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# Einladung zum Vortrag

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# Epic and Chronicle, Ādiparvan & Mahāvamśa 1-7:

## Selected Comparisons and their Implications

Mittwoch, 24. Mai 2017, 17:00

Seminarraum 1, Bereich Tibet- und Buddhismuskunde  
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Though it is usually assumed to be impossible, or wildly speculative, the application of the Indo-European comparative linguistic framework to IE oral narratives is not an unreasonable undertaking – perhaps we can one day look forward to proto-IE starred narratives. The present paper, though very compressed, belongs to a body of research that pursues this idea, and hopes to show that the undertaking is susceptible to a degree of scholarly rigour. It looks for similarities of any kind between the texts from the *Mahāvamśa* and the *Mahābhārata*.

The texts resemble each other in distinguishing a substantial introduction from the main story, and in taking an abrupt step backwards in time at the transition. Within the main story, detailed rapprochements link the Susīma-Lion union, first with the Gaṅgā-Śaṃtanu union, then with the Kuntī-Pāṇḍu union. The Buddha instructing gods to protect Laṅkā and Vijaya (the first human to inhabit the demon-infested island) parallels Brahmā instructing the gods to protect the demon-infested earth. As for the two introductions, despite their complexities, both deal with the consolidation of their respective traditions. Following the death of the Buddha, the First Buddhist Council sees his disciples reciting the Vinaya and the Dhamma. Following the death of Parikṣit, the Snake Sacrifice of his son Janamejaya occasions the first public telling of the *Mahābhārata* by Vyāsa's disciple.

Tempting though it may be to imagine the composers of the *Mahāvamśa* drawing on India's Great Epic, this explanation of the similarities cannot be taken for granted: similarities with Greek epic and Latin pseudohistory will need to be brought into the comparison.