

OSHO: THE BOOKMAN-TURNED-MYSTIC

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ABSTRACT

The present paper discuss about Osho , his life and Osho Lao Tzu Library. Osho's words on print, audio ,vedio and www , publications are on global level.

Key words : Osho , Osho Lao Tzu Library .

1.0 INTRODUCTION

It was years before Osho became known as a provocative speaker and controversial mystic that he began his lifelong obsession with book collecting and reading (1). He was to become the greatest bookman of India, the most voracious reader of the 20th century and the owner of Osho Lao Tzu library in Pune, which may actually be the largest private library worldwide. This bibliographic essay will present the publishing of his words in print, audio, video and on www, an act of publication bound to be taken into consideration when mapping the Indian contribution to the present publishing on a global level.

The paper is based on the author's own observations and audio-taped qualitative interviews with Osho's librarians in Lao Tzu library, supplemented by information collected from other resource persons worldwide. A major source of information has been the large number of biographies and documentaries on Osho, written by scholars and critics as well as devotees. Scientific journals, magazines and newspapers have been retrieved for articles from 1970 onwards, and some information on the subject in Hindi press has been translated into English. Not unexpectedly each of these written accounts has their limitations and advantages, depending also on the internalist versus externalist origin of the source.

Field survey took place in Pune during the rainy season 1989 when the author was volunteering in Osho Research library. This was during a rare and colourful phase of organizational changes, when Osho was preparing his sannyasins on his disappearing and setting up structures for the continuation of his work. Further investigations have been made during seven recent visits to India and Lao Tzu library 1998-2005. Still, the research process reinforces cautions to be considered by the reader about the researcher's social relationship to the group and the topics being studied (2). As for the Hindi part of Osho's production, interviews have been conducted in Pune, Mumbai, Delhi and Jabalpur with Indians who have been collecting Osho's writings since the 1950s. His library and early prints are documented on digital photos presented on www (3). So in this essay Osho will be

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dealt with as the greatest bookman of India, but as for the message and ideology of his mystery school, including its religio-political connotations, this knowledge has to be found in his publications and absorbed by each individual according to his disposition and capability.

Repeatedly Osho has claimed that anyone trying to make the attempt of writing his biography is bound to become insane. Still, let us give it a decent try in this bibliographic essay. And before we dive into the vast ocean of his publications we'll have to get acquainted with a brief outline of his library and his extensive reading.

2.0 OSHO LAO TZU LIBRARY

Since 1974 Osho Lao Tzu library in Koregaon Park, Pune, has displayed Osho's impressive book collection. The house used to belong to a Maharaja, but since long it has turned more into a shell around the growing library, as the whole interior is dominated by library matters with fully packed shelves along all corridors.

The collection dates back to the time when Osho was still a student. From early childhood, when living in his father's house, he was destined to start his own collection to supplement his extensive use of public libraries. In his early years he wanted the whole house full of books, and a similar process later seems to have taken place in Lao Tzu house. Also here the library has taken over the whole house and 'corridor library' may be the proper term to identify the physical layout of Lao Tzu library.

During his years at high school in Gadarwara near Jabalpur his room was full of books covering all walls. The floor too was packed, just leaving enough space for the bed which was in fact standing in his library. Later on when studying and teaching in Jabalpur, the public library in Gadarwara was supplied with lots of his weeded English non-fiction, and when leaving for Mumbai in 1970 all English books were taken with him, while spare copies and some old material in Hindi were donated to the university library in Jabalpur.

In Mumbai at Woodlands his apartment on 1st floor had a huge drawing-cum-library room, all walls furnished with glass-fronted shelves for books. On the end walls with windows towards the street and the backside, top shelves up to the very ceiling also gave room for his collection. In Woodlands his librarian Karuna replaced the former registration in ledgers by two drawers with cards, the shelving of the labelled books being alphabetically according to title. Together with his entire library, card catalogue and old ledgers were all taken to Pune in March 1974.

Here at his Pune residence in Lao Tzu House each day new books were brought from the library to his private room. Following Eastern tradition his reading never took place in the library itself, but in his privacy in Lao Tzu. It

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constituted the major part of his daily schedule in Pune until early 1981 where his eyes were so weak that he had to stop reading.

As a book connoisseur his whole life Osho was giving specific instructions for the style and character of the library's interior design and for various techniques to be used. Among other features the books are arranged on the shelves according to size and colour. Two books of the same size or colour are not to be placed next to each other, so the effect is that of waves going up and down, adding a much lighter impression of the packed shelves than usually seen in libraries. Generally spoken, his priorities for the library were aesthetics combined with cleanliness.

In official statistics for Lao Tzu library it contains about 100.000 volumes, yet on my estimate closer to 80.000. His tastes were eclectic, ranging from philosophy and religion to psychology, literature, history, the arts, politics and poetry. Accordingly the collection is mostly English non-fiction, but also some books in Hindi has remained, all adding up to two kilometers of shelves.

During the 1970s and later on the book drying procedure following the rainy season continued the old Jain tradition, Jnana or Shruta Pancami, from his father's house, now taking place on the flat roof of Lao Tzu House where books were spread in the sunshine to dry out and the shelves dusted down.

Timely before his passing away in January 1990 he sent a message 27.11.1989 to his secretary and librarian on the future use of the library's treasures: When I'm is gone, everything should be locked away; only people writing on Osho should be allowed in; permissions should be rarely granted with only three books off the shelves at a time.

Today Lao Tzu library is basically a protected archive of Osho's production being used for copyright-, publication- and research purposes with an almost complete set of publications in English and a much less complete collection in Hindi available for research. By no means this is a library open to the general public, as its use is strictly limited to disciples for their publication and research work. The last librarian left in 2002 and the present coordinator's insight in library matters reflects the low priority given to Osho's library by the present management. The situation of Osho Lao Tzu library seems frozen for the moment, and it's not possible to tell whether they are knowledgeable of Osho's last and clearly expressed wish concerning the library. At present [July 2005] it is hard to claim that his guidelines are being followed.

3.0 READING AND BOOKCOLLECTING

For centuries the Jains have been a highly literate community and Jains have long emphasized the importance of the written word. Manuscripts, books and miniatures belong to the most important forms of cultural heritage which Jainism

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has preserved in India to this day. It is with this tradition as his starting-point we have to understand Osho's lifelong obsession with book collecting. He was born December 11th 1931 in Kuchwada, a small village in the state of Madhya Pradesh, as the eldest of eleven children of a Jaina cloth merchant within the Jyanti sect. So his early interest in reading and story telling is solid anchored in the family's Jain culture, where daily reading was seen as a religious duty.

Gadarwara became his native town, where he moved after the death of his grandfather. It was a town of 20,000 inhabitants about sixty miles from Jabalpur, offering a primary school, a high school and a public library. He was the youngest member to join the public library, and all 3000 books in Gadarwara Public Library [Sarvajanic Pustkalya] had been read by Osho when he was a teenager.

"His passionate search made him explore books on every possible subject. Often he read all night [...] Then at dawn he would go to the river and take a swim. Although as a young boy he played games such as field hockey, soccer and volleyball, he was more interested in reading. Many of the books at the Gadarwara Public Library still have cards that show only Rajneesh's signature. The books ranged from politics and philosophy to science, religion to detective novels. Not only did he himself read widely, but he insisted that his friends also read something other than the usual textbooks. The Indian Nobel price winner in literature, Rabindranath Tagore, was one of his favourite authors. Because of his extraordinary reading habits, Osho rarely attended school. Not only that, he was branded a communist, for he read extensively in Marx and Engels and other communist literature, and was threatened with expulsion from school. With the help of his friends, he built a small library that contained mostly communist literature, and believing socialism to be the answer to the economic plight of India, Rajneesh leaned toward socialism and remained an atheist." (Joshi 1982, p.42).

The seven-year period from his fourteen to his twenty-one year was his search, during which period he experienced intense reading on all subjects and also experimented with meditation techniques, which finally lead to his enlightenment at 2 a.m. March 21th 1953. He was now at the age of twenty-one, while majoring in philosophy at D.N. Jain college in Jabalpur. In the early fifties he wrote stories for Hindi newspapers, and to collect money during his student days in the 1950s he also worked as an assistant editor, writing and translating for the Jabalpur Hindi paper Nav-Bharat. On Sundays in Jabalpur he went to Gurandi Market to buy second-hand books.

Figures for his total reading over the years are not unexpectedly inconsistent, but it will be in the region of 150-200,000 books, based on 5-10,000 books each year over a period from the 1950s to 1981. A kind of speed-reading had been developed which allowed him not only with a photographic memory to remember what he read, but also to underline and add special coloured dots in the margin in his dialogue with the text. Having read a book Osho signed it with a colour signature, sometimes adding a painting or some comments or drawing at

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the end.

With a B.A. in philosophy he graduates 1955 with honours from D.N. Jain College in Jabalpur and is soon invited by professor S.S. Roy to do his postgraduate study at Sagar University. Here he gets his master's degree in philosophy in 1957, and all the time he was immersing himself completely in the vast collection of the university library and enjoying the pleasant natural setting around Sagar. Rather than attending classes, he spent most of his time reading in the library, and even on holidays when the library was closed, he could be found reading on the library lawn or wandering alone into the nature.

Osho was enrolled as a lecturer of philosophy from September 1957 at Mahakoshal Mahavidyalaya [Arts College] in Jabalpur, a government college affiliated to Jabalpur University from where he later resigned as ass. professor in 1967, thus bringing his academic career to an end. When teaching he would sit cross-legged on a table dressed in his lunghi, a dress he wore beautifully and naturally. The library most intensively used by Osho in Jabalpur was Rani Durgawati University Library, where he had 50-100 books passing over his still preserved reading desk on a weekly basis. Ram Chandra Naik, university librarian 1962-96, assisted him and also helped him organize his private library in Jabalpur. His favorite bookshop in Jabalpur was for Hindi books Sushma Sahitya Mandir, on 1st floor at Jawaharganj Market, in 2000 still with the same owner S.M.Jain and same interior as in the 1950s.

Following his move to Woodlands, Mumbai, in 1970 the library and its range of literature is remembered by Khushwant Singh in his foreword to *Life's Mysteries*:

"I arrived at Woodlands at the appointed time and was shown into a large, airy room lined with books. I was told to wait a few minutes for the Acharya. I went round the bookshelves. Most of the collection was in English; a few in Sanskrit and Hindi. I was baffled by the range of subjects: religion, theology, philosophy, history, literature, biographies, autobiographies down to books on humour and crime. It occurred to me that I had not seen books in ashrams I had visited. Some had libraries meant for the use of disciples but most consisted of books on religious subjects or tracts summarizing sermons of their gurus. Other gurus read very little beyond Hindu scriptures, the Vedas, the Upanishads and the epics, and rarely bothered to read books on Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity or Islam. Rajneesh had. Consequently while others had only their religions or what they vaguely learnt at second hand, Rajneesh had studied them from original sources and evolved an eclectic faith of his own." (Osho 1995, p.vii).

He might order books from catalogues, but more often he went to bookshops himself to purchase books for his collection. Among his favourite bookshops in Mumbai were Strand Book Stall and the smaller and more intimate New & Secondhand Bookshop. He also went to Chor Bazar, Thieves Market, for

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second hand books, and he is said to have bought home whole libraries from Thieves Market. Still he was buying secondhand books when needed, that is in case the book was sold out and in case of rare books. Later in Pune his favourite bookshop was Manneys Booksellers at Moledina Road, Pune's largest bookstore.

When reading he had a pencil in his hand, holding the pencil parallel with two fingers. His marginal notes were in Hindi until his fifth grade at school, from then on notes were in English. He was reading at high speed and still being able to make notes and collect quotations while reading. Many of the marked books in Lao Tzu library have small red and blue dots that Osho placed in the margin to note significant passages, while others have comments at the end. The dotting was also used in the margin of the sutras he was to lecture on: The upward pointing triangle, the downward pointing triangle, the circle, the circle (solid) within the circle, the square, solid and empty, an upward and a downwards triangle together etc.

The Indian Nobel price winner in literature, Rabindranath Tagore, was one of his favourite authors, and in *Books I have loved* (Rajneesh 1985) he dictates the story of his lifelong book-loving affair. The book itself is dedicated to the memory of Alan Watts and his effort to bridge the gap between eastern and western thinking and spirituality. Books mentioned here by Osho include a number of principal religious texts alternating with western and eastern authors. Among the authors and titles are: *Walt Whitman, Lewis Carrol, Friedrich Nietzsche, Fyodor Dostoevsky, The Book of Mirdad, Lao Tzu, Kahil Gibran, D.T.Suzuki, Herman Hesse, Jean Paul Sartre, Martin Heidegger, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Samuel Beckett, Karl Marx, Turgenev, Herbert Marcuse and Aristotle.*

4.0 THE MEDIA PUBLISHING

Next to Osho's own experience, his extensive reading was a cornerstone in his lifelong transmission of ancient spiritual traditions. For years he would give a 90 minutes discourse every morning, in the 1970s Pune alternating between Hindi and English. These discourses offeres insights into all major spiritual paths, including Yoga, Zen, Taoism, Tantra and Sufism. He also spoke on Gautam Buddha, Jesus, Lao Tzu and other mystics.

So Osho is by no means an author in the usual sense, as he never wrote a book himself. All published books (some 600 titles to his name) are verbatim transcriptions of his talks - 7.000 of his discourses being also available on digital audio tape and 1.700 on digital video tape. The discourses in Hindi from meditation camps in the 1960s, and from Mumbai 1970-1974 in English or Hindi, are published in a number of early and rare booklets, which are by now collectors' items. These early publications also include intimate handwritten letters between master and disciples.

The family's Jain culture, where bookish matters were seen as a religious duty, inspired him not only to reading, but also to the publishing of his words. In

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the fifth grade 1944 Rajneesh edited his first publication at the age of fourteen: a handwritten magazine *Prayas* [Effort], with titles and some pages printed in toy press with rubber letters. All articles were written by him, some in his own name (Rajneesh Mohan Chandra/RMC), some under pseudonym. The coloured magazine contained drawings, jokes, poetry, e.g. the folk song on the sixteenth-century warrior queen Rani Durgawati.

His second magazine publication, the printed *Mukul* [Flower in Bud], was published in Jabalpur during 1953. From the content we find: On Kahlil Gibran, My Thoughts (on destroying the old to create the new), on Gandhism, Life Death and Nature, jokes, poems and letters to the editor, all written and answered by the editor himself, including advertisements.

Small pamphlets - among them *Taran Vani* [Sayings of Saint Taran] with his first published discourse in Hindi - with Osho's studies and messages were published in Jabalpur 1955 onwards for the yearly cross-religious conferences Sarva Dharma Sammelan [All Religion Conferences], where he gave talks and occasionally presided.

Rajneesh travelled far and wide conducting meditation camps all over India, following the first camp held 1964 in Ranakpur, Rajasthan. Lectures from this camp was to become his first book in Hindi: *Sadhana Path*. [The Path of Self-Realization. Bombay 1966] (Rajneesh 1979). And the first booklet to be published with Osho's words in English was *Philosophy of Non-Violence* (Delhi, 1968). A 33-page print dealing with fearlessness and courage as preconditions for a spiritual life, all for a mere Rupia 3.00. To publish his books and organize his tours throughout India Jeevan Jagruti Kendra [Life Awakening Movement] was founded in 1965, later to be renamed Rajneesh Foundation in 1975 following the move to Pune.

Throughout his travels, Rajneesh spoke to vast audiences consisting of fifty thousand people and to small groups huddled in smoke-filled rooms. He begins to address these gatherings in the open-air maidans of India's major cities, and four times a year he conducts intense ten-days meditation camps. Periodicals are from now on distributing the essence of his teachings: The quarterly *Youti Shikka* [Lamplight] in Mumbai (June 1966-June 1974) and *Yukrand* [Youth Revolution], a monthly published in Jabalpur (June 1969-May 1975). During this period he was known as Acharya Rajneesh.

Early discourses in Hindi from these meditation camps in the 1960s are said to contain all that was to follow later on: Kranti Beej (Rajneesh 1965), Sadhana Path and Sinhanad (Rajneesh 1965a). Discourses from Mumbai 1970-1974 in English or Hindi, are primary published in a number of early booklets and some of his earliest discourses are to be found in *The Eternal Quest* (1980, Orient Paperbacks, India), *The Perfect Way* (Rajneesh 1979) and *The Mystic Experience* (Rajneesh 1977).

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Almost four years after his resignation in 1967 from Jabalpur University, Osho decided to leave Jabalpur and find his own space in Mumbai. Here in Woodlands his living room was sometimes used for lectures and celebrations, and he soon began regular evening discourses with fifty odd people about spiritual matters. The first intense and powerful dialogue in Woodlands, with questions and answers to seekers on deeply esoteric matters like kundalini, shaktipat and levels of consciousness, has been compiled and translated from Hindi in *The Mystic Experience* mentioned above, and the first discourse series in English to be held at Woodlands in 1971 was *I am the Gate* (Rajneesh 1975).

Lecturing in his mother-tongue he was speaking the most flowing Hindi, ranging from Veda-like poetry and songs to the slang of the village dialogue. For early western disciples in Mumbai to be in his presence and listen to the flow of sounds in Hindi was reportedly enough, but as more and more overseas visitors and disciples came by, lectures were from now on in Mumbai and later in Pune alternating in Hindi and English. Discourses from this time taught westerners to treasure the holy texts of India, e.g. the *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali in ten volumes and *Vigyan Bhairav Tantra*, a five volume commentary on 112 meditation aphorisms published in *The Book of Secrets* (1974-75).

Discourses in Hindi on the Bhagavad Gita were the first to be held upon his arrival to Pune in March 1974, and in May he launched his first series of English discourses, later to be published and entitled *My Way: The Way of the White Clouds*, (Rajneesh 1975). In the evening darshans he answered more intimate questions on personal matters such as love, jealousy and meditation. These darshans are compiled in 64 darshan diaries, of which 46 are published. The first darshan series to be recorded and later published in English was *Hammer on the Rock* (Rajneesh 1976). On the eleventh of every month the discourses swapped languages with alternate months in Hindi and English, and the meditation camp began in the ashram.

In Hindi, Osho has in his early Pune phase 1974-81 devoted fourteen volumes to the Bhagavad Gita (he has spoken on all eighteen chapters of the Gita), ten volumes to Mahavir and another forty volumes to other Indian mystics. In English, he has devoted eighteen volumes to Gautam Buddha, seven to Jesus, eleven to Taoism and twenty-one volumes to Zen masters and their stories. During his seven years in Pune he spoke over 33 million words in daily discourses and evening darshans, averaging 13,000 words per day, seven days a week. Not using any notes for his lectures they were always spontaneous, with only sutras, jokes and questions written down on his clip-board. And during discourses he answers more than 10,000 questions from disciples and visitors.

In Pune the discourses were first set in the porch of Lao Tzu House, then in the new constructed Chuang Tzu Auditorium (also part of his residence in Lao Tzu House, now Samadhi), and still later in the first Buddha Hall to be erected as

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people came to the ashram in growing numbers during the 1970s. They came for discourses, meditations and a variety of therapy groups offered by leading therapists originating from Quaesitor and Tavistock Institute in London and from Esalen in Big Sur. With many psychotherapists of the New Age movement going to Pune, Osho was uniting eastern meditation with the modern therapy which had grown out of the Human Potential movement from the 1960s, making Pune the world's largest center for therapy and human growth (Amitabh 1982).

	Non-hostile	Hostile
Internalist	The Sound of Running Water / Asha 1980. Lord of the Full Moon / Divya. 1980 Drunk on the Divine / Bharti. 1980. The Awakened One / Vasant. 1982 Bhagwan / Forman. 1987ff. 3 vols.	Flowers of Emptiness / Belfrage. 1981 Bhagwan / Milne. 1986 The Ultimate Game / Strelley. 1987 Life of Osho / Sam. 1997 The Promise of Paradise / Franklin. 1992
Externalist	Life as Laughter / Mullan. 1983 The Golden Guru / Gordon. 1987 The Way of the Heart / Heelas. 1988. Charisma and Control / Carter. 1990 The Quest for Total Bliss / Mann. 1991.	Bhagwan / Floether. 1983. Bhagwan / Tanner. 1986. Cities on a Hill / Firtzgerald. 1986. Orange & Lemmings/ Wright. 1985. O is for Orange / van Leen. 1980.

Soon documentaries describing these events were in the press: *Lord of the Full Moon* (Divya 1980) offers an intimate insight in the life around a spiritual master and in *The Sound of Running Water* (Asha 1980) we have the authoritative lavishly illustrated photo biography of the first Pune phase, but to be found only in few academic libraries worldwide. If a biography can be made of Osho, *The Awakened One. The Life and Work of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh* (Joshi 1982) is the most informative source, later supplemented by his life story compiled from own lectures *Autobiography of a Spiritually Incorrect Mystic* (Sarito 2000). The virgin biographical print from early Mumbai is *Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh - a Glimpse*, a four-page introduction by Swami Yoga Chinmaya included in the early publications by Jeevan Jagruti Kendra in Mumbai, and first comprehensive study is *The Mystic of Feeling* (Prasad 1978) supplemented by *Rajneesh. A Glimpse* (Vora 1970).

Secondary literature on Osho and his movement is of gargantuan proportions. We find the books and documents published by Rajneesh Foundation and later Osho International Foundation, as well as in-depth sociological surveys in books and academic journals mixed with eye-catching articles in glossy magazines and a variety of books by historians, observers, ex-sannyasins and enthusiastic

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disciples. In the scheme we will follow Wallis who categorizes orientations to cult studies into either internalist or externalist writers, with an either supportive or hostile perspective. No need to stress the fact that this structure is an attempt to frame the unframeable and that others may have understandings differing from the one presented here. Also it should be mentioned, that books by former disciples to varying extent can be read as exercises in redefining the self after the withdrawal from the movement.

The assumption that externalist and hostile publication were in abundance can not be confirmed; on the contrary the books published and the articles printed in academic journals were mostly non-hostile. The number of features in magazines and the yellow press seem over the years to have moved quite some distance towards a more non-hostile approach.

In early 1981 he develops a degenerative back condition, and in March, after giving daily discourses for nearly 15 years, Osho enters a period of silence. In view of the possible need for emergency surgery, and on the recommendation of his doctors, he travels to the United States and settles in the desert-like highlands of Oregon. On October 30th, 1984, Osho ends his three and a half years of self-imposed silence, and starts speaking to small groups of people who gather at his residence. *The Rajneesh Bible* (1985) paperback series from Oregon are publishing questions from disciples and answers from Osho, and it's thought-provoking that during his stay in the United States and the following World Tour, no sutras were ever commented upon by Osho.

Max Brecher in his *Passage to America* (Brecher 1993) has produced an in-depth account of the treatment of Osho during his imprisonment for immigration fraud in the United States. No wonder Osho's challenging of the American way of life made him an unwelcome visitor, and in the autumn of 1985 he was forced to leave and embark on a World Tour. The White House during Reagan's office had an obvious Roman Catholic inclination and keen interest in the expulsion of Osho, and the underlying strategic alliance of the 1980s with the Vatican is thoroughly documented in Carl Bernstein's *His Holiness. John Paul II and the Hidden History of Our Time* (Bernstein 1996)(4). During the subsequent six months World Tour Osho was deported or denied entry in twenty-one democratic countries in Europe and on other continents due to diplomatic pressure from the United States, and discourse series were these turbulent days held in Manali, Kathmandu, Crete and Uruguay, the latter series resuming esoteric issues not being dealt with since the early seventies in Mumbai.

During the 1980s also more scholarly papers by social scientists documenting the religio-political system in the making began appearing in peer-reviewed journals. The demographics and psychological well-being of residents in the Oregon commune was mapped in two surveys (Latkin 1987), the ideology and history of the religious movement narrated by a non-hostile outsider (Carter 1987), and a brief tentative study of the movement's highly charismatic and mythic leader

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by a participant-observer (Palmer 1988).

Returning to Mumbai August 1986 following his World Tour, Osho again started giving discourses on central themes like meditation and master-disciple relationship. In *The Rajneesh Upanishad* [Upanishad meaning 'sitting at the feet of the master'] (Rajneesh 1986) he declares the opening of a new phase of his work: the mystery school. So this last phase of his work was initiated in the same metropol where he was sitting with his disciples in 1970. Like his moving back to the source in the mountains, where after his return from the US and before the following World Tour, he stayed in Kulu Manali ['the Valley of the Gods'] at the river Beas, the very place where he started initiating into sannyas in 1970.

The move to Pune in early January 1987 continues this final phase of his work with the creation of a mystery school. In this second phase in Pune (1987-90) the first year was very intense with both morning and evening discourses each day up to *Om Shanti Shanti Shanti* (1988) in March 1988. A fair part of his early publications focused on Zen, but after early 1988 his focus became almost exclusively Zen, and in that year alone twenty-eight books were published from his commentaries on Zen. As he read absolutely nothing after 1981, there was no reading involved for the preparation of these last discourse series on Zen.

From March 1988 only evening discourses were held in Buddha Hall on a daily basis, until this continuity was partly interrupted due to the decline in Osho's health from October 1988 until the last discourse in April 1989. He was in these periods resting to recover from the severe effects of his mistreatment while in U.S. custody, which by now were strongly influencing his health. The last discourse by Osho was delivered on 10.04.1989 p.m., finishing the series *The Zen Manifesto* (Osho Rajneesh 1989). Early in 1990 his body becomes noticeably weaker, and on January 19th he leaves his body.

4.1 Editing and publishing

As we have seen, Osho had loved books since he was a student. Later especially his own were in focus, and he took an intimate personal interest in each one, especially after he had put an end to his reading in 1981. He was involving himself in every phase of the production right from choosing the subject to the types for printing and layout. He made title selection and design up to his very last days, and was still giving instructions for revamps of some of his older works on the day he left his body. 'How does this sound?' he would ask when choosing a title. Each night he would check how many more talks were left to the end of the series so he could round the book off.

He was not fond of paperbacks, so much effort was put in the production of exquisite hard-bound editions from the Pune discourse series onwards. He was proposing a cost price policy for the sale of his books, partly due to some reluctance

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of distributors to handle these hardcover books. Jacket design and cover-photo were made from his suggestions, and also the logo for Rebel Publishing House was designed by him. The time formerly used for reading in early Pune was from 1981, after the weakening of his eyesight, spent on his love affair in the design of his books, and in Oregon as well as in Pune Two he spent more time with his secretaries working on his books than on anything else.

Quite an amount of human resources has been invested in the recording, transcribing and editing of Osho's discourses, darshans and press conferences and the process of transforming and editing the spoken words to the printed text has turned out to be a delicate matter. The editing has in recent years seen a much debated loosening up of the guidelines laid out by Osho.

The 'purists' insist that he was very concerned that his words were preserved as they were spoken, and often he talked about the misfortunes that befell people like Jesus, whose teachings have been recorded and filtered through the misunderstandings of his followers so many times that we really have very little way of knowing what he actually said. For years the job of the editors has been to work with verbatim transcriptions of tapes from discourse recordings to create books. Osho's instructions were to "make it good English, but don't change anything." What he meant was that the editors should fix the English grammar and in doing so be careful not to change the meaning.

From another standpoint it's the firm understanding of the present management that he never wanted to have his books treated like 'holy scriptures'. There is a strong focus on having the original books in print, but as we will see later the policy is to preserve the full text on www and leave a space open for adapted editions. Osho had created compilation ideas, and also left a whole list of suggested themes together with a list of titles to be reduced to 'The essentials of...'. He also gave suggestions to edit political details and irrelevant context out of new editions, to re-name new editions, to change the questions - anything specifically to keep his work contemporary and to avoid to have 'dated books' in print. Finally he even requested to remove all dates of the talks in order to keep his message timeless (5).

Keeping up with bibliographic control on this flow of compilations and abridged new editions is quite a challenge, supplemented by other features like frequent change of title to promote sales, and the lack of publishing year in books and/or lack of dates on lectures. They were, according to Osho, not old but timeless. Being a booklover himself, Osho was definitely not sparing future bibliographers with these changes, and in retrieving his publishing also a change of author names have to be taken into consideration as search terms. Editions published from 1998 onwards are now with the name Osho in all discourse questions if mentioned, and the former address to Bhagwan is now omitted.

This essential job of maintaining all of Osho's talks in print as they were originally spoken is still the editorial responsibility of Osho Internationally Foundation (OIF), although in the digital age there is less emphasis on making sure

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this 'print' is on paper. It has in recent years become clear that the books in their original, unabridged and hard-bound form were not well marketable in the evolving world of bookshop chains and bestseller-driven publishing. So to introduce Osho to a wider audience of readers the publishers of Osho had to find ways to present the material in a more commercially appealing form. For the editors this is an entirely new challenge, not to compromise the message in the process of creating a product that is appealing in the marketplace. This sort of packaging job is to be seen in context with the technological advances on the world wide web, where all of Osho's works in their unabridged form are preserved and available for people to read.

In several cases the new editions and formats have opened a door for an increasing number of original works such as *The Book of Secrets*, *The Mustard seed*, and the first volume translated into English of Osho's commentaries on the *Bhagavad Gita*. In the creation of compilations the policy has also been to keep up with the contemporary context and to prevent distortion of his message. But still this new policy on editing has aroused grave concerns among Osho's Indian followers, whether this dilution to serve a western audience is corresponding with the plight to preserve the originality and purity of the content.

They point to an example where an abridged version of an original two-volume series of talks (Rajneesh 1983-84) now published by Element Books *The Book of Wisdom* (Osho 2000) was reduced from the original 320.000 words to 150.000 words. Additional studies may reveal the significance of those parts of the text omitted, including the removal of one complete chapter, deleting entire questions and answers and omitting blocks of text, along with the intimacy with the names of sannyasins asking questions being deleted in the edited version.

In response, the Osho International Foundation editors point out that the original, unabridged work is available in print by Rebel Publishing and on line. They also put forward that in many cases Osho had asked that the names of the questioners to be omitted in the books, and that he left instructions for his editors in issuing new editions to take out some material that was out of date or related to transitory historical events. And finally that he himself suggested numerous compilation titles be created to serve as 'calling cards' for new readers (5).

The media- and political upheaval following Osho's arrest and deportation from the United States in 1985 at that time made it evident for Osho's followers that they were to translate and publish books and other media all by themselves, as the doors to the publishing houses had effectively been slammed. In 1993 a kind of breakthrough after the silencing in the media came in England, when two smaller publishing houses, Element Books and Boxtree, accepted Osho's books for commercial production. Two years later in 1995 the wall of silence in the U.S. was finally breached when St. Martin's press in New York launched Osho with 100.000 copies of the Osho Zen Tarot cards, with attached handbook of anecdotes and

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excerpts from the discourses. It sold out its first run in two years and is still in print, soon to be followed by an edition of *Meditation: The First and Last Freedom*, a guide to meditation and meditation techniques, which had first been compiled and published by Rebel Publishing House at Osho's request in 1988. Now published by St. Martin's with its huge distribution channels, 10,000 copies were sold in three months, compared to the 800 copies/year in the U.S. market when earlier distributed by Rebel (Rajneesh 1988).

A full discourse series was published early in 1998 from St. Martin's: *The Book of the Secret* (Osho 1998). In the seventies this series was published by Harper & Row in five volumes and later by Rebel in two volumes titled *Vigyan Bhairav Tantra*. The new 1998-edition is in one volume, a mammoth-sized 1200-page paperback bible bound with thin paper and a new subtitle, with now more than 50,000 copies sold. The paper-over-board edition for the first time features Osho's picture on the cover, a rather unthinkable choice just a few years earlier, and is mediated tied-in with audio tapes, published by Audio Renaissance, with excerpts from discourses covering some of the topics that are raised in the book.

Today the Osho International Foundation is primarily involved with mainstream publishers who have broad access to distributors and booksellers in nearly every country of the world - quite contrary to the earlier situation where the publishing had to rely on persons affiliated with the movement. Osho now appears in the catalogues of the biggest publisher in Italy (Mondadori, Rizzoli), the biggest in Spanish language (Grupao Planeta, Editorial Norma, Random House), the top publishers in Brazil (Ediouro), the largest in Germany (Ullstein) and two of the top ten publishers in America (St. Martin's Press and Random House). In Japan the publishing of books especially on Zen has been booming ever since the Zen Institute in 1989 published their first series by Osho, thus bringing these new interpretations of Zen back to its country of origin.

Osho assigned during his lifetime the copyrights to his work to a foundation in the United States while resident there, and the rights were later transferred to a Swiss-based trust and he directed that they remain there. Copyright and trademarking has in fact recently become a hot issue between Osho International Foundation in Zürich and New York - with registrations in the Library of Congress and a 1999-award from Business Week for best office interior design and Zen ambience - and an Indian wing of the movement centered around Osho World in Delhi, claiming that the words of Osho 'cannot be copyrighted and should by no means be managed from an off-India headquarter profiting from what belongs to all mankind'.

These are really delicate matters and not to be dealt with in depths in this article. It suffice to mention that OIF states Osho's books have always been registered under copyright, all Pune-One works originally in India, later all works in the Library of Congress. Osho's work is not for India only, he is a world citizen just by chance born in India and the position taken by Osho World in Delhi is pure

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Indian nationalistic thinking. Osho's former names Rajneesh and Bhagwan have been registered trademarks during most of his public life. The mark Rajneesh was first registered by his Indian secretary Laxmi on behalf of Rajneesh Foundation in the 1970s and later in the US. After his name change additional marks were registered to protect his name and work. The New York office is the licensing office of OIF, located in New York because of the city's importance for international publishing and is run by managers from the Inner Circle set up by Osho to deal with mundane matters (6).

Osho's books are selling worldwide in numbers of 6 mio copies in 2004. The translations are now in 46 languages and one new translated edition is appearing on a daily basis. Over the years app. 25 million copies have been sold. Editions dealing with wellness, physical, mental and spiritual, are presently much in demand, like the ten new topic books on St. Martin's Press on intuitions, courage and creativity. In India Osho's books are published in 12 languages by 36 publishers, and 400 audio-titles are currently published by 6 leading audio publishers. About 60 titles with discourses in Hindi are by now translated into English with more in process.

4.2 Audio/video production and IT

In essence, Osho is not an author but a speaker, and he described how in the future people would not be reading books but watch him on TV, video or www and listen to audio tapes. In addition to published books, video has the unique feature of bringing also his plastic gestures, movements and whole expressiveness which can now be accessed via the internet. It is surprising that during the short time he was speaking, recording technology advanced quite tremendously on audio, video and later www, and he was often pointing to the new possibilities for dissemination provided by the technological development.

From early meditation camps audiotapes with his discourses are preserved dating back to the mid-sixties, but not until Woodlands in Mumbai 1972 do we find some regularity in audio-recording. Also from Mumbai celebration music with drumming for Kirtan meditation are recorded, and as many people were constantly recording Osho on spooltape in various quality these were later to be remixed from different sources. Celebration and meditation music by the German composer Chaitanya Deuter is a central field for audio-publishing, alongside with classical Indian music recorded live in Pune and elsewhere.

A complete archive of Osho's discourses in English includes 3.050 discourses recorded on nearly 7000 audiotapes (8000 hours), and 1.700 videotaped discourses (2500 hours) from 1977 onwards. The earliest known video footage of Osho was taken in Mumbai in 1972.

Audio discourses in English and Hindi were the first to be preserved onto

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Digital Audio Tape (DAT). As for the video archives the first aim was to convert all 1.700 original recordings in seven different standards and formats onto Betacam SP broadcast quality tape, using a studio facility in London. During this process the old videotapes from Pune received noise reduction, image enhancement and colour correction. Once the original videos of the discourses had been converted to Betacam SP, the new master tapes were used to create sets of video discourses on Super VHS or other formats.

Since the early 1990s the digital conversion of audio and video tapes has been carried out to prevent decay and loss of the original analogue recordings. There are now 35 copies of the complete digital video archive, as well as 12 full archive audio sets in English and 14 in Hindi. The source is still the original recordings of Osho's words, the so called 'masters of the Master' now kept in a high security environmentally-controlled facility in North America, also used by Hollywood companies like MGM to store their video and film originals.

What can be done technically in converting formats is quite remarkable. For example the video produced in 1991 about his early years as a spiritual master *The Rising Moon* (Osho 1991) was compiled entirely from old film footage and converted to video in a Dutch studio. For the time being only videos from Pune Two are marketed e.g. 25 videos with English discourses by Music Today 2005. Videos from before 'cap-time' are not in circulation any more.

Attentively Osho followed the development in new communication technologies and until his final days he was stressing that his people should make use of the latest technology. Before the introduction of the internet and www, a computer network, The Rajneesh Newsletter Network, made e-mail, newsletters and press releases from Pune accessible worldwide from March 1988 to mid-1991.

The Quest and *The Books* were early projects from 1991 of the Rajneesh Broadcasting corporation, Netherlands. *The Quest* is a database containing all the questions that Osho have been asked, and included is a chronological list of all dates of the thousands of lectures that osho has given as far as they are known. The data on publishing are taken from the integrated database *The Books*, giving the first overview of all his books and their full bibliographical data. *Osho Books on cd-rom* was released 1999 in London as a new version of an older infobase in Silverplatter, but the cd-rom was made only available to those directly involved with Osho publications due to copyright concerns and low quality of editing.

A place has been created on world wide web at www.osho.com (renamed June 1999 from osho.org opened in December 1995) and naturally Osho's books are a vital part of the site. Included are a general resource library for all his books, a book catalogue and a book ordering facility for virtual shoppers. The site now offers links to full length discourses in audio format in near cd quality sound, aiming at eventual availability of the complete archive. Presently 227 titles in Hindi and in English are available in The Complete Archive of *Osho Library*, making it the

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web's biggest library of a single author (7). 2500 downloadable audio talks are available on-line, 150 audio-books with discourses are available in mp3 format, and 65 e-books in Microsoft Reader format from Barnes & Noble are also offered, starting with four first titles in 2000. The first edition of *Autobiography of a Spiritually Incorrect Mystic* (Sarito 2000) was sold out and during the reprint of the hardcover version, St. Martin's Press also prepared the title for current e-book formats, and accordingly the book was moved to an early release and experimental sales in electronic version in mid-August 2000 on the Barnes & Noble website (7).

Outside the gates it cannot be denied that Osho's books with their unorthodox views have been widely banned by e.g. the Theosophical Society and not unexpectedly also by the Vatican. As a result of inconsistency in library selection policies and intellectual freedom, some of the primary sources mentioned in this essay may be difficult to locate in national and academic libraries worldwide. The largest public collection of Osho's books resides at the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in the Netherlands, followed by the Library of Congress in the United States and the Deutsche Bibliothek in Germany.

In Lok Sabha, two of the nation's great sons have been honoured in a unique way. Not unexpectedly a complete set of Mahatma Ghandi's books is placed in the library of the parliament (relocated 2001), but we also find Osho enrolled in the special collections of the library with more than 200 titles in Hindi and English, as well as audio/visual material. Naturally, this collection is for MP's only. In Mumbai a brief survey in leading libraries July 2005 indicates that the research into Osho as a bookman and/or mystic is by no means an easy walkover in his beloved India itself due to limited representation of his works in the holdings of the libraries.

During his last years in the commune, first editions signed by Osho were sold at auctions in Pune 1988-89 at prizes on a level of US\$ 6-7.000. A top sale to an American businessman in October 1989 on rupia 500.100 equivalent to more than US\$ 13.000 for his last discourse series *The Zen Manifesto* (Osho Rajneesh 1989) is a world record sum for a book signed by a living author.

The author of this paper is most grateful for any documentation or bibliographic information that might be provided by library professionals in India with insight in this intriguing field of the merits of *the* Indian bookman par excellence (pe@db.dk).

5.0 PERSPECTIVES

Considering the vast space for interpretation and distortion during the collection of sayings and anecdotes from other founders, the case of Osho's is quite a different one. It may be the first time ever that the entire literature and spoken words of a mystic and master have been recorded and preserved for everyone to

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refer. On paper, on audio- and videotapes and in electronic form, as we have seen.

His achievements make him an intellectual Indian giant of the 20th century on a global level, although this view is not yet shared in the West. This may partly be due to the silencing in the media following the religio-political upheaval in the United States in the 1980s. In his own words, Osho in 1989 said that he wanted us to read his books to understand his philosophy. These were his last words and by reading them we would gain a greater understanding of what is happening to us. Keeping the books and reading them again from time to time, we would find new insights every time we read, and we would understand more and more according to his directions, as the books were far from novels to be read once and then thrown away (9). With the message to his librarian in Lao Tzu library mentioned earlier, there is solid evidence that the legacy of his books was of highest concern to him until his last breath.

It's tempting here to draw some lines from Osho to other founders. Leaving his body the founder instantly raises the questions of the successor, the role of the secretary and the preservation of the message's purity. These questions were dealt with intensively by Osho during the last six months before he left his body in January 1990, and I can't help contemplating on the Buddhist heritage during the reign of Ashoka (268-233). Following Alexander Cunningham's rediscovery 1851 of the Buddhist stupas in Sanchi (M.P.), we know that the lion capital of pillar number 10 was chosen as the symbol of the Indian Union at India's Independence in 1947. At the same time, the thirty-two-spoked Dharmachakra or Wheel of Law the four lions had originally been supporting, became the central image on India's new tricolour. But what might be less known, are the seven lines of Brahmi characters found inscribed on the base of the column. This surviving edict by Ashoka enjoined the monks and nuns to avoid creating schisms within the Sangha, its third line declaring that by command of his sacred majesty 'no one shall cause division in the order'.

So upheaval is by no means anything new in the story of other religious written traditions. The control and ownership of Osho's work and interpretation of his intentions - also regarding the future use of his library - are fairly charged items nowadays. Osho has long ago made it clear that his teachings speak for themselves and that whatever interpretation is needed, they are to be made by the individual and not by any intermediary or priest. The importance of keeping Osho's words inviolate to ensure a reliable record in the future is at the core of this debate. For the time being the present management tends to take a stand with somewhat low priority of the early phases of Osho's work well before 'cap-time'. Phases where Hindi was the language and Indians the devotees before the influx of westeners.

This explorative paper has been focusing on the reader, his library and the media publishing and not on his message. Whether we have been talking about the work of an enlightened master or not, it is up to each and everyone to decide from

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the best of his abilities. On this delicate point it can be assuring to refer to key-persons within the lineage of ancient spiritual traditions who certainly do bring their homage to Osho:

He "is an enlightened master who is working with all possibilities to help humanity overcome a difficult phase in developing consciousness," (The 14th Dalai Lama (1935-). Dharamsala, India).

The stepping stones for further personal and/or scholarly discovery have by now been laid out, and they may indeed lead deep into the vast spiritual heritage of India.

6.0 NOTES:

1. Osho was formerly known as Acharya Rajneesh (1966-1971) and Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh (1971-1988). In 1988 he played with a number of name changes until he finally fell at ease with Osho. The name has been used historically in the Far East, meaning The Blessed One on Whom the Sky Showers Flowers, and Osho also recognized the other connotation deriving from William James' word oceanic, dissolving into the ocean. The name Osho is used throughout this paper.

2. For evaluation of validity and reliability, the writer has since 1975 been doing research in library science as ass. professor at The Royal School of Library and Information Science, Denmark (www2.db.dk/pe). He has been committed as a devotee of Osho since 1981. Without this connection to the movement the insight and observations presented in this paper would not have been possible. The potential disadvantages associated with this perspective, naturally has to be kept in mind throughout the paper, as the identity of the participant-observer influences what is available to be seen as well as how that may be interpreted.

3. 10 photos for this article are presented on www2.db.dk/pe/oshogallery.htm. All photos are from: *Osho. Early prints and manuscripts* / Pierre Evald. Version 3.0. Denmark, Aalborg, January 2005. 66 photos + text. Unpublished.

4. Brecher (1993) and Bernstein (1996) are reviewed by this author in: *Two tales - one story. A review of strategic alliances and spirituality*. In: Allah to Zen / Unmani & Keerti (editors). Delhi, Diamond Pocket Books, 2000. Page 165-75. Also on www2.db.dk/pe/twotales.htm

5. Information from Sarito. Editor, Multimedia, Pune. June 2005.

6. Information from Pramod. Osho International Foundation, New York. June 2005.

7. Other websites with bibliographical information and full text include: www.oshoworld.com (240 titles in full text), and www.sannyas.org (with 2900+ *Current trends in Library and Information Science*

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editions in 22 languages). In Multimedia in Pune, the database *English Osho Books* is the most complete bibliographical source of all international editions in English. A biography of Osho with a selection of texts somewhat more in accordance with the 'Hindi Canon' was published 2000 on [www](http://www.oshoworld.com) free to download in Zip format (approximately 2MB): *Osho's Life. An Anthology of Osho's Life From His Own Books*, 1500 pages of Osho's own words in chronological order including many quotations and references on his library, books and reading (located October 2005 on www.oshoworld.com).

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