

Happy Birthday  
Dr. Usui!

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AUGUST 15  
(1865-1926)

International Association  
of Reiki Professionals



The month of August is a celebration for Reiki. August 15th marks the birthday of the founder of Reiki, Dr. Mikao Usui. Though he died in 1926, Dr. Usui's legacy lives on gracefully and powerfully.

Dr. Usui was born on August 15, 1865, in the village of Taniyai, Japan (known as Miyama cho in present-day). There, he lived with his father, mother, and two brothers, Kuniji and Sanya, and a sister, Tsuru.

As a child, it is believed that young Mikao studied at a Tendai Buddhist monastery school where he took a deep interest in psychology, biology, medicine, and the various religions of the world. Later, Dr. Usui married a woman by the name of Sadako Suzuki with whom he bore two children – Fuji and Toshiko.

Though the exact list of countries that he visited during his life is unknown, it is thought that Dr. Usui visited much of the Americas, Europe, and China during his young adult years. During this time, Dr. Usui held many jobs, including positions as an office worker, reporter, missionary, public servant, secretary to the politician Shimpei Goto, supervisor of convicts, and more.

Mikao Usui had many interests with a common theme of benefitting humanity and studied various religions including Buddhism, Taoism, and Christianity. Eventually, however, it is said that Dr. Usui became a Tendai Buddhist Monk. It is said on his memorial that it was during an extended period of meditation he partook in

during his time as a monk that Dr. Usui became inspired to create the healing system for which he would become famous – Reiki.

The discovery of the roots of Reiki arose when Dr. Usui partook in a 21-day meditation on Mount Kurama-yama. This included fasting, prayer, and meditation.

It is thought that Dr. Usui developed Reiki by utilizing the enlightened symbolic information he received during his Mount Kurama-yama meditation and combining both the spiritual and physical healing techniques of many Eastern medicine practices into one comprehensive system. However he devised it, Dr. Usui's healing techniques and teaching methods were popular among the people in Japan. Dr. Usui opened a practice in Harajuku Tokyo in April of 1922. There, word about his practice quickly spread. At a time when Japan was opening up to Western ideas and culture, many of the older people in Japan saw Dr. Usui's practice as a return to the old ways and thus appreciated it.

At his school/clinic, Dr. Usui taught and healed devised a small manual, the basic content now translated into English. Dr. Usui would heal his patients using a wide range of techniques. Most importantly, though, Dr. Usui would strive to teach them how to heal themselves – a concept still central to Reiki to this day.

After a devastating earthquake struck Tokyo and Yokohama, Dr. Usui and his school/clinic played a key role in helping treat the injured. His list of patients and students quickly grew to the point that he needed a larger building. Dr. Usui moved his practice to Nakano where he continued his work until his death on March 9, 1926, when he suffered a stroke while traveling to Fukuyama to impart his teachings.

Today, Dr. Usui, respectfully called Usui Sensei in Japan, is fondly remembered as the original architect of a system that has continued to help countless people even years after he was gone. His life and legacy are filled both with adventure, compassion, and innovation, and the mark he left on this world during his 60 plus years on earth will not soon be forgotten. And so every month of the year but especially in August, we like to celebrate the birth of Reiki's beloved founder, Dr. Mikao Usui!

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