

## *CESNUR 2017 - Jerusalem*

*A century of Reiki practice:  
from one Holy Place  
to many versions of Sacred Space*

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### Overview

- 1) Background & religious/cultural context (Liad)
- 2) Intro Reiki (Jojan)
- 3) Holy places and Sacred spaces, Japan (Liad)
- 4) Holy places and Sacred spaces, the West (Jojan)
- 5) Conclusions

## 1) Background & religious/cultural Context (Liad)

- ▶ Holy places in Japan
  - ▶ Landscape and Mountains
  - ▶ Such as: Mount Kurama
- ▶ Sacred spaces in Japan
  - ▶ Shintō shrines
  - ▶ Buddhist temples
- ▶ In this context
  - ▶ 1922: USUI Mikao ‘discovered’ Reiki on Mount Kurama

### Mt. Kurama 鞍馬山 near Kyoto



## Mt. Kurama 鞍馬山



### 2-1) Reiki (Jojan)

- ▶ What is Reiki
  - ▶ Main narrative
  - ▶ Migration from Japan to the West
    - ▶ Many elements changed
    - ▶ De- and re-culturalization
  - ▶ Key features of contemporary Reiki
    - ▶ Based on assumed 'universal life energy'
    - ▶ Entrance: initiation
    - ▶ Ritual: laying on of hands
    - ▶ Self development: self-treatment / 5 Precepts
    - ▶ Treating others/Distant-treatment
    - ▶ Use of sacred and secret symbols
    - ▶ Meaning through experience
    - ▶ Everyday spirituality
    - ▶ "Presence" of preceding Masters

## 2-2) Reiki (Jojan)

### ► Example of Reiki self-treatment



## 2-3) Reiki (Jojan)

### ► Example of Reiki treatment in hospitals



## 2-4) Reiki (Jojan)

- ▶ Example of Reiki treatment in public practice



## 3) Holy places and Sacred spaces in Reiki, Japan (Liad)

- ▶ The entrance into Reiki
  - ▶ *Reiju* / Initiation
  - ▶ Relation
    - ▶ Buddhism: Esoteric Buddhist fingerprints
    - ▶ Mudra, Mantra, Mandala (representation cosmos)
    - ▶ Shinto: *chinkon kishin* (relation master-student-energy)
    - ▶ *Reiki* energy equals 'deity' = *kami*
- ▶ Reiki Mandala is *in* initiation
- ▶ Sacred space is created by Usui on Mt Kurama ...
- ▶ ... and is used in / passed on through initiation ...
- ▶ ... and can be re-created in practice



## 4-1) Sacred spaces in Reiki, West (Jojan)

- ▶ Sacred space: how do you get there?
  - ▶ Through
    - ▶ Re-creation of sacred space of initiation /Mt Kurama
    - ▶ No artifacts; only energy, intent, state of mind
    - ▶ Laying on of hands / self-treatment
    - ▶ Meditation
    - ▶ Tuning the mind
    - ▶ Drawing the Reiki symbols (*mudra*)
    - ▶ Speaking the Reiki symbols (*mantra - kotodama*)

## 4-2) Sacred space in Reiki, West (Jojan)

- ▶ Sacred space: what do you do there?
  - ▶ Experiences of the divine in this specific sacred space
- ▶ Quotes
  - ▶ *“Being in the universal life energy”*
  - ▶ *“The all containing / embracing”*
  - ▶ *“Aligning with Spirit ... Reiki is the entrance”*
  - ▶ *“Attune with my higher self”*
  - ▶ *“I speak to God/Divine Spirit and thank them for getting me through the past”*

### 4-3) Sacred space in Reiki, West (Jojan)

- ▶ Sacred space: who or what else *is* there?
  
- ▶ Quotes
  - ▶ *“Oneness”*
  - ▶ *“Only me ... warmth”*
  - ▶ *“I am in a Source”*
  - ▶ *“Just me, it is my private place”*
  - ▶ ...
  - ▶ *“Spirits of deceased people”*

### 4-4) Sacred space in Reiki, West (Jojan)

- ▶ Sacred space: what do you *feel* there?
  - ▶ Entrance to more transcendent realms in which sacredness is experienced
  
- ▶ Quotes
  - ▶ *“It brings me in contact with ...[God, deeper layer of myself, source, my own being]”*
  - ▶ *“I feel like my true self; alone, humble and accountable. My hearing and feelings are more acute”*

## 5) Conclusions

- ▶ More “sacred space” than “holy places”
  - ▶ Transcendent realm
- ▶ Creation of and re-creation through ‘rite de passage’ of *reiju* / initiation to:
  - ▶ (inner) sacred space reconnected with self
  - ▶ (personal) micro-cosmos reconnected with universal macro-cosmos
- ▶ Enter at will through altered state of mind / consciousness
- ▶ Highly subjective and personal
- ▶ Rooted in Buddhist narratives and practice ...
- ▶ ... yet it does not appear to be Buddhist anymore
- ▶ Reflection: religious notion has become (secular) spirituality