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 broadly, amplifying and making concrete whenever possible the curriculum and addressing issues of interest to various disciplines. Our present exhibition, *Daruma: Images 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 Lincecume, Department of History.

The principal lenders to the exhibition are Dr. H. Neill McFarland, Professor Emeritus of the History of Religion at the Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University and Lore and Conrad Schirokauer. In addition, Lloyd Craighill has lent his Daruma-Hotei 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, Yuriko Kuchiki 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 (koan), 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 hagiography 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 koan 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 Buddhism 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'an 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 Buddhas, and taught an austere 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-mo

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-mo 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-mo 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-mo’s legendary encounters and teachings were collected in early texts such as the Ch’uan a-Pao Chi, and they became so popular that the Ch’an’s colloquial name was ‘The Da-mo 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 an honorific suffix). The original indigenous collection, the Genkoshakusho (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 koan was commonly employed, and it reportedly led to the satori of many monks. One saint's response—Shinjo seppo ('All creatures [deliver] sermons')—is a famous example. Monastic poetry often visits the legends of the Patriarch, as seen in the following poem by Zen Master Soen (1859-1919):

**On Visiting Shorin Temple, Where Bodhidharma Once Lived**

_The steep slope hangs above_
_The temple calm. An autumn voyager,
I go by ways neither old nor new,
Finding east, west the mind the same._

(Stryk and Ikemoto 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 monks, 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 Rikyū School of tea attempted to instill the ideals of simplicity, purity, and directness into their discipline. The tea classic Nanbō-roku expresses its 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

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creep in... it becomes more and more difficult to... comprehend the meaning of the art. If we were to have... Bodhidharma 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 monastery decorations featuring his fierce, scrutinizing eyes set the tone for stern meditation (sazen). Zen painters also developed a "one-stroke Daruma" tradition (ippitsu 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 McFarland notes:

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

Hence, the evolution of Japanese traditions depicting Daruma minimally or ‘irrelevantly’ 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!’

73. _Sake bottle with two heads._ Ceramic. h: 4 5/8”. Collection of Lore and Conrad Schirokauer.
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 (1603-1868) called called *ukiyo-e* ('momentary 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 courtesans, married, 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, countercultural 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, Ieyasu (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 enculturation such as dolls, games, and kites. A children's staring game begins with the verse:

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Daruma-san, Daruma-san!
Let's play the staring game!
If you laugh, you lose!
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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: 265)

**Daruma-san as a Buddhist Amulet**

The practices that developed using Daruma as an amulet have longstanding precedents in Buddhist Asia. Images of Buddhist saints that have been ritually empowered through incantations of sacred words (*mantras*), fire rituals (*homa*), and an 'eye-opening' ceremony were in-
Inherited from ancient India. Emphasis on the eyes of an image as centers of power have the same origins. Like all Buddhist laymen, the Japanese have faith that their amulet will deploy the powers of the Buddhas and enlightened saints to bless their endeavors. What is uniquely Japanese, however, is the notion that Buddhist amulets lose potency after a year, requiring the destruction of the old and purchasing replacements.

10. Small red temple Daruma. Papier mache. h: 3".

The most popular amulets of the Patriarch utilized in contemporary Japan are the rotund, limbless paper-mache Daruma-san okiagari (‘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 first states a wish and paints 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 amulet 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 koan posed at the outset, it may be, as with any Zen koan, that there is no single correct response. At one extreme, one cannot escape the crass materialism of modern Japan that is reflected in the production each year of millions of Daruma okiagari, wishboards, amulets, and folkcraft, 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

Legends of Daruma

The Buddha Holds Out a Flower

When Shakyamuni Buddha (the founder of Buddhism) was on Vulture's Peak, he held out a flower. Everyone was silent. Only Kashyapa broke into a broad smile.

The Buddha said, 'I have passed on the eye of the true Dharma, the wonderful Mind of Nirvana, the formless form, the mysterious gate of the Dharma, which rests not upon words and letters, a special transmission outside the scriptures. This I hand over to the great Kasyapa.'

Bodhidharma is the twenty-eighth Patriarch in this lineage.

Meeting with Emperor Wu

A great patron of Chinese Buddhism through his lavish support of monks and his construction of temples and monasteries, Emperor Wu was anxious to meet the Indian monk. Upon doing so he recited the summary of his works and asked Bodhidharma, 'What do you think the merit earned for this might be?'

'No merit,' replied the patriarch.

'Why?'

'All these are impure motives for merit. They bear the limited fruit of rebirth as a human being or a god. They chase a figure like a shadow, but have no reality.'

'What is true merit?'

'It is pure knowing, wonderful and perfect. Its essence is emptiness. One cannot gain such merit by worldly means.'

'What then is the first principle of the Dharma?'

'Vest emptiness, nothing sacred.'

'Who is it that now stands before me?'

'I do not know.' He then departed, pulling a single rush reed from the bank and using this flimsy craft to cross the Yangtse River into northern China.

A Disciple's Pennance and Discovery

Earnestly seeking instruction on the way to enlightenment, Hui-k'ou presented himself to Bodhidharma to become a disciple. Though ignored, he stood patiently deep in the snow for seven days and nights outside the cave where the Patriarch meditated. Several times Bodhidharma noticed the penitent, but rebuffed him. To demonstrate his dedication, Hui-k'ou finally cut off his left arm. This he presented to Bodhidharma and said, 'My mind has no peace yet! I beg you master, please pacify my mind!'

'Bring your mind here and I will pacify it for you,' replied Bodhidharma.

'I have searched for my mind, and I cannot take hold of it.' 'Good, I've pacified it then.' Hui-k'ou experienced satori.
Zen Final Examination

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

T’ao-fu 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-ch’ih 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.’

T’ao-yu said, ‘The four elements are empty and the five components of a human being are no-things. In my view, reality is no-thing-ness.’ Bodhidharma commented, ‘You have my bones.’

Finally, Hui-k’o bowed before the master and remained silent. Bodhidharma replied, ‘You have my marrow.’

Bodhidharma Koan

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 Mumoken and Hekiganroku, original captions.

Checklist of the Exhibition

Ink Drawings.

Shrine Darumas, Plaques & Arrows.
17. Two votive house-shaped Daruma plaques. Purchased in Japan in 1993. Wood and paint. h: 3 1/2".

Ceramic & Wood Single Figures of Daruma (and Female Daruma).
41. Daruma carved from a stick with parts of the bark showing. Purchased in Kyoto flea market in 1980s. Wood and paint. h: 1 13/116". Collection: Schirokauer.
46. Wooden keg-shaped Daruma. Purchased in Japan in 1993. Wood and ink. h: 2 1/4".

Sake Bottle & Cups, Other China & Lanterns.


Seven Fulls, Eight Rises.


Toys, Novelties, Charms & Kites.

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".

Commerially Printed Paper.