

While walking along a river one afternoon, I came upon a man sitting on a stone. The large, flat stone sat at the center of the river's breadth, the apex rising just above the rapidly flowing water. The sun shined beautifully that day, its rays dancing harmoniously with the leaves of the trees while creating an ever shifting collage of shapes on the dark earth below. Of particular interest was the way the sun illuminated that individual stone. I could see tiny particles of spray from the raging river floating about within the column of light. It was almost as if the rays were funneled, perhaps even deliberately focused on that one rock and its inhabitant like some form of supernatural spotlight.

As I stood at the edge of the river bank, I could see that, not only did the water flow with great force, it was also quite deep. This tandem of observations generated the natural question. How did the man get to that stone? Throughout this series of occurrences, the man never looked up or acknowledged me in any way. In fact, judging by his seated posture, it seemed quite clear that he was meditating. As a long time practitioner of meditation, I understood that he should be allowed to continue his practice undisturbed. However, my curiosity, a childhood trait I've never quite been able to grow beyond, took the reins. "Excuse me sir. How did you get to that stone?"

After an awkward pause that seemed to last much longer than it likely was, he slowly turned his gaze toward me. Immediately, I regretted disturbing him as he clearly seemed irked. Our expressions met, mine a mixture of embarrassment and inquiry. His expression was blank and emotionless. Clearly, he was a master of the art of meditation. Slowly, his mouth opened slightly and he appeared to speak. I was unable to hear his words over the rushing water. I tried to read his lips for at least enough information to formulate an educated guess as to how he arrived on that stone. As I focussed harder and harder, I felt a change in the air around me. It was as if something suddenly shifted. It wasn't like a breeze or sudden gust as every detail of my immediate environment abruptly changed.

I looked about, thoroughly confused as I found myself standing on the surface of the stone, deep water raging all around me. Though there was a slight chill in the air at the river's edge, the stone was warm as the column of sun's rays warded off the effects of the cold water's presence. The man with whom I had tried to communicate was gone. I was alone on this minuscule island with no clear path to the shore.

I decided that the best course of action was to clear my mind so that I may approach the problem with a fresh perspective. So, with this new directive in place, I sat and began to drift into a meditative state. It was surprisingly peaceful. The loudness of the raging water diminished to a gentle purr. The warmth of the sun's focused rays soothed the muscles in my shoulders. As my mind relaxed, all distractions began to drift away. The harmony I felt with my surroundings, the various energies intermingling brought about a clarity which I had never before experienced. Suddenly it was lost. This great connection to the world around me was interrupted as a voice from the riverbank echoed "Excuse me sir. How did you get to that stone?"