

# **Reiki Ryoho:**

## **- (in)frequently asked questions**

by

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## REIKI RYOHO: (IN)FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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### Reiki Practice:

*Is it better to do a Reiki treatment 'hands on' or 'hands off' and is there any difference between the two ways? Is hands off better because you are working in the aura? Which do you prefer?*

I feel the most important consideration is honouring the desire of the 'client'. If they are not comfortable with hands-on treatment (for whatever reasons), then we must work off the body.

There are obviously subtle differences in the effects of treating a particular area hands-on, and treating the same area hands-off.  
(There is so much that can be conveyed by the simple act of compassionate touch)

And of course, even working hands-on we are *still* treating the aura (after all, the aura is not solely an emanation around the body - it also *permeates* the body)

I am ever mindful that in Usui Shiki Ryoho as actually taught by Takata-sensei, hands-on treatment was seen as THE approach (hands-off was generally only to be used if there was a *physical* issue such as an open wound, third degree burn, etc)

However, I often find myself drawn to work hands-off and hands-on at the same time - literally - working with my left hand in physical contact with the client, and my right at varying distances from their body surface.

*We were taught that to end a treatment session we should sweep the healee's aura five times from head to toe, shaking our hands out towards the earth after each sweep so as to get rid of the toxins and other 'stuff' we had removed. But now I've been told this aura sweeping isn't really a reiki technique*

The practice sweeping the aura from head to toe is something that has been adopted-in to Reiki practice sometime *after* the passing of Takata-sensei.

The practice is found in several different healing traditions, notably the western art of Mesmerism or Animal Magnetism, and the old belief is that rather than sweeping something *off of* or *away from* the aura, you are simply stabilizing it. (actually there are two *different* 'Aura sweeps' *downward* sweeps are used to 'calm' the aura, inducing a state of relaxation in the client, while *upward* sweeps are used to revitalise the aura and invigourate the client). Also, it seems the original purpose in shaking out the hands was simply to *re-energise* them (stimulate blood-flow) not *get rid of* something.

Takata-sensei taught we should conclude a Reiki treatment by performing something she referred to as the Nerve Stroke

This is how she described the process:

"I finish the treatment with a nerve stroke which adjusts the circulation.

Apply on the skin a few drops of sesame oil or any pure vegetable oil.

I place my thumb and fore finger on the left side of the spinal column and the three fingers and palm flat on the right side of the spinal column.

With a downward stroke, 10 to 15 strokes to the end of spinal cord..."

However, it is likely that, in places which had strict laws governing the practice of Massage ( - in such places the application of pressure or physical-contact 'sweeps' as used in performing the 'nerve stroke' would be considered "manipulative" and therefore only permitted to be performed by qualified masseurs), it was necessary for an alternative practice to be substituted for the nerve stroke, and so, the aura sweep came to be used as a viable alternative .

*How do we go about sending healing to a past trauma, is there a special technique? What combination of symbols is required?*

All trauma (and, for that matter, all illness, disease, disorder, injury, etc) occurred in the *past* - be it a lifetime ago, or a decade ago, or a year ago, or a month, a week, a day, an hour - or even only a fleeting moment ago...

Every single time we perform a Reiki treatment, we are dealing with the *past* - assisting the client (*in the now*) to recover from the particular state of imbalance which occurred *in the past*

Healing takes place in the 'here-and-*now*', not in the 'there-and-*then*'

To facilitate the client's healing from *past* trauma, all you need to do is: *be present in the now*, and let the Reik flow

Certainly, for *emotional/psychological* trauma work with the SHK if you wish; and even where the presenting trauma is of a physical nature, SHK may be of benefit, as physical trauma commonly has an unseen emotional/psychological element to it also.

Sometimes I feel, we seek to over-complicate matters. Reiki is simple.

Whatever the *origin* of the client's dis-harmony, it is present in the *now*

And it is in the *now* that the healing process may begin.

"There is no past, no future - only the NOW"

*In describing what Reiki Ryoho is to others, should we present it as an alternative to traditional mainstream western medical practice?*

Use of the term 'alternative' (in connection with Reiki - or any other 'non-mainstream' form of palliative/ameliorative practice) may be seen as somewhat antagonistic by the medical community - and in my opinion, only helps to strengthen the divisive "us versus them" perception that so many practitioners (not solely *mainstream* ones) hold.

Personally, I feel we should speak of Reiki Ryoho more in terms of being "complementary to..." rather than "an alternative to..."

If you want to speak of Reiki Ryoho as being an 'alternative' to traditional mainstream western medical practice, then that is of course your choice - but, just precisely *which* aspect of mainstream medical practice do you consider it to be an alternative to?

If you are lying in a mangled heap of metal that moments before was an automobile, with blood spurting out from the gash in your femoral artery, and theres a shard of what used to be your dashboard which has taken an intercostal detour, straight into your left lung - given a straight 'either or' choice, would you opt for a Reiki treatment, or would you prefer I call a Paramedic?

*I have heard you and others mention: Holding The Healing Space in connection with a Reiki treatment. What does this involve, are you referring to the atmosphere you create: space clearing, toning, smudging, drawing the symbols in the air around your treatment area, and such things?*

The phrase 'Holding the Healing Space' refers to the *whole* process of facilitating the client's 'opportunity for healing' - the creating and maintaining ('holding') of a suitable environment - not just the *physical* environment but also (and more importantly) the *emotional* and *energetic* 'environment': a safe and relaxing psychological 'inner space' in which the individual can heal themselves with Reiki's assistance.

So essentially it involves "whatever it takes" for that *particular* session with that *particular* client. But don't get too hung up on 'bells and whistles'.

Can you *really* imagine Usui-sensei doing smudging, etc

While the client is with us, the atmosphere of the room, the sensory stimulus - music, warmth, lighting, fragrance, etc (or lack of it), and the treatment itself - none of it is about what *we* want/like/consider conducive to healing - rather it is about what the *client* wants - about what enhances the experience for *them*.

*I have been reading on several different Reiki forums about the 'three diamonds' or 'three haras' that make up the hara system... ?*

In the 'Hara System' there is only *one* Hara

There is commonly confusion here. The concept of 'Hara' often becomes confused with the related concept of 'tanden' (even amongst many who teach the Japanese Reiki styles!)

Hara literally means 'belly' - and is commonly used to refer to the lower part of the abdomen - the area between the navel and the top of the pubic bone. Though it is - more fully - the entire area from the top of the pubic bone up to the base of the sternum (encompassing abdomen and diaphragm).

In many Japanese arts (spiritual, therapeutic, martial or creative) the term 'Hara' is often used as a shortened way of referring to 'the tanden that lies in the Hara'

The 'tanden' [more properly called the 'Seiki Tanden' or 'Seika no Itten'] is an energy centre - a focal point, or rather, a focal *area* - a place of 'energetic convergence', located deep inside the body, in a specific area of the Hara, roughly midway between the navel and the top of the pubic bone (people often say 2 inches [4-5cm] below the navel)

In the more traditional Japanese spiritual, therapeutic, martial and creative arts there is Hara (belly) and there is only *one* tanden - situated *within* the Hara. And this one 'Seiki Tanden' - this abdominal centre, is the focal point for all 'dimensions' of energy - personal, spiritual and otherwise.

One's very life - even one's spirit itself, is seen to reside here.

However, many who now claim to be teaching the Japanese 'Hara System' are actually teaching the Chinese 'Three Jewels' or 'Three Tan Tien' system instead.

You see, in Japan, there are also several spiritual, therapeutic, martial and creative disciplines ( - some , 'imported' - having actually originated in China, others, 'homegrown', yet nonetheless very heavily influenced by Chinese Chi Gung/Qi Gong philosophy) which speak of not one, but *three* tandens (Chinese:'tan tien' also 'dan tian' ) and their associated Chinese attributes.

In the Chinese system, the 'lower tanden' is identical (position-wise) to the Seika Tanden conceived of in the traditional Japanese philosophy/practice we refer to as 'the hara system' or 'the Way of Hara'

However, the Chinese system posits a second (middle) tanden in the region of the thymus / chest, and a third (upper) tanden in the region of the pineal gland / brow

These two *additional* tanden have no place in the 'Hara System' - for the simple reason that neither of them are located *within* the Hara ( - even using the term in its broadest sense, i.e. indicating the *entire* area from the top of the pubic bone up to the base of the sternum)

As mentioned, in the Japanese 'Hara System', Seika Tanden is situated *within* the Hara - and, under certain circumstances the term 'Hara' may be used to imply this singular tanden

However when it comes to the Chinese-influenced systems, the term 'Hara' *cannot* be used to refer to the two additional tanden which are situated at the brow and the 'heart'

Hara means 'belly'

You cannot have a 'middle belly' in your chest, nor an 'upper belly' in your head!

*Is there any way to do the Nerve Stroke (Ketsueki Kohan Ho) technique on yourself?*

In my opinion, not unless you are made of rubber!

I have never met anyone who can physically perform the *full* spinal sweep on themselves.

However, you *can* do a simplified version, depending how flexible you are.

Just reach behind your back with one arm and reach up as far as is comfortable (perhaps you can get up between your shoulder-blades) - and using the *back* of your hand, sweep gently down your spine to the tailbone. (You are still essentially doing the 'nerve stroke', just not starting from the occipital ridge)

Alternatively, if you have a suitably developed ability, you *can* perform Ketsueki Kohan Ho as a 'visualisation' (or rather - as a deeply, and precisely imagined, re-experiencing of the sensations created when receiving the technique from another practitioner)

The degree to which this will be effective depends entirely on how well you can recreate the experience.

Far better (and also possibly, far easier) to go to a Reiki share and trade ketsueki with others, 'hand to hand'

[As with all other Reiki techniques, there is a particular energy-dynamic in sharing in the experience of Ketsueki Kohan Ho with another person that is not present in self-work]

*Instead of placing both hands on the healee, can you only use one? And does the total amount of energy that would have flowed from both hands now flow from the one? And what about placing one hand on top of the other to increase flow - I read we were not really meant to do this?*

Some people *do* only use one hand to give treatment, keeping the other by their side. This is the way Fumio Ogawa taught his students to practice Reiki. However, giving treatment in this way does not necessarily seem to result in increased intensity of flow in the hand being used.

I and many other folk often work with one hand in contact with the body and the other held at varying distances from the body (in the biofield/aura) - and again, in giving treatment in this way, I personally have not been aware of this causing an increased intensity of flow in the hand that is in body-contact.

[It does however bring a further dimension of interaction to the practice, which, in my experience, seems to assist the client achieve swifter resolution of issues being treated.]

As to the practice of placing one hand on top of the other: somewhere along the line, the idea that you should not connect (or for that matter, cross) the hands has crept into various lineages of Reiki from certain specific forms of 'magnetic healing' therapy. The theory behind this being that in doing so you would somehow 'short out' the energy flow.

Personally, I find that touching the hands together or even placing them one on top of the other can indeed produce the effect of increasing Reiki flow.

However, it must be remembered that greater *intensity of flow* does not necessarily mean more *effective* Reiki

In my opinion, greater *subtlety* is more important than greater *intensity*.

*Can we send distant treatment to several people at the same time?*

We *can* send to several people at the same time.

- but perhaps we should be mindful that if we choose to do so, we are not doing so out of laziness.

I personally feel that in providing distant treatment, the client is deserving of the same level of individual attention and care as would be afforded to them were we treating them 'in-person'.

In a recording made at a level 2 class, Takata-sensei said that we should treat only one person at a time; and even then, treat a maximum of *three* people in succession [i.e. during any one session]

*I haven't used Reiki for a little while and when I started again, it feels weaker. How can I make it strong again and if I don't use it for long periods of time, could it disappear completely?*

Takata-sensei said that once you have the 'contact' with Reiki (i.e. have been initiated) the ability will stay with you always.

However, she also explained that, in the same way that an unused muscle will atrophy, the Reiki ability can also weaken and fade considerably if it is not used regularly.

She said that the reason for the decrease in effectiveness was simply due to the student's "battery" having run down; and in order to recharge the battery - to restore the Reiki ability to 'full strength' - all you need to do is to start regularly self-treating again.

In a short time the energy will pick up, and when you feel a definite improvement, then you can begin treating other people again.

*Is there a proper title for the person receiving a Reiki treatment? Should we call them the patient, recipient, client or what?*

'Recipient' is a good, safe description. 'Client' is becoming very popular - but IMO it should only be used to indicate someone receiving treatment on a payment basis (whether cash or kind). Some practitioners apparently do use the term 'Patient' [but this always reminds me of hospitals, the 'sick-bed', and the smell of disinfectant!]. ('Patient' has its origin in *pati* the Latin for "to suffer".)

Of course, while we - as practitioners - are giving the *treatment* we are not doing the *healing* - merely *facilitating* it. As the saying goes "all healing is self-healing".

The person receiving treatment is the one doing the healing (albeit with Reiki's help); so -and this is a radical thought I know - why not give the person who is receiving treatment their proper title: 'the Healer '

*We were taught that we should only lightly place our hands on the healee without any pressure. Also that we must not slide the hands between the positions, we must lift our hand clear of the healee's body then place it in the next position. Why is this?*

Over the years I've heard all sorts of reasons being offered by various people - including how applying pressure will supposedly force Reiki too deeply into the recipients body-tissue!!

And how sliding the hand from one position to the next might somehow direct the recipient's own energy to flow the wrong way along any meridian your hand happens over in the process!

However, the *real* reason is far simpler. It has nothing to do with forcing or influencing the energy.\* It is very simply this: a matter of *self-preservation*.

Application of pressure, or for that matter, sliding the hands while remaining in direct contact with the recipient's body, could possibly be construed as 'massage', and as it is illegal to practice massage without a licence in many places, this could result in either public prosecution or private lawsuits.

By lifting the hands/ not applying pressure you ensure against this.

[\*Remember, from what we now know, Usui-sensei himself probably used application of pressure: the *Oshi te* technique utilises pressure with the heel of the hand. And as for sliding the hands: the *Nade te* technique utilises stroking or brushing with the hands]

*I was told that when doing Reiki we should be careful not to pick up on the other person's stuff: their physical aches and pains or emotions?*

Personally, I feel it can be useful to 'interact' with the client's physical/emotional states - an important element of the therapeutic session (afterall, the *hibiki* picked up as part of *byosen* are an example of basic interaction with the client's 'stuff') - but it's all a matter of how we interact with their 'stuff'.

Whether simple *hibiki*, or more complex sensations of pain (somatic, emotional or otherwise) or surfacing memory, etc - by acknowledging it, and to whatever degree, experiencing it, I feel this helps us connect at a deeper level with the client, enabling a clearer 'flow ' of Reiki.

However, there is a difference between allowing ourselves to interact with and experience the client's 'stuff' *in the moment* [being 'present' with it *during* treatment], and taking it on and *holding onto* it [taking it into our own lives *beyond* the treatment session]

*I have heard that if you are unwell or even not focussing on what you are doing during the Reiki session you might end up giving some of your own energy instead of Reiki energy to the patient.*

Perhaps its not so much a case of '*instead of*' as one of '*as well as*'; and I don't feel you have to be unwell for this to happen either.



The desire to 'do' Reiki - to involve yourself in the therapeutic process (beyond simply being a medium for Reiki) can certainly, IMO, bring your own energies into the mix. I'm sure at some point we've all been there.

The concept of *nen*: mindfulness ( - as in HSZSN) is very important in Reiki, I feel. Though, not so much, being mindful of what you are doing, as being mindful that 'you' are not doing the 'doing' - Reiki is.

As Takata-sensei was fond of saying 'let go and let the energy flow'  
It is a case of constantly being mindful of the need to 'step out of the way' - of overriding the desire of the conscious mind to interfere (albeit to benign intent) in the process, and instead, simply let the Reiki phenomenon 'happen'.

*While reading up on Reiki, I notice there doesn't seem to be anything about removing stale, blocked or negative energy from the person you are treating - like there is in some other types of healing. How come?*

I feel this is where 'Reiki' (as a system) differs from, say, Qi Gung or Shiatsu, or Therapeutic Touch - in each of which we do have the conceptualisation of *adding* 'energy' *into* the system or *releasing/draining energy away from* the system.

Now while a lot of 'reframing' and 'revisionism' has gone on within Reiki in the last few years - in particular, with some Teachers seemingly bent on presenting Reiki as being essentially little more than a purely manual form of 'ki-therapy' practice (much akin to the most basic levels of Wai Qi [projected Qi Gung Healing]) - we have to remember that, at core, Reiki is not about *adding energy into* the system in order to 'top up' deficiency (*kyo*), nor for that matter, about *removing energy from* the system to release excess (*jitsu*) [or, for that matter, 'negativity'].

Rather, Reiki is about Transformation.

IMO, when we give a treatment, rather than ki-energy to 'top up' the clients energy reserves, we are channelling a - for want of a better word, *phenomenon* - a spiritual 'something' which elicits a positive, benign, *transformative* reaction/response within in the client. [Remember, it is only in its most simplistic usage that the word Reiki can be considered 'energy' .]

With Reiki, 'Negative' energies/energy-patterns are transmuted into positive ones and 'Positive' energies/energy-patterns are reinforced.

Nothing need be added - nothing need be taken away.

*I have heard that you can control Reiki. But surely it flows where it will without any help from us other than being a channel for it?*

Perhaps not 'control', Reiki, but certainly 'guide' or 'direct'.

Yes indeed we *are* 'channels' - and as channels, our part of the 'agreement' (as it were) in our 'contract with Reiki' is to be a *clear* channel - to 'get out of the way and let the Reiki flow' - but at the same time, WE choose for *whom* or for *what* (object, place, or event), and for *when* (past, present, future) the Reiki will be channeled -

and, for that matter, we choose *how long* we are willing to act as a channel (i.e. the length of the particular Reiki session/treatment).

When, for example, we *choose* to use the Seiheki Chiryō-ho technique (to effect change to a client's habits, perceptions, addictions, etc ) we are *directing* Reiki to effect a *specific* outcome - not just change, but a specific change.

When we use CKR we are not simply being a channel - we are in effect directing the Reiki to flow more potently, in keeping with *our* personal perception of the need for it to do so, rather than just letting the Reiki 'happen' as it will. And so on.

*Did Mikao Usui work with the energies of the five elements? I have learnt that each of the fingers & thumbs are connected to a different elemental energy, so by using a specific finger you can choose which element to apply?*

Usui Sensei would no doubt have been well acquainted with 'Godai' [Japanese Five-element] theory and the understanding that everything in the universe is perceived to be a manifestation of a particular balanced interplay of the five great elemental 'building blocks'.

[In Godai, Earth gives substance; Water holds things together; Fire heats or transforms; Wind/Air is responsible for movement; & Void/Sky/Ether connects with the creative source.]

But if what you are asking is, did he use - or for that matter, should we be looking at using - individual fingers to attempt to isolate and apply a particular elemental energy to one's self/client, then IMO, no.

IMO, contrary to what the developers of some modern reworkings of Reiki (including some supposed 'original' forms) seem to be intent on persuading us of, Reiki is not merely a 'mechanical' energy-therapy.

It is not about the practitioner consciously/willfully attempting to 'tweak' energy balance - as one learns to do in 'entry-level' chi kung healing practice, for example - by attempting to increase/decrease specific elemental energies.

I personally feel we tend to think too much about Reiki in terms of 'energy' (something that we have re-imported back into Japan).

Reiki is - to my mind - more 'Spiritual Phenomenon' than 'Energy manipulation'  
Perhaps, rather than trying to 'add more - do more' we should simply be mindful of, as Takata-Sensei put it:  
Getting out of the way and simply letting the Reiki happen.

*I was shown a relaxation technique where you lie down with your arms and legs positioned so you form a five-pointed star shape and simply feel your energy moving round your body. Is this a Japanese Reiki Technique?*

It is certainly not amongst the practices commonly considered Reiki techniques; however, what you describe is essentially the same as a basic *taiso* (exercise) practice which is used in another Japanese therapeutic modality, known as Seiki Jutsu.

In Seiki Jutsu and other Seiki-based arts, the position is named *dainoji* because lying in this position, you are not only forming a pentagram, but also the *kanji* character for the Japanese word *dai* meaning 'big', 'great' etc ( - as in DKM)

Lying in *dainoji*, you stretch then relax and breathe from the *hara* while becoming conscious of your body/energy

The breathing - which should be very relaxed and easy - alternates: in through the nose out through the mouth, then in through the mouth out through the nose, in through the nose out through the mouth, and so on.

Normally you would do this for up to 15 or 20 minutes at a time.

*I have recently done my first degree in Reiki and I have now heard several people say that I should remove my watch, rings and other jewelry when doing Reiki - why is this?*

Some people say that jewelry can interfere with the 'energetic vibrations' -however there does not seem to be any viable evidence to support this claim.

There are, however a few *valid* reasons for removing jewellery items prior to giving a Reiki treatment.

Firstly: on occasion, items of jewelry have been known to 'snagg' on the client's clothing - and having to interrupt treatment in order to cautiously disentangle yourself without pulling too many threads in your clients designer sweater (- not to mention the concern that the client might bill you for damages), can somewhat 'break' the soothing atmosphere of the treatment room.

Secondly: some practitioners have a tendency to suffer from 'bracelet, bangle & bead overload' and many clients do not appreciate, for example, having almost half a kilo of jewelry resting on their head while receiving treatment on their face/eyes.

Thirdly: (and this is also a reason clients are requested to wear non constricting clothing, loosen belts, and take off their shoes) When the body relaxes ( -a central response in Reiki treatment - for both practitioner and client) blood flows towards the surface of the body, sub-cutaneous blood-vessels dilate resulting in the production of surface heat and various degrees of natural, temporary, swelling - particularly of the hands and feet.

So, in the case of both practitioner and client, it is a good idea to remove *tight-fitting* jewelry such as rings, and either remove or at least loosen items such as watches. This is partly for the sake of comfort; and also to avoid the even the slightest inhibition of the circulation.

*I am a reiki master, but have never given an attunement- I am curious as to how to empower images/objects so that they give reiki to others. Any suggestions?*

While there are several ways of achieving this, I would like to suggest that you really should begin with passing attunements/Reiju directly to other living beings first, and develop both your confidence and experience in this most sacred aspect of Reiki.

Of course, anyone with even Level I Reiki can theoretically 'charge' an item temporarily (i.e. suffuse it with Reiki). However, the use of images/objects is really only a subsidiary method to 'usual' Reiki practice.

Yes, attuned items are helpful to 'reach' people with Reiki. But, for many Level III's there is a risk the practice may become an impersonal substitute for direct, consciously-intended work with living beings.

After all, Reiki is about Interaction (- personally I feel this should, where possible, be face to face - but that's just me).

But you have the HSZSN symbol; and equipped with this and the other three, you can reach people wherever they are.

## Takata-Sensei:

*How do you pronounce Mrs Takata's first name?*

Many people, having only seen the name written down (in books, or on websites, etc) seem to pronounce it Ha-Way-o, however, Mrs Takata was actually named after the Hawaiian Islands where she was born, and her name should be pronounced the same way as you would pronounce Hawaii - but with an 'o' sound rather than an 'e' sound at the end: Ha -Wai-o

*Is it known if Mrs Takata ever taught Reiki in Japan?*

There are several audio recordings of Takata-sensei talking about Reiki, and in one, she mentions how she went to Japan to teach a few people the introductory level in 1975. She also spoke of her intention of returning to teach the second level - and eventually initiate several masters in Japan also.

However, it seems Takata-sensei never got the opportunity to return to Japan to teach level 2, and certainly not the master level\*

The reasons behind this are not clear, but possibly can be put down to health. I believe it was sometime in '75 or '76 that Takata-sensei had her first heart attack, so after this she was probably less inclined to travel overseas...

We know of course that Takata-sensei went to visit Hayashi-sensei's widow, Chie, in the early 1950's - so I suppose it is possible she taught some classes there at that time.

\*[Phyllis Furumoto. has confirmed that no masters were created by her grandmother in Japan in the 70's]

*Why is it that Mrs Takata didn't allow her students to make notes about what she taught them?*

It wasn't so much that she didn't *allow* written notes.

She discouraged students from note-taking *during* her classes [several people wrote up notes *after* the classes]- there is a big difference. [What she really didn't allow was written depiction of the *symbols*]

I believe the reason she discouraged in-class note-taking was in the main due to the fact that while concentrating on making notes about one thing, students often missed some other important points that Takata-sensei was sharing, and she would then have to repeat herself. The more this happened, the more it interrupted the dynamic of the course session.

*Is it true that Mrs Takata taught different versions of the symbols to different students?*

Actually there is very little evidence to support this (to all intents and purposes it is something that falls in the category of 'Reiki Myth')

At the first meeting of the majority of Reiki masters - in Hawaii in April 1982 - it emerged that Takata-Sensei had taught each master somewhat differently (- i.e. she had adapted her *approach* slightly with each student, as any good teacher would)

It also emerged that a couple of the students were 'writing' the symbols ever-so-slightly differently from most of the others [Takata-sensei frequently spoke of 'writing' rather than 'drawing' symbols]

As a result, some folks later claimed that Takata-sensei had shown different students very different versions of the symbols.

However, it is generally accepted that the *minor* differences which actually existed were primarily due to mis-rememberings on the part of the *students* (generally, Takata-sensei did not allow students to keep copies of the symbols) .

While later, *endless* different versions of the original symbols began to appear, [due to students *intentionally* modifying symbols and their meanings/significance as taught by Takata-sensei, to suit their *own* purposes], originally, the *primary* differences seemed to be in the way a couple of the students wrote HSZSN (which is of course for many folk the most difficult symbol to master)

It also emerged that there were what *seemed* to be two or three slightly different versions of the DKM.

However, it must be remembered that these two 'symbols' DKM and HSZSN are in fact phrases written in Japanese kanji and just as there are several ways of writing words/phrases in the 'roman' (English) alphabet, eg: Block Capital and lower-case letters of numerous different 'font' styles, and also cursive /handwriting script - with most individuals having their *own* style - so too with Japanese writing.

Essentially there are four main Japanese writing styles, and if anything, the 'different' versions of the DKM are due to nothing more than the phrase being written in a couple of different styles....

*I am having certificates printed and was wondering if you can tell me what wording Takata used on her certificates?*

While most people now use the terms 'Level 1', 'Level 2', or 'Level 3' (or 1st, 2nd, 3rd Degree) Takata-sensei used the terms 'introductory', 'intermediate', or 'advanced' for the courses she offered

Takata-sensei used the following wording on certificates:

(Title:) USUI SHIKI RYOHO.

This is to certify that ( *student's name handwritten here* ) has completed the [see above] course in the REIKI Method of Natural Healing as administered by Hawayo K. Takata on this date (*hand-dated and signed: Rev. Hawayo K. Takata*)

*Just where in Hawaii did Hawayo Takata have her Reiki Clinic?*

Initially, after returning to Hawaii from Japan, Takata-sensei set up a small place of practice at Kapaa in the Kawaihau district on Kauai island.

However, in 1939, she acquired a property at: 2070 Kilauea Avenue, Waiakea Homesteads, South Hilo, Big Island, and it was from this address that she ran her practice up to the late 1940's.

For a time at her clinic, she advertised Reiki as 'Reiki Massage' .

Later, when the clinic was called the 'Hawaii Health Studio', Takata-sensei advertised Reiki as 'Nerve-Gland-Shortwave Treatments' !

As well as Reiki, she also offered Swedish Massage, and 'Cabinet Bath' (i.e. steam bath) treatments at this address. Later she moved back to Honolulu and set up a practice there.

*I read somewhere that Mrs Takata only attuned 22 students in all her years of Reiki practice. How come?*

Actually, Takata Sensei initiated a great many level 1 and level 2 students over the years\* (the exact numbers are unknown). However it was not until the 1970's that she initiated her first student to 'Master' level.

It is generally acknowledged that she only trained 22 students *to the level of 'Master'* - not 22 students *in total*.

\* [It has recently been suggested that Yuji Onuki who apparently taught 'Usui-Do' to Dave King in 1971 may have possibly been one of Takata-Sensei's level 2 students...]

*Did any of the people Mrs Takata made Reiki Masters make any Masters of their own while she was still alive?*

Yes. While Takata-sensei Certified 22 people as Reiki Masters, one of the 22, Beth Gray, was not actually initiated to Level 3 by Takata-sensei herself, but by one of the other master-level students - John Harvey Gray.

*Was it Mrs Takata who came up with the idea of the 'energy exchange' - the requirement that payment must always be made for treatment/training: that they are not allowed to be given for free? And why is this; are free treatments believed to be less effective - didn't Usui treat victims of the Kanto earthquake for free?*

Many people do seem to think that Takata-sensei was responsible for introducing the idea of charging for treatment/training, and the phrase "Energy Exchange" is certainly a very modern one.

However in a 1928 Reiki Article by the playwright and journalist Shou Matsui states: "I was introduced to Mr. Hayashi by a mutual acquaintance and I paid a large sum of money to learn this treatment method..."

Matsui was speaking of Shoden level - and if he had to pay what he [a quite affluent individual] considered " a large sum of money", it makes you wonder what Hayashi-sensei's fees for Okoden - never mind Shinpiden, might have been like.

Hayashi-sensei would certainly also have expected some form of payment for providing *treatment*.

And in Usui-sensei's day it was probably much the same. Students would have had to pay fees to attend Usui-sensei's Dojo, and no doubt payment for treatment would

also be expected - this was common practice during the time whether one was learning an artistic, therapeutic, or martial discipline.

Certainly, *other* healers and therapists in the Meiji and Taisho eras required payment from clients. Where treatment itself *was* provided without charge, this was often done simply as a way to attract new interest in the particular therapy - in the form of people who would then hopefully go on to pay for *training*.

Even those who practiced healing as members of the various 'New Religions' (and Traditional Religions for that matter) would expect 'donations' from those they had helped. Often, 'new religions' offered healing as a means of recruiting new 'devotees'. Many healers, religious or otherwise, travelled the country and while not charging for the healing *per se* would expect to be housed and fed by the person receiving healing, or by their family. ['Free' usually really means hidden 'strings attached']

And yes, Usui-sensei is indeed said to have provided *emergency* treatment for a great many people after the Kanto Earthquake, however, in Takata-sensei's version of the Reiki Story, Usui-sensei is also said to have realised that people don't always *appreciate* - and therefore do not reap the full benefits of - 'something-for-nothing' (see the story of the beggars).

Actually, while the *phrasing* is modern, the *original* thinking behind the concept of the 'energy exchange' is much older. And its not so much about *not being allowed* to give free treatments as about the fact that in doing so, the giver *is seen to be making the receiver ' beholden' to them* on some level.

It is all tied up with *giri*, *okaeshi*, and *kansha*.

Giri - in this usage, meaning obligation or indebtedness - is a big deal in Japanese culture. To be indebted to someone can in some circumstances carry with it a certain degree of shame - it can also simply weigh heavily on the mind, and as such be the cause of much stress (which *can* impact on the effectiveness of the treatment - possibly even *counteract* the therapeutic effects of a treatment).

Tied in with *giri* is *okaeshi*: meaning 'a gift in return'.

When someone gives one a gift (and this doesn't have to be a material or monetary gift - it can be advice, aid, assistance - treatment, etc) one can free oneself of obligation (and the psychological burden it can bring) by means of *okaeshi* - giving a gift in return.

[Often, if one wants something from a particular person, one will actually give the gift *before* asking for the thing.]

*Okaeshi* is the *true* origin of the 'energy exchange' (which technically doesn't have to be money - it can be a token item, payment in kind, performance of a service - something given to or done for the Reiki practitioner/Teacher - or for that matter something given to or done for a *third party* (with the Reiki practitioner/Teacher's approval) in line with the concept of 'Pay it forward'

By means of *okaeshi* / 'energy exchange' one can free oneself psychologically (also ethically/spiritually/karmically) of indebtedness to the practitioner, thus enabling one to fully accept the healing on all levels.



Okaeshi / 'energy exchange' is also a worldly means of expressing true *kansha* - gratitude: appreciation (and with it, *true respect*) for what one has received. "Just for today, be Grateful" - Takata sensei held this as the most important of the principles.

When we truly *appreciate / respect* the treatment/training received, this *also* opens us (psychologically, spiritually, etc) to receive the *full benefits* of the 'gift'.

*Kansha* - Gratitude is also the acknowledgement of ones indebtedness to another (*giri*), and on yet another level (to a certain extent, one of 'self-interest') the generation and expression of *true* heart-felt gratitude is also perceived as a means whereby one can free oneself from the burden of indebtedness - i.e. gratitude itself becomes another level of *okaeshi*.

[And from a purely therapeutic point of view, the generation of the emotion of gratitude is also widely accepted as being highly conducive to the healing processes.]

## General:

*On a web site I read about a Reiki Master who was meant to be trained by one of Mikao Usui's students still alive today who is known as the Soke Dai. It said Soke Dai is a Buddhist term for the current lineage bearer, tho someone else said it had to do with martial arts? This Reiki Master gives his lineage as Usui Mikao, Soke Dai, and then himself*

Well, I must say that I personally have previously never heard Soke-dai described as being a Buddhist title.

The term Soke-dai is indeed often used today in relation to Japanese martial arts; however, it seems, many westerners who practice Japanese martial arts are somewhat confused as to the precise meaning of the term, and thus use it incorrectly – interestingly enough, usually believing that it refers to the person considered to be the current head (or as you put it) 'lineage bearer' of a particular art.

In order to understand the term Soke-dai we first need to have an understanding of the term Soke (so-ke)

Traditionally, the term Soke (or more fully Sodenke) has been used denote the head of a family-(or guild-)based discipline, skill or art.[1].

The term Soke is used to refer to the original 'Founding Father'[2] of the discipline/skill/art, and is *also* to refer to those who have *succeeded* the founder as hereditary/generational 'Family Heads' of that tradition.

It has long been the Japanese way of things to 'keep it in the family' with the teaching and practice of specific arts being closely guarded, regulated and controlled by certain families or 'guilds'; and with the innermost 'secrets' of the art only being shared from father to son down through the generations.

When the Soke or Head died (or retired) it was common practice that he would be replaced by a blood-line descendant, who would in turn assume the role of 'Family Head'. On occasion, however (for example if the Soke had no male offspring) the Soke, might designate another blood-relative to take on the role of Head of Family after his retirement/death. More rarely, the Soke might designate a non blood-relative - an 'adopted' son, or even a son-in-law to succeed him.

This intended next-generation successor (be it offspring, other blood-relative, adoptive son or son-in-law) would have been trained to the highest level - a senior instructor in the given discipline/skill/art, and would have been made privy to the innermost secrets of the tradition by the Soke.

It was quite common that this intended 'inheritor of the lineage' of the given discipline/skill/art would be referred to by the title Soke-dai.

However, as stated, many westerners have misunderstood the meaning and significance of the term Soke-dai [and likewise, of the term Soke].[3] Many seem to think that the term Soke refers *solely* to the originator of the art, and that Soke-dai means something like "the originator's current successor" and that the individual will still be referred to as Soke-dai after the Soke has retired or died.

Yet this is not the case.

Now while Soke is a title for the founder of an art, as mentioned above, it is also a title for the generational Heads of that art.

And while Soke-dai is indeed a title (usually) held by the Soke's designated successor[4], this latter title does not actually refer *directly* to the individual's status as designated next-generation successor *per se*.

Rather it refers to their high-ranking status within the art.

As mentioned, the designated successor would be a senior instructor in the given discipline/skill/art, trained to the highest level; to all intents and purposes, an equal to the Soke in all but name.

The term Soke-dai actually speaks to this fact.

Soke-dai (which is actually a shortened version of: Soke-dairi) implies 'in place of the Soke' - a proxy – a stand-in for, or official representative of, the current Soke.

A Soke-dai is someone authorised to speak, act and teach on the *current* Soke's behalf when, for whatever reason, the Soke can not be present.

More directly put, Soke-dai is simply a 'Deputy Soke'.

Sometimes, within a large family/guild-based art, there may be several Soke-dai – several Deputies - to assist the Soke with day-to-day instruction and teaching, administrative duties, meetings, etc, etc.

Yet only one Soke-dai will be deemed 'heir apparent'.[5]

And when the *current* Soke eventually retires (or dies), this 'heir apparent' will (barring unforeseen circumstance) assume the position of Head of Family. From this point on they are *no longer* referred to as Soke-dai for they are no longer the Soke's *deputy*.

They now hold the title Soke, and as such will have one or more deputies (Soke-dai) of their own.

However, to distinguish them from previous Soke, their title will often be augmented with an ordinal number.

The Original Head of Family – the founder of the art – may be referred to (retrospectively) as Shodai Soke (i.e. 1<sup>st</sup> generation head), his immediate successor, as Nidai Soke (2<sup>nd</sup> generation head). The Nidai Soke's successor, as Sandai Soke (3<sup>rd</sup> generation head), and so on.

Thus I feel it rather confusing that the term Soke-dai would be used to indicate the current Head of a given art (at least, that is, by anyone familiar with traditional Japanese protocol in such matters)

The term Soke-dai really only has meaning where used in relation to Soke.

For there to be a Soke-dai or deputy, there would of necessity also have to be

someone currently fulfilling the role of Soke – someone for the Soke-dai to deputise for.

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NOTES:

[1] While traditionally used in relation to various other arts, the terms Soke and Soke-dai have only really been used in relation to *martial* arts for about 130 years or so.

[2] i.e. one who has independently developed their own unique art or discipline (or alternatively, has modified an existing art or discipline to the extent that it was thus recognised by the individual's peers as constituting a 'new' style)

[3] This is commonly the case with many martial artists who have had no direct contact with or experience of the particular art as actually practised in Japan.

[4] While the Soke is still *alive*

[5] And, while all the Soke-dai will have been highly trained, traditionally, the Soke will only share the innermost 'secrets' of the art with this one chosen successor

*I have read the account given by Mrs Takata of Usui's experience that led to him (re)discovering Reiki. Where can I find Usui's own first-hand description of the experience?*

Unfortunately there does not seem to be any 'first-hand' description .

As far as we can tell, Usui-sensei did not commit his experience to the written word in any detail (the best we get is in the Usui Reiki Ryoho Hikkei where Usui-sensei states that he experienced "a great Reiki" over his head. [Of course, as to just precisely what Usui-sensei's understanding of the term 'reiki' was, we cannot be certain - and unfortunately we cannot be certain if the words are indeed even truly Usui-sensei's at all])

Concerning his experience on Kurama Yama, we really only have second-hand accounts, and these vary from source to source - and are, in certain cases, blatantly "framed" in an attempt to support the given individual's (unsubstantiated) claims that Usui-sensei belonged to this or that specific spiritual tradition

*Was Chujiro Hayashi a Christian, I thought it was outlawed in Japan?*

Christianity had indeed been outlawed in Japan since the early 17th century, however in 1873, the ban was formally lifted.

Though Christianity itself had never been wiped out. Prior to the ban, a great many Japanese had converted to Roman Catholicism, and, over the 150 or so years it remained in place, many Japanese families continued to practice their Christian faith, in secret - and on pain of death. [During this period, it is estimated that somewhere in the region of 40,000 *senpuku kirishitan* ("underground Christians") were discovered and executed.]

As to whether or not Chujiro Hayashi was a Christian, we just don't have any clear hard evidence. Though it is quite possible that he was.

With the lifting of the ban on Christianity surviving *senpuku kirishitan* could once more practice their Roman Catholic faith openly; and during the Meiji and Taisho eras, a great many other Japanese became Christian - mainly Methodist, Congregationalist and other 'protestant' denominations. There was also a home-

grown 'no-church' movement - an attempt to develop a Japanese Christianity not linked to or under the authority of western European/American churches.

*I contacted a Reiki Teacher about doing my level three, but this person wants to do an assessment of my knowledge and practical abilities before he will consider attuning me to level three. Why is this?*

As teachers and facilitators we have a duty to ensure - insofar as we can - that the student is ready to move on to the next level - whether it is from level one to two\*, or from level two to three.

In traditional Japanese practice, 'master' level training in any art was something undertaken in the form of an apprenticeship - an approach which affords the teacher vast scope for monitoring and assessing the ongoing development and competence of the student.

[It is a traditional approach that only when a student is perceived to have integrated a given element of a teaching - and 'run with it' as far as they can - that the next element is presented to them.]

However, (while some of us still insist on a more traditional apprenticeship-style format for sharing level 3 training,) with today's 'fast food'-style training methods - i.e. people being certified as 'masters' after a weekend's (or sometimes only a single day's) training, most Reiki teachers do not have the opportunities for *ongoing* assessment afforded by the apprenticeship approach. And so, some other more structured, 'acute' form of assessment is, in my opinion, crucial.

The Teacher must be able to assess the needs of the student, in order that he or she can 'fill in the gaps' which may exist in the student's training.

After all, in Reiki Ryoho we have an ethical duty of care - not *just* to those who come to us for *treatment*, but also, to those who come to us for *training*.

For a teacher to confer certification for a particular level of Reiki on a student without ensuring that the student has gained the relevant understandings / appropriate degree of competence in practice, etc. for that level (as defined within the particular lineage/Reiki style) is to dishonour the student, to dishonour the traditions of Reiki, and also, to dishonour themselves as a teacher.

[\*In the 'Usui Reiki Ryoho Hikkei', in response to the Question: "How can I receive the second degree ...."? Usui-sensei answers: ".....We will give okuden [second degree] to enthusiastic shoden students who bring good results, are of good character, and behave properly." From this we can see that a student had to be considered to have developed to a certain point, and be seen to act ethically - before being permitted to move on to even the second, let alone third, level of training]

*In your Reiki Timeline you say "Cognisant of the likely entry of Japan into what we now designate W.W.II, and of the moral and ethical conflict between resuming military duty and his Reiki values, Hayashi Sensei ... committed seppuku (suicide)". But surely as a doctor his job would have been to save lives - to heal the wounded?*

Indeed. Save them, and patch them up - so that a great many could then go back to battle and kill people...

Also, we must remember that as well as being a Doctor, Hayashi-sensei had been a Commander in the Imperial Navy [ - up to the time of his death, he was *still* a Commander in the Naval Reserve].

He had previously been Director of Ominato Port Defense Station - and as a Commander, even in a defensive posting (as would probably be offered yet again to the 59/60 year-old Reserve officer), in his eyes, he would have been responsible for the deaths (caused by those under his command) of *all* Naval and Airbourne forces attacking their position...

*I am thinking about doing a Reiki course, but I've read that new students go through this 21 day period of automatic detox, and that it can be unpleasant depending how out of balance your system is. This worries me.*

The whole '21 day cleanse' is something that has ascended into the realms of 'Reiki Myth' and has been blown out of all proportion.

The Reiki initiation is primarily about conferring/awakening therapeutic ability, and as a result, it *may* trigger automatic and often intense self healing processes ['all healing is self-healing'] in the student.

However, there is *no* reason for *anyone* to experience such unpleasant abreactive phenomena

A sustained course of Reiki treatments *prior* to Initiation will rebalance the students system in a more leisurely and less acute manner than occurs in those who undergo initiation while in an imbalanced / unwell state.

*How do you pronounce the founder of Reiki's name: Mikao Usui?*

Mikao = ME-COW [emphasis on the second syllable]

Usui = OO-Su-E [emphasis on the second and third syllables] 'OO' rhymes with 'You'.

The 'u' in the second syllable is almost silent.

[This is a rough approximation - the best way to learn pronunciation is of course to hear someone else saying the words]

Also, in Japanese you would put the surname first:

OO-Su-E ME-COW

*What is the difference between being a Reiki Master and a Reiki Grand Master, and how do you become a Grand Master?*

Though many would try to convince you otherwise, there is no such thing as a 'Reiki Grand Master'.

The term Reiki 'Grand Master' is something that came into use within Reiki Alliance circles, after Takata-sensei's death.

It was initially used to denote the person considered to be Takata-sensei's successor (i.e. her granddaughter, Phyllis Furumoto) - the person recognised as being 'in charge' of Usui Shiki Ryoho.

For some, there was an inference that the 'Grand Master' had received something 'more' from Takata-sensei than the other masters (deeper 'lineage' secrets or such like)

Today, in Alliance circles, there are two people sharing the 'office' of Grand Master.

I have also seen some online Reiki practitioners who claim to be 'Grand Master' of this or that newly created 'brand' of Reiki. But this is purely an ego thing.

Remember, the term 'master' is actually a poor translation of the Japanese word 'sensei'. 'Teacher' or 'instructor' would be a far better translation.

And just as the term 'Reiki Grand Master' is an ego thing, so - unfortunately - in many cases, the term 'Reiki Master' is also used in an ego-related sense.

There are no 'Grand Masters', and IMO, in the final analysis, neither are there any 'Reiki Masters' - only those who have been 'Mastered-by-Reiki'

### *Is Reiki really derived from Japanese Esoteric Buddhism?*

It is indeed still a popular theme with *some* Reiki folk that Reiki originated in Mikkyo (Esoteric Japanese Buddhist) tradition. However there is no real evidence of this, and to be honest, most of those folk who would have us believe the theory, seem to have little understanding of what Mikkyo itself *really* entails.

One of the primary things that initially led folk to make a link between Reiki and Mikkyo is the fact that Kurama Yama, where Usui Sensei had his Reiki experience was, for several hundred years, strongly connected with the traditions of Mikkyo.

But to jump to the conclusion that because of this association, Reiki must therefore be *derived* from Mikkyo practice is, to my mind, simply clutching at straws. We shouldn't read too much into it. There is no real evidence. {As it is, Esoteric Japanese Buddhism has its own tradition of healing - *kaji* - and this bears no similarity to Reiki.]

While it is of course possible that Reiki - while not necessarily *derived* from Mikkyo practice - may have still picked up subtle *influences* from Mikkyo tradition, I am currently looking into the likelihood that if anything, rather than direct Mikkyo Buddhist links, Reiki has more in common with other pre-existent *secular therapeutic practices* such the various 'te-ate' or hand-healing practices used by independent healers, etc; and even with the esoteric practices of *Shinto-based* sects or 'new religions'.

Reiki (at least what we *currently* understand by the term Reiki) seems to have a lot directly in common with the Edo-period practice of *seiki-jutsu* / *seiki-te-ate* - which in the Taisho era underwent a spot of 'rebranding' and modernisation and re-emerged as: *seiki ryoho* (Vital Life Force Healing Method)

I still cannot help but feel that much of the so-called 'original Reiki' is simply re-imported Usui Shiki Ryoho ("Western Reiki") - reworked & 're-Buddhafied' - a

revisionist reinvention with about as much historical validity as 'western' Reiki styles claiming Tibetan, Egyptian or Venusian origin...

I have seen little evidence to support the claims that what is *now* being presented as 'Japanese Reiki' is a *separate* stream of Reiki that has survived / evolved independently of Western Reiki. Most present-day 'Japanese' styles of Reiki are in fact based directly on Usui Shiki Ryoho which was initially reintroduced to Japan in the 1980's in the format most commonly now referred to as 'The Radiance Technique'.

For that matter, certainly many of the 'original' practices / techniques common to various present-day Japanese styles - the very things that supposedly make Japanese Reiki 'original' - have actually been 'borrowed' from other therapies, and - in my opinion - have only been introduced into Japanese Reiki comparatively recently.

*I read somewhere that Master Usui had a brother and sister, and also children of his own?*

Usui-sensei married Sadako Suzuki and they had a son: Fuji (1908-1946), and a daughter: Toshiko (1913-1935). I believe Toshiko died without offspring; however Fuji, who was apparently a teacher for a time at Tokyo University (though this has yet to be varified) is said to have married and had a family. Mieko Mitsui, the person hailed as being responsible for the rekindling an interest in Reiki in Japan, claimed to have tracked down members of Fuji's family but said they refused to talk to her.

It is also claimed that Usui-sensei had an older (?) sister, Tsuru, and not one but two brothers: Kuniji, who it is said was a policeman in Gifu prefecture (the area where Usui-sensei was born), and Sanyai - apparently a doctor with a practice either in, or somewhere near, Tokyo.

*Is the expression "Usui Shiki Reiki" a proper one? If 'Shiki' means method or system and 'Ryoho' healing method or therapy, why use both these words together: Usui Method Healing Method - why say it twice?*

Its really all down to subtleties of language:  
here, *shiki* (which is essentially a suffix to 'Usui') can also mean a 'form of expression' or a 'style'  
And as you say, *ryoho* can be read as 'therapy' (a *ryohoshi* is a therapist)  
Thus, *Usui Shiki Ryoho* can be read as: 'Usui-style Therapy'  
So it's not really a case of saying the same thing twice.

*In Frank A Petter's book the Reiki Fire he mentions that Chujiro Hayashi died in 1941, I thought it was 1940?*

Possibly just a 'typo'. We already knew from Takata-sensei - who was actually present at Hayashi-sensei's *seppuku* (suicide) - that the year was indeed 1940. [Thinking about it, there are several 'confusions' in the Reiki Fire book, for example, Petter also claims Usui-sensei's first name was not Mikao, but Mikaomi, that he was born in 1862 (it was actually 1865), that he 'rediscovered' Reiki in the late 19th Century (we know it was in the early 20th century). Other 'confusions' include Petter's



claims that the temple at Mt Kurama is part of the mikkyo sect (it isn't) and that Mikkyo has its roots in Tibetan Buddhism (it doesn't)...]

*Is it true that there's an asteroid named Reiki?*

Yes indeed. An asteroid discovered on November 14, 1990 by Japanese astronomers Shun-ei Izumikawa & O-samu Muramatsu is designated: (5239) Reiki.

However it is not named after 'Usui Reiki'.

(5239) Reiki is named in honour of a woman: Reiki Kushida - another Japanese astronomer; and the *kanji* used to write her name are *not* the same as those used to write Reiki - *a la* Usui.

*Some people say Reiki was created by Dr Usui, but other people say it was an ancient system of channeled healing?*

IMO, while there are indeed many ancient healing systems using channeled energy, and the term *Reiki* had actually been used in a healing context some years before it became associated with Usui-sensei's healing method, it is certainly the case that the system *stemming from* Usui-sensei - the system we know as 'Reiki' or 'Reiki Ryoho' - with its own particular physical, symbolic and spiritual protocols, is a creation of the early 20thC.

The *inspiration* for Usui Reiki Ryoho may indeed have come from pre-existent sources, but the system *itself* is less than a century old.

*My teacher told me that Reiki comes from a form of shamanism combined with Shinto magic and that the symbols and their jumon all come specifically from Tantric Buddhism, is this true?*

This is a rather nice, vague, statement, isn't it? I myself have heard something very similar from a couple of sources, but when I questioned them as to just *which* form of shamanism and which *particular* form of Shinto magical practice they were referring to, neither seemed to have the slightest idea.

As to the symbols and *jumon*: there is indeed a (loose) Buddhist connection - well at least to 3 of the 4 symbols - however, in the case of two out of these three, it is not specifically a *Tantric* Buddhist connection.

The phrase: Dai Ko Myo was used as a euphemism for Enlightenment in Japanese Buddhism *before* Tantric Buddhism came to Japan from China.

The 'Nen Shingon' (HSZSN) is also a *general* (rather than specifically *Tantric*) Buddhist 'mindfulness reminder' (though also interestingly used as part of some ninja magic *jumon*-spells!!)

It is generally accepted that the SHK symbol is probably derived from a *shuji*-character used as the 'spiritual emblem' of both the buddha Amida and the

bodhisatva Senju Kanzeon - this 'spiritual emblem' is indeed a *Tantric* Buddhist symbol.

But then we come to the CKR. A couple of people have claimed it is a Tantric Buddhist symbol. [One, for example, claims he has seen it inscribed on statues of the Buddhist deity, Fudo Myo-o, though in my researches I have not found a single Fudo statue or image showing it] - many have passed on this claim without any attempt to verify it (as with many other 'new history' claims regarding Reiki).

In fact in all my researches of Buddhist imagery - be it in the Mikkyo (Japanese Tantric Buddhist) traditions or otherwise - while I have come across many *spiral* motifs, I have not seen anything approximating the actual CKR symbol - nor, for that matter, a symbol from which it can clearly be seen to have been derived.

*Isn't Reiki just another name for Chi or Ki, I mean, they are all spiritual energy, right?*

*Chi* is not just *Spiritual* energy. *Chi* is a wideranging and inclusive term for energy of varying degrees of 'coarseness' and 'subtleness' - from the more 'tangible' energies including 'bio-energy' - right through to the 'cosmic' or most 'spiritual' end of the spectrum. [The original ideogram or *kanji* for *chi* implies steam rising from a covered pot of rice cooking over a fire, with the lid of the pot being lifted by the steam - hence its basic meaning: energy or motive force.]

The term *Reiki*, on the other hand, refers to a (or possibly the *most*) highly refined form of *chi* which can be accessed by a living being's energy-system.

And while the *-ki* part of *Rei-ki* is the Japanese equivalent of *chi*, there are some subtle differences between the Chinese understanding of *chi* and the Japanese understanding of *ki*.

In isolation, *ki* is indeed 'energy' (but not *just* 'energy' - it *also* loosely translates as Intent, Attitude, Mood, Emotion, Spirit (in the sense of 'Spiritedness'/Fiestiness), Feelings, Heart, Mind, Disposition, Character/Nature, Temperament; the very essence of a thing); but in combination with other *kanji* - *ki* can refer not only to 'energy' itself but also to the *effect of energy being expended* - *the effect* of energy in action.

In the case of *Rei-ki*, rather than referring to 'Spiritual energy' itself, this deeper meaning would imply: 'the effect of Spiritual Energy in action' [Hence, the reason many people are now beginning to translate 'Reiki' as something along the lines of 'Influence of the Spirit'.]

*At the beginning of the Reiki Principles, when it says 'The Secret Method To Invite Happiness'; what does the 'Secret' part mean?*

I feel that its all a matter of how literally we translate: Shoufuku no hihou.

We can rephrase 'The Secret Method To Invite Happiness' as something like 'The Secret to Being Happy'. I feel the Principles themselves are the 'secret method'. Its a bit like that book title: "The Seven Secrets of Success" - the 'secrets' are 'keys' or *strategies* to apply to life.

So too, in just the same way the Principles are 'secrets' - strategies to apply to life.

Essentially, for me, its saying: "Look - this is the Secret to Being Happy - and the key to Spiritual Healing: Just for today, do not get angry... etc, etc..."

*Is it true that Dr Usui found Reiki while he was doing something called Lotus Repentance meditation?*

IMO, too much is made of the possible (and I repeat POSSIBLE) link between the Lotus Repentance Ritual - a Tendai Buddhist practice - and Usui Sensei's meditation.

To the best of my knowledge, the Lotus Repentance Ritual is a rite practiced primarily at Hiei Yama, it was not commonly performed at Kurama Yama. Even if it was performed at Kurama, it seems to be primarily a Priestly practice - just because he was Tendai, doesn't mean Usui was a priest. And just because he meditated on a mountain that was, during his lifetime, under Tendai control, doesn't necessarily mean he was even participating in a Tendai rite.

Although the main Temple complex was under Tendai rule, as a Sacred Mountain, Kurama Yama was frequented by members of many different sects.

It was/is also of course sacred to followers of Shinto (- let's not forget that 'Mao-son' - one part of the trinity collectively referred to as Sonten by the independent Religion that took over Kurama after WWII - is in fact a *Kami*, not a Buddha or Bodhisatva)

Kurama also holds significance for several of the 'new religions' which were in existence in Usui-sensei's day (eg: the *Oomoto-kyo* - with whom many claim Usui-sensei was possibly connected).

And like many other sacred places, Kurama was no doubt frequented by numerous 'independent' shamanic and mystic devotees, practicing many and varied meditative austerities. Usui Sensei's meditation could have been something from any of a number of traditions.

Also, the practice of 21-day meditation is not solely a Buddhist (let alone specifically Tendai) one. Even amongst the founders of other modern-day healing traditions and 'new religions' in Japan, similar themes can be found.

For example, the experience of Hase Yoshio, founder of the healing *sect Reiha no Hikari Kyôkai*:

Having been sickly since childhood, Hase Yoshio was suffering from tuberculosis, pleurisy, and after surgery for an intestinal condition, his doctor had told him he was unlikely to survive more than a month.

In the time he had left, he decided go on a religious quest.

Hase climbed to the summit of Gokenzan Yama, where, he sequestered himself in a small hut.

*Lining up twenty-one stones to count the days, he sat in perpetual meditation, discarding one of the stones each day.*

*The day came when there was only a single stone remaining, and on this day, Hase experienced a spiritual phenomenon. He became aware of the voice of god, and the voice said, "Be the messenger of god and walk the path of god." As the voice spoke to him, Hase was transfixed - unable to move - as if he were tied down; and suddenly, all the terrible pain that had crippled him for so long mysteriously dissipated. And in time his health recovered fully....*

*I have heard that Mikao Usui's '5 Principles' were endorsed by the Emperor Meiji, is there any actual evidence of this?*

The Meiji Emperor died in 1912. Now, while he is revered by many Japanese people as being a great psychic, his psychic/precognitive powers must have indeed been truly amazing if he endorsed the *gokai* (5 Principles), as - according to the 'new' history of Reiki - Usui Sensei is said to have only drafted his *gokai* in or around April 1921.

However, it seems that an almost identical set of principles were presented in a 1915 edition of a book entitled *Kenzen no Genri* (Health Principles)

*On a website about Raku Kei Reiki they showed something called Kanji Hand Positions. I thought kanji was the name for the characters used to write Japanese, so why are the Hand Positions called Kanji?*

*Kanji* is indeed the name for the Chinese characters used in writing Japanese.

The 'kanji hand positions' (sometimes called 'kanji mudras') used in Raku Kei Reiki are supposed to be Tibetan meditative gestures. However, while Tibetan Buddhism does make use of mudras, the specific ones used in Raku Kei are actually drawn from a set of nine mudras used in Japanese Ninja mystical practice.

A handout provided by many Raku Kei Teachers shows photos - actually taken from a book on Ninjitsu - of a young woman performing the so-called 'kanji mudras'.

In another Ninjitsu book by the same author, under sections titled "1st Kanji/Mudra", "2nd Kanji/Mudra", "3rd Kanji/Mudra", etc, not only is each *mudra* described, but there is also a depiction of a specific *kanji* character to be drawn in the air while performing each mudra.

It seems that "Kanji/Mudra" (indicating a kanji *and* a mudra) was changed to the subtly different "Kanji Mudra" (and later, Kanji Hand Position).

Whether this was intentional or was a misremembrance of what had been read in the Ninjitsu book, is unclear.

*Is Reiki Jutsu a particular style of Reiki or just a term for Reiki in general - in my Japanese dictionary it says jutsu means art - so Reiki Jutsu is Reiki Art or Art of Reiki, am I right?*

Yes - the term Reiki Jutsu does translate as 'Art of Reiki', however Reiki Jutsu is actually the name of a martial art (developed by Karate Instructor Andy Wright) which combines elements of *Reiki*, Qi Gung, Shotokan Karate & Ju *Jutsu*!

## Reiki Symbols:

*Is it true that Mrs Takata taught different versions of the symbols to different students?*

Actually there is very little evidence to support this (to all intents and purposes it is something that falls in the category of 'Reiki Myth')

At the first meeting of the majority of Reiki masters - in Hawaii in April 1982 - it emerged that Takata-Sensei had taught each master somewhat differently (- i.e. she had adapted her *approach* slightly with each student, as any good teacher would)

It also emerged that a couple of the students were 'writing' the symbols ever-so-slightly differently from most of the others [Takata-sensei frequently spoke of 'writing' rather than 'drawing' symbols]

As a result, some folks later claimed that Takata-sensei had shown different students very different versions of the symbols.

However, it is generally accepted that the *minor* differences which actually existed were primarily due to mis-rememberings on the part of the *students* (generally, Takata-sensei did not allow students to keep copies of the symbols) .

While later, *endless* different versions of the original symbols began to appear, [due to students *intentionally* modifying symbols and their meanings/significance as taught by Takata-sensei, to suit their *own* purposes], originally, the *primary* differences seemed to be in the way a couple of the students wrote HSZSN (which is of course for many folk the most difficult symbol to master)

It also emerged that there were what *seemed* to be two or three slightly different versions of the DKM.

However, it must be remembered that these two 'symbols' DKM and HSZSN are in fact phrases written in Japanese kanji and just as there are several ways of writing words/phrases in the 'roman' (English) alphabet, eg: Block Capital and lower-case letters of numerous different 'font' styles, and also cursive /handwriting script - with most individuals having their own style - so too with Japanese writing.

Essentially there are four main Japanese writing styles, and if anything, the 'different' versions of the DKM are due to nothing more than the phrase being written in a couple of different styles....

*What can you tell me about the symbol "tamarasha"? I heard it is a fifth symbol of reiki used for grounding someone?*

Tamarasha is part of Reiki as practiced by SOME people, but it was not part of any style of Reiki prior to the mid 1980's.

You will find that people incorporate all manner of symbols, beliefs, practices from totally unrelated healing disciplines, spiritual beliefs and other 'New Age' interests into their personal Reiki practice - unfortunately many folk also present these 'add-ons' as actually being part of the system as devised and taught by Usui-sensei. Tamarasha is actually the central symbol in a modern system of symbol-healing called Kofutu.

The symbol was 'channeled' by Kofutu's founder, Frank Homan. According to Frank, Tamarasha is the name of an 'Ascended Master' he works with.

*Since I received my attunements, my Reiki master has begun to use a new symbol in place of one of the symbols I was attuned with, and has requested that we all use the new symbol when attuning students of our own. Do I need to get re-attuned with the new symbol in order to be able to use it?*

Personally, I feel that you have to have experienced a symbol (via attunement) before you can *really* use it effectively - and especially so, if you wish to use it to attune others. It doesn't matter even if the new symbol is only slightly different to the one you were actually attuned with, the differences may be very subtle, but there will be a difference.

*I have been taught that each Reiki symbol has its own colour and should be visualised in that colour?*

While several people *do* teach that each of the four symbols has its *own* colour, in my research I have not found any suggestion that, originally, the symbols were ever associated *individually* with specific colours.

This *supposed* colour-association seems to be yet another addition to the never-ending list of Western, New-Age 'add-ons' - elements which have been *adopted-in* to Reiki since the passing of Takata-sensei. (So much of what is today presented as Usui Shiki Ryoho was in fact never taught by Takata-sensei herself.)

To make matters worse, such adulterated forms of Reiki healing practice have also been imported into Japan, and many of these western add-ons have managed to find their way into various forms of 'Japanese' Reiki, where they are being passed on to students as though they had always been part of native Japanese practice.

In many instances where people currently allot colours to the symbols, it has a connection with the 'non-traditional' meanings/associations these people (or *their* teachers) have overlaid on the symbols - e.g. the erroneous belief that CKR is somehow connected with the Earth/the elemental earth energy, often leads folk to connect it with the colour green; and so on.

In traditional Japanese practice (whether Buddhist, Shinto or Omyodo[Taoist]-influenced), symbols the kind used in Usui Reiki Ryoho would normally *all* be visualised in either gold or pure, colourless, bright light.

*In specific cases, such symbols might be visualised in silver, or for 'talismanic' purposes, in red (many protective and healing amulets are written in red ink on yellow paper, and at a certain level, the Usui Reiki symbols can be placed on a par with such protective devices). It would be rare for such symbols to have their own individual colours.*

*Should we use all three second-degree symbols together when doing treatments, or just use certain ones?*

Well (IMO) that would depend on two things: 1, which form of Reiki you have been attuned/trained in; & 2, what you happen to be doing at the time.

For example in 'pure' Usui Shiki Ryoho:

if you are giving a distance Reiki treatment, then you use the HSZSN to connect to the person, followed by the CKR (you would also use SHK if doing a 'habit' treatment)

If you are not working at a distance you don't use the HSZSN. Period.

If you are treating an ache, a very minor cut, or other 'simple' physical injury, while you may use the CKR, you probably wouldn't need the SHK

SHK can come into the equation when there is psychological-emotional shock/trauma (however minor) connected with the physical injury etc. (though perhaps there may actually be some level of emotional shock/trauma accompanying 'simple' physical injuries - a paper cut for example!)

If the client has had a fall, been in an accident, etc, etc, then they would almost certainly be suffering from associated emotional shock/trauma (as well as from the physiological shock /trauma), so you could use SHK as well as the CKR.

This would also help prevent the build-up of what is often referred to as 'emotional body-armour' around the area of injury, and will contribute greatly to the self-healing process. SHK can also be used to release-clear pre-existent 'emotional body-armour' associated with old injuries which although technically healed, are still causing the client discomfort or other problems.

Also, if you are treating a purely stress-related problem of any kind where there is no physical injury, etc. you would use SHK.

You would use SHK and CKR together in behavioural modification treatments - be it Takata sensei's version of the technique or the 'Japanese' version: Seiheki chiryo-ho

*Is it true some Japanese warriors used the Reiki DKM as a sign of protection when entering unfamiliar buildings, and some modern-day Japanese businessmen still do this when going to important business deals?*

Yes - and no.

There is indeed a common practice [handed down from the or warriors of old] in which one uses 'Dai Ko Myo' as a form of protection, not *just* on entering buildings, but in any situation where you feel you need protection or an advantage (including in tactical military situations or even business negotiations).

However, this use of 'Dai Ko Myo' has *no* direct Reiki connection.

'Dai Ko Myo' in this context (as used as a sign of protection) should *not* be confused with the *symbol* DKM as used in Reiki Ryoho.

It predates the origination of Usui-sensei's system by several centuries.

As mentioned elsewhere in this site, 'Dai Ko Myo', as distinct from its significance as a Reiki 'symbol', has symbolic importance in Japanese Buddhism. It can be seen to represent great 'Enlightened Nature' - Spiritual Radiance - and by extension, is considered by many to be a strong protective force, manifesting as 'great bright light' (or 'great shining light')\*

The practice employed by various warriors and others, involved the use of the *phrase* 'dai ko myo' – *not* in the sense of the Reiki *symbol*, but rather in the sense of a broader, *more commonly used* meaning of these words.

This protective practice involves visualising yourself surrounded by an intense protective aura of 'great bright light' ['Dai Ko Myo'] (- or often 'White Light': *Hakko* - so the practice could also be spoken of as visualising the 'dai hakko myo' rather than the 'dai ko myo').

There is of course a similar practice commonly to be found in western spiritual/psychic traditions.

The term Dai Ko Myo has also often been used by the 'warrior priests' known as Yamabushi (or Yamafushi), to refer to yet another, far more esoteric, Buddhist symbol - one of great importance - though again, *not* one with Reiki-significance: Dai Ko Myo or the 'Great Ko Myo' is another name for the 'Komyo Shingon\*\*' - the 'Mantra of Light' (or, Enlightenment Mantra) - which, chanted or visualised, is considered to be a powerful charm of protection as it is believed to encompass the entire power of the Supreme Buddha Dainichi.

Yamabushi (and many others) have used the visualisation of the complex *written form* of this mantra as a form of protection, and illumination.

However, it must be understood that, while the *name* dai ko-myō can be applied to the Mantra of Light - the *written form* of this Mantra is *not* the three kanji familiar to Reiki practitioners as the Reiki DKM.

The Mantra itself *does not* even include the words 'dai ko myo'.

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\*In general usage, the Japanese words 'dai', 'ko', and 'myo' simply mean a great or intensely bright light - any bright light. (The phrase Dai Ko Myo has often appeared on advertizing for Flashlights!)

\*\*Shingon in this context does not refer to the Shingon sect of Buddhism, but simply means 'true word'(i.e mantra)

Sometimes the Ko-myō Shingon is also referred to by the name Dai Ko-myō Shingon (Great Mantra of 'Light')

*In Diane Stein's book Essential Reiki she teaches something called the non-traditional dai ko mio symbol. Where does this come from?*

This 'non-traditional' symbol is actually a version of a symbol known as Dumo, which has been modified to look more like the 'mystic spiral' found in western 'neo-pagan' traditions.

The symbol Dumo (aka: the Tibetan Master Symbol) comes from Raku Kei - a Reiki style created by Arthur Robertson who claimed (though there has never been any proof) that Reiki originated in Tibet.

*Why should we have to learn to say the symbol names or mantras in Japanese? Why not just use the English translation? Same question about the actual distant and*



*master symbols - aren't they just the names drawn in Japanese writing? So why not just write the English words instead. It would be much easier.*

Well, for a start, learning how to pronounce the Japanese phrases, and draw the stylised kanji that make up these two symbols, is a basic sign of *commitment* on the student's part - it shows a *willingness to make an effort* to learn...

It is also a useful exercise in Mindfulness: focussing the attention

Then there is a matter of showing *respect*, and *gratitude*:

- taking the time to learn (and it really doesn't take that long) the correct form of the symbols and the pronunciation of their names/*jumon* is one of the many ways in which we honour the Gift that is Reiki.

And while we certainly know the English translation of the kanji used as symbols 3 and 4 - perhaps it says something about the inherent *spiritual* importance of symbols per se, that, on bringing Reiki to an *English*-speaking society, Takata-sensei translated *everything* concerning Reiki into English - except for the word 'Reiki' itself, and the Symbols: their *forms* and *names*.

*I was taught [Ishikuro/Robertson lineage] that if you use the master symbol on a client during treatment this 'implies you accept full responsibility for their healing'?" Why is this?*

If I recall correctly, the original thinking was that the Master symbol was considered purely as an initiatorial symbol, so in attempting to use it on a 'client' in a healing context, you would in fact be 'passing attunement' to them.

From the Tibetan teachings brought in by Arthur Robertson who (- with input from Iris Ishikuro) created Raku Kei Reiki, came the understanding of the Teacher's karmic responsibility for their student (which, in using the DKM on them, the 'client' had now - albeit unintentionally - become).

In just about every initiatorial tradition I am aware of, it is a very serious matter for a teacher to take on a student. A student is said to be (for want of a better term) 'tied' to the teacher/master - through a karmic bond.

Whether in Tibetan Vajra tradition, or in the Mikkyo traditions of Shingon and Tendai, the teacher/master (Mikkyo: Ajari) is *karmically responsible* for the student *until* the student becomes a 'master' in their own right and takes on the responsibility for the 'karma' in relation to the teachings they are being empowered with/into.

*Being karmically responsible for the student ('client') would also include responsibility for their healing.*

*Do the symbols have to be imprinted in the chakras for the practitioner to be able to use them to intensify the healing produced by the Reiki energy?*

The whole concept of chakras is really alien to Japanese healing practices (one -or more - of Takata sensei's students, it seems, introduced the chakra system into Reiki probably in the late 70's as a frame of reference for New-Age oriented westerners).

*"...use them to intensify the healing produced by the Reiki energy?"*

Perhaps we in the west think too much about Reiki in terms of 'energy' (something that we have re-imported back into Japan)

Reiki is - to my mind - more 'Spiritual Phenomenon' than 'Energy'.

Rather than seeing it that healing is 'intensified' by the symbols - it might be better to say that the symbols bring focus ( -mindfulness) to the whole 'Process of Sharing' that is the Reiki Experience.

To infer that symbols are 'used to intensify the healing produced', seems to me to suggest that healing is something that the practitioner 'does' to the client.

When a Reiki Practitioner and a Client enter into the Sharing Process that is the Reiki Experience, the Practitioner is simply the Facilitator for the Experience, Reiki is the Catalyst, the Client themselves is the Healer....

*I was shown an attunement where the Reiki Master drew symbols on the student's middle fingers. Is this a standard practice?*

It is currently believed by many researchers that Reiki was strongly influenced by elements of Mikkyo (esoteric) Japanese Buddhist practice.

Mikkyo speaks of a Buddhist elemental system known as 'godai': the 'Five Elements' (-not to be confused with the Chinese Five Elements system).

Everything in the universe is perceived to be a manifestation of five great elemental 'building blocks' - referred to as: Earth, Water, Fire, Wind/Air, and Void/Sky/Ether.

Earth gives substance; Water holds things together; Fire heats or transforms; Wind/Air is responsible for movement; & Void/Sky/Ether connects with the creative source.

In the godai system, the middle finger is seen to be directly connected with 'ka' - elemental Fire - and in particular, with heat in the body

Picking up on this point, *some* Reiki practitioners believe that attuning the middle finger directly will help increase 'ka' - the fire element, and with, it increase the 'hot hands' sensation which is considered the sure sign that you have actually 'got' the attunement.

However godai is all about a *balanced* interplay of all 5 elements - too much Fire can increase the passions - but also increases aggression and anger...

*(so ideally, if people are working with finger-tip attunements, they should attune all the fingers [and thumb] to maintain the dynamic balance)*

*I am looking to make Buddhist connection to Reiki. In your opinion do the Reiki symbols link to these Buddhas: CKR for Dei Seichi Bosatsu, SHK for Monju Bosatsu, HSZSN for Ashuku Nyorai, DKM for Amida Nyorai ?*

*Why do you feel the need to link the Reiki symbols to individual Buddhist Deities?*

CHR is *not* a Buddhist Symbol - it is possibly of Shinto origin. On one level, it may be seen an invocation of the Blessings of the Kami [- *choku rei* = 'Spirit Direct from God']

SHK is the *only* Reiki Symbol with any *direct* connection to an *emblem* of a particular Buddha. SHK is based on the *shuji* symbol "kiriku".

*Kiriku* is used in Japanese Buddhism to symbolise Amida Butsu - Buddha of Compassion. (and also to symbolise the bodhisattva, Senju Kanzeon).

To draw the *kiriku* is - for followers of either of these two Deities - to invoke their power/Blessing.

*But*, this does *not* mean that, *in Reiki symbolism*, SHK necessarily has any *direct* connection with *either* Amida *or* Senju Kanzeon.

HSZSN is not a 'symbol' per se - it is actually a *mantra* reminding us of the need for Mindfulness in ones undertakings - not a symbol of a *specific* Buddhist Deity (though 'Mindfulness' is the 7th step in the Noble 8-Fold Path of Buddhism.)

And as for DKM, in a Buddhist sense, it signifies the great Komyo -'Enlightened Nature' or 'the Radiant Light of Wisdom' - the Radiance of a Deity - not of one *specific* Deity, but *any* expression of deity - be it in the form of a Buddha, Bodhisattva, 'Vidyaraja', etc. ( -even a Shinto *kami* for that matter)

*My Reiki master taught me that the CKR power symbol should be drawn clockwise to focus the energy, but now I have been told by another teacher that this is a mirror image of the original CKR symbol - and also that one version is for putting energy in and the other for drawing energy out?*

Over the years since Takata-sensei's passing there have been many new meanings and associations added to the four Usui Reiki symbols (and also, it seems, elements of the original meanings have often been removed or obscured - albeit unwittingly). In addition to this, several people have made changes to the actual *forms* of the symbols themselves [presumably in an attempt to make them 'fit' with their own personal views & perceptions]

It was not till the 1980's (after the death of Takata-sensei) that mirror-image versions of the *choku rei* started appearing.

Up to this time there was only *one* *choku rei* - and it was always drawn (from the top): from *left* to right, then the vertical line down, and then an ANTIClockwise spiral inwards to the centre.

There was no concept of drawing *choku rei* one way to 'put in' energy and drawing a reversed or mirror-image version to 'draw out energy' (for the simple reason that this was not what the symbol was about)

The first proto-version of the 'reversed' *choku rei* actually seems to have originated (albeit unintentionally) with one of Takata-sensei's master-level students: Iris Ishikuro.

Iris was a follower of *Johrei* Healing (- an outgrowth of the *Shumei* religion) and introduced a new symbol into her Reiki practice. Named 'White Light', this symbol was a stylised version of a piece of calligraphy sacred to *Johrei* and the *Shumei*.

The proto-version of the reversed *choku rei* is actually part of Iris's 'new' Reiki symbol

It is in the lineages coming down via Iris that the reversed *choku rei* in its 'proper' form seems to have originated, first truly becoming popularised by Kathleen Milner as part of her Tera Mai system.

## Reiki Initiation / Attunement:

*Why bother with a Reiki teacher – why not just self-attune?*

Reiki ability is something, to quote John Gray (one of Takata-sensei's master level students), that is passed:

"Hand to hand"

- i.e.: from one living person (in whom the ability is *already* awakened - and *developed*) to another (who wishes to awaken and develop the ability)

In my opinion it is not something you *can* self-attune to - unless perhaps, you are willing to go down the whole "21-days of starvation, prayer and meditation" route as Usui-sensei did - and maybe not even *then*.

Numerous others have attempted this - both *before* and *after* Usui-sensei - without achieving anything close to the same results...

*Also, there is more to becoming a Reiki practitioner than simply receiving attunement*

I feel, it is important to remember that *originally* (and even in Takata-sensei's day,) attunement - be it to master or any other Reiki level - was only one *part* of Reiki Training; only one *element* of the process of awakening and developing the Reiki ability.

But somewhere down the line, folk began fixating on this one part, in some cases, to the almost total exclusion of the *rest* of the training - forgetting that in relation to Reiki, the concept of 'initiation' - in the *fullest* sense of the word - while it *includes* the energetic 'attunement', *also* includes the *teachings* accompanying it [and by teachings, I refer to more than 'information'].

Often, much of our *real* 'learning' comes from simply spending time in the physical company of an experienced Reiki Teacher.

We are not merely gaining 'information' [which we could read in a book/manual], but are *also* gaining insights, awarenesses, understandings - in part, via the conscious process of 'observing and practising' - but perhaps more importantly, subliminally, as we interact on a *subconscious level* with the body-language of one experienced in the Reiki art.

The initiation *ritual* (i.e. the 'attunement' itself), may constitute the formal aspect of, as it were: 'fine-tuning the student to the Reiki frequencies'.

However, beyond the 10 minutes or so over which the actual ritual occurs -in fact right throughout the *entire* time we spend with the teacher during the course of training - we are *still* participating (albeit subconsciously) in a profound 'energetic' interaction that follows on from, and in my opinion, 'rounds out' the effects of, the attunement itself.

*They said I must wait at least two or three months before getting my level two attunement? Why? I heard some Reiki Masters will give you level two Reiki straight away after level one, even on the same day. Some people are saying that both Usui and Hayashi taught Reiki 1 and 2 together - that this was the original approach?*

IMO, so many people (through no fault of their own) seem to have the understanding that it is *the length of time* you wait that is important - where in reality it *is how actively you apply and develop* your Reiki *during that time*.

Sadly, I've known some people who, after receiving the Level 1 attunement, essentially just 'kick back' and focus on the '*waiting*' (albeit impatiently!) for 6-12 weeks - not even bothering to *self* treat, let alone treat others - before taking the Level 2.

I feel that, in their enthusiasm, too many people see the progression through the levels as some kind of *race*.

*It is not.*

I have a friend who took level one several years ago, and when I suggested a while back that he might wish to take 'the next step on the journey' and receive the level 2 attunement, his reply was essentially "Not until I've exhausted all the possibilities of Level 1 - ask me again in a decade or so."

And, when it comes to the issue of whether Teachers should even be *offering* Levels one and two 'back to back', I feel we should keep in mind the following:

In the 'Usui Reiki Ryoho Hikkei', in response to the Question: "How can I receive the second degree [*okuden*]....."?

Usui-sensei answers:

*".....We will give okuden to enthusiastic shoden [level1] students who bring good results, are of good character, and behave properly."*

This in itself would suggest the need for a period of time between levels, in order for the *Teacher* to monitor and assess both the *student's development* and their *moral* behaviour, and thus to establish the required criteria:

i.e. that the student *is* achieving good results in their shoden practice\*, is also *ethical* in their practice (as well as in life generally); and amongst other things, that they are not *boasting* about their newly-awakened abilities, making false claims as to *how* they gained them, or attempting to instruct others in things they themselves have not yet mastered, etc, etc.

[\*It is a traditional approach that *only* when a student is perceived to have integrated a given element of a teaching - and 'run with it' as far as they can - that the next element is presented to them.]

Takata-sensei tells us that *her* level 1 and 2 training with Hayashi-Sensei took the form of an apprenticeship/internship - based around intensive daily practice (and monitoring) at the Hayashi clinic, *and lasted well over a year*. (She received the level 1 initiation in 1935 and the level 2 in 1936).

However, she also tells us that *initial* tuition for the level 1 consisted of *four* days of training - a separate initiation being given on each day; also each day dealt with a different area of treatment: Day 1 - the head and neck, and related medical conditions; Day 2 - the front of the body; Day 3 - the back, spine and nervous systems; Day 4 accidents and acute illnesses; and also with the spiritual aspects of Reiki - including the Principles.

Chiyoko Yamaguchi (founder of Jikiden Reiki) claimed that, in 1938, her training with Hayashi-sensei took a form not dissimilar to this initial 'seminar'-style teaching, though perhaps of a somewhat *simplified* nature - as apparently it consisted of both Level 1 and 2, presented over a single five-day period.

This is the primary source for the belief that Hayashi-sensei taught levels 1 and 2 back-to-back, but as we can see from Takata-sensei's training, it was *not* the way he was teaching back in 1935/36.

*People say if you try doing Reiki but you have not ever been attuned or initiated with Reiki, then you are really using up some of your own personal ki. How can this be? Wouldn't you have to learn how to do this?*

We are all constantly (though usually *unconsciously*) 'tapping into', interacting with and expending our own personal ki as part of the very process of living.

[There is a very specific term used to describe anyone does not do so, and that term is: *dead*]

*Fortunately, most of the time our system is also capable of sufficiently replenishing our personal ki levels as a part of same natural process of living.*

Every time we consciously focus on our breath, we are tapping into our personal ki - and while certain breathing rhythms (whether unconsciously occurring, or consciously activated) help us *absorb* external ki - thereby replenishing our levels of personal ki, other rhythms actually cause depletion and *dispersal* of our personal ki.

Some folk (i.e. those poetically referred to as either 'psychic vampires' or 'energy vampires') seem possessed of a natural ability to 'leech' personal energy from others; and on the *flip side* of the coin, there are many from whom personal ki simply 'escapes' under certain circumstances.

Fortunately, in most cases this leakage is akin to an energetic 'slow puncture' and while debilitating, is not too serious - providing the episodes of leakage are not *too* frequent or long-lasting - thus giving the individual time to recover.

Throughout history, such 'bleeders' (especially those who have come to a realisation of what is happening and find their own ways to at least partially control it) have frequently become successful healers [successful healers-of-*others* that is, though commonly, over the long-term, to the *detriment* of their own health].

Even non-'bleeders' can (*without* any training) give of their own personal ki, if the desire or intent to do so is strong.

A common example of this is often seen in Reiki - where novice students find themselves tired or drained after giving treatment, simply because in their eagerness

to achieve, they are trying too hard - not yet being comfortable with the concept of simply *letting go* and letting the Reiki happen - they feel the need to 'do', to *push* the energy - and in doing so are adding their own personal energy into the flow.

*So, if I am not properly attuned to Reiki, I would be using my own ki for doing the treatment? Then, what happens when I do self healing; am I just channelling my own ki out from the hands and back into my body? Wouldn't feeling energised and replenished after healing self or others be a sign I am properly attuned, and so not using my own ki?*

The *common* theory is that the point of self-treating (or treating a client for that matter) is to 'top up' the energy levels - but perhaps this is an oversimplification.

Many treatments are not necessarily about *replenishing* energy but rather about *unblocking* or *transforming* energy; or *balancing* energy-flow.

Also, there is a big difference between adding energy *into* a person's system and *energising* a person's system

For either practitioner or client, feeling refreshed and energised after a treatment is not *necessarily* a sign that they have had their energies 'topped up'.

It is more commonly a sign that their *existing* energies have been *mobilised*: 'stirred up'.

I.e. that sluggish elements of their inherent energy-flows have been altered to restore proper 'rates of flow', and that in fact they are actually accessing and *using up* pre-existent reserves of energy, rather than having *extra* 'energy-fuel' added from an outside source.

To use a more mainstream medical analogy - its a bit like a very listless patient who is given amphetamines - they will feel amazingly *energised* - but they have not been given 'energy' - their system has simply been *stimulated* to burn up energy they already have.

Where someone is not a clear channel for Reiki, but using their own energy in self-treating, rather than *passing* that energy round in a loop via the hands and back into themselves, they are actually using some of their own vital life force energy as a *catalyst* - to trigger the *metabolizing* of their more general, renewable, everyday energy-reserves.

Same goes for treating a client. Rather than the *Reiki* mobilising the client's energy / energising them, the practitioner is using up a small amount of their *own* vital life force energy to trigger the effect.

*What part or action of the initiation process actually attunes / initiates the student - at what point in the ritual do they go from not being able to do Reiki to being able to do it?*

The 'formal' or 'theoretical' answer would probably be "there is no one single part - yet the student can not truly be said to have been attuned until the initiation has been completed".



To use an analogy - the initiation process is essentially a 'recipe' - for argument's sake, lets say a recipe for apple pie:

Is there one point in the process when the collection of ingredients, and instructions as to what to do with them, actually manifest 'apple pie'.  
Is it perhaps the point when the dough is formed? Or when the apples are cut? When the pastry lid goes on? When the edges are crimped? When vent-holes are made in the pietop? When it goes in the oven? When it's cooked?

However, in my experience, there are actually several other factors to be taken into account:

The matter of 'intent' is an obvious one, and while intent may indeed play a part - I feel it is only a *small* part.

Obviously there is the matter of *which* actual initiation process is being used and just how *in touch* the Initiator is with the process i.e. the degree to which they are actually performing the process on an *energetic* level, as opposed to *simply going through the motions* of the physical 'form' of the process

But I am of the growing opinion that it is *in the main* down to the particular individual who is actually *being* initiated, as to when they begin to manifest the ability to channel the Reiki Phenomenon (which is of course *the only reliable way* we can say for certain that the person is actually attuned / initiated.)

From experience, with different students the Reiki begins to flow (or, more properly, is *perceived* to begin to flow) at different stages in the procedure. With some it is early on in the process, with others it is later in the process - and then there are others still in whom the Reiki does not actually begin to flow at all during the process itself

*[The first time you come across this it can be somewhat disconcerting - but generally the Reiki 'kicks in' within a few minutes]*

Unlike pregnancy and death [you can't be 'a little bit pregnant' or 'a little bit dead' - you either are or you are not], in my experience, the ability to channel/manifest the Reiki Phenomenon is not something we can pin down to a specific point in time (i.e. one nanosecond you *don't* have the ability, the next you *do*).

All beings have the *potential* to channel 'external' energies of various kinds, in fact I would go so far as to say that all beings *do* actually channel 'external' energies (albeit unconsciously) - though the degree to which this ability is naturally active (and the nature of the particular energies channelled) varies greatly from one individual to another.

While a rare few may already manifest a natural level of channelling ability which is clearly perceptible, and there are also those in whom the ability is *verging* on the perceptible, in most people the ability is so low level as to be *beyond* the perception of all but the most energetically sensitive individuals.

In my experience, the initiation process incrementally builds on the pre-existent level of energetic channelling ability, gradually 'increasing the volume' as it were, as the procedure is worked through

[and, also - to the extent that the Reiki Phenomenon is simply the channelling of energy (it is of course much more than this) - the process also 'tunes in'/'fine-tunes' the individual's channelling ability to the specific energetic frequencies we recognise as 'Reiki']

Thus, in a student in whom the natural ability was already verging on the 'audible', that ability may (possibly) reach a level where it becomes clearly perceptible at an *earlier* stage in the initiation process than would be the case with a student in whom the natural ability was less 'audible'.

*If something actually attunes you to Reiki, then it actually will attune you to each level...As each level IS Reiki?*

There is a famous Zen saying: "Do not confuse the finger pointing at the moon, with the moon itself" or in this case: "Do not confuse the 'levels' - and the tuition you receive at each one, with Reiki itself".

The levels are *not* Reiki.

The concept of 'levels' is simply a way of breaking up Reiki *training* (i.e. techniques, protocols, methodology, etc) into bite-size chunks, nothing more.

The four initiations ('attunement' will also do as a descriptive here) which are part of the 'Level 1' Reiki training course (Takata-sensei originally spoke of it simply as "Introductory training") are what connect you with the phenomenon that is Reiki - i.e. they give you the ability (or if you prefer *awaken* the ability) to 'do' Reiki.

Actually, in my experience, the *first* of the four gives/awakens the ability, the following three *deepen* and 'set' the ability (providing they are done properly - when they are not, you'll soon know about it, the connection begins to fade, and in time the student complains about feeling depleted as they end up transmitting their own energy instead of Reiki)

What we call level 2 (Takata-sensei spoke of it simply as "Intermediate training") is simply the next part of the *tuition in Reiki practice*.

The initiation given as part of the level 2 training course *does not* attune you to Reiki - *how could it?*

*You were already attuned to Reiki as part of your level 1 (Introductory training) course*

At level 2, the initiation 'attunes' you to the *symbols* you will be working with at this level.

(And no, contrary to the modern, post-Takata, western New Age mumbo-jumbo spouted by many - and even adopted by some styles of Japanese Reiki - the symbols *do not* connect you to different 'energies' within Reiki.)

Likewise, 'Level 3' *does not* attune you to Reiki - but rather attunes you to/empowers your ability to work with, the *symbol* given at that level: the Master Symbol.

*I have been reading about Reiki and the whole process of attunement and there is something I just do not understand: this founder of Reiki, how was he "attuned"?*

Certainly it is true that no human being 'attuned' Usui-sensei to the specific phenomenon that is the Reiki healing ability – but, nor for that matter, did he 'attune' himself.

What we call an 'Attunement', whether it is to Reiki or any other energy, power, or spiritual force, is essentially something you receive - most commonly from another living being - i.e. someone who is *already* attuned to that energy, power, or spiritual force.

To use an I.T. analogy, its a bit like having someone who possesses a very specific program which enables them to interact with an energy/power/force, download a copy of that program into your being.

Alternatively, if you have a deep understanding, and a stout heart, you can attempt to 'write your own program' as it were, by intentionally going in search of an 'attunement experience'.

This search might, for example, involve something like the arduous Vision-Quest practices found amongst several Native American peoples; or might involve the Japanese *shugyo* practices: severe meditative, ascetic & spiritual disciplines derived from Mikkyo (Esoteric Buddhist) and Shinto tradition.

We are told that it was as a result of the life-threatening 21-day shugyo practice Usui-sensei undertook on Kurama Yama that he received an intense, spiritual Initiatorial experience - one outcome of this being the manifestation of the abilities we know as the Reiki Healing Phenomenon.

The intentional search for an 'attunement experience' is usually considered a difficult & potentially (psychologically) dangerous route, but if successful, is said to result in a far more personal & intensely spiritual experience.

[There are, admittedly, some *rare* cases of what is referred to as 'spontaneous attunement' or 'spontaneous initiation' in which an individual becomes 'attuned' to an energy, power, or spiritual force quite *unintentionally* and for no perceivable reason]

*OK, so Mikao Usui discovered Reiki meditating on Mt Kurama, but how did he learn how to do the attunements on people? Was he shown the instructions in his vision also? I have not seen this mentioned anywhere, does anyone actually know for sure? And were the symbols always a part of the process?*

Well, if you keep on looking, you might find someone *claiming* they know, but think the only person who truly knows the complete answer to that would be Usui-sensei himself.

Firstly, as far as we can tell, in the very earliest days, Usui-sensei did not use the formal system of attunements that we are familiar with today, but rather used a very simple form of *reiju*. (Even the various *modern* examples of the *reiju* process we have now are *also* probably far more ritualised or formal than the one Usui-sensei actually used.)

There is no evidence to suggest that, as part of his 'Kurama experience', Usui-sensei received clear instruction on *methods* of conferring the Reiki ability on others.

However, we *may* assume that Usui-sensei would have been well aware that within Mikkyo Buddhism many forms of 'empowerments' or 'spiritual permissions' (*kanjo*) were used as a means of transferring 'potentials' or 'understandings' from *ajari* (teacher) to *deshi* (student).

And if he was, as is commonly claimed, actually himself a formal *student* of the teachings which constitute the *esoteric* element of Tendai Buddhism, then receiving such blessings etc. would have been a central part of his training.

Also in the course of his more *general* spiritual studies, he would no doubt have become aware of - and quite possibly received - several other forms of blessing/initiation used by many of the other healers, religious sects and healing groups, which existed in Japan at the time.

[The concept of sharing, or passing on, of an ability to others through 'initiatorial process' was something common to the majority of these groups and sects.]

It seems quite likely that such initiatorial practices could have influenced the development of Usui-sensei's *own* methods.

For example, it has been suggested that Usui-sensei had been involved with the Shinto-influenced *Reijutsu Kai* movement, and also with the *Omoto Kyo* sect, both of which organisations utilised rituals of empowerment, blessing and healing - Omoto-kyo working in the main with a spiritual healing rite: the *miteshiro*; and Reijutsu working with practices including 'laying-on-of-hands' *and* spiritual rituals.

They also used initiatorial procedures for conferring these healing abilities on others.

*We can also be pretty sure that Usui-sensei's own approach to methods of initiation was one of experimentation - probably evolving through various forms over the four years or so he used it [prior to his death]*

Current understanding is that originally (- rather than being a purely *therapeutic* modality,) Usui Sensei's system was essentially a spiritual-philosophical system - a system 'for the improvement of body and soul' - that is, a system *primarily* focussing on spiritual development, but one which *also* incorporated a self-healing element.

So, the reiju process was not simply about imparting practical 'healing ability', but also (as the term *reiju* implies) about imparting *spiritual* qualities or 'gifts'

Some say that, at first, there were *no* symbols used in the reiju process - that Usui-sensei incorporated them into the procedure at a later stage in its development.

However, there *is* of course the possibility that the symbols *were* there all along (They are, after-all, important keys to Usui-sensei's *spiritual* teachings, which *predate* the healing practice we generally think of as 'Reiki' today)

It is quite possible that Usui sensei (even early on) used two *different* versions of the reiju process

- one, *without* symbols: being a means of conferring blessing / empowerment / awareness of the healing ability, on *soto-deshi* (lit: 'outside students') – i.e. those who simply sought to develop a 'practical' remedial ability

and one, *with* symbols: a more spiritually-oriented process - being reserved for conferring blessing / empowerment / awareness of the healing ability, on *ushi-deshi* (lit: 'inside students') - i.e. those who had been accepted to study Usui-sensei's *spiritual* teachings.

*My teacher said that there is no such thing as a 'right' or 'wrong' Reiki attunement process?*

It really does come down to how the word 'Reiki' is being used here: If we are taking the word 'Reiki' as a contraction of *Usui Reiki Ryoho*, then in my opinion, this statement is incorrect.

However if we are taking the word 'Reiki' in the commonly-used (and, as I see it, *incorrect*) sense - i.e. as a generic term for just about *any* form of channelled healing (whether energy or spirit), then, in an *absolute* sense, the statement *might* be seen to be true:

All attunements *will* attune you to something (otherwise we wouldn't label them as 'attunements')

But the emphasis should be on the word *something*

*Different* attunements will attune you to *different* things...

All attunements will attune you to *something*

*Not* all attunements will attune you to the specific *Spiritual Energetic Phenomenon* that is at the heart of *Usui Reiki Ryoho*.

On a related note: Whatever attunements you *have* received are modified by other, *different* attunements you later receive, and what *you* pass on is further modified by the specific attunement process *you* use to pass on attunements to others

*Some people do four attunements at level 1, others do only one attunement; does this affect the outcome, does it make a real difference or is it all down to the intent of the person giving the attunement?*

Takata-sensei taught the use of the 4 separate initiations (i.e. attunements) for level one, with a gap between each initiation. The idea seems to be that each initiation 'built' on the previous one, deepening the process of connection - thus ensuring the student develops a deep 'quality' of connection at what is after all the foundation level of Reiki [Reiki *is* - or *should be* - a building built on firm foundations]

However, as seems to be the case with all things Reiki - some post-Takata Reiki folk decided that as 'time is money' they needed a way to speed up the initiation process (especially when you hear how some of those in question liked classes of not less than 30-40 people!) - so essentially it seems the idea of one attunement instead of four actually evolved out of a time-saving exercise / plain ol' laziness.

Now as to what difference there is between the two:

[We all know that the symbols are sacred - but many it seems forget that the Initiation is *also* sacred.]

The Reiki initiation is a process - just like a mathematical or chemical formula (or a food recipe for that matter)

You follow the process/formula and you get what you are supposed to get.

But when you start messing about with the process - alter the process - change the number or nature of one or more of the 'ingredients', change the point in the process where certain procedures are carried out or the order in which the 'ingredients' are added to the mix, you are likely to end up with something other than what you were supposed to get.

IMO, this is the case with the 'simplified' Reiki initiation.

While it may connect a student to Reiki, there is often little 'quality' of connection (and some folk - well they've definitely been attuned to *something* - but it sure ain't "Reiki as we know it").

*Yes, of course, intent plays a part - but only a part (and as the saying goes "the Road to Hell is paved with good intentions")*

*IMO, too much is made of 'intent'.*

Just because someone *intends* something, does it guarantee the thing?

I intend to win the lottery every week!

[And after all, this whole concept of 'intent' as used in relation to 'New Age-ified' Reiki and other practices is simply a washed-out shadow of the *original* mystical/magical concept of 'intending'.

'Intent' in its mystical use was not about simply *wishing* that a thing be so; but involved a *devastating effort of will* - the achievement of a total congruence of being - focussing every single fibre of the being to achieving a given aim or goal. ]

No - 'true' intending is too much hard work.

Personally, I can't see why I should have to intend (that is: hope & pray!) that a version of the Initiation that has been 'messed with' will work properly, when I can use the version passed on from Takata-sensei - one we know will do the job, properly attuning the student to Reiki 'as we know it'. [but this is just MY opinion of course.]

*I was told you couldn't do Reiki without first having a "Reiki attunement", but surely we're all connected to the ULE [Universal Life-force Energy], anyone can channel it?*

It is certainly possible to do *channelled healing* without a "Reiki attunement", but that doesn't mean what you are doing is 'Reiki'.

For example, in Therapeutic Touch (which I trained in before ever coming to Reiki) we also work with 'energy' channelled from Source - but this certainly isn't 'Reiki healing'.

In my opinion, Reiki [if we are to speak of this wonderful therapeutic phenomenon in terms of what is after-all the limited, modern-day conceptualisation of "energy" ] manifests as, for want of a better analogy, a very specific set of 'therapeutic frequencies'.

It is not *just* 'ULE' - some vague, all-encompassing 'blanket-coverage' energy, but rather, like everything else in existence - be it a pebble, a person, a non-corporeal 'spirit' or the nuclear reaction at the heart of a sun - what we term 'Reiki' is a unique manifestation of a *very specific* set of *qualities* existing *within* the omnipresent Universal Life-force Energy.

*Also, the Reiki ability is something very specific, not just 'channelled healing' ability in general.*

Yes, Reiki involves the channelling of 'energy', but more than this, Reiki is a very particular way *of interacting with* that energy, involving a particular set of physiological, symbolic and Spiritual protocols.

As I believe John Harvey Gray put it, Reiki is something that is passed 'Hand to Hand' (i.e. by initiation/attunement) from one person to another - starting with Usui-sensei.

If it doesn't come to you in this way - no matter what you choose to call it - it *isn't* Reiki.

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