



McCLAIN'S
PRINTMAKING SUPPLIES

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August, 2005

TIPS

Kento Registration

Kento is the registration system traditionally used by Japanese printmakers.

Multi-color woodblock prints often require a separate block for each color, and the *kento* marks insure the needed accuracy to align the colors on the paper. It is necessary for each block with a design on it to have its own set of carved *kento* marks. Here's how to do it!

Step 1:

Draw *kento* lines and image onto the block at the same time. They should be at least ¼" in from the edges of the block.

Illustration #1

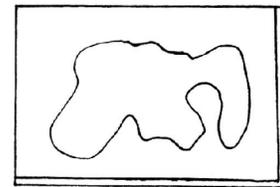
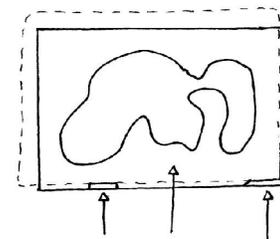


Illustration 1 - Draw image and lines.

Carve the images on the blocks, then carve all of the *kento* marks at the same time so they will be consistent.

The *kento* system includes two parts, the *hikitsuke kento* (line stop) and *kagi kento* (key). The *kagi kento* is generally located in the right lower hand corner of the block. The *hikitsuke kento* is approximately ¾ the distance down the block from the *kagi kento*.

Illustration #2



hikitsuke paper kagi
Illustration 2

Step 2:

Start with the *hikitsuke kento*. Place the *kento nomi* (registration carving chisel) or *hira to* (chisel) on the drawn line. Hold the tool with the flat side towards you and push straight down into the wood about 2mm. Gently rock the tool left and right.

Illustration #3



Illustration 3 - Cut 1 of the hikitsuke kento.

Step #3:

At both ends of this cut line make perpendicular cuts straight down forming a small rectangle.

Illustration #4

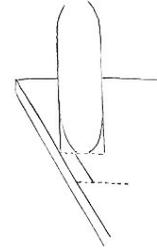


Illustration 4 - Cuts 2 & 3 of the hikitsuke kento.

Step 4:

Turn the block 180 degrees. Make sure the block is secure against a bench hook.

With the bevel side of the *kento nomi* face down, carefully clear wood way from both sides of the rectangle.

Illustration #5

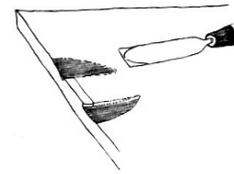


Illustration 5 - Clearing the sides of the hikitsuke kento.

Step 5:

Shave the area in front of the rectangle to establish a stop for your printing paper. This very shallow cut only needs to be as deep as the printing paper is thick.

Illustration #6

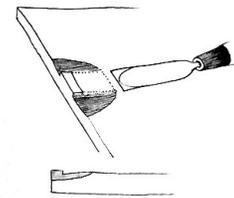


Illustration 6 - The final cut and side view of the hikitsuke kento.

Step 6:

Cut the lines shown in illustration #7 for the *kagi kento* using the same technique shown in illustration #3.

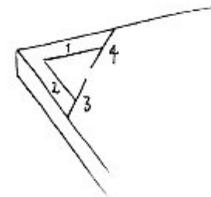


Illustration 7 - The first 4 cuts of the kagi kento.

Step 7:

Cut away the areas shown in illustration #8. Clearing these two areas first make the cutting of the corner much easier.

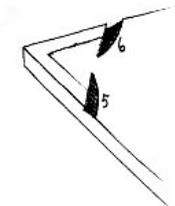


Illustration 8 - Cuts 5 & 6 of the kagi kento.

Step 8:

Now hold the tool almost flat to the wood and shave the wood out of the corner.

Illustration #9

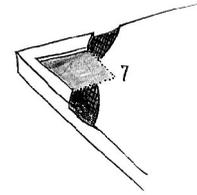


Illustration 9 - Clearing the corner of the kagi kento.

Step 9:

Clear a 'moat' between the *kagi kento* and the color area.

Illustration #10

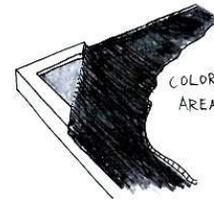


Illustration 10 - Clearing the 'moat' between the design and the kagi kento.

The *kento* system is now ready to use! The next step is to print the design. This topic will be covered in further issues of the newsletter. If you have questions about this technique or others related to relief printmaking, give us a call and we'll be happy to help you.