

☆☆ Mother Shiwori's 100 Years ☆☆

☆ Centenarian Shiwori ☆

Works and Commentary

しずまれい  
SHIZUMA Rei

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## References :

I also live as a storyteller (Note)

Written and Edited by Yoshio Murakami,

Published by Kyoiku Shiryo Shuppan-kai

My home is the earth (Note)

Written and Edited by Yoshio Murakami,

Published by Kyoiku Shiryo Shuppan-kai

Ryoji Shizuma's Last Letters and Reminiscences (not for sale)

## Note :

When my mother took a writing class on the theme of personal history at a culture centre, the instructor edited the students' work.

1. Born in Sendai (under the Aoba Castle)



# 1 . Born in Sendai (under the Aoba Castle)

My mother was born as the second daughter in August 1924 in Sendai. Her grandfather was a bureaucrat in the former Ministry of Finance, and this was her first post as a so-called 'young lord trainee'. My mother's name, Shiwori, was probably unusual at the time. Even today, we sometimes see kanji and 'Shiori', but I have yet to see anything with 'wo' in it. According to my mother, 'shiwori' derives from 'branch fold' and means a landmark for those who come after you in the mountains. My mother has three other brothers and sisters, but I forgot to check with my grandparents as to why they gave my mother a prominent and unusual name. The kanji 'Shiwori' looks tragic, but the hiragana version sounds more feminine, and I think the 'wo' gives a better sense of the word.

## 2. Ashiya River



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My grandfather was posted from the Sendai Tax Office to the Osaka Nishi Tax Office, and the family apparently lived in Ashiya City. According to my mother's story, she remembers playing in the river, which was probably the Ashiya River, and the child she played with at that time was watched over by a person who looked like a butler. This is a story that would be very likely in Ashiya. This is a world of imagination, but my father lived in Higashinada Ward, Kobe City, next to Ashiya City, during this period, so I would like to think that he may have encountered them. In reality, my father lived in Mikage and my mother in Ashiya, somewhere in an unknown address, so even if they were on the same Hankyu line, the distance between them was a little too far for a child. However, in the world of novels, it would not be interesting if they did not meet. The same goes for the world of painting.

### 3. Hiroshima Jogakuin Kindergarten



### 3. Hiroshima Jogakuin Kindergarten

My grandfather was posted from Osaka to Hiroshima, and the family lived rather close to the government office, so he walked to work. There was a kindergarten attached to Hiroshima Jogakuin near the house, so my mother attended there. It was a Christian kindergarten and seemed to offer unique instruction at the time. When it came to talking about school life, my mother only talked about Hiroshima. She has very few concrete details, but I think she must have had a lot of fun experiences. But the most enjoyable experience seems to have been going to school with my grandfather every day. I don't know where he lived, and I don't know what route he took from home to kindergarten to his office. According to my mother's dim memory, we walked through a place with a broad field and what looked like a stone wall of a castle.



## 4. Traditional Japanese Dance



## 4. Traditional Japanese Dance

After Sendai, the family moved to Osaka, Hiroshima and Nagoya at intervals of one or two years, before returning to Tokyo, where the family settled in Toyama-machi, now Shinjuku-ku. Mother lives here until 25 May 1945, just before the end of the war, when her house is destroyed by fire in an air raid in Yamanote. She is transferred to Ichigaya Elementary School in Tokyo. On her grandmother's advice, she took up various lessons, but none of them seemed to last long. Japanese dance was one of them, but although she remembers doing it, she has no concrete memories of it.

## 5. Sea bathing in Kamakura



## 5. Sea bathing in Kamakura

My mother's family used to go to a rented villa in Kamakura every summer from the time she was in primary school until about the second year of girls' school, to enjoy swimming. The children stayed there all the time, and their parents joined them on weekends. My mother was not good at gymnastics, but she liked swimming and was naturally in the group that completed the long-distance swim at the girls' school. My mother liked to spin around in the surf when she was in primary school. I guess that was a bit surprising. She was a hardcore summer girl, and at the time of her physical examination in April, she still had marks from the previous year's swimming costume. Although the harmful effects of ultraviolet rays are being pointed out these days, for my mother it seemed to give her the energy to live.

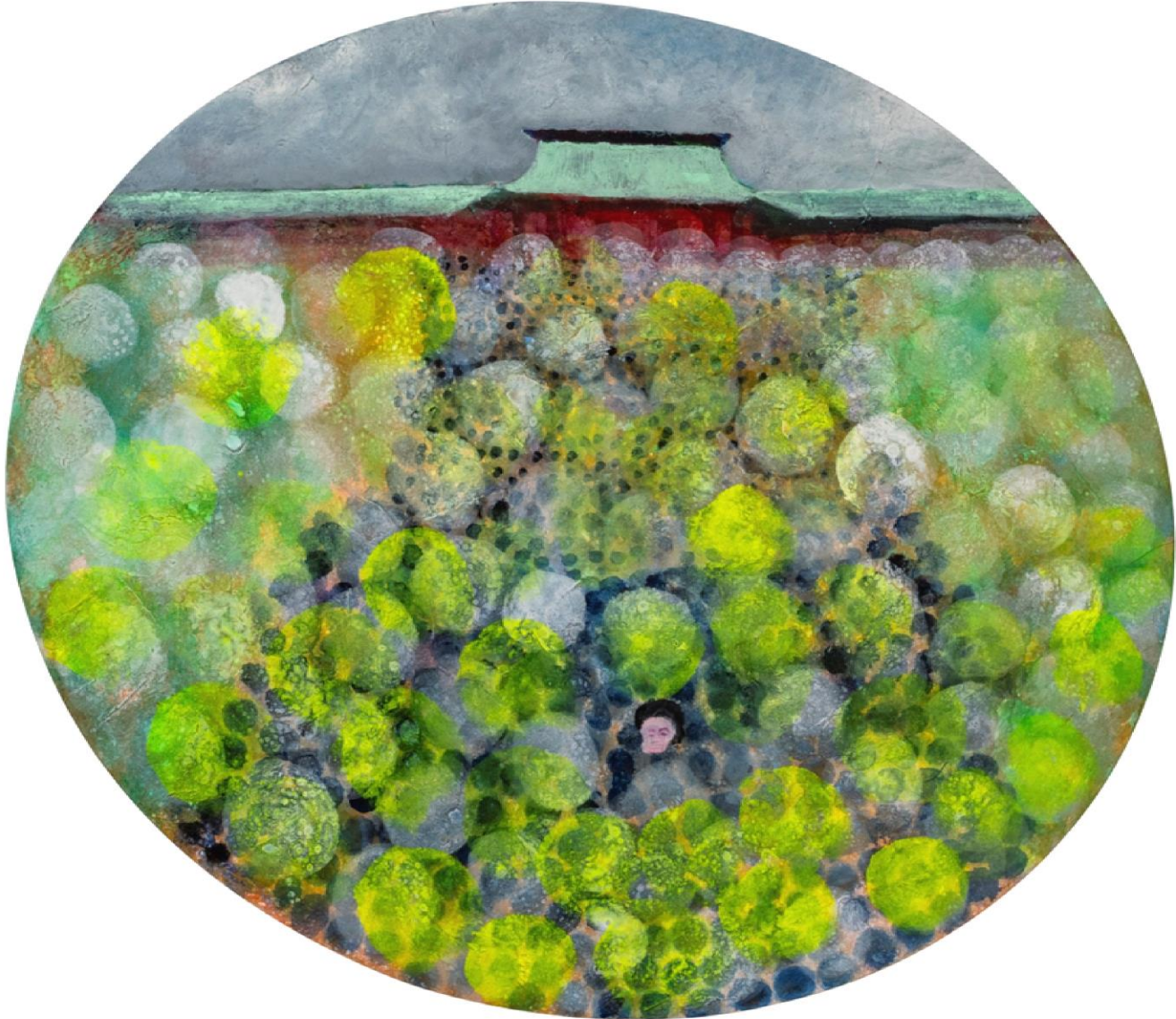
## 6. Ogasawara-ryu etiquette class



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My mother entered the Tokyo Prefectural Fifth High School for Girls, which was located in what is now Kabukicho, Shinjuku. There, Ogasawara-ryu etiquette was introduced into the classes. My mother was not particularly good at it, but later, when she was learning the tea ceremony, her teacher praised the Fifth for the way they walked because they were so well trained. The Fifth seems to have had a very rigid and simple school culture, which was not suitable for my mother, and I have never heard her talk about her happy memories of her time at the Fifth. Nevertheless, after she got married and spent 20-odd years in Nagoya, she returned to Tokyo and attended reunions of her classmates at the fifth every year. However, at a gathering when she was around 91 years old, my mother, who had become quite moody person at the time, cancelled on the morning of the reunion, and the reunion came to an end when the number of participants fell below 10.

# 7. Pray for victory at Meiji Jingu Shrine

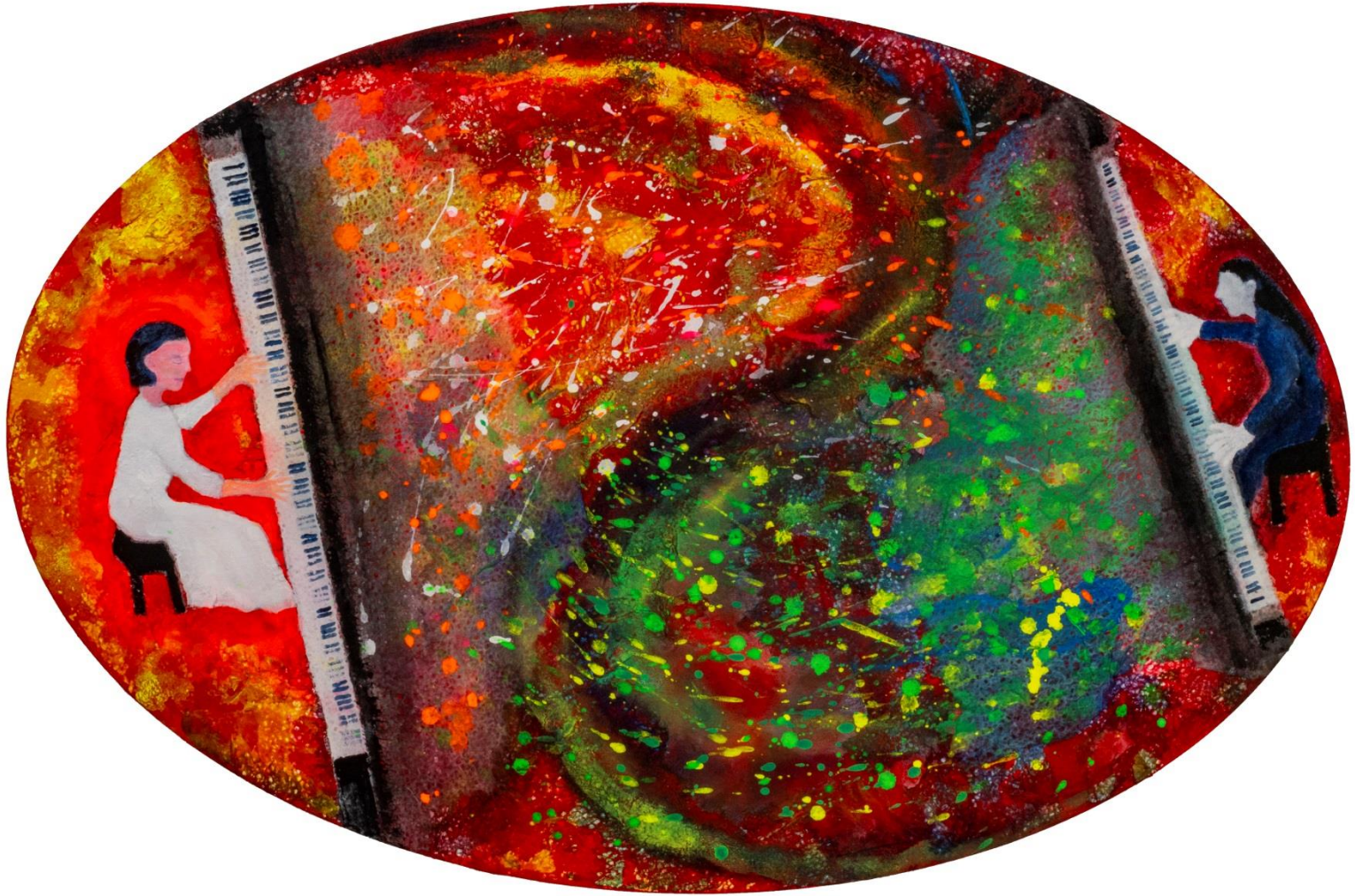


## 7. Pray for victory at Meiji Jingu Shrine

When my mother was in the latter half of her school days, the Pacific War broke out and everyone walked from school to the Meiji Shrine to pray for victory. She says that because of the gravel approach to the shrine, there were so many other people praying for victory that the dust was so thick that they could hardly see what was ahead of them.



## 8. Phantom piano recital



## 8. Phantom piano recital

Piano was the only one of my mother's lessons that she took seriously. It all started when she saw and heard her elder sister start to play the piano. She was trained by a young female pianist who had graduated from an arts college who lived nearby, and she once wanted to go on to an arts college, but it was unlikely that her parents would agree, and given the social situation during the war, she had to give up. In the meantime, it was decided to hold a review session, and my mother was supposed to play Beethoven's 'Emperor' with her teacher, but the war situation worsened and the review session was cancelled, so the performance ended up being a phantom. However, I wondered if the piano concerto could be played by a piano duet, or if there was a score to begin with, and when I looked for it in a Yamaha shop, to my surprise, there it was.

9. Hitchhiking on a military truck on the Koshu-kaido road



## 9. Hitchhiking on a military truck on the Koshu-kaido road

On 25 May 1945, just before the end of the war, my mother's house in Toyamacho was destroyed in an air raid in Yamanote, Tokyo. However, my mother escaped the disaster by evacuating with her younger brother to a house at Kyodo, which her father had prepared for her. Her elder sister was already married and safe in Daita, her another younger brother was safe because he was participating in military training in Kawasaki, and only her parents were exposed to the danger of incendiary bombs, but they managed to survive. My mother had seen the direction of Shinjuku turning red at Kyodo, so she called the next day but could not get through, so she walked alone towards Shinjuku. On the way, she went to Koshu Kaido with an old man who said he was going to check on the safety of his daughter in Bunkyo Ward, and they met up with some people waiting for a military truck. Eventually, the truck arrived and my mother finally got into the back of the truck after being pulled and pushed on her buttocks by everyone. However, the whole area was a burnt-out wilderness and she was lost, not knowing where to get off, but only Isetan and Mitsukoshi remained intact, so she knew she was in Shinjuku and passed through there, probably got off around Akebonobashi. When she saw the building of the Tokyo Women's Medical University, her sense of place returned and I finally arrived at my house in Toyama-machi, which had been destroyed by fire, and there was a sign in the garden saying where I was, and I was able to safely reunite with her parents. My mother said that if she had been with them, she would have fled to an air-raid shelter near the Institute for Sound and Vibration Research at Waseda University, where she worked, and burnt to death. Many people who fled there died, and the Kikui-cho Kannon Memorial Service is held every year on 25 May. Her parents were lucky that they did not know of its existence. My mother lost a precious Bösendorfer (maybe?) piano and the first and last Bösendorfer piano of her life. piano and the SP record of Beethoven's Ninth, which she bought with the first and last bonus in her life.

# 10. Wedding ceremony at the Tokyo Grand Shrine



## 10. Wedding ceremony at the Tokyo Grand Shrine

My mother had an arranged marriage with a friend of her mother's soon after the war. The man she met was the son of the elder sister of the president of the company where her mother's friend's husband worked as an executive, and an assistant professor of Mathematics in the Faculty of Science at Nagoya University. Although he is her son, he is her adopted son. Her paternal mother lost her husband early in life and had no children, so she adopted my father, the second son of her elder sister's five siblings, who seemed the safest of all except the eldest. When my mother first saw my father, she was somewhat apprehensive because he was weakly with his inner thighs.. However, that's where the old blind dates were not easily turned down. But did it turn out okay in the end?

11 . Moved four times in 6 years in and around Nagoya city



## 11 . Moved four times in 6 years in and around Nagoya city

My mother married and started living with my father and paternal grandmother in Nagoya. However, due to the post-war housing shortage, even if they rented a room, when the family returned from the war or evacuation, they moved to another room, from Motoyama to Iwakura and Tsushima's brothel district, and then to a room near Tsushima Shrine. When her father visited them there, he surprised by the devastation, introduced them to the Government Housing Loan Corporation and encouraged them to buy a house. He introduced him to the Housing Loan Corporation and urged him to buy a house. Her paternal mother sold a painting by Maurice Denis that she had bought when she was in France and used it as a down payment to build a house in Koyocho, Chikusa Ward, Nagoya. This story, which I heard from my mother much later after my father passed away, shows how my father was not very good at getting around in the world and how out of touch he was with worldly affairs. My mother was a status quo positive type and would have accepted and coped honestly with the post-war doldrums as this is what a newlywed family is supposed to be like. However, my paternal mother must have been very stressed out, having to rent a large house in Shinjuku to her nephew, and having to move from one small rented house to another in Nagoya with my parents.



## 12. Isewan Typhoon



## 12. Isewan Typhoon

On September 26, 1959 (Showa 34), the Ise Bay Typhoon struck Nagoya, causing great damage, and our family also had a hard time. As far as I remember, my grandmother was the one who worked the hardest, fastening the shutters with nails, fastening them together with cramp , and even turning the bed sideways to prevent the wind from coming and breaking the windowsin. My mother followed my grandmother and worked with her. I can't remember what my older brother was doing, so I think he was probably studying in his room. As for my father, he saw that the ceiling was leaking in various places, and he attached a piece of string to the leaking area with a thumbtack, and the other end of the string to a washbasin, and he succeeded in controlling several leaks in one place, and he was pleased with himself. I don't remember doing anything, and I think I probably just watched. Now that I think about it, it's interesting that each of their actions says a lot about the person.

# 13. MODE et MODE



## 13. MODE et MODE

After graduating from the girls' school, my mother transferred to the second year of a two-year vocational school called Surugadai Women's School, run by the Tokyo YWCA, and graduated in one year. It is unlikely that her mother would have sent her to a Christian school, but perhaps she sent her to school as an emergency refuge, as it was wartime and she was not in a position to recommend a match. My mother also attended the Ito Institute of Western Dressing, which was attended by her elder sister. The chronology of her attending these schools is not well understood, and it is exactly the chaos of wartime and postwar times. However, attending these two schools in Tokyo helped my mother a lot in her life in Nagoya, where she was a stranger. This was because both the YWCA and the Ito Institute of Fashion had branches in Nagoya. These two places seemed to help my mother adjust smoothly to Nagoya. She was particularly enthusiastic about Western-style dressmaking and built a Western-style dressmaking fortress in the corner of her small house, where she worked hard to make clothes. It seems that the three-dimensional cutting method of Mohei Ito is a distinctive feature of the Ito Institute of Western Dressmaking, and my mother had a three-dimensional model of her own body shape made for her. "Mode et Mode" is the name of a monthly magazine published by the Ito Institute of Western Dressmaking, .

14. "Woman And Socialism" by Bebel



## 14. "Woman And Socialism" by Bebel

My mother married soon after the war and became a housewife, and there were probably many such women at the time. They seem to have enjoyed their post-war freedom with fresh surprise and excitement. Books in particular seem to have satisfied their thirst for knowledge. My mother, of course, could not read freely during the war. At such times, my father introduced various books to my mother, and she read them as recommended. I could still understand Romain Rolland and Tolstoy, but I was surprised at "Woman And Socialism" by the German socialist Bebel. I was surprised at my father for recommending it, but I was even more surprised at my mother for reading it seriously and opening her eyes to it. She said it was when she was waiting for the train, which was too good to be true and probably came from the input of her writing class teacher. But it fits the picture.

# 15. Mahjong and Tobacco smoke



# 15. Mahjong and Tobacco smoke

On New Year's Day, my father's students came to our house and played Go and Chess during the day and Mahjong after the evening party. My grandmother and mother were very busy. My grandmother would help them prepare meals and then leave, but my mother would attend the banquet and even the Mahjong. Everyone was dumbfounded as my mother, who was only good at home mahjong, proudly taught Pon-chi mahjong to the late Kyoto University professor, who was still a graduate student at the time.

In doing so, the amount of cigarette smoke is not half bad. It is truly an opium den. More than ten people were having a banquet and playing mahjong in a room with a low ceiling of about six tatami mats, while everyone smoked except my mother, a scene that would be unthinkable nowadays. Why is it that my mother has survived to the age of 100 despite all this passive smoking?



16. Like a cow being led to the slaughterhouse



## 16. Like a cow being led to the slaughterhouse

My mother was introduced to ballroom dancing by someone, and when she started learning it, she took my father, who was unwilling, to visit a dance teacher, as she thought this might help him improve his posture and walking style.. My father and the teacher hit it off as they were both from Kobe, and they both learned to dance together. My father was more interested in theory than technique and read foreign theory books, and although he was inferior to my mother in technique, he was far ahead of her in theory. I believe this is the action that my mother contributed most to my father's life. The words in the title were actually said by my father to my mother.

17. Afternoon tea with female university students in the garden



## 17. Afternoon tea with female university students in the garden

Thanks to my mother's encouragement of my father to dance, he has improved his posture and walk in a very different way. It is likely that this improvement in appearance has given my father the confidence that has motivated him to work at Tokyo Women's University. My father often invited his seminar students to his house for lunch and afternoon tea in the garden. Naturally, my mother entertained them. Because of this, my mother remained close to many of you even after my father's death, which is truly a precious intangible legacy of my father's. This legacy has undoubtedly contributed to my mother's longevity.

# 18. Rue de la Pump



## 18. Rue de la Pump

When my father's younger brother and his wife were unable to go on a tour to see the Salzburg Festival, my mother suddenly decided to go on her first overseas trip together with my father, instead of them. I was over 20 years old, so even if something happened to the two of them, I could survive. From then on they began to enjoy our trips abroad. My mother took a coat tailored by Jeanne Paquin, which my paternal grandmother had bought during her stay in France, as clothing to wear to an evening concert at a music festival. I thought that was outdated, but my mother seemed to know more about clothes than I did, so I didn't say anything. A routine part of the package tour included a stay in Paris, my parents visited the apartment where my grandparents had lived in Paris. My father had my grandfather's business card. It is on a long, narrow street called "Rue de la Pump" near the Arc de Triomphe. It was still there when I visited more than a decade ago.

# 19. Dancing Queen!?



## 19. Dancing Queen!?

After returning to Tokyo from Nagoya, my mother continued to devoted herself to dance. My father seemed to go along with her as he saw fit. I often saw them dancing together in the house. One day there was a party at the dance school and my mother was encouraged to take part in a demonstration, which she did. My father, being shy and knowing his level, did not attend. In the painting, however, I had my father join me discreetly.



## 20. Requiem by Fauré



## 20. Requiem by Fauré

My mother said that my father asked her to play the Requiem by Fauré when he died. When my father asked her to listen to it before he died, she only listened to it briefly because she had other work to do. However, after my father passed away, my mother told me that she listened to the Requiem over and over again for about a month, and when she had heard enough, she suddenly stopped. Heh, that was a fresh surprise to me, that's how it works.

## 21. Tokyo Disneyland



## 21 . Tokyo Disneyland

My mother and the wife of her best friend from Konan Junior High School, who died about a year after my father's death, had hardly interacted with each other before, but they suddenly started to interact and started going on domestic trips together. Much later, my mother told me that they had been to Tokyo Disneyland together. I don't know what the two old ladies were doing there. My mother frequently went on overseas travel tours by herself after that, and she sometimes got on well with another woman who was going alone and went with her when it suited her. Her last overseas trip was a tour of New Zealand with a friend of the same generation whom she met at the YWCA in Nagoya, when she had reached her 77th birthday.

## 22. Walking with Nordic poles



## 22. Walking with Nordic poles

My mother used a Nordic pole as a walking stick and could walk quite well before the Corona epidemic. When she took a walk with the Nordic pole, there was a sushi restaurant at just the right distance, which motivated her to take a walk. Just when the Corona epidemic was going around, she had a recurrence of back pain and was hospitalised, but although her back pain healed quickly, she could no longer move her legs. I rushed my mother out of hospital and put her through rehabilitation at home. She has now managed to walk with a walker.

## 23. La Tour d'Argent



## 23. La Tour d'Argent

I did not confirm whether my mother went to La Tour d'Argent with my father when he first went to Paris, but recently I heard from a Tokyo Women's University graduate that they had been there. Moreover, she even told me that my father had told her the number of the duck he had eaten. My father, I assume, knew that his parents had been to this restaurant and had taken my mother there. Nevertheless, I have never seen or heard about my grandparents' or parents' duck numbers. To celebrate my mother's 100th birthday, I went to the Tokyo branch with my family, because it was no longer physically possible for her to go to the main branch in Paris. I wonder if my mother would have remembered those days while eating the duck? Incidentally, the number of the duck my mother ate was No. 293911.