

To Friends Worldwide,

The Annual General Conference of Japan Yearly Meeting was held on November 18-19, 2017. Our theme was "Let Our Lives Speak," the words of George Fox inspired by James 2:14-18. The conference was hosted by Tokyo Monthly Meeting, with 34 in attendance.

In the first symposium, "The Legacy We Leave to the Next Generation, Visible and Invisible," representatives of each Monthly Meeting shared the following observations:

--the hope that we may cherish what we have learned from the models set by our elders and fulfill our responsibilities as members;

--the desire for recognition of the value of mutual respect for diversity and our tradition of openness and generosity;

--the hope that the children of the Meeting will grow up with an awareness of the presence of God in their lives and the joy of working with them;

--the importance of letting the younger generation feel free to choose from the models they witness rather than feeling compelled to accept advice; and

--the hope that intergenerational relations among Friends will be as peers rather than hierarchical, and that we share a global vision of our place in the world.

We felt a common sense of what we want to convey in these experiential testimonies from representatives of various age groups, and hope to continue to sojourn in this spirit.

In the second symposium, "Journeys to Membership in the Religious Society of Friends and How We Welcome Visitors," four new members spoke about how they were drawn to join. In one case, it was related to her daughter entering Friends Girls School. In another case, the journey began with attendance at a Christian church during a period of study abroad. For a third, the opportunity was occasioned by a child enrolling in a Friends kindergarten. For another, it was through the introduction of an acquaintance who was a member. The occasions were various, but all were led by God. We feel a ray of hope in all these encounters. Attenders were also inspired by the witness of the Clerks of our Monthly Meetings who shared their local traditions of welcoming all visitors as friends, of active outreach, and of respect for individuality.

The Meeting for Business approved the following items: the 2016 Yearly Meeting report; the plan and budget for 2017; the plan for the timely demolition of Friends Center Annex; the laying down of the Shimotsuma Meetinghouse Working Group and the Friends Center Planning Committee; and nominations of new executive committee members.

After the General Meeting, we had the opportunity to deepen our acquaintance with representatives of the following affiliated organizations: Aiyuen, Japan Friends Service Committee, Shoutomo Gakuen Kindergarten, Shouyuu Gakuen Kindergarten, and Friends Girls School.

Sachiko Yamamoto, Clerk
Japan Yearly Meeting
November 19, 2017