



New Zealand Buddhist Council

A key part of the NZBC mission is the development of friendship connections between the Buddhist communities of Aotearoa. We continue to serve you in national efforts for Buddhism, and we offer our gratitude for the consistent presence and ongoing dana in all the traditions practiced here. Despite differences in language and culture there are many parallels between the ways we practice, and there is support to be had for each of us from knowing that our diverse Buddhist communities are proceeding wisely not just in normal times but during a challenging period.

Regarding the Covid-19 threat, our country's leaders and officials have been going through a series of intense reality checks about what to tell us and how to govern to keep us all safe. In quite a sudden way our eyes have been opened to the fact that an invisible assailant has been landing on our shores. Locally and globally this pandemic is bringing much suffering and has the power to weaken many of the established systems of our modern lives. Nonetheless our government is providing well-informed advice, regularly updating [their webpage on the virus](#) and also providing [advice in many languages](#). We hope all of us may dedicate merit to those at the frontlines in the work for our community's health.

The speed of change has been such that many of us may have shocked questions still lingering: "How did we get here?" and "Will we be able to go back to normal?" As with any profound change,

we may be feeling disorientated and challenged, before we reach new insight.

So how might we see these extraordinary times in Buddhist terms? We can certainly say that the teachings concerning suffering, impermanence, and the illusion of individualism are being amplified for us, as circumstances intensify. We face a challenge to the lungs, a challenge to continuity, and we face a new mix of isolation and interdependence. This is rich terrain in which to apply such practice tools as mindfulness, radical acceptance, and an opportunity to develop a dispassionate view of self and its world.

As these are times of adversity, Buddhist Council executive members are reaching out by phone and email amongst our contacts seeking messages of inspiration which will help to sustain us all on the path during these current challenges. We will soon begin to publish these on [the NZBC website](#) and through our [NZ Buddhist News Facebook page](#).

You are invited to [send us here](#) inspiration and insight from within your own community. The themes we would like to encourage are "wisdom from the here-and-now" and "mindful living during emergencies". Examples may be a short wisdom talk (within 50 words), haiku and other concise poetry, or a recorded blessing (under 2 minutes).