

## **Daiichi Honcho-ku Festival Float**

The second oldest *dashi* float was inspired by the friendly rivalry between neighborhoods. After Kumagaya's Daini Honcho-ku neighborhood purchased the first festival float from Tokyo in 1891, the residents of the Daiichi Honcho-ku neighborhood built their own. A model of Japan's first emperor Jimmu, said to be a descendant of the sun goddess Amaterasu, stands on top of the float. He is depicted holding a gilded staff with a crow perched on top. According to legend, the emperor was guided through the mountains from Kumano, in present-day Wakayama Prefecture, to Yamato, in present-day Nara Prefecture, by a three-legged crow.

The *dashi* is decorated with carved dragons and mythical birds across the front lintel and supporting pillars, and lions along the balustrades on the sides and back of the float. The rear section of the float is covered with a green tapestry depicting a battle between a dragon and a tiger, richly embroidered in gold thread. This common trope in traditional Japanese art symbolizes the balance of forces in the universe. The float was built in 1898 and is a Tangible Folk Cultural Property of Kumagaya.