

# Buddha's Middle Path: A Journey of Self-evolution in Rudyard Kipling's Kim

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## Abstract

*This paper has explored the Buddhist Middle Path doctrine in Rudyard Kipling's novel 'Kim', which was written in the background of colonized India. The Buddha first enunciates The Middle Path in Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta, and teaches people to avoid two extremes: self-indulgence and self-mortification in daily life in order to free themselves from attachment and suffering. This article has observed how this idea is reflected in words and actions in two characters, namely the lama, a Buddhist monk and an orphan English lad in Kim. After briefly talking about what Buddhism has said about Middle path of living, interpretation goes on studying how the lama as a Buddhist monk himself applies the doctrine and whether the boy understands and realizes the significance of its practically in his life or not. The paper has used deductive logical approach on qualitative contents and extracts from authentic literary discourse and draws conclusion from interpretation and analysis on how both characters apply the Middle path of living in words and actions. The finding shows that the lama and Kim do not have any religious conflicts and misunderstanding for they both get simply guided by value and practicality of the Middle Way of living. They show less attachment to the things they perform, explore and accomplish.*

**Keywords:** Buddhism, the Middle Path doctrine, monk, accompaniment, phenomena

## Background

Rudyard Kipling's novel *Kim* begins with the background of the late nineteenth century colonial rule of Britain in India and most of the events in the story are concerned to the will and strategy of strengthening colonial rules in India. However, Rudyard Kipling in *Kim* talks much about the Middle Path of Buddha Dharma and presents few characters, namely Kim, an orphan English boy in his teenage and a Tibetan lama in his old age for Buddhist pilgrimage in India, who wants to liberate himself from bonds of life, concerned much with the doctrine. The lama's journey of the life seems to be a journey of self-evolution by visiting four Holy places of Buddhism and a Holy River in which he wishes to cleanse himself and be free from "all illusion. Ay, Maya, illusion" (Kipling 9). He is driven by the will of self-liberation in the holy land of the Buddha. The events of the story move forward from city Lahore, now in Pakistan. Kim, son of a British soldier in Indian, living under a care of a poor woman, is the protagonist of the novel. Kim is mostly in the street and seems "burned as any native (1). And he prefers to speak vernacular and plays with the native street boys. Though there are

many Anglo-Indians and native characters, the relation between a gradually growing boy from Christian Irish family to maturity and an old Buddhist lama from Tibet, becomes a remarkable line in the novel and Kipling's preference of establishing the relation does carry Buddhist message in the novel. And the message from Buddhist perspective is essential to be explored through the interpretation of Buddhist Middle path the Tibetan lama in the novel often talks about.

Not only from this perspectives, exploration of the Middle Path doctrine in the novel sounds necessary from the view point that Kipling presents the Tibetan lama in the journeys of self-evolution though visiting four Holy places of Buddha Dharma- the birth place of the Buddha (Lumbini), Buddh Gaya, the Deer Park (Saranath) and the place of the Buddha's death (Kipling 9). Not only that the lama is in search of the holy river- The Fountain of Wisdom, which the lama believes was created by Prince Siddharth's arrow. He has faith that a person who "bathes in it washes away the tints and speckle of sin" (10). With this wish, the lama has made his efforts to "to go to free" himself "from the Wheel of things by a broad and open road" (9). His meeting with Kim and the latter's interest to accompany the old pilgrim also becomes a new stream of the plots in the novel and this line of the story has not been explored much through the Buddhist Middle Path perspective. The lama claims that the Tibetan Buddhist practice of lamaseries teaches the lamas to "be followers of the Middle Way" (5). The lama's interest to Kim and desire to have help from street boy like Kim is a significant aspect of interpretation. In order to judge whether the practice of lama from the learning of lama series get reflected in his action or not is therefore major aspect of focus of this paper.

Dharma in general may have broad implication but in Buddhism Dharma is not an entity that is created and applied by any supernatural force, it is judged through how the followers of Buddhism apply knowledge of Dharma in words and actions. Bhikkhu Bodhi (2012) in translation of the Anguttara Nikaya Sutta 114, points out what Buddha said of the Dharma is about understanding of nature. The Buddha says, "Wrong effort is non- Dharma; right effort is the dharma. The numerous bad unwholesome qualities that originate with wrong efforts as condition: these are harmful. The numerous unwholesome qualities that reach fulfilment by development of right efforts as condition: these are beneficial" (1494). Benefits to all sentient being is what the Buddha Dharma wants to do. To understand the right view of the Buddha, a person has to make association between the consciousness and the universe; and have understanding of the law of inter-relationship of various phenomena in existence. Understanding of the law of nature is Dharma. When a person understands this fundamental principle about worldly phenomena, he or she is in the Middle path, which according to the Buddha, is acceptance of Dependent Origination doctrine. The Buddha used the word Dharma "to refer to phenomena or things. However, he was always careful to define this

dharma as "dependently arisen phenomena" (Kalupahana 15). Therefore, this article is going to focus the relation from the Buddhist Middle path perspective of living and responding to phenomena. The following paragraphs have explained and explored how the novel can be considered and interpreted under the Middle Path philosophical tone of Buddhism, particularly through the Middle Ways of living both in ascetic and Grihasti life. After making statement of problem, objectives and methodology, the paper talks of what in Buddhism the Middle Ways of living actually means through the eye views of Buddhist texts and explanation of various learners and practitioners of Buddhist philosophy. Then it goes on relating the idea to the events, opinions and actions reflected and expressed in *Kim*, particularly focusing on the relationship between the lama and Kim and see whether they follow The Middle Path doctrine in words and actions or not.

### **Statement of Problem**

Kim and the lama encounter in a land with cultures shaped from Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist and other religions, along with Christian colonial context of British Raj in India. Unexpected meeting of the old lama and Kim, an English boy of twelve, develops into a strong affinity of love, care and friendship as Guru and Chela (tutor and pupil). The young boy learns much from the old lama and the lama gets much affection, care and accompaniment of the boy up to the very end of the novel. The novel does have many streams of plot and development with exciting stories about business, culture, landscape, travels, spies, feuds and intrigues of imperialism and colonization. Many critics have interpreted the novel from the colonial, imperial and post-colonial perspectives and imperial background of British Raj in India. Even if the novelist has elaborately depicted so many contexts and events related to Buddhist's thoughts and practice, yet their interpretation from Buddhist Middle path philosophical perspective has been remaining in the shadow and it is in need of critical analysis. Therefore, this study proceeds with two research questions through Buddhist perspective of Middle way of living. First, it is going to explore -whether the lama is with concept and practice of Middle way living as Buddhism has indicated. Then, it endeavors to find out whether the lama is able to teach and make Kim understand and apply the Buddhist approach of living in the middle path or not. This query has not been sold and this paper has taken it as a statement of problem and explored its solution.

### **Research Objective**

This article aims at focusing on two objectives. First, it endeavours to discover if the Tibetan lama in *Kim* lives the way Buddhist philosophy of Middle path teaches and see whether the lama guides Kim as well as common people he happens to meet and behaves accordingly. Second, it intends to produce logical inferences from Kim's

accompaniment with the lama and the practicality of living in the Middle path even when he is involved in a colonialist role in India. This will indicate how practical the doctrine is in human life in general.

### **Methodology**

This study is based on qualitative research approach. The researcher has employed qualitative content analysis method to extract ideas and concepts of theoretical perspective from authentic Buddhist texts and other relevant resources. As directed by the research questions and objectives, the Buddha's doctrine of the Middle Path has been the theoretical tool for the interpretation. Relevant extracts for analysis and interpretations on the thematic area from the selected text *Kim* extracted using convenient sampling procedures. Interpretations and conclusion are based on various representative responses of the doctrine and its relevancy on extracted contents from *Kim*.

### **Literature Review**

Review of literature below is concerned to explore those research articles and dissertation about the theme of culture and Buddhist philosophy in *Kim*. Attention is given to those researches that have been concerned to Kipling's imaginative construction of Buddhism in *Kim*, particularly relating the Middle Path doctrine and find out its relevance as well as the research gap for this study. The reading of *Kim* has provided me an inspiration to find out the Middle path doctrine of Buddhism in the novel. Some research studies in this theme and the area have been presented in the following paragraphs.

Randall, Don (1996) in 'Ethnography and the Hybrid Boy in Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*' focuses on Kipling's status as an ethnographer, particularly illustrating characteristics of ethnographic writing grasping and documenting cultural realities of Indian people. Though he has observed the cultural aspect, he has left the analysis on Buddhist philosophical aspects as reflected in words and actions of the Tibetan lama.

David (2012) in his research article 'Kipling's Encounters with Buddhism and the Buddhist Orient: "The Twain shall Meet?"' views that *Kim* contains in elaboration the content of Buddhist teaching in the novel. He views how Kipling has presented the Buddhist content in the novel rather than asking and exploring about the impact of Buddhism in characters in the novel. He finds the novel in complex web of Buddhist elements which he thinks has made the novel really difficult to understand from the theological and philosophical perspective.

Fellion, Matthew (2013) in his article 'Knowing *Kim*, knowing in *Kim*' makes studies on how Kipling in the novel *Kim* presents his protagonist, a teenage boy able to grasp both ethnographic and social, cultural and linguistic knowledge and skills in claiming the authenticity of information and faces challenges in difficult situations. Yet he does not pay attention on the significance of the relation between the lama and Kim in the novel.

Deanna K. Kreisel,(2014) in his article "The Psychology of Victorian Buddhism and Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*" demonstrates that Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* first informs the readers that 19<sup>th</sup> century thought in England was somehow influenced by the Buddhist philosophy and it had also affected in writing fiction. Here Kreiser tells us that Kipling has exhibited his deep understanding and practice of Buddhism in India, particularly by the people from high hill, from Tibetan region who come to the down land of India, the land of Enlightenment and liberation of The Buddha. This is, he claims, reflected in *Kim*.

Vescovi, Alessandro (2014) in his article 'Beyond East and West: The Meaning and Significance of *Kim*'s Great Game', does not interpret the game in *Kim* as a diplomatic and imperial exercise of England as political domination in the central Asia as most critics in this novel do. He simply takes it a game of the boy for amusement and entertainment, because young boy like *Kim*, is not inspired by any political need and desire of England to control over central Asia, but just to scale up the Tesso lama's spiritual thinking and traveling with him in India.

Huxley (2014) admires of Kipling's involvement in Buddhism in his childhood and makes connection to *Kim* with the biographical approach. He sees that the plot of *Kim* is like mirror of Kipling's childhood life through the presentation of little *Kim*. Huxley also talks of the relation of character and relate some character with the family members of Kipling, but his study does not focus its critical view on the philosophical aspect of Buddhism.

Louttit(2014) in ' what Profit to Kill Men ? Buddhist Non-violence in *Kim* explores the relevancy of the various forms of violence in the novel and raises questions about the proper understanding of the novelist's shallow knowledge and implication about Buddhist philosophy. He illustrates the relevancy of the violence that appear in the novel and questions the moral implications of them from Buddhist perspective. Yet it has not touched any philosophy of the Middle Path.

The Gale Group's publication *A Study Guide for Rudyard Kipling's Kim* (2016) narrates Rudyard Kipling from his childhood to literary age when he became popular and got

novel prize in literature. With much emphasis on his Indian life and how he learnt knowledge of Indian culture and geography on the one hand and also explains why he could not be liberal in his attitude in humanity and advocate for the welfare of Indian and other colonized people in the world by British Empire. The book explains that Kipling's elaborate narration of the Indian life, its topography, cultural and religious faith and practices is the result of his extensive travelling in India when he was young. His experience during his stay in India and visit to different places in India enriched his ability to realistically depict the characters in *Kim* and other stories yet ignores significance of Buddhist message in the novel.

In 'Hybrid Mysticism: the Journey to enlightenment in the Works of Sir Richard Burton and Rudyard Kipling' a dissertation by Sheba Aniqua,(2016) explains that Kipling in *Kim* seem to a person with esoteric faith talks of various information and to some extent gives attention on Buddhist elements. He thinks that Kipling's hero in *Kim* has very much affected an elusive concept of Englishmen as instructed by a Tibetan lama of Buddhism and such person like *Kim* goes on devotedly engaging in a certain work and even succeed in accomplishing such task as they inwardly look to fulfil. Here the researcher emblems Kipling with his ties to deal with mystical religious theme and culture and other social values.

Paskins, Susan Karin (2017) in his dissertation of Doctorate of Philosophy entitled 'Engaging Enlightenment: Buddhism and Kipling's *Kim* makes comparative study between Christian theological message of religion and its instruction to achieve religious goal and Buddhist message as depicted in the novel by Kipling through the characterization of the Holy Tibetan lama. This reflects Kipling's importance in Buddhist idea on the one hand and contradictory characterization of *Kim* in the great games on the other. The researcher says it is a kind of resistance of the English upbringing in *Kim* which seems quite difficult to get erased. Nevertheless, Khann here shows Kipling's deep respect to the Buddhist theosophy because of his shaping characters like the Tibetan lama and *Kim* in *Kim*.

These are some articles found concerned to Buddhist theme in the novel. But most of them have focused their discussion on the knowledge and skills of the novelist in presentation of the Buddhist theme and relevant characters in the novel. Most of the researchers have not touched the area of Middle path philosophy of Buddhism as reflected by the Tibetan lama's responses and activities. These works show that the philosophy of the Buddhist Middle Path has been still untouched for studies. Since these articles and their contents have left ample space for this study, this study, therefore, proceed with sufficient theoretical perspective and evidences from the selected text to see the relevancy and significance of the Middle Path doctrine in the novel.

### **The Middle Path:**

The Middle Path doctrine is the core content of the philosophy of Buddhism. The Buddha, propounded Buddhism around twenty-six hundred years before. The term "Middle Path" (*Majjhimāpatipadā*) was used in the *Dharmacakrapravartana Sutra*, the first teaching of the Buddha to his five former ascetic colleagues, in which the Buddha mainly talks of the Middle Way, the Four Noble truth, the Eight fold Paths, Dependent Origination and impermanence of worldly phenomena (Thanissaro 1993). The Middle Path doctrine is the Buddha's teaching of avoiding extreme approach of practicing sensual activities and self-mortification. After he got Enlightened, he first gave sermon to the five monks thus:

There are these two extremes that are not to be indulged in by one who has gone forth. Which two? That which is devoted to sensual pleasure with reference to sensual objects: base, vulgar, common, ignoble, unprofitable; and that which is devoted to self-affliction: painful, ignoble, unprofitable. Avoiding both of these extremes, the middle way realized by the Tathagata — producing vision, producing knowledge — leads to calm, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to Unbinding. (Thanissaro 1993).

This path is closely connected to the Four noble truths one needs to understand in order to save oneself from the two extreme approaches. It is also concerned to the eight-fold Path of practicing life in a peaceful and more meaningful activities, which gradually lead to the path of attaining ability of detachment to things. The Buddha once says to his followers: "And this, monks, is the noble truth of the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress: precisely this Noble Eightfold Path — right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration (Thanissaro, 1993). When one has to be in the peaceful or stressless ways of living one has to understand what the Four Noble truths mean and how he/ she can lead the life of Eight- fold paths. The Buddha advises his disciples that understanding of the eight-fold paths, and following them is the Middle Path approach of living because right view of worldly objects or phenomena teaches one to see the temporariness of existence and it inspires to have right intention, truthfulness to speech which has direct connection of the understanding of phenomenal existences. Similarly, right livelihood, right concentration and so forth are the Middle Path Ways to all people whether he or she is ascetic one or a lay man or woman. The Buddha reveals how he himself realized the significance of the Middle Path thus:

And what, monks, is that middle way awakened by the Tathagata? It is this Noble Eightfold-path: that is right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration, This, monks, is that

middle way awakened to you by the Tathagata, which gives rise to vision, which gives rise to knowledge, and leads to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nirvana. (Thanissaro 1993)

Likewise, The Buddha's first sermon in the *Dharmachakraparbartan Suttaya* also talks of dependent origination (pratityasanutpada), which according to the Buddha is the true nature of the existence of phenomena, their origination, existence and cessation due to various causes and conditions. Changes in the nature appear because of change in the existing conditions and it leads to change or disappearance of existing object or phenomena. Various factors are associated in such process and thinking of single factor like God or any supernatural entity without any facts is an extremes of view. Similarly, thinking that nothing is the cause behind the origin and cessation of phenomena is another extreme. Likewise, accepting that there is permanent essence like Self is an extreme and completely Nihilistic approach of viewing things in existence is also another extreme of belief. And Buddhism views that attachment of either one or another extreme of faith or belief is impractical illusions of living and it leads one beyond reality of phenomenal nature. In Dharmapada the Buddha says: "All conditioned things are impermanent- when one sees this with wisdom, one turns away from suffering. This is the path of purification (Dharmapada 277). Nothing in the world is permanent and any attachment to non-eternal thing is illusion and source of suffering and pain.

In Buddhism, the Buddha is believed to have understood the cause/s behind origination as well as cessation of things and events in the world. The Buddha's teaching to human beings intends to give them knowledge about the true nature of things, origination and extinction of objects, events and causes of suffering in life. To explain what makes one suffer from and free himself from suffering, the Buddha talks of the Four Noble truths and Dependent Origination of phenomena. The Four Noble truths teaches us that suffering in life comes due to ignorance, and ignorance refers to a person's failure to understand the transitoriness of all things in the world, even of the Self; and attachment to what is impermanent is cause of suffering. And realization that when there is cause for suffering and the way to eliminate through practical application of the Dharma – the true nature of phenomenal existence, is the way one frees himself or herself from the suffering. He explored the right view of understanding the world- that is- everything in the world is in the changing process and all phenomena and happenings are in dependent origination and cessation chain. Paul Williams (2002) points out what the Buddha said in the *Mahaanhasankhaya Sutta* and says, "the Buddha stresses that things originate in dependence upon causal conditioning, and this emphasis on causality describes the central feature of Buddhist ontology" (64). And it is one of basic concepts of Middle Way the Buddha teaches human beings to understand and apply in daily life.

The Buddha also briefly explains the Middle way in Samyutta Nikaya, Annatarabrahmana Sutta to a Brahman who inquisitively requests the Buddha to explain the reason why a person who expects the result of his action beneficial to himself, and another one who ignores the result of his works himself but for other, then the Buddha says: "The person who does the deed experiences the result': this is one extreme, brahmin." ...'One person does the deed and another experiences the result': this is the second extreme" (Samyutta Nikaya.12.46). Nagarjuna in Mulmadhyamika further extends this doctrine saying that a person whoever perceives dependent arising also perceives suffering, its arising, its ceasing and the path -leading to its ceasing (David 354). Holding anything for possession thinking that the thing remains long is an illusion and it leads to more suffering in case of separation from it. This is itself an extreme of attachment that causes suffering. The Buddha says: "Therefore, hold nothing dear, for separation from dear is painful. There are no bonds from those who have nothing beloved or unloved (The Dharmapada 211). As mentioned in Mulamadhyamakarika of Nagarjuna, translated by David (1999) the Buddha's discourse with Kaccayana as reported by Ananda, the Buddha's close disciple, gives a broad philosophical message about the Middle Path doctrine in Buddhism. The discourse goes thus:

Thus have I heard: The Blessed one was once living at Savatthi, in the monastery of Anathapindika, in Jeta's Grove. At that time the venerable Kaccayana of that clan came to visit him, and saluting him, sat down at one side. So seated, he questioned the Exalted one: Sir [people] speak of 'right view, right view. "To what extent is there a right view?"

This world, Kaccayana, is generally inclined towards two [views]: existence and non-existence.

To him who perceives with right wisdom the uprising of the world as it has come to be, the notion of non-existence in the world does not occur. Kaccayana, to him who perceives with right wisdom the ceasing of the world as it has come to be, the notion of existence in the world does not occur.

The world, for the most part, Kaccayana, is bound by approach, grasping and inclination. And he who does not follow that approach and grasping, that determination of mind, that inclination and disposition, who does not cling to or adhere to a view: 'This is myself,' who thinks: 'suffering that is subject to arising arises; suffering that is subject to ceasing, ceases,' such a person does not doubt, is not perplexed. Herein, his knowledge is not other dependent. Thus far, Kaccayana, there is 'right view.'

Everything exists, - this, Kaccayana, is one extreme.

Everything does not exist, - this, Kaccayana, is the second extreme.

Kaccayana, without approaching either extreme, the Tathagata teaches you a doctrine by the middle.

Kaccayana, without approaching either extreme, the Tathagata teaches you a doctrine by the middle (David 10).

This is what the Buddha called right view and elimination of ignorance, the cause of suffering. The Buddha's teaching of Four Noble truths, Eight-fold paths for living pure life, love, compassion and forgiveness feeling to all sentient beings is core philosophical doctrine of Buddhism. For it, reverent, purity and charity are basic qualities one has to cherish and apply in life. Arnold (1903) mentions all these things as fundamental teaching of the Buddha and this exposure brings new enlightenment of the Western learner to study Buddhism further. Writer like Kipling has been a representative figure who has taken much effort to understand and actualize what the philosophy on the base is and how it is pertinent to the law of nature and human beings. Arnold's narration of what Buddha advises for Buddhist practitioners like monks who are devotees to teach Grihasthas and make their life pure and reverent must have given some influence to Kipling and his curiosity to know and understand Tibetan monk in the Buddhist Middle path journey of life. And a monk according to the Buddha is "He who has no attachment what soever for .... mind and body, who does not grieve for what he has not -he is truly called a monk". (The Dharmapada 367). A person in such practical approach of living is full with compassion and love to all sentient beings. In the Dharmapada the Buddha further explains what a monk is practice should be: The monks who abides in universal love and is deeply devoted to the teaching of the Buddha Dharma attains the peace of Nibbana, the bliss of cessation of all things of all conditioned things (The Dharmapada 368). It is the way to free oneself from delusion, the way to Nirvana. As Arnold (1903) mentions, the Buddha advised the monks to follow simple and attachment free life to any material prosperity and comfort so that their service to mankind and their living being would be pure and they would enjoy peace and feel calm. The Buddha says:

How live, free from the snares of love and wealth;

What eat and carry - three plain cloths, - Yellow, of stitched stuff, worn with shoulder bare -

A girdle, alms bowl, strainer (Arnold 48)

The concept of Middle Path is clearly stated in Paskins (2017) quoting Rhys David's article. The conversation between Nagasena, a Buddhist sage and Indo-Greek King Milinda as around 200 BCE explains the Buddha's teaching of impermanent self-using

the analogy of the chariot. To Milinda's curiosity of what really Self is, Nagasena rather asks questions to the former and the later responses which goes like this:

'Did your Majesty come here on foot or in a chariot?'

'In a chariot.'

'What is a chariot?' 'Is the ornamented cover the chariot? Are the wheels, the spokes of the wheels, or the reins, the chariot? Are all these put together (in a heap) the chariot? If you leave all these out, does there remain anything which is the chariot?'

'No'.(151)

King Milinda simply says 'no' to such question, implying his inability of answer the philosophical questions. Then Nagasena explains that just as a 'chariot' is given name to a single appearance of so many constituent parts that have given a shape of the chariot, so is the human body in which the soul is just a constituent of various human physical and psychological qualities and contents. Nagasena further explains that we cannot identify a chariot as a chariot in our conventional form of a chariot if we separate its individual parts. In the similar way, Nagarjuna's *Mulamadhyamakakarika* or the fundamental wisdom of the Middle Way says that our acceptance of things also needs the middle way of acceptance and analysis. Nothing exists in an extreme point of relation to single things, the chain of connection in existence and origination as well as cessation of things also do have interrelationship and our observation and analysis should be accordingly. In the examination of Aggregates Nagarjuna says:

The assertion that the effect and cause are similar

Is not acceptable

The assertion that they are not similar

Is also not acceptable.

Feeling, discriminations, and dispositions

Consciousness and all such things

Should be thought of

In the same way as material form. (13)

Critical view on phenomenal existence, their relationship either in the role of cause or consequence is very important in order to know the nature of origination and cessation of objects and events. Human consciousness and its association to material forms as well as ethereal ones should be judged through the Middle path doctrine so that true nature of existence can be experienced and realized. This is knowledge and it eliminates ignorance, the cause of suffering.

### **Critical Views on the Middle Path:**

The Buddha's teaching of the Middle Path among monks and common people in His time was in itself an extreme approach to non-Buddhists. Advocacy of the no self of things and living beings as it is said below was not easily acceptable. Acharya Buddharakkhita (1985) quotes the Buddha saying in *The Dharmapada*, "All things are not-self- when one sees this with wisdom, one turns way from suffering" and instructed that "One should give up anger, renounce pride, and overcome all fetters. Suffering never befalls him who clings not to mind and body and he is detached (*Dharmapada* 221). Teaching of impermanence of human soul is a radical thought in his time also. In this reference James Freeman Clarke in his book *Ten Great Religions* (1871) mentions that The Buddha was a radical man to the social, cultural, religious faith and belief of the time. India in His time (and still now to some extent) was the land with people with various caste system and discrimination between higher case and lower with behavior of touchable and untouchable was much dominant pattern of social relational and ritual practices. The Buddha advocated for equality, nonviolence, untouchability, love, compassion, forgiveness and this kind of advocacy was opposite to caste system of the time. In this reference Clarke(1871) writes that Buddhism in Asia, like Protestantism in Europe, is a revolt of nature against spirit, of humanity against caste, of individual freedom against the despotism of an order, of salvation by faith against salvation through any kind of worship and chanting. Much more than this, the Buddhist way of living is cherished in the proper understanding of the word 'Dharma', which means actualization of the underlying reality of things as well as need for human action accordingly. For it, one needs to carefully observe the law of nature- the ways worldly phenomena come into existence, go on changing and cease. Knowledge of Dharma therefore comes through viewing, listening, thinking, analyzing and practicing through experimentation. Susan Karin Paskins (2017) asserts that experienced person and practitioner of Dharma would be able to explain things and events better. Listening to such individuals and following their actions practically would be a relatively better way of learning and living in life. That is why becoming disciple to an experienced person Dharma is essential to learn Dharma. In Buddhism it is important to learn the Buddhist Dharma through an experienced teacher or practitioner of Dharma, and this kind of Buddhist tradition got started from the Buddha and came down as an unbroken line. The Buddha himself handed this practice over his disciples and after that through the monks and nuns of the Buddhist community, or sangha. In this practice, knowledge from textual material is less important than teaching of monks and nuns from their practical experience and it is emphasized that followers need practically experience themselves and understand the phenomena. In practice Monks and nuns are those who have to show Buddhist Dharma in action. And the main practical approach of such ascetic persons is to be detached from things because all things are illusionary of permanence and source of dissatisfaction. In this reference The Buddha says. "All

conditioned things are unsatisfactory—when one sees this with wisdom, one turned away from suffering. This is the path to purification” (The Dhammapada 278). The purification is the understanding and acceptance of the Four Noble truths, the law of dependent origination and practicality of the Middle Path in living.

Unlike many religions, Buddhism believes that human beings or any living being don't deserve any permanency of existence and says the belief of immortality of the soul is against the law of change. When an individual understands this faith of impermanence, he or she may react that there is no unchanging soul of living beings. Paskins (2017) points out that the basic foundation of Buddhist belief is that the world is not fixed, the phenomena are in the law of nature, and all living being, including humans, as parts of nature, do have no fixity and permanency. James Freeman Clarke in *Ten Great Religions* (1871) points out that there is a logical contradiction on claiming of impermanent soul and concept of reincarnation in Buddhism. Therefore, the Middle Path of Buddhism indicates the ways the Buddhists followers adopt faith and apply in life. It rejects any idea that claims somethings in assumption, without producing any logical reason or fact-based evidences. According to Sharma (2007) Buddhist philosophy asserts that the notion of soul as “eternal and unchanging is a primordial false notion (avidhya) which is the root cause of all misery and pains that renders spiritual life meaningless and it must be annihilated in order to realize Nirvana (25). The middle path of Buddhism in other words is a practice of avoiding any kind of extreme approach in accepting, understanding and interpreting of belief on any doctrine of faith. It is in one sense in-between minus one and plus one. It is a zero position, philosophically the doctrine of Sunyata or Middle way of accepting and understanding thing or any phenomenal events in life. In this reference Sharma further writes “Madhyamika ...advocates the ‘middle path’ discovered by Buddha which avoids the two extremes of thesis and anti-thesis” (75). Practical realization of the Middle way of living and avoidance of getting into extremities in faith and action of anything is attained through the practice of Yoga. An endeavor to realize and understand Yoga in real life is the approach of practicality and understand how the external world is being conveyed into our comprehension (75). The Middle Path is not any ideal state of thinking, nor nihilistic in approach, it is, according to Bart Dessein and Weijen Teng (2013), Chandrakirti, a Buddhist analyst, shows disagreement and makes clear distinction of the “Madhyamika from the nihilist (nastika) by saying that the Madhyamika is an absolutist who goes beyond both affirmation and negation, while the nihilist clings to absolute negation which is a self-condemned view”(62). Unlike nihilist the Madhyamika sunyata does not see everything as meaningless. What Middle Ways of looking the world and events is, is also defined to the origin and continuity of the universe which does not view with its definite start and end. In this reference, quoting Nagarjuna's explanation of what the Buddha said about the world, about its origin and general nature of existence as

mentioned in various Buddhist texts, Sharma says:

The Buddha said that the universe is beginningless and endless. And it is an accepted canon of logic, urges Nagaijuna, that if a thing does not exist in the beginning and in the end, it cannot exist in the middle also. Hence, beginning, middle and end; birth, duration and death are all unreal... Action, agent and result are all unreal. The individual self is neither identical with nor different from the mental states. If the self is identical with the mental states, then it too, like the states, will be subject to change, to birth, decay and death. (57)

As pointed out by Bart Dessein and Weijen Teng(2013) Candrakirti's explanation about the nature of dharmas in the Madhyamikas is concerned to know how to acquire insight into emptiness, how to philosophically ground and conduct the analysis leading to that insight, and how to linguistically elaborate upon such an analysis without transgressing conventional limits imposed by language(372). In Buddhist Madhyamika philosophy, mind is also understood as material substance with limitation. Its better functions and perception depend on the proper training and the training is meditation. Mentioning the Buddha's concept of mind Carl Olson (2005) says that the mind is a sense faculty because it senses ideas and thoughts. When the mind is trained, controlled, and refined by means of meditation it becomes free of deleterious cravings. And untrained mind rather shows strong attachment to material world and illusionary reality. Consequently, it goes on continuous craving that becomes the cause of suffering.

In order to realize Nirvana, one has to understand the nonexistence of a real external object, as Sthiramati (1984) asserts. The consciousness that perceives any object also is an illusion of the illusionary because it also goes on changing and has shot existence. Therefore, the nature of consciousness and reflection of the substances have to be understood with the concept of impermanency. Attachment to impermanent things would be hindrances to Nirvana that can be attained through the world view of Middle Way (20-21). In her explanation Sthiramati further elaborates that the Buddhist concept of Atman or Self does not equal to the Brahmanical notion of Atman as the single controlling power (which is called Brahman or truth (Satya) or the universal soul (paramatman). The Buddha indicated that the view of a Self and its supposed essence is a false view. The 'self' (atman) in Buddhist analysis is just the composite of the five aggregates that get perceived or accumulated through karmic law of dependent origination (pratityasamutpada), and they are Selfless (Dessein and Teng 1). So, the soul is in Selfless identity, unidentical in search of individual identity.

British scientist and a strong logician, Thomas Henry Huxley, thinks that the Buddhist concept of soul is much science based and it is grounded on changeable characteristics

of world phenomena, whether they are in perceptible form or not. In his *Ethics and Evolution* (2009), he highlights Buddhist concept of the soul saying:

Accepting the prevalent Brahminical doctrine that the whole cosmos, celestial, terrestrial, and infernal, with its population of gods and other celestial beings, of sentient animals, of Mara and his devils, is incessantly shifting through recurring cycles of production and destruction, in each of which every human being has his transmigratory representative, Gautama proceeded to eliminate substance altogether; and to reduce the cosmos to a mere flow of sensations, emotions, volitions, and thoughts, devoid of any substratum. As on the surface of a stream of water, we see ripples and whirlpools, which last for a while and then vanish with the causes that gave rise to them, so what seem individual existences are mere temporary associations of phenomena circling round a center, "like a dog tied to a post." In the whole universe there is nothing permanent, no eternal substance either of mind or of matter. Personality is a metaphysical fancy; and, in very truth, not only we, but all things, in the worlds without end of the cosmic phantasmagoria, are such stuff as dreams are made of. (18-19)

Huxley in his speech emphasizes on Buddhist understanding of living being without metaphysical and permanent self and identity. The main point of Buddhism in his context is about the need of freeing oneself from the attachment to either worldly achievement or on faith of permanent soul. Therefore, any phenomenon in the world is not permanent, and attachment to its illusionary permanency is just an illusion of illusions and it misleads individuals to have wrong concept of the world, events, and ultimate reality- that is changeability. The attachment is the cause of suffering, a hindrance to the liberation of life. It urges that all phenomena that we do identify with as 'self' should be carefully observed and examined to see that they cannot be taken as such and when a person finally understands and realizes it in consciousness, he/she will be able to accept world events as a witness, just as an observer without biased feeling, with a neutral perception of their effects and consequences. And it is an unattachment-way to Nirvana. It is search of Enlightenment, if not an Awakening moment of viewing the world from Buddhist perspective of the Middle Way. It is neither to run away from any kind of material association to live with and get livelihood nor to have any craving to the things, and even to the Soul that has no everlasting existence or unchanging identity. Any approach of attaining something through much difficult and painful way as sages of Hindu- Vedic practice of meditation and penance do, is not the right path. Nor it is a directive to an ascetic person to give up all worldly comfort of materials as the physique is in need. So, the middle path of movement is to disregard the extremes of both ends and have middle way of living physically and mentally.

From Buddhist phenomenological perspective it is better to accept that there is no object or existence with permanent self that leaves the physical body and goes beyond in metaphysical form and existence. This doctrine of 'not-self', atman, is a remarkable Buddhist logic for English people and they found it difficult to understand in Kipling's time because it was different from the conventional Christian practice and faith of the immortal soul (Paskins 149). Western understanding of Buddhism and its major philosophical stands are initially conveyed through Sir Edwin Arnold's version *The Light of Asia* which was first published in 1879. This book not only introduced the Buddha and his teachings to European people but also popularized Him among the Western peoples. Then after, interests and curiosity to know Buddhist philosophy became more intense and wider and many western writers began to mention Buddhism in their writings. In this connection it is relevant to mention what Jeffrey Franklin (2008) mentioned of the Buddha as a social reformer who initiated a new ethical social system and practice of equality among all castes and social strata in the predominately caste-based Indian society with discrimination of human beings on the basis of touchable and untouchable ones.

Thus, Middle Path of the Buddhism is just a combination of all aspects of life, both the nature and humanity, life and nonlife, ethereal and non-ethereal, and material and spiritual(conventionally) in its broad perspective. And in its narrow sense, it just teaches human being to avoid extreme approach of thinking and doing anything in its extreme level but to apply practice of living in the middle way of two extremes: sensual pleasures and self-mortification. Therefore, critical approach in this novel from the words and activities of the lama would be quite significant to understand what the Middle path philosophy in Buddhism is practically reflected by such a personality and make judgement on whether it is applicable to our daily life as it is observed on another character *Kim* who accompanies the old man from the beginning to the end of the novel, being influenced by the words and personality of the lama. To be in point, the main intention of this article is to through light on the way the novel is conveying the Buddhist message of the Middle path to follow in life as far as possible. Though many critics see the novel through colonial perspective, it is here interpreted from Buddhist Middle Path doctrine. That is why the friendly relation between an English boy and old Tibetan monk has been a remarkable event for study and analysis of the novel. Now let's see how such a philosophical approach is reflected in Kipling's *Kim* and realize it. For this, the followings paragraphs would describe how Kipling's understanding of Buddhism is reflected in the narration of events and characters particularly the lama and *Kim* in the novel.

### **The Revelation of Middle Way in *Kim***

This article in the following paragraphs has exposed often ignored aspect of the novel.

It has been interpreted from the Buddhist perspective of the Middle Path in which things and activities of human beings are seen and understood through the ideas as mentioned above. Discussion and interpretations are on the Middle Path perspective that have been reflected in words and actions of two characters- the lama and *Kim* – in the novel.

### **The Lama and *Kim*: Dependency in Quest for Independency**

The Lama and *Kim* come across at the side of Zam Zammah, a real cannon, and the Wonder House in Lahore. In response to the wonder of *Kim* about his identity, the lama explains that he is a man from high hills but he is neither a pahari (a hillman) nor Khitai (Chinese) but is from Bhotiyal (Tibet) and not a man with culture of extreme path of living. He means he is from Tibetan Buddhist culture who are "... followers of the Middle Way, living in peace in lamaseries" (Kipling 5). In order to make clear about his presence in India the lama further explains the way he arrived there admitting that he passed through Kulu - "from beyond the Kailash ... where the air and water are fresh and cool" (Kipling 5). He also explains that his main purpose of visiting India is to see various historically significant place in India from Buddhist faith and see some relics of the Buddha. *Kim* becomes more interested to the lama and as he knows that the lama's disciple had died at Kulu and he had to continue his pilgrimage without the accompaniment of his disciple, *Kim* initially shows sympathy to the lama by leading the old man to show "the Wonder House", (5) the Museum in Lahore where he seems to have been much impressed and excited from the Buddha's statues because his reaction after seeing the statue goes "The Lord! The Lord! It is Shakyamuni himself ... My pilgrimage is well begun." (5-6). From the lama's words we know that he has much experience of life and much devotion to Buddha Dharma. His introduction and explanation about his own journey in conversation with the curator of the Museum also indicates that he is the follower of the Middle path and in the search of Self exploration though visiting holy places of Buddhism in India. He says that he is from the "Such-zen" Monastery and has come there after the recommendation of his friend, an Abbot of the "Lung-Cho" (7) monastery in Tibet, to visit the place the Buddha was born; Kapila (Kapilvastu), the place where the Buddha was mostly brought up, then the place where he attained enlightenment to see the Monastery there; then to the Deer Park in Saranath where the Buddha started his teachings of "Bodhi"-his understanding- and delivered first his Dharma sermon; and finally to Kaushinagara, "the place of his death" (Kipling 9). Along with visiting these places he is in keen desire to get into "The River of Arrow, ... The fountain of Wisdom" (10) where the Siddhartha Gautam's arrow fell while doing contest to complete for a young lady for marriage. He does not know where the river is and has not got any sure and certain information about it from any one though he seems to have been sure that it is somewhere in India and he would find it.

The lama's faith on the flow of the river is so assertive in his words to the curator and *Kim* that hesucceeds on exploring information and looking for "the place", when they expressed their doubt about such river. He says "Think again! Some little stream, maybe - dried in the heat? But the Holy One would never so cheat an old man (10) though he does not know himself where the arrow fell. A serious eye witness and listener to the lama there is *Kim*, who gets inwardly impressed and confirmed within himself that he needs to accompany the lama as his disciple during his journey to visit the Buddhist Holy sites and the river of arrow. He decides so because he realizes that the lama and himself are in an exploration- the lama for The River of Arrow- symbolically Enlightenment, and he for "a great Red Bull on a green field, and the colonial riding on his tall horse, yes, and ...nine hundred devils" (16) which is to be found as prophesied by his father in the amulet he has been carrying on his arms from his childhood (1). *Kim* has belief that the search would bring fortune to his life. Therefore. The friendship between the lama and *Kim* becomes closer initially due to purposes of exploration, which later becomes rather more imperial and philosophical.

Buddhist philosophy of Self exploration through the practice of Middle Path, is thus reflected in the very beginning of the novel. When the lama appears near the inn and proceeds up to the Museum, in conversation with the curate and *Kim*, we can realize that he is under the mission of Nirvana through the practicality of Middle path. He sounds to have understood, accepted and followed what the Buddha taught his disciples. A sage or monk's life is assessed through his involvement on charity and non- attachment to material thing and any status marker to his life. It is sincere reverence: "in the Eightfold Path; Living pure, reverent, patient, pitiful; Loving all things which live even as themselves" (47). Similar to the teaching of the Buddha, the lama in the very outset of the novel starts explaining the Buddhist ways of living, particularly through the Middle Ways of observing, accepting and responding to the events and living beings in our life, which the lama claims he knew in his lamasery (11). The expression is confidential and sounds to have guided from practical experience. And how much this confidence has been a practical tool to get to his destination of acquiring power and practice of having less or no attachment to things and loved ones has been further exploration and interpretation.

### **The Middle Path and the Lama**

The Buddha gives advice to monks for pious dwelling for living without attachment to sensual love and wealth, food or wears. A monk is considered a representative of such aspects of behavior. A lama in Tibetan term is a monk and in the novel Kipling presents the lama as an embodiment of this ideal in *Kim*. He does indeed live a pure, reverent, patient and compassionate life. The lama does not show any greed for goods, any material things and simply wears simple monk dress. He possesses no other than his

begging bowl, his pencase, and his drawing of the Wheel of Life. Kipling's understanding of Buddhism is expressed through the words and actions of the lama in the novel and makes lama a tutor to teach *Kim* about the philosophy of the Middle path. It can be justified on what he does and speak of. As the Buddha gives necessary advice to his disciples about the life of simplicity and avoidance of extreme approach of attaining either material or spiritual objectives. The lama shows this kind of understanding and practice in the very beginning of the novel, as soon as he has meeting with the curator. After a conversation the curator knows that the old man is really Tibetan lama and he is to live on charity. So, he gives the lama pencils and paper, and a new pair of spectacles to replace his scratched ones; the lama gives the curator a pen-case (8–10). The pen-case is described as 'a piece of ancient design, Chinese, of an iron that is not smelted these days, and the collector's heart in the curator's bosom that had gone out to it from the first. For no persuasion would the lama resume his gift (12). This indicates that the lama is practically has no greed or any desire to possess anything precious but to offer other what he has so heartily. Not only that when the Russian spy persuades the lama to sell his drawing of the Wheel of Life, "the lama shook his head slowly, and began to fold up the Wheel. The Russian, on his side, saw no more than an unclean old man haggling over a dirty piece of paper. He drew out a handful of rupees, and snatched half-jestingly at the chart, which tore in the lama's grip (242). He does not want to sell it for money any value because the Wheel of life is the symbolic figure of achieving Nirvana. In this reference Paskin (1917) comments that Russian spy who are ignorant of Buddhist philosophical view sees the lama through the lens of ethnic and religious contempt. They don't know not the significance of the Wheel of Life and the lama's representation of the Buddhist practice. Rather they slap on the old man's face. Which proves *Kim* and attach the Russian physically which is against the teaching of the Wheel, and incompatible to the doctrine of the Middle Path, and *Kim* has to learn the lesson (252). So the lama is strictly regarding the path he has learn from Buddhism and he shows no malice and hatred to the person who physically attack him.

Similarly, the reference of Indian Mutiny of 1857 in the conversation between the lama and a British soldier, who shows pride in suppression of the Mutiny in favor of the British rulers in India is refuted by the lama and says that there is no profit in killing. And he further comments that the use of violence with these words: "Very little — as I know; but if evil men were not now and then slain it would not be a good world for weaponless dreamers. I do not speak without knowledge who have seen the land from Delhi south awash with blood" (Kipling 52). This kind of preaching from the lama asserts that he is again any kind of violence and really a sincere follower of Buddhist doctrine.

The lama respect and practice of the compassion and benevolence is expressed through

his contribution to *Kim* education in Lucknow for three years. During *Kim*'s stay in school lama travels all over India to 'follow the traces of the Blessed Feet' in most of the holy places and consequently 'there remained nothing more in life but to find the River of the Arrow' (165). Since it has been realized that the search would be somehow difficult, then getting a disciple or assistant like *Kim* is necessary and the search is now with the skill and strength of *Kim* now. search is linked to his relationship with *Kim* because he even sees this in his dream: "Yet it was shown to him in dreams that it was a matter not to be undertaken with any hope of success unless that seeker had with him the one chela appointed to bring the event to a happy issue and versed in great wisdom (165). He is optimistic that he will succeed in finding the Holy River and get himself purified in it. As the buddha gives direction to the non-adherence to concept of *anatta*, or no permanent self, so does lama to his new disciple, *Kim*, who is supposed to accompany his journey for the research of Holy River and places that have historical significance in the Buddha's life and philosophical dissemination.

The Middle Way living in Buddhism is further well reflected in the lama. This can be traced from different actions and activities of the lama. As narrated by Paskins the lama and *Kim* travel together along the Grand Trunk Road - from Lahore to Benaras. Then to the western Himalaya. During the travel the Lama teaches Buddha Dharma to *Kim* and those who come across him. He chants Om mani padme hum on the train, tells his fellow passengers the story of the Buddha's life, and compassionately expresses his best wishes that they all be free from "the Wheel of Things" which refers to the cycle of birth, death and rebirth that leads to labyrinth of suffering. On a farmland, where *Kim* tries to kill snake, the Lama prevents him, saying, "Why? He is upon the Wheel as we are - a life ascending or descending - very far from deliverance ... Let him live out his life." The Lama is kind to everyone irrespective of their "caste" Kipling knew that Buddhism has no caste system, or as the Lama says, "There is neither high nor low in the Middle Way" (43). The Holy Man earns the respect of *Kim* and those whom he meets on the way; the Lama also respects *Kim*'s good. The Lama tries to guide *Kim* indirectly and through being a role model. Early in the novel, *Kim* fantasizes that perhaps "the red bull on the green field ... will make me a king," to which the Lama answers, "I will teach thee the other and better desires upon the road (17). This is benevolence and service to living being for the attainment of knowledge and gain power to be in less attachment to object or event.

The lama spent his life in Tibet and recently he has left his monastery in Tibet. He has come on a pilgrimage to the four holy places of Buddhism, the sites of the Buddha's birth, enlightenment, death and first sermon delivered spot. Above all he is on a quest to find the river of the arrow where he believes he will find enlightenment and free himself 'from the Wheel of Things by a broad and open road. 'The broad and open road'

is a road accessible to all who follow the Dharma, or Buddhist Law. The Lama does not seek to impart esoteric knowledge he has learnt and realized only to the few but shows eager to share his knowledge and experience to all people whoever comes before him. He does not show any kind of racial, color and other discrimination. All human beings are equal to him. He is portrayed as an old man who has 'gentle kindness' (38) and 'quiet dignity'. He is 'wise and holy' (43) and is a 'scholar removed from vanity, as a Seeker walking in humility, as an old man, wise and temperate, illumining knowledge with brilliant insight' (213). Even though the lama is in the conventional practice of Tibetan Buddhism, as David Scott (2012) judges, particularly in the traditionality of what present Dalai Lama School has been following, his practice of Buddhist teaching intend to get liberation from all kind of attachment in life and ultimately perceive Nirvana. His chela *Kim* has understood the lama's way of behaving and talking and realized that the lama is pious ways of living and servicing to mankind as well as all sentient beings. Therefore, he disinterestedly cares for the lama and becomes devoted disciple up to the end of the novel.

The lama assistance to *Kim* for his education is not only intended to his selfish motivation of persuading *Kim* to be his disciple but from his intention of utilizing his money to the benefit of the boy who is able to perceive Buddhist teaching 'to acquire merit' in life (Kipling 106-107). And *Kim's* understanding of the Buddhism has also been quite successful, to the expectation of the lama also because *Kim* in answers to a query of a Hindu priest about the lama's journey in India deeply evaluating saying that the lama is travelling in India because he is really a seeker of knowledge. The long haired Hindu *Bairagi* (187) then refers that any seeker of knowledge have to overcome much obstacles because 'it is a long road to the feet of the One; but thither do we all travel' (186), yet not unattainable. Just like Mahbub Ali, the Hindu priest expresses here a relativism about religion, that all religions are making the same journey. Again, *Kim* rejects such relativism by identifying himself with the lama's search, He tries to make it clearer immediately when he arrives at the Temple of the Tirthankers in Benares, where he hopes to meet the lama again. Now he identifies himself with no doubt or hesitation to a Hindu banker: 'I am chela to the Teshoo Lama, a Holy One from Bhoyital which means Tibet (187). *Kim* then heals a sick child by giving it meat lozenges in milk to regain its strength, his first act of charity in imitation of the lama (188). This episode indicates that *Kim* is now different from the boy who enjoyed his own capacity for cunning and deceit at the beginning of the novel. Formerly, *Kim* reflects, 'he would have made prompt profit on the situation and gone his way without a thought; but now, the very respect the Jat, a Hindu from the North, paid him proved he was a man' (187). He had wanted to return to the lama in disguise and gradually reveal himself, but now sees that these are 'boys' dreams' (188). The time for disguise is past. By healing the child, *Kim* identifies himself with the lama's loving-kindness, as the

lama himself acknowledges, by saying, 'that was wisely done, O Friend of all the World'. In reply *Kim* explicitly devotes himself to the lama: 'I was made wise by thee, Holy One', said *Kim*, forgetting the little play just ended; forgetting St Xavier's; forgetting his white blood; forgetting even the Great Game as he stooped, Mohammedan fashion, to touch his master's feet in the dust of the Jain temple. 'My teaching I owe to thee. I have eaten thy bread three years. My time is finished. I am loosed from the schools. I come to thee' (189). *Kim*, the 'little friend of all the world', has so far been presented as a protean figure who can assume any disguise and pass as a member of any community in India. Now, however, in a Jain temple, having healed a Hindu child, and adopting the pose of a 'Mohammedan', he devotes himself to the Buddhist lama's service. In this way, the narrator indicates, *Kim* first uses and then discards other religious and cultural traditions in order to follow the lama and the Buddhist way.

### ***Kim* and his Quest with the lama**

When we see *Kim* as the lama's disciple then we find Kipling sketching him simply a disciple, because he does not question anywhere about the mission of the lama and his faithful assistance to him. Though *Kim* also carries with him his own mission of finding out what his father's prophesy was in his amulet, and what job he has got as a secret service agent of the colonial government, yet he does not seem to be different boy or a Christian Sahib, whenever he remains with the lama. It is claimed so because *Kim* simply remained a disciple to the lama, not any agent of any hidden mission. He wants to be free from bond of any fixity, even though he may not have fully realized what the Buddhist doctrine with the lam he has learnt from. He does not want to be identified with any religious identity, even not as a Buddhist except as follower or assistant of the lama. Once in a conversation with the Muslim Mahbub Ali who suggests him to hold on to his dual identity: 'Among Sahibs, never forgetting that thou art a Sahib; among the folk of Hind, always remembering that thou art', *Kim* with a kind of bewilderment, says that he does not want to be identified with any religious identity and says: 'What am I? Mussalman [Muslim], Hindu, Jain or Buddhist? That is a hard nut'. (143). With confident he says that he is rather obliged and influenced by the word and action of the lama and says: 'but my lama said altogether a different thing' and asserts that insists that his heart is drawn by the lama (144). *Kim* feels a relationship of affection between himself and the lama and this feeling answers the question of what his religious identity consists in and shows the lama's influence on him philosophically. *Kim* recognizes the lama's contribution to him and appreciates identifies the lama's love and kindness and says: "I was made wise by thee, Holy One", said *Kim*, forgetting the little play just ended; forgetting St Xavier's; forgetting his white blood; forgetting even the Great Game as he stooped, Mohammedan fashion, to touch his master's feet in the dust of the Jain temple. 'My teaching I owe to thee. I have eaten thy bread three years. My time is finished. I am loosed from the schools. I come to thee' (189.) The lama also feel that he

has been much assisted by the boy. He says: "That was wisely done, O Friend of all the World'. In reply *Kim* explicitly devotes himself to the lama: *Kim*, the 'little friend of all the world', has so far been presented as a protean figure who can assume any disguise and pass as a member of any community in India.

This inclination is proven by his action when he joins the lama as soon as he completes his education in a school in Lucknow (185). Personal identity is not a great thing in him and this realization has made him people's intention and practice of repeating their own names time and again and expose identity proudly is not good (185). Indifference personal pride of own identity is not under the consideration of Buddhist Middle Path doctrine because such nothing is fixed and permanent. Therefore, the Buddhist concept of no fixed self of livingbeing is seen though *Kim*'s deviation of his Christian identity search and no adherent to Indian identity pride though he enjoys living with Indian boys in the streets and remains mostly with the natives with his pleasure of using vernacular, simply because of his upbringing. Kipling's poem 'The Two-Sided Man' expresses the unfixed identity mentality of the writer himself in which he generates a character like *Kim* in this novel, who would go without 'shirts or shoes/ Friends, tobacco or bread' rather than lose 'either side' of his head (Kipling 131). In fact, Kipling uses the important Buddhist concept of anatta, or no permanent self, to explore the identity of boy, *Kim*. A Hindu priest also observes in *Kim* a kind shift in his to get identified and says, "Thou wast wondering there in thy spirit what manner of thing thy soul might be" (186). Though the novel was written in Indian sociocultural condition for a person to be identified in any religion, culture of caste – either Hindu, Muslim or Buddhist and others, yet the unfixedity of *Kim*'s identity is thus clearly stated it ultimately looks for Middle Pathway of adjustment and accommodation. No fixity or adherence to any particularly identity.

Of course, the novel clearly creates two worlds- the world of the colonial rule in India on the one hand and the world of the native people on the other. Beside the political and geographical world categories, there are two other worlds- the materialistic and non-materialistic- which are in this connection identified with the world of Buddhist Middle path in which any kind of materialistic attachment in performance of action is accepted. The world of the British Raj as well as the world of native stand different from the world of Buddhist piety in which life is not driven by any kind of lust but the consumption of the material things from its utility ground, without being much affected from its attachment. Although *Kim* in other characters' observation is identified with divided identity of 'English' and 'Indian' selves and crushed in-between, in the world of Buddhist analysis he is rather a sincere disciple of Middle Path because of his sincere accompaniment to the lama.

Whether *Kim* is identified as an English boy or Indian native does not make significant difference. Middle Way of reading *Kim*, of course, sees *Kim* following the idea of no permanent identity for any human being to keep forever. Patrick Williams (1989) comments that *Kim* has to choose to be a servant of the Great Game or the disciple of a Buddhist lama and in the end opts for the world of 'materiality and common sense, which is par excellence that of the Englishman, rather than the morally superior but practically useless world of the lama' (23). *Kim* shows that there is no fixed identity for the human being. It is similar to, as Huxley explains, what Buddhist concept of atman and anatman means. According to Huxley the Buddha using conventional linguistic terms 'self' as in himself, herself 'yourself' and 'myself' the Buddha simply refers to particular collection of physical and mental states and taught that no permanent, substantial, independent, metaphysical self does have its permanent existence. And an identity of a person is not the real identity because nothing in Buddhist belief is permanent and remains with fixed identity but goes on changing.

The lama and *Kim* are in their quests: the lama's is of gaining knowledge and skill of attaining power to liberate himself from the bonds of life and *Kim*'s to get opportunity to make his life better from the having got his father's prophesy fulfilled. Harish Trivedi (2010) duly recognizes the quest of the lama in the novel and writes that both lama and *Kim* are in 'the parallel quests'(132). *Kim*'s understanding of the lama's search for the River of the Arrow, is a religious and symbolic importance to explore ideas of religious faith, devotion, manliness, and love in the context of an idealized India. Yet he is not engaged for himself. He is in the application of what he learnt of Bodhisattva meant in Buddhism. It is a practice of contributing as far as possible to enable human as well as other living ones to experience freedom from attachment and suffering. Paskins (2017) comments, Kipling constructs the lama in terms of the Buddhist idea of the bodhisattva, the figure who postpones Nirvana for the sake of others. These kinds of ideas and eastern practices according to Paskins, were familiar to intellectual European colonialist in the East yet such practices were not accepted because they were alien. That is why Kipling presents the lama and the Curator in the novel in different perspective. Commenting on Kipling's understanding of Buddhism Paskins writes:

If we concentrate instead on the lama and his religious quest, it is clear that Kipling presents the lama as the equal of the curator, in that the two men represent different, and complementary, attitudes towards Buddhism. The curator has collected and catalogued most of the artefacts and statues in the museum, and read English and French translations of the early Buddhist scriptures. He is knowledgeable about the attempts by archaeologists and scholars to map the holy places of Buddhism. His interest in the religion is intellectual and scholarly. He is polite and courteous to the lama, but he does not have any emotional or spiritual attachment to the

Buddha, and the Buddhism, Non-Violence and Masculinity Part of the reason for Kipling's use of Buddhist ideas in *Kim*. (243)

Likewise, the colonialists are in military mission and they train and treat people from the political as well as military mission and try to keep events and things under their control but the lama is indifferent to such objectives and guides himself completely with nonviolence principle. Indeed, the lama's spiritual quest involves tracing and overcoming the roots of violence within himself so that he can attain enlightenment and become a Bodhisattva. He follows 'The Wheel of Life' which is in its visual image represents some of the most important Buddhist ideas that need to be realized. He wishes to gain power to make them under the will and control of an individual in order to live a happy and peaceful life. 'The Great Wheel with its six spokes, whose center is the conjoined Hog, Snake, and Dove symbolizing Ignorance, Anger, and Lust respectively' (143). This is antagonistically rebuked by the disfigured chart (picture) drawn by the Russians to describe the tear in the lama's picture "the Eleventh House where Desire gives birth to the Child (as it is drawn by Tibetans) - across the animal and human world, to the Fifth House - the empty House of the Senses" (Kipling 262). Symbolic message through the representative figures of human emotions in the Buddhist Wheel of Life, particularly negative ones that become hindrance of understanding and realizing the law of nature are often misinterpreted. The lama teaches the mission of the Wheel so practically when *Kim* and the lama encounter with a cobra. *Kim*'s response of hatred and violence to the appearance of the cobra, saying "I have no stick, - I have no stick I will get me one and break its back" is eased by the lama's non-violence response to a dangerous creature. The Lama says: "He is upon the wheel as we are - a life ascending or descending - very far from deliverance" (43). The lama addresses the cobra as 'brother' and even questions him to give response about its knowingness of the knowledge of the river that the lama is looking for. And he tells *Kim* to "let him (the snake) out of his life". In this reference Paskins comments that all creatures in the lama's understanding are in the Wheel of Life and we need to love, care and let live them. This is what the lama intends to teach his chela, *Kim*, though the chela is not at the moment able to realize such a high level of worldly existence and his wisdom to practice and experience it.

Thus, Kipling has presented the lama as an embodiment of the love, compassion and calm. The lama is also in the process and struggle of attaining Bodhisattva, and he has been able to portray the compassion through words and actions which influence simple hearted young figure like *Kim*. As Paskins points out the mission and destination of the bodhisattva is 'to compassionately help a human being while maturing his or her own wisdom. For it, needs for cultivation of wisdom and insight into the causes of things must be learnt, understood and realized. As Paskins says "Buddhism makes a distinction between Nirvana, which can be attained in this life, and Parinirvana,

the completion of Nirvana, which comes at death for the awakened individual. It is important that an individual who has glimpsed Nirvana may choose to remain in the phenomenal world (samsara) to help other sentient beings to achieve the same state” (189). This is of course a high level of understanding about the world and law of nature. According to Rupert Gethin any person who has attained Nirvana does not remain in this material world and gets higher realm in some transcendental state of mind. Unlike such a person a Grishati jana, a person who is in family life without being able to attain Nirvana would continue to get birth and rebirth so he or she has to think, speak, and act and such a person is mostly in the attachment to different kind of allurements, ambition and greed. In contrast to the life of Ghristajana, the lama in this novel is in the journey of attaining Bodhisattva by learning the significance of four holy places the Buddha was indebted to, and the holy river in which, he believes, he can cleanse his all sins of life. But the learning process of lama and his ultimate finding of the river teach him the river he found was not the holy river and come to conclude that there is no holy river as it is supposed to be. Therefore, the river he goes in to is simply a brook (Kipling 276). Much more his realization is more significant than this. In his understanding the material form of river is not anything that gives any person a substance for liberation and nirvana; it is the mind and knowledge that helps attain it.

This kind of learning and realization made the lama to tell Mahbub Ali that he was ‘dragged from no river’ and it was not any moment of his Nirvana in the river but he realized it through his ‘Knowledge’ (284). This moment taught him that he has come to the state of getting free from his companionship to *Kim* and be free from the self and other material relation and sensibility or from the Wheel of Life. The lama says, “This very night he will be as free as I am from the taint of sin - assured as I am when he quits this body of Freedom from the Wheel of Things ... He is sure of Nibban [Nirvana] - enlightened as I am ... Let him be a teacher; let him be a scribe - what matter? He will have attained Freedom at the end. The rest is illusion.” (284-285). As Paskins (2017) evaluates the lama’s search for holy river or the moment, he would completely realize what he sought for is complete. The completion is the realization of what love can achieve for his disciple, *Kim*. He has entered a state beyond individuality and beyond time and space. This is of course high level of realization of impermanency, external illusion of thing and all such illusionary impression can only be eliminated through the understanding of changeability of things and life itself. When the lama realization of the completion of his pilgrimage, which rather become a means of gaining the knowledge of law of nature, it gives an impression of what he learnt, knew and attained. It is how he describes how he got into the moment of complete realization of the truth of life and its changeability. He describes the last moment of his realization of the moment of Nirvana thus:

As a drop draws to water, so my Soul grew near to the Great Soul which is beyond all things. At that point, exalted in contemplation, I saw all Hind ... I saw them at one time and in one place; for they were within the Soul ... By this I knew that I was free ... And I meditated a thousand thousand years, passionless, well aware of the Causes of all Things. The lama's experience of seeing 'all Hind (India)' at one time and place refers to the Buddhist belief that the phenomenal world has no reality in time and space, a thought which is also conveyed by the repetition of the word 'thousand'. (288)

Even though he expresses his experience, he neither states or implies that he is in the extreme moment of ecstasy because overcoming such feeling and realizing things as commonly as possible is the Middle way practice. And getting into neither in exaltation nor dejection is what a Buddhist in feeling and practice does show. Though the lama shows his sincere responsibility to *Kim* in the final state of the novel and says "What shall come to the boy if thou art dead? And I was shaken back and forth in myself with pity for thee; and I said, 'I will return to my chela lest he miss the way'" (Kipling 288). The lama is much affected from the thought of what the boy would do if he is left, yet it is his Middle Way of remaining in the practicality of life, but not emotionality or ideal beyond life. It is his teaching to *Kim* about his need to be matured and independent in the absence of the lama and follow the path the old man has shown him through world and actions so far. His returning from the moment of the realization of the reality- the law of nature is just a momentary, just to make his chela feel that he knows what and how the lama knew what he knew. To him even the Russian who assaulted (242) him are not enemies and shows any negative attitude to them. As he gets into the brook and gets pulled out by (284), he realizes that he has attained bodhisattva. That is why the lama says his search for the River of the Arrow has ended. "For the merit that I have acquired, the River of the Arrow is here. It broke forth at our feet ... Son of my Soul, I have wrenched my Soul back from the Threshold of Freedom to free thee from all sin — as I am free and sinless (289). Therefore, he empathetically and more philosophically makes *Kim* realize how the world is in relation of chain connection and appearance as the chariot with different components and appear and exists until change for reappearance of disappearance takes place as a continuous process of the law of nature. The lama tells *Kim* how the world and events exist and cease thus: As the egg from the fish, as the fish from the water, as the water from the cloud, as the cloud from the thick air; so, put forth, so leaped out, so drew away, so fumed up the soul of Teshoo Lama from the Great Soul (288). This kind of realization of the existence, knowledge about the phenomena and experience of life thorough practice has made the lama content of life and endeavor to reach to the state of Nirvana, though he is yet to be in that stage. He feels that his search for the River of Arrow has ended: it is not his finding of the brook but realization or the attainment of the knowledge that made

him feel free from all kinds of bondage of life – even from the practicality of the Middle Path.

This practicality does not end with attainment of Nirvana. The lama is unable to experience or knowledge of Nirvana and still remains in the world. His attachment to his chela and desire to lead him to the life -like of a Bodhisattva who always tries to make his disciples and other living beings attain Salvation is still active. That is why the lama remains with his chela *Kim* crossing “his hands on his (*Kim*'s) lap and smiled, as a man may who has won Salvation for himself and his beloved’ (289). The lama at the end of the novel is presented as personality of Buddhist practitioner who is now in the state of getting into the stage beyond sensual influence and emotions. However, in contrast to our expectation, the lama is not able to overcome the influence of love and realization of the need from guidance to his disciple, *Kim*. Consequently, he remains with his chela with a cry: “What shall come to the boy if thou art dead? And I was shaken back and forth in myself with pity for thee; and I said, ‘I will return to my chela lest he miss the way’ (288). The lama’s withdrawal from his journey to ‘the Great Soul’ momentarily fails here and this shows that the lama is yet to get to the state of Nirvana and still in the Middle Path journey.

### Conclusion

The Buddhist notion of the fundamental wisdom of the Middle way tells every individual to have knowledge about the Four Noble truth, perceive and practice dependent origination condition of things and interrelationship of natural phenomena- either in form of social activities or in their effect and connection to individual life. Besides it tells us nothing is permanent- neither nature nor the Self or individual identity in any form. And *Kim* understands this subtly at the end of the novel, even though he seems to be in side of colonial society. With his accompaniment with the lama, *Kim* has realized that there is no fixity of his identity and this according to Middle Path doctrine, symbolizes to the impermanent condition of Self. He knows the value and meaning of non-attachment to things, and shows neither extreme joy nor any pain even to the moment now he is to farewell lama forever. From Buddhist perspective, the ending of the novel is quite meaningful though most of the critics who don’t pay attention to the philosophical aspects of Buddhism in the novel cannot realize its significance. The lama is in satisfaction of his life, of his journey and his accompaniment with *Kim*. He does not show any kind of malice to any event that became hindrance and obstacle to his mission. The lama does not show any negative attitude even to the Russian assailants. This kind of practice ultimately takes him to the realization of insignificant difference between any Holy River he was in search for or the brook he has got in at the end of the novel. That is why, as he gets into the brook and pulled out by, he realizes that he has understood about Bodhisattva, not because he is into the river he has been looking

for, but because he has realized that physical attainment of something is not the tool to get Bodhisattva, but to selfless devotion to other's wellbeing. He calmly affirms his compassion and love to *Kim*, and *Kim* also has realized the value of his accompaniment of the lama and the value of the lama's teachings, guidance and contribution to him. *Kim*'s understanding of the core message of Buddhist philosophy that there is no any fixity of identity and permanency of things is well reflected to his meditative listening to the lama who asserts that human life as a chariot with different components for its composition is similar to the lama's explanation about interrelationship and interdependency of things in worldly existence as the egg from the fish, as the fish from the water, as the water from the cloud, as the cloud from the thick air and so many things in chain of relation. All get connected in the law of existence of phenomena as the lama and *Kim* have been in connection thorough their actions and words. The law of nature to both the lama and *Kim* has been a new perception of changeability, and identity of an individual in any background is unreal perception. This realization is means of achieving victory of Salvation for oneself in Buddhism. It can be attained through the practicality of Middle Way of living Buddhism has taught for all human beings. And the lama's journey of self-evolution by visiting Buddhist holy places and wish to liberate himself from all bonds of life has advanced high yet still incomplete.

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