

Room 6: Calligraphy

Lotus Sutra passed down at Hōryūji Temple

N-12: *Lotus Sutra*

This scroll is from a complete eight-volume transcription of the *Lotus Sutra* on yellow hemp paper. Faintly ruled lines of ink form vertical columns, each containing exactly 17 characters. All eight volumes are the work of one calligrapher, who rendered each character in thick, powerful brushstrokes. Compared to the controlled and orderly writing that typified the Nara period (710–794), this piece shows slightly looser brushwork, suggesting that it might be from the early Heian period (794–1192).

Room 6: Textiles

Fragmentary *Gigaku* Costume (*Hō*) and Its Replica: Post-Conservation Viewing

This exhibition presents a fragmentary 8th-century *hō* costume and its replica. The original was used in an ancient Japanese masked performance called *gigaku*. A full-scale conservation of the original *hō* was completed in 2020, and its replica was produced by the National Center for the Promotion of Cultural Properties and Tokyo National Museum based on studies conducted during the conservation.

The original is the only surviving *hō* costume outside of the Shōsōin Imperial Repository in Nara. Found among the uncatalogued objects of Hōryūji Temple, it is being shown here for the first time since its conservation. The replica reveals how the original looked in its initial, undamaged condition.

N-325: Fragmentary *Gigaku* Costume (*Hō*)

Nara period, 8th century; Plain-weave silk

This garment was probably used in an ancient masked performance called *gigaku*. The right sleeve and the right front section have survived. The fabric is yellow-dyed silk in plain weaving with the lining made of light brown plain-weave silk. There is a cord on the reverse side of the front section, suggesting this costume was worn with the right side wrapped over the left, the opposite of how kimono are worn today. During the conservation process, the costume was disassembled, strengthened with a backing of Japanese paper, and reassembled.

Replica of a *Gigaku* Costume (*Hō*)

2021; Plain-weave silk

This is a replica of the Fragmentary *Gigaku* Costume (*Hō*) (N-325). It was created based on studies of the structure, size, and tailoring of the original when it was disassembled. Both sides of the costume are sewn together, but a part of the lower edge has a slit opening, which is hemmed with a separate fabric. Because the original has a cord on the reverse side of the right section, the replica has another cord attached to the gusset on the left, so that the left front section could be tucked under the right. It was likely worn with a sash.

Supervision: The National Center for the Promotion of Cultural Properties, Tokyo National Museum

Production: Sengiren Co., Ltd.

Weaving: Nagai Textiles Co., Ltd. (Nagai Kōzaburō)

Dyeing: Konku, Mori Yoshinori

Sewing: Tailor Chinami (Sakamoto Tazuko)