

## Max Satoh • Rodmaker - Tip #2

My name is Max Satoh, one of the Japanese bamboo flyrod makers.

First of all, let me say "Congratulations" to the winner of Makers Rod 2002.

This rod, which I wanted to own myself, is very unique and has its value as selected contemporary rodmakers hand-planed each strip based on their individual rodmaking methodologies.

I admire this Makers Rod program which is going to share the cost of maintaining your home rivers in Michigan. After knowing this project, Michigan became one of the locations where I want to visit for flyfishing.

As for myself, I respect the predecessors of traditional workmanship in various technical areas which has been grown in my country. For instance, the straightening technique in making arrows of bamboo, the techniques of hardening bamboo strips in making a Japanese bow, varnishing techniques of *Urushi* (Japanese lacquer), ferrule-less connection in making a traditional Japanese rod (not for fly-fishing) from thin and round bamboo canes, and so on. Fortunately, I was born in such a country where many kinds of *Take* (bamboo) grow in my neighborhood.

I am trying to apply some of those materials, techniques and methods from old days to my rodmaking as much as possible. Of course, I owe rodmakers in the United States of America very much on basic methodology in making hexagonal fly fishing rod. The mailing list called *Rodmakers* is one of my sources of getting technical information where many friends helped me by experienced advice. The book by Everett Garrison and Hoagy Carmichael Jr., also influenced me very much and it is still alive as the bible of rodmaking in my country.

Max Rod is hand-planed and mostly varnished by



traditional Japanese *Urushi*; the surface is coated and hand-polished many times to get an oriental deep and clear coffee color with aroma.

Fortunately *Urushi* is tough against both moisture and heating. It is dried by absorbing moisture and its effects continue after that. It is possible to heat treat the rod to straighten a curve after the varnishing is completed and after the rod is used for fishing. *Urushi* is the sap which is taken from poison trees, called *Urushi*. To use this natural lacquer, we need special care in handling. We have to try not to touch this on the skin to avoid having a rash. (After drying, it is all right.)

Rodmaking is an exchange of cultures among respective countries of east and west, north and south. I hope this culture of making a bamboo rod continues forever and becomes a bridge of friendship among all the countries in the world.



ABOVE - A series of Max's Jack Knife Royal 5'6" #3, #4, *Urushi* finished wood filler, 925 cast silver cap and slide ring.



Gloss of *Urushi* finish.

BELOW - Max's Para 17 8'6" #8 hollow built, made of *Hachiku* (one of the Japanese bamboo species); sections and wood filler are finished with *Urushi*. The taper is copied from Paul H. Young's Parabolic #17.

