

Dr. Usui and Mt. Kurama

BY MARIANNE STREICH

*The following information is based in part on the original research and writings of William Lee Rand, Frank Arjava Petter, and Walter Lübeck. For more detailed information, see their book, **The Spirit of Reiki**.*

Mikao Usui's association with Mt. Kurama began at a very early age and continued throughout his life. Usui was born in 1865 near present day Nagoya, Japan. His village was a short distance from the village of Kurama on the mountain. It is believed that he began attending a Tendai Buddhist school on or near Mt. Kurama when he was four years old. *Kiko*, a ki-based healing method, was among the subjects he studied there.

Usui had an avid interest in learning. As an adult he explored medicine, psychology, religion, and fortune telling, traveling to Europe and China for his studies. He was a member of *Rei Jyutu Ka*, a metaphysical group dedicated to developing psychic abilities. As a spiritualist, Usui spent much time over the years meditating at power spots on Mt. Kurama.¹

Eventually Usui became secretary to the head of the department of health and welfare in Tokyo and subsequently a successful businessman. In 1917, with his business and personal life in disarray, Usui enrolled in *Isyu Guo*, a twenty-one day meditation retreat sponsored by the Tendai Buddhist Temple located on Mt. Kurama. Spiritual practices for the retreat included meditation, prayer and fasting. Usui may also have participated in a special waterfall meditation during which he would have stood under a small waterfall and allowed the stream of water to fall onto his crown chakra. On the twenty-first day of this retreat, "...he felt a great Reiki over his head, and at the same time as he was spiritually awakened, he acquired the Reiki cure. When he tried it on his own body and members of his family also, it brought an immediate result on them."²

He realized that he had received a wonderful gift that greatly enhanced his healing abilities. For several years he used his gift to heal the poor in Kyoto. Later he started a healing society in Tokyo called *Usui Reiki Ryoho Gakkai*, which translates as "Usui Reiki Healing Society." This society is still in existence and is led by Mr. Kondo, its current president.

Usui gave treatments and taught classes. All diseases from cancer to meningitis were treated. His reputation as a healer spread all over Japan. He traveled the country healing the sick, directly teaching more than 2000 students, and initiating twenty teachers. Based on this work and his tireless efforts in the wake of a devastating earthquake and fire in Tokyo in 1923, the Japanese government issued him a *Kun San To* award for doing honorable work to help others. He suffered a stroke and died on March 9, 1926 at the age of sixty-two.

After his death, Usui's students erected a memorial next to his gravestone at Saihoji Temple in Sugunami, Tokyo. On it, he is described as "...gentle and prudent...His body was big and sturdy, and his face was always beaming with a smile. But when he faced



The Jizo shrine

the difficulties he went ahead with a definite will and yet persevered well, keeping extremely careful. He was a man of versatile talents and also a book lover, knowing well in the wide range from history, biography, medical science, cannons of Christianity and Buddhism and psychology up to magic of fairyland, art of curse, science of divination and physiognomy."³

It was Usui's desire that Reiki not be closely held as secret knowledge, but that the gift of Reiki be shared with all people. He recognized that "co-existence and co-prosperity of humanity underlie happiness."⁴ Perhaps he knew the potential of Reiki and that its healing touch would reach millions of men, women, and children around the world. He would no doubt be tremendously pleased to know that today Reiki is a force for global as well as individual healing.



¹ Jessica Miller notes the areas where Usui is likely to have meditated in her book, *Reiki's Birthplace*. (See article page 38.)

² Excerpt from the inscription on Dr. Usui's gravesite memorial. Text was written by Juzaburo Usuhida and translated into English by Tetsuyuki Ono.

³ This and earlier quote are reprinted with permission from *Iyashino Gendai Reiki-ho* by Hiroshi Doi.

⁴ "Excerpt from the *Reiki Ryoho Hikkei*," translated by Hyakuten Inamoto, *Reiki News Magazine*, Summer 2006, p.19.