



# Non-Fiction

Group 1

# The Mogao Grottos – got us wondering!

*Canadian International School of Hong Kong, Daga, Ishana – 8*

The Mogao Grottos in western China has existed for over 1650 years! It is of great cultural and historical significance, and as such it is recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Over 2 million people visit the Grottos and its marvellous caves every year. The visitors are left with their mouths open, larger than the cave entrances, in awe, as they journey through the past. But why do they go there? What makes it so interesting? Let's see!

Mogao means peerless as it really is, because it is home to the largest, most intricate and the most breath-taking amount of Buddhist artwork ever created [and maybe even more waiting to be discovered!!!]. The Mogao Grottos took a thousand years to build. That may seem like a very long time, but it took that long because there are 735 caves containing more than 2000 coloured sculptures and 45 thousand meters of frescoes. Now let's visit my personal favourite part of the Grottos. The Library Cave. The Library Cave holds nearly 50,000 ancient manuscripts dating from the early 1000 A.D. Even super cool things like the Diamond Sutra, the world's first printed book was found there!!

Imagine how it would be like, if all the smartest people put their heads together and discuss their ideas. That is what happened in the Mogao grottos thousands of years ago. Unfortunately, visitors can only view 110 of the caves, but that's good enough.

But how were the caves created? A long time ago, around the 4th century AD people from all over the world started to make magnificent things in the many caves. Ever so sadly, in the 1400s, people forgot about it, and they stopped going there. It became a legend, about which people had only heard about. But not for very long! In the 1890s, a monk called Wang Yuanlu rediscovered it. Yay! Three cheers for Wang Yuanlu! He helped the world see one of the greatest creations of mankind, which would have otherwise been lost forever. Luckily the dry desert climate kept the Grottos safe.

I hope that we can preserve ancient and wonderful works of art like the Grottos because they help us take a glimpse into the past, and as they say, studying the past is the best way to create a better future. Would you like to visit the Mogao Grottos? I would! I bet that it will be fun!!

## New Tales from The Mogao Grottoes

*Canadian International School of Hong Kong, Ip, Everett – 7*

The mogao grottos is also called the thousand buddha cave is in the Gansu Province, China. The cave was built on a cliff side. The monks started building it from 366 AD for 1000 years, and it was forgotten over the years then was restored.

The mogao grottoes was for Buddhist activities, such as meditating and worship. It is in the south side, it was for Buddhist art, but the paint on the art rusted off and over the years people took the sculptures and art or damaged them.

There are 735 caves there. The caves are close to two kilometres long. Inside the caves were a lot of sculptures and art. In the northern side 248 caves are currently found there. They are for meditation, the monks live there. In the southern side 487 caves are there.

The two biggest sculptures both are Mairaya Buddhas. The biggest one is 35.5m tall. It is in cave 96. The smallest cave 96. The smallest Buddha is 10cm tall only.

# Mogao Grottoes

*Canadian International School of Hong Kong, Li, Noah – 7*

Mogao Grottoes is on the silk road and it's where lots of countries connect like Europe, Italy, and so on. Mogao Grottoes has lots and lots of caves. It has 492 caves or more. It is built there because lots of people travel there to go to the west. It is very old, and it is built over 1000 years ago! It has lots of sculpture, paintings on walls, models, patterns, and much more cool stuff like that. Other countries have sculpture and drawings like that too, but there are not in caves, and there is also not as many paintings, sculpture, and models as Mogao Grottoes.

In Mogao Grottoes, there are lots of different kinds of caves. Some are small, some have two rooms, some have a tower in the middle of the cave, and lots of caves like that. Mogao Grottoes is named like that because Mogao means sandy, and Grottoes means caves.

If you want to know how people make sculpture in Mogao Grottoes, here is how they make it: for small sculpture, smaller than a person, they use wood to kind of make the shape of the sculpture, then use thin dust to cover the hole piece of wood and paint the detail on the dust with a brush. For sculpture that are medium size, as the same big as a grown-up person, they use a wooden piece to be the base, and sticks and branches to make a little sculpture, then, they use some straw to fill in the gaps and to cover the stick and branches. After, they use thick dust to cover the straw. Last, they use thin dust to cover the thick dust, and then they use a brush to draw the details. For huge size sculpture, the workers already thought that there's going to be a big sculpture here, so when they dug up the cave, on piece of wall was the shape of the sculpture, and then they covered it with thick and thin dust and detailed it with a brush.

The most thing that impresses me in Mogao Grottoes is the colour because Mogao Grottoes is very old and I didn't know really about Mogao Grottoes, and I thought that there was only the colour of the dust in the drawings and sculpture. I am also surprised that the drawings and not just about Buddha. It's also about daily life, and life not just in Buddha, but about India, middle east, and even Europe! I want to go there, but right now there's covid, so I guess no.

# New Tales from The Mogao Grottoes

*Canadian International School of Hong Kong, Xu, Blair – 7*

The Mogao Grottoes are a series of caves near Dunhuang in northwest China, which was located on the ancient Silk Road near the Gobi Desert. Hundreds of caves in Mogao contained treasures of Buddhist arts, mostly in the form of wall paintings and sculptures. The Mogao Grottoes had over one thousand years of history, spanning throughout several dynasties that ruled ancient China.

The art works of the Mogao Grottoes showed us what people living one thousand years ago believed and valued. One example is Cave 257. It has seven murals illustrating the tale of the nine-coloured deer. In the story, the nine-coloured deer rescued a drowning man but was later betrayed by him when the queen wanted to kill the deer for its fur. The deer later convinced the King, and the man met his well-deserved fate. The painters used contrasting colours of black, earth red, green, and turquoise to depict different characters and used white to express the inner world of the deer. The key message brought about by the murals was that good deeds bring blessing and evil deeds result in punishment.

Two years ago, I watched the Chinese animation movie made in 1980s about the Nine-Coloured Deer. I was very impressed by the mural-style mythological figures and the decorative colour schemes in it. When doing research for this article, I learned that, to make that animation movie, the animation makers went to the Mogao Grottoes and stayed in Cave 257 for 23 days straight. The animation makers had to hand copy all the characters and the backgrounds as photo-taking was not allowed. At the end of the 23 days, they made thousands of sketches that filled five large sketch books. The animation became a huge success, and most of the children in China watched and enjoyed it.

Cave 17, also known as the "Library Cave", is another fascinating example of the importance of the Mogao Grottoes. It was almost a miracle that Cave 17 was discovered in the first place by a Taoist monk because its entrance was hidden by a wall painting. Its existence was hence not known for centuries. Cave 17 was filled with manuscripts, paintings, textiles, and other documents from various dynasties. A lot about what life was like in China and about traveling on the Silk Road one thousand years ago was learned by studying the art works discovered. Today the manuscripts from Cave 17 are on display in museums and being studied by people around the world.

Why does the Mogao Grottoes matter? Everybody may have a different angle and my answer is, a passage to history. It feels amazing that we can see and feel the beauty created by artists one thousand years ago, and the values shared by people living then still receive echoes from us. Hope I can go to see the Mogao Grottoes with my own eyes the first thing after COVID is gone.

# Tales from the Mogao Grottoes

*Discovery Mind Primary School, Wright, Daniel – 8*

The story that I am about to tell you is about my journey in discovering the Mogao Grottoes. I come from the town near the edge of the Gobi Desert, where we were paving the path to the caves by hand. The sizes of the caves are varied with the big ones looking robust, while the small icons are exquisite and delicate. The art is so profound and imagination so rich that I was tongue-tied when I first saw them.

During this time, I found the world's largest collection of Buddhist art. I noticed the cave walls were decorated and so were the ceilings with elaborate paintings showing stories of Buddha. The most amazing one of all was the 100 foot tall sculpture, which was the largest.

I found this exciting because it was a melting pot of cultures even though it was a Buddhist site. Art and objects found at Mogao reflect the meeting of different countries along the Silk Road. One of the maps I read told me that China, Central Asia and Europe were trade routes. I saw many manuscripts written in many languages such as Chinese, Sanskrit, Tibetan, ancient Turkish and even Hebrew.

I heard that a Daoist monk named Wang Yuan Lu looked after the caves and he discovered a great collection of documents in history. I was so intrigued. I wanted to know more about the library cave and heard that ancient documents, silk banners and embroidery were found there. The fresco-contents were quite rich, most of them connecting with Buddhism, for example, the life story of Sakyamuni and his good deeds to others by sacrificing what was of his own. The other special thing about the library cave were pictures of life and Medieval China, medical texts, dictionaries, descriptions of music, dance and games.

The best part of my trip to the caves was finding the Diamond Sutra, which was the world's earliest printed book. The date it was printed was 868. The book was printed onto strips of paper and then pasted together to form a scroll!

During my walk around the caves, I could feel a sense of enlightenment. I knew at that moment that Buddha himself must have meditated in the caves before he attained Nirvana. The Mogao caves are the largest caves and it is good to see people coming together to preserve the caves for the future. Though they've been exposed to weathering winds and sandstorms for over a thousand years, the colours of the murals are still bright with clear curved lines. The Mogao caves can teach us so much about art and the creativeness of the artists in Ancient China.

I would definitely recommend going to the Mogao Grottoes and having a look at it yourself. I hope you discover the beauty of ancient China in the caves just as I did.

# The Forgotten Caves

*Li Sing Tai Hang School, Manglicmot, Mark Kristopher – 8*

Caves...what's the first thing that comes to your mind about caves? Big boulders of rocks, pebbles or a bat hanging on darkness of the caves...mmm...I bet you didn't think of hundreds of paintings, murals, sculptures and Buddha, let us explore the history of the Mogao Caves.

One evening in 366 A.D. when a Buddhist monk named Yuezun was making the long journey to Western Paradise, he was stopped by a mountain near Dunhuang and rested there. Suddenly, the mountain began to glow and so a thousand Buddha were blazing on a cliff. The monk decided to stay and learn painting and sculptures and this also inspired him to build a cave.

Years later, a second monk named Fanliang joined him to build and filled a second cave with paintings and statues. It became a pilgrimage site for Buddhist and many others. Buddhist monks collect sculptures and many pilgrims passing the caves are painted murals inside the cave. Many of the caves was constructed by the members of the ruling family of Northern Wei and Northern Zhou. It builds for the monks to prepare themselves according to their religious beliefs and a place for meditation.

Centuries later, the Mogao caves were forgotten and some of the caves have been blocked by sand and a monk named Wang Yuanlu discovered the hidden library cave which you can find the world's oldest book called the Diamond Sutra and there are nearly 50,000 manuscripts.

Wow! The history of the Mogao Caves is so amazing and fascinating. I feel like if I was reading a great discovery of history, I was surprised how they built the caves not only one, but hundreds and a thousand Buddha's paintings, murals and sculptures. It's like living in a magical world.

Today, the Mogao Caves are the world's heritage site. It was forgotten for many years, but because of its uniqueness, it remains remarkably well preserved. With 492 well preserved Mogao Caves with artworks, this breathtaking hidden treasure was the most protected sites and was put under the protection of National Law. And Mogao Caves mean 'Peerless Caves' and one Buddha statue is over 30 metres tall and the caves contain the world's largest Buddha collection. For over many years, many archaeologists study on what ways to preserve the Mogao Caves temples for the future.

New technologies use 3-D scanning to share data to other people around the world. Experts use advanced technologies to provide wider access to the world's famous ancient murals. Many tourists are enjoying the views of the Mogao Caves. Mogao caves can also teach you a lesson, it teaches you that the more hard work you put into something, the more you can achieve your goal.

This hidden treasure was once forgotten, but it's still recognized in its true form by some and is still as important as before.

# New Tales from the Mogao Grottoes

*Po Leung Kuk Choi Kai Yau School, Tse, Yui Hang Makis – 9*

Long, long ago, according to legend, a monk (a religious man) named Yuezun had a vision of a thousand luminous Buddhas on a cliff face in Mogao, which inspired him to begin exploring the caves.

All together there are 735 caves and about 492 with artwork and sculptures. There are about 45,000 square meters of murals (an artwork drawn on a wall), more than 2,000 painted clay figures and five wooden structures. The sculptures are created during Northern Liang (A.D. 397–439), Northern Wei (A.D. 386–534), Western Wei (A.D. 535–556), Northern Zhou (A.D. 557–581), Sui (A.D. 581–618), Tang (A.D. 618–906), Five Dynasties (A.D. 907–960), Song (A.D. 960–1279), Western Xia (A.D. 1038–1227) and Yuan (A.D. 1279–1368) Dynasties. Most of the sculptures were created by the Five Dynasties period. By that time the people had run out of space and could not make any more grottoes. But still, there are a lot of grottoes.

Mogao Caves were occupied by Buddhist monks from the end of the 19th century up to 1930. In 1900, the priest Wang Yuanku discovered the famous Hidden Library, a trove of 50,000 documents, including the Diamond Sutra, the world's oldest book. But in 1907, the British–Hungarian archaeologist Sir Aurel Stein paid Wang four silver pieces and took thousands of manuscripts, silk scroll paintings and wood slips, and the Diamond Sutra out of China. These are now housed in the British Museum, the British Library and the National Museum in New Delhi.

The grottoes contain Buddha and Bodhisattva statues and lots of paintings, such as paradise, asparas (angels), religious scenes, et cetera. Did you know that the oldest cave dates back to the 4<sup>th</sup> century?

The largest cave is very tall. It is 130 feet (3,962.4 cm) high! It contains a 100-foot (3,048 cm) tall Buddha statue installed during the Tang Dynasty (A.D. 618–906). Lots of caves are so tiny that they can only accommodate very little people at a time. The smallest cave is only 1 foot tall (30.48 cm)!

Carved out between the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, the grottoes have survived the ravages of war, pillage, nature and neglect.

It is such a miracle for these caves to have survived for such a long time!

# Treasures of the Mogao Grottoes

*Regents Primary School of Shenzhen, Guo, Xinmiao – 9*

Magnificent art treasures are filling the famed Mogao Grottoes, among the ancient and consummate creations in China carved in the Mongolian conquest. The grottoes show an uninterpreted history of Chinese painting over nearly a thousand years.

The Mogao Grottoes, popularly known as the Thousand Buddhas Caves, were built on the eastern cliff of Mingsha Mountain, 25 kilometers to the southeast of Dun Huang city. In 366 A.D. a monk named Yunezun had a vision of the Buddhas over the Sanwei Mountain opposite the cliff of the Mingsha Mountain, so the devout believer set out to build the first caves into the cliff. Afterwards more and more caves were excavated over a thousand years. The Grottoes are the largest globally and are the best preserved treasure – house of Buddhist art, housing 492 caves, 45,000 square meters of murals, and about 3,000 painted statues.

# New Tales of the Mogao Grottoes

*Regents Primary School of Shenzhen, Liu, Xinyuan – 9*

I have never seen the Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes before, so it's very mysterious in my mind. I researched the information through the internet.

The grottoes in the Mogao Caves are the world's largest and oldest treasure house of Buddhist art. The Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes, also known as the One-Thousand-Buddha Grottoes, are located on the eastern, rocky side of Singing Sand Mountain, near Dunhuang City Gansu Province. According to historical records, their carving was started in 366 AD and continued for about 1,000 years.

In 1900, a total of 4,500 valuable cultural relics dating from 256 AD to 1002 AD were found in the Buddhist Sutra Cave, including silk paintings, embroidery, and documents in rare languages such as ancient Tibetan and Sanskrit. This is regarded as one of the world's most significant oriental cultural discoveries.

About 50,000 cultural relics were found in a sanctum sealed behind the northern wall of Grotto No. 16. These articles included Buddhist sutras, documents, embroidery works, and paintings from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> centuries.



# The Mogao Grottoes

*Shanghai Singapore International School, Krishna, Rohan – 8*

The Mogao Caves, or the Thousand Buddha Grottoes, situated in the east of Dunhuang—China are known for their figures and divider canvases, seething 1000 years of Buddhist craftsmanship by the Sui and Tang lines. The Mogao caves has turned into a position of love and a sacred spot for the general population.

From the fourth until the fourteenth century, the caves were developed by priests to fill in as holy places with assets from givers. The Mogao caves were locked in by the Buddhist priests from the end of the nineteenth century up to 1930. In 1900, the cleric Wang Yuanku founded the well-known Hidden Library, a treasure of 50,000 records including the Diamond Sutra – the world’s oldest book.

The fascinating elements inside the caverns of the Dunhuang are the improved caverns dividers and roofs adding up to near 500,000 square feet. They are covered with elaborate artworks portraying accounts of Buddha. The Buddhist sutras are representative of the cavern benefactors, and are decorated with plans and scenes of social and business life.

## The Guardians of the Mogao Caves

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

Once upon a time, there was a Chinese monk called Shao-long. Shao-long loved to create different artworks like paintings and sculpture. He also wrote many books to advocate Buddhism. He wanted to show the world his wonderful artworks therefore he decided to travel from China to the Western countries with his artworks and literature through the Silk Road.

Shao-long commenced his journey from the starting point of the Silk Road – Chang' an. He walked and walked then he arrived a desert in Dunhuang. As the desert was too large, Shao-long eventually got lost. He finished all his food and water and he felt so hungry and thirsty. He could not find the exit or place to rest so he finally fainted out. Suddenly, “someone” was licking Shao-long’s face. He woke up in a shock and he saw so many desert animals including camels, lizards, snakes and foxes were surrounding him. The foxes shake their heads to show him there were footprints on the desert. He followed the footprints and found an oasis! There were so much fish and fresh water for him to eat and drink. He felt so amazing and he strongly believed that there must be some spirits guarding this place.

After Shao-long recovered, he decided not to continue his journey to the Western countries. He wanted to discover this miracle desert so he started to visit around. He finally arrived a mysterious place called the Mogao Caves. To be thankful for the desert and animals saving him, he put all his paintings, sculptures and literature into the caves. Days by days, he kept designing more artworks to put inside the Mogao caves. He also encouraged more people to visit the desert and contributed in the decoration of the decoration of the caves.

One day, a group of robbers came to the Mogao Caves. They wanted to steal all the artworks and literature to sell so that they could have so much money. Shao-long and all the other artists were standing at the entrance of the Mogao Caves, holding their hands together to protect the caves. After a big fight, the robbers won as they had swords and knives. They stole all of the artworks and left. When they passed the desert, a horrible sandstorm suddenly appeared. There were strong wind and sand that they couldn't open their eyes. At the same time, all of the desert animals attacked the robbers. The sandstorm stopped, the robbers were covered by the sand and all died. Unbelievably, all the artworks and literature were lying on the surface of the sand and none of them had been damaged. Shao-long and the artists took back all the paintings and literature back to the Mogao caves. They were all surprised by the magical spirits protecting the desert and the caves.

Since then, Shao-long and many Chinese artists designed more and more beautiful artworks and literature for the caves to show their thankfulness to the guardians of the desert. The Mogao caves became a famous art gallery in China.

# In the Eye of the Beholder

*St. Paul's Co-educational College Primary School, Lee, Madeleine Sofia – 7*

Out in the edge of the desert in the farthest roads of north-western China lay a small town that stood in the crossroads of Eastern and Western Asia. It was the last stop where travellers would be able to find some shelter and refuge from the sand dunes that would go as far as the eye could see in every direction. This small town served as a physical and commercial crossroad, but more importantly was the portal through which Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and Buddhism would enter China.

A man of small stature, Wang Yuanlu, endured famine in his younger years and had also served as a soldier. He turned to Taoism as his life purpose to make sense of his suffering. He encountered the Mogao Grottoes in the middle of the desert that had been painted with a myriad of Buddhas and appointed himself as guardian to them. One day, while repairing the walls, he found a crack in a door that led to a secret chamber. Inside, were thousands of white cloth bags and in each bag were scrolls of manuscripts, fabrics, and silk flags. Having never been educated, Abbott Wang was unable to read the manuscripts; however, sensing their importance, he retrieved a few and sent them to local Chinese governors in an effort to raise money for his restoration work.

News of these manuscripts traveled word of mouth, and soon two explorers of European heritage made their way to Dunhuang to try and acquire these secret treasures. Frenchman, Paul Pelliot, befriended the Abbott and was given access to the secret chamber. For three weeks, Pelliot worked tirelessly and with breakneck speed. Crouched in the little hole in the wall, under the small flicker of a candle, he peered into thousands of scrolls. His fluency in Mongolian, Arabic, Persian, Tibetan, Sanskrit, and Chinese quickly came to use and as he had a photographic memory, he was able to comprehend the scrolls, categorize them in his mind, and pick the ones that had the greatest historical value. After much negotiation and haggling with Abbot Wang, Pelliot secured his lot of scrolls for 500 taels and traveled by horseback for two years to Peking before bringing them back to Paris to showcase them for the world to see.

In a moment in time, a poor local man survived the desert by selling what he beheld were illegible scrolls to facilitate his mission of serving his temple gods. An educated foreign man pursuing his passion of Asian language, culture, history, and art made the discovery of his lifetime seizing what he beheld were treasures beyond belief. These two men, in spite of pursuing their own self-interests, ended up contributing to humanity by preserving these treasures for the world to see.

## Mogao Grottoes – Embrace Different Cultures

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Cheung, Nga Ting Annette – 9*

My interest in the Mogao Grottoes, Dunhuang, acclaimed as an "Encyclopaedia of the Middle Ages", is induced by my love of "Journey to the West", the Chinese novel following the journey of the Buddhist monk, Tang Sanzang, and his entourage, to Dunhuang and how the monk and the Monkey King were painted in one of the caves! If one extract from one wall painting relates to the great Chinese classical novel, what about other breathtaking secrets?

The Mogao Grottoes are located in Dunhuang, Gansu Province, People's Republic of China. According to the International Council on Monuments and Sites of April 1987, the Mogao Grottoes comprise 492 cells, 200 Buddhist sculptures, and approximately 45,000 square meters of murals. They witness the civilisation of ancient China for more than 1,000 years from 366 A.D. for several dynasties, like the Tang, Song and Yuan Dynasties, as well as the transcontinental history and propagation of Buddhism in Asia. Trades, arts and communications were freely exchanged in this strategic area of the ancient Silk Road and Chinese, Tibetan, Hebrew and other manuscripts were found in this melting pot of cultures.

The Mogao Grottoes are justified in being on the World Heritage List of 1987 because they fulfil six of the ten World Heritage criteria. For example, they represent a masterpiece of human creative genius and a unique testimony to a civilization over a span of time. Amongst the brilliant works, I like the Dunhuang flying Apsaras, the symbol of Dunhuang murals, most. Their faces and artistic styles change over different periods to embrace the influences of

China, India, Greece, Tibet and Mongolia. These flying Apsaras can dance freely in the sky with ribbons. If they joined the Olympics rhythmic gymnastics competitions, they would surely win the gold medals!

If the Mogao Grottoes were not rediscovered in 1900, I would not feel the pulse of the ancient Oriental cultures and the adventures in "Journey to the West". However, since the opening of the Mogao Grottoes, the original internal ecology, including the murals, architecture, and painted sculptures, has deteriorated, discoloured, darkened or peeled off due to heat, carbon dioxide and humidity from excessive tourism. Its external ecological problems become more severe due to natural erosion from the encroaching Gobi Desert nearby and other natural disasters.

Luckily, besides restrictions on where visitors can enter and a recyclable water use method to relieve the ecological pressures, a three-dimensional "Digital Dunhuang" project capturing its heritage resources, at [www.e-dunhuang.com](http://www.e-dunhuang.com), has been developed by the Dunhuang Academy to help preserve and maintain the Grottoes by encouraging visitors to explore them online rather than in person.

The Mogao Grottoes' embracing of Buddhism and Chinese cultures, though different from those of other countries, touches and reminds me to understand any culture, religion or tradition, not only in an algebraic way through their symbols and scripts, but with a thorough understanding and respect of its origin, developments and interactions with various aspects of the world. Let's protect and treasure the Mogao Grottoes for our future generations!

# The Amazing and Magical Mogao Grottoes

*St. Stephen's College Preparatory School, Yeung, Karissa – 8*

The Mogao Grottoes of Dunhuang is located on the North West of China. It was on the Silk Road and was an international metropolis of the ancient China. The first grottoes were built in Tang and continued to be built until they were abandoned by the Ming Dynasty. The previously unknown grottoes were then sealed by drifting sand. They were accidentally discovered by a Taoist monk in about 1900. To study and maintain these treasures, he needed to get financial support. He sent letters to King of the Ching Dynasty but it was a messy era and he did not get any response. However, western explorers heard this news and flocked to the desert of Dunhuang. When they arrived, they were completely in awe of the discovery.

Grottoes, murals, coloured sculptures and Buddhist Scriptures are all over Mogao. Today, many tourists visit them and spend hours wandering around Mogao every day. The murals, or what can be called wall paintings, are unique to Mogao.

The books state that Duhuang spirit is devoted with peace and serenity. You could close your eyes, listen to Buddha and dive into the Buddhist world to inspire the people of today. Although I am a Catholic, I would believe people pray for a nice and peaceful world, bring joy and happiness around and let go all the worries.

Dunhuang is a big topic, I have read many articles found one of the most famous images in mural arts, the “Feitian”, the flying dancers. It’s like a goddess type of a thing. It looks like it was brought to China from other cultures but it then received like the clothing and the style from China culture.

The flying dancer images are laden with colourful and wonderful costumes with long beautiful ribbons that fly with swirling patterns from low to high and high to low. Many of the Feitian carried a Pipa on their back. Pipa is a Chinese traditional musical instrument with four strings. Just imagine the murals images coming alive, the dance would be so amazing.

Studies revealed that the painters must have observed a lot of dancing and drawn a lot of outlines before the paintings. The positions of the heads, necks, waists, hips and legs have all been carefully planned. They were sometimes far from reality but it was great in an artistic way. Professional dancers continued to analyse the Feitian and study their movements nowadays. They found the figures were so touching to them and filled with inspirations. They thought that the Feitian needed to be study further, the dance movement and posture were complex.

I wish I had a time machine to take a trip to Mogao Grottoes in the past.