

Achieving Happiness Blessed to a Foreign Spouse

Saori Tomatsu Tang

2019

FFWPU-Japan's Blessed Family magazine, No. 95, the 2019 Winter Edition



I was born in city of Ichihara in Chiba Prefecture as the second of three daughters. My father is taciturn and stubborn, while my mother is bright and outgoing. As a child, I was so self-reliant that I started going to the toilet on my own when I was 18 months old. However, I always felt that my sisters rejected me; I could not join them when they were playing together. I had a sense of rejection and the feeling of not receiving enough love.

Divine Principle brought me joy

In the spring of 1992, soon after I graduated from a junior college and started working in Tokyo, I met a woman from the Sugunami Family Church in Shinjuku. Ever since I was a child, I thought I had to love everybody around me, but most people I knew tended to think it was a stupid thing to do. I would often wonder if I was right or wrong. Starting out in the workforce, I came to witness conflictual relationships, bullying, sexual harassment, illicit affairs and other goings-on within the office that made me feel as if I were choking. It was so distressful that I had trouble breathing.

When I decided to quit my job, I met my spiritual mother. The Principle of Creation teaches that God created the world in order for beings to love and unite. That gave me conviction that what I have felt from childhood was not a mistake. I was excited with joy and inspiration.

That year, I quit my job and started to serve as a full-time church member. Later, in August 1995, I participated in the 360,000-couple International Holy Wedding Ceremony in Korea with the belief that a God-centered marriage is the only way to happiness. True Parents matched me to my husband, Mingshun Tang, from Taiwan through a photograph matching. The moment I saw his picture, I recalled a dream I had soon after I joined the church, in which I stood arm in arm with a man. The man in the photograph was the same man I saw in that dream. He was truly the one-and-only-man God had prepared for me. I was grateful for this blessing.

Blessed to a military man

My husband was a Taiwanese military man two years younger than I. He told me that he had decided to join the military, because he wanted to protect his nation. He applied for Special Forces to be a fighter pilot, but his inferior eyesight disqualified him. In the Air Force, he was in charge of repairing combat aircraft and maintaining radio and control tower facilities.

One day, when he was spending his day off with a friend, he looked at a church handout his friend had with him and became interested. A few days later, he visited the church. A video they showed him moved him and he began going to the church on his day off to learn the Divine Principle.

He says that when he first heard that True Parents teach that God and human beings are related as parent and child, it deeply moved his heart and motivated him to begin a life of faith. While the other members around him had started their life of devotion in the church, he had to follow a lonely path of faith because he was a military man who could not freely take the time to go to the church of his own free will.

He had been a staunch bachelor but changed his mind and applied for the blessing after learning of the ideal of establishing world peace through international marriages. He told me that he was happy when he learned that True Parents had chosen a Japanese woman for him through the photo matching. Taiwan is a pro-Japanese country. He says he felt something was familiar about me when he received my photo and

thought to himself that I was his eternal better half.

I participated alone in the blessing ceremony with my husband's photo. I later learned that my husband was engaged in a mission on Quemoy Island [Taiwanese territory] located just off the coast of mainland China. He could not visit Korea because the situation was extremely tense. On the day of the Blessing Ceremony, rain had been coming down hard since morning, but it stopped raining when the ceremony began, and the sun was shining by the time True Parents came onstage. Filled with deep inspiration, I wondered how more exciting it would have been if my husband were there with me.

Our long-distance courtship

After returning to Japan, I worked busily in the church as I thought of my husband, whom I had never met in person. Since there were no e-mail or SNS back then, we communicated mainly via letters.

The Suginami Family Church introduced me to a woman from Taiwan blessed to a Japanese man in the 30,000-couple blessing group. She would translate the letters I wrote in Japanese into Chinese and send them to my husband in Taiwan. I deeply appreciated her help.

I visited my husband in Taiwan once a year from 1995 when I received the blessing until 1999 when I moved to Taiwan to start a family. We communicated in simple English and sometimes in writing. I remember my first encounter with my husband in December 1995 as one of my most cherished memories. We went sightseeing around the church and visited his workplace on the Air Force base. On my date of departure, he came along to the airport to see me off. I was surprised to see his tearful eyes as we parted. I had never seen a man cry like that before.

On my second visit to Taiwan the following year, we visited his family in Taipei. His parents and his siblings greeted me in a welcoming atmosphere. His family is Hakka (one of the Chinese subgroups) and they have naturally loud voices. I remember getting nervous every time they spoke because they sounded as though they were always starting a fight. In the autumn of 1998, my husband came to Japan to meet my family. My family had a particularly good impression of him. My father looked at my face and heaved a sigh of relief saying, "You look happy."



Mingshun Tang, an engineer in the Republic of China (Taiwan) Air Force

Unexpected horror

However, that year, in winter, something I had never expected happened. My parents told me that my older sister was planning to move into an apartment, and we were going for a preliminary inspection of it. The moment I entered the room, I noticed it was a room outfitted for confinement -- the doors and windows had multiple locks.

My parents and sisters tried to force me into abandoning faith. They said, "We will not go against your marriage, but we want you to give up your faith." To make possible much long and heavy conversations, my parents had taken a month's leave from work and my sisters had quit their jobs. When I tried to leave the room, my family blocked me with all their strength. I kept shouting and crying as I fought back.

At the end of the day, my father said, "I'll go crazy if it goes on like this," and gave up trying to dissuade me. He said, "It's fine as long as you're happy" and gave me permission to go to Taiwan. My sisters, on the other hand, were not convinced. They were furious because they had resigned from their jobs for this confinement. My mother looked at it differently. "Since you're overriding our objections and going to Taiwan," she said, "becoming happy is your responsibility."

"Becoming happy is your responsibility." What she said has strengthened me significantly throughout my life in Taiwan. At first, when starting a family in an unfamiliar environment, my heart became unstable from tension and anxiety.

A fresh start in Taiwan

I moved to Taiwan in January 1999 and lived in the headquarters church in Taipei. Some time later, my husband opted to retire from military service and became a company employee. In September that year, we moved into an apartment near the church to start a family. Taiwan is a convenient place for women to live because most husbands are actively engaged in parenting and housework and people are accustomed to eating out on a daily basis. My husband and I were able to communicate in simple English, so there were no problems in daily life.

However, I began to see my husband's shortcomings, which I had not seen before we lived together. This made me feel conflicted. I guess my heart became somewhat unstable due to the environmental change. I was taking out my stress or even my unfulfilled feelings from childhood on my husband. Whenever I felt highly frustrated, I became silent or threw harsh words at my husband. Once, I threw an alarm clock at him. It must have been hard for him, but he always spoke to me in a kind way, apologized and hugged me as he listened to me. He endured, forgave and loved me like a mother would a baby.

One day, one of the church members who used to be a military man asked me a question: "The military provides stable jobs with a high salary. Do you know why your husband quit?" Many men transferred in and out of his unit and in many cases, military husbands lived away from their families. My husband decided to retire from duty because it would be hard for me as a foreigner to live like that. I was surprised, but also felt grateful and sorry for him. My trust for him began to grow. Truly, True Parents know the right person for me. The blessing is amazing.

Learning his language helped me

At times, my husband scolded me so strictly that I felt as if I could never recover mentally. I felt like giving up everything and going back to Japan. But each time, I hung on by remembering what my mother told me before I left Japan. "Becoming happy is your responsibility." Looking back, I feel that God spoke to me through her. I began studying Chinese in a language school, but in three months I reached my "saturated point" and gave up. Half a year later, I made up my mind to study again but it did not last long. As a result, I studied Chinese in a language school for a total of a year or so.

Other than that, I tried communicating with the Taiwanese women I worked with in the headquarters church. My listening ability increased after about three years. As my Chinese got better, my husband and I started to enjoy deeper conversations. My husband would tell me about his jobs, his experiences, and his feelings. I, too, could tell him about the day's events and how I felt. Over time, we grew able to give each other advice. Little by little, my husband and I became "companions" and gradually, we firmly established our trust relationship as husband and wife.

My husband's maternal grandmother lives in Miaoli County in the northwestern part of Taiwan. She welcomed me saying, "I now have a Japanese daughter-in-law." Showing me a Japanese book, she said, "I can read Japanese," and read it aloud in front of me in a proud tone. She would ask me how to read some of the characters and when I answered, she would smile at me happily. Through such encounters, I became interested and searched on the Internet for the relationship between Japan and Taiwan. I discovered that through history many Japanese contributed to Taiwan's development of Taiwan, such as Shinpei Goto who contributed to Taiwan's infrastructure development; Inazo Nitobe invested in Taiwan's sugar industry, and Yoichi Hatta, a civil engineer who made Chianan Plain's poor land into a great grain belt.

The grace accepting one another

In 2003, my husband resigned from his company and started working in the management department of the FFWPU-Taiwan Headquarters. His work is maintenance and management of the church headquarters' buildings and facilities. In 2011, a Japanese woman who was the director of the Family Department asked me to work for Japanese-Taiwanese blessed couples and their families and I began to work in the headquarters, too. I am in charge of negotiating with the lecturers of FFWPU-Heavenly Japan, arranging lectures in Taiwan, and interpretation the lectures. Through these and similar experiences, I learned many things from the Japanese Family Education Department staff members and second-generation leaders.

God's grace came to my husband and me through two daughters, both of whom speak Japanese and Chinese. They are familiar with Japan's and Taiwan's cultures and have global awareness. Our older daughter has an outgoing personality. When she was in fifth grade, she went to a language program abroad, in the Philippines, for nine months. When I encouraged her to go, she accepted my suggestion effortlessly. She did not show resistance against traveling to another country.

She stayed in a dormitory for foreign students managed by a Filipino-Japanese blessed couple. Since they spoke Japanese fluently, my daughter, who had felt lonely being apart from her family, experienced relief. On the other hand, our younger daughter is sensitive and introspective. She knows how to communicate in Japanese, but she is not good at reading and writing. Recently, she voluntarily started to study the fifty Japanese syllabary. [Roughly like learning Japanese pronunciation in alphabetical order.]

Our family, a Taiwan–Japan bridge

When my husband's father died in 2011, our family moved into the housing complex where my husband's family members live. His mother and younger brother live on the second floor and we live on the fifth floor. We eat dinner at his mother's house on the second floor. His mother takes care of my daughters when I am busy with work. I am grateful to her for treating me like a real daughter.

When our daughters were children, I took them to Japan every year to meet my family. I think my parents were relieved to see us on a regular basis. They no longer show harsh disapproval as they did before. Today, we enjoy communicating with my parents and sisters through SNS. Now that Taiwan has become a special subregion of Heavenly Japan, my husband and I would like to pay respect to our forefathers who shed blood, sweat and tears for Taiwan and do our best in serving as the bridge between Japan and Taiwan.