

Okesa Sewing Instructions



Zen Center of Los Angeles

Includes Instructions for Okesa Case and Oryoki Set, as well as Ironing and
Folding Instructions and Precautions

OKESA SEWING MANUAL

My sewing instructions are mostly drawn from Western-style sewing combined with the Eastern tradition. This is not out of a lack of respect for the origin of the Okesa, but rather out of respect for both East and West, that is, both the original culture and the settling into a new culture.

I want to express my deep appreciation to:

My teacher, Roshi Egyoku Nakao, for all her support. I thank her for providing the wisdom of the lineage and the robes of the Buddha. Roshi Egyoku provided and reviewed all pieces on precautions, chants, and background knowledge of the Okesa and the Zagu. She wrote the wonderful piece on the kesa/kesa, which you will find under the precautions. What I contributed to this manual is merely the body of the Okesa; it was Roshi who added the heart.

My grandmother, my mother and my teachers in elementary school, who taught me how to sew with a sewing machine and a needle when I was a child.

My apprenticeship master, Mr. Brehm, who taught me his knowledge of sewing and restoring furniture.

Ms. Tonoé Katagiri, who made the effort to write the first and most used sewing instructions on Rakusus and Okesas, providing much more background information than I will ever be able to offer.

I also thank William Earth-Mirror Corcoran and Elena DeVos for their tireless editing of my German dialect.

Thank you to Kazuaki Tanahashi for Dogen's translation on *The Power of the Robe* and to Shambala Publications for the right to use it in this manual; and to the deceased Francis Dōjun Cook, for "Shukke, Home Departure."

Thank you to the great teachers of our Bodhisattva lineage and all other Buddhist lineages who transmitted and still transmit the robe of the Buddha generation to generation.

Nine Bows,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gemmon Koshi". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Gemmon" on the left and "Koshi" on the right.

Gemmon

First Edition

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Starting the Process

Your *Okesa* is an intricate and individual piece of work and should be made without rushing. Please give it your full attention. Allow yourself plenty of time so that you may enjoy making it, especially if you are not accustomed to sewing. Cultivate a mind of Bodhicitta while you are doing this practice.

Try not to see sewing your *Okesa* as a task. To sew your robe is to grow organically into a new phase of your life, which will be witnessed at your Tokudo ceremony.

The *Okesa* is a manifestation of the lineage. Our practice is to give ourselves fully to it. Start with this in mind, and it will become a deep and joyful practice in itself.

It is not necessary to be nervous about the sewing itself. You have good instructions and you will get all the support you need.

Collecting fabric:

If you want to sew your *Okesa* from collected pieces, then you need to calculate the size of the pieces first. The details of this are provided in the section *Calculations and Terminology* on page 32.

It is your choice whom you ask for fabric. It can be family members, friends, your teacher, or spiritual friends. Tell them what it is for and explain that the fabric they give you is an important piece in your life that will be sewn together into a robe that is a tapestry of your relationships.

It is recommended that you collect natural fabric like cotton, linen or silk. If the silk is very slippery, it is hard to sew. **Ask for woven fabric and NOT t-shirt fabric, which will stretch, making it difficult to sew.**

Do not cut anything yet.

Thank you for your practice!

Readings by Dogen to Settle the Mind

SHUKKE

“Home Departure”

The *Ch'an yüan ch'ing kuei*¹ says, “All the Buddhas of the past, future, and present have taught home departure and achievement of the Way. All the twenty-eight Indian patriarchs and the six Chinese patriarchs who have transmitted the seal of the Buddha mind were *śramanas*. All who left the home life were afterwards able to become the teachers of the three worlds because they upheld the moral precepts (*sīla*) of the Buddha Way. Consequently, when you practice Zen and seek the true teacher, you should give priority to the observance of these precepts. If you do not free yourselves from worldly delusion and dissociate yourselves from evil acts by upholding the pure precepts of the Buddha Way, there is no way for you to ever become a Buddha or patriarchal teacher. You must receive the precepts (*jukai*).”

“In order to receive the precepts of home departure, you must supply yourselves with the three robes, bowl, eating utensils, cushion, and new underclothes. If you do not have new underclothes, you may use some that have been washed, but when you enter the place where you are going to receive the precepts, you must not use someone else's robes and bowl. Concentrate single-mindedly on the Buddha Way, be modest in mind and body, model yourself on the Buddha, unite the precepts to your own mind and body, and make the Buddha mind your own mind. This is very important in the life of home departure, so do not neglect it. If you just borrow robes and bowl and go where the precepts are given, it will be as if you had not received them. If you do not receive the precepts by following these regulations, you are probably the kind of person who will not be able to receive the precepts in this life. By entering the Dharma gate carelessly, you become the kind of person who received the offering of the faithful in vain. When you are introduced to the Way for the first time and still do not understand the precepts, then if your teacher does not teach them to you, he is leading you down the wrong path. Therefore, I am now giving you this frank advice. I hope very much that you will engrave it on your hearts and never forget it. If you receive the precepts of the *śrāvakas* of the small vehicle, you should next be diligent about receiving the bodhisattva precepts, because this is the proper sequence of entering the door of the Dharma.”

Clearly understand that the achievement of the Way by all the Buddhas and patriarchs was only through home departure and receiving the precepts. The life pulse of the Buddhas and patriarchs is only home departure and receiving the precepts. If you still have not made your home departure, neither are you a Buddha patriarch. Seeing the Buddha, seeing the patriarchs, is making your home departure and receiving the precepts.

Mahākāśyapa² left the home life to follow the Buddha in his wish to be freed of all defilements. The Buddha said to him, “Welcome, monk,” and his hair and beard spontaneously fell to the ground and his body was spontaneously covered with monks' robes. It is clear from the traces we have of all the Buddhas that all who practiced the Way and freed themselves from defilements have made their home departure and received the precepts.

According to the third volume of the *Large Sutra on the Perfection of Wisdom*,³ the Buddha, the World-Honored One, said, “If a bodhisattva, a great being, thinks, ‘Someday I will surely abandon the ranks of the court and leave the home life, and on that day I will attain supreme bodhi. Also, on that day, when I leave the home life, I will turn the wonderful wheel of the Dharma and cause countless,

numberless beings to abandon wickedness and delusion and produce the pure Dharma vision. Then I will cause them to exterminate their impurities forever and become wise and emancipated. Moreover, I will cause them to become irreversible in supreme bodhi,' then this bodhisattva who desires to accomplish such a thing should extensively study the *[Sutra on the] Perfection of Wisdom.*"

Supreme enlightenment is acquired on the day one leaves the home life and receives the precepts. If there is no day of home departure, there is no day of supreme enlightenment. Thus, the dawning of the day of your home departure is the dawning of the day when you achieve supreme bodhi, and the dawning of the day when you achieve supreme bodhi is the dawning of the day of your home departure. This is the day when your layman's body, just as it is, is transformed into a Buddha's body, and you attain supreme bodhi and preach the Dharma for the sake of all beings. Your home departure itself causes many living beings to enter the Buddha Way. It is the practice of self-benefit and benefit to others which causes them to experience supreme bodhi and acquire irreversibility.

You should understand that when you have perfected this self-benefit and benefit to others, this is itself the seeking of supreme bodhi and becoming irreversible, and this immovability is nothing other than leaving the home life and receiving the precepts. Attaining supreme bodhi enlightens us to the fact that the day of home departure is the day of supreme bodhi. What you should understand correctly is that the day of home departure is the day when the opposition between bodhi and the first thought of enlightenment is transcended. This absolute time is the time of liberation. The day of home departure is the day when you know from inner experience that the time of three incalculable eons is the eternal now of the day of home departure. This day of home departure contains within itself the time when you dwell in the boundless oceans of the eons and teach the Dharma to all beings. The time of home departure is not a small period of time, such as that required for eating a meal, nor is it the unthinkable time of sixty small eons; it is time which transcends time. It is time which freed the Buddha's topknot. The day of home departure even transcends the day of home departure. The day of home departure is truly the day of home departure when you have overcome attachment and reached the state of dropping off mind and body. The day of achieving the Way is the day of achieving the Way; that is, the day of home departure is the day when you achieve the Way, and the day when you achieve the Way is the day of home departure.

The following is recorded in the thirteenth volume of the *Ta chih tu lun:*⁴ "When the Blessed One was staying in the Jetavana Grove, a drunken Brahmin came to the Buddha and said that he wanted to leave the home life. At this, the Buddha had some monks shave off his hair and dress him in the robes of a monk. The Brahmin sobered up and was surprised to discover his altered appearance, and he left. Some monks then asked the Buddha why he had allowed the Brahmin to leave the home life. The Buddha replied, 'Never in all the ages up to now has that Brahmin ever thought of home departure. Now while he was drunk, it was a small matter for him to think that he wanted to leave the home life, but because this happened, in a later time he will really leave the home life.' "Thus, there are various conditions for home departure. It is better to break the precepts as one who has left the home life than to observe them as a householder, because a householder cannot be liberated by the precepts. You should understand the truth of the Buddha's words. The fundamental requirement of the Way is home departure. He who has not yet left the home life cannot acquire the Buddha Dharma. When the Buddha was still in the world, various non-believers had already given up their wicked ways through their own faith, but when they took refuge in the Buddha Dharma, they necessarily asked for home departure and the precepts.

Sometimes the Blessed One himself says in a friendly manner, "Welcome, monk," and thereby acknowledges home departure, and sometimes he gathers monks about him and has them shave their hair and beards and thus leave the home life and receive the precepts. In both cases, the Dharma of home departure and receiving the precepts is fulfilled in the minds and bodies of these people. You

should understand how great are the merits of home departure and receiving the precepts. When the Buddha's efforts flood the minds and bodies of these people, their hair falls spontaneously to the ground and the kesa covers their bodies. If the Buddha does not acknowledge home departure, their hair is not shaved and the kesa does not cover the body. This means that the person has not yet received the Buddha's precepts. This being so, home departure and receiving the precepts is the new prediction of all Buddha Tathagatas that Buddhahood is certain.

Śākyamuni Buddha said, “Sons of good family, the Tathagata perceives that those who practice the Dharma in the small vehicle are slight of merit and laden with impurities, and it is for their sake that I left the home life and attained supreme bodhi when I was young. However, in truth, my experience of bodhi really occurred many, many ages ago. Now, in the present time, I exercise skillful means in order to educate beings and cause them to enter the Dharma, and so I say this. Although I experienced bodhi long, long ago, I say that I left the home life when young. ‘I attained supreme bodhi’ means ‘I made my home departure when young.’ When I departed the home life when young, beings who followed the small vehicle and whose merits were few and whose impurities were many left the home life with me when I was young. When I experienced the Dharma teaching of ‘home departure when I was young,’ I experienced the Buddha’s enlightenment. So, in order to aid beings who delight in the Dharma of the small vehicle, I say that I left the home life when young and experienced supreme enlightenment.” This may be so, but it still may be asked what the merits of home departure are. The answer is that the merits of home departure are countless and unlimited.

NOTES

1. The *Ch'an yüan ch'ing kuei* is a well known list of monastic regulations of Chinese origin (*ch'ing kuei* are monastic regulations, which the Japanese call *shingi*), and is one of several such documents. *Ch'ing kuei* give detailed instructions for the living of the monastic life, including eating, bathing, interrelations between superiors and inferiors, use of the toilets and libraries, and so on. This *ch'ing kuei* was brought to Japan by Dōgen. It is said to be related in spirit to the *Pai-chang ch'ing kuei*, the first of its kind in Chinese Zen.
2. Mahākāśyapa was the spiritual successor of Śākyamuni, according to the Zen lineage charts.
3. *The Large Sutra on the Perfection of Wisdom* is the *Pañcavimśatisāhasrikā prajñāpāramit sūtra*, the best known of the longer versions of this literature.
4. A lengthy commentary on the above sutra, ascribed to Nāgārjuna but suspected to have been composed by its supposed translator into Chinese, Kumārajīva.

Eihei Dōgen, “Shukke, Home Departure” in Francis Dōjun Cook, Tr., *How to Raise an Ox*, Zen Center of Los Angeles, ©1978, pp 127 - 132

Written by Dogen Zenji in 1240 A.D.
In Fukakusa, Japan

The Power of the Robe

BODHIDHARMA, THE HIGH ANCESTOR of Mt. Song, alone transmitted the correct teaching of the robe to China. He is the twenty-eighth-generation ancestor from Shākyamuni Buddha. In India twenty-eight generations of ancestors transmitted this teaching from heir to heir. The Twenty-eighth Ancestor entered China and became the First Ancestor there. After transmission of the teaching through five generations in China, Huineng became the thirty-third-generation ancestor. He is called the Sixth Chinese Ancestor.

Huineng, Zen Master Dijon, received a robe from Hongren at Mt. Huangmei and maintained it for the rest of his life. This robe is still enshrined at the Baolin Monastery on Mt. Caoxi, where he taught.

Over the generations, one emperor after another requested that the robe be brought to the palace. When it was, people made offerings and bowed to it. Thus the robe has been worshiped as a sacred object. Emperors Zong, Su, and Dai of the Tang dynasty occasionally commanded that the robe be brought to the palace. Each time it was brought and each time it was returned, an imperial messenger accompanied it.

Once when Emperor Dai sent this buddha robe back to Mt. Caoxi, he proclaimed: "We order Liu Chongjing, the Nation's Chief General, to transport the robe with great respect. We regard this robe as a national treasure. You should place it in the main temple with appropriate procedures. Make sure that the monks are notified of our command and protect the robe without failure."

There is more merit in seeing the buddha robe, hearing the teaching of it, and making offerings to it than in presiding over the billion worlds. To be the king of a nation where the robe exists is an outstanding birth among innumerable births and deaths; it is indeed the most supreme birth.

IN THE BILLION WORLDS where the Buddha's teaching reaches, is there any place there is no kashāya robe? Yet, Bodhidharma alone correctly transmitted the buddha kashāya face-to-face, heir to heir. Teachers who were not in this lineage were not given the buddha kashāya.

A transmission in the lineage of Bodhisattva Bhadrapāla, a descendant of the Twenty-seventh Ancestor, Prajnātāra, reached Dharma Teacher Sengzhao, but no buddha kashāya was transmitted to him. Daoxin, the Fourth Ancestor in China, guided Niutou, Zen Master Farong, but did not give him a buddha kashāya. Even for those who did not receive heir-to-heir transmission of kashāya, the power of the Tathāgata's dharma is not lacking and its benefit is broad for thousands of years. But those who received correct heir-to-heir transmission of kashāya are not the same as those who didn't. Therefore, when devas or humans receive a robe, they should receive a robe correctly transmitted by the buddha ancestors.

In India and China, even lay people received kashāya in the Ages of True Dharma and Imitation Dharma. Nowadays in the lands remote from India when the buddha-dharma is thin and declining, those who shave their heads and faces, calling themselves the Buddha's disciples, do not maintain the kashāya. They do not believe, know, or understand that the kashāya is to be maintained. What a pity! How can they know its form, color, and measurement? How can they know the proper way to wear it?

* * *

A KASHĀYA has been called the garment of emancipation. The hindrances of actions, defilements, and the effects of action are all liberated by it. If a dragon obtains a small piece of kashāya it can be cured of febrile diseases. If an ox touches a kashāya with one of its horns, its past wrongdoings disappear. When buddhas attain the way, they always wear a kashāya. Know that its power is unsurpassable and most venerable.

It is regrettable that we have been born in a remote land in the Age of Declining Dharma. However, we have the joy of meeting the teaching of the robe transmitted from buddha to buddha, heir to heir. In what lineage has Shākyamuni's teaching of the robe been transmitted as correctly as it has been in ours? Who would not revere and make offerings upon meeting the teaching of the robe? You should make such offerings just for one day, even if you need to give up immeasurable lives to do so. You should vow to meet, uphold, revere, and make offerings to the robe, birth after birth, generation after generation.

We are thousands of miles away from the land where the Buddha was born, beyond mountains and oceans. We are unable to go there, but due to the influence of our past good actions, we are no longer blocked by mountains and oceans nor excluded by our ignorance in this remote place. We have met the true teaching and are determined to practice it day and night. We maintain, uphold, and guard the kashāya continuously.

Thus the power of the kashāya is actualized through our practice, not merely with one or two buddhas but with as many buddhas as the sands of the Ganges. Even if it is your own practice, you should revere it, rejoice in it, and wholeheartedly express gratitude for the profound gift transmitted by the ancestral teachers. Even animals repay kindness; how should humans not recognize their kind help? If we do not understand kindness, we are more foolish than animals.

The power of the buddha robe, the buddha-dharma, cannot be known and understood except by ancestors who transmit the Buddha's true dharma. When you follow the path of buddhas, you should joyfully appreciate the buddha robe, the buddha-dharma. You should continue this correct transmission even for hundreds and thousands of future generations. This is buddha-dharma newly actualized.

Correct transmission is not like mixing water with milk, but rather like the crown prince being installed as king. You can use milk mixed with water if there is not enough milk. But don't mix milk with oil, lacquer, or wine. If there is correct transmission, even an ordinary teacher of a mediocre lineage can be regarded as milk. How much more so with the correct transmission of buddhas and ancestors? It is like the installation of the crown prince. Even worldly kings say that they only wear the former king's robe. How could a buddha's child wear a robe other than the buddha robe?

After the tenth year of the Yongping Era [67 CE] of the Emperor Xiaoming of the Later Han Dynasty, monks and lay people often went back and forth between India and China. But none of them said that they had met an ancestor in India who had correct transmission from buddha ancestors. Thus there was no lineage of face- to-face transmission from the Tathāgata. These seekers only studied with masters of sūtras and treatises and brought back Sanskrit scriptures. They did not say they had met ancestors who had correctly inherited buddha-dharma. They did not say there were ancestors who had transmitted the buddha kashāya. Therefore, those people did not enter deeply into the chamber of buddha-dharma and clarify the meaning of the correct transmission of the buddha ancestors.

The Tathāgata Shākyamuni entrusted the treasury of the true dharma eye, the unsurpassable enlightenment, to Mahākāshyapa along with the kashāya which had been transmitted by his teacher, Kāshyapa Buddha. The robe was transmitted heir to heir for thirty-three generations, to Huineng. The shape, color, and measurements were intimately transmitted. After that, dharma descendants of Qingyuan and Nanyue, intimately transmitting the dharma, sewed and wore the ancestral dharma. The

teaching of washing and maintaining the robe was not known except by those who studied in the chamber of a master who had transmitted this teaching face-to-face.

* * *

THERE ARE THREE TYPES OF *kashāya*: a five-panel robe, a seven- panel robe, and a great robe such as a nine-panel robe. One who is engaged in authentic practice receives only such robes as these, which are enough to offer to the body, and does not keep other types of robes. For work and traveling far or near, a five-panel robe is worn. For conducting formal activities or joining the assembly, a seven-panel robe is worn. For guiding humans and devas and arousing their respect and trust, you should wear a great robe such as a nine-panel robe. A five-panel robe is worn indoors and a seven- panel robe is worn while with other monks. A great robe is worn when entering the palace or in town.

Also, a five-panel robe is worn when it is mild and a seven-panel robe is added on top of it when it is cold. A great robe is further added when it is severely cold. Long ago in midwinter, when it was so cold that the bamboo was cracking, the Tathāgata wore a five-panel robe in the early evening. Later at night it got colder so he added a seven-panel robe. At the end of the night when it became even colder, he further added a great robe. The Buddha then thought, “In the future when the cold is severe, good monks can use these three robes to warm the body.”

THESE ARE WAYS to wear the *kashāya*: The most common way is to leave the right shoulder uncovered. There is also a way to cover both shoulders, which is customary for tathāgata and elders. When both shoulders are covered, the chest is either covered or revealed. Both shoulders are covered when a formal *kashāya* of more than sixty panels is worn.

When you put on a *kashāya*, you start by placing both ends on your left shoulder and upper arm, hanging the ends over your left elbow. If you put on a formal *kashāya*, you start by bringing the ends over the left shoulder and letting them hang down in back. There are many other ways to put on a *kashāya*. You should study deeply and make inquiries of your teacher.

For hundreds of years during the Liang, Chen, Sui, Tang, and Song dynasties, a number of scholars of Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna gave up lecturing on scripture, having learned that it was not the ultimate teaching. Intending to study the correctly transmitted dharma of buddha ancestors, they would invariably drop off their old robes and receive a correctly transmitted *kashāya*. This is departing from the limited and turning to the genuine.

The Tathāgata’s dharma is rooted in India, where teachers in the past and present have gone beyond the limited views of ordinary people. As the realms of buddhas and the realms of sentient beings are neither limited nor unlimited, the teaching, practice, practitioner, and essence of Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna cannot be contained by ordinary people’s views. However, in China practitioners often ignore teachings from India and regard recent interpretations of limited views as buddha-dharma, which is a mistake.

Those who arouse aspiration and wish to receive a *kashāya* should receive a correctly transmitted one. Do not receive a *kashāya* with a new design. What is called a correctly transmitted *kashāya* is what has been transmitted from Bodhidharma and Huineng, heir to heir, directly from the Tathāgata, without a generation’s gap. This is the correctly transmitted *kashāya* worn by dharma heirs and dharma descendants. Newly designed *kashāya* in China are not appropriate. The *kashāya* worn by monks from India in the past and present are all like the buddha ancestors’ correctly transmitted *kashāyas*. None of

them wore kashāyas like those newly made by monks of the Precepts School in China. Those who are ignorant believe in the kashāyas of the Precepts School, but those who have clear understanding do not.

THE POWER of the kashāya transmitted by buddha ancestors is clear and easy to accept. The correct transmission has been handed down person to person. The true form has been shown to us directly. It still exists, as this dharma has been inherited up to the present. The ancestors who received a kashāya are all teachers and students who merged their minds and received dharma. Therefore you should make a kashāya in the manner correctly transmitted by buddha ancestors.

As this is the correct transmission, ordinary people and sages, humans and devas, as well as dragon kings, all know it. To be born to the abundance of this dharma and to wear a kashāya even once and to maintain it for a moment is no other than wearing an amulet that assures the attainment of unsurpassable enlightenment.

When one phrase or one verse permeates your body and mind, it becomes a seed for illumination for limitless kalpas, and this brings you to unsurpassable enlightenment. When one dharma or one wholesome action permeates your body and mind, it is also like this. Moment by moment a thought appears and disappears without abiding. Moment by moment a body appears and disappears without abiding. Yet the power of practice always matures. A kashāya is neither made nor not made, neither abiding nor not abiding. It is the ultimate realm of buddha and buddha. A practitioner who receives it invariably attains its power.

Those who have no wholesome past actions cannot see, wear, receive, and understand a kashāya even if they live for one, two, or innumerable lifetimes. When I look at practitioners in China and Japan, I see that there are those who are able to wear a kashāya and those who are not. Their ability to wear one does not depend on how noble or lowly they are, how wise or ignorant they are, but on their wholesome past actions. Therefore those who have received a kashāya should rejoice in their wholesome past actions, without doubting their accumulated merit. Those who have not received a kashāya should wish for one. Try to sow a seed for a kashāya immediately in this lifetime. Those who cannot receive one because of their hindrances should repent to buddha tathāgatas and the three treasures.

How strongly people in other countries wish to have the Tathāgata's correct transmission of the dharma of the robe in their countries, just as in China! How deep their regret is and how sorrowful they are that they do not have it! With what fortune we have encountered the correct transmission of the World-honored One's robe dharma. This is due to the great power of our having nurtured prajnā in the past.

Now in this unwholesome time—the Age of Declining Dharma—people have no regret that they do not have correct transmission, but they are jealous that others do. They are like a gang of demons. What they believe and where they abide are not genuine, but only bound by their past actions. They should take refuge in the correctly transmitted buddha-dharma as the true place of return in studying the buddha way.

You should know that a kashāya is what all buddhas respect and take refuge in. It is the buddha body, the buddha mind. It is called the clothing of emancipation, the robe of the field of happiness, the robe of no form, the unsurpassable robe, the robe of patience, the Tathāgata's robe, the robe of great love and great compassion, the robe as a victorious banner, and the robe of supreme, penetrating, perfect enlightenment. You should indeed receive it with utmost respect. This is why you should not alter it.

EITHER SILK or common cloth is used as the material for a robe, according to the situation. It is not necessarily true that common cloth is pure and silk is impure. On the other hand, it would be unreasonable and laughable to exclude common cloth and only choose silk. According to the usual practice of buddhas, a robe of discarded cloth is regarded as excellent.

There are ten types of discarded cloth, including burned cloth, cloth chewed by oxen, cloth chewed by rats, and cloth from corpses. People throughout India throw away such cloth on streets or fields, just as we do with excrement-cleaning cloth. So a robe of discarded cloth is actually called a robe of excrement-cleaning cloth. Practitioners pick up such cloths, wash and repair them for use. There can be pieces of silk and common cloth among them. You should give up discrimination between silk and common cloth and study the meaning of discarded cloth. Once when a monk washed such a robe of discarded cloth in Anavatapta Lake, the dragon king rained down flowers in admiration and respect.

There are teachers in the Lesser Vehicles who say that threads are incarnated bodies of the tree god.¹ Practitioners of the Great Vehicle should laugh about it. Which thread is not an incarnated body? Those who have ears to hear about incarnated bodies may not have the eyes to see them. You should know that among the cloths you pick up, there can be common cloth and silk. Because cloth is made differently in different regions, it is difficult to identify the materials. Eyes cannot see the difference. Do not discuss whether the material you pick up is silk or common cloth. Just call it discarded cloth. Even if a human or a deva turns into discarded cloth, it is not sentient but just discarded cloth. Even if a pine or chrysanthemum turns into discarded cloth, it is not insentient but just discarded cloth. Discarded cloth is actualized only when you accept that discarded cloth is not silk or common cloth, not gold, silver, or a pearl. Discarded cloth is not yet dreamed of by those who have not yet dropped off discrimination between silk and common cloth.

Once a monk asked Old Buddha Huineng, “Is the robe you received at midnight at Mt. Huangmei common cloth or silk? In the end what is it?”

Huineng said, “Not common cloth, not silk.”

You should know that a kashāya is neither silk nor common cloth. This is the profound teaching of the buddha way.

HONORABLE SHĀNAVĀSA is the third entrusted ancestor of the dharma storehouse. He was born wearing a layperson’s robe. The robe turned into a kashāya when he became a monk. Nun Pundarīka was born with a kashāya, birth after birth, as a result of offering a carpet to the Buddha.

When we meet Shākyamuni Buddha and leave the household, the lay clothing we acquire at birth immediately turns into a kashāya, just as Shānavāsa’s did. Thus a kashāya is neither silk nor common cloth. The power of buddha-dharma transforms body, mind, and all things in this way.

It is clear that our body, mind, and environs are immediately transformed when we leave the household and receive the precepts. But we often do not notice this because of our ignorance. This effect of buddha-dharma is not only applied to Shānavāsa and Nun Pundarīka but to us all. We should not doubt this great benefit. You should endeavor to clarify this point. The kashāya that covers the body of the one who has received the precepts is not limited to common cloth or silk. The Buddha’s

¹ An attempt to explain that the silk for kashāya was not produced by killing silkworms.

transformation is beyond our comprehension. The pearl hidden inside the robe is beyond the understanding of those who count letters.

You should study the shape, color, and size of buddhas' kashāyas. See whether they have size or are sizeless, whether they have form or are formless. This is what the ancestors in India and China, and present, have studied and correctly transmitted. Those who see and hear this original inheritance that has come from ancestor to ancestor and yet do not accept it cannot be excused. This is due to their ignorance and distrust. It is throwing away the true and seeking for the false, giving up the essential and wishing for the trivial, making light of the Tathāgata.

Those who arouse the aspiration for enlightenment should without fail receive the authentic transmission of the ancestors. As dharma descendants we have not only encountered the rarely encountered buddha-dharma, but we have seen, studied, and received the correctly transmitted buddha kashāya. In this way we meet the Tathāgata, we hear the Buddha expound the dharma, we are illuminated by the Buddha, we enjoy the Buddha's enjoyment, we receive the one-to-one transmission of the Buddha's mind, and we attain the Buddha's marrow. Thus we are intimately covered by the kashāya of Shākyamuni Buddha. We personally accompany the Buddha and receive this kashāya from the Buddha.

THIS IS HOW to wash a kashāya: you put it unfolded into a clean wooden tub, cover it with thoroughly boiled water that has been purified by incense, and leave it for one hour [roughly two hours by the modern way of counting]. Another way is to boil water mixed with pure ash and cover the kashāya until the water cools. Nowadays it is common to use ash water. It is called *aku no yu* in Japan.

When the ash water cools, rinse the kashāya with clear hot water many times. Do not scrub it with your hands or stamp on it. After thus removing sweat and oil stains, mix fragrant powder of sandalwood or aloeswood with cold water and rinse the kashāya in it.

Then hang it on a clean rod to dry. When it is completely dry, fold it, and put it on the altar. Then burn incense, spread flower petals on the altar, circumambulate the kashāya clockwise a few times, and bow to it. After three, six, or nine full bows, kneel and put your palms together; then hold up the kashāya with both hands, chant the kashāya verse, and put it on properly.

THE WORLD-HONORED ONE, Shākyamuni Buddha, said to the great assembly: "Good assembly, long ago in my previous life when I was with Rātnakosha Buddha, I was called Mahākarunā Bodhisattva. Once in front of the Rātnakosha Buddha the bodhisattva made these vows:

Rātnakosha Buddha, after I attain buddhahood, there may be those who, following my teaching, leave home and wear a kashāya and still break important precepts, hold wrong views, or ignore the three treasures. And there may be monks, nuns, laymen, or laywomen who commit serious wrongdoings but arouse respectful mind and honor the monk's robe, revering the buddha, dharma, and sangha. I vow that there will not be even one such person in the Three Vehicles, who misses receiving a prediction of enlightenment or turns away from my teaching. Otherwise this would contradict the vows of all buddhas who have been present for limitless eons in the worlds of the ten directions, and thus I would not attain unsurpassable, perfect enlightenment.

Rātnakosha Buddha, after I attain buddhahood if any devas, dragons, humans, or nonhumans revere, make offerings to, or admire one who wears the kashāya, I vow that such beings, holding even a small piece of kashāya, will practice in the three treasures without regressing.

If there are sentient beings overcome by hunger or thirst, poverty-stricken, or in a most humble position, as well as hungry ghosts, who obtain a piece of a kashāya no bigger than a hand, I vow that such beings will be satisfied with food and drink and that their wishes will be immediately realized. If there are sentient beings who are in conflict, harbor grudges, and fight one another, or if there are devas, dragons, *gandharvas*, *asuras*, *garudas*, *kinnaras*, *mahoragas*, *kumbhāndas*, *pishāchas*, humans, or nonhumans who fight one another, I vow that if such beings think of a kashāya, compassionate mind, gentle mind, generous mind, serene mind, wholesome mind will arouse them and they will attain purity.

If people who battle, quarrel, or are in legal conflict bring a patch of kashāya for self-protection and pay respect to it, they will always be victorious and will overcome difficulties, because others will not harm, confuse, or belittle them.

Rātnakosha Buddha, if my kashāya did not possess the above five sacred powers, I would be deceiving all buddhas who have been present for limitless eons in the worlds of the ten directions, and I would not achieve unsurpassable, perfect enlightenment for conducting buddha activities in the future; thus I would be without wholesome dharma and would be unable to overcome those who are outside the way.

“Good assembly, then Rātnakosha Buddha extended his golden right arm, stroked Mahākarunā Bodhisattva on the head and said in admiration, ‘Splendid, splendid, courageous bodhisattva. Your vow is a rare treasure that expresses great wisdom. You will realize unsurpassable, perfect enlightenment and your kashāya robe will possess those five sacred powers and cause immeasurable benefit.’

“Good assembly, upon hearing Rātnakosha Buddha’s admiration, Mahākarunā Bodhisattva rejoiced and became exuberant. Then Rātnakosha Buddha extended his golden right arm, with long and slender fingers and his palm as soft as a feathery celestial robe. Rātnakosha Buddha stroked the bodhisattva on the head and turned him into a youth of twenty.

“Good assembly, all the devas, dragons, *gandharvas*, humans, and nonhumans folded their hands together and dedicated flowers and music to Mahākarunā Bodhisattva. They admired and admired the bodhisattva and then sat still.”

From the time when Shākyamuni Buddha was alive in this world up to the present, these five sacred powers of the kashāya have been described in sūtras and precept texts for bodhisattvas and shrāvakas. Indeed, the kashāya is a buddha robe of all buddhas of past, present, and future. Although the power of all kashāyas is unlimited, receiving a kashāya from the heritage of Shākyamuni Buddha is incomparable with receiving a kashāya from the heritage of other buddhas.

The reason for this is that Shākyamuni Buddha made these vows to initiate the power of the kashāya in his former life as Mahākarunā Bodhisattva, when he made five hundred vast vows to Rātnakosha Buddha. The power of the kashāya is unlimited and beyond thought. Thus, what transmits the skin, flesh, bones, and marrow of the World-honored One is the kashāya robe. Ancestors who have transmitted the treasury of the true dharma eye have always correctly transmitted a kashāya.

Sentient beings who maintain and pay respect to a kashāya have always attained the way within two or three lifetimes. Even wearing the kashāya as a joke or for profit can lead to attainment of the way.

ANCESTOR NĀGĀRJUNA SAID, “Home-leavers in buddhadharma, you can resolve your crimes and attain liberation even if you break precepts and commit crimes, as mentioned in *The Sūtra on the Former Birth of Nun Utpalavarnā*:

At the time when the Buddha was in this world, Nun Utpalavarnā attained six miraculous powers and became an arhat. She visited noble householders and talked about the life of home-leavers. She encouraged noble women to become nuns.

They said, “We are young and beautiful. It would be hard to keep the precepts.”

Utpalavarnā said, “It’s all right to break the precepts. Leave the household first.”

The women said, “If we break the precepts, we will fall into hell. How can we do that?”

Utpalavarnā said, “Then go ahead and fall into hell.”

They laughed and said, “We would be punished in hell.”

Utpalavarnā said, “Reflecting on my former life, I was an entertainer, putting on various costumes and speaking memorized lines. Once I put on a nun’s clothes for a joke. As a result of this action, I was reborn as a nun at the time of Kāshyapa Buddha. Because of my high status and proper conduct, I grew arrogant and broke a precept. I fell into hell and experienced various punishments. In my next birth I met Shākyamuni Buddha, left the household, attained the six miraculous powers, and became an arhat. From this I know that if you leave the household and receive precepts, even if you break a precept, you can become an arhat because of the merit of the precepts you have received. But you cannot attain the way if you only create unwholesome deeds without receiving the precepts. I was once a criminal falling into hell and coming out of hell. If a mere criminal dies and enters hell, there is nothing to attain. So, you should know that even if you break a precept, you can attain the fruit of the way.”

The cause of Nun Utpalavarnā becoming an arhat in this story is no other than putting on a kashāya for a joke. In her second birth, she became a nun at the time of Kāshyapa Buddha and in her third birth she became a great arhat at the time of Shākyamuni Buddha and accomplished the three types of knowledge and six miraculous powers. The three types of knowledge are the celestial eye, insight into the future, and knowing how to remove misery. The six miraculous powers are the power of celestial activity, insight into others’ minds, the celestial eye, the celestial ear, knowing the past, and removing misery.

Indeed, a mere criminal dies in vain and enters hell. The criminal comes out of hell and becomes a criminal. As Utpalavarnā had a causal connection with the precepts, even though she broke a precept, she was able to attain the way. As a result of putting on a kashāya for a joke, she could attain the way even in her third birth. How much more likely you are to attain the way if you arouse a pure heart of faith and put on a kashāya for the sake of unsurpassable enlightenment! Can the merit not be complete? Even further, the merit of maintaining a kashāya with utmost respect throughout a lifetime is vast and boundless.

Those who arouse the aspiration for enlightenment should immediately receive a kashāya. To encounter this fortunate life and not to plant buddha seeds is regrettable. Having received a human body in this world, Jambudvīpa, you have a chance to meet Shākyamuni Buddha’s dharma, to share life with ancestors who are heirs of buddha-dharma and to receive a kashāya that has been directly transmitted from person to person. It would be a pity not to do this and to spend your life in vain.

In the transmission of kashāya, only transmission through the ancestors is correct heritage. Transmission through other teachers cannot compare with this. Even if you receive a kashāya from a teacher without transmission, the merit is profound. How much more merit there is in receiving a kashāya from a correct teacher of heir-to-heir, face-to-face transmission. Indeed, in this way you become a dharma child and a dharma grandchild of the Tathāgata. This is truly to inherit the Tathāgata's skin, flesh, bones, and marrow.

The kashāya is transmitted through buddhas of the ten directions in the past, present, and future without a break. Buddhas, bodhisattvas, shrāvakas, and pratyeka-buddhas of the ten directions in the past, present, and future maintain it.

FOR MAKING a kashāya, coarse cloth is basic. When coarse cloth is not available, more finely woven cloth may be used. In case there is neither coarse cloth nor finely woven cloth, plain silk may be used. When none of these are available, patterned or open-weave silk may be used. This is permitted by the Tathāgata. When no cloth is available, the Tathāgata permits making a leather kashāya.

Kashāya materials should be dyed blue, yellow, red, black, or purple. The color should be subdued and indistinct. The Tathāgata always wore a kashāya of skin color. This is the original kashāya color.

The kashāya transmitted by Bodhidharma was bluish black. It was made of *kārpāsaka* [core] cotton from India, and is still kept at Mt. Caoxi. This kashāya was transmitted for twenty-eight generations in India and five generations in China to Huineng of Mt. Caoxi. Now disciples of Huineng maintain the tradition of this buddha robe. Monks of other lineages have nothing close to it.

There are three types of kashāya material: excrement-cleaning cloth, animal hair or bird feathers, and patched cloths. I have already mentioned that a robe usually consists of excrement-cleaning cloth. A robe made of animal hair or bird feathers is called a down robe. A robe made of patched cloths is made of old, worn-out cloth. Cloth that is desirable by worldly standards is not used.

SENIOR MONK UPĀLI said to the World-honored One, "Great virtuous World-honored One, how many panels does a great robe have?"

The Buddha said, "There are nine kinds of robes. The number of panels maybe nine, eleven, thirteen, fifteen, seventeen, nineteen, twenty-one, twenty-three, or twenty-five. The first three kinds of great robes consist of panels of one short and two long pieces of cloth. The second three kinds of great robes consist of panels of one short and three long pieces of cloth. The last three kinds of great robes consist of panels of one short and four long pieces of cloth. A robe with more panels is not standard."

Upāli said, "Great virtuous World-honored One, how many sizes of *sanghātī* robes [great robes] are there?"

The Buddha said, "There are three sizes: large, medium, and small. A large robe measures three *hasta* [length from elbow to middle fingertip] vertically and five hasta horizontally. A small robe measures two and one-half hasta vertically and four and one-half hasta horizontally. A medium robe measures between these two."

Upāli said, "Great virtuous World-honored One, how many panels does an *uttarāsangha* robe [over-robe] have?"

The Buddha said, "It has seven panels. Each panel consists of one short and two long pieces of cloth."

Upāli said, “Great virtuous World-honored One, what are the sizes of an uttarāsangha robe?”

The Buddha said, “There are three sizes. A large robe measures three hasta vertically and five hasta horizontally. A small robe measures half a hasta less each way. A medium robe measures between these two.”

Upāli said, “Great virtuous World-honored One, how many panels does an antarvāsa robe [under-robe] have?”

The Buddha said, “It has five panels. Each panel consists of one short and one long piece of cloth.”

Upāli said, “Great virtuous World-honored One, what are the sizes of an antarvāsa robe?”

The Buddha said, “There are three sizes: large, medium, and small. A large antarvāsa robe measures three hasta vertically and five hasta horizontally. A small and a medium antarvāsa robe measure the same as for the uttarāsangha robe.” The Buddha also said, “There are two other types of antarvāsa robe. One measures two hasta vertically and five hasta horizontally. The other measures two hasta vertically and four hasta horizontally.”

The sanghāti robe is the outermost robe. The uttarāsangha robe is the outer robe. The antarvāsa robe is the inner robe. The sanghāti robe is also called the great robe. It is a robe for visiting a palace or expounding dharma. The uttarāsangha robe is a seven-panel robe. It is a less formal robe for joining the assembly. The antarvāsa is a five-panel robe, which is an informal robe for work. You should always maintain these three types of robes. Also there is a sixty-panel sanghāti robe. You should be aware of this.

Some sources say that the height of human bodies varies corresponding to their maximum life span, which ranges between eighty thousand years and one hundred years. Other sources say that the height of human bodies does not vary. It is a correct teaching to say it does not vary. But the height of a buddha’s body and that of a human body are different. Human bodies can be measured but the buddha’s body cannot. Thus, when Shākyamuni Buddha wore the past Kāshyapa Buddha’s robe, it was neither too long nor too wide. When the future Maitreya Buddha wears Shākyamuni Buddha’s robe, it will be neither too short nor too narrow. You should be aware that a buddha’s body is beyond long and short. Brahma, the king of gods who resides high in the form world, could not see the top of the Buddha’s head. Maudgalyāyana, a disciple of the Buddha, traveled all the way to the Heaven of Shining Banner and still heard the Buddha’s voice. Thus the Buddha was seen and heard near and far. How marvelous it is! All the merits of the Tathāgata are like this. You should keep this in mind.

A KASHĀYA VARIES according to how it is sewn. It may be made of rectangular pieces sewn together, of narrow strips sewn in the same pattern onto one large piece, of one piece tucked and hemmed, or of one piece plain and flat. These are all authentic ways of sewing. You should choose the way of sewing to suit the cloth you have received. The Buddha said, “The kashāyas of the buddhas of past, present, and future are always stitched.”

In acquiring materials, purity is of primary concern. What is called excrement-cleaning cloth is regarded as of utmost purity. Buddhas of past, present, and future all recognize its purity. Cloth that is donated by faithful lay people is pure. Cloth purchased in a marketplace with donated money is also pure. Although there are guidelines for the length of time to spend on sewing, we live in a remote land in a time of declining dharma; so the most important thing for you is to sew a kashāya when the faithful heart arises, and then receive it.

It is an essential characteristic of Mahāyāna that even a lay person, whether human or celestial, receives a kashāya. Kings Brahma and Shākyamuni both wore a kashāya. These are outstanding examples in the desire world and in the form world, and cannot be comprehended by ordinary human beings.

Lay bodhisattvas also wear kashāyas. In China, Emperor Wu of the Liang Dynasty and Emperor Yang of the Sui Dynasty both wore a kashāya. Emperors Dai and Su also wore a kashāya, studied with monks, and received the bodhisattva precepts. Other lay men and women of the past and present have also received a kashāya together with the Buddhist precepts.

In Japan, Prince Shōtoku wore a kashāya and expounded such sūtras as *The Lotus Sūtra* and *The Shrimālā Devī Sūtra*, when he perceived the marvel of celestial flowers raining down. Since then the buddha-dharma has spread widely in our country. Prince Shōtoku was not only Regent of the Nation, but also a guiding master of humans and devas. A messenger of the Buddha, he was both father and mother of sentient beings. Although the form, color, and measurements of a kashāya have not been transmitted accurately to us in Japan, still, because of Prince Shōtoku's influence, we are able to see and hear about kashāyas. If he had not introduced the Buddha's teaching, it would have been a great loss to us.

Later, Emperor Shōmu also received a kashāya and the bodhisattva precepts. In this way even those who are on a throne or those who are retainers can receive a kashāya and the bodhisattva precepts. There is no wholesome fortune for humans that excels this.

Some sources say that the kashāya worn by lay people is called a single stitch robe or a lay robe, and that double stitching is not used for that robe. Other sources say that when lay people go to the practice place they wear three types of dharma robes and use tooth cleaning twigs, rinsing water, eating utensils, and sitting mats to engage in pure practice just as monks do. These are words of ancient masters. However, in the direct transmission of buddha ancestors, the kashāya given to kings, ministers, lay practitioners, and warriors is invariably double stitched. Laborer Lu [Huineng] did receive the buddha kashāya when he was a layman, which is an excellent precedent.

THE KASHĀYA is a banner of the Buddha's disciple. When you have received a kashāya, wear it respectfully every day.

First put it on top of your head, place your palms together, and recite this verse:

Great is the robe of liberation,
the robe of no form, the field of happiness!
I wear the Tathāgata's teaching
to awaken countless beings.

Then put it on. Visualize your teacher, or visualize a stūpa in the kashāya. Also recite this verse when you put on the kashāya after washing it.

The Buddha said, "When you shave your head and wear a kashāya, you are protected by all buddhas. Having left the household, you are given offerings by celestial beings."

From this we clearly know that as soon as you shave your head and wear a kashāya, you are guarded by all buddhas. With this protection, you realize unsurpassable enlightenment. Thus you are given offerings by humans and devas.

The World-honored One said to Monk Jnānaprabha, “The dharma robe brings forth the ten victories: It covers your body, providing modesty, and the practice of wholesome conduct. It protects you from cold, heat, insects, beasts, and snakes and provides comfort in the practice of the way. It manifests the form of a mendicant home-leaver and arouses joy in those who see it, relieving them of ill intentions. It is a sacred banner of humans and devas. Revering it and bowing to it will cause you to be born in the heaven of purity. By wearing it you arouse the thought of a sacred banner, avert wrongdoing, and bring forth happiness. It has been dyed with subdued color to help you become free from the five desires, undefiled by greed and attachment. It is the Buddha’s pure robe that cuts off delusion and creates a wholesome field of happiness. When you wear it your unwholesome actions will disappear and the path of the ten wholesome actions will increase moment by moment. It is like an excellent rice field as it nurtures the bodhisattva mind. It is like armor that protects you from the poison arrows of delusion.”

Thus Monk Jnānaprabha understood that, thanks to these ten victories, all buddhas in the past, present, and future, all pratyeka-buddhas, *shramanas*, and pure home-leavers wear the kashāya while they sit on the sacred platform of emancipation, holding the sword of wisdom to subdue the demon of delusion, and together they enter nirvāna.

Then the World-honored One said in a verse:

Listen carefully, Jnānaprabha.

The great happiness-field robe has ten victorious qualities:

While worldly clothes increase defilement,
the dharma robe of the Tathāgata does not.

The dharma robe provides modesty, completes repentance,
and creates the rice field of happiness.

It protects you from cold, heat, and poisonous creatures
and strengthens your way-seeking mind for attaining ultimate understanding.

Manifesting the form of a mendicant home-leaver,
it frees people from greed and desire, cuts off five wrong views,
and helps you to hold correct practice.

By revering and bowing to the sacred banner kashāya, you will have the happiness of King Brahma.

When a Buddha child wears the kashāya a vision of a stūpa arises,
creating happiness, eliminating unwholesomeness,
and joining humans and devas.

The noble form of the kashāya arouses respect
in a true seeker who is free from worldly dust.

All buddhas praise it as an excellent field
most beneficial to sentient beings.

The inconceivable miraculous power of the kashāya
nurtures practice for enlightenment.

The sprout of practice grows in the spring field,
the splendid fruit of enlightenment is like a harvest in autumn.

The kashāya is true armor, impenetrable as diamond,
the deadly arrows of delusion cannot pierce it.

I have now recited the ten excellent merits of kashāya.

For eons, more comments could be made, but I’ll say this:

A dragon who wears even a shred of kashāya

can't be devoured by a gold-winged garuda.
A person who holds a kashāya while crossing the ocean
will not fear dragons, fish, or harmful beings.
Lightning and thunder, heaven's wrath,
will not frighten a monk who wears a kashāya.
When a lay person carries a kashāya with respect,
no evil spirits draw near.
When one arouses the beginner's mind,
leaves home and worldly affairs to practice the way,
demon palaces in the ten directions will tremble
and such a person will immediately realize the dharma king's body.

These ten victorious qualities encompass the wide-ranging merits of the buddha way. Understand clearly the merits expounded in these prose and verse lines. Do not put them aside after reading, but continue to study them phrase by phrase. These victorious qualities come from the power of the kashāya, not from the power of a practitioner's vigorous effort or long practice.

The Buddha said, "The miraculous power of the kashāya is beyond thought." It is not something ordinary people or wise sages can comprehend. When the dharma king's body is immediately actualized, the kashāya is invariably worn. Those who do not wear a kashāya have never actualized the dharma king's body.

THE ROBE of utmost purity is one made of excrement-cleaning cloth. Its merits are clearly and extensively stated in sūtras and commentaries of the Great and Lesser Vehicles, which you should inquire into and study broadly. You should also study other sources about materials for robes. Buddha ancestors who have always understood and transmitted the robe of excrement-cleaning cloth cannot be compared with those who have not.

The *Madhyamāgama Sūtra* says, "Venerable assembly: Suppose there is someone whose practice is pure in body, but not pure in speech and mind. If you see this person and feel disgust, the disgust needs to be removed."

"Venerable assembly: Suppose there is someone whose practice is not pure in body, but pure in speech and mind. If you see this person and feel disgust, the disgust needs to be removed. How is this removed?"

"Venerable assembly: It is like a monk who practices outdoors and finds stained cloth. 'When he sees cloth discarded in the toilet which is stained with excrement, urine, mucus, or other impurities, he picks it up with his left hand, opens it with his right hand, and tears it up and saves the parts that are not stained or damaged.'

"Venerable assembly: Suppose there is someone whose practice is not pure in body, but pure in speech and mind. Do not think of this practice as impure in body, but just think of this practice as pure in speech and mind. If you see the impurity and feel disgust, the disgust needs to be removed."

This is the way for a monk who practices outdoors and collects discarded cloths. There are four types as well as ten types of discarded cloths. When you collect cloths, you should save pieces without holes. Also, the parts heavily stained with urine and excrement are not taken. Save the pieces that can be washed clean.

The ten types of discarded cloths are those that have been chewed by cows, gnawed by rats, burned, stained by menstrual blood, stained during childbirth, used as a shrine robe, found in a cemetery, used as an offering with a prayer, given by royalty, and used as a shroud.² These cloths are abandoned by people, and not ordinarily used any more. You pick them up and turn them into pure material for the kashāya.

This is what buddhas in the past, present, and future admire and use. Thus discarded cloths have been respected and guarded by humans, devas, and dragons. You should pick up such discarded cloths, the material of utmost purity, to create a kashāya. There is no robe like this in Japan now. Even if you look for one, you won't encounter it. How sorrowful! Even if you search, you won't find one in this small remote country.

To make a kashāya, you should use pure material given by donors, offered by humans or devas, or purchased with the earnings from pure livelihood. Discarded cloth, as well as cloth obtained by pure livelihood, is neither silk, cotton, gold, silver, jade, nor brocade; it is nothing other than discarded cloth. It is used not for making tattered or elegant clothes, but just for the sake of buddhadharma. To wear this cloth is to transmit the skin, flesh, bones, and marrow of buddhas of past, present, and future, to transmit the treasury of the true dharma eye. Do not ask humans and devas about the power of the robe. Just study it with buddha ancestors.

POSTSCRIPT

Once when I was in Song China, practicing on a long sitting- platform, I observed the monks around me. At the beginning of zazen in the morning, they would hold up their kashāyas, set them on their heads, and chant a verse quietly with palms together:

Great is the robe of liberation,
the robe of no form, the field of happiness!
I wear the Tathāgata's teaching
to awaken countless beings.

This was the first time I had seen the putting on of the kashāya in this way and I rejoiced, tears wetting the lapel of my robe. Although I had read this verse of veneration for the kashāya in The *Āgama Sūtra*, I had not known the procedure. Now I saw it with my own eyes. In my joy I also felt sorry that there had been no master to teach this to me and no good friend to recommend it in Japan. How sad that so much time had been wasted! But I also rejoiced in my wholesome past actions. If I had stayed in my land, how could I have sat side by side with the monks who had received and were wearing the buddha robe? My sadness and joy brought endless tears.

Then I made a vow to myself: However unsuited I am, I will become an authentic holder of the buddha-dharma, receiving correct transmission of the true dharma, and with compassion show the buddha ancestors' correctly transmitted dharma robes to those in my land. I rejoice that the vow I made at that time has not been in vain, and that there have been many bodhisattvas, lay and ordained, who have received the kashāya in Japan. Those who maintain the kashāya should always venerate it day and night. This brings forth most excellent merit. To see or hear one line of the kashāya verse is not

² Cloth given by royalty: viewed as polluted because it may have been stained by the former owner's desire for fame and pride.

limited to seeing and hearing it as if we were trees and rocks, but pervades the nine realms of sentient beings.

In the tenth month of the seventeenth year of the Jiading Era of Song China [1224], two Korean monks visited Qingyuan Prefecture. One was named Zhixuan, and the other Jingyun. They were men of letters who often discussed the meaning of sutras, but just like lay people they did not have kashāyas or bowls. What a pity! They had shaven heads but not the manners of monks. This was perhaps because they had come from a small country in a remote land. When some monks from Japan visit other countries, they might be like Zhixuan and his company.

During the twelve years of his practice before attaining the way, Shākyamuni Buddha venerated the kashāya without putting it aside. As a remote descendant, you should keep this in mind. Turn your head away from worshiping heaven, gods, kings, and retainers for the sake of name and gain, and joyfully dedicate yourself to venerating the buddha robe.

This was presented to the assembly of the Kannondōri Kōshō Hōrin Monastery on the first day of winter, the first year of the Ninji Era [1240].

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Okesa Precautions at Zen Center of Los Angeles

Guidelines for how to wear and care for your Okesa:

- **Keep your Okesa protected**

When it is not being worn, keep your Okesa in a case or wrapped in cloth. Do not leave your Okesa laying around on the floor or on a kitchen counter.

When placing the Okesa in its case, fold it correctly. Put it in the case with the cord upwards.

- **How to wear your Okesa**

Dawn Zazen: When you attend dawn *zazen*, bring your Okesa in its case. Set it down beside your *zabuton*. At the end of the dawn sitting, the *doan* will signal (*bong, gatz, bong*) to begin chanting the *Verse of the Okesa*. At the sound of the bell, remove your Okesa from its case, set the case aside. Touch the Okesa to your forehead and place the folded Okesa on the top of your head. Place your hands in *gassho* and chant the *Verse of the Okesa* three times together with everyone:

*Vast is the robe of liberation
A formless field of benefaction
I wear the Tathagata teaching
Saving all sentient beings.*

At the end of the second repetition, remove the Okesa from your head. Put the Okesa on your left shoulder and open it as shown to you by a senior student or teacher.

First time during the day other than dawn zazen: If you have not put on your Okesa during dawn *zazen*, put it on at your place of *zazen*. Kneel down on your *zabuton*, remove the Okesa from its case and set the case aside. Place the Okesa on your head (as described directly above) and with your hands in *gassho*, silently chant the *Verse of the Okesa*. Put your Okesa on (as described above). Then take your seat.

Every time you put on your Okesa: Whenever during the day or night you put on your Okesa, first bring it to your forehead before opening it.

- **How to remove the Okesa**

There is a very specific way to remove your Okesa. Please be in contact with a senior student or a teacher to learn it.

- **When not to wear the Okesa**

Remove your Okesa when you go to the bathroom or work in the kitchen. Whenever you remove it, fold it correctly.

- **Take your Okesa with you**
Always know where your Okesa is.
 Don't leave it somewhere and forget it.
 Don't leave it in the zendo if you are not coming back for the next sitting period or outside sesshin.
 Always have your Zagu with you when you wear your Okesa or go somewhere with it. You never know if you will run into a situation where you need to bow or sit.

When to wear Okesa, when Rakusu?

“The general rule of Kesa wearing is that it cannot be taken off in any situation. This is known as Kesa, Kesa. We will not ask when not to wear the Kesa, Kesa because we are never not wearing the Kesa, Kesa. It is very mysterious—this mystery is Kesa, Kesa. Now the Koromo is another matter entirely. When you are confused, the Koromo covers up the Kesa, Kesa and, if you are not careful, you will have to wear yet another Kesa over the Koromo, which is over the Kesa, Kesa. I hope this clears up matters!

There is also a rule of ‘when Kesa.’ This has to do with when Kesa, Kesa moves through you and your Kesa drops off. If you are lucky, your Koromo will also drop off. Dropping off Koromo and Kesa is the movement of Kesa, Kesa. Tell me, when Koromo and Kesa drop off, what is revealed? Kesa Kesa-ing Kesa!—this is the time of ‘when Kesa,’ which is the unhindered functioning of dropped off Kesa, Kesa.”

Roshi Egyoku

During the hot summer months, it is fine to wear the Rakusu for zazen and for service, unless one is officiating.

- **Liturgy:**
 When to wear Okesa, when Rakusu?
 - Always Okesa for morning and noon services if not explicitly stated otherwise.
 - Rakusu acceptable for evening service during sesshin, unless you are officiating
- **Dharma Talks**
 When to wear Okesa, when Rakusu?
 - Always Okesa, if not explicitly stated otherwise
- **Sitting:**
 When to wear Okesa, when Rakusu?
 - Regular week schedule: Okesa after dawn sitting
 - Rakusu during Hosan days
 - Sesshin all sittings except afternoon, through evening service and dinner
 - In summer, Roshi announces when we are allowed to wear Rakusu in the evenings.

- **Programs:**

When to wear Koromo, Okesa, Rakusu?

- For programs dealing with the Precepts, wear your Koromo with your Okesa.
- Otherwise, Rakusu

- **Attending Buddhist Programs Outside the Zen Center**

- If you do a retreat with a monastic teacher in the Zen tradition, ask the center for precautions. Don't forget to take along your Juban.
- If you do a retreat with a monastic teacher of another tradition, be sensitive. Theravadans sit on their Zagus all the time and they wear Okesa all the time. You can do so as well, but continue to chant the verse of the Okesa for yourself before putting it on.
- Observe the Tibetans and check what feels right. You might consider Koromo and Rakusu.
- If you do a retreat with a lay teacher, you might either keep the precautions of ZCLA or wear Koromo/Rakusu.

- **Representing ZCLA at another Location**

- If for secular programs, wear Western dress with Rakusu.
- If asked in your role as a priest, wear Koromo/Rakusu.
- You may also consider wearing samue jacket with Rakusu.

General Tips on Cleaning Your Robes and Oryoki Fabric:

- Your Okesa rarely needs to be cleaned. If you must clean it, do so either by hand washing in cold water or take it to a safe drycleaner, one that does not use harsh chemicals.
- If your other robes are sewn well, you can wash them on delicate in a washing machine. If you are uncertain about that, bring at least the Koromo to the drycleaner.
- NEVER put your robes in a dryer. They will shrink and it is not good for the fabric. Also, do not dry your Oryoki cloths in a dryer. They too will shrink and be too small to wrap your bowls.

How to Store and Care for Your Robes and Bowls

Long-term and Short-term Storage:

- Robes at the Center
 - Please do not leave your robes—Koromo, Okesa, Rakusu—at the Center. When carrying them from home, please use a bag designated for carrying these items or wrap them in a large wrapping cloth (fukusa).
- Robes at home
 - Okesa and Rakusu: Store in a clean and quiet place, preferably in or under your altar. Don't store it on the floor.
 - You may hang your Koromo in the closet.
- Zagu and Okesa in bag together
 - Put the Zagu under the lid of the bag; don't store it together with the Okesa in the bag.
- Travel with Robes
 - If you travel a lot, consider sewing a case for all your robes, including Kimono, Koromo.
 - Otherwise wrap them in a piece of cloth.
 - Keep them separate from dirty clothes in your suitcase and keep them clean.
 - Store any footwear in a separate case.
 - On international flights you might consider taking your robes in your carry-on luggage

How to fold:

- Koromo
- Zagu: See page 90
- Kimono
- Juban
- Oryoki cloth: See page 104.

Gathas for Sewing an Okesa

When sewing our Okesa, we chant a *gatha* or verse with each stitch. The Okesa will take on the energy of the *gatha*. For example, if you chant the *Jizo Shingon Dharani*, you will wear the robe of *Jizo Bodhisattva*. When you chant the *mantra* from the *Heart Sutra*, your robe will become that and so on. Your chanting invokes the presence of the particular *buddha* or *bodhisattva* energy.

The *Buddha's* robe includes and contains everything, so regardless of how many errors you make in sewing your Okesa, please realize that the *Buddha's* robe *is this very life*, including all its ups and downs.

Here are some suggestions for *gathas* to chant while you are sewing:

Verse of the Okesa:

*Vast is the robe of liberation,
A formless field of benefaction
I wear the Tathagata teaching
Saving all sentient beings.*

(Japanese):

*Dai sai geda fuku
Mu so fuku den e
I bu Nyorai kyo
Ko do sho shujo.*

The Three Refuges

*Being one with the Buddhas
Being one with the Dharma
Being one with the Sangha*

(Japanese)
*Namu ki e Butsu
Namu ki e Ho
Namu ki e So*

*I take refuge in the Buddha
I take refuge in the Dharma
I take refuge in the Sangha*

(Pali)
*Buddham Saranam Gacchami
Dhamman Saranam Gacchami
Sangham Saranam Gacchami*

The Mantra of the Heart Sutra

Gate, Gate, Paragate, Parasamgate, Bodhi Svaha

The Mantra of Jizo Bodhisattva

Om Ka Ka Ka Bi San Ma E So Wa Ka

Refuges of the Bodhisattvas

Being one with the Great Compassionate Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva

Being one with the Great Wisdom Manjusri Bodhisattva

Being one with the Great Action Samantabhadra Bodhisattva

Being one with the Great Vow Jizo Bodhisattva

Dharani from the Gate of Sweet Nectar

Now I have raised the Bodhi Mind.

I am the Buddhas and they are me.

The Name of the Lotus Sutra

Being one with Mahayana Saddharma Pundarika Sutra

Or Namu Myoho Renge Kyo

Enmei Jukku Kannon Gyo

(Prayer for Extending Life)

KAN ZE ON

Kanzeon

NA MU BUTSU

At one with *Budhha*

YO BUTSU U IN

Directly *Buddha*

YO BUTSU U EN

Also indirectly *Buddha*

BUP PO SO EN

And indirectly *Buddha, Dharma, Sangha*.

JO RAKU GA JO

Joyful, pure, eternal, being!

CHO NEN KAN ZE ON

Morning mind is *Kanzeon*.

BO NEN KAN ZE ON

Evening mind is *Kanzeon*.

NEN NEN JU SHIN KI

Nen, nen arises from Mind.

NEN NEN FU RI SHIN

Nen, nen is not separate from Mind.

Measure the Okesa:

Get someone to help measure. The person who will wear the Okesa can be regularly dressed while being measured.

Length of the Okesa:

In our temple, the Okesa should end where the Koromo ends. That is usually 3" (or one hand) above the ankle. The Kimono should end an inch above the floor.

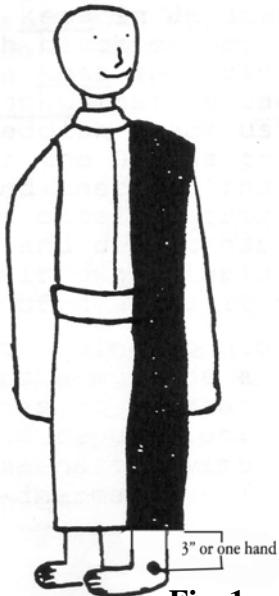


Fig. 1

Take a piece of fabric and hang it over the shoulder of the recipient. Let it end where the Okesa will be finished. Measure the fabric from the top of the shoulder to the edge of the fabric. (See Fig. 1.)

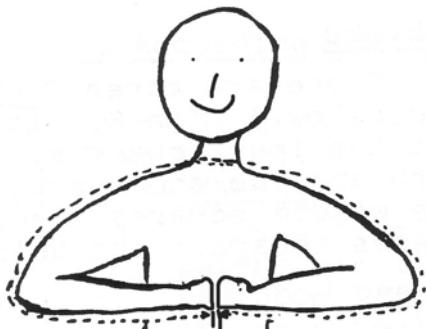


Fig. 2

The recipient should form a circle with her/his arms, as far out as she/he can. Put the fists together. (see Fig. 2.)

Take the fabric and wrap it around the recipient, who can hold it in her fists. Measure all around from where the fists meet.

Then, add 2 inches.

These are the finish measurements.

Important: The term “right side” will always refer to the side of the Okesa that will face out and be seen by others. The “wrong side” will always refer to the side that is next to your body or does not show.

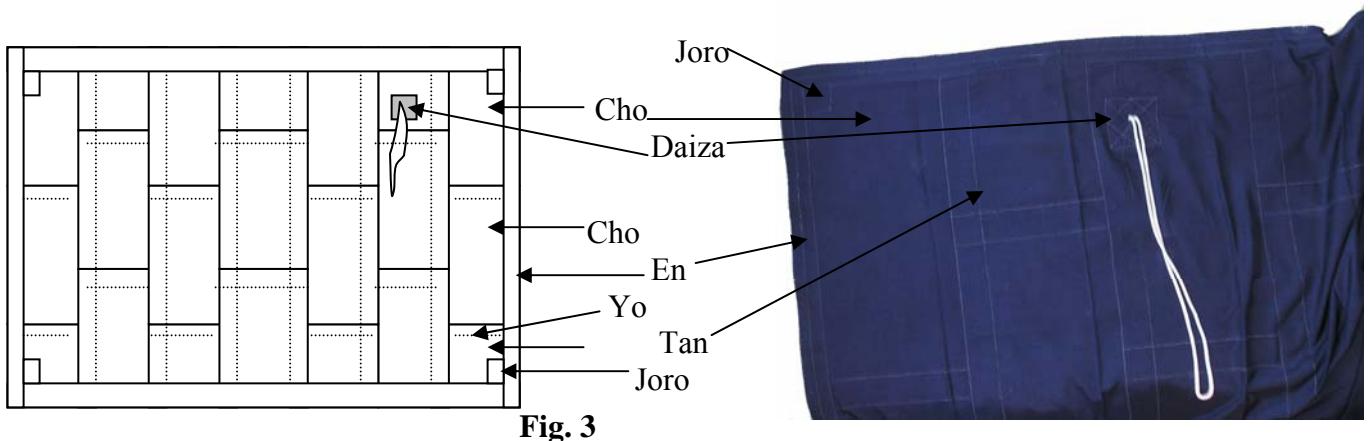
Calculations and Terminology

Now comes the math of the Okesa.

For some background and overview information (see Fig. 3):

The kind of Okesa we will sew has seven panels. Each panel consists of three smaller pieces—two long ones and one short one. When the seven panels are sewn together, they are called Kagami or rice field. I'll use the term *rice field* in the rest of this manual.

The long pieces are called Cho, the short ones Tan. The amount they overlap is called the Yo. (See Fig. 3.)



Around the rice field is the border, called the En.

In each corner of the rice field is a little piece called the Joro.

The piece where the cords are coming out (one on the right side and one on the wrong side of your Okesa) is called the Daiza.

I hope this did not confuse you. You don't have to remember it all. We will come back to the different pieces step-by-step. For now we just need these basics for calculating the fabric sizes.

At the end of this description, you will find a table where you can write in the numbers of your precise cutting sizes, which we will now calculate.

DO NOT CUT ANYTHING YET!

Calculation of the overlap width (Yo):

Traditionally the Yo is the width of two fingers of the recipient. Usually I make it either 1.5" or 2", depending on the size of the person and the nature of the fabric (roughness, quality, etc.). For first Okesas with collected fabrics, I generally choose a 2" Yo.

In addition to this 1.5" or 2", we will need to add 0.5" on both the left and right edges of the panel. The extra material is to make a hem.

Regardless of the size of the Yo, the hem measurements will always be 0.5". This is not a cutting size; we will have to add the measurement of the overlap when we calculate the size of the pieces.

Example: if you select a 2" overlap (Yo), you will have to add 3" later: $2" + 0.5" + 0.5" = 3"$ to the calculated width of the panel pieces.

Calculating the width of the Tan (short) and Cho (long) pieces:

Take the finished width of the Okesa as you have measured it.

Divide this number by 7.

Then add your overlap calculation. This is the final width of all Tan and Cho pieces.

Example: Finished Okesa size 78" x 53"

Width $78" \div 7 = 11.14" + 3" \text{ for a } 2" \text{ overlap, equals } 14.14"$

Round up this number to the next quarter inch, in this case 14.25"

Calculating the length of the Tan (short) pieces:

Take the finished length of the Okesa as you measured it.

Divide this number by 5.

Add the overlap calculation. This is the final length of your tan pieces.

Example: Finished Okesa size 78" x 53"

Length $53" \div 5 = 10.6" + 3" \text{ for a } 2" \text{ overlap, equals } 13.6"$

Round up this number to the next quarter inch, in this case 13.75"

Calculating the length of the Cho (long) pieces:

Take the finished length of the Okesa as you measured it.

Divide the number by 5. Multiply the result by 2.

Add the overlap calculation. This is the final length of your Cho pieces.

Example: Finished Okesa size 78" x 53"

Length $53" \div 5 = 10.6"$

$10.6" \times 2 = 21.2" + 3" \text{ for a } 2" \text{ overlap, equals } 24.2"$

Round up this number to the next quarter inch, in this case 24.25"

Calculating the Border (En):

Take the finished length of the Okesa as you measured it.

I usually make the border as wide as the overlap, in our example 2".

Your border has 4 pieces, two long ones for the width and two short ones for the length.

For the long ones take the width of your Okesa and add 5" for the length. For the short ones take the length of your Okesa and add 5".

Calculation of the Edge pieces (Joros):

I usually make the Joros as big as the size of the overlap, in this case yielding a finished measurement of 2 x 2". The cutting size would be one inch bigger, yielding a 3 x 3" square. We will need 4 Joros.

Calculation of the cord panel pieces (Daizas):

For the Daizas you will need to cut four pieces with the dimension of 5 x 5 inches.

Calculating the Zagu (bowing mat):

We have identified all the pieces for your Okesa. You will also need fabric for your Zagu (bowing cloth).

For your Zagu select the following from your Okesa material:

Two pieces 45" x 5"

Two pieces 28.5" x 5"

Four pieces 5" x 5"

You will also need a piece of white fabric for the bottom layer of the Zagu. A cotton of pretty good quality is recommended. Do yourself a favor and pick a fabric that is easy to iron and has a bit of a weight. Don't use silk.

The cutting size for this bottom piece is:

45" x 28.5"

DO NOT CUT YET!

Because your fabric will shrink during the dying process, you will need to do a rough cutting first. You might also dye the whole piece somebody gave you, but often they are so big that this is complicated.

If you want to pre-cut it, then cut the pieces at least 4 inches wider and longer than your calculated precise cutting sizes.

Also, dye more fabric than you need. Then you will have pieces if you need to repair your Okesa later.

Table for Your Measurements

All measurements are in inches

My finished Okesa is

Wide	
Long	
Overlap calculation	

	Number of pieces needed	Precise cutting size length	Precise cutting size width
Okesa (all pieces need to be dyed)			
Tan	7		
Cho	14		
Border (En) long:	2		
Border (En) short:	2		
Joro: (finish)	4	3	3
Daiza (finish)	4	5	5
Zagu: (all pieces need to be dyed, if not marked as "white")			
Zagu border short side	2	28.5	5
Zagu border long side	2	45	5
Zagu corner pieces	4	5	5
Zagu white fabric	1	30	47
Oryoki Set (all pieces need to be dyed, if not marked differently)			
Wrapping cloth	1	22	22
Napkin	1	14	30
Utensil holder	1	20.25	4
White or light grey fabric*	1	21.5	5.25
Okesa Case			
Outer fabric of your choice	1	22	22
Slippery lining fabric	1	22	22
Cords You can buy black cord in a fabric store. Buy a 90" length. It should be a resilient material, not too slick, not too rough		Buy 90 "	

*It is good to use a fabric that has a bit of a body and resilience to it, but does not wrinkle too much. I usually use a simple, heavier cotton.

Dyeing the Fabric

How to dye the fabric and what the color should look like at the end is a decision for your teacher. The fabric can be dyed with natural colors or with conventional chemical colors, by hand or in the washing machine (mostly turns out too light).

At ZCLA we mostly dye with conventional colors by hand. The Okesa should be blackish dark with a little bit of reddish blue tone. Dyeing in the machine often leaves the color too light.

The mixture we use is something like:

8 parts black
1/2 part marine blue
1/2 part dark red
1/2 part dark green.
(or: two parts black, 1/8 part for all other colors)

Follow the instructions of the manufacturer. The fabric gets darker and richer the longer you leave it in the dye.

Synthetic fabrics will **not** take the color. Natural fabrics with patterns may keep a shade of the original pattern, contributing to the individual character of the Okesa.

You may want to “test-dye” a piece of fabric. You will need to dry the test piece to know what the final color is.

As mentioned before, if you need to make a rough cut because a piece of fabric is too large to easily dye, just cut it at least 4” bigger than what you need in both length and width. The fabric will shrink and get ragged at the edges through the dyeing process.

Dye some extra fabric to reserve for later repairs.

After dyeing, dry and iron all the pieces.

Make four piles:

1. the rice field
2. the border, the Joros and the Daizas
3. the Zagu
4. leftover fabric in reserve

Double-check to make sure you have all that you need before you dispose of the dye.

From this point on consider the pieces as already being your Okesa and treat them as such. Keep the fabric wrapped in a piece of cloth and store them in an orderly way at your altar or in a protected and clean place. You may make several bundles to divide the pieces you are currently working with from pieces you have completed or have yet to sew.

Whenever you start sewing, light a candle and a stick of incense and then unwrap the fabric. Return the fabric to its cloth when you are done sewing for that day.

Supplies and Notes on Precise Cutting

I would like to give you some advice about tools worth investing in to make your life easier. To cut precisely is half of sewing. It is better to cut precisely the first time instead of spending time making more cuts later to correct for uneven edges and angles.

- Because every panel is square or rectangular, I recommend buying a cutting mat and a roller knife. If you buy a 36" x 24" mat, your Cho and Tan will usually fit on it, allowing you to cut the fabric without having to move it. This makes it much easier to make a precise cut.
- A pair of sharp, long plate scissors is great to have.
- A small pair of scissors to cut thread is helpful.
- A regular carpenter square is **very** helpful. For long straight lines you can use any wood piece you have at home or buy a cheap roof batten.
- A yardstick made of aluminum (I find easier, but it is a bit more expensive) or wood.
- For marking: most fabric markers will drive you crazy because they often break. I use wax markers now because they have two advantages: the line is they make is easy to see and it disappears on black fabric when you iron it. Wax markers come in little squares and you can usually get them at a fabric store. They can be sharpened with a paring knife.
- Buy sharp needles. I usually use long, thin sharp ones.
- A box of pins and a pin cushion.
- Use a hand-sewing thread. Thread is always a bit problematic, because it curls. There are two tips: don't make the thread too long and do make it wet. To make it wet, you can pull it through your mouth before you start sewing. That takes out the initial curl and helps prevent further curling. You can also buy wax stones for this purpose. 4-5 regular bobbins of thread are usually enough.

In German we have a saying: "Long thread, idle sewer." A good length to start with is the distance between your arms when they are comfortably stretched to the sides. Thread the needle and make a double knot at the end of the thread. As a sewing instructor, I have learned that how to knot the thread isn't necessarily obvious. If you have never made a knot in a thread, ask somebody to show you.

Tips for cutting:

Iron your piece well and lay it flat on a surface like a table or a wood floor (if you don't have a big enough table). If you work on a mat, then place the part you wish to cut on the mat.

If you are cutting with a roller knife, use your carpenters square to cut a right angle. You can use your yardstick to extend the line to the length and the width you need so you don't move the fabric.

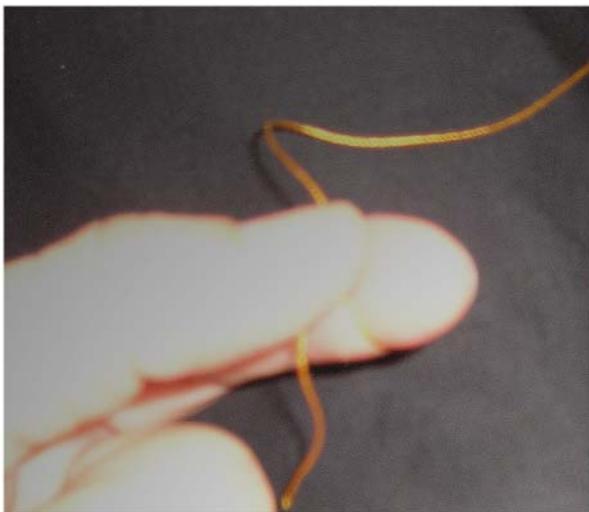
When cutting with a roller knife, press down hard on the ruler or square that is guiding the blade and DO NOT MOVE THE RULER AT ALL. The hand holding the knife pulls the blade toward you rather than pushing away from you. Position yourself so that your arms don't cross or one hand interferes with another. With confidence make one straight cut, avoiding tentative, partial cuts along the length

of the cut. If you are cutting with scissors, mark a right angle with your square. Extend the lines and mark the whole square as described above. Don't move the fabric till you have done so. Then cut.

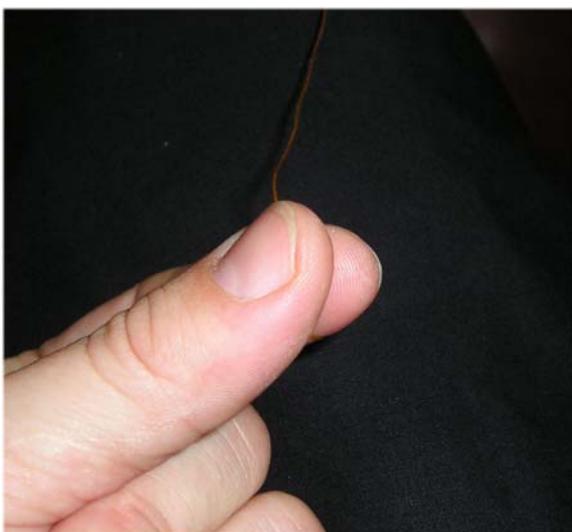
You don't have to cut everything at the beginning. Cut your Chos and Tans and start sewing the rice field.

Knots and Stitches

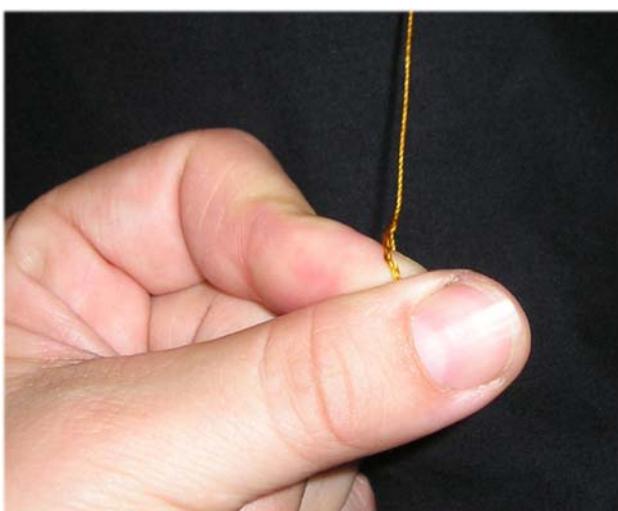
Making a knot at the end of the thread



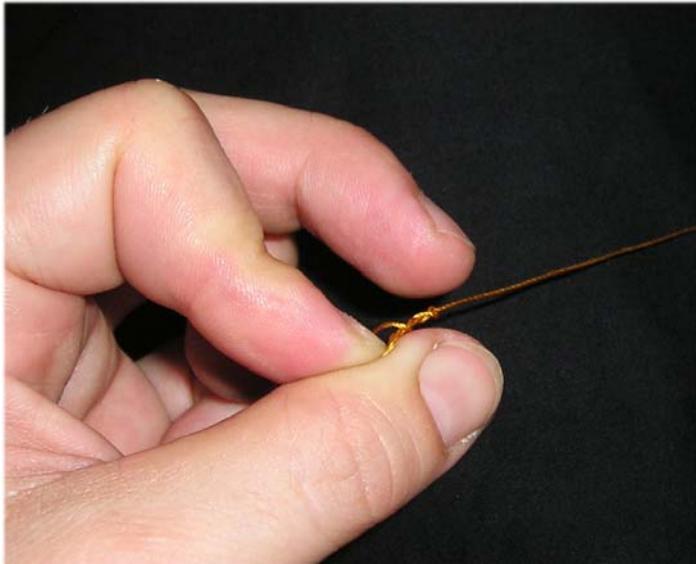
1. Loop thread around your first finger, holding with your thumb



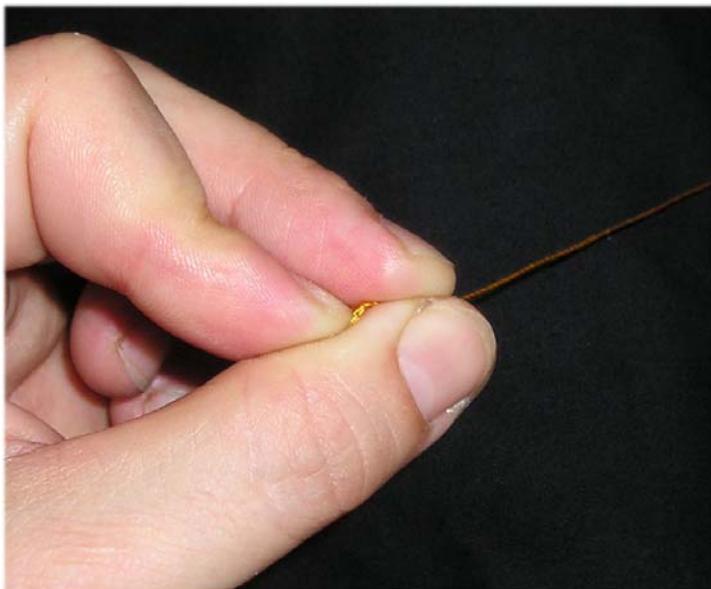
2. Pull the thread till the end disappears between your fingers.



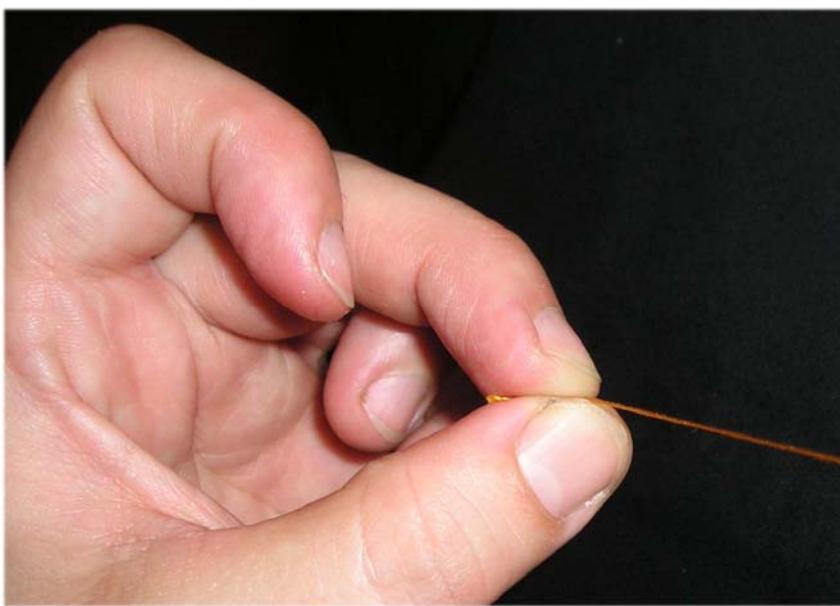
3. Pushing thumb and finger against each other, pull the finger in, so the thread starts rolling.



4. Keep rolling till the loop comes out between your fingers.



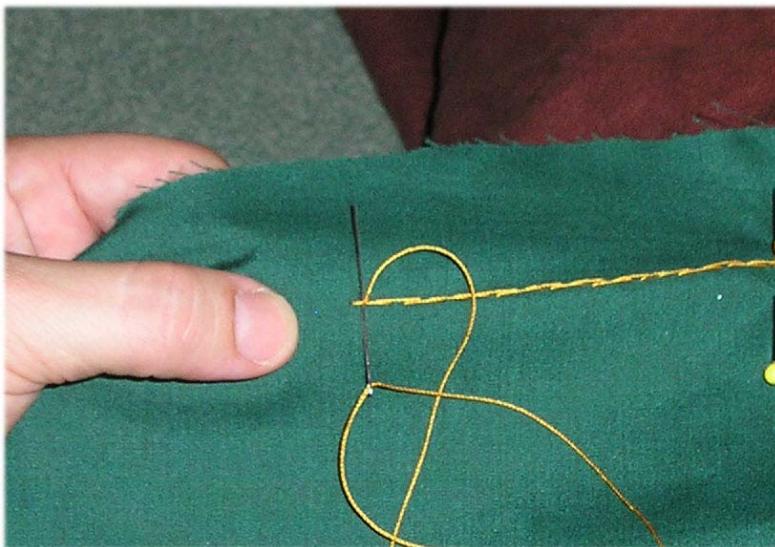
5. Grasp the knot with your second finger, pressing against the thumb.



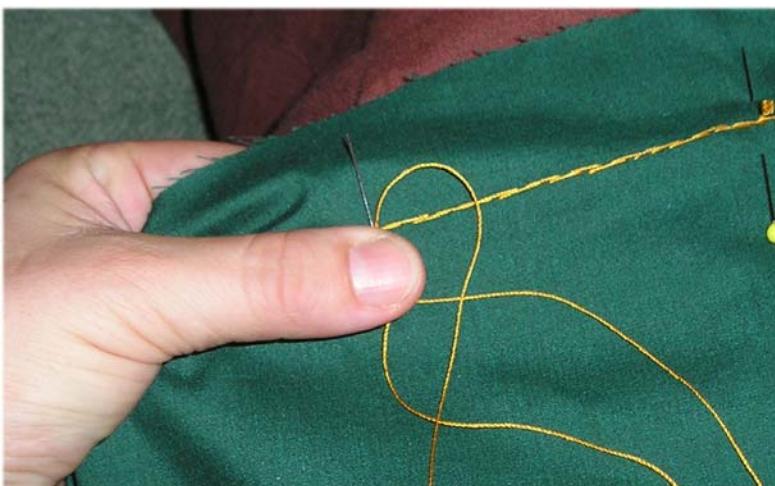
6. Remove the first finger and pull the thread till the knot sits tight.

Making a knot at the end of a seam.

1. Stitch to the wrong side of the fabric, the side that is not seen. Pull out, till the thread is straight.



2. Without pulling out the needle, grasp the last stitch.



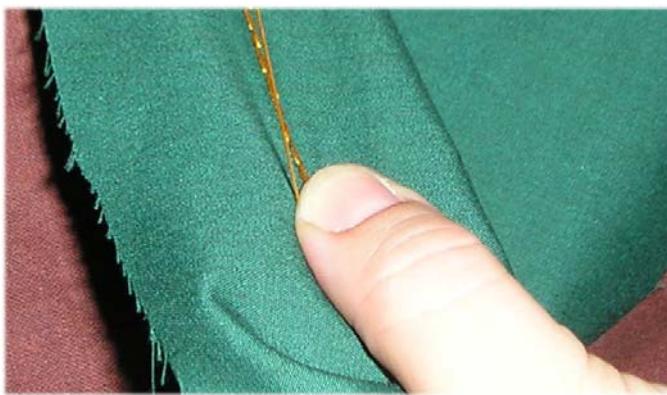
3. Push the needle down with the thumb of your left hand (if you are right-handed).



4. With the right hand loop the thread twice around the tip side of the needle.



5. Pressing down the thread with the loops, pull out the needle.



6. Pull till the thread is straight and you feel the knot tight under your thumb.



7. Pull the knot tight.



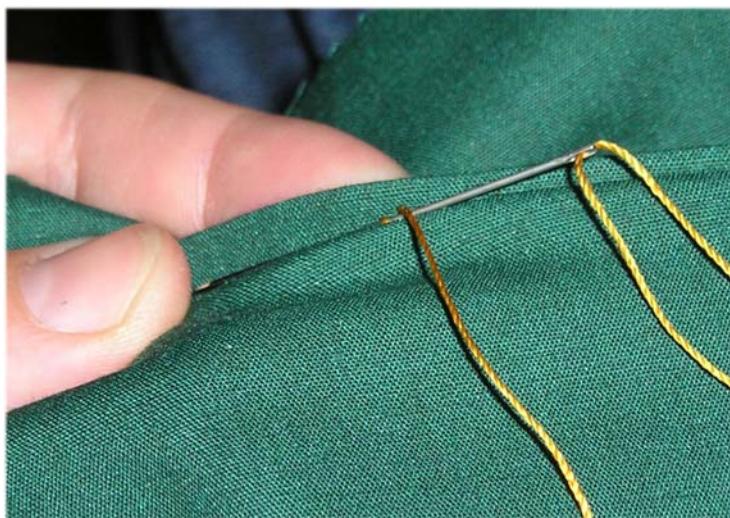
8. Set a simple knot on top of it and cut thread near the simple knot.

How to make a knot between two layers:

You will use this knot when you sew the vertical panels together and when you add the En to the rice field.



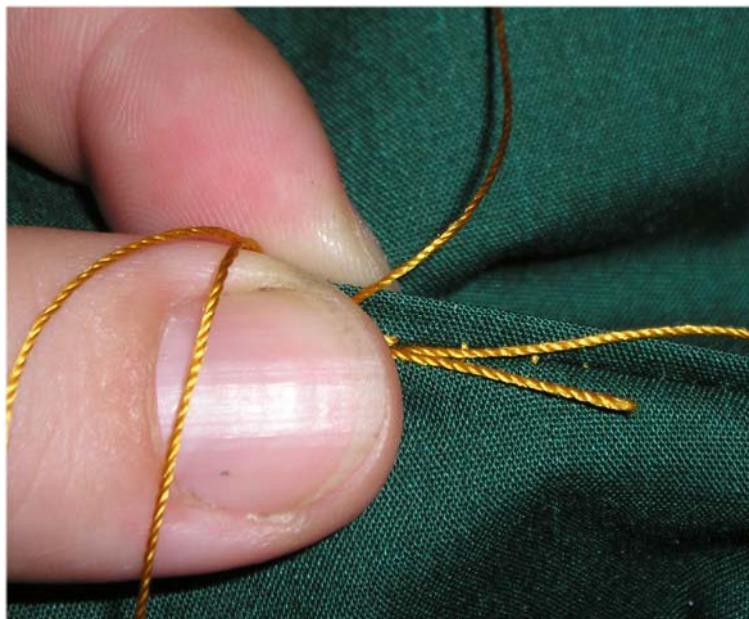
1. Put your needle between the layers and pull the thread straight



2. Grasp the last stitch without pulling out the needle



3. Loop the threat twice around the tip side of the needle.



4. While pulling out, push down the loop under your thumb.



5. Pull straight until the knot is tight.



6. Make a second, simple knot shortly after.



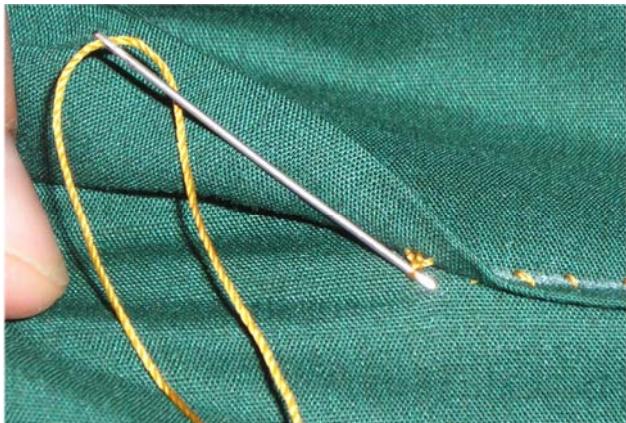
7. Make a stitch, going between the layers, coming up an inch further on the **right** side of the fabric.



8. Pull till it “clicks.” This happens when the second knot disappears between the layers.



9. Straighten the thread till the fabric gets a bit curled and cut the thread. Straighten the fabric again and the cut end will disappear between the layers.



10. Make a knot at the end of a new thread.
11. Go between the layers and behind the other knot.



12. Come out on the **wrong** side of the fabric where your other stitch would have come out, so you don't see an interruption of the flow.



13. Keep coming up to the right side and continue sewing.



14. The knot will be hidden between the layers.

The Backstitch - your Okesa companion for a long time

The backstitch is actually the only stitch you will need for your entire Okesa. Put the two pieces you want to sew together on top of each other. For an illustration of how it works, see Fig. 4.

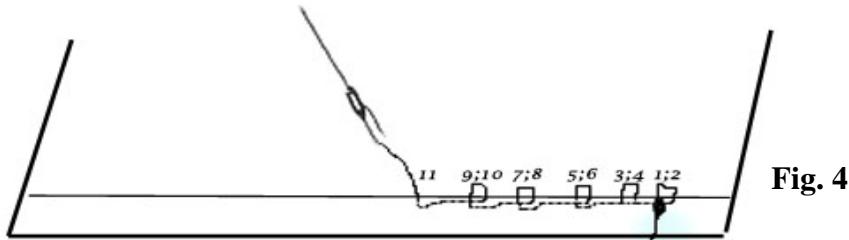
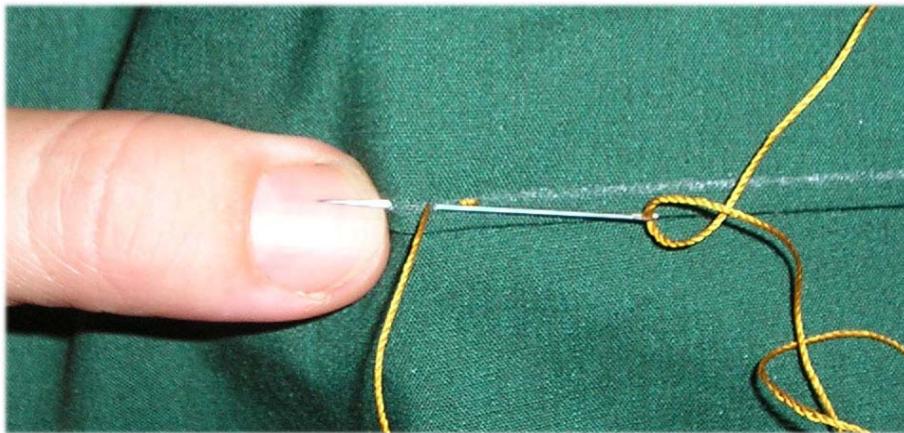


Fig. 4



This is how the stitch looks from the **wrong** side (left picture) and from the **right** side (right picture) of the fabric. You can also see the distance between stitches.

1. Start at the right end of the panel, if you are right-handed or at the left end if you are left-handed.
2. Start the stitch by inserting the needle and thread from below (through the wrong side) and pulling it through to the right side until the knot is tight.
3. Then double back with the needle and push it down through the right side about 1/8 inch (the size of the pin head) behind.
4. Come back up through the wrong side about 1/4 inch forward with the same movement. Go back – down and come forward - up. Again and again. See pictures below.

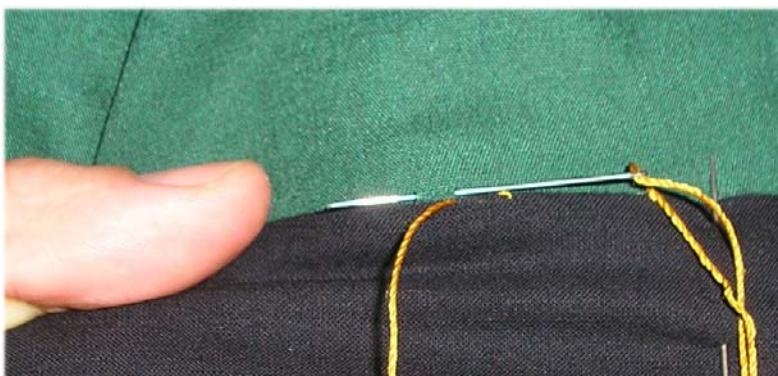


When you reach the end of the thread or the section you are sewing, make a knot on the wrong side of the fabric. If you don't know how to make the knot, please ask somebody to show you or see page 41; this is an important knot. It has to be secure and tight to the fabric. It's best to run the remaining length of thread through the previous stitch, and tie the knot tightly to the fabric.

Always try to hide the knot if you can. Wherever possible, make it at the wrong side of the fabric or between layers.

The Blindstitch

You might not need this stitch for the Okesa. I will still mention it, because you might run in a situation when it becomes necessary. You can use it for example when the fabric in the corners are not tightly sewn together. You will need it if you plan to sew the utensil holder for your Oryoki set.

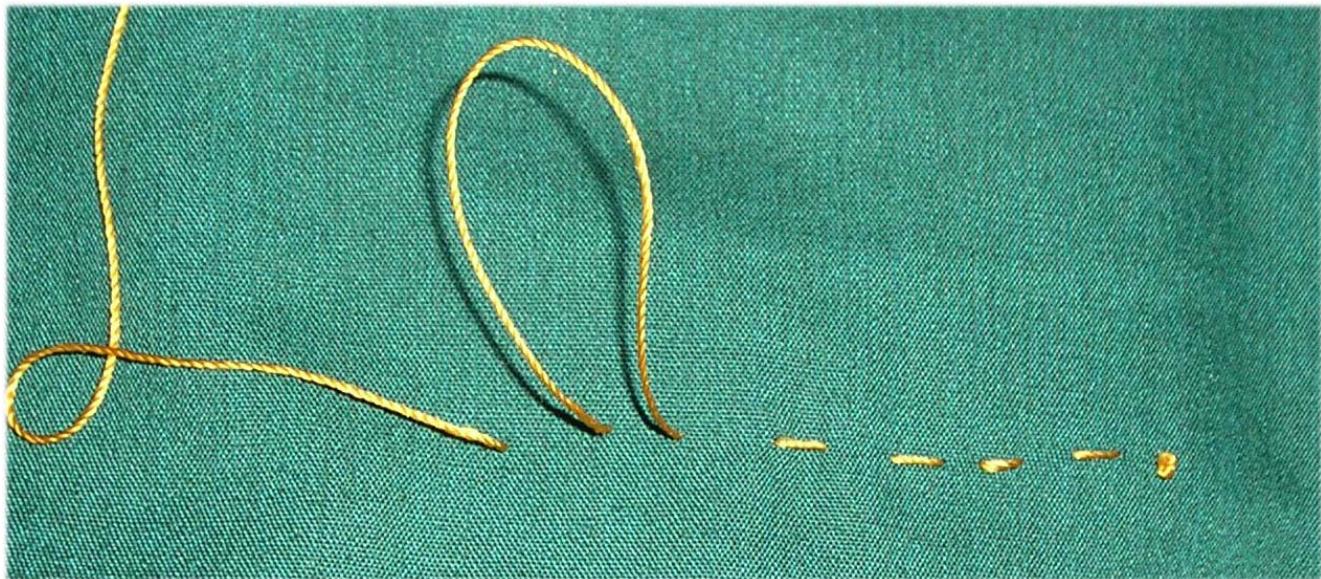


1. Come up from the wrong side of the fabric close to the edge of the layers you want to sew together.
2. Exactly across from where you came out, stitch in and along the edge of the other fabric, coming out $\frac{1}{4}$ inch further.
3. Exactly across from where you came out, stitch in again and sew along like this for 3 – 4 stitches.
4. Then pull the thread till the stitches are unseen.

The Baste Stitch

The baste stitch is very simple. You will need it to join together your white Zagu fabric and the Zagu En.

Just come from the wrong side of the fabric and then keep going in $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ inch up and down stitches. See picture below.



The Rice Field

Your Okesa incorporates the pattern of a rice field. The hems “flow” from up to down and from the middle top piece towards the outside, embodying the principle of higher rice fields watering and nourishing lower rice fields. To see this, take another look at the finished Okesa. The dashed lines are sewn, the through lines are fabric edges. (see Fig. 5.)

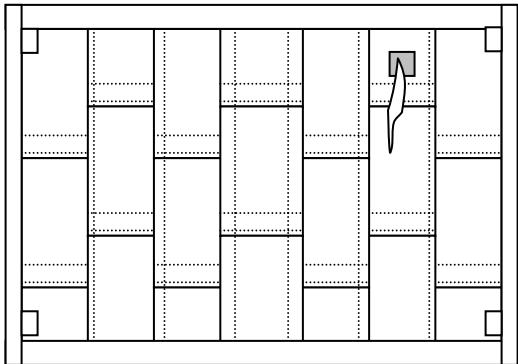


Fig. 5

After you cut your Tans and Chos, make 7 bundles, each with 2 Chos and one Tan.

As you can see in the picture, you will need 3 panels that are comprised of short – long – long pieces and 4 panels that are comprised of long – long – short pieces. Sew one panel after the other.

Step One: Sewing your Vertical Panels

Reminder again: The term “**right side**” will always refer to the side of the Okesa that will face out and be seen by others, while the “**wrong side**” will always refer to the side that is next to your body when you are wearing the Okesa or does not show.

1. Lay out a whole panel (either short – long - long, or long-long-short). At the bottom edges of each piece, mark all the **right** sides with a little pencil line to avoid confusion later in the sewing process. (see Fig. 6.)



2. Start with the two upper pieces.
3. Turn over piece shown as “①” in Fig. 6, so you see the **wrong** side.



Fig. 7

4. Mark a line for the overlap size above the bottom edge on **wrong** side of upper fabric (let's stick with the example of 2").



Fig. 8

5. Place piece “②” on top of piece “①” (see photo below), so that the **wrong** sides are facing each other. (See Fig. 9.) In other words, set the **wrong** side of piece “②” on top of the **wrong** side of piece “①.”

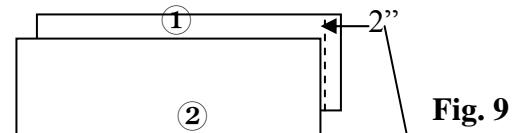


Fig. 9



6. Line up the edge of piece “②” with the pencil line of the 2” overlap of piece “①” and pin them together.



Fig. 10

7. Turn the pieces over so that the **right** side of piece “①” faces up.



Fig. 11

8. Mark a line for the overlap size, adding one-half inch, or + 0.5” (2.5” in the example we are using). (See Fig. 12.)

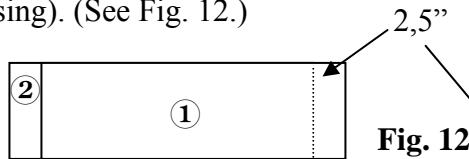
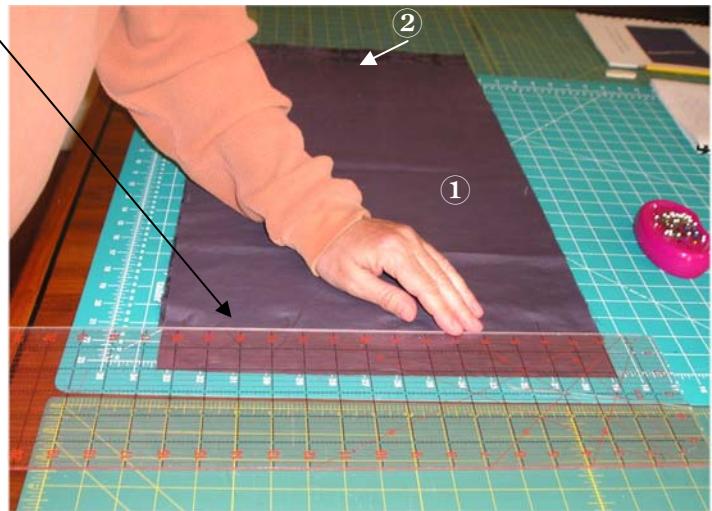


Fig. 12



9. Sew together (facing the **right** side of the fabric “①”) from the right edge to the left edge. (See Fig. 13.)

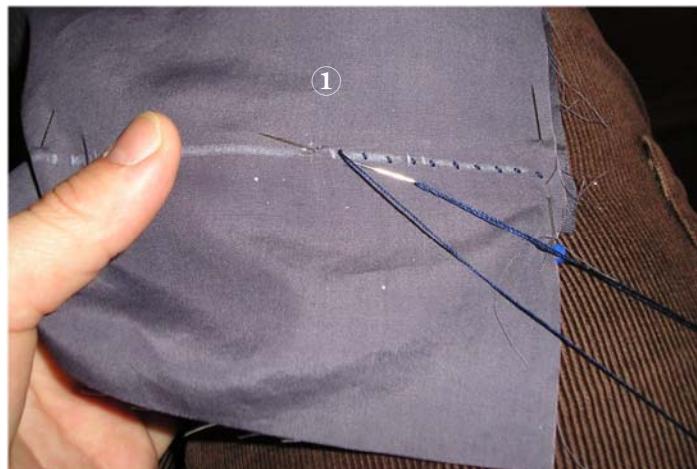


Fig. 13

To make a knot at the end of the seam, flip up the **wrong** side of the fabric. See also *Knots and Stitches* Side on page 41.

- a. Grasp the last stitch with the needle, without pulling it out,

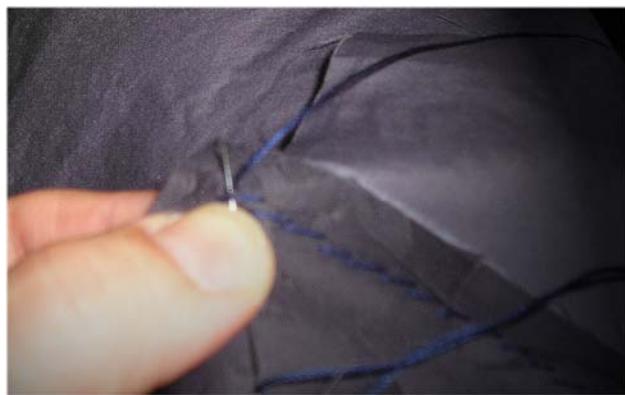


Fig. 14

- b. Loop the thread three times around the needle,

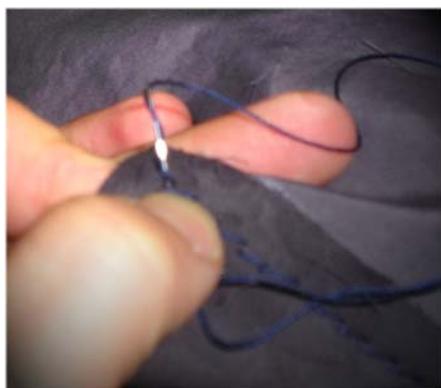


Fig. 15

- c. Pull the needle through, pressing the knot close to the fabric with your thumb.



Fig. 16

- d. Make a regular knot on top of this knot. Cut the thread $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch farther out from the end.

10. Mark a line 0.5" from the bottom edge on the **right** side of the upper piece “①”.
(See Fig. 17.)

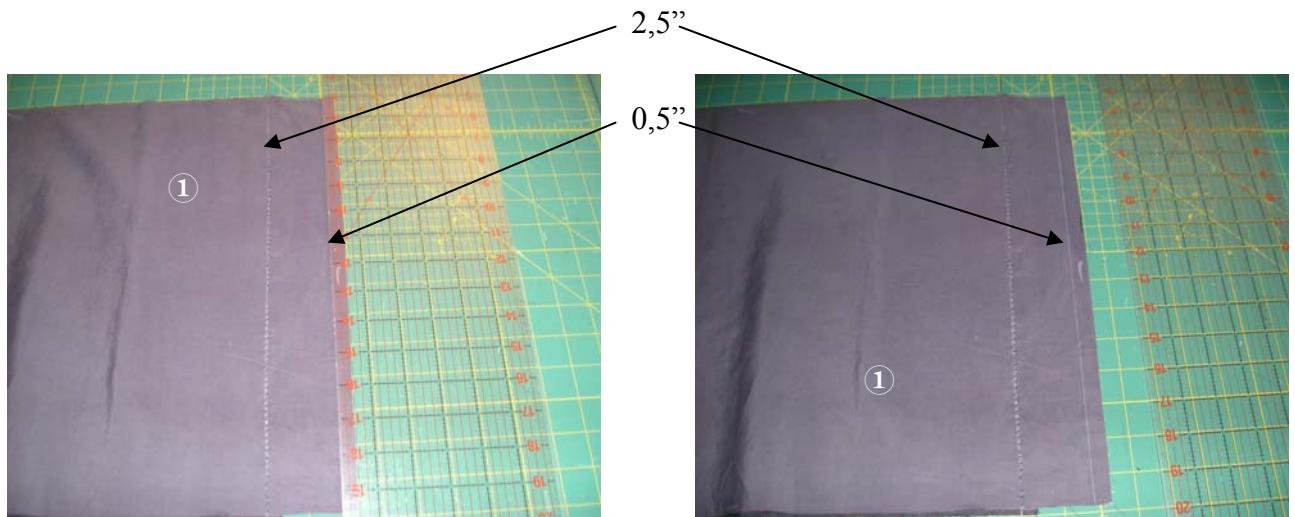


Fig. 17

11. Fold the half inch over and iron this hem toward the **wrong** side.



Fig. 18

12. Now, lay the panels out flat, iron them, and mark a small line slightly above the ironed hem edge.



Fig. 19



13. Pin the two pieces together.

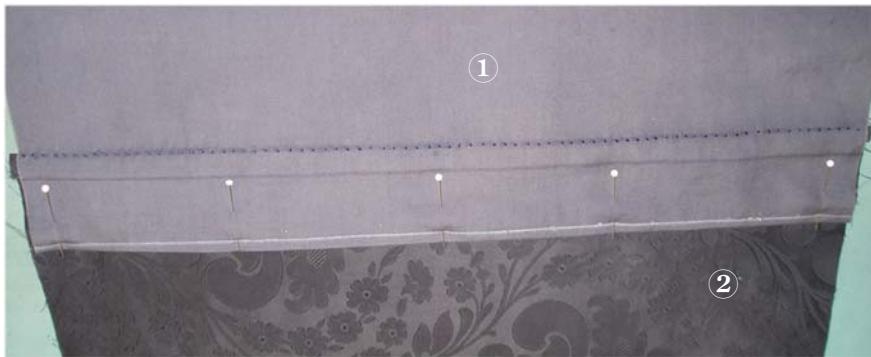


Fig. 20

14. Sew the two pieces together. You are facing the **right** side of panel “①”.

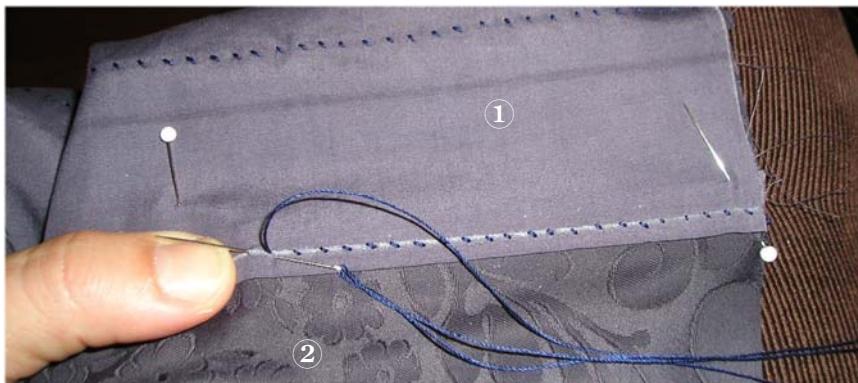


Fig. 21

15. Add the third (bottom) piece to these two pieces the same way as you did with the first two pieces and your panel is complete.



Fig. 22

16. Turn over the upper piece (panels “①” **and** “②”, that is, the ones now sewn together).

17. Mark a line for the overlap size above the bottom edge on **wrong** side of upper piece “①&②”



Fig. 23

18. Place the bottom piece ③ on top the piece ①&② so that the **wrong** sides are facing each other.



Fig. 24

19. Line up the edge of the upper piece with the pencil line of the lower piece and pin them together.



Fig. 25

20. Turn the pieces over.



Fig. 26

21. Mark a line for the overlap size + 0.5" (again, to remind you, that is 2.5" in the example we are using here).



Fig. 27

22. Sew together piece “①&②” with piece “③” (facing the **right** side of the piece “①&②”) from the right edge to the left.

23. Mark a line 0.5" from the bottom edge on the **right** side of the piece “①&②”. (See Fig. 28.)



Fig. 28

24. Fold the hem over and iron it toward the **wrong** side.

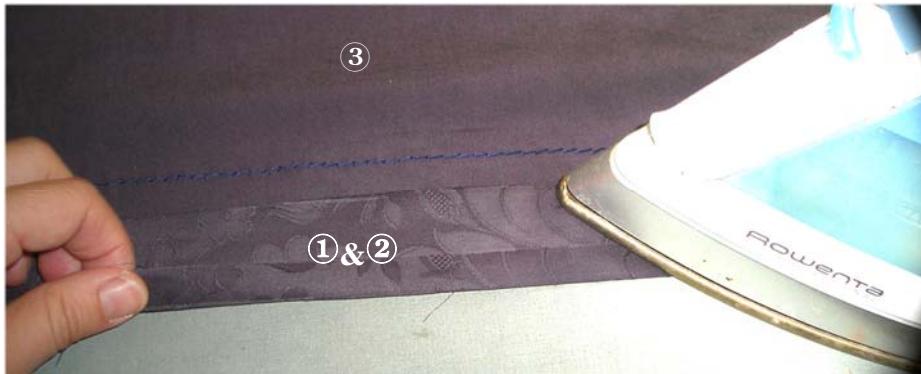


Fig. 29

25. Iron out the panels and mark a small line slightly above the ironed hem edge.



Fig. 30

26. Pin and sew the pieces together. You are facing the **right** side of the panel.



Fig. 31

27. Follow the same directions for completing all vertical panels

Sew four panels: long-long-short

Sew three panels: short-long-long.

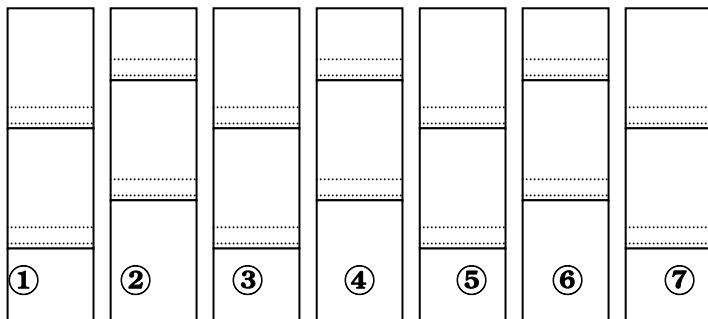


Fig. 32

Step Two: Sewing your Vertical Panels Together

Example 2" Yo, 0.5" hem:

Principle: Sewing the vertical panels together parallels the method for sewing the small pieces together except that the middle panel is considered the "top" panel—in other words, you will assemble the panels by working away from the middle panel to the right and then to the left.

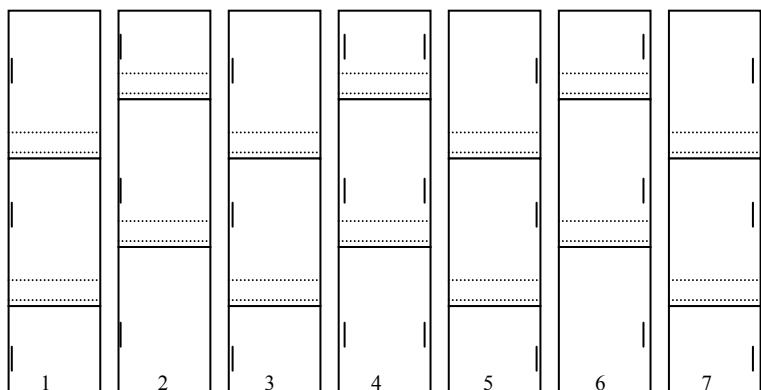
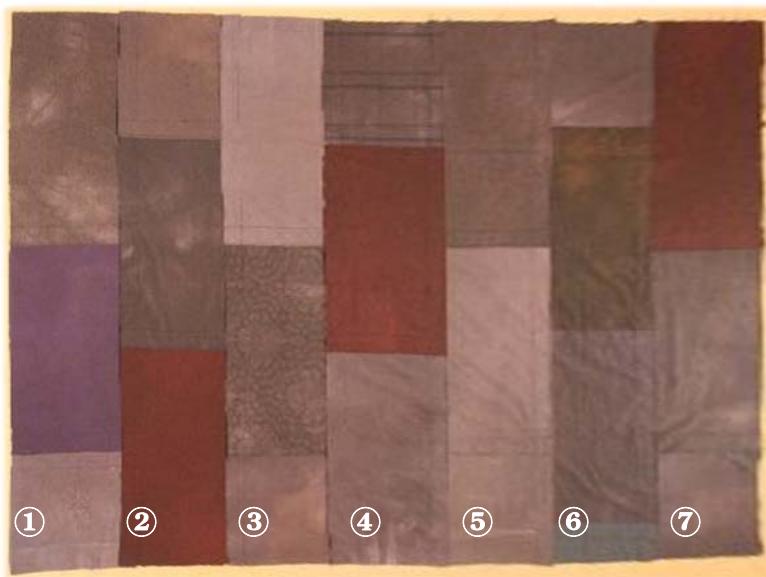


Fig. 33

28. Lay out all panels precisely in the order you want to have them in the finished product. (See Fig. 33.)
29. Mark the **right** side outer edge with two little pencil lines. (See Fig. 33.)
30. Number your pieces from left to right. (See Fig. 33.)
31. Put aside the pieces “①”, “②”, “⑤”, “⑥”, and “⑦”.

32. Lay out panels “③” and “④”.



Fig. 34

33. Flip panel “④” so its **wrong** side faces up. Attention: now the edge you will mark on panel “④” is turned away from panel “③”.

34. Mark a 2” line along the length of the central panel “④” on the **wrong** side of the panel.



Fig. 35

35. Place panel “③” on top of panel “④” (see Fig. 36), so that the wrong sides face each other.

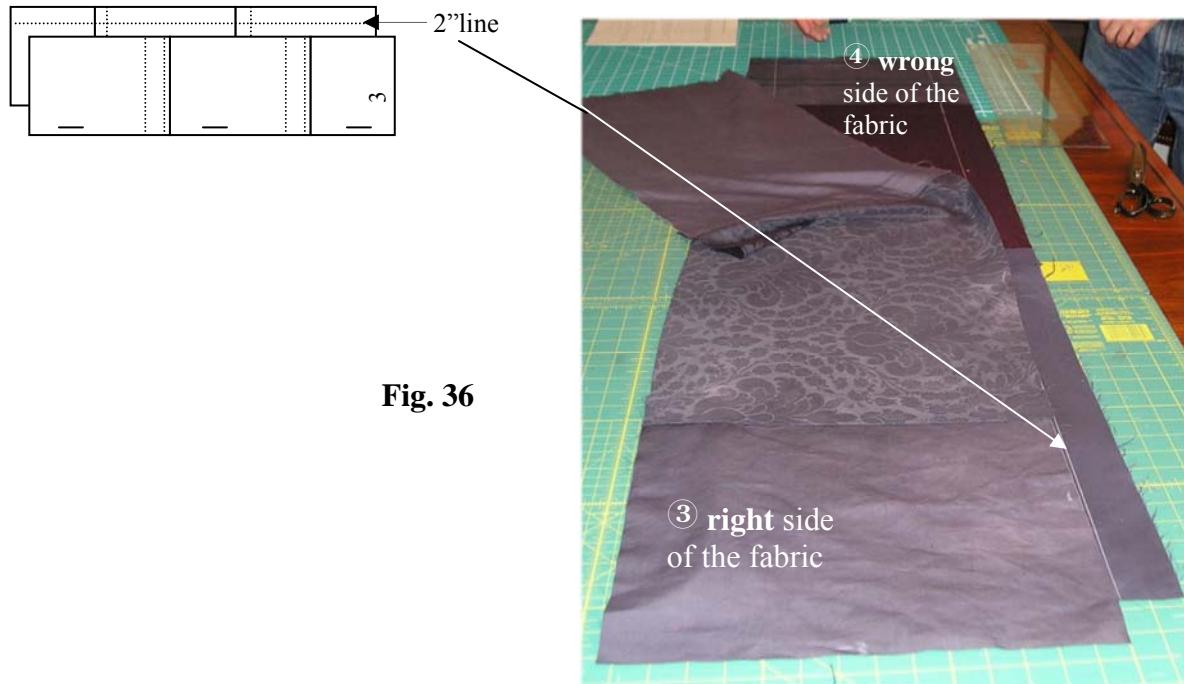


Fig. 36

36. Line up the edge of panel “③” with the marked line of panel “④” and pin them together. (See Fig. 37.)

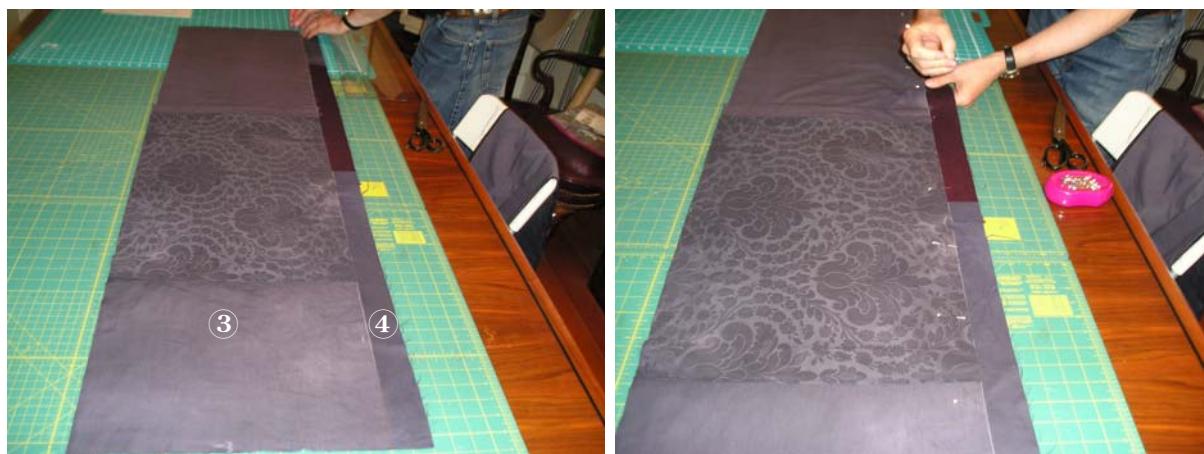


Fig. 37

37. Turn the pieces over and mark a line 2.5" away from the edge on the **right** side of panel “④”. (See Fig. 38.)

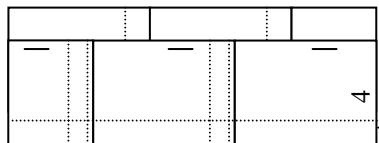


Fig. 38



38. Sew together along the 2.5" marked line (facing the **right** side of panel “④”).

*Important! Your thread will not be long enough to sew the entire length of the panel. When you get to the end of your thread, flip over the **wrong** side of the fabric and make a knot close to the fabric. Start with a new length of thread.*

39. Mark a line 0.5" of the **right** side of the center panel “④”. (See Fig. 39.)

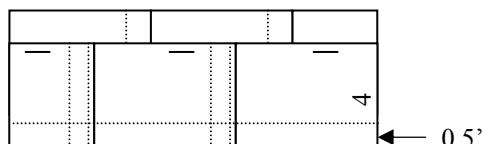
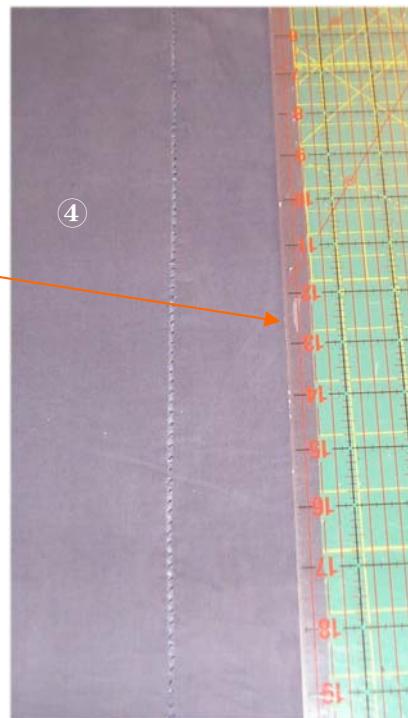


Fig. 39



40. Iron the half inch toward the **wrong** side to create a hem.
41. Open the panels, iron them, and mark a small line along the ironed hem edge. (See Fig. 40.)

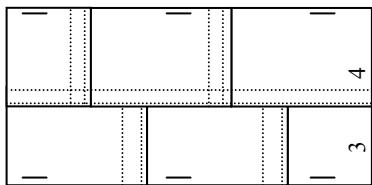


Fig. 40

42. Pin the two pieces together and sew along the marked line.

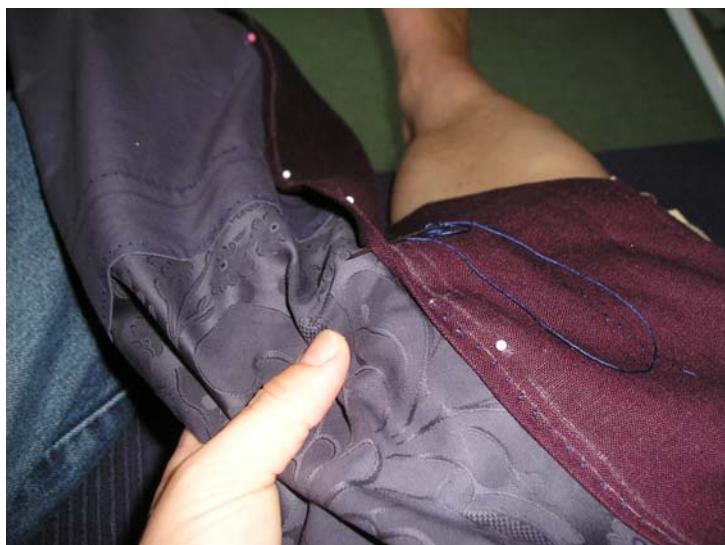


Fig. 41

Important: Your thread will not be long enough to sew the entire length of the panel. When you get to the end of your thread, place your needle in between the three layers of fabric and make a hidden knot as close to the fabric as possible. Start a new thread and try to hide the knot by starting between the layers, repeating one stitch. (See Knots and Stitches Side on page 39).

43. Add panel “②” to these two pieces in the same way. Now panel “③” is your top panel. (See Fig. 42.)

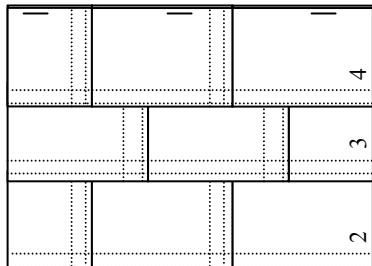


Fig. 42

44. Add panel “①” to these three pieces in the same way. Now panel “②” is your top panel. (See Fig. 43.)

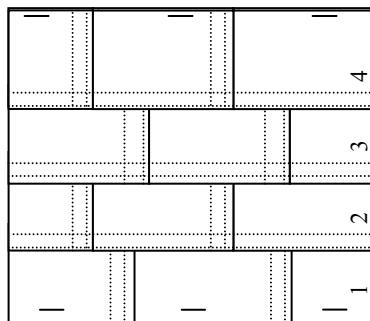


Fig. 43

45. Start with the center panel “④” again and mark a line 2” from the right-hand edge on the **wrong** side.

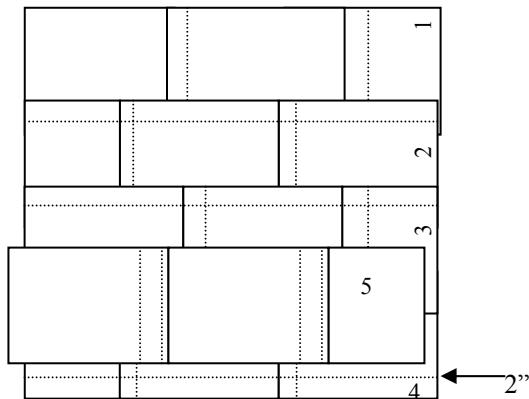


Fig. 44

46. Place the next panel “⑤” on top this piece (see Fig. 44), so that the **wrong** sides are facing each other.

47. Line up the edge of panel “**⑤**” with the marked line of panel “**④**” and pin them together. (See Fig. 44 or refer to Fig. 36 and Fig. 37 on page 65.)
48. Turn the panels over.
49. Mark 2.5”
50. Sew together (from the right side). You should now face panel “**④**” on the right side and sew it along the 2.5” line.
51. Mark on the **right** side of the center panel “**④**” on the outer edge 0.5”
52. Iron it toward the **wrong** side.
53. Iron out the panel and mark a small line along the ironed edge.
54. Pin the two pieces together
55. Sew the two pieces together.
56. Add panel “**⑥**” to this long piece in the same way. Now panel “**⑤**” is your top panel.
57. Add panel “**⑦**” to this long piece in the same way. Now panel “**⑥**” is your top panel.

Congratulations! You have completed your rice field.

The Border En

58. Lay out your Okesa on a clean floor so it lays flat and straight, with the wrong side up. (See Fig. 45.)

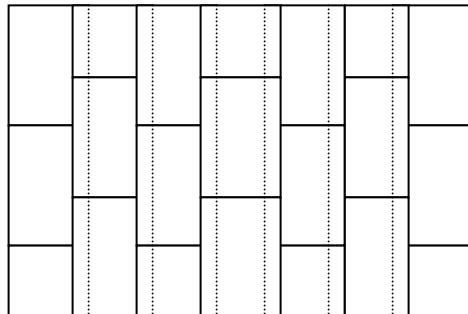


Fig 45

59. Measure and mark the middle of your center panel “④” on the top and on the bottom. (. 6 – red lines).

60. Measure and mark the middle of your side panels “①” and “⑦”. (See Fig 46 – red lines.)

61. Take half of the finish measurement of your Okesa length and measure from the middle mark toward the top and the bottom edge.

Example: on page 35 you calculated a final measurement of 88" x 58".

Your finish length measure is 58", the half is 29". Go from the mid mark on panel “①” and “⑦” 29" up and down. (See Fig 46 – purple lines.)

62. Take half of the finish measurement of your Okesa width and measure from the middle mark toward the right and the left edge

In our Example: on page 35 you calculated a final measurement of 88" x 58".

Your finished width measure is 88", the half is 44". Go from the mid mark on panel “④” 44" toward panel “①” and panel “⑦” and make a mark there. (See Fig 46 – green lines.)

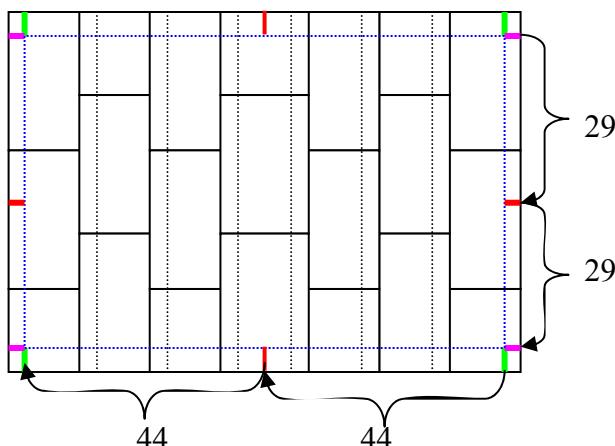


Fig. 46

63. Draw a line between the (purple and green) marks. (See Fig 46 – blue line.) That will be the final size of your finished Okesa.
64. Iron the extra fabric toward the **right** side of the Okesa. If it extends over more than the width of your finish measurement for the En, then you either have to double-fold the hem or cut it. If your measurements are correct, it should not happen, but it is not a big problem if there is too much fabric. If it turns out too short, then iron a half of an inch toward the right side of the Okesa.



Fig. 47

65. Cut your 4 frame pieces that will become your En straight. Cut them so they are 2" longer than the final size of your Okesa and 1" wider than your finished En (making a 0.5' hem on both sides).
66. Mark 0.5" along **all** the length sides of the strips and iron them toward the **wrong** side of the fabric. (See Fig. 48.)



Fig. 48



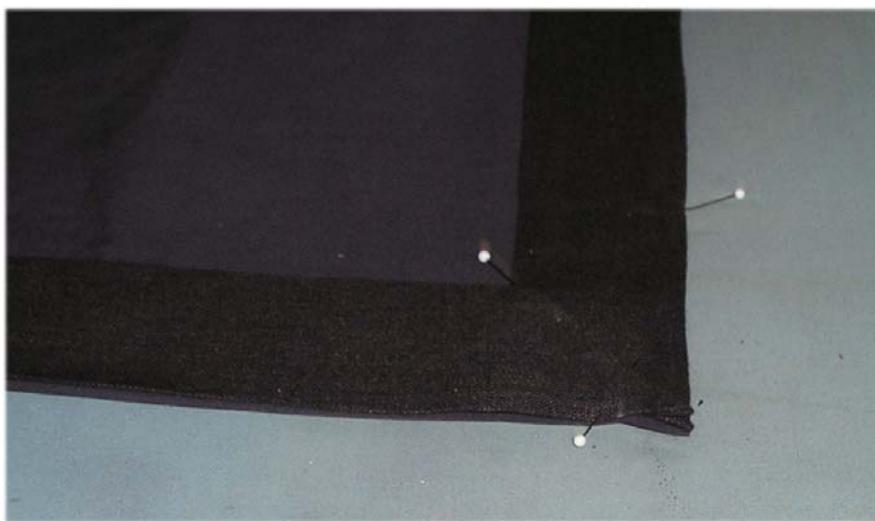
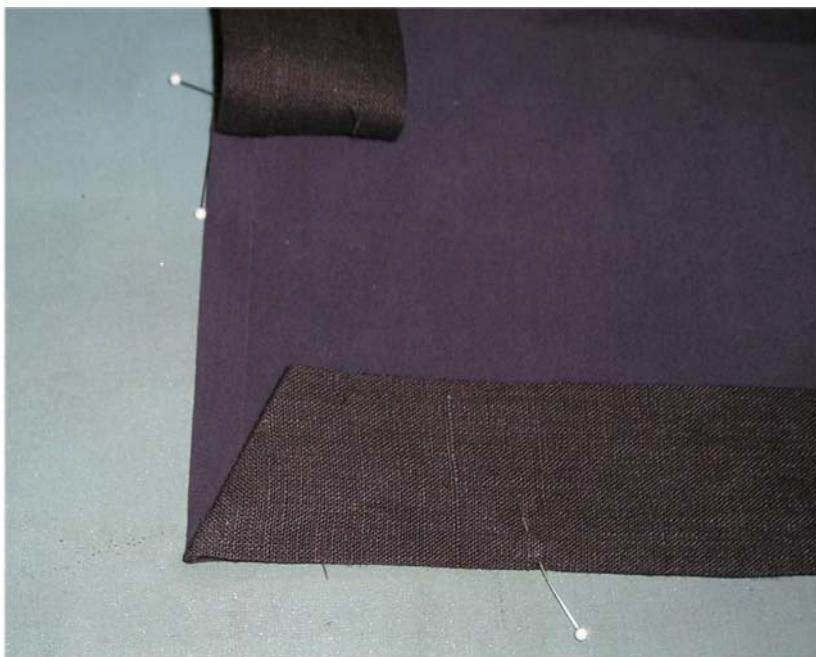
67. Pin your frame pieces along the edge of your Okesa (all around).
68. Fold the edges in at a 45-degree angle and iron them so that no open edge stands out or is seen. (This step is a hassle--don't judge yourself).

Here (Fig. 49 series) is an example of how to do it:



Fig. 49







69. You will sew the entire length of the En three times, once along the outer edge, once along the inner edge, and once along the middle.
70. Draw a little line next to the outer edge and sew along all around.
71. After you have finished this first round, you can adjust your corners with the iron.
72. Now sew the inner edge of the En to your rice field. (See Fig 50.)
73. Mark the middle between the two edges with a pencil line and sew this last line of the En.

You might need to close the corners of the En with a hidden stitch, if necessary.



Fig. 50

74. Take the four Joro pieces (the small square panels for the corners) and cut them 1" wider than the width of the En. Iron on all sides a 0,5" hem toward the **wrong** side. Flip the corners a bit inwards, so they cannot be seen when you turn the Joro **right** side up. (See Fig 51.)

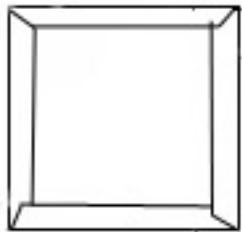


Fig. 51

75. Put the Joro in the corners of the **right** side of the frame, just a little bit overlapping the seam of the En, and pin them. Sew the Joros on with the regular stitch. (See Fig. 52.) The Joro should sit on top of the En where the Joro and En overlap.
76. Repeat this step with all Joros in the four corners of your okesa.

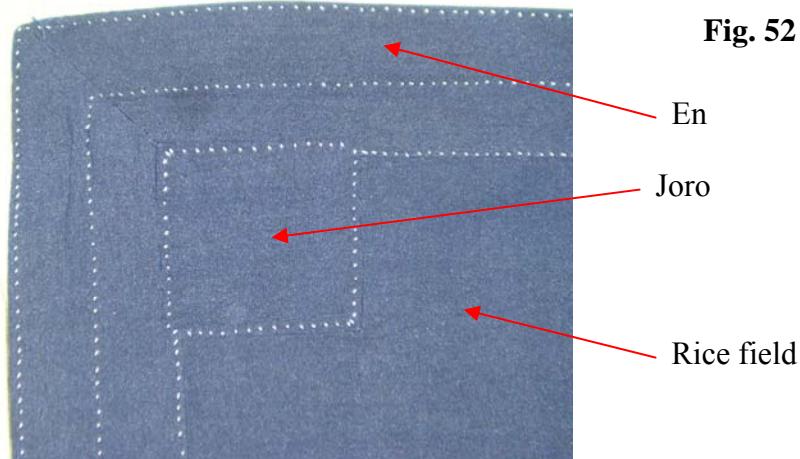


Fig. 52

The Daizas

Prepare the Daizas with the cords:



Fig. 53

Overview of the picture as the Daiza looks at the end:

There are actually two pieces of fabric over each other, a bigger one on the bottom (light gray in Fig. 53) and a smaller one on top (black one in Fig 53).

The gray lines are sewing stitches,

The cords come out of the center point of the Daizas.

77. Cut the bigger one 5 x 5 inches and iron a half-inch hem all around toward the **wrong** side of the fabric. That leaves a square of 4x4 inches.



Fig. 54

78. Cut the smaller square 4x4 inches. Iron a half-inch hem all around, leaving a square of 3x3.
79. Put them on top of each other, centering the smaller square on the larger square (as shown in Fig. 55).

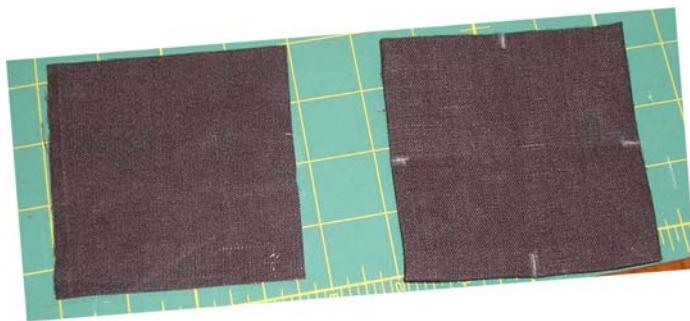


Fig. 55



80. Cut 44" for one cord. If the material is plastic, hold the end of it over a flame until it starts melting, then wait until it cools down a bit before you squeeze the ends with your fingers to seal them. Be careful not to burn yourself.



Fig. 56

81. If you are using a cotton cord, wrap a piece of scotch tape around it so it does not fray.

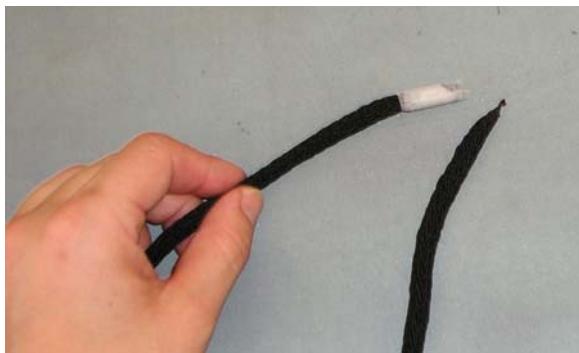


Fig. 57

82. Make a small hole in the center of the Daiza fabric and pull your cord through, making a loop on the **right** side of the Daiza. (See Fig. 58.)

Leave 1.5 inches of the cord on the **wrong** side of the Daiza.

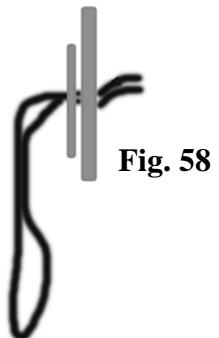


Fig. 58

83. Take a piece of left-over fabric and cut a rectangle 2" by around 5". (If you used scotch tape for the cord ends, remove it now.) Fold the rectangle in half and wrap it twice (not more) **tightly** around the ends of the cord, with the folded edge toward the Daiza. If there is too much fabric, cut it off. (See Fig. 59.)
84. Sew together the cord ends and the fabric piece with up and down stitches, mainly tight at the end where the Daiza is. (See Fig. 59.)

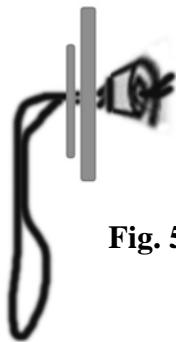


Fig. 59



85. Pull the loop out until the sewn-together cord ends and fabric sit on the Daiza. (See Fig. 60.)
86. Now sew the cord ends/fabric piece to the **wrong** side of the larger square of fabric (the bottom piece of the Daiza) with lots of stitches. Note that the smaller top piece of the Daiza will later cover those stitches. (See Fig. 60.)



Fig. 60

87. Now place the small top piece of the Daiza so, that its corners meet the middle of the bottom piece. Pin them together.
88. With many up and down stitches, sew along the hole where the cords come out of the Daiza, catching all layers. (See Fig. 61.)

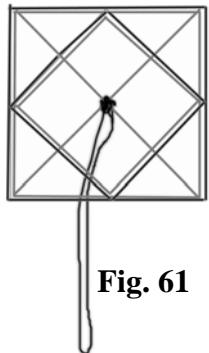


Fig. 61



The Placement of the Daizas

Determining where to place the Daizas is a bit tricky. The best approach is to wear a Koromo and all the under-robies you will wear in your temple. Have someone do the measurements for you.

The person who will wear the Okesa should stretch out her left arm. Place the Okesa over the left arm, around the back, under the right arm and over the left shoulder (wrap it around your body this way—Fig. 58). [Picture to follow](#)



The dark Daiza on Fig. 58 goes on the **right (outer)** side of the Okesa and the lighter one goes on the **wrong (inner)** side of the Okesa.

The distance of the dark Daiza (measured from where the looped cord comes out of the Daiza) from the side edge of the Okesa is from the wrist to the angle of your neck/shoulder. [Close Picture to follow](#)

The distance from the top edge is around 4.5".

To determine the location of the lighter Daiza (**wrong** side—Fig. 58), you must find the distance between the two Daizas that allows the two Daizas to overlap when the Okesa is wrapped relatively tightly around the body with all under-robies on. For the lighter Daiza, the distance from the top edge is 5.5 inches. [Close Picture to follow](#)

Take care not to wrap the Okesa too tightly or too loosely.

Mark the two Daiza locations with a dot and remove the Okesa.

Put the Daizas on your Okesa. Match the center of the Daiza with the marked dots.

89. Mark small lines along the edges of your Daiza and sew them with the stitch used for your Okesa. Sew along the edges and a cross through the center. (See Fig 63.) The loops of the cords should fall toward the **upper** edge of the Okesa.



Fig. 63

Congratulations: you have finished your Okesa.

Following a short rest on the top of the 100 foot pole, we will now sew the Zagu.

The Zagu

The Zagu is the bowing cloth of the Zen priest. All Buddhist ordained monks, nuns and priest carry this cloth with them. You will use it to protect your robe from dirt or touching the ground. You will also use it in Face-to-Face meetings (Dokusan), whether you are wearing your Okesa or not. In Face-to-Face meetings, you will place it parallel to the teacher's Zagu with the open edges facing her/him.

As for practice, the bottom side of the Zagu is considered dirty and the top side clean. We try to avoid presenting the dirty side to the Buddha or our teacher; thus, when we unfold our Zagu, we rotate our torsos to the side.

At the end of the sewing instructions, you will find instructions on how to fold the Zagu and wear it over your arm.

As for sewing, the Zagu is similar to sewing the frame of the Okesa. It also has corner pieces, like the Joro.

We will first sew the four frame pieces together and then add them to the white cloth along with the Joros.



Fig. 64

Sewing Instructions:

1. Cut two pieces 28.5" x 5" and two pieces 45" x 5".
2. With each piece, mark 0.5 along **one** long side and iron it toward the **wrong** side of the fabric.



Fig. 65

3. Take a piece of 8.5" x 11" (letter size) paper and fold it over the edge to create a 45° angle. (See Fig 66.)



Fig. 66

4. Put the piece of paper on top of each fabric piece, so that the corners match. The shorter side of the triangle goes toward the ironed edge. (See Fig. 67.) Mark the angle with a pencil.



Fig. 67

5. Take a long frame piece and a short frame piece and put them on top of each other, so the **right** sides face each other and the ironed edges are on top of each other. Pin along the pencil line. (See Fig. 68.)

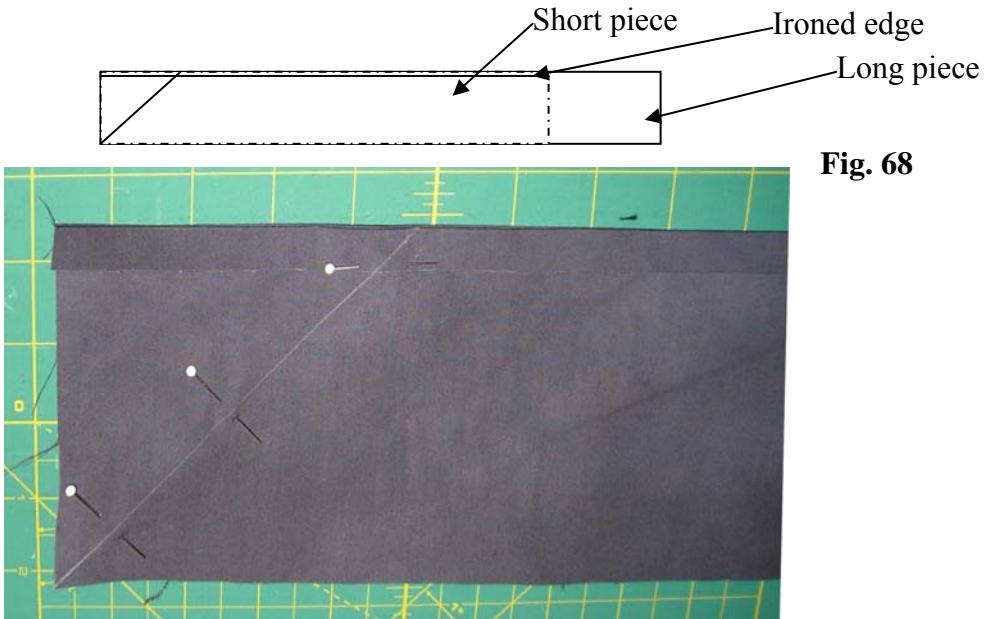


Fig. 68

6. Sew them precisely along the line with the stitch you know from the Okesa, but this time don't leave a gap between the former stitch and the current. (See Fig. 69.)

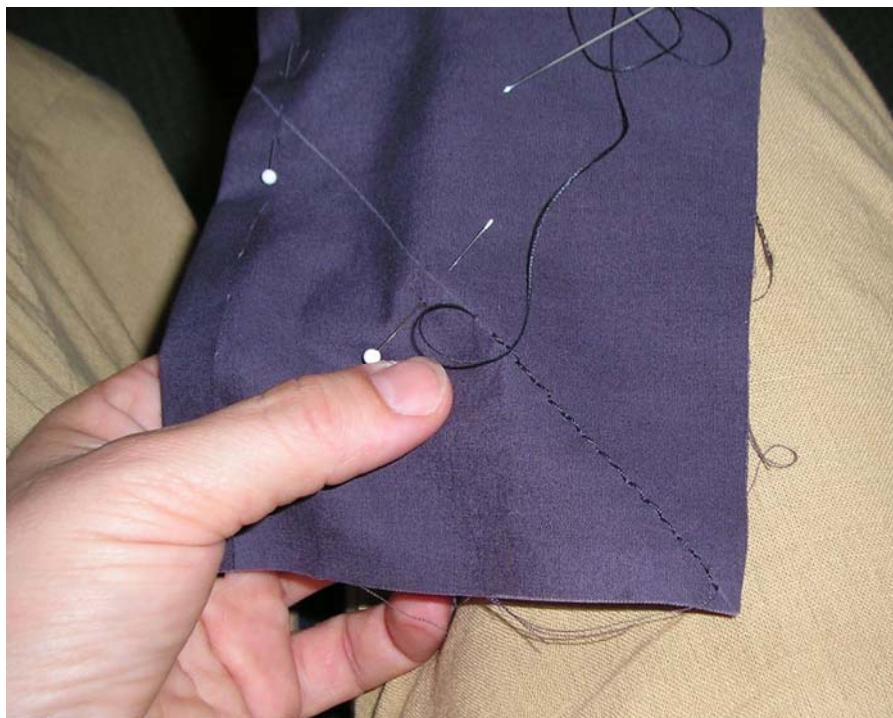


Fig. 69

7. Cut off fabric that is not used, leaving 0.5' hem. (See Fig. 70.)



Fig. 70

8. Iron the pieces open so that they look like the figure below: (See Fig 71.)

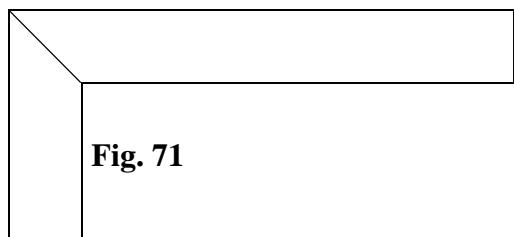
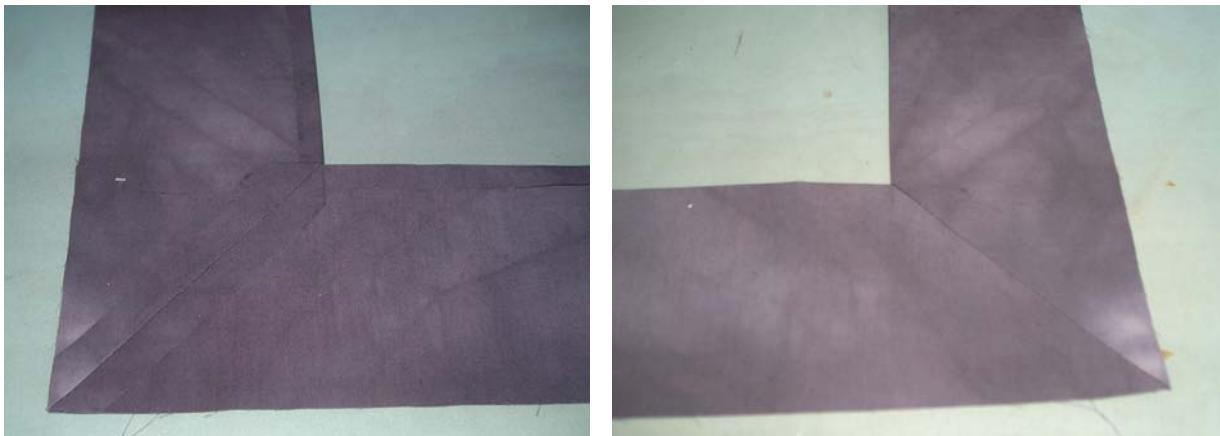


Fig. 71

9. Now put a short piece on top of the long piece, **right** sides facing each other.

10. Pin along the line and sew together as shown above.

11. Iron it the finished product open. (See Fig. 68.)

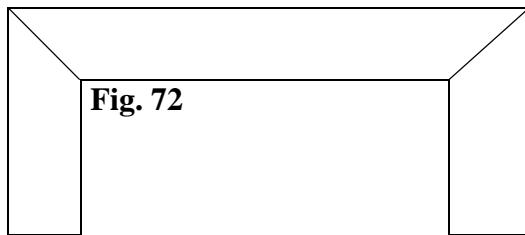


Fig. 72

12. Add the last piece and sew them together so a square appears. Open the square and iron it flat. (See Fig. 73.)

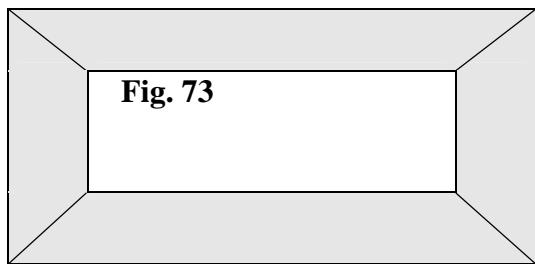


Fig. 73

13. Put the white piece of fabric flat on the table, with the **right** side facing up (if it has a right side).
14. Place the square with the **wrong** side facing up on top of the white fabric. Take care that the lines are straight.



Fig. 74

15. Your white fabric should now be bigger than the square.
16. Cut off extra fabric. (See Fig 75.)
17. Draw a line 0.5 inches along the outer edge of the square.

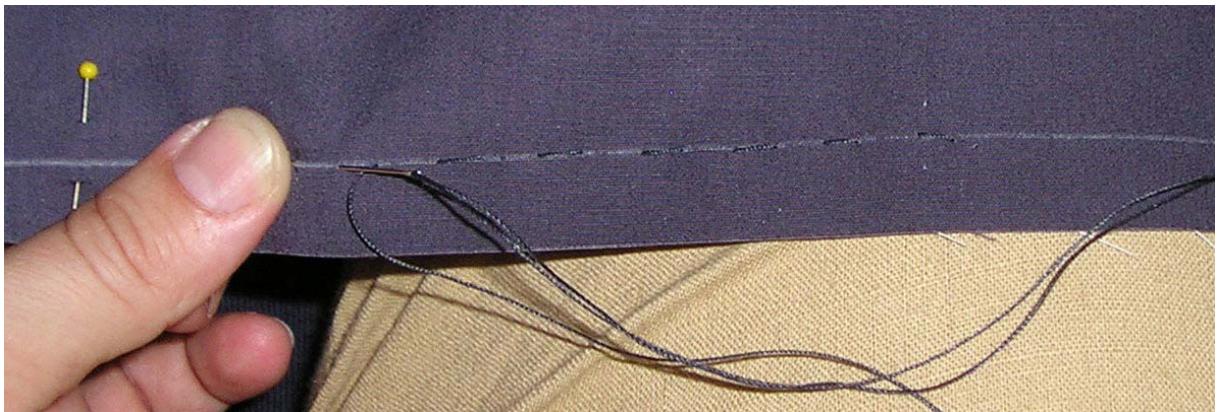


Fig. 75

18. Pin and baste the white fabric and the border together along your pencil line (all four sides). When basting, just make sideways stitches; they can be close to a half an inch long. (See Fig. 76.)



Fig. 76



19. Turn the Zagu inside out. Iron the edges so that the white and the dark fabric line up where you sewed them together. You might sometimes need a pin to pull out the hem before you can iron the edge. (See Fig. 77.)



Fig. 77

20. Mark a line just $\frac{1}{4}$ inch next to the outer edge and sew all around with the stitch you know from your Okesa.
21. Sew the inner edge of your Zagu the same way.
22. Mark a middle line between the two lines and sew along that line.
23. Take your four Joro pieces and mark 0.5' all around. Iron them toward the **wrong** side of your fabric. (See Fig. 78.)

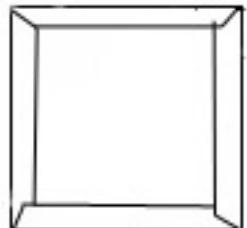


Fig. 78

24. Do the same as with your Okesa Joros. Put them in the corner of the Zagu on top of the En. The edges of the Joros should slightly overlap the seam of the En.
25. Pin and sew the Joros and the rest of the Zagu together on.

You're done. Congratulations!

How to Iron your Zagu

Mark the top of your Zagu by making two small cross stitches in the upper corner on the **wrong** side of the Zagu.

The easiest way to iron it is to put a piece of linen on a table so you can spread out the Zagu completely.

Place it with the **wrong** side up—in our example, the top mark would be in the right corner.

1. Fold the Zagu in half, leaving a $\frac{1}{4}$ inch edge extending on the bottom long side, and iron the fold (as in picture below).



Fig. 79

2. Iron it once more toward you; still leave a little bit of space at the edge. (See Fig 80.)



Fig. 80

3. Fold the Zagu in half again and iron it along the fold. Now all edges should more or less line up. You might have to do some adjustment ironing.



Fig. 81

4. Fold it in half toward the left:



Fig. 82

5. Fold it one more time toward the left:



Fig. 83

This is exactly how your teacher should view your Zagu when you go to Dokusan or Face-to Face meetings.

You will not store your Rakusu in the case with your Okesa, but rather under the lid of the case. (See Fig. 84.)



Fig. 84

Okesa Case

1. Choose your exterior case fabric. It is often either the same fabric as the Okesa or a pretty, traditional silk.
2. Choose the lining for the case. It's good to use a slippery fabric so it is easy to take the Okesa in and out.
3. Lay the fabrics out flat on a table or floor (with a cutting mat under it if using a cutting knife). Put the case fabric down first, so that its **right** side faces up. Put the lining fabric on top of it, so the **wrong** side of the fabric faces up.
4. Mark a square of 22". (See Fig. 85.)

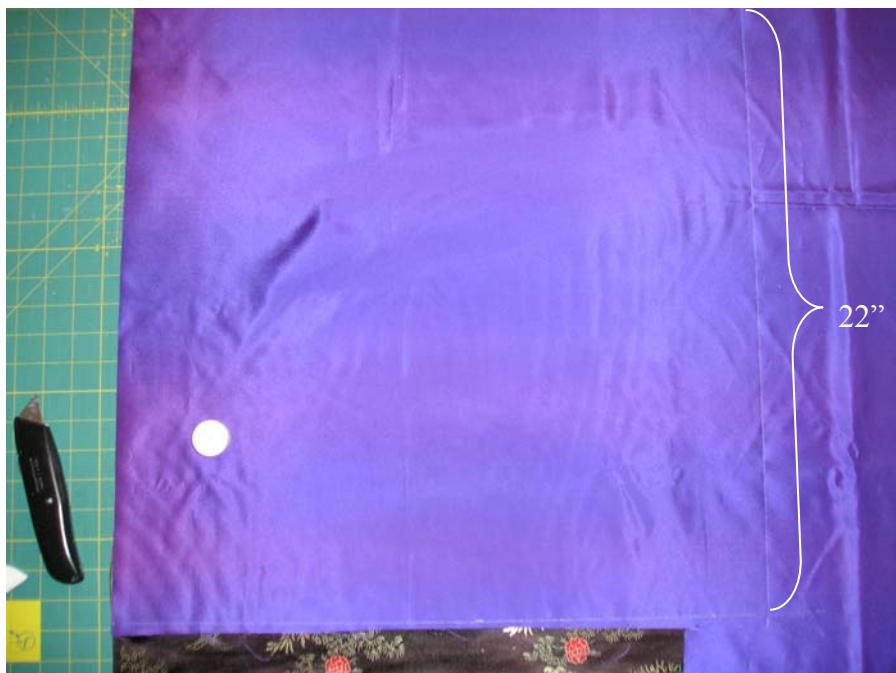


Fig. 85

5. On one corner, measure in 1.5" from both sides. (See Fig 86.)

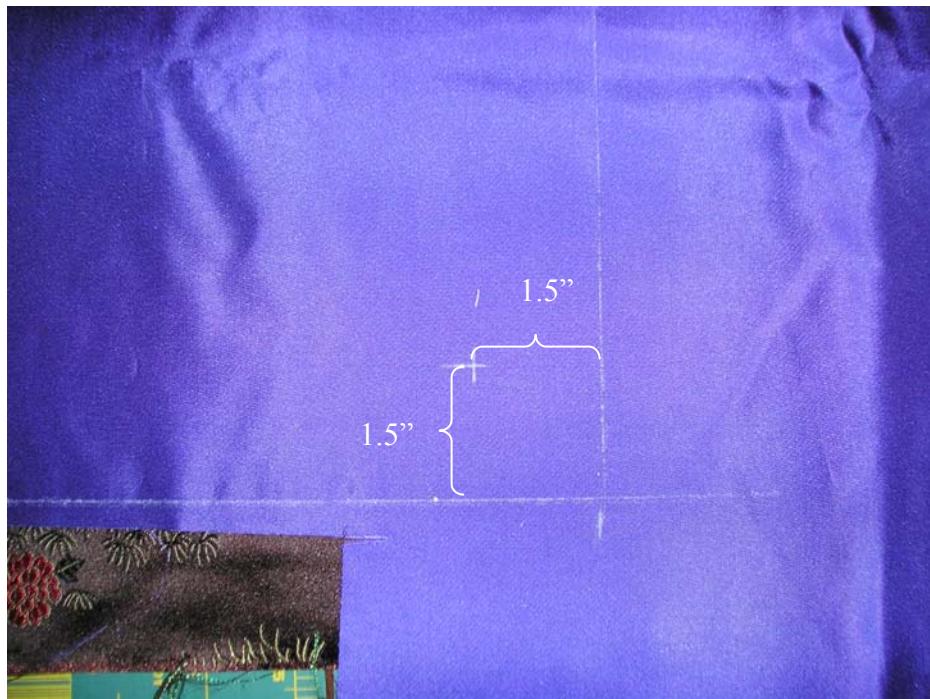


Fig. 86

6. Then connect the other corners with this point, as shown in Fig. 87.

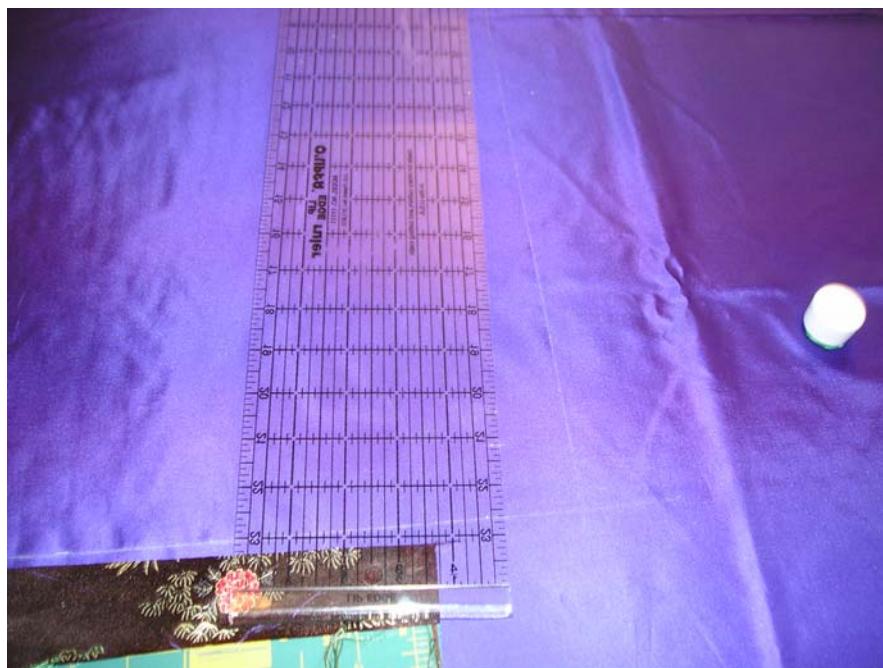


Fig. 87

7. If using scissors, pin the two fabrics together now and cut along the inner frame.
8. If using a roller knife, cut both layers and then pin them along the cutting line.
(See Fig. 88 and 89.)

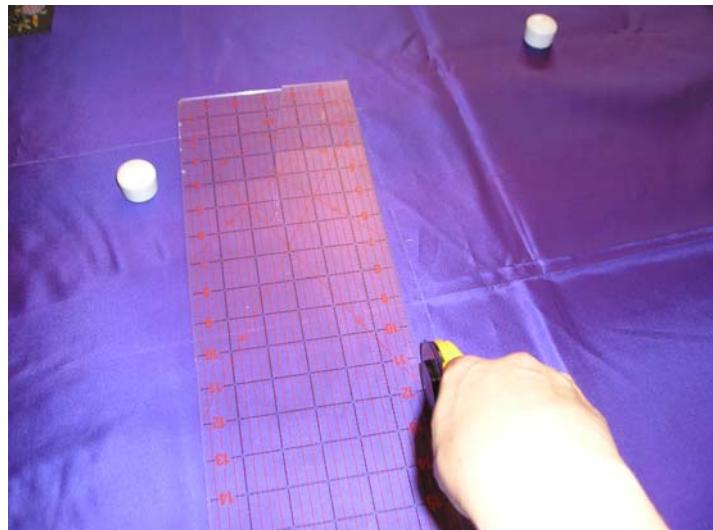


Fig. 88

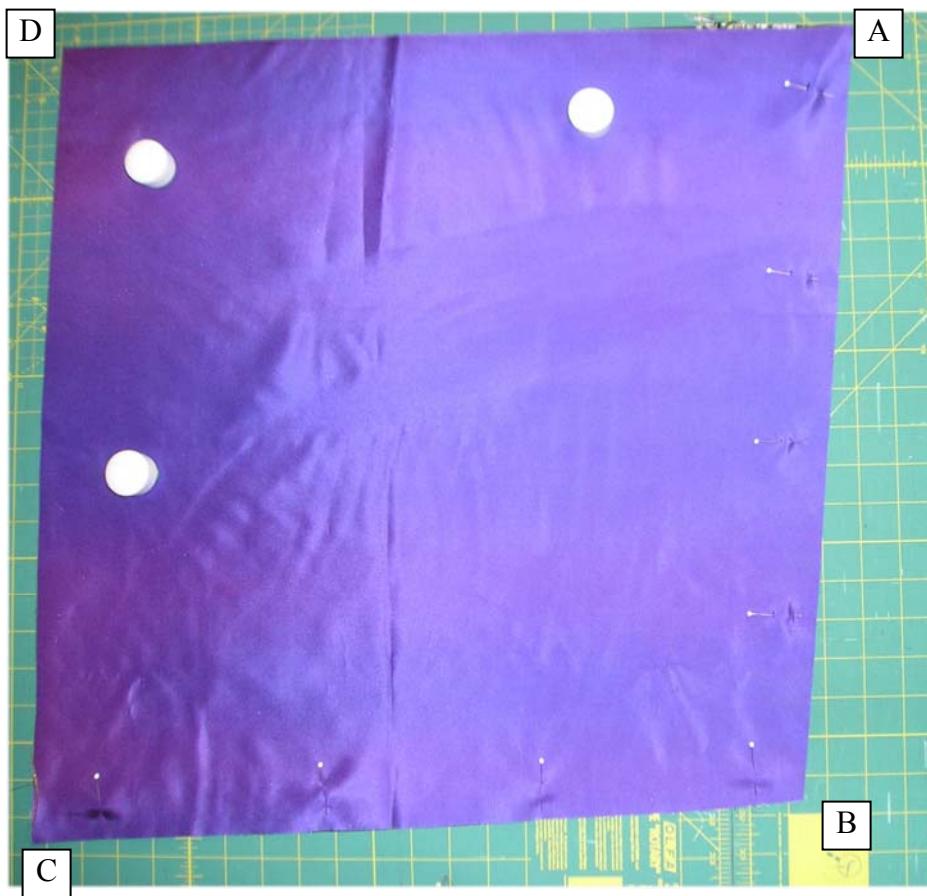


Fig. 89

9. Sew the two pieces together 0.5 inches next to the edge **A-B** and **B-C**. (See Fig. 90.)

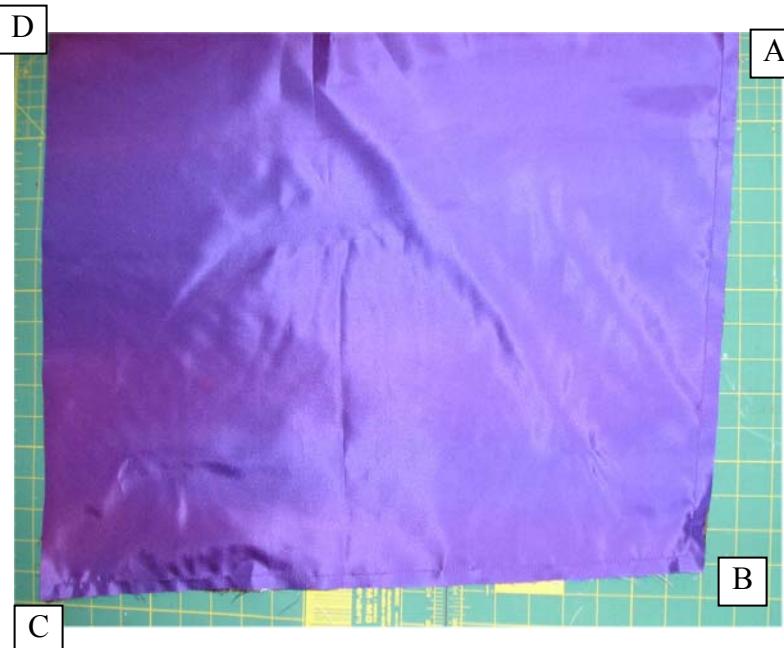


Fig. 90

10. Just moving the lining fabric, bring point **D** and point **C** together and pin the lining fabric along the edge. (See Fig. 91.)



Fig. 91

11. Sew these two pieces together, $\frac{3}{4}$ ' next to the edge.

12. Bring point **C/D** and point **A** together, so a little square is formed. Pin that edge together.
13. Sew along this edge, leaving a 3 inch opening. This will be needed to turn around the envelope later. (See Fig 92.)

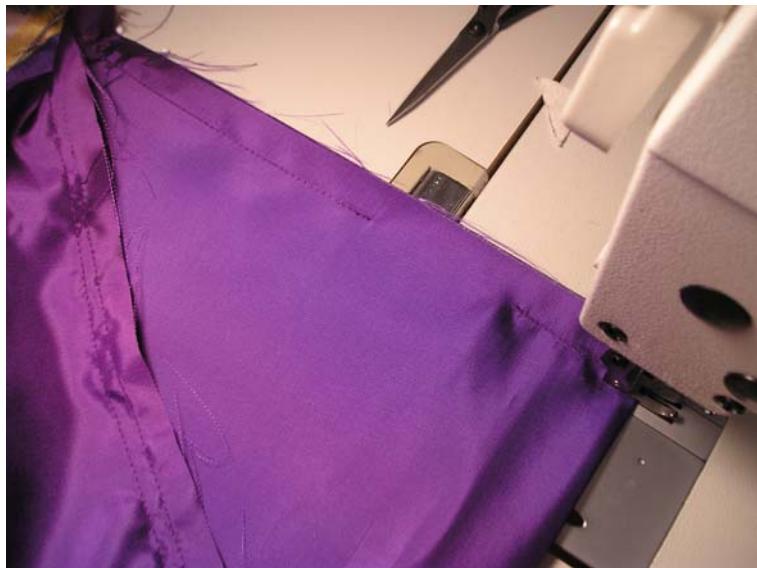


Fig. 92

14. Now do the same with the case fabric, but sew just 0.5' close to the edge. (See Fig 93.)



Fig. 93

15. Turn the case inside out by pulling all the fabric through this 3" opening.



Fig. 94

16. Push the bag part of the lining fabric into the bag part of the case fabric. Push the edges well into each other. You now have an envelope like Fig 95.



Fig. 95

17. Now pull out the inner bag again and close the 3 inch opening with a blind stitch. See stitching page and Fig 96.



Fig. 96

18. Push the lining back in and iron it down. The inner fabric can stick out a bit. (See Fig 97.)



Fig. 97

19. You now make a hidden small stitch in the corners, coming from inside the bag. See Series of Fig. 98. This is necessary so the lining bag will not come out when you remove your Okesa later.

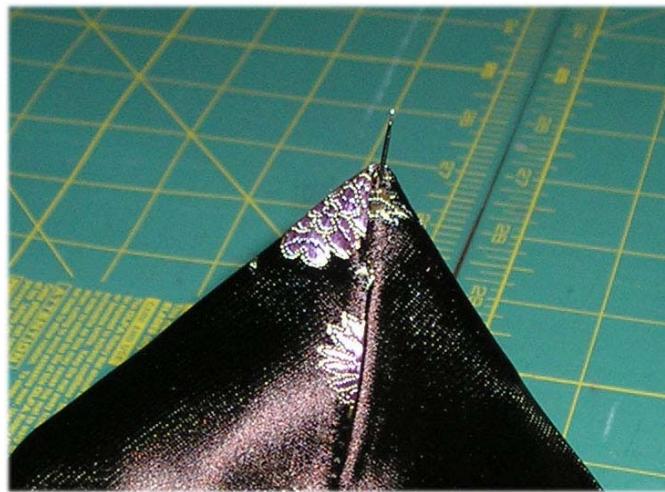


Fig. 98 series





20. Iron your case flat and fold the lid over as big as you need for your Okesa. If you travel a lot, you may sew a snap fastener in the corner of your lid and on the opposite place on the bag, so it holds your Zagu in place better.



Enjoy your complete set of
Okesa, Zagu and case!

The Oryoki Set

The last piece that will be handed to you during the ordination ceremony is your Buddha Bowl. As you surely know, this sacred bowl comes with a set of smaller bowls and the utensils. It is usually wrapped and stored in or on your altar, until you need it for the formal meals, Oryoki.

The cloth of the set is comprised of four pieces:

- The wrapping cloth,
- The napkin
- The utensil holder
- The drying cloth

For your priest set, you will dye most of the fabric, as you did for your Okesa. The pieces that need to be dyed are the wrapping cloth, the napkin and one part of the utensil holder. Please refer to page 35, “Table for your measurements”.

The wrapping cloth is a square of 21” x 21” inches. Cut 22” x 22” and sew (with a machine or by hand) a 0.5’ double hem all around.

The napkin is a rectangle of 13” x 29”. Cut 14” x 30” and sew a 0.5’ double hem all around.

The drying cloth is traditionally a cheap cotton cloth, often with calligraphy on it. You can use any kind of table cloth. The size that comes from Japan is often a square of 13 – 15”.

The utensil holder

The traditional utensil holder is a bit more complex to sew, so I will guide you through the process

1. Cut two rectangles:

- From a white or light grey cloth: 21.25” x 5.25”
- From the dyed fabric: 20.25” x 4”
(See Fig. 99.)



Fig. 99

- Put the dyed fabric in the center of the white one and pin the two layers together. (See Fig. 100.)

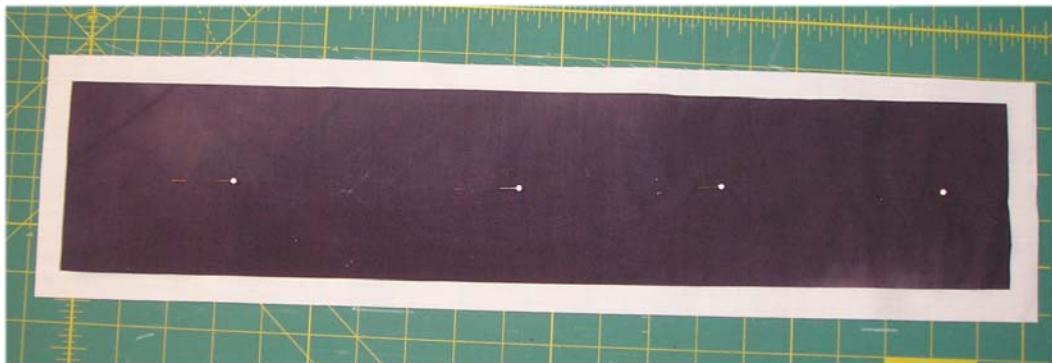


Fig. 100

- Iron the edge of the white fabric half way in, so the raw edges of the white and the dyed fabric meet. (See Fig 101.)

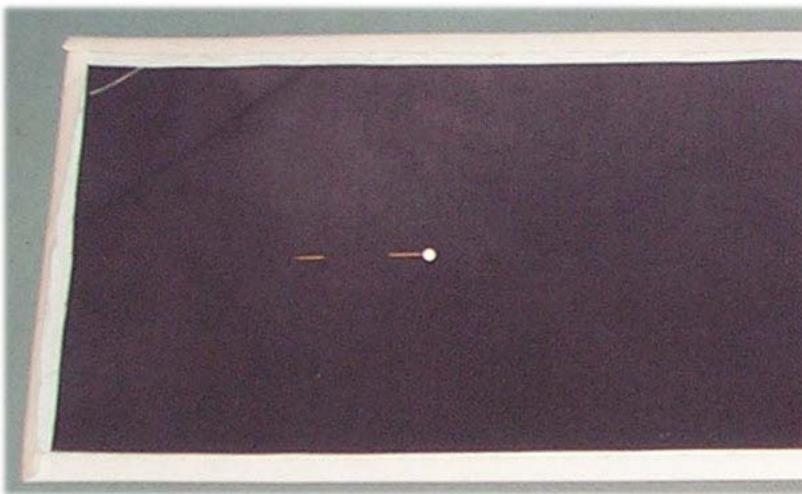


Fig. 101

- Fold edges in one more time, so you have a double hem. Pin it down. (See Fig. 102.)



Fig. 102



Fig 103

5. Sew with a machine along the hem, all around the square. (See Fig. 103.)

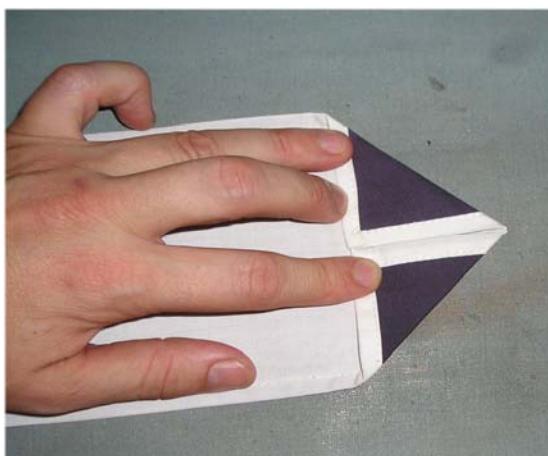


Fig. 104

6. Fold two corners of one end, so the edges meet and a triangle appears. Iron it down. (See Fig 104.)

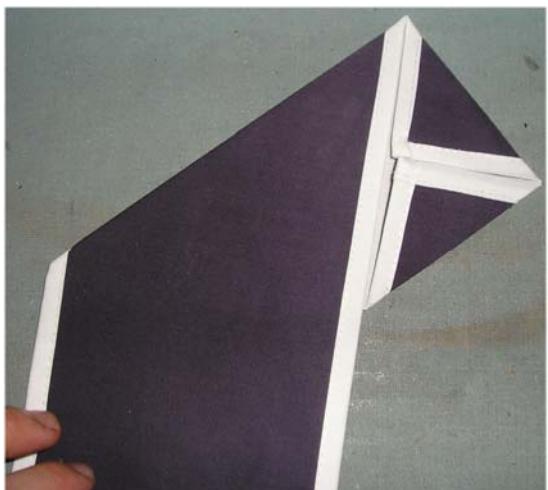


Fig. 105

7. Like a spiral, circle the fabric around itself till the end. You might need to adjust the ironing a bit, until the triangle of the other end sits in the center. Iron it down and pin it. (See Fig. 105 and 106.)



Fig. 106

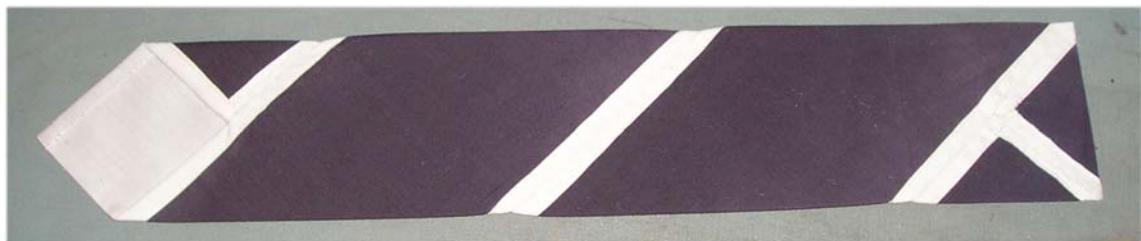


8. With a tight blind stitch (see Knots and Stitches page), sew the two edges together, following the complete spiral.

Fig. 107



Fig. 108



Enjoy your utensil holder!

How to Iron your Napkin Correctly

Please follow the pictures exactly. That will be the easiest way if you never have ironed your napkin before.



Fig. 109

1. Facing the wrong side of the fabric, grasp the left corners and fold half.



Fig. 110

2. Iron it down.



3. Fold in three, so the far corner is on top at the end. Iron.

Fig. 111



4. Fold in half, bringing the left end on top of the right. Iron.

Fig. 112



5. When you later put it on top of your bowls the two open edges are in the far left corner.

Fig. 113

How to Fold a Koromo



1. Lay out the koromo on a clean space, preferably a bed or a table. Stretch sleeves out straight.



2. Make sure the pleats of the skirt come down from the waist.



3. Fold the right sleeve straight across the chest, then back, making sure the sleeve lays flat on top.



4. Fold the left sleeve across the chest as above.



5. Fold the entire left side over top (about 4 inches of it) left and then do the same for the right side. Leave the left side large sash hanging out to the side.



6. Grasp the skirt and fold it up to the shoulders. (The koromo will now be in half.)

7. Fold in half one more time.



8. Fold in half in the vertical direction.





9. Tie the sash around the body of the koromo and tuck it in so it holds together.



10. Tuck in the collar

11. This is how it looks at the end.



12. Wrap it in a cloth or store it carefully in a case



Follow the same folding instructions for the kimono.