

Silk Road hub takes cultural lead

Dunhuang Academy director looks to iconic Mogao Caves art in renewed global role for Chinese culture.

The apsaras, angel-like beings known as feitian in Chinese, are a symbol of the historic Silk Road **oasis** of Dunhuang in Gansu province. Common motifs in the city range from towering **sculptures** of **ethereal** musicians clutching Chinese pipa lutes, to intricate drawings of **winsome** beauties bearing floral tributes **enameled** on **mugs**.

oasis 绿洲

sculpture 雕塑

ethereal 优雅的；飘渺

winsome 迷人的；可爱的

enamel 搪瓷；珐琅

mug 马克杯

For Dunhuang Academy director Zhao Shengliang, the feitian also offer an important way to "brand" traditional Chinese culture and help spread an appreciation of it across the world.

The leading research institute manages and studies the nearby Mogao Caves, one of the greatest repositories of ancient Buddhist art dating back to the 4th century, covering the golden age of the Tang (618-907) and other **seminal** dynasties.

seminal 种子的；精液的；开创性的

lens 镜头

The **monumental** impact of the **murals**, sculptures, scripts and other major artifacts discovered in the 500 or so caves at the **UNESCO** World Heritage Site on the **outskirts** of the oasis in the early 20th century continues to be felt beyond the cultural, historical and religious spheres.

monumental 不朽的；纪念碑的

mural 壁画

UNESCO 联合国教科文组织

outskirt 郊区；市郊

The push to promote Dunhuang art globally rides on its ancient role and legacy as a hub of exchanges between East and West, Zhao says. "Dunhuang offers a major **lens**, a major representation, of traditional Chinese culture."