

Gansenji Temple: Seated Amida Nyorai

Enshrined in Gansenji Temple's main hall is its principal deity, a wooden statue of the Amida Nyorai, the Lord of the Western Paradise, who leads the dead to the land of bliss. This Seated Amida Nyorai is an Important Cultural Property of Japan and is nearly three meters tall. The fact that it is hewn from a single, enormous zelkova tree makes its size all the more impressive. The precise date of its creation was brought to light upon the discovery of an inscription inside the statue that notes its completion date over one thousand years ago in 946. Among the Seated Amida Nyorai statues with known creation dates, Gansenji Temple's is thought to be the oldest. In addition to its remarkable size and age, it is also very well preserved. Vestiges of the original red dye of its clothes can still be seen on the left-hand side of the statue.