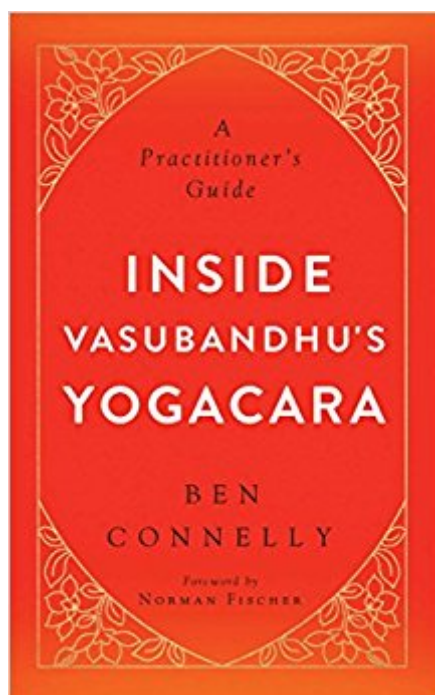


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Inside Vasubandhu's Yogacara: A Practitioner's Guide



Synopsis

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 Connelly 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.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“Through Connelly’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 Connelly 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. Connelly’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)

Ben Connelly 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.

Simply a wonderful book. I’ve read many books about Buddhist teachings, and this one stands out as incredibly clear and beautifully written. This is all the more remarkable considering how cryptic the Thirty Verses are by themselves. Ben Connelly manages to illuminate very complex ideas in a readable and accessible way. I intend to reread this often.

Very good study of Vasubandhu’s 30 verses, written in a clear, non technical style, on a very difficult subject

thks

A gem of a book! Very clear presentation of difficult material. Practical!

This book is wonderful, precise, and freeing. I feel a lot more clarity and peace in my being. I’m reading it again.

Very understandable translation. Thank you Ben.

Reading this text, the word delightful comes to mind. It combines ease of reading with relative brevity and ample profundity. How is that possible with a subject like Yogacara, considered one of the most difficult of subjects in the pantheon of Buddhist teachings? Is it easily understood with just thirty verses from Vasubandhu and a crystal clear commentary? Is it possible that we have been handicapping ourselves by considering the Buddhist teachings so difficult? Is this book ripe for beginner's mind? Or is there a wide gap between intellectual and experiential understanding? Not being a Zen practitioner, it seemed odd finding a Zen master familiar with the writings of Vasubandhu, an early Indian teacher. The author quickly confirms his familiarity by orienting the reader with an introduction to Vasubandhu's place in the development of Buddhism, then providing the necessary definitions of Yogacara and consciousness, its practice, and its relationship to non-self and the thirty verses. A translation of the thirty verses follows, then the commentary with its clear verse by verse explanation. That explanation is so well written it lulls you into a sense you are understanding. I'm getting this, you think. Of course there is a lot more to it than that, but it's a wonderful start or re-start, as the case may be. Vasubandhu's verses and the commentary are about "bringing it altogether." Portions of many fundamental teachings are included, such as right effort and right mindfulness from the eightfold path, the not-self teachings, and the vedanas, all together a great cornucopia of teachings is included, each worthy of complete books. A previous understanding of some or all of these concepts will enrich the experience of reading this book. Adding this book to your journey will be rewarding.

Seems excellent! Reasonably priced.

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