

My name is Yuriko Dipasupil Kunimasa, 21 years old. I was born and raised in the country of my mother, the Philippines.

I can't remember exactly when I first learned that I lost my Japanese nationality. When I was little, I was just told that although my father is a Japanese, I am a Filipino. Which was fine with me because at that time, I didn't even know what a nationality is.

Growing up, I experienced a lot of awkward and embarrassing situations whenever my classmates would ask me why I am a Filipino citizen and not Japanese. They asked me where my father is and why I am not in Japan. They asked why we don't observe Japanese practices at home. I was looked down upon and discriminated because being a Filipino, they thought that I was an illegitimate and unwanted child. Although it is true that my father left me and my mother, it happened for a reason different from what other people think. My mother tried to protect me from all the discrimination so she worked hard to show everyone that we are well-provided for. She was so busy that I lost a lot of time to be with her and she is now sick from being overworked.

Today, I am currently working as a clinic nurse. At age 21, I have finished studying college, passed the board exams, have a stable job and I may say more job opportunities ahead of me. So if I were to receive my Japanese nationality, I simply plan to explore Japan to learn its culture and heritage. I want to do this so I could see the other side of my identity. My utmost dream, however, is to be vindicated from all the prejudice placed upon me.

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