

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to provide my recommendation for Olof Axelsson's application for a three-year retreat scholarship. I have known Olof since 2019, when we both began our studies at Rangjung Yeshe Institute (RYI) in Kathmandu, Nepal. We have taken multiple classes together and shared a flat for a period of time. Over the past five years, I have had the privilege of witnessing his remarkable development as both a scholar and practitioner, and believe that he represents exactly the kind of individual that your foundation seeks to support.

My perspective comes from my own deep involvement in Buddhist studies and practice. I completed my BA in Buddhist and South Asian Studies at Munich University, of which I spent one year at RYI. Since then I have been studying at RYI, where I completed one year of MA preparation and one more year of interpreter training. I am currently enrolled in the MA in Textual Translation and Interpretation. I have also completed a 100-day retreat in the Drikung Kagyu tradition and have been actively engaged with the Drikung Garchen Center in Munich.

Olof began his BA at RYI in 2019 and is now completing his MA, having maintained high standards throughout his studies. He has lived in Boudha, Kathmandu since 2018 (apart from one year during the pandemic), immersing himself completely in the environment there. In my observation, his scholarly capacity is remarkable. He is known as someone who has mastered large amounts of material and can quote traditional teachings (sometimes even in sanskrit) and provide examples from secondary literature and research. However, his scholarship does not feel dry, because he genuinely values the Dharma and strives to practice as best as he can.

What sets Olof apart is his unofficial leadership within the community. He is a student of Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche and has become one of the driving forces behind the Dharma Gyan Youth Organisation, a group established by Rinpoche two years ago to engage young practitioners. Without Olof's participation, the group would not be as relevant as it is now. He has personally organized a Sanskrit chanting club for 3 years straight, coordinated guest lectures with renowned teachers like Erik Pema Kunsang, and helped establish a weekly teaching series with Khenpo Pema Namgyal from Ka-Nying Monastery. These accomplishments demonstrate not only his organizational skills but also his commitment to making authentic dharma teachings accessible to others.

During our three years serving together as student representatives at RYI, I observed Olof's ability to balance multiple responsibilities while maintaining his studies and practice. He also worked as a coordinator for guest lectures, showcasing his versatility and reliability. His daily practice includes Sanskrit recitations, and he regularly attends Drubchen sessions at Ka-Nying Monastery when possible.

In my experience, Olof does possess the mental stability and capacity for solitude that a three-year retreat demands. He has demonstrated this through spending 2-3 weeks completely alone in the northern Swedish countryside with no outside contact, and more generally through his ability to maintain intensive study and practice routines over many years.

Olof recognizes that this may be his last opportunity for such intensive retreat practice before taking on greater responsibilities as he moves onto PhD candidacy and onto taking more

responsibility in the Sangha. He is concerned about the preservation and continuation of authentic Buddhist teachings in our modern world, and he strives for the scholar-practitioner ideal. His aspiration is not just personal advancement but also transmission of authentic Dharma.

Olof's connection to the Nyingma tradition through his relationship with Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche and the Ka-Nying lineage, and the intensive schooling at RYI provide an exceptional basis for doing extensive retreats. His years of preparation through study, community involvement, and consistent Dharma practice have laid the groundwork for what I believe will be a fruitful retreat experience.

I recommend Olof Axelsson without reservation and I am certain that supporting his three-year retreat will be a worthy investment for the future of Dharma transmission.

Please feel free to contact me if you require any additional information at gkoebler8@gmail.com or +977 9803820101 (WhatsApp or Call/SMS).

With appreciation for your important work,

Gabriel Köbler

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Rangjung Yeshe Institute, Kathmandu, Nepal