

Winning Entries



HONG KONG YOUNG WRITER OF THE YEAR

Fiction – Group 3 Winner

Woven

Diocesan Girls School, Lau Tsz Yi Stella, –

In the grand tapestry of the fourteenth century, the Silk Road had been ebbing much before anybody acknowledged it. It started falling out of favor unobtrusively--slack business, nervous traders and little collapses, like cracks in old ware.

The Dragon Trail wound through the bitter deserts and mountains, and the Passage of the Lunar Serpent, a maritime route of vast, became hazardous. Ships were sunk in storms and pirates took control of new waters and the winds became unreliable. All ways were unsafe, all expeditions hazardous roll of dice.

Everyone felt the shift.

No one knew how to mend it.

And in the large market of Samarkand, where all the wealth of the world crashed together in dazzling colour, the rupture was expressed in one deafening crackle.

An Italian cart loaded with Venetian glass broke its axle under the weight of its load.

The beam of wood snapped as though it were struck with lightning, and the whole weight swayed, as though in a forward direction. Glassware--blown so much carefully in other distant shops across the water--smashed upon the ground, and scattered in a constellation of sparkling fragments. They caught the morning sun and reflected it back, as though a thousand ruined futures were broken up on the sand.

The camel driver cursed the mountains for their cruelty.

The Venetian captain cursed the sea for its deceitfulness.

Up they soared, in the air—two worlds colliding in an instant: land and water, delay and danger, tradition and risk.

But two people saw something else.

Dimitrios was amidst the chaos, as the others were, but his attention was not on the broken glass itself—rather, on the shattered world it represented. He grew up in the desert, yet was sea-bound, windblown, sand-covered—a man of contradictions.

He had towed shipwrecks and caravans through monsoons and droughts, and now, gazing at the cart's load lying there in pieces, he felt a silent conviction:

This was not an accident.

This was a warning.

His memories awakened—implicit and unavoidable.

Then a wave of nostalgia overwhelmed him:

He was a boy again, standing beside his father on the docks of Hormuz. A wrecked vessel was crawling into the port, its hull torn open, its sailors barely alive. His father had placed a hand on his shoulder, with shadowed wisdom learned from loss. “The sea gives with one hand and takes with ten.”

Those words were deeply rooted in Dimitrios’s heart and grew heavier with each passing year. He felt the old fear in his bones as he observed the traders’ arguments. The sea was failing. The old world was unraveling under its own contradictions.

Then Lin stepped into the scene.

She was an engineer of the Dragon-Trail—keen, steady-handed, soot-covered in the mornings—she had to repair the broken caravan wheels. While the others raved, she dropped to her knees beside the snapped cart and traced the fractured axle with her fingertips.

“The wheel isn’t the problem,” she murmured.

Her voice was calm, so calm that it cut through the rising arguments like a blade of clear thought.

“Every travel is independent, she continued. Each ship-load, each caravan, comes on alone. No flow. No continuity.”

Dimitrios blinked, startled by how clearly she voiced what he had felt but never dared articulate.

A chain of excessive weak links, said he to himself.

Lin shook her head and took her wax tablet. In quick certain strokes she drew a thing that was not yet anywhere in the world. Then she turned the tablet round to him.

The drawing was simple.

Revolutionarily simple.

Two continuous grooves carved into the earth, like rails, between station and station, and carried the carts on in an uninterrupted line. There will be no more independent caravans. No more isolated ships. One, twisting labor of motion.

Not a caravan.

Not a fleet.

A river of motion.

Dimitrios felt his breath catch in his throat.

“A road that never stops,” he whispered. “A road that carries the world.”

Nothing more, it was a sketch, one thought drawn in wax in the midst of a disorderly market, but it was at this time that the future changed.

And neither of them looked away.

It was not the labor of months that followed but the development of destiny. The news was spread easily among the people who were desperate to change. Artisans, blacksmiths, mathematicians, woodcarvers, mapmakers and architects began to gather. The proposal was impossible according to the old-world reasoning, but too tempting to those who had tried the sourness of a breaking system.

Together they carved grooves into the ground and ran tests of angle, depth and curvature. They constructed high wind-pulleys which caught the desert winds and converted them into motion. The waterwheels were fixed in the mountain streams and rotated the gears hewn out with great care. Relay stations sprang up like stepping stones all over the land, and by these never-ending rails they joined each other.

The work was slow.
 It was grueling.
 It was dangerous.
 But it never faltered.
 Everybody came, because all were in the same silent belief: craftsmen, traders,
 porters, scholars.

This road was common to them all.
 This was their salvation.
 And so the Silk Road began to breathe again.
 The first test came at dawn.
 Dimitrios was standing on the new track, the air still cool with the retreating night.
 There was fear and wonder as he touched the wood, which made his hands tremble. A cart
 full of rock was brought up on the rails, and its sails were made of canvas, as brown as the
 sunset. In case it crashed, the stone alone would be broken.

Lin raised the signal flag.
 The breeze was blowing across the desert, seizing the sails.
 Gears tightened.
 Ropes strained.
 And then—
 The cart moved.
 Slowly at first. Tentative. Testing its new world.
 Then with one graceful move, sliding along, as no caravan had known, gracefully.
 No jolt.
 No fight.
 No struggle against sand or storm.
 Only flow.

The onlookers gasped. Many had never seen such effortless motion, and had traveled
 their whole lives either across deserts or oceans. A camel jockey who had thirty years of the
 Trail wiped his eyes. A sailor accustomed to the restless sea whispered in awe, “This... this is
 steadier than the ocean.”

Something inside him shift, something was loosening up, and Dimitrios had wished it
 to happen without knowing it. The storm that had dwelled in his mind, the sound of the
 waves, the horror of drowning, appeared to subside. For the first time, there was no battle in
 travelling through mountains and deserts.

It felt like a connection.

Lin walked up beside him with triumph in her eyes.

“This is not a road built by one empire,” she said softly. “Or one people. It belongs to
 all of us.”

The cart flew by, sliding on as silently as a thought on the wind.

It did not drag itself across the land.

It moved with the land.

It breathed with the land.

And to Dimitrios, in a sense which he could never describe to anyone, it dawned upon
 him that they had invented something the world had never heard of.

In the evening, when the sun was setting itself behind the horizon and had tipped the
 rails with molten gold, Dimitrios was standing alone by the track. Desert wind swept against
 him, and aroused the memories he had long kept in hiding.

Another memory rose unbidden—

It was like a storm around him, as he clung to a broken spar of wood, when he was young again. Waves were as much as living animals. Lightning carved the sky. The flavor of salt filled his lungs reminded him of the time he felt like the sea had swallowed him forever.

Many years later on, he had been under the opinion that the world was split: land versus water, security versus peril, good versus doom.

However, now, when the Silk Express was present, something changed.

He knew that the world had never been divided.

They had simply lost touch.

And the highway which they had constructed was no struggle with nature, but communion with it, unity of wind and of forest, of water and of mill, of man and of the magnificent landscape, with which it loved to be united.

His father's old warning echoed again.

“The sea gives with one hand and takes with ten.”

But here, to the first time, Dimitrios caught an unsaid fact behind the words:

If the sea takes, build where it cannot reach.

Should the world break apart, mend it up.

The Silk Express was such weaving.

Another Silk Road is emerging, and this time, it was not conquest that bred it or empire, rather it was a combination of the need to work together, necessity and imagination. A vein of intertwining reach was made between old divided lands.

A highway which had made disorder sanity.

Distance into connection.

Fear into possibility.

And as Dimitrios touched the warm rail he said, this is where it begins all over again, the world.

Because now he knew:

The Silk Express was not any road.

It was a rebirth.

An avenue that would unite the world.

HONG KONG YOUNG WRITER OF THE YEAR

Fiction – Group 3 Winner

What the Sand Remembers

ESF Sha Tin College, Iris Sun Shi, –

The sand has a memory.

It's the first thing you learn out here, in the crushing, gold-white silence between worlds. It holds the metallic scent of every spilled drop of blood from forgotten skirmishes for control of an oasis, a pass, a river crossing. It remembers every footfall; the measured tread of Tang soldiers, the heavy plod of Bactrian camels, the frantic scrambling of men caught in storms. It remembers every caravan that ever crossed its face, from Zhang Qian's exploratory missions to the great merchant trains of the Sogdians. It remembers the weight of empires: the fleeting shadows of the Huns, the relentless advance of the Han watchtowers, the disciplined patrols of the Tibetans, the swift horsemen of the Uighur Khaganate. It forgets nothing, just waits, for the wind to scour the story clean and start again.

It also remembers the exact moments where the silence broke, centuries apart.

The Storm

The storm hit Jun's caravan three days later. A *karaburan*, the black storm of legend, whose name the men whispered almost reverently. The horizon vanished and the world shrank to the howl of sand, scouring skin, cloth, and courage. The camels groaned and knelt. The men tied themselves together with ropes and huddled. Jun, in his terror, found himself reciting the ballads of frontier soldiers he'd once transcribed, his lips moving soundlessly, *uselessly*.

The bamboo tube against his ribs suddenly felt absurd, a toy of a distant, orderly world. It was his mission, holding words meant for a Tang general in Kashgar, words of strategies and alliances in the endless struggle to control the Silk Road. Jun, a minor scholar from a modest family in Chang'an, had been selected for his reliability and his clean hand, but more because he was expendable. It was a validation of years spent honing his script in dutiful obscurity, yet it was shadowed by bitterness. He understood that great poets and strategists were not sent into the maw of the Taklamakan.

He had travelled with a small Sogdian caravan for camouflage, a scholar amongst the boisterous, Zoroastrian-fire-worshipping traders whose language he did not fully understand.

One evening, by a dwindling oasis, a relic of the old Kushan irrigation lines, the old Sogdian guard Nergün had pointed to a slight ridge in the sand.

“See that? Not a dune. Something’s buried there,” he said. Jun had helped him brush away the grains. They uncovered a story: the parched, wooden frame of a cart, its design unfamiliar, possibly Xianbei from centuries past. Beside it, a human form, curled as if in sleep. The features smoothed by time and wind into an androgynous mask of peace. In the corpse’s clenched hand was a small, felt-wrapped bundle.

Nergün pried it loose. Inside was a Byzantine gold solidus, Heraclius’s profile worn soft, and a jade cicada, exquisitely carved from Khotan nephrite, meant for the tongue of a noble corpse to ensure resurrection in the Han tradition. This traveler, perhaps a mercenary or a renegade trader, had died carrying someone else’s passage to the afterlife.

When the wind died, the world was remade. Dunes had migrated like nomadic armies. Landmarks were gone. The oasis they were heading towards was buried under new, anonymous hills. Two camels were lost. Their water sacks, slashed by flying grit, were half-empty.

Panic settled over the caravan. Arguments in Turkic, Sogdian and Chinese broke out. The master was dead; his lungs filled with sand. Nergün took command. “We walk. That way!” He pointed to a blankness.

Jun watched the Sogdian guard read the sun like a book, interpreting the sand where the storm had brushed it. He learned to ration his spit, to ignore the blistering sun on his neck. His purpose, his precious message became just a shape, then a nuisance, then a part of him. He stopped thinking of Kashgar, of the Tang Empire’s celestial mandate. He thought only of the next step, and the next, and the next.

The Unknown

Centuries later, the memory of that desperation flickered on a screen in an air-conditioned trailer. Dr. Arman zoomed in on the satellite image. The proposed New Silk Road highway’s path was a red line cutting through endless amber desert. Right through Grid G-7, his team’s last dig. *The Place of the Wooden Cart*, they called it informally. A single find from a preliminary scan; the silica of wood, one human skeleton. But now the funding was gone. The permit was revoked. Progress had a new scripture, and it had cut Arman out.

In his trailer, Arman held a plastic bag. Inside was a single artifact recovered just before the shutdown. A small, exquisite jade cicada. The report would call it *Funerary Object*, likely Han Dynasty. But Arman thought of the hand that last held it. The sand had remembered the body and the object, but the name, the *why*, it was dust, and Arman hated it.

He packaged the cicada for shipment to the national museum, forever labeled *Provenance Unknown*.

The Shovel

On the fifth day of walking, Jun saw it. A glint of metal. Some kind of shovel, half-buried, left behind by some transient crew. He stared, uncomprehending. It was a shape with no context. He didn’t touch it. It was part of a story he would never, *could* never understand.

His lips were cracked and his vision was swimming, the world dissolving into a shimmering, treacherous heat haze where sand met sky, and every step forward felt like he was walking on knives, a bargain struck with the ground beneath his feet. Nergün was a dark, faltering shape ahead. Then, Nergün stopped. He sank to his knees in sudden, frantic purpose, his hands clawing at the sand. A sound tore from his throat, a ragged sob choked with disbelief that broke into a wild, gasping laugh. His fingers, raw and bleeding, had found

a promise: an unexpected, shocking coolness. A dark stain spread against the pale sand, then a seeping, muddy trickle. It was water from an old, buried spring, its source likely carved by Tocharian herdsmen a millennium before.

They drank like animals, the mud coating their tongues. It was life.

That night, huddled by a feeble fire of tamarisk scrub that spat more smoke than warmth, Jun felt the sand, once as deep, as fathomless, as unending as the sea. Now it had traces of gravel and stubborn root. They were nearing the edge. He took out his dry inkstone and his last scrap of paper. With precious water, he ground the ink. He wrote not in the rigid *kaishu* of official documents, but in the swift, fluid *xingshu* of personal emotion. A private record.

The sand remembers the weight of empires, but forgets their names. It remembers the thirst, but not the prayer. I loved order, poetry and carried words of power for the Son of Heaven, but have learned the language of thirst, of wind. I am Jun, who survived. The message is intact, but the man who carries it is gone, remade by the desert.

He sealed the note and tucked it inside his robe, beside the official tube. One for the Empire. One for the sand.

The Cigarette

The next morning, thousands of years in the future, the foreman of the New Silk Road highway crew, a man named Li, lit a cigarette. The survey was done. The flags were up. This stretch was empty, boring. He kicked at the sand, revealing a black, twisted shape: a piece of old, rusted rebar. He threw it towards the pile of construction debris. It landed with a thud.

He didn't see the slight, human-sized depression in the sand nearby, a desperate man's kneeling prayer for water. He didn't feel the memory of the place, the whisper of a wooden cart, a final surrender, a group of survivors passing.

The Survival

When Jun stumbled into the *caravanserai* at Kashgar's outskirts two days later, he was celebrated as a miracle. He delivered his bamboo tube to the general's aides with efficiency. His duty was completed.

Before returning to the orderly world, Jun walked to the edge of the bustling outpost, where the desert began again. He took the jade cicada he had kept, tribute to the unknown traveler, and held it in his palm. He laid it on a flat stone, an offering to the wind and the memory, a gesture more Sogdian than Tang, an act not of the person he was, but as the person he had become.

Then he turned his back, leaving a piece of his story for the desert to keep.

The sand has a memory. It remembers the shovel, the rebar, the cicada on the stone. It remembers the storm and the taste of the mud. It holds the sigh of the scribe and the cigarette ash of the foreman. And it waits, patient, vast, unflinching, for the next wind, or the next road, to write over it all again.

Fiction – Group 1

WINNER

Whispers of the Desert

The Independent Schools Foundation Academy, Maya Suarez – 7

The shiny yellow sun yawned and stretched over the mountains as the caravan of camels began their walk at dawn. Sultan, who was the eldest of camels, pushed past Clumsy with his strong boulder shoulders. Clumsy stumbled in fright and dropped his porcelain pots. “That’s why they call him Clumsy everybody!” mocked Sultan. All the camels snickered and Clumsy’s eyes fell to the ground in embarrassment.

In the scorching afternoon, Clumsy felt a vibration whispering into his hooves. He stopped dead in his tracks and flared his nostrils bringing the whole caravan to a halt. A merchant yanked on his rope and yelled, “Move you stubborn sack of meat!” Suddenly, the path ahead collapsed with its soil and rock falling like a waterfall. The caravan had to take a detour around. Sultan scoffed at Clumsy, “Lucky oaf.”

When the sun's curtains began to draw shut, the moon took its dance onto stage. In front of the caravan, a narrow and dark canyon stood menacingly. The camels marched. Clumsy felt butterflies in his belly and slipped on some loose stones. Without realising, a sharp thorned tree branch had torn Clumsy’s bails of silk which were perched upon his back. After three hours, the camels were ordered to stop and rest. “Where’s all the silk?!” the merchant cried. His eyes glared with fire towards Clumsy. “You useless beast!” he scolded.

The next morning, Clumsy was sent to the back of the pack. Isolated. Feeling alone and unwanted, his head and neck hung down. While walking, he heard whispers of water rushing underground. Clumsy tried to warn everyone but no one would listen. He raced ahead past Sultan and guided them to a higher ledge. Without a moment to spare, a flood of water swallowed the lower ground out of sight. “How did you know?” Sultan asked. “I could feel and hear it,” replied Clumsy, “The desert speaks to me.”

Days had passed, but the caravan stood stranded on a high plateau without any water. “Can your whispering find us a drink?” asked a younger camel. Clumsy closed his eyes and blocked out the mocking memories. He felt the deep, cool song of the earth. Walking to a barren spot, he scraped it with his hoof and lay down. The humans dug and found a small spring. It was enough to save them all.

From that day, Clumsy led the caravan at the front with Sultan and the other camels followed with awed respect. He held his head high and always remembered to listen to the whispers of the desert.

Creative Writing: Fiction – Group 1

WINNER

The Secrets of the Silk Road

Po Leung Kuk Choi Kai Yau School, Gu Mi Lan – 8

Dapple, a little brown mouse with curious eyes, nibbled on a piece of sugar from a merchant's bag. She shivered, from excitement and a little fear. She knew many dangers—hungry eagles, endless deserts, and strange creatures—awaited her upon the legendary Silk Road. Yet Dapple was determined to see it for herself.

Suddenly, she heard a camel's deep grunt and squeaked in fright, nearly dropping her treasure.

“So thirsty! My throat is drier than desert sand!” one camel grumbled.

“Hmph! I'd leave this caravan now if they didn't give us seven meals a day with sweet grass and fresh water!” complained another, flicking its tail.

More camels joined in, their grumbles growing into such a racket that Dapple scurried deeper into the woven baskets, hiding behind a ball of soft silk.

Just then, a deep, rumbling laugh broke through the noise. An old camel named Sage, with fur weathered by many journeys, said with a calm but firm voice, “Youngsters, our caravan leader has given us more than we deserve. Did you already forget the terrible sandstorm that swept through just last week? Where would you be without his guidance?”

The camels, including little Dapple, trembled at the memory of howling winds and stinging sand. “The desert is not just an ocean of endless sand. Many secrets are hidden beneath, if you know where to look.”

As days passed, Sage became a gentle teacher. He showed the young camels how to find an essential water plant by its special smell, and how to read the twinkling stars for direction and hidden weather signs. Dapple listened carefully, huddled nearby. “The true treasures of the Silk Road,” Sage would say, “the skills, knowledge, and wisdom passed down by those who know the way. Remember, the journey itself is the greatest teacher.”

When the caravan finally reached a bustling trading city, Dapple spotted a fierce warrior named Arash, his arms crossed and a scowl on his face. The silk weaver called out, “Silk! Strong, unbreakable silk! Perfect for kites and strong robes!”

Arash scoffed, “Unbreakable? Impossible! Nothing so thin can be strong.”

The weaver smiled. “Let us have a contest.” He tied a single, thin silk thread to a heavy stone, then asked Arash to snap it. He pulled and twisted, but try as he might, the delicate thread held fast.

The stocky warrior was stunned into silence. The weaver replied softly, “True strength is not always loud and hard. You see, gentleness and flexibility can be a powerful kind of strength, too.” Grinning, the impressed warrior traded a shiny dagger for a full roll of glorious silk.

That evening, as the sun set in hues of orange and purple, Dapple felt her heart swell, glad she had come to the Silk Road. She had discovered different treasures and wonderful secrets along the way. Gazing at the road stretching ahead under the first stars, she was sure there were many more surprises waiting to be uncovered.

Fiction – Group 2

WINNER

Threads That Connect Us

Singapore International School, Sean Tan – 10

“Xiaolian! Xiaolian!”

In a small mud-brick house nestled on the dusty eastern stretch of the ancient Silk Road, twelve-year-old Xiaolian spent her days at the old wooden loom that had belonged to her ancestors. The loom stood in the corner of a single room, its frame scarred by generations of hands. Sunlight slipped through the narrow window, illuminating the tiny room.

Xiaolian’s grandmother rolled her wheelchair through the narrow hallway. Grandmother Li’s wrinkles never seemed to fade. Instead of her usual wrinkled face, her eyes sparkled with energy today. Xiaolian glanced up from her weaving, movement stalling in her hands.

“Yes, Nainai?” Xiaolian asked as she stopped weaving. Grandmother Li reached between her shawl and drew out a small, dark wooden box. The lid was carved with faded flowers, almost erased by time. She set the box on a table and took a seat next to her. “I have something special for you.”

Grandmother Li opened the box. Folded inside lay a silk scarf, its borders stitched with tiny symbols—circles enclosing crosses. Resting upon the scarf was a small rusty steel cross, its edges worn smooth from centuries of touch. Grandmother Li lifted the cross and placed it in Xiaolian’s palm. “Now, I must tell you a story.”

A story?

Xiaolian’s heart beat faster. She loved her grandmother’s intriguing stories. They were like threads connecting her to the past.

“This cross belonged to a brave traveller from long ago. It reminds us of him. Now, listen carefully.”

Rabban Bar Sauma was born in Khanbaliq to Nestorian Christian parents who had prayed for many years for a child. He grew into a gentle monk. At the age of 55, a restless longing pulled him westward. With his young disciple Markos, he set out on a pilgrimage toward Jerusalem.

They travelled the Silk Road for years. They walked across burning deserts where sand sang at night and through cities filled with unfamiliar people. At last, they reached Kashgar, a great oasis where every road seemed to come together.

“Now, your ancestor, Li Wei, was a street merchant who had migrated to Kashgar. He had set up a tiny stall in Kashgar, aiming to help Silk Road travellers.” Li Wei was a kind and honest person. He sold warm flatbread, offering travellers a relief from hunger.

On a sunny afternoon, as he fed crumbs to a stray goat that often visited his stall, he spotted two weary pilgrims among the crowds. Their robes were bleached by the sun, their sandals broken. Li Wei saw the exhaustion in their eyes and called them to his shade. “Travellers,” he said, “you look like you have come a long distance. My stall is small, but please, rest here in the shade.”

Without saying much more, he offered them dry bread and water. Rabban Bar Sauma and Markos tried to decline, but Li Wei just smiled and said, “I don’t need anything in return.”

Moved beyond words, Rabban drew from his pouch the little rusty steel cross that had travelled with him. He pressed it into Li Wei’s hand. “May this remind us of each other,” he said. Li Wei accepted it with a bow. Strengthened, the pilgrims continued west.

War later closed the road to Jerusalem, yet new paths opened: Markos rose to become Patriarch of the Eastern Church, and Rabban was chosen as an envoy to the courts of Europe. He stood before emperors in Constantinople, popes in Rome, kings in Paris and London, carrying messages of peace across a divided world. He died in Baghdad in 1294, but the light of his journey endured.

“Back in Kashgar, Li Wei kept the cross safe. His wife later embroidered the symbols onto an old silk scarf. The scarf and cross passed quietly through the family, until they reached this small house on the edge of an old road.” Grandmother Li finished the story.

Xiaolian, traumatised by the story, traced the worn edges with her thumb. She could feel the weight of deserts and mountains. She could sense strangers who would become connected by one shared meal.

Years passed. Xiaolian grew into a skilled weaver whose scarves travelled far beyond the village. She never sold the original scarf or the cross. They stayed with her at all times.

One spring evening, long after Grandmother Li had passed, an elderly foreign visitor arrived at Xiaolian’s door. He was dressed in simple clothes, and spoke Chinese with a strange accent. In his hand, he carried a small wooden box.

He introduced himself as Father Elias, a scholar tracing the footsteps of Rabban Bar Sauma. Word of Xiaolian’s scarves bearing symbols no Chinese artisan should have known had reached him over continents.

He opened the box slowly and revealed a small rusty steel cross, identical in every detail to the one Xiaolian had.

“This,” he said, “was found among Rabban Bar Sauma’s few possessions in Baghdad. It was believed to have a companion piece, one that he gave away during his journey”

He had come, he explained, to see if the lost twin still existed.

Xiaolian’s heart skipped a beat. The memories of Grandmother Li, her Nainai, came flashing back. Xiaolian drew her cross from its hiding place. The two pieces lay side by side on the table, gleaming softly.

Father Elias’s eyes filled with tears. “The circle,” he whispered, “is complete.”

Xiaolian understood then that the threads had never been about one act of kindness in a dusty market. They were about two strangers who could meet again and recognise each other across time.

“Take it home,” she said, “the road is long, and kindness is lighter to carry when shared.”

That night, under the same stars that once guided Rabban westward, Xiaolian sat at her loom once more. The shuttle began its quiet song, weaving new patterns into the endless threads of connection.

Creative Writing: Fiction – Group 2 WINNER

The Journey of Wind and Sand

Alliance Primary School, Kowloon Tong, Lau Wang Hei – 10

The wind tasted of red dust when Jun stood at the edge of Dunhuang. In front of him stretched the desert—so wide he couldn't see its end. Under the blue sky, the sand moved like golden waves. Jun was fourteen, but his dream was big: to follow the old Silk Road and find the Valley of Wind Chimes. His father, a mapmaker, had once told him about it—where wind and stone made music together.

When Jun was ten, his father died, leaving behind a few unfinished maps covered in strange curved lines and symbols. On the morning Jun left home, he packed one of these maps, a small compass, a wooden flute, and some food. His mother gave him a scarf and said softly, “The road will not give you answers quickly, but it will help you know who you are.”

Soon Dunhuang disappeared into the distance. The days burned like fire, and the air shimmered over the dunes. At night, the desert froze. Jun wrapped himself in the scarf and watched the stars. One night, a gust of wind whispered through the dunes—it almost sounded like a voice saying, “Keep going east.”

After a week, Jun reached a caravan camp filled with traders from distant lands—Persians with blue eyes, Kazakh horsemen, and Chinese merchants with silk and spices. He asked to join them, offering to care for camels. The caravan leader, Zahra, eyed him skeptically.

“You are too small to handle camels,” she said.

“I can read maps,” Jun replied.

“Then tomorrow, map boy, find us water.”

At dawn, Jun studied his father's map and the dunes. Climbing a rocky hill, he spotted a patch of green in the distance—reeds around a small pool. Zahra nodded in approval. “You can stay with us.”

Travelling with the caravan changed Jun. He learned to listen—to the bells around the camels' necks, the movement of stars, and the low hum of the desert at night. Around the fire, traders told stories of faraway cities—Samarkand's blue domes, Kashgar's markets, and snowy mountains shining in the sun. These tales filled Jun with wonder.

One evening, Zahra sat beside him. “You carry something important, don't you?”

Jun showed her the map. “My father drew this. He said it leads to the Valley of Wind Chimes.”

Zahra's eyes softened. “I've heard of that place. They say the wind sings there through tall stone pillars like bells. Only those who truly listen can find it.”

Weeks passed. The caravan battled sandstorms and crossed narrow mountain trails, passing ruins half-buried in dust. When they reached Turpan, Jun decided to go on alone. Zahra gave him a small bag of dates. “Trust,” she said.

From Turpan, Jun entered Tuyugou Valley, where red cliffs rose high with caves carved into their sides. Inside were ancient Buddhist paintings—the faces of Buddhas glowing faintly in the dim light. They seemed to watch him as he walked past. Villagers told him the Valley of Wind Chimes was only a legend, but Jun would not give up.

As the air turned cold and snow began to fall, Jun grew weak. One freezing night, he took shelter in an old watchtower and lit a small fire. To stay awake, he played his father's favorite tune on the flute—a slow, wistful melody like wind between stones.

Then he heard it: ding... ding... ding...

At first it seemed an echo—but the notes came from outside. Heart pounding, Jun followed the sound through a narrow path between cliffs. Suddenly the passage opened into a hidden valley. Under the moonlight stood tall stone pillars, thin and smooth. When the wind blew, they rang like wind chimes, their tones weaving together in a haunting, beautiful song.

Jun opened his father's map. Now he understood. The strange symbols showed the pillars' positions and how their shadows fell. His father hadn't sought gold or glory—he had been mapping the music of the desert.

Jun sat among the chimes until dawn, the wind singing around him. He felt as if his father was beside him, listening too. "I found it, Father," he whispered.

Months later, Jun returned to Dunhuang—taller, leaner, and weathered by wind and sun. His mother recognized him instantly. She listened as he spoke of Zahra, the caravan, and the valley of singing stones. She cried softly, smiling through her tears.

"Your father always said maps are more than lines," she told him. "They are journeys waiting for the brave."

When Jun grew up, he became a mapmaker like his father. But his maps were not ordinary—they showed more than rivers and mountains. He also marked the places where he had heard special sounds, met kind people, and learned important truths. People said his maps felt alive. Some swore that if you touched them, you could hear a faint humming—like wind moving over distant sand.

On quiet nights, when the wind rose from the desert, Jun took out his flute and played the song of the valley. The notes drifted through Dunhuang's streets, mingling with the whisper of sand. Together they became a single melody—one that travelled forever along the old Silk Road, carrying the story of a boy, a mapmaker, and the voice of the wind.

Fiction – Group 6

WINNER

The Helpful Camel

Korean International School Springboard, Tsui Yau Yau Claire Summer – 11

Chapter 1 : Not very helpful

On a very peculiar day in the Taklamakan desert, there was an equally peculiar camel. This camel, along with the caravan of hardworking merchants, helpful servants and ordinary camels, was a camel that was remarkably lazy. In the desert, where food is dry and meager, and the journey complicated and long, the lazy camel refused to walk, ate food, and burped. In fact, this camel was soooooo unhelpful that he would never help his owner, never. His owner was understandably very unhappy. In fact, he was so sad that he didn't want to talk to this camel anymore.

Everything changed when a note from the king. One day, on holiday, the camel was lounging and enjoying his camel snacks. Then, a note was delivered by a pigeon named, well, Pigeon to the merchants - a valuable looking scroll made of silk, with extra fancy writings on it. The camel got curious - what could it be? Crudely and rudely, he snatched the note with his big camel teeth. The merchant who had the note was really angry with the camel. "Hey! how rude of you to snatch my note!" yelled the Merchant.

But the camel did not care about the man, or what he was saying. He was too busy opening the scroll with his camel feet! After a lot of struggling, stomping and pushing and shoveling, he finally opened it. On the note, it said "Please, we are going to finish building the Silk Road. Next year, there will be a contest to bring the most valuable item to the emperor. The owner of that camel will become the emperor and rule all of China." The camel was very excited but realised he was so lazy that he could not join the contest.

After crying very hard about himself, the lazy camel decided to give up on junk food. Sadly, he cannot resist the food and keep eating. The berries and the sweets are just too good! The bed, too comfy; the caravan, walking too fast; the goods, too heavy! Frustrated, the camel kept rolling on the floor and stumbled upon a book.

The camel read the book and found a magic cave on page 15. It said, "This is a magical cave that has the legendary golden dragon statue located to the north of China, it is the rarest treasure in the world." The camel knows what to bring to the emperor "the legendary golden dragon statue." murmured the camel. So, the camel is set out on an adventure to find the treasure.

In the middle of the night, the camel escaped his house and went outside of the desert. The city was quiet and everyone was fast asleep, so the camel escaped safely from the people and their camels. "The book said that I would have to go through the oasis, then I would have to walk through the city where they only allowed local people and did not allow camels, and in the end I would have to go back to the China mountains and survive from the dragon guardian." the camel shuddered. Determined, he set out on his way anyway.

In the morning the camel's owner woke up to find the camel missing. Worried he got kidnapped, the owner called the royal guards (police at the time). "Sorry we can't find your camel, we looked everywhere but still no evidence!" The police said. The owner was shocked and decided to go to the oasis to find the camel.

Turns out, the desert is quite big, and everywhere looks the same – lots and lots of sand, some dunes, and a random rock. The camel went his way to get to the oasis but it was toooooo complicated to find his way. "What was I thinking?" sighed the camel. Dragging his feet, he was very ready to walk back home when he saw a cat and a dog. "We are tour guides to people's directions. We want to help you go to the oasis, but first we need your help to fix our boat. It's broken." sang the cat and dog. The camel agreed and decided to make the promise to fix it so that he could go to the oasis.

During the journey a pack of wolves were secretly watching the camel, dog and cat. They were scavengers, and their LOVE treasures!

"If I kidnapped the cat" Said wolf 1, "we would be able to find the way to the treasures!"

"We need to be sneaky." One wolf said. "Wolves, we should pretend to be camels so we can camouflage through the oasis and later we can catch the cat." The wolves disguised as camels and later arrived at a shortcut to the oasis.

Chapter 2 : The adventure begins

With great difficulty, the camel finished building the boat. It was tough to find the wood to make a raft!

"Thank you camel now we can travel to the oasis." thanked the cat and dog.

Once the raft was finished, the camel, dog and the cat rowed the boat. It was a little shaky, but it managed to set out to the sea until a terrible storm appeared. The raft shook like an autumn leaf in the stormy sea.

"Maybe I was right, it is not a good idea to not go on an adventure." cried the camel. The cat and dog comforted the camel and said." It's ok we can still find a way to the oasis." The camel now has more confidence and found another way to get to the oasis – getting back on land, keep making lefts and walking into the jungle. The cat and dog were surprised when they found out the camel was able to find another way by the book.

2 hours later the owner walked to the oasis and said." Excuse me, where is my camel?." asked the camel's owner, a merchant said." sorry the camel ran away to the dark jungle." The owner was sad and went back home to wait for the camel, hoping he would come back soon. The owner prayed to the saints so that the camel could come back soon but he didn't know that saints did not exist.

At last the camel, dog and cat arrived at the oasis with the book's help. The dog and cat said." Thank you camel for helping us all go to the oasis. This book must be very helpful." The camel said." This is a secret only between us, you should not tell your owner." The dog and cat promised they would never tell anyone.

Finally they arrived at the oasis. The oasis was very busy -there were lots of people, lots of camels and also many shops. The camel has never seen something so amazing. He wished to live there forever." I wish that I could live in this oasis." amazed the camel.

Suddenly a group of camels came and grabbed the cat. The cat screamed for help but it was too late the camel and the dog couldn't grab her paws. Suddenly the camel realised that they were not camels, but they were wolves in disguise. The wolves brought the cat to Egypt and gave her to the pharaoh. The pharaoh said." Wow this cat's fur is good for making a new carpet but first I must kill her." But the dog came and later went to stop the

pharaoh." Don't kill the cat because she is my only friend, and meet my new camel friend. Please don't make fun of him for being lazy." cried the dog. But the pharaoh didn't listen and laughed at the camel.

The camel felt sad and decided to give up but the dog said." Camel lets me deal with the pharaoh later and starts the adventure with 2 of us." The camel went with the dog to the city that did not allow black people and camels. In the city there were many beautiful structures and fancy 5 star restaurants. But the problem is that there was a family's daughter that was punished by the mayor." Stop hitting our daughter." sobbed the family." No, I would not allow your daughter because she is black." yelled the mayor. The camel and dog saw everything and decided to hide in a bush. The camel bravely came and kicked the mayor's butt." owwww!" screamed the mayor. The camel and dog ran away and secretly brought the family to a random hotel." Thank you camel and dog, what can we do to repay you, but please go away because the mayor is going to find you." cried the father.

The camel and dog ran away as fast as they could but were in big trouble." Why are you taking me away." yelled the camel. The mayor's guards said." This city is restricted for camels. We can't let you in. The dog came and said." Mayor's guards, if you try to take the camel away then you will have to face the consequences." The mayor's guards ran away as fast as they could and decided to quit their jobs. Later all the people praised the camel and dog and now the city has never restricted the black people and camels ever again.

Chapter 3: Rescuing the cat

Right in Egypt the pharaoh and his wolves were hitting and yelling at the cat." You disobedient cat, keep cleaning my shoes or else I will kill you." the pharaoh yelled. The cat tried to clean but she couldn't because she is a cat. The cat sobbed." Please why do you want to kidnap me? I am just a cat." The pharaoh yelled ." Shut up you disrespectful cat." The pharaoh taped the cat's mouth and later the cat could not breathe.

The camel and dog were later given a magic statue." take this book it has real magic in it, if the pharaoh tries to attack you, use this statue to bring the characters to life." encouraged the librarian." Thank you librarian." said the camel and dog. During the adventure they arrived at the pharaoh's palace. The pharaoh asked." You strangers, why are you here?" We are here for revenge, I will teach you." yelled the camel and dog. The characters from the statue appeared and quickly freed the cat." That will teach you." yelled the characters from the statue. The pharaoh decided to tell his wolves to come for another plan for revenge. Later his wolves decided to dress up as humans so that they could capture the cat again.

Soon the camel, dog and cat followed the book that said." To get to the mountains you must walk to the saffron village, and you must use this magic book to heal the richest man in this village." The camel, dog and cat walked to the saffron village and saw many dead flowers, many fishermen and one extraordinary wooden mansion. The camel said." I think this wooden mansion belongs to the richest man in this village." The dog and cat decided to agree and they all went to the mansion. They saw the richest man inside of the mansion and saw a sick old man inside."Help me." cried the old man." I only have 3 days to live." The camel didn't even know what to do but remembered what the book had said, so the camel read some strange words and later found out that the old man suddenly turned into a rich young quadrillionaire and said." Thank you camel, dog and cat. You saved my life. As a reward I give you a digital map so that it can help you easily get to the high mountains." The camel, dog and cat thanked the old man and left to walk to the mountains.

Chapter 4: The trading day

A year later there was an alliteration about the silk road trading from the emperor.” At 8pm everyone must trade their most extraordinary treasure to me, but if you trade me something in common, you would be exiled forever, don’t embarrass yourself!” yelled the emperor furiously. But then the camel’s owner saw this and called the camel.” You only have an hour before the event, come back quickly or else you would be exiled!” cried the owner.” I promise I will be here soon.” reminded the camel. But when the camel, dog and cat arrived at the mountains it was too late. The silk road event has already started.” Oh no!” the camel screamed.” I don’t know what to do.” The dog and cat decided to comfort the camel and said.” It’s ok, we will find a way to get here as fast as we can, but first let’s just find the golden dragon statue first and we will have plenty of time.”

Suddenly the camel realised the digital map and opened it. Suddenly it started to talk.” Hello I am the digital map. How can I help you.” said the digital map.” please show us the destination to the mountains.” said the cat. The digital map shows the camel, dog and cat the destination.” Thank you.” said the dog. They followed the destination and saw the legendary golden dragon statue. The statue was ancient and very beautiful. Suddenly the dragon guardian came and yelled.” Who are those trespassers? We do not want strangers in my temple.” We are here to bring your legendary golden dragon statue to the emperor.” said the camel, dog and cat.” Let’s make a deal. If we can answer your question you can come with us to the adventure and trade the emperor your legendary golden dragon statue.” The dragon guardian gave the camel, dog and cat a question and said.” what is $6x(145 - 56) + 5 =$.” The dog answered.” The answer is 539 because when you add the extra numbers this is the answer.” Wow.” said the camel and cat.” Dog, you are so smart.” The dragon guardian was pleased.” Dog you are correct, the answer is 539.” said the dragon guardian.

Later the camel, dog and cat were about to give the emperor the legendary golden dragon statue until the pharaoh and his pack of wolves snatched the legendary golden dragon statue.” Hahahahahaha you will be exiled forever.” shouted the pharaoh. The camel was depressed and said.” I am sorry but would be exiled because the only thing left is nothing.” So the dragon guardian gave the camel a broken vase. Embarrassed, the camel hid under a bush. Then the emperor came and said.” may I look at your treasure?” But when the emperor saw this he was surprised.” Wow this vase would be worth millions, this is the most legendary treasure I’ve ever seen.” cried the emperor. Suddenly the dog, cat and the dragon guardian saw this and said.” Well done camel you are now the king.” Turns out the legendary golden dragon statue was just made of plastic instead of real gold.

The camel was crowned emperor and told the emperor’s guards.” Arrest the pharaoh and his pack of wolves. We do not want something in common.” Why did we not win.” yelled the pharaoh.” The emperor said.” Because the legendary golden dragon statue is not made of real gold. It’s made of plastic painted in gold. The camel was soon helpful and was never remarkably lazy again. The End

Chapter 5: A trip to shenzhen

So the day continued with the camel, dog, cat and the dragon guardian when the day went on another adventure to travel to Shenzhen and visit all of the destinations. Another peculiar day in the Taklamakan desert the camel’s owner said,” Are you sure you can go on a holiday without your owner.” The camel said.” It is not only me. I have my friends named dog, cat and dragon guardian.” The camel made a promise from his owner, in fact he actually broke his promise from his owner. There was a bus waiting for the camel to come in. The

driver cried." Please get here as fast as you can or we would have left earlier. "The camel ran to the bus but his suitcases dropped when he was getting inside of the bus. The dog, cat and dragon guardian were waiting until they were shocked." Where are your bags." yelled the dog." I dropped my suitcases when I was running. The dog ran out of the bus and picked out all of the camel's suitcases and ran back to the bus.

During the adventure the bus driver drove very fast to the city but then the cat felt very sick. I need a vomit bag." cried the cat. The camel gave his vomit bag but did not feel better. But tragically the plane has left already, the camel was sad."It's ok camel there is another plane in 3 hours." comforted the dragon guardian. So the camel, dog, cat and dragon guardian decided to explore the airport to the shops, the restaurants, and the resorts just in case the plane was delayed.

Later an evil gang of hyenas had a secret plan." This is our goal to steal the emperor's crown and become the emperor of all of China." Laughed one of the hyenas. The leader of the hyenas said." This is our only chance to steal the throne. This quest should be ironic or else you all are fired. To be continued

Fiction – Group 7 WINNER

Six Traders, One Dream

Korean International School Springboard, Adrian Lin – 20

Once upon a time in Wuhan, China, there lived a family who wanted to start a trading business. They are called the Jiangan family. Zhang is the head of the family and his wife is called Wei. They are the head of the Jiangan Family, are in their mid 30s, and they have 4 children who are mostly boys named Yue, Nai, Lan, and Wen living together in a house. Together, they like to go fishing in the lake, make dumplings, and garden. The 4 boys are in their teens and they are joining the trading with their family. So the whole family will trade together by traveling to western China.

“We’re bored and we want to do a lot of trading to make better business!” said Lan eagerly. “Ok! We will go together as a group.” Wen replied. The family then set off on their trading route going west of China. They were trying to sell various items made in China such as gunpowder, silk, and fruits such as lychee, peaches, dragonfruits, and mandarins to the people who live there. “After gathering the fruits, Zhang suggested, ‘Let’s trade them to Jingzhou!’ ‘Good idea!’ said Nai excitedly. The family then continued with their journey westwards to do trading smoothly.

Suddenly, when they arrived in Chengdu, Sichuan, they met Dingken, a merchant guild leader. Dingken is in his 60s and he used to be friends with Wei, but was bullied by one of Wei’s friends. He is a very strict man who doesn’t allow people to visit Chengdu. Dingken yelled “What are you doing here? You guys are not allowed to enter Chengdu! My merchants are here and you shouldn’t be visiting my hometown!” The family got angry with Dingken but they tried to ignore his warnings and proceed with trading in Chengdu. “I’m going to tell the armies to escort you guys away from Chengdu!”

“We’re unhappy about Dingken’s feelings on trading in Chengdu! Let’s find a solution so that we can solve the problem together!” said Wei. The family continued to think of a way to solve the conflict with Dingken. “Dingken and Zhang negotiated and came up with a compromise on allowing them to visit Chengdu. “I’ll allow your family to do trading only if you will give me 10% of your sale!” The family accepted the deal with Dingken, but after a few days of trading. Finally, they decided to head towards Deyang because they wanted to have their full income in trading.

“Let’s head north to Deyang so that we can get back our full trading income!” Nai suggested confidently. “I agree with you Nai!” the 3 other boys echoed. After heading north to Deyang, the family continued their journey westward. In Chamdo, they faced unexpected challenges—difficult terrain and skeptical local merchants. But the Jiangan family’s reputation for honesty and fair dealing helped them overcome these obstacles. By the time they reached Nagqu, their name was known throughout China.

"The Jiangan family succeeded through integrity and teamwork!" merchants said with admiration. Yue's negotiation skills, Nai's eye for quality goods, Lan's ability to build trust, and Wen's careful record-keeping had all contributed to their success. Inspired by their journey and values, families across China started their own trading businesses, carrying forward the Jiangan family's legacy of hard work, honesty, and unity.

For example, around 240 million years ago, a serpent-like reptile named Dinocephalosaurus roamed the earth. The Dinocephalosaurus had a very long neck. Researchers recently described that Dinocephalosaurus is a giant. That dinosaur was found in southern China and was believed to be a marine animal and probably used its long neck to hunt along with its fang-like teeth to catch prey.

The reason why China has a lot of fossils is because of the huge area China covers.

Non-Fiction – Group 1

WINNER

The Silk Road: A Journey from Past to Future

YK Pao School Shanghai, Chen Yi An Anne – 8

The Silk Road only became known as The Silk Road in the 19th century, but the history of the route stretches back thousands of years.

Around 2000 years ago, Rome and China wanted direct travel between them because they wanted to trade. However, the Parthians were in the middle of the two great empires, and tried to stop them. The Romans then developed the Maritime Silk Road, which went across the sea just around the Parthians.

By around the 13th century, it became much easier to travel from China to Europe by land. However, the Silk Road was not only one main road. There were many branches of the Silk Road spread around the world. The main route started by going along the Great Wall, then continued to spread into the Taklamaken Desert, over the Pamir Mountains, and through Central Asia to Rome.

Around that time, explorers and merchants like Marco Polo began to travel along the Silk Road. Marco Polo was one of the greatest explorers of his time. He was famous for traveling from Venice along the Silk Road to China and working for Kublai Khan, who was the first Emperor of the Yuan Dynasty. Marco Polo stayed in and travelled around China for many years. He learned the Chinese language and was fascinated by the cities, culture, luxury and wealth of the country. Moreover, Marco Polo's journey on the Silk Road inspired an informative book called The Book of the Marvels of the World which opened a window for the West to the knowledge of the East.

Despite its name, silk was not the only product that was traded on the Silk Road. Recipes like dumplings, pilaf, noodles, and ice cream were traded too, as well as other foods such as onions and carrots. Valuables such as porcelain, medicine, tea, camels, glass, gold and silver were also bought and sold. The Silk Road made trading easier, and global trade flourished.

It was not just goods that flowed along the Silk Road; arts, technology, and knowledge did as well. Stories like Aladdin were developed first in Kashgar, China and spread along the Silk Road. Religions such as Christianity and Buddhism also traveled along the route. China's four great inventions—gunpowder, compass, paper and printing were too transported along the Silk Road, to the Middle East and Europe.

The Silk Road is a pathway of globalization. In recent years, China is working on developing a new “Silk Road”. While camel caravans have been replaced by China-Europe freight trains, more roads, railways and ports are being built to connect China with many countries in Asia, Africa and Europe. Nowadays, the trade of goods and products, and the sharing of cultures and ideas, are becoming more convenient and efficient.

China’s Silk Road is a journey from the past to the future, and it is booming again. It bridges the eras, helps the world become more connected, and improves the lives of people all over the world.

Creative Writing: Non-Fiction – Group 1 WINNER

Zhang Qian and the Silk Road

The King's School Qianhai Shenzhen, Akira Yang – 8

Over two thousand years ago during the Han Dynasty, a man named Zhang Qian was sent to the West. He went through big mountains and rivers. Sometimes he felt hungry. Sometimes he got captured, but Zhang Qian never gave up. He finally found a way to the western regions and connected the East with the West.

From then on, China's silk, porcelain and tea were sent to far away western countries through this road. They love Chinese silk. They thought it was light, soft, and smooth to touch. Meanwhile, spices, glass and grapes from the West made life in China more colourful.

Later, during the Eastern Han Dynasty, there was another great man named Ban Chao, who worked to reopen the Silk Road, which had been blocked for many years. His efforts made the road wider and allowed even more countries to trade with China.

The Silk Road was not just for trade caravans; it was also a way to share culture and knowledge. Through this road, China shared many inventions with the world, like silk-making, pottery, paper-making, and iron-smelting. They became even busier. The monk Yuan Zang travelled West along the Silk Road to India to Buddhist scriptures. When he returned, he wrote a book called *Records of the Western Regions*. It described the people and places he saw, full of fascinating stories.

During the Yuan Dynasty, an Italian traveller named Marco Polo came to China along the Silk Road. He travelled in China for many years, and later wrote a book called *The Travels of Marco Polo*. The book described China.

The Silk Road was not just a trade route, it was also a bridge of friendship and culture. It helped people from different countries understand and help each other, making the world a better place. Many Chinese people and people from other countries like this long road, and now the Silk Road has changed into what it's becoming in future – a great train line.

The story of the Silk Road tells us we need to be brave and believe in ourselves – if you believe in yourself, you will be better and better. Zhang Qian was very brave, if he was not brave, he would never have crossed the Silk Road. After Zhang Qian came back, he told lots of people about the Silk Road story and the king liked Zhang Qian so much he held a big party for him. They thought Zhang Qian to be a hero. If Zhang Qian was alive today, I'd like to listen to his stories also.

Non-fiction – Group 2

WINNER

The Chessboard of Silk and Strategy: Old Roads, New Dreams

St. Joseph's Primary School, Daryl Ng – 10

As dusk settles and the harbour lights dance like chess pieces waiting for their turn, I open my book on the Silk Road, ready to step into a timeless game of journeys and exchanges. The pages feel like squares on a board, caravans like knights, and the ships outside glide like rooks across the glittering board. Through stories, I hear camel bells, smell cinnamon and pepper, and see silk shimmer like water.

The Silk Road isn't just history to me, but a game that never ends. Each move across the board carried treasures, e.g. silk from China, glassware from Rome, spices from India, paper from our own scholars. Each move also carried ideas about religions, technologies, scientific knowledge, and art forms, changing shape as they travel. I feel like a player waiting for my turn, wondering what piece I'll place on the board of the New Silk Road.

In 139 BC, Emperor Wu sent Zhang Qian west to find new lands and allies, a single bold move that opened the Silk Road. I picture Chang'an buzzing like a chessboard at the start of play. The Silk Road was not a single road but a web of paths stretching over 6000 kilometres across the Gobi Desert and the Pamir Mountains. Traders travelled in caravans with camels to protect themselves from robbers, stopping at caravanserais. Few people journeyed the entire route; instead, middlemen and trading posts kept the goods and ideas moving, square by square, like a long strategic game. Merchants carried silk soft as clouds, jade symbolizing wisdom, and porcelain shimmering under the sunlight. In return, caravans brought baskets of Persian grapes bursting with sweetness, ruby-bright pomegranates from distant valleys, powerful horses from Central Asia and Roman glassware sparkling like captured rainbows. Tea drifted west with its fragrance, spices and gemstones added colour to the journey, while textiles and crafted tools moved east.

The Silk Road carried more than goods. It carried games too. Chaturanga from India evolved into Shatranj in Persia, later into international chess, while in China, Xiangqi took shape with a river on the board and Generals who cannot meet. Yet as pieces changed, strategy held. Children in caravan camps learnt rules the way they learnt words, swapping moves like they swapped stories by the fire. Across the centuries, chess blossomed into thousands of identifiable variants and hundreds of millions of people play.

Religion and ideas spread just as fluidly. Buddhist monks carried scriptures eastward, Islamic scholars shared astronomy and medicine, and Christian missionaries travelled across continents. Towns along the routes grew into multicultural cities, where languages mixed and innovations flourished. Horses introduced to China strengthened the Mongol Empire, while gunpowder from China reshaped the European warfare. One famous traveller was Marco Polo, who journeyed

from Venice to Xanadu in 1275. His adventure made the Silk Road famous in Europe, inspiring generations to imagine lands beyond their own.

When I imagine the Silk Road, I don't picture merchants first. I see children. A boy from Persia might hand me a carved horse piece; I'd give him a flat Xiangqi disk with Chinese characters. We'd grin at the differences, then play on the same board. Under a tamarisk tree, families traded not only silk and jade but also inventions, e.g. compasses to steer ships, papermaking that spread learning, and remedies for fevers. Musicians carried rhythms and cooks swapped noodles, spices, olives, and dates. Imagine tasting a Roman grape while teaching someone how to move a knight across the board. Every encounter was a lesson, every friendship a discovery, and every invention a new piece added to the board.

By the 1400s, ships had begun to sail across oceans, carrying goods faster than camels could cross deserts. The caravans faded, and the road grew quiet. The story felt unfinished until 2013, when China revived the idea with the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Now the pieces become high speed trains, cargo ships, airplanes, and digital networks. Countries trade machines, medicines, and ideas that travel instantly online. The BRI stretches across land and sea, building lanes where goods, services, capital, and ideas can move. Today, more than 150 countries are part of this new game, each placing their pieces on the global board.

Hong Kong, being a vital connector in the BRI, links Mainland projects to global capital and expertise while deepening cultural and educational exchanges. Its role isn't only economic but symbolic. Hong Kong is a place where East meets West, resembling the crossroads of the ancient Silk Road.

China's high-speed rails, ports, and digital Silk Road have already made the game alive again. But its future depends on us, the new players. I imagine sitting in a classroom with students from faraway places, each of us telling stories of our homes, then playing a match of chess. The Silk Road isn't only about trade. It's about people finding ways to understand each other through moves and ideas.

I wonder what my move will be. Perhaps I'll be an engineer, building bridges that connect countries like rooks across the board. Or a scientist, working on clean energy projects that shine like bishops guiding the way. Maybe I'll design games that teach history, so children across continents can play together and learn how the Silk Road once carried both silk and strategy.

The Silk Road has always been more than a road. It's a thread weaving people together across time and distance. Once, the Silk Road shimmered with silk, jade, spices, and games. Now, it hums with trains, ships, satellites, and digital sparks. In the future, it may carry treasures no caravan ever held—our imagination, our friendships, and the dreams we dare to share. The story of the Silk Road isn't finished. It's still being written, move by move, step by step. And one day, we'll place our own pieces onto the board, adding a new chapter to its endless tale of connection and discovery.

Creative Writing: Non-Fiction – Group 2 WINNER

The Silk Road: A Simple Story of Travel, Learning, and Change

Shanghai Singapore International School, Agastya Wangkheimayum – 10

The Silk Road is one of the most famous networks of travel and trade in world history. Even though it is called a “road,” it was really a large group of paths, trails, and routes that spread across Asia, the Middle East, and into parts of Europe and Africa. For many centuries, people used these routes to move goods, ideas, and culture. The Silk Road helped people from many different countries learn about one another, and it changed the world in important ways.

The First Travelers

Long before the Silk Road had its famous name, people were already travelling across Central Asia. Many of the first travellers were nomads—people who moved with their animals from place to place. Nomads knew the deserts, mountains, and grasslands very well, and they knew how to survive long journeys. They traded useful things like animal skins, tools, and food. Even these early trades helped ideas spread from one group to another.

One of the most important early travellers was a Chinese explorer named **Zhang Qian**. In **138 BCE**, the emperor of China sent him westward to learn about other kingdoms. His journey was long and difficult. He was captured, escaped, and travelled through dangerous areas. When he finally returned to China many years later, he brought back valuable information. He described stronger horses from Central Asia, new foods like grapes and alfalfa, and cultures with customs that China had never seen before. His reports helped China to develop trade with western regions. His journey helped shape what we now call the Silk Road.

People Learning About One Another

As more people began to travel along the Silk Road, it became a meeting place for many cultures. Merchants, explorers, religious teachers, and scholars used the routes to move from place to place. Some carried goods to trade, while others carried knowledge, stories, and beliefs.

Many different items travelled along the Silk Road. China sent silk, tea, and paper. India sent spices, ivory, and cotton cloth. Persia sent carpets, jewellery, and beautiful glassware. The Roman Empire sent gold, silver, and strong glass cups and bottles. Many items travelled very far from where they were made, passing through many hands before reaching their final destination.

Goods were not the only things that moved along the Silk Road. Ideas and religions travelled too. Buddhist monks from India used the Silk Road to bring Buddhism into China. Over time, Buddhism influenced Chinese art, architecture, and ways of thinking. Later, Chinese monks travelled back along the same route to learn more. One of the most famous monks, **Xuanzang**, spent many years crossing deserts and mountains to collect Buddhist teachings. When he returned, he shared what he had learned and helped spread these ideas further.

Along the Silk Road, people heard many languages, tasted foods from faraway places, and saw many styles of clothing and buildings. Cities along the route—such as **Kashgar** and **Samarkand**—became rich and full of culture. In these cities, travellers traded goods, shared music, told stories, and learned new skills from one another. The Silk Road became a powerful example of how cultures can mix and grow.

The Last Great Travelers

Over time, sea routes opened up, traveling by ship became faster and safer than crossing deserts and mountains. Still, some famous travellers made their journeys along Silk Road routes during its later years.

One was **Marco Polo**, a merchant from Venice. In the 1200s, he traveled to China and spent many years exploring Asia. When he returned home, he wrote a book describing what he had seen. People in Europe were amazed by his stories about Chinese cities and powerful rulers. His writings inspired curiosity about Asia.

Another famous explorer was **Ibn Battuta** from Morocco. He travelled through North Africa, the Middle East, India, Central Asia, and China. He wrote detailed descriptions of the people he met, the foods he ate, and the traditions he observed. His writing gives historians useful information about life across many regions at that time.

By the 1400s and 1500s, the land travel along the Silk Road were less common. Wars, bandits, and shifting borders made travel harder. Sea routes took over most long-distance trade. Even so, the cultural connections built through the Silk Road lasted for centuries.

A New Silk Road for Today's World

Today, people sometimes talk about building a “new Silk Road.” This means creating new connections—such as highways, railways, ports, airports, and digital communication—that link countries across Asia, Africa, and Europe. These links no longer use camels and caravans, but the purpose is similar: to support trade, travel, and learning.

A modern Silk Road could bring several benefits. One benefit is stronger cooperation between countries. When nations work together on shared projects, they can build better relationships and solve problems more peacefully.

Another benefit is cultural exchange. Just like the ancient Silk Road connected people, a modern one can help people share music, art, stories, and traditions. The internet makes this easier, allowing students and teachers from different places to learn from one another.

A new Silk Road could also support economic growth, especially in developing areas. Better transportation can help regions sell goods more easily, create jobs, and improve living standards. Cities along modern routes could become busy and successful, just as Silk Road cities once were.

Finally, modern connections can support cooperation in science and technology. Countries can work together on climate research, health care, clean energy, and new inventions. Just as the ancient Silk Road helped spread inventions like papermaking, modern networks can help spread new discoveries.

Why the Silk Road Still Matters

The Silk Road is important today because it shows the power of human connection. It teaches us that when people meet and share ideas, they learn and grow. The Silk Road was more than trading objects. It was also about sharing beliefs, art, traditions, and knowledge.

It reminds us that the world is always changing. Today we can travel across continents in hours or send messages in seconds. The main idea of the Silk Road—connecting people across distance—still matters. Whether someone was walking across deserts hundreds of years ago or joining an online class today, the spirit of learning from others continues.

Conclusion

The story of the Silk Road is a story of travel, discovery, and learning. It began with early travellers crossing hard landscapes. It grew into a network that connected many cultures. It continued through explorers like Marco Polo and Ibn Battuta. Today, it inspires new ideas about how countries can cooperate and share knowledge.

No matter which part of the Silk Road we focus on, the message is the same: when people trade, share, and learn from one another, the world becomes a richer and more connected place.

Non-fiction – Group 6 WINNER

The Silk Road

Korean International School Springboard, Kai Setyawan – 10

The Silk Road is a route where people went trading in the past. It spans from Europe all across to Asia. The Silk Road passes important cities such as Xi'an in China, Constantinople in Turkey, and Balkh in Afganistan. In the ancient days, people traded gemstones, fruits, incense and (unfortunately) also human slaves to other countries. They form caravans with camels to go through the route. They needed camels because there was no transportation at that time, and they needed to go through the desert. Because of the silk road, people could buy food from another country. The merchants gained money. Unfortunately, merchants travelling the Silk Road also brought diseases, like the black death.

Non-fiction – Group 7 WINNER

From Ancient Rome to Modern Highway: Marco Polo's Journey Along the Silk Road

Korean International School Springboard, Fan Ka Chun Ethan – 17

Marco Polo, Niccolò, and Maffeo traveled along the Silk Road, departing from Venice, Italy, in 1271. During their journey, the Polos passed through Erzurum (Eastern Turkey) and Tabriz (Northern Iran), then crossed deserts threatened by brigands before reaching Hormuz on the Persian Gulf. The Polos decided against taking a sea route and instead continued overland to China.

After leaving Hormuz, they traveled to the Khorasan region and turned gradually northeast as they reached more hospitable lands. The Polos stayed in Badakhshan, Afghanistan, for one year because the benign climate was particularly beneficial for travelers. Marco had fallen ill, and the region's climate helped him recover and avoid malaria. During this period, Marco also visited territories in southern Afghanistan, Kafiristan in the Hindu Kush, and Chitral. It is difficult to establish which districts he actually traveled to versus those he described from information gathered en route.

After leaving Afghanistan, the Polos continued toward the Pamirs, following the route across the highlands of Central Asia.

Before entering China, Marco Polo had to travel across the great Gobi Desert. Crossing the desert took months, and it was said to be haunted by spirits. Descending the northeastern side, they arrived at Kashgar, now part of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region of China.

When the Polos arrived in China, they traveled through regions inhabited by Muslims and Nestorian Christians. They also encountered Buddhists, Manichaeans, and Zoroastrians in the vast province of Tangut. The travelers stopped in Suzhou, Ganzhou, and other cities. In 1274, they reached Shangdu, the Mongols' summer capital, and entered the Mongol Court. In 1275, the Polos presented sacred oil from Jerusalem and papal letters to Kublai Khan.

In 1295, after traveling the Silk Road for 23 years, the Polos returned to Venice, Italy. After returning to Venice, Marco found the city at war with Genoa. While imprisoned, Marco told detailed stories of his journeys to a writer named Rustichello, who compiled them into a book called "The Travels of Marco Polo."

This popular book was translated into multiple languages and read throughout Europe. After Kublai Khan's death, China came under the Ming Dynasty, which was wary of foreigners, making information about China scarce. Marco's book became even more valuable and popular.

The legacy of the Silk Road continues today. Modern transportation, such as trains, has dramatically reduced travel time compared to the months-long journeys of Marco Polo's era. In ancient times, silk production was expensive, and the Chinese emperor kept the process secret. Eventually, it expanded beyond China to India and Japan, then to the Persian Empire. Modern silk production is much cheaper due to reduced transportation costs. Today, the Silk Road functions through multiple trade routes and partnerships, serving as an international hub for commerce. Modern Silk Road routes open new opportunities for travelers, and travel between East and West is now easier than ever before.

Outsmarting Saul in the Silk Road Scavenger Race

Korean International School Springboard, Mattea Abbey Choi – 17

Once upon a time, the legendary Silk Road Scavenger Race brought a burst of excitement to the heart of China. Mofurun the bear, Bao Bao the panda, Rumi, Jinu, and Saul the Bandit eagerly stretched their limbs and adjusted their gear at the starting line. Mofurun bounced cutely on her paws, Bao Bao munched nervously on bamboo shoots, while Rumi and Jinu checked their compasses and maps one last time.

The radiant sun beat down on the dusty Silk Road paths as the race wound through ancient temples, market stalls, desert dunes, mountain trails, and finally to the finish line at Xi'an City Wall.

Sky, the brown kodiak bear, served as referee and raised her horn high. With a triumphant blast, the race began, and the contestants surged forward with their footprints pounding on the ground as Sky's horn echoed along with the cheering of the crowd, their spirits soaring as the adventure unfolded!

The goal of the race was to discover hidden jade jewels, golden coins, and ancient symbols carved into stone—each representing precious goods like silk, spices, and tea that once travelled the Silk Road's dusty paths. Before the race began, Sky reviewed the essential rules with all candidates. Whoever cheated and didn't follow all of the instructions throughout the race would be disqualified.

Excitement filled the air as the race began! However, one participant wasn't following instructions and was constantly cheating during the race. And that participant was none other than Saul himself!

Saul is a greedy bandit, obsessed with amassing wealth and hoarding treasures stolen from the rich, with no regard for fairness or playing by the rules. He intentionally attended the event because the prize for the winner is based on one of China's treasures, so he decided that if he wins, one way or another, he can put it into his stash of treasures.

Throughout the race, Saul kicked sand into Jinu's eyes, tied Rumi's shoelaces together when she wasn't looking, and even pushed Bao Bao into a muddy puddle; Mofurun had to aid her friends as a result. He snatched maps right out of their paws and stuffed stolen jewels and coins into his bulging satchel. He even used secret passageways to quickly reach locations, though it wasn't allowed. "That prize will be mine and mine alone, and none of you can stop me from making this reward a part of my treasure collection!" bragged Saul as he began bolting away from the contestants.

"That annoying bandit, always breaking the rules!!!" scowled Rumi angrily. "He will seriously feel our wrath!" fumed Bao Bao with a mouthful of bamboo rice crackers. Both Mofurun and Jinu agreed with them, as they were all irritated with Saul's malicious behaviour. They all wanted to stop him. But how? They were currently having a quick break from running at Lanzhou, and they were all fed up with the horrible treatment they received from Saul. Even so, their destination was near the final course!

Mofurun and Rumi thought and thought until all of a sudden, a wonderful strategic idea came to their mind. "Rumi and I came up with an excellent plan to stop Saul for good ~MoFu!" exclaimed Mofurun. She always ends her sentences with "~MoFu". "Here's the plan ~MoFu! Bao Bao will distract Saul with fake jewels while Jinu and I circle around to retrieve our stolen items ~MoFu. Then, Bao Bao and I will search for the last remaining coins, jewels, and symbols ~MoFu. Meanwhile, Rumi will document all his cheating with her camera as proof for Sky while Jinu blocks Saul's escape routes ~MoFu!" After sharing their strategy with Jinu and Bao Bao, everyone agreed enthusiastically. Together, they were determined to put an end to Saul's wicked deeds once and for all!

At the last leg in Xi'an, the Han dynasty capital of China, all of the contestants went along with Rumi and Mofurun's plan. They dodged every one of Saul's cheating and vile movements as Bao Bao made her move to distract Saul with false jewels. Jinu and Mofurun secretly retrieved their stolen things while Saul was distracted and not looking. Very soon, while Mofurun and Bao Bao began to search for the last remaining symbols and jewels, Rumi and Jinu worked together like lightning—Rumi snapped photos of Saul's stolen goods while Jinu cleverly cornered him against an ancient city wall, blocking his escape route.

Soon, with Saul falling behind due to the impact of Mofurun and Rumi's tactics, the four friends charged towards the finish line together. Then, they informed Sky of the entire incident regarding Saul's horrible behaviour throughout the entire race, with Rumi's camera photos as proof. Consequently, Sky declared that Saul was hereby removed from the event. "I WILL GET MY REVENGE ON ALL OF YOU!" stormed a furious Saul loudly upon hearing Sky's decision.

As for the rest of the participants, Mofurun, Bao Bao, Rumi, and Jinu officially won! They all received their prize: Silkworm Chinese lucky charms—each one delicately crafted with shimmering red and gold silk threads, adorned with tiny jade crystals that sparkled in the sunlight. The charms depicted silkworms on mulberry leaves, symbolizing prosperity and good fortune. "Wow. This is wonderful!" said Jinu and Bao Bao, as Mofurun and Rumi agreed in unison. They were so happy to have participated in "The Silk Road Scavenger Race," and Saul was far from achieving his scheme of including the charms in his treasure collection.

Poetry – Group 1

WINNER

The Weight of Jade

St. Joseph's Primary School, Yiu Chi Chim – 7

Father measures jade by weight and flaw,
 His thumb tracing price in every vein.
 I measure miles by a stranger's script,
 And count the stars in a foreign name.
 He fears the storm will be our only death;
 I fear it will be the only story told.
 We returned to Chang'an with two kinds of weight:
 One purse of silver, small and definite, and one thick ledger, filled with what the night.
 And strangers gave us – seeds of knowing, light.
 Not meant for sale, but meant to integrate.
 We do not close the ledger. We compile.
 His memory, my ink – a single thread.
 The Road runs through this quiet, lamplit aisle.
 No good is finished, and no final mile is counted, while a thing remains unsaid.
 The true trade happened not with spice or silk,
 But in the space between his skill and my surmise.
 The stronger bond was woven not of silk or gold, but of the choice to walk that walk.
 And see the world with each other's eyes.

Creative Writing: Poetry – Group 1 WINNER

The Dusty Silk Road

Po Leung Kuk Choi Kai Yau School, Yu Shen Xing Hazel – 9

From China far, a road begins,
Where trade and travel count their wins.
Across the land, Through mountains high,
Beneath the big and open sky.

*Camels walk with heavy load,
Upon the dusty, bumpy road!*

They carry silk, so soft and bright,
A treasure shining in the light.
Gold and spices, pots and tea,
For everyone, for you and me.

*Camels walk with heavy load,
Upon the dusty, bumpy road!*

Ideas shared, and stories told,
More precious even than the gold.
Friends are made in every place,
A happy smile on every face.

*Camels walk with heavy load,
Upon the dusty, bumpy road!*

Poetry – Group 2

WINNER

The Silk Road

German Swiss International School, Elizabeth Chiang – 11

Six thousand bolts of imperial silk:
 These shall be my companions on the road.
 I say “road”, but that is optimistic,
 For nothing but grey sand lies before me,
 Nothing but the wastes of Taklamakan.

Yesterday, I arrived at the crossroads — north or south?
 I considered them both when all of a
 Sudden rocks avalanched down before me,
 Blocking both ways. I wanted to punch them.
 No option but to trudge through the cruel sands.

I begin my treacherous hot journey
 Across the dunes of the towering desert.
 Barely eating or drinking: must preserve.
 My legs are aching, my body feels limp,
 Yet I am determined to keep going.

The next hundred miles are like a thousand.
 The dromedaries cry with exhaustion,
 While the mules bray, bored of sand — always sand.
 Exasperation drives me to madness...
 I pray for a heavenly glimpse of Kashgar.

Trudging, stumbling, pushing on, I deeply
 Pray to Ahura Mazda, one true god,
 That he grant me deliverance from pain.
 Every step is brutal; I long for rest.
 But I shan't stop. Ahriman won't take me.

Our caravan finally slows to a stop:
Lushan, my dutiful bodyguard, yells,
“Good sir, look yond, the city of Kashgar!”
I frown, I doubt — mirages have deceived
Many before. But then I spy a man.

At the gate, my trading partner awaits,
Grinning like a crescent moon. He greets me:
“Welcome old friend! Let us tour the city.”
Babbling citizens, colourful fruits stalls,
Floral perfumeries, local diners.

Never in life have I been more relieved
Than now, soaking in a warm soothing bath,
Stomach satisfied, brimming with fine food.
I take a blissful nap; serenity
Flows through me and I dream of unicorns.

A rooster’s crow wakes me from my slumber.
To business! I gather my goods: bolts of
Rainbow silk and precious, glimmering gold.
These my partner will take to Samarkand,
In exchange for items bound for China.

My eyes widen when I spot a gorgeous
Mongolian wild horse, galloping and
Dancing in the breeze. I name him Hunter.
I also receive radiant rubies,
Smiling sapphires. What a delightful day!

I load my goods onto the caravan,
Wave farewell to Kashgar, desert oasis.
Dunhuang, here I come! Xi’an, at long last!
Spirits lift at the thought of family:
My patient wife, my son like a bursting star.

Creative Writing: Poetry – Group 2 WINNER

Grain of Sand

St. Joseph's Anglo-Chinese Primary School, Guan Yi Jacob – 11

I am a grain of sand,
Drinking from rain's soft hand,
Basking in the sun's warm span.

A camel's hoof steps light on me,
Caravan bells chime o'er Gobi's Sea;
I cling, watch caravans flee,
Halt at the caravanserais,
Where spice-scented tales be.

Swept to a factory's heat,
Melted to glass, pure and neat,
Pressed to a microchip's quick beat.

Now I send messages bright,
Faster than camel, faster than ship's flight,
Old road's thread, stitching day and night,
From dunes to world's endless light.

Poetry – Group 6 WINNER

The Luxury of Fur

Korean International School Springboard, Hung Wing Hung Iden – 13

Furs from the North, so soft and so rich,
Luxurious treasures that bring style and charm.
Silky and plush, with a glossy delight,
They wrap us in warmth, comfortable through the night.

Timeless and lavish, a true work of art,
Furs tell a story—each piece plays a part.
From chilly winters to lands far away,
They brighten our lives in a wonderful way.

Porcelain Treasures

Korean International School Springboard, Sung Sangeun – 13

Porcelain is classic,
Oh, so artistic—
A smooth treasure
That makes us whimsical.

It's radiant and refined,
A special find,
With fragile beauty
That dances in our mind.
Pristine and versatile,
It's a pretty sight.

From sophisticated to delicate,
It's used every day,
Bringing gloss and timeless charm
In a lovely way.

So here's to porcelain,
Elegant and durable,
A magical treasure
From a faraway land!

Poetry – Group 7 WINNER

One Voice Can Change the World

Korean International School Springboard, Damien Chor – 18

In ancient halls where whispers weave,
He didn't travel to Europe's shore, but eastward bound, to western routes explore.
A voice rang out, determined and brave.
With ink and brush, he dared to believe.

In Han Dynasty's time, beneath history's weight
He sought the truths that few could see
His wisdom shines through ages past
Through lessons wise, he showed the way to grow.
With pen in hand, he wrote with care,
He told his men of what was fair

Ban Chao, the brave, who took a stand.
His legacy across the land.
His cleverness shone through the silent nights.
With courage, he claimed his rights.
And the echoes of his voice were very strong.

For every voice, both loud and soft.
Can change the world and inspire all.

The strength in our voices, strong and clear.
For Ban Chao's legend will resound through time.
Each voice can find the strength to stay.
Transforming darkness into light.

The Silk

Korean International School Springboard, Taryn Liane Bi – 14

Silk, a treasure, luxurious and bright,
A craft of beauty, shimmering in light.
Soft and delicate, as light as a bird,
Worn by kings and queens with royalty.

Rich and flowing, with a glistening grace,
A journey unfolds, from China's embrace.
Through winding paths, to Europe it flows,
A legacy woven in history's prose.

Valuable Trades

Korean International School Springboard, Wong Jing Yuk Euan – 15

These precious treasures, gems, and gold,
Silver and vibrant stones, unique tales told.
Crafted by ancients, with skill and delight,
Radiant, sparkling, shimmering bright.
They enrich my journey, inviting and bold.

Precious metals and gems, billions of years old,
Zircon, the oldest, a wonder to behold.
Natural diamonds, formed in grandeur's embrace,
Rare and elusive, a captivating grace.
Priceless and exquisite, in nature's pure state.

Peridot and garnet, rich and bold
Sapphire's gleam, ruby's fiery glow,
Diamond's brilliance, jade's allure too.
Both metal and gold, in beauty entwined,
The vibrant gems danced on the Silk Road.

Chinese Poetry – Group 1

WINNER

时光

YK Pao School, Ju, Anna – 8

据站在西安的西市前，遥想当年，
我多想加入张骞出使的队伍，
过黄河，翻越祁连山，十三载兜兜转转，
他是不是也没有想到自己会开辟一条商路，
而无功而返的结局会不会少一些遗憾。

五百年后，莫高窟开凿了，
有飞天，有九色鹿，也有女娲、伏羲，
我仿佛听见了驼铃声声，
沙漠中的城市分外神秘。

又过了两百五十年，
有一个僧人悄悄从长安出发，
沿着丝绸之路一路西行，然后往南，
他是否也曾预想到自己的西行取经路会如此艰难。

我多想坐上时光穿梭机，
逛一逛盛唐时长安的西市，
摸一摸远方运来的玻璃、玛瑙和香料，
还可以尝一尝那时刚运来的胡萝卜。

又仿佛看见章怀太子李贤，
看见他打马球时的身影，
还有在鸿胪寺前的意气风发，
《客使图》中的西域使者穿梭往来。

时光啊时光，
大雁塔如今还在屹立，
脆弱的贝叶经还安放在锦盒中。

Chinese Poetry – Group 2

WINNER

絲綢之路

LKWFSL Wong Yiu Nam Primary School, Chan, Tsz Ham – 11

烈日熔金沙，風刀刻浪紋。
駝鈴搖碎星辰，在月牙灣裏沉。
仙人掌刺破寂寥，向天空討一滴淚。
蜃樓是海市，是遲遲不歸的船隊。

絲路

LKWFSL Wong Yiu Nam Primary School, Huang, Zirui – 13

駝隊是大地鋪展的畫卷，
駝鈴搖碎了千年的長風，
每一步都碾過洪荒的寂寞，
每一聲都震落西域的繁星。

絲綢是長安載的月光，
是裹着茶香漫過的雪浪。
胡楊枝沿着高道流淌，
一夜間爬滿了敦煌的院牆。

黃沙是時光織的錦緞，
是樓蘭的傳說與長安的煙。

這絲路的線啊，
一頭繫着東方的日出，
一頭繫着西方的月圓。

Chinese Calligraphy – Group 2 WINNER

人閑桂花落夜靜春山空
月出驚山鳥時鳴春澗中

乙巳冬月周凡博書