

Garrett Wade

Technical Memo T34

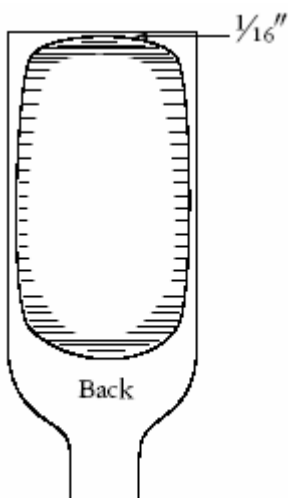
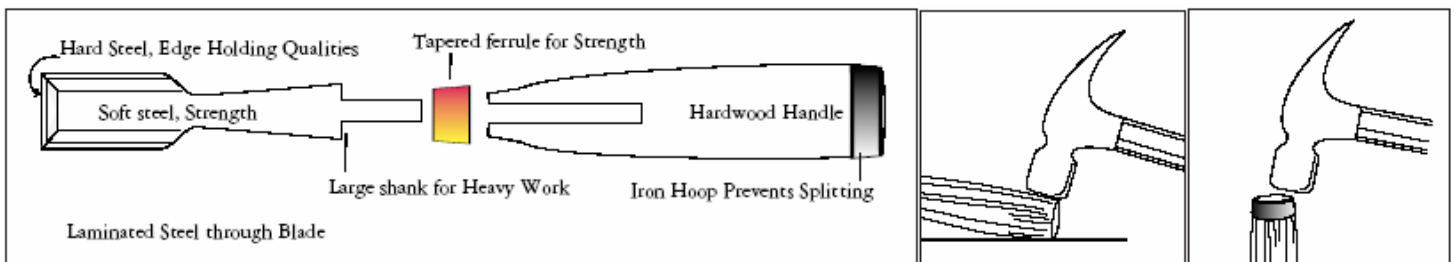
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Japanese Chisels

First-time users of Japanese chisels might be interested in several aspects of its construction. The information here should assist you in the use and care of these special tools.

Our Japanese striking chisels have double-hooped handles. The lower hoop is fitted at the factory; the upper usually has to be fitted by the user.

Dip the handle end in water for a few minutes to soften the wood fibers. Lightly swag the handle with a steel hammer until the hoop seats just below the handle top (typically 1/32"-1/16"). The wood projecting above the hoop should be peened over, (mushroomed) slightly to form a cushion and to lock the hoop in position.



The back of a Japanese blade is unique because of the hollow. When the flat between the hollow and the edge of the blade is narrow, the blade performs best. Repeated sharpenings will eventually make the flat disappear. To make a new flat we suggest this procedure:

- The back of the chisel should be flattened on a medium grit stone until the flat is re-established. Rub the entire back along the stone with finger pressure applied near the cutting edge. Because of the hollows on the chisel, the amount of steel removed is very small.
- With the back flat, the chisel is sharpened by alternately honing the cutting bevel and the back. Honing with a fine grit stone produces a wire edge which can be felt easier than seen. Hone bevel and back alternately until the wire edge is gone.
- Subsequent sharpenings require attention to the bevel only until the cutting edge reaches the hollow grind. At that point the back should be relapped until a 1/16" flat is established behind the cutting edge.

For further assistance, call the Garrett Wade Technical Department at 800 221 2942, or email us at mail@garrettwade.com

Care should be taken with all Japanese blades to prevent chipping the edge. The Laminated steel construction gives a harder cutting edge but the extreme hardness of the steel results in a more brittle edge. They are cutting tools and cannot be used for levering out or prying wood chips. If not held firmly the chisel may wobble when struck and the blade can fracture. When properly sharpened and struck, however, the superior cutting edge will give longer usage between sharpenings than the softer western-style chisels.

The bevel angle should be about 25° for softwoods, 30° for hardwoods.

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