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Exchange

Reconciliation services promote peace

25 August 2005



Ambassador Nogami delivers a speech at Canterbury Cathedral

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[Exchange](#)

[Governmental Relations](#)

[Decorations and Commendations](#)

[Business & Economy](#)

[Science & Education](#)

[UK-Japan 21st Century Group](#)

[Speeches](#)

As in recent years, three events dedicated to the cause of reconciliation have been held this summer. On 20 July, the Embassy hosted the ninth Summer Reunion of Peace and Friendship, attended by many who have fostered reconciliation through projects inspired by the Peace and Friendship Initiative, launched by the Japanese Government in 1995.

On 21 August, reconciliation ceremonies were held in Canterbury and Coventry. Ambassador Nogami attended the special service of Friendship and Reconciliation at Canterbury Cathedral, while Minister Plenipotentiary Hiroyuki Kishino represented the Embassy at Evensong at Coventry Cathedral. Both events were coordinated by the International Friendship and Reconciliation Trust (IFRT). They were attended by local dignitaries, representatives of the German Embassy, members of the Burma Campaign Society, including British and Japanese veterans, and former prisoners of war and their families.

At the beginning of Evensong at Canterbury Cathedral, a ceremony of commemoration took place in which Ambassador Nogami and German Minister Plenipotentiary Blomeyer-Bartenstein joined Lord Weatherill and Masao Hirakubo, both veterans of the Burma Campaign, in laying wreaths at the High Altar in remembrance of all the war dead. A Japanese boy and girl then placed paper cranes symbolizing peace alongside the wreaths. The service was concluded by a ceremonial shaking of hands to represent friendship and reconciliation at the Compass Rose in the nave.

Speaking after the service, Ambassador Nogami said, "Sixty years ago, few could have imagined then that Japan and the UK would, as strategic partners, once again rebuild mutual trust, strengthen friendship and work together for world peace and stability as they do today. I do hope that our efforts through the 10 years of the Peace and Friendship Programme have brought about positive results towards reconciliation and friendship between the British and Japanese people". He went on to declare, "The dreadful events of the Second World War gave solemn lessons to us all. We should not forget the past, and we must pass on the lessons learnt from the war to future generations. Japan, reflecting deeply on the past, has been doing its utmost to contribute to world peace and prosperity for 60 years. We are determined to continue to play such a role for many years to come."

Ambassador Nogami also attended the Commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of the Ending of the Second World War at Horse Guards Parade, hosted by the UK Government on 10 July.



Ceremonial shaking of hands to represent friendship and reconciliation

[Full text of Ambassador Nogami's speech](#)

[Top](#)
