

# Poetry

Group 2



# Mogao Grottoes Poem

*Canadian International School of Hong Kong, Kwok, Audrey – 10*

The Mogao Grottoes is a weird thing to say,  
Although it's a significant building,  
It still embraces the day.

Even if we didn't see it in person,  
It still reflects on the ocean.

You see,  
Even though you might not see it in person,  
Someday you will,  
When your life goes to heaven.

# A Journey Through Time into the Mogao Grottoes

*Canadian International School of Hong Kong, Wong, Moniz – 9*

Two thousand years ago,  
The Mogao Caves were born.  
In the Thousand Buddha Grottoes,  
Five hundred temples formed.  
Travelling monks on the Silk Road  
Trading silk, spices, ivory trunks  
Needed a place to lighten their load,  
And the first cave was dug by monks.  
Building the Caves as temples,  
The scorching sand rose to their knees.  
Painting clay sculptures and murals,  
The sand still flew over their cheeks.

As the days turned into years,  
To the oasis, crowds came.  
The caves were full of cheers,  
Igniting a raging flame.  
Inside the Mogao Grottoes,  
Walls of colourful murals  
With minerals, earth, metal,  
Ancient art sparkled like pearls.  
Stucco statues with eyes and legs  
Might be guarding the Mogao Caves.  
Careful, lest you break like an egg.  
All's silent because of their faith.

Ten centuries later,  
Less footprints on the Silk Road.  
Fewer and fewer remember  
A time before the caves erode.  
People were now using boats,  
Traders were sailing on the sea.  
No one travelled on the Silk Road,  
The caves would never be seen.  
The Mogao Grottoes were worried,  
Abandoned and lonely.  
They thought they were buried  
Existing with darkness only.

In the late nineteenth century,  
Western archaeologists came  
With key documentary,  
Digging tools and raging flame.  
The Mogao Caves were blocked by sand.  
New explorers, strong and brave,  
Started researching the land,  
Discovered the Library Cave.  
They found cultural sculptures,  
Buddhist artifacts and murals.  
Dunhuang, the greatest art treasure,  
Was famous all over the world.

In this year, Twenty-Two,  
These Caves are a special place.  
We know these stories to be true,  
But there are answers we still chase.  
A site of Buddhist history  
Expressing itself in its own way,

Full of secrets, still a mystery,  
So go there on a special day.  
Follow the pathways of pilgrims,  
Walk to the innermost cave.  
Your own golden vision will come,  
All this knowledge can be saved.

# Buddhi

*Diocesan Girls' Junior School, Chan, Hay Yee Jessy – 10*

Miles of vigorous dunes  
Ceiled by earthy aurelian  
Up above and down below

Tunnels of timeless runes  
Engraved by deific semblance  
Up above and down below

*Bodhi Buddha*  
*Days of yore awaken*  
*Bodhi Buddha*  
*Days of old enliven*

Storeys of archaic aura  
Embodied by dreamlike rouge  
Up above and down below

Towers of fulgid annals,  
Sheltered by archaic spires,  
Up above and down below

*Bodhi Buddha*  
*Days of yore awaken*  
*Bodhi Buddha*  
*Days of old enliven*

Echoes of mythic tune  
Circled by awakening tone  
Up above and down below

Dreams of deep reverie  
Whirled by numinous verity  
Up above and down below

*Bodhi Buddha*  
*Chants of soul awaken*  
*Bodhi Buddha*  
*Chants of mind enliven*

Showers of lucent blessings  
Enveloped by gracious smiles  
Up above and down below

Vespers of praising chorale  
Crooned by orotund whispers  
Up above and down below

*Bodhi Buddha*  
*Chants of soul awaken*  
*Bodhi Buddha*  
*Chants of mind enliven*

*No withering, no death, no end*

***Bodhi Svaha***

***Bodhi Svaha***

***Bodhi Svaha***

# Caves of the Past

*Diocesan Girls' Junior School, Choi, Shi Yin Reagan – 11*

The folds of gold, the sandy dunes of the desert.  
The scorching sun glaring, sizzling and scorching.  
Embedded in the stony face, the entrances stand.  
Faded paint etches on stone, once vibrant now faint.

One after another, the levels stretch to the sky.  
Still statues sit in caves, intricately carved.  
Flushes of orange come and pass,  
Shadows dropping listlessly.

Gilded faces of the worshipped,  
Their wisdom freely offered  
To those who seek it  
Willingly.

No sign of life in the plains,  
The environment unwelcoming.  
Yet none can stop those  
Who believe and trust.

A place for reflection,  
Seeking those willing to open up.  
Hidden in the endless stretch of gold,  
The cave's uniqueness rarely noticed.

Those called to come,  
Feel a tug and purpose.  
Peerless and undeniable,  
A portal back in time.

Lost in the maze of thousands,  
Fragments of history stored there.  
Stories inscribed into its walls,  
Waiting soundlessly.

The past lingers in caves,  
Away from the surging present.  
Sealed and protected,  
These secrets are waiting to be found.

# Wander in the Grottoes

*Diocesan Girls' Junior School, Doo, Charlene Hayden – 12*

In the deserted land of Dunhuang,  
Past the great Silk Road,  
Where aged paintings are being adored  
By every descendant abroad,  
The historical artworks flourish  
Into thousands of legends,  
And countless dynasties nourish  
Our nation's heritage.

In the great cave stood the Buddha,  
Standing there so bright,  
Hundreds of others worship  
Their goodful and trustworthy heroine.  
Buddhists from all around  
Come to this very cave,  
To see and worship Buddha together  
With each other forever.

Ancient caves were bringing  
Joy to every nation,  
The Mogao bells were ringing,  
As if the sun had been away.  
The hymns are rejoicing,  
Cave-like stones are following  
Wherever the tune goes flowing,  
When the moons were singing.

While the moments awaited,  
The desert filled with misty air,  
Covering the wondrous view,  
In between ages of destiny.  
Mist made everyone fall asleep,  
While the sandy stretch of land,  
Covering the whole world,  
Waited until the hundreds were discovered.



# History of Library Cave, Mogao Grottoes

*Diocesan Girls' Junior School, Ho, Sum Yin – 9*

Thousands of years in the past,  
Appeared this mysterious place.  
It showed many cultural relics,  
From all over the place.

It happened around the Silk Road,  
An oasis in a desert.  
So many peculiar cultures,  
As much of garden's dirt.

Once, a little monk saw a beam of light  
Shown upon a Buddha stone statue.  
When he saw the shaft of light,  
Inspired he was to dig into the statue.

Dug, dug and dug,  
Library Cave, he discovered.  
Filled with precious treasures,  
Dust, amazing treasures were all covered.

Although the monk didn't know much,  
For he had never gone to school.  
People claimed him to watch over the cave,  
And he knew nothing as he ruled.

One day, the wise men came,  
And asked the monk to trade the beloved things.  
The monk wasn't educated enough to know,  
That the treasures were indeed valuable.

So the monk exchanged the dear treasures:  
Paintings, manuscripts and sculptures,  
With money, gold  
And some lies that were told.

But after the wise men said goodbye,  
They kept the precious treasures,  
Went back to their own countries  
And conserved our ancient cultures.

These cultural relics are at other places,  
and significant heritage is preserved by them.  
But as China is growing more dominant,  
Its historic legacy is now alive with us!

# An Unusual Escape

*Diocesan Girls' Junior School, Lam, On Tung Adelynn – 11*

I was a young maiden in a mural in the Mogao Grottoes —  
A mural that illustrated meaningful community mottos  
Of love and peace, created in 336 A.D by a wonderful artist  
Who was acknowledged as one of the world's smartest.  
Up on the walls I was doing my light-footed dance  
When I saw a potion on the ground — would that be a chance...?

Just then, water shot out of the colourful vase beside me,  
And it was surging and plunging like a waterfall, as I could see.  
Splish! Splash! Splosh!  
Then I thought I was lost, my gosh! My gosh!  
Suddenly, the potion tilted, fell and mixed with the water,  
I was no longer in the painting with my dear daughter.

I woke up to the sounds of heavy footsteps approaching,  
Did they belong to people engaged in illegal poaching?  
I looked around, gasped in horror and cried like a mourner!  
That's when I noticed I was in a distant corner!  
I heard some scratching, laughing, barking and tapping.  
I saw two people holding a cage, and inside was a bird.

The archaeologists who saw me looked bemused  
And tried to solve the mystery which made them confused.  
They asked me tons of questions as if they were my teachers.  
Reluctantly, I answered them, trying to please these creatures.  
They thanked me politely and said they would continue exploring.  
With their voices sincere and their faces imploring.  
After that weird commotion, I saw the bottle of potion again.  
Everything was so strange and I wondered if I could stay sane.  
I really missed my brilliant life in the painting —  
Compared to that of the humans, mine was indeed amazing.  
Before drinking the potion, I said "Goodbye!"  
Then to my world I returned without any ungrateful sighs.

# 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.

# In Search of the Mogao Grottoes

*Diocesan Girls' Junior School, Tong, Sui Ting – 11*

Flying coach on a stormy evening from Venice,  
6,604 miles, 10.4 hours and 42,000 feet in altitude.

Silently I sat in excitement.

Embraced by loneliness and curiosity  
Prepared to embark on a journey that will forever change my life,  
Dunhuang – the Mogao Grottoes, you call for me.

Overwhelmed by exhaustion and hunger,  
A good half an hour of ferocious bus ride till I reached the renowned Silk Road Dunhuang Hotel,  
Rain shower, gloominess, and cruel humidity welcomed my arrival to this enigmatic land,  
Yet, my heart was filled with eagerness.

Awaiting me was an upsetting, ordinary, unflattering room,  
Dust and dirt gracefully covered the surface of every seen object,  
Luggage unloaded, I explored diverse options to combat my extreme starvation.

Loaded myself with countless tourist pamphlets,  
Scrutinized alternative travelling routes,  
Submerged into the curious legends of the great Mogao Grottoes, better known as the Thousand Buddha Caves  
Le Zun, blessed with the view of Maitreya Buddha, dug the first cave,  
Fa Liang, with an equal vision, claimed the second one,  
Where shall my pilgrimage begin? I pondered

Arrived at ten with a bus, blessed with sunshine.  
All alone so lonely and lonesome.

Suddenly astonished, startled and touched

Marvelled by the five levels built in various dynasties totalling 735 caves  
Stepping inside gazing admiringly at the seas of murals and sculptures created by gifted artists.  
Red, green, yellow, brown and orange coloured the caves  
There are some boards written in Chinese introducing the masterpieces.  
Each one with its uniqueness, style and history  
'How gorgeous this is!'

I exclaimed. A must-visit is the eye-catching Library Cave,  
A memorial cave for the wealthy Hongbian monk following his death  
Loaded with manuscripts, scrolls, books, short texts and figurines of Buddhas  
Sacred sanctuary for poetry, philosophy, law, music, medicine, economics and art.

Moved by the endless, magnificent and invaluable Buddhist arts,  
I just couldn't stop admiring the cleverness, ingenuity and inventiveness of the past.  
The splendid Mogao Grottoes – once forgotten, now revived and heavily protected as the World Heritage Site,  
History must not be buried

A long visit of five hours, conquered by extreme tiredness and starvation  
I promised a tour to the Dunhuang Shazhou Night Market  
Hundreds of well-organized stalls promoting local cuisine  
I awarded myself with the most delectable meal  
Needless to say, it ought to be the trip of a lifetime.

# 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!



# Caves of Gold

*Diocesan Girls' Junior School, Yip, Kristen Ho Yan – 10*

In a desert long forgotten,  
lies a cave, sleeping in silence,  
accompanied by age-old murals.  
Nothing but pure darkness in sight,  
a blaze of bleak black, void of white.  
An undefiled imbalance.

No longer are the caves of gold,  
just whispers from lost stories told.  
Standing still, it has strayed off its way.  
but will it come, the promised dawn?  
Or are the caves forever gone,  
forever gone, gone, gone, gone.

Soon, the days grew dark, hard and long,  
and the time gradually went on.  
Once a beloved and rare treasure,  
a crown of gold beyond measure –  
now but a remnant of the past,  
its golden days having long passed.

Until that so marvelous day,  
Western light shone upon the way.  
After many hard times spent alone,  
how wondrous it feels to be known!  
Years hidden away, lost and gone  
now to see the long-promised dawn.

Arise! A jewel from barren lands.  
Created from such crafty hands.  
a golden treasure, a masterpiece.  
Beauty to last unendingly,  
admired for eternity,  
cherished by all humanity.

History is not times gone by,  
nor simply ancient stories told.  
It's a way to learn, to live and grow,  
like our ancestors long ago.  
Masters of art long, long ago,  
created centuries of gold.

# New Tales from the Mogao Grottoes

*Diocesan Preparatory School, Ng, Ho Yin – 11*

On the Silk Road of China  
There are some giant caves,  
Inside are ancient sculptures,  
And a lot of staves.

Lots of people came to stay,  
And made several paintings.  
The sculptures that the people made  
Took lots of time creating.

The caves survived war and nature  
For fifteen hundred years.  
Although it is really old,  
Its end is still not near.

When the caves were rediscovered,  
People found many sculptures.  
They also read literature  
To learn ancient people's cultures.

The cave may teach us religion,  
Economics and ancient art.  
The awesome sight of the Mogao Caves  
Will stay in everyone's hearts.

# The Mogao Grottoes

*Diocesan Preparatory School, Yeung, Pok Him Ethan – 11*

The Mogao Grottoes,  
Ancient, precious and awesome,  
A Chinese treasure.

# Bats by The Bay

*ESF Glenealy School, Leung, Chriselle – 10*

As the stunning sunrise fills the summer sky,

A flock of humble birds soar up high.

Heaps of stones litter the burning ground,

Dozens of majestic creatures fly around.

The caves of China stand magnificent and plump,

With the whistling wind blowing past the sandy bumps.

The flickering and beaming sun sets too soon,

Suddenly, the sky is filled with the one and only moon.

Diligent bats are awakened by the shadow of the night,

Countless are ready to fight, yet a handful have frights.

A courageous and bold bat snatches the job,

Gingerly darting through the musty spiderweb cobs.

At last, they stumble back home, into their immaculate cave,

Children ecstatically swing up and down, seeming to forget about being behaved.

Millions of gleeful grins fill the room, everyone scrambling for more and more food,

A once glumful cave transforms into a delightful mood.

As the spirit of Autumn starts to kick in,

Everyone is ready for the fun to begin.

# The Silk Road

*ESF Kennedy School, Huang, Sylvia – 9*

Facing more challenges than ever,  
With injuries so severe,  
Sleeping in dark caves,  
Leaving the secrets that now fades.

Feeling horribly faint,  
Faces covered with red, sticky paint,  
Walking feebly along the path,  
Not taking a single bath.

Selling silk that shines,  
Selling spices so fine,  
Selling different foods,  
So many things to choose.

Then shouting with glee,  
With the silver they see,  
With smiles on their face,  
Going home at a quick pace.

The caves, so dark and dense,  
Shielding rain, like a fence,  
As old as time,  
Before Mozart was even nine.

Millions of years ago,  
In the caves all sorts of plants could have grown.  
There could have been toads,  
But no cars and no roads.

Gradually, the people began to add,  
To this beautiful cave Earth had,  
Painting artwork worth ninety thousand and four,  
Writing poetry better than anything before.

Today, all has changed,  
Everything is rearranged!  
Fascinating artwork to see,  
Unknown poems to read.

What could the future caves hold?  
Will it become a place where ancient stories are told?  
Will it become an office for men?  
Or a shop that sells only pens?

Will it become a classroom?  
Or a women's bathroom?  
Will it become a garden full of roses?  
Who knows? It might become a museum of chopped-off robot noses!

# The Mogao Grottoes Poem

*ESF Kennedy School, Lee, George – 8*

Magical, mysterious Mogao caves were discovered at a fabulous oasis that stretched along the boiling hot desert on the brilliant Silk Road in China.

Omnipotent literature, colourful paintings and fantastic sculptures made by Monks were unlocked by scholars who were searching for the secrets of the timeless, sacred Buddhist art.

Gansu Province soon became the hidden gem of the originally old, dusty place in west, central China because thousands of desperate pilgrims rediscovered more sandy caves and the breathtaking secrets of the long-lost culture.

Amazing, awe-inspiring, ancient caves were the loyal guardians of the oldest dated, printed books in the world.

Oh, old silk road, you were the pathway to a legendary lost world and the courageous camels were your messengers who brought thousands of strong believers to the Mogao Grottoes

Graceful, glorious and grand buddhas were storytellers of the Silk Road traditions.

Representing the religious wonders of the world, countless hand carved stories, decorated art on the towering ceilings and Buddhist artefacts were kept safely in the deep dark caves.

Oh, Mogao Grottoes, you were the dusty protector of the ancient manuscripts, wonderful silk banners and paintings, precious silk embroideries and unique textiles.

Time was preserved because you did your best to retell the prehistoric cultures and traditions.

Time became endless because archaeologists from all around the world found the key to unlock the Buddhist secret!

Oh, Mogao Grottoes, luckily your stories were buried under the sand and rediscovered by the world.

Eternal Buddhist beliefs were spread to every single continent like a fireball.

Sshhh, let's keep the secret of the Mogao Grottoes alive!

# Mogao Grottoes

*ESF Kennedy School, Lin, Declan – 10*

The Silk Road was used by East and West,  
On the road, trading is best,  
After all those years, It became a tourist attraction,  
You can see tombs, temples and Buddhist Grottoes!  
The tombs and the temples might be worn down,  
But still a magnificent sight to see!

The Silk Road stretched for tons of miles,  
They traded silk, gold, spices and tiles,  
East and West trade goods for goods,  
They both come back with new goods or food,  
They both come back on a daily basis,  
I'm not so sure how they don't get sick of it!

The Silk Road looks a bit rusty,  
But it's nothing that Neosporin can't fix!  
It looks like it needs minor repairs,  
But it's still a great place to visit,  
(You sussy people might not agree)

The Mogao Grottoes look traditional,  
I think the detail is quite additional,  
Tourists visit this place all the time,  
They say, "This is a top-notch place to see"  
Looking at the Buddha made of stone,  
The decorations are as bright as the sun,  
Maybe a bit too bright to handle!

Mogao Grottoes were decorated in gold and silk,  
The Buddha stands proud and tall,  
The caves might be home to anything  
Pandas, Dragons or a random thing!  
That random thing could be arrogant or modest,  
From the Zodiac Animals to a sussy bunch of monks!  
You might think "he's going insane!" but I'm not!

No one lives in the Mogao Caves right now,  
But it looks like a comfy place,  
Any moment now, someone might move in,  
An Omicron victim, or a COVID victim,  
Maybe to quarantine for a thousand years!

Before people came to the Mogao Caves,  
They were spiky, musty and smelled like dirt,  
The Chinese slowly began to trickle in,  
And made the caves into ol' fashioned gold 'n silk.  
It seems a bit additional though (\*groans\*).

After all that gold and silk,  
They slowly lost their appeal,  
The Chinese walked past them without a glance,  
Someone should comfort those poor caves!

# Enchanted Encounter

*ESF Kennedy School, Yip, Heather – 9*

Slowly the monk entered the cave,  
Old memories started popping in his head.  
He reached out to some ornaments,  
Figures like werewolves looking dead.  
Jaw-dropping features,  
Mythological creatures.

An enchanting voice whispered “come near...”  
He can’t help exploring more and more.  
Curiosity was leading him,  
Some dangerous items unexplored.  
On the walls were floating lanterns,  
Swirls, curls, dazzling patterns.

A step and another,  
Eventually appeared a glamouring box of Pandora.  
Reaching it with a shivering hand,  
He thought the world was coming to an end.  
Was he really correct?  
“Leave now and you will miss everything instead.”  
The secret voice was creating suspense,  
The monk wondered if all these made sense.

The monk decided to open and *JUST* take a look,  
But the Pandora box shook.  
First out came just a chocolate brown thing,  
Turning to be a dire beast stood tall like a king.  
The beast opened its mouth,  
Like a blackhole desiring to engulf.  
Instead it spitted the words “please, stay...”  
“...I, I, am really afraid”.

The monk hesitated, yet  
His sympathetic heart led him to stay.  
The whole cave suddenly rumbled,  
Down came rocks tumbled.  
No one knows what happened to the monk,  
The story left waiting to be unfolded.

Maybe, by another daring monk.

# The Heart of the Mogao Grottoes

*ESF Quarry Bay School, Wong, Angie – 8*

O! I open my craggy mouth to speak  
of an underworld of things unheard,  
unknown to man—

*Listen! Listen!*

Long long ago, a monk  
heard me on the slopes:  
stopped by my oasis of spittle,  
peered through my stony lips,  
passed my tongued stalagmites,  
stalactites, and took shelter  
in my throat.

He slept in the dark depths of me,  
and in his sleep he heard, a voice—  
that could be my own—singing  
through the dark shapes of his mind.

As I swallowed his sleep,  
as he rested where I felt  
my vocal cords should be:  
curled foetal as a baby.

In the morning he awoke,  
and unleashed his knife, dazzling my eyes;  
carving the face of Buddha, right on my chin,  
carving Buddha's teachings, stroke by stroke,  
carving his art deep into my skin,  
carvings of inspiration to provoke  
the others he would welcome in.

The monk proclaimed me as a sacred place:  
and the people came and came,  
tiptoeing over my petrified face,  
creeping inside my gritted cheeks,  
decorating my jagged teeth with trinkets,  
offerings of food and flowers for me to eat.

*Good! Good!*

How lovely to have company!  
How wonderful to be somebody!  
My face lit up by their candles:  
I adored their attention—  
I adored being adored.

But then!  
Sounds of crashing and smashing,  
dust rising, polluting my air,  
clogging my mouth, my breath,  
making me choke,  
voices coughing through my throat.



Workers' sweat dripping on my tongue:  
salty taste overpowering my mouth,  
making me wish I could vomit:

*Sick! Sick!*

Cracking colossal holes in my heart,  
breaking me apart,  
as a hammer shattering through glass,  
banging and booming me over.

Shall pilgrims dig thousands of caves,  
but fail to listen to the mystery I contain?

After a while the pilgrims became bored:  
they failed to find the secret that I stored.  
They stopped coming by.  
They stopped bringing me gifts.  
They stopped remembering my ancient face.  
For centuries, now, I've been forgot,  
left lonely and abandoned.

Would I be lost in the world forever, again?  
Or could I rediscovered and made famous?  
Visited for my greatness?

Look past your tower blocks,  
your cars, your roads, concreteness, rigidity,  
and come, come, come, to find me.  
Pause your work,  
your industry, technology,  
and unlock my secretive theology.

*Come! Come!*

And hear my heart.

# Tales from the Mogao Grottoes

*ESF Sha Tin Junior School, Tsang, Julian - 9*

More than half a millennium ago,  
A monk found a very special cave  
Which pilgrims came to work and stay,  
But that just couldn't be the same.  
Thousand years later,  
Advanced civilization broke off,  
Leaving the caves in delay.  
Now, we come to see,  
We finally realise our blunder,  
Of the wonder, we grieved.  
So, now we go,  
To uncover more things,  
And ring our hearts with content.

\

# Final Effort

*Harrow International School Hong Kong, Ip, Mya – 10*

At the foot of the sandy grottoes, stood a man.  
Let's call him Ganji, shall we?  
Although he was very young, he only had one goal.  
Ganji always conceived the world as empty, like a husk.  
Waiting to be painted with creativity and pride.  
Although it may be a daunting task, he knew that it would be worth it.  
That it would finally give him peace.  
He decided to complete what nature has started– the grottoes along the cliffs.

He planned to add some flair and zest to the grottoes.  
Not just some drawings and stickers, art that people would look forward to admiring– real art;  
that would normally take a lot of time.  
But there was nothing to worry about, Ganji had all of the time in the world.  
So, he started to create his soon to become masterpiece.

\*\*\*

Ever since Ganji was a child, he loved literature.  
He promised his mother that he would one day write enough scrolls and books to fill a library.

“Mommy, I promise I can do it!!” He declared.

“Well that's gonna be very hard, but mommy believes in you.”

But she's gone.  
Gone now.  
And Ganji didn't know why,  
but she's gone.  
Ganji couldn't do anything to undo this.  
The birds on the wire.  
They promised to stay together.  
Carefree, without a worry.  
And yet she flew away.  
Leaving him behind.  
How could Ganji keep his promise if she wasn't there by his side anymore?

“I'm sure mommy will be proud. I'll make sure she will be.”

\*\*\*

The art of literature in Ganji's opinion was quite delicate, in his own words.  
He believed that originality was what made literature so special.  
His hands were already ready.  
Holding a brush in one hand and his confidence in another,  
Ganji started to work.  
Each character was unique, and that was why Ganji loved writing.  
He also believed that every writer has a voice of their own.  
Just as his mother told him.  
He finished writing in no time,  
because of his creative and imaginative ideas overflowing his head.  
And so, he finally fulfilled his promise.

\*\*\*

Ganji had an eye for art. Especially sculptures and murals. His friend would always say that they had a special something to them and Ganji couldn't agree more. Their never-ending passion for art was one of the many things that kept their friendship going.

"Come on!" Ganji exclaimed

"I'm tired," he replied.

And that's how their friendship quickly turned to dust.  
The two birds of a feather.  
His attitude completely changed.  
Another bird flew away from his wire.  
And now their pledge of "brotherhood" was broken.  
Time faded away.  
Ganji truly felt like he was being dragged into a cage.  
What happened to the boy who once taught him to fly?

\*\*\*

Ganji remembered the murals that his "friend" and he drew at the side of the alleyways.  
He yearned for the long lost nostalgia.  
Being quite artistic by blood,  
He imagined how the walls would look if he added some creativity to them.  
So Ganji started painting.  
It had been quite a while after his last mural,  
he recalled each step to preparing the pigments.  
As he dipped the brush into the bowl, he slowly but surely remembered how he drew the murals.  
His hand obtained a mind of itself.  
For every stroke of the brush,  
streams of power and imagination flowed through his body.  
The world was filled with a million colours.

Well, that took a while.  
Now we just have the sculptures left.

As he tapped the chisel firmly on the stiff stone, spurts of confidence were gushing through his body as if he was being electrocuted (in a good way of course).  
While Ganji carved out the people's expressions, he had made the expressions too.  
It was as if he could empathize with the sculptures.  
Feel ecstatic when the sculptures were happy and cheerful,  
and feel pity and sorrow when the sculptures were sad and miserable.  
Just how he felt when his friend had left him.

\*\*\*

And so, after decades of hard work, he was ultimately done.  
He didn't believe it at first, but he was finally complete.  
The world was complete.  
His sacrifices were definitely worth it.  
So as he took his final breath  
Recalled his last memories  
He closed his eyes  
And whispered to the world  
"Goodbye."

# The Discovery of the Mogao Caves

*Harrow International School Hong Kong, Yan, Mary – 10*

One day a monk went to pray,  
And found some caves far, far away.  
They were broad, narrow, thick and thin,  
But they were collapsing in the wind.

Some pilgrims came and decided to stay,  
And began digging more and more caves.  
They built, sculpt and painted the walls,  
And made buddhas as tall as clouds.

As years came by the caves progressed,  
Because more travellers wanted to come and rest.  
They carried on creating sacred art,  
Until one day the caves were done.

That special day came to a close,  
Because travellers started to go through other roads.  
So now these caves faded away,  
And became just a dusty tale.

# The Tales from the Mogao Grottoes

*Harrow International School Hong Kong, Yang, Eva – 10*

The Silk Road has a lot of routes  
for people to trade many goods.  
Along the road stands a colossal cave  
which does not weather with age.

The cavern is old as history  
and all numbered caves are filled with mystery.  
The paintings look like that they will come to life  
but cave 148 is a brilliant sight

It all started with a priest named Le Zun  
who was a devout Buddhist monk  
and he built and drew his own creations  
in a temple which caused awe and elations.

Soon after more monks came  
and created their own masterpieces;  
tunnels and tunnels filled with arts,  
full of mythical and divine parts.

The temple was used for meditation  
but mostly used to pray for luck.  
Many crossed the road of peril and danger  
to seek the rumored treasure.

But then the Grottoes faded into darkness,  
covered in a blanket of dust.  
The gates were closed and lights dimmed,  
to stop the unwanted intruders

Soon a priest named Wang Yuanlu  
stumbled upon the invisible passage  
to the forgotten antique land  
so they could see the light of day.

At last the Grottoes are famous again,  
untouched by time's invisible hands.  
Flocks of tourist pay their homage,  
to the mighty Buddha which remains.

But are all the mysteries found,  
across the sands which stretch far away?  
Will all the unseen tunnels be discovered,  
or will they be kept forever... a shambles?

# The Great Temples of Mogao

*Hong Kong Adventist Academy, Leung, Torres – 10*

Located around the Chinese Hills  
Situated on the Silk Road  
The caves are huge  
Then a euphoria comes in  
You'll fathom at the art designs  
As well as the architecture  
Five hundred were decorated  
But the other five hundred is unknown  
This is also known as Qianfodong  
But I would say temples instead  
Dim as the night  
Many beings will come to life if you look  
And you'll be in awe  
Great Buddha is inside cave 130  
Surrounded by artwork  
Exhibitioners love to hold tours  
As you might join the tour guide  
Then you get going on the silk road  
As you enjoy the view  
High above the mountains  
It must be scary  
But it's also fun!

# The Wisdom of the Mogao Caves

*Hong Kong International School, Wenn, Isaac Samuel – 9*

At the crossroads on the Silk Road  
A road for trading fabrics  
Teas  
Ideas  
A gateway to the West

The Mogao Caves  
“None higher”  
“Peerless”  
A well of mysteries and treasures  
An oasis in a barren desolate land  
An inspiration for  
Believers  
Travelers  
Philosophers

Le Zun  
A Buddhist monk with a vision  
A vision of a thousand Buddhas  
Incandescent  
Iridescent  
Gleaming  
Glowing  
Rays of light dancing

He built a cave  
A cave in Dunhuang in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century  
To inspire hope  
Beauty  
Devotion  
Meditation  
“Ohmmmmmm”

More monks answered the call  
A call to meditate  
Practice mindfulness  
Reach enlightenment

More grottoes were built  
More treasures were kept  
More people were inspired  
Inspired to create  
Learn  
Believe  
A thriving religious community flourished  
For a millennium

But the caves were forgotten  
Abandoned  
Neglected  
“Poof” into thin air  
It disappeared like a dream  
It became a legend



Centuries later  
A guardian emerges  
Wang Yuanlu  
A protector of the hidden treasures

What were these treasures?  
Treasures of Buddhist  
Art  
Sculptures  
Murals  
Scrolls of scholarly works  
A library so great  
So great to rival the Library of Alexandria

What wisdom do they contain?  
It provides a roadmap  
A roadmap for  
Enlightenment  
Inner peace and wisdom  
Morality and tolerance  
Important virtues

Four Noble Truths  
The truth of suffering  
The truth of the cause of suffering  
The truth of the end of suffering  
The truth of the path that frees us from suffering

Follow the Eightfold Path for  
Right understanding  
Right thought  
Right speech  
Right action  
Right livelihood  
Right effort  
Right mindfulness  
Right concentration

And you can reach  
Inner peace  
Enlightenment  
Nirvana

Teachings for a chaotic world  
Hope for the believer  
An inspiration for many  
Treasures for eternity

# Hidden Secrets of Mogao Grottoes

*International Christian School, Lo, Ava – 11*

The bright sun was up  
as if it missed the welkin  
and was glowing when  
it reached out the heaven

The desert was warm  
and light colored, golden brown  
as wide as a tunnel  
and always enduring down

The weeks of travel  
the weeks of enervation  
we have finally reached  
at the famed destination.

The damp walls of caves  
made from mud, reed to lime paste  
are filled with detailed art  
some already been erased

Murals of hamlets  
of ancient Chinese temples  
of tall mountains and hills  
the opposite of simple

Sculptures of Buddhas  
some enormous some small  
found in every vast cavern  
like a great gallery hall

Into the grottoes  
means back into history  
means into new stories  
means unfolding mysteries

To touch the gray walls  
is to feel the unjust past  
is to perceive journeys  
an experience that lasts

Oh, Mogao Grottoes!  
Splendid secrets you reveal  
getting to explore you  
is positively surreal

# Legends of the Caves

*Kingston International School, Fung, Derek – 9*

366 AD

Miles and miles of rugged terrain I passed without rest  
On my pilgrimage as I advanced towards the west  
I travelled the wild and wandered through barren wasteland  
Crossing the desertscape, the Dunes of the Singing Sands

Journeying endlessly and overcoming obstacles  
Trudging on dry sand littered with skulls  
Oh what perilous trouble I was in for  
I trembled from the reverberations of the desert storm's roar

I reached the Precipice of the Immortals at last  
The peak of a mountain with a sight that was vast  
Sunlight glinted off crystalline water in the desert oasis  
The magnificent vista seemed forever timeless

Suddenly I collapsed exhausted on the floor  
My eyes were closed and yet I saw  
It came to me in the depths of my dreams  
I envisioned golden light dazzling in beams  
A thousand buddhas surrounded me  
A vision of ecstasy  
Revealing my destiny

I awoke breathless, heart pounding in my chest  
Overtaken by an urge to fulfil my holy quest  
Memories of the vision lashed into my mind  
To carve a cave that would keep the truth forever enshrined

I grabbed my chiselling tools and began to create  
Working in the dry desert air from early to late  
I carved out a space in the cliffside  
With a hidden entrance to reach the inside

I engraved thousands of Buddha statues in the stone  
And depicted masterpieces of all that I have known  
Maidens peacefully playing musical instruments  
All with calm and gentle temperaments

I painted on raw walls creating heavenly murals  
To tell the tales of bygone parables  
I portrayed vibrant illustrations of sutras here  
To remind myself that my life would contain no fear

As soon as I finished I sat down and meditated  
Relaxed calmly in the lotus position finally liberated  
Hoping the Buddha would be grateful for my monument  
Two legs folded and two hands closed seeking enlightenment

556 AD

The locals passed the secret of the silk down to me  
You'll need silkworm larvae to make this luxury  
Feeding them the leaves of the mulberry tree

These larvae spin their cocoons after moulting

Which are then dropped into water that is boiling  
The filament is extracted from cocoons through brushing

This raw silk is carefully woven and knitted  
A material so elegant and exquisite is created  
The Chinese Emperor keeps the secret closely guarded

Sharing this secret might be my last word  
Condemned to death and never again to be heard  
Though risking my life I am not deterred

I traveled with my silk fabrication supply  
Bringing to Constantinople what they yearned to buy  
Crossing rivers vast and mountains high

My camel was laden with the load as I rode my horse  
We trotted for miles along an extensive course  
Taking the precious cargo far away from the source

The menacing desert wind blew and caused a storm  
I still headed forwards and guided my horse in crooked form  
Until I found a cave to take shelter and be warm

I built a fire and gasped in shock  
At the illuminated artwork on the cave rock  
A secret art gallery that made me gawk

I slowly fingered a Buddha on the wall  
Clasping my cane that was thin but tall  
Containing a payload so precious and small

When the storm calmed I headed on my way  
Leaving the mystical cave without delay  
To meet Justinian the First here today

Romans surround me as I snap open my cane  
Revealing the silkworm eggs their empire hoped to gain  
Ready to bring glory and riches to Justinian's reign

## 2016

Equipped with my camera I plan to capture  
Ancient and historical murals and sculpture  
To inspire the world to do something helpful  
To protect the Mogao Caves

I board the train to a faraway land  
And arrive at the caves like the windblown sand  
I stare horror-struck as I enter a grotto  
I stare at the cavern in ruins

Precious artefacts that once shone so bright  
Are faded from sandstorms and scorching sunlight  
Some of the paintings are cracked and peeled  
Some of the cave collapsed

I silently enter another grotto on foot  
Paintings are burned and covered in soot  
Vandals defaced the murals and sculptures  
Vandals desecrated this shrine

I notice some missing valuable treasure  
Stolen by explorers for their own pleasure  
How evil that they flaunted their theft  
How heartbreaking for the caves

I gasp in shock as the cave crumbles  
Statues tumble down as the floor rumbles  
It is time for the caves to be a real wonder  
It is time for us to change

I am beckoned into a majestic grotto  
To immortalise the caves shall be my motto  
I take photos of the sacred art  
I take the news back home

I ride the aeroplane back to my homeland  
To prepare an exhibition so grand  
I imagine showing the caves to the world  
I imagine the caves being safe

I put my photos of the caverns on display  
At the Getty Center in the heart of LA  
People come by and eyes widen  
People gape in awe

The great treasures of the Orient shall now be known  
A legacy of conservation is set in stone  
By the monumental revelation of the Mogao Caves  
By the feast for artistic eyes

# Mogao Caves

*Korean International School, Khandelwal, Sanvi P - 8*

They can be high,  
They can be low,  
They can survive,  
Even in the snow.

This one was hidden,  
Where no one could see ,  
In the desert forbidden,  
Far away from the sea.

They are dark in the night,  
They have lots of treasure,  
They are never bright,  
But light gives you pleasure.

Placed along the silk route  
More than 500 caves build,  
They show buddhist art's root,  
With sculptures and paintings on silk.

Magao caves they were named,  
Preserved and protected,  
In many countries they are famed,  
Taken care of and perfected.

Inside there are paintings,  
Around 1,000 years old,  
Many people were creating,  
So precious as gold.

## Mogao Caves

*New Territories Women & Juveniles Welfare Association Christian Remembrance of Grace Primary School, Kong, Cerise – 9*

Painted life on walls  
They are all Buddhist figures  
Is world heritage

## Mogao Caves

*New Territories Women & Juveniles Welfare Association Christian Remembrance of Grace Primary School, Ng, Nathan – 9*

Silk Road oasis  
Collections of Buddhist art  
Many fine sculptures

## Mogao Caves

*New Territories Women & Juveniles Welfare Association Christian Remembrance of Grace Primary School,*

*O'Rourke, Abigail – 9*

Ancient and famous  
Standing after centuries  
For meditation

## Mogao Caves

*New Territories Women & Juveniles Welfare Association Christian Remembrance of Grace Primary School, Yung, Alice – 9*

Caves filled with murals  
and very pretty sculptures.  
Best place in the world!

## Mogao Caves

*New Territories Women & Juveniles Welfare Association Christian Remembrance of Grace Primary School, Zhou, Grace – 9*

Beautiful pictures  
They tell the story before  
In the hot desert

# Mogao Grottoes Live On

*Po Leung Kuk Choi Kai Yau School, Chan, Audrey – 9*

Long live the Mogao Grottoes  
Carved into the cliffs above Dachuan River  
Along ancient Silk Road, true treasures bestowed  
From one thousand caves  
Legends told and temples glowed  
Centuries of memories infinitely engraved

Majestic cave temples stand tall day and night  
Inspired by vision of a thousand Buddhas  
Bask in streams of golden light  
Surviving rain and heat leaving us in awe  
From Muslim rebels to European explorers to Russian soldiers  
All leaving their marks, yet the Grottoes endure

Glory to the ruling family  
The Northern Wei and Northern Zhou  
Constructing caves with dignity  
Sites of worships and vows  
Through the Sui and Tang dynasties  
A sanctuary of privacy and unity

One thousand painted and sculpted Buddhas  
Tell stories of medieval politics, culture, arts  
From religion, ethnic relations to daily dress  
Bearing witness to ancient civilizations  
Han Chinese arts in full blossom



# New Tales of Mogao Grottoes

*Po Leung Kuk Choi Kai Yau School, Tsang, Tsz Ling Naomi – 10*

At the very centre of Dunhuang,  
stands Mogao Grottoes, towering over.  
There stands caves of paintings that are painted,  
waiting, just to be acquainted,  
and statues, weavings, stories and more,  
undeniably without a bore.

Yet who would imagine that on those walls,  
laid secrets hidden on those painted tales.  
There, trouble and chaos befalls,  
monsters and demons, both females and males,  
decided to adventure out of those halls.  
But fortunately, there were brave volunteers to stop those bad deeds,  
to prevail, to finish, to end those actions before the wicked exceeds.

There were two sisters, one brave and one bright.  
The first was valiant, courageous, strong and tall,  
yet slightly too reckless, but that's mainly all.  
The second was smart, with an intelligent mind,  
but bashful and shy, you would most definitely find.  
Though the most important thing, the one trait in common,  
is that both of them are undoubtedly kind.

They lived with their greedy aunt, a woman of pride,  
she was disrespectful and the good in her heart seemed to have died.  
One day, to visit Mogao Grottoes, the sisters begged and pleaded,  
their aunt at last gave in, and the pair's plan succeeded.

They rode on the shuttle bus to arrive at their destination,  
and the trio (excluding the aunt) bounced in without hesitation.  
From top to bottom, in and out, they looked at the stairs and walls,  
the galleries, rooms, the small library, and the great halls.

The first sister just appreciated and admired every story,  
tales, statues, paintings and more in their glory.  
Yet the second sister, with her sharp witted mind,  
something out of the ordinary was what she could find.

The second sister noticed that some pictures seemed odd.  
There were eyes that followed and creatures that shifted and nodded.  
They snickered and smirked and cackled at her.  
Then the girl squinted at the paintings,  
and found the creatures moving were demons for sure.

The second sister elbowed the first, to show her what she found.  
The first sister realized with giant shock and gaped with no sound.  
Instantly, they went to tell their grumbling aunt.

“The pictures were moving!”  
“The creatures were creeping!”  
“The demons were cackling!”  
“The devils were teasing!”

The sisters pleaded and begged it was true,  
but the cruel aunt rolled her eyes, seeming sure it was untrue.  
“Nonsense,” she growled, “Don't bother my day.”  
“It's already been so much worse since we've come here to stay.”

The sisters looked at each other in unison, and signed.  
They didn't know how to explain what they could find.  
They turned around together, but their aunt had disappeared.  
The two exchanged frightened looks, and they agreed that was very weird.  
They decided to search for her, through the grottoes.

The first sister yelled for their aunt, but the cold halls were deserted.  
Not a single person was walking by, so the girl felt alerted.  
The second sister, on the other hand, decided to just observe.  
Suddenly, she heard a screaming noise, and she nearly lost her nerve.

"That sounded like my aunt." the second sister thought,  
and notified her sister, as both tensed up at the thought.  
They agreed on exploring this mysterious place,  
and split up to discover more.  
Then eventually meet up again in a space.

The first sister wandered around,  
without a target, and without a sound.  
She noticed a picture move and creak,  
with the demons that she had to seek.

She saw it cackle, and laugh, and bounce,  
and she raced towards the wall, ready to pounce.  
The demon just chortled, and vanished with no trace.  
The first sister looked around, and searched the walls for his face.

She caught sight of the monster, on another wall.  
This time when she pounced, she guaranteed he would fall.  
The demon fell out of the wall, alive and on the ground.  
He snarled and told the other monsters to come out to the girl and surround.

Meanwhile, the second sister came across the library cave.  
She found ancient scrolls that were precious, and leaned towards them,  
but at once a demon popped out of the wall and bounced out of his grave.  
Few other demons came along and tried to stop her.

The young girl faced upon demons, quite an awful lot  
as she tumbled backwards and into the pile of scrolls like spice in a pot.  
She fell down in many unique scrolls of every kind,  
but there was one that somehow captured her mind.

She grabbed that scroll, before the red glowing hands of the demons reached her.  
Clutching the scroll, she rolled to the right, and opened that crinkled paper.  
On it were a few words of mystery with other parts below.  
The sister recognized the language as putonghua,  
and read out the words not fast nor slow.  
The magic started, and the demons screeched, and vanished in mid air.  
The girl smiled, as she found the weakness right there.

The second sister unraveled the rest of the scroll, with a sentence down below:  
"Read the following spell and the demons will be trapped in the wall forever,  
but there must be two people reciting the spell,  
in the place where power is most well,  
and that is what you should know."  
Upon this, the young girl pocketed the scroll, and ran while shouting for her sister.

The first sister, still fighting those demons, fled down the stairs.  
She backed into a corner, where the monsters had caught up, ferocious like bears.  
She dodged some of their attacks, but much hope seemed lost.  
The demons clawed their way to the girl, who now just had her fingers crossed.

When despair was on its edge, and gloom was nearing,  
The first sister closed her eyes, yet she couldn't hear a roaring.  
It was silent, for a while then she heard her sister's voice.  
"E mo zou ba!" was what her second sister recited, and the demons disappeared,  
Leaving the first sister, shocked yet grateful, and she happily rejoiced.

After learning what had happened, the first sister smiled in glee.  
"Then why are we waiting? Let's recite the spell!" said she.  
The second sister showed her the scroll, and pointed above the spell.  
"We must read it in the place where power is most well."

They pondered this, thinking what to do.  
Then realization struck both sisters, as they slowly knew.  
The most amazing, admirable, astounding area and place,  
must be one statue of the buddha with its beautiful grace.

But the question was, which?  
The second sister muttered and stared at the scroll.  
Suddenly, something at the bottom caught her eye,  
a black arrow so clear it couldn't be a lie.

"Ah!" said the first sister, "I know what this is for!"  
"It will lead us to the correct buddha on the correct floor!"  
They followed the arrow, to which direction it pointed,  
but the sisters didn't notice a crowd of demons sneaking out unappointed.

The duo swerved around sculptures and passed all the paintings,  
sidetracked cave stories to find the great buddha.  
Suddenly, they heard noises behind them,  
and found demons chasing them like burglars after a gem.

They ran like the wind, still following that arrow,  
yet the demons still followed them tightly through the halls that were narrow.  
Some came close to those two girls, so they had to recite the first spell,  
several times to make them vanish and to repel.

After running for so long, both were out of breath,  
and the demons had slowly caught up and were plotting both their death.  
But alas, they reached the buddha they were supposed to go,  
Maitreya Buddha, crossing her feet, with such an enormous shadow.

The sisters quickly scrambled to their feet, and were amazed by this sight.  
Then, they quickly stood below her and recited in the light.

"E mo zou ba,  
Zou hui hua li,  
Qing bie chu xian,  
Yong yuan suo bi."

The magic instantly worked, and the demons vanished in mid air,  
They faded back to the picture, with a furious glare.  
A wall opened up, and tourists tumbled out.  
The two girls spotted their aunt, and her head seemed to spin about.

"Where were we? Oh yes, stop bothering me!" their aunt yelled.  
There seemed to be no difference of their aunt, she still grumbled and she smelled.  
The aunt seemed to notice no difference and didn't know of the demons.  
"Demons? For goodness sake, please stop your imagination.  
You stupid halfwits would be in the jail right now, if I ruled the nation!"

The two girls just looked at each other, and together they smiled.  
Perhaps this journey could be a secret of the secrets they piled.

# The Mogao Caves

*Po Leung Kuk Hong Kong Taoist Association Yuen Yuen Primary School, Lee, Hayson – 11*

“Why am I in the Mogao Caves?”

A curious boy Alexis gasped and surprised.  
As he walked towards the sculptures he saw  
His gaze was locked in awe

He kept walking through the cave  
Looking at all the paintings from 1700 years ago  
It had special colours but with the same person.  
They all looked strange for a lot of reason.

He saw Buddha sculptures everywhere  
Mesmerized by their magnificence when he stared  
No matter where he set his foot in  
He held his breath and couldn't help his grin

Alexis slowed down as he looked carefully  
Through every room he walked past previously  
Walking back to the very beginning  
Till he saw the room with no carving

It was the room with a balcony  
And a staircase hidden in its journey  
Alexis went in and rolled down the stairs  
Landed in a place with hundreds of squares

A dark and big wall blocked his way out  
He saw a square in a circle and wondered what it was about  
He pressed on it and the wall broke down  
He walked out of the Mogao Caves safe and sound

# The Mogao Grottoes

*Po Leung Kuk Hong Kong Taoist Association Yuen Yuen Primary School, Li, Renee – 11*

At the end of the cliff  
The magnificent grottoes stand stiff  
Reaching deep into the Mogao caves  
Whereas the mighty Buddha's engraved  
With all the paintings far and wide  
And characters are side by side

Great big statues filled in the rooms  
To represent the Buddha's glory bloom  
How secret they are, hidden in the ground  
How great they are, when they were found  
And travel from thousands of years ago  
How can we not cheer for the pride they grow?

Who engraved them? Who built them?  
Does anyone believe they are priceless gems?  
Or maybe there's a god inside  
Who would never ever die?  
The Mogao Grottoes are full of mystery  
They will surely go down in history

# A Deer from the Mogao Grottoes

*Regents Primary School of Shenzhen, Li, Zimu – 10*

Hi, boys and girls. I am a beautiful deer. I come from heaven. Now I have lived in one of the caves of Mogao Grottoes for more than a thousand years.

My fur is magic. I can change my fur's color. People say my white horns are just like a cloud and call me 'The Nine-Colored Deer.'

When my fur is red, the warmth is coming.

If my fur becomes green, you will get healthy.

If you see my blue fur, you will be the wisest man.

Maybe you like purple. The people will be noble in my purple light.

Sometimes my fur will be gray. Then you'll be a silent man.

Yellow, must be your favorite color. The universe will be covered bright.

When I become brown, you will be decisive.

If you see my silver fur, your love will be forever!

The last, my black fur means more mystery to the world.

Now I am your tour guide.

I will pass through all the caves and dynasties with my power.

Dunhuang has been where different peoples and cultures converge and exchange since ancient times. This is the famous Silk Road.

Woosh! All the Apsaras fly out of their caves. Some of them come from Tang Dynasty. Some are from the Five Dynasties Period and Song Dynasty.

Look, some are coming from the sky! Maybe they come from other countries, England, America, Japan.

Come on! Boys and girls, in one line, let's go dancing with our friends' Apsaras and enjoy the music from each dynasty. I dream these tramp Apsaras can stay here forever!

By the 61<sup>st</sup> cave, we're in the Five Dynasties Period.

Now I am on the Mount Wutai.

Today, I will visit Manjusri.

Wait, my fur is turning red!

The burned grass became alive.

The hot weather becomes cool!

There is no danger, no sadness, no anger, only happiness.

Manjusri is manifesting!

Suddenly many mythical creatures are coming from the sky. They protect the temples and take care of them.

The people communicate friendly with each other.

The ancient people or us, we'll like Manjusri, and dream she always stays with us.

I dream-sharing more tales with you. I dream all of my colorful dreams will be yours!

Mogao Grottoes is a mystery. More mystery things are waiting for you.

# The Wonderful Mogao Grottoes

*Regents Primary School of Shenzhen, Lin, Ya Qi – 11*

Mogao Grottoes

A wonderful station on the Silk Road,  
In the deep of the desert,  
On the top of the Rattling Sand Mountain,  
Priceless treasure in Dunhuang City.  
More than 1000 years, snow and rain,  
More than 1000 years, wind and sand,  
She is still a forever a fairy tale,  
Thousands of buddas,  
Fabulous frescos and statues,  
Full of treasure.

Mogao Grottoes

She is like an old book with a long history. I want to read.  
She is like a glass fine of wine. I would like to taste.  
She is like beautiful music. I would like to hear.  
She is like the moon. I want to watch and ponder upon her.  
How divine thou art.

# The Mogao Grottoes

*Shanghai Singapore International School, Kuo, Yong Yan – 10*

I found myself in my parent's rusty blue car.  
I heard pebbles crashing under the weight of the rusty blue car. The thunder knocked at my window.  
I heard waves lapping at the beach.  
Outside, the rain poured.  
I remember two days ago, my mom surprised me with news to go see the Mogao Grottoes.  
I nagged them for ages, begging, crying, until she finally gave in. I was excited, and we had set off.  
We traveled for ages, one, two, no, maybe three hours.  
I got bored on the car, asked my parents every five minutes, when will we be there, when will we be there, when will we be there.

I got off the car, the glorious sunshine soaking in my wet braids.  
I ran straight to the entrance of the grotto, so big.  
Giant.  
I could hear laughter echoing inside the grotto.  
Curious.  
Nagged.  
Asked "Please?".  
They said "No, we cannot, there is COVID."  
We had to stay in a hotel.  
Hotel, bad.  
Grotto, sad.  
I cried, tears streaming down my face, daddy says, "tomorrow we will stay.  
I have to promise to make it up."  
I laughed. I cried through my laughter.  
"Take a stroll. Take a stroll, take a stroll."  
Mom laughed.  
I was bored.  
Flipped through many paintings of old artwork, laughed at the pictures.  
Once colorful, now brown as a puddle.  
Brown as dirt.  
Brown as in melted chocolate.

Take a stroll, said mom, shooing me out the door.  
Stared at the door, "why?"  
Outside nighttime.  
Moon bright, saw two cats.  
Said to them, "How I wish to visit the Grottoes, maybe you will help me?"  
Mew in response.  
I played them until dark, mom calling my name.  
Waved in farewell.  
Mew in return.  
"Goodbye," I whispered, "Make my wish come true."

Slept for two hours, tapping on the door.  
Opened the door, cats again.  
Petted them, played, and said goodbye, calico cat stopped me, purred, "Emily, come with us."  
Stopped.  
Turned around.  
What?  
Gray tabby whispered, "Let's visit the grotto."  
I whooped, not too loud, just enough.  
My wish come true.  
I flew with the cats, swooping, laughing, dizzy from the height. We saw the statue, we marveled and joked.

Beside the statue was a sign.

Wang Yuanlu made the grotto, I repeated, many statues of gods, I knew the grotto was over 1600 long, and 492 caves still survive today, I told the cats, Calico and Tabby rolled on the ground. It looked familiar, where had I seen it, I don't know. Vivid statues, and exquisitely arranged lotus bricks, creating holy world of Buddhism.

Carved in 336, the first statues, dynasties of North Liang, North Wei, and many others.

I took one picture, knew that it remained over 45000 meter murals, they consult a mirror of China.

I tickled Calico until she screamed, poked Tabby until he rolled over.

Fun.

Walked along, knew artistic content of the grottoes is very rich, knew, Mogao grottoes, State Council "recognized", key under state protection.

Knew, located on Eastern slope of Mingshashan, knew, the Thousand Buddha cave, Mogao grottoes, richest treasure of Buddhist art in the world. 30 kilometers joined altogether, so long, I had said, so long, so long, so long. Told a Buddhist story to Calico, Tabby dancing around me.

"Time to go home," I said, scooping up, petting, tails wagging.

He saw me, I tiptoed past.

"Safe," I said, wiping my forehead.

Calico and Tabby. They had said, "We will wait for you here, we are in number 217."

Scurried home, dad up, "Where have you been!"

Angry, sad. Needs a hug. I am sorry, I am sorry, I am sorry.

Mom stretched, I stretch, dad stretch.

"Emily, we can go to the Mogao grottoes today! there's Grotto today," Mom says, ticking me until I laughed through my serious face.

We went to the grotto, mom and dad looking at the things I had seen before, I would not tell them where I had seen it, I went straight to number 217, I saw elegant apsaras, finally knew the dancing of Calico and Tabby.

They were no longer living cats, but now they were paintings on the wall, wiggling their hips, stretching their paws, legs kicking the air, so beautiful, and so elegant.

"Let's go home," I said, surprising dad. Go home, go home, go home, please.

On the car, when will we be there, when will we be there, when will we be there.

Silence dripped, falling asleep.

## Mogao Grottoes

*Shanghai Singapore International School, Lim, Siew Ming – 9*

The Mogao Grottoes

Temple of the people,

As the big wind blows,

All the water flows.

In the huge rock,

Everybody bows.

So this is the Mogao Grottoes.



# The Dream from the Past

*Shanghai Singapore International School, Susanto, Stella Marcheline – 10*

Listening to the desert wind  
along the Great Silk Road  
someone dreamed  
the presence of a thousand

So he led thousands  
monks, travelers, scholars  
Hand-in-hand  
they sculpt the dream

Mountain that was frozen,  
now is butter to slice and cut  
giving birth to  
caves dressed in murals,  
sutras tucked in their pockets

Gobi desert is no longer lonely,  
as it is lined with pilgrims  
who want to celebrate  
as if it were Spring  
in their orchard

This was the blessing from the dream  
for they have opened a door  
allowing the light inside

A millenium later,  
you walk in Mogao Grottoes  
and hope  
If you get lost  
maybe the dream will show you the way

# A Thousand Buddahs

*Shrewsbury International School Hong Kong, Madan, Akshadha – 10*

Along the ancient path the silk road goes,  
Stand a thousand buddha grottoes,  
Paintings, sculptures, so many to see,  
492 caves in total there be.

More than one and a half millennia ago,  
Yuezun the monk created these grottoes to explore,  
Of a thousand Buddhas, he had a vision,  
To excavate these caves, he made the decision.

Vast temples carved from rock,  
At which many visitors stop to gawk,  
Grand balconies overlooking what lay beyond,  
The sight like the spell from a magic wand.

A sea of intricate paintings,  
Enveloping the walls and ceilings,  
Amongst the bare rock they are a picturesque pop,  
Realistic statues reaching the top.

Buddhas here, Buddhas there, Buddhas everywhere,  
Hidden from the sunlight's glare,  
Gasps of awe from tourists they bring,  
Laden with bangles and golden rings.  
To explore these caves would delight all,  
To see the elaborate Buddhas, big and small.

# New Tales From The Mogao Caves

*St. Francis of Assisi's English Primary School, Fong, Hon Pok Hobart – 11*

An oasis on the silk road  
Lays the Mogao Caves  
The more paintings you see  
The more you crave  
A Buddhist monk had a vision  
He had made a decision  
Got inspired  
And started building a cave

A second monk joined the first monk  
Then came another  
By the time of the Northern Liang  
A community of monks was founded  
They meditated  
From day to night  
The sacred art and statues  
What a beautiful sight

A thousand years later  
Other routes the travellers took  
Dunhuang Mogao Caves were forgotten  
Becoming no more than a dusty legend  
Scholar-explorers rediscovered  
That of breathtaking secrets  
The thousands of Buddhist architecture  
Filled with uniqueness

The clay statues constructed on a wooden frame  
Then padded with reed  
Modelled in clay  
And finished with paint  
The glorious statues of the giant Buddha  
However has a stone core  
Often attended with mythical creatures  
Looking at them, you could never be bored

Texts produced by a woodblock print  
Like the oldest book  
And other early images  
There's plenty more in store  
Silk banners, altar hangings  
Wrapping for manuscripts and more  
So many different textiles

...There's just too much to explore

# 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.

# Caves of Wonder

*St. Margaret's Co-educational English Secondary & Primary School, Kam, Matthew – 11*

Caves of wonder.

Caves of beauty.

Caves of treasure.

In a barren desert, where silk meets spices, porcelain meets marble, where the famed silk path lays.

Hidden away and found again like a pearl in an ocean of sand.

Natural and rejuvenated wonders combine.

Gold in a desert, gems in a wasteland and historic wonders in caverns lost to time.

Towering statues, breath-taking paintings and spectacular pieces of art, wonderful splashes of colour, precise cuts of rock.

Where the West meets the East, where mosaic glass meets fine china.

Tucked away in a place of loneliness, is beauty!

# Caves of Wonder

*St. Paul's Co-educational College Primary School, Chan, Amelia Joanna - 9*

I long to see what splendor lies  
Within the Mogao caves.  
Art and sculptures that dazzle the eye?  
Or something our souls crave?

How did men from centuries past  
With nothing but bare hands.  
Carve these Buddhas tall and vast  
In a mountain of rock and sand?

Legend says a monk was on a mission,  
To search for paradise.  
As he rested, he had a vision,  
Where Buddhas filled the skies.

Inspired and touched by this scene divine,  
The monk worked non-stop.  
To recreate this glorious sublime,  
Alone on a mountain top.

Years went by and the caves were forgotten,  
As travelers took other routes.  
The monk and his art became a dusty legend,  
Whose existence were in doubt.

What secrets lie in these caves of wonder?  
Is there more than what meets the eye?  
Perhaps there is more to uncover,  
Deep, deep under the sky.

# The Other Lives of Mogao

*St. Paul's Co-educational College Primary School, Yeung, Sin - 11*

I am an ancient ant,  
making my mark in tiny steps since time immemorial.  
I have lived in the Mogao caves for over a millennium  
and had the luck to meet and hear the tales of Master Hongbian  
echo through the walls  
as he talked about his dreams and wisdom  
through sketches on the cave walls  
and Buddhas with lively expressions  
to encapture the beauty and sadness of humanity.

I am an insignificant rock,  
sat here neglectfully since time immemorial.  
I have seen the uprise and downfalls of dynasties,  
the colossal statues glaring all day long at me  
in the dark eyes from all directions  
yearning to tell me secrets they hide  
yet their mouths are sealed shut  
despite their weathered faces telling all  
etched with history and the sinister side of humanity.

I am an archaic arachnid  
spinning webs in these caves since time immemorial.  
I have explored all the nooks in this mystical place  
sometimes it is dark and scary  
with violent secrets encased in the walls.  
Sometimes it is warm and loving,  
with compassion flowing through the air.  
hardening and softening time,  
layer after layer,  
just like my webs.

I am a statue  
living in the timeworn Mogao cave since time immemorial.  
I was once exquisite  
I represented the prosperity and accomplishments of humans.  
Dynasty after dynasty,  
I was collateral damage.  
I have seen the battles, the wars, and  
The lights vanished from the souls  
I could not tell the world my woes and suffering  
There is no part of me that is left unbruised internally,  
How long before will my facade hold up  
Will I last till Judgement day?  
Or will I fall in the hands who built me?



# Mirages at Mogaoku – Ukoagom Ta Segarim

*Tak Sun School, Law, Yu Ching – 11*

A wanderer  
Lost --  
Anno Domini a distant PAST  
Trenched in vast nothingness  
En route an endeavor  
Neither beaten nor alive  
As Singing Sand after sand  
Step after step  
Draws a blank for  
Months on end  
Draws a blank for  
Step after step  
As Singing Sand after sand  
Neither beaten nor alive  
En route an endeavor  
Trenched in vast nothingness  
Anno Domini a distance PAST  
Lost --  
A wanderer  
A discoverer  
In awe --  
Upon the surreal PRESENT  
Stunned by mineral magnificence  
Delicate creations of thousand hands  
Buddhas and Sanskrit sutras  
As scrolls after scrolls  
Clay after clay  
Devotion narrated  
Millenia of alliances and wars  
Devotion narrated  
Clay after clay  
As scrolls after scrolls  
Buddhas and Sanskrit sutras  
Delicate creations of thousand hands  
Stunned by mineral magnificence  
Upon the surreal PRESENT  
In awe --  
A discoverer  
A scholar  
Transcends --  
Witnesses a farfetched FUTURE  
The worldly to the unworldly  
Paths to Nirvana in

# A GrottOde

*The British International School Shanghai, Puxi Campus, Davies, Neo – 11*

A century ago,

The Mogao Grotto,

Where everyone used to go.

One day the wind stopped blowing,

People stopped going,

The reason nobody knows.

Centuries later,

A merchant selling graters,

Discovered a grotto full of art.

The merchant played his part,

In a discovery so large,

Even aliens from the planet Marge,

Heard of the astounding news,

And came with their crews.

# Mogao Grottoes

*The British International School Shanghai, Puxi Campus, Lambert, Sienna – 9*

Many years ago,  
There lived a monk,  
Who lived far away in a bunk.

He created the pictures we see,  
Yes he does, yes indeed,  
He inspires me and you too,  
And to give this to you!

The caves, oh the beautiful caves  
We see them today and every other day,  
The cave paintings as well also every day.

You can climb the mountains to see these,  
Yay, yay indeed,  
I saw them on the internet they look very pretty,  
Oh, the Mogao Grottoes you should go there soon.

The pictures are sent all over the place,  
In China they are found,  
Especially this place,  
You should really wish that you could go there.

So bye-bye I'm off there myself!!!!!!

# The Mogao Grottoes

*The British International School Shanghai, Puxi Campus, Lew, Olivia – 11*

Far away, in a sea of sand,  
Stood a temple of magic,  
Left behind. This large temple,  
Created by mankind,  
Once a home to travelers journeying  
On the ancient Silk Road.  
In the caves,  
The people drew and wrote their historical identity,  
Until that day came,  
When fate could not be changed,  
These timeless treasures, the Mogao Caves,  
Were forgotten, in the blink of an eye,  
After being drowned in a sea of sand,  
And sleeping for centuries,  
One day, in one minute, in one second,  
Wang Yuanlu found this cave of wonders,  
An artist's dreamland.  
And so, that's the story,  
Of the caves of a Thousand Buddhas,  
Now waiting...  
For you to explore.

# Cavern and Isolation

*The Independent Schools Foundation Academy, Wong, Kwan Shun Charmaine – 11*

Buses running past me every day,  
Welcoming new tourists and roamers,  
Visiting where I live.

Hot and sandy,  
Sun Burning every day,  
Desert,  
Cactus,  
Agaves,  
Halfmens,  
Camels,  
And buses.

Tourists, roamers,  
Come and go,  
Flags waving everywhere.

Locals,  
Visitors,  
Tourists.  
Everywhere around me.

Suddenly  
In a cave out of nowhere.  
Rocks above me,  
Treasures next to me,  
Scrolls withered on the nearby shelves.  
Artifacts of  
Silk,  
Ink,  
Diamond,  
Jade,  
and bone.  
A tunnel to the lost,  
The lost world of the past.

# The Forgotten Caves

*Yaumati Catholic Primary School (Hoi Wang Road), Leung, Ngo Him – 10*

The shiny and yellow gold  
In the Mangao Grottoes gets cold

Hans tales are told  
Dangerous adventures unfold

Don't forget the past  
As it can be vast

