

# **THE Original Usui Reiki Ryoho**

**- and other things**

by

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## **THE *Original* Usui Reiki Ryoho**

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So many different people have so many different beliefs as to what THE Original Usui Reiki Ryoho entailed.

Most of us are probably aware of the seemingly endless array of spiritual / self-developmental practices, energy-sensing techniques, breathing and visualisation exercises, treatment methods, etc, etc. which, according to this or that supposedly authoritative source, were vital elements of THE Original Usui Reiki Ryoho

However, I would offer another perception (and yes, it does rather depend on which version of the "Story of Reiki" you accept).

Can we perhaps say that the REAL Original Usui Reiki Ryoho involved:

No Certificates

No Levels of training

No "Treatment Guidelines"

No Reiki Principles

No Hatsurei ho

No Joshin Kokyu ho

No Byosen Reikan ho

No Reiji ho

No Nentatsu ho

No Hand Positions

No Reiju

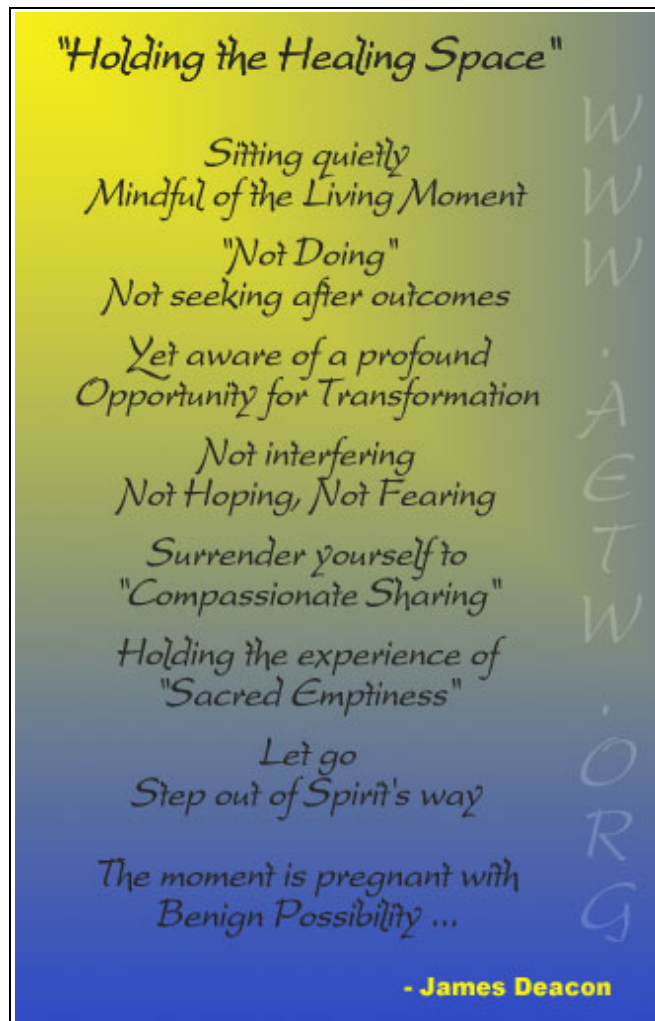
No Kotodama

No Symbols

No Jumon

etc...

That rather, it simply involved an emaciated, dishevelled, hungry man, sitting on the ground on the slope of a mountain  
his body perhaps rocking slightly to and fro  
his hands - radiant with the newly awakened gift of 'Reiki' - cupped instinctively around an injured toe  
his mind owning and breathing through the pain  
until the blood stopped flowing  
and the wound, almost miraculously, began to heal...



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**"JAPANESE" REIKI:  
Purer / Closer to the Source than "Western" Reiki....?**  
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It is interesting, I feel, how what we term: "Japanese" Reiki is widely considered to be 'purer' or 'closer to the source' than so-called "Western Reiki".

Yet if we look at the various primary "Japanese" expressions of the art :  
Vortex Reiki, Reido Reiki, Gendai Reiki Ho, Komyo Reiki Kai, Jikiden Reiki, etc.

- we cannot help but see that while *originally stemming from the same source*, these "Japanese" styles - just as is the case with "Western" Reiki - have, over time, evolved and grown in different ways:

They have often been subject to various external influences, in several cases, adopting-in practices from non-Reiki sources; evolving different understandings concerning the primary underlying purpose of Reiki

practice;  
 modifying the form of the symbols,  
 evolving different versions of symbol names and/or jumon,  
 adding new symbols,  
 in some cases, changing the level at which symbols are introduced;  
 blending in elements from different pre-existing Reiki styles;  
 evolving different versions of the attunement or reiju process,  
 in some cases having several different versions of the process for different purposes;  
 evolving different understandings concerning the purpose and use of specific symbols;  
 changing the number of levels within the training format,  
 and also the content of training at each level,  
 as well as modifying the teaching format  
 – the list goes on and on...

So what is it that causes the seemingly widespread tendency within the Reiki Community to be more accepting of the changes and evolutions which have taken place in “Japanese” Reiki, while decrying similar changes and evolutions which have occurred in “Western” Reiki.

Could it be simply a case of having been dazzled by the hype...

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## WILL THE REAL 'HAYASHI-STYLE REIKI TEACHINGS' PLEASE STAND UP?

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It is commonly taught by many pro “Japanese style” Reiki enthusiasts, that, because there are differences between the modern-day Japanese 'Jikiden' style of Reiki (founded by Mrs Chiyoko Yamaguchi) and the Usui Shiki Ryoho style of Reiki (as practised and taught by Takata-sensei over a period of more than 40 years,) that it is Usui Shiki Ryoho which has deviated from what was actually taught by Hayashi-sensei in the late 1930's

– that Hawayo Takata must have made changes to the system.

Of course this is not beyond the bounds of possibility.

But it is not the *only* possibility.

And yes, a couple of people have pointed to the fact that Hayashi-sensei apparently named his organisation the Hayashi Reiki Kenkyukai (Hayashi Reiki Research Society) and have suggested that perhaps the differences are actually due to Hayashi-sensei himself – that as part of his researches, *what* and *how* he taught evolved into new forms over time.

Yet others have suggested that Hawayo Takata did not receive the 'proper' training because she was a *nisei* (a person of Japanese blood, yet born overseas – and thus, seen by some as less than pure Japanese)

However to date, few it seems have been willing to consider the possibility that it is actually the *Jikiden* teachings, and *not* the Usui Shiki Ryoho teachings which really deviate from what Hayashi-sensei taught in the late 1930's.

It is, I feel important to remember that Usui Shiki Ryoho's Hawayo Takata learnt Reiki *before* Jikiden's Mrs Chiyoko Yamaguchi.

In fact, by the time Chiyoko Yamaguchi took her first Reiki class, Hawayo Takata was already a fully trained and certified Master, and had been practising Reiki for somewhere in the region of 2½ years.

Also, unlike Mrs Yamaguchi's training, Hawayo Takata's training with Hayashi-sensei took the form of an extended, full-time apprenticeship.

In 1935, Hawayo Takata had travelled to Japan to inform her parents of the death of one of her sisters in Hawaii (also bringing her own late husband's ashes to be interred in Kyoto).

After several months of experiencing daily Reiki treatments in the Hayashi clinic, she was healed of a number of serious health problems – something that in itself would have given her a very deep connection with Reiki.

She then, through great effort, managed to persuade Hayashi-sensei to accept her as a student.

Having gone through the four-day introductory training and initiations for Level 1, Hawayo Takata had been privileged to be offered a one year Reiki apprenticeship / internship.

She worked alongside Hayashi-sensei, his wife Chie, and a small number of other select students in the Hayashi clinic in the mornings, and went out on 'house calls' (sometimes accompanying Hayashi-sensei, sometimes alone) in the afternoons.

This was the daily routine for these students. Learning from Hayashi-sensei, from each other, and from direct experience of treating the many and various conditions that brought people to the clinic.

During this time, she had not only worked on a daily basis with her teacher, but, after some months, had been honoured by being welcomed into the Hayashi's home.

For a student, to be invited to live with their teacher in this way, as part of his family, is something which has special significance – particularly for 'old school' Japanese ( a pertinent fact which seems to have either been missed or conveniently overlooked by those who seek to promote the 'superiority' of various "Japanese" Reiki styles tracing their lineage back via Hayashi-sensei) and is something we will look at, below.

In time Hawayo Takata was permitted to undergo the training and initiations which constituted entry into level 2, and having done so, she continued the next phase of her apprenticeship.

Several months later, prior to her returning to Hawaii in 1937, both she and Hayashi-sensei's wife: Chie, received the master level initiation.

Later that year, Hayashi-sensei travelled to Hawaii, where he accompanied Hawayo Takata on a lecture tour to promote the art of Reiki Ryoho.

Just prior to returning to Japan at the end of February 1938. Hayashi-sensei signed a **Certificate before a 'Notary Public' confirming Takata-sensei's status as Reiki master. And – contrary to some later claims that Takata-sensei, due to her being a woman and a *nisei* (a person of Japanese blood, yet born overseas – and thus, seen by some as less than pure Japanese) had not received full training - the notarised certificate also clearly acknowledges Takata-sensei as being “ one of the thirteen fully qualified as masters of the profession”.**

It was only *after* all this, on Hayashi-sensei's return to Japan, that he is said to have travelled to Daishoji in the North of Japan to hold the short training course where Chiyoko Yamaguchi began her journey with Reiki.

As mentioned above, Hawayo Takata had been welcomed into the Hayashi's home.

Now to 'western' minds, little significance is placed on this fact (- other than perhaps a fleeting thought that the Hayashi's were kind to give her a place to stay)

And, likewise, even though she spoke about her acceptance into the Hayashi household when recounting information about this time in her life, other than to express her gratitude to the Hayashis, Hawayo Takata *herself* did not 'make a big ego thing of it'.

Even though, in Japanese culture, a student being invited to live as a member of their teacher's household (no matter what the nature of the discipline they are studying) has long been seen as something of great significance.

It is a great honour - something usually only bestowed on students who display high levels of potential.

To be invited to live with their teacher in this way is to become *uchideshi*

An *uchideshi* (literally an 'inside student') is a live-in student who receives special training – frequently with a focus on becoming their teacher's successor.

An Uchideshi has a far greater degree of contact with their teacher than is possible for other students.

Traditionally, only students deemed by the teacher to be highly dedicated to their development within the chosen art would be offered the opportunity to become Uchideshi.

It is said that life as an Uchideshi can be a challenging one (for a start, Uchideshi often have to put up with animosity from other students who are jealous of their status\*), yet life as an Uchideshi can also be a highly rewarding one, as it is believed that only through experiencing daily life with their teacher, can a student truly reach beyond the technicalities of their art and learn its inner essence. (Thus, the term Uchideshi can also be understood in the sense of “student of the inner teachings”)

And so, to all intent and purposes, HawayoTakata had become an *uchideshi* .

Not only was she working, day in day out, in the clinic with Hayashi-sensei and the other chosen apprentices, but she was also living in the Hayashi home, 'breathing the same air', in almost constant close proximity to her teacher: observing how he lived his life, how he dealt with various situations, how he interacted with others; and being exposed to endless situational learning opportunities: a comment here, a question there, being asked to find her own solution to a problem or treatment issue; a simple conversation – its content seemingly unimportant at the time - its true significance and value only realised perhaps months or even years later; perhaps being challenged to look at situations from a new perspective - often learning by 'osmosis', a gradual, often unconscious process of assimilation or absorption.

To a certain extent, almost every aspect of her daily life would have become part of her training.

In one of Takata-sensei's diary entries (May 1936 ) she wrote:

“What was more than pleasing was that Mr Hayashi has granted to bestow upon me the secrets of Shinpi Den ...” (i.e. third Level)

Yet apparently it was not until 1937 that Hawayo Takata began her Master level training.

So it is very interesting to note that Takata-sensei is mentioning this in 1936.

It would seem to suggest that, even by this date, Hayashi-sensei had already made the decision that Hawayo Takata possessed the correct moral character, and was displaying the necessary understanding, ability and aptitudes, of a student destined to be initiated and trained as a master.

[We must remember that at the time (unlike today) master-level training and initiation was something not automatically offered to every level 2 student.]

So, to recap, Hawayo Takata, after undergoing several months of intense treatment in the Hayashi Clinic:

- Fought hard to persuade Hayashi-sensei to accept her as a student, proving her determination and commitment to the art that had cured her.
- Was offered an internship/apprenticeship in the Hayashi Clinic, with other select students.
- Became *uchi deshi* (an “inner student”).
- Received full, certified, Mastership directly from Hayashi-sensei.
- And not only had she lived, trained and worked hand-in-hand with her teacher for two years or so in Japan, she was then honoured by her teacher coming to Hawaii, where the two of them toured giving lectures and demonstrations.
- Also, she had Hayashi-sensei's confidence in her that she was worthy to be the *sole* representative of the Reiki art in the US.

Whereas, Mrs Yamaguchi on the other hand:

- Apparently learnt level 1 and level 2 from Hayashi-sensei over a few days when he visited her home town.
- Was *not* offered an internship/apprenticeship working directly under Hayashi-sensei.
- Did *not* work on a daily basis in the Hayashi clinic.
- Was *not* invited into the Hayashi home as a live-in student.
- Was *not* invited to take master level training directly from Hayashi-sensei.
- And apparently only *later* learnt how to perform reiju *from her uncle* Wasaburo Sugano, who had, so we are told, been trained as a master by Hayashi-sensei...

So I feel we have to ask the question:

“Usui Shiki Ryoho or Jikiden - Hawayo Takata or Chiyoko Yamaguchi – based purely on the nature, quality and depth of training received *directly from Hayashi-sensei* by each of these two women, which of the two styles would probably more closely reflect the system of Reiki Ryoho as actually taught by Hayashi-sensei ?”

Then again, did Hayashi-sensei perhaps modify the Reiki system at some point *after* training Hawayo Takata, his wife Chie, and many other students?

Or did he perhaps feel some need to teach different things to those “outside students” (both in Tokyo and in other areas of the country) than he taught to his apprentices in his clinic. Perhaps he also felt that the inclusion of certain additional techniques and practices would help to supplement the training of those students for whom he was unable to provide a greater depth of day-to-day in-person training?

Or could it have perhaps been Mrs Chiyoko Yamaguchi who over time altered what she had been taught to suit her *personal* preferences?

For example, can we perhaps find influences in her teachings drawn from her interactions with one of the groups practising a version of the Johrei teachings of Mokichi Okada ?

Unlike Hawayo Takata who was a professionally active Reiki practitioner (and teacher\*\*) throughout her life, Mrs Yamaguchi appears only to have begun to work



with Reiki on a professional level in the 1990's.

Could it be that she had forgotten things, or simply misremembered some of the details of the *brief* training she had received from Hayashi-sensei?

Or could perhaps the differences between what Chiyoko Yamaguchi taught and what Hawayo Takata had learnt, been due, at least in part, to the influence of Chiyoko's uncle Wasaboro Sugano - with whom she obviously had far more interaction than she did with Hayashi-sensei?

And yes, of course it is possible that Hawayo Takata did also make changes to the way in which she taught and practised Reiki over the years.

However I feel that the reason for the differences between the teachings of Jikiden Reiki and Usui Shiki Ryoho is not nearly as 'clear cut' as many pro "Japanese style" Reiki enthusiasts would like us to believe.

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\*and it is to be imagined this might this might be even harder if the uchideshi was a woman, and also a *nisei* (a person of Japanese blood, yet born overseas – and thus, seen by some as less than pure Japanese)

\*\*contrary to what is commonly repeated in many books and on many websites, Takata-sensei did *not* only begin to teach Reiki in the 1970's. It is true that it was not until the mid 70's that she initiated the first Reiki *Master*, however we know that she had even initiated several students (including one of her sisters, and at least one neighbour) while Hayashi-sensei was alive.

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### ***'On the source of Reiki 'energy'...***

When asked what 'Reiki' meant, Takata-Sensei frequently gave a *very* simplistic answer, along the lines of: Rei means 'Universal', and Ki means 'Energy'.

However, in attempting to transmit a deeper understanding of the meaning of Reiki to her students, Takata-Sensei spoke of Reiki as:

"...a universal force from the Great Divine Spirit"

elsewhere, she described it as:

"...a cosmic energy to heal the ill..."

and yet more specifically, as:

"God Power".

" It is not associated with any visible material being.", she said of it, "It's an unseen spiritual power that radiates vibration and lifts one into harmony. This power is incomprehensible to man, yet every single living being is receiving its blessings..."

Now, it seems that in hearing Takata-sensei speak of Reiki as a "*...a universal force from the Great Divine Spirit*" and '*... a cosmic energy...*', many of her students took this to mean that Reiki - as an 'energy' - was something *outside* of ourselves: something 'out there' - *beyond* us.

- something we 'channel' from 'out there', rather than something arising *within* us.

And this is the understanding these students passed on to their *own* students.

However, this idea of Reiki as being something *external* is perhaps only part of the truth...

In a diary entry dated Dec. 10 1935, Takata-sensei wrote about Reiki being:

*"...Energy within oneself "* - and also about how we must "*...meditate to let the "Energy" come out from within.*"

Concerning the "Energy" she said: "*It lies in the bottom of your stomach about 2 in. below the navel.*"

On learning of this, many people have now jumped to the conclusion that Reiki must therefore be an expression of our *own* inherent, intrinsic, 'self-originating' or 'personal' energy.

However, simply because 'energy' is perceived as *coming out from within*, does not *necessarily* mean it is 'personal energy'

Consider, for example, the phenomenon of Johrei (or Jyorei) Healing:

Johrei's 'founder', Mokichi Okada believed that he had received the purificatory, Johrei healing power from the bodhisattva Kannon.

According to Okada (known to his followers as 'Meishu Sama'), Kannon placed an

orb or ball of golden light within his hara\*, and it was from this radiant source within his abdomen that the power of Johrei emanated.

From: "The Principles of Jyorei"

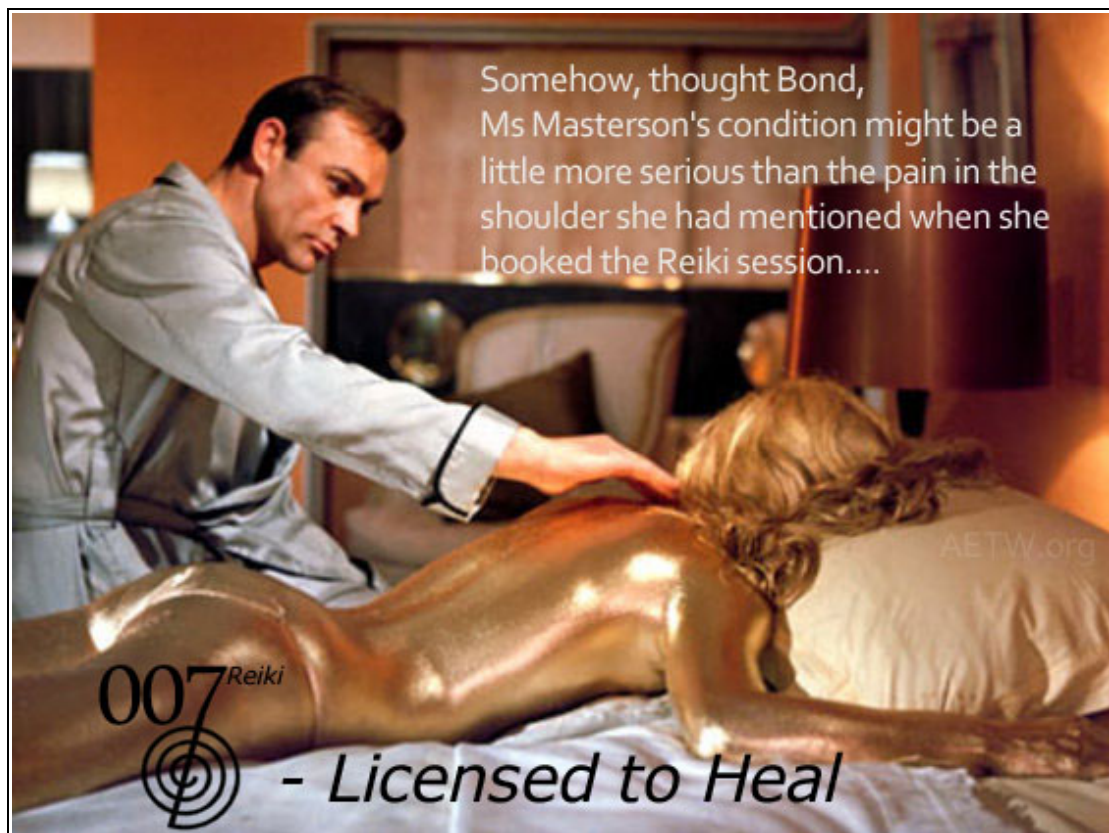
"The fundamental source of the light energy of the Ball is to be found in the spiritual world. The Orb of Kannon constantly and infinitely replenishes its Power with Divine Light rays which are directed at me." – *Meishusama*

Thus, while the healing light of Johrei emanated from *within* Okada's hara (at a point which can be described as "*in the bottom of your stomach about 2 in. below the navel.*"), *Okada himself* was not the ultimate source of this light.

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\* It has often been said that the Reiki initiation results in the 'planting of a seed of light' within the student (though the initiation itself does not necessarily involve such visualisation or intention) ...

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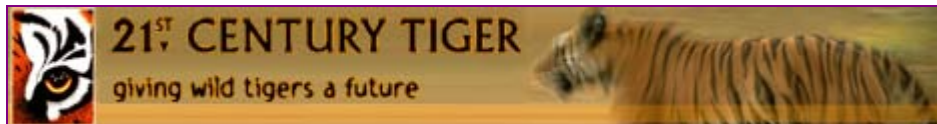
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