

Rev S. Suzuki
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It is a pretty long time since I saw you all. But if we sit with you in this way I don't feel so...I feel as if I were in San Francisco or Los Altos, always. When I was in Tassajara I think about San Francisco or Los Altos, I feel as if many things to talk about, but in this way when I meet you I have nothing to say. This is very funny. Nothing to say at all. This is...but this is the way it should be. When we have something to talk about that is not so healthy, sometimes, but when we have nothing to say, that is very healthy situation...especially when I see young people I lose my...I lose every thing...I forget everything. And sometimes I am ashamed of preaching to them. It's much better not to say anything. That is how I feel, actually.

This is also how to keep our precepts. When we do not...when we are not keeping our precepts we have precepts, but when we keep all most all the precepts, the precepts: do not kill, do not steal...Perhaps if you do not know what is your law... lawyer might be annoyed but almost all of us do not know what is law. But we do not...almost...when we do not know what is precepts, we are keeping them. And even though you have problem that problem will vanish when your practice is healthy. In the fifth precepts...do not sell liquor, or do not take liquor (this is nearly the same). Do not sell liquor the precepts says. Do not sell liquor...liquor is not intoxicating...Intoxicating liquor does not mean just saki and wine. Some teaching will intoxicate you is also intoxicating liquor...not liquor but teaching. So Dogen-zenji explained this precept; don't be intoxicated, or do not violate this precept; even before the intoxicating liquor comes. How is it possible to violate precepts...to violate the precepts of not selling liquor when you have no liquor? Do you understand? When you have nothing to sell how can you sell it? But he

says do not sell liquor when you have no liquor. But we are selling liquor which we haven't got. I am very ashamed of myself, sometimes I sell liquor. Because of being priest, when I come to Los Altos I think I must say something. So Dogen-zenji says do not sell liquor when you haven't any. This is a wonderful interpretation of the precept, of the fifth precept. So actually when...try not to drink liquor when you have it...that is too late. If you have it here you will drink it. But the most important point is do not create the idea of liquor when you haven't.

People create the problem when they do not have it actually. When you are afraid of some problem, or when you are too much concerned about yourself you create problem which you haven't. Originally you haven't but you create problem for yourself, and you suffer from it. Mostly our problem...the problem we have is home-made problem. You make delicious problems to eat or you can make various liquor. This is how we live with problem. But if you realize this point you may realize how important it is to practice Zen. To practice Zen...when you practice Zen there is no problem and you will have some bright light within yourself... within and without. Bright light. So when the light comes there's no problem. In the darkness there is problem. So even though you try to work for problem in the dark you cannot do that. When the light comes various problems will be dissolved. Because it is dark you have problem. If it is not dark there is no problem. There may be big tree and small tree. Under the big tree there is small tree and you will think the small ones are suffering under the big tree. It looks like a problem. Even in nature we see many problems. But if you see the root of the trees...small trees and big trees you will understand how they survive. How the small tree survive under the big tree. But if you do not see the root it looks like the small tree has always difficulties under the big trees. But if you understand how the root goes under...how the root of the small tree goes under the big tree you will

understand how the small tree survives. You know, usually big trees had big hole around the trunk and actually big tree takes its nourishment from far away...four, five, maybe more than fifty feet away, and under the big tree there is many leaves and decayed root and small tree is taking their food under the big tree because the big tree gives them always nourishment for them. And by the time the big tree dies the small tree takes its place. That is how they survive. But before you do not see this fact it looks like problem for them. So this is the same with our practice. When you have wisdom...true wisdom, which is not just limited understanding you have no problem. The problem itself has some meaning for the problem and for yourself and for others. And you will understand the true meaning of the problem. And you will have the power to understand the nature of the problem. So we say our practice is scare-crow practice. If you just sit there are no sparrows around you. Even though you do not try to scare them they are scared of you and they do not come to you. So if you practice zazen there is no problem and there are no precepts to observe. So there's no need to observe them. You are observing them. And you have wisdom. In this way we should keep our precepts and we should cope with our problems. Before we have problems we should observe our precepts. It may be too late to try to keep the precepts when you have liquor. Dogen-zenji said do not violate precepts, do not take or sell intoxicating liquor before it comes. And if you want to keep the precepts keep it before it comes. Before food or intoxicating liquor comes. This is very appropriate advice for us.