

Public Abstract

First Name:Melanie

Middle Name:Kay

Last Name:Johnson-Moxley

Adviser's First Name:Bina

Adviser's Last Name:Gupta

Co-Adviser's First Name:

Co-Adviser's Last Name:

Graduation Term:SP 2008

Department:Philosophy

Degree:PhD

Title:Vasubandhu's Consciousness Trilogy: A YogAcAra Buddhist Process Idealism

This work is a philosophical investigation into Vasubandhu's consciousness trilogy, comprised by the *TrisvabhAva-NirdeSa* ("Instruction on the Threefold Own-State-of-Being,") and the *VijNaptimAtra-KArikas* ("Verses on Consciousness-Occasion,") divided into the *ViMSika-KArikas* ("Twenty Verses") and the *TriMSika-KArikas* ("Thirty Verses.") Although early Indian YogAcAra Buddhism was once non-controversially described as a form of absolute ontological idealism, challengers have urged predominately psycho-epistemological readings of YogAcAra works. However, neither an exclusively metaphysical or exclusively epistemological reading is warranted; the more interesting and difficult case is that these themes are necessarily interwoven throughout the early YogAcAra canon, including the consciousness trilogy. While Vasubandhu's position in the trilogy is indeed idealist and monist, this does not entail a rejection of objectivity. Functions are substituted for substances in ontological discussions. The *AlayavijNAna* ("storehouse-consciousness") concept is developed so that it can serve the explanatory function of material cause. In this way much apparent logical tension is diffused, and a more complete picture of Vasubandhu's YogAcAra emerges.