



Press release

## NHK Coproduces 8K Drama

### Set during Japan's World War Two Atomic Bomb Program



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**Tokyo, August 27, 2020** — This month, the 8K drama *Taiyo No Ko (Gift of Fire)* was aired on NHK's 8K and 4K satellite channels and on the NHK General TV digital terrestrial channel.

*Taiyo No Ko* is a coproduction by NHK and Los Angeles-based distributor Eleven Arts and NHK's first internationally coproduced 8K drama. It tells the story of Japanese scientists and their loved ones amidst the turmoil of World War Two. The characters include two young brothers (the older a nuclear fission researcher working on secret military orders to build an atomic bomb; the younger a military pilot home from the front) and a young woman who has been their lifelong friend. The story is based on facts that became apparent when a wartime university researcher's diary and other documents were discovered 10 years ago. With exquisite 8K camera work, it gives a vivid depiction of the young people's fates.

The young scientist is played by Yagira Yuya, who won the best actor prize at Cannes for his work in Koreeda Hirokazu's *Nobody Knows* (2004). Yagira gives a convincing portrayal of the young man as he questions his motives while trying to develop a new kind of bomb. Also starring are two other top Japanese

talents, Arimori Kasumi and Miura Haruma. The director is Kurosaki Hiroshi, whose past work includes *Hi No Sakana (Goldfish)* (2009) (Prix Italia award in the TV movies and mini series category and Monte Carlo Television Festival Golden Nymph for Best TV Movie) and *Second Virgin* (2011). The script earned a special mention for the 2015 Sundance Institute/NHK Award. The music was composed by Nico Muhly, whose credits include the Academy Award-winning *The Reader* (2009).

Producer Tsuchiya Katsuhiro said: “We used cutting-edge 8K technologies to make a drama that tackles the role of science in war head-on. Unprecedented imagery of yellowcake (a material scraped together in the midst of a wartime shortage of resources), of the blueish-green light emitted when atoms break up, and of the colorless, burned-out wasteland of Hiroshima after the atomic bombing draw viewers into the world of the drama as though they have traveled through time. The drama is serious, but it shows that people have tried to live life to the fullest in even the hardest of times. I want viewers to encounter them in 8K.”

This drama is scheduled for a theatrical release in 2021. A two-hour documentary about wartime nuclear physicists at Kyoto University has already been broadcast. NHK’s 8K channel controller Hakuno Takahiko said: “NHK has always aired lots of war-related documentaries and dramas in August (the month of the atomic bombings). In this 75th anniversary year, I am delighted that NHK has had the opportunity to work with an American coproduction partner on a project whose message is that humankind must never repeat the tragedy of the atomic bombings. Thanks to the stunning realism of 8K and world-class creative input, we created a drama that can reach young people along with people of other age groups. NHK plans to pursue more major drama coproductions that expand the possibilities of 8K.”

*Gift of Fire* follows *Wife of a Spy* (2020), *A Stranger in Shanghai* (2019), *An Artist of the Floating World* (2019), and *The Sniffer* (2018), as the NHK 8K channel’s fifth drama.

Japan’s major TV broadcasters began broadcasting in ultra-high definition on satellite channels on December 1, 2018. The country’s only public broadcaster, NHK, launched 4K and 8K channels. NHK’s 8K channel operates for 12 hours (from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.) every day. Its content encompasses drama, music, documentaries, culture, and travel.

**About NHK** - NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) is Japan's sole public broadcaster. Funded by fees from Japanese households, it has a reputation for impartial, high-quality programming. Through its six nationwide TV channels and three radio channels, NHK reaches about 50 million households. Besides being a broadcaster, NHK produces a vast array of high-quality programs covering news, documentaries, children's and educational programs, music, entertainment, culture, animation and drama. Known as the pioneer of HD, NHK now actively produces programs in 4K and 8K. [www.nhk.or.jp/corporateinfo/](http://www.nhk.or.jp/corporateinfo/)