



# University of Hawaii at Manoa

Department of Religion  
Sakamaki Hall • Room A311  
2530 Dole Street • Honolulu, Hawaii 96822  
Telephone: (808) 948-8299 • Cable Address: UNIHAW

July 12, 1983

Rinzai Department  
Rajneesh Hotel  
1115 Southwest 11th Avenue  
Portland, Oregon 97205

Dear Friend,

I am Professor Mitsuo Aoki, a member for the past 27 years of the Department of Religion, University of Hawaii. A graduate of The Chicago Theological Seminary and beyond that of Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary in New York, I have travelled extensively in India and Japan as I conducted my research in the field of Comparative Religions.

I am very familiar with the writings of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, having read most of his books and pamphlets, and having assigned many of his writings to my students. I have had many hours of conversation and serious discourse with his disciples here in the islands. And on many occasion, I have attended their meetings and have experienced their form of meditation and chants.

What is most attractive about Rajneesh is his ability to articulate the thoughts of many different religious leaders and systems so clearly and often-times with humor. His analysis of Christianity and Buddhism is often marked with wisdom and charity. There are not many outstanding religious leaders and teachers today who possess such a vast knowledge of so many different religious systems and who is able to help so many persons understand their own religious thoughts with insight and power. Hence, Rajneesh fulfills a very important role in assisting an international audience to better understand other points of view and become more ecumenical in their practice of faith.

I have been told that Rajneesh is practicing the art of silence--a practice that puzzles many Western minds. I have only to add that "the noble silence" is a mark of great distinction within Buddhism. And among the great mystics of all religions, there comes a moment of time, when silence is the most appropriate form of worship and celebration of faith.

In discussing the role and significance of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh in America today, we must forever be sensitive to our basic American freedom: that of religious liberty based on our Christian belief that we have one God who made of one blood all the children of the world, all citizens of one kingdom.

Aloha,

*Mitsuo Aoki*

Mitsuo Aoki