



## **Uwe Rosebrock**

May 2007 - June 2007

**Nationality:** Australian

**Dojo:** University of Tasmania Aikido Club

Mr. Rosebrock stayed in Tokorozawa dojo for one month from May 2007 with Mr. Gataric. It seems that he had many experience during his stay.

### My life as an uchideshi at Kobayashi Dojo

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On May 16, 2007, I left for Japan to arrive on May 17 from Tasmania, Australia, to become an uchideshi at Kobayashi Dojo in Tokorozawa near Tokyo. Firstly my warmest thank you goes to the Kobayashi family to allow me to train and welcome me to the dojo. The experience was truly eye opening in so many ways.

One could have all the preparation in the world, but when living in a western society, it would be hard pressed to envisage the lifestyle one enters into in becoming a live-in student. The early rise to prepare and clean the dojo almost becomes a mantra in which you focus on the immediate little things. Especially when you are so sleep deprived. Not that I wasn't warned – but I wouldn't want to miss it for the world.

The tight schedule meant to get up before 5:00am to either clean the Tokorozawa dojo where we stayed, or travel to Kodaira, Dojocho's place of residence and principle dojo. In all dojos was an intensive cleaning schedule to follow, which in itself was a task and reminded me ever so often of what being there was all about.

While Tokorozawa has been rebuilt several years ago, Kodaira is close to its original state, at least as far as the mats are concerned. These are old style straw mats, compressed through years of practice to mirror the consistency of a wooden floor. Since we had the opportunity to train in Kodaira many times a week under Dojocho, it took a little getting used to. It did not take too long until my knees did not appreciate the ongoing challenge. Considering that all the senior students and teachers spend most their life training on these mats, didn't ease the pain but made me admire them even more. Any of these challenges were utterly overshadowed by the privilege to be taught by Kobayashi sensei and Hiroaki sensei. The continuous training 2-3 times a day with so many senior students and teachers was not only exciting but also put my own study of Aikido in perspective. I appreciated the structured teaching, the generosity, the



kindness and particularly the smiles with which all those miss-steps of us gaijin were overseen.

And then there are the 'little' events outside the daily schedule, such as taking part in the annual Aikido Enbukai (demonstration) under Kobayashi Dojo, travelling to the foot hills of Mount Fuji to train under Dojocho and others for a weekend, or getting up early on the day when you could sleep a little longer to train under Doshu at Hombu Dojo. Travelling to Meiji University where Dojocho instructs the students of Meiji University, we met a great number of incredibly keen students and it gave us yet another insight into the spectacular efforts these great teachers of Aikido and life make.

As a tradition the uchideshis are to prepare breakfast every Friday morning for the sensei's attending the weekly office day as well as for the uchideshis. I wondered often what sort of culinary inventions must have been presented. So we tried to stick with the simple and spent some effort on desserts. But let there be no doubt, we couldn't possibly compare any of our efforts with Hiroaki sensei's wife, Miyoko, who made a traditional Japanese breakfast every Wednesday morning.

Thank you ever so much, for allowing us to gain this experience.

