



THIAN
HOCK
KENG

Since 1840



天福宮

致广大于精微：

天福宮建筑装饰文化
与符号美学

ARCHITECTURAL
SIGNIFICANCE OF
THIAN HOCK KENG

Content By
Professor Kang Ger-Wen

Head of Chinese Studies

Ngee Ann Polytechnic

(translated by Thian Hock Keng)

资料来源：

康格温博士

义安理工学院

中文系系主任







天福宫简介

座落于直落亚逸街的天福宫建于1840年，是当时闽帮华商汇集的场所，也是福建帮总机构所在处。临海的天福宫落成后，凡南来或北归的华人，都把船舶碇在宫前，然后向妈祖娘娘祈求“海不扬波，平安返国”。

天福宫的兴建，象征新加坡由流动人口过度至定居社会。这座当年全岛最大规模的建筑物，耗资大量的金钱和多年的努力完成，是华社的宗教中心。天福宫虽是闽

帮庙宇，但以它规模的宏大，香火的兴旺，络绎不绝的香客，已进而超越帮派的藩篱。

天福宫是少数结合道、佛、儒三教合一的华人庙宇。除了供奉的主神妈祖之外，其他供奉的神明就有观世音菩萨、孔子等。有鉴于此，天福宫迄今吸引着众多不同籍贯的善信前来参拜，适逢神佛诞辰，更是热闹非凡！




About Tian Hock Keng

Thian Hock Keng was built in 1840 along Telok Ayer Street, a bustling meeting point among *min* (闽) businessmen and an important congregation point for Hokkiens. Upon the completion of Thian Hock Keng, southbound immigrants who had just landed or northbound immigrants heading back to China would always stop by the temple facing the waterfront to pray for calm waves and a safe journey.

The construction of Thian Hock Keng signified the transformation of an immigrant society to one that planted its roots. The temple, hailed to be the biggest building island-wide then, took many years of sweat and toil and heavy financial commitments to complete. It was

also deemed to be the religious centre for the Chinese community at that time. Today, although Thian Hock Keng is primarily a min temple, its worshippers are not limited to min descendants. It has transcended dialect boundaries and worshippers are from all walks of life.

Thian Hock Keng is a rare temple that encompasses Taoism, Buddhism and Confucianism. In addition to its main deity, Goddess of the Seas, other deities include Goddess of Mercy and Confucius. Over the years, it has continued to attract devotees of different dialect groups and is especially crowded during birthday celebrations of deities.



天福宫建筑装饰的语言表达可以分为

形式语言 - 宏观

符号语言 - 微观

所谓的建筑形式语言，即天福宫其建筑的外在结构与形式形象，由观赏者藉由对其表象结构的形式观察，以展现其宏观的文化意义。除了形式语言之外，尚有符号语言，此其中包括了图像符号与文字符号，是建筑大匠以装饰展现其建筑语言与文化寓意的方式。

文字符号：以抽象文字符号呈现者，多以谐音借义为途径。

三川殿上

花窗四端的四只蝙蝠所暗喻的“赐福”（四蝠）为代表。

以佛手瓜谐音的“福寿”；

以葫芦谐音的“福禄”；

以菜头谐音的“好彩头”；

以鲟鱼所代表的“年（鲟）年有余（鱼）”；

以喜鹊在梅树枝上所代表的“喜（喜鹊）上眉（梅）梢”



▲ Four bats 赐福 (四蝠)



▲ bat 蝙蝠

Architectural significance in its layout refers to the structure and design of the temple and how it is built; while its carvings, sculptures and murals present messages of cultural heritage and traditions as expressed by craftsmen during construction.

The architectural significance of Thian Hock Keng may be presented in its:

- Layout
- Carvings and Paintings



▲ wealth every year (年年有余)

Symbols of Language
Language symbols are generally portrayed through the use of homophonic (“sounds like”)

Entrance Hall

The stone carved windows are accentuated in the corners by four bats. Four bats in Mandarin shares the same pronunciation as “*ci* (赐)” “*fu* (福)” which means blessed with luck and prosperity.

Use of the fruit sarcodactylus (commonly known as Buddha’s Hand)(佛手瓜) means prosperity and longevity (福寿)

Use of the long melon (bottle gourd) (葫芦) means prosperity and success (福禄)

Use of the radish (菜头) means good omen “*cai tou* (彩头)”

Use of the catfish (鲶鱼) means having excess “*yu* (余)” wealth every year (年年有余)



▲ prosperity and longevity (福寿)



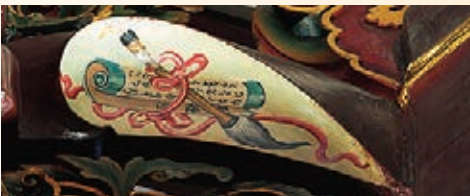
▲ prosperity and success (福禄)

正殿檐下

以线描彩绘装饰的“大旗、彩球、纸笔、方印”。这四个纹样象征着来此参拜祝祷的人心愿都能“祈（旗）求（球）必（笔）应（印）”。



▲ ball (球)



▲ pen (笔)

图像符号

以祥瑞为征者

以祥瑞为象征是传统庙宇最重要的装饰语言。匠师们通常以山、川、水、云等为自然祥瑞的象征。祥云在庙宇建筑的使用所在多有，通常会伴随祥龙为装饰，因为龙能兴雨利农，又能从云行雨，所以二者向来即有祥瑞之征。凤凰有祥瑞太平之意，凰鸟为鸟中之王，常与花中之王牡丹相衬为证。



正殿上方

天福宫正殿上方的脊饰上木作与彩绘上均可见到许多“凤凰朝牡丹”的装饰图案。

三川殿中门

祥狮亦为尊贵的象征。三川殿中门即有一双石狮，门檐二端之下，亦可见一双石狮护卫镇守。





▲ flag (旗)



▲ seal (印)



Central Hall

Paintings of a flag (旗), ball (球), pen (笔) and seal (印) on the eaves of the central hall in Mandarin shares the same pronunciation as the Chinese idiom “*qi* (祈) *qiu* (求) *bi* (必) *ying* (应)” which means your prayers will be granted.

Carvings and Pictorial Symbols Symbols of Auspicious Tidings

Nature such as mountains, river, water and clouds; and mythical animals that are deemed to benefit humans are often found in a temple's architecture. For example, clouds are often depicted with mythical dragons. Dragons are believed to command rainfall. Clouds bring rain. Both aid farming. Phoenixes are also auspicious symbols representing peace. As the King of Birds, phoenixes are usually depicted with the King of Flowers, the peony, to signify good tidings.

Central Hall

Paintings of phoenixes with peonies can be located in the central hall of Tian Hock Keng.

Main Entrance

Guarding the main door of Tian Hock Keng is a pair of stone lion sculptures believed to be able to ward off evil spirits.

以子嗣(sì)昌盛为征者

求子祈嗣是生命礼俗中一项重要的追求，表现在庙宇上则以多子的植物或动物为象征。在庙宇的表现以多子的植物或动物以象征。

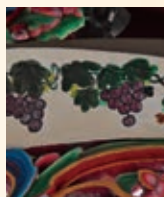
鱼类的产卵量大，使得鱼有了富裕且丰的意象。鱼与“余”同音，“余”有遗留、遗下的引申义。因此，鱼表征着幸福长久、好运不断、繁荣昌盛、人丁兴旺等。

鼠有着“多子多产”的象征，鼠为子神，有着求子的借喻，多与金瓜合为建筑装饰。

多子型的植物与开枝散叶的植物，象征子嗣兴旺，有利于后代繁衍(yǎn)。建筑装饰上最常见到的是“卷草”、“石榴”、“莲藕”、“花生”、“葡萄”与“金瓜”。

“老鼠咬金瓜”的装饰纹样，象征多子的兴旺与吉祥

石榴亦为天福宫木作上常见到的装饰纹样，象征“榴开百子”，“子孙万代”。石榴、桃子与佛手用于祝贺“多子、多寿、多福”。





Symbols of Fertility and Offsprings

Praying for heirs is an important tradition amongst families. In a Chinese temple, plants and animals associated with abundance are used to depict desires for heirs and offsprings.

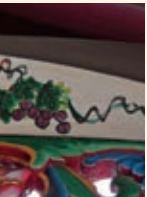
Fish is seen as a symbol of fertility as it lays numerous eggs at a time. In addition, fish in Mandarin is pronounced as “yu” which sounds similar to “yu (余)” meaning excess, abundance and continuity.

Rodents are also used in carvings or paintings to represent blessings for offsprings as rodents produce multiple litters every year. It is also believed to be a deity for offsprings (子) and most often depicted with pumpkins which have many seeds. Seeds in Mandarin is “zi (子)” which is a homonym for “children”.

Plants with flourishing leaves and many seeds are used to represent blessings for offsprings and prosperity for descendants. Common sightings include pomegranates, lotus, peanuts, grapes and pumpkins.

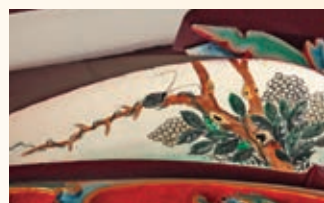
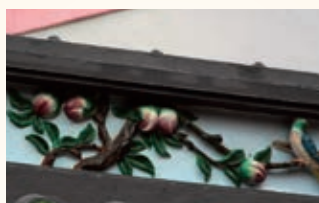
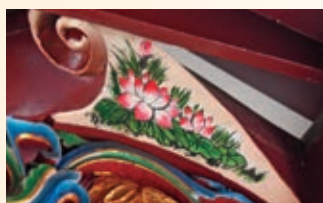
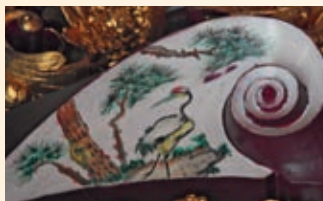
“Rat Nibbling A Pumpkin” symbolises prosperity for many descendants.

Pomegranates can be sighted on many carvings in Thian Hock Keng. It is often depicted with peaches and sarcodactylus (Buddha’s hand) to represent fertility, longevity and prosperity.

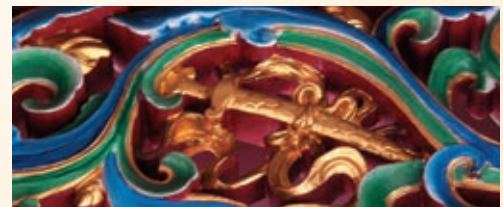


以长寿为征者

动物如鸟雀、仙鹤与鹿，植物如菊花、松柏与仙桃等等均为长生的象征喻意。



以八仙为主题或是代表八仙的暗八仙纹样，代表祈求高寿的寓意。



Symbols of Longevity

Plants and animals associated with longevity include birds, cranes, deer, chrysanthemum, pine, and peach.

The Eight Immortals are adopted to represent longevity.

以功名、富贵为征者

装饰语言中喜以“甲壳”类的动物与“科甲”谐音，以象征功名。

天福宫出现的虾与蟹的彩绘装饰即为此图样喻意。

以宝盒中盛三枚孔方铜钱有财富的寄托，也象征连中“三元”的功名寓意。

牡丹因其艳丽、多为财富的表征，鹿则因为与“禄”同音，亦为象征财富的常用装饰。

庙宇的建筑装饰语言经常以图像为象征，并藉由语音变化或以谐音转化为吉言瑞语，表现出人们的心愿祝祷。

您找得到这些符号吗？



◀Treasure box and 3 copper coins represents "lian zhong san yuan (连中三元)"



◀Prawns and crabs portray success in examinations (虾与蟹象征功名)

Peonies are often associated with wealth and affluence (牡丹象征财富) ▶



Deer represent achievements and accomplishments (鹿与“禄”同音)



Symbols of Success, Achievements and Wealth

Usually, crustaceans (甲壳类动物) are used as they represent “*ke jia* (科甲)” which means to succeed as scholars in ancient imperial examinations.

Prawns and crabs depicted in Thian Hock Keng's architecture are said to portray success in examinations.

The use of a treasure box and 3 copper coins represents “*lian zhong san yuan* (连中三元)” in the ancient imperial examinations. Today, it is said to mean academic achievements.

Because of its bright colours, peonies are often associated with wealth and affluence. Deer (鹿) has the same pronunciation in Mandarin as “*lu* (禄)” or success and is also used to represent achievements and accomplishments.

Wishes and prayers of devotees are commonly reflected in a temple's architecture with the use of carvings and paintings of symbolic plants, animals, nature; and through the homophonic features of the language and basic characteristics of these symbols.

Try locating these symbols of blessings! Have fun.

Awards



▲ Top (left to right):

- 2001 Architectural Heritage Awards
- 6th SIA Architectural Design Awards 2001
- SIA-ICI Dulux Colour Awards 2001 (Silver)

▼ Bottom Left:

- UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Culture Heritage Conservation 2001 (Honourable Mention)

🕒 每天上午7.30至下午5.30
Daily from 7.30 am – 5.30 pm

🎫 免费
Free

☎ 6423 4616

📠 6423 4626

🌐 www.thianhockkeng.com.sg

**158 Telok Ayer Street
Singapore 068613**

