





Once, Prajnatara asked Bodhitara, "What is it that is formless amongst things?"

The prince answered, "Formlessness is unborn."

Venerable Prajnatara asked, "What is it that all things are hung on?"

The prince answered, "All things hang on the sense of self and other."

Prajnatara asked, "What is the highest amongst things?"

The prince answered, "The Actual Nature is the highest."



“From afar Bodhidharma saw that this country (China) had people capable of the Great Vehicle, so he came by sea, intent on his mission, purely to transmit the Mind Seal, to arouse and instruct those mired in delusion. Without establishing written words, he pointed directly to the human mind (for them) to see nature and fulfill Buddhahood.”



Emperor Wu of Liang
(464–549)



Emperor Wu asked, “I have built many temples and ordained many monks; what merit is there in this?”

Bodhidharma said, “There is no merit.”

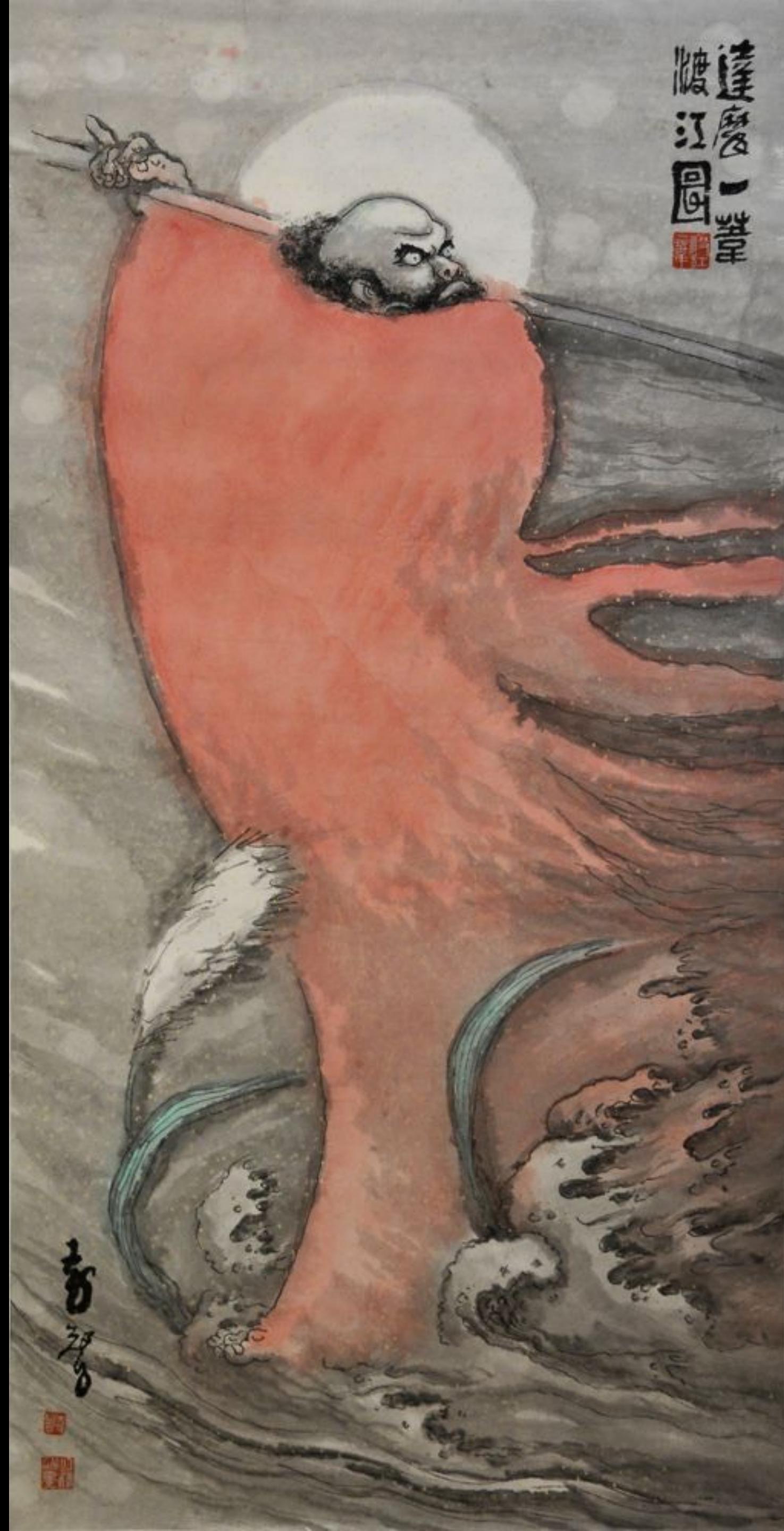
The Emperor asked, “What is the first principle of the holy teachings?”

Bodhidharma replied, “Vast emptiness; nothing holy.”

The emperor asked, “Who is it who stands before me?”

Bodhidharma answered, “I do not know.”

The Emperor did not understand.



... After this Bodhidharma crossed the Yangtse River and came to the kingdom of Wei.

Later the Emperor brought this up to Master Chih and asked him about it.

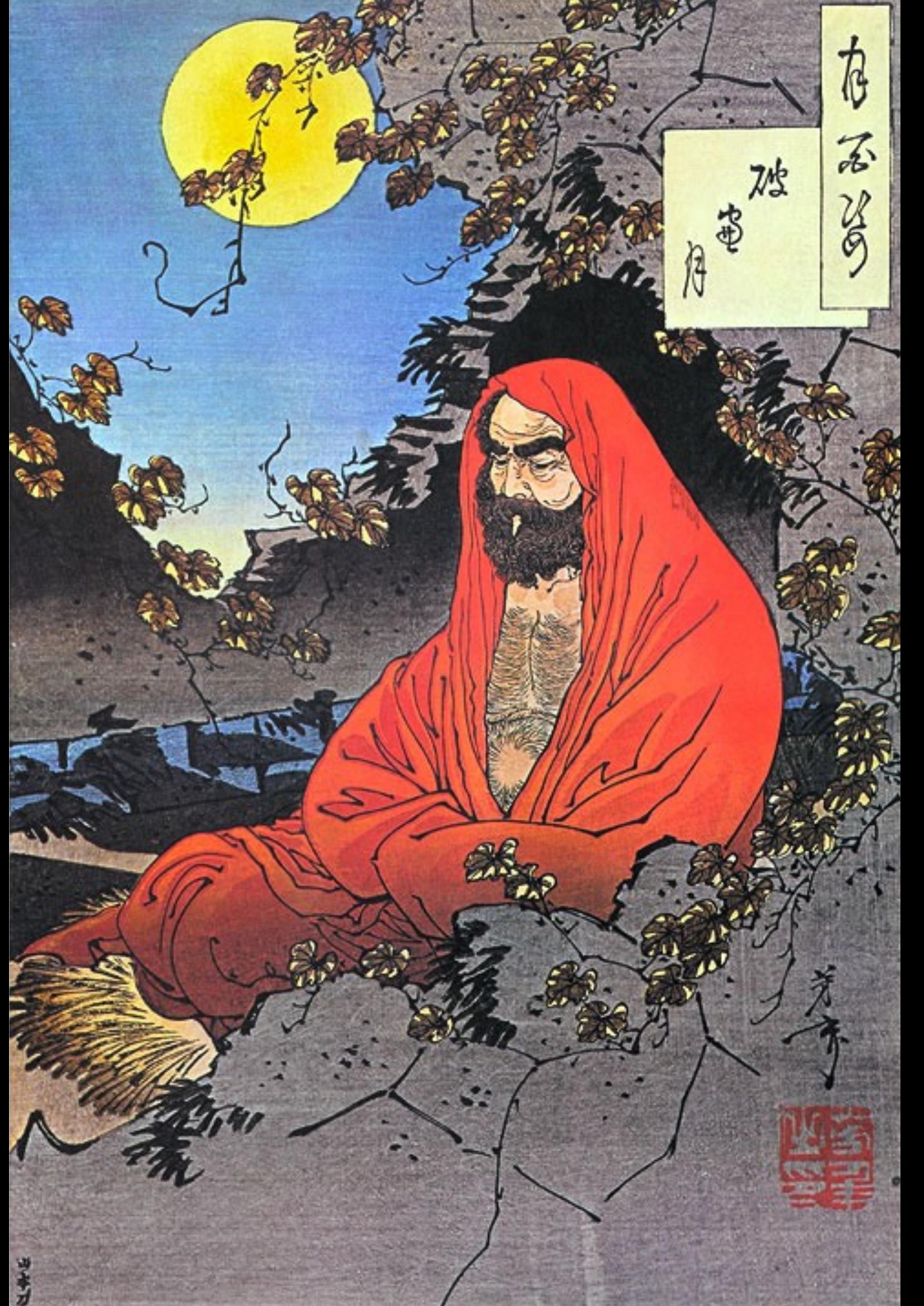
Master Chih asked, “Does your majesty know who this man is?”

The Emperor said, “I don’t know.”

Master Chih said, “He is the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, transmitting the Buddha Mind Seal.”

The Emperor felt regretful, so he wanted to send an emissary to go invite (Bodhidharma to return).

Master Chih told him, “Your majesty, don’t say that you will send someone to fetch him back. Even if everyone in the whole country were to go after him, he still wouldn’t return.”



Bodhidharma travelled to distant Mount Song in the north, near Shaolin Monastery, but he was not allowed to enter. In a nearby cave on the mountain, he practiced zazen meditation for nine years, “facing the wall”.



According to legend, during his nine years of facing the wall in meditation, Bodhidharma once fell asleep. So that he would not fall asleep again, he cut off his own eyelids. As his eyelids hit the cave floor, they turned into the first tea plants. To this day, students of Zen drink green tea to help them stay awake during meditation.



A Chinese scholar named Shen Guang approached Bodhidharma in his cave, but Bodhidharma refused to teach him. He waited in the snow for days. Finally, according to legend, the man cut off his own arm to demonstrate his sincerity. Bodhidharma gave him the name “Huike”, which means “Able Wisdom”. Huike became Bodhidharma’s disciple and dharma heir.

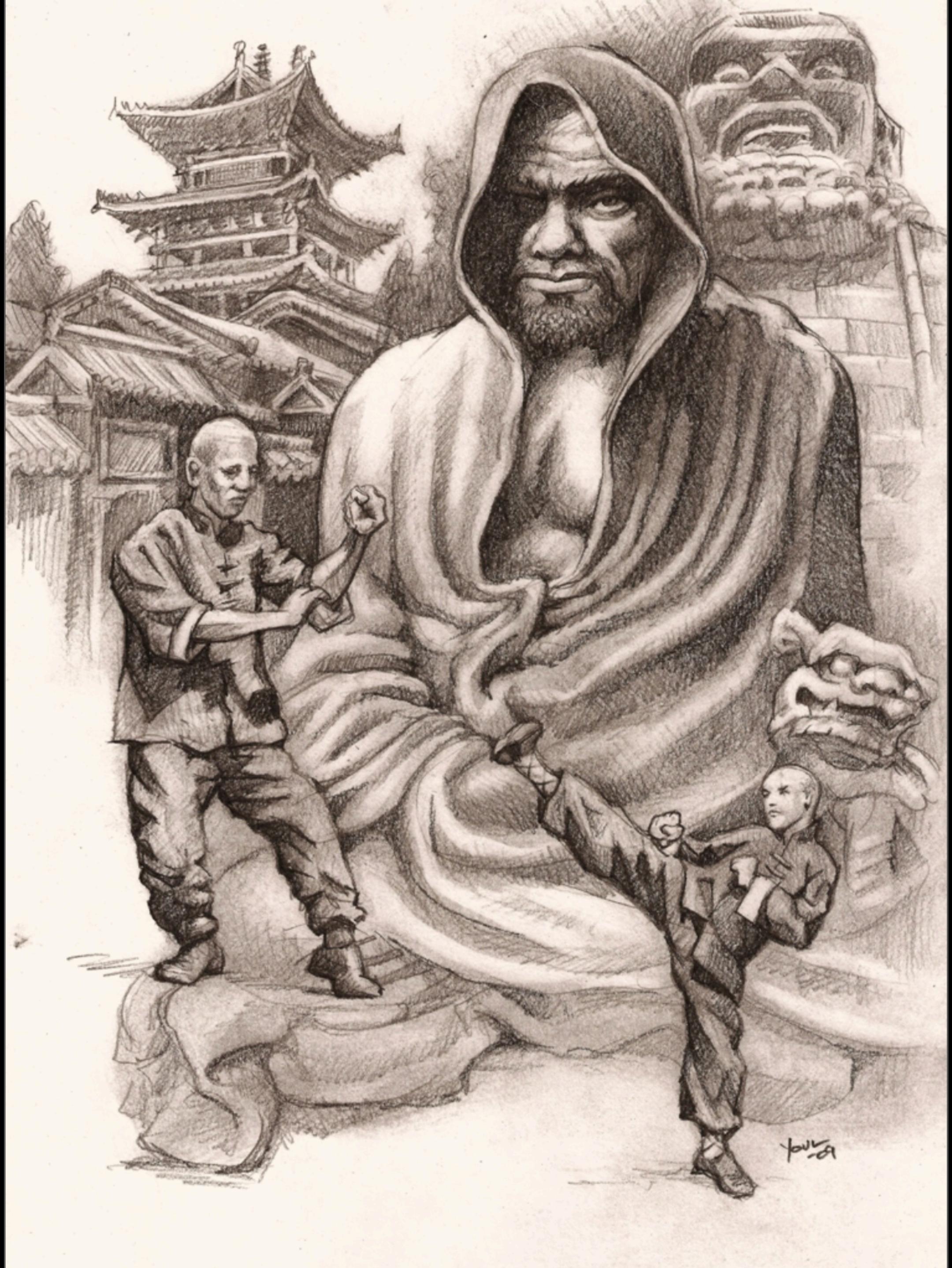


Huike said to Bodhidharma,
"My mind is anxious. Please
pacify it."

Bodhidharma replied, "Bring
me your mind, and I will
pacify it."

Huike said, "Although I've
sought it, I cannot find it."

"There," Bodhidharma
replied, "I have pacified your
mind."



Another legend says that, after nine years in his cave, Bodhidharma was welcomed into Shaolin Monastery. Bodhidharma saw that the monks were too weak to defend themselves and lacked the stamina to do meditation. So he taught them the techniques of the Martial Arts, and that was the birth of Kung Fu. Shaolin Monastery is still famous for its Kung Fu monks.





According to legend, Bodhidharma died at the age of 150. However, three years after his burial, a Chinese official lost in the mountains encountered Bodhidharma. He claimed to be returning to India, and he carried a single sandal on a staff. Later, Bodhidharma's tomb was opened, and only a single sandal was found inside.

Daruma Dolls

“Nanakorobi Yaoki”:
“Seven times down, eight times up”

