

**Embassy of India
Hanoi**

Buddhism in Vietnam and India

Buddhism in Vietnam is believed to have arrived from India as early as the second century A. D. through trade routes and travellers. Indian monks such as Kaundinya, Mahajivaka, Kalacarya and Vinitaruchi find reference in Vietnamese texts and folklore. Buddhism became widely popular during the reign of Ly dynasty (11th century) when it became the official religion. Subsequently, it has remained an important part of the social and cultural life in Vietnam. The arrival of French in Vietnam (and Indo-China) in the 19th century led to the introduction of Catholicism. However, Buddhism remains the most popular religion/belief system in Vietnam with a Communist Party system. As per official figures, 27% of Vietnamese are religious, out of which 53% are Buddhists. However, a much larger proportion of Vietnamese people visit Buddhist pagodas, particularly during festivals.

2. Vietnam Buddhist Sangha (VBS) was established in November 1981, and it emerged as the only official organization representing all Buddhist groups. The Sangha set up a Buddhist academy in Hanoi in November 1981 and another in Ho Chi Minh City in December 1984. His Holiness Dr Thích Tri Quang is the current Supreme Patriarch of Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, who is based in Ho Chi Minh City. Executive Council of Vietnam Buddhist Sangha oversees administrative matters related to Sangha with a President and several Vice-Presidents.

3. Buddhism in Vietnam largely follows the Mahayana tradition with some presence of Vajrayana/Tantric tradition. In the Mekong Delta region in southern Vietnam Theravada school of Buddhism is more common. Vietnamese Buddhism share the belief that liberation takes place with the help of Buddha and Bodhisattvas. Buddhist monks in Vietnam chant sutras and recite Buddha's names, particularly Gautama, Shakyamuni Buddha, Amitābha, Avalokiteswara. Buddhist temples and pagodas are not only places of worship but also serve as centers for spiritual beliefs. Confucian traditions are also visible in the belief system in Vietnam.

4. Vietnamese Buddhist community and Vietnam Buddhist Sangha respect India as the land of Buddha. Tens of thousands of Vietnamese visit Bodhgaya and other Buddhist sites in India every year. The Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi addressed several hundred Buddhist monks and nuns at Quan Su Pagoda in Hanoi during his official visit to Vietnam in September 2016.

5. Rashtrapatiji during his State visit to Vietnam in November 2018 and External Affairs Minister during the visits to Vietnam in August 2018 and October 2023 met with the monks and nuns of VBS. Minister of State for External Affairs Shir Kirti Vardhan Singh MoS(KVS), during his visit to Vietnam in February 2025, visited the historical Dau Pagoda representing old Buddhist connections between the two countries. The General Secretary of the Executive Council of VBS Most Ven. Thich Duc Thien was awarded Padma Shri by the Government of India in January 2018.

6. Vice President of India Shri Venkaiah Naidu participated in the 16th United Nations Day of Vesak celebration held in Ha Nam Province of Vietnam in May 2019. A 40-member Buddhist delegation, led by Supreme Patriarch of Vietnam Buddhist Sangha His Holiness Thich Tri Quang, attended the Global Buddhist Summit organized by the International Buddhist Confederation in New Delhi on 20 April 2023 where he was felicitated by the Prime Minister. Standing Vice President of Vietnam Buddhist Sangha Most Venerable Thich Thanh Nhieu participated in the General Assembly of the International Buddhist Confederation in Delhi in November 2023.

6. Over the years, hundreds of Buddhist monks and nuns have undertaken Buddhist studies in India using ICCR scholarships and otherwise, including at Masters and Doctoral levels. At least 250 Vietnamese nationals are estimated to be engaged in Buddhist studies and related programmes presently at various educational institutions in India. Some Indian gurus and monks visit Buddhist pagodas in Vietnam occasionally.
