Content: In general, these three letters discuss various policies within the Chinese government while under the leadership of Emperor Shenzong (r. 1067-1085). The first letter of the three, is a firsthand account (Sima Guang) of a debate had between Sima Guang and Wang Anshi referring to government expenditures and where these funds should be coming from. The second letter is a request sent from Sima Guang to Wang Anshi, beseeching Wang Anshi to ask the emperor to abolish the commission on financial regulations and recall the granary commissioners. This letter was then replied to by Wang Anshi in the third letter with an understanding yet defiant “no”.

Citation: The authors are Sima Guang and Wang Anshi. Official advisors to the Emperor Shenzong in the mid-1000s. These documents were created in 1067-1070 AD. These letters come from the textbook, Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook by Patricia Ebrey.

Context: These documents were produced in a time of rising Confucianism in china. Leading way for a growing educated and family-oriented population.

Connections: These letters connect to past readings like the Fairbanks text and Ban Zhao’s “Lessons for Women” by calling on the Confucian ideals and morals practiced by the educated upper class of the time.

Communicate: Because these two sources are wealthy, upper-class, educated men, their biases understandably lean toward these characteristics.

Conclusions: These letters bolster my understanding of Chinese government in the mid-1000s by allowing a small peak into the lives of how two imperial financial advisors with conflicting points of view interacted with each other.