

Fabric Care for Old Silk

Old silk can be preserved and cared for easily in today's climate controlled homes and offices. If the silk is currently in good condition, not brittle, crumbling or worm-eaten, it can be used in the normal household with the following care:

1. Do not use with food stuffs. Animal fats are death to old silk.
2. Do not expose to direct sunlight. Sunlight literally rots old silk. Normal room lighting is fine.
3. If the silk does need cleaning, it can be taken to a reputable dry cleaner if you alert them that it is old and special care should be taken. The exception to this is painted or yuzen dyed items. Old silks with designs created by this technique can fade dramatically with modern cleaning solutions. Have the cleaner test on a corner or other obscure part of the item. Woven and embroidered designs are usually fine.
4. If you press an old silk piece that has metallic thread in it, ALWAYS use a press cloth and a steam setting. Many of the old pieces have actual gold and silver on the threads. If you put the iron directly on the fabric, the gold or silver may end up on the iron and not the fabric!
5. Do not fold the silk into a hard crease. If you have to fold it, place it on top of a towel or other thick fabric, then fold it with the towel or fabric to prevent a hard crease during storage.
6. If the fabric smells musty, just leave it out in an airy room for a few hours and the smell should fade. If not, spray a towel with Febreze and put the silk and towel in the dryer on an "air" cool setting for a few minutes.
7. Do not store the silk in a place that does not have good climate (temperature and humidity) control. Humidity over a period of time is very bad for any silk, old or modern.