

# *The Heart of Reiki*

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## **Introduction (Excerpt)**

*The secret of inviting happiness through many blessings  
The spiritual medicine for all illness*

*Just for today:  
Do not be angry  
Do not worry  
Express gratitude  
Devote yourself diligently to your work  
Be kind to people*

*Do Gassho every morning and evening  
Repeat the precepts and keep them in your mind and heart  
To improve your body and mind*

— Mikao Usui

“The secret method of inviting happiness.” That’s how Mikao Usui, who developed and taught Reiki in Japan in the 1920s, described the method we call Reiki. But what, exactly, did he mean by “happiness”?

Although we don’t know all the specifics of how Usui Sensei worked with his students, we do know that his overarching purpose was to help them — and, by extension, us — experience personal or spiritual transformation. I’ve come to see Usui Sensei’s words as a concise expression of his purpose. He seems to be saying, “If you practice as I have taught, you will experience transformation, and as a result of that transformation, great happiness will arise.”

The five precepts Usui Sensei gives us here are certainly part of the method he taught for achieving happiness. If we do not give in to anger, if we do not worry, if we strive to be grateful and diligent and kind, then certainly we will see our lives change for the better over time: we will improve our body and mind. But that’s not all. We can also see the precepts as an expression of what we’ll be capable of once we’ve invited that happiness in: we’ll feel less anger and worry, which will enable us to feel more gratitude, devote ourselves more diligently to our calling, and be kinder to others. But still, the question remains: what precisely *is* this happiness that we can invite into our lives by practicing Reiki, and that can bring us all these other benefits?

An answer to this question came to me only after I had devoted myself to living a life of integrated Reiki and Buddhist practice. Over a period of years, I consciously and unconsciously drew elements of my Buddhist practice into my Reiki work, until finally the two marvelously and unexpectedly came together: I found that as I gave Reiki to others, great compassion would arise in me, followed by deep happiness. This joy would spread outward in all directions, benefiting not only me, but those around me, too. I am sure that it was *this* happiness Usui Sensei had in mind. ...