

Moderní hinduistický reformismus

Rámmohan Ráj a indická renesance

Biographical Sketch

- *1772
- Father`s family - claimed descent from Narottam Thakur, follower of Caitanya
- Grandfather Rarhi - kulin Brahman - abandoned priestly life - the title Raya Rayan as a revenue official of Murshid Quli-Khan, Nawab of Bengal, under Aurangzeb - the title Ray replaced the family caste name (custom of laukika Brahmans in Mughal service).
- Maternal grandfather Syam Bhattacharya – vaidika Brahman »» mother Tarini Devi - Sakta from her house, becoming Vaisnava by marriage - responsible for his early training in Sanskrit,
- Father Ramakanta ('Lover of Rama') after 1757 procured zamindari - responsible for Rammohan's training in Arabic and Persian – preparation for government service.
- Rammohan - "Raja" title from Akbar II.
- Married 3 times before getting 9 years (being Kulin Brahman) old, having two sons with second wife.

Biographical Sketch

- About age of 16 – travels - great aversion to British rule and idolatrous system of the Hindus – Islamic studies in Patna, Hindu in Benares, myth of Buddhist studies in Tibet.
- To Calcutta – contact with East India Company servants through money lending.
- Jobs for East India Company - during 1803 - 1815
- With John Digby (from 1805 until his permanent move to Calcutta in 1815) – English language and Western literature studies.
- At the same time - studying Brahmasutras with the pandit (1815 he published his first vedanta essay *Vedantasara*).
- One of his houses - neighbour of Baptist Missionary.
- To England - 17 November 1830 – first known transgression of the traditional restriction on overseas journeys
- † 27 September, 1833 in the care of Unitarian friends in Bristol.

Rammohan activist

Journalism

- Founder and editor of Bengali weekly *Sam̃bād Kaumudī* (1821), Persian weekly *Mir'atu 'l-akbar* [1822], English *Brahmunical Magazine*.
- 1823 censorship upon Calcutta press imposed by Bengal government → series of petitions, for the first time in history Indian subject addressed directly the King in *Appeal to the King in Council*.

Education

- 1822 - English *Anglo-Hindu school*.
- 1823 - opposition to *Sanskrit College* - European-style public education prepares Bengali youth better for “the demands and economic opportunities of a modern Europeanized society”, mass Sanskrit education → widening of the gap between Europeans and Indians, segregation of Indians from participation in political and commercial life of their country.
- 1826 - *Vedanta College* - instruction in vedanta sastra for selected few.

Tohfatu 'l-Muwahhidin

- Written in Persian (1803-04), Arabic technical and literary vocabulary, Islamic logic.
- Unknown to contemporaries - since 1884 available in English translation by Adi Brahma Samaj → attention of historians.
- This time - no knowledge of Upanishads
- Composite of popular beliefs "available to everyone in popular culture of his day, i.e. Christian, sufi, Sunni Islam, bhakti cult, and Vaisnava doctrines thrown together with the teachings of Guru Nanak, Dadu and Kabir.
- Rejection of **idolatry**
- Criticism of fraudulent commercialization of established religion and established religious leadership → immorality and violence and fanaticism of blind faith.
- Advocation of **natural religion** - "**reason and common sense**" as conducive to the knowledge of God and principles of morals.
- **Test** of ancestral religion and manners by **reason and self experience** for release from brahmanic prejudices causing social evils in Bengal, rejection of miracles:

"habit and training make men blind and deaf in spite of their own eyes and ears".

Kontroversze s traditionalisty

- **átmíja sabhá** – founded 1815 - community with a common aim - to purge the ancient sacred tradition of modern-day corruptions (made by Brahmans).
- Vedantasara (1815) x Abridgement of the Vedant (1816) →
- *A Defence of Hindu Theism* (1817), published 1820 – reply to letter written by Sankara Sastri (head of the Madras Government College), published in *Madras Courier* of 26 December 1816.
- *An Apology of the Pursuit of Final Beatitude independently of Brahmanical Observances* (*Subhramania sastrir sahit bicar* [1820], also in Sanskrit and Hindi) – after public debate with Sivanath Sastri – a Madras pandit of the Sadr Diwani 'Adalat (Appellate Court) – at December 1816 meeting of Atmiya Sabha.
- Sakta leadership delivered *Vedantacandrika* (probably by Radhakanta Deb and Mrtyumjay Vidyalankar) - *An Apology of the Present State of Hindoo Worship* →
- → Rammohan - *A Second Defence of the Monotheistical System of the Veds* (*Bhattacharyyer sahit bicar*, 1817).

Tradicionalistická opozice

- Some of polemical tracts querring with Rammohan were published in ***Samācār Candrikā*** (edited by Rammohan's former follower *Bhavānīcaran Bandyopādhyāy [1787-1848]*) – next to Radhakantha most active antagonist of Rammohan and one of founding members of ***Dharma Sabhā***.
 - Charged Rammohan party with living impure lives while presuming to instruct others in true religion.
 - Rammohan party replayed by accusing opponents of “not living according to the dictates of sastra.”
- **Dharma Sabhā** - founded in 1830 - ***Sati Act*** (4 December 1829).
 - **Support of the richest babus in Calcutta, few Brahman members. However “[a] number of Sanskrit College pandits subscribed anonymously to it in the beginning.”** (Robertson42)
- Rammohan's letter comprising *Sanskrit College* to the General Committee of Public Instruction opposed by his opponents' letter claiming that his notion does not at all represent “any portion of the natives of India” (Robertson, 44).

Rámmóhanovy kontroverze

- proti tradicionalistům
 - idolatrie – původ všeho sociálního zla a zaostalosti
 - satí
 - postavení žen
 - možnosti dosažení brahmadžňána bez ohledu na kastu
 - brahmadžňána jako výsledek milosti po náležité snaze (jednání
 - nirguna vs. saguna upasana
 - text jako pramen vědění i morálky vs. šištáčára
- vliv na Rámmóhana – křesťanská kritika (Sérampurská baptistická misie, orientalismus, knihovna Koleje ve Vilémově pevnosti)

“Oživení” tradice – překladatelský projekt

- Poučit Bengálce x poučit Brity → překlady
- Sanskrit edition of Brahmasutra of Bādarāyaṅa (1818)
- Bengali version of Atmanatmaviveka (1819)
- Upanisad Tikas
 - Talavakāra (Kena) Upanisad (English and Bengali, 1816)
 - Isa (both 1816)
 - Katha (Bengali 1817, English 1819)
 - Mandukya (Bengali 1817)
 - Mundaka (both 1819)

Kontroverze s misionáři

- *Precepts of Jesus and The Guide to Peace and Happiness* (1820) - published by Serampore Mission Press
- Missionaries believed to be misled “by a trusted prospective Brahman convert” >> public criticism (by J. Marshman) >> Rammohan - three *Appeals to the Christian Public* (two first at Baptist Mission Press)
- Marshman's defence (London 1822) - *A Defense of the Deity and Atonement of Jesus Christ in Reply to Rammohun Roy.*
- Rammohan could not accept the God-like character of Jesus and took him as a moral personality giving good moral prescription.
- Marshman - the Scripture, the God's word, must be received as a whole. Highlighting just the part and other leaving aside degrades the God's majesty. And Scripture speaks that Jesus “was God incarnate, both divine and human.” Accused Rammohan from Arian heresy.

Vliv unitářství

- Polemics with Marshman >> close relationship with unitarian missionaries (William Yates, William Adam) →
- → help with **translation of the New Testament** to Bengali >> problem of philoquie – Yates' withdrawal (fear of Arianism) >> Adam and Ray - **Unitarian Committee in Calcutta (1822)** - correspondence with American and British Unitarian organizations (since 1823).
- 1823: Rammohan, Adam and Dwarkanath Tagore - **Unitarian Press** in north Calcutta
- 1829 Rammohan has abandoned Unitarian committee
- January 23, 1830 - Trust Deed of **Brahmo Sabha**
- **“for the worship and adoration of the Eternal, Unsearchable and Immutable Being, who is the Author and Preserver of the Universe.”** - in fact meeting ground for “many former Atmiya Sabha members following Rammohan’s advaita vedanta + agreement on subjects of education, commerce, government, above all sati.

Rámmóhanovy kontroverze

- Proti trinitárním křesťanům
 - jediný bůh bez přídavků – nemožnost pojmenování a kvalifikace
 - žádná zástupná krvavá oběť – jen pokání a meditace
 - Pure tradition of Vedanta X popular Hinduism \longleftrightarrow
Pure Christianity X popular Christianity (idols, crucifixes, saints, miracles, pecuniary absolutions form sins, trinity, transubstantiation, relics, holy water, and other idolatrous machinery)

Specifika Rámmóhanova unitářství – sociální kontext

- Západní unitářství - Christ as the ethical teacher, intuition instead of revelation, opposition to trinity, social work and moral improvement of urban poor
- Rammóhan:
 - Social gospel not to cope with consequences of a changing social, economic and political order, but for revitalization and progress of India
 - Social evils - consequence of idolatrous notions and oppression of women (the bearers of children).
 - Acclamation of superiority of Vedanta against Trinitarian Christianity
 - The use of comparative approach
 - From Deist and Unitarian attacks on Hindu tradition to the Hindu-Vedantin reformer

Rammohan in England

- Set on journey 17 November 1830 – first known transgression of the traditional restriction on overseas journeys.
- The objectives:
 - To inform about his views regarding the current state and future prospects of India
 - To get more insight into the European, British culture
 - To counter the considerable influence in England of his Hindu opponents' lobby for repeal of the Sati Act
 - To visit the country he had long admired
- Summer 1832 voyage to France - presented to King Luis-Philippe.
- † 27 September, 1833 in the care of Unitarian friends in Bristol.
- Admired for “dissemination of European knowledge and literature” well as for literary quality of his English works.