



MONASTIC ACADEMY

FOR THE PRESERVATION OF LIFE ON EARTH

CEDAR

COMMUNITY FOR THE
EXPERIENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF
AWAKENING AND RESPONSIBILITY

2023
WINTER
QUARTERLY
REPORT

ABOUT US



Description of CEDAR

CEDAR (Community for the Experience and Development of Awakening and Responsibility) is an international 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, and we have now expanded to include Oak in California and Willow in Canada.

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 monastic academy founded in 2018 that provides monastic training, trustworthy friendship, and spiritual guidance to those addressing society's greatest challenges in the San Francisco Bay Area.

History of Willow

Willow is the newest monastic academy located near Toronto—the first international member of CEDAR. Founded in 2020, Willow brings modern monastic training to the many beautiful communities in Canada, particularly those in Toronto and Montreal.

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

www.monasticacademy.org
www.facebook.com/monasticacademy
www.youtube.com/c/CenterforMindfulLearning
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LETTER FROM THE FOUNDER



Hello friends,

We are in the best shape of our history so far. Our mission is more clear than ever before. The residents here at MAPLE are more talented than ever before. Our connections with those in the world who need our help are deeper and broader than ever before.

I was away for several months. When I have traveled before, the group's clarity and harmony declined while I was away. This time, for the first time, everything improved. We are accelerating to the point where the organization can flourish without its founder. This is very exciting.

The progress here astonished me. I'm writing because I want to share some of the highlights with you myself:

- Our fundraising has been successful, allowing us to finish last year with a significant profit and begin this year with a major donation. We will be building out physical infrastructure here and expanding online offerings in new directions.
- The MAPLE Dharma Study, led by Bodhi, has gained traction outside of our community and a partner Buddhist organization has asked if they can make it the core of a major outreach to teach Buddhism in colleges and universities worldwide. We are making adjustments to enable this.
- Our Emerging Technologies Team, led by Trinley, has completed a number of projects designed to make practice easier, and to make measuring the quality of practice more effective. They have also created a software tool for a partner organization. This brought in income, and resulted in a valuable resource for us as well.
- Our Guest Offerings are improving with a new Hospitality Manager, Bhadda. She has stepped into her role with such gusto, she's like a dream I've had for years actually come to life.
- The Mobile Monastery Tour, led by Autumn, impacted the entire nation as they traveled, and skillfully dealt with violence directed against them (see below).
- Our views and teachings are penetrating the individuals and companies who are building the world of the future. They desperately need our guidance, and they know it.
- I published a new book, Buddhism For All, with Chade-Meng Tan. This complete guide to the basic teachings of the Buddha is comprehensive, accessible and fun. Meng is a brilliant writer. He took the fruits of my decades-long study of the earliest accounts of the Buddha Dharma, and made them comprehensible and practical for everyone. I pray that it will be of great benefit to those who seek the Dharma in the world today.

Challenges still confront us. Slander still obstructs us online. One of our critics has orchestrated a campaign against our in-person offerings on the West Coast. She threatened us and seems to have instigated her followers to engage in violence against us. As we grow into a major force in our society, naturally we face more adversity. We ask for your support.

Overall, we are more harmonious, more capable of benefiting the world, and more dedicated to spiritual practice than ever before. We have created one of the healthiest, most socially intelligent, most supportive, most meaningful, and happiest communities in the world.

This is due to your support and participation in creating a new, a more peaceful, and a more honest world. Thank You.

Soryu Forall

President and Founder



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EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES TEAM

Over the past quarter, our Emerging Technologies team has shifted towards a product-focused approach. We defined "Minimum Delightful Product" specifications for several AI applications, preparing to deliver on those specifications in the upcoming quarter.

We experimented with several different tools, including a tool to create videos from dharma talks, a tool to measure the paramitas such as generosity, and others. We ultimately decided to focus on three tools that were proving very useful, including a search tool, a posture measurement tool, and a chanting feedback tool.

The first tool is a search tool for dharma materials. This tool is now being used for preparing dharma studies and talks. Current enhancements focus on improving contextual relevance in search results and ease of access to specific content in recordings or documents.

We also developed a basic version of a posture measurement tool, which gives real-time feedback on one's meditation posture. The next stage involves increasing data collection through user engagement, with the aim to provide metrics that align with meditation practice goals.

Progress was also made on our chanting feedback tool. We tested it, and gathered feedback about any areas of frustration. We identified a few areas for improvement, particularly in the area of data display and design of the physical components used during chanting. The objective is to improve the user interface and experience.

This quarter also marked our entry into contract work, with our first project involving the development of an AI-powered search tool for an external existential risk organization. Basic processes for managing contract work—including financial transactions, communication, and project delivery—have been established.

In the next quarter, we plan to refine these tools to align with our defined product specifications. The focus will be on improving user experience and interface design. We also anticipate further integration of these tools into our practices as well as exploring more opportunities for external collaborations.



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CHAUTAUQUA TOUR

This year MAPLE alumni Autumn Turley and Pan Williams launched their third annual Mobile Monastery Chautauqua Tour. As a part of the CEDAR network, The Mobile Monastery brings the MAPLE training and ethos into a variety of modalities, including connecting to nature, intimacy practices, and discussions on the intersection of emerging technologies and the spiritual path. They travel for three months a year leading workshops, immersions, and retreats across the country. Their events are creatively customized to serve each local community's unique interests and needs. The mission of the Mobile Monastery is to help people take the next step on their spiritual path.



Over the past three years the Mobile Monastery has grown from two to four to six people, broadened their reach to fourteen US states and two Canadian provinces, and acquired a large cargo van to accommodate their expansion.

One of the greatest successes of the Mobile Monastery is that it exists entirely through *dāna* (the Buddhist practice of generosity). Instead of putting a fixed price on their events, the group invites each participant to consider the value of what they received, their available resources, and an amount that feels most in alignment with both. In this way, the Mobile Monastery helps people shift their relationship with the economy by being interactive participants in the exchange rather than passive consumers. The first year they came out \$2,000 ahead, last year \$4,000, and this year \$7,000.

Three former MAPLE stewards joined the Tour: Savanna Skinner, Albert Kim, and Nick Ludman. Each Tour Steward was given roles that they were responsible for, thus learning skills that they can use to run their own events or apply to their personal endeavors. It was inspiring to see the personal and professional growth that each Tour Steward achieved.

In addition to the Tour Stewards, MAPLE renunciate Renshin Lee joined this year's Tour. She supported the Tour by leading regular group practices, such as morning and evening chanting, and offered impactful dharma talks and teachings at their events. Her involvement in the Mobile Monastery was a great asset to the Tour's mission.

The mindfulness practice of this incredible team was put to the test in Portland. The morning after their event there, on their way to their next event, in Seattle, the van lost control and narrowly missed a head-on collision with an oncoming truck. Uninjured, they were able to pull over and discover that two of the van's tires had been slashed. It seems that a group of CEDAR critics made good on the threat they made online the day before to "do whatever it takes" to stop the Tour—escalating their online harassment campaign to this terrifying next level of physical violence (we're involved in an ongoing investigation). Despite having their lives put at risk, the tour continued onward and successfully facilitated their final events in Seattle and Spokane.

Other than this adversarial experience, the tour has been received everywhere they go with so much generosity. In addition to financial resources, people continuously donate their venues, offer food and housing, and even donate practical necessities like oil changes. It is deeply inspiring to see that the spirit of generosity is so alive during these times, and the Tour looks forward to deepening the relationships that it has cultivated over the years.

STEWARD SPOTLIGHT: PROFILE ON JAN BÖEHM



INTERVIEW WITH JAN:

Why did you join the MAPLE Stewardship Program?

I needed a good kick in the butt. To push myself out of a lethargy that was gaining momentum due to the experienced meaninglessness of endlessly grasping to an idea of self-fulfillment. I wanted to experience a way of life that is aligned towards something larger than myself. I wanted to rouse energy back into my life and spirit through deep and urgent spiritual practice. I wanted to live in community with people who acknowledge that the planetary crisis is at the root a crisis of the uncultivated human mind.

How have you benefited from your time at MAPLE?

It was at MAPLE that I finally turned fully onto the spiritual path. Here I finally started to reluctantly accept that every moment counts as practice. That the way in which I take food during the meal ceremony can tell me as much about the state of my mind as an extensive retreat. I very much benefited from a community and a teacher persistently encouraging me and holding me to a high standard when it comes to my practice—moment by moment, on the cushion, off the cushion, and in relationship. This is true friendship and what a gift to have received this here.

What has been your biggest challenge?

How to not miss the sweet spot where effort meets surrender. How to rouse energy in my practice without forcing it. How to not confuse grasping with striving. How to have aspirations while letting go of self-conscious expectations. How to be of true service without trying to be someone.

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

I am looking forward to this self getting out of the way more and more and for a new clarity being allowed to increasingly steer my life. My goal is to cultivate the clarity to know when I am being called to step forth and the confidence to not hesitate to do so. And I am looking forward to doing it with the support of new spiritual friends.

Jan grew up in Germany. He lived in London in his 20's, working in brand communications and soaking up the chaotic beauty of metropolitan life. Coming down from the feverish high of his 20's he grew increasingly disillusioned with the fast-paced life he had built for himself. His 30's became an exploration of how to make life less about himself. He trained and worked at OnPurpose, an organization aiming to transform our economy from profit to purpose; he joined social change movements and generally tried to grow up—only to realize that his self still mostly called the shots in, well, selfish ways. Now in his 40's, he prioritizes spiritual practice and balances work at a Berlin artist studio with extensive monastic training periods.

COWORKING SPOTLIGHT: PROFILE ON AMAN AGARWAL



Aman is a seasoned software engineer who transcends the conventional bounds of his profession. His professional journey spans roles at prominent tech giants including Facebook and Amazon, but it is his diverse experiences that truly define him. Aman has embarked on transformative journeys from traveling through Colombia as a digital nomad to inward explorations through meditation retreats, psychedelics, and shamanic practices. He finds purpose in meaningful conversations and strives to bring clarity, connection, and healing to those he encounters. Firmly believing in the pursuit of an extraordinary life, Aman exemplifies courage by taking the risks necessary to manifest his dreams. Aman's time at MAPLE reflects his commitment to a holistic and purpose-driven existence, blending his technological expertise with a deep reverence for personal growth and spiritual exploration.

INTERVIEW WITH AMAN:

Why did you join the MAPLE Coworking Program?

Before joining MAPLE I was at a crucial turning point in my life. I had just finished up some travels in Colombia, and I was seeking something deeper. I felt a strong desire to be part of a community and specifically a community bonded around a shared dedication to personal growth and becoming more capable, competent, and effective in helping the world. At this point, I had cultivated some awareness around my strengths and gifts, but I also knew I lacked the discipline to serve those gifts effectively. MAPLE seemed like a place that could support me so I applied!

How have you benefited from your time at MAPLE?

During my time here I have undergone a profound transformation. The dedication to practice here has helped me to truly deepen my practice, and I have experienced meditation states of bliss, deep equanimity, and letting go which has given me greater confidence in my ability to walk the path to its completion. The community here has provided me with great spiritual friends and confidence in my ability to navigate life in community. I have also been appropriately humbled by being shown how reliant we are on each other.

What has been your biggest challenge?

My biggest challenge has been adjusting to the sleep cycle. For me, getting 6-7 hours of sleep and waking up by 4:40 AM is a low amount of sleep and very early for me. So initially I struggled a lot with drowsiness in the first half of the day. But as time has passed I have addressed this challenge. I have become significantly better at spending less time on my phone before bed, falling asleep more easily and earlier, and being able to generate energy.

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

My immediate focus until I leave MAPLE in a couple weeks is to deepen my practice as much as possible. Recognizing the rare and conducive environment MAPLE provides, I am committed to maximizing this unique opportunity. I also would like to leave here with more clarity around the specifics of how I can appropriately offer my gifts for the benefit of others and in a way that addresses the meta-crisis happening in the world. I know I'll leave here with deep confidence and faith in my ability to walk my path, truly awaken, and contribute meaningfully to the world.



FINANCIALS



Winter has begun in fits and starts with large temperature swings and unseasonable rain, reminding us with each passing day that we cannot be certain of what tomorrow will bring. CML continues to improve in its ability to respond and adapt to the changing times by focusing more of our efforts on our non-local offerings.

This quarter we piloted the Global Monastery, a project designed to combine modern technology with ancient teachings so that the tech leaders who are building this next era can study the dharma and cultivate their minds in the way that we do at MAPLE.

We have already received several donations supporting this effort and see signs that this could be a main conduit for fundraising in the future.

This quarter, our proven adaptability and resilience has allowed our donors to contribute \$266,965 with confidence. When combined with guest payments, interest income, and residency fees, CML received a total of \$378,741 in income.

Total expenses for the quarter were \$142,591. The largest single expense was a \$24,000 investment into Emerging Technologies R&D.

CML is closing the year in the black with total net operating revenue equaling \$129,260. Total income for the year was \$657,287 and total expenses were \$520,027. Recognizing that this year's annual income is lower than in previous years, we will be working to secure more funding in 2024 to invest in new income-generating activities.

Regarding liabilities, CML continues to regularly pay down its debt, which currently stands at \$1,031,159, of which \$260,000 constitutes the zero-interest property mortgage, and \$769,345 in principal remains on our SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan at a 2.75% interest rate.

As we face the growing uncertainty and urgency of this moment in history we continue to call upon the support of our generous donors to help us take each next step towards a world of true peace and happiness.

CML 2023 YEAR-TO-DATE

Guest Income	Donations & Grants	Total Income*	Total Expenses
\$131,772	\$521,620	\$657,287	\$528,027

*This includes more income than the three types listed

INVESTMENTS AND DEBT

Total Debt	Year-To-Date CAPEX**
\$1,031,159	\$52,894

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

Figures listed are the combined financials of CEDAR, MAPLE, and Oak and do not include Willow, our Canadian location.



POETRY & PHOTOS

winter
the cradle that held me

winter
the master that ruled me

this early heat will end you soon
and 'goodbye' is catching in my throat

- Dechen (from solitary retreat, day 77)

Fast-flying clouds
High above snow

One-legged friends
Reach up to say hello

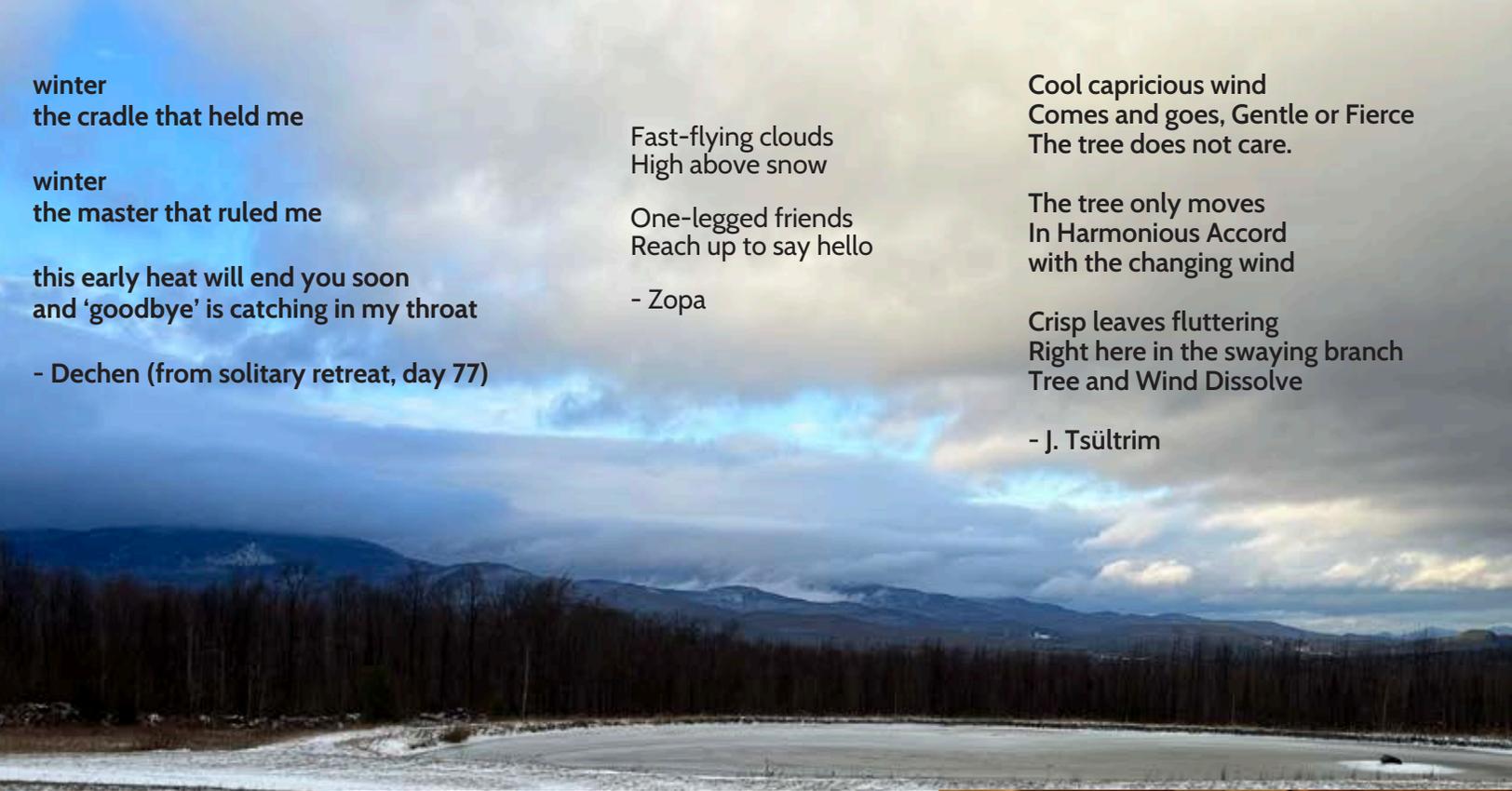
- Zopa

Cool capricious wind
Comes and goes, Gentle or Fierce
The tree does not care.

The tree only moves
In Harmonious Accord
with the changing wind

Crisp leaves fluttering
Right here in the swaying branch
Tree and Wind Dissolve

- J. Tsültrim

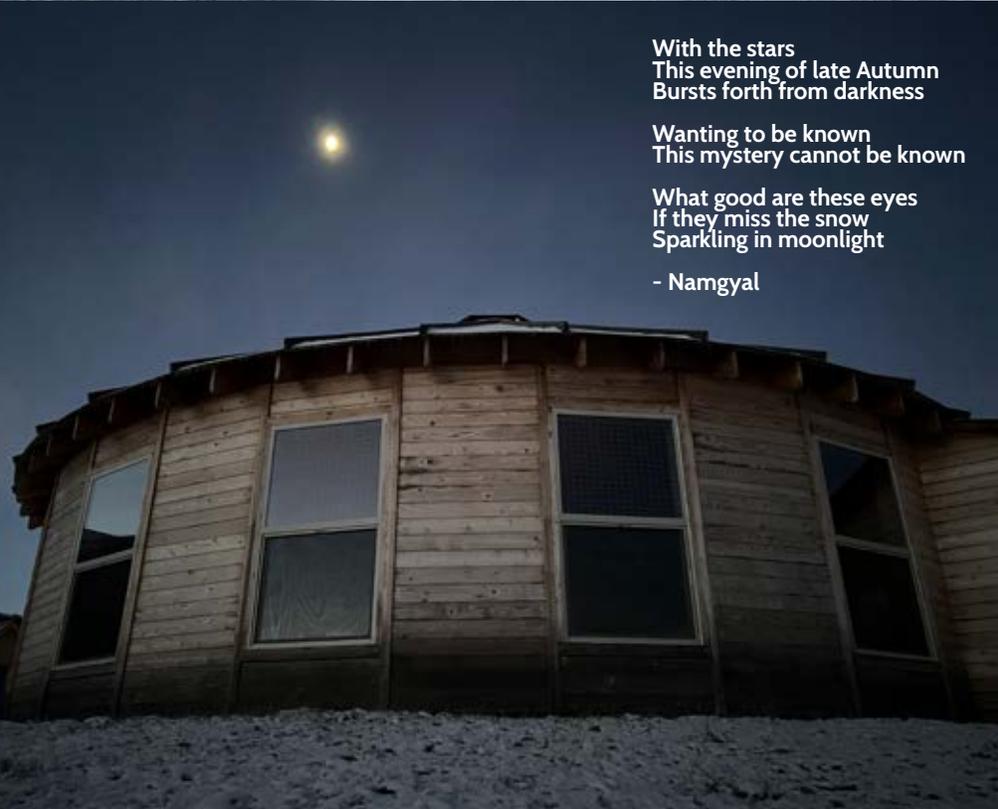


With the stars
This evening of late Autumn
Bursts forth from darkness

Wanting to be known
This mystery cannot be known

What good are these eyes
If they miss the snow
Sparkling in moonlight

- Namgyal



FUTURE EVENTS

February 9 - 16

Awakening Week with Soryu Forall

March 8 - 15

Awakening Week with Soryu Forall

April 12 - 19

Awakening Week with Soryu Forall

May 10 - 24

Awakening Two-Week with Soryu Forall

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.

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