

Call for Applications

Two Junior Scholars

ERC (European Research Council) Consolidator Grant (No. 101229483)

MIRA: Manipravalam — Insight, Research, and Analysis

University of Hamburg (Host Institution) in partnership with the École française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO), Pondicherry

Location: École française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO), Pondicherry, India.

Start date: June 2026

Full-time positions (100%), one-year renewable contracts (until 2031)

The **ERC-funded Consolidator Grant project MIRA** invites applications for two full-time positions as junior scholars, which will be based at the **École française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO)**, Centre de Pondichéry. The research team will conduct, textual research, manuscript study, and field-based scholarly activities. Successful candidates will be expected to **reside and work in Pondicherry**. MIRA will be hosted at the University of Hamburg and carried out in close institutional partnership with the EFEO Pondicherry, which will host a research team and provide the main base for philological work, manuscript research, and so forth.

Project description

MIRA investigates Manipravalam, the Sanskrit–Tamil hybrid literary language that emerged as a major intellectual medium in medieval South India. Far from being a marginal linguistic phenomenon, Manipravalam—used by Śrīvaiṣṇavas, Jains, and Śaivas—functioned as a bridge-language across religious communities, facilitating the transmission of theological concepts, reshaping Tamil literary culture, and mediating between Sanskrit and Tamil intellectual traditions. The project integrates philology, manuscript studies, linguistic analysis, intellectual history, and digital humanities, including the creation of an open-access database, lexicographic tools, and a Grantha-typing interface.

Required Qualifications (for both profiles)

- An ongoing PhD or a recent PhD
- Excellent knowledge of Tamil
- Excellent command of English
- Proficiency in Sanskrit
- Proficiency in IT skills (MS OFFICE typing skills in Tamil/English/Devanagari)

Desirable Expertise (for both profiles)

- Demonstrated familiarity with Indian religious traditions
 - Experience in working in an international project
 - TEI Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) skills
 - Knowledge of the Grantha script + working knowledge with manuscripts
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Research profiles

Applicants should clearly indicate which research profile they are applying for:

(A) Jaina Manipravalam

(B) Śaiva Manipravalam

Profile A: Jain Manipravalam

This position focuses on Manipravalam texts within the Tamil Jain tradition, including narrative and commentarial literature.

Research Context

Tamil Jain authors adopted Manipravalam to participate in broader intellectual and interreligious debates. Texts such as commentaries on the *Nīlakeci* and Jain hagiographic narratives provide crucial insight into doctrinal positioning, narrative strategy, and lexical borrowing across traditions.

Responsibilities

- Critical edition and translation of selected Jain Manipravalam texts
- Comparative analysis with Śrīvaiṣṇava and Śaiva corpora
- Study of doctrinal vocabulary and semantic adaptation
- Contribution to shared lexical and digital infrastructure

Desirable Expertise

- Specialization in Jain philosophy and/or Tamil Jain literature
 - Experience with polemical or interreligious texts
 - Training in manuscript studies
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Profile B: Śaiva Manipravalam

This position focuses on Manipravalam texts in the Śaiva traditions, especially those connected to Śaivasiddhānta and later medieval theological developments.

Research Context

Śaiva Manipravalam reflects complex engagement with rival doctrinal systems and displays variability in its integration of Sanskrit vocabulary. The corpus includes commentaries and poetic works that illuminate sectarian debates and the reshaping of Tamil religious discourse.

Responsibilities

- Critical edition and translation of selected Śaiva Manipravalam texts
- Linguistic analysis of hybridity and vocabulary formation
- Study of theological argumentation and intertextuality
- Contribution to the Manipravalam glossary and database

Desirable Expertise

- Specialization in Śaivasiddhānta or related Śaiva philosophical systems
 - Experience with hybrid Sanskrit–Tamil prose
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What We Offer

- Full-time (100%) research position based at the EFEO Centre in Pondicherry
 - One-year contract renewable annually (until 2031)
 - **Monthly salary:** INR 60,000
 - **Employer-provided social security benefits according to EFEO regulations**
 - Integration into a major ERC-funded international research project
 - Access to EFEO manuscript collections and scholarly networks
 - Participation in the development of a foundational digital resource for Manipravalam studies
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Application Materials

Applicants should submit:

1. Cover letter outlining relevant experience and indicating clearly the profile applied for (A or B)
2. Curriculum vitae
3. Writing sample (maximum 30 pages)
4. Contact details of two referees

Shortlisted candidates may be invited for interview, online or in-person.

Application deadline: 15 April 2026

Applications should be sent electronically to:

administration@efeo-pondicherry.org with copy to erc.projectMIRA@gmail.com

Please indicate in the subject line of your email:

MIRA Application – Junior Scholar [Profile A/B] – [Applicant's Name]