

Press Release

Koji Yakusho to Receive Excellence in Asian Cinema Award at the 13th Asian Film Awards

(February 20, 2019; Hong Kong/Tokyo) The Asian Film Awards Academy (AFAA) announced that the recipient of this year's Excellence in Asian Cinema Award is the renowned **Japanese actor Koji YAKUSHO**. He will accept the award at the awards ceremony held in Hong Kong on March 17, 2019. Previous AFA special award winners include Japanese director Yoji YAMADA, Indian actor Amitabh BACHCHAN, Chinese director ZHANG Yimou, Taiwanese director HOU Hsiao-hsien, Hong Kong director Ann HUI, Malaysian actress Michelle YEOH and others. The Excellence in Asian Cinema Award aims to highlight distinguished talents and affirm their achievements and contributions to Asian film industry and culture.

With a stellar career spanning four decades, Koji YAKUSHO received his first Best Actor nomination at the Japan Academy Prize with his performance in a Japan-Soviet Union production, *Under Aurora* in 1991. In addition to winning the **Mainichi Film Award Best Actor prize** for Masato HARADA's *Kamikaze Taxi* (1995), he won **over 20 awards** in the following years for *Shall We Dance?* (1996), *Lost Paradise* (1997), *Cure* (1997) and Shohei IMAMURA's Palme d'Or-winning film *The Eel* (1997). Earning Japan Academy Prize nominations for Best Actor for seven consecutive years in the 1990s solidified his status as one of Japan's greatest actors. In 2005, YAKUSHO participated in his first international production with *Memoirs of a Geisha* and in 2006, in the Academy Award-nominated film *Babel*. He debuted as a director with *Toad's Oil* in 2009. YAKUSHO received the Cinema Legend Award from the Singapore Film Festival in 2017 and has been praised in China as 'the man with a thousand faces.'



Photo by KAZUTO SUETAKE

YAKUSHO has been twice nominated by the Asian Film Awards (AFA) for his performances in *13 Assassins* (2010) and *Chronicle of My Mother* (2011) respectively. He received his third AFA nomination this year with *The Blood of Wolves* (2018). YAKUSHO will next be seen in a China-Japan co-production *Wings Over Everest* directed by YU Fay, and a Japanese period epic *TOUGE - Saigo no Samurai* (Original Japanese title) directed by Takashi KOIZUMI.

"I am very honored to receive the 'Excellence in Asian Cinema Award.' It has been 40 years since I started my acting career, and it's a miracle that I am still able to pursue this profession. I am also indebted to all the people who have inspired me throughout my life." said YAKUSHO.

"The Asian Film Awards Academy is proud to present Mr. Yakusho with the Excellence in Asian Cinema Award," said Dr. Wilfred WONG, Chairman of the AFA Academy and the Hong Kong International Film Festival Society, "Over his prolific career, Mr. Yakusho has made an indelible impression on audiences and his professional peers around the world. His talent for playing a wide variety of characters in films and TV in Japan and overseas testify to his commitment and dedication to the art and craft of acting. He deserves far and wide recognition."

Last year, he was the focus of a retrospective tribute at the 31st Tokyo International Film Festival in celebration of his 40th anniversary as an actor.

The AFA has announced its Next Generation Award which goes to South Korean vocalist, songwriter and actor **KIM Jae-joong**. He will attend the ceremony on March 17. It will also announce the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award soon.

For press registration, please visit following website. <https://afa.meetingceo.com/evtreg/media.tps>



Details of AFA13 Awards Ceremony:

Date: March 17, 2019 (Sunday)
Venue: TVB City (Hong Kong)
Time: 19:30* (red carpet starts at 17:30*)
*Hong Kong time

All press materials available for download from Dropbox link below:

[https://www.dropbox.com/sh/sb8hf3xsbhtyxv4/AADi3HbXX3Ru9ZxfE0Jx5Wdoa?dl=0Asian Film Awards \(AFA\)](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/sb8hf3xsbhtyxv4/AADi3HbXX3Ru9ZxfE0Jx5Wdoa?dl=0Asian%20Film%20Awards%20(AFA))

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Asian Film Awards (AFA)

Inaugurated in 2007, the Asian Film Awards celebrates excellence in Asian cinema through the annual presentation of awards to talents and films that make up the dynamic film industries of Asia. Awards night is a spectacular gathering of stars, celebrities, industry professionals and the media that highlights and publicizes the year's achievements in Asian movies.

Asian Film Awards Academy (AFAA)

In 2013, three main Asian film festivals - Busan, Hong Kong and Tokyo - joined together to create the non-profit organization, the Asian Film Awards Academy to promote and develop Asian cinema and its talents. The AFA Academy highlights, strengthens and develops Asian film industry and culture through the annual Asian Film Awards, and several year-round initiatives including strategies for building regional and international audiences.

<http://www.afa-academy.com/>

Tokyo International Film Festival (TIFF)

The Tokyo International Film Festival (TIFF) started in 1985 as Japan's first major film festival and the only Japanese film festival accredited by the International Federation of Film Producers Associations (FIAPF). Since then, TIFF has grown to become one of the leading film festivals in Asia.

Every year for ten days, filmmakers and film fans of all ages gather in Tokyo to enjoy outstanding films from around the world and TIFF's many colorful events. These include TIFFCOM, the affiliated market of TIFF, seminars for students, professionals, and business people, and symposia and workshops for networking, uniting the world's film industries, developing international co-productions, and the promoting global film business.

The 32nd TIFF will take place October 28 to November 5, 2019. <http://tiff-jp.net>