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Twelve Examples of Illusion

Jan Westerhoff

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Tibetan Buddhist writings frequently state that many of the things we perceive in the world are in fact illusory, as illusory as echoes or mirages. In *Twelve Examples of Illusion*, Jan Westerhoff offers an engaging look at a dozen illusions--including magic tricks, dreams, rainbows, and reflections in a mirror--showing how these phenomena can give us insight into reality. For instance, he offers a fascinating discussion of optical illusions, such as the wheel of fire (the "wheel" seen when a torch is swung rapidly in a circle), discussing Tibetan explanations of this phenomenon as well as the findings of modern psychology, and significantly clarifying the idea that most phenomena--from chairs to trees--are similar illusions. The book uses a variety of crystal-clear examples drawn from a wide variety of fields, including contemporary philosophy and cognitive science, as well as the history of science, optics, artificial intelligence, geometry, economics, and literary theory. Throughout, Westerhoff makes both Buddhist philosophical ideas and the latest theories of mind and brain come alive for the general reader.

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