



Roshi's calligraphy:

"How fragrant the plum blossoms dusted by the snow"

"The plum is one of the first flowers to bloom in the new year, appearing naturally during the severe cold of winter. No matter how harsh the weather, the plum thrives and blossoms. Persevering through the cold and blooming even when everything is covered with snow, it expresses honesty and endurance in the face of hardships.

"Closely associated with plum flowers is the Sung dynasty hermit named Rin. He lived from 963 to 1028 and was known as the hidden sage. Although he seldom appeared in public, the influence of his verses on the plum was so great that it's hard to think of one without the other.

In one poem describing winter, the water so clearly reflects the cold moon and the shadow of a plum branch that the plum's fragrance can be smelled. There is only the bright moonlight and the shadow of the plum branch, seen against the flowing water. Although the shadow of the plum doesn't move, the flower's light fragrance brings us a feeling of great abundance. The scene is famous from Rin's song of the plum.

The Manyōshū, the earliest anthology of Japanese poetry, published in the middle of the eighth century, included many descriptions of plums;

In my garden the plum's petals are fluttering down.
In this great huge sky the snow falls, and in that same way the petals fly.
But is it snow or is it the flowers? It's hard to know.
This beauty of not being able to tell the difference.

Carrying a child on my back, I wanted to show it the plum flowers,
but was it plum or not? The snow was falling, the snow was dancing . . .
or was it the flowers dancing? We could not tell them apart.

The snow fell this morning; in my garden
the old plum tree has bloomed on two branches.

"In Zen there is a place beyond time and space where the truth of the Dharma can be clarified. If we experience that, we know that no being is limited to a certain period or era; there is only awakening. That is the purity of the plum flower as well."