

The Idea of Renunciation in Mahānubhāv sampradāy

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The purpose of this presentation is to describe an examination of how the high value of a sannyās (renunciation) is acquired in the bhakti movement of Maharashtra situated in western India.

Mahānubhāv sampradāy (tradition), founded by Cakradhar Svāmin in 14th century, is widely known as an old popular religious group of bhakti. This long-standing tradition persists, although it declined severely after the 15th century, mainly in the northern part of maharashtra.

Some of their scripture compiled in the 14th century reveals their views related to the renunciation. The *Sūtrapāṭh*, a compilation of the words of Cakradhar Svāmin, repeatedly emphasized the soteriological importance of renunciation, or detachment from the world. However, in the *Smṛtiṣṭhaḥ*, which describes early stages of development of the Mahānubhāvs, many renouncers keep their property and their family relationships.

In point of fact, contemporary renouncers of Mahānubav also seem to keep their relationships with their family and social life. Most contemporary Mahānubhāvs understand renunciation as the means of final liberation, as declared in *Sūtrapāṭh*. At the same time, it seems that they value such renounced life from modern perspectives that highly esteem a simple, peaceful, and harmonious life.

Furthermore, although *Sūtrapāṭh* never recommends renunciation after getting old, numerous people have become renouncers nowadays. A possible reason for this is that the monastic community is a place of mutual support for retired people. Another reason is that under the influence of a traditional Hindu view of four-ashrama system, renunciation tends to be considered as a desirable choice for elderly devotees.