

Chapter

1

Understanding the Landscape of Kyoto

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Kyoto has a brilliant history of more than 1200 years commencing from the establishment of Heian-kyo capital. The present colorful and unique landscape of Kyoto developed in the course of its long history. Fusion between rich natural environment called “Sanshi-suimei” or “Purple Mountains and Clear Water” which is featured by the mountains on three sides and Kamo and Katsura rivers ; and many historical properties including the World Heritage sites and attractive streets form the unique local landscapes, the collection of which forms the entire landscape of Kyoto.

The landscape of Kyoto strongly displays the culture of the

capital city and the livelihood of its people. These elements are still alive in the unique natural environment of Kyoto. The dignity and elegance of Kyoto were created by the activities of people in business and in daily lives. In addition, the colorful sceneries created by the seasonal change and passage of time have given the depth to its landscape.



The landscape of Kyoto can be perceived not only by vision, but also by such sensations as light, wind, sound and smell which harmonized with each other since olden days. It is also perceived together with its history and the sensitivity and mentality of its people. For a long time, the landscape of Kyoto has been regarded as the asset that should be protected.

Everyone living here at present has the responsibility to protect and pass the outstanding historical landscape of Kyoto down to the future generations. This chapter entitled “Understanding the Landscape of Kyoto” illustrates the components and factors active in the formation of landscape.



1-1

Components of Kyoto's Landscape

The landscape of Kyoto is composed of several components which have developed under the influence of various factors. First of all, the profile of Kyoto will be presented:

● Geography

Kyoto city is located in the southern part of Kyoto Prefecture. Having an area of 827.90km², it extends 29.18km from the east to the west and 49.49km from the north to the south. Its population is approximately 1.47 million which makes it one of the biggest cities in Kansai area next to Osaka and Kobe. Kyoto is about 40km far from Osaka, 100km from Nagoya and 370km from Tokyo.



Yamashina Basin. The view of the mountains seen from the downtown is a distinctive property of Kyoto's landscape. The view of low and moderately tall buildings seen from the top of the surrounding mountains and the hillsides is also a part of the eye-catching scenery of Kyoto.



Overlooking view at the early Showa Era

● Topography

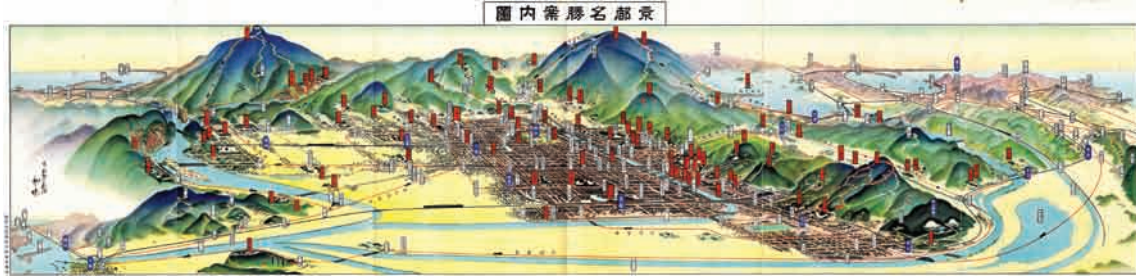
Mt. Hiei and Higashiyama mountain range in the east of the city creates exquisite scenery. Mt. Atago and the Kitayama mountain range dominate the north. Mountain peaks in the west that stretch on both sides of Hozu River form two beautiful valleys known as Arashiyama and Saga. Kyoto basin is open on the south toward Osaka Plain. Kamo River that runs in the east and Katsura River in the west of the city have originated from the above mentioned mountains. Many scenic spots are scattered around Kyoto which is known as the city of Sanshi-suimei or Purple Mountains and Clear Water.

The urban area of Kyoto consists of the Kyoto Basin which is surrounded by mountains on three sides and the

● Climate

Although the climate of Japan can be generally called temperate, it is further divided into the following four climatic zones: Sea of Japan side zone, Pacific Ocean side zone, Inland zone, and Seto-inland-sea side zone. Generally speaking, the climate of Kyoto is a blend of both Inland and Pacific Ocean side with the annual precipitation of about 1400mm. Having the topographic feature of basin, the climate of Kyoto is unique, being hot and humid in summer, and chilly to the bone in winter. The clear-cut four seasons accentuate the awesome natural landscape of Kyoto.

■ Aerial view of Kyoto drawn around 1933 in a guide map showing the beauty spots



* figure 1 : reference is on the end

The landscape of Kyoto is formed over in the course of the long history under the influence of the seasonal cycle.

● The history piles up

In earlier times, many powerful clans used to live in Kyoto. Since the capital was relocated to Kyoto in 794, the history of this city kept piling up until today as the centre of Japan. The reason why Kyoto has kept attracting people like other well-known historical cities in the world is that its long history created rich culture in the city.

Since early times, people of various strata have been living in harmony with nature and have nurtured their culture. The accumulated culture became a part of the tradition and is still vivid in Kyoto.

● Change brought by time

The landscape of Kyoto varies with the season change, weather and time. Therefore, a particular place will have several appearances if viewed at different times of the year. It is said that the Japanese sense of beauty has its roots in the rich variety of the landscape of Kyoto. Particularly, the distinctive four seasons of Kyoto has greatly influenced its culture. People would find the beauty sense of “Kacho-fugetsu” or “Flower, Bird Wind and Moon” and “Setsugekka” or “Snow, Moon and Flower” in many events and festivals in Kyoto. They miss the past season and welcome the new one.



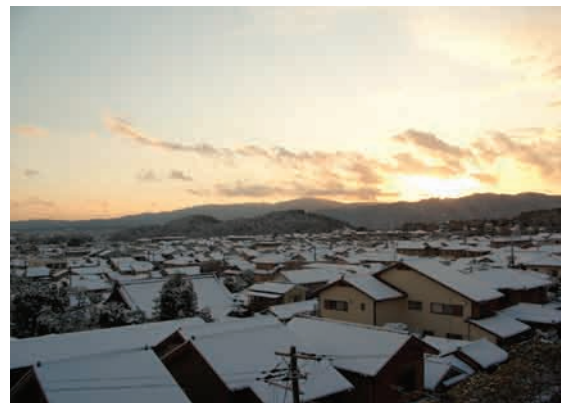
A historical street of Kyoto



Scenery changes with time (Oike Street.)



Events and festivals
(Daimonji-The Great Bon Fire Festival)



Scenery changes with season
(Ryoanji Temple neighborhood)

The landscape of Kyoto was formed over a long period of time under the influence of people's way of living and natural environment

● Industries

Farmland accounts for approximately 4% and forest approximately 74% of the total area of the city. The Densely Inhabited District (DID) occupies about 14,000ha, or 17%.

Old and new coexist in the urban area where rich living culture including various traditional industries and food culture are still alive, and the state-of-the-art technology that may produce key industries in the 21st century provides energy to the city.

Most of the traditional industries and their skills used to be the advanced technologies when they started. This fact perfectly describes one aspect of Kyoto who has always been a forerunner in any age.

Vegetables including turnip, green onions and eggplants are grown in the suburban area. 'Sugukina', a kind of turnip grown in Kamigamo area and bamboo sprouts in Nishiyama are well known specialties of Kyoto. Kitayama Cedars are grown in Nakagawa, Onogo and Keihoku areas for the production of famous decorative pillars for alcoves in the houses.

● Tradition and culture

Kyoto is not only a city where goods and information are accumulated, it has also been blessed with outstanding natural environment called "Sanshi-suimei" or "Purple Mountains and Clear Water" since ancient days. Such environment has brought up people with rich sensitivity. It has also helped the development of literature, performing arts, tea ceremony and flower arrangement. These traditions and cultures can be observed in various annual events such as Gion Festival, one of the three major Japanese festivals, Aoi Festival, Jidai Festival and Daimonji Bonfire on Five Mountains.

Kyoto is also well known for being a "city of universities and higher education" where many cultural and educational facilities such as museums, an international conference hall and other educational and research institutes are located.

● Livelihood

Since the establishment of Heian-kyo capital, the daily activities of the people, over a long period of time have contributed greatly to the formation of Kyoto's landscape. Autonomous bodies in communities called "Cho" existed in Kyoto since earlier times. These organizations governed their communities by themselves. The traditional town houses called Kyo-machiya are excellent houses designed for urban area which were developed by the residents. Such architectural tradition still exists vividly. Busy Nishiki market is another contemporary landscape of Kyoto, a familiar scene to the local people.



Traditional industries of Kyoto



Tea ceremony at Kodaiji Temple



Nishiki Market

● Architectures

Kyoto has acquired a number of architectural designs during its 1200 years history. Many buildings have their historical background and some are designated as important cultural properties or as World Heritage site. There are a wide range of architectural designs including temple, shrine, Shoin style, Sukiya style, Kyo-machiya town houses and modern architectures. The various architectural designs of each era are found here. Modern buildings are also one of the major components of the landscape of Kyoto.



World Heritage site (Nijo Castle)



Kyo-machiya town house (in Nishijin)



Modern architecture (on Sanjo Street.)



Karasuma Street.

● Streets

There are many well-cared streets in the center of Kyoto that are designed on a grid pattern, which remind us of the streets of Heian-kyo. There are also many historical trunk roads connecting Kyoto to other major cities of Japan. Some of those trunk roads are: Tokaido Trunk Road running from Kinai (Kyoto and its vicinity) toward east along the Pacific Ocean, San- in Trunk Road running from Kinai toward west along the Sea of Japan, and Sanyo Trunk Road running from Kinai to Dazaifu along the Seto Inland Sea.



Grid pattern streets in the urban area



Oike Street.



Old San-in Trunk Road (at Nishinokyo-Katagihara)

1-2 Components of Regional Landscape of Kyoto

Various components and conditions mentioned before blended and formed the attractive landscape of Kyoto. This section will describe the above components of landscape by dividing the area into the following six major regions: (1) Mountains on three sides of the city and the foothills (2) Residential areas bordering mountainous area, (3) Historical urban area, (4) Southern region (5) Western region and (6) Eastern region. The development processes of urban areas in the past will also be described.

The local characteristics of the landscape are disappearing because of the emergence of diverse building designs, the development of architectural technologies and changes in the economic climate in recent years. Therefore, it is necessary to review the components of the regional landscape and ensure that the architectural designs are in harmony with the surroundings so that an attractive landscape could be developed and maintained which is to be passed down to the future generations.



A view of the city from JR Kyoto Station to the east



A view of the city from JR Kyoto Station to the west

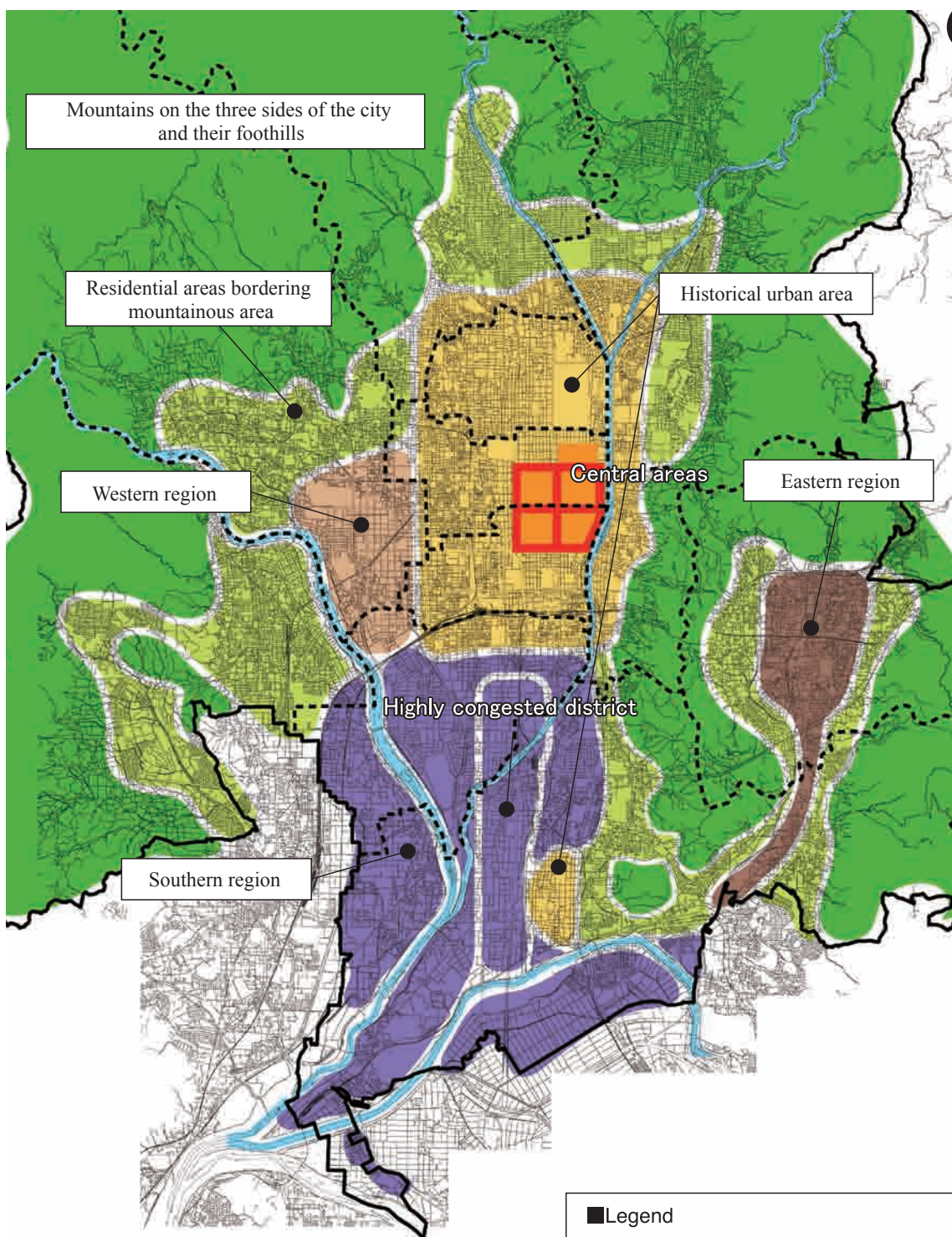


A view of the city from JR Kyoto Station to the south



A view of the city from JR Kyoto Station to the north

■ Area Map



■ Legend

- Mountains on the three sides of the city and their foothills
- Residential areas bordering mountainous area
- Historical urban area
- Western region
- Eastern region
- Southern region

1 Mountains on the three sides of the city and their foothills

The urban area of Kyoto is surrounded on three sides by low and undulating mountains namely Higashiyama, Kitayama and Nishiyama mountain ranges. These mountain ranges serve as the background of the landscape of urban area. The foothills embrace many historical structures including shrines and temples, some of which are registered as the World Heritage sites. Rich green mountains and concentration of these historical assets are typical characteristics of this area.

● Higashiyama (Eastern mountain range)

Higashiyama mountain range extends between Mt. Hiei and Mt. Inari on the eastern edge of Kyoto Basin which is located very close to the old urban area. The area is also being called “36 peaks of the east” since olden days. People consider the area as a historically significant mountain range with many shrines and temples.

The foothills surrounding Kyoto basin is rich in greenery. Besides that, the groves of shrines and temples, trees along the access route of shrines and temples and trees of large facilities such as Keage Water Purification Plant and Fukakusa Cemetery in addition to the forests on the

mountains create a voluminous green space.

Hedges and trees in the gardens of larger houses also contribute to the rich greenery.

The foothills surrounding Yamashina basin also consists of rich greenery which is maintained by the forestry industry. Sosui Canal is carefully maintained between Shinomiya and Hino-oka as a natural green zone of Higashiyama area. Harmonizing with the surrounding mountains and a sound of water stream, it serves as a pleasant pathway with cherry and pine trees planted along it.



Foothills of Higashiyama



Daimonji viewed from Yoshida



Philosopher's path



Yamashina-Sosui Canal

●Kitayama (Northern mountain range)

Among the northern mountains, the part which can be viewed from the urban area has three roads: Shu-zan Trunk Road leading to Keihoku area, Kurama Trunk Road leading to Kurama Temple and Ohara Trunk Road leading to the famous sightseeing spot.

Also the ridge lines of Mt. Kinugasa, the hills of Matsugasaki and other low mountains bordering the urban area, are incorporated into the landscapes of many temples forming beautiful background or a part of borrowed landscape. Such sceneries combined with the urban scenery form the landscape of Kitayama area.

The mountainous area covering Takagamine, Kinugasa, Rokuonji Temple (Kinkakuji Temple), and Toji-in Temple consist of clusters of forests. Also the woods in Haradani basin and the forests surrounding Sawanoike pond are conserved by forestry industry.

Woods at Mt. Funayama, Mt. Jusangoku and their foothills are also preserved in a cluster by forestry industry.

There are many green areas in the premises of shrines and temples. In addition, gardens rich in trees in the residential area together with mountains in the background forms a rich green living environment.

The mountainous area covering Kamigamo, Iwakura and Yase is a reservoir of abundant green forests. In particular, the mountain range in the south of Iwakura is an important green zone that can be viewed from Kyoto International Conference Center and from the neighboring shrines and temples. This green zone contributes effectively to the beauty of the landscape.



The foothills of Mt. Kitayama



Kitayama cedars (Keihoku area)



A forest viewed from Kyoto International Conference Center (Takaragaike Park)



Vicinity of Rokuonji Temple

1-2 Components of Regional Landscape of Kyoto

● Nishiyama (Western mountain range)

Among the mountains located in the western part of Kyoto Basin, Mt. Atago, stands out among the neighboring mountains, and plays a symbolic role in the natural landscape of the area. Meanwhile, in Saga area, low hills including Mt. Ogura which converges with Toriimoto settlement and its surrounding pastoral area characterizes the picturesque landscape of this area.

Several temples and shrines including, Ninnaji Temple, are located on the foothills and their premises are covered with thick vegetation. Also the area around Narabigaoka Hill and Hokongoin Temple is rich in greenery which characterizes the landscape here.

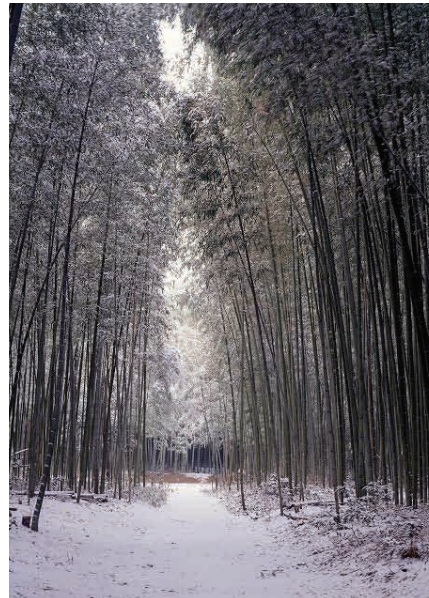
The greenery in wide residential areas of Yamagoe, Utano and Umegahata are well maintained. The greenery along gentle Mt. Henshoji, its surrounding plain farm lands and rich green fields in Kitasaga and Sagano areas is excellent



The piedmont area of Nishiyama

in quality and density. The housing area in Matsuo and south of Saihoji Temple (Kokedera Temple) together with the mountains on the background, forms a natural green landscape.

The mountainous area of Oe and Oharano is also rich in greenery because of plantation and groves of the shrines and temples. In addition, the hillsides are covered with bamboo grove, and farm lands are well maintained.



Bamboo grove in Sagano



Picturesque landscape in Kitasaga



The vicinity of Saihoji Temple (Kokedera Temple)

●Daigo area

The row of mountains, including Mt. Daigo and Mt. Otowa, next to Higashiyama mountain range, and Gyojagamori Forest surround the residential area of Yamashina Ward which forms a small basin.

Sampoin Temple and Daigoji Temple on the foothill provide rich greenery and serve as an integral part of the perspective landscape of this area. Pine trees along the Old



Mt. Otowa and Mt. Daigo

Nara Trunk Road depict the atmosphere of old times.

The greenery on the mountainous area of Hino on the south, combined with Daigoji Temple and its surrounding mountains, forms a rich natural landscape



Mt. Daigo



Vicinity of Daigoji Temple



Old Nara Trunk Road

2 The residential areas bordering mountainous area

The residential stretch bordering mountainous area were developed under the land readjustment project and the housing development project even after the population of Kyoto had reached more than one million in 1931. The areas have kept growing thereafter. The houses for single families in this area are mostly of good quality. The area is not so crowded and is blessed with well-maintained greenery.

● Eastern area

Jishoji Temple (Silver Pavilion Temple) and Tetsugaku-no-michi (Philosopher's Path) match well with mountainous scenery and other historical sites in the vicinity, and form an outstanding landscape.

Yoshida Shrine, Shin-nyodo temple, and Konkai-komyoji Temple are located on Yoshida yama and Kurodani hills, creating a serene and rich green landscape. When viewed from Higashi-ichijo Street or Marutamachi Street, one feels Higashiyama mountain range closer. Tanaka and Yoshida areas used to be farmland until Taisho Era. After Showa Era, the areas became urbanized as a result of the development of traffic network.

● Northern area

The World Heritage sites, such as Rokuonji Temple (Golden Pavilion Temple) and Kamowake-ikazuchi Shrine (Kamigamo Shrine) are located along Kitayama mountain range. The residential area in this neighbourhood has a good view of Kitayama and Higashiyama mountain ranges.

Houses of Shinto priests who serve the shrine and farmers' houses are located in front of Kamowake-ikazuchi Shrine. This place was developed as Shakemachi or the residential area of Shinto priests since Muromachi Period. The row of houses, mud walls and gates along the Myojin River which completed in Edo Period still remains in the area forming a historical landscape of Shakemachi



Yoshida yama Hill



Vicinity of Golden Pavilion Temple



Shogoin area



Kamigamo area

● Western Area

Saihoji Temple or Kokedera Temple (a World Heritage site) is located along Nishiyama mountain range. A good residential area with single detached houses with natural scenery at the background spreads in this neighbourhood.

Uzumasa area, located in the west of Tenjin River and in the south of Shin-Marutamachi Street is surrounded by Mt. Arashiyama, Mt. Ogura and Kitayama mountain range. Historical treasures such as Koryuji Temple and Kaikonoyashiro Shrine still exists in this area.

A stretch of elegant residential area with a nice view of Nishiyama is located along Katsura River. The vast forest of



The Katsura Imperial Villa and Katsura River



Katagihara area



Rakusai Newtown

Katsura Imperial Villa is an important component of the landscape of this area. There is a cluster of densely planted trees at the old settlements in the west of the villa. The Old San-in Trunk Road that used to connect Kyoto to Tanba runs east-west direction. Historical townscape including Katagihara, an old-time post station still remains along the road.

Rakusai Newtown, a large residential complex developed under the first large-scale housing project of Kyoto city, consists of single family houses with pitched roofs and mid-to-high-rise condominium in a wide space with rich greenery.

● Fushimi and Yamashina areas

Daigoji Temple, a World Heritage site, and Fushimi-Inari Shrine are located at the foot of Mt. Daigo and Mt. Inari, respectively. There are elegant residential areas with mostly splendid single family houses on these foothills that are in harmony with the surrounding mountains and historical sites.



Daigo area



Distant view of Mt. Inari

3 Historical urban area

The modern urban area surrounded by Kitaoji Street, Higashioji Street, Kujo Street and Nishioji Street and the old urban area of Fushimi Ward were mostly developed between Edo Period and early Showa Era. Even today, many traditional buildings including Kyo-machiya town houses remain here forming a historical urban area.

● City center and historical urban area

The area surrounded by Kitaoji Street, Higashioji Street, Kujo Street, and Nishioji Street mostly overlaps the urban area of Heian-kyo. Ryogawa-cho or houses located opposite each other on a street was developed in this area in the old days. Ryogawa-cho forms the foundation of the structure of the city and its landscape, and is also a unit of the community area. Some communities are often very active in developing their own landscape.

In addition to the waterfront landscape created by Kamo, Horikawa, Takase and Shirakawa rivers; and the Lake Biwa canal; hills, forests and road-side trees blended with historical buildings and bridges, also contribute to the creation of elegant atmosphere here.

The area roughly surrounded by Oike, Kawaramachi, Gojo and Horikawa Streets functions as an urban center of Kyoto which consists of large shopping complexes and

business areas. Each street has its own characteristics, for instance, Karasuma Street harbors business offices, Oike Street being a symbol street for landscape development and both Shijo and Kawaramachi Streets accommodate shopping arcades. Thus it could be said that these are the arteries that keeps the urban area functioning.

Many Kyo-machiya houses that have been used for both business and residence since earlier times form the historical townscape of this area.



Aburanokoji Street



Kamishichiken area



Shirakawa area



Oike Street



Nishijin area



Kamo River



Muromachi Street



Shijo Street

● The historical urban area of Fushimi

The historical urban area of Fushimi, built by Hideyoshi TOYOTOMI, flourished as a castle town. The Hori River, which was dug as the outer moat of Fushimi Castle, runs to the south, and a tributary of the Uji River which was dug as a canal, runs to the south. These waterfront landscapes combined with town houses and Sake storehouses give the atmosphere of old mercantile city flourished in both late Middle Ages and Modern Ages.

The busy shopping streets that are still maintained give a unique and vivid atmosphere to this area. The traditional streets, the traditional town houses and the Sake storehouses being in harmony with the modern commercial streets gives a unique characteristic to the landscape of this area.



Fushimi-Minamihama



Tributary of Uji River

4 Southern region

The southern region is mostly plain having many waterfronts along Kamo, Uji and Katsura Rivers.

Suburban farm villages were developed along Katsura River. Recently, many houses and factories were constructed on the west bank of the river which used to be a farm land. Kisshoin area, on the east bank of the river was once occupied by Sugawara family who constructed a shrine there in Heian Period. Recently, the area was developed as an industrial complex. The residential area is stretched out on the old settlements. Farm lands are scattered between residential and industrial area. Many green parks are created along the Katsura River which are well maintained.

A residential area was developed on the land along the Uji River after 1960's. The Mukaijima and Momoyama residential complexes are among those constructed at that time. Currently, apartment complexes occupy most of the

area. The ruins of Yodo Castle at the confluence of Uji, Kizu, and Katsura rivers, and the residential area spread out in its vicinity.

Various buildings such as residences, stores, offices and factories are located in the south of Jujo Street. There are still a number of under developed land lots. After the opening of Kyoto Express Highway, further land development is expected mostly around the high-density district.



Kamikuze area



Kyoto Express Highway



Shimotoba area



Katsura River



Ruin of Yodo Castle



High-density district

5 Western region

The western region, like the southern region, is located on the flat land in Kyoto basin. The Tenjin River flows in the center and the Katsura River flows at the western end. This area was also developed as a suburban farm land where crops and vegetables for the urban people were produced in Edo Period.

The Kadono area located on the east of Tenjin River and on the west of Nishioji Street is a lively industrial area in Kyoto where representative industries of Kyoto and residential houses coexist.

The rich waterfront along the Tenjin River and the quiet

residential neighborhood at Saiin are also located here. Moreover, the Stadiums in Nishikyogoku Sports Park is another characteristic of the landscape of this area.

The area became livelier because of the extension of the Tozai Line subway up to Uzumasa-Tenjingawa Station in 2008. Further, development of the area in front of the terminal station added to the vitality of the area.



Sanjo-Nishioji



Area where factories and housings coexist



Tenjin River



Vicinity of Saiin



Nishikyogoku Sports Park



In front of Uzumasa-Tenjingawa station

6 Eastern region

Similar to the old urban area, the eastern region is also located in a basin surrounded by mountains on the three sides. The rich streams from the mountains such as the Old Anshoji River, Shinomiya River and Otowa River join the Yamashina River which also flows into the Uji River.

A Jinai-cho (a town developed around temples) built by Ren-nyo at Yamashina Honganji temple was located in this area. Its remnant still exist as a mound in the Yamashina Central Park which reminds us of the old days. Today the branches of both Higashi-honganji Temple and Nishih-honganji Temple called Yamashina Betsuin are built on the site of Yamashina Honganji Temple. The main halls and premises of both temples, Nishi-Betsuin's mud wall, a ditch along Yamashina River, and Yamashina Central Park

are the important components of the landscape of this area.

Because of the rapid economic growth in the 1950's and the need for housing development, turned the eastern region into a commuter town for Kyoto. This further extended to Daigo and Momoyama areas.

The inauguration of Subway Tozai line in 1997 and the completion of the development project around Yamashina Station in 1998 helped improve the efficiency of city functions and added vitality to the area.



Remnant mound in Yamashina Central Park



The area around Yamashina Betsuin



The area in front of Yamashina Station



Daigo



Downtown Yamashina



Vicinity of Rokujizo, Fushimi area

■ Transition of the urban area

The characteristics of urban landscape in each area was described in the previous pages, but when and how these areas have been urbanized was not described.

The following map shows the expansion of the urban areas after the Meiji Era. Different periods are shown in different colors. It shows the process of expansion from the historical urban area toward the mountains and to the south. This expansion was brought about by different factors in different periods.

The areas urbanized until 1909 were mostly developed in the Edo Period as downtown area and can be called the historical urban area. The urban development by Kyoto City before the City Planning Act was enforced in 1919 mainly focused on reinforcement of research institutes, educational and medical facilities; and on widening of major roads.

Most of the areas urbanized by 1938 were developed by the land readjustment project based on the City Planning Act. Kitaoji Street and Nishioji Street which are adjacent to the old urban area and other new streets connecting the trunk roads in the downtown area were constructed at the time. Along these streets, new urban development projects were implemented.

The area urbanized by 1970 is shown below. This area was developed under the suburban housing development project which was aimed at compensating the post-war housing shortage. The area urbanized by 1995 was marked by the Newtown development project in Rakusai and Mukaijima.

