

Ojo-Gokurakuin (Amida Hall)

Ojo-Gokurakuin, also called Amida Hall, houses the statues of the Amida Trinity that are designated National Treasures. The unusual roof resembles the upturned hull of a boat and was designed to accommodate the towering statues within. The hall is believed to have been constructed in 986 by the priest Eshin Sozu (942–1017) and his sister Anyo Ni (953–1034) as a memorial to their late parents. It was most recently reconstructed in 1143.

The hall also houses a seated statue of the Amida Buddha. The Buddha's right hand is extended in a *raigo* welcoming gesture, and a mat is positioned to allow worshippers to make eye contact with the statue before prayer. To the right sits Kanzeon in a position indicating the laying out of a deceased person on a lotus pedestal. To the left sits Seishi with hands clasped together. Both bodhisattvas are seated in the stooping pose known as *Yamato suwari*.

On the ceiling, though blackened by centuries of burning tapers, the original images of bodhisattvas and celestial maidens are still partially visible. In 2006, a new facility was opened nearby with a complete recreation of these colorful images. The design includes depictions of 48 bodhisattvas, including 10 playing musical instruments, and maidens soaring through the skies surrounded by the petals of a flower that blooms only in heaven.