

My Uchideshi Experience Colin Nicholas



My experience as an uchideshi at Kobayashi Dojo was everything I expected and more. Upon leaving for Japan I expected that I would be tired, I was exhausted from landing until the conclusion of my one month stay. I expected that I would be sore; my muscles were put under a strain that I haven't felt before and likely went again for a long while. The important part though, is that I expected that I might learn some Aikido. I can't even begin to explain how much I learned in one short month of training. During my stay I wasn't entirely conscious of the changes in my Aikido. I was still in an unfamiliar area and did not put much thought to the issue. Upon return is where I truly noticed how much I had changed. I had become much softer and relaxed and learned far more than I had realized at the time.

The opportunity to go to Japan and train is something I've always wanted to do once I moved from children's class to adult class 8 years ago. The idea of training every day with some of the best in the world was something that appealed greatly to me and I couldn't wait for the time to come. I felt I needed to obtain the rank of Shodan though before I took steps to make this happen so I could get the most I could out of the experience. I succeeded in this goal just over two years ago but sadly Inaba Sensei, the founder of Calgary Aikikai, passed away. The passing of my Sensei was a difficult time for both me and my dojo that left a great void in all of our lives. This resulted in the delay of my trip to Japan for one year as we honored him at our dojo's 30th anniversary and I wished to be present for the ceremonies. My trip was almost further delayed by the disaster in Sendai. I feared the repercussions of radiation in the Tokyo area. Now looking back if I hadn't gone to Japan this year I would have missed out on such a great experiences.

The amount of knowledge and the ability to impart this knowledge that Kobayashi Sensei, Hiroaki Sensei, and their students have is astounding. It wasn't only the learning that made this trip special though. A large part of the uchideshi experience for me was the kindness and patience the members of Kobayashi Dojo showed me on and off the mat that made the trip unforgettable. This coupled with my first real trip on my own, made this an experience of a lifetime.

I hope to go back to Kobayashi dojo in the future for more training as



one month was not nearly enough. I can't thank the members of Kobayashi dojo enough for all of the assistance they gave me. If you've ever thought of taking some time to train as an uchideshi, Kobayashi dojo is an amazing dojo filled with remarkable people who will show you nothing but kindness. I hope that when I return I will be able to see all the great friends I made, and that both Calgary Aikikai and I can continue to grow a positive relationship with Kobayashi Dojo as I still have much to learn.

