



## INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

### **ICT mourns the passing of Robert Thurman, an iconic Tibetan Buddhist scholar and lifelong advocate for Tibet**

<https://savetibet.org/ict-mourns-the-passing-of-robert-thurman>

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The Tibet world suffered a major loss this week with the passing of Robert Thurman, renowned scholar of Tibetan Buddhism and retired Columbia University Professor. Bob was a force of nature who was a tireless advocate for the Tibetan people, religion, culture and way of life.

A true leader without whom thousands of people from around the world would not have been exposed to or educated about Tibetan Buddhism, Bob made Buddhism accessible to the American people, translating the religion so that it could be better understood by a western audience. He hosted decades of teachings of the Dalai Lama in New York City and wrote several prominent books on Tibetan Buddhism and the Dalai Lama. The International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) honored Bob with the Light of Truth award in 2003 for his significant contributions to public understanding of Tibet and its people.

“Bob was a steadfast friend and tireless advocate for the Tibetan people and His Holiness the Dalai Lama. In co-founding Tibet House New York, together we were able to do much to spread awareness of the profundity of Tibetan culture and the truth of the Chinese invasion and occupation that continues till today,” said ICT Chair Richard Gere. “In organizing the very successful International Year of Tibet in 1991, we showcased a flurry of activities in different parts of the US and the World. Tibet took center stage for that year. Bob was a completely unique, brilliant and charismatic free thinker. It’s a shock to lose him.”

Bob testified before Congress on the situation in Tibet and the need for the United States to strongly support the Tibetan cause.

Recognized as a worldwide authority on religion and spirituality, Asian history, philosophy and Tibetan Buddhism, Robert Thurman was the Je Tsongkhapa Professor of Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Studies at Columbia University until his retirement in 2019. After learning Tibetan and studying Buddhism initially with Geshe Wangyal, a Tibetan Buddhist monk of Kalmyk heritage, he traveled to India, became a monk and was ordained by the Dalai Lama, the first Westerner to earn that distinction. In 1987, he co-founded Tibet House US, a non-profit organization in New York City dedicated to the preservation and renaissance of Tibetan civilization.



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