**The *Nippon Maru***

Following the death of Oda Nobunaga in 1582, Kuki Yoshitaka entered the service of Nobunaga’s successor, Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–1598). Where Nobunaga had tasked him with creating ships capable of crushing his rivals, Hideyoshi asked him to design an entirely new fleet for a planned expedition to conquer Korea in 1592.

The resulting flagship was enormous, and dwarfed other warships of the time. It was about 30 meters long and 11 meters wide, and was equipped with 100 oars. He christened the ship *Kishuku* (the Japanese name for four stars in the Cancer constellation), and presented it to Hideyoshi, who was so impressed that he renamed it *Nippon Maru*—a ship worthy of representing the whole country. The *Nippon Maru* became the model for the rest of Hideyoshi’s fleet.

The *Nippon Maru* was decommissioned and disassembled in the Edo period (1603–1867). Only a few pieces remain, including the painted doors now installed at Kogakuji Temple.