

Greetings Students,

Thank you for joining us on the upcoming workshop. There will be much to learn and plenty of wood to cut. Basic power tools such as drills will be available for us to use. Each student will need their own hand cutting tools. The first portion of the class will be devoted to sharpening and setting these tools. Then you will work with them creating joints and finish planing surfaces. By the time you return home these tools will be your good friends ready to be of service for whatever type woodworking projects you desire.

Attached is a list of the necessary tools. Please review the list and feel free to contact me if you have questions. I recommend that you pursue acquiring these tools early. Some suppliers have limited stock and others will be shipping from Japan. Following are a few thoughts to consider as you look for Japanese tools:

1) It is not necessary to get the very best. In Japanese tools "the very best" is very expensive! Any professional quality will be plenty adequate to learn on. After becoming accustomed to these tools, gradually moving up to higher quality makes sense. There will always be a use for the less expensive tools.

2) There is a lot of information and misinformation about Japanese tools on the web, which can be pretty confusing. Please don't worry about what color of steel the tools are made of. Please do make sure to get tools that are made of laminated steel including the chip breaker on the hand plane. There is no need to purchase tools that are pre-setup. That is what the class is about.

3) Chisels come in various styles. Oire or bench chisels are small sized for furniture and finish work. Tataki or timber chisels are large for cutting timber frames. Chu-tataki or medium timber chisels are in-between sized. Any of these styles can be used during the workshop. Most important is to choose according to the type of work that you will be doing when you return home.

4) For planes, 70mm is standard and most versatile. Most carpenters in Japan use this size exclusively. But, a smaller width is handy and perhaps easier to hold onto, especially for a beginner or someone with small hands. Also for furniture work or quick one-handed trimming. In such case 60mm is a good size. Less than 50mm can be difficult to work with. Particularly on smaller sizes, please ask to be sure that the chip breaker is laminated steel.

5) Common replacement blade type saws are adequate for the class. Traditional forged steel saws are great, but pricey. Traditional saws require special sharpening ability and normally must be sent back to Japan for such service.

6) Japanese sharpening stones come in two basic types. Standard and Ceramic. The Standard (old style) is like a fired brick. The ceramic are improved, harder, cut quickly and more expensive.

For the standard type I recommend King Hyper #1000 grit medium stone and King Gold (G-1) 8000 grit finish stone. Please avoid King S-1 and S-3 and combination stones.

For the ceramic type I recommend:

Suzukitool stones 1200, 4000, 10,000 grits

Shapton Pro (kuromaku) 220, 320, 1000, 1500, 2000 grits

Shapton glass backed also work well, but are less versatile.

Sigma #358019 (hard) 1000 grit

7) The following is a list of domestic tool dealers that I recommend as trustworthy and offering professional quality. They are your best bet for traditional edge tools (chisels and planes):

<http://www.suzukitool.com//>

Full service importer

<http://hidatool.com/>

Full service importer

<https://yournokogiri.com/>

Limited selection high quality edge tools

Lee Valley, Amazon and Ebay are alternative sources for stones, saws, hammers and miscellaneous items. Compare prices.

<http://www.leevalley.com/US/Wood/page.aspx?p=67175&cat=1,43072>

8) Finally some tools stores in Japan are beginning to offer in English shopping with direct credit card purchase and international shipping. Shipping is costly, but if purchasing a number of tools it might be worth comparing. In most cases communication is limited to web based translation. This list is bound to grow in the coming years:

<https://www.shop.kurashige-tools.com/>

<http://www.5e.biglobe.ne.jp/~ttoishi/sumurai.index.html>

Note 1: The required scraper plane is of less importance than the smoothing plane. Even a used one can be okay.

Note 2: For the advanced joinery and construction classes a flexible Japanese square is needed. Please get a full sized one (approx. 20" X 10") with square root (kakume) scale on the back side. At this time only Hida tool carries the inch version and Suzuki tool carries the shaku version. (If you already have a smaller version in either inch or shaku, it will suffice for the joinery class.)

Note 3: If purchasing a sumitsubo any size will work, but at least a 210mm is recommended. Silk string should be at least #15 or thicker. For the filling in the sumitsubo, purchase raw silk roving sold by weaving suppliers, rather than the silk sold by tool importers. (A sumitsubo and sumisashi are not required for the Joinery class.)

Best Regards and I look forward to seeing you soon at the workshop!

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