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Foreword

JD first came to my attention when he started to post on the web forum of the International Guild of Knot Tyers (IGKT), giving links to his videos on YouTube. These videos are impressive demonstrations of his knotting ability and provide astonishingly clear instructions on how to tie a variety of knots. But when it comes to knot books, there are many. And the vast majority of them show the same knots, albeit with different pictures and variations on how they can be tied.

So why choose this book?

First, it relies on step-by-step, clear, and easy to follow photographs rather than illustrated diagrams. Second, most of these knots have never appeared in books before. And further, this book not only teaches, it inspires!

Fusion knots show what can be achieved with a little patience and imagination, and provide endless opportunities for decorative knotting

enjoyment. This is especially exciting for those who may have thought knots were something only used by specialists, such as sailors or climbers; or taught to Scouts and Guides, but then forgotten in the modern world of snaps and fasteners.

So while away a few minutes (and don't be surprised when hours have passed!). Tie some or all of these creations. All you need is a piece of cord, a little time, and a mind set to wonder.

Barry Mault
Honorary Secretary
International Guild of Knot Tyers
www.igkt.net

Introduction

For tens of thousands of years, knots played a critical role in human society. They have helped us catch food, sail the seas, build empires, worship, remember and heal. Quietly supporting us through all our historic conquests and adventures, knots helped our ancestors tie their world together.

The Incas of South America, for instance, may have used knots tied along strings as an early form of writing—communicating narratives of the Incan Empire through knots rather than ink and paper. They also used knots as accounting tools, generating and keeping records similar to those kept by modern day bookkeepers and census takers.

More popularly, the Celts used stylized representations of knots to express a variety of natural and spiritual concepts. Seen on ancient structures and in modern motifs, these decorative knots conveyed the relationships between man and woman, hunter and prey, earth, spirit and the universe. Still other Celtic knots are believed to have represented protection from evil spirits, and were placed on battle shields or near people who were sick.

Asian cultures, primarily Chinese, produced decorative knots that took on the esthetic qualities of religious symbols, nature and money. The Double Coin Knot, for instance, is so named because it looks like two Chinese coins overlapping. The majority of these decorative knots were meant to represent good luck, virtue, or

prosperity. But others were created for more utilitarian purposes such as buttons for jackets and shirts.

Much like the development of any art form, time and practice are the keys to new ideas and innovative developments. Mariners throughout history, with lots of time of their hands, began coxcombing, covering rails and wheels with decorative wraps and ties. These wraps and ties served the dual purpose of improving the grip on an otherwise slippery object, while at the same time increasing the beauty of the ship.

As still more time passed, knots grew to become a semi-finite field of study. Knot books started presenting what had come before; with the most attention being paid to practical knots. Then, in 1944, Clifford W. Ashley published *The Ashley Book of Knots (ABOK)*, an encyclopedic reference manual describing how to tie thousands of decorative and functional knots from all around the world. To this day, Ashley's tome remains the quintessential book of knots.

Members of the International Guild of Knot Tyers (IGKT; officially founded in 1982) updated *ABOK* in 1979, adding what was then believed to be a new knot called the Hunter's Bend. Many of the guild members have gone on to write multiple books on the subject of knots. Most of these books, with the exception of a select few, focus on what has come before as opposed to new or recently created knots. When it comes to decorative knots, this last statement is especially true.

Introduction

So where do we go from here?

What does the future hold for knots?

The answer to both these questions, I believe, is fusion knots: innovative knots created through the merging of different knot elements or knotting techniques.

Like origami figurines created through the folding of paper, rope in the hands of a fusion knoter becomes a vehicle for exploring ever more complex and imaginative knot designs. Fusion knot tyers gather inspiration from history, nature, mythology, or any other source that moves them to tie. They see knots as assemblages of discrete parts, rather than indivisible units of information.

For instance, the Celtic Tree of Life Knot (a fusion knot) is the result of combining three different knot elements—one derived from the Trinity Knot, one from the Ring of Coins, and one from the Handbasket Knot. Together, these three elements commingle to create something different, something more elaborate and impactful.

This book is an introduction to the world of decorative fusion knots, but more so it is a bridge between what is and what can be. In turn, alongside fusion knots, I present instructions for historical knots, knots that were discovered or created before 1979 (the year the IGKT updated *ABOK*). Historical knots are the foundations for and elements of fusion knots, so knowing how to tie them is important.

In a few cases the historical knot instructions shown will not be presented as elements to subsequent fusion knots. The purpose for this is twofold:

A) I want to provide instructions for an unusual or rarely described historical knot, and

B) I want to provide techniques you can use to create fusion knots of your own.

The chapters of this book are organized according to the primary knot element or knotting technique utilized in the knot's construction. For example, if a knot starts off as a Double Coin Knot, but finishes with a technique associated with the Trinity Knot (as seen in the Djinn Bottle Knot), that knot will be placed in the Double Coin Knot chapter.

All this said, please remember, fusion knotting is a creative endeavor. Although the pages before you show a multitude of step-by-step instructions on how to tie knots, you do not have to be a passive consumer of this information. Modify what is shown, play with the techniques, integrate different knot elements, and create something new. Put another way...

Explore, Discover, Innovate!

Doing so will not only improve your understanding of fusion knots; it will improve your understanding of all knots and pave the way to ever more elaborate and creative knots tomorrow.

Thank you and keep tying.

— JD of Tying It All Together

Rope Orientation

The following definitions and visual clarifications are meant to provide an understanding of the terms and knotting procedures associated with this book.

Note: All the knots in this book were tied with a six foot length of ¼ inch solid braid nylon or equivalent lengths of paracord.

Definitions

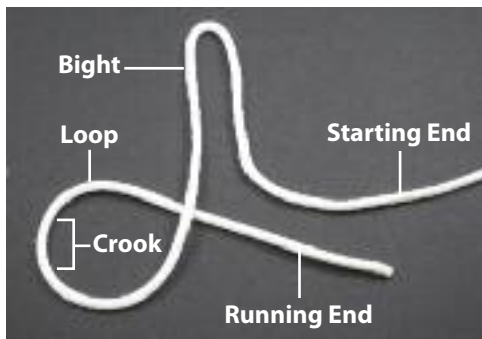
Ascending End: The end of a line (usually the running end) going up.

Bight: A line doubled over into a **U**-shape.

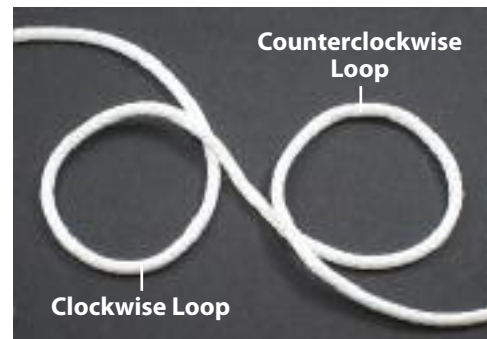
Circle: A line making one complete revolution around another line.

Clockwise Loop: A loop that has a running end (or line on top) that rotates clockwise.

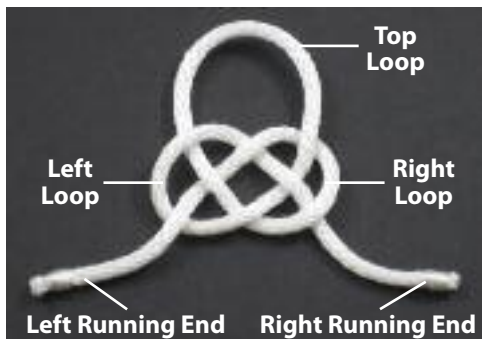
Counterclockwise Loop: A loop that has a running end (or line on top) that rotates counterclockwise.



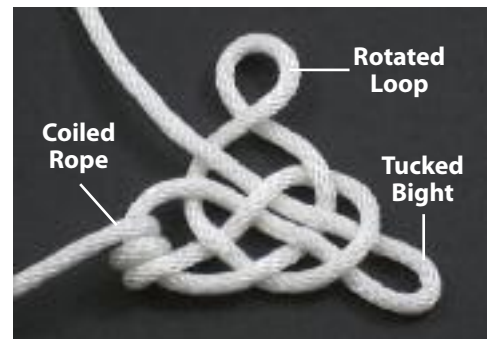
Rope Parts



Rope Loops



Knot Parts



Knot Movements

Rope Orientation

Coil: A line that makes several (more than one) revolutions around another line.

Crook: The curved part of a bight, circle or loop.

Flip: Turning a knot or semi-completed knot upside down.

Firm: The point at which the adjusting of a knot results in a satisfactory appearance.

Fusion Knot: An innovative knot created through the merging of different knot elements or knotting techniques.

Historical Knot: Knots that were discovered or created before 1979 (the year the IGKT updated *ABOK*).

Hook: A line that makes a sharp curve or a shape resembling a hook.

Knot Component: A knot element or knotting technique used to make a fusion knot.

Line: The material used to tie a knot (e.g., rope, paracord, wire, etc.)

Loop: A circle of line that crosses itself.

P: A line that is looped to look like the letter **P** or the mirror image of the letter **P**.

Pentaradial: Lines or knots splayed out in a configuration characteristic of echinoderms (i.e., sea stars, sea urchins and sea cucumbers). Similar in appearance to a pentagon.

Rotate: To turn a loop 180 degrees around an axis.

Running End: The end of a line that's being used to make the knot.

Singe: Scorching the end of a cut line to hold it in place and keep it from fraying.

Standing End: The end of a line that is not involved in making the knot.

Tuck: Inserting a line or bight through a loop or under another line.

Weave: Passing a line over and under another line.

Y-Configuration: An arrangement of bights and running ends in the shape of the letter **Y**.



Section 1

Flipping the Double Coin

Double Coin Knot

A decorative variant of the Carrick Bend, the Double Coin Knot's structure and elegant simplicity make it the perfect base for multiple fusion knots. This was the knot that introduced me to the world of decorative knots.

Knot Components: Historical Knot



1. Make a clockwise **P** with the ascending rope on top the loop created.



2. Drop the right running end down over the loop of the **P**.



3. Bight the running end and weave it under the "leg" of the **P**, over...



4. ... the rope above it, under the top of the **P**, and then over itself.



5. Tuck the bight under the bottom of the **P**.



6. Pull the running end out until the knot is firm.

Cloud Knot

The Cloud Knot branches off the Double Coin Knot in an innovative and seldom realized way. The knot is created via a weaving technique that can be applied to a variety of knots, making them appear more elaborate.

Knot Components: Double Coin Knot + Opposing Weaves



1. Begin by tying a Double Coin Knot.



2. Untuck the right running end of the knot.



3. Then, untuck the left running end of the knot.



4. Weave the left running end under, over, and under the right ropes.



5. Weave the right running end under, over, under, and over the left ropes.



6. Carefully adjust the knot until firm.

Djinn Bottle Knot

The Arabian Nights Entertainments tells of a djinn that is imprisoned in a bottle for 1,800 years. When the djinn is released, it grants wishes. The Djinn Bottle Knot calls to this story, representing the djinn's prison vessel in rope.

Knot Components: Double Coin Knot + Trinity Knot



1. Begin by tying a Double Coin Knot.



2. Stretch the knot's top loop out about 1½ inches.



3. Cross the right running end over the left and...



4. ... tuck it under and out the left loop.



5. Tuck the other running end over and through the right loop.



6. Rotate the top loop (left rope over right).



7. Cross the right running end over the top loop.



8. Weave the left running end under the outer edge of the top loop,...



9. ...and then over, and under the ropes above it at a diagonal.



10. Carefully adjust the knot until firm.

Prosperity Knot

Denoting abundance and long life, the Prosperity Knot is said to bring wealth, in all its manifestations, to those who tie or incorporate it into their attire. Be this fact or fiction, the knot's beauty is unquestionable.

Knot Components: Historical Knot



1. Begin by tying a Double Coin Knot.



2. Then stretch the left and right loops out about two inches.



3. Drop the loops so that they're below the left and right running ends.



4. Rotate both loops (left rope over right).



5. Tuck the loop on the left through the back of the loop on the right.



6. Drop the right running end down across the right loop.



7. Weave the left loop over the running end and under the right loop.



8. Weave the left running end under the outer edge of the left loop,...



9. ...and then over, under, over, and...



10. ...under the ropes below it at a diagonal. Adjust the knot until firm.

Wide Lanyard Knot

The Wide Lanyard Knot looks like a Prosperity Knot turned on its side. A historical knot that has been around since at least the 19th century, it is also the fusion of the Double Coin Knot and Panel Knot.

Knot Components: Historical Knot



1. Begin by tying a Double Coin Knot.



2. Then bight the right running end back and beside itself.



3. Bight the left running end back and beside itself as well.



4. Pull out and split the running ends apart from one another.



5. Hook the left running end down, diagonally across the knot.



6. Drop the right running end down, over the left.



7. Continue forward, weaving the running end under,...



8. ...over, under, and over the ropes below it at a diagonal.



9. Weave the other running end over, under, over, and...



10. ...under the rope below it at a diagonal. Adjust the knot until firm.

Mayan Temple Knot

Archaeological evidence suggests the ancient Mayans first began building their stepped temples about 3,000 years ago. The Mayan Temple Knot, on the other hand, is new to the world; still I hope it lasts just as long.

Knot Components: Wide Lanyard Knot + Keyhole Weave



1. Begin by tying a Double Coin Knot.



2. Then bight the right running end back and beside itself.



3. Bight the left running end back and beside itself as well.



4. Circle the right running end forward around the top loop.



5. Circle the left running end back around the top loop.



6. Continue weaving the left running end over and under the ropes...



7. ...below it. Then over, under, and over the ropes at a diagonal.



8. Weave the right running end under and over the ropes below it.



9. Then under, over, and...



10. ...under the ropes below it at a diagonal. Adjust the knot until firm.

River Knot

The River Knot is an expansion of the Double Coin Knot that results in the appearance of the sun rising over a rippling river. Valued for its riparian beauty and graceful weaves, this knot is one of my personal favorites.

Knot Components: Historical Knot



1. Begin by tying a Double Coin Knot.



2. Make a counterclockwise **P** with the right running end.



3. Tuck the right running end through the right Double Coin Knot loop.



4. Make a clockwise **P** with the left running end.



5. Tuck the left running end through the left Double Coin Knot loop.



6. Weave the left running end under, over, and...



7. ...under the ropes above it.



8. Hook the running end to the right and continue under, over, and under.



9. Now weave the right running end under the rope to its left,...



10. ...then over, under, and over the ropes above it.



11. Hook the running end to the left and continue over, under, and over.



12. Adjust the knot until it takes on its distinctive appearance.

Ring of Coins

The Ring of Coins is a compound knot, a string of knots tied together in series or a cluster. Knots brought together in such a way create complex configurations that have been treasured and admired for centuries.

Knot Components: Historical Knot



1. Begin by tying a Double Coin Knot.



2. Untuck the right running end.



3. Weave the running end through the back of the right loop...



4. ... then over and under the ropes to the right. Leave a three inch loop.



5. Make a clockwise loop over the right edge of the three inch loop.



6. Insert the right running end through the front of the small loop...



7. ...then weave it under, over, and under the ropes below it.



8. Now, untuck the left running end.



9. Weave the running end through the front of the left loop,...



10. ...then under and over the ropes to the left. Leave a three inch loop.



11. Make a clockwise loop under the left edge of the three inch loop.



12. Insert the left running through the back of the small loop,...



13. ...then weave it over, under, and over the ropes below it.



14. Untuck the right running end.



15. Untuck the left running end.



16. Cross the right running end over the left.



17. Insert the left running end through the back of the lower right loop.



18. Hook the running end up, weaving it over and under the ropes to the left.



19. Insert the right running end through the front of the lower left loop.



20. Hook the running end up, weaving it under and over the ropes to the right.



21. Cross the right running end over the left.



22. Then weave it under and over the ropes below it at a diagonal.



23. Weave the other running end over and under the ropes below it at a diagonal.



24. Carefully adjust the knot until firm.