



MONASTIC ACADEMY

FOR THE PRESERVATION OF LIFE ON EARTH

CEDAR

COMMUNITY FOR THE
EXPERIENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF
AWAKENING AND RESPONSIBILITY

2019
WINTER
QUARTERLY
REPORT

LETTER FROM PETER PARK



Dear friends,

This quarter at MAPLE, our first zendo meditation hall was completed! As you step into the zendo, large windows provide a vista in every direction. A poem broken into four parts by our teacher, Soryu, hangs from each of the four directions. The heated, wooden floor grounds our practice while the soaring, arched roof matches our aspirations for awakening and service to all beings. This 1,320 square foot circular building finally serves a dedicated area for our practice. Now, we can prioritize meditation with an always available, quiet, and inspiring practice area.

In November, Soryu completed his annual extended retreat. As we walked to his cabin to bring him out of his solitary retreat, the snow was gently falling around us. It was the first significant snow storm of the season. His return marks the transition in our training back to what is most rare and difficult — the realization of awakening — of knowing oneself and knowing reality.

In October, our fourth Unified Mindfulness week-long meditation retreat with Shinzen Young was a grand success. It was our largest guest program with 22 guests and 15 residential trainees. In late November, we hosted our annual Thanksgiving Potluck. Amid the snowy conditions, scores of community members showed up. The residents enacted a musical skit parodying songs and stories from Annie, the Wizard of Oz, and more to put on a monastic musical.

Vienna Looi joined us this quarter, working with Soryu to prototype a new economy based on giving gifts. Vienna is a very impressive young leader who recently won the United Nations' Reboot the Earth hackathon in NYC. This new economy is a free sharing economy for gifts such as housing, transportation, and time. It would track and provide incentives for those who are having a lower temperature impact on the globe. She will be presenting this new model to the World Economic Forum next year. You can find out more about her work at bowl.eco.

Our California branch, OAK, is setting up the foundation for continued growth next year. Residents Peter Williams and Lauren Lee secured a new, larger location for next year that's closer to our East Bay community. They are also leading events in people's homes and at organizations throughout the area.

Together, we are cultivating a trustworthy community to create a culture that can outcompete the dominant culture, where people can immediately be grounded by the group's honesty, sincerity, care, and integrity. This culture is a wonderful training ground for contemplative leaders, who can become seeds for new trustworthy communities.

In friendship,

Peter Park
Executive Director



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YEAR IN REVIEW

This past year, we hosted a record number of people including 8 full-time residents, 26 apprentices, and hundreds of guests throughout the year. We have two residents already scheduled to start next year and a full waitlist on our apprenticeship program until the Fall.

This success is the joint outcome of the serious need in the world for this type of training and of our determined work in sending our message out. Our commitment to the rigor of our training has resulted in our becoming a community well-known for developing trustworthy leaders.

This year also marked an increase in new programs and evolution in the ecology of practices. We continued our existing retreat programs: the Shinzen Young Unified Mindfulness retreat as well as three Circling Interpersonal Meditation retreats. Soryu led a total of eight weeks of meditation intensive weeks. In addition, in June, we implemented a new practice of emotional clearing with the Bio-Emotive Retreat. After a weekend of this deep emotional processing workshop, Hōji and resident teacher Peter led the group for the remainder of the week. Intimacy expert Lynn Kreaden taught us her Intimacy Workshop in September. Peter led his first week-long meditation retreat at MAPLE. Finally, we hosted subsidized retreat programs for college students in collaboration with Dharma Gates, a new non-profit co-founded by our former resident, Miles Bukiet. All of these programs were not only net income positive, they also offer additional benefits. They provide a comprehensive training for the students here and attract more people to our community.

Our California Bay Area location, OAK, has thrived in 2019. After a year of hard work, OAK has been cultivating a growing community offering awakening and kindness to the Bay's brilliant and dedicated people. It reached a significant milestone this past year in becoming self-sustaining and no longer reliant on MAPLE for funding; OAK also secured sufficient funds to sign a lease for a larger space in their new Berkeley/Oakland home.

This year former resident Daniel Thorson rejoined MAPLE. His Emerge podcast, originally conceived and developed in 2015 when he was a resident here, continues to attract numerous people to our group. In addition, he has been expanding our curriculum to provide students with the cognitive understanding of what we are doing.

This year, Peter Park became the Executive Director of our Vermont MAPLE center. Prior to his role change, Peter had been the Assistant Director for over two years and Assistant Teacher for almost a year. His efforts have led to the constructed completion of our first meditation hall at MAPLE, a healthy financial year, and an abundance of students eager to train here.





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OAK (BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA)

OAK, our center in the California Bay area, has had a solid quarter to finish off a successful year.

When Soryu Forall and Autumn Turley returned to Vermont, MAPLE sent our longest serving resident Peter “Pan” Williams to California to support Jōshin. Pan has been part of MAPLE for nearly five years. He will be providing a much welcome sense of fun to the work, as well as connecting to and befriending our California community.

MAPLE Resident Lauren Lee also traveled to California to serve as a temporary OAK resident. Her long-term experience with the community in the California Bay area makes her an extremely qualified person to support Pan and the vision at OAK.

This quarter, OAK’s primary goal was to identify a new, larger location. New training facilities will allow OAK to serve more people with events and programs. An increasing number of people in the Bay Area are engaging in OAK’s training programs for their benefit and the world’s.

OAK will move to their new beautiful center in Berkeley in January 2020. The space is roomy, practical and beautiful, and boasts balcony views and peaceful surroundings. Just off of Wildcat Canyon Road and the wonderful Tilden Park, OAK’s new home invites connection to nature while still being close to community members living in the East Bay. OAK is grateful for the generosity of the Survival and Flourishing Fund for supporting this new training center.

Meanwhile, OAK’s larger community is beginning to find real depth and ongoing support. Two community members have committed to holding weekly or daily events on our behalf. Pan and Lauren are leading workshops and classes almost every day at places such as CFAR and REACH.

These changes have made it possible for OAK’s guiding teacher, Jōshin, to return to MAPLE for five weeks in an extended silent retreat in one of MAPLE’s solo cabins. We are grateful that Jōshin will have this chance to deepen his own practice and prepare for his next year of teaching and holding the vision for OAK. This vital inner work is rare and precious in the world. We thank Jōshin for demonstrating the essential value of spiritual practice.

Three new apprentices will join Jōshin and Pan Williams in a two-month training period from January through early March. Each apprentice is already a leader in their community, and we’re excited to work with them to expand their skills and increase their ability to serve from a place of authenticity and love.





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MAPLE CONSTRUCTION

We have completed construction on our new meditation hall, our zendo. Many people in our community came together to make its construction possible. We now have a dedicated space for practice that is beautiful and inspiring. We've begun using the new building as the home of our Awakening practice, where we meditate and chant daily. We are excited for you to see it and practice with us in it.

The completion of the zendo marks the close of a successful year of construction. Our kitchen renovation project has allowed us to serve the higher volume of trainees at our facility, just in time for the surge in interest in our programs. Similarly, the large size of our new meditation hall will also allow us to host even more people here, even running multiple programs in parallel.

We have also made important progress on our long-term plan to build a community of homes, a Village, around our training center, with the help of site planners and surveyors. Next year, we aim to begin building the infrastructure for this village, including roads, septic, and other necessities. There is ever-increasing interest from the larger community to be involved. We believe the village will foster a form of deep community based on friendship and integrity that will be a model for the world. This unique interweaving of people dedicated to putting their comfort and pleasure aside for the greater vision of a world at peace will be a powerful force for the future.

As an organization, our ability to hold long-term visions and manage multi-year projects is growing. This should make for an exciting 2020 and beyond. Together, we can build a new type of community and culture based on trust, care, and truth for ourselves and all beings.



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FINANCIALS



Thanks to the generous support of friends like you, we have had a good financial quarter to close the year. As a national organization, CEDAR brought in \$78,544 for the quarter, spending \$158,054, with zendo construction accounting for \$83,161 of that amount. A large gift from a long-time donor last year was set aside in reserve for the zendo project. These numbers reflect the combined budgets of our Vermont headquarters, MAPLE, and our Bay Area location, OAK.

OAK not only began to be financially self-sufficient this year but has raised enough funds to rent a new location in the Berkeley area for next year. OAK is positioned to have a significant positive impact for the Bay Area.

MAPLE's programs and events have been very successful. Our annual retreat with Shinzen Young brought in \$35,000. Our end-of-year circling retreat brought in over \$14,000.

Gifts large and small came in this past quarter including one from a long-term donor who gave \$10,000 to support our Village project. Our new meditation hall was supported by a \$20,000 donation this quarter from a supporter who visited MAPLE previously and witnessed the beautiful community here. We also launched a campaign to ask for donations for the construction, bringing in \$10,283 from over fifty individuals, many of whom donated the suggested \$41 or a multiple of that amount. One long-term supporter gave multiple donations as she felt the goodness of giving each time to support this mission.

In 2017 when we bought the Lowell property, we raised \$1,366,000 in gifts and loans to make the purchase. In the past two years, we have continued to make progress in reducing our debt. It is now down to \$905,679. This year CEDAR has paid off \$10,000 of the loan. In addition, several lenders have forgiven all or parts of their loans. In 2019 their generosity totaled \$76,500. We have made great progress together.

These financial gifts along with other forms of support have made it possible for us to serve so many people at such a deep level in 2019.

4TH QUARTER

GUEST INCOME	DONATIONS	LOAN FORGIVENESS	TOTAL INCOME*
\$31,566	\$70,217	\$0	\$108,898

*This includes more income than the three types listed

2019 TOTALS

GUEST INCOME	DONATIONS	LOAN FORGIVENESS	TOTAL INCOME*
\$145,517	\$330,871	\$76,500	\$589,099

*This includes more income than the three types listed



LEADERSHIP EMERGES: PROFILE ON STEVEN JANGO-COHEN

INTERVIEW WITH STEVEN:

Steven has been at the Monastic Academy for three years. Prior to that, he taught English in Spain for two years; he then returned to the U.S. to work with at-risk youth in group homes through the Home for Little Wanderers and later with students in social-emotional learning programs through Wediko Children's Services.

Steven joined MAPLE to find a way of living in integrity. He feels that this is now a unique moment in the growth of CEDAR and has committed himself to helping ensure that the community will thrive.

Why did you join the MAPLE Mindfulness and Leadership training residency?

Before experiencing meditation in a spiritual community, I believed that life was just random and meaningless. I remember asking many people how they ended up at their jobs. I was trying to see if they could help me to find meaning in my life. I learned that most people I spoke to only did their work because it made them feel good, not for some deeper, more selfless reason. It seemed that whatever job or living situation I pursued, it would all be motivated by the same self-centered desires.

Spiritual practice has given me the clarity to directly experience that life is not meaningless and selfish. I was startled to learn that I could interact in the world with beauty, love, power, and ease, startled to find that I could be the type of person that deep down I had always thought I was. I knew that, unless I found a way to live my life from this clarity, any actions I would take in the world would stem from a fundamental ignorance and selfishness.

How have you benefited from your time here?

The interpersonal meditation practices we have done here have completely changed my relationship to human interaction. I used to fear intense, uncomfortable emotions and interpersonal conflict; now they are a rich chance for deepening wisdom and connection.

It is life-changing to live, train, and work with someone like Soryu, who is truly taking on being of service to all beings as his life mission. And all of the people at the Monastic Academy give me more and more examples of how to live in integrity. That integrity, and the real, meaningful relationships we have here make it harder and harder for me to fall back into delusion. My time here has brought me closer to being a person of integrity.

What has been your biggest challenge?

My biggest challenge has been relinquishing a more conventional life: having a nice apartment and working a fun job that ostensibly helps people. I still want that type of life to be OK. Sometimes I try to convince myself that I can relax and live a life that is based on pleasure, as long as I'm being a relatively good person. But I have seen that that pleasure comes from a toxic, evil system that is causing immense suffering and death around the world. This training has shown me that living a life of true service is far more desirable and valuable than any sensual pleasure.

What are your goals? What are you looking forward to as you continue to train here?

I'm looking forward to living with more and more autonomy, realizing that each moment is a choice, each state of mind is a choice. I don't need to fall into victimhood, apathy, or delusion. I want to do what is best in each moment, even if it is scary or unconventional.

I'm looking forward to seeing all of the unique connections we are making with so many different people and organizations all over the world, and what will come from this shared search for a better way of being in the world.

I want to realize the beauty of being alive, to live out of joy with the drive to benefit all beings.



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MOVING FORWARD

We hope to see you here on January 26, 2020 to celebrate the good work of completing our new zendo meditation hall. Through the combined efforts of hundreds of dedicated people, we can open to our community a world-class training center. Come celebrate with us in our common mission to care for all beings.

In the first quarter of 2020, the zendo will be standing to embrace the Monastic Academy community. As the winter has set in and snow has begun to fall, this next period marks MAPLE's deepest time dedicated for awakening practice. This is a time for going inward towards spiritual death and rebirth.

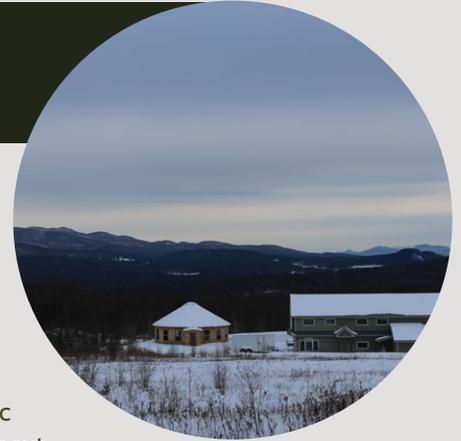
In February we will be undergoing our annual two week intensive Awakening meditation retreat week. During this time, many of the students dedicate themselves to awakening, to realizing a joy prior to conditions, a joy that can break through us and heal us to make it possible to do the work necessary to confront the world's largest and smallest problems.

Starting in February, we are looking forward to hosting solitary retreats for senior students here. As we work towards the future of developing many teachers and centers, these solitary retreats are an investment in our faith in the students here to break through. This is an extremely rare opportunity for a training community to support a student's solitary retreat and take on their responsibilities. It is precious and rare to be supported for weeks and months at a time in solitude. This is a time to encounter, befriend, and transcend everything.

OAK's new training space starting with the New Year is accompanied by a regrouping. In early January, Jōshin returns from his extended solitary retreat in a snow-covered cabin at MAPLE. Three new apprentices will join Jōshin and Pan Williams to train and grow the community. OAK's growing momentum will offer great gifts to its community.

This year, we will be looking to continue the expansion and refinement of our training curriculum at MAPLE. The aim is beyond ambitious. Students who learn here for three months will come away with requisite and rare adult life skills: how to clear life-long emotional patterns; how to relate with each other courageously and vulnerably; how to meditate to cultivate focus, relaxation, and compassion. How to live a life of simplicity and connection in community. In time, after a year or more, students will be able to teach these essential skills to others. After several years students will be able to cultivate sufficient insight to break through so that they can establish and lead new communities from a place of wisdom, love, and incredible power.

We begin with the most magnificent yet simple intention: to break through our own ignorance with a commitment to serve all life on this planet. As I talk with the students here, and with other teachers, and leaders, I find we are all aiming towards a common mission. We do not seek our own financial wealth or fame. We seek to create the conditions necessary to support healing the planet and we desire most of all to find others to do the same. At this place, we are creating the future leaders who will do that work. At this moment, 2020 marks a new decade for the world and for our community as we live our vow by developing a training regimen to maximize human capacity to care for all things and by fostering a living community of families sharing this common mission.



WINTER SCHEDULE

January 17 - 24

Silent Meditation Retreat with Soryu Forall

January 26

Zendo Meditation Hall Opening Celebration

February 7 - 21

Two-Week Silent Meditation Retreat with Soryu Forall

March 4 - 8

New Comprehensive MAPLE Training Program

March 13 - 20

Silent Meditation Retreat with Soryu Forall

JOIN US

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

Our address is:

751 Page Rd

Lowell, VT 05847

If you'd like to come, or to be in touch for any reason, please email at info@monasticacademy.org or call at 802-540-0820.

Thanks again for your support. Together we are building a new, trustworthy culture.

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