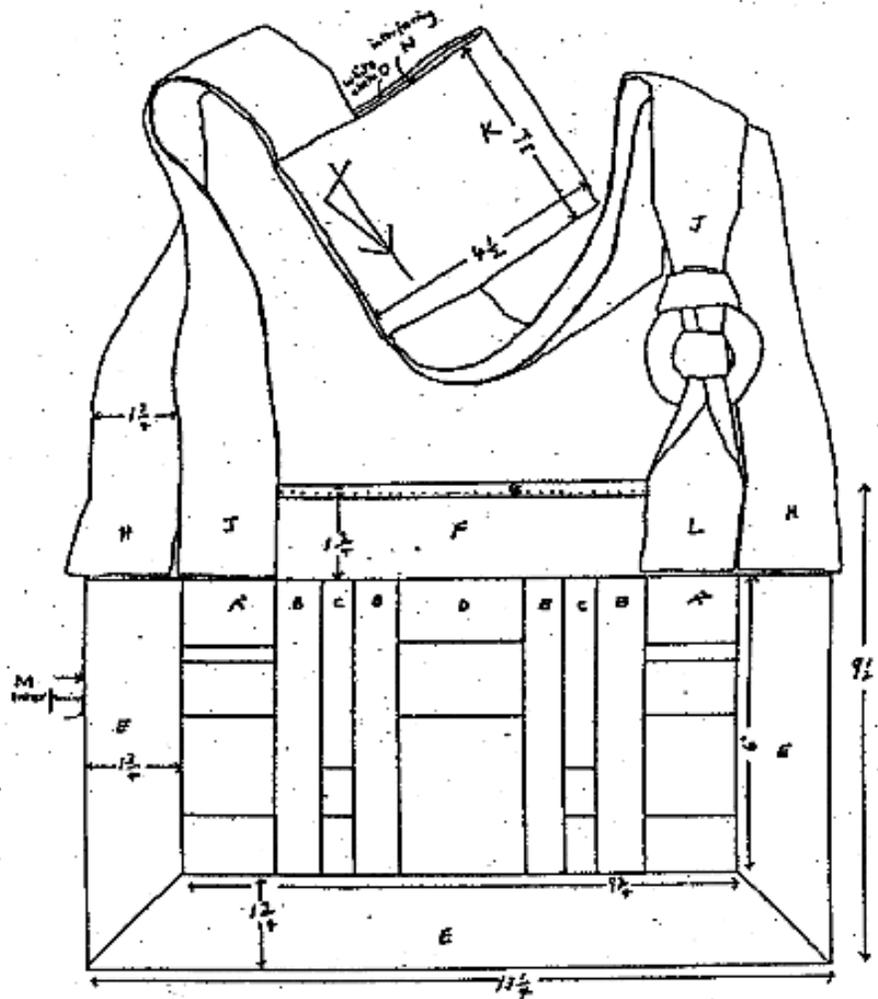
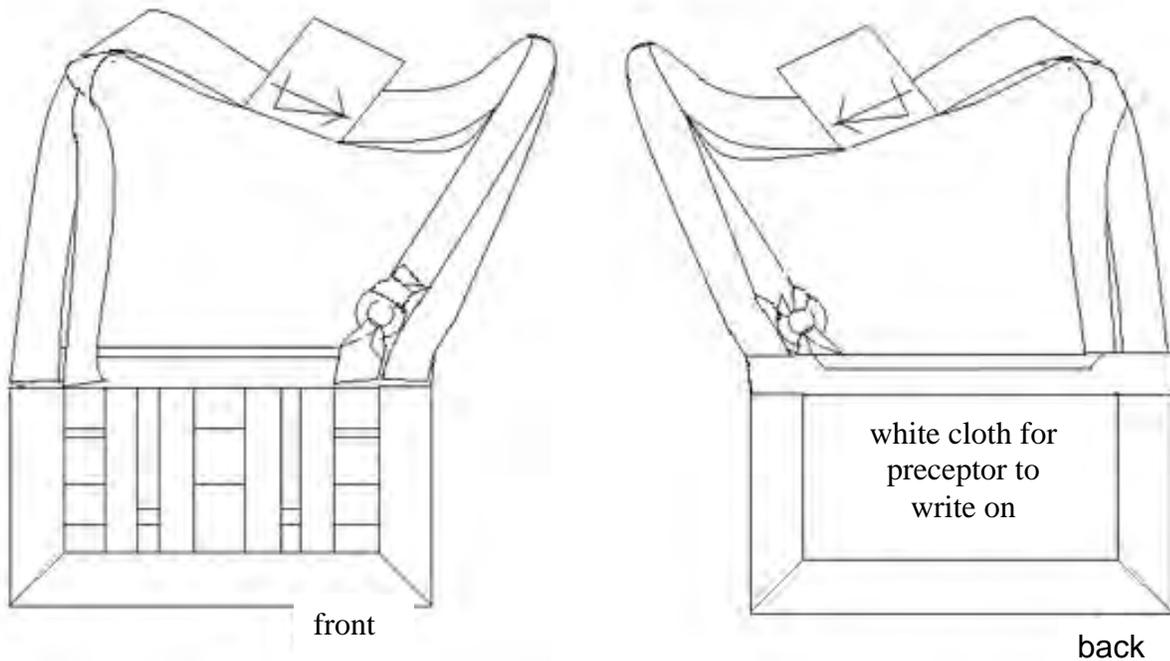


RAKUSU PATTERN



RAKUSU SEWING INSTRUCTIONS



1. You will need:

2.

1 yard black cloth or Peacemaker Rakusu pieces (1.25 yard for tall people)

1/3 yard white cotton (smooth fabric, so that it's easy to write on)

1/3 yard black or white interfacing

1 ring, plastic or light wood, 2" - 2.5" in diameter

1 length of green embroidery thread (several people can share 1 package)

black cotton thread with polyester coating

contrasting thread (like bright red) for basting

scissors (Fiskars brand is recommended)

glass head pins (so you can iron over them and not melt them)

3. If you choose to make a Peacemaker rakusu, you will ask family and friends to donate swatches of cloth which will have some meaning for you (e.g., a wedding dress, a shirt or skirt, a tie). This cloth must be dark so that it will not divert the attention of others in the Zendo: to this end you will want to die with black dye the donated fabric as many times as it takes to darken it appropriately.

4. Your rakusu is an intricate and individual piece of work and should be made without rushing. Please allow yourself plenty of time to work on it with full attention. Enjoy making it, particularly if you are not accustomed to sewing. See Treeleaf Zendo's series of rakusu sewing videos at <http://www.treeleaf.org/forum/viewtopic.php?f=7&t=1152> for help. It will help you greatly in this project if you view all eight of the videos before you start on your rakusu.

All seams are sewn with a “blind” or “hidden” stitch (barely visible); the pine needle stitch on the tab is the only exception to this.

5. “One of the teachings in Zen is ‘Everything is mind’. I’ve never experienced this quite so vividly as when I was sewing my first rakusu. At some point I realized that what was there wasn’t just a needle and thread and some cloth, but my state of mind. My state of mind was there facing me. My effort, intention, and concentration, my impatience, frustration, and restlessness, my desire to just get it over with were right there before me. It was as if all the ups and downs and configurations of my mind were there looking back at me. So, when we sew a rakusu, not only do we get a rakusu made, but most of us get a very tangible experience of our state of mind. Then we wear our rakusu on our chest, and everyone else can see our rakusu-sewing state of mind.

One of the instructions for sewing the rakusu is to say a refuge silently with each stitch. As I took a stitch I said, ‘I take refuge in Buddha’; another stitch, ‘I take refuge in Dharma’; another stitch, ‘I take refuge in Sangha.’ This is repeated over and over with the sewing. Doing this brings the refuges to the breath, and the breath to the sewing. This way of sewing, sitting still, trying to bring your complete attention to each stitch, and chanting, brings forth a concentrated state. Sewing is itself a meditation practice which unifies body, breath, and mind. Through the sewing and chanting we embody the refuges, we bring Buddha’s teaching into our bodies. I think this is the first initiation”.

Excerpted from a Dharma talk by Taitaku Pat Phelan, Abbess of the Chapel Hill Zen Center

6. Before beginning each session of work on your rakusu, take a moment to light a candle and offer incense, dedicating the merit of your practice to the relieving of suffering of all beings. You will sense delight in this continuous practice. It is also helpful to have a finished rakusu in front of you while you work. The drawings at the end of this chapter contain pictures of each step.
7. Read all instructions carefully before you begin. If you are making a Peacemaker Rakusu and receiving fabric from friends and family, please roughly cut the pieces to size and dye them in black dye before continuing with the instructions. If you are using store-bought black fabric, there is no need to dye the fabric, but it is a good idea to wash and dry it before continuing. In all cases, iron your fabric flat before measuring and cutting the pieces.
8. There are 16 pieces of black (or, in the case of a Peacemaker rakusu, patterned or dark colored) cloth, 2 pieces of interfacing and 2 pieces of white cloth. Be careful to **use the straight grain of cloth** at all times.

1 strip J	42"	x	4.5"	(44" for tall people)
1 strip H	42"	x	4.5"	(44" for tall people)
1 strip E	36"	x	4.5"	
1 strip F	14.5"	x	4.5"	
1 strip K	10"	x	4.5"	
1 strip L	9"	x	4.5"	
1 strip G	9"	x	2"	
2 strips A1 and A2	9.5"	x	2"	
2 strips C	8.5"	x	1"	

1 strip D	8.5"	x	2.75"
4 strips B	7.5"	x	1.5"

For tall people, pieces J and H should be 44". For average or shorter people, pieces J and H should be 42"

9. First, cut out strips A, B, C and D pieces (two A, four B, two C and one D strip) according to the measurements listed above. Do not include the selvage (the unfrayed edge of the fabric) in any of the pattern pieces. Then cut out the paper templates for each strip (see pages 43ff) and pin them on the front of the appropriate fabric strips. This will give you the exact locations for the folds of each strip in the center section or "field" of your rakusu. Be aware that A1 and A2 mirror each other, allowing for outside seams of 1/2 inch.
10. Mark all pattern pieces accurately on the wrong side of the cloth after cutting them, using a sharp white pencil and a straightedge. Mark first the letter identifying the strip and then the 1/4" seam allowances along both sides of the length of the strip. Note: the outer seam allowances on A-1 and A-2 are 1/2" instead of 1/4".
8. Lay out all pieces of fabric in the pattern of the rakusu (use the illustration at paragraph 15), so that you have a general idea of what it is going to look like. Check with the picture at the beginning of the pattern or a finished rakusu, if available.
9. Mark, then cut from interfacing:

1 piece M	15.25"	x	11.5"
1 piece N	10"	x	4.5"

 and from white cloth:

1 piece O	10"	x	3.5
1 piece P	12.5"	x	9"
11. Soak piece P in a solution of 50% soy milk and 50% water for 30 minutes. Then stretch and iron it. This will make it easier for your teacher to write the verse of the kesa on it. Put M, N, O & P aside until you add the white cloth (paragraphs 16 - 18).
13. The folds on the A-1 and A-2 pieces inscribe two "innie" folds on each strip, just like an umbilicus ("belly button"); those on the C and D pieces inscribe an "outie". Start with one of the A pieces. Pin the paper strip you have cut out for the piece to the front of the piece in 3-4 places. Holding the top nearest you, make a creased fold in both the paper and the cloth, using our fingernails. Then fold this new edge across the hatch marks to the next cross line. Turn the paper around and do the same with the next adjacent hatched marks to the next cross line. Turn the paper around again and repeat this process with the next adjacent hatched section, so that the folds make the "innie". Repeat with the two hatched areas on the lower portion of the A piece.
14. Once you have made the creases, using the paper, turn the piece over and iron the back side, in order to "fix" the folds. After removing the pins, gently remove the paper strip by sliding it sideways out of its folds. This will preserve the folds. Now baste each fold (1/4" stitches with bright-colored thread across each horizontal fold, leaving a 1/2-1" tail on each end of the basting,

so you can pull it out). This will hold the folds in place until you attach an adjacent B-piece with stitches.

When you do the C and D pieces, reverse the folds, so that you create an “outie” on each.

15. When you complete the D piece, you can attach one of the B pieces (which have no folds). Take one B and lay it face to face over the D piece; pin through both with five pins, forcing the pins exactly through the seam lines on both sides of the two pieces. Put a pin at each end to start, and then fill in with the other three or four pins, always pinning exactly through the seam lines on both sides and catching the fold with one of the pins.

16. Now baste outside the seam lines (again using brightly colored thread), leaving at least a half inch “tail” at either end. Remove the pins and sew directly on the seam line, using the step stitch. Grasp the basting thread by one of its tails and pull it out (or cut it in several pieces and remove the pieces).

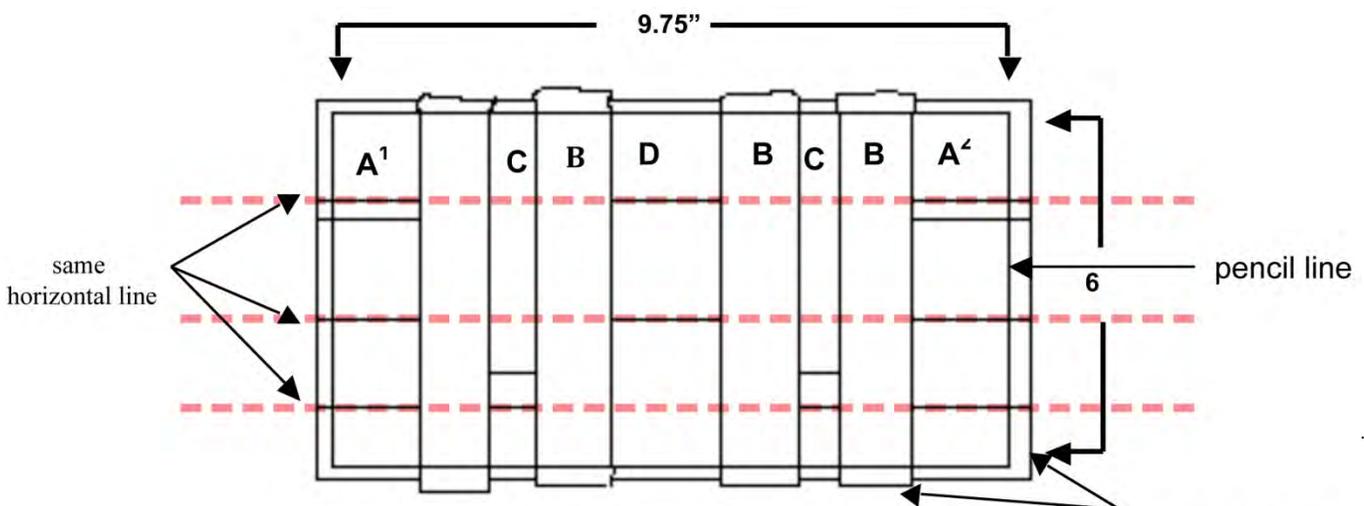
Now you should have a B and D sewn together. Congratulations!

17. Sew another B to the other side of the D piece in the same manner. Then sew a B to the A-1 and another B to the A-2 piece. To these B’s attach, in the same manner, a C-piece. Now you will have an A-1/B/C and a C/B/A-2. No seam lines or stitches should show on the front. The tops of the upper “innies” on the A strips should align perfectly with the top of the “outie” in the D strip; the bottom folds of the lower “innies” on the A strips should align perfectly with the lower folds on the “outies” on the C strips. See the red lines on the drawing of the rakusu field on page 35 below. You will now have a B-D-B for the center of your rakusu.

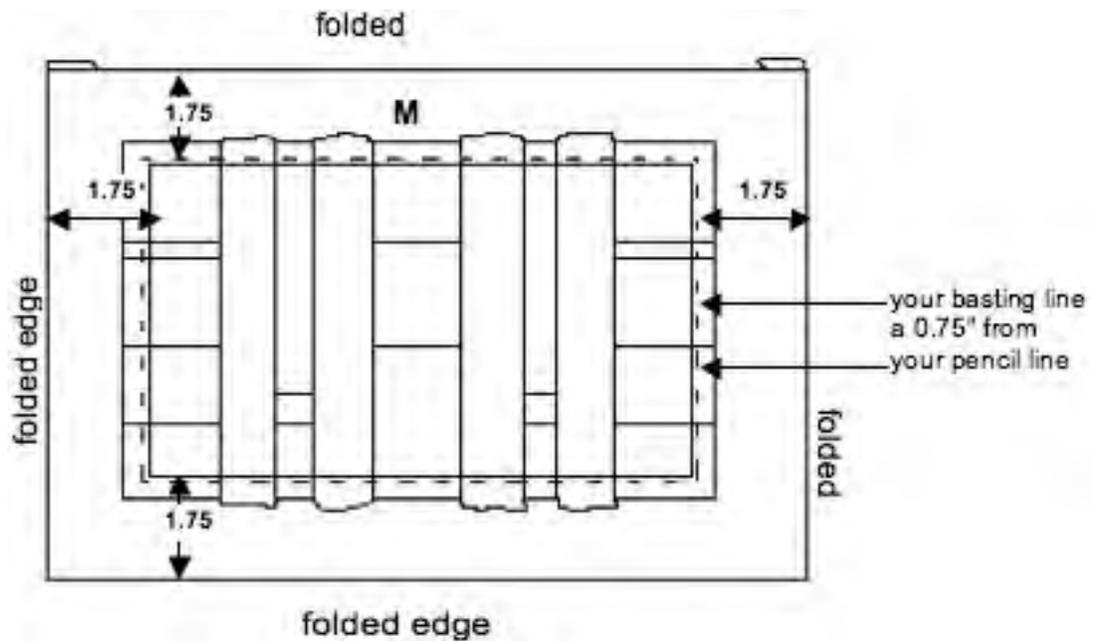
Now pin, baste, and stitch the B-D-B first to the A-1/B/C and then to the C/B/A-2. Now you have the final panel: A-1/B/C/B/D/B/C/B/A-2. No stitches, except the broken pine needle stitch on the tab, should show.

[This is a lot to cover but take it slowly, step by step. Be kind and gentle to yourself in this continuous practice. If, at any point, you have a problem or a question, please feel free to email Ray (rayolson29@gmail.com). He will be most happy to help you.]

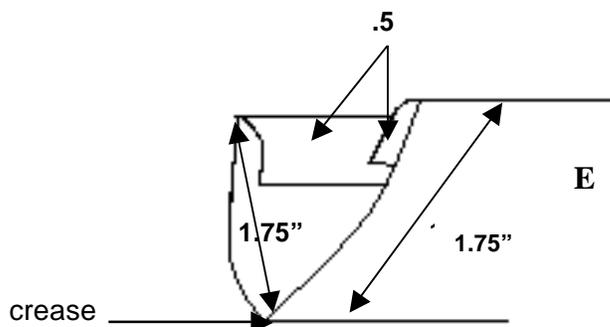
18. With a pencil on the “wrong” side, mark a rectangle of 6” x 9.75” on the center field. There should be at least 0.25” outside your pencil line. (See below.)



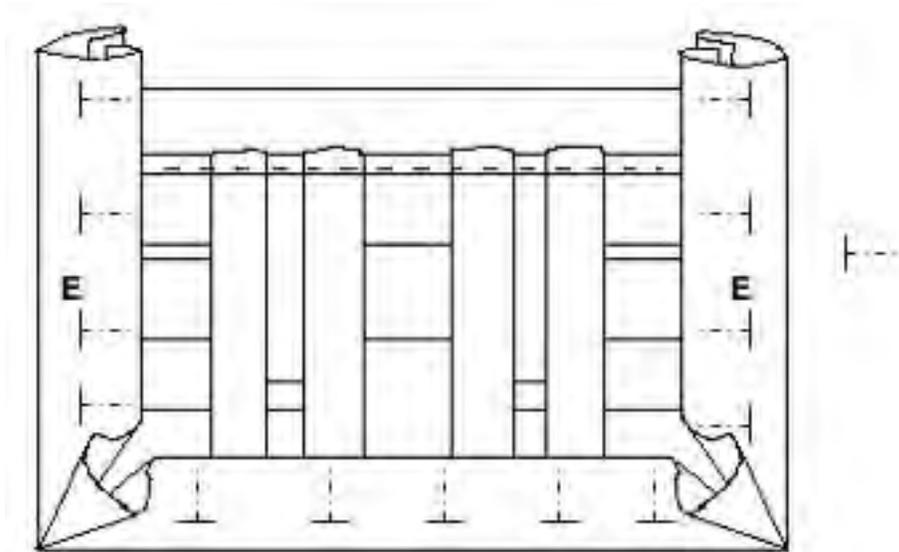
19. Next, on interfacing piece M, fold and press a 1" edge, turning under all four sides, so the cloth measures exactly 9.5" x 13.25" from each folded edge. You might have to adjust the fold so that the cloth measures these dimensions precisely. See the figure below.
20. Now, find the exact center of your finished center "field." Fold the field horizontally and vertically, marking the center with a pin. Do the same with the interfacing. Using the pins as marks, place the finished center field exactly in the middle of the interfacing so that there is a 1.75" space between the pencil line of your center piece and the folded edge of the interfacing. Pin, then baste with small stitches 1/4" outside of pencil line. Press.



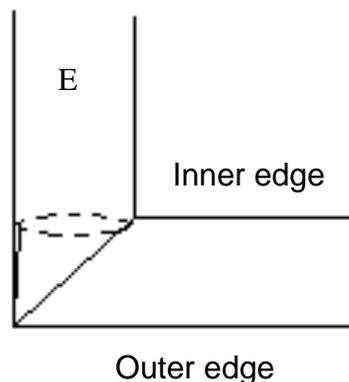
21. Now turn the whole thing over. Place white cloth, piece P, in the middle so there is about 0.25" between the raw edges of P and the folded edge of the frame. Pin & baste with small stitches 0.25" from the edge of P.
22. Press border piece E exactly in half lengthwise, then press both raw edges inside so that it measures 1.75" wide (see below).



23. Starting at the top left corner on the front, tuck the front and back border around the fold edge of the frame, ending at the top right corner. Pin as you go, making sure that the edge of the frame fits very snugly into the crease of the border. Do not worry about the corners yet. Just keep the edge and crease together. The fold of the border, E, should meet your pencil line on the center section exactly. Does it look like the diagram below? Check with the front page of the rakusu instructions.



24. Now, fold the corners inward as shown above. On the front, fold the excess cloth inside, towards the side edges. You may have to unpin a little to get the fold to lie neatly, then re-pin. On the back, fold the excess cloth towards the bottom edge of the frame to distribute the thickness evenly. Press these folds and sew the angled edges of the border together with a hidden stitch.



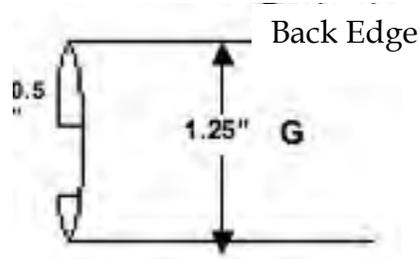
* Check to see that the corners meet at a nice, tight 90°.

25. Baste inner (back) and outer (front) edges of the border. Make sure the corner seams make a neat 45° angle.
26. Blind-stitch by hand the inner edge of the border and the corners on the front first. Your stitches should pick up the interfacing but not come through the back. Then turn it over

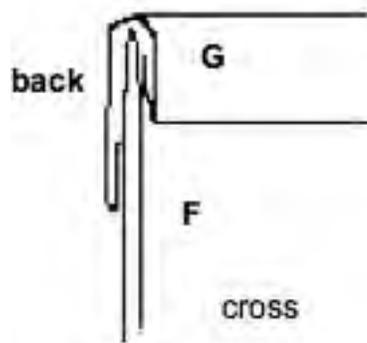
and stitch the back in the same way. Press carefully. Trim off the raw ends of the E border so they are in line with the top edge of the frame.

27. Press piece F in exactly the same way as you did E. Fold it over the top edge of the rakusu, the again making sure it's a snug fit. Pin. Tuck the ends of F neatly inside themselves with the excess cloth towards the back of the rakusu. Blind-stitch the front first, then the back.

28. On piece G, press a crease 1/2" from the edge. Press a crease 1/4" from the other edge.

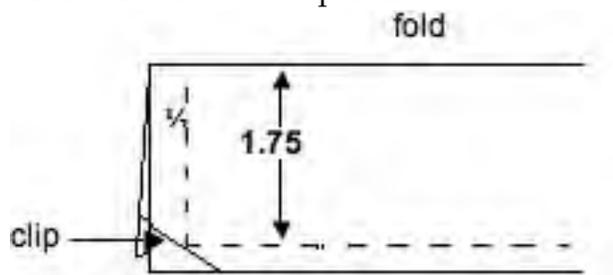


26. Fold G over the top edge of the rakusu so that 1/4" shows in front and 1" in back. Center it.



27. Pin G to F, folding in the ends neatly, at a right angle in front and forming a slant in back. See the drawing on . Baste and blind stitch. (If you wish, stab-stitch bottom of G through all layers to give the edge a firm finish).

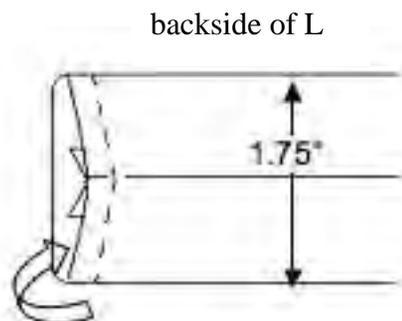
28. Now the straps: fold pieces J and H lengthwise and pin, raw edges together. Stitch 1/2" from raw edges. Stitch across only one end on each piece. Clip both corners with scissors (it helps to make a tight corner. Do not clip through your stitches! See the figure below) and turn the whole thing inside out using your fingers to pull the strap inside out. Poke out the corner with a chopstick or the eraser end of a pencil.



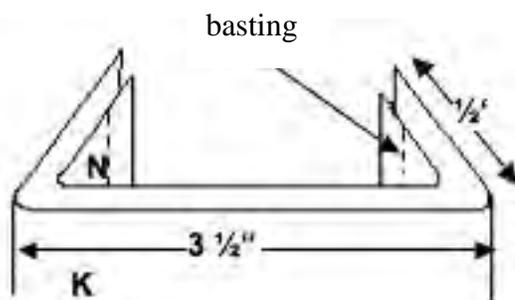
29. L will be the comes up to make it, fold L together.

smaller part of the strap that meet your rakusu ring. To lengthwise and pin raw edges Hand-stitch raw edges

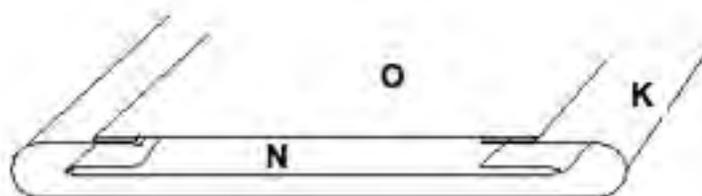
together keeping one end open. Turn inside out with the aid of a chopstick or other pointed end. Fold and press. See drawings. Fold in 1/2" on one end and close with small stitches.



30. Pin K and N together and baste along sides 1/4" from raw edges. K has to fit around N. Fold in 1/2" on each side and press.

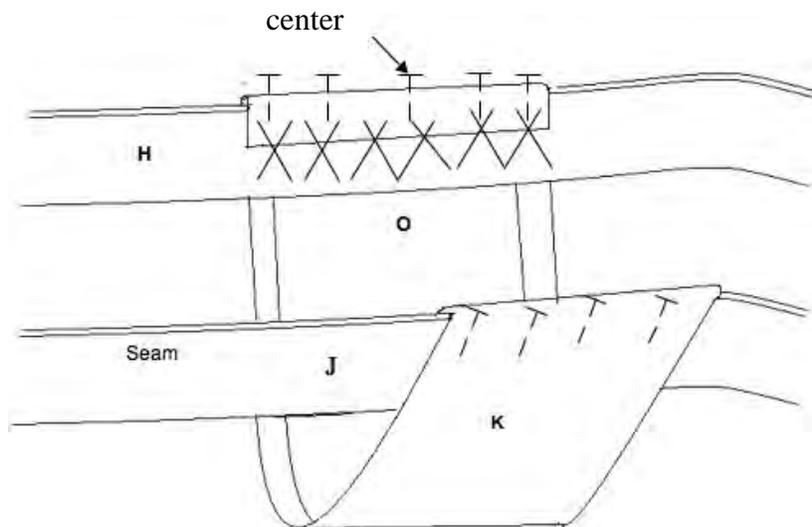


31. Fold in 1/4" on long sides of piece O and press. Pin O to K/N so that 1/4" of K shows on either side of O. Baste, then slip-stitch. Fold raw ends over 1/2" and press. Mark center of each (long) side with a pin.



32. Pin the finished ends of J and H to the top edge of your rakusu, on the left as you look at it, as illustrated on page 1. The seamed edges of the strap should be towards the center of the rakusu and lined up with the bottom of F. Stitch them securely from the back with double thread, without coming through to the front. Pin the raw ends of H and L temporarily in place on the right.
33. Draw the raw ends of J and L through the rakusu ring and pin to get an impression of how it will look. Make sure that J will be on top of H (see picture of completed rakusu).

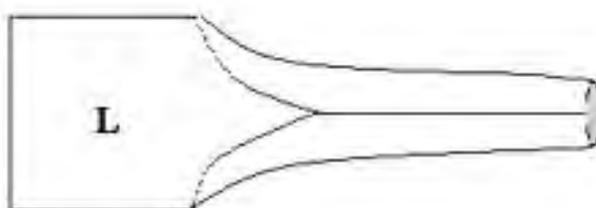
34. Now try it on and check in the mirror. The bottom edge of the rakusu should come approximately 3" below your navel when you are standing up. It should also cover your mudra when you sit zazen. If it is too long, shorten J and L straps on your left side as you are wearing it. Place hands in shashu to help you judge. When you are satisfied (no dukkha!), pin the straps in place. Edges are still raw.
35. Fold rakusu in half to find the exact center back point of the straps. Mark the center back on both straps with pencil. Fold the raw ends of K over the straps, lining up the center points and pin. Cross-stitch the raw ends of K to straps and place both sides together so the straps are sandwiched inside K. Slip-stitch folded edges together. Press so that you don't see the stitches. See the drawing below.



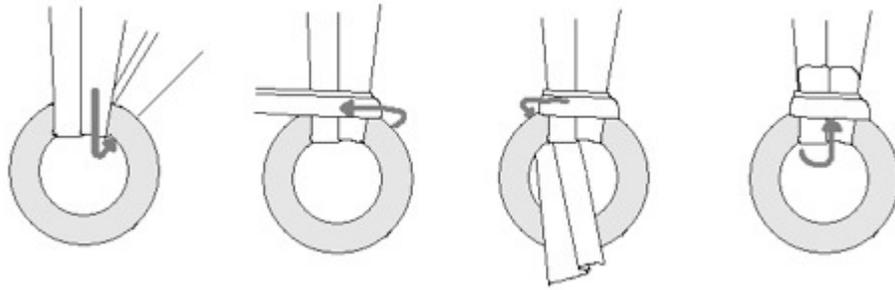
Note: H is the one towards the outside of the frame when it attaches, and J is the one that attaches towards the middle.

36. Fold the edges of L, one over the other, to the front, and stitch invisibly but firmly through all layers, finishing off the raw end neatly. Press well. Stitch the wide end to the rakusu like you did with J and H. Draw the other end of L through the rakusu ring. Fold in the raw edge and stitch it to the top edge of the rakusu at the back (see drawings).

Note: This section of L has the same dimensions as the height of F.

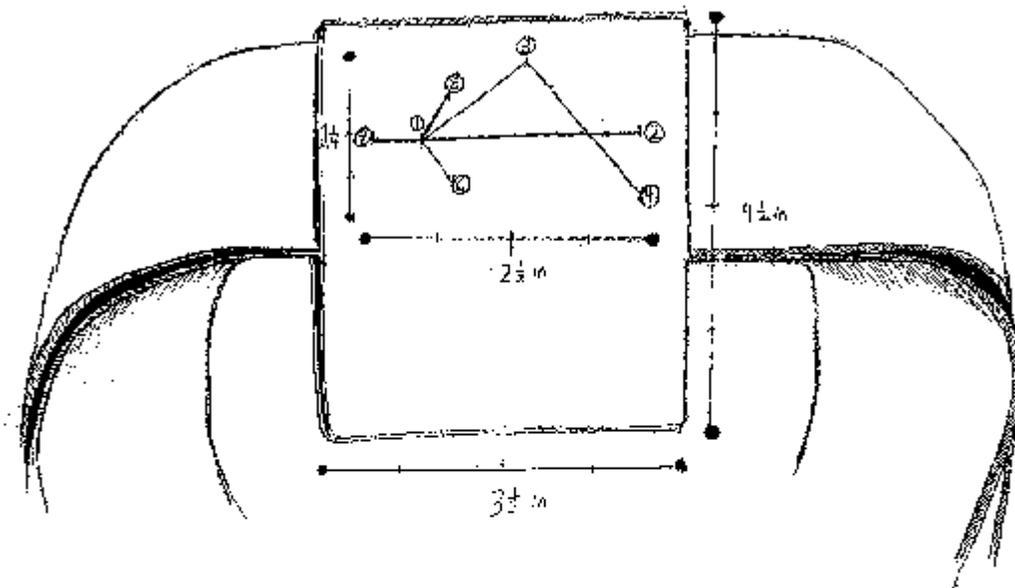


37. Finish raw ends of H and sew it on. Finish raw end of J and tie it to the ring. It may take some practice to get the knot to sit at the right length. It will hold itself in place if you pull the strap taut after tying it. Check with drawing below. Usually, the end is not stitched.



38. Last, stitch the broken pine twig at the top of the tab, overlying the straps. Thread your needle with two strands of green embroidery thread and practice on a spare piece of cloth. If you like, mark the main points with pencil to guide you. Put the needle through all layers, except for the first and last stitches. One line is one stitch. The pine twig should be in the center and about 3/4" from the edges. The design should look as pleasing as a mirror image on the back as on the front. The numbers on the drawing on the next page indicate in which order to stitch. Press.

**BROKEN PINE TWIG STITCHES
ON TAB**

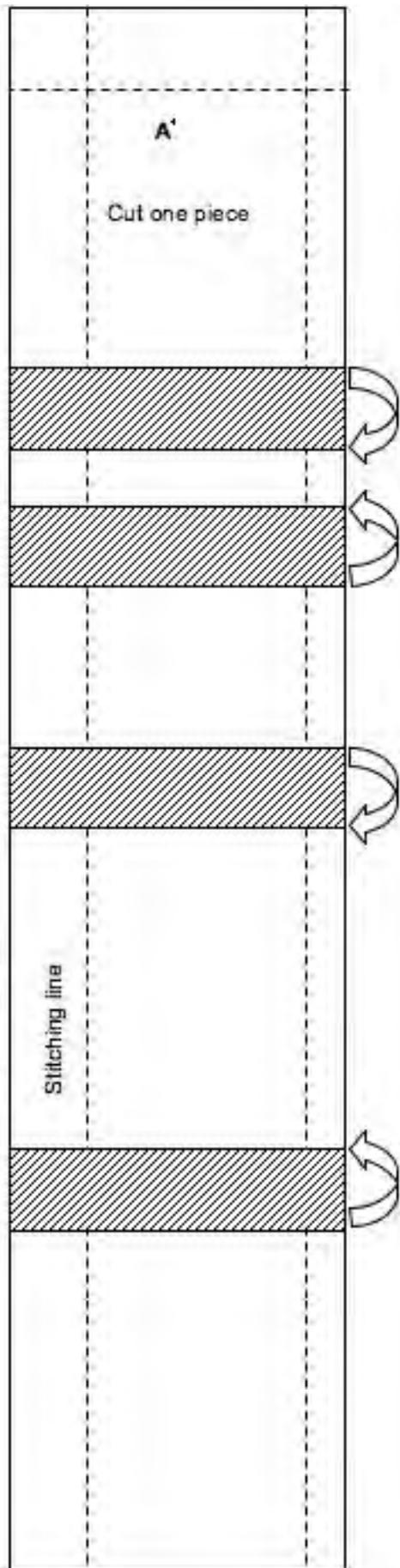


- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| Stitch from inside of the cloth to point | 1 | At the front side to point | 5 |
| At the right side one stitch to point | 2 | At the wrong side to point | 1 |
| At the wrong side to point | 1 | At the front side to point | 6 |
| At the front side to point | 3 | At the wrong side to point | 1 |
| At the wrong side to point | 4 | At the front side to point | 7 |
| At the front side to point | 3 | At the wrong side back to point | 1 |
| At the wrong side to point | 1 | Then come up just through one part of the cloth | |
| | | and make a few stitches on top of each other, | |
| | | where nobody can see them. | |

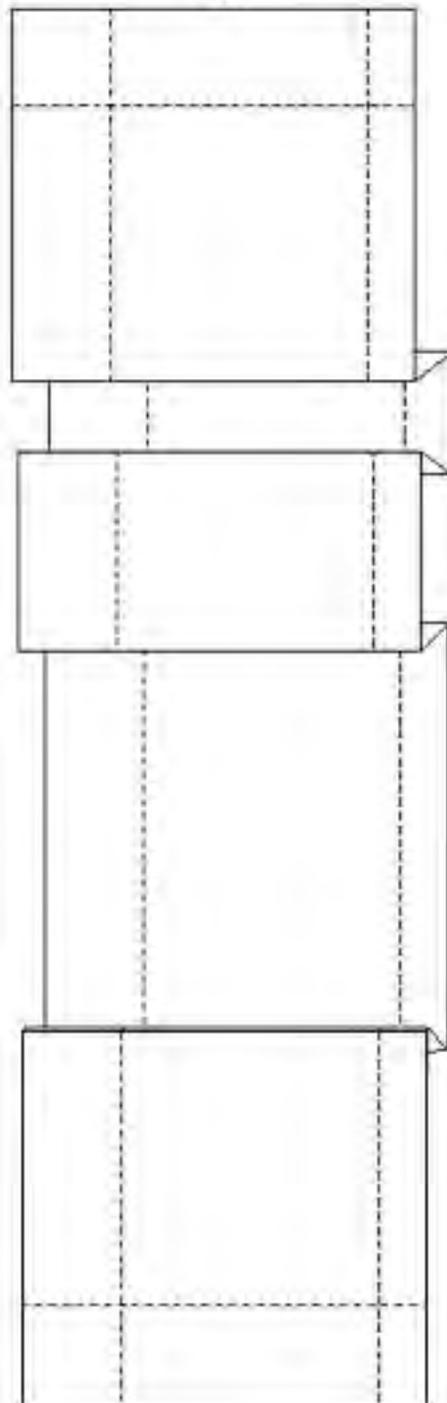
Now you have finished your rakusu. Breathe. Sit quietly and enjoy a cup of tea. Then place a strip of masking tape on the front of your robe, write your name on it, and place it in a 1 qt. ziplock bag: write your name on the bag and send it to Ray Olson at Upaya Zen Center, 1404 Cerro Gordo Road, Santa Fe, NM 87501.



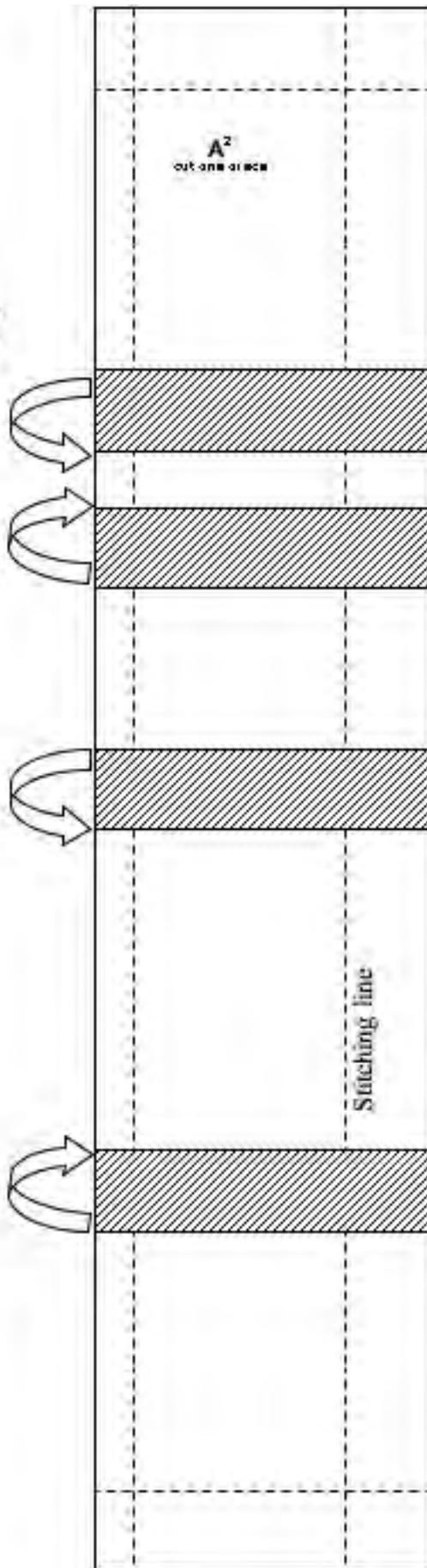
Cut pattern here



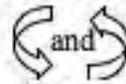
Direction to press tucks
in A'



This line goes on top of this line



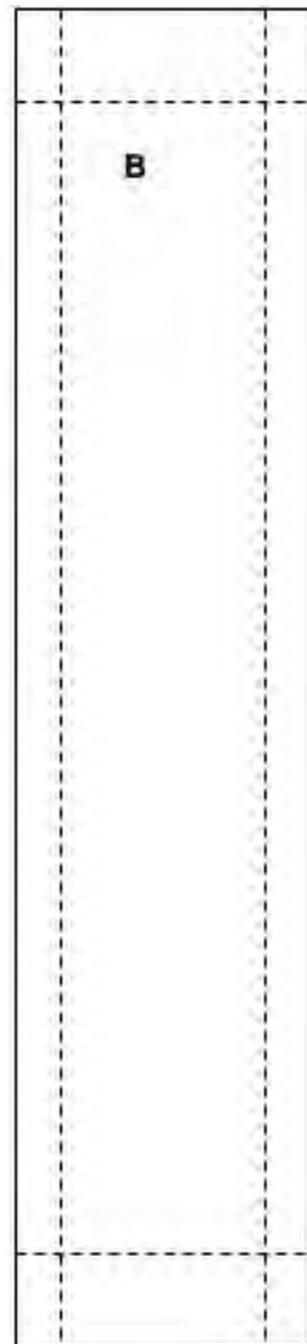
A¹ and A² are exactly the same, except the seam allowance is reversed.

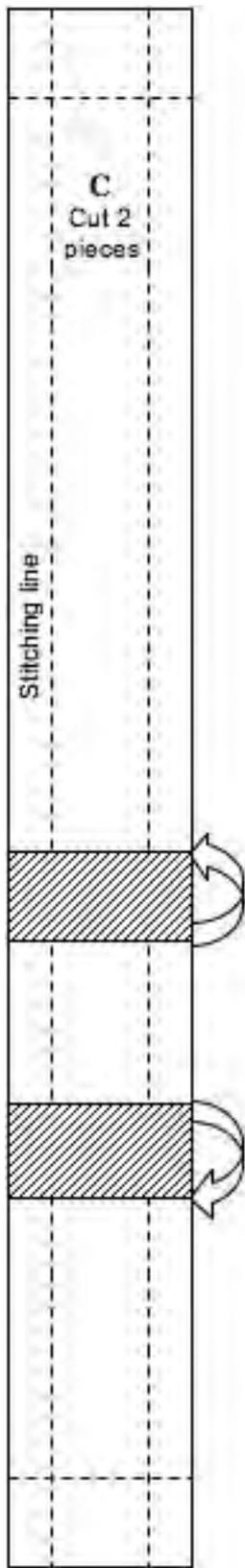


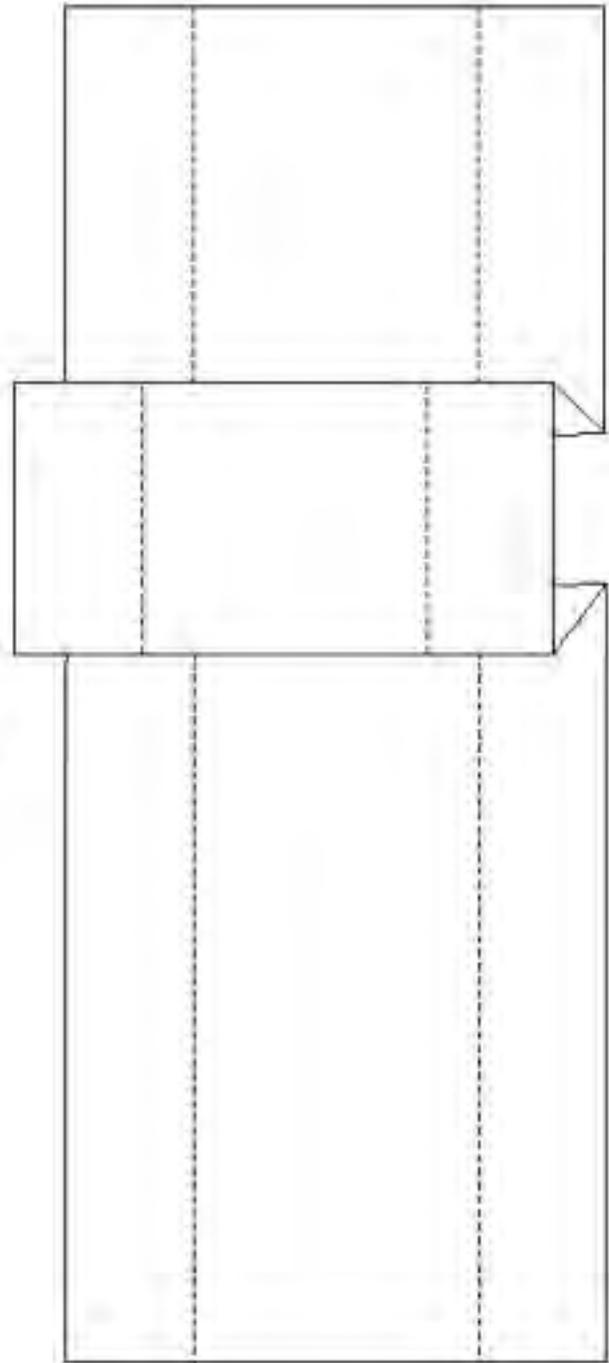
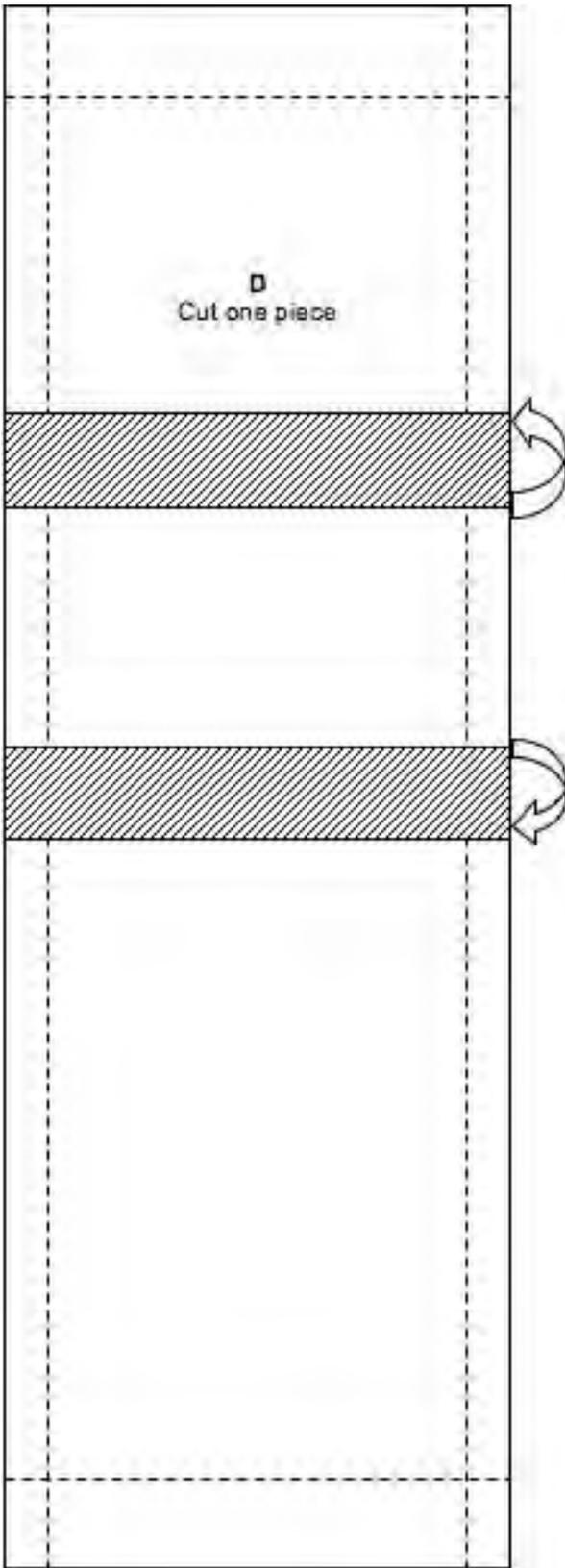
Arrows, indicate the direction in which to press the tucks.



Cut pattern here



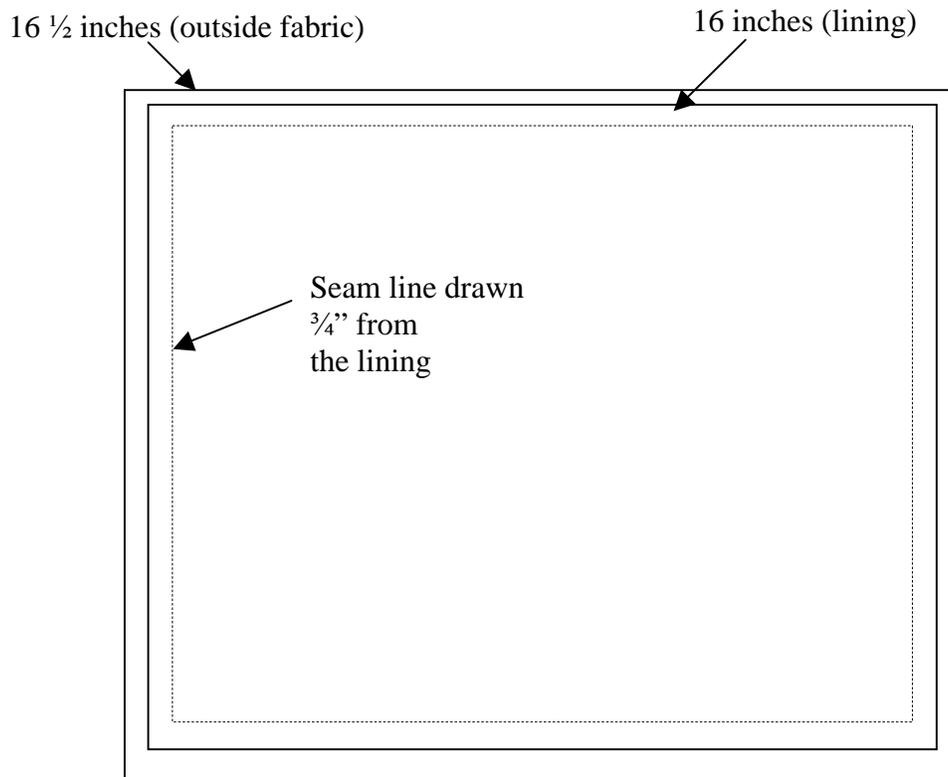




RAKUSU ENVELOPE

A rakusu envelope is not required, but it is strongly recommended. It is important to keep your rakusu clean and in a safe place. If sewing is truly a challenge for you, then you may keep your rakusu protected by wrapping it in a cloth. For other people, follow these directions to make a rakusu envelope.

1. Obtain 2/3 yard of cloth for both the envelope and for its lining. Any subdued color and texture of cloth may be used for envelope. Lining cloth may be a more decorative contrasting color. It should allow for easily sliding your rakusu into the envelope and should be minimally frictional. Satin-type fabrics are ideal for the lining.
2. Obtain polyester-coated cotton thread that is the same color as the envelope cloth. Use a sharp needle.
3. Measure, mark, and cut cloths. Pinking shears will discourage fraying, especially of lining.
Envelope: 16½ inches square (add ½ inch if cloth is heavy)
Lining: 16 inches square
4. On the back (“wrong”) side of the lining, draw a seam line ¾ inch inside outer borders on all four sides.



5. Place envelope cloth on work surface, face (outside) up and place lining on top of this, face down (both “right” sides are facing each other). There should be ¼ inch between the edge of the lining and that of the envelope cloth.
6. Pin the four corners, smoothing the lining carefully. Then pin centers of top and left sides. Gradually fill in spaces with pins on these two sides, so pins are ½ inch apart.
7. Starting in upper right corner, sew the layers together with step-stitch leftward all the way to the seam line on the left side of the lining; as you approach this upper left corner, decrease the spaces between stitches and make the stitches small, so as to strengthen the corner. Repeat this decrease at all four corners.

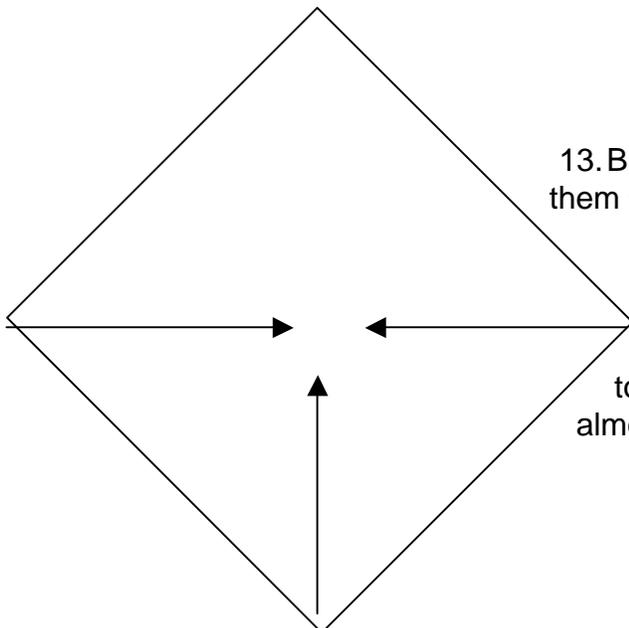
8. When top and left seams are sewn, rotate the cloths clockwise so free edges are again at top and left. Pin these remaining two sides and sew the third (now top) side as you did the first two sides.
9. After rounding the corner onto the fourth side, sew only 2/3 of that side.

Both outside fabric and lining are now joined except for 1/3 of this side



Reach inside this unsewn part to pull the two layers inside out (#10). Then close up the hole with a blind stitch.

10. Reach your dominant hand through the hole left in the seam on the fourth side and move it to the farthest corner; grasp that corner from the inside and pull it gently out through the hole, turning your entire project inside-out (now the “right” sides of both cloth and lining are showing). Use an instrument like a chopstick to poke out the corners fully.
11. Now, using a blind stitch with thread the color of the envelope cloth, close the hole you left in the fourth side.
12. With the lining side up, rotate the envelope so that one point faces you and another point points away from you, leaving the two remaining points facing off to your left and right.



13. Bring the right and left points together and tack them with several blind stitches.

14. Bring the point facing you up to meet the tacked points; place a series of pins along both lower seams. You should now be able to fold the top point down over the front of the envelope, almost to the lower border.

15. Close the seams you have pinned, using a blind stitch with the thread the color of the envelope.

16. You may choose to do a loose decorative cross-stitch on these seams instead of the blind stitch.
17. An option is to provide a closure, using either snaps or a button and loop to fix the envelope flap to the envelope.

Enjoy carrying your rakusu mindfully inside this beautiful envelope.

Rakusu Etiquette

The following are guidelines for handling a rakusu appropriately. Basically, you may wear it all the time, except when you are:

1. Going to the bathroom
2. Lying down to sleep
3. Working
4. Going into town

Here are some particulars:

HOW to wear/care for a rakusu

1. Carry the rakusu at heart level or above.
2. Carry it with 2 hands, if possible.
3. Travel with the rakusu in an envelope.
4. Spot wash if necessary; do not put in a washing machine.
5. If you eat while wearing a rakusu, you may swing the rakusu around so that it lies on your back, or tuck it inside your samue.
6. If you are carrying a stack of things, place the rakusu on top.

WHEN & WHERE to wear a rakusu

In a zendo

1. Put it on your head during the robe chant; then wear it for service. The folded part of the rakusu faces the back; the open area of the rakusu faces front. If there is no service, place it on your head, chant the Verse of the Robe once, and put it on, touching the flap with the pine needle to your forehead. This calls to mind the lineage. If there is no time to chant the whole verse, place it on your head and pause; then touch the pine needle to your forehead and put the rakusu on. Do this each time you put it on during the day.
2. Do not wear a rakusu in the bathroom. Take it off and put it on an altar or in some other respectful place (not on the floor).
3. At Upaya, you may keep your rakusu on your seat in the zendo. At the end of zazen, we bow out together. Then, instead of joining the exit line, quietly turn around and kneel on your zabutan. Take off your rakusu, fold it up and place it on your zafu. Then exit the zendo.

Other places

1. Wear a rakusu in a dharma-related seminar or event.
2. You may wear a rakusu while doing light physical samu, such as sweeping a floor or working on a computer. Take it off for heavy labor or exercise.

How to fold a rakusu (from Sojun Mel Weitsman, abbot of Berkeley ZC):

- a. Take hold of both lower corners with both hands
- b. Fold the rakusu in half away from your body

- c. Hold it with your left hand while you
- d. Run your right hand up the right hand straps
- e. Grasp the plaquet (flap with broken pine needle) with your right hand and remove the rakusu from your neck
- f. Lay the rakusu down with the folded edge to the left
- g. Lay the straps flat against the folded edge of the rakusu
- h. Position the plaquet/flap squarely at right angles to the straps
- i. Insert the folded rakusu into its envelope, moving from right to left.

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