

# Insight & Aspiration: The Path of a Bodhisattva in T'ien-t'ai Buddhism

In T'ien-t'ai Buddhism, the aspiration for enlightenment is expressed through the Four Extensive Vows, rooted in a profound, multi-layered understanding of the Four Noble Truths, as interpreted by Chih-i (538–597).

## The Four Extensive Vows: A Commitment to All Beings



## Chih-i's Fourfold Truths: A Ladder of Insight

**Level 4: The Non-created Four Noble Truths**  
The highest insight into the non-duality of reality, where nirvana and suffering are one (Complete Teaching).

**Level 3: The Infinite Four Noble Truths**  
Seeing the infinite marks of suffering and its causes across all Ten Realms (Distinct Teaching).

**Level 2: The Unborn Four Noble Truths**  
Insight into emptiness; phenomena like suffering are understood to be fundamentally empty (Shared Teaching).

**Level 1: The Truths of Birth and Passing Away**  
Understanding suffering as the cycle of rebirth within the Triple Realm (Tripitaka Teaching).