TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Quest for Nirvana in Kim and Buddhacharitam

A Thesis submitted to the Central Department of English, TU in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in English

By

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Letter of Recommendation

This thesis entitled "Quest for Nirvana in *Kim* and *Budhacharitam*" submitted to the Central Department of English Tribhuvan University by Niraj Dahal has been completed successfully. He carried out this research seriously by being devoted for a year. I therefore recommend him to submit it for the final Viva Voce.

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled "Quest for Nirvana in Kim and Budhacharitam" submitted to the

Central Department of English Tribhuvan University by Niraj Dahal has been approved by

the undersigned members of the research committee.

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Abstract

This dissertation compares the quest for nirvana, the supreme state of bliss, the main characters the Lama in Rudyard Kipling's Kim on the on hand and the Buddha in Ashwaghosa's *Buddhacharitam* on the other. In the both texts the protagonists the Lama in the novel *Kim* and the Buddha in biographical text *Buddhacharitam* are in the quest for nirvana despite the fact that there is a vast gap of time of the publication, location of the authors and other issues between these texts. There are some distinct features of these characters and texts as well. Kim's quest is a journey to fulfill his worldly ambition and confined with the pursue of his identity in comparison with the quest of the Lama who is detached from the worldly attachments and indulged in the journey for finding out the 'river of arrow' in order to clean his sins and to transform him from ignorance into the 'fountain of wisdom'. The quest of Buddha as it represents in Ashwaghosa's Buddhacharitam is much wider and meaningful to talk about the journey of nirvana in the sense that he gets nirvana through the self-meditation, and enlightenment attained through transcendental meditation has been further used for liberating the mankind form sufferings. The quest for the nirvana and its achievement in *Kim* is particularly in order to get our body or life released from the sins which is closer to the Christian narration of sins associated to the Adam and Eve. Both texts are closer to the Mahayani cult of Buddhism that tells that nirvana is not only for the one who attains it, it is for others as well as Buddha in *Buddhacharitam* and the Lama in *Kim* believe and get inclined to this mission of enlightening others too after attaining the nirvana.

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