



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

‘Amazing’ experience at ICT program for Tibetan American youth

<https://savetibet.org/amazing-experience-at-ict-program-for-tibetan-american-youth>

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From meeting high-ranking members of Congress to visiting Washington, DC’s top attractions, a group of Tibetan American college students had a full, fun schedule last week at the International Campaign for Tibet’s Tibetan Youth Leadership Program.

TYLP—which took place in person this year for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic began—gave nine Tibetan American college students from across the United States [unique exposure to the US political system](#), the foreign policy discourse, and the role of activists, lobbyists, think tanks and journalists in the US capital.

Their week in Washington included attending a ceremony with the Speaker Emerita, networking with DC professionals, and visiting landmarks, restaurants and more.

“My experience at TYLP has honestly been amazing,” said one of the students, Dekyi Sharchitsang. “I think having the opportunity to come here to Washington, DC and meet other young Tibetans like myself who are interested in our broader Tibetan movement has been very enriching. In addition to that, getting to meet other people who work in DC in similar fields, whether that’s nonprofits or on the Hill, overall, the program has been very enriching for me.”

TYLP is part of ICT’s [Lodi Gyari Tibetan Empowerment Program](#), which also includes The Rowell Fund for Tibet, Tibet Lobby Day, humanitarian assistance for Tibetans in exile and more.

“The Chinese government has illegally and brutally occupied Tibet for over 60 years,” said ICT President Tencho Gyatso. “While we urgently work to resolve this conflict through dialogue, it is crucial that we train the next generation of Tibetan leaders to carry on our peaceful struggle.”

“By connecting talented Tibetan American students with policymakers in Washington, DC, our Tibetan Youth Leadership Program helped lay the groundwork for continued political and programmatic support for Tibet from the US government, as well as further advancement for the Tibetan American community. We thank the phenomenal Tibetan youths who took part in TYLP, and we can’t wait to see the incredible things they accomplish in the future.”

US leaders

The TYLP students arrived in Washington on Saturday, June 3. Over the next week, they interacted with ICT staff, government and NGO representatives, journalists and elected leaders.

One of the clear highlights of the week was meeting [Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., a longtime champion of Tibet and the Dalai Lama](#). The students attended the presentation of the Wei

Jingsheng Lifetime Democracy and Human Rights Award to Pelosi, which ICT President Tencho Gyatso spoke at.

Twitter: [International Campaign for Tibet \(@SaveTibetOrg\)](#)

.@SpeakerPelosi, one of #Tibet's greatest champions, shared her wisdom yesterday with the next generation of #TibetYouthLeaders from our Tibetan Youth Leadership Program!

Thank you, Speaker Pelosi!

The students also met with Rep. Jim McGovern, D-Mass., and the office of Sen. Todd Young, R-Ind., two of the main sponsors of the [Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Conflict Act](#), a bipartisan bill that is currently in Congress. Known as the Resolve Tibet Act, the legislation will pressure the Chinese government to [resume dialogue with the Dalai Lama's envoys](#) to reach a negotiated agreement on Tibet.

“My favorite part of TYLP was definitely going to the Hill and lobbying for the Resolve Tibet Act to Congressmen and Senators on the Hill,” said Tenzin Menrinetsang, a TYLP student from New York. “I thought that this was very, very educational for me personally because that really gave me firsthand experience with the US political atmosphere and how I can use that and my leverage as a Tibetan American to the advantage of the Tibetan movement.”

The students also met with Sen. Ben Cardin, D-Md., as well as with staff from other Congressional offices, the Congressional-Executive Commission on China and the Select Committee on China.

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Today our #TibetYouthLeaders met with @SenatorCardin, as well as @RepMcGovern & the office of @SenToddYoung, two of the main sponsors of the #ResolveTibet Act! They also visited other Congressional offices during their day on Capitol Hill 😊

Outside of Congress, the students visited Under Secretary of State Uzra Zeya, who serves as Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues, and Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom Rashad Hussain.

Twitter: [Under Secretary Uzra Zeya \(@UnderSecStateJ\)](#)

Energizing conversation w/Tibetan Youth Leadership Program students ready to take on the next generation of 🌐 challenges. Proud to share my experiences @StateDept, from my early days as a young foreign service officer to my current roles as U/S & Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues.

Twitter: [U.S. Ambassador at Large Rashad Hussain \(@IRF_Ambassador\)](#)

Thankful for today's discussion on religious freedom and other issues with students from the Tibetan Youth Leadership Program. I was impressed by these rising leaders & look forward to seeing what they accomplish in the future.

In addition, the students met with the US Agency for International Development. They also had lunch with Sophie Richardson, China Director of Human Rights Watch.

Tibetan leaders

TYLP didn't just expose students to the workings of the US government. It also helped them become more familiar with the Central Tibetan Administration, Tibet's government in exile.

Dolma Gyari, the Kalon (Cabinet Minister) for the CTA's Department of Education, met with the TYLP students in person during her trip to DC from the CTA's headquarters in Dharamsala, India.

The students also visited the Office of Tibet in Washington, DC, where they spoke with Namgyal Choedup, the Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration to North America.

Tempa Tsering, an ICT Board Member and veteran of the CTA, also met with the students in person, as did fellow ICT Board Member and Asia expert Ellen Bork.

In addition, the students spoke virtually to Arjia Rinpoche, the former abbot of Kumbum Monastery in Tibet and current head of the Tibetan Mongolian Buddhist Cultural Center in Indiana.

During TYLP, the students visited Radio Free Asia's and Voice of America's Tibetan services, which act as vital sources of news about Tibet and for the Tibetan community. The students also met with Josh Rogin, a columnist for The Washington Post and political analyst with CNN.

One evening, the students had a networking dinner with Tibetan American professionals and local college students in Washington, DC.

On the last full day of the program, they attended the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation's 16th annual Roll Call of Nations, where Bhuchung K. Tsering, ICT's head of research and monitoring, [received the Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom](#) for his lifetime commitment to Tibetans suffering under Communist Chinese oppression.

Forming friendships

The nine students participating in TYLP this year were: Dechen Atsatsang of William Rainey Harper College; Dekyi Sharchitsang of Emory University; Kunga Shidhe-Chokra of Reed College; Tenzin Chaksam of the University of Minnesota; Tenzin Choesang of the University of Minnesota; Tenzin Menrinetsang of the University of Michigan; Tenzin Passang of the University of Minnesota; Tenzin Samten Ukyab of the University of California Berkeley; and Tenzin Tsega of the University of Virginia.

Although their schedule for TYLP was full of learning experiences, the students also got to have fun.

Their week included sightseeing trips to the Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial; a visit to the National Museum of African American History and Culture; karaoke; and much more.

Instagram: [@savetibetorg](#)

The 2023 Tibetan Youth Leadership Program has concluded! Last week Tibetan American students from across the US came to ICT's Washington, DC office to immerse themselves in the US political process!

We here at ICT had a wonderful time working with these #TibetYouthLeaders, and we wish them all the best as they continue to the next stages of their advocacy for #Tibet!

#savetibet #savetibetorg #religiousfreedom #tibet #tibetan #tibetanbuddhism #monk #buddhistmonk #advocacy #legislation #uspolicy #community #students

“The favorite part is definitely getting to know your fellow peers, including the staff,” said Tenzin Chaksam. “I feel like I made really meaningful connections with some of my friends. Hopefully this will allow me to keep in touch in the future and connect up.”



International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) | 1825 Jefferson Place NW | Washington, DC 20036 | United States of America
Phone: (202) 785-1515 | Fax: (202) 785-4343 | info@savetibet.org

ICT Europe
Funenpark 1D | 1018 AK
Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Phone: +31 (0)20 3308265
Fax: +31 (0)20 3308266
icteurope@savetibet.nl

ICT Deutschland e.V.
Schönhauser Allee 163 | 10435
Berlin, Germany
Phone: +49 (0)30 27879086
Fax: +49 (0)30 27879087
info@savetibet.de

ICT Brussels
11, rue de la linière | 1060
Brussels, Belgium
Phone: +32 (0)2 609 44 10
Fax: +32 (0)2 609 44 32
info@savetibet.eu