

## **The Real meaning of Otomo**

Otomo is a Japanese tradition among martial art masters. It is very often confused with Uchideshi (private disciple) because it is often one of the Uchideshi who performs Otomo. Otomo is usually considered as a training method for Uchideshi. It is to take care of the master just like a servant.

However there is a deeper meaning to the practice of Otomo. Martial arts masters often had enlightenment in meditation. Enlightenment means that one becomes conscious of one's inner world and understands that watching one's inner world is the only way to develop one's life with truth. Some dancers, painters, actors, musicians and meditation practitioners achieved this state. Watching one's inner world gives such a feeling of wellbeing that one does not desire any friendship or socialisation. One only enjoys his job of art performance or teaching besides basic life activities like eating, drinking, sex, taking a walk, etc. This can create a misunderstanding with other people because of the lack of friendship or social life. People may consider this as being cold or impolite. That is why a master needs an Otomo, a person who can make a bridge between the master and other people.

A master is not interested in social conversation but he is always ready to teach or to answer questions. The presence of an Otomo prevents social conversation but gives the possibility for asking questions. Many dinners continue with social conversation of one or two hours. The Otomo can take the master home without bothering people who are enjoying social conversation.

Naturally the Otomo can also practise meditation in daily life while he/she is with the master. It is not important whether one is enlightened or not because no one knows why enlightenment happens nor how to enlighten others. The important thing is to understand life after enlightenment. All philosophers and artists end up in a way of life which is in the direction of life after enlightenment. That shows that the life after enlightenment is the natural goal for all human development. Here lies the value of enlightenment and meditation.

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