

# *Philosophy By Hand*

## **2025-2026 LECTURE SERIES**

**THE AGENCY OF MANUSCRIPTS IN SHAPING HUMAN THOUGHT**

9 June 2026 | 17:15-18:45 CET | in person and online

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(COLLÈGE DE FRANCE, PARIS)

### *Reading, Writing, Philosophising in Medieval India*

The primacy of orality in Indian culture and the Brahmanical tendency to deprecate writing as a means of transmitting knowledge have often been emphasised – with good reason. Yet writing technologies were used early on by Indian scholars and they arguably played a crucial role in the development of philosophy in particular, notably by enabling competing religious movements to study their rivals' systems. Moreover, although the Indian speculations on language largely focus on oral speech, contrary to what is often assumed, writing and reading were not altogether absent from the field of philosophical inquiries. South Asian thinkers did not just use manuscripts as a medium for the preservation and circulation of their ideas: they discussed the cognitive mechanisms at work when we read, the ontological status of the written signs, and their relationship with the phonemes for which they stand.

Isabelle Ratié is Professor at the Collège de France (Chair of History of Indian Systems of Thought) and a Senior Fellow of the Institut Universitaire de France. She has authored or co-authored six monographs and numerous articles on the history of Indian philosophy, with a particular focus on the manuscript tradition of Kashmir.



**Venue: Institute for Jewish Studies**

Please contact the HEPMASITE project for registration and further information: [hepmasite.reli@uni-hamburg.de](mailto:hepmasite.reli@uni-hamburg.de)

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