



Hanging scroll: A plum branch bound up with narcissus

The priest Keison

Not on display

Title/Description: Hanging scroll: A plum branch bound up with narcissus

Artist/Maker: The priest Keison

Born: 1500 c.

Object Type: Scroll painting

Materials: Fibre, Ink, Paper, Silk

Measurements: h. 1143 x w. 304 mm

Accession Number: 767

Historic Period: Muromachi period (AD 1333-1568)

Production Place: Asia, East Asia, Japan

The painting is signed Kyugetsusai, together with an undeciphered seal of the artist. It was formerly attributed to the better-known Zen priest-painter, Kei Shoki (Ji. 1476-1506), who worked in Kamakura, the first centre of the Zen sect in Japan, but it is now known that Kyugetsusai is an art-name of his pupil, Keison. The painting is in the serious Zen ink-style, with abundant use of wash, the flowers being reserved in the white paper. The flowering plum and the narcissus, both symbols of early spring and of the resilience and elegance of the scholar-artist, have been plucked and tied together to send as a present to a like-minded friend, and this recalls the elegant amateur exchanges of the Chinese scholar class of the same period. The scroll has a lacquered outer box and an older wooden inner box with the seal of the Matsukata collection.

Entry taken from Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Collection 3 volume catalogue, edited by Steven Hooper (Yale University Press, 1997).
