

Poetry

Group 1

Mogao, Monk and Meditate

Po Leung Kuk Choi Kai Yau School, Wong, Hiu Wai Elizabeth - 9

O Mogao Grottoes, Mogao Grottoes,
The thousand Buddhas' caves;
Hiding in the Dunhuang's toes,
Burying in the Silk Road's graves.

Pilgriming for austerity,
Tens of thousands monks seek you there;
Enlightening with spirituality,
Paintings and sculptures are not rare.

Why have you caused to be forsaken?
That make all the nations sorrow;
Million literatures have been forgotten,
Civilization needs tomorrow.

Trekking across the dusty land,
Explorers discovers the treasures;
Unearthed secrets are now in hand,
All the riches are without measures.

Wondering on such splendid legacy,
I meditate through the tunnel of time;
If I had been with that destiny,
I would advocate to the world such prime.

A Poetry for the Magao Grottoes

Regents Primary School of Shenzhen, Du, Zhuoxuan - 9

I am Mogao
I am a pearl
Although after a thousand years
like ever
Shine on the Silk Road
I'm a fortress
The toughness of soft rock walls was built with yellow sand
Standing in the Gobi Yellow Sands
I'm a time recorder.
Bodhisattva gave me immortal faith.
I use it as an axe.
Engraved with the gods and Buddhas in the paradise of the Western Heaven
Look
Thousands of real Buddhas here for me
Standing still
Incarate mudstone engraving on the wall of the cave
Leaving the truth of Buddha.
Look
Nine-coloured deer here for me
Come in nine-coloured auspicious clouds
Running speedily
The goodness of leaving Buddha
Look
Luo Shen is here for me
Come in graceshan yu is dacing
Sow the beauty of Buddha.

Poetry

Group 2



Seeds of Bodhi at the Mogao Grottoes

Diocesan Girls' Junior School, Lee, Nok Ching Chloe - 12

Deep down the roots of the Bodhi Tree
Sat the seeds of Buddhist Chi.

Ripening figs grown from blossoming buds,
Dispersing seeds drifted through the gusts.

Falling into Danchuan River along the oasis,
Crossing the Crescent Lake beside Dunhuang mesas.
Desolate desert turned spiritually sacred groves,
Buddhism flourishes in Mogao Grottoes.

Caves of Thousand Buddhas carved in cliffs,
Preaching through rock art beauty its beliefs
Crossover of art, culture, style, and traditions
Amongst the Ancient Chinese, Indian, Turks, and Tibetans.

Manuscript scrolls, carvings, and murals,
Display traces of ancient oriental morals.
The beauty of enlightenment wore gowns of prana,
The master of awakening bestowed prajna.

From the bustling Silk Route with passing traders,
To the hallowed vihara filled with devoted worshippers.
Centuries of time witnessed its highs and lows.
Once lost but found its secret untold.

The Eastern Jewel shines forth its light.
Imparting vision through statues and wall paintings in sight.
The sealed chamber couldn't hold its awe,
Hidden wonder of civilization unearthed as a jigsaw.

When nomadic saints heard the divine call,
Possession forsaken to live humbly above all.
Buddha's teaching and the heavenly sounds
Purify the hearts, and souls abound.

Earnest seekers joined in meditation
Quietly undertaking the important mission
Follow the monks' footsteps over a millennium
Zealously pursue the truth for freedom

Can you not smell its spirit-awakening scent?
Incense of prayers to quest or to thank
Tranquillity overflows corners of the caves
Transcending peace overcomes the troubled saves.

Blessings and affliction, peace and strife.
Seasons of growth, adding flavours to life.
Reaping what you sow. Karma to Samsara.
Cycles of rebirth recur in the endless era.

Hot sand, harsh rock, dry wind in the wilderness
Transforming solitude into mightiness
Touching manifold, a thousand years
Lonesome sanctuary turned legacy heritage into cheers!

Amazing journey at the oriental crossroad of trade.
Tiny seeds of faith give meaning to despair and raid.
Respect life. Avoid evil. Be good and kind.
Awaken. Enlightened. Nirvana you shall find.

Journey of the Mind

Diocesan Girls' Junior School, Sung, Zhi Yin - 11

Why indulge in hatred,
When you can surround yourself with love?
Why act on impulse,
When you can act with wisdom?
Why perpetuate evils and conflicts,
When you can spread peace and love?

Map, masks—
Sandals for the camel saddles.
Sunscreen, sunglasses—
My eyes widened.
Hands on handles, feet on pedals—
A sandy journey to a boundless desert.

Clickety-clack, clickety-clack—
A scent of train oil wafted into my nose.
Hopping on, hopping off—
Curiosity shot from head to toe.
'Next station, Dunhuang.'
'Deserts, temples, sculptures— here I go!'

Standing on the Silk Road,
I peeped into a melting pot of cultures—
China, Central Asia and Europe.
Ancient manuscripts, wall paintings and silk banners—
Gold embroideries and rare textiles—
A vivid picture of life in medieval China.

Sculpted out of sandstone cliffs over ten dynasties.
Constructed by monks to serve as shrines for eternity.
In these caves of giant murals,
I meditated.
Paintings, writings, carvings—
An experience of Buddhist beliefs and stories.
Oh! How I am enlightened!

The goddess of mercy,
A calming Buddha Smile surrounded me,
Bringing inner tranquility.
An elegant lady floating on clouds,
A content figure projecting peace,

Speaking truth, speaking love,
Speaking serenity.

Yellow, red, brown,
Spirited paintings, stucco sculptures,
Gold, silver, black,
Woody smell, a floral note, hints of spice,
Amber, scarlet, hazel,
Red railings, rusty metal,
Rich and bright.

Soaring freely
Over the golden desert land,
The Spirit whispered and sang, gently.
Finding the courage to let go,
I breathed in and out, deeply.
Drip, drip, drip,
Tears trickled down my cheeks, slowly.

A Historical Treasure House

Diocesan Girls' Junior School, Wong, Hei Lam - 11

On the edge of the Gobi Desert,
Lies a place of pilgrimage,
Considered as one of the treasure houses in China.

The Mogao Caves is a major channel
Along the ancient Silk Road,
Connecting the bond between China and the West,
Witnessing the evolution of Buddhist art,
Bearing such a heavy load.

Its rough walls are like the gentle hands of a mother,
Sheltering all her children inside her palms—
Coarse yet protective forever.
Stairs crawl everywhere like lines of ants,
As though walking in a convoluted maze.
Countless doors are the golden keys to the mysterious treasures.

A vision it should be,
Which inspired a monk named Yuezun to excavate the caves.
What treasures did he unveil, that
Even calm the whispering waves?

The kaleidoscope of murals mingles with
Not only the style of one race.
Those fair ladies wore elegant dresses with crystals,
Some danced in grace,
Some played pipas on their shoulders.

Atypical and anomalous dragons—
With the horns of a bull,
The claws of a hawk,
The wings of a butterfly,
The leg of a man,
The perfect combination of delicacy and ferocity.
All displaying the exquisite craftsmanship of China.

The 'living' buddha statues sat cross-legged with solemnity.
Disciples greeted and knelt to their masters with stiff formality.
Earning a reputation of "Thousand Buddhas Caves".
Heavenly kings sat on almighty thrones with dignity.

Servants bow low before them with civility.
All seemingly formidable.

The Mogao Grottoes capture every event
In the Buddhism history book.
Suffering every natural and man disaster which I resent,
They remain intact everywhere I look.
However,
Many threats have been brought to light,
When unlimited tourists visit like water flowing forever.
Under top-level protection and regarded as a World Heritage Site,
I believe the Mogao Grottoes will be well-preserved.

What are you still sitting here for?
Embark on a journey to the treasure house,
To see for yourself the priceless treasures they contain!

A Life Well Spent

St. Joseph's Primary School, Chan, Him Jonah - 10

My name is LeZun,
an ordinary Buddhist monk with an extraordinary life.
I feel very satisfied to have lived this fulfilling life,
blessed by gods and deities.
Let me tell you the thrilling story of my wonderful life.

I started off as a monk in my youth,
going through the motion day in and day out,
of praying, cleaning the temple, cooking for the monastery.
However, I was feeling empty and getting bored
of this mundane life.
So I decided to seek enlightenment in the Western Paradise.

I travelled for days, weeks and even months.
The terrain was rough and the journey lonely,
eventually I got lost in the middle of the vast Gobi Desert.
I was at the mercy of frosty chilling nights and scorching hot days.
Perishing from thirst and exhaustion,
I started to lose hope and faith in God.
I thought, *“Is there really a God in this world, does he actually care about me?”*

Then suddenly I stumble upon an oasis with a fountain inside!
‘Is this a sign that the gods are preserving my life?’ I wondered.
I took large gulps of the sweet cool waters from the fountain.
With my strength revived and my faith renewed,
I journeyed on, feeling grateful of this timely salvation.

Further on, to my utter amazement,
my sight was blinded by a radiant light.
I saw a beaming vision
of the glorious golden Maitreya Buddha,
looking at me with a tranquil smile,
sitting on heavenly music,
surrounded by a thousand more Buddhas
bathing in glistening light.
It was a sacred wonder!

What does this mean?
What are the gods saying to me?
Could it be that they are trying to send me a message through the vision?
So I knelt on the spot and made a vow

to the gods and I set to work
upon the sandy mountains and the porous caves
to recreate the vision sent to me.

I started hammering and chiselling the sandstone cliffs,
Carving, moulding, painting,
Constructing and adorning,
Until I saw before me my vision carved in a grotto.

Without noticing, a big community grew in this place.
It became a refuge for pilgrims, scholars and sojourners.
And this place I met the gods
gradually became a treasure trove
of Buddhist art, sculptures and murals.

This is my story, my life –
a life touched and used by the gods,
who gave me an earthly glimpse into otherworldly realms.
Now in my old age,
I am ready to greet my end with peace
and travel to where the gods and I would once again meet.

Poetry

Group 3

The Ballerina and Her Trophy Dream of Mogao Dance

ESF King George V School, Wu, Kasper - 12

The ashes of burning dunes portrays the beauty
Of history, for a thousand cattles, million stories
Too close to the fame
Withstanding all climate and time - Dunhuang.

The stress of pointe shoes compresses the strong passion
In life, for a thousand pretties, one dance trophy
Too far to the dream
Dream my peerless practice on the Silk Road.

In the Endless Sea by ships of desert, long and slow
Pacing pace to follow my Polaris to the dance recital of Mogao
The lengthening tulle remarks no short-cut for a go, waiting a go
Since the little tutu ever desired to reach for the stars, a long time ago.

I walk by the emerald crescent, bearing new blisters, and old
Sinking sand noshes my every steps, a tug-of-war, tired never told
Not easy I win the chiffon of moony night, wait for the breezes' call
Reward my bony ankles with caress and champion's dream of all.

Slits of flash dazzle my drowsy eyes to open
Emancipated mural souls, springing alive in heaven
And said, "Get up to the stage, no time to wait
For your choreographing the Gateway of the grottoes, today."

"Shall we dance? Shall we fly? Shall I borrow your feather wands?"
I gaze at the Apsaras before me, waiting for her promise
She coaches me the right time to grab, grab tight
The softest scarfs and take off together
To the farthest of no name.

In a blink of an eye-

Elegantly I bend back on the rainbows
To see perfect inverted beehives of faith, who
Carved into cliffs on very still water, a dancing mirror
Reflects my faith in dance, as you teach
Only with sincere love can I really learn well.

Continuously I swift my leg high to my wrist, with your lift
 To touch pinches of windswept rocks, pains drift
 Across debris of the Great Walls, a recollection's call
 For chronicling things that were not all roses, as you tell
 Only with gratitude can I really manifest a life staging journal.

I learned your silken calligraphic note, a bolt from the blue
 Is a farewell to the Sleeping Buddha in a pyramidal tomb and you?
 "Cheer up for every fall," my dearest coach wrote,
 "The smouldering incense end is calmness, if, you think through."
 Only with intelligence can I really beat jitters in my shoes.

And after I sit on the nine-story grotto
 The first sunray strikes on a faded face, illuminates
 The blessing to caravanserais along the Silk
 So clever am I, rolling up light beams into rhythmic sparklers
 Turning silence into stage cheers.

A zither and a pipa narrate my sentiment overflown, oh dear
 A dowry for homesick princesses, or a souvenir to Northwest from tears?
 Rattling grief and joy in waves, far from my hometown
 How close to the trophy?
 I have to give the zither to a couple, a dragon and a phoenix
 In exchange for a pair of lucky candles to warm up
 The backstage for Princess Pipa.

The backstage with four book walls, altered from an antique library
 Squeaks on the centipede ladders there introduce me old visitors, stealing scholars
 Should I cogitate to mix their old footsteps to match my new choreo
 Add an overture of rebirth from plunder?
 "Sure you can." the couple assured
 Reminiscing Mommy's whispers since I was a toddler.

I make a deer and a lotus embroidery with my fingers
 The dragon teaches, I stitch
 I wave an arc through the fragments of plundering with my wrist
 The phoenix shows, I sew
 A blessing in disguise, unfolding the world the treasures of millennia.

In a blink of an eye-

No time to wait, it is the sand of time, my show time
 Nine-coloured deer furred my shoulder straps
 Five-coloured clouds underpinned my flutter fluffy fringes
 The alchemist of dance am I?
 Even thousands of gods will gaze and never look away... on me.

I flick my legs to patter pipa's angry-looting notes
 Hear my arm gliding over the heart-striking strings
 Plucking behind my back, lean my back, hold your breath
 I am beaming with pride, percussing the legend of Rebound
 My jumps are larger and smaller pearls falling...on a jade plate.

Slowly my elbows draw enduring twirls, to salute
 The glories and sorrows in Thousand Buddha Caves
 Brushing the sand dust with my grand split leap, to dilute
 The grief in grains of ignited bloody ruby
 In the memorial of dynastic changes and interregnum days.

No time to wait, it is the sand of time, my show time
 I absorb the energy on the stage, mesmerize the front
 Revitalizing all the flying Apsaras riddles alive
 I am a poetry in motion, the visible ballad in your eyes.

I
 Close
 My eyes
 Hear my heart
 Focus on the silence
 Foot forward. Back straight
 Head lowered, my last curtsy, to all.
 A square of golden light falling from overhead
 Head raised I clasp an imaginary Pipa in both hand
 My signature to the world's curtain call.
 Downstage.
 Bursting into applause and a standing ovation
 The trophy of mine reflects the cinematic glitters of Mogao
 Coming true in my eyes and yours.

Mogao Grottoes

Shanghai American School - Pudong, Wei, Joy - 14

*Life is a candle, time is the glimmering embers,
our existence gradually burns away,
time cannot be fought against or reversed,
but we can travel along its passing.*

In the naïve conscience of my diminished youth,
I dreamed of living forever,
exceeding life,
escaping the demise that awaited every soul.

Upon the crossroads of Dunhuang my childhood flourished,
blooming in a golden age;
my roots lay in Mogao,
guarded by the endless desert,
drenched by the blistering sun;
perched upon the sand, the Silk Roads stretched far,
twin pathways of the East and West,
the oasis of commerce and intrigue,
where difference mingled, merchants hawked their wares;
livelihood brought by trade and travel,
fought the monotony of the dunes.

Amongst the architecture, the Grottoes of Mogao loomed tall,
its rocky hills steep and resolute,
etched and carved from the cliffs,
its eastward cave faces greeted the sun.

Hums of chanting,
tolling of sacred bells,
prayers and incense rose to the heavens,
belief and religion swelled.

My house sat on wheels, accompanied by herds of cattle,
we ate meat and drank milk, we bartered for fruit,
we wore straw sandals,
dressed in garments of woven hemp and cotton.

My father was a wise merchant,
I gaze wonderingly at father as he exchanged elegant boxes of gleaming porcelain,
his gentle brow furrowed, carving deep crevasses across his forehead,

his nod of approval,
signaled agreements made, deals sealed.

Mother was a skilled seamstress,
At night, I peeked over my covers,
as mother sat and wove handsome brocades,
the threads crossing and splitting, sorting and cutting;
her folklore filled my mind with great warriors, dragons, people grasping the reach of
immortality.

Xian.

Immortal life.
Mere mortals becoming eternal beings,
unbothered by war and bloodshed,
untouched by the elements,
they live an effortless existence,
separate of the bloodied world of mankind.

I imagined that life,
free,
unburdened,
impossible.

From that point on,
I wanted to win the race against the hours,
it was only a matter of time before my life goes out,
my candle snuffed.

I vow to defy that end,
I won't let the flame catch on,
I will always move forward,
I shall escape that destiny.

Time burns on.

I have grown old,
my view sharpened,
my gaze broadened,
my childhood playfulness gone.

I am dissatisfied,
ever desiring more to life,
for that nagging fear of demise,
like a beast of chasing from behind,
waiting glean my soul,
kept me scurrying forwards.

Lost in the tumult,
wandering on the busy streets of Mogao,
seeing people dancing, greeting, trading;
they lived unbothered, no trace of dread or worry,
merchants called,
sheep bleated,
horses pawed the dust,
craftsmen bent over copper, silver, gold,
tools dancing in metallic reflections,
the symphony of hammering and chatter.

Overwhelmed, I pace through the grottoes,
hoping to find clarity;
their numbers have grown,
from afar like anthills,
each grottoe yawned their openings.
I follow the trodden paths through the caves,
becoming lost,
encircled by this labyrinth.

Murals lay motionless,
they stretched across the ceiling,
stood on sandstone walls,
mingled with intricate carvings and delicate text;
They danced to the distant chanting,
Illuminated in the sunlight.
They depicted legends, deities, paradise
rich culture visualized by bright pigments of peacock green, deep aqua,
ruby red and warm amber,
adorned with gold and silver leaves.
Statues sat cross-legged, in serene meditation,
Feitian graced the skies, or amongst sumptuous palaces,
Buddha reclined upon daises, dressed in elaborate robes and grand headdresses.
Their sentient faces,
their air of reverence and neutrality,
rested in perpetual peace.

Time burns on.

I continue my race,
I followed the Silk Road on my own, westward,
journeying to foreign lands.
my old fears ever lingered,
driving my nomadic life forward.

Time burns on.

Decades have swung by,
carving crude canyons across my skin,
wrinkles and scars, scattering like constellations,
I have seen the world far and wide,
I need not travel further.

Tired, weary, bedraggled,
I lose the gaiety of laughter,
I forget the grandeur of youth,
I sink into contempt and cynicism,
wallowing in my own ennui,
doubting trust like a miser with hidden gold.

I can no longer move on.
I slowly lose race with the hour.

Time burns on.

Abandoning travel,
I trace the worn roads to my roots,
to those soaring sandstone cliffs,
and the deep caverns.

Time burns on.

Before the threshold of the Grottoes, I am again,
this time I gaze with clouded eyes,
balanced on creaky joints,
shaky hands grasping the walls.

The murals again greet me,
the painted gods and sacred text,
people swirling in an eternal dance;
their color hardly changed,
their faces clear and young.

I slump before their serene countenance,
hands frayed beyond recognition,
body landing into the incessant trickle of the hourglass,
my once fair frame contorted by the second;
I remember my wish,
so long ago,
that impossible dream to live forever,
now I reminisce in sorrow.

With one last effort,
 driven by no clear rationale,
 I write down my life on an empty cavern wall,
 painted in gilded characters.
 now, perhaps, I will live again,
 my story can stay within these Grottoes;
 turn into a myth, a folklore,
 I will remain in the memory of humankind,
 becoming part of that antiqued past,
 but in living consciousness I shall last.

Time burns on.

I lay there, near the dunes,
 buried beneath wisps of sand,
 the future clouded as my eyes dimmed,
 stillness encompassed my broken form,
 as a final thought drifted across my mind:
*If my wandering conscience had stayed,
 paused my stubbornness to notice the world around me,
 then, I could have beheld
 the true beauty of the present.*

Stop this useless struggle,
 I had lived in worry,
 but now, I find clarity
 I relent and let time burn on.

The candle neared its end,
 the wax trickling away,
 time, at last caught up,
 and I allow the flames to burn out.

Epilogue

Time, again, burns on,
 centuries drift past, carried upon its curling smoke;
 soft footsteps, echo upon deserted caverns,
 a new exploration takes place,
 daring to seek the pathways of Dunhuang's lost world.
 They hear the voices, the whispered songs,
 they read the gilded text whose bearer forgotten,
 but listen to the stories, his unfinished scroll,
 and envision that wandering boy, who lived long ago.

The Lonely Monk

St. Paul's Co-educational College, Mok, Si Kei - 14

I was born in a hidden grotto
 Tucked securely on the Mogao mountains
 But not long
 Everyone in the grotto died
 To be buried under dust
 So, I never had my childhood
 And I became its sole guardian

At first
 I was thrilled to have this mysterious cavern
 All to myself
 Being the childish boy I was
 I roamed the halls that echoed with age
 I traced paintings of the Buddha with a branch
 I flipped through the countless pages
 Suspended on shelves that were too high
 But
 As I grew taller with time
 I realised
 I was alone
 The Crescent Spring in the distance could not pacify me
 However clearly it sparkled
 The flowers that grew every spring could not fill my life with colour
 However colourful they grew to be
 The Mingsha Mountain was a giant I could not rely upon
 However steady it stayed
 I was alone
 And lonely

Often, I would roam the halls
 Just searching for an echo
 That signalled some holy presence
 I would sit in the centre of my room
 Where the echoes were the loudest
 And recite endless chants
 That fooled me into thinking I was not alone
 Although I was still lonely

On every sacred festival
 I was the only one there to glorify the gods
 On every early morning

I was the only one who saw the sunrise
 Each smile the sunbeams radiated
 I could not return
 And when winter came
 I was the only one who was cold
 And lonely

One day
 When I was already an old monk
 Three strangers entered my cave
 They were from a faraway land
 And called themselves a strange word
 It sounded like archangels
 Or maybe it was archaeologists
 Captivated by the beauty of my home
 They stayed and brought other company
 Soon life bustled

At first
 I was thrilled to see them
 Regardless of how they were strangers
 I took them around the place
 And told them the secrets the walls had to whisper
 But slowly
 The people grew
 Tourists started to come
 Photographers flocked in
 Lost in the middle of all this commotion
 I stared and thought
 “I’m not alone now
 But am I lonely?”

When I was on my deathbed
 I looked out the window
 And saw a tiny bird singing on a branch
 I smiled and faintly recited my favourite chant
 To hear echoes filling up my room
 The sun was rising
 Its rays flooding my eyes with light
 For the last time, I smiled
 And serenely drifted away
 For I understood
 With nature by my side
 I was never lonely

Footprints

Wellington College, Shanghai, Lin, Lola - 12

When she spoke, she spoke quietly.
 Lucid verses smothered by her dubious heartbeats that thud so loudly
 Her words never stumbling, each breath subtly inciting anticipation.

When she sang, she sang quietly.
 Her voice a sharpened knife that cut through the lulling atmosphere.
 The birds turned to stare, rapid flutters silenced by curiosity.

When she painted, she painted loud.
 Each stroke a breathless siren that flew off of the rocky walls of her property.
 Forming the words, the final wishes of a thousand voices.

She never took a moment to breathe or rest
 Under the burden of the mind of one desperate for expression
 Her voice never heard, this was her one call for freedom
 Dreams clouded by doubt as of her true identity
 Whether she was fit to be the muse she claimed
 Happiness fading, nightmares clouding
 Her dreams the prison that sent her crying
 Wisps of the future to come passing by
 But she never took them seriously.

Bad omens warned her
 Scattered across her imagination
 Running through her vivid mind
 The horrors that waded their way into the cracks

From then on, the terrors flocked
 Grabbing her and tearing away at the foundations that kept the place standing
 The masterpieces, which she had breathed soul and heart into.

Now I step through the same coven
 Through the gateway into the kingdom she once entertained
 With her fine arts and graces

Walls splashed with peeling paints
 Once shining and vibrant with eons of color
 And no rubbing can remove the dullness in their eyes
 The dullness which her influence has left behind

All that remains are the marks made on the stretched canvas
Carven engravings that grow like wisteria rose across the covenant
So far away from the misery

Her story left untold
Hidden between the lines
Left to search for blindly
Or, as they sometimes call it
Follow in the muse's

Footprints.

Poetry

Group 4



To: Whomever Seeking an Adventure

Heep Yunn School, Fong, Hoi Ching - 17

to: whomever seeking an adventure
re: a yearning so soft
and a longing so tender
to find existence in a dream
in an oasis we long to see

the first step entails
a history so sweepingly
sensuous, a fascination spanning
across a century of
fulfillment and
wonder

legend tells its tale where
from a buddhist to another
the cave filled
with spectaculars of art and
sensational sculptures
so that the eye would feel
awe in the behelded
beauty of the sorcery
of the creation

a second step reveals
the exaltation of mankind
as the scene unravels a breath
of heavenly paintings that
coat the ceilings and
walls

and in thine eyes shine the striking
imagery of buddhas
and bodhisattvas
and fairies
in such presence
would thee not exclaim at the
solemnity of the Buddha
grand as the terrors of Hell
for the wicked?

Would thee who,
in search of an adventure,
not excite at the glories of
the blissful backdrop
where marvel and
miracles lie?

the next few steps unveil
the picturesque portrayal of the
essence of life and the beauty of
living – springing to action from the
literature, murals and art,
the tales of hunters, the flair
of dolled ladies, the movements of
stars, the competition between
philosophers
so that the heart would fill
in content, in gladness at
the sight of the
prosperity of
life

but beyond the brilliant beauty lies
in a once popular marketplace
a traveler's stop, a religious shrine
a place of pilgrimage
a sanctuary of the saint and the sacred
would thee not bow in reverence to
the majesty of the magic these caves carry?
would thee who
in search of an adventure
not dance in wonderment of
the divinity of the scenery?

the last few steps mark the
end of the journey
of an adventure where wonders took flight
exiting the enchantment of
murals, textiles, art, literature and
ancient documents
one simply has not time
enough to appreciate the devoutness of the place
and disappointed one must feel at departure
drowsy and dreary
but the body remembers –

as one takes their final step
the indescribable saccharine sensations of sanctity
swim through our veins
and this is where
we come to comprehend:
in our hearts, the legend lives on.

Poem by a Paper

St. Paul's Convent School, Li, Cheuk Tung Elena - 16

Born from the corpse of another,
I awoke from the tickling
Of the tip of a pen
And the trailing of ink.

The mumbling mantras,
The placid pacing,
The tintinnabulation,
Were the lullabies of my youth.

I lived in peace,
With my siblings,
The paintings on the walls,
The sculptures' blank stares.

Until one day,
Pacing turned into rumbling,
Mumbles roared about the Karakhanids,
Panic replaced the placidness.

Jostled and juggled,
Shoved into a cave,
A slam boomed
And my stomach fell.

Darkness was all I saw.
Whispers of my friends were all I heard.
Nights turned into days,
Days turned into nights.

The Vajrapani Painting,
The Nestorian painting of Jesus Christ,
And hoards of manuscripts
Accompanied me through these silent days.

A musty smell choked me awake.
A glow seeped into the cracks of the entryway.
Brown curious eyes peeked in
And we were found.

He slinked into the cave,
 Ferociously driving the darkness away.
 Rustling of papers echoed
 As he scoured around.

He came and left,
 Came and left,
 Until one day,
 He left and never came back.

The cave was sealed back up
 And we returned to slumber.
 But not for long,
 As many came to plunder.

There were the White Russians,
 The American Langdon Warner,
 And the Kuomintang soldiers,
 Who wrecked the place.

My brothers and sisters were carted off,
 Some were missing a piece,
 Others were trashed.
 But I could only watch through my tears.

While we mourned our lost friends and family,
 A kind man appeared.
 He only stayed for a while,
 But did more than the first had.

The murals were painted a better shade.
 Cracks were filled.
 The man would grin.
 Everyone looked almost new.

Now, I remain in the same cave
 That humans call 17.
 Peace and quiet were long gone.
 Oohs and Aahs took their place.

Every now and then,
 I would be woken by a flash,
 Or the screams of children,
 Or the shouts of tourists.

I shook myself lightly,
 Allowing 'fresh' air ripple through my body.
 My yellowed sheets crackled,
 And I wince in fear.

Though I am not pleased
 That my home has turned into a pen,
 I can do nothing,
 For I am but a measly scripture.

Poetry

Group 5

Of Secrets Kept

American International School, Chaudhuri, Aishani - 17

A stone skitters, loosed by the wind,
lonely;
with no one to hear it, does it make a sound?
Many say it doesn't, and some
say it wasn't ever anything at all.

A space is carved out of rock, a
haven
forced out of unforgiving sandstone;
but the threshold remains uncrossed for centuries—
who does it protect, if it ever did?

A brush sweeps across stone,
crimson,
the colour of stories to tell, lives to record,
but red is not red in the darkness, absent light.
Was there ever a hand there?

A book is filled, carefully inked-in
wisdom
gathered over the years— reaching across time
to guide those that come after,
but what if it stays unread?

A husband climbs too high for favourite
flowers,
forever immortalised in art as he
wasn't in flesh, if he ever was flesh—
but what of his love?

Love was carved into these walls centuries
ago,
shaped into poetry and paintings lost to time.
What happened to the love in its forgetting?
Was it there, once, without anyone to remember?

Perhaps ghosts wove through grottoes they had
haunted

when alive; perhaps they loved the love
they had left behind in these spaces when
there was no one else to love it, and that was enough.

we love, and perhaps that is enough.

Wandering War Soldier

Po Leung Kuk Choi Kai Yau School, Lam, Haidee - 17

A soldier trudges along the desert
Wandering, lonely, guilty.
He is young, with no home, no country to return to
Not after the blood that stains his armor crimson
Drying to rust.

A robed figure in the distance.
“Where are you going?” He questions.
His face is weathered with blemishes
And his eyes crinkle with reminiscence.

“I am—”

The battle cries, the war horn-
Blood glistening as he avenges the slain
With his sheathing sword; hissing in pain
Adrenaline overpowers his mourning.
The thrill of savagery overrides his guilt.

“I have nowhere to go,” the soldier murmurs.
Nowhere to live, nowhere to run.
“The desert seems most fitting for a man
who has committed
unspeakable sins.”

The monk studies the soldier closely.
“You have suffered,” he says.
“Come.” He gestures.
“Buddha awaits.”

If you walk 15 miles away from Dunhuang,
Across the mirage of deserts-
You will find
A haven.
A place of recuperation, of forgiveness,
Of enlightenment.

The History of light

Po Leung Kuk Choi Kai Yau School, Tsai, Solomon - 16

It's so different from before,
how so?

So different
from the monks' zen
while reciting the Diamond Sutra,
twirling their prayer beads.

It's so different from before,
from when it started, and when it flourished—
and from how the color ebbed
while a monk painted his religion's histories.

It was a tranquil oasis on the south of Dunhuang:
Trees that rose from the ground,
flowers that bloomed at the twigs.
Under the brilliance of the sun

lay a lonely hill—
and the monk's lonely journey to the west
was different from anybody else's.
Here is the monk's testimony.

What happened, then?

*I was bearing my baggage,
I was running out of water,*

*the journey had no end—
until ten thousand rays of light*

*coming from every side,
layering, scattering...*

*I closed my eyes for a second
only wanting to open them again.*

*I took it as a sign
and I started to dig—*

*whistling breeze blowing at my sleeves.
It will be the best place to meditate.*

How is it, now?

A little fish splashed in the stream,
a light ray
peeked through.
casting itself on the tall, wide walls:

the deities flying, soaring high,
towards the sunlit sky,
the plucking, gliding notes from the pipa ensemble.
A painter finished with a wide smile, because

he's done it, one of so many thousands.
What did time do to them?
Paint fades into specks of
mirages.

What was sat by monks
are now sat by spider webs.
So much for that light ray, lonely and late—
Nothing is the same.

Is it a sign that it is destined to vanish away?
How shall it wait
for its former glory and peace
again?

Poetry

Group 6

Mogao Caves

Korean International School Springboard, Chen, Ue - 13

Reaching up to the sky
Opening a gate to a temple
Close to Dunhuang in China
Kenneth worships the Buddha in a cave
Young men like him are all impressed

Mogao Caves

Korean International School Springboard, Choi, Mattea Abbey - 13

Caves of the holy carved mountains.
History says it shone because of the golden light.
Ideas came from the legend of the Silk Road.
Nothing but sand rocks and the strong wind.
The name of Dunhuang's temple is Mogao Grottoes.

3 Mice

Korean International School Springboard, Chu, Ka Lok - 11

Three mice went in a temple.
One stepped on a staple;
One went in the cave;
One was not so brave.
I gave each an apple
Oh no! It got trampled!

Mogao Caves

Korean International School Springboard, Ryan, Efon Angela - 13

Go to a Silk Road town called Dunhuang
I see a big Buddha from afar
Northwest of China is his home
Originated in India
Rocky mountain hides his temple
Much like a cave for the bears
'Oh, wow!' is all I can say
Utterly amazing it is
Shining through the whole wide world

Mogao Cave

Korean International School Springboard, Wong, Euan - 11

Wow!

Be
Big
Bold
Brave
Buddha.
Temple
Toilet?
Tissue?
Toys?
No!

Poetry

Group 7

Mogao Caves

Korean International School Springboard, Chau, Kirsten Hannah - 18

Mogao caves are in Dunhuang China.
Old statues are delicate.
Gigantic grottoes.
Amazing temples are tall.
Original paintings are colorful.

Chinese culture everywhere.
Angry statues are very scary.
Very pretty sculptures.
Exciting place to visit.
Stories to be told.

Mogao Caves

Korean International School Springboard, Ching, Jonathan Liam - 16

Tales from the Mogao Grottoes
Friends of the sea
In the water very damp
Sidney looks bright
Hot like the summer story

Mogao Caves

Korean International School Springboard, Ching, Matthew James - 20

Mysterious caves in western China.
Original history can be found there.
Geographic landscapes filled with hills and mountains.
Amazing statues that are huge and plenty.
Old temples are grand and interesting.

Creative pictures on the ceiling.
Awesome museums, lots of sculptures and different stories.
Vacation in Dunhuang.
Everyone can go visit.
Special place to go.

Ancient Mogao Caves

Korean International School Springboard, Kwan, Jordan - 15

A - A lot of people gather together inside to worship Buddha.
N- Nice view outside the grotto.
C- Centre of attraction is a different old painting.
I- Inside you can see different Buddha sculptures.
E- Elevated structure from the desert.
N- Nice architectural design that lasted many years.
T- To those people who visited the Mogao Grottoes, they experienced peace of mind within.

Mogao Caves

Korean International School Springboard, Leung, Chun Yin, Darren - 14

Dunhuang is the place to go
If you want to visit a big Buddha
Very dry weather keeps him well
Inside a cave is his temple
Northwest of China in Asia
Excellent place to visit indeed

Mogao Caves

Korean International School Springboard, Lin, Adrian - 16

Valued for its history.
Impeccable carvings of caves.
Standing still for many years.
Introduced by a monk named Yuezun.
Overflowing with prayers.
Narrated through hundreds of years.

Mogao Caves

Korean International School Springboard, Lowther, Jessica Kate – 15

Place of prayer
Range of thousands of paintings
Ancient tradition kept alive
You can find a divine culture
Everyone goes there to see the famous Buddhist art
Rocky mountain is where the temple was built

Mogao Caves

Korean International School Springboard, Mak, Arthur - 19

Magnificent caves
Origins
Golden age
Awesome
Omega

Cool
Amazing
Vitality
Elegant
Secrets

Mogao Caves

Korean International School Springboard, So, Yan Tung - 16

Mountains are where people pray
On hot burning sand
Nobody live in the desert
Kind souls deep in the caves
Special secrets of Buddha

Mogao Caves

Korean International School Springboard, Tang, Sze Chai Adrienne - 17

Thousands of monks
Enter the open caves
Magnificent culture
Projected from an image of Buddha
Located in ancient land Dunhuang
Exhibition of a great history