

Mere Appearance

For example, let's take the appearance of a flower in a dream. This flower is not something that exists, that truly exists, because it's just a dream appearance—there's no real flower there whatsoever. On the other hand, you can't say there's absolutely nothing, because there is the mere appearance of a flower—but just a mere appearance, that's it. That is its nature in terms of how it exists in the world of appearances. There's nothing really there but there is this mere appearance. In a dream there's nothing substantial but there is the mere appearance of something substantial. Thus, its true nature transcends both existence and nonexistence. Its true nature is not something we can describe with these kinds of terms, because it is beyond any type of thing we might be able to think up. And so, just like a flower that appears in a dream, all phenomena that appear, *wherever* they appear, are the same. They all appear in terms of being a mere appearance. There is nothing substantial to them, and their true nature transcends both existence and nonexistence and any other idea. All phenomena that appear to us in this life are exactly the same.

Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, *Meditation on Emptiness*, Nalandabodhi Publications 2001, p. 96. Translated by Ari Goldfield and Susane Schefczyk.