

audience; National Taiwan Library research assistant **Shih-ying Chueh**, for her long-term devotion to providing reading services to disadvantaged communities, creating picture books for deaf and hard of hearing individuals, and promoting a variety of unique reading events; Taipei First Girl's High School Library administrator **Hui-yu Tsai**, for her ingenuity in helping high school girls to fall in love with reading and turning the First Girl's High School Library into a place where students can go to express themselves; Taipei City Guting Junior High School Library manager **Hui-ping Liu**, for her professionalism and passion in becoming an important advocate for reading education at Guting Junior High School and promoting rich and diverse reading events.

The commendations offered by these awards will be beneficial in enhancing the image of the library industry and laying a solid foundation upon which Taiwan's libraries can strive toward becoming a competitive library system that offers the highest quality at an international level.

The names and achievements of this year's winners have been announced on the event's official website: <https://moeacl.ncl.edu.tw>



Ministry of Education Deputy Minister Lin and award recipients.

■ National Central Library and the Saudi Arabian Trade Office in Taipei Co-hosted “World Arabic Language Day and Arabic: The Language of Poetry and Art” Exhibition

To increase international cultural exchange, the National Central Library and the Saudi Arabian Trade Office in Taipei co-hosted the “2023 World Arabic Language Day and Arabic: The Language of

Poetry and Art” Exhibition. It went from December 19-31. The opening ceremony was held on December 18 at the NCL reading room. NCL Director-General Shu-hsien Tseng and Saudi Arabian Trade Office in Taipei Representative Adel F. Althaidi co-hosted the event. Representatives stationed in Taiwan from Jordan and Oman were also invited to attend. On display were ancient books, clothing, artifacts, and modern books related to Arabic. Important works of literature and poets were also introduced.

NCL Director-General Shu-hsien Tseng stated that Arabic is an important language in the world, with over 400 million people using it on a daily basis. In 2010, the United Nations declared December 18 as World Arabic Language Day. Saudi Arabia is Taiwan's largest trading partner in the Middle East and its largest crude oil supplier. The relationship between the two countries is very tight. This is the first time NCL collaborated with Saudi Arabia to put on an event. Consequently, Representative Althaidi visited NCL many times, and the faculty and students in the Arabic Department at National Cheng-chi University provided many valuable suggestions on the content and décor of the exhibition—making this exhibition a reality. It is worth noting that on display at this event were handwritten manuscripts of the Koran written in 1504 and an ancient Arabic book from 1702, which are from the personal collection of International Student Center Director Mei-ting Huang at Fu Jen Catholic University International and Cross-Strait Education Center. These are rare works that are not seen often.



The opening of the exhibition with special guests present.

In recent years, NCL has expended much effort in developing international exchanges and expanding its

influence worldwide. With regard to the consulates of its ally nations and representative offices in Taiwan, NCL has donated books, promoted reading, and other cultural events, such as French month and English reading events. Both of these events were well received. In terms of exhibitions, NCL has worked with Czechoslovakia, Germany, and Belize to promote their culture.

Recent regional conflicts have arisen, making the exhibition even more significant. In one sense, through cultural exchange people from different countries can better understand each other and appreciate each other's cultures. In another sense, through the exhibition different generations can have an opportunity to view the beauty of the Arab culture. Regardless of if it is history, the writing of text and literature, through audio-video, text, and images the unique cultural flair of Arabic was put on display. It is hoped that through culture, conflict can be resolved, and through exchange to foster much more brilliant knowledge and civilization.



A look at the rare items on display.



Students attending the exhibition from a combined class by Fu Jen Catholic University's Ancient Chinese Studies and Taipei First Girls High School.

■ **Yearend Reading Extravaganza: 2023 Taiwan Reading Festival's Joyous Reading Carnival Starts with a Bang**

The National Central Library put on the 2023 Taiwan Reading Festival's "Joyous Reading Carnival" on December 2 at Freedom Square. Taipei Municipal Xinyi Elementary School's war drum team performed for the opening ceremony.

The Taiwan Reading Festival is Taiwan's brand for promoting reading. In 2020, it received the American Library Association's Presidential Citation for Innovative International Library Project. 2023 marks the eleventh year it has been held. It's a reading event fit for all ages, as well as a grand gathering for those in libraries.

During Deputy Education Minister Ming-yu Lin's remarks, he encouraged and thanked the 14 representative offices in Taiwan and the libraries, schools, publishers, and museums from various places for attending this year's Taiwan Reading Festival. Under the leadership of NCL Director-General Shu-hsien Tseng, the Taiwan Reading Festival has become a reading brand of freedom in Taiwan. It has brought together publishing companies, authors, and creators who all worked together to create the foundation we have today. Starting next year, the Ministry of Education will roll out a new program for laying a reading foundation. It has purchased 300 million dollars' worth of books for elementary and middle school libraries. Also, it will roll out a new reading rock program. This has reading volunteers and school groups giving even more encouragement and incentives to read. Reading in Taiwan is currently growing rapidly. We hope to have everyone who loves reading from around the world come. In 2023, national libraries from Singapore, Vietnam, and Malaysia were in attendance. The two days of events comprising the 2023 Taiwan Reading Festival showcased Taiwan's new trend of reading that pushes toward lifelong learning for all of society.

Deputy Education Minister Lin and dignitaries from both Taiwan and abroad participated in the opening ceremony. Afterward, Lin presented plaques of appreciation to the library, representative offices in Taiwan, international librarians, government offices,