

**The Foreign Ministers of Vietnam and India pay their respects to Tran Quoc Pagoda
and visit the Bodhi tree**

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At the invitation of Foreign Minister Bui Thanh Son, External Affairs Minister of India Subramanyam Jaishankar is on an official visit to Vietnam and co-chair the 18th Vietnam-India Joint Commission Meeting. On the afternoon of October 15 (September 1 of the lunar calendar), the two Foreign Ministers visited Tran Quoc Pagoda, Tay Ho district, Hanoi. Minister Bui Thanh Son welcomed the Indian Foreign Minister from outside the gate and briefly introduced Tran Quoc Pagoda - a pagoda with a long and famous history in Vietnam, located on the bank of West Lake.

Minister Bui Thanh Son said that today is the first day of the lunar calendar month, Vietnamese people often go to pagodas on these days, so Tran Quoc Pagoda is very crowded this afternoon.

Most Venerable Thich Thanh Nha, Abbot of Tran Quoc Pagoda, welcomed the two Ministers and introduced thoroughly the history of the pagoda. The abbot gave the two Ministers 2 artistically crafted Bodhi leaves.

The Indian Foreign Minister also gifted Tran Quoc Pagoda Bodhi leaves extracted from the Bodhi tree in Bodhgaya (Bodhgaya - where Buddha Shakyamuni attained enlightenment). After that, the two Ministers attended the prayer ceremony at the main hall of Tran Quoc Pagoda according to Vietnamese Buddhist spiritual rituals.

The delegation worshiped the Bodhi tree in the middle of Tran Quoc Pagoda's yard. This is a Bodhi tree extracted from the sacred Bodhi tree where Buddha attained enlightenment in Bodhgaya and was given to President Ho Chi Minh by Indian President Rajendra Prasad in 1959 during his visit to Vietnam. The Bodhi tree was very small when it was first brought to Vietnam. After nearly 60 years, it has grown up tall, casting a shadow over the entire temple yard. Many high-ranking Indian leaders, when visiting Vietnam, went to Tran Quoc Pagoda

to pay their respects to Buddha and admire the Bodhi tree. The Bodhi tree at Tran Quoc

Pagoda is a symbol of the long-standing cultural and civilizational connection between India and Vietnam. The birth of Buddhism in Vietnam, spread from India nearly 2 thousand years ago, was an important event, creating a civilized connection between the two societies, creating a continuing philosophical and spiritual bond, strengthening the friendship between India and Vietnam over time.

The Indian Minister of Exter Affairs thanked Foreign Minister Bui Thanh Son, Abbot, monks, nuns, and Buddhists of Tran Quoc Pagoda for welcoming him and delegation. He hoped that Indian-Vietnamese Buddhism would always strengthen exchanges and cooperation for peace and prosperity of the two countries.