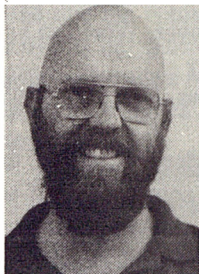


# Four Walls of the Cage

## *Anecdotes for our practice*

Bob Moore, JDPSN



*Excerpted from a Dharma Talk at Providence Zen Center on December 9, 1989.*

In the Kwan Um School of Zen we teach that the four walls that lock us in our cages are wanting mind, attaching mind, checking mind, and holding mind.

There is a man in Los Angeles, Michael Josephson, who has established a training institute in ethics for lawyers and business men. He tells a wonderful story illustrating wanting mind.

Two yuppies go out with their backpacks into the Santa Barbara mountains on a hike. They come around a bend and find a mountain lion sitting on a ledge staring down intently and hungrily at them. They stand terrified for a moment, then one yuppie slowly starts taking off his pack. The other one says "What are you doing? You can't possibly outrun this mountain lion." The first yuppie looks at him and says, "I don't have to outrun the lion. I just have to outrun you!"

This is the mind of selfishness, the mind that says, "I want!"

Another wall of this cage is attaching mind. As a boy I used to listen to the Jack Benny radio program and I remember a routine that is a good metaphor for this mind. Sheldon Leonard, the great character actor, did a routine with Benny that began with the sound of footsteps going

down a dark alley. Then Leonard would say in his best gangster voice, "Your money or your life!" There would be a dead silence. And then he'd say again, "Your money or your life!" And Jack Benny would finally reply, "I know . . . I'm thinking, I'm thinking."

That is attachment mind. We seem to come into this world with predispositions, already programmed for wealth, fame, sexual conquests, or whatever.

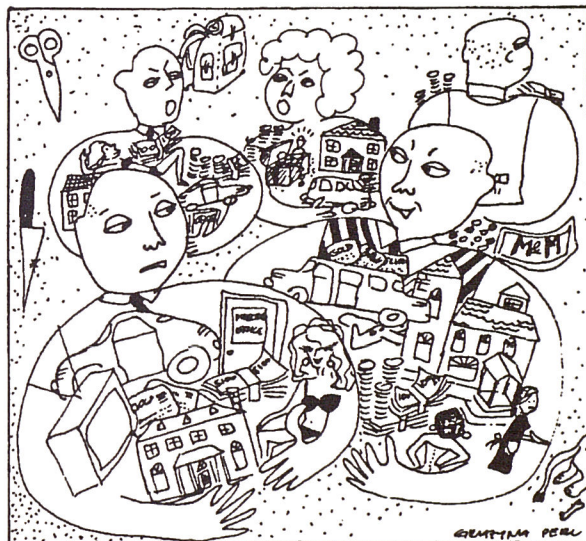
Yet another side of the cage is checking mind, and I know this mind well as a university professor. Zen Master Seung Sahn has hit me many times about this mind!

One of our students in Seattle told me a wonderful story illustrating checking mind. An American went to Japan to train in Zen after sitting in America. He did hard training for a long time, and received transmission from his Rinzai master. But he happened to be the only American in the temple among many Japanese monks. As fate would have it, a short time after giving him transmission the Zen Master got quite ill. The temple was starting a lengthy training period, so the American had to assume leadership.

During the training period the monks were not supposed to eat anything in the evening. But this American teacher was concerned about his energy, so every night he went into his room and ate just a little bit to keep his energy up, so he could give clear interviews the next day. One night he was eating some M&Ms when the door crashed open, and there stood the head Dharma teacher looking quite fierce. "What are you doing? What's that you're eating?"

The American said, "These are enlightenment pills."

A puzzled look came over the monk's face. He looked down and of course they had an "M" on them, so the monk



asked, "What does this 'M' stand for?"

"Mu!!"

The monk ran out, and the next morning at interviews, everyone wanted an enlightenment pill.

That is checking mind: the mind that is bound up in constant evaluating and comparing.



And lastly, we have holding mind. A man I know in the psychology department at U.S.C. tells this anecdote to his patients when they are caught by this kind of energy.

A man and woman got married, and they seemed to get along very well until one day they argued about how to open letters. The wife said it was proper to use a knife; the husband said to use scissors. This argument escalated over the years until eventually they no longer spoke rationally to one another. One would say, "Knife!" and the other would reply, "Scissors!"

One day they went out on a boat, and the man bent over to pull up the anchor. The woman saw her chance. She got the paddle and POW! Over the side he went. He could not swim, so he started to sink. The first time he came up she yelled, "Knife!" He said, "Scissors!" and sank again. The second time, "Knife!" "Scissors!" Gurgle, gurgle, gurgle. Third time, "Knife!" "Scissors!" And she hit him over the head with the paddle. She then peered intently into the water and could barely make out his fingers making a scissor motion as he sank all the way to the bottom.

Even until death this holding mind can possess us.

*Bob Moore, JDPSN, is guiding teacher of Dharma Zen Center in Los Angeles; Empty Gate Zen Center in Berkeley; and Seattle Dharma Center. □*

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*The knowledge of the ancients extended a long way.*

*How far did it go?*

*To the extreme point where some believed  
that nothing existed.*

*Others believed that something existed,  
but it had no limit.*

*A third group believed there were limits,  
but no distinctions.*

*When distinctions were drawn,  
preferences began,  
and the Way was injured.*

*Chuang-tzu*

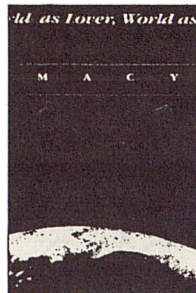
*It is wise, listening not to me but to the logos,  
to agree that all things are one.*

*Heraclitus*

## Book Reviews

### Books In Brief

*Reviewed by Mu Soeng Sunim*



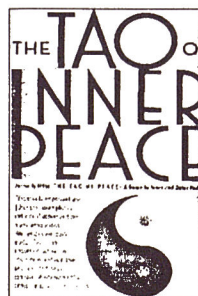
**World as Lover, World as Self**  
Joanna Macy  
Parallax Press, Berkeley, 1991

Joanna Macy is one of the best-known spiritual social activists in the country. Her activities have ranged from leading nationally-known workshops on "Despair and Personal Power in the Nuclear Age," to doing field

work in Sri Lanka in a Buddhist-inspired community development movement, to being a scholar of Buddhism. The present book is a collection of many talks and magazine articles addressed to a wide range of audiences. As she says of this varied collection,

*I have put into it an equally varied assortment to convey what I have been about . . . so many pieces of my life that reflect the pursuits of my heart and mind. . . . These talks and writings stem from that portion of my life that has been shaped by Buddhist thought and practice.*

This book can be useful to contemporary American readers who wish to integrate their Buddhist practice with concerns for social issues. Macy's concern is not with any particular issue but rather how we approach any issue at all. The chapters in the book are focused on the fundamental Buddhist teaching of dependent co-arising. Macy insists that to apply this teaching to our life is to consider our world and its creatures as nothing less than an extension of ourselves. It is only in such an approach that we create a community of intentionality and mutual help.



**The Tao of Inner Peace**  
Diane Dreher  
HarperPerennial, San Francisco, 1990

Judging by the spate of books on Tao Teh Ching in the last couple of years, it would seem that this venerable Taoist text is the latest spiritual "flavor of the month." The author has traveled the linear trajectory, especially the northern California