



2005 looks set to be another exciting year for the group. At the moment, the group are in Japan again, performing at the opening ceremony of the EU-Japan Year of People to People Exchanges.

At the end of January we look forward to the culmination of a large-scale teaching project with schools in the Stoke-on-Trent area, with a performance by 400+ schoolchildren at the Victoria Hall (phew!).

In February and March, Neil, Miyuki and Adam take "The Way of the Drum" show on tour, leaving Teresa behind to hold the fort with the ever expanding teaching work at the Dojo.

In April, Masaaki Kurumaya Sensei from Fukui, Japan, will be making a special visit to Scotland to celebrate the opening of the Mugen Taiko Dojo. We first opened the doors of the Dojo to the public in early 2002 and have been holding regular workshops and classes since then. At the same time we have also been continually adding to the facilities, including the completion of the reception area in early 2004. The Mugen Taiko Dojo Official Opening Event will be held in early April, with Masaaki Kurumaya Sensei as the guest of honour. To coincide with his visit, we will also hold concerts in Glasgow and Edinburgh with Kurumaya Sensei performing as special guest, who will also lead two workshops at the Dojo.

At the end of April we will hold the Dojo Showcase Concerts, where Project Taiko III and the newly formed Taiko Academy will be displaying their ever-improving Taiko skills.

This year Mugenkyo will be touring the UK in May and again in October / November.

We are also planning a joint concert tour with the fabulous Hanayui – Japanese dance, drum & song group - in September. Those of you who caught the three shows by Hanayui in March 2004 will know that we're in for a real treat. We are very much looking forward to this special joint tour. More on that as the year progresses...

We really hope that we can see you at a concert or a workshop in 2005! Let's hope it's a brilliant year for all of us...

## Mugenkyo Special Concerts with guest appearance by master taiko drummer Masaaki Kurumaya Sensei.

Friday, 8th April  
7:30 pm

Edinburgh, The Queen's Hall  
0131 668 2019

Saturday, 9th April  
7:30 pm

Glasgow, Tramway  
0141 287 3900



**MUGENKYO TAIKO DRUMMERS NEXT UK TOUR IN MAY 2005**  
Details in next newsletter, or go to our website [www.mugenkyo.com](http://www.mugenkyo.com)

## TAIKO TAIKO

The quarterly newsletter of Mugenkyo and the Mugen Taiko Dojo, publishing news on concerts, Taiko Dojo activities, the art form of Taiko, and Taiko events in the UK.

### MUGENKYO

Established in 1994, MUGENKYO is Europe's first professional Taiko drum group, performing at theatres, concert halls, festivals and events. MUGENKYO's aim is to develop Taiko as a European art form, through performance and collaborations across artistic disciplines.

[www.mugenkyo.com](http://www.mugenkyo.com)



The MUGEN TAIKO DOJO is the first purpose-built Taiko Centre in the UK. Located in rural Scotland, it is a place where people gather from all over Britain and Europe to learn about the art form of Taiko through residential workshops and regular classes. It is also the permanent base and training space for Mugenkyo. The Dojo's extensive outreach programme brings Taiko to schools and communities throughout the UK.

[www.taikodojo.com](http://www.taikodojo.com)

**Mugenkyo, P.O. Box 5124, Lanark ML11 0WA**

**email: [mail@mugenkyo.com](mailto:mail@mugenkyo.com)  
tel/fax: 01357 522 008**

Thank you to those of you who sent in donations towards the cost of this newsletter:

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Please remember, it costs money to put out a newsletter. Please help us to continue, by sending donations - a book of stamps, postal orders or cheques (made payable to Mugenkyo), all gratefully accepted.

## The Big Bang!

### Mugen Taiko Dojo Showcase Concert



In October 2004 we held the very first Mugen Taiko Dojo Showcase Concert at Gilmorehill G12 in Glasgow. Two groups of Project Taiko performed at the event, in a seamless theatre show, with the members of Mugenkyo performing alongside them. Many months of sweat and blisters, effort and energy culminated in the two hour concert. Well done to you all!

**Project Taiko II: Sally Boardman, Jam Gray, Martin Knapp,  
Katy McAuley, Jennifer McFadden, Jennifer Minto, Clementine Sandison,  
Barbara Stuart, Peter Tagg**

**Project Taiko I: Anna Birkett, Claire Cunningham, Amy Dean,  
Georgina Harris, Jennifer McMurtrie, Hilde McKenna, Lucy Searle**

The showcase will now become an annual event - the next concert taking place in April 2005.

Project Taiko was made possible thanks to generous funding from the **GB Sasakawa Foundation** and the **Nippon Taiko Foundation**. Thank you for your continuing support.

## JOJI HIROTA CD and WEBSITE:

Joji Hirota, the well-respected London-based Japanese percussionist has recently released a new CD: "Japanese Taiko" by Joji Hirota and the Taiko Drummers. The CD also features two ex-members of Mugenkyo: Mark Alcock and Liz Walters, who continue their Taiko playing both with Joji Hirota and also with their own London-based groups.

Further information on Joji Hirota can be found on:

[www.jojihirota.com](http://www.jojihirota.com)

Joji Hirota's CD can be bought from the "Knock on Wood" website:  
[www.knockonwood.co.uk](http://www.knockonwood.co.uk) or tel: 01423 712 712

Knock on Wood also stock various other taiko CDs

## TAIKO MEANTIME PERFORMANCES

Taiko Meantime from London, led by Mugenkyo ex-member Mark Alcock, will be performing with the Henri Oguike Dance Company January to April

For more details, please see

[www.mark.alcock.com/taiko-meantime/dates](http://www.mark.alcock.com/taiko-meantime/dates)

<http://henrioguikedance.co.uk/tour/forthcoming>



### Hello to Anna!

A warm welcome to the newest member of the team: Anna Birkett, whose main role is as the administrator in the office, but who can also occasionally be seen on stage as a player in the Taiko Academy. She's the friendly voice on the telephone at the Mugenkyo office, and our reliable person behind-the-scenes



THE REAL FACE under the mask of Hilde McKenna who joined us on tour in 2004.  
Thank you Hilde!!





## 10TH ANNIVERSARY CONCERT IN TAKEFU, JAPAN

**In November, Mugenkyo were invited to Japan to perform their 10th anniversary concert in Takefu City in Fukui Prefecture.**

It's amazing to think that it's been 10 years since Neil & Miyuki formed the group in 1994, and 12 years since we first moved to Fukui on the west coast of Japan. It was here that a chance encounter with master drummer Masaaki Kurumaya Sensei led us on a path that would change our lives. Obtaining a cultural visa to stay in Japan to study Taiko, Neil became Kurumaya Sensei's apprentice, following him to every class and group he taught, practicing on a cardboard drum until the rhythms were good enough to play on a real taiko. Miyuki began attending lessons as a translator, then was gradually drawn into the world of Taiko drumming. After two wonderful years in Fukui, we returned to Britain to form Mugenkyo.

The special concert in Takefu was a great success – a sell-out show with 600 people in attendance, and our friends who have supported us over the years.

It was also Mugenkyo's very first "solo concert" in Japan. It was especially great to be able to thank those people

who had helped us, and also to show them how far we've come in these 10 years. It touched us deeply to see so many familiar faces in the audience; there were many in tears at this very emotional event.



Performing with Kurumaya Sensei was a real pleasure, and also a challenge as the great thing about Fukui-style is the improvised nature of the pieces, and as usual we were kept on our toes, as we just didn't know what he was going to do next! The energy created by that tension is really what gives Fukui-style its distinctive character, and there certainly was a lot of high tension in the air that night. You could almost hear the audience collectively holding their breath, and then letting out a great sigh at the end before exploding into applause. It

was an amazing once-in-a-lifetime event.

In the lead-up to the concert, in addition to all of the organising and planning, we also took part in "koryukai" cultural exchanges, at a community centre, a primary school and a secondary school, taking the opportunity to explain about taiko in Britain and our activities here.

A very special thank you to Fumi Nojiri from the Takefu International Association for making it all happen and for your endless energy, to Yagi-san and crew on lights, Martin Miller on sound, to Kicho-no-kai and the Kurumaya Taiko Dojo for allowing us to use their precious drums, and to all the volunteers who worked so hard both in the lead up to the concert and on the day - we couldn't have done it without you!



### Order Form

See overleaf for goods.

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C.D's £12

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Total enclosed £

**MUGENKYO**  
**P.O Box 5124**  
**Lanark**  
**ML11 OWA**

*All prices include VAT, packaging and postage within the U.K. (please allow 21 days delivery).*

*Please make cheques or postal orders payable to MUGENKYO.*

## "The Way of the Drum" Tour Dates

For those of you who can't wait for the next Mugenkyo tour, this special show presented by the Taiko Dojo is designed to introduce the traditions and history of taiko through traditional pieces, audience interaction and the usual thundering rhythms, energy and excitement you've come to expect from us! Don't miss this unique opportunity to see taiko "up close & personal" at a venue near you!



### February

Wed 9	Matlock, Highfields School	01629 581888
Thu 10	Milford, Primary School	01332 840660
Fri 11	Ashbourne, Hulland Ward & District Millenium Village	01335 370629
Sat 12	Ashford, War Memorial Institute	01629 812559
Sun 13	Warwick, Playbox Theatre	01926 419555
Fri 18	Burnham-on-Sea, Princess Hall	01278 784906
Sat 19	Bridport Arts Centre	01308 424204
Sun 20	Ledbury, Market Theatre	01531 633760

### March

Fri 4	Goole, The Gate Arts Theatre	01405 763652
Sat 5	Cockermouth, Kirkgate Centre	01900 826448
Sun 6	Spilsby Theatre	01790 752936
Mon 7	London, Studio Theatre, North Westminster Community School	020 7641 8424
Wed 9 - 11	Cambridgeshire, Arts in Cams	01223 566 205

## Guest Teacher Workshops by Masaaki Kurumaya Sensei from Fukui, Japan

### One-day Open Workshop

**Date: Sunday, 3rd April**

**Time: 10am - 5pm**

**Price: £80 (includes lunch)**

The master of Fukui-style "mitsu-uchi" will be running a special one-off workshop at the Dojo. This workshop is only open to those who have been on an introductory workshop at the Dojo. Please contact us asap if you've been to us before but have not yet received a pack.

### Workshop for Taiko Players

**Date: Sunday, 10th April**

**Time: 10am - 5pm**

**Price: £80 (includes lunch)**

This workshop is only open to people with experience in playing or performing taiko. Masaaki Kurumaya Sensei will be giving advice based on his 35 years of experience playing taiko.

He is a master at making a powerful sound out of a Taiko drum, and at directing KI energy in his playing. The workshop content will be Fukui-style "mitsu-uchi".

This workshop is to be held on the Sunday after the concerts in Edinburgh & Glasgow, so we highly recommend coming to one or both concerts to experience Masaaki Kurumaya Sensei performing.

## Dojo Showcase Concerts in April 2005

**Friday, 22nd April**  
Livingston,  
Howden Park Centre  
01506 433 634

**Saturday, 23rd April**  
Glasgow,  
Gilmorehill G12  
0141 330 5522

The culmination of "Project Taiko III" and the first performance by the brand new "Taiko Academy". This promises to be a thrilling event, with over 25 drummers onstage.



## Introductory Weekend Workshop

**Date: 26 + 27 March 2005**

**Price: £130 non-residential (includes lunch)**  
**Residential packages available on request**

*What better way to spend Easter weekend than learning a new skill, making new friends, and playing these beautiful instruments. A booster shot of good energy for the new year, (and be the first in line for the next guest teacher workshops)!*

Contact us on: 01357 522 008 or [mail@taikodojo.com](mailto:mail@taikodojo.com)

## Mugenkyo Merchandise



T-Shirts available in various sizes and colours - see order form on back.

### NEW C.D - TEN



Our latest C.D. Recorded last year and selling like hot cakes. With flute, bells, didgeridoo, voice and of course big booming taiko stompers...and a bonus C.D-rom of clips from our show.

### C.D - MUGENKYO



Don't forget our original C.D. Pure taiko at its most energetic!