

August 1, 2025

Dear Anthony and Tsadra

Greetings from Dorje Denma Ling in Nova Scotia, where my wife and I are the Codirectors here this year. We just hosted a week-long, 90-person retreat with Anam Thubten Rinpoche, which went quite well, especially considering that there hasn't been a larger residential retreat with a lineage teacher here in the last decade.

I'm writing to support the application of Carol Lemarche to Tsadra to give her financial support for her three-year retreat at Sopa Choling, Gampo Abbey in Nova Scotia.

I've known Carol for at least a decade. I have known her over the time she was a temporary monastic at Gampo Abbey, living as a resident at KCCL, and then on her own, and now at Dorje Denma Ling as a resident volunteer. She has always shown a keen interest and thirst for the dharma, with great devotion to her teacher Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche, and a strong bent to actually practice meditation. She is an insightful, conscientious person, and a stickler for details.

I have never been on a three-year retreat. But I have done some longer ngondro and sadhana retreats of a month or two. I have translated a number of the texts used on the three-year retreat at Sopa Choling, and I have visited that retreat a few times when Thrangu Rinpoche was there. So I have some idea of what she might be getting into.

I think this retreat and its structured environment of practice could mesh well with the lifestyle that Carol aspires to have and practice. It could be a very good fit for her and the dharma.

I recommend that you support her in her practice.

If you wish to discuss her and her application further, please let me know.

Whatever the merit, let it be so!

Yours in the dharma,
Mark Nowakowski

Nalanda Translation Committee
and
Codirector of Dorje Denma Ling

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PS:

Carol sent me this list of meaningful events on her spiritual path:

This is much more than I know about, but it shows her consistent dedication.

Criteria to consider

If you can comment on any of these, that would be helpful:

- * Studied and practiced for at least 5 years
- * Completed preliminary practices of the tradition (I'm still working on Vajrayogini – hoping to finish in time for the Amending Fire puja in June 2026 – a requirement for Sopa Choling)
- * Have at least a rudimentary knowledge of Tibetan (depending on the retreat)

Some of my dharma activities

Here are some highlights of my dharma activities that might be helpful to know.

(I really should be enlightened by now.)

2001-2003

Gampo Abbey

Refuge and bodhisattva vows - with Thrangu Rinpoche

Two yarnes – with Ani Pema

One Shedra session – with Lodro Sangpo, Karl Brunnholz, Andy Karr

Songs of Milarepa - Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche

Diverse topics, including lujong

2003-2011

Gampo Abbey, Maine, New York, Vancouver, Toronto, Ottawa, Sarnath, Kathmandu

Studies and practices with Thrangu Rinpoche - including ngondro, Medicine Buddha, lojong, Shantideva, Padampa Sangye, songs of Milarepa, Mahamudra, and more

Pointing out

2004 – 2011 – Thrangu Rinpoche

2016 – Ponlop Rinpoche

Empowerments – with Thrangu Rinpoche

Hevajra 2006

84 Mahasiddhi 2009

Red Avalokiteshvara 2009

White Mahakala 2010

Vajrayogini 2016

Empowerments

Vajrayogini – Ringu Tulku Rinpoche 2024

Sharp Vajra of Awareness Tantra – Anam Thubten Rinpoche 2005

Chakrasamvara – with Tulku Damcho Rinpoche 2025

Practice retreats (1-2 weeks)

Boudha 1996

Gampo Abbey 2003

Bhaktapur 2011

Vajrayogini druppas and intensives

KCCL – three: 2017 – 2024

Dorje Denma Ling - multiple 2022 - 2024

Mahamudra studies with Elizabeth Callahan

Online 2020 – 2025

Moonbeams of Mahamudra, Ganges Mahamudra

Other teachers

HH Karmapa 17

Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche

Mingyur Rinpoche

Khandro Rinpoche

Dzongsar Kyentse Rinpoche

Tsultrim Allione