

Reiki

- some thoughts on 'Initiation', 'Attunement', & 'Reiju'

by

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SOME THOUGHTS ON INITIATION...

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'Reiki' is an initiatively-received (initiatively-*awakened*?) ability to *interact* with a *very specific* set of therapeutic qualities - or, as some would phrase it: a *very specific* set of 'therapeutic energy-frequencies' *, which are not normally *consciously* accessible to us.

On one level, the purpose of the Reiki initiations is to calibrate or *fine-tune* the student's awareness/sensitivity/interactivity to that particular set of therapeutic energy-frequencies.

In order to pass the specific initiation to another - in order to *fine-tune* (rather than *attune*) them to the set of frequencies that constitutes the therapeutic qualities of (pure) Reiki, *we ourselves* must first have received that specific initiation - we must have ourselves been fine-tuned to these specific frequencies.

If we have not - if we do not, as it is phrased "hold the energy": this specific set of frequencies - then we cannot pass this particular 'fine-tunement' on to another:

"You cannot give what you do not have".

Modified forms of the Initiation process

The Reiki Initiations as used and taught by Takata together comprise a very precise process - just like a mathematical or chemical formula (or a food recipe for that matter)

You follow the process/formula and you get what you are supposed to get.

But if you start messing about with the process - *alter* the process - change the *number or nature* of one or more of the 'ingredients', change the *point in the process* where certain procedures are carried out or the *order* in which the 'ingredients' are added to the mix, you are likely to end up with something other than what you were supposed to get.

"Modify the formula, and you get a different result."

IMO, modifying the initiations results in the student being 'fine-tuned' to a slightly different set of frequencies (some might say, a less 'pure' or less 'effective', perhaps even less-than-therapeutic, set of frequencies).

We can only pass on what we have; and if what we have is fine-tunement to a slightly *different* set of frequencies, then (in using the same modified version of initiation process that was used to initiate us) this is what we will pass to others.

Even if we revert to using the actual initiation process as taught by Takata-sensei, unless we have first received this form of the initiation ourselves, then what we pass will still be a *slightly* different set of frequencies.

In an attempt to clarify this point [though by the time you've read the following, it may well be even less clear !]:

If we are 'fine-tuned' to a particular set of energy-frequencies, then by using the *identical process* by which we became 'fine-tuned' to this specific set of frequencies, then this is what we will pass on to others - 'fine-tunement' to the identical, specific set of frequencies we ourselves hold

If, however, we modify the process, then we pass on a *modified* version of what we ourselves hold.

For example:

If I have received, say, Tera Mai Reiki - then in using the Tera Mai initiation, I will pass this set of 'frequencies' on to the other person.

However if (sticking with the same example), having been attuned to Tera Mai, instead of the Tera Mai initiation, I use, for example, the Jikiden initiation process, (without having myself received the Jikiden 'frequencies'), then what I am passing is actually the Tera Mai frequencies, *modified* by the Jikiden process, rather than the 'pure' Jikiden frequencies themselves.

The person receiving this 'impure' Jikiden, even in passing on initiation via the Jikiden process, will still not be passing 'pure' Jikiden frequencies (as they *never had them in the first place*).

Alternatively, let's say (having been attuned to Tera Mai), I decide to create a *new* 'style' of Reiki (and let's be egotistical and call it James Deacon Reiki). Instead of using the Tera Mai initiation, I create a new initiation process (perhaps using new symbols, or initiation points or whatever). In using this new process, what I am passing is actually the Tera Mai frequencies, *modified* by the new process.

This particular 'impure' or modified version of the Tera Mai frequencies now becomes known as 'James Deacon Reiki'.

I pass the James Deacon Reiki initiation to someone.

Having received the James Deacon Reiki frequencies (i.e. the Tera Mai frequencies, modified by the new initiation process), that person, by themselves using the James Deacon Reiki initiation process, will pass this same set of 'frequencies' on to the next person.

While this set of frequencies may technically be considered to be an *impure* version of Tera Mai, it is at the same, the '*pure*' set of James Deacon Reiki frequencies; and this is what the next person receives: pure James Deacon Reiki.

Everyone who receives this James Deacon Reiki frequency-set can, by using the specific James Deacon Reiki initiation process, pass the pure James Deacon Reiki (aka impure Tera Mai) on to the next person.

However, someone who has, say, 'Usui Shiki' Reiki frequencies, (but who has not received the James Deacon Reiki frequencies) even if they use the James Deacon Reiki initiation process, will not be passing 'pure' James Deacon Reiki - but rather 'Usui Shiki' *modified* by the James Deacon Reiki process.

and so the 'frequency-set' has changed once again...

In turn, the person receiving this 'impure' James Deacon Reiki, even in passing on initiation via the James Deacon Reiki process, will still not be passing 'pure' James Deacon Reiki frequencies (*as they never had them in the first place*)...

Now, if that person, holding the 'impure' version of the James Deacon Reiki frequencies, should choose to use, let us say, the Komyo initiation process....

This, I believe, can go some way to explaining why there is a different 'feel' (in some cases, subtle, in others not so subtle) to the Reiki channelled by practitioners in certain lineages.

The greater the changes to the initiation process, the greater the energetic difference, to the point where the frequencies to which the student becomes attuned cease to be recognised as 'Reiki' at all - a prime example being the modified versions of the Reiki initiations as used in Tera Mai.

Modifications to the initiation process could also account for instances where the 'fine-tuning' simply just doesn't 'take' at all: the student complains of feeling tired or drained after giving Reiki treatments - a sign that, unable to channel Reiki, they are in fact using personal ki to bring about healing - and in doing so, are depleting their own vital life force.

Note:

* existing *within* / as part of, the omnipresent Universal Life-force Energy

* * * * *

REIJU: 'ATTUNEMENT', 'EMPOWERMENT', OR SIMPLY A FORM OF 'BLESSING CEREMONY'?

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Attunement = Empowerment = Attunements?

In Reiki terminology, 'empowerment' and 'attunement' *used* to mean the same thing:

Attunement - from the analogy of 'tuning in' a radio. In the Reiki sense, tuning the student in to the 'Universal Life-force Energy- or rather to *specific frequencies within* that all-pervasive Energy* the 'frequencies' otherwise referred to as the 'Reiki Energy'

Empowerment - coming from an Japanese esoteric Buddhist concept: *kanjo* - a rite in which an individual receives a 'spiritual permission' i.e, is spiritually/esoterically *empowered* to work with a particular practice, or manifest a particular ability - in this case the Reiki ability
(some folk still refer to the initiation symbol (DKM) as the 'empowerment' symbol)

So, 'empowerment' and 'attunement' were just different ways of looking at the process of 'getting' the Reiki Phenomenon

[Other folk sometimes spoke of the process in terms of bringing the individual into '*alignment*' with the Reiki capability.

Yet others talked in terms of '*re-patterning*' the individual's field - as if re-programming some form of 'psychic-energy computer' to enable it to interact with the subtle energy-phenomenon that is Reiki...]

Initiations?

But these terms/concepts mentioned above are really very modern:
Takata sensei actually spoke of the process as an 'Initiation' - a sacred ritual; however, the word 'Initiation' was seemingly a bit too overtly esoteric for some, so it fell out of favour and both 'attunement' and 'empowerment' (terms which on the surface at least had less 'mystical' connotations than Initiation) came to be used interchangeably as the standard terminology.

Empowerments and Attunements, no longer the same?

Then, more recently, some people started to differentiate between 'empowerment' and 'attunement' - using 'empowerment' to refer more to a *non*-initiatorial practice - simply a way of boosting sensitivity - enabling the individual to experience the feel of the 'energy' more deeply, and thus interact with it more effectively.

The state of boosted sensitivity achieved through 'empowerment' is temporary; however it appears that, through repeated empowerment, the effects may in fact be cumulative - resulting in a permanent and progressive deepening of sensitivity. But due to the subjective nature of the experience, it is difficult to be certain if this is indeed the case.

Reiju - Attunement or Empowerment, or..?

Initially it was believed that modern-day forms of *reiju* (all of which seem to stem from the process as reinvented/recreated by Hiroshi Doi*) essentially served the very same purpose as the initiation process (*denju*, in Japanese) as practiced by Takata-sensei.

However, over time this view has altered and it is now generally understood that the various forms of *reiju* function either more along the lines of an empowerment (in the more *recent* 'increased-sensitivity' meaning of the term), or alternatively, simply as a form of 'blessing ceremony'.

[*When Doi first began teaching *reiju*, it was assumed that the process he was working with was the 'original' version (or at very least, close to the original version) used by Usui-sensei. It was only some time later it became clear that Doi's *reiju* was purely his own creation - something he designed in an attempt to emulate the *feel* of the *reiju* process he claimed was used in the Gakkai, but which he himself, not being a Gakkai master, had not been taught.]

As such it would seem that *modern-day* *reiju* is lacking something that was present in *Usui-sensei's* *reiju* - the *effect* of the latter probably having been more in keeping with that of the later initiation/attunement process (which may have actually evolved *out of* the *reiju* process).

Original meaning of the term: reiju?

Technically, the term *reiju* (in its *purest* sense) - depending on which of two specific kanji you use to write the *ju* part, can mean either 'to give spirit', or 'to receive spirit'.

And just as *modern-day* *reiju* is seen as being simply a 'blessing ceremony' by some, in its original sense, the term *reiju* can indeed *also* refer to the sharing of a 'blessing' - but at a *very* deep, spiritual/esoteric level.

The term *reiju* implies the sharing/conferring of an actual *Spiritual Gift*.

In a Reiki context then, rather than simply being about increasing an individual's ability to sense the 'energy', the original concept of *reiju* can perhaps more properly be understood as having been about 'Blessing' an individual with the actual Reiki itself: the actual *Reiki ability* itself.

Usui-sensei's *reiju* being a process for facilitating gradual transfer of the *Spiritual Gift* of Reiki to another living being - perhaps a means of sharing with them (at a subtle level) the essential 'flavour' of the phenomenon that was Usui-sensei's *initial* 'Reiki Experience' during the meditation on Mount Kurama?

Reiju then - the sharing/conferring of an actual *Spiritual Gift* - is an (albeit incremental) initiatorial process comparable to the *denju* (initiation) as practiced by Takata-sensei.

Denju

In its deepest sense, *denju* constitutes a simple form of 'transmission-empowerment-ritual' - the likes of which are to be found in Japanese Mikkyo (esoteric Buddhist) traditions [also in the Esoteric Buddhist traditions of Tibet and China] - and which are viewed as *central* to the student/disciple's development and 'spiritual unfolding'.

In its earliest manifestation, so we are told, Usui-sensei's system was a *Reiho*: a 'Spiritual Method' - for improving mind and body; it is also claimed by some that Usui-sensei's original reiju was actually *itself* derived from Mikkyo ritual.

So this would seem to put *denju* and *Usui-sensei's* reiju (not the *modern* reinventions) on a relatively level footing.

From the perspective of the Esoteric Buddhist initiatorial traditions, it can be understood that, via either the *denju* process or (*Usui-sensei's* version of) the reiju process, the teacher is conferring the 'Reiki Ability' on the student - not just in an actual, *practical* sense, but also in the more spiritual/esoteric sense of passing on to the student the 'spiritual *permission*' to manifest what is afterall an essentially *sacred* therapeutic phenomenon.

Note

* – as existing *within* us

* * * * *

FROM REIKU TO DENJU...
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Many people are seemingly of the opinion that, as Usui-sensei originally worked with the incremental *reiju* process as a means of 'awakening' the Reiki Ability in his students, then it must have been someone *else* - such as Hayashi-sensei - who devised the *denju* (initiation) process as used by Takata-sensei.

But why?

Are we expected to believe that, having begun to work with his *reiju* process (as opposed to *Hiroshi Doi's* *reiju* - or *Chris Marsh's*, for that matter), Usui-sensei *never* experimented: *never* modified the initial process, *never* attempted to improve on it? Or, perhaps, if he found something more effective, even *replace* it?

We know Usui-sensei's system went through various evolutionary changes - e.g. the incorporation of the *gokai*, the introduction of a grading system, the gradual increase in emphasis on the therapeutic side of his system, where previously the focus had been primarily on Spiritual development.

We are also told by some that the symbols were not a component of the *therapeutic* side of the system in the very early days - that they were something Usui-sensei introduced at a point during its continued evolution - this action in itself marking a quite significant shift from earlier practice.

Now, as the symbols are a *vital* part of the *denju* process, could it be that their introduction coincided with the shift (whether immediate or gradual) from *reiju* to *denju* ?

That a *denju* process (possibly only a *proto*-version of the more familiar, later *denju* process) came into use as the *direct result* of a need for a more effective 'delivery system', as it were, for the newly introduced symbolic keys we are now all familiar with?

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REIJU – AND OTHER ‘HIGHER’ PRACTICES?

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When the 'Reiki Community' in the western world first learned of the process called *reiju* being used by Reiki Masters in Japan, we were told that this was the original version of what eventually became the 'Reiki Attunement' or 'Initiation' taught by Takata-sensei.

But whereas Takata-style initiation/attunement process (*denju* in Japanese) was only given at the 'introduction' to each level, *reiju* was a practice repeated on a *regular* basis, and was said to have a cumulative effect - ever deepening the quality of the attunement.

It was Japanese Reiki Master Hiroshi Doi who introduced the *reiju* process to western Reiki practitioners. However, at first there seems to have been some confusion (possibly due to language barriers) concerning the exact origin of the *reiju* method he was teaching.

Initially many western Reiki Practitioners were under the impression that the *reiju* being taught by Doi-san was the *original* version used by Usui-sensei himself.

But this was not the case.

And not only was it not Usui-sensei's *original* *reiju*, it was not even a version as used by the Usui Reiki Ryoho Gakkai.

Rather it turned out to be a procedure developed by Doi-san himself, to emulate the *experience* of the Gakkai version of *reiju* - which Doi-san had *received* on many occasions, but had not actually been taught how to *give* *

Some time later, Usui Teate teacher Chris Marsh (who *claims* to be in contact with some of Usui Sensei's original students) also began teaching a form of *reiju* - which he maintained was the *original* version [but it is unlikely that this will ever be verified]; and over the last few years, several other versions of *reiju* have also appeared.

Hyakuten Inamoto (of Komyo Reiki Kai), for example, utilises a variety of *reiju*'s, including an 'open' or 'temporary' *reiju* which can be given to non Reiki practitioners [- this latter is, I feel, based on the 'Healing Attunement' found in some western styles of Reiki] .

As mentioned above, when we in the west first began to hear about *reiju* we were told it was the *forerunner* of the *denju* initiation/attunement process as taught by Takata-sensei.

In its deepest sense, Takata-sensei's *denju* constituted a 'transmission-ritual' by means of which the Reiki Master conferred the 'Reiki Ability' on the student - both in an actual, practical sense, and in the more spiritual/esoteric sense of passing on to the student the '*spiritual* permission' to manifest this essentially sacred phenomenon.

This type of 'transmission-process' is something which has a deep resonance with practices central to Japanese Mikkyo (esoteric) tradition.

Now, strangely, while it is claimed by some sources that reiju is actually *derived* from Tendai Mikkyo Buddhist practice, [in which 'transmission-empowerment rituals' are *core* to the student/disciple's 'unfolding'] these same sources are also *now* telling us that, rather than being a form of attunement or initiation, reiju is *simply* a 'blessing ceremony' - that it is *not* a transmission-empowerment process at all.

Interestingly though, while in *one* breath effectively downgrading the significance of reiju in the Reiki scheme of things, these same sources in the very *next* breath intimate that they themselves have been made aware of other '*higher*' practices that can take the student to levels of Reiki experience that reiju can not.

Could it be that, with the passing of time - the original enthusiasm about reiju having eventually died down to a level where it is widely realised that reiju (or at least the modern-day, '*reinvented* reiju') is not all it was hyped up to be - the time has come for the *next*, new 'big secret', in the shape of one or more of these 'higher' practices to be rolled out (via an expensive seminar, no doubt) to an unsuspecting and ever-eager Reiki Public?

* On a related note, Hiroshi Doi learnt Barbara Ray's "Radiance Technique" style of Reiki from Mieko Mitsui in Japan in the late 1980's. It is interesting that his *reiju* actually bears a striking resemblance to a version of the short-form Reiki Treatment I learnt from a "Radiance Technique" Reiki Instructor several years ago...

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INITIATION: (IN)FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why bother with a Reiki teacher – why not just self-attune?

Reiki ability is something, to quote John Gray (one of Takata-sensei's master level students), that is passed:

"Hand to hand"

- i.e.: from one living person (in whom the ability is *already* awakened - and *developed*) to another (who wishes to awaken and develop the ability)

In my opinion it is not something you *can* self-attune to - unless perhaps, you are willing to go down the whole "21-days of starvation, prayer and meditation" route as Usui-sensei did - and maybe not even *then*.

Numerous others have attempted this - both *before* and *after* Usui-sensei - without achieving anything close to the same results...

Also, there is more to becoming a Reiki practitioner than simply receiving attunement

I feel, it is important to remember that *originally* (and even in Takata-sensei's day,) attunement - be it to master or any other Reiki level - was only one *part* of Reiki Training; only one *element* of the process of awakening and developing the Reiki ability.

But somewhere down the line, folk began fixating on this one part, in some cases, to the almost total exclusion of the *rest* of the training - forgetting that in relation to Reiki, the concept of 'initiation' - in the *fullest* sense of the word - while it *includes* the energetic 'attunement', *also* includes the *teachings* accompanying it [and by teachings, I refer to more than 'information'].

Often, much of our *real* 'learning' comes from simply spending time in the physical company of an experienced Reiki Teacher.

We are not merely gaining 'information' [which we could read in a book/manual], but are *also* gaining insights, awarenesses, understandings - in part, via the conscious process of 'observing and practising' - but perhaps more importantly, subliminally, as we interact on a *subconscious level* with the body-language of one experienced in the Reiki art.

The initiation *ritual* (i.e. the 'attunement' itself), may constitute the formal aspect of, as it were: 'fine-tuning the student to the Reiki frequencies'.

However, beyond the 10 minutes or so over which the actual ritual occurs - in fact right throughout the *entire* time we spend with the teacher during the course of training - we are *still* participating (albeit subconsciously) in a profound 'energetic' interaction that follows on from, and in my opinion, 'rounds out' the effects of, the attunement itself.

They said I must wait at least two or three months before getting my level two attunement? Why? I heard some Reiki Masters will give you level two Reiki straight away after level one, even on the same day. Some people are saying that both Usui and Hayashi taught Reiki 1 and 2 together - that this was the original approach?

IMO, so many people (through no fault of their own) seem to have the understanding that it is *the length of time you wait* that is important - where in reality it is *how actively you apply and develop your Reiki during that time*.

Sadly, I've known some people who, after receiving the Level 1 attunement, essentially just 'kick back' and focus on the '*waiting*' (albeit impatiently!) for 6-12 weeks - not even bothering to *self* treat, let alone treat others - before taking the Level 2.

I feel that, in their enthusiasm, too many people see the progression through the levels as some kind of *race*.

It is not.

I have a friend who took level one several years ago, and when I suggested a while back that he might wish to take 'the next step on the journey' and receive the level 2 attunement, his reply was essentially "Not until I've exhausted all the possibilities of Level 1 - ask me again in a decade or so."

And, when it comes to the issue of whether Teachers should even be *offering* Levels one and two 'back to back', I feel we should keep in mind the following:

In the 'Usui Reiki Ryoho Hikkei', in response to the Question: "How can I receive the second degree [*okuden*]....."?

Usui-sensei answers:

".....We will give okuden to enthusiastic shoden [level1] students who bring good results, are of good character, and behave properly."

This in itself would suggest the need for a period of time between levels, in order for the Teacher to monitor and assess both the student's *development* and their *moral* behaviour, and thus to establish the required criteria:

i.e. that the student *is* achieving good results in their shoden practice*, is also *ethical* in their practice (as well as in life generally); and amongst other things, that they are not *boasting* about their newly-awakened abilities, making false claims as to *how* they gained them, or attempting to instruct others in things they themselves have not yet mastered, etc, etc.

[*It is a traditional approach that *only* when a student is perceived to have integrated a given element of a teaching - and 'run with it' as far as they can - that the next element is presented to them.]

Takata-sensei tells us that *her* level 1 and 2 training with Hayashi-Sensei took the form of an apprenticeship/internship - based around intensive daily practice (and monitoring) at the Hayashi clinic, *and lasted well over a year*. (She received the level 1 initiation in 1935 and the level 2 in 1936).

However, she also tells us that *initial* tuition for the level 1 consisted of *four* days of training - a separate initiation being given on each day; also each day dealt with a different area of treatment: Day 1 - the head and neck, and related medical conditions; Day 2 - the front of the body; Day 3 - the back, spine and nervous systems; Day 4 accidents and acute illnesses; and also with the spiritual aspects of Reiki - including the Principles.

Chiyoko Yamaguchi (founder of Jikiden Reiki) claimed that, in 1938, her training with Hayashi-sensei took a form not dissimilar to this initial 'seminar'-style teaching, though perhaps of a somewhat *simplified* nature - as apparently it consisted of both Level 1 and 2, presented over a single five-day period.

This is the primary source for the belief that Hayashi-sensei taught levels 1 and 2 back-to-back, but as we can see from Takata-sensei's training, it was *not* the way he was teaching back in 1935/36.

People say if you try doing Reiki but you have not ever been attuned or initiated with Reiki, then you are really using up some of your own personal ki. How can this be? Wouldn't you have to learn how to do this?

We are all constantly (though usually *unconsciously*) 'tapping into', interacting with and expending our own personal ki as part of the very process of living.

[There is a very specific term used to describe anyone does not do so, and that term is: *dead*]

Fortunately, most of the time our system is also capable of sufficiently replenishing our personal ki levels as a part of same natural process of living.

Every time we consciously focus on our breath, we are tapping into our personal ki - and while certain breathing rhythms (whether unconsciously occurring, or consciously activated) help us *absorb* external ki - thereby replenishing our levels of personal ki, other rhythms actually cause depletion and *dispersal* of our personal ki.

Some folk (i.e. those poetically referred to as either 'psychic vampires' or 'energy vampires') seem possessed of a natural ability to 'leech' personal energy from others; and on the *flip side* of the coin, there are many from whom personal ki simply 'escapes' under certain circumstances.

Fortunately, in most cases this leakage is akin to an energetic 'slow puncture' and while debilitating, is not too serious - providing the episodes of leakage are not *too* frequent or long-lasting - thus giving the individual time to recover.

Throughout history, such 'bleeders' (especially those who have come to a realisation of what is happening and find their own ways to at least partially control it) have frequently become successful healers [successful healers-of-*others* that is, though commonly, over the long-term, to the *detriment* of their own health].

Even non-'bleeders' can (*without* any training) give of their own personal ki, if the desire or intent to do so is strong.

A common example of this is often seen in Reiki - where novice students find themselves tired or drained after giving treatment, simply because in their eagerness

to achieve, they are trying too hard - not yet being comfortable with the concept of simply *letting go* and letting the Reiki happen - they feel the need to 'do', to *push* the energy - and in doing so are adding their own personal energy into the flow.

So, if I am not properly attuned to Reiki, I would be using my own ki for doing the treatment? Then, what happens when I do self healing; am I just channelling my own ki out from the hands and back into my body? Wouldn't feeling energised and replenished after healing self or others be a sign I am properly attuned, and so not using my own ki?

The *common* theory is that the point of self-treating (or treating a client for that matter) is to 'top up' the energy levels - but perhaps this is an oversimplification.

Many treatments are not necessarily about *replenishing* energy but rather about *unblocking* or *transforming* energy; or *balancing* energy-flow.

Also, there is a big difference between adding energy *into* a person's system and *energising* a person's system

For either practitioner or client, feeling refreshed and energised after a treatment is not *necessarily* a sign that they have had their energies 'topped up'.

It is more commonly a sign that their *existing* energies have been *mobilised*: 'stirred up'.

I.e. that sluggish elements of their inherent energy-flows have been altered to restore proper 'rates of flow', and that in fact they are actually accessing and *using up* pre-existent reserves of energy, rather than having *extra* 'energy-fuel' added from an outside source.

To use a more mainstream medical analogy - its a bit like a very listless patient who is given amphetamines - they will feel amazingly *energised* - but they have not been given 'energy' - their system has simply been *stimulated* to burn up energy they already have.

Where someone is not a clear channel for Reiki, but using their own energy in self-treating, rather than *passing* that energy round in a loop via the hands and back into themselves, they are actually using some of their own vital life force energy as a *catalyst* - to trigger the *metabolizing* of their more general, renewable, everyday energy-reserves.

Same goes for treating a client. Rather than the *Reiki* mobilising the client's energy / energising them, the practitioner is using up a small amount of their *own* vital life force energy to trigger the effect.

What part or action of the initiation process actually attunes / initiates the student - at what point in the ritual do they go from not being able to do Reiki to being able to do it?

The 'formal' or 'theoretical' answer would probably be "there is no one single part - yet the student can not truly be said to have been attuned until the initiation has been completed".

To use an analogy - the initiation process is essentially a 'recipe' - for argument's sake, lets say a recipe for apple pie:

Is there one point in the process when the collection of ingredients, and instructions as to what to do with them, actually manifest 'apple pie'.

Is it perhaps the point when the dough is formed? Or when the apples are cut? When the pastry lid goes on? When the edges are crimped? When vent-holes are made in the pietop? When it goes in the oven? When it's cooked?

However, in my experience, there are actually several other factors to be taken into account:

The matter of 'intent' is an obvious one, and while intent may indeed play a part - I feel it is only a *small* part.

Obviously there is the matter of *which* actual initiation process is being used and just how *in touch* the Initiator is with the process i.e. the degree to which they are actually performing the process on an *energetic* level, as opposed to *simply going through the motions* of the physical 'form' of the process

But I am of the growing opinion that it is *in the main* down to the particular individual who is actually *being* initiated, as to when they begin to manifest the ability to channel the Reiki Phenomenon (which is of course *the only reliable way* we can say for certain that the person is actually attuned / initiated.)

From experience, with different students the Reiki begins to flow (or, more properly, is *perceived* to begin to flow) at different stages in the procedure. With some it is early on in the process, with others it is later in the process - and then there are others still in whom the Reiki does not actually begin to flow at all during the process itself

[The first time you come across this it can be somewhat disconcerting - but generally the Reiki 'kicks in' within a few minutes]

Unlike pregnancy and death [you can't be 'a little bit pregnant' or 'a little bit dead' - you either are or you are not], in my experience, the ability to channel/manifest the Reiki Phenomenon is not something we can pin down to a specific point in time (i.e. one nanosecond you *don't* have the ability, the next you *do*).

All beings have the *potential* to channel 'external' energies of various kinds, in fact I would go so far as to say that all beings *do* actually channel 'external' energies (albeit unconsciously) - though the degree to which this ability is naturally active (and the nature of the particular energies channelled) varies greatly from one individual to another.

While a rare few may already manifest a natural level of channelling ability which is clearly perceptible, and there are also those in whom the ability is *verging* on the perceptible, in most people the ability is so low level as to be *beyond* the perception of all but the most energetically sensitive individuals.

In my experience, the initiation process incrementally builds on the pre-existent level of energetic channelling ability, gradually 'increasing the volume' as it were, as the procedure is worked through

[and, also - to the extent that the Reiki Phenomenon is simply the channelling of energy (it is of course much more than this) - the process also 'tunes in'/'fine-tunes' the individual's channelling ability to the specific energetic frequencies we recognise as 'Reiki']

Thus, in a student in whom the natural ability was already verging on the 'audible', that ability may (possibly) reach a level where it becomes clearly perceptible at an *earlier* stage in the initiation process than would be the case with a student in whom the natural ability was less 'audible'.

If something actually attunes you to Reiki, then it actually will attune you to each level...As each level IS Reiki?

There is a famous Zen saying: "Do not confuse the finger pointing at the moon, with the moon itself" or in this case: "Do not confuse the 'levels' - and the tuition you receive at each one, with Reiki itself".

The levels are *not* Reiki.

The concept of 'levels' is simply a way of breaking up Reiki *training* (i.e. techniques, protocols, methodology, etc) into bite-size chunks, nothing more.

The four initiations ('attunement' will also do as a descriptive here) which are part of the 'Level 1' Reiki training course (Takata-sensei originally spoke of it simply as "Introductory training") are what connect you with the phenomenon that is Reiki - i.e. they give you the ability (or if you prefer *awaken* the ability) to 'do' Reiki.

Actually, in my experience, the *first* of the four gives/awakens the ability, the following three *deepen* and 'set' the ability (providing they are done properly - when they are not, you'll soon know about it, the connection begins to fade, and in time the student complains about feeling depleted as they end up transmitting their own energy instead of Reiki)

What we call level 2 (Takata-sensei spoke of it simply as "Intermediate training") is simply the next part of the *tuition in Reiki practice*.

The initiation given as part of the level 2 training course *does not* attune you to Reiki - how could it?

You were already attuned to Reiki as part of your level 1 (Introductory training) course

At level 2, the initiation 'attunes' you to the *symbols* you will be working with at this level.

(And no, contrary to the modern, post-Takata, western New Age mumbo-jumbo spouted by many - and even adopted by some styles of Japanese Reiki - the symbols *do not* connect you to different 'energies' within Reiki.)

Likewise, 'Level 3' *does not* attune you to Reiki - but rather attunes you to/empowers your ability to work with, the *symbol* given at that level: the Master Symbol.

I have been reading about Reiki and the whole process of attunement and there is something I just do not understand: this founder of Reiki, how was he "attuned"?

Certainly it is true that no human being 'attuned' Usui-sensei to the *specific* phenomenon that is the Reiki healing ability – but, nor for that matter, did he 'attune' himself.

What we call an 'Attunement', whether it is to Reiki or any other energy, power, or spiritual force, is essentially something you *receive* - most commonly from another *living* being - i.e. someone who is *already* attuned to that energy, power, or spiritual force.

To use an I.T. analogy, its a bit like having someone who possesses a very specific program which enables them to interact with an energy/power/force, download a copy of that program into your being.

Alternatively, if you have a deep understanding, and a stout heart, you can attempt to 'write your own program' as it were, by intentionally going in search of an 'attunement experience'.

This search might, for example, involve something like the arduous Vision-Quest practices found amongst several Native American peoples; or might involve the Japanese *shugyo* practices: severe meditative, ascetic & spiritual disciplines derived from Mikkyo (Esoteric Buddhist) and Shinto tradition.

We are told that it was as a result of the life-threatening 21-day *shugyo* practice Usui-sensei undertook on Kurama Yama that he *received* an intense, spiritual Initiatorial experience - *one* outcome of this being the manifestation of the abilities we know as the Reiki Healing Phenomenon.

The intentional search for an 'attunement experience' is usually considered a difficult & potentially (psychologically) dangerous route, but if successful, is said to result in a far more personal & intensely spiritual experience.

[There are, admittedly, some *rare* cases of what is referred to as 'spontaneous attunement' or 'spontaneous initiation' in which an individual becomes 'attuned' to an energy, power, or spiritual force quite *unintentionally* and for no perceivable reason]

OK, so Mikao Usui discovered Reiki meditating on Mt Kurama, but how did he learn how to do the attunements on people? Was he shown the instructions in his vision also? I have not seen this mentioned anywhere, does anyone actually know for sure? And were the symbols always a part of the process?

Well, if you keep on looking, you might find someone *claiming* they know, but think the only person who truly knows the complete answer to that would be Usui-sensei himself.

Firstly, as far as we can tell, in the very earliest days, Usui-sensei did not use the formal system of attunements that we are familiar with today, but rather used a very simple form of *reiju*. (Even the various *modern* examples of the *reiju* process we have now are *also* probably far more ritualised or formal than the one Usui-sensei actually used.)

There is no evidence to suggest that, as part of his 'Kurama experience', Usui-sensei received clear instruction on *methods* of conferring the Reiki ability on others.

However, we *may* assume that Usui-sensei would have been well aware that within Mikkyo Buddhism many forms of 'empowerments' or 'spiritual permissions' (*kanjo*) were used as a means of transferring 'potentials' or 'understandings' from *ajari* (teacher) to *deshi* (student).

And if he was, as is commonly claimed, actually himself a formal *student* of the teachings which constitute the *esoteric* element of Tendai Buddhism, then receiving such blessings etc. would have been a central part of his training.

Also in the course of his more *general* spiritual studies, he would no doubt have become aware of - and quite possibly received - several other forms of blessing/initiation used by many of the other healers, religious sects and healing groups, which existed in Japan at the time.

[The concept of sharing, or passing on, of an ability to others through 'initiatorial process' was something common to the majority of these groups and sects.]

It seems quite likely that such initiatorial practices could have influenced the development of Usui-sensei's *own* methods.

For example, it has been suggested that Usui-sensei had been involved with the Shinto-influenced *Reijutsu Kai* movement, and also with the *Omoto Kyo* sect, both of which organisations utilised rituals of empowerment, blessing and healing - Omoto-kyo working in the main with a spiritual healing rite: the *miteshiro*; and Reijutsu working with practices including 'laying-on-of-hands' *and* spiritual rituals.

They also used initiatorial procedures for conferring these healing abilities on others.

We can also be pretty sure that Usui-sensei's own approach to methods of initiation was one of *experimentation* - probably evolving through *various* forms over the four years or so he used it [prior to his death]

Current understanding is that originally (- rather than being a purely *therapeutic* modality,) Usui Sensei's system was essentially a spiritual-philosophical system - a system 'for the improvement of body and soul' - that is, a system *primarily* focussing on spiritual development, but one which *also* incorporated a self-healing element.

So, the reiju process was not simply about imparting practical 'healing ability', but also (as the term *reiju* implies) about imparting *spiritual* qualities or 'gifts'

Some say that, at first, there were *no* symbols used in the reiju process - that Usui-sensei incorporated them into the procedure at a later stage in its development.

However, there *is* of course the possibility that the symbols *were* there all along (They are, after-all, important keys to Usui-sensei's *spiritual* teachings, which *predate* the healing practice we generally think of as 'Reiki' today)

It is quite possible that Usui sensei (even early on) used two *different* versions of the reiju process

- one, *without* symbols: being a means of conferring blessing / empowerment / awareness of the healing ability, on *soto-deshi* (lit: 'outside students') – i.e. those who simply sought to develop a 'practical' remedial ability

and one, *with* symbols: a more spiritually-oriented process - being reserved for conferring blessing / empowerment / awareness of the healing ability, on *ushi-deshi* (lit: 'inside students') - i.e. those who had been accepted to study Usui-sensei's *spiritual* teachings.

My teacher said that there is no such thing as a 'right' or 'wrong' Reiki attunement process?

It really does come down to how the word 'Reiki' is being used here:
If we are taking the word 'Reiki' as a contraction of *Usui Reiki Ryoho*, then in my opinion, this statement is incorrect.

However if we are taking the word 'Reiki' in the commonly-used (and, as I see it, *incorrect*) sense - i.e. as a generic term for just about *any* form of channelled healing (whether energy or spirit), then, in an *absolute* sense, the statement *might* be seen to be true:

All attunements *will* attune you to something (otherwise we wouldn't label them as 'attunements')

But the emphasis should be on the word *something*

Different attunements will attune you to *different* things...

All attunements will attune you to *something*

Not all attunements will attune you to the specific *Spiritual Energetic Phenomenon* that is at the heart of *Usui Reiki Ryoho*.

On a related note: Whatever attunements you *have* received are modified by other, *different* attunements you later receive, and what *you* pass on is further modified by the specific attunement process *you* use to pass on attunements to others

Some people do four attunements at level 1, others do only one attunement; does this affect the outcome, does it make a real difference or is it all down to the intent of the person giving the attunement?

Takata-sensei taught the use of the 4 separate initiations (i.e. attunements) for level one, with a gap between each initiation. The idea seems to be that each initiation 'built' on the previous one, deepening the process of connection - thus ensuring the student develops a deep 'quality' of connection at what is after all the foundation level of Reiki [Reiki *is* - or *should be* - a building built on firm foundations]

However, as seems to be the case with all things Reiki - some post-Takata Reiki folk decided that as 'time is money' they needed a way to speed up the initiation process (especially when you hear how some of those in question liked classes of not less than 30-40 people!) - so essentially it seems the idea of one attunement instead of four actually evolved out of a time-saving exercise / plain ol' laziness.

Now as to what difference there is between the two:

[We all know that the symbols are sacred - but many it seems forget that the Initiation is *also* sacred.]

The Reiki initiation is a process - just like a mathematical or chemical formula (or a food recipe for that matter)

You follow the process/formula and you get what you are supposed to get.

But when you start messing about with the process - alter the process - change the number or nature of one or more of the 'ingredients', change the point in the process where certain procedures are carried out or the order in which the 'ingredients' are added to the mix, you are likely to end up with something other than what you were supposed to get.

IMO, this is the case with the 'simplified' Reiki initiation.

While it may connect a student to Reiki, there is often little 'quality' of connection (and some folk - well they've definitely been attuned to *something* - but it sure ain't "Reiki as we know it").

Yes, of course, intent plays a part - but *only* a part (and as the saying goes "the Road to Hell is paved with good intentions")

IMO, too much is made of 'intent'.

Just because someone *intends* something, does it guarantee the thing?

I intend to win the lottery every week!

[And after all, this whole concept of 'intent' as used in relation to 'New Age-ified' Reiki and other practices is simply a washed-out shadow of the *original* mystical/magical concept of 'intending'.

'Intent' in its mystical use was not about simply *wishing* that a thing be so; but involved a *devastating effort of will* - the achievement of a total congruence of being - focussing every single fibre of the being to achieving a given aim or goal.]

No - 'true' intending is too much hard work.

Personally, I can't see why I should have to intend (that is: hope & pray!) that a version of the Initiation that has been 'messed with' will work properly, when I can use the version passed on from Takata-sensei - one we know will do the job, properly attuning the student to Reiki 'as we know it'. [but this is just MY opinion of course.]

I was told you couldn't do Reiki without first having a "Reiki attunement", but surely we're all connected to the ULE [Universal Life-force Energy], anyone can channel it?

It is certainly possible to do *channelled healing* without a "Reiki attunement", but that doesn't mean what you are doing is 'Reiki'.

For example, in Therapeutic Touch (which I trained in before ever coming to Reiki) we also work with 'energy' channelled from Source - but this certainly *isn't* 'Reiki healing'.

In my opinion, Reiki [if we are to speak of this wonderful therapeutic phenomenon in terms of what is after-all the limited, modern-day conceptualisation of 'energy'] manifests as, for want of a better analogy, a very specific set of 'therapeutic frequencies'.

It is not *just* 'ULE' - some vague, all-encompassing 'blanket-coverage' energy, but rather, like everything else in existence - be it a pebble, a person, a non-corporeal 'spirit' or the nuclear reaction at the heart of a sun - what we term 'Reiki' is a unique manifestation of a *very specific* set of *qualities* existing *within* the omnipresent Universal Life-force Energy.

Also, the Reiki ability is something very *specific*, not *just* 'channelled healing' ability in general.

Yes, Reiki involves the channelling of 'energy', but more than this, Reiki is a very particular way *of interacting with* that energy, involving a particular set of physiological, symbolic and Spiritual protocols.

As I believe John Harvey Gray put it, Reiki is something that is passed 'Hand to Hand' (i.e. by initiation/attunement) from one person to another - starting with Usui-sensei.

If it doesn't come to you in this way - no matter what you choose to call it - it *isn't* Reiki.

* * * * *

DIAMONDS ARE...?
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Diamonds are forever...

[No, that's not it... What I *meant* to say was]

Reiki Initiations are... Forever?

In my opinion, the frequently-repeated notion that "once Reiki initiation is given, it can't be undone" came about partly as a misunderstanding of something Takata-sensei used to tell her students.

In response to voiced concerns (arising out of quite common and understandable insecurity on the part of many fledgling students), she frequently had to reassure people that once they had received Reiki (initiation) from her, it would stay with them always - they would never lose it - it would not disappear (- accidentally, as it were)*

[Though, in saying that Reiki would stay with them always, she did warn her students, they would never lose it as long as they did not attempt to pass the Reiki ability on to another person without having been trained in the proper method of doing so.]

Over the years the belief that Reiki would stay with students was reinforced by each new generation of Reiki masters...

However, the inference grew *beyond* Takata-sensei's meaning, to also mean that the initiation was something that could not be *intentionally* undone - could *never* be reversed. Period.

Yet this unsubstantiated belief in itself may well have been born out of yet a deeper insecurity...

Afterall, what if an initiation *could* actually be intentionally reversed/undone/negated?

Could someone (a Reiki Master, with the necessary understanding) possibly 'de-initiate' a student
- against their wishes?

There have, for example, been cases of Masters 'disowning' students for various reasons, e.g. where a student has chosen to modify the way they present/practice/teach Reiki or perhaps the student is acting in ways considered unethical by the Master etc. In such instances, the Master might deny the student permission to cite the given Master in their lineage.

But what if the Master could *reverse* the initiation - actually *neutralise* the Reiki ability within the student?

And beyond such (whether seen as 'legitimate' or otherwise) *punitive* use of 'de-initiation' - what about possible *unethical* use..?

If followed, this line of thought could open up a whole new can-of-worms...

And so the very idea that, once having been initiated, an individual could possibly (willingly or otherwise) be 'de-initiated', was made anathema.

It just *didn't* bear thinking about...

Yet, while Takata-sensei had assuaged her students' insecurities - re-affirming that they would not *lose* their Reiki ability - as far as I can be certain, she never actually said *anything* about not being able to *intentionally* 'undo' the initiation - particularly if the *student* wanted it to be undone...

Wanted it...?

But why on *earth*...

Well, for one thing, how about simple *freedom of choice*: the right to change our minds; the right to evolve, or even (- if as many do, we see Reiki initiation as an upward step - small or otherwise - in our 'personal evolution' -) our right to 'devolve' again, if we so *choose*.

In our life journey there are things that we are drawn to / things that are drawn to us - come to us for specific purpose - are necessary in our lives for a time - then, having helped us in a certain way, must be released, enabling us to progress, develop, evolve into new dimensions of our journey.

Is it not conceivable that Reiki can be such a thing - that (much as it may now be hard to imagine) there may come a point in our individual journey that Reiki is no longer meant to be *part* of that journey - that we are no longer meant to be part of *Reiki's* journey...

Must not there be the option to release the 'connection', the initiation?

Of course there must.

Anything else would be less than in keeping with the *spirit* of Reiki....

* She almost certainly wasn't allowing for the scenario of people 'tinkering' with the initiation process, or playing around with other practices from other disciplines - practices which might interfere with the specific 'energetic patterns' - the adjustments/realignments made in the students energetic system (or, to use an I.T. analogy, the 'program' downloaded to their system) via the Reiki initiation process

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