



Jill Robinson MBE, Dr.med.vet. h.c. **Founder and CEO, Animals Asia**

Jill Robinson MBE, Dr.med.vet. h.c. has been a pioneer of animal welfare in Asia since 1985 and is widely recognised as the world's leading expert on the cruel bear bile industry, having campaigned against it since 1993.

Born in the UK, Jill Robinson arrived in Hong Kong in 1985 and spent 12 years working in Asia as a consultant for the International Fund for Animal Welfare.

Repeatedly faced with scenes of widespread animal cruelty, Jill founded “Dr Dog” in Hong Kong in 1991 — the first animal-therapy programme in Asia. This groundbreaking initiative introduced the concept of “change through empathy”, the belief that empathy for one animal can evolve into empathy for an entire species and ultimately for all species.

More than 1,000 dogs have qualified as therapy dogs since Jill started Dr Dog, and today over 250 dogs make regular visits to hospitals, disabled centres, schools and elderly homes in 10 cities across Asia, spreading warmth and love to people in need, while promoting companion animals as our friends and helpers.

In 1993, a visit to a bear farm in southern China changed Jill's life. Exposing the plight of endangered Asiatic black bears (also known as moon bears) cruelly farmed and milked for their bile, and learning how easily herbs and synthetics could replace bear bile, Jill embarked on a journey to end the practice of bear farming once and for all.

In 1998, she founded Animals Asia, an organisation that is devoted to ending the barbaric practice of bear bile farming and improving the welfare of animals in China and Vietnam by promoting compassion and respect for all animals, and working to bring about long-term change.

Animals Asia began as a small group working out of Jill's front room. She has built the organisation into a respected international NGO with over 300 staff, an annual turnover of more than US\$9 million, award-winning bear sanctuaries in China and Vietnam, headquarters in Hong Kong, and offices in Australia, China, Germany, Italy, the UK, US and Vietnam.



In July 2000 Jill signed an agreement with the Chinese authorities to set up a bear sanctuary and rescue bears from the bile industry. This was the first agreement between the Chinese government and an international NGO. Animals Asia is the only organisation with a bear sanctuary in China.

Jill is a Council Member of the World Federation of Chinese Medicine Societies (WFCMS) Herbal Committee, a former member of the Hong Kong Government's Animal Welfare Advisory Group and an Honorary Adviser to the Ocean Park Conservation Foundation, Hong Kong.

Awards and commendations

1995: Readers Digest "Hero for Today" award

1998: Awarded an MBE by Queen Elizabeth in the Birthday Honours List, in recognition of services to animal welfare in Asia.

2002: USA Genesis Award

2005: Marchig Animal Welfare Award for lifetime achievement in animal welfare

2006: Winsome Constance Kindness Trust Gold Medal for Humanitarian Service

2007: St Francis of Assisi Award, the Auckland New Zealand Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

2008: Named "Outstanding Earth Champion" in Hong Kong and appointed World Animal Day Ambassador for Asia.

2009: Awarded medals from the Mayor of Genoa and Vice President of the Regional Council symbolising the support and gratitude of the Italian government in recognition of services to animal welfare in Asia.

2010: Awarded the Gold Medal of Naples by the Mayor's representative in Italy and elected as Member of the Society of Woman Geographers in the USA.

2010: Awarded a "You Bring Charm to China" award at a ceremony held by Phoenix Satellite Television and Tianjin TV to recognise 12 prominent foreign people who have enriched life in China through their contribution to business, education, medical care, disaster relief and environmental protection.

2010: Awarded the 2010 Carole Noon Award for Sanctuary Excellence for Animals Asia's moon bear rescue centres in China and Vietnam, by the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS).

2011: Awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Zurich, Switzerland.

2011: Awarded the RSPCA UK's William Wilberforce Award in the RSPCA Honours.

2011: Awarded the "I love Papà" Mini Oscar 2011 in Florence, Italy, for her accomplishments in the field of education and animal welfare, in recognition of services to animals and people in Asia.

2012: Awarded the VeganOK Award 2012 by Veganfest in Seravezza, Italy, for the campaign to end bear bile farming and restore respect for all animals in Asia.



2012: Awarded 2012 Master in Charity, Arts or Culture at the Women of Influence 2012 awards ceremony in Hong Kong, held by the American Chambers of Commerce and the South China Morning Post.

2013: Named as the winner of BBC Wildlife Magazine's Conservation Hero 2013

2013: Winner of the Lifetime Achievement award at the 2013 Burgess Wetnose Animal Rescue Awards in London.

2013: Presented with the International Rescue Award at the British Animal Honours event in a ceremony that aired on primetime British television.

Jill has given hundreds of presentations throughout the world and has been interviewed by CNN, GMTV, Channel 5 (UK), Sky News, BBC News and the USA's National Public Radio and Voice of America. The China bear rescue was the subject of the award-winning British "Really Wild Show Special", which screened in January 2003, and Animals Asia's own in-house film, "China Bear Rescue...the beginning", has won countless awards worldwide.

Jill was featured in Animals Planet's one-hour special "Moon Bears: Journey to Freedom" narrated by Stephen Fry. "Moon Bear Rescue: A Decade On" shows the progress made from 2000 to 2010, and "Cages of Shame", a film by director Martin Guinness that documents Animals Asia's mission to rescue 10 bears from a Chinese bile farm is the winner of the Humane Society of the United States ACE award.

