

# 平常心

What is Heijoshin (平常心) ?

Heijoshin literally means ordinary mind/heart. It is a state of mind when you look at thing as what it is and nothing more. There is no fear, no doubt, no surprise and no confusion.

In Kendo, we must cultivate this mindset that will enable us to confront any situation with an ordinary mind, that is to deal with it as if nothing special or out of ordinary. If we look at the first two letters of Heijoshin in Kanji, 平常 (Heijo) means flat or calm as usual. Therefore, Heijoshin simply implies having a calm mind as usual when facing any situation.

There is a known saying applicable to this state of mind in Kendo: “walk down the road of fear, through the valley and the shadow of doubt, cross over the mountain of surprise, and bravely sail beyond the sea of confusion.”

Fear, doubt, surprise and confusion are all the creations of our own thought or imagination. It is our human nature to fear when facing a situation, and out of fear appear the doubt; doubt will question our ability to handle the situation; we will then be caught by surprise the situation is not as what we think; and finally it will lead us to confusion.

Therefore, if we could face the situation with Heijoshin, we will be able to look at thing or situation as what it is. With a calm mind as usual, we will be able to notice the snake coiling under the window in the shadow of fear is in fact only a coil of rope.

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Montreal, 2013