

## Extension Activities

1. **Sticky Rice and Eating Sticks.** Make a list of the various foods in *Silver Phoenix* and visit a Chinese restaurant to sample some of them. Eat your meal with “eating sticks” and experience how sticky rice is different from fluffy rice.
2. **Beauty Salon and Spa.** Author Cindy Pon often describes her characters’ hairstyles. Why? What did hairstyle signify about a person in imperial China? Illustrate each hairstyle that is mentioned in *Silver Phoenix*, and then compare and contrast them. Also explore some of the scents associated with Chinese culture and used in soaps, shampoos, lotions, and creams, such as those Ai Ling uses to bathe. What are natural aromatics? Become familiar with these scents, including citrus, gardenia, ginger, honey, honeysuckle, jasmine, lotus, mango, orchid, peach, plum, rose, and sandalwood. Which ones do you prefer?
3. **Night at the Opera.** Research the ancient art form of the Chinese opera, and create masks for the main characters in *Silver Phoenix*. Investigate the symbolic meaning of the various colors used on the masks. Why and how are Chinese opera masks used?
4. **Graceful Chinese Brushwork.** Ai Ling and author Cindy Pon are both skilled in Chinese brushwork, creating landscape paintings and calligraphy. Read about these art forms. How are the scrolls, rice paper, parchment, chop, brushes, grinding stone, and ink sticks used? Experiment with brushes and ink to create calligraphy or simple landscapes, and find a red stamp for your own signature. Visit a gallery that displays Chinese art, including calligraphy, carved jade, ceramics, cloisonné, lacquered objects, or paintings.
5. **Martial Arts.** Chen Yong and Li Rong are martial-arts sparring partners. Find out more about martial arts by researching *kung fu* and *wushu*. Are you or any of your classmates skilled in these art forms? Organize a group of your friends to take a class together at a martial arts studio.



Photo by Jen Kerker

## About the Author

**CINDY PON** is an accomplished Chinese calligrapher and brush painter with an academic background in Chinese studies. *Silver Phoenix: Beyond the Kingdom of Xia* is her first book, and she is currently at work on its sequel. Cindy Pon lives with her family in San Diego, California. You can visit her online at [cindypon.com](http://cindypon.com) and read her blog at [cindypon.blogspot.com](http://cindypon.blogspot.com).

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Guide prepared by Linda Z. Hamilton, PhD, Leawood, Kansas.

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## Reading Group Guide



**SILVER PHOENIX**  
Beyond the Kingdom of Xia

BY CINDY PON

