Danish-Weave Coverlets: Dansk Brogd

In the southern district of Vest-Agder, a type of weft-faced coverlet known as dansk brogd, or Danish weave, was woven (7.21–7.22). Danish weave is similar to the technique referred to in English as skip plain-weave (or plain weave with weft substitution), variations of which were known in the Middle East and also pre-Columbian Peru. A coverlet in Danish weave is noted in mid-eighteenth-century estate documents from Vest-Agder, but an earlier tradition is possible. Although the history of these coverlets in Norway is unclear, the name would seem to point to Denmark as a possible avenue of introduction.

Danish-weave coverlets were noted for broad rows of pattern in stippled Xs, diamonds, and chevrons (fig. 7.23). Background colors alternated in horizontal stripes, often accompanied by changing colors in the patterns themselves. Separating the areas of Danish weave were bands of pattern in krokbragd and/or pick-and-pick.

When woven with the two-harness threading of pick-and-pick, patterns were created by splitting one of the two plain-weave sheds so that two wefts, pattern and background, did the job of one. Where the pattern weft came to the surface, the background weft floated underneath, and vice versa. In the open pattern-shed, a pick-up stick was used to select threads from the bottom half of the shed, allowing a shot of pattern weft to be woven. The opposite threads in the still-open shed were then selected, and a shot of background weft was woven, covering the remaining warp threads in that shed. In the second shed, only a single shot of the background weft was woven (fig. 7.24). As the design progressed, the pattern and background sheds alternated to accommodate the shifting lines of Xs and diamonds. The same procedure was followed when weaving in three-harness krokbragd, except that occasionally one of the krokbragd sheds matched the pattern exactly, requiring no pattern pick-up.

Dimensions and materials in the Danish-weave coverlets were similar to those of other weft-faced coverlets.

7.23 Diamonds, Xs, and chevrons were common patterns used in Danish weave coverlets.
In Danish weave, pattern warp-threads are selected with a pick-up stick from the back warp-threads of the open shed before a pattern weft is inserted. Remaining warp threads in that shed and all warps in the alternate shed are woven with a background-colored weft. In this illustration the warp threads in the back position are indicated by gray shading and warps selected by the pick-up stick are indicated by arrows.

(a) The shed in which the pattern will be selected is opened. After the pattern warps are selected from the back warp threads with a pick-up stick, a shot of dark pattern weft is inserted. (b) In the same shed, the non-pattern warps are selected from the back warp threads and covered with a shot of background weft.
(c) The shed is changed and a shot of background weft is inserted. (d) As a pattern segment is complete, the next shed receives a shot of background weft. (e) The new pattern segment, shifting by one warp thread towards the center, begins in the following shed.