

1 Article : Cannes Double Win a Reminder to the World of Japan's Filmmaking Caliber

Directions: Read the following article aloud.

The global recognition of Koji Yakusho and Yuji Sakamoto at Cannes is an [uplifting](#) message to aspiring individuals across Japan, transcending the film industry.

The 2023 Cannes Film Festival witnessed a momentous achievement for Japanese cinema, as two films received prestigious awards: one for Best Actor, and the other for Best Screenplay. This simultaneous victory in two major categories [highlights](#) the exceptional quality of Japanese filmmaking. It also provides a significant boost to the industry's prominence.

Koji Yakusho was honored with the Best Actor award for his performance in Perfect Days (2023). It is a captivating film set in Tokyo, directed by Wim Wenders. Yakusho's recognition brings to mind the previous victory of Yuya Yagira, who, at the young age of 14, won the same award for his role in Hirokazu Kore-eda's Nobody Knows in 2004.

'Magnetically Charismatic'

Yakusho's reputation extends beyond Japan's borders. His notable portrayal in Shohei Imamura's The Eel secured the prestigious Palme d'Or at Cannes in 1997. In Perfect Days, Yakusho masterfully depicts an enigmatic and taciturn toilet cleaner. He manages to captivate audiences despite being given a challenging role with minimal dialogue. Even the [notoriously](#) critical French press lauded his performance as "magnetically charismatic."

In the Best Screenplay category, Yuji Sakamoto received the award for his exceptional work on Monster, directed by Hirokazu Kore-eda. This triumph marks Japan's second win in the category since Ryusuke Hamaguchi and Takamasa Oe won the award for Drive My Car in 2021.

Sakamoto is a renowned screenwriter who has played a prominent role in Japan's television industry, particularly in creating what is known as "trendy dramas" in Japan. These shows, produced around the time of Japan's economic bubble, offer a glimpse into urban life, pop culture, and romance. Notably, Sakamoto wrote the script for the widely popular Tokyo Love Story (1991). In recent years, he has also ventured into films addressing social issues, winning the Hashida Award for his script for Mother (2010).

Global Recognition of Japanese Talent

The recognition bestowed upon Yakusho and Sakamoto reflects the international acknowledgment of Japan's filmmaking caliber. It is uplifting to witness the influence of these esteemed maestros on the global stage.

German filmmaker Wim Wenders is a Japanophile and a great [admirer](#) of Yasujiro Ozu. He received the 33rd Praemium Imperiale in the Theatre/Film category in 2022. In his latest work, Wenders masterfully portrays the simple joys and humble existence of an ordinary man in a quiet corner of Japanese society.

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[JAPAN Forward](#)



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French media observed the influences of Akira Kurosawa's *Rashomon* (1950) in Sakamoto's screenplay for *Monster*. The film skillfully explores the varying [interpretations](#) of an incident at a school through the eyes of a mother, a teacher, and a child.

Yakusho and Sakamoto, who established their acting and screenwriting careers in Japan, have now demonstrated their exceptional talent on the global stage. While the international spotlight has recently focused on Japanese athletes, these achievements underscore the significant role of filmmaking in uplifting Japanese society.

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2 Key phrases and vocabulary

Directions: First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

1. **uplifting** 励みになる、気持ちを高めさせる、希望にあふれた、元気にさせる、活気づける

Hearing about their contributions to children's health in that country is **uplifting**.

2. **highlight** ~を目立たせる・強調する、(催し物などで) ~を目玉にする、マーカーで塗る、(ショーなどの) ハイライト※名詞

The event will **highlight** the achievements of young scientists.

3. **notoriously** 悪名高くも

The singer is **notoriously** private and rarely gives interviews.

4. **admirer** ファン、崇拜者

He became an **admirer** of Japanese animation after watching some Ghibli movies.

5. **interpretation** (意味、重要性、検査・調査などの結果の) 解釈・判定、通訳

The professor presented contrasting **interpretations** of the historical event.

3 Questions

Directions: Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. What were the two major categories in which Japanese films won awards at the Cannes Film Festival?
2. In the film "Perfect Days," what kind of character does Koji Yakusho portray?
3. Have you ever watched a Japanese film that received international recognition? If so, which film was it?
4. Do you think the success of Japanese films at international events like Cannes can positively influence the perception of Japanese culture globally? Why or why not?
5. How important do you think filmmaking is in promoting cultural exchange and understanding between different countries?

4

日本語関連記事：
【主張】カンヌ同時受賞 日本を盛り上げる快挙だ

世界最高峰の映画祭の一つ、フランスのカンヌ国際映画祭で日本の2作品が男優賞と脚本賞に輝いた。主要賞を同時受賞するのは初めてで、邦画のレベルの高さを示す快挙だ。日本映画界のさらなる隆盛につなげることを期待したい。

男優賞を射止めたのは、東京を舞台にした「パーフェクトデイズ」（ヴィム・ヴェンダース監督）主演の役所広司さんである。日本の俳優としては、2004年の「誰も知らない」（是枝裕和監督）で、当時14歳の最年少で受賞した柳（やぎ）楽（ら）優弥さん以来2人目、19年ぶりだ。

役所さんは1997年に同映画祭の最高賞を受賞した「うなぎ」（今村昌平監督）で主演するなど海外での知名度も高く、現代日本を代表する俳優の一人だ。今回演じたのは影のある寡黙な公共トイレの清掃員で、せりふがほとんどない難役を魅力たっぷりに演じた。辛口で有名な仏紙も「磁石のように人を引き付ける」と高く評価した。

一方、脚本賞を受賞したのは「怪物」（是枝監督）の坂元裕二さんだ。一昨年の「ドライブ・マイ・カー」の濱口竜介監督と大江崇允（たかまさ）さん以来2度目である。

坂元さんは「東京ラブストーリー」などトレンドードラマの旗手で、テレビ業界の第一線で活躍してきた人気脚本家である。最近では社会派ドラマも手掛け、「Mother」で橋田賞を受賞している。

両者の栄誉は、日本の映画界の実力を世界が評価した結果といえるだろう。またその背後にわが国が誇る巨匠たちの存在を感じさせるのも興味深い。

ドイツ出身のヴェンダース監督は小津安二郎監督を師と仰ぐ親日家で、昨年、第33回高松宮殿下記念世界文化賞（演劇・映像部門）を受賞した。今作品では日本の社会の片隅で生きる男の質素な日常とささやかな喜びを描いた。

仏メディアが黒澤明監督の「羅生門」に由来する手法であると指摘したのが坂元さんの手掛けた「怪物」だ。学校で起きた出来事を母親や教師、子供らそれぞれの立場から描き、その見え方が異なるという構成である。

日本で実績を重ねた俳優と脚本家が世界を舞台に実力を示した。最近ではスポーツ界の話題が多いが、映画でも日本全体を盛り上げてくれる快事である。

出典：【主張】カンヌ同時受賞 日本を盛り上げる快挙だ
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