

Kobayashi Dojo Uchideshi  
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We stayed as uchideshi for 2 month. From the very beginning we knew that we are supposed to write an essay, so I started to write it after two weeks of staying. But two weeks later I realized that my feeling about being uchideshi had changed so much, that I started another essay, and another... This is the final version I am typing on Monday 30 of July and hope to finish tomorrow – one day before leaving. I enjoyed staying in Kobayashi Dojo and the closer to the end, the easier it feels to be here. I became advanced uchideshi. I keep on doing the tasks being more relaxed mentally. I like the changes that came to me, but now I feel I want to go home very much. That is because I feel I am full of new knowledge, new experience, I want to try many new things about practicing, teaching and managing dojo in Saint Petersburg. I cannot collect impressions anymore, I want to share it with my friends. I want to try to practice aikido in more Japanese way in Russia, with my friends. That was the purpose of coming here – to get new experience and to put it in practice in our dojo. I expected that this experience to be more about keiko, but staying uchideshi is more about managing the dojo, and it seems to be very useful for us. Still I guess I need much more time to realize what being uchideshi became for my life.

It was not very hard physically (except for afternoon keikos, when it is about +35 degree). I mean I am used to practice a lot and sleep 5-6 hours per night... but it was very stressful and psychologically difficult. I would say, if you are going to become uchideshi, it is better to try it together with your friends – well known people who can speak the same language, who has expected reaction to different events, who shows understandable emotions...

Same about leading dojo – it is difficult to do everything alone, and it is wrong to think that being good in techniques or in teaching on tatami is enough for leading dojo. There is much more to do. And it must be a team work, and I had great opportunity to watch carefully how one of the best aikido dojo in the world works.

That is about the business part of our trip. About emotions: some people ask me if we enjoyed staying in Japan. Definitely enjoyed! I can not describe it, but we have over 2000 photos, even though I can't stand having camera with me! It was made to try to keep the memories of our good feelings, good emotions about places and people. All the Kobayashi Dojo instructors and of course so many members were so kind to us. I want to thank you very much!

And one more thing: I was lucky, Olga - my wife – stayed uchideshi same time with me. I stayed in Tokorozawa dojo, she stayed in Kodaira, but we had days off on Monday. And when we were going for sightseeing on Mondays, it was a kind of honeymoon after a week of hard work.

That was a great journey!



