

# 京都基本構想

## 概要版

**The Kyoto Philosophical Charter**

**Overview**



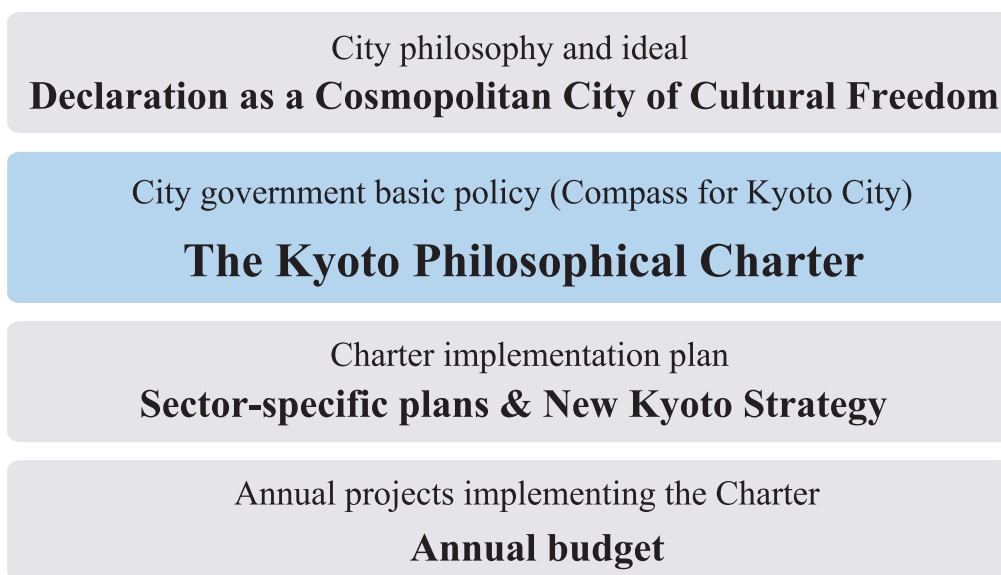
**京都市**

December 2025

# What is The Kyoto Philosophical Charter?

- The Kyoto Philosophical Charter is the “**city’s compass**” for the next 25 years (2026-2050), guiding with a vision that looks a thousand years ahead.
- It defines the **values that we, the citizens of Kyoto, should uphold and pass on to future generations** and presents the **city’s aspirations** in pursuit of the ideal outlined in Kyoto’s Declaration as a Cosmopolitan City of Cultural Freedom (adopted in 1978)—its overarching guiding principle.

## [Kyoto City's Policy Framework]



## Why do we need a guiding compass now?

While societal and technological progress has made our lives more convenient, it has also brought about numerous challenges, such as the effects of climate change and the emergence of social divisions, which cannot be solved by economic growth alone.

In Kyoto, too, the very essence of the city—including the way of life, traditional streetscapes, and business ethos that have been passed down through centuries—may vanish if current trends continue.

To ensure that Kyoto remains authentically Kyoto and continues to attract many people for the next thousand years, we need a shared compass for the city, one that embodies values the entire community can share and the future we hope to achieve in these rapidly changing times.

Note: The translation of the title and content of the “Declaration as a Cosmopolitan City of Cultural Freedom” differs from Kyoto City’s previously established standard translation; it has been reinterpreted in the process of formulating The Kyoto Philosophical Charter.

# **Toward the Ideal City: Lessons from Kyoto's Declaration as a Cosmopolitan City of Cultural Freedom**

The Declaration of Kyoto as a Cosmopolitan City of Cultural Freedom states that a city requires ideals, and that these ideals should be based on a clear understanding of the state of the world and a profound reflection on its own heritage, with its citizens striving to realize them. The Kyoto Philosophical Charter is structured in accordance with the path set out in the Declaration.

- “Without ideals, no city can endure” (Preface & Chapter 4)
- “Clear understanding of the state of the world” (Chapter 3)
- “Profound reflection on its own heritage” (Preface & Chapter 2)
- “Citizens strive to realize those ideals” (Chapters 4 & 5)

## **Declaration as a Cosmopolitan City of Cultural Freedom**

Without ideals, no city can endure. When a city's ideals are grounded in a clear understanding of the state of the world and a profound reflection on its own heritage, and its citizens strive to realize those ideals, the city will play a significant role in shaping world history. Guided by this conviction, we hereby declare Kyoto as a Cosmopolitan City of Cultural Freedom.

A Cosmopolitan City of Cultural Freedom is a city where people from around the world freely and peacefully gather for cultural engagement, regardless of differences in race, faith, or social systems.

Kyoto is a thousand-year capital that has preserved its rich cultural heritage and scenic beauty from one generation to the next. We must not, however, let pride in past glory make the city live in isolation. Kyoto must cultivate cultural exchange with the world, serving as both a timeless and innovative city of cultural achievement while aspiring to become a center of global cultural engagement.

A declaration of ideals is, of course, much easier than its execution, but we, the citizens of Kyoto, would like calmly to make this resolution and pledge our efforts towards what we can do for the realization of this ideal.

Kyoto City, October 15, 1978

# Formulation Process

Incorporating input from diverse stakeholders, including Kyoto’s citizens and proposals from Future Co-Creation Team Meetings—composed primarily of young people aged 35 and under—the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Council held discussions and submitted a recommendation for the formulation of The Kyoto Philosophical Charter. Based on this, Kyoto City conducted a detailed review on the Charter’s wording and expressions before submitting a bill to the City Council. After deliberation by the Special Committee for the Review of The Kyoto Philosophical Charter, the bill was unanimously approved, and the Charter was formally adopted.

## Soliciting opinions from citizens

October 2024 – September 2025

We received over 23,000 opinion submissions from both within and outside the city, collected through a dedicated website ( “ideal Kyoto” ), dialogue events engaging local residents and visitors, and questionnaires.



## Proposals from Future Co-Creation Team Meetings

February 3, 2025

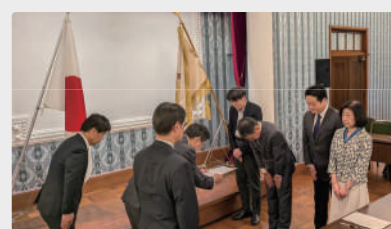
After extensive discussions on themes including “What values does Kyoto cherish and resonate with?”, the insights were summarized and presented as recommendations to the Advisory Council.

\*See Reference Material at the end

## Soliciting public comments

July 14 – August 14, 2025

A total of 1,514 comments were received from the citizens of Kyoto and other members of the public (around half of whom were people in their 20s or younger, the generation that will drive the future).



## Report from the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Council

September 11, 2025

After about a year of ongoing discussions, the conclusions were compiled into a formal report and submitted to Kyoto City.

## Unanimous adoption by Kyoto City Council

December 11, 2025

Following lively deliberations in the City Council (the Special Committee for the Review of The Kyoto Philosophical Charter), The Kyoto Philosophical Charter was unanimously approved and formally adopted.

## Implementation of The Kyoto Philosophical Charter

January 2026 – December 2050

# Structure of The Kyoto Philosophical Charter

## Preface

Expresses our determination to ensure that the **three values Kyoto has long cherished** endure for the future.

## Chapter 1

### Background of The Kyoto Philosophical Charter

Revisits the ideal city envisioned in Kyoto's Declaration as a Cosmopolitan City of Cultural Freedom and explores the context behind the formulation of The Kyoto Philosophical Charter.

## Chapter 2

### The Shape of Kyoto

Traces the history and geo-cultural climate in which the three values from the Preface have been nurtured and woven into the fabric of our daily lives by generations of people.

## Chapter 3

### Current and Future Challenges for the World, Japan, and Kyoto

Highlights current and potential future challenges and crises for the world, Japan, and Kyoto.

## Chapter 4

### The City We Envision

Outlines nine future visions for the city we aspire to become, each linked to one of the three values presented in the Preface and carrying those values into the future.

## Chapter 5

### Our Path Forward in Kyoto

Identifies not only Kyoto residents but also those connected to Kyoto in various ways as "citizens of Kyoto," and highlights the city administration's role in driving the collaborative development of the city.

### Questions for the Future

Expresses our desire to use The Kyoto Philosophical Charter as a starting point for everyone to reflect on Kyoto's future, engage in dialogue, and act together.

## Preface

The Preface expresses our determination to ensure that the three values Kyoto has long cherished endure for the future.

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The opening four lines of The Kyoto Philosophical Charter encapsulate the main message we aim to share.

“

We, the citizens of Kyoto, remain committed to unremitting effort so that this city may endure as a place where, through history and culture, humanity recovers its truest human ground; a place where reverence and gratitude toward nature are cultivated as the very ground of life; and a place where the lives of self and other are inseparably affirmed, upheld, and mutually respected.

This opening presents **three values that we, the citizens of Kyoto, wish to continue cherishing**—expressed as distinct facets of our city—so that Kyoto may remain true to its character. These values have long been treasured and passed down through the daily lives and livelihoods of our predecessors, and we convey our determination to carry them forward into Kyoto’s future.

In the Preface, we also restate these values in the following three sentences:

“

- Human beings are granted existence by the past, and we exist always oriented toward the future.
- Human beings are granted existence by nature, and we exist as nature itself.
- Human beings are granted existence by community, and we exist through community.

## The Three Values We Will Continue to Cherish in Our City

### 1 A place where, through history and culture, humanity recovers its truest human ground

Recognizing that Shinto rituals, *Geidō* (Arts), *Kōgei* (Crafts), shrines and temples, and gardens have been handed down through generations, we live with an awareness of the continuity of time: the present rests on the layers of the past, and the future on the **layers of our daily lives**.

### 2 A place where reverence and gratitude toward nature are cultivated as the very ground of life

Just as the banks of the Kamo and Katsura rivers provide quiet repose, and groundwater supports Kyoto's cuisine and *sake* brewing, we live humbly as **one life within nature**, sustained by it and grateful for its blessings.

### 3 A place where the lives of self and other are inseparably affirmed, upheld, and mutually respected

Whether through neighborhood associations, watching over children on their way to and from school, taking lessons, frequenting local shops, or engaging with the community as university or international students, we prioritize **real human connections** over economic rationality—living with mutual respect and appreciation for each other's differences.

# Chapter 1. Background of The Kyoto Philosophical Charter

1978

Kyoto's Declaration as  
a Cosmopolitan City of Cultural Freedom

2011 Local Autonomy Law Revised  
Master concept requirement abolished

2025

Formulation of The Kyoto Philosophical  
Charter

It expresses the values we, the citizens of Kyoto,  
hold dear and seek to uphold in pursuit of our city's  
ideal.

1983 / 1999

Formulation of The Master Concept  
of Kyoto City

The Master Concept of Kyoto City, formulated in 1999, was written in the voice of Kyoto's citizens and reaffirmed the core values they share, expressed through six distinctive strengths: *Mekiki* (discerning eye), *Takumi* (craftsmanship), *Kiwame* (mastery), *Kokoromi* (venture), *Omotenashi* (hospitality), and *Shimatsu* (zero waste mindset).

## Chapter 2. The Shape of Kyoto

Chapter 2 traces the history and geo-cultural climate in which the three values from the Preface have been nurtured and woven into the fabric of our daily lives by generations of people.

### Within the Enduring *Kyōsei* (Symbiosis) with Nature

Kyoto, blessed with abundant rivers and groundwater fed by encircling mountains, has cultivated a rich tradition of gardens, tea ceremony, *sake* brewing, and heirloom vegetables, alongside a philosophy that conceives human beings as one life within nature.

This philosophy remains alive in everyday life, finding expression in the seasonal sensibilities that shape the city's annual events, cuisine, and attire.

### Layered History, Cultural Depth, and Continuity of Human Bonds

Kyoto has overcome wars and crises through the resilience of its culture, building a rich history and preserving the practices nurtured over the centuries thanks to the deep attachment and dedication of its people.

We owe this enduring legacy to our predecessors, who shared their history and culture while actively learning from and teaching one another.

## Open Civic Character Rooted in Moderation and Dignity

Kyoto has been shaped by people of diverse and vibrant backgrounds—gathering, connecting, embracing differences, and supporting one another. This has fostered in Kyoto’s people a sense of dignity that honors tradition, alongside a spirit of moderation that encourages collaboration while respecting boundaries, together forming a strong foundation of mutual trust.

Guided by this civic openness of moderation and dignity, Kyoto has preserved its heritage while fostering new cultures and industries—a practice that has led to the city’s thriving concentration of universities, research institutions, and cutting-edge technology sectors today.

## A Preeminent Seat of Scholarship and the Arts

Kyoto is known as a preeminent seat of scholarship and the arts, esteemed for its academic achievement as well as its rich cultural and artistic pursuits.

This standing is sustained by the steady efforts of the “Kyoto scholarly and artistic fellowship”—a living tapestry of individuals who learn from and teach one another, safeguarding and enriching the scholarship, culture, arts, traditional craftsmanship, festivals, and business ethos that embody the city’s values. They are indispensable to the continuation of these legacies.

## Chapter 3. Current and Future Challenges for the World, Japan, and Kyoto

Chapter 3 highlights current and potential future challenges and crises for the world, Japan, and Kyoto.

- Demographic changes are not only weakening social ties in communities but also undermining the tradition of local self-governance and the spirit of mutual support, impacting welfare services, local events, and cultural preservation.
- Economically, there is a shortage of successors to local businesses that have long supported the community’s way of life and culture. Furthermore, rising tourist numbers are leading to concentrated crowds at specific tourist spots and the transformation of traditional streetscapes and business ethos, affecting the lives and livelihoods of citizens.
- The environment has experienced record-breaking torrential rains and extreme heat days, causing significant disruption to citizens’ daily lives. In addition, precious native species, which have long supported festivals and culinary traditions, are now endangered.
- The international community faces persistent instability, from the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath to the emergence and continuation of wars and conflicts, and a return to nationalism.

## Chapter 4. The City We Envision

Chapter 4 outlines nine future visions for the city we aspire to become, each linked to one of the three values presented in the Preface and carrying those values into the future.

### Section 1. A City Where Humanity Recovers Itself Through History and Culture

#### Pursuit and Creation of the Authentic

Instead of chasing short-term gains or being swayed by shifting trends, we will actively collaborate with individuals within and beyond the city, learning from one another as we explore, adopt, and create diverse expressions of authenticity (*honmamon*, a Kansai dialect term). In doing so, we seek to make them a source of vitality and foundation for the city.

##### Key concepts in the text

The authentic, Unity of the timeless and the ever-changing, Sensibility

#### Global Cultural Engagement and Synthesis

Through ongoing engagement with people worldwide, Kyoto's citizens will be able to expand their activities on the global stage. By embracing the new culture that emerges from the blending of diverse and vibrant individuals with the city, we will make Kyoto a city chosen by people across Japan and around the world.

##### Key concepts in the text

Spirit of enterprise, Playfulness, Unconventional and marginal

#### Endless Learning Fueled by Passion and Inspiration

By treating the entire city as a living campus, we will create an environment where the children and young people who will shape Kyoto's future can engage with the history, culture, and craftsmanship woven into every corner of our city. This will allow everyone to explore a wide range of interests aligned with their unique personalities and pursue lifelong learning, fostering a city full of passion and inspiration.

##### Key concepts in the text

Passion, Entire city as a living campus

#### Contemplation of Self and the World in Peace and Tranquility

Amid the peace and tranquility fostered by the city's nature, history, and culture, we will continue to engage quietly and deeply with both our inner selves and the wider world. By remaining a city where people can overcome divisions and reaffirm mutual respect, we will contribute to the lasting peace and prosperity of the world.

##### Key concepts in the text

Profound serenity, Continuous reflection, Peace and prosperity

## Section 2. A City Where Reverence and Gratitude for Nature Ground All Life

### Humble Coexistence with Nature

We must never forget that we are one among many lives sustained by nature. With gratitude for its blessings, which have shaped this city’s history and culture, we will continue to live humbly and strive for a harmonious *Kyōsei* (symbiosis) with nature.

#### Key concepts in the text

Life through the changing seasons, Identity as the birthplace of the Kyoto Protocol

### Flexible Recovery from Disasters, Epidemics, and Other Crises

Building on the resilience this city has cultivated throughout its history, we will work closely with diverse stakeholders to foster a city that prepares for future crises, continually explores ways to respond, and recovers swiftly.

#### Key concepts in the text

Resilience, Human connections

## Section 3. A City Where Self and Other Thrive in Mutual Respect

### Diverse and Living Human Connections

While preserving the tradition of local self-governance, we will continue to weave vibrant, inclusive connections among diverse people, regardless of titles and roles—making Kyoto a city where everyone lives with peace of mind and feels at home.

#### Key concepts in the text

Cultivated poise, Multilayered connection, Inclusive connection

### The Practice of Daily Life Through Mutual Support

Within a community built on relationships of mutual support, we will foster a city in which no one is left behind and each person can embrace their roles and connections in society, living authentically in a safe and secure environment.

#### Key concepts in the text

Flexible shifting of roles, Connections within society

### Mutual Respect of Personalities and Values

We will continue to build a city where people can affirm and respect one another, express their individuality, and find their own place to belong and opportunities to contribute in the community—regardless of gender, nationality, or any other differences—enabling them to follow the paths of life and daily rhythms they desire.

#### Key concepts in the text

Belonging and contribution, Acceptance of diverse personalities

## Chapter 5. Our Path Forward in Kyoto

Chapter 5 identifies not only Kyoto residents but also those connected to Kyoto in various ways as “citizens of Kyoto,” and highlights the city administration’s role in driving the collaborative development of the city.

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Our three core values are not abstract principles, but cherished traditions sustained through the daily lives and livelihoods of our predecessors. They are a precious legacy that we, the citizens of Kyoto, wish to carry forward for generations to come.

However, values are intangible, and without conscious effort, they can easily slip away. That is why we, the citizens of Kyoto, must continually reflect on, recognize, and share these values in our daily lives and livelihoods — translating them into action, passing them on to future generations, and striving together to realize the city’s nine future visions.

### Collaborating with pluralistic citizens, bound in civic spirit

Kyoto is a city shaped not only by its residents, but also by people connected in diverse ways: those who commute into the city to work or study, university and international students, tourists, and visitors who come on their days off to pursue hobbies or attend classes.

From now on, we will actively collaborate with those who, despite living elsewhere, feel a strong attachment to Kyoto—whom we recognize as **pluralistic citizens ( “0.1 citizens” )**. We aim to strengthen our shared understanding of Kyoto’s values and jointly realize our visions for the city.

### The administration will serve as a nexus between civically engaged citizens and pluralistic citizens

To enable a more diverse and vibrant range of people to engage in public affairs as a personal matter, the administration will continually review its operational approaches. By reducing barriers between the public, communal, and private spheres as much as possible, we will serve as **a nexus connecting civically engaged citizens with the broader community of pluralistic citizens ( “0.1 citizens” )**. Through ongoing dialogue, we will together create a system in which everyone can collaboratively shape the city’s development.

### Going forward

By ensuring that **everyone connected to Kyoto can belong and contribute**, and uniting our efforts to create new spaces for participation, we hope to lay the foundation for Kyoto’s future.

## Questions for the Future

This section expresses our desire to use The Kyoto Philosophical Charter as a starting point for everyone to reflect on Kyoto's future, engage in dialogue, and act together.

In this era of profound change, there may not be a single correct answer. Therefore, we must continue to ask ourselves questions such as “What truly defines Kyoto?” and “What should we pass on to the next generation?” and engage in ongoing dialogue and discussion.

To this end, The Kyoto Philosophical Charter presents seven key questions, some of which follow.

“

- As the number of tourists to Kyoto continues to increase, how can we harmonize our daily lives and livelihoods with the tourism industry, and leverage that balance to enhance the charm and vitality of our city which is borne on traditional streetscapes and local commerce?
- With the increasing number of people requiring support and care, due to social factors such as a declining birthrate and aging population, and the simultaneous decline in caregivers, how can we build communities that leave no one behind?
- Is the Kyoto we are shaping today a city that honors its thousand-year history, and can it proudly uphold that legacy for the next thousand years?

Kyoto's future does not rest on any single exceptional individual, but on each of us who, in some way, is connected to the city.

Through ongoing reflection on Kyoto's values and magnetism, **we must continually ask ourselves** what we should cherish and carry forward to the next generation. It is the accumulation of these efforts that will forge a new future for Kyoto.

**What will your next step be?**



## Proposals from Future Co-Creation Team Meetings

### Shaping Kyoto's Future: Core Ideas and Values for the Next 25 Years

The following summarizes the outcomes of discussions held during Future Co-Creation Team Meetings on the values we cherish and resonate with, which were subsequently proposed to the Advisory Council.

\*Presented at the 4th Council Meeting (February 3, 2025)

01

#### **Foster many “0.1 citizens” by designing even weak connections**

We suggest cultivating relationships with people and non-human beings that are only loosely tied to the city and regarding them as key contributors to shaping Kyoto.

02

#### **Leave room for citizen interpretation and initiative**

To encourage Kyoto's citizens to think proactively and take initiative, we suggest allowing “space” for recognizing and embracing diverse values.

03

#### **Beyond a competitive society—valuing better, not just the best**

We suggest adopting a pluralistic perspective—one that favors moderation over extremity, attentiveness over speed, the ongoing and open-ended over completion, and intertwining at one's own pace over competition.

04

#### **Adopt a nurturing, supportive attitude toward others**

We suggest prioritizing the perspectives of young people, children, and vulnerable groups who will live in and shape the times to come.

05

#### **Think in the ultra long term**

Since the future is built on the present and the past, we suggest revisiting Kyoto's unique values, carefully woven over a thousand years.



For the full text of The Kyoto Philosophical Charter and information on the formulation process,  
please visit the Kyoto City Information Center



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Initiatives for Formulation  
Page: QR Code