



## Yamakawa Dojo

The New Year has begun and the first event of the season is the *lai* demonstration at the Tucson Children's Museum. This year the museum will celebrate the Japanese New Year on **January 1st** with *taiko* drumming, *origami* demonstrations, and ethnic dance. Once again the *lai* club has been invited to show the people of Tucson some fancy sword work and perhaps scare a few children.



## 1000 Cuts

Last year we started the year with a special practice consisting of 1000 sword cuts followed by *roponme*, the first six forms of the *Sekiguchi* tradition. *Shihan* Gettings later sent word to Japan that we had performed this ritual and included the names of everyone in attendance.

This year the plan is to gather on Monday, **January 9th** during the regular practice time at The Center for Traditional Martial Arts, Grant Road and perform 1000 cuts. This will be immediately followed by group groaning and hugs with Uncle Ken.

## Inside this Newsletter

**January 1** **Iai Demo**  
Sunday 12:30 - 4:00  
Tucson Children's Museum

**January 9** **1000 cuts**  
Monday 6:30 - 8:30  
Grant Road Dojo

**January 14** **Kagami Biraki**  
Saturday 6:00 PM  
Magee Dojo

## Kagami Biraki

A Japanese tradition with *Shinto* roots, *Kagami Biraki* is a ceremony of the New Year. **Kagami Biraki**, which literally means "Mirror Opening", also known as the rice cutting ceremony is a Japanese celebration that is held in many traditional martial arts schools. Usually on the second Saturday or Sunday of January so all students will

be able to attend. It is a samurai tradition dating back to the 15th century to offer *mochi* to their arms and armor. It was adopted into modern martial arts in 1884 when *Jigoro Kano*, the founder of *Judo*, instituted the custom at the *Kodokan*, his organization's headquarters. Since then other Japanese arts, such as *Aikido*, *Karate*, and *Jujutsu*, have adopted the celebration to officially kick off the new year. It is a tradition of spiritual reflection, rededication and renewal.

Most traditional *dojo* prepare for the new year's season in the same way as many households. Toward the end of the year *dojo* are cleaned, repairs made, mirrors shined and everything is made tidy. Decorations of pine boughs and *origami* are placed all around the *dojo*. Finally the special rice cakes are placed on the *shinzen*, often with a colorful orange on top. Called **Kagami Mochi**, these rice cakes have been pounded into the round shape of a traditional Shinto metal mirror.



Breaking apart, or opening up, the *mochi* is the "Mirror Opening," after which *Kagami Biraki* is named. Small pieces are then consumed, often in a red bean soup.

Yamakawa dojo will be celebrating *Kagami Biraki* on **January 14th**, at 6:00 PM in the Magee dojo.

