

IN MY LIFE: Decisive Moments
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Here is where you will cross the Uji River. Here is where you will ford the Seta. This event will determine whether you win honor or whether you disgrace your name. (“Reply to Yasaburo,” *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 6, p. 235)

Though the Uji River and the Seta, both famous strategic points of battle in Japanese history, may seem geographically and even metaphorically distant from the cafe where I am sitting with my husband, John, it is, in fact, here that I find myself, over a Key lime pie, appealing to their reverberant names in a moment of struggle.

Nichiren Daishonin calls upon the significance of these two battle sites to illustrate those decisive moments of victory and defeat that arise in our lives. He is encouraging Yasaburo, a disciple preparing for a debate with a priest from the Pure Land sect, asking him to not be swayed by any outside influences but to “simply make up your mind” (MW-6, 235). I call upon the Daishonin’s words as I attempt to overcome my lower, fear-filled self and, with John, meet such a strategic moment in our lives.

John’s making his first feature film, a daunting task in and of itself — the challenges seem endless. Today we are deciding whether or not to continue with the project. We have often reminded ourselves in times of duress that we are both actively pursuing our dreams in the producing of this movie (I’m acting in the picture). But our financial circumstances are telling us to give up on our shared dream.

This is where we cross the Uji River, so to speak. This is where we must put ourselves behind our lives and proceed with total commitment despite fear, despite criticism, despite doubt. After all, what is life if not pursuing your dreams in the face of fear? The Daishonin is speaking directly to the two of us and to all of us, and his words ring true and clear. Of course, we’re taking a risk. But we’re determined to use our faith to surmount all obstacles that come up.

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