



# MONASTIC ACADEMY

FOR THE PRESERVATION OF LIFE ON EARTH

## CEDAR

COMMUNITY FOR THE  
EXPERIENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF  
AWAKENING AND RESPONSIBILITY

2020  
**FALL**  
QUARTERLY  
REPORT



## LETTER FROM PETER XŪRAMITRA PARK

Dear friends,

Wildfires ravage the west coast of the United States. The COVID pandemic continues to threaten our lives. Throughout the world, social unrest and authoritarianism are on the rise. As a species, we are re-evaluating our shared values and culture.

At CEDAR, we too are focusing on evaluating and developing our own evolution. CEDAR, composed of our monastic centers, MAPLE in Vermont and OAK in California, is the parent organization to all our efforts to preserve the planet. All of us feel blessed to live in these trustworthy communities. We dedicate ourselves to living in a happier, saner way. We have already been preparing for this moment and strive to be of service. The world will continue to unravel. We will continue our path welcoming new villagers and trainees.

Each day, the Vermont forests change color. We too have begun harvesting the fruits of our labor both in our new vegetable garden and in our community.

This past September, five residents and two apprentices of MAPLE took lay ordination. Our head teacher Soryu Forall and Shinzen Young led the ceremony. Each of the ordained vowed to take on the commitment to awaken for the sake of all beings.

Our MAPLE Village continues to take steps forward. Its permitting is pending State of Vermont approval for construction of our first home, to be built by Rich and Renee Dee. They will be our first villagers. The Village webpage has launched at [monasticacademy.org/village](https://monasticacademy.org/village). In addition, a collective of MAPLE members have successfully purchased a neighboring fifty acres. MAPLE is taking a large step forward as it expands from a monastic training center to a larger, spiritual community with a monastic, ethical core. This larger community is our next step in a global shift to a trustworthy culture for all beings.

This year, we have seen a steady rise in the caliber of our apprentice cohorts. The majority of apprentices wish to become residents. OAK's leadership team continues to grow. We strive to develop the best training for the next generation of awakened leaders. These leaders will lead the next centers, organizations, and communities that we create.

We continue to grow. Our progress is due to hard work and support. The hard work of residents giving their lives to this mission. The support of people like you, trusting the good that a small community of dedicated people can do. Together, we provide a beacon for the world. A beacon that says a life of service to all beings is a source of wholesome happiness without regret.

In friendship,

**Peter Xūramitra Park**  
Executive Director



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## OAK (CALIFORNIA)

This quarter, OAK has reached new milestones in terms of growth and cohesion, momentum in training, and clarity regarding OAK's vision.

The number of residential trainees continues to increase. OAK has reached full capacity at the Berkeley location. OAK needs a larger location to bring more people into the training to give them the opportunity to realize their vow and serve the world.

Over the past quarter, OAK residents have developed in understanding and cohesion as a team. Through dedication to the training, several hard-working and capable leaders have emerged, including the core leadership team: Jōshin as the Teacher, and Pan and Kōshin now share the roles of Director and Care. The five long-term residents at OAK have also bonded into a group that is loving, harmonious, and committed.

Jōshin furthered his training for two months at MAPLE in Vermont, while newly-qualified teacher Tasshin Fogleman filled the teaching role at OAK. The OAK community has benefited from Tasshin's teachings on the Dharma, virtue, and productivity; he also has benefited from this opportunity to practice and mature as a teacher.

The OAK residents are excited to have Soryu Forall, the founder and guiding teacher of CEDAR, our national organization, join for the months of September and October. During his time here, we plan to enter more deeply into the practice of Awakening, and also to clarify and hone our vision.

OAK aims to create a community, based on real love and wisdom, that is able to work on large-scale group coordination mechanisms (such as AI) from a state of mind free from the distortions that continually pervert humanity's efforts in these domains. Researchers receive the opportunity to live and work inside of the OAK monastic container so they can focus on these problems with newfound mental clarity. Together, a mutually supportive relationship is building between their work and the monastic training. The first two of these researchers, Kōshin Flint (also part of the leadership team, concentrating on AI Safety) and Vienna Looi (working on new forms of economics based in Buddhist and ecological ideals), have already begun this process by living and training here.

We value your support and friendship. That you care about us, that you value what we do, that you look to us as a light and example, gives us the strength to continue our efforts. We hold you in our hearts. At this time especially, it is vital that we connect and express our love for each other and for the Dharma. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us; we won't hesitate to reach out to you.





## FINANCIALS

One recent survey found one-third of nonprofits are expected to shut down this year due to lack of funds. In major election years, dollars divert towards political campaigns. In addition, COVID closed many of our vital, guest retreats. Despite these challenges, MAPLE has continued to survive and flourish this year. Growth in these times has been made possible thanks to the support of donors, lenders, and community members. In addition, the efforts of our team have led to successful government relief funds through the CARES Act (see Fundraising page).

MAPLE, thus far in 2020, has paid back \$98,400 of our property loan. In addition, four lenders this year have forgiven part or all of their loans for a combined total of \$87,200. One of our largest lenders also elected this September to reduce their interest rate to zero percent for the remainder of the loan. Since purchasing this property, MAPLE has successfully finished and closed out three of our lender loans, two of them in the past quarter. We are very glad to have fulfilled that promise. Our loan principal in 2018 began at \$1,195,279 and now is \$720,079.

Year to date, VT's MAPLE has a revenue of \$581,898 while spending \$410,404, including loan repayments, for net \$171,494. Of the \$171,494, about \$150,000 is earmarked for future Village construction, loan repayment, and solar installation. The projected 2020 budget for Vermont was to raise \$686,000, not including loan forgiveness, thus leaving \$104,102 still to be raised. For the year, we project \$60,000 in lost expected guest revenue due to COVID. Meanwhile, year to date, CA's OAK revenue is at \$37,036 with expenses at \$87,221. CEDAR, as the national organization, has a total year-to-date revenue of \$624,169 and expenses of \$509,982, not including loan forgiveness.

Given earmarked funds for future projects and continued expenses, MAPLE expects at the end of the year to still have an operating budget shortfall of \$67,000. In order to bridge this gap, we will be launching both a year-end donor campaign and a future-visit gift card program, experimenting with online courses, and continuing to make phone calls to our supporters. Supporters can donate at [monasticacademy.org/donate](http://monasticacademy.org/donate).

### CEDAR 3RD QUARTER

| GUEST INCOME | DONATIONS | LOAN FORGIVENESS | *TOTAL INCOME |
|--------------|-----------|------------------|---------------|
| \$39,856     | \$71,868  | \$86,200         | \$224,083     |

\*This includes more income than the three types listed

### CEDAR 2020 YEAR-TO-DATE

| GUEST INCOME | DONATIONS | LOAN FORGIVENESS | *TOTAL INCOME |
|--------------|-----------|------------------|---------------|
| \$75,460     | \$462,398 | \$87,200         | \$711,169     |

\*This includes more income than the three types listed



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### FUNDRAISING

In the Buddhist tradition, generosity (Dāna) is a vital part of the spiritual path. Monastics have relied on lay people in a mutually beneficial relationship. In this reciprocity, donations rest on trust and connection. Donors practice unconditional giving to a greater good. This giving comes from the heart to serve this mission to preserve life on earth. Giving also allows the donor to cultivate a happier mind of generosity and service.

Our supporters give these gifts because they believe in this training program to cultivate wise, virtuous, and powerful awakened leaders. In addition, these gifts are a spiritual practice in themselves. On one side, in asking for support, the residents practice humility and non-identification with money. Likewise, the giver challenges the ego to give freely in trust, letting go of the usual habits of insatiable acquiring and accumulating.

This year, residents and apprentices have been participating in fundraising through our community phone outreach. Each week we make calls to our community members, family, and friends to provide pastoral care. In this time of social unrest and isolation, these calls are a great way to connect with presence and compassion.

MAPLE has been very proactive in applying for all the emergency funding relief being provided by the CARES Act. We have received a \$17,341.78 grant from the Vermont State Relief along with \$13,964 in Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loan, and a \$150,000 Small Business Administration COVID (SBA) loan. This SBA loan has very favorable terms, 30 years at 2.75% interest. The PPP funding has enabled us to retain our employees and pay their salaries without change.

As we move towards 2021, the unpredictability of the COVID pandemic continues to be an impediment to the proven success of our revenue from guest retreats. As we work to create new long-term sources of revenue to cover the basic needs of MAPLE's twenty full-time students, donations are crucial in the short term. As we look to the future, we remember that, throughout history, monastics and lay people have formed communities of mutual benefit, relying on each other, raising each other up, ever aware of each other's value. Lay people have invested in the monastics' training which in turn prepares the monastics to work for the benefit of all beings.

Today the world faces continuing collapse. Now is the time to invest in this next paradigm of trustworthy community, culture, and leadership. Though the pandemic has challenged all of us with its setbacks and its inherent instability, our community is moving forward with joy and with purpose. We invite you to join us as villagers, as donors, or as program participants.





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## NEW TRAININGS

This year also marks a record high at MAPLE welcoming five new residents and 24 new apprentices so far this year. We continue to refine MAPLE's Awakening and Responsibility training by continuously incorporating innovative trainings.

**Grounds Day:** We honor the centuries-old tradition of monastics using their bodies to benefit their environment. Everyone's hands get dirty as we care for the buildings and grounds with our physical labor. Activities include foraging for wild plants, gardening, deep-cleaning the building, and trail clearing.

**Sutta Study:** "Right View" is essential to the spiritual path. It is the foundational step in the Buddhist Noble Eightfold Path. What do we hold as our basic assumptions about what is true and real? Right View means that our lives matter, our actions matter. Our actions have consequences, have an impact, therefore we matter, our lives matter. Love exists. Care exists. Generosity exists. They are important. Ethics is real, and it matters. To learn Right View, we devote several hours each week studying the classic works of Buddhism.

**Work Sprints:** We have spent one week each month dedicated to deep work on Responsibility projects. We are developing a new work culture, which includes timed pomodoro sessions of fifty minutes of work and ten minutes of rest as well as tracking accomplishments. Deep work projects have included a new donation tracking system, our MAPLE Fundamentals Online beta course, and a community database. Our work effectiveness during these weeks is at least triple our normal output and is transforming our other work weeks as well.

**Awakened Leadership Intensives (ALI):** We have highlighted ALI in past Quarterly Reports as the foundational orientation week for new apprentices. During this time, we cover the principles and practices of MAPLE including peer coaching, meditation, embodiment, interpersonal meditation, and emotional processing. This blend of traditional and modern practices brings the Buddhist Noble Eightfold Path alive in a powerful way for modern people today.

**Monthly Vow Commitments & Personal Precepts:** We began monthly vow commitments as a group. Each month, everyone commits to a constructive action and a relinquishment precept in alignment with their vow. As a community, we are discovering we are more capable of making good habits and breaking bad habits. These real shifts are enabled by the accountability and support we give each other. Examples include not eating refined sugar, asking for daily feedback, and practicing prayer every day.

And more!



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### MAPLE VILLAGE & LAND

This past quarter, a collective of CEDAR teachers and former residents successfully purchased from a neighbor fifty acres of land adjacent to the Monastic Academy. This adjacent land was less costly as an initial buy-in but, unlike the MAPLE Village, it will operate separately from MAPLE and anyone who may build on it will not receive the same benefits as a MAPLE Villager. These individuals will mostly live on the land as a type of primitive hermitage without actively participating at MAPLE on a regular basis.

For MAPLE Village, all of our state and town permitting has now been filed. We are awaiting final approval to begin breaking ground on our first home for Rich and Renee Dee. They have visited this past quarter. Together, we have been learning how to create a trustworthy collaborative effort to bring this vision to reality.

The MAPLE Village page launched this past quarter for anyone to learn more about this opportunity and begin conversations on becoming a villager. You can learn more at [monasticacademy.org/village](http://monasticacademy.org/village).

Villagers will have the opportunity to participate in all the activities of the monastic training including but not limited to communal meals, meditation sats, workshops, dharma talks, and retreat programs. Meanwhile, all of the basic needs such as snow plowing, trash, recycling, and grounds care are provided by the monastic students. Living in a deep community, together, we will create the conditions necessary for a future where we may host families, children, and more mission projects. We do not yet know what these might be. Perhaps, a new research institute studying the intersection of mindfulness and new therapy modalities. Maybe it will be a new type of child education based on modern Buddhist training. In any case, the first few villagers will be vital in creating the larger community for generations to come.

As our first villagers begin building their homes here in the next year, we will usher in a new age in CEDAR/MAPLE history. In this time of crisis, as we turn from individualism and hyper consumerism towards community and collective intelligence, we feel that this is the perfect opportunity to offer residential living in MAPLE Village.

Lastly, we have been excited to have our first Phase 1 of a 12.6 kW solar system installed on the roof of the Monastic Academy in Vermont. Through a Moonshot Foundation grant and a matching donation from one of our long-term supporters, the dream of MAPLE operating entirely on solar has started. This system will provide about a third of our energy needs. We look forward to completing our installation of panels and storage batteries in future years so we can go entirely off-grid.





## LEADERSHIP EMERGES: PROFILE ON DANIELLE “KHEMĀ” EERNISSE

Khemā grew up in the suburbs of St. Louis and made her way to New England six years ago to pursue permaculture and regenerative agriculture. There she discovered and fell in love with a vibrant, tight-knit community of people devoted to ecstatic dance and contact improvisation. This was a huge turning point in her life. She made a study of various movement practices, therapeutic modalities, and spiritual traditions over the subsequent years, catalyzing a journey of intensive healing. Discovering the practice of Circling was particularly powerful for her, which led her to help start a growing Circling community in western Massachusetts. After experiencing the healing power of touch, community, and authentic communication, she received formal training in Thai massage, professional cuddling, and Circling in the hopes of offering that same healing to others. For the last three years, she has maintained a private practice in which she combined these three modalities.

While Khemā has been seeking god in many ways for many years, she is new to Buddhism as taught at MAPLE. She's very inspired by the way MAPLE's teachings keep to the integrity of the Buddhist sutras while also making room for practices like Circling, Bio-Emotive, and land-based spirituality. She recently received lay ordination.

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

After nearly two years of researching and emotionally processing social and ecological collapse, I knew I couldn't go on living in compliance with the systems that are destroying the world. I tried to change my life to fit what I was coming to understand about existential risk, but it was clear that no matter what little changes I made to my own lifestyle or local community, a much more significant shift was being called for in my own mind and in the world. This planetary crisis clearly demanded that I give everything I had to its healing, but I didn't know how to get out of my own way and do that. When I discovered Soryu's teachings, everything finally clicked. I was amazed to find a teacher who acknowledged the reality of existential risk and taught that cultivating a radically ethical lifestyle is a necessary response to collapse and essential on the path to awakening. I needed to become the kind of person who could meet the unfolding collapse of our civilization with courage, grace, and wisdom. I needed to become the kind of person willing to give their life to serve life on earth. MAPLE offered exactly that.

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

I've benefited enormously from my time at MAPLE. I feel significantly more calm and grounded. Each time I'm given a challenging task and discover that I can at least meet it -- and sometimes succeed beyond what I thought was possible -- I gain confidence and trust in myself. Living in such close community means that I can't hide from myself or others; there's always someone there to reflect back to me what I need to work on next. The rigor of the structure here accomplishes the same thing: I am held to a level of integrity that I long to embody but which is near impossible to attain without the support of a community and teacher. As a result, I see my patterns more clearly and have the tools to escape them instead of helplessly following them. And ultimately, life just feels very rich and meaningful when lived in a community of kind people with shared values and a powerful vision.

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

It's hard to keep up motivation in the practice, especially when it's not going very well and there's a lot of stuckness or confusion. There's just enough freedom of choice here that, when practice isn't feeling inspired, I can collapse into attachment to sensual pleasures: eating too much, sleeping too much, escaping into connection with friends. Of course, there's far less temptation to do so compared to life outside the monastery, but this can still become a vicious cycle that's very challenging to break.

### *What are you looking forward to as you continue to train here?*

I'm looking forward to deepening my practice and discovering the unconditional pleasure and joy that is true security and freedom. More simply said, I'm looking forward to untangling trauma in the body and finding my home there instead of in fleeting sensual pleasures. Ultimately, I aspire to awaken and become either a death doula for civilization or a midwife for a more beautiful human culture.



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## MOVING FORWARD

Adapting to the COVID pandemic, we have begun online programs. We started by turning our Awakened Leadership Intensive (ALI) program into an online format called MAPLE Fundamentals. This course teaches the ecology of practices that have evolved at MAPLE. These practices include mindfulness meditation, interpersonal meditation (Circling), Bio-Emotive emotional processing, and peer coaching. Our first cohort in October will be a beta test to work out the kinks. In the future, we aim to provide further continuing education opportunities online to our former students and community members.

Circling Europe and MAPLE are partnering to offer their Circling Leadership SAS at the MAPLE Vermont location. SAS is a six-month intensive course including three in-person weekends at MAPLE to train Circling facilitators. We are honored and excited at the prospect of collaborating with mission-adjacent organizations in the world to train more awakened leaders. Several MAPLE residents will be participating in this leadership Circling training as well. It will be open to all.

The systems running the world continue to fracture. As our work at CEDAR is becoming more necessary, the direction of its evolution is becoming clearer. In this next year, we will focus on three primary projects.

First, we will expand our capacity to train more monastics as well as offer our services to a broader audience. This includes moving our California OAK center to a building capable of housing dozens of people. This includes increasing our capacity at MAPLE to host more residents. This means beginning construction of Village homes in 2021. This means offering more online courses and free educational materials such as talks.

Second, we will train awakened leaders to be able to lead our next centers. Although the last several years have been as arduous as we anticipated, our community and the training we have developed have both matured to the point that residents can confidently say, *My vow is to awaken for the benefit of all beings*. This winter, we plan to again put several residents through intensive solitary meditation cabin retreats. At the same time, we are developing our fundraising training, leadership development, and pastoral care.

Finally, we will work to raise the funds needed to create and expand these centers, develop and hone our training, and create more facilities. With an election year and COVID slowing guest income, we continue to rely on deepening and expanding our network of support. Your choice to support MAPLE and OAK will create an ever-growing pool of trustworthy leaders, centers, and communities. All our efforts together will be for the benefit of all beings. Please contact us to become a monthly supporter, take part in our programs online or in person, or build a home at MAPLE as a villager.



## FALL SCHEDULE

**October 13 - 20**

Awakened Leadership Intensive (ALI)

**November 13 - 20**

Awakening Meditation Retreat with Soryu Forall

**December 2 - 7**

Circling Europe SAS First Weekend at MAPLE

**December 16 - December 21**

Awakening Silent Meditation Retreat

**December 27 - January 2**

Circling Interpersonal Meditation Retreat

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

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

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