

Myoe Shonin jujo zazen (Painting of Myoe Meditating in a Tree)

Myoe (1173–1232) often used to meditate in the crook of a forked pine tree on Mt. Ryoga, near Kosanji Temple. The tree had a name: Josho-ju, or “Rope-seat Tree.” Today, a small stone pagoda marks its location.

The most famous portrait of Myoe depicts him meditating in the crook of the tree. He is seated peacefully amid wisteria, birds, rocks, trees, and squirrels. The painting captures Myoe’s reverence for nature and love of animals. It is attributed to his attendant, Jonin, and has been dated to the thirteenth century.

The original is a National Treasure kept at Kyoto National Museum. The version displayed at Sekisuiin is a reproduction.