

Dr. Mikao Usui

A memorial stone erected in 1927 honors the life of Dr. Mikao Usui, founder of the Reiki healing system. Dr. Mikao Usui or Usui Sensei as he was called by his students in Japan, was born on August 15, 1865 in the village of Tandai in the Yamagata district of Gifu prefecture, which is located near present day Nagoya, Japan. It was thought that he entered a Tendai Buddhist school on or near Mt. Kurama (“horse saddle mountain”) when he was four years old. He also studied kiko, the Japanese version of qigong, which is a health and healing discipline based on the development and use of life energy. Usui found that these healing methods required the practitioner to build up and then deplete his own life energy when giving treatments, and wondered if it were possible to do healing work without depleting one’s own energy.

Usui Sensei had an avid interest in learning, and worked hard at his studies. He traveled to Europe and China to further his education. His curriculum included medicine, psychology, and religion, as well as fortune telling, which Asians have long considered to be a worthy skill. He eventually became secretary to Shinpei Goto, head of the department of health and welfare who later became the Mayor of Tokyo. He was also a member of the Rei Jyutu Ka, a metaphysical group dedicated to developing psychic abilities.

Usui Sensei’s personal and business life were failing in 1914. As a sensitive spiritualist, he had spent much of his time meditating at power spots on Mt. Kurama, where he received his early Buddhist training. He traveled to this holy mountain where he enrolled in Isyu Guo, a 21 day training course sponsored by the Tendai Buddhist Temple . Although we don’t know for certain what he was required to do, it is likely that fasting, meditation, chanting and prayers were part of the practice.

There is a small waterfall on Mt. Kurama where even today people go to meditate. This meditation involves standing under the waterfall and allowing the waters to strike and flow over the top of the head, a practice which is said to activate the crown chakra. At midnight during his third week of fasting, Usui Sensei suddenly felt a powerful shock in the center of his brain, as if he had been struck by lightning. He lost consciousness. After several hours he came to and woke to find dawn breaking. To his surprise he was feeling refreshed in a way he had never felt before. During this incident, divine Reiki energy penetrated his body and soul. As the cosmic energy and his own energy resonated together, he came to realize, “The Universe is me – I am the Universe.” He had finally achieved the enlightenment he had so long pursued and realized he had received a wonderful new gift – the ability to heal others without depleting his own energy.

Having attained enlightenment, Usui Sensei ran joyously down the mountain. On the way he tripped over a rock and ripped off his toenail. He laid his hand on the toe and to his surprise, the pain disappeared, the bleeding stopped, and the toe was healed. Finding that Reiki produced great healing, he decided to share this blessing with others. After experimenting, he developed a method that would enable him to pass on this wonderful ability to other people. This method is now known as “Shin-Shin Kai-Zen Usui Reiki Ryo-Ho” or “The Usui Reiki Treatment Method for Improvement of Body and Mind.”