

# 京都花街

KYOTO KAGAI

紅ちょうちんのおぼろげな光が人々を誘う、京の五花街。祇園甲部、宮川町、先斗町、上七軒、祇園東、これら五つの花街を「舞妓」抜きにして語ることはできない。若くして親元を離れ、「おかあさん」と呼ぶ女将のもと「置屋」に住み込む。芸事の稽古に励み、行儀作法やしきたりを学んでいく。美しい白塗りやあでやかな装いの奥に、計り知れない覚悟と努力を秘めて。京都の粋と「おもてなしの心」が息づく花街に生きる舞妓こそ、千年を超える歴史と文化を象徴する存在なのかもしれない。

The soft light of red Japanese lanterns attracts people in the Kyoto's five districts called "Kagai": Gion Kobu, Miyagawacho, Pontocho, Kamishichiken and Gion Higashi. When one talks of Kagai, "maiko" are an essential element. A young girl who resolves to become a maiko leaves her home and lives in an Okiya where her "Oka-san," or "mother" in Kyoto is responsible for everything in her new life. After going through the lengthy and intense training required to learn the various manners, traditions and skills of entertainment, the young girl finally flourishes as a maiko whose elegant white face and gorgeous attire can be only achieved with great determination and patience. Maiko is a symbol of Kagai where the sophisticated culture of Kyoto and "Omotenashi", sincere hospitality, are deeply respected.

