

Amida Buddha Statue

A wooden statue of Amida Buddha, the Buddha of Limitless Light, stands to the right of the altar in the main hall of Amida Temple. This statue, is an Important Cultural Asset. Its precise origins and how it came to the temple are unknown. The style is from the Heian period (794–1185), but it was carved in the early part of the Kamakura period (1185–1333).

The figure has elongated ear lobes and eyes that are slightly opened. Its somewhat unusual red lips are in the original color. The use of gold leaf over wood, the Buddha's position, and his *raigo* hand gestures indicate that he is welcoming someone to the Pure Land.

On the altar of the main hall is a statue of Tanzei Shonin (1552–1613), the Buddhist ascetic who founded Amida Temple. It was carved by Tanzei himself, and in fact the head still has some of the priest's hair attached to it. Patches of gold leaf on the upper torso indicate a level of enlightenment equal to the Buddha.

Originally from what is now Aichi Prefecture, Tanzei is famous for welcoming even the lowest classes to his teachings, including miners and others whose work was considered menial or unclean. He is also renowned for copying out the Buddha's name four million times and distributing it to his followers.