

# PAN

AMSTERDAM

## MANDARIN MANSION



### Uda Kunifusa tantō

Tempered steel, wood, lacquer, gold, silver, copper, silk  
52 cm

Blade unsigned, Etchū, 14th century  
Mountings signed Hakuryūsei, Edo, 19th century

Uda Kunifusa was a swordsmith whose lineage was originally from Yamato. They settled in Etchū, where Kunifusa became a student of Norishige, grandmaster of the Sōshū school. His dated works put his active period in the late 14th to early 15th century. This blade shows an overall shape that is very close to Norishige's work.

It comes mounted in late Edo period mountings consisting of a black lacquered scabbard with silver dragonflies. The hilt is wrapped with brown silk. It has a hairpin and by knife (kogai and kozuka) and two hilt ornaments (menuki) all adorned with the hollyhock crest of the ruling Tokugawa family.

The metal fittings are all adorned with swallows in flight, and signed "Hakuryūsei", a 19th century sword fitting maker who worked in Edo, then the capital of Japan and the shugun's seat of power.

The dragonfly is an auspicious symbol in Japan, that has been praised for its agility and hunting abilities. Like the samurai, it moves sideways without taking its eyes off its prey and rids the lands of pests.

The swallow is a harbinger of spring, diligent workers that are loyal to their nests. They, too, eat insects that could otherwise ruin crops so their arrival was always welcomed.