

KOREAN HISTORY THROUGH JOURNALING

GRADES: High School

AUTHOR: Mary Nacarlo

SUBJECTS: History

TIME REQUIRED: One to two class periods

OBJECTIVES:

1. To locate the Korean Peninsula.
2. To describe how the geography of Korea may have affected life there.
3. To highlight the major achievements of the Chosŏn kingdom.
4. To develop an understanding of life in Korea during the Chosŏn kingdom.
5. To identify the effect of the Japanese invasion on the daily lives of the Korean people.
6. To introduce the process of journal writing.

MATERIALS REQUIRED:

- Present day world map
- Handout 1: Map of Korea—Three Kingdoms Period (all handouts attached)
- Handout 2: Web Diagram of the Chosŏn Kingdom's Accomplishments
- Handout 3: UCLA International Institute Article
- Handout 4: Korean Journal Writing Rubric

BACKGROUND:

Korea is located on a peninsula off of mainland China. Mountains cover nearly 70% of the Korean Peninsula. Because farming is difficult on the mountains, most people lived along the coast. The western coastal area is Korea's major agricultural region.

Korea has a coastline with hundreds of good harbors. Due to their proximity to the sea, Koreans have long depended upon fish and seafood for sustenance. Today, South Korea has the third largest fishing industry in the world. China, a powerful neighbor, has played a key role in Korea's historical development (imparting farming and writing methods as well as Confucian traditions and ideas about government). At various times in history, China has invaded and exerted direct control over Korea. The first Chinese invasion of Korea took place in 108 BCE, during the Han dynasty.

Between 300 and 600 CE, powerful local rulers forged three separate kingdoms: Koguryŏ (koh-guh-ree-oh) in the North, Paekche (pehk-cheh) in the Southwest, and Silla (shill-lah) in the Southeast. Although they shared the same language and cultural background, the three kingdoms often warred with one another or with China. In 668, the Silla kingdom united the Korean peninsula. The Silla kingdom ruled from 668 to 918. The Koryŏ kingdom (kor-ee-oh) succeeded Silla, ruling from 918 to 1392, and the Chosŏn (choh-suhn), or Yi kingdom, ruled from 1392 to 1910.

Under the Silla kingdom, Korea acknowledged Chinese dominance, but preserved its independence. Korea came to see its relationship with China in Confucian terms, as that of a younger brother who owed respect and loyalty to an older brother. Koreans also adopted this Confucian philosophy in domestic affairs and placed importance on the family as the foundation of the state.

The relationship between China and Korea was also one of cultural exchange. Chinese missionaries spread Buddhism in Korea. Koreans used woodblock printing from China to produce Buddhist texts. Later, Korean inventors made movable metal type to print large numbers of books. Koreans learned to make porcelain from China, but then perfected techniques of making celadon, a type of porcelain with an unusual blue-green glaze.

In 1392, Korean general Yi Song-gye (ee-sung-keh) established the Chosŏn kingdom. Yi reduced Buddhist influence and set up a government based upon Confucian principles. In 1443, Korea's most celebrated ruler, King Sejong (seh-jong) the Great, decided to replace the complex Chinese system of writing that was then used throughout Korea. Sejong had experts develop han'gul, an alphabet that was easy for all people to learn. Its use led to an extremely high literacy rate.

During the 1500s and 1600s, Korea restricted the influence of outsiders. The low status of merchants in Confucian society led Koreans to look down on foreign traders who worked in the kingdom. Eventually, Korea's isolation was ended by force. An ambitious Japanese ruler decided to invade China by way of Korea. Japanese armies landed, looted and burned across the Korean Peninsula. Korean admiral Yi Sun-shin used metal-plated "turtle boats" to fight off the Japanese. Finally, after six years, the Japanese armies withdrew from Korea, taking many Korean artisans back with them to Japan.

In a second invasion, in 1636, the Manchus conquered Korea before overrunning Ming China. After the Manchus ascended to power in China, Korea was forced to acknowledge China's supremacy. The two invasions led Koreans to lament that they were "a shrimp among whales." In response, Koreans chose to isolate their country, excluding all foreigners except the Chinese and a few Japanese. During this time period, Korea became known as the "hermit kingdom."

Korea was drawn into conflicts between larger powers again in the 1800s as Chinese power waned, Russia expanded and Japan began to Westernize. In 1876, Japan forced Korea to open its ports to Japanese trade. Faced with similar demands from Western powers, Korea had to accept unequal treaties. As Japan extended its influence in Korea, it came into conflict with China, which still saw Korea as a tributary state. After defeating China and then Russia, Japan made Korea a protectorate.

In 1910, Japan annexed Korea outright, absorbing the kingdom into its empire. Japan ruled Korea for 35 years. Like Western imperialists, the Japanese desired to modernize their newly acquired territory. They built factories, railroads and communications systems. Development, however, generally benefited Japan. Under Japanese rule, Koreans produced more rice than ever before, but most of it went to Japan. The Japanese were as unpopular in Korea as Western imperialists were elsewhere. They imposed harsh rules on their colony and deliberately set out to

erase the Korean language and identity. This repression bred resentment, which in turn nourished a Korean nationalist movement. A nonviolent protest against Japanese rule began on March 1, 1919, and soon spread throughout Korea. The Japanese crushed the uprising and massacred many Koreans. The March First Movement then became a rallying cry as Koreans continued their struggle to evict the Japanese in coming years.

PROCEDURE:

1. Introduce students to the geography of Korea. Show them a world map and point out where Korea is. Have them label Korea, China, Russia, Japan and the United States. Have them color the Korean Peninsula. Explain to students that Korea is almost 70% mountains. Ask students how the location of the Korean Peninsula might have influenced the development of Korean civilization (i.e., people would tend to settle along the coasts, might lead them to be economically tied to the sea).
2. Introduce students to the geography of Korea during the Three Kingdoms period (Koguryō, Paekche, Silla). Have students label the kingdoms. Color the three kingdoms different colors.
3. Trace the unification of the three kingdoms into the Silla kingdom. Explain how the Chosŏn kingdom contributed the most to Korea as a result of its being the last and longest ruling kingdom (1392–1910).
4. Highlight the contributions of the Chosŏn kingdom using a web diagram (see Handout 3).
5. Discuss the reasons that Japan may have desired to have privileged access to Korea (i.e., it was the bridge between China and Japan; imperial competition was developing between Japan, Russia and China; to gain economic control in the territory; to demonstrate to other nations that Japan was a rising power).
6. Question students about journal writing: What is the purpose of writing in a journal? How might journals be a positive aspect of a child's life? (i.e., it serves as an outlet; provides perspective on a situation; details situations in one's life that could be able to be examined at a later point; serves as a historical record). Ask students to identify famous accounts of someone's personal diary becoming public (i.e., Anne Frank, *The Diary of Anne Frank*; Ronald Reagan, *In His Own Words*) and discuss the controversial issue of making someone's personal thoughts and feelings public.
7. Have students read Handout 3, an article titled, "Flashpoint in Japanese–Korean Relations," published by the UCLA International Institute. Provide students with the following questions to guide their reading:
 - a. According to the author, what Japanese actions caused bitterness among Koreans?
 - b. How is the island of Dokdo a sore spot for Koreans today?
 - c. How did the guest speaker (Dudden) feel about the issue of the apology?
 - d. What is your opinion about the last paragraph of the article, in reference to Dudden's statement regarding the role of the United States? Should the United States side with Korea? Should the United States side with Japan?

Students may need further explanation about North–South relations today, based on the article. Refer to Map 2 on Handout 1 for the Demarcation Line.

8. Assign students the following homework assignment: Write two journal entries. The first entry should be dated in 1880. Students are to role-play a 10 year-old Korean child growing up during the Chosŏn kingdom. They are to highlight the accomplishments of the Chosŏn kingdom. In the second journal entry, students are to write as if they were a 36 year-old Korean adult living in 1906. Students are to highlight the invasion of Korea by the Japanese and how life might have changed under Japanese rule. Provide students with the rubric on Handout 4, for grading purposes.

EVALUATION:

Students will be assessed on the level of knowledge about Korea during the Chosŏn period that they demonstrate in their journals. In addition, students will be expected to understand how historical information and artistic expression can be revealed through journal writing. Refer to Handout 4 for rubric.

ENRICHMENT:

Han'gul Day is a holiday in South Korea. Ask students why they think Koreans celebrate the creation of their alphabet. Discuss their answers.

Have students research the han'gul alphabet on the internet site below. Have students write their names in han'gul. See the following internet source for Korean translations of English names:

<http://thinkzone.wlonk.com/Language/KoreanName.htm>

Discuss how technology has changed journal writing today. (Some potential topics are blogs, myspace.com, the use of the internet, I-books, audio versions of journals, typing journals rather than writing them, freedom of expression rights and the Patriot Act.) Have students create a blog detailing the daily life of Koreans today. Blogs might focus on life in North Korea as well as South Korea.

RESOURCES:

Assessment Generators

<http://www.thecanadianteacher.com/tools/assessment/>

Korea Three Kingdoms Map and Modern Day Korea Map

<http://www.hendrick-hamel.henny-savenije.pe.kr/maps.htm>

Ellis, Elisabeth and Esler, Anthony, eds. *World History Connections to Today*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2003, pp. 313-315; 380.

UCLA International Institute: Flashpoint in Japanese-Korean Relations

<http://www.isop.ucla.edu/article.asp?parentid=45806>

HANDOUT 1: MAP OF KOREA—THREE KINGDOMS PERIOD

Map 1

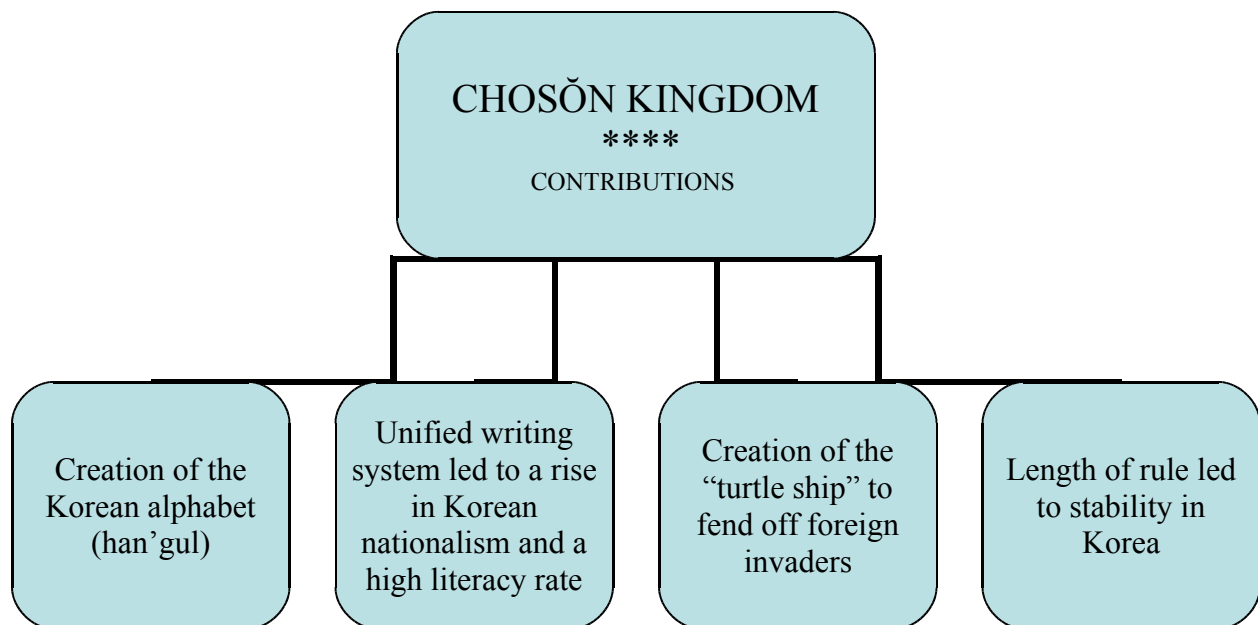


*Note: The Korean government recognized the McCune-Reischauer System (Silla)

Map 2



HANDOUT 2: WEB DIAGRAM OF THE CHOSŎN KINGDOM'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS



HANDOUT 3: UCLA INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE ARTICLE

Flashpoint in Japanese–Korean Relations: Connecticut College's Alexis Dudden speaks on "Illegal Korea"

By Ayub Khattak

Japan's colonial rule over Korea from 1905 to 1945 is still a raw issue. "We can take as a baseline of knowledge that Japan committed horrible atrocities in Korea," said Alexis Dudden of Connecticut College at a May 1, 2006, colloquium sponsored by the Paul I. and Hisako Terasaki Center for Japanese Studies. In spite of that preface, she had to placate an audience member whose outburst culminated with, "You know what the Japanese did? They banned even the Korean language! That is the Koreans' language! How can they do that?"

"We don't disagree about this," Dudden tried to reassure the man.

Lingering Korean bitterness about the occupation has worsened as Japan has reiterated its claims on a pair of uninhabited islets and the nearby waters and seabed, which are rich in fish, squid, minerals and natural gas. Located between Korea and Japan, and currently under South Korea's control, the islands and surrounding rocks are called Dokdo by the Koreans and Takeshima by the Japanese.

Competition for natural resources has spun off a controversy over the naming of the sea between Japan and Korea, currently called the Sea of Japan, Dudden explained. Koreans want that changed to the East Sea, she said, out of concern that the current name gives Japan a symbolic edge in claims on resources.

Koreans' anger over Dokdo was stoked by a series of events, including a Japanese envoy's remarks that Dokdo belonged to Japan and the declaration of a Takeshima Day by Japan's Shimane prefecture. In response several protestors in Seoul cut off one of their own fingers in March of 2005, to demonstrate what it would mean for Korea to give up control of Dokdo. Another man set himself on fire. Korean protesters also took to the streets in Los Angeles.

The Japanese claim on Dokdo dates to 1905, when its navy seized the island as a prelude to the invasion and occupation of Korea and China. The Japanese declared to the international community that their annexation of the island during the Russo-Japanese War, and subsequent expansion, were entirely legal. When pressed for a justification, "the Japanese would say, 'Hey! We were just doing what everyone else was doing,'" Dudden explained.

Today, long after Japan withdrew from Korea and began issuing official apologies, the country is again advancing its claim on Dokdo/Takeshima. This has engendered new skepticism among Koreans about the sincerity of Japan's apologies for its colonial actions. One such apology contained in a letter from Hirohito, emperor of the expansionist period, scarcely deserves to be called an apology, Dudden said. The letter's sole expression of regret "to those who lost their lands abroad," applies not to Koreans, Dudden said, but to Japanese whose overseas estates had to be abandoned after the withdrawal.

Japan refuses to call the invasion of Korea a war, saying that war was never declared. Japan did give Korea \$600 million after the occupation, but mostly to avoid any mention of reparations, Dudden said. In a set of insults that angered both Koreans and Chinese, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi has repeatedly visited the Yasukuni Shrine, a memorial to Japanese war dead since 1869 that honors, with others, 14 convicted war criminals.

Japan's prominent place in the global economy and alliance with the U.S. allow it to get away with this posture, Dudden said, suggesting that the geopolitical dynamics have come to resemble those of the early twentieth century.

Meanwhile, as part of shrewd attempts to delegitimize Korea as a whole, Dudden said Japan has drawn attention to North Korea's admitted abduction of Japanese citizens and other highlights of the outcast regime's rap sheet. Calling her talk "Illegal Korea," she argued that the Japanese have attempted to fashion the two Koreas as a single rogue entity in the eyes of the international community.

"It's hard for a historian not to take a side," she said, adding that the United States is apparently bound by security agreements with both South Korea and Japan to go to war with whichever side fires first, if it ever came to that. She doubts that it ever will come to that, but hinted that strong U.S.–Japanese ties (including a good personal relationship between Bush and Koizumi) might trump the other alliance.

Date Posted: 5/18/2006

Source: <http://www.isop.ucla.edu/article.asp?parentid=45806>

HANDOUT 4: KOREAN JOURNAL WRITING RUBRIC

Student: _____ Subject: _____ Grade: _____

Evaluated By:

☐ Self ☐ Peer ☐ Teacher

Criteria	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
<i>REFLECTION</i>	Entries show a great deal of evidence of reflection about what I have read and learned about Korea.	Entries show evidence of reflection about what I have read and learned about Korea.	Entries show some evidence of reflection about what I have read and learned about Korea.	Entries show little evidence of reflection about what I have read and learned about Korea.
<i>QUANTITY</i>	I have produced two journal entries with many examples to demonstrate the thoughts, feelings and beliefs of a Korean as a 10 year-old and as a 36 year-old.	I have produced two journal entries with examples to demonstrate the thoughts, feelings and beliefs of a Korean as a 10 year-old and as a 36 year-old.	I have produced two journal entries with some examples to demonstrate the thoughts, feelings and beliefs of a Korean as a 10 year-old and as a 36 year-old.	I have produced one journal entry with examples to demonstrate the thoughts, feelings and beliefs of a Korean as a 10 year-old or as a 36 year-old.
<i>CREATIVITY</i>	I have demonstrated a great deal of creativity when writing my journal entries.	I have demonstrated creativity when writing my journal entries.	I have demonstrated some creativity when writing my journal entries.	I have demonstrated very little creativity when writing my journal entries.
<i>NEATNESS</i>	My journal looks like I truly treasure reading, thinking and writing.	Someone else can read my entries easily.	It is often difficult for someone else to read my entries.	It is very difficult for someone else to read my entries.
<i>SPELLING, PUNCTUATION, GRAMMAR</i>	I have used grammar, spelling, word order and punctuation correctly.	I usually use grammar, spelling, word order and punctuation correctly.	I sometimes use grammar, spelling, word order and punctuation correctly.	I rarely use grammar, spelling, word order and punctuation correctly.

Comments:

