

A Safety Net for Mental Health

Edit and Issue

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A World Created by the Mind

Imagine you were standing by a brand-new car that you have just bought, and you were told, "That car exists only temporarily through the workings of your mind and has no real substance." What would you think?

A group of Buddhist practitioners in fourth-century India grasped the world in this way. This doctrine is called *Yogācāra* (Yuishiki), meaning "Consciousness-only." In *Yogācāra*, the world we understand as real is considered to be constructed by eight kinds of consciousness—the five senses, consciousness, and two layers of the unconscious—or, put simply, by the workings of our mind. It feels remarkably psychological in character.

An automobile is made of various materials such as iron, glass, and rubber. Once it has served its purpose, it may be recycled back into its original materials or reused as secondhand parts. If we think of a human being at the level of elements, we are a collection of water, proteins, amino acids, and the like, continually changing from day to day. An automobile or a human being is transitory phenomenon, and it exists merely through the conception of such by means of the word "automobile" or "human being". This is how *Yogācāra* understands the world.

In encountering a dog, one person may see it as a "cute dog," another may perceive it as a "scary dog," and someone who knows only cats may even see it as an "ugly cat." Likewise, while some people find a certain person's remarks "interesting," others regard the remarks "frivolous." In this case, is that "certain person" an interesting individual, or a frivolous one? The differences in perception are said to arise because "preconceptions" and "past experiences" are stored in the unconscious realm and influence the other forms of consciousness.

In this way, all things are subjective matters temporarily created by the mind and do not exist as substantial entities. By being obsessed with the things that do not truly exist, worldly desires arise, and people suffer—this is how the *Yogācāra* grasps the world.

It is said that if one can eliminate the influence of unconsciousness and come to accept the world just as it is, the mind will become tranquil and suffering will disappear. To achieve this state of mind, one should undergo the kind of rigorous practice undertaken by the Buddha himself, which is far beyond the reach of ordinary people. Even so, we can reflect on our own inner world and try to examine the subjective worlds of others. By understanding the differences, our restless minds might become a little calmer, experiencing a sense of gentle peace.

Schedule a counseling appointment

☎ 0120-783-744

Office hours: (excluding holidays)
Monday through Friday 10:00~20:00
Saturday 10:00~18:00

✉ E-mail :
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※We will reply to you within two business days after receiving your message.

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You can also schedule a counseling appointment through the LINE app.

(*Reservations only.

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Counselor's Oasis

I bought a zafu (meditation cushion). Since I bought it, in order to make use of it as much as possible, I practice zazen meditation almost every day, but for now I manage to do it only about ten to fifteen minutes at most. Perhaps because I do it after dinner, I get sleepy and my posture starts to collapse. I have heard that zazen meditation is not something you do with a particular goal in mind. I think that not worrying about results is the key to sticking with it, so I keep going with that attitude.