

I was raised by four women: my mother, my grandmother, and two aunts who never married. My mother was diagnosed with schizophrenia when I was a teenager. She became a totally different person overnight; it almost seemed as if the history of her life had been erased. The only way to prove who she had been was with photographs from before she became ill. She has been going back and forth between home and the hospital ever since her diagnosis.

When I was 28, my grandmother died. She was the boss among the four women who raised me and had really played the role of a mother to me because of my mother's illness. Losing her was like losing my own mother. The loss of a family member made me acutely aware of how much time had passed without my really noticing. I never thought my family would grow older; it seemed to exist in a timeless place. Before my grandmother died, I rarely took pictures of my family. Afterwards I started photographing them every time I went back to Japan to visit. The best days for us became those when my mother, her two sisters, and I went on short trips around Japan.

For me, these photographs are a vehicle that enables me to travel back and forth between the past and the present. The photographs help me to accept the changes that have taken place and those that are yet to come.