

EXPERIENCE—YUMI SCHWEIZER, KENTFIELD, CALIF. THE STRENGTH OF A WIFE

Yumi Schweizer manifests harmony and financial stability in her family. ‘In praying for my husband’s happiness,’ Yumi says, ‘I realized that everything in life is connected.’

I did not have much hope or dreams for marriage because I grew up watching my parents constantly fight; they divorced when I was 10. I didn’t want to be like my mother. “Like father like son,” or in my case “like mother like daughter,” it seemed inevitable that I would follow in my mother’s footsteps. Because we shared the same destiny, I thought it would be better to stay single than to suffer being married. Yet deep down, I had a slight hope that if I met someone completely different from my father, just maybe...

I was introduced to Nichiren Daishonin’s Buddhism in London in 1984 by Kyoko Ohshima, who is now my best friend. Kyoko and I traveled to Switzerland together. While we talked about life in general at the foot of Mount Matterhorn, she also taught me about cause and effect—that it’s possible to change one’s karma. Every single comment Kyoko made was sound and profound; she changed my outlook on life. Most of all, because she was and still is a wonderful, caring person, full of compassion and very strong in faith, I trusted her completely and decided to start practicing.

I met the man I would marry, James, in Japan soon after I received my Gohonzon. I fell in love with him and somehow knew he was the right man for me. I sincerely chanted for the success of our relationship. One year later he moved back to the States, and I followed him to go to college to further develop my life.

My four years at Bates College in Maine was a real challenge. The courses were much more difficult than I expected. Cultural differences, the language barrier, the cold stormy climate and the different diet made me homesick. Just like the Japanese pioneer SGI-USA members, I wanted to go back to Japan. But through this practice I learned nothing is impossible. SGI President Ikeda often says “Buddhism is win or lose,” and I didn’t want to be defeated by my own weakness. And it was clear that if I gave up everything and went back to Japan, I wouldn’t have a future with James. Determined to win, I chanted Nam-myoho-renge-kyo for hours and immersed myself in activities.

My grades improved dramatically, but my financial situation deteriorated. My father could not afford my college tuition during my second year. Again, I overcame this difficulty through my Buddhist practice. I received a scholarship, the total amount of \$26,000 for my junior and senior years and graduated in 1990. I appreciate James for his ceaseless support and understanding toward me and my Buddhist practice; he was always there for me.

James and I got married that same year. Life seemed good for a while, but as many remember, a big recession hit this country and my husband’s work was affected. We decided to move back to Japan where the economy was still booming. I was eight months pregnant with our oldest son, and we had only \$70 when we left the U.S.

During the last eight years in Japan our family grew; we had two sons and a daughter. With my parents’ support, we built a house three years ago. Our sons got into the best school in the city. My husband was teaching at a couple of universities at the time, but he

was not happy at all. He was always loyal to the schools and worked very hard. In return, they treated him with no respect, and he didn't foresee teaching as his lifelong occupation.

Many people fall into one of two categories: you enjoy what you do, but the pay is not enough, or you don't like your job, but you do it anyway to make ends meet. Since my husband was the main source of our household income, without a successful career, we had no financial stability. I wanted him to have a good paying job, but not just any job, one that he truly enjoys.

It occurred to me that I always prayed for my children and myself, but what about my husband? Nichiren Daishonin writes, "It is the power of the bow that determines the flight of the arrow, the might of the dragon that controls the movement of the clouds, and the strength of the wife that guides the action of her husband" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 656). This phrase was read at our wedding, now I finally understood it from the bottom of my heart.

I started chanting for my husband's happiness, for him to have a challenging, fulfilling and rewarding job. Things happened very quickly. Within a couple of months, he resigned from the universities and then moved back to the United States at the end of February last year. I had no doubt that he would find the best job, wherever that might be.

In the meantime, my children and I remained in Japan. I continued to chant and involve myself in many SGI activities. Two weeks later, he called and told me that he was interviewing with an Internet company that he really liked, and asked me to chant for him. I chanted a lot over the next four days, and he got the position with an annual salary \$10,000 over his original proposal.

My husband's job requires both his Internet skills and his past teaching experiences. Yes, in Buddhism, nothing is wasted. The job he always dreamed of finally materialized, and recently he got a promotion. The work is challenging and demanding, but it's rewarding, and James is very happy. And I am grateful for my Buddhist practice.

Because of this change in our financial situation, I no longer have to work. I can stay home and raise our three children and devote myself to SGI activities. What more could I ask for?

In praying for my husband's happiness, I realized that everything in life is connected and my compassion for people has evolved. I feel that it's my opportunity to help other people in return for all the support I received from my family and SGI friends. Now I can sincerely pray for the happiness of others, and I truly feel that "there is no greater happiness than...chanting Nam-myoho-enge-kyo" (WND, 681).