



The lotus, or 蓮花 (lián huā), is a cherished summer symbol in Chinese culture. Its bloom, rising pure and elegant from the mud, represents purity and a scholarly spirit.

Ne Zha – The Lotus Warrior

Ne Zha (哪吒) is one of the most famous heroes in Chinese mythology. His story comes from *The Investiture of the Gods* (Fengshen Yanyi 封神演義), a Chinese novel written during the Ming dynasty in the late 16th century.

Known for his unusual birth and magical powers, Ne Zha is a brave young hero who stands up for what is right. After giving up his life to protect his family and community, Ne Zha is brought back with the help of his teacher. He is reborn from a lotus flower and returns stronger than ever. His journey from hardship to renewal has made him a lasting symbol of resilience, growth, and second chances.

✧ Did You Know?

In Chinese culture, the lotus flower symbolizes purity because it can grow from muddy water and still bloom into a beautiful flower. Ne Zha's rebirth from a lotus connects him to these qualities, making him a symbol of strength, renewal, and hope.

Discover the hidden lotuses of Lan Su below!



Lotus Lookalike! But Not Quite...

They are water lilies (Nymphaea sp.) Unlike lotuses, these water plants have heart-shaped leaves that rest flat on the water's surface. In Chinese, they are called "the sleeping lotus" because the flowers open in the morning and close at night!



This Is a Lotus!

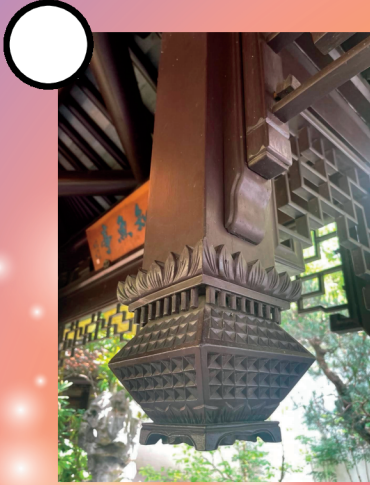
Another way to tell lotuses and water lilies apart is by looking at their stems. The stem and bloom of our lotus (Nelumbo sp.) grow tall above the water, while the bloom of waterlilies floats atop the water's surface. Keep in mind, the lotus may be in a different stage of growth than the picture shown here, so you might need to visit the garden again to catch it in full bloom!

LAN SU DISCOVERY GUIDE

Summer 2026

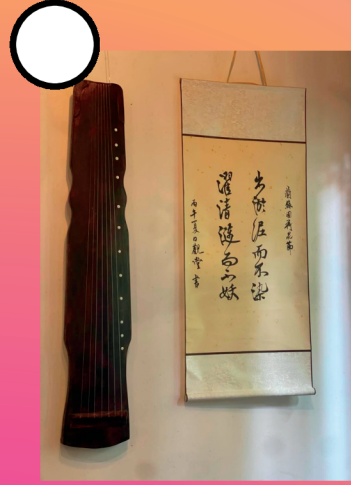


* flip to the other side to learn about Discover the Hidden Lotuses!



Lotus Bloom in Columns

A "chui hua zhu" (垂花柱) is a hanging wooden column commonly found in traditional Chinese architecture. It serves both decorative and structural purposes. At Lan Su, these carved columns feature lotus and flower-basket motifs, symbols of purity, abundance, and refinement in Chinese culture.



Always Unstained

In *On the Love of the Lotus* (《愛蓮說》), Song dynasty scholar Zhou Dunyi (周敦頤) praised the lotus as a symbol of virtue. This calligraphy features his famous line, **"Emerges from the mud yet remains unstained,"** celebrating the lotus's natural purity while expressing the ideal of maintaining integrity in life.



The Blooming Columns

These are called "column bases," or "zhu chu" 柱础. Lotus column bases were especially loved by Chinese scholars for their homes during the Ming and Qing dynasties when the craftsmanship of these bases reached new heights!



Rooted in Wood Carving

This ginkgo wood carving features lotus in bloom in the lake at the world-renowned Humble Administrator's Garden (拙政园), a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Portland's sister city, Suzhou. It served as one of the inspirations for the design and construction of Lan Su.

Hint: this carving can be found facing the lake.



Lotus Hidden in the Calligraphy

"蓮" (qú), circled here, is a classical literary term of lotus often found in poetry and couplets. These four characters are "蓮紅葉綠" means "the red of lotus blossoms and the green of leaves," evoking the beauty of a lotus-filled lake.



Lotus Seeds bring a Big Family

Lotus seeds are rich in protein and widely used in Chinese cooking. Because their name sounds similar to wishes for children and family prosperity, lotus seeds are often served at weddings and other celebrations as a symbol of fertility.