

To all our dear Friends around the world,

The 2012 Annual Gathering of Japan Yearly Meeting was held on November 17th and 18th at Mito Monthly Meetinghouse, newly rebuilt after overcoming the great trial of the East Japan Earthquake. Our theme this year was “Be of good comfort, be of one mind” (2 Corinthians 13:11). It was a joy to welcome two members from Australia Yearly Meeting, Topsy Evans (former AWPS Treasurer) and her partner David.

In our first discussion, we learned in detail of the generous support received from Friends and organizations around the world to aid in the reconstruction of the Meetinghouse at Mito. Mito Friends suffered many hardships, but thanks to this support and their own cooperative efforts, they were able to complete the reconstruction in a short time. Hearing their report, we were convinced of the unifying power of faith.

Monthly Meeting reports revealed that Friends throughout Japan likewise uphold their faith in the face of various trials. Learning of their simple, steady efforts, we were able to feel fresh strength.

In the next discussion, we heard about the initiative by members of Tsuchiura Monthly Meeting to consult with middle-aged Friends at a gathering in Tsukuba in July about intergenerational connections. We look forward to seeing how this group develops this project to promote intergenerational relations.

In our Meeting for Business, we discussed the economic difficulties involved in maintaining the activities of the Monthly Meetings and Yearly Meeting in the face of declining membership, and agreed to establish a special committee to deliberate measures for the future. We also discussed the optimal use of Friends Center, a Yearly Meeting facility.

We were further reminded of the need for responsible stewardship of our publications and other documents to be passed on to future generations.

Finally, this year’s Inazo Nitobe Memorial Lecture was presented by Mitsuo Otsu of Mito Monthly Meeting. His topic was “Japan Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends and Inazo Nitobe.”

Takeshi Isaka, Clerk

Japan Yearly Meeting