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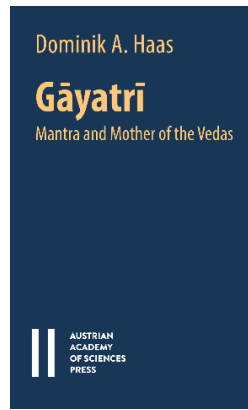
Book Presentation: *Gāyatrī: Mantra and Mother of the Vedas*

by Dr. Dominik A. Haas, International Institute for Asian Studies

Date : Thursday, April 25, 2024

Time : 15.30h

Venue : Leiden University, Matthias de Vrieshof 2, room 0.04. The lecture will be followed by **drinks** in the basement of Matthias de Vrieshof 3.



Abstract

In this lecture, Dominik A. Haas will present the results of his recently published book, titled: 'Gāyatrī: Mantra and Mother of the Vedas' (Austrian Academy Sciences Press, 2023), see also: <https://doi.org/10.1553/978OEAW93906>

The mantra known as Gāyatrī or Sāvitrī (R̥gveda III 62.10) is one of the most frequently recited texts of mankind. Over the course of time it has not only been personified as the mother of the Vedas – the oldest religious literature of South Asia –, but has even come to be venerated as a goddess. Today many consider it the most important, most efficacious, or holiest mantra of all. In his book, Haas reconstructs the history of the Gāyatrī-Mantra for the first time, tracing it from 1000 BCE to 1000 CE. He shows how an inconspicuous verse became an emblem of Brahminical Hinduism and presents the processes that led to its deification. To this end, he not only subjects passages from more than one hundred source texts in Vedic and Sanskrit to philological-historical analysis, but also draws upon perspectives and insights from religious studies.

The Gāyatrī-Mantra plays an important role in contemporary Hinduism as well as in modern yoga and alternative spiritual currents around the globe. Haas's book therefore not only contributes to South Asian studies and religious studies, but is also of interest to a wider readership.

Dominik A. Haas



Dominik A. Haas is a researcher in South Asian Studies working with ancient Vedic and Sanskrit texts. He regularly publishes and gives lectures on the topics of mantras, deification, 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 and religious studies.