

Chinese Macramé

Tying the Friendship Knot

References:

E-Chinaj (2001). *China Knots Web*. Retrieved from: http://e-chinaj.com/new_page_2.htm (Sept. 6, 2001).

Liu, Yanni (2001). *China Knots*. Guangxi, China: Science and Technology Publications.

Jiang Nan Ren Jia (2001). Retrieved from: <http://go1.163.com/jiangnanren/zhgj/zhgj.htm> (Oct. 6, 2001).

Other Sources:

"Jiang Nan Ren Jia":
<http://go1.163.com/jiangnanren/zhgj/zhgj.htm>

"Chinese Macrame":
<http://www.gio.gov.tw/info/culture/cultur22.html>

"Chinese Knot":
<http://www.chineseknotting.org/>

"Two Snakes":
<http://twosnake.myetang.com/>

"Zhong Guo Jie":
<http://www.chineseknot.com/>

"Hua Yang Nian Hua":
<http://vix.topcool.net/index.html>

"Jie Yi Fang":
<http://www.myknots.com/>

You may want to refer the students to these other sources.



Note: Important notes will appear in the yellow side-bars.

Time specifications are in bold print on the side-bar.

Actions are in italics on the side-bar.

To the Instructor

This lesson is part of a series of lessons meant to endow students with a greater understanding of East Asian languages and cultures. The dual considerations of language and culture are inextricably intertwined. They feed off of one another in a symbiotic relationship providing insight and motivation to the students.

Because students begin language classes not only with an interest in the language, but also an interest in the culture, teachers incorporate information about Chinese Culture in the curriculum to motivate students. In C201, Intermediate Chinese Language, the instructors introduce Chinese cultural history, music, and philosophy to the students.

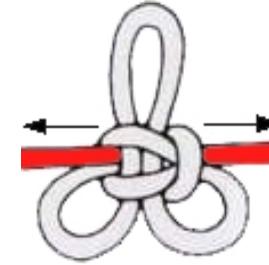
This student centered lesson is founded on the proven instructional techniques of scaffolding and immediate feedback. This is because scaffolding provides just enough instructional support to allow students to complete the task, but also leaves enough ambiguity for students to construct their own knowledge of the task.

The teacher acts as a *facilitator* for this activity, providing feedback to guide and support students' learning.

You will first instruct students in tying each of the two basic knots (Bird Knot and Flower Knot) by referring to overheads and monitoring and providing feedback to the students. After you have taught the basic knots, students will work independently to create the entire Friendship Knot on their own by referring to their student handbooks. This will empower and motivate students to create both Friendship Knots on their own and later generalize their knowledge to creation of other kinds of Chinese Macramé.

The teacher's materials provide ample room for personal teaching style, but deviating from the lesson as it was developed will result in a less effective presentation and learning environment.

5. Remove the pushpins and pull the flower tight.



Make sure that students have all completed the Flower Knot successfully and that their questions are answered before moving on. Allow the students to keep their practice Flower Knots to refer to later.

POST-INSTRUCTION

Hand out the student manuals. Explain to students that they will be working independently on creating the Friendship Knot and that you will be available to answer their questions.

Choosing String

Let the students choose their string, keeping in mind that different colors will create different patterns. You may want to discuss the meanings of colors in China: red and gold represent good fortune and wealth respectively, black and white both represent death and should not be used.

Independent Practice

Allow the students to create the Friendship Knot independently by following the directions in their manuals.

Give consistent feedback to students regarding their completion of the Friendship Knot. Walk around the classroom, observing and assessing students' progress. Make sure to address errors and answer questions.

5 Minutes

40-60 Minutes

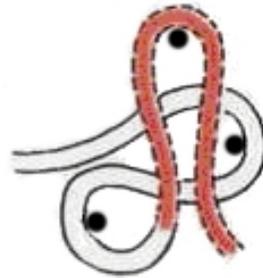
Note: You should familiarize yourself with the variations in the Friendship Knot which are included in the student manual.

The Flower Knot

Explain to the students that they will be making Flower Knots. Have them untie their strings from the stick so that they may re-use them.

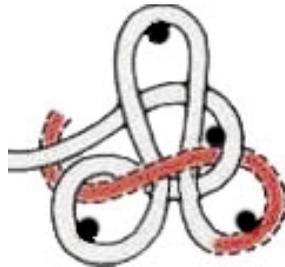
Demonstrate steps 1 and 2 using the cardboard and push pins. Hold your work up so that students can see it.

1. For this step, lay the string on a flat surface.
2. Using the piece of cardboard and the pushpins, begin tying the Flower Knot.

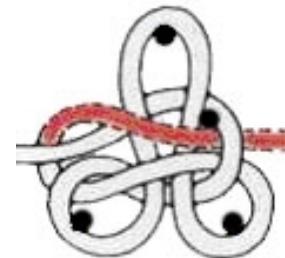


Push a pushpin into the cardboard at each point where you shape a loop.

3.



4.



Note: The shaded area on the illustration represents current action.

PRE-INSTRUCTION RESPONSIBILITIES

Before teaching this lesson you should familiarize yourself with all of the included materials.

Teacher Materials

- o Teacher's manual
- o Overhead transparencies
- o Books on China Knots
- o Pre-made Friendship Knot samples

Friendship Knot Materials

- o 1 practice string, 6 inches long per student
- o 1 student manual per student
- o 2 strings, 2 yards long per student
- o 1 stick (chopstick or pencil) per student
- o 1 pair of scissors for each group
- o 1 stick per student
- o Selection of beads

Optional Materials

- o At least one needle & thread per group
- o At least four pushpins per student
- o At least one piece of cardboard per student

Before teaching this lesson, you should try tying the Friendship Knot in order to better understand the process and problems involved in the tying of Friendship Knots.

You should prepare the classroom and equipment before the lesson begins. This means that you may consider decorating the room with Chinese cultural items, arranging the desks in groups of two or three, and making sure that the room has an Overhead Projector (and that it works).

Note: Teacher's instructions appear in italics



75-120 Minutes

INTRODUCTION

5-15 Minutes

Pass examples of different types of Chinese Macramé and books around the class.

INSTRUCTION

Introduction to Topic

We recommend that you introduce this lesson with an explanation and history of Chinese Macramé and a description of the Friendship Knot. We have provided this text for you, but we do not recommend that you read it verbatim to the students. You should familiarize yourself with it and summarize it for your students, using the facts provided to answer potential student questions.

Chinese Macramé

A unique folk craft, Chinese Macramé (Chinese Knots) originated two thousand years ago in China. Chinese people believe that these hand-crafted knots prevent calamity and bring good luck. Knots often represent themes of power, harmony, friendship and unity. To this day they are commonly given as gifts to others as a token of good will. With their classic elegance and ever-changing variations, the knots serve both practical and ornamental purposes. They may be used to adorn clothing or can be hung on a wall to ward off evil spirits.

Chinese knots can range from very small (button sized) to very large (wall hangings). They are traditionally made from cotton, silk or hemp and incorporate beans, beads, bells, jade pieces and other small decorations.

Chinese Macramé is based on dozens of basic knots which are named according to their distinctive shapes, usages, or origins. The Two Coins Knot, for example, is so named because it is shaped like two overlapping coins similar to the ones used in ancient China. The Button Knot can actually function as a button, and the Reversed Swastika Knot is derived from the Buddhist symbol, which was commonly seen on the streamers hanging down from the waistband of the Buddhist Goddess of Mercy.

3. Pull the loose ends through the resulting loop.



4. Pull tight.



5. Take string A and loop it in front of and around string B.



6. Continue tying string A in Bird Knots around string B in the same direction.



Use Transparency #2

Make sure that all the students successfully complete steps 1 through 4 before moving on.

Use Transparency #3

Note: Though these knots do not look the same, they are still Bird Knots.



Tell the students to keep the knots flat and smooth and to make the knots just tight enough to hold their shape.

Friendship Knot

The Friendship Knot, which is actually a series of continuous loops (Bird Knot), symbolizes the conception of long-lasting friendship. And traditionally, in China the circular ring represents unity and harmony. It fully reflects the profundity of highly collectivistic Chinese culture, which puts emphasis on harmony amongst friends.

Objectives

Next you should explicitly state the lesson's objectives to the students.

Students should be able to:

- o Tie Bird Knots around a stick using fingers and string
 - o Tie a series of Bird Knots around string using fingers
 - o Form a loop from the series of Bird Knots and tie it off with Bird Knots using a 4 inch piece of string and fingers
 - o Thread beads on string with fingers
 - o Tie a Flower Knot using fingers or cardboard and pushpins
 - o Tie the Friendship Knot independantly with their handbooks
-

Tools & Materials

Now you need to introduce the students to the materials that will be required (and optional) to make a Friendship Knot.

Friendship Knot Materials

- o Student manuals
- o String
- o Scissors
- o Sticks
- o Beads

Optional Materials

- o Needle & thread
- o Pushpins
- o Pieces of cardboard

Show pre-made examples of Friendship Knots.

OBJECTIVES

2 Minutes

TOOLS AND MATERIALS

2 Minutes

Note: String should be a little stiff, textured, and flexible, with luster and bright color.

Demonstration materials should be easy to see, i.e. thick and dark colored.

The Basic Knots

You should teach each of the constituent knots before allowing students to work independently. We recommend that you do not give them their manuals until after instruction to prevent distraction.

The Bird Knot

First turn on the Overhead Projector (OHP) and put Transparency #1 (steps 1 and 2 from below) on the OHP. Demonstrate steps 1 and 2 for the class using the 6-inch piece of string and a stick.

Have the students mirror your actions by tying their pieces of 6 inch string. Monitor the students' progress and make sure that they have all complete the first two steps.

1. Fold one length of string in half.



2. Drape the folded end over the stick.



THE BASIC KNOTS

15 Minutes

Hand out all materials except the 2 yard pieces of string.

Use transparency #1

*You should explain that the **Bird Knot** is so named because it looks like a bird.*

