

## Professor Timo Airaksinen recipient of the Väinö Voipio Award

Timo Airaksinen, Professor Emeritus of Social and Moral Philosophy at the University of Helsinki (title corrected 16.11.2020), has been given the Väinö Voipio Award of the Union of Freethinkers of Finland in recognition of his work, especially in popularising practical philosophy and in promoting free thought and secular culture.

Airaksinen's diverse literary output has included upper secondary school ethics and philosophy textbooks. He has been involved in developing these subjects and has served as a member of the Finnish Matriculation Examination Board for 20 years.

In 2020, Airaksinen wrote a polemical work entitled *Jäähyväiset uskonnolle: Henkisyyden puolustus* ("A Farewell to Religion: A Defence of Spirituality"), published by Bazar. The book is a bold defence of free thought and non-religion which popularises the debate on social and philosophical values in a light-hearted manner.

The award was presented on 22 October 2020 at the Kappeli restaurant in Helsinki by Jape Lovén, chairman of the Union of Freethinkers of Finland, and Esa Ylikoski, editor-in-chief of the magazine *Vapaa Ajattelija*.

Airaksinen has also enjoyed an outstanding international career in philosophical research. He has worked, for example, in Texas, at Tokyo Institute of Technology, Japan and in Hamburg, Germany and has written in numerous international top publications about, among other topics, George Berkeley, ethics, applied ethics and human rights. He is an exceptionally multidisciplinary author. His works, which include *Markiisi de Saden filosofia*, 1998 ("The philosophy of the Marquis de Sade"), and *Onnellisuuden opas*, 2011 ("A Guide to Happiness"), have achieved a wide international reputation.

Previous recipients of the Väinö Voipio Award include Jorma Palo, Kari Cantell, Kari Enqvist, Ilkka Niiniluoto, Simopekka Nortamo, Kimmo Pietiläinen, Erkki Tuomioja and Esko Valtaoja. The Award has also gone to the conferment committee of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Helsinki, the Local Register Office of Hyvinkää, and the Young Philosophers' Association of Helsinki, responsible for organising the Youth Philosophy Event Nufit.

The Väinö Voipio Award is named after a former chairman of the Union of Freethinkers of Finland who was also a judge and an author. The Award is given as recognition of a humanistic outlook on life, a scientific perception of reality and promotion of a society independent of religion.

The Union of Freethinkers of Finland is an advocacy, human rights and cultural organisation for the non-religious, which also promotes science-based thinking, rationality, critical judgement, freedom of speech and humanism. <http://vapaa-ajattelijat.fi/>

For further information, please contact

Esa Ylikoski

Tel. +358 (0)50 468 5332

[esa.ylikoski@vapaa-ajattelijat.fi](mailto:esa.ylikoski@vapaa-ajattelijat.fi)