***The Four Noble Truths***  
**1. The Truth of Suffering (Kutai)**  
The Buddha declared that this world if full of suffering; that actual existence including birth, decrepitude, sickness and death is suffering and sorrow. This is called the Truth of Suffering.  
  
**2. The Truth of the Cause of Suffering (Jutai)**  
The cause of human suffering lies in ignorance and Karma. Ignorance and its resulting Karma have often times been called "desire" or craving. The Buddha declared:   
Verily it is this thirst or craving, causing the renewal of existence, accompanied by sensual delight, seeking satisfaction now here, now there - the craving for gratification of the passions, for continual existence in the worlds of sense.  
  
**3. The Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (Mettai)**  
The extinguishing of all human ignorance and Karma results in a state known as Nirvana. This is the Truth of the Cessation of Suffering.  
  
**4. The Truth of the Path to the Cessation of Suffering (Dotai)**  
The Truth of the Path to the Cessation of Suffering is the Noble Eight-fold Path. 

***The Noble Eight-fold Path***  
**1. Right Views** - to keep ourselves free from prejudice, superstition and delusion and to see aright the true nature of life.  
**2. Right Thoughts** - to turn away from the evils of this world and to direct our minds towards righteousness.  
**3. Right Speech** - to refrain from pointless and harmful talk to speak kindly and courteously to all.  
**4. Right Conduct** - to see that our deeds are peaceful, benevolent, compassionate and pure; to live the Teaching of the Buddha daily.  
**5. Right Livelihood**- to earn our living in such a way as to entail no evil consequences.  
**6. Right Effort** - to direct our efforts incessantly to the overcoming of ignorance and selfish desires.  
**7. Right Mindfulness** - to cherish good and pure thoughts for all that we say and do arise from our thoughts.  
**8. Right Meditation** - to concentrate our will on the Buddha, His Life and His Teaching.  
  
Since these eight paths can be put into the categories of precepts, meditation and wisdom we can say that the path of practice of Buddhism is the Three Vehicles of Learning. By following the precepts we learn to control the body and mind. Through mediation we learn to unify our mind. Wisdom is attained by the practice of the above two and through this wisdom all ignorance and passions are cut off and true state of Enlightenment is then realized.

***The Seven Stages of Purification:***

1. Purification of Virtue

2. Purification of Mind

3. Purification of View

4. Purification by Overcoming Doubt

5. Purification by Knowledge and Vision of What is Path and Not-Path

6. Purification by Knowledge and Vision of the Way

7. Purification by Knowledge and Vision

(from Majjhima Nikaya 24, Visuddhimagga)

## The Sixteen Bodhisattva Precepts

### The Three Treasures

I take refuge in the Buddha  
I take refuge in the Dharma  
I take refuge in the Sangha

### The Three Pure Precepts

Not Creating Evil  
Practicing Good  
Actualizing Good For Others

### The Ten Grave Precepts

Affirm life; Do not kill  
Be giving; Do not steal  
Honor the body; Do not misuse sexuality  
Manifest truth; Do not lie  
Proceed clearly; Do not cloud the mind  
See the perfection; Do not speak of others errors and faults  
Realize self and other as one; Do not elevate the self and blame others  
Give generously; Do not be withholding  
Actualize harmony; Do not be angry  
Experience the intimacy of things; Do not defile the Three Treasures

Attar's Seven Valleys of Love  
  
  
**The Valley of the Quest**

http://chippit.tripod.com/images/vspacer.gif **When you enter the first valley, the Valley of the Quest, a hundred difficulties will assail you; you will undergo a hundred trials. There, the Parrot of heaven is no more than a fly. You will have to spend several years there, you will have to make great efforts, and to change your state. You will have to give up all that has seemed precious to you and regard as nothing all that you possess. When you are sure that you possess nothing, you still will have to detach yourself from all that exists. Your heart will then be saved from perdition and you will see the pure light of Divine Majesty and your real wishes will be multiplied to infinity. One who enters here will be filled with such longing that he will give himself up completely to the quest symbolized by this valley. He will ask of his cup-bearer a draught of wine, and he has drunk it nothing will matter except the pursuit of his true aim. Then he will no longer fear the dragons, the guardians of the door, which seek to devour him. When the door is opened and he enters, then dogma, belief and unbelief--all cease to exist.**

**The Valley of Love**

http://chippit.tripod.com/images/vspacer.gif **The next valley is the Valley of Love. To enter it one must be a flaming fire--what shall I say? A man must himself be fire. The face of the lover must be enflamed, burning and impetuous as fire. True love knows no after-thoughts; with love, good and evil cease to exist.   
http://chippit.tripod.com/images/vspacer.gif But as for you, the heedless and careless, this discourse will not touch you, your teeth will not even nibble at it. A loyal person stakes ready money, stakes his head even, to be united to his Friend. Others content themselves with what they will do for you tomorrow. If he who sets out on this way will not engage himself wholly and completely he will never be free from the sadness and melancholy which weigh him down. Until the falcon reaches his aim, he is agitated and distressed. If a fish is thrown onto the beach by the waves it struggles to get back into the water.   
http://chippit.tripod.com/images/vspacer.gif In this valley, love is represented by fire, and reason by smoke. When love comes reason disappears. Reason cannot live with the folly of love; love has nothing to do with human reason. If you possessed inner sight, the atoms of the visible world would be manifested to you. But if you look at things with the eye of ordinary reason you will never understand how necessary it is to love. Only a man who has been tested and is free can feel this. He who undertakes this journey should have a thousand hearts so that he can sacrifice one at every moment.**

**The Valley of Understanding**

http://chippit.tripod.com/images/vspacer.gif **After the valley of which I have spoken, there comes another--the Valley of Understanding, which has neither beginning nor end. No way is equal to this way, and the distance to be travelled to cross it is beyond reckoning.   
http://chippit.tripod.com/images/vspacer.gif Understanding, for each traveller, is enduring; but knowledge is temporary. The soul, like the body, is in a state of progress or decline; and the Spiritual Way reveals itself only in the degree to which the traveller has overcome his faults and weaknesses, his sleep and his inertia, and each will approach nearer to his aim according to his effort. Even if a gnat were to fly with all its might could it equal the speed of the wind? There are different ways of crossing this Valley, and all birds do not fly alike. Understanding can be arrived at variously--some have found the Mihrab, others the idol. When the sun of understanding brightens this road, each receives light according to his merit and he finds the degree assigned to him in the understanding of truth. When the mystery of the essence of beings reveals itself clearly to him, the furnace of this world becomes a garden of flowers. He who is striving will be able to see the almond in its hard shell. He will no longer be pre-occupied with himself, but will look up at the face of his Friend. In each atom he will see the whole; he will ponder over thousands of bright secrets.  
http://chippit.tripod.com/images/vspacer.gif But, how many have lost their way in this search for one who has found the mysteries! It is necessary to have a deep and lasting wish to become as we ought to be in order to cross this difficult valley. Once you have tasted the secrets you will have a real wish to understand them. But, whatever you may attain, never forget the words of the Koran, "Is there anything more?"   
http://chippit.tripod.com/images/vspacer.gif As for you who are asleep (and I cannot commend you for this), why not put on mourning? You, who have not seen the beauty of your Friend, get up and search! How long will you stay as you are, like a donkey without a halter!**

**The Valley of Independence and Detachment**

http://chippit.tripod.com/images/vspacer.gif **Then there comes the valley where there is neither the desire to possess nor the wish to discover. In this state of the soul a cold wind blows, so violent that in a moment it devastates an immense space; the seven oceans are no more than a pool, the seven planets a mere sparkle, the seven heavens a corpse, the seven hells broken ice. Then, an astonishing thing, beyond reason! An ant has the strength of a hundred elephants, and a hundred caravans perish while a rook is filling his crop.  
http://chippit.tripod.com/images/vspacer.gif In order that Adam might receive the celestial light, hosts of green-clad angels were consumed by sorrow. So that Noah might become a carpenter of God and build the ark, thousands of creatures perished in the waters. Myriads of gnats fell on the army of Abraham so that the king would be overthrown. Thousands of the first-born died so that Moses might see God. Thousands of people took to the Christian girdles so that Christ could possess the secret of God. Thousands of hearts and souls were pillaged so that Muhammad might ascend for one night to heaven. In this Valley nothing old or new has value; you can act or not act. If you saw a whole world burning until hearts were only shish kabab, it would be only a dream compared to reality. If myriads of souls were to fall into this boundless ocean it would be as a drop of dew. If heaven and earth were to burst into minute particles it would be no more than a leaf falling from a tree; and if everything were to be annihilated, from the fish to the moon, would there be found in the depths of a pit the leg of a lame ant? If there remain no trace of either of men or jinn, the secret of a drop of water from which all has been formed is still to be pondered over.**

**The Valley of Unity**

http://chippit.tripod.com/images/vspacer.gif **You will next have to cross the Valley of unity. In this valley everything is broken in pieces and then unified. All who raise their heads here raise them from the same collar. Although you seem to see many beings, in reality there is only one--all make one which is complete in its unity. Again, that which you see as a unity is not different from that which appears in numbers. And as the Being of whom I speak is beyond unity and numbering, cease to think of eternity as before and after, and since these two eternities have vanished, cease to speak of them. When all that is visible is reduced to nothing, what is there left to contemplate?**

**The Valley of Astonishment and Bewilderment**

http://chippit.tripod.com/images/vspacer.gif **After the Valley of Unity comes the Valley of Astonishment and Bewilderment, where one is a prey to sadness and dejection. There, sighs are like swords, and each breath a bitter sight; there, is sorrow and lamentation, and a burning eagerness. It is at once day and night. There, is fire, yet a man is depressed and despondent. How, in his bewilderment, shall he continue his way? But he who has achieved unity forgets all and forgets himself. If he is asked: "Are you, or are you not? Have you or have you not the feeling of existence? Are you in the middle or on the border? Are you mortal or immortal?" he will reply with certainty: "I know nothing, I understand nothing, I am unaware of myself. I am in love, but with whom I do not know. My heart is at the same time both full and empty of love.**

**The Valley of Deprivation and Death**

http://chippit.tripod.com/images/vspacer.gif **Last of all comes the Valley of Deprivation and Death, which is almost impossible to describe. The essence of the Valley is forgetfulness, dumbness and distraction; the thousand shadows which surround you disappear in a single ray of the celestial sun. When the ocean of immensity begins to heave, the pattern on its surface loses its form; and this pattern is no other than the world present and the world to come. Whoever declares that he does not exist acquires great merit. The drop that becomes part of this great ocean abides there for ever and in peace. In this calm sea, a man, at first, experiences only humiliation and overthrow; but when he emerges from this state he will understand it as creation, and many secrets will be revealed to him.  
http://chippit.tripod.com/images/vspacer.gif Many beings have missed taking the first step and so have not been able to take the second--they can only be compared to minerals. When aloe wood and thorns are reduced to ashes they both look alike--but their quality is different. An impure object dropped into rose-water remains impure because of its innate qualities; but a pure object dropped into the ocean will lose its specific existence and will participate in the ocean and in its movement. In ceasing to exist separately it retains its beauty. It exists and non-exists. How can this be? The mind cannot conceive it.**