WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A cutting apparatus including a chuck table for holding a workpiece thereon, a cutting unit having a cutting blade rotatably mounted for cutting the workpiece held on the chuck table, and a cutting blade changing unit for automatically mounting and dismounting the cutting blade on and from the cutting unit, ~~wherein~~

the cutting blade changing unit includes a cutting blade stocker having a plurality of cutting blade storage units for individually storing the cutting blades and a cutting blade delivery mechanism for delivering cutting blades between the cutting blade stocker and the cutting unit,

the cutting blade stocker includes a storage determining unit for determining whether or not a cutting blade is stored on one of the cutting blade storage units, ~~and~~

the cutting blade delivery mechanism delivers a cutting blade to the one of the cutting blade storage units if the storage determining unit determines that a cutting blade is not stored on the one of the cutting blade storage units, and

a control unit controls operation of the cutting blade delivery mechanism, wherein

the storage determining unit includes a lighting member for applying light to the one of the cutting blade storage units and an image capturing device for detecting light from the one of the cutting blade storage units to which the light is applied by the lighting member and converting the detected light into an electric signal, and

the control unit includes

a brightness calculating section for calculating a brightness from an area included in an image captured by the storage determining unit and corresponding to the cutting blade delivered to the one of the cutting blade storage units,

a threshold value storage section for storing a threshold value used as a criterion for differentiating between the brightness of an area included in the captured image and corresponding to the cutting blade when the cutting blade is stored on the one of the cutting blade storage units and the brightness of an area included in the captured image and corresponding to the cutting blade when the cutting blade is not stored on the one of the cutting blade storage units and the cutting blade is placed in a position that is spaced a predetermined distance from the one of the cutting blade

storage units, and

a determining section for determining whether or not the cutting blade is stored on the one of the cutting blade storage units by comparing the brightness calculated by the brightness calculating section with the threshold value stored in the threshold value storage section.

~~2. The cutting apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:~~

~~a control unit for controlling operation of the cutting blade delivery mechanism, wherein~~

~~the storage determining unit includes a lighting member for applying light to the one of the cutting blade storage units and an image capturing device for detecting light from the one of the cutting blade storage units to which the light is applied by the lighting member and converting the detected light into an electric signal, and~~

~~the control unit includes~~

~~a brightness calculating section for calculating a brightness from an area included in an image captured by the storage determining unit and corresponding to the cutting blade delivered to the one of the cutting blade storage units,~~

~~a threshold value storage section for storing a threshold value used as a criterion for differentiating between the brightness of an area included in the captured image and corresponding to the cutting blade when the cutting blade is stored on the one of the cutting blade storage units and the brightness of an area included in the captured image and corresponding to the cutting blade when the cutting blade is not stored on the one of the cutting blade storage units and the cutting blade is placed in a position that is spaced a predetermined distance from the one of the cutting blade storage units, and~~

~~a determining section for determining whether or not the cutting blade is stored on the one of the cutting blade storage units by comparing the brightness calculated by the brightness calculating section with the threshold value stored in the threshold value storage section.~~

2~~3~~. The cutting apparatus according to claim 1~~2~~, wherein

the cutting blade includes a recording portion where one or both of a type and characteristics of the cutting blade are recorded, and

the determining section determines one or both of

the type and characteristics of the cutting blade on a basis of an area included in the image captured by the storage determining unit and corresponding to the recording portion.

34. The cutting apparatus according to claim 1 or 22 or 3, wherein

the lighting member includes an oblique lighting member.

45. The cutting apparatus according to any one of claims 2 or 3through 4, wherein

each of the cutting blade storage units is disposed on a face side of a transparent support member,

the storage determining unit is disposed on a reverse side of the support member, and

the storage determining unit captures an image of the cutting blade through the support member.