

## **"Japan: A New Age" by Tasogarenin (黄昏人)**

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### **Chapter 2: Startup**

When Makimura returned to the research lab, he picked up the phone and dialed Dr. Yamato's extension.

"Hello, this is Yamato."

"Dr. Yamato, this is Makimura. There is an important matter I'd like to talk to you about. When are you available?"

"Let's see...I'm free this afternoon. Can you stop by soon?"

"Yes, I am available, but before that I think it would be better if you could read a related research paper, so I'll go ahead and email that to you now. After you finish reading it, can you please let me know when would be convenient to meet?"

"Sure. I'll be waiting for your email."

After sending the email to Professor Yamato, Makimura paused to think for a moment.

Interacting with Junpei—whose parents didn't seem to be involved with him at all—would be quite straightforward, but at the same time there were several factors that made this situation hard to manage by himself.

Up until now, Junpei had somehow hidden his abilities from those around him, with the exception of his grandmother who recently passed away. However, now that he had turned 10, the boy was making an attempt to expose himself to the world.

Having been able to refine a paper he had written by himself to such a level so quickly, calling the boy a "genius" was an understatement. It was quite possible that he was the first person in history to possess talents exceeding Einstein.

There was no telling what he was capable of.

Perhaps this boy would also make groundbreaking achievements in areas outside his specialization of physics. With the proper funding, he might even succeed in the realization of the nuclear fusion reaction referenced in his paper in a relatively short time, given that he was focused exclusively on it. The exhaustion of natural resources can probably be considered modern society's biggest dilemma, and if an inexpensive supply of sufficient energy could be obtained, shortage of natural resources would become a solvable problem.

It was a great opportunity to be able to participate in the introduction of such revolutionary technology to the world, however it would require significant connections and financial support to make this happen quickly, two things Makimura severely lacked.

About an hour after his call with the professor, the phone rang.

"This is Yamato. Did *you* write this paper?" The professor was making an effort to speak calmly, but Makimura could detect an undertone of excitement in his voice.

"No, I'm sure you remember about the paper I showed you the other day that I posted online, but what I just sent you is a response to that paper I got over email. Do you have some time to discuss this now in person?"

"You can come over now. I'll be waiting."

He hurriedly grabbed the file folder, which contained paperwork including the boy's research paper, stuck his head into the graduate research lab, and spoke to Saito and the other students inside, "I'm going over to Dr. Yamato's office for a little while." As he walked through the hallway to the professor's office, Makimura forced himself to calm down and avoid breaking into a jog.

Upon hearing "Come in" in response to his knock he opened the door, said "Excuse me" as he entered the room, and sat in the chair situated directly in front of Dr. Yamato. On the professor's desk was the research paper in question, marked up with comments.

"I read it. A paper this advanced is a first, at least coming from a student. How did this come to be?"

"It was written by someone named Yoshikawa who had been sending questions to my lab's website once in awhile. He sent it to me over email, saying it was an attempt to improve on my most recent paper."

"If I remember correctly, you had posted that paper to your site two weeks ago, right? I'm surprised he was able to formulate and write up such advanced ideas in only two weeks! By the way, what do you know about Yoshikawa? Is he young? Have you met him in person?"

"Yes...He is a 4th grader, age 10, who goes to the nearby Namishima elementary. He looks just like a normal elementary school boy. His height is also typical at around four and a half feet, though his head seems a little big."

"What? An elementary school student? Are you sure he wrote it himself?"

"I think so. The boy called himself a genius. Up until now, he had been told by his grandmother to hide his abilities, but she passed away recently. Apparently he felt that now that he was 10 years old, it was all right to expose himself to the world. From what I hear, he has relied on the internet for his studies and seems to have reached a limit there and has also become completely bored with school."

"Hmm...This seems to be the start of a story that will make history, but while I'd like to say it's happy ever after, there are still some challenges to overcome. For example, what about his parents?"

"Both his parents are very busy, and don't seem to be too close to him."

"If it doesn't look like they will interfere much that's even better.

As you know, there is no telling what impact this paper will have. Of course, any researcher directly involved with this will surely get a Nobel prize. Given that you set the groundwork and your pupil Yoshikawa extended upon what you did, both of you deserve the prize."

"Of course, when we present our findings publicly I was also planning on including you as co-author..."

"No, I have not contributed at all to this research, and there are those that are aware of that. My pride would never let me do that. What I'd really like to get involved in is not the theoretical side, but the practical application of those ideas. It's a bit out of my field of expertise, but it will require someone with good connections. Also, with something this important, it shouldn't be done half-assed and will require absolutely secrecy for a period of time. I'd like to try coordinating this effort myself."

Dr. Yamato flashed Makimura a grin.

"Yes, at present I feel that this paper is written such that it exposes too much, and we cannot publish it in its current form. Furthermore, I think that in order to accelerate practical applications some type of special institution will be necessary. My social connections are terribly insufficient for that."

"I feel strongly that this will be impossible to achieve with a private company and getting the government involved will be necessary. Even with respect to the boy himself, arrangements with MEXT (\*) will probably be needed for his school situation, and if his talents are discovered, his immediately family as well as the boy himself will have to be placed under extremely tight security. I know someone in METI (\*) and will try to speak with him. Fortunately, I get the sense that the current cabinet's administration will actively assist in cases like this where national interests are involved. I'll give him a call now."

\* MEXT = Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

\* METI = Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry

The professor took out his smartphone, found the contact in his directory, and dialed the number.

"Hello Tanaka, this is Yamato of Konan College. It's been quite a while since we last spoke...Yes...Yes...I have a promising matter which I would like to discuss in person. When are you available to meet? Yes...I would have to take a plane, and since it's already Friday, the earliest I could meet is next week...Tuesday afternoon?"

The professor threw Makimura a questioning glance, and Makimura nodded in agreement.

"All right, so to confirm we will be meeting on Tuesday at 2 pm. I'll send you an email with related information by Monday morning."

Yamato hung up the phone and then explained,

"He is the General Director for METI, and rumor is he'll become the next Deputy Prime Minister. This man has deep connections within the government."

"Wow, I'm really surprised you got an appointment with him so easily."

"Yeah, it's because he is the younger brother of a close classmate of mine. He is a very outspoken man, unlike most bureaucrats. For the time being, please edit out any parts from the paper that would be premature to release to the public and send the result to me. Tomorrow is Saturday, but I'd like to visit the home of our key person Yoshikawa. Would you mind trying to make arrangements for my visit?"

Junpei Yoshikawa lived in a single family house within a ten-year-old development on the base of a mountain in the outskirts of N city, around three kilometers from Konan College. The two-story house shared its design with neighboring houses and had a small garden and driveway facing the street to the South. The driveway was wide enough to fit two cars, but now only a single white car was parked there. Professor Yamato parked his Sedan in the road and pressed the intercom button on the front gate.

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A voice on the intercom said, "Who is this?"

Yamato answered, "Professor Yamato and Associate Professor Makimura of Konan College, we are here to see Junpei."

"Please come in."

The front door opened and a woman who seemed to be her 30s appeared. Junpei was waiting for them inside on the wooden step in the entryway of the house. Dr. Yamato entered the front door first, bowed his head to the woman, and said, "I'm Yamato from the Physics Department of Konan College, and this is Associate Professor Makimura. We're terribly sorry to bother you on the weekend like this."

The woman, looking uncomfortable about their visit, said, "Oh, it's no problem. Thank you for coming all the way to visit us. Please come inside," and led them into the home.

When they entered, Junpei said softly, "Welcome, Mr. Makimura."

Yamato and Makimura sat down on a sofa in the small living room, and the woman went to go prepare tea as Junpei sat quietly on a two-seater sofa.

"You must be Junpei Yoshikawa," said Yamato, "I'm Yamato. I work with Mr. Makimura."

"Mr. Yamato, I guess you're Makimura's teacher," Junpei said.

"Yeah, that's right. I was teaching at the college when Makimura was a student there."

Junpei's mother placed drinks and some snacks on the table, "Here is some tea."

"Thank you very much," Yamato said.

"I'm Junpei's mother Yoko. Nice to meet you. I would have liked my husband to be here to meet you, but unfortunately he had to go to the office to work today. Please feel free to have some tea."

Professor Yamato picked up a cup of tea and said, "Your husband seems very busy with his job."

"Yes, he works until late at night, has frequent business trips, and isn't able to take vacations very often. I work myself and try to have at least Sunday off, but on other days I generally can't come home too early.

That's why his grandmother was taking care of him, although she passed away two months ago. What is the reason for your visit, if I may ask?"

Professor Yamato took a sip of tea and used his eyes to indicate Makimura should speak next.

"My specialty is general physics, however the other day I posted a new research paper regarding atomic physics on the Internet. Your son Junpei read that and sent me a new paper he wrote that developed my ideas further.

I was surprised to see its content was extremely advanced and the quality of the paper itself was very high. It is quite possibly worthy of a Nobel prize."

"What?? Are you serious? Just understanding a paper written by a college teacher would be..."

The professor added,

"If we were just speaking academically, we could say he had achieved a groundbreaking result, end of story. However, his paper has a good chance of creating an impact big enough to change how our society works at a fundamental level."

Yoko froze in shock as she shared at Dr. Yamato, unable to speak.

"Put simply, this paper brings to light how we can create a mechanism that produces infinite energy, for an extremely low cost."

Yamato paused for a moment.

"Your son Junpei is a special type of genius that the world has never seen before. But at the same time, he is a young boy who is attending elementary school. I think you've already realized this to a certain extent, but I feel his school classes are boring him to no end.

Furthermore, if his true abilities are discovered, he will no longer be able to walk around outside like everyone else. That would be extremely dangerous.

Other countries and companies would likely see him as a goose that will lay a golden egg.

We want to make proper use of Junpei's abilities. However, in order to do that, major changes to his lifestyle will be required, and these cannot be done without his mother's and father's consent."

After another pause, he asked the boy, "Junpei, you possess extraordinary abilities. What do you want to do with them?"

Junpei answered immediately. "I want to make good use of them. For myself, and for society."

"Do you want to be popular, like a movie star?"

"No way. I would hate to be prevented from walking around freely. And being afraid of being kidnapped is even worse."

Yamato spoke. "Ma'am, we have scheduled a meeting with someone important in METI next week in Tokyo to discuss this matter. During that meeting, I'd like to talk about the best way to leverage Junpei's abilities.

It is likely that METI will propose a plan to utilize his abilities as much as possible for the sake of the country.

With regards to that, while it may not match his abilities appropriately, I believe they he will be offered enormous compensation for his work, at least compared to an average person.

My intention is for Junpei to be a member of Konan College in some form, and to assist us covertly. This should work nicely because there is an elementary school associated with our college's educational department.

At any rate, as long as we can keep his abilities hidden I'd like to allow him to act freely to the furthest extent possible. I'm curious to hear your thoughts on this.

When we return from Tokyo, I'd like to meet with you again, this time with your husband present."

"All right. I'll take some time to think this over carefully and speak with my husband," said Yoko.

On the way home, Yamato and Makimura stopped by a nearby cafe and discussed what to do next.

"Makimura, for the time being it looks like we will have to keep the matter of Yoshikawa secret, so before we can present the paper at an upcoming conference it will require some heavy modifications."

"Agreed. Just demonstrating that so-called 'cold fusion' is possible will be a significant result. But professor, but I'd really like to see him get accepted into our college. When I was reading his paper, I felt he was also very skilled at combining other people's ideas and research, and taking them in new directions. I have a feeling that by interacting with our various research labs, we'll continue to see new developments from him."

"Yeah, I was just thinking the same thing. If we can just get him to join our college, I bet we are looking at nothing less than a complete renaissance for Konan."

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