

MURAKAMI Suminao Award 2022
and the JDR Award for the Most Contributory Reviewer 2022:

Message from the Winner



Hideaki Karaki

Professor Emeritus,
The University of Tokyo,
Tokyo, Japan

I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the MURAKAMI Suminao Award for Disaster Research 2022 and the JDR Award for the Most Contributory Reviewer 2022. It has been a great pleasure to serve on the editorial board for many years, and I have had the opportunity to talk with distinguished members of the editorial board who specialize in natural disasters such as earthquakes, volcanoes, and floods, which are completely outside my field of expertise, biology and medicine, and who have greatly broadened my perspective.

The saying goes that disasters come just when you forget about them, but we have been in a situation recently where disasters come before we forget about them. There have been so many disasters: the panic that began with the discovery of cattle infected with bovine spongiform encephalopathy in Japan in 2001, the simultaneous terrorist attacks in the U.S. and the U.S. military invasion of Afghanistan around the same time, the poisoning of frozen dumplings made in China in 2007, the Tohoku Earthquake and Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant accident in 2011, the COVID-19 problem that has continued from 2019 to the present, the invasion of Ukraine by Russia in 2022 and the resulting energy crisis and food shortages, as well as earthquakes, torrential rains, landslides, and typhoons that have occurred every year.

The purpose of JDR, I believe, would be to stimulate research on these disasters, thereby providing a basis for the development of technologies for disaster prevention and control. In this regard, I have been concerned about the distance between science and technology: in the case of COVID-19, research on the causative virus, combined with messenger RNA vaccine technology, led to the fastest vaccine ever developed. On the other hand, the development of a cure has been slow, and the only treatment for pneumonia has been the old-fashioned one. Recently, antiviral drugs have been developed, but their efficacy has yet to be determined.

There are many reasons for the distance between science and technology, and I hope that the research results published in JDR will play a role in reducing that distance.

*On my 81st Birthday,
Hideaki Karaki
December 3, 2022*