

DESCRIPTION

METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR STICKING TAPE

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FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a method and an apparatus for sticking a tape to an adherend such as a semiconductor wafer. More particularly, the invention relates to a method and an apparatus capable of preventing the warpage of an adherend to which a tape has been stuck.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

In the manufacture of semiconductors, circuits are formed on the surface of a semiconductor wafer (simply "wafer" hereinafter) and the back surface of the wafer is ground to achieve a small and uniform thickness and to remove an oxide layer on the back surface.

The step of grinding the wafer back (backgrinding step) involves sticking of a protective tape to the wafer surface having circuits to protect the circuit surface.

In a common method of sticking a protective tape to a wafer, a protective tape sized larger than the wafer outer diameter is stuck, then a cutter 102 is inserted into the protective tape T at a position along the outer peripheral edge

of the wafer W, and the protective tape T is cut out by swiveling the cutter 102 or a mounting table of the wafer W, as illustrated in Fig. 14 (see for example JP-A-H10-330022).

The recent spread of IC cards and cellular phones has entailed further reduction of wafer thickness, and therefore semiconductor chips have been required to be reduced in thickness to 100 to 50 μm or below.

However, the production of such thin wafers has resulted in the following problem when a protective tape is stuck to a wafer by the above method prior to the backgrinding.

The problem is when the protective tape T is cut out to the size of outer periphery of the wafer W with slight contact of the cutter 102 with the outer periphery of the wafer W, the cutter 102 is likely to damage the outer peripheral edge of the wafer W. Thin wafers for fabrication of thin semiconductor chips as described above can crack from the damage and become brittle such that they break upon a small impact. Moreover, positioning the tip of the cutter 102 in the vicinity of the edge of the wafer W requires fine adjustment, and any misalignment can bring the cutter 102 into contact with the wafer W to damage the outer peripheral edge of the wafer W.

The protective tape stuck to the wafer is generally long and tensioned, namely, the protective tape having a tension is stuck to the wafer. Accordingly, the protective tape stuck

to the wafer keeps a substantial residual stress. Thinning such wafers by backgrinding lowers the wafer's strength and easily results in warpage.

Approaches to the aforesaid problems have been made from viewpoints of protective tapes and sticking apparatuses, but have not led to a sufficient solution.

In a conventional approach, a protective tape is previously cut to approximately the shape of a wafer and is stuck to the wafer. This method is illustrated in Fig. 15, in which a protective tape 112 cut to the shape of a wafer 114 is delivered to the wafer 114 by folding a release film 152 at a sharp angle by means of a peel plate 160 above the wafer 114; the protective tape 112 is stuck to the wafer 114 by relative movement of a mounting table 116 and a press roll 150.

This conventional method, however, causes the protective tape 112 to have a large angle θ to the wafer 114 because of the presence of the peel plate 160. Therefore, the protective tape 112 largely changes the traveling direction at the press roll 150, requiring a further tension. As such, the problem of wafer warpage is not fully solved.

The warpage problem can occur not only when protective tapes are stuck to wafers, but also in the sticking of die-attach films to silicon wafers or IC chips, optical films such as polarizing films and phase difference films to LCD

panels, labels to compact discs, and coverlay films to flexible substrates.

The present invention has been made to solve the problems mentioned hereinabove. It is therefore an object of the invention to provide a method and an apparatus for sticking a tape capable of preventing the warpage of an adherend to which the tape has been stuck.

DISCLOSURE OF THE INVENTION

10 A method for sticking a tape according to the present invention is capable of sticking a tape having a sticky surface to a surface of an adherend, and comprises:

preparing the tape for sticking to the adherend;

15 attaching the tape via a non-sticky surface to a support film having a sticky and removable surface via the surface;

while subjecting the support film to tension, causing the sticky surface of the tape on the support film to be opposed to a surface of the adherend mounted on a mounting table;

20 sticking the tape to the adherend by pressing the support film; and

releasing the support film from the tape.

In the method, the tape is cut beforehand to shape for sticking to the adherend and is thereafter attached to and held on the support film. Accordingly, the tape can be opposed to

and stuck to the adherend while the tension to the tape is diffused to the support film. Moreover, the tape can be approximated to the adherend and be stuck thereto at a small angle, so that the tension required for the sticking can be reduced. Accordingly, the tape stuck to the adherend has less residual stress and the adherend can be prevented from warpage.

In another aspect, the method for sticking a tape according to the present invention comprises attaching a plurality of the tapes to the long support film along a longer direction, and transferring the support film whereby the tapes are stuck to respective adherends by repetition of operations (i) to (iv):

(i) causing the sticky surface of the tape on the support film to be opposed to a surface of the adherend mounted on the mounting table;

(ii) sticking the tape to the adherend by pressing the support film;

(iii) releasing the support film from the tape; and

(iv) mounting a new adherend on the mounting table.

In the method, a plurality of the tapes to be stuck to adherends are attached to the long support film across the longer length, and the support film is transferred to cause each tape to be opposed to and be stuck to the respective adherend on the mounting table. Therefore, continuous

sticking of the tapes to respective adherends can be thus achieved.

In a further aspect, the method for sticking a tape according to the present invention involves a frame member for

5 fixing the support film and comprises:

attaching and fixing the support film to the frame member such that the tape is included in a frame of the frame member;

causing the sticky surface of the tape in the frame of the frame member to be opposed to a surface of the adherend
10 mounted on the mounting table; and

sticking the tape to the adherend by pressing the support film in the frame of the frame member.

In the method, the support film is fixed with the frame member and the tape in the frame is stuck to the adherend.

15 Because of the frame member, the support film in the frame of the frame member is isolated and free from the tension to the support film out of the frame. Accordingly, the tape attached to the support film in the frame can be stuck in a less tensioned state. Therefore, the tape stuck to the adherend has less
20 residual stress and the possibility of the adherend being warped can be further reduced.

In another aspect, the method for sticking a tape according to the present invention comprises relatively moving the frame member to which the support film is attached and the

mounting table on which the adherend is mounted to perform alignment of the tape in the frame of the frame member with the adherend.

According to this structure, relative movement of the
5 frame member and the mounting table in a vertical direction permits the tape and the support film to be approximated sufficiently to the adherend to which they are stuck. Therefore, the tension to the tape during sticking can be reduced. Moreover, relative movement of the frame member and
10 the mounting table in a horizontal direction permits the tape and the support film to be aligned with the adherend to which they are stuck. Therefore, the sticking can be accomplished accurately without misalignment.

In another aspect, the method for sticking a tape
15 according to the present invention involves:

a fixing roll for attaching and fixing the support film to the frame member;

an sticking roll for sticking the tape to the adherend;

a wind-up roll for the support film; and

20 a fixed end of the support film;

and comprises:

moving the fixing roll toward the frame member while causing the fixing roll to press the support film between the wind-up roll and the fixed end, thereby transferring the tape

attached to the support film between the wind-up roll and the fixing roll in a direction opposite to the wind-up direction such that the tape is included in the frame of the frame member;

causing the fixing roll to press the support film to fix
5 the support film to the frame member;

causing the sticking roll to press the support film in the frame of the frame member to stick the tape to the adherend; and

moving the fixing roll away from the frame member
10 simultaneously with releasing the support film from the tape and winding up the support film on the wind-up roll.

In a still further aspect, the method for sticking a tape according to the present invention involves:

a fixing roll for attaching and fixing the support film
15 to the frame member;

an sticking roll for sticking the tape to the adherend; and

a clamping member for clamping the support film across the width;

20 and comprises:

clamping the support film at longer edge portions thereof with the clamping member and arranging the tape such that the tape is included in the frame of the frame member;

causing the fixing roll to press the support film to fix

the support film to the frame member;

causing the application roll to press the support film in the frame of the frame member to stick the tape to the adherend; and

5 releasing the support film from the tape by relatively moving the clamping member.

In the methods for sticking a tape according to the present invention, the adherend is a semiconductor wafer and the tape is a protective tape.

10 An apparatus for sticking a tape according to the present invention is adapted to stick a tape having a sticky surface to a surface of an adherend, and comprises:

a mounting table on which the adherend is mounted;

a frame member provided to include an adherend-mounting
15 surface of the mounting table;

a fixing roll for attaching and fixing a long support film to the frame member, the support film having a sticky and removable surface to which the tape is attached; and

an sticking roll for sticking the tape to the adherend;

20 the apparatus being constructed such that:

the support film is arranged above the frame member so that the tape is included in a frame of the frame member;

the fixing roll is caused to press the support film to fix the support film to the frame member;

the sticking roll is caused to press the support film in the frame of the frame member to stick the tape to the adherend; and

the support film is released from the tape.

5 In another aspect, the apparatus for sticking a tape according to the present invention further comprises:

a wind-up roll for the support film; and

a fixed end of the support film;

the apparatus being constructed such that:

10 the fixing roll is moved toward the frame member while pressing the support film between the wind-up roll and the fixed end, thereby transferring the tape attached to the support film between the wind-up roll and the fixing roll in a direction opposite to the wind-up direction such that the tape is included
15 in the frame of the frame member;

the fixing roll is caused to press the support film to fix the support film to the frame member;

the sticking roll is caused to press the support film in the frame of the frame member to stick the tape to the
20 adherend; and

the fixing roll is moved away from the frame member and simultaneously the support film is released from the tape and is wound on the wind-up roll.

In another aspect, the apparatus for sticking a tape

according to the present invention further comprises a clamping member for clamping the support film across the width, the apparatus being constructed such that:

the support film is clamped at longer edge portions thereof with the clamping member and the tape is arranged such that the tape is included in the frame of the frame member;

the fixing roll is caused to press the support film to fix the support film to the frame member;

the sticking roll is caused to press the support film in the frame of the frame member to stick the tape to the adherend; and

the support film is released from the tape by relatively moving the clamping member.

In the apparatuses according to the present invention, the tape is formed beforehand to shape for sticking to the adherend and is thereafter attached to and held on the support film. Accordingly, the tape can be opposed to and stuck to the adherend while the tension to the tape is diffused to the support film. Moreover, the tape can be approximated to the adherend and be stuck thereto at a small angle, so that the tension required for the sticking can be reduced. Accordingly, the tape stuck to the adherend has less residual stress and the adherend can be prevented from warpage.

Further, the support film is fixed by the frame member

and the tape in the frame is stuck to the adherend. Because of the frame member, the support film in the frame of the frame member is isolated and free from the tension to the support film out of the frame. Accordingly, the tape attached to the support film in the frame can be stuck in a less tensioned state. 5 Therefore, the tape stuck to the adherend has less residual stress and the adherend can be prevented from warpage.

Furthermore, a plurality of the tapes to be stuck to adherends are attached to the long support film along the longer 10 direction, and the support film is transferred to cause each tape to be opposed to and be stuck to the respective adherend on the mounting table. Continuous sticking of the tapes to respective adherends can be thus achieved.

In a still further aspect, the apparatus for sticking 15 a tape according to the present invention further comprises aligning means capable of relatively moving the frame member to which the support film is attached and the mounting table on which the adherend is mounted to perform alignment of the tape in the frame of the frame member with the adherend.

20 The aligning means performing relative movement of the frame member and the mounting table in a vertical direction permits the tape and the support film to be approximated sufficiently to the adherend to which they are stuck.

Therefore, the tension to the tape during sticking can be

reduced. Moreover, relative movement of the frame member and the mounting table in a horizontal direction permits the tape and the support film to be aligned with the adherend to which they are stuck. Therefore, the sticking can be accomplished
5 accurately without misalignment.

In another aspect, the apparatus for sticking a tape according to the present invention is adapted to stick a tape having a sticky surface to a surface of an adherend, and comprises:

10 a mounting table on which the adherend is mounted;
a press roll for pressing a long support film having a sticky and removable surface to which the tape is attached, to stick the tape to the adherend; and

a clamping member for clamping the support film across
15 the width;

the apparatus being constructed such that:

the support film is clamped at longer edge portions thereof with the clamping member and the clamping member is moved to cause the sticky surface of the tape on the support
20 film to be opposed to a surface of the adherend mounted on the mounting table;

the press roll is caused to press the support film to stick the tape to the adherend; and

the support film is released from the tape by relatively

moving the clamping member.

In the apparatuses for sticking a tape according to the present invention, the adherend is a semiconductor wafer and the tape is a protective tape.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a set of front views explaining the sticking operations by a method of the present invention;

Fig. 2 is a set of front views illustrating the sticking
10 involving a frame member by a method of the present invention;

Fig. 3 is a top view of Fig. 2;

Fig. 4 is a set of front views illustrating arrangements of a frame member and a mounting table;

Fig. 5 is a top view illustrating a configuration of the
15 frame member;

Fig. 6 is a top view illustrating a configuration of the frame member;

Fig. 7 is a set of front views illustrating an embodiment of an apparatus according to the present invention;

20 Fig. 8 is a top view of the apparatus of the embodiment shown in Fig. 7;

Fig. 9 is a set of front views illustrating an embodiment of how a protective tape is stuck and a release film is released in the embodiment of Fig. 7;

Fig. 10 is a set of front views illustrating an embodiment of an apparatus according to the present invention;

Fig. 11 is a top view of the apparatus of the embodiment shown in Fig. 10;

5 Fig. 12 is a set of front views illustrating an embodiment of an apparatus according to the present invention;

Fig. 13 is a set of perspective views illustrating how a tape to be stuck to an adherend is laminated with a support film;

10 Fig. 14 is a perspective view illustrating how the protective tape stuck to a wafer is cut to the shape of the wafer; and

Fig. 15 is a front view showing a conventional way for sticking a protective tape previously cut to wafer shape to
15 a wafer.

PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION

Embodiments of the present invention will be described hereinbelow with reference to drawings. Fig. 1 is a set of
20 front views explaining the sticking operations by a method of the present invention. Fig. 2 is a set of front views illustrating the sticking involving a frame member by a method of the present invention. Fig. 3 is a top view of Fig. 2.

As illustrated in Fig. 1, a tape 12 of a size

corresponding to that of an adherend 14 is prepared beforehand, and, with the tape 12 being attached to a support film 10, the support film 10 is pressed to stick the tape 12 to the adherend 14.

5 When the tape 12 is being stuck to the adherend 14, the support film 10 is held in a planar state with tension (Fig. 1(a)). In this state, the tape 12 attached to the support film 10 is held in a less tensioned state because the tension is stuck to the thick laminate of the support film 10 and the tape 10 12 and is diffused to the support film 10.

The tape 12 held in the above state is aligned with and opposed to the adherend 14 mounted on a mounting table 16, and a press roll 50 is rotated over the support film 10 to press and stick the tape 12 to the adherend 14 (Fig. 1(b)).

15 Because the tape 12 can be held in a planar state without excess tensions while the support film 10 is tensioned as mentioned above, the tape 12 can be stuck to the adherend 14 with reduced residual stress. Therefore, the adherend 14 to which the tape 12 has been stuck can be effectively prevented 20 from warpage.

Referring to the support film 10, the surface to which the tape 12 is attached has sticking properties such that the surface can hold the tape 12 and possesses removable properties such that the tape 12 can be released therefrom after the tape

12 has been stuck to the adherend 14. Therefore, the support film 10 can be released from the tape 12 after the tape 12 has been stuck to the adherend 14 (Fig. 1(c)).

The support film 10 may be formed by producing a sticky
5 and removable layer on a flexible substrate film by sticking a removable pressure-sensitive adhesive. The support films are not limited to pressure-sensitive adhesive coated films, and any films may be used as long as the tape 12 can be attached and held thereto and be released therefrom.

10 The tape 12 is formed to size corresponding to that of the adherend 14 by previously punching a long tape to desired shape. For example, when the protective tape 12 is stuck to the adherend 14 being a wafer, the protective tape 12 punched approximately to shape of the round wafer is prepared and is
15 attached to the support film 10. It will be appreciated that the tape 12 may have a size somewhat larger or smaller than that of the adherend 14.

Fig. 13 illustrates an embodiment of how the tape 12 is attached to the support film 10. Herein, the attachment of
20 a wafer-shaped protective tape to a support film will be described as an example. As shown in Fig. 13(a), the protective tape 12 is formed long and has a pressure-sensitive adhesive layer to which a release film 52 is attached along a longer direction. The long protective tape 12 is cut out

in a circular shape by swiveling a blade of rotary die cutter that is fitted with a cut-shaped blade on a roll face over the protective tape 12 or by cutting and inserting a blade of flat die cutter in a circular motion, without cutting the release
5 film 52. Subsequently, the protective tape 12 is released and removed while leaving the circular portions. Thereafter, the support film 10 approximately of the same width as the release film 52 is laminated to the release film 52 having the circular protective tapes 12 thereon (Fig. 13(b)). Thus, the long
10 support film 10 supports a plurality of the protective tapes 12, 12 ... attached separately from each other along a longer direction.

As described above, the present invention reduces the residual stress of the tape 10 stuck to the adherend 14 and
15 thereby prevents the warpage of the adherend 14 by sticking the tape 12 to the adherend 14 with the tape 12 being attached to the long support film 10. Furthermore, Figs. 2 and 3 illustrate another embodiment of the present invention. As illustrated, a frame member 18 is arranged in a position along
20 the outer circumference of the adherend 14, and the support film 10 is attached to the frame member 18 so that the tape 10 to be stuck to the adherend 14 will be included by the frame member 18 (Fig. 2(a)). The support film 10 in the frame is then pressed to stick the tape 12 to the adherend 14 (Fig. 2

(b)). By attaching and fixing the support film 10 to the frame member 18 as above, the support film 10 in the frame of the frame member 18 is blocked the tension to the support film 10 out of the frame.

5 Specifically, the support film 10 in the frame of the frame member 18 is attached to the frame member 18 and is blocked via the frame member 18 from the tension to the support film 10 out of the frame. Accordingly, excessive tensions to the framed support film can be avoided. Furthermore, as described
10 above, the tape 12 attached to the support film 10 is held in a less tensioned state because the tension is diffused to the support film 10. Therefore, pressing the framed support film 10 can stick the tape 12 to the adherend 14 with the residual stress of the tape 12 stuck to the adherend being further
15 reduced, thereby effectively preventing the warpage of the adherend 14.

 The frame member 18 is arranged above the upper surface of the mounting table 16 so as to include the adherend-mounting surface that is defined at a position on which the adherend
20 14 is mounted. The frame member 18 and the mounting table 16 are preferably arranged to permit free relative movement in a vertical direction by means of aligning means capable of adjusting their relative positions, as illustrated in Fig. 4(a). Descending the frame member 18 or ascending the mounting

table 16 approximates the adherend 14 and the tape 12 adequately, so that the subsequent pressing can be performed with high position accuracy while reducing the residual stress of the tape 12. Further preferably, the frame member 18 and the mounting table 16 are arranged to permit free relative movement in a horizontal direction by means of the aligning means so as to adjust the overlap of the adherend 14 and the tape 12.

Provided that conditions permit adequate alignment of the adherend 14 and the tape 12, the frame member 18 having a height such that the adherend 14 and the tape 12 have an appropriate clearance may be fixed to the mounting table 16 as shown in Fig. 4(b).

The shape of the frame member 18 is not particularly limited and may be square as illustrated in Fig. 3. In the illustrated case, when the support film 10 is pressed with the press roll 50, the principal surface of the press roll 50 should be smaller than the width of the frame member 18 and the width of the support film 10 may be smaller than the width of the frame member 18, as shown in Fig. 5.

For the adherend 14 being circular as a wafer, the frame member 18 may be a circular shape having a size slightly larger than that of the adherend, as illustrated in Fig. 6. In this case, the principal surface of the press roll 50 defines a circular protrudent portion 54 having a diameter larger than

that of the wafer; the press roll 50 is rotated over the frame member 18 to cause the protrudent portion 54 to press the support film 10.

Hereinbelow, the sticking apparatuses according to the invention will be described with reference to an embodiment in which the protective tape is stuck to the adherend being a wafer.

The sticking apparatus of an embodiment shown in Fig. 7 includes a frame member 18 and a mounting table 16 as described above, and further includes a fixing roll 22 for attaching and fixing a support film 10 to the frame member 18, an sticking roll 24 for sticking a protective tape 12 to a wafer 14, and a wind-up roll 26 for the support film 10. In the figure, 20 denotes a feed out roll that feeds out the support film 10, and 21 denotes pinch rolls.

The frame member 18 is provided above the mounting table 16 so as to include an adherend-mounting surface of the mounting table. In the present embodiment, the frame member and the mounting table are arranged to permit relative movement in horizontal and vertical directions by means of aligning means (not shown), as illustrated in Fig. 4(a). This structure permits alignment of the wafer 14 on the mounting table 16 with the protective tape 12 so as to overlap the wafer 14 and the protective tape 12 with a predetermined positional relation

and to approximate them adequately in an opposed relation. The adherend-mounting surface of the mounting table 16 is formed with a plurality of pores, through which a vacuum apparatus suctions through a vacuum tube or the like to fix by suction
5 the wafer 14 to the adherend-mounting surface of the mounting table 16.

The apparatus of the present embodiment performs the following operations to apply the protective tape 12 to the wafer 14.

10 The first operation involves feed of the support film 10 from the feed out roll 20 and winding thereof on the wind-up roll 26. This transfers the protective tape 12 stuck to the support film 10 to between the wind-up roll 26 and the fixing roll 22 (Fig. 7(a)).

15 The protective tapes 12 may be attached to the support film 10 by means of the pinch rolls 21 as illustrated in Fig. 9(a). Alternatively, the protective tapes 12 may be previously cut out on the release film 52 and be laminated with the support film 10, and the release film 52 may be released
20 by means of the pinch rolls 21, as illustrated in Fig. 9(b).

Subsequently, the feed out roll 20 is stopped to cancel the feed of the support film 10, and the fixing roll 22 is moved toward the frame member 18 while pressing the support film 10 between the wind-up roll 26 and a fixed end of the support film

10 (feed out roll 20). Consequently, the protective tape 12 that has been previously positioned between the wind-up roll 26 and the fixing roll 22 is transferred away from the wind-up roll 26 in a direction opposite to the wind-up direction. The
5 protective tape 12 is then transferred via the fixing roll 22 and is arranged so as to be included in the frame of the frame member 18 (Fig. 7(b)).

In the state described above, the fixing roll 22 presses the support film 10 against the frame member 18 to fix the
10 support film.

Subsequently, the frame member 18 and the mounting table 16 are aligned by relative movements as necessary; for example, the protective tape 12 and the wafer 14 are approximated and opposed to each other with a clearance of about 1 to 3 mm.
15 Thereafter, the sticking roll 24 is moved on the upper surface of the frame member 18 (Fig. 7(c) and Fig. 8) and is rotated over the framed support film 10 to press the same and to stick the protective tape 12 to the wafer 14 (Fig. 7(d)).

After completion of the sticking of the protective tape
20 to the wafer 14, the sticking roll 24 is moved out of the frame of the frame member 18. Subsequently, the fixing roll 22 is moved away from the frame member 18, and the support film 10 is released from the protective tape 12 and is wound on the wind-up roll 26 (Fig. 7(e)).

After the wafer 14 with the protective tape 12 stuck thereon has been dismounted from the mounting table 16, a new wafer is delivered and mounted. These operations may be manual or fully automated. When the new wafer 14 has been mounted
5 on the mounting table 16, the aforementioned operations are repeated to apply the protective tapes 12, 12 ... each to the respective wafers 14, 14

The sticking apparatus of an embodiment shown in Fig. 10 includes a mounting table 16, a frame member 18, a fixing
10 roll 32 for attaching and fixing a support film 10 to the frame member 18, an sticking roll 34 for sticking a protective tape 12 to a wafer 14, and chucks (clamping member) 36 for clamping the support film 10 at edge portions thereof across the width.

The frame member 18 is provided above the mounting table
15 16 so as to include an adherend-mounting surface of the mounting table. In the present embodiment, the frame member and the mounting table are arranged to permit relative movement in horizontal and vertical directions by means of aligning means (not shown). This structure permits alignment of the wafer
20 14 on the mounting table 16 with the protective tape 12 so as to overlap the wafer 14 and the protective tape 12 with a predetermined positional relation and to approximate them adequately in an opposed relation.

The apparatus of the present embodiment performs the

following operations to apply the protective tape 12 to the wafer 14. First, a pair of the chucks 36 clamp edge portions of the support film 10 and one pass of the support film 10 is withdrawn from the feed out roll 20 while the chucks 36 pull
5 the support film; the support film is held so as to cover the frame member 18. In the above operation, the feed out roll 20 may be rotated with a torque motor or the like in a direction opposite to the feeding direction of the support film 10 to maintain the tension of the support film 10 between the feed
10 out roll 20 and the chucks 36. The protective tape 12 is then arranged so as to be included in the frame of the frame member 18 (Fig. 10(a)).

Subsequently, the fixing roll 32 is moved over the upper surface of the frame member 18 and presses the support film
15 10 to fix the same to the frame member 18 (Fig. 10(b) and Fig. 11).

Thereafter, the frame member 18 and the mounting table 16 are aligned by relative movements as necessary; for example, the protective tape 12 and the wafer 14 are approximated and
20 opposed to each other with a clearance of about 1 to 3 mm. Subsequently, the sticking roll 34 is moved on the upper surface of the frame member 18 and is rotated over the framed support film 10 to press the same and to stick the protective tape 12 to the wafer 14 (Fig. 10(c)).

After completion of the sticking of the protective tape 12 to the wafer 14, the application roll 34 is moved out of the frame of the frame member 18. Subsequently, the support film 10 is released from the protective tape 12 stuck to the wafer 14 by predetermined means. The present embodiment involves a cutter 40, which cuts the support film 10 being held by holding means 42 capable of fixing through adhesion of the support film (Fig. 10(d)); thereafter the chucks 36 clamping the support film 10 cut off are moved to release the support film 10 from the protective tape 12. After the wafer 14 with the protective tape 12 stuck thereon has been dismounted from the mounting table 16, a new wafer is delivered and mounted. When the new wafer 14 has been mounted on the mounting table 16, the aforementioned operations are repeated to stick the protective tapes 12, 12 ... each to the respective wafers 14, 14

The sticking apparatus of an embodiment shown in Fig. 12 includes a mounting table 16 for mounting a wafer 14, a press roll 50 for pressing a support film 10 to stick a protective tape 12 to the wafer 14, and chucks 36 for clamping the support film 10 at edge portions thereof across the width.

The apparatus of the present embodiment performs the following operations to stick the protective tape 12 to the wafer 14. First, a pair of the chucks 36 clamp edge portions

of the support film 10 and one pass of the support film 10 is withdrawn from the feed out roll 20 while the chucks 36 pull the support film; the support film is held so as to cover the mounting table 16. In the above operation, the feed out roll
5 20 may be rotated with a torque motor or the like in a direction opposite to the feeding direction of the support film 10 to maintain the tension of the support film 10 between the feed out roll 20 and the chucks 36. The support film 10 is then arranged so that the sticky surface of the protective tape 12
10 on the support film 10 is opposed to a surface of the wafer 14 on the mounting table (Fig. 12(a)).

Subsequently, the press roll 50 is brought into contact with the mounting table 16 through the support film 10 (Fig. 12(b)) and is rotated toward the wafer 14 to press the
15 protective tape 12 to the wafer 14 through the support film 10 and to stick the protective tape to the wafer (Fig. 12(c)). This sticking operation is preferably performed in a manner such that the tension by the rotation of the feed out roll 20 in a direction opposite to the feed out direction of the support
20 film 10 is relaxed by controlling the drive of the torque motor to an extent such that the support film 10 that is not stuck to any wafer 14 will not contact with any wafer 14. This reduces the tension to the protective tape 12 and leads to further reduction of warpage of the wafer 14 to which the protective

tape 12 has been stuck.

After completion of the sticking of the protective tape to the wafer 14, the support film 10 is released from the protective tape 12 stuck to the wafer 14 by operations similar to those of the embodiment shown in Fig. 10 ((d) and (e)). When the support film 10 has been released and a new wafer 14 has been mounted on the mounting table 16, the aforementioned operations are repeated to stick the protective tapes 12, 12 ... each to the respective wafers 14, 14

The present invention is not limited to the embodiments presented hereinabove and any modifications and alternations are possible without departing from the scope of the present invention.

The present invention can be applied not only to the sticking of protective tapes to wafers but also to any cases in which the adherend can be warped by residual stress of the tape stuck thereto, with examples including the sticking of die-attach films (used for bonding IC chips to lead frames or substrates) to silicon wafers or IC chips, optical films such as polarizing films and phase difference films to LCD panels, labels to compact discs, and coverlay films to flexible substrates.

CLAIMS

1. A method for sticking a tape having a sticky surface to a surface of an adherend, comprising:

5 preparing the tape for sticking to the adherend;
attaching the tape via a non-sticky surface to a support film having a sticky and removable surface via the surface;
while subjecting the support film to tension, causing the sticky surface of the tape on the support film to be opposed
10 to a surface of the adherend mounted on a mounting table;
sticking the tape to the adherend by pressing the support film; and
releasing the support film from the tape.

15 2. The method for sticking a tape according to claim 1, which comprises attaching a plurality of the tapes to the long support film along a longer direction, and transferring the support film whereby the tapes are stuck to respective adherends by repetition of operations (i) to (iv):

20 (i) causing the sticky surface of the tape on the support film to be opposed to a surface of the adherend mounted on the mounting table;

(ii) sticking the tape to the adherend by pressing the support film;

- (iii) releasing the support film from the tape; and
- (iv) mounting a new adherend on the mounting table.

3. The method for sticking a tape according to claim
5 1 or 2, which involves a frame member for fixing the support
film and comprises:

attaching and fixing the support film to the frame member
such that the tape is included in a frame of the frame member;

causing the sticky surface of the tape in the frame of
10 the frame member to be opposed to a surface of the adherend
mounted on the mounting table; and

sticking the tape to the adherend by pressing the support
film in the frame of the frame member.

15 4. The method for sticking a tape according to claim
3, which comprises relatively moving the frame member to which
the support film is attached and the mounting table on which
the adherend is mounted to perform alignment of the tape in
the frame of the frame member with the adherend.

20

5. The method for sticking a tape according to claim
3 or 4, which involves:

a fixing roll for attaching and fixing the support film
to the frame member;

an sticking roll for sticking the tape to the adherend;
a wind-up roll for the support film; and
a fixed end of the support film;
and comprises:

- 5 moving the fixing roll toward the frame member while
causing the fixing roll to press the support film between the
wind-up roll and the fixed end, thereby transferring the tape
attached to the support film between the wind-up roll and the
fixing roll in a direction opposite to the wind-up direction
10 such that the tape is included in the frame of the frame member;
causing the fixing roll to press the support film to fix
the support film to the frame member;
causing the application roll to press the support film
in the frame of the frame member to stick the tape to the
15 adherend; and
moving the fixing roll away from the frame member
simultaneously with releasing the support film from the tape
and winding up the support film on the wind-up roll.

- 20 6. The method for sticking a tape according to claim
3 or 4, which involves:

a fixing roll for attaching and fixing the support film
to the frame member;
an sticking roll for sticking the tape to the adherend;

and

a clamping member for clamping the support film across the width;

and comprises:

5 clamping the support film at longer edge portions thereof with the clamping member and arranging the tape such that the tape is included in the frame of the frame member;

causing the fixing roll to press the support film to fix the support film to the frame member;

10 causing the sticking roll to press the support film in the frame of the frame member to stick the tape to the adherend;

and

releasing the support film from the tape by relatively moving the clamping member.

15

7. The method for sticking a tape according to any one of claims 1 to 6, wherein the adherend is a semiconductor wafer and the tape is a protective tape.

20

8. An apparatus for sticking a tape having a sticky surface to a surface of an adherend, which apparatus comprises:

a mounting table on which the adherend is mounted;

a frame member provided to include an adherend-mounting surface of the mounting table;

a fixing roll for attaching and fixing a long support film to the frame member, the support film having a sticky and removable surface to which the tape is attached; and

an sticking roll for sticking the tape to the adherend;

5 the apparatus being constructed such that:

the support film is arranged above the frame member so that the tape is included in a frame of the frame member;

the fixing roll is caused to press the support film to fix the support film to the frame member;

10 the sticking roll is caused to press the support film in the frame of the frame member to stick the tape to the adherend; and

the support film is released from the tape.

15 9. The apparatus for sticking a tape according to claim 8, which further comprises:

a wind-up roll for the support film; and

a fixed end of the support film;

the apparatus being constructed such that:

20 the fixing roll is moved toward the frame member while pressing the support film between the wind-up roll and the fixed end, thereby transferring the tape attached to the support film between the wind-up roll and the fixing roll in a direction opposite to the wind-up direction such that the tape is included

in the frame of the frame member;

the fixing roll is caused to press the support film to
fix the support film to the frame member;

the sticking roll is caused to press the support film
5 in the frame of the frame member to stick the tape to the
adherend; and

the fixing roll is moved away from the frame member and
simultaneously the support film is released from the tape and
is wound on the wind-up roll.

10

10. The apparatus for sticking a tape according to
claim 8, which further comprises a clamping member for clamping
the support film across the width, the apparatus being
constructed such that:

15 the support film is clamped at longer edge portions
thereof with the clamping member and the tape is arranged such
that the tape is included in the frame of the frame member;

the fixing roll is caused to press the support film to
fix the support film to the frame member;

20 the sticking roll is caused to press the support film
in the frame of the frame member to stick the tape to the
adherend; and

the support film is released from the tape by relatively
moving the clamping member.

11. The apparatus for sticking a tape according to any one of claims 8 to 11, which further comprises aligning means capable of relatively moving the frame member to which the support film is attached and the mounting table on which the adherend is mounted to perform alignment of the tape in the frame of the frame member with the adherend.

12. An apparatus for sticking a tape having a sticky surface to a surface of an adherend, which apparatus comprises:

a mounting table on which the adherend is mounted;

a press roll for pressing a long support film having a sticky and removable surface to which the tape is attached, to stick the tape to the adherend; and

a clamping member for clamping the support film across the width;

the apparatus being constructed such that:

the support film is clamped at longer edge portions thereof with the clamping member and the clamping member is moved to cause the sticky surface of the tape on the support film to be opposed to a surface of the adherend mounted on the mounting table;

the press roll is caused to press the support film to stick the tape to the adherend; and

the support film is released from the tape by relatively moving the clamping member.

13. The apparatus for sticking a tape according to any
5 one of claims 8 to 12, wherein the adherend is a semiconductor wafer and the tape is a protective tape.