

Summary of Press Conference

(September 27th, 2023)

On the Japan Prize 2023

(Comments by YAMANA Hiroo, Executive Director of General Media Administration)

We are pleased to inform you about Japan Prize 2023.

The Japan Prize, an international contest for educational content organized by NHK, will mark its 50th edition since its establishment in 1965 (*Refer to Note 1). This is a unique competition that is exclusively focused on educational content, where works that reflect and address contemporary and social issues of the time come together. The children's television series "Sesame Street" of the United States won the Grand Prix in the 7th Japan Prize in 1971. The program was highly rated for its stance on trying to bring learning through television to children suffering from racial discrimination and economic disparity by making use of the most advanced expressive techniques of the time.

This year, we received a total of 391 entries, works and proposals combined, from 55 countries and regions around the world. From those, 34 finalists have been selected. Many of the selected works and proposals reflect the current times, such as the impact of the war in Ukraine on teenagers, teenagers' sexual problems, and the diverse forms of family. They are all high-quality works for a wide range of generations, including authentic documentaries and dramas.

To commemorate this 50th event, Harry Sugiyama, who hosted the awards ceremony in the past three years, has been appointed the event's PR Ambassador. This year, he will not only host the ceremony, but will also appear in related programs.

*Note 1: The contest was held annually from 1965 to 1973, biennially from 1975 to 1991, and annually thereafter

(Comments by YASUDA Shin, Secretary General of Japan Prize)

Let me introduce some works from this year's finalists.

In the Pre-school Division, a category for children aged up to 6, seven works were selected as finalists, including "The Fabulous Show with Fay and Fluffy: I love My Family!"

The Primary Division for children aged from 6 to 12 also has seven finalists, including "Guillermina & Candelario: My first moon," a Colombian animation that teaches children about the physical changes that occur at puberty.

In the Youth Division for those aged from 12 to 18, the seven finalists include “Speak out yourself – The Abuse we are not talking about,” a Bangladeshi documentary that protests against the society attempting to turn a blind eye to the issue of sexual violence, and NHK’s “Project Aliens,” in which four young minorities, each with different issues, interact with each other in a virtual reality space as alien avatars and become to understand each other’s backgrounds and values.

The Lifelong Learning Division for those aged 18 and older selected “Sarah in Genderland” from Belgium, a program that examined how young people today are facing their own gender, as one of its seven finalists.

Winners of the Award for the Best Work for each division will be chosen from the finalists on October 3rd. The Grand Prix Japan Prize will be selected from the winners and announced at the Awards Ceremony in the Japan Prize Festival Week in November.

The competition has another category called Proposal Division. This category aims at helping countries and regions short of sufficient production conditions, such as budgets and equipment, materialize their outstanding proposals for educational programs with cash prizes. Six proposals from Kenya, Pakistan, Ukraine and other countries have been selected as finalists. Awards for this division will be announced at the Japan Prize Festival in November, together with the Grand Prix Japan Prize.

Next, we would like to introduce the Japan Prize Festival Week, which will take place in Harajuku, Tokyo, from November 20th to 23rd. During the four-day event, award-winning works will be screened, and their creators and jurors, who will be invited from overseas for the event, will have discussions and exchanges with visitors. On the final day, the Grand Prix Japan Prize will be announced. All the screenings, Q&A sessions and social events are open to the public free of charge. Registration will start soon. Please visit the Japan Prize website for more information.

The 28 works in the list of finalists can be viewed on the Japan Prize’s special website from November 13th through December 3rd. All programs are in English. In addition, nine award-winning programs—winners of the Grand Prix as well as the Awards for the Best Works, Awards of Honors and Special Prize, to be announced on October 3rd—will become available with Japanese subtitles from November 20th. The Grand Prix winner and other award-winning works are planned to be broadcast on NHK’s Educational TV by the end of this fiscal year.

Reporters are invited to preview the works anytime they wish, even before the opening of the special website. We will also be happy to arrange online interviews with creators, together with interpreters. During the festival week, reporters are also welcome to cover not only the awards ceremony but also discussions and other events.

Lastly, let me introduce a special program featuring the event. On November 19th, the day before the festival week opens, the program that won the 49th Grand Prix Japan Prize last year will be aired on Educational TV. Titled “Dounia and the Princess of Aleppo,” this Canadian-produced animation film

will be broadcast in Japan for the first time. It is a story full of hope and courage that follows the journey of Dounia, a 6-year-old girl who became a refugee after being forced to flee her homeland of Syria due to the civil war. It was awarded the Grand Prix as a work that tackles difficult challenges of the modern society and fosters understanding and empathy for young victims of war. We hope you will have a chance to watch the work.

On the 74th NHK Kohaku Utagassen (Red-and-White Year-End Song Festival)

(Comments by YAMANA Hiroo)

I would like to talk about the Kohaku Utagassen on the New Year's Eve.

This year's Kohaku Utagassen, to be the 74th, will be held at NHK Hall as its main venue. We would like to present a song festival full of hope that will delight all viewers and listeners.

The program will be broadcast from 7:20 p.m. to 11:45 p.m. on General TV, BS Premium 4K, BS8K and Radio 1. The hosts, participating singers and other details will be announced as soon they are finalized.

For those wishing to view the show live at the venue in Tokyo, we will start receiving applications online from 11 a.m. on October 5th. Details will be announced on NHK's website and elsewhere on the same day.

We hope that the year 2024 will be a bright one, and we would like to make the song festival to be an event suitable to bring this year to a finish.