

An Edo period midnight blue silk Kesa Robe

£4,800



REF: 5730

Height: 209 cm (82.3")

Width: 104 cm (40.9")

Description

On a midnight blue ground.

Japan, circa 1800

The kesa has been worn by Buddhist priests in Japan since the Heian period (794-1185) as a symbol of the wearer's faith. Made as a single design, it is then cut into strips or squares and reassembled as an act of meditation on the Buddha's teachings. The rectangular shape represents formlessness, while the squares are reminiscent of mandalas depicting the Buddhist cosmos. The four smaller squares correspond to the Four Heavenly Kings, guardians of the cardinal directions, and the two larger squares represent the compassionate bodhisattvas.

Can be hung portrait or landscape