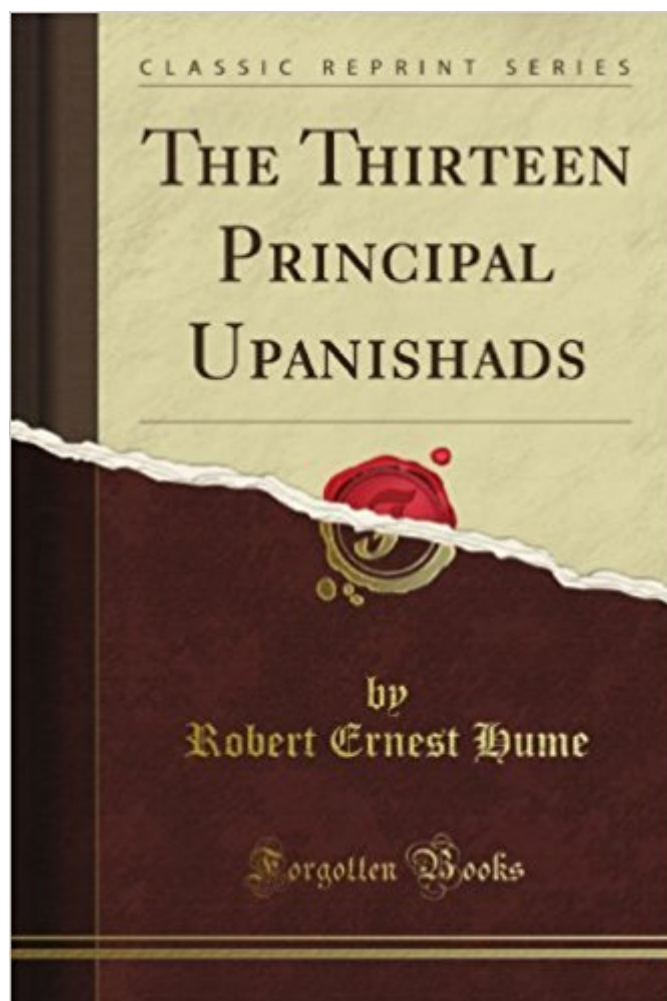


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The Thirteen Principal Upanishads (Classic Reprint)



Synopsis

PREFACE IN the LONG history of man's endeavor to grasp the fundamental truths of being, the metaphysical treatises known as the Upanishads¹ hold an honored place. They represent the earnest efforts of the profound thinkers of early India to solve the problems of the origin, the nature, and the destiny of man and of the universe, or more technically the meaning and value of 'knowing' and 'being.' Though they contain some fanciful ideas, naive speculations, and inadequate conclusions, yet they are replete with sublime conceptions and with intuitions of universal truth.² Here are found intimations of the inadequacy of mere nature-worship and of the falsity of an empty ceremonialism. Here are expressed the momentous discoveries that the various gods of polytheistic belief are but numerous special manifestations of the One Power of the universe, and that the supreme object of worship is this variously revealed, patently elusive, all-comprehending unitary Reality.) Still more

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Customer Reviews

In general, many call the Upanishads "the New Testament of Hinduism"; it has a canonical status which merits inclusion in any bookshelf which includes the Bible, in my view. The Hume translation is a classic in itself, but I recommend this version for many other reasons as well. Before buying it, I read the wikipedia article on upanishads, which is a good beginning -- and then noted that this version, unlike fluid partial translations by devotees, is clearly complete, including all 13 principal upanishads in clear organized fashion. A couple of more recent academic translations exist, but there is a risk of missing the forest for the trees, unless one is planning to spend much more time on this than I will. In short, if you are not a devotee of a particular stream of thought coming out of the Upanishads (there are many) and not a Sanskrit scholar, this is the right one to choose. The only caveat is that google also pointed me to a no cost kindle format version of the Hume book, from Liberty Books. Hume has a long introduction, which was somewhat sobering to me but very useful, and which suggests other things that people interested in this book (for diverse reasons) may want to look up and read. I first read a borrowed copy of the Upanishads in 1964, when they made a great impression on me, as I tried to grapple with fundamental questions about purpose in life. I got to meet Robert Oppenheimer back then, and a close friend of his later told me that Oppenheimer learned Sanskrit very quickly just to be able to read the Upanishads. But my thinking evolved a lot since then, and I only came back to them after a trip to India and other things. The content is very, very mixed, as Hume explains -- and I only found two passages with some sort of positive new value to me. But two is important. There were also a few neat sentences buried here and there, aptly saying things we already knew.

A timeless edition of a classic writing. Trustworthy translation and easy to navigate. Definitely a basic tool if a no-frills study is your objective.

Without any prior knowledge of Hinduism I found it too much of a challenge to understand the first pages - after reading some background on Hinduism I was able to wade through but I still need to call on others to help me and I still do not feel I understand the culture of the meaning of the myth that is the basis for these prayers. The copy is clear and easy to read but not for a beginner who has no knowledge of how the Upanishads fits into Hinduism.

Although Robert Ernest Hume's is an older translation, it still reads remarkably well and I would have no hesitation in recommending it to someone who wanted a substantial and authoritative text

of the thirteen principal Upanishads. What bothers me about this Forgotten Press edition, however, is that, whereas the revised Oxford 2nd edition which I have is 588 pages long and includes two useful indexes at the end of the book between pages 563-588, the product page of this edition states 'Paperback: 560 pages.' Recently I purchased a digital reprint of another book and was more than disappointed to discover that the publisher had omitted the very important Bibliography which should have been at the end of the book. I now begin to wonder whether 'Forgotten Press' have made a similar error and have forgotten to include the indexes that should be at the end of this book. The Hume translation, as I've already indicated, is well worth acquiring by anyone who is seriously interested in the Upanishads. But to be on the safe side, and to make sure you are getting the COMPLETE book, it might be wiser to get a copy of the revised Oxford 2nd edition: The Thirteen Principal Upanishads: Translated from the Sanskrit: With an Outline of the Philosophy of the Upanishads You will note that the product page of this edition shows it as having the 588 pages it should have.

Yeah, it's a scan and print, but the paper's quite crisp and print size is easy on the eye. Hume's 70 page introduction is an enjoyable read, liberally littered with his favourite quotations from the texts and still holds up well as an immediate, introductory access; it is a gentleman's reading of something hallowed, with no prissiness. The Upanishads themselves are spaciouly laid out and not overburdened with footnotes, the translation style is light and mostly not problematic, though occasionally a tad Victorian - I'd prefer 'self' to 'soul' as a reading of Atman, for example [in fact, that's pretty major, innit?] So the ellisions and interpretations are those of a gentleman of his time, but, overall, it's a generous book, delivered in a generous spirit.

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