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A look at

Tora's kukri

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- Gear reviews and tests - Edged tools - Long blades -



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Description :

A look at a few kukri from toratoratora.co.uk, which proposes an excellent range of quality blades.

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The Khukuri or Kukri is the traditional knife of Nepal. It serves every day for a multitude of tasks. Its aspect is unique and makes it easy to recognize, with its bent blade. The Kukri has been made famous through history from its use by the fierce and fearless British and Indians Gurkhas regiments.

[Tora](#) is a firm based in UK, and sells kukri (khukuri) [\[1\]](#) that are made for them in Nepal through their own channels and craftsmen. Simon Hengle, is a martial artist specialist of the kukri which is behind this, and he brings his knowledge in order to propose kukri that are historically correct. And no doubt the man knows what he does and has the knowledge needed. Their production is unique, and well worth a look.

Tora kukri are different. They differ from the rest of the Nepalese production by having generally bigger blades, that are also thinner than the 1 or 1.5 cm thick spines you can see on most modern production (which Simon does not hesitate to call "tourist models"). Tora's spines are rarely more than 0.8 to 1cm at the base of the handle and tapering constantly toward the tip.

The handles are curved, so that the back of the handle does not penetrate the hand and wrist while chopping, that's the ergonomics as they were designed on the older models, models which inspire the tora line. The handle are also not round, but rather elliptic, a very good shape.

Handling them is interesting, as the reach is maximum, and the weight very reasonable for such big blades. The ergonomics are just the best I ever encountered on a kukri, and the balance of the thin blades makes them fantastic to handle.

Tora presents some pure traditional models as well as some woodcraft/bushcraft models. The traditional models come generally with a 0.5 mm primary edge, which is the standard used in Nepal, but which to my taste, while sufficient is not really the best for cutting wood.

The bushcraft models come with a 1 cm primary edge, which has a much more acute angle and is effectively excellent for bushcraft, wood cutting, chopping and shaping, and general utility.

All edges are slightly convex.

The sheath are all of the flat kind which makes them easy and unobtrusive to wear. Some models come with a big "bushcraft" karda instead of the classical chakma (burnisher/steel) and karda (little knife).

Indeed like all kukri, the Tora are differentially tempered using a teapot, pouring water on the red hot blade, following the traditional method. Generally the full quench line goes from a few cm from the tip to a few cm on the cho (the funny looking hole at the base of the ricasso).

After my first Tora, I got rid of all the kukri I owned that had a straight handle, so painful to the hands, and dangerous to use. [\[2\]](#)

The camping kukri



The Camping kukri As it comes.

I obtained this kukri on Tora's forums, one of two similar kukris, during some special deals, they are not sold in the main line on their web site, but it does not matter, any piece is fully hand made and unique anyway.



A good forester tool

The kukri is shorter than most Tora production, but still a 12 " blade and 23 oz weight, at a price of 29.50 £ +P&P. Inspection shows amazing craftsmanship, a light thin blade, very nice rosewood handle, well built sheath, and two small karda/chakma. it comes with a 1 cm edge, and therefore has a very thin and performing edge.



Temper line I am lucky, the best temper line I have met on a kukri.

Revelation of the tempering line shows an amazing work, Normally kukri are fully tempered from 3 cm from the tip to 3 cm of the ricasso (cho), this one has a temper line on the tip to 3cm of the ricasso.

Tora's kukri



Seasoned wood. Sticks a bit but goes easy through seasoned pine.

Nice curves Note the curved handle.

The ergonomics of the handle are good, it fits the hand well, and the curvature of the handle helps for chopping movements.



On the belt Not a small pack, but not a problem to carry. Needless to say, it stays mostly in my pack, as I do not like to frighten people on the tracks.

The sheath is light very flat, light and unobtrusive. a quality sheath!



Hacking seasoned wood Yes it works well, I compared with a hatchet and a small golok, and the size gives a lot of power.

In use, the blade shows excellent penetration. Though the state when I received it was sharp, I resharpened it to my likings. It bites well, as the edge angle is acute, it sharpens easily, even in the field, and lasts a long time : the steel is good and well tempered, not too hard, nor too soft.



Penetration test Very good penetration in green wood.

Tora's kukri

The penetration is therefore totally amazing in green wood, a combination of the thin blade, acute edge, and lightly convex edge profile. I had a valiant golok of similar size and weight, the day I took the picture, and I could not decide which one worked best for cutting cherry saplings or 5 inches seasoned dead willow trunks

The blade is light enough to be used for a variety of tasks, from machete work to axe work, light or heavy, use as a smaller knife, scrape, handle from the back of the blade, this is a winner! There is no point to carry a one kilogram blade of 9 inches when a 12 inches of a lesser weight can do a better job. Most of the Tora I own show this versatility, the only real difference is that they have generally a more pointy tip (which to me is even better).

In conclusion, a quality product at a reasonable price. The only trouble I had with it, was that the butt plate was moving a bit, a problem which I fixed by inserting some super-glue, and hammering the pinned tang. This is due to the wood shrinking between damp Nepal and dry Europe, no big deal, and the kind of trouble to expect. Tora has anyway the reputation to replace any item which is not up to the expectations of their clients.



In the forest No, I did not fell this huge tree.

More Toras

I own more Tora than simply this Camping kukri, but reviewing them all in the same way would quickly bore the reader. Just let me tell that in my experience, they all show the same quality and interesting features.



Special forces MK IV

The Special forces MK IV: A very nice flat tang kukri with a bushcraft karda. The one you see here was re-handled by myself, as I bought it on a special deal with a handle slabs that were a bit loose. Nevertheless a very nice kukri. I also reworked the edge to make it more acute for bushcraft.



Angh khola kukri

The Angh kola : a beautiful kukri with a deeply bent handle and a nice deep fuller. The strongly bent handle makes it the kukri I prefer to handle. The edge was reworked, as it came with a 0.5mm edge which was definitively to obtuse to do any other thing than MA



Officer's kukri

Officer's kukri : another double fullered quality kukri with a excellent balance.



Tin Chirra kukri

Tin Chirra A triple fuller kukri, very light and with a nice thin edge (1cm edge), it is the other kukri that I take to the woods, as it cuts well and weights reasonably.



Sherpa Sirupate

Sherpa Sirupate A huge kukri, very long and very impressive. Not really something to carry in the field, unless the purpose is to frighten people[:-)] , It is a MA blade, but well, I fell in love with it[:-)]

Conclusion

[Tora's](#) range is unique. No other maker is more historically accurate, or making so good reproduction of ancient models, but they are also inventive on some others. Yet these models are for use, and hard use. the new models are good and consistent. these blades are designed by people who use them for people to use them!

But more than just the historical accuracy, Tora kukri have the right balance. The blades, which are thinner than the concurrence allow for extremely good performances, and less bulk weight to carry , which is a major factor for a big blade. Yet their reach is good, and because of the balance, their power impressing.

Tora makes kukri not as they are made today for the market outside Nepal, or the tourists, but as they were made, are sometimes still made in the villages, and should be made !

The steel is good, certainly spring steel, and certainly not railways rails, so, it is much better than what I have met on purely Nepalese companies (khukuri house, khukuri palace...), and at the level of Himalayan Imports' khukuri. The quality is definitively comparable with the best of the best of the traditional makers on the market today (which regarding steel in my mind is mainly called Himalayan Imports), we are not talking simply of quality, but of high quality.

The service is good, the blades are good and reasonably priced, what else could we demand! A less tempting and inventive Simon Hengle, maybe !

The range comprises some kukri which are better suited for martial artists, as they are more weapon and less tools, so when choosing a kukri, choose wisely about the use, and choose a kukri that is designed for the use you intend.

A bushcrafter will preferably choose a model with a 1 cm edge, unless he does not care having a lot of work to do to convert a rather obtuse 5mm edge into a wood working 1 cm acute edge. Indeed for such use, the models with a big karda are interesting, as they provide a usable smaller knife (though I think the handle could benefit being a bit larger). They do have a special bushcraft model.

One of these will replace a knife and a small axe without problem.

Another advantage, and none the least, is for EEC buyers, Tora is in the EEC space, so there is no duty taxes, or VAT to add, and minimal P&P to pay. A consideration worth remembering in case a return is needed. It turns out that if you count taxes, VAT and transport, a cheap kukri bought directly on internet in a Nepalese shop will cost the same, if not more than a Tora, without the same guaranties or quality, trust me on this, I have been there, and done that.

The best way to buy in my opinion, is on their [forums](#) through their Deal Of the Day (DOD), which happen at variable frequencies, mostly monthly.

Post-scriptum :

Please do not play with big bladed knives without reading [Handling and working with knives, big blades, axes and hatchets](#). first.

- 12/03/2007 Creation 1.0
- 16/03/2007 Small additions, complements, orthographic corrections. 1.1

Tora's kukri

[1] I am taking the convention that kukri and khukuri are foreign words, and that their plural is invariant. Kukri is the term used by Tora, so it is the one we will use here.

[2] This is indeed a very personal perception, different handles styles fit different hands.