

Saigon Ceramics in Artistic Decoration Architecture of the Hoa People in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

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ABSTRACT: Hoa people play an important role in reclaiming and building the southern region, especially the Cho Lon area, which is considered to have the largest concentration of Hoa communities in the country. Possessing a unique cultural heritage, Hoa people in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) have created many unique architectural works with outstanding colors and decorative carvings. Exquisitely carved on many materials, such as wood, bronze, and especially ceramic.

From the early twentieth century onwards, in the Saigon region, names of pottery kilns such as "Dong Hoa Dieu" and "Buu Nguyen Dieu" appeared on ceramic products used for construction, restoration, decoration, or worship at temples, Hoa Guild Halls, etc. Saigon pottery appeared because the need to use decorative ceramics and worship objects for new construction and restoration at temples, shrines, and Guild Halls became more popular.

The decorative art themes in the traditional architecture of the temple and the Flower Guild Hall are very diverse and rich, such as mascots, plants, stories, symbols associated with religious beliefs,... Decorative images This is vividly portrayed to express the profound ideological and intellectual meanings of human life and the universe while demonstrating the mettle and character of the Hoa people and educating future generations.

We aim to introduce the origin, historical significance, and cultural characteristics through each theme, legend, and distinctive layout of the temples by surveying and studying Saigon ceramics in architectural and artistic decoration at some temples, shrines, and Hoa Guild Halls in Ho Chi Minh City, such as: Tue Thanh Hoi Quan, Nhi Phu Hoi Quan, Nghia An Guild Hall, Nam Pho Da Tu, Thao Duong Thien Tu,... Ho Chi Minh City is home to two distinct Vietnamese and Hoa resident communities, which together support the city's distinctive architectural and historical assets.

KEYWORDS: Saigon pottery, Hoa Temple architecture, decorative arts

1. FINDINGS

Hoa people are one of 54 ethnic groups in Vietnam. In the South in general and in Ho Chi Minh City in particular, Hoa people live intermingled with Vietnamese and Khmer people. According to the General Statistics Office, as of April 2019, the whole country had 749,466 Hoa people (accounting for 0.77% of the country's population), concentrated mainly in Ho Chi Minh City with 382,826 people, accounting for 51% of the Hoa people nationwide. The Hoa in Ho Chi Minh City include many different groups, divided into 05 main dialect groups: Cantonese (廣東), Chaozhou (潮州), Hainan (海南), He (客), Fujian (福建). The division of these Hoa dialect groups is based on their native homeland and language. Each small group has its own unique cultural nuances and characteristics, but that does not mean there are divisions between them. They are always aware of their origins and close community links.

The history of immigration to form the Hoa ethnic community in Ho Chi Minh City lasted for many centuries, but the largest number was around the 17th century (1679). After the "overthrowing the Ming Dynasty" movement (反清復明) was suppressed, many Hoa mandarins, soldiers and people who did not submit to the Qing Dynasty (大清) sailed south to seek refuge. In the Dai Nam Thuc Luc, it is written: "Ky Mui, 31st year, spring, January, the old general of the Ming Dynasty (大明) was Long Mon general (龍門總兵) Duong Ngan Dich (楊彥迪) and Deputy General Hoang Tien (黃進), General Tran Thuong Xuyen (陳上川) and Deputy General

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Tran An Binh (陳安) brought more than 3,000 troops and more than 50 warships to Tu Dung and Da Nang estuaries, claiming to be the gods of the Ming Dynasty. I refused to be a servant of the Qing Dynasty, so I came to ask to become a servant." Duong Ngan Dinh's group explored the My Tho area to establish My Tho Dai Pho, while Tran Thuong Xuyen's group stopped in the Dong Nai area (Cu Lao Pho) to establish Nong Nai Dai Pho. Both areas are places where commerce is developed, with temples, markets, and bustling streets. Also according to Dai Nam Thuc Luc, in 1778, the Tay Son army attacked along the river in the areas of Bien Hoa, Gia Dinh, ... so some Hoa people in Cu Lao Pho moved to the Cho Lon area and called this area is De Ngan (提岸), although based on some documents and artifacts at Tue Thanh Hoi Quan (穗城會館), Nhi Phu Hoi Quan (二府會館),... it proves that the Hoa were present there here since before 1778.

The process of immigration and settlement of Hoa people in Ho Chi Minh City is a process of integration into the host community through cultural exchange and community cohesion. Along with the Vietnamese, the Hoa played an important role in building De Ngan (提岸) into a bustling area with bustling trade and commerce. Along with economic development, the Hoa pay great attention to preserving traditional cultural values, religion, and beliefs, especially expressed through architecture.

Stepping into District 5, District 6,... we will easily see many "unique" Hoa -style buildings with colorful red colors and curved tiled roofs at Guild Halls, temples, ...of the Hoa. This skillful decorative art is expressed through unique decorative images and motifs, which will be a highlight to attract tourists at Hoa religious buildings.

Within the framework of the article, we conducted a survey of unique sets of statues and motifs decorated with typical Saigon ceramic materials at temples, shrines, and Guild Halls of Hoa people in the city. Ho Chi Minh City includes: Tue Thanh Guild Hall (Thien Hau Temple), Nghia An Guild Hall (Quan Thanh De Temple), Minh Huong Gia Thanh Communal House, Thanh Mau Temple (District 5); Ngoc Hoang Palace, Quang Trieu Guild Hall (District 1),... to better understand the origin, historical significance, and cultural characteristics through each theme, legend, and unique layout of the two groups. Vietnamese - Hoa community in Ho Chi Minh City. Besides, for the purpose of comparing and clarifying the special features of the ceramic figurine populations, we also compared another relic site in Dong Nai with Saigon ceramic populations, Tan Lan communal house in the city. Bien Hoa - Dong Nai, this is an architectural and artistic relic bearing bold Vietnamese-Hoa cultural exchange.

2. OVERVIEW OF SAIGON CERAMICS

In ancient documents, the place Lo Gom in Saigon is mentioned. In the book "Gia Dinh Thanh Thong Chi" by Trinh Hoai Duc, it is said that "Ma Truong River" (Ruot Nguoa canal): "In the past, from the Cat River estuary to the north to the pottery kiln, there was a water line with stagnant hooves of buffaloes and boats. The boat cannot move. In the fall of the year Nham Thin (1772), War Officer Dam Am Hau... dug a canal as straight as a horse's intestines, so he named it...". Saigon Pottery is associated with the location of Xom Lo Gom, now the Phu Lam area of Ward 6, Ward 9, Ward 10 - District 6, which is a famous traditional craft village with a long history on the land of Saigon - Gia Dinh. This place appeared on the map of Gia Dinh province drawn by Tran Van Hoc in the 14th year of Gia Long (1815). Saigon ceramics are products of many ceramic kilns produced in the Saigon - Gia Dinh region in previous centuries, typically ceramics produced from Cay Mai kilns and Hung Loi kilns with different characteristics.

Saigon's pottery village in the past had about 30 production kilns in 3 areas: Hoa Luc and Phu Dinh, Cay Mai and Lo Gom, Vin Hoi and Lieng Thanh (Can Hoi). We can recognize Hoa Luc village (ward 16, district 8) and Phu Dinh (ward 10, district 6), Cay Mai belongs to Long Quoi village (ward 16, district 11) and Lo Gom belongs to Phu Lam village (ward 6, district 11). 9, Ward 10 in District 6, in this area there are also canals named Lo Gom and names related to pottery making such as (street) Lo Sieu, (street) Xom Dat... Remaining traces are the relics of the ancient Hung Loi pottery kiln (ward 16, district 8) and Cay Mai pottery kiln area (district 11).

The remaining places are Vin Hoi and Lieng Thanh (Can Hoi). Which place has not yet been unified? In our opinion, it is likely that Vin Hoi is Vinh Hoi, and Lieng Thanh is Lien Thanh. In the work Gia Dinh Thanh Thong Chi by Trinh Hoai Duc, when introducing the villages and wards of Phien An town, the names of these places are not introduced. But in the Gia Dinh Provincial Directory established during the Minh Mang Dynasty, Vinh Hoi village belongs to Tan Phong Trung canton, Tan Long district, Gia Dinh province: "Vinh Hoi village. The East borders Long Vinh village, taking the canal bed as the boundary. The West borders Thuan Duc village, there is a wooden pole set up as a boundary. The south borders Phong Phu village (Tan Phong Ha), with wooden pillars as a boundary. The North borders two villages: Tan Hoi and Tan Loc, taking the river bed as the boundary. Currently, in Ward 13, District 8, there is still Vinh Hoi Communal House (No. 46 Dinh Hoa Street, Ward 13, District 8), formerly the communal house of Tan Huong Village (at the beginning of Chau Van Liem Street, District 5) moved to in 1889. Vinh Hoi communal house still retains the image of King Tu Duc conferred in 1853 "Prepared for Tan Huong village, Tan Long district, worshiped as before". Tan Huong village is a village with a fairly early history. According to Gia Dinh Thanh's information: Tan Huong village belongs to Tan Phong district, Tan Long district, Tan Binh district, Phien An town. The Gia Dinh province directory also mentioned: "Tan Huong village. The eastern border of Gia Dinh village has a canal and wooden poles as a boundary. The west borders An Thoi village, with wooden pillars as a boundary. The south borders Dinh Long village (Tan Phong Trung), taking the river bed as the boundary. The North borders the two villages of Tan Long and Tan Huong, with Thien Ly road as the boundary. What should be noted is that it is in this

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area, in the three houses numbered 1 - 2 - 3 Quai Testard, the base of Lien Thanh Huong Quan where in 1910, Nguyen Tat Thanh lived before leaving to find a way to save himself. country (now No. 5 Chau Van Liem, Ward 14, District 5). Most likely, the term Lieng Thanh that Derbès mentioned comes from the word Lien Thanh Huong Quan and thus, the terms Vin Hoi and Lieng Thanh (Can Hoi) are Vinh Hoi and Lien Thanh.

In addition, if we take the old Saigon market (now Cho Lon Central Post Office - District 5) on the right bank of the old Saigon River (now filled to form Hai Thuong Lan Ong street) as the center, then Saigon market and Vinh Hoi village is located on the right bank of the Saigon River, and opposite the other bank is Lien Thanh (left bank of the Saigon River). And if we include Dao Xuong pottery kiln in Cho Quan, located a little to the East, then Vinh Hoi and Lien Thanh are the ceramic production areas closest to Saigon market. Further west are two ceramic production areas of Hoa Luc and Phu Dinh, Cay Mai and Lo Gom. These are the three ceramic production areas in ancient Saigon. Today, in Hoa Luc village (ward 16, district 8), you can still see many fish ponds located next to each other, most likely traces of ancient clay mining tunnels.

Saigon ceramic products are used to decorate small ceramic statue complexes, especially on the roofs of temples, communal houses, Guild Halls, etc., often the name of the kiln is written on the ceramic, such as: "Buu Nguyen Dieu" (Buu Nguyen kiln).); "Dong Hoa Dieu" (Dong Hoa kiln), at Thien - Hau temple - Tue Thanh Hoi Quan, Quang Trieu Guild Hall, Minh Huong Gia Thanh communal house, on the small statue complex, these two ceramic kilns are clearly written, at Tan Lan communal house - Bien Hoa also has the names Buu Nguyen and Dong Hoa kilns written on the small ceramic statues on the roof of the temple. There are quite a lot of Saigon ceramic products preserved today, which can be seen on: the complex of miniature statues and incense burners at Minh Huong Gia Thanh communal house (District 5), the complex of miniature statues of the Sun and Moon Gods at Thien Hau Temple - Tue Thanh Hoi Quan (District 5),... In addition to Hoa religious establishments, Vietnamese religious establishments also preserve many Saigon ceramic statues such as Giam Trai statues, pedestals, and basins at Giac Pagoda. Vienna (District 11), Bodhidharma statue, Dai Dien Dai Si statue at Phung Son Pagoda (District 11),... It can be said that Saigon ceramic products, especially in the late 19th and early 20th centuries Not only used in the Saigon - Gia Dinh area but also popular in all parts of the country.

Today, we can still see populations of Saigon ceramic figurines present on the roofs of Hoa folk religious establishments (communes, temples, Guild Halls) in Ho Chi Minh City and many provinces and cities throughout the South. . Appearing along with countless images of people, palaces, and small statue complexes are also written lines. The decorative content of ceramic figurines on Hoa religious sites brings a highly artistic motif and conveys many valuable contents.

3. THEMES AND MEANINGS OF DECORATIVE SAIGON CERAMIC FIGURINE COMPLEXES IN THE TRADITIONAL ARCHITECTURAL ART OF THE HOA PEOPLE IN HO CHI MINH CITY

The ceramic miniature statue complex is mainly mounted on the roof of the front hall so that visitors standing in the front yard can easily observe the entire miniature statue complex. However, because some relics have strong economic potential, many small statue complexes have been ordered to decorate the roofs of the front hall, main hall and along Thien Binh courtyard as in the case of Thien Hau Temple - Guild Hall. Tue Thanh, often mounted on both sides of the front yard at Quang Trieu Guild Hall or mounted on the assembly walls of the Dong Lang and Tay Lang Temple of Thanh Mau.

The unique set of small statues on the roof of Hoa Temple clearly reflects the concepts and aspirations of ancient ancestors. The ancient, quiet features as if covered with the dust of time are clearly shown from the top of the roof, the edge of the sword, with the very typical decoration of the statue complex made by Cantonese Hoa artisans. Regarding the origin of the statue populations at temples, up to now there still exist two parallel hypotheses: one is that it was made by Hoa artisans (of Cantonese origin) at the once famous Cay Mai pottery kilns in Gia Dinh region. The second hypothesis is that Hoa people bought it from China. At Hoa religious establishments, the decoration of the Quang green ceramic statue complex is typical such as in the Tue Thanh Guild Hall, Minh Huong Gia Thanh communal house or Tan Lan communal house...

Looking from afar, the group of decorative statues is arranged in a balanced way, going into detail, you will see stories depicted extremely vividly, showing people's daily lives. , or the wishes of ancestors or scenes taken from classical Hoa legends. It can be seen that the structure of the small statue complexes at the monument consists of two components: the small statue complex used for decoration and the statue group used for worship.

3.1 Themes and Meanings of Figurine Complexes Used for Decoration

China is a country with a long culture and history with many heroic historical pages, many classic stories and stories that carry many human values to this day. Carrying that brilliant culture, in the distant land of Vietnam, the Hoa have told their heroic history through bas-reliefs and decorative murals at temples and Guild Halls. The most common images on historical topics are anecdotes in Romance of the Three Kingdoms (三國演義) such as Taoyuan San Keyi (桃園三結義), Liu Bei (劉備), Guan Yu (關羽) and Zhang Fei (張飛) or Tam Co Thao Lu (三顧草廬),... or topics about the Six Kingdoms including Qi (齊), So (楚), Yen (燕), Han (韓), Zhao (趙) and Wei (魏) The Warring States period fought with the Qin state (秦) called the Six Kingdoms War (六国争雄

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),...images in famous works such as Water Margin (水滸) (108 Heroes of Liangshan Bac (梁山泊), Journey to the West (西遊記), Dream of the Red Chamber (紅樓夢),... are clearly displayed as decorations on the roof of Thien Hau temple - Tue Thanh Hoi Quan. The group of statues used to decorate and perform rituals is arranged in horizontal rows on the roof, with the function of creating high symbolic meanings. That is "Dragon Adoring Phap Lam" on the water waves between the roof of the communal house - temple, symmetrically on both sides are a pair of qilins and fish transformed into dragons, on the outside is the image of the bow of a boat symbolizing prosperity.

The statue complex with specific content still leaves a bold mark in the decoration style at Hoa temples. On the roof, hundreds of statues of people and objects made of green glazed ceramics, 30 - 50cm high, vividly represent classical Hoa themes, such as the theme of "Three Kingdoms"; "Six Kingdoms"; "Journey to the west"; "The Eight Immortals pass through the sea"; Sun - Moon; "Two Dragons fighting for pearls"; Qilin - Phoenix.... The first group of small statues (Tien Dien) often depicts the theme "Six Kingdoms" or the gathering of six countries. The center of the small statue complex is a board with the two Hoa characters 聖旨 "Holy Decree" written on it, on both sides are soldiers and military officials, some wearing armor, some riding horses, some holding flags, facing the central area. mind to follow instructions. On the flags are the names of each country written in Hoa characters.

This theme appears on the roofs of the temples of Tue Thanh Guild Hall (District 5), Quang Trieu Guild Hall, and Tan Lan Communal House (Dong Nai), all of which were crafted by Buu Nguyen, but these small statue complexes have similar content. but each ensemble has reduced decorative details, layout, posture, position or clothing of the characters are also made differently so as not to cause duplication or boredom. This creates uniqueness and newness for each ceramic product and the artistic landscape of each monument.

Topic (群英會) "Quan Anh Hoi; (虎牢關) "Ho Lao Quan": these are two battles in "Romance of the Three Kingdoms" in the 5th and 45th chapters; or the theme "Quan Cong supports his second sister".... the themes are very uniquely decorated with small groups of statues in the front yard of Quang Trieu Guild Hall and a section of small statues on the roof of the front hall of Minh Huong Gia Thanh communal house. The topics on the Saigon ceramic figurine ensembles are very rich. The images of people, palaces... Appear so densely that "it takes a lot of time and effort, especially ancient knowledge, to be able to explain the themes in the miniature statue complexes".

Topic "Sun and Moon": Natural phenomena that often appear in the decorations of ancient Hoa buildings are the sun (日), moon (月) and stars. The sun and moon are concretized into the Sun God (日神) and the Moon God (月神), also known by the people as Mr. Nhat and Ms. Nguyet. The Sun God is often sculpted in the form of a man, with a long beard, standing on his left leg, his right leg raised, his left hand holding a red sun with a rectangle (日) inside. The Moon God is depicted as a woman, with a kind face and in her right hand holding a golden moon with the word moon (日) inside. The statue of Mr. Nhat is placed on the left side of the roof of the building, the statue of Ba Nguyet is placed on the right side of the building. To explain this image, there is an opinion that these two statues are symbols of the yin element (Moon) and the yang element (Japan). Any place where yin and yang come together is a place with good feng shui and prosperity. will grow, develop and prosper. There is also another explanation, which is that the image is metaphorical, the rectangle (日) and the word moon (月) written in Hoa characters combine to form the word Ming (明), to indicate that this is a place of worship for the descendants of the dynasty. Ming dynasty, was from Ming Huong (明鄉). This topic appears in all Hoa temples and religious establishments in Ho Chi Minh City and surrounding areas.

Eight Immortals (八仙) theme: is the image of eight immortals in Hoa mythology including: Ly Thiet Quai (李鐵拐) riding a white elephant holding a wand and a gourd; Han Chung Ly (漢鍾離) rides a deer holding a three-headed fan; Lu Dong Tan (呂洞賓) rides a crane holding a whisk and a sword; Truong Qua Lao (張果老) rides a donkey upside down holding a instrument; Lam Thai Hoa (藍採和) riding a cloud and holding a flower basket; Ha Tien Co (何仙姑) rides a phoenix holding a lotus flower, Han Tuong Tu (韓湘子) rides a peacock holding a jade flute; Tao Quoc Cuu0 (曹國舅) rides a deer holding a sheng. This theme is shown on the roof of Tue Thanh Guild Hall temple and Tan Lan communal house.

The Eight Immortals are said to be guardians of the eight directions, so recreating them in temples and shrines brings good things in terms of feng shui. The Eight Immortals symbolize the desire to eliminate evil and bring about a prosperous and peaceful life. Wherever the Eight Immortals reside, that place is like Bong Lai. It is believed that they bring longevity, wealth, health to children and grandchildren, money and fame to those who display them. The Eight Immortals are often painted or carved on walls, decorated on blue envelopes, most commonly with the theme of Eight Immortals Passing the Sea (八仙過海). The Hoa also took the eight treasures of the Eight Immortals to create the Eight Treasures set (八寶) to decorate the blue envelopes, horizontal panels and especially on the ancient stones at Nhi Phu Temple - Nhi Phu Guild Hall.

At Hoa pagodas, Bat Buu (八寶) decorative patterns often appear such as at Van Phat Pagoda (District 5), Hue Nghiem Pagoda (Phu Nhuan District), Long Hoa Pagoda (District 8)... Thao Pagoda Duong (District 6), this Bat Buu is completely different from the Bat Buu at Vietnamese temples. The Eight Treasures (八寶) include: Umbrella (寶傘蓋), Pisces (雙魚), Aquarius (寶瓶), Lotus Flower (蓮花), White Conch Shell (白海螺), Platter (盤長), Victory Banner (勝利幢) and Dharma Wheel (法輪). These eight

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treasures represent the lives and virtues of the Buddhas. Seeing them, sentient beings will arouse joy, bringing much auspiciousness and peace.

Dragon (龍) is a mascot that appears frequently in the culture of Eastern countries. Depending on each country and era, the dragon has different shapes and meanings. Dragons have the characteristics of gods, walking in the clouds and returning to the wind, controlling all things, transforming infinitely, shaking heaven and earth, etc. In addition, dragons are also considered symbols of kingship, the embodiment of kings, because kings are Heavenly Prince. According to La Quan Trung, "dragon is an animal created on the basis of synthesizing 36 typical parts of 36 animals that are the totems of ancient ethnic groups living in China". At the same time, dragon in Hoa has a slang pronunciation, homophonic with long (隆), meaning prosperity and development. The Hoa dragon image in architectural works in Ho Chi Minh City bears the mark of the Ming Dynasty dragon with "evil eyes (round in deep sockets), serrated eyebrows, wolf mouth, deer horns, beast ears, camel-shaped forehead, eyes like catfish whiskers and wavy like flying forward or one front, one back, lion nose, snake neck, carp scales, crocodile legs, eagle claws, elbows The legs also have blades like catfish whiskers. The Hoa use a lot of dragon decoration motifs to show respect for Buddhism, gods, and ancestors, and convey the desire for prosperity and well-being.

Dragon images at religious and belief buildings often appear in the center of the roof with motifs such as: Two dragons trieu Chau (兩龍朝珠), meaning two dragons flanking the orb, this is the most common motif, typical Symbols such as: Tue Thanh Hoi Quan (穗城會館, Nghia An Hoi Quan (義安會館),... carry the meaning of preserving and protecting the building's peace, avoiding the disturbance of evil and physical damage. present the desire for heaven and earth to be in harmony and for a bountiful harvest. Two dragons fighting pearl (兩龍爭珠), also known as Two dragons fighting pearls (兩龍戲珠), meaning two dragons fighting and playing with pearls. We can see them at Nhi Phu Hoi Quan. These two images are often decorated on the roofs of buildings, on diaphragms, panels, etc., expanding the motif of Two Dragons Painting Adorning to Nine Dragons Painting Pearls. (九龍爭珠) has the meaning of eternal life, prestige, showing royal strength, strong will, fighting for strength, fighting for dominance. The pearl also has many different forms, sometimes it is a chrysanthemum Stylized, sometimes a fiery sun or moon. In particular, at Nhi Phu Hoi Quan, the pearl is surrounded by a ring of fire and carried by a qilin. Currently, cultural researchers have not yet concluded with certainty whether the pearl is stylized as the sun or the moon. Some authors who agree with the view of the moon call this the motif of the two dragons and the lunar tide. On the contrary, some authors who believe that it is the sun call it the two dragons and the diurnal tide.

Along with the motif of a dragon flanking a orb, there is also a motif of a dragon flanking a gourd with many variations such as a tiger carrying a gourd, a lotus flower supporting a gourd. In ancient Hoa literature, there is a saying "When the gourd mountain appears, there must be a famous medical deity residing there." Gourds are often seen as containers for spiritual medicine, elixirs, and to subdue demons. The hollow gourd seems to contain the universe, the spiritual energy of heaven and earth and all things. Therefore, the gourd facing the sky in Hoa decorations has the meaning of gathering the essences in the universe, bringing vitality and happiness to the project. In addition to the image of a dragon flanking a gourd, at Hoa temples there are often images of a dragon flanking a lotus flower supporting the swastika (卐 or 卍) or a dragon flanking a lotus flower supporting the Dharma Wheel to imply that the light of the Buddha Dharma is constantly circulating. educate sentient beings

Besides the above motifs, there are other motifs about dragons that are also quite commonly used by Hoa people. Du Long Hi Thuy (游龍戲水), also known as Long Phun Thuy (龍噴水), means the dragon is playing and spraying water with the hope of good weather, good harvests, and prosperity. In particular, the motif Long Ham Tho (龍含壽), meaning the dragon's head holding the word Longevity, is a typical decorative motif of Hue and also appears in Hoa works. This demonstrates the cultural exchange between Vietnamese and Hoa in decorative arts.

Unicorn (麟), also known as Qilin (麒麟), is a popular mascot not only for Hoa people but also for Vietnamese people. During the Ming Dynasty, qilins were represented as animals with cow hooves and dragon heads often with only one horn. During the Qing Dynasty, the Qilin was also an animal with ox hooves, a dragon's head but two deer horns, fig skin and fish scales, and a lion's tail. The qilin is a brave species that eliminates evil and brings peace to the project, so according to the concept, a qilin statue is often placed in front of the entrance. In addition, Lan also brings luck, wisdom and prosperity to the country. At the main door of Hoa guilds and temples, a pair of symmetrical qilins is often placed. In addition to Saigon ceramics, the Hoa also carve lions out of stone. According to the direction of the structure, on the left is the male qilin in the qilin playing orb position (麒麟戲球), on the right is the female qilin in the qilin teaching position (麒麟教子). In the rule of symmetry, the pair of qilins symbolizes yin and yang, the concept of male left and right female, and happy harmony. In particular, on the roof of the central hall of Tue Thanh Guild Hall is a group of small statues interwoven with sections of small statues containing scrolls with the Hoa characters (麟吐玉書) " Lan Tho Ngoc Thu " (Qilin spits out jade book. This legend recalls the birth of Confucius. The qilin is a sacred animal that represents a good omen. According to Hoa legend, qilins appeared three times: The first time was during the reign of Yao Shun, the second time was before Confucius was born, the third time was when Confucius composed the Spring and Autumn Sutra.... Besides The legend "Lan Tho

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Ngoc Thu", the small ceramic statue complex at Tue Thanh Guild Hall, has many other legends related to mascots such as: "Xuy Tieu Khoa Phuong", "Thai Cong Dieu Ngu", "Nam Son Tien Si", "Chung Quy gia muoi"....

Another common form of Lan is Dragon Horse (龍馬). The dragon horse is a mascot with a dragon's head facing backwards, a qilin body, and horses' legs and hooves. The appearance of a dragon horse is considered a good omen, such as the birth of a sage or a saint who will bring peace and prosperity to the country. Dragon horse often appears in the form of Dragon Horse Exiting River Map (龍馬出河圖) or also called Dragon Horse Carrying River Map (龍馬負河圖), which means carrying a Dragon horse on its back with a river map. If the motif of the Vietnamese Long Ma and Ha Do has the image of the Ha Do as a book bag tied to the back of the Dragon Horse, this motif of the Hoa Ha Do will be dots on a cloth on the back of the Long Ma or Ha Do. form the Bagua circle (八卦). The eight trigrams are eight hexagrams including Qian (乾) Dui (兌) Ly (離) Zhen (震) Xun (巽) Kan (坎) Jin (艮) and Kun (坤) symbolizing the basic elements of the universe In order: Thien (天) means sky, Trach (澤) means pond or lake, Hoa (火) means fire, Loi (雷) means thunder, Phong (風) means wind, Thuy (水) means water, Son (山) means mountains and hills and Dia (地) means ground. The eight trigrams reflect the primitive thinking of all things and influence many good factors in the lives of Hoa people to this day. Decorating a Bagua-shaped vase also means the harmonious circulatory movement of the universe, suppressing evil spirits and bringing prosperity.

Quy (龜) is shaped like a turtle, meaning longevity and eternity, and also represents the virtue of patience, the ability to turn evil into good. Along with the Dragon Horse, the Turtle in Hoa culture is also associated with the legend of Divine Turtle Emerges from the Luo River (神龜出洛), which means the turtle has a Luo book on its shell.

Phuong (鳳) is revered as "king of hundreds of birds" (百鳥之王), meaning the king of birds with the head of a chicken, the jaw of a swallow, the neck of a snake, the back of a turtle, and the wings of a peacock. The phoenix bird, also known as the phoenix, governs the monsoon, calendar, regulates crops and is a messenger bird, transmitting God's mandate to humans. The phoenix bird symbolizes the sky, Saints, talented people with wisdom who bring prosperity, luck and happiness to the country. The theme is "Loan – Phung ham tho", like the dragon, the phoenix is an image that synthesizes many beautiful and superior elements of many real animals of the bird family, is a messenger bringing good news, and is a symbol of beauty, of happiness and of promoting the spirit of studiousness.

The four animals Dragon, Qilin, Turtle, and Phoenix form the set of Four Sacred Animals (四靈), widely used in decorative arts. The image of the Four Sacred Spirits can be seen on the roof of Nhi Phu Hoi Quan, with a dragon flanking a pearl, below is a motif of a pair of phoenix birds, on both sides there are motifs of turtles in lotus ponds and qilins playing orb.

In addition to the image of the Four Spirits, we can also see other animal images in decorative art such as:

Fish (魚) in Hoa, pronounced yú, has the same sound as Du (餘), meaning surplus, more, continuing to grow and lasting. Therefore, the image of fish also often appears in Hoa architecture with the desire for abundant wealth, a prosperous life and constant development. The fish used by the Hoa in decorative images is the carp with two main decorative forms. The fish turning into a dragon (魚化龍) is decorated mainly on the tips of the swords based on the legend of a carp crossing Vu Mon and turning into a dragon, showing advancement and overcoming difficulties to succeed. The second form is the image of Nine Fish Assembly (九魚組裝) symbolizing the fulfillment of career, happy family, and reunion of children and grandchildren.

Bats (蝠) appear commonly not only in religious buildings but also in people's houses. In Hoa, Doi is pronounced fú, which is the same as Phuc (福), meaning happiness. Therefore, the bat image used in decoration symbolizes good things, auspiciousness and luck. The Hoa have a saying "the best happiness in the world" (天下第一福) meaning that in the world, happiness is the most precious because when you have happiness, you will have everything. The Hoa often create the shape of a bat with an upside-down string holding a coin in its mouth, called Phuc Dao (福到), meaning Phuc comes home. According to the Classic Book, there are five things called the Five Happinesses (五福) including: Longevity (長壽), which means long life; Phu Quy (富貴) means wealth and prosperity; Khang Ninh (康寧) means peace and health; Hao Duc (好德) means good and kind nature; Thien Chung (善終) means enjoying old age, freely leaving the human world. Therefore, another popular form of bat decoration that often appears at the door is Ngu Phuc Lam Mon (五福臨門), which means five blessings coming to the house. Ngu Phuc Lam Mon is symbolized in the form of five bats spinning in a circle in the middle, which is the word Phuc, or four bats spinning in a circle, in the middle, which is the stylized word Phuc in the shape of a bat.

Crane (鶴) is a symbolic image of longevity, clear mind and wisdom. Cranes are often depicted with white feathers called White Cranes (白鶴) symbolizing the nobility, purity and talent of a gentleman. In particular, cranes are often associated with Taoism through the image of immortals often riding cranes or using the phrase 駕鶴西遊 to imply the passing of a highly virtuous person. Along with the four sacred animals, eight sacred animals including Dragon, Lan, Quy, Phung, Bat, Crane, Tiger, and Fish form the Eight Animals (八物). The eight objects represent strength, protection, protection, and comprehensive personality development of a person who is both intellectual and moral. There are also some other animals such as deer, butterflies,...

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Deer (鹿) in Hoa is pronounced lu and has the same sound as Loc (祿) which means good omen. In particular, the Hoa have the concept of Thien Loc (天祿), which means a deer that lives for thousands of years, with many five-colored spots on its back that only appear when the world is peaceful and the king rules the people with morality. Bach Loc (白鹿) is also a long-lived deer, but its white hair symbolizes auspiciousness and is associated with a typical saint - Lao Tu. The deer also carries a symbol of longevity, so it is often considered the mount of the Spirit of Life (壽星). In particular, there is a decorative form of deer flanking the Dharma wheel, reminiscent of the Buddha's first sermon at the Deer Park. This motif often appears at Hoa temples.

The lion (獅子) is a fierce beast with a majestic appearance, wide mane, strong body, open mouth and fangs. The lion symbolizes mighty strength, conquers all obstacles, brings luck and peace. Therefore, lions are often placed in front of the entrance gates of many spiritual works to show their power and pray for blessings. Lions are often carved from stone, so they are also called Stoned Lion (石獅) and there is always a pair that follows the principle of yin and yang. Similar to the lion, in the direction of the construction, on the right side is placed a female lion with its paw holding the lion cub, on the left side is a male lion with its paw holding the ball according to the principle of "male left, female right". Besides, lion has the word "shi" pronounced shī, similar to the word "shi" (師), which means teacher in words like master (師父), grand master (太師),... so lion also means a person who has profound knowledge, teacher of the world. Although lion and qilin have many similarities in shape, their meanings and uses are very different. Through field surveys, we found that buildings where the main object of worship is women or mandarins will place qilin statues, for example at Tue Thanh Hoi Quan (the main object of worship is Mrs. Thien Hau, Nhi Phu Hoi Quan). (The main object of worship is Mr. Bon Chau Dat Quan, a civil mandarin). On the contrary, if the main object of worship is a male or military mandarin, a typical lion statue will be placed like Nghia An Hoi Quan (the main object of worship is the Quan). Thanh De Quan, a famous general during the Three Kingdoms period). In addition, the seat of the Buddhas is also known as the lion seat, often carved in the shape of a lion in a lotus throne. The lion is also the mount of Manjushri Bodhisattva .

Butterfly (蝶) in Hoa is pronounced dié, which is similar to the word Die (耄), meaning a person who lives to be over 80 years old. Therefore, butterflies are considered by the Hoa as a wish for longevity.

In addition to the above popular mascots, the Hoa also bring familiar, rustic animals such as shrimps, crabs, peacocks, frogs, etc. into decorative art, especially at temples and Hoa Guild Halls. .

Among flowers, the first image that cannot be ignored is the Lotus flower. Lotus (蓮) is a flower that appears almost in decoration in Eastern countries such as India, China, Vietnam,... "The lotus flower has eight typical characteristics: immaculate, pure, patient, gentle, tolerance, clear-mindedness, direct action, empty space and karma" symbolizes purity, has the ability to purify pollution, perfect wisdom, patience in the face of difficulties, coolness and peace,... In particular, in architectural works of the Fujian Hoa people, lotus flowers are carved upside down like lanterns. In feng shui, lantern symbolize positive energy, exorcise evil, and bring warmth and wisdom. Chrysanthemum (菊) has the meaning of longevity and bravery in the face of wind and frost. The Hoa have a praising saying about Chrysanthemums: "Diep bat ly chi, hoa vo lac dia" (葉不離枝, 花無落地), which means the leaves are not far from the branches, the flowers do not fall to the ground, showing loyalty and attachment. Acacia and chrysanthemum flowers. Chrysanthemums also mean longevity because they have hundreds of thousands of petals, blooming brilliantly in the midst of a sad autumn.

The Hoa believe that the Peony (牡丹) is the king of flowers because of its beautiful beauty and is associated with many fairy tales. The peony symbolizes prosperity and wealth, and is an image to compare to a beautiful girl.

Apricot (梅) to the Hoa symbolizes nobility, toughness, resilience in the face of cold, and protects people with beautiful qualities in poverty. Many Hoa people also believe that the five-petaled apricot flower also symbolizes the Five Blessings. Along with Apricot, Peach blossom (桃) symbolizes fertility, luck, and success after hardships.

Pine tree (松) carries the meaning of a hero who has the power to protect all people, is not afraid of danger, has a courageous spirit, and has the qualities of a man. Pine tree also means longevity, patience and perseverance.

Bamboo (竹) is considered a symbol of a gentleman, living uprightly and not yielding to power and fame. Burning empty represents purity, unselfishness, and enduring vitality.

Pomegranate (榴) with bright red flowers and plump fruit containing many seeds symbolizes luck and many descendants.

Popular flowers and plants decorate Saigon ceramics in many diverse forms such as festoons, trees or dragon flowers, etc. They can be combined with animals to create many other decorative motifs such as: Truc Tuoc (竹鵲) means a bamboo clump and a hydrangea bird means congratulations on promotion. Mai Dieu (梅鳥) means an old apricot tree and birds symbolizing steadfastness, overcoming hardships until the day of rebirth like an apricot tree in winter waiting for spring to bloom with all the birds. Lien Ap (蓮鴨) means lotus and duck symbolizing close bond and loyalty. Chrysanthemum (菊蝶), which means a cluster of chrysanthemums and butterflies, is a wish for longevity and comfort in old age. Besides, there are also some other motifs such as Peony pheasant (牡丹雉) meaning peony flower and pheasant, pine crane (松鶴) meaning old pine tree and crane or Pine Deer (松鹿) meaning pine

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tree and a few deer,... The three species of pine, bamboo, and apricot trees are often called Tue Han Tam Huu (歲寒三友), which means the three friends of winter, symbolizing the virtues of patience, self-reliance, and always cultivating virtue. happy in the face of life's adversities. In particular, the four species of apricot, orchid, chrysanthemum, and bamboo are called the four gentlemen (四君子) often combined into the four precious (四季) or four times (四時) symbolizing the four seasons of spring, summer, and autumn, winter. This is a theme used by the Hoa not only in architectural decoration but also in painting, literature, etc. The Four Seasons are sometimes simply depicted with flowers, plants or combined with animals, objects, etc. There is also a set of three flowers (華封三祝) including: peach symbolizing longevity; The Buddha's hand symbolizes blessings and the pomegranate symbolizes descendants.

3.2 Themes and Meanings of Figurine Complexes Used for Worship

At Phuoc Hai Pagoda (Jade Emperor Palace), on the Dong Suong block of the Jade Emperor Palace, there is a shrine, in the middle are the Golden Mother Goddess, the Immortal Master, the Patriarch, the Holy Master, and the Twelve Nuong Nuongs. This very unique set of ceramic statues produced by the Buu Nguyen kiln in Cho Lon (Cay Mai ceramics, Saigon), are special works of art, dating back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries, along with the Vietnamese period. time to establish the temple.

The set of worship statues includes: Kim Hoa Thanh Mau (Kim Hoa Nuong Nuong: 金華娘娘) is the Hoa goddess in charge of childbirth, the Cantonese people call it Hue Phuc Phu Nhan, the Minh Huong people and the Vietnamese people call it Chu. The Lady of Birth or Princess Thai Sanh. In Vietnam, Kim Hoa Nuong Nuong is often worshiped in temples. The statue of Lady Kim Hoa Thanh Mau is placed in the middle, crafted in a throne-like position, with her hands arranged in layers in the middle. The statue is covered with ivory enamel in the robe, the inner robe is covered with blue and white enamel, the statue's face is covered with brown enamel, giving the statue a harmonious whole. This is a familiar way of creating statues of Buu Nguyen kilns in particular or Saigon ceramics in general, in terms of worship ceramics. Next to the statue of Kim Hoa Thanh Mau is a statue of a maid holding two children with an upright posture, covered with purple enamel.

Three Masters (Ancient Master, Patriarch, Holy Master): The three Masters (people often mistakenly call them 13 Masters) are the three symbolic teachers of the maternity profession: the Immortal Master, the Patriarch and the Holy Master (ie. educator, innovation initiative and initiator of the maternity sector).

Twelve Midwives, also known as Twelve Flower Sisters, or as Vietnamese people call them, Twelve Midwives, Midwives, Mother of Birth, 12 midwives are 12 goddesses who assist the Holy Mother Kim Hoa. , he creates and blesses fetuses and pregnant women, each year from Ti to Hoi. The Hoa also believe that the 12 Midwives are 12 goddesses who assist the Holy Mother Kim Hoa, with the following names: 1. Tran Tu Nuong: considers childbirth; 2. Van Tu Nuong: considers pregnancy; 3. Nguyen Tam Nuong: considers witnessing and supervising the birth; 4. Tang Ngu Nuong: takes care of newborn babies; 5. Lam Cuu Nuong: considers conception; 6. Ly Dai Nuong: considers labor; 7. Hua Dai Nuong: considers the opening of flowers and pistils; 8. Luu That Nuong: considers shaping male and female forms for the baby; 9. Ma Ngu Nuong: takes care of the baby's holding; 10. Lam That Nuong: considers the care of the fetus; 11. Cao Tu Nuong: considers confinement; 12 Trac Ngu Nuong: considers take care of holding the baby.

The set of 12 midwives statues at Kim Hoa Thanh Mau Palace are placed symmetrically with 6 statues on each side. According to the people who came to pray here, 6 Midwives on the Left side heard the prayer of the male counterpart, 6 Midwives on the Right side heard the prayer of the female counterpart.

3.3. Distinctive Features of Saigon Ceramics in Architectural Decorative Arts

- Artistic Characteristics

The decorative pieces are a harmonious and smooth combination of two elements of architecture and art of the Nguyen Dynasty with the architecture and art typical of the Hoa Nam region (China).

Decorative arts at Hoa religious establishments are quite rich and diverse. Many styles are used, both inheriting the traditional culture of Hoa temples and interweaving decoration in Vietnamese art, including the following topics:

Four precious fruits (apricot - orchid - chrysanthemum - bamboo) symbolize the four seasons of the year.

+ The four sacred animals (dragon - qilin - turtle - phoenix) symbolize the quintessence of heaven and earth of the universe.

+ Two dragons flanking the sun (or Two dragons flanking the orb) has the image of two dragons flanking the sun (or pearl).

The dragon symbolizes the yang principle, so this image represents "three yangs", symbolizing the phrase "tam yang opening up" which means everything goes smoothly and smoothly.

+ Dragon - phoenix: symbolizes harmony between yin and yang, harmony between heaven and earth.

+ Long hidden cloud: represents a good opportunity (long hidden clouds).

+ Turtle – crane: represents longevity and eternity.

+ Bamboo - apricot: symbolizes the noble spirit of a gentleman.

+ Pine tree - luck: represents the wish to live long and have good luck.

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With the arrangement of the statues and the small statue complex on the roof, we can recognize that this is a single ridge-shaped roof. The decoration of the sets of "two dragons painting pearls", "fish turning into dragons", "loan phuong ham poetry"... according to the highest horizontal layout on the roof is not purely symbolic but actually follows the perspective. concept is the upper realm, the residence of spirit beasts.

The group of small statues and statues in the center of the roof are decorated in the style of pavilions, palaces, classics, and famous historical figures such as "Six Kingdoms", "Eight Immortals", "Nhat Nguyet", "Quan". Cong Pho Nhi Tu", "Quan Anh Hoi", "Ho Lao Quan", "Hoa Nhi Tien"... are arranged interspersed with decorative panels to name the kilns, date of artifacts or themes of ancient landscapes. dictionary with the symbolic meaning of good things with auspicious sentences such as "Rich and peaceful".

- Characteristics of Inscriptions Content

The content of the inscription clearly shows a lot of information and historical data about a period of construction and formation of religious establishments in the new land. Historical data such as date, name of the factory, person making offerings, name of the creator, names of historical records, Tang poems, blessings or praising beautiful scenery... these are the data. Accurate in understanding the history of formation and development of each monument.

Inscriptions on Saigon ceramic figurines in **Hoa** communal houses, pagodas, temples, and Guild Halls have helped researchers learn about the history, culture, technical and aesthetic characteristics of this type of pottery. Thereby contributing to clarifying the economic life and cultural life of the Hoa people in particular and of ancient Southern society in general, as well as demonstrating a golden period of development of Saigon ceramics.

Inscriptions are like a bridge through which we can understand the thoughts and feelings that ancient potters put into their products. In other words, the inscriptions on the Saigon ceramic miniature statue complexes, although short, play a very important role. That is the basis for discovering a lot of information that has scientific value in many aspects.

- Artistic Characteristics and Origin of Statues and Figurine Complexes

Regarding the place of production: Based on the statue and the statuette complex and the inscriptions in Hoa and Nom characters, it can be determined that this is a product created by two Hoa ceramic kilns, Buu Nguyen and Dong Hoa. Lo Buu Nguyen and Dong Hoa are located near Hau Giang bridge in Ben Lo Gom (Cho Lon). These are two famous kilns specializing in producing Saigon ceramics, not only in Saigon but also in many other places. Statues and miniature statues at Tan Lan communal house can also be ordered here when building the communal house.

Regarding visual art: although the number of statues on small statue complexes is very large, repetition or similarity of statues is almost non-existent. The number of figurines is very large, but each facial expression and outfit is very unique according to the style and status of each character. No outfit is the same. Even if the statue has a "mold" nature, the enamel color, size, and layout are also different. The statues and miniature statue populations are shaped with quite accurate physical proportions, the skill of portraying the character's psychology from cheerful, smiling, graceful, heroic, solemn facial expressions... is shown. appears quite clearly on the statue.

4. PRESERVATION OF CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC VALUES OF ARCHITECTURE AND FINE ARTS IN THE TEMPLES AND ASSEMBLY HALLS OF THE HOA PEOPLE IN HO CHI MINH CITY

Facing the challenges of the period of industrialization and modernization, preserving architectural heritage in modern cities like Ho Chi Minh City is necessary. When cities are racing towards economic development, architectural heritage, especially decorative arts in architecture, is the highlight that creates unique features for each city.

Carved and decorative sculptures are an inseparable part of architectural works, so these heritage values need to be preserved and promoted. In this article, we would like to propose 03 solutions to preserve and promote architectural heritage values directly related to Saigon ceramic decorative motifs including:

Firstly, conduct a survey, collect and research decorative themes in ancient Hoa architecture in Ho Chi Minh City in the direction of cultural research in symbolic anthropology. Symbolic anthropology will focus on explaining the meaning of decorative symbols in architecture from the perspective of their creators, thereby helping to recognize and preserve the cultural values of the Hoa people. more profound way.

Second, applying science and technology in preserving and promoting architectural heritage, specifically using laser scanning techniques of all spaces, structures, and decorative details of traditional architectural works that restore for future storage and restoration. Besides, combining with museums and galleries, promoting artifacts and unique decorative motifs using 3D technology. Third, increase the applicability of decorative motifs by including them in garments, souvenirs, printing postage stamps, and commonly used on notices and event program banners. annual cultural event of the Hoa people. In particular, decorative motifs can be combined with crafts and souvenirs such as keychains, embroidered towels, fans with decorative patterns, lanterns, etc. to increase the applicability of decorative motifs. decoration as well as creating unique products that attract tourists.

5. CONCLUSION

The process of formation and development of religious establishments is associated with the immigration and settlement process of immigrants from Southern China to Vietnam and the new land of the South in particular, since the 17th century (1679). During the process of reclamation and establishing villages, living together and developing a prosperous economy with Vietnamese people, this immigrant group gradually became Vietnamese citizens, integrating into the Vietnamese community in many fields. One of the many proofs of this integration is the presence of communal houses and temples in general and the art of decorating statues and small ceramic statue complexes of communal temples in particular.

Saigon ceramic statues and figurines in communal houses, pagodas, temples, and Hoa Guild Halls are a unified combination of traditional methods of circular engraving, relief, and lines. The art of decoration through statues and small statue complexes on the roofs and roofs of temples is sophisticated and sophisticated in addition to being diverse and flexible from design to decorative content. Through the decorative content of statues and small statue complexes, the worship of astronomical phenomena (expressed through reverence for the sun and moon) and the worship of animals (expressed through the image of the four sacred animals) are expressed. quite clear. Along with famous classics such as "Eight Immortals", "Six Kingdoms", "Guan Gong's two sworn brothers"... also shows us some part of Hoa culture. Through the decorative arrangement of rows of statues, they express the cultural life of the people here with their wishes and aspirations for a prosperous and peaceful life in the land they choose to live.

Some temples and communal houses of the Hoa people such as Minh Huong Gia Thanh communal house, Tue Thanh Guild Hall, and Tan Lan communal house are national historical, cultural, artistic, and architectural relics, bearing both material and spirit in the overall culture and history of Ho Chi Minh City in particular and the Southern region in general. Researching architectural art relics, including research on statues and small statue populations on temple roofs, is not only valuable in terms of cultural history; cultural exchange between the Người Hoa and Vietnamese ethnic groups in this land, which is also a source of material contributing to research on the history of formation and development of a famous ceramic line of the Southeast region at that time, ceramics. Saigon.

“This research is funded by University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh under grant number SDH2024 – 03.”

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