

Daruma

I have a DARUMA doll in my classroom, which evokes a lot of interest from all students. Daruma dolls, as you can see from the picture, are generally red and have 2 eyes. When you purchase a DARUMA, their eyes are blank. When you set a goal (some say to make a wish) one eye is drawn on. Every time you look at the Daruma, your goal is recalled and you continue to work towards it. Once you have reached the goal, the other eye is drawn on, honouring the promise that you will give the Daruma full sight once the goal is reached.

Daruma are modelled after Bodhidharma, the founder of the Zen sect of Buddhism. According to one tradition Bodhidharma gained a

reputation for, among other things, his practice of wall-gazing. Legend claims that he sat facing a wall in meditation for a period of nine years without moving, which caused his legs to fall off !

Another popular legend is that after falling asleep during his nine-year meditation, he became angry with himself and cut off his eyelids to avoid ever falling asleep again.

Although considered a toy, they are regarded more as a talisman, a good luck charm and are seen prominently in Japan, some even as big as us !

One last piece of trivia, Yuki-daruma is a snowman. Yuki is snow, and it looks like the round, roly-poly Daruma is sitting on top, hence YUKI-DARUMA.

