

China, Japan Working towards a Film Co-production Treaty

To commemorate the 40th anniversary of the signing of the "Sino-Japanese Treaty of Peace and Friendship", Premier Li Keqiang of the State Council visited Japan earlier. While Shinzo ABE, Prime Minister of Japan, has also accepted the invitation to go visit China, the relationship between the two countries at the moment is considered at its best in recent years. Therefore it is believed that a China-Japan film co-production agreement will be signed hopefully in May, entitling China-Japan co-productions the privilege to be exempted from import quotas on films.

Some time ago, director Chen Kaige's "Legend of the Demon Cat" was released in Japan and achieved good box office numbers and high customer ratings. The fact that it is an adaptation of a Japanese novel also boosted its popularity in Japan. During 8-14 March, the Chinese Film Festival was held in Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya, screening 10 Chinese films including "Youth", "Till The End Of The World", "Wrath of Silence" and "The Thousand Faces of Dunjia". From 15 to 22 April, Japan Film Week was held in Beijing, bringing 35 Japanese films such as "Ryuichi Sakamoto: CODA", "Tokyo Vampire Hotel", "Mumon", "Funohan" and "My Teacher" to Chinese audiences. These are all indications that collaboration in films between China and Japan is almost certain to happen.

According to the official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, the first negotiation between the governments of the 2 countries on the "Film Co-production Agreement between the Government of Japan and the Government of the People's Republic of China" (title is not final) was held on 8 December 2017. Earlier in September 2017, Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary, Yasutoshi NISHIMURA revealed that talks are underway between the 2 countries on the transnational procedures for film co-productions. Japan was hoping to get an official treaty signed with China within the same year.

Recent news reveals that famous Japanese director Shunji IWAI will be the first to shoot a film in China. The film, named "Last Letter", has Peter CHAN from Hong Kong as executive producer and, though not yet confirmed, will have ZHAO Xun playing the lead role.

It is reasonable to believe that cultural exchange and collaboration will enhance better bilateral relationship between China and Japan.