

The Golden Fan

In the current section you are going to practise a Couching stitch a lot, I am sure you know many of its variations and in Cherry Blossom design you have already met this technique, but there are still some important points that I want to pay your attention to.

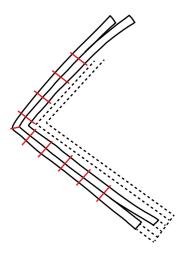
In Japanese embroidery, a Couching stitch can be done with a single thread, two threads and four threads. For sharp corners and angles it is effective to process couching with a single thread, thus avoiding double thickness in the pointed parts.

Couching a pair of threads provides faster filling of the element; moreover, two threads form more round shapes, that is why I recommend using this method for embroidering the Golden Fan.

It is possible to couch two pairs of strands, but for this purpose it is better to choose thicker threads, it will be easier to stack compared to the thinner ones.

Work from the outside of the embroidered element moving inwards, clockwise around it. First accomplish the outline of the element to provide some rigidity, then continue around within previously laid threads.

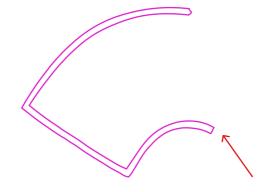
Set the threads closely together, avoiding any spacing. In the corners turn the thread sharply as shows the diagram.



▲ Making a sharp corner in the Golden Fan

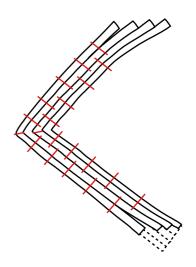
To embroider the entire Golden Fan you will need to lay out about six threads of Madeira Metallic 40 col. 422 Golden Dustin a row. You need to couch three pairs of strands with Madeira FS Metallic 40 Embroidery Thread gold 6. If your thread (to lay out) is not thick enough you may add a couple of rows thus the Fan gets enough width.

There are three separate parts of the Fan, and you need to start from the biggest one. The diagram below shows you where to start. Mind that you need to move inwards from the outward part of the element clockwise.



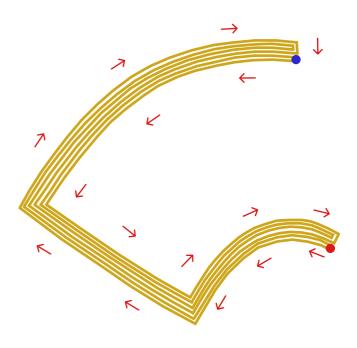
▲ The starting point

Arrange the couching stitches in a brick-like manner, so making them even and smooth. The diagram below shows the way to make this.



▲ Brick couching

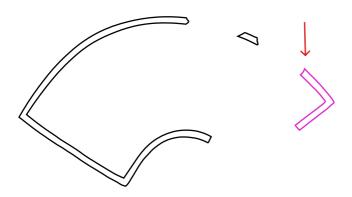
The starting point is indicated in red, the arrows show the direction of laying out threads for a Couching stitch. The end point is indicated in blue, there you shall hide the ends.



▲ The order of laying out

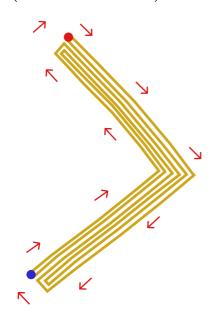
It is high time to switch to the second part of the Fan, due to the first part of it is embroidered.

The arrow points the starting point. Move clockwise from the outward to the inward of the element and couch the threads the used way.



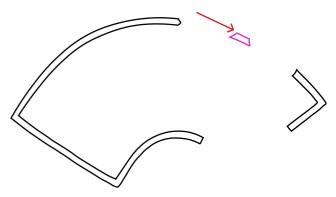
▲ Couching the second part of the Fan

See the diagram below which indicates the starting point (red), the direction of laying out the threads for a Couching stitch. Hide the ends in the end point (indicated in blue).



▲ The order of laying out in the second part

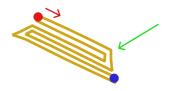
It remains to do the third part, which is the smallest, but it contains some segments that might appear complicated to process. Some angles are rather pointed, so it is better to lay them out using a single strand for couching.



▲ The third part of the Fan

Find the starting point (indicated in red), secure the ends of the laid out thread and couch the line up to the point indicated with green arrow, make a turn and go down, turn left, couch a new line, then again make a turn, step down, turn right and go straight up to the point indicated in blue.

The laid out thread in this segment resembles a "snake" and is a bit different from what you did while embroidering the first and the second part of the Fan.



▲ The third part of the Fan

Now the fan is completed. There are left some golden details to embroider with a Couching stitch. Soon the design will shine in all its glory.



The Golden Circles

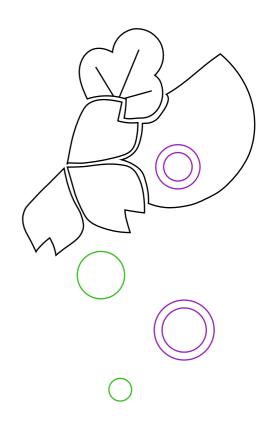
The last touches of the Golden Dust are waiting to be set in.

You will use the familiar metallized threads:

- Madeira Metallic 40 col. 422 Golden Dust (for laying out)
- Madeira FS Metallic 40 Embroidery Thread gold 6 (for couching).

The task is not complicated, though you will mention some features of hiding the cut ends in the couching technique.

Previously, while working on rectangular shapes and angles you pulled the ends to the wrong side making the end of the element straight. In the current task, you will use a Couching stitch for the circular motifs, so that the start and the end point of the couched thread merge evenly with the entire circle without any humps and bumps.

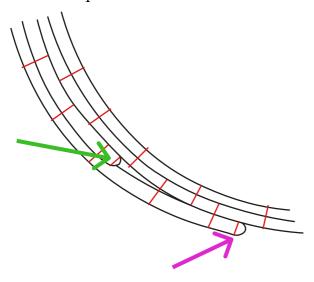


▲ The Golden Circles in the embroidery design

There are two coil elements (indicated in green) and two elements opened in the centre (indicated in violet). The rule here is the same: lightly secure the ends of the laid out threads and move to the inside, when the element will be completely embroidered you will return to the starting point to make it smooth as a ring.

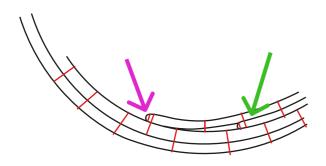
The diagram below shows how to secure the ends in the outward of the figure to reach the smoothness.

On laying down a pair of threads the inner one (marked in green) should be secured foremost, then the outer (marked in pink) should be secured in the second place.



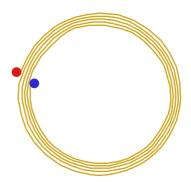
▲ Couching the outer side of the circle

When the shape is complete, secure the ending pair of the thread you couch, just the same way you did for the outer part. First secure the inner thread (indicated in green), then the outer Indicated in pink).



▲ Couching the inner side of the circle

The position of the starting and the finishing point should be on one side of the element, thus the total look of it will be ring-like, even and smooth. Where to start is indicated red and where to end is indicated in blue in the diagram below.



▲ The starting and the finishing point in the circle

I recommend starting with elements opened in the centre, to train your hand on making small rounded shapes.

You will find it easier to do the same stitch on smaller elements that are completely filled. If you feel that six rows of double thread look not enough, add some more to construct appropriate width of the element.



The second ring you stitch over the lower part of the Sun.

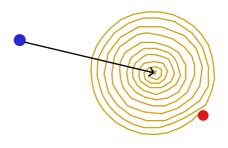
First couch an outward circle, then fill it with some more rows of the laid out thread and hide the ends as explained earlier.



There are only two golden circles left. In some books, I met recommendations to embroider coil elements starting from their centres. I tried this several times, however making them round and even appeared difficult to me.

So, it turned out that starting outward and going to the centre is better and more convenient. The outer side of the circle constructs a strong and stable base for laying out further rows of the golden thread. You may lay out two threads or use just a single strand, depending on the thickness and the width of the thread you are using. If you choose to couch a single strand, then the whole element will take much time to embroider, while using two strands will help you to couch the coil much faster.

Mind to hide the outward end(s) as I showed you before and secure it (them) with a couple of stitches. In the diagram it is shown the starting and the ending points. Remember to start outward and construct a stable base for further inner circles.



▲ The starting and the finishing point in the circle

Start from the bigger coil and then switch to the smaller one. The last will demand more concentration and accuracy, because you will have less room for movement and turns.

Do the same way as you did on embroidering the bigger coil: build the outward circle and, one curl after another, reach the centre of the element.

Now most of the design is done.

