

It's like I'm standing in between two countries and do not really know which is my nationality- that which defines my true identity. I know that society dictates that I am a Filipino since I was born and brought up in the Philippines. However, personally, I do feel there's something missing – that feeling of going back to my roots, to that Japanese blood that's running through my veins.

When I was young, my father brought me and my sister in Japan. It really felt good to be in another country, and not just any country but the hometown of my father. I thought that it was going to my hometown as well. But as time flies and for reason I cannot comprehend back then, my father slowly drifted away. For a time, he visited us in the Philippines twice a month, and then became once a month, then weekly, until such time that he didn't even visited us anymore but called to us once in a while. I thought that I was her favorite daughter, enamored with the love that he's giving to me. He is a sweet and caring father, that's the only thing I know of him.

Over the years though, I became used to not hearing from my father. I graduated high school and college without any call or visit from him. But even if that's the case, there are times in my life especially during holidays – those moments when families gather together to celebrate, that I miss my father; hoping that one day, even one day, when we could do the same. I missed my father and kept on searching for a fatherly figure to some of the guys I meet. But I know in my heart that the love from my true father will be incomparable and irreplaceable.

It's this feeling of longing for my father – his love and care for me and my sister is the main reason why I am putting up with this fight for my right as a Japanese citizen. Because I know that having Japanese nationality can help and give me a chance to be with my Japanese father whom I have missed for many years..

I have sacrificed many things just so I could grab the opportunity to be a Japanese citizen and spend time to be with my father and know him well. I gave up a job I've been waiting for more than a year, just so I could attend this hearing. That is why I am here standing in front of you, requesting for an appeal for our right as a Japanese. I know there are a lot of JFC's like me who want to have their Japanese nationality And please give us a chance to prove ourselves that we belong in your country – our country, which is Japan.

Thank you very much.

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Nariko GOKITA