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Japan hails record Emmy success for 'Shogun' as cultural win

By Rocky Swift

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Summary Companies

- 'Shogun' wins 18 Emmys, including best drama and acting awards
- Japanese government encourages creators to pursue overseas productions
- Tourists inspired by 'Shogun' to explore Japan's Edo period culture

TOKYO, Sept 17 (Reuters) - Japan's government and people cheered the record trophy haul for period drama "Shogun" at the [Emmy Awards](#) as yet another win for their history and culture, which are becoming increasingly popular with tourists and international audiences alike.

The historical epic set in Imperial Japan claimed 18 awards, the most ever for a single drama season, according to the Emmys [website](#), including best drama and acting awards for leads Hiroyuki Sanada and Anna Sawai.

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Another Japanese period piece, "Blue Eye Samurai", won an Emmy for the best animated programme.

The government welcomed the achievement, and highlighted that 70% of the dialogue in "Shogun" was in Japanese and that Sanada, who played the lead warlord Yoshii Toranaga, was involved in its production.

"We would like to further encourage Japanese creators to take on the challenges of overseas productions," Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiroshi Moriya told reporters.


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The Japanese government also set up a committee this month to support the entertainment and content industries, he said.

The accolades for "Shogun" are the latest showcase of Japan's rising prominence on the global stage.

In March, the monster movie epic "Godzilla Minus One" nabbed a visual effects Oscar after becoming a sleeper hit in U.S. theatres, while HBO's critically acclaimed noir crime series "Tokyo Vice" finished its second and last season in April.

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In sports, Japanese baseball [phenomenon](#)  Shohei Ohtani is in second place for home runs in his first season with the Los Angeles Dodgers, and Japan finished third in the gold medal tally at the Paris Olympics that concluded last month.

Meanwhile, foreign [tourists](#) are flooding into Japan each month, with total visitor numbers and spending poised to smash records this year.

Many visitors are drawn to experience things as they were in the Edo period of "Shogun", said Naomi Mano, president of Tokyo-based travel agency Luxurique.



[1/5] Tourists from abroad hold an imitation Japanese sword as they take part in a Japanese sword-cutting experience at Samurai Theater Tokyo in Tokyo, Japan September 17, 2024. REUTERS/Issei Kato [Purchase Licensing Rights](#)



"We are an island country, and in the Edo period, everything was secluded," Mano said. "Now we're in a phase where we're actually trying to get people to understand why we do things or the way we did our traditions."

Dutch tourist Dominique le Noble said she was partially inspired by "Shogun" in booking a samurai sword class as part of her first trip to Japan.

"The samurai wasn't all flower arrangement," Le Noble, 31, said in the underground dojo, or training room, in Tokyo where she had just practised slicing apart woven reed mats with a sword.

"It was actual violence, and there's a beautiful side to it but there's a dark side, and I like how both of them come together," she said.

"Shogun" is based on a 1975 historical novel by James Clavell, later made into a mini-series in 1980 that focused more on the shipwrecked English captain, played by Richard Chamberlain, than the Japanese characters.

The latest version produced by Walt Disney ([DIS.N](#))'s FX studio relied on Japanese actors and producers to create a realistic portrayal of the nation's Warring States period in the 1600s. A Disney representative declined to give viewership data for the show in Japan.

"Tokyo Vice" executive producer Jake Adelstein said the global appeal of dramas like "Shogun" that glorify values such as honour likely stems from the disillusionment with politics.

"When we see, especially in America, a world of double dealing politicians who lie out both sides of their mouth, a culture that values honour, integrity and reciprocity, seems foreign and exotic," Adelstein said.

The Emmys triumph on Sunday reached Japan on a holiday on Monday, but that didn't stop "Shogun" from becoming a top trending topic online.

"The Japanese heart, way of life, and soul crossed the seas and touched the hearts of people all over the world. I'm so happy," wrote a user named Shock Eye on X.

Sanada, a veteran actor who also picked up an Emmy as a producer, was especially praised on social media, with videos of his acceptance speech among the most watched online.

"The reason why Sanada is fighting alone so diligently is to give back to Japan," a user named Rui wrote on X.

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