

Dr. Bennet Givens
University Senate
119 Independence Hall
1923 Neil Avenue
Columbus, OH 43210

February 19, 2018

Dear Dr. Givens,

The Committee on Honorary Degrees of the University Senate has carefully reviewed the dossier of Dr. Matthieu Ricard, a Buddhist monk, and the French translator of his Holiness the Dalai Lama, for an honorary degree from The Ohio State University. Dr. Benjamin Hoffmann, Assistant Professor of Early Modern French Studies brought the nomination forward.

Matthieu Ricard received a PhD in cell genetics in 1972, after working under the guidance of Nobel Prize Winner, François Jacob. After the completion of his doctoral work, he moved to the Himalayan region where he has been living for the past 45 years. An international best-selling author and a prominent speaker, he has authored and co-authored numerous books translated into over twenty languages, including *The Quantum and the Lotus* (a dialogue with the astrophysicist Trinh Xuan Thuan), and *The Monk and the Philosopher*, a dialogue with his father, the French philosopher Jean Francois Revel.

Dr. Ricard is a world-renowned scholar, has led critical global efforts centering on research and teaching of the contemplative practices. He has worked with scientists at Princeton, the University of Wisconsin at Madison and UC-Berkley to show how meditation re-trains the brain and creates new neural pathways that allow the brain to develop and change well into adulthood. He is an active member of the Mind and Life Institute, the premier society bringing together scholars and practitioners of contemplative sciences in order to foster growth and collaboration within this field.

Dr. Ricard is also a global humanitarian. He has been involved in several efforts, throughout the world, but especially in South Asia, benefiting the underprivileged. More recently, he extended his preaching of compassionate care and altruism to include all beings. His latest book, *A Plea for the Animals*, is a scientifically informed, well-written document, calling urgent attention to extend our care and respect to all animals that inhabit this planet with us. Since 2000, Dr. Ricard has used royalties from his many publications to help support the work of this charity, which has funded schools, hospitals and other organizations in India, Nepal and among Tibetan people in China. Dr. Ricard is a recipient of the French National Order of Merit award.

The interdisciplinary support this nomination received is worth highlighting. Faculty members in arts and sciences, library faculty in the humanities (French and Italian as well as East Asian Studies) and in psychology have come together to support this nomination of a scientist who although trained as a cell geneticist, has spent a lifetime demonstrating a commitment to compassion, contemplation, and health and wellness. His life and work represents the strength of merging science and art in order to make a difference in the world. This strength clearly mirrors

the foundational principles of the College of Arts and Sciences and The Ohio State University's public mission.

By a unanimous vote, the Committee on Honorary Degrees recommends that Dr. Matthieu Ricard's dossier be forwarded to the University Senate for their consideration, and recommends the title of Doctorate of Humane Letters *honoris causa*

Respectfully submitted,

José O. Díaz

Jose O. Diaz, Ph.D.

Associate Professor

Chair, Senate Honorary Degrees Committee