

MORIOKA Toshiyuki



Genre: Comedy
Format: 35mm
Estimated Running Time: 105 min.

Budget:
US \$1,500,000
(HK \$11,600,000)

Producers:
IIZUKA Eiju

Writing Credits:
TAKASU Mitsuyoshi

Production Company:
NHK Enterprises, Inc.

HAF Goals:
Funds, Co-producers, Sales agents,
Pre-sales

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INTRODUCTION

Middle-aged TV writer, TAKATSU Mitsuyoshi, is being given a break-up talk by his younger girlfriend when he suddenly receives word that his childhood friend, SATO, has died. TAKATSU jumps in his car and drives like a demon towards his hometown of Amagasaki, dragging his girlfriend along with him and telling her stories about growing up with his best friend as they drive through the night. The stories capture exactly what it was like to grow up in a small town in the 70's and 80's and SATO and TAKATSU's journey from childhood, to adolescence and on to early adulthood.

SYNOPSIS

Forty-three-year-old TV writer, TAKATSU Mitsuyoshi, is being given a break-up talk by his thirty-three-year-old girlfriend, KAYAMA Yukino, when he suddenly receives word that SATO Fumiaki, his childhood friend, has died. TAKATSU drags Yukino to his car and begins driving towards his hometown of Amagasaki telling her about his old friend on the way.

"He was a great guy," he says. "Better than me at everything: running, grades, love, compassion, determination to get things done. There was nothing I could beat him at. Nothing."

As he talks, memories of his Amagasaki days with SATO come flooding back. Space Invaders, pop group Pink Lady, the stand-up comedy craze and more. The two were born troublemakers, especially at school when they run afoul of their new homeroom teacher, Ms. MURAKAMI Ryoko, who greets her class by telling them, "Most of you will never find happiness."

When stand-up comedy became the latest trend, TAKATSU and SATO paired up into a comedy team as did HAMADA and MATSUMOTO (who later become the hit comedy duo Downtown) but it didn't take long for TAKATSU and SATO to become jealous of the superior talents of the other pair. In junior high, Takatsu and Sato stole women's underwear, bought porno magazines and Takatsu even experienced his first love, but had his heart broken when she dumped him for a "more mature" college boy. Then he met AOYAMA Takako, the manager of TAKATSU's high school soccer team and the two fall for each other despite the fact that AOYAMA was SATO's ex-girlfriend. In their senior year, TAKATSU breaks up with AOYAMA over the phone, using his failure to get into college as an excuse.

With HAMADA acting as ringleader, the four friends experimented with shoplifting, but only SATO was caught and punished. He refused to reveal his friends' names and as they're walking home over a bridge, TAKATSU apologizes to SATO who bursts out laughing.

"You've gotta smile at times like these. I mean, if you think about it, it's actually pretty funny. And hey, it doesn't cost a thing to laugh, right?"

In the present, TAKATSU and KAYAMA arrive at SATO's funeral. There they

meet AOYAMA, who wound up marrying SATO, and the two of them have a six-year-old son, TSUYOSHI. Everyone at the funeral is someone from TAKATSU's past, even Ms. MURAKAMI, his old homeroom teacher. After the cremation, TAKATSU walks with KAYAMA over the bridge where he apologized to SATO so long ago. He asks KAYAMA if they can start over. She tells him that they can, but only if he wants to start over, too. Overwhelmed, TAKATSU begins to cry. Frustrated that he can't smile through his tears he suddenly remembers SATO's words.

"You've gotta smile at times like these. I mean, if you think about it, it's actually pretty funny. And hey, it doesn't cost a thing to laugh, right?"

Finally, TAKATSU can smile again.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

This film will depict TAKATSU Mitsuyoshi's life from childhood through adolescence and into early adulthood with humor and nostalgia. It will illustrate the innocence, curiosity, anguish, hope, disillusionment and joy of that most sincere and fearless time in our lives. Reminiscing about the past is a heart's journey that anyone can take. Of course, poorly motivated reflection is only a bad trip, but a good reminiscence is inspiring. One can relive one's past and then return to the present with a treasure in your hand, energized and inspired to face the future. We hope to spin a story about the unforgettable moments of our youth, full of grace and splendor. We hope that after seeing this movie, the audience will feel like revisiting their adolescence and bringing the best parts of themselves, the dreams and courage that they had almost forgotten, into their present lives.

DIRECTOR

MORIOKA Toshiyuki is the head of the theater company Stray Dog, working as playwright and director, giving regular performances at small theaters across Japan. In 1995, he made his screenwriting debut with the motion picture *Lonely Hitman*, which was directed by MOCHIZUKI Rokuro and starred ISHIBASHI Ryo. In 1999, MORIOKA directed his first movie, *Requiem of Darkness*, based on his own script. The film was released in Japan in early 2000. Winner of a long string of awards, MORIOKA was honored in 2004 with the Japanese Professional Movie Angel Award, whose goal is to discover new talents. In 2007, his movie, *Tears of a Kitty*, received the Japanese Eyes Special Award at the 20th Tokyo International Film Festival. He adapted the movie into his first

novel in 2008. His new film, *Girl's Story*, is set to be released in 2009 starring FUKATSU Eri, based on a book by SAIBARA Rieko.

PRODUCER

IIZUKA Eiju was born in 1957 in Tokyo, and joined Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK) as a director in 1982. Since 1988 he has been involved in a wide range of programs, from comedy, to music to drama at the NHK Broadcasting center in Tokyo. He shifted to NHK Enterprises in 2003 and currently produces dramas, films and other content online. He is also the producer of films like *Crab Goalkeeper* (2005) directed by MINORU Kawasaki and the Japanese segments of *Victim of Love*, a Korean television series produced by the Seoul Broadcasting System in 2007 and directed by PARK Gyeong-yeol.

PRODUCTION COMPANY

NHK ENTERPRISES was founded in 1985 as an affiliate of the Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK). It produces a diverse range of high-quality programs, drawing on its resources and know-how to produce other products and services such as video packages, display videos, digital content and cultural events. NHK Enterprises has overseas offices in New York, Los Angeles, London, Paris, Beijing and Bangkok. The six overseas offices are involved in a wide range of international activities, including program production outside of Japan and joint productions.