PLENARY SESSION LECTURE



FROM MYTH TO REALITY

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Chairman
Asian Arts and Cultural Council
New York, U S A

at the
INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR
on the

CONTRIBUTIONS OF TAMILS TO THE COMPOSITE CULTURE OF ASIA

in
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16TH, 17TH AND 18TH JANUARY 2011

celebrating the

"SILVER JUBILEE"
of the
"THE INSTITUTE OF ASIAN STUDIES"

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Chennai, India – It is my pleasure, after about thirty years of on-and-off research, to be able to throw light with conclusive evidence on the existence of **Bodhidharma**, the 28th Patriarch after the Buddha in the Mahayana Buddhist tradition. Though he is an icon in the Mahayana tradition, many so-called scholars and researchers still stubbornly continue to insist that he is a myth. Unfortunately their research, and thereby their conclusion, lacks substance. To give one example, a book, in fact two books, written by a Father Damoulin, a Jesuit priest in Japan tries its very best to prove Bodhidharma a myth because of wrong dates found in various records of the 5th, 6th and 7th centuries.

But, one must remember that those books and records were written in the 5th and following centuries in various parts of China. Those were the days when there was no electricity, no computers, no phones and no peer review as we have it today and hence mistakes were bound to occur. Today, even with all these facilities of modern technology, mistakes are still being made.

Also in those days for information to go from one part of China to another took months, if not more. However, the presence of these mistakes does not mean that Bodhidharma did not exist, as some westerners propagate.

By the same token, the recently discovered Book of Judas, which has been authenticated and published by National Geographic, completely overturns what the Christian faith has been teaching for centuries. Does that mean Jesus Christ did not exist, or was a myth?

Why is it when the attention turns to Eastern religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Islam, to name a few, which have all existed before Christianity came into being – to the exclusion of Islam - that the words mythology, fake, and other such derogatory terms are applied. And this also applies to the traditional arts of many countries - like Yoga, Kalaripayat, Ayurveda, TCM or Traditional Chinese Medicine, and Kampo. No doubt, with the Internet and TV these bigoted ideas, which were born in ignorance and arrogance, are now changing as people, scholars, and researchers are looking at religions and traditional art forms from a different perspective.

As far as I know, there is no 'historical' fact (so far) available in India about the 28th Patriarch of Mahayana Buddhism. There are many theories but nothing substantive. This may be due to what historians have described as the 'long night' in South Indian history, which was between the 3rd and the 6th centuries, during which period a lot of records were destroyed due to either natural calamities or because warring factions destroyed records when they conquered the opposing parties, groups, or tribes. We know from whatever historical facts that exist today that there were four groups at that time in South India when Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka didn't exist as we know of them today. The whole area had the Cholas, Cheras, Pandayas, and Pallavas roaming around picking fights with each other.

However, at that time another group was also around and they were the Kallabhras. At one period they also ruled and, like the Pallavas, were strong supporters of Buddhism. But they were so hated by the Pallavas that when the Pallavas finally conquered them, they destroyed all records about the Kallabhras, who they considered a barbaric group.

While there have been many theories that Bodhidharma was a Pallava, we must also ask the question whether he may have been a Kallabhra, and that is why, maybe, there is no record traceable about him.

Japanese groups have been doing a lot of research about Bodhidharma, whom they fondly call as Daruma San or Mr. Daruma, and have traced the various Patriarchs of Mahayana Buddhism from the Buddha all the way to Bodhidharma, the last and 28th Patriarch of Mahayana Buddhism in India and the first Patriarch of Chan Buddhism in China.

Bodhidharma who propagated his own version of Mahayana Buddhism was the last Patriarch in India, and the first Patriarch of Mahayana Buddhism in China, where Mahayana became Chan Buddhism and where Bodhidharma came to be known as Da'mo.

When he was reincarnated in Japan, he came to be fondly known as Daruma San and the original Mahayana Buddhism came to be known, again, as a branch of Zen Buddhism. It traveled from China to Japan through Korea. In Korea it is known as Seon.

But, let us now concentrate on Bodhidharma in China, where a lot of records are available about his existence, including one eye witness account. According to various Chinese records, he took about three years to reach Guangzhou in the Guangdong Province in present day China.

Now, one may ask why it took three years to reach China from India. Well, let me say again it is the 5th century we are talking about. With no electrical or nuclear powered ships, in those days they used sailing vessels made of timber and most probably also used rowers to sail from one place to another. As they did not have the modern conveniences of refrigeration and water storage facilities, they also had to land at various places en route to China to pick up fresh supplies.

Since it is said that he was from Kanchipuram, he would have started his long journey from the port of Mahabalipuram. It is said that he disembarked at many places en route to China - some of those places being Palembang, which was the capital city of the ancient kingdom of Srivijaya and the present capital of the South Sumatra province in Indonesia. It is also said that he disembarked in Malaysia, Cambodia, Thailand, and Vietnam. I have found some traces of his visit at a temple in Johor, Malaysia.

After landing in the ancient city of Kuang/Guang/Kwang Cho (a Port on the Pearl River) and what is now known as Guangzhou Bodhidharma stayed at the present day Hualin Temple and started to preach his version of Mahayana Buddhism. Propagating the

concept of "no dependence on the written word but the transmission (of knowledge) from mind to mind"; he also revered the Lankavatara Sutra and it is said that when he finally passed on his authority to the second Patriarch of Chinese Chan Buddhism, Hui K'e, he not only gave him his robe and begging bowl but also gave him a copy of the Lankavatara Sutra.

When he landed in Gangzhou Bodhidharma was met by the Governor of Guangzhou, Xiao Ang and a military official Shao Yang, who had heard in advance about his arrival. Bodhidharma also found to his pleasure quite a few Indians there who had initially come as traders and had then settled down among the locals. Guangzhou at that time was the largest trading port in the south east of China and going back in history its original name was Kuang/Guang or Kwang Chow, also called Panyu in some documents. Later on in the 1600's, when the Portuguese arrived there it was also referred to as Canton or what they refer to in Portuguese as Cantao.

The Indians who had settled there were fluent in the older version of Cantonese, the language spoken by the locals, and initially helped Bodhidharma as interpreters, till Bodhidharma picked up the local dialect of Cantonese and also the main language of China, Mandarin.

He stayed at the Hualin Temple preaching there for three years and during this period also lectured at the Guangxie Temple, which is a few miles from the Hualin Temple.

Finding the water in Guangzhou brackish, he had five small wells dug close to each other, each just a foot in diameter. These wells have been preserved in his memory and are located just outside the compound of the Hualin Temple and are marked with a walled off area and two stone markers. One stone marker has the caption 'One flower - five leaves' and the other stone marker has the caption 'Five eyes old well'. He also had a larger single well dug in the compound of the Guangxie Temple, about 10 feet in diameter, which has also been preserved and marked with a stone marker.

The three gates to the Hualin Temple carry the caption "Visitor from the West". The place where he first stepped off the ship in Guangzhou has also been marked with a stone marker. Here the caption reads: "Landing place of Visitor from the West." It also mentions that he landed during the period of the Liang Dynasty. Again, that was in the 5th century and presently this location, which was originally the harbor, is at least three miles from the banks of the Pearl River. This is because over the centuries the Pearl River deposited sand and silt and now the whole area from the Temple to the River is full of shops and residences. Among the many eating places, there is also a Kentucky Fried Chicken, McDonalds, and also a pizza parlor. The whole area has come to be known as Hualin and the huge open square nearby is also a place where especially the young congregate in the evenings.

In the Hualin Temple, the Chinese have installed a huge metal statue of Bodhidharma -

about 75 feet high, which they claim is the largest statue of this icon in the world. The heading reads "Holy statue of Master Da'mo." Just inside the present entrance to the Hualin Temple, on the right is a smaller temple in which there is a small statue about four feet tall of Da'mo, the history of which is not known.

At both temples, Hualin and Guangxie, there is a constant stream of visitors and worshipers streaming in to pay their respects, both young and old and also from abroad. I spent many hours at these temples on the two trips I made to Guangzhou and one gets the distinct impression that there is a lot of respect for this icon of Mahayana/Chan Buddhism even centuries after his arrival in Guangzhou.

The Hualin Temple is now being expanded, and the whole area which is surrounded by jade shops and eating places is being cleared to make space for the expansion, the work on which has already started.

As Da'mo went about preaching in Guangzhou and the surrounding areas, his fame spread over quite a large part of China. One must understand that Hinayana or 'lesser vehicle' Buddhism had reached China a few centuries earlier, at around the 2nd century. Scriptures of the Hinayana tradition, which were brought by two monks from India, reached Louyang on two white horses. Till today that temple is called the White Horse Temple because it is said that the bodies of the two monks and the carcasses of the two horses are buried here. This is also the Temple where Mr. A B Vajpayee worshiped when he visited China when he was Prime Minister of India.

But, Mahayana or 'greater vehicle' Buddhism caught the attention of the people and Da'mo soon had a large following. The basic difference between these two forms of Buddhism is that while Hinayana (lesser vehicle) Buddhism teaches one to seek one's own salvation, Mahayana (greater vehicle) Buddhism teaches one to seek not only one's salvation but encourages one to help others to seek their salvation also. This inclusive nature of Mahayana Buddhism obviously caught the attention of the people who flocked to it in droves.

Not to digress from the talk, I must also mention that the third branch that exists in today's world is Vajrayana Buddhism or 'diamond vehicle' Buddhism, which is from Tibet.

As Da'mo's fame spread in China, Emperor Wu Di of the Liang dynasty (527 AD) in Nanjing, which was the capital of China at that time, sent an emissary to Guangzhou inviting Da'mo to Nanjing. Emperor Wu was a strong supporter of Buddhism and had built many temples and propagated Buddhism at every opportunity that presented itself.

Therefore, when Da'mo and Emperor Wu of the Liang dynasty finally met, the Emperor asked Da'mo what merit he had achieved in doing so much for Buddhism, to which Da'mo replied "no merit". The Emperor was completely taken aback and finally after a few more back and forth questions and answers he asked Da'mo "who is it that stands before

me" to which he received the answer "I don't know."

Not making any headway in his relationship with the Emperor, Bodhidharma left and after crossing the Yangtze River 'on a reed' traveled to the Shaolin Temple (Temple of Little Forest). I must draw your attention of Bodhidharma crossing the Yangtze 'on a reed' as it has come up in different records by various authors. In my opinion, the boat he used to cross the Yangtze was shaped like a reed. Either the author of this particular reference "a boat shaped like a reed" was writing metaphorically, or was being poetic like quite a few Chinese still do.

At the Shaolin Temple he again met with resistance as the Abbot at that time didn't like Bodhidharma's theory of 'not depending on the written word'. The Temple which Bodhidharma made famous was actually in existence before he arrived. It was built by another Emperor of that region, who was also a supporter of Buddhism, for another Indian monk called Batua, so that Batua could translate Buddhist scriptures into Chinese.

This temple was, and has always been, located in Deng Feng County, about 30 miles from Zhenzhou, which is the capital of present day Henan Province. Today there are also other Shaolin temples in China but the one in Deng Feng County is the original one and really became famous by the presence of Bodhidharma. Even today, he is revered at the Temple and the nearby Wushu (Kung-Fu) training center. In the fourth building of the seven buildings at the Temple there is an ancient scroll and statue of Bodhidharma, and in this temple there is always a monk chanting to Bodhidharma's memory. The monks take this duty by rotation.

And recently from what I have heard and seen on the Internet, the new Abbot of Shaolin Temple, who is a business major, has erected a 25 foot statue on the Songshan Mountain very near the cave where Bodhidharma meditated. The Songshan Mountain is one of the five holy mountains in China and is located behind the Shaolin Temple. The cave where Bodhidharma meditated for nine years is located close to the peak of this mountain.

Again there are many stories which are mythical in nature like "he meditated for so long that his legs fell off"; "he once got so angry with himself for falling asleep that he cut of his eyelids and threw them on the ground, and this is where the first tea plants grew"; and "he returned to India after his nine years of meditation;" and many other such stories.

As far as I can infer from the available information, while he did meditate at this cave for nine years he did not do so 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Remember that he was human so he had to eat, and I am sure the monks of the Shaolin Temple would have taken him his food every day. He was highly revered by the monks and soon he became an icon among the people of China who made visits to the cave to pay their respects to him, which they do even today.

During this period, he also taught the monks the fighting art of India, which today is

known as Kalaripayat and which in those days, was known as Vermanie. In these ancient martial art forms also had a medicinal aspect, because if any student got injured he would go to his teacher for treatment, as is being done even today at Kalaripayat schools. As a prince Bodhidharma would have been taught the traditional arts, which he also propagated to his Chinese students. It all started because the long hours of meditative practice of Mahayana Buddhism was not conducive to proper circulation of blood. So he taught his students not only the martial arts but also breathing techniques, which in my opinion was related to the Pranayama and other techniques of Yoga, again which he would have learnt as part of the traditional arts training during his princely studies.

Another reason for the training of the martial arts, which he imparted to the monks, was to prepare them to be able to defend themselves against highway robbers, thieves and animals as they went from place to place preaching Buddhism. The training Director of the Wushu Training Center did mention that one of the favorite weapons of Bodhidharma was the six span staff which is equivalent to the Silamban of Kalaripayat in Tamil Nadu. In the Kalaripayat of Kerala, it is referred to as Kettukari.

Ultimately, Bodhidharma passed away and was buried at Bear Ears Mountain (Shon Er Shan) in Henan Province in China.

Pranab Mukerjee, the Indian Foreign Minister, also referred to Bodhidharma in his speech when he inaugurated the Indian Consulate in Guangzhou a few years ago, mentioning that the connection between India and China goes back centuries.

Bodhidharma's (Damo's) teachings carried on through five Patriarchs of Chan Buddhism before it took on a more Chinese philosophy after Hui Neng (638 to 713 AD) became the 6th Patriarch. This happened when Hui Neng, who was from present day Guangdong Province, shaved his head and then started teaching his version of Chan Buddhism. The place where he did this was in the compound of the Guangshie Temple, behind the main temple, and now there is a stupa erected at this spot. The Chief Priest of the Guangshie Temple says that the shaved hair of Hui Neng is buried under the stupa.

Mahayana Buddhism then traveled to Korea where it established itself and came to be known as Seon (Buddhism). From there it traveled to Japan and it is believed that in the 12th century Bodhidharma was reincarnated in Nara in the Oje Prefecture in Japan. Today there are eight important temples dedicated to Bodhidharma in Japan and the World Association of Bodhidharma is also located in Japan in which Dr. Tsutomu Kambe, who sits amongst us today, is a Vice President. One temple is located in Takahashi, which is north of Tokyo, and which is famous for the Daruma Dolls or Okiagari Koboshi/tumbler dolls which originated in the 17th century. Other important temples are located just outside Tokyo and in Kyoto. The most important one is in Oje, Nara Prefecture where Bodhidharma was seen by the Prince at that time. It is said that Bodhidharma is buried under the Temple. Bodhidharma/Daruma's resilience and determination and his indestructible and indomitable spirit made him a favorite of the Samurai of Japan and in

the gardens of the Temple in Oje, on its left side, there are graves with headstones of important Samurai.

Credit must be given to Japanese scholars and researchers who have done extensive work on especially the lineage of Bodhidharma from the Buddha, and also have been able to establish his burial site in China, where they are now engaged in building a temple.

I must pay due credit to those Chinese authors of the 5th, 6th and 7th centuries who wrote about Bodhidharma in China - in the days when there were no modern facilities to assist them in their writing. It is only due to their writings and references to Bodhidharma that we are able to establish his bonafide and do away with the "myth" theory that is still being propagated by some so-called scholars.

Separating the imaginative stories from facts has led to the presentation of this paper and Bodhidharma's resilience and persistence in his endeavors set an example for me to pursue this research, though at times it has been extremely difficult. As he said, "Fall down seven times, get up eight times," or as they say in Japan "Nana Korobi Yaoki".

"BODHIDHARMA"

Exhibition of Memorabilia and Artifacts organized by the

ASIAN ARTS and CULTURAL COUNCIL, USA

in collaboration with the

INSTITUTE of ASIAN STUDIES, INDIA

and the

WORLD ASSOCIATION of BODHI-DHARMA (NPO), JAPAN.









Celebrating the 25th ANNIVERSARY of the INSTITUTE of ASIAN STUDIES in Chennai, India - 16th, 17th and 18th January 2011

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This catalogue, of an exhibition of "Bodhidharma Memorabilia and Artifacts" is a production of the Asian Arts and Cultural Council, a registered non-for-profit organization in the State of New York, USA, in collaboration with the World Association of Bodhi-Dharma (NPO) in Japan. Material used in this catalogue has been copy-righted and no material from this catalogue is to be reproduced in any form, without prior written permission of the Asian Arts and Cultural Council - joseph9aranha@yahoo.com

> This catalogue has been designed and formatted by Fran Comeau, Vice President, AACC and O.A. Sathyadevi and R.M. Paulraj, IAS



Dr. John Samuel
Founder-Director
Institute of Asian Studies
Chennai - 600119

MESSAGE

The Institute of Asian Studies was established in the year 1982 with a view to promote academic research on the genetic relationship or family resemblance that exists among the various cultures of the people of Asia.

It is remarkable that the mediaeval traders and Buddhist monks served as our true cultural ambassadors since they carried with them the rich cultural traditions of this country to various parts of Asia along with their mercantile commodities and the message of love and compassion of the Buddha. This great message of the Buddha radiated its rays over the benighted world and brought the people of Asia closer than ever and developed spiritual kinship and symbiotic relationship among them.

One such spiritual and cultural ambassador was Bodhi-Dharma, a prince of Kanchipuram, the capital city of the Pallava dynasty, who went to China in the fifth century AD and founded the Chan/Zen school of Buddhism. The teachings of this great saint from the Tamil soil has transformed the life and culture of the people in China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam and many other countries and he is venerated as the first Zu (patriarch) of Zen Buddhism. The Chinese manuscripts show the birthplace of Bodhi-Dharma as "Kang-zhi", which researchers believe to be Kanchipuram of Tamil Nadu. a great spot of learning and cultural diffusion during the times of Bodhi-Dharma.

Mahayana or Zen Buddhism has given birth to a vast literary corpus. The Japanese worship Bodhi-Dharma as Dharmazan. If Gautama Buddha was the Light of Asia, Bodhi-Dharma is a great Asian beacon of philosophy. It is a matter of great pride for all of us that this great Buddhist teacher hailed from Kanchipuram. Bodhi-Dharma taught our Kalari art, the unique martial art form of South India to the Chinese, and this later evolved into various forms of martial art in Asia.

To help advance the study of Indian philosophy and Mahayana Buddhism, we are now planning to establish a Buddhist Study Centre named after Bodhi-dharma in Kanchipuram, his birth place. It would serve as a centre of study and meditation for Buddhists and scholars from all over the world.

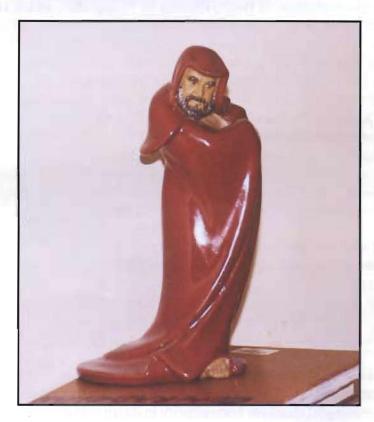
In the present international conclave, we wanted to give due importance to Bodhi dharma, one of the illustrious sons of this soil, whose mission in China helped in some way or other for the spread of Tamil culture in Asia.

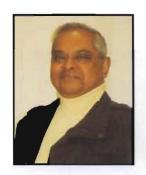
The Bodhi Dharma Exhibition, being held in the institute as part of The International Seminar on the Contributions of the Tamils to the Composite Culture of Asia, is a commendable recognition of Mr. Joseph Aranha, President, Asian Arts and cultural council, New York, USA, to Bodhi Dharma.

We are grateful to Mr. Aranha for having moot ed out the idea of organising an exhibition and translated the same into action by displaying the Bodhi Dharma memorabilia which is indeed a milestone in our meaningful quest for homogeneity in Asian culture and sensibility.

Curator's Personal Collection







Joseph Aranha
Curator
Bodhidharma Exhibition
President
Asian Arts and Cultural Council
New York, USA

MESSAGE

First of all I must thank the Founder Director of the Institute of Asian Studies, Dr G John Samuels for having invited me to take part in these celebrations of the 25th anniversary of the Institute, and deliver the Plenary Session lecture about the icon of Mahayana/Chan/Zen Buddhism (in India/China and Japan) - BODHIDHARMA.

Bodhidharma the 28th Patriarch after the Buddha in the Mahayana tradition went to China in the 5th century and propagated Mahayana Buddhism, where he is acknowledged as the first patriarch of Chan Buddhism and where they renamed him - Da'mo.

Mahayana Buddhism then traveled from China via Korea to Japan where Mahayana/Chan Buddhism became a bifurcation of Zen Buddhism and where Bodhidharma came to be fondly known all over Japan as Daruma San or Mr Daruma. There are eight major temples dedicated to Daruma in Japan and he is revered in every aspect of Japanese life and culture.

Since he is not well known in India, except for a very small dedicated following, I thought that I must approach Dr Samuels to also host an exhibition about Bodhidharma's artifacts and memorabilia during the period of these celebrations. Dr Samuels readily agreed to the idea and suggested I take charge of organizing the exhibition.

I must thank Dr Tsutomu Kambe, who will also enlighten us about Bodhidharma during this seminar, for his help in approaching various groups in Japan for donations for the exhibition.

I must thank the Rev Taiten Sano of the Daiho Zan Horinji, Daruma Ji in Kyoto, Japan who readily agreed to donate whatever they could to the exhibition. Thanks also go to the Rev Hirose Daisuke of the Shorinji Zan, Daruma Ji in Takasaki, Japan who also agreed to donate items for the exhibition. When I was in Japan, both these two Priests at the above mentioned Temples were extremely helpful with information, and also for making arrangements for meetings with officials of other Daruma temples, so that I could photograph ancient artifacts/statues of Daruma. Many thanks also to the World Association of Bodhidharma (NPO) Japan who contributed towards the Exhibition. And also to Dr Kamba who is responsible for the illustrative descriptions for all the exhibits from Japan.

I would be remiss if I did not thank Mr R.M. Paulraj, the Associate Editor of the Encyclopedia of Tamil Literature at the Institute, and his team of volunteers for their help in organizing the exhibition. Mr Paulraj made very valuable suggestions for the implementation of this exhibition. I must also thank Mrs. O.A. Sathyadevi for her invaluable and cheerful help in formatting this catalogue as a last minute substitute, without any complaint.

Last but not least of all I must thank Bodhidharma whose most famous quote - "fall down seven times, get up eight times" gave me strength and courage to keep persisting in my research over these many years, which is now coming to a successful culmination. And when my book is published in a few months it will be my hope that it will lead to others taking up, and doing further research about this icon of Mahayana Buddhism, especially about his antecedents in India.

Scroll calligraphy

A Single Flower Opens Five Petals by Rev Hirose Seishi (Daruma-ji, Takasaki)



A Single Flower Opens Five Petals

There exists a flower in this world which opens five petals. This is a part of the verse of Bodhidharma, followed by a phrase "Fruiting should be naturally achieved". This is a figurative expression. A person has a flower in his/her own heart, which opens its petals and comes to fruition.

Those two phrases are preceded by the following: "I have come to this land with an ambition, that is transmitting Dharma and relieving unsettled minds. This describes the aim of Bodhidharma why he came to China.

Presented by Rev Hirose Seishi (Daruma-ji, Takasaki, Japan).



Board Member, Institute of Asian Studies
Vice President
World Association of Bodhi-Dharma

MESSAGE

I wish to congratulate the memorabilia exhibition of Bodhidharma, held first in his home country India. Traditionally, Bodhidharma is said to be a mysterious monk who came from India to China in the sixth century. He remained in China and is respected as the First Master of Zen Buddhism. The Mahayana Buddhism of the Zen School brought about revolutionary changes and enlightenment to both the culture and lives of people in East Asia. In this contemporary world, the influence of Zen Buddhism is not waning, instead it is vigorously expanding worldwide, and its importance continues to grow. (Zen is an abbreviated phone tic translation of Sanskrit's Dhyana into Japanese, and corresponding Chinese is Chan). Bodhidharma was the third prince of a kingdom of South India, although other details of his life are not well known. Documents published just after Tang dynasty of China (ending in 907) describe the name of his kingdom with two Chinese characters, meaning Fragrance-Extreme. It is very likely that those were pronounced as Kang-Zhi. This reminds us of the old capital town "Kanchee-puram" of the state Tamil Nadu. The author of Chinese records of eminent monks (7th CE) praised that Wallcontemplation of Mahayana Buddhism of Bodhidharma is the highest meritorious practice. It is generally said that Bodhidharma brought the mind seal (i.e. Dharma) of Sakyamuni Buddha to China, expressed by Wall contemplation and quieting mind.

This is expressed equivalently as follows:
"No dependence on words and letters. Special transmission outside scriptures.
Directly pointing at the mind dharma. Seeing into the nature. Attaining Buddhahood."

A Chinese Chan Master in the 13th century told a Japanese monk in the following way (metaphorically): "Before Bodhidharma's arrival, only envoys and furniture had come to this country, but no master was there. When Bodhidharma arrived in China, it was as if the people had a king."

Almost every Zen temple in Japan enshrines a statue of Bodhidharma along with a statue of Buddha. There are a number of legends among people in East-Asian countries. Most typical one is the "Daruma san" (doll) shown in the exhibition. Japanese people love it very much and renew it at the new-year time by wishing their fortune of the year.

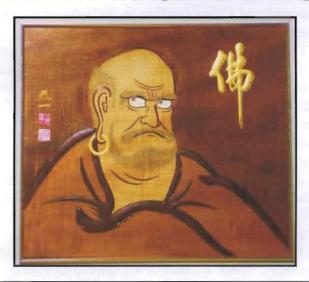
Bodhidharma (original color painting) by Artist Wang Dan (China, 2002)



Presented Principal statue of the Dharma Hall (reconstructed in 2002), Symbol of Zen School, Kong Xiang Si at Bear Year Mountain, Henan Province, China.

Presented by Rev Ichikawa Shingyo (Kozei-ji, Suzuka, Japan)

Bodhidharma (original carved-image)



Title: Buddha

This art work was designed, carved and colored by Tanaka Kyo-ichi (1931~) on a wooden plate of Sen-noki (Kalopanax pictus). The title is named after the calligraphy of a single character at the upper right corner written by the Master Shi Yongxin of the Shaolin Temple (China) where Bodhidharma stayed 1500 years ago. The single character denotes the Buddha, and pronounced as Hotoke in Japanese.

Presented by the carver, Tanaka Kyo- ichi, Representative

Bodhidharma (stone rubbing) Xi-an Museum of stone monuments



Bodhidharma:
Heading to the north on a reed over the Yang-Zi-Jiang (according to the legend).

Presented by Rev Ono Eiju (Lintei-ji, Nagoya, Japan)

Scroll (Original)

Daruma Doll By Hu-siki-an Shunkai



Presented by Hu-siki-an Shunkai
(Mr. Tanaka Toshiyuki),
Artist (member of Japan Zen-artists
Association),
Social worker (Mi-e prefecture, Japan)

Poster Bodhidharma By Zen Master Haukin Exhibition 2010 at the Zuigann-ji-Temple (Japan)



Haukin's Zen brush works were exhibited from September to November 2010 at the Zuiganji Zen Temple in Matsu-shima, Miyagi-prefecture.

Presented by Rev Ume-Zawa Tetsu-gen, (Zenko-ji Miyagi Prefecture, Japan)

Scroll calligraphy No collapse

---- Single stroke Daruma ---by Rev Noritake Shu-nan (Myo-shin-ji, Kyoto)



No Collapse

Bodhidharma is symbolized by the Daruma san doll which is made so as to right itself when knocked over, that is "never knocked down.". Such kind of doll is also called as "Ven.-nocollapse". respectfully in Chinese.

Presented by Rev Noritake Shunan (Rei-un-in, Myo-shin-ji, Kyoto, Japan).

Scroll calligraphy

Maitri Karuna Mind by Rev Ichikawa Shingyo (Kozei-ji, Suzuka)



Maitri Karuna Mind

The first character corresponds to the Sanskrit Maitri, the second corresponds to Karuna, and the third to Mind.

Maitri is the love that has capacity to bring happiness to another. Karuna is the love that has capacity to remove another's suffering. The mind is extended to all people and all beings with neither discrimination nor attachment.

Presented by Rev Ichikawa Shingyo, President of World Association of Bodhi-Dharma (Kozei-ji, Suzuka, Japan).

Bodhidharma
Teaching the Martial Arts
as per Professor Tsutomu Kambe



Bodhidharma and Calligraphic Art

by Haku-in Zen-ji (Zen Master, 18th century)



This is a photo-picture of the original calligraphic art by Zen Master Hakuin. The calligraphy reads:

Directly pointing to the mind dharma,

Seeing into the nature,

Attaining Buddhahood

This is the second half of the verse describing the philosophy of Bodhidharma.

Presented by Rev Sano Taiten (Horin-ji, Kyoto, Japan).

Daruma-san doll

Daruma-ji Temple, Takasaki (Japan)



Daruma-san doll is made so as to right itself when knocked over.

It symbolizes a proverb "Seven Downs and Eight Ups" (never knocked down). This is connected to the legend of Bodhidharma who practiced wall-meditation for nine years. He never degenerated, but kept sitting.

The doll is regarded as a bringer of good luck. At the front lower center, there is a Chinese character "Fuku" which means Happiness. Japanese people love it very much and call it "Daruma san" affectionately. Each family renews it every new year at temples specialized for the doll by wishing their good fortune of the year.

Presented by Rev. Hirose Seishi, Takasaki Daruma-ji Temple (Gunma, Japan).

ABTRACT OF JOSEPH ARANHA'S PL ENARY SESSION LECTURE AT THE SILVER JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS OF THE INSTITUTE OF ASIAN STUDIES, 16TH, 17TH AND 18TH JANUARY 2011 AT CHENNAL, INDIA.

Bodhidharma the 28th Patriarch of Mahayana Buddhism after the Buddha was a living, breathing human being, contrary to the false notions being put out by some ignorant and arrogant so-called intellectuals that he was a myth.

Bodhidharma anticedents can be traced back to Chinese records of the 5th century and onwards, and credit must be given to those authors who recorded those histories.

Bodhidharma left India on the instructions of the 27th Patriarch – Prajnatara, who asked him to go to China the preach the Mahayana tradition there. Travelling via ship he embarked in various ports in South East Asia before he reached present day Guangzhou three years later.

He settled into the Hualin Temple and with the help of expartiates started to preach his version of Mahayana Buddhism where there was no reliance on the written word but the transmission of knowledge from mind to mind. Three years later he was invited to visit Emperor Wu Di of the Liang dynasty and at their meeting in Nanjing, the then capital of China, both of them did not see eye to eye on various aspects of Buddhism. This led Bodhidharma to then cross the Yangtse river and head to the Shaolin Temple in Deng Feng County which is located about 30 miles from Zhengzhou, the present capital of Henan Province.

There also he did not see eye to eye with the Abbot of the Temple and so climbing Songshan mountain behind the temple he chose a cave about a 100 feet from the peak of the mountain and started a daily routine of meditation, seeking sudden enlightenment. He stayed at this cave for a period of nine years and also taught the monks of Shaolin Temple various breathing techniques and the martial arts to make them more health conscious.

He became famous throughout China and people came to this cave to pay their respects to this meditating monk, which they do even today.

Contrary to various stories being put out he passed away in China and is buried at Bears Ear mountain as per Japanese historians. The Japanese are presently involved in building a temple at this place as a memory to Bodhidharma.

He is presently known as Da'mo in China and where Mahayana Buddhism became Chan Buddhism. Today in Japan he is well known in every aspect of life there – both culturally and religiously and is fondly known as Daruma San or Mr Daruma, and where Mahayana and Chan Buddhism has became Zen Buddhiam.

Credit must be given to those authors of various records of the 5th century and later years who recorded his activities and teachings there. Cr edit also must go to Japanese researchers who have done intensive research about his back ground right from the inception of Mahayana Buddhism.



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Bodhi Dharma and Oceanic Silk Road Tstuomu Kambe

(Former Professor of University of Tokyo, Physics)

ABSTRACT:

Which sea-route did Bodhi Dharma (the First Patriarch of Zen-Buddhism) take in order to get to China from India? Its details are not known.

In this article, it is proposed that a possible route he took was an Oceanic Silk Road.

Before the Christian Era already, there were active trade routes across the Indian Ocean between India and China.

It is very likely that Bodhi Dharma chose this course.

There is a new project to commemorate Bodhi Dharma at an old town in India.

[KEYWORDS] Bodhi Dharma, Indian Ocean, Ocean trade

Bodhi Dharma and Oceanic Silk Road ¹⁾ Tstuomu Kambe

Historical Background

Bodhi-Dharma (菩提達摩) was an Indian Buddhist monk who came to China from India in the first quarter of the sixth century. He brought Mahayana Buddhism to China. Coming to China, he stayed nine years at the Shao-lin Temple (少林寺), located in He-nan Province (河南省). Bodhi-Dharma is well-known in connection to a story expressed by the phrase "Wall Contemplation Nine Years (面壁九年)". From the philosophy and practice represented by this phrase, the Chinese Zen Buddhism originated and developed in ensuing generations. The Bodhi-Dharma is respected as the First Zu (First patriarch) of Chinese Zen Buddhism.

It is said that he was born as the third prince of a kingdom of south India. Name of the kingdom is expressed with two Chinese characters 香至. Late in his life, he left India. It was the year 520 CE (or 527 CE) when he arrived at Guang-zhou of south China by taking a sea route. It is not well known which course he took on the way. This article proposes a tentative account that the route he took was the Sea Silk-Road.

Chinese historical literature describes what took place at the time when he left India. "He met the King and told him of his wish to go to China. The King tried to persuade him to stay in his home land, but Bodhi-Dharma was determined to go. There was no longer anything for the King to do but to prepare a large boat with necessary items for a safe voyage. His hope was for the future return of Bodhi-Dharma (preferably with the same boat). On the day of departure, the King accompanied Bodhi-Dharma up to the harbor, together with the families of his relatives and vassals. At this moment, there were none who were not in tears.

After a three-year voyage, the ship of Bodhi-Dharma arrived at Guang-zhou of south

China. There, the local governor came to greet him. It was September of the year 520. It was the time of Emperor Wu of Liang Dynasty (梁朝, 武帝)。He was informed of this event. Knowing it, the emperor invited Bodhi-Dharma to the capital Jian-kang (now Nan-jing). During his stay at the capital, it is said that there was the following dialogue between the Emperor Wu and Bodhi-Dharma. The Emperor asked: "I have constructed many temples for Buddhists and used to serve for transcribing a number of Buddhism sutras. What karmic merit is promised?" Bodhi-Dharma replied: "No merit (無功徳)".

The kingdom where Bodhi-Dharma was born is recorded as "香至" in Chinese literatures. At the time of Tang dynasty (618 - 907) established a hundred years later from the time of Bodhi-Dharma, it is likely that 香至 is pronounced as "Kang-zhi". This is close to "Kanchi" (-puram), an old capital town in the state Tamil-Nadu of south India (the part 'puram' means a town or a state in the sense of earlier times). It was a capital of Pallava Dynasty at the time when Bodhi-Dharma was living. The Pallava Dynasty is recorded as an oceanic state, trading with Mediterranean countries to the west and with China, Siam, Fiji and others to the east. It is conjectured that Bodhi-Dharma departed from Kanchipuram to the nearest port Mamallapuram and embarked from there.

On the other hand, from the time of Former Han Dynasty (前漢, established in 206BC) more than two thousands years ago, China also traded by sea with south-east Asia, India, Middle-east and Mediterranean countries by using large oceanic boats. It is said that return journey took four years or so between China and Middle-east. In China at the time of 3rd century, oceanic boats were called "Konron-chuan". "Konron (崑崙)" meant the area of south-east Asia in general. A picture shows that an early-time trading boat is equipped with wooden arms on its both sides (supposed, for stability). It is noteworthy that there are remains described as China-Pagoda in a trading harbor-town (Nakapattinam) of south India near Sri-Lanka island. This was built by the order of a Chinese king for the sake of Chinese Buddhists who came to India from China for trade or for pilgrimage (perhaps in the 8th century). Kanchipuram is famous now in India as a town of quality silk cloths. Even Indian Buddhist monks used silk goods. This is written in the travel record [2] by Yi Jing (義浄, 635 - 713). Original silks were likely imported from China, although mulberry trees (for silkworms) were planted in south India too. Some sources record that Yi Jing wrote a letter during his stay in Java (691) and sent it to the authorities of Tang Dynasty (at the time of Wu Zetian 武則天), in which he asked to construct a China Pagoda in India. This corresponds to the above record in India.

Sea Route of Fa-Xian (Buddhist monk, 335-423)

A number of Buddhist monks visited India from China and vice versa. A record of most famous travel is that of Xuan-Zang (629-645), who took the land route both ways to and from India. In an earlier travel by Fa-Xian (399 - 412), he took a land (mountain) route on his way to India and returned back by a sea route. Why Fa-Xian took the sea route on his return is not written in his travel record. It is conjectured that he wanted to avoid steep and dangerous mountain routes because his age had advanced to over seventy at the time.

Beginning his way back to China, he stayed at a town at the mouth of the Ganges river and waited for two years to take a large commercial ship. During his stay, he has transcribed Buddhism texts (and possibly looked for a person or a merchant who would assist him on his return journey). By taking advantage of seasonal (monsoon) wind in the

beginning of winter, his ship arrived at the island of Simhala (now Sri-Lanka) after fourteen days. It is well known that there is a seasonal wind from the north-east along the east coast of India in the Bengal Bay. After he had stayed for two years in Sri-Lanka too, he took a large ship (possibly helped by another merchant). The number of passengers on board was more than two hundreds. They embarked for the east. In the beginning there was favorable seasonal wind, but from the third day a storm occurred. After thirteen days, they arrived at an island. It is speculated that it was one of Nicobal islands. Tending to repairs due to flooding of the ship, they resumed their journey. After nine or ten days (or ninety days by another reading) by passing through the Strait of Malacca, they arrived at a harbor in Sumatra or Java islands. Fa-Xian stayed there for five months. His trip route is shown by the thick solid curve in the figure (Reference [3]).



Route of Fa-Xian (thick solid line) and a speculated route of Bodhi Dharma (dotted line)

Helped by another merchant, he took a large ship bound for China where two hundred passengers were on board. Guessing the size of the ship, it could be one corresponding to two carriage cars of a modern electric train connected side by side and one underneath them. A relief of a big ship remains in Borobudur's Buddhist structures (below) on the Java Island, which suggests such a ship as Fa-Xian took.



Ship relief in Borobudur.

They embarked with food on board of fifty days, but they encountered a storm on the way and drifted on the East China Sea. Eighty days after their departure, they arrived at a place on the south coast of Shan-dong Peninsula of China.

This was a voyage that occurred at a time a hundred years before Bodhi Dharma. At

his time, it appears that voyages across the Indian Ocean by using the monsoon seasonal wind are well-known. It is likely that such a sea route would have been recommended to Fa-Xian. According to modern data of observation, there is Monsoon wind in the Indian Ocean from Indian side to Malay Peninsula from May to September every year.

Sea Route of Bodhi Dharma

Bodhi Dharma's ship departed Mamallapuram, a main port closest to Kanchipuram, and headed for Sri-Lanka. This is just a conjecture. It is likely that they stayed there a couple of months waiting for favorable monsoon wind, preparing for the great journey crossing the Indian Ocean. It might take another couple of months to get to a port in Sumatra or Java island. It may have taken a half or more of a year (depending on circumstances) since he departed his home country Kanchipuram. It is likely that he may have been invited by a royal family at the place he was staying, or that he stayed at a temple for rain retreat in summer time according to the Buddhist custum, or that he spent half a year by preparing his next journey, waiting for a favorable wind, or trading. Once everything was ready, they finally embarked for Guang-Zhou, China. It may have taken two months or so to get to their destination. Two years should have been sufficient time for the whole journey. The "three years" written in the record may imply that it was the third year since he departed his home country, rather than that it took full three years.

Bodhi Dharma according to old records was born in Kanchipuram of south India., and his final place of rest was at the Bear-Ear Mountain of He-Nan Province of China, where there is a temple Kong-Xing Si to commemorate Bodhi-Dharma. However, in the ancient town Kanchipuram where Bodhi-Dharma is supposed to have grown up, there is nothing to remind us of him. It is considered that there were many Buddhist structures in Kanchipuram, but most of them were destroyed by the ravages of time and by the opponents of Buddhism. At the present time, it is a sacred town of Hinduism. Historical remains related to Buddhism found in that region are very limited in number, although one can come across a large number of Buddhist remains in the Hindu temples of this antique city.

Devotees and interested individuals from different countries may wish to be informed and experience some sense of this great person Bodhi-Dharma in Kanchipuram. Currently, a project is being planned by those who intend to build a memorial structure at the land (in Kanchipuram) owned by the Institute of Asian Studies (Chennai, India). This article is written with the hope and confidence in worldwide spiritual support for this endeavor.

Reference

- [1] This article was written in Jappanese for Ship & Ocean Newsletter, No.204 (February 5, 2009), published by Ocean Policy Research Foundation (Torano-mon 1-15-16, Minato-ku, Tokyo, Japan).
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- [3] "Fa-Xian Story and Song-Yun Story" (Translation and comments by Kazutoshi Nagasawa, Toyo-Bunko No. 194, published by Heibon-sha, 1971).

By Tsutomu Kambe, January 2009,