$ divided by 3

35

Chō (Long) Dankyaku

Nine Row Okesa:

2 short *dankyaku* + 1 *yō*

Seven Row Okesa:

2 short *dankyaku* + 1 *yō*

Five Row Okesa:

2 short *dankyaku* + 1 *yō*

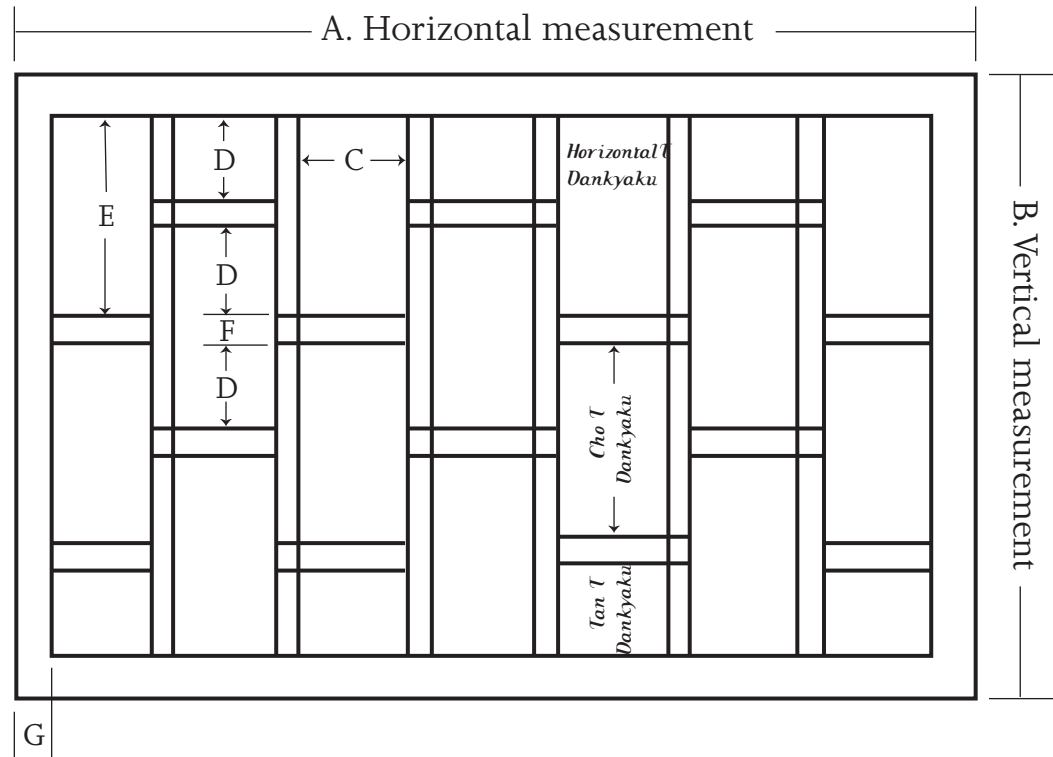
Figure 1

Dankyaku Measurements

Use figure one on the right as a work sheet. Draw a picture of the *okesa* and write the actual measurements on it.

- A. Seven row *okesa* horizontal measurement
- B. Seven row *okesa* vertical measurement
- C. Horizontal *dankyaku* measurement
- D. *Tan* (short) *dankyaku* measurement
- E. *Chō* (long) *dankyaku* measurement
- F. *Yō* 1.5" (2 fingers width) or 2.25" (3 fingers width)
- G. *En* 1.5" (2 fingers width) or 2.25" (3 fingers width)

* *Yō* and *en* widths are the same for nine, seven and five row *okesas*.



Cutting the Pieces for the Okesa

Cut size for
9 Row,
7 Row and
5 Row Okesas

Chō (Long rectangular piece):
(18 pieces for nine row, 14 pieces for seven row, 5 pieces for five row)
Horizontal cut size = horizontal *dankyaku* + 2 *yō* + 2 seam allowances*
Vertical cut size = long *dankyaku* + 2 *yō* + 2 seam allowances

Determining
the cut sizes

Tan (Short rectangular piece):
(9 pieces for nine row, 7 pieces for seven row, 5 pieces for five row)
Horizontal cut size = horizontal *dankyaku* + 2 *yō* + 2 seam allowances
Vertical cut size = short *dankyaku* + 2 *yō* + 2 seam allowances

En (Cut size for 2 horizontal and 2 vertical strips):
Width = *en* width (1½" or 2¼") plus 2 seam allowances
Horizontal length = *okesa*'s horizontal length + 2" or 3" for corner folding
Vertical length = *okesa*'s vertical length + 2" or 3" for corner folding

Ties Finished size: About ⅜" by 21" or 22".
Cut size: Add ¼" or ½" seam allowance to each side of width, and also on each end of length. (⅜" + 2 seam allowances by about 22" + 2 seam allowances.)
Make three ties. (Longer length is suggested for heavier fabric.)

Daiza Finished size: 3¾" by 3¾"
Cut size: 3¾" + 2 seam allowances or about 5" by 5"
Make two *daizas*.

Jorō Finished size: 1½" by 1½"
Cut size: Add seam allowances on each side = 2½" by 2½"
Make four *jorōs*.

*Seam allowance = ½" or less per seam allowance, adjust as needed

Figure 2

Lay out on 45" width fabric.
 The layout is flexible, this is just an example. It is determined by the width of the *chō* and *tan* cut size and the width of the fabric.
 You can also adjust the seam allowance.

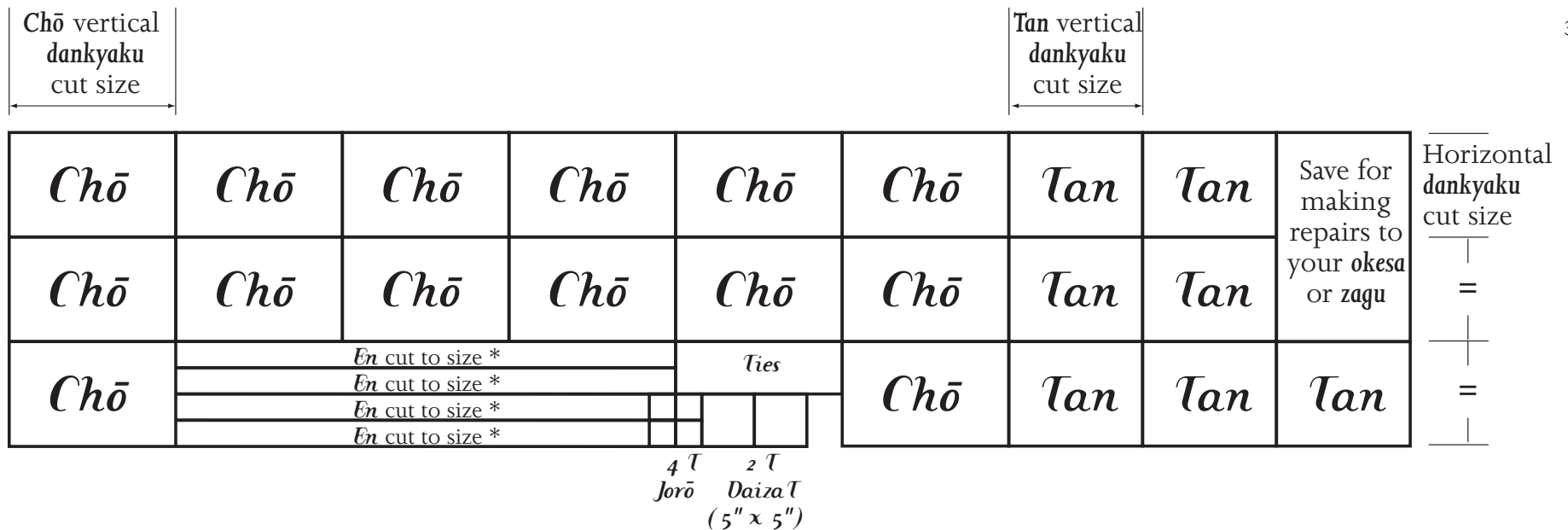


Figure 3

Sewing the Pieces Together

The method of sewing together a top piece and a middle piece is the same as for *rakusu* sewing.

Please see the *rakusu* instructions, figures 4 to 8.

Example

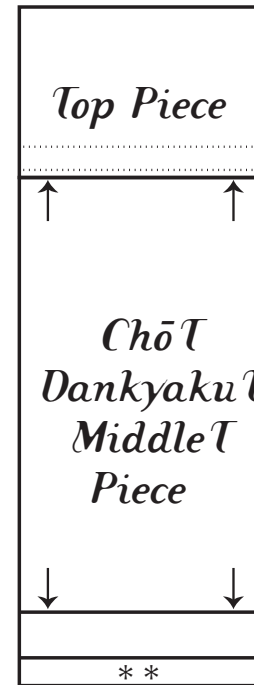
Attaching middle and bottom pieces

- (1) Measure and mark the *chō dankyaku* size down from the *yō*'s bottom edge fold of the upper piece.

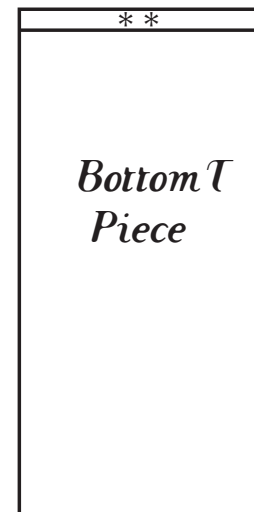
Draw a horizontal line for the top edge of the *yō* stitch line, using the *chō dankyaku* measurement. This line will be the *yō* line between the middle piece and the bottom piece.

- (2) Measure and mark the *yō*'s bottom fold line. This line will become the bottom of the *yō*, the fold line.
- (3) Mark the seam line on the top edge of the bottom piece, 1/2" or less from the edge.

Sew together the middle piece and bottom piece.



1. Top edge *yō* (stitch line)
2. Bottom line (fold)



3. Seam line

** Remainder is seam allowance to go inside of *yō*

Sewing the Strips Together (Seven Row Okesa)

The method of sewing together the strips is similar to the way shown in the *rakusu* instructions, figures 11 - 15. The center strip and the next strip should be marked as shown on the right.

Next Strip (#3)

- (1) Seam line.
- (2) *Tan dankyaku* measurement down from the *yō* fold line.
- (3) *Tan dankyaku* measurement up from the middle *yō* stitch line.

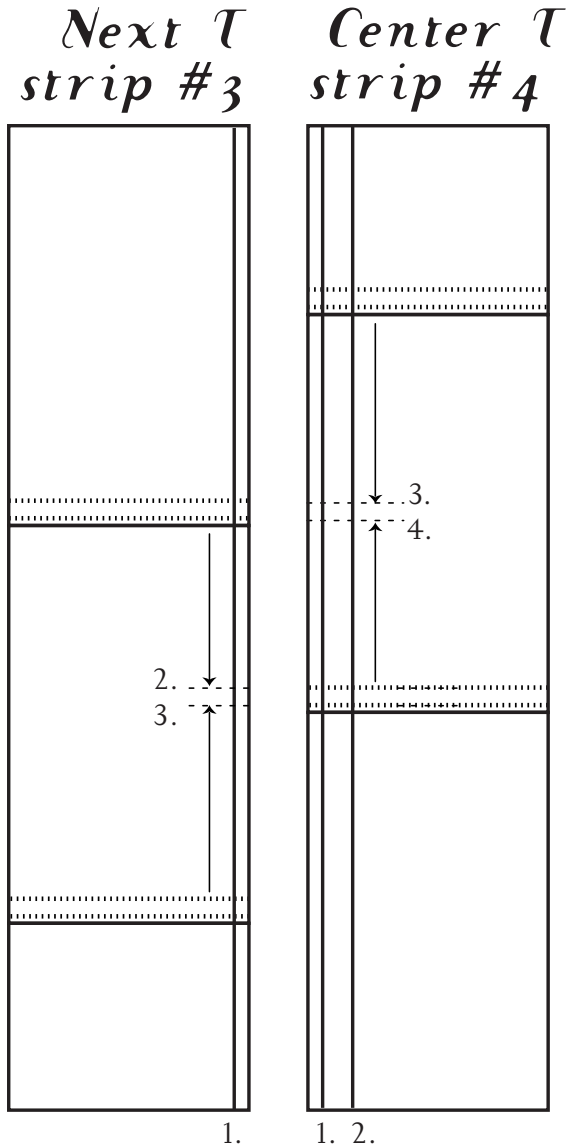
Mark 2 and 3 across the *yō*.
You use these markings for aligning the *yō* for the adjacent center strip (#4).

Figure 4

Center Strip (#4)

- (1) Fold line.
- (2) *Yō* stitch line.
- (3) *Tan dankyaku* measurement from the top *yō* fold line.
- (4) *Tan dankyaku* measurement from the middle *yō* stitch line.

Mark 3 and 4 across the *yō*.
You use these markings for aligning the *yō* from the adjacent (#3) strip.



Marking the Kagami

Sew together all the strips. Now your *okesa* has become a big piece, a *kagami*.

Lay out the *kagami* and mark its final size:

- (1) Mark the correct *dankyaku* horizontal measurements, measuring from the last vertical *yō* and add *en* width for *en* placement.
- (2) Mark the correct *tan dankyaku* by measuring from the top *yō* lines, and add *en* size for the top edge *en* placement.
- (3) Mark the correct *tan dankyaku* by measuring from the bottom *yō* line, and add *en* size for the bottom edge *en* placement. The remaining fabric goes inside, underneath the *en*.

Figure 5

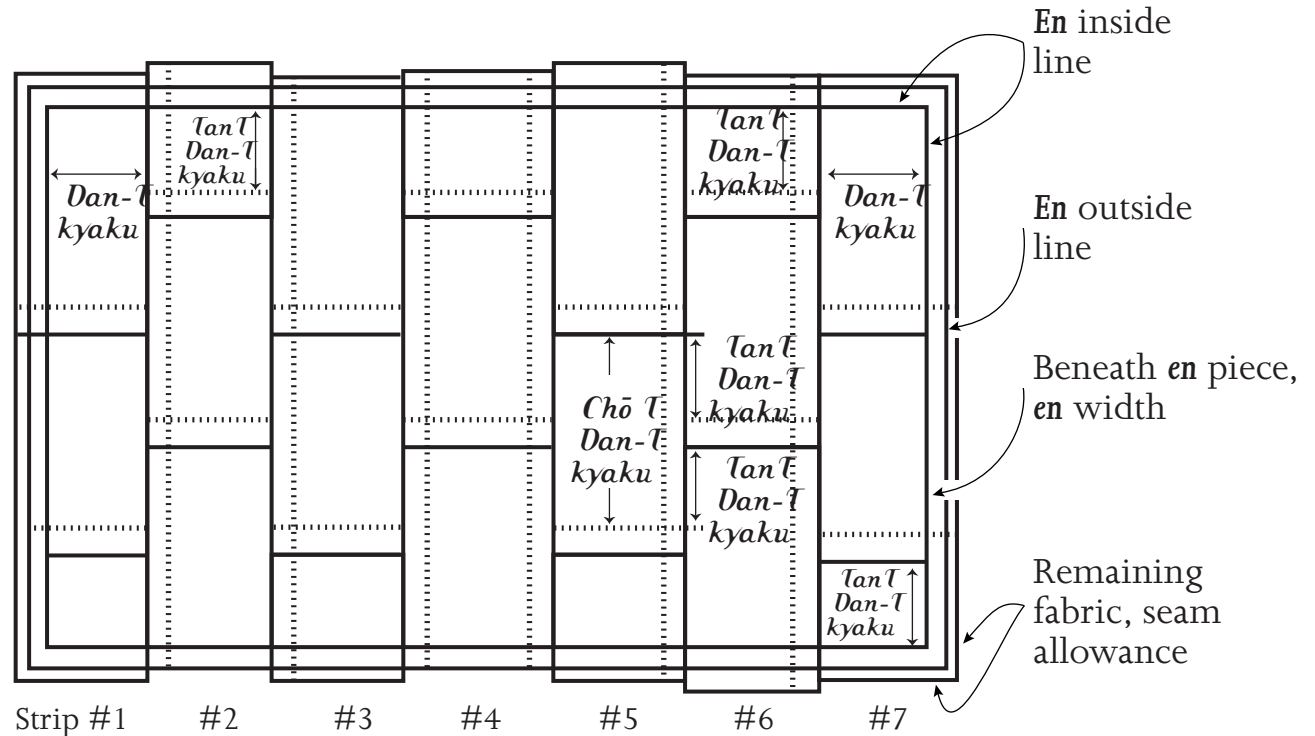


Figure 6

Marking and Attaching the En

Mark the seam line on the long edge of the *en*. Measure *en* width from the seam line. Mark your *en* width on all four horizontal and vertical *en* pieces.

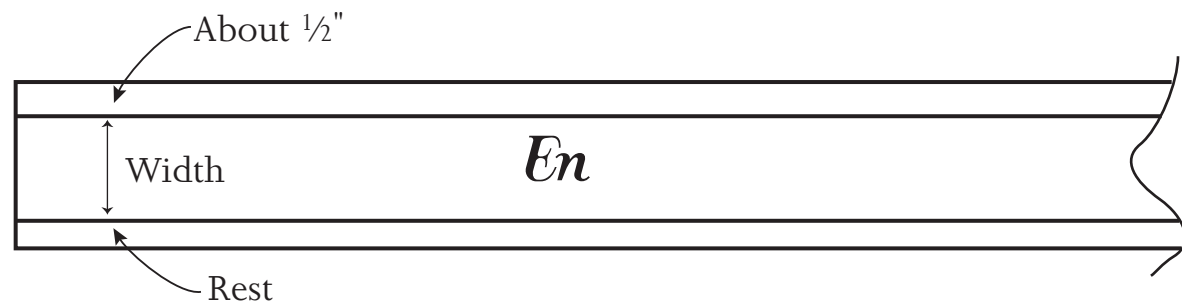


Figure 7

Okesa En Attachment

You should have two vertical side en pieces and two horizontal side en pieces.

When you have attached the en, three rows of stitching will show on the outer, front side and only two rows of stitching on the inner, back side. There will be one row of stitching diagonally through the corners, visible on the front and back.

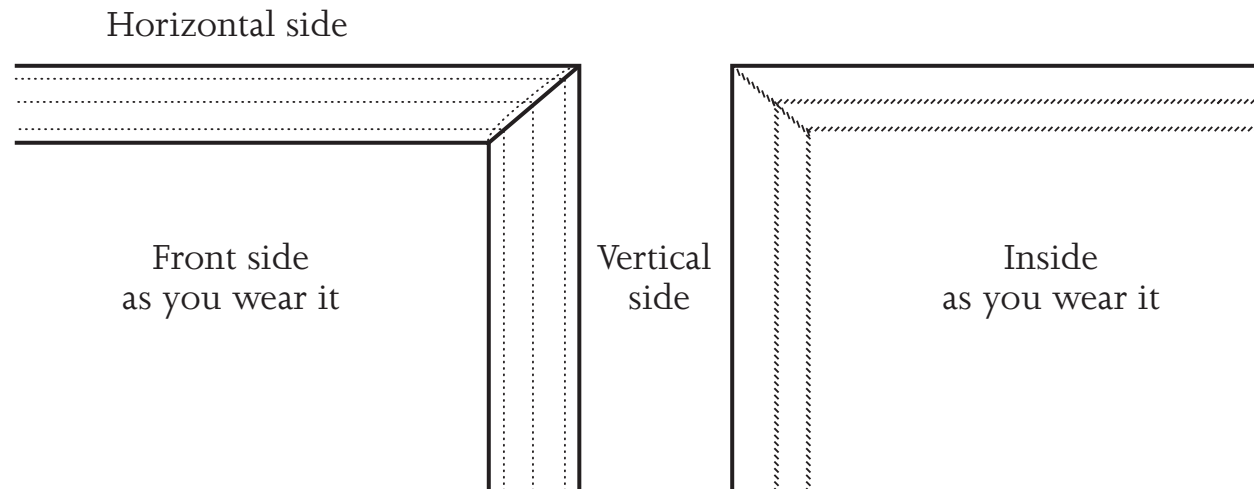
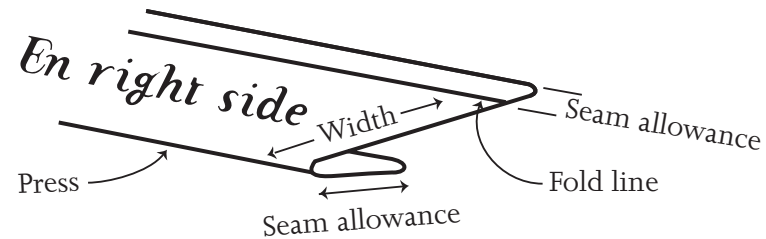
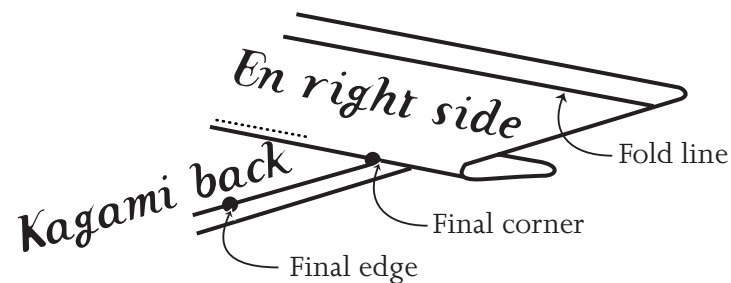


Figure 8

Measure, mark, fold and press one seam allowance along the length of each *en* piece.



Pin the *en* right side up to the back side of the *kagami* along the final size mark. It is best to start pinning from the center of the *en* length. The *en* should extend beyond the length of the *kagami* at both ends. Using the *kyakushi* stitch, sew the *en* through the fold to the *kagami*, right up to the corner.



The front side of the *kagami* shows the back side of the *kyakushi* stitches, but this will be covered by the *en* when the *en* is folded over to the front side of the *kagami*. The seam allowances go under the *en* when it is folded.

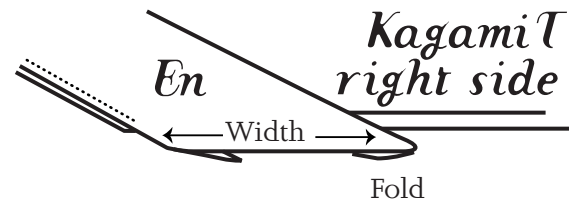
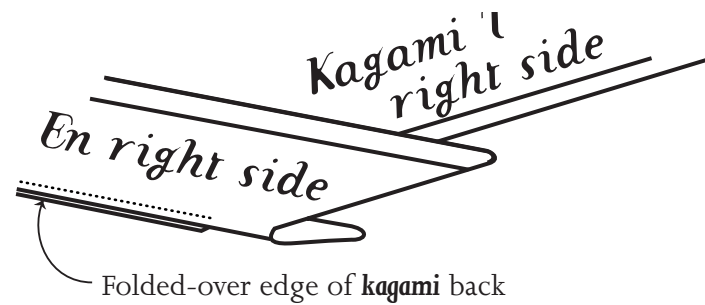
Figure 8 (cont)

Fold the *en* to the right side of the *kagami* along the final size mark and press. The *kagami* back should not be visible above the *en* edge fold.

After you fold the *en*, the first row of *kyakushi* stitches do not show on the *kagami* back. They are hidden inside the fold.

Measure the *en* width and fold the other edge excess under. Pin this *en* edge to the *kagami* and sew the edge with the *kyakushi* stitch. Start and stop about 6" from the corner to allow for folding. These stitches appear on the back side of the *kagami*.

Measure and mark a line along the



middle of the *en* width and pin on the middle line mark. Start and stop sewing about 6" from the corner. These stitches also appear on the back side of the *kagami*.

Figure 9

Finishing the En Corners

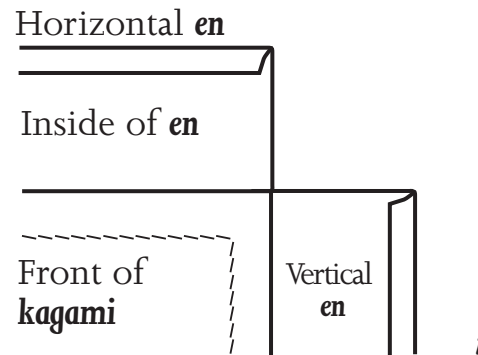
Once you have attached all four *ens* to the *kagami* (sewing each *en* all the way to each corner) and ironed the outer *en* seam allowances inward, you can begin to fold the *ens*.

Note: These directions are for the right side top and left side bottom corners. The left side top and right side bottom corners are folded in the opposite directions.

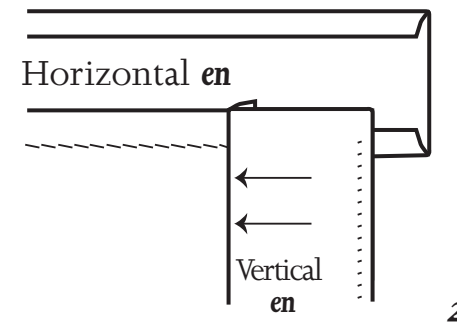
Tip: The horizontal *en* always overlays the vertical *en*.

Right Side Top and Left Side Bottom Corners

Lay *okesa* right side (front) up and spread out the corner *ens*.

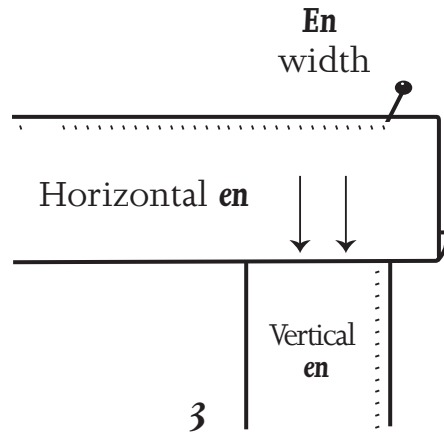


1. Do a preliminary fold of the *ens* to see where the corner fold line will go. Lay the *okesa* front side up and spread out the horizontal and vertical *ens*. Make sure the horizontal *en* is the bottom-most layer.

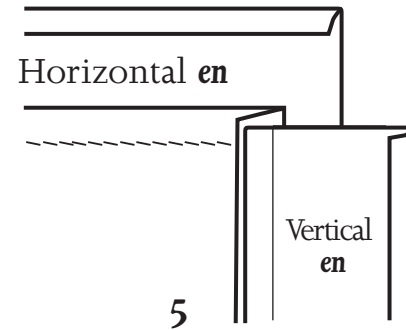


2. Fold the vertical *en* in.

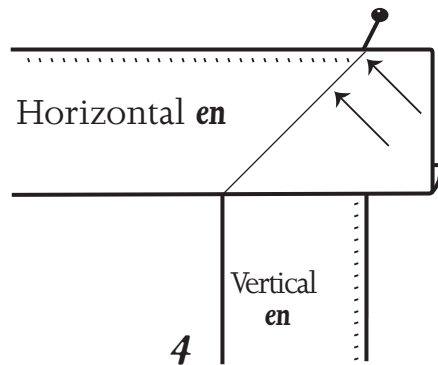
Figure 9 (cont)



3. Fold the horizontal en down. Put a pin in the outside corner to mark that spot.



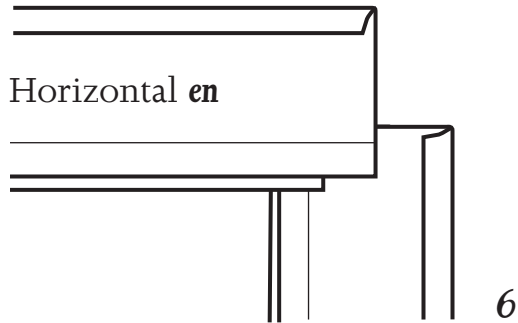
5. Unfold those preliminary folds and lay the ens flat again. (See corner illustration #1). Then open the vertical seam allowance by folding it towards the kagami.



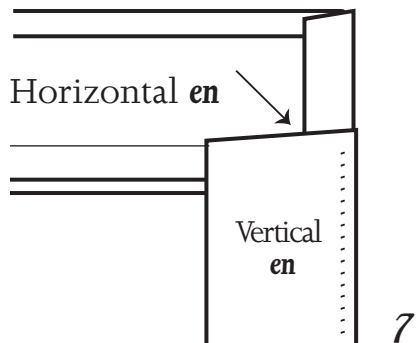
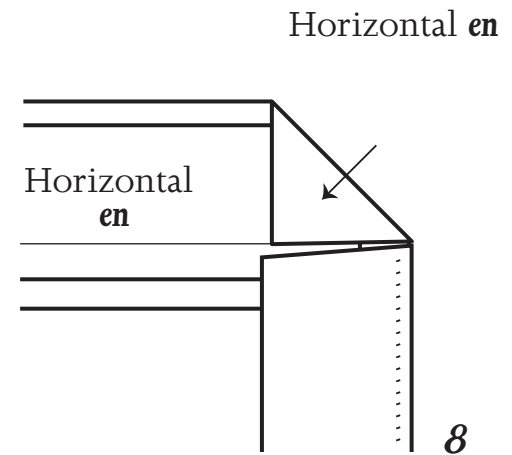
4. Draw a line from that outside corner to the place where the two en pieces come together, using either a marking pencil or a hera.

Note: At this point, you can either cut the excess fabric about 1/2" outside the marked line, or wait and cut the excess once all the folds are completed. (These instructions illustrate the process to follow when waiting to cut the excess once all the folds are completed.)

Figure 9 (cont)



6. Open the horizontal seam allowance by folding it towards the *kagami* (making sure the top of the vertical *en* is folded in too).



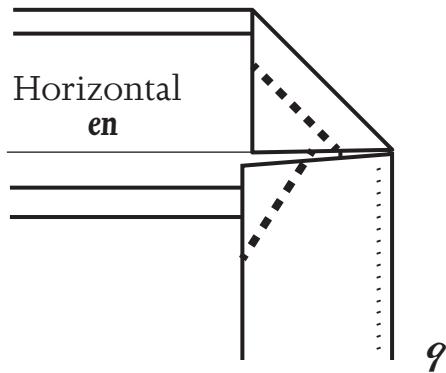
7. Fold the vertical *en* over the *kagami* (making sure the end of the horizontal *en* is folded in too).

Tips: It helps to fold the top of the vertical *en* on the diagonal just a bit, to allow more room for the horizontal *en* to lie flat.

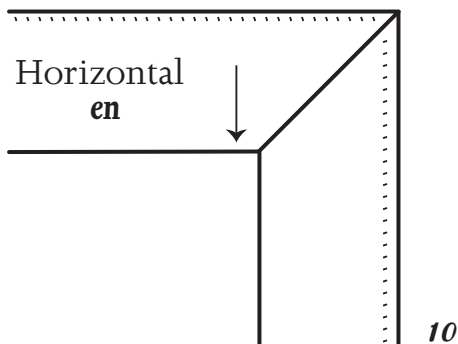
Pin the vertical *en* in place, putting the pin in through the back of the *en*.

8. Fold the corner of the horizontal *en* down and in diagonally, to form a triangle shape.

Figure 9 (cont)



9. To remove some of the extra bulk, you can cut the extra material from the vertical and horizontal *ens*. Draw a line at least $\frac{1}{2}$ " from the folded edge of the triangle on the horizontal *en*, and a matching diagonal line on the vertical *en*, as shown.



10. Fold the horizontal *en* down over the vertical *en*.

11. If necessary, adjust the fabric of the corner to fit snugly and neatly, and then crease the folds firmly into place. Pin or baste, and then sew the corner.

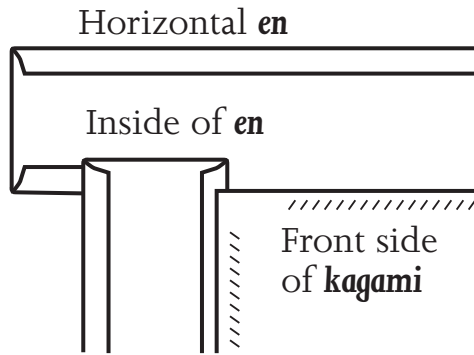
Finish all *en* rows of stitches to the corners, beginning with the inside line.

Jorō Attachment

Mark and press *jorōs* to their $1\frac{1}{2}$ " finished size. Position them on the *okesa* so that the *jorōs* overlap the *ens* by about $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Pin and sew.

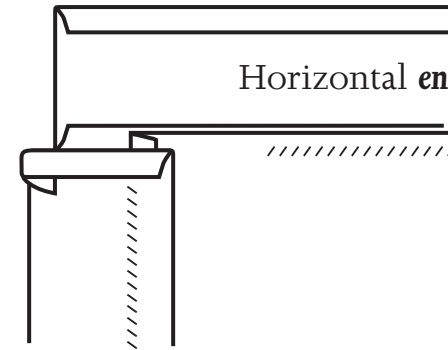
Figure 10

Left Side Top and Right Side Bottom Corners



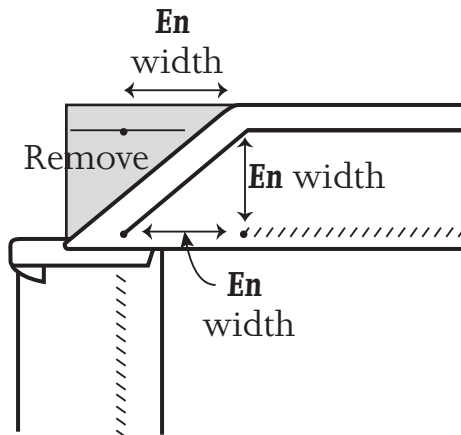
Lay **okesa** front side up and spread out the corner **ens**.

1

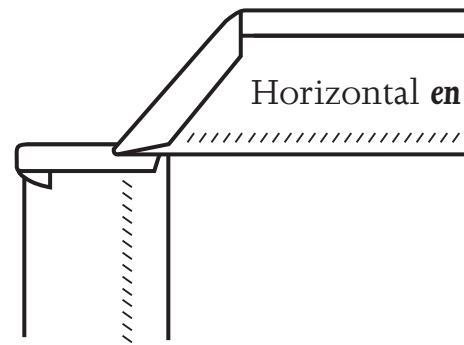


2

50

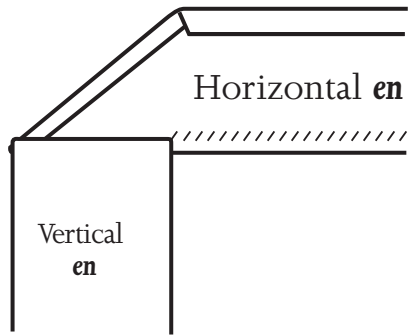


3



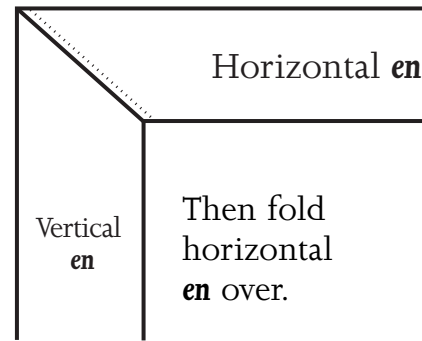
4

Figure 10 (cont)



Fold vertical **en** forward over **kagami** so that vertical **en** now has its outside facing you, and baste or pin in place. Then fold horizontal **en** over.

5



Then fold horizontal **en** over.

6

Figure 11

When folding the horizontal *en* over, tuck the corner under to make a diagonal line. Tack along the edge several times almost to the tip of the corner, to hold the material in place. Sew the diagonal line in place, and sew the unfinished edge of the corner.

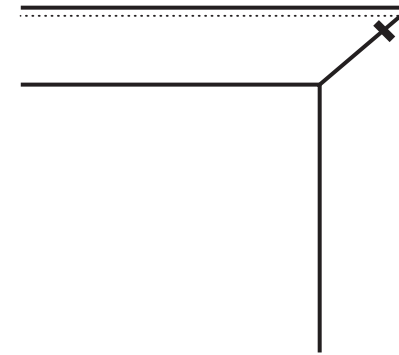
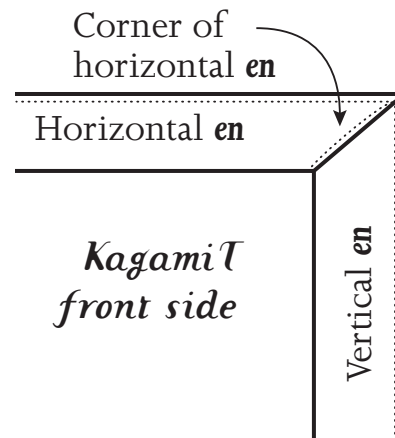
Remove any basting stitches that show.

Finish all *en* rows of stitches to the corners, beginning with the inside line.

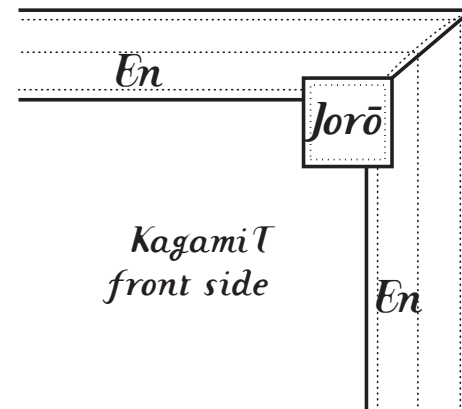
Jorō Attachment

Mark and press *jorōs* to their 1½" finished size. Position on the *okesa* so that the *jorōs* overlap the *ens* by about ¼". Pin and sew.

Orient the lengthwise grain of the fabric vertically.



Tack several times through to the other side.



Lining Attachment for a Nine-or-More-Row Okesa

For sewing a nine-or-more-row *okesa* a lining is attached to the back side of the *kagami*.

Method 1

Begin when your *kagami* is completed but the *ens* are not attached to it. You should have two horizontal *ens* and two vertical *ens* and a lining piece larger than the completed size of the *okesa* by not less than ½" nor more than 1" all around. If you need to piece the material together to make a large enough lining, join the pieces together as you would the *kagami* — creating long *yōs*.

Lay the *kagami* back side up on a large flat surface. Spread the lining over it, front side facing up, so that

it covers the *kagami* completely. Pin them together. Using your fingertips to feel where the *yōs* are, measure out the appropriate *dankyaku* length from the last *yōs* (see instructions for *dankyaku* length), add width of *en* for the *en* placement, and mark the completed (final) *okesa* size on the lining.

Sew the lining to the *kagami*. Begin about ⅓ of the way down from the top and sew to about ⅓ of the way up from the bottom. The place to sew is on the *kagami yōs*. You may sew on every other *yō* line; it is not necessary to sew on every *yō*. Sew from the lining side through one layer of the *kagami yō*. The stitches should not be visible on the front;

check often to be sure. Try to insert a yardstick inside the vertical *yō* of the *kagami*, then sew the lining and *yō* together using a longer needle. The yardstick is very helpful to keep the stitches from showing on the front side of the *okesa*. The stitches showing on the lining side should be tiny, about ⅛" or ¼"; but the stitches within the *yō* can be long, about 1", so that the tiny lining stitches are spaced far apart.

Attach the *en* on the final *okesa* outer size mark. Sew through the *okesa kagami* and the lining. The seam allowance material of the *okesa* and lining should stay inside of the *en*.

Lining Instructions

(cont.)

Method 2

With this method the *ens* are already attached and your *okesa* should be completed, except for *gorōs* and *daizas*. This method also uses one large piece of lining. The lining cut size is the same as in Method 1 (larger than ½" or 1" all around for the seam allowance).

Tuck (fold) the lining's seam allowance under on all four sides to the *okesa*'s final size. Lay the *okesa* backside facing up on a large flat surface. Spread the lining out face up; the insides of the *okesa* and the lining face each other.

Pin the edges of the *okesa* and lining together. Sew using small hidden stitches on the lining side along the edges of the *okesa*. Then put on the *gorōs* and *daizas*.

Method 3

This method is used when you have many small pieces of lining material. Put linings behind each of the *tans* and *chōs*. This method is also for an *okesa* that is completed, except for *gorōs* and *daizas*.

Cut *chō* and *tan* lining pieces, adding ½" on to the *chō*'s and *tan* final sizes. Tuck the seam allowance under so that the finished lining piece is ⅛" smaller than the *chō* or *tan* size.

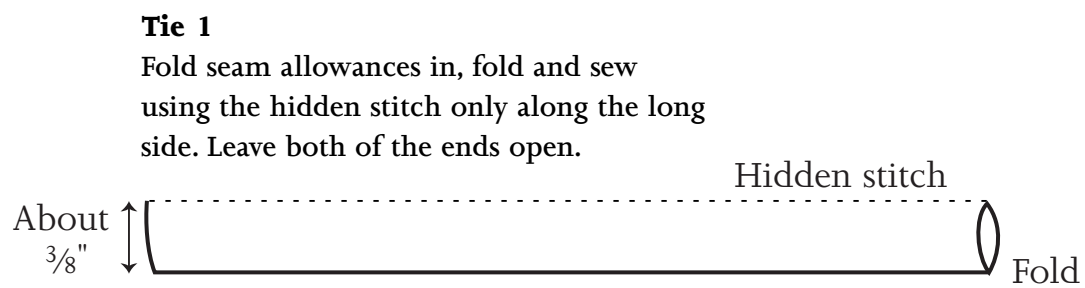
Pin the lining to the *chō* or *tan* on the back side. Then sew using very tiny running stitches. Sew the very edge of the lining and *okesa* together. Since you fold the lining about ⅛" smaller than the *chō* and *tan* size, there is a tiny space, about ¼", between the edge of the *yō* and the edge of the lining. (The original idea of ¼" came from the width of a grain of barley.) The front side of the *okesa* will show the running stitch line. Then put on the *gorōs* and *daizas*.

Ties

3 ties are needed. Finished width is about $\frac{3}{8}$ ".

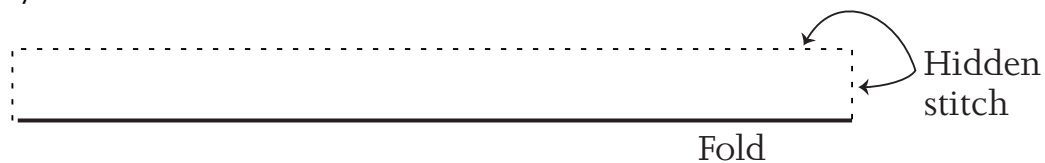
Cut size is about 21" or 22" by 1" or 1½".

For heavier fabric, the longer size is suggested.



Tie 1 will be fixed on the *daiza* that will be put on the right (front) side of the *okesa*. Both ends will hide inside the *daiza*, between the *okesa* and the *daiza*. To make the inside of the *daiza* smoother we do not fold and sew the ends of this tie.

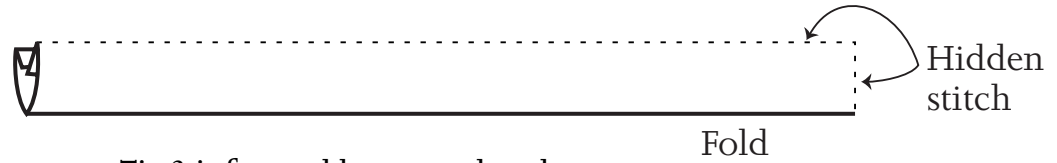
Tie 2
Fold seam allowances. Sew three sides, the longer and both short sides, using the hidden stitch. Four sides of the tie are closed up by the hidden stitch and the fold.



Tie 2 will be attached to Tie 1.

Tie 3

Sew the longer side and one of the shorter sides, and leave the other side open.



Tie 3 is fastened by one end to the *daiza*, that will be put on the back side of the *okesa*. It is the open side that is put inside of the *daiza*.

Daiza

2 pieces are needed, finished size $3\frac{3}{4}$ " by $3\frac{3}{4}$ ".
Cut size $4\frac{1}{2}$ " by $4\frac{1}{2}$ ".

- (1) Mark $\frac{3}{8}$ " - $\frac{1}{2}$ " for the tie hole on the center of the *daiza*.
The finished width of the tie is about $\frac{3}{8}$ ".
- (2) Mark *Daiza* as shown.

- (3) Baste a patch to the back of the *daiza*, covering the tie hole. The grain of the patch should be at right angles to the grain of the *daiza* material.
- (4) Cut the slot for the tie hole.
- (5) Sew around the tie-hole cut using buttonhole stitches, sewing through both layers of fabric. See illustrations 12a and 12b on the next page.

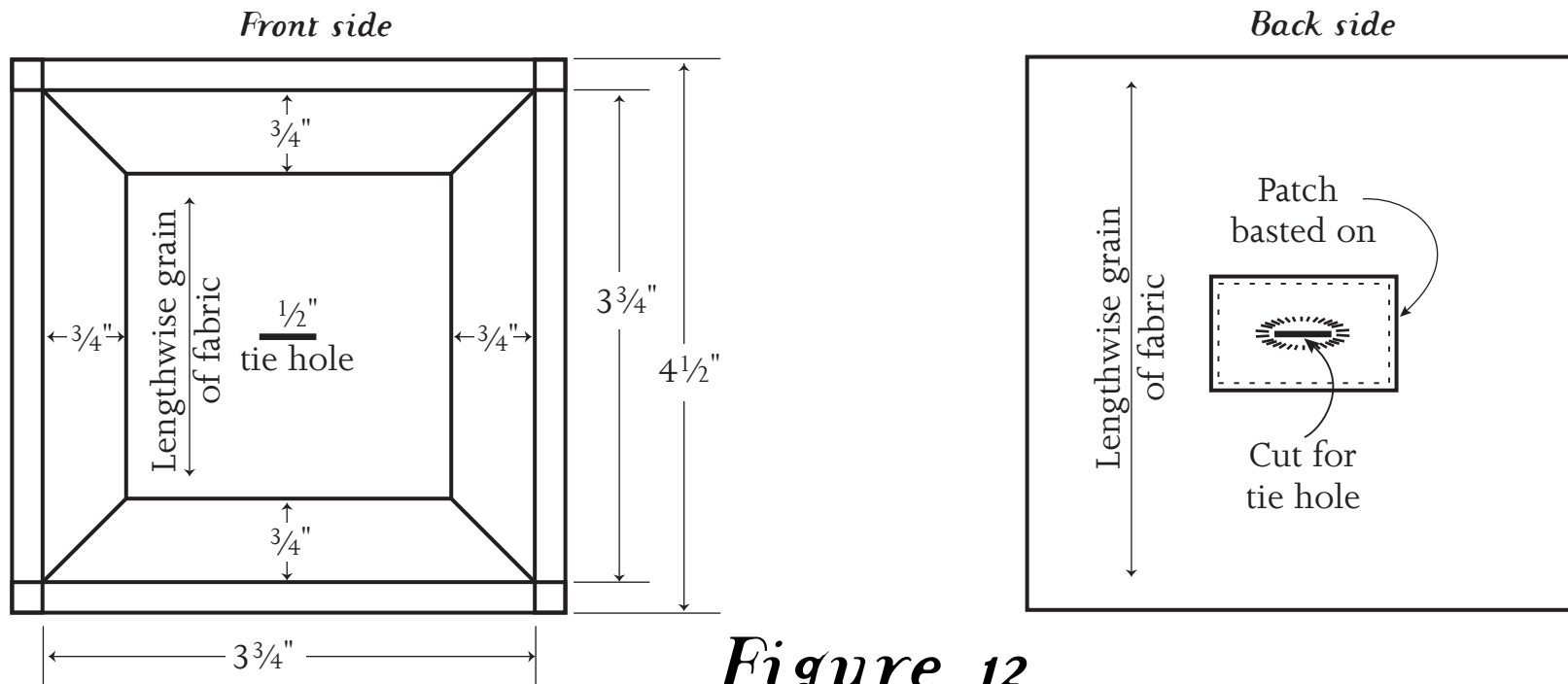


Figure 12

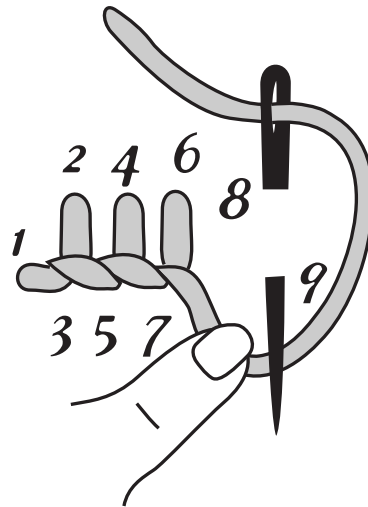
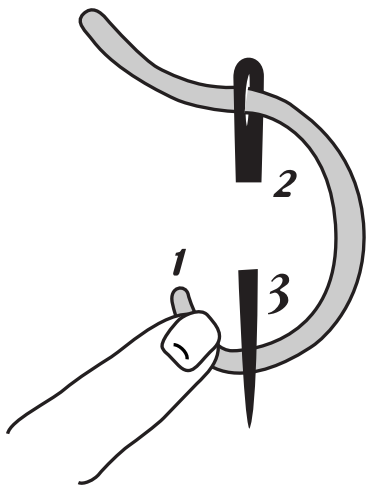


Figure 12a + 12b

Buttonhole stitch

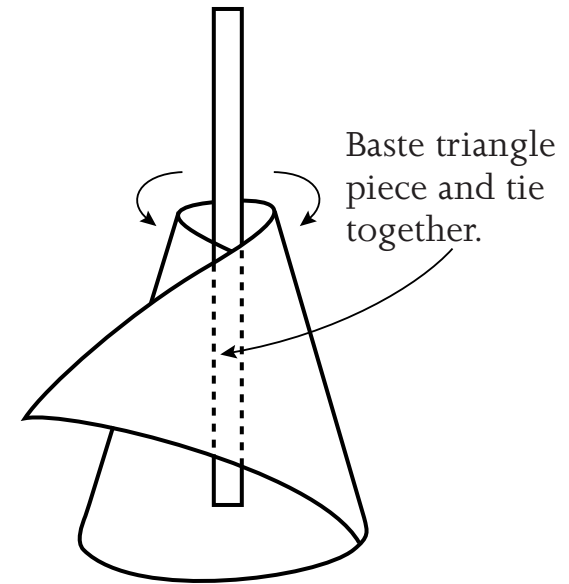


Figure 13

Wrap the end of Tie 3 with a small piece of fabric about 2" by 2", and wrap both edges of Tie 1 with another piece of fabric the same size. Fold the pieces of fabric to make a triangle shape. Put the unfinished ends of the ties into the triangle pieces and then wrap the tie with the triangle. This looks just like a tie lady wearing a triangle kimono. Pin and baste the triangle piece and the tie(s) together. Put the triangle piece on the wrong side of the *daiza*. The tie sticks out through the hole on the right side.

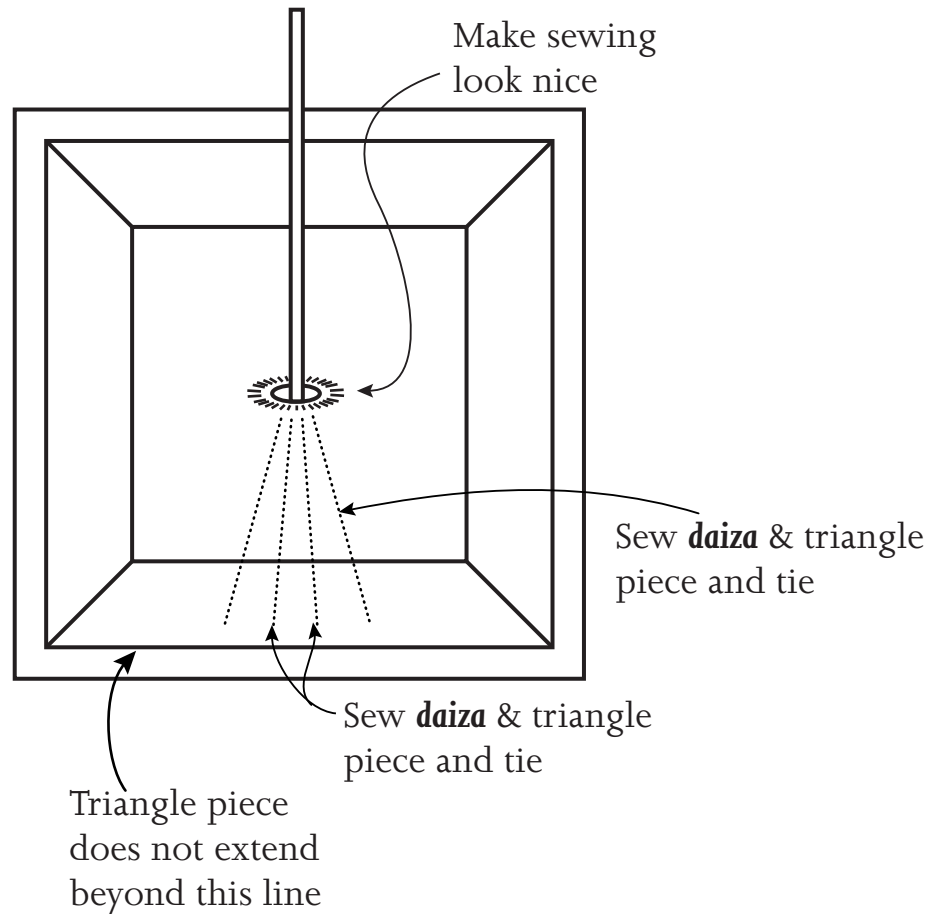


Figure 14

Sew the **daiza** and the triangle piece together using *kyakushi* stitches. Notice that the end of the triangle piece should reach the inside square mark, but not the outside square mark.

Fold the edges of the **daiza** and make the finished size $3\frac{3}{4}$ " by $3\frac{3}{4}$ ".

How to Assemble the Ties

This illustration is for the outside tie over the left shoulder.

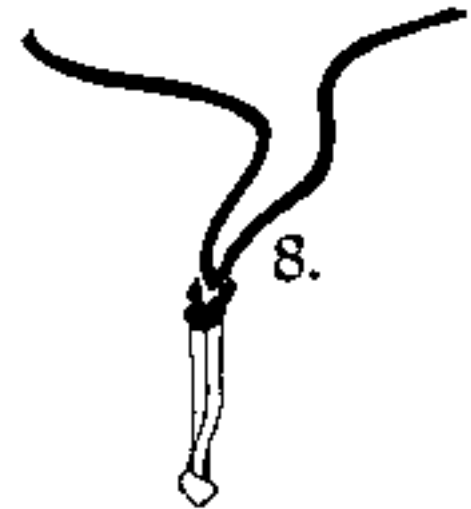
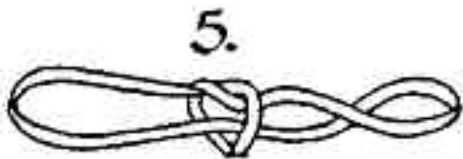
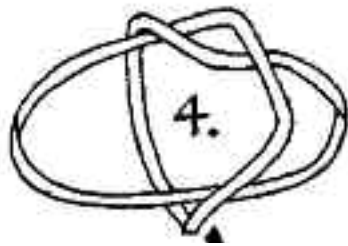
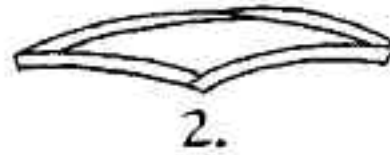
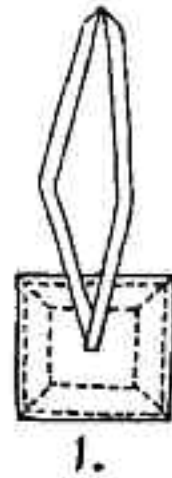


Figure 15

Illustration from *Kesa No Kenkyū*
Edited by Echu Kyuma
Published by Daihorinkaku

Attaching the Daiza

(1) On the front, the outside, of the *okesa*, on the left shoulder side, the center of the *daiza* (the tie hole) should be placed at the intersection of $\frac{1}{3}$ (from the edge) of the *okesa*'s horizontal measurement and 6" below the lower edge of the *en*.

On the back side of the *okesa*, on the right shoulder side, the center of the *daiza* (the tie hole) should be placed at the intersection of $\frac{1}{3}$ (from the edge) of the *okesa*'s horizontal measurement and 3" below the lower edge of the *en*.

(2) Sew two rows of stitching around the *daiza* on the *okesa* and also diagonal lines at the corners, using the *kyakushi* stitch. The stitches start and end inside of the *daiza*, so the knots will not show outside, but will hide inside the *daiza*.

This is the final sewing. Now iron the *okesa* at a medium temperature. First iron the *ens* and *yōs*, then iron

the *kagami* the top to bottom, middle to outer edges, so that you do not iron against the *yō* edges. Fold the *okesa* in the proper way. (See figure 19.) If you fold your *okesa* improperly, you will have trouble putting it on when you wear it.

Figure 16

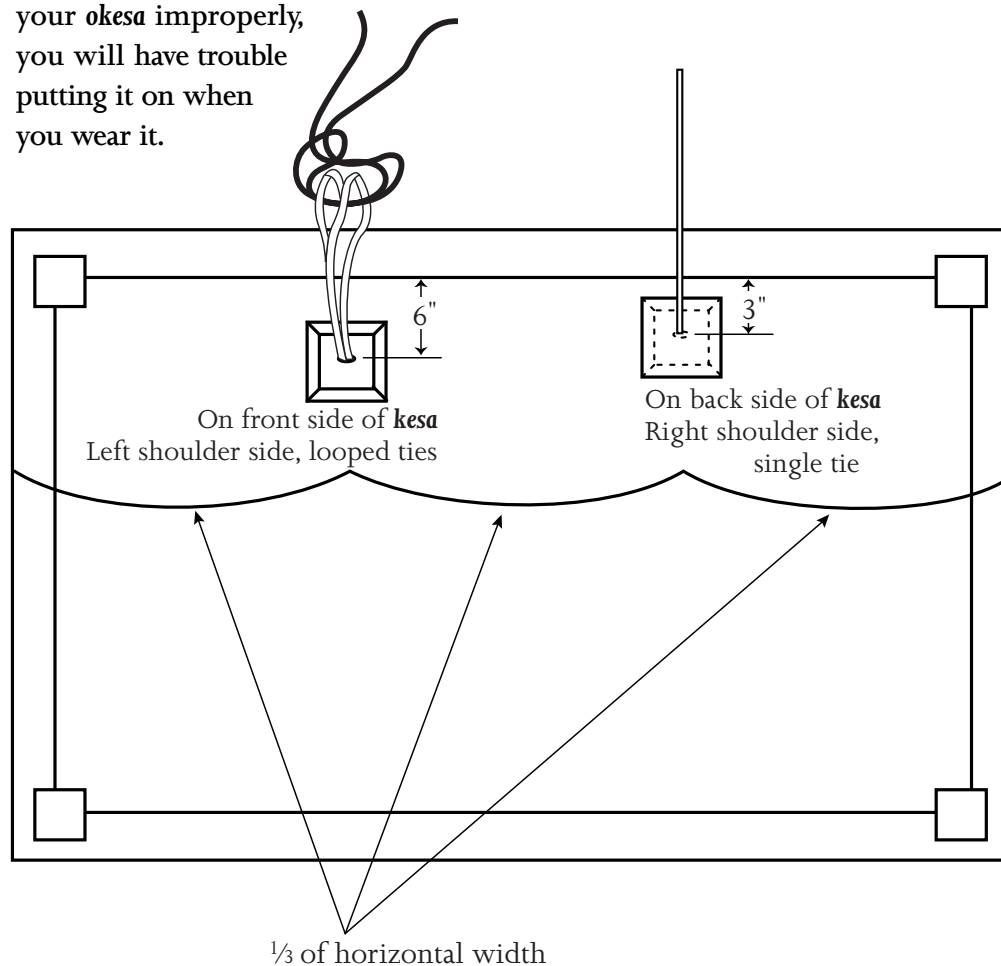
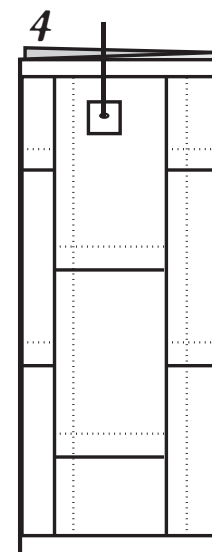
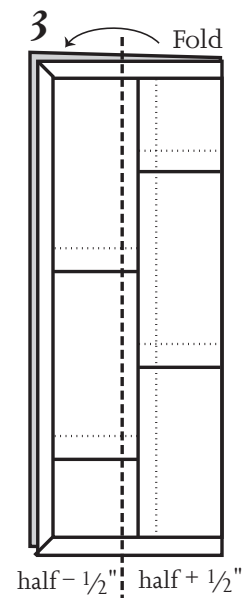
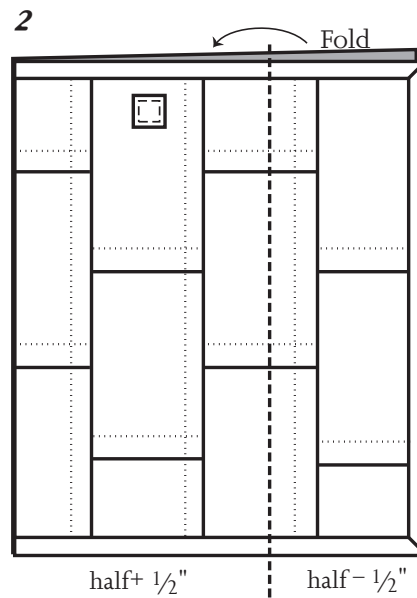
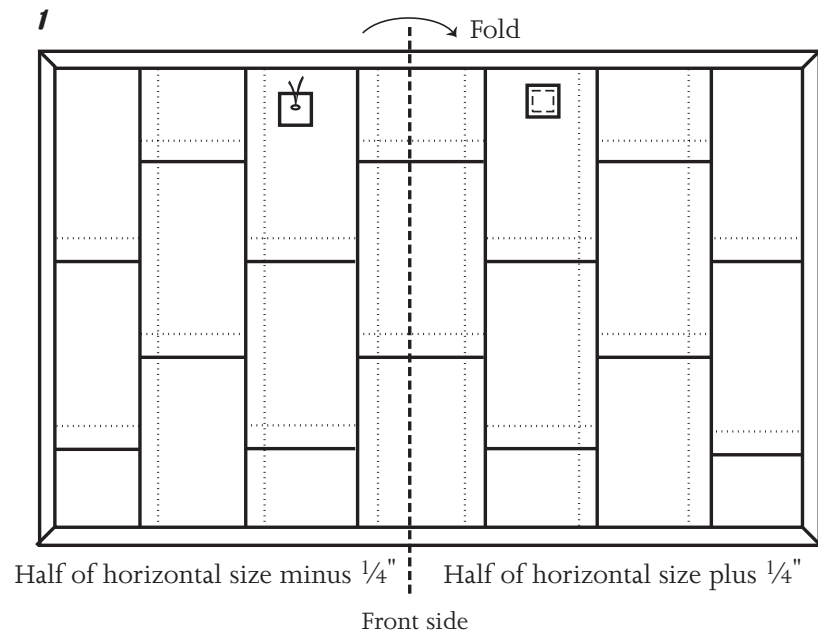


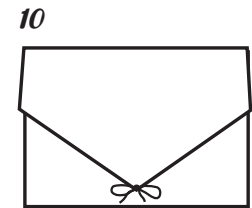
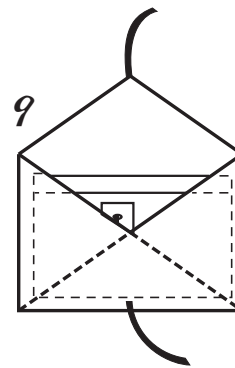
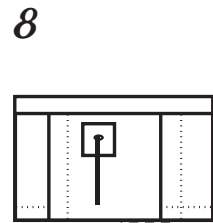
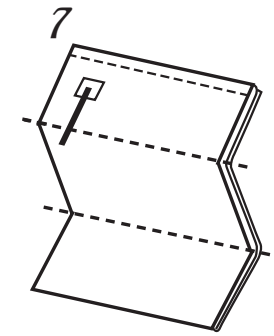
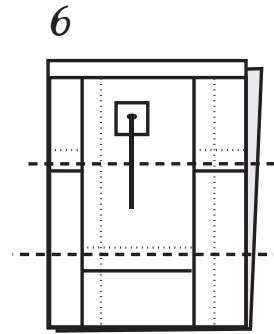
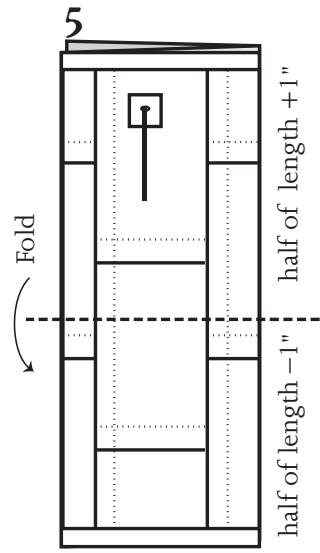
Figure 17

How to Fold the Okesa

The *okesa* is always folded with the back side (the inside) facing out.



Back side



Zagu

Introduction

The *zagu* (*nishidana*, in Sanskrit) is used as a mat to protect the *okesa* from dirt when the monk sits or bows. It is also used to protect his or her health when sleeping. Since ancient times the custom in India has been to walk in homes with shoes on and to sit on dirt floors. Thus everyone, regardless of whether they were monks or ordinary people, always had to carry mats to sit upon.

One day when Shakyamuni Buddha was staying at Rajagrha, he walked inside the monastery to inspect it. He noticed many sleeping mats were scattered in the alley. Most of them were filthy and wet from rain. At that time Shakyamuni Buddha established the *zagu* as the monks' mat, for it was easy to carry on their shoulders or their arms.

We use the Buddha's forearm (elbow size), which fits everyone, for the *zagu* measurement. The Buddha's elbow length is 2 *shaku* 4 *sun*. The *zagu* size is two elbow sizes (4 *shaku* 8 *sun*) long, and one and a half elbow sizes (3 *shaku* 6 *sun*) wide. Our *zagu*'s longer sides are 36" and the shorter sides are 27" .

When the *zagu* is made from new fabric we sew a piece of used fabric in the center. This is the rule. The square patch is called *tekko*, in Japanese, and one's individual elbow size is used as the *tekko*'s measurement.

The rules of the color and the material are the same as for the *okesa*, but it does not have to be the same material as the *okesa*. Also each *okesa* does not need its own *zagu*. The Buddha taught that for very big people the *zagu* may be larger.

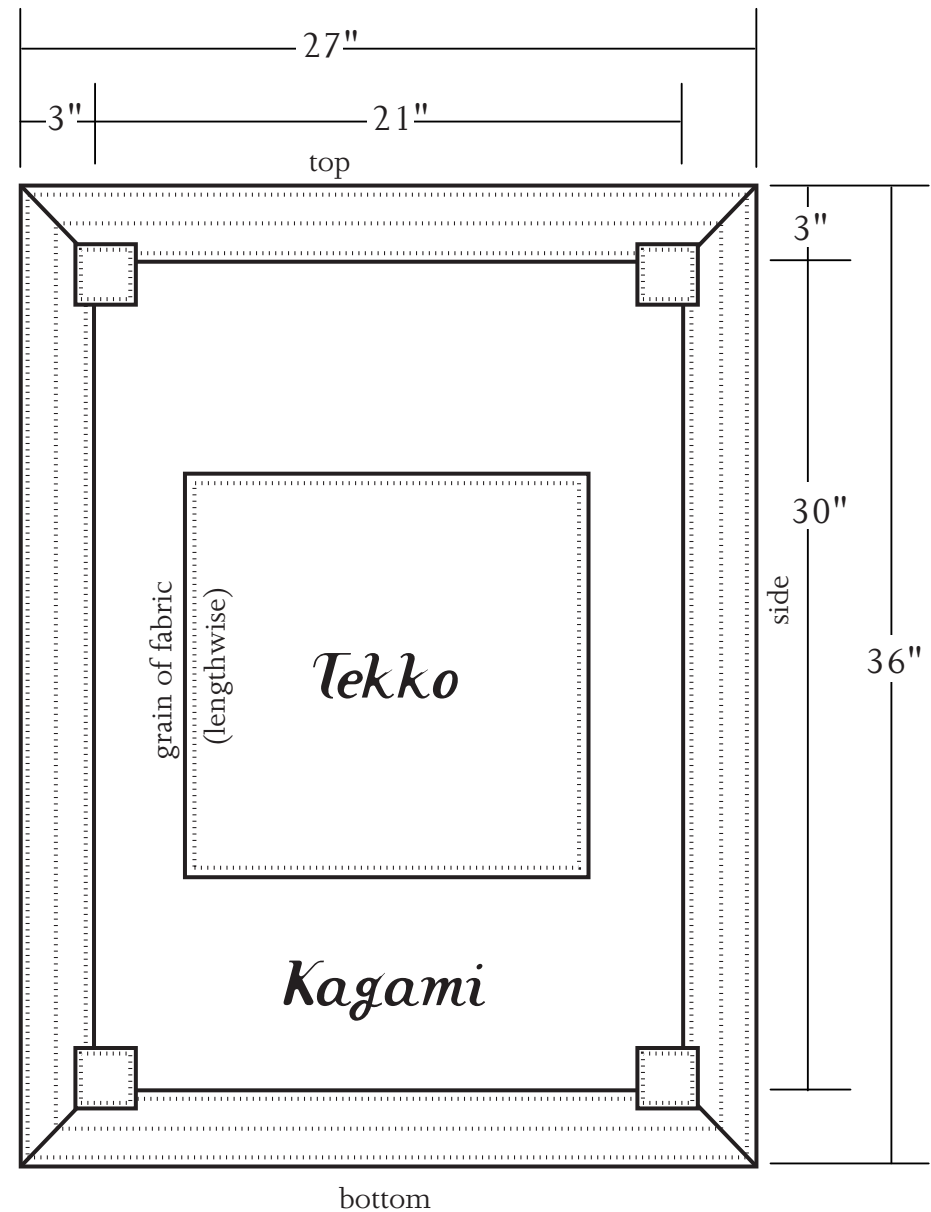
Layout and Dimensions

	Finished Size	Cut Size	# of Pieces
Kagami	21" by 30"	22" by 31"	1 Piece
En	27" by 3"	28" by 4"	2 Pieces
En	36" by 3"	37" by 4"	2 Pieces
Jorō	3" by 3"	4" by 4"	4 Pieces
Back Facing	27" by 36"	28" by 37"	1 Piece
Tekko	18" by 18"*	19" by 19"	1 Piece

The seam allowances are approximate; it is not necessary to get them exactly the same as the above.

Everything should be laid out with the longer lengths following the grain of the fabric (lengthwise).

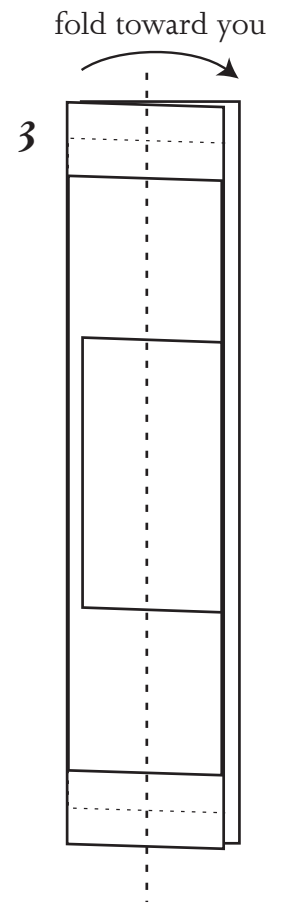
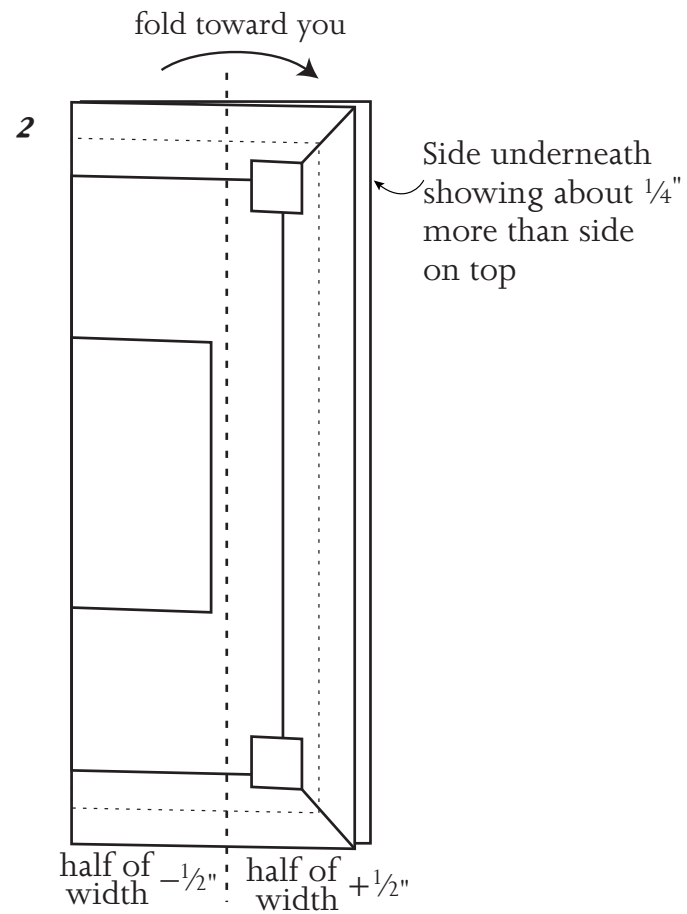
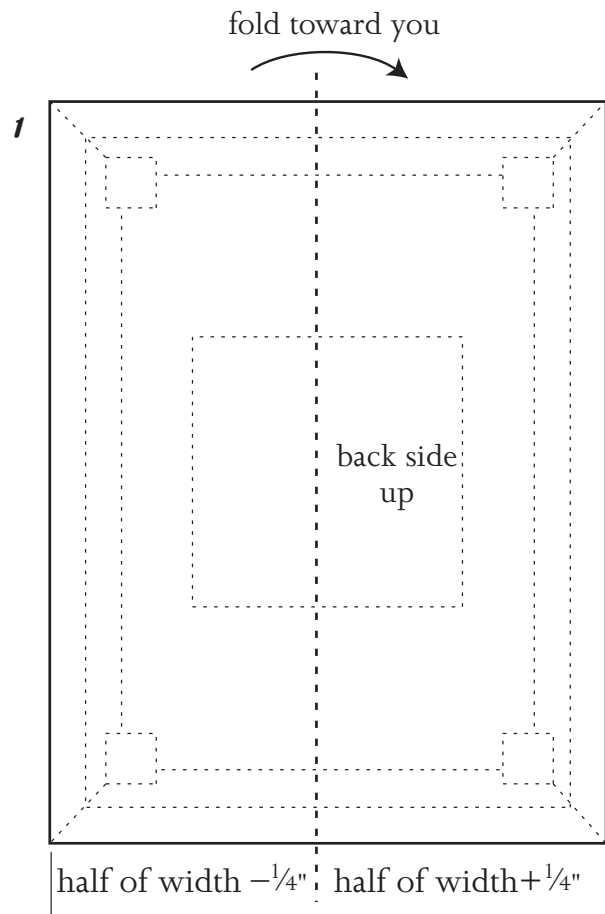
* (or) one elbow length by one elbow length.

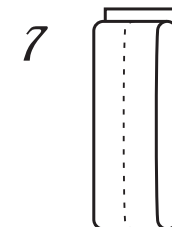
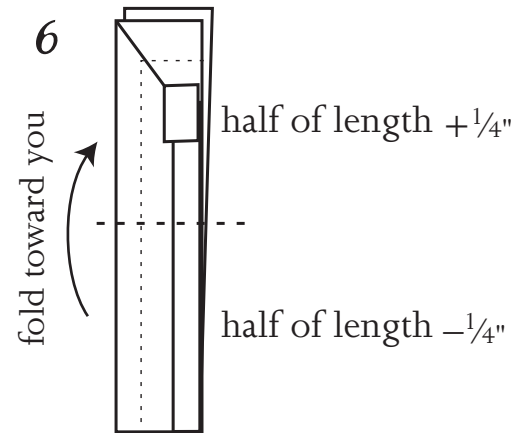
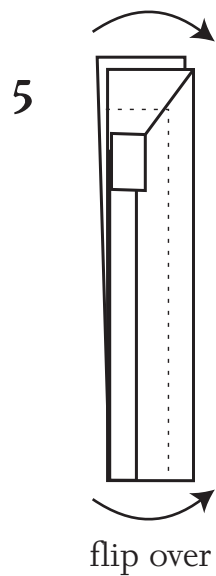
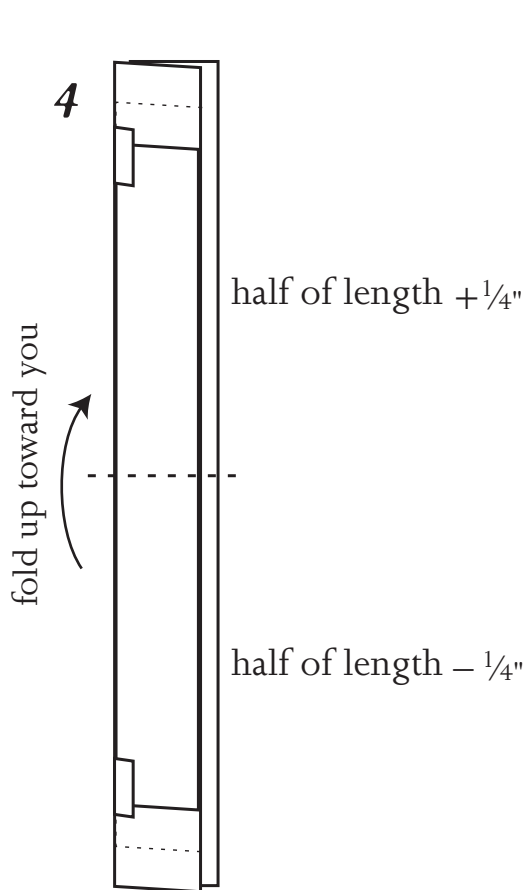


How to Sew the Zagu

- (1) Baste the *kagami* on the center of the back facing.
- (2) Put the *ens* around the back facing in the same way as for an *okesa*. Sew the *en* and back facing together, using the *kyakushi* stitch.
- (3) Next sew the inside line on the *en*, then the middle line.
- (4) Put the *yorōs* on.
- (5) Put the *tekko* on the *kagami* in the center; then sew the *tekko*, *kagami* and lining together by *kyakushi* stitches.

How to Fold the Zagu





Each fold-over is brought close to the opposite edge, but not flush. This is to allow room for the fabric inside the fold. Bring the upper edge over to about $\frac{1}{4}$ " to $\frac{1}{2}$ " shy of the edge underneath.

Shō-san-e

Three Miniature Okesa

Introduction

Shō-san-e are three miniature size *okesas*: five, seven and nine rows. A little history of the *shō-san-e* is given in the chapter “Nyohō-e.” “Shō” means small, “san” means three, and “e” means *okesa* in Japanese.

The following instructions were given by Eshun Yoshida Rōshi:

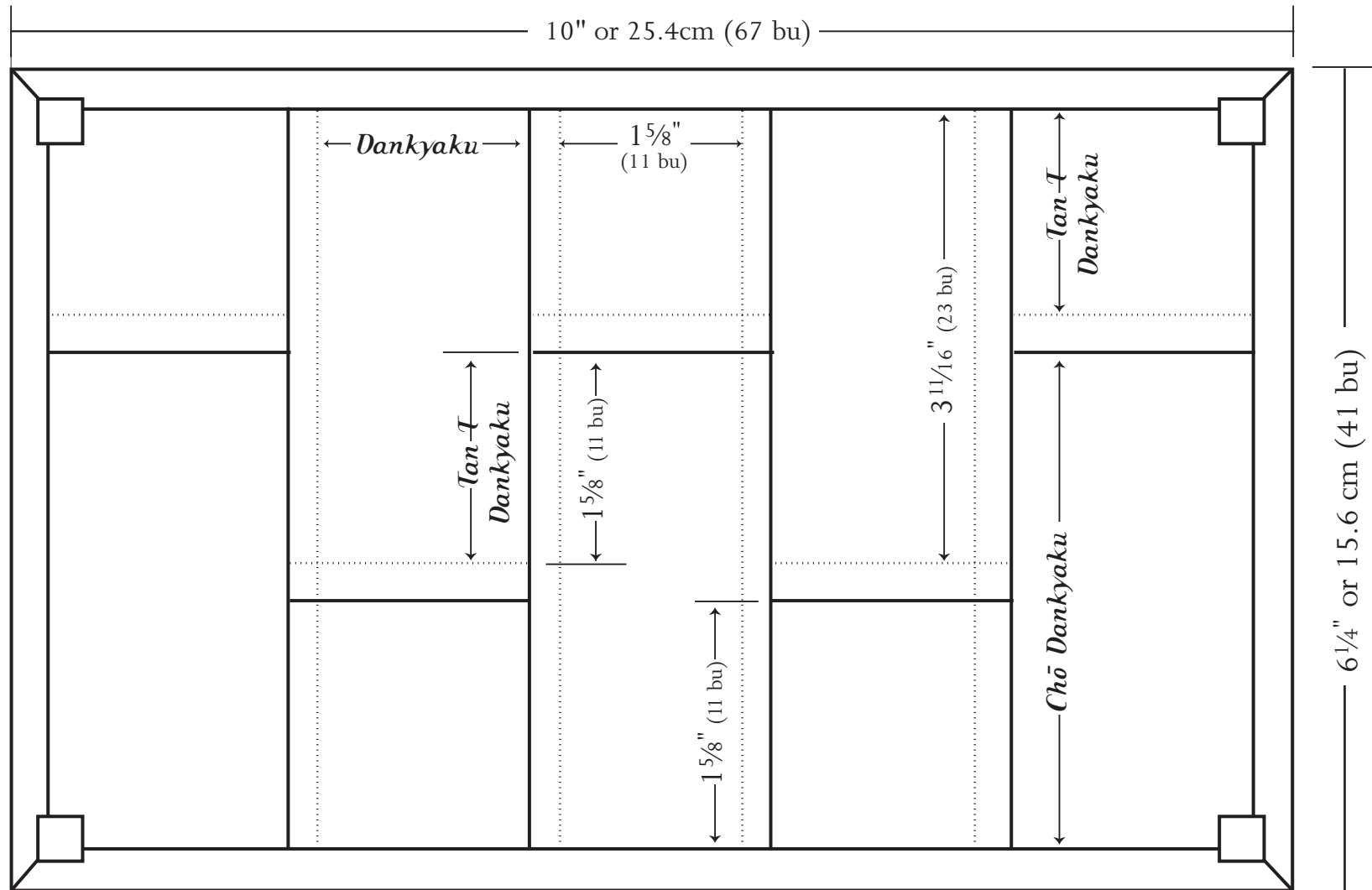
The size, color and material of the *shō-san-e* follow the rule of the *okesa*. The basic size of the *okesa* is five arm lengths for the horizontal width and three arm lengths for

the vertical length. The *shō-san-e* follows this same ratio (5 to 3). See figures 1 and 2 for exact measurements. (Note that $\frac{5}{16}$ ”, 0.8 cm or 2 bu are used for *en*, *yō* and *jorō* of any *shō-san-e*.)

Since the sizes of the *shō-san-e* are very small, there is no middle line sewn on the *en* and no *daizas* or ties are sewn. A lining is placed on the nine row miniature *okesa*.

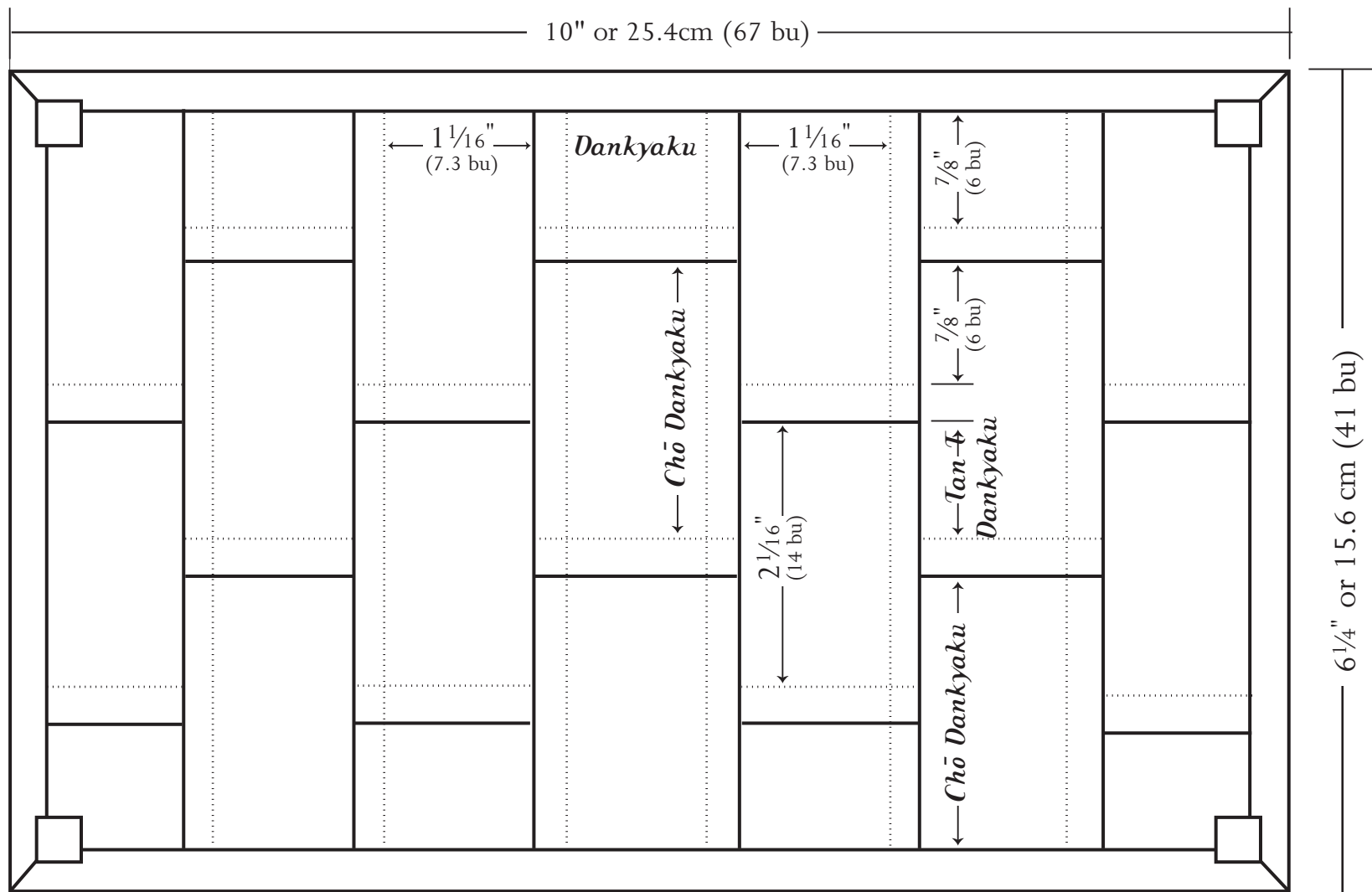
Monks carry the *shō-san-e* with them when they travel. Therefore, the *shō-san-e* dimensions are a handy carrying size. Figures 1 and 2 offer two different sizes for the five, seven and nine row miniature

okesas. There may also be other sizes. The larger size in figure 1 is that given by Eshun Yoshida Rōshi. The smaller size in figure 2 is the size Dainin Katagiri Rōshi made while he was in Eihei-ji Monastery in Japan (1947). The measurements are transferred from an ancient Japanese measurement system (bu to inches and metric). See the following figures.



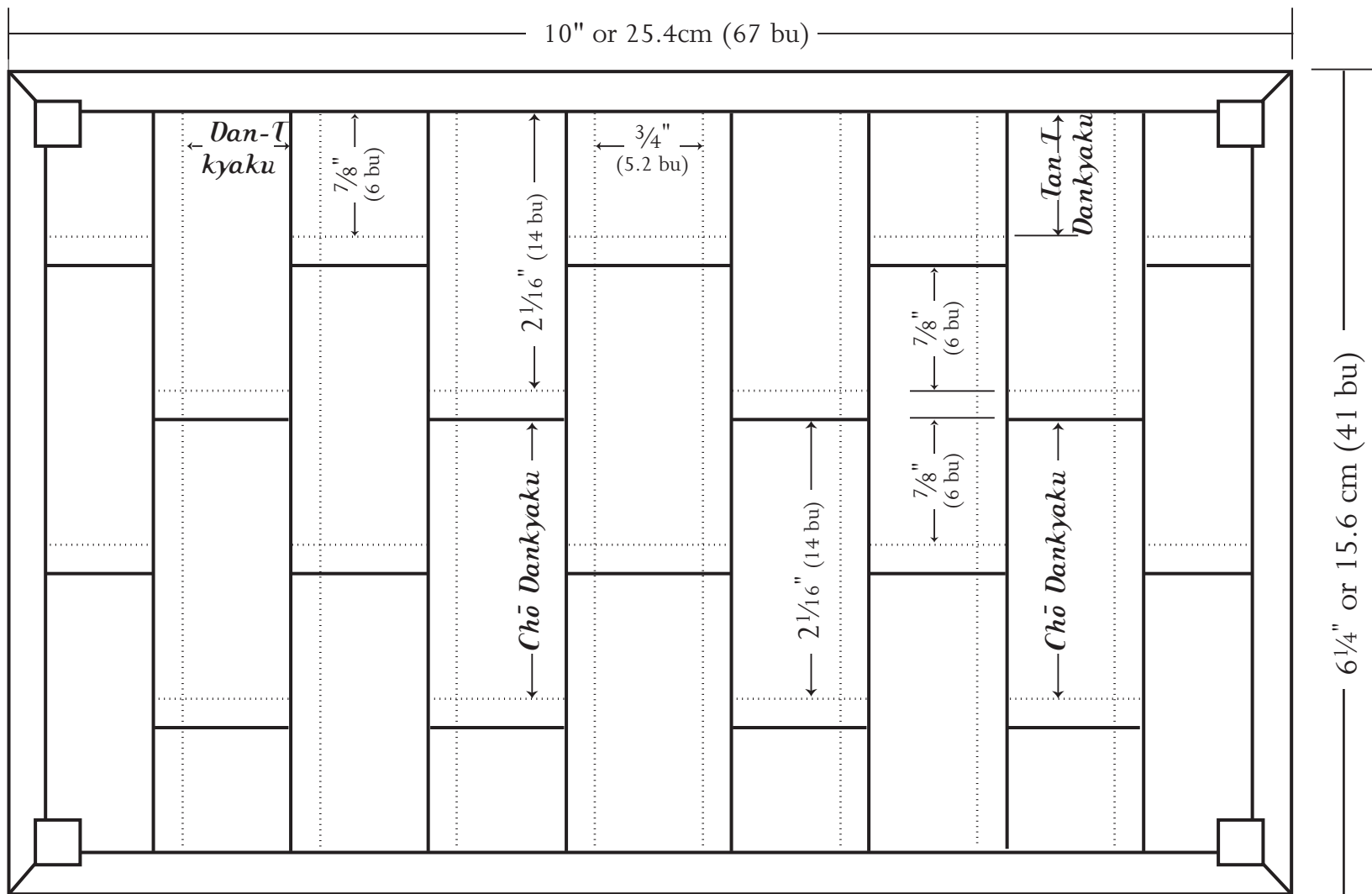
Dankyaku	1 ⁵ / ₈ " (11 bu)
Tan Dankyaku	1 ⁵ / ₈ " (11 bu)
Chō Dankyaku	3 ¹¹ / ₁₆ " (23 bu)
Jorō, En, Yō	5/ ₁₆ " (2 bu)

Five Row Miniature Okesa Larger size



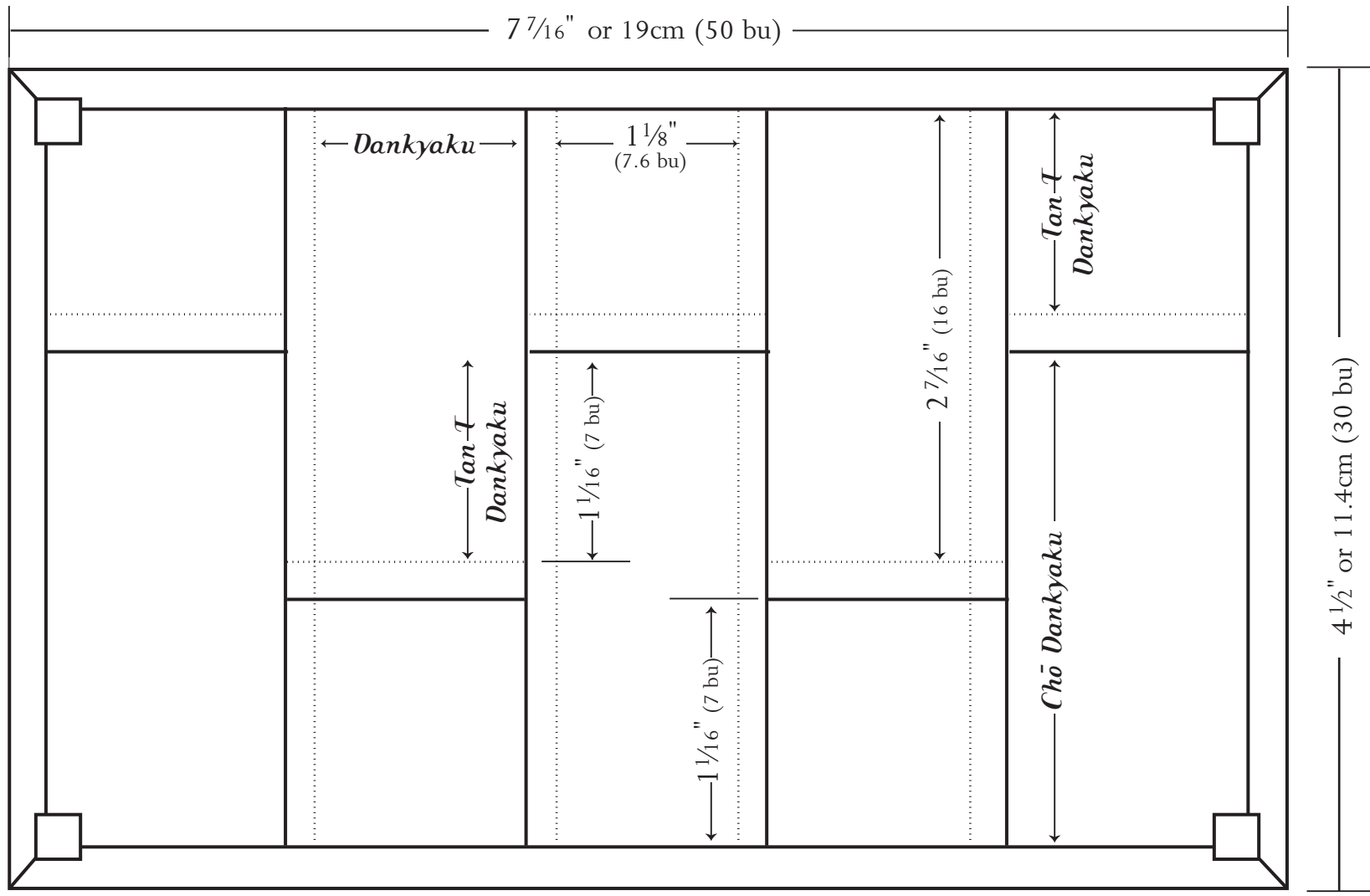
- Dankyaku** 1 1/16" (7.3 bu)
- Tan Dankyaku** 7/8" (6 bu)
- Chō Dankyaku** 2 1/16" (14 bu)
- Jorō, En, Yō** 5/16" (2 bu)

Seven Row Miniature Okesa Larger size



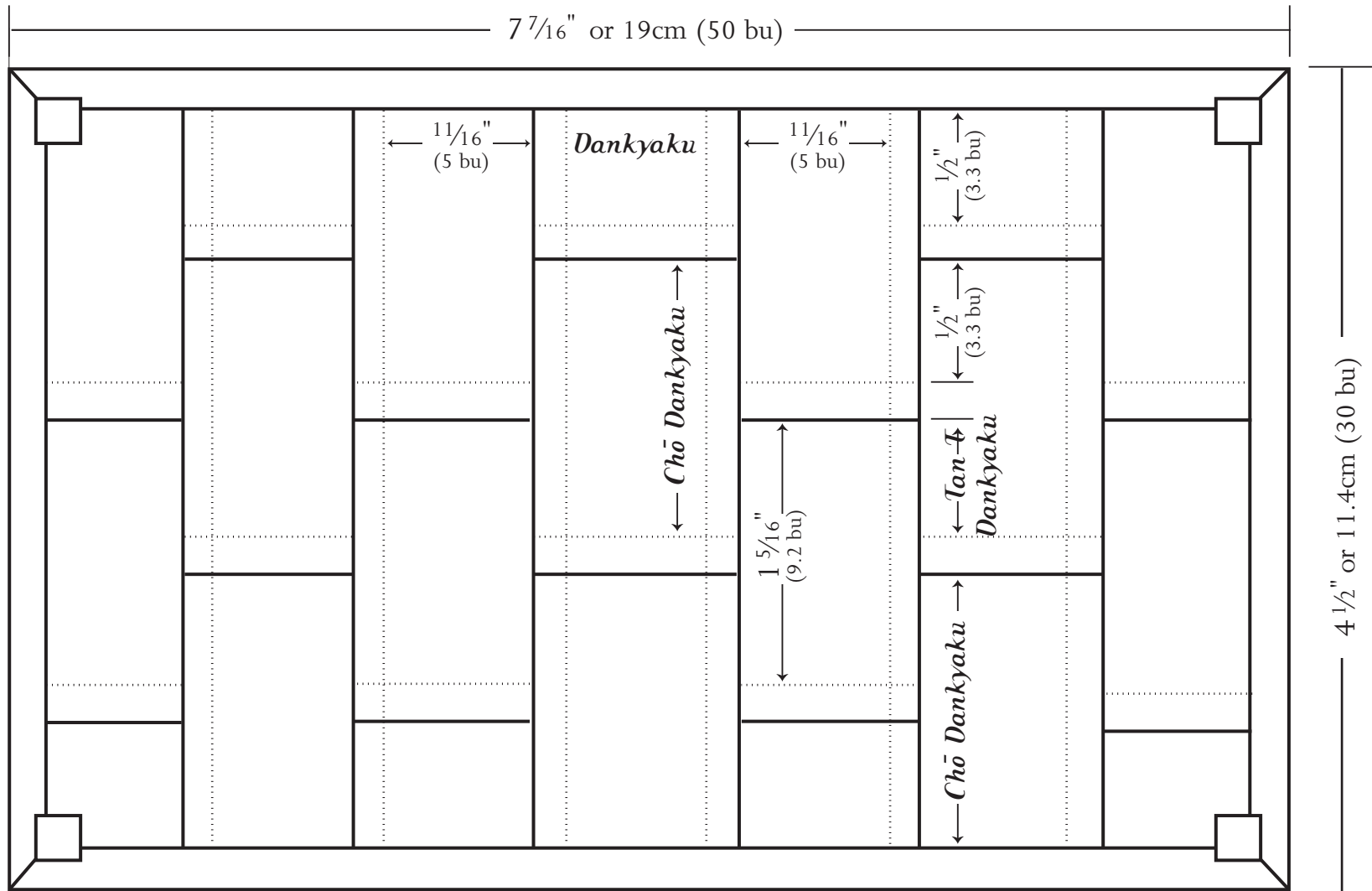
Dankyaku 3/4" (5.2 bu)
Tan Dankyaku 7/8" (6 bu)
Chō Dankyaku 2 1/16" (14 bu)
Jorō, En, Yō 5/16" (2 bu)

Nine Row Miniature Okesa Larger size



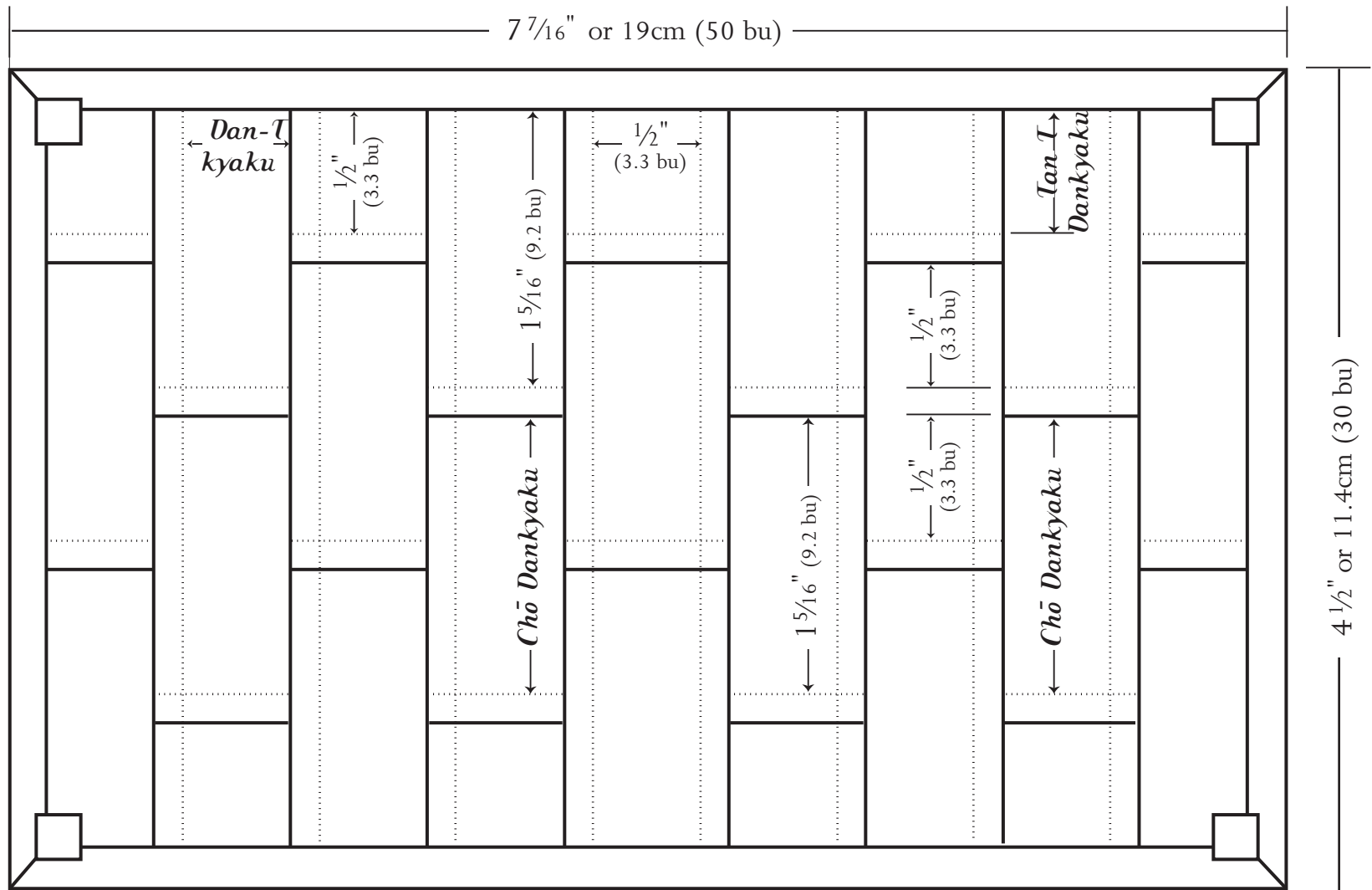
Dankyaku	1 1/8" (7.6 bu)
Tan Dankyaku	1 1/16" (7 bu)
Chō Dankyaku	2 7/16" (16 bu)
Jorō, En, Yō	5/16" (2 bu)

Five Row Miniature Okesa Smaller size



- Dankyaku** $1\frac{1}{16}$ " (5 bu)
- Tan Dankyaku** $\frac{1}{2}$ " (3.3 bu)
- Chō Dankyaku** $1\frac{5}{16}$ " (9.2 bu)
- Jorō, En, Yō** $\frac{5}{16}$ " (2 bu)

Seven Row Miniature Okesa Smaller size



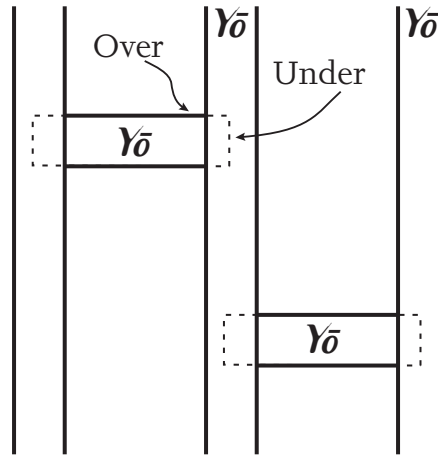
Dankyaku	1/2" (3.3 bu)
Tan Dankyaku	1/2" (3.3 bu)
Chō Dankyaku	1 5/16" (14 bu)
Jorō, En, Yō	5/16" (2 bu)

Nine Row Miniature Okesa Smaller size

Instructions

Material: A thin fabric in an *okesa* color (*eshiki*, blended color). For *shō-san-e* the *Decchō* style is often used. (See chapter on “*Nyohō-e*”.) In this method the *yōs* are made from different pieces of fabric and sewn onto one piece of fabric in the *shō-san-e* size fabric using *kyakushi* stitches.

- (1) Cut the fabric to the final *shō-san-e* size adding small seam allowances for four sides. Please remember when figuring out the seam allowance that your *yō* width is only $\frac{5}{16}$ ".
- (2) Mark the *en* inside and outside lines and all *yōs* on the *shō-san-e* fabric piece which you just cut.
- (3) Cut the horizontal and vertical *yō* pieces adding small seam allowances. Also cut the *ens* and *yorōs* adding small seam allowances for the four sides.



- (4) Fold all of the *yōs*' longer sides to the proper width ($\frac{5}{16}$ ", 0.8 cm or 2 bu). Do not fold the shorter-side edges. Place the folded short *yōs* on the horizontal *yō* marks. Pin or baste the *yō* on the *shō-san-e*. Sew the very edge of the folded *yō* using *Kyakushi* stitches. Sew all of the horizontal *yōs* onto the *shō-san-e* fabric piece.
- (5) Vertical *yōs* are used the same way. Place the shorter side edges of the horizontal *yōs* underneath the vertical *yōs*. The vertical *yōs* go over the horizontal *yōs*.
- (6) Attach *ens* and *yorōs*. There is no need to sew a middle line on the *en*.
- (7) A lining is put on the nine row. See the lining instruction Method 2.
- (8) Fold each *shō-san-e* back side out in half, vertically; and in half again vertically; and then fold horizontally.
- (9) Make a *shō-san-e* case. Put the three *shō-san-e* together in one case. See *okesa* or *rakusu* case instructions.
- (10) Put the *shō-san-e* in its case on your altar when you don't carry it with you.

Rakusu

Introduction

Sewing a *rakusu* is not a difficult task, but it will require time, patience, and care. You will need a piece of blended colored fabric (very dark brown, dark green, reddish black, bluish black, etc.) about 48" long by 15" wide, a piece of whitish fabric 14" long by 8½" wide for backing and a non-fusible interfacing. 100% cotton is best for both of these or you can use a cotton/synthetic blend, or any lightweight fabric that keeps a crease when you iron it. You will also need a 15" square of fabric for your *rakusu* case. If you do not have any suitable new or old fabric for this purpose, you can add 15" to your *rakusu* fabric length. For information about the case and lining, see *rakusu* or *okesa* case directions, page 115.

All measurements are given in inches, but an alternative set of metric measurements is included on page 78. The metric measurements make a larger *rakusu*. It is important not to waste fabric; the smaller size fully utilizes the standard fabric widths. One can get three *rakus* from a piece of 45" wide by 48" long fabric, or 2¼ from a 36" wide by 48" long piece of fabric.

You will also need a sewing needle (compatible with the fabric and long enough to handle easily), thread (of a color similar to the blended color), scissors, ruler, marking chalk and quilting pins. Originally, thread was dyed at the same time as the fabric. Now, you may use a slightly different shade so you can see the stitches better. However, the stitching on a *rakusu* is not intended for decoration or expression of personality.

Whenever you are not working on your *rakusu* all of your fabric should be kept wrapped in a cloth. Care must be taken to keep the *rakusu* fabric clean during sewing and transport.

Making a *rakusu* may take about forty to sixty hours, depending upon your sewing skill.

Before starting, read through the instructions to get an idea of what you will be doing. Before cutting pieces of fabric or sewing, it would be a good idea to read a few sentences ahead in the instructions to make sure you understand the step completely.

Alternate Dimensions

(Finished size of rakusu)

	Standard in INCHES	Standard in BU	Large METRIC	Young child in BU	Young child METRIC
Chō	4" by 1½"	22bu by 10bu	9.5cm by 3.5cm	20bu by 8bu	7.5cm by 3cm
Tan	1⅝" by 1½"	11bu by 10bu	4.5cm by 3.5cm	8bu by 8bu	3cm by 3cm
Yō	¾"	5bu	2.5cm	4bu	1.5cm
Sao	1½" by 35"	10bu by 233bu	4cm by 95cm	7bu by 180bu	2.7cm by 68cm
En	1½"	10bu	4cm	7bu	2,7cm
Maneki (folded)	3¼" by 3¾"	23bu by 25bu	11cm by 10cm	23bu by 18bu	8.5cm by 7cm
Jorō	1" by 1"	7bu by 7bu	2.5cm by 2.5cm	5bu by 5bu	2cm by 2cm

Bu is an old-fashioned Japanese measurement. Standard size *rakusu* sizes were transferred from bu to inches.

10bu = 1sun

100bu = 10sun = 1shaku

¾" = 5bu

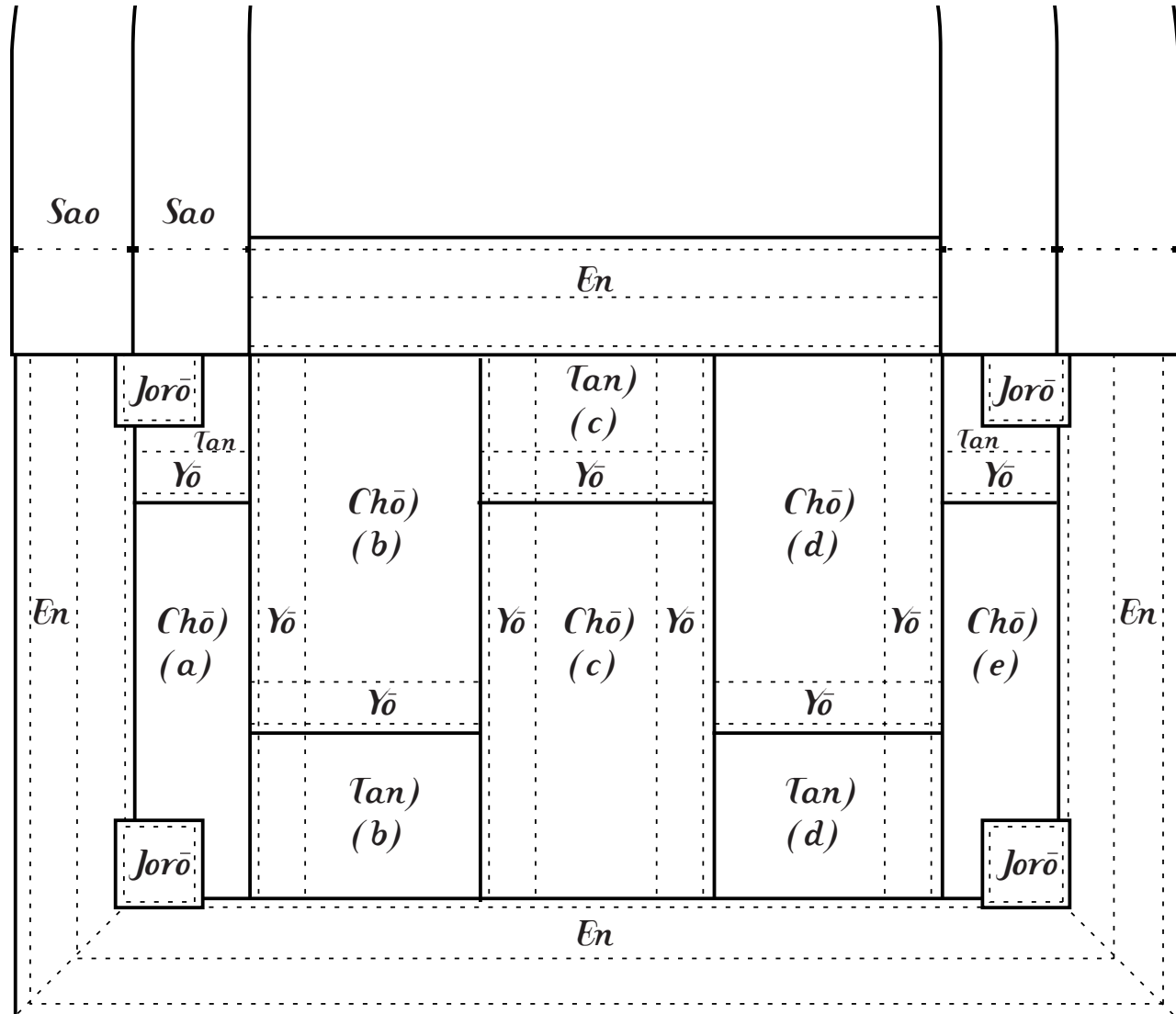
1½" = 10bu = 1sun

3" = 20bu = 2sun

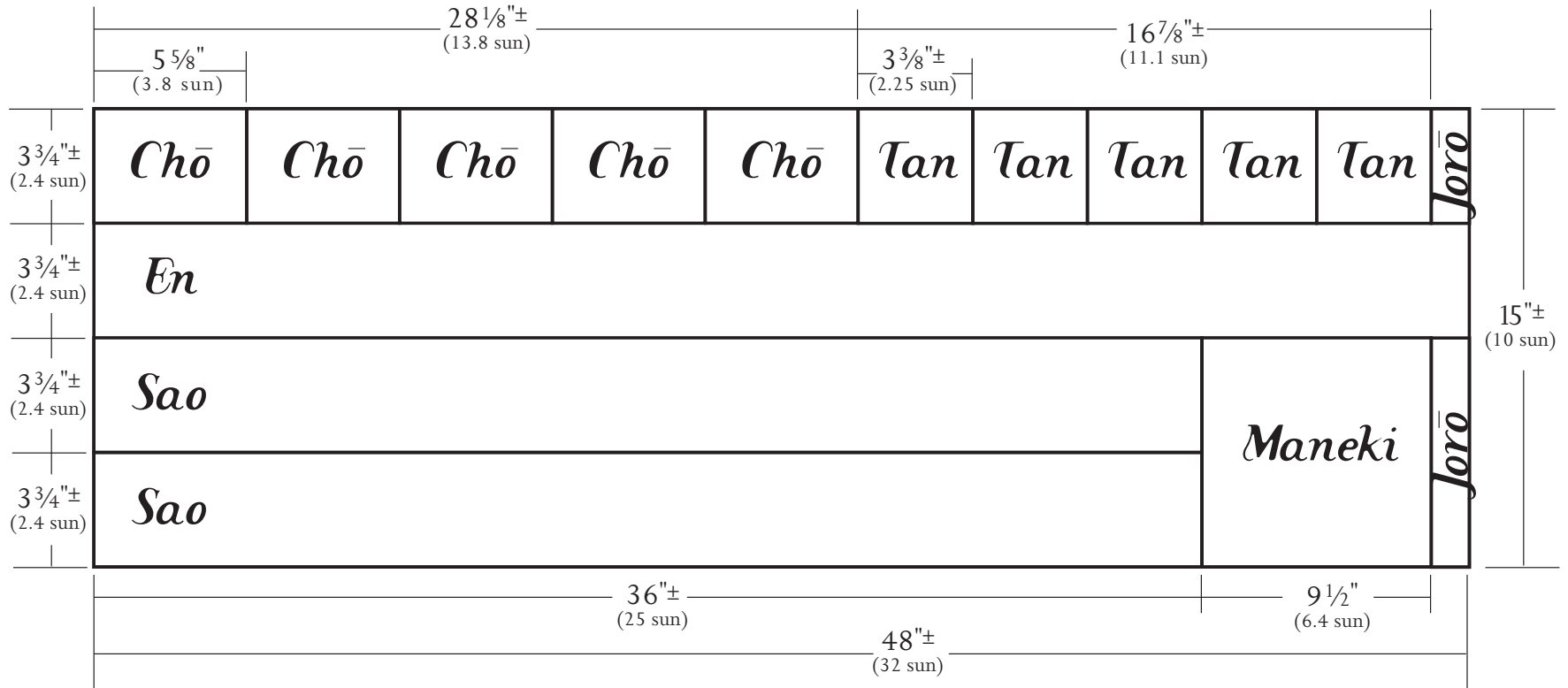
1⅝" = 11bu = 1sun 1bu

The Rakusu

Main Part



Layout



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Figure 1

This figure is not drawn exactly to scale. You must rely on the measurements for each piece. If the fabric you have chosen has a very coarse weave, you may need to cut the pieces slightly larger to achieve the right size in your finished *rakusu*.

*Lay out your pattern lengthwise on the fabric.

Sewing the Kagami

(1) To begin, check the colored fabric to be sure the grain is straight. On close examination, you should see the warp and weft threads perfectly perpendicular to each other. If the threads are crooked, grasp the corners of the cloth and pull on the diagonal, in the direction required to straighten the grain. Next, lay out the fabric and iron it smooth.

(2) Using a dressmaker's chalk pencil, mark the pieces on the fabric as shown in figure 1.

You should end up with the following pieces:

5 Chō (Long)	3¾" x 5⅝"
5 Tan (Short)	3¾" x 3⅜"
1 Maneki	7½" x 9½"
2 Sao	3¾" x 36"
1 En (Border)	3¾" x 48"
4 Jorō (Reinforcing)	1½" x 1½"

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1 back facing (white or light blended color) about	8" or 8½" x 11½"
1 Interfacing about	9" x 13"
1 Maneki interfacing	3" x 8"
2 Sao interfacing about	1¼" x 36"

(See note on figure 1.)

Marking the Chō and Tan

(3) It is easiest to make the front center section of the *rakusu* first. You will be sewing each *tan* to a corresponding *chō*, then taking these strips and sewing them side by side to make the front center section. It is important to make each seam correctly.

(4) Take 2 *chō* and 2 *tan*, and lightly draw the seam lines on the right (front) side of the fabric, following the grain, as shown in figure 2. Always measure the $\frac{1}{4}$ " line first, then measure the $\frac{3}{4}$ " line from the $\frac{1}{4}$ " line. We will refer to these 2 *chō/tan* sets as strips (b) and (d). See figure 16 for their final location and relation to each other. On the 3 remaining *tan/chō* sets, which we will refer to as (a), (c), and (e), draw the seam lines as shown in figure 3.

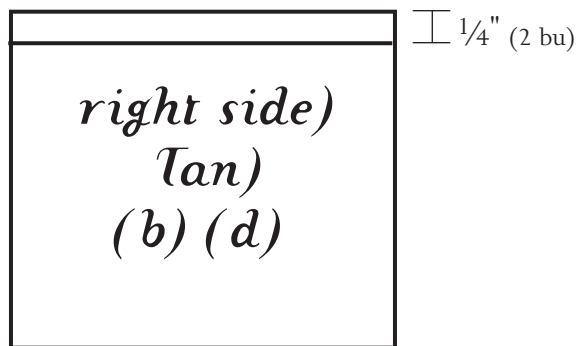
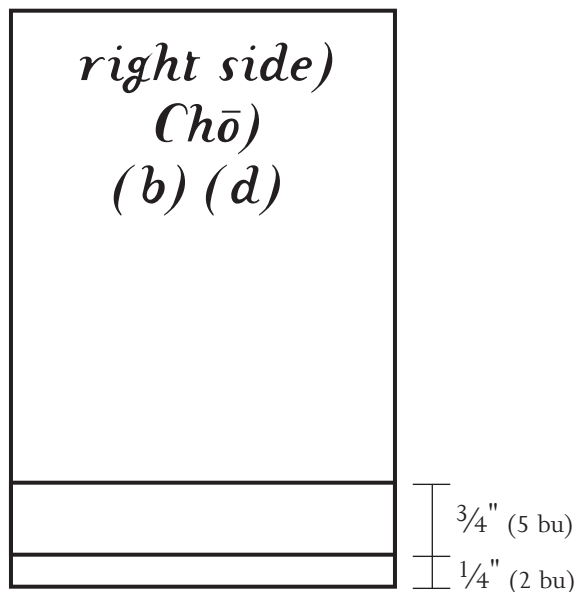


Figure 2

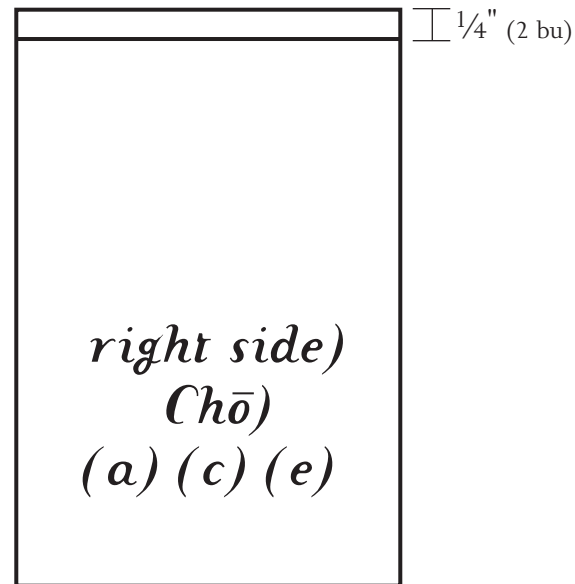
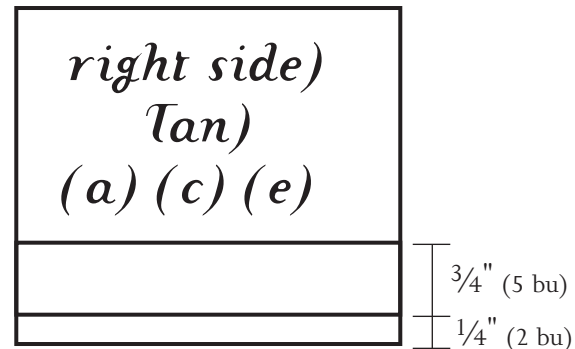
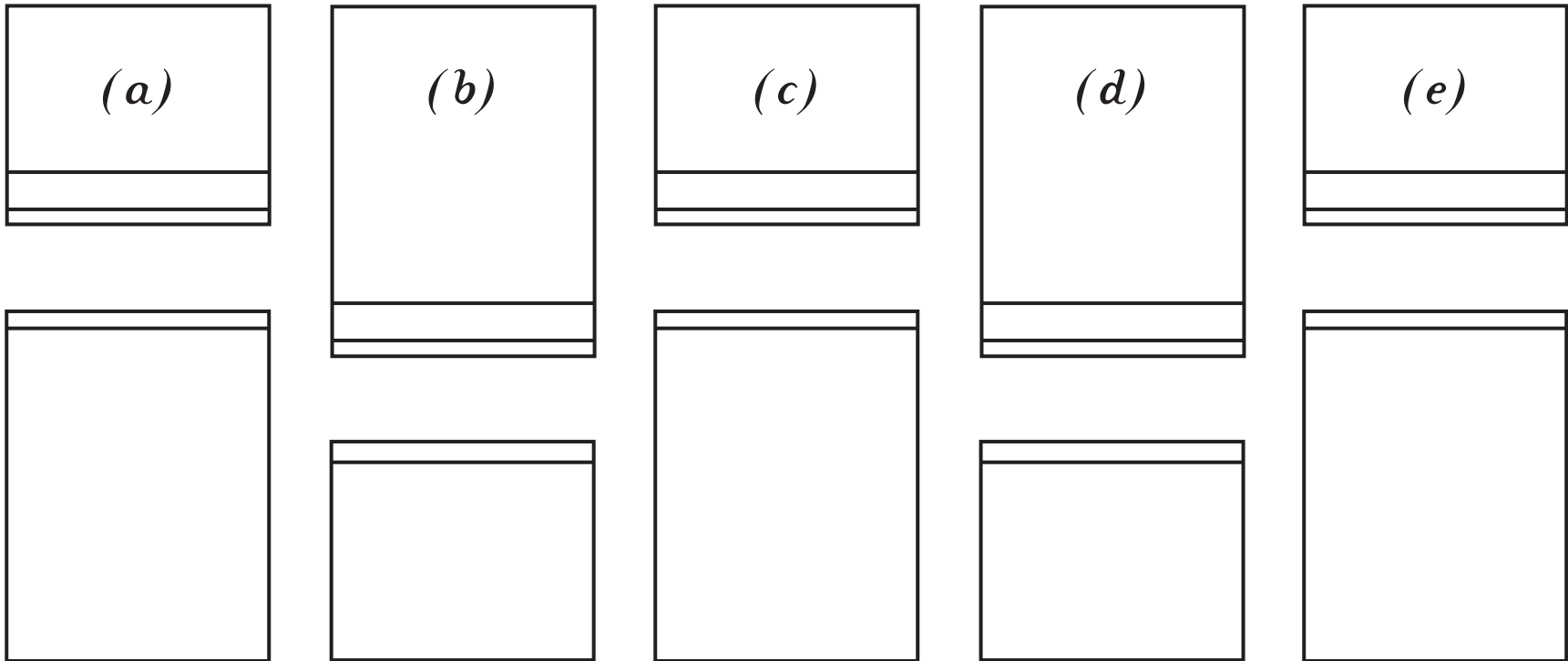


Figure 2

Figure 4



Pinning and Stitching the Chō and Tan with the Kyakushi Stitch

(5) Take the *chō* and *tan* for set (b), put the wrong sides of the fabric together, and pin the *chō* to *tan*, matching the chalk lines as shown in figure 5. You should pin perpendicular to the chalk lines, catching only a small bit of the material, and your pins should be fairly close together. This will prevent the material from puckering, resulting in a smooth finished *rakusu*.

(6) Using the *kyakushi* stitch, as shown in figure 6, stitch the *chō* and *tan* together right on the chalk line. The stitches should be very small (less than $\frac{1}{16}$ ") and very close together (about $\frac{1}{8}$ ") extending the entire width of the material. They are perpendicular and very close together. Refer to figure 6 for illustration. The fold will curl up later if your stitching is too far from the edge.

While sewing, you should chant silently with each stitch,

“I take refuge in the Buddha”
or
“Namu kie Butsu.”

Your objective is not to finish the *rakusu* quickly but to proceed with each step in deep mindfulness.

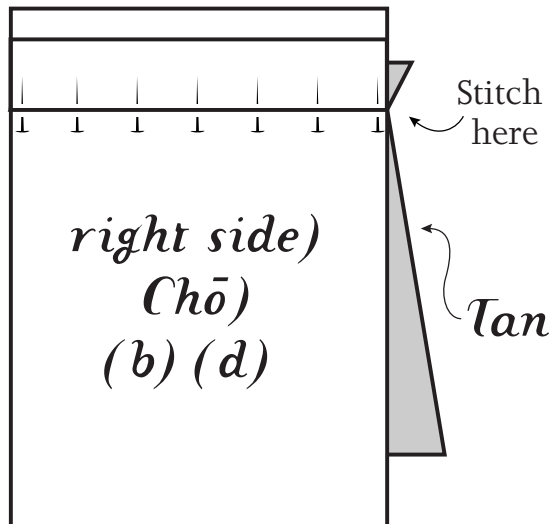


Figure 5

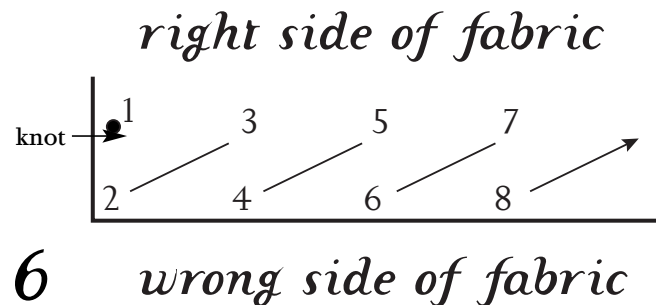
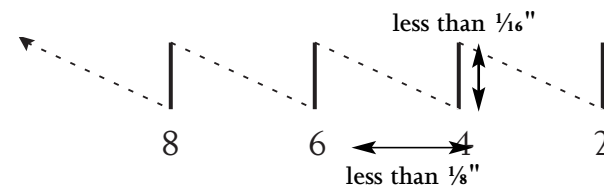


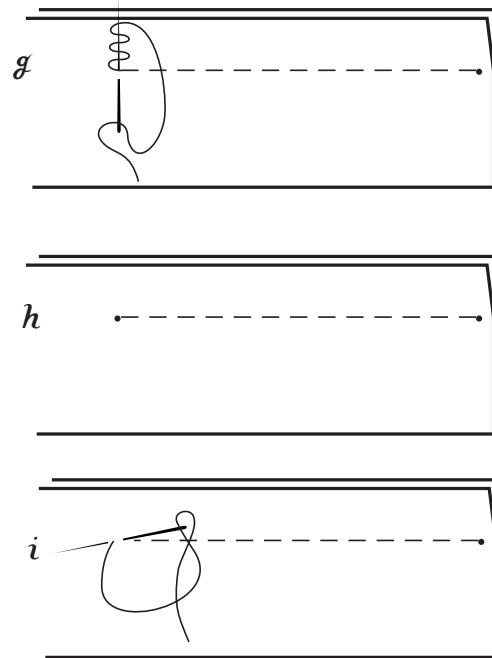
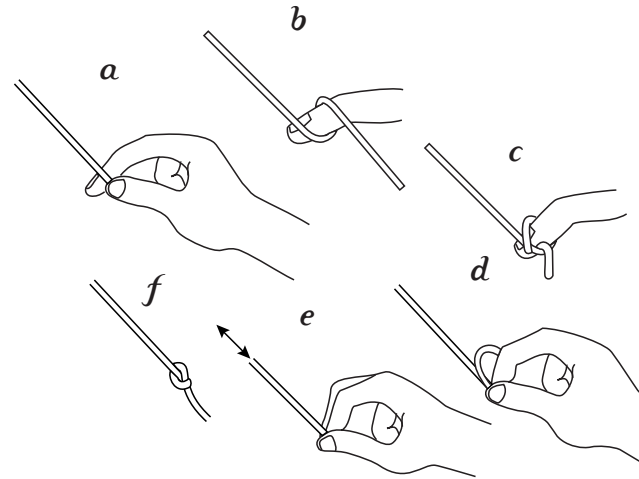
Figure 6

Figure 7

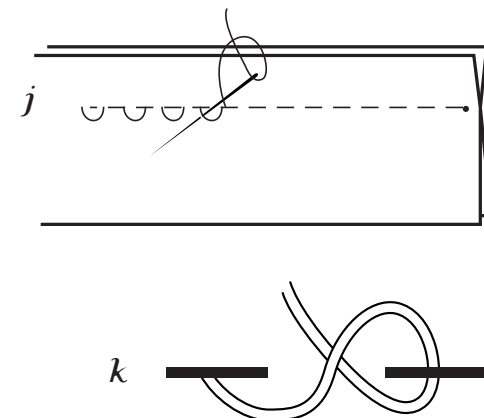
Knotting the Thread

Before beginning, knot one end of the thread by wrapping the thread around your index finger (b) and rolling it off between thumb and index finger (c, d) while pulling it tight into a tiny ball (e). It helps to moisten the thread end first.

To finish off the hand sewing with a knot, lay the needle on top of the last stitch, wrap the remaining thread a few times around the needle (g), and pull the needle out (h), while pinching the knot area between the thumb and forefinger. To finish off the hand sewing without a knot, take a small back stitch (i), then reverse direction and sew back over the line of stitching for a few stitches (j). Tuck the thread under (k), and trim off the excess. This type of finishing may be desirable to avoid a lumpy knot.



To finish off the hand sewing without a knot, take a small back stitch (i), then reverse direction and sew back over the line of stitching for a few stitches (j). Tuck the thread under (k), and trim off the excess. This type of finishing may be desirable to avoid a lumpy knot.



(7) Fold the *tan* up and fold the *chō* under on the ¼" chalk line, as in figure 8. Pin and stitch very close to the fold line. The fold will curl up later if your stitching is too far from the edge. Repeat this procedure with *chō/tan* set (d). Take care that your fold lines are crisp; when you open a seam, flatten it out and crease along the stitch line with your fingernail. This is quite important; if you don't, your *yō* (the space between the stitching lines, see the completed *rakusu*, pg. 86) will pucker and your *chō* or *tan* will become shorter and not fit properly.

(8) Take the *tan* and *chō* for set (a), with the wrong sides of the fabric together, and pin the *tan* to the *chō* matching the chalk lines as shown in figure 9. Stitch on the line, then fold the *chō* up and fold the *tan* under on the ¼" chalk line, as in figure 10. Pin and sew, following the same directions as for strips (b) and (d). Now, repeat the process on *tan/chō* sets (c) and (e).

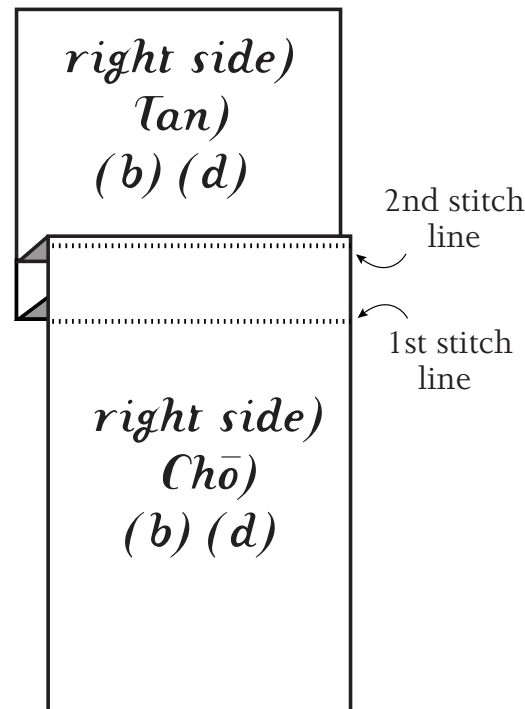


Figure 8

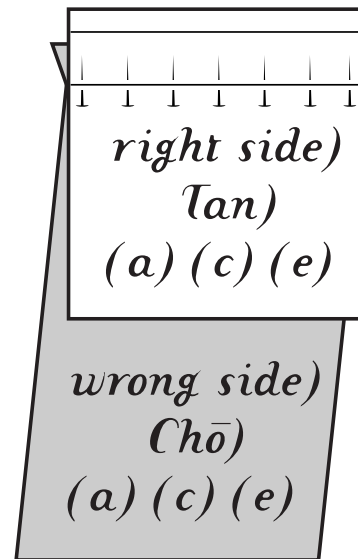


Figure 9

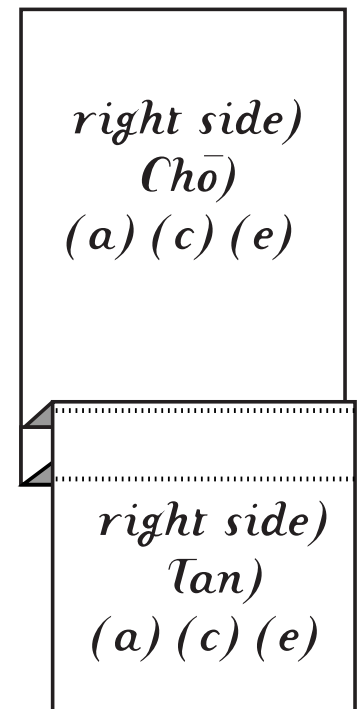


Figure 10

Figure 11

Assembling the Vertical Strips

(9) Now you are ready to join these vertical strips together, sewing them side by side. Begin with pieces (c) and (d) [or (c) and (b)]. Mark the seam lines on each piece as shown in figure 11. From the fold of the seam on (c), measure down $1\frac{5}{8}$ ". From the first stitch line on (d), measure up $1\frac{5}{8}$ ". These reference points (* on diagram) must match up as you sew (c) to (d) in the same way the *chō* and *tan* were sewn together.

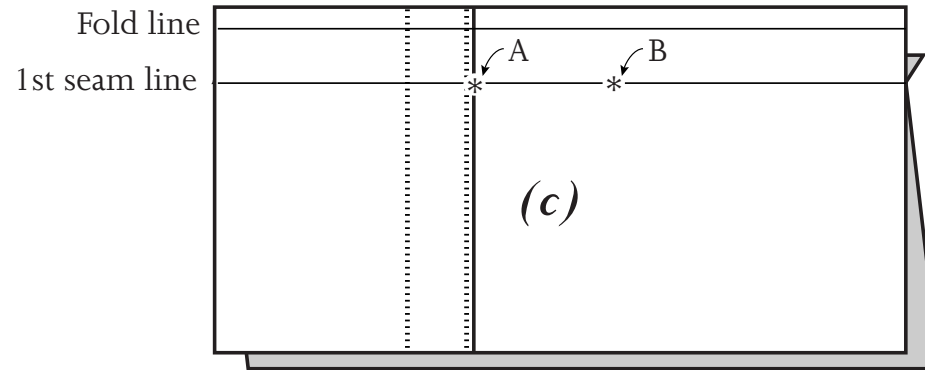
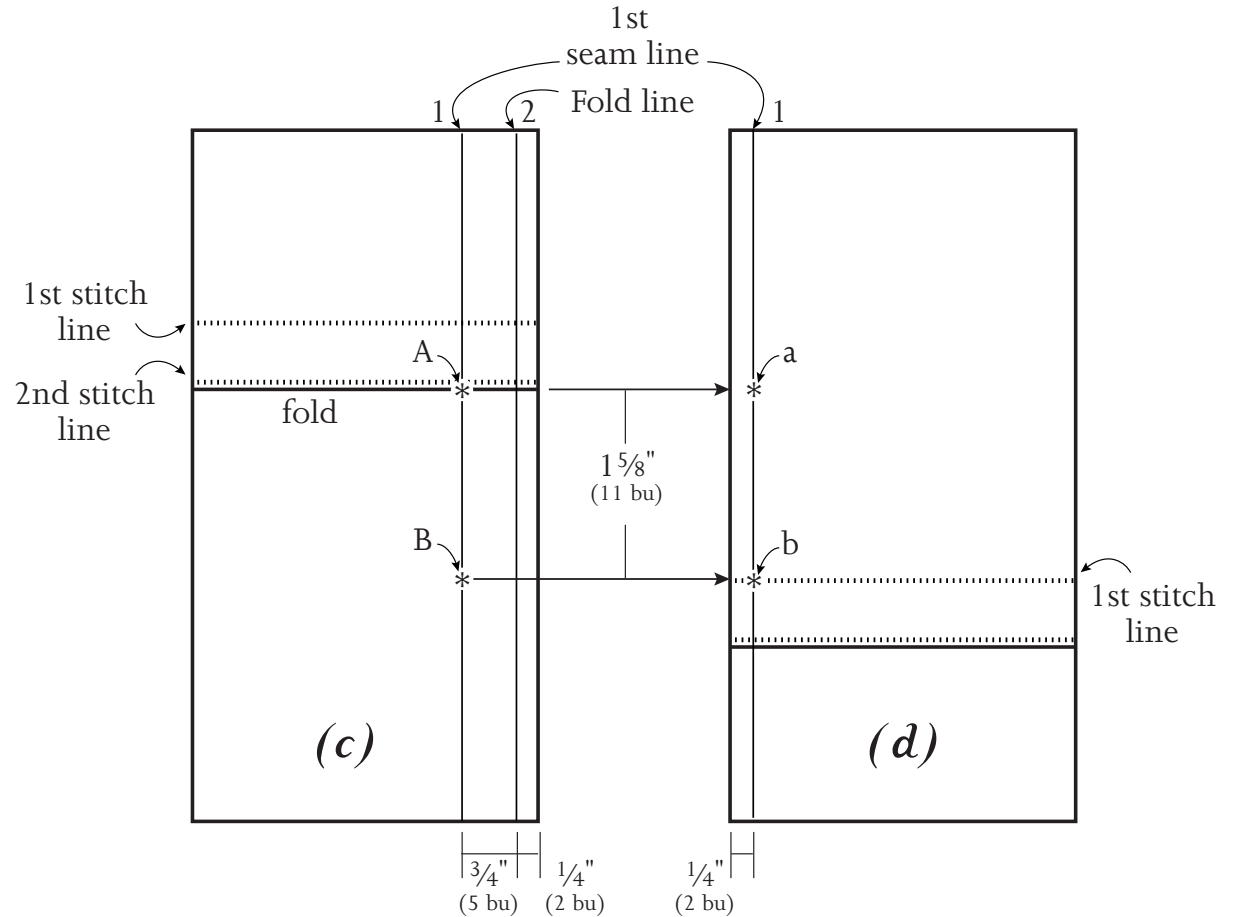
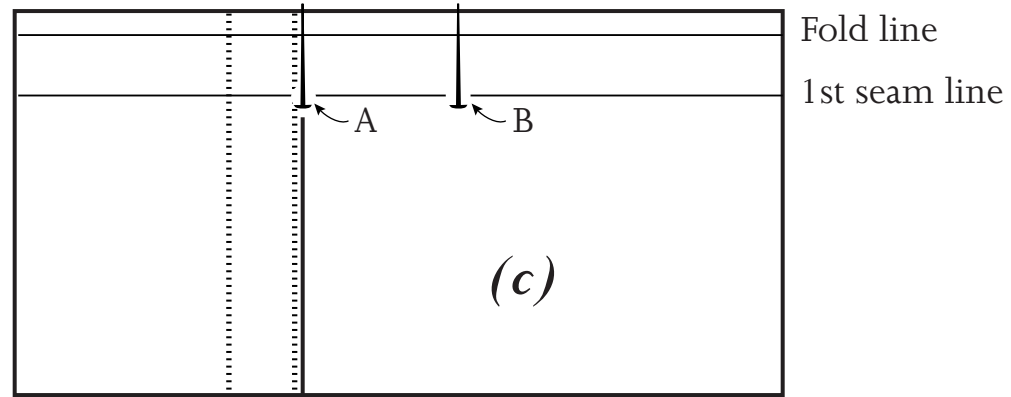


Figure 12

Pin, matching the reference points
A* and a*
B* and b*



Pin from the center toward both
ends. Don't be concerned if the
ends don't line up evenly; this is
normal.

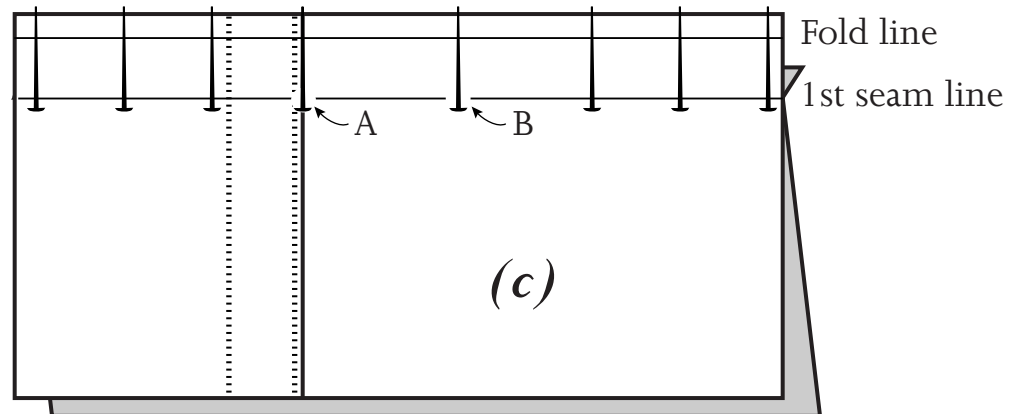
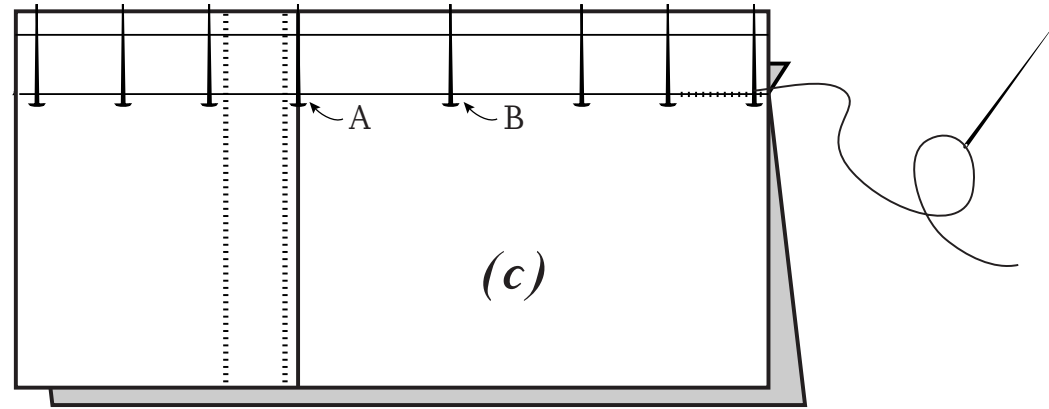


Figure 13

Sew on the first seam line.



Fold (d) up and fold (c) under the $\frac{1}{4}$ " chalk line. Pin and stitch very close to the fold line.

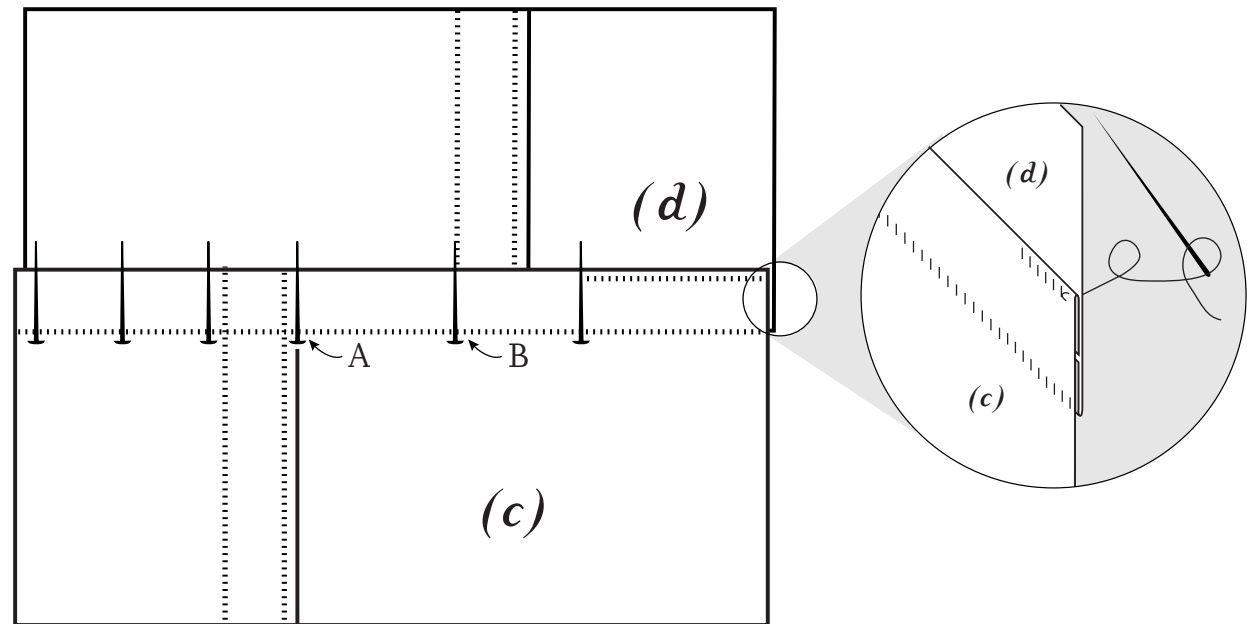
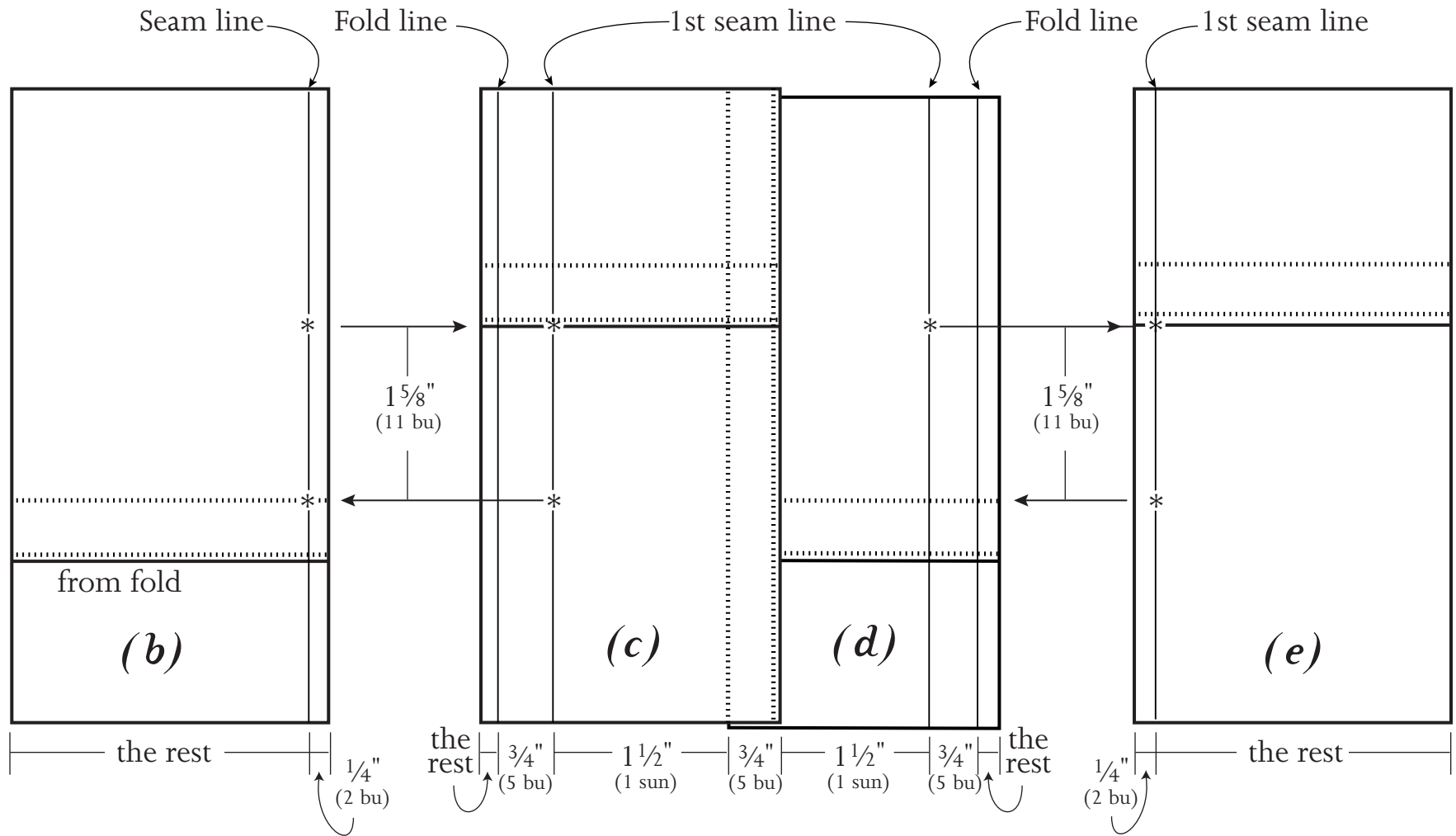


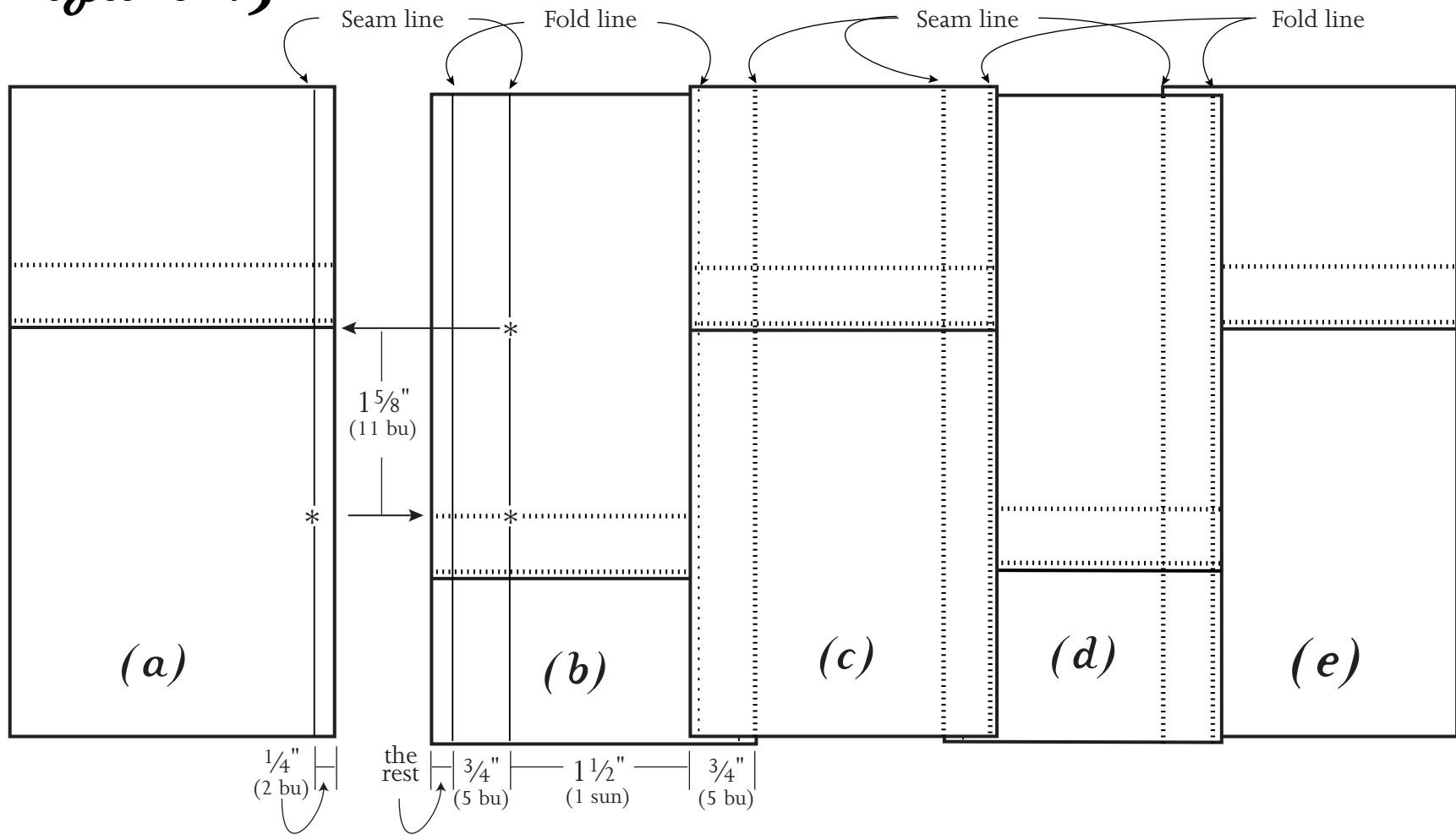
Figure 14



(10) Mark 2 chalk lines on (d): first, $1\frac{1}{2}$ " to the right of the fold of (c), then $\frac{3}{4}$ " from the first line. On (e), mark a chalk line $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the left edge, and mark a reference point (*) $1\frac{5}{8}$ " down from the fold. Matching this reference point to the upper stitch line on (d), you can sew (d) to (e), as strips (c) and (d) were sewn together. See figure 14.

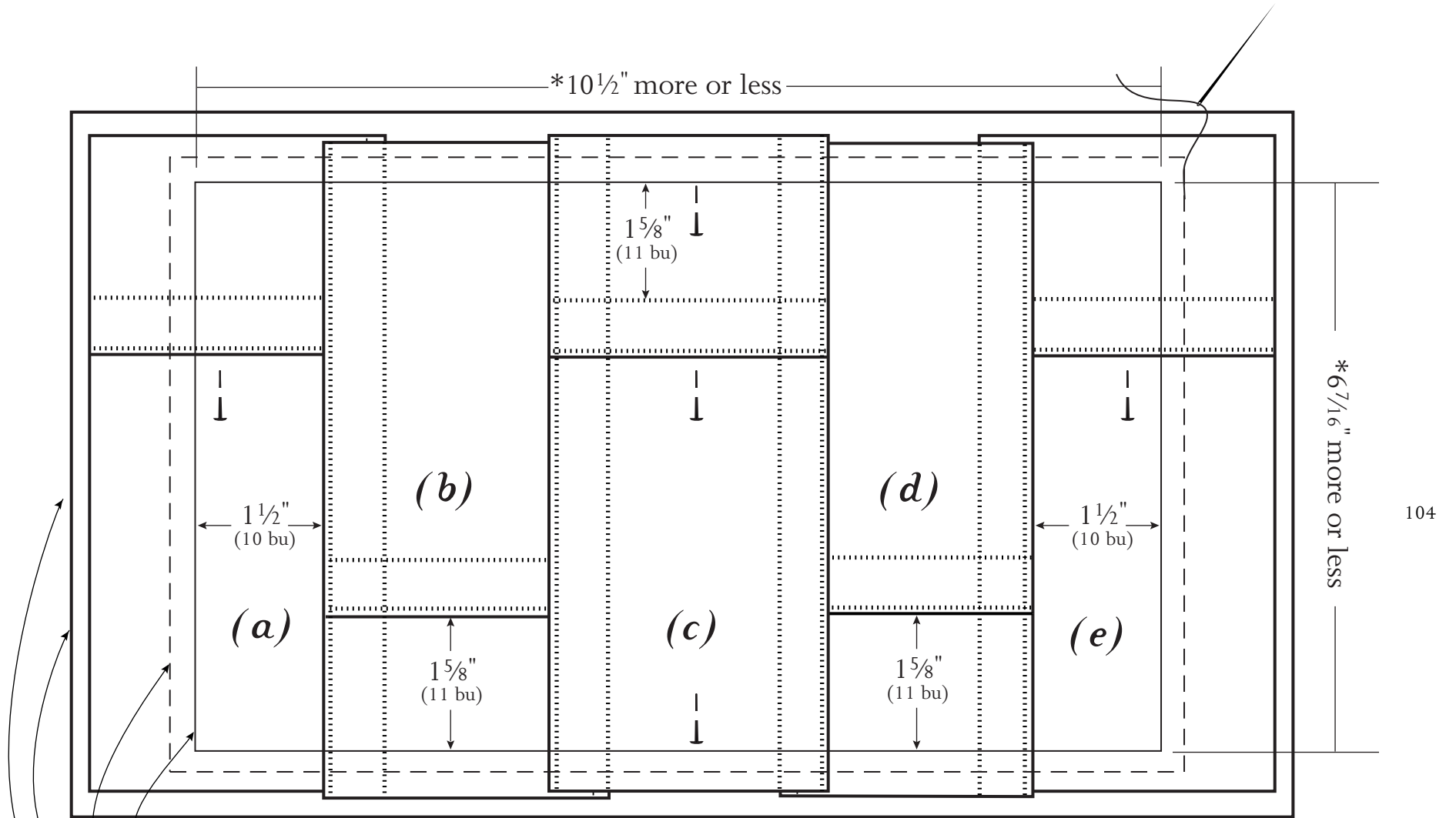
(11) Mark 2 chalk lines on the left edge of (c): first, $1\frac{1}{2}$ " from the first row of stitching that connects (c) to (d), then $\frac{3}{4}$ " from the first line. On (b), mark a line $\frac{1}{4}$ " in from the right edge, and a reference point (*) $1\frac{5}{8}$ " up from the first stitch line. Match this reference point on (b) to the fold of the seam on (c), and sew (c) to (b), as strips (c) and (d) were sewn together. See figure 14.

Figure 15



(12) Mark 2 chalk lines on the left edge of (b): first, $1\frac{1}{2}$ " to the left from the fold of (c), then $\frac{3}{4}$ " from the first line. On (a), mark a chalk line $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the right edge, and mark a reference point (*) $1\frac{5}{8}$ " down from the fold. Matching this reference point to the upper stitch line on (b), you can sew (b) to (a). See figure 15.

Remember: The horizontal fold lines (horizontal *yō* line) should form a straight line across the front of the *kagami*.



Inner perimeter of **kagami**
 Basting stitch
 Interfacing
 Backfacing (backfacing is underneath
 interfacing, about same size as **kagami** piece)

Figure 16

* according to actual
 dimensions of your
kagami

Marking and Basting the Kagami

(13) The top and bottom edges of this center section will not be straight across. From the fold of the seam joining pieces (a) and (b), draw a line $1\frac{1}{2}$ " to the left, and from the fold of the seam joining pieces (d) and (e), draw a line $1\frac{1}{2}$ " to the right. Measure up $1\frac{5}{8}$ " from the upper stitch lines on (a), (c), and (e), and draw a horizontal line. From the folds on (b) and (d), measure down $1\frac{5}{8}$ " and draw a second horizontal line. You have now marked off the inner perimeter of the center section, which should measure approximately $6\frac{7}{16}$ " x $10\frac{1}{2}$ ". Carefully press flat. See figure 16.

(14) Press the back facing and interfacing. Then lay out the back facing, place the interfacing on top of it, and place the *kagami* on top of the interfacing, right side up. Smooth the pieces out, then find the center of the *kagami*. Put a pin there.

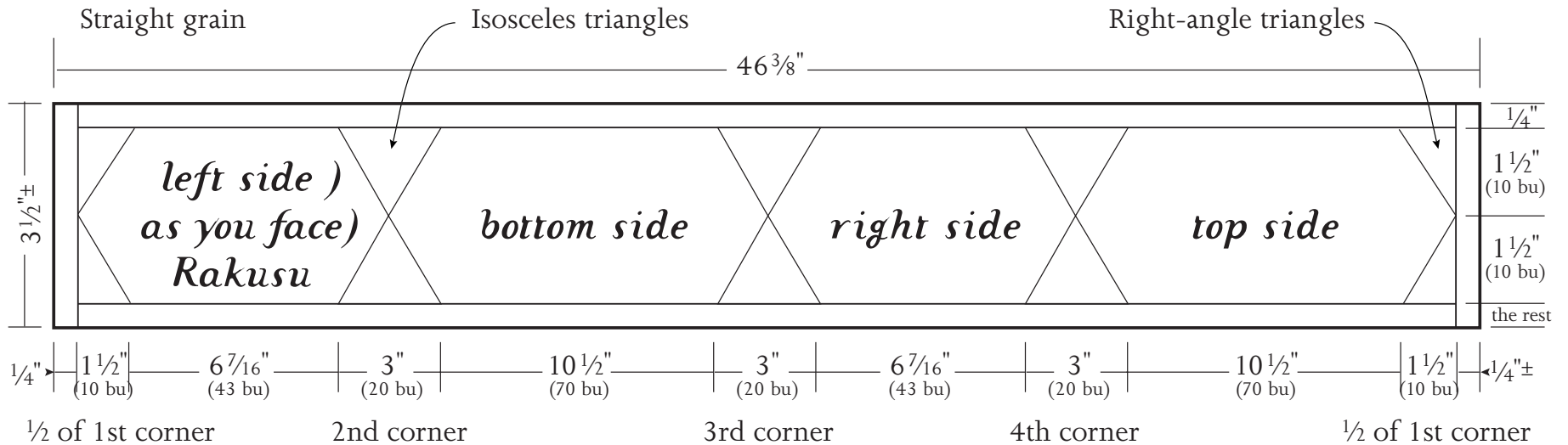
(15) Then very carefully smooth the fabric from the center to the edges, checking that the facings are flat and the grain is straight. Place pins as shown in figure 16. Once all is securely pinned, you may baste all three pieces together around the perimeter, keeping your stitches slightly outside of the chalk line. Use large stitches, about $\frac{1}{2}$ " – $\frac{3}{4}$ " in length. This basting will keep the *kagami*, interfacing and back facing straight and centered as you attach the *en*. The basting stitches will not show when the *rakusu* is finished.

Figure 17

Sewing the En

(Use either Method 1 or Method 2)

Method 1



* Measurements are approximate and should be replaced by the actual dimensions of your *kaqami*.

Method 1

Mark on the wrong side of the fabric. This drawing is not to scale. Measurements are approximate and should be replaced by the actual dimensions of your *kagami*.

(15) Smooth out or iron the *en* piece flat. Lay out the guide lines as in figure 17. All measurements will be derived from the actual dimensions of your *kagami*, so the measurements given on the diagram are approximate only. Measure your *kagami* on the chalk line you drew in step 13 and use these dimensions for your *en*.

Precision in measuring is extremely important in this step. Please check and recheck all measurements.

Figure 18

(16) Step 1. First corner: Sew ends together, starting at point (A), where the lines meet, and ending at point (B).

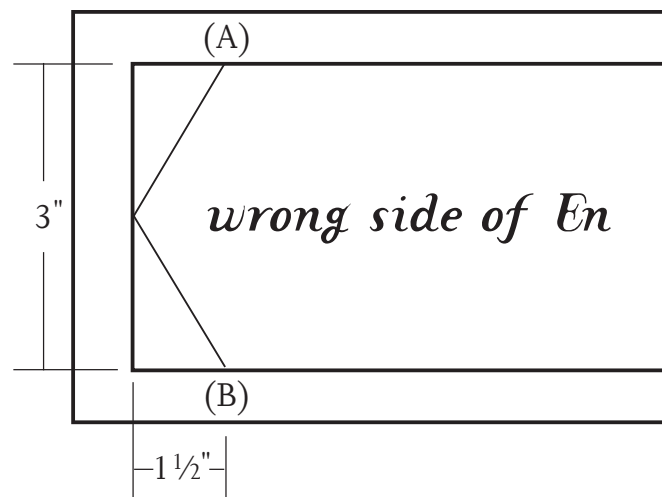


Figure 19

Step 2. How to sew all corners: Use basting stitch. First pin and then sew all 4 corners of the en, slightly outside of the mark always beginning at point (A) and ending at point (B). See figure 20.

Leave a loop of thread about 1/2" at the middle. See figure 20.

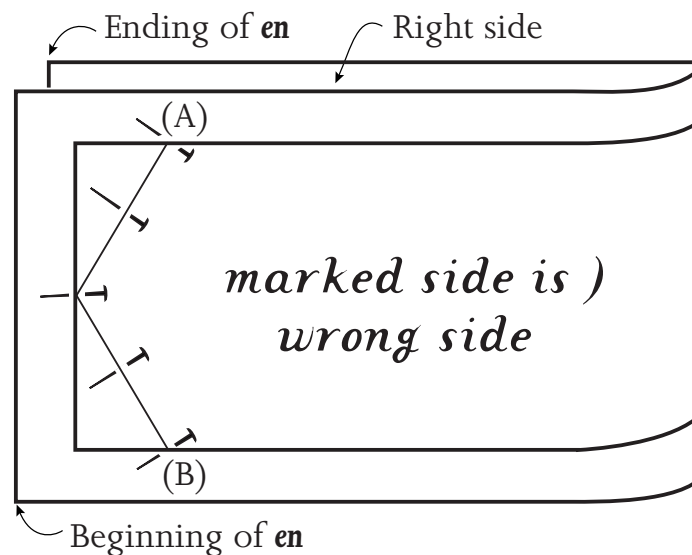


Figure 20

Use a basting stitch, and leave a loop at the middle (tip) as shown in figure 19. Knot your thread before beginning to sew and when finished basting.

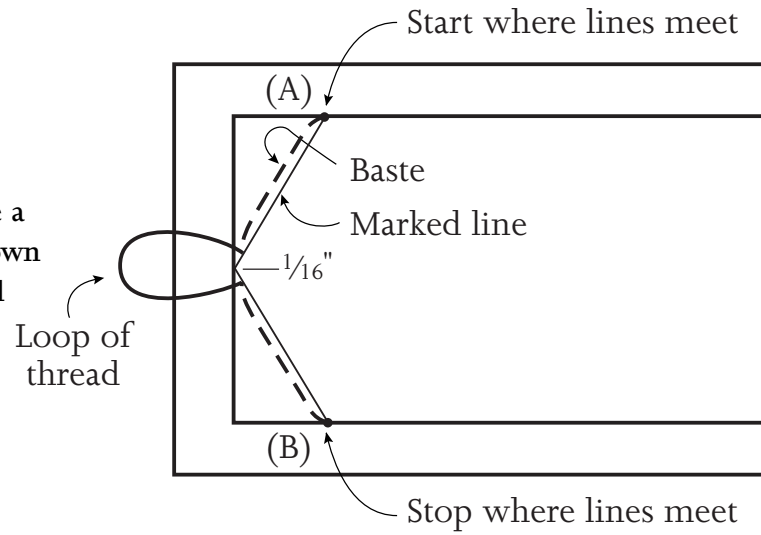


Figure 21

Corners 2, 3, and 4.

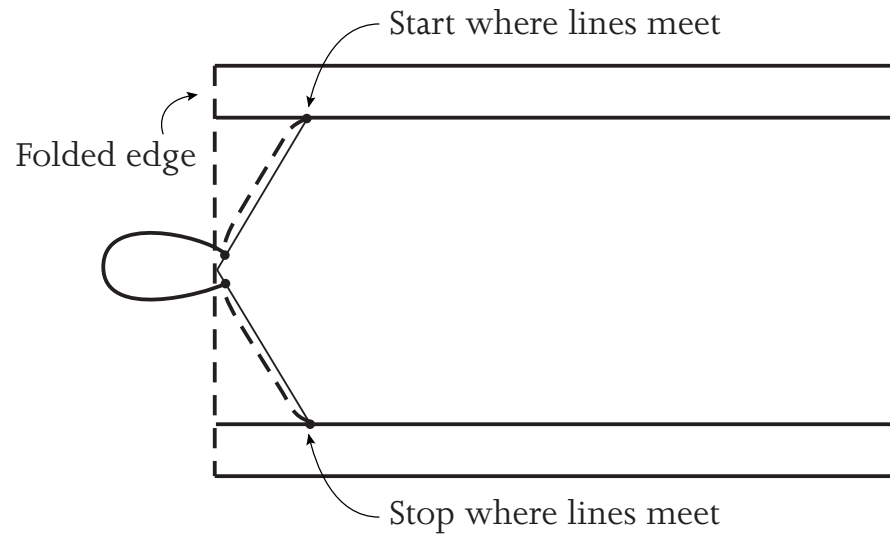


Figure 21a

1st corner
3rd corner

1st corner: shorter side of *en* ($6\frac{7}{16}$ " side) faces you. The right side flap is folded toward you. Left side flap is folded to back, away from you.

----- Basting stitch
—— Marked line (fold on this line)

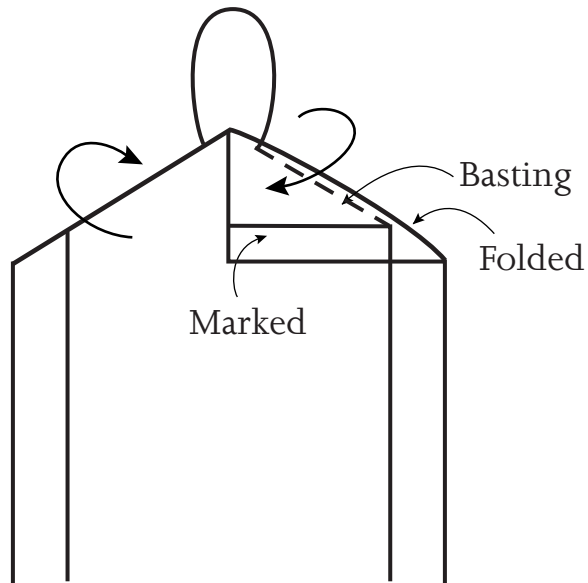


Figure 21b

2nd corner
4th corner

Figure 21c

(17) Fold each corner following the diagram. Fold on the marked line so that the basting stitches will go slightly inside of the corner line.

The 1st corner and the 3rd corner are shown in figure 21a. The right flap is folded toward you and the left flap is folded to the back side. The 2nd corner and 4th corner are as shown in figure 21b.

Fold and iron all the corners. Iron only on each corner; do not iron on the marked line of the *en*. The warm temperature might stretch the fabric and alter the length of the *en*.

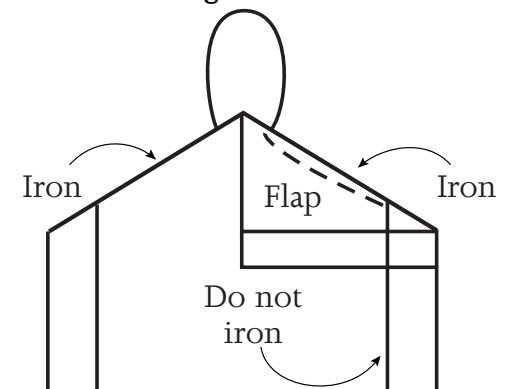


Figure 21d

Method 1 (cont.)

Sewing the En Corners with the Kyakushi Stitch

Insert both your thumbs inside the corner, underneath the triangular flaps, with your 4 fingers on the outside. The flaps are supported from the outside by the 4 fingers and inside by the thumbs. Then turn the corner inside out. Pin on the corner line. The inside triangular part, together with the pinned side, must stay folded toward you. The piece folded to the back side must stay on the opposite side of the right corner. Each half of the corner should have a triangular flap inside, so the fabric layers become even.

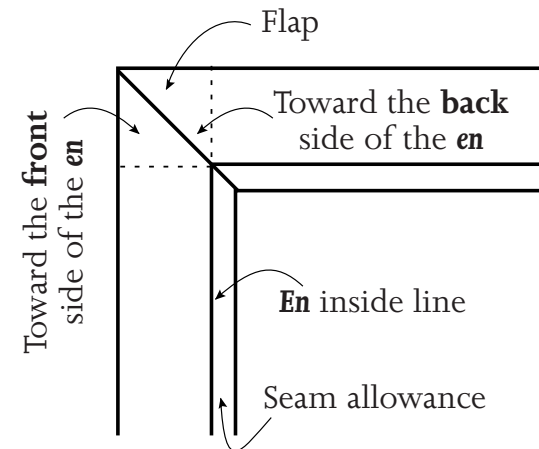
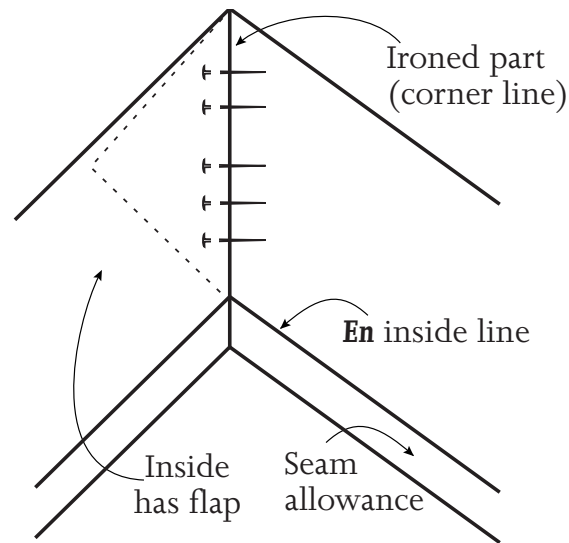


Figure 22

(18) Beginning with the first corner, and sewing toward the outside corner, sew all corners using the *kyakushi* stitch. Start your stitch about 1/8" from the inside-of-*en* fold line and end about 1/8" from the other inside of *en* fold. As you sew each corner, turn and re-hold the corner, continuing the *kyakushi* stitch on the other side of the corner. Finish each corner.

When you sew on the corner line, put the fingers of your other hand inside under the triangular part, so you won't sew the two sides of the corner together. You will be sewing the triangular part on that side to the seam. The stitch lines illustrated in the diagram are on the top edge of each fold. You made the first corner by stitching together the two ends of the *En*. No ironing is suggested. See figure 22.

Go to figure 26.

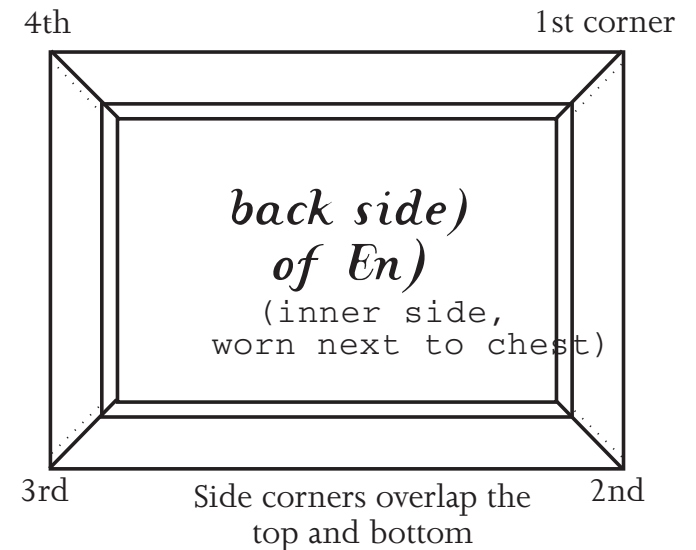
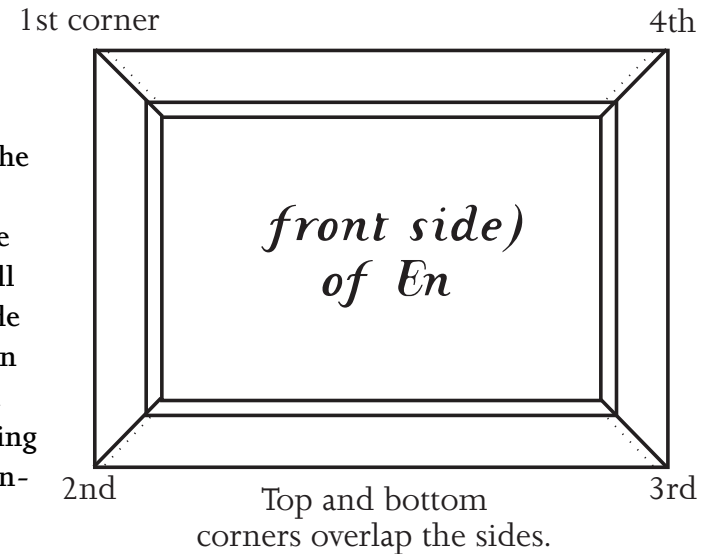


Figure 23

Method 2

Mark on the right side of the fabric. This drawing is not to scale. Measurements are approximate and should be replaced by the actual dimensions of your *kagami*.

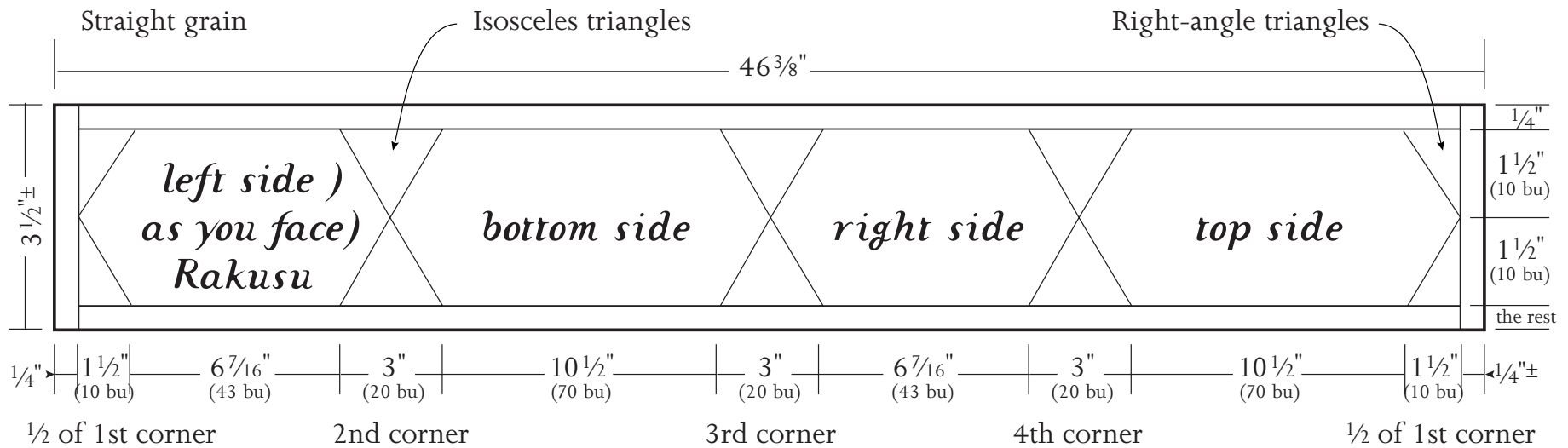
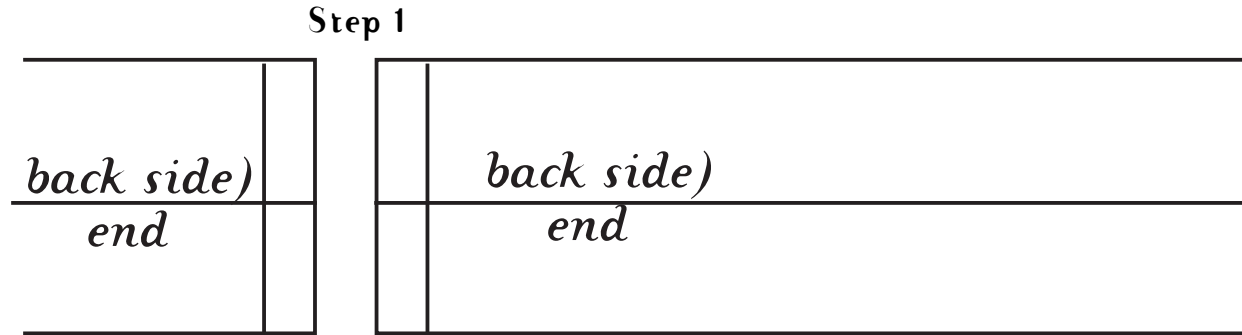


Figure 24

Method 2 (cont.)

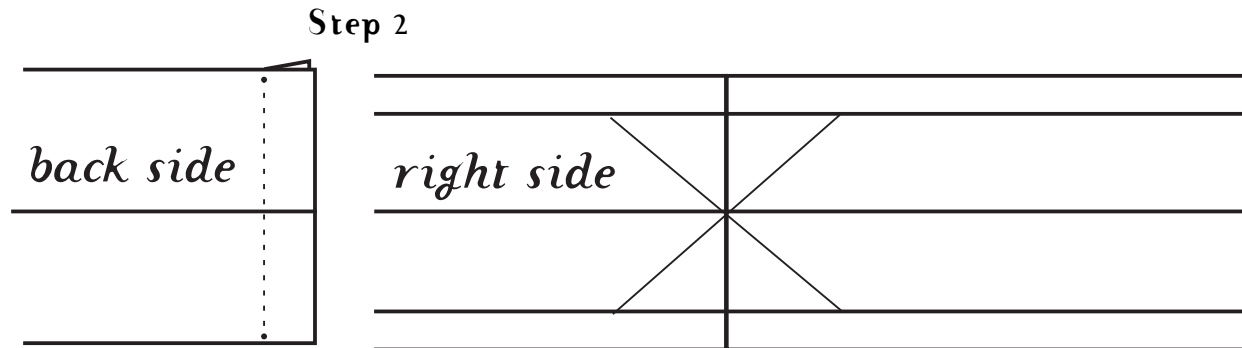
Step 1

Mark the *en* exactly as in figure 17, but on the right side of the fabric. Then turn the *en* over and mark a chalk line along the entire length of the *en* right along the middle. Also mark lines across the ends, $\frac{1}{4}$ " from each end.



Step 2

First corner: Sew the ends together on the back side (with the right sides facing in) using a running stitch. Turn to the right side and check that the chalk lines make a perfect "X". Then press the seam allowance open. Turn the whole *en* to the right side.



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Step 3

Imagine that the "X" is laid over the face of a clock. Fold and press along the 11 o'clock - 5 o'clock diagonal for corners 1 and 3. Fold and press the opposite diagonal on corners 2 and 4.

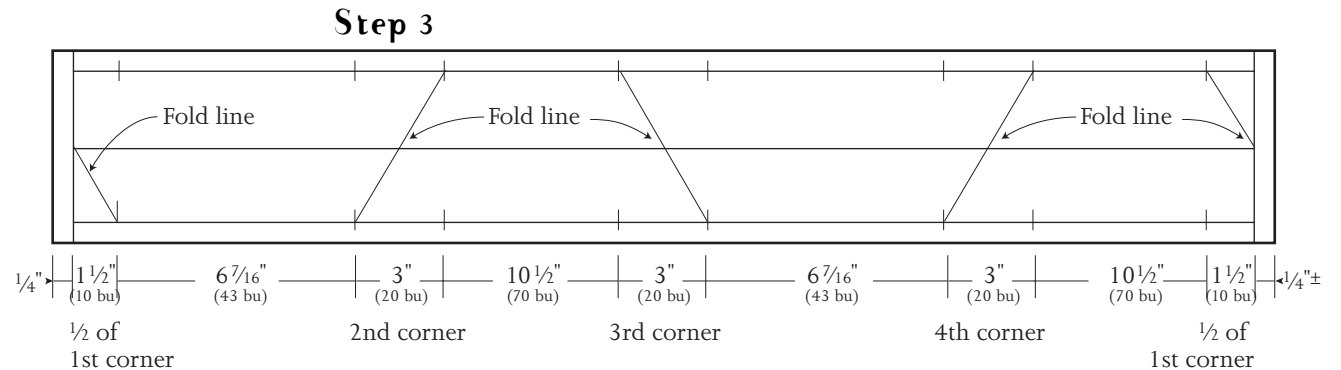
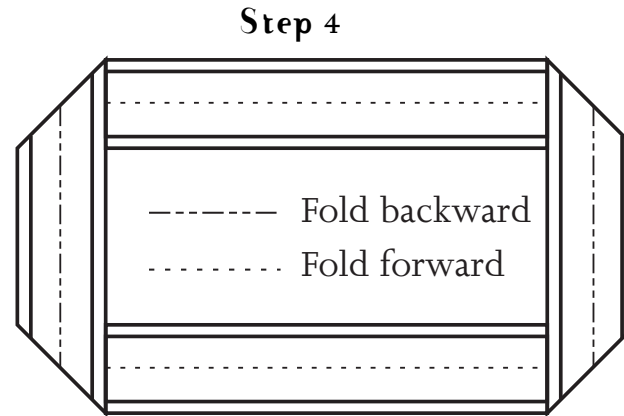


Figure 25

Method 2 (cont.)

Step 4

Fold the top of the *en* toward you along the chalk line. Fold the bottom of the *en* up along the chalk line. Fold the outside edge of each side under (to the back) along the chalk line.



Step 5

On the front, the top and bottom pieces overlap the side pieces. On the back it's the reverse: the sides overlap the top and bottom. Return to figure 21d to sew the corners. Then go to figure 26.

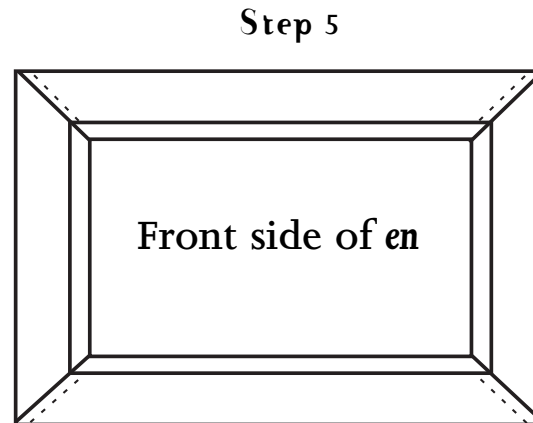


Figure 26

Putting the Kagami into the En

Both Method 1 and Method 2

(19) Put the *kagami* into the *en*. Match the *kagami*'s corners and the *en*'s inside corners. Lightly pin the corners. Fold the seam allowance to the inside of the *en*. Lightly pin the *en*'s edge to the *kagami* through the backing material but not through the back edge of the *en*. Sew the very edge of the *en* using the *kyakushi* stitch through the interfacing and the backing (white or light-blend fabric) **but not through the other side of the *en***. Use the same tiny *kyakushi* stitch you used when sewing the *kagami*. See figure 26.

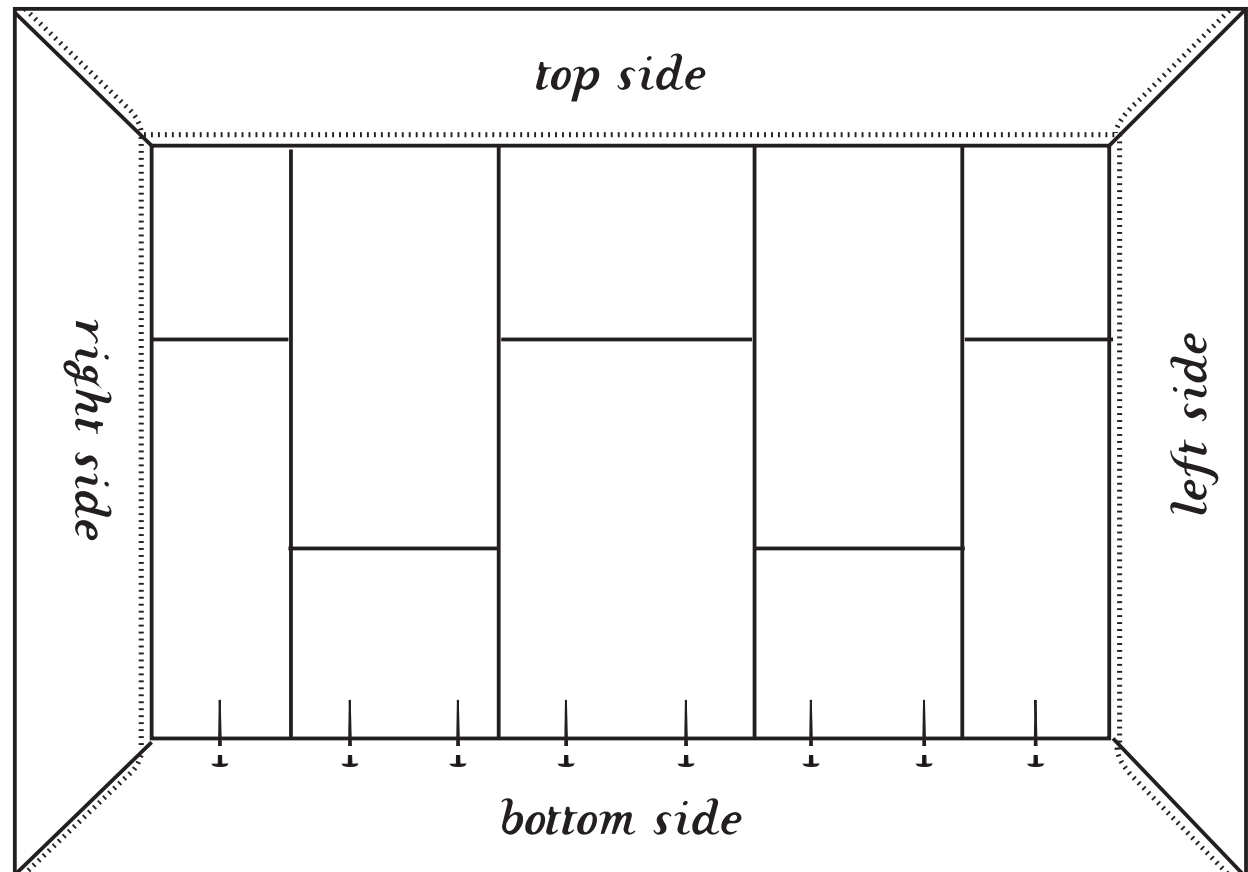
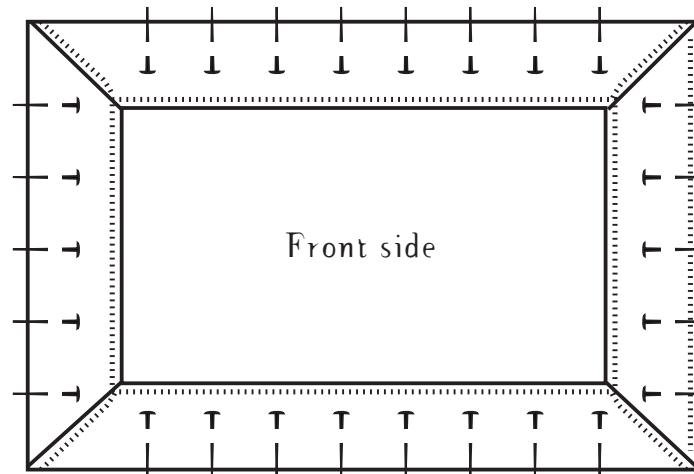
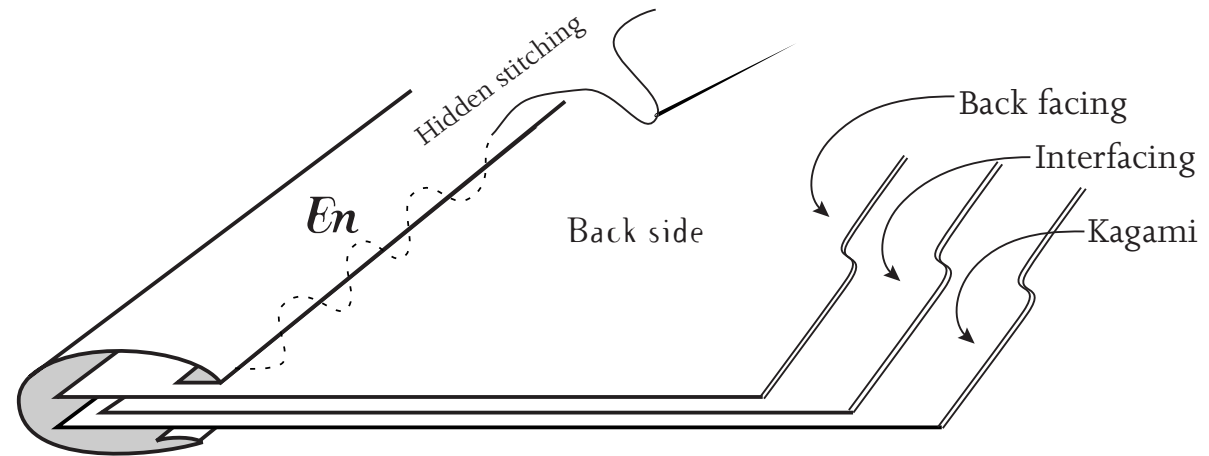


Figure 27

Sewing the En to the Kagami

(20) Turn the *rakusu* over so that the white or light-blend color fabric (facing you) is in front of you, with the *en* encircling it but not sewn down. Carefully fold on the $\frac{1}{4}$ " line, seam allowance to the inside, and pin as you did the front side. The folded line will cover the back side of the *kyakushi* stitch line. Sew the very edge of the *en* using the hidden stitch (see figure 27) through the inner side of the *rakusu*. The dotted line in figure 27 indicates the thread passing beneath the surface of the fabric. Stitches do not show in the hidden stitch. Check to make sure no stitches show on the front of the *rakusu*.



(21) Turn the *rakusu* over again, so that the front of the *kagami* is facing you. Pin around the middle part to secure all layers of the *en*. (See diagram.) Sew around the very outside edge of the *en*, through both sides, using the *kyakushi* stitch. The stitch size must be the same size as the *chō* or *tan's* stitch size. When you change threads, pull the knot through to the inside of the *rakusu* so it is hidden on the inside of the *en*. You should start a new thread one or two stitches back from the last stitch. Pull this knot to the inside of the *en* too.

Figure 28

Sewing the Middle (Third) Seam

(22) Draw a middle line. Lightly pin on the line so the interfacing remains smooth. Sew through both sides on this middle line of the *en* using the *kyakushi* stitch. See figure 28 for front and back views of the stitching.

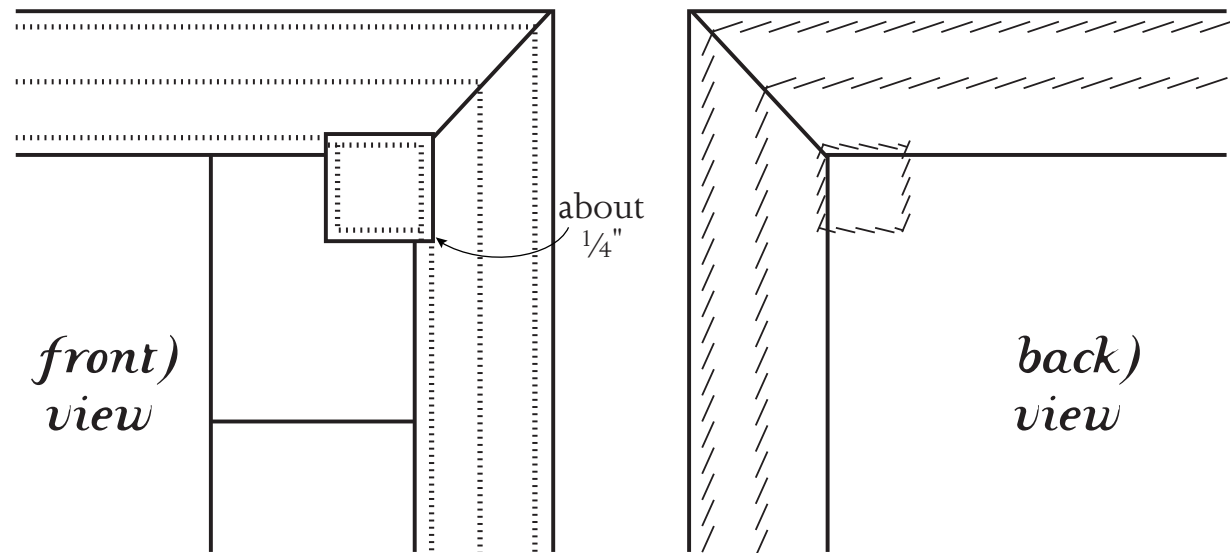
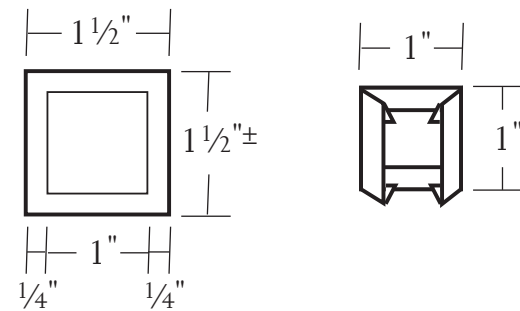


Figure 29

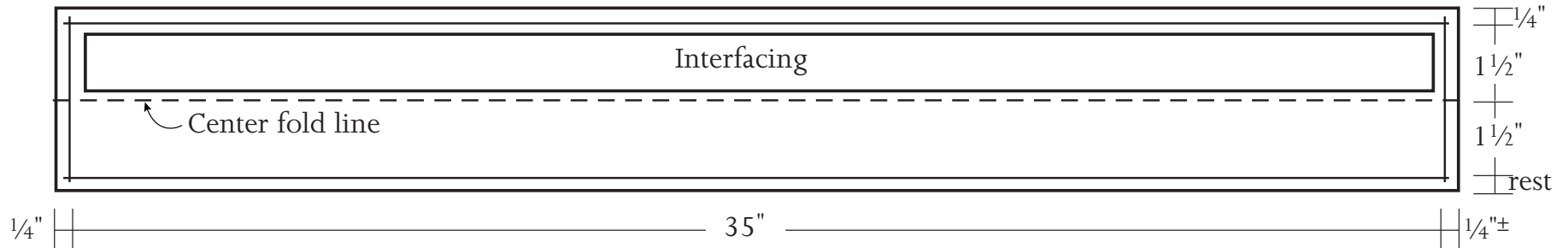
Jorō Attachment

(23) Take the four *jorō* and mark the fold lines as shown in figure 29. First fold the top and bottom under $\frac{1}{4}$ " each, then the sides. The *jorō* are positioned in each inner corner of the front of the *en* as shown in figure 28. The *jorō* must be pinned exactly to correspond

with the straight grain of the *kagami*. Using the *kyakushi* stitch, sew the *jorō* through all the layers to the back, continually checking the back so the stitches which will show, are kept very neat and about $\frac{1}{4}$ " overlapping the *en*. Stitch to the very edge of the *jorō*.



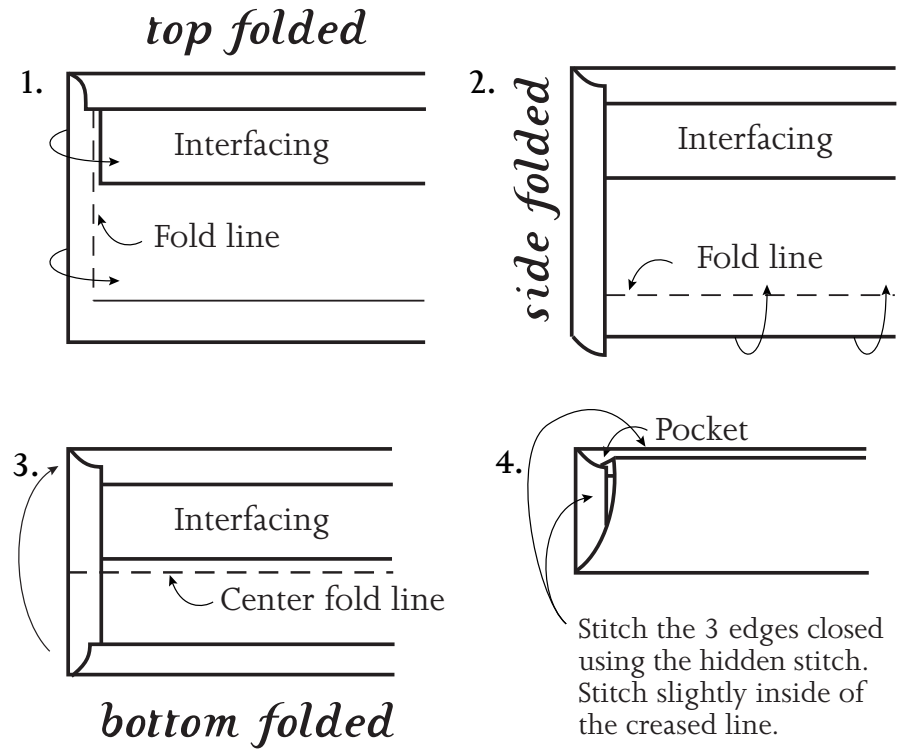
Figures 30 and 31



Marking, Folding and Stitching the Saos

(24) You are now ready to stitch the *saos*, the straps. Both straps are sewn in the same way, so once you have finished one, just repeat the process on the second. The length of the *sao* is determined by your height. The *sao* for an average-size person is 35" in length. Adjust that measurement either way so that the center of the *rakusu* is roughly midway between the top of your diaphragm and your navel.

Iron the *sao* pieces smooth and mark as shown in figure 30. Trim a little off one end to get the proper length, if necessary. Set the interfacing piece with one edge along the center fold line. Iron the 1/4" seam allowance over along the top edge. Iron both ends over 1/4", and finally iron the bottom edge up 1/4". See figure 31. Finally, iron the *sao* in half lengthwise along the center fold line. Put the bottom corner seam allowance into the pocket. Stitch the 3 open edges closed, using the hidden stitch.



Stitch the 3 edges closed using the hidden stitch. Stitch slightly inside of the creased line.

Marking, Stitching and Folding the Maneki

(25) Now lay out the **maneki** fabric. Mark a chalk line $\frac{5}{8}$ " in from each long edge, as in figure 32. Fold the **maneki** in half, and sew up the seam with a running stitch or a small basting stitch, as in figure 33. Rotate the seam to the center of the **maneki**, as in figure 34. Now turn the **maneki** right side out, slip the interfacing inside and center it as in figure 35. Iron the **maneki** in half with the seam on the inside, then turn both ends inside so that the **maneki** measures $3\frac{1}{4}$ " x $3\frac{3}{4}$ " as in figure 36.

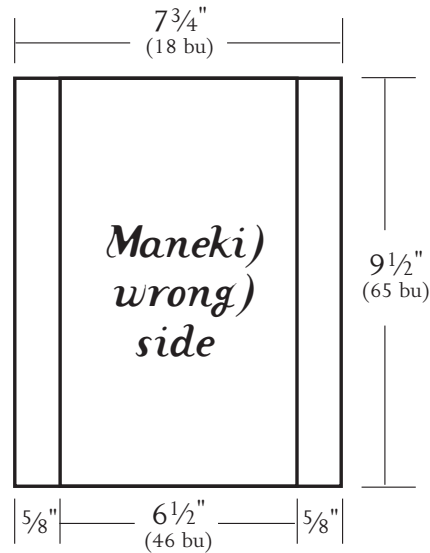


Figure 32

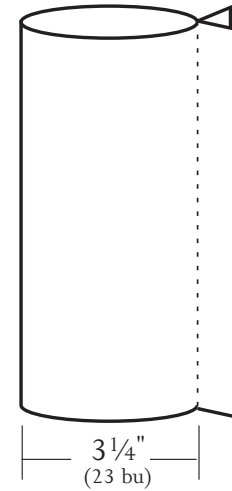


Figure 33

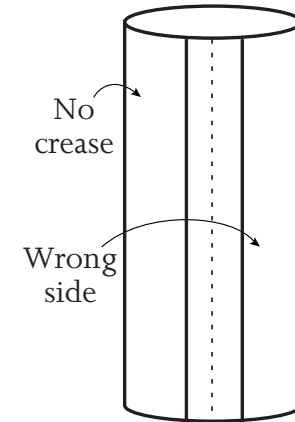
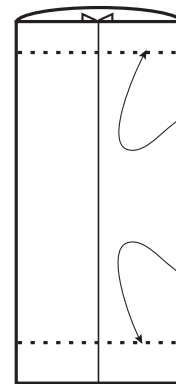


Figure 34



Dotted lines indicate interfacing, which has been slipped inside.

Figure 35

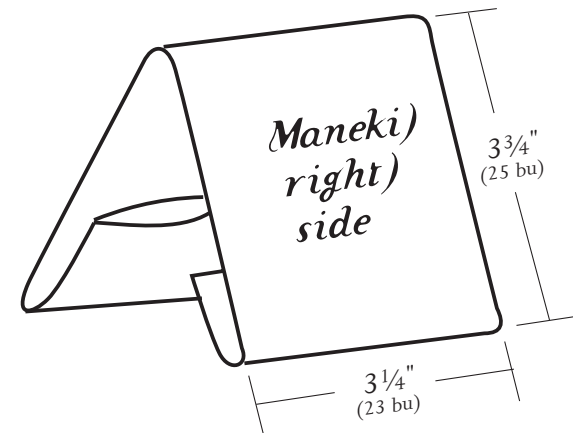
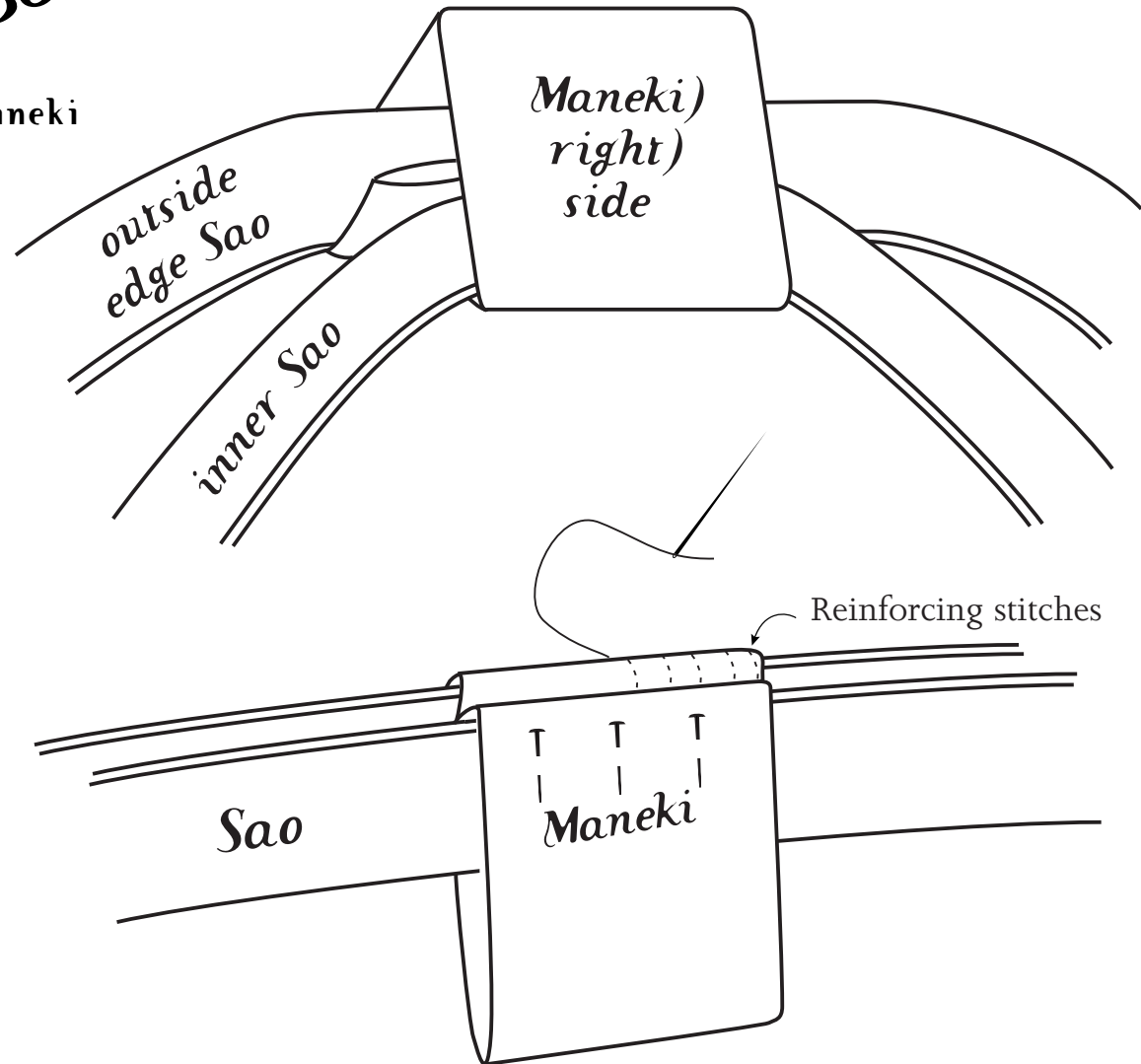


Figure 36

Figures 37 and 38

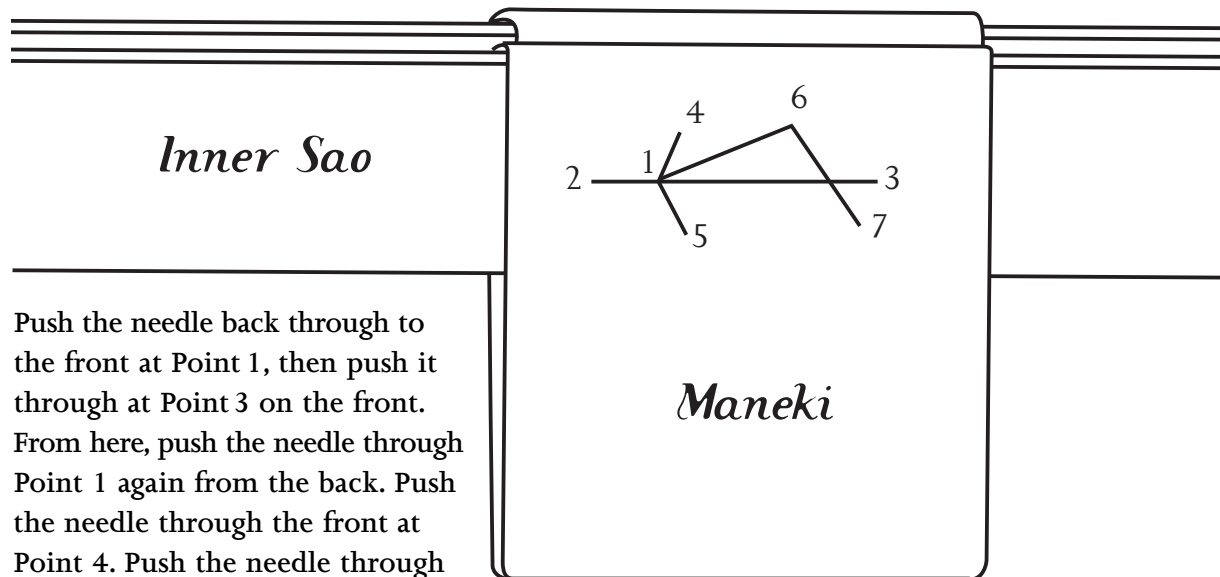
Putting the Saos into the Maneki

(26) Slip both saos into the maneki with the stitched edge of the sao facing the open end of the maneki. Note that in figure 37 the sao that appears closer in the picture is the strap that runs down to the rakusu on the inside (toward the center of the rakusu), and the sao behind it in the picture runs down and attaches to the rakusu's outside edge. Fold the maneki closed and pin or baste it in the center of the sao. Stitch the 2 open ends of the maneki closed with the hidden stitch, as in figure 38. You only need to sew through the maneki fabric and not the sao fabric as you sew this seam closed. Take two extra stitches directly over the first and last stitches of this seam, for reinforcement. Do not remove the pins, because the maneki and the sao are not sewn together at this point; they are held together only by the pins.

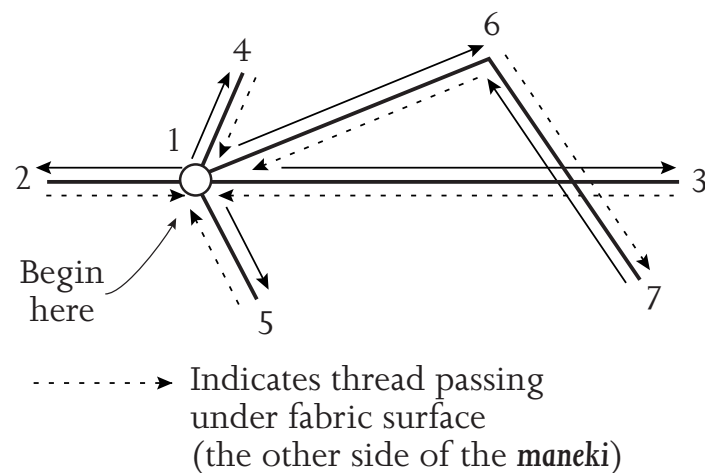


Securing the Maneki with the Pine Stitch

(27) Now you are ready to sew the securing stitching through the *maneki* and *sao*. The stitch you will use, representing pine needles, is done with the same thread you have used for the rest of the *rakusu*. When you are done, the pine stitch will appear on both sides of the *maneki*. Pass the thread through the eye of the needle and knot it to itself, so you are sewing with doubled thread for strength. In the previous step, you pinned or basted the *maneki* in the center of the *sao*. Begin sewing with the side of the *maneki* where the inner *sao* is up, facing you as in figure 39. Come between the two *Sao* and push the needle through both the inner *sao* and the *maneki*, hiding the knot inside. The needle should come out at Point 1 on figure 39. Pull the thread all the way through and then push it back through at Point 2, going through all the layers so that it emerges out the back.



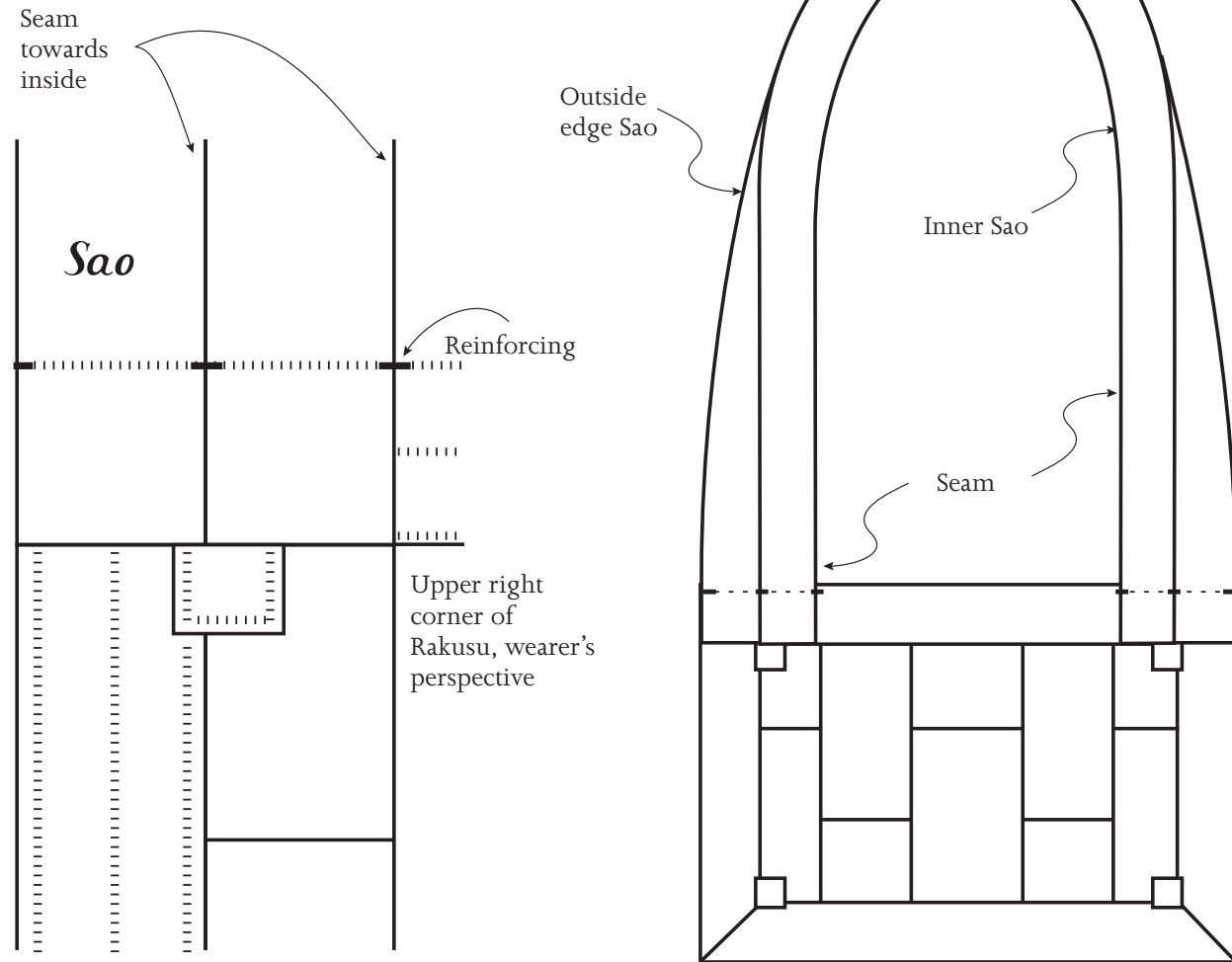
Push the needle back through to the front at Point 1, then push it through at Point 3 on the front. From here, push the needle through Point 1 again from the back. Push the needle through the front at Point 4. Push the needle through from the back again at Point 1. Push back through at Point 5 from the front, and return to the front through Point 1. From here, push the needle through Point 6 to the back, then return to the front through Point 7. Again, push the needle back through Point 6, and push the needle to the front through Point 1, but not all the way. Tie a knot on the inside and clip the threads.



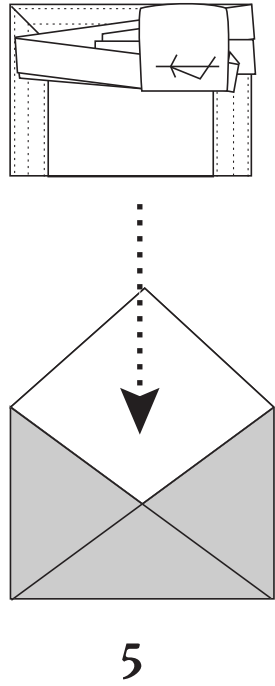
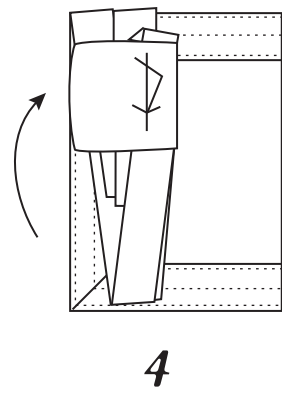
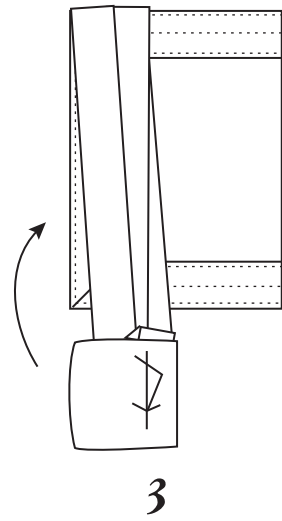
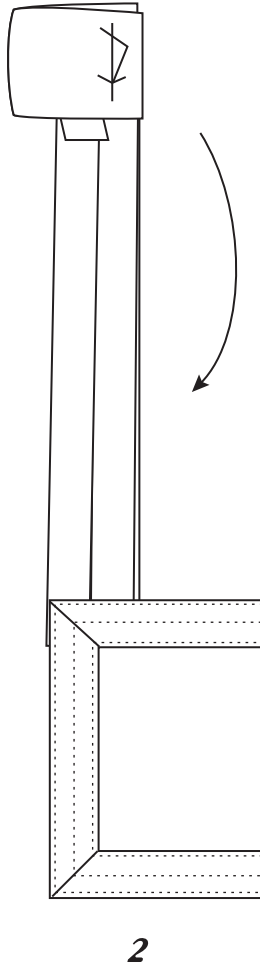
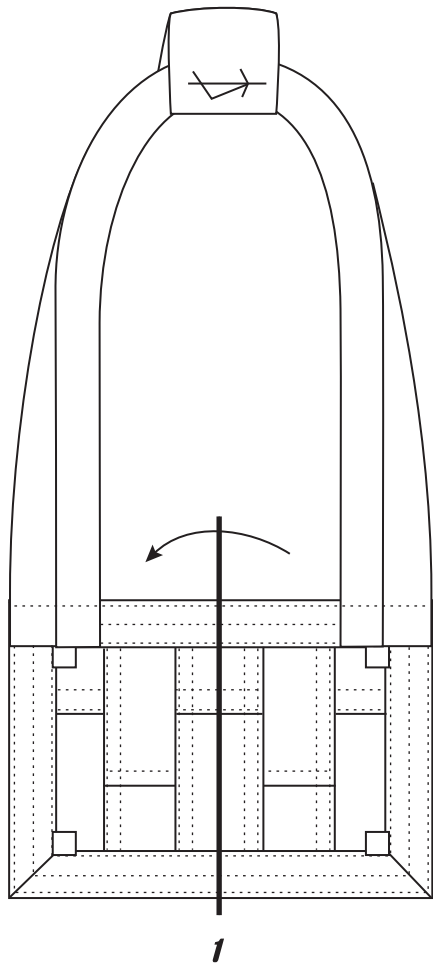
Figures 40 and 41

Attaching the Saos to the Rakusu

(28) Take the outside edge *sao* and with its seam toward the inside, pin it to the upper left corner of the *rakusu*, the bottom edge matching the lower edge of the top *en*. Sew it to the *rakusu* as close to the top as possible, using the *kyakushi* stitch. See figure 40. Sew the other end of this strap to the upper right front corner, keeping the seam on the inside and not letting the *sao* twist. Sew the second *sao* in figure 41. At each seam at the beginning and end, and between inner *sao* and outside *sao* edge, take two extra stitches directly over the first and last stitches and between *sao* and *sao* for reinforcement.



How to Fold a Rakusu



Okesa and Rakusu Case

Finding the Right Size

Because of the personal size differences and the varying thickness of the material used in sewing the *okesa* or *rakusu*, the case must be custom fitted.

- (1) Fold the *okesa* or *rakusu* in the proper way (see pages 60-61 and 114).
- (2) Lay the *okesa* or *rakusu* in front of you with a long side toward you. Measure the length of the short side.
- (3) Use this measurement for finding the right size.

Okesa case

Finished Square = Double the measurement of shorter side length PLUS 1"

Cut Size = Finished Square Size PLUS 1" for two seam allowances.

Standard size rakusu case

Finished Square = 14" x 14" Heavier material 14¼" to 14¾"

Cut Size = Finished Square PLUS 1" for two seam allowances.

Simple Method

(1) Cut a square piece of fabric for the case. Cut a second piece the same size for the lining. You may use a dark-blend color fabric for the outside and a plain color fabric for the lining, as long as they are suitable practice colors. The lining should be a very smooth fabric, such as silk or acetate. See figure 1. Mark a seam line all around the case fabric on the wrong side, the size of the finished square. Pin the two squares together, right sides facing each other (wrong sides out).

(2) Sew the two square pieces together with a small running stitch on the marked line around all four sides. Leave about 2" open in the middle of one side (not at a corner) to pull the fabric right side out.

(3) Press so the edge of the lining is about $\frac{1}{16}$ " inside. Take care to press the corners square and neat. See figure 2.

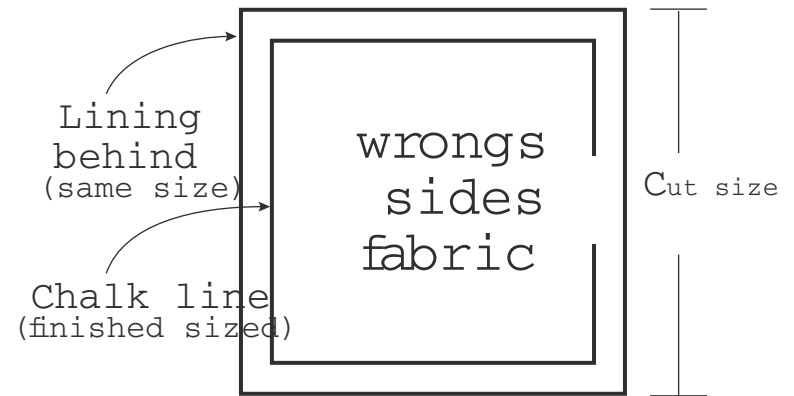


Figure 1

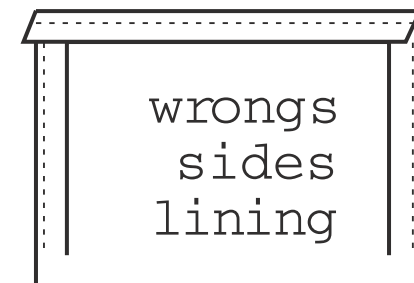


Figure 2

Figure 3

(4) Turn fabric right side out through the 2" opening. Hold the corners with thumb and index finger as you turn the right side out. While doing this, keep holding the corner until a nice point comes out. Hidden stitch the opening closed. Fold the resulting square as shown in figure 3.

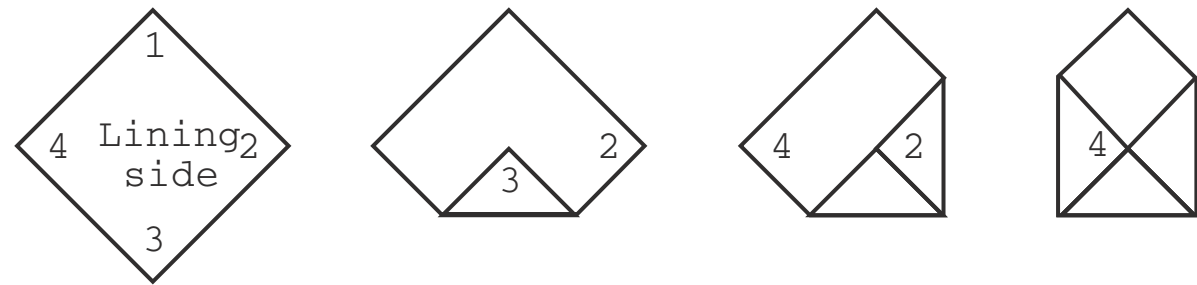


Figure 4

(5) Press around the edges. Hidden stitch the edges together on the outside, joining 2 and 3, 3 and 4. Turn to inside and hidden stitch the edges. Make a couple of extra stitches at the junction of the three corners for strength. *Rakusu* cases rarely need a fastener, but you may add string ties for *okesa* cases. Finish the cases with a blanket stitch or other stitching for extra strength, if you wish. See figure 4.

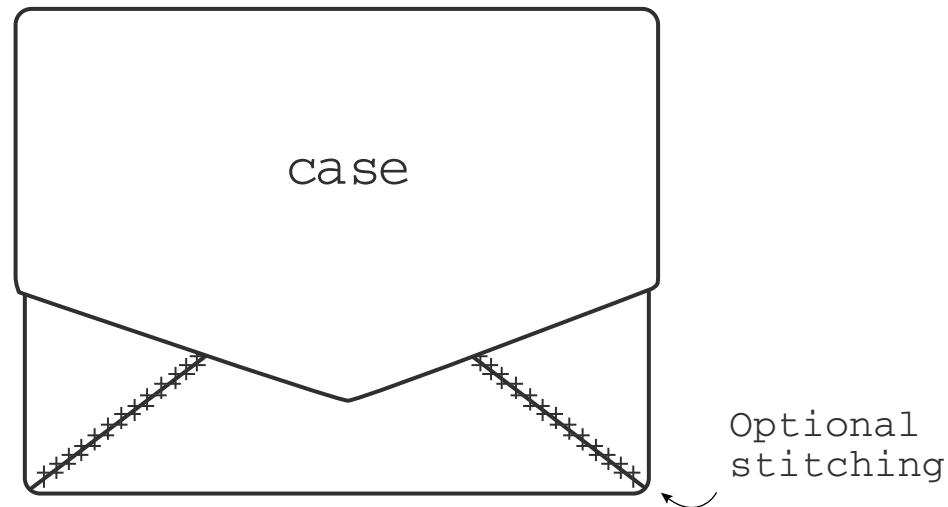


Figure 1

Japanese Traditional Method

- (1) Cut and mark your material as you would for the previous method.
- (2) Assemble the two pieces with the right sides together. Pin two adjacent sides together on the marked lines, making sure that the lines on the pieces match as you pin. Sew on the pinned lines, using a running stitch. See figure 1 for finished seam.

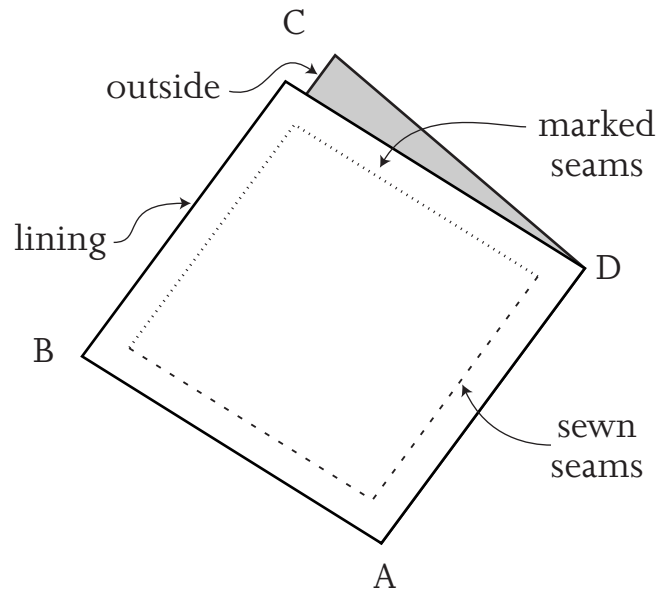


Figure 2

(3) Turn your material so that the sewn (A) corner is at the bottom and the open corners are at the top.

The lining material should face you. Fold the lining back at the top corner (C) to expose the corner of the outside material. Bring the seams of the two side corners (B and D) together at this corner. Be sure to match the seam lines of the three corners with one another. As you fold the two side corners in, you will turn them so that the outside of the material shows. See figure 2.

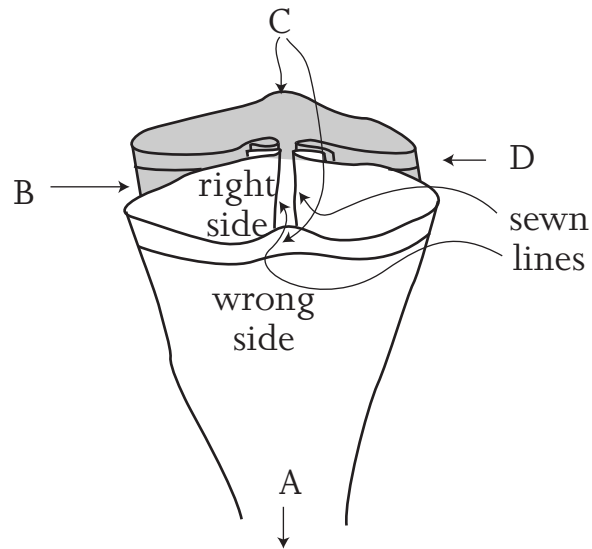
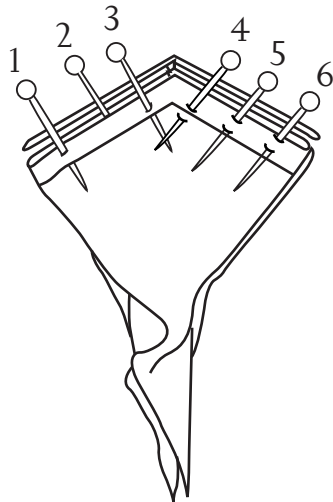


Figure 3

(4) Place the corner of the lining on top. You now have a sandwich with the two unsewn corners on the outside and the two sewn corners on the inside. Pin these together as shown in figure 3 (pins 3 and 4).



(5) You will now have two loops of material on each side of the pinned area. One will consist of lining material and one will consist of outside material. On one side, pin the two loops of material together on the marked seam lines. Be sure that the lines match on all four layers of material (pins 5 and 6). On the other side, pin all four layers together but leave the top lining layer free, about 2", somewhere along the seam (pins 1 and 2). Do not leave the 2" space at the corner – it is too difficult to do the finishing step there. This provides a hole to turn the case inside out when the seam is finished.

If you have done the operation correctly, your material will form a square with the tail of the bottom corner hanging from it. See figure 3.

(6) Sew along the pinned seam line with a running stitch, being careful to sew only the layers that you have pinned together.

(7) Fold the seam allowance so that the corners will lie flat (do not trim the corners) and turn the case right side out through the space you left in the lining seam. It should suddenly resemble a *rakusu* case.

(8) Using a hidden stitch, finish the seam in the lining.

(9) Press the case so that the seams lie flat and the top folds over neatly.



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