

**The Mahānubhāvs***Antonio Rigopoulos***Pub Date:** December 2011**Binding:** Hardback**Price:** £40 / \$65**ISBN:** 9780857284013**Extent:** 104 pages**Size:** 229 x 152mm / 9 x 6**Category:** RELIGION / Hinduism / General**BISAC code:** REL032000**BIC code:** HRG**Rights Held:** World

Description

Offers an overview of the origins and main religious and doctrinal characteristics of the Mahānubhāvs, the ascetic, devotional sect that arose in 13th century Maharashtra.

The ascetic devotional sect known as the Mahānubhāvs – ‘Those of the Great Experience’ – arose in thirteenth-century Maharashtra and initially experienced a fairly rapid expansion across the northern and eastern areas of the region. However, by the end of the fourteenth century the sect had moved underground, having withdrawn to remote areas and villages in order to achieve defensive isolation from the larger Hindu context. Although the prominent leaders of the early Mahānubhāvs were Brahmans (often converts from the prevailing advaita vaisnavism), their followers were (and are) mostly non-Brahmans – those of the lower castes, and even untouchables. Thus the Mahānubhāvs were met with prejudice and distrust outside of their own closed circles, and this isolation continued until the beginning of the twentieth century. This volume offers an overview of the origins and main religious and doctrinal characteristics of the Mahānubhāv movement, with a particular focus on the aspects that reveal their difference and nonconformity.

Readership: Students and scholars in the fields of religious studies, cultural studies and South Asian history, with an interest in the religious milieu of medieval Maharashtra.

Contents

1. Introduction; 2. The Early Historical Background and the Mahānubhāvs’ Foundational Texts; 3. The Five Manifestations of the Supreme God Parameśvar; 4. Elements of Mahānubhāv Doctrine; 5. Mahānubhāvs’ Practice: Devotion and Asceticism; 6. Mahānubhāvs and Other Religions; Bibliography

About the Author

Antonio Rigopoulos is Associate Professor of Sanskrit and Religions and Philosophies of India at the Ca’ Foscari University of Venice, Italy. His publications include: *The Life and Teachings of Sai Baba of Shirdi* (SUNY, 1993); *Dattātreyā: The Immortal Guru, Yogin, and Avatāra. A Study of the Transformative and Inclusive Character of a Multi-Faceted Hindu Deity* (SUNY, 1998); and *Guru: Il fondamento della civiltà dell’India* (Carocci, 2010).

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