



The First Three-Way Conversation Coinciding with the Thirtieth Anniversary of Studio Ghibli

Miya-san, why don't you make another movie?

TAKAHATA Isao (Film director), MIYAZAKI Hayao (Film director) and SUZUKI Toshio (Producer and Chairman of Studio Ghibli)

*The release of *The Wind Rises*, *The Tale of Princess Kaguya*, and then, Miyazaki Hayao's announcement of his retirement: 2013 was truly the year of Ghibli. Read about their works and this country in an in-depth conversation that lasted for three hours by two master directors and a famous producer.*

Suzuki: This is the first three-way conversation consisting of these members. And this might be the last. [Laughter] The year 2014 marks the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of Ghibli. Last year was a busy one, with the releases of *The Wind Rises* by Director Miyazaki Hayao, *The Tale of The Princess Kaguya* by Director Takahata Isao, and in addition, Miya-san [Editor's note: Miyazaki] announced his retirement. So the aim was to have the three people get together and talk.

[Facing toward the direction of the editing team] Do you have anything you would like to ask us?

[Editing team] First, we would like to ask Director Miyazaki about his impression of *The Tale of The Princess Kaguya* and Director Takahata about *The Wind Rises*.

Miyazaki: When I saw *Princess Kaguya*...well, do you remember the scene in which the tall bamboo trees were being cut? When I saw it, I got really nervous thinking



Miyazaki Hayao (left), Suzuki Toshio (center) and Takahata Isao

Photo by Nicolas Guérin



about whether bamboo shoots sprout from the ground or if they do not, whether they would have to be dug out from the ground.

Takahata: It was okay to present it that way because they were Japanese *madake* bamboo trees. If they were *moso* bamboo trees, it would dug out like Miya-san suggested. Back then, *moso* bamboo trees were not yet available in Japan. I did my research properly [laughter].

Miyazaki: I see.... You see, there is an unwritten rule that directors should not say anything about each other's work.

Takahata: I think that's the way it ought to be. There are differences among each and every creator, so I think it's okay to keep it that way.

Suzuki: However, the editing team is free to ask whatever they want.

Takahata: Well, that is true. For me, as for a lot of women, my understanding was that *The Wind Rises* is a movie based on a love story between Horikoshi Jiro and Nahoko and then watched it, and accepted it as a film about a love story. I'm really not sure if I should say this, but there was a scene toward the end of the film that showed a great number of Zero fighter planes that had been decimated, and I thought that there should have been a depiction of what had happened during the World War II prior to the scene. It would have been fine to be in the form of an objective description.

Miyazaki: I thought about that a lot myself. But creating a scene like that seemed like trying to create an alibi.... So that is why I decided not to go for it.

Takahata: A wreckage of Zero fighter planes means that many people died at the same time. Aside from people who are above a certain age, there are many in the younger generation who do not understand what that war was. So I would have liked you to describe it, regardless of the format



The Tale of The Princess Kaguya (*Kaguya-hime no Monogatari*), released on November 23, 2013. (Based on the folktale *Takekura Monogatari* [Tale of the Bamboo Cutter]; original concept, written, and directed by Takahata Isao; distributed by Toho.) Takahata's first new work in fourteen years based on Japan's oldest folktale. © 2013 Hatake Jimusho-GNDHDDTK.



you used. But I knew that this was a result of Miya-san thoroughly thinking it through. It's unimaginable you wouldn't think about it.

Miyazaki: Yes, and it may be that I have seen too many images of Zero fighter planes in documentaries, but there is a lot of evidence as well as records available. Without touching upon it otherwise, I thought that it would be impossible to have the audience understand all of it through an animated film alone. I thought that it would only serve as a harsh element. The initial concept did include that sort of scene, but since Zero fighter planes were used from the Sino-Japanese War all the way to the end of World War II, it would have taken up a lot of time.

Takahata: Still, I think that even if it was a short scene, it would have been good to take some time to recall the type of events that occurred at the time.

Miyazaki: I did envision that there would be comments like yours, Paku-san (Mr. Takahata's nickname), but even if I had depicted that, it would not have changed the image of Horikoshi Jiro, the designer of Zero fighter planes.

Takahata: I do understand that.

Suzuki: Both of your works being released in the same year is the first occasion since *My Neighbor Totoro* and *Grave of the Fireflies* in 1988, isn't it? Actually, they were simultaneously released at that time. In fact, these releases occurring at the same time was a total coincidence. More than anything, the fact is, *Princess Kaguya* took eight years to produce.

Takahata: Well, people say that often, but it's not as if I continuously worked on *The Tale of The Princess Kaguya* for eight years. During the Toei Doga era over fifty years ago, there was a time when I wrote a proposal for a plan to create an animated film version of *The Tale of the Bamboo*



The Wind Rises (*Kaze Tachinu*), released on July 20, 2013. (Written and directed by Miyazaki Hayao; distributed by Toho.) The story of a young plane designer, Jiro—based on the actual life of Zero fighter designer Horikoshi Jiro and a story by writer Hori Tatsuo—who meets and part ways with the beautiful but ill-fated girl Nahoko. © 2013 Nibariki-GNDHDDTK.



Cutter by Director Uchida Tomu. I somehow suddenly recalled it one morning eight years ago when I went to Suzuki-san's place and couldn't get it out of my mind. I thought, "*The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter* does not explain why Princess Kaguya came from the moon. Still, while the moon may be a world of purity, it neither has the earth's plants and flowers bursting with life in a natural habitat nor human emotions. This is why Princess Kaguya admires Earth. If I were to make a film from this perspective, it would be interesting because it would be a completely different take on *The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter*."

But at that time, I was not at all ready to direct it myself. It was a good project, so even if it weren't me, I thought it would have been interesting, and besides, I didn't like works from the Heian period.

It would take twenty years if we carried on like this

Suzuki: Takahata-san put it this way: "*The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter* is the oldest story in Japan, so someone should do a good job making a movie out of it." And then, I said, "Takahata-san, why don't you become that someone?" But he wouldn't say, "Yes, I'll do it." He would only respond by saying, "I see." [Laughter] So at that time, we decided to just continue with studying the project. When it came down to actually starting the project, we advanced the project by using Takahata-san's trusted method of working with a few but exceptional talents, a rare method for Ghibli to adopt. We thought that we would be able to start seeing the timing of the completion if we worked on it a little at a time, but Nishimura Yoshiaki, the producer who was in charge, reported that "it could end up taking twenty years if we carried on like this." [Laughter] So, then, we turned to our regular production method of hiring a lot of staff members, but it was a long journey from that point as well. First, the plan was to release it at the same time as *The Wind Rises*, but it got later and later and took until November. [Laughter]

Miyazaki: But the method of working with a few but exceptional talents does not communicate the truth. There are a lot of people who are talented in something I am not, but the kind of talent that I desire does not exist. So there is no choice but to work on it with the people who are currently around.

Takahata: This work would have not been possible without the participation of Art Director Oga Kazuo and Character Design and Directing Animator Tanabe Osamu. Still, the staff who supported these two genuinely worked very hard. I think that we were able to successfully achieve work that was directed toward creating animation that made use of the blank spaces as much as possible as well as the scenes drawn in watercolor by Mr. Oga and Mr. Tanabe's alluring line drawings.

This is a little difficult to say in front of two people who have supported Ghibli thus far, but for me, it is not satisfying to simply create a movie by using *The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter* as the subject matter, and it would be meaningless if I did not fulfill whatever it is that I am pursuing. But then if I end up thinking this way, the part about making progress somehow ends up being halfhearted. So the corporate side saying, "What are you doing?" would turn out to be justifiable. Still, we ended up in a place where we were unable to respond to them.



Miyazaki: You're always that way. [Laughter] When we worked on a weekly television series together, Paku-san would get a hold of a producer and talk like this: "Would it be better to create a television series out of this work or would it be reckless? And the reason for this is..." and would deliberate forever. The production has already started. I wanted to tell him to hurry up and hand over the picture content.

Takahata: Ever since that time Miya-san has always been thinking about the future. You would say something like, "It's no good to do something this time-consuming," right? I'm the type that says, "Even if I think about the future, regardless, it will ultimately end up the way it ought to be." That was the big difference.

Suzuki: How is it that you can think that far ahead, Miya-san?

Miyazaki: Animation is a group collaboration. If we take too much time, it becomes problematic for the people in charge of the next section, right?

For example, when we are about to start producing a full-length feature, we actually draw a timeline on paper. If we were to start preparing in 2014, we would start writing out what we would do until around 2015 or 2016 and begin writing out when we would start drawing pictures or when staff members are available. Doing this makes the prospect for the two years crystal clear. All that is needed to do, then, is to push forward on a daily basis. I would not want to think about anything past this point.

Suzuki: That is extremely disciplined. The entire schedule is set, from the moment you wake up until you get to the studio at Ghibli, that is, you scrub yourself, take a walk and have coffee. There is no way I would be able to do this.

Miyazaki: Everyone ends up this way as they age. In my case, because my abilities are increasingly waning, I would not be able to maintain the pace of my work without having a regular lifestyle. And truly, I must say Paku-san is lazy. I am diligent, right, Suzuki-san?

Suzuki: [No comment]

Miyazaki: You're not going to say yes. [Laughter]

Takahata: I don't think I'm as lazy as Miya-san claims.[Laughter] Miya-san is too diligent.

The impact of Disney's works

Suzuki: In any case, it's been over fifty years since you started creating animation, correct? Takahata-san joined Toei Doga in 1958. Miya-san joined four years later. And then in 1968, Director Takahata's debut film, *The Little Norse Prince Valiant*, was released. Miya-san participated in key animator.



Takahata: According to Kotabe Yoichi who worked on *Heidi a girl of the Alps*, “The history of animation consists of about 100 years. We have lived to see half of it.”

Miyazaki: Back then, both Paku-san and I were aggressive, weren't we? Suzuki-san is that way as well, so that may be the only common thread among the three of us. [Laughter]

Takahata: Even when young directors and animators of today want to create a new piece of work, it's difficult for them because the presence of Miyazaki's works looms over them. When we were young, there were a lot of things that people had not done yet. For example, Disney had a lot of amazing works, but they were completely different from what we intended to create, so they didn't bother me that much.

Miyazaki: No, I did actually pay attention to them. [Laughter] Before starting work on our projects, we would rent a Disney piece and hold a reference viewing. After viewing, I would drag myself back to my seat with my head down, look at my own drawing and think, “I don't like it. It's pathetic.” I used to think about ways to fill this gap....

Takahata: It's true that back in the day Disney's works had a remarkable degree of perfection. Also, it tried out various types of innovative experiments. For example, for *101 Dalmatians*, it switched to using a Xerox copier instead of tracing over pencil lines with a pen – a method that had been used to date – and they created a short trial piece first.

Miyazaki: There is this Disney series called the *Silly Symphonies*, which is a series of short films, and there is a piece called *The Old Mill* and I remember thinking how amazing it was when I saw it a long time ago. Though when I saw it again, it wasn't that amazing.

Takahata: Well, no, *The Old Mill* is amazing. It was filmed using a multiplane camera that creates depth, and so it had a unique impact. So they would experiment in a short film like that one and then use it in a full-length feature like *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*.

Suzuki: Miya-san used to do the same thing, right? You would experiment in all sorts of ways with animated film that was played at the Ghibli Museum.

Miyazaki: I do not have to think about making money with the films I play at the museum, so I'm laid back about them. [Laughter] For example, we tried to see what would happen if we continuously decreased the amount of sound effects. And then we realized that we do not need the sound of footsteps or the sound of grass parting as one paves a path while walking through it. The more sound we took out, the easier the viewing got. That was a discovery.

When I listen to drama that played on the radio from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s, I listen to it with great ease. I thought about ways to capture this great sensibility and found out that it was a matter of reducing the amount of sound effects. Right now, I may be too neurotic and may be including too much sound.



Suzuki: The short film called *Hoose Hunting* in which all the sound effects were done by the voices of Mr. Tamori and Ms. Yano Akiko was also amazing.

Takahata: That touches on Japan's traditional culture. For example, in *kyogen* [traditional comic theater], everything is expressed vocally in onomatopoeia, such as by using words to depict the sound of a sliding Japanese door opening, or the sound of a stone falling into a lake and hitting the bottom.

Miyazaki: There is a presumption that evolution points to one direction. But I think that it's not really that way. I think it branches into various directions. It is possible, in fact, to have methods that appear old or simple at first glance to evolve in different ways, and they may become a different form of expression. That said, I wouldn't be able to use all this in a full-length feature.

Takahata: In *The Wind Rises*, the sounds of the propellers of the Zero fighter planes, the steam from the locomotive and car engines were all represented vocally.

Miyazaki: Even if we wanted to record the sound of Zero fighter planes, the sound does not exist today. Using the sound of airplanes today would not produce the sound of the engine from a long time ago, so it wouldn't be anything worth recording. It would be difficult to recreate the sound, so our approach was, let's just give up and use voices. I thought it would be better that way because we would be able to create various types of sounds by skillfully using microphones and speakers.

Takahata: Listening to it was fascinating. They were not simply just sounds. This is where I was able to feel the essence of being human. The things that were especially effective were the sound of an engine exploding and the rumbling sound of the ground during the Great Kanto Earthquake. The word "to roar" gives an impression of something related to God's ire, and it was extremely effective to express that by using a human voice.

Suzuki: What I found interesting was what Mr. Hisaishi Joe, who was in charge of the music, pointed out. Sound effects do not get in the way of music, but using a human voice does conflict with music. In other words, sound effects using a human voice is also a type of music.

Miyazaki: That was a sharp comment. So in order for the voices to not collide with the music, we staggered them in terms of timing or adjusted the volume. We depicted the Great Kanto Earthquake in *The Wind Rises*, and thought, what does an earthquake sound like? At the time of the Great East Japan Earthquake, I attentively listened to the sound without moving in my atelier to figure out what type of sound I could hear, but all I heard was the sound of things falling from the closets and my impression was that it was extremely quiet.

Takahata: That story reminds me. When I was a boy and experienced air raids, there was a strange time, sort of like a void, in between air raids. Incendiary bombs came falling from the sky with great impact, but once they do, they do not set houses on fire thereafter, but the fire just burns here and



there. That result of not anything really happening has remained with me in the form of a genuine experience of an air raid.

Human senses are extremely interesting, in that things that one sees with the naked eye or hears do not necessarily match reality. Conversely, human beings are sensing more than what is actually occurring.

Miyazaki: That reminds me, when I watch a Japanese movie from the days of black-and-white films, there is nothing in the rooms. I see mysterious spaces in which only the spots where the characters are standing are lit in white light. There is something about that simplicity that attracts me. I don't watch too many movies, but fragments of that kind of image come to mind every once in a while.

Takahata: I think there is value in bringing the greatness of black-and-white pictures back to life. In the *Tale of The Princess Kaguya*, we used a method that was more like sketching that did not fully fill out spaces and shadows but left them to the viewer's imagination and memory. When viewing a regular piece of animation, everybody looks at the pictures as something real. But when people see a sketch, they try to figure out what it was that the person drawing the object saw. So we ventured to create it by drawing rough sketches, left negative spaces intact, and tried to awaken the imagination of the audience by making them figure out what exists on the flip side of the lines. This was the most difficult thing to do for this film.

Miyazaki: But we would not be able to create a piece of animation if we were to be too obsessed about manipulating lines. It's true that the greatness of a rough sketch that is full of life gets lost when the conversion is made into a picture on the screen, and we experience this a lot. Still, trying to make a mediocre drawing appear decent can also be called animation. If one does not like this fact, I think that the person should not be in the business of animation. A great number of animators get together and create, so if they get too obsessed with creating a great set of lines, progress is not made. In a way, the presence of the drawings wanes, so the responsibility of each and every person gets reduced. For this very reason, there is a side to this that allows for doing work in an easygoing manner.

Takahata: But I'm doubtful that Miya-san fully subscribes to that belief. [Laughter] I just remembered this. When we did *Anne of Green Gables* as a television series, Miya-san did a flashback with line drawings that were close to being monotone. That was brilliant. But Miya-san would not be able to draw a feature film all on his own. Miya-san has been doing this all along by striking a balance.

Suzuki: I don't know what Miya-san would think, but Mr. Anno Hideaki [director of the *Neon Genesis Evangelion* series] is saying that he would like to make a sequel to the *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* and is asking whether he would be able to do this by making use of the lines used in Miya-san's drawings in the original work. This idea stems from Takahata-san's *My Neighbors the Yamadas*, which was an animated piece that made use of the lines used in the original manga.



Miyazaki: That should never be done. That is unnecessary. I am no longer wedded to the idea of the touch of the lines. I do not make films to show lines.

Takahata: It's true, what you say, Miya-san, but my intention for *The Tale of The Princess Kaguya* this time around was to change that part a little bit. It is because the strength of the lines of a drawing is something that I have been emphasizing from before, in relation to paintings. In the early days, staff members would look at Tanabe's pictures and say that no one would be able to draw that way, but as they continued their work, we were able to create surprisingly powerful lines despite having had to divide the work. Everyone really worked hard on it.

Miyazaki: From the standpoint of one who draws, when I watch drawings that have turned into film and see that mistakes are covered up or a bit of carelessness emerges, I quietly writhe in pain. I think about remaking it on my own, but most of the staff wonder why such trivial things bother me or think that what they have is good enough. [Laughter]

Takahata: Well, perhaps, they are thinking that Miya-san has gotten a little soft or that you used to get more angry.

Miyazaki: That may be true. For example, take a scene of a person walking. If I start watching people walk every day, I realize that the movements and the poses are completely different from what I had imagined in my mind. However, many animators draw based on what they believe to be the way things appear. When I see that, I get furious and think, "This guy has been drawing the same pictures for decades. What does he see, as he lives his life?" What also makes me angry is that when I try to correct it, since my eyesight has worsened, the movements become stiff and we wouldn't be able to use it. [Laughter]

Different interpretations in Japan and overseas

Takahata: Miya-san's movies are also popular overseas, and even when you make a film like *Kiki's Delivery Service*, which is a story about the West, one can feel its inherent Japanese characteristics.

Suzuki: What I always think when we take our work overseas is that the more Japanese a piece is, the more it communicates well overseas. This does not only apply to works like *Princess Mononoke* and *Princess Kaguya* that use old Japan as the subject material, but the audience overseas seems to somehow respond to things that are inherently Japanese, as Takahata-san says.

For example, with *Howl's Moving Castle*, French people were surprised just by looking at the design of that castle. They said that castles ought to be symmetrical on both sides, so they asked about what inspired us to come up with that jumbled up design.

Miyazaki: That concept was about showing annexed portions of the castle. [Laughter]

Takahata: For a moment, Kiki, the main character in *Kiki's Delivery Service*, is unable to fly, and



when I asked the children in France what the reason was, what do you think they said? They said that it was probably because she fell in love with Tombo. French people value reasoning, but the thing that disengages them from reasoning is love. This is why they like love.

However, if I were to ask Japanese people, even if I don't explain anything to them, I am sure they would feel something like a sense of alienation that she is feeling as a witch or her suffering for not being part of a group or not being able to find a place for herself.

Miyazaki: Yes, and suddenly, that kind of feeling would make it difficult for me to draw. I get lost and confused about how I was drawing until that point. Don't you experience this kind of thing? This suddenly hits you for no reason. It's something I cannot explain.

Takahata: But if so, then, the reason that enables Kiki to start flying again would change, right?

Suzuki: That reminds me. There is a scene in the movie in which Kiki is asked how she is able to fly in the sky, and she answers by saying that it is her blood that gives her the ability to fly. And then a female partner responds by saying that whether it is the blood of a witch or a painter or a baker, it represents the power that was given to them by god or somebody else. I remember Takahata-san and Miya-san arguing about this.

Takahata: I thought that explaining things with blood was dishonest and taking the easy way out.

Miyazaki: There was no other way to explain this. Well, yes, there is no way that blood determines all sorts of professions. [Laughter]

Takahata: Hahaha, yes, for sure.

Miyazaki: But for sure, there is an aspect in people that helps them obtain mental stability by connecting to society in the form of work. It is about how painful it could be for a person to lose one's role in the context of work.

Takahata: I truly understand what you said. The story relates to the reason why Kiki lost her ability to fly, doesn't it?

Enormous production costs are their retirement funds?

Suzuki: This would surprise everyone, but despite *The Wind Rises* reaching number one in box office results last year in Japan, with box-office sales of 12 billion yen, it has yet to recover all its production costs.

Miyazaki: I was shocked when I heard that. I felt that it was an end of era. The fact is that we are in a time in which too much money is spent on making a movie.



Suzuki: If you think about it more deeply, production costs for these two works were equal to about 100 Japanese films. This enormous amount of production costs are perhaps a kind of retirement funds for the two of you.

The person in charge of producing *Princess Kaguya* was the late Mr. Ujiie Seiichiro, chairman of Nippon Television Network Corp. Mr. Ujiie cooperated because he fell in love with Takahata-san's work and he asked him to create a piece of work as a souvenir that he can take with him when he leaves this world. It was truly regrettable that he passed away without witnessing the completion of the film.

Takahata: It is so true. For me, there is nothing else to say but that I am grateful. Tokuma Shoten's President Tokuma Yasuyoshi also had that kind of presence for me.

Suzuki: In terms of works by Ghibli, *Princess Kaguya* this time marks the second occasion in which the person at the helm, who is ultimately responsible, passed away. The first was *Spirited Away*, when we asked Mr. Tokuma to serve as the executive producer. I was completely irresponsible and all I did was work under the executive producer who passed away. The fact that there was a person who provided support as a patron of the arts was extremely fortunate for Ghibli. For this reason, it may be a little difficult to make movies like *The Wind Rises* and *Princess Kaguya* again.

Each other's favorite works

Suzuki: Miya-san announced his retirement last year. This means that you would be able to create freely from now on. What are you thinking of doing after this?

Miyazaki: What do you mean? [Laughter]

Suzuki: Doesn't it only mean that you are walking away from commercial films?

Miyazaki: No, I'm just saying that I will no longer make full-length animated features.

Takahata: Wouldn't it be okay for you to make feature films? [Laughter] When we released *The Tale of Princess Kaguya* to the press, I was asked what I thought of Miya-san's retirement.

Miyazaki: The fault there is in the person who asked Paku-san that question.

Takahata: That is so true. But I did tell him, "Please do not be surprised if he retracts his decision to retire." [Laughter] You're that kind of person.

Miyazaki: I'm truly in a state of emptiness right now. I'm in a place where even if I get a hint of an idea, I do not feel like transforming it into print. I'm now dealing with my cardiac angina, so I am just drawing manga for fun without a deadline.



Takahata: I have concepts for new works, and a newspaper said something about how I might make another movie if there is an opportunity, but I really don't know.

Suzuki: Takahata-san has been promoting the creation of an animated version of *The Tale of Heike* for a long time, before *Princess Kaguya*.

Takahata: Yes, that would be a compelling piece. Somebody should make it. I cannot say whether I would do it or not. [Laughter]

Movies aside, I am having fun every day. For example, it's even enjoyable just to see a series of leaves falling off the trees. A lot of different types of birds come to the park next to my place, and some rare ones also come by at times. I get really happy seeing that.

Miyazaki: I am also always taking walks. While on my walks, I go to a cemetery in my neighborhood and pray for my parents as well as those who have taken care of me. Even if I haven't met them, I pray about the people who have written works that have opened my eyes, for example, Mr. Shiba Ryotaro or Mr. Nakao Sasuke, the botanist, or the archeologist Mr. Fujimori Eiichi.

Takahata: You are pious. I have never thought of anything like that. These people did not necessarily write for you, right, Miya-san?

Miyazaki: But I do feel indebted. So when I start praying while on a walk, my wife ends up walking way ahead of me. [Laughter]

Takahata: Well, that's more normal.

Miyazaki: Also, Ghibli's day care center is located right next to the atelier, and I experience joy in watching these children grow. I cannot match the names and the faces of the little ones I see, and then one day, suddenly, they are no longer little. And then they appear in front of me as an unwavering presence. When that happens, I can't let my guard down.

Takahata: How should one deal with the situation?

Miyazaki: You can't just give them a big smile, but you have to deal with them properly. At that moment, the child's movements are transformed. It is interesting how they become tense as if to show that they are unable to live their lives by letting their guard down. If one loses that moment, that moment will never come back.

Takahata: That's an unobtainable type of joy for an old person.

Miyazaki: Ha ha ha. I gave a British picture book called *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King* to a girl the other day, and she liked it. And I found out that I can buy a real nutcracker on the Internet, so I decided to give it to her as a present. When I told my wife this story, she said, "Buy it for our



grandchild as well.” My grandchild is a boy, and so I wondered whether it would be appropriate, but still, there was no way I would disagree with her. And then before I knew it, the plan was to buy it for all the children of the staff around me, so ultimately, I ended buying eight of them.

Takahata: Well, in that case, Miya-san, you should have played favorites as if it were a normal thing to do.

Miyazaki: The girl I initially thought of for the gift will turn five years old soon, and she wrote me a letter. She wrote, “Next time, I will sneak over and place a nut in it. The nutcracker hasn’t appeared in my dream yet.” Even if it’s real, it’s a doll, so if you put a walnut in it, it will break. But she can’t resist placing a nut in it. Aren’t the words “hasn’t appeared in my dream yet” also great?

Suzuki: I’ve recently started to watch all of the works again in order to create all Ghibli works in Blu-ray.

Takahata: Which one was good? [Laughter]

Suzuki: The thing is, I cannot get into these works, no matter what, because I keep on remembering things from back then. So it’s possible that in this entire world, I am the one who least understands the joy of Ghibli. [Laughter] I am going to squeeze this question in at the end: which ones do you like among each other’s works?

Takahata: My most favorite is *My Neighbor Totoro*.

Miyazaki: Mine is *Heidi a girl of the Alps*. I also participated in it and other staff members worked hard, but indeed, that was a work created by Takahata Isao. I’m angry because it warrants full praise, but no one has praised it.

Takahata: I don’t care about me, but the three conditions for success by Wise Old saying— timing, positioning and support* – came together in *Heidi*.

Miyazaki: It was a once-in-a-lifetime thing that could either happen to you or not. But the schedule was crazy. There was heavy snowfall on a day when we had to get back all the work that had been outsourced. And there was great commotion because we couldn’t buy any snow chains. But it was wonderful to have come across a piece of work like that.

Note: * Mencius (372 BC – 289 BC), Chinese philosopher, said, “Opportunities of time vouchsafed by Heaven are not equal to advantages of situation afforded by the Earth, and advantages of situation afforded by the Earth are not equal to the union arising from the accord of Men.” (*Gong Sun Chou II*)



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TAKAHATA Isao, Film director

MIYAZAKI Hayao, Film director

SUZUKI Toshio, Producer and Chairman of Studio Ghibli
