

ගන්නා සැටි යථාරූපී ව නිරූපණය කරනු සඳහා ඓතිහාසික වෘත්තාන්ත කිහිපයක ආභාසය ලබා ගන්නට මට සිදු විය.

මෙයින් මා අදහස් කළේ යොවුන් සාහිත්‍යය හුදෙක් කල්පිතයට ම සීමා නොකොට, යථාර්ථවාදී ව අපේ ම පැවැත්ම එළිකොට දැක්වීම ය. මායා යථාර්ථය ද මෙහි ලා මිශ්‍ර කොට ගැනුණ ද එහි අද්භූතයක් නොවන බව බුද්ධිමත් පාඨකයට හැඟී යනු ඇත. මෙහි අගට යෙදෙන උනහුරණය ටෙලි නාට්‍ය රචකයකුට වඩාත් ගැඹුරු ඓතිහාසික පසුතලයක් යොදගනු පිණිස ය. ආයුධ සන්නද්ධ රජු ඇතුළු සිවුරඟ සේනා සමඟ ආයුධ විරහිත කතරගම රජ දරුවන් ගැමියන් සමඟ කළ ජයග්‍රාහී සටන මෙහි දී අවධාරණය කළ යුත්තකි. ස්වකීය ප්‍රියමනාප වැසියන්ගේ විනාශය නොරිසි දසහතිකයන් යටත් වූයේ සිය කැමැත්තෙනි. නිරායුධ ඔවුන්ගේ ඝාතනය ගෝඨාභය මහරජුට ඓතිහාසික කළු ලපයක් ඇති කළ සිද්ධියකි. මහ වෙහෙර දහසක් නැංවීමෙන් වුව ද ඔහුට එය මකාලිය නොහැකි විය. මහාවංශගත මෙබඳු සිද්ධීන් සැකෙවින් සඳහන් කෙරුණේ ඉතිහාසය තුළින් වර්තමානයට ද එබෙනු පිණිස ය.

අපේ තරුණ කොටස් ප්‍රබුද්ධ ව තබාගැනීම සඳහා ඔවුන්ගේ බුද්ධියට ආමන්ත්‍රණය කළ හැකි නිර්මාණ අපට අවශ්‍ය ය. ජාතියේ පෞරුෂය බිඳ වැටෙන මෙබඳු අවධියක බොළඳ - මිලාරික රසයට නැමෙන දරුවන් එයින් මුදවාගෙන වර්තවත් බුද්ධිමත් පුරවැසි පිරිසක් තනාගැනීමේ අභිප්‍රාය අපේ යොවුන් සාහිත්‍ය නිර්මාණකරුවන්ට තිබිය යුතු ය.

"Middle Path" and the "Middle Doctrine" In Buddhism

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Middle path

It is a well known fact that the Buddha is said to have realized middle path (*Majjhimā pamipadā*) as the way which leads to the cessation of suffering (*Dukkha-nirodha*)¹. The aim of the noble quest of Siddhartha Gautama before being the Buddha was to find out the solution to the problem of suffering encountered by all living beings in the world². The Buddha made use of his first sermon, *Dhamma-cakkappavattana-sutta*³ to reveal what he realized in his enlightenment as the result of his noble quest for the benefit of the world. Out of four Noble Truths which the Buddha realized in his enlightenment the last Noble truth, the way leading to the cessation of suffering (*Dukkhanirodhagāmini pamipadā*) is identified by him with the middle path (*Majjhimā pamipadā*). This middle path is further identified as the Noble eight-fold path (*Ariyo amma, hangiko maggo*) in the very same sutta⁴. The way leading to the cessation of suffering is said to be middle path as it avoids two extremes namely self indulgence (*Kāma-sukhallikānuyoga*) and self mortification (*Attakilamthāmyoga*)⁵. Self indulgence is considered as a way of life recognized by the materialists in order to achieve sensory gratification. Likewise, self mortification is considered as a religious way of life recognized by the Jaina thinkers in order to purify the soul from previous Karmas done by the people. It should be emphasized here that the way recommended by the Buddha for the cessation of suffering or the realization of liberation (*Nibbāna*) is a mode of life which reduces the crude characteristics of both the extremes. Extreme forms of both luxury life and painful life are avoided in the middle way realized by the Buddha as they do not lead to the cessation of suffering. Hence it is called middle way or middle path.

The term *Pamipadā* used in both *Majjhimā-pamipadā* and *Dukkha-nirodha-gāmini pamipadā* can be justifiably rendered into English as Middle way or middle path for the reason that the Buddha himself used the term *Magga* as a synonym to term *Pamipadā*⁶. Therefore, it imports

the notion that the middle way is not just a teaching which should be known or understood but what should be practiced or followed for the cessation of suffering. It was further elaborated by the Buddha himself by saying "With the thought, 'This is the noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering, and this way has to be developed', there arose in me, bhikkhus, vision, knowledge, insight, wisdom, light, concerning things unknown before"⁷. There are many places in discourses of the Pali canon where term "*Pamipadā*" can be found in addition to the terms appeared in the phrases "*Majjhimā pamipadā*" and "*Dukkha-nirodha-gāminī pamipadā*". Except in the case of "*sammā, pamipadā*" appeared in *Pamipadā sutta* in *Nidāna-samyutta*, in all other places it seems that the term "*Pamipadā*" refers to some thing which has to be practiced, trained, followed or utilized. For an instance, the phrase "*Anupubba-pamipadā*" indicates some thing which is practiced or followed gradually. So is the term "*sekha-pamipadā*" (practice for the trainer). Therefore, it is no need to emphasize that the *Majjhimā pamipadā* refers to the practical aspect of Buddhism.

Sammā pamipadā

The term "*Sammā pamipadā*" found in *Pamipadā sutta* of *Nidāna-vagga* in *Samyutta-nikāya* seems to be used in different context which does not refer to the meaning of practice or training. In that discourse the Buddha advocated two types of *Pamipadā* namely, *Micchā pamipadā* and *Sammā pamipadā* while identifying *Micchā patipadā* with the mode of emergence and *Sammā pamipadā* with the mode of cessation in the twelve linked formula of *Paticca-samuppāda*⁸. It is worthwhile to inquire into this particular type of *Sammā pamipadā* which refers to the mode of cessation of the doctrine of *Pamī-ccasamuppāda*. The term *Micchā pamipadā* used to denote the mode of emergence of the *Pamīcca-samuppāda* may be significant in order to understand the proper intention of the Buddha in this context. Doctrine of *Pamīcca-samuppāda* as evident from the discourses covers causal genesis pertaining to both the modes of emergence and cessation of the mass of suffering. Is there a possibility to consider one mode as *Micchā patipadā* and the other as *Sammā pamipadā* in the same doctrine? If the *Pamīcca-samuppāda* is a doctrine realized by the Buddha as the *Ariyapariyesana-sutta* enumerated⁹ it cannot be a path or means rather than the end. *Nagara-sutta* of *Nidāna-samyutta* reveals us that the Buddha discovered the ancient path (*PurāGam maggam purāGam anjasam*) through which the Buddha is said to have realized both the aspects of *Samudaya* and *Nirodha*. This ancient path is nothing

but the middle path which is also known as noble eight fold path¹⁰. According to this sutta, causal genesis of both emergence and cessation of suffering in other words, *Pamīcca-samuppāda* has to be realized by practicing middle path. The fact that the Buddha realized the way which leads to the realization of the cessation of causal genesis of suffering is nicely explained by the Buddha in the same discourse as follows:

"Adhigato kho myāyam maggo bodhaya yadidam nāma-ripa-nirodhā viññāna-nirodho viññāna-nirodhā nāma-ripa-nirodho nāma-ripa-nirodhā salāyatana-nirodho... jāti-nirodhā jarā-marana... nirodhoti" S. ii. P.3

It is said that not only the cessation of causal genesis of suffering but all the four modes of realization namely, causes themselves, emergence of the causes, cessation of the causes and path leading to the cessation of the causes of suffering are said to be realized by the Buddha by following the same middle path¹¹

"...Tam anugacchanto sankhāre abbaññāsīm. Sankhāra-samudayam abbaññāsīm. Sankhāra-nirodham abbaññāsīm. Sankhāra-nirodha-gāminim pamipadam abbaññāsīm". *Nidāna-samyutta* *Nagara-sutta*, S. II. P.106.

It is quite evident from the discourses of the canon that the Buddha presented not only the practical aspect in the middle leading to the goal but also advocated his doctrinal aspect in the middle to explain the reality of the world which should be realized through the middle path (*Majjhimā pamipadā*). It is the teaching of the Buddha that without understanding the reality of the world one cannot achieve the cessation of suffering. It is said that in the absence of knowledge and insight of things as they are the cause is absent (for the production of) disinterest and renounce. In the absence of disinterest and renounce the cause is absent for the knowledge and insight of emancipation¹². Further, it is the view of Buddhism that the knowledge and insight of emancipation is the necessary outcome of the understanding of reality. *Anguttara-nikāya* enumerates this fact as follows: "*It is the nature of things (Dhammatā) that a person who knows and sees as it is, feels disinterested and renounce. One who has disinterested and has renounced does not need an effort of will to realize the knowledge and insight of emancipation*"¹³. "Knowing and seeing as it is" (*yathābhūta-ñānadassana*) used in the above quotation refers to the knowledge of the reality which is known as *Pamīcca-samuppāda*. Therefore, the middle path is intended to lead the way to reach the goal through the understanding of the reality.

Reality of the world as recognized by Buddhism is nothing but the causality or the conditionality of the world. This is what is called *pamicca-samuppāda* in the discourses of the Buddha. It is explained as the everlasting and all pervading nature of field of existence of the being without exception: “*whether Tathāgatās arise or not, this order exists namely, the fixed nature of phenomena, the regular pattern of phenomena or conditionality*”. It is no doubt that the paramount intention of the Buddha was to reveal the way how this reality constitutes the existence of being. Therefore, in most of the discourses, the Buddha identifies this reality with the conditional existence and its cessation. In the *Paccaya-sutta* of *Nidāna-samyutta* explaining *pamicca-samuppāda* as conditional existence, the Buddha advocated that this conditionality is the fixed nature of phenomena or the regular pattern of phenomena as follows:

Katamo ca so Bhikkhave pamicca-samuppādo. Jātipaccaya bhikkhave jarāmaranam uppādaṃ vā tathāgatānam anuppādaṃ vā tathāgatānam. Ihitava sa dhātu dhammamhitata dhammaniyāmatā idappaccayatā. Tam tathāgato abhisambujjhati abhisameti abhisambujjhītvā abhisamētvā āchikkhati dēseti paññāpeti pamūhapeti vivarati vibhajati uttāni-karoti passathāni (S.ii. P.25)

(What is causation? On account of birth arise decay and death. Whether *tathāgata*-s arise or not, this order exists namely the fixed nature of phenomena, the regular pattern of phenomena or conditionality. This the *tathāgata* discovers and comprehends; having discovered and comprehended it he points it out, teaches it, lays it down, establishes, reveals, analyses, clarifies it and says “Look”¹⁵).

All these evidences prove the fact that the *Pamicca-samuppāda* (conditionality or causality) is the truth of existence which should be known in order to realize the knowledge of emancipation. They further confirm that understanding of both the modes of *Pamicca-samuppāda* namely mode of emergence and mode of cessation are equally supportive for the cessation of suffering. Without understanding of the order of emergence it is impossible to achieve the understanding of the cessation of the causes which lead to the cessation of suffering. Therefore, understanding of *Pamicca-samuppāda* necessarily implies the understanding of both the orders of *Pamicca-samuppāda*. The fact that the Buddha having realized it clarifies to the world with the view to look at it as it is, is evident from the above quoted *sutta* passage. Therefore,

causality in Buddhism is certainly intended not as a mean to some end but as something to be known. If it is so, it is inevitable to arise a question as to why the Buddha identified the order of emergence with *Micchā pamipadā* and order of cessation with *Sammā pamipadā*.

On the contrary to the concepts of *Micchā pamipadā* and *Sammā pamipadā* in *Nidāna-samyutta*, the Buddha has presented another kind of *Micchā pamipadā* and *Sammā pamipadā* in *Magga-samyutta* in the same *Samyutta-nikāya*. While *Sammā pamipadā* is identified with the noble eight fold path in that *Pamipadā-sutta* and *Micchā pamipadā* with wrong aspect of noble eight fold path. Introducing *Sammā pamipadā* there the Buddha explained it in the following way:

*Gīhino vāham bhikkhave pabbajitassa vā sammā pamipadam vannemi. Sammā pamipattādhikaraṅgaḥetu āradhako hotu ñāyam dhammam kusalam. Katamo ca bhikkhave sammā pamipadā? Seyyathīdam sammā dīmmhi sammā sankappo...sammā Samādhi*¹⁶.

(Bhikkhus whether for a lay person or one gone forth, I praise the right way. Whether it is a lay person or one gone forth who is practicing rightly, because of undertaking the right way of practice he attains the method, the Dhamma that is wholesome. And what bhikkhus, is the right way? It is right view...right concentration. That is called the right way.¹⁷)

It is quite evident that the Buddha used the concept of *Sammā pamipadā* in the *Pamipadā-sutta* in *Nidāna-vagga* in a quite different context other than that of in the *Pamipadā-sutta* of *Magga-vagga* in *Samyutta-nikāya*. When we take constructive efficacy of the right way or right path (*Sammā pamipadā*) shown in the *Pamipadā-sutta* of *Magga-samyutta* into our consideration, it might not be difficult to decide the exact context of the *Pamipadā-sutta* in *Nidāna-samyutta*. As shown above, *Pamipadā-sutta* of *Magga-vagga* says that “because of undertaking the right way of practice one attains the method, the Dhamma that is wholesome. And what bhikkhus, is the right way? It is right view...right concentration. That is called the right way”. This implies that the practice that leads to the attainment of the method (*Ñāyam Dhammam*) that is wholesome (*Kusalam*) is the right way and otherwise is the wrong way (*Micchā pamipadā*). If we take this for granted order of emergence of *Pamicca-samuppāda* and order of cessation can also be called *Micchā pamipadā* and *Sammā pamipadā* respectively. Order of emergence of the *Pamicca-samuppāda* shows how the mass of suffering comes to be. It

is the way starts from ignorance (*Avijjā*) which is unwholesome (*Akusala*) and leads to craving (*Taṇhā*) and grasping (*Upadāna*) which are also unwholesome in the chain of causal existence of suffering. It becomes the wrong way when it is taken in the sense of mode or manner which produces unwholesome and their bad effects. In this sense mode of cessation of the Pamicca-samuppāda can be considered as Sammā pamipada as it is the way which speaks the demolition of unwholesome and thereby the achievement of the highest wholesome (*Parama-kusala*) which is known as *Nibbāna*¹⁹. But, either aspect of Pamicca-samuppāda never becomes a “*Pamipadā*” (path) in the sense of means through which something can be achieved. Therefore, it is no doubt that the Buddha used the term *Pamipadā* in the *pamipadā-sutta* in the *nidāna-samyutta* quite contrary to that of in the *Pamipadā-sutta* of *Magga-samyutta*.

Middle Doctrine

Apart from the middle path (*Majjhima pamipadā*) which refers to the Noble eight fold path, there is a teaching presented by the Buddha in the middle which is identified with the doctrine of Pamicca-samuppāda in the Pali tradition of Buddhism. In most of the occasions the Buddha is said to have presented Pamicca-samuppāda as a teaching in the middle rejecting all diametrically opposed wrong views. In this respect, it seems that the attention of the most of the Buddhist scholars is mainly focus towards the discourse preached by the Buddha to venerable Kaccāyana-gotta (Kaccāna-gotta) which is appeared as *Kaccāyana-gotta sutta* in the *Nidāna-samyutta* of *Nidāna-vagga* in *Samyutta-nikāya*. The Buddha presented this discourse as an answer to the question raised by venerable kaccāyana-gotta as to in what way is there right view. The question of Venerable Kaccāyana-gotta is given below as it appears in the discourse:

“*Sammā dīmmhi sammā dīmmhī bhante vuccatī. Kittāvutā nu kho bhante sammā dīmmhī hotī*”²⁰.

(Venerable sir, it is said ‘right view, right view. In what way, venerable sir, is there right view?’²⁰)

The answer given by the Buddha in this discourse has to be considered as an explanation of right view (*Sammā dīmmhī*) for he rejected there two extremist wrong views and presented Pamicca-samuppāda as right view. Relevant passage of the discourse and its translation is given below as follows:

“*Sabbam atthīti kho kaccāyana ayam eko anto. Sabbam naṭhīti ayam dutiyo anto. Ete te kaccāyana ubho ante anupagamma majjhen tathāgato dhammam deseti: Avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā...evam etassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hoti.*

Avijjāyatveva asesavirāganirodhā saṅkhāranirodho...evam etassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa norodho hotī”²¹.

(“‘All exists’ Kaccāna, this is one extreme. ‘All does not exist’ is the second extreme. Without veering towards either of these extremes the Tathāgata teaches the dhamma in the middle: ‘With ignorance as condition mental formation (comes to be)... Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering. But with the remainderless fading away and cessation of ignorance comes cessation of mental formation... Such is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering’”²¹).

In this discourse, the most striking expression of the Buddha is that “without veering towards either of these extremes Tathāgata teaches dhamma in the middle: Dhamma in this phrase is nothing but Pamicca-samuppāda. Even in the *Dhamma-cakkappavattana-sutta* we can find a similar expression slightly different way. It says that “without veering towards either of these extremes, the Tathāgata awakened to the middle way”²²

The similarity and difference of these two expressions of the Buddha can easily be discernible through the original Pali quotations. Therefore, the two quotations taken from both *Kaccāyana-gotta-sutta* and *Dhamma-cakkappavattana-sutta* are given below respectively:

“*Ete te kaccāyana ubho ante anupagamma majjhen tathāgato dhammam deseti*”²⁴

“*Ete te ubo ante anupagamma majjhimā pamipadā tathāgaten abhīsambuddhā*”²⁵.

In the former the Buddha mentioned the manner how he teaches the Dhamma which is Pamicca-samuppāda without veering to two extremist wrongs views and in the later the Buddha explained what he has awakened to without veering to two extremes. It should be mentioned here that the Pamicca-samuppāda (Dhamma) too had been awakened to the Buddha²⁶. In both the cases the Buddha is reported to have rejected extremes. Extremes in both cases rejected by the Buddha themselves

would reveal the distinction of the two attitudes taken up by the Buddha, when they are critically examined. As pointed out earlier, the Buddha is said to be realized middle path by rejecting two extremes. They are not labeled as wrong views. They are merely two ways of life adopted by two different groups which do not lead to the realization of *Nibbāna*. In the *Kaccāyana-gotta-sutta*, the Buddha has rejected two different wrong views about the nature of the reality when he preached the *pañiccasamuppāda* in the middle as the nature of reality. Conditionality or *Pañicca-samuppāda* as the reality or truth of the world is a doctrine realized by the Buddha by following the middle path²⁷. Therefore, this doctrine of *Pañicca-samuppāda* by no means becomes the middle path (*Majjhimā paṃsaddā*) as it is not the path but it is the right view which refers to the reality.

The Buddha has presented *Pañicca-samuppāda* in the middle avoiding diametrically opposed wrong views in different occasions. In the *Kaccāyana-gotta-sutta* the Buddha advocated *pañicca-samuppāda* in the middle transcending both eternalistic view of existence which asserts that everything exists absolutely (*sabbam atthi*) and the opposite nihilistic view which maintains that nothing exists absolutely (*sabbam natthi*)²⁸. The Buddha has repeated the rejection of above mentioned two views again in the *Jānussoṇi sutta* in the *nidāna samyutta* exactly in the same way²⁹. In the *Lokāyatika-sutta* of *Nidāna-samyutta* the *pañicca-samuppāda* is said to have presented by the Buddha in the middle, transcending above two views together with another mutually contradictory two extremist views. One is a monistic view of existence which holds that everything is reducible to a unique unity, a sort of self-substance (*sabbam ekattam*) which again implies the eternalism and the other is a pluralistic view which maintains that the whole of existence is resolvable into a concatenation of discrete entities (*sabbam paḥuttam*)³⁰.

Avoiding different types of wrong views regarding the reality existed in the contemporary religious field; the Buddha presented the reality in the middle in terms of causal genesis (*pañicca-samuppāda*). In addition to the aforesaid extremist views the following contradictory views too discarded by the Buddha preaching the Dhamma in the middle:

- (i) *So karoti so paḥisamvedeti; Añño karoti -añño paḥisamvedeti*³¹
(The one who acts is the same as the one who experiences; the one who acts is one, and the one who experiences is another)
- (ii) *Tam jīvam tam sarīram; Aññam jīvam aññam sarīram*

(The soul and body are the same; the soul is one thing and the body is another)³².

In the *Acela (kassapa)-sutta*, a naked ascetic called *Kassapa* presented four views to the Buddha in order to know the correct view out of the four. The views put forward by *Kassapa* are as follows:

- (i) *Sayam katam dukkham* (suffering is created by oneself)
- (ii) *Param katam dukkham* (suffering is created by another)
- (iii) *Sayam katañca param katañca dukkham* (suffering is created both by oneself and another)
- (iv) *Asayamkāram aparam kāram, adhicca-samuppanam dukkham*³³ (suffering is created fortuitously; it is created neither by oneself nor by another).

Commenting upon those views the Buddha has omitted the last two views and taken first two views into his consideration. The reason for the omission might be the fact that first two are obviously the main views; the third is a combination of the first and the second views and fourth is the negation of the third. Anyhow, referring to the first and second views the Buddha has arrived at conclusions respectively that when one asserts "suffering is created by oneself" it refers to one existing from the beginning. So it amounts to eternalism (*sassatam etam pareti*)³⁴. And, when one asserts "suffering is created by another" then it amounts to the annihilationism (*ucchedam etam pareti*)³⁵. Taking both extremist eternalism and annihilationism into account the Buddha explained to naked ascetic *Kassapa* that the Tathāgata preaches the Dhamma in the middle without resorting to neither of them.

Middle path and Middle Doctrine of Buddhism

We come to know that the Buddha has presented the path leading to the cessation of suffering as middle path as it supersedes both self-indulgence and self-mortification. The path preached by the Buddha is known as middle path not merely because of the fact that it rejects the both extremist paths but because it stands in between of the two extremes. In other words it is really a middle position of self-indulgence and self-mortification for it has the characteristics of minimized crude form of both the extremes. It is the religious path which is characterized by comfortable living (*phasu-vihara*) in relation to self-indulgence and self-restraint (*samvara* or *samyama*) in relation to self-mortification. Therefore,

it reflects the middle position in between both extremes and as it is path leading to cessation of suffering it is called middle path.

While Buddhism accepts a middle path which leads to cessation of suffering it advocates a middle doctrine as the reality of the world through the realization of which cessation of suffering is possible. It appears that there is an attempt by some modern Buddhist scholars to label middle doctrine of Buddhism as the middle teaching (*majjhimā desanā*) of the Buddha. It is obvious that they have come to such a conclusion depending on one of the statements of the Buddha in *Kaccāyana-gotta-sutta*. There the Buddha mentions that the *tathāgata* preaches the Dhamma in the middle or by the middle (*majjhena tathāgato dhammam desetī*). It should be noted here that the Buddha made that statement while explaining the right view. In the explanation of the right view the Buddha does not fall into any one of the extreme views. Therefore, it is evident that the Buddha teaches this right view in the middle. Whether it is right and wrong, a view refers to the way how one looks at something. It is really a subjective attitude. The reality of course is not subjective but objective. The right view of Buddhism which is known as *paticca-samuppāda* as explained by the Buddha in the *kaccāyana-gotta-sutta* is about the objective reality which is also known as *paticca-samuppāda* as mentioned in the *Mahānidāna-sutta*¹⁶.

When we take the objective reality (*paticca-samuppāda*) recognized by Buddhism into our account, it is quite apparent that it is not appropriate to say that objective reality is the middle teaching (*majjhimā desanā*) of the Buddha for the reason that the ascription of *Majjhimā desanā* to *paticca-samuppāda* undermines the exact denomination of *Paticca-samuppāda*. As in the case of *majjhimā paripadā*, *paticca-samuppāda* as the objective reality has the characteristic of being in between or in the middle of the eternality and the nihility. *Kāśyapa-parivarta (Ratnakūṭa-sūtra)* in Mahayana tradition, though it wrongly ascribes *Madhyamā pratipad* to *Pratītyasamuppāda*, correctly recognizes this middle position of the *pratītyasamutpāda* when it says:

*"Ātmeti, Kāśyapa, ayam ekantaḥ, nairātmyam ity ayam dvitīyo'ntaḥ. Yad ātmanātratmayor madyanam, tad ariyam anidarsanam aparaticmham anābhāsam avijñaptikum aniketam."*¹⁷

("that atman is" Kasyapa, one end; "that atman is not" is another; but the middle between these two extremes of atman and nairatmya is the intangible, incomparable, non-appearing, not comprehensible, without any position.")

This middle position of the reality (*paticca-samuppāda*) is nicely explained by the Buddha in the *kaccāyana-gotta-sutta* itself in the following way:

*"Loka-samudayaC kho kaccāyana yathābhūtaC sammappaññāya passato yā loka natthitū sā na hoti. Loka-nirodhaC kho kaccāyana yathābhūtaC sammappaññāya passato yā loka atthitū sā na hoti"*¹⁸

According to this passage the reality is devoid of both eternal existence (*atthitā*) and utter non-existence (*natthitā*). On the other hand it has the characteristics of both emergence (*samudaya*) and cessation (*nirodha*). If some thing has only the emergence it has the eternal existence. And, in the same way if something has only the cessation it has the utter non-existence. The reality according to Buddhism is consisted of both emergence and cessation; (existence and non-existence). This nature is further confirmed in the *Dhamma-cakkappavattana-sutta* by saying:

*"Yam kiñci samudaya-dhammam sabham tam nirodha-dhammaC"*¹⁹
(Whatever is of the nature of arising has the nature of ceasing)

There is no reality in Buddhism other than the true nature of empirical existence. Buddhism sees it as a flux of causal emergence and its cessation. It is a process of both emergence and cessation. Therefore, it is neither a metaphysical existence nor a non-existence. But, it has empirical existence as well as empirical non-existence represented by *samudaya* and *nirodha* respectively. Emergence (*uppāda*), change in continuance (*phitassa aññatatta*) and cessation (*vaya*) are the characteristics of the causally produced phenomena²⁰. Therefore, reality recognized by Buddhism is epitomized by a process characterized by emergence, change and cessation. It should be emphasized here that such a middle position of reality which stands in between existence and non-existence can be described by none of the four corners of logic as implicitly pointed out by the Buddha²¹ and explicitly by Nāgārjuna.

It is worth while to mention here that though there is a modern trend to introduce *Pratītya-samutpada* as the middle teaching of the Buddha as mentioned earlier, there are some Buddhist scholars who correctly recognize it as the middle doctrine discovered by the Buddha. Prof. Y. Karundasa in his monumental work on *Theravada Abhidhamma* very accurately has made a following observation:

"...the philosophy of *Abhidhamma* accords with the "middle doctrine" of early Buddhism. This doctrine avoids both the eternal view

of existence which maintains that every thing exists absolutely (*sabbham atthi*) and the opposite nihilistic view which maintains that absolutely nothing exists (*sabbham natthi*). It also avoids, on the one hand the monistic view that every thing is reducible to a common ground, some sort of self-substance (*sabbham ekattam*) and, on the other, the opposite pluralistic view that the whole of existence is resolvable into a concatenation of discrete entities (*sabbham puthutum*). Transcending these two pairs of binary extremes; the middle doctrine explains that phenomena arise in dependence on other phenomena without a self-subsisting noumenon which serves as the ground of their being.⁷⁴

Madhyamā Pratipad

It is no doubt that the foregoing discussion makes it clear that the Majjhimā pāṇipadā (middle path) which leads to the cessation of suffering and the Paṇicca-samuppāda that refers to the truth which should be realized are two different aspects of the teachings of the Buddha and they are not one and the same. For the reason that the means and the goal never become one and the same. In point of fact the middle path which has the successive eight stages prepares the pursuant only up to the stage of *sammā Samādhi*. As Ven. Professor Dhammavīhāri Thera rightly pointed out “Its functional efficiency specifically is limited”⁷⁵. The last stage, Samādhi of the middle path leads the pursuant to acquire wisdom (*Paññā*) which reveals the reality (paṇicca-samuppāda) as it is. Realization of the paṇicca-samuppāda is a necessary prerequisite for the knowledge emancipation⁷⁶. It is for this reason that it is said that in the absence of knowledge and insight of things as they are the cause is absent (for the production of) the knowledge and insight of emancipation⁷⁷. This fact is further stressed when it is said that *paññāya e’assa diṣṣā āsavā parikkhīnā honti*⁷⁸ (Seeing the reality through wisdom his cankers become eradicated). Correct vision of the reality makes an end of dukkha (evam etaṃ sammuppannaya suddhitaṃ bhavissati ekaṃ dukkhassa

However, curiously enough, it seems that venerable Nāgārjuna has made an attempt to identify those two different concepts in his monumental work, Mūlamadhyamakakārikā. Nāgārjuna is considered to be the founder of Mādhyamka philosophy of Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition. The main theme of his masterpiece, Mūlamadhyamakakārikā is the doctrine of Pratitya-samutpada and its aim is to give exhaustive interpretation to the doctrine of Pratitya-samutpada. The term paṇicca-samuppāda as a doctrine in Early Buddhist discourses is used to imply two main aspects namely the reality or the truth of empirical existence and the way how it

practically exemplifies the empirical existence; in other words one is the causality or conditionality and the other is causal or conditional emergence or conditional genesis of empirical personality. The second aspect is in most of the occasions explained in terms of twelve factors’ paṇicca-samuppāda and it becomes the main emphasis in early Buddhism. It should be enumerated here that Nāgārjuna pays his main attention to the doctrinal aspect of paṇicca-samuppāda as ultimate reality or the right view of the reality. It is quite evident even from the first stanza of his book which includes the salutation to the Buddha:

*Anirodhamanupādamanucchedamanāsvatam
Anekārthamanānārthamanāgamamanirgamam
Yah pramītyasamutpādam prapañcopasamam sīvam
Desyāmsā sambuddhah tam vande vadatūm varam.*

(I salute him, the fully enlightened, the best of speakers, who preached the non-ceasing and the non-arising, the non-annihilation and the non-permanence, the non-identity and the non-difference, the non-appearance and the non-disappearance, the depending arising, the appeasement of obsessions and the auspicious⁷⁹)

The negative characteristics used to *Pratityasamutpāda* by Nāgārjuna in above verse undeniably points to the fact that his main concern was to deal with the *Pratityasamutpāda* doctrine which governs the entire field of phenomena and not about the practical employment of it in the context of causal genesis of the empirical individuality though he presented his critique on the examination of twelve causal factors in the 26th chapter of Mūlamadhyamakakārikā. Eight negatives used to denote *Pratityasamutpāda* can have two implications. One is the truth regarding the field of phenomena understanding of which is the necessary prerequisite for the final liberation. This is the truth which should be understood by oneself through the wisdom (*Ñāna-dassana* or *Paññā*) led by *Samādhi*, the last stage of middle path. Knowing and seeing the truth is generated by *Samādhi* (*sammā samādhiṣṣa sammā ñānam pahoti* – DN. II. 216 f.). Therefore, here it should be emphasized that the truth of the phenomena is not the path itself but some thing which should be realized through the successful completion of the path. The second implication is the right view about the truth. Commenting on the eight negatives Prof. Kalupahana observes:

⁶⁰“Depending arising” (*pratītyasamutpāda*) would then stand for the middle position, which is the right view (*samyag-dṛcī*) on the basis of which are wrong views are criticized....it allows for possible explanations of phenomena not permitted by theories of absolute existence and nihilistic non-existence”⁶⁸

Right view is the provisional understanding of the truth. In other words it is still unverified vision of the truth. This is certainly verified by the wisdom which is the direct result of the middle path. It is to be noted here that whether it is right view or wisdom it is the disclosure of truth and not the truth itself. Wisdom is individualistic and truth is universal. Truth lies on its own accord unaffected by the wisdom.

The fact that the negating all sorts of wrong views about the reality, the Buddha presented it in the middle position as the right view is evidenced by many discourses such as Kaccayana-gotta, Jānussoṇi, Lokāyatika, and Acela-kassapa quoted above. Therefore, prof. Kalupahana very correctly observes that the dependently arising (*pratītyasamutpāda*) would then stand for the middle position, which is the right view. But for the Nagarjuna it is not the middle position but is the middle path (*madhyamā pratipad*). The following stanza provides the undeniable testament to Nagarjuna’s identification of *Pratītyasamutpāda* with middle path:

*Yah pratītyasamutpādah sūnyatām tām pucakomahe
Sā prajñāpīrupādāya pratipad saiva madhyamā⁶⁹.*

(We state that what is dependent arising that is emptiness. That is depending upon convention. That itself is the middle path⁷⁰).

It should be noted here that according to this verse, Nāgārjuna directly identifies *Pratītyasamutpāda* with *Sūnyatā* and then *Sūnyatā* with both *Upādāya-prajñapti* and *Madhyamā pratipad*. Both feminine gender nominative case ‘Sā’ which referred to *upādāya-prajñapti* and *Madhyamā pratipad* have direct relation to the term *Sūnyatā*. Therefore, in this verse identification of *Madhyamā pratipad* with *Pratītyasamutpāda* is implied in indirect way. However, it is no doubt that Nāgārjuna has taken all the four key concepts here to convey the same meaning.

Any of the discourses in Pāli tradition which explains the *Pamicca-samuppāda* does not equate it with *Majjhima patipadā*. Those discourses completely avoid the usage of *Majjhima patipadā* and instead make use of the phrase *magghen deseti* (teaches in the middle). It is undeniable that Nāgārjuna was well aware of the fact that Buddha preached the

pratītyasamutpāda by avoiding the extremist views. Eight negations themselves given by Nāgārjuna prove the above mentioned fact. If some thing is preached avoiding the extremes that preaching can be called preaching in the middle way. Negatives of the view points are not the inherent characteristics of the Dhamma or *Pratītyasamutpāda* rather than the way how the *pratītyasamutpāda* was described by the Buddha. Such a description does not amount to *Madhyamā pratipad* or middle path. In the case of *Majjhima patipadā* (middle path) the Buddha did not reject the wrong views; what he rejected was the two wrong ways of life which prevent one from the cessation of suffering. But in the case of *Pamicca-samuppāda* the Buddha rejected wrong views about the real nature of the phenomenal existence and those rejected views prevent one from understanding the reality. Therefore, it is no need to say that the identification of *Pratītyasamutpāda* with *Madhyamā pratipad* by Nāgārjuna by no means can be justifiable when the term *Madhyamā pratipad* is taken to mean the middle path which should have to be applied to one’s life for the cessation of suffering.

Kenneth K. Inada seems to be attempted to defend Nāgārjuna for the identification of *Pratītyasamutpāda* with *Madhyamā pratipad* in his book entitled *Nagarjuna – A Translation of his Mūlamadhamakakārika with an Introductory Essay*. He has attempted to connect two extremes namely *kāmasukhallkānuyoga* and *Attakālamathānuyoga* which were rejected in *Majjhima patipadā* to two wrong views namely, eternalism and nihilism respectively which were rejected in the *pamicca-samuppāda* and thereby he tries to suggest that *pratītyasamutpāda* and *madhyamā pratipad* are one and the same thing. The following statement of Inada shows how he makes this equation:

“The middle path, as initially discoursed in the Buddhist foundation sutra ... indicates that it is realized by the avoidance of the two extremes. What extremes? The extremes of the realism of activities relative to luxury and asceticism. One side engenders the quest for affluent matters and things which are of the nature of permanency and eternity (*śāśvata-vāda*) while the other the quest for total self-abnegation, self-effacement and of the nature of impermanence, nihilism and annihilationism (*uccheda-vāda*). In both instances there arise the root evil forces of objectifying or entifying either the elements related to wealth or riches on the one hand or “elements” related to non-entity, nihility, or negativity on the other...”⁷¹

Though it is true that both extremes rejected in middle path can be extracted indirectly to two viewpoints rejected in the *pamicca-samuppāda*, *pamicca-samuppāda* (conditionality or causality) in early Buddhism is the real nature of empirical existence. It explains the suffering (*dukkha*-

sacca) and the cause of suffering (dukkha-samudaya-sacca). This fact is not denied even by the Madhyamikā-s. If it is so, how the path which leads to cessation of suffering can be the suffering and the cause of suffering. On the other hand, as Mahānidāna-sutta enumerated, pamicca-samuppāda is the doctrine of the reality which should be understood for the cessation of suffering²². For the understanding of pamicca-samuppāda there should be a gradual religious path without which one cannot reach to the complete realization of the truth.

Another mistake done by Enada in his explanation is that he identifies wrongly the two extremes of Majjhima pamipadā with the two wrong extreme views rejected in the teaching of Pamicca-samuppāda. In the Majjhimā pamipadā, rejected first extreme is considered as self-indulgence. People who engaged in self-gratification cannot necessarily be regarded as realists and eternalists. There are different types of realisms. There is no valid logic to arrive at the conclusion that all the realists are those who are engaged in self-indulgence. For example Abhidharmic Buddhism is considered as one of the realisms. But, no one can say that Abhidharmic Buddhism accept the extreme of self-indulgence. It is the accepted fact that those who believe in the materialism advocate the self-indulgence as they do not have the belief of the eternal life. Therefore, it is undoubtedly a mistake to consider self-indulgence as eternalism. Inada's identification of self-mortification with nihilism is also wrong. He defines self-mortification as "total self-abnegation, self-effacement and of the nature of impermanence, nihilism and annihilationism (*uccheda-vāda*)". It is a well known fact that Atta-kilamathānu yoga was an accepted method by Jainas who believed in permanent self. It seems that Inada has taken erroneously the term 'atta' used in Atta-kilamathānu yoga to mean the metaphysical self or soul. Here meaning of the term Atta (self) is equal to that of the term oneself. It is quite similar to the term 'Atta' in the phrase "*Attā hi attano nātha*" (One is indeed one's own lord). Jainas follows the method of self mortification as their religious path to purification of self for the eternal liberation. Therefore, it amounts to the eternalism and not to the nihilism. However, it is wrong to consider the ways of life as wrong or right views of the reality. For an instance self-indulgence is itself not the nihilism. Nihilism is a view of reality. In the same way self-mortification is itself not a view of reality; though, the eternalism is a view of reality whether it is wrong or right. Same logic can rightly be applied even to the Middle path and the theory of dependent origination.

Prof. Kalupahana in his translation of Mulamadhyamakakarika tries to approach to Nāgārjuna's equation of four concepts namely, Pratītyasamutpāda, sunyatā, upādāya-prajñapti and madhyama pratipat

in rather different way. He supposes that "dependent arising" and "emptiness" are abstract concepts derived from concrete empirical events, "the dependently arisen" (*pratītyasamutpanna*) and the "empty" (*Sūnya*) respectively²³. He interprets *pratītyasamutpāda* and *sunyatā* in this way in order to justify Nāgārjuna's next equation of *pratītyasamutpāda* with *upādāya prajñapti* and *madhyamā pratipad*. Its quiet evident from his following statement:

"unless this relationship between abstract and the concrete is clearly observed, interpretation of the second line of the verse will remain for ever obscure, as seems to have happened since Nāgārjuna composed this treatise"²⁴.

It seems that Kalupahana wanted to say that there is no any absolute truth known as *pratītyasamutpāda* other than the conditional existence as the reality of the entire phenomenon existing in the world and hence *pratītyasamutpāda* is only the abstract concept which denotes the conditional or causal emergence. It is true to say that Nāgārjuna never expected to bring out any absolute truth through his interpretation of *pratītyasamutpāda* though his interpretation, as the result of its obscurity misleads scholars to assume absolute truth over and above the phenomenon which really have the nature of *pratītyasamutpanna* or *siṅya*. Nāgārjuna's position in this regard is quite obvious from the following statement in the *Kārikā* which immediately follows the Nāgārjuna's equation of *pratītyasamutpāda* with other three concepts:

*Apratītya-samutpanno dharmah kaścīn na vidyate
Yasmāt tasmāt asīnyo hi dharmah kaścīn na vidyate*²⁵.

(For the reason that there is no any thing which is not arisen dependently, there is no indeed any thing which is non empty.)

This statement of Nagarjuna is an undeniable evidence to prove that he did not intent any kind of absolute truth as he included every thing into phenomenal existence.

Though Kalupahana correctly brings out the exact connotation of the concept of *Pratītyasamutpāda* and the *siṅyata*, in order to validate the equation between *Pratītyasamutpāda* and *madhyamā pratipad* it appears that he is unsuccessful for the reason that he establishes only the middle position of the *pratītyasamutpāda* through his argumentation and not the way how *pratītyasamutpāda* becomes Middle path. At the end of his argument he observes:

"As such they are not absolutely real or absolutely unreal. This, then would be the middle position (*madhyamā patipada*). This middle path could be adopted in understanding all forms of experience"²⁶

According to this statement of Kalupahana, middle path is only another expression for the middle position. There is no any distinction between two concepts. When he talks about the *prāṭhyasamutpāda* throughout his book he uses these two terms as mutually convertible concepts. Some times, *prāṭhyasamutpāda* is the philosophical middle path and another time it is a middle position to him. This character can be seen even in the section in his book he devoted to explain the middle path. He observes:

"The *kaccayanagotta-sutta*, quoted by almost all the major schools of Buddhism, deals with the philosophical "middle path" placed against the backdrop two absolutistic theories in Indian philosophy, namely, permanent existence (*atthitta*) propounded in early *Upanisads* and nihilistic non-existence (*natthitta*) suggested by the materialists. The middle position is explained as "dependent arising" (*paṭicca-samuppāda*) which, when utilized to explain the nature of the human personality and the world of experience, appears in a formula consisting of twelve factors (*dvādasāṅga*)"²⁷

It should be mentioned here that Kalupahana does not make any attempt to equate middle path (*majjhimā patipada*) in early Buddhism with the middle position of *paṭicca-samuppāda* though he prefers to call *Paṭicca-samuppāda* as philosophical middle path. He very accurately describes the *Majjhima patipada* enunciated in *Dhamma-cakkappavattana-sutta* as the practical middle path leading to freedom and happiness²⁸. Only thing, that he has no firm footing on the concept of *Prāṭhyasamutpāda* either to ascribe philosophical middle path or philosophical middle position for, he uses both phrases without any distinction.

T.R.V. Murti who has done an exhaustive research on the *Madhyamaka* philosophy mainly on the basis of *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* of Nāgārjuna has nothing special to say about the real connotation of the *madhyamā patipad* used by Nāgārjuna. He too seems to be come closer to the position held by Kalupahana on this incredulous usage of *Madhyamā patipad*. He has attempted to describe *madhyama patipad* mainly depending on *Kāśyapa parivarta* quoted in *Ratnakīma-sūtra*. Elucidating the *madhyamaka* position as a philosophy Murti observes:

"The essence of the *Madhyamaka* attitude, his philosophy (*madhyamā patipad*), consists in not allowing oneself to be entangled in views and theories, but just to observe the nature of things without stand

points (*Bhūta-pratyavekca*). The *Ratnakīma Sūtra* (*Kāśyapa-parivarta*) states the middle position thus"²⁹

In this statement Murti takes the term *Madhyama pratihat* (Middle path) as mutually convertible to the term middle position. Therefore, he does not see any distinction between middle path and the middle position. It seems that he does not pay much attention to the literal meaning of the term *Madhyamā patipad* with a view to bring out the way how the avoidance of extreme views becomes a path. He simply says: "the middle path is the non-acceptance of the two extremes – the affirmative and the negative (the *sat* and *ast*) views, of all views"³⁰. His position on the term *Madhyamā paratipad* is not really different from that of Kalupahana and both the scholars use it indifferently following the identification of *Prāṭhyasamutpāda* with *Madhyamā patipad* by Nāgārjuna in the *Mūlamadhamaka-kārikā*.

Though Nāgārjuna seems to be the first to use the term *Madhyamā patipad* equating it with *Prāṭhyasamutpāda*, it is evident that even before Nāgārjuna there was a historical development of an attempt to make use of the term *madhyamā patipad* in the context of *prāṭhyasamutpāda*. The starting point of this trend can be traced back to *Sarvāstivāda* or *Mūla-sarvāstivāda* canon. *Samyuktāgama* of *Sarvāstivāda* canon which is now available in Chinese translation records some instances where the Buddha is reported to have taught the Dhamma in the middle in *Nidāna-vagga* of *Samyutta-nikāya* of Pāli tradition, with slight differences to their Pāli counterparts. Most of the Discourses which related to the teaching of the Buddha in the middle in the *Samyuttanikāya* have their counter parts in the Chinese *Samyuktāgama* which belongs to *Sarvāstivāda* or *Mūla-sarvāstivāda* tradition. Strangely enough, these Chinese counterparts in the *Samyuktāgama* the Buddha is reported to have said that avoiding the two extremes Dharma is preached in the middle path. For instance, the passage "ete te ubho ante anupagamma majjhena tathāgato dhammam deseti" (the Buddha without approaching to those two extremes preaches the dhamma in the middle) in the *kaccāyana-gotta-sutta* in *samyutta-nikāya* has been changed in the Chinese counterpart so as to give the meaning that "that is called avoiding the two extremes and teaching the middle way"³¹.

It should be mentioned here that all the discourses of *Nidāna samyutta* of *samyutta nikāya* which talk about the teaching in the middle by the Buddha use the identical statement to report how the Buddha teaches the dhamma in the middle; that is to say: "ete te ubho ante anupagamma majjhen tathāgato dhammam deseti". But, the Chinese version of *samyuktāgama* does not follow the same method. It changes

this crucial statement from discourse to discourse to have a slight difference from each other. For examples in the counterpart of Kaccīyanagotta-sutta that particular statement appears as “that is called avoiding the two extremes and teaching the middle way” while in the counter part of Aññatarum-sutta (SN. Vol.ii. p. 75) it is given in the following way: “Teaching the essence, teaching the dhamma, I avoid these two extremes. Keeping to **the middle way**, I teach the dhamma”.⁶¹ Sutra no. 297 of Samyuktāgama (T 2 (Taisho Tripitaka) pp. 84c-85a) which has a part quite similar to Avijjāpaccaya-sutta (SN. 11. p. 60-63) records it as given below: “Following neither of these two extremes, the mind should move rightly toward **the middle way**.”⁶² Though the expression differs from one discourse to another, it must be kept in mind that all such discourses equally mention the term Madhyamā pratipad. Regarding the recurrent usage of term madhyamā pratipad in Chinese version of Sarvāstivāda Samyuktāgama, it can be supposed that these occurrences are due to the work of the Chinese translators and they may have translated particular statement of original Sanskrit version in the way that it gives the meaning of Madhyamā pratipad instead of Madhyena deśyati. This supposition cannot be taken to be granted for the reason that the Sanskrit version of Nidāna-samyukta⁶³ contains almost all the above mentioned discourses in samyuktāgama Chinese version with the term Madhyamā pratipad. It is no doubt that Nidāna samyukta written in Sanskrit language is not a section of the Samyuktāgama of Sarvāstivāda which was translated to Chinese language for the reason that the statement which include the term Madhyamā pratipad in the discourses of Chinese version of Sarvāstivāda samyuktāgama appears to be different from that of the similar discourses of Nidāna-samyukta of Sanskrit version.

As earlier pointed out, the particular statement in discourse of Chinese version unlike Pali version differs from discourse to discourse whereas Nidāna-samyukta of Sanskrit version following the discourses in Pali version uses one and the same statement in all the relevant discourses. The way how the particular statement is appeared in the discourses belonging to above mentioned three sources can easily be discerned from the following illustrations:

1. Kaccīyanagotta-sutta

- (a) Pali nidāna-samyutta, samyutta-nikāya (vol. ii, p. 16):
“Ete te kaccāyana ubho ante anupagamma majjhena tathāgato dhammam udeset.”

- (b) Samyuttāgama Chinese version T2. pp.85c-86a, sutra no. 301 (English translation):
 “That is called avoiding the two extremes and teaching the middle way”
 (c) Nidāna-samyukta, (Sanskrit version) sutra no.19:
“Etāv ubhāv antāv anupagamya madhyamayā pratipadā tathāgato dharmam deśyati”

2. Aññatarum-sutta

- (a) Pali nidāna-samyutta, samyutta-nikāya (vol.ii, pp. 75-76)
“Ete te brahmana, ubho ante anupagamma majjhena tathāgato dhammam deset.”
 (b) Samyuktāgama Chinese version, T 2, p. 85c Sutra no. 300 (English translation): “Teaching the essence, teaching the dhamma, I avoid these two extremes. Keeping to **the middle way**, I teach the dhamma”
 (c) Nidāna-samyukta Sanskrit version (sutra 18.6): *“etāv ubhāv antāv anupagamya madhyamayā pratipadā tathāgato dharmāC deśayati”*

3. Avijjāpaccaya-sutta

- (a) Pali nidāna-samyutta, samyutta-nikāya (vol. ii, pp. 60-63):
“Ete te bhikkhave, ubho ante anupagamma majjhena tathāgato dhammam deseti.”
 (b) Samyuktāgama Chinese version, T 2, pp. 84c-85a, Sutra no. 297 (English translation): “Following neither of these two extremes, the mind should move rightly toward the middle way”
 (c) Nidāna-samyukta (sutra 15): *etāv ubhāv antāv anupagamyaṅsti madhyama pratipad āryā lokottarā yathābhūta aviparītā samyagā[cmi]%,*

4. Acela (kassapa) sutta

- (a) Pali nidāna-samyutta, samyutta-nikāya (vol. ii, pp. 18-22)
"Ete te kassapa, ubho ante anupagamma majjhena tathāgato dhammam deseti".
- (b) Samyuktāgama Chinese version: not available
- (c) Nidāna-samyukta samskrit version (sutra 20):
"Etāv ubhāv antāv anupagamyā madhyamayā pratipadā tathāgato dharmam deśyati"

When we examine these evidences it is quite obvious that the Mahayana Madhamaka tradition was led to accept Madhyamāpratipad as equivalent to Pratiṣyasamutpada by non-mahāyāna sūtra literature which was the pioneer to bring forth the concept of Madhyamā pratipad into the arena of Pratiṣyasamutpada. There is no doubt that Mahāyāna was gradually evolved into a tradition basing its sūtra literature which was immensely influenced by non-mahāyāna sūtra literature existed during the course of time of its evolution. Ratnakūma-sūtra (kāśyapa-parivarta) which is one of the early formative texts of Mahāyāna⁴⁴ is a good example to show the influence of the Non-mahāyāna-sūtras on the Mahayana original texts. Specifically in the explanation of pratiṣyasamutpada, Ratnakūma-sūtra seems to be highly influenced by Nidāna-samyukta. Equation of Madhyamā pratipad with Pratiṣyasamutpada in Nidāna-samyukta is further attested and confirmed by Ratnakūma-sūtra. The way how Ratnakūma-sūtra establishes Madhyamā pratipad over the expression of "The tathāgata preaches the dharma through middle path" in Nidāna-samyukta is quite evident from the following quotation:

"Ātmeti Kāśyapa, ayam eko'ntah, nairātmyeti ity ayam dvitīyo'ntah. Yad etad anyour antayor madhyamaC tad arūpyaC anidarśanaC apratīsmhaC anābhasaC avijñāptikaC aniketaC iyam ucyate, Kāśyapa madhyamā pratipad dharmānāC bhītapratyavekā"⁴⁵

("Kāśyapa, that reality is soul (ātmeti) is one extreme; that it is non-soul (nairātmyam iti) is the second extreme; the middle between these two extremes is the intangible, the incomparable, non-appearing, not comprehensible, without any position, that verily is the Middle path – reflective review of things")

Ratnakūma-sūtra emphatically stresses that the middle between two extremes is the middle path. When we look at this process of the historical development of the concept of Madhyamā pratipad in the context of Pratiṣyasamutpada we can clearly demarcate four stages as given below:

1. Early stage represented by discourses in Pali nidāna-samyutta, which records that the Buddha teaches the reality (conditionality) in the middle avoiding the two extremes: Ete te ubho ante anupagamma tathāgato majjhena dhamma deseti. Here the middle is directly refers to the way of teaching of the Buddha.
2. Second stage represented by non-mahāyāna Sanskrit sūtras which records that the Buddha avoiding two extremes teaches in the middle path. Here middle path refers to a mode of teaching of the Buddha just like in the first stage:
 - (i) Samyuktāgama Chinese version T2. pp.85c-86a, sūtra no. 301 (English translation): "That is called avoiding the two extremes and teaching the middle way"
 - (ii) Nidāna-samyukta, (Sanskrit version) sūtra no. 19: "*Etāv ubhāv antāv anupagamyā madhyamayā pratipadā tathāgato dharmam deśyati*"
3. Third stage represented by some discourses of Sanskrit nidāna-samyukta which records that avoiding two extremes there is middle path. In this stage there is an attempt to equalize Madhyamā pratipad with the reality (pratiṣyasamutpada; Nidāna-samyukta (sūtra 15): *etāv ubhāv antāv anupagamyāsti madhyamā pratipadāryā lokottarā yathābhūtā aviparītā samyagā[em]i*%,
4. Fourth stage represented by Mahāyāna-sūtras such as Ratnakūma-sūtra which reconfirms the concept of madhyamā pratipad in the context of Pratiṣyasamutpada: "*etad anyour antayor madhyamaC tad arūpyaC anidarśanaC apratīsmhaC anābhasaC avijñāptikaC aniketaC iyam ucyate, Kāśyapa madhyamā pratipad dharmānāC bhītapratyavekā*"-Ratnakūma-sūtra (kāśyapa parivarta)

By analyzing the above instances, one can easily come to the conclusion that the identification of Madhyamā pratipad with pratiṣyasamutpada is not an innovation of Nāgārjuna in the Mūla-madhamaka-kārikā. The concept of Madhyamā pratipad introduced by non-mahāyāna-sūtras into pratiṣyasamutpada was accepted by

Mahāyānists without paying proper attention to the efficiency of the middle path implied by its literal meaning. What Nāgārjuna has done is that he has given an endorsement to the concept of Madhyamā pratipad by mere following his own tradition. What is interesting here is that Nāgārjuna never has made any effort to clarify the fact that how Pratītyasamutpāda becomes the middle path throughout his work though, he has identified it with pratītyasamutpāda. In this respect one can say that Nāgārjuna has fully explained Pratītyasamutpāda therefore it is no need to give a clarification to Madhyama pratipad for there is no any difference between Pratītyasamutpāda and Madhyamā pratipad. But, another can equally ask as to why then Nāgārjuna presented a substantial explanation to the term Sūnyatā which is also equated with Pratītyasamutpāda. Really speaking Nāgārjuna has left alone not only Madhyamā pratipad but also Upādāya prajñapti which is also considered as equivalence to the Pratītyasamutpāda, without paying attention.

Seeing the reality in the middle without approaching to two wrong views is the right view (Sammā-dimmi) in Buddhism as pointed out by the Buddha in the Kaccāna-gotta-sutta. This is correctly recorded in the 15th Sūtra of Sanskrit Nidāna-samyukata and Kāśyapa-parivarta as well. While 15th Sūtra of Nidāna-samyukata mentions Madhyamā pratipad as Samyagd[emi] (right view), Kāśyapa-parivarta prefers to call it DharmāGām bhūta-pratyavekā (reflective review of things or seeing the things as they are). There is no difference in meaning between terms samyagd[emi] and Bhūta-pratyavekā. Right view is considered as the first step of the noble eight fold path which is also known as middle path leading to the cessation of suffering. Validity of middle path which comes under four Noble Truths is equally accepted by all the Buddhist traditions. Even Nāgārjuna has argued in his Kārika against a wrong view which is a threat to the validity of four Noble Truths as follows:

*Yadā dukkham samudayo nirodhas ca na vidyate
Mārgo dukkha-nirodhatvāt katamā prāpyoicyati* (M.K.K.XXIX, 25)

(When suffering, arising and extinction cannot be admitted to exist what path is achieved in virtue of the extinction?⁹⁹).

Here it is evident that Nāgārjuna has indirectly expressed that Noble Path which is the middle path has to be accepted for the cessation of suffering. There cannot be two different middle paths which lead to the

cessation of suffering. Therefore, it is quite obvious that the middle position between two extremes views cannot be the middle path (Madhyamā pratipad) as suggested by Mahāyānists including Nāgārjuna together with non-Mahāyāna sūtra literature.

Footnotes

1. *ete te, bhikkhave, ubho ante anupagamma majjhimā pamipadā Tathāgatena abhisambuddhā cakkhukaraGī, āGakaraGī, upazamāya, abhiññāya, sambodhāya, nibbānāya saCrummati.* S. V. P. 420
2. *Pabbeye me bhikkhave sambodhā anabhisambuddhassa bodhisattassa sato etadahosi. Kiccam vatūyam apanno loko apanno mīyati ca jiyati ca mīyati ca cavati ca upapajjati ca. Atha pana imassa dukkhassa nissaranam nappajjānāti jarāmaranassa. Kudassa nāma imassa dukkhassa nissaranam paññāyissati jarāmaranassa.* S. ii, P.10
3. S. V. p.420
4. *Katamā ca bhikkhave majjhimā pamipadā ayameva ariyo umhangiko maggo* Ibid
5. Ibid
6. S.v. p. 420
7. *TuC kha pan'idaC dukkhanirodhayāminī pamipādā ariyasaccaC bhūvetabban'ī me, bhikkhave, pubbe anantassasacca dhammesu cakkuC udapādi, āGac udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijja udapādi, āloko udapādi.*
8. *Katamā ca bhikkhave micchā patipadā avijjāpaccayā sankhārā samkhārapaccayā ... evam etassa kevalassa dukkhakkhamānāssa samudayo hoti. Katamā ca bhikkhave sammā patipadā. Avijjāyataveva asesa virāganirodhā sankhāranirodho ... evamevassa kevalassa dukkhanirodho hoti.* S.ii P.4-5
9. M. 1. 160
10. *Katama ca so bhikkhave purāna maggo surānājasam pubbakhehi samnā sambuddhehi amyaō? Ayam ev ariyo aithangiko maggo.* S. Maha vaggā Nidāna-samyutta, P106.
11. Nidāna samyutta Nāgāra-sutta, S.ii. P.106.
12. *Yathābhūtañānadassane asati yathābhūtañānadassanavipannassa katāpaniso hoti nibbidā virāgo, nibbidāvirāge asati nibbidāvirāgavipannassa katāpanisam hoti vimuttiñānadassanam.* A., iii. 200.
13. *Dhammatā esā ... yam yathābhūtam jānam passam nibbindati virajjati. Nibbinnaassa viratassa ... no ostanayo karaniyam vimuttiñānadassanam sacchikaromiti"* A .iv. 3, 313.
14. *Uppadā vā tathāgatānam anuppadā vā tathāgatānam thitāva sā dhātu dhammatthitā dhammaniyāmatā idappaccayatā.* S.ii. P.25

15. This translation of the pāli passage of the Paccaya-sutta of Nidana-vagga of Samyuttakikaya is quoted from K. N. Jayatilleke's "Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge" P.448.
16. Potipada-sutta, Magga-samyutta, S. V.XLV.
17. The Connected Discourses of the Buddha, A Translation of Samyuttanikaya by Bhikkhu Bodhi, Wisdom Publication, P. 1536
18. *saGamaGikā-sutta*, M.II, p.24
19. S. II. P16-17
20. The Connected Discourses of the Buddha, P. 544.
21. S. II. P. 17.
22. The Connected Discourses of the Buddha, P. 544
23. The Connected Discourses of the Buddha, P. 1844
24. S. II. P. 17
25. S. V. P. 421
26. *Adhigato (Atiyapariyesana)*
27. S.II. *Nagara-sutta*, P. 106
28. S. II. P.117
29. S. II.P.76
30. Ibid
31. S. II. 75-76
32. S.II. p. 60-61; 63-64
33. S. II. P. 19-20.
34. Ibid
35. Ibid
36. *Etassa ānanda ananubodhā appativedhā evamayam pajā... samsaram nativattanti* D. II.55
37. *Kāṣyapa-parivarta*, Ed.by Baron A. von stael-Holstein, Shanghai, 1926. PP.86-7
38. S. II. P.17
39. S.V. P. 420
40. "Yini māni bhikkhave sankhataṣu sankhata-lakkhūGāni: uppado paññāyati vayo paññāyati mhitassa annatattam paññāyati" A. I. 152.
41. S. II. P.20; 22-23.
42. Y. Karunadasa, *The Theravada Abhidhamma, Its enquiry into the Nature of Conditioned Reality*, Centre of Buddhist Studies, the University of Hong Kong, 2010, P. 22
43. Professor Dhammavihari thera, *Dhamma: Man Religion Society Governance in Buddhism*, Buddhist Cultural Centre, Dehiwala, Sri Lanka, 2006, P. 43
44. *Sumā Banassa sammāvimutti pahoti* M. III. 76

45. A. III. 200
46. M.I. 301
47. Quoted from *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā of Nāgārjuna; The Philosophy of the Middle Way* by David J. Kalupahana, P.101
48. David J. Kalupahana, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā of Nāgārjuna; The Philosophy of the Middle Way*, Motilal Banarsidas Publishers, Delhi, 1999, P.103
49. *Madhyamakakārikā*, Chup.XXIV. 18
50. David J. Kalupahana, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā of Nāgārjuna, The Philosophy of the Middle Way*, P. 339
51. Kenneth K. Inada, *A translation of his Mūlamadhyamakakārikā with an Introductory Essay*, Sri Satguru Publication, Delhi, India, 1993, P. 21
52. *Etassa ānanda ananubodhā appativedhā*
53. David J. Kalupahana, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā of Nāgārjuna, Philosophy of the Middle Way*, P. 340
54. Ibid.
55. *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, Chp.XXIV. 19.
56. David J. Kalupahana, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā of Nāgārjuna*, P.341.
57. Ibid, P.1
58. Ibid
59. Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, P. 8.
60. Chaoong Mun-ke, *Annotated Translation of Sutras from the Chinese Samyuktāgama Relevant to the Early Buddhist Teachings on Emptiness and the Middle Way*, Printed in Penang, Malaysia, P. 41.
61. Ibid, P. 31
62. Ibid, P.35
63. Tripāṃṣī, Chandrabhāl, *Funfundzwanzig Sūtras des Nidanasamyukta* (Akademie-Verlag, Berlin, 1962.
64. T.R.V. Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, P.51
65. *Kāṣyapa-parivarta*, P. 86-87
66. Inada's Translation of Nāgārjuna, P. 149.