The historical scenic beauty of Kyoto to be maintained and improved

1 Total Picture of Kyoto

(1) Outline

The historical scenic beauty of Kyoto has been formed as a result of the rich natural environment and urban space developed by 1000 year of history and culture as a capital. The presence of historical monuments, cultural events and arts which are supported by those who have inherited them and their keen interest in developing and preserving them has also played an important role in this process. This unique urban terrain cannot be observed in other cities of the world.

(2) Kyoto and natural environment

When moving the capital to Kyoto, the imperial decree repeatedly emphasized the natural beauty of Kyoto basin stating that “Mountains and rivers are also alluring”. There were several political and military reasons for selecting the site for capital, however, the topography of Kyoto was the top most striking of all because it fits the “Shijin So-oh” criteria or Fen shui geomancy; having Kamo river in the east, San-yo trunk road in the west and Ogura pond in the south. Three mountains: Funaoka, in the north, Kaguraoka in the east and Narabigaoka in the west were believed to provide serenity to the land for mountains had a special meaning in ancient time.

Most of the World Heritage sites of “Historical Monuments of Ancient Kyoto” are closely related to the circumjacent mountains and rivers and have been nurtured by its rich history and culture in its natural environment. The beautiful nature encompassing Kyoto is what makes Heian-kyo the capital and the modern Kyoto as Kyoto. Kyoto and its natural environment could be called as the representative or even the origin of the scenic beauty of Japan.

(3) Urban structure of Kyoto

Fig2-1  Kyoto City and its natural environment
Even before Heian-kyo was constructed, Kyoto area was inhabited and covered with agricultural fields. There were some shrines, such as Yasaka Shrine, that local people worshiped.

Heian-kyo was a Japanese fortress type of capital surrounded by beautiful mountain ranges constructed under the concept of Ritsuryo law system.

Urban zoning system called Jobo system was developed during 100 years of transition of capital from Fujiwara-kyo to Heijo-kyo, then to Nagaoka-kyo and finally to Heian-kyo. It can be said that the Jobo system is the pearls of engineering for city planning gained by the accumulation of experiences and ingenuity during the aforesaid transitions. Heian-kyo and its concept survived ages and became the ideal city image in Kamakura and Edo periods.

From the Middle Ages to the present, Kyoto has constructed new urban space on top of avenues and streets of Heian-kyo. It has experienced several ups and downs and has undergone declination, growth, revitalization, expansion and transformation.

Some examples are the depopulation of Ukyo area, expansion of the city area to the north beyond Ichijo Street, development of Shirakawa and Toba areas, large development project by Muromachi Shogunate, destruction afflicted during the warring states period, construction of castle towns by Nobunaga ODA, Hideyoshi TOYOTOMI and Ieyasu TOKUGAWA and modern city planning project. Also lying beneath are the destruction of Heian-kyo, the Middle Age type urbanization, population density of modern time and urban expansion. Construction of new small roads and new housing land are some of the community development by the citizens.

Kyoto has undergone big transition and changes. The framework of the inner Kyoto and outer Kyoto and the grid pattern street structure of the city have been handed down to the present. This inherited asset together with the basin landscape, symbolically called “Purple Mountains and Clear Water” form the foundation of
historical scenic beauty.

(4) Architectural monuments and townscape

Before the Modern Ages, on the basis of the aforesaid framework, Kyoto city consisted of the following areas each of which might be called as towns by themselves: Kamigyo, Shimogyo, Toji, Kiyomizu, Gion, Yoshida, Kitano, Kamigamo, Nishinokyo, Saga, Fushimi and Yodo. Out of theses, the ones with wider area have some unique communities. For instance, the imperial palace, residences of aristocrats, Nijo castle and Nishijin textile industrial areas were located in Kamigyo, while Gion festival communities and Toji, Nishi-Honganji and Higashi-Honganji temple towns were located in Shimogyo.

These areas can be defined as towns of imperial and noble courts, of Shoguns and warriors, of markets, of inns and of port. Kyoto was a city where unique small towns were loosely connected with each other, meanwhile forming a network system linking the center with its surrounding areas.

Architectures including World Heritage sites, national treasures and important cultural properties are located on the foot of three mountain ranges which make Kyoto a city with the most concentrated historical sites in Japan. The city features typical Japanese architectures of each stage of 1200 years of history from Heian Period to the present. It has also a wide variety of buildings including temples, shrines, castles, residences of court nobles, tea houses, town houses, modern residents, school buildings, banks, government offices and museums. Many of these historical buildings are inseparable from the history and culture of the neighbouring communities. For instance, Yasaka Pagoda (Five storied pagoda of Hokanji temple) is the symbol of its neighbourhood.

In the historical downtown area, Kyo-machiya or town houses, a symbol of Kyoto’s history and culture still exist, providing living space and business facility to many people. There are four important preservation districts for groups of historical buildings and other places where tasteful townscape are formed.

(5) Kyoto Culture

Being the capital of Japan for more than 1000 years, Kyoto was a gathering place for people, products and information. It was very receptive to accepting foreign cultures, not only of East Asia but also of other parts of the world. At the same time, it has kept creating new culture while preserving the inherited traditional culture. This way, Kyoto has nurtured its own unique values by respecting the differences of
various other values such as the way of living, industry, politics, religion, arts and academy. While reconciled the differences, she managed to harmonize, modify, and blend them, thus, creating and developing a new rich and integrated culture.

Kyoto culture is a blend of aristocrats’, temples’ and shrines’, warriors’ and common citizens’ culture. Hence, the culture of imperial family and aristocrats and that of commoners interacted and stimulated each other, as a result of which sophisticated arts such as Noh play, tea ceremony, flower arrangement and Sukiya style architecture were created.

Suburban villages had also deep connection with Kyoto Culture. The use of untreated human waste from urban area as fertilizer for growing vegetables in the suburbs formed an ecological cycle which is regarded as the first eco-friendly society to be achieved in Japan. This should be highly praised. Daimonji Bonfire on five mountains in summer is the pageant during Obon, a religious ritual in mid-August, which is said to be a present from the rural folks to the urban people.

In the past as well as present, a blend of various cultures such as those of aristocrats and commoners, city and countryside, Chinese style and Japanese style, Western style and Japanese style and classic and Suki style co-existed in Kyoto. The characteristics of Kyoto, which is accepting various cultures, nurturing and spreading them out, was achieved by the people who willingly accepted both the tradition together with innovation and respected and kept the balance between the two.

Tea ceremony and flower arrangement have been deeply incorporated into the daily life, society and the annual events and that also contributed to the attractive lifestyle of people as well as that of Kyo-machiya town houses.

Rokkakudo temple which is famous for “standing style” flower arrangement, used to be a meeting place for Shimogyo commoners. The bell of this temple was used to announce time as well as to call townspeople to rise in rebellion against the authorities. Furthermore, Gion Festival (World Intangible Cultural Heritage) is a ritual of Yasaka Shrine which has been closely connected to the local community since the warring states period. These facts clearly show that daily lives, lifestyle, and communities are inseparably linked together.

As mentioned before, in every period of history, a combination of traditional culture and modern one coexisted in Kyoto. Meanwhile, it had been producing various crafts which were marketed not only in Kyoto but also in other parts of Japan and East Asian countries. Some firms produced such goods as Nishijin brocade and folding fans that could be called as Kyoto brand. From early ages,
similar occupations and businesses formed clusters and developed their own individual areas. So, it can be said that people, their culture, and their communities are closely united.

Fine arts, performing arts, crafts, religious rituals ceremonies, and livelihood have their bases in local communities where the residents help and collaborate with each other. Residents also developed a uniform townscape composed of Kyo-machiya houses. Residents developed communities and managed them. These communities contributed greatly to the construction of modern elementary schools for the first time in Japan, implemented modern community development and revitalized Kyo-machiya. This spirit was passed down to the present Kyotoites and formed one of the traditions of Kyoto.

The multicoloured culture nurtured during more than 1200 years of history forms the background of historical scenic beauty of Kyoto. The daily lives and activities of the citizens have bestowed an air of dignity and taste, seen only in Kyoto. Communities possessing the qualities or characteristic of each era, including their historical buildings blended with the surrounding natural environment called “Purple Mountains and Clear Water” constituted the multilayered landscape. This created the unique historical scenic beauty of Kyoto, which is the only one of its kind not only in Japan but also in the world.
Fig 2-3 Historical scenic beauty in Kyoto
2 The historical scenic beauty of Kyoto to be maintained and improved

Kyoto has accumulated strata of tangible and intangible historical properties from each period during more than 1200 years of history. The historical scenic beauty sites are scattered both around the centre of the city and the northern and western mountainous areas which used to be the outskirts of the capital. These sites are loosely connected with each other to form a larger historical scenic beauty. The following pages are dedicated to the specific examples of historical scenic beauty of Kyoto under three categories.

The first category consists of four chapters which give examples of urban culture including religion, livelihood, business, and tradition which was developed and handed down to the present:

- “Kyoto, the city of religious faith and prayer”
- “Hare or festive occasion and Ke or ordinary days are much alive in daily lives of Kyoto”
- “Kyoto, the city of manufacturing, commerce and hospitality”
- “Kyoto, the city of art and culture”

The second category consists of one chapter “Historical scenic beauty in suburbs” which presents examples of the historical scenic beauty in the areas that used to be the suburbs and were closely related to the urban area.

The third category consists of one chapter “Kyoto, the place of tradition with the spirit of modernization” which presents examples of the process of modernization of Kyoto after the relocation of capital to Tokyo in Meiji Era based on the traditional values in line with the spirit of modernization.
Kyoto, a city of religious faith and prayer –

(1) Head temples and holy places

From 794 to the beginning of Meiji Era, when the capital was relocated to Tokyo, Kyoto fulfilled her function as the capital of Japan. This is the reason why the headquarters of many temples of highest status and rich dignity are located in Kyoto. These include those temples that are designated as World Cultural Heritages such as Kiyomizu Temple, Kyo-oh Gokokuji Temple (commonly called Toji Temple), Honganji Temple, Tenryuji Temple, and some others like Nanzenji Temple and Chion-in Temple. Moreover, some of the “33 holy places of the ancient Western Provinces” are also located in Kyoto. Thus, many pilgrims who intend to pay homage to these holy places frequently visit Kyoto.

Kamigamo and Shimogamo Shrines already existed in Kyoto from ancient times. Fushimi Inari Grand Shrine, the head quarter of Inari Shrines throughout Japan, and other representative shrines in Japan are concentrated in Kyoto. Most of these shrines and their rich green precincts such as Koyama hill and Tadasu Forests have attracted religious faith and pilgrims from olden days. These holy lands also served as a sightseeing spots. This is one of the historical aspects of Kyoto as the headquarter of religion. The following pages show the background and examples of the historical scenic beauty from the point of view of “Kyoto as a religious headquarter”.

A Background

The feudal government forced everyone to follow Buddhism and made it mandatory for people to belong to any one of the Buddhist temples. Thus almost all Japanese were converted into Buddhism. The headquarters of these temples were located in Kyoto. Such temples possessed Buddhist statues and other inherited treasures that were not open to the public except on special occasions. Therefore, people eager to see these treasures had to visit Kyoto which became popular trend and promoted pilgrimage to Kyoto, the headquarter of the temples. Accordingly, lodgings were built in the vicinities of big temples such as Higashi Honganji and Nishi Honganji Temples and along the trunk road of Seiganji Temple and Kiyomizu temple.

Moreover, a fixed tour route for paying homage to “33 Holy Kannon Places in ancient Western Provinces” located in across six prefectures in Kinki Region had been designed. Out of the 33 sites, eight are located in Kyoto which attract many men and women. Following the above route pattern, two new routes, the “33 Rakuyo Kannon Bodhisattva Places in western provinces” and “Benzaiten
Sarasvati visit” were created. Since 18th century, “48 Ganji Temples” were popular for viewing and paying tribute to famous statues including images of Buddha, Yakushi, Amida, Hudo and Jizo.

There are a great number of notable sites and historical monuments as well as natural beauty spots in Kyoto to be enjoyed in four seasons. These places were introduced on the guide books such as “Miyako Meisho Zue”. These guide books encouraged people to visit Kyoto for both religious purposes and sightseeing.

**B Examples**

**(A) Visiting Honganji Temple and its vicinity**

East and West Honganji Temples were popular since Edo Period which are still among the most attractive tourist spots.

Hōonko is a memorial service held to honour Shinran, the founder of Jodo Sect. It is the most important and glorious of all services conducted annually at the temples in Kyoto. Priest Kakunyo started this service 33 years after the death of Shinran. Since then, it has been regarded as the most important service and is being held at both the headquarter and branch temples. East Honganji Temple holds it from November 21 to 28 and West Honganji Temple from January 9 to 16. On both occasions, the temples and their vicinities are packed with visitors.

In 1591, Hideyoshi TOYOTOMI relocated Honganji Temple to the present site where high-ranked priests and merchants moved in to form the temple town.

The history of the temple began when a new temple building was constructed at this site to conduct the memorial service for Shinran who had died in 1262. Later,
the temple was brought under the protection of Hideyoshi TOYOTOMI and the site had been changed several times before settling to the present location.

In 1602, Ieyasu TOKUGAWA was allotted a piece of land in Karasuma-Shichijo area for the construction of East Honganji Temple. Thus the Honganji was divided in two East and West temples. Consequently two temple towns were developed in this area.

Many inns and lodgings existed in front of these temples from olden days for pilgrims from other parts of Japan. Even today, there are many inns along the streets there. The main feature of the area is the presence of numerous shops dealing with Buddhist objects including altar, clothes, rosaries and paper mountings. A shop called Wakabayashi Buddhist Object Shop (a tangible cultural property registered by the national government) which still exists, was constructed in 1927. This area serves as the centre for Buddhist objects which are one of the traditional industries of Kyoto. These shops displaying bright objects and rosaries on the shelves and dispersing fragrance of incense to the vicinity exhibit an atmosphere of temple town.

Clustered Buddhist object shops and inns are distinctive attributes of the landscape of a temple town. Town houses, small and medium temples, and roof tiles of grand temples are also some of the distinguishing qualities of the area. Monks and citizens spend their lives there, and pilgrims come and go in the historical townscape and deepen their faith by visiting grand temples.

(B) Yasaka Shrine to Kiyomizu Temple

Yasaka shrine, Hokanji Temple, and Kiyomizu Temple at the foot of Higashiyama mountain range were the attraction spots from olden days for many people from both religious and scenic beauty aspects. The area is still the most popular target in Kyoto for both male and female visitors from home and abroad.

There are several theories about the origin of Yasaka Shrine commonly and endearingly called Gion-san. According to one of the legends of the shrine, Yasaka clan of Korean origin enshrined here a god named Susano-o-no mikoto who had lived in Mt. Gyuto in Korea.

The shrine is famous for Gion Festival celebrated in mid-summer. It is also well known as the place for Otera-mairi, an event held from New Year’s Eve to New Year’s Day. During this period, people visit the shrine to pray for good health and luck for the New Year: and carry some fire home to cook food for the New Year’s day.
Before the creation of Maruyama Park (designated as a place of extraordinary scenic beauty by the government) there was a vacant lot behind the shrine where a dormitory for monks, temples and shrines were located. This was converted into a park in 1973. The park is famous for its weeping cherry tree which was originally planted in the garden of Hojuin Temple. After the temple was abandoned, the tree survived and attracted many people for viewing cherry blossom in the evening. The original tree died of age and the present tree replaced it.

Hokanji Temple known for its famous Yasaka Pagoda is said to be built before the Heian Period. According to the legend of the temple, Prince Shotoku built a five-storied pagoda to store some bones of Buddha and named it Hokanji Temple. Yasaka clan of Korean origin is said to be involved in the construction of the temple.

The eye-catching view of Yasaka Pagoda projecting among the roofs of town houses is an important component and symbol of the historical landscape of the area.

Kiyomizu Temple is famous for its Kengai architectural style. According to “The Picture Scroll for the Origin of Kiyomizu Temple”, the origin of the temple is linked to Tamuramaro SAKANOUE who came to the area for deer hunting. A priest named Enchin reprimanded him for killing animals. After this incidence in 798, with the help of Enchin, he started erecting the statue of a multi-armed deity and built a hall to enshrine the statue in it. The temple was repeatedly engulfed in fires, but was rebuilt again and again. As a result, Nio Mon (the statues of the guardians at the gate) and the horse stable both built in late Muromachi Period become the oldest structures in the temple. The present buildings, including the main hall and three storied pagoda were constructed in the mid 17th century. The temple is the headquarters of Hosso sect. In late middle ages, the temple became one of the “33 temples of west provinces” because of the increasing popularity of Kannon Bodhisattva. Many pilgrims are in the incense
smoke filled main hall with their hands clasped in prayer. Furthermore, there are many other places worth visiting in the vicinity of the temple.

The access route to Kiyomizu Temple has been called Kiyomizu Slope since early times. To reach the temple, town people used to walk on Gojo Street (present Matsubara Street.), cross the Gojo Bridge, and then proceed to the Kiyomizu Slope. In late Middle Age, a road from Yasaka Shrine to Sannen Slope became one of the main access routes to the temple. The busy crowded roads can be found in Rakuchu Rakugai painting screens and HigashiyAMA Yuraku-zu or the picture of Higashiyama mountain tour. Later, Ninen Slope was constructed which was connected to Sannen Slope forming the present access route. There used to be many tea houses along these routes. Pottery shops, tea houses and doll shops on the way to the temple are recorded in a document in 1848, showing that many souvenir shops for the pilgrims already existed there at that time.

![Photo2-2 Townscape of San-nenzaka Slope](image1)
![Photo2-3 Yasaka Pagoda](image2)

Today, Sannen Slope and Ninen Slope access routes form a historical townscape with traditional houses built on both sides from Edo Period to early Showa Era. Souvenir shops selling Kyoto dolls and Kiyomizu pottery are also run in front of these traditional houses. Some shops operate their workshops in their backyards where they produce traditional crafts. Thus, the area has many historical places including temples and shrines and some access routes link these places. The scene of selling handicrafts adds colour to the historical townscape and gives the atmosphere of the old capital, while the peacefulness of the area pleases pilgrims and visitors.

**(C) Shimogamo Shrine and Tadasu Forest**

Shimogamo Shrine is located on the confluent point of Kamo River and Takano
River. Together with Kamigamo Shrine, it belonged to Kamo Clan who used to rule this area. These two shrines were regarded as one and are two of the oldest shrines in Japan.

Tadasu Forest is within the premises of Shimogamo Shrine and a place for worshipping nature. This 12 hectares of land stretches from the south of the main hall of Shimogamo Shrine to Kawai Shrine. The vegetation and ecological system of forest has been preserved from the ancient North Yamashiro forest. The area is designated and protected as a historical site by the national government because of its preciousness. There are several clean streamlets including Nara, Semi, Izumi and Matarashi winding through the forest, and showing off the beauty of four seasons. These streams appear in the Tale of Genji, Pillow Book and some other stories and songs. In the peak of its rich bright greenness in May, the forest serves as the stage for Aoi Matsuri or Hollyhock Festival. Before the commencement of the main festival, Yabusame (archery on horseback) and procession of Mikage Festival are held. At the Aoi Festival itself, bullock carts will parade and besides that several other events will take place in this rich green forest.

Tadasu Forest has not been only a sacred religious place, but also a playground for the citizens since olden days. Today, the forest is a part of the livelihood of local citizens, serving as a spot for refreshment and tranquility, for tea parties and for “getting cool breeze”. People have enjoyed cool evening breeze since Edo Period. A book called “Miyako Rinsen Meisho Zue”, published in 1799, depicts these scenes. Also a description of an evening cool tea ceremony is recorded in a document in Meiji Era.

With the passage of time, citizen’s activities declined. However in 1991, tea ceremony adorned by the flares of fireflies has been resumed after 100 years of absence. This elegant annual event with fireflies flying over the scene is held in the evening of early June.

In front of the tower gate of the shrine “Cool breeze market on Tadasu Forest” opens in the afternoon with over 20 long-established shops. In the evening, a religious event is held in the middle gate and tea service starts at Hashidono and Hosodono buildings.
Fig 2-6 Shimogamo Shrine and Tadasu Forest

Photo2-4 Tadasu Forest

Photo2-5 Aerial view of Tadasu Forest
At six in the evening, wearing of 12 layers of ceremonial Kimono, royal dancing and Koto music are performed. At eight, some 600 fireflies are released from baskets to Mitarashi stream.

In the past, many fireflies were seen around the clean and limpid water streams, but regretfully with the passage of time fireflies disappeared and tea ceremonies abandoned, too. However, with the help of local agricultural society and people in the domain of the shrine, the brook was cleaned and nymphs were brought in which resulted into the return of fireflies and the resumption of tea ceremony.

In Edo Period on the day of Cool breeze market”, tea ceremonies were held on a boat, tea stalls were built along the brook, Noh & and Sumo were performed in Tadasu Forest. Unfortunately, the market was abandoned later. Today the nostalgic scene of “Cool breeze market” has been revived once again.

Other annual events including Aoi Festival, Mitarai Festival and Coming of age Festival are held on this stage blessed by rich natural environment. People enjoying forest bathing, children playing with water and early morning walk are some of the routine scenes which are deeply rooted in their lives. The tea ceremony adorned by the flare of fireflies testifies that both shrine priests and local residents take care of the forests.

The aforesaid events formed the basis of people's faith in history and religion. Visitors to Tadasu forests will sense the depth of faith and history of the primeval forest while walking under the sun peering through the leaves, breathing fresh air and hearing the sound of the brook in the forest.

C The historical scenic beauty at head temples and their sanctuaries

Visiting the headquarters of temples and pilgrimages seeking comfort and peace is being practiced until today. Temples, scenic places and their vicinities including temple towns, sacred forests as well as the activities there creates a unique world characteristic of Kyoto.

These places are the destination for pilgrims and tourists and form a part of urban landscape. Also the activities of pilgrims and monks in Kyoto have influenced the traditional handicrafts industries. As a result, it has created business and contributed to the revitalization of Kyoto as the city of religion.

Even today, monks chanting sutra and priests wearing Buddhist robes are often seen in some historical quarters of Kyoto. Selling traditional handicrafts in front of temples is a good way of knowing the skills developed in Kyoto.

Temples, their vicinities and related traditional industries have important place in the history and culture of Kyoto, which is regarded as a typical religious city in Japan.
(2) Place for prayer

Bishamon Hall famous for the god of commercial prosperity, Yoshimine Temple for its curing power of neuralgia and backache, Jonangu Shrine for its power of avoiding bad luck, Kanjadensha Shrine and Daiho-onji Temple are some of the places which are closely connected to the people's daily lives and has enticed many people of faith.

The following pages are dedicated to the examples of historical landscapes which are composed of temples, shrines and their religious activities closely related to people's livelihood, from the points of view of business and daily activities.

A Examples

There is a small shrine called Kanjaden, next to one of the rest station for the portable shrines of Gion Festival. It enshrines the god of commerce and has garnered the religious faith. It used to be located at another rest station at the cross point of Karasuma Street and Takatsuji Street. In late 16th century, it was transferred to the place called Kanjaden at the crossing of Manjuji Street and Takakura Street. Later it was transferred again to the present location.

In Edo Period, there used to be religious customs called “Seimon-barai” and “Ebisuko” on October 20th of lunar calendar for which merchants and dancers
would visit this shrine. A document of Edo Period describes the reason why the shrine has been the centre of enticement of faith.

Yoritomo MINAMOTO ordered Masatoshi TOSABO, one of his vassals, to go to Kyoto and kill his brother Yoshitsune MINAMOTO. Yoshitsune invites Masatoshi to his house after arriving Kyoto, to ask him why he visited Kyoto. Masatoshi answered that he was on the way to Kumano shrine on behalf of his master Yoritomo and he wrote an oath of loyalty to Yoshitsune as a proof. Later at night, he attacked Yoshitsune at Horikawa Palace but was overpowered and killed by Yoshitsune who had predicted the attack. Masatoshi was enshrined in Kanjaden and it was dedicate to his death. Susano'o is the shrine's god. The public knows this story. Because Masatoshi broke his oath and was punished for it, merchants began to come here to evade their sins of telling lies in their business transactions.

This day became a day of abstinence for seeking forgiveness. Even now, merchants visit the shrines to purify their sins on October 20th. The shrine is popular place of worship for the business people.

Daiho'onji Temple located in Kamigyo Ward is a famous temple of Shingon Sect. Its main hall is an original wooden structure built in 1222 and is designated as National Treasure. Its principal image is a famous Shaka Nyorai or Buddha. The temple is also affectionately called Senbon Shakado. The temple is believed to be the omen of good luck for married life. Many people including local wives visit the temple.

In February, Okame Setsubun (a festival marking the beginning of spring) is an enjoyable event where people wear masks of a flat-faced woman, to make goblins laugh. Men and women wearing masks and walking on the streets are worth seeing. There is a story of a wise wife named Okame*1.

Another famous event in December is Daikon-daki or cooking radish. The origin of the event dates back to Kamakura Period. People eat daikon in this event to avoid bad luck. Daikon is said to cure paralysis and other diseases.

Kitano Shrine and other temples around Senbon Shakado attract religious people. The areas around such shrines and temples have been developed into a historical town. The area encompasses Nishijin textile industry and forms a business centre for Nishijin textile and other related industries. This has created an atmosphere where business centre and residential area coexist. Many people visit the area on a daily basis to pray at temples and shrines. As mentioned earlier, traditional folk events like Daikon-daki and Okame Setsubun also attract people to this area.
Several temples and shrines are located along Teramachi Street and Shin-Kyogoku Street in Nakagyo Ward. Among these, people casually visit Yata Temple. It is a branch of Yata Temple in Yamato Koriyama City, Nara Prefecture which is famous for its hydrangea. It was constructed by priest Manmai and Takamura ONO in 845 at a place called Gojo Bomon and later moved to the present site by Hideyoshi TOYOTOMI in 1590.

*1 The secret story of a wise wife, Okame

Takatsugu NAGAI was the leader of the carpenters constructing the main hall of Senbon Shakado temple. During the construction of the temple, he cut one of the four pillars short by mistake. Okame, his wife tried to save his blunder and told him to cut the rest of the pillars short and added a wooden frame on top of the pillars. The idea worked well and the hall was successfully completed. She was afraid of her suggestion coming out to the public and committed suicide on the eve of the completion ceremony in 1227. This sad and beautiful story is the reason why people visit the temple to get blessing for happy married life.
The formal name is Kongo-zan Yata Temple and belongs to Nishiyama Jodo sect. The principal image is a jizo Bodhisattva called Daijuku jizo which has a meaning of a savoir for people from nether world and has appealed to many people of faith. A document written in Edo Period describes it as one of the prominent Jizo Bodhisattvas.

Even now the temple attracts many visitors who have faith in Jizo as a local deity seeking blessing for bumper crop, family safety, prosperity, recovery from diseases, avoiding evils, happiness, and easy delivery.

There is a bell in the precinct of Yata Temple which is called “the farewell bell” as opposed to “the welcome bell” at Rokudo-Chinno-ji Temple. The former is used for sending off souls of the dead to the netherworld without going astray. It is common to strike the bell when someone dies or during Bon Festival. Particularly, many people visit the temple during Bon Festival to strike the bell and send off souls of their deceased ones. The sound of the bell manifests a deep love for ancestors.

B The historical scenic beauty at locations for prayer

There are many old temples and shrines in Kyoto that, functioned as community hall for the local residents, and played a central role in the region. There are other temples which attract the faith of business people.

There are still more historical temples preserving old legends which have survived and have been passed down to the present generation. All of the aforesaid facts have attracted the faith of people. The sound of chanting sutra, wooden drum and bell of local shrines remind us of the deep religious tradition rooted in the daily lives of the residents.
Kyoto, the city where *Hare* or festive occasions and *Ke* or usual days are alive in day-to-day life

(1) Festivals in Kyoto

People of Kyoto highly esteem their daily lives and enjoy the difference between festive occasions called *Hare* and usual days called *Ke*. Among various refreshing activities, festivals are the biggest occasions for *Hare*. Kyoto has many festivals throughout the year, so much that people would say “there is no single day without festival”. These festivals provide power and comfort to the people. The following pages will elaborate festivals and related historical scenic beauty in order of month, including Gion Festival, Aoi Festival, Jidai Festival (three biggest festivals in Kyoto), Daimonji Bonfire on Five Mountains, Yasurai Festival, Fire festival in Kurama (the last two are regarded as peculiar festivals in Kyoto) and some more.

A Examples

(A) Winter (January to February)

**a Toka Ebisu (first Ebisu)**

Toka Ebisu festival is held from January 8 to 12 at Ebisu Shrine in Higashiyama Ward. This is an occasion for wishing success in business and happy family life. It is said that the shrine was established by priest Yosai who had prayed for the safety of the construction work of Kenninji Temple to Ebisu deity. In Muromachi Period, Seven Deities of Good Fortune were worshipped and Ebisu, one of these deities also became popular among people.

Toka Ebisu is said to have been embarked by the people who tried to get a share of his blessing from Ebisu, on his birthday of January 10. The place is filled with people buying lucky bamboo branches decolated with auspicious objects.
like paper cash boxes, good luck rice bags and good luck bamboo rakes to lead happiness.

Although the origin of the festival is not known, a document called Miyako Rinsen Meisho Zue” published in 1799 shows the scene of Toka Ebisu festival in front of Ken‘ninji Temple. Bamboo branches, the symbol of the festival, have much longer history and is said to be conceived 400 years ago.

After the prayer, people definitely wish for a revisit. Since Ebisu has a weak hearing, people bang the board near the main hall to attract his attention, and yell out again their wish. Hustle and bustle of the visitors and the sound of flutes and drums together with the sound of clapping and board banging create a unique and vivid atmosphere.

There are some other attractions at the festival including those where an actress is carried in palanquin that help selling bamboo branches, and maiko or dancing girls from Miyagawa-cho and Gion-cho who also help selling bamboo branches and give away mochi or rice cakes. Such attractions project a bright and vivid atmosphere appropriate for celebrating New Year. The scenery of many open stalls along Shijo Street which is the access route to the shrine has become a part of the tradition of January. There many small and medium businesses proprietors in Kyoto who pray for the prosperity of their businesses and their happiness here.

b Setsubun Festival or Setsubun-e

Setsubun-e is celebrated on February 3rd at many temples and shrines. Setsubun means the beginning of each four seasons. At the imperial court, the ceremony on Risshun or the first day of the spring according to Japanese calendar was blended with a ceremony conducted in the New Year’s Eve. As a result, the present tradition of repelling goblins by throwing beans at them came to existence. A ceremony conducted in 706 by Emperor Monmu already existed, but it was for ousting goblins by the voices of magicians and arrows by imperial subordinates.
In late Heian Period, magicians were mistaken for goblins because of their bizzare masks and costumes. In Kyoto, bean throwing event began in Muromachi Period with the chanting “Goblins o away!”

Yoshida Shrine is said to be the original place of Setsubun-e which is one of the most famous of its kind. A document written by Kanemi YOSHIDA in 1672 describes this festival. Today, rituals such as Ekijin-sai, Tsuina-shiki and Horo-sai are conducted maintaining their old styles, and attract more than 500,000 people.

An old document testifies that as early as Edo Period, it was common to hang a sardine and a holly branch at the entrance of their houses to avoid evils entering the house. Throwing roasted beans by “toshi otoko”, a man who was born in a year with the same sign of the Chinese zodiac as the current year to welcome fortune on the day of Setsubun was also common. However, the custom of ousting goblins is presumed to have started in Meiji Era.

Yoshida Shrine was established in 859 by Yamakage FUJIWARA who had invited four gods from Kasuga Shrine to Kyoto in the hope to receive tranquility of Heiankyo Capital. There are a number of branches of this shrine in the premises including Saijosho-Daigenkyu designated as an important cultural property by the national government.

At Tsuina-shiki ceremony held on February 2nd, the main character, Hososhi magician, red, blue and yellow goblins, children and court nobles walk down the access way. First the magician fights goblins to weaken them. Then the court nobles attack them with peach bows and arrows and finally oust them. This is a dynamic ritual where excited visitors and screaming children who are scared of ferocious goblins can be seen. At Horo-sai festival on February 3rd, talismans and arrows from the previous year are thrown into a huge metallic furnace which keeps on burning throughout the night creating a pillar of fire. The flames are
believed to cure diseases and bring happiness to the visitors for a new year.

During Setsubun-e, as many as 800 open stalls are lined side by side on the access way of the shrine. Beans offered by the shrine are taken home and each family member consumes the same number as his/her age, praying for good luck.

(B) Spring (March to June)  
**a Yasurai Festival**

Yasurai Festival at Imamiya Shrine, also called Yasurai-bana, is designated as an important intangible folklore property. It is considered one of the three peculiar festivals of Kyoto.

Imamiya Shrine is said to be established when a plague outbreak hit Kyoto in 1015. According to the shrine’s history, the plague started spreading out in March of lunar calendar in late Heian Period when cherry blossoms began to shed. Yasurai festival was celebrated to pray for calming the soul of flowers and good health.

A history book called Hyakurensho published in late Kamakura Period mentions about the shrine in 1152. Another document published in 1780 describes this festival’s scene at that time.

The festival is celebrated on the second Sunday of April every year. Large parasols with their borders decorated with flowers and cloth are carried at the head of the procession followed by people wearing period costumes while
striking bells, drumming and dancing. The parade goes thorough every corner of the shrine domain before reaching the main shrine to pray for good health. Singing and dancing mean prayer for rich harvest, calming down the demons which are supposed to cause sickness, and locking them up in the shrine by the power of attars.

The procession begins with people carrying flags, some Sakaki tree branches, Chinese boxes, pikes and some other ceremonial goods. Then comes people who carry flower parasol and about 20 dancers. These are followed by child goblins, large goblins who strike bells and drums, flutists, and some staff of the organizing authorities. Today four preservation societies namely, Genbu, Imamiya, Kawakami and Kamigamo shrines still practice the Yasurai dancing. Local elementary school third grade children play the role of child goblins and older children play music. Junior and senior high school students are for larger goblins striking bells and drums. Those who once have played some of these roles in their youth pass down their dancing or music skills to the future generations.

The parade goes on from morning to evening. On the way, it stops in front of the houses that have hung a piece of orange colour cloth at their entrance. Such houses are located at a pace of about 50 meters and have contributed to their god in some way. At these instances, people rush to get under the parasols to pray for their good health and spell off demons. It is believed that placing a new born baby under the parrasol will make him or her healthy throughout the life. Therefore people would bring all the grand children for the blessing which will warm up the festival. Each community provides benches on which tired dancers can rest.

b  Aoi Festival (Hollyhock Festival)

Aoi Festival is such a prestigious festival that in the past emissary of emperor was sent there. It is one of the rare festivals having been handed down from depicting traditional imperial manner and customs. It is known as the most elegant and tasteful festival in Japan. In the course of its long history, there were times when the processions were disrupted. However, the Shake or families who look after the shrine have kept conducting the rituals of the shrine to keep on the tradition even during those interruptions.

(a) History of Aoi Festival

It is said that the shrine existed at the present location long before the
Heiankyo was established. The festival is said to have started when strong winds and flood damaged crops and people started praying for rich harvest while racing their horses with bells tied to them. During Heian Period and afterwards, the festival was conducted by the government. Among several Shinto rituals conducted in the month of May, one day is called “Aoi Festival”. Some scenes of Aoi Festival in the Tale of Genji describe the history of this festival.

The name of the festival comes from the fact that hollyhock leaves are used for decorating people and carts in the procession. The festival was came to be called as such after resumption in Genroku Age (1688~1704).

The name Kami-dera covers two shrines, Kamigamo Shrine, formally called Kamowakeikazuchi Shrine and Shimogamo Shrine, formally known as Kamomioya Shrine. The above names appeared first in 698 in a book called Shoku Nihon-ki. It has also mentioned that the building was constructed in 677 during the reign of Emperor Tenmu. The Kami-dera mentioned in the documents dated before 729 refers to today’s Kamigamo Shrine. Shimogamo Shrine was established around 750.

(b) Aoi Festival and its related rituals

Before the day of Aoi Festival, Kamigamo Shrine holds several rituals including “Kurabeuma” or hourse race registered as an intangible folklore cultural property by the city, “Mitama-mukae” or welcoming soul ritual, one of the oldest and awesome event in the festival, and “Miare ritual”. Meanwhile, Shimogamo Shrine holds some other rituals such as “Mikage Festival”. There are other rituals like Saio-dai Misogi which are conducted alternately by the two shrines.

Kurabeuma had been originally conducted as a ceremony at the imperial court on May 5th 1093. Later the ceremony was dedicated to Kamigamo Shrine. It is a Shinto ritual for the peace of country and rich harvest. Mitama-mukae is a ritual for welcoming the soul of god from Mikage Shrine. The ritual started in the era of Emperor Suizei and is said to be the oldest procession with the god. It had once discontinued and resumed in Genroku Age (1688~1704) together with Aoi Festival.

Miare ritual is held by Kamigamo Shrine and is said to be the oldest in the shrine.
Originally, Aoi Festival consisted of three ceremonies, *Kyuchu, Roto,* and *Shato.*

Today, only *Roto* and *Shato* ceremonies are conducted. The length of the *Roto* procession is about 700m. In the procession, 512 people, 36 horses, four cows, two bullock carts, and one palanquin take part. The parade starts at 10:30 am from Kenrei Gate of the Old Imperial Palace. The participants wear noble court costumes and *Saio-dai* acting princess protected by guards.
The procession marches through Maruta-machi Street and Kawara-machi Street until it reaches Shimogamo Shrine. From here, it proceeds to Shimogamo Hon-dori Street, then to Kitaoji Street. After crossing Kitaoji Bridge, it moves forward to the bank of Kamo River and finally reaches Kamigamo Shrine at 3:30 P. M. The total walking distance of the parade is 8km. People along these streets admire and cheer *Saio-dai* wearing 12 layers of ceremonial kimonos on the palanquin carried by men.

*Saio-dai* is playing the role of *Saio* or a princess who dedicated her life to god of Kamo Shrines. The *Saio* performance is said to have been copied from *Saio* of Ise Shrine by Kamo Shrines around 9th century and lasted until Kamakura Period. *Saio* played an important role to dedicate herself to the shrine at the festival. Today the role of *Saio-dai* is played by an unmarried woman recruited from ordinary citizens.

As the procession reaches Kamigamo and Shimogamo Shrines, Shato ceremonies are held. The messenger reads a letter from the emperor and offers food to the god. The elegant events such as walking the horse and dancing dedicated to the god remind us of Heian Period.

**(c) Venue for the rituals**

Kamo Shines which consists of Kamigamo Shrine and Shimogamo shrine are the stage for these rituals. It used to be the guardian shrines for Kamono Agatanushi clan who lived in the north of Kyoto basin. Each of the two shrines are surrounded by a large forest. At the time of the festival, the shrines welcome their gods from the heavenly mountains. It brings to mind the memories of ancient worship of nature before the establishment of the shrines This distinctive ritual has survived until today.

Kamigamo Shrine is worshipped by many as a god of bringing good luck, of avoiding the bad evil of evil orientation; and of winning competitions. Honden and Gonden halls are designated as national treasures and the other 34 buildings of the shrine are designated as important cultural
properties.

A book called *Yamashiro no kuni Fudoki* has described the shrine. According to the book, the shrine was established in 678. The present Honden and Gonden halls were rebuilt in 1868 and other buildings were rebuilt in 1628.

Shimogamo Shrine was founded before Heiankyo, thus, being one of the oldest shrines in Kyoto. It was regarded as the top shrine in Yamashiro (the old name for Kyoto before Heian Period). Rules for worshipping shrines were enforced by the government. Shrines were believed to bless people with peace and good health and to procure stable government.

According to the legend, Kamo Festival was held from 544, the time of Kinmei Emperor. In the large premises, designated as a historical site by the national government, there are two Honden buildings designated as national treasures and 53 other buildings designated as important cultural properties. Honden buildings were constructed in 1863, and others in 1628.

Both shrines were designated as the World Cultural Heritage sites as a part of “Historic Monuments of Ancient Kyoto”. A settlement consisting of houses for priests called *Shake* and *Ujiko* or houses for residents of the shrine precinct was established in front of Kamigamo Shrine. The area...
was developed as the town of Shinto priests in Muromachi Period. Today, there are several Shake houses along the Myojin Stream that flows off the shrine. Small bridges across the stream, earthen walls, gates and the greens behind the walls blend with each other and create the historical scenic beauty of Shake town established in Edo Period.

**Supporters for the Festival**

Aoi Festival has been supported and patronized by many people including Shake of shrines, former aristocrats, Heian Gagaku court music ensemble, and other related people. This support includes costumes, way of dressing and wearing traditional makeup. Ordinary citizens have also supported the festival by taken part, thus Aoi Festival has been passed down till today.

*Yasedoji-kai*, a group of people from Yase area lead the procession in an orderly fashion. They have long served important imperial ceremonies since the time of Emperor Godaigo. Yase area located in the north of Kyoto, has had close relations with the imperial families from olden days. The people of the area including elementary school six grade boys play roles of important court figures and such customs have been handed down till today.

Young craftsmen of traditional arts learn the skills by looking after and making festival tools. Conducting the festival uninterruptedly contributes greatly to the continuation and passing down the techniques to the next generation.

**Summer (July to August)**

**Gion Festival**

*Shinshin’no Furyu* can be seen in the rituals and floats of Gion Festival which is said to be the flower of city festivals. Yamaboko floats procession is the highlight of the festival and the floats are called as moving museums. The colourful and gorgeous floats, designated as important tangible folklore property, feed the soul of the audience with joy. They also represent the spirit of Machishu or town’s people who have inherited the long tradition.
(a) **History of the festival**

Celebrated every year in July, Gion Festival used to be called Gion Goryo-e in the old days. It is a festival for Yasaka Shrine which is located in Gion-cho, Higashiyama-ku and has a long history from Heian Period. The shrine has some important cultural properties such as main hall and tower gate. The festival is well known for its long history, gorgeousness and for being celebrated for a long period.

The origin of the festival goes back to 869 when a plague broke out in the city. By the imperial order, Hiromaro URABE erected 66 spears at Shinsen-en garden and ushered in gods of Gion-sha to conduct Gion Goryo-e. Later a small shrine was constructed in Yasaka area to enshrine Gyuto-Tenno deity. After 970, Gion Goryo-e became an annual event. In the age of North and South dynasties, Yamaboko floats were added by the town’s people to create a gorgeous atmosphere to the festival.

※1, *Shinshin no furyu*

After Heiankyo, Kyoto city has undergone expansion and contraction of its area with the passage of different eras. The guardian shrines of the people living in the centre of the city are located in the suburbs. Some of these shrines include Imamiya, Kitano, Kamigoryo, Gion, Fushimi-Inari, Matsuo and Fujinomori. Although these shrines are located far from the centre, gods on the portable shrines carried around the precincts and their vicinity during the procession, stop at the stations. The ritual in the station is the highlight of festival all over Japan. However, in Kyoto, the manner of welcoming and sending off the gods is well developed and it is called "Sinsin no furyu". The aim of the shrine in holding this event is to attract the larger audience in the city. It is contributed to the development of rich festival culture.
Although Yamaboko procession was abandoned during Ohnin War, it was resumed in 1500. Later on, floats were decorated with tapestries imported from countries such as China, Persia and Belgium. During Edo Period, the floats were destroyed by fire many times. However, local communities replaced the destroyed floats with new one which have been passed down till today. The Miyako Meisho-zue guide book published in 1780, depicts the scene of Yamaboko floats. At present 32 floats participate in the procession. Each community has its own organization or committee responsible for the preservation, maintenance and operation of the festival. Out of 32, 29 are designated as important tangible cultural properties by the national government.

There are five types of floats used in festivals in Japan. They are Hoko, Kakiyama, Hikiyama, Yatai and Kasaboko. Gion Festival possesses all of the five types. In Edo Period, many Yamaboko communities possessed Chorie or community houses and storages to house Yamaboko floats. Still today, many communities keep and use the community houses.

(b) A month long Gion Festival

Gion festival lasts a month and its venue is Yasaka shrine. Also the stage of festival includes resting stations of the shrine, community halls for Cho-gumi (traditional autonomous community organization), Kyo-machiya or town houses, and other historical townscape and its buildings.

Gion Festival starts on July 1st with Kippuri, a ritual that signals the start of the festival. Local festival managing communities get down to business by receiving the God of Yasaka to their community houses, then they select the executive members, discuss about the carpentry, assembling, and pulling of the floats. Later priests from

Fig2-16  Gion Festival in Miyako meisho-zue
Owned by International Research Center for Japanese Studies
Yasaka shrine were invited by each house to purify the places.

On the 2nd day, the process of deciding the order of the floats in the procession by draft is held at the city hall except Naginata float which always has the privilege of occupying the foremost position. Around July 10th, Yamaboko floats are taken out of their storages and assembling them starts. The scenes of the assembly heighten the mood of the festival.

On 13th, a child wearing traditional court noble’s costume and is supposed to ride on the Naginata float (the foremost float) visits Yasaka shrine at 11:00 A.M. attracts many audiences.

July 14th to 16th is called Yoiyama. On the eves of Yoiyama each Yoiyama community lit many curb roof paper lanterns and the bands play pleasant music. The sound of the music and voices of children selling good luck charms and candles boost the atmosphere of the festive.

On the 17th Yamaboko junkou, which is the highlight of the festival is carried out. The procession starts at 9:00am from Shijo Karasuma led by Naginata float, heading for Kawaramachi Street and then Oike Street. Several attractive rituals such as rope cutting, checking the order of floats according to the lottery, and the dynamic changing of the direction of floats at the crossings make it a great pageant.

The floats are regarded as the means to attract the god of pestilence and demons. The pleasant music and the gorgeous tapestries are indispensable part of the festive because, on one hand, they please the ears and gratify the eyes of demons, and on the other hand, they create an awesome atmosphere. The audience are stunned by these attractions. The local festival communities and the participants of the procession take pride in putting up such a gorgeous show.

Yasaka Shrine hosts the ceremonies of cleaning portable shrines and ushering the Holy Spirit into them on the 10th and 15th respectively. Shinko Festival is held on the evening of the 17th, carrying the portable shrines to the communities of the shrine precinct. After the commencement of rituals at 4:00 P. M., three portable shrines, namely Nakagoza, Higashigoza and Nishigoza are carried down to the bottom of the stone steps of the shrine from where the vermilion gate can be seen in the background. The repeated chants of “hoito, hoito” of the people carrying the wavering shrines on their shoulders and the rattling sounds of the ornaments on the shrines is heard endlessly. Then, they are paraded through the streets of shrine precincts and finally put at rest in
the evening at the temporary rest station at Shijo-Teramachi until 24th.

On the 24th, the Kanko Festival is held. In this festival, the portable shrines at the rest stations are paraded around the shrine precinct communities and back to Yasaka Shrine. After the cleaning ceremony on the 28th, portable shrines are stowed in the Kura (preservation compound). The executives of the preservation committee wear special garments throughout July and work hard for the preparation of the festival. Town houses and streets serve as a stage for the festival. Families of the precinct as well as passersby participate and celebrate the special days of *Hare*.

(c) Inheritance of skills

Floats are assembled by a traditional technique and skills of rope knotting and tying called “Nawagarami”, without using a single nail. These skills have been handed down from the past till today. Through these refined cognitive skills, the shock of the movement of the more than 20 metres tall *Yamahoko* floats, weighing more than ten tons, is absorbed, and the tilting angle is accommodated. The remarkably experienced assemblers are also earnestly committed to maintaining the grace in
visual aspects of Gion Festival by applying their precious skills in the beauty of the knots, bends and hitches.

After the procession, *Yamaboko* floats are dismantled. It is believed that by dismantling the floats they get rid of demons which were trapped in them. This process of assembling and dismantling is being repeated every year. The skills related to the festival and the festival itself have been inherited from the past.

A large number of people are involved in handling the *Yamaboko* floats. They include carpenters and their assistants; people called ‘*kurumagata*’ who change the direction of the floats by putting wedges under the wheels, roof attendants called ‘*yane kata*’ who keep a watch to avoid the collision of floats with obstacles, musicians on the floats, some people standing in front of floats called ‘*ondotori*’ or mobility supervisors who oversee the movements of ‘*kurumagata*’ and pullers or ‘*hikite*’, the carriers or ‘*kakite*’ and the pullers. Since the carpentry work of the festival requires advanced skills, most of these carpenters are professional ones.

**Community house and Byobu Festival**

Community houses have been the centre for the traditional autonomous community. Even today, they are used not only at the time of festival, but also a place for practicing music and holding meetings of the community executive members. They are rented out to offices and shops to finance the operation and management of the festival. Four of these community houses are designated as cultural properties by the city.

During the festival, community houses are beautifully decorated with dolls, brocades and metal ornaments. Most of the shrine precinct communities are located along Muromachi and Shinmachi Streets, an area where Japanese cloths wholesale business are concentrated. That is why floats are decorated by rich ornamental fabrics. More than 1000 pieces of ornamental fabrics that are displayed on the floats are produced during and before Edo Period. Out of these, 30% were imported from abroad. These were originally used as carpets and tapestries. One of these carpets is the only one of its kind left in the world. These carpets and tapestries have survived well until today because they have been well preserved and used only during the festival.

The decoration at the community houses inspires the individuals in the precinct to decorate their houses and offices with ‘*byobu*’ or folding screens and other precious traditional articles; thus organizing their
house for Hare or the festivity. This is called ‘byobu’ matsuri. For this purpose, people remove the front lattice of their houses and replace them with folded curtains. Sliding doors between rooms are replaced by bamboo blinds to create coolness. Floors are covered with red carpets on which family treasures such as folding screens and art objects are displayed. Visitors walking along the streets enjoy and appreciate the beauty of these valuable objects. This is another attraction besides the parade of Yamaboko floats. The residents of those houses take great pride in displaying their precious traditional articles.

Families in this area hold parties at their homes for guests. Out on the main streets, there are floats lit by tens of paper lanterns and many open stalls. People come and go to enjoy the spectacular atmosphere.

To sum it up, the whole month of July is packed with the spectacular events of Gion Festival. These include practicing special festival music, assembling floats, Yoiyama eves, procession of Yamaboko, decoration of community houses and Byobu Matsuri.
b Kyoto Gozan Okuribi ( bonfire on the five mountains in Kyoto)

At 8:00 pm on August 16, a speck of light is lit at the side of Mt. Daimonji or Nyoigatake in Higashiyama mountain range. Soon the flames spread out and form the character Dai, meaning big. Soon other characters of bonfire on Kitayama and Nishiyama mountain ranges are lit one by one.

The aforesaid events are collectively called Kyoto Gozan Okuribi which is registered as intangible folklore cultural property by Kyoto city. It is a traditional event for sending off ancestors’ souls to nether world after they descended in early August and stayed with their families for a while. The grand and fantastic events of this festival are some of the important attractions beautifying the summer night sky of Kyoto.

The origin of this festival is not clear. According to one hypothesis, Mantore or lantern festival which had been popular in Muromachi Period was gradually moved up to the hillside and eventually it transcended to a celebratory bonfire for sending off the souls of the dead. It is said that the villagers in the suburbs conducted such religious events and dedicated them to the urban people. The first record of these events appeared in the diary of an aristocrat in 1603. He has mentioned that he watched the fire Kanji characters on the foothills from the bank of Kamo River on the day of Bon festival. Today, residents of the foothills have formed preservation societies which conduct the lighting ceremonies and providing fire woods.

Nowadays, the Bon fire on Mt. Daimonji is managed and maintained by the people living in the area at the vicinity of Ginkakuji Temple which was used to be called Jodoji village.

Ginkakuji temple’s formal name is Jishoji Temple. The name comes from Kannnon Hall called Ginkaku or Silver pavilion. The temple was originally a mountain villa built by Yoshimasa ASHIKAGA in 1482 on the land of Jodoji Temple which had been destroyed by the war. A year later, the palace was completed and was named Higashiyama-den by Emperor Gotsuchimikado. The framework of the pavilion was completed in 1489.

In front of Ginkakuji Temple, some members of the preservation society of Daimonji ask passers-by to donate pieces of holy wooden strips for the peaceful soul of their ancestors and the prosperity of their families. Collected pieces of holy wooden strips are sent up to the hill and to the fire beds. The event is started by lighting a candle at Kobo hall located next to the centre fire bed. Heart Sutra is chanted by members of the management society and the priest of Jodoin Temple located at the foot of the mountain.
Fig2-18  Bonfire on five mountains

Fig2-19  Myoho bonfire at Matsugasaki

Fig2-20  Daimonji bonfire
Fig2-21  Hidari-Daimonji bonfire
Fig2-22  Funagata-mantoro bonfire

Fig2-23  Toriigata-taimatsu bonfire

Photo2-20 Daimonji bonfire  Photo2-21 Myoho bonfire  Photo2-22 Funagata-mantoro bonfire
at Matsugasaki

Photo2-23 Hidari-Daimonji bonfire  Photo2-24 Toriigata-taimatsu bonfire

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At 8:00 P. M., a torch made of bamboo sticks with straw and pine leaves attached to the top is lit by the aforesaid candle. With this torch they first lit the centre bed and then all of the remaining beds are lit simultaneously by the cue.

*Matsugasaki Myoho Okuribi* Bonfire is managed and carried out by Matsugasaki Myoho Preservation Society. This religious event is closely attached to Matsugasaki area where Nichiren sect of Buddhism is deeply rooted. On the mountains of Myo and Ho, a priest from Yusenji Temple (designated as a tangible cultural property by Kyoto city) and the local residents recite sutras to send off souls of the deceased to nether world guided by the light of bonfires.

Yusenji Temple emerged after the merger of Honyuji Temple with Myosenji Temple in 1918 and the present name is composed of one kanji each from the name of the two parent temples.

Myosenji Temple is the offspring of Matuzaki Temple which was established by Chunagon Yasumitsu in 992 as the temple of Tendai sect. Honyu-ji Temple used to be a temple school and was commonly known as Matsugasaki Danrin.

After the bonfires are burnt out around 9:00 P. M., Daimoku dance (registered as intangible folklore property by Kyoto city) is held. The story of the origin of this dance goes like this: a priest called Jitugan, converted his faith from Tendai to Nichiren sect. When he learned that all local residents had also converted, he was overjoyed and started dancing, chanting and drumming. People also joined him in dancing. A document published in 1704 depicts the dancing scene. Today men and women form a circle and dance while chanting “Nammyo Horenge-kyō” and drumming. The dance is also performed in the eve of *Okuribi* Bonfire. After Daimoku dance, people perform Sashi dance (registered as intangible folklore property by the city) which used to be popular in Late Middle Ages.

*Funagata Mantoro Okuribi* Bonfire is mainly managed by Funagata Mantoro Preservation Society. Like *Daimonji Okuribi*, pieces of holy wooden strips are collected at Saihoji Temple. Bonfire is lit at 8:15 pm. After that, *Rokusai-nenbutsu* dance (designated as important intangible folklore property by the national government) is performed.

It is said that the establishment of Saihoji Temple was started by the priest En'nin in 847. In early 14th century, a priest named Doku Honyo converted the temple from Tendai to Jodo sect. *Rokusai-nenbutsu* is a folk art
performance where people dance and chant with bells and drums. It is said that the priest started this event by dancing to spread Buddhism among people in mid-Heian Period. The dance became a popular performing art later in the Middle Age. It was originally performed on the days of Rokusai, i.e. the 8th, 14th, 15th, 23rd, 29th and 30th of every month.

Rokusai-nenbutsu at Saihoji Temple is a performance of the same category as that of Toshina Temple in Sakyo-ward and is said to maintain the original style.

Hidari-daimonji Okuribi Bonfire is managed by Hidari Daimonji Preservation Society. Holy wooden strips are collected in the premise of Kinkakuji Temple.

Kitayama villa which Yoshimitsu ASHIKAGA bought from Saionji family was converted to Kinkakuji Temple. After Yoshimitsu’s death, a priest named Soseki MUSO founded the temple there.

On the day of Okuribi, a candle light from Horonji Temple is transferred to the main fire base at the temple. Meanwhile, young members of the society carry holy wooden strips and fire woods to the mountain top. After the sunset, a priest of Horonji Temple recites sutra. Then the large torches are lit by the fire from the the main fire base. At 7:00pm, carrying the torch, people start lighting the other fire bases one after the other.

Toriigata Taimatsu (torches) Okuribi is managed by Toriigata Taimatsu Preservation Society. The name comes from the fact that the Okuribi is lit as torches. Recently holy wooden strips for this purpose are collected at Adashino-Nenbutuji Temple.

Adashino-Nenbutuji Temple was established by the priest Kukai in early 9th century to comfort souls of the deceased at Adashino, a burial place. It was originally called Gochi-nyorai Temple and belonged to Shingon sect. Later in the Middle Age, the priest Honen converted it into Jodo sect and renamed it as Nenbutuji Temple.

After the holy wooden strips are collected and blessed by the monks’ prayer at the temple, they are carried to the mountain. Okuribi rituals here are different from the ones at other mountains. People carrying torches run together to the fire bases and erect the torches there. The experienced runners run uphill vertically while the inexperienced younger people run horizontally to form the figure of Torii gate.

After bonfires at the five mountains are burnt away, the ashes and charcoal left in the fire bases are wrapped in paper and taken home. These
are tied with *Mizuhiki* strings and hanged in front of houses to curb evil and bad luck. Though the origin of the custom is not known, it is still practiced till today. In Edo Period, there was a time when people had difficulty in conducting *Okuribi* of five mountains because of famines and fires in the city. In spite of such unfavourable situation, people managed to conduct *Okuribi* with the support of a shop owner in Nakagyo ward. As a reward for his generosity, he would get some charcoal left in the fireplaces.

Thus, the suburban villages of Kyoto also are closely related to its culture. Religious events in Bon Festival season represent the local history and tradition which have been handed down till today. The religious events and the temples that serve as their stages create a special atmosphere.

As the time of As the time of *Okuribi* approaches, Kyoto citizens dim the lights and move to verandas or to the river banks. They invite relatives from near and far to the feast and think of their ancestors. The darkness sets off the red lights on the mountains and quiet excitement arises from the crowds. Sending off dead souls in a group to nether world with the light by *Gozan Okuribi* Bonfire add sombre atmosphere to the whole city. And people would know that summer is ending and autumn is approaching.

**(D) Autumn (September to November)**

**a Jidai Festival**

Heian Shrine was constructed in 1895 commemorating the 1100th
anniversary of Heiankyo. On this occasion, *Heian-kosha* association was established by the Kyoto citizens to organize Jidai Festival and maintain shrine’s buildings and gardens. The festival was created to celebrate the construction of the Heian shrine. It was the pioneer of today’s citizens’ festivals. October 22, the day when the festival is celebrated, coincides with the day when Emperor Kanmu moved the capital to Kyoto. In a sense, it is the birthday of Kyoto. The festival reveals the determination of the people to demonstrate the history and culture of Kyoto in a way that can be easily understood at a glance.

They wanted the festival to be something that no other city could copy.

**(a) Brief summary of the festival**

The construction of Heian Shrine was a part of the plan of the 4th National Industrial Exhibition held in Okazaki, Kyoto, as one of the commemorative events of the 1100th anniversary of Heiankyo Founding. Being the highest ranked shrine, it enshrined Emperor Kanmu. Later it also enshrined Emperor Komei.

Jidai Festival (designated as intangible folklore property by Kyoto city) is a procession where all the periods of Heiankyo are vividly represented and paraded. In addition to that, rituals called *Kojinsai* and *Kankousai* are also performed. The procession starts from Meiji Restoration and goes backward till Enryaku Age. In the procession, authentic manners and objects of each age are displayed. However, Muromachi Period had long been omitted from the procession because of the fact that the Muromachi government rebelled against the emperor of that time. After 2007, Muromachi Period was also added into the procession. As a result, the procession consisted of 20 episodes performed by 2000 people which covered a strap of 2km. Total number of furniture, costumes and gadgets used in performing the rituals reaches 12,000 pieces. These objects were reproduced after thorough research of the old objects by the craftsmen using their refine traditional techniques that were accumulated during 1000 years of Kyoto history as the capital. The procession is like a living picture scroll which makes people feel like slipping into the past.

The procession starts from Kyoto Gyoen Park at noon and parades through Karasuma Street, then to Oike Street, Sanjo Street then Jingu Street and finally arriving Heian Shrine (designated as a cultural property by the city, and registered as a tangible cultural property by the
(b) Operation of the festival and Heian-kosha

This magnificent festival is organized and managed by the citizens association called *Heian-kosha*. The executive committee for the commemorative event of the 1100th anniversary of Heiankyo Foundation suggested establishing *Heian-kosha* association for the preservation and maintenance of Heian Shrine, its garden; and the festival. Another of its task was to coordinate the followers of the shrine. Finally the association was founded in 1895. In the early period, the executive committee suggested that every citizen must donate 1 *rin* per day per person. The association consisted of six zones each called a *Sha* which included four districts at that time, Kamigyo Ward, Shimogyo Ward, Otagi County and Kadono County, and each zone was responsible for their own procession.

Later, as the city area broadened, *Heian-kosha* also expanded. Today, it consists of 10 *Sha* each of which has about 20 school zones called *Kumi*. Individual *Kumis* participates in the procession in rotation. This means that one *Kumi* will participate once in 20 years. When their turns come, they have to bear all the expenses of the procession. Many *Kumis* save money for this purpose by selling old newspapers collected by the residents of the communities. This shows how deeply Jidai Festival is rooted in the daily lives of the citizens.

To learn about the procedures and other details of the festival, the executive members of the Kumi which is expected to participate next year would visit the Kumi which has already supervised and managed the procession this year. After that, they will decide the role of member of
their committee and discuss the details of the preparation for the next year's festival.

Each *Sha* has professional festival managers who supply, keep and repair all the costumes and instruments. They also procure horses, volunteer students and other specialists without whom the festival would not function. They also teach them how to wear the traditional costumes of the periods, and prepare lunch and busses for the participants on the day of the parade. Most of these managers have inherited these jobs from their ancestors for generations.

On the year of their turn, the president of community federation will serve as the president of the executive committee of the festival and other group leaders would join him/her as members. They make a time table and decide the role of each member under the guidance of the festival managers. They rehearse their roles many times in the auditorium of their community school.

The representatives of each *Kumi* come to Heian Shrine one week before the festival day to attend the ritual called *Senjo-sai* where they pray for the safety and success of the festival. After the ritual, the priest of the shrine hands in the letters of authority to the representatives. Later in the evening, the executive members gather at their school and those who take part in the parade practice how to put on the period costumes. Festival managers will help them wear Japanese sandals, socks, gloves, trousers and swords. They rehearse again on the day before the festival. On the morning of the festival day, people wearing period costumes gather at the school.

On the day of the festival, the school is packed with people. More than 100 volunteer students are dressed by the members of the women's association of the community. In the meantime, the horses arrive. Participants rehearse at the school ground and then parade in the school zone to show their performance to those who helped with the preparation of the events. After this, they proceed to Kyoto Gyoen Park, the starting point of the festival and gather there. Besides the 10 groups of the *Sha*,
another 10 groups composed of the Youth Chamber of Commerce, the Pleasure District Association, the Food Business Association, Ohara Women’s Agriculture Association and other related groups also participate in the parade.

**b Kurama Fire Festival**

This festival is held in October at Yuki Shrine in Kurama. It is believed that the festival originated at the end of Heian Period. Those days the villagers of Kurama received the god from the imperial palace by holding torches. The festival is designated as intangible folklore property by Kyoto city. The record of Kurama hamlet written in 1814 describes some scenes of the festival in Edo Period. Yuki Shrine is said to have been established for inviting the god from imperial palace for the protection of the north corner of the capital.

The shrine used to be called Utsubo Shrine because *utsubo* or arrow containers were offered to the god in the event of emergency or the sickness of emperor.

A document says that Kurama Temple emerged when in 770, a student of the grand priest Ganjin dreamed of Gantei, a dedicated Bishamon deity, and invited him to the temple. In 769, ordered by Emperor Kanmu, Iseto FUJIWARA constructed the grand temple of Kurama to protect the northern corner of the capital. In late 9th century the temple was converted from Hosso to Shingon sect. In the early 12th century, it was converted again to Tendai sect.

In 1947, the temple defected from Tendai sect and established a new sect called Kurama Kokyo. Two years later, it became the head temple of the sect. Preparation for Fire Festival begins...
several months in advance. The priests and executive members of the temple discuss the detail of the plan frequently in order to operate it smoothly.

As the festival approaches, every household removes the front doors and clean up their houses thoroughly. Roofs and walls are repaired for this occasion because the festival is highly esteemed by the people.

In the evening of the festival day, people light bonfires in front of their houses. At 6:00 pm, children holding torches walk around the area. Soon adults in straw sandals carrying large torches walk around the area while chanting “Sairei Sairyo” and approach Yuki Shrine. Two portable shrines are paraded among these torches, creating a spectacular scene.

During the Fire Festival, several other attractions are presented by the groups called Kumi-nakama. Thus, contributing to the development of the sense of unity in the community and in the whole Kurama hamlet.

The gate of Kurama Temple and the resting stations of Yuki Shrine, both the venues of the festival turns to a stage for the community activity. The torches in the evening of festival day create a fantastic atmosphere.

(E) Winter (December)

a Okeramairi

Okeramairi (designated as an intangible folklore property by Kyoto city) is an event that takes place between the New Year’s Eve to New Year’s day. People visit Yasaka Shrine at Gion-cho, Higashiyama Ward and get some Okera fire to be taken home. It is a very popular event and one of the representative traditions of the New Year’s Eve. Its origin is not well known, however, a document called Gion Kezurikakeno Shinji has a detailed description of the event. Okera is a herbaceous perennial plant used as a cure for stomach ailments and for flavouring sake for new year’s day.

Since this plant produces a strong smell when burnt, it is used in the ritual for inviting good luck and avoiding evil at the beginning of the year. They use Okera mixed with wood to lit lanterns. That is why the fire is called Okera-bi.
In accordance with ancient ritual, the holy fire should be ignited by friction. The priest and their assistants light up lanterns hung in the premise with fire produced in the aforesaid way at 7:00 P. M. on New Year’s Eve. The fire is kept burning throughout the night with the Okera strips on which peoples’ wishes are written. Visitors would bring bamboo ropes called Kitcho’-nawa to get the holy fire. They keep on rotating the ropes so as to keep the fire burning on the way home. With the fire they light candles at their family Shinto alters and the cooking stove at home. It is said that if you sip a bowl of Zoni soup cooked by this fire, you would not suffer from any disease throughout the year. Unburned part of the rope is hung in the kitchen as a charm for good luck and protection against fire.

In the New Year’s Eve, Shijo Street is filled with people heading for Okeramairi at Yasaka Shrine. The scene of bonfires and people spinning the ropes are indispensable scene suitable for the New Year’s Eve.

B Historical scenic beauty of festivals and rituals of Kyoto

There are various rituals in many places of Kyoto throughout a year. These rituals are some of the annual events which create seasonal beauty of four seasons in this old capital. As described in the previous chapter, people may enjoy a year studded with the following events.

The New Year starts with visiting shrines. Beginning with a local shrine, people may visit other famous ones including those with the seven auspicious deities using bus tours. Toka Ebisu religious event is held around 10th of January. People hear the chanting voices that says “Shoubai hanjo sasa mottekoi” or “Get these bamboo grass branches for your success in business!” In February, Setubun’e is held. Many stalls and visitors can be seen at the famous Yoshida Shrine. Yasurai Festival at Imamiya Shrine and Dainenbutsu at Mibu temple are held in April which is followed by Aoi Festival in May.

In July, which is midsummer, Gion Festival will grab the hearts of people. Its’ climax is Yamaboko procession on July 17th. Okuribi Bonfire on five mountains in August signals the end of summer. Momiji Matsuri or Maple Festival in
Arashiyama area will indicate that autumn will be over soon. The striking bells of the temples announce the end of the old year and the approach of the new year. It is obvious that changing of four seasons is accompanied by festivals and rituals.

People of each community have become very familiar with festivals of Kyoto. There are many festivals which involve singing and dancing together with walking around the communities. Some of the festivals are energetic and others display the

![Festivals in Kyoto](image)

Fig 2-26 Festivals in Kyoto
elegance of Heian Period while the magnificent scale of some others is the pride of their community. Thus each festival produces a unique atmosphere in the community. The ornaments and costumes for the festivals demonstrate the refined skill of traditional industries in Kyoto and remind us of the tireless efforts of our ancestors who made them. They also remind us the importance of handing down these traditions to the next generation.

Stalls often line along the access route and premises of the shrines and temples at the time of festivals, which are the highlight of *Hare*.

The interaction between shop keepers and shoppers add energetic atmosphere to the scene. In some festivals, it is customary to take home some specialty of that shrine such as Bamboo branches at *Toka Ebisu* and Bamboo ropes at *Okeramairi*. People carrying such objects fill the entrances and access routes of the temples and shrines.

These activities in historical areas create a colourful atmosphere which is quite different from the usual calmness.

The advent of some festivals means the arrival of a new season. For instance, Aoi Festival tells the arrival of fresh green season, of Gion Festival that of humid and hot summer, and of *Okeramairi* the approach of the year end and cold season.

People intimately feel the changing of nature and climate while enjoying *Hare* occasions such as festivals and rituals held throughout a year. There are many more festivals and rituals in Kyoto. The passage of four seasons and the geographic diversity as well as profound history since Heian Period are felt by these events.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>&lt;venue&gt;</th>
<th>Detail</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>1~</td>
<td><em>Hatsumode</em> (First visit to</td>
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<td>temples and shrines)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1 to 3</td>
<td><em>Ohbuku</em> Tea Ceremony</td>
<td>&lt;Rokuharamitsu-ji Temple&gt;</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td><em>Chona Hajime</em></td>
<td>&lt;Koryuji Temple&gt;</td>
<td>Carpenters pray for the safety of their work. Its history dates back to Nara Period.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td><em>Kemari Hajime</em> (First kicking</td>
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<td>of the traditional ball game)</td>
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<td>&lt;Shimogamo Shrine&gt;</td>
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<td>8 to 12</td>
<td><em>Hatsu Ebisu</em> Festival</td>
<td>&lt;Ebisu Shrine&gt;</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td><em>Hokaiji Hadaka Odori</em> (Nude</td>
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<td>Dance by men)</td>
<td>&lt;Hokaiji Temple at Hino&gt;</td>
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<td><em>Toshiya Archery</em></td>
<td>&lt;Sanju-sangen-do Temple&gt;</td>
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<td><em>Tondo</em></td>
<td>&lt;Imakumano Shrine&gt;</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td><em>Hatsu Tenjin</em></td>
<td>&lt;Kitano Tenmangu Shrine&gt;</td>
<td>On the 25th of every month, the birthday of Michizane SUGAWARA, many stalls are set up at the shrine. January bazaar is called <em>Hatsu Tenjin</em> and December bazaar is called <em>Shimai Tenjin</em></td>
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<td>28</td>
<td><em>Hatsu Fudo</em></td>
<td>&lt;Tanukidanisan Fudoin&gt;</td>
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<td>February</td>
<td>2 to 4</td>
<td><em>Setsubun-sai</em></td>
<td>&lt;Temples and shrines&gt;</td>
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<td><em>Hatsu-uma</em> Festival</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Godairikison·Nin·noh·e</td>
<td>Daigoji Temple</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Sanyare Festival</td>
<td>Kamigamo Shrine</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Baika or plum blossom festival</td>
<td>Kitano Tenmangu Shrine</td>
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<td></td>
<td>In memory of Michizane SUGAWARA who loved plum blossom, some branches are offered to the shrine.</td>
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<td>March 14 to 16</td>
<td>Nehan-e ritual</td>
<td>Sennyuji Temple, Tofukuji Temple, Shinnyo-do and some others&gt;</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Saga Otaimatsu, Saga Dainenbutu Kyogen comic play</td>
<td>Seiryoji Temple</td>
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<td>Last Sunday</td>
<td>Hanezu Dance</td>
<td>Zuishin'in</td>
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<tr>
<td>Last Sunday</td>
<td>Spectacular Dancing and singing by girls in memory of a romance between Onono-komachi and Fukakusa-shojo</td>
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<td>April 8</td>
<td>Hana·matsuri or Flower Festival</td>
<td>Mibu Temple, Nishi-honganji Temple, Shinnyo-do and other temples&gt;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Celebrating the birth of Buddha</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Rokasai or Cherry Festival</td>
<td>festival started from the episode when Emperor Kazan planted a cherry tree by himself.</td>
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<td>2nd Sunday</td>
<td>Yasurai Festival</td>
<td>Imamiya Shrine</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd Sunday</td>
<td><em>Hotaiko-hanami-gyoretsu</em> procession &lt;Daigoji Temple&gt;</td>
<td>Re-creation of the scene of cherry viewing by Hideyoshi TOYOTOMI at Daigoji Temple</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td><em>Jusan Mairi</em> (Pilgrimage at the age of 13)</td>
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<td>Sunday after 20</td>
<td><em>Sinko Festival</em></td>
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<td>&lt;Matsuo Shrine&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>3rd Sunday</td>
<td>Yoshino <em>Tayu Hana Kuyo</em> (Flower mass) &lt;Joshoji Temple&gt;</td>
<td>A parade in memory of Yoshino, an entertainer in Edo Period.</td>
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<td>21 to 29</td>
<td>Mibu <em>Dainenbutsu Kyogen</em> (Comic play)</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td><em>Kyokusui-no-en</em> &lt;Jonangu Shrine&gt;</td>
<td>Recreation of a game practiced in Heian Period. Participants make a poem before catching the approaching sake cup flowing in a stream.</td>
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<td>May 1 to 4</td>
<td>Senbon Enma-do <em>Dainenbutu Kyogen</em> (Comic play)&lt;Senbon Enma-do &gt;</td>
<td>One of the three <em>Dainenbutu Kyogen</em> in Kyoto</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td><em>Yabusame Shinji</em> ritual &lt;Shimogamo Shrine&gt;</td>
<td>Archery on horseback</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Fujinomori Festival &lt;Fujinomori Shrine&gt;</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td><em>Kurabeuma-e Shinji</em> ritual &lt;Kamigamo Shrine&gt;</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Ichihime Festival &lt;Ichihime Shrine&gt;</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Aoi Festival &lt;Kyoto Imperial Palace, Shimogamo Shrine,</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Goryo Festival</td>
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<td><em>&lt;Kamigamo Shrine&gt;</em>*</td>
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<tr>
<td>3rd Sunday</td>
<td>Mifune Festival</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>&lt;Kurumazaki Shrine, Ohri River&gt;</em>*</td>
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<td>It started from the time when Emperor Shirakawa used to enjoy riding on three boats: of Chinese poems, of Japanese poems and of orchestra. Today dancing and singing are performed on the boats.</td>
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<td>June</td>
<td>Kyoto <em>Takigi Noh</em></td>
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<td><em>&lt;Heian Shrine&gt;</em>*</td>
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<td>1 to 2</td>
<td>Noh Play by the bonfire</td>
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<td>Taue Festival</td>
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<td><em>&lt;Fushimi Inari Shrine&gt;</em>*</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td><em>Takekirie-shiki</em> or Bamboo cutting ceremony</td>
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<td><em>&lt;Kurama Temple&gt;</em>*</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td><em>Nagoshi no harae</em> (Ceremony for evicting evil in summer)</td>
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<td><em>&lt;Kamigamo Shrine etc.&gt;</em>*</td>
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<td>July</td>
<td>Gion Festival</td>
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<td><em>&lt;Yasaka Shrine, Yamaboko Communities&gt;</em>*</td>
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<td>1 to 31</td>
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<td>Tanabata Festival</td>
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<td><em>&lt;Kitano Shrine, Shiramine Shrine&gt;</em>*</td>
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<td><em>Doyo-nosushi</em> in late July</td>
<td>Kyoto <em>Hujii</em> (blocking up in a cucumber)</td>
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<td><em>&lt;Renge Temple&gt;</em>*</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Pumpkin mass at Shishigatani</td>
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<td><em>&lt;Anrakuji Temple&gt;</em>*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug 31</td>
<td>Sen-nichi Mairi (1000 days of pilgrimage)</td>
<td>&lt;Atago Shrine&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug 1</td>
<td>Hassaku</td>
<td>Geiko and Maiko entertainers visit their masters and tea houses to express summer greetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug 7 to 10</td>
<td>Rokudo Mairi (Pilgrimage to Rokudo)</td>
<td>&lt;Rokudo Chinnohji Temple&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug 15 to 16</td>
<td>Matsugasaki Daimoku Dance</td>
<td>&lt;Yusenji Temple&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug 16</td>
<td>Kyoto Gozan Okuribi (Bonfire on five mountains)</td>
<td>&lt;Mt. Nyoigatake etc.&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug 16</td>
<td>Arashiyama Toro Nagashi (Lantern floating)</td>
<td>&lt;Togetu Bridge, Arashiyama&gt;</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug 16, 25</td>
<td>Rokusai Nenbutsu</td>
<td>&lt;Mibu Temple, Kisshoin Shrine and others&gt;</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug 23, 24</td>
<td>Sento Kuyo (1000 lights mass)</td>
<td>&lt;Adashino-nenbutsuji Temple&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug 15</td>
<td>Matsuage (Torch tossing)</td>
<td>&lt;Hanase area&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug 24</td>
<td>Matsuage (Torch tossed)</td>
<td>&lt;Hirogawara, Kumogahata&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug 24</td>
<td>Kuta Hanagasa Dance</td>
<td>&lt;Shikobuchi Shrine&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>First Sunday</td>
<td>Hassaku Festival</td>
<td>Matsuo Shrine etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Crow Sumo Wrestling</td>
<td>Kamigamo Shrine</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mid-autumn day</td>
<td>Meigetu Kangen (Full Moon Orchestra Festival)</td>
<td>Shimogamo Shrine</td>
<td>Conducted on August 15 in lunar calendar</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mid-autumn day</td>
<td>Daikakuji Moon viewing evening</td>
<td>Daikakuji Temple</td>
<td>Restaging the elegant moon viewing by aristocrats in Heian Period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Third Saturday and Sunday</td>
<td>Hagi or Bush Clover Festival</td>
<td>Nashinoki Shrine</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Late September to early October</td>
<td>Shinko Festival</td>
<td>Gokogu Shrine</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 1 to 5</td>
<td>Zuiki Festival</td>
<td>Kitano Shrine</td>
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<td>Sports' Day and days before and after</td>
<td>Awata Jinja Festival</td>
<td>Awata Shrine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Day before Sports' Day</td>
<td>Shamenchi Dance</td>
<td>Akimoto Shrine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Third Sunday</td>
<td>25 Bodhisattvas Oneri Kuyo Mass</td>
<td>Sokujoin Temple</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Jidai Festival</td>
<td>Kyoto Imperial Palace, Heian Shrine</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>22 Kurama Fire Festival</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 1</td>
<td>Inoko Festival</td>
<td>Ritual restaging the</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 to 15</td>
<td>ceremony dating back to Heian Period</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Restaging an episode at the time of Narihira ARIWARA</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Offering newly picked tea leaves in a tea pot that associates with Kitano Grand Tea Party hosted by Hideyoshi TOYOTOMI</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 8</td>
<td>Hari kuyo (Needle mass)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 and 8</td>
<td>Daikon daki (Radish cooking)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 and 10</td>
<td>Narutaki Daikon daki (Radish cooking at Narutaki)</td>
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<td>13 to 30</td>
<td>Kuya Yuyaku Nenbutu</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Event restaging attacking of 47 Samurais from Ako</td>
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<td>Page</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Details</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Shimai Kobo</td>
<td>A hopping is held on 21 of every month commemorating the day of death of priest Kobo. Hopping in December is particularly called <em>Shimai Kobo</em> and one in January is called <em>Hatsu Kobo</em>, both attracting many people.</td>
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<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Okeramairi pilgrimage</td>
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<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td><em>Joya no kane</em> (Tolling bells on the new year's eve)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Chion-in Temple and many other temples</em></td>
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(2) **Life in Kyo-machiya (Kyoto town houses) and communities**

Many town houses in the centre of Kyoto that have survived, show the architectural design of Kyo-machiya that has been handed down. They are one of the important components of charm and unique landscape of Kyoto. These houses are the arena for *Ke* or daily lives and businesses as well as a stage for *Hare* or festivities. Residents of these town houses enjoy their colourful lives of *Hare* and *Ke* in changing the interiors appropriate for each season.

The scenes of daily activities such as people sweeping the front yard of their houses and sprinkling water there, hanging lanterns along the eaves, displaying family treasures in the reception rooms seen from outside by removing the front doors, are living examples of the day-to-day culture of towns people. *Noren* or a curtain with the name of shop hung at the entrance, sound of weaving machines, the smell of dyestuff, and traditional handicrafts displayed at the stores are also reminders of the culture of manufacturing and commerce. Here, a strong bond among fellow traders living across the streets is felt. Thus in Kyo-machiya, people inherited urban living culture which has been developed during the long years of its history.

The following pages demonstrate the outline of historical *Kyo-machiya* houses, the historical scenic beauty found in daily lives of Kyo-machiya, and the history of community autonomy and its present situation.
A General description of local communities and Kyo-machiya

Most of the present Kyo-machiya buildings were constructed at the very beginning of Showa Era. Figure 2-27 shows the transition of urban area. Pink zone in the centre shows the urban area around 1938 where many Kyo-machiya still remain.

A Kyo-machiya is a terraced house with large tiled roof of Hirairi style, and is built with the traditional wooden frame technique. Large doors, wooden lattice doors and lattice windows painted with colcothar are the main features of Kyo-machiya which form the street landscape.

(A) History of Kyo-machiya

Kyo-machiya is said to have originated in the middle of Heian Period or the 10th century. As Ritsuryo law weakened, local craftsmen and merchants who had been recruited to work in Kyoto started to settle down in the city and made a living here. Gradually they became prosperous and fixed huts in front of the walls on large and small streets. This is believed to be the origin of Kyo-machiya.

Eventually rich citizens started buying pieces of land from aristocrats, demolished the walls along the streets, and constructed their own houses there. Today's Kyo-machiya is the prototype of shops on the streets where many citizens would frequently visit for shopping.

These streets started serving as passages as well as platforms for communication where people came to talk and to celebrate festivals. Eventually, facilities such as public restrooms were constructed and Ryogawacho or a community of the areas facing each other across the street were born.
Fig 2-28  Sample structure of Kyo-machiya
Illustrated by Naoki Tani and Masaya Masui in "Machi Gion-matsuri Sumai" published by Shibunkaku Shuppan, 1994

Photo 2-23  Hidari-Daimonji bonfire

Fig 2-29  Layout of houses and facilities
Source: "Nippon Toshihi Nyumon 1 Kukan" Edited by Yasuo Takahashi and Nobuyuki Yoshida. Published by Tokyo University Press, 1989
the fifth year of Bunka Age, Sashimonoya cho, Ogawa Tamotsu
Soon after recovery from wars in Edo Period, a variety of commercial and manufacturing businesses started developing which formed the basis of industrial culture. Traditional industries such as those related to making Obi sashes and Kimono prospered upon receiving orders from court nobles and the government. Advancement in architectural technology allowed constructing larger houses for commoners. Meanwhile, living standard of commoners was elevated along with advancing business prosperity. Merchants were allowed to use roof tiles and tatami mats in their houses. They would invite guests to tea ceremonies and poem reciting gatherings in large rooms covered with tatami mats.

For such occasions, wide Obi sashes were invented. The host wearing such Obi used to serve tea to her guests sitting at the opposite side of the room. When the host would serve one of the guests on one side of the room, she would bow and make a gesture of courtesy to one of the guest, the guests on the opposite would cherish the beauty of the knots of the Obi, and vice versa. Such wide sashes became popular nationwide along with the popularity of tea ceremony and flower arrangement. Businessmen who had gained large profit spent their money to build houses. Thus, tatami mats and roof tiles became popular and urban resident culture fully bloomed.

Along with the increase of capital and population, demand for constructing large shops and terrace houses for the commoners intensified. Construction standards were improved to cope with this. Sizes of tatami mats and doors were standardized and architectural designs with standardized sizes were developed to create design uniformity. This formed the basis of today's Kyo-machiya.

![Fig2-30](image_url) 
**Figure 2-30** Picture scroll showing the townscape of the west side of Sanjo aburanokoji-cho
A picture scroll painted in 1820
Owned by Kyoto Prefectural Library and Archives
Rich merchants wanted to have good quality wood for the frames and the finishing of their houses and obtained them from all over Japan. As a result, the skills of carpenters and craftsmen were refined which resulted in the creation of today’s gorgeous and elegant Kyomachiya. At that time, the grand master carpenter of Nakai family had 22 master carpenters who were in charge of different districts. These master carpenters would compete with each other to improve their skills. Under the masters there were carpenters who were patronized by rich merchants and were given job opportunities.

The major job of these carpenters was repairing and maintaining houses, not constructing new buildings. The relation between those house owners and the carpenters was one of an employee and employer, not that of a contract partners. There was a strong bond between the two parties. Such relations prompted the carpenters and craftsmen to offer their services to their patrons in such ways as cleaning beams and spreading white sand in the garden at the time of year-end cleaning. This custom still remains among the carpenters of Kyomachiya. They maintain and do repair the houses of their patrons and also help in assembling Yamaboko floats for Gion Festival.

Later on with the passage of time the form of Kyomachiya underwent several changes little by little. Kyomachiya gained its present form in of Meiji Period.

Kyomachiya has various architectural styles the features of which differ according to the area it is located and the occupation of the owner. For instance, Kami-no Kyo, a textile manufacturing area, also called Nishijin, has Oriyadate or weaver house style with a vaulted ceiling and a space for the tall weaving machine in the back of the house. Houses in Shimo-no Kyo, a business area, are of the Omoteya tsukuri style which is meant for rich merchant. These have two separate parts, one in the front allotted for the shop and the other in the back for
living. There is another room called *genkan* or the entrance room for receiving guests which is connecting the two parts and at the same time separating them.

*Chaya* or tea house style in the entertainment quarters is a two story building. The second floor is protruding above the eaves of the first floor. The second floor rooms are used for entertaining guests.

Lattice, one of the characteristics of *Kyō-machiya* has also several variations. *Itoya-goshi*, or thread shop lattice is seen at thread shops, cord shops and cloth shops. A number of the upper bars of a lattice are cut short so as to get enough light for seeing the colours of threads and fabrics. The intensity of light is adjusted by the number of short bars. The name of the lattice changes according to their number of short bars in them. For instance, weaver's lattice or four-bar lattice, thread shop lattice or three bar lattice and cloth shop or two bar lattice. Sake shop lattice is usually sturdy so that it may not be broken if a Sake barrel collides with it. There are some other types of lattice like the one of rice shops, charcoal shops and *fu* shops. Such old business quarters are still found in Kyoto.

(B) **Beginning of community autonomy and making regulations called Choshikimoku**

People started living in *Kyō-machiya* and formed *Ryogawa-cho*, communities of people living on both sides of streets facing each other.

Several such communities got together and developed *Chogumi* or community association. During the Warring States Period, *Kami-no Kyō* was formed by those *Chogumi* who served for court nobles and warriors in northern Kyoto.
Whereas, Shimono Kyo was formed by those Chogumi who were engaged in commerce in southern Kyoto. Each Chogumi protected themselves from intruders by surrounding the area with walls having gates. This is the beginning of community autonomy.

When peace was restored in Edo Period, Kyoto was directly ruled by a branch office of Bakufu or military government called Kyoto Shoshidai. However, these authorities endorsed the autonomy of Cho and Chogumi.

At that time, the government imposed some restriction on changing residence. Nonetheless, according to a document, residents of Cho often moved in and out. Two out of 50 households in a Cho changed residence in a year. To secure law and order in these communities where people used to come and go frequently, some rules have to be enforced. These rules were called Cho-shikimoku and Cho-sadame, and are recorded in the old documents.

Several provisions within these rules were applicable to each Cho. They include limitations on the entry of newcomers, budget and town meetings. Communities composed of people of the same occupation accepted only those of their own elements. Communities with various businesses accepted only people with different businesses. Most of the newcomers had migrated from Wakasa and Ohmi provinces expecting to get some helps from their relatives living in the Cho. These regulations were the fruit of wisdom of the townspeople.

The main financial source of Cho community was a tax called 1/20 which was imposed on those newcomers who bought lands and houses in the Cho. They had to pay one-twentieth part of the price of the real estate as a tax.

In addition, every family had to shoulder a fair share of the burden. This was decided according to the size of the house and whether the house was rented or owned.

The community rules stipulated in details regulations regarding fire fighting such as how to extinguish fire, how to maintain fire wells and penalty for those who did not participate in fire fighting activities. It also included criteria for the quality of houses, standards for the uniformity of roofs, raising orphans and many other issues. Checkpoint gates and huts for guards were installed at each crossing. These gates were closed during the night to protect the community from intruders. Costs of maintaining the gates and wages for guards were covered by Cho.

Although Cho-shikimoku did not stipulate the detail of Kyomachiya architectural styles, community members were aware of their own responsibilities in maintain order. Such unwritten rules made it possible to
standardize and rationalize the architectural design of *Kyomachiya*. As a result, a uniformed architectural style was established.

**C) Communities still much alive today**

The national government in Meiji Era took advantage of these autonomous structures. They reorganized *Chogumi* to form *Bangumi* and encouraged community autonomy. *Choshikimoku* which was formulated in Meiji Era contained an article about the community tax collected for being used in the community.

The most striking fact is that community residents established elementary schools with their own budget for the first time in Japan. The reason for this was that they were worried that Kyoto’s condition might deteriorate after the capital was relocated to Tokyo. However, they found hope for a bright future of Kyoto in child education. Each of the 66 Bangumi had one elementary school, except one case where two schools were shared by four *Bangumi*.

These schools were not only for elementary education but also served as family registration offices and meeting places for communities. The schools were also used by government officers and adults. Residents of *Bangumi* established a company called *Shogakko Kaisha* or elementary school company to raise fund for the maintenance of school building, recruiting teachers, and community management. No matter a household had a child or not, they had to pay some money called *Kamado-kin* to operate the schools. The community would lend some of this money to business firms and earn interest which was also spent for school operations. Such activities to support school operations continued even after *Bangumi* were converted to school zone system. Community used to shoulder expenses needed for the expansion of the school premises and the renovations of school buildings which continued until the school zone system was abolished.

Western style Barber shop buildings are often found at the crossings in old downtown area. This is because in Meiji Era, old guard houses, one of the assets of school zones were rented out to barbers to earn money. Since then, barber shops have been serving as information centres for communities.

Today, out of 64 original *Bangumi* schools, 11 became junior high schools under the revised system after the Second World War. Nowadays, even half of the old school zones are not left in their original form of old school zones because some schools have been integrated with others. However, old school zone system still prevails as a unit for community activities. They are engaged in sports, fire
prevention, women activities, senior citizens activities, child guidance, welfare, traffic safety and several other activities. Therefore, schools are regarded as the centre for such social activities.

Even decommissioned schools have been used for meetings, sports activities, fire prevention drills, flea markets, festival and athletics meet to boost up their communities. Schools serve as the symbols and centres of communities.
B Example

The following pages elaborate the historical scenic beauty of *Kyo-machiya* houses, daily lives of the residents, and their community activities.

**(A) Wisdom of Kyo-machiya: its relations with natural environment in four seasons and festivals**

Residents of *Kyo-machiya* in highly populated area of the city, have the wisdom of adopting natural environment into their lives. Houses are attached to each other which are separated by a common wall. Therefore, it is to be said that these houses have only three dimensions facing outside, that is the front, backyard and ceiling.

Residents grow plants at the backyard. This causes a difference of temperature with the front portion of the house and created air circulation. Houses with much longer depth have spot gardens to augment the effect. When stepping into the inner earthen corridor from the hot and humid air outside, the person fatigued by the heat feel comfort when embraced by the cool breeze. Plants at the backyard of each house form a green belt which allows the flow of wind and cools down the hot air.

Subtle change of wind and sun light, and the sound of rain coming from spot gardens, back gardens and high windows on the wall give the sense of passing time and the change of seasons to the daily lives of residents. In addition, seasonal plants in the back yard would cultivate the sense of beauty in the minds of the residents which would result into the creation of beautiful colours and
designs of Nishijin fabrics and Kyo-yuzen dyeing.

To cope with the weather variation during the four seasons, people make use of their wisdom and ingenuity to live comfortably in Kyo-machiya. When the weather starts getting hot in the afternoons of June, people will replace Fusuma doors for summer-type doors in their houses. This custom is called Tategu-gae that means changing Fusuma and Shoji doors into reed doors and chick blinds, and covering Tatami mats with rattan carpets. These customs are observed even today in the air-conditioned rooms to enjoy visual coolness. Reeds and rattan offer cool feelings to the skin and eyes. This summer practice will be continued till the end of September. After that, the usual style would be resumed.

In the past, sprinkling water and sweeping the space in front of the house both in the mornings and evenings were a common scene around Kyomachiya. Scooping water by a dipper from a bucket and sprinkling it on the street avoids the dust from being blow. Meanwhile, this is a good way to bring down the temperature. This practice shows the wisdom of our forefathers.

There are several festivals and rituals closely related to four seasons in Kyoto. The interior of Kyomachiya is arranged and set differently in accordance with various seasonal events. During festive occasions, lattice windows of Kyomachiya are removed to accommodate special arrangements of festivals.
Arrangements are also made for other events such as New Year’s days, girl’s day, boy’s day, Tanabata Festival and Choyo Festival. These events stimulate and add accent and comfort to the daily life of the residents of *Kyo-machiya*. These customs have been handed down until today and have contributed to their living culture.

Although, a room is needed for the display and special arrangements of festivals, such space is not provided, instead the space for daily life is used for this purpose. Usually the ornaments for special occasions are stored in closets and storehouses and when in use, these items are taken out from the storage. Using a room for multipurpose became their lifestyle. The procedures of putting articles for the festive occasions in and out, cleaning rooms and changing the interior by all family members are the annual events deeply rooted in the lives of residents of *Kyo-machiya*.

Thus, all family members are expected to support this tradition of maintaining the close relation of their daily life with four seasons. Passing down such customs to the next generation will play an important role in teaching children how to learn manners of receiving guests and the idea of sharing domestic tasks by family members. Thus, this is to be called a mechanism of passing down living culture. Passersby could also sense the flavour of four seasons by the special daily displays by such houses where various festive events are conducted in harmony with natural environment.

**(B) Wisdom of Kyo-machiya: relations with community**

Lattice doors and dirt path of *Kyo-machiya* both connect with and separate from outside. This is quite different from today’s architectures in that *Kyo-machiya* is blended with outdoor and its function is flexible.

*Hirairi* style of main roof and deep eaves on the first floor are some of the features of *Kyo-machiya’s* outlook. This design is to prevent earthen walls from rain as well as from strong sun rays in summer and let the sunlight in the winter. The space under the eaves serves as shelter from rain. A bench attached to the house can be used for different purposes such as a shelf for displaying goods for sale, a seat for rest, and a rack for festive decoration. Thus the bench connects the public space and the private area of the house.
Lattice has excellent function. People cannot see the inside of the house through lattice while, it is easy to see the outside from the inside. Thus lattice serves as a moderate safety device. For those who want to see the shops, they can simply stop in front of the lattice window and look inside. Thus, a lattice also serves as a show window. The dirt path which usually opens to the street is a part of the house and a place to receive customers.

Anyone who visits for business purpose is welcome to enter the dirt path near the entrance and announce his/her arrival. In most cases, the visitor will talk to the host while standing. If the conversation prolongs, he will sit on the front room and will be served tea. The kitchen is located at the end of the path which faces the dining and living room. Only close family friends are allowed here.

In this way, though located inside the house, the path functions as a semi–public space. When visitors are received here, they don’t have to take off their shoes. Family members share receiving visitors and that will promote interpersonal relation. As a result, such relation will contribute to the strengthening of bonds between the residents of the community.

Eave along the street, lattice and dirt path create a link between the indoor and outdoor. Streets are not detached or isolated, but are a part of living space of
people and communities. They are play ground for children and interaction arena for adults.

The semi-public space of Kyo-machiya is the fruit of the wisdom of people living in the community. The urban residential culture that was created in the course of the long history, consists of the daily life of the residents of Kyo-machiya and the activities on the streets there. Such culture is still alive today.

(C) The mechanism of strengthening bonds between community residents

Kyo-machiya characterized by its dirt path which serves as semi-public space is a symbol of rich community in the old downtown area. Families living in Kyo-machiya communities interact daily with the residents of their school district. They share the same elementary school, are engaged in the same profession, and hold festivals together being members of the local shrine precinct. Since they have been raised by their community as a whole, it is natural for them to participate in the activities and development of their community.

Jizo-bon celebrated by a community called “Cho” and the athletic meet held in a school district are part of the traditional activities of local communities.

a Jizo-bon

When strolling in the town, one can often find a Ojizo-san (a stone statue of Bodhisattva) here and there. People in the neighbourhood offer seasonal flowers to Ojizo-san which is believed to keep children in good health and to protect the community. It is loved by the residents of Cho. Each Cho has at least one Ojizo-san, often at the corner of Kyo-machiya or of a condominium.
The size of these statues varies in deferent locations. Offering beautiful flowers to Ojizo-san is an ever continuing custom. Usually a particular person will take care of this deed. However, if the particular passes away, other members of the community would take over and carry on the task in turn. One can usually find a passerby stopping in front of Ojizo-san and offering a prayer in the morning and in the evening.

_Jizo-bon_ is one of the events every _cho_ would celebrate in late August. It is a seasonal tradition which announces the end of summer in Kyoto. Developing faith in Jizo Bodhisattva became popular among aristocrats in Heian Period. Gradually commoners also started offering prayers to these stone statues. Jizo Bodhisattva is believed to protect children from goblins in the hell. That’s why rituals to protect children started. In Edo Period, it was called _Jizo-matsuri_.

Originally _Jizo-bon_ was celebrated on August 23 and 24. However, these days, communities often move the celebration day to the Saturday and Sunday closest to the original dates because people who take care of celebrating _Jizo-bon_ are mostly company employees.

As _Jizo-bon_ approaches, people in the community get busy in preparing for the event. The day before the celebration, they clean the statue and decorate the altar for the event. Permission from police is needed to use a public road where they will place the altar for Jizo statues and decorate them with ornaments. Some will place their altars inside their house. In such cases, the altar is properly placed at a spot that could be seen from
outside so that people can pray from outside. Offerings such as flowers, sake, rice and other foodstuff of sea and mountain origin are placed around the beautifully decorated Jizo statue the altar of which is hemmed by red drapes. The place is surrounded by paper lanterns with the names of children on them which warm up the atmosphere of Jizo-bon.

Event organizers arrange some attractions for children such as catching goldfish and breaking water melon while blind folded. In some localities Fugo Oroshi, a kind of lottery will also be added to the attraction. Several bags containing presents are individually attached to a cord and are placed on the second floor of a house. The cords run through a pulley and reach the ground where their ends are bundled up. One child at a time will pull one of the cords get the present attached to it. In the old days Joruri or ballad drama was performed to entertain people.

A priest from the nearby temple comes and prays for the good health and growth of children. Some communities have a custom called Juzukuri which is commonly known as Hyakumanben no juzu mawashi (turning the rosary a million times). Children sitting in a circle would hold a couple of meters long rosary and turn it while chanting sutra.

In the evening, adults gather in front of Jizo and discuss about issues such as children, community development and so forth. Moreover, it is a spot for interaction for residents who meet each other for the first time.

Thus, Jizo-bon is one of the Hare or festive occasions where children expand the span of their friendship. Scenes of decorated Jizo statue seen on the streets, various activities through the cooperation of the community residents, and the townscape of Kyō-machiya, the symbol of local community, will deepen the love for the community and strengthen the bond between residents.

b Athletic meet in school district

Under the autumn blue sky, the athletic grounds of elementary schools which were financed by the local residents in the past are decorated with buntins and several tents are erected there with the echo of march music at the background. The athletic meets are the biggest events in school districts.

The athletic meet is held by the local sports promotion society in each school district. Most of the societies were organized after the latter 1940’s.

Nowadays, the athletic meet is held by the local sports promotion society in each school district. Most of the societies were created during the second
half of 1940’s. In 1957, 160 societies were established. The athletic meet was the first activity held by these societies and also was one of the most impressive events for many people. Some school districts were conducting these events even before the establishment of the society and even before the World War II. Having more than 50 years of history, the athletic meet represents the passion for autonomous activities since the days of Chorgumi. Even today, athletic meets are the biggest events in the school district.

In order to hold an athletic meet, the cooperation of many people from various sectors of society is needed. The sports promotion society, children’s committee, PTA, volunteer firemen and many others will sit, discuss and coordinate the events. On the day of the event, the number of executive members and other staffs will exceed 100.

Programs of the type of events of the athletic meets vary from one district to another. In order to encourage participation from different age groups, programs are carefully planned. Once the events start, cheering voices echo in the neighbourhood.

In a history of more than a half century, the programs of athletic meets have undergone various changes to match the needs of time and the ages of participants. However, the cheering voices, the lively atmosphere of communities and the enthusiasm of the executive members have not changed. People interact with each other through their involvements and in the management and participation. This will further promote the activities of their community. These activities combined with their elementary schools which are considered as the symbol of community, in the vicinity will strengthen the bond between residents, and create a vibrant community where the residents want to continue living in the same place.

C Scenic beauty in the life of Kyo-machiya

As mentioned before, Kyo-machiya has seasonal faces which are influenced by natural environment and festivals. It also provides a half public space which plays an important role in maintaining community bonds. The depth of Kyo-machiya and a glimpse of people’s daily life is felt there.

Each Kyo-machiya house is related to the community in which it is located and forms unique townscape of Ryogawa-cho (a community consisting of two dimensions facing each other. Community bonds create and promote autonomous activities of a community. Then several communities form Motogakku, an ex-school district with Bangumi elementary school as
its centre.

During the course of progression from one Kyo-machiya house to Ryogawa-cho and further to a school district, daily lives, autonomous activities and other events have contributed to the community to strengthen the bond over a period of time. By maintaining the same lifestyle, residents of the community feel the bond and closeness and become aware of the preservation of the historical townscape of their community.

(3) Places for Hare and historical stages much alive with tradition

Kyoto Imperial Palace and Nijo Castle used to be the centres of politics and cultures in the history of Kyoto as a capital. They have served as stages for significant historical incidents. Their buildings and gardens are very important historical assets for the country. They also serve as spaces for the festivals and relaxation of citizens.

Close relations between the daily life of people and these historical cultural assets as places for relaxation and festivals plays important roles to ingrain the history and culture of Kyoto into the mind of citizens. People learn the cultural values subconsciously which greatly influences their own sense of beauty.

The traditional techniques of preserving historical properties and passing them down to the next generation have been acquired in such places. And advancement of such techniques will in turn contribute to conserve and pass down the historical properties to the next generations in the future.

The following pages show the stages for the historical episodes in the past and present and their historical scenic beauty.

A Kyoto Gyoen Park

(A) Kyoto Gyoen Park in the past and present

Kyoto Gyoen Park is a national park with the area of 63ha excluding Kyoto
Imperial Palace, Kyoto Ohmiya Palace and Sento Palace. The park is open to public. The area measuring 700m from east to west and 1300m from north to south used to be the residential compounds of 200 families of imperial and court nobles.

The imperial palace in Heian Period used to be located 2km west of the present site. Suffering from frequent fires, the palace was shifted to the residence of one of the imperial relatives. The roots of the present imperial palace are in one of such residents in the end of 14th century. After the emperor moved to Tokyo in 1869, most of the court nobles followed him. By the order of the emperor, Kyoto Prefecture started reforming the complex by removing the houses, constructing stone mounds on the boundary, constructing paths and planting vegetation. The work was completed in 1883 and the complex took a shape similar to the present one.

The first Kyoto Exhibition was held in 1872. The second exhibition and the subsequent ones were held at Omiya and Sento Palaces. In 1881, a permanent exhibition site was constructed in the east and south corner of Gyoen Park. Several exhibitions had been held there until 1897 when the site was shifted Okazaki area. Thus, these exhibitions served as a bridge between the people and the area.

After World War II, the functions of Kyoto Gyoen Park was restored to the original state, out of respect for its dignified history, and became a national park open for public. In addition to augmenting the scenic beauty of the premises of the imperial palace, and serving as a public park, it was regarded as an important rich green space that preserves the natural environment and provides people the pleasure of being close to nature.

Today there are many old trees which were planted in some aristocrats residences several hundred years ago and after renovation 130 years ago. These trees compose rich and diversity of vegetation cultivated in the long history.

Ito-zakura or thread cherry in the vacant site where Konoe residence used to be and Sato-zakura or town cherry, plum trees, peach trees at Demizu and Ogawa area, and maple and ginkgo trees provide colourful tint in each season and please the eyes of the visitors. The number of trees in the garden is estimated to be 50,000. There are over 500 species of vegetation in the park. It is amazing to find a rich variety of animals and plants there with more than 100 species of wild birds such as northern goshawks which find a feeding site there, more than 50 species of butterflies and more than 400 species of fungi.
Although Gyoen Park is filled with lively activities, it has also a peaceful and orderly atmosphere. In spite of the fact that it is located close to the downtown, it offers some quietness. People enjoy the passage of four seasons such as appreciating cherry blossom and tinted maple leaves as well as observing wild plants, birds and fungi. There are several spots in the park where there stood
residents of aristocrats once stood. The exhibition house where people can learn
the natural environment and history of the park is located on the South East of
the park where Kankyu-in residents once existed. Shusui-tei house, once being a
part of the resident of Kujo family is now open to public and is used for tea
ceremony, poem recital gathering, and many other purposes. Kyoto residents
highly esteem the park, and are proud of having the privilege of using the place
once served as an important historical stage for their leisure.

On the occasion of Aoi Festival in May and Jidai Festival in October, the place
becomes the stage for Hare. People in gorgeous costumes gather from all parts of
Kyoto accompanied by their relatives and friends. Maiko and Geiko also are
there to help accentuate the festive atmosphere.

The park provides opportunities for craftsmen with traditional skills to show off
their skills. They are absolutely necessary for the maintenance and preservation
of many historical buildings and their landscape in the park.

There are many pine trees mostly around the boundaries of the park.

The pine forest spreading out in front of Kenrei Gate is one of the typical
sceneries of the park. In this huge compound, trees are trimmed with a technique
called Sukashi to produce calmness and natural outlook while allowing the
branches grow upward and to let the wind pass through. To prune the tall trees,
they use a four to five meter long bamboo pole with a sickle or a saw attached to
the tip.

While in narrow spaces such as the sites that once belonged to aristocrats, a
technique called Midori-tsumi or picking fresh top pruning method is used in
May and June, and Momiage or removing old leaves in November to February to
prevent these plants from growing out excessively.

It is not known when these techniques were developed. However, it is assumed
that these techniques were inherited from the time of enthronement ceremony
for Emperor Taisho whose pictures show the technique of cutting branches with
which trees look like growing naturally.

The State Guest House in Gyoen Park was completed in 2005. Various
traditional techniques of Kyoto such as carpentry, plastering, gardening as well
as fitting, joinery, Karakami and Washi paper, gold leaf cutting, lacquer, pottery,
metal work, weaving and dyeing were applied to complete the house. After the
completion, of the State Guest House, craftsmen engaged in the work established
a system for its daily maintenance. This has contributed to the development and
the process of traditional techniques to the future generations. Gardens in
particular need everyday care so young gardeners are given the opportunities to
learn from veterans through this system.

Thus, Kyoto Gyoen Park provides people a place for relaxation and a stage for festivals. They sense the history of this large park and its historical buildings such as the Kyoto Imperial Palace. They also find refined and stylish traditional techniques in the works finished by the craftsmen. People would learn subconsciously the importance of the history and sense of traditional beauty while they are in Kyoto Gyoen Park.

B Nijo Castle

(A) Nijo Castle in the past and present

The first Tokugawa Shogun, Ieyasu TOKUGAWA ordered the local feudal lords to construct Nijo Castle as his lodging in Kyoto and it was completed in 1603. Its compound expanded to the present size in 1626 after Iemitsu, the third Shogun had brought some buildings from Fushimi Castle to receive emperor Gomizuno-o. Later Iemitsu visited the castle together with his 300,000 subordinates and soldiers. This was the last occasion that the castle attracted political attentions until the last days of Tokugawa Shogunate. The place became a political stage again when the 14th Shogun Iemochi visited the place after 230 years of absence and the 15th Shogun Yoshinobu declared that he would return the sovereignty to emperor in the grand audience room of Ninomaru Palace in the castle.

In the beginning of Meiji Era, the castle was used as the office HQ of Kyoto Prefecture. Later it became the property of the Ministry of Imperial Household and was used as a place for the enthronement ceremony of Emperor Taisho. In
All the buildings of Nijo Castle are designated as the historical site by the national government. Ninomaru Palace is designated as a national treasure. 22 other buildings and paintings on the sliding doors of the Ninomaru Palace, totalling 954 items are designated as culturally important properties. Ninomaru garden which is said to be the work of Enshu KOBORI is designated as the place of special scenic beauty by the national government. In 1994, the castle was registered as a part of world heritage site of “Historical Monuments of Ancient Kyoto” by UNESCO.

The architectural style of Ninomaru Palace, its gardens and the paintings of sliding doors by the painters of Kano school are some of the charms of Nijo Castle. Looking from outside, the gates with plastered walls, the tower, the stone walls, the moat and the pine and pyracantha trees along the moat are very attractive with the reflection of sun rays. In the evening, East Grand Gate is lit up which serves as one of the landmarks of the city.

(B) Scenic beauty found in Nijo Castle

Usually the castle is a popular sightseeing spot and the place for a walk. It is also the regular place for Hare occasions. One of them is tea ceremony held in Seiryuen Garden. Spring Sencha tea ceremony and autumn grand tea ceremony are held each for three days for the citizens. The year 2009, marked the 55th anniversary of the annual tea ceremony. This proves that the event is very popular annual event of Nijo Castle.

The castle is also famous for its cherry blossom. The buildings are lit up in this season in the evening. In autumn, to appeal the charms of the castle, “Castle Festival” is held. Like Kyoto Gyoen Park, many craftsmen with the traditional techniques work for the maintenance in Nijo Castle.

After the ownership of the castle was transferred to the city of Kyoto in 1939, the city staff took charge of maintenance of the Ninomaru Garden, Honmaru Garden and Seiryu-en Garden.

Most of the trees in the castle are said to be planted 150 years ago at the site.
where there were some buildings once, and at the mounds surrounding the premises.

Black pine and red pine trees are the dominant plants composing 10% of the total number of trees. Pines are indispensible part of the landscape of Ninomaru and Honmaru palaces and other buildings in the premise. Pine trees planted along the moats serve as means of creating elegant atmosphere.

Pine trees in the gardens of Ninomaru and Honmaru palaces maintain their styles by the pruning techniques inherited since the possession of castle was rendered to the Ministry of Imperial Household. Garden specialists who have been engaged in taking care of this job for a long time, always keep their eyes on the trees so that to maintain the same elegant old style.

The castle garden has some cycads, the kind shown in the photos, dating back to the last days of Edo Period. Since cycads originate from tropical region and are weak in cold weather, they are wrapped with straw in the early December to protect them from frost. This method has been passed down from the days when the garden was possessed by the Ministry of Imperial Household and is one of the maintenance works practiced for 70 years which became one of the winter traditions in the castle.

Ninomaru Palace and other buildings are checked regularly by the technicians stationed at the castle on regular bases. They do the repairing job with the appropriate traditional techniques. Professional knowledge and experiences are
needed in repairing the buildings of cultural values. To reuse material having the same qualities as those of the original ones as far as possible is very important for the repairs. Even if the new material must replace the original one, the same traditional material and assembling skill should be used.

Thus, Nijo castle has some technicians stationed regularly for the maintenance of gardens and buildings. This is how the traditional styles and skills are maintained and passed to the future in the castle. However, these technicians alone cannot maintain the assets. They need help from other professionals who can maintain the castle such as gardeners, carpenters and plasterers. Still many such people are found here in Kyoto.

Tea ceremonies and other similar events together with the historical buildings and gardens represent the deep rooted tradition of Kyoto culture. While the maintenance work by the technicians stationed at the castle prove the quality of their techniques, and high cultural value of the castle.