

WORLD

The World Conference of Historical Cities Council Bulletin

HISTORICAL CITIES

NO. 2: SPRING, 1994



*4th Conference Information
Update & Schedule*

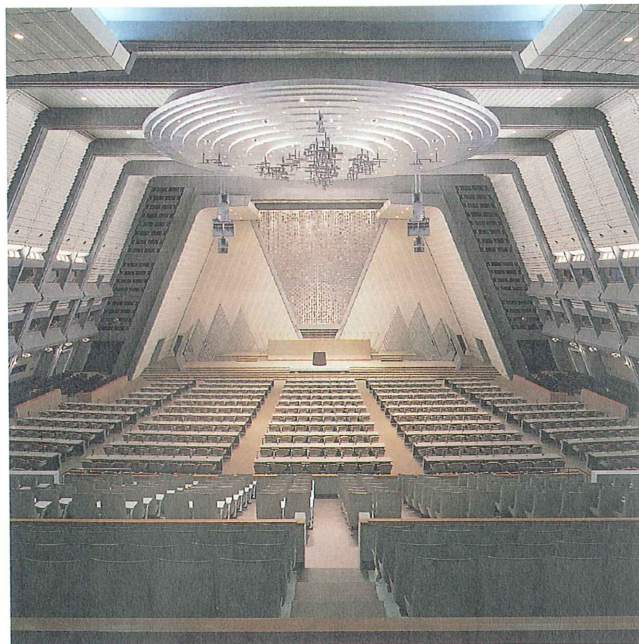
*Kyoto Old & New - Two
Living Historical Communities*

*Council Member Cities:
Introduction (Part II)*

*Historical City Kyoto -
Two Interviews*

THE 4TH WORLD CONFERENCE OF HISTORICAL CITIES WILL BE HELD IN KYOTO IN APRIL

Information Update for The 4th World Conference of Historical Cities in Kyoto, April 25-28, 1994



Current Situation

Participating Cities: To date, of the 53 cities that have been invited, about 45 have confirmed that they will be participating in the conference.

Interpretation and Accompaniment

An officer from Kyoto City along with a volunteer interpreter will attend the representatives of each participating city, except for conference sessions. More than 300 people applied for the interpreters' positions, which clearly demonstrates the enthusiasm among Japan's citizens in helping and participating in internationalism. To meet anticipated demand at the conference, about 50 volunteers from Kyoto and the surrounding area were chosen.

Planned Excursion

City representatives and accompanying persons will have a chance to inspect Kyoto City on the fourth day of the conference (Apr. 28). To introduce Kyoto as an internationally renowned historical city, two free, optional tours will be open to participation by city representatives. The tours will include some sight seeing spots which symbolize the essential nature of the city, as well as stops at traditional and modern industries which Kyoto's citizens proudly consider to be another face of Kyoto. It is our aim and hope that people recognize Kyoto as not only a city with a long history, but also a city developing constantly with the times, a city that is alive today.

Course 1	Course 2
<p>Kinkaku-ji Temple (Golden Pavilion), Kawashima Textile Manufacturers Ltd. (facilities), Heian Shrine, Shimadzu Corporation (medical instrumentation facilities).</p>	<p>Mitsubishi Motors Corporation Kyoto Works (automobile production facilities), Sanjusangendo Temple, Kiyomizu Temple, Gekkeikan Sake Co., Ltd. (sake production facilities).</p>
<p>Kawashima Textile Manufacturers Ltd. Visitors will experience the beauty of the world's textile heritage in an exhibition of historical materials related to the textile industry, and view Kawashima's products made with traditional techniques, some of which date back 1000 years.</p>	<p>Mitsubishi Motors Corporation Kyoto Works Visitors will observe the car engine manufacturing process, an indispensable part of modern society. This factory's products are exported to over 150 countries worldwide.</p>
<p>Shimadzu Corporation Visitors will observe Shimadzu's manufacturing system for such products as analytical machines, inspection machines, medical devices, aircraft parts and industrial machines, all of which contribute to providing people the world over with a better quality of living.</p>	<p>Gekkeikan Sake Co., Ltd. Visitors will learn about the traditional Japanese sake manufacturing process, and visit an exhibit of tools used to make and brew sake. Gekkeikan is located in an area of Kyoto that has been famous for its sake for centuries.</p>

Accompanying Persons' Program

A cultural program is being planned for April 26th, in which families or accompanying members can directly experience Japanese culture and life styles including kimono dressing and shopping for traditional handicrafts and souvenirs.

The World Conference of Historical Cities Council List

- | | |
|---|--|
| Alexandria (Arab Republic of Egypt) | Kyongju (Republic of Korea) |
| Amsterdam (Kingdom of the Netherlands) | Lisbon (Portuguese Republic) |
| Barcelona (Spain) | Paris (French Republic) |
| Brussels (Kingdom of Belgium) | Rio de Janeiro (Federative Republic of Brazil) |
| Cologne (Federal Republic of Germany) | Tashkent (Republic of Uzbekistan) |
| Cracow (Republic of Poland) | Varanasi (India) |
| Florence (Republic of Italy) | Vienna (Republic of Austria) |
| Guadalajara (United Mexican States) | Xian (People's Republic of China) |
| Hanoi (Socialist Republic of Viet Nam) | Yogyakarta (Republic of Indonesia) |
| Istanbul (Republic of Turkey) | Zagreb (Republic of Croatia) |
| Kaesong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) | Zurich (Swiss Confederation) |
| Katmandu (Kingdom of Nepal) | Kyoto (Japan) |
| Kiev (Ukraine) | |

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Date	Morning	Noon	Afternoon	Evening
April 25th (Mon.)			Opening Ceremony (Main Hall) 15:30 - 18:00	Welcome Reception (Prince Hall) 19:00 - 22:00
April 26th (Tue.)	Session I (Room A) 9:30 - 11:30	Luncheon (Prince Hall) 11:50 - 13:20	Session II (Room A) 13:30 - 16:50	Dinner Party (Prince Hall) 19:00 - 21:00
	Accompanying Persons' Program 9:00 - 17:00			
April 27th (Wed.)	Council's General Assembly (Room A) 9:00 - 9:40	Session III (Room A) 10:00 - 11:40	Nijo Castle Garden Party 12:30 - 14:30	General Discussion & Closing Session (Room A) 17:30 - 18:00
			Free Time 18:00 - 18:30	Press Conference 18:30 - 19:00
				Farewell Party (Prince Hall) 19:30 - 22:30
April 28th (Thu.)	Excursion (City representatives and accompanying persons may choose between two, free, optional, pre-planned city tours) 9:00 - 18:00			

The Main Hall and Room A are in the Kyoto International Conference Hall.
The Gold Room and Prince Hall are in the Kyoto Takaragaikie Prince Hotel, across the road from the conference hall.

Major events during the Kyoto Celebration

Kyoto in the Paris - Dakar Rally

As part of the 1200th anniversary celebration, Kyoto took part in the 1993 Paris - Dakar rally, the cruelest race in the world. Prior to the race start, 30 people from Kyoto went to Paris to present and distribute information about Kyoto and the 1200th anniversary.

Kyoto International Half Marathon

This international event, held on March 20, 1994, with 12,000 participants selected by lottery from the more than 30,000 applicants, was a great success. A half marathon course, which traced a path past some of the cities most famous areas and sites, the race featured such notable runners as Rosa Motta from Portugal (gold medalist in the Seoul Olympics), Kenji Kimihara (silver medalist in the Mexico Games), Keizo Yamada (57th Boston Marathon winner), and representatives from Kyoto's 8 Sister Cities.

Kyoto's 1200th Anniversary Exhibition

Celebrating Kyoto's Golden Age

As part of Kyoto's 1200th anniversary celebrations, the Kyoto National Museum will stage a special exhibit from April 12th to May 15th devoted to artworks from the Heian Period, when the powerful Fujiwara regents ruled for the emperor (roughly 1017- 1198). Often referred to as Japan's Golden Period, this epoch saw Japanese arts

and literature blossom and develop into flowering of high culture that has forever been immortalized by following generations. Centered exclusively in Kyoto, developments and inventions of this period include the kana writing system, the world's first novel, and unique artistic styles and forms. Period works depict and reveal, in broad and detailed fashion, the daily lives of the Imperial family and the aristocracy. The exhibition has been organized to provide an understanding of Japan's Golden Age and its influence on later events of Japanese history and development.

Mibu Kyogen

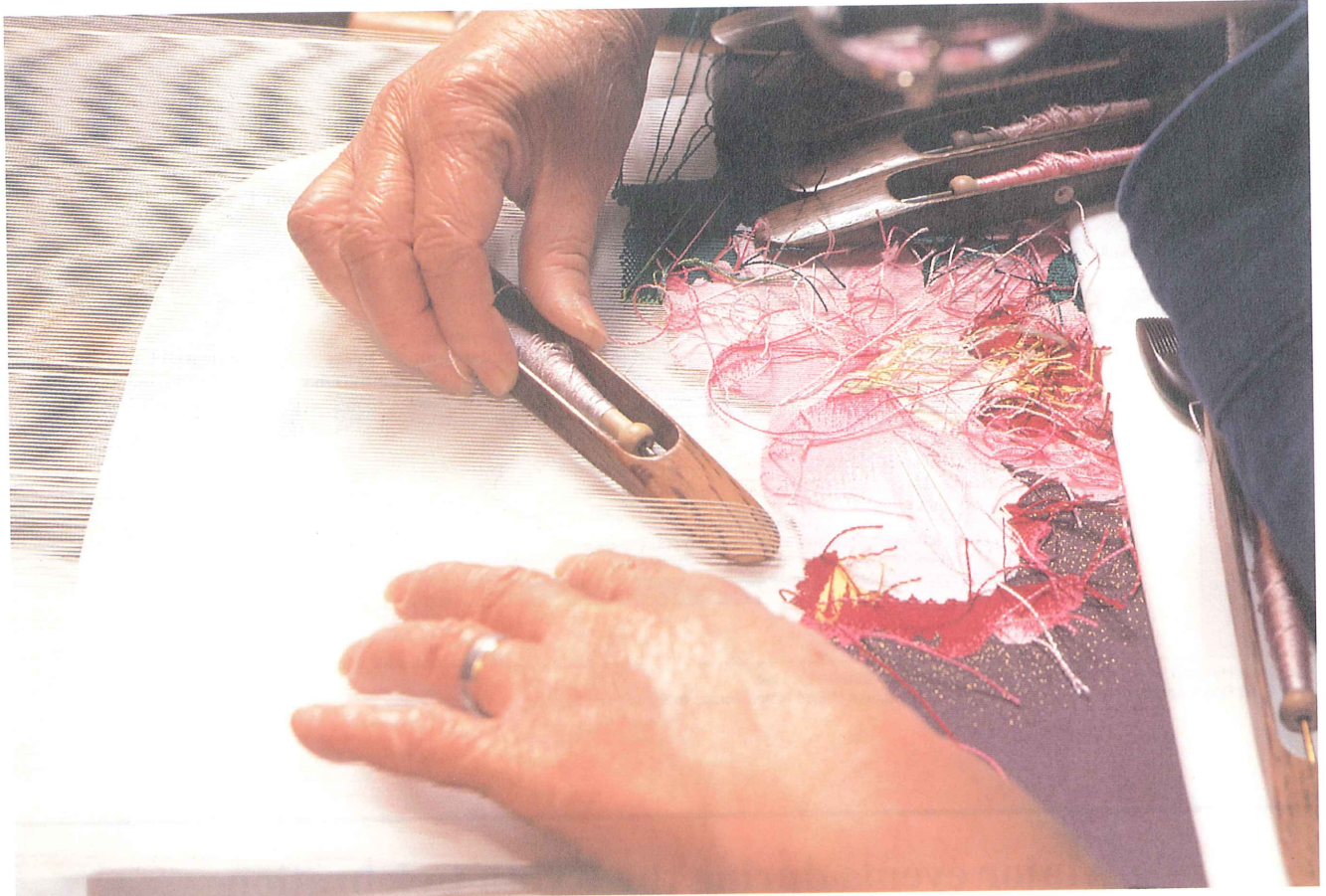
Mibu Kyogen (at Mibu Temple, April 21-29) is an exciting, colorful spectacle that is famous throughout Japan as an annual event of dramatic and ritualistic importance. Grotesque and humorous masks, simple but effective costumes, and some spectacular battle scenes make this event a special treat.

Kyoto Odori

Held annually by the various geisha (dancing-girl) quarters, this lavish performance of song and dance is a highlight of the spring season in Kyoto. Miyako Odori: April 1-30, at Gion Kobu Kaburenjo Theater. Kyo Odori: April 3 - 17, at Miyagawa-cho Kaburenjo Theater. Kitano Odori: April 15 - 25, at Kamishichiken Kaburenjo Theater.

Kyoto Old and New

Nishijin and Muromachi Two Living, Historical Communities



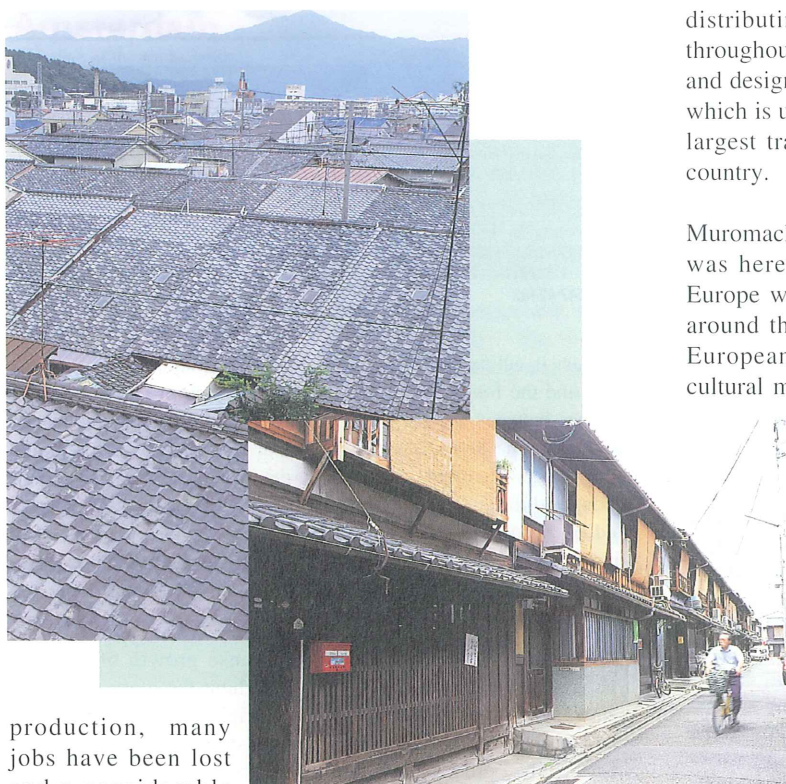
Historical cities can be thought of as bridges across time. The better the city is preserved the smoother one can cross from one century to the next, as it were. Kyoto as a historical city spans over 1,200 years; as a city with so much of its history in the past, it is not surprising that Kyoto, in places, exists as a living version of times long gone by. And then again somewhere else in the city, there are places where people are increasingly leaving the past behind and moving steadily along that uncertain line leading over the edge into the future. Nishijin and Muromachi, respectively, are two of Kyoto's living communities which typify this old and new feeling.

Nishijin is undoubtedly one of Kyoto's oldest areas and also one of its tightest and longest living communities. If there is anything that symbolizes the area to city residents, then it must be the rocking rhythm of the weaving loom in motion — *kattan, kotton kattan, kotton, kattan, kotton*. Nishijin has been the center of Kyoto's and in many ways Japan's textile industry since the middle ages. Before the area was formally acquired by the weavers' guild in 1477 at the end of the Onin wars, which damaged much of the city, it served as the official encampment of the Western Army (Nishijin means "The Western Camp"). Since its founding, the area has prospered

and, strangely enough, remained untouched by the incredible number of manmade and natural disasters that destroyed so much of the city on so many occasions. What makes Nishijin more than anything a living community of the distant past is the narrowness of its streets, the complete lack of space between homes, and the highly local atmosphere of work done at home behind weathered wooden and earthen walls.

The area is famed for its gold brocades and silk damasks used in the *obi* or sash which hold the *kimono* in place and often gives the traditional Japanese woman's way of dress its richness and decorative dignity. Behind the endless and unbroken line of Nishijin's old Kyoto row houses nearly 20,000 looms continue to work actively in a textile tradition that reaches back across the centuries to Kyoto's very origins. Even though the efficiency and improved productivity of the Western-style Jacquard loom has dominated the industry since the beginning of the century, the area still has about 2,000 active traditional-style looms.

These days, as the preference for Western clothing dominates more and more, a sense of darkness has crept over the once prosperous area. Since most of the area is concerned with



production, many jobs have been lost and a considerable

number of generation-old family businesses shut down. But, even for all the economic difficulty, Nishijin is still very much alive. A good proportion of Japan's finest and most highly praised *obi* and *kimono* still come from this area. Even today, that same *kattan, kotton, kattan, kotton, kattan, kotton* of ancient times can still be heard. And though this local bridge across the centuries has lost much of its importance, it still connects many of thousands of people working and living today to the very roots of the area itself.

Just a few short kilometers south of the Nishijin lies the heart of another textile-associated area — Muromachi. Here historical time is expressed in broad and stately representations from centuries long gone, increasingly mixed with a modern and rising building profile. But like Nishijin, Muromachi is old, with a history stretching back as far as 1000 years, and just as strongly connected to the textile industry. And yet the difference in local atmosphere between the two is such that it is hard to believe that only a few kilometers separate them.

As a center of commerce and industry during the medieval ages, Muromachi developed into Japan's premier textile design and wholesale area during the 16th and 17th century, a role it has continued to play to this day. Muromachi played an important role in supplying the affluent and highly productive dyeing and weaving industry of Nishijin with raw materials, and

distributing and selling the kimono and obi created there throughout Japan. It also functioned as a major production and design center for other textiles, such as the famous *Yuzen* which is unique to Kyoto. Even today, Muromachi is still the largest trade center for traditional Japanese fashion in the country.

Muromachi has an additional position of distinction in that it was here that the Silk Road which connected medieval Europe with China and Korea came to an end. Wandering around the area one still stumbles across richly decorated European tapestries, full of European mythological and cultural motifs, hanging in the ancient show windows of the area's leading merchant enterprises. Since the early 17th century, the area has proudly displayed its wealth and influence on the rolling, several story high tower floats of the Gion Festival, an annual pageant of colorful costumes and celebration that is the highlight of Kyoto's summer season.

During the last century, Muromachi has had to increasingly adapt to the growing popularity of Western clothing. Kimono and obi are nowadays limited, for the most part, to ceremonial dress for formal occasions, and are considered luxury items in the fullest sense. Gone are the days when *kimono* and *obi* sales networks extended throughout the land in an empire of shops and door to door service. But as with any area of wealthy, experienced merchants, Muromachi has adapted remarkably well to change. Today, a full 40% of the areas revenue is related to Western clothing. Many companies in the area, instead of just distributing textile goods, have made considerable effort to design and create new and original products of their own. Progressive and creative companies of this kind have helped immensely in maintaining the high reputation of Muromachi in Kyoto and throughout Japan. And yet the true value and essence of the area is still very much directed to preserving and adapting a tradition of design and beauty that is symbolic of ancient Japan.



Council Member Cities Introduction (Part II)

Zurich

(Swiss Confederation)

Mayor: Josef Estermann
Population: 363,300
Area: 91.93 km²

Contact Person: Ralph Kuehne
Tel: 41 1 216 3111
Fax: 41 1 212 1404



Throughout its history, Zurich has always played an important strategic economic and cultural role. There is definite evidence that a Roman settlement was established in Zurich not later than 15 BC.

An important milestone in Zurich's development into a major international financial and trade center was the foundation of the Zurich Stock Exchange in 1877. Today, Zurich houses the world's fourth most important stock exchange. Zurich's businesses provide a total of 360,000 jobs in the machine, metal and textile industries, as well as in banks, insurance companies, tourism, trading and commerce. Zurich's international reputation also rests on its excellent shopping and its fame as an art and cultural center.

Zurich is really a lakeside town. In addition to the lake of Zurich, which reaches right into the city, three rivers and streams flow within its boundaries. Wherever you look, you'll always see water somewhere, whether you are in the picturesque old part of town or enjoying the view from the shade of the Lindenhof over the roofs or the majestic panorama of the chain of alpine mountains on the horizon.

Brussels

(Kingdom of Belgium)

Mayor: Michel Demaret
Population: 970,500
Area: 161 km²

Contact Person: J. Van Droogenbroeck
Tel: 32 2 511 1416
Fax: 32 2 511 5070



The city of Brussels was founded in 979 and quickly grew into a place of commercial and political power because of its location on the trade route between the prosperous regions of Flanders and Rheinland in the 12th century. Early on, the city became renowned throughout Europe for its scarlet-colored wool and its richly adorned tapestries. Later, the city's reputation increased through the manufacture of luxury goods. In 1515, with the arrival of Archduke Charles of the Hapsburg Empire, the city suddenly became the princely capital of the Netherlands and the center of the entire Hapsburg Empire.

Belgium finally gained true independence on July 21st 1831, when Belgium's first king acceded the throne in Brussels and the city began an era of reconstruction: walls were destroyed and replaced with wide boulevards, railway stations built, canals extended, and rivers filled in. At the same time Belgium's fortunes rose dramatically with the massive industrial expansion in the south and an inflow of riches from its newly established colony in the Congo. Brussels also became a major European center for cultural and scientific achievement. Though Brussels was damaged by the second world war, it remains one of Europe's most beautiful cities with an abundance of museums and parks, and continues to remain an influential force in the European Community.

Varanasi

(India)

Mayor: MD. Swaleh Ansari
Population: 1,400,000
Area: 73.79 km²

Contact Person: The Mayor's Secretariat
Tel: 91 542 53055/53372/320617/
322917
Fax: 91 542 42462



Varanasi is acknowledged as one of the most ancient cities in the world and the foremost sacred city of pilgrimage in India. The city stretches between the rivers Varuna and Assi, and thus was named Varanasi. The activities and growth of the city are concentrated mostly on the riverfront of the holy river 'Ganga,' sacred to India's Hindus and the major attraction of Varanasi. The beautiful crescent bend of the river with its countless number of temples, shrines and princely residences with their colossal flights of steps leading down to the holy waters is a unique example of a living religious site and place of exquisite beauty.

Behind the riverside scene stands a dense growth of massive structures and narrow lanes which still exhibit the glory of ancient Benares, the city's former name. The origin of the city is lost in antiquity and only mythological stories exist prior to the 6th century B.C when the Lord Buddha preached his first sermon just outside the city to his first five disciples. Today, the city continues to maintain the pristine characteristics for which it has become a symbol of religious fervor and ancient civilization and culture to the world.

Rio de Janeiro

(Federative Republic of Brazil)

Mayor: Cesar Maia
Population: about 6,000,000
Area: 1,255 km²

Contact Person: Augusto Ivan de
Freitas Pinheiro
Tel: 55 21 2732395
Fax: 55 21 2737633



Rio de Janeiro (River of January) was founded in 1565 on a small hill facing Guanabara Bay on the Atlantic Ocean. Its growing importance connected to the shipments of gold from the port to Portugal and later to the commerce of coffee, elevated the city to the capital of the colony in 1765. It served as a capital right through to the time it ceased being the center of the Brazilian Republic in 1960, when the capital was transferred to Brasilia.

Being the most important Brazilian city for so long, the city's historical heritage encompasses nearly 3,600 protected buildings. This cultural and architectural heritage ranges from superb examples of the Colonial period, such as Baroque churches, monasteries and palaces, to an impressive range from the Republican period including an eclectic architecture of townhouses, national theaters, libraries, museums, and landmarks with a modern, international style. The contrast between the city's contemporary tall buildings and old historic ones is very much part of the atmosphere of the downtown area.

Today, with its economy centered around services, tourism and commerce, Rio is the second largest economic region in the Brazil. A place of immigrants, universities, fashion designers, cultural producers and the Carnival, Rio possesses the most cosmopolitan and vivid cultural life in Brazil.

Amsterdam

(Kingdom of the Netherlands)

Mayor: Ed van Thijn
Population: 713,493
Area: 201.5 km²

Contact Person: Ir. Rob Apell
Tel: 31 20 626 3947
Fax: 31 20 620 3766



Amsterdam is the capital of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the center of the country's trade, commerce and culture. The origin of the city dates back to the early 13th century, when it was founded along the banks of the river Amstel as a trading port.

Though a prosperous and expanding center throughout the middle ages, the world-wide commercial relations and trade activities of Amsterdam in the 17th century marked the zenith of its wealth and power. In the same era the city gained a reputation for freedom and tolerance. Powerful economic development led to a magnificent and unique extension of the city, which took the form of a triple crescent of canals. Though stagnant in the 18th century and most of the 19th, the first decades of the 20th century were marked by systematic extensions of the city, aesthetically enhanced by the imaginative architects of the Amsterdam School.

Amsterdam has over 7,000 historical buildings (mostly residential) and sites which are protected by law. In 1987, the National Monuments Inventory Project was started with the aim to investigate the present architectural and environmental structures of the "younger heritage" dating from the 1850-1940 period.

Zagreb

(Republic of Croatia)

Mayor: Branko Miksa
Population: 867,717
Area: 1,290 km²

Contact Person: Josip Krajina
Helena Duplancic
Tel: 385 41 513050/611599
Fax: 385 41 511406



Zagreb is the capital of Croatia. Situated in the south of Central Europe, it developed on the crossroads between Eastern and Western Europe and between Northern Europe and the Mediterranean. The city will celebrate its ninth centennial in 1994.

The medieval city of Zagreb was first mentioned in 1194, when it became the seat of a bishop. It flourished in the 13th and 14th centuries, growing into the major commercial center of northern Croatia on the route linking the Pannonian plain and the Adriatic coast. Zagreb consisted of five cities, the royal palace was built in one of them. In the 16th and 17th centuries, Croatia barely survived the advance of the Ottoman Empire and the city suffered a decline. Since the early 18th century, Zagreb has developed continually as the political, cultural and economic capital of Croatia.

The city of Zagreb is a reflection of its historical development. The Bishop's city and the Free Royal city, each on their own hilltop, with their medieval cathedral, churches, baroque monasteries, houses and palaces respectively, are still partly surrounded by the city's original walls. Beneath them is the busy 19th century center of the city surrounded by a belt of parks with a number of cultural buildings including the exquisite Art Nouveau building of the University Library.

Kiev

(Ukraine)

Mayor: Leonid G. Kosakivskiy
Population: 2,656,400
Area: 825 km²

Contact Person: Kim M. Gukov
Tel: 7 044 221 22 42/225 63 48
Fax: 7 044 228 47 18



Kiev, meaning the "Mother of Russian Cities," is the capital of Ukraine. It is situated on the banks of the Dnieper river and has a colorful history of nearly 1500 years.

In the 10th century Kiev's prince Vladimir introduced Christianity as the state religion, and by the 11th century, Kiev had become one of the largest and finest cities in the Christian world. At that time it boasted 400 churches, 8 markets and over 100,000 inhabitants. The city continued as the capital of the ancient Slavic state, Kiev Rus, until the invasion of the Tatar-Mongols in 1240.

Throughout its long history, Kiev was subjected to frequent attacks and destruction. However, though it was rebuilt many times, the city always retained its special appeal. During World War II, much of the city was turned into rubble. Today, Kiev is the capital of the independent state of the Ukraine and a major industrial center with firms engaging in electronics, instrument manufacture, aviation, engineering and metal working, etc. It is a city of simple beauty and its own singular identity. The luxuriant greenery of the city's parks and tree-lined streets harmonize with its impressive architecture.

Yogyakarta

(Republic of Indonesia)

Mayor: R. Widagdo
Population: about 454,405
Area: 32.5 km²

Contact Person: Ir. Djoko Budhi Sulistyono
Tel: 62 274 5207
Fax: 62 274 62590



Yogyakarta is a cultural city with a long and mysterious past that extends right up to the 21st century. Today, though Yogyakarta continues to grow and develop through the development of sustaining economic activities, it remains above all else a well preserved manifestation of its cultural values.

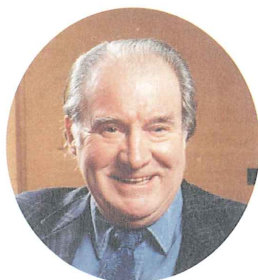
Yogyakarta became the Kingdom of Yogyakarta in 1755, with the construction of the Pangeran Mangkubumi (The Sultan's Palace) for the founder and first king of the kingdom, Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwono I. As the city's oldest structure, with its origins in the philosophical principles of Javanese culture, the palace has remained the center of the city's government from the start and a center of Javanese culture up to the present. Today, nearly 250 years after it was first constructed, many of the palace's architectural details and ornamentation remain perfectly preserved.

Yogyakarta covers an area of 32.5 km² which is divided into 14 districts and 45 sub districts, and is the second most popular tourist destination in Indonesia. Though tourism and history have unavoidably resulted in change to the city and its citizens, who now live increasingly in a technological oriented world, Yogyakarta remains the most important city of Javanese culture and its ancient, highly refined arts.

Historical City Kyoto — Two Interviews

Otis Cary

As Amherst Professor and scholar of American history at Kyoto's prestigious Doshisha University, Professor Otis Cary probably has more experience in Kyoto than almost any other foreigner that has lived in this ancient city. Born and raised in Japan, as was his father, in a missionary way of life started by his grandfather, he has made Kyoto his home since 1947.



WHC: After living for nearly 50 years in Kyoto, how do you feel the city has changed?

OC: Well for me one of the biggest changes has been the disappearance of Kyoto's extensive streetcar system, which added such a special touch of historic atmosphere to the city's streets. Another thing I miss are the tofu sellers who used to bicycle slowly through residential areas selling fresh tofu. They announced their approach with a big rubber bicycle horn that you could hear from far away. It was the sound of Old Kyoto. I miss it.

WHC: As a long-time Professor at Doshisha University, do you think the history and culture of this city have any kind of influence on the many thousands of students who have and continue to come and study here?

OC: With the exception of some of the more conscientious students I have gotten to know over the decades, I would have to say that the city does not have an especially great of an influence on university students.

WHC: What parts or places in Kyoto do you feel most strongly represent the feeling of Kyoto as a historical city?

OC: Well one of the areas is Pontocho, the old merchants drinking quarter on the west side of the river with its narrow, almost medieval feeling. Its alleys are full of traditional restaurants and drinking establishments and a feeling of history that seems nostalgic to everyone. The other area I really love is along the Shirakawa river running through the center of Gion, Kyoto's geisha (Japanese dancing-girl) and entertainment quarter. One part along the river, in which you can still see big colorful carp, is lined with ancient wooden tea houses and bordered by cherry trees; strolling along the cobble stone lane running next to the river is a dreamy experience that seems timeless. Another area that comes to mind is Toji Temple. The entire complex with its tall wooden pagoda and towering buildings from the 9th century was and still is Kyoto's southern gateway. When you see it, coming in from the airport, you really get the feeling that you have arrived in Kyoto. That's where it all begins.

Michel Wasserman

Michel Wasserman has been in Japan since 1981, as a cultural researcher and a member of the French cultural establishment. He has been the director of the French Japanese Institute of Kansai since 1986 and will join the International Relations Department of Ritsumeikan University this spring.



WHC: How did you come to be involved with Japanese culture?

MW: It all started when I was studying at Princeton University, where I happened by chance to see a Noh play. It changed my life. I felt that Japanese classical theatre realized the essence of international theatre in a very complete way. It was incredible — the theatrical impact, the brilliant intermingling of dance and music.

WHC: What do you think of Kyoto, as a historical city?

MW: For European people, a historical city should have its unity, for example Brugge or Venice are truly historical cities because everything in both cities is, in a way, a kind of living past. Perhaps the Eastern idea of a historical city is not the same. For me, Kyoto is one of the finest cities in the world in terms of spots. These spots are some of the most beautiful things you can imagine. So I think it is, in a way, useless to compare Brugge and Kyoto. It has no meaning. Kyoto is a big city, and, like any big city, it has the problems of a big city.

WHC: What places or areas in Kyoto do you particularly love?

MW: Of course, there are very famous places that I love very much. But I've been in Japan for quite a long time, and sometimes I prefer to go to places that are not so well known, where I find a certain quality of beauty and serenity. For example, I love Yoshida Mountain, because when you are in Shinnyodo between the Buddhist temple and the Shinto sanctuary it is very hard to imagine that you are in the center of a big city. Another thing I love about Kyoto is the close proximity to nature. In Kyoto there is a perfect balance between nature and the urban landscape. The French humorist Alphonse Allais once said, "How nice it would be if the cities were in the country."

WHC: What are your feelings about this year's 1200th anniversary celebration?

MW: I think it is a very good way for the city to think of what it has to do as a historical city and as a city of the 21st century; in this way, I think it is a very good thing. I think the 1200th anniversary should be considered over the long term, in the way the city looks at itself now and in the future.

The World Conference of Historical Cities Council Office

International Relations office, City Of Kyoto, Teramachi-Oike, Nakagyo-ku, Kyoto 604, Japan Phone +81-75-222-3072 Fax +81-75-222-3055
