

A GEOGRAPHY OF HUMAN LIFE” AND OUR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

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“A Geography of Human Life (Jinsei Chirigaku)” was written by TUNESABURO MAKIGUCHI (1871-1944) in 1903. In his book, he writes of the evolution of competition from military, political, and economic competition to humanitarian competition, based on nation’s moral capitals. By employing geographic concepts, he attempted to describe experiences that a person goes through in one’s life in a global point of view. Moreover many important points of views on environmental education are also described in “ A Geography of Human Life”. For instance, he points out that 1) Children can learn various things in their hometown while they are unconscious of the process of learning, and 2) hometown has in itself a strong educational power to foster the people living there. As a great suggestion was obtained from the value-consideration on the relationship between human beings and the earth, and from the humanics-consideration on the harmonization of man with nature etc., I would like to report on that taking environmental education activity with cooperation of the community at our school as an example.

Our school stands on a hill in Hamamatsu City, which is situated between Tokyo and Osaka. In Hamamatsu City, there are many factories like the well known YAMAHA, HONDA and SUZUKI, and is said to be a town of motorcycle, musical instruments and industry. Since 1991, our school has been working on environmental education and activities based on “volunteer activity” to protect the nature and “ manufacturing activity” in consideration of nature and environment. We have a great natural environment with beautiful lakes and rivers, a long sand hill costs and the North Alps Mountains, which is said to be the roof of Japan. In such as environment, our school holds up “Every students as an environment friendly engineer” as one of our educational aims and has been taking characteristics environmental education.

Our Chief activities are; 1) volunteer activity, 2) conservation activity of nature, 3) recycling activity, 4) careful manufacturing activity for nature and environment, 5) gathering for study and dialog, 6) research activities of nature and environmental problems, 7) public relations. The committee of environmental education, the student’s council and the environmental club hold these activities all the year round. We cooperate with the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), organizations working for nature preservation and UNESCO as well.

We have been participating in cleaning up activities to protect the precious seashore called “Nakatajima dune” since 12 years ago. In this sea shore, loggerhead turtles come along with the current and lay their eggs. Little terns, one kind of migratory birds, come in numbers and make a colony. Students and their parents have worked together and carried out enlightenment activities and public relations to citizens by flying a big handmade kite with a message of the conservation of nature.

Moreover, we have worked on cleaning up activities of Lake Humana and Lake Sanaru, which is connected to Lake Hamana. Students have made a boat, which

is driven by solar and human power and participated in competitions with their messages of conservation of nature on its hull. And we also have worked on cleaning up activities of Lake Sanaru connected with Lake Hamana. Fortunately, Our continuous environmental volunteer activities have received commendation from 3 city 6 towns and villages around Lake Hamana and Shizuoka prefecture. Moreover, unique protection-of-nature activities in the lakefront of Lake Sanaru received minister commendation also from the government in 2002. Through these activities I have reached to the conclusion that the educational power of an area's nature and people living there are very important for environmental education and activity.