
Practical Report

A Support to the “Integrated Study” at a Junior High School in the Local Community

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As a guest lecturer, I have been supporting the “Integrated Study” for the first grade students in Kawaguchi Junior High School for several years. The titles of my lectures in the recent three years are as follows: “Let’s walk the promenades on the map of fantastic village, Kawaguchi” in 2008, “Let’s explore the unexplored areas in Kawaguchi Village” in 2007, and “Let’s make your nature trails in Kawaguchi Village” in 2006. At first, I gave my lecture on the culture and history of our home village Kawaguchi and its nature such as the low mountains, woods, rice fields, and rivers in the rural district of Kawaguchi. Furthermore, I taught students about wild birds, wild animals, and wild flowers in the nature of Kawaguchi Village. And then, students carried out research activities on various subjects in their community and reported their results by the end of second term.

Keywords: Integrated study, junior high school, Home Village Kawaguchi

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As an example of environmental preservation activities in the local community, let me introduce my lectures related to my hometown Kawaguchi Village. The lectures have been given to support the Integrated Study for the first grade students in Kawaguchi Junior High School in the village.

About Kawaguchi Village

Where is Kawaguchi Village?

Kawaguchi Village is in Hachioji city which is located in the western part of Tokyo Metropolis, Japan. Kawaguchi Village is far

from the center of Tokyo. The latitude of the village is 35°39’N and the longitude is 139°07’E.

Tokyo Metropolis is located in the center of Kanto region which is in the large Kanto plain, and is surrounded by four prefectures: Saitama, Kanagawa, Chiba and Yamanashi.

The city hall of Tokyo Metropolis, which is one of the high-rise buildings in Japan, is in Shinjuku Ward in the downtown of Tokyo Metropolis. The governor of Tokyo Metropolis is Mr. Shintaro Ishihara, a famous novelist of Japan. He is an elder brother of the popular and famous movie star, the late Mr. Yujiro Ishi-

hara.

Aerial View of Kawaguchi Village

The aerial view of Kawaguchi Village shows many golf courses in the forests of the Minami-Kasumi Hill region particularly in the northern part of it. And it shows the forests of Kawaguchi Hill region in the southern part of the village. The Kawaguchi River runs between Minami-Kasumi Hill region and Kawaguchi Hill region. The local community of Kawaguchi Village spreads along the river.

Kawaguchi Village is well-known in Japan

Kawaguchi Village is well-known among Japanese students because the geographical topics of Kawaguchi Village have been taken up in a textbook of geography for junior high school students which is published by Teikoku-shoin Co., Ltd. (Fig. 1). Many Japanese junior high school students learn geography through this textbook today.

The Imakuma Shrine

The Imakuma Shrine (Fig. 2) is one of the representative historical buildings in Kawaguchi Village. It was said that in the old time Mt. Imakuma, which is a low mountain behind the shrine, was haunted such as bogies, monsters and ghosts, like the famous Totoro who is

a hero in an animated film made by the very famous Japanese animated movie director, Mr. Hayao Miyazaki, and lives in the forests in the Sayama Hill region of Tokorozawa city, Saitama Prefecture.



Figure 2 The Imakuma Shrine

Kawaguchi River

The Kawaguchi River (Fig. 3), which runs through the center of Kawaguchi Village, is a branch of the Asakawa River, a tributary of the Tamagawa River which is a main river of Tokyo. Once, the Kawaguchi River had much clean water and many wild birds like a Japanese kingfisher named “Kawasemi,” and many fish. We saw many rich forests and green fields along the river in the nature of Kawaguchi Village.

Princess Norinomiya, who married Mr. Yoshiki Kuroda, does research on the Kawasemi, and she wrote a book on the bird. However, recently I am sorry that we see less water and fewer living things in the Kawaguchi River because of certain developments in Kawaguchi Village, such as river improvements, road constructions and turning the land into housing lots.

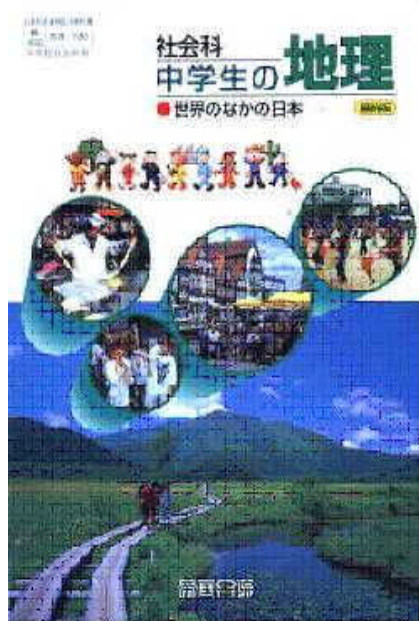


Figure 1 (Left) A junior high school geography textbook published by Teikoku-shoin Co., Ltd. which take up the geographical topics of Kawaguchi Village



Figure 3 Kawaguchi River

History of Kawaguchi

In the Jomon period, five thousand years ago, people lived on the plateaus of Kawaguchi Village, their habitation sites with so many pieces of Jomon earthenware, which have vivid fire flame patterns, were found in the fields of Kawaguchi Village. The name of Kawaguchi Village is found in an old book from the Nara period, more than one thousand years ago. During the age of civil wars in the 15th century, a feudal lord ruled Kawaguchi Village. The ruins of Lord Castle are in the village. From the age of civil wars to the Edo period, many Buddhist temples were built in Kawaguchi Village. The representative one, Hourenji Temple, was built in the 15th century in the center of the village.

The Woods called "Satoyama"

"Satoyama" is the woods which is close to a farming area. For farmers in Kawaguchi Village, their Satoyama used to be very useful forests. Once, they used trees in Satoyama as firewood and for making charcoals everyday. They used fallen leaves for fertilizer for the rice fields. However, farmers came to use oil and chemical fertilizers gradually, so they do not use trees and fallen leaves in Satoyama. As a result, Satoyama in Kawaguchi Village is abandoned today. In our Satoyama, we can see many pretty flowers which are called Spring Ephemerals, such as beautiful "Kata-

kuri," *Erythronium japonicum*, and various violets during the spring season. We also can see the flowers of "Higanbana," *Lycoris radiata*, in autumn. We can see various dandelions from spring to autumn.

A View of Fantastic Village, "Kawaguchi"

Kawaguchi Village has beautiful scenery because it has beautiful nature such as green hills, clean rivers and fertile fields. The landscape of Kawaguchi Village in a rainy day during the rainy season of the Japanese islands is particularly beautiful and heartwarming (Fig. 4). In early spring, we can enjoy many beautiful plum blossoms and cherry blossoms. The cherry trees are the representative plant of Japan. One hundred years ago, a famous Japanese poet, Toukoku Kitamura, visited Kawaguchi Village and stayed there for a short time. He wrote the novel entitled, *Mikka-Genkyo*, which means "the stay for three days in Fantastic village Kawaguchi."



Figure 4 A rainy scene of Kawaguchi Village

One of Japanese Hawks, "Otaka"

One of the Japanese hawks, Otaka (Fig. 5), lived in the forest named Tengu-mine of Kawaguchi Village before. Once, we found Otaka's nest and heard the birds cry in it. However, we have not found Otaka anywhere in Kawaguchi Village since the tunnel construction of the highway named Ken-o-do was started. We hope we will find Otaka in the forests of Kawaguchi Village someday in the

future because the bird is one of the endangered species in Japan.



Figure 5 A Japanese hawk, Otaka, in Tengo-mine Forest

A Support to the “Integrated Study” at Kawaguchi Junior High School

Kawaguchi Junior High School

Kawaguchi Junior High School was established by Kawaguchi Village 60 years ago. In the year of 2008, there were 368 students and 11 classrooms, a broad school yard, a rooftop swimming pool, and in particular, a duplicated old room of farmer’s house in Kawaguchi Village. The Japanese farmer’s family lives at the sunken hearth end in their house made of wood, straw and paper in the old time.

Lectures of Integrated Study for the First Grade Students

I have had my lectures of Integrated Study for all first grade students in Kawaguchi Junior High School in the auditorium before their fieldwork for three years continuously. The titles of my lecture were “Let’s make your nature trails in Kawaguchi Village” in 2006, “Let’s explore the unexplored areas in Kawaguchi Village” in 2007, and “Let’s walk the promenades on the map of fantastic village, Kawaguchi” in 2008.

FieldWork of Integrated Study

One day on July 2008, I had fieldwork with some first grade students around their school for two hours. They studied the history of Buddhist temples, Shinto shrines and old farmer’s houses. And they investigated and watched many wild flowers, insects and birds in the fields, woods and mountain streams. After their fieldwork, they chose the topics of their research thesis by themselves. They presented their reports in which they wrote the result of their research by the end of the second term.