



# Einladung zum Vortrag

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## The Many Lives of South Asian Megaliths

**A Glimpse of the  
Archaeological, Ethnographic  
and Indological Evidence**

**Freitag, 8. Juni 2018, 15h c.t.**

Seminarraum 1, Bereich Tibet- und Buddhismuskunde  
Institut für Südasi-, Tibet- und Buddhismuskunde,  
AAKH, Spitalgasse 2, Hof 2.7  
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Megaliths, i.e., funerary or commemorative monuments made of large stone slabs or unworked boulders, are a major marker of the protohistoric archaeological landscape of South Asia, more specifically of its central and southern areas during the Iron age. After amateurish beginnings in the eighteenth century, the research on Indian megaliths has made remarkable progress over the last fifty years, and particularly during the last two decades. The lecture will provide an overview of the encouraging results of recent investigations, based on updated and multidisciplinary methodological tools, as well as of the many unanswered questions that still make our understanding of these monuments imperfect and keep scholarly interest alive.

No less intriguing is the appropriation, in historical times, of protohistoric graveyards, including megalithic monuments, by Buddhist monasteries as well as Brahmanical sacred areas, aimed at asserting or underscoring specific relationships with death.

The tradition of funerary megaliths is still flourishing in contemporary *ādivāsī* communities in many areas of the Indian subcontinent and has been revealed by some ethnographic accounts. A glimpse of this practice will offer interesting clues that may help us understand the role of the Iron age prototypes in the funerary process.