

2495 (1952)
The Second General Conference
Tokyo

The Second General Conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists took place in Tokyo, Japan at the Tsukiji Hongwanji Temple from 25 to 30 September 2495. This was the time when Japan was just beginning to emerge out of its World War II experience; when there was, in that country, great hope for peace and progress after having had the dubious distinction of being the first and only country to have suffered from the aftermath of nuclear bombs. It was also the year of commemoration of the 1400th anniversary of the introduction of Buddhism into Japan. In view of W.F.B.'s firm commitment to international peace and world-wide economic and social development as strongly expressed at the First Conference in Sri Lanka, the choice of Japan for its second conference seemed most appropriate.

Although five Standing Committees had been established at Sri Lanka, the Tokyo meeting operated with 3 *Sectional* Committees which were appointed to discuss proposals submitted to the Conference and to report thereon to the main body. The 3 main Sectional Committees dealt respectively with: (1) Buddhist Thought and Doctrine; (2) Buddhist Education and Propagation; and, (3) Buddhism in Practice. In addition, 2 Sections were organized, the first entitled *Youth Section* and the second, *Women Section*.

The main thrust of the discussion at this Conference was on World Peace since all the participants, especially the Japanese, were fully aware of the horrors of war, particularly a nuclear holocaust. The Sectional Committee on Buddhist Thought and Doctrine, for example, recommended a resolution on the Establishment of World Peace on the Basis of Buddhist Principles, and this resolution was adopted by acclamation indicating the strong anti-war atmosphere at this meeting. The resolution's spirit was well expressed in its last paragraph. It reads: *We Buddhists have assembled here, without hindrance of sects or of nationality, in an earnest desire to establish*

peace for eternity and for the universe by taking refuge in the three Ratna, and have resolved to strive to realize the Buddha's peaceful realm without resorting to warfare, but by propagating the wisdom and compassion of the Lord Buddha.

One of the significant resolutions of this meeting called for the adoption of a Constitution of a Universal Buddhist Youth Organization. Although mooted at this conference, W.F.B. was to take up the Youth question at a later date when, at its Eighth General Conference, it established a Standing Committee on Youth. Soon after, World Fellowship of Buddhists Youth (W.F.B.Y.) was to be born. As for W.F.B. dealing specifically with Buddhist women, there had been some desultory references over the years, but nothing has come to fruition so far, despite two recommendations by the meeting. The first dealt with the subject of Elimination of Discriminative Views towards Women and the second related to the *Formation of a Universal Buddhist Women's Federation*. The purpose of such an organization was to render services to establish world peace and promote the welfare of humankind. A proviso was made in the relevant resolution that the first president of such an organization should be elected from among the Japanese Buddhist ladies.

During this meeting, Dr. Malalasekera was again at the helm of W.F.B., as it became an agreed policy that office bearers should hold their posts for a term of four years with the possibility of re-election. In his keynote address he was to mention: *Let each one of us strive our utmost. Let us, if nothing else, lay the foundation stone for a structure which under the hands of present and future builders, will rise as the Temple of our Dreams—a world wherein all creatures will abound in weal and peace, all blessed in peace always, all creatures weak and strong, all creatures great and small, none cajoling or flouting his fellows anywhere, none wishing harm to others in dudgeon or in hate, but filled with an all embracing love for all the universe, in all its height and depth and breadth—unstinted love, unmerred by hate, not rousing enmity.*

Thus, the stresses and strains and the sufferings of the Second World War inspired W.F.B.'s Second General Conference to follow Buddha's footsteps of spreading *Mettā* across all boundaries, throughout the world and for all Buddhists to pursue relentlessly, activities for achieving peace and amity.