

## SPOTLIGHT: Japanese Armor



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Year created: Edo Period

Five essential aspects of this work of art:

1. This is a grand armor of Japan, considered the finest example of the craft. It is a ceremonial suit of armor.
2. The suit consists of a mask to protect the face and intimidate the enemy, a helmet with a back shield to protect the neck from sword blows, a breastplate and joined back plate, mailed sleeves, thigh plates, shin guards and stirrups for the saddle.
3. The wooden box under the suit has the same feather marking as the armor and was used to protect the suit from weather and insects.
4. The crescent-shaped metal on the helmet would reflect the light into the eyes and the hole at the top of the helmet would let out bad thoughts of the warrior and let in the protection of the god of war – Hachiman.

5. The silk lacings and the lightness of the lacquered pieces of the armor allowed the warrior to move easily. The suit has 23 separate parts and needed 22 steps to put it on.

Possible questions to use when discussing this piece with museum visitors:

1. What elements of art can you find?
2. Who would wear and use this? How do you know and what do you see that makes you say that?
3. What does the feather symbol on the box and shoulder points tell you?
4. Why does the helmet have a half crescent?

Tour Type: Explore Asia, Learning to Look, Portraits and Places