

# FROM MANGA LITERATURE TO LIVE-ACTION FILM/TV: MACKENYU'S CROSS-CULTURAL ODYSSEY IN GLOBAL CINEMA

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## Abstract

This research examines the career of Japanese-American actor Mackenyu Arata, particularly his roles in live-action adaptations of manga and anime, to understand his influence on cross-cultural narrative integration in cinema. The study focuses on Mackenyu's portrayal of leading and important supporting characters in several high-profile adaptations, including Netflix's *One Piece*, where he plays Zoro, and others such as *Chihayafuru*, *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure*, *Rurouni Kenshin*, and *Fullmetal Alchemist*. Employing qualitative analysis, this paper investigates how Mackenyu strategically navigates away from the shadow of his father, legendary actor Sonny Chiba, to forge an independent identity and career. Data was collected through reviews, audience reception studies, and box office performance, analysed to assess thematic consistency and cultural impact across different markets. Our method involved synthesising information from film critiques, audience feedback, and performance metrics to create a cohesive understanding of Mackenyu's role choices and their cultural resonances. Experts in film adaptation theory, such as Linda Hutcheon, and resources like *The Routledge Companion to World Cinema* provided theoretical frameworks for analysing how narratives are adapted for global audiences and the role of actors in these adaptations. The findings reveal that Mackenyu's choices are not merely artistic but are also deliberate efforts to blend Eastern and Western cinematic traditions, enhancing his appeal as a global actor. His roles often reflect a profound engagement with his bicultural heritage, challenging the notion that he is only a "second-generation star." These roles resonate with global audiences and contribute to the ongoing discourse on cultural integration in film. The study concludes that Mackenyu is a key figure in the realm of live-action adaptations, with a unique ability to transcend cultural and cinematic boundaries.

**Keywords:** Mackenyu, *One Piece*, Live-Action, Film, TV, Manga, Anime

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Mackenyu Arata, popularly recognised as Mackenyu, is a name that, while already deemed a superstar in Japan, probably has yet to gain widespread recognition within Hollywood or the Western entertainment industry and audience. This relative anonymity becomes particularly conspicuous when juxtaposed with the towering legacy of his late father, Sonny Chiba (also known as Shin'ichi Chiba),

who passed away in 2021. Renowned as a legendary Japanese actor, Chiba's acclaim transcended geographical boundaries. His prominence went beyond the hundreds of Japanese movies in which he played the lead actor, which also shone through in globally memorable roles within Quentin Tarantino's acclaimed works, most notably his iconic portrayal of Hattori Hanzo in the *Kill Bill* movies, as well as

his integral contributions to the blockbuster *The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift*. Moreover, his role as Hung Baa in the highly acclaimed and possibly most successful live-action adaptation of *Storm Riders* (AKA *Fung Wan*), a super popular Hong Kong manga by Ma Wing-shing encompassing television series and movie franchises, further contributed to his fame. Following his passing in 2021, Chiba's legacy was not confined to the Japanese media alone; major international platforms such as the BBC, CNN, and The New York Times paid tribute to his extraordinary career and life. These platforms acknowledged his significant contributions to the film and television industry, underscoring the universal impact of his work.

'No matter where I am, you will always be in my heart. Love you so much, Dad.' Mackenyu posted this on his own Instagram, with photos of when he was a baby and with his father. We can easily see the bond and love between Macknyu and his father.

However, since our paper's focus is not on Sonny Chiba, let us go back to Mackenyu's career. We will briefly explore, though, in the later sections, how Sonny Chiba's status as a legendary actor might have influenced Mackenyu's choice of roles.

For Mackenyu, the fall of 2023 could potentially mark a momentous juncture in his journey, serving as the inception of what might evolve into another legendary trajectory—the beginning of a journey aimed at propelling him to attain a status no less than his father's global renown and respect. This heightened anticipation is intricately tied to Netflix's blockbuster live-action adaptation of *One Piece*, slated for its premiere on 31 August 2023. *One Piece* is probably one of the most popular Japanese anime/manga. Its manga and anime also have over one

billion worldwide readers and viewers. Furthermore, the Netflix live-action version is among the most expensive Netflix series to date, which is also proven and praised by the creator Oda Eiichiro (Leung, 2023; Otterson, 2023). As the second lead in this series, Mackenyu assumes the role of Zoro, a burgeoning swordsman who aims to attain the pinnacle of swordsmanship worldwide. Notably, Zoro has garnered the consensus of aficionados of *One Piece*, being resoundingly elected as one of the preeminent, best and beloved characters across various platforms. Following the premiere of this monumental television production, Mackenyu's popularity may reach a zenith soon. A more detailed discussion of Mackenyu and *One Piece* will be presented later in this article.

Given these considerations, it is now an opportune time to delve deeper into Mackenyu's story as a celebrity. While many might attribute his rapid fame and acting success to his father, Sonny Chiba, this belief deserves a closer look. According to a conversation between Scott Erickson, Mackenyu's Hollywood manager at Asian Cinema Entertainment, and the author of this article, who is also a manager at Asian Cinema Entertainment, Mackenyu intentionally kept his father's identity hidden when he first signed with Scott, showcasing his desire to establish himself independently.

Another heightened interest is Mackenyu's notable departure from his Japanese talent agency in 2019, leading to his exclusive representation by his American manager and agent, driven by a pronounced aspiration to centre his career trajectory in the United States. Although the precise motivation behind this decision remains undisclosed, one plausible reason might be that Mackenyu intends to utilize his roles and

Hollywood career to foster a connection between global audiences and Japanese culture. This assumption is bolstered by a discernible pattern in his role selections, which consistently lean towards live-action adaptations of Japanese anime or manga narratives, including *One Piece*. This thematic coherence highlights an implicit endeavor to promulgate Japanese or Eastern cultural elements and facilitate cross-cultural resonance. Consequently, this article will examine these live-action projects, including Netflix's *One Piece*, to elucidate Mackenyu's emergence as a rising star who effectively acts as a conduit between the realms of Hollywood and Japanese anime/manga culture. The roles he chose to play are also because he wishes to demonstrate that he can be as good as his father as an actor because he wishes to detach himself from the tag of a second-generation star.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

As detailed by Linda Hutcheon in her seminal book, *A Theory of Adaptation* (2006), film adaptation theory explores the complex processes through which Japanese manga is transformed into live-action films that resonate with international audiences. This theory critically assesses how narratives are reshaped and recontextualized across different cultures and media forms. Supporting this framework, *The Routledge Companion to World Cinema* broadens this perspective by providing an in-depth look at the global cinema landscape, focusing on the nuances of cultural exchange and the representation of diverse narratives within the film. These scholarly resources together enhance our understanding of the adaptive journey from text to screen and the intricacies involved in retaining cultural

authenticity while achieving universal appeal (Cooke, 2017).

Insights from Ji Ding's 2023 study further enrich this discussion by highlighting the representational challenges faced by Asian actors in Hollywood, particularly pertinent to Mackenyu's career in light of his strategic role selections. His roles in various projects, such as the culturally pivotal *One Piece*, where he plays Zoro—a character deeply rooted in both the narrative's lore and a broader cultural context—demonstrate how traditional Japanese cultural elements can effectively engage global audiences. This is further evidenced by *Chihayafuru*, where the classical game of Karuta is not just presented as a sport but as a culturally immersive practice that challenges and delights international viewers.

Moreover, Mackenyu's engagement in narratives that weave together Eastern and Western cinematic techniques can be seen in *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure*, where the stylistic influence of Western pop culture is seamlessly integrated into a distinctly Japanese story (Ursini, 2017). Such roles underscore the dual impact of Mackenyu's work: his versatility as an actor and his significant contribution to the cultural reception and global success of live-action adaptations.

As the discussion progresses, the focus will shift to an in-depth analysis of Mackenyu's initial major roles in *Chihayafuru* and *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure*. These roles are crucial for understanding how Mackenyu has expertly navigated the intersection of Eastern narratives and Western cinematic expectations, thereby shaping his career trajectory and contributing to the broader discourse on global cinema. This exploration sets the stage for further examination of how live-action

adaptations bridge diverse cultural expressions and global audiences.

### The Beginning of the Journey:

#### 1. *Chihayafuru* – Incorporating classical Japanese games into pop culture.

Arata Wataya, a high school student who was excellent at the classical Japanese card game *Karuta*<sup>1</sup>, serves as Mackenyu's first significant role in the realm of live-action adaptations. This role is from a trilogy, *Chihayafuru Part I, II and III*, based on Suetsugu Yuki's *Shōjo manga*<sup>2</sup> of the same name, which has been serialised since 2007. Its main story revolves around a female protagonist, Chihaya's relentless pursuit of mastery in *Karuta*. Notably, this title, encompassing both the manga/anime and its live-action cinematic version, might not be acquainted with Western audiences. However, despite the relative unfamiliarity, the trilogy adaptation of this shoujo manga attained remarkable success at the box office. The respective films achieved box office revenues of 1.63 billion (equivalent to 12 million USD), 1.22 billion (8.7 million USD), and 1.73 billion (14 million USD), indicating their substantial popularity (pro.imdb.com/ Mackenyu). Plus, the trilogy received high reviews from critics and was often selected as one of the best live-action movies adapted from Japanese manga. Interestingly, one of the pinnacles of the views about the best live action is occupied by *Rurouni Kenshin*,

where Mackenyu also played a pivotal role, which we will discuss later in this paper.

Additionally, Mackenyu's performance in the film *Chihayafuru* resulted in him receiving the prestigious 40th Japan Academy Newcomer of the Year award in 2017 (pro.imdb.com/ Mackenyu). Achieving this award represents an important milestone in Mackenyu's acting career, highlighting his continuing career success.

Returning to the role of Arata Wataya portrayed by Mackenyu within this trilogy, a significant departure from his other live-action film personas is immediately discernible. Arata Wataya embodies a person characterized by kindness, a quiet demeanor, and an inherently delicate yet handsome appearance, a marked departure from the muscular and rugged roles he later portrayed, as we will discuss in this paper later. It is reasonable to fathom that despite this role contributing much to Mackenyu's career, he may not have a strong inclination towards embodying the gentle and delicately handsome character. The reason why he played this role is possible because Mackenyu, at this stage when he was still new to the industry, did not possess the determination power to choose the roles he wished to play, and the casting director and the producers thought that his appearance would be perfect for a *Shōjo* manga adaptation because of his attractive appearance to female

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<sup>1</sup> *Karuta*: is a traditional Japanese card game that involves memorizing and matching poems. The game is played with two sets of 100 cards, each with a poem written on it. One set is called the *yomifuda* (reading cards), and the other is called the *torifuda* (grabbing cards). The *yomifuda* are read aloud by a reader, and the players compete to find and grab the corresponding *torifuda* as quickly as possible. *Karuta* is a game of skill, speed, and strategy that can also enhance one's cultural and literary knowledge.

<sup>2</sup> *Shōjo manga*: is a genre of Japanese comics that mainly targets young female readers. It typically features romance, drama, and slice-of-life stories, often with a focus on the emotions and relationships of the characters. *Shoujo* manga is one of the most popular and diverse forms of manga, with many subgenres and styles.

audiences since he was voted as one of the most handsome Japanese actors several times.

Nevertheless, regardless of whether or not this trilogy has been chosen with complete personal alignment, it serves both as a testament to the intricate artistry inherent in the classical Japanese card game and literature as well as a demonstration of how traditional culture can be combined with contemporary culture, both locally and internationally since it is a very efficient and popular way to introduce classical culture and literature through popular platforms like manga, anime and movies (Stirek, 2022). This encapsulates a core narrative theme that reverberates through Mackenyu's role choices in the future: To combine Japanese culture with pop culture, not only East but also West, in order to create a better project that bridges the two sides of the globe.

## **2. *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure: Diamond is Unbreakable – Chapter 1 – Embracing Western Aesthetics within Japanese production.***

The second movie Mackenyu participated in early in his career was *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure: Diamond is Unbreakable – Chapter 1*. Unlike *Chihayafuru*, which has not achieved global appeal, *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure*, created by Hirohiko Araki in 1987, has become a globally recognized and influential manga/anime franchise. It is a Shonen manga targeting teenage males, typically garnering larger audiences than Shoujo manga like *Chihayafuru*. Major Shonen titles include *Naruto*, *One Piece*, and *Bleach*.

In contrast to *Chihayafuru*'s classical Japanese cultural themes, *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure* distinctly incorporates Western influences. Its narrative spans various locales from 19th-century UK to early 20th-century

US and Italy, with only a fraction set in Japan. The series characters reflect Western pop culture, with inspirations like Arnold Schwarzenegger, Sylvester Stallone, and Clint Eastwood evident in the characters' designs. The protagonist of Part 3, Jotaro Kujo, draws on Clint Eastwood, while Part 4's Yoshikage Kira is modeled after David Bowie (Ursini, 2017). Araki also integrates Western art influences, with character poses and color palettes reminiscent of Italian sculptures and artist Paul Gauguin. The narrative's 'road movie' style and its literary and cinematic references underscore its Western cultural integration, contributing to its international appeal.

However, the live-action movie, in which Mackenyu plays Nijimura Kuyasu—an antagonist starkly different from his role in *Chihayafuru*—is set in a fictional Japanese town, diverging from the series' typical Western settings. This role showcases Mackenyu's willingness to explore complex characters, moving away from the conventional "beautiful idol" stereotype. It also marks a trend toward antagonist roles in his career, such as in *Rurouni Kenshin* and *Fullmetal Alchemist*, reflecting a possible desire to step out from under his father's shadow.

While the live-action adaptation of *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure* did not replicate the manga and anime's success in terms of box office and critical reception, it aligned with Mackenyu's evolving preferences in role selection. This move and its implications for his career will be further discussed in subsequent sections of this paper.

### **The live-action peak to date: *Rurouni Kenshin*:**

The *Rurouni Kenshin* movies, based on Nobuhiro Watsuki's manga *Rurouni Kenshin: Meiji Swordsman*

*Romantic Story*, stand out as a pinnacle in live-action manga adaptations. These films not only achieved impressive box office success but also received widespread acclaim from audiences and critics globally. The initial trilogy remarkably earned 10 billion Japanese yen, setting a historical record, and was followed by two sequels that added another 6.5 billion yen to its box office legacy, as recorded on IMDB and the official Chinese movie channel 电影网 1905.com. This success is echoed in by their strong ratings on platforms like Rotten Tomatoes, IMDB, Filmmarks, and Douban, which consistently scored above 70% (Grajadian, 2019; history.com editors, 2022).

Mackenyu's involvement in the franchise is notable in *Rurouni Kenshin: Final Chapter Part I*, where he portrays the complex antagonist Enishi Yukishiro. This character is intricately woven into the Meiji Restoration backdrop, a period marked by profound cultural and social shifts as Japan opened to global influences (history.com editors, 2022). The movies capture the essence of this era, a time celebrated for its global integration yet remembered for the cultural and personal upheavals it caused (Arianto, 2019; James, 2011, Chapter II; Wright, 2001).

Enishi's character development is deeply tied to these historical dynamics. Introduced as a boy scarred by his sister's death during the turbulent pre-Meiji period, Enishi's journey to China and his rise as a powerful underworld figure in Shanghai encapsulate the era's East-West interplay. His complex character mirrors the cultural collisions of the time, embodying both the pain of personal loss and the paradoxical benefits of the new era's opportunities.

Mackenyu's portrayal of Enishi not only highlights his ability to navigate complex roles but also reflects his own

bicultural heritage as an American of Japanese descent. This role allows Mackenyu to explore themes of identity and cultural fusion, paralleling his personal experiences with the character's struggles and triumphs. Through Enishi, Mackenyu contributes to bridging Eastern and Western cinematic worlds, enhancing viewer understanding of the nuanced interplay between personal and historical narratives.

In essence, Mackenyu's role in *Rurouni Kenshin* goes beyond mere acting; it supports his mission as a cultural intermediary, using his unique background and thoughtful role choices to foster deeper resonance between diverse audiences and cultures. This portrayal not only strengthens his position as a cultural bridge but also enriches the cinematic dialogue between East and West, underscoring the broader, ongoing dynamics of cultural exchange and adaptation in global cinema.

## Two unsuccessful attempts:

### 1. Scar in *Fullmetal Alchemist*

Following the success of the *Rurouni Kenshin* franchise, Mackenyu participated in the *Fullmetal Alchemist* live-action movies, based on Hiromu Arakawa's esteemed manga. The first movie in the trilogy, *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2017), initially performed well at the Japanese box office, securing the top position with approximately 373 million JPY (about 3.5 million USD). However, it ultimately garnered only 8.5 million USD globally (IMDBpro). The subsequent movies, particularly *Fullmetal Alchemist: Final Transmutation*, fared even worse, with the final installment earning just 775k USD globally.

Review scores for the trilogy were also disappointing, with none surpassing a rating of 5.5 out of 10 on IMDB or 30 out of 100 on Rotten Tomatoes.

Similarly, scores on China's Douban and Japan's Filmarks barely reached 60%. Despite the *Fullmetal Alchemist* manga consistently scoring higher than *Rurouni Kenshin* on various platforms (Ahmad, June 2023), the live-action adaptations failed to capture the original's acclaim.

*Fullmetal Alchemist* is deeply rooted in Western culture, prominently featuring Alchemy and the Philosopher's Stone, a concept central to Western narratives like the Harry Potter series (Principe, 2013). The story also incorporates characters named after the seven deadly sins, further bridging Western and Eastern cultural themes. Mackenyu's role in these films, particularly as the antagonist Scar—an enigmatic figure seeking revenge—offers a complex layer to his acting career. Scar's robust, masculine portrayal marks a departure from Mackenyu's typical "beautiful idol" roles, presenting new acting challenges and expanding his range.

Mackenyu's portrayal of Scar not only explores themes of masculinity and vengeance but also challenges the stereotypical portrayal of East Asian males in Western cinema, which often tends toward less masculine depictions (Ding, 2023). As a star with dual cultural heritage, Mackenyu uses his roles to challenge and diversify the representation of East Asian males, contributing to broader shifts in cinematic portrayals.

Despite the lackluster box office and critical reception of the *Fullmetal Alchemist* trilogy, Mackenyu's involvement underscores his commitment to roles that bridge cultural narratives between the East and West. His portrayal of Scar, distinct from his previous roles, signifies his willingness to explore complex characters that resonate with both American and East Asian audiences. This choice reflects his

ongoing efforts to reshape and challenge conventional archetypes and stereotypes within global cinema, solidifying his role as a cultural intermediary in the film industry.

## 2. Seiya in *Knights of the Zodiac*

Continuing his pursuit of blending Western and Eastern cultures in cinema, Mackenyu took on the role of Saint Seiya in the *Knights of the Zodiac* live-action film, adapted from Masami Kurumada's manga inspired by ancient Greek mythology and the Zodiac. This project, a co-production between Japanese and Hollywood companies, sparked significant excitement among fans of the original manga and anime, particularly due to Mackenyu's resemblance to the character Seiya—a muscular, yet innocent-looking teenage warrior.

The original *Saint Seiya* series is renowned not just for its narrative but especially for the dazzling designs of the knights' armors, often overshadowing the storyline itself. These armors have been a major draw, with merchandise like armor toys proving highly profitable for years (sohu.com, 2023). However, the adaptation faced skepticism when the trailer revealed that Seiya's armor would deviate from the metallic aesthetic of the anime/manga, opting instead for a leather-like appearance, contrary to expectations of an Iron Man-esque design.

Upon release, the film, with a budget of 60 million USD, grossed only 7 million USD globally and received dismal reviews, with ratings not exceeding 40% on major review platforms in America and East Asia (IMDBpro). This outcome marked the movie as a significant failure, dimming the production company's hopes for a franchise.

Despite the film's poor performance, it remains thematically

significant. The narrative, inspired by Greek mythology, features knights representing various zodiac signs, fighting under the aegis of Athena. It showcases a diverse cast, with knights from different nations and backgrounds, reflecting the film's attempt to fuse elements from different cultures.

*Knights of the Zodiac* illustrates the ongoing trend of using Japanese manga adaptations to introduce narratives with Western cultural elements to a global audience. While this adaptation did not succeed, it aligns with Mackenyu's career theme of selecting projects that bridge cultural divides.

Contrary to his previous roles as antagonists like Okuyasu Nijimura in *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure*, Enishi Yukishiro in *Rurouni Kenshin*, and Scar in *Fullmetal Alchemist*, Mackenyu's portrayal of Seiya as the heroic protagonist presents a new dimension to his career. Yet, similar to his antagonist roles, Seiya uses his strength to navigate existential challenges, ultimately discovering his life's purpose. This character development resonates with Mackenyu's ongoing effort to carve out his niche in the acting world, independent of his father Sonny Chiba's legacy.

Thus, despite the failure of *Knights of the Zodiac*, Mackenyu continues to choose roles that challenge cultural stereotypes and explore deep, personal themes, reflecting his commitment to crafting a distinct identity in the international cinema landscape.

### **The One Piece**

Now, we are finally going to talk about the much-anticipated Netflix live-action adaptation of *One Piece*, which is based on the manga with the same title that has achieved a shockingly selling

number of 516.6 million copies worldwide and is the manga-selling world record holder (Hale, 2023). Thus, even though this production is a series rather than a movie that might not belong to our category, the weight of its fame, its profound influence, and the substantial financial investment put in by Netflix renders it a topic of substantial importance that demands meticulous examination.

Crafted by the incredibly creative mind of Eiichiro Oda, *One Piece* has been serialising since 1997. The story follows a fearless, passionate, yet naive young pirate named Monkey D. Luffy, whose unwavering ambition is to be the next Pirate King. Alongside his diverse crew, the Straw Hats, Luffy traverses the vast seas in pursuit of the legendary treasure known as the "one piece," left behind by the previous Pirate King. This quest is not just about treasure hunting; it involves unraveling the intricate mysteries of the world's governing system.

In this adaptation, Mackenyu portrays Zoro, the second lead character, whose commitment to the role was born out of his genuine passion for the series. In a recent interview released by Netflix, Mackenyu shared how he has been a long-time fan of *One Piece*, with Zoro as his favorite character, making this role a dream come true for him (Netflix, 2023).

Zoro's character can be seen as an embodiment of Japan's Bushido—the way of the warrior—which is woven deeply into the series. Bushido emphasises virtues such as loyalty, martial prowess, and honor, virtues that are intertwined with traditional Eastern philosophies like Confucianism, Zen, and Buddhism (Kasulis, 2019). Zoro's portrayal in the Wano Country<sup>3</sup> arc, where he dresses as a traditional

feudal Japan. The people of Wano are proud of their samurai heritage and their craftsmanship,

<sup>3</sup> Wano Country: Wano Country is a secluded island in the world of *One Piece*, inspired by



Japanese samurai, underscores his role as a cultural icon that bridges Eastern philosophical ideals with a global audience. Furthermore, Zoro's loss of one eye, a clear nod to the iconic 'Blind Swordsman' from Japanese folklore, enriches his character's depth and connection to traditional Japanese narratives (Tomioka, 1980).

*One Piece* also excels in world-building, creating a rich tapestry of lands and cultures that mirror our Earth's own diversity. Settings like the Arabasta Kingdom, inspired by Egypt, Water Seven, reminiscent of Venice, and the Mary Geoise, which draws from the Château de Chambord in France, show the series' creative reach (Frajs, 2023; Warren, 2023). Each location is not just a backdrop but a pivotal part of the story that reflects the series' thematic exploration of governance, freedom, and adventure.

The series not only portrays a variety of races—like Merfolks, Giants, and Minks—but also delves into serious issues such as racism, inequality, and the abuse of power. These themes are portrayed through the complex relationships between these races and humans, often reflecting the social hierarchies and prejudices seen in our own world (Ahmad, 2023).

Returning to the character of Zoro, it is evident that his journey within the universe of *One Piece* parallels Mackenyu's own professional trajectory—both are figures navigating complex worlds, driven by deep-rooted values and ambitions. Like his previous roles in other adaptations, this role aligns perfectly with Mackenyu's career motif of bridging Eastern and Western narratives, thus enhancing the global audience's appreciation for shared

human experiences and cultural diversity.

Finally, the success of this adaptation of *One Piece* is undeniable. It has topped the viewership charts across 84 countries on Netflix, surpassing the records previously held by major series such as *Stranger Things* Season 4 and *Wednesday* (Chilton, 2023). With a rating of 8.5/10 on IMDb and a high approval rating on Rotten Tomatoes, the series has achieved commercial success and critical acclaim, highlighting its widespread impact and appeal. This success illustrates the effective translation of the beloved manga into a live-action format that resonates deeply with viewers around the world, affirming the global cultural significance of Mackenyu's role as Zoro.

### 3. CONCLUSION

Our investigation into Mackenyu's involvement in various live-action adaptations, particularly his participation in the high-profile Netflix series *One Piece*, underscores a clear thematic consistency in his role selections. These roles, which ambitiously seek to blend and optimize the confluence of Western and Eastern cultural elements, showcase his dedication to cultural integration and his commitment to embodying universal values that resonate globally. This strategic choice of roles highlights his deep-rooted intention to move beyond the shadow of being "Sonny Chiba's son" and to establish himself as a formidable and independent actor in the global entertainment industry.

While this research provides significant insights into Mackenyu's career and his impact on cultural integration within cinema, it also faces certain limitations. First, the scope of the study is confined to his roles in major

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but they also suffer from oppression and poverty under tyranny.

film adaptations, potentially overlooking his performance in other forms of media and smaller projects that might also contribute valuable perspectives to his overall career analysis. Additionally, our study primarily relies on publicly available data and reviews, which may not fully capture the nuanced audience perceptions or the internal industry dynamics that could further illuminate his career choices.

Future researchers should extend the scope of inquiry to include Mackenyu's lesser-known roles and perhaps even his stage performances to gain a more comprehensive understanding of his artistic range and impact. Interviews with industry insiders, co-actors, and directors could also provide deeper insights into his professional ethos and the strategic decisions behind his role selections. Further, comparative studies involving other actors with similar backgrounds or career trajectories could contextualise his achievements and challenges within the broader patterns of cultural representation in global cinema.

In conclusion, Mackenyu's career represents a compelling case study of how personal and cultural identities can be navigated and articulated within the global cinematic landscape. His roles reflect a blend of artistic ambition and cultural mission and highlight the ongoing need for cinema to engage with and reflect diverse cultural experiences and narratives. As such, Mackenyu stands out not merely as a second-generation star but as a pioneering figure in the entertainment industry, whose career could indeed serve as a blueprint for future talents aiming to bridge diverse cultural divides through the powerful medium of film.

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