VII.1. Concluding Remarks:

We have already given our observations on the concerned topics at the end of the respective chapters. Therefore this chapter of conclusion is a mere reappraisal of what have been already stated. Of the important topics, the concept of bodhicitta, its nature and its benefits etc. are discussed in the introduction. In the Daśabhūmika sūtra, the content of bodhicitta is stated as comprised of the ten chief factors. They are:

1. A great compassionate heart which is the chief factor of the desire.
2. Knowledge born of transcendental wisdom which is the ruling element.
3. Skilful means which works as protecting agent.
4. The deepest heart which gives it a support. And,
5. of the same measure with the Tathāgata - power.
6. Endowed with the power to discern the power and intelligence of all beings (Sattvabalabuddhi).
7. Directed towards the knowledge of non - obstruction (asambhin - najñāna).
8. In the conformity with spontaneous knowledge (svayamdhujñāna).
9. Capable of instructing all beings in the truths of Buddhism according to knowledge born of transcendental wisdom.
10. Extending to the limits of the Dharmadhātu which is as wide as space itself.

The main purpose of practising the Mahāyāna is to attain Buddhahood to benefit all living beings. To accomplish this aim, firstly, we must generate bodhicitta; to generate bodhicitta, we should know the methods of it. There are two main methods to generate bodhicitta: 1. The seven-point cause and effect transmission (Firstly, developing equanimity, and then: a. perceiving all beings as mother. b. remembering kindness. c. repaying kindness. d. great love. e. great compassion. g. pure superior intention. and h. bodhicitta). 2. Equalizing and exchanging oneself with others (this method consists of five points: a. Equalizing oneself with others, b. The advantages of changing self with others, c. The disadvantages of not changing, d. The ability to exchange self with others, and e. Taking and giving.)

Moreover, as the important doctrine in cultivation to attain enlightenment, bodhicitta is applied and practised in many Buddhist schools, especially Mahāyāna schools, such as Meditation school, Tantric school, Pure land school, etc.

In Meditation school we do this (attain enlightenment) by meditating on the path, but for our meditations to be effective we must purify and enrich our minds, so that insight can take root, flourish and ripen. If we make bodhicitta our main practice, we will be creating the highest merit and purifying our minds to the great extent. Thus we will
be able to gain all realizations and enlighten of the kind, suffering of sentient beings, fulfilling their purpose and our own.

In *Tantric* Buddhism, the explanation of *bodhicitta* is centered round the idea of voidness of all phenomena: The *Tathāgatas* approached the Lord and entreated him to explain the nature of *bodhicitta*. Entering into a special trance (*Samādhi*), he explains *bodhicitta* as ‘neither perception of absence of existence in non-existence, nor the perception of existence in existence. When so viewed, no thought construction occurs and existence also ceases to be.

In Pure land school, exchanging the virtues of the Buddha, the virtue of Buddha Recitation for the petty merits and blessings of this world is certainly not consonant with the intentions of the Buddhas. Therefore, practitioners should recite the name of *Amitābha* Buddha for the purpose of escaping the cycle of birth and death. However, if we were to practice Buddha Recitation for the sake of our own salvation alone, we would only fulfill a small part of the Buddhas’ intentions. Because, the Buddhas’ ultimate intentions are for all sentient beings, to escape the cycle of birth and death, and to become enlightened, as they are. Thus, those who recite *Amitābha* Buddha’s name should develop the *bodhicitta*.

We have known that, approaches of *Mahāyāna* are generation of *bodhicitta*. It is an attitude that is based on the great compassion wishing to remove the suffering of all others and the recognition that, to be of greatest benefit to both oneself and others; it is ideal to attain enlightenment. With such a thought or attitude, *Mahāyāna*’s approaches have much significant in the world as well as in the modern society, especially in modern crisis of war, increasing population, degrading environment and human moral, etc.
VII.2. Evaluation of the Concept of Bodhicitta

Bodhicitta is a common technical term in Buddhist Sanskrit literature. In the Mahāyāna tradition, bodhicitta is closely related to the spiritual practice of the Buddhist aspirant to enlightenment. It is a Sanskrit compound consisting of two members namely, bodhi and citta. Bodhi means perception, comprehension, knowledge or wisdom. In modern terminology, it means either enlightenment or awakening. The term citta is derived from the root Cit, meaning ‘to perceive, to form an idea in the mind, etc.’ It is interpreted as mind, thought, attention, desire, attention, intention or aim, etc… similar to the English word mind, as in the expression ‘to keep in mind’ or ‘she changed her mind.’ The compound bodhicitta therefore means ‘thought of enlightenment’, ‘mind of enlightenment’, ‘will of enlightenment’, ‘mind turned to enlightenment’, ‘awakening mind’, or ‘desire for awakening’. Its denotation is not metaphysical but psychological.

Attainment of supreme Buddhahood beginning with the Rising of the thought of enlightenment is the most important event that can occur in the life of a human being. As by the discovery of a priceless jewel a poor man becomes immensely rich, so with the rising of the thought of enlightenment the devotee is transformed into a Bodhisattva. The path of the Bodhisattva being for the Mahāyāna the supreme archetype of spiritual paths, is the rising of the thought of enlightenment, by means of which that path is entered upon, may be regarded as corresponding to what on a lower level of experience appears as the phenomenon of religious conversion. Hence on the day on which this thought arises in his mind the devotee rejoices that his birth has become fruitful, his
human life is a blessing; that he has been born into the race of the Enlightened Ones and is now their son.

To cherish the desire for enlightenment is no ordinary event in the life of Mahāyāna Buddhist, for, this is the definite step he takes towards the goal as distinguished from the life of the so-called Hīnayāna follower. Enlightenment is not mere personal affair which does not concern the community at large; its background is laid in the universe itself. When I am enlightened, the whole Dharmadhātu is enlightened, in fact the reason of my enlightenment is the reason of the Dharmadhātu; the two are most intimately bound up with each other. Therefore, that we have been able conceive a great longing for enlightenment means that the entire world wish to be liberated from ignorance and evil passion. This is the meaning of the following statement made by Ven. Sāgaramegha, one of the teachers whom Sudhana visited in his long spiritual pilgrimage: ‘It is indeed well for you that you have already awakened the desire for enlightenment, this is impossible for those who have not accumulated enough stock of merits in their past lives’. (Gandhavyūha-sūtra)

Moreover, in this sūtra, the protector Maitreya taught to Sudhana the benefit of bodhicitta at great length: ‘O son of my lineage, bodhicitta is like a seed, from which the qualities of the Buddhas grow. It is like a field in the earth, which is the foundation of entire universe…. Son of my lineage! These are the limitless qualities and benefits of bodhicitta and even then there are more!’ (Gandhavyūha-sūtra)

The great sages of lesser vehicle possess innumerable wondrous qualities, yet someone who has developed merely the initial stages of the bodhicitta surpasses them in terms of his nature. This is likened to
the baby son of universal monarch who, although only an infant possessing no qualities of knowledge or power, is granted a higher status than any scholar or minister in the empire. In terms of conventional benefits, all happiness and goodness that exists is a product of bodhicitta. The Buddhas are born from the Bodhisattvas, but the Bodhisattvas are born from the bodhicitta. As the result of the birth of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, great waves of enlightened energy spread throughout the universe, influencing sentient beings to create positive karma. This positive karma in turn brings them much benefit and happiness.

Bodhicitta is not only an important term in Mahāyāna literature, but also is a practical method very famous of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas -the way of ‘arising of Enlightenment mind’ to remove the suffering of all others, and the recognition that, to be of greatest benefit to both oneself and others. Because of that the term bodhicitta is explained and commented by many famous Mahāyāna masters in India (Like Nāgārjuna, Vasubandhu, Śāntideva etc., Atiṣa, Tsongkhapa etc., in Tibet and Shih-hsien Hsing-An etc. in China

To Nāgārjuna, bodhicitta is the thought of enlightenment is not stained by the various concepts relating to self, aggregates etc. Its characteristic is to be always empty (Bodhicaryāvatāra – the Commentary on Bodhicitta). Vasubandhu compares bodhicitta to the ocean: It is like the great ocean which, when it arises in the beginning, is understood to be a mine producing wishfulfilling gems, jewels and pearls of lesser, middling and the highest value right up to those that are invaluable, because of the origin from the ocean of these jewels. So it is for the raisings of the Resolve (citta) of the Bodhisattva (Bodhicittopada-sūtra-sāstra - A commentary on Arising of Bodhicitta
Śāntideva praises *bodhicitta* as follows: The moment *bodhicitta* is born in a puny (varāka) person, who is a prisoner of fetters of the world; he is at once named as the Son of the Sugatas and becomes the object of reverence both for men and gods in the world (*Bodhicaryāvatāra – Entering the path of enlightenment*). If a form could be had for the full merit of the Enlightenment thought, it would surpass even one that filled the whole realm of space (*Bodhi-patha-pradipa - the Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment*) etc.

The Buddha also taught numerous techniques for liberation in his teachings, the teachings on method are profound and effective, and the Buddha and all great masters always emphasized, in every *Mahāyāna* instruction text, that the teachings should only be given to those who have *bodhicitta*. The profound teachings can not be taught to those who do not have *bodhicitta*, because *bodhicitta* is the foundation. It is the heart as it were. When we have *bodhicitta*, any sacred method is good and effective. When we do not have *bodhicitta*, the methods are useless and of no benefit.

At the end on the basic of our analysis we can summarise the concept of *bodhicitta* in following points:

a. *Bodhicitta* rises from a great compassion heart, without which there will be no Buddhism. This emphasis on *Mahākaruṇā* is characteristic of *Mahāyāna*.

b. The raising of *bodhicitta* is not an event of one day, for it requires a long preparation, not one life but of many lives.

c. *Bodhicitta* comes from a stock of merits, it is impossible for those who have not accumulated enough stock of merits.

d. The *bodhicitta* means the awakening of the desire for supreme enlightenment which was attained by the Buddha, enabling him
to become the leader of the religious movement known as Buddhism.

e. The rise of bodhicitta marks the beginning of the career of a Bodhisattva. Before this, the idea of a Bodhisattva was no more than an abstraction. We are perhaps all Bodhisattvas, but the notion has not been brought home to our consciousness, the image has not been vivid enough to make us feel that.

f. The notion of bodhicitta is one of those marks which label the Mahāyāna as distinction from the Hīnayāna.

In short, the bodhicitta is more than mere love etc.; it contains something of a philosophical insight. It is a concrete unified embodiment of prajñā and karuṇā.

VII.3. Suggestions and Proposals for a Modern View of Bodhicitta

The concept of bodhicitta, the generation and practical methods of bodhicitta originated from the Buddha Shākyamuni and then passed down through Maitreya Bodhisattva, and to Masters such as Nāgārjuna, Asaṅga, Vasubandhu, Śāntideva, Atiśa, Tsongkhapa, etc., and continue today. The Buddha taught numerous techniques for liberation in his teachings, the teachings on method are profound and effective. The Buddha and all great masters always emphasised, in every Mahāyāna instruction text that the teachings should only be given to those who have bodhicitta. The profound teachings can not be taught to those who do not have bodhicitta, because bodhicitta is the foundation. Bodhicitta is essential for all Buddhists. Moreover, bodhicitta is also very much relevant and necessary for all human beings, especially in the modern society.
Human beings of the modern society are supposed to be more civilized though everybody has become lonelier, more worried, tensed and afraid of uncertainty. Science has made it possible to produce more in quantity but more number of people go to bed with empty stomach, die without medicine, more number of children are working and lesser going to school. Human race is more awake of the consequence of environmental degradation, pollution etc., but the defense investment on nuclear tests have increased, number of vehicles produced and used have increased, the area of jungle is coming down drastically. So, we have come to believe that our society as a whole finds itself in great crisis. We can read about its numerous manifestations every day in the newspapers. We face high inflation and unemployment; we have an energy crisis, a crisis in war, increasing population, collapsing the morals, health care, pollution and other environmental disaster, a rising wave of violence and crime, exchanging the West and East thoughts, and so on.

The entire crises begin from greed, hatred and ignorance of man. Because of greed and hatred, people contested territory; natural resources ... people have created the weapons, making bloody wars. From greed and ignorance, man has destroyed the environment, mining, oil and gas ... in excess has caused environmental pollution, natural disasters, and disease disability. Because of greed, hatred and delusion, people not caring, not loving each other, fighting for each piece of food, a land ... has created the famine, suffering and pain.

*Bodhicitta* is the attitude that is based on the great compassion wishing to remove the suffering of all others, and the recognition that, to be of greatest benefit to both oneself and others, it is ideal to attain enlightenment. With such a thought or attitude, *bodhicitta* has much
significance in the world as well as in the modern society, especially in the crises. The true solution for these crises is to have to cultivate and generate bodhicitta. On the basis of the above discussion we have learnt that, the characteristics of bodhicitta are: The mind of great compassion, for the salvation of all beings; the mind of great kindness, for unity with all beings; the mind of happiness, to stop the mass of misery of all beings; the altruistic mind, to repulse all that is not good; the mind of mercy, to protect from all fears; the unobstructed mind, to get rid of all obstacles; the broad mind, to pervade all universes; the infinite mind, to pervade all spaces, etc. (Gandhavyūha sūtra).

With a world full of changes and crises like today, the morals of humanity must be protected and enhanced; the good minds of man, like bodhicitta, compassion, altruism... need care, to cultivate and generate the gradual elimination of the crises. If human beings know the practice of compassion, altruism, and love for others; treat people same as oneself... type of catastrophe of war, racism... would vanish. If people know generate and practice bodhicitta, compassion and selfless heart, mutual concern... see them as others, see all human beings as our parents... the terrorism, poverty, violence... will gradually reduce and one day would come to an end.

The interdependent of world as today, donot allow human beings to live selfish, lives just know oneself, as our benefits to harm others, harm the environment... but we have to live not only being interested in our life, but also for others, interested in the environment, in the world. A catastrophic volcanic eruption in Japan, toxic gases, dust, smoke... making many places of the world affected, polluted, more relevant airline also stalled... A spill of oil in the Gulf of Mexico made many regions polluted ocean, many marine creatures were killed, polluted marine
environment damage... The terrorist attacks on 11 September in New York, America in 2001, had thousands of people to dust in a few minutes, as billions of human hearts terrified, stunned.

All people dream of living a happy life, living in a clean environment, living in a peaceful world. People have to love, mutual concern, treating each other like brothers and sisters, in the spirit of equality, civilization... To have such a life, people need to turn on the development of compassion, altruism, bodhicitta... to eliminate the evil, the mind of greed, anger, ignorance... promote the lofty virtue existing in ourselves.

The doctrine of bodhicitta or compassionate, altruistic, selfless...is not a mere theory, an abstract philosophical ambiguity; but is a living philosophy, background, methods, a practical philosophy that has been practised by holy Saints, sages, great people, to benefit themselves and all mankind, like Buddha Shākyamuni, Nāgārjuna, Asanga, Vasubandhu, Šāntideva, Atiśa, Tsongkhapa, etc.,


In short, whether at any time go, generation and cultivation of bodhicitta, compassion should be practised by the Buddhists in particular and everyone in the world in general. Because these are the good mind, noble heart beneficial for ones ownself and for everybody in the world. It is the foundation of human morality, removing any crisis,
the negative social elements; is the path of peace and happiness in the
world, and also the path leading to liberation, enlightenment for
ourselves and all beings. That was the message from the heart of the
Buddha for all living beings in the world, especially in this era:

Hatreds never cease through hatred in this world;
Through love alone they cease. This is an eternal law
(Nahi verena verāni – sammanti’dha kadācanam,
Averena ca sammanti – esa dhammo sanātano).

(The Dhammapada, verse 5)