



A Film by Isao Takahata

かぐや姫の物語

The Tale of The Princess Kaguya

Cast and Staff Credits

Studio Ghibli, Nippon Television Network, Dentsu, Hakuhodo DYMP, Walt Disney Japan, Mitsubishi, Toho and KDDI present “*The Tale of The Princess Kaguya*”

Voices

Aki Asakura

Kengo Kora

Takeo Chii

Nobuko Miyamoto

Atsuko Takahata

Tomoko Tabata

Shinosuke Tatekawa

Takaya Kamikawa

Hikaru Ijuin

Ryudo Uzaki

Shichinosuke Nakamura

Isao Hashizume

Yukiji Asaoka (Special Appearance)

Tatsuya Nakadai

Chief Executive Producer

Seiichiro Ujiie

Deputy Chief Executive Producer

Yoshio Okubo

Planning

Toshio Suzuki

Based on

Japanese Folktale “The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter”

Original Concept and Screenplay

Isao Takahata

Screenplay

Riko Sakaguchi

Music

Joe Hisaishi

Theme Song

“Inochi no Kioku”

Lyrics, Music and Performed by Kazumi Nikaido

Songs

“Warabe Uta”

“Tennyo no Uta”

Lyrics by Isao Takahata and Riko Sakaguchi

Music by Isao Takahata

Character Design	Osamu Tanabe
and Directing Animator	
Art Director	Kazuo Oga
Supervising Animator	Kenichi Konishi
Paint Outline	
and Texture Animation	Masaya Saito
Animation Check	Maiko Nogami
Color Setting	Yukiko Kakita
Director of Digital Imaging	Keisuke Nakamura
Promotional Sponsor	KDDI, Eyeful Home
Special Media Support	Lawson, The Yomiuri Shimbun
Advertising Producers	Akito Takahashi, Tomoko Hosokawa
Associate Producers	Seiji Okuda, Naoya Fujimaki, Ryoichi Fukuyama
Executive Producer	Koji Hoshino
Production	Studio Ghibli
Producer	Yoshiaki Nishimura
Directed by	Isao Takahata

Distribution (Japan): Toho

Color / 1.85:1/ 5.1ch

Running time: 137 min.

A Studio Ghibli Film

© 2013 Hatake Jimusho - GNDHDDTK

About the Film

A woman came to live in this world.
Through each moment of her short life
she sought its radiance
in laughter, tears, joy, and anger.

Why did she choose to come to earth?
Why did she long for this world?
Why did she have to return to the moon?
What was her sin,
and how was she punished?

This is the untold story of The Princess Kaguya,
the heroine of the ancient Japanese folktale
'The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter'.

The crime and punishment of a princess.

A 5 billion-yen epic of animated entertainment, eight years in the making.
The most beautiful Ghibli heroine ever.

After Half a Century, by Director Isao Takahata

Once upon a time, nearly 55 years ago now, at a company called Toei Animation, a project to make an animated feature of the classic *The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter* took shape under Tomu Uchida, one of the greatest directors of the day. In the end the film was never made, but part of the director's original idea was that this would be a new type of challenge in which all employees of the company would be invited to submit scenarios. A number of those submitted were later collected in a mimeographed booklet.

I did not submit a scenario. New employees who wanted to work in planning and direction were routinely asked to offer outlines, but by this time my idea was already dead in the water. I had not written a dramatization of the story; instead I had written a scene that was to have served as a prologue to this curious tale, in which the princess and her father talk prior to her departure from the Moon.

Towards the end of the original *The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter*, when Princess Kaguya announces to the Bamboo Cutter, her adoptive father, that she must return to the moon, she tells him she came to this world because of 'an old promise'. The messenger of the Moon who comes for her tells the Bamboo Cutter that 'Princess Kaguya, because she committed a sin, was sent to this place to live for a time in the humble abode of one such as you. The time over which she must atone for her sin has ended, and we have thus come for her.'

What, indeed, was the crime Princess Kaguya committed on the Moon, and what manner of obligation is her 'old promise', in other words 'her promise in the world of the Moon'? And if she was sent as punishment to this world, why was it lifted? Why is she not happy about this? What kind of sin is possible in the pure unsullied world of the moon? Why was Princess Kaguya ever sent to the Earth?

The answer to these questions explains all the unfathomable changes in the heart of Princess Kaguya as they appear in the original story. And I had hit on that answer! At that time I was delighted, but over the half century between then and my taking it up again, the dust of many years had covered over the concept of this 'old promise'.

I can still clearly see my scene of Princess Kaguya with her father the Moon King. He tells us something very important about the Princess's sin and her punishment.

Kaguya, her thoughts elsewhere, doesn't listen to what her father is saying. Her eyes shine, and she gazes happily down on the Earth to which she will be exiled.

But I did not put that scene at the beginning of this film. As long as I could draw out 'the true story of The Princess Kaguya', one that does not feature in the original work, my film would not need the prologue. And as long as Princess Kaguya was portrayed as someone with whom an audience could empathize, she would remain in the heart. Seized with that great ambition, I took up '*The Tale of The Princess Kaguya*'.

I have no idea, to tell the truth, if a story like this has any of what could be called 'present-day-ness'. I can at least assert, however, that this animated film will be worth seeing. This is because of the talent and abilities of the staff who have rallied behind it, and the cinematic expression they have achieved. These all clearly indicate a modern-day point of arrival. This is what I most earnestly wish you will see.

About the Songs

Lyrics by Isao Takahata and Riko Sakaguchi

Music by Isao Takahata

“Warabe Uta” (Nursery Rhyme)

Round, round, go round, Waterwheel, go round

Go round, and call Mr. Sun

Go round, and call Mr. Sun

Birds, bugs, beasts, grass, trees, flowers

Bring spring and summer, fall and winter

Bring spring and summer, fall and winter

Round, round, go round, Waterwheel, go round

Go round, and call Mr. Sun

Go round, and call Mr. Sun

Birds, bugs, beasts, grass, trees, flowers

Flower, bear fruit, and die

Be born, grow up, and die

Still the wind blows, the rain falls

The waterwheel goes round

Lifetimes come and go in turn

Lifetimes come and go in turn

“Tennyo no Uta” (Song of the Heavenly Maiden)

Go round, come round, come round, O distant time

Come round, call back my heart

Come round, call back my heart

Birds, bugs, beasts, grass, trees, flowers

Teach me how to feel

If I hear that you pine for me, I will return to you

About the Theme Song

“Inochi no Kioku” (When I Remember This Life)

Lyrics, Music and Performed by Kazumi Nikaido

The joy I felt when I touched you
Went deep, deep down
And seeped into
Every nook and cranny of this body

Even if I’m far away
And no longer understand anything
Even when the time comes
For this life to end

Everything of now
is everything of the past
We’ll meet again, I’m sure
in some nostalgic place

The warmth you gave me
Deep, deep down
Comes to me now, complete
From a time long past

Steadily in my heart
The flames of passion give light
And softly soothe my pain
Down to the depths of my grief

Everything now
Is hope for the future
I’ll remember, I’m sure
In some nostalgic place

Everything of now
is everything of the past
We’ll meet again, I’m sure
in some nostalgic place

Everything now
Is hope for the future
I’ll remember, I’m sure
When I remember this life

KAZUMI NIKAIDO

Began live performance, mainly vocal with guitar accompaniment, in 1997. She has a gentle yet powerful voice, a wide range of musical tastes, and a unique sense and approach that, combined with her cheerful, affable personality, have made her a well-loved performer on her tours both inside and outside of Japan. Her last album, *Nijimi*, released in 2011, was a compilation into which she poured all that life had brought her to that point, and was the spark for her contribution to the film “*The Tale of The Princess Kaguya*”. In recent years she has widened her areas of activity, contributing songs to NHK’s long-running daily *Okasan to issho* children’s program and to albums by performers such as Kyoko Koizumi, and even contributing a school song to an institution near to where she lives. She resides in Hiroshima Prefecture, Japan, and is a Buddhist nun of Pure Land Buddhism.

Producer's Notes

Eight Years with Director Isao Takahata

**Yoshiaki Nishimura
Producer, Studio Ghibli**

'I'm going to make an Isao Takahata film.'

Eight years ago I started going regularly to the director's home, and we talked about all kinds of things. Music, art, history, language, even the latest shows on TV; Mr. Takahata knew all about them, and the days I spent with him were full of intellectual excitement.

Making his movie, however, was one problem after another. No matter how many times I told him I wanted to make a film, he would just shake his head.

'I said there should be a *Princess Kaguya* movie. I didn't say I wanted to make it,' he kept saying, all the 12 hours a day and six days a week I was with him. It was 18 months before he agreed to make the film.

And it was still rough going even then. Planning for the project did not go smoothly, and the script took another 18 months to complete. That's a pace of two minutes a month. It was five years from the beginning of planning that we finally got to 30 minutes of storyboard.

There were two choices: Isao Takahata, or the movie.

If the choice had been 'Takahata', the movie would never have been finished. I had a number of serious talks with Toshio Suzuki. At the rate we were going, it would be some time into the 2020s before the film was finished. By that time the staff would be worn out, and the production would collapse. The decision to release *Princess Kaguya* together with *The Wind Rises* was a gamble on the part of myself and Mr. Suzuki to get Mr. Takahata stirred up.

'Just like that, right out of the blue?' he fumed. I ignored him, brought in more artists, and sped up the production. He, however, had a tremendous grim determination when it came to his work, a tenacity which is legendary. We embarked on a process of 'two steps forward, one step back' trial-and-error. But no matter how absurd the schedule became, Osamu Tanabe and Kazuo Oga were there to put their genius to work and ensure that we did not swerve from the project's original intent. Finally we reached what Mr. Takahata calls that 'point of arrival', 'the realization of a kind of dream.' Now he had confidence in the movie.

Seven years had gone by. A warehouse converted to a new studio had become Mr. Takahata's 'ideal working environment'. We were not going to open on the same day as *The Wind Rises*, but we were going to be able to make the film that Mr. Takahata had imagined. I was determined we were going to do it. So was Mr. Suzuki. While this was in no sense an animation suited to the techniques of mass production, we were going to use any means necessary to get it done.

As I write this, we are in the middle of adding the sound effects. It has been one thing after another for the entire production, but in a week now the movie will be done. 'We're finished!' I said to Mr. Takahata, whose response was, 'It's sad, isn't it.'

It's been eight years from planning to completion. As the curtain comes down on eight years of Mr. Takahata's 'dreams and ideals', it rises on what they have brought about.

Seiichiro Ujiie: The Keystone, by Toshio Suzuki

Toshio Suzuki
Planning, Studio Ghibli

Without Seiichiro Ujiie, the former Representative Director and Executive Chairman of Nippon Television Network, this movie would never have been made. It all started with a few words from him.

'I like Mr. Takahata's movies,' he said. 'I especially love *My Neighbors the Yamadas*. I want to see a movie by Mr. Takahata. I don't care if it loses money. I'll pay for it. I'll die happy knowing I did.'

Thus we decided to make *Princess Kaguya* and went into production, but support for indulging Mr. Ujiie was not wholehearted. Far from it; there were many concerns with the project and its vast budget. From a standpoint of rational economics, it was an enterprise not undeserving of the word 'reckless'.

There was at the time, however, no one who could face Mr. Ujiie with a dissenting opinion. There was not even anyone who would criticize him behind his back. He was so formidable a character that no one knew how to express their opinions to him. This was in 2005.

As time went on, the production encountered one difficulty after another and fell more and more behind schedule. While this was going on, in 2011, Mr. Ujiie died. Shortly before that he had read the script and seen the partial storyboards that had been finished to that point.

'Princess Kaguya is a strong-willed girl,' he said. 'But I like strong-willed women.'

His words made a powerful impression on me. When I told Mr. Takahata, he smiled in agreement.

Nobody said anything about it when Mr. Ujiie died, but we were all worried about what was to become of the project. Blowing all those concerns away was Yoshio Okubo, now the President of the Nippon Television Network.

Mr. Ujiie's wishes would be respected, said Mr. Okubo. As everyone is aware, the release date was moved back. When I went to report this to Mr. Okubo, he added to the budget, even though by now it was the equivalent of a large-scale live-action motion picture. It was easy to imagine what effort this must have cost him, but Mr. Okubo showed not a trace of it.

Visiting the *Princess Kaguya* production facility some time later, he did hint directly at how he felt. After he had seen all the artwork posted on the walls, he said, 'This would run late, wouldn't it.'

I believe that every epic work of art needs a patron. 'Make it for me': those words loom very large. Without someone to say them, without a patron, it is impossible to dive right in and bring a project to fruition. Mr. Ujiie was the keystone of this project, and he lives on in it. As such he set Mr. Takahata, and me, into motion, and erased all the worries that plagued everyone connected with the project.

Thus his name appears first among the opening credits to this film.

About the Characters

Princess Kaguya – Born from a bamboo plant, and raised by a bamboo cutter and his wife. Nicknamed ‘Li’l Bamboo’ by the children of the mountain hamlet, she grows in 12 months to the equivalent of a 13-year-old. The bamboo cutter decides that she should be a ‘true princess’, and moves his family to the capital, where she acquires the social graces, such as playing the *koto*, that together with her great beauty bring the greatest nobles of the capital in quest of her hand.

Sutemaru – Princess Kaguya’s childhood friend, the ‘boss’ of the children in their mountain hamlet. The son of a family of ‘lathe-turners’.

The Bamboo Cutter (Sanuki no Miyatsuko) – Princess Kaguya’s adoptive father. He finds her while he is out cutting bamboo, and decides to raise her. Feeling that he should make a true princess of her, he contrives various ways to accomplish this.

The Bamboo Cutter’s Wife – Princess Kaguya’s adoptive mother.

Lady Sagami – A noblewoman of the capital who serves as Governess to Princess Kaguya.

Inbe no Akita – A yin-yang master who gives Princess Kaguya her adult name.

Me no Warawa – Princess Kaguya’s ‘girl’; servant and companion.

Prince Kuramochi

Prince Ishitsukuri

Lord Minister of the Right Abe

Great Counsellor Otomo

Middle Counsellor Isonokami

Noble suitors for the hand of Princess Kaguya.

His Majesty Royal suitor for the hand of Princess Kaguya.

About the Director

ISAO TAKAHATA

Born in 1935 in Mie Prefecture, Japan. After graduating from The University of Tokyo with a degree in French literature, he joined Toei Animation Company. He debuted as a director with the animated TV series KEN, THE WILD BOY (1963 – 1965), and directed his first animated feature film, THE LITTLE NORSE PRINCE VALIANT (1968). He left Toei in 1971 and worked at various studios such as A Production, Zuiyo Eizo and Nippon Animation, and directed many popular TV series including LUPIN THE THIRD (first series, 1971 – 1972), HEIDI A GIRL OF THE ALPS (1974), MARCO, FROM THE APENNINES TO THE ANDES (1976), and ANNE OF GREEN GABLES (1979), and feature films such as THE ADVENTURE OF PANDA AND FRIENDS (1972), DOWNTOWN STORY (1981) and GAUCHE THE CELLIST (1981).

Takahata co-founded Studio Ghibli in 1985 with Hayao Miyazaki, and has directed five feature films since: GRAVE OF THE FIREFLIES (1988), ONLY YESTERDAY (1991), POM POKO (1994), which received the Feature Film Prize at Annecy International Animation Film Festival in 1995, MY NEIGHBORS THE YAMADAS (1999), which was chosen by The Museum of Modern Art in New York for its film collection, the first Japanese animated feature film to be so honored, and his new film, THE TALE OF THE PRINCESS KAGUYA, released in November 2013 in Japan. He served as producer for Hayao Miyazaki's films NAUSICÄÄ OF THE VALLEY OF THE WIND (1984) and CASTLE IN THE SKY (1986). He also directed the live action documentary THE STORY OF YANAGAWA WATERWAYS (1987).

He has been involved in a variety of other projects. To name but a few, he has participated in the creation of the Japanese versions of foreign animated films such as Paul Grimault's LE ROI ET L'OISEAU and Michel Ocelot's KIRIKOU ET LA SORCIÈRE and AZUR ET ASMAR. He has also published a number of books including "Jyu-ni Seiki no Animation (12th Century Animation – Film and Animation Techniques as Seen in Kokuhō Emaki Scrolls, 1999)", "Ichimai no E kara (From One Piece of Art, 2009)"; essays on Japanese and foreign fine art; and the Japanese edition of "Paroles" (2004) by Jacques Prévert. He has also served as a professor at Nihon University College of Art.

In 1998, Takahata received Japan's Medal of Honor with Purple Ribbon. He was awarded with the Honorable Leopard at Locarno International Film Festival in 2009.

Works of Isao Takahata

TV Series

HEIDI, A GIRL OF THE ALPS (Arupusu no Shojo Haiji), 1974

FROM THE APENNINES TO THE ANDES (Haha wo Tazunete Sanzenri), 1976

ANNE OF GREEN GABLES (Akage no An), 1979

Feature Films

THE LITTLE NORSE PRINCE VALIANT (Taiyo no Oji Horusu no Daiboken), 1968

PANDA! GO PANDA! (Panda Ko-Panda), 1972

JARINKO CHIE (Jarinko Chie), 1981

GAUCHE THE CELLIST (Serohiki no Goshu), 1981

GRAVE OF THE FIREFLIES (Hotaru no Haka), 1988

ONLY YESTERDAY (Omoide Poroporo), 1991

POM POKO (Heisei Tanuki Gassen Pompoko), 1994

MY NEIGHBORS THE YAMADAS (Ho-hokekyo Tonari no Yamada Kun), 1999

THE TALE OF THE PRINCESS KAGUYA (Kaguyahime no Monogatari), Fall 2013 in Japan

Short Film

WINTER DAYS (Fuyu no Hi), one episode, 2003

Live Action – Documentary Feature Film

THE STORY OF YANAGAWA WATERWAYS (Yanagawa Horiwari Monogatari), 1987

About the Composer

JOE HISAISHI

Joe Hisaishi was born in Nagano, Japan in 1950. He started to show his interest in minimal music when he was a student at Kunitachi College of Music, and started his career as a modern music composer.

Starting with NAUSICAA OF THE VALLEY OF THE WIND (1984), Hisaishi has produced music for nine Hayao Miyazaki films, including MY NEIGHBOR TOTORO (1988) and PONYO ON THE CLIFF BY THE SEA (2008). He also composed the music for HANA-BI (1998) directed by Takeshi Kitano, OKURIBITO (DEPARTURES) (2008) directed by Yojiro Takita, AKUNIN (VILLAIN) (2010) directed by Sang-il Lee and TOKYO KAZOKU (TOKYO FAMILY) (2013) directed by Yoji Yamada. He has collaborated on the music production of nearly 70 films at home and abroad.

In 2001, he made his debut as a film director with QUARTET, taking charge of the theme music and co-writing the script. The film was officially selected for the World Competition section of the Montreal Film Festival. Hisaishi also is well-reputed as a skilled performer, ranging from piano soloist to orchestra conductor. Since his debut, he has released nearly 30 solo albums, including "MKWAJU" (1981) and "Melodyphony" (2010). Hisaishi serves as a Professor at Kunitachi College of Music and in 2009 he received Japan's Medal of Honor with Purple Ribbon.

Production Notes

STUDIO GHIBLI'S 'REAL' PRINCESS KAGUYA

A baby is born from a bamboo plant, grows quickly into a beautiful young woman, turns away suitor after suitor, and on the night of a full moon returns there with the celestial beings who have come for her. *The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter* is familiar to everyone in Japan and to many around the world as well. We never learn, however, why the Princess Kaguya leaves her heart here on Earth, and why she grieves so at having to return to the Moon. What and who did she love here? What was her crime? What was her punishment? *The Tale of The Princess Kaguya*, the latest animated offering from director Isao Takahata, is a work long in gestation that looks into the heart of its central character, and proposes a complex and believable reality for the heroine of this ancient fairy tale.

'PRINCESS KAGUYA' AND 'HEIDI'

The Tale of the Princess Kaguya has much in common with *Heidi, A Girl of the Alps*, the animated TV series Isao Takahata directed, with scene design by Hayao Miyazaki, beginning in 1974.

Both heroines grow up in a beautiful mountain environment, from which the adults in their lives remove them in favor of life in the city. There they both long for their lost mountain home.

While the original Heidi story did not delve deeply into the psychology or the day-to-day life of its title character, Takahata carefully brought out the attraction of his heroine and the beauty of the mountain pastures known as 'alm', and the animation became very popular both in Japan and abroad. Likewise there is very little in *The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter* about Princess Kaguya herself, making it a difficult task to imagine what she might think and feel. Painstaking attention to the psychology of Princess Kaguya and her life in the mountains in this work give her a presence that will resonate with audiences everywhere.

'Someday we should make a Japanese Heidi,' Takahata and Miyazaki agreed after *Heidi, A Girl of the Alps*. Now, 40 years later, their long-cherished ambition has come to the screen.

PRE-RECORDING AND THE LATE TAKEO CHII

The animation for most Japanese productions is created before the characters' voices are recorded, with voices being matched to the picture in a process known as 'after-recording'. Most animation in the rest of the world, however, is drawn to voices recorded before the visual sequences are done.

Isao Takahata, always in search of greater realism to counterpoint his impressionistic animation style, has pre-recorded voice for most of the titles he has released. Wishing for *Princess Kaguya* to utilize the talents of actors known primarily for the summer of 2011. The voice of the Bamboo Cutter is thus that of Takeo Chii, who died in June of 2012.

Upon first reading the script, Chii is said to have asked Takahata if this was to be a movie that 'denies the earth,' to which the director replied, 'No, you've got it backwards. This is a film that affirms the earth.' Thus reassured, the nearly 70-year-old actor set to work on his first, and sadly last, role as a voice actor.

WHY AKI ASAKURA FOR THE VOICE OF PRINCESS KAGUYA?

"The Princess needs more "oomph".'

Auditions for the voice of Princess Kaguya took place in the spring of 2011, but at that time the production staff was having trouble coming together on the image they wanted for her, and had yet to find that one voice that was exactly right, the voice of a strong-willed character to whom passivity was unknown. A mood of resignation had begun to prevail when an audition by Aki Asakura caused Takahata and producer Yoshiaki Nishimura to agree that this voice had definite potential.

After her audition, Asakura walked sadly back to the nearest train station, convinced that she had failed, but ironically it was the quality of sadness latent in her voice that attracted Takahata. It would be two years after her selection from among several hundred candidates that the film would be completed, with the animation artists listening to her through long days of fleshing out the image of Princess Kaguya. Over that time it was not entirely accidental that the Princess came more and more to resemble Aki Asakura.

JOE HISASHI & KAZUMI NIKAIDO

Joe Hisaishi is a name that appears regularly on Studio Ghibli productions as the composer of soundtracks for films by director Hayao Miyazaki. Known around the world as Japan's top film composer, he first came to prominence with his score for Miyazaki's *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*, on which Isao Takahata served as producer. Since that time Hisaishi has always wanted to score a Takahata film.

He finally got his chance because production on *Princess Kaguya* ran late. The film was originally to have been released in the summer of 2013 in tandem with Miyazaki's

The Wind Rises, for which Hisaishi was doing the music, and he came on board for *Princess Kaguya* when it became obvious that the production was not going to be complete in time for simultaneous release. Takahata was delighted at this serendipity, and Hisaishi at long last was given the opportunity to exercise his talent together with the man who had discovered him 30 years before, and to whom he was bound by long ties of deep mutual respect.

Two songs that appear in the course of the film, *Nursery Rhyme* and *Song of the Heavenly Maiden*, feature lyrics by Takahata and fellow script-writer Riko Sakaguchi, and music by the director himself that he demo-recorded for Hisaishi with a ‘Hatsune Miku’ voice synthesizer.

The theme song is written and performed by Kazumi Nikaido, who unusually for a singer-songwriter is also a Buddhist nun at a temple in her native Hiroshima Prefecture. Takahata, impressed by her album *Nijimi*, immediately bought all of the CDs she had released, and subsequently asked her to undertake the *Princess Kaguya* theme. Two meetings between the two sufficed for Nikaido to come up with lyrics and a melody to Takahata’s liking, and *When I Remember This Life* was recorded in April of 2013, very shortly before the singer gave birth to a little princess of her own.

The film was in production when the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami struck Japan on March 11, 2011. While work continued, Takahata found himself more and more concerned about whether he could truly fulfill his function as director, but says now that *Inochi no Kioku* (*When I Remember This Life*) served to remove those doubts from his mind, bringing him to the realization that *The Tale of The Princess Kaguya*, which gives expression to the connection between humanity and the planet it inhabits, was indeed an appropriate artistic response to the disaster.

THE DREAM OF ALL ANIMATORS; A DIFFERENT ‘STUDIO GHIBLI’

In traditional hand-drawn animation, backgrounds are created separately from character cels, a process that is unavoidable with so-called ‘cel animation’. For *Princess Kaguya*, however, director Isao Takahata wanted to try something different, with the backgrounds and characters united to produce that dream of all animators, the impression of an entire picture in motion.

That proved impossible within the existing Studio Ghibli set-up, and so Takahata and producer Yoshiaki Nishimura moved out, setting up a new ‘Studio 7’ a few minutes away from the main buildings, leaving the artists free to transcend the bounds of conventional animation.

‘Make the movement remind you of reality,’ said the brilliant animator Osamu Tanabe to his team, and the result is a series of sketch-like compositions that go beyond

conventional animation in bringing the characters vividly to life. The effect of Princess Kaguya's 'birth' owes much to this technique.

It has been 16 years since *Princess Mononoke*, Ghibli artisan Kazuo Oga's last credit as Art Director. The warmth and color of his team's backgrounds in *Princess Mononoke* form a perfect fusion with the Tanabe characters. 'The insects and the plants are this movie,' says Takahata, and it is in these natural backgrounds that the talents of Japan's top animation Art Director are brought most fully to bear.

Without these two men, says director Takahata, *The Tale of The Princess Kaguya* could not have been made. An enormous amount of time and effort has gone into its simple, impressionistic style of animation, giving the images tremendous visual impact and an extraordinary feeling of reality. At the age of 78, Isao Takahata has created a new style of animated expression, one that will long be remembered in the history of the medium.

PLACING VALUE ON LIVING IN THIS WORLD

Released in the summer of 2013, Hayao Miyazaki's *The Wind Rises* became the eighth title to earn box-office receipts of more than 10 billion yen in the Japanese market. The late fall of 2013 now sees the release of *The Tale of The Princess Kaguya*, making 2013 the first time that Studio Ghibli has released two features in the same year since *Grave of the Fireflies* and *My Neighbor Totoro* appeared in 1988.

The Wind Rises, through its hero and his passion for flying, speaks to the importance of throwing yourself wholeheartedly into whatever it is you may wish to do. Through its heroine and her yearning for life in this world, on the other hand, *The Tale of The Princess Kaguya* concerns the importance of 'living with everything that's in you,' whatever grief and trouble this may entail.

But in fact, in their emphasis on 'placing value on life in this world,' both films may be talking about precisely the same thing.



かぐや姫の物語