



MONASTIC ACADEMY

FOR THE PRESERVATION OF LIFE ON EARTH

CEDAR

COMMUNITY FOR THE
EXPERIENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF
AWAKENING AND RESPONSIBILITY

2024
WINTER
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

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ONLINE RESOURCES

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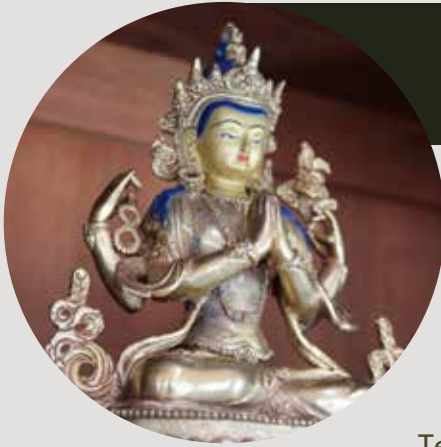
FROM THE FOUNDER



Who will love all living things
Fully enough to find the courage
To cultivate our own sincerity?
The world is in crisis, a crisis of love.
We behave as if there isn't love,
Despite our direct knowledge of it.
We choose contrary to it, creating shame
In our hearts, for no good reason.
This shame has become normal.
But it is strange. It is made up.
It is false. It is deception.
We are not it.
Even if our day-to-day lives demonstrate
That we identify with it.
"Why, oh why,"
We ask, we cry,
"Why are we caught,
Lost, bewildered,
Trapped in
Lives that destroy lives?
Causing harm
Physical and mental,
Spiritual and emotional,
To those
Near and far,
Human and not human,
Known and unknown?
What, what traps us?"
And we see:
Views we learned from others,
Ideas we figured out ourselves.
These caught us. These trap us.
These are what we trust.
These are what we trust to tell us what to trust.
These are not worthy of trust.
They must go.
This is simple.
This is possible, not impossible.
Possible to do now.

We don't even need to hold the view
That views and ideas need to go.
They go by their own nature.
They are insubstantial, fleeting, made up,
Dissolving away the moment we hold them.
They cannot be trusted.
They go by their own nature.
They are insubstantial, fleeting, made up,
Dissolving away the moment we hold them.
They cannot be trusted.
Truth, love, life, is not like that.
This can be trusted.
This is not a word.
To overcome shame, we live differently.
It won't work just to think
That we should live differently.
Much less to not even think about it.
Who has the courage to let go
Of the ideas, the views, we depend on?
And, depending on nothing, realize freedom?
Those with compassion, urgency, desperation!
The courage to urgently love
To the point of despair:
That cultivates our deep sincerity
That we abandoned long ago.
Once sincerity comes back to life,
It guides and corrects
Without mistake.
It is the path to clarity, joy
And benefit for all beings.
Therefore, we love with courage!
Courage to despair enough
To surrender to the sincerity
That drops ideas and views
And enters the inconceivable.
Through inconceivable relationship,
We build a global mind that realizes
A world beyond belief.

Soryu Forall
Founder & Head Teacher



MONASTIC TRAINING

This year, we erected the third and final zendo of our Cathedral in three parts. We now have a large Lower Zendo for the whole village to meditate and chant, for all ages and experience levels. We have a medium-sized Upper Zendo, reserved for those completely dedicated to entering and staying in samadhi—a depth of practice that enables beings to operate beyond preferences, ideas, emotions, and ideology. And finally, we have opened the third and final Teaching Zendo—a space dedicated for meetings with our teacher.

Now that our training spaces have been finished, there is a sense of completion, of readiness, and a going forth. We can do this.

We celebrated the new Teaching Zendo at the start of the December Awakening Week, and the interviews it supported were deeper than ever. So much went into this building—the vision, the support, the construction, the sweat and tears. We were awed and grateful upon entering it for the first time as a group, contemplating the poem within:

DO
NOT
KILL
LIFE

To enter this Teaching Zendo for interviews is like entering a snowed-in cave of mirrors to meet death—emerging to bring life to the dharma. It is a dreadfully fun experience. It's a trek into the unknown.

We are overjoyed to have Soryu back to lead the intensive winter training period after his own training in Japan with his teacher Harada Roshi. With Soryu come the winds of change, as always. The schedule, the meals, the chanting, the exercise period—all have been adjusted to meet our minds in this moment. The changes reflect our burgeoning maturity and strengthening harmony as a collective.

Some changes include: simpler and more delicious meals, all-group exercise periods that feature a boot camp vibe (a “dream come true,” reports Kyōshin), and a dedicated study hour.

Soryu's teaching schedule is jam-packed this season, as he plans to teach evening classes 5 days a week. We're preparing as a dharma-devoted collective to meet powerful, and deeply deluded, collectives in the world who are actively destroying life as we speak. The challenge level exceeds that of any previous crisis in history, so we focus on cultivating courage, confidence, and humility.

The mind that cannot stay with THIS is the mind we try to tame... until a mysterious energy flows and animates this life, caring for all beings.



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2024
WINTER
QUARTERLY
REPORT

ONLINE MONESTARY AND MEDIA

This quarter we continued to make strides in our capacity to distribute the Dharma through the dominant telecommunications technologies of our time.

We released module three of the Buddhism for AI online course, posted ~20 video teachings to our YouTube channel, and made significant updates to monasticacademy.org. Beyond this, in December we launched a new six-month residential study which is training the community's capacity to answer questions about the Dharma and become the ideological designers of this age.

As we look back on this calendar year, it is remarkable to consider how much we accomplished. Last January, we began the six-month residential Buddhism for AI series – which resulted in 40 recorded classes with dynamic lectures and Q&A sessions. In early August, after months of hard work to transform those recordings into pithy teachings and design a custom course and community platform, we launched the Buddhism for AI online course. Today, there are nearly 200 active participants engaging with these teachings on buddhismforai.sutra.co.

Now, with Forall back from his speaking tour and training in Japan, we kick-started a new six-month residential course that looks at the planetary situation, the history of how we got here, and what the Buddhadharma has to offer for this moment in time. In particular, we are training the group's capacity to answer our world's most pressing questions about huge topics like what we should live for, whether artificial intelligence can enable that, and how we can care for all beings in the digital age. The highly practical curriculum is based on the inquiries we received while offering talks and meeting with tech leaders in Silicon Valley this fall.

This will be the third professional-level education production we have created in the last two years. What is particularly exciting about this latest series is that it draws heavily on the previous two productions and the courses that resulted from them: MAPLE Dharma Study and Buddhism for AI. This means that the students' priority can shift from absorbing new content to mastering existing teachings using the educational artifacts we have already created. Because these previous courses exist in digestible digital formats, we can use them to facilitate asynchronous personalized learning during our study hour and emphasize dynamic application of that knowledge during our live sessions, rather than memorization of novel information.

We look forward to seeing the progress the residential group makes in becoming the ideological leaders of the digital age and we encourage you to begin engaging with these precious teachings aimed at forging a collective that can use technology to care for all beings.





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2024
WINTER
QUARTERLY
REPORT



CHAUTUAQUA TOUR

In November, MAPLE Staff Villager Autumn Turley launched our 4th annual Mobile Monastery Chautauqua Tour. The Mobile Monastery Chautauqua travels across the US and Canada each year offering events that feature traditional MAPLE offerings (chanting, guided meditation, Dharma talks, and leadership training), as well as unique offerings from the facilitators such as embodiment and interpersonal practices. It is an opportunity for current trainees, as well as MAPLE alumni, to share our work in person with people who otherwise might not experience it. The mission of the tour is to help people take the next steps on their spiritual paths.

This year's tour was a success. We led 14 events in 3 weeks, shared our offerings in two new states, and had many rich conversations about Buddhism as a foundation to address AI risk.

This tour gave us a meaningful experience of the current state of the world in relation to AI. Many people are concerned about the direction of AI and are desperately seeking guidance on how to live their lives during these times. Others have more of a "techno-optimist" attitude and are unaware of the risks, sometimes even unwilling to face them. MAPLE resident Namgyal Schaltegger offered Dharma talks and discussions to help people navigate the impact of technology on their personal lives and on the world. This was his first time giving Dharma talks. Part of the training at MAPLE and on the tour is to place people at their growth edges, and Namgyal rose to this challenge. His talks were met with engaged interest, as well as deep gratitude for the work that we are doing at MAPLE. A student from a high school where we shared our offerings commented that Namgyal's talk helped him to more clearly realize that everything he does with technology has an effect on the world. We are grateful that our training has enabled us to have such meaningful impacts on people's lives.

Another success of the tour was the group harmony that we cultivated. We did group practices such as chanting as we drove to each next event, engaged each other in deep and meaningful conversations about the Dharma and the state of the world, and worked through disagreements in a way that brought us closer into relationship with each other. We also included our hosts in our group field, sharing our practices and finding ways to be of service to them. Multiple hosts commented on the positive impact we had on them during our time together. It is moving to see how the loving community we have created at MAPLE can spread beyond its walls.

The Mobile Monastery Chautauqua offers all of its events through *dāna* (a Buddhist term for the virtue of generosity) instead of charging a ticket price. We are continually inspired by the generosity we receive from spiritual friends across the country. Through this relationship of giving and receiving generosity, we are creating connections based on relationship rather than transaction. In this age of AI, human connection is deeply important, and we are grateful for this opportunity to build and deepen spiritual friendships through in-person relationships.

We plan to continue offering these tours each year. As MAPLE scales our impact through technology, this is our way of grounding our impact through relationship. Thank you to each person who has helped make the Mobile Monastery Chautauqua a success.



TRAINEE SPOTLIGHT: PROFILE ON MATTHEW DE CAUSSIN

INTERVIEW WITH MATTHEW:

Why did you join the MAPLE Stewardship Program?

From the far corners of the internet, I kept hearing about this place called MAPLE, and knew that it was a place I wanted to visit once I returned to the States. The opportunity came to fruition last year during my first MAPLE stewardship, mid August through mid December 2023. I prioritized visiting MAPLE because it's so rare to find a community that mixes deep practice with having an impact in the world. Where else can you participate in a deep-dive, silent meditation intensive one week and the following week be studying and workshoping how to apply the fruits of meditation to AI and the creation of enlightened society? This is what grabbed me.

How have you benefited from your time at MAPLE?

When I left MAPLE last year, I was happy to have been a steward, but I wasn't convinced that anything had been accomplished or that I had benefited in any trackable, concrete manner. I was mistaken. I noticed over time, largely through my interactions with others, that my heart-mind had been somehow subtly trained, pacified – I was simply more grounded, more embodied, more available, more equanimous. And people took notice. My relationships deepened. My life was fundamentally better, and all the while I was somehow “not doing anything.” I've returned to bring this work, this self-development, to completion. Whatever that might look like. To keep going. To harness real clarity and energy and take that out into the world.

What has been your biggest challenge here?

Stuff comes up. When you're in a monastic container, things are bound to surface and need to be worked through. I like to say that coming to MAPLE is going to be great. There's so much gratitude for the community, the teachings, the container, for everyone's wholehearted efforts. And being at MAPLE is probably going to be a complete disaster, the wheels will come off, things will fall apart. I will fall apart. And this is great, too. It's exactly how it needs to be. And the stakes feel high, there's real urgency to bring the path to fruition. I'm 51 years-old, my parents died young, and I've had other friends die recently. The time to practice is now.

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

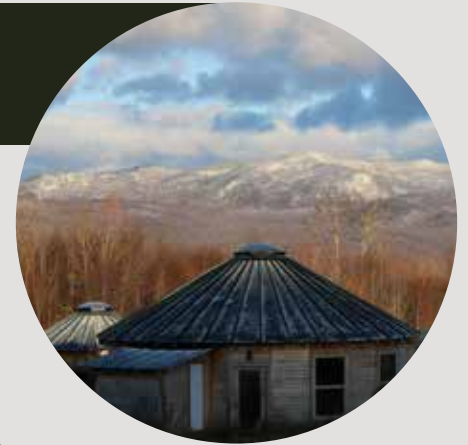
Goals while at MAPLE: The goal is simply to throw myself in completely. Throw myself into the training. Whatever that might look like moment to moment. This breath. Again and again. Keep going. I wish to take the equanimity, clarity, and energy cultivated here and share it with the greater world. May I be a refuge, a beacon, a guide along the path so that others may realize full and complete liberation.

Matthew was born and raised in Detroit, Michigan, and has called Boulder, Colorado home since 2000. The last several years have been a more nomadic chapter: Matthew lived in Berlin 2018-2022, traveling far and wide across Europe, and also going on to explore communities and projects in Central America, Sri Lanka, and elsewhere. With a background in startups, venture capital, and technology sales, Matthew is currently training to become a coach and aspires to help others live more meaningfully and authentically during these challenging times.



FINANCIALS

As snow blankets the landscape at the Monastic Academy, three white cones rise from the western end of our campus. The smallest cone is also the newest: our Teaching Zendo, which was ceremonially opened prior to our December Awakening Period, completing the Cathedral in Three Parts project initiated in 2018.



The Center for Mindful Learning finished out a strong financial year with a modest quarter, drawing \$29,715 in revenue. Expenses for the quarter were \$146,637, on par with the same period of last year. Besides personnel, the largest expense category was Buildings and Grounds at \$21,387, which allowed us to finish out the building season and prepare for winter. In addition to the work of contracted professionals, the entire community helped during our frequent Work Practice periods.

CML's debts saw a significant reduction this quarter to \$974,385. This is principally thanks to a generous \$25,000 gift of loan forgiveness we received in late December, bringing our mortgage loan down to \$225,000 at 0% interest. In addition, \$749,384 remains on the Economic Injury Disaster Loan from the SBA at a 2.75% interest rate. This quarter also saw major investment in capital assets totalling \$150,150. Of this, \$149,415 was associated with the Teaching Zendo.

Taking the year in review, total expenses were \$545,491, a slight increase from last year's total of \$524,188. Total income was \$825,848, a 25% increase over last year. This is attributable to greater fundraising donations, \$722,421 for the year, approximately \$280,000 more than in 2023. CML's books end the year in the black with a total net operating revenue of \$280,436. Our total operating expenses and capital investments total \$890,880 compared to our \$825,848 income, resulting in a \$65,032 net decrease to our cash balance. We are expecting a \$250,000 pledged donation to arrive early in Q1 2025.

As 2024 comes to a close, CML recalls and deepens its commitment to being of true service. This year proved that the donation-based revenue model of traditional monasteries remains viable in the modern age, and the move away from revenue-generating guest programming has allowed us to focus more on our mission of saving life on earth. We continue to rely on the generosity of our donors and the unflinching support of our wider community to

CML 2024 YEAR-TO-DATE

GUEST INCOME	DONATIONS & GRANTS	TOTAL INCOME*	TOTAL EXPENSES
\$38,992	\$722,421	\$825,848	\$545,412

*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**
\$974,385	\$345,389

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



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2024
WINTER
QUARTERLY
REPORT

POETRY & PHOTOS

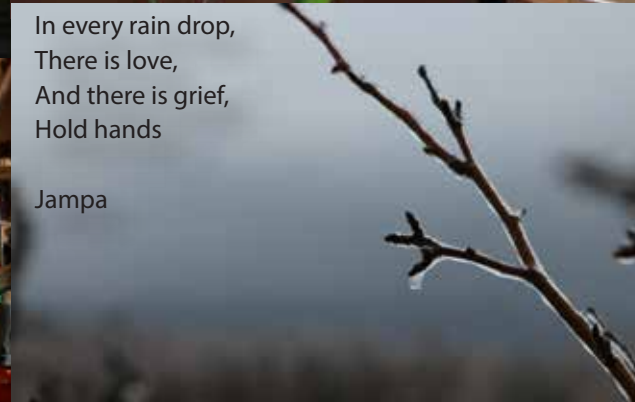
While we have
These precious
Human lives
May we
Transcend
Sensation

Namgyal



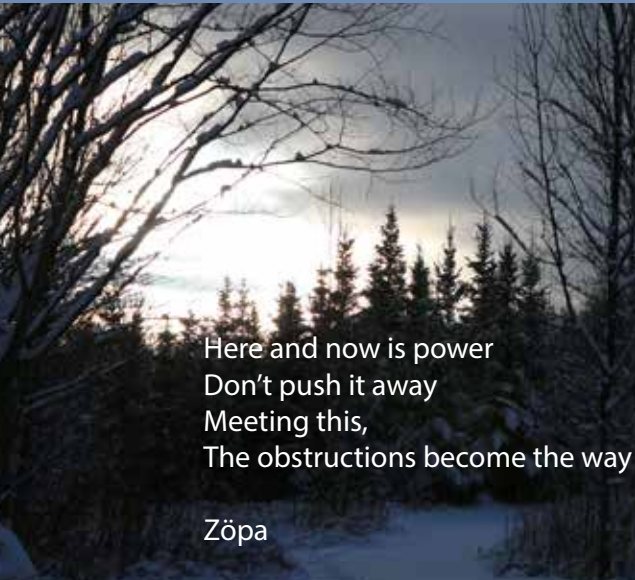
In every rain drop,
There is love,
And there is grief,
Hold hands

Jampa



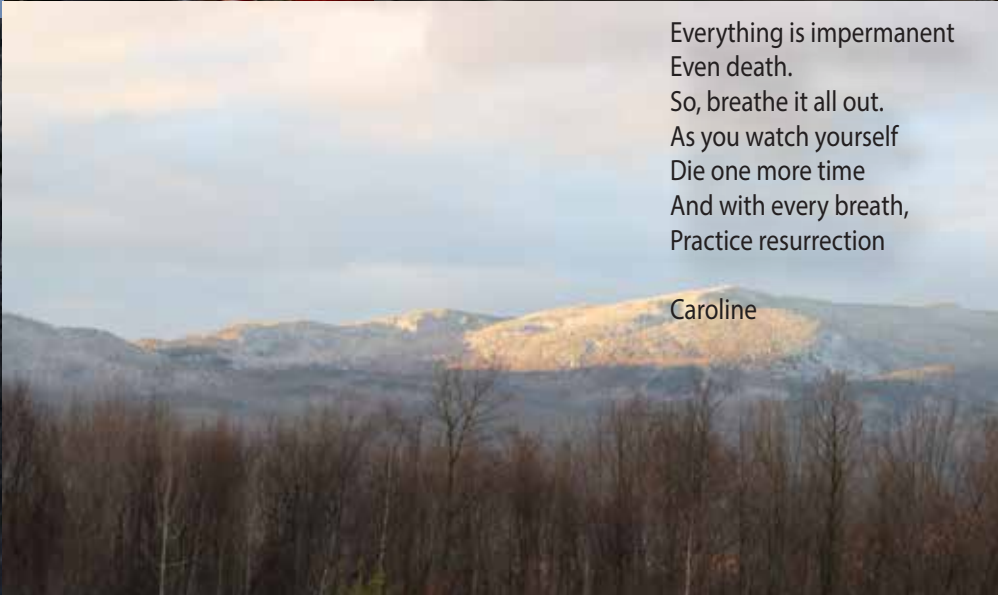
Everything is impermanent
Even death.
So, breathe it all out.
As you watch yourself
Die one more time
And with every breath,
Practice resurrection

Caroline



Here and now is power
Don't push it away
Meeting this,
The obstructions become the way

Zöpa



FUTURE EVENTS

February 7 - 14

Awakening Week led by Soryu

March 7 - 14

Awakening Week led by Soryu

April 4 - 11

Awakening Week led by Soryu

May 2 - 16

Two-Week Awakening Period 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.

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