



The Portland Classical Chinese Garden ~ At Home in Nature The Five Elements: ARCHITECTURE

The Portland Classical Chinese Garden, also called *Lan Su Yuan*, was built in Oregon during the year 2000. However, it looks much the same as gardens built in the busy city of Suzhou, China around 600 years ago, during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). As people enter *Lan Su Yuan*, they can imagine how people lived inside their homes and gardens in China many hundreds of years ago.

To make the home and garden appear larger on the inside of the garden walls than could be imagined when standing outside, many styles of buildings were used long ago in China. These same techniques are used in the Ming-style garden in Portland, Oregon. Portland's Chinese garden is not very big—less than one city block—yet visitors often say that they feel like they are in wandering inside a wilderness area, even though they are really walking in walled-off city garden. Different kinds of building designs are to make the garden seem bigger than its actual size. Exploring the garden allows each visitor to discover nature's mysteries hidden among various the plants, stone, architecture, buildings and poetry.

One way that the Chinese Garden feels bigger on the inside than it looks from the outside, is the use of **Leak Windows**. Leak Windows are formed with pieces of curved roof tiles set into a garden wall. In this way, a person can see from one courtyard into another. Animals, flowers and other shapes pierce through the solid wall creating a kind of secret passageway. Peeking into nature's wonders that are 'leaked' through the wall, helps a person's mind take a journey by imagining what might be found on the path just beyond.

LEAK WINDOW ACTIVITY

1. **Color one of the Leak Window designs you find with this activity.**
2. **Design an original Leak Window using shapes and lines found in nature.**
3. **Choose one of the Leak Window designs and draw** a scene that you imagine you could find in the Portland Classical Chinese Garden. In other words, draw the scene that might be 'leaking' through this window somewhere inside *Lan Su Yuan*.

In your drawing, try to include at least four of the Five Elements found within the Portland Chinese Garden: Plants, Water, Rock, Architecture (optional Written Poetry). Three window scenes can be put them together in a trptych, that is, a three-panel piece of art. All your artwork can be displayed together in an exhibit you might call Bringing Nature into View. These might reflect the changing seasons of nature.

Visit the Portland Classical Chinese Garden website to view some photos of nature's beauty and the art and architecture discovered with each step you take inside the Chinese Garden. Go to www.portlandchinesegarden.org. Click on Learning then on Visiting with Children. Download the Family Guide to take a scenic stroll through the Chinese Garden. Scroll down for some Garden views.



Leaked View of Late Spring in Fragrance Courtyard & Moon Gate



Framing a Distant View of Chinese Mountain and Forest in Summer



Leaked View of the Changing Colors of Fall in the Scholar's Courtyard



Winter Scene through the 4-Corner Butterflies with 8-Petal Blossom

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