

A Short Talk During Zazen

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(Presented during zazen on the morning of June 28, 1970,
between the tenth and eleventh Sandokai lectures)

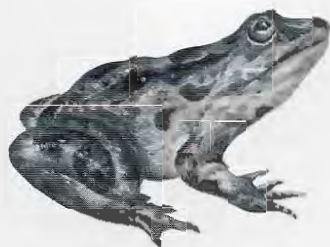
YOU SHOULD SIT WITH YOUR WHOLE BODY: your spine, mouth, toes, mudra.¹ Check on your posture during zazen. Each part of your body should practice zazen independently or separately: Your toes should practice zazen independently, your mudra should practice zazen independently, and your spine and your mouth should practice zazen independently. You should feel each part of your body doing zazen independently. Each part of your body should participate completely in zazen. Check to see that each part of your body is doing zazen independently—this is also known as *shikantaza*. To think, “I am doing zazen” or “my body is doing zazen” is wrong understanding. It is a self-centered idea.

The mudra is especially important. You should not feel as if you are resting your mudra on the heel of your foot for your own convenience. Your mudra should be placed in its own position.

Don't move your legs for your own convenience. Your legs are practicing their own zazen independently and are completely involved in their own pain. They are doing zazen through pain. You should allow them to practice their own zazen. If you think you are practicing zazen, you are involved in some selfish, egotistical idea.

If you think that you have a difficulty in some part of your body, then the rest of the body should help the part that is in difficulty. You are not having difficulty with some part of your body, but the part of the body is having difficulty: for example, your mudra is having difficulty. Your whole body should help your mudra do zazen.

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The entire universe is doing zazen in the same way that your body is doing zazen. When all parts of your body are practicing zazen, then that is how the whole universe practices zazen. Each mountain and each river is going and flowing independently. All parts of the universe are participating in their practice. The mountain practices independently. The river practices independently. Thus the whole universe practices independently.

When you see something, you may think that you are watching something else (outside yourself). But, actually, you are watching your *mudra* or your toe. That is why zazen represents the whole universe. We should do zazen with this feeling in our practice. You should not say, "I practice zazen with my body." It is not so.

Dogen Zenji says, "Water does not flow, but the bridge flows." You may say that your mind is practicing zazen and ignore your body, the practice of your body. Sometimes when you think that you are doing zazen with an imperturbable mind you ignore the body, but it is also necessary to have the opposite understanding at the same time. Your body is practicing zazen in imperturbability while your mind is moving. Your legs are practicing zazen with pain. Water is practicing zazen with movement—yet the water is still while flowing because flowing is its stillness, or its nature. The bridge is doing zazen without moving.

Let the water flow, as this is the water's practice. Let the bridge stay and sit there, because that is the actual practice of the bridge. The bridge is practicing zazen; painful legs are practicing zazen; imperturbable zazen is practicing zazen. This is our practice.

¹ In zazen, *mudra* refers to the position of the hands, which form a circle called "the cosmic circle."