

BUDDHIST CULTURE IN DAILY LIFE

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The progress of Korean culture is exposed on various facets, traditional and contemporary, of which the Buddhist culture boasts a significant position.

According to 1991 statistics, of 54% religious community, 51% claimed themselves as Buddhism followers, 45% Christianity and Protestantism. Buddhism was officially transferred to Korea via China, and hailed by the royalty on the grounds that Buddhism acknowledged the dominant position of the aristocrats.

In Vietnam, Buddhism entered about 300 BC. Though not coming to presence coincidentally, Buddhism in the two countries came up to their national religion for a time and managed to firmly root in the spiritual life as well as communal activities of the two peoples. Buddhism confirmed its influential power in the belief of the Korean people over 1700 years ago. At that time, 2/3 of pagodas were built in the countryside. Therefore, the Association of Buddhism has expanded its influence into large cities by setting up impressive meditation chambers in order to attract the youth. Pianos in large pagodas accompany Buddhist chants guiding the followers towards

Buddhism. Tens of thousands of families have their dead folks' memorial tablets kept in pagodas.

In the modern time, it is noticeable that numerous progressive Buddhist monks bravely fought the ruling yoke of the Japanese Fascism and the American- friendly dictatorship policy of president Pak Chung Hy, and contributed to the national democracy and freedom.

In the daily life, the Korean Buddhism followers stay devout. Lots of families have pagodas pray for continuous 100 days for their children's entry into universities. Every year, on 9/11, or 9 days before university entry examinations, tens of thousands of mothers go to pagodas to light incense sticks praying for their children's success. A lot of mothers go to pagodas to pray for their married daughters to have a male first- born baby.

In Korea, Buddhist festivals are magnificently celebrated, especially on Buddha's birthday. People, Christians not excluded, go to pagodas and jig together. In those celebrations, festivities are more dominant than religious rites themselves. Those are the most significant features of the Buddhist culture in the real life. In "the miracle progress on the Han river", the Korean people have been attached to their national identity, of which the Buddhist culture has become a golden stroke that will never be removed.