

Eye-catching title (short)

STREET LIFE

Temples and pagodas 101

Ever stood outside the gate of a pagoda or temple and wondered how it fit into the daily lives of Vietnamese people?

By Aviva West

Author's name

On average Hà Nội motorcyclists jockey with bicyclists, *phở* and com shops litter the sidewalk, and storefronts hawk everything from cigarettes to fresh produce. Moving amid the exhaust and frenzied activity, suddenly the architecture changes. You find yourself in front of an ornately decorated gate, tigers, dragons and phoenixes wrought into cement painted red, yellow and white with prominent black Chinese characters. Called a pagoda (in Vietnamese, *chùa*) a temple (*dền*), or a communal house (*dinh*), these are the places

of the Vietnamese whose beliefs gather from various ancient philosophies.

For visitors, the sight of a multi-coloured pagoda, temple or communal house, air thick with incense and a bustle of vendors outside, is one of the most intriguing, exotic and beautiful sights.

Common in Asian countries, tourists from Europe and North America can't help but marvel at the intricate designs, colourful patterns and calm air that surround these shrines.

But how do these places of worship fit into daily lives?

Phường, 32, says in her family, going to the pagoda or temple is as common as the market. "They have to go for anniversaries and festivals we have pray for."

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active worship of Buddha, whereas a temple will be dedicated to the region or community's local spirit or hero. A communal house serves as a place to worship the village's patron saint, and for village elders to meet and discuss important matters in the community. In temples and communal houses, Buddhist beliefs blend with the offering of respect to and seeking assistance from spirits, an element of Taoism. Hà Nội has major spirits that guard and



Visitors flock to Tây Hồ Temple on an auspicious day to pray for...

Examples and information, written descriptively (in a form of a story, as it's about people)

protect the city's ancient boundaries (in the south Cao Sơn in Kim

Temple, in the east Long Đỗ Mã Temple, in the north Quán Thánh Temple, the west Linh Lang in Voi Temple). Usually this spirit died where the temple and in every case made tributions to society. In Liên neighbourhood, of Ba Mẫu Lake, a temple

ected to Cao Sơn Đại warrior who protected ern gate from intruders. Our congenial old men as guards and baby-sit-

maintain his temple. A small library sits inside the temple's outer courtyard, and during the week children gather to read and play. Inside the inner courtyard fragrant *hoa đại* (*frangipani*) trees drop tiny yellow blooms. A good thing to note is that it is never okay to take flowers from the grounds of a pagoda or temple. They belong to the spirits, and it's bad luck to remove them. Inside, multiple altars are

largest altar is dedi guardian spirit, in t Son Đại Vương. On ornate pair of boots symbolise his body. is a prayer mat and a large table of offer candy and small bills around an urn for offered over by state Nam's four sacred phoenix, dragon, tur Other than the el playing chess and d handful of locals make their rounds past the altars, stopping to burn incense in quiet meditation.

Just down the street from Kim Liên Temple is the neighbourhood pagoda. Busiest on the first and fifteenth days of the lunar calendar, it is an essential part of people's lives.

"My sister just had her first baby, and we went to the pagoda to pray for its health and success. Births, deaths, marriage, starting a new business, for all these things we go to pray and make offerings," says Hiếu, an 18-year-old high school student. "For me, sometimes the pagoda

that they will marry. Old people can come here and burn incense, pray for luck or health, or even just thank the spirits for something good that's happened to them. In every important event in a person's life, they will come to the pagoda to reflect."

Entering a small temple dedicated to a man who built dyke works in a flood-prone area in the 18th century, an older man speaking impeccable French offers his visitors some tea. Smiling broadly, he explains that this temple is special, as the hero's deeds are written in Chinese characters on a stone block folded in two like a locket. Ushering his guests inside, he pours small cups of green tea and chats amicably about his work as a mathematics professor at a nearby university.

Settled comfortably on mat, the air is still and sound of birds can be above the muted conversation of a city of 3 million, where metre is spoken for and noise is endemic, the *chùa* and *dinh* remain islands of Open to everyone, all yo to do is step through the

A complex web of traditions, rituals and values make it hard to pin down Vietnamese religious beliefs. Phường seems able to sum it up best. "The pagoda or temple is an open place for everyone. A young man can bring his girlfriend here and pray

Mahayana Buddhism (emphasising the cultivation of virtue), practised in the north, arrived from China at the end of the 2nd century AD, but didn't catch on until centuries later. **Theravada Buddhism** (emphasising personal attainment brought to the south at the same time) remains the dominant p Mekong region. **Confucianism**, based on the teaching a Chinese scholar who lived around 500 BC, emphasises duty and virtue attained through education. Confucianism allowing class to advance through a series of examinations. Those at the top became mandarins, and Hà Nội's dedicated to Confucius (which also nation's first university) is Văn Miếu of Literature, one of the city's marks. **Taoism**, founded by Lao-tzu, a Chinese philosopher from the 6th century BC, emphasises contemplation, and urges moderation. Taoism's greatest mark on Việt Nam is the cult of local gods and heroes, whose shrines are housed in temples.

A small section with additional related information to give depth to the article, which is not crucial to the article, but is interesting and informative

Written in columns

Concluding paragraph connected to the introduction

Magazine name and page number

Subheading-explain the topic of the article

Introductory paragraph to introduce the topic in this case, through a descriptive "story" of someone's experience

Pictures and caption underneath to make the article interesting

Quotations and shows lots of people's points of view on the subject

Written in a semi-formal language, with sophisticated vocabulary



Young woman prays and offers incense at Trấn Quốc Temple.