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Wedding Customs in South Korea

Wedding customs in South Korea have changed a lot these days from a traditional Korean wedding to a westernized simple wedding, involving tuxedos, white dresses and sharing wedding rings. However, there are still some people who celebrate their weddings in traditional ways, or mingle both western and traditional wedding customs. It has become relatively easy and convenient to prepare for weddings nowadays, but it is rather sad that the beautiful tradition is fading away.

Wedding Process

Korean weddings used to be arranged by match makers. Families would go to a matchmaker and ask them to find someone that is compatible in status with their child and has good reputation. Usually, the groom's family would send a letter of proposal to the bride's family, and the bride's family would send approval letter back. This process was only known by the parents of the two families, but not the groom and the bride.



After the groom's family has received the approval letter, the two families share another set of letters deciding the wedding date. The day before the wedding, the groom's family would send a wedding box, which includes silk and marriage pledge. The marriage pledge letter is considered to be very precious for the bride and the groom, which they cherish until death.

As the first step of the wedding ceremony, the groom carries over a set of carved crane to the bride's house. A set of crane has three meanings: Eternal love, courtesy and reputation. The second step is bride and groom bowing



each other. This is the first time for both to see each other's face. This step means that they will love each other forever. The third step is the bride and groom sharing Korean wine in a one-halved gourd vessel. This means that they are now husband and wife.

After all these steps at the bride's house, the groom takes the bride to his house to present the bride to his parents. At groom's house the bride bows to the groom's parents and they all sit in front of a table with jujube and some dry foods. The bride gives one jujube to the prospective father-in-law, and he would toss it to the bride's dress. This ceremony contains a wish of groom's family to continue his family line from generation to generation by having a son.

Wedding Attire

Korean traditional costume is Hanbok, which is made by white cotton, silk or scratchy coarse fabric called hemp. The bride would wear a short jacket with long sleeves with two long ribbons attached, and to be tied in the front and a full length, high-waist wrap around skirt. Boat shaped shoes made of silk are worn with white cotton socks. The bride's attire might include a white sash with significant symbols or flowers. A headpiece or crown may also be worn. For the groom, a traditional jacket, trousers, and an overcoat are worn.



Wedding Feast



The size of the wedding feast differs from one to the other. These days, a big feast would present a buffet with variety of food and desserts, and a rather small feast would serve thick-beef soup with rice and kimchi.