

Secrets of the Silk Road  
Bowers Museum  
2002 N. Main Street, Santa Ana  
March 27 – July 25, 2010

Student Admission \$16 (\$18 weekends)  
Tues – Sun: 10am – 4pm  
Group Tours: 714.567.3680  
www.bowers.org

### Student Worksheet

#### Exhibition Summary

Strikingly well-preserved mummies tall in stature and fair in complexion have lain in the parched Tarim Basin of western China for 3,800 years. Wearing Western-influenced textiles and possessing surprising technologies and customs, just who were these extraordinary people? This historic exhibition of 100 objects drawn from the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region Museum and the Xinjiang Institute of Archaeology in Urumqi, China, reveals surprising details about the people who lived along the ancient Silk Road. For the first time ever, three of the more than 100 Caucasian mummies found and preserved in the western China's inhospitable desert sands are being presented in the United States. An impressive array of objects are included in the exhibition to represent the full extent of the Silk Road, where lavish goods, technologies and ideas between East and West were adopted and exchanged.

Directions: Use these questions as guidelines as you make your way through the exhibition. The wall text will also help you in understanding the history of many of the objects you will see. Try and connect what you see here to what you have learned in school about ancient China and trade.

1. Yingpan Man: Take a close look at this mummy. What do you notice about it? How does it compare to other images of mummies you have seen in other museums or books? Hint: Think about this mummy in relation to pictures of Egyptian mummies you have studied or seen. Does the mummy look like one you would normally find in the middle of China?
2. Travel Permit: Even as far back as 1400 years ago, people needed passports to travel! This travel permit is made of paper, an important invention that came about during the period that encompasses the Silk Road. (a) Do you know anything about how paper is made? Where was it invented? (b) What other items along the Silk Road could this new paper technology be used for? (c) How is this travel document different from our passports today? (d) Based on what you know about the Silk Road, where do you think the traveler who owned the passport was from? Where did he travel to?
3. Food: One result of the extensive trade of the Silk Road was the widespread adoption of different kinds of food. Did you know that the Chinese noodles influenced the Italians to develop pasta? (a) Did you notice the won-ton? Does it remind you of any Italian food? (b) What do you think the travelers ate as they were traveling across the vast distances of the Silk Road? (c) Since the travelers and traders on the Silk Road didn't have modern conveniences like coolers and refrigerators, how do you think they preserved their food? (d) Think about the food you eat on a daily basis. Do you know of any American foods that originally came from somewhere else?

4. Clothing and Textiles: Clothing during the time of the Silk Road was very different than the clothing of today. Look at the various robes – notice that they are made out of different materials – the robes are made out of silk, felt and wool. (a) How do you think the different fabrics were made along the Silk Road? (b) What material gave the Silk Road its name? Where did it originate? (c) Find the bronze eyeshades. What modern accessory do they remind you of?
  
5. Gold Lion Plaque: This beautiful lion plaque was excavated from a tomb. (a) Who do you think it belonged to? What do you think the purpose of placing this item in the tomb was? (b) You may have noticed that many of the items you've seen so far were discovered mostly in tombs. Many of the items are replicas of things that the buried person would have used in their everyday life. What are some items you would take with you if you were planning your tomb like these ancient Chinese?
  
6. Infant Mummy: Spend some time with this infant mummy. Remember the adult male mummy in the other room? Note down some of the key differences in how he was preserved and presented in comparison to this infant mummy. Did you notice the light hair? What does that tell you about the origin of this baby?
  
7. Beauty of Xiaohe: Similarly to the infant mummy, spend some time studying this female mummy. Who do you think she was? Was she rich or poor? Where do you think she was from? Why?
  
8. Religion and Culture: As you have seen from this exhibition, the Silk Road was not simply just a pathway for the trading of goods. It facilitated the spread of language, culture and religion, and changed the way people thought of the world. It connected people from places as far off places such as India in the East and Italy in the West. (a) What is one religion that you have learned about in school that spread as a result of the Silk Road? Where did it originate? Where is it practiced today? (b) Have you seen any objects in this exhibition that could have belonged to someone who practiced that religion?
  
9. Conclusion: What are some of the things you have learned after seeing this exhibition? What were some of your favorite parts? Why? Would you recommend this to your friends?

Thank you for your visit and we hope you learned some interesting things while you were here! Hope to see you back at the Bowers Museum again soon!

Questions/Comments: [info@bowers.org](mailto:info@bowers.org)