



# MONASTIC ACADEMY

FOR THE PRESERVATION OF LIFE ON EARTH

## CEDAR

COMMUNITY FOR THE  
EXPERIENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF  
AWAKENING AND RESPONSIBILITY

2025  
**SPRING**  
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.

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## 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.

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## 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.

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## 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](http://www.monasticacademy.org)  
[www.facebook.com/monasticacademy](https://www.facebook.com/monasticacademy)  
[www.youtube.com/@monasticacademy](https://www.youtube.com/@monasticacademy)  
[tales.monasticacademy.org](https://tales.monasticacademy.org)

## LETTER FROM THE FOUNDER



Information is not truth. Intelligence is not wisdom.

Modern education attempts to give us information and intelligence. Therefore it has made us into a species that kills life on earth. We need education that gives us wisdom and compassion.

Developing a new educational system that teaches wisdom and compassion is the most urgent issue in the world. We must learn how to stop destroying the world.

I'm now 48. Forty years ago, it began to seem to me that my schooling was doing me more harm than good. And five years later, it was absolutely clear to me that my education was the greatest obstacle to a meaningful life, the greatest hindrance to becoming a person I could be proud of. Yet I continued to offer my mind to the broken system for another eight years. It's very hard to escape.

As an adult, I worked in schools for many years. I saw then what I didn't see as a student: teachers know that the system is broken. The ones who love the kids most are least able to ignore the problem.

It's hard to create a new system. But finally after 200 years, we are ready for a change.

When our government was founded, it claimed to separate Church and State, but in fact, governments of all nations have always tried to separate every Church from the State, except the State-sponsored one. Our founding documents were just a new way of doing this.

People don't usually understand that public education is essentially about teaching people religion. Therefore, it's imperative to call education, of every kind, what it really is: religion. If we don't see it this way, it gives the educational system authority that it does not deserve.

So what was the State-sponsored religion? Secular Humanism. Since it was selected by the State to forward the State's goals, it has a unique privilege. It can openly claim it's not a religion.

Why would the State choose the religion of Secular Humanism over others? Because it is made for the industrial age. Most of the ideologies we call religions were made for the agricultural age, so they do not sculpt minds into the shape needed to run a global economy. But over the past few hundred years, it has been necessary to sculpt minds in a new way, because you can't make even one factory if you can't shape people into the kinds of things that can be turned into factories. More important than materials, standardization, or any other factor, factories need large numbers of human minds to fit the same shape, so they can all fit together for economic growth. Economic growth is to Secular Humanism what God was to monotheism.

Therefore, whether you're going to be an investment banker, a car salesman, a psychotherapist, or a school teacher, you need to go to a school with the same type of curriculum. This was never true before, in all of human history. We take it for granted now.

When modern education was invented at the start of the industrial era, it was revolutionary. It was revolutionary to make it universal, to teach everyone. It was revolutionary to make it free, to make it a responsibility of the state. It was revolutionary to make it uniform, to make sure that everyone became competent in the same basic ways of understanding the world.

## LETTER FROM THE FOUNDER

Education as we know it is the religious system that makes people into factories.

But this is changing now, whether we are ready or not. Starting a few years ago, education became the religious system that turns people into AI. What factories are to farms, AI is to factories. Exponential technologies are now running factories, and even farms. People need to be trained to bend over little metal and glass rectangles, sifting through data to create more data. They need to be trained into this.

Of course, public education is slow to adapt. But the kids already know. They learn everything from their phones.

Ask them what 5 times 17 equals, and if they can, they'll look it up on their phone. Ask them what important developments came with the campaigns of Alexander the Great. You think they aren't already reaching for their phone?

The challenge is not a lack of information. Kids have too much information, and it's only increasing. The challenge isn't even intelligence. This is the point that most people can't understand about AI.

The challenge is wisdom.

Today, we need an educational system that is even more revolutionary than the modern education system was at the start of the industrial age. We need an educational system that allows us to use machines for information and intelligence, while providing wisdom and compassion to a global mind that is half human, half machine.

Any child connected to the internet can tell you anything you want to know about Alexander the Great. Our job is much more challenging. We need to make sure that every child grows into an adult who can answer the question, "Was Alexander great?"

Truth is not information. Truth is not a representation. Truth is alive. Wisdom is not mental understanding. There is no kind of intelligence that can attain wisdom. Wisdom is alive.

"Truth is not information. Wisdom is not intelligence." These two claims are at the heart of the current discussion between MAPLE and the global techplex. Those who believe that information is truth and intelligence is wisdom are killing life on the planet; this data-driven religion is accelerating the Sixth Great Extinction. That is in the nature of their religion. We have hundreds of years of evidence for this. Compassion makes us unable to turn away, so we respond.

Developing a new educational system that teaches wisdom and compassion is the most urgent issue in the world.

The Monastic Academy is that educational system.

If you want to learn more, feel free to visit. Let's escape the system that failed us.

Soryu Forall  
Founder & Head Teacher



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## CURRICULUM DESIGN

This quarter we continued to make significant progress in designing the premier educational system for the age of AI.

At the core of this education is the development of wisdom and compassion. While most assume that with enough intelligence you become wise and with enough information you become compassionate, this isn't the case. Intelligence is what we depend on when we don't have wisdom.

Information is what we depend on when we don't have compassion. Intelligence tries to use information to solve problems, but in the process of solving those problems it tends to create bigger problems.

These kinds of radical claims require deep investigation. In order to carefully investigate topics like these and learn how to engage with commonplace assumptions in a way that can bring the modern world towards the Dharma, students at the Academy are challenged to analyze and weave together Buddhist doctrine, personal experience, historical evidence, and contemporary issues.

They are offered trustworthy teachings to take refuge in, while being demanded to put the claims to the test through their own contemplation and spiritual practice. Beyond this, they are asked to creatively apply these various forms of evidence to the modern situation and express their understanding in a way that beings of the digital age can hear and act upon.

At the end of each unit, we hold a week of assessments where students give five-minute talks on complex issues, such as: *The history of intelligence and its consequences on this planet, emphasizing harm done 100,000 years ago, 5,000 years ago, 200 years ago, and over the past 70 years.* As each student creatively elucidates the Dharma and receives feedback from facilitators and peers, the whole group deepens in their capacity to be the ideological designers of this age.

In the third unit of this year's course on the origins of the planetary crisis, the way out of suffering, and the ideologies and technologies running the digital age, we looked deeply into the nature of intelligence. The central tool that the group used to investigate the nature of intelligence is interdependent origination. This Buddhist framework and technology of investigation breaks down cause-and-effect in regard to suffering and its cessation. Through a careful analysis of its links, we saw how intelligence arises due to ignorance in order to manipulate the world to fulfill certain cravings. This leads to collective and individual suffering.

Beyond this investigation into the arising of suffering, we looked into the remarkable claim that suffering is caused. With the cessation of one of the twelve links, suffering ends due to a lack of causality. Through our investigation of the production and cessation of suffering, we began to see that while intelligence unmoored from wisdom and compassion is omnicidal, it can be used for the ends of wisdom by those who have brought ignorance to cessation. This is compassion.

By carefully analyzing the Buddha's teachings and applying them to the modern context, we are developing a wise and compassionate collective that can turn the highly intelligent collective minds running the digital age towards the Dharma for the benefit of all beings.



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## MONASTIC TRAINING

We joyfully announce the induction of three new Students into the Monastic Academy: Matthew de Caussin, Joshua Meyers, and Aman Agarwal. These Students have committed to a year of training. We have seen them transition from guest to short-term trainee, sometimes coming back year after year. We celebrate them taking this step to join our ongoing mission to serve the world through developing Awakening and Responsibility.



MAPLE provides a training in wisdom and compassion for the modern adult who has been disappointed, disenfranchised, and even disabled by the inadequate education they received in how to live, how to serve. Our training teaches them how to ask a real question and receive a real answer.

We use time-tested methods: a monastic container with high ethical standards. A schedule that supports honoring the sacred with each breath, song, and bow. A residential community constantly giving feedback and watching out for one another. A practice under guidance by a capable Teacher who speaks from experience, lives impeccably, and has studied extensively.

We watched these new Students prepare themselves by paying off debts, calling friends for advice, setting certain relationships down. And of course the various ways we all try to wriggle out of this—do I really have to give my life? What about this? What about that? No, this is definitely not for me. Not in a thousand years.

For a while we convince ourselves we don't have to let go. But we've been doing the wrong thing for thousands of years already, and it's time to give it up.

We're so addicted to intelligence—thinking, figuring things out, inventing—that many never choose to enter a place of training that teaches us how to stop relying on intelligence. When people do make this choice, we hurrah and sigh in relief. The direction of less suffering is not easy, but it is worthwhile. It is like seeing an alcoholic put down the bottle for the first time. We become joyful.

The Buddha doesn't recommend even one moment of becoming, of existence, of creating and grasping a self. Why? It is simply ineffective. It is not a thing that can be done. It is not feasible.

When we are done trying what is not feasible, we let go.





## TRAINEE SPOTLIGHT: PROFILE ON ADITYA PRASAD

### INTERVIEW WITH ADITYA:

#### *Why did you join the MAPLE AI Fellowship Program?*

A good friend of mine talked about his experience visiting MAPLE, and I saw his face light up in a way I had never seen before. This made me curious. I heard the intro audio piece with Soryu talking about MAPLE's mission, and the clarity struck me; it related to egregores and group minds that I had been thinking about for months before that. So I came to visit for a month hoping to deepen my practice of meditation and learn more about MAPLE.

#### *What are you working on in your meditation practice?*

My goal is to face the present moment completely free from any constructed layers added on by my mind. This means trusting myself to make the right choice in every instant again and again without relying on any afflictions. My technique is to breathe with my whole body, unified by letting go of tension and laying my attention on the whole breath, throughout the whole day. A vigorous, energetic long exhale emphasizes my cultivation of letting go, giving, and relaxing, and a calm inhale represents my aspiration to later unify the aspects of centeredness to the exhale.

#### *What has been your biggest challenge here?*

The food made with love and care here at MAPLE is so tasty that it is a constant struggle to listen to my stomach and follow the spiritual happiness pointed to by my breath. My fear that I may not get such healthy nutritious food later made me want to overeat. This challenge of directly meeting limitless greed constantly is a painful challenge I am grateful to this container for.

#### *How have you benefited from your time at MAPLE?*

Before coming to MAPLE, I believed I had made progress on my path as a Truth seeker. I believed that truth was models that gave me predictive power, that understanding was based on having a map in my head that corresponded to the territory. The validation of my map was to see if I could manipulate the object I claimed to understand. MAPLE has offered me a new definition of Truth based on harmony, cooperation, and love which has reduced my suffering in ways I did not know was possible.

*Aditya was born in Kerala, India, and took a break from pursuing a PhD at the Computational Data Science Department at IISc Bangalore to focus on various problems he believes need urgent attention. He has been involved with AI Alignment field building in India for two years now.*

*Currently, he works with the Centre for Effective Altruism to coordinate AI Alignment field-building efforts in India. His recent collaborators include Impact Academy and AI Safety Camp. He has spent time exploring decentralized communities like ZuGeorgia and EA Hotel and is building a community in Bangalore.*

*His hobbies include Mountain-eering, building a second brain on Obsidian, and having philosophical conversations. Reach out to him at [adityaarpitha@gmail.com](mailto:adityaarpitha@gmail.com).*



## FINANCIALS

Along with the warmer days and increasing sunlight, spring brought us to the halfway point of our intensive period of study and practice. This quarter was marked by one of our most significant investments to date: the \$450,000 purchase of a 2-bedroom, 2-bathroom house on 26 acres of property at the entry to Page Rd. This new welcoming center is where all of our new students will begin their journey with us and, if all goes well, they will end their journey in the Teaching Zendo facing the setting sun.



We are confident in the value of what we teach and see that confidence reflected back to us in the form of donations, which totaled \$283,474 this quarter. These included the \$250,000 pledged donation mentioned in our previous quarterly report.

Total expenses for the quarter were \$140,596. Aside from personnel, plowing was the largest single expense, totaling \$7,865 to take care of the roughly 200 inches of snowfall we've received this year.

Our total equity surpassed the three-million dollar mark this quarter, the majority of which is in the form of physical capital, such as the new property and the final expenses on the Teaching Zendo. We also continue to pay down our debt consisting of our mortgage loan with \$225,000 remaining at 0% interest and our EIDL small business loan from the Small Business Association with \$743,826 remaining at 2.75%.

We are grateful to everyone who has supported us, and continues to do so. Without their faith in us we would not be able to innovatively adapt the Dharma for this modern age. As we develop and evolve our Monastic Academy we hope to inspire more and more people to join this revolutionary effort to offer a truly valuable education to the world.

### CML 2025 YEAR-TO-DATE

DONATIONS & GRANTS	TOTAL INCOME*	TOTAL EXPENSES
\$283,474	\$294,296	\$140,596

\*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**
\$968,827	\$496,134

\*\*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

*These three poems were offered by the Head Teacher Soryu Forall to our new Students at their Welcoming Ceremony on March 19, 2025.*



When everywhere we've been is abandoned,  
And everything we've gained is relinquished,  
And everything we find is clean and clear,  
And everything we are is open and bare,  
And we are free to go anywhere,  
Why take a single step?

Poem received by Matthew de Caussin



Honesty does not  
Leave room for a  
Single uncaring thought.  
Much less a caring one.  
A pine stands  
Plain and simple  
On the horizon.  
No one can say  
It's not there.

Poem received by  
Joshua Meyers



The world, from the outside,  
Looks like the jewel  
The jewel, from the inside,  
Looks like the world  
No outside, no inside,  
No looking in any way:  
Truth is not a lie.

Poem received by Aman Agarwal



## FUTURE EVENTS

**May 2 - 16**

Two-Week Awakening Period led by Soryu Forall

**May 18**

Vesak Celebration

**June 4 - 11**

Awakening Week led by Renshin

**August 2 - 9**

Awakening Week led by Renshin

**August 30 - September 7**

Vision Quest with Darren Silver

*All events are subject to change or cancellation*

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## 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](mailto:info@monasticacademy.org) or call 802-540-0820.

**Our address is:**

**751 Page Rd**

**Lowell, VT 05847**

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