Hitched at 22... and he has no regrets

SMU student says marriage gives him a kind of peace that singlehood can't offer

BY CHRISTIE TAN

TO MOST 22-year-olds, marriage is one of the farthest things from their minds. Not so for 23-year-old political science student Zheng Renjie. He tied the knot last year at the age of 22 — even before he went to university.

And unlike most of his peers who hang out at bars or watch movies after classes, Renjie heads home each day to be with his wife Low Pui See, 24, a defence executive officer with the Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF).

While most youths are holding off marriage in pursuit of an education and career, getting hitched seemed a natural thing for Renjie to do.

Having grown up in a close-knit family, he wanted to find a suitable partner to settle down with and start his own family.

“To me, freedom is being able to do something that fulfils my life. Having my loved ones with me gives me that contentment. I don’t feel in any way constrained by marriage,” he explained.

“Marriage is about forming a family, it’s about commitment.”

As one of only two men in the pioneer batch of social science students at the Singapore Management University (SMU), Renjie admits that there is indeed “a huge pond of fish” on campus.

To quell Pui See’s insecurities, he decided to propose to her before he entered university as a testimony of his love for her.

He admits their parents were initially apprehensive about them marrying so early, but they gave their blessings after “we showed them that we are committed to make this marriage work and the decision is not a rash one”.

The couple had dated for a year before marrying. He revealed that they had asked each other many searching questions and talked about relevant issues such as their values and children before saying “I do”.

He gives the impression of someone who has had everything mapped out carefully. As a holder of a Singapore Armed Forces Local Study Award, he is assured of a job and a stable income.

He reckons it would not be a problem supporting himself and his wife with his savings and yearly allowance from the RSAF.

The couple plan to have their first child once Renjie graduates.

As president of the SMU Social Science Society, he said his main challenge is to balance his time between his wife, studies and co-curricular activities.

He doesn’t miss out on the fun of being single. “I prefer being ‘un-single’. My wife brings a most peaceful feeling that singlehood cannot provide. I would give up any ‘fun’ for that peace.”

The writer is a second-year social science student at Singapore Management University.

WELL-THOUGHT-OUT MOVE: Before Renjie and Pui See took the plunge, they talked about their values and children. Both sets of parents gave their blessings after they knew the couple’s decision was not a rash one.