



**CONSTITUTION
OF
THE WORLD FELLOWSHIP OF BUDDHISTS**

ARTICLE 1

NAME

The name of this organization shall be “THE WORLD FELLOWSHIP OF BUDDHISTS”. Its abbreviation shall be “The WFB.”

ARTICLE 2

HEADQUARTERS

The Headquarters of The World Fellowship of Buddhists is permanently situated in Bangkok, Thailand, as adopted at the Ninth General Conference of The World Fellowship of Buddhists B.E. 2512 (1969).

ARTICLE 3

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The Aims and Objectives of The World Fellowship of Buddhists shall be:-

- 3.1 To promote among the members strict observance and practice of the teachings of the Buddha;
- 3.2 To secure unity, solidarity, and brotherhood amongst Buddhists;
- 3.3 To propagate the sublime doctrine of the Buddha;
- 3.4 To organize and carry on activities in the field of social, educational, cultural, and other humanitarian services;
- 3.5 To work for securing peace and harmony amongst men and happiness for all beings and to collaborate with other organizations working for the same ends.

ARTICLE 4

WAYS AND MEANS TO ACHIEVE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

In order to achieve its Aims and Objectives, The World Fellowship of Buddhists shall:-

- 4.1 Establish Regional Centres in countries, territories, or areas where there are appreciable numbers of Buddhists, whose belief in and practice of Buddhism are free and unrestricted, or give recognition to any existing organizations as Regional Centres;
- 4.2 Establish and maintain Dhammaduta Centres throughout the world for the purpose of disseminating the teachings of the Buddha, promoting and encouraging practice and observance of the teachings of the Buddha;
- 4.3 Establish and maintain or assist in the establishment and maintenance of such institutions as may be necessary for the study and propagation of Buddhism;
- 4.4 Stimulate and promote active practice and observance of the principles of Buddhism;
- 4.5 Organize and maintain, or assist in the organization and maintenance of, institutions for social, educational, cultural, and other humanitarian services;
- 4.6 Act as a directing and co-ordinating authority amongst international Dhammaduta Centres;
- 4.7 Organize and promote exchange of missions, scholars and students between Buddhist countries; and
- 4.8 Take such other steps as will be conducive to the promotion of its Aims and Objectives.

In pursuing the courses of action indicated at 4.1 to 4.8 above, The World Fellowship of Buddhists shall refrain from involving itself directly or indirectly in any political activity.

ARTICLE 5

PATRONS

The following shall be invited to be Patrons of The World Fellowship of Buddhists:-

- 5.1 The Sangharaja of Thailand;
- 5.2 A Maha Nayaka Thero of the Republic of Sri Lanka;
- 5.3 The King of Thailand;
- 5.4 The King of Nepal;
- 5.5 The President of the Republic of India;
- 5.6 The President of the Republic of Sri Lanka;
- 5.7 The Prime Minister of Thailand;
- 5.8 The President of the Japan Buddhist Federation;
- 5.9 Such Heads of the Sangha, Heads of States and others as may be invited by the General Council to be the Patrons of The World Fellowship of Buddhists.

The General Council may elect Ovadacariyas (religious advisers) not exceeding twelve in number and Honorary President not exceeding nine in number, whose term of office shall be for life. In addition to the Honorary Presidents elected under this paragraph, every past President shall become an Honorary President.

ARTICLE 6

THE GENERAL COUNCIL : POWERS AND FUNCTIONS

The Office Bearers and representatives of Regional Centres shall constitute the General Council of The World Fellowship of Buddhists.

Each Regional Centre shall be entitled to have a representative in the General Council.

- 6.1 Subject to Article 16, all the funds and properties belonging to The World Fellowship of Buddhists shall be vested in the General Council.
- 6.2 The power of general control over all the affairs of The World Fellowship of Buddhists shall also be vested in the General Council.
- 6.3 The General Council shall have the right of general supervision over the Executive Council.
- 6.4 Both the General Council and the Executive Council shall have power to act notwithstanding any vacancies in the membership thereof due to failure on the part of any Regional Centre or otherwise, and its proceedings shall be valid notwithstanding that it is discovered subsequently that some person, who was not entitled to do so, sat or voted or otherwise took part in the proceedings.
- 6.5 The General Council shall have power to make Rules for the purpose of carrying out the Aims and Objectives of this organization.

Without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing powers, the General Council may make Rules relating to :-

- 6.5.1 Procedure to be followed at the General Conference and meetings of the General Council and Executive Council;
- 6.5.2 Method of appointment of the representatives or alternate representatives of Regional Centres in the General Council;
- 6.5.3 Procedure relating to elections and determination of doubts and disputes arising therefrom;
- 6.5.4 Financial matters;
- 6.5.5 Form of Charter;
- 6.5.6 Power, duties, and functions of the Office-Bearers, Executive Council, and Standing Committees;
- 6.5.7 Establishment and maintenance of Dhammaduta and other centres;

- 6.5.8 Training and selection of Dhammadutas;
- 6.5.9 Establishment and recognition of new Regional Centres.

ARTICLE 7

MEETINGS OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

The General Council shall normally hold its meeting once every two years. A meeting of the General Council normally shall be convened immediately before a General Conference at the same venue or area where the General Conference is to be held.

- 7.1 The business to be transacted at a General Council Meeting shall be :-
 - 7.1.1 To receive and consider the periodic reports of the Executive Council;
 - 7.1.2 To receive and consider the duly audited periodic statement of accounts showing the financial position for the two preceding years;
 - 7.1.3 To consider and pass the budget for the ensuing period;
 - 7.1.4 To elect the additional members of the Executive Council;
 - 7.1.5 To appoint a firm of professional auditors; and
 - 7.1.6 To consider any other matters specified in the agenda.
- 7.2 At least a forty-five-day-notice shall be given of the meeting of the General Council. The sending of the notice by air mail post to the address of a Regional Centre as furnished by it shall be deemed to be valid service of notice to that Centre. Such notice shall specify the time and place of the meeting to be appointed by the President.

- 7.3 The President may, or on the requisition in writing signed by not less than one-third of the number of the Regional Centres, shall convene an extraordinary meeting of the General Council at a time and place to be appointed by the President.
- 7.4 At least a thirty-day-notice of the extra-ordinary meeting shall be given. Such notice shall specify the agenda, the time and place of the meeting to be appointed by the President.
- 7.5 Twenty members present shall form the quorum for all meetings of the General Council. If the required quorum is not present within half an hour after the appointed time, the meeting shall be adjourned for half an hour. If the required quorum is still not present, a meeting convened on requisition shall be dissolved whereas a meeting convened by the Headquarters will proceed to transact all the business irrespective of a quorum.
- 7.6 At any meeting of the General Council no business other than that specified in the agenda shall be considered, except with the permission of the Chairman.
- 7.7 Any member of the General Council wishing to move any resolution at any meeting of the General Council shall give notice of such resolution in writing to the Hon. Secretary-General at least ten days before the date of the meeting.
- 7.8 The President may at his discretion secure on any matter the decision of the General Council by circulating the matter in writing and obtaining the views of the members thereof.
- 7.9 No decision shall be deemed to have been reached on any matter so circulated if at least five members of the General Council demand consideration of the matter at a meeting.

- 7.10 Every member shall be entitled to vote on any matter personally, by proxy or post. No member shall be entitled to more than one vote.
- 7.11 All questions shall be determined by a majority of votes of the members other than the Chairman, who shall not vote in the first instance but shall have and exercise a deciding vote in the case of an equality of votes.
- 7.12 The President shall preside at all the meetings of the General Council. In the absence of the President one of the Vice-Presidents shall be voted to the chair. In the absence of the President and all the Vice-Presidents, any member of the Council present at the meeting shall take the chair by election.

ARTICLE 8

OFFICE BEARERS

The World Fellowship of Buddhists shall have the following Office Bearers:-

- 8.1 One President to be elected at a General Conference;
- 8.2 Fifteen Vice-Presidents to be elected at a General Conference. The President may enlist services of the Vice-Presidents by entrusting them with specific assignments to cover certain areas and/or activities;
- 8.3 Chairmen of Standing Committees to be elected at a General Conference;
- 8.4 One Hon. Secretary-General;
- 8.5 One Hon. Deputy Secretary-General;
- 8.6 One Hon. Assistant Secretary-General;
- 8.7 One Hon. Treasurer.

A Chairman of a Standing Committee and/or a member of the Executive Council may concurrently hold the post of Vice-President.

Office Bearers under 8.4, 8.5, 8.6 and 8.7 are to be appointed by the President.

Should any vacancy occur under 8.1, 8.2 or 8.3 in between General Conferences, such vacancy shall be filled in an acting capacity by the Executive Council.

Subject to the provision of Article 11.10 the Office Bearers shall hold office for a term of four years.

ARTICLE 9

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL: POWERS AND FUNCTIONS

The President, Hon. Secretary-General and Hon. Treasurer shall be members of the Executive Council and hold the posts of Chairman, Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer, respectively, of the Executive Council. In addition to these three members, the Executive Council shall consist of eight representatives of WFB. Regional Centres elected by the General Council at each of its General Meetings. These additional members shall be eligible for re-election.

- 9.1 The Executive Council shall exercise general supervision over the administration of the affairs of The World Fellowship of Buddhists. It shall be responsible to the General Council.
- 9.2 The Executive Council shall delegate the responsibility for day-to-day operation to one or more members of the Executive Council who reside in the country in which The World Fellowship of Buddhists Headquarters is situated. The Executive Council shall give sufficient power and authority to those members of the Executive Council to enable them to carry out the responsibilities assigned to them.

- 9.3 It shall be the duty of the Executive Council to submit a periodic report on the activities of The World Fellowship of Buddhists together with a duly audited statement of accounts to the General Council at each meeting of the General Council.
- 9.4 Vacancies among the additional members of the Executive Council shall be filled by the General Council.

ARTICLE 10

MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

The Executive Council shall normally meet once every six months, provided that a period of twelve months shall not, in any case, be allowed to intervene between one meeting of the Executive Council and the next. The President may, or on the requisition of at least five Executive Council members, shall convene a meeting of the Executive Council.

- 10.1 At least a twenty-one-day-notice of the meeting shall be given specifying the agenda and also the time and place of the meeting to be appointed by the President.
- 10.2 Six members present shall form a quorum. If the required quorum is not present within half an hour after the appointed time, the meeting shall be adjourned for half an hour. If the required quorum is still not present, a meeting convened by requisition shall be dissolved whereas a meeting convened by the Headquarters will proceed to transact all the business irrespective of quorum.

ARTICLE 11

STANDING COMMITTEES: POWERS AND FUNCTIONS

There shall be the following Standing Committees for the purpose of exercising such powers and performing such duties and functions as may be specified by the General Council from time to time or as may be defined by the Rules to be framed under Article 6.5 :-

- 11.1 Finance Committee;
- 11.2 Publication, Publicity, Education, Cultural and Art Committee;
- 11.3 Dhammaduta Activities Committee;
- 11.4 Humanitarian Services Committee;
- 11.5 Unity and Solidarity Committee;
- 11.6 Youth Committee;
- 11.7 Socio-Economic Development Committee;
- 11.8 Women Committee;
- 11.9 Buddhist Pancasila Samadana.
- 11.10 The General Council shall elect at its General Meeting eight persons to serve on each of the above mentioned Standing Committees from among the members of The World Fellowship of Buddhists Regional Centres. These Standing Committees shall be headed by the respective Chairman elected at the General Conference in accordance with Article 8.3
- 11.11 The Standing Committees shall have power to co-opt additional members and shall act under the general direction and control of the Executive Council.
- 11.12 The General Council shall have the power to establish other Standing Committees whenever necessary.

ARTICLE 12

THE REGIONAL CENTRES

The General Council may established Regional Centres in such countries, territories or areas or give recognition to existing organizations as Regional Centres in countries, territories or areas, as it may deem fit and proper.

In deciding on an application for recognition of an existing organization as a Regional Centre, the General Council shall be guided by the following:-

- 12.1 The applying organization represents a specific group of Buddhists in appreciable number. Geographic or political boundaries should not be an obstacle to recognizing more than one organization in the same area if the applying organization represents a clearly defined group of Buddhists.
- 12.2 Its objectives and activities are consistent with the Aims and Objectives of The World Fellowship of Buddhists.
- 12.3 It has well been established locally, with reasonably good standing.
- 12.4 In case it is a branch or a member of a federation or a parent organization, the recognition, if granted, shall be on condition that such recognition be withdrawn when the federation or a parent organization is later recognized as a Regional Centre.
- 12.5 Views of the existing Regional Centres, if any, in the same geographical areas should be sought and taken into account.
- 12.6 The Executive Council shall collect the necessary information relating to the applying organization and submit it together with its recommendation to the General Council for consideration and decision.

- 12.7 The establishment of a Regional Centre in any area or recognition of any organization as a Regional Centre for any area shall not, in any way, have any political, national, racial, communal, sectarian or any significance whatever (including any implication affecting the territorial sovereignty of any country) other than meaning that the Regional Centre so established or recognized is a Buddhist organization affiliated to The World Fellowship of Buddhists for the particular geographic area concerned.
- 12.8 Each Regional Centre shall nominate a representative to serve on the General Council. It may have branches and/or affiliated organizations within the region concerned and may admit individuals or organizations as its members and it shall frame its own rules and regulations in consonance with this Constitution. Membership of Regional Centres shall be open to both the members of the Sangha and the Buddhist laity.

ARTICLE 13

GENERAL CONFERENCE

General Conference shall be held once in every two years, or may be extended to three years for special and unavoidable reasons acceptable to the Executive Council.

- 13.1 The President may at any time, or on the requisition in writing signed by representatives of at least one-third of the members of the Regional Centres, shall convene an Extraordinary General Conference.
- 13.2 The time and place of the General Conference of The World Fellowship of Buddhists shall be determined by the Executive Council.

- 13.3 Each Regional Centre may send delegates whose number shall not normally exceed five.

Only a Buddhist shall represent a Centre as a delegate or observer. A Regional Centre may, however, send more than five delegates with the approval of the host country in consultation with Headquarters.

A past Office Bearers of The World Fellowship of Buddhists, although not appointed by a Regional Centre to be its delegate or observer, shall be entitled to attend any General Conference as observer. Each Regional Centre may send observers whose number shall be fixed by the host country in consultation with Headquarters.

- 13.4 Subject to Article 19.2, all questions shall be determined by a majority of votes of the delegations present and voting. Each Regional Centre shall have one vote.
- 13.5 Twenty Regional Centres shall form a quorum. If the required quorum is not present within half an hour after the appointed time, the General Conference shall be adjourned for half an hour. If the required quorum is still not present, the General Conference convened on requisition shall be dissolved whereas a General Conference convened by Headquarters will proceed to transact all the business irrespective of a quorum.
- 13.6 Not less than a forty-five day notice for an Extraordinary General Conference and a ninety-day-notice for a General Conference shall be given. The sending of such notices by airmail to the addresses furnished by Regional Centres shall be deemed to be valid service of such notice.

- 13.7 Subject to Article 19 any Regional Centre wishing to bring forward any resolution at the General Conference shall give notice of such resolution in writing at least twenty-one days before the date of the meeting.
- 13.8 The Chairman may, after consultation with the appropriate Standing Committee, permit a resolution to be moved on the ground of urgency and importance.
- 13.9 The decision of the General Conference shall be binding on the General Council, the Executive Council, and the Regional Centres.

ARTICLE 14

FINANCE

The funds of The World Fellowship of Buddhists, which shall be known as “The World Fellowship of Buddhists Fund” shall consist of :-

- 14.1 Donations, grants, and endowments;
- 14.2 Contributions from the Regional Centres.

ARTICLE 15

CONTRIBUTIONS

Each Regional Centre shall pay to The World Fellowship of Buddhists an annual contribution of US\$ 100.00 or its equivalent. In addition, an entrance fee of US\$ 200.00 shall be paid by each new Regional Centre when the application is filed.

ARTICLE 16

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The General Council may appoint a Board of Trustees for the purpose of holding and administering all the immovable properties of The World Fellowship of Buddhists.

ARTICLE 17

CONTROL OF PROPERTIES AND FUNDS

The General Council shall have control over all the properties and funds of The World Fellowship of Buddhists.

- 17.1 The funds shall be deposited in a bank or banks to be approved by the Executive Council. The cash balance with the Hon. Secretary-General or Hon. Treasurer shall not exceed such sum as may be prescribed by the Executive Council from time to time. The cheques for withdrawal of any money from the bank or banks shall bear the signatures of the Hon. Secretary-General on the Hon. Treasurer and the President or a Vice-President.
- 17.2 The Hon. Secretary-General shall have power to incur any expenditure not exceeding US\$ 500.00 only.
- 17.3 The President shall have power to incur any expenditure not exceeding US\$ 1000.00 only.
- 17.4 In the absence of a budget, the Executive Council shall have power to authorize any expenditure on behalf of The World Fellowship of Buddhists.

ARTICLE 18

THE CHARTER

Every Regional Centre shall be granted a Charter by The World Fellowship of Buddhists under the common seal of The World Fellowship of Buddhists and signatures of the President and the Hon. Secretary-General.

- 18.1 Failure to pay the annual contributions by a Regional Centre for five consecutive years will be a sufficient ground for the General Council to withdraw the Charter granted to that Regional Centre and thus signify the termination of its membership of The World Fellowship of Buddhists.
- 18.2 Such conduct as is considered by the General Council to be detrimental to the cause of Buddhism or the interests of The World Fellowship of Buddhists will be a sufficient ground for the General Council to annul the membership and to withdraw the Charter granted to the Regional Centre.

However opportunity for explanation shall be given to the Regional Centre concerned before any action is taken under the preceding paragraph and the General Council shall decide when such explanation should be sought. The final decision shall be made by the General Council either by postal ballot or by a meeting of the General Council within a period of 60 days after the explanation has been received. If no explanation is received within 60 days from the date of the despatch of the request for the explanation, it shall be presumed that no explanation is forthcoming and the General Council shall make its decision within 120 days from the date of the despatch of the request for explanation.

ARTICLE 19

AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION

Any provision of this Constitution may be amended, whether by way of variation, addition, or repeal in the manner hereinafter provided.

- 19.1 The Executive Council or any Regional Centre wishing to propose any amendment shall give notice of the proposal in the form of resolution or resolutions to the Hon. Secretary-General at least two months before the date of the General Conference.
- 19.2 The Resolution shall be deemed to have been passed only when not less than two-thirds of the delegations present at the General Conference have voted in its favour.

ARTICLE 20

THE FLAG

The Flag of The World Fellowship of Buddhists shall be the six-coloured flag based on the Shadvarna-rasami of the Buddha and as designed by the Executive Council.

ARTICLE 21

THE COMMON SEAL

The Common Seal shall be the Dhamma-Chakka with eight spokes representing the Noble Eight-Fold Path, as designed by the Executive Council.

ARTICLE 22

CO-OPERATION

For the purpose of carrying out its Aims and Objectives The World Fellowship of Buddhists and any of the Regional Centres may work in cooperation and in combination with organizations having similar aims and objectives.



**RULES OF PROCEDURE
FOR
GENERAL CONFERENCE OF
THE WORLD FELLOWSHIP OF BUDDHISTS**

ARTICLE I - CHAIRMAN

1. There shall be one Chairman and two Vice-Chairmen at each business meeting of the Conference.
2. One of the Vice-Chairmen shall act instead of the Chairman in case the latter is absent or otherwise unable to perform his duties.
3. At the first meeting of the first day and the last meeting of the last day of the Conference, the President and two Vice-Presidents of The WFB shall be Chairman and Vice-Chairmen respectively.
4. At every other meeting, the President of The WFB may invite one delegate to be Chairman and two other delegates to be Vice-Chairmen of that meeting.
5. The Chairman shall have the duty and power to conduct all business throughout the duration of that meeting.

ARTICLE II - ORGANIZATION

The Conference may establish whatever subsidiary bodies as are necessary for the effective discharge of its duties. It shall elect members of the various committee from the members of the delegations which are present.

ARTICLE III - SECRETARIAT

1. The *Secretariat work* of the Conference shall be carried out by The WFB Secretariat in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Conference.
2. The *Hon. Secretary-General of The WFB* shall be Secretary-General of the Conference at every meeting. In the event of his absence, the Rapporteur shall take note of any points which need to be brought to his attention.

3. The *Rapporteur* nominated by The WFB shall serve as the *Rapporteur of the Conference* at every meeting.
4. The Secretaries elected by the Working Committees and/or Standing Committees shall submit to the Rapporteur of the Conference concise reports of the discussions and conclusions arrived at by their committees at the close of each session.

ARTICLE IV - RIGHT TO SPEAK

1. Delegates only shall have the right to speak or take part in discussions at the Conference. Distinguished guests and observers may speak or take part in discussions on recognition by the Chairman.
2. Delegates and other participants, who wish to speak, shall either submit notes of request to the Chairman and be called upon to speak, or raise their hands sufficiently to attract attention and be called upon to speak.
3. Each speaker shall speak from the speakers' seat.
4. In no case shall anybody speak without being called upon to speak by the Chairman.
5. The Chairman has the authority to caution any speaker to keep his speech within the issue, or to interrupt him, or to ask him to stop speaking.
6. Each speaker shall have the right to speak for *five minutes* on any one point of the agenda. The Chairman has the power to extend this time allotment, but in no case shall it exceed *fifteen minutes* for each speaker.
7. The President and Hon. Secretary-General of The WFB shall be entitled to have their seats at the Chairman's table and intervene in discussion at any time, with the consent of the Chairman.
8. The Conference shall be conducted in English. Speakers wishing to use another language must provide their own interpreters.

ARTICLE V - RESOLUTIONS

1. The Conference will only consider draft resolutions which deal with a subject on the agenda. Delegates only shall have the right to move resolutions or take part in the discussions on them. Observers or distinguished guests shall not have the right to speak, except by invitation of the Chairman.
2. All resolutions from Regional Centres and Working Committees or Standing Committees must be submitted in writing to the Chairman, through the Secretary-General of the Conference, at least twenty one days before they are due for discussion. The Chairman may, however, permit other resolutions to be submitted under special circumstances.
3. All resolutions accepted by the Secretary-General of the Conference and its Organizing Committee shall be submitted to a Steering Committee, consisting of not more than six representatives of Regional Centres plus the Secretary-General of the Conference, to be elected at the opening of the Conference and to meet at the end of each plenary session. The Steering Committee shall also serve as Resolutions Committee and Credentials Committee.
4. *The tasks of the Steering Committee shall be to :*
 - i) examine the resolutions proposed and consider their acceptability;
 - ii) if necessary, ask the authors of similar resolutions to present one single resolution together;
 - iii) distribute the text of all resolutions found to be acceptable to all participants at least one day before they are due for discussion;
 - iv) steer the Conference to a successful close;
 - v) pass on the credentials of all conferences.

ARTICLE VI - VOTING

1. Each Regional Centre shall have one vote.
2. Delegates only shall have the right to vote on behalf of the Regional Centres. Observers may not vote.
3. Subject to the provisions of The WFB Constitution, decisions shall be taken by a majority of the Regional Centres present and voting.
4. The voting shall be conducted in one of the following ways :
 - i) open votes: by raising hands;
 - ii) roll-call: by calling and voting in the name of each Regional Centre;
 - iii) secret ballot: by written vote handed to the Conference staff and counted by the Secretary-General of the Conference with an observer as scrutineer.
5. The results of every voting, irrespective of the means, shall be openly announced by the Chairman.

ARTICLE VII - COMMITTEES

There shall be one Chairman and one Secretary to be elected by each committee. The Chairman of such committees shall have the same powers as the Chairman of the Conference.