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Kagami Biraki

The New Year is upon us and it all feels so very fresh. I'm loving it. Maybe having the rain around has also added to that 'Spring Clean' feeling. Traditionally we celebrate Kagami Biraki (鏡開き) at this time of year. This literally translates as 'Opening the Mirror' &/or 'Breaking the Mochi' (traditional rice cake). In the Japanese calendar, it represents an opportunity to renew ourselves... to see the world and ourselves in a new light. It was explained to me by one of my teachers as 'breaking the mirror' – discarding the image we held of ourselves and looking at our life through the new mirror.

The energy and insight we gain from this can be transferred into our everyday affairs. It can be so easy to see our existence as a humdrum affair, particularly when so much of what we do each day is a repeat performance of what we have done each day before. Wake up in the same place at the same time, see the same face each morning in the mirror, go to the same workplace, eat the same things, drive the same car or catch the same train, do the same techniques at Budo practice each evening, go home to the same house and finally fall asleep again in the same bed. (I hope I haven't driven you to drink with this bleak picture!)

How do we keep this fresh? Do we need to seek out new experiences each day to keep us 'awake' or can we notice that each day already has its own unique rhythm and signature? Perhaps many of us spend too much of our time waiting for the magic life to come to us... thinking always 'tomorrow it will be different or special' or focusing on some 'special' event in the future and willing it closer. Or thinking of some time in the past and remembering it as 'the best time'. This is a time of year when we can all instead see the reality that **this is** our magic life... **this is** our special event! Breathing in & out and being alive in this extraordinary universe is already a miracle. We all too easily lose this consciousness - so let's help each other through our training to stay in that mindspace and enjoy the moments.

What are the obstacles? Well - in my life I have the challenge of a relationship between our organisation and a large government department that impacts on much of my work. There is a real heaviness in that relationship that I feel dragging me into the mire of uncreative routine and false accountability. This year I will focus on ways to improve this. What about you? What challenges draw you away from appreciating the awe of being alive? How will you address them? I look forward to hearing from you... and to training with you all in this new year.

David

