

Ueno Tenjin Festival: Nakamachi

Shirushi: Kikujidō

Danjiri: Kishinzan-Aoiboko

Built in 1802, the Nakamachi *shirushi* float is named Kikujidō, or “Boy with Chrysanthemums,” a reference to the central figure in the decorations. The *shirushi*’s back banner is reportedly made from the fabric of courtly robes made in China during the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644).

The first part of the *danjiri* float’s name, Kishinzan, is from an old folk song. The second part, Aoiboko, comes from the spear tipped with Japanese ginger (*aoigusa*) that pierces its roof. Japanese ginger is the official plant of the Aoi Festival, the largest of which is celebrated in Kyoto. A variety of flowers adorn the float from the inner ceiling to the middle curtain and the side banner, and the float’s gables sparkle with gold leaf and jewels. The eaves are intricately carved with dragons and clouds.

Two events from Chinese history and legend are depicted on the lower curtains. The main curtain shows Tao Yuanming (365–427), a Chinese poet of the Jin dynasty (266–420), returning to his home—a reference to a famous poem also associated with chrysanthemums. The back curtain reproduces one of the dragon paintings of Wu Daozi (680–760), a Chinese painter said to be so skilled that his dragons came to life.