

Ohiyo gozaimas, tomodachi [**o-hi-yo go-zah-ee-mahs, to-mo-dah-chee*] (remember what that means?) and, gakusei [*gah-koo-say-ee*], or student. Blessings on you and on your stitching.

I sit here writing to you with my right wrist in a cast, alas, a torn ligament that hinders everything I love to do. As you stitch, please know that I am stitching with you in spirit.

My husband and I have just returned from a lovely trip to Vancouver, BC where he had a week of meetings. One morning, he took a break from meetings to go with me to [Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden](#). Yes, it is Chinese, but the more I read, I realize that it is not inconsistent with the lore we are learning through our Japanese Embroidery; the two philosophies have much in common.

This garden is an exact life-size replica of a Scholar's Garden, where he would write, read, meditate and play and listen to music. Walking around the garden, we see wood and plaster "see-throughs", or leak windows. The scholar would walk around and each leak would give him a different view of the garden, leading your eye to something beyond. Each one is in a different design. Going clockwise around, the first window is in a pattern of floral openings, a feminine essence; the next is one of hearts; the next, one of geometrics. With each window, the design is simpler and more masculine. Also, the garden mosaic floor pattern evolves from intricate feminine design, gradually changing to a more herringbone pattern on the other side. Chinese rocks were brought from China to be placed strategically in the garden. Rocks are principle elements in Japanese art as well. Here, the more intricate the rock form, the more special it is. The best ones have natural holes in them, thereby letting the good spirits and light shine through them.

Plants are selected for their symbolic values, just as our embroidery designs. The willow portrays feminine grace; the winter flowering plum depicts renewal; the pine symbolizes strength because it can grow in treacherous conditions; and bamboo represents quiet resilience, bending, but never breaking.

Water is there for its Feng Shui atmosphere. One of its attributes is that it reflects the mountains, the trees and plants and buildings. At this typical garden, the water is colored green to make the reflections even more prominent.

There is so much more I would like to share, but for this column I will leave you with one more tidbit. How many of you have stitched a tassel? Tassels are challenges for those of us who have stitched the Sake Boxes. Silly me, I thought they were just a part of the box ties. But, no! There were symbols carved into the doors and one was a tassel, which we were told symbolize long life. So, don't be afraid of tassels any more.

In honor of tassels, nagaiki [*nah-gah' ee kee*] or long life to you all!

Till next time, sayonara, tomodachi!
Heiwa,
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