

Tsadra Foundation Lifetime Achievement Award

Transcript

When we look at the Translation Timelines we see the remarkable progression of published titles in the last 40 years and quite rightly we have been celebrating the translators engaged in this amazing adventure of Translation and Transmission. Many people in North America and around the world first encounter Buddhism through books. In the seventies there were almost no “serious” books for the student of Tibetan Buddhism, but steadily over time we have reached a point where students of Buddhism can fill large shelves in their homes with these precious treasures.

We could say that the unsung heroes of this incredible shift are the publishers. In the late 70's and early 80's a few brave individuals began publishing Tibetan Buddhist books in translation and other works on Buddhism, often with difficulty and at financial loss. We all owe our Buddhist publishers a great debt of gratitude.

There is one person we would like to single out here today who has made a significant impact on the development of Tibetan Buddhism in the West. He has worked tirelessly in his lifetime to grant us all access to the written dharma. He has been a fan, a mentor, midwife, and friend to multiple generations of aspiring translators. He is an individual who has given himself entirely to Buddhist publishing over the last 30 + years.

Sidney Piburn was at the heart of Snow Lion Publications when it was established in 1980 inspired by a conversation with His Holiness, the Dalai Lama. Together with Jeff Cox, and all those who participated in Snow Lion's adventure, Sidney began his work with the kind of intrepid attitude we hear attributed to selfless bodhisattvas. Their mission was to “publish translations of classic texts and monastic textbooks from each of the four main lineages of Tibetan Buddhism, commentaries by eminent lamas past and present of their respective lineages, and works by Western practitioners and scholars skilled at bridging the cultures.”

For years Snow Lion actually operated at a financial loss, a situation which finally changed when they were given publishing rights to His Holiness' book, Kindness, Clarity, and Insight. Snow Lion Publications published more than 300 works and made available through its distribution many more titles published by other houses.

As you all know Snow Lion has now re-incarnated as an imprint of Shambhala Publications where we look forward to the continuing fruit of the work of Snow Lion Publications.

Sidney would you please come forward. It is our pleasure and honour to bestow upon you this Lifetime Achievement Award as an expression of the heartfelt appreciation and gratitude of us all.