

## Figurines and flags on gilded shrine used by Fukian Chinese at Hoi An

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Figurines and miniature flags cover the surfaces of a gilded shrine used by the Fukian Chinese community at Hoi An. A crowned goddess figure is enthroned at the back center of the shrine, flanked by four smaller images of less important goddesses. A four-legged metal incense burner is seen at the front right of the shrine table.

Hoi An was a thriving sea port for sailing ships and maritime trade by the 1700s. Ethnic Chinese populations are found in all urban and trade centers of Vietnam, but they are particularly large in Hoi An. As in Singapore, many of the ethnic Chinese merchants in the town are descended from migrants from the Fukian (also written as Fukien, Fujian, and Phuc Kien) area of southern China. Although originally built as community meeting halls for the migrant Chinese community, these compounds now are used as temples for the worship of various Fukian Chinese deities, including Thieu Hau, a goddess of the sea.



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