

PROFILE

Professor Jiro KAWAKITA was born in Tsu City, Mie Prefecture in Japan, but spent most of his childhood in Kyoto. His childhood plant collection fostered his interest in exploring nature. Throughout his junior high school to college career, Professor Kawakita was an active mountaineering club member. While majoring in geography at Kyoto Imperial University, he went to Ponape Island and the Daxinganling Range on a scientific expedition under the guidance of Kinji Imanishi. These trips further stimulated his scientific curiosity.

Upon graduation from university, he was conscripted into the army. His warfare experience implanted in his mind the desire to contribute to world peace. The yearn to contribute to world peace remained an important part of his philosophy of life after the end of war. In 1953, he joined Japan's first expedition group to Mt. Manaslu as a member of the scientific team which accompanied the group. The research report on the expedition written in English, *Ethno-Geographical Observations on the Nepal Himalaya* (1957), is still regarded as a top research document. After the completion of the expedition, he continued to vigorously conduct scientific research in Nepal. While at home, he promoted and exemplified the philosophy and methodology he had acquired from his fieldwork experience. When the school turbulence broke out, in late 1960's, he retired from the Tokyo Institute of Technology and established "Free Campus College." Later, he began training young researchers of various disciplines in the field of geography at Tsukuba and Chubu Universities. Currently, as Chairman of the Board of Directors at the Kawakita Research Institute, he continues to pursue his diverse research activities and put his expertise into practice.

Professor Kawakita's ethnogeography is very unique. Its methodological foundation is thoroughly based on observations which he obtained during his fieldwork. He once expressed one of his primary ideologies as follows, "Let the chaos speak for itself." He proceeded to develop the methodology into his innovative problem-solving method called, "KJ Method." Today, many corporations and research institutions apply the KJ Method to their activities.

His achievements in promoting exchange between Japan and Nepal have been quite extensive. It is a well known fact that he installed a basic water supply system in rural villages in Nepal. The realization of this project was made possible by Professor Kawakita's meticulous research and accurate understanding of the needs of the local people. These characteristics are excellent examples of Professor Kawakita's pragmatic humanist belief.

MAJOR WORKS

Ethno-Geographical Observations on the Nepal Himalaya, Kyoto, 1957.*

Ecology in Nepal Himalaya, *Geographical Review of Japan*, 30-9, 1957.

Journals of Expedition to the Nepali Kingdom, 1957.

Land of Platform Burial, 1960. *Method on Field Sciences*, 1973.

Vertical Structure of Central Nepal Himalayan Cultures, *Anthropology, Quarterly*, 8-1, Kyoto, 1977.

KJ Method, 1986. *Simplicity and Civilization*, 1987.

Himalaya, Tibet and Japan, 1988.

In Search of Philosophy on International Technological Cooperation (co-author), Nagoya, 1989.

Title with asterisk is published in English.

Titles without place of publication are published in Tokyo.