

Theosophical Society
INDO-PACIFIC FEDERATION CONFERENCE
Singapore, November 2004

An atmosphere of joyous participation, camaraderie and sharing pervaded the Ninth Triennial Conference of the Indo-Pacific Federation of the TS, held in Singapore from 5 to 7 November 2004, at the RELC International Hotel. Over 120 delegates attended it, coming from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, Myanmar, Australia, New Zealand, USA and Brazil.

The Conference was opened on Friday morning, 5th November, with the Prayers of the Religions, according to the pattern used at International Conventions at Adyar. The Federation President, Pedro Oliveira, welcomed the gathering. The President of Singapore Lodge, Chong Sanne, also extended his warm welcome to all present. Joy Mills, former International Vice-President and former National President of both the American and Australian Sections, conveyed the greetings of the Krotona Institute, School of Theosophy, Ojai, California. The President of the Inter-American Theosophical Federation, Terezinha Franca Kind, gave the greetings on behalf of members in the Americas. Greetings were also presented by the representatives of a number of member-countries.

The International President, Mrs Radha Burnier, who was our Guest of Honour, then delivered a short address pointing out to the significance of the Conference's theme, "Working Together for Theosophy" and its relevance to the work of the TS. At the Federation Council Meeting, business was transacted as usual and the following officers were elected for a period of three years: President: Pedro Oliveira (Australia); Vice-President: Matius Ali (Indonesia); Treasurer: Donald Fern (Australia). Executive Committee Members: Chong Sanne (Singapore), Vic Hao Chin, Jr (The Philippines), S. Sundaram (India) and Vicki Jerome (New Zealand). Vicki Jerome was appointed Secretary of the Federation, also for a period of three years.

In the afternoon three workshops were held: 'What is the Essential Work of the TS?', facilitated by John Vostermans, National President, TS in New Zealand; 'How to Strengthen TS Work in the Indo-Pacific Region?', led by Chong Sanne, President, Singapore Lodge; and 'Daily Life in the Light of Theosophy', conducted by Linda Oliveira, National President, TS in Australia. The workshops generated focussed discussions on important aspects of theosophical work and provided opportunities for the participants to listen to points of view by those coming from different regions.

On Saturday, 6th November, there was the 'Indo-Pacific TS Workers Forum', which addressed the question: how can we help to strengthen TS work in Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Japan, Bangladesh, Korea and other areas within the Federation? The representatives of a number of the countries mentioned above addressed the gathering and pointed out difficulties and needs of theosophical work in their area. They include the need for more visits by overseas lecturers, translation of theosophical books and leaflets in local languages and training of office-bearers in the administration of Lodges and Groups.

In the afternoon there was a discussion on 'Non-English Theosophical Literature in the Indo-Pacific Region: Needs and Priorities'. It was announced that a Chinese translation of *At the Feet of the Master* will be brought out in 2005 for wide distribution. The International President delivered her public lecture on 'Life is Relationship'. In her lecture Mrs Burnier described how human beings in the present day had lost contact with Nature and its profoundly benign designs. Only a complete transformation of the human mind by the exercise of self-awareness could bring about a real

change in humanity and in the world. The lecture was followed by questions and answers. The evening session, chaired by Chong Sanne, included a very informative PowerPoint slides presentation by Dr K. V. K. Nehru, from India, on 'Theosophical Teachings'.

On Sunday, 7th November, in the morning there were two short talks: 'Solidarity in Theosophical Work' by Vic Hao Chin, Jr., National President of the TS in the Philippines and former President of the Indo-Pacific Federation, and 'Meditation, Study and Service', by Joy Mills. Both talks were illuminating and inspiring and touched on central aspects of our work in the Theosophical Society, namely, the need for selflessness, the capacity to go deeper into oneself through meditation, to see study as a means of direct experience of the truths of Theosophy, and to serve without any thought of reward.

In the afternoon there was a discussion, facilitated by Joy Mills, on 'How can Theosophy become a living force in one's life?' In her opening remarks, Joy pointed out that in the word 'Theosophy', 'sophia' means wisdom but also 'taste', implying that it is only when one lives a certain kind of life that the realisation of wisdom becomes possible.

At the closing session the Federation President thanked all present for their attendance, the Singapore Lodge for their dedicated work of preparation and organisation of the Conference and the International President for having graced the gathering with her active participation. He also said that from the very heart of the Society there comes a call for human transformation and regeneration. Our three Objects clearly point out to that. We need to remember that Theosophy is a living teaching and that one of our important tasks is to make this teaching more widely available to all who are seeking it.

In her closing address, the International President expressed her joy in attending the Conference and said that there is a need to understand the First Object in a deeper way. Rightly understood, it means that there is no difference whatsoever between Universal Brotherhood without distinction and love in its true sense, from Brotherhood is a mind without any barriers, free from prejudice and self-interest. In other words, it is human regeneration. Such a work is crucial to humanity in its present state of divisions and fragmentation. She conveyed her very best wishes to all.

The Triennial Conference in Singapore was an important event in the life of our Federation not only because of its large attendance but also because it helped to create a deeper sense of integration, communication and re-dedication to our common work in the TS. Let us continue to work together for Theosophy.

Pedro Oliveira