

## CONCENTRATING THE WHOLE BODY

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It may look like I am trying to put you into some form, like zazen practice, but actually it is not so. I put an emphasis on the form of practice because that is a way for you to have real concentration.

If you ignore just one instruction we may give you, there will be no real concentration. If your back is not straight, it is impossible to have good, deep breathing. Good breathing means smooth, deep breathing. It should be calm and it should be strong. When you have good posture, your breathing can be very smooth and deep. It should reach the bottom of your belly. Breathing does not actually reach the bottom of your belly—it comes to the bottom of your lungs and not any lower—but the feeling should be of it reaching the bottom of your belly.

When a calligrapher or a Japanese sumi ink artist works, even though they are not in the perfect posture of zazen, they apply that posture in their work. For these artists, one stroke or one line expresses many things, in the same way that our practice includes everything. That may be the difference between art in general and Zen art: in Zen art, full concentration is put on one dot, on one line. If you see how they do it, you will understand.

They usually hold the brush in the right hand, but the left hand is working harder than the right. You could say that the artist is working the left hand with a brush in the right hand. In the same way, the artist's whole body is working on one line. If you paint just by using one hand, you cannot work properly. In some

way your left hand should help your right hand, and your whole body should make your brush work freely to express something. If your brush includes all of your effort, and if you have become completely one with everything, then you can work in a true sense.

That is why we put emphasis on our posture. When you are not sitting, you still should keep your back straight and find out how to be concentrated on your activity. There will be some way to be concentrated on what you do.