

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 5, 2024

## **Kao the Sole Japanese and Asian Company Included in the World's Most Ethical Companies® List for a Record 18th Consecutive Year**

TOKYO, March 5, 2024—The Ethisphere Institute, a leading US think-tank, has named Kao Corporation one of the World's Most Ethical Companies. Kao is the sole Japanese and Asian company to have made the list every year since Ethisphere began its ranking in 2007.



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The Ethisphere Institute develops and shares best practices in business ethics and corporate social responsibility. The World's Most Ethical Companies list recognizes companies which have demonstrated outstanding performance in transparency, integrity, ethics, and compliance. The Institute surveys and evaluates companies worldwide across five categories, covering Ethics & Compliance; Environmental & Social Impact; Culture of Ethics; Governance; and Third Party Management.

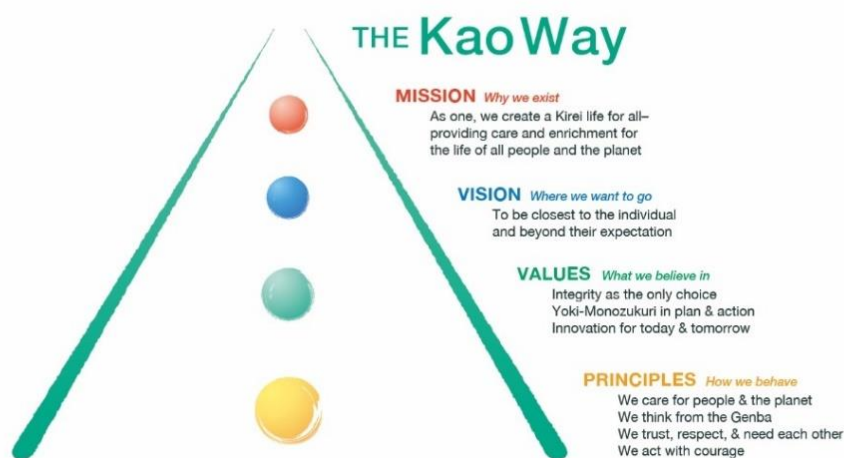
Commenting on the accolade, Yoshihiro Hasebe, Representative Director, President and Chief Executive Officer, said: "We are honored to have been selected as one of the World's Most Ethical Companies for 18 consecutive years. 'Walking the right path' is our core value, and external evaluations such as this are very important to us. We have reaffirmed our determination to continue taking on challenges as we work toward ambitious goals; we will continue applying the principle 'We act with courage' to become an industry-leading company in an ever-changing society and fulfill our purpose, which is 'to realize a Kirei world in which all life lives in harmony.'"

Ethisphere’s Chief Executive Officer, Erica Salmon Byrne, said: “We are, once again, delighted to honor Kao as one of the World’s Most Ethical Companies. Kao is one of only six companies to have received this recognition from its inception—18 times. This achievement is a testament to Kao’s dedication to continually advancing best practices for ethics, compliance, and governance. We look forward to seeing Kao’s continued leadership in furthering business integrity across the industry and globally.”

In April 2019, the Kao Group established the Kirei Lifestyle Plan, an ESG strategy. The Japanese word ‘kirei’ describes something that is both clean and beautiful. For Kao, Kirei not only encapsulates appearance, but also attitude—to create beauty for oneself, other people, and for the world around us. Since 2021, it has been promoting the Kao Group Mid-term Plan with its vision of “protecting future lives” and “sustainability as the only path.” The Kao Group will continue to integrate its ESG strategy into its management practices, and by maintaining and practicing a high level of ethical awareness, aims to develop its business, provide better products and services for consumers and society, and work toward its purpose, “to realize a Kirei world in which all life lives in harmony.”

The Kao Group upholds the founder’s value of “walking the right path” at the core of all corporate activity. As such, this is the first item in the fundamental values that form the basis of its corporate philosophy, the Kao Way. This signifies acting in accordance with the law and ethics, and conducting honest and sound business activities. To implement the Kao Way, the Kao Group worldwide shares the Kao Business Conduct Guidelines. The company bases its activities on these Guidelines, which serve as a lodestar when there is uncertainty about the path to follow, as the guiding principle in daily work and as the fundamentals to help achieve sustainability for the company and for society.

### [Kao Business Conduct Guidelines](#)



Corporate Philosophy—the Kao Way

\* This news release appeared in English, distributed via global press release distribution service Business Wire, to coincide with the release from the Ethisphere Institute (March 4, 2024, 8:00 pm JST).

### **About the Kirei Lifestyle Plan**

Over the past 130 years, Kao has worked to improve people's lives and help them realize more sustainable lifestyles—a Kirei Lifestyle. The Japanese word 'kirei' describes something that is clean, well-ordered and beautiful, all at the same time. The Kao Group established its ESG strategy, the Kirei Lifestyle Plan in April 2019, which is designed to deliver the vision of a gentler and more sustainable way of living. By 2030, Kao aims to empower at least 1 billion people, to enjoy more beautiful lives and have 100% of its products leave a full lifecycle environmental footprint that science says our natural world can safely absorb.

Please visit [the Kao sustainability website](#) for more information.

### **About Kao**

Kao creates high-value-added products and services that provide care and enrichment for the life of all people and the planet. Through its portfolio of over 20 leading brands such as *Attack*, *Bioré*, *Goldwell*, *Jergens*, *John Frieda*, *Kanebo*, *Laurier*, *Merries*, and *Molton Brown*, Kao is part of the everyday lives of people in Asia, Oceania, North America, and Europe. Combined with its chemical business, which contributes to a wide range of industries, Kao generates about 1,530 billion yen in annual sales. Kao employs about 34,300 people worldwide and has 137 years of history in innovation.

Please visit [the Kao Group website](#) for updated information.

### **Media inquiries should be directed to:**

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### **Related Information**

[World's Most Ethical Companies® 2024](#)

[Kao launches new ESG Strategy “Kirei Lifestyle Plan” to support consumer lifestyle changes](#)

[Kao's New Challenges for the Future: Accelerating Purposeful Business Commitment with ESG](#)

[Kao sustainability website](#)