Buddhist Spiritual Progress by the Eightfold Path:

Morality → Meditation → Insight → Enlightenment → Final Nirvana

Eightfold Path

- Right Action
- Right Speech
- Right Livelihood
- Right Effort
- Right Concentration
- Right Mindfulness
- Right Intention
- Right Views

Nirvāṇa: “All cogitation, all worry and rumination, all me-taking and mine-making as well as the penchant for conceit are extinguished, no longer desired, abandoned, stopped, no longer grasped.” (Māghīma Nikāya I, 486)

New karma ended. Eternal state of unindividuated bliss.

The Ethic of Successive Approximation: Varieties of Buddhist Life

1. parinirvāṇa (end of human life)
2. samyaksambodhi (complete enlightenment, fullness of prajñā)
3. prajñā deepens with clear comprehension, detachment
4. vipashyanā meditation that cultivates prajñā (“insight”)
5. Sangha ordination
6. Going for Refuge, moral discernment
7. Practical Buddhism and folk religion

Stages in the Theravāda Buddhist Path:

1. Arhat: fully enlightened; at death, nirvāṇa without remainder
2. “Non-Returner”: fetters of craving removed; one will not be reborn in human realm again and pass into nirvāṇa from there.
3. “Once-Returner”: When insight (prajñā) has deepened, craving is weakened, one will return only once more as human
4. “Stream-Enterer”: one has “entered the stream” and undergo no more than 7 future human rebirths.

Taking refuge: in the Buddha, Dharma, Sangha

Mahāyāna Buddhist Paradigm for Spiritual Progress:

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Bodhisattva Rebirths

- skillful compassion / detached insight

Progress in the Pāramitās (Perfections)

Dāna → śīla → kshānti → vīrya → dhyāna → prajñā
// upāya → prajñādāna → bala → jñāna

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Vow to reach Enlightenment (bodhicitta)