

Culminating Activity Handout

Source 1:

Due to so many unexplained difficulties and bad omens, the Majesty is humbled and concerned... To alleviate the situation, all policies that cause the public inconvenience, if not urgent, should be stopped... policies temporarily stopped include the voyages to foreign countries, horse trading with the remote western and northern areas.

Excerpt from a speech by Emperor Yong Le explaining the decision to stop the voyages of Zheng He: 1433 (Source: *Asia for Educators* at <https://tinyurl.com/kw52z43>.)

Source 2:

Riches and honors are what men desire. If it cannot be obtained in the proper way, they should not be held... The superior man understands what is right; the inferior man understands what will sell... The superior man is aware of righteousness, the inferior man is aware of advantage... The virtuous man is driven by responsibility, the non-virtuous man is driven by profit...

Excerpts from Chapters 2 and 4, Confucius, *The Analects*, 500 BCE

Source 3:

"...deceitful exaggerations of bizarre things far removed from the testimony of people's eyes and ears... the expeditions of San Bao (meaning "Three Jewels" as Zheng He was called) to the West Ocean wasted tens of myriads of money and grain and moreover the people who met their deaths may be counted in the myriads. Although he returned with wonderful precious things, what benefit was it to the state?"

Excerpt from a discussion between the Ministry of War to Emperor of China in 1477, Response to attempts by eunuch factions to begin more voyages. (Source: *Asia for Educators* at <https://tinyurl.com/kw52z43>.)

Directions: Read and answer the following three questions for each source.

What is the author's point of view?

What claim does the author make about the sea voyages? (Confucius obviously made no claim but it is important that students think about how the greatest sage in Chinese history might have reacted to the Ming voyages had he lived at the time they occurred.)

What words or phrases are used to convince the reader of their argument?