



## **Emmeli Wennström**

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Nationality: Swedish

Dojo: Iyasaka Aikidoklubb

Ms. Wennström stayed in Kodaira dojo as an uchideshi for three months. It seems that she had many good experiences while staying in Japan. She is smaller than other male uchideshis, but she was the most energetic uchideshi and made everyone around her cheerful.

### My Adventure Emmeli Wennström

Maybe this is not really the kind of essay that I was supposed to write about me, but this is how I would like to describe my adventure as an uchideshi. The experience I had here has been amazing, better and at times worse than I could possibly imagine. I came because I wanted to experience the aikido and the way of life that I have heard so much about. I got all that, but I also got so much more. I have met people and had experiences that I will never forget. When I am writing this it is my very last night here and I wish that I could go to sleep and wake up to this day again, this last precious day.

During my time here I have felt at home and I have had the privilege of focusing on one of the things I love; Aikido. I would warmly recommend this trip but I have also seen that this way of living is not for everyone. If you are thinking about going to Japan as an uchideshi I can say.

Perhaps I have had a rather easy time considering we have been so many uchideshis living in the dojo. But, even so, I must say that I have not found the life as an uchideshi that difficult. I had heard stories about how broken and exhausted I would be and, yes, I have had my ups and downs. However, what has been most difficult and harsh has been awakening from some of the naiveté. When you are in a difficult situation, you need to be able to say “no” sometimes, and at times that is the best decision. Because by seeing the limit of your ability, you can get a better idea about in which part of yourself you need to develop. On the other hand, being able to say “yes” at all time without thoughts of oneself is also a virtue. This virtue of self-sacrifice is crucial to be an uchideshi serving and learning under a sensei.

Very special thanks I would like to give to Kobayashi sensei, Hiroaki sensei, Koyanagi sensei,



Kasahara sensei, Shinozaki san, and Anita. Anita has truly been a savior during the weekends; she has enlightened my spirit.

All of the aikido practice has been enormously fun and I will have lots to thoughts about this experience when I go home. And when I come back here, I hope that I will have better sense about what I have already grasped.

I am still very young and my experience here in Japan has reminded me of how much I still have to learn. When I say this, I do not only refer to aikido but also to life. Here in Japan I have understood what I have always known but never really believed; no one is perfect. Nonetheless, that do not mean you should not strive for perfection.

