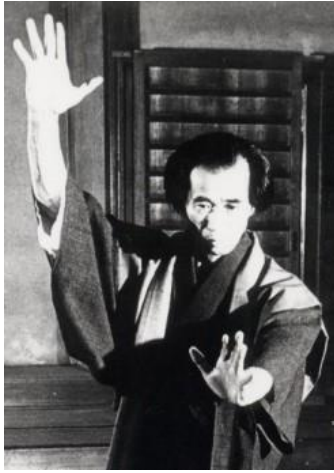


# Heihō



"Hō" is the idea, the vision, the dream towards which to go, it is a need that generates a mental projection to be realized. The "Do" is the tool with which to realize the vision, a project that focuses on the present and describes in a clear and detailed way how to walk the "Way".

In Japanese martial arts the "Dō" (道) indicates the spiritual way through the emptiness of the mind of Zen Buddhism in order to achieve mastery in the various combat disciplines (karatedō, kendō, kyudō, etc.). Mastery in the Way is achieved only if the body is guided by an empty, calm, clear and imperturbable mind. Only in these conditions will the action be extremely effective. The "Hō" (法) indicates the vision that directs the "Dō".

Heihō can be written with two different kanji that are pronounced in the same way: the kanji 兵法 translates as: "art or strategy of war" and refers to the Heihō of Miyamoto Musashi (legendary samurai who lived between 1584 and 1645). The kanji 平法 instead translates: "art or method of peace" and refers to Shigeru Egami and Noriaki Inoue (founder of Shinwa-taido\*, renamed Shinei-taido)

- Miyamoto Musashi's Heihō (兵法), has as its objective the victory through the defeat of the enemy (in war as in an individual duel). Musashi had achieved mastery in the art of the sword, his vision was to become invincible in battle as well as in individual combat by subduing the enemy through technical perfection and a considerable amount of "Ki" energy. For Musashi, Heihō was a method of becoming invincible by mastering the sword, but also the mind through an energetic spiritual path. In his book "The Book of the 5 Rings" he writes: "Trust the spirit and ignore matter".
- Shigeru Egami's Heihō (平法) is instead a method to win together, to make human beings live in harmony by agreeing and not clashing. Egami had achieved mastery in the art of karate, his vision was to win together and in agreement with the other through technical perfection and a large amount of "Ki" energy. The method of peace "Hei-Hō" of Egami sensei indicates which mental condition and what kind of mood are necessary to achieve a real agreement between the parties and to achieve mastery in the way of karatedo in harmony with the laws of nature and of the universe. Egami indicates heihō as the goal of Karate-dō ".

In my opinion there are many similarities between the paths of these two great masters of Heihō, each of which has developed his own method based on energy through matter: Musashi to defeat his opponents in combat and Egami to establish harmony with others.

For the sake of completeness, I also want to mention two other great contemporary Samurai of Musashi. The first, Ito Ittosai Kagehisa (who lived between 1560 and 1653), had introduced the idea that in the art of war and in particular of the sword a spiritual elevation was more necessary than the simple

acquisition of techniques; he had indicated a path to eliminate his own aggression. The second, Yagyu Munenori (who lived between 1571 and 1646), wrote the "Heihō Kadensho" (兵法家伝書) (Hereditary Book on the Art of War), a treatise on the art of war and the sword and on how to apply its principles in daily life and in politics. It is a very concentrated text on Zen Buddhism.

Musashi writes: "When you proceed to the assault, 'empty' your mind of all useless thoughts. If you suffocate the opponent with your energy from the start, you have secured victory: this is 'ken no sen'. " Finally, Musashi states that the path of Heihō must be traveled in constant search for the "void" (ku) and writes: "The ku will be your way and your way will be the ku."

Musashi's "ken no sen" is sometimes associated with "sen no sen": I think they are two different abilities. Musashi describes ken no sen as an energetic phenomenon in which the "pouring out" of a large amount of energy comes to "suffocate" the opponent. The "sen no sen" is instead commonly considered as the ability to move together with the opponent, so much so that looking at the action from the outside it is not clear who moved first. To achieve "sen no sen" it is certainly necessary to free the mind from thoughts, empty it to become one with the other. The "ken no sen" described by Musashi seems to be a phenomenon that goes beyond "sen no sen", to the point of trespassing into the energetic dimension to "suffocate", "crush" the opponent energetically before hitting him with the sword. It appears that Musashi even faced the latest fights without a sword, with his bare hands: he had become able to energetically prevent the opponent from advancing and attacking.

Egami follows a similar energy path, but does not go in search of victory by killing or submitting the other in combat, instead he sets himself the goal of making an agreement with him. This path led him to the "toate", a sort of energy pressure that allowed him to reject the other's advance without touching him to prevent his onslaught, a phenomenon very similar to that of Musashi. Egami said that to overcome one's enemy, it was necessary to love him. This statement is in some respects incomprehensible, at least it was initially for me. With time and training I understood, with infinite joy, that the enemy to which Egami was referring is not only the one we meet in our footsteps, but especially the biggest and strongest one of all: the enemy we have inside. In fact, it is not possible to love the enemy we encounter if we are not able to love ourselves first.

The initial joy that had pervaded me was transformed a moment later into a sense of great responsibility that almost took my breath away and almost overwhelmed me; I immediately realized what an immense undertaking I had in front of me: I absolutely had to seek within myself the way to face and resolve my inner conflicts, I had to agree first with myself to successfully deal then with conflicts with the outside world. At the same time I felt the need to transfer all this to my students, but I realized that the only way I had was to become a real and practical example for them: I could not convey this great truth with words alone.

The only way to go that I found in order to change myself and that I immediately began to put into practice was the difficult path of the "ku": the emptiness of the mind. The mokuso, which I had been practicing with great passion for many years, had since become something even more important for me, I would say vital: it has become my route and my trusted travel companion. The mokuso soon evolved into "dozen", that is "meditation in movement"; the state of empty mind and circulating energy applied to techniques, to kihon, to kata, to kumite, to the space around, to the people I met, to animals, to nature, to the universe, in short, to everything and in every moment. These are the effects that Master Egami's Heihō has had on me, the effects with which I live pleasantly today, day after day.

*Enzo Cellini, March 30, 2021*