

Four Apadānas

The Apadānas are among the latest additions to the Sutta Piṭaka in the Pāli Canon. They are also among the few books of the Canon that have not been translated into any Western language. This is a shame, not only because of the intrinsic interest of the Apadānas as literature, but also because they throw light on three important issues in Buddhist history: the development of Buddhist thought and practice in the centuries following Asoka; the relationship between the “Great” and “Little” traditions in modern-day Theravāda; and the relationship between Mainstream Buddhism and early Mahayana.

The term “apadāna” (Sanskrit: *avadāna*) can be broadly translated as “background story.” An apadāna/avadāna is a story telling of the fruits of action over many lifetimes. As a genre, these stories were composed throughout Buddhist India from the period immediately following the reign of Asoka onward. Because the Pāli Apadānas make frequent reference to the building and worshiping of stūpas, they are among the earliest texts whose dating can be indicated by archeological evidence, in that they mention details of stūpa architecture using a vocabulary found only in the inscriptions dating from the 2nd century B.C.E. to the 1st century C.E., during the reign of the original Sātavāhana dynasty, centered in the West, and the original Śunga dynasty, centered in Magadha. Other collections of avadānas, roughly contemporaneous, include those collected in the Vinayas of the Mūlasarvāstivādins and the Lokottaravādins, along with the *AvadānaŚataka*, a Sarvāstivādin text.

The intended function of an Apadāna is suggested by the texts themselves. Repeatedly, they describe an individual presenting a gift to a Buddha or one of his chief arahant disciples, after which the recipient—either spontaneously or at the request of the donor—indicates the karmic fruit of the gift. This is apparently the function of an Apadāna: an act of praise for a donor, detailing the many rewards of his/her gift. (The one Apadāna that describes the rewards of chanting an Apadāna (287) portrays the Apadāna as an act of praise or celebration.) This is a variation of the *anumodanā*—rejoicing in merit—that the Vinaya (Cv VIII.4.1) and earlier Suttas (e.g. DN 16; AN 5:36–37) prescribe as the duty of the Saṅgha after a meal. However, a comparison of the rewards promised in an Apadāna with those promised in earlier anumodanās shows how far the Apadānas have extended the terms of this duty. In the earlier verses, the highest reward described for the practice of generosity is the possibility of heaven. In the Apadānas, every gift carries the guarantee of full awakening.

Thus the Apadānas show the various motivations employed by the monks and nuns of the period to encourage gifts to the Saṅgha and to their monasteries. And it is hard not to believe that the Apadānas collected in the Canon were included—at least partially—for their perceived effectiveness. Thus they open a window into the motivations for generosity that underlay, among other things, the cult of the stūpa as practiced in the period in which they were composed. In this way, the Apadānas belie the claim, sometimes made, that the Pāli Canon contains no material that is of any use in understanding Buddhism as practiced “on the ground” in the period in question. In fact, they tell us a great deal about the

attitudes and motivations of the people involved in the worship of stūpas, along with the particular ways in which that worship was expressed.

For instance, a number of Apadānas (such as 33, 61, and 95) depict an individual donating a cetiya to a living Buddha. In these passages, the cetiya appears to consist of an elaborate throne. This suggests that the cetiyas enshrining relics may have similarly been conceived as thrones for the relics they contained. Also, a favorite offering to a cetiya is of multitudes of lamps (a prime example is in Theriyāpadana 27). The immediate purpose is to make the cetiya shine like the sun or a lightning bolt; the long-term purpose is to ensure that the donor will outshine all his/her companions in beauty and rank.

Altogether, the Pāli Apadānas comprise 592 stories: two background stories for the Buddha, one passage on the ideal of the Private Buddha (this is actually not an Apadāna: it is instead the Rhinoceros Sutta, Sutta Nipāta 1:3), 549 background stories on male arahants (the Therāpadānas), and 40 on female arahants (the Theriyāpadānas).

The focus of almost all of these Apadānas is on the role of kamma in leading to awakening. Although the various Apadānas differ in how they analyze the workings of kamma, by far the majority of them focus on the fruits of a seed-action planted in a “Buddha-field (*Buddha-khetta*).” The concept of a Buddha-field is one of the primary contributions of the Apadānas to Buddhist thought, and in the arahant Apadānas it carries two meanings. In a handful of cases, it simply means the range of a particular Buddha’s sphere of influence. Thus, Ven. Sāriputta comments that, aside from the Buddha himself, he sees no one in the current Buddha’s Buddha-field who is equal in discernment. (This is the meaning that the concept holds in the one other place in the Pāli Canon where it is mentioned outside of the Apadānas, the verses of Mahākassapa in Theragāthā 18, which may also date from the same general period of the Apadānas.)

However, the more predominant meaning of Buddha-field seems to have derived from the concept of merit-field (*puññakkhetta*) as found in the Suttas: a field in which a seed of merit is planted and bears great fruit. Although some Apadānas continue to identify the Saṅgha as the ideal field of merit, and one Apadāna (498) even discounts the importance of such a field for the production of merit, most of the others operate explicitly or implicitly on the assumption that the Buddha-field excels the field of merit of any saṅgha or group. Also, this Buddha-field continues to function even after a Buddha’s death: An act of service (*adhikāra*) performed for his cetiya—whether containing his relic or simply dedicated to his memory—gives the same results as an act of service performed for a living Buddha. In this way, the Buddha—in supplying such an effective merit-field—is a protector (*nātha*) of the world.

The Buddhāpadāna further develops the concept of Buddha-field, in that it speaks of innumerable Buddha-fields in all ten directions in the multiverse. Thus the Apadānas clearly show the line of development from the concept of merit-field in the early Suttas to the Pure Land systems of later Mahāyāna.

The concept of *adhikāra*, or service, is the other main contribution of the Apadānas to the Buddhist vocabulary. The proper response to the Buddha, as shown in many of the Apadānas, is one of *pasāda*, or confidence. Inspired by this confidence, an individual feels driven to perform a service for the Buddha, which may be as elaborate as building a monastery for him and his Saṅgha, or as simple as raising one’s hands in añjali. This act of service, combined with the attitude of

confidence and rapture (*pīti*), forms the seed that guarantees future awakening. This act further functions as a seed in that it determines the particulars of the individual's awakening: either through the nature of the act itself, or through a determination aimed at a particular distinction. An example of the first type of seed occurs in the Apadāna of Ven. Anuruddha (4), who was the monk foremost in clairvoyance because, in a previous lifetime, he had presented the Buddha Sumedha with lamps that burned non-stop for seven days. An example of the second type occurs in the story of Ven. Khemā (Theriyāpadāna 18), who was the nun foremost in wisdom because she had voiced an aspiration for that distinction after providing the Buddha Padumuttara and his Saṅgha with a week of meals.

The common formula for most Apadānas is as follows: In the distant past, an individual plants a seed of merit by performing a service for the Buddha whose field is still extant at that time. As a result of that act of service, the individual is guaranteed awakening in a later lifetime. In the interim, he/she follows a path of rebirth through the many heavenly realms; reigns as a king or queen for many times in the human realm; and is ultimately reborn in the dispensation of "our" Buddha, Gotama, where he/she attains arahantship.

Within the framework of this formula, there is plenty of room for variation. Although the route to awakening is usually totally painless, it sometime contains ups and downs. For example, Lakunṭaka-Bhaddiya-to-be (541), after aspiring to a beautiful voice, has to be reborn once as a bird to sing the praises of a later Buddha, thus guaranteeing the quality of his voice in his final life. However, in an interim life as a general, he objects when the populace plans to build a seven-league tall cetiya in honor of a later Buddha, Kassapa, so he persuades them that it should be only (!) one league tall. This last act is what determines that, even though he has a beautiful voice in his last life, he is also a dwarf.

Similarly, Bhaddakāpilānī-to-be (Theriyāpadāna 27), in one of her many human lifetimes, is irked by her husband and so, in a fit of pique, places mud in the bowl of a Private Buddha. She immediately realizes her error and so washes out the bowl with perfumed substances and then fills the bowl with excellent food. Nevertheless, she is reborn with a horrendous body odor that can be cured only by covering a cetiya with perfumed bricks of gold.

In fact, the most interesting of the Apadānas are those that fill in gaps in the biographical accounts of the earlier texts. And this, in fact, seems to be the one of the main accomplishments of avadāna literature as a whole, in that it tries to provide a unified body of narratives to the Buddhist tradition, tying up the loose ends left by the accounts in the earlier Suttas. Thus the Apadāna devoted to Ven. Soṇa (42) includes a history of the founding of the Sakyan clan. The Apadāna devoted to Ven. Sivali (543) identifies him as the unnamed child born to Suppavāsā in Udāna 2:8, and explains why she had to carry him in her womb for seven years: He had laid siege to a city in one of his former lives, closing off all the gates, and she had expressed her approval for that action.

However, as noted above, not all the Apadānas are devoted to the past lives of arahant disciples. Two are devoted to Gotama Buddha's own first aspirations to Buddhahood. In one, the Buddhāpadāna, the act of service that resulted in his Buddhahood is so extravagant that it can only be imagined. In the other, the Pubbakammapiḷotika Buddhāpadāna (390), the first act of service is much more humble: He donates an old piece of cloth (*pilotikā*) to a monk observing the practice of living in the wilderness; this second Buddhāpadāna is unusual in that it

also lists the unskillful actions in Gotama's past lives that bore unpleasant fruit in his final life as a Buddha. (There is a similar piece in the *Avadānaśataka*.)

Thus, the Apadānas clearly parallel the Jātakas in their apparent intent of providing a pedigree from the past for the Buddha and his arahant disciples. In so doing, they are obviously meant to be entertaining as well as informative and inspiring. At the same time, both have had parallel effects on Theravādin devotionalism. The Jātakas have provided the raw material from which the Theravādin tradition derived its teaching of the ten perfections (*pāramī*)—or, in its most complete formulation, the thirty perfections: the ten perfections as required, respectively, for the paths of the arahant, the Private Buddha, and the Teaching Buddha. The Apadānas have provided not only the concept of the Buddha-field, which has informed devotionalism to cetiyas and Buddha images throughout the Theravādin world, but also examples of what sorts of merit-seeds should be planted by acts of service in the Buddha-field provided by those monuments. A representative list, drawn from the first 100 Therāpadānas, provides a template for building cetiyas and monasteries, along with most of the donations and devotional acts that are still focused on cetiyas and Buddha images to this day:

- Building a cetiya—3, 33, 61, 95
- Building and furnishing a monastery—6,12, 38, 42, 47, 48, 51, 53 92
- Praising the Buddha or his wisdom—1, 32, 52, 64
- Donating food—2, 20, 25, 35, 36, 37, 44, 56, 65, 66, 68, 74, 75, 87
- Donating a lamp (candle)—4, 57
- Protecting the Buddha with a sunshade—10, 46
- Giving cloth—12, 30, 67, 92
- Donating flowers—17, 45, 50, 59, 62, 63, 69, 70, 71, 78, 80, 81, 82, 84, 90
- Donating an elephant—18 (at present, this donation takes the form of carved elephants)
- Donating flags—22, 58, 59
- Receiving the Triple Refuge—23
- Receiving the five precepts—24
- Donating incense—26
- Making añjali—29, 79, 83, 85
- Covering a cetiya with gold—33
- Setting up a Dhamma wheel in front of a Buddha's seat—39
- Donating a golden seat—43
- Donating a sandalwood vessel—49
- Admiring the Buddha's radiance—86
- Worshipping—91
- Cleaning the area around the Buddha—96

Thus the Apadānas show that many of the devotional practices of Theravāda Buddhism—once thought to be antithetical to the spirit of the Pāli Canon (usually as exemplified in the earliest strata of Suttas)—are actually inspired by examples in the Canon itself. And there are modern Theravādin movements—such as the Dhammakāya in Thailand—that are clearly inspired by the Apadānas in their promotional literature.

However, despite the similarities between the Apadānas and the Jātakas as genres, they do display an importance difference. In none of the Jātakas is there

any mention of a Buddha of a previous era; in every case, the Buddha-to-be and his disciples-to-be have to develop their perfections through the power of their own initiative. Thus the pedigree provided by the Jātakas is the pedigree of personal effort. In the case of the Apadānas, though, the existence of Buddhas of the past is central to the equation. The existence of their Buddha-field is essential to the extravagant results produced by even the smallest acts of service. In this sense, the pedigree provided by the Apadānas is one of personal connections. And interesting study could be made on the way in which the tension between these two paradigms has worked itself out in the history of Theravādin practice.

Similarly, the Jātaka and Apadāna paradigms offer a useful lens for understanding the rise of the Mahāyāna around the beginning of the common era. All too often, the early Mahāyāna texts are approached in comparison with the earliest Sutta and Abhidhamma texts. The radical differences between these two bodies of literature have led to myriad speculations as to what sorts of people, with what sorts of motivations, would have created such a radically innovative form of Buddhism. When compared with the Jātakas and Apadānas, however, the early bodhisattva Sūtras show that Mahāyāna developments in this period grew organically and incrementally from what went immediately before. For example, the *Akṣobhya-vyūha* can be studied as an attempt to reconcile the two paradigms. The story of Akṣobhya's own vows and practices follows the Jātaka paradigm: He vows to become a wilderness monk in every lifetime; to observe strict ascetic practices above and beyond the rules of the Vinaya; and to sacrifice even his own life for the sake of others. However, the practices of the bodhisattvas reborn in Akṣobhya's realm follow the Apadāna paradigm. In addition to performing services for Akṣobhya and hearing his Dharma, these bodhisattvas can travel easily to infinite numbers of other Buddha-fields to perform services and hear the Dharma of all the Buddhas in the multiverse, thus fulfilling the merit- and knowledge-qualifications required to form Buddha-fields of their own.

The Apadānas' contribution to the development of the Mahāyāna promises to be an especially fruitful line of inquiry, both in terms of the general paradigms it provides, and in terms of the contributions of particular works within it.

The general paradigms offered by the Apadānas involve both general aesthetic and content. In terms of aesthetics, the Apadānas show a taste for extravagant tropes and an obsession with gold and jeweled substances. In this, they clearly foreshadow the aesthetics of many of the early bodhisattva sūtras. In terms of content, their concepts of Buddha-field, service to Buddhas, and the necessity of both in the pursuit of awakening have long been appreciated as central to early Mahāyāna thought. What the Apadānas show, however, is that these concepts are not particular to the Mahāyāna. They are part of the general world-view of all the yānas in the time period in which they were composed.

As for individual Apadānas, two stand out in terms of their potential relationship to the Mahāyāna. One is the Buddhāpadāna; the other is the Subhūtittherāpadāna (21). Subhūti's Apadāna is important because of the role he later played in Mahāyāna texts, channeling the *anubhāva* of the Buddha in teaching the Mahāyāna doctrine. The question has frequently been posed: Why was Subhūti chosen for this role? His Apadāna suggests an answer, for in it he gives an extended paean in praise of the virtues of *buddhānussati*, the meditative practice of recollection of the Buddha. As recent studies have shown, this practice was central to the early Mahāyāna. Thus it is possible that Subhūti's connections to the

practice as portrayed in his Apadāna may have contributed to his selection as the early Mahāyānists' arahant spokesman of choice.

The Buddhāpadāna shows a more integral connection to the early Mahāyāna, in that it seems to inhabit—both psychologically and cosmologically—the world of the early Mahāyāna. Psychologically, it is concerned with questions that faced all Mahāyānists: how to perform service to other Buddhas without gaining liberation in their dispensation (so as to gain awakening in one's own dispensation); and how to dedicate oneself to the path of Buddhahood when no Buddha is still alive in the universe. Its solution to these questions foreshadows the maṇḍala offerings that play a large role in Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna practice. Cosmologically, the Buddhāpadāna acknowledges the existence of innumerable Buddha-fields in the ten directions, and the possibility of performing service in, and listening to the Dhamma of, all the Buddhas in those Buddha-fields.

This is clearly the cosmos as envisioned in the early Mahāyāna. Whether the Buddhāpadāna influenced bodhisattva Sūtras, or the influence went the other way, the chronology of these texts is too uncertain to say. What is clear, though, is that the Buddhāpadāna was accepted into a Mainstream Canon. This shows that, during the period in question, exponents of these ideas had not become a separate movement, and that their contemplations were still considered orthodox. As of yet, no radical break had occurred between the elders of the Theravāda and the aspirants to Buddhahood in their midst—an important point to keep in mind when trying to trace the course of the various yānas at the beginning of the common era.

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The translations of four Apadānas are presented here. Two—the Buddhāpadāna and Therāpadāna 21—have been chosen because of their value in the study of early Mahāyāna. Therāpadāna 502 has been chosen because it offers the clearest articulation of the Buddha-field as the highest of merit-field; Therāpadāna 80, because it offers an example of how a small seed of service can influence both the details of one's deva mansions during one's course through the levels of the cosmos and the particular features of one's ultimate awakening.

The translations are based on the Royal Thai edition of the Pāli Canon (Bangkok: Mahamakut Rajavidalaya Press, 1982), although I have in three instances preferred alternate readings from the Burmese edition as listed in the footnotes to the Thai. I have also followed the Thai numbering system for the Apadānas, in which the Buddhāpadāna and Paccekabuddhāpadāna are not numbered, the Therāpadānas (including the Pubbakammapiṭṭika Buddhāpadāna at 390) are numbered 1 to 550, and Theriyāpadānas 1 to 40.

FURTHER READING

Robinson, Richard; Willard Johnson; and Thanissaro Bhikkhu. *Buddhist Religions: A Historical Introduction*. Fifth Edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2005. Chapter Three discusses the development of the apadāna/avadāna literature and its connection to the stūpa cult. Chapter Four discusses the role of this literature in the development of the early Mahāyāna.

- Walters, Jonathan S. "Gotamī's Story." In *Buddhism in Practice*. Edited by Donald S. Lopez, Jr. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995. The first translation of an Apadāna into a Western language.
- Walters, Jonathan S. "Stupa, Story, and Empire: Constructions of the Buddha Biography in Early Post-Asokan India." In *Sacred Biography in the Buddhist Traditions of South and Southeast Asia*. Edited by Juliane Schober. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997: 160-192. Portrays the Apadānas as an important step in the development of Buddhism as a universal religion responsive to the religious aspirations of the laity.

Buddhāpadāna

The sage of Vedehi [Ven. Ānanda], his limbs composed,
 asked the Tathāgata, dwelling at Jetavana:
 “They say there are omniscient Buddhas.
 Through what cause are they enlightened [*dhīra*]?”

Then the excellent Omniscient One, The Great Seer,
 (said to) auspicious Ānanda with his honeyed voice,
 “Those who have done service [*adhikāra*] in all Buddhas
 without having gained liberation in the Victors’ dispensations,
 they, the enlightened, by means of self-awakening,
 through a disposition of great strength,
 they, of very sharp discernment,
 through the might of discernment,
 reach the state of omniscience.

I myself aspired to Buddhahood
 under [lit: “in”] former Buddhas—
 Dhamma-kings beyond reckoning,
 complete in the thirty perfections.
 Having raised my ten fingers in homage,
 I bowed down my head
 to the self-awakening of the foremost Buddhas,
 to the protectors of the world,
 together with their Saṅghas.

However many treasures there are, beyond reckoning,
 as far as Buddha-fields extend,
 in the air & on land,
 I brought them all together with my mind.
 There, on a ground of silver,
 I built a many-level palace made of treasures
 reaching up to the sky,
 with elaborate, well-fashioned pillars,
 well-arranged, of great cost,
 with archways made of gold,
 adorned with pennants & sunshades.

The first floor, of lapis lazuli,
 beautiful, free of ashes & dust,
 was filled with stands of blue lilies
 on an excellent floor of gold.
 The (next) level illumined the directions
 with a light the color of ladybugs:
 beautiful, red, the color of coral, charmingly branched.
 Well-arranged were the porch roofs,
 lion-cage windows,
 gateways,
 four-sided window frames,

enchanted, with scented garlands.
 (Levels of) blue, yellow, red, white, & pure black,
 were topped with a gabled roof
 ornamented with the seven treasures.
 canopied with lotuses,
 radiant with wild beasts & birds,
 filled with the zodiac stars,
 decorated with the sun & the moon,
 covered with a network of gold.

Dangling little bells of gold
 tinkled with the motion of the breeze.
 The golden net was enchanting.
 Windows, elaborate with many colors—
 pink, red, yellow, & gold—
 were garlanded with flags set high.
 Many hundreds of planks,
 made of silver, gemstone, ruby, cats-eye,
 elaborate with different kinds of bedding,
 were spread with exquisite Kāsi-cloth,
 woolen blankets, fine jute-cloth, Chinese cloth [satin?],
 Pattuṇṇa cloth, yellow mantles:

I arranged all sorts of coverings with my mind
 in each & every level,
 topped with a jeweled gable.

I properly set stands with sun-jewel lamps.
 The golden door-posts, the columns & pillars were beautiful,
 made of gold, hardwood, & silver.
 Many openings were well-arranged,
 elaborate with window- and door-panels.
 On both sides (of the palace) were many tanks,
 filled to the brim,
 with lotuses & red-lilies.

I conjured up, in their normal color & form,
 all the Buddhas of the past,
 the protectors of the world,
 together with their Saṅghas of disciples.
 Having entered by way of the door,
 all the Buddhas & their disciples—
 the circle of the noble ones [*ariya-maṇḍala*]
 sat on benches made entirely of gold.
 All those who are unexcelled Buddhas in the cosmos
 past, existing, & yet to come,
 ascended (the palace).
 Many hundreds of Private Buddhas,
 self-dependent, undefeated,
 past, existing, & yet to come,
 ascended (the palace).

From the many wishing trees there are,
 both human & divine,
 I took cloth and clothed them each
 with a triple set of robes.
 Having filled their beautiful bowls
 made of gemstone
 with consummate rice,
 staple & non-staple foods,
 I presented them with food & drink.

Dressed in divine, burnished cloth,
 made into robes,
 satisfied with sweet rock-crystal sugar,
 oil, cane-sugar, & honey,
 with excellent food,
 all the circle of the noble ones
 having entered the jeweled bedrooms,
 as a lion would a cave,
 lay down in the lion's posture
 on costly beds.

(Then,) getting up, alert,
 they sat cross-legged on the beds
 filled with delight in *jhāna*,
 the range of all the Awakened Ones.
 Some taught Dhammas,
 others sported with psychic powers.
 They sported with fixed penetration [*appanā*],
 those with developed expertise in the cognitive powers [*abhiññā*].
 They transformed (themselves) into transformations,
 many hundreds of thousands.
 Buddhas asked Buddhas
 about the realm, the abode of the Omniscient.
 They thoroughly examined [lit: turned inside out] with discernment
 the deep, subtle state.
 Disciples asked Buddhas;
 Buddhas asked disciples.
 They asked one another;
 they answered one another.
 Buddhas, Private Buddhas, & disciples
 entertained one another.
 Enjoying these delights,
 they greatly enjoyed themselves in the palace.

Multi-tiered sunshades stood there,
 shining with lapis & gems,
 tied with a net of gold,
 interwoven with a net of silver,
 surrounded by a net of pearls—

may each bear one over the head.
 There were cloth canopies,
 elaborated with golden stars
 decorated with strings of garlands—
 may each bear one over the head.

Stretched over with garland-tassels,
 radiant with scented tassels,
 covered over with cloth tassels,
 ornamented with jeweled tassels,
 covered with flowers, so very elaborate,
 scented with wonderful scents,
 marked with scented five-finger marks,
 roofed with a roof of gold:
 in the four directions were pools
 strewn with lotuses & red lilies
 sending lotus pollen-dust on high,
 looking like gold.

[I thought:]
 “May trees all burst into bloom around the palace
 and shedding their flowers bestrew the grounds.
 May long-tailed peacocks dance,
 may celestial geese call out,
 may karavikas sing,
 may flocks of birds be all around.
 May drums all sound,
 may lutes all play,
 may wind instruments all play
 around the palace.

Throughout the Buddha-fields above the cosmos,
 may there be set thrones of gold,
 consummate in radiance,
 without-gaps,
 made with jewels.
 May lamp-trees shine,
 may they become a single radiance,
 extending on through ten-thousand (of Buddha-fields).
 May courtesans, dancing women,
 groups of celestial maidens dance.
 May many colors appear around the palace.
 On rough paths, on mountains,
 on the summit of Mount Sineru,
 I set up every kind of flag, elaborate, five-colored.
 May human beings, nāgas, gandhabbas,
 all devas,
 come & having paid homage with añjali,
 surround the palace.

Whatever skillful action,
 whatever act that should be done by me
 with body, speech, or with mind,
 has been done, well-gone, by me
 in the [Ones of] Thirty [Perfections.]
 May whatever beings that are percipient,
 and those that are not,
 all have a share
 in the fruit of the merit I've done.
 To those well-aware of what has been done by me,
 the fruit of my merit is given by me.
 And as for those who don't know,
 may devas, going there, tell them.
 May all beings in the world
 who live relying on nourishment,
 receive all the food they like
 through my awareness."

Having given gifts with the mind,
 having held on to conviction with mind,
 having honored all self-awakened Buddhas,
 and honoring the Private Buddhas,
 through that well-done action,
 and through the directing [*panidhi*] of (my) intention,
 on dropping the human body
 I went to the heaven of the Thirty-three.
 I have known (only) two levels of becoming:
 the divine, the human.
 I have known no other destinations:
 the fruit of my mind's aspiration.
 I have been the leader of devas,
 sovereign among human beings.
 Consummate in form & features,
 I've had no peer in discernment.

Many kinds of the very best food,
 myriads of treasures,
 cloths of many kinds
 have quickly come to me from the sky.
 Wherever I've stretched out my hand—
 to earth, crag, space, water, forest—
 there has come to me divine food.
 Wherever I've stretched out my hand—
 to earth, crag, space, water, forest—
 there have come to me all treasures.
 Wherever I've stretched out my hand—
 to earth, crag, space, water, forest—
 there have come to me all scents.

Wherever I've stretched out my hand—
 to earth, crag, space, water, forest—
 there have come to me all vehicles.
 Wherever I've stretched out my hand—
 to earth, crag, space, water, forest—
 there have come to me all garlands.
 Wherever I've stretched out my hand—
 to earth, crag, space, water, forest—
 there have come to me ornaments.
 Wherever I've stretched out my hand—
 to earth, crag, space, water, forest—
 there have come to me all maidens [!!!].
 Wherever I've stretched out my hand—
 to earth, crag, space, water, forest—
 there have come to me honey & rock-crystal sugar.
 Wherever I've stretched out my hand—
 to earth, crag, space, water, forest—
 there have come to me all non-staple foods.

To people without wealth, travelers,
 beggars, those along the road,
 I have given excellent gifts
 for the sake of attaining
 the excellent self-awakening.
 Having made rocky crags roar,
 having made many mountains thunder,
 having made merry (the world) with its devas,
 I am the One Awakened in the world.

There's no one who's journeyed on to the end
 of the ten-fold direction of the world;
 in that direction are Buddha-fields
 beyond reckoning.
 My radiance has spread out in pairs of rays.
 In the midst of this net of rays
 may there be an abundance of light.
 May all people, throughout the world-element
 have faith in me.
 May all be happy-hearted.
 May all follow me.
 May I beat the drum of the deathless,
 with its wonderful, sweet sound.
 May all people in the midst
 [of this sound? of these rays of radiance?]
 listen to (my) sweet words.
 When the rain of Dhamma falls,
 may all be without effluent.
 May the least of the beings there
 be stream-winners.

Having given gifts that should be given,
 I've fulfilled virtue without remainder.
 Having reached the perfection of renunciation,
 I've attained the highest self-awakening.
 Having questioned the wise,
 having done the highest effort,
 having reached the perfection of endurance,
 I've attained the highest self-awakening.
 Having made a strong determination,
 I've fulfilled the perfection of truth.
 Having reached the perfection of good will
 I've attained the highest self-awakening.
 Having been everywhere even (-minded)
 with regard to
 gain, loss,
 pleasure, pain,
 esteem, contempt,
 I've attained the highest self-awakening.

Seeing laziness as danger
 and persistence as secure,
 be a person with persistence aroused:
 This, the Buddhas' instruction.
 Seeing quarreling as danger
 and non-quarreling as secure,
 be harmonious, congenial:
 This, the Buddhas' instruction.
 Seeing heedlessness as danger
 and heedfulness as secure,
 develop the eightfold path:
 This, the Buddhas' instruction.

Many Buddhas & arahants have gathered all around.
 Bowing down, pay homage
 to the Self-awakened Ones & arahants.
 Thus beyond imagining are Buddhas;
 the Buddha-Dhammas: beyond imagining.
 For those with conviction in what is beyond imagining,
 beyond imagining is the result."

Thus the Blessed One, honoring* his own Buddha-conduct,
 spoke the Dhamma-sequence called the *Buddhāpadāniya*.

* Reading *sambhāvayamāno* with the Burmese.

Subhūtittherāpadāna

(Apadāna 21)

Not far from the Himavant
 on a mountain named Nisabha
 —“Chief Bull of the Herd”—
 was my well-made ashram,
 my leaf-hut well-built.
 Kosiya by name,
 a hermit of strict asceticism,
 I lived alone then on Nisabha,
 with no companion.
 I ate neither fruits, roots, nor leaves,
 but maintained myself
 on leaves that had fallen on their own.
 I didn’t upset my livelihood,
 even sacrificing (willing to sacrifice) my life.
 I persuaded my own mind;
 I stayed apart from wrong modes of search [*anesanā*].
 Whenever a passionate mind-state arose to me,
 I reflected on myself
 & trained myself on my own:
 “You are impassioned
 with what inspires passion,
 averse with what inspires aversion,
 deluded with what inspires delusion:
 get yourself out of the forest.
 This is an abode for those who are

pure,
 without blemish,
 practicing austerities.

Don’t you corrupt what is pure.
 Get yourself out of the forest.
 When you were a householder
 you gained what was proper.
 Don’t fail in both ways:
 Get yourself out of the forest.
 As timber from a funeral pyre
 can be used for no purpose at all,
 neither in village
 nor in wilderness,
 for it isn’t counted as timber,
 you are like a funeral pyre,
 neither a householder
 nor a restrained (contemplative):
 Today you are released from both (states):
 Get yourself out of the forest.

Is this proper for you?
 Who will know this about you?
 Will you take care of my urgent work
 while you are full of laziness?
 Those who know will be disgusted with you—
 as a city-dweller, with what is unclean.
 Having seized you, seers
 will accuse you always.
 Those who know will proclaim you
 as one who has transgressed the Teaching [*sāsana*].
 Gaining no affiliation (with them)
 how will you live?

A strong, young elephant
 having taken on a Mātāṅga elephant—
 sixty years old, in rut—
 would be chased out of the herd.
 Being banished from the herd,
 it would find no pleasure, no satisfaction,
 would be pained, disheartened.
 Withering away, it would be afflicted.
 In the same way, hermits will chase you
 of miserable opinions,
 away.
 You, being banished by them,
 will gain no pleasure, no satisfaction.
 Tormented with the arrows of sorrow
 —day & night—
 you will burn with being excluded,
 like the elephant banished from the herd.

As a golden chamber pot doesn't glow* anywhere,
 you, your virtue abandoned,
 won't glow** [gain mental absorption] anywhere.
 Even if you were to live in a home,
 how would you maintain yourself?
 Your mother & father have buried for you
 no wealth.
 Working on your own,
 sweat breaking out of your limbs:
 that's how you'll live in a house.
 It would be good if that doesn't please you."

Thus did I there put a check
 on my immersed-in-defilement mind.
 Having made various Dhamma-talks
 I kept my mind in check from evil.
 (And) dwelling this way, in a dwelling of heedfulness,
 I spent 30,000 years in the great woods.

Seeing me for my heedfulness
 —me, in search of the highest goal—
 the self-awakened one, HigherLotus [Padumuttara],
 came to my presence.
 Of golden radiance
 —limitless, without compare—
 the awakened one of peerless form
 paced back & forth in the air.
 Like a great sal-tree in full bloom,
 like a lightning bolt in the folds of a cloud,
 the awakened one of peerless knowledge
 paced back & forth in the air.
 Like a fearless lion-king,
 a joyful elephant-king
 a fearless tiger-king,
 he paced back & forth in the air.
 Golden like Singi gold,
 (glowing) like acacia-embers,
 dazzling like a jewel:
 he paced back & forth in the air.
 Like pure (Mount) Kailāsa,
 like the moon when it's full,
 like the sun at noon:
 he paced back & forth in the air.

Seeing him pacing in the sky,
 I had this thought:
 “Is this being a deva
 or human?
 I've never seen nor heard
 of a man like this on earth.
 Perhaps there is a charm.
 Perhaps this is a Teacher.”
 Thinking this, I brightened my mind,
 gathered myriad flowers & scents,
 prepared a seat of flowers
 —admirably elaborate, alluring—
 and said this to the supreme tamer of men:
 “This, O hero, is my seat prepared,
 appropriate for you.
 Making my mind merry,
 sit on this seat of kusuma flowers.”
 He sat there—the Blessed One,
 like a fearless lion,
 the awakened one—for seven days & nights,
 on the seat of kusuma flowers
 in the great woods,
 while I—for seven days & nights—
 stood paying homage to him.

Emerging from his concentration
the Teacher unexcelled in the world,
celebrating my kamma, said this:
 “Cultivate Buddha-recollection,
 the unexcelled meditation.
 Cultivating this mindfulness,
 you will fulfill your heart.
For 30,000 eons you will delight in the deva worlds.
Eighty times you will be lord of the devas,
exercising deva-sovereignty.
For 1,000 times you will be
a wheel-turning monarch over an empire.
You will experience abundant local sovereignty
countless times:
 You will experience all this:
 the fruit of Buddha-recollection.
Wandering from one state of becoming to another,
you will gain great wealth.
In your wealth there will be no lack:
 the fruit of Buddha-recollection.
In another 100,000 eons,
a Gotama by clan, born in Okkāka’s lineage,
will be the Teacher in the world.
Abandoning 80 crores (of wealth),
& many workers & slaves,
you will go forth in the instructions
of the blessed Gotama.
Pleasing the self-awakened Gotama,
born of the Sakyans,
you will be Subhuti by name,
a disciple of the Teacher.
Seated in the midst of the community of monks,
he will establish you in two supreme positions:
 for being worthy of offerings,
 & for dwelling free of conflict.”
Having said this, the glorious, highest lord,
the enlightened one, ascended to the sky,
like a swan-king in the firmament.

Having been instructed
by the protector [*nātha*] of the world,
paying homage to the Tathāgata,
I always cultivated, with appreciation,
 the highest Buddha-recollection.
Through that well-done action,
and the directing of my intention,
on dropping the human body,
I went to the heaven of the Thirty-three.
Eighty times I was lord of the devas,

exercising deva-sovereignty.
 For 1,000 times was I
 a wheel-turning monarch over an empire.
 I experienced abundant local sovereignty,
 good attainment, countless times:
 the fruit of Buddha-recollection.
 Wandering from one state of becoming to another,
 I gained great wealth.
 In my wealth there was no lack:
 the fruit of Buddha-recollection.
 For the 100,000 eons since I did that kamma,
 I did not know the lower realms:
 the fruit of Buddha-recollection.
 Having realized the four forms of acumen
 the eight emancipations,
 and the six cognitive skills,
 the Buddha's instruction
 is done.

I have heard that Ven. Subhūti recited these stanzas.

* Reading *jhāyati* with the Burmese.

** Reading *jhāyissasi*. The Thai here reads *yāyissasi*, which doesn't make sense in the context, although it is properly conjugated. The Burmese reading, *jhāyassati*, is improperly conjugated, but gives the sense that the context calls for.

Tinipadumiyattherāpadāna (ThreeLotus)

(Apadāna 80)

When the Victor named Padumuttara—
 who had gone to the far shore of all Dhammas,
 tamed, surrounded by those who were tamed—
 was leaving the city,
 when I was a garland-maker in that city of Hamsavatī,
 I was carrying three superb red-lotus-flowers there.
 I saw the dustless Awakened One
 following the path through the market,
 and immediately on seeing the Self-Awakened One,
 I thought:

“Of what use would it be
 for me to present these flowers to the king?
 I would gain a village or a village-realm
 or a thousand (in money).
 But having done homage to the Hero,
 who tames the untamed,
 who brings bliss to all beings,

the protector of the world:
I will gain the wealth of the Deathless.”

Thinking this, I brightened my mind.
Taking the three red (flowers)
I threw them into the air.
And as they were thrown by me,
they spread out in the air.
He bore them there, over his head:
their stems up, their blossoms down.
The human beings who saw this
let out a shout.
The devatas in the sky
called out “Sādhu.”
“A miracle has appeared in the world
due to the excellent Buddha.
We all will listen to the Dhamma”—
due to my flowers.
Padumuttara, the knower of the worlds,
(worthy) receiver of offerings,
stood still right there in the road
and spoke these verses:

“The young man who has honored the Buddha
with ruby red-lotuses:
I will celebrate him (his future):
Listen to what I say.

For 30,000 eons he will delight in the deva worlds.
Thirty times will he be lord of the devas,
exercising deva-sovereignty.
He will have a celestial mansion
named Mahāvithārika
[Greatly Detailed],
shooting up 300 leagues,
150 leagues wide.
400,000 (lotuses) will
decorate the gateways,
ornament the gabled roofs,
adorn great beds.
100,000 koṭis of celestial maidens will surround him:
skilled at dancing and singing,
adept at instrumental music.
At that time a floral rain of celestial ruby (lotuses)
will fall on the mansion filled with maidens.
From pegs in the walls, from the serpents-teeth,
from the door-frames and gateways
will hang ruby (lotuses), the size of carriage wheels.
Inside this foremost mansion

roofed with lotus-leaves,
 they (the maidens) dressed with lotus-leaves
 surrounding (him)
 will live together (with him).
 All around the grounds
 for 100 leagues,
 the divine scent of pure ruby (lotuses)
 will entice.

For 500 times he will be
 a wheel-turning monarch over an empire.
 (He will experience) abundant local sovereignty
 countless times.
 Having had both treasures (divine & human),
 free from trouble, free from dangers,
 when their end comes, he will attain unbinding.”

How good it was for me
 to have seen the Awakened One!
 I have made a good trade.
 Having done homage with the three red-lotuses,
 I have experienced the three attainments.
 Today, when I have reached the Dhamma,
 totally released all around,
 I will bear good ruby flowers over my head.
 When the Teacher, Padumuttara,
 spoke of my kamma,
 100,000 beings broke through to the Dhamma.

For the 100,000 eons
 since having done the highest homage to the Buddha,
 I have not known the lower realms:
 This, the fruit of three lotuses.
 My defilements have been burned away.
 All states of becoming are uprooted
 with the total ending of all effluents,
 there is now no further becoming.
 Having realized the four forms of acumen
 the eight emancipations,
 and the six cognitive skills,
 the Buddha’s instruction
 is done.

I have heard that Ven. Tinipadumiya recited these stanzas.

Ekapattadāyakattherāpadāna (SingleBowlDonor)

(Apadāna 502)

I was a potter in the city of Hamsavatī.
 I saw the dustless Buddha,
 who had crossed over the flood,
 effluent-free.
 I gave to the excellent Buddha
 a well-made clay bowl.
 Having given a bowl to the Blessed One,
 —the straightened one, Such—
 then on coming into (each) state of becoming,
 I have gained golden platters,
 bowls made of silver, gold, & gemstone.
 I have eaten from a fine dish:
 This, the fruit
 of a meritorious act.
 And in terms of rank,
 I was among all people
 supreme.

As when even a small bit of seed
 is planted in an auspicious field,
 rightly showered with a stream of rain,
 the fruit satisfies the farmer,
 even so,
 when this gift of a bowl,
 planted in a Buddha-field
 is showered with streams of rapture,
 the fruit will satisfy me.

As far as fields are found,
 whether of a Saṅgha or group,
 there is none equal to a Buddha-field,
 a giver of happiness to all beings.

Homage to you, O thoroughbred of man!
 Homage to you, the utmost man!
 Having given a single bowl,
 I have attained the unwavering state.*
 For the 91 eons
 since having given that bowl,
 I have not known the lower realms:
 This, the fruit
 of the gift of a bowl.
 My defilements have been burned away,
 all states of becoming uprooted.
 Like an elephant who has broken his bonds,

I live effluent-free.
 How good it was for me
 that I came to the Buddha's presence!
 Having attained the three knowledges,
 the Buddha's instruction is done.
 Having realized the four forms of acumen
 the eight emancipations,
 and the six cognitive skills,
 the Buddha's instruction
 is done.

I have heard that Ven. Ekapattadāyaka recited these stanzas.

* There is a word-play here on "bowl" (*patta*) and "I have attained" (*patto'mhi*).