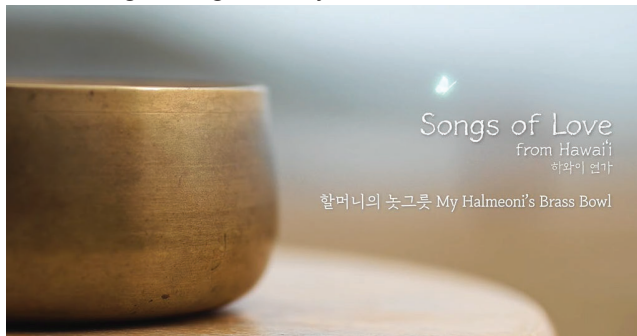


My Halmeoni's Brass Bowl

"Please don't write about the deep pain. If you choose to write about me, focus on my joy in watching my children graduate from high school. Write about my happiness seeing my grandchildren enjoy the steak I cooked, grow big and strong, and sleep peacefully while I sing a song from my childhood."



About Picture Brides*

Some picture brides came from poor families or were orphans with low socioeconomic status, while some were high school graduates seeking educational opportunities in Hawaii. Regardless of their backgrounds, all of them aspired to a better life by choosing to come to Hawaii.

** Picture bride: were young east asian women who traveled from their homes to marry farm workers around the world, based solely on each other's pictures.*

Men sent their photographs to Korea and awaited the selection of a bride. Women chose their prospective husbands from these photographs and sent their own photographs in return. At that time, this process was significant because most women married through family-arranged matches and had little say in their choice. In contrast, picture brides had the opportunity to 'choose' their spouses, giving them a greater sense of agency and liberty.

Historical Information

1. How old were the picture brides and their husbands?

- In those days, the marriageable age ranged from 15 to 20, and consequently, most picture brides were in their teens. On average, there was a 15-year age difference between the picture brides and their husbands.

2. How was the journey to Hawaii?

- The ship ride was extremely arduous. Although the men had financed the transportation of the picture brides to Hawaii, the brides were assigned to third-class compartments. These quarters, initially designed for animals, were stuffy and provided inadequate living conditions for women. Additionally, the brides were prohibited from accessing the deck for fresh air. As a result, some did not survive the journey.

3. What was the reality that awaited the picture brides who had hoped for a better life by coming to Hawaii?

- Men wore borrowed suits and displayed luxury items, such as cars and houses, in the photographs sent to the picture brides. Consequently, the women expected to live in homes similar to those shown in the pictures, only to find themselves in crude, isolated, and racially segregated plantation quarters. The lack of honesty from the grooms and brokers stemmed from their fear that the women would not come if they were aware of the harsh reality of the grooms and their living conditions.

- Some women were very dissatisfied with their grooms. However, the cost of returning home was expensive, so they had no choice but to accept their circumstances and settle into their new life in Hawaii.



4. How did picture brides overcome their challenges?

- Many picture brides quickly established communities to support one another and became deeply involved in church activities. Despite their challenging circumstances, they were notably proactive and determined. They worked tirelessly to overcome poverty and provide well for their children. Additionally, they participated actively in social gatherings, both to educate their children and to raise funds for Korea's independence.