



## Japan actor Takakura, known for stoic heroes, dies

1) TOKYO (AP) — Ken Takakura, a craggy-faced, quiet star known for playing outlaws and stoic heroes in scores of Japanese films, has died of lymphoma. He was 83.

2) Perhaps best known abroad for his police inspector role in Ridley Scott's "Black Rain" in 1989, Takakura died Nov. 10 at a Tokyo hospital where he was treated for the illness, according to his office and media reports Tuesday.

- 3) He surged to stardom after his 1956 debut, becoming an icon in yakuza films such as "Abashiri Prison" in the 1960s. Much of his appeal to the Japanese public stemmed from his image as a hero fighting authority figures on behalf of the poor and weak.
- 4) But in a career spanning more than 200 films he sometimes played comic roles, such as his 1992 portrayal of a coach in "Mr. Baseball."
- 5) Likened to Clint Eastwood, Takakura starred in detective stories and dramas including the 1977 film "The Yellow Handkerchief" and 1999's "Railroad Man," which won him a best actor award at the Montreal World Film Festival.
- 6) The news of his death topped Japanese news programs almost nonstop, and major newspapers distributed extras in downtown Tokyo.
- 7) Unlike many Japanese celebrities, Takakura shunned the usual rounds of television variety shows and melodramas, maintaining a John Wayne-like aura of toughness.
- 8) Born in 1931 as Goichi Oda in Fukuoka, southern Japan, he was recruited by a major film production while he was applying for a managerial position.
- 9) Takakura's friends and admirers described him as humble, honest and reserved in his real life, too.
- 10) "He was the last big star (in Japan)," said Shintaro Ishihara, 82, an award-winning writer and politician. "And yet, Ken-san lived a really healthy, sound life, unlike many other stars who often end up paying the price later on."
- 11) Even though he played many outlaw roles in yakuza films, Takakura said today's gangster movies didn't interest him.
- 12) "I like movies that picture the human heart and linger with me," he told an interviewer of the Japan Subculture Research Center. "The Deer Hunter," "Gladiator," and "The Godfather" were among his favorites, he said.
- 13) In the 2012 award-winning "Dearest," the last of Takakura's films, he plays a retired prison warden who goes on a soul-searching trip with a postcard that arrived after his wife's death.
- 14) According to a fax released by his office, Takakura was preparing for his next project while in the hospital.
- 15) In 2013, when Takakura attended a ceremony to receive Japan's highest cultural award, the Order of Culture, at the Imperial Palace, he joked that he had often played characters considered most distant from the exalted realm of the palace.
- 16) "In movies, I'm most often an ex-convict. I'm grateful for the award despite many of these roles I've played," Takakura said. "I really believe that hard work pays off." 【November 18, 2014／Associated Press】



craggy: 岩のようにごつごつした、際立った目鼻立ちの、彫りの深い lymphoma: リンパ腫 extra: 号外 exalted: 高貴な

1. Have you ever seen any Ken Takakura's films? Which one impressed you the most and why?
2. What is 'Ninkyo'? What is your image about Yakuza?
3. Many people around the world offered condolences to his death. Why do you think he was loved by so many people?
4. Which do you like better, going to the cinema to watch a movie or stay at home and watch DVDs? Why?
5. What qualities make up a good actor or actress?
6. What are your considerations when you choose a movie to watch?
7. If you can make your life into a movie, which actor would you like to act as you?
8. Make sentences using the following words: icon, stem from, span, portrayal, detective, extra, linger, soul-searching and exalt.

明治大学卒業後、芸能事務所のマネジャーになるための面接で東映のプロデューサーの目にとまり東映ニューフェイスとして入社。65年から「昭和残侠传」シリーズに主演。「任侠」は仁義を重んじ、弱い者や困った人を放っておかず体を張って助け、義のために命も惜しまぬ気性に富むこと。英語では a chivalrous spirit と説明される。寡黙な役が多かったが実は話し好きで人を笑わせるのが好きでロケ先でもあらゆる人に心を配る優しい人だったという。昭和を代表する俳優がまたいなくなってしまった。