

## Review – Juxtaposition of Two Monuments

- Both objects cast of metal
- Both survived history
- Both objects have symbolic function; represent ideologies that people wish to perpetuate
- Immediate tension created between spirituality and military conquest

### Buddhism

- The statue represents heightened spiritual state of enlightenment; 'winning' or overcoming personal weakness within
- Attempt to overcome desire
- Espouses peace
- Cyclical time

### Imperialism

- The gun represents successful conquest, triumph of one person or one nation over another
- linked to war, death, hatred
- desire for territory, power, plunder
- Establishes hierarchy between conqueror and the victims
- Sequential time

## Who is Kim?

- He is English, but he is “burned black as any native” (3)
- Speaks in the vernacular by choice (Hindustani)
  - Not Hindi (Note that at the time of the novel, there are many languages spoken in India and no unifying language)
- “poor white of the very poorest” (3)
- Son of a nanny and a colour-sergeant
- After his mother died, his father became an alcoholic and opium addict himself
- Kim is now an orphan; lives with an opium addict

- Kim is of Irish descent
- Ireland in this period (late nineteenth century) is claiming Home Rule – wants end to English domination of the island
- The Irish often suffered prejudice from English

- Kim moves throughout the novel between factions
- Nickname is “Little Friend of all the World” (5)
- Dons Hindu or Mohammedan garb as a disguise
- Playmates are a Hindu and a Muslim
- Speaks Urdu, English, Hindustani and understands the policeman who speaks Punjabi

- Father was also a Freemason, member of a fraternal organization
- Kim has no possessions save the amulet
- Amulet contains 3 papers:
  - *ne varietur* – proof of his father’s membership in the Masons (fraternal organization)
  - Father’s clearance certificate from his masonic lodge
  - Kim’s birth certificate (establishes legitimacy, identity, cultural, social position should he chose to present it.)

- Narrator tells us that Kim avoids the Masons and their orphanage – too restrictive
- Avoids missionaries

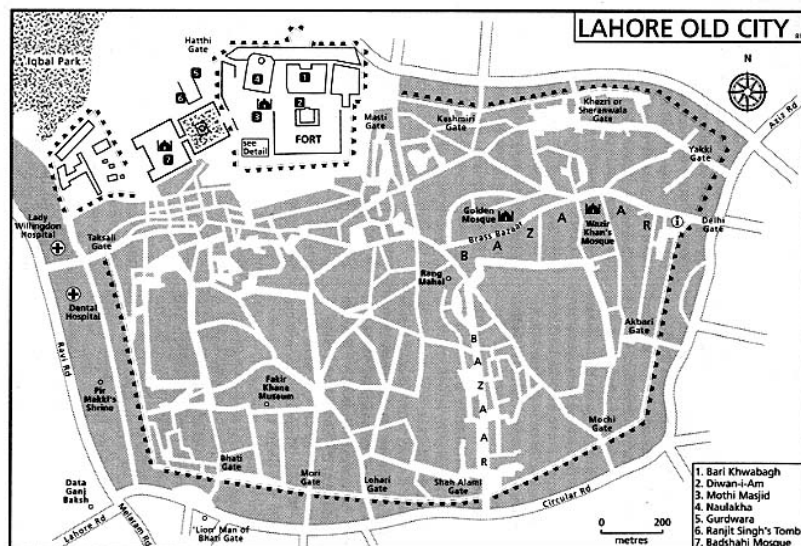
- Father bequest is a prophecy
- Distorted by the woman who cares for Kim
- “there will come for you a great Red Bull on a green field, and the Colonel riding on his tall horse, yes, and’– dropping into English – ‘nine hundred devils” (4).
- Becomes a somewhat fantastic dream of rescue/redemption from his orphaned and impoverished circumstances

“As he reached the years of indiscretion, he learned to avoid missionaries and white men of serious aspect who asked who he was, and what he did. For Kim did nothing with an immense success. True, he knew the wonderful walled city of Lahore from the Delhi Gate to the outer Fort Ditch; was hand in glove with men who led lives stranger than anything Haroun al Raschid [literary figure from *The Arabian Nights*] dreamed of; and he lived in a life wild as that of the *Arabian Nights*, but missionaries and secretaries of charitable societies could not see the beauty of it. His nickname through the wards was ‘Little Friend of all the World;’ and very often, being lithe and inconspicuous, he executed commissions by night on the crowded housetops for sleek and shiny young men of fashion. It was intrigue, of course – he knew that much, as he had known all evil since he could speak, -- but what he loved was the game for its own sake – the stealthy prow through the dark gullies and lanes, the crawl up a water-pipe, the sights and sounds of the women’s world on the flat roofs, and the headlong flight from housetop to housetop under cover of the hot dark.

Then there were holy men, ash-smeared *faquirs* by their brick shrines under the trees at the riverside, with whom he was quite familiar – greeting them as they returned from begging-tours and, when no one was by, eating from the same dish. The woman who looked after him insisted with tears that he should wear European clothes – trousers, a shirt, and a battered hat. Kim found it easier to slip into Hindu or Mohammedan garb when engaged on certain businesses. One of the young men of fashion – he who was found dead at the bottom of a well on the night of the earthquake – had once given him a complete suit of Hindu kit, the costume of a low-caste street boy, and Kim stored it in a secret place under some baulks in Nila Ram’s timber-yard, beyond the Punjab High Court, where the fragrant deodar logs lie seasoning after they have driven down the Ravi. When there was business or frolic afoot, Kim would use his properties, returning at dawn to the veranda, all tired out from shouting at the heels of a marriage procession, or yelling at a Hindu festival. Sometimes there was food in the house, more often there was not, and then Kim went out again to eat with his native friends” (5-6).

## Lahore – Nineteenth century

- Ancient city, surrounded by wall to protect inhabitants
- 13 gates – formed entry points
- British annexation of Punjab region in mid-nineteenth century destroyed much of the wall and most of the gates (some have been rebuilt)
- British replaced wall with gardens
- Political decision rather than aesthetic
- Delhi Gate was the main entrance, built during Mughal era (post 16<sup>th</sup> century)



<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:OldCityM.jpg>



Artist Rendering of Delhi Gate,  
Nineteenth Century



Lahore Fort – UNESCO World Heritage Site

## Kim

- Moves unimpeded throughout the city, from within the gates of “civilization” to the outside
- From a young age, he is accustomed to fending for himself
- only the most basic of needs are met – shelter and sometimes food
- Moves in and out of British control (ie in and out of Fort)
- Knows evil and good
- Avoids any offer of security if it includes restriction on his behaviour
- Independent

- Can move vertically from the ground to the roof,
- From public, male space to more private “womens’ world”, normally restricted from male gaze
- Has props to change identity, ethnicity
- Moves from highest moral order (High Court) to the timber yard, where logs flow out of town on the river
- Can partake of both the child/adolescent world and the adult world at whim
- Come to see that this novel is, on one level, an adventure novel, a boy’s tale of escaping parental control, dabbling in intrigue, flirting with danger



- Kim lives outside all boundaries: physical, ethnic, linguistic, class, moral, economic, political; not governed or restricted by his class, age
- Come to see that this novel is, on one level, an adventure novel, a boy's tale of escaping parental control, dabbling in intrigue, flirting with danger

## Where is Kim's position?

- Physically astride the gun
- Playing "king-of-the-castle with Chota Lal and Abdullah
- Playmates are a Hindu and a Muslim
- Observed by a Punjabi policeman who ignores the municipal orders

“Off! Off! Let me up!” cried Abdullah, climbing up Zam-Zammah’s wheel.

‘Thy father was a pastry-cook. They mother stole the *ghi*,’ sang Kim. ‘All Mussalmans fell off Zam-Zammah long ago!’

‘Let me up!’ shrilled little Chota Lal in his gilt-embroidered cap. His father was worth perhaps half a million sterling, but India is the only democratic land in the world.

‘The Hindus fell off Zam-Zammah too. The Mussalmans pushed them off. Thy father was a pastry-cook—’” (6).

- Abdullah’s father is a business man; Chota Lal’s father is wealthy
- [ Kim] “kicked Lal Dinanath’s boy off the trunnions – since the English held the Punjab and Kim was English” (3)
- Power struggle between the boys is a history lesson
- (Buddha is born 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE, Hindus rule from 4<sup>th</sup> century CE, Mughal Empire (Muslim) from Persia rules from ~1500 until British annex India in 19<sup>th</sup> century)
- Kim claims English privilege to ride the cannon, but only by the most tenuous means
- He looks like the locals, he is poorer than the locals, he has no family connections, he is uneducated
- See that the politics of colonization shape their play

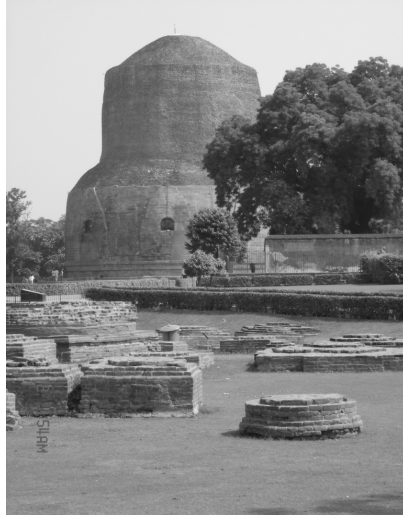
- Yet, at the same time, what does it mean that this symbol of one nation's power over another is reduced in the opening pages to a toy?
- Do we take Kipling, the author, as an apologist or defender of imperialism? A detached observer? A satirist?
- Is he mocking the imperial endeavour, the business of war as a game??

## The Lama

- Lama appears, but the boys cannot place him in terms of familiar categories;
- Note how they try to classify him:
- Chota Lal ties the lama's rosary to religion
- Kim cannot tell from the lama's clothing his trade or profession
- Can't place him by his language of Urdu
- Can't tell his religion
- Kim asks him, "What is your caste? Where is your house? Have you come far?" (7).
- Abdullah decides he is from China, Chota places him as a hillman
- Boys' behaviour prefigures other common attempts in the novel to 'read' characters' position from their attire

- Lama identifies himself as a Tibetan monk, a guru
- “We be followers of the Middle Way, living in peace in our lamasseries, and I go to see the Four Holy Places before I die” (7).
- On a pilgrimage to see the four Holy Places where Buddha was born, where he gave his first sermon, where he died, his relics (Lumbini, Nepal; Benares (Varanasi); various stupas)
- Lama identifies himself: “As a pilgrim to the Holy Places I acquire merit” (11).
- Wants to “free myself from the Wheel of Things [cycle of birth, death and rebirth] by a broad and open road” (11).
- Searching for the River of the Arrow
- Wash in the river, you become pure

- First stop for the lama is Benares, 700 miles away
- Benares is now called Varanasi
- One of the most sacred places to Hindus after Kathmandu
- Believed to be founded by Lord Shiva
- Lama is looking for another religious scholar from who he can learn
- Walk and take the train
- Following the places of Buddha’s life; attempt to make history present



Dhamek Stupa at Deer Park, near Benares (Varanasi) where Buddha gave his first sermon

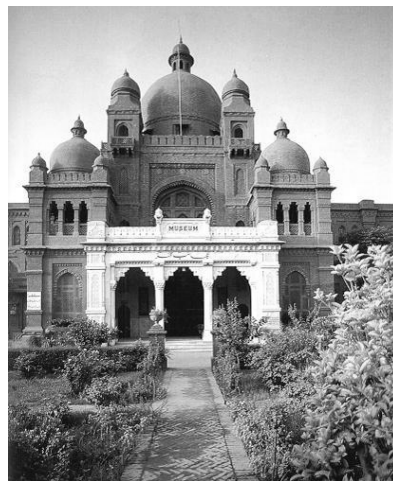
## Pilgrimage

- From Latin *peregrinum*, a stranger
- Many religions have an element of pilgrimage
- Pilgrimage is most simply a journey to a sacred place
- Purpose may include act of devotion, healing of illness or infirmity, to give thanks, a punishment, re-enacting a religious event
- Pilgrims may be confused, uncertain of their identity
- Can be of any economic class, gender
- Often travel in group
- Seek hardship
- No expectation of earthly reward
- Pilgrims divest themselves of worldly concerns in order to reach the sacred place both geographically as well as internally
- Step outside sequential time to focus on cyclical time

- Lama has lost his companion, his *chela* or disciple
- Part of his pilgrimage is to enter the Museum; he has been directed by the Abbot of another monastery, who has previously made a pilgrimage and seen the reliefs and sculptures in the museum (9)
- Only Kim is not afraid to accompany the Lama into the museum; tells Chota Lal and Abdullah: “Run to your mothers’ laps, and be safe” (8).
- Curator shows the lama the collection
- Lama is enthralled with the relief of the Buddha

## “Ajaib-Gher – the Wonder House”

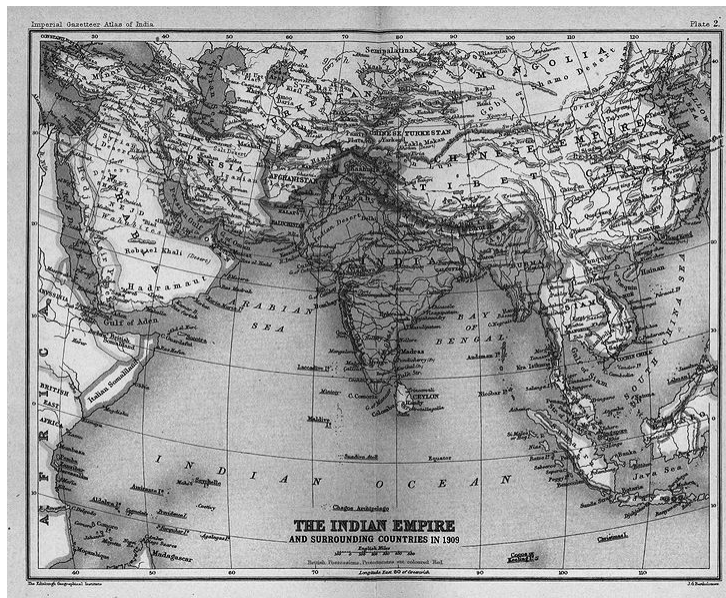
- Lahore Museum
- Museum has a large collection of antiquities from Tibet, Nepal, the Punjab
- Curator is a “A white-bearded Englishman” (8, 9), a “sahib” – “Sir” or “Master” – from notes, refers to Europeans or colonizers,



- The curator states that he is there “to gather knowledge’ “ (9),
- but he is also portrayed as having to explain the significance of historical, Buddhist artifacts to a Tibetan monk: “For the first time he [the lama] heard of the labours of European scholars, who by the help of these and a hundred other documents have identified the Holy Places of Buddhism” (10).

- If we read from the colonial or imperialistic perspective, we might see the relationship between the curator and the lama as professional and friendly, perhaps even as one scholar to another
- The lama trades with the curator
- Curator gives the lama paper, pencils and spectacles
- The lama gives the curator an antique iron pencase and a promise of one of the “brush-pen Buddhist pictures” (14).

- But from a twenty-first century post-colonial perspective, that is, from the perspective of the once colonized, we might ask, 'Why is an Englishman in charge of Asian culture?'
- See a paternalistic portrayal that suggests that the Europeans are 'parents' to 'childlike' Asians
- Asian's 'need' the help of the more worldly, knowledgeable Europeans to explain the world to them
- This perspective completely ignores the historical facts of India which has a lengthy and rich cultural history, long before the British were present



<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:BritishIndianEmpireandEnvirons2.jpg>



## The Great Game

- The British Empire in Asia includes India, Burma, Singapore, Pakistan
- Britain and Russian are vying for Indian territory
- Mirrors other power struggles between European nations for control of Africa, Middle East, Asia
- Politically, occupation of India served to consolidate British power in Middle East and Asia
- India is the most profitable of all the British colonies ("the jewel in the crown" of Queen Victoria)
- Control is maintained by an army of 3000 British officers and 150,000 Indian soldiers
- Army was financed from Indian revenue of taxes levied by British (400,000,000 Indians) (Benita Parry, *Delusions and Discoveries*)

- How to pay for the Army?
- British mapping 1767-1947, ostensibly attempt to take a census for taxation purposes
- After war of 1857 (mutiny/war of independence), British determined that ratio of soldiers should be 2:1 British to Indian
- British fear Russian invasion from north and also Indian rebellion from within

## Russian Invasion

- A. Michael Matin: Kim is “imbued with the motifs of invasion-scare literature” (“*Kim*, Invasion-Scare Literature, and the Russian Threat to British India,” *Kim* 359 – Norton edition)
- Matin argues that this fear is generated by the Tory-Conservatives in England to generate support for “increased military expenditures” (359).
- Several texts published at same time as novel, both fictional and non-fictional, suggesting Russian threat
- Era when France and England are fighting over control of Egypt, Germans are producing battleships

- Mahbub Ali is a Pathan from northern frontier (now Afghanistan and Pakistan)
- He operates as a horse trader
- Also working undercover for the British, mapping the northern regions
- But there is another layer, since he is also spying for the British; known as C25 1B
- Goes into remote areas to trade horses, but also trades information
- Part of the intrigue of the novel is that the five northern kings have formed alliances with the Russians
- Mahbub Ali uses Kim as a courier to deliver information about the situation to British

- Kim takes the lama to the Kashir Serai, which is the camel and horse caravan hostel in Lahore
- It is a large square, - not unlike the AQ outside – and around the perimeter are cloisters or a covered walkway built of arches
- The arches have been closed in to make locked rooms where the travellers can have privacy and secure their belongings
- Ali leaves his room unlocked and visits the “Gate of the Harpies” and the “Flower of Delight” – a local prostitute
- Gets drunk and while he is sleeping off the events of the evening, the keys to his room are stolen and his belongings are carefully searched

- This activity is observed by Kim
- We find out later that Ali was not unaware of the ploy and deliberately left his room unlocked: “What a colt’s trick.... As if every girl in Peshwar did not use it! But ‘twas prettily done. Now God He knows how many more there be upon the Road who have orders to test me – perhaps with the knife” (24).
- Ali is under suspicion of being a British agent and so he has deliberately placed himself under scrutiny to mitigate such suspicion
- He has already given Kim the message to pass on to Colonel Creighton, so nothing is found in Ali’s belongings that could incriminate him