

An old sage was once meditating on the bank of a river. Another sage, standing across from him on the other bank, saw him and, as he was stuffed with his own worth, decided to show the old sage a thing or two. He raised his hands and chanted a mantra, glided smoothly on the water and stepped ashore bang in front of the old man. He stood looking down at him, waiting for an exclamation of admiration, but the old sage said nothing.

"Didn't you see what I just did?" he asked irritably.

"I did," the old man said mildly.

"I saw you walking on the water. What did it take to do that?" he asked curiously.

"Twelve long years of the most painful and difficult penances," the young sage said proudly.

"In the high reaches of the Himalayas, I stood in the eternal snows on one leg and ate only once a week," remarked the young sage. The old sage was quite unimpressed.

"Oh dear, such a silly thing to do, all those terrible ordeals," he remarked.

"Our ferryman would have rowed you across for just a couple of rupees."