DARUMA-SAN
Images of Daruma in Traditional and Popular Japanese Art

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Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Art Gallery • College of the Holy Cross • Worcester, Massachusetts
Preface and Acknowledgments

A major goal of the exhibition program at the Cantor Art Gallery has always been to serve the needs of the College lucidly, simplifying and making concrete whenever possible the curriculum and addressing issues of interest to various disciplines. Our present exhibition, Daruma: Image of Daruma in Traditional and Popular Japanese Art, handsomely fulfills these aims. It was proposed by Professor Todd T. Lewis of the Department of Religious Studies at Holy Cross, who has a special interest in Zen Buddhism. Professor Lewis and I worked together in organizing the show and he wrote the introductory essay to this checklist with Professor Mark Linehan, Department of History.

The principal lenders to the exhibition are Dr. H. Neil McFarland, Professor Emeritus of the History of Religion at the Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University and Lore and Conrad Schnuckert. In addition, Lloyd Craighill has lent his Daruma-Hotel folding screen. I would like to express here my thanks to all our lenders; they have been extremely generous with their time and their hospitality, as well with their collections.

At Holy Cross, my first thanks go to Todd Lewis for his original proposal and for his continuing work on the exhibition. The realization of the project has depended heavily on his efforts. Finally (and as usual) I owe debts of gratitude to the members of the Physical Plant Department, to Thomas Parsons of Graphic Arts and to my secretary, Suzanne Parsons.

Todd Lewis would like to express his gratitude for the kind assistance he received in Japan from John Baldwin, Liyoko Tada, Neil Gross, Yuri Koochik and Lesley Downer.

Ellen Lawrence
Director
What is the Meaning of Daruma-san
Coming from the West?

This interrogative has been posed for centuries as a Buddhist spiritual riddle (kean), demanding an answer as to why an enlightened Indian monk came to China. The same question might also frame this exhibition of Japanese objects showing the sage as Daruma-san, one of Asia’s most popular saints. An answer necessitates entering into his biography and the history of popular traditions he has inspired in Japan, past and present. To contemplate these images invites asking why a saint from a tradition emphasizing meditation and renunciation has been domesticated in modern commercial Japan as a ubiquitous folk art form. Hence, our kean might be: “What does the phenomenon of Daruma-san reveal about the modernization of Japan?”

Buddhism and Bodhidharma

Roughly 600 years after the time of Shakyamuni Buddha (560-480 B.C.), the historical founder of Buddhism, the first missionary monks reached China. Representing the different early schools, they preached a spiritual path (Dharma) emphasizing morality, meditation, and the experience of Nirvana as the only escape from the suffering of endless reincarnations. The movement of Buddhists into China and across East Asia is one of the greatest religious transformations in world history.

Our exhibition focuses upon one missionary sage, an exponent of the ‘Meditation School’ called Ch’in in China, Zen in Japan, whose legend profoundly shaped this assimilation.

Historical records of China’s northern Wei dynasty (386-534 A.D.) note the arrival from India of an elderly Buddhist monk named Bodhidharma. He preached sermons on the Lanka-vatara Sutra, a text emphasizing that all beings have the potential to become Buddhhas, and taught an ancient meditation called “wall-gazing” to reach enlightenment. Annals and early writings note that he had only a small following, although Bodhidharma did designate two Chinese disciples as his spiritual heirs before dying at an advanced age on the Lo River in 520 A.D. Beyond these simple facts, all else known about the monk is legendary, although the terse stories of incidents and teachings were formative in the later history of Ch’an/Zen.

Bodhidharma, Da-no

We know that by the early seventh century, Bodhidharma’s disciples joined with the founders of Ch’an Buddhism to keep alive the memory of the old monk, who is called Da-no in Chinese. He was given prominence in the new school’s lineage and identified as the twenty-eighth patriarch descending from Shakyamuni Buddha. It was Bodhidharma /Da-no who brought to China a unique transmission of the Buddha’s teachings, one that proved compatible with Taoism, a path to Nirvana passed “beyond words, from mind to mind,” teacher to disciple.

Accounts of Da-no’s legendary encounters and teachings were collected in early texts such as the Ch’an “Pao Chi,” and they became so popular that the Ch’an’s colloquial name was “The Da-no School.” Subsequent Ch’an history in East Asia cultivated these accounts both to glorify their patriarch and to present case studies revealing the qualities of a mind that had achieved satori (“Nirvana experience”).

Bodhidharma in Japan: Daruma-san

When they imported Buddhism, the first Japanese monks translated and elaborated upon the Chinese legends about the Patriarch, who became known as Daruma (or as “Daruma-san,” adding a hosoic suffix). The original indigenous collection, the Genkosakusho (c. 1300 A.D.), begins with an account of Daruma-san crossing the sea from China to reach Japan. Passing himself off as a beggar, he is said to have given doctrinal instructions to Shotoku (573-621 A.D.), prince regent and an early champion of Buddhism in Japan. The Daruma legend became widely known and Daruma images may be found in temples from all schools up to the present. (This is evident in the exhibition video segment)

Eisai (1141-1215 A.D.) and Dogen (1200-1253 A.D.), the great teachers who founded the first Zen schools, cultivated the Daruma traditions most extensively, accepting his line of authority through Chinese masters and using Patriarch legends for spiritual inspiration. Within Zen monasteries, the Bodhidharma /Daruma was commonly employed, and it reportedly led to the soul of many monks. One saint’s response—Shako apppe (“All creatures [deliver] sermons”)—is a famous example. Monastic poetry often visits the legends of the Patriarch, as seen in the following poems by Zen Master Soon (1859-1919).

On Visiting Skirios Temple, Where Bodhidharma Once Lived

The steep slope hangs above
The temple calm. An autumn voyage,
I go by ways neither old nor new,
Finding east, west the mind the same.

(Shyry and Ikano 1981: 83)

Through Zen’s influences on painting, sculpture, poetry, and tea, Daruma became a popular symbol of Japanese Buddhism. In keeping with the introduction of tea to Japan by Zen masters, the Zen Daruma legends aver that the first tea plants grew from the Patriarch’s “wall-gazing” meditation: to keep sleep from disturbing his meditation, he cut off his eyelids and these became the first tea plants! The Zen-influenced Rikyö School of tea attempted to instill the ideals of simplicity, purity, and directness into their disciplines. The tea classic Nansen-tekoku expresses this ideal with reference to the Patriarch:

For what we want here is to give full expression to the Buddha-mind. When ceremony, etiquette, and other things

creep in... it becomes more and more difficult to... comprehend the meaning of the art. If we were to have... Budhidharma for a guest... would not such a gathering be a happy one indeed? (quoted in Suzuki, p. 283)

For monks and Buddhist artists, rendering Daruma-san through ink on paper (sumi-e) also became a spiritual discipline, and monastic decorations featuring his fierce, scrutinizing eyes set the tone for stern meditation (sosan). Zen painters also developed a "one-stroke Daruma" tradition (Uppinno Daruma) that sought to capture the master's essential spirit in a single brush movement.

Consistent with the 'vast emptiness, no holiness' ethos of early Zen are paintings and icons representing Daruma minimally and in comic situations. This irreverent iconoclasm was a necessary stage in the spiritual enterprise deconstructing sanctity is required to remove any basis for attachment. As H. Neill McFadyen notes:

_Budhidharma is Zen. This is the statement of Budhidharma symbolically. But the converse does not hold. Zen is not Budhidharma. The notion cannot be tolerated that Budhidharma was or is essential to Zen. For the Zen devotee, to know that Budhidharma is Zen is to know that Budhidharma must go. He is and must be expendable (1987: 14).

Hence, the evolution of Japanese traditions depicting Daruma minimally or 'irreverently' seems to follow an early Zen master's advice: 'If you meet the Buddha on the road, kill him! If you meet the Patriarch, kill him!'

Another early modern precedent for the popularization and satirical rendition of the Patriarch is evident in the tradition of woodblock prints from the Edo Period (1653-1858) called called _shijo-e_ ('monotonous images'). Among the _nouveau riche_ merchant classes of this period there arose a counterculture of arts and entertainment that attacked the pretensions of the old feudal elite. Daruma became a target for exposing aristocratic hypocrisy as well as the decadence of the Zen establishment. Woodblock prints from the period show Daruma in the company of courtiers, masters, drinking sake, and even dressed as a woman. The latter, called _Hime Daruma_, became a popular doll.

**Daruma-san in Modern Japan**

With the opening of Japan to the outside world in 1854 and its rapid modernization, the Daruma-san traditions that had previously been largely the province of monks and literati entered all areas of popular material culture. His visage soon appeared on household objects, toys, souvenirs, and decorations and these are especially featured in the exhibition. Modern designers have clearly realized many uses for a portrait that lends itself to comic, protective, counter-cultural or 'old tradition-evoking' associations.

The countenance of Daruma-san is still invoked for a variety of purposes. The modern plaque from Asakusa weds his visage to the well-known sayings of the first Tokugawa shogun, leyasu (1542-1616), which counsel frugality, hard work and limited ambition. Perhaps the most popular modern saying associated with Daruma-san urges the resilience that is so much a part of Japanese character, especially in the post-war period: "Seven times knocked down, eight times getting up."

The limbless images of Daruma -- limbless because his years of 'wall-gazing' caused his legs and arms to fall off -- have become children's toys that when tipped, roll over and right themselves.

Daruma-san's legendary nature is similarly conveyed through other media of entertainment such as dolls, games, and kits. A children's staring game begins with the verse:

_Daruma-san, Daruma-san! 
Let's play the staring game! 
If you laugh, you lose!_

Children fashion snowmen in the Patriarch's image, too. _yuki-daruma_. As Bernard Faure concludes, "This figure, impressed on every child's mind, has come to play an important role in Japanese art and culture." (1987: 255)

**Daruma-san as a Buddhist Amulet**

The practices that developed using Daruma as an amulet have long-standing precendents in Buddhist Asia. Images of Buddhist saints that have been ritually empowered through incantations of sacred words (mantras), fire rituals (homare), and an 'eye-opening' ceremony were in-
The most popular amulets of the Patriarch utilized in contemporary Japan are the rounded, limbless paper-mache Daruma-san okagari ("tumbler dolls"). Once a year, Japanese go to Buddhist temples to purchase these amulets that come in all sizes. (For most, this is done around January 1.) An individual fasts to achieve a wish and prays in one eye. It may be blessed at the temple altar, although most devotees today do not perform the traditional empowerment ceremonies. Once the wish is fulfilled during the year, the second eye is painted in. At year's end, the two-eyed image must be discarded at the temple and cremated to avoid a reversal of fortune. The most conspicuous contemporary resort to this "wish-granting" Daruma-san amulets is found when a politician embarks on an election campaign.

Special Daruma ima ("wish boards") can be similarly bought and set out within Buddhist temples, with the individual writing his or her wish on the reverse side of a wooden board bearing the Patriarch's image. Today, a host of mundane wishes can be found on ima boards such as gaining entrance to a school, success in business, or finding a suitable marriage partner. The magical-practical conceptions and the simple supplicatory rituals give the impression of modern resort to Daruma largely divorced from Buddhist spiritual aspiration. Still, it is to the Buddhist temple fairs the Japanese must go to obtain the images, as well as to have them properly empowered and disposed of.

Daruma-san, Buddhism, and Japanese Modernization

To return to the issue posed at the outset, it may be, as with any Zen koan, that there is no single correct response. As one extreme, one cannot escape the crass materialism of modern Japan that is reflected in the production each year of millions of Daruma okagari, wishboards, amulets, and folkarts, not to mention the manipulation of Daruma-san imagery by politicians and in advertisements for everything from coffee cups to camcorders. At the other extreme, one cannot deny the pervasive incorporation of this Buddhist symbol that is often made to stand in opposition to the modernization of Japan. In between these two extremes, Daruma-san still manages to accommodate a host of meanings and practices that are produced—both at an individual and a societal level—by people who, like the rest of us, are still learning to cope with their own modernity. Daruma stands—or rather sits—at the crossroads between past and present, tradition and modernity, waiting to be alternatively revered and "killed" by all who meet his gaze.

—Todd T. Lewis
—Mark Lincicome

Selected Bibliography

Zen Pith Explanations

After nine years in China, Bodhidharma gathered his disciples about him to test their comprehension.

Taofu said, 'In my opinion, truth is beyond affirmation or negation, for this is the way it moves.' Bodhidharma replied, 'You have my skin.'

The nun Tsung-chih replied, 'In my view it is like a disciple's sighting of the Buddha land: seen once and forever.' Bodhidharma answered, 'You have my flesh.'

Tsao-yu said, 'The four elements are empty and the five components of a human being are no-things. In my view, reality is nothingness.' Bodhidharma commended, 'You have my bones.'

Finally, Huik'o bowed before the master and remained silent. Bodhidharma replied, 'You have my marrow.'

Bodhidharma Knew

Ryunge asked Master Rinzai, 'What is meaning of Bodhidharma coming from the west [India]?'

Rinzai said, 'Pass me the cushion.'

Ryunge passed the cushion to Rinzai, who took it and hit Ryunge with it.

Ryunge said, 'I will let you strike me. But after all, there is no meaning whatsoever in the Patriarch's coming.'

Compiled from the Meimonzen and Higaku-ron, original captions.
40. Daruma carved from a stick with parts of the bark showing. Purchased in Kyono flex market in 1980s. Wood and paint. h: 3 1/81/16". Collection: Schiölerweiss.
45. Wooden beg-shaped Daruma. Purchased in Japan in 1993. Wood and ink. h: 2 1/4".
99. White bell Daruma with purple cord. Purchased in Japan in 1993. Metal, thread and paint. h: 3 1/2".
100. White Daruma keychain. Purchased in Japan in 1993. Plastic. h: 3 1/4".
101. Red Daruma charm with purple cord. n.d. Ivory or bone. h: 5/8".
113. Large Daruma kite. Purchased in Japan in 1993. Bamboo, string, paper and ink. h: 28".
118. Two paper lanterns. Purchased in Japan in 1993. Paper, plastic and ink. h: 8 1/2".

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