

# Three Stages in the History of Preservation

The **Three Stages** in the History of the Preservation of Cultural Heritage in Japan.

below: Kyoto station



Arriving nowadays in Kyoto by train one hardly has a sensation of having arrived at the famous hana no miyako, the Capital of Flowers of old, but rather of having emerged into the center of Manhattan or any other Megalopolis. The new Kyoto Station Building, designed by Hiroshi Hara and opened in October 1997, has no equal on this planet in terms of size or unique spatial grandeur. Being magically lured up to the top of the sixty meter high interior atrium on various linked huge escalators, one is presented a breathtaking view down to hustle and bustle of travellers on the ground. Ironically, from the top platform of this most recent Mega-Building one is granted a view over the most important remainder and asset of the original ancient city; like from nowhere else one can witness that Kyoto was and still is uniquely placed into a horseshoe of untouched mountains. In this sense, even in the most recent modern addition of Kyoto's townscape, one is aware that in Kyoto origin is always present.

The history of the preservation movement in Japan over the past hundred years can be interpreted as a process of growing awareness of what constitutes a cultural heritage, and how best to protect it; it can be interpreted as a great learning process of seeing and designating culturally assets in Objects only initially; then in Space, too, and finally in Place. Here, the main stages in chronological order, in abridged form and without too much detail, in order not to lose the overview.

