

VAN PRUISSEN ASIAN ART



Japanese Armour of Okegawa nimai-dō gusoku type with a so-fukurin sujibachi kabuto

Japanese Armour of Okegawa nimai-dō gusoku type with a so-fukurin sujibachi kabuto
Japan, Edo period, 17th–18th century
Provenance: Private collection, the Netherlands

The armour is predominantly gilt-lacquered and laced in green and orange, mounted on fine beige-and-gold silk brocade. It is fitted throughout with kanamono (metal fittings) in kiku (chrysanthemum), hanabishi (diamond-flower), sakura (cherry blossom), and katabami (wood sorrel) designs, together with a mon in the form of a yahazu jūji (notched-end cross).

The kabuto is a brown-lacquered thirty-two-plate iron bowl with raised ridges, surmounted by a five-stage mixed-metal tehen kanamono issuing shinodare, and fitted with a gilt-copper so-fukurin (edging) and pierced igaki (fence-form crest). The mabisashi (visor) is covered in gilded leather, centred by an embossed inscription reading 八咫 (Hachiman) flanked by kiku medallions. The brim carries a gilt-lacquered maedate (frontal crest) in the form of an oni with curling horns and red-lacquered ears, set above a five-lame jikoro (neck guard).

The menpō (facial armour) is red-lacquered iron with a removable nose plate and deeply embossed features, with ase-nagashi (a channel to drain sweat) at the chin, and is fitted with a four-lame yodarekake (throat guard).

The dō, sode, kote, tekko, and suneate share a consistent textured lacquer surface throughout. The dō is constructed of okegawa (barrel-form) plates studded with kiku-form embossing, and comprises seven sections of five-lame kusazuri. The watagami (shoulder straps) are of checkered design, applied with the yahazu jūji mon in shakudō against a ring-punched ground. This consistency of surface treatment across every lacquered component points to a single, coherently conceived armour, rather than a later, composite assembly.

The armour is accompanied by its original red-lacquered storage box (yoroibako), bearing the character 前 (mae, “front”) in gold hiramaki-e to one side, the remaining three sides decorated with a leaf-form crest.