



Thirty Years of 1975-2005: OSHO International Publishing

Osho: “Make Me Avail

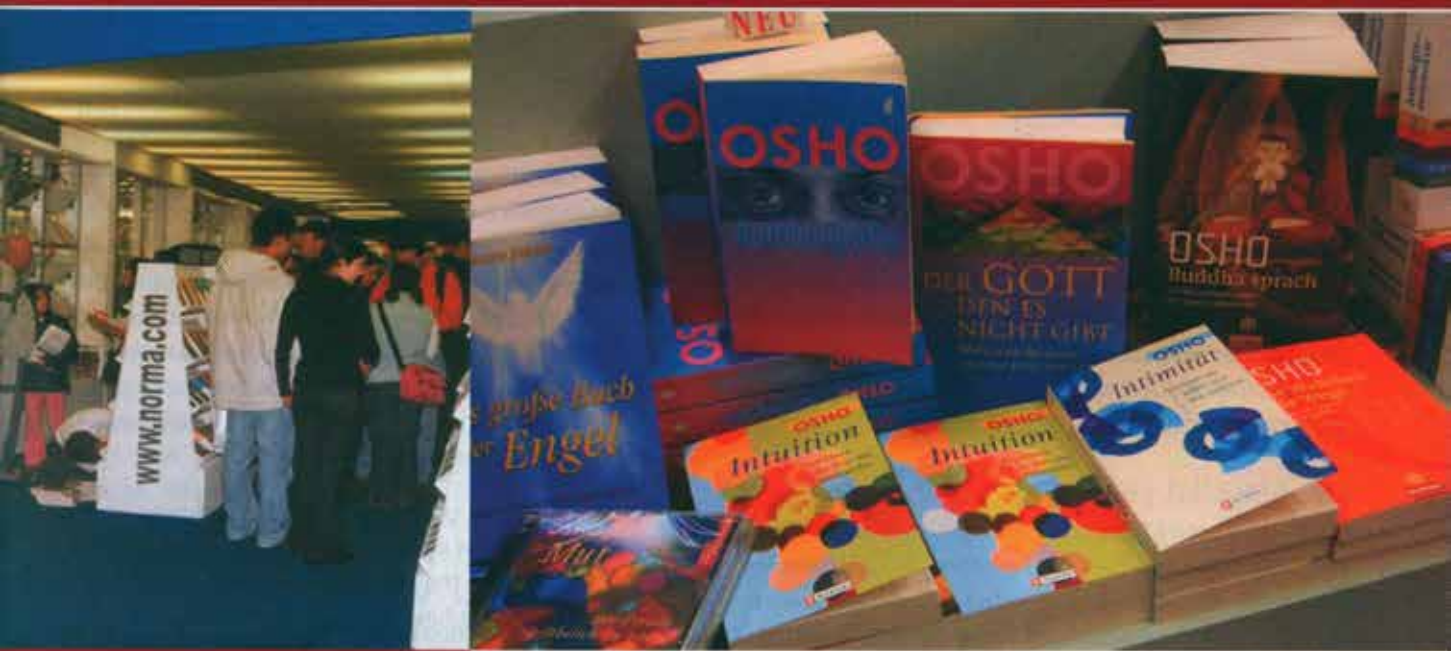
Thirty years ago the first chapter of publishing Osho's works on an international level began with a contract for *The Book of Secrets* with Harper and Row, New York and Thames & Hudson, London – a contract that is still active today. In honor of this important anniversary, the Osho Times offers a bird's-eye view of the publishing history which has made Osho's work available all over the world. Here is a look at the historic beginnings and evolution of the work, and the expansion into the exciting developments in international publishing that are happening now.

The early days

In 1974, to accommodate the growing number of people who came seeking appointments at the door of his Woodlands apartment, Osho moved from Bombay to Pune. There, the Rajneesh Foundation had purchased the first property in what has now expanded into the Osho International Meditation Resort.

Yoga Laxmi, the secretary of the Foundation and personal secretary to Osho at the time, started the first international publication of discourses in English. Laxmi initiated the process with *The Book of Secrets* and soon, with the help of a literary agency in New York, the book was also published by some of the largest publishing houses in the world: Thames & Hudson in the UK, Harper & Row in the US, Wilhelm Heyne in Germany, Albin Michel in France and Bompiani in Italy.

The book became an instant success, selling hundreds of thousands of copies across a western world that was becoming interested in the East and eastern traditions. Osho was established as an international best-selling author, and many readers were moved to travel to Pune for a first-hand experience of Osho and his work. Meanwhile, publishers of *The Book of Secrets* moved quickly to add more of his titles to their programs.



able around the World”

Osho never personally managed the administrative affairs of the publication of his work. Rather, he assigned all his intellectual property, his copyright and the right to his name, pseudonyms and image to a foundation – a public charitable trust – during his lifetime. The Foundation was established to implement this assignment and the formal protection and exercise of these rights, including taking care of all practical aspects like the recording of his discourses, transcription, editing and design, international licensing and publication. In this, the Foundation was assisted by a dedicated group of friends*.

By 1981 Osho was a world-renowned figure. His works were instantly recognizable wherever they appeared on bookshop shelves and in private collections, with unique logos and symbols designed by Osho. The Foundation registered these logos and symbols, in addition to his name, as trademarks around the world.

His books filled entire shelves in bookshops, and people around the globe listened to his recorded discourses on

*The Bern Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works recognizes and agrees to protect the copyright of authors from all participating countries including India. For example in India this copyright protection lasts for the life of the author plus an additional 50 years.

cassette tapes carried by hand from Pune, or copied and sold by authorized local distributors. The content for new books was created quickly and constantly. For years, Osho was giving public discourses and meeting with smaller groups of visitors in *darshans* – intimate talks – on a daily basis, providing material for two to four new titles per month.

With his move to the United States in 1981, Osho entered a three-year period of public silence, which incidentally gave the editors and the publishing team a chance to catch up with their backlog of unpublished work. Many of the discourse series spoken during 1975 -1981 were published in the USA during this period, for worldwide English language distribution in small and affordable paperback editions.

Talks in America

In 1984 Osho resumed his daily public discourses and at the same time considerably increased the average length of each of his talks. The books based on those series of talks are huge, comparable in size to today's Harry Potter books. From then onwards, video recordings were made of his complete discourses, meetings, and interviews with journalists.

In addition to overseeing the print publication of Osho's discourses and interviews, the Foundation now found itself with the responsibility of managing the regular recording and distribution of these discourses, using the new video technology which had become affordable and widely available in the 1980s. The recording of all the Osho talks in professional quality audio, which had already started in India, continued parallel to the new video recordings. As a result, the physical archive of Osho's works began to grow exponentially.

The blacklist years

Osho's new series of talks in America were more direct and provocative than ever, and he rattled the establishment there even more than he had in India. Some of his more mainstream publishers began to cancel their contracts, often offering surreal and even hilarious rationalizations for their decisions.

In 1985, Osho's arrest and deportation by the US government brought the international publishing of his books to a halt. As he traveled to twenty-one different countries in an unsuccessful attempt to find one that was willing to host him despite US government pressure, publishers around the world removed the Osho books from their catalogues and dropped plans for future scheduled publications. Fueling that phenomenon was the fact that some booksellers, in an extraordinary act of marketplace censorship, returned all copies of their Osho books in stock, regardless of ongoing demand from their customers. It was now almost impossible to find an Osho book on the shelves of all but the most libertarian and rebellious booksellers.

In a very short time, Osho became such a *persona non grata* that all international publishers save one had canceled their publishing agreements with the Foundation. Politicians, churches, and the media used the occasion of his arrest and deportation to manipulate public opinion, in an effort to silence or at least discredit Osho completely.

Between 1985 and 1994, Osho books had almost completely vanished from commercial bookshops, libraries and public awareness. Many people were under the mistaken impression that his deportation from the USA and his death in 1990 had marked the end of his work.

When representatives of Osho International tried to reconnect with publishers during this time, they were quickly shown the door. In some cases they were even told outright: "Never, ever come back with any proposal relating to this author."

Osho was aware of these developments. He mentioned

repeatedly in public discourses and press interviews that his books had been blacklisted – and in fact his books were officially blacklisted by the Vatican and various other totalitarian governments. In order to guarantee the availability of his books after his return to Pune in 1987, a new publishing operation was created. Osho suggested the name – *The Rebel Publishing House* – and sketched the now well-known flame symbol which became the logo and trademark of this new publishing house. It is very similar to the first logo used in association with his public speeches and publications in the early sixties.

It is a great work to take care of all the languages – we need the publication institute to check all the language publications before they are published. Now there are many countries. We have to take care of things. There are countries which are not members of the Bern Convention; they do not believe in copyright. It is not only a question of copyright; it is a question that I should not be presented in a wrong way – which is possible.

Osho

The new Rebel Publishing House was based in Germany and India, and between 1987 and 1991 more than 2 million books were printed as original first-edition hardcover volumes and released within months of each new discourse series given by Osho. Today, the focus of Rebel, now solely based in India, remains the same – to produce the unabridged, original discourse series by Osho in hardcover format.

During the blacklist years when no commercial publishers were willing to publish his works, Osho encouraged his friends and his people to take care of the publication of his books in different languages. Working closely with the Foundation, sister publishing companies began forming in response – in Germany, Greece, Taiwan, and the Netherlands.

These small Osho publishers and dedicated teams of translators devoted much of their time to making Osho available in their respective languages and countries. But because they had such limited access to commercial distribution channels, they were known mostly to existing friends of Osho and already interested readers. It continued to be very difficult to gain access to the mainstream book market and through that access, to reach substantial numbers of new readers. As a result, many of these small Osho publishing houses could not survive economically. The few that did were those who made a big jump and became professional publishers with a solid financial, marketing and planning base.

A new phase of international expansion

By the early 1990s it became clear that in order to realize Osho's request to make his work available around the world, Osho International needed a new, more mainstream approach. There were no connections to international publishers, and the distribution of English books out of Germany and India was costly and difficult – if not impossible. The Foundation had a fresh look at Osho's suggestion that an international publishing headquarters be established for his international publishing work.

Osho International Foundation opened a gallery in the heart of London to reintroduce Osho's books to a market where they had been missing for almost a decade. The process of reconnecting with professional publishers began, and soon Osho titles were placed with three different UK publishing houses.

In 1995, an attempt to expand distribution of Rebel

Publishing House books into the mainstream US book market was unsuccessful. The US market was by now dominated by big nationwide chains, with rigid corporate definitions of product cycles. Hardcover shelf space was measured in inches and reserved for new releases by well known, mainstream authors. While the "outlaw" status of



Osho's drawing

The Rebel logo

Osho as an author might be fading from memory, his hardcover Rebel books did not fit comfortably into the rules of the bookselling game.

These new realities eventually led the Foundation to New York City, where it opened a licensing office in the publishing capital of the world. Today, the Foundation is a major player in the international publishing scene.

Osho is the first mystic in history to live in an age where his complete message could be recorded in his own words and preserved for future generations. He said, "Whatever I am saying is not just for you...I am talking also for the future generations" – and tremendous care has been taken to preserve the record and to make it accessible to everyone.

All of Osho's discourses were published as hardcover books at least once before Osho left his body. The final list consisted of approximately 250 original titles in Hindi and approximately 280 original titles in English. Some of these first editions are still available in print, others can be found in specialized bookshops, for auction on eBay, or through an online retailer of rare and out-of-print books.

Osho International Foundation aims to keep all of these titles in print in their original language, plus an English translation of each of the Hindi titles. This is not a small undertaking, given the fact that the total will be close to 800 volumes once the translations are completed.

The strategy so far has been to publish these books on a rotation schedule determined by demand, subject matter, completion of translation and availability of funds. Today Rebel Publishing House in India is the source of most of these titles.

The Foundation also continues to



The world is a market, and nothing is wrong with it being a market.

Osho

The work of making Osho books available throughout the world, while passing through many phases, has continued uninterrupted through the decades. Thirty years after its first international publication, *The Book of Secrets* continues to be in print, with more than 2 million copies sold. It is now published in 18 languages.



publish titles from a list of compilations and abridgements suggested by Osho. These books – such as *Gold Nuggets, From Medication to Meditation, India My Love* – were created to encourage professional, mainstream publishers to license his works. A number of these compilations have been published – and there are still more to come from the suggestions on his list.

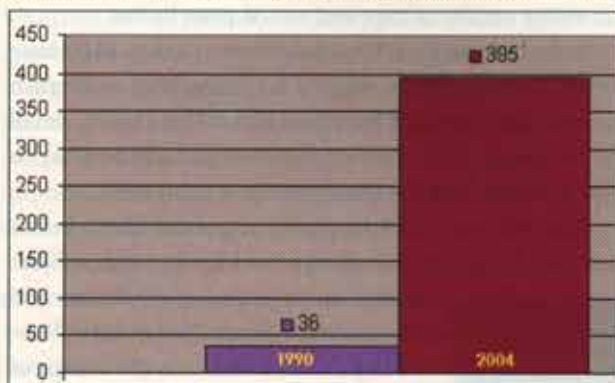
Besides making his work available to all,

Osho asked that his books remain contemporary. He suggested that certain historical details and references that date his works, or are irrelevant to a new generation of readers (e.g. an episode with the local police commissioner) should be edited from the books as they are reprinted. He also suggested to change the titles of books, and to change questions if they seem outdated. Though he often referred to *god* in his earlier talks, Osho instructed that wherever possible in a new edition, the word should be replaced with *godliness, existence* or another phrase more in accord with changes in the way he spoke after he emerged from silence in 1984 to “add the final touches” to his painting.

I am not a savior or a prophet or a messenger of god or the only begotten son of god; I am as human as you are. My books are simply books as other books; no specialty is claimed for them.

Osho

This editing, which is done only after listening to the original audio recordings and correcting any transcription or editorial mistakes, is performed in Pune with the contribution and help of volunteer editors in the Osho Multimedia Office.



Publishing contracts signed by Osho International Foundation in 1990 and in 2004

Osho supported any kind of marketing, modern technology and communication methods to make his message available: “You have to use all the communication media. And when you use the mass media, of course, it looks like meditation is also a commodity. You cannot do it like a Buddha, you cannot do it like a Jesus – those days are over. If you go on doing it like that, then it will take millions of years to spread the news.”

In the marketplace

The door to re-entering the mainstream international publishing market was opened in 1994 with the publication of the *Osho Zen Tarot* – a deck of tarot cards packaged with a book of Osho’s insights. This package, created in



Pune over a period of two years, has now become an international best-seller. Today the deck is published in 23 languages, including Hebrew, French, Italian, Spanish, Japanese, Chinese, German and English. The German version is now in its tenth printing and the US edition alone has sold more than 250,000 copies.

This was the first major title to establish Osho’s new name in the international publishing scene. As an attractive gift item, it reached a whole new audience, motivating publishers to acquire more Osho titles for their markets.

Since then, the number of publishers of Osho titles around the world has risen to 212, and includes some of the world’s largest and most influential publishing houses, such as Random House and St. Martin’s Press in



New York, Mondadori and Bompiani in Italy, Random House-Mondadori in Spain, Random House in Germany, and Penguin in India.

Many of the publishers that had dropped Osho in the 1980’s are now back in play, with more Osho titles than ever before. In 2004, Osho International signed 395 publishing agreements for Osho titles – the equivalent of more than one new Osho title or reprint per day. Osho books are not only bestsellers within individual publishing houses but are appearing more

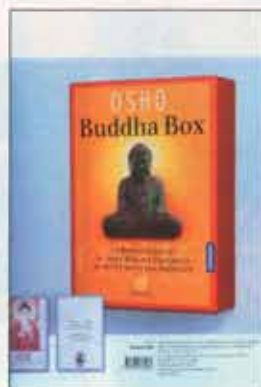
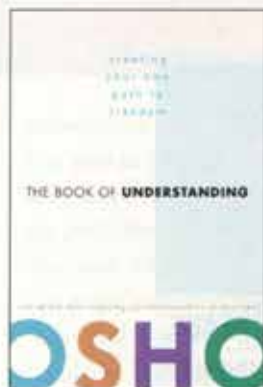
OSHO on line



and more on local and national bestseller lists.

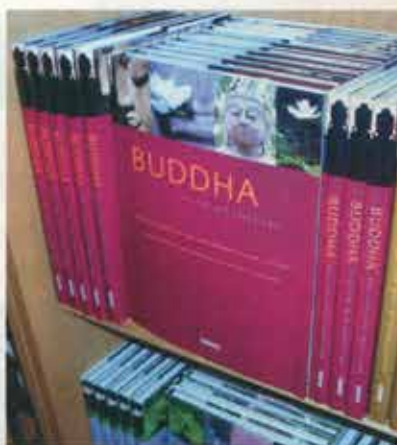
Over the last ten years, from almost no presence in bookstores except for a few specialized local shops, Osho books can now be found in bookshops around the world. Where print runs used to be a cautious 3,000-5,000 copies per Osho title, now first printings of 25,000 copies or more are

common. Today, the mega-chain bookstores in the USA not only sell Osho, but also publish his books under their own imprints. Barnes & Noble was first with their



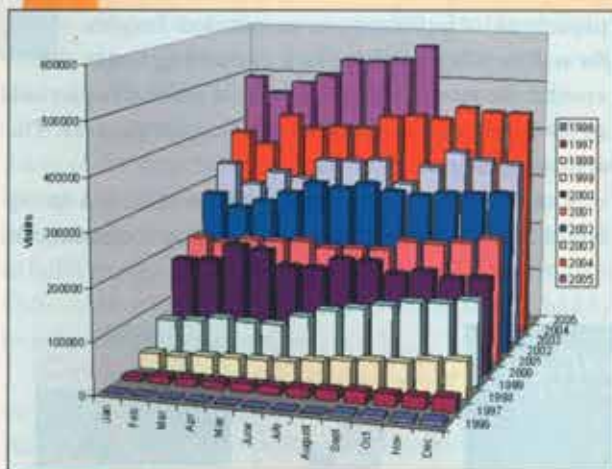
publication of the *Buddha Discovery Deck* and Borders followed with a series of four illustrated books on *Buddha*, *Zen*, *Tantra* and *Tao* with a combined print run of 120,000 copies in the first year.

There are now 2,537 active publishing contracts in a total of 54 languages around the world. Each contract represents one Osho title that eventually reaches thousand of readers. Total annual sales are now close to three million copies – ten to fifteen times the volume of sales during Osho's lifetime. By working with mainstream publishers and their networks of distribution, Osho books are



Soon you will be able to carry small pocket computers with you...full of all the knowledge available in the world. A small computer can contain all the libraries of the world and is always at your service: just push a button and whatsoever you want to know the computer will tell you.

Osho, when Bill Gates was just 23 years old



Osho.com visitors 1996 - 2005

Since 1995 the internet, with its millions of subscribers, has allowed worldwide distribution of Osho's work in a way that was never before possible. When the re-mastering and digitalization of the archives was complete, books and audios that were not in print, not with mainstream publishers, or were too difficult or too expensive to distribute could now be published online through the Foundation's website: www.osho.com.

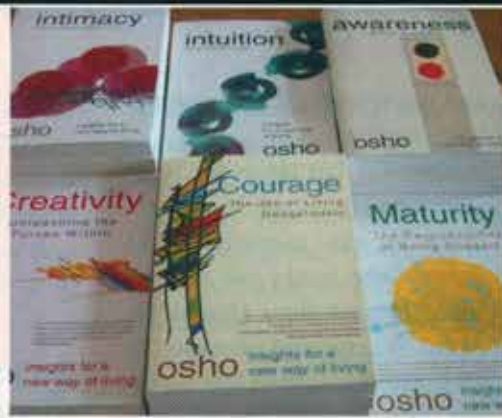
Today, www.osho.com offers a full presentation of Osho's vision and work. It is in the top 2% of the world's most visited sites with more than seven million visitors per year. The "Osho Library" online offers all original Osho books in English and Hindi, and allows subscribers to search for specific content or statements and to read one or all titles online. The "Shop" offers a catalogue of all available books, eBooks, and thousands of Osho Talks for downloading in popular audio formats like MP3 and Windows Media files.

Elsewhere on the website, there are video clips, audio postcards that can be emailed to friends, an interactive version of the Osho Zen Tarot, downloadable music and much more. Visitors can also find video clips that demonstrate the different stages of the Osho Active Meditations, Multiversity course information and schedules, and links to purchase meditation and music CDs. They can take a virtual tour of the Osho International Meditation Resort in Pune, and make a reservation for the Guesthouse there.

reaching many more people than was possible when the Foundation acted alone.

For example, *Meditation: The First and Last Freedom*, a compilation published by Rebel in 1989, was selling a steady 1,000 copies per year in the US. When St. Martin's Press in New York agreed to publish this title in 1997, they sold 10,000 US copies in the first year alone! The paperback compilation series entitled *Insights for a New Way of Living* is a bestselling series around the world, with more than a million copies sold so far in eighteen languages including Vietnamese, Thai and Indonesian.

As intended, compilation books have acted as a springboard into the mainstream marketplace, increasing the



demand for more Osho titles. In fact, publishers now have more confidence in the author and have begun signing up original titles such as *The Mustard Seed* – signed into seven languages in 2004 –

Inner War & Peace – the first of 21 volumes of commentaries on the *Bhagavad Gita* – *When The Shoe Fits*, and *Tao: The Three Treasures*. These original titles are being reintroduced around the world and are considered and published as *Osho Classics*. One of Osho's last and most



Insights series: Chinese, Portuguese and Spanish



Body Mind Balancing project



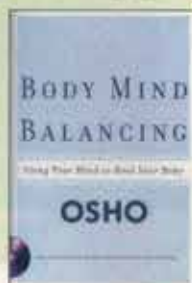
An outstanding example of the collaboration process which is used to make Osho's work available is *Body Mind Balancing*. This book and CD package features the Osho Meditative Therapy, *Osho Reminding Yourself of the Forgotten Language of Talking to Your Mind and Body*, the last meditation created by Osho.

In the early stages of the project, the Foundation worked closely with Osho Multimedia at the Osho International Meditation Resort. With the help of translators, editors, musicians and friends from around the world, the meditation was translated and recorded in sixteen different languages. Veet Marco composed a soundtrack for the meditation; Pratito edited a book of Osho insights

on the body and body-mind relationship; and many more people were involved in translating the text of the book.

If left to individual publishers, the development and packaging of this complex project would likely have taken years. Without the master audio recording translations provided by Osho International Foundation, many publishers would simply have found the project impossible to handle.

The book and CD package has already been published in several languages including English, German, Spanish, Swedish, Chinese, Polish and Dutch, and was quickly a bestseller in Italy.





with the need to reprint existing titles, it was obvious that a new method of archiving the text of Osho's work was needed. In order to allow editors and researchers to access thousands of discourses with ease, they were all transcribed or scanned into a searchable database. This became a central resource that included not only the text in electronic format, but also information about which discourses were available in audio and video, their length, and where they were spoken. This work, accomplished over a period of three years by dozens of volunteers, laid the foundations that supported the huge expansion in publishing over the last decade.

With the passage of time and rapid changes in technology, many of the original audio and video recordings were in out-of-date formats and were deteriorating. It became increasingly clear that if Osho International Foundation was to fulfill its responsibilities in preserving and protecting the Osho archive for the generations to come, all of it had to be converted into digital formats.

It was a complex, multi-million dollar undertaking, on a scale that had never before been attempted. Even Hollywood, at the time the Osho video archive re-mastering project was begun, had taken just a few tentative steps towards digitizing a small number of classic films.

Over a period of four years in England, Germany and India, 6,500 audio and 1,870 video discourses were re-mastered into the latest digital formats available. As part of this project, several sets of the audio and video archives were created and placed around the world, allowing access to the Osho's original talks on every continent.

A team effort

The extraordinary accomplishments in international publishing are due in large part to the generous contributions of creativity and energy by hundreds of volunteers over the years. The work continues to grow with the help of a huge international network of translators, designers, agents, publishers, IT specialists, publicists, editors, photographers, musicians, promoters, meditation instructors, artists and many other friends who contribute to Osho's publishing work, each in their own unique way.

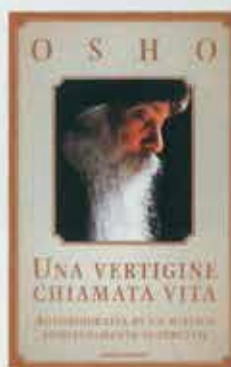
For the past twenty years the Foundation has been guided by the same chairman and vice-chairman to whom Osho entrusted this work during his lifetime. Under their direction, the Foundation's unchanged aim is to ensure that Osho's books, recordings and meditations are available as widely as possible – as Osho intended.

If you are interested to be involved or to contribute your energy and skills to the Osho International publishing work or if you have questions, contact us at: pramod@osho.net

provocative series of talks, *God is Dead*, will be published this year in the Spanish, German, Russian and Portuguese languages. This was unthinkable a few years ago, when no publisher was ready to consider such controversial material. Michael Goerden, the publisher of Ullstein, Germany, calls this title "a must-read for every Osho fan."

In Italy, where his books make the bestseller list regularly, Osho is considered one of the country's most prolific non-fiction authors. A number of titles have now sold more than 100,000 copies each, and in just one month *The Autobiography of a Spiritually Incorrect Mystic* sold out its first printing of 10,000 hardcover books.

The most impressive growth in the last five years has been in the Spanish language market. This year alone three new publishers have signed with Osho International, bringing the total of Spanish language publishers to fourteen. Today in Spain and Latin America, Osho is considered to be part of the "new thinking" – an essential author for the best and brightest. Annual Spanish language sales have now passed the 250,000 mark.



Keeping pace with the changing times

Early on, Osho's daily talks were transcribed from audio recordings onto paper – with multiple carbon copies to provide both an original verbatim archive and working manuscripts for book publications.

As the demand for more Osho books increased, along