

Korean Hexagonal Pavilion

The hexagonal (six-sided) pavilion has been found in Korean culture since ancient times in places of great natural beauty. It provided a frame and focus to the landscape. Traditionally the pavilion was seen as a balance between heaven and earth, symbolizing man's spiritual relationship to the universe. It is well-situated at VanDusen between two majestic black locust trees with groves of Douglas fir in the distance.

When you look at this hexagonal pavilion, what effect does it have on you? Let's consider the angles of a hexagon. They are obtuse – obtuse angles have controlled energy and convey a sense of subdued or refined energy. On the other hand, acute angles increase energy, intensity and angularity. When you look at this structure, there is a sense of well-being and containment. Forces within hexagonal structures are uniformly distributed.

What does a honeycomb, the eye of a fly, the wing of a dragonfly, the single-celled Radiolaria have in common with the Korean pavilion? – the hexagon. Busy bees build honeycombs of hexagons, single celled creatures are made up of hexagons, flies eyes and dragonfly wings are made of hexagons. All get maximum effect with minimum effort. It is the most efficient shape.

Going inside this pavilion, each of the six sides has a different view. The half revealed half hidden aspect is a central theme in Asian gardens. Note also the six pointed circle symbols on each of the six beams and the six white dots around each of the six red pillars. The color red has always been associated with temples, shrines and religious gates since ancient times. On the inside of the roof there are different designs symbolizing the universe (mandala).

The hexagonal pavilion was used as a retreat for study and contemplation. But it was also used for poetry contests and social gatherings. Considering the energy and sense of harmony of the hexagon, this was and is a perfect place.

Architect's Journal - 22/02/2001 - A Taste of Eden – Isabel Allen
Introduction of Landscape Design – John Motloch
Principals of Garden Design – Po-Chu Lee



Looking up at the Korean Hexagonal Pavilion in VanDusen.