

Criticizing the „Nuclear Village“ – Scientists in Predicament?

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The implementation of nuclear technology for energy production is one of the foundations of swift economic growth in post war Japan. The “peaceful use” of nuclear energy was seen as a door opener for a new, prosperous future. However, the awareness of the intrinsic risks was scarce. Beside the novelty of the technology, the main reason for that surely lies in the security myth grown by the so called nuclear village (*genshiryoku mura*).

The purpose of science is doing research for gaining knowledge – impartial, open and unbiased. So what to do with results, which are diametrically opposed to the security myth of nuclear power production? It shall be questioned whether scientists were put in a predicament between career and social responsibility by criticizing the usage of nuclear power. Based on the biography of three well-known (nuclear) scientists, it will be examined which consequences on their professional and private lives they had to deal with because of their decisions.

The first one will be Takagi Jinzaburō a chemist with focus on nuclear chemistry. At the very beginning of his career, he conducted research on the commercial usage of nuclear power. In 1975 however, he abandoned research and his career and founded the Citizens’ Nuclear Information Center (*genshiryoku shiryō jōhōshitsu*). There he translated his gained knowledge about nuclear power into understandable language for everyone. He is seen as the most important opinion leader in the anti-nuclear movement. The second one who shall be introduced is a companion of Takagi: theoretical physicist Taketani Mitsuo. He played a key role in anti-nuclear activism, as well, but unlike Takagi, Taketani continued conducting research. He formed the Research Group on Atomic Safety Issues (*genshiryoku anzen mondai kenkyūkai*) whose members examined for instance the effects of low dose radiation or the vulnerabilities of NPPs. Almost 40 years later in 2011 the nuclear engineer Koide Hiroaki emerged as an influential voice and a central figure in the anti-nuclear movement. He spent his entire career at the Kyoto University Research Reactor Institute (KURRI) as an assistant professor working on the abolition of nuclear power plants. He is seen as powerful detractor of the nuclear village.

Although all three of them criticised the usage of nuclear power respectively the nuclear village itself, they chose an individual way of expressing it. Hence the extent of impact on their life is to be scrutinized.