Chinese Scissors

These scissors are covered with oil. The first thing you should do is carefully wipe them clean.

These scissors have changed little in the last 300 years. On this particular style, the recessed portion in the middle of the blade is formed by a drop hammer; that has been the only apparent change in three centuries. Otherwise, these tools are hand-forged and assembled (a soft iron rivet through the blades with a pair of keeper washers on the outside) just as they were when Champlain was a boy. The scissors should come adjusted ready to use. If you do not like the way they work, you can adjust the mechanism. It is slightly more primitive than you might expect, but certainly equal to anything the market has to offer today.

Tightening the blades

If you find the blades sloppy, you can tighten them by laying the scissors on a piece of steel and tapping the iron rivet on the edge. You will find that the scissors tighten quite quickly with relatively light taps.

Loosening the scissors

You can loosen the scissors by opening them, sliding a screwdriver blade into the center recess and then closing the scissors. This will tend to spread them a bit. If you do this a couple of times and they are still not loose enough, do it one more time but tap the screwdriver a little deeper into the join; this will stretch the rivet slightly.

You probably will never have to adjust the tension of these scissors; quite frankly, they stay in adjustment better than most scissors that have a nut and bolt join.

The scissors are quite sharp when they come to you. If you look carefully at the edges you will see a line in the metal somewhere between the main bevel and the narrow cutting bevel. This line shows the junction between the iron body and the steel that has been laminated to it to create the cutting edges. This is a sophisticated process and if it were done anywhere but in China, the end product would cost a lot more. This hard steel will take a fine edge and hold it for a long time. When you first use the scissors you will see just how good this edge is.

Sharpening

That thin layer of steel just described withstands dulling well but when it eventually requires sharpening, you can use a stone on the narrow bevel next to the cutting edge. They can be sharpened this way several times before the bevel widens unacceptably. If you happen to have a belt sander with a fine belt, this works quite well on the scissors also.

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