



Inside Vasubandhu's Yogacara: A Practitioner's Guide

By Ben Connolly

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Inside Vasubandhu's Yogacara: A Practitioner's Guide By Ben Connolly

A practical guide to Vasubandhu's classic work "Thirty Verses of Consciousness Only" that can transform modern life and change how you see the world.

In this down-to-earth book, Ben Connolly sure-handedly guides us through the intricacies of Yogacara and the richness of the "Thirty Verses." Dedicating a chapter of the book to each line of the poem, he lets us thoroughly lose ourselves in its depths. His warm and wise voice unpacks and contextualizes its wisdom, showing us how we can apply its ancient insights to our own modern lives, to create a life of engaged peace, harmony, compassion, and joy.

In fourth-century India one of the great geniuses of Buddhism, Vasubandhu, sought to reconcile the diverse ideas and forms of Buddhism practiced at the time and demonstrate how they could be effectively integrated into a single system. This was the Yogacara movement, and it continues to have great influence in modern Tibetan and Zen Buddhism. "Thirty Verses on Consciousness Only," or "Trimshika," is the most concise, comprehensive, and accessible work by this revered figure.

Vasubandhu's "Thirty Verses" lay out a path of practice that integrates the most powerful of Buddhism's psychological and mystical possibilities: Early Buddhism's practices for shedding afflictive emotional habit and the Mahayana emphasis on shedding divisive concepts, the path of individual liberation and the path of freeing all beings, the path to nirvana and the path of enlightenment as the very ground of being right now. Although Yogacara has a reputation for being extremely complex, the "Thirty Verses" distills the principles of these traditions to their most practical forms, and this book follows that sense of focus; it goes to the heart of the matter—how do we alleviate suffering through shedding our emotional knots and our sense of alienation?

This is a great introduction to a philosophy, a master, and a work whose influence reverberates throughout modern Buddhism.

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Editorial Review

Review

“Through Connally’s luminous teaching, some of Yogacara’s most vivid and inspiring innovations come to life...Newcomers and adherents to this lesser-known Buddhist school alike are lucky to have Connally as an exceptional guide to the central themes of Yogacara.” (*Publishers Weekly, Starred Review*)

“A readable, accessible starting point for verbal understanding, contemplation and meditative maturation. Connally’s clarity and refreshing humility invite a wide range of practitioners into the view and methods of the Consciousness-Only school.” (Shosan Victoria Austin, San Francisco Zen Center)

About the Author

Ben Connally is a Soto Zen teacher and Dharma heir in the Katagiri lineage. He teaches at Minnesota Zen Meditation Center. Ben is also a professional musician and teaches mindfulness in a wide variety of secular contexts. He lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

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