

Reflections on a Japanese-American Marriage

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David Hose:

Very interesting dynamics take place particularly in marriage when it comes to East and West communication. I have discovered this often in my marriage. It is not very easy to express, not because it is embarrassing, but because it is very subtle. There are times in our relationships with one another that we want an answer right away. But there are certain answers that shouldn't be given right away; yet sometimes without thinking, we demand these answers. It's like standing over flower seeds in February and demanding them to grow. It just doesn't happen. The ripening and maturing season has to come before you can get an answer from that flower.

I have discovered in my relationship with my wife that these two concepts come head-on sometimes. It is a western trait, especially in America, to be honest and straightforward. We pride ourselves in putting all the cards on the table. I used to frequently ask my wife why she said or did certain things. But then she would say, "Do I have to explain everything? Do I have to put everything into words for you?" I said, "Well, why not?" This was years ago. I don't say that anymore; I'm learning slowly. Years ago, I would get angry and say, "Why can't you explain it to me? I have to learn how to be a blessed husband. I need guidance!" This was a point of frustration for her because she wanted to think that if I were the subject, I would be perceptive enough to catch her heart. But I was not. I was more wrapped up in myself than in her.

I can think of many times that I wanted an answer from her before the proper time. I wanted the flower to bloom right away. It *is* something like a person who climbs half way up a mountain and asks for the flag on top claiming the mountain to be brought down to him. It is a cheap victory. Sometimes I would catch myself asking for cheap victories.

This is one area where Westerners have a hard time. Always there is the conflict of wanting to know something right away and waiting for the proper season. It is so important that we learn to wait for answers. Many times words are not really answers. For the oriental, truth is not found in words or in the confrontation itself, but in the way that life is lived. In the West we get caught up in words. You listen to so many lectures and you hear all those words and you think that you know the truth. But then you can constantly trip over your own life.

For the Western partner in a blessed couple the necessary patience is a challenge. Of course, this challenge can be found in all marriages and in many contexts. We all need to learn how to wait and learn that the answer doesn't come only through the mouth but through deeper things, not just with our spouses but also in our vertical relationship with Father and with God.

Tacco Hose:

Referring to what my husband said, speaking from my side, what I most had to learn in my marriage to him is that many times I expected him to understand something without my explaining it clearly. That is especially true in reference to cultural differences. The difference between man and woman is enough, and then comes the difference between East and West. I don't want to be particularly conscious that we are an international marriage and we have to work out this and that, but it does come out naturally. I think like a person who was born and raised in the Orient. I have been called a "typical Oriental." In general, we don't talk too much. The deeper we get, the less we talk. If we express to each other, "I love you, I love you," all the time we feel that it's so cheap, that it's a feeling that will disappear into the air. Western couples may be used to the expression, but it easily embarrasses me. If somebody is around and my husband kisses me on the cheek, I feel so embarrassed.

I try to think about the best way to express my feelings for him. I don't always do so in words. Many

times I find that I am planning to do something good for him, and I don't want to talk about it until the last minute. If I say, "Well, I just want to let you know that I have good intentions -- I am planning this!" it takes away the joy. What if I can't follow through on it? Then he will expect something good and be disappointed. You know that I make a lot of clothes. Often I see that members need clothes. I want to be able to make them, but I have to figure out my time schedule. But of course I have to measure for the size. So at the last minute, when I am sure that I can make it, I quietly tell that person.

Also, if I do something, I don't want to say it in front of other people. For example, in the Orient, if we give someone a gift, we don't want him to open it in our presence. What if he is displeased about it and we are there to see his face? We would rather just leave it and say goodbye. Just after I came to America an associate member brought a gift over. We didn't know the custom, so we just said thank you and didn't open it. Then she said, "Aren't you going to open it?" So then I caught on and opened it. Then she said, "Isn't it great!" before we could say anything!



My husband works with many people and has many members to take care of. Many times I hear him say, "Why don't we get together and have coffee sometime?" Then I watch and nothing happens. So I say, "Gee, didn't you promise that person?" Then he says, "Oh, no. It was just like a greeting!" But for me, if I say something, I feel a hundred percent responsible to do it. So if I want to take someone out, I have to figure out the time and money.

Then at the last minute I grab that person and go. I do it all the way, from the start to the finish. I try my best not to disappoint but to live up to my word. Therefore we hesitate to speak before we have assurance of doing something. Of course, we are human, so sometimes we make mistakes and have to apologize. My husband is always busy. But sometimes he says, "Tonight we will go out." So this poor wife waits all day for that moment to happen.

Then when he gets home he's wiped out and nothing happens. Then I say, "Sure, I understand how hard you have to work and respect it, but what about me? Why did you tell me if it's just wishful thinking?"

For many years I couldn't get used to this. If he says we will do something, I say to myself, "Maybe it will happen, and maybe it won't." I've had to learn to protect myself. This is a different country, a different culture. I have to understand him. I have to learn to put my thinking into words. But then sometimes, as he said, I get tired of explaining everything. I want to be understood without that. I don't know if this is a woman's nature or the Oriental nature. So it goes both ways; we are still learning.

Also, as he said, this is true in our relationship with God. We have to exercise our intuition. We may think that the Principle is presented so completely, rationally and scientifically, so we expect that what we go through can be clearly explained. But it doesn't happen that way. Many times God is silent. But we shouldn't feel abandoned, because the time will come when God will explain it in His own way. I think that God sees more in our position of blessed couples than we can comprehend. That is why whatever Father does through us has so much meaning. But many times we don't catch it; we don't understand that we are caught in a very special situation.

In 1975 many wives went to Barrytown to a workshop and from there became IW's. Our children were in a nursery in Barrytown. During the workshop Father came many times to speak to the trainees. Father showed great concern for the trainees, but didn't visit the children, who were very close. I'm sure that even though they didn't say anything, many people wondered about this. But Father always assured us that he understands everything. He does know what we are going through, what we are sacrificing. Many times he speaks strong words in public about sacrifice and the formula course, etc. But he is different in private. At that time in Barrytown I had occasion to serve him in his room and he always asked about my children. In private, he is always comprehending what we have to go through as humans, not just as heavenly soldiers.

Also, those part of the 43 couples blessing in Japan were separated for a long time. When they finally did

get together and have children, Father explained for the first time in very simple terms that while they had been separated Japan was in a crucial time and God needed some condition of sacrifice.

We should all understand that as blessed couples, as long as the world is suffering, we are more likely to be in a position of sacrifice than the younger members. Many blessed couples know that they are being observed by younger members who see that they have so little and worry about their own future. But you need to understand that this is not something that God enjoys. But there is a reason for it, and if we understand this, then we can wait until the moment comes when Father can say, "You have done well."

Father always explains after we have done something, not in the beginning or in the middle. And while you are paying indemnity, God is not in a position to sympathize with you because it will take away your credit. You feel like you need comfort and appreciation, and nothing comes. And thus many members get tired and leave the church.

If you are suffering to the point where you just can't contain your tears, then you know that God is not treating that suffering cheap. He knows it. He is the creator and He gave all those feelings to us, too! He senses them more than we do. But we have to be able to exceed the sacrifice of the rest of the world. I have many Christian relatives who have decided that their first concern is their own family. We have to go beyond that. We can't expect that always someone will explain everything, like spoon-feeding.

Maybe we will be thrown into a situation in which we have to mobilize all of our understanding and figure out how to get through this period in a most faithful way. Father may ask you to do things without explanation. You have to trust in God that he comprehends what he is doing. This is much more rewarding than expecting everything to be explained. Especially through the Oriental tradition we can learn the value of persevering without having everything explained. You have to be willing to assume that something good will come if you are faithful.