

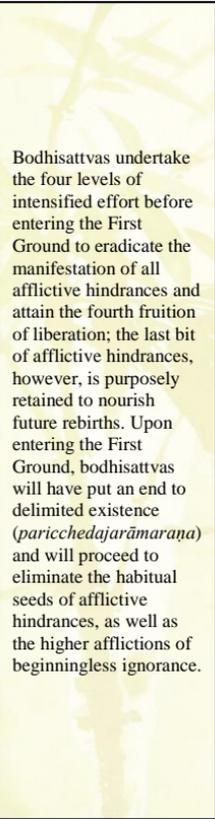
# The Cultivation Stages of the Two Paths within the Buddha Bodhi

## The joint cultivation of these two paths is the one and only way to attain Buddhahood

### The Great Bodhi: Path to Buddhahood

### The Bodhi of the Two Lesser Vehicles: Path to Liberation

<b>Distant Pāramitās</b>  <b>►</b>  <b>First Faith to Tenth Dedication</b>	<b>Path of Accumulation</b>	Ten Faiths: Bodhisattvas accumulate faith in the Buddha Dharma. This will take one to ten thousand eons to accomplish.	Extensively practicing the six <i>pāramitās</i> before achieving awakening to the True Mind.	Practitioners eliminate the three fetters to attain the first fruition of liberation.
		First Abiding: Bodhisattvas accumulate virtues of charitable giving, primarily material goods.		
		Second Abiding: Bodhisattvas accumulate virtues of precept observance.		
		Third Abiding: Bodhisattvas accumulate virtues of forbearance.		
		Fourth Abiding: Bodhisattvas accumulate virtues of diligence.		
		Fifth Abiding: Bodhisattvas accumulate virtues of meditative absorption.		
	Sixth Abiding: Bodhisattvas accumulate virtues of <i>prajñā</i> , by studying and familiarizing themselves with the Middle Way of <i>prajñā</i> and eliminating the view of self during the Path of Preparation.	Extensively practicing the six <i>pāramitās</i> after achieving awakening to the True Mind.	Practitioners attain the second fruition of liberation by reducing greed, aversion, and delusion.	
	Seventh Abiding: Bodhisattvas awaken to the True Mind and gain direct comprehension of <i>prajñā</i> , thereupon realize directly the nirvana with primordial, intrinsic and pure nature.			
	Eighth Abiding: Starting from this stage, bodhisattvas gain direct comprehension of the Middle Way of <i>prajñā</i> in all phenomena, and gradually eliminate their dispositional hindrances.			
	Tenth Abiding: Bodhisattvas see the Buddha-nature with the physical eye and attain direct comprehension of the illusoriness of the world.			
First Practice to Tenth Practice: While extensively cultivating the six <i>pāramitās</i> , bodhisattvas rely on their insights into the Middle Way of <i>prajñā</i> to directly comprehend that the five aggregates, twelve sense-fields, and eighteen elements are illusory like mirages. Upon completing the Tenth Practice, they will have fully accomplished the direct comprehension of these phenomena being like mirages.	Practitioners attain the third fruition of liberation by eliminating the five lower fetters.			
First Dedication to Tenth Dedication: Bodhisattvas study and familiarize themselves with the knowledge-of-all-aspects and eliminate dispositional hindrances, except the last bit of affliction eradicated through cultivation. Upon completing the Tenth Dedication, they will have attained direct comprehension of the bodhisattva path being like a dream.				

<p><b>Near Pāramitās</b></p> <p>►</p> <p><b>First Ground to Seventh Ground</b></p>	<b>Path of Vision</b>	<p>First Ground: Upon completing the Tenth Dedication, bodhisattvas will have realized a portion of the knowledge-of-the-aspects-of-paths, consisting of personal and direct realization of each of the eight consciousnesses, which enables them to perceive the five aspects of dharmas, the three natures, the seven facets of the ultimate truth, the seven intrinsic natures [of the <i>tathāgatagarbha</i>], and the two types of selflessness. They enter the Stage of Proficiency (First Ground) after bravely making the ten inexhaustible vows. Also, they have forever subdued the dispositional hindrances without eliminating them completely. While they can attain liberation from samsara through wisdom at this point, they purposely retain the last bit of afflictive hindrances to nourish future rebirths out of their great vows. The principal cultivation of the First Ground consists of the <i>pāramitā</i> of Dharma teaching as well as the Hundred Dharmas. The cultivation of the First Ground is completed when bodhisattvas attain direct comprehension of the six sense-objects being like images in a mirror.</p>	 <p>Bodhisattvas undertake the four levels of intensified effort before entering the First Ground to eradicate the manifestation of all afflictive hindrances and attain the fourth fruition of liberation; the last bit of afflictive hindrances, however, is purposely retained to nourish future rebirths. Upon entering the First Ground, bodhisattvas will have put an end to delimited existence (<i>paricchedajarāmarāṇa</i>) and will proceed to eliminate the habitual seeds of afflictive hindrances, as well as the higher afflictions of beginningless ignorance.</p>
	<b>Path of Cultivation</b>	<p>Second Ground: Bodhisattvas enter the Second Ground when they have completed their cultivation of the First Ground and realized an additional portion of the knowledge-of-the-aspects-of-paths. Cultivation of this stage focuses on the <i>pāramitā</i> of precept observance and the knowledge-of-all-aspects. Upon completing the Second Ground, bodhisattvas will have attained direct comprehension of the first seven consciousnesses being like light and shadows. Thereupon, they will be able to adhere to precepts in a way that is both pure and natural.</p>	
		<p>Third Ground: Bodhisattvas advance to the Third Ground after having realized an additional portion of the knowledge-of-the-aspects-of-paths upon completing the Second Ground. The principal cultivation of the Third Ground includes the <i>pāramitā</i> of forbearance, the four concentrations and the four formless absorptions, the four boundless minds, as well as the five supernatural powers. While bodhisattvas on the Third Ground can realize the fruition of twofold liberation, they deliberately choose not to; instead, they purposely retain the last bit of afflictive hindrances to nourish future rebirths. Upon completing the Third Ground, bodhisattvas will have attained direct comprehension of all voices of Dharma teaching being like echoes in a valley and achieved the mind-made body attained through the taintless and wondrous <i>samādhi</i>.</p>	
		<p>Fourth Ground: Bodhisattvas advance to the Fourth Ground after having realized an additional portion of the knowledge-of-the-aspects-of-paths on the Third Ground. The principal cultivation of this stage is the <i>pāramitā</i> of diligence, for which bodhisattvas extensively and tirelessly teach and guide sentient beings who have karmic connections with them in this and other worlds. They will also continue their cultivation of the knowledge-of-all-aspects. Upon completing the Fourth Ground, bodhisattvas will have attained direct comprehension of their own mind-made bodies generated during <i>samādhi</i> being like the moon reflected in the water.</p>	
		<p>Fifth Ground: Bodhisattvas advance to the Fifth Ground after having realized an additional portion of the knowledge-of-the-aspects-of-paths on the Fourth Ground. The <i>pāramitā</i> of meditative absorption and the knowledge-of-all-aspects constitute the principal cultivation of the Fifth Ground. Bodhisattvas will also eliminate the desire for nirvana possessed by adherents of the lesser vehicles. Upon completing the Fifth Ground, they will have attained direct comprehension of all bodhisattvas' mind-made bodies and emanation bodies being like the effects of conjuring.</p>	

<p><b>Near Pāramitās</b></p> <p>▶</p> <p><b>First Ground to Seventh Ground</b></p>	<p><b>Path of Cultivation</b></p>	<p>Sixth Ground: Bodhisattvas advance to the Sixth Ground after having realized an additional portion of the knowledge-of-the-aspects-of-paths on the Fifth Ground. The principal cultivation of the Sixth Ground is the <i>pāramitā</i> of <i>prajñā</i>: relying on the knowledge-of-the-aspects-of-paths they have acquired, bodhisattvas directly comprehend that each of the twelve factors of dependent arising as well as the mind-made emanation bodies are all transformations of one’s mind of True Suchness, and therefore are “seemingly but not truly existent.” Having accomplished the contemplation of the subtle characteristics of these dharmas, they acquire the ability to spontaneously realize the meditative absorption of cessation without any added effort. Thereupon, they become Mahāyāna adepts (<i>āśaikṣa</i>) of twofold liberation.</p>	<p>Upon completing the Seventh Ground, bodhisattvas will have eliminated the last bit of “affliction eradicated through cultivation” that has been purposely retained. They will also have thoroughly eliminated all tainted habitual seeds of afflictive hindrances associated with the aggregates of form, sensation, and perception.</p>
<p><b>Great Pāramitās</b></p> <p>▶</p> <p><b>Eighth Ground to Virtual Enlightenment</b></p>		<p>Eighth Ground: Having attained the contemplation of the extremely subtle characteristics at the Seventh Ground, bodhisattvas realize an additional portion of the knowledge-of-the-aspects-of-paths and advance to the Eighth Ground. The principal cultivation of the Eighth Ground concentrates on the continued learning of the knowledge-of-all-aspects and the <i>pāramitā</i> of vows. Upon completing the Eighth Ground, bodhisattvas will be able to spontaneously bring forth the exclusively signless contemplation at all times and hence can manipulate physical objects or mental images at will. Also, they will have realized “the mind-made body attained through correct realization of dharma characteristics.”</p>	
<p>Ninth Ground: Bodhisattvas advance to the Ninth Ground after having realized an additional portion of the knowledge-of-the-aspects-of-paths on the Eighth Ground. The principal cultivation of the Ninth Ground consists of the <i>pāramitā</i> of strength as well as continued learning of the knowledge-of-all-aspects. Upon completing the Ninth Ground, bodhisattvas will have mastered the four unhindered knowledges and realized “the mind-made body attained without added effort and in accordance with the classes of beings to be delivered.”</p>			
<p>Tenth Ground: Bodhisattvas advance to the Tenth Ground after having realized an additional portion of the knowledge-of-the-aspects-of-paths on the Ninth Ground. The principal cultivation of the Tenth Ground is the knowledge-of-all-aspects, namely, the <i>pāramitā</i> of omniscience. Upon completing the Tenth Ground, bodhisattvas will be able to generate the cloud of great Dharma wisdom and manifest the various meritorious qualities contained therein. They will also become a “designated bodhisattva.”</p>			

<p><b>Great Pāramitās</b></p>	<p><b>Path of Cultivation</b></p>	<p>Virtual Enlightenment: After having realized the portion of the knowledge-of-the-aspects-of-paths cultivated on the Tenth Ground, bodhisattvas advance to the stage of Virtual Enlightenment. At this stage, they cultivate the knowledge-of-all-aspects and perfectly realize the acquiescence to the non-arising of dharmas (<i>anutpattikadharmakṣānti</i>) pertaining to this stage. They will also perfect the thirty-two majestic physical features and innumerable associated good marks unique to Buddha by cultivating and accumulating enormous amount of virtues over a hundred eons.</p>	<p>Bodhisattvas gradually and spontaneously eliminate the taintless habitual seeds of afflictive hindrances associated with the aggregates of formation and consciousness, as well as the higher afflictions of cognitive hindrances.</p>
<p><b>Perfect Pāramitās</b></p>	<p><b>Path of Ultimate Realization</b></p>	<p>Sublime Enlightenment: Bodhisattvas have thoroughly eliminated all habitual seeds of afflictive hindrances and all latent cognitive hindrances, as well as permanently eradicated the ignorance that leads to transformational existence. They will manifest birth in the human world, realize the great nirvana, and perfect the four kinds of wisdom of Buddha. After displaying physical death in the human world, their reward-bodies will permanently reside in the highest heaven of the form-realm to continue to teach and guide bodhisattvas on or above the First Ground coming from all worlds. Having accomplished the ultimate fruition of Buddhahood, they will generate numerous emanation bodies to perpetually teach and guide sentient beings.</p>	<p>Bodhisattvas bring transformational existence (<i>parinamikījarāmaṇa</i>) to a complete end and attain the great nirvana.</p>

## Perfect Ultimate Fruition of Buddhahood

Respectfully composed by Buddhist disciple Xiao Pingshi (Feb. 2012)