

Der Verein  
**Sammlung De Nobili – Arbeitsgemeinschaft für  
Indologie und Religionsforschung**



lädt herzlich ein zum

## **9. Jahresvortrag:**

**Prof. Dr.**

# **Srilata Raman**

**(University of Toronto)**

## **Crypto-Christian and Atheist**

**The Westward Journey of the  
Seventeenth-century Śaivite Poet  
Tāyumāṇavar**

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**Ort:** Seminarraum 1 des Instituts für Südasien-, Tibet- und Buddhismuskunde,  
Bereich Tibet- und Buddhismuskunde (Campus der Universität Wien,  
Spitalgasse 2, Eingang 2.7), 1090 Wien

**Zeit:** Freitag, 15. Dezember 2017, 15h c.t.

**Im Anschluss lädt der Verein zu Getränken und Knabbereien.**

### Zum Vortrag:

The nineteenth century saw intensive missionary activity in the Tamil region of South India. Particularly enduring proved to be the work of the Scudder family, evangelical Christian preachers from the Dutch Reformed Church of North America, who lived and preached in the North Arcot area of the Madras Presidency from the early nineteenth to the twenty-first century. Prominent among this family was Henry Martyn Scudder (1822–1895), a fine Tamil scholar who wrote a compilation of preaching tracts called “The Bazaar Book or the Vernacular Preacher’s Companion” published in 1865. Contemporaneously, the nineteenth century also saw the founding, in Madras, of the Hindu Free Thought Union which was renamed the Madras Secular Society in 1886. This organization arose obviously in response to scientific and rationalist movements in the “metropolis” of England. Particularly influential, ideologically, were the writings of Charles Bradlaugh (1833–1891), who founded the National Secular Society in 1866 and the mouthpiece of the secularist position, the *National Reformer*, of which Bradlaugh became the editor in 1860. It was the direct inspiration of the National Secular Society that lay behind the founding of the Hindu Free Thought Union and the subsequent publication of its Tamil-language journal called *Tattuvavivēciṇi* (“The Discrimination of Realities”) from 1878 onwards. Both “The Bazaar Book” and the *Tattuvavivēciṇi* dealt, either extensively or briefly, with the poetry of the seventeenth-century Śaivite poet Tāyumāṇavar, whose works endured and were immensely popular as part of the oral Tamil tradition in the nineteenth century. Yet, in their understanding of him they come to opposite conclusions – “The Bazaar Book” sees Tāyumāṇavar as a Crypto-Christian while the *Tattuvavivēciṇi* sees him as an atheist. The lecture discusses this widely disparate view on Tāyumāṇavar in the light of the cleavage of the Tamil literary canon into a dichotomy of “religious” and “secular” as it emerged within the context of the formation of Tamil Christianity and Tamil Rationalism in the nineteenth century.

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### Zur Vortragenden:

Srilata Raman is Associate Professor of Hinduism at the University of Toronto and works on medieval South Asian, especially South Indian religion, devotionalism (*bhakti*), historiography and hagiography, religious movements in early colonial India that arose in the South as well as modern Tamil literature. Her special areas of interest are Tamil and Sanskrit intellectual formations from the late medieval to early colonial period, including the emergence of nineteenth-century socio-religious reforms and colonial sainthood.