

3721 Mead St.
Fort Collins, CO USA
80526
August 8, 2022

Dear Tsadra Foundation,

I am writing to endorse Teja Campbell for Tsadra sponsorship for a three-year retreat. I think he is a worthy candidate.

As for myself, I have been a Tibetan Buddhist practitioner for 40 years, first under Chogyam Trungpa, Rinpoche, and then, starting in 1997, under Drikung Garchen Rinpoche. Over the years I have completed ngondro (almost!) 2 times, and Vajrayogini practice including the recitation requirement, and four karmas plus amending fire offerings. I attended the Shambhala community's Ngedon School, studying Buddhist Philosophy and view, for 3 consecutive, two-year programs, and then taught in Ngedon School for five more years.

In my time serving Garchen Rinpoche, I helped found the Southwest Buddhafield Endowment Fund, Inc to support the Garchen Institute, and served as president of the Endowment board from 2006-2016. I am again serving on that board. I have also been a member of the board of directors of the Garchen Institute, for the last five years. I am NOT supporting Teja as a Garchen Institute board member, but as a friend with some background in Dharma.

I have done many two, or three-week solitary retreats, and one, 100-day retreat. Retreat is difficult—I am too much of a wimp to do a 3-year retreat. I had intended to, but discovered how addicted I am to being busy! I know that, entering a long retreat, one goes through withdrawal from one's worldly life for weeks or months. I have seen this with other retreatants, having watched two different 3-year retreats at the Garchen Institute. Some retreatants have succumbed to health issues—real, or partly imagined—and one misused the retreat structure to write instead of practice. Knowing the challenges of long retreat, and how few people actually do it fully, I do not recommend Teja lightly.

Teja and I have known each other for five years. We first met at the Garchen Buddhist Institute. Teja was just coming out of retreat when I arrived for a program in 2017. We struck up a friendship, as both of us have done retreat practice and have had similar pilgrimage experiences in Asia.

Shortly after that time, Teja stayed at my home from January to March, 2018, while my wife and I went on pilgrimage in India. Since that time, Teja and I have kept in touch as he has traveled and practiced on retreat.

I am impressed with Teja's retreat history, and especially by the apparent ease he has in being isolated from friends and family while on retreat. I think he would not suffer the "withdrawal from life" misery that so many retreatants face when entering a long retreat. Teja is self-sufficient and quiet, deeply thoughtful, and without worldly aims. His "worldly" work is cranial-sacral therapy, which he practices intermittently when he is traveling about. Although married, Teja and his wife live mostly apart; Helena is South African and lives in Europe. Teja lives in the United States, although he travels widely. Their relationship seems to be mainly based on mutual, spiritual support.

Teja has broad Dharma experience, including extended shamatha and Vajrayana deity retreat practice, and a 100-day, Four Thoughts that Turn the Mind retreat. He was also a monastic for two years.

In caring for my house for two months, he was completely reliable.

If Teja has the chance to enter long retreat, I feel he could actually do it. Thus, I endorse Teja's application for retreat assistance.

May all beings benefit! If you have questions for me, please call or email:

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