

# **Reiki & “Tellers of *very* Tall Tales”**

by

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## Reiki and “Tellers of Very Tall Tales”

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"The *secret* to being a good storyteller *lies* in the ability to seamlessly blend *truth* and fiction together  
- to convincing and emotionally-engaging effect"

Over the years since Takata-sensei's passing (in 1980) many new and varied forms of Reiki have come into existence.

Some are simply new *approaches* to teaching the art of Reiki Ryoho, for example, utilising entrainment methods drawn from such disciplines as NLP, etc.

Some are the result of blending the art of Reiki, as taught by Takata-sensei, with elements drawn from other therapeutic and/or spiritual traditions – their originators being quite open and clear regarding the fact that these new systems are their own creations.

Yet other new styles of Reiki claim to be based on “channeled” teachings, whether from Mikao Usui, or other dis-incarnate sources.

Then there those new styles which claim to be 'rediscovered' early expressions of Usui-sensei's teachings. In some cases these are presented as therapeutically-focussed practices, in others, Spiritual disciplines in which the therapeutic element (if one exists at all,) is presented as simply a *side-effect* of the spiritual practices.<sup>1</sup>

In this “rediscovered teachings” category, there are often many commonalities:

Several of the individuals responsible for the initial “discovery” of these systems claim to have, by sheer good fortune, accidentally “bumped into” (or as a result of their “honoured status” due to being some form of high-ranking martial artist or such like, to have been *introduced* to,) one or more Japanese men or women whom, so they claim, are (extremely long-lived) students who either were trained directly by Usui-sensei, or alternatively, had trained with (previously unknown) masters who were themselves trained directly by Usui sensei.

Conveniently, these ancient “Original Students” are (almost) always the bearers of hither-to unknown teachings which supposedly constitute the true core of Usui-sensei's system

[Though in a slight deviation from this common storyline, one individual claimed that it was his *father* who had come into contact with certain custodians of a box containing diaries and various other personal writings

belonging to Usui-sensei – writings which supposedly revealed the “true nature” of his teachings.]

Another common theme is that in most cases the 'Original Student' seems to confirm to the fortuitous individual who has been lucky enough to encounter them, that Usui-sensei just happened to belong to the particular spiritual tradition which the lucky individual also happens to have leanings towards.

Individuals with Taoist-related interests claim their teachers have confirmed that Usui-sensei's system was Taoist in origin.

Others who were known to have Tendai Buddhist leanings before their supposed encounter with their particular 'Original Student' claim that their teacher confirmed that Usui was a Tendai Buddhist and his teachings were Tendai in origin.

Yet others with Shingon Buddhist leanings before their supposed encounter... well, you get the idea.

\* \* \* \* \*

Now in general, the stories these individuals tell are often very compelling, full of intriguing anecdotal accounts.

In fact it must be said, gathering together some of the stories told by these individuals about the various “rediscovered” systems, it reads a bit like a handful of outline-notes for a yet-to-be-written Dan Brown novel:

Claims concerning a 'secret' lineage of Masters who were Usui-sensei's teachers...

Rumours of a hidden shrine (housing some of Usui-sensei's ashes, and the original handwritten version of the Reiki Principles) - its location known only to an honoured few...

Tales of still-surviving Buddhist nuns who had worked with Usui-Sensei during the 1920's...

Hints at the existence of a 'lost' Reiki symbol, known only to Usui-sensei's *True* successors ...

Stories concerning a renegade Shihan sharing *Usui Reiki Ryoho Gakkai* secrets with Western students...

Tales of chance meetings with some of Hayashi-sensei's students...

Accounts of 'Secret Usui Diaries' and other Reiki-related documents - locked away in a Japanese Temple...

Yet *other* accounts of 'Secret Usui Diaries' and other Reiki-related documents - though this time, claimed to have been discovered in a box, purchased from some Japanese monks after WWII...

Stories of clandestine meetings with a couple of Usui-sensei's students in Italian hotel rooms...

Tales of westerners receiving Reiki training in Japan in the 1950's...

Stories of the discovery of long-lost Buddhist Reiki-Sutras...

Claims that Reiki was based on a Tibetan Tantric Buddhist text, supposedly part of a cache of Buddhist documents brought to Japan by the founder of Shingon Buddhism...<sup>2</sup>

Stories of how Usui-sensei's development of Reiki Ryoho had been strongly influenced by the *Sonten*-worshipping 'Kurama-Kokyo' sect who occupy the temple on Mount Kurama...<sup>3</sup>

Tales of a fortuitous encounter on a North African beach with a septuagenarian Japanese student of Toshihiro Eguchi, who was also trained in the original system as taught by Usui-sensei...

Rumours about the existence of a secret Japanese mantra (closely guarded by the senior monks at the Kurama Temple) which activates a deeper level of all the Reiki symbols...

Accounts of a secret 'Buddho meditation' supposedly practiced by Usui-sensei on Kurama-Yama and passed on by him to Chujiro Hayashi who in turn shared it with a Zen monk...

Tales of the discovery of an obscure lineage of lamas in the Himalayas who recognised both the 'Buddho meditation' symbols and also some of the Reiki symbols as being elements of their own ancient healing system...

Yet *more* accounts of the discovery of Usui-sensei's hand-written journals...

Vague references to apparent documentary evidence that Reiki came originally from China...

Stories of how Usui Sensei was a high level martial arts practitioner...

Accounts of meetings with a Yoda-like character, supposedly Usui-sensei's one and only true successor...

\* \* \* \* \*

In many instances, the individuals responsible for 'discovering' these long-lost lineage-systems are often quite charismatic; they can seem very genuine and come across as very open-hearted in their willingness to share; and (for a time at least) the story that they tell may seem quite plausible

- that is, until people begin to get a feeling something isn't quite right, start to look deeper, and begin to ask questions...

This may take many months, it may not happen for some years, but when the veil of illusion begins to slip...

Usually it begins with little things.

Often a whole series of little things - issues with the story they tell – a story, which, by its very nature must constantly develop as the supposed “Original Student” reveals more and more information and takes the individual through further levels of training.

Perhaps the individual will unwittingly contradict something shared on a previous occasion.

Perhaps people will notice factual inaccuracies in some piece of historically-checkable information.

Or there may be issues with accounts relating to supposed details in the life of the “Original Student” - for example things that a Westerner, not well-versed in subtle aspects of Japanese culture might get wrong, but that a native Japanese who had been alive during the late Meiji or early Taisho eras would certainly not.

In an attempt to understand better, another Reiki practitioner might simply ask a seemingly innocuous question, only to find themselves suddenly greeted with excessive defensiveness.

Perhaps, some practitioners will question why they have never been permitted to see certain original documents (supposed extracts from which have been shared by the individual in order to lend weight to their claims) – only to be fobbed off with excuses, with reassurances that they *will* get to see the documents – eventually, when the time is right, or when they get permission to share them, or when...

In some cases, there may have been promises (or at least hints) to a senior student that they are to be honoured with a meeting with the “Original student” – but of course the meeting is, for some or other reason postponed, perhaps again and again.

All manner of reasons for this may be cited; common ones seem to be: issues related to the health / age-related frailty of the “Original student”; or in the case of the “Original student” being a member of a particular Buddhist order, restrictions imposed by their superiors at their Temple; or issues of some or other imagined nature concerning formal matters of Japanese etiquette.... Of course, another more final option would be to announce that the very aged “Original Student” had sadly finally passed away (however, not before they had shared the *entirety* of their teachings with the fortunate individual).

Some individuals, realising that the game was almost up have sought ways to get themselves out of the situation.

One or two have simply slipped off the radar.

Others – well perhaps they might announce that there would be no further sharing of the teachings, citing as a reason, that the “Original Student” had (for example) decided that perhaps the time was not right to reveal more; or

had decided that teaching the material was actually in some way holding the individual back – that it was time for them to move on to a new phase in their own personal spiritual training...

There are however several instances of individuals who have not gotten out in time - whose deception *has* been exposed for what it is.

One or two cases have been well documented, and occasionally come up in conversation in various online Reiki discussion groups.

Several other cases, it seems, have been more or less forgotten – nothing more than “yesterday's news”.

[Yet, sadly, human nature being what it is, it would be perhaps a little naïve to hope that the Reiki community has seen the last of such deceptive behaviour.]

Responses to such revelations are many and varied.

Initial disbelief often turns to confusion, shock, sadness, anger – perhaps depression.

Fortunately, it seems, the majority of people who were used and abused by such individuals will – after perhaps a period of disheartened-ness, and possible wariness about putting their trust in other teachers, move through the experience, treat the whole thing as a learning opportunity, and get on with their lives.

Some perhaps will adopt the attitude that while it is important to walk through life with an Open Heart, it in no way detracts from our spirituality if we also walk in “a *Street-smart* State of Mind”

However, in some instances, those who have made a considerable investment (whether financial or emotional) in the particular teachings, go into denial, refuse to believe that they have been the victims of a complex deception, and enter into a mindset of attempting to somehow validate the teachings and justify their belief in and commitment to the individual who has perpetrated the deception ( - often coming up with some quite eccentric reasons and excuses in the process.) .

In a few cases, some of these people will continue to present the discredited teachings as being 100% genuine.

It is perhaps to be wondered if these people truly *do* believe in the validity of the 'teachings' or if this is merely a pretence and they are simply focussing on the potential financial gain to be made from continuing to perpetuate the deception.

\* \* \* \* \*

So, just why *are* some individuals drawn to make up stories about the 'true' nature of Mikao Usui's teachings in the first place; to invent fictitious lineages, to create imaginary "Original Students", and put words in their mouths?

What motivates them to do these things – to take advantage of the trusting nature of good-hearted Reiki folk?

Do such individuals perhaps have some deep-rooted need to feel Important?  
A need to feel Special?

Is it in some way a confused attempt to gain a level of respect and admiration from others in the Reiki community, based on their (imagined) discoveries and achievements?

Is the desire for esteem so strong that they will seek to convince others that they have been singled out as being worthy to receive direct instruction and training in the 'inner mysteries' of their art?

Does it perhaps flatter their ego to have other people believe that they are somehow unique; or at least that they are part of a 'very privileged few' who are granted the rare honour of direct access to special people and teachings - access which is not directly available to others?

[Even though publicly they may pretend to play down the persona of 'high standing', prominence, and supposed importance which they have in reality worked so hard to create]

Some individuals might be using such fabricated stories as a way of 'giving weight' to their own ideas, by pretending these are really the teachings of someone *else* – someone supposedly holding an important central position within the traditions – someone supposedly close to the source – close to the Founder...

So many people are thrilled by the idea of learning "secret traditions" within a particular art or discipline.

How many would be enticed to invest in a particular course of training, specifically because it is presented as being part of the "un-polluted, original teachings" of Mikao Usui? <sup>4</sup>

Then there is the whole issue of "*uso mo hoben*".

This Japanese expression, originally a concept from Buddhist thought, refers to the idea of "skilful or expedient methods" (*upaya* in Sanscrit, *hoben* in Japanese) of teaching the Dharma

In its original context, "*uso mo hoben*" speaks to the belief that, that under certain circumstances, even a lie (*uso*) may justifiably be used as a means to draw someone to the Buddhist path. <sup>5</sup>

"Words that are not true may never-the-less lead one to the Truth."

For example, a particular individual who holds certain spiritual or religious

beliefs may feel justified in 'pretending' that Usui-sensei was a follower of that particular tradition, and that he taught certain related practices, beliefs and principles.

In creating this deception, their hope may be that some people will be drawn to the study of the specific tradition, become immersed in its practices, beliefs and principles, and thus be brought closer to the deception-creator's own particular understanding of the "Truth".

Of course, while such individuals may genuinely begin with the original noble concept behind "*uso mo hoben*" it is all too possible that, somewhere down the line, as they continue to develop and expand upon their imaginative story, even they themselves may eventually become "lost in the lie".

\* \* \* \* \*

[ *There is more yet to be written on this subject. "Watch this space"* ]

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#### NOTES:

- 1 In nearly (but not entirely) every case, such styles have been "rediscovered" by Westerners.
- 2 - at a time *before* Tantric Buddhism - originating in India - had even *arrived* in Tibet!
- 3 - even though this particular sect did not take possession of the Kurama temple until nearly *a quarter of a century* after Usui-sensei's passing!
- 4 It is interesting that, often, the individuals offering such training are also amongst those who are attempting to cast doubt on the validity of other more *established* teachings within the Usui lineage.
5. Sadly though, in the modern era the original sentiment behind the phrase "*uso mo hoben*" has become twisted, and the expression has become an excuse for lying whenever one feels it is convenient to do so:  
"lying is simply a convenient means to an end"



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