

DISCOVERING THE *CHIKCHI*: THE WORLD'S FIRST MOVABLE-TYPE PRINTED BOOK

GRADES: 6–12

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SUBJECT: World History, Social Studies

TIME REQUIRED: One to two class periods

OBJECTIVES:

1. To explore the reasons behind the printing of the *Chikchi* in fourteenth century Korea.
2. To identify the steps in the printing process of the first metal-type printed book in the world.
3. To discuss what the printing of the *Chikchi* tells us about Korean society in the late Koryŏ period.
4. To give examples of how this technological innovation has shaped the world.

MATERIALS REQUIRED:

- Handout 1: The Story Behind *Chikchi* (all handouts attached)
- Handout 2: Who, What, When, Where, Why and How
- Handout 3: Making the *Chikchi*
- Handout 4: Chronology of World Printing

BACKGROUND:

This lesson will introduce your students to the important role Korea has played in shaping the information age. This lesson can be used on its own, as an introduction to movable-type printing in history or as a comparison to Europe's printing revolution.

PROCEDURE:

1. Review the history of print. Where was printing first developed? How did people write before printed texts? Where was the first movable-type book made?
2. Have a brief class discussion on the benefits of printing technology. How are printed books an improvement over handwritten books? How does printing technology benefit the spread of ideas?
3. Elicit from the class what country they think printing technology originated from. Share with the students that the first book printed by moveable type was published in Korea in 1377, 78 years before Gutenberg printed his Bible in Germany.
4. Distribute Handout 1 and read about the first movable metal-type printing in Korea. Complete Handout 2 with the whole class as you read.
5. Show photos of the process of movable type used to make the *Chikchi*. This is best done directly off the computer onto a smart board or projection screen.
6. Distribute Handouts 3 and 4 and have students work in cooperative groups. Discuss findings.
7. As a conclusion, ask the class a) what they discovered about Korean society from learning about the *Chikchi* (Possible answers might include that during the Koryŏ era,

Buddhism had great impact on the lives of the Korean people and that the kings and aristocrats of the period made Buddhism the state religion); b) How did this the new technology effect the future of the world? (Elicit from the students that the *Chikchi* in the East along with the Gutenberg Bible in the West are the two oldest metal-type printed books and changed the documentation culture of the human race.)

EVALUATION:

Evaluate students based on responses given during class discussions and their performance on the concluding activity.

ENRICHMENT:

Students might be interested in comparing and contrasting Gutenberg's printing press technology to Korea's printing technology. Have the students conduct research on how the technologies were the same and how they differed. What accounts for these differences? What were the results of these differences for the future of printing technology in the East and the West? Have the students research these questions and present their findings to the class in a PowerPoint presentation.

RESOURCES:

Chikchi World

<http://www.jikjiworld.net>

The Early Printing Museum of Ch'ŏngju

<http://www.jikjiworld.net/content/english/museum/main.jsp>

Friendly Korea, My Friend's Country, Truth in Scholarship

<http://www.prkorea.com/english/estart.html>

Lee Hee-Jae. Korean Typography in 15th Century

<http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla72/papers/085-Lee-en.pdf>

Gil-sang, Lee. *Exploring Korean History Through World Heritage: The Center For Information on Korean Culture*. Seoul: The Academy of Korean Studies, 2006.

HANDOUT 1: THE STORY BEHIND THE *CHIKCHI*

The *Chikchi*

The *Chikchi* is a Korean Buddhist document published in 1377. The first book in the world to be printed by moveable metal type, it predates Gutenberg's Bible by 78 years. The full title of the book is *Paegun Hwasang Ch'orok Pulcho Chikchi Simch'e Yojŏ*, which can be translated into English as "Paegun Hwasang's Anthology of the Great Priest's Teachings on Identification of the Buddha's Spirit by the Practice of Sŏn" and is called the *Chikchi* for short. A classic academic book, it was published in Hŭngdŏk Temple, in Ch'ŏngju, Korea.



The Author of the *Chikchi*

The text of the *Chikchi* was written by the Buddhist priest Paegun Hwasang, at the end of Koryŏ era, in the fourteenth century. As a young man Hwasang learned Sŏn Buddhism (predecessor to Zen Buddhism in Japan) from Korean and Indian masters. In Sŏn Buddhism, Hwasang was taught that by emptying one's mind through meditation, one can see the Buddha nature in others. As a novice monk, Hwasang received a volume of *Pulcho Chikchi Simch'e yojŏ*, a collection of the teachings of Sŏn Buddhism. He learned its teachings and became a Sŏn master in 1353. He then went on to serve as the chief priest of Ahn'guk Temple and Shinwangsa Temple in Haeju, and raised pupils that followed Sŏn Buddhism. He then published two volumes of *Chikchi* himself to serve as a guide to meditation of Sŏn Buddhism and to pass down the tradition of Buddhism to his pupils. Hwasang passed away in the Ch'wiamsa Temple of Yŏju, Korea in 1374.

The Printing of the *Chikchi*



The postscript printed in the last part of the *Chikchi* states the publisher of the metal-type printed book was Seokchan, recorded in the *Chikchi* as the best pupil of Paegun Hwasang. He made the metal printed book in 1377 after collecting the first and last volume of Paegun Hwasang's edition. A female priest named Myodŏk donated the money for the printing.

The Structure and Contents of the *Chikchi*

The *Chikchi* is made up of two volumes with a total of 307 chapters. The metal-printed *Chikchi* (Volume Two only) that was written by Hwasang is currently kept in France's National Library, with the first page of the last volume torn off. A xylographic copy of the *Chikchi* published in Ch'wiamsa Temple, and consisting of the first and last volume, is kept in the National Library of Korea and at Changsŏgak and Pulgap Temple.

The *Chikchi* contains a collection of excerpts from the teachings of Buddhism's most revered monks. Hwasang added his own masters' teachings to the analects in the *Chikchi simch'e yojŏ* copy that had been given to him when he was a student. His collection consisted of 145 Buddhist sermons. The sermons recorded in *Chikchi* are considered to be masterpieces.

How the *Chikchi* got to France

Toward the end of the Chosŏn kingdom, during the reign of King Kojong, Korea began official diplomatic relations with the West, including France. Collin de Plancy served as France's first representative in Korea from 1888 until 1891. Plancy was a collector of old books and Korean ceramics, and managed to bring the *Chikchi* into his collection while in Korea. Later, the book fell into the hands of Henri Vever, through an auction in 1911 and when Vever died he willed the second volume of the *Chikchi* to the National Library of France in Paris, where it has been ever since.

The Discovery of the *Chikchi*

The metal-printed *Chikchi* was first publicized in a book published in 1901, but it wasn't until the *Chikchi* was displayed by the National Library in France at an international exhibit in 1972, that the *Chikchi* became widely known. It was added to UNESCO's Memory of the World Register in 2001, confirming the *Chikchi* as the oldest extant metal printed book. In 1992, the Early Printing Museum of Ch'ŏngju, which highlights the production and importance of the *Chikchi*, was opened.

HANDOUT 2: WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY AND HOW

WHO
WHAT
WHEN
WHERE
WHY
HOW

HANDOUT 3: MAKING THE *CHIKCHI*

1. First monks inscribed the thousands of Chinese characters onto beeswax molds.



2. Then the wax molds were covered in clay casings.



3. The wax was melted away and the hollow inside mold was filled with molten bronze.



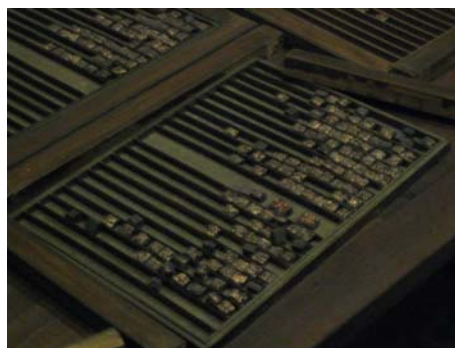
4. When the bronze cooled in the molds, the casings were broken and the movable metal type was formed.



5. The types were then arranged onto the printing plates. One monk would select the contents of the books to be printed, in this case the *Chikchi*.



6. Another monk would then find the types for each character needed. This was a difficult job because of the great variety of Chinese characters. A third monk was responsible for managing and storing the types.



7. When the necessary types were found, they were set on the printing plate and ink was painted evenly on the type faces.



8. A piece of paper was then laid across the inked type faces. The monks rubbed a heavy stone over the reverse side of the sheet to impress the type



9. After printing the first page, errors such as omitted words and crooked typesetting were noted on the draft and a second, corrected copy was printed.



10. The printing process was repeated for each page of the *Chikchi*. When all the pages were completed, and bound together, the *Chikchi* was complete!

Chronology of World Printing Development

