

**LONG DISTANCE TRADE AND ITS IMPACT ON THE SPREAD OF  
BUDDHISM IN KOREA:  
A FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT OF HISTORICAL ARGUMENTATION**

**GRADES:** 9-12

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**SUBJECT:** AP World History

**TIME REQUIRED:** One 90-minute block period

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. Recognize the role that Korea played in long distance trade in East Asia and on the Silk Roads.
2. Understand the complex political, economic and cultural bonds that linked Korea and China during the period of the Three Kingdoms and the Silla, Koryo and Choson dynasties.
3. Analyze changes and continuities in Korean attitudes towards China.
4. Analyze the roles that trade and state sponsorship played in the spread of Buddhism in Korea.
5. Analyze changes and continuities in Korean attitudes towards Buddhism.
6. Improve students' abilities to construct written arguments based on historical evidence.

**STANDARDS:**

Common Core:

WHST 1 Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content

RH 1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources

RH 2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source

RH 3 Evaluate various explanations for actions or events

RH 6 Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue

RH 8 Evaluate an author's premises, claims and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information

RH 9 Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event

SL 1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions

SL 3 Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning and use of evidence and rhetoric

**MATERIALS REQUIRED:**

- Document Set 1: Four primary and secondary sources describing Korea's role in long distance trade, and Korea's tributary relationship with China
- Document Set 2: Images of sculptures of the Buddha from Korea, China and Afghanistan, and maps of the Silk Roads.
- Document Set 3: Four primary and secondary sources discussing changes in Korean attitudes towards Buddhism

**BACKGROUND:**

The history of pre-modern Korea is most commonly studied within the context of four historical eras: the period of the Three Kingdoms (57-676 C.E.), the Silla dynasty (676-935), the Koryo dynasty (935-1392) and the Choson dynasty (1392-1910). As early as the period of the Three Kingdoms, Korea was participating in long distance trade. It served as an intermediary between China and Japan, and facilitated the transmission of cultural traditions such as Buddhism and Confucianism from China into the Japanese archipelago. Korean celadon pottery was a particularly prized trade commodity both in China and Japan. Korea's location on the extreme eastern end of the Silk Roads connected it with the trade networks that flourished between the Mediterranean and East Asia. As Buddhism spread along the Silk Roads from India into Afghanistan and China, Korea's commercial and diplomatic relations with China ensured the spread of Buddhism into the Korean peninsula. Each of the Three Kingdoms, Paekche, Koguryo and Silla, adopted Buddhism as the state religion. In each case, early kings used Buddhism as a method for giving religious legitimacy to the monarchy. Later, Buddhism continued to enjoy state support under the United Silla and Koryo dynasties. However, the rise of Neo-Confucianism during the Choson dynasty resulted in a backlash against Buddhism, at least among members of the Confucian dominated elite. Many Confucians were troubled by the proliferation of Buddhist monasteries. Monasteries traditionally enjoyed tax-exempt status, and controlled large amounts of land. This, Confucian officials pointed out, limited the government's tax base. Moreover, many Buddhist monks lived celibate lives, a practice that undermined Confucian principles of filial piety and proliferation of one's family line. These economic and cultural concerns gained an increasing number of advocates during the Choson period, and resulted in Buddhism playing a diminished role in state matters. Nonetheless, Buddhism continued to enjoy a high degree of popular support among common Koreans.

Students enrolled in an AP World History course must demonstrate mastery of several historical thinking skills. Among those skills is the ability to construct and defend a written argument using primary and secondary sources of evidence. This lesson is designed to be a formative assessment that helps students refine their abilities to analyze documents, and create thesis statements based on documentary evidence. Students who participate in this lesson should already have experience analyzing historical documents and crafting thesis statements. This lesson design attempts to mirror the model used by the College Board on page 67 of the *AP World History Workshop Handbook and Resources 2011-2012*.

**PROCEDURE:**

1. Break students into heterogeneous groups of three to five.
2. Distribute one of the document sets to each group.
3. Ask each group to create a list of as many questions and observations as possible about each of the individual documents. Ask each group to compare documents as often as possible. Note that some documents corroborate one another, while other documents appear to contradict one another. Other groups of documents appear to show change or continuity over time.
4. Move from group to group to help students analyze the documents and generate questions.
5. After students have generated a list of questions, ask them to develop an interpretation of the document set, and write a thesis statement based on their interpretation. Remind students that their thesis must include all of the documents and must address the similarities and differences between the various documents. The thesis should show corroboration or conflict between documents.
6. Ask a representative of each group to share their thesis with the class.
7. After each group has presented their thesis, ask the class as a whole to note any relevant comparisons, changes or continuities. Ask them to share one document which they found most enlightening.

**EVALUATION:**

The following scoring guide is designed to assess the students' thesis statements.

**RESOURCES:**

Bentley, Jerry and Ziegler, Herbert. *Traditions and Encounters: A Global Perspective on the Past*. New York: McGraw Hill, 2006.

	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>References all documents</b>	Thesis insightfully and accurately references all documents	Thesis accurately references all documents	Thesis attempts to reference all documents	Thesis does not reference all documents
<b>Corroboration or Conflict</b>	Thesis insightfully and accurately shows corroboration or conflict between documents	Thesis shows corroboration or conflict between documents	Thesis attempts to show corroboration or conflict between documents	Thesis does not show corroboration or conflict between documents
<b>Structure and Writing</b>	Thesis is 1 or 2 sentences in length and is clearly and succinctly written	Thesis is 1 or 2 sentences in length and is understandable	Thesis is 1 or 2 sentences in length but is difficult to understand	Thesis is not 1 or 2 sentences in length and/or is not understandable

Lee, Peter and de Bary, William. *Sources of Korean Tradition: From Early Times through the Sixteenth Century*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.

Seth, Michael. *A Concise History of Korea: From the Neolithic Period through the Nineteenth Century*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006.

### Document Set 1

Note: Document 4 is a primary source from Korea's Koryo Dynasty. Documents 1-3 are secondary sources.

Two... sunken ships were discovered off the coast of Taean [Korea], which has emerged as a hotspot for maritime treasures. Salvaged artifacts include some 380 pieces of celadon [pottery] from the Koryo (918-1392) and Choson (1392-1910) Kingdoms [of Korea] and Song- and Qing-dynasties of China (960-1279 and 1644-1911, respectively), as well as coal used onboard by seamen.

Three hundred celadon items [were unearthed], originating from different times and places. Those from the Korean Peninsula include 11th-century celadon with halo-shaped feet, late 14th-century inlaid celadon, 15th-century Choson grayish-blue-powdered celadon and 17th-to-18th-century white porcelain. Chinese pottery include those made during the 15th and 16th centuries in Fujian and exported to South Asia.

“This implies the area was an important point of international commerce,” said [The National Research Institute of Maritime Cultural Heritage].

Source: [www.koreatimes.co.kr](http://www.koreatimes.co.kr) by Lee Hyo-won, July 3, 2009.

...Korea entered into a tributary relationship with China. Envoys of the Chosŏn kings regularly delivered gifts to Chinese emperors but these concessions brought considerable benefits to the Koreans. In return for their recognition of Chinese supremacy, they received gifts more valuable than the tribute they delivered to China. Moreover, the tributary relationship opened the doors for Korean merchants to trade in China.

Meanwhile, the tributary relationship facilitated the spread of Chinese political and cultural influences to Korea. Embassies delivering tributes to China included Korean royal officials who observed the workings of the Chinese court and bureaucracy and then organized the Korean court on similar lines. Alongside royal officials, tribute embassies included scholars who studied Chinese thought and literature and who took copies of Chinese writings back to Korea. Their efforts helped to build Korean interest in the Confucian tradition, particularly among educated aristocrats. While Korean elite classes turned to Confucius, Chinese schools of Buddhism attracted widespread popular interest. Chan Buddhism, which promised individual salvation, won the allegiance of peasants and commoners.

Source: Jerry Bentley, *Traditions and Encounters*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, 2006.

A central fact of Korean history, however, is that it has been surrounded by larger societies that were some of the most militarily formidable peoples in history. Or as Koreans sometimes say, they have been a “shrimp among whales.” Yet the land was more than a passive victim of larger forces but a part of a large interactive regional sphere that included China, Japan and Northeast Asia...

Ceramics, as in the Koryo period, was also highly esteemed [in Choson Korea]. In the fifteenth century an official government-controlled factory...was established on the model of the great Chinese official production center at Jingdezhen... Koreans did not follow Qing in its use of bright colors in porcelains and enamels. Instead, Yi dynasty pottery contains a simplicity and purity of design lacking the elaborate decorative embellishments of Ming and Qing ceramics.

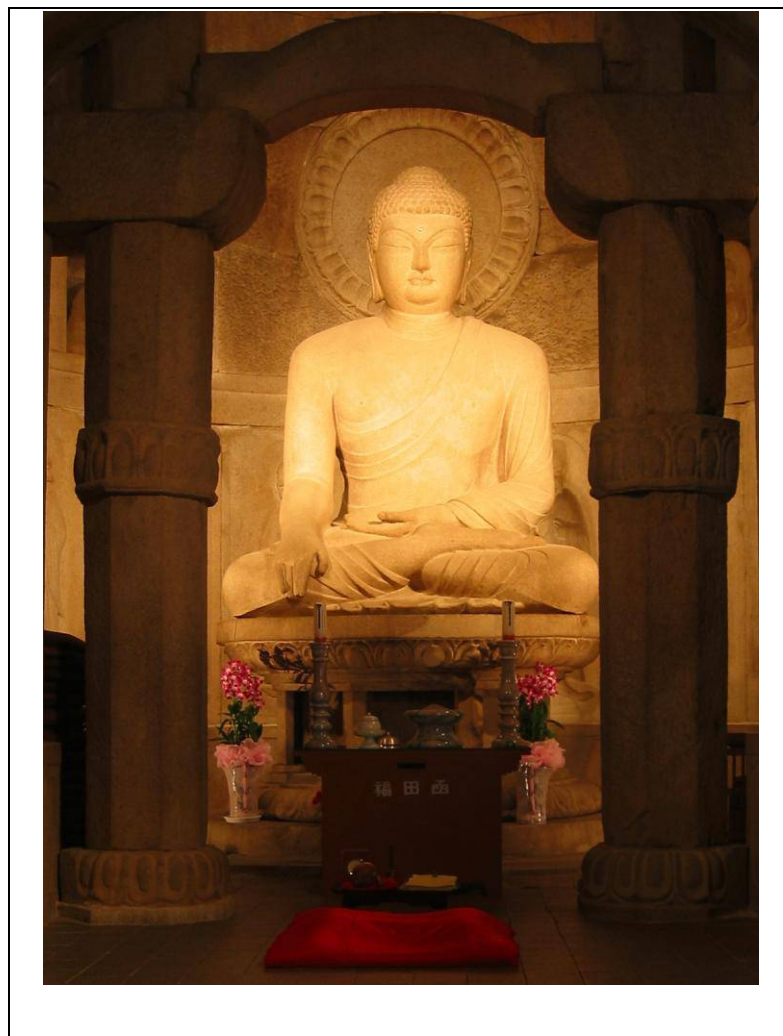
Source: Michael Seth, *A Concise History of Korea*, 2006.

In the past we have always had a deep attachment for the ways of China and all of our institutions have been modeled upon those of Tang. But our country occupies a different geographical location and our people's character is different from that of the Chinese. Hence, there is no reason to strain ourselves unreasonably to copy the Chinese way. [Manchuria] is a nation of savage beasts, and its language and customs are also different. Its dress and institutions should never be copied.

Source: Koryo Emperor Taejo's *Ten Injunctions*, c. 943 C.E.

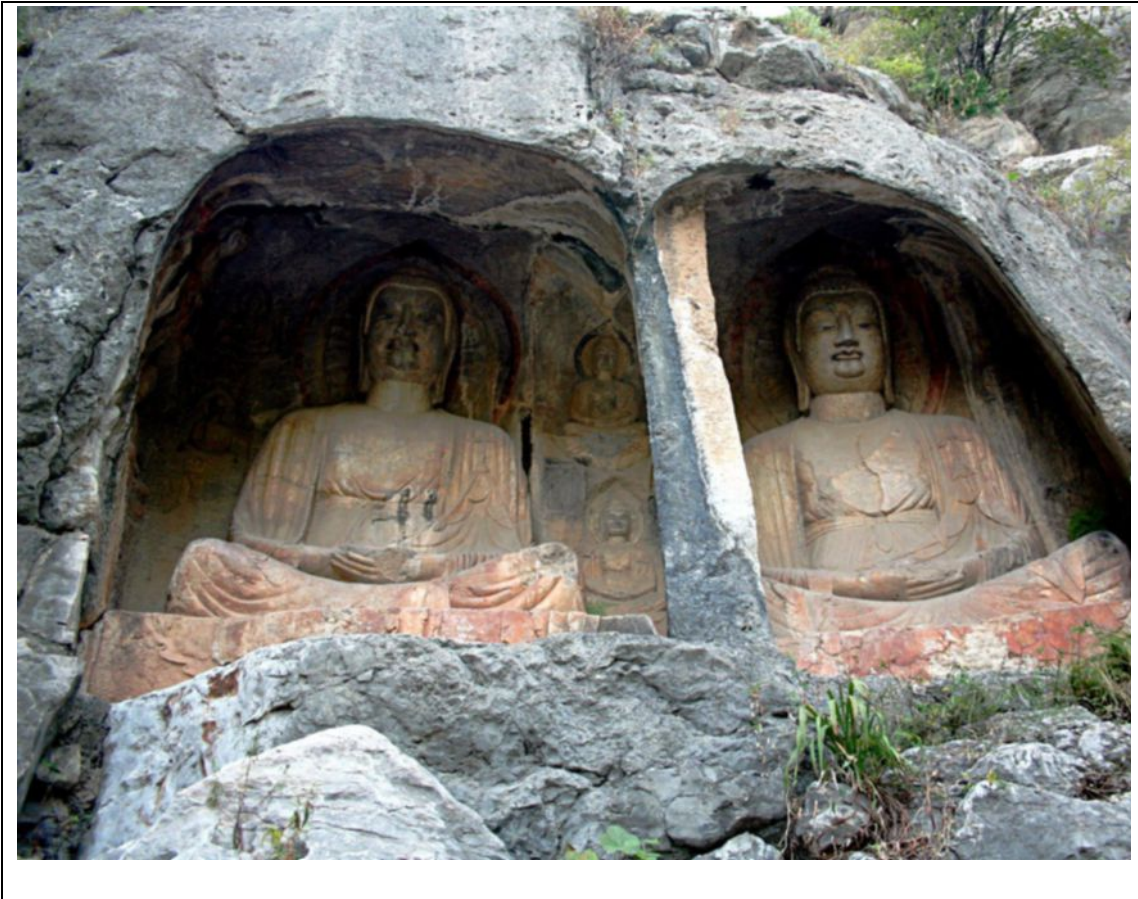
**Write your questions, interpretation of the sources and thesis here.**

## Document Set 2



Source: Seokguram Grotto, Korea. C. 750 C.E. Unified Silla Period.

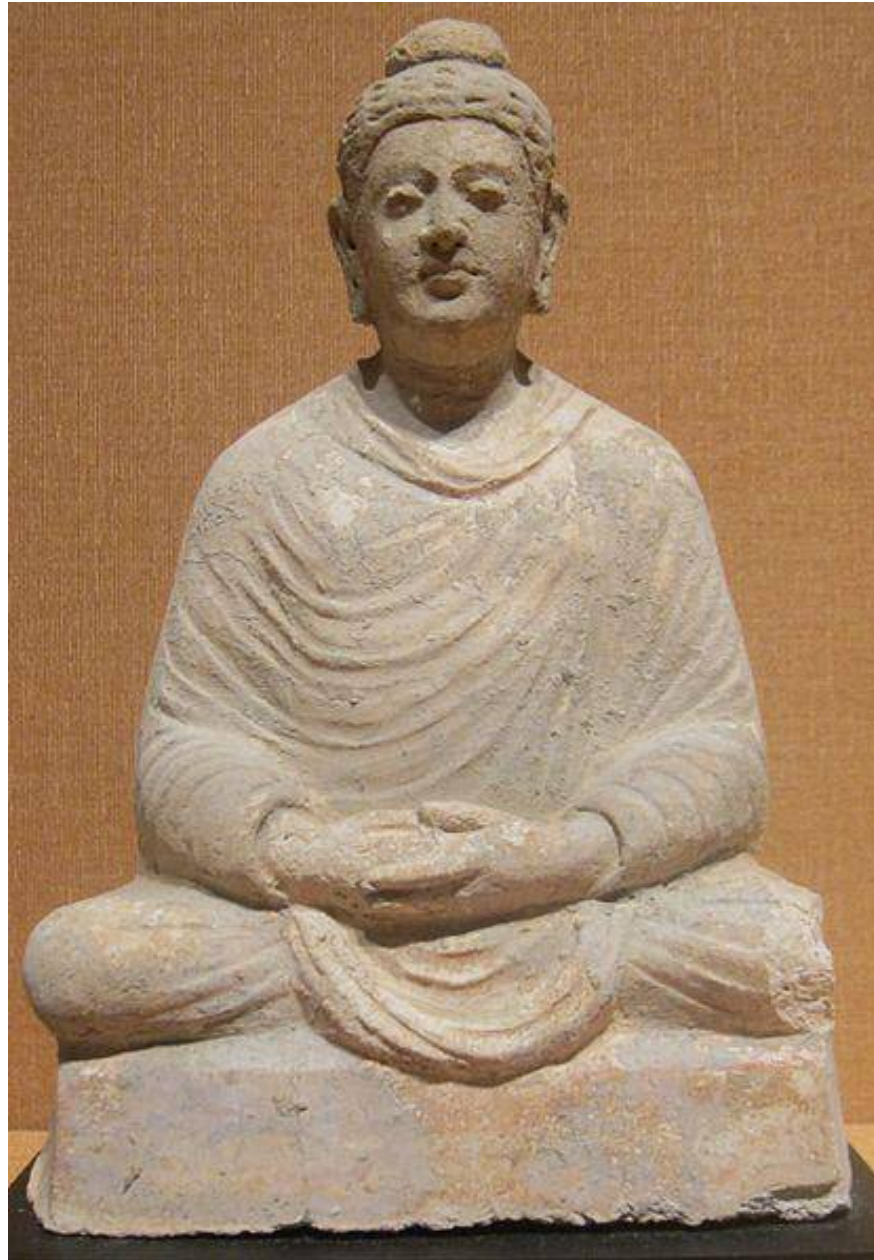
[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Seokguram\\_Buddha.JPG](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Seokguram_Buddha.JPG)



Source: Thousand Buddha Cliff, Shandong Province, China. C. 650 C.E. Tang Dynasty.

[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Thousand\\_buddha\\_cliff\\_shandong\\_2006\\_09\\_1.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Thousand_buddha_cliff_shandong_2006_09_1.jpg)





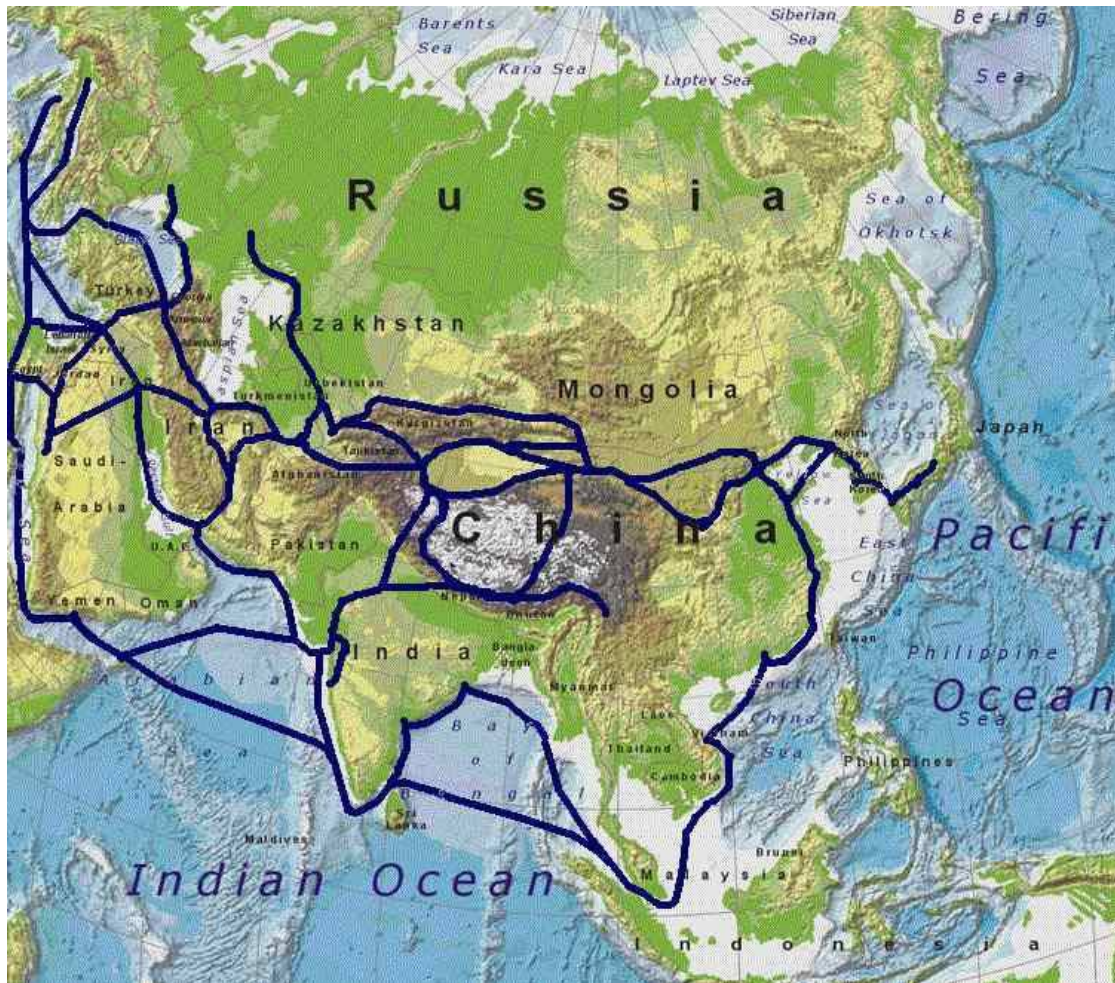
Source: Seated Buddha, Gandhara, Afghanistan. 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> century C.E.

[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Seated\\_Buddha\\_from\\_Afghanistan,\\_Gandhara,\\_3rd-4th\\_century\\_CE,\\_stucco\\_with\\_traces\\_of\\_polychrome,\\_HAA.JPG](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Seated_Buddha_from_Afghanistan,_Gandhara,_3rd-4th_century_CE,_stucco_with_traces_of_polychrome,_HAA.JPG)



Source: The Silk Roads

[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Transasia\\_trade\\_routes\\_1stC\\_CE\\_gr2.png](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Transasia_trade_routes_1stC_CE_gr2.png)



Source: The Silk Roads

<http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Silkroutes.jpg>

**Write your questions, interpretation of the sources and thesis here.**

Note: Documents 1,2 & 3 are primary sources from Korea. Document 4 by Peter Lee is a secondary source.

After toiling, body and mind, for nineteen years I united the [Three Kingdoms] and have held the throne for twenty-five years. Now I am old. I only fear that my successors will give away to their passions and greed and destroy the principle of government. That would be truly worrisome. I therefore wrote these injunctions to be passed on to later ages. They should be read morning and night and forever used as a mirror of reflection.

His injunctions were as follows:

1. The success of every great undertaking of our state depends upon the favor and protection of Buddha. Therefore, the temples of both the Meditation and Doctrinal schools should be built and monks should be sent out to those temples to minister to Buddha.
2. ...I am greatly concerned that the royal family, the aristocracy, and the courtiers all may build many temples and monasteries in the future in order to seek Buddha's blessings.

Source: Koryo Emperor Taejo's *Ten Injunctions*, c. 943 C.E.

We consider the harm of Buddhists to be prevalent still. Since the Han period the reverence for Buddha has been increasingly fervent, yet neither happiness nor profit has been gained. This is recorded in the historical books, which Your Majesty has certainly perused thoroughly. Must you therefore wait for your ministers to tell you?

We think of all the heterodox teachings, Buddhism is the worst. The Buddhists live alone with their barbaric customs, apart from the common productive population; yet they cause the people to be destitute and to steal. What is worse than their crimes? Beasts and birds that damage grain are certainly chased away because they harm the people. Yet even though beasts and birds eat the people's food, they are nevertheless useful to the people. Buddhists, however, sit around and eat, and there has not yet been a visible profit.

Source: Yun Hoe, Deputy Director of the Hall of Worthies: *On the Harmfulness of Buddhism*, 1424.

Sin Ch'ojung, a licentiate at the Royal Confucian Academy, and one hundred and one others went to the palace and tendered the following memorial [in 1424].

Those Buddhists, what kind of people are they? As eldest sons they turn against their fathers; as husbands they oppose the Son of Heaven. They break off the relationship between father and son and destroy the obligation between ruler and subject. They regard the living together of man and woman as immoral and a man's plowing and a woman's weaving as useless.

If monks were forced to return to their home villages; if they were treated as men fit to join the military; if they were made to settle down in order to increase their households; if we burnt their books in order to destroy their roots and branches; if their fields were requisitioned in order to distribute them among the offices; if their bronze statues and bells were entrusted to the Office of Supply in order to mint copper cash... in a few years, the human mind would be corrected and the heavenly principles clear, the households would increase, and the number of soldiers would be complete.

Source: Sin Ch'ojung: *On the Deceitfulness of Buddhism*, 1424.

The Confucians' rise to power was accompanied by the repression of Buddhism... According to the Confucians, Buddhism lacked the practical standards necessary for social control and economic prosperity. The first measures against Buddhism taken at the beginning of the [Choson] dynasty were motivated by economic and military considerations and therefore directed at the institutional foundation of the Buddhist monasteries. The contest for control of the spiritual-religious realm, however, was more difficult because the early kings and the people at large continued to adhere to traditional Buddhist customs and ceremonies.

Source: Peter H. Lee, *Sources of Korean Tradition: From Early Times through the Sixteenth Century*, 1997

**Write your questions, interpretation of the sources and thesis here.**

## **INSTRUCTOR MATERIALS**

### **Document Set 1**

#### Sample Thesis Statement

While Korea exerted some international influence as a result of its role in long distance trade, during significant periods of time it maintained a tributary relationship with its large and powerful Chinese neighbor. As a result, Korea adopted many Chinese technological, political and cultural characteristics, but adapted them to serve Korea's unique needs and tastes.

### **Document Set 2**

#### Sample Thesis Statement

Based upon the maps showing the various segments of the Silk Routes and the dates associated with each of the Buddhist sculptures, Buddhism appears to have moved from its point of origin in India to Afghanistan, China and Korea along major trade routes.

### **Document Set 3**

#### Sample Thesis Statement

Due to the support of Buddhism by early Korean leaders, Buddhism enjoyed popular support in Korea well into the Choson period. However, Confucian scholars increasingly harbored animosity towards Buddhists who they believed violated Confucian principles of filial piety, and threatened Korea's social and economic stability.