

Japanese Cabinet Making Saws

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A Japanese-style saw cuts on the pull stroke rather than the push stroke used by a European-style saw. This allows a Japanese-style saw to be made with a thinner blade, which removes less wood and cuts more efficiently. The blade of a pull-saw is under tension when the teeth are cutting and therefore does not need to be as stiff as a European-style saw.

Many Japanese saws have impulse (laser) hardened teeth. They are very sharp and stay sharp longer. They are impractical to sharpen, however. Instead, some saws (*kaeba*) have removable handles and replaceable blades.

Top-of-the-line Japanese saw blades are made of very hard (and brittle) steel. They can be re-sharpened but can easily be broken by a person who uses too much force (tries to cut) on the push stroke. (This is hard to avoid unless your hand has become accustomed to a pull-saw.)

Types of Saws

The Japanese word for saw is *nokogiri*. Apparently the type of saw is properly an adjective, so for example a Dozuki saw may be called a Dozuki-nokogiri.

Azebiki – The Japanese version of a stair saw or pattern makers saw, used for cutting into the flat surface of a board. The blade has a convex curve which can begin the cut anywhere on the surface. Usually has a normal long handle with a double-edged (*ryoba*) blade.

Dōzuki – a backsaw. (A saw with a stiffening strip attached to the back.)

Kaeba – A saw with a disposable blade.

Kataba – a single sided saw without a back. The blade of a *kataba* saw is thicker than the blade of a Dozuki. The thicker blade does not need a rigid back and therefore this saw can be used for deep and long cuts. Good general purpose saw and usually inexpensive.

Kugihiki – A Japanese flush-cut saw used for cutting off dowels, etc. May be double-sided. The blade is usually very flexible. Some (all?) *kugihiki* saws have the set on one side only.

Mawashibiki – The Japanese version of a keyhole saw.

Ryōba – Saw with two cutting edges, a cross-cutting (*yokobiki*) blade on one side and a ripping (*tatebiki*) blade on the other. The Japanese means "double blade".