

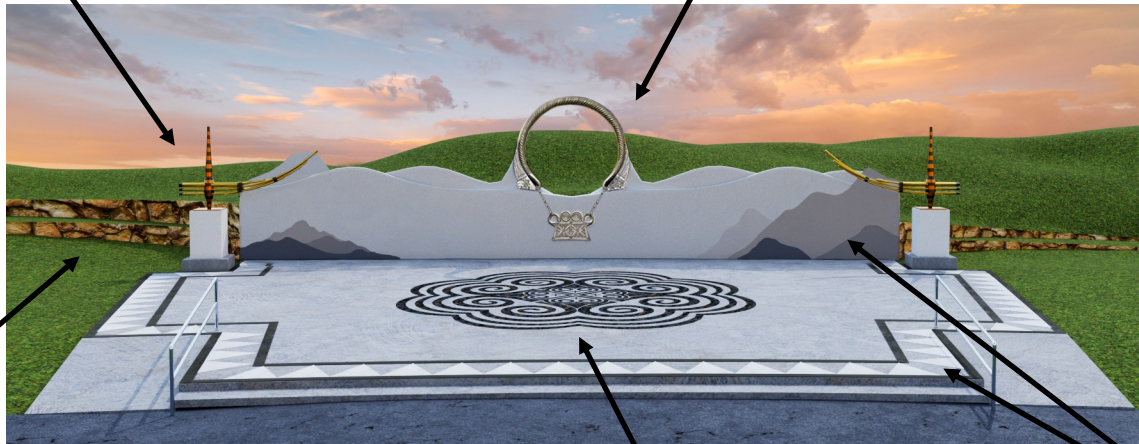
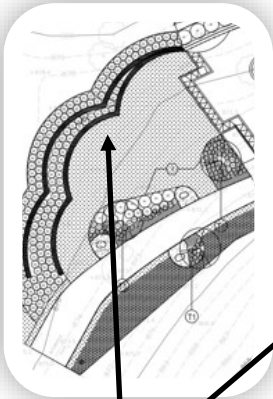
Symbolism of the China Friendship Garden Hmong Plaza

Traditional Hmong Saying represented in the Hmong Plaza: *“Be pure as rice, strong as rock, healthy as green grass, and transparent as water”*

Qeej is a free-reed Hmong musical instrument with a hollow body and six bamboo pipes. Sounds are produced by inhaling or exhaling with various finger placements. The Qeej is a communication tool, its sounds are the sounds of the Hmong spoken language, meaning every note or sound has an equivalent Hmong word. The Qeej serves two primary cultural purposes. At funerals, its melody instructs the deceased on his/her journey to the spirit world and ancestors. At festivals, the musician demonstrates their talents and skills for entertainment.

Silver Necklace can be worn by all ages and both genders. It demonstrates the wealth of each family. Traditionally, it is made of real silver weighing 1 to 5 pounds, depending on the family's wealth. Used as a decorative accessory, engagement dowry, and for spiritual healings. The Necklace will stand 15' tall and be made of stainless steel.

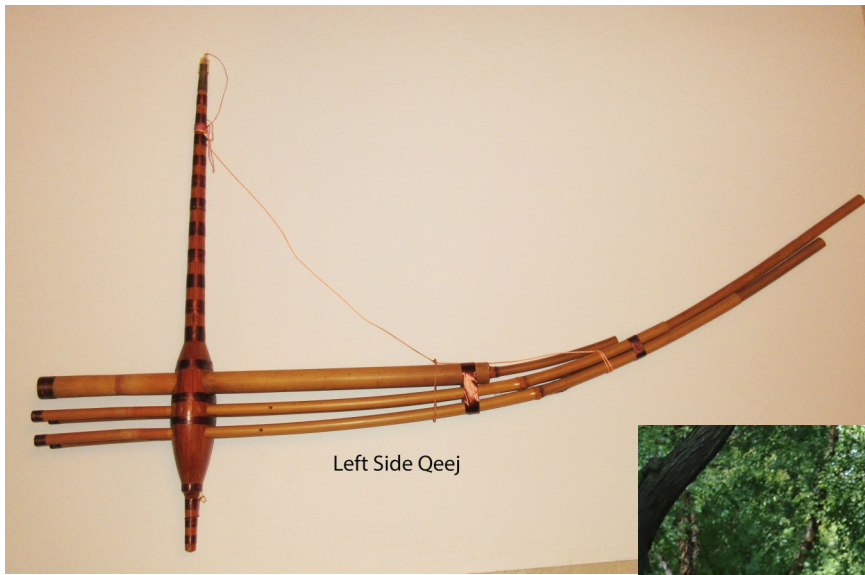
Hmong Plaza is part of the China Friendship Garden; a garden based on the sister-city relationship between St. Paul and Changsha in Hunan Province, China. St. Paul has the largest urban Hmong population in the U.S. and the Hmong trace their ancestral roots to this area of China. Changsha is home to 2 million Hmong. The Hmong Plaza was designed in collaboration with the St. Paul Parks & Recreation Department's Design Advisory Committee (that included local Hmong leaders, artists, and community members), the Changsha Hunan Jianke architects, and MN China Friendship Garden Society Board Members, among others.



Rice Terrace Rock/Grass Borders represent significant Hmong cultural symbols. **Rice** is grown in rice terraces and is the traditional principal food of the Hmong. **Rock** borders represent how Hmong traditionally use rocks to set boundaries for protection. **Grass** represents the principal food for their domestic animals.

Elephant Footprint Paj Ntaub/Paaj Ntaub comes from Hmong embroidery art and is a typical Hmong cultural symbol. It represents a guide to green land; wherever there are elephant footprints, there are rainforests, food, and water; rich lands that can produce maize and rice. Hmong women have used **Paj Ntaub/Paaj Ntaub** embroidery, embedded with special symbols and meaning, to preserve their stories from generation to generation.

Triangles and wall paintings represent mountains. The Hmong people tend to live in higher parts of the country (mountains in China, Laos, Vietnam), and believe that mountains are cleaner, healthier, and have the best views of the world. It is a place to freely grow rice and raise animals; and represents their love of living with nature.



Left Side Qeej



Example of Hmong Silver Necklace



Hmong Qeej and Qeej Musician



Hmong villages in mountains of Vietnam



Hmong Rice Terraces