

# Fiction

Group 1



# The Cave Man Battle in Mogao Cave

*Canadian International School of Hong Kong, Chang, Ming Sum Marky – 8*

Once upon a time, there was a poor but friendly cave man who lived in Mogao cave.

It was a super sunny day, the sky was bright and blue, the sun was burning, blinding, blazing and boiling hot. Few seconds later, the sky turned gloomy like a monster looming over you. “Boom, crack, bang” sandstorm swirled around Mogao cave, every piece of little dust and sand flew away as fast as a rocket until it reached the sandstorm. The cave man was so scared that he shouted “HELP”. He used the giant shovel and axe to dig deeper in the deep dark cave. As he started to dig, torches flickered in the twilight. He was super impressed by the wall painting, it was full of Chinese culture that he thought he was eating dumplings.

It went on and on, the cave man saw a big, strong horse. So, he rode on him in a galloping speed. Then he discovered ten boxes of shiny, beautiful, glittering, gleaming, twinkling, sparkling, precious jewels. Suddenly, pungent smoke wafted through the air and punched my nose, fire sparks were flying in the sky like fireworks. Booming sounds was ringing in my ears, then a fierce fire breathing dragon stood upon him. He was so frightened that he shouted “HELP”. Then something caught his eyes, it was a sword, quick as a flash, he grabbed the sword and stabbed it in the dragon’s heart.

The dragon fainted, died in a second. The cave man grabbed the jewels and shared it with his friends happily.

# Adventures of Ace and Paul: The Mogao Caves

*Canadian International School of Hong Kong, Douglas, Niamh – 8*

Ring ring, the villain alarm was ringing! Ace and Paul race to the monitor. Their arch enemy Zaptor was entering the Mogao Caves to steal the famous Buddha statue.

“I can’t believe Zaptor is at it again” says Ace, a crime-fighting puppy dog, to Paul.

“He must have broken out of jail again,” says Paul, a crime-fighting Duck.

Ace and Paul speed to the Superfidget. The Superfidget was a plane that could transport anywhere instantly through magical portals. Ace and Paul jump in and push the button to the Mogao Caves. Before the plane zooms off into the magical portal, Simon, Paul's cat, jumps in.

“Great idea, Simon, Zaptor is allergic to cats!” says Paul.

The Superfidget zooms through the magical portal but suddenly Paul thinks up an idea! “We should think up some booby traps for Zaptor.”

“Great idea.”

“I will get my thinka thinka pad.” The thinka thinka pad was a device that stored all their ideas.

“We could collect some bottles and mice so we could put them in the caves.”

“I don’t understand why we need some mice and bottles Ace.”

“We need mice and bottles because Zaptors favourite hobby is to put mice in bottles and we can distract him and capture him.”

Ace and Paul land the Superfidget outside the mice store. As they walk in, some mice run up their sleeves causing them to scream.

They walk up to a man dressed in black and white stripes from head to toe. He has a long beard that brushes the wooden floor. He is as gruff as a thunderstorm.

“So what do you need today?” asks the shopkeeper.

“We would like about three thousand mice and bottles.”

“You must have something special planned” notes the shopkeeper and hands them the items.

They quickly zoom off in the Superfidget and arrive at the caves.

“Wow, that is more caves than I expected, but we have enough mice and bottles to totally distract Zaptor.”

As Ace and Paul start moving, laying out the mice and bottles, something beeps on Ace’s pom pom watch. The pom pom watch was a watch that detects villains.

“Ace! Your pom pom watch!” Paul shouts. “What is Zaptor doing right now?”

“Zaptor is heading our way. It seems like Zaptor knew we were going to distract him and has sped up his plan to steal the statue!

“What are we going to do now?!” cries Paul.

“Don’t give up. Remember we still have Simon.”

Meanwhile, Zaptor was laughing loudly. “HA!HA!HA! They will never catch me.”

Outside the caves Paul was panicking. “Oh no! We won’t be able to catch him and he’ll steal the Buddha statue. I hope Simon can save the day.”

As Zaptor sneaks out towards his getaway car Simon meows and jumps on Zaptor. “Ahhhhchoooo!” And at that moment he began to sneeze uncontrollably.

“Quick, grab him!” Both superheroes grab Zaptor while he sneezes, saving the day once again!

# The Magic Song

*Canadian International School of Hong Kong, Lau, Noemie – 7*

It was dry, sunny and hot in the desert. Amy, Sunny, Kyle, Oscar and their parents were travelling to the Mogao Grottoes. They brought a lot of water, their sunglasses, food and other supplies since it was a long journey. They had traveled from Hong Kong all the way to China. When they finally reached Dunhuang, they were really tired but they still had to climb the steep mountain. When they reached the top, they could see the Mogao Grottoes. When they reached the Mogao Grottoes, without much ado, they rushed into the Grottoes. In the Mogao Grottoes there were a lot of paintings. All of a sudden, they heard music coming from inside the caves. They were speechless! But when they went deeper into the cave, they didn't see anything as it was pitch dark. As they looked closer—a painting with musicians seemed to be moving! But the music stopped and the musicians started talking to them.

“Hello there,” said the first musician. “My name is Albert.” “Hello,” Amy said. “We heard music. Was it you?” “Yes,” said Albert. “We sometimes come to life.” “Why do you come to life?” Kyle asked. “So we can hear what we are playing.” Albert said. While they were talking, a few cobras sneaked up behind them. Sunny heard some noises so he looked behind. That's when he saw the cobras.

“G.G. Guys!” Sunny stammered. “Yes?” Oscar said. “Snakes!” exclaimed Sunny. Kyle turned to see what was going on. “Cobras!” Kyle screamed. The musicians turned around and said, “It's okay, we know how to charm snakes.” “Using a song!” Albert said. As the snakes came closer, the musicians started playing the song. It was an extraordinary magical song. As soon as they started playing the song, the cobras were charmed as though they were hearing a lullaby.

Without much ado, the cave was filled with sleepy snakes. The children applauded. It was such a magical sight a song that could charm snakes! There was a pandemonium. The children yawned a sleepy yawned. They were tired from so many adventures. They said goodbye to the musicians, and then turned to the entrance of the cave. “Wait!” Albert shouted. “Here are the notes for the song.” The children said thank you and left for the journey back home. Kyle even fell asleep! It was a long way back home. They were only halfway through the desert.

When they finally got home, they rushed into the house. Kyle took out the notes to the song Albert gave them. Since he knew how to play the violin, he took it out. Amy also knew how to play the piano, Sunny knew the trumpet and Oscar knew the flute, all four children started playing the song that charmed snakes. It was such a beautiful song!

# Best Cave Ever

*Canadian International School of Hong Kong, Law, Rachel – 8*

1990 January 20<sup>th</sup>

Dear diary,

I was in class learning about Mogao Grottoes when the bell rang. Time to go home!

I walked to the bus thinking about what my teacher said. Maybe my family could go! I spent hours thinking about it! Wow, imagine all the stories I could learn!

Beep! Beep! Its my stop now! This time my mom picked me up. Yay, I could tell her all about the stupendous cave. Can we go? For some reason my mom said yes! Our flight leaves tomorrow.

1990 January 21<sup>st</sup>

Dear diary,

I'm in the airplane ready to take off soon. Suddenly the captain announced, "I'm your captain Matthew please fasten your seatbelt, we are going to take off soon". On top of my head the red light turned on. Sorry diary, I have to write to you tomorrow!

1990 January 22<sup>nd</sup>

Dear diary,

Sorry I couldn't write to you, one of the pilot's assistants told me to put you away! Right now I'm in the hotel.

The beds are as soft as marshmallows! The air is very fresh! The sky is clean and blue. And the best of all is that its sooooo comfortable! I'll talk to you later, its bedtime. We leave first thing tomorrow to the cave.

1990 January 23<sup>rd</sup>

Dear diary,

I'm in the bus going to the cave! The bus takes half an hour. But I feel like its one whole long year! The rides quite boring, no offence to the bus driver. But I guess it's worth it.

We're finally here! I think I would have died. The bus ride was so long! We brought a sandwich just in case I'm hungry. The cave is so gigantic. I don't know how to describe it!

There are so much paintings! I don't know how but I think there are 50. Just kidding!

I wonder how many paintings and sculptures there are?

Is it possible you could get lost in there? Hey! It could be possible!

The cave feels more and more exciting as we go in. Even better then what my teacher said!

Wow! I just saw a mural that had a lot of leaves on! Too bad I can't read it! This all feels like a dream come true!

This is the best day ever!

I was skipping in the cave while singing... "This is the best cave, the biggest cave, come come here!" Ok, maybe not the biggest right?"

We just finished going in the cave and looking around. Now it's time to go back to the hotel.

Aw man!

1990 January 24<sup>th</sup>

Dear diary,

I just had a good night sleep! Oh, that was so comfortable! I'm in the taxi going to the airport. Gotta stop writing now, otherwise the pilots assistant will tell me to put you away!

1990 January 25<sup>th</sup>

Dear diary,

As usual, I watched movies in the plane. I'm in the car going home. Its nighttime now.

I just finished showering. Time to go to bed.

# The Mogao Grottoes

*Canadian International School of Hong Kong, Lee, Hwan – 8*

Huff, Pant, Huff, Pant

I was exhausted, both from the searing heat of the sun and from the whole day of walking. My shoes were all ripped up, and my eyes began to close but then, no, it can't be. My eyesight was getting worse. But the next thing I knew I saw a man standing in front of me.

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I was at home, reading a book. A book about the Mogao Grottoes. The book was pretty old, since it just turned 2122. 45,000 square feet of artwork! I want to see that! I decided to go there. I had got a new teleporter for my New Year's present, and I have finished packing up all the supplies. My teleporter can only travel 10 miles from the Mogao Grottoes, so I packed some snacks.

I am Buddhist, so I brought some riches.

Three, Two, One, Go!

I blasted into China. The teleporter started spinning. I felt dizzy, and my face turned into an odd shade of green. Even thoughts were spinning in my head. Would I ever make it?

Give me your riches.

Give me your riches.

That thought struck in my head like a wrecking ball slamming into a building. I panicked, standing there, paralyzed, "Give me your riches, right now." The man said those words as he picked up a stone. I braced myself. The man noticed that. Instead of throwing the rock, he gave me a punch in the face. A blinding pain flew across my head. It was a galaxy behind the stars. Blood oozed out of my nose.

The pain was nothing compared to when he unzipped my bag, and took out ALL the riches. That was like having a serious wound. Oh well, I just have money, so I found a shop 500m away from the Magao Grottoes. Pain exploded in my face. But I was determined to find the Mogao Grottoes. I would even go with a leg injury. I bought more riches at a near-by shop then went. But I saw something. A cave. The Magao Grottoes.

I just couldn't believe how big it was. I thought it was more like 100,00 square feet than 45,000. But I just couldn't believe the next thing that happened to me. I saw that man again. I braced myself with an exploding cloud of anger. But this time, but this time. But this time, he held out my old riches.

"I am sorry."

It was like a bursting balloon in my throat. This man. This man. This person who stole my riches, who stole riches from me. I just choked out.

"Thanks."

Then he was gone.

Then I took a step forward. Then another. I kept on going until I oversaw the vast palace.

THUMP! THUMP!

I went inside. I saw a colossal Buddha. I saw paintings, and architecture. I could not imagine how much stuff was scrunched on every room. It certainly was a thing I would never forget.



# Mogao Grottoes

*Canadian International School of Hong Kong, Li, Evanna – 8*

Jack and Evie moved to Mogao Grottoes. They made a friend named Bob. “You guys want to come over to my house?” Asked Bob “Sure we would love that!” Said Evie. “Cool! I’ll show you guys my cave!” Bob said. “Cave?” Asked Evie and Jack. “I live in a cave.” Said Bob. “Let’s go then.” Said Jack.

As Bob led them inside the cave Jack and Evie saw pictures of Buddhas. “Who is that?” Asked Jack holding his pencil and notebook at the ready. “That is Guan Yin.” Bob said. As Jack wrote down the information Bob said. “There are plenty of other cave filled with pictures of ancient artifacts, come with me tomorrow to see the night market.” “Okay!” Said Evie.

At night Jack, Evie, Bob, and Bob’s father met at the cave as planned. At the market people were selling sculpture, cloth, art, food, and designs on stuff. “Can we buy some stuff?” Asked Jack. “Of course!” Said Bob’s father. “Can we get some food? I’m really hungry and I want to check out the food.” They walked up to the food seller and Bob’s dad said. “Can we have some donkey noodles, mutton and some preserved fruit please.” “Yum!” Said Evie. “It’s my favorite food.” Said Bob.

After they finished their food Bob asked. “Do you wanna go cycling?” “Sure!” Said Jack. They went, cycling and went to the caves to see Buddha paintings. Not only they learned about Mogao Grottoes, but they made a new friend! And that is all what matters family and friends!

# The Case of the Freezing Sculpture

*Canadian International School of Hong Kong, Saenyasiri, Victor – 8*

The crowd went in the Mogao Grottoes. They gasped when they saw the amazing sculptures and paintings. A hush fell over the crowd as the giant sculpture was revealed in cave 96. Nobody seemed to notice the chill in the air. Nobody, that is, except the dark figure that hung suspended from the ceiling. It was Sam Million, and he was going to freeze the sculpture. But nobody seemed to know that the world famous supervillain was there with them. They were all looking at the sculpture. It has paint of red, green, yellow, blue for the clothes, and white for especially the face of the Buddha. It was as tall as a Brachiosaurus. Then, after everybody left, it was time for Sam Million's element of surprise.

"Alpha team seven, this is Sam. Let's do this and boogie." Sam said to his microphone.

A team of 5 people appeared. They were wearing sleek black jumpsuits and were carrying an enormous ice cube as white as the polar bear. Sam pulled the air trigger on a gun. Blasts of cold air were shot out and the team dropped the cube and ran.

"So where is it?" the police asked.

"Here!" The guard replied, his voice trembling.

Massive blocks of ice covered the room. An air gun was hung, firing little ice cubes. The police took the air gun. He jammed at the trigger, but it would not budge. There were cracks already because of the cold air.

A 14 years-old teenager stood out of the crowd. "I think I can hack into the organic supercomputer system that controls the gun. Then I can track down who turned it on." he said.

"We'd better give it a try.", the police replied.

The teenager walked to the gun. There was a little keyboard and his fingers were flying. A few minutes later, he stopped.

"I'll need my friend, but at least I stopped the gun.", he said.

A minute or so, a girl at similar age came. She examined the gun and saw numbers: 19,1, and 13. She took out a notebook and sorted the Alphabet by order and it spelled "SAM".

"Sam Million!" Everybody exclaimed.

They ran out of the Mogao Grottoes. The police got in their cars and a push of the lever sent the engine roaring as the car sped away. The boy and the girl walked out. They leaned over the fence to wait for some news of Sam. The police car came back a while later, with Sam handcuffed. The police got out and took out 2 badges with some sculptures on them.

"We'd like to thank you for saving Cave 96. These are for you, our little Mogao heroes." the police said, handing out the badges to the two teenagers.

The name of the Mogao Grottoes meant that there was no higher deed than buildings the caves, but there is also no higher deed than saving Mogao Grottoes.

# New Tales of the Mogao Grottoes

*Canadian International School of Hong Kong, Scott, Su Yifei – 8*

It was late in the middle of Dunhuang. The only sound I could hear was my own panting. I was visiting the Mogao Grottoes with my parents. But I wandered off and lost sight of them!

Finally, there was a cave. I decided to go in for a rest. This cave was so shabby as compared with the bigger ones I saw earlier. The paintings on the wall were fading and there were stones everywhere. Even a mouse wouldn't want to live here. But I was too tired to walk. It was nice to sit down and get some rest.

I almost fell asleep when I vaguely heard some chatter. Who were talking in this cave? I looked around but saw no one. I looked again – there were two flying apsaras (Feitians) on the wall, dressed in Tang Dynasty robes, talking to each other! One complained her dress was old and the other said the strings on her Pipa were broken. They had been turned away from the heavenly parties for a thousand years.

Seriously? A thousand years? I could not believe my ears. I took out my paint palette from the backpack. I brushed some dark coral red color on the Feitian's long dress. It was a perfect match of her style. The train of her long dress began to wave in the breeze. I added a few simple strokes to the other Feitian's Pipa strings. The Feitian plucked the strings with her fingernails to make a wonderful sound. They were happy.

Suddenly, the doors painted on the wall opened. I could see multiple layers of murals behind. Magically I walked through the doors and met other Feitians. They started playing wonderful music, as sweet as honey newly gathered from honeycombs. The sound flew over the sky and the moon and seemed to spread everywhere. Some instruments stood out more: pan flute, Ruan, Zheng, and most of all, Pipa. Another Feitian boy was playing flute on top of a giant phoenix with turquoise wings and tail feathers made of fire. The phoenix's beautiful eyes seemed to burn in the sea. I overheard two ladies fighting over how to hold a Pipa, vertically or horizontally. The thousand-armed Buddha walked over and said: "Ladies! Both are correct. The difference is that you were from different eras. Now leave your debate alone and let's just enjoy music." I also saw a Feitian girl playing harp and asked whether I could try. She giggled and told me that was a Konghou, not harp.

"Scotty, thank God, you are here." I woke up and saw daddy and mommy. "I must have been in a dream", I thought. But when I looked up on the wall, I noticed a Feitian boy holding a paint pallet and a brush in the painting.

"Mom, I want to do my next study report on ancient Chinese music." "Really?" my mom smiled. "Yeah, it is fascinating". I took a last look at the Feitian boy and walked out.

# The Story of Mogao

*Canadian International School of Hong Kong, Suen, Ingrid – 8*

It was the middle of Autumn and so Laity decided to go hiking in the Mogao caves with Kauri, but the problem is that Kauri said she wanted to hear the story of Mogao before she went there, that's why Laity started by saying: "Long ago in china there were two young men named Lin Xian and Lu Yin who became the best of friends. They always went to see buildings because they love architecture, then one day they got really inspired and they decided to dig a lot of caves and put them together to form a bigger temple. Since they believe in Buddha, they also wanted to call it the thousand Buddha caves too, so they started building the Mogao Caves

Once they finished digging for an hour or so, they started getting sweaty, so they went to the market to buy some water. On they're way back home they saw buildings with pictures so when they came back, they decided to make copies of famous pictures drawn by artists. But back then there were no printers that's why they decided to make their own art. After they were finished with the first two paintings, they got tired, so they took a long nap.

After their nap they went out for some more information once they got all the information, they needed they made paper out of sand and drew a blueprint on it. Once they finished drawing, they found out that they so fast that's why they each asked one of their friends to help.

Since it was the ancient times, they made stone carved paintings that were fascinating. Anyways then they're friend Lin Xin came and helped them make Mogao, meanwhile Lin Xian created some Buddhist art. After they all finished with the Buddhist art, they continued to carve the cave.

Since they wanted to make the cave strong, they had to buy some cement.

They built and built and built and built until they finally finished. After they finished, they also had to build the roof with tiles, but it took them days and days to figure out what the roof's shape should be. After they figured it out, they started building a triangle shape out of tiles. When they finished halfway, they started getting tired, so they needed some rest.

3 days later the gang finished making the cave and putting the color on it so that's how they made Mogao."

Then right after Laity told Kauri the story Kauri thought about it for days and days and days and days until it was winter. "Um Laity, can I go to the Mogao grottoes now?" Laity sighed with a bad look saying, "Kauri its winter! wait until next year!"

# The Evil Living Statues of the Mogao Grottoes

*Creative Primary School, Lam, Ethan – 8*

Skeppy and his father went to Mogao Grottoes because Skeppy had a history project about historical architecture. Skeppy being only twelve, was smart, calm and kind. His father, Johnny, was strong, brave and calm.

Skeppy looked at some signs and knew that Mogao Grottoes' first cave was built 1600 years ago. Priest Wang Yuanka discovered Mogao Grottoes. There were 492 caves and around 2400 buddha statues still standing. They went into cave number 96 and saw the biggest buddha Maitreya Buddha. It stood 35.5 metres high. They were both astonished and amazed at the sight. They also saw wall paintings of the buddhas, but some had faded and changed into a greyish tone.

Suddenly, the buddha statues came to life! They started to destroy buildings and attack visitors. The visitors were so scared and scurried away. Johnny was a policeman and he was acquaintances of The Living Statue Hunters. He called them for help and they arrived minutes later. With the help of the buddha transformer gun, the hunters could reverse the spell of the living buddha statues. However, they only had three shots. It was not enough! Johnny stayed to help as Skeppy tried to find out why this was happening.

Skeppy remembered what he had read on a website. There was an infinity stone that brought things to life in Mogao Grottoes. The website had a riddle. "A place that is very hot. It will be there only between 12:00–1:00. Maybe you can find it!" Skeppy thought of the hottest place was where the sun shone at noon. He borrowed a shovel from a gardener and went to find the spot. It was twelve o'clock, Skeppy dug and dug. He finally found the infinity stone!

He went back to his dad and told him that he found the infinity stone. He thought the stone could be turned off somehow to allow the statues to return, but he did not know how. The hunters said, "Maybe we can ask the living buddha statues." Then the hunters used their buddha transformer and zapped three living buddha statues. Skeppy asked the three good buddhas, "Why do you want to destroy the world?" They replied in unison, "The humans don't take care of us, we are fading and being destroyed by human nature." Skeppy said, "No, through time, getting old is normal. We will take care of you all." The buddhas nodded their heads. Skeppy kindly asked, "Can you please tell me where the hidden infinity stone controller is?" The first buddha answered, "I only know the first digit of the cave number is 2!" The second buddha said, "The third digit is 3!" The third buddha said, "The second digit is 6!" Skeppy put all three numbers together and knew it was Cave 263!

Skeppy, Johnny, the hunters and the good buddhas all went to Cave 263. They finally found the controller and turned the infinity stone off. All living statues stopped battling and went back to their original spots.

# The Mogao Grottoes Adventure

*Creative Primary School, Lee, Ochs Clement – 8*

Hayden and Kayden were two engineers famous for building robots and machines. Looking like a typical scientist with a pair of nerdy glasses, Hayden was detail-minded. Kayden, seemingly playful, was a creative genius.

One day, while they were watching a documentary on ancient Chinese culture, the Mogao Grottoes came to their attention. They learnt that there were countless valuable murals regarding Buddhist teachings, statues, books, and artifacts in this place. However, loads of treasure were stolen and sold on the black-market years ago. “Is there something we can do to stop the thieves?”, asked Hayden. Kayden, pondering for a while, suggested, “Perhaps we can build a time machine to travel back in time.”

Two months later, the time machine was ready. Setting the time back to 100 years ago on the control panel, they started their journey with some whizzing sounds in the background. After landing, each of them carried a backpack and walked inside the vacant Mogao Grottoes. “I can’t believe we are actually here! Yippee!”, exclaimed Kayden with his fist in the air. When darkness of the night fell, they started their private exhibition tour with two flaming torches in hand.

Suddenly, the engineers noticed two shadows at a corner and heard some clashing sounds. They quickly hid themselves behind a gigantic statue and walked on tippy toes towards the source. There were two clumsy men tossing books and artifacts into their bags. “We have to stop them! These books and artifacts are so important for research on Buddhism. They shouldn’t be kept as personal collections,” Kayden whispered. Hayden then fished out a tiny robot from his backpack. This invention, rechargeable with air, could produce different kinds of sounds with audio command. “Let’s scare them away and make sure they would never return,” suggested Kayden. “How about some howls of strong wind and zombies?” Hayden proposed with a mischievous grin.

Hayden whispered the command to the robot, not to draw any unwanted attention. Shortly, the howl of strong wind echoed around the hall and sent shivers down their spines. One of the thieves glanced around and murmured something in a local dialect nervously to his companion.

Next, Hayden gave another command and some louder zombie-like howls were released. This time, both thieves looked at each other with widened eyes, terrified of any approaching monsters. They dropped their bulky bags onto the ground and began running. One of them tripped over a rock and landed with his chubby face down. Some broken teeth fell from his bleeding mouth. Another cried for his mother, shouting, “This cave is haunted! Help!”

The engineers witnessed the entire scene while covering their mouths to hold in the laughter. After the thieves’ departure, they high-fived each other and decided to leave the robot behind to guard this place. They programmed it to only operate at night so that the workers at the grottoes could continue working in the daytime. Taking the final glance at its wonder, they entered the time machine with satisfied smiles.

# A Tunnel to the Lost World in the Past

*Creative Primary School, Wong, Hei Nam Sophie – 8*

History is something from or created by people in the past. Have you ever imagined that you are creating a “History” somehow?

One day, Tsz-Man, a ten-year-old boy, was visiting the Mogao Grottoes with his family in Dunhuang. It is a massive group of caves filled with Buddhist statues and imagery. The art and objects found at Mogao reflected the meeting of cultures along the Silk Road and the collection of trade routes that for centuries linked China, Central Asia, and Europe.

When Tsz-Man was admiring one of the world’s largest Buddha statues, it suddenly came to life and said, “Help! A monk named Wai stole my key and has escaped. It is an extremely powerful key which could be dangerous if misused. He just entered that tunnel, please help catch him back!”

Tsz-Man’s caring nature took over as he agreed and scurried into the tunnel.

After Tsz-Man came out of the tunnel, he saw Wai—the-thief and dashed to seize him. With a flash of light, Wai transformed himself into a Buddha and made multiple clones of himself, dancing under the glowing sunlight.

“Come and catch me!” bellowed Wai.

Tsz-Man was stunned with hesitation. He tried but he kept grabbing the wrong one. He was exhausted and dazed at the sight of thousands of Buddhas. All of a sudden, Wai vanished in the air! Upon searching for Wai, he encountered another monk.

“Did you see another monk passing by?” inquired Tsz-Man.

“I am Yuezun and yes, I did see a monk rushing there.” replied the monk pointing to a tunnel.

Tsz-Man hurried through the tunnel. He spotted Wai in a distance and hollered, “Stop, thief!” The yelling noise alarmed a monk named Wang Yuanlu, who was smoking a cigarette nearby. Everyone chased after Wai to a large cave. Out of the blue, an opening emerged on the back wall which closed right after Wai and Tsz-Man entered. Wang Yuanlu was left alone in the cave, startled.

When Tsz-Man exited the tunnel, he saw that the Buddha get hold of Wai.

“Thanks for creating the history with Wai!” exclaimed the Buddha gratefully.

“What do you mean?” asked Tsz-Man confused.

“I will explain more.” said the Buddha, “With my key, you two just traveled back to the past. Remember Monk Yuezun? After seeing the thousand radiant Buddhas made by Wai, he was inspired to build the first cave here in the Mogao Grottoes. Remember Wang Yuanlu, the Taoist monk? He examined the wall meticulously after the tunnel closed. He noticed his cigarette smoke wafting toward the wall. Inquisitively, he knocked down the wall, and unearthed a mountain of valuable documents. That’s how our famous Library Cave was discovered.”

Tsz-Man could not believe his ears. He had just created the history! No wonder people said the grottoes were like tunnels to the lost world in the past!

Never underestimate yourself, we are all creating the history of our future selves!

# The Revenge of the Mogao Grottoes

*Creative Primary School, Wong, Matthias – 9*

In the Dunhuang district of Gansu province in West Central China, there were caves called Mogao Grottoes which were dug and sculpted by monks many years ago. These held many beautiful statues, sculptures, books and paintings. But after 1,000 years, people have forgotten about this place because travelers found a new route and things started to change, and monks no longer went there anymore.

In 1834, a group of 1,000 treasure robbers discovered this place from a secret map and they planned to steal the treasures from the Mogao Grottoes. One chilly winter night, these robbers arrived to the Mogao Caves, filled with greed and determined to steal all the treasures. A dazzling golden Buddha statue stood there and they decided to steal it too. Suddenly a monk leader named Wu Fung and 99 monks showed up in front of the robbers and said, "You are going to regret this!" It turned out the Mogao Caves were not forgotten at all because Wu Fung and his followers secretly lived there for a long time for the sake of protecting this sacred place.

Wu Fung led his monks to stop the robbers, but they faced countless enemies. Many of the monks were injured or fought to death. But they did not surrender and kept fighting until Wu Fung was the last person standing. Unfortunately, his right arm and left leg were shot by the enemy's gun, he bled so badly and fell unconscious. The robbers were thrilled thinking they have claimed victory. They grabbed the treasures and were about to leave.

When the battlefield became hopeless, a hundred golden monkeys, which also lived there with the monks to safeguard the place, suddenly showed up in front of the robbers. The monkeys were furious with what happened and they fought fiercely with bamboos in hand to beat the robbers. But again, the monkeys could not resist the strong bullets. "Die animals!" shouted the violent robbers. The monkeys were either shot to death or seriously injured. The sacred place was in defeat once again. "It seems that it's not that difficult to conquer this place. It turns out only halfvits live here," said the robbers.

Filled with pride, the robbers stood as the ground began to shake rapidly until a scroll with amazing Chinese characters flew out of a robber's sack. The scroll text glowed, the characters from the paintings and the statues all came to life. A healing potion flew out of a painting and splashed on Wu Fung, immediately bringing him back to consciousness. Then the statues, the painted characters, together with Wu Fung all fought against the robbers. At last, the big golden Buddha came to life and it used its gigantic hands to grab and smashed all of the robbers, and threw them far away.

Finally, the Mogao Caves stood in peace again all because of the story on that mysterious night that spread among other robbers from country to country.



# New Tales from the Mogao Grottoes

*Diocesan Preparatory School, Chau, Yan Tung – 8*

One day before the Chinese New Year, I decided to clean my house. After a while of cleaning, I took a rest. Suddenly, I saw something glowing in the storeroom. I took a look at it. It was a very old book, my grandparents bought it many years ago in Mogao Grottoes during their trip to Silk Road in China. I remembered that grandparents said Mogao Grottoes was a beautiful place with hundreds of caves full of beautiful art and historical literature. There was a swirling wind coming out from the book suddenly, which blew me inside the book.

When I opened my eyes, it seemed that I went back to Mogao Grottoes hundred years ago. I looked around and saw some monks digging some caves, I tried not to be scared, but when the monks saw me, they were friendly to me. I found a beautiful key on the floor, and there was a string hanged to it. I put the string around my neck and it glowed with a magic – my body then became invisible. The monks and I noticed some robbers who wanted to steal the valuable paintings and statues in the cave. The monks asked me to help them, so I helped. The monks gasped, “How could we stop the robbers?”, I then told them about my plan. My plan was to dig some holes in the cave so the robbers would fall into the holes.

I kept on digging holes secretly and luckily the robbers did not notice my act. I then hid in the shady part of cave with the monks so the robbers could not see us. Our plan succeeded! The robbers fell into the holes when they were about to leave with the stolen paintings and statues. They could never come out again!

The monks thanked me and gave me the magic key as a reward. Suddenly the key on my neck glowed again, it took me back to my home in modern world. Mogao Grottoes was such a wonderful place full of invaluable treasures of the past so it should be carefully protected. I wish I could go to Mogao Grottoes again soon!

# A Treacherous Cave

*Diocesan Preparatory School, Law, Tsz Lok – 9*

A long time ago, a Mogao cave held a mysterious object. It was believed to grant peoples' infinite wishes and wisdom. Later, it was identified as a kazoo. Thousands of people went into the cave in search of it. The greedy people found it; however, it was just an illusion created by the creature that was protecting the treasure.

Soon others went into the cave and saw a sign. It read, "What can be eaten yet, be so deadly?" Sam replied, "A fish." A strange voice said, "Correct" letting everyone pass. While they were walking deeper into the cave thousands of coins dropped. A mysterious voice said, "You must find the real coin." Luckily, Bob knew that if it doesn't shine, it's fake. He came up with a plan. They grouped the coins in search of a very shimmering pile. Finally, the voice let them pass. "What happened?" shouted Bear. Sam replied, "Look! After we found the right coin, two paths appeared!"

Another sign read "What can blow down trees, spin rapidly and spread to different places?" Two signs appeared behind the first one revealing two answers, a hurricane, and a tsunami. People who thought tsunami was the right answer took the left. What was awaiting them was darkness. The people that took that path, got thrown out by a shadowy hand.

Meanwhile, the people who chose the hurricane saw a hallway. At the end, a door appeared. There were 20 keys. Another sound whispered, "You must find which key opens the door with 4 keyholes. You must find the numbers in the room." People kept searching. They found the numbers 2,7,9 and 4 and used them to open it.

In the next room, there were many old violins, everyone knew what they must do. They started playing 'It's raining tacos'. Unexpectedly, the notes started fading and reappearing. After hours, they finally perfected the rhythm; the door opened.

In front of them, a giant turquoise dragon was standing in fury. He said, "Why are you disturbing my slumber. I will not be bothered by any menial tasks." The people offered pebbles to him, so he let them go with no harm. Yet, the door sealed shut. The dragon told them they must fight him to pass. After hitting the dragon many times, he collapsed. The door exploded, and people cautiously ran past him into a room with 12 plates.

These plates were to activate the door by the detection laser. The people didn't know what to do yet, they saw a painting with a strange symbol. They tried to make a pattern accidentally opening the final door.

Everyone saw the kazoo in the middle of a room full of happy faces and fought to steal it. Someone shouted, "How about taking turns, it will make everyone happy." Yet, one person wished for an evil and malicious thing. An evil steed that would destroy anything in its way. Bob, who was fed up with the drama, wished for peace and brought the world altogether.

# Li the Explorer

*Discovery Mind Primary School, Gallagher, Ellany – 6*

Many years ago, a young girl named Li lived in a small village called Diaowo near Beijing. Li lived with her parents and grandparents. Li also has a dog called Cha Cha. Cha Cha followed Li everywhere. Li loved her small village. Only 100 other families lived there as well. Her families were all farmers, but her grandpa would share stories from when he was a boy and would go exploring all around the villages. This made Li want to be an explorer. Her grandpa would tell Li how to prepare to be an explorer. He said “pack water and food and even a torch. Always have a pencil and notepad so you can draw the path you took which will be your map.” Li loved to spend time with her Grandpa, he even taught her to catch fish from the river.

Li was only 10 years old when she became an explorer. The day Li went exploring, she didn't tell anyone about her plan. She left the house with only her explorer backpack. Li wanted to explore the mountains, but she had never left the village alone before. Li noticed Cha Cha was following her as she was trying to sneak out of her village. Li packed some extra food for him and told him to stay close and not to bark. They passed through some rice fields and Li started drawing her map. It started to get dark so Li took out her torch from her backpack and used it to see the way. Li started to feel scared and suddenly realized she didn't know how to get home. It was cold and dark. She didn't want to disappoint her grandfather by getting lost and not being a brave explorer. Li decided to look for shelter. Cha Cha started barking and showed Li he had sniffed out a cave. Li shone her torch into the cave to make sure it was empty. The cave seemed to be enormous, but safe. Li told Cha Cha, “good job, we can sleep here tonight.’ After they set up their camp inside the cave, it started to rain. Li knew her family couldn't search for her in the rain. Li shared some of the food from her backpack with Cha Cha.

The next morning Li wanted to go home. She missed her family. However, she decided she would return to the cave to explore it more with her grandpa. Li took her map out and started to follow it home while Cha Cha helped by sniffing out their path. Hours later, Li could hear many people calling her name. She knew she was close to her home. Cha Cha started to bark to help their family find them. Everyone was happy Li and Cha Cha were safe. But Li was in trouble for leaving the village and exploring on her own. Everyone had been worried, but Grandpa noticed Li's backpack was missing so he knew she was exploring with the supplies he taught her to always pack. Li promised never to explore by herself again. That night Li told her family and friends how Cha Cha and she had found a hidden cave. This cave had never been discovered before. After Li showed her grandfather the cave, they started to take a break from farming and show the villagers the cave so that everyone could explore and enjoy it. Li became known as the young explorer who had been lost with her dog and discovered the now famous cave.

# The Mogao Grottoes

*ESF Bradbury School, Yau, Audrey – 7*

One sunny day, Audrey and her sister Sophie packed their bags to visit the Magao Caves. Audrey pulled a map out of her bag. “We need to go to the desert.” she said.

The sky in the desert was dark and sprinkled with stars. They made a big tent and went to sleep. Waking up in the morning they stuffed the tent back into Audrey’s bag, and set off to find the Mogao Grottoes. They met a mouse named Sheldon. Audrey asked if he could take them to the Mogao Grottoes.

Suddenly, some golden sprinkles fell from the sky. Buddha came to life! The Mogao Grottoes collapsed because Buddha is too big! The broken pieces of the Mogao Grottoes suddenly moved! They floated across the sky then most of the pieces fell down and some of the pieces stick together!

A note fell from the sky, reading, ‘find a crystal in South Pole and the desert, they will connect and make the Mogao Grottoes again.’ “Let’s go and find the crystals!” said Sophie.

“Wow!” cried Audrey as she jumped off Buddha and ran onto the ice. “It’s really cold!” said Sheldon. “I’ve got a strange feeling!” said Audrey jumping on the ice. The ice broke and they found their first crystal! It was light blue, round and shiny. “It’s so light!!!” said Audrey.

“Let’s go to the desert!” Sheldon said. Buddha took one huge step and they were in the desert!

Sheldon jumped down and started to dig! Sand flew in every direction. At last Sheldon stopped, he had found the crystal! It was like yellow wings and was rounded in shape. Sheldon tried to pull it out, but it was stuck! They all tried to pull but the crystal was still stuck. “I know a friend who could help!” said Audrey. “Can you take me to South Pole?” she asked Buddha.

Audrey called “Marsh and Mellow! Where are you?” two penguins jumped out of the snow!

“Hi, Audrey! It looks like you brought some friends!” one penguin chirped. “Do you want to go to the desert?” asked Sheldon.

They climbed on Buddha and went to the desert. “Let pull!” said Sheldon “On the count of three pull!” said Sheldon. An animal appeared with fox’s eyes, a mole’s head and a mole’s body and a fox’s legs and tail!

Audrey picked up the shiny crystal. Sophie got the round crystal out of her bag. They put it together and the broken pieces of the Mogao Grottoes floated in the sky and connected! “We did it!” said Sophie. “Did you grow the golden sprinkles on Buddha?” asked Audrey.

“Yes, I did.” Said Lotus proudly “There are some seeds that grow very fast into trees! said Sheldon. “I will plant it now!” shouted Lotus and he ran off.

“We can play now!” Audrey shouted. As they played they didn’t notice that Buddha was back in the Mogao Grottoes and had turned back into stone!

# The Silk Key of Lunda & Entirugus

*ESF Quarry Bay School, Chan, Jodi – 7*

Over half a millennia ago a monk discovered an ancient cave. He told many wise men to come and visit and make ancient carvings for the worthy to know. But the greedy King called Chen Chi Wong sent some of his men to steal treasures. But when they arrived the monk appeared and said “You are not worthy now go or else I will have to banish you.” After that the King’s men ran in fear they told the King that they were not worthy.

At that time a kind girl called “Yun”(luck) was cycling down the Silk Road and saw the cave. The monk beckoned her in the cave and asked her “What do you see?” Yun said “I see hope, joy and faith “. The monk lead Yun to a key, the monk said “Which door will you open the Door of Hope or the Door of Fortune.” Yun unlocked the Door of Hope, there stood the water angel she said “Yun, I will bless you with part of my power I trust you know what to do with it”. But when she stepped out she saw the King and his men. She ran to help the monk because he was being threatened the shimmering gold shine in his eyes disappeared as the King’s men started to point spears at him.

She knew it was going to happen so she used 1% of her power to protect the monk but she used 1% on purpose. She winked at the monk. The men barged through her as they took the key and unlocked the Door of Fortune and saw treasure beyond their dreams. But the moment they stepped in they fell into a trap, a voice said “Stay here until you learn your lesson.” A devil tried to free them but the water angel said “Greed is not a way but hope and faith is.” Then the devil disappeared knowing his plan has failed. The water angel came to Yun and said “Part of my power is yours I trust you know what to do with it.” Yun was passed down as the bravest girl but little did anybody know one of the King’s men escaped.

The Silk Road is now a glittering emerald tourist road. The true power that the water angel gave Yun was a blue and golden coral necklace that whoever who has evil in their heart will be harmed. This is how she uses it, she takes it in her hand and it begins to glow. It removes the evil in whoever’s heart. The key was called the Silk Key. The origin is that a girl called Lunda and a boy called Entirugus owned it and had to give it up for their love so they gave it to somebody trustworthy the monk. The moral is that to always have hope, never give up and never be greedy.

This the ending of the Silk Key of Lunda and Entirugus.

# Thousand Memories of Mogao Grottoes

*ESF Quarry Bay School, Desai, Ishaani – 6*

Maria crossed Central Park on her way home on a Friday evening after ending work. A scarf on display in a shop caught her eye as she walked along Seventh Avenue. As Maria gazed at the beautiful scarf, Mrs. Wang, an elderly woman from the shop, greeted her with a grin. Mrs. Wang was the owner of the Chinese silk clothing store. She noticed Maria's fascination with the scarf and explained that it was made of silk from China, with a floral print inspired by paintings in the Mogao Grottoes. "What are Mogao Grottoes?" Maria inquired. Mrs. Wang invited Maria inside a shop and began reciting her Mogao caves stories. "In the fourth century, a Buddhist monk named Lè Zūn was on his long journey to Western Paradise," she explained. He rested on the Sanwai Mountain in Dunhuang after crossing the Gobi Desert. where he saw a vision of a thousand Buddhas. Mesmerized by the brilliance of the mountain, Lè Zūn began painting on cave walls to recreate his vision. The legends quickly traveled across the globe, and other monks began making pilgrimages to the Mogao caves."

Mrs. Wang displayed a selection of scarves with Buddhist murals and unique floral patterns. "Many Buddhist monks and artists visited Mogao cavers over centuries and filled them with many Buddhist murals, sculptures, and paintings," she continued. Mrs. Wang's tales piqued Maria's interest in the Mogao caves. "I was born in Dunhuang and spent up admiring Mogao caverns," Mrs. Wang explained. These scarves are a way for me to share my life-changing memories of Mogao Caves with the rest of the world." Maria purchased a scarf after being inspired by Mrs. Wang's story and thanked her for her generosity. As the days passed by, Maria read more and more about the history and art of the Mogao Grottoes.

The following summer, Maria went on a cultural trip in China. She flew to Dunhuang after touring China extensively. At the airport, she bought a map of the ancient Mogao Grottoes. Because it was written in Chinese, Maria couldn't read it. Fortunately, on the flight she met Myla, a Chinese-speaking arts student. The next morning, Maria and Myla bought tickets at the exhibition center, followed the map, and arrived at the Mogao caves. Over the next few days, they visited 492 caves, and saw over 2,000 paintings and sculptures. Everywhere they went, they saw fusions of civilizations, architecture, and ancient languages such as Tibetan, Uighur, Sanskrit, Sogdian, and Khotanese. Maria spent several hours in caves, admiring the spectacular artwork and culture. During the evenings, they talked about the history of the caves with other arts students in Myla's group, ordered dumplings for dinner, and watched movies related to the Mogao caves. Maria realized at the end of her journey that her visit to Mrs. Wang's shop had now turned into thousands of inspiring memories, just as Lè Zūn's visit to Mogao caves had turned into a vision of thousand Buddhas.

# Adventures in the Mogao Grottoes

*ESF Quarry Bay School, Hui, Karissa – 7*

Eko was a girl who loved reading and finding out. She reads more than any nine year-old. One evening in Hong Kong, Eko was listening to an old tale from her grandma. It was about caves with beautiful Buddhist sculptures and drawings on the Silk Road that were created in the Tang Dynasty. Eko was determined to find these caves because she wanted to know if they existed. So, the following day, she and her best friend Chloe sneaked out of their houses at midnight when nobody noticed, except the silent owls.

‘The caves are near Taklamakan Desert,’ said Chloe. The girls walked for a short while. Suddenly, Chloe spotted two rocks, one of which had a lotus flower pattern on it. ‘Let’s have a rest,’ she said. When Chloe sat on the rock, she disappeared into thin air. ‘Chloe!!’ shouted Eko. Eko felt scared. But she remembered Chloe had told her, ‘I’m your best friend no matter if I’m here or not.’ That softened Eko’s feelings. She knew she had to do something for her best friend. So, she sat on the rock, closed her eyes and felt a little tingle. When she opened her eyes, she was outside the Mogao Grottoes.

Eko! Eko! Chloe shouted, giving Eko a big hug. ‘Just now when I peeked inside one of the caves, I saw a monk and knew him right away. He was the Monk Wang I read from history book!’ Chloe said. Just then, Monk Wang saw the girls and greeted them. Monk Wang led the pair to a cave with paintings of “Young Female Buddhist Donors”. Afterwards, he led them into a small cave entrance with a towering Buddha inside. Then, Monk Wang asked the girls to wait outside and disappeared.

After hours of waiting, the girls were very bored and hungry. Eko peeked inside a cave and saw a cloud of mist. ‘Let’s step in it! Eko said. Both girls stepped in the mist and disappeared like popped bubbles. When they opened their eyes, they were in a library full of old scrolls and books where Monk Wang was reading. ‘Do you know how to get us home? Chloe asked. ‘Legend says, you two must pass the test of wisdom,’ Monk Wang said.

Eko and Chloe read book after book, did hundreds of quizzes and answered a load of questions asked by Monk Wang. They got every single thing right. Eventually, Monk Wang announced that the girls had passed the test! But he had to check the rhyme that could bring them home. The rhyme was: ‘The girls sat on a rock and the door got unlocked.’ After Monk Wang said it, Chloe and Eko vanished.

Smiling at each other, Chloe and Eko tiptoed back to their houses, climbed up the stairs, and went back in bed. The next morning, they were still thinking about the caves. But it was a secret between them. Who knew? One day, they may just go back ...

# My Most Adventurous Dream

*Harrow International School Hong Kong, Hung, Catherine – 8*

One day, my dad suggested that we go to the lost caves on the silk road of china. He planned to buy four tickets, one for him, one for my mum, one for my brother, and one for me. We were going to the caves during summer holidays.

When summer holidays finally came, we couldn't wait to go to the airport and board the plane to Beijing. It was a wonderful sight on the plane! I decided to sleep for the next few hours of the plane ride, just to get some more energy for all the walking I would have to do to get to the cave.

Suddenly, I heard a voice that was calling me awake. I looked around dizzily, realizing that I was already there! I was confused when my family pulled me out of my seat and carried me to walk for twenty minutes and take our car to the caves.

When we finally got to the caves, we bought a ticket to go into one of the caves. When we got in, we saw the cave's various forms of sacred art and literature. I was having fun until I heard a sound that seemed like it was from the very inside of the cave. Without thinking, I dashed into the cave to search where the sound came from.

I reached the end of the cave, but I still couldn't see where the sound was coming from. So, I reached my hand into all the holes (big or small) to search for the rumbling of the sound. Finally! I reached a hand in one of the biggest holes that seemed to be emitting the sound. I heard a very muffled and echoed sound saying "Help me and pull me out of this hole". So I did.

I decided to head back out of the cave, but I found that I was lost! Every direction looked like it would lead me back out. So, I found it impossible to escape. I shouted at the top of my voice, but no response came back. Nothing seemed to work. Until, that is, I heard my parents shouting back at me. They guided me out of the hole.

I got to the top just before the clock turned 8 o'clock at night. Time for us to go home! As dad was driving us to Beijing, my mum asked me where I went. I replied "I heard a noise deeper into the cave, so I ran in without thinking that I wouldn't be able to come back. And then I got lost.". My mum told me how important it was to think about what to do **before** doing it. Then I woke up, not realizing that all of it had only just been a dream.



# The Amazing Caves

*Harrow International School Hong Kong, Li, Serena – 8*

It was a sunny day. My little brother and I was out in the garden to water our flowers with dad. After that, we decided to have some afternoon tea and some readings in the garden to relax. Mum brought some teas and cakes with books for us and I picked one book that is called “Mogao Grottoes”.

“What is Mogao Grottoes?” I asked dad.

“Oh, Mogao Grottoes is the caves that form a system of 492 temples near [Dunhuang](#), in [Gansu](#) province, [China](#). They are also known as the Caves of the Thousand Buddhas, the Caves of Dunhuang or the Mogao Grottoes.” dad replied.

“Caves? Is there any monsters inside?” my little brother asked.

“That is an interesting question,” mum replied with a smile, “we may find out when we have a chance to go there for tourism.”

“I am not sure they have monsters inside or not. As I know, there are a lot of wall paintings, painted sculptures, ancient architecture, movable cultural relics and their settings about culture of Buddhists inside of the caves.” dad said.

“Paintings and Sculptures? Do they have magic powers as paintings and sculptures in Harry Potter?” I whispered to myself and started to think.

At the night time, I read a little bit of the book and fell asleep quickly.

“Gosh! Where am I?” I screamed very loudly because I realized I am in a dark place. I looked around but nobody answered me. Suddenly, I saw some lights sparkling ahead so I followed it. Then I walked into a lightening place with a lot of lit candles hanging on the wall. It is a cave! A beautiful cave with candlelight. What a beautiful wall paintings and a huge sculpture of Buddha.

I looked around and found a note on the ground and it says “Follow the arrows”, so I did. I finished following the arrows, it was a dead end. Then I looked on the other side, there was a stick on the ground. “What is that Stick for?” I am asking myself in my mind. “Is it a magic wand?” I was wondering. Then I picked up the stick and waved it in the air but nothing happened. I dropped the stick and went on, but suddenly I noticed that it wasn’t just any magic cave, it was the Mogao Grottoes! That is just a normal Cave! A normal cave with beautiful wall paintings and a huge sculpture of Buddha without any magic power.

Now I was starting to worry about how I got here? As I remembered I was reading the book on my bed.

“It is time to get up! Hurry up! Breakfast is ready.” Mum called.

“What?” Why can I hear my mum’s voice in the cave?

I suddenly wake up and looked around. Gosh! I am still on my bed.

It was just a dream. A dream of Mogao Grottoes, a normal cave without any magic power like Harry Potter.

# Back to Mogao Grottoes

*Hong Kong Baptist University Affiliated School Wong Kam Fai Secondary and Primary School, Yi Kiu, Cheng – 8*

“The new COVID-19 variant virus keeps menacing and raging globally and the total death of the world is increased to 5.4 millions...” Issy was watching televised news report and soliloquized, “Alas! When can I go to school?”

Issy was a 9-year-old girl who displayed great ardor in Chinese cultures. Schools have been suspended under the epidemic so she was taking home learning. She took a book, “The Silk Road” before sleep and turned to a page about Mogao Grottoes, “The Mogao Grottoes is peerless!” Issy’s eyes shot wide open and wondered. She turned over page after page, “I wish I could go to Dunhuang one day”. She read until mid-night but could barely keep her eyes open, so finally she was out like a light.

When Issy awoke, she felt chilly and was surrounded with Chinese paintings and sculptures. She was stunned! Oh no! It can’t be true. She was in one of Mogao caverns!

All of a sudden, a man wearing kasaya came to her.

Issy rubbed her eyes and looked closer, “You..you are Monk Yuezun! I saw your portrait in the book!”

“I have successfully turned back to ancient China! My dream came true!” Issy murmured.

In a blink of an eye, Monk Yuezun knelt in front of her and said, “Tulku! You must be tulku!”

Issy was feeling lost, “Sorry, I don’t know what you are talking about.”

Yuezun kept kneeling and said, “You look glistening and your clothes are...so special. I have never seen this before! I know you’re a living Buddha sent from heaven.”

Issy was completely nonplussed and thought, “What! It’s just pajamas!”

Yuezun responded enthusiastically, “It is my pleasure for your visit! A few monks and I are building grottoes here.” He then respectfully escorted Issy to one of the grotto. Inside the grotto was a magnificent cave and walls filling with fine paintings and sculptures of Buddha. Issy stared with fixed eyes, “This is a feast for the eye!”

Issy observed at the wall and read, “All compounded phenomena are impermanent.”

Yuezun explained, “Yes, it means everything would not last forever. Look bright, be mercy and thankful and look to every new day with positive hope!”

When Issy had a deep thought about his words, a light gleamed through and shined on her. She slowly opened her eyes as she was on the bed and still holding the book, “Oh, it was a dream!” she puffed.

Whoosh! Just then, a strange breeze came from the window and turned the pages of the book. Upon the page about Mogao Grottoes, a little girl wearing pajamas appeared prominently among the monks in the painting...

# New Tales from the Mogao Grottoes

*Kingston International School, Lee, Charlotte – 6*

One night, I was in the middle of some really good sleep but when I woke up I was in a cave. At first, I thought it is a dream but then I found out it was real because when I tried to open my eyes there was no view of home. I see a big sculpture sitting in crisscross applesauce and a mural in green, blue and reddish brown. I rode on my pony Vileisha to explore for the rest of the day.

We walked around and realise that everything was fading in colour, I wonder where we are. On the wall a fairy flew out and she told me this place was a point of knowledge exchange and then she flew back and vanished. I use my red unicorn watch I got from my mommy's friend for Christmas to scan where I am. The watch said you are in the Mogao Grottoes on a pony. I used my watch to look up on the web, the web tells me that the Mogao Grottoes has been restored in digital form, so I can go home and browse the web with my mommy.

When it was nine o'clock, I was back home then I realised everything was a miracle. I think the Mogao Grottoes were never forgotten, it moved to the web. What a great day I said to myself with a deep breath.

# Tales from The Mogao Grottoes

*Korean International School, Leung, Ching Lai – 7*

Once upon a time, a monk called Jelly and his dog, OO, started their journey in a desert on the Silk Road called "Darklands". Darklands is a place where dragons lived in the ancient times according to some wise old men living there.

Jelly wanted to find some treasures including diamonds, jewellery and valuable stones. They entered Darklands from west and found some caves. They started to dig in these caves. After a few days, they found nothing and they wanted to give up because they spent a lot of effort already. In the fourth day morning, when Jelly and OO were prepared to leave, OO found a magical treasure map in one of the caves called Magic Stone Cave. There are so many wall pictures drawn by Mogao Civilization. One of the pictures is about an old story of a dragon city and suddenly the magical treasure map started to glow.

Jelly and OO were dragged into the map and both of them fell on an island and they felt dizzy after hitting on the land. They saw a total of seven islands and there were full of dragons on them. They are fire dragon, ice dragon, metal dragon, water dragon, forest dragon and storm dragon. Some of them flying in the sky, some of them are eating fishes in the water and some of them were fighting. Then they saw some villagers coming out from a cave on the island. They told Jelly and OO "Don't worry", they are our pets.

The villagers took them to a castle where the Dragon King named "Ezrite" lives and all villagers bowed to the Dragon King. The Dragon King looks wise and powerful and therefore both Jelly and OO bowed at him as well. They were invited to sit down at a very long table and have lunch with the Dragon King. One of the villagers took out a box of gold medals and present to the Dragon King as a gift. In return, one of the dragon guards present a lot of diamonds, jewellery, amber and valuable stones to Jelly and OO. Meanwhile, the dragon prince "Callum" joined the lunch as well. He asked Jelly and OO how did they get here and Jelly explained to him about being dragged to here by the Treasure Map. Callum cannot believe but anyway they have a long chat all day long.

The next day morning, while they were eating at the same place, a black dragon came over to the long table. He said "You robbers are in big trouble, I am gonna take everything back to my home at Mogao." He started to breathe out fire and swept the dining hall. Everyone escaped from the castle and the villagers called every single dragon to run to a safe place. Jelly and OO found some weapons and armour in one of the safe rooms in the castle. They went up to the roof top and wanted to fight back with the black dragon. Suddenly, Callum tap on Jelly's shoulder and said "come and ride on this dragon horse". A big fight in the clouds ensued. The black dragon is a very tough and strong fighter, almost all dragons came together were still unable to defeat him. Finally, the king dragon pick up a water hose and put out the fire dragon. He said "not work hard but work smart, kids".

The magical treasure map started to glow and all the villagers and dragons say goodbye to Jelly and OO. They were dragged into the map and finally returned to Darklands. They found all the treasures given by "Ezrite" were placed in front of them. They were very happy and go home.

# Tales from The Mogao Grottoes

*Korean International School, Leung, Ching Lok Josiah – 7*

Once upon a time, there was a tamed dragon called JJ and his friend Jo. They needed to be untamed and they wanted to suck the super power from a dragon called "Baise" because he has a superpower called "Jellopower" which can untamed JJ and Jo by breaking them from the cage. Although they were tamed, they were able to move around by rolling themselves with the cage.

They wanted to find some food as bait to attract dragon "Baise". They found a cave in a mountain in Jiangxi in China and they prepared a lot of food including apples, oranges, lettuce, beans and milk for the dragon to eat and drink. After a few hours later, "Baise" appeared in the sky and they wanted to get him. However, they found a magical map in the cave and the magical map began to glow. They found themselves in a city called "Fruit Punch Jelly Island" with a lot of dragons over the beautiful island. They also found so many dragon eggs near the beach. A signage written as "buy one get one free" and they thought it is interesting. They started to pick up some eggs and put down some money. Suddenly, when they want to leave, two evil dragons called "Juo" and "Kut" just came. Both JJ and Jo used their fire to burn Juo and Kut and they were able to escape. They suddenly returned to Jiangxi city and go home.

# Tales from the Mogao Grottoes

*Li Sing Tai Hang School, Akbar Riani Muhammad, Rizqi – 7*

Over thousand years ago, a monk decided to draw lots of pictures in a cave which called "Mogao cave". Thousand of pilgrims arrived and decided to stay and dig more caves to spend their time creating sacred art and literature. A group of scientists who come from China would like to discover the hidden meaning of pictures in the cave.

In the old days, the history of this ancient Silk Road is reflected in the Mogao Caves.

The first caves were found in 366 A.D. by Buddhist monks and they drew large numbers of art painting. At the very beginning, some monks tried to visit the cave to find the secrets which are hidden there. However, some monks who did not allow them to see it and killed them. After that, it attracted more and more people to go there to find the secrets. In the cave, people saw nearly fifty thousand silk banners, paintings and other rare textiles before the early 1000s that can be found on the wall in the library cave. Moreover, people can see some texts on the wall to show their thoughts 700 years ago. It revealed that the monks had full of information from various aspects such as politics, religion, ethnics relations in western China. Inside a Mogao cave, they also found a famous status which is over 100 feet tall and it is one of the largest in the world. 'what so amazing Buddha'.

After that, monks often travelled through the silk road so there are number of religions to spread into the city. So, it became the turning points of development of business. They started to sell goods to merchants such as silks, food, medicine and animals and it is the network of trade routes connecting the East and West to the economic, cultural and religion interaction between those regions while travelling the Silk Roads.

I have learned a lot from the tales of the Mogao Grottes and I think Dunhuang was an important crossroads on the Silk Road. I know the monks carved out of the rock by hand and tribute to Buddha. What a touching and meaning ways it is.

# Mogao Grottoes Ice Lollies

*Marymount Primary School, Chow, Tsz Yu Hannah – 6*

“Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way.”

Charlotte was singing the Christmas song. Charlotte is my cousin. Today is Christmas day, Charlotte has a sleepover in my house and plays with Audrey, my sister, and me.

On the next day, Audrey saw three presents under the Christmas tree and shouted “Hey, Charlotte and Hannah, look at these presents, they are from Santa Clause.”

Then, Charlotte and I ran to the Christmas tree and opened the presents. They are a treasure box, magic key and magic wand. Audrey used the magic key to open the treasure box. When she put it in, the key glowed. Suddenly, the key brought us to the Mogao Grottoes. We saw many sculptures and caves.

At that time, Charlotte was hungry and said “I’m hungry, is there anything we can eat?” I had an idea and used my magic wand to magic some ice lollies. Suddenly, the sculptures became different flavours of ice lollies, like strawberry flavour, chocolate flavour and mango flavour. Then we ate the ice lollies. Suddenly, the biggest sculpture became a giant and shouted “Hey, why did you eat my ice lollies?”

We were so scared that we ran away and shouted “Help!”

Then I had an idea. I used the magic wand to magic us back home. Finally, we went back home safely. Our mother asked us “Where did you go, Hannah, Audrey and Charlotte?” I told my mother that we played an adventure game. And I put the treasure box, magic key and magic wand under my pillow. When I came out from my bedroom, my mother said “Hey girls, I made some ice lollies, would you like some?” We all shouted “No more ice lollies, thank you!”

## New Tales of the Mogao Grottoes

*Po Leung Kuk Choi Kai Yau School, Cheng, Shun Yuet Aleah – 6*

Once upon a time, there was a little kingdom named Mogao Kingdom in Ancient China. AVERY, a little boy, who has been living in Mogao Kingdom since he was born. He was a hardworking boy. Every day, He woke up before Sunset. He collected water from the sky, to ensure every villager in the Kingdom had enough water to live. It was his lifelong duty assigned by God Aliyah. Moreover, he had to do all the housework inside the large cave on his own. Although he was very busy every day, he enjoyed such a peaceful feeling.

One day, no water fell from the sky in Mogao Kingdom. Avery waited there for a couple of days, until he felt dizzy and he fell down. All of a sudden, Avery was scared and shouted his lungs out, “All plants and animals will die.” He ran to the finest painting with God Aliyah’s statue as swiftly as he could and he knelt in front of the painting and prayed for water to all villagers.

Suddenly, he saw that there was a strange light from the sky and it became brighter and brighter. He was exhausted. He stood up slowly and looked up to the sky. It became a mirror showing God Aliyah. “Go.....Go to break down a giant rock in the underground tunnel.” God Aliyah stammered. “You are the one to save the Kingdom.” Avery realized himself to be chosen to bring water back to the Kingdom and save all villagers.

Avery was not scared. He climbed down to the underground. He looked for the giant rock in a pitch black tunnel. He saw there was a rock at the end of the tunnel. Suddenly Avery’s both hands turned red and he shrieked. He rushed into the tunnel with the fire source on his hand directing to the giant rock where plenty of magical marbles were hanging on the wall. With his love for the Mogao Kingdom, he climbed up to bravely take the marbles to knock a big hole in the rock. The giant rock turned into many pieces of stone and the tunnel became brighter and brighter simultaneously.

Just then, some holes appeared on the giant rock. He was starting to open up those holes one by one with his bare hands. His hands were hurt but he didn’t care. Suddenly, he saw water flowing from the holes. “Water starts to come out.” He whispered and nodded his head to the direction of God Aliyah.

The breakthrough of hardship was impressive. “You finally made it possible,” God Aliyah muttered. “Having bravery and love is essential to overcome challenges.” Avery sobbed. He was so grateful that he could save the whole Kingdom. Everything was unchanged after that day. Avery still woke up very early everyday and guarded his beloved Mogao kingdom continuously.

# An Unforgettable Adventure

*Po Leung Kuk Choi Kai Yau School, Cheung, Ching King Leo – 7*

“It is a place full of secrets and is absolutely worth visiting,” said our teacher when she was introducing the Mogao Grottoes during our last assembly. I was so impressed that I borrowed a book about the Mogao Grottoes. That night, I was reading it quietly on my bed. Suddenly, the words glowed. It was so bright that I could hardly open my eyes. When the light faded, I found myself in a desert! There were a lot of caves around and inside the caves, there were gigantic sculptures and gorgeous wall paintings. I was at the Mogao Grottoes!

I was so terrified as I didn't know the way back home! So, I could only keep on walking. After a while, I saw a monk sitting on a rock looking frustrated. So I asked him, “Hello! Do you know the way to Wu Kai Sha?” The monk looked puzzled and replied, “Where is Wu Kai Sha? Maybe you can wait for the merchants who pass by this Silk Road. They might know the way.” Then I said, “Thanks. Why do you look so frustrated?”

The monk replied, “I have written two books, one is about all our life and the important events during these few years. And the other is about the meaning of all the sculptures and paintings here. I hope to pass these books to the people in future but I don't know how.” All of a sudden, an idea came to me! “We can use a time capsule!” The monk didn't understand so I explained to him. “Fantastic! Let's do it together!” the monk said happily. We started to collect some sticks for making a wooden box and put the two valuable books in. After that, the monk cut open his leather “water bag” and we used the leather to wrap the box so that rain water would not go into the box and soak them up. Then, we hid our special time capsule at a safe spot! Finally, we drew a treasure map on the wall. We were so excited about all this! I really wanted to take a photo with the monk but there was no camera. So, we drew a picture of ourselves on the wall. The finished painting was amazingly beautiful! Suddenly, a humungous rock beside me began to shake and move! A tunnel appeared! At the end of it was my bedroom! I immediately said goodbye to the monk and rushed through the tunnel. Finally I arrived home! When I looked back, the tunnel was already gone!

The next morning, I saw an exciting news on TV! A team of archaeologists had discovered the 736th cave at the Mogao Grottoes and they found a treasure box with two precious books inside, which was from thousands of years ago! TV also showed the wall painting inside the cave. I could instantly recognize that it was the “photo” of me and the monk! It was really an incredible and unforgettable adventure!



# Tharin and the Temple of Sand

*Po Leung Kuk Choi Kai Yau School, Chung, Wing Hong Ian – 8*

Once upon a time, there was an emperor who ruled a land named Mogao. He was very welcomed by all the people and this made a royal guard named Chang jealous. In order to overthrow the emperor, Chang captured him and brought the emperor to the temple at the end of the Rainbow Road. The next morning, the knight Tharin in Mogao woke up and went to the throne room to greet the emperor. But soon, he figured out that the emperor was missing! He went to the top of the east tower and sounded the alarm! Everybody went to the conference room to discuss how to save their emperor. Tharin suggested they organize a quest. Everybody agreed and they started to discuss which person shall go on the quest. They all voted for a person and they all agreed that Tharin should go. Therefore, Tharin started to pack up his bags and said one last goodbye to the people in the kingdom. Then he set off to save the emperor.

He finally reached the Rainbow Road. He was starting to get close to the temple. But he was blocked by the Rainbow Monster, he had a rainbow body. The Rainbow Monster was a massive giant with sharp fangs. Tharin almost died trying to defeat the Rainbow Monster, but he won! He continued to travel to the temple. After a long day, he finally reached the temple. He went inside and saw the Sand Monster! The Sand Monster was made out of sand. He was even more enormous than the Rainbow Monster. He has two sharp horns on his head and poisonous fangs. Tharin slashed the Monster with his sword but the sand reconnected to the wound where he got slashed. Tharin was very astonished and thought, "How do I defeat this Monster?" He saw a well just outside the temple and got an idea! He lured the Monster towards the well. Out of a second, he pushed the Monster into the well so he would dissolve. Then, Tharin realized that it was night time already so he decided to camp outside the temple.

The next day, he was determined to save the emperor! He started walking up the stairs of the temple and he saw the emperor! He ran towards him! But Chang blocked him from freeing the emperor! Chang took out his sword and said, "You're not going to save your emperor unless you defeat me in a battle!" Tharin took out his sword and replied, "Fine! But only if you play fair!" Chang nodded and they started fighting. They fought outside the temple until Tharin kicked him and Chang fell down onto a sharp rock. Chang immediately surrendered and Tharin ran towards the emperor's cage as fast as he can! He freed the emperor and they both travelled back to Mogao.

Tharin announced the great news and they celebrated! Then the emperor announced Tharin as the new General of the knights!

# New Tales of the Mogao Grottoes

*Po Leung Kuk Choi Kai Yau School, Lee, Jun Ya Sophie – 8*

Nadia held her grandfather's hand by his sickbed, sobbing sadly knowing her grandfather would go to heaven soon. In his soft and broken voice, he said, "Nadia...you...must find...the secret...door..." He was then led to heaven by his guardian angel.

Nadia kept these last words in mind until one day she got back to her grandfather's mansion for his memorial service. She left her family and disappeared into the study room where her grandfather spent most of his life reading there. After half a day of searching for this secret door, she found one of the bookshelves that could be pushed slowly showing a dark hallway.

She took a flashlight out from her grandfather's drawer, carefully she navigated herself down this secret path wondering where this would lead her to. To her astonishment, she saw on the walls some magnificent ancient Chinese artwork which her grandfather once fond of. Suddenly, her flashlight started flashing and the whole place went pitch dark. Nadia continued to move forward with courage until she reached a dead end. When she thought this was it, she felt something at her tiptoes. She knelt and felt a candle with a box of matches next to it. She lit up the candle and saw "Enter Through Here" marked on a huge stone in front of her. She gathered all her strength to push the stone and felt the golden sun shining on her face.

What a complete new sight! She was up on a high mountain with caves all over. Buddhas with different postures surrounding her. A gentle voice behind saying, "Welcome to Mogao Grottoes, home to thousands of Buddha. I am Monk Le Zun and I have been expecting your presence, Ms. Nadia." Nadia was shocked and couldn't quite respond. Monk Le Zun told Nadia that her grandfather was once a monk as he led her to the very first cave. It was a magnificent Buddhist sculptural site which Nadia later found out it was first dug up in AD 366. After that, they went into the "Library Cave" where a large number of manuscripts were bundled up and left on the floor. Monk Le Zun brought over an incense which Nadia remembered the smell from a Chinese temple at where she lived. Monk Le Zun patiently explained the Dunhuang manuscripts, the textiles, and figurines inside the cave. Nadia was listening with interest but slowly she felt very relaxed with the smell of the incense, the voice of Monk Le Zun drifted away and her vision went blur.

When she regained her consciousness, she was back in her grandfather's study room with a broken miniature Buddha in her palm. She quickly dashed out of the room and to her surprise, no one knew she went missing. During her school break, she went to the British Museum to explore more on the Silk Roads and Dunhuang manuscripts while she kept this precious adventure that her beloved late grandfather left for her at the bottom of her heart.

# Mysterious Power of the Mogao Grottoes

*Po Leung Kuk Choi Kai Yau School, Wu, Cheuk Yiu Charlotte – 7*

Have you ever been to the Mogao Grottoes in DunHuang? Have you seen an ancient wall painting having a modern girl there? Do you believe everything has been arranged? I am going to tell you a story, my own story about this mysterious place!

Some years ago, my family and I went to the Mogao Grottoes. I first came to a grotto that didn't have many visitors. There was a Buddhist statue and some paintings on the wall and the ceiling. I was attracted by a painting that was about 2 fairies dancing in the sky. Suddenly, a beam of light shone on me, one of the fairies jumped out and grabbed my hand flying through the ceiling.

Didn't know how long it was, I found myself lying in a rice field. I was wet all over with mud and water. At that moment, a pale girl, called Xia, in strange costume came to me and said, "You seemed like a foreigner. Do you mind coming to my home to change your clothes?" I was so thankful for her to relieve my embarrassment.

After getting to her home, Xia gave me her clean clothes. Surprisingly, it fit me well. But suddenly, she fainted on the ground. Her mom told me that Xia had been feeling unwell for some days and the medicine from the village doctor didn't work. She sobbed and was afraid that Xia would pass away soon. I found that Xia seemed like having a cold with fever only. Actually, I had some medicine with me that my mom gave me for the trip. Although I was still worrying where I was and how I could get back home, Xia was more important at that moment. So, I decided to give her the medicine. After that, she slept for some time and her temperature seemed going down. Next morning, Xia felt a lot better. Her mom thanked me a lot. As we were chatting in the backyard, suddenly, there was a strong wind blowing followed by the appearance of the fairy. She took me to the air again. After a short while, I fell on the ground and found myself in the grotto again!

My parents came to me and told me that they had been looking for me for long time. I didn't explain as they would not believe me and neither would I believe myself, so I just gave some nonsense excuses to comfort them. As I looked back, I saw the fairy in the painting winked to me. I was terribly shocked. I rubbed my eyes and looked back again. The fairy disappeared and just left one there. Something more unbelievable was that I found one of the paintings on the wall having a scene of a modern girl standing next to an ancient girl in bed. My mind got blank.

Is this the mysterious power of the Mogao Grottoes? Did it foretell my visit thousand years ago?

# New Tales of the Mogao Grottoes

*Po Leung Kuk Choi Kai Yau School, Yip, Hiu Ching Lois – 8*

There once was a traveller called Natasha. She and her family left their home in America to China to discover and explore more places. Natasha had two kids, Avielle and Arthur. Avielle and Arthur's dad is called 'Henry'. While they were in the airplane, she searched on the network for AMAZING places in China. The first thing popped up was Mogao Grottoes. She quickly clicked on the website, and it pointed to the Silk Road, which has a bunch of magnificent treasure trove of Buddhist art. *So, whoever built this thing might be Buddhist, quite interesting! We MUST go there, thought Natasha.* They need to go to Gansu if they want to see the Mogao Grottoes. It's in the middle of the desert and in the north-western China. Since they had a private jet, Natasha told the pilot, her friend Irene to go to Dunhuang Mogao Airport, the closest airport to Mogao Grottoes. It was amazing that Irene did accept changing routes last minute.

Once they arrived at the airport, Natasha invited Irene to come with them and go to Mogao Grottoes together. While on their walk to Mogao Grotto, the kids observed the bugs while Irene and Natasha chatting and their dad busily searching Google Maps for the location of Mogao Grotto. Avielle cried, "I oversaw mommy's computer saying that there would be hundreds of buddhas there. I fear them. I am not sure if I want to go there or not." "I don't think they will be scary. Just stick with mommy and daddy, then it is okay, I guess," whispered Arthur. "UGH!!" Henry shouted, feeling very frustrated, "We still have to walk for 3 hours and 27 minutes! Shall we go for the car? The car only takes 20 minutes. Much faster!" announced Henry. "Of course!" cried everyone and off they went for the Taxi.

Finally, they arrived there. At first, it looked ordinary, but then, Irene found the caves. They quickly ran to line up for paying. It wasn't long till it was their turn. They quickly ran to the caves. They first trotted for cave 302, the oldest cave of all. It was a bit spooky there too, particularly the Buddhas. Suddenly, the Buddha turned alive! It was magical. They all shouted and went wild, but the Buddha said kindly, "Please don't scream! I won't kill you!" They calmed down and sat around the Buddha. They had lots of fun inside the room, playing, chatting, and sharing tales.

"Hello? Jessica? What is  $53 + 47$ ? Are you okay? Do you need to wash your face? You seem to be very sleepy," cried a familiar voice. She was her teacher Mrs. Bartholomew. *Oh my gosh! Is this a dream? Did I really go to the Mogao cave? This is so embarrassing!* Jessica said to herself. "100?" asked Jessica. "Correct!" Mrs. Bartholomew cried with amazement.

## My Trip to the Mogao Grottoes

*Regents Primary School of Shenzhen, Chen, Yue – 9*

Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes is a famous tourist attraction in our country. I WAS AMAZED when I walked into the Mogao Grottoes and saw the flying apsaras mural. What an enormous and magnificent mural it was! Life-like dancers, as if dancing in front of my eyes. It was as if I had stepped into their world. On the outside is the king of Heaven, stepping on the devil. It expressed a sense of justice and had an air of authority. It is like protecting Buddha all the time. There are tiny figures beside the Buddha, probably disciples of Buddha in the flying sky. Some cry flower baskets, some pick flowers, some embrace pipa, and some hanging upside down. Ribbons flutter all over the sky while the figures stretch their arms, rise, and dance in a happy mood. Flying apsaras are not the only objects on the murals in the Mogao Grottoes. There are other stories as well. Among them is the story of the nine-colored deer and the little prince. The prince went hunting in the forest. The little prince saw four hungry tigers. So he took off his clothes and made a sign for them to come, but the tigers were so hungry that they had no strength to walk. So the little prince committed suicide and allowed tigers to eat him. It is said that the little prince was the incarnation of Buddha. I went back to the apsaras mural. In that mural, a character is in high spirits. The most special is the rebound lute dancers. They put their hands behind their backs, dance, and play. Every dancer on the wall competes like a flower, displaying their best dance.

In the Mogao Grottoes, everyone who admires the murals is their audience. Everyone was amazed. It was too much of a show. They were mesmerized, lamenting the greatness of the creator. We went to visit another cave. Inside was Shakyamuni Buddha. On the left was disciple A Xiong, and on the right was The Heavenly King. They were listening attentively to Buddha. There were many patterns on the pants worn by the Buddha. How beautiful, A man is in his cassock. It is a lovely color. The Heavenly king wore armor, there is a little imp stepping down there, there are over a thousand years of history, and it still looks good. Whether it is a fresco or Statue of Buddha, all the features are vivid, the expression is rich, and the line is even. There is a lot of detail, even the texture on the hands. Our ancestors were terrific to think such great art could be created at such a backward time.

It was a fantastic journey for me. It was like riding a carpet through time and space back to ancient times.

## The Mogao Grottoes Caves

*Regents Primary School of Shenzhen, Lee, Tsz Ho – 9*

Today Mum and I went to see the Dun Huang Mogao Grottoes Art Exhibition in Zhejiang Art Museum. Once we entered the hall, I was so excited after seeing a giant Buddha in front of me. And the hall was surrounded by wall paint of Buddhists. When we look at every grotto as if we went to the scene, the painting was beautiful, and I wish I could paint like them.

It is so happy to see the Mogao Grottoes today.

## New Tales of the Mogao Grottoes

*Regents Primary School of Shenzhen, Tam, Wai Chung –*

Today, allow me to educate everyone on Magao Grottoes.

Mogao Grottoes, also known as Thousand Buddha Caves, is one of China's three most famous caves. It is also the largest, best-preserved, and richest Buddhist art site globally. It was built on a rock wall that is more than 30 meters high, arranged in five upper and lower parts, and includes countless caves. The exquisitely colorful and magnificent walls will give us a better understanding of the ancient and splendid culture surrounding it. Admiring the hard work and wisdom of the people in the past is Worthy of all of us descendants being proud.

# The Mogao Grottoes

*Regents Primary School of Shenzhen, Xu, Bocheng - 9*

Hi, everyone. My name is Tony. My father took me to see the Mogao Grottoes in the summer holiday. I was shocked by it. Mogao Grottoes is located in Dunhuang City, Gansu province, China. It was built in the pre-Qin period of the sixteen kingdoms. It is commonly known as the thousand Buddha cave. There are many amazing murals and sculptures in it. It is about one thousand six hundred meters long from north to south, with five layers arranged up and down; There are seven hundred and thirty-five caves, forty-five thousand square meters of murals, and two thousand four hundred and fifteen clay-colored sculptures. You must go and have a look when you have a chance.

# A Fairy Mogao Grottoes

*Regents Primary School of Shenzhen, Yang, Jerry - 9*

Miss Chen tells us about new tales of the Mogao Grottoes. She shows pictures and videos for us. I like this tale and those pictures and videos.

I go back after school. I'm tired, so I go to bed. "Nice to meet you, Jerry." I heard. "Who are you?" I ask. "I'm a fairy." A pretty girl who wears a beautiful dress in front of my bed. "Where are you from?" I ask. "I'm from Mogao Grottoes." She answers. "Where is the Mogao Grottoes?" I ask. "Mogao Grottoes is situated 25 Km southeast of Dunhuang city, Gansu Province, in Daguang river valley at the foot of Echoing-sand Mountain facing Sanwei Mountain." She answers. "When the Mogao Grottoes were built?" I ask. "The first Mogao Grottoes were carved in 366, and the carving went on through the following dynasties of North Liang, North Wei, West Wei, North Zhou, Sui, Tang, Five Dynasties, Song, West Xia, and Yuan dynasties." She answers. "What in the Mogao Grottoes?" I ask. "There remain by now over 45000 m<sup>2</sup> murals and more than 2400 statues." She answers. "I want to see. Can you take me there?" I ask. "Of course." She answers. I follow the fairy flying to the sky.

I see the moon and the stars in the sky. I see the Mogao Grottoes in a desert. We fly to a cave. I walk into another cave. I see a tall statue in front of me. It has 30m high. I'm amazing. "Wake up, Wake up." My mom calls me. I have a good dream at night.

# Ben's Adventure in GrottoesLand

*St. Joseph's Primary School, Fung, Wai Yin - 9*

Ben and his friends were excited as they were on a fast ferry heading to the Christmas adventure camp. All of a sudden, the engine made a weird sound and stopped! The captain rushed to check the engine. After one hour, the captain announced, "I am sorry the ferry is out of fuel. I already called for help from the patrol centre, but they will not arrive until tomorrow morning." Ben and his friends were worried. Suddenly, Ben pointed to the front of the ferry and shouted, "There is an island over there! Maybe we can find help." The captain steered the ferry to float to the island.

Ben and his friends got off the ferry. They landed on a beach with lots of seashells. A moment later, Ben saw a camel train with ten camels walking to the north. Ben stopped the shephard and asked if he had any fuel for their ferry. The shepherd didn't know what a ferry is, but he can give Ben and his friends a ride on the camels to the Mogao Grottoes. Ben thought, "Maybe some people there will help us." After passing through a jungle with lots of tall trees for half an hour, they arrived at an enormous desert with glaring sun. An oasis appeared miles away. Ben was attracted by rows of caves on a huge, reddish, long and thin rock. The shepherd stopped and told them, "This is the Mogao Grottoes."

Ben dashed to the caves to find help. Some noise came out of cave 130, so he went into it. Quietly he opened the door. He found a nine-story tall Buddha in the middle of the cave, holding a worn out book, sitting with closed eyes praying. Ben asked politely, "Excuse me, do you have any fuel? Our ferry ran out of it." The Buddha didn't answer but tore a paper out of the book and gave it to Ben. The paper read "Cave 322." Ben ran quickly to cave 322. He discovered beautiful wall paintings of different patterns all over the cave. Suddenly the wall paintings began to move themselves to form letters! After a minute, some letters appeared on the ceiling. It read "Cave 27-10, 15th from the right, 10th from bottom." In just one second, Ben already knew the answer! So he sprinted to cave 17. When he arrived, he saw over a thousand stacks of parchments. He followed the instructions. Then he took the parchment out, examined it and noticed a little tube and two words on the parchment "FUEL INSIDE." Ben finally found the fuel for the ferry!

Ben took the fuel with him and raced to find his friends. When all of them gathered, they ran south. Suddenly, they fell into a big hole. The next thing they saw was the beach with the ferry parked there. Ben gave the fuel to the captain. He was surprised, "You are wonderful, Ben!" Then he drove off

# Tales from the Mogao Grottoes

*St. Joseph's Primary School, Kwok, Ayden – 9*

The Mogao Grottoes also known as “Caves of the Thousand Buddhas” are famous for their statues and wall painting. Besides, there was a tale between it. In one small village in Gansu province, there was an old man and his ancestor are being well known about the Mogao caves stories.

One clear and sunny morning, a stranger was visiting the small village where the old man lived, he entered a restaurant and looked around to find a seat. It was so occupied in the morning time that the stranger had to seat with the old man.

“I have never seen you before. Where are you from? And what is your name?” The old man gently looked at the stranger and asked.

“I come from Hong Kong, and my name is David. What is your name?” The stranger said.

“My name is Mo, nice to meet you.” The old man replied.

After a moment, David questioned: “Mo, do you know anything about Mogao, I come here because I am interested in caves, and I love to know more.”

“You ask the right person, David. I can tell you a story which I heard from my parents and grandparents.” Mo chuckled. “Apart from the well know Silk Road, paintings, sculpture, and literary history, there was a mystery about The Mogao Grottoes where today no one still can find out. Besides all those treasures, I heard from my ancestor there were two weapons; one is “magic sword” and the other is “powerful shield”. The magic sword was the sharpest weapon that can use to cut and divide rocks and mountains. The powerful shield was the most durable shield in the world which would protect from any materials attacking. These two weapons were owned by a guardian, Xiong, who was the first person living in Gansu. He used these two weapons to protect this area but at the same time, millions of enemies are killed. After Xiong’s death, nobody could find the sword and the shield. Some people said it was hidden under one of the caves, some people said it was actually under the sea, and some even said it was buried underground.”

“Wow, I have never heard about that!” David was surprised.

“Trust me, if you can find those out, you will dominate this world,” Mo said.

David suspected, “Thank you Mo! I’m sure I will be the first to find it out one day.”

“Okay. Good luck and keep safe!” Mo replied.

Later, David walked a long way to a cave but he couldn’t find it. Then, he tried to dive into the sea but nothing was found. Finally, he walked to the forest and dug a tunnel towards underground but he still couldn’t find it.

David was disappointed. On the way home, David saw a shiny box dropped from the sky. He opened and shouted, “I did it...I got it! I do..... domi.....dominate the..... wor.....world!”

Eventually, David became the powerful leader of this BIG BIG city.



# Tales from the Mogao Grottoes

*St. Joseph's Primary School, Lai, Tsz Long Kaysen – 9*

Over the centuries, Dunhaung has been a unique place for different travelers. It was not only because of its trade center, but also the home to one of the most valuable collections of Buddhist murals and statues in the world. Mogao Grottoes, which located in Dunhaung district, became a pilgrimage site for scholars, archaeologists, artists and Buddhists. An international scholar named Jason was attracted by this cultural heritage and would like to explore the secrets of this lost world.

Upon entering one of the caves in Mogao Grottoes, Jason found that it was dark and spooky. He lighted a fire and saw Buddha statues and paintings surrounded him. Suddenly, an enormous spider web appeared in front of him. Lying behind the web was a giant spider that was as big as a school bus. He tried to burn it down but did not succeed. It ran after him at maximum speed while he was running like a cheetah. Luckily, he dodged the attack and barely escaped from it.

The Buddhas statues blocked Jason's way out, so he kept going down the cave. He heard monotonous chirping sound but nothing was found. All of a sudden, a flock of bats snatched his blazing torch! "Pesky bats!" he shouted. Up ahead, he saw a wall of Buddhas with vines all over it. He took out a machete to hack and thwack at the vines. By pressing one of the loose Buddhas, it opened up revealing a sacred temple with waterfalls, Buddha statues and lush trees. "What an amazing masterpiece!" he exclaimed.

When Jason entered the temple, he felt a gust of wind blown by. Jason discovered an ancient book sat on a pedestal. A streak of light erupting from the book made him faint. When he became conscious, he was lying on a meadow and someone whispered, "Welcome to my Dynasty!" Up in the sky were the colorful flying dragons. It was unbelievable! He gasped in awe by staying in this magical world.

A golden dragon landed in front of Jason intending to show him something special. Then, he rode on his back flying to a mountain rapidly. He landed on a plain. There were various versions of himself, consisting of Wizard Jasons and Evil Jasons. They were all chasing after him. In an instant, Wizard Jason conjured the legendary hammer and passed it to him. He struck a huge bolt of lightning on all Evil him which were then slowly evaporated to dust, with a huge dragon egg left behind. He finally realized that it was the main purpose of the dragon bringing him there.

Once he was back to the reality with the dragon egg fossil, he found that his eye-opening experience was coincidentally the same as the story engraved on the cave wall. Perhaps, it was the inspiration from God that evil could never prevail over good. The dragon egg fossil was an exhibit in Mogao Grottoes from now on.

# Tales from the Mogao Grottoes

*St. Joseph's Primary School, Tsui, Zedric – 9*

“Ahhhh!” a famous Chinese Scholar screamed at the entrance of a cave hidden in the desert of the Silk Road in China after seeing an old spooky man floating in the air.

“Stop! Don’t leave, please! I promise I won’t hurt you!” requested the transparent man in the air.

“Who...who are you?” said the confused scholar nervously.

“I am ...I have been dead for so long that I don’t remember my name, but you can call me Monk. This cave is number 736, one of the many Mogao Caves in Dunhuang. I died in this cave while finding the secret of...”

The scholar interrupted, “Are you talking about the oldest printed book of the world which has the cure for the pandemic that can save the lives of millions of people?”

Buried deep in one of the colorful paintings among the caves was the first printed book written by the oldest king of China. He had predicted the pandemic and left a recipe of a drink which could save people from CORONAVIRUS–2019.

“I’m here to track it down too! Oh...I forgot to introduce myself. I am Leo Wong from Hong Kong.” confessed Professor Wong, talking excitedly.

“I spent a thousand years in this cave solving all the clues in the beautiful paintings here, I have one more to go,” explained the friendly ghost. “Follow me! Let me show you the painting.”

Professor Wong followed Mr. Monk further into the cave where the painting was.

“This is the code I can’t crack,” Mr. Monk showed Professor Wong the symbols on the painting.

The symbols in the painting were listed from the left to the right and repeated in order. It seemed impossible to crack. Surprised, Professional Wong lurched forward and accidentally smashed his forehead against the 19th symbol. The painting started to move like puzzle pieces and a hidden tunnel appeared.

“Let’s explore the tunnel!” Professor Wong whispered with amazement.

Mr. Monk agreed. The cave was very dark and smelt dusty. Suddenly, Mr. Wong felt a cold shiver, and a thin book appeared on a big rock at the end of the tunnel.

“Mr. Monk! We found it! There are 26 symbols repeated in this book, assuming they are representing letters A–Z, we can try to decode the recipe,” explained Mr. Wong.

Then they worked hard together and finally they cracked the code.

“Yay! This is the recipe for the potion! The hidden secret! Hooray! I’m going to bring the recipe back and heal the people!” Professor Wong cheered.

All of a sudden, Mr. Monk vanished.

Months later, all countries began making the potion to fight the pandemic. Soon, the deadly CORONAVIRUS–2019 was wiped off the earth. The world was grateful to Professor Wong, but he always gave the credit to Mr. Monk, he told the world about the brave Monk who never gave up. His stories inspired people and taught them to never give up and that ‘Tomorrow is about learning from the past.’

# The Adventure in The Mogao Grottoes

*St. Margaret's Co-educational English Secondary & Primary School, Lam, Tak Lok Morris – 9*

It was a normal day in 3069. Charlie and Edward were taking a walk in the streets in Gansu province, China. Charlie saw a black thing on the floor and tried to touch it.

“Don’t touch it!” said Edward. “We don’t know what it is.”

But Charlie didn’t care. He touched it anyway. The sky went pitch black. When the sky brightened, all the humans were gone except Charlie and Edward. Lightning bolts shot out from everywhere.

Charlie said, “Hurry up, Edward! Let’s take cover in that cave!”

The two children ran into the cave, but Edward remembered something.

He said, “Wait! Charlie, are you crazy? This isn’t any normal cave... It’s the Mogao Grottoes! Mr. Pearce, our history teacher taught us about it just this morning! He told us that in the year 2072 when World War III started, the Mogao Grottoes were actually a battlefield and the soldiers had to put traps in here!”

“Well, who cares?” said Charlie, as he stepped on a pressure plate.

Suddenly everything went pitch black again.

Charlie stood up. He had fallen into a cave. Slowly, Charlie’s eyes began to adjust to the darkness. There were hundreds of beautiful murals of Buddha on the walls and ceilings. He saw more grottoes, each one covered in dark soot. He wandered around curiously and saw a tunnel at the edge of the cave. Meanwhile, Edward lay on the floor in another cave. He woke up weakly and also saw a tunnel. The two children crawled through it.

Edward saw a figure in front of him after he climbed through the tunnel. It was Charlie!

Edward said, “Hey Charlie! I see some statues and they look mysterious. I think we should go there to explore.”

Charlie and Edward walked to the statues. There was a riddle written on one of them.

“One of the two statues behind me will give you a clue to find what you need. The other one lies and will be the end of you. Choose wisely.”

Charlie and Edward walked to the first statue, but Charlie stumbled and fell. He accidentally pushed a button on the first statue. The floor rumbled and the ceiling started to break.

“Oh no! What do we do? What do we do?” Charlie cried.

While Charlie was busily mumbling, Edward quickly pushed the button on the second statue and a gem appeared. Edward grabbed it and pulled Charlie to safety.

“Phew! That was close!” said Charlie.

The gem started shaking and a voice called out, “Congratulations, you have gone on a huge adventure. My reward for your bravery is this special gem. It can grant you a wish.”

Charlie shouted, “Edward, let’s wish for a giant hamster! I have always wanted one.”

Edward replied, “No, Charlie. We have to fix the mess that we created in the first place!”

Suddenly the gem started sparkling, then it started shining! It had reacted to Edward’s wish. All the humans were transported back to earth. The boys couldn’t wait to tell Mr. Pearce about their adventures in the Mogao Grottoes.

# The Unknown Cave in Dunhuang

*St. Margaret's Co-educational English Secondary & Primary School, Young, Teagan – 7*

My Dad and I had been exploring China's Dunhuang caves made by travelers and traders on the ancient Silk Road because we like ancient history. We had become tired after exploring many dark caves in the cliff's face. We wanted to swim in the river, below the cliff, to get the dust off of us.

As we left a cave and carefully climbed down the cliff to get to the river, I slipped and grabbed onto a root that was hanging nearby.

I put my foot down in the dirt, on ground which seemed stable, but the ground slipped away and revealed an underground hollow which might have been hidden for centuries...

The small landslide had been enough to clear a path into the hollow and I walked towards it, cautiously.

I was first startled and then excited to see that the hollow was the opening of a new cave. It smelled bad, like a dead animal, so maybe no one had been in it before. I quickly called my Dad over to go in with me and to explore the new cave I had uncovered.

It was dark inside the grotto but my Dad had his iPhone. He used the iPhone's flashlight to light the room up—just to find snakes. I was terrified to see the snakes; I knew these serpents could be venomous because they were very colourful.

Fortunately, it was fall and very cool in the cave, so the snakes were sleeping and were not dangerous to us if we didn't wake them up—but I still didn't want to get too close to them.

Staying at the front, I looked around and was astonished at what I saw; paintings covered all the walls and the ceiling.

I saw Buddhas, goddesses, gods, warriors, goblins, and monsters on the grotto's walls and ceiling. They were painted in greens, blues, black, yellows, and browns. All the paintings looked old and faded. Also, there were cracks and many holes in the walls down near the floor of the grotto.

At the far end of the carved room I saw statues of ancient gods and goddesses.

The shadowy silhouettes of the statues flickered onto the cave wall as the iPhone's light moved across them.

I wanted to see the statues up close. We carefully stepped around the sleeping snakes and entered the grotto—just to find another creature lying in the back of the cave...

As the iPhone lit up the animal, we saw it was a pile of rats!

As they attacked my Dad, I scared the rats off by yelling loudly. The startled rats quickly disappeared into the many holes in the walls.

After we took pictures of the statues and the paintings, we decided we should leave and call the official archeologists to show them the grotto I had discovered. They were amazed and thought it could help people learn more about the ancient Silk Road traders and their Dunhuang caves.

# The Adventures of Mogao Grottoes

*St. Paul's Co-educational College Primary School, Chan, Charisse – 6*

One day, Holmes got a message from Watson, “Holmes, go to Mogao Grottoes quickly, someone stole the arts!”

Holmes rushed there. He saw many beautiful arts and a very big Buddha. Suddenly the place swirled and Holmes felt dizzy. When he opened his eyes again, he was in a room. There was a monkey staring at him.

“Who are you?” Holmes asked.

“You don’t know who I am? I am supposed to be famous!” roared the monkey.

“No, I don’t know. Can you tell me who you are?”

The monkey growled, “okay, but you have to tell me who you are too.”

“Sure,” replied Holmes.

“My name is Sun Wukong, the Monkey King! So who are you?”

“I am Sherlock Holmes. Why are you here?”

“Many years ago, I was fighting with some monsters and I broke all the arts and sculptures in this cave. Buddha then locked me up here and ordered me to protect the arts. I need to stay here for a thousand years and it has just been a hundred years.”

“What can I do to help you out?” Holmes asked.

“No one can help me. I deserved to be here for what I have done,” Wukong said. “But you can help me in other way.”

“Like what?” asked Holmes.

“Someone stole the arts under my watch. I was supposed to protect the arts. I have failed Buddha,” said Wukong. “I wish I could go out and find the stolen arts, but I can’t leave here...”

“That is exactly why I am here,” started Holmes. “My friend Watson sent me here to investigate the stolen arts.”

“Watson? He was here few days ago. He said he will help me to find the greatest detective. So you are the detective he sent after all.”

“Well, I never said I was the greatest detective, but I won’t deny either,” smiled Holmes.

“Please, help me to restore the arts. This is important. I have damaged enough arts here. The arts are very valuable with historical meaning. The arts belong to the world, no one shall own them.”

“I will do whatever I can,” said Holmes. “By the way, do you know where Watson is?”

“He said he needed to go to a museum to check on the arts. I will send you to Watson now.”

Wukong pointed a finger to Holmes. The same dizziness struck Holmes again. The moment he opened his eyes, Holmes found himself in a big museum, a guy smiling at him.

“You are here finally,” said Watson.

“You should have told me the details,” replied Holmes.

“Aren’t you Sherlock Holmes, the greatest detective?” Watson smiled.

They then went out of the museum together. Whether or not they can find the arts is another story.

# Joe's Realization About China's Glorious Past

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Alto, Brandon Young – 8*

One breezy morning, eight-year-old Joe was in the library browsing books about 21<sup>st</sup> century construction. As he flipped through the pages, he marveled at the innovative works of today's engineers. He thought to himself, "Our world is so advanced today!"

The next day, his classmate, Claudia, lent him a quirky-looking book with a gold-colored bookmark. It was about China's history over 1,500 years ago! Joe thanked Claudia and brought the book home.

That evening, after a few minutes of reading, Joe mumbled "This is boring!" and he closed the book, placing the bookmark in the Silk Road chapter. Suddenly, the bookmark glowed, and a portal appeared hovering over the book.

Joe thought "Maybe this will lead me to another dimension!" As he inched closer, there was a loud KABOOM, and Joe suddenly teleported into the middle of a desert oasis!

Disoriented, Joe sat under a swaying palm tree until a traveler came by on a camel cart. He greeted Joe, "Hi! I'm Jiawei. Are you from a distant land?"

"Where are we?" Joe asked, while ignoring Jiawei's question.

"We are near the Mogao Caves along the Silk Road," Jiawei replied.

"Mogao Caves? Are you going there now?" Joe asked.

"Yes, I am going there to finish my paintings. Do you want to come?" Jiawei answered.

Joe excitedly agreed and rode with Jiawei on his camel cart.

Upon arrival at the Mogao Caves, Joe ran off to explore the inner parts of the caves. He looked closely at the paintings and saw all the intricate details unfolding like secrets waiting to be revealed!

Joe gazed over at the scholars near him patiently writing by hand. He thought to himself how, while the present world is impressive, the ancient times were even more remarkable!

Suddenly, Jiawei call out "Dinner is ready!"

Everyone walked to the communal table with starch noodles and donkey meat, dried fish, and preserved fruits. After a delightful dinner, they went back to their tents.

Joe smiled contently as he dozed off, thinking about what he had learned in the Mogao Caves that day.

The next morning, Joe woke up to mesmerizing gong sounds as loud as a lion's roar! He saw Jiawei and the scribes were already awake sitting cross-legged, perfectly still.

"Good morning! Do you want to join our morning meditation?" Jiawei asked before gently closing his eyes again. Joe sat beside him.

Later that morning, Joe was alone in the tent pondering about how much he missed home. Suddenly, as if his thought had been heard, the portal reappeared! Joe wanted to say goodbye to Jiawei, but he changed his mind and decided to leave as mysteriously as he came.

KABOOM! Joe was suddenly back in his bedroom. He grabbed the book that his classmate Claudia lent him and flipped it open to the chapter where the golden bookmark lay. It was entitled, "Life In The Mogao Caves."

Joe smiled as he reflected on his realization about the past from his magical adventure from another time!

# New Tales of the Magao Grottoes

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Birt, Sophie – 8*

Once upon a time, there were two friends named Sophie and Emma. They were hiking with their mums in the mountains of the New Territories when they realised they were lost! After they had walked for over six hours they realised they weren't in Hong Kong anymore – but they were actually in Shenzhen!

They looked around and saw lots of people bustling around the shops there. A mysterious old woman came up to them and said, "You should be somewhere else" and tried to grab Sophie's arm. The friends didn't know what to do next. Emma suddenly saw an abandoned house and they both ran inside.

Once they arrived in the mysterious house, Sophie and Emma looked out the windows. They realised they weren't in Shenzhen anymore, but they were actually in the Mogao Grottoes! They decided to go out and explore.

Sophie and Emma tiptoed outside and saw zombies everywhere! The sun was setting and it was getting dark outside. As the darkness was coming in, more zombies seemed to appear! Sophie and Emma were terrified, so they ran into the nearest hidden dark corner by the caves to escape the zombies.

Sophie and Emma saw two guards protecting the caves, so they thought carefully about what to do next. They decided they should stay very still and pretend to be statues so that the guards wouldn't notice that they were there. Luckily, the guards walked past and didn't see them!

At that moment, Sophie and Emma saw something shining in the corner of the cave and realised it was a treasure chest! Together they carefully opened the treasure chest and gasped at what was inside! Sophie pulled out a glittering key which had a note attached that read, "This is the key to the kingdom. Whoever finds it shall become the queens of the Mogao Grottoes". Sophie and Emma were thrilled! They couldn't believe they were both going to become queens!

Then, the two friends glanced around the room and noticed royal clothes had appeared in the middle of the cave waiting for them to try them on. Sophie and Emma put on the beautiful clothes and looked just like real queens.

Emma reached inside the treasure chest and also found a magical scepter with a note. The note said that the queens of the Mogao Grottoes would have magical powers and could control everything in the kingdom. So Sophie and Emma decided to use their powers to defeat the zombies in the kingdom and to create some beautiful art for the caves. All of the people in the kingdom could come and enjoy seeing the beautiful art there!

At the end of day, Sophie and Emma decided to continue being queens of the kingdom and still keep their normal lives in Hong Kong as well. They could visit the caves and their kingdom whenever they wanted to and always made sure their kingdom was happy and beautiful!

# Tales from the Mogao Grottoes

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Chan, Chun Yin – 9*

One day, my family and I watched a documentary programme about the Mogao Cave on TV. I was fascinated by it and I wondered why ancient people chose to build the cave in the middle of a desert where food, water or even trees were so scarce. There must be a big secret behind this and I wanted to find out more. I started to do some research and I found that many people had tried to look for a secret treasure chest kept inside the cave. It was believed that it contained the most valuable treasures in the world, but no-one had ever found it. I decided that I wanted to try and find the treasure. My family were really supportive, as they always had been with my crazy ideas.

When we arrived at the Mogao Cave after a long flight, I could not believe my eyes as it was such a magnificent scene. We walked inside the cave and we saw a huge Buddha sitting right in front of us with its nose taller than an average adult! I noticed that the Buddha's eyes were staring at a stone pillar and I went over to touch it. Suddenly, the door behind the Buddha opened. We went inside the secret chamber and saw a gigantic treasure chest. When we tried to get close to it, we heard a deep voice speaking, "To get the treasure, you will need to complete two challenges. First, you must pick one of the two doors. If you pick the correct door, you will have the treasure chest but if you pick the bad door, you will be trapped here forever. Second, once you pick the good door, you will need a four-letter code to open the treasure chest. Good luck." We then examined the first door. We saw some footprints near the door and heard a growling sound behind it. We thought this must be the wrong door. We saw nothing and heard nothing at the second door so we chose that one.

When we opened the second door, we saw the treasure chest in the room and we knew that we had chosen the right door. We saw a note with the letters `smtwtfs' written on it. We tried to enter many different codes but were all wrong. Dad suddenly figured out by saying "perhaps `smtwtfs' stands for Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday." I then entered the code 'week' and it was correct! The treasure box was open and we saw a large, beautiful drawing showing how the ancient people lived together in a really primitive environment but they all carried big smiles on their faces. We modern people have everything but we do not seem to be as happy as them and I wondered why. I finally figured out what is the most precious treasure in our life – our family, friends, living harmoniously with nature and a simple life are all we need to be happy!



# The Secrets Of The Magao Caves

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Cheung, Bo Lin Bosco Anthony – 9*

## **Chapter 1: Meet Bosco the Explorer**

In October 1940, Janet escaped the World War 2 and rode a camel to the Gobi Desert. There she bumped into Bosco the Explorer. Bosco was discovering the Magao Caves. They were empty, gigantic and ancient, with grey paintings and carvings.

## **Chapter 2: In the Caves**

When they went inside, they saw a painting of a metallic dog following people holding bows and arrows. Suddenly, Bosco said "It's Copperhead, the metallic robot dog!" Janet shouted "Copperhead?! I just saw it fighting the World War 2!"

Along the bumpy road they saw a weird object on the wall. "Speaker? Who drew this?" Bosco said. Janet questioned "Who's Speaker?" Bosco answered "It's a robot, 8 metres and 6 metres long. Its head looks like a speaker, so we call it Speaker. It comes out at night to eat people when they are asleep. We tried to burn Speaker, but never succeeded to kill or short circuit it."

When they went further down the cave, they saw a dragon. "Nasiku!" Bosco exclaimed. Janet questioned "Who's Nasiku? He's beautiful!" Bosco told a story "When I was 3 months old, my parents died, and a dragon found me. Thereafter, it took care of me like a son, and I named him Nasiku. He taught me dragon science, and I learnt how to communicate with dragons. When I was 10 years old, a war broke out and he flew to a Hidden World to escape. He is still whispering in my head all the time.

## **Chapter 3: The Hidden World**

Suddenly, the ground shook, soldiers ran away, temples broke into dust, trees fell. "Nasiku!!!!!" Bosco shouted as a huge dragon landed in front of the cave. Bosco ran out to greet Nasiku and hugged him. Janet was astonished. "Come on." Bosco said. Janet came closer. "Wow! Amazing! I don't know how to describe."

Next, Bosco said "Nasiku said he wanted to take us to the Hidden World.

## **Chapter 4: A New Home**

And so Nasiku laid down to let them climb on his scaly back. Next, Nasiku spread its wings and soared to the Hidden World.

When they reached the Hidden World, they saw a blue waterfall, beautiful sunshine, green mountains, colourful flowers and powerful but friendly dragons.

Bosco and Janet were delighted with the place. Bosco communicated with all dragons, saying that they would live there. Then, the dragons celebrated with their new arrival.

# The Invasion of the Mogao Grottoes

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Cheuk, Aaryn – 8*

Once upon a time, there was a man named Michael. Michael is an experienced explorer. He was the first person ever to travel to Antarctica from Hong Kong. One day, he decided to explore the mysterious Mogao Grottoes.

After many days of travelling, he was already tired. Suddenly, a big sandstorm came, and Michael was almost buried by sand. Fortunately, another man from America called Jason was also traveling to the Mogao Grottoes, saved him. They began travelling together and became best friends. They were so close that they were like brothers.

One day, they took a break because they were very hungry and tired. They ate some food from their backpacks and set up a mat. They were very happy. Suddenly, Michael looked to the west and said "Look! We found it! We found the Mogao Grottoes!"

The American looked, and he was very excited. "Yes!" said Jason.

The two men began exploring the caves. "They are so beautiful!" said Jason. The walls were all covered with ancient paintings which were unlike any paintings that they have seen before. There was also a big bronze Buddha sculpture which was still shiny even though it is very old. They went to another room to explore but they were surprised to see nothing but dirt walls. Then, something strange happened. As they entered the room, a door made of human bones came down and blocked the entrance. They were trapped! Michael cried "Oh No!" Then, they started to think of ideas to escape.

As they looked around the room, Michael found a small window and looked outside. He was shocked to see four skeletons armed with swords surrounding the place. Jason said, "Maybe we can break the windows with the axes in my backpack." Then, they tried to break the windows. Jason said, "Wow, these windows are harder to break than expected." They had to think of another plan.

Fortunately, they found a second small wooden door which was not sturdy because the wood was very old. They used their axes to break through the wood and they found a room full of weapons and armour. They both put on diamond armour, the shiniest and sturdiest of all other armour out here, and picked up diamond swords. They hid while they waited for the skeletons to come in. As they entered, Michael leaped out with his sword and started fighting them. As he was outnumbered, Jason leaped out and helped fight the skeletons too. As Michael and Jason were overpowered, the diamond swords flew out of their hands and slayed the skeletons one by one until they were all dead.

Suddenly, they heard a voice saying, "Jason and Michael, you have proved to be brave enough to be the guardians of the Mogao Grottoes." Jason and Michael were shocked and fell to their knees.

# Journey to the North

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Chiu, Andou - 8*

A long long time ago, after the journey to the West, Monkey King, whose real name is Sun Wu Kong, was living in heaven, in his buddha seat. One day, his brain popped out of his head and he thought that being a buddha was too boring! So Wu Kong went to Monk Tang's buddha seat and found him standing up and praying. Wu Kong waved at Monk Tang. Monk Tang looked back and smiled at Wu Kong. Wu Kong then asked Monk Tang to join him on a new adventure and not to be a buddha anymore. Wu Kong told Monk Tang that this time, they should go north to Dunhuang.

After Wu Kong convinced Monk Tang, they escaped from heaven at night. They escaped to earth and saw a river in front of them that they needed to cross to go north. Wu Kong cast a spell on himself and Monk Tang to allow them to breathe underwater. As they swam deeper and deeper into the water, they realised that they were actually in the sea. Suddenly, they came across a guy staring at them in front of a sea palace.

"Are you the buddhas from the heaven?" the guy asked. Wu Kong got his iron bar out of his ear and screamed "Yes!". "OK, I'll let you in but you've got some work to do!" the guy said. Actually the guy was Ryder. Wu Kong and Monk Tang went to the palace named Puplantis with merpups swimming around. As they explored deeper into Puplantis, they met the King of Puplantis. The king yelled "Paw Patrol" and six merpups swam up with Ryder. Wu Kong realised that the King wanted Paw Patrol and Ryder to fight him but he did not want to put Monk Tang in harm's way, so he said to the King of Puplantis, "I will leave Monk Tang here, please take good care of him." Then, Wu Kong jumped up to the sky and onto a cloud. Wu Kong rode the cloud all the way to Adventure Bay, the headquarter of Paw Patrol.

Wu Kong saw the Paw Patrol tower and landed there. The Paw Patrol pups rushed out of the tower and used all their weapons to try to trap Wu Kong. Wu Kong got so angry that his eyes had fire coming out! Wu Kong smashed the tower into pieces and caught all of the Paw Patrol pups. Ryder was very frustrated and annoyed by all the damages Wu Kong caused. Meanwhile in Puplantis, as the news of Paw Patrol's defeat reached the King, the King told his soldiers to push Monk Tang out of his palace.

As Wu Kong met up with Monk Tang again, they continued the journey to the north and encountered many many adventures. On the way, they were joined by Piggy. The three of them walked and walked for so long and finally reached Dunhuang. They looked up and saw a giant statue on top of a mountain. They climbed all the way to the highest point of the mountain. To their surprise, they found the original story book of "The Journey to the West" on the mountain top. They took that book and painted scenes from the journey to the west onto the walls of the Mogao caves. When they were done, Monk Tang said "Let's live here.", so they lived in Mogao cave happily ever after!

# The Secret of the Mogao Caves

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Cho, Tsz Long Tristan – 8*

One summer night, Tony and his brother Timy were having a pillow fight on their beds. They were chasing each other up and down in the bedroom. Suddenly, Timy spotted a sparkling light shining out from the toy chest. “Look! Look! Over there! A beam is coming out from our toy chest!” Timy told Tony in an excited voice. Tony came close to it and tried to trace where the light was coming. As fast as lightning, he was pulled into the chest and Timy held on to Tony’s legs before they were both dragged in and disappeared.

They were now in front of a big red temple. The temple was huge with many levels. “Where are we? This place looks familiar to me,” said Timy. “I think we are in the desert on the Silk Road in China!” Tony exclaimed. “The Mogao Caves of Dunhuang! I saw them in my history book before. There are many important and valuable treasures inside!” Tony proudly explained.

“Let’s go in for an adventure!” Timy started to climb towards the cave. Tony followed behind.

They walked along the narrow stone path and at the end of it they came to a stone gate. Timy told Tony, “There are some special symbols on it!”

“They are not symbols. They are Chinese writings! I have learnt some Chinese words in the Calligraphy and Chinese Culture lessons,” Tony said.

“Okay! Okay! My dear brother, can you tell me what exactly is written on the wall please? I believe there must be clues to open this door!” said Timy impatiently.

Tony started to translate,

“Its head looks like a sheep.

Its neck looks like a goose.

It is not a horse nor a donkey.

It cannot run fast even with its long legs! But it is FAMOUS here!”

Timy grinned and said loudly, “CAMEL!”

The door creaked and opened widely. The scene was breathtaking. In front of them was a gigantic Buddha’s statue. The Buddha shined like a golden sun. He had a pair of big, long ears and he looked gentle with a smiley face. “I have been waiting for you for more than 1000 years,” the voice came from the Buddha.

Timy gasped, “The Buddha is talking to us!”

“We were once painted beautifully, but we are now forgotten by the world. You are invited to explore the amazing work here and spread the words for us!” the Buddha said.

They nodded their heads and were thrilled to have this meaningful mission. They walked between the caves. They saw lots of stunning wall paintings, painted sculptures, ancient architecture and many old printed books!

Later, the Buddha pointed at a treasure chest, which has a sharp beam coming out.

“ I guess it’s almost time to leave!” said Tony as he looked at Timy.

When the boys looked at each other, they were in their beds already. They were back home. “What are you doing up so late at night? ” came Mom’s voice. The boys giggled softly. “Nothing, Mom. Good night!” said the boys. “I think we know where to go for our summer vacation next week!” said Tony. “Yes, good idea! I can’t wait to tell Mom and Dad!” Timy replied.

# Magic in the Mogao Caves

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Chow, Caelyn – 9*

One day Kristen, her dog, Mocha, and her horse, Popcorn, decided to go on a great adventure, so the three of them set off to the north towards Gansu Province! They walked for hours and finally saw some mysterious caves in the distance. They realised these were the Mogao Caves that they had learned about in school!

When they arrived at the caves the three friends decided to explore them together. Inside the caves they saw gorgeous artwork and historical artifacts all around. Then, they suddenly noticed a strange object in a dark corner of the cave. As they inched closer, they realised it was a treasure chest!

Popcorn was feeling brave, so she decided to use her teeth very carefully to open the lid of the treasure chest. The friends couldn't believe what they saw inside! It was an ancient painting covered in golden paint that was glowing brightly like a shining star.

Suddenly, Mocha noticed a pebble bouncing on the ground. Then, the ground began shaking harder, so they closed their eyes and hugged each other to stay safe. When they opened their eyes, they had a feeling it was not the year 2021 anymore. They had gone to the past – about 2,000 years in the past!

Kristen poked her head outside the cave to see what was going on. She saw some people dressed in old-fashioned clothes riding horses and camels with big packs on the animals' backs. They were on the ancient Silk Road in China. They couldn't believe it!

"Achoo!", a sneezing sound echoed behind them. They all turned around and realised that it was their teachers from school – Miss Clayton and Miss Jeana!

Miss Clayton said she had traveled back in time to help Kristen, Popcorn and Mocha learn more about the Mogao Caves and how travelers went on the Silk Road to trade and learn about each other's history and language. Miss Clayton said these caves were special because mysterious people had left paintings there, and some of these paintings had magical powers that enabled you to time travel to learn more about China's past!

Then, Miss Jeana said she had a special gift for the three friends. She handed them a treasure chest and said they could look inside and find a gift for them to keep. It was the same magical painting that had glowing gold paint on it from before! She said they could keep this treasure and use it to time travel whenever they wanted.

Kristin, Mocha and Popcorn all touched the painting together. Then, there was an enormous flash of light that looked like lightning in the cave. The three friends opened their eyes slowly and realised they were back in the present day!

On Popcorn's back was the same treasure chest from the Mogao Caves with the magical painting hidden inside. The friends promised each other to explore China's history often and to keep the painting safe and secret from the rest of the world.

# Magical Journey to the Mogao Grottoes

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Chow, Hoi Ching Agnes – 7*

Once, there were two children named Kelly Kranky and Andrew Wingdale. They were studying in Grade 6 at St. Stephen's College Preparatory School. They recently read lots of mysterious tales of the Mogao Grottoes. They wanted to go to the Mogao Grottoes but they had no way.

One day, they went to St. Stephen's Beach to play with their classmates. They arrived early and Kelly wanted to build gigantic sand castles. "Why don't we build the Mogao Grottoes?" Andrew asked. Andrew used sand and water to build desert, the Silk Road and sand caves. Kelly was in awe of it. "You were just like the Buddhist Monk Lezun building the first cave in Dunhuang. Can we go in it?" Kelly asked. "No, you can't." Andrew warned.

Suddenly, a beautiful magic platypus climbed out from the sea to the beach. "I came from Australia and I loved Dunhuang and the Mogao Grottoes. Please cuddle me and we can fly to the Mogao Grottoes." the magic platypus said. "That is unbelievable! Let's go!" Andrew replied. They cuddled the magic platypus and flew inside the sand caves.

In the blink of an eye, they arrived at the Silk Road. The weather was hot and dry. They were lost. Luckily, a camel passing by took them to the Mogao Grottoes. Inside the Mogao Caves, there were many Buddhist sculptures, murals and paintings. They were amazed by the magnificent scenery of the Mogao Caves.

There was a giant sculpture with a silver shield, talking to them in a strange voice. "Welcome to the Mogao Grottoes. Where did you come from?" the sculpture asked. "I came from Hong Kong, a city in China. We came here with the help from the magic platypus and the camel. We feel so excited and lucky." Kelly answered. Andrew wanted to show off his sand building skills to the sculpture. "No! We came here just because of me! I was the one building the gigantic sand caves." "Don't be too proud of yourself. Please learn from others!" The sculpture exclaimed.

Suddenly, the magic platypus felt sick and dizzy. It used to live in the waters. "We need to take the magic platypus back to the beach!" Kelly cried. Unexpectedly, the tears from Kelly cured the magic platypus. "Good job, Kelly! Your love and kindness cured it! Please draw the place you come from and you will return immediately." The sculpture explained.

Kelly drew their school and St. Stephen's Beach on the wall. All of a sudden, they returned to the beach. Andrew and Kelly were thankful for such a wonderful experience at the Mogao Grottoes. They sent the magic platypus back to the waters. They promised to go back again with their classmates.

# A Sweet Journey

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Fong, Kyra – 8*

## A Sweet Journey

On one fine sunny day, there was a boy and a girl who were exploring the Silk Road in China. They rode on a funny camel which took them into the caves of Mogao Grottoes. The boy suddenly hopped off the camel and screamed that there were mosquitoes! In fact, the mosquitoes were leading them into the Mogao Caves. The caves were huge and had many floors. The boy hopped like a bunny while the girl left a trail of honey so that their parents could find them if they were lost.

Soon, the boy and the girl went into a room where there was a big statue. The boy shrieked, "Is that Sleeping Beauty?"

"No, you silly Billy. That is called a Sleeping Buddha." The girl replied.

The boy giggled and continued to lead the way. They went further inside the caves, both feeling brave. Inside they saw many statues made out of rock. They saw carvings of pictures on the wall. There were birds, dragons, bells and funny looking fish in different shapes, patterns and colours. The girl looked around and said, "Wow!"

By now they were feeling hungry so the boy said, "We need to go now!" So, they both ran out of the Mogao Caves feeling happy and satisfied. They followed the trail of honey the girl had left, but there was an army of ants following the trail too! What a sweet journey!

# Zhao and the Swallow Bird

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Hung, Daphne – 9*

Zhao pushed himself forward through the sandy expanse. He was exhausted, his stomach was growling, and there wasn't a cloud in sight to protect him from the raging sun. His mind flashed back to a memory of his mother's mouth-watering noodles.

His only companion was a swallow bird that he had been following for a few days now. Its company made Zhao feel calm during this uncertain time. The bird had directed him to an oasis where he had found shelter for a few days. As the sun rose, the swallow bird pecked Zhao's foot. Zhao woke to a kind face who offered food and water, which he snarfed down hungrily. Zhao told the monk that he was an orphan, the monk felt so sorry for him that he took him in. He introduced himself as Siddhartha and told Zhao about the caves that were around the corner.

The caves looked never ending. What he saw inside them was breathtaking. The drawings on the walls were very detailed and delicate. The choice of colours was bright and cheerful. There were reds, teals, and oranges blanketing the walls. It made him feel comfortable and happy. They were surrounded by sculptures of different Buddhas. They all looked blissful and it made Zhao feel at home for the first time in a very long time.

Over the years, the monk taught Zhao the art of mural-making, sculpting and meditation. One day, he was teaching some children how to mix paints when Siddhartha's daughter, Yan, came out with a cup of tea. They exchanged smiles and Zhao knew that she was the one he was searching for. "I love your art. You should show it to people." Zhao said he was too shy to do that, but Yan's kind words encouraged him, and she stayed with him in the caves as people continued to come and see his art. Zhao crafted two swallow birds for her to thank her, as her name was Yan. Their love blossomed and they had a child named Lei and lived in the caves.

Zhao and Yan created thousands of paintings and pieces of art. People started coming to see their art in the "cave museums". One day, there was a huge earthquake, Lei ran out of the cave as fast as she could. The cave began to shake, rocks rained down on those in the cave, and it collapsed! Lei was heartbroken as she saw her parents crushed under the rocks. Lei looked down to see the other swallow bird in her hands, she swore to herself never to lose it.

## Present Day

"Dr. Huizhong, we finally found it!" Huizhong was part of an expedition to find the legendary caves from a thousand years ago. "Ancestor Lei, I kept your promise." He pulled out the swallow bird that Lei had protected for so long. Huizhong found, inside a collapsed cave, two skeletons that had cushioned a carving of a beautiful swallow bird. "Thank you Zhao."



# A Desert Adventure

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Kao, Jing – 6*

The sun was rising in the Gobi Desert, I had been walking far the whole night and I needed a place to rest. I felt so hot I was burning like soup in a pot. I saw a strange temple in the distance, so I walked toward it.

The temple led to a weird cave. It was creepy and gloomy. The walls were covered with peculiar writings and carvings. I felt scared and my knees were shaking! Statues of Buddhas were towering over me, and I wanted to leave. I turned around to try and find the exit, but I was lost.

I noticed something shiny in the corner. It was a rare crystal! I picked it up and it started to glow blue. The floor rumbled and the walls cracked. A secret door opened. I ran fast like an F-1 race car through it and on the other side. Luckily, I found a desert oasis! I felt happy to out of that creepy cave.

I heard my mommy's voice from far away to near, "Jing! It is time to get ready for school!" I realize it was my dream. I wish one day I could visit the cave in bright on a day, in real life. Maybe I would find the cave interesting and not creepy anymore.

# The Rainbow Medicine

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Kong, Audrey – 7*

In 2020 summer, thanks to Covid-19, two explorers, Athan and Juliet, felt bored because they had nowhere to go for adventure. During lockdown, they visited Juliet's cousin, Michael, who was a librarian at *the University of Mystery*. They spent most of the time reading books in the library to see whether there was something exciting. One day, Athan found a book called *Treasure Medicine*. It mentioned the pandemics over human history. The author of this book was professor Topo. In the book, Topo stated that he discovered a herb that could make humans strong enough to overcome any deadly disease. Since the herb was too precious, people might start a war to fight for it. He hid the herb somewhere secretly.

"I think we can find the solution for this pandemic!" said Athan excitedly, "Juliet, are you ready for an adventure?" "Sure! But where shall we go?" asked Juliet.

Athan flipped open the book, it was a map showing the Mogao Caves. "This is where we are going!" grinned Athan. The Mogao Caves were along the Silk Road. Athan and Juliet quickly packed and flew to the Taklimakan Desert in China. Two days later, they arrived at the desert. Athan and Juliet took out a map and discussed the plan and routes they would take. Moments later, they were already at the entrance of the Mogao Caves. They walked around it for a minute. "Mogao Caves are really big." thought Juliet, "We need more help from the map."

They had a much closer look at the map again over and over, finally, "There is a picture of a scroll on the map," said Athan, "We have to find the scroll that leads us to the treasure."

They searched the caves, checked the walls and checked everything, including manuscripts in the Library Cave. Suddenly, Juliet found a manuscript written on silk, with the signature of Topo. It was the scroll! She gathered her partner and opened the scroll carefully. There was a riddle in it:

*In the heart of the cave it lies,  
Sleeping above all,  
The key to it beneath its all.*

"What do you think it means?" said Juliet.

"I think," replied Athan, "it means that we should search the ceiling of the bedroom." They did. They soon found a secret door. Athan climbed up and saw the treasure chest! "We have to find the key next," Athan pointed to the chest lock and said, "that opens the chest."

"In the riddle it says under something you will find the key," shouted Juliet, "and I think it's under the carpet beneath us now!" They searched beneath the carpet in the room. A golden key was sitting in the middle of the carpet. They opened the chest in no time. Inside were some rainbow coloured herbs. They shouted loudly with tears in their eyes. After 2 months, everyone has taken the rainbow colour herbal potions and no more COVID in the world! Have you taken your rainbow drink today?

# The Mogao Grottos

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Kwan, Wing Sun – 7*

In the Mogao Grottos, there was a wall painting of three young men and a tigress. No one knew what it meant until years later when a traveller recognised the faces of the three young men from a drawing he had found in his village chief's home.

The village chief told the traveller that thousands of years ago, three handsome young men from the village left home to look for food during a time of drought. They were brothers. Egur was the eldest, Pollada was the second brother, and Marco was the youngest. At that time, the villagers were starving because the crops were dying. The three young brothers volunteered to go in search of food for the villagers.

They walked into the forest. They saw chirping birds sitting on the dry branches, their leaves burnt by the sun. The grass was dead. Bugs were trying to seek shelter from the sun. Skeletons of deer and rabbits were found next to the river, which had dried up.

As they walked deeper into the forest, they could see more remains of animals. Suddenly, they saw a tigress on the ground and it seemed to be starving. Under the tigress, they saw four cubs. The tigress was so tired that she did not even move or try to attack them. It looked like she wanted to eat her own cubs.

“Let's eat the cubs,” suggested Pollanda.

“Don't eat the cubs. It's like killing a child. We shouldn't do that. Maybe we should find some food for the tigress so she won't eat her own cubs,” said Egur.

“Oh yeah. The tigress was suffering just like us,” said Marco.

“Marco and Polland please go find food for the tigress and I'll stay and make sure the tigress doesn't eat her cubs,” said Egur.

After the pair had left, Egur took off his clothes and laid down next to the tigress offering himself to the tigress in the hope that the cubs would be safe. But the tigress only sniffed him and would not eat him. Egur then wrote words on a tree with his blood and jumped right down a nearby cliff and died. After Egur jumped down the cliff and died, the tigress immediately ate his body and fed her cubs.

When his two younger brothers returned and saw the bones of their dead brother, they were very angry because the tigress ate up their brother. But they couldn't help because the tigress and the cubs were long gone. Then they saw Egur's words on the tree and realised he had sacrificed himself so that the tigress could save her cubs. They buried Egur and continued their search for food. At night they rested in a mysterious cave. They missed Egur so much that they painted a picture on the wall of Egur's sacrifice for the tigress. The cave was later found and named the “Mogao Grottos”.

# The Secret Key

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Lee, Wayne – 6*

There was a treasure box hiding in the deep, dark cave. People thought there must be a lot of money inside, but they did not have the key. What could they do? They went outside of the cave to look for the key. After a while, they still had nothing, so they went back to the gigantic cave.

They carefully walked into the cave one by one, holding hands. "The pictures are beautiful!" one of them pointed at the pictures on the walls.

"They have got so many keys in the picture! It must tell us something!" Later on, when they walked further, they saw a bunch of keys hanging on Guanyin's hand. Now they had a mission. A mission to find the right key.

Golden, silver, bronze, and rainbow colour. The keys were in many colours! The explorers had no clue which was the correct one. They just kept trying their luck. When they put the silver one in and turned it, "Ka chat", they heard the sound. They found the right key! Inside, there were hundreds of things. Twenty ancient coins made with gold, fifty diamonds, twenty golden rings, and lastly, ten bamboo books with titles.

The explorers opened one of the books to try to understand what happened in the cave. The secret started to reveal itself.

The book described 'The Chan's' village story. A long long time ago, there was a group of people who had magic power that were given to them by Guanyin. Boys back then were all super smart, they could make lots of super powerful weapons and understood many languages. Girls could cook good food which made peoples mouth water all the time. They all worked for Guanyin.

There was a gang called 'The God Killers'. They believed that they were the best so they wanted to see Guanyin for magic powers. Suddenly, they went into Chan's village with bad manners. They already had guns but they wanted to have even more weapons. The boy villagers did not make weapons for them because they knew they were bad guys and they needed to protect Guanyin.

That night the girl villagers cooked a big meal for the gang, after they had dinner, they soon fell asleep. The Chan's started to pack everything including the map to see Guanyin about a mission and ran away quickly with speedy shoes that they had invented.

After half a day, they finally saw a safe place – The Mogao Cave. They quickly built everything up again inside the cave and started their new life. The leader of the village wanted to fight back. People started to make weapons and get ready for the war.

And this was just the first book of many to tell of the story.

# Eason and the Cave

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Liu, Ella – 8*

Once upon a time, far away in the Gansu Province of China, there was and still is, a magical oasis. It is here, a thousand years ago that the story of Eason begins.

Eason was not strong, or brave. He was, however, kind and clever. Eason was the youngest of ten sisters and ten brothers. Their father was the Grand Official who reported to the Emperor of China. Soon, it would be the Emperor's birthday and the Grand Official needed the grandest gifts to present to the Emperor. Eason's father sent his hard-working sons and daughters to find a gift for the Emperor. They decided to travel to Europe by land and exchange goods with foreigners. On their way, they found an oasis among the dry desert sand. They were so hungry and thirsty that they relished a drink of water from the marvellous oasis. They suddenly heard a strange noise and set off to find where it was coming from. After an hour of walking under the baking sun, Eason found a cave! The entrance was tiny, and only Eason was able to fit through it.

"Wait!" cried the panicked sisters, "It might be dangerous inside."

"I must go in! I'm the only one who can go further. Wait for me here, I'll be back before sunrise."

The eldest brother handed Eason a candle for light.

When Eason saw the cave walls, he was surprised. There were beautiful paintings and towering statues. He walked and walked, and suddenly realised that he had forgotten that his brothers and sisters were patiently waiting outside. They waited all night and all day, but Eason didn't come out. When Eason finally remembered that they had promised to wait, they had already left. As he wondered what to do, he heard a deep voice.

"Is there anyone there?" Eason asked, trembling with fear. An old man appeared out of the darkness.

"Hello, little boy. Are you lost?" asked the old man.

"Yes!" replied Eason.

The man gave Eason hope when he said, "I can help you find your way back. Follow me."

Once they got out of the cave, the old man said, "Go along this path through the cave, it will lead you to Europe." Eason thanked the man, and set off to find his brothers and sisters. After three days of gruelling running, Eason finally found them. He told them what he had seen in the cave. They all became excited. Eason suggested that they return to the cave and ask the wise old man to help create some special paintings for the Emperor.

Back inside the cave, after many months of intense work, they created a special collection of statues, paintings, stories and poems with the help from the old man. They returned the most precious pieces to their father. The Emperor was so pleased with his special gifts that he held a huge feast, and invited the Grand Official and all his sons and daughters to celebrate with him.

# The “G” Stick

*St. Stephen’s College Preparatory School, Ng, Tabitha – 8*

Tabitha always wondered what that big G-shaped stick on the wall of her Grandfather’s house was all about. Strands of old, broken silk hung from it. The stick was odd, so one day Tabitha asked her Grandfather what it was. Grandpa said, “I found it in the Mogao Caves, my Peanut. It’s time I tell you the story of Chloe and her beloved dog, Titiman.”

One thousand five hundred years ago, a girl named Chloe traveled west along the Silk Road wanting to explore and trade her family owned silk for jewelry. When Chloe reached India, she met a dog and named him, Titiman. Every day, Chloe would play fetch with Titiman by using a stick to hit a pinecone as far as possible. Titiman would run as fast as lightning to catch the pinecone out of the air before bringing it back to Chloe. Chloe loved playing fetch with Titiman so much. One day, Titiman barked at a stick that was shaped like the letter ‘G’. Chloe then saw the stick and said “Wow, I could wrap some of Dad’s silk around it and then I could hit the ball even higher! Good job Titiman!”

Soon enough, it was time for Chloe to go back home. Chloe and Titiman traveled east along the Silk Road. It would take months to get back home, so Chloe decided to rest with Titiman along the way. Titiman used his little legs to dig up a cave for them to live in. Every day, they continued to play fetch and wrap their remaining silk around newly found sticks.

Several days passed and then it was time to continue eastward home, but they had too many sticks. They decided to leave several sticks behind. Several years passed and the cave was forgotten. It was not until the 1900s when Tabitha’s grandfather discovered what is now known as the Mogao caves.

“You see Tabitha, this g-shaped stick on the wall is the world’s first known tennis racket! Chloe and Titiman had no idea they were responsible for creating the great game of tennis that you and I love so much!” said Grandpa.

Tabitha never realised the stick was such an important part of history. She said to herself, “Thank you, Chloe and Titiman, I will one day win a tennis tournament for both of you!”

# A Mysterious Journey to the Yellow Mountain

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Pang, Michelle – 6*

It was a hot, lazy afternoon in August on Silk Road Farm. Fluffy, the big dog, Olive, the clever dog and Mr. Huff, the fat little pig, lay in the shade of the big tree next to the pond.

“Hey Olive, how about drawing us some nice, iced fruit gummies to cool us off?” asked Fluffy. So, Olive drew some iced fruit gummies with her magic chalk and soon the friends were eating the giant jellies.

Mr. Huff told them about a dream he had. It was all about a fantastically delicious, mouth-watering candy house in the Yellow Mountain. Olive convinced everyone to go on an adventure to find it. Everybody agreed, but they wondered how they would get there. Fluffy called his best friend James, the dragon who could fly them across the big river. Olive was a little worried because James always gets lost, but Mr. Huff told her they would all guide James in the right direction.

Fluffy packed his pink pajamas with pickles on as well as a gigantic bottle of water. Olive packed her magic chalk and a big bag of bubble gum. Mr. Huff packed his favourite music box and his portable barbeque.

With a ‘swoooooosh’ of his big wings, James made a wide turn and landed on the grass next to their pond. He let down his tail and the three friends climbed onto his back. They weren’t in the sky for long when it started to rain! They all had forgotten their umbrellas. Olive drew a tunnel with her magic chalk and Mr. Huff told James to go and wait there. When the rain stopped, they flew off again. But James flew backwards, we were completely lost! The friends helped James to find the right way and they headed for the Yellow Mountain.

When they arrived, a nasty, huge tiger called Stripes, saw Mr. Huff and his mouth started watering. He thought of a fantastic plan. He put on his pig-costume and walked closer to Mr. Huff. Mr. Huff was excited to see a friend and started running towards him. Luckily, Olive saw his stripes under the costume and quickly blew giant bubble. She hopped into the bubble and pulled Mr. Huff in with her. Fluffy saw everything and shouted for James to come and help. James was just about to swallow half of the river, but he dropped it all over Stripes instead. Stripes roared and struggled because he couldn’t swim. It gave the friends time to hop onto James’ tail. James flew in circles, lost as usual. Fluffy shouted “Down, down!” When they looked down, they saw an amazing, colorful, mouth-watering candy house under the big tree!

“Swoooooosh,” James went down, laughing, “I told you, I will find the candy house for you!”

Mr. Huff was down first and grabbed a delicious, sticky donut, but before he could take his first bite, the door slowly opened, and a voice said.....

# The Pizza Cave

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Pang, Pok Man – 7*

One sunny morning, a pizza man discovered a marvelous cave next to the enormous Mogao Caves. He decided to open a new pizza shop called the “Pizza Cave” for visitors there. The pizza man made a big fence surrounding Pizza Cave to prevent the weird and evil Monks living in Mogao Caves from attacking his shop.

The next morning, the pizza man played some joyful music at his shop. It was so fabulous and relaxing! He also added some colourful balloons and explosive party poppers on the cliff side with many well–designed posters of delicious pizzas. Some visitors claimed they saw some old monks from Mogao Caves when the sun rose. They thought the evil cave monks were not real, and they were just old men or stories in ancient China.

Interestingly, inside the Mogao Caves, there were thousands of Buddha sculptures holding or eating green pizzas. Having heard of such funny scenes from visitors, the pizza man soon had a great idea. He decided to add a brand–new delicious pizza in his menu, “Mogao Caves Pizza”. Furthermore, he provided some fantastic books about the Mogao Caves at his shop. Luckily, visitors loved reading these books while they were waiting for the savory pizza to be served. Although nobody knew why the pizza was green, not even the pizza man, visitors still enjoyed it. Some people would even try make a pizza in the cave, but the taste of the pizza was very disgusting.

On a rainy day, the pizza man took a day off and went into the enormous Mogao Caves to take a look. When he arrived, horror attack came to him. He saw plenty of poisonous snakes and active murals along the hallway, and the evil monks suddenly passed by. A strong and evil Monk ran over. The pizza man escaped as fast as a cheetah running towards the only exit of the cave. He locked the door of his shop as fast as lightening. After that, the pizza man swore he would never ever go into the Mogao Caves again, not even to take a single look.

# The Monk and I

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Sip, Wai Tin Alistair – 6*

One day, my parents brought me to the library and I borrowed a book about Dunhuang. I felt sorrowful when I was reading it because most of the treasures in the Mogao Grottoes were taken away by western expeditions and ended up outside China. The book was thick and I fell asleep after reading it for a while.

When I opened my eyes, I found myself in a cave alone. It was dark and cold. I was frightened and wanted to find my parents. Then I saw a little light flashing in the darkness and I ran towards it. The light led me to another cave full of God statues and wall paintings of Gods. The Gods were talking to each other! Some of them were dancing in the sky. As I recalled, they were “Flying Apsaras”, the symbol of the Mogao Grottoes. They were female spirits in the sky, like the angels of Gods. Their clothes were beautiful and their dance was enchanting. I was deeply attracted to this scene.

Suddenly, they flew close trying to catch me. I was so scared and ran towards the entrance! Then a hammering sound stopped me. It came from a cave with dim candle light. Slowly, I walked inside this cave and saw a monk. He was making a huge God statue. I was so glad to see someone and asked, “Hello. Have you seen a woman and a man around?” He did not look at me but said no. He looked very busy. I was curious and asked, “What are you doing?” He replied, “I am making a Buddha statue.” “Did you know that those statues and paintings eventually come to life?” I asked. “Yes, of course,” the Monk answered. “They are the projections of God.” “No, I mean they are real. They talk to each other,” I replied anxiously. The Monk turned to me and said, “Gods are real.”

“He doesn't understand what I mean,” I thought and gave up again. I looked at the incomplete statue. “How long will it take to complete this statue?” I asked. “Maybe it will take the rest of my life,” said the Monk. The Monk kept working on his project. I was worried about my parents and started walking outside. He stopped me immediately, “Where are you going?” “I want to find my parents,” I said. “No, you cannot. You can either stay or leave,” said the Monk. “Do you want to stay here?” “Here? Of course not! I don't belong to here,” I explained.

“I hope you will not regret your decision,” said the Monk, “You may leave now.”

I woke up and found myself at home again. I rushed to my parent's bedroom and was immensely relieved to find them sleeping on their bed. I burst into tears and hugged them hard. The Buddhist art in the Mogao Grottoes is a treasure to the world but my treasure is my family. The only place where I belong is here, my home.



# The Mysterious Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Sun, Yu Shi – 7*

On a fine Sunday, Ava and Sophie were playing hide and seek in Ava's house. They were both tired, so Sophie decided to spend the night at her friend's house.

"Oh, Sophie," said Ava, "guess what we will have for breakfast tomorrow morning?"

"Ham, mayonnaise, lettuce and melted cheese sandwiches?" answered Sophie.

"We are having McDonald's hamburgers!" shouted Ava.

"Yay! We love McDonald's. Yay! Three cheers for us!" they both shouted.

"Let's go to sleep, or else we won't have strength for tomorrow," suggested Ava.

Ava got her favourite book, *The Nine-Coloured Deer* and read it to Sophie. They both fell asleep. But all of a sudden, Ava was awakened by a terrific bang.

"Sophie? Are you here? I see a black hole!" said Ava. There was no answer. "Where am I?"

"You are in Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes," a soft voice said.

"Who are you?" Ava asked.

"Don't be scared. I am the queen of the deer." said the beautiful shiny nine-coloured deer.

"Why are we here?" Ava asked again.

"I have guarded this desert for over 1000 years. Here you will find the most beautiful pictures and the most interesting stories in the world. Every ten years, I invite a child to come here to listen to the stories. You are the lucky girl this time," the nine-coloured deer said gently and smiled.

"Really? Can you tell me a story?" Ava suddenly felt more relaxed.

"I will tell you about the flying fairies. The flying fairies live in heaven. They like to play lots of instruments like the lute, the waist drum and the bamboo flute. Sometimes they like to hold them. Once upon a time, a young flying fairy was playing in little heaven when she saw a bird. She chased it all the way until she ended up in the human world, 492 Dunhuang Caves. At first, she was pretty scared, but she got used to the life there. She played the lute every day and made enough money to survive, and then, one day, her sister came and took her home. She left the lute in the cave. Ever since then, the lute was known as a Chinese instrument," said the queen of the deer.

Then Ava felt like she was flying slowly, holding a lute in her hands and playing the most beautiful music, just like the flying Fairies. She was flying higher and higher. All the fairies were flying around her.

"Ava? You slept until 10:30! Your dad is here, come on!" said Sophie.

Ava woke up. She was still in her bed holding the book *The Nine-Coloured Deer*. Only she knew what had happened in the dream. She wanted to read more stories. Who knows, maybe she would have another beautiful dream.

Yep, that day Ava did feel very dizzy, but they still ate McDonald's, and that is where the story ends.

# Mogao Caves and the Minotaur

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Tang, Yee Kiu Karenna – 9*

Long ago in Ancient China, there was a gigantic Minotaur who lived in the Mogao Caves. The Minotaur had eaten all the people and animals who visited the

mysterious caves. The caves were the Minotaur's territory and it had developed a deep love for its home.

One day, a traveller from Siberia, named Cacnea, went to explore the cave.

The mystic monks laughed at him and said, "The Minotaur will eat you alive," but the determined Cacnea didn't listen to them, and he continued on his quest.

After he arrived at the caves, he took a peek inside to ensure it was safe, before he entered fearfully. Inside the caves, there were many interesting tunnels to explore. Cacnea chose to go left instead of right. There were many magnificent paintings. Cacnea was amazed by the beauty, so he took pictures of each one. Cacnea then explored further. After a while, he entered a strange tunnel which was bigger than the other ones he had come across. This one was longer than the other ones too! It took a tiring half an hour to get to the end of it.

When he touched the wall, he felt a kind of rough fur and dry skin. It was the half man, half bull, Minotaur! The angry Minotaur wanted to attack Cacnea and it wanted to make a meal of him, but Cacnea used a golden coated stone wand to turn the Minotaur to stone.

Cacnea displayed the large beast at the entrance of the caves for people see. Cacnea became famous and rich because he was the first one not to be eaten by the Minotaur. He went back to Siberia and all the members of his family were delighted for him. He became the hero that had conquered the Minotaur.

Later, Cacnea and his family set out to construct lights, routes and tracks for people to explore the Mogao Caves, and they made statues in remembrance of the fierce Minotaur. Soon, the Minotaur became famous too. Several tourists came to visit the statues and view the paintings. Scientists came to study the Minotaur and how it was able to live there for so long. China became famous for the Mogao Caves and the Minotaur. China showed gratefulness to Cacnea for making them famous.

One day, Cacnea fell in love with a gorgeous girl named Kaylene, who liked the brave Cacnea too. The two married each other. They soon had a beautiful baby girl named Adelina. When she was only eight years old, she said that she would make the Mogao Caves easier to explore.

Twelve years later, she has kept her promise. The Mogao Caves became the biggest tourist attraction in the world. Thousands of people moved to live there and millions of tourists visited the M

# Legend of the Camhorse

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Wang, Lachlan – 7*

A very long time ago, a special prize was on offer to see who could race across the Silk Road the quickest. James was a keen explorer and his family has been raising camels in Dunhuang along the Silk Road for many generations. If there was a quicker way to travel the Silk Road he would want to know about it, and better yet, be part of it.

One day, James found a message in a bottle buried in the sand that read “The secret to winning the grand prize lies in caves at .....

”, and before he knew it, his camel Willy came out of nowhere and gulped it up in one go. “Willy! You unruly camel! I should have left you in the cave where I found you!” James shouted angrily. “Oh wait... that’s it, isn’t it?” it dawned on James that the caves must be the Mogao Caves, with thousands of years’ of art and clues hidden inside.

James had to hurry up as time was running out.

After spending what felt like an eternity on the camel’s back, James had finally arrived at the Mogao Caves. Along the way, James had been wondering what kind of secrets that might be waiting for him.

As James stepped into the caves, he was mesmerized by the colossal seated Buddha figures. The walls were covered in shades of green, red and blue and what stood out were the images of a two-humped horse as if it was one-part camel and one-part horse.

James gasped with astonishment, realizing a two-humped horse would have the speed and agility of a horse to race along the Silk Road without needing to stop for water just like a camel. James’ eyes sparkled in excitement, “I shall call it the Camhorse! And grand prize here I come!”

“But how do I turn Willy into a camhorse?” Suddenly James’ joy and excitement turned into sadness and doubt. He knew he had to keep looking for more clues.

After days of studying the wall paintings at Mogao Caves to no avail, James was ready to give up. But all of a sudden he felt water droplets falling on his shoulder, “plink, plink, plink...”, “why would there be water droplets in the middle of a desert cave?” he gazed up to the ceiling in amazement. “Could that be the magic potion of the Mogao Caves?” and he decided to feed it to Willy to see if that would turn him into a camhorse.

And it did! The next morning James raced Willy-turned-camhorse across the Silk Road and won the special prize.

Legend has it that James used the special prize to breed more camhorses that turned into modern day camels all thanks to the secret potion of the Mogao Caves.

# Mogao Cave Story

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Wang, Zhao Long Anderson – 10*

Many centuries ago, on edge of the Gobi Desert stood a breathtaking oasis to the west of Dunhuang. The Mogao Caves had over one hundred smaller caves in it that had been built by monks dating back from 11 BC. There was an adventurous man from Britain called Albert John who had stolen something of great importance from one of the caves. Many explorers from around the world hunted up and down the Silk Road over the years looking for the item which had been stolen.

The stolen item was the auspicious mark from one of the astonishing Buddhas. This Mark was to be returned to its rightful place, or there would be dire consequences! The auspicious mark was held in a secret location at MI6's headquarters in London.

One gloomy night in 2013, Professor Williams and archaeologist James set off to China to return the auspicious mark to its rightful owner the Buddha. Little did they know that a MI6 chief was hot on their heels. When they arrived at the Mogao Caves the bad guy from MI6 was waiting for them in the grim shadows. "Who are you?" Professor Williams asked.

"I'm the supreme chief of MI6 in the UK. In the name of the UK I order you to hand over the mark," he replied.

It was Chief Bond! A MI6 agent turned criminal. But James was actually the MI6 agent sent out to this special mission, so there was a sense of confusion. "Never will I hand it over," said James. "I order you to get out of the way now!" He exclaimed. Soon they heard an uncommonly nimble shooting sound. Then all they saw was a dead body of a poor MI6 agent lying in the sand. Next to him was a MI7 sniper!

"Go go go into the cave!" shouted the sniper. "I will give you cover!"

Several of MI6 agents and Bond went into the cave with the good guys. They entered the 158th cave, the cave of the Buddha. Some of the greedy MI6 agents wanted the gold and were trapped in the cave for eternity. Only Bond himself did not die. He entered the main cave there stood two explorers. With an accelerated speed, Bond launched himself into a fight. They fought like lions, dashing and dunking and punching, but they were all standing. At last, Williams took a pixel and aimed at Bond!

"Surrender or die!" shouted Williams.

"Surrender...ok?" said Bond on his knees.

Entertaining how people can do that. As James put back the mark to its rightful place, Williams was looking at Bond with his pixel on his head. After returning the mark, James arrested Bond and handed him over to MI7. "It was nice working with you," said Williams, shaking James' hand.

"You too! We saved the world again!" said James. "We could really use a vacation to the Mogao Caves."

"Yes we could really use a vacation to the Mogao Caves" Williams responded. They both laughed.

# Mogao Caves Adventure

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Wong, Athan – 7*

On a hot summer morning, Athan was reading a magazine by the poolside and saw the headline “ Monster Drawing Competition: Surprise Us and Win a PS5! ”. Without a second thought, he enrolled himself in the competition.

Athan was prepared to go out of his way to win this PS5. To get some inspiration for his monster, he packed his bags and travelled to the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang. Since he was young, his parents had told him stories about the cave and its mysterious gods and spirits.

Athan took his first step into the cave and was immediately stunned. There was a huge and amiable– looking Buddha sitting in the centre. When Athan looked from the floor up to the ceiling, he saw faint but fascinating paintings all over the walls. He was so excited that he cheered loudly at the sight of the ancient creatures, and the echo of his voice marked the start of his long day of drawing.

However, the excitement didn't last long and the stuffy cave made Athan impatient. Hours passed and Athan only finished half of his drawing. He realised that the cave paintings were not creepy enough and ran out of inspiration. Out of frustration, he threw a tantrum and accidentally hit the Buddha sculpture with his paintbrush.

Suddenly, a strong wind blew away the painting. While Athan was trying to catch his artwork, he got sucked into the cave paintings by a tornado! “Help!” Athan struggled and shouted but no one was there! After spinning and spinning, Athan landed safely in an unknown place. As he tried to find his way out, a red– skinned monster with a pair of mega wings appeared in front of him. It opened its mouth widely and roared at Athan with deafening noise, and its breath smelt so disgusting that Athan ran away immediately.

Athan was lucky to have escaped the beast and he sat down to take some rest. Unfortunately, another monster popped up when he was about to doze off. This time, the monster had a human body with an elephant's face. It was much fiercer than the previous one – he wanted to put Athan into his long blue trunk! Out of desperation, Athan raised his paintbrush to fend off the attack and a miracle happened – the paintbrush turned into a magic Pokemon ball!. Athan then threw the ball at the elephant man and subdued the monster.

Before Athan could catch his breath, the Pokemon ball glinted and flashed before his eyes. He then found himself tumbling down from the cave painting back to where he was before. Athan looked up at the Buddha sculpture and felt sorry for his bad temper. He promised Buddha that he would be kind to all creatures, including monsters. Therefore, he released the elephant man onto his drawing paper and set it free.

Athan did not win the competition. Despite not getting a PS5, he thought his adventure and the lessons of kindness and forgiveness learned are more precious than anything.

# Treasures in Mogao Caves

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Woo, Emma – 7*

Did you ever hear the story of the Captain Underpants and the Mogao caves monsters?

Three heroes were up to a mysterious adventure. Captain Underpants was a brave and muscular boy who had a big red cape behind his back, and he wore a big pair of underwear! George was a boy who had long curly hair, and he loved exploring with his best friend, Harold. Harold was a boy who had frizzy and curly hair because he had such a bad haircut. Captain Underpants exclaimed,

“Heroes, I heard there were treasures left in the Mogao caves a thousand years ago. What are we waiting for? Who’s with me? Let’s go!”

They got on the plane, and off they went to the Taklamakan Desert in China. When the heroes got off the plane, they saw a big hole and that was the first clue to find the treasure. The clue showed them how to walk to the Mogao caves in the desert.

The weather was very hot and dry, and it was hard for them to breathe but they kept walking in the desert. As they were walking, the sandstorm struck. The sky clouded over and it became red, the wind was howling loudly. The brave heroes were hit by the strong wind that was full of dust and sand. They were terror-struck, and George found a “Tippy-Tappy” Mogao car under a palm tree. They got on the car and zoomed through the sandstorm.

Once the sandstorm stopped, the heroes saw three Mogao caves in front of them. Each cave had a door in the colour of red, blue, and green. Red on the left, green in the middle, and blue on the right. Harold saw a note in front of the red door, he gently opened it and it wrote,

“If you go to the wrong entrance, you will be trapped in here forever! Read the note carefully! Walk to the red door, then turn right and walk 5 steps. Open the green door!”

They followed the instructions and opened the green door. There was the treasure box sitting in the middle of the cave. They opened the treasure box, out came some angry monsters! They had been hidden in the box for more than a thousand years! The heroes cried,

“There was no treasure after all! Run!”

While the angry monsters were chasing after the heroes, they ran to the plane; however, the plane flew away without waiting for them! Sadly, the heroes had to walk home on foot, and they never returned to the Mogao caves again!

# The Magic Pen of Larry the Guardian Monster

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Yan, Sheung – 7*

Once upon a time, there was a monster named Larry, who lived in the Mogao Caves. Larry was the guardian monster of a magic pen that was the fruit of many murals in Mogao Caves. It was hidden in one of the thousands of caves. Larry liked to make friends, but nobody could find the hidden magic pen, so Larry had to live in the magic pen for hundreds of years.

One day, Snowy had travelled with her family and they came to the cave. She stumbled upon the magic pen. When Snowy arrived at home, Larry came out of the magic pen and thanked Snowy. Snowy was a special girl who could understand Larry's language, therefore they became good friends.

Sometimes, Snowy was bored at home because of COVID-19. Larry used the magic pen to draw an image similar to the pictures on the wall of the Mogao Caves. It was Feitian. Feitian came to life and flew into the sky immediately. It was unbelievable, and Snowy felt so excited. Then, Snowy and Larry used the magic pen to draw many people on the paper. All of them came to life. They were singing and dancing at home, it was like a carnival during the Christmas holiday.

After a while, Snowy's mother came back. When she entered the house, Larry went poof back into the magic pen and all the people from the picture flew away through the windows. Snowy walked to her mother and showed her the magic pen. Her mum was glad that her daughter's drawings were so good. She thought that Snowy could be a famous artist when she grew up. When Snowy's mother went to the toilet, Larry came out again and said, "I can help you to become a great artist. Let's make your dreams come true!"

# When I Encountered the Magao Grottoes

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Yang, Yuen Tou Nina – 8*

It was a sunny day in the summer of 2021. The sun was burning above the sky and made people feel dizzy.

A girl and a man were standing outside the Mogao Cave number 96. “Nina, here is Mogao Grottoes. It was built many years ago. Let’s go inside and check whether anyone is living there,” the man said to his daughter.

A few minutes later, they were already in the highest level of the cave number 96. “Daddy, it’s so cool here! The wall looks so old and some parts are peeling off,” commented Nina. Then, Nina stopped in front of a beautiful wall painting. Its colour had faded out, but you can imagine how beautiful it was when it was just been painted. In this painting, many beautiful girls were dancing and playing musical instruments.

“They look like fairies...” Nina murmured.

“Do you want to join our party?” a soft voice came out from the painting.

“Sure!” replied Nina.

Suddenly, Nina felt lighter and lighter and finally she merged into the painting and became one of the figures in the painting. The man was busy looking at other art works and did not see this happening.

“My name is Feitian. Nice to meet you!” the flying girl in the painting greeted Nina.

“Hello, Feitian. You have a beautiful name. May I know more about you?” asked Nina.

“Come, follow me,” said Feitian.

In a little while, they arrived at a very busy market. “Excuse me, don’t block my way! I am very busy, you know!” a tall man with beard shouted on a camel.

“Oh, sorry!” Feitian and Nina replied together.

Actually, it was a busy day in the summer of 678. At that time, people used horses and camels for transportation. People in the East and in the West exchanged goods with each other. The main route was called the “Silk Road”.

“Wow, this silk is so shiny and soft!” Nina exclaimed.

“The silk is a precious material from China and will be sold to the West,” replied Feitian.

“Wow, the grapes and the guavas look yummy!” Nina said excitedly.

“These fruits were brought here from the West. We can buy some and try them,” replied Feitian.

Just then, Nina realised that her daddy was not here and got upset. “No worry. You will be back soon. Can you do me a favour?” asked Feitian.

“How can I help?” asked Nina.

“I lost my diary, in which I keep all my secrets. I remember I put it in the Sutra cave, but I just cannot find it now. Can you help me find it?” Feitian asked sadly.

“Sure! What does your diary look like? ...” Just before Nina finished her sentence, a bright light flashed on her face and she had been brought back to the modern world.

The man was still looking at the piece of art. “Daddy, I... I would like to visit the Sutra cave!”



# Tales of the Magao Grottoes

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Yao, Zhichun Alina – 7*

On a windy night long ago, my mom was reading a book about the Mogao Grottoes to me while sitting on the little grey sofa next to my bed. I slowly fell asleep...

Suddenly, there was a ringing sound in my ears! Was it a phone ring? No! It was from camel bells. My eyes widened as I saw camels walking by me on endless desert. Where was the view of Victoria Bay outside of my bedroom window? What happened? All I remember was my daddy anxiously telling me that Typhoon *Lion Rock* was coming. 'Oh, maybe I was blown away thousands of miles to the West by the strong wind,' I wondered.

What was so heavy, even heavier than my school bag? I was carrying a big backpack, a kerosene lamp in my left hand, and a notebook under my right arm. The cover reads 'Mogao Caves Work Diary'.

'Good Morning, Emma!' Someone shouted.

'Morning!' I replied quickly. Wasn't that Professor Liang? He had been looking for the remaining wooden structure of the Tang Dynasty. He expected the murals here to give him some clues.

'Let's go to Cave 61 today, the murals are very fragile so we have to be very careful.' he said. A few young people joined us. I followed the group to the cave and lit up the kerosene lamp at the entrance. With the help of the flickering flame, I was able to see murals on the wall and the ceiling of the cave. A 13 meter long and 3.6 meter high mural caught my eye. It was almost half the size of the badminton field where I played with my schoolmate at the Stanley Stadium! On the mural, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas were in the clouds. Underneath, the daily life of a city was shown with more than five hundred people and two hundred buildings.

Foguang Temple was identified on the mural. It was famous for its unique wooden Tang Dynasty building style. Since the relative location was shown on the mural with the known landmark, we could use the mural as a three dimensional map and then go to Shanxi Province to find it! All our team members got very excited! The murals in the Mogao Caves were not only beautiful, but they had the historical value of 'proving history with pictures'. Just like those 'secret maps' I prepared before my friends visited my home.

But suddenly, someone was calling my name again in a hurry, 'Emma, get up, the school bus is coming...' Oh, it was a dream, I have to go to bed early tonight, maybe I can continue my archaeological work.

# New Tales from the Mogao Grottoes

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Yeung Au, Hanna – 7*

At popular tourist destination, Mogao Grottoes in China, there is a cave that stores hundreds of rolls of literature called the Library Cave. Long ago, there was a tale about the Library Cave.

Four emerging artists, named Alana, Kristy, Will and Mike were from the southern part of China. They thought that the literature in the Library Cave contained spell books and magical rhymes and believed those books could help them to make anything kinds of sculpture they wanted to easily.

The four artists read and studied hard throughout the days, and wanted to read the entire collection within the Library Cave. Alana and Kristy worked hard, practiced and followed the books to make the sculptures. The two girls failed but tried again and again. Will and Mike also studied hard, but not as much as the girls.

The boys practiced but when they failed in making the sculptures, they skipped the steps and jumped to another chapters. They wanted to give up after several times, the boys didn't want to finish reading the collections and try anymore, they just wanted to go home. Alana and Kristy were shocked, they thought Will and Mike wanted to finish the art work and go home with them together.

The girls spoke to the boys, "You have only finished half of the books, they were still waiting for you to read. Why don't you finish it, try practicing again and see if you could make your sculptures?"

Will and Mike thought for a moment, Will said, "Maybe you are right, we should not give up that easily. We should continue reading the collection until we finished all of them, and make the art work again."

At the end, the learners finished reading all of the literature in the Library Cave, and made beautiful and unique sculptures. They were proud of each other, and understood that there were actually no magical spells in these literatures, those were in fact the knowledge for creating sculptures.

Some people said the sculptures the learners created were those the explorers found and stored in Library Cave today. If you have chance to visit the Library Cave, take a look at the sculptures there. It reminds us we should work hard and never give up easily when we failed. We should not scare to fail, and should keep trying to do our best in everything.

# Ancient Caves

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Yip, Mia – 6*

Long ago, before there were cars, a monk lived in the Mogao Grottoes. His name was Gao. He had shaved hair, a huge nose and green eyes that were round and sparkly. He was as tall as a door. Gao was travelling along the Silk Road to buy silk from China. One evening as it was getting dark, Gao stopped for a rest. He saw a cave in the moonlight, and went inside to explore. After the first night, Gao thought, "I was staying for one night but I don't want to leave yet." For the next day few days, he struggled to leave, until finally, he said again, "I'm staying here forever! I like this cave and I might find something interesting one day. I can take my time and have a proper look." The cave Gao lived in was dark and cosy at night, but during the day light shone in from a big, round entrance.

Sometimes, Gao felt lonely. Nobody lived near him, except a cute little mouse who became a pet to Gao. It had grey fur, peach-coloured ears, a nice big pink nose, white whiskers, chubby cheeks and bright little eyes! The mouse was always very hungry, his favourite food was cheese. It wasn't easy to find cheese in the desert, it was a special treat. When travellers came, sometimes they would share their cheese with Gao. The little mouse was very playful and adventurous. Gao named the mouse Maomao.

One hot morning, Gao and Maomao excitedly set off on an adventure to find clay to make a house near their cave. They walked and walked, further and further, but they could not find any clay. They walked until night fell. They felt cold as the sun set in the chilly desert. They snuggled up together and fell asleep.

The next morning, they found themselves sleeping near the cave where they started out from! Gao thought, "What a mystery!". Suddenly, they heard a fluttering noise. They had discovered an oasis close by! The oasis was splendid, it had a palm tree, a pond and lotus flowers growing in the water. Gao and Maomao were so surprised, they ran to the oasis and found coconuts laying on the ground.

Gao dug near the oasis while he waited for Maomao and he found lots of clay. With all that clay, Gao built a house. When Maomao saw the house, he stored all his food in a tiny clay cupboard that Gao built for him. In the caves, he put many beautiful statues of Buddha that he made out of clay. Some of the statues were of Buddha lying down, some were of Buddha sitting up – they were all different.

One hundred years later, eight groups of eight pilgrims went to stay there, digging and discovering new caves. But time passed, pilgrims started taking other routes and the Mogao Caves were forgotten, becoming no more than a dusty legend.

# An Adventure in the Mogao Caves

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Yip, Victoria – 8*

The sky was so blue that it was bluer than the ocean, and the air was so cool that it was like turning on the air-conditioner and the air blowing right on my face.

I saw a beautiful temple in front of me, and I was very excited. I stepped on the rocky floor of the temple and saw so many calm monks meditating, so I quietly walked through.

There were four narrow caves on the side of the temple, and I went into the top right cave first. I saw a green shelf full of books, and they were made out of bamboo. I took one out and saw all the words were like pictures, that was why I did not understand anything.

I put back the book and went into another cave. There I saw an enormous sleeping buddha statue. I said to myself, "Wow, it is so big that I could even sleep in its ears!"

Then, I saw a smaller buddha next to it, it was as tall as a person. Suddenly, it looked like he had blinked his eyes! I looked carefully, and then the dirty hands of the buddha started moving! I was so scared that I ran to another cave, until I realised it was just a person!

After calming down, I continued walking on. This time I saw a rough painting of a buddha. Actually, there were a lot of them! Finally, I walked into the last cave. The last cave was very mysterious and creepy because I could hear some dreadful music coming from the deep within. As I went deeper, I started to see some terrifying marks on the wall. It was the scariest picture with horrible creatures trying to eat a lot of frightened people. I did not know what it was, and I did not want to think about it. I was very scared, so I ran away because I had dreamt about something similar in a nightmare before.

After leaving that temple, I felt good again. So, I said goodbye to the temple and the temple said goodbye to me. As I was shaking, I asked myself, "Oh! Why is this place so strange? What a scary place!"

I learnt that there should always be more than one person to go on an adventure, as it is safer. I will surely bring my best friends with me next time to explore deeper into this enormous and fascinating temple, even though it was a bit frightening the first time. Nonetheless, it was a very good adventure!

# My Dream About the Mogao Caves

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Yuen, Jeffrey – 9*

One night, in my deep sleep, I was with my family, exploring the southeast part of the centre of Dunhuang, an Oasis located on the Silk Road in Gansu Province of China. I saw a young man named Jack and his family. They had come to explore the Mogao Caves. They had come from America to tour around China. We talked about our interest in visiting the Mogao Caves. I told them that I had read about the caves and that they were the main reason my family and I had come to Dunhuang.

While our parents were chatting, I asked my mum and dad if I could go for a walk with Jack. We promised not to go far, and we strolled off on our walk. On our way, there were many tourists from different countries who had come to visit and explore the beautiful caves. We all entered the cave and saw many passages leading different ways. "Let's go and explore," my father said. After walking for about fifteen minutes, we all found ourselves lost. Suddenly, we were in front of a tall Buddha statue. It was the most beautiful and colourful statue that I had ever seen before. On the top of the statue was a Komodo Dragon sitting there. It looked fierce and hungry. The Komodo Dragon got down and chased us. "Run!" Jack yelled frightenedly. The Komodo Dragon, on seeing the huge crowd of people, got scared and went back the way it came. Moments later, it disappeared. "Whew, we are safe," everyone sighed with relief.

After a while, we landed in the most beautiful part of the cave. The cave was full of beautiful paintings and sculptures of Lord Buddha. It was such a delight to see and experience the fine arts, literature, Buddhism and the past.

Suddenly, I heard my mother calling my name to wake me up. I was still dreaming of the Mogao Caves. She promised me, one day, that she would take me to see the World Heritage Mogao caves. My dream would come true after all!

## Cave 428– The Compassionate Prince

*The British International School Shanghai, Puxi Campus, Qian, Aisha – 6*

Once upon a time long ago, there was a Prince named Sudama. One fine day the Prince and his Brother decided to explore a nearby forest. The forest was very big. They rode their horses for a very long time. Soon it was time for lunch. They decided to take a little break. After a while Prince Sudama and his brother heard a growl. They decided to explore further. They found a tigress and her seven cubs. They looked very skinny and hungry. It appeared that they had not eaten for many days. Prince Sudama asked his brother to look for some food in the forest for the hungry tiger cubs. His brother did not return for a long time.

When the Prince saw the seven starving tiger cubs and their mum, he felt sad. The Prince realized that the tiger cubs would die without food. He decided to do something to help the tiger cubs. Prince Sudama stabbed himself with a twig and offered himself to the hungry tiger cubs. Finally, when his brother returned empty handed, he saw a pile of bones. He realized the great favor that Prince Sudama had done to help the tigress and her cubs.

Mark Stein was a Hungarian born British explorer who was interested to know more about the Mogao Grottoes. In 1907, after a long journey he finally found the Mogao Grottoes. While Mark was waiting for permission to meet the then care taker of the Mogao Grottoes, Taoist monk Wang Yuan Lu, he decided to inspect the murals in the caves. In cave number 428 (There were more than 1000 caves), Mark saw a mural describing the above story. Upon reading the Buddhist scriptures he learnt more about Prince Sudama. Prince Sudama was a rebirth of Sakhyamuni who is popularly known as Buddha all over the world. Buddha teaches us to be compassionate towards all. Buddha was born as Siddhartha Gautama in the 5th Century B.C. In a country today knows as Nepal. Buddha's teachings about life and how to conduct oneself became the foundation for the Buddhist religion. Many people believed in Buddha's teachings and started following Buddhism. In the olden days the traders and the people used the silk route to travel from China to other parts of the world. The murals of Mogao Grottoes and the scriptures are a profound example of the exchange of stories, tales and beliefs of people which happened thousands of years ago.

# Chloe's Journey to the West

*The Independent Schools Foundation Academy, Cao, Chloe – 8*

Christmas was coming. One evening, I was watching my favorite TV series Journey to the West...

I woke to find myself covered by a shining, silvery cloth, walking side by side with the main character Xuanzang, the Tang Dynasty Buddhist monk.

I looked down at my feet, but they were gone, and so was my entire body! I gasped and realized I must be wearing an Invisibility Cloak! So, I followed Xuanzang and his men quietly. Into the desert we went.

“Shifu, the water bag on the horse back is leaking,” said Sunwukong, a look of worry on his face. “I don’t know how far we need to walk to find water.”

“Let’s just keep walking,” said Xuanzang. “I’d rather die heading for the West than live returning to the East.”

I was struck by this powerful saying and caught up with their pace.

Just when I was so thirsty and almost fainting, I seemed to have a vision of Buddha bathed in golden light. And right in front of us, there was an oasis, with some greens and water. I started to wonder if everything was real – the oasis, my Invisibility Cloak, joining Xuanzang for the journey...

The moment I reached out my hand and the water flowed through my fingers, I knew this was for real and we finally found water! I swallowed mouthfuls of water from the stream and splashed some more on my face and immediately started to feel sober again. Luckily, no one seemed to be noticing me.

“The water tastes so fresh!” said Zhubajie.

“Indeed, and cannot be even more timely,” added Shawujing.

Then we continued on the same pathway until we approached some huge caves. It was like a miracle that these caves seemed to have appeared out of nowhere! Going through cave by cave, we noticed there were all kinds of paintings and sculptures of Buddha on the walls, and even some engravings of hard to recognize ancient words.

“Shifu, we are surrounded by Buddha! Have we finally arrived at The Thunderclap Monastery after a decade long journey?” asked Zhubajie.

“Silly piggy...” I thought quietly in my head, “we must be in Mogao Grottoes”. I found him amusing but fought hard not to give out a word, fearing my talking would disrupt the history of Journey to the West.

After a moment of silence, Xuanzang answered, “No, we are not there yet but we are getting closer.”

Sunwukong and Xuanzang soon stopped by a painting and stared at it for a long time. The tartar in the picture with much hair looked exactly like Sunwukong himself and the storyline was just like their Journey...

I couldn’t help thinking to myself: “How can there be paintings of our Journey to the West while we are still on our way? Are we actually in the future or in the past?”

Well, maybe it doesn’t matter – I guess if you believe in something so firmly like Xuanzang, you will always reach your destination one day.

# The Discovery of a New Cave at the Mogao Grottoes

*The Independent Schools Foundation Academy, Wong, Darren – 7*

I am an adventurous Chinese archaeologist who worked in the National Museum of China. My special interest is to examine and investigate all artefacts along Silk Road, especially in Dunhuang China. The artefacts that were explored in the caves and reclaimed include all sorts of objects, from rotten apple cores to pure diamond and emerald geodes to the most early printed literature on paper. I think they were very valuable and treasurable as they showed the culture, civilization, beliefs and religion of our ancestors.

One day, I examined a new map from Mogao Caves sent to Beijing in 1960. I found a hint in a map that led me to find a special golden key to treasures of the last caves in the Mogao Caves. Therefore, I went to Mogao Caves all by myself.

When I arrived the Mogao Caves, it was late at night. As I stalked into the mysterious dark cave, so happened that the battery of my torch was dead. It was too dark and I bumped my head into the statue of a Buddha statue. Suddenly a stone wall moved along the side revealing the passage to a new cave!

I tip-toed to go inside the new cave. I saw an enormous 5-meter-high Buddha statue in front of me with a lot of small cracks. Besides the statue, there were also a lot of ancient paintings on the walls. I looked up high and saw a handle holding a golden key. I was very amazed. I jumped up high and accidentally broke the handle that was holding the golden key. The key dropped and I got hold of it. I looked around and found a wooden chest with golden keyhole. I tried to open the chest with key in my hand. The chest opened! There were ancient gold rings that belonged to the ancient Chinese emperors from the Tang dynasty, Gold, Silver, and Bronze coins that were used to buy exclusive treasures in the Qing dynasty, carvings on rare species of turtle shells like soft shell turtles in the Xia dynasty, some paper maps of ancient villages in the Han dynasty, and traditional 3-legs pots in the Shang dynasty. They are valuable because they are all only belong to emperors and kings. They are also valuable because they are made Gold, which is a very valuable material back then. I called the Museum and informed them of the new discovery. The museum sent a team to help me carry all the treasures out of the cave. They were displayed in the museum, under bulletproof glass to prevent people from stealing the loot.

# Mogao Grottoes: A Story About Friends, Legends and Adventure

*Victoria Shanghai Academy, Chan, Natalie – 9*

“Beep, beep!” The bus from China International and Local School had come to the desert at the Silk Road ! Students rushed out the door, grabbing their bags, and racing towards the bus exit. The school had come for a research at the Silk Road.

“ I just can’t believe we’re here!” sixteen year old Lucy exclaimed, as she clambered out of the bus. Lucy was sister of Alexia, daughter of Tom Simpson and friend of Thomas CottenWood, Kelly and Samuel Ketterson.

“Me too!” Alexia grinned, as she made her way towards Lucy, putting her arm around her sister. She was nothing like Lucy, she was like an archer, ready for anything.

As they were excitedly chatting, Lucy’s friends came out: the Ketterson twins, Samuel, Kelly, and Thomas CottenWood. Lucy was the youngest of the group, but she was smart. She was huge help during all the problems her team were stuck on.

As they were walking through routes of the place, Lucy instantly noticed a cave that was blocked in with a enormous rock. Suddenly, she remembered what she learnt in school a few days ago...

“A long time ago, before your great great great great grandfather and grandmother was born,” began her teacher, “A monk decided he would create a special cave in the Silk Road. It is estimated that there would be five scholars to find the cave again.”

Could the legend be about her group? Could it be behind the rock, is the cave that the monk found? What really was in the cave? The thoughts in Lucy’s mind kept popping up while she was traveling through the desert.

Suddenly, a huge rumbling noise made the ground shake. Everybody glanced at the teachers, terrified. The teacher waved them off, explaining that it was usual to have these sounds in the desert. However... splash! A colossal shadow appeared behind their backs. Tsunami! Everybody raced to high ground. The teacher scampered behind them, out of breath. One would never, ever imagine a tsunami there!

Every student was terrified, but it was so crowded that no one knew that just behind them that it was the blocked entrance Lucy found a hour ago, except for Lucy.

As Lucy turned around she found the blocked cave she noticed earlier. She called the others to help her move the rock out of the way.

When Alexia poked her head inside, she gasped. The scenery was breathtaking, with walls were covered in sketching so creative that no artist could dream up of, aged paper, and on it, were literatures that written carefully by unknown authors, and the oldest book in the world! Other precious treasures were hidden in every single corner, waiting for them to investigate.

Thomas whipped up his camera and started taking photos of the literatures. They then raced back to their party, and showed what they found.

The teacher suggested that they go back to school and see the president. And that was what they did.

Lucy, Thomas, Kelly, Samuel and Alexia completed the legend. They were greeted as heroes by everyone they saw. The photos Thomas took still stands in a display case in the well-known China museum today.



# The Legend Story Of The Mogao Grottoes

*Victoria Shanghai Academy, Cheung, Dexter – 8*

Once upon a time a monk rides his horse to a long way of China, he saw the sunset and the sun light was pointing to the right side, he thought the God said he has to make a mogao caves to buddhist the God, and then he builds it a thousand years, some pictures are a photo of war.

And then one day another monk who has no educational background came, he thought the pictures and the books from the mogao caves were normal, so he brought all of them to his country, and he re-paint all the pictures and everything in the mogao caves were gone. Then the monk sells all the things of the mogao caves to his country shop.

A scientist invented a robot called the Champion Goblet and it can go back to the past and the future. Then the robot goes back to the time that the monk steals from the mogao caves, so the robot decided to teach the monk some skills and knowledge, then he did, he talk about something of the mogao caves to the monk, the monk was sorry he said “do I need to go to jail?”

The robot thinks he doesn't need to go to jail because he has no educational background at that time and therefore both of them, the monk was happy and the robot was happy.

And then they go back to the monk country, then the police saw the monk and the police said come with me because you stole the mogao caves things, the monk look at the robot, the robot look at the monk too, then the robot answered he has no educational background that time, so he steals the mogao caves things and he said sorry to the police. The robot said that was fine and then the police walked away.

So now the monk and the robot were happy, they played together and ate together, finally the monk needed to go home but there was one problem: the monk house was small because he didn't have money, so now the robot needed to do a job. The robot became a doctor and he did his job for ten years. Finally, they have ten million dollars and they have enough money to buy a house which has a big living room and two bedrooms.

They slept until the next day, they bought food to cook breakfast and they played together afterwards. After they play they go to work, the robot looks worried.

“What's wrong?”said the monk.

“Well...I need to go back to my year.”said the robot.

“Why?”said the monk.

“Because I can only stay here for eleven years.”said the robot

“Oh!”said the monk.

So after one year the robot left and the monk was alone. Then the robot tells the scientist at home about his adventure, the scientist was happy because the robot can teach, travel time and do a job then they lived happily ever after and the monk.

After one year a bad guy named Sam want to destroy the mogao caves and he wants to have a bomb to explode it. The monk and the robot watch the news. They want to stop Sam from destroying the mogao caves, so they get there but they cannot find Sam.

“He must be hiding," said the monk.”

The robot picks up a shield to block Sam from attacking. Suddenly! Boom! Boom! Sam is attacking.

“I must stop him,”said the robot.

So the robot called the police and Sam was arrested.

Sam said “forgive me !”

No! Said the robot. So the mogao caves were saved! And they lived happily ever after!

# The Sandstorm

*Victoria Shanghai Academy, Cheung, Sat Yau – 8*

“The sandstorm is coming,” Annabeth said. “Are you sure?” asked Travis. “I’m very sure!” said Annabeth. “Come on, Travis, just get inside the cave.” He looked like he wanted to argue but he just went in. When he went in, he accidentally went to cave 85. They were supposed to find cave 10000000000 last time. They ended up finding cave 85 this time. Travis looked out of the door. The sandstorm had passed but a huge number of pythons are guarding the doors. Where is Annabeth? Hope she is okay. Meanwhile, Annabeth was in cave 10000000000. She had found it but she can’t go back without Travis. So she took a few photos and then went to look for Travis. She came to cave 85. She knew why Travis did not look for her because pythons were guarding the door of the cave. She yelled “Travis!”. There was a muffled voice. It was “Help Annabeth pythons are surrounding us!” She found Travis. She took out a knife from her pocket! She killed the pythons all in one go! She shouted at Travis “We’re safe!”. The pythons were gone. He came out like he had seen a ghost. So they quickly ran to the airport to catch the flight home.

# Momo’s Mogao Cave Adventure

*Victoria Shanghai Academy, Lam, Summer – 7*

Hello! I am Momo the explorer, I also have a dog called Starlight and a cat called Misty. I have a time machine that helps us travel all over the world! And today I am going to travel to the Mogao Caves in Gansu, China. The 2,000 years old town has more than 1,000 cave’s. We’ll also follow the Silk Road, the Silk Road is for the China people to bring China things to Europe such as tea, china, silk fabric and statues.

Zoom! We arrived at the Mogao caves! When we went to Mogao Cave 1 it was on fire! Luckily my time machine changed into a fire engine and put out the fire quickly! Then, we met a child named Bella in cave 10, the girl was trying to copy a painting of monks. The girl was about 7 years old. When I said hello to the Bella, she jumped, her big sister turn around and rolled her eyes at me, and she said how dare you scared Bella my little sister, then I said angrily I did not scared Bella, anyway what is your name, mine’s Momo and this is Starlight and Misty. Then she said mine’s Stella and this is baby Sam. I said sweetly to Stella “Baby Sam is so cute!!” Stella sighed “ yes, Samsam is just so cute!”

Suddenly Bella said “Stella, who are you talking to ?” Stella said “I am talking to Momo, the dog is Starlight and the cat is Misty. Bella asked me “Do you want to have a rest, it’s nearly night time. “ Yes, anyway, do you want to have a sleepover at my time machine?” I asked, then they said eagerly “Yes, please.” “Then come on in!” I cried! When it was morning time we played hide and seek until Bella suggested we go into Moago cave’s to visiting, then we went to cave 259, I saw a very beautiful painting of a nine-colored deer and a black face Buddha riding a horse going somewhere, in cave 158 there is a statues of Buddha lying down, the Buddha looks so into her sleeping, there are lots of painting that have been destroyed especially the Buddha’s bed, in cave 112 is a painting of seven children happily playing in the river bank, there is even paintings on every Mogao Cave’s ceiling, in cave 9 there is a painting of a monk sitting on the chair in the forest full of bamboos, he is doing mindfulness meditation with his master, in cave 96, there is a 9 story old style chinese building, inside covered a giant status Buddha which height was 30m. What I saw was so amazing!

My time machine is ringing, it’s time to say goodbye to my friends. We have a big hug, then we take the time machine back home, mommy calls us down for dinner and no time has passed in the real world when we have our adventure.

# All about Mogao Grottoes

*Victoria Shanghai Academy, Li, Ka Yee – 8*

Mogao Grottoes is well-known all over the world for its exquisite murals and statues. The name Mogao Grottoes means the top of the desert. In A.D. 366, there was a monk called Le Zun. During his journey to the west, he passed through a mountain and reached a cave near a cliff at the east of Mingsha Mountain in Mogao Town, where are 25 kilometers to the southeast of Dunhuang City, Gansu Province, China. The reason he chose this location is because he saw sunlight shining on the mountain which looked like a thousand of buddhas appearing in front of him. He thought this place was very special and sacred. He believed that the gods express a holy message to him so he stopped there and started to build the first cave. That place is later known as Mogao Grottoes.

Thereafter, Le Zun's art work was widespread to many followers. Many people followed his idea and continued to build those caves inside with buddha statues. After thousand of years of erosion from the nature and man-made damage, Mogao Grottoes is still preserved in good shape and quality.

In 1900, a group of explorers found these caves. They discovered many things about these caves. Now it is called the "Thousand Buddha Cave". These caves have a very long history and lasted for many dynasties. After the Mogao Grottoes passed through many decades, those buddha statues and arts are corroded by nature and destroyed by visitors. There are only 492 grottoes remaining with murals and statues and the total wall paintings are over 45,000 square meters. Besides, it has the third biggest buddha statue in China. It is the biggest indoor buddha in the whole world. There are many beautiful statues, some statues have colour too which are 2415 clay colored sculptures and there are rooms that have pictures. The shape of the statues are very delicate, which are rare in the world. In recent years, people are going to the Mogao Grottoes, and more people started to grow more interest in Dunhuang art, and they learn about Dunhuang art too. It teaches me a lot of history. I learn about the statue and other things about the Mogao Grottoes too. I wish I can visit this place one day in the future and I could wish to stay there for a few days, because I can use a bit more time to see all the beautiful wall painting, the colourful statues and the third biggest buddha in China. I wish I can learn some more history about Dunhuang art and some other history about Mogao Grottoes. I wish I could know how they built some big buddha in the old times. This made me feel more interest about Chinese history and I know a lot of Mogao Grottoes history now.

# The Dream To Mo Gao Caves

*Victoria Shanghai Academy, Liang, Stanley - 7*

One day, I had a dream

I was Sun Wu Kong (monkey king) 1 somersault turns back into 1700 years ago.

I landed in Dun Huang desert, I saw a man with a shovel carving a cave.

I thought he was a pirate because he had an eyepatch.

I panicked cause I thought he was going to kill me.

Then I realized that pirates don't exist in this year.

Then the pirate looking man placed a Buddha in the cave he carved, then he prayed.

At first I have absolutely no idea what he is praying about, I thought maybe he lost his mom and dad, or maybe he is lost in the desert and can't find his mom and dad, how sad.

Then some people saw him praying so they did the same.

Some people carved caves, some painted on the wall, some made statues and some wrote books.

I made a golden stick.

After so many years of hard work by Buddha believers, there are 735 caves that were dug.

There are 45,000 square meter pictures that were painted.

There are 2,415 statues that were handmade.

Mo Gao Caves are now the biggest caves of Buddha culture center

In the world, also a world culture heritage, a lot of visitors come for tours to Mo Gao Caves.

Then suddenly I woke up, ha! ha! ha!

I need to go to school!

Does anybody want to go to Mo Gao Caves?

You can go with me if you want!

# Destroy History, Not Everyone Agrees!

*Victoria Shanghai Academy, Liu, Sofia – 8*

“The Time-a-Tron is ready! Get ready to destroy HISTORY!” Jack proudly displayed a shiny silver time machine to his partners, Bruce and Jamie. They thought history was horrible. Full of bombs, wars, and death. They formed the club Destroy History. “Woohoo! Let’s rumble!” Bruce grinned.

They took a last check, climbed into their creation, and took off. The buildings around them got older and older. A few minutes later, a voice came over the speaker. “Destination reached.”

Jack, Bruce and Jamie slowly stepped out of the Time-a-Tron. The cracked stone walls echoed every sound that was heard, even footsteps. It was dark; only small candles were standing on a rock. “You have entered the Mogao Caves.” A voice came from the paintings. They snapped to attention and scanned the ceiling and walls for people. No one, but life size sculptures and some wall paintings.

“We have been waiting for you, the Destroy History club!” They pointed at the team. “Wha... Who are you?” the club members stuttered. “We are FeiTian, living here, in the Mogao Caves for more than a millennium!”

“A cave? Where are we?” Jack asked.

“Mogao Caves in Dunhuang, China. These are caves full of treasures. Ancient sculptures, murals, ancient scrolls. We are a part of them. The caves are also a collaboration, because many people worked together to build the caves.”

“What? Collaboration? NO WAY! History is a time of war.” Bruce challenged.

The FeiTian disappeared. Three words, Past, Present, and Future appeared, with glimmering globes of scenes.

Bruce picked the Past. It showed people working together in heat, carving wonderful caves and painting life-like sculptures. “The Silk Road ran across Dunhuang and was a popular trading network in the old days.” The narrator said. Hordes of camels strode across the vast desert, carrying merchants and goods. The Present, with Jack, a mob of people visiting the Mogao Caves. “What do you think this is for?” Jack asked. “For understanding the past, maybe? So unimportant. But other people think it’s fascinating.” Jamie was staring at the Future. There was nothing. “Supercomputer, activate!” They went to get the computer out of the Time-a-Tron. “Here is what might happen in the future.” it beeped. The screen showed a vast desert, just as it was in the past. But there was no trace of humans, or any camels. Deserted. “What happened to the treasure?” Jack protested. “If you destroy history, this place will be devastated!” The supercomputer said. “Treasure? I’d call that junk!” Bruce snickered. “If we destroy history, no one will ever see the wonders of *the past*.” Jack said defensively. Jamie shot him an encouraging look. “Jack’s right. We shall become Protect History!” she said, laughing. Bruce growled. “Promise protection is the answer?” a voice shot in. It was the FeiTian! “Ok, maybe.” Bruce shot back. “Fine, yes!” he moaned. The FeiTian smiled, whisked them back to the future, then winked at each other and said: “Mission Accomplished!”

# Secrets of the Mogao Grottoes

*Victoria Shanghai Academy, Lui, Hayley – 9*

BOOM!! CRASHH! KABAAM! “Is there another thunderstorm?” asked Lyn, “ Mhm” mumbled Joe “ I guess we can’t go exploring today...” Suddenly, the rain stopped, “Yes!!” cried Lyn “The thunderstorm stopped! Now we can go explore China!”

“Umm, what’s happening?” asked Joe, “I don’t know!” whispered Lyn “Hey wait... why are we standing in front of a building?” asked Joe, just then they heard a BIG sound that sounded like rumbling... CRASH! “Oh! This might be the place we can explore!” cheered Lyn.

In the building they saw ancient statues, props, and even bodies! “Oh no! This is so scary!” whined Lyn “Then why did you choose this job?” snarled Joe “Be quiet I hear a echo sound!” said Lyn calmly.

“WOAHHH!” Joe and Lyn shouted, “Sigh... we’re now trapped forever!” cried Lyn they heard a SLAM on top of them, it was a trapdoor! “Great! We’re trapped forever! It’s your fault that you agreed to go in here!” said Joe angrily.”Umm ...Joe?” asked Lyn, “What.” answered Joe ,” What in history is that!?” asked Lyn “I– I don’t know!” replied Joe “ It looks like some sort of creature, and i–its m–moving!” “Don’t be so scared! Purr...” “ OH GOSH ,YES YOUR RIGHT! THIS IS MY FAULT!” screamed Lyn

“AHHH!” shouted some sort of creature, “PLEASE HELP!” Suddenly, all the lights were off! It was as dark as a closet! DING! The lights gone on again! They saw a deadly hurt explorer, instead of one, they found FOUR! It was lucky that Joe and Lyn was born, if they were not born nobody in the cage could be saved! They had prepared their bow and arrow, so they shot the cage open and the door swung open! The four explorers jumped out of the cage,and headed to the exit,it was very dark, so they had a hard time trying to get out of the building.

Then,they heard a SLAM! “Back off! I will figure this out!” Joe said out loud,the other five went to find the exit leaving Joe alone,”Now all I have to do is investigate!”

# Sophia's Secret

*Victoria Shanghai Academy, Punjabi, Sonal – 7*

Sophia was walking along a mountain trail when she saw a cave. She went into it and discovered lots of interesting things such as drawings, gold and silver coins, bronze figurines and some clothes and books. Sophia also noticed a little hole on the ground and she decided to go into it. When she went down the little hole she saw ..... A BALL!! She tried to reach for the ball but it disappeared and reappeared in another corner. Sophia chased after the ball but it flew out of the cave and so she stopped chasing it. She then continued to look around the cave. She read most of the books and looked at all the pictures. After that, she tried on some of the clothes. The clothes were too big for her so she tried on some necklaces instead. BUT...when she put on one of the necklaces, it changed colour. A few minutes later, she touched a bead of her necklace which then made her fly out of the cave!!!

She landed in another part of the cave where she saw a big buddha standing right in front of her. She also saw lots of paintings on the walls. She began to touch the paintings when suddenly one of the walls of the cave slid open! The opening led her into an empty part of the cave. She looked around and found a tiny piece of turquoise coloured chalk. She decided to draw her world! While she was drawing she noticed a monk standing in front of her. She asked the monk how long he had been living here but he didn't respond. Sophia wondered why he didn't answer; she thought he didn't hear her question so she asked him again but when she turned around to ask, he had disappeared! She shrugged and went back to her drawing; she drew her village and a big palace in the middle of the village. She drew a king and a queen and as soon as she finished drawing the queen, she realised she was dressed the same way as the queen she had drawn. Surprised at the magic, she tested it again by drawing a rose in the queen's hand and indeed a rose appeared in her hand! Excitedly she continued drawing but this time she drew the same ball that had disappeared earlier, but unfortunately nothing happened. Disappointed, she realised she had to go home before it got too dark.

Once home, Sophia couldn't stop thinking about her magical day and couldn't wait to go back to the cave the next day. Her mum called out to her and showed her something she got for her from the market. To Sophia's amazement, it was the same ball that she had seen in the cave and the one she had drawn on the wall. Then Sophia noticed the same monk standing outside her home window! He smiled and winked at Sophia and then disappeared. Sophia smiled and whispered to herself – “the magic actually worked; oh! I am still wearing the necklace!”

# Exploring the Mogao Caves

*Victoria Shanghai Academy, Tse, Isaac – 8*

Ben the monk shielded his eyes as he overlooked the enormous oasis. He was the first to find the sacred lake in a desert near Silk Road in China. He knew at once the oasis was special.

Over time, many more Pilgrims arrived at the oasis, spending their time digging caves and creating sacred art and literature.

Over a hundred years later, travellers decided to take other routes. So, the Mogao Caves, what the caves are called, in the Dunhuang district of Gansu province in west central China were forgotten, making it only a little more than a foggy legend.

That doesn't mean that no one else can explore this hidden oasis. Maybe there's more than meets the eye.

One day, a man named Conker rediscovered the Mogao Caves. He was the director of the Ancient Wonders Rediscovery Association.

"Come on, team!" Conker calls to his workers. They struggled to keep up. Finally, they reached the clearing that called to Conker. He took a picture.

"Wow." Conker said as he saw the arts on the rocks and walls.

"Look at this, director!" one of his workers shouted, pointing to a stupa.

"It kind of looks like a two-legged creature." Conker said, examining the creation.

"Hmm," a worker said, scratching his head. "There weren't any rabbits or chickens in the past. What is it?" For almost an hour, the explorers tried to answer the question. Until a smart worker peeked behind the sculpture and found a map. The explorers followed the map's instructions to what seemed like a digging site.

"I think we're supposed to dig out something," Before you know it, the explorers were digging like crazy to find the treasure.

A little while later, a sweaty worker's shovel hit something hard. Everyone helped him to uncover the dirt. When they uncovered it enough, they realised what they found: a dinosaur fossil. Beside the fossil was something brown and rough.

The explorers eventually managed to extract the fossil and the brown thing back to the lab. There, they analysed both findings. It turns out that they found the fossil of *Wulong bohaisensis's* femur. And the brown thing is..... dinosaur poop?!

They somehow got rid of the poop (I'm not going to say it because it's a little disgusting) and kept the fossil for further research. Then everyone slept.

Early next morning, Conker was too excited to wait until the other workers got out of bed. So, he crept to the examination section. He tiptoed past the tank full of mushrooms, he crawled under the microscopes, and slipped through the hallway of flowers. Finally, he reached the fossil. But wait! Inside the storage, there wasn't a fossil in sight. He blinked. Still nothing.

Behind him, he felt a touch. He glanced back and saw Kristina.

"The fossil....." Conker explained what happened to her, but it was obvious that she couldn't understand. It turns out that Conker was dreaming this whole time. He imagined the picture he took before, shielding his eyes as he overlooked the oasis. That just made him even more determined to find the oasis!



# Monks and mysteries in Mogao

*Victoria Shanghai Academy, Van Hoof, Chloe – 7*

BANG! BANG! Thunder rumbled and lightning flashed across the dark sky. Cold wind howled, and icy rain poured down on the old Silk Road. Three monks climbed on the rock face at the edge of the Taklamakan desert.

“Come on, we have to find shelter quickly!”, shouted the oldest monk, Wang. The other two, Liang and Tang, followed in his footsteps, step-by-step...

“We have been travelling non-stop for days to get horses from Europe, we really need to eat and sleep”, uttered Tang. “I am so cold”, cried Liang. The three monks huddled together under a rock, soaked and shivering.

“Let’s light a fire!”, Wang said. Thick smoke billowed from the wet wood. When the smoke cleared, the three monks saw a dark shadow rising above the mounting. “Shhh! It’s the black cave demon!” whispered Tang. “I thought it was just a legend”, mumbled Liang, “that means its cave must be nearby”. Scared, the three monks rushed down the mountain. Suddenly, Liang stumbled and tumbled down a narrow passageway and disappeared in between the rocks. The other monks cautiously followed, shouting the young monk’s name.

As soon as they entered the cave, a giant king cobra slithered behind them. Its red, glistening eyes shot fire at the monks, its forked tongue spit poison while its tail tried to strangle Wang and Tang. Liang grabbed his bow and arrow, took aim and SHOOOSH, he shot the cobra right between the eyes. With a deafening shriek, the cobra collapsed on the floor.

“This cave is massive, but I don’t see it anywhere on the map.” said Liang. “Let’s go further inside and explore!” shouted Wang. Just as they stepped down, the ground began to rumble. “I think it’s an earthquake!” shouted Liang, “a big one!”. “No!” shouted Wang, “it is the black cave demon!!”.

The monks scattered and ran for cover. They dipped the tips of their arrows in the poison of the cobra and shot them at the black cave demon. BOOM, BOOM, the cave ceiling began to crumble as the black cave demon hurled and bumped into the cave walls, gasping for his final breath. “It is dead”, shouted Liang, “is everyone okay?” Luckily, no one was hurt.

“Look!” yelled Tang. “The cave entrance is blocked by giant rocks!” “Come on! As long as we are stuck, let’s explore inside!” said Wang. “Maybe we can find another exit,” said Liang, “or a treasure!”.

So the three monks explored every hall within the cave system. Every cave they saw, they counted in Wang’s notebook. In total, there were 495 caves. They found more than 2000 sculptures, including buddhas in different sizes, shapes and colors, thousands of paintings and a lot more.

After several days, they saw a ray of sunlight coming into the cave. They followed it and saw that the rain had washed away all the big rocks. “Come on!” shouted Tang. “Let’s go!” “WAIT”, ordered Wang, “before we go, let’s name this cave Mogao!” He saw that the other monks looked confused so he explained “it means peerless.” When he saw that Tang still looked confused, he said: “Peerless means better than all others.” Tang said, “I understand now, let’s finish our mission and go West!” “You guys go and get horses from Europe,” said Wang. “I will stay here and preserve the caves for everyone to see. They are the real treasure!”

That morning, the sun was shining high in the sky and birds were singing, as two monks climbed on the rock face at the edge of the Taklamakan desert, waving farewell to their old friend.

# The Secret Room

*Victoria Shanghai Academy, Wu, YINUO – 8*

A bus drove on a dusty road roaring like a monster, inside the bus a whole class was chatting about the field trip destination 'Mogao Grottoes'. One of those kids was Karen, who was getting her camera ready. She knew the field trip would expand her photo collection and knowledge about the past.

Soon the bus arrived, Karen walked through the path to the caves and her heart pounded quickly. Following the teacher's lead, students entered the caves. The caves were magnificent and mysterious which gave Karen a scary thought. All students were shocked by the beautiful murals and statues. They had never seen so many statues of Buddha before.

Then a statue caught Karen's eyes, she stopped and took a photo as well as taking notes. After she finished, Karen turned around and was ready to leave, but she heard footsteps not walking towards her but walking away from her. "What happened?! Where are the others? They were just here." She wondered.

Suddenly, Karen noticed that she was lost! Karen lowered herself on the floor and thought again, "Nobody will notice I'm gone! They'll just keep chatting about the Mogao Grottoes." Karen decided that she would try to retrace her own footsteps, and she might be able to escape with luck. She got up and tried to remember where she passed. But it seemed impossible to find the path due to the so many doors and caves. The statues and murals looked similar and made it even harder to escape.

Soon Karen reached some ivy that was blocking her path, she walked through it without a second thought. The ivy tickled her face but she made sure she would not laugh. Karen found herself in a room with books scattered on the floor. It seemed like nobody had been here for ages. In this room, there were age-old beautiful mural paintings on the wall, golden statues of Buddha and wild plants swirled around the statues and gleamed on the wood. Karen couldn't believe this cave had such a wonderful place. It felt like a dream come true! Karen thought "This place is so special, should I let everyone know about it?" After a while, she decided to take photos which could help her remember this place well and left it to be found by other people. Suddenly Karen bounced back to life and focused on how to escape. Just then a big golden book in the middle caught her eyes. She walked towards it, to her surprise it was a map! Karen knew this was her chance to escape, so she took her camera out of the case and took a photo of the map. Quick as lightning she found where she was now then she followed the map and escaped.

Finally she found the bus parked at the bus station, she got on and returned to school. From now on, she would keep the secrets of the Mogao Grottoes and let people explore it themselves.

# Finding the Past of the Mogao Caves

*Yaumati Catholic Primary School (Hoi Wang Road), Chan, Chak Yu Jayden – 8*

Jayden and Brian were students who were interested in the history of China. They were so enthusiastic about going on an adventure that they joined an expedition to the Mogao Caves. Brian said, "Maybe we can find some treasure!" Jayden said, "I hope we can find the hidden story in the oldest cave."

The adventurers found Ze Yu who was an old local tour guide of the Mogao Caves. Ze Yu had a grandson who was also familiar with the caves. The expedition followed them and found the Mogao Caves. It was located at an oasis in a desert on the Silk Road.

The local people called the caves grottos. Ancient travellers spent their time drawing wall paintings, writing ancient words and building statues. Jayden and Brian were amazed and said, "Let's find out the secret behind the Mogao Caves."

In the past, some explorers found treasures and literature inside the grottos. Jayden and Brian studied the images on the wall paintings, styles of the writing and appearances of the statues. Suddenly, Brian found a secret sign which might lead them to the hidden story on one of the paintings. Ze Yu warned them, "Don't go to the oldest cave."

Jayden and Brian did not listen to Ze Yu. The team followed the map to enter the oldest grotto which dated back to the early fifth century. It smelt musty and was filled with spider webs.

Suddenly, Jayden found a treasure box covered with spider webs. Brian asked excitedly, "What's inside?"

Jayden answered anxiously, "The key hole is very special. I can't find the key." He decided to take the treasure box and leave the cave to seek help from Ze Yu.

Suddenly, a member called Harry passed the key to Jayden and said, "I've found this key on a statue's hand." Jayden was over the moon.

Just when Jayden wanted to open the treasure box, the team smelt some unknown gases which could be poisonous. They ran to the grotto exit. Ze Yu told them to run as fast as they could. The alley leading to the exit was getting smoky. Jayden's legs were shaking and he fainted.

When Jayden woke up, he saw Ze Yu and his grandson who carried him out near the grotto exit. Jayden was overwhelmed with joy that Brian and all the team members were safe. Then, Ze Yu showed Jayden how to open the treasure box. Jayden found an old book inside. He could not read the ancient words. The team decided to let the historians of the National Museum of China study the hidden story.

Jayden and Brian later realised that the story was about a businessman doing business with the west long before recorded history. Jayden and Brian wrote a book called *Finding the Past of the Mogao Caves* to commemorate their big discovery.