



Key of Life

A film by Kenji Uchida

"Breezy rhythm, witty dialogue and excellent thesping chemistry."
Maggie Lee, *Variety*

"Intelligent, amusing, and casually touching."
Kong Rithdee, *Cinema Scope*



**Japan / 2012 / Comedy / Japanese with English subtitles /
128 min. / Color / 1.85 / Dolby Surround**

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SYNOPSIS

35-year-old Sakurai is out of work, out of luck, and his dreams to become an actor have been dashed. He tries to end his own life, but fails miserably, so he goes to relax at a public bathhouse. There he meets the mysterious Kondo, who subsequently suffers a fall, erasing his memory. On a whim, Sakurai switches locker keys, steals the man's belongings, and decides to pass himself off as Kondo. What Sakurai does not know, is that Kondo works for ornery yakuza gangsters. Meanwhile, Kondo has been convinced that he is actually the failed actor Sakurai, and faces this dismal 'reality' with increasing bewilderment. Fortunately, at the hospital he meets the lovely Kanae who, while desperately searching for a husband, goes out of her way to help 'Sakurai' pull himself together. Eventually Kondo regains his memory, but before he can make a new life with Kanae, he has to solve the many problems caused by Sakurai's identity theft.

FESTIVALS AND AWARDS

WINNER, Halekulani Golden Orchid Award for Narrative Feature– **Hawaii International Film Festival**

NOMINATED, Best Actor, Masato Sakai - **Award of the Japanese Academy**

NOMINATED, Best Screenplay, Kenji Uchida – **Award of the Japanese Academy**

NOMINATED, Best Supporting Actor, Teruyuki Kagawa - **Award of the Japanese Academy**

NOMINATED, Best Supporting Actress, Ryoko Hirose - **Award of the Japanese Academy**

OFFICIAL SELECTION:

TORONTO Int'l Film Festival

VANCOUVER Int'l Film Festival

PALM SPRINGS Int'l Film Festival

PORTLAND Int'l Film Festival

DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Kenji Uchida - Director

Uchida graduated from San Francisco State University's cinema program in 1998, where he learned screenwriting and film production in everything from 8mm to 35mm. After returning to Japan, he made the independent comedy *Weekend Blues*, which won the Grand Prize at the 24th Pia Film Festival. This also earned Uchida the PFF scholarship, which financed his first theatrically released feature, *A Stranger of Mine*. The film also won four awards at Critic's Week in Cannes, 2005. After a couple years of intense planning and writing, Uchida made *After School*, another meticulously plotted, innovative piece of story telling. Both this and *Key of Life* garnered Uchida nominations for best screenplay at the Japanese Academy Awards.

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

Masato Sakai – Sakurai

Sakai joined the Tokyo Orange Theater Company while a student at Waseda University. Moving from stage to screen, he won praise for his nuanced performances in samurai dramas, both on television and in films such as *When the Last Sword is Drawn*. Sakai appeared in director Kenji Uchida's previous film, *After School*, and in *Key of Life* was reunited with his co-star from *Golden Slumber*, Teruyuki Kagawa. Sakai has won awards at the Hochi Film Awards, Kinema Junpo Awards and the Blue Ribbon Awards. He was nominated for best actor at the Japanese Academy Awards for his role in *Key of Life*.

Teruyuki Kagawa – Kondo

Kagawa made his television debut in 1989 and has since appeared in countless TV shows and movies. He struggled initially to step out of the shadow of his parents – both popular stage performers – but over the course of his illustrious career has proved himself a brilliant actor in his own right, adept at both dramatic and comedic roles. Some of his more notable performances include Kiyoshi Kurosawa's *Tokyo Sonata*, Jiang Wen's *Devils on the Doorstep* and Miwa Nishikawa's *Sway*. Kagawa recently reconciled with his estranged father, a celebrated kabuki actor, and has decided to join him in the traditional stage art.

Ryoko Hirosue – Kanae

Hirosue made her television debut in 1995 at age 15 and was named Best Newcomer at the Television Drama Academy Awards that same year. Her television career took off, and then she made her film debut in 1997's *20-seki Nostalgia*, for which she won Best Newcomer of the Year at the Japanese Academy Awards. In 2001 Hirosue made her international film debut in Luc Besson's *Wasabi*, alongside Jean Reno. She continued to appear frequently on both television and the big screen, but slowed down in 2004 when she gave birth to her first child. In 2006, Hirosue resumed her career, and in 2008 starred in *Departures*, which won the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film.

CREDITS

CREW

Director and Screenwriter	KENJI UCHIDA
Producers	KAZUMI FUKASE, SATOSHI AKAGI, HIROSHI OHNISHI
Executive Producer	ITARU FUJIMOTO, KAZUTOSHI WADAKURA
Casting	TSUYOSHI SUGINO
Cinematography	AKIRA SAKO
Editing	SHINICHI FUSHIMA
Sound	KENICHI FUJIMOTO
Music	YUSUKE TANAKA

CAST

Takeshi Sakurai	MASATO SAKAI
Kondo	TERUYUKI KAGAWA
Kanae Mizushima	RYOKO HIROSUE
Junichi Kudo	YOSIYOSI ARAKAWA
Ayako Inoue	YOKO MORIGUCHI