Chapter 7 Taking the Bodhisattva Vow

Colour scheme used

- View / Wisdom / Emptiness
- Practice / Method / Path
- Motivation / Bodhicitta / Compassion
- Pitfalls / Errors
- Foundational / Structural

1. Purpose of the Bodhisattva Vow
- To stabilise bodhicitta through commitment
- To transform aspiration into a vowed path
- To formally enter bodhisattva conduct

2. What the Bodhisattva Vow Is
- A commitment to attain enlightenment for all beings
- Grounded in bodhicitta and compassion
- Sustained by wisdom realizing emptiness

3. The View Required for Taking the Vow
- Understanding the emptiness of self and action
- Avoiding reification of vows as inherently existent
- Seeing vows as dependently arisen commitments

4. Preconditions for Taking the Vow
- Stable aspirational bodhicitta
- Respect for ethical discipline
- Confidence in the Mahayana path

5. Aspirational and Engaging Bodhicitta
- Aspirational bodhicitta as the foundation
- Engaging bodhicitta as commitment to action
- The vow marks the shift to engagement

6. How the Vow Is Taken
- Taken in the presence of a qualified teacher or support
- Supported by ritual and intention
- Strengthened by repeated reaffirmation

7. Maintaining the Bodhisattva Vow
- Frequent recollection of motivation
- Avoiding actions that damage bodhicitta
- Using confession and restoration when weakened

8. Causes of Degeneration of the Vow
- Strong self-cherishing
- Anger toward sentient beings
- Abandoning bodhicitta intention

9. Wisdom as Protection for the Vow
- Emptiness prevents rigidity and guilt
- Dependent arising allows restoration
- Wisdom prevents discouragement

10. Relationship Between the Vow and Training
- The vow gives direction to daily training
- Training gives substance to the vow
- Each supports and reinforces the other

11. Signs the Vow Is Alive
- Spontaneous concern for others' welfare
- Reduced tolerance for self-cherishing
- Greater resilience in adversity

12. Pocket Reminder
- The vow is not a burden but a direction
- When self is empty, commitment is light