

July 15, 1983

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Dr. Cari Shay. I am an Associate Professor of Political Science at Western Oregon State College. My husband, a Professor of Political Science at Willamette University, and I have been studying the social, political and legal situations related to Rancho Rajneesh for approximately eighteen months.

My first contact with sannyasins of the Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh was in April of 1982. I was invited by a friend to be an academic observer at a meeting between them, residents of Antelope, nearby ranchers, representatives of 1000 Friends of Oregon and Wasco and Jefferson County officials. The meeting was conducted by federal mediators and took place in Madras. My husband was an observer at several of these sessions.

We first visited Rancho Rajneesh in June of 1982 and have since travelled there at least half a dozen times. From the beginning, we were impressed with the dedication of sannyasins to their shared goal of building a City in the Wilderness. They are a spiritual community in the same sense as are monks and nuns. Excluding vows of celibacy, both groups display nearly identical characteristics: distinctive clothing, the adoption of new names, reverence for religious figures, daily religious rituals, long hours of hard labor without pay in the secure knowledge that the community will care for their every physical need.

This is a pioneering group with a vision of establishing a city and ranch which will serve as a model of ecological awareness and the most nurturing and humane environment possible for its citizens. That spiritual vision is taking material shape very rapidly. Once barren land is being reclaimed for agricultural use, soil erosion has been checked and beautiful buildings and homes have been erected to blend in with the environs. The laws which have been passed by the Rajneesh-puram City Council provide for a cheerful, caring, crime-free community. Such a vision and such results are ideals undeniably consistent with the American Dream. We should be proud that such a group is actively working to create the sort of environment to which most Americans aspire and are doing it here in the United States. The story of sannyasins is no different than that of so many of our immigrant ancestors who came to this land of promise and plenty to build a better future.

In the course of our studies, we have had occasion to meet and observe dozens of sannyasins. We have found each to be individually unique, but uniformly intelligent, well-educated, friendly, considerate and open. Both those who are U.S. citizens and those from other countries have the types of professional skills and personal qualities which any society hopes to develop in all of its citizens. There is no question that sannyasins will be easily assimilated into American society, nor that they will be counted among the most productive immigrants this country has ever known.

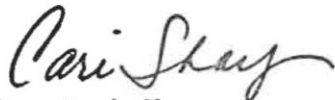
And what has all of this to do with Bhagwan's application for permanent residency in the United States? A great deal. The exceptional experiment at Rancho Rajneesh, the exceptional qualities displayed by sannyasins are all inspired by an exceptional man, Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh. We have read many of his books and find him to be, on one level, the most well-read and articulate living religious scholar with whom we have ever come into contact. The visions and values derived from Bhagwan's teachings are the well-spring of his sannyasins, their endeavors and the resulting community which they have established.

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I strongly urge the most serious consideration and the swiftest and most positive action possible on Bhagwan's application for residency. He is, without a doubt, a religious leader. He is quite clearly an exceptional person. The United States should be proud that Bhagwan and his sannyasins desire to live and work among us. In my view, they represent a twentieth century embodiment of the best features of what we call The American Dream.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cari Shay".

Dr. Cari Shay  
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Salem OR 97302