

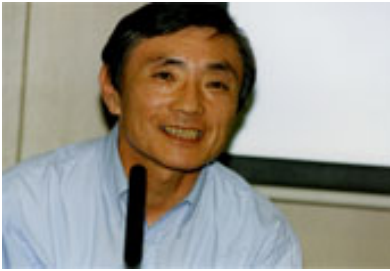


The Right Livelihood Award

for outstanding vision and work on behalf of our planet and its people

Jinzaburo Takagi (Japan)†

Joint Award with Mycle Schneider (1997)



"...for serving to alert the world to the unparalleled dangers of plutonium to human life."

Jinzaburo Takagi

Jinzaburo Takagi started his career of nuclear activism from a position as associate professor of nuclear chemistry at the Tokyo Metropolitan University (TMU). He was born in 1938, graduated in 1961 from the University of Tokyo and spent four and a half years working for the nuclear industry and another four years for the nuclear institute at the University of Tokyo, winning the Asahi Science Encouragement Award in 1967, gaining his doctorate in 1969 and being Guest Scientist at the Max Planck Institute for Nuclear Physics in 1972-73.

When he left TMU in 1975 to set up the non-profit Citizen's Nuclear Information Center (CNIC), he stepped off the ladder to top status within the nuclear elite. He directed CNIC until his death, reporting on the results of their analytical and public education work through the CNIC publications including SNIC Monthly in Japanese and bimonthly Nuke Info Tokyo in English. Takagi was the author of many books and innumerable articles on nuclear issues, environment protection and peace, with special emphasis on the fight against the nuclear threat as well as human rights.

Takagi and CNIC concentrated since 1988 on the Japanese plutonium programme. Takagi organised the International Conference on Plutonium (1991), the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sea Shipments of Japanese Plutonium (1992) and the Aomori International Symposium on Japanese Plutonium (1994) and produced the proposal for a Moratorium on Japan's Plutonium Utilisation Programme. These activities contributed to the recent scale-down of Japan's plutonium programme. Takagi also helped other Asian NGOs to get correct scientific information on the risks and environmental implications of nuclear energy.

Following the IAEA 1991 report that claimed "radiation from the Chernobyl accident had almost no effect on the local population", Takagi produced a paper estimating that 100,000-200,000 extra cancers in former USSR countries are a result of this accident. To follow up, CNIC was co-organiser, with the Belarus Academy of Sciences and a number of Japanese scientists, of the 1994 Belarus-Japan Symposium 'Acute and Late Consequences of Nuclear Catastrophes: Hiroshima, Nagasaki and Chernobyl'.

In 1991 Jinzaburo Takagi invited Mycle Schneider to Japan to participate in an International Plutonium Conference. The two men started working together on the issues of waste and plutonium shipment between their two countries, a collaboration which was recognised in 1997 by the bestowal of a joint Right Livelihood Award on the two men.

In December 1995, the prototype Japanese fast-breeder reactor (FBR) had a serious accident, which the authorities tried to cover up. Takagi and CNIC were constantly quoted in the press as the

scientists who could be trusted. With Japan and France hosting the two remaining large-scale interests in plutonium use, and MOX (uranium-plutonium mixed oxide fuel) being the main use for plutonium outside fast breeder reactors (FBRs), Takagi started work with Schneider on a two-year intensive international research project on 'A Comprehensive Social Impact Assessment of MOX in Light Water Reactors'.

In 1992 Takagi received the Yoko Tada Human Rights Award and in 1994 the Ihatobe Award for his practice as a scientist working for the people. He was also successful as a writer of children's books and in 1997 received the Sankei Children's Book Award.

In 1997 France shut down its Superphénix FBR, and Schneider edited a 32-page brochure that highlighted France's increasing isolation on nuclear policy. In Japan there was another nuclear accident, this time at the Tokai waste disposal facility, and another abortive attempt at a cover-up. With the escalating costs of reprocessing, and a MITI-imposed moratorium on fast-breeder development, public confidence in the industry in Japan decreased dramatically.

With his RLA prize money, Takagi started the Takagi School, to educate people who aim to be citizen scientists. He was diagnosed with cancer, but continued his activity under medical treatment until he died in 2000. Following his last will, the Takagi Fund for Citizen Science was founded to encourage and support Japanese and Asian citizen scientists.

Quotation

"I now think for the first time in my life that we will be able to relieve Japan and the world from the plutonium nightmare."

Jinzaburo Takagi

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