A gas street lamp presented by Boston to Kyoto in 1969 stands at either side of the main entrance to Kyoto City Hall. A plaque at the base of each reads: "A Gift from Boston."
Boston, Massachusetts and Kyoto, Japan

There have been close cultural bonds between the people of Boston and Kyoto for almost 100 years. Today the similarities between these two centers of history, education and culture are striking. About one million people in each city live in a relatively small urban area notable for numbers of historical landmarks, a blend of architectural traditions and strong neighborhood identities. In Kyoto you can find streets of antique shops to match Charles Street and gardens surrounding temples and shrines, the complement to Boston’s Public Garden and parks. Similar in climate to Boston, the Kyoto area is where the Japanese travel to see the autumn foliage. Boston and Kyoto have been “Sister Cities” since 1959 when Mayor Takayama of Kyoto came to Boston to attend an international trade convention. His suggestion of an official cultural exchange was accepted by Boston’s Mayor John Hynes. Boston and Kyoto became Sister Cities in 1959.
Since that time, the Sister City relationship has grown to include a great variety of activities. Many individuals and groups in Boston have made contact with their counterparts in Kyoto. The Boston School Department was one of the first organizations to establish an exchange program with Kyoto. For 12 years the school children of Boston and Kyoto have been exchanging letters, paintings, tapes, literature, and many other things on a school-to-school basis. Another of the earlier projects was an annual photo exchange between amateur photographers of the two cities. Selected photographs from these exchanges are on exhibit at the Children’s Museum in Boston. Exchange students have studied at Doshisha University in Kyoto and Emerson College in Boston and small groups of educators have made study tours in each city. There has also been a series of official delegations between the two cities. The most recent delegation was led from Boston to Kyoto by Mrs. Kevin White in May of 1975. Boston looks forward to Mayor Funahashi’s second visit in this bicentennial year.
Many gifts have been exchanged between the two cities. The Japanese Home Exhibit at the Children’s Museum, for example, was the gift Mayor Takayama presented to the people of Boston in 1959. For Boston’s new City Hall, Kyoto sent two Japanese stone lanterns. Boston reciprocated with two Boston gas street lamps which stand in front of Kyoto City Hall. The Boston Museum of Science and the Kyoto Youth Science Center conducted an exhibit exchange. The Museum of Science sent a replica of its famous sand pendulum exhibit to Kyoto and, in return, received a magnet exhibit from the Kyoto Youth Science Center. Boston most recently presented the City of Kyoto with two beavers for their zoo.

Many groups and individuals in the City of Boston have worked to advance the cause of international friendship by participation in the Sister City relationship between Kyoto and Boston. The Boston-Kyoto Sister City Committee and its counterpart in Kyoto have consistently provided the necessary encouragement and assistance to exchange programs between the two cities.
Mayor Kevin White watches as Kyoto's former Mayor Kiyoshi Tomii lights one of two Japanese stone lanterns presented by Kyoto in 1969 for Boston's new City Hall.

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