

Kobayashi Dojo Uchideshi  
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When I first heard that I would go to Japan for two months as uchideshi, I choked on a chop. At that moment I did not know to enjoy this news or not.

On the one hand it was a joy: “going to Japan, rare chance, to practice aikido a lot, Japanese food, finally – authentic sushi”...

On the other hand: I'm not going to a hotel “all inclusive” for relax, eat and sunbathe on the sea. Uchideshi, it's more work than the rest (so it seemed to me then, now it seems even more so).

In uchideshi life you have a very busy schedule, you must get up early (at 5 in the morning, and sometimes even earlier... at home I have no concept of "5 in the morning", there is the concept of "5 at night", and at night time I sleep ...), lots of cleaning, washing, help in all matters, practice.

There is some leisure time of course, it is enough for sightseeing and sleep as well, and even for having food, sometimes.

What was difficult is the lack of personal space. You live in the dojo and all the time you have to remember that this is not your own house. The belongings must be kept hidden in a small closet. Feeling as if you are “living on your suitcases” (a russian expression). St. Petersburg citizens are not nomads, it is difficult for us.

Also it was hard to get along with other uchideshi. A person you never met before, and suddenly you start to live with him under the same roof - a lot of stress. And people are all good, but in this situation, it is stressful.

To be an uchideshi in Kobayashi Dojo is difficult. Although, to be an uchideshi is difficult, I think, everywhere. That is an uchideshi`s role. It is especially difficult with no habit. Once and for two months, your life changes drastically from all sides as if you live not for yourself but for the general case of a large. You're like a piece of big machinery. Not the most important piece. It is difficult to switch immediately and not to worry about such a change of relationship with the others. They are kind to you, but you are used to another relationship so sometimes they seem to be not.

We were in Japan in June and July. This is not the most suitable months for visiting the attractions of this country. Nevertheless, there was something to see. It's very beautiful flowers. We were at the festival of flowers, which took place near, Higashi-Muroyama. I've never seen such a large irises ... We also saw the lotuses. It's really a beautiful sight. In each pond in Japan you can find huge hungry fish and turtles. We looked at the nighttime Tokyo from the observation deck on a skyscraper (45 floors). Once when we were at Yamanakako, we saw the famous Mount Fuji. Although it has been seen very little because of the strong clouds, it looked majestic. Swimming in the sea, visiting Japanese hot spring baths in the open air few times - unforgettable feeling. We went to Nikko – fantastic area... Many other places.

Although these two months were not the easiest of my life, but it was a great adventure. I have spent here unforgettable moments, and I am grateful for these to all the Kobayashi Dojo instructors and members here – in Japan. And I am especially grateful to Urban Aldenklint, who first had the idea to send me to this hell (here I mean, of course, the hottest July in Japan), and to my husband, who at first wanted to send me here alone, but then realized that it is coming true, became envious, and finally found ability to come with me.





