Chapter 3 The Sevenfold Cause and Effect

Colour scheme used

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

1. Purpose of the Sevenfold Cause and Effect

- Systematic method for generating bodhicitta
- Ensures bodhicitta arises from causes, not aspiration alone
- Transforms self-centred concern into universal responsibility

2. Overview of the Seven Causes and the Effect

- 1. Recognising all beings as mothers
- 2. Remembering their kindness
- 3. Repaying their kindness
- 4. Great love
- 5. Great compassion
- 6. Extraordinary intention
- 7. Bodhicitta (the effect)

3. Recognising All Beings as Mothers

- Based on beginningless rebirth
- All beings have stood in a nurturing role
- Counters the sense of ‘stranger’ or ‘other’

4. Remembering the Kindness of All Beings

- Kindness shown in countless lifetimes
- Includes even harm-doers as former benefactors
- Undermines indifference and resentment

5. Wishing to Repay Their Kindness

- Natural response to remembered kindness
- Transforms gratitude into responsibility
- Prepares the mind for impartial concern

6. Great Love

- Wish that all beings possess happiness and its causes
- Not attachment or preference-based love
- Equal toward friends, enemies, and strangers

7. Great Compassion

- Wish that all beings be free from suffering and its causes
- Arises naturally from great love
- Intensified by understanding cyclic existence

8. Extraordinary Intention

- Taking personal responsibility for others’ liberation
- Recognising that only Buddhahood is sufficient
- Bridges compassion and bodhicitta

9. Bodhicitta: The Effect

- Aspiration to attain enlightenment for all beings
- Compassion becomes a vow-directed path
- Marks true entry into Mahayana

10. Wisdom as the Stabilising Context

- Understanding emptiness of self and others
- Prevents compassion from becoming reifying or exhausting
- Grounds love and compassion in dependent arising

11. Common Pitfalls in the Sevenfold Training

- Treating the steps as intellectual concepts only
- Skipping earlier causes to reach bodhicitta prematurely
- Allowing compassion to collapse into sentimentality
- Neglecting emptiness while cultivating love and compassion

12. Integrating the Sevenfold Cause and Effect in Daily Life

- Use encounters to rehearse recognition of kindness
- Transform irritation into opportunities for patience
- Reaffirm extraordinary intention in adversity

13. Pocket Reminder

- Bodhicitta does not arise by wish alone but by causes
- When self is empty, responsibility for others becomes possible