

# A Silk Road Journey

Welcome to the Silk Road! This vast network of land and sea routes linked Asia with the Mediterranean from about 200 BC to 1400 AD. Religious pilgrims, businessmen, traders, armies and other travelers exchanged raw materials, finished goods, technologies, and religions and other ideas as they moved along the Silk Road.

This guide will help you explore the Gardner D. Stout Hall of Asian Peoples and Hall of African Peoples and see how goods and ideas were made and exchanged along the Silk Road. Use the hall map on the 2nd page to help you find the stops on your Silk Road journey.

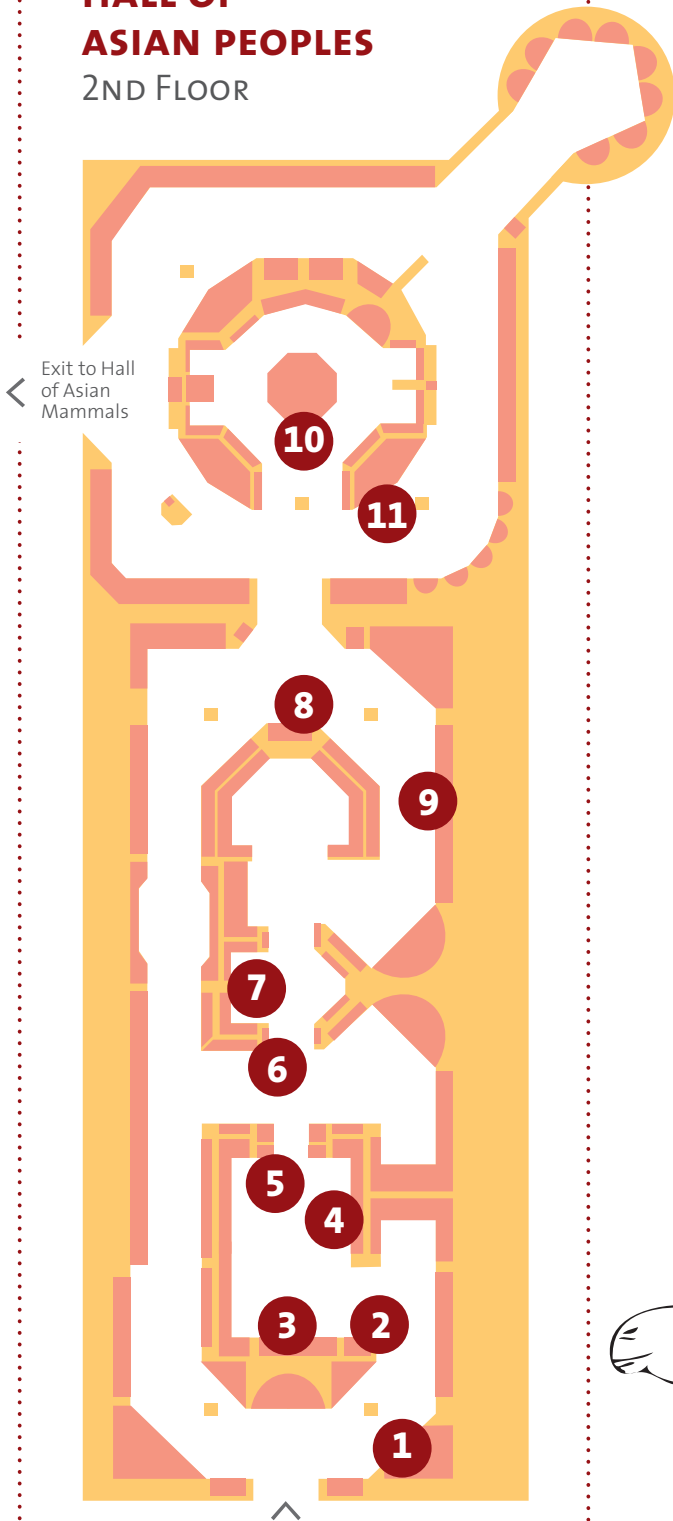


— overland trade routes  
••••• maritime trade routes

The Silk Road was a network of trading routes that extended more than 4,600 miles—across immense deserts and high mountain passes—from eastern China west to the Mediterranean. Routes also extended to the north and south, and eventually included seaways.



**GARDNER D. STOUT  
HALL OF  
ASIAN PEOPLES**  
2ND FLOOR



Enter from Hall of  
North American Birds

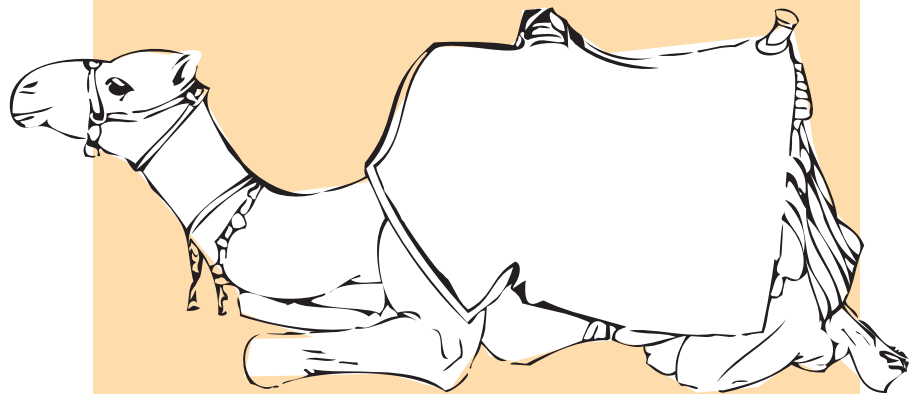
< **12** This way to Hall of African Peoples

**1 BEDOUIN TENT**



The traditional homeland of the Bedouin people was the Arabian Desert in and around present day Saudi Arabia. Historically, these nomadic people traveled and traded for goods, while challenged to find water and food for their animals. Today most of the Bedouin people live in settlements and lead more urbanized lives, though some are trying to preserve the traditions of their rapidly changing culture.

**Can you find the camel saddle in the diorama? If you were a nomad, what would you need to pack in your saddle to survive for weeks in the desert? Draw or write your answer below.**





## 2 HOLY BOOKS

Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and other religions spread along the Silk Road.

The Qu’ran (or Koran) is the holy book of the Islamic religion. According to Islam it is the sacred word of God. Many Qu’rans are written in beautiful Arabic script.

Decorations in many holy books show their importance and value.



Compare the decoration on this Qu’ran with the Armenian Bibles in the Armenian section across the way.

**How are they the same?**

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**How are they different?**

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## 3 PILGRIMAGE

Pilgrims today travel great distances to visit holy sites, just as they did along the Silk Road. This scene shows the Hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca (in modern Saudi Arabia) made by millions of Muslim people from around the world every year. The Hajj is one of the five pillars of Islam. The others are faith, prayer, giving to charity, and fasting during the holy month of Ramadan.

Great travel stories have been written by people such as Ibn Battuta, who lived more than 650 years ago. His pilgrimage from Morocco to Mecca, as well as his travels throughout the Middle East, Asia, North Africa and Eastern Europe, became legendary.

Write about the kinds of environments, people and things you think Ibn Battuta would have encountered on his first journey from Morocco to Mecca over 650 years ago.

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**BONUS!**  
Find other indigo-colored items in this hall!

## 4 INDIGO

Indigo (named after a Greek word for “from India”) is a dark blue dye that comes from a plant. Many people believed this dye and color had protective powers, making it very valuable. Indigo was traded in Asia, the Middle East and later Europe.



Compare this wedding dress to other wedding dresses you have seen.

**How are they the same?**

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**How are they different?**

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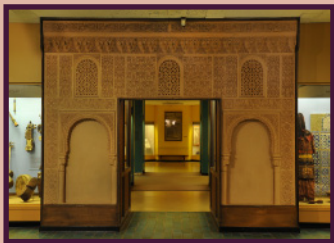
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## 5 ISLAMIC ART



Islam spread from the Middle East into North Africa, southern Spain, and to the far corners of Asia.

This is a copy of one of the gates of the Alhambra, an Islamic palace built in Spain in the mid-13th century. This gate displays several important Islamic art forms: calligraphy and intricate geometric and plant patterns. Although images of living beings are not traditionally allowed in Islamic religious art, it is permitted in most non-religious Islamic art.

**Draw your favorite decoration on the gate. What do you like about this decoration?**

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## 6 BUDDHIST ART

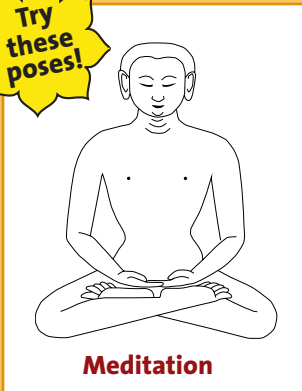
The Buddha was born as the prince Siddhartha about 2,500 years ago in present-day Nepal. He left his luxurious life to dedicate himself to ending people’s suffering, and later became the Buddha, or “the enlightened one.”



This Buddha is in a meditation pose, with his right hand touching the Earth. This pose represents the moment of his enlightenment, when he understood that limiting attachments will help lessen one’s suffering.

These and other poses in Buddhist art are called MUDRAS.

**Try these poses!**



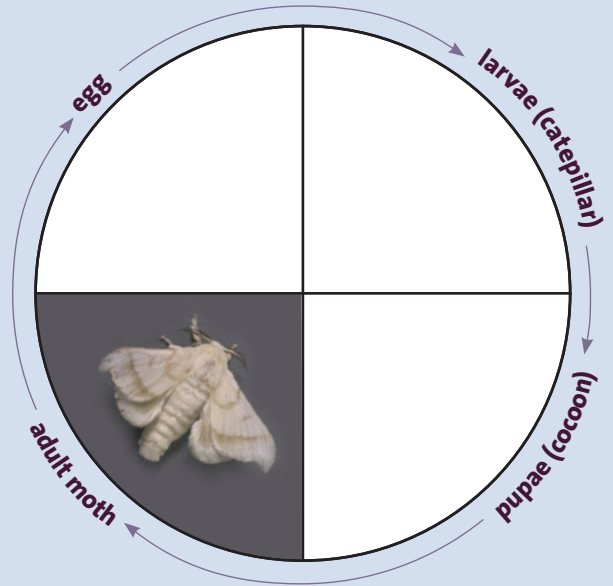
## 7 SILK MAKING TOOLS



Silk fabric was a valuable trade item along the Silk Road because of its fine quality and light weight. China kept the steps of the silk making process a secret for centuries so they could control the trade of silk. Eventually the secret got out and this technology spread to other places.

These tools are used to sort, boil and then unravel silk moth cocoons into fibers that are later woven into silk fabric.

**As a family talk about and then draw the life cycle of a silk moth. >**



## 8 TIBET

This Tibetan scene shows some of the goods traded along the Silk Road that were valued for their exotic origins. Some were used on amulets, or protective charms, like the necklace the woman is wearing here.

**Find the following items in the scene, then circle them in the photo below.**

- Pearls from the Mediterranean.
- Silk from Eastern China.
- Coral from the Mediterranean.
- Turquoise from the Middle East.
- Felt from Central Asia.



## 9 THE CHANGING BUDDHA

As Buddhism spread along the Silk Road, it mixed with existing religions, art and ideas. The image of the Buddha also changed as it reached new places.

Have you seen a Buddha like this before? Images and ideas of the classic Indian Buddha were combined with images and ideas of the Chinese god Ho-T'ai to create this fat and happy deity of plenty.



**The Buddha is often shown seated on a lotus blossom, which represents his divinity and purity. How many lotus flowers can you find in the hall?**



## 10 COMPARING BUDDHAS

Compare this Japanese Buddha with the Chinese Ho-T'ai Buddha.



Find the large Buddha sitting on top of the case in the Japan section of the Hall.

< Try to pose like this Buddha!

How are they the same?

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How are they the different?

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## 11 SILK ROAD SEA ROUTES

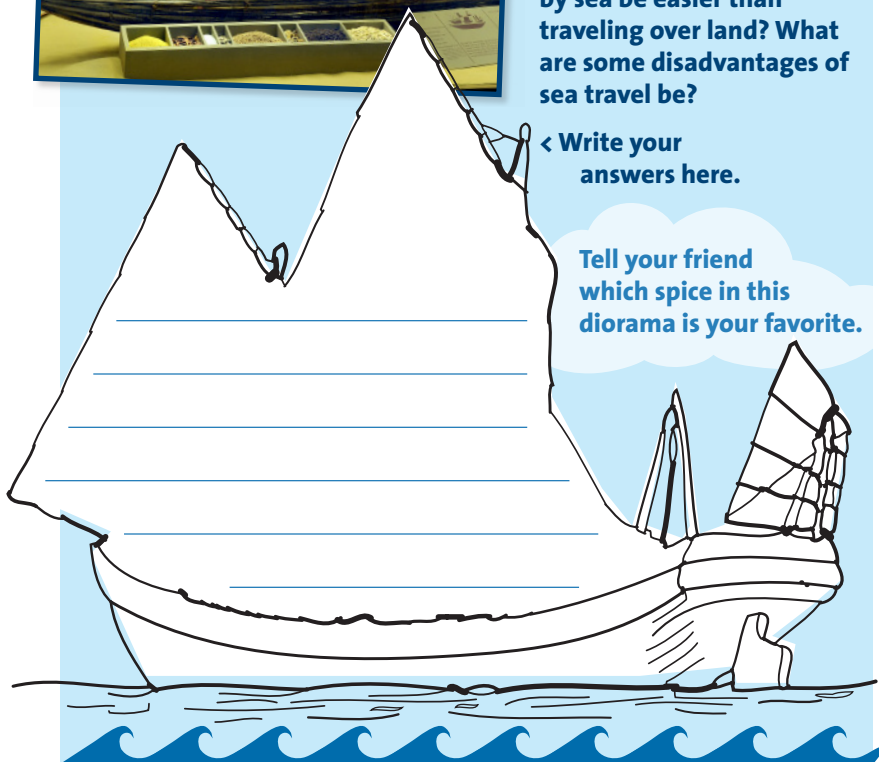


People have long used sea routes for trade. However, during the later period of the Silk Road, from about 800-1500 AD, more goods were moved along sea routes than by land routes.

**How would traveling by sea be easier than traveling over land? What are some disadvantages of sea travel be?**

< Write your answers here.

Tell your friend which spice in this diorama is your favorite.



## HALL OF AFRICAN PEOPLES

### 12 THE POWER OF ISLAM

As you enter the hall, walk past the maps of Africa and stop at the first case on your right.

By the 7th century AD, Islam had spread into Africa. You can see evidence of its influence in many objects in this case.

**Can you find the amulets hanging from the top of the case?** Inside the leather pouches are pieces of paper with words from the Qu'ran. These amulets were worn to protect the wearer. Similar amulets are still worn today.

**Design and draw an amulet you might wear to protect you on your travels.**

