

Neo-Sannyas

Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, now known as Osho, was a major figure in the Eastern influenced personal transformation and New Age movements of the past 30+ years. During the 1970's thousands flocked to his ashram in Pune, India. For a brief time in the 1980's his name became a notorious house-hold word across the landscape of American pop culture after his followers began building a commune (known variously as Rajneeshpuram, the Ranch and the Big Muddy) in eastern Oregon. The activities of the Bhagwan and his sannyasins became frequent fodder for the Western media machine, both in the U.S. and in Europe. For his fifteen minutes, he was known as the "Rolls Royce Guru." In 1985 Bhagwan left the U.S. eventually to return to India. Shortly there after his commune was sold and his followers dispersed around the globe.

Now almost 20 years after the demise of Rajneeshpuram, most American's outside of Oregon, if they can remember him at all, need a push to dredge up the memory of "that guy with all the cars." The cars were sold off long ago and the commune is now a Christian youth camp. Osho left the earth in 1990. Since then he has slowly re-emerged as an important force in the post-modern spiritual milieu. His books are again sought after by major publishing houses and stocked in large chain stores such as Borders and Barnes & Noble. Through the internet any book or talk is now just a few mouse-clicks away. His Pune ashram is now a thriving "meditation resort" and a beautiful new Galleria has opened in Delhi (see article later in this issue).

Despite the impact Osho had on spiritual exploration during the latter half of the twentieth century (acknowledge and, more often than not, unacknowledged), very little has been written of about the largest scale experiment at building an intentional community the West has seen. There have been a small grouping of personal books written by sannyasins (current and former) who lived through the Ranch. Mainstream editions have tended to favor the scandalous and, if carefully studied, most inaccurate. Notable exceptions are the books by Max Brecher and Lewis Carter.

The remainder of this section holds a collection of remembrances, personal analytics and historical examinations of the neo-sannyas and Rajneeshpuram. Of particular note are the two pieces from kids, Autumn and Rupda, who grew up at the Ranch and within the neo-sannyas movement.

