

### **Jōgyōdō (Circumambulatory Hall)**

The Jōgyōdō (Circumambulatory Hall) is the south anchor of the trio of central structures known as the Three Halls, and it enshrines a gilded statue of Amida, the Buddha of Infinite Light and Life. A prominent feature of the building is its forestage, which is used for sacred Bugaku dances and other ceremonial performances. The present structure dates to the Muromachi period (1336–1573). As suggested by the hall's name, it is the site where monks have historically engaged in a meditative practice that entails pacing around the devotional statue while reciting Amida's mantra. In some cases, they continue for as many as 90 consecutive days, with only brief breaks for food and rest.

Inside the hall, Amida is depicted in a classic meditative posture, seated with legs folded upon a double lotus blossom. The eyes are half-closed, and the hands are gently folded into a mudra gesture indicating contemplation. The elongated earlobes, cranial bump, and round tufts of hair are iconographic devices frequently used in Buddhist imagery to signify compassion, wisdom, and enlightenment. Amida is portrayed with a golden halo of emanating rays. The cardinal directions of the halo are adorned with three Sanskrit characters that are the “seed syllables” for Amida and the Bodhisattvas of Compassion and Wisdom, who are often portrayed flanking the deity. A wooden backdrop is painted with the 25 bodhisattvas who descend with Amida from the Pure Land paradise on purple clouds to escort sentient beings to salvation.

Both the statue of Amida and the Jōgyōdō itself are Important Cultural Properties.