

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Geoffrey Yang, Great Enlightenment Buddhist Institute Society (GEBIS)

Phone: (902) 316-0134 | Email: geoffrey.yang@gebis.org

Venerable Heather Chang, Great Wisdom Buddhist Institute (GWBI)

Phone: (902) 215-8127 | Email: bonjour@gwbi.org

*“Several standout titles captured multiple Gold awards, including: *Kindling Hope: Daily Passages from Darkness into Light* by Zhen-Ru (Pownal Street Press) – Winner in Inspirational, and Poetry.”*

— **Independent Book Publishers Association (IBPA) Official Announcement, May 16, 2026**

PEI Author Zhen-Ru’s “Kindling Hope” Named an Official “Standout Title” at U.S. Book Awards, Winning Double Gold

(Montague, Prince Edward Island – May 18, 2026) — In a historic milestone for Prince Edward Island’s literary community, the Great Enlightenment Buddhist Institute Society (GEBIS) and the Great Wisdom Buddhist Institute (GWBI) are proud to announce that *Kindling Hope: Daily Passages from Darkness into Light* (ISBN 9781998129294) has been officially recognized as a “standout title” by the Independent Book Publishers Association (IBPA) after capturing two Gold awards at the 38th Annual IBPA Book Awards.

Published by PEI’s own independent house, Pownal Street Press, the book achieved top honours in both the **Inspirational** and **Poetry** categories. The winners were celebrated during a live gala ceremony on May 15th, 2026, at the Hyatt Regency in Portland, Oregon.

A Historic Year for Independent Publishing

According to the official post-event announcement released by the IBPA on May 16, this year's competition garnered nearly 2,000 entries — the highest number in the award program’s 38-year history. Out of hundreds of publishers and thousands of book submissions across North America, *Kindling Hope* emerged as one of only a select few titles nationwide singled out by the IBPA as a “standout” for winning multiple Gold categories.

“The continued growth of the IBPA Book Award reflects the strength and momentum of independent publishing,” said Terry Nathan, COO of IBPA, noting the record-breaking submissions. Widely regarded as the independent publishing industry’s most comprehensive and prestigious awards program in North America, entries are judged by over 170 industry professionals, including librarians, bookstore owners, reviewers, and editors.

A Journey Toward Inner Peace

Kindling Hope: Daily Passages from Darkness into Light accompanies readers on a journey toward inner peace and emotional resilience. In today's fast-paced world, where senses are constantly on overload, the book offers a timely sanctuary to unplug, breathe, and regain calm. Composed as a series of short, meditative, and lyrical verses, Zhen-Ru's award-winning work serves as a gentle anchor of mindfulness amidst daily stress. The double-gold recognition highlights the book's exceptional success in achieving its purpose and meeting modern readers' psychological and emotional needs.

The author, Zhen-Ru, is a prolific writer, composer, and humanitarian who currently resides in Prince Edward Island, Canada. She has dedicated her life to the study and practice of philosophy, mindfulness, and cross-cultural communication. Her poems and musical compositions reflect how deep inner insights can be harmoniously integrated into everyday life—from nurturing family relationships to fostering environmental stewardship. Her lifelong goal is to promote compassion, mutual understanding, and peace across diverse cultures, inspiring individuals to cultivate a sense of shared humanity.

By sharing this celebratory milestone of *Kindling Hope*, GEBIS and GWBI hope to contribute to the rich cultural tapestry of Prince Edward Island, offering their island neighbours and the wider Canadian community a shared sense of pride in local literary achievements that resonate globally. A video highlight of the historic ceremony can be viewed here: <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1CcbD5PDUy/>.

(Note for Editors: *Kindling Hope* is featured from 50:23–53:00 for the Inspirational Category, and from 1:10:10–1:11:20 for the Poetry Category.)

For more information, to request a review copy of *Kindling Hope*, or to arrange an interview, please contact Venerable Heather Chang (GWBI) at the contact details provided above.

For the official IBPA press release and a complete listing of this year's winners, visit ibpabookaward.org or view the official news announcement directly at: <https://www.ibpa-online.org/news/727405/>.

###

About the IBPA Book Award

The IBPA Book Award includes categories recognizing excellence in book editorial and design. It is regarded as one of the highest national honors for independent publishers in North America. The awards are administered by the Independent Book Publishers Association (IBPA), with help from over 170 volunteer book publishing professionals including librarians, bookstore owners, reviewers, designers, publicity managers, and editors. Visit ibpabookaward.org.

About the Independent Book Publishers Association (IBPA)

Founded in 1983 to support independent publishers nationwide, the Independent Book Publishers Association (IBPA) leads and serves the independent publishing community through advocacy, education, and tools for success. With over 3,500 members, IBPA is the largest publishing association in the U.S. For more information, visit www.ibpa-online.org.