



# ***The Lotus Blooms in Aotearoa***

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**Celebrating Ten Years of the  
New Zealand Buddhist Council  
2008–2018**

## *Introduction*

This booklet has been written and compiled by members of the Buddhist Council executive committee. We hope that it will be useful to Buddhist organisations. We also expect that this booklet will find itself in the hands of people who are not Buddhist, but would like to learn about Buddhism in this country. With such people in mind, we begin by presenting a brief orientation

to some of the Buddha's main teachings; we then outline the main branches of Buddhism. The remainder of the booklet focuses on New Zealand Buddhist Council's activities and shares stories from Buddhist groups around Aotearoa. We have also compiled a directory of member organisations, current as of October 2018.

## *Our Logo*



Our beautiful logo was created in 2010 by designer David Hone. The image of the green unfurling koru within the shape of a Dhamma/Dharma wheel represents all three vehicles of the Buddhadhamma/dharma present in Aotearoa coming together anew in respect, harmony and mutual support to work together to strengthen the Buddhist community for the benefit of all living beings especially those in Aotearoa New Zealand.

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# *In Gratitude*

Words of welcome from the  
New Zealand Buddhist Council  
Chairperson, Ven. Amala Wrightson

A warm welcome to this commemorative booklet, published on the occasion of the New Zealand Buddhist Council's 10th anniversary and in conjunction with peace walks in Christchurch on 16 November and Auckland on 24 November, 2018. The walks are a way of expressing our gratitude for the Buddhadharma, for being able to practise it freely in New Zealand, and for the many Dhamma/Dharma friendships which have grown out of our activities over the past decade. We are a small volunteer organisation, and there is much more that we could do, but we have made a start on offering Buddhist communities in Aotearoa a way to connect with and support each other as we "hold the lotus to the rock" in a new land.

In the process of gathering material for the booklet we realised that in this format we could not adequately represent the diversity of Buddhism in New Zealand, so we plan to create another publication in future. Thus our editor Sally McAra and others are keen to develop an archive of historical material and to seek funding for a book-length project.

There are so many people who have played a part in creating and sustaining the Council over the years. Many thanks to Joan Buchanan who was a driving force behind the formation of the Council in its early stages. She also worked hard to produce the Trilingual Dhammapada presented to Parliament and to organise the Death and Dying gathering held in Wellington in 2010. Thank you to all those who participated in or supported the working group which created the Council's constitution: Ven. Wimalakitti Melpitiye of Auckland Centre for Buddhist Learning (ACBL), Jude Bennett and Roland Cohen of Shambhala, Ian Gordon of SGI (Soka Gakkai International), the late Dr. Upali Manukulasuriya of the United Sri Lankan Association, Mei Foong of Pu Shien Temple, Wajira Dassanayake, Tom Farmer, Ven. Dunuville Metteyya of Waikato Compassion Meditation Centre (WCMC), and Ven. Tenzin Chosang of WCMC and Trashigomang Buddhist Centre. A number of others took part in the working group

and also stayed on to become founding members of the NZBC Executive Committee: Rukman Wagachchi of Srilankaramaya Temple, Simon Harrison of Mahamudra Centre and Sally McAra of the Auckland Zen Centre, all of whom continue to serve on the Committee and contribute in major ways to the Council's functioning.

Other current Committee members joined soon after: Ecie Hursthouse of Amitabha Hospice, Ven. Gyaltan Wangmo of Dorje Chang Institute (DCI), Peter Small of Dhargyey Buddhist Centre and Gamini Settinayake of Dhamma Gavesi Meditation Centre (DGMCC). Benita Ameratunga (former Chair of the Auckland Theravada Buddhist Association [ATBA]) also joined at this time and was a part of the committee until 2012. She was followed by other ATBA members, brothers Chinthakha and Dhanika Samaranayake. Chris Killey of DCI, Chris Krageloh of the Won Buddhist Centre for Mindfulness and Wellbeing, and several Triratna Order members have served for shorter periods on the committee. Fern McRae (Auckland Zen Centre and Diamond Sangha) joined in 2014 and continues to be a very hard-working member of the organisation. Yong Jun Kim (Nam Kook Temple) joined a year ago, bringing new perspectives, and our newest member is Kenny Tsang of Pu Shien Temple. A list of our 2018–19 Executive Committee is provided at the end of this booklet.

Many thanks also to Robin de Haan, Robert Hunt and Pimmy Takdhada for much IT help and website development at different stages of the Council's unfolding. Pimmy and Robert have also played a big part in nurturing connections between Buddhist communities in Christchurch post-earthquake, and continue to do so with Jane Ross of the Diamond Sangha. Special thanks also to Rev. Jiko McIntosh of Zen Peacemakers Aotearoa and Derek LeDayn of the Diamond Sangha who with Gamini Settinayake are working on developing connections between groups in Wellington, Clare Woodham of Phuntsok Choeling is doing the same in Napier, and Peter Small in Dunedin.



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In Buddhism the lotus symbolises purity and awakening. Though it is rooted in the mud, its flowers rise up on long stalks, above the muddy waters of craving and delusion. It is also symbolic of letting go, as the leaves tip and empty themselves of any drops of water that have

gathered in them. The Twentieth Century Zen master Sokei-an once said, late in his American teaching career, that it could take several hundred years for Buddhism to truly flourish in the West. He claimed that the process was like “holding a lotus to a rock, waiting for it to take root”

Thanks to all the organisations and individuals around the country who support the Council’s work

We welcome suggestions on the direction of the Council over the next ten years. As well as continuing with our current projects (see below), I’d like us to eventually engage a part-time administrator so we can communicate more effectively. I would also like to see greater diversity of traditions, age groups and ethnicities on the committee and more volunteers doing the Council’s work. This is an ongoing challenge which relies on the slow process of developing relationships one at a time.

Among the issues we hear about from members is the perennial one of navigating the immigration rules when bringing Sangha

leaders to New Zealand; another is keeping up with changes to the law in other areas; and a third, keeping young people engaged in the Dhamma/Dharma as they become assimilated into New Zealand society. These are all areas where exchanging notes and working together can be helpful.

My hope is that the Buddhist Council will continue to facilitate cooperation and friendship among us, and engage respectfully with people of other faiths and no faith, so that Buddhism thrives in New Zealand and contributes all that it has to offer towards the benefit of all beings.

Nine Bows,  
Amala Wrightson



# What Did the Buddha Teach?

All states of being are determined by the heart.  
It is the heart that leads the way.  
Just as the wheel of the oxcart follows  
the hoof print of the animal that draws it,  
so suffering will surely follow  
when we speak or act impulsively  
from an impure heart.

All states of being are determined by the heart.  
It is the heart that leads the way.  
As surely as our shadow never leaves us,  
so well-being will follow  
when we speak or act  
with a pure heart.

—The Buddha, *Dhammapada*

The Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path are core teachings of Buddhism, while the cultivation of wisdom and compassion are part of many Buddhist meditation practices.

## The Four Noble Truths

The First Noble (or ennobling) Truth is that existence is characterized by suffering and does not bring satisfaction. Physical pain, including sickness, ageing and dying are an inevitable part of our suffering. We also endure psychological suffering such as loneliness, frustrations, fears, and disappointments. Even experiences that we usually label “happiness” such as sense pleasures, are fragile, short term, and can easily change to being painful. This first noble truth is a realistic assessment of our condition, not a pessimistic one. A pessimistic view expects things to always be bad. Instead, Buddhism identifies the suffering and then explains how it can be overcome.

The Second Noble Truth is that suffering has an origin. Out of these delusions of ignorance, craving and aversion we create a multitude of unskillful karmic actions with our body, speech and mind. These negative actions result in suffering and painful rebirths in the future.

The Third Noble Truth is that of the cessation of suffering. We discover that all this pointless

craving and its associated suffering can be truly relinquished. By eliminating the three root delusions of attachment, anger and ignorance from our minds, the causes of our suffering, we are able to eliminate suffering forever. This cessation of suffering is liberation. We then have more inner resources to help others.

The Fourth Noble Truth is that there is a path leading to the end of suffering. The path has eight aspects: right (or more accurately, complete or wholesome) understanding, aspiration, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness and concentration.

## What Is the Noble Eightfold Path?

In summary, these eight aspects fall into three categories. The first is a foundation of ethical behaviour (what we say and do and how we earn a living). The second is to cultivate the heart/mind through training it to be stable, energetic and fully aware of thoughts and actions. And the third category, arising out of this stabilised mind, is the development of a cutting edge of wisdom (right understanding and right aspiration) which informs and guides us in our efforts.

## What Are the Five Precepts?

There are numerous sets of precepts within Buddhism, but all traditions agree on these five: not to take the life of a sentient being, not to take anything not freely given, to abstain from sexual misconduct, to refrain from untrue speech, and to avoid intoxication, that is, losing mindfulness.

## What Is Karma?

Karma is the law that every cause has an effect; our actions have consequences. Positive actions bring positive, happy results, and harmful, negative actions bring suffering results. As His Holiness the Dalai Lama explains,

pleasure and pain, happiness and dissatisfaction are the effects of one's own good and bad, skilled and unskilled actions. Skillful and unskillful (karmic) actions are not external phenomena. They belong essentially to the realm of mind. Making strenuous efforts to build up every possible kind of skillful karma and to put every vestige of unskillful karma away from us is the path to creating happiness and avoiding the creation of pain and suffering. For it is inevitable that a happy result follows a skillful cause and that the consequence of building up unskillful causes is suffering. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that we strive by every possible means to increase the quality and quantity of skillful actions and to make a corresponding paring down of our unskillful actions.

Even as a mother protects with her life  
Her child, her only child,  
So with a boundless heart  
Should one cherish all living beings;  
Radiating kindness over the entire  
world.

—The Buddha,  
*Karaniya Metta Sutta*

The development of these qualities, which are at the heart of the Buddhist path, takes ethical sensitivity, discernment in lifestyle, and diligent practice of awareness and meditative concentration.

## Wisdom and Compassion

Buddhism teaches that wisdom should be developed in tandem with compassion. Wisdom entails a clear understanding of reality, and without it, our heartfelt response to suffering may be misguided, while someone with intellectual knowledge but no compassion will lack emotional connection with others. Just as a bird needs two wings to fly in the sky, we too need both wisdom and compassion to achieve our highest potential.

The highest wisdom is seeing that all phenomena we encounter, including our perception of ourselves, are in flux, and empty of an abiding self. True wisdom is not simply believing this, but experiencing it directly for oneself. Wisdom implies an open and clear mind that is able to respond without bias. With Buddhist practice we can cultivate beneficial qualities such as the calm that supports wisdom as well as the metta (loving-kindness) with which compassion arises. Being intimately interconnected with other beings, we are moved to alleviate their suffering in whatever ways we can. By developing understanding of our motivations and intentions we learn to purify them and cherish other beings wisely. The Buddha's words describe the radiance and depth of true loving-kindness to which we can aspire:

## Three Vehicles

More than two and a half millennia have passed since Shakyamuni Buddha came to awakening under the Bodhi Tree in Northern India/Nepal, and in that time his teachings have taken many forms as they spread across the globe.

The southern transmission, based on the Pali Suttas, is predominantly practised in southern regions of Asia (Sri Lanka, Burma/Myanmar, Cambodia, Thailand, Laos). This transmission, Theravada, "School of the Elders", preserves traditions of practice and training that go all the way back to the time of the Buddha. It teaches that suffering is resolved through freeing the mind from passion, aversion and delusion. Once these cease and even the subtlest clinging and urge to become have been relinquished, the indescribable freedom of Nibbana (Nirvana) is realised.

The Mahayana or "Great Vehicle" travelled north and is still found in today's China, Korea, Vietnam, Japan, Tibet and Bhutan. In Mahayana Buddhism emphasis is placed on the bodhisattva ideal, where entry into final Nirvana is delayed in order to stay

in this world of suffering to liberate sentient beings. This teaching comes from the later sutras, written in Sanskrit around 100 CE. The following quote exemplifies this ideal:

For as long as space endures  
And for as long as living beings remain,  
Until then may I, too, abide  
To dispel the misery of the world.  
— Shantideva, *A Guide to the  
Bodhisattva's Way of Life*

The northern transmission also includes “secret” or esoteric teachings, and these are known nowadays as “Vajrayana”, the Diamond Vehicle.

Some organisations maintain a strong emphasis on practising a received tradition with monks as the main authority. Some Buddhist teachers may combine teachings from several lineages. Some approaches combine elements from Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana. Some practitioners draw on just a few aspects of the Buddhadharma, including various approaches that involve practices like mindfulness and loving-kindness meditation while eschewing religious elements such as holy objects, ceremonies and chanting. Forms of religious leadership and ordination practices also vary widely from community to community.

Not all Buddhists meditate. While mindfulness and other kinds of meditation are important to many Buddhists, others place more emphasis on listening to the teachings or participating in rituals and practicing dana (generosity). Some have another core practice instead of meditation, for example Pure Land traditions where the main practice is chanting.

In the NZBC Constitution we have the following statement:

[We] recognise that there are differences in regard to the life of Buddhist monks, nuns and other clergy, popular Buddhist beliefs and practices, rites and ceremonies, customs and habits, and to affirm that these forms arise in response to differing causes and conditions in different countries and environments, and are not to be confused with the essential teachings of the Buddha on the arising and extinguishing of suffering.

Bearing this in mind we are able to work together respectfully, accepting the great diversity that is to be found within Buddhism in Aotearoa and recognising that each tradition has something unique to offer.

Across all lineages and vehicles the fundamental task is the same – to subdue self-clinging and to purify the mind. All Buddhists take refuge in the Three Jewels: in Buddha (the historical Buddha Shakyamuni, and also our potential to awaken); in Dhamma/Dharma (the Buddha Shakyamuni's teachings as found in the Suttas and Sutras, and the fundamental laws of the universe), and in Sangha (definitions vary; one is the fourfold community of male and female monks and male and female laypeople). All traditions also share the five precepts, as the bare minimum commitments needed for a life of non-harm.

The spreading of Buddhism beyond its historical areas of influence has led to the meeting of traditions and teachings which have sometimes been isolated from each other for many many centuries. The Internet also now provides a cornucopia of teachings from around the globe. Because of these convergences it is possible now to receive inspiration from and share insights with practitioners from a wide range of lineages. This is bound to have an effect on how Buddhism unfolds in the future. It is in part to encourage the friendship of diverse Buddhist traditions here in Aotearoa that the New Zealand Buddhist Council exists.



# *The Origins and Activities of the NZBC*

In 2007, Buddhists representing fourteen different organisations gathered in the Leys Institute hall in Ponsonby, Auckland, to discuss the creation of a new umbrella organisation to represent Buddhist communities around Aotearoa New Zealand. A working group was formed to develop a constitution, and the following year the New Zealand Buddhist Council was registered as an incorporated society, and it is this milestone that we have noted in celebrating our 10th anniversary.

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## *Letter from 2007 that led to founding NZBC*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Dharma,

Here in Auckland for quite some time there has been no organisation where Buddhist groups could come together to address issues of concern to all of us, though we understand that such collective organisations are active in some other parts of the country.

A group of us has been talking about developing a structure that will enable us to work together effectively, starting locally but eventually linking up with other similar groups elsewhere.

In Auckland there have been other attempts to work together in the past which have had mixed success. However at this time there are clear and compelling reasons to try again. The primary purpose of a council would be to work together on issues of mutual concern and care for the wider community. Here are a couple of examples:

**1. The government's current review of immigration policy.** As you may be aware, a number of Buddhist communities have had difficulty in getting permanent residency for their leaders and teachers under the current law. Sadly, Buddhist nuns and monks from other countries often only get temporary permission to stay, and consequently they, and their communities, are disadvantaged. It is our responsibility to make sure that policy-makers understand our needs, and we can communicate most effectively if we join together to support each other.

**2. The move to introduce education about all religions into schools.** If we do not participate in the discussions about this, there is a risk that Buddhism could be misrepresented.

A further purpose of a council would be to encourage interaction with and goodwill towards other faith communities. Working together will allow us to participate in efforts to enhance religious tolerance and understanding in New Zealand as a whole.

Can we come together in recognition of our common needs and aspirations while at the same time honouring our many different languages, cultures, lineages, and styles of practice? This is our sincere intention.

A collective body will allow us to offer to the wider community unique perspectives from our understanding of the Dharma. We may also learn from other traditions in ways that will enrich our own communities.

We live in a time when many of the world's problems (such as global warming and wars) can only be solved collectively; working together at all levels is therefore urgent and essential.

Please come along to the meeting if you are interested in this process. We will be seeking involvement from people who are willing to join a working group with the task of creating good foundations for a Buddhist Council.

May all beings attain Buddhahood,  
Amala Wrightson

On the 6th of December 2008, at the Sixth Global Conference on Buddhism (held at The University of Auckland) the New Zealand Buddhist Council was formally launched. Since that time we have grown our membership to over thirty organisations, from Kerikeri to Invercargill.

Our chairperson, Ven. Amala Wrightson, has participated on behalf of the Buddhist Council in international conventions such as the Asia-Pacific Interfaith Dialogues in Waitangi and Phnom Penh and an International Buddhist Confederation meeting in New Delhi. She is also a trustee of the Religious Diversity Centre (Aotearoa), launched in March 2016.

Over the ten years, we have:

Among our long-term projects, we:

- presented a trilingual version of the Dhammapada to Parliament's Clerk of the House (in English, Chinese and Pali) that can be used by members who practise Buddhism and who wish to take their oath of allegiance using a Buddhist text,
- distributed over 700 donated Dhamma/Dharma books to 18 New Zealand prisons,
- facilitated Dhamma/Dharma and meditation classes in conjunction with Pu Shien Temple at the new Wiri prison, mainly to Chinese inmates,
- facilitated gatherings in Wellington ("Buddhist Perspectives on Caring for the Dying and Deceased"), Christchurch (a post-earthquake support network), and Auckland (Mindfulness for Teachers and Parents) and coordinated information stalls at H.H. Dalai Lama's public talks,
- worked with the Religious Communities Leadership Forum, an informal alliance of religious leaders set up to advocate for more understanding of the needs of religious groups, for changes to residency requirements for religious workers.
- respond to inquiries from members for assistance (e.g. on legal matters), the general public, governmental and non-governmental bodies,
- run a training program for Buddhist chaplains in conjunction with Amitabha Hospice and supervise the ongoing skill development of our Apprentice Buddhist Chaplains,
- collaborate in offering other classes and workshops which bring Buddhist leaders from different communities together, such as English language classes, First Aid workshops and Dhamma/Dharma school training,
- engage with government on a number of issues, including immigration, and work with other entities such as the Human Rights Commission,
- inform our members about issues of interest to Buddhist communities (e.g., rates relief for properties used for religious purposes, immigration requirements for religious workers such as monks and nuns, new charities reporting standards, new health and safety laws),
- provide speakers and/or participants for interfaith activities,
- write about our activities and other matters of interest to Buddhist organisations, which we send as email updates to many Buddhist groups and individuals around New Zealand.

The New Zealand Buddhist Council website provides information that can be helpful for Buddhist temples and centres.

In particular, our website provides:

- Advice on Immigration for Religious Workers
- Advice on reporting standards for not-for-profit organisations
- News updates

Please visit [www.buddhistcouncil.org.nz/resources/](http://www.buddhistcouncil.org.nz/resources/)

The Buddhist Council welcomes new applications for membership, from organisations and individuals. Please visit our membership page ([www.buddhistcouncil.org.nz/membership/](http://www.buddhistcouncil.org.nz/membership/)) to learn more.

# *Dhammapada Presented to Parliament*

In July 2010 a group of monks, nuns and other representatives of Buddhist communities around the country presented a copy of the Dhammapada to the New Zealand Parliament. Buddhist monks and nuns included: Ajahn Tiradhammo, Abbot of Bodhinyanarama monastery in Stokes Valley; Tibetan monk Geshe Wangchen of Dorje Chang Institute; and Bhante Jinalankara, Abbot at Dhamma Gavesi Meditation Centre. The special edition of the Dhammapada was presented by Ven.

Man Wang, who oversaw the construction of Fo Guang Shan's temple in Auckland. The English translation of the text was by Ajahn Munindo, a Buddhist monk born in Te Awamutu (the first two verses are quoted above in 'What Did the Buddha Teach?'). Practising Buddhist Parliamentarians at the time included Labour MP Darien Fenton. The Dhammapada may be used by Members of Parliament who practise Buddhism and who wish to take their oath of allegiance using a Buddhist text.

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Left: Ven. Man Wang hands over the Dhammapada

Below: Mary Harris, Clerk of the House, with representatives of New Zealand's Buddhist community on the occasion of the presentation of the Dhammapada to Parliament in July 2010





# ***Buddhist Perspectives on Caring for the Dying and Deceased***

All that is subject  
to arising is  
subject to ceasing.

On the 13th of July, 2010, Bodhinyanarama Monastery in Stokes Valley hosted a historic event, a day-long gathering organised by the New Zealand Buddhist Council to explore approaches to death and dying in different Buddhist traditions. Close to a hundred people participated, including ordained Sangha from all three vehicles (Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana), health professionals from hospices, hospital chaplaincy services and the Coroner's office, members of the Council and lay Buddhists from the Wellington area. The gathering was the first of its kind to be organised by the Buddhist Council, a national association of Buddhist organisations whose aims include sharing information and building networks among Buddhist communities, working together on common concerns and problems, and representing Buddhist perspectives in New Zealand public policy. The meeting was held in the monastery's graceful main sala and began with a chanting service which included Pali, Tibetan and Chinese prayers and sutras. The meeting was chaired by Joan Buchanan, who introduced presentations by five Buddhist teachers (in order of appearance): Ven. Amala Wrightson, Sensei, founding teacher of the Auckland Zen Centre, Onehunga (Kapleau-Yasutani lineage of Integral Zen); Ajahn Chandako, Abbot of Vimutti Buddhist Monastery, Bombay (Thai forest tradition of Ajahn Chah); Bhante Jinalankara, founding teacher of Dhamma Gavesi Meditation Centre, Tawa (Sri Kalyani Yogasrama Samstha forest tradition of Sri Lanka); Geshe Thupten Wangchen, resident teacher of Dorje Chang Institute, Avondale (FPMT – Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition led by Lama Zopa Rinpoche); and Master Chang Lin, Abbess of Pu Shien Temple, Ellerslie (Mahayana, Pure Land School).

In addition, Ecie Hursthouse, a registered nurse and founder of Amitabha Hospice (FPMT), the only Buddhist hospice service in New Zealand, met for an hour with the health professionals in the group. The day ended with a lively panel discussion with the participation of all the speakers and a dedication of merits.

While each speaker offered unique perspectives and practices from his or her own tradition and culture, there was strong unanimity on the spiritual value of death and its deep significance for our lives right now. The teachers all emphasised that every one of us is dying, and that it is with a clear personal acceptance of this fact that we are best able to help people in the latter stages of the dying process.

Amala-sensei used the image of a candle to illustrate the intimate relationship between our living and our dying – the flame that gives light is the life of the candle and also its death. If we wake up to the fact that we are being born and dying in each moment then our physical death will not be a problem. Even short of this understanding, death is an opportunity to shed what is non-essential. When working with the dying there comes a point when nothing more can be done to “cure” the person or prevent death; at that point attention can be focused on supporting the person's



Ven. Amala Wrightson, Sensei

leave-taking. The key is being present and creating a quiet, calm, loving and non-judgmental environment. In the Zen tradition, after someone dies, chanting services are offered each day for seven days and each week on the death day up to the 49th day. Their purpose is to help guide the deceased – though there is no eternal soul, there is a momentum, or flow of energy, from one life to the next.

Ajahn Chandako emphasised the non-discriminatory nature of death – it happens to all living beings, human or animal, rich or poor, high or low. One of the great purposes of life is preparation for death. When we really take in the fact of death our appreciation of life becomes acute and we can clearly distinguish what is important and what is petty. Cremation grounds are often a part of Thai monasteries, and living next to one brings home the fact of death very vividly. Familiarity with the intimate details of death is a valued part of bhikkhus' training in Thailand, and the monks sometimes make "field trips" to the local mortuary to contemplate the corpses there. Another traditional contemplation is to reflect on our hair, nails and skin, the visible parts of our body – all of which are dead! We are in a sense walking corpses. It is through mindfulness of death that we can develop a real urgency in our Dhamma practice. We can reflect that each breath could be our last – to breathe out and not breathe in again is to die.

In the afternoon, after a delicious lunch offered by a team of Sri Lankan, Burmese and Chinese temple supporters, Ecie Hursthouse explored practical ways to support the dying process. The organisation she founded in 1995, Amitabha Hospice, offers free practical home help and companionship for the elderly and the incurably ill throughout the greater Auckland area, based on the Buddhist principles of love, integrity, equanimity and service. All its caregivers are volunteers and go through an extensive training programme.

Ecie offered suggestions for working with the dying, including the following: Listen, and acknowledge what is shared without judgment. Focus on the positive and encourage rejoicing, which lifts the mind and increases one's spiritual strength (acknowledge "regrets" as lessons learned but discourage guilt which is destructive). Support letting go and releasing everything, even





Top: Bhante Jinalankara  
Bottom: Geshe Thubten Wangchen

“unfinished business”. Confirm faith, devotion and confidence (remind them of their spiritual teachers, mentors or benefactors; help them recall their personal prayer or meditation practices; put uplifting images in their view; put their meditation beads in their hands). Encourage universal love and the altruistic aspiration to serve others and continue one’s spiritual practice through death, the intermediate state and all future lives.

Bhante Jinalankara also emphasised that death comes with birth. In Sri Lanka dying people will prepare themselves for death by offering dana. Sometimes this can happen two or three times as the person may get better after making the offering. The point of the dana is to create positive actions and states of mind at the time of death. Images, chanting by monks and sutta readings can also help do this. Sometimes the dying person prepares a kind of journal while still well enough to do so that lists his or her meritorious deeds. Then at the time of death the journal is read back to the person to remind him or her of these positive actions. Four kinds of causes affect one’s rebirth: (1) serious karma – weighty actions, positive or negative, or if there are none of these, (2) habitual karma – our habits of body, speech and mind, (3) proximate karma – what one is doing close to the time of death, and (4) cumulative karma – the sum total of one’s casual and unpremeditated actions. So, all these kinds of actions warrant our care and attention. After death the body is kept undisturbed for several days and the whole village will come to pay their respects and support the family. Dana is offered seven days after the death and also after three months and after one year.

Geshe Wangchen emphasised that we each have the potential to realise Buddhahood, and doing so is in our hands. The best preparation for death is to develop our mind, which also means to develop our heart. A good death depends on a good heart. If we spend a lot of time thinking about our own problems, we create more problems. If we let go of negative states and put our energy into helping others, we will have fewer problems. Therefore we must develop our altruism and compassion. If we have a strong mind then the pains and trials of the dying process will not bother us. It is like a boxer who is so intent on the fight that he does not feel all the cuts and bruises on his face. All his attention is on his opponent. We train our mind now so that, when death comes, it is strong. Different stages in the dying process, as the elements dissolve, can be observed, though these can sometimes be obscured by medical interventions. After death there are practices to guide the consciousness through the intermediate realm, but the most important thing is to develop a strong mind and a loving heart in this present life.



Master Chang Lin with her interpreter,  
Ping Ching Mabbett

Master Chang Lin spoke of her twenty years in New Zealand during which time she has attended four hundred deaths, including accident victims and suicides. In the Pure Land School it is traditional to chant for eight hours following a death, in order to guide the deceased towards rebirth in Amitabha's Western Paradise. The dying process continues during this period after the clinical death, and keeping the body undisturbed during this time is preferable. During the panel discussion Master Chang Lin brought up the question of whether a very sick person is to use morphine for pain relief. Amongst the Buddhist Sangha and lay people she has encountered, many have chosen not to use or to stop taking morphine. Morphine can make the mind very dull and uncontrolled, so that a person is unable to concentrate effectively to chant the Buddha's name and to meditate. Sometimes the drugged mind also leads to wrong views. Opinions in the group on whether or not to use morphine varied widely. It was pointed out that the ability to handle pain at the time of death depends very much on the mind state of the patient. It is advisable that Buddhist practitioners leave clear instructions with family members and caregivers about their wishes in regard to treatment at the time of death, as well as instructions for arrangements after death.

The gathering was a day of learning for everyone present, and participants left with greater understanding of different Buddhist approaches to death, new contacts within and beyond their own communities, and a refreshed appreciation of the core teachings of impermanence, suffering and the way beyond suffering. There is also work to do. A greater Buddhist presence in our hospitals and hospices is needed, and how to develop Buddhist chaplaincy services across the country is a discussion that needs to happen.

*Adapted from an article published as "REFLECTION: Buddhist Perspectives: Caring for the Dying and Deceased" in INSIGHT Aotearoa: A newsletter for New Zealand's Insight meditation practitioners and communities, August 4th, 2010.*

*Following the July 2010 gathering, Ecie Hursthouse worked with members of the New Zealand Buddhist Council to create a Buddhist Chaplaincy training programme. The first training took place in 2013 as a joint programme between Amitabha Hospice Service and the Council. See the articles about Amitabha Hospice and the Buddhist Chaplaincy programme, below.*

*Photographer: Euan Krogh.*

# ***Buddhist Chaplaincy***

## **Amitabha Hospice Service**

Since 1996 Amitabha Hospice Service (AHS) has offered free practical home help and compassionate companionship for the elderly and the incurably ill of any age and their families, with specially trained and supervised Caregivers throughout the greater Auckland area. Based on the Buddhist principles of love, integrity, equanimity and service, each family member and staff member is accorded equal respect and compassion with regard to their individuality and uniqueness as members of the larger universal human family. Amitabha Hospice Service is dedicated to developing and maintaining the highest quality of compassionate care in co-operation with other professional community services.

Amitabha Hospice Service has trained over a thousand volunteers and serves families in all suburbs in Auckland. In 2014, Amitabha Hospice started a Tuesday morning “day-stay” called “Cuppa and Company” which offers Reiki, games, music and lively conversation. In 2015, Amitabha Hospice started their second day-stay programme on Friday mornings offering art therapy. Amitabha Hospice also provides free private counseling to those with a terminal illness and the bereaved.



First group of trained  
Amitabha Hospice  
volunteers, 1995



## Buddhist Chaplaincy Training

Buddhist practitioners value sickness, old age, death and other transitions as opportunities for spiritual insight and growth. Buddhist chaplains are trained to accompany people through such difficult times, working in hospitals, hospices, schools, prisons and other facilities. By supporting a person suffering in a difficult situation with skilful inquiry, guided meditation and/or prayers, the total pain (physical, mental, emotional and spiritual) a person experiences is skillfully and compassionately addressed. With the help of a spiritual friend the person is better able to find the inner resources to deal with what is happening to him or her, moment by moment.

In 2013 the New Zealand Buddhist Council and Amitabha Hospice started training well-vetted applicants to become Buddhist Chaplains with a Level 1 course. As of 2018 over 30 trainees have completed the Level 1 workshop. Our “Apprentice Buddhist Chaplains” (or ABCs) can facilitate mental comfort by helping the person use their own beliefs to investigate their concerns and the person’s own Buddhist practices to gain strength and resilience in the midst of a crisis. At this stage, they are trained for medical situations in hospitals or hospices or with family and friends. Chaplaincy for schools, universities and prisons will be covered in the next levels. Currently an Apprentice Buddhist Chaplain may be contacted by hospitals, hospices, nursing homes or privately, with the assurance that they will endeavor to address an individual’s own spiritual needs while fostering a peaceful environment and maintaining strict confidentiality.

The training programme is organised by Ecie Hursthouse, Managing Director of Amitabha Hospice and an Executive Member of NZBC. Ven. Amala-sensei and Ecie are the current Supervisors of the ABCs. It is hoped that there will eventually be Buddhist Chaplains in every hospital and hospice in New Zealand. There are some Christian Chaplains interested to see this happen but there is a lot of work to be done before that is a reality. Some of the ABCs are working with hospices around the country now.

Here is what Jane of the Christchurch ABCs wrote:

The Christchurch ABCs have been meeting about once a month for nearly a year to share what’s going on for us as we do the chaplaincy work and to talk about aspects of chaplaincy. We have had a guest speaker talk to us about suicide prevention. And we have worked through the Advance Care Planning booklet that is being adopted by DHBs around the country. We have also shared information about volunteering with the Nurse Maude Hospice spiritual volunteering programme.

Being part of an ABC support group has been very rewarding and friendships are growing. Since we come from three of the main schools of Buddhism (Theravada, Tibetan and Zen) we also share information about our own practice traditions, teachers, and teachings and this has been another enriching aspect of our small community.

New Zealand is very fortunate to have such experienced men and women as Apprentice Buddhist Chaplains, many with counselling training and years of Buddhist study and practice. All very beneficial for sentient beings in so many ways!

## *English Classes for Monks and Nuns*



In 2017, over 20 monks and nuns from diverse Buddhist communities in the Auckland region enjoyed the opportunity to improve their English and meet each other. The monastics were from around the Auckland region and connected with immigrant communities from places such as Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam and Taiwan. Rukman Wagachchi from the Buddhist Council organised the classes, which were held at the Srilankaramaya temple in Otahuhu.

The Level One English class was free for learners with Permanent Residency. Classes ran two days a week, for five

months. Tutors from the Manukau Institute of Technology taught the course.

One of the great benefits of the course was that monks and nuns in temples and small centres around New Zealand, who are often quite isolated, really appreciated the opportunity to make friends with each other while learning day-to-day English.

Rukman reports that they had 29 participants “and of course the teaching styles gave due respect to Sangha. We are so happy about the space created to build unity among Sangha and connections we and they all made.”



# Mindfulness Summer Camps for Young People



At the NZBC's Annual General Meeting in 2018, held at Soka Gakkai's Auckland premises, three girls who participated in the Summer Mindfulness Camp spoke about their experience. Kasuni is shown in the



first photo. The second photo shows Amala-sensei presenting gifts to the three girls, Dihini Thantrige, Kasuni Thawalampola and Binuri Marasinghe. Photographer: Angie Ong

Sri Lankan Buddhist communities around New Zealand are running mindfulness training events such as residential retreats for children, bringing a new generation into contact with the Buddha Dhamma. Rukman Wagachchi reports on a two-day Mindfulness Camp (Sati Pasala) that was held in early 2018, for 35 school children at Bella Rakha Retreat Centre in Oratia, Auckland:

“The young people ranged from eight to seventeen years of age. We organised them into four groups, with five facilitators. Activities included mindful sitting and mindful walking meditation, as well as games and drawing.

“They were shown short videos about mindful activities (eating, teeth-brushing, showering). The four groups each made their own salad for the lunch and shared with other participants. Children enjoyed the forest walk and being in the nature, listening to the sounds of the flowing stream and singing birds. They loved the experience of being silent observing nature.

“We also had several mindfulness Sunday schools in two temples. This was a half-day programme including mindful sitting and walking and several mindful games.”

# *Interfaith Activities*



## **National Meeting of Religious Leaders Held in Auckland**

The Religious Diversity Centre organised and hosted the inaugural meeting of national religious leaders representing the wide variety of faith and belief groups throughout Aotearoa on 15 November 2017 at the Religious Diversity Centre in Auckland. Leaders from Christian denominations, as well as representatives from Hindu, Sikh, Muslim, Bahá'í, Buddhist, Jewish, Latter Day Saints and the Rātana Church communities were present.

The group confirmed their commitment to respecting religious diversity in New Zealand, ensuring that people of all faiths can live in harmony. In

addition, the leaders shared the following concerns which need urgent action:

- The growing levels of inequality and poverty in New Zealand, which can only be solved through addressing structural issues.
- The need for increased levels of training for teachers to feel confident in bringing religious diversity education into classrooms. By improving understanding of each other's commonalities and differences, we will be able to increase religious harmony in New Zealand.
- The importance of recognising the climate crisis as an urgent issue, which impacts the well-being of everyone on the planet.

The leaders are already working within their own communities to implement solutions to these issues but are calling for wider collective action and advocacy. Lasting solutions require action from central and local government as well as from civil society.

The religious leaders committed to working together to provide leadership at a time of global turmoil and look forward to meeting regularly to achieve these and other aims.

Source: <http://www.rdc.org.nz/events/recent-events/>

## ***Warning: Beware of Scammers Posing As Monks***

Occasionally the Buddhist Council receives stories about men who dress as monks and solicit donations in an aggressive manner. In 2014 the *New Zealand Herald* newspaper reported that at least one man was active in Auckland. In 2018, we heard from someone who organised a conference and received requests for visa assistance from people who said that they were monks wanting to visit New Zealand to attend the conference. However, they turned out to be false claims.

The NZBC's chair, Ven. Amala Wrightson, says that such scammers have nothing to do with the Buddhadharma. However, the public needs to understand that temples do rely on the generosity of devotees to keep their doors open:

“Receiving offerings from supporters is an ancient and beautiful part of Buddhist monasticism. Traditionally a monk or nun begging for alms ... will gratefully receive whatever is given and not demand more. Our advice is that if you are approached, don't hesitate to ask for information about the temple the person claims to be collecting for. Most Buddhist

temples in New Zealand are registered charities and their name, address and Charities Commission number should be on any material they give out. Don't give unless you feel comfortable doing so.”

Simon Harrison, who serves on the NZBC and the Dalai Lama Visit Trust, says that he has sometimes received requests from applicants claiming to be Buddhist monks and wishing to attend the Dalai Lama's teachings in New Zealand.

“While I acknowledged these applications, I ensured that my responses did not constitute an invitation, and asked that they establish any visa application through their monastery. None of these applications eventuated. The NZBC cannot act as an authority to verify the credentials of an overseas monk or nun. We can however help to identify an appropriate sponsoring organisation where we have good reason to believe that the credentials are valid. We do have to be careful, so as not to compromise the opportunity for genuine dhamma/dharma teachers being able to come here.”



## *Compassion and Stability in the Face of a Crisis*

When faced with a calamity for a whole community, wise compassion and equanimous attention to the evolving situation are qualities much needed. Aotearoa is one part of the world where the land can shake violently and the destructive earthquakes in Christchurch in 2011 suddenly meant that every individual had to reset their priorities and attend to unexpected challenges. The inconstancy of nature and the fragility of life became very vivid. At the time many places of faith reached out to share precincts that were still standing, putting aside differences in belief and practice. In the Buddhist community of Christchurch, temples such as Fo Guang Shan and Wat Buddha Samakhee responded promptly to the community with significant steps of practical compassion for the community. While many disruptions and losses appear first as obstacles to continuity

of teaching and formal practice, the traumatic sequence of events in Christchurch allowed those ready to learn to more fully comprehend the urgency of practice. While the aftershocks continued, His Holiness the Dalai Lama visited the city to offer solace and insight. With inspiration from NZBC and support and guidance from several individuals and temples, Robert Hunt and Pimmy Takdhada facilitated the Christchurch Buddhist Network to bring the local Buddhist community into more mutually supportive contact. Inter-tradition meetings were held within several temples and useful events coordinated. With the depth of friendships forged in those times of adversity, Buddhist practitioners in Christchurch do not have to look far to recognise how the universality of suffering links us all.

The Christchurch Buddhist Network meeting in the Uposatha at Wat Buddha Samakhee Christchurch in June 2012. Venerables appearing the photo: Phramaha Mani Ovattatto, Abbot of Wat Buddha Samakhee; Bhante Makuldeniye Somarathana of Samadhi Vihara; Amnyi Trulchung Rinpoche of Rigdzin Trust; Geshe Nyima Dorjee of Phen Day Dhargyey Ling; Phramaha Ariyameti Metiyo of Wat Buddha Samakhee. At the left (side view) Bonkag Sunim, then Abbess of Myosimsa Korean Buddhist Temple. Photographer: the much-loved late Ani Sanjay



## Overview of Buddhism and Buddhist groups

The historical record on immigration to New Zealand in the nineteenth century suggests a few people from Asian Buddhist countries arrived in New Zealand, but there is only minimal documentation of organised Buddhist activity. From the late nineteenth century, however, some New Zealanders of European descent began to take an interest in Buddhism as a philosophy. Early publications mentioning the word Buddhism tended to be written by Christian ministers, many of whom sought to refute Buddhist teachings. Meanwhile, internationally a few freethinkers were taking an interest in Buddhist teachings. Theosophy had a presence in this country, and the Theosophist H.S. Olcott, who had a strong interest in Buddhism, visited New Zealand for a few weeks in 1897.

The Colombo plan, which began in the 1950s, attracted people from South

and Southeast Asia, some of whom settled here. It was only in the mid-1970s, with changes to immigration rules, that greater numbers of people born in Asian countries began to settle in this country, whether as refugees from conflict in Southeast Asia or as immigrants.

In the 1960s, interest in the philosophies and religions from Asia, including Buddhism, really flourished. Many of the first formal organisations offering Buddhist teachings in New Zealand were founded during the 1970s. Westerners who had encountered the Dhamma/Dharma while traveling overseas sometimes collaborated with each other and sometimes also with immigrants from Buddhist countries to establish these early groups. Meetings often took place at a member's private residence or at a hired community hall. Many of these groups worked together



Ecie and William Hursthouse first brought two Tibetan teachers, Lama Thubten Yeshe and Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche, to New Zealand. They taught a retreat to 21 people for five days at Little Huia, Auckland in 1974. Ecie thinks it is likely that they were the first Tibetan Buddhist Teachers to come to New Zealand





In Dunedin, the Dhargyey Buddhist Centre was started in 1984 by Ven. Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey in the Gelugpa school of Tibetan Buddhism. Pictured, left, Ven. Sonam Chodron, Ven. Sonam Chokyi, and Ven. Jampa Kunzang waiting for the



arrival of His Holiness the Dalai Lama when he visited in June 2013, and right Ven. Lhagon Tulkus escorting His Holiness during the same visit. Photographer: Hiltrun Ratz

in the early days, for instance to bring teachers from overseas to give public talks and lead meditation retreats. Eventually some of these groups became formal organisations. Many purchased their own premises, and some were now able to support a resident nun, monk or other kind of spiritual leader.

From the 1980s to the present, the numbers of Buddhists have been increasing markedly. New Zealand's many immigrants from Asian countries brought with them various expressions of Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana teachings and practices, along with their cultural traditions.

Nowadays, New Zealand has a very diverse range of Buddhist temples, centres, associations and groups. Some temples and centres are distinctly multicultural, and English is the lingua franca. Centres that are attended by people of many different ethnic backgrounds, including people from Asian Buddhist backgrounds and others of various nationalities, include the Theravada Buddhist Associations in Auckland and Wellington, and Soka Gakkai International, which has branches in the four main cities. Many temples serve particular language and cultural groups. Examples of communities

that are maintaining culture and language as well as religious connections include the Thai, Khmer (Cambodian), Vietnamese and Laotian communities; several Korean temples and centres and the many temples of the Chinese diaspora. The Sri Lankan Buddhist community has many temples around New Zealand and runs regular meditation retreats as well as mindfulness summer camps for children.

A number of centres have a large proportion of people of non-Asian ethnic backgrounds. In the 2013 Census, Buddhists born in the Asian region made up around two thirds of those who called themselves "Buddhist". The remaining third of those who ticked "Buddhist" in the Census include New Zealanders of European descent and people from a wide range of other countries. Most of these people encountered Buddhist teachings as adults, and often their immediate relatives are not Buddhist. This high proportion of Buddhists coming to the faith as adults is unusual among the non-Christian faiths in New Zealand.

The methods of Buddhist teaching around the world continue to evolve as the faith meets different cultural conditions and modern methods of communication. Internationally and



The Laothian temple in Otahuhu, South Auckland, which the community acquired in 1989



Laothian new year celebrations in 2017.  
Photographer: Vou Phommahaxay

in Aotearoa there are those who are developing modern distillations or fusions of teaching and practice from older distinct traditions and sources. Some examples: Secular Buddhism Aotearoa New Zealand focuses on means to serve community and develop practice and thought that is in harmony with progressive values such as egalitarianism, inclusiveness and democratic self-rule. The Triratna Buddhist Community practises its own distinctive approach to rituals and ordination and draws on sources in all three of the main vehicles. The New Zealand Bhikkhuni Sangha Trust has begun work to support the life, practice and teaching of Theravada Bhikkhunis in this country, with resources for training, practice and study.

The influence of Buddhism goes far beyond the numbers who identify as Buddhist in the Census. Go to the religion section of any public library and you will see numerous books on Buddhism and a wide array of books about aspects of mindfulness in the psychology and self-help sections. Mindfulness, though often stripped of its deepest implications, has become very influential in medicine, psychology and psychotherapy and is helping to relieve the suffering of thousands of non-Buddhists. Some people who encounter mindfulness go on to explore Buddhist teachings.

The first Buddhist monastery in this country was Bodhinyanarama Monastery near Wellington, established by the combined efforts of Theravada communities in the mid-1980s. Ajahn Munindo is a New Zealand-born monk who participated in early discussions that eventually led to the founding of the monastery. He received bhikkhu precepts from the late Venerable Ajahn Chah of Wat Nong Pah Pong in Northeastern Thailand in 1976 and is now the Senior Monk at Aruna Ratanagiri Monastery in England. When he returned to New Zealand for a visit in 2007, he recalled on this first visit as a monk, in 1979:

... there were only a few small pockets of interest, yet now there are many different monastic and lay communities of the various Buddhist traditions present in New Zealand.

He reflected:

I believe that Buddhism is now quite well-integrated into New Zealand society, possibly because of the input from the Asian community. People are quite open and accepting of Asian influence, and they see Buddhists as part of that. Plus, of course, Buddhism has been here for a good number of years and has taken root.



While our geographic isolation might seem like a disadvantage because we have access to fewer experienced teachers, Ajahn Munindo noted it also has advantages:

When I first came here, although there was some degree of competition between the different groups, there was also an underlying recognition of the need to co-operate. [...] When you live in a country with only three or four million people you have got to learn to get on with each other. The overall positive community spirit is therefore good enough to overcome any particular difficulties that may arise from being isolated.

The story of the Buddhadharma's arrival in New Zealand follows a similar path to that of many other English-speaking countries, but as Ajahn Munindo suggests, our geographical situation encourages a spirit of working together, and this spirit is one which the New Zealand Buddhist Council aims to foster.



Master Chang Lin gives a talk at Pu Shien temple in Ellerslie, Auckland



At Wesak or Vesak, Buddhists commemorate the birth of the Buddha-to-be, his Enlightenment at the age of 35 and his final “passing” into Nirvana at the age of 80. This event is celebrated in a variety of ways, according to each tradition. Here Zen priest, Ven. Amala Wrightson, stands beside the altar and is about to sprinkle drops of water over a family as a symbolic purification after they have bathed the Baby Buddha



At the dedication of the stupa at Vimutti monastery in 2008, three spiritual leaders offer incense. On left Ven. Tenzin Nangsel (a New Zealander) who served as Director of Mahamudra Centre for many years; in the middle, Ven. Amala Wrightson, and on the right, Ven. Tenzin Chogyi (from the USA), a visiting teacher who was teaching at Mahamudra Centre during the time this photo was taken



Srilankaramaya was the first Sri Lankan Buddhist Temple established in Auckland (in 1999 Otahuhu Auckland). At the temple in 2018, monks (and in the background, lay people) participate in chanting session lasting four days and five nights during the annual Kathina ceremony, after which robes are offered to the monks at the end of the annual “rains retreat”

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Srilankaramaya temple organises blood donation drives; the 2018 campaign collected 100 units of blood, saving many lives

The Buddhist Council is not the first organisation in New Zealand that has encouraged Buddhist groups to collaborate on common interests. There were two Auckland pan-Buddhist organisations that preceded the Council. The item below was from the Auckland Theravada Buddhist Association’s (ATBA) newsletter in 1984 and mentions such a collaboration to celebrate Wesak.

#### **[1984] AUCKLAND BUDDHISTS COMBINE FOR FESTIVAL**

The proposal for all the Buddhist groups in Auckland to join forces for one day to celebrate the Wesak festival this year has been taken up enthusiastically by local Buddhist committees.

Mr. Roy Gillett from the Dorje Chang Institute has been responsible for coordinating the initial stages of the one-day get-together. This is a landmark occasion. Six organizations will participate. They are the Dorje Chang Institute, the Zen Centre, the Karma Kagyu Thigsum Chokhorling temple, the ATBA and the Vietnamese Buddhist Association.

The date: Sunday May 13th [1984].

The venue: The Auckland Museum lecture hall.

— Excerpt from Auckland Theravada Buddhist Association’s newsletter archive, compiled by Mike Hew.

Ecie Hursthouse recalls that “everyone carried a volume of the Kangyur [Tibetan sacred texts] around the museum, respectfully on their shoulder, to circumambulate the holy objects inside. Circumambulation is a Tibetan Buddhist tradition.”



# ***The New Zealand Buddhist Council Executive Committee (2018–19)***

The Executive Committee is a hands-on body that takes care of all aspects of the governance and day-to-day functioning of the Council. The Committee meets about five times per year at Dhamma/Dharma centres around Auckland, with out-of-town members participating by conference call. Our constitution allows us to have up to nine member-nominated positions, three for each of the three vehicles (Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana). Every member organisation which is a registered charity and a financial member in the current membership year may put forward a nomination. If more than three nominations are received in any category, the whole membership votes to elect three people in that category.

Ven. Amala Wrightson, (Chairperson)	<a href="mailto:chair@buddhistcouncil.org.nz">chair@buddhistcouncil.org.nz</a>
Rukman Wagachchi (Vice-Chair)	<a href="mailto:rukmanw@gmail.com">rukmanw@gmail.com</a>
Ecie Hursthouse (Chaplaincy Training)	<a href="mailto:eciely@gmail.com">eciely@gmail.com</a>
Fern McRae (Secretary)	<a href="mailto:info@buddhistcouncil.org.nz">info@buddhistcouncil.org.nz</a>
Sally McAra (Communications)	<a href="mailto:update@buddhistcouncil.org.nz">update@buddhistcouncil.org.nz</a>
Simon Harrison (Treasurer)	<a href="mailto:treasurer@buddhistcouncil.org.nz">treasurer@buddhistcouncil.org.nz</a>

Also:

Wai Kenny Tsang (Auckland)  
Ven. Gyalten Wangmo (Auckland)  
Yong Jun Kim (Auckland)  
Gamini Settinayake (Wellington)  
Robert Hunt (Christchurch)  
Peter Small (Dunedin)

Regional Liaison

Napier: Clare Woodham; Christchurch: Jane Ross; Wellington: Derek Le Dayn

**Coming in 2019:** A booklet telling the stories of selected Buddhist groups and organisations around Aotearoa.

You are invited to contribute your stories and images for consideration. A call for contributions will be sent out in the new year. We also welcome offers of expertise and time, and donations to assist with research costs and printing.

Please contact Sally McAra, the editor of this booklet, at [update@buddhistcouncil.org.nz](mailto:update@buddhistcouncil.org.nz)

Please send any corrections for errors in this book to the same address.



# Directory of Member Organisations

Please call in advance of your first visit to any temple or group.

We have listed telephone numbers with area codes for calling within New Zealand. If calling from overseas, the national code is 64, and the first 0 is omitted. Where the web address is too long, we have instead provided a phrase that will take you to the website or Facebook page.

To the best of our knowledge, this information was current in October 2018.

## National Organisations

### Aotearoa Buddhist Education Trust

Contact: Pete Cowley, trustee  
PO Box 6626, Marion Sq, Wellington 6141  
022 610 2910, prcowley@gmail.com, abet.org.nz  
Working with secular dharma practice communities to bring highly-regarded secular insight meditation teachers to Aotearoa New Zealand

### Dhargyey Buddhist Centres

The Dhargyey Centres in Christchurch and Dunedin encourage harmony and unity through the sharing of Buddhist philosophy  
**Phen Day Dhargyey Ling – Christchurch Dhargyey Centre**  
Resident teacher: Geshe Nyima Dorjee  
Director: Keran Tsering  
34 Dudley St, Richmond, Christchurch 8013  
03 385 3603, 021 062 1092  
christchurch.dhargyey@gmail.com  
tibetanbuddhistcentre.org.nz

### Dhargyey Buddhist Centre, Dunedin

Resident teacher: Geshe Lobsang Dhönye  
Director: Peter Small  
22 Royal Terrace, Dunedin 9016  
03 477 8374, contact@dhargyeybuddhism.com  
dhargyeybuddhism.com

### New Zealand Bhikkhuni Sangha Trust

Contact: Alison Hoffmann, 04 475 8241, or Janice Hill, 021 939 284  
nz.bhikkhunistrust@gmail.com  
bhikkhuni-sangha.org.nz  
We support the presence of bhikkhunis living, practising and teaching in the Theravada tradition, as well as those training to become bhikkhunis

### Rigdzin

Rigdzin Bum Tsog Trust  
Spiritual director: Amnyi Trulchung Rinpoche  
The Rigdzin Trust was founded to support the spread of the Dharma and aid projects in Eastern Tibet, with meditation centres in Nelson and Christchurch  
**Nelson Buddhist Centre**  
Contact: Keith Rowan  
87 Nile St East, Nelson 7010  
021 060 7491, keith@rigdzin.org  
nelsonbuddhistcentre.org.nz  
**Christchurch Buddhist Centre – Dho Nyak Osel Ling**  
Contact: Erin Lummis  
43 Harrow St, Phillipstown, Christchurch 8011  
03 981 8380, erin@rigdzin.org  
christchurchbuddhistcentre.nz

### Secular Buddhism Aotearoa New Zealand

Contact: Ramsey Margolis  
021 973 531, ask@secularbuddhism.org.nz  
secularbuddhism.org.nz  
Creating secular dharma practice communities

### Soka Gakkai International of NZ

Promotes peace through individual transformation and contribution to society, with activity centres in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin

### SGI New Zealand Culture Centre, Auckland

Contact: Ian Gordon  
40 Eaglehurst Rd, Ellerslie, Auckland 1060  
P.O. Box 11968, Auckland  
09 525 1829, info@sginz.org, sginz.org  
**Christchurch Activity Centre**  
390 Montreal St, Christchurch 8013  
03 741 1937, info@sginz.org  
**Dunedin Activity Centre**  
Contact: Yuzuru Ishikawa  
021 209 3895, 03 742 1248, dunedin@sginz.org  
**Wellington Community Centre**  
Contact: Jimi Wallace  
Level 5, 220 Willis St, Wellington 6011  
04 499 4420, sgiwgn@sginz.org

### Wat Phra Dhammakaya

A Theravada Buddhist Temple that provides for the Thai community and others, offering meditation and Buddhist culture

### Auckland

41A Seaview Rd, Castor Bay, Auckland 0620  
Facebook: Search for WatPhraDhammakayaNZ

### Dunedin

Abbot: Phramaha Somkid Tikkhino  
021 0819 7628, 021 0884 5941  
tikkhino072@gmail.com  
Facebook: Search for DunedinTemple

## North Island: Auckland Region and North of Auckland

See also the Buddhist centres in the upper North Island listed under “National Organisations”

### Amitabha Hospice Service Trust

Managing Director: Ecie Hursthouse  
44 Powell St, Avondale, Auckland 1026  
09 828 3321, amitabha.hospice@gmail.com  
amitabhahospice.org  
Amitabha Hospice offers free practical home help and compassionate companionship for the elderly and the incurably ill of any age and their families with specially trained and supervised caregivers throughout the greater Auckland area

### Auckland Buddhist Centre

Contact: Karunajoti  
381 Richmond Rd, Grey Lynn, Auckland 1021  
09 378 1120, info@aucklandbuddhistcentre.org  
aucklandbuddhistcentre.org  
Part of the Triratna Buddhist Community (formerly the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order). Draws on the three main branches of the Buddhadharmā

### Auckland Centre for Buddhist Learning

Abbot: Rev. A Dhammapala Thero  
43A Fairfax Ave, Penrose, Auckland 1061  
09 579 1574, temple@acbl.org.nz  
acbl.org.nz  
This Theravada Buddhist centre organises various religious and cultural activities, educational programmes inclusive of children and environmental conservation activities

### Auckland Theravada Buddhist Association

Abbott: Ajahn Chandako  
**Auckland Buddhist Vihara**  
29 Harris Rd, Mt Wellington, Auckland 1051  
**Vimutti Buddhist Monastery**  
750 Paparata Rd, Bombay 2343  
09 236 6816, vimutti.atba@gmail.com  
vimutti.org.nz  
The ATBA is a multi-ethnic, non-profit organisation, following the Forest Monastic Tradition of Venerable Ajahn Chah

### Auckland Zen Centre

Spiritual Director: Ven. Amala Wrightson, Sensei  
50/52 Princes St, Onehunga, Auckland 1061  
09 550 4383, info@aucklandzen.org.nz  
aucklandzen.org.nz  
Fosters authentic Zen practice and a Sangha of committed practitioners, by offering regular sittings, talks, dokusan, ceremonies, community service, residential training and sesshin (intensive meditation retreats)

### Awakening Vajra New Zealand

Director: Ven. Gyalten Sengye (Zac Parish)  
PO Box 404144, Puhoi 0951  
021 724 974, info@awakeningvajranz.org  
awakeningvajranz.org  
Our goal is to provide a supportive and conducive environment where students can study the classic Buddhist teachings of the original Indian monastic university of Nalanda. A Tibetan Buddhist organisation

### Dorje Chang Institute for Wisdom Culture

Spiritual Programme Coordinator: Ven. Gyalten Wangmo  
56 Powell St, Avondale, Auckland 1026  
09 828 3333, dci@dci.org.nz, dci.org.nz  
Offers meditations, classes and a peaceful, beautiful oasis in the city, serving others by creating the conditions for people of all interests and inclinations to contact, study and practise the teachings of the Buddha. Affiliated to the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition

### **Milarepa Retreat Centre**

Drikung Kagyu Vajra Charitable Trust  
302A Dyer Rd, Wellsford 0984  
09 422 4069, milaretreatcabins@gmail.com  
Facebook: Search for MilarepaRetreatNz  
Dedicated to preserving, promoting and developing Tibetan Buddhist philosophy under the guidance of His Holiness the Drikung Kyabgon Chetsang Rinpoche

### **Nam Kook Temple**

Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism  
Abbot: Ven. Beop Il  
1244 Coatesville-Riverhead Rd, Kumeu, Auckland 0892  
09 412 6442, namkook@yahoo.co.kr  
namkook.org  
The Temple provides a focal point for Korean Buddhists and other Koreans to meet as a community and engage in cultural activities

### **Won-Buddhist Centre for Mindfulness and Wellbeing**

NZ Won Buddhism (Wonbulkyo) Trust  
Spiritual Director: Ven. An  
Contact person: Chris Krageloh  
Unit B7/5 Douglas Alexander Parade, Rosedale, Auckland 0632  
021 0823 3900, 09 424 5542, nzwon@won.or.kr  
Facebook: Search for Won-Buddhist Centre Auckland  
Our centre in Albany offers a variety of activities, including movement meditation, sitting meditation, youth camps, and social and cultural events

### **Palpung Thupten Lungtok Kunphen Chöling Buddhist Institute**

Administered by Zhyisil Chokyi Ghatsal Charitable Trust  
Abbot: Ven. Choje Lama Shedrup  
Resident Lamas: Ven. Lama Dorje and Ven. Lama Damcho  
Contact: Sonam Rinchen  
1 Wastney Rd, Alfriston, Auckland 2105  
PO Box 6259, Wellesley St, Auckland 1141  
027 777 3357, office@palpung.org.nz  
palpung.org.nz/palpung-auckland.php  
We offer an ongoing schedule of Buddhist teachings and practices

### **Pu Shien Buddhist Temple**

Pu Shien Charitable Trust  
Abbess: Ven. Master Chang Lin  
35 Wilkinson Rd, Ellerslie, Auckland 1060  
09 525 2828, pushienpushien@gmail.com  
pushien.org  
To encourage and promote the teaching of the Buddhadharma in New Zealand for the benefit of all living beings, and offering assistance to people in their spiritual development

### **Quan Am Buddhist Monastery**

Abbot: Ven. Thich Phuoc An  
67 Beaver Rd East, Pokeno, Auckland 2472  
PO Box 525, Pukekohe, Auckland 2340  
09 236 6810, abbotquan-am@xtra.co.nz  
quanam.apptechnz.com  
Our purpose is to honour the Three Jewels and to preserve Vietnamese culture in New Zealand

### **Santipada Buddhist Monastery**

Abbess: Bhante (Ayya) Yasala

262 Otaha Rd, Takou Bay, Kerikeri (Bay of Islands), Kaero 0295  
09 407 5275, santipada@hotmail.com  
santipada.co.nz  
The monastery is dedicated to providing opportunities for monastics and lay people to learn and practise the original teachings of the Buddha

### **Srilankaramaya Temple**

New Zealand Sri Lanka Buddhist Trust  
Abbot: Ven. Walgama Munindawansa Thero  
Contact person: Rukman Wagachchi  
Secretary: Wasantha Marasinghe  
11 Pukeora Rd, Otahuhu, Auckland 1062  
09 270 2898, nzslbt@gmail.com  
srilankaramaya.org  
A Theravada temple offering a range of activities including meditation retreats, Dhamma Sermons, religious services, and a Dhamma school for children. Community activities include blood donation drives, tree planting, and beach cleanups

### **Wat Lao Buddharam**

Abbot: Sengchanh Solatanavong  
President and contact (Lao and English):  
Thongyanh Keokotavong  
5 Nixon Ave, Otahuhu, Auckland 1062  
021 411 576, watlaoakl@gmail.com  
Facebook: Search for Wat Lao Buddharam Auckland  
Theravada Buddhist temple for the Laotian community of Auckland

### **North Island: Coromandel and All Areas South of Auckland**

See also the Buddhist centres in the lower North Island listed under "National Organisations"

### **Bodhinyanarama Monastery**

Wellington Theravada Buddhist Association  
Abbot: Ajahn Kusalo  
17 Rakau Grove, Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt, Wellington 5019  
04 563 7193, office@bodhinyanarama.net.nz  
bodhinyanarama.net.nz  
Bodhinyanarama is a rural residence for those wishing to participate or train in the monastic lifestyle together with a public meeting space for a thriving Buddhist community

### **Dhamma Gavesi Meditation Centre**

Sri Lanka Buddhist Association Wellington  
Abbot: Bhante Jinalankara Thero (Bhante Ji)  
115A Coast Rd, Wainuiomata, Lower Hutt 5014  
04 564 4157, info@dhammagavesi.org.nz  
dhammagavesi.org.nz  
We provide support to communities by providing spiritual guidance and teaching and mindful practice to help them to live peaceful and harmonious lives

### **Dharma Gaia Gardens**

Spiritual Director: Sister Phổ Nghiê Shalom  
Centre Guardians: Anton Bank and Lucette Hindin  
608 Manaia Rd, RD1, Coromandel 3581  
07 866 7995, peace@dharmaGaia.org  
dharmaGaia.org  
In the Plum Village tradition of Zen Master Thích Nhất Hạnh. Growing through the art of living mindfully, our focus is on developing a calm, clear attention to each moment of life

### **Mahamudra Centre for Universal Unity**

Director: Ven. Nangsel  
RD4, Main Rd, Colville, Coromandel 3584  
07 866 6851, spc@mahamudra.org.nz  
mahamudra.org.nz  
A physically beautiful Tibetan retreat centre, offering a variety of courses exploring what makes us happy, how to meditate, and how to develop a good heart. Affiliated to the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition

### **Phuntsok Choeling Hawkes Bay Buddhist Centre**

Secretary: Clare Woodham  
10 Herschell St, Napier  
PO Box 671, Napier 4140  
022 370 9697, phuntsok.choeling@gmail.com  
phuntsokchoeling.co.nz  
The centre acts as a place of spiritual refuge and abundance

### **Wellington Buddhist Centre**

Upstairs 6–8 Broomhedge St, Mt Cook, Wellington 6021  
PO Box 12-311, Wellington North  
021 105 9946  
wellingtonbuddhistcentre@gmail.com  
wellingtonbuddhistcentre.org  
Part of the Triratna Buddhist Community (formerly the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order). Draws on the three main branches of the Buddhadharma

### **South Island**

See also the Buddhist centres around the South Island listed under "National Organisations"

### **Chandrakirti Tibetan Buddhist Meditation Centre**

Resident teacher: Lharampa Geshe Jampa Tharchin  
Director: Phillipa Rutherford  
289 Sunrise Valley Rd, RD1, Upper Moutere, Nelson 7173  
03 543 2021, meditate@chandrakirti.co.nz  
chandrakirti.co.nz  
We promote wisdom, compassion and love by providing a conducive environment for people to contact, study and deepen their understanding of the Buddhist path. Affiliated to the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition

### **Southern Insight Meditation**

Co-founder: Di Robertson  
Please contact the group for venue information  
03 338 7070  
southern.insight.meditation@gmail.com  
southern-insight.org.nz  
Supports activities that help people to develop mindfulness using the teachings and practices of Insight meditation

### **Wat Buddha Samakhee Invercargill**

Invercargill Thai Buddhist Charitable Trust  
Abbot: Phramaha Sudchai Lekkratok  
839 North Rd, Lorneville, Invercargill 9876  
03 235 7098, sogood27@hotmail.com  
Facebook: Search for Wat Buddha Samakhee Invercargill  
Wat Buddha Samakhee Christchurch is the main temple, with branches in Nelson, Invercargill and Blenheim

## Contributors

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## Sources

Thank you to all who contributed their writing, not only the writing that appears in this booklet but also pieces that we have kept aside for a future booklet about Buddhist temples, centres and organisations around New Zealand.

We acknowledge Statistics NZ for information from Census 2013. We also consulted Te Ara ([teara.govt.nz](http://teara.govt.nz)) to check some of our facts. Sources of quotes from other publications are listed below.

### What Did the Buddha Teach?

"Karaniya Metta Sutta: The Buddha's Words on Loving-kindness" (Khp 9), translated from the Pali by The Amaravati Sangha. Access to Insight (BCBS Edition), 2 November 2013, <http://www.accesstosight.org/tipitaka/kn/khp/khp.9.amar.html> ©1994 English Sangha Trust. You may copy, reformat, reprint, republish, and redistribute this work in any medium whatsoever, provided that: (1) you only make such copies, etc. available free of charge; (2) you clearly indicate that any derivatives of this work (including translations) are derived from this source document; and (3) you include the full text of this license in any copies or derivatives of this work. Otherwise, all rights reserved. From Chanting Book: Morning and Evening Puja and Reflections (Hemel Hempstead: Amaravati Publications, 1994). Used with permission of the English Sangha Trust, Ltd. Last revised for Access to Insight on 2 November 2013.

Dhammapada quote: From *A Dhammapada for Contemplation*, 5th edition, published by Aruno Publications, 2016.

Quote from Shantideva: Chapter 10 verse 55 from *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, by Shantideva. Translation by Stephen Batchelor. Library of Tibetan Works and Archives.

Information about the Four Noble Truths is adapted from BuddhaNet, [www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/5minbud.htm](http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/5minbud.htm).

Quote on Karma: His Holiness the Dalai Lama, "Happiness, Karma and Mind", [www.lamayeshe.com/article/happiness-karma-and-mind](http://www.lamayeshe.com/article/happiness-karma-and-mind)

### Buddhist Perspectives on Caring for the Dying and Deceased

*All that is subject to arising is subject to ceasing.* A slightly different phrasing of this quote can be found at: "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta: Setting Rolling the Wheel of Truth" (SN 56.11), translated from the Pali by Nanamoli Thera. Access to Insight (BCBS Edition), 13 June 2010, <http://www.accesstosight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn56/sn56.011.nymo.html> ©1981 Buddhist Publication Society. You may copy, reformat, reprint, republish, and redistribute this work in any medium whatsoever, provided that: (1) you only make such copies, etc. available free of charge and, in the case of reprinting, only in quantities of no more than 50 copies; (2) you clearly indicate that any derivatives of this work (including translations) are derived from this source document; and (3) you include the full text of this license in any copies or derivatives of this work. Otherwise, all rights reserved. Documents linked from this page may be subject to other restrictions. From *Three Cardinal Discourses of the Buddha* (WH 17), translated from the Pali by Nanamoli Thera (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1981). Copyright © 1981 Buddhist Publication Society. Used with permission. Last revised for Access to Insight on 13 June 2010.

### National Meeting of Religious Leaders Held in Auckland

This article first appeared on the website of the Religious Diversity Centre: <http://www.rdc.org.nz/events/recent-events/>

### Overview of Buddhism and Buddhist Groups

Quotes from Ajahn Munindo used with permission. From "Ajahn Munindo Interviewed by Novice Nandako – February 2007", In *Bodhinyanarama Newsletter*, Sept. 2007.





NZBC members and attendees at the Buddhist Council's 2016 AGM, held at Dhamma Gavesi in Wainuiomata, Wellington

***fostering information-sharing, respect, collaboration  
and friendship between Buddhist communities in Aotearoa***

The New Zealand Buddhist Council (NZBC) was initiated at a meeting of fourteen Buddhist groups in Auckland in July 2007 and came out of a collective wish to share information and work together on issues of mutual concern and care for the wider community. In accordance with our constitution, the Buddhist Council aims to:

- Create respectful relationships among Buddhist communities and between Buddhist and other communities in order to develop a harmonious and peaceful New Zealand,
- Share information and build networks,
- Work together on common concerns and problems,
- Strengthen the greater Buddhist community in New Zealand,
- Engage with government and other statutory bodies when their policies and practices affect Buddhist communities,
- Represent Buddhist perspectives in public forums where appropriate,
- Work with other faith communities to nurture mutual understanding and promote peace,
- Engage in any other activities consistent with the above objects.

This commemorative booklet was published on the occasion of the New Zealand Buddhist Council's 10th anniversary and in conjunction with peace walks in Christchurch on 16 November and Auckland on 24 November 2018.

**The New Zealand Buddhist Council**  
Email: [info@buddhistcouncil.org.nz](mailto:info@buddhistcouncil.org.nz)  
Website: [www.buddhistcouncil.org.nz](http://www.buddhistcouncil.org.nz)