



*NCL Director-General Tseng (right) and NTU University Librarian Kuang-hua Chen.*

## ■ Amazing French Movies: The Festival du Film Francophone in Taiwan Came to NCL

The 2022 “French Film Festival in Taiwan” was one of the main events celebrating the 11th “French Month in Taiwan” (La France à Taiwan), and was planned as the opening prelude of the yearly event. This year’s “French Month in Taiwan” was a month-long series of events in March related to the French language planned by the Alliance Française de Taiwan. It also incorporated resources from French-speaking representative offices in Taiwan who were co-collaborators. The aim was to help Taiwan people better understand French-speaking cultures and their respective societies and cultures.

This film festival marks the first time National Central Library worked with the Alliance Française de Taiwan, the representative offices of five countries, and the consulate of another to select iconic movies for a theatrical extravaganza. The opening ceremony was held at 5 pm on March 3 in NCL’s Multipurpose Performance Hall. Representatives from the collaborating partners included: National Central Library Director-General Tseng, Alliance Française de Taiwan Director Laurent Vergain, Belgian Office in Taipei Deputy Director Geoffrey Eekhout, Canadian Trade Office in Taipei General Relations Director Martin Laflamme, French Office in Taipei Director Jean-François Casabonne-Masonnave, Haitian Ambassador Youri Emmanuel, Luxembourg Trade and Investment Office in Taipei Executive Director Tania Berchem, and Trade Office

of Swiss Industries Deputy Director Béatrice Latteier. All gave remarks.

During the opening ceremony on March 3, NCL Director-General Tseng welcomed everyone and mentioned that NCL and each of the representative offices have always had a close educational and cultural exchange cooperation, including collaborations on various lectures, new book releases, the Taiwan Reading Festival, book exhibitions, and promotion of special events. NCL is pleased to be able to function as an international cultural exchange platform by which a variety of reading events can be conducted jointly to enhance the knowledge learning and improve quality of life for citizens.



*NCL Director-General Tseng welcomes attendees during the opening ceremony.*

Director-General Tseng further stated that this event was the first time that NCL has worked with the Alliance Française de Taiwan, the Belgian Office in Taipei, the Canadian Trade Office in Taipei, the French Office in Taipei, the Haitian embassy, Luxembourg Trade and Investment Office in Taipei, and the Trade Office of Swiss Industries on one project. The NCL is exciting to be a part of this rare opportunity. The participating countries each selected a representative quality movie produced by their home countries. They selected movies that would well represent the issues and trends of their respective societies and that would be suitable for the young generation to watch. We believe that through these movies our fellow countrymen can come to learn about the cultural diversity in various French speaking countries, thus expanding their international cultural horizons. From March 3-5, this film festival showcased seven movies selected from each of collaborating

French-speaking countries. It was hoped that the people of Taiwan would be able to learn about the cultural diversity in these different French-speaking countries through movies and thus develop a broader international cultural viewpoint. Through this film festival, in addition to providing a film fiesta for Taiwan people, it was also an opportunity to deepen international cultural and educational relations with the five representative offices and with the Haitian embassy.

Director of the Alliance Française de Taiwan Laurent Vergain stated it was an honor to be able to collaborate with National Central Library in putting on this French film festival. He also stated that he sincerely hoped to share wonderful values through such a collaborative platform. Working with French-speaking countries and NCL, which values reading promotion, is an ideal collaborative arrangement. The film festival featured movies suited to the youth. The first day was very successful, and he believed this exchange and sharing could effectively share a sense of values. He sincerely invited those who love the French language and culture and who care about the cultural connotations of different ethnic groups to take advantage of this opportunity to explore foreign societies and culture through movies. He encouraged people to attend as many showings as they could, and to come learn more of the beautiful language of French. Belgian Office of Taipei Deputy Director Geoffrey Eekhout stated in his remarks that the word “peace” exists in all languages. We should respect cultural diversity and share different cultural values. It is too bad that currently a tragedy is happening in the world. It is hoped that the spiritual value of “peace” can spread widely throughout the world. Canadian Trade Office in Taipei General Relations Director Martin Laflamme stated that this list of movies being shown at this film festival was very multicultural. For example, “Petit Pays” was filmed in Africa, whereas “La déesse des mouches à feu” expresses a reevaluation of the living environments of youth. It was hoped that this film festival would be able to display the culture and related concepts from various French-speaking countries to viewers. The French Office in Taipei Director Jean-François Casabonne-Masonnave stated during his remarks that the current situation between Ukraine and Russia informs us what the important values are in human society, as well

as the importance of preserving human culture and values. Working with NCL is an important cultural exchange. The TiBE which will be held in June this year will provide another opportunity to collaborate. After the book exhibition ends, his office has plans to donate the books on display to NCL. This will allow French to not only be a language that spreads to five continents but, more importantly, is a critical means of sharing human values, including unity and helping each other, cultural diversity, and democratic values. In a world where almost 300 million people use French, sharing these movies with the people of Taiwan and interacting and connecting with Taiwan is amazing. He believed this year’s film festival can witness that French is alive and well appreciated in Taiwan. Haitian Ambassador Youri Emmanuel stated during his remarks that La France à Taiwan is a celebratory event as well as a time to promote the values of understanding, love, and peace through the content of the event. This is the most meaningful purpose of La France à Taiwan. Haiti has a literature author serving as its Minister of Culture. Some Haitian scholars have been admitted into the French Academy of Sciences. Examples such as these are proof that French is full of vitality in Haiti. Through this modern way of cultural exchange, this film festival, we can respond to people’s expectations regarding French and broader exchanges of important ideas and values. Luxembourg Trade and Investment Office in Taipei Executive Director Tania Berchem stated during her remarks, as everyone is gathered here to celebrate La France à Taiwan, our hearts are still in Europe where people are suffering for democracy and peace. In this film festival, some related ideas are also portrayed. French-language films, which show various facets of life, are a great medium with which to share value concepts. The Trade Office of Swiss Industries Deputy Director Beatrice Latteier during her remarks first explained the meaning of the French language for the world. It’s not only a language spoken by 88 member states but it also established many multilateral mutual country organizations. Multilateral collaboration is based on shared values, including public benefit, human rights, sustainable management, etc. Internationally, French is a tool for communication as well as a vehicle for transmitting universal values. These values are priceless. Because of this platform we know as La France à Taiwan, we can pass on and

share cultural diversity with everyone. Therefore, La France à Taiwan in the month of March is not only a celebratory event but also one laden with deep significance in the exchange of culture.

On March 3, there were more than 300 people in attendance, including teachers, high school and junior high school students, and others who love the French language. The first day, two movies were shown: “Ma Vie de courgetti” and “Petit Pays.” The opening ceremony was marvelous because of the important remarks delivered by NCL Director-General Tseng, the Haitian ambassador, and the representatives of the other participating countries. The ceremony was a superb one because of the wonderful remarks that have delivered important ideals and values. It was indeed a perfect way to start off the 2022 Festival du film francophone for La France à Taiwan.

This Francophone film festival showed the following films (in order): “Ma Vie de courgetti” (Switzerland), “Petit Pays” (Burundi and Rwanda), “Le Jeune Ahmed” (Belgium), “La déesse des mouches à feu” (Canada), “Je m'appelle humain” (Canada), “Adieu les cons” (France), and “Les Brigands” (Luxemburg).



A group photo of dignitaries from French-speaking countries at the Opening Ceremony of the “French Month in Taiwan” (La France à Taiwan).

## ■ The Treasure of a Lost Century Reappears in Splendid Glory: A Symposium for the New *Dunhuang* Scrolls in NCL’s Collection

NCL has been working on publishing *Dunhuang* Scrolls for many years. And finally in spring 2022 it was published! This new publication has been heralded by academia as the reappearance of the final puzzle piece in the precious *Dunhuang* scrolls. NCL has 161 *Dunhuang* scrolls in its collection (Rare Book Holding No.141). They are the most significant *Dunhuang* collection held by governmental agency in Taiwan in terms of

the number of items and quality. They were primarily obtained during the Sino-Japanese War by members of NCL’s Rare Books Preservation Society in Hong Kong and Shanghai. This collection of *Dunhuang* scrolls was carefully identified by manuscript experts before being added to the library’s collections. The *Dunhuang* scrolls held at the Library includes Buddhist sutras, commentary on Buddhist works, esoteric Buddhist teachings, hymns, and *bianwen* (adapted stories from sutras, historical records, or legends). Texts of many of the scrolls are unique among all *Dunhuang* collections. Furthermore, some of the scrolls contains written prefaces, postfaces, engraved seal print, and some had been mounted with underneath lining for preservation purpose. These are evidences that the scrolls had been owned and treasured by different literati or historians, and they also reveal the transferring history of the scrolls. In addition to the valuable unique content, the fact that the paper material they were written on was preserved from around the *Tang* dynasty; this is truly a marvel. They provide us opportunity to observe paper property of the *Sui-Tang* period (late 6th century to early 10th century), making them an invaluable asset of Chinese culture and human knowledge.

The value of the classics is in their broad distribution and seamless passing down but not in their being stashed away. In 2010, NCL invited internationally renowned *Dunhuang* expert Guang-chang Fang from Shanghai Normal University to personally come to conduct appraisal of the scrolls and write abstracts for them, which initialized the plan to publish this set of annotated *Dunhuang* scrolls. After many years of preparation and editing, NCL teamed up with Linking Publishing once again, after published a replica of the *Diamond Sutra* in collaboration in 2018. This newest set of publication of the *Dunhuang* scrolls are featured with the rearrangement based on the content, providing annotations for each scroll, henceforth made the content of this treasure collection easy-to-understand and conveniently accessible for researchers.

*Dunhuang* Scrolls New Publication Symposium was held on March 19, 2022 at NCL. Taiwan *Dunhuang* experts Professors A-chai Cheng and Ming-chang Yang were invited to hold a discussion on the origin, content, and unique feature of the *Dunhuang* scrolls in NCL’s collection. This insightful discussion effectively pulled back the mask on these rare items from a lost century.