



## Cultural symbols in Vietnamese Đông Hồ paintings from landscape semiotics

**Dr. Le Duc Luan**

Associate professor, Nguyen Tat Thanh University, Ho Chi Minh City

Article DOI: [10.55677/SSHRB/2026-3050-0310](https://doi.org/10.55677/SSHRB/2026-3050-0310)

DOI URL: <https://doi.org/10.55677/SSHRB/2026-3050-0310>

**KEYWORDS:** folk paintings, icons, images, fertility, landscape, Vietnamese culture

**ABSTRACT:** Đông Hồ folk woodcut painting is a line of Vietnamese folk paintings originating from Đông Hồ village, Nom name is Mái village in Song Hồ commune, Thuận Thành district, Bắc Ninh province. The symbol in Đông Hồ folk painting is an image symbol and then turns into a meaningful symbol. The Toad symbol in the painting "Teacher Coc" has three layers of culture stacked on top of each other. The first layer of culture indicates the wet rice civilization. The second cultural class is associated with the matrilineal clan society. The third cultural class is Confucian culture with the image of the Toad teacher and his students. The Buffalo is a symbol of agriculture, with December being the plowing month for agricultural residents. The fertility creed is a belief that prays for the proliferation of people, good crops, and prosperous life. Both pictures of chickens and pigs have the message of a happy reunion, proliferation, and the herd expressing the wish for the prosperity of the Vietnamese people. The painting "Picking up coconuts" symbolizes the reunion and happiness of the family. All the symbolic issues in Đông Hồ's paintings show quite clearly the Vietnamese culture: respect for agriculture, respect for courtesy, respect for knowledge; Wish for a full life, family reunion, and happiness.

**Corresponding Author**

**Dr. Le Duc Luan**

**Published: March 17, 2026**

**License:** This is an open access article under the CC BY 4.0 license:  
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

### 1. INTRODUCTIONS

Terminologically, the symbol in English is a word derived from ancient European languages (symbolus in Roman and symbolon in Greek). Two of the most basic characteristics of symbols are information and communication. Studying the symbolic language of an ethnic group or a community is also studying the culture of that ethnic group or community.

Symbols are images that have cultural symbolic meanings. Image is the form of expression of symbols. According to Freud, "Symbols express themselves indirectly, insinuatingly, and more or less unrecognizable. A symbol is a link that unifies the obvious content of an act, a thought, a word with its hidden meaning". As for CGJung, "The symbol is an appropriate image to show more accurately the vague and suspicious nature of the spirit, the symbol does not bind anything, it does not explain, it brings us out beyond itself to a meaning that lies beyond, unable to grasp, vaguely foretold, and which no word in our language can adequately express." (Jean Chevalier - Alain Gheerbrant. 1997: 24-25).

Symbols present a relationship between expression and content. Saussure contrasted symbols with conventional signs, arguing that in symbols there is an element of the icon. The scale can be a symbol of justice because pictographically it contains the idea of justice. Symbols are both at the expression level and at the content level. There is always something archaic in the symbol. Every culture needs a set of texts to perform that archaic function. The symbol never belongs to a synchronic (same era) cross-section of culture, it always crosses that cross-section vertically, going from the past to the future. (Lotman, Ju. M. 1922-1993: 191-199).

Kati Lindström, Hannes Palang and Kalevi Kull. 2019 overview of landscape semiotics: Denis Cosgrove has stated that there are two distinct discourses in landscape studies: ecological and semiotic. A semiotic approach to landscape is emphasis more on the context and processes through which cultural meanings are invested into and shape a world whose 'nature' is known only through human cognition and representation, and is thus always symbolically mediated (Lotman, Ju. M.). Landscape paintings in particular have been an ongoing source of debate about the discrepancy between semiotic and physical reality. The semiotic constructedness of photographs, literary texts, maps, postcards and other geographical methodologies, but even the representation

of landscapes through other landscapes have been brought to attention. In the 2010 book in sociolinguistics edited by Jaworski and Thurlow with a promising title, *Semiotic Landscapes* is a study very well informed on landscape studies in art and geography, but the “semiotic landscape” here refers solely to linguistic landscapes and the role of texts in landscapes and their creation. From the side of semiotics, a call for developing the field of landscape semiotics can be found in the book *Existential Semiotics*, by Eero Tarasti, who envisions landscape semiotics as a “study the landscape as a kind of sign language” (Lotman, Ju. M.). The departure point of Tarasti is landscape aesthetics, on the basis of which he then strives to develop a vision of Greimasian landscape semiotics. His book is by no means a systematic development of landscape semiotics, but rather a conceptual paper envisioning possible approaches and his definition of landscape remains anthropocentric and culture centered, heavily oriented towards the study of representations, Massimo Leone (2009) is another semiotician who has made an explicit mention of semiotic landscapes, in proposing the notion of 'semio-geography', which is a neologism for a subdiscipline that studies patterns and processes that shape human interaction with various environments, within the theoretical framework of semiotics. Similarly, a collection of articles *Synbolic Landscapes* edited by Backhaus and Murungi (2009) seeks to overcome the Saussurean/structuralist understanding of symbol as something purely ideational and replenish the theory of symbolic landscapes with Merleau-Ponty's philosophy, seeing symbol as something that “arises between the lived- body and its milieu in gesture that freely enters virtual space” and rejecting the division line between perception and conception. (Backhaus and Murungi,2009). Animal geography with its emphasis on other living beings and their meaningful landscapes is a transfer zone between classical landscape studies, the phenomenological approach and an ecosemiotic understanding of landscapes as developed by Almo Farina and his colleagues. Recent years have seen the influence of semiotics inspired by Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) growing internationally. Landscapes are socio-material processes that, due to the action of both people and nature, continuously undergo morphological change (in the most material sense) and revision (in the sense that landscapes are viewed by people). Landscapes are the contested networks of material- semiotic relationships, provisional alliances between people and things, and contested representations viewed from a necessary (Mercer 2002: 42). A model that might help in studying landscape change has been proposed by J. Lotman (2009) in his book *Culture and Explosion*. Ecosemiotics is defined as “the study of the semiotic interrelations between organisms and their environment” (Nóth 1998:333). Such ecological landscape semiotics undoubtedly compensate for excessive anthropocentrism in the semiotic studies of landscapes, but in Farina's case, still falls rather on the side of what Cosgrove called “ecological discourse”. Integrative landscape semiotics should rather be born from the synthesis of “biological” eco semiotics with what has been called “cultural ecosemiotics” that without neglecting the meaningful landscapes of other species, “includes research on the semiotic aspects of the place and the role of nature for humans, that is, what is and what has been the meaning of nature for us, humans, how and in what extent we communicate with nature” (Kull 1998: 350).

Adam Jaworski and Crispin Thurlow overview of landscape semiotics: In the era of multimodality semiotic modes other than language are treated as fully capable of serving for representation and communication. Indeed, language, whether as speech or as writing, may now often be seen as ancillary to other semiotic modes: to the visual for instance. Language may now be “extravisual”. The very facts of the new communicational landscape have made that inescapably the issue. (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001: 46). We are concerned here with the interplay between language, visual discourse, and the spatial practices and dimensions of culture, especially the textual mediation or discursive construction of place and the use of space as a semiotic resource in its own right. We are keen to emphasize the way written discourse interacts with other discursive modalities: visual images, nonverbal communication, architecture and the built environment. All landscape is semiotic, i.e. its meaning is always construed in the act of socio-cultural interpretation – we follow Scollon and Wong Scollon (2003) in making quality, ed distinction between semiotic and non-semiotic spaces; we thus take semiotic landscape to mean, in the most general sense, any (public) space with a visible inscription made through deliberate human intervention and meaning making (Scollon and Wong Scollon, 2003). Thus, landscape is defined by Cosgrove, borrowing John Berger's (1982) terminology, as a “way of seeing the external world” (1984: 46) and as “a visual ideology”. This was evident both in art and other applications of linear perspective. “The artist, through perspective, establishes the arrangement or composition, and thus the speci, time, of the events described, determines – in both senses – the ‘point of view’ to be taken by the observer, and controls through framing the scope of reality revealed”. Landscape both as physical (built) environment, a context for human action and socio- political activity, while at the same time a symbolic (Cosgrove, 1988: 34). By the same token, our sense of national or regional identity is closely linked to the nation's collective gaze at the physical attributes of landscape, especially the pictorial, cartographic and textual representations of the countryside. The production of these landscapes in the construction of regional and national identity has been well recognized and extensively documented (e.g. Daniels, 1993; Matless, 1998; Rycroft and Cosgrove, 1995). Most (English-language) studies of linguistic landscape to date take as their starting point the definition proposed by Rodrigue Landry and Richard Bourhis (1997) (Adam Jaworski and Crispin Thurlow. 2009: 1-7).

Symbols have multiple meanings, but we can divide them into two main aspects: symbolic image and symbolic meaning. Symbols in Dong Ho folk paintings are from symbolic images to symbolic meanings. Đông Hồ folk woodcut painting is a line of Vietnamese folk paintings originating from Đông Hồ village, Nom name is Mái village in Song Hồ commune, Thuận Thành district, Bắc Ninh province. In the past, paintings were sold mainly for the Lunar New Year, rural people bought paintings to stick

on the wall, and at the end of the year, they removed them and used new paintings. Đông Hồ painting paper is called scallop paper. The colors used in the painting are natural colors from plants such as black, yellow, green, red, brown, and white. These are pretty basic colors, not mixed, and the number of colors corresponds to the number of woodcuts. This line of paintings was born around the 17th century and developed until the first half of the 20th century, then gradually declined. However, at present, some artists of Đông Hồ painting continue to preserve and develop this type of painting. This series of paintings has a very rich theme, it reflects almost everything that happens in life, daily activities as well as social relationships in the Northern countryside. Dong Ho paintings are recognized by the Vietnamese government as the national intangible cultural heritage.

The landscape in the picture is a kind of artistic landscape. Every image is a cultural signal. It's a symbolic landscape. The research objective of the article is to point out cultural symbols in Dong Ho's paintings. The article makes readers see Vietnamese cultural symbols in Dong Ho paintings. For the first time, the article mentioned semiotics to learn images in pictures. They are cultural symbols. The article shows the relationship between agricultural cultural symbols in Dong Ho paintings of Vietnam.

## 2. CONTENTS

### 2.1. Cultural symbol of wet rice agriculture

#### 2.1.1. Toad icon:

The landscape in the picture the "Thầy đồ Cóc" (Teacher Coc) is a classroom. Teachers and students are both amphibious animals. The teacher is a Toad and the students are animals: frog, tree frog (hyla), and bullfrog.

#### 讀講蜗老 Lão Oa giảng đọc



Teacher Toad's painting

Why is Toad a teacher, not Monkey or Tortoise? Monkeys are the wisest primates, the closest evolutionary system to humans, humans are said to have evolved from apes. The Tortoise is the longest living, intelligent, sacred animal. God Kim Quy is the Golden Tortoise in the legend of An Duong Vuong of the Vietnamese people and later in the legend of Ho Guom, the messenger of the Long Vuong. The above animals are not respected as teachers. So why is the Toad, who is a small animal, supposed to be a teacher? He is a person who has a lot of knowledge, has many letters, understands Heaven, and has bravery, is a person who has the power to command people.

First of all, the Toad is a courageous animal, resilient, the idiom "Gan Cóc tá" (purple toad liver). It leads the animals against Trời (Heaven) in the Vietnamese folk tale "Cóc kiện Trời" (Toad sues Heaven). According to Vietnamese beliefs, Trời is a great deity, corresponding to God in Christian beliefs. Folks say "Con Cóc là cậu ông Trời" (Toad is the uncle of Heaven), meaning that Toad is bigger than Heaven. Why is Toad the mother's brother and not the father's brother? The "cậu" (uncle) signal shows that this concept occurs in a matriarchy, where women in the family and society take the leading role. The mother's brother played a big role in the family and society of the matriarchal era. Meanwhile, the father's brother has the highest power in the family and patriarchal society in the patriarchal family. The matrilineal clan commune was the development stage of the gentle commune from 4,000 to 6,000 BC. It prospered during the middle Mesolithic, early and middle Neolithic periods and was

gradually superseded by the patriarchal clan commune in the late Neolithic period (<https://bienniensu.com/thegioi/cong-xa-thi-toc-mau-he>). It is because of "Heaven's uncle" that he can command Heaven, so "Cóc kêu Trời mưa" (Toad called it rain).

Second, the teacher is a symbol of wisdom and understanding, with many letters. Toad is "giác" 覺 means understanding. Toads with amphibians such as frogs, and bullfrogs all give birth to tadpoles. The Vietnamese believe that wisdom and character are stored in the belly, not the head and heart: "Sáng dạ" (bright belly) is intelligent, "Tốt bụng" (kind-belly), "xấu bụng" (bad-belly). Toad teacher, the student is Frog, bullfrogs the letters are of course tadpole, but tadpole is shaped like "Khoa Đầu" (Khoa Dau) letters, which is the ancient script of Lac Viet people. (Nguyễn Vũ Tuấn Anh, 2002). According to Thich Vien Nhu, the Vietnamese sent here a message that this letter belongs to the Vietnamese people by writing here the Vietnamese letter 亏 when writing the letter "Coc" 夸斗. It was formed long before the Chinese took possession of it from the Vietnamese, so there was a two-word phonogram of Khoa Dau in the same way as above, and the Chinese at that time recorded it as 蝌蚪. (Nguyễn Vũ Tuấn Anh, 2002).

Excavations in Henan province (in present-day China) have discovered many bronze relics from the Shang Dynasty (1600 to 1046 BC). Ha Nam was the land of An during the Shang Dynasty. In which the letter "Viet" is found as follows:



In 1965, when excavating an ancient tomb in Hubei province (China), archaeologists found the treasured sword of the Viet Vuong Cau Tien. This treasured sword is completely rustless, as good as new for the past 2,500 years. The letter engraved on the above-mentioned treasured sword is not a kanji, archaeologists have determined that this is a type of letter that precedes the kanji. The sword is engraved with 8 characters: "Việt Vương Câu Tiễn Tự Tác Dụng Kiếm" (Viet Vuong Cau Tien self-creation Effect Sword to use). The country of Viet in the Cau Tien period (reigned from 496 to 465 BC) was owned by the U Viet clan, one of the clans of the Bach Viet group, and was also a vassal of the Zhou Dynasty during the Spring-Autumn and Warring States periods. The letter "Viet" on the sword of Viet Vuong Cau Tien and the letter "Viet" unearthed in Ha Nam province are the same. Analysis of ancient Viet script is made up of 3 words as follows:



The three letters above include the digit 1 is "sun", the number 2 is "dragon", the number 3 is a symbol like "birdman" combined. The symbol of the sun and bird is in the Ngoc Lu bronze drum, while the dragon is in the legend "Lac Long Quan and Au Co" of the Vietnamese people.

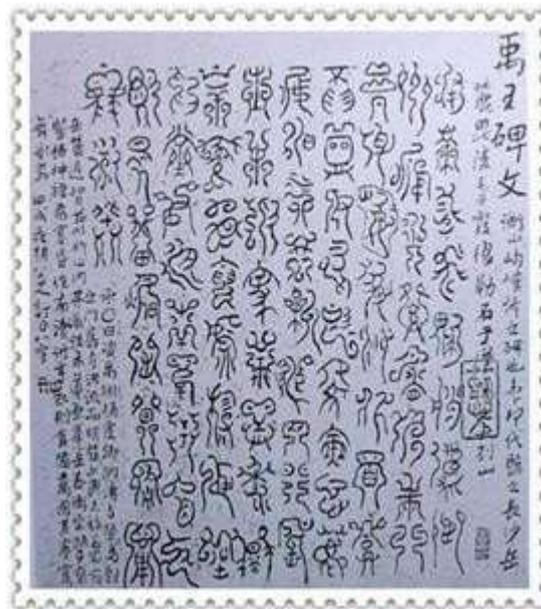


(Trần Hưng, 2021).

Obviously, the symbol in the letter "Viet" coincides with Lac Viet culture. The letter "Viet" was discovered as early as the 2nd century BC during the Shang Dynasty and the first century BC during the Viet Vuong Cau Tien period has the image of the letter Khoa Dau. The letter Khoa Dau was also found in the 2nd century AD in the collapsed house of Khong Tu - the ancestor of Confucian scholarship in a manuscript. This type was popular during the Zhou Dynasty, but after the Tang Dynasty, its popularity declined. (Endymion Wilkinson. 2018, p.408)

Letter Khoa Dau (<https://nghiencuulichsu.com/2018/04/20/nguon-goc-chu-khoa-dau-va-hai-chu-khoa-dau/>)

Thus, it can be seen that Khoa Dau is the script of the Bach Viet people, including the Vietnamese tribes in China before and Lac Viet in Vietnam today. However, Vietnamese people in Vietnam are the owners of Vietnamese culture with the symbol of writing and river culture on the Ngoc Lu bronze drum.



The letter Khoa Dau is said to date from the time of Viet King Cau Tien (496 to 465 BC) and it must have been a long time before that. Chinese characters have gone through many stages of development. Until now, the oldest Chinese characters are believed to be Giap Cot (armor bone text 甲骨文), a script that appeared in the Yin Dynasty (殷) around 1600-1020 BC. (letter Chinese <https://vi.wikipedia.org/wiki/>) So, did Chinese characters come from Khoa Dau or do these two types co-exist? Currently, there are no studies on this issue.

The Toad symbol in the painting "Toad teacher" has three layers of culture stacked on top of each other. The first layer of culture represents the wet rice civilization.

Remnants of the world's oldest prehistoric meal cooked with rice from wild rice, 13,000 years ago, were found by an American-Chinese archaeological team in the Diaotonghuan cave south of the Yangtze River (northern Jiangxi province). Scientists studying these phytoliths - rice crystals - have proven that since 9,000 years ago, ancient people in that area ate more rice from cultivated rice than wild rice. The experience of rice cultivation accumulated there for several thousand years led to the cultivation of rice throughout the southern Yangtze region. The second oldest monument, 9000 years ago, is Pengtou, near Dong Dinh Lake south of the Yangtze River (Wet rice civilization, <https://vi.wikipedia.org/wiki/>). The Yangtze River and Dong Dinh Lake are the residences of the ancient Vietnamese in the legend of the Hong Bang family. The king of Lac Viet residents is the Lac Long Quan, son of Kinh Duong Vuong and Goddess Long at Dong Dinh Lake (Lê Đức Luận, 2017). Vietnamese folklore curriculum:

60-61 Wet rice farming requires water, and the Toad calls for rain, which is associated with water beliefs. The Toad is found on the Bronze Drum, an object representing the culture of the ancient Vietnamese people. Dong Son bronze drum is the name of a type of drum representing the Dong Son culture of the ancient Vietnamese. Most researchers place the Dong Son culture as dating from the 7th century BC to the 1st and 2nd centuries AD (Trình Năng Chung, 2014). In Ban Chiang, Thailand and Vinh Phuc, Vietnam, bronze artifacts were discovered dating to around 2100 BC. (Bronze from Ban Chiang, Thailand: "A view from the Laboratory") The Vietnam History Museum has kept a large number of Dong Son bronze drums. The multi-pointed star in the center of the drum represents the sun god. (Trống đồng Đông Sơn, Bách khoa toàn thư mở Wikipedia). The Sun God presides over the rain and sun, the weather affects agriculture, so it is also called Shen Nong (God of agriculture). The patterns of warehouses, copper jars, patterns of rice grains, flying storks, toad statues, images of buffaloes, water snakes; men and women pounding rice found quite commonly on many bronze drums are all shapes of agricultural cultural symbols.



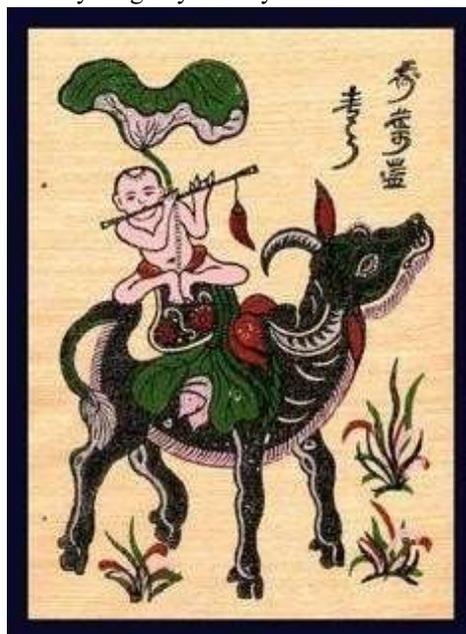
Bronze drum image

The second cultural class is associated with the matrilineal clan society. The second cultural class is associated with the matrilineal clan society. Wet rice farming is often associated with women. Phonological imprints of Vietnamese and Tay Thai languages show that the "n" phoneme has a feminine meaning associated with upland fields: "na" in Tay Thai means the land, "nà" in Vietnamese is a lowland with water, "na" is a married woman, "nang" in Tay Thai is a girl, and so is "nàng/nường" in Vietnamese, "noong" in Tay Thai means sister, "nuong" in Vietnamese means garden (Lê Đức Luận, 2017: 109). Women in the matrilineal society manage the family and do agriculture, while men often go far away to hunt and tame wild animals.

The third cultural class is Confucian culture with the image of the Toad teacher and his students. This cultural class was born later, as early as the 1st century AD. A teacher is a literate person, not a mandarin, who only stays in the village to teach and there are also some people who have become mandarins but open classes to teach in old age.

#### 2.1.2. Buffalo icon:

Landscape painting of rural space with buffalo and boy sitting on buffalo playing flute. Peaceful and romantic landscape. Buffalo and farmer become friends. The innocent young boy usually takes care of buffalo every day. An image full of life!



A picture of a buffalo and a baby playing the flute

Buffalo is a symbol of agriculture, Vietnamese proverb “Con trâu là đầu cơ nghiệp” (The buffalo is the head of the business". Dong Ho's painting has the image of a buffalo with a child sitting on the buffalo's back playing the flute, very peaceful and romantic. Among the 12 zodiac animals of the inhabitants of Bach Viet, the Buffalo, corresponding to December, is the plowing month of the agricultural inhabitants, while the Han people call it "nguru bô" which is the cow, not the Buffalo (Lê Đức Luận. 2017: 235-236). The Cow is good at packing goods, pulling wood, and pulling carts, so it's called an ox cart, while the Buffalo is good at pulling plows on the water field. Chiem rice crop is the most important rice crop of the Vietnamese, plowing begins in December and harvested in April next year. Buffalo becomes the cultural consciousness of Vietnamese people in the process of hunting, taming and productive labor associated with agriculture. The Buffalo is associated with the festival of the “Mục đồng” (buffalo shepherds) worshipping the god Nong associated with honoring the Buffalo and the child herding the Buffalo (Lê Đức Luận, 2017: 222-230).

## 2.2. Symbols of thriving beliefs

### 2.2.1. Beliefs prays for fertility

“Phồn thực”: “Phồn”: crowded, full, many; “Thực”: trees grass good, sprang forth many plants. People worship organs the "sinh thực khí" (reproductive organs): the organ of animals and plants used to produce plants and animals (L.m. An-tôn Trần Văn Kiệm, 2004: 675-792). Reproductive organs are specified to speak of the desire for reproductive development. The fertility belief is a belief that prays for the proliferation of people, prosperity in production and crops, prosperous life. Ngo Duc Thinh said that the statue of men and women having intercourse on the lid of the bronze jar is a symbol of fertility beliefs in folklore. This belief is bold in the agricultural inhabitants who grow wet rice, especially during the Dong Son culture period (Hoàng Phương, 2016). Farmers want fruit trees and animals to multiply, so they worship the reproductive organs and the act of mating. The landscape of two men and women mating on a Dao Thinh bronze jar.



The statue of a man and woman mating

### 2.2.2. The expression prosperity in the painting of pigs and chickens

Pigs and chickens are two animals that are said to have a lot of birth. The fertility creed wishes that if plants were to have many fruits then animals would have many offspring. The picture depicts the mother pig and the herd of pigs expressing fertility. The image of a fat mother pig with a pair of yin and yang swirls represents the male-female harmony giving birth to a herd. The animals are painted in 5 colors: red, blue, yellow, brown, and black to represent the five elements. Piglets also have 5 pigs and each has a dominant color and combines 4 other colors very harmoniously, each has a yin and yang vortex. The piglets gather around their mother, each one is chubby, fat, and hyperactive. Yin and yang are the two original elements that make up the world. The Five Elements are the five physical elements that make up the world. That is the cultural philosophy of the Vietnamese people.



A picture of a mother pig and her cubs

A picture of a mother hen and ten chicks, each chick has its own look, but they are all hyperactive and naughty. One group of chicks is preening their wings, while another group is standing and lying on their mother's back. The chickens are mixed in 5 colors: red, yellow, blue and brown. This is also the color number of the five elements. There are 10 chickens gathered around their mother, the number 10 is the number of integrity, completeness, and crowding. The mother hen is picking up prey that is about to be fed to the chicks. The picture depicts a mother hen taking care of her chicks. Painting exploits the beauty of a happy reunion.



A picture of a mother hen and her chicks

The two paintings of chickens and pigs have the message of a happy reunion, proliferation, and the herd expressing the wish for the prosperity of the Vietnamese people.

### 2.2.3. Expression of prosperity in the painting “húng dừa” (catching coconuts)

Landscape painting shows a family with a husband and wife and two children. The husband picks coconuts, wife picks up. At the top of the tree, the husband picked two coconuts and dropped them, and below, the wife lifted her skirt to catch the coconuts. Two children, one is trying to climb a coconut tree with his father and the other is standing opposite as if to help his younger brother. Couples represent harmony: a couple, a pair of coconuts, and two children. The husband juggles, and his wife receives, showing the yin and yang compatibility: above and below, boys and girls. The two children are healthy and plump, the husband is strong and the wife is collecting love. This is a picture symbolizing the reunion and happiness of the family.



A picture of catching coconuts

### 3. CONCLUSION

The icon studied in this article is a type of image icon. These symbolic images are shown in Dong Ho's paintings. This article deals with agricultural symbols and fertility symbols. In fact, the fertility symbol also originates from agricultural inhabitants. Prosperity beliefs want to have many seedlings and to have many seedlings, people must have many births in order to have “con đàn cháu đống” (children heaps and grandchildren descendants).

The symbolism in Dong Ho's paintings clearly shows the wet rice culture of the Vietnamese people. Thereby, we see the old people's wish for a happy and reunited family. Visual icons are a vivid form of symbolism and preserve many ancient cultural elements. Through the symbol "Teacher toad", we see cultural classes: water beliefs, God worship beliefs, ancient Vietnamese scripts, and the concept of teachers. The belief of prosperity in the reunion, reunion, harmony between husband and wife, boys and girls in paintings of chickens pigs and catching coconuts.

All the symbolic issues in Dong Ho's paintings show quite clearly the Vietnamese culture: respect for agriculture, respect for courtesy, respect for knowledge; Wish for a full life, family reunion, and happiness. The landscape in the picture is a kind of artistic landscape. Every image is a cultural signal. It's a symbolic landscape. The article makes readers see Vietnamese cultural symbols in Dong Ho's paintings.

## REFERENCES

1. Adam Jaworski and Crispin Thurlow. (2009). *Introducing Semiotic Landscapes*. AJaworski\_Intro\_Rev.indd. PDF version.
2. Andrews, M. (1999). *Landscape and Western Art*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
3. Barthes, Roland. (1971). *Mythologies*. Straus Farrar & Giroux.
4. <https://bienniensu.com/thegioi/cong-xa-thi-toc-mau-he>
5. <http://chuaxaloi.vn/tin-tuc/van-de-chu-khoa-dau/921.html>
6. Boas, Franz. (1955). *Primitive Art*, Dove publication Inc. New York, p. 88- 143.
7. *Bronze from Ban Chiang, Thailand: A view from the Laboratory*" (PDF). [Museum.upenn.edu](https://www.museum.upenn.edu).
8. Claude Levi-Strauss. (1963). *Structural Anthropology*. New York: Basic Books, tr. 186-206.
9. Chữ Khoa Đầu (Khoa Đầu characters) <https://vi.wikipedia.org/wiki/>
10. Chữ Hán (Chinese characters) <https://vi.wikipedia.org/wiki/>
11. Cosgrove, D. (1984). *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape*. London: Croom Helm.
12. Cosgrove, D. (2008,1998). 'Introduction to Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape', in R. Z. DeLue and J. Elkins (eds), *Landscape Theory*. New York: Routledge and Cork: University College Cork, pp. 17–42.
13. Daniels, S. and Cosgrove, D. (2007). Introduction: iconography and landscape. In Cosgrove, D. and Daniels, S. (eds.), *The monogram of language: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design and Use of Put Environments*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-10
14. DeLue, R. Z. and Elkins, J. (2008). *Landscape Theory*. New York: Routledge and Cork: University College Cork
15. Douglas, Mary. (1970). *Natural symbols: Exploration in cosmology*. Pantheon Books, New York, p. 140-156.
16. Durk Gorter. (2013). Linguistic Landscapes in a Multilingual World. In: *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* (2013), 33, 190–212. doi: 10.1017/S0267190513000020
17. Eco, U. (2003, 1973). 'Function and sign: The semiotics of architecture', in
18. M. Gottdiener, K. Boklund-Lagopoulou and A. Ph. Lagopoulou (eds), *Semiotics*. London: Sage, pp. 241–290.
19. Eco, Umberto. (1976). *A Theory of Semiotics*. Bloomington & London, Indiana University Press.
20. Endymion Wilkinson. (2018). *Chinese History: A New Manual* (Chinese: 中國歷史新手册; pinyin: Zhōngguó lìshǐ xīn shǒucè), Harvard Univ Asia Center, 2000, 1181 p.
21. Farina, A. (2006). *Principles and Methods in Landscape Ecology. Towards a Science of handmade*. Landscape Series. Dordrecht: Springer.
22. Ferdinand de Saussure. (1915). *Course in General linguistics*, Wade Baskin dịch, McGraw Hill Book.
23. Firth, Raymon. (1973). *Symbols: Public and private*. London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd.
24. G. Jellicoe. (1996). *Studies in Landscape Design*, vol. 2, London: Oxford University Press.
25. Geertz, Clifford. (1973). *The Interpretation of culture*. New York: Basic Books, p. 126-141.
26. Hawker, Terence. (1977). *Structuralism and Semiotics*. California: University of California Press, p. 123-151.
27. Hoàng Phương. (2016). Dấu ấn tín ngưỡng phồn thực trên chiếc thạp đồng bảo vật. [Imprint of fertility beliefs on the treasure treasures jar] <https://vnexpress.net/dau-an-tin-nguong-phon-thuc-tren-chiec-thap-dong-bao-vat>
28. Johan Järlehed & Adam Jaworski. (2015). *Typographic landscaping:*
29. Creativity, ideology, movement. *Social Semiotics*, 25:2, 117-125. To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10350330.2015.1010318>
30. Jorgensen, K. (1998). *Semiotics in landscape design*. *landscape Review* 4(1):39-47
31. Kati Lindström, Hannes Palang and Kalevi Kull. (2019). *Landscape semiotics*. *The Routledge Companion to Landscape Studies*. Second Edition. Edited by Peter Howord, Ian Thompson, Emma Woterton and Mick Atha. Routledge Taylor and Francis Group.
32. Jean Chevalier - Alain Gheerbrant. (1969). *Dictionnaire des symboles (Dictionary of Symbols)*, first printed in 1969. *Dictionary of world cultural symbols*, 3rd edition, translated by Pham Vinh Cu, Da Nang Publishing House 2016.

33. Lagopoulos, A. Ph. and Boklund-Lagopoulou. (2014). Semiotics, culture and space. *Sign Systems Studies* 42(4):435-486.
34. Lawson, B. (2001). *The Language of Space*. Oxford: Architectural Press.
35. L.m. An-tôn Trần Văn Kiệm. (2004). *Giúp đọc Nôm và Hán Việt*, [Help reading Nom and Pinyin] Nxb Đà Nẵng-Hội bảo tồn di sản chữ Nôm Hoa Kỳ, p. 675, 793
36. Liungman, Carl G. (1991). *Dictionary of Symbols*. W.W. Norton & Company, New York & London.
37. Lê Đức Luận. (2017). *Giáo trình văn học dân gian Việt Nam*, [Vietnamese folklore curriculum] Hà Nội: Nxb. Đại học Quốc gia, p.60-61.
38. Lê Đức Luận. (2017). *Những vấn đề ngôn ngữ và văn hóa*, Tập 1, [Problems of Language and Culture, Volume 1], Hà Nội: Nxb. Đại học Quốc gia.
39. Lotman, Ju. M. (1922-1993). *Signs of culture science (Kí hiệu học văn hóa)*. Người dịch: Lã Nguyên, Đỗ Hải Phong, Trần Đình Sử. Hà Nội: Nxb. Đại học Quốc gia, 2014.
40. Lotman, J.M. (1990). *Universe of the Mind: A semiotic theory of culture*. London: Tauris.
41. <https://luocsutocviet.com/>
42. Macann, C. (1993). *Four Phenomenological Philosophers: Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-ponty*. London Routledge
43. Monnai, T. (2005). *Landscape descriptions as signs*. *New Frontiers in Architecture* 3: 51-53; in Japanese.
44. Nash, G. (ed.) (1997). *Semiotics of Landscape: Archaeology of Mind*, BAR International Series 661. Oxford, OX: Archaeopress.
45. Nguyễn Vũ Tuấn Anh. (2002). *Tính minh triết trong tranh dân gian Việt Nam*. [The philosophy in Vietnamese folk paintings] Hà Nội: Nxb. Văn hóa Thông tin.  
<https://nghiencuulichsu.com/2018/04/20/nguon-goc-chu-khoa-dau-va-hai-chu-khoa-dau/>
46. Sorensen, M.L.S. and Carman, J. (2009). *Heritage Studies: Methods and Approaches*. London and New York: Routledge.
47. Tarasti, E. (2000). *semiotics of landscapes*. *Existentialenrorrrc*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University press, p.154-163
48. Trần Văn Đạt, Ph. D. *Trống đồng Đông Sơn và Nền nông nghiệp cổ đại*. *Lược sử tộc Việt*. <https://luocsutocviet.com/>
49. Trần Hưng. (2021). *Một lý giải về hàm nghĩa chữ “Việt” của người Việt cổ*, *Trí thức Việt Nam*.
50. Trình Năng Chung. (2014). *Văn hóa Đông Sơn: 90 năm phát hiện và nghiên cứu*, [Dong Son culture: 90 years of discovery and research] Hà Nội: *Tạp chí Khoa học xã hội Việt Nam*, số 5(78)
51. *Trống đồng Đông Sơn*, Bách khoa toàn thư mở Wikipedia.
52. Todorov, Tzvetan. (1982). *Theories of the symbol*. Cornell University Press.
53. Turner, Vitor. (1967). *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*. New York: Cornell University Press 1970 paperback, p.48-59.
54. *Văn minh lúa nước*, <https://vi.wikipedia.org/wiki>
55. Viên Như. (2018). *Nguồn gốc chữ Khoa Đầu và hai chữ Khoa Đầu*. [Origin of the letter Khoa Dau and the two letters Khoa Dau], *Nghiên Cứu Lịch Sử*. This entry was posted on in Kho tàng văn hóa, *Lịch sử Việt Nam Tháng Tư 20*. <http://chuaxaloi.vn/tin-tuc/van-de-chu-khoa-dau/921.html>
56. Wylie, J. (2007). *Landscape*. London: Routledge.