

## **I Made It!**

Anna Stensland

I have just finished my last Aikido practice in Japan and I can't feel any pain! My biggest worry before I came here was whether my body would hold. The first 10 days will hurt, we were told by a former uchideshi. That wasn't true! We got new pains and aches almost every day even after several weeks! Anyway it's amazing how quick one forget the first painful ukemis on Kodairas hard tatami. Nowadays it feels almost soft....



When we came we had the fortune to be taken care of by two uchideshis, Matthew (4 weeks) and Kasahara-san. Thank you guys! Who so patiently tried to teach us all the tasks of an uchideshi! I have learned a lot: dusting, swiping, stamping etc. I really started to enjoy swiping the street. I will miss that. But I think I have to return, cause I still don't know which windows that should be to the right or to the left. I need much more practice!

One of the most beautiful moments I had was one early morning in April in Kodaira Dojo. Fresh air and birdsong came in through the open windows and beautiful soft morning sun hit the genuine white canvas tatami. Kobayashi Sensei, like a father, was softly leading us through the warm up. Quiet and calmly beautiful pink cherry bloom petals made their way through the air and landed on the canvas. It was just perfect and romantic!

The training has been perfect, I have had a lot of "revolutionary" moments, when suddenly I understood things I thought I knew. In fact this is what makes Aikido fantastic. One is never full filled there is always new experiences. The luxury of doing only one thing, Aikido, is very calming, no stress for 6 weeks. But I got a little stressed when we were visiting Igarashi Sensei. He was teaching a move, the "twist" of the lower arm using a ball. This was so difficult and frustrating I felt I knew nothing! Well later I felt that the feeling of knowing nothing is a good feeling. It makes me more open to new knowledge.



6 week so close to the "source" has given me a lot of energy and understanding. To see how Kobayashi Sensei is taking care of new students, old ones and everything about the dojos was impressive and to see this transfer to new generations is satisfactory. The atmosphere is so warm, friendly and allowing. I really feel content to belong to Kobayashi Dojo.

Thank you all Kobayashi Dojo members for so warmly taking care of visitors both on the tatami and in your free time!