

From Ritual to Introspection: The *adhyātmayoga* of the Kaṭha-Upaniṣad

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Dominik A. Haas; Austrian Academy of Sciences

BA (2016), MA (2018), Dr. (2022) from the University of Vienna

POST-DOCTRACK Fellow, Austrian Academy of Sciences (2023–); Lecturer, University of Vienna (2023–);
DOC Fellow, Austrian Academy of Sciences (2020–2022)

Dominik A. Haas is a researcher in South Asian Studies working with ancient Vedic and Sanskrit texts. He is the author of *Gāyatrī: Mantra and Mother of the Vedas* and regularly publishes on the topics of Hinduism, Vedic religion, mantras, deification, the history of yoga, and soteriology. Following an interdisciplinary approach, he combines philological and historical research with methods and insights from various fields, ranging from digital humanities to text linguistics, religious studies, and archaeoastronomy. As co-founder of the Initiative for Fair Open Access Publishing in South Asian Studies, Haas is also involved in promoting innovative forms of scholarly communication, and fair working conditions in the academic and publishing sector.

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Classical South Asian Studies, philology, Upaniṣads, pre-classical yoga

The Kaṭha-Upaniṣad is a heterogeneous and diverse Sanskrit text that deals with the nature of human beings after death. Similar to the Bhagavad-Gītā, with which it even shares some stanzas, it enjoys great popularity in modern transnational yoga. It mentions two ways of salvation that are supposed to lead to immortality: an elaborate Vedic fire ritual as well as a method referred to as yoga. These two are not easily reconciled, and philologists have repeatedly imputed incoherence and contradiction to the text. In my talk, I will present some of the results of my book project on the Kaṭha-Upaniṣad, which takes a novel, text linguistic approach to analyzing the structure, coherence, and production process of this text. In particular, I will discuss the relationship of ritual and introspection and the central role the concept of the so-called *adhyātmayoga* was intended to fulfill in linking the two.

Author: Dr HAAS, Dominik

Presenter: Dr HAAS, Dominik

Session Classification: Inspiration