

Chronicle & Epic, or the Introductions to the *Mahāvamsa* & *Ādīparvan*: Selected Comparisons

IE cultural comparativism. Ideology: Dumézil's three functions subsumed in pentadic schema. || IE proto-narrative hypotheses. Prejudices re relative mutability of language & oral traditions; re multiple local origins of IE epics, (esp. India and Greece). || G. Turnour 1837 on Odysseus // Vijaya (first king on Lañkā) & Circe // the *yakṣī* Kuvaññā. || Method: seek similarities *of all sorts* (form, content ...).

1. Introduction versus Main Story. Transition involves step back in time: from Asoka back to Vijaya's forebears // from Janamejaya's Snake Sacrifice in Inner Frame Story to Vasu Uparicara.
2. Five textual units in Introduction, the last being longest: 5 chapters, 5th concerns Asoka // 5 introductory Uparavans, of which 5th, *Āstīkaparvan*, concerns Snake Sacrifice.
3. Bow, promise, characterisation. Honour Saṃbuddha // Nārāyaṇa... || Mention title: *Mahāvamsa* // *Jaya*. Praise of the text.
4. Journeys: the Buddha to Lañkā, Garuda to Heaven. Purpose: prepare island for future flourishing of religion // obtain *amṛta* from gods, to regain freedom from slavery. Both travellers fly.
5. Large versus small. Visit II: Big-Belly's *nāgas* fight Small-Belly's for a throne // great Indra offends tiny Vālakhilyas, who help produce Garuda as Indra's rival. Reconciliation.
6. The battle. Jina causes darkness, reconciles *nāgas*, leaves sacred objects // Garuda causes dark, defeats gods, seizes elixir, is reconciled to gods. Internecine fighting of *nāgas* // of gods' weapons.
7. Gatherings. Council I results from the Buddha's death // Snake sacrifice results from Parikṣit's death. The 3 Councils (with monks only) // the Session in Outer Frame Story (brahmins only).
8. Death and recitation. Dhamma is consolidated & recited at Council I // Mbh is first recited at Snake Sacrifice. The Buddha : Buddhist Dhamma // Vyāsa : Mbh & classical Hinduism?
9. Last-minute arrival. Ānanda, by miracle, at Council I // Takṣaka, by miracle, at Parikṣit's death. Comparable motif at Snake Sacrifice.
10. King's U-turn & evil versus good. Kālāsoka supports Vajji heretics, but then changes mind // Janamejaya wants to kill all snakes but then changes mind (sinful snakes ≠ virtuous).
11. One senior snake stands apart. Mañiakkhika, uncle of Big-Belly, supports Buddhism // Śeṣa, Kadrū's eldest son, deserts his brothers, follows Brahmā, & becomes subterranean supporter of earth.
12. Homonymic parents of converter. Nigrodha converts Caṇḍāsoka to Dhammāsoka // Āstīka converts Janamejaya from indiscriminate killer to punisher of evil snakes. N.'s parents are Sumana & Sumanā (*taṃnāmikā*) // A.'s are ascetic Jaratkāru and *nāgī* Jaratkāru (*sanāmnī*). Origin of N's name is explained // ditto for A. The conversion results from each youth inspiring warm reaction of king.

Explanations for the similarities: interaction within South Asia; Indo-European heritage; both.

Wilhelm Geiger, 1908 (text), 1912 (trans). Kristin Scheible, 2016. *Reading the Mahāvamsa: The literary aims of a Theravada Buddhist history*. New York. Alan Strathern, 2014. Vijaya and Romulus: Interpreting the origin myths of Sri Lanka and Rome. *JRAS*. 24/1: 51-73. Alf Hiltebeitel, 1990. *The ritual of battle...*, Ch. 7). || nick.allen@anthro.ox.ac.uk