

THE MYSTERY OF THE BEAUTY OF RECLINING BUDDHA POSTURES¹

Edit note: revision of the 2024 original text by Claude (Anthropic), October 2026; final check by the author. References follow Harvard Plus: canonical texts are cited by sutta name, number and PTS volume and page, Pāli root texts from the Mahāsaṅgīti edition (Online 1); translations not attributed to a named translator are made via dictionaries and AI. Sources consulted for the 2024 text carry the 2024 access date, and a second date where they were checked again for this revision.

“Reclining” refers to lying down. The **Reclining Buddha** (ปางไสยาสน์, **Pang Saiyat**) depicts the Buddha in a resting position, often associated with sleep or serenity or attaining *Parinibbāna*.

Symbolism

The concept of creating the Reclining Buddha image originally centred around พระพุทธรูปนิพพาน (**Phra Phuttha Parinipphan**), Buddha’s *Parinibbāna*, symbolising Buddha’s final passing into *nibbāna*. This image serves as a reminder for Buddhists to practise mindfulness and reflect on the impermanence of all conditioned things—emphasising that even the Lord Buddha could not escape this universal truth, which his last words state: *vayadhammā saṅkhārā*, “Conditions fall apart” (Mahāparinibbāna Sutta, DN 16: 6.7; D II 156; Sujato, Online 2).

Lion Reclining Posture

The “Lion Reclining” posture specifically refers to lying on the right side, with the head resting on a pillow, eyes closed, the left hand resting along the body, and both feet neatly stacked, the left over the right, set slightly past it so that ankle does not press on ankle (Buddhaghosa, 1931: 575). In this position, the mind is set to rest with mindfulness, ensuring a peaceful awakening at the appointed time; the canonical formula is *sīhaseyyaṃ kappesi pāde pādaṃ accādhāya sato sampajāno uṭṭhānasaññāṃ manasikarivā*, the last clause “focused on the time of getting up” (Mahāparinibbāna Sutta, DN 16: 4.40; D II 135; Sujato, Online 2). The Seyyā Sutta names four ways of lying: the corpse on its back (*petaseyyā*), the pleasure seeker on the left side (*kāmabhogiseyyā*), the lion on the right side (*sīhaseyyā*), and the Tathāgata’s lying, which is the fourth *jhāna* (*tathāgataseyyā*) (Seyyā Sutta, AN 4.246; A II 244–245; Sujato, Online 3). At Kusinārā the formula recurs without the clause on rising (DN 16: 5.1; D II 137); Buddhaghosa gives the reason: this is *anuṭṭhānaseyyā*, a lying from which there is no

¹ For reference: Zamaros, Panayotis (2024, revised 2026), *The Mystery of the Beauty of Reclining Buddha Postures*, The DrZ Network, date of access.

rising (Buddhaghosa, 1931: 575). We quickly note that if the majority of the postures have one fundamental feature, that of reclining on the right side, one posture is an exception, where the Buddha lies on his back, the corpse's lying (*petaseyyā*).

Birth Weekday Image

In Thai tradition, the Reclining Buddha is also linked to those born on Tuesday (Online 4), as it is believed that the Buddha attained *Parinibbāna* on a Tuesday (Online 5), making this posture particularly significant for individuals born on that day.

Categories

The postures here detailed, 9 in total, fall into two broad categories: (Online 6; Online 7; Online 8)

- Category 1: the Buddha holds his head with his right hand, in two manners actually, even though a pillow is present (postures 1 to 3)
- Category 2: the Buddha's head is set on a pillow freeing his right hand (postures 4 to 9). This category comprises postures leading to *Parinibbāna* (postures 4, 5, 6) and those specifically concerning *Parinibbāna* (postures 7, 8, 9).

Category 1

Although this category has only 3 postures, the representation of the Buddha with his hand holding his head is one of the most common features of the majority of the Reclining Postures, especially in the large-scale monuments.

Posture 1: The Dream Posture (ปางทรงพระสุบิน, Pang Song Phra Subin)

The Buddha image in the dream posture is lying on his right side with the left hand extending along the body and the right arm resting on the floor. The back of the hand is raised and placed against the chin, the fingers are bent and pressed against the pectoral bone, his eyes are semi-closed (evasive, not staring at anything particular) or closed, and his head is resting on a pillow (Online 9; Online 10). It is a sleeping posture like a lion lying on its right side (AN 4.246; A II 244).



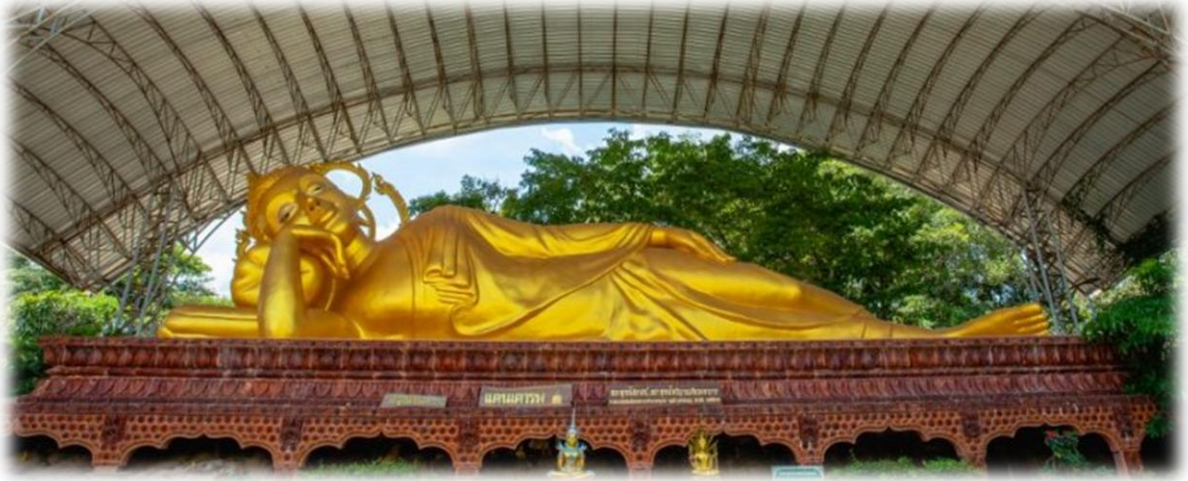
Picture 1: The Dream Posture (Online 9)

The Reclining Buddha of Wat Ratchathiwat Wihan School, on the sixth floor of the Chaian building (Online 11; Online 10; Online 12), has the added particularity of not having the feet in parallel, one on top of the other, giving the representation a more human-like feature; Buddhaghosa's gloss on *pāde pādaṃ accādhāya* already sets the upper foot slightly past the lower (Buddhaghosa, 1931: 575).



Picture 2: Reclining Buddha, Wat Ratchathiwat Wihan School, Bangkok (Online 10)

It is relatively rare to find a large-scale Reclining Buddha such as Phra Phuttha Phothiyan Phattha Maharat, at Wat Si Yaek Saeng Phet, Wat Phra Non, Amnat Charoen Province (Online 13).



Picture 3: Phra Phuttha Phothiyan Phattha Maharat, Wat Si Yaek Saeng Phet, Amnat Charoen (Online 13)

Another example is Wat Suan Phlu, Wat Phra Non, Bangkok, whose hall of the reclining image dates from 1958 (Online 14).



Picture 4: Reclining Buddha, Wat Suan Phlu, Bangkok (Online 15)

According to the life of the Lord Buddha, at that time, the Bodhisattva stopped practising asceticism because he saw that it was not the path to enlightenment. He changed to the Middle Path. Then he went out to beg for alms as usual. The five ascetics concluded that the Bodhisattva had abandoned his striving and turned to eating as before, so how could he find such a wonderful *Dhamma*? So, they left him and went to Isipatana (Fausbøll, 1877: 67–68).

The Bodhisattva practised his mind until the fifteenth day of the waxing moon of the sixth lunar month, the Visākha full moon. While sleeping, he had five great dreams which were five auspicious signs (Mahāsupina Sutta, AN 5.196; A III 240–242; Sujato, Online 16). When he woke up, he interpreted the great dreams by himself. He knew that he would attain enlightenment and become the Perfectly Enlightened Buddha and would spread the *Dhamma* in all directions; in the Jātakanidāna he concludes *nissamsayenāhaṃ ajja buddho bhavissāmi*, “without doubt I shall become Buddha today” (Fausbøll, 1877: 69). He was therefore extremely joyful. In the first dream the great earth was his bed and the Himalaya his pillow (*bibbohana*) (AN 5.196; A III 240).

Posture 2: The Normal Resting Posture (ปางทรงพักผ่อนปกติ, Pang Song Phakphon Pokkati)

This is the general posture of the Lord Buddha resting, with the left foot on top of the right foot evenly, the left hand placed along the body, the head placed on a pillow, and the right hand placed on the pillow as well. Although similar to the Posture of Pleasing Asurindarāhu, the main difference is that with the latter the right hand supports the head, which is not the case here where both right hand and head are supported by a pillow. In paintings, Ānanda is depicted massaging Buddha from behind.

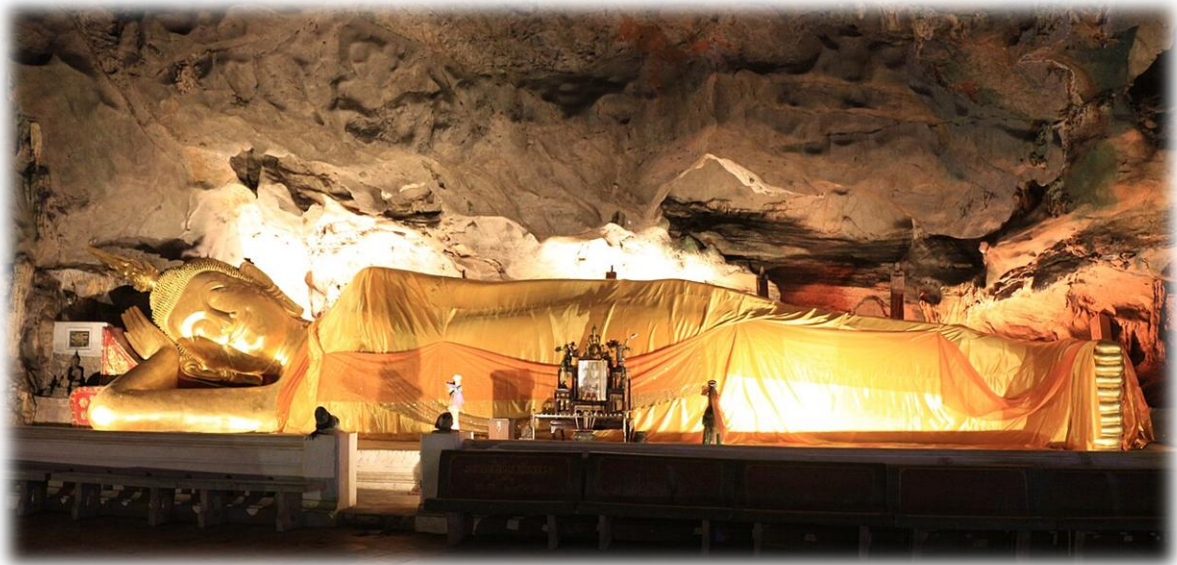
Examples include:

The Reclining Buddha of 43 metres long at Wat Phra Phutthasaiyat, Phetchaburi Province, over 400 years old (Online 17), whose distinctive feature is that the head of the Buddha is supported by two lotus-shaped pillows.



Picture 5: Reclining Buddha, Wat Phra Phutthasaiyat, Phetchaburi (Online 18)

The Reclining 14-metre-long Buddha at Wat Khao Luang (cave), Phetchaburi Province (Online 19; Online 20).



Picture 6: Reclining Buddha, Khao Luang Cave, Phetchaburi (Online 20)

We can add:

- Phra Chao Phon Thuk at Wat Phra That Mae Yen, Mae Hong Son Province
- Wat Pa Charoen Tham, Wat Phra Non, Chiang Mai Province

A further example is at Wat Chedi Luang, Chiang Mai Province (Picture 7).



Picture 7: Reclining Buddha, Wat Chedi Luang, Chiang Mai; photograph by Panayotis Zamaros

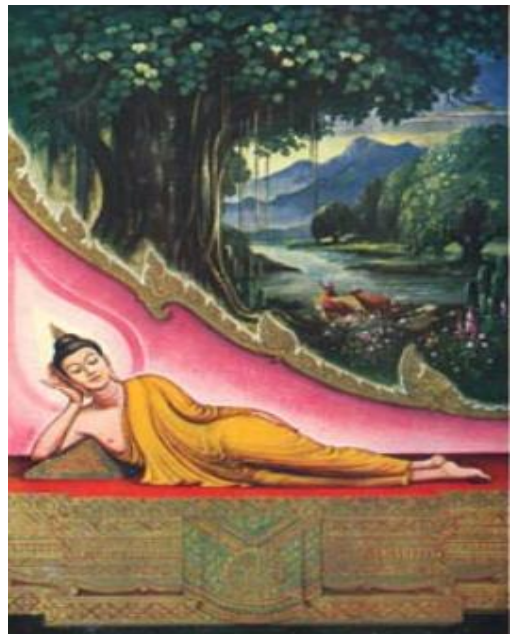
Posture 3: The Posture of Pleasing Asurindarāhu (ปางโปรดอสุรินทราหู, Pang Prot Asurinthrahu)



Picture 8: The Posture of Pleasing Asurindarāhu, Phra Pathom Chedi, Nakhon Pathom (Online 21)

The Buddha statue in the attitude of pleasing Asurindarāhu is in the posture of lying on his right side in the lion reclining position. The left foot is on top of the right foot evenly. The left hand is placed along the body. The right palm supports the head to be upright. The eyes are semi-closed (evasive, not staring at anything particular) or closed (Online 22). The name joins *asura*, *inda* (lord) and Rāhu: the canon calls him *rāhu asurindo*, foremost among those of great size (Paññatti Sutta, AN 4.15; A II 17; Sujato, Online 23).

According to the Buddhist history, when the Lord Buddha was staying at Jetavana Monastery in the city of Sāvattihī, Asurindarāhu, the demon viceroy of King Vepacitti Asurabodin, the ruler of the demon world, heard of his virtues and wished to pay homage to him to listen to his teachings. However, he thought that the Lord Buddha was a human being with a small body and that if he paid homage, he would have to bow down to look at him, which would be difficult. He himself had never bowed his head to anyone, so he put his mind to rest. However, he finally thought that he had to pay homage at least once. Buddhaghosa gives Rāhu's reasoning: *ahaṃ uccosmi, satthāraṃ onamitvā oloketuṃ na sakkhissāmi*, "I am tall; I shall not be able to bend down and look at the Teacher" (Buddhaghosa, 1886: 285; parallel at Buddhaghosa, 1933: 421–422).



Picture 9: The Posture of Pleasing Asurindarāhu (Online 10)

The Lord Buddha knew Rāhu's intention (*ajjhāsaya*), so he asked Ānanda to prepare a place to welcome him in front of the *Gandhakuṭi*, the perfumed chamber, and to lay down a bed there. Then the Lord Buddha performed a miracle by transforming his body to be

larger than a mountain and went to lie in the lion's posture (*sīhaseyyā*). When Asurindarāhu came to pay homage, instead of bowing down to look at the Lord Buddha, he had to tilt his head up to see the beautiful features of the Great Man (*mahāpurisa*) from his feet to his face, which made him feel delighted. Therefore, he reduced his conceit and paid homage. After listening to the sermon, he became devoted to Buddhism and took refuge in the Buddha, the *Dhamma*, and the *Saṅgha* for the rest of his life; in the commentary the Buddha replies that he did not fulfil the perfections with face turned down, and Rāhu goes for refuge that same day (Buddhaghosa, 1886: 285). Then he asked for permission to return to his own world.

Reclining Monuments

The Reclining Monuments are large-scale representations of the Reclining Buddha, most of them in the Posture of Pleasing Asurindarāhu as a reminder that, when Asurindarāhu despised the Buddha for being shorter than him, the Buddha became a giant (Online 24; Online 25; Online 26). The main feature of this posture is that the right hand supports the head. The pillow in this way becomes a secondary element, more decorative than otherwise compared to the *Parinibbāna* posture where the pillow is the only support for the Buddha's head. Thus, it is placed behind the elbow, under the armpit or no pillow is used, and comes in many shapes and decorations.

Of interest, the palm of Buddha's hand is at times taken in between the pillow and his head, as if there is double support.

1. Reclining Buddha of 56 metres long at Wat Saphan Lueak (วัดสะพานเลื้อก), Tha Mai District, Chanthaburi Province (Online 27). We note no pillow in use.



Picture 10: Reclining Buddha, Wat Saphan Lueak, Chanthaburi (Online 28)

2. Wat Phai Lom (วัดไผ่ล้อม), Chanthaburi Province (Online 29)



Picture 11: Reclining Buddha, Wat Phai Lom, Chanthaburi (Online 30)

3. Wat Bang Phli Yai Klang, Samut Prakan houses Somdet Phra Sakkayamuni Si Sumetha Bophit (สมเด็จพระศากยมุนีศรีสุเมธบพิตร), a Reclining Buddha of 53 metres long, built in 1978 and completed in 2001 by Phra Khru Phisan Wuttikit (Online 31; Online 32).



Picture 12: Somdet Phra Sakkayamuni Si Sumetha Bophit, Wat Bang Phli Yai Klang, Samut Prakan; photograph by Phraew (Online 31)

4. The reclining Buddha in Wat Satue (วัดสะดือ), or as the locals call it, Luang Pho To as it was built by Somdet Phra Phutthachan (To Phromrangs), is enshrined at Wat Satue, Tha Ruea District, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province. It was built in 1870 and measures 25 wa, about 50 metres, long (Online 33).



Picture 13: Luang Pho To, Wat Satue, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya (Online 34)

5. The Reclining Buddha Phra Si Mueang Thong of 50 metres long is enshrined at Wat Khun Inthapramun, Tambon Inthapramun, Ang Thong Province (Online 35; Online 36; Online 24)



Picture 14: Phra Si Mueang Thong, Wat Khun Inthapramun, Ang Thong (Online 37)

6. The reclining Buddha image of Wat Pa Mok is enshrined in the temple of Wat Pa Mok Worawihan (วัดป่าโมกวรวิหาร), which was originally named Wat Talat, in Pa Mok District, Ang Thong Province (Online 38; Online 35).



Picture 15: Reclining Buddha, Wat Pa Mok Worawihan, Ang Thong (Online 39)

7. Phra Phuttha Saiyat Wichian Buri Si Rattana Ming Mongkhon is enshrined at Wat Wichian Bamrung, Wichian Buri District, Phetchabun Province. Inside the Buddha image are relics of the collarbone, พระบรมสารีริกธาตุส่วนพระรากขวัญ (Phra Borommasaririkkathat suan Phra Rakkhwan). It is approximately 50 metres long (Online 40; Online 41).



Picture 16: Phra Phuttha Saiyat Wichian Buri Si Rattana Ming Mongkhon, Wat Wichian Bamrung, Phetchabun (Online 40)

8. Phra Non Chaksi, a Reclining Buddha of 47 metres long (47.40 m), is enshrined in Wat Phra Non Chaksi Worawihan or Wat Phra Non Chaksi, located in Sing Buri Province (Online 42; Online 43; Online 44).



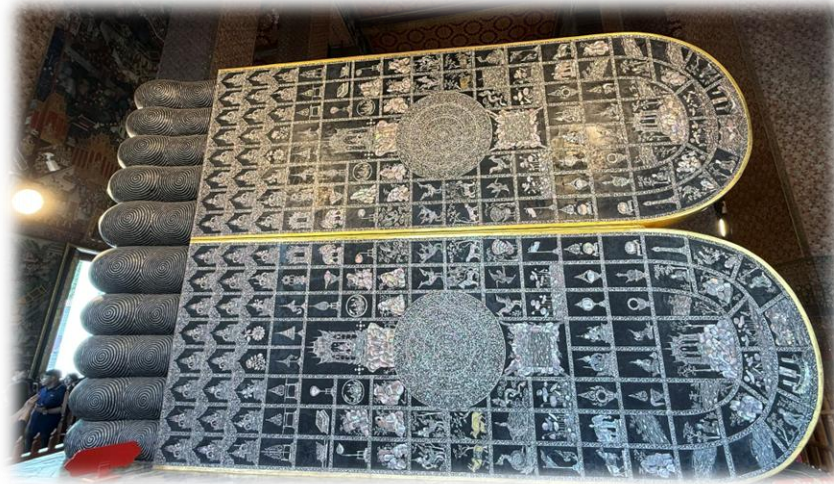
Picture 17: Phra Non Chaksi, Wat Phra Non Chaksi Worawihan, Sing Buri (Online 45)

9. Wat Phra Chetuphon Wimon Mangkhalaram (Wat Pho) in Bangkok enshrines one of the most visited Reclining Buddhas, 46 metres long (Online 36; Online 46).

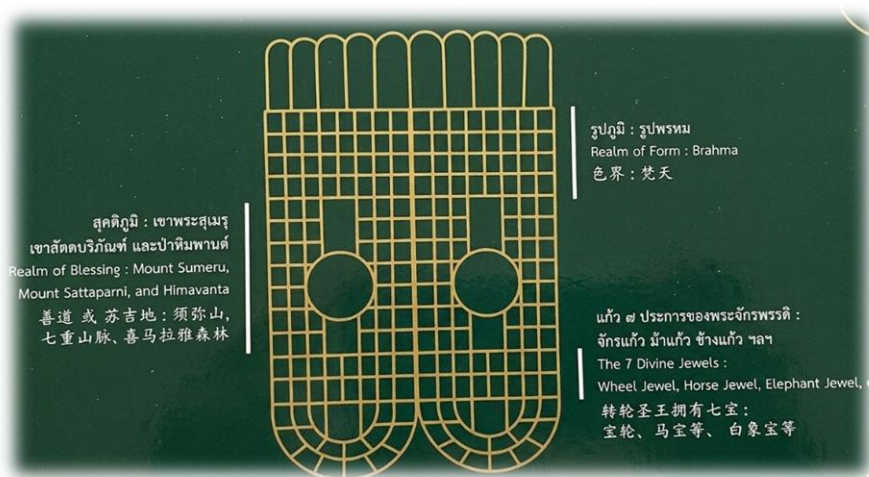


Picture 18: Reclining Buddha, Wat Pho, Bangkok (Online 46)

At Wat Pho the soles of both feet carry the 108 auspicious signs (*maṅgala*) (Online 21), inlaid in mother-of-pearl (Picture 19). The temple's board orders them by realm: the Realm of Form (รูปภูมิ, Rupphum), Brahmā; the Realm of Blessing (สุคติภูมิ, Sukhatiphum), Mount Sumeru, the seven mountain ranges (เขาสัตตบริภัณฑ์, Khao Sattaboriphan) and the Himavanta forest (ป่าหิมพานต์, Pa Himmaphan); and the seven jewels of the wheel-turning monarch (แก้ว ๗ ประการของพระจักรพรรดิ, Kaeo Chet Prakan khong Phra Chakkraphat) (Picture 20).



Picture 19: Soles of the Reclining Buddha, Wat Pho, Bangkok; photograph by Panayotis Zamaros



Picture 20: Board explaining the soles, Wat Pho, Bangkok; photograph by Panayotis Zamaros

10. Reclining Buddha of 21 wa, about 42 metres, long at Wat Phikun Sokhan in Phra Khao, Bang Ban District, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province (Online 47; Online 48).



Picture 21: Reclining Buddha, Wat Phikun Sokhan, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya (Online 47)

11. “Sweet-Eyed Reclining Buddha” at Wat Thai Watthanaram in Mae Sot, Tak Province, is a large reclining Buddha, similar to the Shwethalyaung reclining Buddha at Bago, Myanmar (Online 49; Online 50). We note the pillow is placed under the armpit.



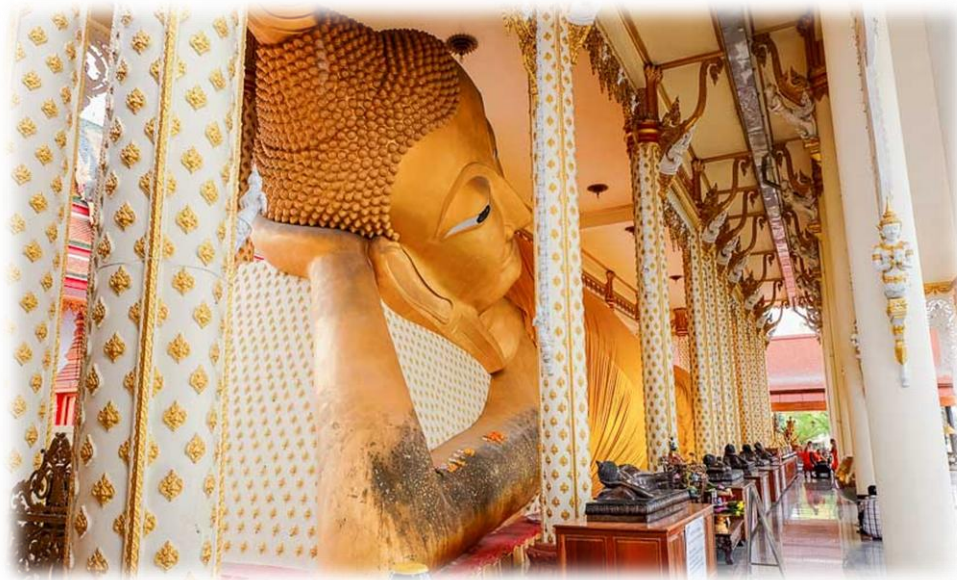
Picture 22: “Sweet-Eyed Reclining Buddha”, Wat Thai Watthanaram, Mae Sot (Online 50)

12. The large Reclining Buddha, Phra Phuttha Mahattamongkhon (พระพุทธมหิตตมงคล), which is 35 metres long, is located at Wat Hat Yai Nai (Wat Mahattamangkharam) on the banks of Khlong Utapao, Hat Yai, Songkhla Province (Online 51; Online 52). We note the pillow is placed under the armpit.



Picture 23: Phra Phuttha Mahattamongkhon, Wat Hat Yai Nai, Songkhla (Online 51)

13. The Reclining Buddha or Luang Pho Phra Non, that is 32 metres long, is enshrined in the Sala Phra Non of Wat Rat Prakhong Tham in Nonthaburi Province (Online 53).



Picture 24: Luang Pho Phra Non, Wat Rat Prakhong Tham, Nonthaburi; photograph by Phawat / Shutterstock.com (Online 53)

14. Reclining Buddha of 19.25 metres long, Maha Phruettharam Worawihan Temple, Phra Non Temple, Bangkok (Online 54; Online 55)



Picture 25: Reclining Buddha, Wat Maha Phruettharam Worawihan, Bangkok (Online 54)

15. Phra Pathom Chedi Ratcha Wora Maha Wihan Temple in Nakhon Pathom Province, where King Rama IV ordered the construction of a 17-metre-long reclining Buddha image to be enshrined as the principal Buddha image in the western chapel (Online 56; Online 57).



Picture 26: Reclining Buddha, Phra Pathom Chedi, Nakhon Pathom (Online 56)

16. The highlight of Wat Pa Pradu in Rayong is that the Reclining Buddha of 11.95 metres long is lying on his left side, the head resting on the left hand (Online 58; Online 59).



Picture 27: Left-side Reclining Buddha, Wat Pa Pradu, Rayong (Online 58)

A second image lying on the left side is in the Hall of Buddhas at Wat Samret, Ko Samui, Surat Thani Province.



Picture 28: Left-side Reclining Buddha, Hall of Buddhas, Wat Samret, Ko Samui, Surat Thani; photograph by Panayotis Zamaros

17. The Reclining Buddha at Wat Waramattayaphanthasatharam (วัดวราฆาตยภณทสาธาธา), Wat Khun Chan, Wat Phra Non, Bangkok uses his right hand to erect the head nearly upright and does not rely on a pillow to do this (Online 60).



Picture 29: Reclining Buddha, Wat Khun Chan (Wat Waramattayaphanthasatharam), Bangkok (Online 60)

Other วัดพระนอน (Wat Phra Non), temples of the Reclining Buddha, examples include (Online 26)

18. Wat Ratchaorotaram Ratchaworawihan, Bangkok (*pillow placed under the armpit*)
19. Wat Nang Chi Chotikaram, Bangkok (*second pillow placed under the armpit*)
20. Wat Senasanaram, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province
21. Wat Phutthaisawan, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province
22. Wat Phra Non 600 Years, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province
23. Wat Sam Wihan, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province
24. Wat Senasanaram, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province
25. Wat Yai Chai Mongkol, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province
26. Wat Thammarat, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province
27. Wat Lokayasutharam, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province
28. Wat Satue , Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province
29. Wat Nuea, Ubon Ratchathani Province
30. Wat Nong Wa, Rayong Province (*pillow placed under the armpit*)
31. Wat Nong Wa, Rayong Province
32. Wat Khuen Ubonrat, Khon Kaen Province
33. Wat Amnat, Amnat Charoen Province (*no pillow in use*)

34. Wat Ratchapaksi, Ang Thong Province
35. Wat Ao Noi, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province
36. Wat Kanchanaram, Singapore (*pillow placed under the armpit*)
37. Wat Burapha Phiram, Phra Yuen, Roi Et Province
38. Wat Phu Dan Hai, Kalasin Province
39. Wat Aranyikawat, Ratchaburi Province
40. Suwannakhiri Temple, Chachoengsao Province
41. Wat Thepnimit, Chachoengsao Province (*pillow placed under the armpit*)
42. Wat Tai Yan, Ang Thong Province
43. Wat Huai Sai Khao, Chiang Rai Province
44. Wat Rat Prakong Tham, Nonthaburi Province
45. Wat Sri Maha Pho, Nakhon Pathom Province
46. Wat Pa Maha Chedi Kaew , Sisaket Province (*pillow placed under the armpit*)
47. Wat Nuea, Ubon Ratchathani Province
48. Wat Phasukaram, Ubon Ratchathani Province
49. Wat Buppharam , Trat Province (*pillow placed under the armpit*)
50. Wat Pa Wiwek, Mukdahan Province (*pillow placed under the armpit*)
51. Wat Mae Rong Noi, Lamphun Province (*pillow placed under the armpit*)
52. Wat Ban Nong Ruea, Roi Et Province (*pillow placed under the armpit*)

The hand placed between pillow and head:

53. Wat Worachanyawas, Bangkok
54. Wat Rat Prakong Tham, Nonthaburi Province
55. Wat Pa Kittianuson, Khon Kaen Province
56. Wat Khuen Ubonrat, Khon Kaen Province
57. Wat Chaiyamangalaram, Malaysia

Category 2

Leading to *Parinibbāna* Postures

Posture 4: The Prophecy of Ānanda (ปางทรงพยากรณ์พระอานนท์, Pang Song Phayakon Phra Anon)

The Buddha image in the prophecy posture of Ānanda is in a lying position on his right side with eyes open, head resting on a pillow, left hand resting on the left side of his body, right hand raised and placed at his navel.



Picture 30: The Prophecy of Ānanda (Online 61)

According to the life story of the Buddha, before the Buddha passed away into *Parinibbāna*, Ānanda was sad and grieved and secretly stood alone and cried, leaning against the door-jamb (*kapisīsa*) (DN 16: 5.13; D II 144). The Buddha called for Ānanda and comforted him that all conditioned things are impermanent (DN 16: 5.14; D II 144).

Where can we find stability in conditioned things? Everything that is born in the beginning must change in the middle and eventually decay. Separation from things we love and enjoy is normal. Let go of sadness and focus on practising Dhamma. Then the Buddha praised Ānanda's goodness (DN 16: 5.15–16; D II 145–146) and prophesied that Ānanda would attain arahantship before the *Saṅgha* held the First Council: *khippam hohisi anāsavo*, “you will soon be free of defilements” (DN 16: 5.14; D II 144; Sujato, Online 2). The Cullavagga tells the fulfilment: on the night before the Council, between his feet leaving the ground and his head reaching the pillow, his mind was freed (Vin II 286; Oldenberg, 1880: 286; Brahmali, Online 62).

Posture 5: The Posture of Pleasing the Wanderer Subhadda
(ปางโปรดพระสุกัถพริพาชก, Pang Prot Phra Suphattha Pariphachok)

The image of the Buddha in the posture of pleasing the wanderer (*paribbājaka*) Subhadda is in a posture of lying on his right side with his eyes open and his head resting on a pillow.



Picture 31: The Posture of Pleasing the Wanderer Subhadda (same picture as Picture 30) (Online 61)

The left hand is extended along the body. The right hand is raised and folded with the fingers together between the arms. This is the gesture while giving a sermon.

According to the Buddhist history, while the Buddha was lying between a pair of *sāla* trees in the city of Kusinārā, a wanderer named Subhadda heard the news that the Buddha was going to pass away into *Parinibbāna*. Therefore, he wished to enter his presence to ask him questions. The Buddha permitted him and gave him a sermon on the Noble Eightfold Path. He emphasized that as long as the disciples of the Buddha could practice correctly, the world would not be empty of *arahants* (*asuñño loko arahantehi assa*, DN 16: 5.27; D II 151). When the sermon ended, Subhadda was filled with faith and asked to be ordained as a monk. He attained arahantship not long after (*nacirasseva*). He is considered the last personal disciple (*pacchimo sakkhisāvako*), the last *arahant* disciple of the Buddha during the Buddha's lifetime (DN 16: 5.23–30; D II 149–153; Sujato, Online 2).

Posture 6: The Final Sermon (ปางปัจฉิมโอวาท, Pang Patchim Owat)

This Buddha image in the final sermon posture is in the posture of lying on the right side in the lion reclining position but has a special feature: the right hand is raised and folded with the fingers (thumb touching the first joint of the index finger) at the same level as the chest.



Picture 32: The Final Sermon (Online 61)

The biography of the Buddha when he was about to enter *Parinibbāna* says that ... after the Buddha had taught the wanderer Subhadda, he gave a sermon to the monks. That sermon was the Buddha's last words. There are many stories, such as the matter of monks, which still used inconsistent words to address each other, namely the words *āvuso* and *bhante*. *Āvuso* (friend) is rendered by the Thai คุณ (khun, you) and *bhante* (venerable sir) by ท่าน (than, sir). The Buddha ordered that the monks who are older should call the monks who are ordained later or younger by name, by clan or *āvuso*. The monks who are younger should call the monks who are older than them *bhante* or *āyasmā* (DN 16: 6.2; D II 154).

Then, the Lord Buddha gave all the monks an opportunity to ask questions about the things he had taught so that they would not regret not having had the opportunity to ask (DN 16: 6.5–6.6; D II 155). It turned out that no monk asked any questions. Moreover, the Lord Buddha did not appoint any disciple to be the Teacher (*satthā*) to continue to govern the monks like the teachers of other religions, which no monks also asked questions about (Gopakamoggallāna Sutta, MN 108; M III 9; Sujato, Online 63). However, the Lord Buddha clearly instructed the monks before his *Parinibbāna* that any monks should not misunderstand that after his *Parinibbāna*, Buddhism or his teachings would be without a teacher. He also told Venerable Ānanda, “Ānanda, the Dhamma and the Vinaya that I have well expounded and established, those will be your teachers who will succeed me, the Tathāgata, when I pass away” (DN 16: 6.1; D II 154).

Then he gave his final sermon: “Monks, now I would like to remind you that all things that are born into this world naturally decay. You should perform duties that are beneficial to yourself and others with diligence” (DN 16: 6.7; D II 156). The Pāli is shorter: *vayadhammā saṅkhārā, appamādena sampādettha*, “Conditions fall apart. Persist with diligence” (Sujato, Online 2). Buddhaghosa notes that, lying on the *Parinibbāna* couch, Buddha placed forty-five years of teaching in the single word *appamāda* (Buddhaghosa, 1931: 593). After that, the Buddha did not say anything else until he passed away at the last moment of the night, at first light (*balavapaccūse*) (Buddhaghosa, 1931: 575), of the 15th waxing moon of the 6th lunar month or the full moon day of Visākha under the pair of *sāla* trees that were blooming in worship of the Buddha, out of season (*akālapupphehi*) (DN 16: 5.2; D II 138).

Parinibbāna Postures

Posture 7: The Posture of Passing into *Parinibbāna* I (ปางเสด็จดับขันธปรินิพพาน, Pang Sadet Dap Khan Parinipphan 1)

This posture of the Buddha is lying on his right side with his eyes closed, his head resting on the pillow, his left hand resting on the left side of his body, his right hand turned upside down and placed *either on the floor beside the pillow or on the pillow beside his head*, his feet superimposed over each other.

According to the Buddha's history, ... when the Lord Buddha made Subhadda the final noble disciple, Ānanda asked him how he should treat Channa after he passed away. Because he considered himself an old servant, who had followed him when he went to ordain, he was a difficult person and did not accept anyone's advice. The Lord Buddha ordered him to be punished by not letting the monks talk to him (*brahmadaṇḍa*, DN 16: 6.4; D II 154), and then Channa would realise his mistake. Then he gave advice to the

monks that “When the Tathāgata has passed away, the Vinaya that I have established for you all and the *Dhamma* that I have taught you all will be your teacher” (DN 16: 6.1; D II 154).



Picture 33: The Posture of Passing into Parinibbāna I, Phra Pathom Chedi, Nakhon Pathom (Online 64)

Then he gave his final advice that “Monks, now I would like to advise you all. All conditioned things decay. You should all practise the Threefold Training , *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*, completely with diligence”.

Examples include:

1. The oldest known image is the Reclining Buddha at Kuśinagara (Kushinagar), India, a 6.1-metre sandstone image given by the monk Haribala (Online 65; Online 66)



Picture 34: Reclining Buddha, Kuśinagara (Online 66)

2. Wat Laem Pho located in Songkhla Province. (Online 67)



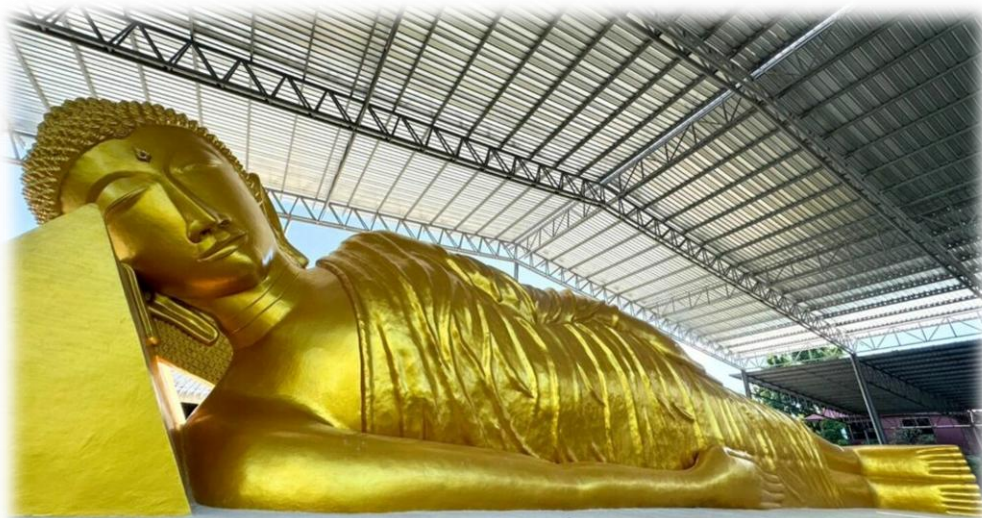
Picture 35: Reclining Buddha, Wat Laem Pho, Songkhla (Online 68)

3. Wat Don Khanak, a beautiful temple in Nakhon Pathom: (Online 69; Online 57)



Picture 36: Reclining Buddha, Wat Don Khanak, Nakhon Pathom (Online 69)

4. Wat Khao Phra Angkhan, Wat Phra Non, Buriram Province (Online 70; Online 71)



Picture 37: Reclining Buddha, Wat Khao Phra Angkhan, Buriram (Online 70)

Other วัดพระนอน (Wat Phra Non) examples include (Online 26)

5. Wat Chiang Isrimongkhonwararam, Sisaket Province
6. Wat Pa Tham Phueng, Sisaket Province
7. Wat Den Saleesri Mueang Kaen, Chiang Mai Province
8. Wat Phra Pan (Mae Pu Ka Reclining Buddha), Chiang Mai Province
9. Doi Tan Phra Pha Luang Temple, Chiang Mai Province
10. Wat Phra Non Pa Ket Thee, Chiang Mai Province

11. Wat Phra Pan (Mae Pu Ka Reclining Buddha), Chiang Mai Province
12. Wat Phra Non Nong Phueng, Chiang Mai Province
13. Wat Latthiwan, Chiang Mai Province
14. Wat Phra Bat Tai, Laos
15. Wat Pong Krasang, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province
16. Wat Tuk, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province
17. Wat Mahaeyong, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province
18. Wat Pa Tham Uthayan, Khon Kaen Province
19. Wat Thammak Sema Ram, Nakhon Ratchasima Province
20. Wat Phra Non, Phrae Province
21. Wat Phra That Hariphunchai, Lamphun Province
22. Wat Thung Si Wilai, Ubon Ratchathani Province
23. Phukon Forest Temple, Udon Thani Province

Posture 8: The Posture of Passing into *Parinibbāna* II (ปางเสด็จดับขันธปรินิพพาน, Pang Sadet Dap Khan Parinipphan 2)

According to the Buddhist biography, after the Buddha passed into *Parinibbāna*, his royal body was arranged appropriately. He lay on his back with his feet stretched out evenly, and his hands were placed one on top of the other on his chest. Some say they were overlapping on his navel (Online 61; Online 72). Therefore, this posture of the Buddha is lying on his back, the lying the Seyyā Sutta assigns to the dead (*petaseyyā*) (AN 4.246; A II 244).

In Thailand, as far as is currently known, there are:

- Wat Phra Non, Tambon Phihan Daeng, Mueang District, Suphan Buri Province, an ancient temple from the U Thong Period. (Online 61; Online 72)



Picture 38: Luang Pho Phra Non, Wat Phra Non, Suphan Buri (Online 61)

Excavations discovered a reclining Buddha image carved from stone. It is lying on its back and is the same size as an ancient person, about 2 metres long. It is currently enshrined in the Reclining Buddha Temple.

- Wat Thung Noi, Tambon Laem Bua, Nakhon Chai Si District, Nakhon Pathom Province, is a large stucco reclining Buddha image in the Sukhothai art style, lying on its back with both hands stretched and clasped on its navel (Online 72; Online 73).



Picture 39: Supine reclining Buddha, Wat Thung Noi, Nakhon Pathom (video still) (Online 73)

Posture 9: The Posture of Passing into *Parinibbāna* III (ปางเสด็จดับขันธปรินิพพาน, Pang Sadet Dap Khan Parinipphan 3) or The Posture of Offering the Royal Cremation (ปางถวายพระเพลิง, Pang Thawai Phra Phloeng)

This Buddha image is in a supine position, with both feet stretched out and hands placed on either side of the body. Mahākassapa is paying homage at the feet (DN 16: 6.22; D II 164).

According to the Buddhist legend, ... during the royal cremation ceremony, the body was wrapped in new cloth, then in carded cotton, then again in new cloth, five hundred double layers in all. The royal body was then placed in an iron vessel filled with oil, covered with another iron vessel turned over it, and placed on a pyre made entirely of fragrant wood (*āyasāya teladoṇiyā*, DN 16: 6.18; D II 162) at the Makuṭabandhana shrine (*cetiya*) of the Mallas in Kusinārā for the cremation ceremony. When the royal cremation ceremony was performed, the fire did not spread. Only when Venerable Mahākassapa arrived and circled the pyre three times and bowed his head to the feet did the fire ignite of itself (*sayameva ... pajjali*) (DN 16: 6.22; D II 164; Sujato, Online 2).

As far as has been found in Thailand, there should be only one, which is in the small chapel of Wat Ratchakhrue Worawihan (วัดราชคฤห์วรวิหาร), Bangkok, an ancient temple where the body of the brave soldier of King Taksin the Great, Phraya Phichai Dap Hak, is buried. According to history, Phraya Phichai Dap Hak restored this Buddha image to make merit, dedicate merit, and atone for the sins of the soldiers and villagers who were killed in large numbers; the image itself dates to the reign of King Ekathotsarot (Online 74; Online 72; Online 7).



Picture 40: The Cremation Posture, Wat Ratchakhrue Worawihan, Bangkok (Online 72)

There is also a reclining Buddha image with a special feature called พระเจ้าเข้านิพพาน (Phra Chao Khao Nipphan), the Lord Entering *Nibbāna*, which looks like a coffin containing the royal corpse before the cremation, with two feet protruding from one end (Online 75; Online 76). There are 2 temples in Thailand where it can be found:

- Wihan Luang Pho Puang, Wat Tha Lo, Tambon Tha Lo, Mueang District, Phichit Province, which is assumed to be more than 100 years old (Online 77)

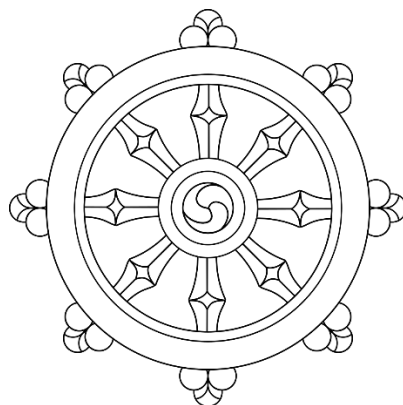


Picture 41: The Lord Entering *Nibbāna*, Wat Tha Lo, Phichit (Online 77)

- Wihan Klaep, Wat Phra Sri Rattana Mahathat Woramahawihan (Wat Yai), Mueang District, Phitsanulok Province. (Online 75)



Picture 42: The Lord Entering *Nibbāna*, Wihan Khlaep, Wat Phra Si Rattana Mahathat, Phitsanulok (Online 75)



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