Seated Statue of Amida Buddha (Main Hall, Chojuji Temple)

This 142.5-centimeter gilded, wooden statue depicts Amida Buddha, the Buddha of Infinite Light and Life, seated in the full lotus position with hands joined in the meditation mudra. It is displayed on a lotus pedestal and backed by double halos symbolizing the Buddha's eternal radiance and enlightenment. Based on its style, the figure is believed to date to the late twelfth century. Both the pedestal and halos are thought to be original, rare for a statue of this age. The statue is designated an Important Cultural Property.

Stylistically, the carving marks a clear departure from earlier twelfth-century statuary, which favored soft, subtle features. In this work, the details are bolder, defined by lines carved in deep relief. The overtly muscular chest and the sharply chiseled folds of the robe, for example, convey a striking impression of depth and volume. Structurally, the statue was carved from multiple, partially hollowed pieces of hinoki cypress and assembled using the *yosegi-zukuri* (joined-wood) technique. This method mitigates the severe cracking and warping that often occurs in large, solid blocks of wood due to uneven drying and internal stress.

The Amida statue and a seated statue of the historical Buddha (Shakyamuni) flank the temple's altar, where the principal image of Jizo Bodhisattva is concealed behind closed doors. Jizo is revered as the compassionate protector of children and souls in the afterlife. The Amida figure is positioned on the left side, with Shakyamuni on the right.

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