

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,

museums, schools, publishers, and community groups who helped put on the festival. He wanted to show his gratitude for their efforts in promoting reading. Later, Deputy Minister Lin transformed into a special guest in the Joyful Storytelling Village, reading *Forgetful Grandma Wanda and After Mr. Dinosaur Has a Runny Nose* to the children. There was a continuous ring of laughter from the crowd.

National Central Library Director-General Tseng stated that the reading carnival incorporates the spirit of the new curriculum, STEAM disciplines, language learning, international culture, picture books, and early literacy. In 2023, NCL worked closely with the National Development Council to design events and guides in both Chinese and English, creating a bilingual experience at the reading festival. NCL also invited libraries from around Asia. The National Library Board Singapore, the National Library of Malaysia, and the National Library of Vietnam set up booths. Also on display were posters from libraries in Macau, the Philippines, the United Arab Emirates, Kenya, Romania, Columbia, and the US, sharing what libraries abroad are doing to promote reading. It was a great exchange among libraries around the world.

2023 Taiwan Reading Festival's Joyous Reading Carnival had several booths, including Joyful Storytelling Village, The World Symphony of Reading Enjoyment, Library Trail, Museum Wonderland, Mobile Library Display, Little Book-Lover's World, Reading Market, and Book Exchange. In addition, attendees could walk through a book fair, buy books, exchange books, etc. The Ministry of Education invited readers of all ages to create a beautiful time of reading.



A group photo during the opening ceremony of the 2023 Taiwan Reading Festival.

■ Deepening Relations between Taiwan and France: Both Countries' National Libraries Engage in Exchange through the Best of Their Holdings and in Planning an International Exhibition

Three experts from the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF) led by Director of Museums, Exhibitions, and Events Claire Nénert, as well as Aurélie Jobert from the French Office in Taipei, visited the National Central Library Director-General Shu-hsien Tseng on December 6, 2023. Both parties held a discussion and gave reports on the unique characteristics of their respective holdings, digital items, staff, and working together on an international exhibition. They also made suggestions on ways they could collaborate in the future.

National Central Library Director-General Shu-hsien Tseng stated that the two libraries enjoy a close relationship and have done tangible exchanges, and have truly engaged in international collaboration. The French party was comprised of Director-General Claire Nénert, Alice Rivollier, and Francesca Baldi. All three are experts in exhibitions and international collaboration. NCL and BnF enjoy a close relationship, including inviting BnF in 2012 to join the Chinese Union Catalog project, in 2013 inviting Deputy Director-General Arnaud Beaufort to give a lecture at an international conference held during NCL's 80th anniversary celebration. From 2014 to 2015, Li-chung Tu, who used to work at NCL, visited BnF with the help of the French Ministry of Culture to help with the cataloging of ancient Chinese works. In 2015, they worked together on a digitization project, completing 126 ancient books comprised mostly of novels and plays. Currently, the images and the table of contents of the books are available for searching or browsing on the Rare Books Digitalization database. On November 13, 2023, before NCL and BULAC signed an agreement to establish the first Taiwan Academic Digital Resource Center (TADRC), Director-General Tseng toured BnF's Bibliothèque-musée de l'Opéra guided by Mathias Auclair. Both parties discussed their preservation of music manuscript. Because of this, NCL is very happy to be able to partner with BnF again.