

## Murasaki Baren

The Murasaki baren is a truly fine, less expensive version of the traditional or *hon* baren. It is from the studio of the baren maker Kikuei who has long made the traditional, knotted bamboo fiber core barens and is now producing this less costly version for more democratic distribution and affordability. This wonderful baren has a synthetic, hand knotted core wrapped within a matte finish black lacquered *ategawa* (backing) using the traditional *takenokawa* (bamboo sheath). Like the traditional baren, the *ategawa* and coiled core can be rotated within the bamboo sheath to help prolong the life of that covering. And like the traditional baren, it is also slightly convex to facilitate the printing process. It is a very versatile baren.

The baren maker has given us a few tips about using this beautiful baren that we would like to pass on to you:

“Because the handmade core may initially cause *baren suji* (baren marks) on your paper, it is recommended that you pull a number of proofs before you begin editioning. Placing a fairly heavy paper

between the baren and printing paper while printing can also help. (The baren maker assures us that with use this tendency to make marks will lessen and eventually stop, and that was my experience with this baren.)

It is very important that you rotate the *ategawa* frequently to prevent holes from forming in the *takenokawa*.

It is also very important that you check the *takenokawa* for torn spots or holes. Replace a worn out *takenokawa* immediately to prevent damaging the inner coil and the printing paper.

Rub a drop of camellia oil into the face and sides of the *takenokawa* to keep it lubricated and pliable. We recommend you do this at least each day before you use the baren. It may be necessary to repeat the application of oil during the day if you are printing extensively.”

(Translated from instructions written by the Japanese craftsman who creates the Murasaki baren.)



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