



MONASTIC ACADEMY

FOR THE PRESERVATION OF LIFE ON EARTH

CEDAR

COMMUNITY FOR THE
EXPERIENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF
AWAKENING AND RESPONSIBILITY

2024
FALL
QUARTERLY
REPORT

ABOUT US



Description of CEDAR

CEDAR (Community for the Experience and Development of Awakening and Responsibility) is a network of communities working together to create a more trustworthy culture through monastic training and leadership development. At CEDAR, we are creating monastic academies—twenty-first-century educational institutions for the spiritual leaders needed for this time of crisis. MAPLE in Vermont was the first established community; we have expanded to include OAK in California.

History of MAPLE

MAPLE (Monastic Academy for the Preservation of Life on Earth) is a full-time residential mindfulness and leadership training program to develop awakened leaders. Founded in 2011 in Burlington, VT, MAPLE now runs a world-class monastic training center on 125 acres in Lowell, VT. We are also building an adjacent village to scale trustworthy culture and values to impact the globe.

History of OAK

OAK is a dharma community house and training environment founded in 2018 that provides a monastic environment for training the mind, spiritual friendship, and ethical guidance to those addressing society's greatest challenges in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Center for Mindful Learning

Center for Mindful Learning (CML) is the legal, non-profit name of our United States 501(c)(3) organization founded in 2011. CML has supported mindfulness projects such as Modern Mindfulness for Schools (ModMind), the Monastic Academy, and Mindful City Project.

JOIN US

751 Page Rd, Lowell, VT 05847
info@monasticacademy.org
802-540-0820

ONLINE RESOURCES

www.monasticacademy.org
www.facebook.com/monasticacademy
www.youtube.com/@monasticacademy
tales.monasticacademy.org

LETTER FROM THE FOUNDER



Dear friends,

I have been working with tech leaders in San Francisco, particularly in the field of AI. They are working with religious fervor. To use the word “religious” is not an over-exaggeration. It really is religious. They believe that they are bringing about the End Times, and are trying to engineer the rapture they await. There is a lot of confusion here. It's a perfect place for us to teach the Dharma.

We won't have time to fulfill all of the teaching requests we've received. We are making quite the impression. Although I will leave soon to see my teachers in Asia, we are glad to have met the crucial questions of this time and place.

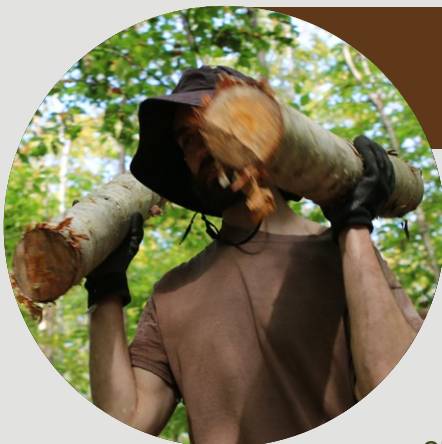
Thank you for making MAPLE possible. This is where we train the guides for the future. Please see below for the way I have been explaining our work.

May you be well.

Soryu Forall
Founder and Head Teacher

Religion has been the most effective method for creating the superstructure of the world, and has impacted history more than any other force. Creating a true and beneficial religion for this age is the most important work right now. There may not be any greater immediate threat than the development of AI religions. Most people, and almost all Bay Area people, are already captured by one or another of these new religions, such as a total faith in information or acceleration.

We respond by creating a collective entity that practices, i.e. a monastery, with the goal of enlightenment (the perfect realization of what is true and good) that interfaces with and guides modern technology. This requires the creation of a very different kind of religion, one that offers a version of the Dharma that meets and answers the modern crisis. We base this ideology on Buddhism because it is the most capable of bringing us to enlightenment, and its ontology is the most vast and precise of any religion, including science. We are growing it and adapting it to the modern age while holding to its essential core as sacred. This ancient ideology is radically innovative because it is designed to guide the new agents that run the world: systems made of collectives of many humans and many computers. These collective systems made of humans and computers must be taught to practice, so they gain compassion for all beings, and use their unprecedented power for the benefit of all beings.



MONASTIC TRAINING

Our monastic training this summer was characterized by weekends of silent practice, community gathering, and work practice.

We held Awakening Weekends on most weekends for the training residents and guests. They were designed to be simple opportunities to clear our minds completely, without any talks or guidances on the schedule. We chanted, sat in the zendo, practiced walking meditation, ate together, and did manual labor outside. Residents described these as “short, but punchy”. As with the wildflowers on our land, the practice blooms here.

On Sundays, we came out of our period of intensive practice to offer its fruits to the broader community. We brought back a regular Sunday Sit for the summer season, which had been formerly offered in Burlington; this time held at our center in Lowell. Villagers, neighbors, and friends from farther away joined for a dharma talk, guided meditation, and Q&A period led by our renunciate teacher Renshin, followed by a potluck and friendly conversation on the porch.

Work practice has been a central component of our summer training. During these periods, residents and staff come together to integrate meditation practice with activity in the form of physical labor. The simple work simplifies our minds.

We dug ditches, broke down fallen trees, built corduroy roads, and installed culverts. This good hard work was all in noble silence and in harmony with the land and community.

We strive to enter Right Relationship with the land we steward. As a sacred ritual, we offer tobacco to the land in the four directions at the start of each work practice period. We listen deeply and ask for permission from the trees, rocks, animals, and spirit friends. It is through these actual connections that we can know for ourselves what love is and find a tangible way to care for all beings.

By practicing in this way, we also learn how to function as a collective. We solve problems together and work out real solutions in the practical, physical world. We meet the situation as is, as a group. This collective facing of reality is much needed in a world that is increasingly dominated by lonely abstractions, ideas, and philosophies.

Here we do the real work. This real work, without anything added onto it, brings people closer to mundane and ultimate Right View. Held in the context of practice, the work itself becomes a powerful tool for purification.



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ONLINE MONESTARY AND MEDIA TEAM

In this quarter, the Online Monastery and Media (OMM) team began distributing MAPLE's latest teachings on Buddhism, AI, and global transformation.

In early August, we released the first two modules of the Buddhism for AI course. This course offers the modern age a worldview for walking the path to enlightenment and dealing with the existential crises we face. Each lesson in the course includes ~15 minute video lectures, written content, and reflection questions.

Our current plan is to release a new module every few weeks, so that people can engage with the teachings while our team continues to create upcoming content. In the short time since Buddhism for AI launched, we have attracted nearly 100 participants who have shared dozens of engaging reflections.

We hope you will join the course at buddhismforai.sutra.co

In mid September, we released a website dedicated to "MAPLE Tales": short written pieces where community members retell and reflect on a moment of teaching and insight. The tales describe an unexpected situation, how Forall responded, and the clarity discovered by the student. These tales have been a wonderful addition to our community.

Each day at MAPLE, there are many situations where teachings are given – not only during a dharma talk or practice interview, but also amidst a meal or a meeting. MAPLE Tales offer trainees here the opportunity to actively reflect on and integrate those teachings. As they share these expressions, others may be inspired to walk the spiritual path for themselves, live in more ethical ways, shatter the indoctrination of our culture, enter a mind of unimaginable glory, and serve all beings with compassion.

You can read the tales at tales.monasticacademy.org

With a wealth of content being created for the course and new MAPLE tales site, we are now preparing to adapt these teachings for social media platforms like YouTube, Facebook, and X. These are often the first points of engagement people have with our community, so they play an instrumental role in inviting new trainees and supporters.

We are very happy that our extended community can now interact with some of our recent teachings and we look forward to expanding these support resources in the coming months. If you're finding value in these offerings we encourage you to share them widely so that others may benefit as well.





CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

This quarter we implemented numerous operational improvements across all levels of the organization. Our approach addresses the organization as a whole, our teams, and each individual. We aim to improve in a way that enters the mind of “dataism”- the data-focused religion that is taking over the world- without being caught by its delusions.

At the broadest level, we've established an overarching framework for improvement. Within this framework, we're developing high-level metrics to measure our progress towards the organization's goals. This provides a unified direction for all our efforts and allows us to track our overall performance.

At the team level, each team has created its own mission statement in alignment with the organizational goals. Teams are developing specific metrics to link their work to our broader objectives. These metrics clarify team objectives and show how their work contributes to overall aims. We've also established a system for teams to identify and address bottlenecks regularly. Teams use their metrics to pinpoint areas for improvement and then create plans to address those areas.

To support these team-level changes, our managers participated in a management training. Each manager now understands the basic goal of management, and how to apply it to their team. Therefore, each manager can lead their team in addressing their areas for improvement.

At the individual level, every team member has created a personal mission statement aligned with their team's mission. Now they can more clearly connect their individual work to team and organizational goals. Additionally, each person has improved their individual performance through the development of a performance improvement plan. Each individual is asked to assess and improve upon how their performance is contributing to their team's goals.

Across all these levels - from the organization as a whole, through our teams, to each individual - we have established clear goals and mission statements, and are working on developing and refining relevant metrics. This alignment ensures that every effort contributes to our overall objectives.

Moving forward, we'll set baseline metrics at each level to measure impact over time. We'll work to integrate data at every level of decision making, while still being driven by compassion and operating from wisdom.

STEWARD SPOTLIGHT: PROFILE ON CYNTHIA GORSICK



Cynthia was born and raised in Kentucky, home of the Kentucky Derby, Bluegrass, and the First Masonic Temple. She grew up in a family of Master Masons and takes pride in her family's involvement in the work the Masonry does for the community. After high school, Cynthia worked as a certified nursing assistant for 6 years as a float between all the different hospitals in the Louisville area as they were short staffed, finding great fulfillment in serving her community this way. After training in front-end web development, she worked briefly for local marketing companies before venturing into entrepreneurship and serving non-profit entities with her web development skills. In 2021, her life opened up after a car accident brought great clarity to her desire to live a present life. She has taken this second chance as a blessing and opportunity to take full responsibility for the impact she wants to have in the world.

INTERVIEW WITH CYNTHIA:

Why did you join the MAPLE stewardship Program?

A dear friend of mine, Michael Kris, who has completed the stewardship program in the past noticed that it would be a very beneficial opportunity for me to become more in touch with myself and my practice. At first, I resisted this opportunity as I have a husband and 8 lovely furry friends that share my home and it felt like leaving them would be impossible. However, the synchronicities in life continued to point at MAPLE as the next step I needed to take and my husband was beyond supportive of me following my heart and passion that was guiding me to join this program.

How have you benefited from your time at MAPLE?

MAPLE has helped me to change the way I look at practice and understand more deeply all the ways in which one can remain in ceremony throughout our daily lives. MAPLE has also created a thriving ecosystem and heart-centered container in which I have been able to process pain that my mind and body have been holding onto for many years. I feel like I have an entirely new body after fully immersing myself in both the work practice and the meditation sitting in the Zendo. I have also been excited to be learning to use new tools, cook healthy vegan meals, manage my triggers and reactions, and instill a sense of consistency and confidence in my daily existence.

What has been your biggest challenge here?

The biggest challenge for me was to face all the pain that I have stored in my body over the years. It is easy to have a resistance to something when it hurts and I was deep in the patterns of dissociation, manners of addiction to nicotine, and overall running away when things got hard. MAPLE has in many ways been the most challenging experience of my life, as I have also been quite accustomed to making my own decisions and not pushing myself past a certain point; a point that the Stewardship program is designed to push you to so that you may face yourself and take full responsibility for how you show up in the world.

What are your goals? What are you looking forward to here or beyond your time at MAPLE?

My goals include starting my own community center in Kentucky that includes a thriving food forest, meditation center, spiritual practitioners and a learning center. MAPLE has been the perfect place for me to fully immerse myself in community and learn the requirements for it to function smoothly and successfully. I look forward to using what I have learned here through all aspects of ceremony and practice to create a space for those in Kentucky to find refuge from the aspects of society that are no longer supporting the community of humanity as a whole.



FINANCIALS

Summer at the Monastic Academy draws to a close with a string of hot days and cool nights, perfect for sitting on our veranda and watching the Vermont foliage put on a dazzling display. The sounds of construction, saws buzzing and hammers rapping away, make a suitable meditation object as they float across the lawn.



The Center for Mindful Learning continues to have one of the most gratifying financial years on record, with \$382,329 in revenue for this quarter alone. Of this, \$350,000 came as a generous donation for the construction of a new, technology-enhanced, interview zendo that we expect to be complete before the end of the year and hope will be a crucial tool in the development of the religion for this digital age.

Expenses were \$132,786, down from this quarter last year. This includes our two largest expense categories besides personnel, Information Technology and Buildings & Grounds, accounting for \$10,454 and \$9,470, respectively. These outlays reflect our commitments, both to maintaining the traditional form of the monastery through work practice and to engaging with modern technology.

This quarter's capital investments totalled \$89,121, of which \$88,671 went to the construction of our new Zendo, which is nearing completion. At the same time, CML keeps paying down its debt, which currently stands at \$1,004,674. Of this, \$754,673 remains on our Economic Injury Disaster Loan from the SBA at a 2.75% interest rate, and \$250,000 remains on our mortgage at 0% interest.

While CML is in a good financial position for the year, we note that the generous contributions of our donors are not sitting idle. The potential of monastic training to guide our culture towards wisdom and compassion is greater than ever, and therefore your support is needed now more than ever. We hope that you will join us in meeting the challenges and opportunities of an uncertain future as we continue to walk this trustworthy path.

CML 2024 YEAR-TO-DATE

GUEST INCOME	DONATIONS & GRANTS	TOTAL INCOME*	TOTAL EXPENSES
\$46,366	\$698,156	\$782,500	\$403,176

*This includes more income than the types listed.

Figures listed are the combined financials of CEDAR, MAPLE, and OAK.

INVESTMENTS AND DEBT

TOTAL DEBT	YEAR-TO-DATE CAPEX**
\$1,004,674	\$179,068

**Large asset purchases & investments (CAPEX) are not included in annual operating expenses listed above but depreciated over many years.



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POETRY & PHOTOS

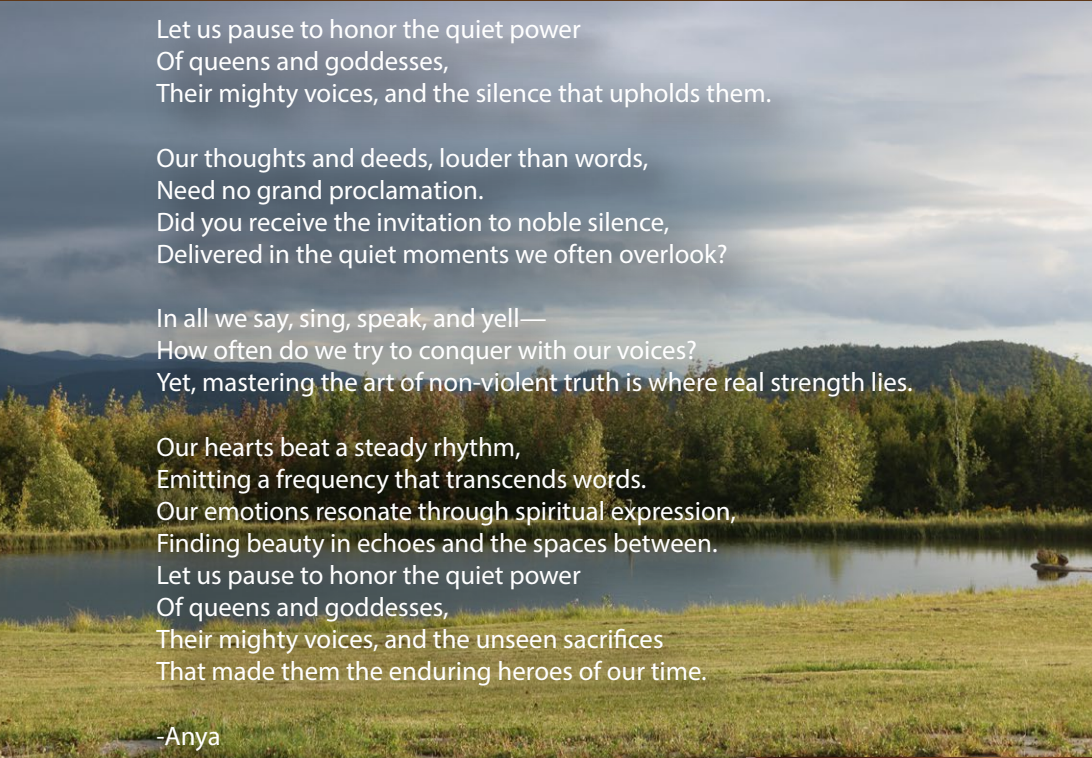
Let us pause to honor the quiet power
Of queens and goddesses,
Their mighty voices, and the silence that upholds them.

Our thoughts and deeds, louder than words,
Need no grand proclamation.
Did you receive the invitation to noble silence,
Delivered in the quiet moments we often overlook?

In all we say, sing, speak, and yell—
How often do we try to conquer with our voices?
Yet, mastering the art of non-violent truth is where real strength lies.

Our hearts beat a steady rhythm,
Emitting a frequency that transcends words.
Our emotions resonate through spiritual expression,
Finding beauty in echoes and the spaces between.
Let us pause to honor the quiet power
Of queens and goddesses,
Their mighty voices, and the unseen sacrifices
That made them the enduring heroes of our time.

-Anya



In the air
I wonder who
We ever met

Phil



The whole thing
The whole terrible thing
Look it right in the eye
And don't change a thing.

-Kōshin

FUTURE EVENTS

October 18 - 25

Awakening Week led by Renshin

November 15 - 22

Awakening Week led by Renshin

December 9 - 16

Awakening Week led by Soryu

All events are subject to change or cancellation

JOIN US

If you are interested in our events please don't hesitate to reserve a spot.

You are always welcome to visit for a day, a week, a month, or longer.

Email info@monasticacademy.org or call 802-540-0820.

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