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Mountain Gate Journal

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Mountain Gate is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization established to provide the environment and training in the specific mindfulness practices of Rinzai Zen, focusing on meditation and work with koans [traditional paradoxical anecdotes or questions]. Regaining Balance, a nonsectarian outreach program, was established by Mountain Gate some years ago- to offer free, nonsectarian retreats for women veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress, and for women who are wives or partners of veterans with PTSD.



The following is the first chapter in a new book by Mitra-roshi and the Book Group at Mountain Gate. Full title of the book, which will become available in early September, is, ***Deepening Zen: the Long Maturation***. It will be published by Sumeru Press, which is offering deep discounts on bulk orders directly from the publisher. The book will also be available, without the bulk discounts, on Amazon.com.

The Expectations of New Zen Students

Roshi Philip Kapleau, the earliest American pioneer in Zen, used to say, “Your life depends upon it!” when speaking of the need for committed, ongoing Zen practice. At the time I would think “*Oh yes, of course, right, sure...*” but after many more years of Zen practice it’s clear that it was absolutely true. How we live our life—what enriches our life, how we’re able to respond to adversity—all these are positively enhanced by deepening practice.

But in the beginning, when people first start Zen practice, there is often an inherent sense that we sit down on this “magic cushion” and instantly we’re transported into a very lovely place. Suddenly we’re free, suddenly it’s joyful; it’s even possibly blissful. But that’s a vast misunderstanding. The promise is there and the promise is real, but it takes (depending on how caught we are) a great deal of work to reach that point. Yet if we’re willing to do the work, it can happen.

“Zen” has been misunderstood in modern cultures, beginning with the Beat Generation of the 1960’s—Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, Gary Snyder, and others. Jack Kerouac wrote about—among other things—spiritual questing. Kerouac was raised French-Canadian Roman Catholic and for a while dabbled in Buddhism, until encounters with significant Buddhist authorities such as D. T. Suzuki took the wind out of his sails. The Beats had a romantic but mistaken idea of what Zen practice was. They appeared to think it meant doing what-

ever you wanted to do, whenever you wanted to do it.

Zen practice ultimately will bring us to a point where whatever we are faced with—whatever positive or negative situations we find ourselves in—we are able to easily, healthily, appropriately move through them without being caught; without being filled with suffering. But it doesn't entail doing whatever we feel like whenever we feel like it.

And that brings us to Jacques Lusseyran's story. Lusseyran was French; when he was about eight years old he was blinded in a school accident. He was wearing glasses, and back then (this would have been in the 1930's, or slightly earlier) no eyeglasses were shatter-proof. The accident took place when his classmates were rushing out to recess and somebody, in haste, shoved him from behind. The push sent him into the corner of his teacher's desk, his eyeglasses smashed into his eyes and he lost his vision. But perhaps because he was not seeing very well before the accident, he had already developed an expanded awareness.

He wrote that after the accident he began to realize that if he was playing with friends and got angry or jealous, suddenly he was bumping into things. When he was not in those negative mind states he was able to move freely about with ease.¹

Expanding our awareness is something we're called upon to do whether we are blind or not—an awareness that goes beyond how we are told things are, beyond how we think things are, beyond how we're accustomed to assuming things are. Beyond the wall of expectation and assumption is a place of absolute clarity.

There's a wonderful Tibetan Buddhist book of teachings by Longchenpa, a 10th-century Tibetan Buddhist master, called *You Are the Eyes of the World*. The title itself is absolutely right on: Our assumptions and conditioning influence our perceptions and determine how we see things—what our worldview is.

¹ Lusseyran, Jacques. *And There Was Light*. Translated by Elizabeth R. Cameron, Parabola Books, 1991. This autobiography, from which Mitra-roshi draws upon frequently, tells Lusseyran's life story in detail.

When Jacques Lusseyran was in high school, France was invaded by the Nazis. He and his high school friends had a favorite uncle they would visit frequently. He had so many wonderful ideas and was so interesting to be with. One day they went to see him and were told by the concierge of his apartment building that the Gestapo had taken him away that morning. They began to see other people disappearing as well, people they cared about, people they had great respect for. At that time also the French population was becoming increasingly frightened due to Nazi propaganda. So Jacques and his circle of friends decided they needed to do something about it. Risking their lives and the lives of their families, they listened to clandestine radio and typed up the truth in a little newspaper that eventually grew to become *France Soir*, the most important daily newspaper in France in subsequent years.

They pedaled their bikes all over the country, distributing their mini-newspaper to sympathetic French citizens. Their news countered the Nazi propaganda. The initial group of high school kids grew, and Jacques, because of the intuition and perception he had enhanced when he went blind, was the gatekeeper for the group. Anyone wanting to join first was interviewed by him. If he felt the person was going to be loyal and work well, they were let in; otherwise, he wrote, it was just an afternoon conversation with a blind man.

At one point a person arrived. Jacques' inner sense said, No, don't let this guy in, but because the young man came with the purported recommendation of some Jacques respected, he let him become a member of one cell in the group. Not long after that, that very person betrayed them. The resistance group had wisely been set up in cells such that each cell contained no more than twenty-some participants. Thus, even though the group eventually grew to 600 young people, if any part of the group was betrayed, only a few would be revealed. Jacques, of course, was one of the people who were turned in. He was held first in a French prison. After some months in solitary confinement he was taken by train to Buchenwald, one of the death camps in Nazi-occupied Europe. The train was so crowded with other prisoners that the occupants of the cars were

forced to stand up the entire three-day-and-night journey except for rare stops when they were forced to run on the tracks, chased by the guards' dogs and occasionally shot at.

At Buchenwald his good *karma* allowed him to bypass instant execution when one of the intake prisoners whispered to him to claim that he was a translator. Otherwise, because he was blind, he would have been instantly executed. He was housed in what was called the "invalid block," where anybody who was old, missing a body part, deaf, blind, mentally ill, gay, or had sexually transmitted diseases were kept. It was a building that would have been crowded with 400 people, and there were a thousand men in that barracks. Jacques wrote that you could not move without bumping into another human being.

After five months in that environment, with death (and the constant threat of death) and with the lack of sufficient food to maintain his health, he became extremely ill; his body could no longer handle the stress. There were three doctors in the camp who were also prisoners, and they each diagnosed him, so he knew what his conditions were called. But diagnosis wasn't an issue: he could feel what was going on in his body, and this was critical. He could feel his face swollen with a dangerous condition called *erysipelas*. He could feel the writhing of his intestinal tract as if it were filled with razor blades. He could feel the wildly out-of-sync beating of his heart; he could feel his kidneys shutting down. He was dying and he knew he was dying. Pretty much all his organs were failing. Recognizing this, two other prisoners, friends of his, carried him to what they euphemistically called "the hospital," a piece of concrete on the ground outdoors.

But what then happened? Because of the total presence that he was able to bring to that experience—and this is critical—he died, but only to his ideas of what he needed in order to be happy. That profound letting go brought about a very deep Awakening. It was still alive and functioning decades later when his college students, fascinated by his quiet energy, asked him about his history.

An Awakening that doesn't move into functioning is a useless Awakening. Functioning is vital. What Jacques had awakened to transformed him; it was clearly functioning.

The whole tenor of the writing of the authors who were part of the Beat Generation was to push the limits of the American culture at the time, in part by exploring spirituality, including Buddhism. That was the first information on Buddhism that 20th-century mainstream Americans had—although Buddhism had earlier been introduced at the 1896 World Parliament of Religion in Chicago, when Shaku Soen (who actually did some of his Zen training at Sogenji) gave a talk on Buddhism. It was the first people really knew about the religion. D.T. Suzuki translated for him and then remained in the United States, writing books in English, furthering the flow of information. Other than that, here and there a small handful of very wealthy Americans somehow managed to make contact with Buddhist monks and Buddhist priests—and took them into their homes as private Zen teachers.

If the Beat Generation had a skewed understanding of Buddhist practice, then what is it? It is to be so profoundly present that ideas about ourselves and about any situation we would encounter would not hinder us, potentially causing suffering. With that level of presence, we sink into an open awareness so profound that we naturally respond seamlessly, clearly, and appropriately to whatever circumstances arise before us.

That is what Jacques did; in that dying to his self-image he found joy. After that, people led him to other prisoners who were freaking out because he had such a profound calm that he was able to help people also calm down. They quit stealing his bread. He had been able to find joy in the midst of hell—and, in his words, that joy never left him.

This really is something that we also can realize through our Zen practice. However, it is not something that is going to happen immediately. We can't sit down on a cushion or a chair (or however we are doing our *zazen*²) and immediately plunge into that enlightened mind-state. Moreover, many people—not everybody, but many people—come to Zen practice with a history of trauma. When we experience a traumatic event, our natural inclination (for self preservation) is to shut down our senses; to become, as I was (rightly) accused of in high school,

2 Sitting meditation

a zombie: walking, talking, but nobody home. And “nobody home” on purpose, because to be there would be so painful or so frightening that we couldn’t bring ourselves to it.

Even with a history of trauma, with appropriate guidance it is possible to come to a place where we can respond in a very different, free and unhindered—yet fully present—way to whatever arises. This is the promise of our Zen practice, and of course if we haven’t experienced trauma then it might unfold faster.

Another image of Zen prominent in popular culture is that we can leave our challenging life behind and pop into a place of bliss and peace. Unfortunately, while that can ultimately be true, to uncover it takes time, courage, and a willingness to BE present even in adversity. With dedication, perseverance, and faith, it is possible eventually to open to what is innate in all of us: profound peace, ease, and an ability to seamlessly experience whatever comes along in life, regardless of how positive or negative it appears. So many new Zen students hear that part and don’t realize that to reach that, it’s a long process that involves little by little recognizing—through insight—where we are caught in rigid and conditioned ways of thinking and acting.

In a blog long ago, Bernie Glassman (the first Dharma successor of Maezumi Roshi’s Zen Center Los Angeles) wrote:

As writers and philosophers have already said, there’s no language for Auschwitz. I can only add, there are no thoughts, either. We are in a place of unknowing. Much of Zen practice, including many teaching techniques used by Zen masters, is aimed at bringing the Zen practitioner to this same place of unknowing, of letting go of what he or she knows. Letting go: that’s not so easy.³

3 Glassman, Bernard. “Why Bernie Kept Going Back to Auschwitz-Birkenau?” *Zen Peacemakers*, 24 Dec. 2019, <https://zenpeacemakers.org/zpi-publishing/why-bernie-kept-going-back-to-auschwitz-birkenau/>

But that is the ticket: letting go of thoughts, letting go of what we think we know based on our thoughts, behavior, and past and future thoughts and behaviors. In order to reach this place of innate peace and joy, there is no other option than not to push away or deny, but to let go.

But how?

We cannot let go until we see where we’re caught—and that’s not what we usually think Zen practice is about.

That’s where *zazen* comes in: *Susok’kan*⁴ is especially effective in this endeavor. The practice and our daily life are amplified and enriched when we pay attention. Because what *susok’kan* does, is to require attention it trains us in both attention and letting go. It’s an invaluable practice.

It is so common to “pay attention” at certain (maybe critical) times, but the attention spoken of here is 24/7, fundamental presence. Real presence; constant, ongoing presence. What that means is that, loading the dishwasher, we focus on the full body experience of putting a glass in the place it belongs in the rack. We focus as we load each separate item into the dishwasher. Is the glass or dish or plate in a condition where the dishwasher will actually be able to clean it? And where are WE when we place that item? Sunning on a California beach? Are we on automatic, putting stuff in because we’ve done it so many times before?

When we close the dishwasher and hit the start button, do we feel that motion and that sense of contact? Again, when the dishwasher has completed its cleaning cycle, are we fully present when we are unloading it and putting the dishes and pots and silverware away? Or do we later realize when we’re cooking and we reach for a utensil, that it’s not where it’s supposed to be because we absent-mindedly put it somewhere else?

It sounds picky, but all the rules and regulations of monasteries everywhere are there not only to help things flow, but at least as importantly, to help us pay attention. For it is the most profound attention that is what will

4 The extended out-breath practice. An in-depth description of how to *susok’kan* is featured later in the book.

bring about the liberation we seek. And it begins with the most mundane things.

It's so easy to coast along on automatic. We've done something once, twice; we're going to do it many, many more times, and our body goes into gear but our mind is wandering elsewhere. It's like riding a bicycle: you have to pay attention to learn how to ride a bicycle, but then after that you can pedal around without thinking about it.

Sadly, we get that way—absentminded, moving around on automatic pilot—about everything! If we are to live a fulfilling life it's important to really, really pay attention. It can seem boring, but actually if you really pay attention to the most subtle aspects of whatever you're doing—the sensations in your body, the quality of the air, the feel of your hands as you're touching something, it can be quite a rich experience. That's how Jacques found lasting joy—through ongoing, profound presence.

We too can experience the level of joy Lusseyran did, but in this day and age with our tech toys it's a lot harder: when we grow up with television, for example, where the screen flashes a different image every few seconds, our brains are trained to disengage if something new isn't happening constantly. So we have to slow down; we have to relearn how to be in the moment. Initially zazen can be a big challenge because of this.

We're fortunate here at Mountain Gate to be in this high-mountain, very small, quiet, spread-out community, with a National Forest right at our doorstep. Things go at a slower pace here. I wrote on Facebook once of having just witnessed "the Ojo Sarco rush hour": three cars and a pickup truck! In L.A. (and Southern California in general), where each freeway consists of a minimum of five lanes each direction, there are quite a few more, whether it's rush hour or not.

So to open to an inner state of peace and tranquility, train your mind. Unplug for significant periods of time each day, so you're not looking at the screen all the time. Go for a walk, outdoors if possible; get up in the morning and *feel* how the weather feels by going outside and actually feeling it—before you turn on the T.V., look at a newspaper or your cell

phone or your computer! There are so many ways people can return to living in the present and find the joy that is



How It All Came About

When Mitra-roshi completed her formal Zen training at the Rochester Zen Center she did not want to quit formal training yet. A chance encounter with harada Shodo Roshi followed by the gift of a sesshin with him in the Northwest solidified here connection with him and the sense that going to Japan to train at his monastery in Okayama, was the next important step in her training. To test it further she went to Japan for three months in the Fall of 1992, spending a month in the intensive training offered at Sogen-ji, followed by a couple of weeks in Kyoto, sitting with Morinaga Soko Roshi's sangha at Daishu-in, a subtemple of Ryoan-ji, a Rinzai temple famous for its deeply quiet rock garden. This was capped by a few days at Bukkoku-ji in Obama, where Harada Tangen Roshi, Dharma successor of Harada Daiun Sogaku Roshi with whom Roshi Kapleau had trained, including attending the Rohatsu sesshin there before returning to Rochester and attending the Rohatsu sesshin there. The amazing experience of doing five sesshin within three months, along with the intensive schedule at Sogen-ji, cemented her intention to return full time to Sogen-ji. And so a few months later she returned to Japan to take up longer term training at Sogen-ji.

In 1996 she returned to the United States at the request of Roshi Kapleau, who then authorized her to teach as one of his Dharma successors. It was now time to establish a teaching center, and there was no doubt in her mind that it would be in a very small, Spanish-heritage village in northern New Mexico. Purchasing a special piece of bare land with her inheritance from her father, who had died earlier that year, she established Mountain Gate and commenced slowly to build while living in a small, very old travel trailer someone had given to her. The first construction project was an out-house. The sec-

ond was an adobe zendo. The zendo was gradually constructed through the gift of adobes and the help of a number of volunteers. We held our first sesshin in January 1998 in the unfinished zendo. No heat and no electric lights, with the men sleeping in the zendo and the women joining Mitra-roshi in the old trailer and meals crowded into the old trailer, it was an exciting beginning. And it was crystal clear we needed more space.

with Roshi's background in architecture she drew up drawings, obtained a building permit, and again we set to work, mostly with volunteers. Roshi worked side by side with everyone building Mountain Gate, and eventually we had a finished zendo, a bathroom, small entry, two guest bedrooms, a closet, and Mitra-roshi's quarters, which also served as the dining room for the next many years.

During that time, Mitrar-roshi returned to Sogenji every year for five or six weeks to continue her intensive training. Supported by donations, Mountain Gate continued to grow slowly. There was never the intention for it to become a mainstream Zen center, but rather, a quiet place off the beaten path for deep, serious, Zen training. Somehow despite not being well known, and maintaining a frugal lifestyle, Mountain Gate has continued to offer deep training in a very quiet and peaceful location.

With the trailer dying, we needed to come up with another kitchen quickly. So one Thanksgiving day three friends came and we built the foundation for a very small kitchen; it would have no running water but it would have electricity and a propane gas connecton. A cookstove was donated and so was a refrigerator, and we hauled water in 5-gallon containers. It served us well for many years until we were finally able to buy the adjoining property, which had an old house trailer with a poorly constructed addition. Suddenly we had a "real" kitchen with running water, as well as more sleeping space. We found—or rather, she found us—an exquisite porcelain figure nearly 3 ft. tall, of the bodhisattva Kannon, known also

as Kwan Yin, and considered traditionally to be an expression of the compassion innate in all beings. (Of course, it's not so obvious in some!) So it was that we named the "new" building the Kannon-do, meaning, the Hall of Compassion, inspiration to our practice. A full schedule of sesshin was maintained through those years.

And then, motivated by her own wartime experience and the horrors pictured in the various Life Mazine large-format books, a special program we called RegainingBalance Retreats for Women Veterans with PTSD we began offering these special retreats during summer months, beginning in 2014. The retreats were specially developed to offer respite, community, and also teach the women tools with which they could de-stress and ground themselves. (for mor information: www.regainingbalance.org)

It is through the experiences in her own life, including trauma and therapy as well as decades of intensive Zen practice unde two committed



An Update on the Kannon-do Project

Update on the Kannon-do Rebuild

Kannon is also known as Guan Yin or Kwan Yin, the latter two being the Chinese names for her. Historically the saying goes, in India where he was known as Avalokiteshvara, is that he was so moved by the suffering in the world that his head split into many heads so he would be better able to do something about that suffering. When Buddhism went to China, "he" became "she," Guan Yin, and was modeled after the daughter of an emperor who was known to be incredibly kind and compassionate. Kannon/Guan Yin/Kwan Yin if considered to be a representation of the profound compassion innate in every being. It is not always, by any means, obvious, but it is there, if underground. There are some human beings who are known to be so obviously compassionate, one being the Dalai Lama, who has spent his life opening more and more that innate compassion through Buddhist practice, and inspiring countless

others with his model of behavior. Desmond Tutu, Mother Teresa, the names and unnamed medical doctors who gave their lives (or are continuing to do so) in remote countries where medical care was normally not available. We, too, are working to embody that compassion.

At Mountain Gate, for example, we helped care for a neighbor who was slowly dying of what was discovered by the Mayo Clinic, as the effects of having been bathed in pesticides when she was a child in Oak Park IL and she and her siblings would chase after the trucks that were spraying the famous elm trees that lined the streets, because they could be cooled by the pesticide spray. In our area there is a hospice option for home care but it only covers care for 20 hours a week. In opting out of that program ourselves we were able to add significant hours of care for her. At the time there were three women in residence at Mountain Gate, including the roshi, and we took turns every day helping her move around (while she was still able), and otherwise caring for her. This is the spirit of Kannon.

And this is why, when we were finally able to purchase the adjacent property with a small, somewhat ramshackle combo old house trailer and poorly built and incomplete add-on, we named that building the Kannon-do, or Hall of Compassion, in honor of what Mountain Gate is about: doing what we can to relieve the suffering in the world. Our focus in doing that is two-fold. We teach Zen meditation, always with the component of *susok'kan*, the extended out-breath, offering regular meditation "sittings" and frequent extended retreats known as *sesshin*. The point in this offering is to offer people who are interested enough, a means of uncovering their innate compassion and wisdom, with attendant clarity that will allow them to comprehend exactly what to do in each circumstance, especially when things are difficult, painful, or challenging. In this way each person, if they do the work and open to the innate wisdom and compassion, will understand how to put their own unique history and gifts to work to relieve suffering in the world.

Our second focus is to work with women veterans diagnosed with PTSD—post-traumatic syndrome—through our *RegainBalance Retreats for Women Veterans with PTSD*. During these retreats, which are not *sesshin* but quite different, we teach them various means by which to ground themselves and work with difficult feelings. Feedback has made it known that these retreats have a very positive and ongoing effect in the lives of these women, most of whom have had such nightmare experiences, often at the hands of their fellow soldiers but also in their deployments in war zones.

So this small structure represents an overriding aim of Mountain Gate: to relieve suffering.

But the building itself is suffering, and has been for many years. It was never completed, and the OSB the covers the outside of the addition was never meant to be exposed to the elements for more than two weeks before it was covered over with the final building exterior finish such as stucco or some other product that would protect it from the elements. The best we could manage financially over the years was to paint it with an elastomeric paint, which has helped slow the deterioration but is itself beginning to fail.

We have had two major and expensive pipe breaks, in which each of which caused the loss of approximately 1000 gallons of water, and in the case of the add-on, flooded the bathroom and the main room. In the case of the break in the trailer, it was up inside the wall behind the shower and resulted in the water digging a foot-deep trench as it made its way down the property. Because it was not a wise use of money to try to repair that particular break we capped off the water to the shower. The bathtub, sink and toilet still function in that bathroom. The trailer has been deemed, by those in the know, to be "an accident waiting to happen." The break in the addition happened through poor construction decisions, in which water piping was installed in exterior, poorly insulated walls when there were interior walls that would have been more appropriate. The best solution under these conditions, is to give

the trailer away to anyone willing to haul it out of here. There are two people who have expressed strong interest in having it under those conditions. Because the addition is so poorly insulated, and because we could use more room, our plan is to enclose that part with adobe walls on the south and east sides, and continue to add those exterior walls to encompass the “footprint” of the building, including where the trailer currently is. The adobe is an especially effective building material for walls facing those directions; the west and north sides would be super-insulated frame, and would allow for a small expansion that would provide a closet off the bathroom, a mechanical room large enough to in the future accommodate solar heating equipment, and a larger pantry/storeroom off a new kitchen. Upstairs would be a small bedroom, a meditation room, a bathroom, and a small deck.

What would we use this rebuild Kannon-do for? Why invest in its reconstruction? Answering the second question first, we need to do something before the building deteriorates to the point where it would better be torn down, yet the main room and bathroom in the addition are worth retaining, though with much better insulation and natural light.

What do we use it for even now? It is overflow housing for sesshin and for the RegainingBalance retreats. It has been used multiple times as a guest house. For example, last year the parents of one of our members was in sesshin here and his parents wanted to both be very part time participants, cook food for the sesshin, and have time to explore the area. It worked out beautifully. We had wonderful Chinese cuisine for many of our meals during the sesshin, and each of his parents came for some sitting and for some teisho (talks). Other Sangha members have come and stayed there, especially one member whose wife, while she is supportive of his Zen practice, does not practice herself and is not interested in attending sittings. This way they could be up at the Kannon-do, do sightseeing, and Steve could come down for all the sittings while they were here for a week. A further option, and one we have made available in the past to a number of people who had asked, is to have the space separate from the main building in which

to do their own solo retreats. These uses of the Kannon-do make it worthwhile to rebuild it and make it more amenable and functional for those different ways of using it.

To help provide funds to do this important work, you can click [here](#); it will take you directly to the page where you can make a donation.

Or you can make a PayPal donation, or you can simply send a check made to Mountain Gate, to 124 County Rd 73, Ojo Sarco NM 87521. And thank you so much for your help!

We estimate it may cost approximately \$200,000 to do this rebuilding of the Kannon-do. Since COVID, building materials have skyrocketed, and with the massive fires burning in British Columbia forests as well as in other parts of Canada, where much of our lumber comes these days, it will continue to impact building materials prices in the United States.

At the moment we have received approximately \$25,000 in funds earmarked for the Kannon-do Rebuild Project; it is not yet enough to begin building. However, this coming weekend the architectural designer who designed and prepared the requisite drawings to get a building permit for our recent major addition to the main building, while retired now, has offered to take over the architectural drawing work that our neighbor, who supervised and worked on that addition, had brought almost to completion before necessarily taking a long-term job that would give him retirement and health care benefits. Once we have sufficient funds to begin construction, we will take Lloyd's (the architect) drawings and get a permit. In the meantime we will be searching for a local contractor who will do a very good job of the building rebuild.

Again, [here's the link](#); thank you!

A Gallery of Photos of the Kannon-do



Inside the addition, the wall where the painting is will be removed and the room expanded with French doors and more light, to become the living room. an



The current, very small front entryway; on the other side of that wall is the view to the left. The exercise machine was donated by a neighbor and will eventually be moved to an area off the kitchen and be joined by an old rowing machine and a weight bench so people at Mountain Gate will have an opportunity to exercise, which balances and enhances zazen.



Above, left and right, : The add-on bathroom



Sunset over the Kannon-do

CALENDAR

September 6-10 - RegainingBalance Retreat® for Women Veterans with PTSD.

This is not a sesshin, but a special, free, nonsecular retreat for women veterans with PTSD. If you'd like more information: www.regainbalance.org

September 30 - October 7 7-day Sesshin

at Mountain Gate. Deadline for applications is a week before sesshin. Applications are required for every sesshin, whether attending by Zoom or in person. Anyone attending in person must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, including with a bivalent booster.

October 21- 28 7-day Sesshin at Mountain Gate.

Deadline for applications is a week before sesshin. Applications are required for every sesshin, whether attending by Zoom or in person. Anyone attending in person must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, including with a bivalent booster.

November 4-11 7-day Sesshin at Mountain Gate.

Deadline for applications is a week before sesshin. Applications are required for every sesshin, whether attending by Zoom or in person. Anyone attending in person must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, including with a bivalent booster.

November 30- December 8 Rohatsu

8-day Sesshin at Mountain Gate. Deadline for applications is a week before sesshin. Applications are required for every sesshin, whether attending by Zoom or in person. Anyone attending in person must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, including with a bivalent booster.

2024 CALENDAR

January 20-27 7-day Sesshin at Mountain Gate.

Deadline for applications is a week before sesshin. Applications are required for every sesshin, whether attending by Zoom or in person. Anyone attending in person must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, including with a bivalent booster.

February 3 - 10 7-day Sesshin at Mountain Gate.

Deadline for applications is a week before sesshin. Applications are required for every sesshin, whether attending by Zoom or in person. Any-

one attending in person must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, including with a bivalent booster. This is the second of a pair of sesshin very close together—just a week apart. This provides an opportunity to do a short period of really deep training!

March 10-17 7-day Sesshin at Mountain Gate.

Deadline for applications is a week before sesshin. Applications are required for every sesshin, whether attending by Zoom or in person. Anyone attending in person must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, including with a bivalent booster.

April 20-27 7-day Sesshin at Mountain Gate.

Deadline for applications is a week before sesshin. Applications are required for every sesshin, whether attending by Zoom or in person. Anyone attending in person must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, including with a bivalent booster.

The April and May sesshins are a dual sesshin, offering Zen students a special opportunity to take a significant step deeper in practice, since the two sesshin are only a week apart.

May 4-11 7-day Sesshin at Mountain Gate.

Deadline for applications is a week before sesshin. Applications are required for every sesshin, whether attending by Zoom or in person. Anyone attending in person must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, including with a bivalent booster.

The May sesshin marks the end of the Spring intensive training period. The summer schedule is mainly reserved for the special RegainingBalance Retreats for Women Veterans with PTSD; these retreats will be scheduled later in the year. There will also be opportunities for continued Zen training with another sesshin sometime midsummer, and zazenkai (all-day sittings) as well. Again, these events will be scheduled closer to the time.

"Practice is truly being open and vulnerable to everything.

That much is very clear since sesshin - this giving up the base fear of the uncontrollability of events.⁹

For information about the RegainingBalance program and to offer support: www.RegainingBalance.org
For information about Zen meditation practice and sesshin [meditation retreats]: www.sanmonjizen.org
