



The Usui Gainen 概念

by Richard R. Rivard

The Usui Gainen (concepts), also known as the Usui precepts, Usui affirmations or Usui Principles, are the **heart of every system of Reiki** that is attributed to Mikao Usui. This includes the original Usui-Do, Usui Teate, Usui Reiki Ryoho, Dr. Hayashi's Reiki school, and all early systems in Japan and afterwards. As a student progresses his/her way through the structure of the system, eventually he/she comes to a deeper understanding of their meaning.

Modern Japanese kanji is read with a mixture of what is termed as the KUN reading and the older ON or Chinese reading. All Japanese students learn both On and Kun interpretations of kanji in school. The Usui Gainen are intended to be read mostly with the On reading. (see the end of this article for the breakdown)

Original Translation

(intended meaning)

*The secret method of inviting blessings.
The spiritual medicine of many illnesses.*

*Anger not, worry not, today only.
(moment to moment, be in a state of non worry, non anger)*

*Do your work with appreciation
(live your life with gratitude)*

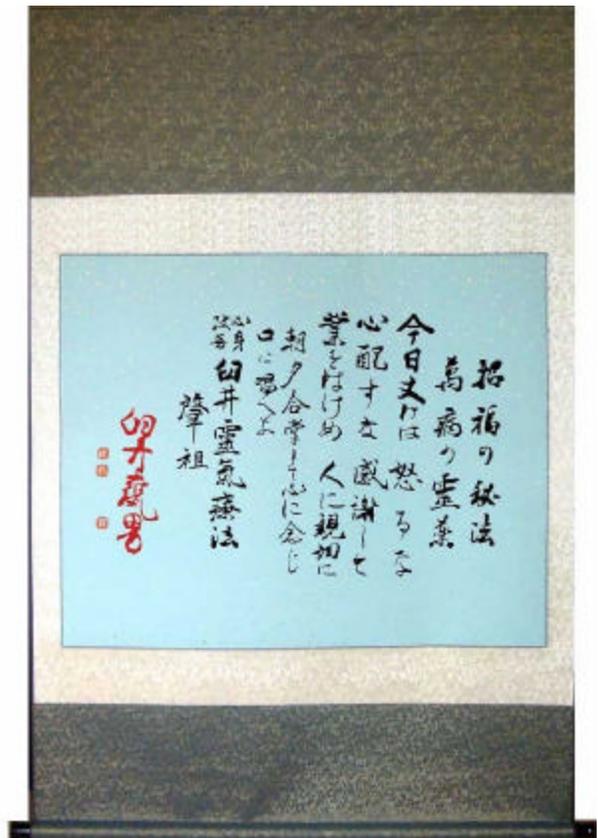
*Be kind to people.
(show empathy and awareness to yourself and others)*

*In your life, perform gassho as your mind recalls
(experience your life through these concepts each day)*

*The Usui system for connecting with your
ancestral self, through the body-mind.
(within each of us from the moment of conception)*

*The founder
Mikao Usui*

(The complete explanation is later in this document)



A close reproduction of the original Usui Gainen
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Most outside of Japan first learned of Reiki through Mrs. Hawayo Takata (a student of Dr. Hayashi) or via the lineage of her students. Here is how she worded the core part of the Gainen in her early diary.

From Takata-sensei

The Ideals (or Spiritual Precepts of Reiki)

Just for today--Thou Shalt not Anger
 Just for today--Thou Shalt not Worry
 Thou shall be grateful for thy many blessings
 Earn thy livelihood with honest labor
 Be kind to thy neighbors

The concepts have been presented in many forms since Mrs. Takata first taught the core part of them. The central part is known in the old Japanese Reiki society as the **Gokai** (go-kah-ee) - and most have been similar in their wording. But recently, these versions have been found to be a little incomplete and slightly inaccurate. In June 1996, I taught a Japanese fellow who was in Vancouver learning ESL (English as a second language). Just before leaving Japan he purchased a 1995 Reiki book called "**Iyashi No Te**" (Healing of Hands -- or Healing Hands). The author is Reiki Master **Toshitaka Mochizuki**, and this was the first modern Reiki book written by a Japanese. He has connections to many Reiki masters in Japan, at least one of whom has a lineage to another of Usui's students, Toshihiro Eguchi.

In Mochizuki's book he had a copy of the complete Usui Gainen (in Mochizuki's handwriting). With the aid of one of my Japanese students, Emiko Arai, a group of Reiki Masters sat down to decipher this version of the Gainen. Dave King also brought a copy of the original affirmations in the handwriting of Mikao Usui, which he had received on one of his Japan trips.

Emiko compared the modern day Japanese translation in Mochizuki's book to the copy of the original we had. If you have ever had to decipher someone's handwriting, you know that there are usually some words you have to guess at. It is the same with the handwritten version of the Gainen; plus, this style of writing and the Japanese Kanji used, are a bit different from that in use today.

Here is a VERY LITERAL TRANSLATION of the Gainen, from that day. Please note that the sentence structure is sometimes backward to that normally used in English (i.e. the verb comes first). Also, the first 2 lines are actually heading lines. Also, the Gainen in it's original Japanese form (previous page) are read from right to left, top to bottom.

Literal Modern Translation	Romaji or Japanese Pronunciation
<p><i>Inviting blessings of the secret method, Many illnesses of the spiritual (heavenly) medicine Today only, anger not, Worry not. With appreciation Do work. To people be kind In morning at night hands held in prayer think in your mind Chant with mouth. Mind body change it for better Usui Reiki method. Founder Usui Mikao</i></p>	<p><i>Shou fuku no hiihou Manbyou no Rei yaku Kyo dake wa Ikaruna Shinpai suna Kansha shite Gou ou hageme Hito ni shinsetsu ni Chou seki* gassho shite kokoro ni nenji Kuchi ni tonaeyo Shin shin kaizen, Usui reiki ryoho Chouso Usui Mikao</i></p>

* Note: Originally Emiko translated the 5th line as the phrase "Gyo wo". However, I have revised this based on what I learned later from Dave King's discussions with Tenon-in.

In any translation, you usually have several words to choose from, and you should pick ones that express the content of the whole, (and the culture). E.g. 'spiritual' may be more accurate in Japanese than "heavenly". So, if you try to put this into modern English, you could get something like the following, which is close to what Takata-sensei translated them as :

*The Secret Method Of Inviting Blessings
The Spiritual Medicine of Many Illnesses
For today only, Do not anger, Do not worry.
Be grateful. Do your work. Be kind to all people.
In the morning and at night, gassho (hands in prayer). Think this, chant this.
The Usui Reiki remedy to change your mind and body for the better.
The founder
Mikao Usui*

However, in 2002 in his Usui-Do classes, Dave King presented a different translation and explanation of the Gokai section, as well as the term Usui Sensei used – “Usui Reiki Ryoho.” In 1996, Dave and his colleague, Melissa Riggall, were introduced to several students of Usui Sensei who were all in their late 90’s.

One of them, a lay nun known as Tenon-in, began to share information about her daily life assisting in the Usui dojo with 4 other nuns, from 1920 until Sensei’s passing in 1926. She explained that Sensei wrote the affirmations one day in 1921 after receiving inspiration on nearby Mt. Hiei, his favourite mountain near Kyoto. It is also the location of the main temple of the Tendai sect of Buddhism, which Sensei was born into. He wrote them on a large piece of mitsumata washi (paper made from the misumata bush), which he then hung as a kakejiku or hanging scroll. This still hangs on the wall in a private shrine to Usui Sensei (not the Saihoji Temple site), which is kept secret from the public.

In her written comments to the Usui Reiki Ryoho International gathering in Toronto in 2002, **Tenon-in** describes the origin of the Gainen. (my comments are in brackets.)

“Usui-sama frequently made trips to Hiei-zan (Mount Hiei in Kyoto). He told us that he was waiting. We asked what is was that he was waiting for. He replied he would know when it arrived. Then one day in 1921, Usui-sama made yet another trip made another trip up to the Enrakyu Temple (on Mount Hiei near Kyoto) and returned several days later with a sheet of gold coloured paper.

*“O-Sensei sent us to buy a sheet of mitsumata washi (paper made from a mulberry type bush) and he spent the rest of the day with ink and brush. When we returned the next day, the paper was already mounted in the tokonoma (alcove). He had **signed the sheet in red ink** and had spilled some of the ink on the edge of his cushion which took the shape of kokoro (heart).”*

It was previously thought that the Affirmations were derived from the words of the Meiji Emperor, but on my trip to Japan in November 2000 I learned the following from Hiroshi **Doi-sensei** in his Gendai Reiki Master class.

“Usui Sensei created (the) Gokai (the 5 principles) getting hints from a book “Kenzon no Gebri” written by Dr. Bizan Suzuki (published in March, 1914.) The book says “Just for today, do not get angry, do not feel fear, be honest, work hard, and be kind to others.”

So it could have been a coincidence, or Usui Sensei could have noticed the inscription in

the book and become inspired by it. Whatever the source, the Gainen are what the spiritual side of Sensei's system was all about. Another interesting coincidence is that Suzuki was Usui Sensei's wife's maiden surname.

The Gainen were called by the original term Usui Sensei wrote near the end of the document - **Usui Reiki Ryoho**. In traditional Japanese Reiki and Usui-related schools like Gendai Reiki Ho, Usui Reiki Ryoho Gakkai and Usui-Do, they are explored in great detail.

When Melissa Riggall spent a month working with Mr. Tatsumi (a senior Hayashi student from 1927-31) in 1996, she pointed to the kanji for the term "Reiki" in a photo of the original affirmations that Mr. Tatsumi had. She said this is what the Western world called the healing system. Tatsumi said that the term is simply what O'Sensei (meaning Usui; the term refers to the head of a system) used to refer to his ancestors.

Dr. Hayashi had taught him an inner spiritual system (the original Usui-Do or Usui-no-michi) and an outer palm healing system that Usui's friend Eguchi created at the Usui dojo in 1925. Together with the Navy students of Usui, Eguchi and Hayashi had formed a learning society (Gakkai) called Usui Reiki Ryoho Gakkai. The palm healing system was the main method being taught, with spiritual work being increased as one progressed. But the system was shortened to 3 or 4 levels and few learned the complete Usui system. Dr. Hayashi continued to teach both systems until at least 1931, while Eguchi may have taught both for longer.

Since Takata-sensei's time the original Usui concepts were mistakenly called "precepts" or "principles". However, thanks to the meeting of Melissa Riggall and Dave King with several of Usui Sensei's living students, new insight has been discovered on what was originally intended by Usui Sensei's writing. They explained that the correct term for this writing is "Gainen", which means concepts. This is how Sensei referred to them in his dojo (training hall).

The image on the first page of this article is a reproduction close to how the original Usui Gainen looks in its resting place in a small shrine to Usui Sensei near Tokyo, based on in-person observations by Dave King and others. Dave shared these comments of Tenon-in at URRRI 2002.

"In 1921 O-Sensei made a further trip to Hiei-zan and returned several days later with a sheet of yellow paper. He sent one of us to buy mitsumata washi (bluish paper made from a kind of mulberry bush) and he spent the rest of the day with ink and brush. When we returned the next day the paper was already mounted in the tokonoma, He had signed the sheet in red ink and had spilled some of the ink on the edge of his cushion which looked like kokoro (the kanji for heart)."

All Western versions of this document are from a photo taken most likely by Dr. Hayashi, who was also an amateur photographer. The monochrome photographic plates he used did not seem to pick up Usui Sensei's signature in red ink, and Dr. Hayashi may have blanked the 3 hankos out when he developed the photo of the Gainen. Perhaps they were only proper on the original work. Dave had also observed that the original was brushed (shodo style) on blue mitsumata paper of the time, made from the mulberry bush. It was hung in typical Japanese kakejiku fashion, using a dark blue linen for its background. The

actual Gainen is quite large – about 35 by 27 inches.

Dave King was originally led to this (with eyes covered) in the early 1990's by the son of an Usui student he had met at Saihoji temple, and then a second time a few years later by Japanese friends. The shrine is extremely small, just big enough to stand in, and has the Gainen on one wall and the Usui portrait photo on another wall. There are some vases with flowers and a guest book. A portion of Usui Sensei's ashes is buried vertically (traditional style) in the floor. (The remainder are at Saihoji Temple.)

In Dave's Usui Teate class, he explains:

"The Gainen ARE Usui's system! They can be a philosophy, a way of living, a way of practicing the system (or "all of the above"). They are NOT a set of control statements! The term gainen (from Mandarin Gài Nian) translates as "concept." "

Dave and Melissa were receiving training from one of Usui's students, a lay Buddhist nun named Tenon-in (also called Mariko-Obaasan or Grandmother Mariko by those close to her). He further explained the following (with my notes):

"I had asked Mariko Obaasan to comment on the translation I had from Tatsumi (which was similar to that we worked out with Emiko all those years ago).

(Note: this was in July 1996)

*"The phrase **kansha shite gö o hageme** is **not** separated into **kansha shite** [be grateful..] and **gö o hageme** [work diligently]. In Japanese one can not string clauses together using a conjunction such as 'and'. Instead, the main clause appears at the end and is preceded by the dependent clause using the -te form (gerund) of a verb to link them. **Shite** is the -te form of *suru* (to do) and is used here to indicate concurrency. We get: **Appreciate** [at the same time as] **encourage work** [karma] ==> **Do your work with appreciation.***

"The secret method of inviting blessings is not reiju.

(Note: reiju is the term traditional Reiki uses for their empowerment ceremony).

"The effective medicine of many illnesses is not reiji.

(Note: reiji is the traditional Reiki term for giving intuitive healing).

"The title refers to that which can be accomplished from following the system (the gainen). One is seeking a shikan state (not exactly nirvana which is permanent shikan).*

"We cannot have FIVE concepts even if we separate the "worry-not" from the "anger-not" (regardless of whether we consider the "today only" to apply to all concepts or just those in the same 'sentence' (worry-not, anger-not). Mariko had not heard of the expression Gokai - they were called Gainen at least during her stay at the dojo."

(*Shikan - a definition -- "A meditative state in which perception is utterly free of discrimination between mind and matter, self and object; where the only permanence is impermanence; and change, whether subtle or violent, remains the essence of being.)

Here is Dave's translation based on Tenon-in's own training directly from Usui Sensei:

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THE HEADINGS

招福の秘法 [Shou fuku no hiihou](#): **The Secret Method Of Inviting Blessings**

萬病の霊薬 [Manbyou no Rei yaku](#): **The Spiritual Medicine of Many Illnesses**

THE FIRST CONCEPT:

Here we have two complementary ideas dealing with our interaction with the outside world that might inhibit our ability to be mindful.

今日だけは [Kyo dake wa](#): **Today only**

- This does not have to mean literally today. It is valid for any period of time (the duration of a specific activity).

怒るな [Ikaru na](#): **Anger not.**

- This is a state of polarity that is balanced on the side of openness to the perception of the effects of others on the self.

心配すな [Shin pai su na](#): **Worry not.**

- This is a state of polarity that is balanced on the side of the non-presence of concern over the outcome of a given activity. To not worry is itself worry!

(Note: Dave explained Polarity vs. duality. "Duality is represented by two opposites, often based on moral values, such as good vs. bad, right vs. wrong etc. There can not be a balance because duality can have only two states. Polarity seeks a balance between two complimentary ideas: warm is somewhere between cold and hot. In nature everything seeks a balanced state." Dave also explained that the idea here was to always be in the NOW, the immediate moment.)

THE SECOND CONCEPT:

感謝して業をはげめ [Kansha shite göu ou hageme](#): **Do your work with appreciation.**

- Apply wei-wu-wei (use without use e.g. if one has a experience that relates to one of the symbols, then the symbol has been used) and work guided by shen (the spirit) rather than yi (the "thinking" mind).
- Although the characters [kansha] used in this Concept literally mean "gratitude" the interpretation should be one of openness to one's interaction with nature. The character reading "göu" is better associated with Buddhist karma than "gyö" work.

THE THIRD CONCEPT:

人に親切に [Hito ni shinsetsu ni](#): **Be kind to people.**

- Show empathy and awareness both to yourself and others.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

朝夕合掌して心に念じ口に唱へよ

[Chou seki gassho shite kokoro ni nenji Kuchi ni tonaeyo:](#)

In your life*, perform gassho as your mind recalls (the Gainen)

- (Note added August 30, 2005) It seems that Melissa had been working on the Gainen in her last days. She had received more information from Mariko-Obaasan that deals with the meaning of the "instructions". Previously we had used 'asa yuu' - the kun (Japanese) readings (*instead of "chou seki"*).* The kanji are the same but Usui intended ON (Chinese) readings. The image here is '**constantly**' - literally 'from morning to night'. The intent is to experience your daily life through the Gainen. You are not expected to literally perform gasshou and chant the Gainen!

[心身改善 白井靈氣療法 Shin shin kai zen, Usui reiki ryoho:](#)

The Usui system for connecting with your ancestral self through the body-mind.

- *Reiki is a compound of REI and KI imported directly from China where it is pronounced LING QI. In Taoist cosmology the act of conception unites the souls called HUN and PO. When that being dies HUN returns to Heaven to be reborn in another incarnation and PO returns to Earth. However, if that being achieves a state of "nirvana" it may choose not to "die" in which case the souls remain on Earth and may become a source of guidance to those who come after. The result is simply a presence, not a "form of energy". It is only in very recent times that this term has been used to describe a specific form of energy connected with Usui Mikao and others of the post-Meiji period in Japan.*
- *In the mid 1990s my associate Shen Lissa (Melissa Riggall) stayed for a month with Tatsumi-san who was a student of Chuujiro Hayashi from 1927 to 1931. One day she pointed to a photo of the Usui concepts in Tatsumi-san's house. She noted the term "Reiki" and said that this was how the West referred to the hand healing system. Tatsumi-san said that the hand healing was simply referred to as te-ate, and that by using the term "reiki," O-Sensei (Usui Sensei) had been referring to his ancestors. **Usui Reiki Ryoho** simply means '**Usui system for connecting with your ancestral self**'- something that is already within each one of us from the moment of conception.*

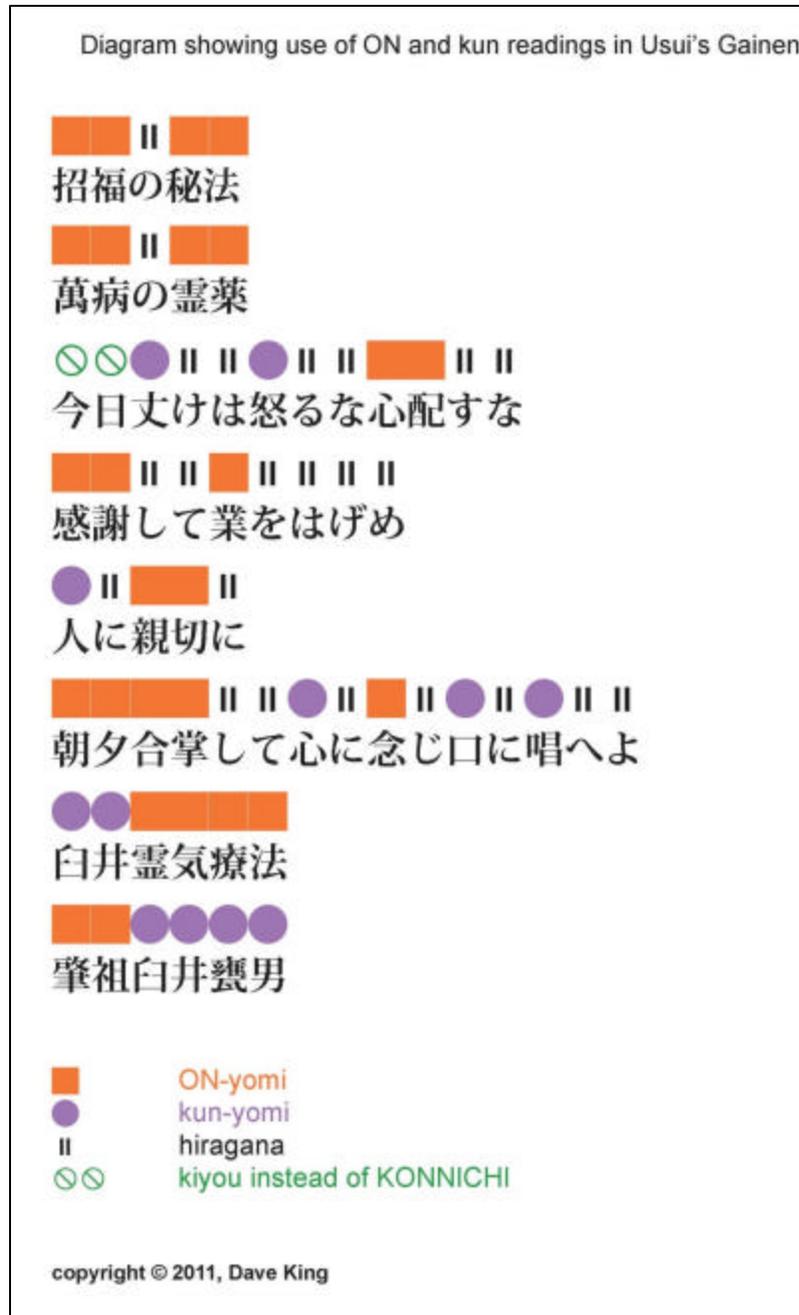
(Note: Dave's Usui-Do colleague, George Mullen, explained the term "reiki" this way:

"Reiki is a compound of REI and KI imported directly from China where it is pronounced LING QI. In Taoist cosmology the act of conception unites the souls called HUN and PO. When that being dies HUN returns to Heaven to be reborn in another incarnation and PO returns to Earth. However, if that being achieves a state of "nirvana" it may choose not to "die" in which case the souls remain on Earth and may become a source of guidance to those who come after. The result is simply a presence, not a "form of energy." ")

SIGNATURE

肇祖 [Chouso:](#) **the Founder**

白井靈男 [Usui Mikao:](#) **Mikao Usui**



At URRI 2000 in Kyoto Mr. Hiroshi Doi taught the following in his Gendai Reiki Master class.

"Usui Sensei created (the) Gokai (the 5 principles) getting hints from a book "Kenzon no Gebri" written by Dr. Bizan Suzuki (published in March, 1914.) The book says "Just for today, do not get angry, do not feel fear, be honest, work hard, and be kind to others."

It is interesting to note that Sensei's wife's maiden name was Suzuki – although Suzuki was a common name.

At the URRI 2003 conference in Denmark, Mr. Doi explained the use of the word "Reiki" as used by Usui Sensei. He said:

"The word "reiki" is used often by spiritual therapists during (the) Meiji (1868-1912), Taisho (1912-1925) and early Showa (1926-1988) Era. Many people used the phrase "reiki ryoho" to refer to their therapies, and "reiki ryoho" is not original with Usui Sensei. The name Usui Sensei used was "Usui Reiki Ryoho."

"The first person to use the term "reiki ryoho" was Mataji Kawakami, who was a therapist,

who published "Reiki Ryoho to sono Koka" (Reiki Ryoho and its Effects) in 1919. However, today the term "reiki ryoho" almost exclusively refers to "Usui Reiki Ryoho." "

In our 1996 translation, Emiko Arai also offered this interpretation of Usui's name: "Usu" means 'a large grain or rice mortar'; "i" means 'water well'; "Mika" is a very old name no longer in use that meant 'sacred rice wine cup or vessel', probably used in a spiritual offering; "o" denotes a masculine name."

Dave King found another translation for "Mikao" -- Jar/jug/vat/urn/vase.

Note: all comments from Dave King, Melissa Riggall and Tenon-in are © Copyright Dave King 2002