



# Kanazawa II

## Where *Samurai* Once Walked

Centuries ago in Kanazawa on the Sea of Japan coast, *samurai* warriors held administrative and military day jobs at Lord Maeda's castle complex, but at day's end they returned to their families at their homes. Since warfare has not touched Kanazawa in more than 400 years, a large *samurai* residential district, crisscrossed by narrow meandering streets, still stands intact. In the photo above, Yoshi (in red jacket) treads one such roadway as I lag behind with my camera. The earthen walls, looking now as they did then, hide homes in which people still live. But of course the houses have been upgraded. Like us, modern Japanese can't survive without gas and electricity, running water and sewers, which support all their heating, cooling, cooking, clothes washing, bathing and flushing needs, not to mention television sets and computers. Their ancestors, like ours, were tougher.



In silhouette, as I prefer to see myself nowadays, I inspect the garden of an old *samurai* home open to the public. It is November 2003, and heavy snows will come soon, so pine limbs are supported with twine to keep them from breaking under the weight. A prominent *samurai* enjoyed this garden long ago.



### *Welcome, Friend*

Only the ceiling light fixture strikes a discordant note here. With its *tatami* flooring, sun-speckled *shoji* window and *tokonoma* alcove featuring a hanging scroll and flower arrangement, the room was one into which an honored guest would be invited. A low lacquered table and *zabuton* cushions probably provided human comforts on the *tatami*.