

Japan Earthquake Charity Literature

Furukuri Kinoshita

*The Cambrian Palace*  
*Bombing Project*

Translated by Satoshi Katagiri

WasedaBungaku 2012

It was a Thursday night, just passed 10 o'clock. With the sound like a hammer shattering the TV screen, words burst and cracked out;

"I told you I'm not going to talk to anybody working at one of those luxury hotels."

It was as if a full-fledged dragon, fired out words of disgust. The razor sharp voice pierced through the crappy apartment building. The scream was so alarming, it shrieked to the heart and as I grabbed a container of "Golden Shower"(One which I purchased in the 90's at a *Burusera* porno shop. A 15-year-old vintage for acquired taste), a carton of cookies and a bottle of brandy, I wanted to dive beneath the sturdily built writing desk. Yet there was nothing so gorgeous, not even enough space for a tiny round table. The dusty lingering sound dispersed to the four corners like shattering glass, leaving the room with an odor of violence.

Seemingly, the scream brought in an enigmatic multitude of group members in the midpoint of starting a new Nobel Prize. The new prize was called the "Nobel in Kaboom". As we all know, Dr. Nobel was the prestigious inventor and father of dynamite, once called the "Merchant of Death" in his life time. The peace prize and the literary award were only sly hypocrisy. Now, why not blast it all up for good old origi-

nal sin's sake? The uprising galvanized an ensemble, from Pill Gates, Warren Burrett to Carlos Glim, all top players of the world billionaire club, stripping off, showing their bare savage self, agreeing to back-up the attempt. The Mexican Media King Carlos Grim showed special interest by addressing his plan to blow up his entire art collection from Picasso, Dali, Rodin, Renoir, Cezanne, Gogh, all the way to Leonardo da Vinci, as his final will. "I'm not saying 'Art is explosion', in fact, I've never showed exceptional interest in it anyway. I think I'm going to give it a try. Blast them off boys." Then all the wealthy Japanese investors started to show their keen interest. First off was Son Goku, of SOFT PANK Mobile Corp, announces via Twitter "My 3G network is getting very weak signals. Aren't you going to blast anything off Mr. Son?" Then he said, "Well, why not??" He promised to explode all the country's network stations. Another promising key figure was the CEO of Bast Retailing 'Yabai Tadashi'. "We own more than 900 stores world wide. I have this stupendous idea to explode all of them. What a splendid scheme. Now that's what I call Heat Tech." Now with worldwide support among them, 'The Cambrian Palace Bombing Project' was unveiled. The plan was to build or establish 'Cambrian Palaces' around the world, then explode them and in the end, award the most

magnificent explosion ‘The Nobel Prize in Kaboom’. Initially the award was treated with very wide media coverage, yet as the news release was on April 1<sup>st</sup> the announcement was treated as a prank and gradually faded away into one of those forgotten, drown out memories of everyday living. Still behind all of this was the countdown of an underground movement that could not be picked up in any extensive WikiLeaks coverage. “In the midst of the Cambrian Era on this planet appeared the explosive happenings of all living beings. 550,000,000 years after, an unprecedented natural disaster happened in the Heisei era. Following the evolution towards the future, now a wide variety of explosions are being undertaken.” And in that instant the nuclear power plant exploded, BANG! The Cambrian Palace went BANG! The Chateau de Versailles went BANG! The Roppongi Hills goes BANG! The Buckingham Palace went BANG! William the prince of hair grow blasts off BANG! Art is explosion, BANG! The Musee de Louvre explodes BANG! The Metropolitan Museum shatters BANG! The Hermitage Museum blasts BANG! The Crystal Bridges Museum of American Arts explodes BANG! Too much health food from Wal-Mart adding another extra pound on your belly going BANG! Frozen rice balls going BANG! In an empty room of the Burj Khalifa, a mysterious

poltergeist wavered, scattering that BANG! An out of focus figure of a head caught at the corner of the eyes watching U.S. government leaders following the latest footage of Bin Laden's live broadcast assassination explodes BANG! The entire population of 20,000,000 Cote d'Ivoire people, neither taking sides of Gbagbo nor Outtara, declared the inauguration of the president, bringing a beginning to direct democracy 2.0 shattering, BANG! The real estate bubble booming China with ghost like vacant apartments and condominiums outside of suburban cities exploding BANG! Yosano under the eagerness of raising tax in the midst of back-sets in deflation, his long deceased grand father putting a banana into his grand mother's cunt. The banana traveling through the whirlwind of time blasting off BANG! Time goes BANG! BANG!! Reconstruction taxes that even Yosano restrains to announce asserted by Kan Naoto's mad economic policy, brains screaming out BANG! While possessing enough waste money for bidding on the summer Olympics, city civilians are possessed with a cult following to kneel on the ground towards the direction of Northern Japan where the pounding of the forehead onto the ground in multitudes shivering the earth with artificial earthquakes blasting off BANG! While wearing protective garments designed by Galliano, chief cabinet secretary Edano

makes an immediate debut at the Paris Collection and going straight onward to Areva head quarters for direct appeal in reducing the payment for cleansing contaminated water yet again kneeling on the ground, BANG! With the long awaited introduction of Super Cool Biz, the slogan “Be cool from hidden spots” brings mass growth of salary men wearing no underwear, knocking down the sales of undies, BANG! With the long awaited introduction of Super Cool Biz, growth in female office workers wearing no brassieres increase, making everyday life like a carnival, BANG! Christina Hendricks’ dynamite boobs blooming, Bang! Christina Hendricks’ bosoms going BANG! Christina Hendricks’ breasts blasting off, BANG! In all facts my colleagues are women between 40 and 50, bringing me down, BANG!

“Seems like I have been a bit too emotional. This here is rapeseed, a specialty sent from my parents back in my hometown. It’s boiled, seasoned and froze packaged. I thought I probably disturbed you. It’s lightly flavored with dashi soy sauce but if it’s a little bland, don’t hesitate to add some more salt.”

“Oh, how nice. As a matter of fact, I haven’t been eating much vegetable lately. Well thank you.”

The emergence of that clamorous, piercing, slightly plot

oriented burst of an outcry certified my conviction that somebody turned mad, which made me terrified. Yet, the delicious taste of that rapeseed prevented me from going psychotic. He was probably having a bad day and was stressed out. This can happen to anybody. The boiled sprout he gave me, I ate half of it and the rest I used as the topping for instant noodles. I put them all in storage in case of rise in wheat values. Needless to say it was delightful. As my stomach was full, my feelings became more relaxed. As I never had any acquaintance with my neighbor before, the conversation was more like a meet-up out of mere politeness. Still that little piece of unexpected interaction was indeed, genuinely pleasing. All you need is a friend. I even started thinking it would be nice to bring a bottle of sake and visit his home, perhaps spend the night with him, drinking and chatting the night away. How about becoming real friends, cuddling our arms around each other's shoulders? We might even tear down this crummy wall and start our life anew, making this into one of those so-called room share apartments.

However, if I cool down my mind and try being sober for a second, I start to feel the likeness of that eruptive mind and the sentiment that I was going through. They are both temporary feelings, anticipations withering away. You can never

trust a person screaming out in such impulses, assaulting like that without any brains in his body. I am not sure if I can tell you, I would never be so enraged, maybe picking up a knife, butchering someone to death.

Then it occurs to me, though the wall may be as thin as skin, it just might be best to go straight to bed. No getting along with each other. Besides, who could ask for anything more?



## Furukuri KINOSHITA

Furukuri Kinoshita was born in Saitama in 1981. In 2006 he made a debut with *Mugen no Shimobe* which received The Gunzo's New Writers Prize, an award sponsored by Kodansha, the largest publisher in Japan. His appeal is his post-post-modern literary style. With *lionna vs. lionna* published in 2011 he was written of as, "Furukuri Kinoshita's talent lies where he blends an almost bizarre preciseness that he uses to great effect. His work represents an eccentricity that is awe-inspiring." (illustrated by Asuka ASAHINA)



## Satoshi Katagiri

Satoshi Katagiri was born in Japan 1979, but shortly after moved to New York, spending most of his childhood years there. He believes himself to be a natural bilingual, crossing over different cultural languages. He is presently involved in the performance art crew "Ukikusa Ryogakudan (浮草旅楽団)" as the assistant producer and poetry narrator. He currently lives in Tokyo, Japan.

*Waseda Bungaku's* charity project:

*Japan Earthquake Charity Literature*

The earthquake and tsunami that struck Japan on March 11, 2011 claimed the lives of more than 15,000 people, displaced many more times that number from their homes, schools and workplaces, and triggered a nuclear accident whose effects are sure to last for decades. These unprecedented events have forced people in Japan to think and act in new ways. We recognize our responsibility to mourn the dead and do what we can to help the people whose lives have been turned upside down. We realize that we are victims ourselves – both of the short to mid-term damage from the earthquake and the long-term damage from the nuclear accident. We cannot escape the fact that we are somehow

responsible for the effects that the contamination from the nuclear accident will have on current and future generations both at home and abroad.

In towns where street lights and neon signs have been dimmed and where air-conditioning and the number of trains running have been reduced, everyone – regardless of whether they were directly affected or not – has been thinking about what they can do as well as what it means to use nuclear energy. Writers are no exception. Jean-Paul Sartre once famously asked what literature can do for starving children. Each one of us began to ask ourselves similar questions: What can we write or not write? What can and should we be doing other than writing? What is it that we really have to offer? The damage wrought by the disaster and the reconstruction process that followed on the one hand, and the accident at the nuclear power plant on the other, each raised issues that had to be thought about quite separately.

In responding to the first, we searched for words to mourn the dead and encourage survivors who were trying to get back on their feet. Some tried to write pieces that would bring solace to these survivors, while others composed re-

quiems, just as Shoyo Tsubouchi, one of the founders of Modern Japanese literature, did in 1923 following the Great Kanto Earthquake. It is often said that “authors always arrive last”. Some made a conscious decision not to write, choosing instead to write about these events as history one day. There were those who questioned the value of writing fiction, while others did not hesitate to write when asked to do so. Some considered it their duty as a writer not to be moved by it all and chose to go on as always with daily life.

It was (and continues to be) terribly difficult to find the words to offer those who have been directly affected by the disaster. Faced with the continuing effects of the nuclear accident, some shed tears thinking of the people in Fukushima they had grown up with; others joined demonstrations calling for the government and the electricity company to be held responsible for their mismanagement; still others began to rethink the way they had lived, dependent on electricity supplied by nuclear power; and some even called for the need to reevaluate the modern era that had “progressed” in that direction.

Such reactions naturally extended beyond the borders

of Japan. We all imagined, lamented, and felt anger at the thought of the many devastating disasters that have shaken our world, the accidents that all kinds of technologies have caused, and similar events that are sure to happen again in the future, as if they were happening to our neighbors, our friends, and to ourselves. We think of Hemingway rushing to Madrid with rifle in hand to report on the Spanish Civil War as we head to Fukushima armed not with rifles, but buckets and shovels.

But for those of us who make a living by writing, it is clear that the biggest contribution we can make is through doing what we do. (Standing in front of a mound of rubble and debris with shovels, we are far less useful than local high school students.) Although they have used different methods and approaches, all the authors who participated in this project chose to try to do something for the areas and people affected through their writing. They all struggled in different ways as they wrote these short pieces that have been made available in English through the efforts of a number of translators.

This program aims to give serious thought to the disaster

and accident, then bring these words that were born, directly or indirectly, through this thought process, to people across the world. We hope that after reading these texts you will choose to make a donation to the Red Cross in Japan or in your country or to another charity.

We hope that these pieces, written for ourselves as much as for anyone else, will reach people around the world, and eventually, in some small way, also serve to help the people in northern Japan who are now working hard to rebuild their lives.

Makoto ICHIKAWA (literary critic / director of The WASEDA  
bungaku)

September 11, 2011

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This story was written primarily for use in *Waseda Bungaku's* charity project for the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 2011 and for distribution via the *Waseda Bungaku* website in PDF form. An e-book publication of this story will also be made available in Japan. All proceeds from sales will be donated to the families of victims and survivors in areas affected by the disaster.

PDF files of all the stories in this collection will be available to download from the website until March 2012. Sending these PDFs to third parties via e-mail, and posting the URLs to third-party sites, is permitted (though *Waseda Bungaku* will take no responsibility for the content of such third-party sites). However, reproduction, in whole or in part, of the data on these PDFs in any printed media by any unauthorized third parties is strictly prohibited. Data alteration is likewise strictly prohibited. We hope that after reading these texts you will choose to make a donation to the Red Cross in Japan (details below) or in your country or to another charity supporting disaster relief. In case of data transfer, we suggest you send

us notification beforehand.

### **Donation Bank Account 1**

Name of Bank: Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation

Name of Branch: Ginza

Account No.: 8047670 (Ordinary Account)

SWIFT Code: SMBC JP JT

Branch Number: 026

Address of Bank: Ginza Joint Building 6-10-15 Ginza Chuo-ku  
Tokyo JAPAN

Payee Name: The Japanese Red Cross Society

Payee Address: 1-1-3 Shiba-Daimon Minato-ku, Tokyo JAPAN

### **Donation Bank Account 2**

Name of Bank: The Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ, Ltd.

Name of Branch: Tokyo Government and Public Institutions  
Business Office

Account No.:0028706(Ordinary Account)

SWIFT Code: BOTKJPJT

Branch Number: 300

Address of Bank: 3-6-3 Kajicho Kanda Chiyoda-ku Tokyo JA-  
PAN



Payee Name: The Japanese Red Cross Society

Payee Address: 1-1-3 Shiba-Daimon Minato-ku, Tokyo JAPAN

### **Donation Bank Account 3**

Name of Bank: Mizuho Bank, LTD

Name of Branch: Shinbashi Chuo Branch

Account No.: 2188729 (Ordinary Account)

SWIFT Code: MHBK JP JT

Branch Number: 051

Address of Bank: 4-6-15 Shinbashi Minato-ku Tokyo JAPAN

Payee Name: The Japanese Red Cross Society

Payee Address: 1-1-3 Shiba-Daimon Minato-ku, Tokyo JAPAN

**(All bank accounts above are open until March 31, 2012.)**

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(\*English translations will be made available):

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