

A Chinese and Unificationist Love Story

Laurent Ladouce
October 2017



In the televised musical, *The Sound of Music*, actors portray Maria Rainer singing "Climb Every Mountain" with the Mother Abbess, when Maria decides to leave the monastery and marry Captain Von Trapp with whom she will escape Nazism by crossing the Alps. Climb every mountain / Search high and low / Follow every byway / Every path you know...

Sometimes, love has to cross mountains. In China, it may have to cross a strait. Between Mainland China and the island of Taiwan, the Taiwan Strait can be seen as a metaphor of the straits that we all have to cross in order to arrive at true love. The man is Ko Cheng-hong, from Taiwan and his beautiful wife, Zheng Lina, is from mainland China. "My husband is not handsome, but it was never an issue; he has brought so much to me," says the lively Lina. "In our marriage, we almost never quarrel," replies the placid Cheng-hong.

Their story is so Chinese, and so Unificationist. Lina was the third child of a couple living in countryside in the People's Republic of China. After a second child, her mother had an operation but still conceived Lina. "My birth was not declared, and I grew up with my grandparents in Beijing, far away from my parents in the countryside. I was raised as a city girl." When she went back to her parents, she felt like a foreigner there. Even in China, in the same family, there can be many straits.

Finally, unlike her two siblings, Lina could enter university, and returned to Beijing to study international trade. There, she became interested in spirituality and Christianity. "I knew there was something higher in life." One of her classmates brought her to the Unificationist center in 2004. She accepted the Divine Principle but because the police often investigated the center, she had to hide her faith.

Cheng Hong is eight years older than Lina. He has been a Unificationist since 1993. His faith background is Ikuang Tao, an important religion in Taiwan. He had gone through the blessing in 1997 but his bride never accepted him. After several years, the blessing broke, leaving him with deep scars. Without ever losing his faith, he lost confidence that he would ever enjoy a happy conjugal life.

In 2006, Lina attended a workshop. The schedule was strict and she could barely follow the Hoon Dok Hae at 5 AM. One day, she heard a strong voice from the spirit world telling her that God and the spirit world actually exist. Though hiding her faith from everyone, she kept her faith that God would guide her. Shortly before her region organized a matching by picture, she had dream of a big man with a flower. When she received the picture of Cheng-hong, it was the same man. She felt attracted by the goodness that she had felt in her dream.

Cheng-hong went through the Blessing Ceremony in Seoul with a picture of Lina. Until the day they finally met, they often communicated by Skype. Upon seeing the sadness that had been in his heart for many years, Lina took his hand and comforted him. His long ordeal to find love was over; he would build his home.

She quickly came to Taiwan, where she opened a small shop and became involved in Pure Love outreach. Her passion to live in a new country without recognizing any barrier impressed her husband. Both believe it is possible to become an "ideal couple." She sees herself as a strong woman, but a bit stubborn and sometimes influenced by bad dreams. "My husband is peaceful and tolerant. Whenever I am harassed by evil spirits, he tells me to embrace them and love the enemy rather than hate them." Cheng Hong feels proud of Lina, who has embraced him and the country. "I believe that problems can be solved. If my wife cannot do something, I should try to do it. Moreover, if a problem emerges in the couple, it is useless to ponder who is right or wrong. What matters is to find the solution." To date, they have two children, a girl and a boy.