

Dragon and fish statues in garden fountain of Chinese Fukian hall at Hoi An

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Colorful dragon and fish statues spurt water at each other in the garden fountain of the Chinese Fukian assembly hall at Hoi An. The large, coiled dragon is said to represent power while the fish represents scholarly knowledge. Other animals in the assembly hall garden also symbolize qualities admired and desired by this Fukian Chinese community.

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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