

Ueno Tenjin Festival: Uomachi

Shirushi: Kinkō Sennin

Danjiri: Shirin

The *shirushi* float of Uomachi is a statue of the Daoist immortal Kinkō Sennin atop a colorful throne surrounded by splashing water. Kinkō Sennin, known in China as Qin Gao, is most often depicted as bursting out of the water riding a carp while his followers watch at the edge of the lake.

The title of the *danjiri* float, Shirin, literally means “purple scales,” and refers to fresh fish. Fishmongers were common in the neighborhood of Uomachi (literally, “fish town”), so the float was likely named in hope that the fishmongers’ fish would stay fresh. It is also known as Shoin Makoto-ni Yawaragu, a hopeful reference to harmony during meetings with magistrates. The second name may be from the number of famous men from Chinese classics depicted on the curtains.

The middle curtain shows wise men practicing the four traditional arts: music, go, calligraphy, and painting. The bottom curtain depicts four individuals: Huang Shigong, a legendary Chinese military strategist; Zhang Liang (251–186 BCE), a Chinese general of the Han dynasty; Gama Sennin, a Daoist immortal associated with medicine; and Li Tieguai, another Daoist immortal associated with medicine who is best known for helping the needy. The front curtain shows two Chinese generals, Zhang Fei (unknown–221 CE) and Guan Yu (160–220 CE), on a bright red background. A procession of wise men appears on the side banners, and golden dragons decorate the pillars above.