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# Study says Rajneeshees sought growth

By Stacy Friedman  
 Emerald Contributor

Disillusionment with the attractive notion of economic success and a lack of positive parental role models were two of the reasons most women decided to become Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh followers, according to Marion Goldman, a University associate sociology professor.

Goldman delivered a speech, "The Women of Rajneeshpuram: Gender, Achievement and Ambivalence," to about 75 people in the EMU Gumwood Room on Wednesday night.

Women comprised 54 percent of the Rajneesh population in the five years the *sannyasins* (disciples of the Bhagwan) occupied Big Muddy Ranch near Antelope. During a time of overwhelming media coverage of the commune. She conducted a study to understand the motivation of women who left high-paying jobs and financial

security to pursue more spiritual and intangible goals.

For her study, Goldman extensively interviewed 11 women and 14 men between 1984 and 1985, after the Bhagwan had left the United States. Although the study focused on women (she later will conduct a similar study on men), Goldman found that almost everyone interviewed "valued the collective purpose, friendship and opportunities for their own spiritual growth," she said.

However, this was not the image of the commune the media provided, Goldman said.

Two of the most common opinions espoused by the press were that the Bhagwan's followers were going through a "lifestage," or that the *sannyasins*, particularly the women, had been brainwashed and duped by the original occupants of Rajneeshpuram.

Goldman said women were motivated to join the commune by a lack of encouragement from their parents to go out in the



Marion Goldman

world and achieve the same goals as men.

While the financial rewards and prestige were pleasing, the women did not feel loved or cared for, Goldman said. In the commune where many women "fell in love" with the Bhagwan, subjects said they felt completely loved and accepted, she said.

In fact, characteristics of women that may be stifled in other religious movements were the heart and soul of Rajneeshpuram, she added.

"Certain feminine attributes, such as sensitivity and intuitiveness, that have traditionally been associated with femininity were highly valued at Rajneeshpuram," Goldman said.

Goldman's speech was the fourth part in a series of lectures sponsored by the Center for the Study of Women in Society.

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**Correction**

The Oregon Daily Emerald incorrectly reported Tuesday that the Athletic Department would make all reserve football tickets available to students for \$7.50.

Reserve ticket prices will be lowered to \$7.50 only if all student tickets are unavailable, all general admission tickets are sold out at the time of kickoff (or a time thereabouts to be specified in the contract) and reserve tickets remain to be sold.


The Emerald apologizes for any confusion that might have occurred as a result.

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