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## PART I

LESSON 8. My mind is preoccupied with past thoughts.

W-8.1. This idea is, of course, the reason why you see only the past. 2 No one really sees anything. 3 He sees only his thoughts projected outward. 4 The mind's preoccupation with the past is the cause of the misconception about time from which your seeing suffers. 5 Your mind cannot grasp the present, which is the only time there is. 6 It therefore cannot understand time, and cannot, in fact, understand anything.

W-8.2. The one wholly true thought one can hold about the past is that it is not here. 2 To think about it at all is therefore to think about illusions. 3 Very few have realized what is actually entailed in picturing the past or in anticipating the future. 4 The mind is actually

blank when it does this, because it is not really thinking about anything.

W-8.3. The purpose of the exercises for today is to begin to train your mind to recognize when it is not really thinking at all. 2 While thoughtless ideas preoccupy your mind, the truth is blocked. 3 Recognizing that your mind has been merely blank, rather than believing that it is filled with real ideas, is the first step to opening the way to vision.

W-8.4. The exercises for today should be done with eyes closed. 2 This is because you actually cannot see anything, and it is easier to recognize that no matter how vividly you may picture a thought, you are not seeing anything. 3 With as little investment as possible, search your mind for the usual minute or so, merely noting the thoughts you find there. 4 Name each one by the central figure or theme it contains, and pass on to the next. 5 Introduce the practice period by saying:

*6 I seem to be thinking about \_\_\_\_.*

W-8.5. Then name each of your thoughts specifically, for example:

*2 I seem to be thinking about [name of a person], about [name of an object], about [name of an emotion],*

and so on, concluding at the end of the mind-searching period with:

*3 But my mind is preoccupied with past thoughts.*

W-8.6. This can be done four or five times during the day, unless you find it irritates you. 2 If you find it trying, three or four times is sufficient. 3 You might find it helpful, however, to include your irritation, or any emotion that the idea for today may induce, in the mind searching itself.

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