

## Buddha's Birthday and the blending of religions

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Well, it's the last day of April 2020 and Buddha's Birthday. Buddhism is an old and venerable religious/cultural sphere and has seeped into the way of life and culture of many Asian countries. Without understanding some of the tenets of Buddhism and its history it is not possible to understand Korea and other East Asian people and nations. Like all religions, Buddhism as it exists and is practiced today in its many forms is a far cry from the original form that emerged from the teachings of the Nepalese prince who sought enlightenment in a dark world. Known as Siddhartha Gautama in Sanskrit, he is called Shukyamuni in Korea which means the sage of the Shakya clan or Buchonim.

While scholars, philosophers, and theologians study, pontificate on, and try to ascertain the correct form or intention of the founder's original vision; for the common people life goes on and they practice mostly according to their own needs. Since their own needs don't much conform to the scholar's interpretations, the daily practice of people leads them down a path not perfectly in-sync with either the founder's vision or the scholar's interpretations. All kinds of beliefs and practices from the age-old religions creep in. It is no wonder that after two thousand or more years most religions are almost unrecognizable as their original form. In Asia, in particular, there has been a blending of Daoism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Shamanism, Totemism, Animism, as well as other folk religions. In all religions there are two aspects; the dogma and the mysticism derived from the daily practice of believers. The dynamic between these two points of view creates both opposing position and a blending together affecting each other; often producing progressive revelations.

For those who are here to sincerely and honestly critique Divine Principle, Sun Myung Moon, or the organizations that have sprung up in their wake ought to keep such things in mind. Those with an agenda and a bone to pick won't find these things very helpful.