



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

Dr. Sophie Richardson and Geshe Lobsang Monlam receive International Campaign for Tibet's Snow Lion Human Rights Award from Richard Gere

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Berlin – This weekend, the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) bestowed the 2025 Snow Lion Human Rights Award on long-time human rights defender Dr. Sophie Richardson and Tibetan Buddhist scholar Geshe Lobsang Monlam. More than 150 guests gathered at the Berlin Environmental Forum, where long-time ICT Chairman and Tibet advocate, the actor and global humanitarian Richard Gere, presented the human rights award to the two winners on behalf of ICT.

Among the guests were many Tibetans living in Berlin, numerous representatives of other human rights organizations, and representatives from politics and the media. Host Christine Adelhardt welcomed Gere to the stage to introduce the award recipients. “It’s good to be a troublemaker in this world and tell the truth,” he said, addressing the audience with a wink, before reminding them of the motto of the Snow Lion Awards ceremony: “May your good deeds be good to all living beings forever.”

“Tibet is not just about Tibet; it is a valuable part of our global civilization,” declared Michael Brand, Parliamentary State Secretary and Chairman of the Tibet Parliamentary Group in the German Bundestag, to begin his keynote speech. Referring to the Chinese regime, he added, “Dear friends, the world must not forget Tibet, and Tibet needs greater support from the world.” He further promised, “We will not tire of demanding the release of the real Panchen Lama.”

Following the award, ICT President Tencho Gyatso paid tribute to Sophie Richardson’s decades of tireless commitment to human rights in a laudatory speech. “Either Tibet is open or it isn’t... The Olympic torch must not become a smokescreen to cover up human rights violations,” Gyatso said, quoting the award winner, who, as then Asia Director of Human Rights Watch, sent a “loud and clear message to the world” in the run-up to the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

“What has always impressed me most about Sophie is her tenacity—her unwavering determination to keep pushing, to keep speaking out, and to keep challenging indifference. ... What also impresses me is Sophie’s fearlessness and her deep sense of responsibility toward the people whose stories she tells,” Gyatso continued.

“To be recognized in the company of so many remarkable people—activists and artists, diplomats, scholars, and parliamentarians—is deeply humbling,” said Sophie Richardson, thanking the many long-time companions who attended. “Tibetans have demonstrated breathtaking resilience in the pursuit of basic human rights: the ability to live their identities—their beliefs, their languages, their cultures, their traditions, and their livelihoods—without fear. We can, we must, and we will—together—show this determination and solidarity in the pursuit of a human rights-respecting regime in Beijing and in the pursuit of a free Tibet,” Richardson continued.

As the evening’s second laudatory speaker, Tulku Tenzin Thoesang, Managing Director of Tibet House Germany, honored award winner Geshe Lobsang Monlam. “Dr. Lobsang Monlam’s life is not just a biography—it reflects the Tibetan spirit itself: resilient, innovative, and eternally compassionate. With monumental projects such as the 223-volume ‘Great Tibetan Dictionary’ and the visionary Dalai Lama-KI, he ensures that Tibet’s voice continues to resonate clearly, powerfully, and timelessly in the future,” Thoesang emphasized.

“Thank you for the recognition of our work,” Monlam said, also on behalf of his team, who had supported him in his projects for many years. “We must find a way for our language and culture to survive in this rapidly changing world,” he added.

The exiled Chinese writer and musician Liao Yiwu's musical contribution generated both enthusiasm and contemplation. Yiwu dedicated his first piece, "Song of Self-Immolation," to the numerous Tibetans who have self-immolated in protest. Liao Yiwu's performance was accompanied by commentary and translations by author Angela Hsu and a poetry recitation by Berlin-based author Malte Kiessler.

The International Campaign for Tibet awards the "Snow Lion" human rights prize in recognition of outstanding achievements in politics, society, and culture relating to Tibet, China, East Turkestan, Southern Mongolia, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. The prize is awarded to individuals and organizations that demonstrate civil courage, engage in civil society or political advocacy, promote and protect human rights and democracy, or advance the preservation of their threatened culture. The prize was presented for the first time on October 15, 2022, at the Umweltforum Berlin and previous recipients of the "Snow Lion" award are Dr. Adrian Zenz, the Tibet Film Festival, Lhadon Tethong, and the organization "Freedom for Hong Kong."



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