The Role of Korea's Geography in Asian Cultural Diffusion

The Unit: This activity is part of a 7-8 week long unit that includes Ancient and Medieval China, Medieval Japan and Korea.

Time Frame: Ancient and Medieval China Unit: 4 weeks
Ancient and Medieval Japan Unit: 3 Weeks
Lesson on Korea's geography and Cultural Diffusion: 3 Days interspersed within the China and Japan units

Purpose and Rationale:
Throughout East Asian history, the proximity of China to surrounding areas has contributed to the spread of cultural ideas. Students will understand the geography of the region and its role in cultural diffusion. Students will also learn how cultural elements that spread to Korea were adapted by Korea making them uniquely Korean. In a different lesson, students will learn how Japan adapted some of these same cultural ideas and adapted them to fit their culture as well.

Intended Audience: 7th grade World History social studies students

Activity Day One: Mapping Korea and the Surrounding Area
Students will make an edible map of Asia, including China, Korea and Japan. Using peanut butter dough, students will map the physical features of China, Korea and Japan so students can see the proximity of these places to each other while considering the effects of their relative location.

Materials:
Outline map of China, Japan and Korea
Peanut Butter play dough (you will need about ¼ cup for each map); waxed paper to put over the outline map which will be used as a guide; (Note: if peanut allergies are a concern, students can put waxed paper over the outline map and use the candies to mark the features without shaping the map with peanut butter dough first.)
Assorted candies (this will vary depending on what you can find, but some candies that work well include mini M&M's, mini chocolate chips, licorice strips, colored sugar).

After using the dough to recreate the outline map, students will then use candy to locate and mark the following features:
China, Huang He River; Chang Jiang River; Gobi Desert; Taklamakan Desert; Himalaya Mountains; Mt. Everest, Yellow Sea, East Sea, Japan, Korea (it might also be appropriate to put in the 38th parallel for a discussion on the division of Korea);

After students have completed their maps, ask them to answer the question:
Prediction: How might the geography of the region have lead to the spread of cultural elements in ancient and medieval times? Think about: relative location of China, Korea and Japan; the role of bodies of water; How might Korea's location been an advantage in regard to the location of China and Japan? How might it have been a disadvantage?

Lead a discussion on the answers to these questions as it pertains to the history of the area.

Activity Day Two: Spread of Chinese Influence to Korea (A.D. 600-1400)
Prior to this activity, students will be familiar with terms *elements of culture, cultural diffusion, adaptation*; students will have completed an activity on the influence of neighboring cultures on Japan; To begin the lesson, show students examples of pagoda style architecture from China, Japan and Korea. Have the students guess which building is from China, which is from Japan and which is from Korea. Students may be able to guess because the pagoda found in Japan fits in with its natural surroundings, the one from China is more colorful. The Korean pagoda is more similar to the Chinese style than the Japanese style. Students will recall that Japan borrowed pagoda style architecture from Japan and that is an example of cultural diffusion.

Students will study a map showing the spread of Chinese influence to Korea and Japan found in their textbooks *World History: Medieval and Early Modern Times*, especially as it pertains to the spread of Buddhism, Confucianism, porcelain, printing and the writing system. Students will recall that these cultural elements also spread to Japan but were adapted by the Japanese to fit Japanese culture. Students will learn how these same cultural elements were adapted by the Koreans to meet their cultural needs. Students will read about celadon pottery, Buddhism in Korea, printing, Korean writing system and Korean Confucianism from a variety of sources listed in the resource section below.

Activity Day Three: Show sections of the PBS video 'Hidden Korea'.

Assessment: Students will complete Venn Diagrams on the topics of religion and culture comparing China, Japan and Korea.
On the topic of religion: Students choose either Buddhism or Confucianism;
On the topic of culture: Students choose either pottery, writing or printing
Each diagram will show what each element was like in China, Japan and Korea

Students will complete an "Exit Slip" answering the question: What influences shaped Korea's development?

State of Ohio Academic Content Standards--7th Grade

**History**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early Civilizations</th>
<th>Describe the enduring impact of early civilizations in India, China, Egypt, Greece and Rome after 1000 B.C. including:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. The development of concepts of government and citizenship;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>b. Scientific and cultural advancements;</td>
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</tbody>
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c. The spread of religions;

People in Societies
Students use knowledge of perspectives, practices and products of cultural, ethnic and social groups to analyze the impact of their commonality and diversity within local, national, regional and global settings.

1. Analyze the relationships among cultural practices, products and perspectives of early civilizations.
3. Give examples of contacts among different cultures that led to the changes in belief systems, art, science, technology, language or systems of government.

Geography
Students use knowledge of geographic locations, patterns and processes to show the interrelationship between the physical environment and human activity, and to explain the interactions that occur in an increasingly interdependent world.

1. For each of the societies studied, identify the location of significant physical and human characteristics on a map of the relevant region.
2. On a map, identify places related to the historical events being studied and explain their significance

Describe the geographic factors and processes that contribute to and impede the diffusion of people, products and ideas from place to place including:
   a. Physical features;
   b. Culture;
   c. War;
   d. Trade;
   e. Technological innovations.

Resources:
http://www.buddhismtoday.com/english/world/country/027-korea.htm
http://www.peanut-institute.org/Peanut_Play_Dough.html
http://www.pbs.org/hiddenkorea/geography.htm
http://www.omniglot.com/writing/korean.htm
http://www.koreanhistoryproject.org/Jta/Kr/KrLAN1.htm
http://www.socwel.ku.edu/candagrant/Gallery/HFC-Thumbnail/Confucianism/Confucianism%20page.htm