



TOKIBO

The traditional brushes to apply pigment, especially when using classic pure powder pigment in water.

1. Take the last 4½" from the tough end of the takenokawa. Soak overnight but not longer than 20 hours, weighted with a stone. On a hard flat surface (stone, marble, steel or very smooth concrete) pound 2½" up from the tough end with a wooden mallet *until the fibers separate*. Be sure to hit the takenokawa flat with the mallet—hitting on an angle will break off the fibers or hairs. Dry overnight or until very dry.
2. For the stick or handle of the brush, bamboo is best. It won't rot like wood and is very strong. Shish kabob sticks work very well; and thin, unpainted, unvarnished chopsticks can be used. Cut little notches on the last inch of these sticks being careful not to cut too deeply—you don't want to weaken the stick and cause it to break. Roll the pieces of takenokawa tightly around the handle, matching up the edges.
3. Then tie tightly. I used waxed whipping cord—it's thick, amazingly strong and won't rot. The best way to tie is whipping, ends hidden under, so that great strength can be applied to get it tight. I hold the stick/takenokawa in a vise for tying so the stick won't pull out.
4. Next, comb out all loose filaments and connective tissue until nothing more comes. Cut off excess fibers, leaving about ¼" of fiber showing on the handle above the cord, by pulling up against a sharp knife so you won't cut the handle. Trim bristle ends with a kento nomi.

These brushes wash out easily and last for ages. Ours are 10 years old and still good.

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