



Bodhidharma

Date

early 19th century

Medium

wood and stain

Description

Known in Chinese as Damo, he is documented as the first patriarch of Chan (Japanese: Zen) Buddhism. Damo was an Indian Buddhist monk who arrived in south China by sea around the year 520. Shortly after his arrival, he had an audience with Emperor Wu Di of the Liang dynasty, whom he offended by discoursing on how far the emperor had strayed from the path to true enlightenment. He travelled north and founded his own sect and the Shaolin Temple near Mount Song in Henan province where he taught that enlightenment could be attained through chan, or meditation. Legends about Damo are closely related to the way he is depicted. He is said to have meditated with intense concentration for nine years while facing a wall of a cave near the Shaolin temple he founded. He is, therefore, depicted with a large forehead and intensely bulging eyes symbolizing his concentration, wisdom, soberness, and dedication. He is also often depicted crossing the Yangzi River on a reed, indicating

his weightless

Dimensions

Overall: 9 5/8 x 4 x 3 3/4 in. (24.4 x 10.2 x 9.5 cm)