

Mikao Usui's Memorial Stone

The memorial stone was erected by the Usui Reiki Ryoho Gakkai in Japan one year after Usui Mikao's death. This translation is true to the original text and has not been modernised. Though this is the case it is also easy to read and creates a feel for the period and the happenings during Usui Mikao's life as seen through the eyes of the society's members.

Reiho Choso Usui Sensei Kudoku No Hi

Memorial of the merits of Usui Sensei, the founder of Reiho (Reiki Ryoho)



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That which is attained within oneself after having accumulated the fruits of disciplined study and training is called 'Toku' and that which can be offered to others after having spread a path of teaching and salvation is called 'Koh'. Only with high merits and great virtues can one be a great founding teacher. Sagacious and brilliant men of the olden time or the founders of new teachings and religious sects were all like that. Someone like Usui Sensei can be counted among them. Sensei newly founded the method based on Reiki of the universe to improve the mind and body. Having heard of his reputation all over, people crowded around to seek his teachings and treatments. Ah, how popular it is!

Sensei, commonly known by the name 'Mikao', with an extra name 'Gyohan' is from Taniaimura (village) Yamagata-gun (county), Gifu-ken (prefecture). He is descended from Chiba Tsunetane. His father's name was Taneuji, and was commonly called Uzaemon. His mother was from the Kawai family.

Sensei was born on August 15 of the first year of Keio (1865 A.D.). From his youth he surpassed his fellows in hard work and endeavor. When he grew up he visited Europe and America, and studied in China. Despite his will to succeed in life, he was stalemated and fell into great difficulties. However, in the face of adversity he strove to train himself even more with the courage never to yield.

One day, he climbed Kurama-yama and after 21 days of a severe discipline without eating, He suddenly felt One Great Reiki over his head and attained enlightenment and he obtained Reiki Ryoho. Then, he tried it on himself and experimented on his family members. The efficacy was immediate. Sensei thought that it would be far better to offer it widely to the general public and share its benefits than just to improve the well-being of his own family members. In April of the 11th year of Taisho (1922 A.D.) he settled in Harajuku, Aoyama, Tokyo and set up the Gakkai to teach Reiki Ryoho and give treatments. Even outside of the building it was full of pairs of shoes of the visitors who had come from far and near.



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In September of the 12th year (1923 A.D.) there was a great earthquake and a conflagration broke out. Everywhere there were groans of pains from the wounded. Sensei, feeling pity for them, went out every morning to go around the town, and he cured and saved an innumerable number of people. This is just a broad outline of his relief activities during such an emergency.

Later on, as the 'dojo' became too small, in February of the 14th year (1925 A.D.) the new suburban house was built at Nakano according to divination. Due to his respected and far-reaching reputation many people from local districts wished to invite him. Sensei, accepting the invitations, went to Kure and then to Hiroshima and Saga, and reached Fukuyama. Unexpectedly he became ill and passed away there. It was March 9 of the 15th year of Taisho (1926 A.D.), aged 62.

His spouse was Suzuki, and was called Sadako. One boy and one girl were born. The boy was named Fuji and he succeeded to the family. Sensei's personality was gentle and modest and he never behaved ostentatiously. His physique was large and sturdy. He always wore a contented smile. He was stout-hearted, tolerant and very prudent upon undertaking a task. He was by nature versatile and loved to read books. He engaged himself in history books, medical books, Buddhist scriptures, Christian scriptures and was well versed in psychology, Taoism, even in the art of divination, incantation, and physiognomy. Presumably sensei's background in the arts and sciences afforded him nourishment for his cultivation and discipline, and it was very obvious that it was this cultivation and discipline that became the key to the creation of Reiho (Reiki Ryoho).

On reflection, Reiho puts special emphasis not just on curing diseases but also on enjoying wellbeing in life with correcting the mind and making the body healthy with the use of an innate healing ability. Thus, before teaching, the 'Ikun' (admonition) of the Meiji Emperor should reverently be read and Five Precepts be chanted and kept in mind mornings and evenings.

Firstly it reads, Today do not anger, secondly it reads, Do not worry, thirdly it reads Be thankful, fourthly it reads, Work with diligence, fifthly it reads, Be kind to others.

These are truly great teachings for cultivation and discipline that agree with those great teachings of the ancient sages and the wise. Sensei named these teachings 'Secret Method to Invite Happiness and 'Miraculous Medicine to Cure All Disease'; notice the outstanding features of the teachings. Furthermore, when it comes to teaching, it should be as easy and common as possible, nothing lofty. Another noted feature is that during sitting in silent meditation with Gassho and reciting the Five Precepts mornings and evenings, the pure and healthy minds can be cultivated and put into practice in one's daily routine. This is the reason why Reiho is easily obtained by anyone.

Recently the course of the world has shifted and a great change in thought has taken place. Fortunately with the spread of this Reiho, there will be many that supplement the way of the world and the minds of people. How can it be for just the benefit of curing chronic diseases and longstanding complaints?

A little more than 2,000 people became students of Sensei. Those senior disciples living in Tokyo gathered at the 'dojo' and carried on the work (of the late Sensei) and those who lived in local districts also spread the teachings. Although Sensei is gone, Reiho should still be widely propagated in the world for a long time. Ah, how prominent and great Sensei is that he offers the teachings to people out there after having been enlightened within!

Of late the fellow disciples consulted with each other about building the stone memorial in a graveyard at Saihoji Temple in Toyotama-gun so as to honor his merits and to make them immortalized and I was asked to write it. As I deeply submit to Sensei's greatness and am happy for the very friendly teacher/disciple relationships among fellow students, I could not decline the request, and I wrote a summary in the hope that people in the future shall be reminded to look up at him in reverence.

February, the 2nd year of Showa (1927 A.D.)

Composed by: Ju-sanmi (subordinate 3rd rank), Kun-santo (the 3rd Order of Merit), Doctor of Literature Okada Masayuki.

Calligraphy by: Navy Rear Admiral, Ju-yonmi (subordinate 4th rank), Kun-santo (the 3rd Order of Merit), Ko-yonkyu (the distinguished service 4th class), Ushida Juzaburo.

(Translated by Hyakuten Inamoto)



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Lessons from the Mikao Usui Memorial Stone

The memorial stone was erected by a Japanese Reiki society called the Usui Reiki Ryôhō Gakkai in 1927, one year after the founder of Reiki's death. The founder's name is Mikao Usui. Engraved with old Japanese kanji, the memorial stone stands in the peaceful grounds of the Saihoji temple in Tokyo.

Old Japanese kanji can barely be read by contemporary Japanese due to the complexity of the kanji utilised at that time and therefore requires more detailed translation than modern Japanese. The Japanese used approximately 50,000 kanji prior to WWII while only using around 3,000 today.

The calligrapher of the memorial stone was Ushida Juzaburo, the President of the Usui Reiki Ryôhō Gakkai. If Usui, as some believe, was the first President of this society then Ushida, as its second President, should be considered the legitimate successor to Usui.

There is no question as to the authenticity of this memorial and therefore it is one of the very few resources that all Reiki branches and their teachers can constantly return to for direction and guidance in their daily practice.

As the memorial stone was only discovered by modern teachers in the mid-1990s, its information has not yet been fully integrated into recent Reiki teachings. The information it contains is of the greatest importance today in a Reiki community that often feels as if it has been foundering for the last 28 years, with teachers trying to create a practice out of thin air.

This should not be at all necessary when such a great resource is at hand.

Insight into what it means to practice the system of Reiki is right under our noses – let us utilise it to create a Reiki community that has common understandings and practices that are based on accurate historical information regarding the very foundation of the system of Reiki.

This article will look at excerpts from the memorial stone that support teachers and practitioners in finding strength and understanding within their practice. Underneath each excerpt is a commentary on the memorial stone's meaning and how you can work with it to benefit your practice.

One day, he climbed Kurama-yama and after 21 days of a severe discipline without eating...

It is easy to forget the enormity of what it means to perform a 21 day fasting meditation, let alone the preparation required for such a practice. 'Oh, he just did a 21 day meditation and then it all came together'. Well not exactly.

Perhaps you have taken a one day meditation intensive or even a 10 day meditation retreat. Was it easy? Have you ever fasted before? If so, how would you go fasting for 21 days? Compare your own experiences to what it might mean to sit on a mountain, exposed to the forces of nature, without food for 21 days.

To be able to go without eating while meditating for 21 days is a major feat. Such an extreme form of meditation requires preparation, and not just any old preparation but strict, consistent practice over an extended period of many years.

From this place of knowledge it is possible to gain a brief insight into Mikao Usui. It exposes a man who already had a high level of energetic and spiritual awareness before beginning the 21 day retreats. (Yes, retreat with an 's' – it is likely that as he was at this level of consciousness he would have taken part in other similar practices, if not the same practice at various times. 21day mountain practices are undergone in Shugendô; esoteric Japanese teachings).

There is one more question afforded us by the memorial stone that still remains a mystery. Who were Mikao Usui's teachers? Who guided him over the many years of self-practice that allowed him to take on such an austere practice? This is a road that Reiki researchers may like to delve further into in order to understand more about the roots of Usui's teachings.

He suddenly felt One Great Reiki over his head and attained enlightenment and he obtained Reiki Ryoho.

The order of what occurred in this sentence is of the utmost importance. It states that after becoming enlightened, Reiki (universal energy) Ryôhō (healing method) was attained.

This is overlooked by many Reiki teachers and practitioners who treat the practice as a magical pill that simply happens without any effort on the practitioner's behalf. Today, some teachers claim that after an attunement you can practice the system of Reiki, but in reality you only tap into a small aspect of the whole – it is not until you reach a space of enlightenment that you can tap into the whole aspect of Reiki (universal energy) and the system of Reiki.

An attunement merely offers you a taste of what it could be like to obtain Reiki Ryoho – which in itself is a wonderfully encouraging thing, yet the receiving of this blessing is not the system itself. Tapping into the whole aspect of Reiki and comprehending the system completely comes from the space where you are the universe and the universe is you.

Naturally, this is not easily attained yet remains a goal for all teachers and practitioners to work toward.

Presumably sensei's background in the arts and sciences afforded him nourishment for his cultivation and discipline, and it was very obvious that it was this cultivation and discipline that became the key to the creation of Reiho (Reiki Ryôhō).

Here it states that Usui created the system of Reiki. It was not 'rediscovered' as has been promoted in some Reiki communities. Certainly aspects of it existed and yet it was his genius that brought these elements together to create the system of Reiki.

Also stated is that his cultivation and discipline were the key to the creation of the system of Reiki. In some modern practices of the system teachers rely solely on the attunement. But in reality all 5 elements of the system must be practiced together with perseverance. These 5 elements are the *precepts, meditations, hands-on healing, symbols/mantras* and *the reiju*. When we work with discipline and cultivate these elements only then can we reach a space of connection with Reiki. Not through the attunement alone.

On reflection, Reiho puts special emphasis not just on curing diseases but also on enjoying wellbeing in life with correcting the mind and making the body healthy with the use of an innate healing ability.

We all have an innate ability to heal ourselves. Innate means that the healing comes from within ourselves not from an outer source like a teacher or a specific external ritual. The healing ability has been, and always will be, there.

This excerpt also states that the system of Reiki is not just about curing diseases but also about correcting the mind and one's general wellbeing. This emphasis relates to the system of Reiki as a personal spiritual practice.

These are truly great teachings for cultivation and discipline that agree with those great teachings of the ancient sages and the wise.

To be able to practice the system of Reiki you need to have the discipline to practice the methods taught within the system on a daily basis. Through this discipline you will cultivate a deeper connection to Reiki and the deeper this becomes the more you become on a par with the sages and wise of old.

Furthermore, when it comes to teaching, it should be as easy and common as possible, nothing lofty.

This excerpt is a warning to teachers and practitioners regarding the ego. Many modern practices of the system of Reiki have strayed away from the simplicity of the basic practice. It is too easy to get carried away by the profundity experienced within this system with the ungrounded individual taking credit for this wisdom of the universe.

The system of Reiki has had its fair share of being manipulated to create lofty or elite Reiki branches. An example of such a misguided practice is where a teacher states that he or she needs to 're-attune' someone who has been taught elsewhere. Does the teacher believe that only he or she knows the correct way? And does the teacher believe that it is his or her power that makes the system of Reiki work? The truth behind these misconceptions is that is not the attunement that makes a Reiki practitioner but the practitioner's cultivation and discipline. An individual such as a teacher cannot claim the right to make another person into anything. Another example is where a teacher says that his or her teachings are more

powerful. This is totally subjective and such claims would unlikely be made by a spiritual teacher of quality.

Many new concepts have also been added to the system due to its entanglement with the New Age movement. Not all of these concepts are compatible and many lack a solid foundation in the modern manner that they are practiced.

Once a teacher and practitioner truly connect with Reiki they will find the truth in their practice and then be able to avoid these pitfalls.

The Japanese have been masters in the art of simplification. When the kanji was borrowed from China, the Japanese simplified it. The same occurred with calligraphy. Buddhism became Zen. It was the Japanese who took the enormous, unwieldy computers that could fill a room and simplified them into personal computers.

So when practising the system of Reiki remember to keep this simplicity. It belongs with the system. The more we add to the system, the more convoluted it becomes and the harder it will be for people to connect to their own true nature.

Another noted feature is that during sitting in silent meditation with Gassho and reciting the Five Precepts mornings and evenings, the pure and healthy minds can be cultivated and put into practice in one's daily routine.

There are a number of very important points mentioned here. First it re-states the significance of meditation and personal practice within the system of Reiki.

Then there is the point of the major influence that the 5 precepts play within the teachings. They are its foundation. Once a practitioner gains a deep understanding of the precepts, all five elements of the system of Reiki become clear.

Lastly, it emphasizes the importance of a daily routine. The true system of Reiki requires that its practitioners do more than simply receive an attunement; they must go home and practice.

A little more than 2,000 people became students of Sensei.

Some of Mikao Usui's peers had over 500,000 students. So, in reality Mikao Usui was teaching on a small scale. Looking at these numbers we also come to an interesting conclusion. Mikao Usui trained 2000 students and yet of these only about 80 began Okuden (Level II) and approximately 20 practiced Shinpiden (Level III). It is even rumoured in Japan that of these 20 Shinpiden practitioners only 7 finished it. This means that not even 1% began Shinpiden, with even less completing it. If the practice relied solely on attunements then every student would have received the attunements and completed Shinpiden. This was obviously not the case.

We also know that within the Usui Reiki Ryôhō Gakkai when a practitioner becomes Shoden, Okuden or Shinpiden, the practitioner is merely beginning the practice. This information indicates that it was a hard practice that required diligence and perseverance on the practitioner's behalf.

These are just some basic insights that we hope will encourage you to delve further into what you do using as the foundation a basic truth and awareness of your practice from a Japanese perspective.

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