

Basic Temple Etiquette

Shoes worn for outside should be taken off before entering the temple areas.

On entering and leaving the temple area it is considered respectful to turn toward the Buddha altar, bow slightly, with hands held at chest level, as in the prayer position.

Greeting/leave taking: both hands may be held together in a prayer position at chest level, and a slight bow given — this hand position (mudra) shows whole-hearted respect and mindfulness. It is particularly appropriate when interacting with ordained members of the Sangha.

Address the abbot or teacher as '**Thay**' (pronounced Tie) and any of the nuns as '**sister**' as a sign of respect and appreciation of their efforts and devotion to the Sangha.

When in conversation with ordained members' of the Sangha it is considered impolite to interrupt while they are speaking or to talk over them.

At meals: in Vietnamese culture the chopsticks are used to transfer food from a general food source to your bowl or plate; and the spoon is used for individual eating, placing the chopsticks from a communal bowl to one's mouth and back again is considered impolite and is of course unhygienic.

Bowing, and respectful and dignified behaviour not only show thoughtfulness but demonstrate respect for Buddhist beliefs and for Vietnamese culture and sensibilities - they are behaviours consistent with that of an honoured guest - they also help to develop humbleness.

UPEKSA MEDITATION CENTRE

Lot 3A Womma Rd, Penfield South Australia 5721

THIEN (ZEN) MEDITATION PRACTICE (English language group)

For the study and practice of Zen sitting meditation under the guidance of Vietnamese Zen Monk, Thich Thong Chieu.

Held every 2nd and 4th Saturday of the month at 2:00 pm

(All are welcome; there are no obligations or costs of any kind)



On alternate Saturdays a presence is maintained by lay members of the Sangha (Buddhist community) for meditation purposes.

Contact: Wesley Ph. 8182 3735 mobile 0427 699 913 or Michael or Elze Ph. 8250 4409

Buddhism (a brief overview)

Buddhism is not a religion; consequently its practice does not interfere with anyone's religious beliefs. The various statues of Buddha, Patriarchs & Bodhisattvas at Upeksa Village **are not worshipped** - those they represent were human beings, not gods; they are venerated for their qualities of enlightenment and compassion, and in gratitude as trailblazers who introduced or fostered Buddhism in Vietnam. It is these same qualities in us, enlightenment and compassion, that we foster through the practice of Buddhism and Thien Meditation.

The founder of Buddhism (Sakyamuni Buddha, 5th century BCE) discovered the path to enlightenment after experiencing extremes of indulgence and asceticism. He found neither resulted in happiness nor answered the question of why people suffered, or how to end suffering. In desperation he vowed to sit in meditation until he had attained full enlightenment; eventually realising that the answer lay in a '**Middle Way**' between these two extremes. Although Buddhism has many different traditions and methods of practice, their foundations all stem from the Buddha's first sermon which is known as the '**Four Noble Truths**', that:

1. **Humans suffer** (birth, old age, sickness, death, separation, enemies, and disappointments etc.)
2. That **suffering is caused through** greed, hate and illusion.
3. **That suffering ceases** when the causes for suffering are eliminated.
4. That meditation is one path leading to the **end of suffering**.

This path has three qualities:

Morality (*sila*);

Concentration (*Samadhi*);

Wisdom (*panna*)

Therefore the essentials of Buddhist practice are:

Not to do any evil;

To cultivate good;

To purify one's mind;

This is the teaching of all the Buddhas.

Thien (Zen) Meditation:

Upeksa Village was envisioned and brought into fruition through Zen Monk Thich Thong Chieu, with the aid of many dedicated Sangha members and under the auspices of Zen Master Thich Thanh Tu*, who in the 1970s undertook a regeneration of Vietnamese Thien (Zen) method, practice, and instruction. The practice at Upeksa Village is in line with these teachings:

To reduce mental agitation through meditation; and increase inner peace and happiness.

*Zen Master Thich Thanh Tu, is the founder of Thien Truc Lam (Bamboo Forest Sect); which has over 20 monasteries and more than 100 meditation centres world wide.