

Unfurling the Real Meaning) is today extant only in Chinese and Tibetan versions (Chinese, *Jie shenmi jing*; Tibetan, *Dgongs pa nges par 'grel pa'i mdo*). As its title indicates, the text claims to provide definitive explanations for contradictory statements in earlier sūtras. It is divided into ten chapters, each of which has a main interlocutor who asks the Buddha to explain the intentions behind earlier statements attributed to him. All of the interlocutors are identified as BODHISATTVAS on the tenth stage (*bhūmi*), and the discourse is set in a heavenly realm. These tropes are apparently intended to establish the text as the definitive statement on contentious doctrinal issues.

The first four chapters focus on a discussion of the ultimate truth (*paramārtha*). The fifth contains a seminal description of the *storehouse consciousness* (ĀLAYA-VIJÑĀNA), and the sixth explains the notion of the *three characteristics* (*trilakṣaṇa*) of phenomena (imputational, other-dependent, and thoroughly real). The seventh chapter is mainly concerned with outlining principles of Buddhist HERMENEUTICS, and the eighth focuses on MEDITATION theory and practice. The ninth chapter describes the bodhisattva PATH, and the final chapter is concerned with the characteristics of buddhahood, the culmination of the practices the text describes.

The *Samḍhinirmocana-sūtra* became the main scriptural source for the YOGĀCARA SCHOOL, one of the two main philosophical traditions of Indian MAHĀYĀNA Buddhism (the other being Madhyamaka). It figures prominently in the thought of ASAṄGA (ca. 320–390), VASUBANDHU (fourth century C.E.), and their commentators, and inspired a voluminous literature in Tibet that is based on TSONG KHA PA's *Legs bshad snying po* (*Essence of Good Explanations*).

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SAMGUK YUSA (MEMORABILIA OF THE THREE KINGDOMS)

The *Samguk yusa* (*Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms*) is a collection of myths, anecdotes, and short stories from ancient Korea, mostly from the kingdom of Silla. The text was compiled around 1285, after the Mongol

subjugation of Korea, by the Buddhist monk Iryōn (Kim Kyōnmyōng, 1206–1289) and contains at least one later insertion by his disciple Mugūk (d.u.). Little is known about the text prior to 1512. The title word *yusa* (Chinese, *yishi*) suggests that the text was meant to serve as an unofficial supplement to an official work, perhaps the *Samguk sagi* (*Historical Records of the Three Kingdoms*), compiled by Kim Pusik between 1136 and 1145. *Samguk yusa* is roughly modeled after the *Lidai fabao ji* (*Record of the Dharma-Jewel over Successive Generations*, ca. 780) and the *Taiping guangji* (*Expanded Tales of the Taiping Era*, compiled 977–978) in form and content.

The *Samguk yusa* is comprised of five chapters. The first chapter begins with a dynastic chronology and follows with the foundation myths of the native Korean kingdoms and other traditional narratives dating from before Silla's conquest of the other kingdoms. The second chapter contains tales from the peninsular wars for unification, as well as postunification dynastic and other tales. The third chapter is comprised of two sections subtitled "The Flourishing of the Dharma" and "Stūpas and Images," which present the Buddhist perspective of the transmission of the religion to the peninsula and tales about the miraculous founding and history of particular sacred or cultic sites. The fourth chapter, "Exegetes," contains hagiographies of eminent Silla scholastic monks. The fifth chapter is divided into four subsections titled (1) "Divine Spells," hagiographies of Buddhist monks who specialize in working miracles through chanting DHĀRAṆĪ and sūtras; (2) "Thaumaturges," stories of individuals, particularly Buddhist monks, who possess magic powers; (3) "Escape and Seclusion," stories of people who escaped this mortal realm; and (4) "Filial Piety and Virtue," traditional narratives of filial sons and virtuous daughters.

See also: Korea; Korean, Buddhist Influences on Vernacular Literature in

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SAṂSĀRA

Saṁsāra (wandering) is a term referring to the beginningless cycle of birth, DEATH, and REBIRTH and a

process characterized by mental and physical DUḤKHA (SUFFERING). This ongoing series of lives is determined by the moral quality of an individual's thoughts and KARMA (ACTION) in this life and in previous lives. It is generally postulated that within saṃsāra the effects of good moral actions lead to wholesome rebirths, while the effects of bad moral actions lead inevitably to unwholesome rebirths. Liberation (NIRVĀṆA), release from the cycle altogether, is achieved only by those individuals who gain correct insight and realization of the truth of the Buddha's teachings.

Saṃsāra is divided cosmologically into five (sometimes six) distinct realms of existence, within which living beings are reborn in dependence upon their karma. These places of rebirth include the realms of DIVINITIES (deva), human beings (*manuṣya*), animals (*tiryak*), spirits of the dead or hungry ghosts (preta), and the hells (*naraka*). When the list of five realms is expanded to six, the place of demigods (asura) is added below the god realm. Life in any one of these realms is never eternal and never free from the prospect of suffering. Whether wandering temporarily in the higher realms of gods and humans or in the lower realms of animals, ghosts, and the denizens of hell, all living beings experience the sufferings of birth, death, and rebirth. Saṃsāra and the realms of rebirth are depicted in paintings of the wheel of life (*bhavacakra*), which are especially common in Tibet.

Liberation from the cycle of saṃsāra is not always the immediate goal of Buddhism. In some Buddhist traditions, particularly in East Asia, greater emphasis is placed on rebirth in a buddha's pure land (Chinese, *jingtu*; Japanese, *jōdo*). The pure lands are purified buddha-fields (Sanskrit, *buddhakṣetra*) or paradises, which are free from mental and physical suffering and watched over by a particular buddha. Dissenting opinions exist about the exact location of the PURE LANDS. Some place them within the realms of saṃsāra, and others place them outside the cycle altogether. Rebirth in one of the pure lands is determined less by karma and more by sincere FAITH and aspiration to be reborn there. The compassionate assistance of the buddha who resides in the pure land is also a decisive factor in securing rebirth in such an auspicious realm. Among the most popular pure lands are AMITĀBHA's Land of Bliss (Sukhāvātī) and AKṢOBHYA's Land of Delight (Abhirati).

See also: **Cosmology**

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SAMYE DEBATE. See **Bsam yas Debate**

SĀNCĪ

Sāncī's extensive monastic complexes occupy a hilltop near the prosperous Indian town of Vidiṣa, where major road and river routes intersect. Its many free-standing pillars, STŪPAS, temples, assembly halls, and monastic residences (vihāras) date from the reign of King AŚOKA (third century B.C.E.) to around 1200 C.E., making it one of the oldest and most constantly occupied extant Buddhist sites. A small flat-roofed Gupta temple (ca. fourth century C.E.) is probably the earliest extant stone temple in South Asia. Many structures were erected on the foundations of earlier ones. Begun during Aśoka's rule, an apsidal temple complex (no. 40) was enlarged in Śuṅga times (ca. second to first centuries B.C.E.) and again later. Four quadrangular dry-masonry vihāras belong to the seventh century C.E. Two of these were double-storied, while another incorporated a stone-faced temple with a northern-style tower in its eastern wall. As at AJAṆṬĀ, Sāncī's early stūpas are unadorned and austere, while a Buddha image graces its Gupta stūpa. Here too, Buddha images do not replace stūpas; rather the two coexist.

Dominating the hilltop, the Great Stūpa's core of Mauryan bricks and the edict pillar beside it suggest Aśoka may have built it as part of his legendary redistribution of the Buddha's bodily relics (*śarīra*). During the Śuṅga period, the stūpa was doubled in size to its present diameter of thirty-six meters. A railed berm accessed by a double staircase was also added to the dome, and an identical but more massive stone railing with openings at the cardinal directions enclosed the sacred precinct. These unadorned railings defined circumambulatory passages where Buddhist devotees could perform the basic rite of worshipping their lord's relics.