

# Sokushin-ki

(concluded)

SHIDŌ MUNAN ZENJI

TRANSLATED BY KOBORI SŌHAKU

SOMEONE related the following story. "As I was listening to a recitation of the *Heart Sutra*, I heard the reciter say to eliminate form. What a wonderful teaching. I do not know its effect on others, but this made me clearly recall an experience I once had.

In former times, I was moved from morning to evening by a craving for prosperity. From youth my heart was set on obtaining a comfortable life for myself and for my children. I served my lord very diligently, and prayed to the gods and buddhas that I might never run counter to the mind of my master or to the fancy of the elders of my household. But the moment I heard those words, my mind was thoroughly emptied. My fault was that until then I had been thinking only of improving my own career. It is just as Śākyamuni said: Not to think of one's own self is the great repose, the land of ultimate bliss. For me, Buddha's grace deepens more and more.

Thereafter, when I called upon my master, he called me near in a manner more intimate than before, and praised me, "Heretofore you have been somehow difficult, but now you have nothing bothering your mind." It came to me, that when one is inwardly reposed, it becomes visible to others as well.

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A very knowledgeable priest once said to me, "I hear that you also belong to Zen. Zen can scarcely be called Zen that does not at least know the ten *rūpas*."<sup>1</sup> I remained silent. As I reflect on this, how shameful it all is. He is guilty of not knowing that to know the great Way is fundamentally wrong,

<sup>1</sup> Ten *rūpas* 色. *Rūpa* is matter, form, that which can be transformed and broken down. It is not clear what the ten *rūpas* refer to.

of being filled with self-importance, of taking interminable pains in learning and in enlightenment.

Knowing is a far camp from Buddha;  
Not knowing is at once the end of self.

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A man [samurai] asked how he should conduct himself in his everyday life serving his lord. I told him: "People should stand in fear of their own mind. Your lord can forgive you sometimes. There is no forgiving the sins detected by your mind."

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Since this is essentially beyond teaching, there can be no help for it. Even Śākyamuni's calling it the wondrous Dharma was a great mistake.

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An elderly nun brought me a copy of the *Heart Sutra*,<sup>2</sup> which had detailed annotations. She lamented that she could not understand the old explanations no matter how much she read it. So, taking pity on her, and in spite of my ignorance, I have added a few comments of my own.

Maka—is great: means no-self. Hannya—is the wisdom that issues whence there is nothing at all. Haramitta—refers to the fact that the wisdom that

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<sup>2</sup> In Japanese, the *Shin-gyō* 心經 (Skt. *Prajñā Pāramitā Hridaya Sūtra*), the *Heart Sutra*. The *Shin-gyō*, a compendium or summary of the *Prajñā-pāramitā* literature, a group of sutras which sets forth the doctrine of *sūnyatā*, is the shortest of the sutras utilized by the Zen school, being read on almost all occasions. In the following, the sutra itself is underlined; the rest is Munan's commentary. The translation of the sutra is based broadly on the translation of Suzuki Daisetz, which appears in his *Manual of Zen Buddhism* (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1960), pp. 26–7. The reader is referred to it for detailed notes on the sutra.

<sup>3</sup> *Maka Hannya Haramitta Shingyō* makes up the full title in Japanese of the *Heart Sutra*: Maka—Great; Hannya—*Prajñā*; Haramitta—*Pāramitā*; Shin—Heart; Gyō—Sutra.

issues from Maka nowhere lingers or stops. Shin-gyō—refers to the sweeping away of one's own evil. All that emerges therefrom is the sutra.<sup>3</sup>

The rest is all commentary

“The Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara—when you see him, he is the Bodhisattva in you. When practicing in the depths of the Prajñā pāramitā—refers to eliminating the self. Perceives that the Five Skandhas are all empty—without a doubt, there is no self. And passes through all obstacles caused by suffering—if there is no self there is no suffering. Śāriputra—indicates the listener. Form is no different from emptiness, emptiness is not different from form—self and the vast emptiness are one. Form is emptiness, emptiness is form—is the form of having become ever more reposed, of there being nothing at all. You should clearly know: when one's evil has gone, there is no form; when you have sensual thoughts or desire wealth, form is invariably there. With this, you should know perfectly. The same is true of feelings, thoughts, impulses, and consciousness—if only form is emptied, there are no feelings, thoughts, impulses, or consciousness. Śāriputra—same as before. All dharmas are characterized by emptiness—no need to comment. They are not born and not annihilated—

the vast emptiness produces nothing, annihilates nothing. Not defiled, or pure—in emptiness there is no defilement or purity. They do not increase or decrease—in emptiness there is no increase or decrease. Therefore, in emptiness—no need to comment. There is no form, no feeling or thoughts, no impulses or consciousness—when you become one with emptiness, there is nothing. No eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, or mind—in emptiness, there is nothing. No form, sound, smell, taste, touch, dharmas—from the first, there is nothing. There is no dhatu of vision, and so forth, until we come to no dhatu of consciousness—same as before. There is no ignorance or extinction of ignorance—there is also no ignorance and no such thing as extermination of ignorance. But don't think, there is originally nothing like there-is-nothing. And so forth until we come to, there is no old age and death and no extinction of old age and death—same as before. There is no suffering, accumulation, annihilation, or path—in emptiness there is no suffering, accumulation, annihilation, or path. There is no knowledge and no attainment—in emptiness, no knowledge and no attainment. There being no attainment—no need to comment. A Bodhisattva—those who walk this way are even now called by this name. Because he dwells depending on the Prajñā pāramitā—first

of all, eliminate your self. His mind has no obstacles, and thus does not have fears—as there is no self, there is naturally nothing to fear. Going beyond all perverted views—because there is no self there is nothing at all upsetting. It is beyond each and all things. He reaches final nirvana—final nirvana is having no birth-and-death. All Buddhas of past, present, and future—no need to comment. Depending on the Prajñā pāramitā—means having no self. Attain to the highest perfect enlightenment—like the dead come alive. Therefore, one ought to know that the Prajñā pāramitā is the great Mantram—no need to comment. The Mantram of great wisdom—no need to comment. The highest Mantram—nothing higher, like this because you make yourself nothing. The peerless Mantram—means it is incomparable. Capable of allaying all pain; it is truth because it is not falsehood—all sufferings completely dispelled. This is the Mantram proclaimed in Prajñā-pāramitā—bespeaks the bliss of acts that issue from no-self. It runs—no need to comment. Gate, Gate, Paragate, Parasamgate, Bodhi, Svaha! [O Bodhi, Gone, Gone, Gone to the Other Shore, Landed at the Other Shore, Svaha!]”

THE EASTERN BUDDHIST

In no-mind, no trace of self,  
Everything we say and do  
Is good,  
Will be good.

Shidō Anju

*[The first edition of Sokushin-ki, which appeared the eleventh year of Kambun (1671), ends here. The following portion was added to the second edition, of 1676. See Munan's Postscript.—Translators]*

If you do not avenge your parents in this world, you will have a lifetime of shame; [but] if you do not annihilate your self in this world, you will suffer for endless kalpas. You annihilate your self by directly becoming the Tathāgata. A man of the highest realm in the great vehicle is directed directly to the Tathāgata, without reference to the other myriad dharmas. A Tathāgata has compassion possessed of merit. Of course, in him there is no void, no substance, no coming or going.

Someone asked me about hell. I told him, "It is being tormented by your self." He asked about the Land of Bliss. "It is the non-existence of your self's tormentations," I replied. He asked about Buddha. I said, "No-body. No-mind." He said, "Just like a dead man." I said, "It is becoming a dead man while alive. My religion is satori. Do you have before your eyes the pains and pleasures<sup>4</sup> of your past and present?" "Nothing at all," he replied.

When you reach satori  
Without changing your manner  
You see sheerly  
Nothing at all.

In illusion  
Without changing your manner

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<sup>4</sup> Here we follow the text of the Kambun edition. Shidō Munan Zenji Shū has 樂 remedies for 樂 pleasures.

SOKUSHIN-KI

You feel nothing  
But suffering.

The Buddha Dharma is the great good, the soul of heaven and earth. Man practices it because he is patterned after heaven and earth.

KOKORO [MIND]

The wonderful names Buddha, kami, the Heavenly Way, Bodhisattva, Tathāgata are all different expressions for man's mind.

In mind there is originally not a single thing.

Its function is, above all, compassion, harmony, and artlessness. Before a master, it thinks of faithfulness. Before parents, it thinks of filial piety. Before family or friends, it thinks of the correct relationship. This is the original essence of the mind. It is such a wonderful thing!

Mind is called wondrous, the letter A,<sup>5</sup> Amida, satori—undeniably so. When one's mind sees one's evils, it cannot overlook them. Why are evil men inevitably punished? Because their own mind does not permit them to overlook their evils. Why does a good man gradually become better? Because good issues of itself from his mind. Let there be no doubt of this.

Men are thus unmistakably endowed. It is a wonderful thing. When an emperor practices in accordance with it, all the realm is at peace. When a lord practices in accordance with it, his domain is tranquil. When a householder acts in accordance with it, his house is peaceful. Not knowing of it, one commits himself to self-will; he is deceived by the evils of his self, is envious and jealous of the various affairs, good and bad, of others, and his mind and body are continuously uneasy, his pain and sorrow unending. Even in the world after death he can get no deliverance, being drawn by the strings of his evil thoughts. How wretched and pitiful!

The Buddha appeared in the world and taught men to dispell the sins of the self, telling them that without these evils there is no self, that being without self in itself is Buddha—what a welcome teaching.

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<sup>5</sup> Which has in esoteric Buddhism numerous esoteric indications.

One's practice is to remove the evils of the self. If in your daily acts you show your evils to your mind and assiduously dispell them, they will finally be completely removed. Then, your self in itself is emptiness, and emptiness in itself is your self. There is no doubt of this.

Since you are then clearly free from birth, death, and all things, and you are in great repose, it is called the Land of Ultimate Bliss. Because there is no more craving and desire, it is called Buddha. There is no doubt of this, or of the following:

Passing through the world  
With both body and mind extinguished,  
Even walking on naked swords  
Presents no difficulty.

*Errors men always make:*

Suffering when deceived by others. Taking pleasure in being deceived by themselves.

Knowing others' death, and not their own.

Judging pros and cons in others, behaving irregularly themselves.

Conceiving nothingness [when I] speak of all things being originally nothingness.

Establishing norms in the Buddha Way.

Not entering the Buddha Way, and thus being unable to govern themselves.

There are men who offer prayers, but do not revere the buddha in themselves.

Suffering in poverty, and not knowing there is release from it.

Saying the Buddha Dharma is enlightenment. Enlightened men are rare.

Not even a single evil thought can be reversed.

[Postscript]

This book was compiled in late autumn, the tenth year of Kambun (1670). It might seem unnecessary to add something to it now. Yet I have reached the unexpected age of seventy-four. When I recall the teaching of the Buddha, that he never preached a single word, that birth, death, and all things in themselves are nothing, it brings to mind that my whole life as well has been



spent doing nothing. This is something everyone knows, but since I hope there might also be some seekers who would desire to go in the same way, I have been unable to forbear these additions, in hope they might prove of help to those men who are as foolish as I am myself. At seventy-four, in response to the entreaties of my disciples, I dip my brush and presume to write this postscript.

Late summer, the fourth year of Empō (1676)  
Munan (seal)