

USR Banquet Program Launches “Huwei Feast 1002” : Press Event Tells History Through Cuisine

Campus focus

Set to open to traffic in May 2026, the Danjiang Bridge marks a major milestone in the transportation development of Tamsui. Yet 142 years ago, these same waters were once shaped by the ravages of war. To bring this history to a wider audience, Tamkang University’s USR project, “Exploring Tamsui, Connecting Globally: Promoting Taiwan’s Most Influential Cultural Itineraries and Signature Banquets” (the “Banquet Program”), in collaboration with the Department of History and Fullon Hotel Tamsui Fisherman’s Wharf, held a media launch event titled “Sino–French War Huwei Feast 1002—French Artillery Bombardment” at 11:00 a.m. on April 20, with the official debut scheduled for May 2.

The event drew significant attention from domestic and international media, including the president of Central News Agency, alumna Wan–Ling Hu from the Department of French, correspondents from Asahi Broadcasting Corporation and Fuji Television, as well as reporters from Associated Press, alongside veteran journalist Shen Wen, China Times, Formosa TV, SET News, and numerous bloggers. Together, they participated in this creative reinterpretation that blends local history with culinary culture.

Secretary–General Yu–Pei Ma noted that since entering its “Fifth Wave” development phase in 2017, Tamkang University has upheld the vision of “Co–creating Greater Tamsui, Building a Smarter Future,” embedding USR into both local engagement and global outreach. The Banquet Program aligns with multiple SDGs, and “Huwei Feast 1002” integrates academic expertise with strong industry collaboration, demonstrating the university’s commitment to local engagement through innovative storytelling.

The press conference opened with a theatrical performance, “Naval Mines Beneath the Danjiang Bridge,” vividly recreating historical scenes.

Looking back to the Sino–French War in 1884, Qing forces laid ten naval mines in the waters where the bridge now stands to prevent French troops

from advancing along the Tamsui River toward Taipei. This action triggered the intense French bombardment of Tamsui on October 2 of the same year. Through character dialogue and stage props, the performance enabled attendees to gain a clearer and more tangible understanding of this historical episode.

Professor Chi-Lin Lee, Principal Investigator of the project, explained that while the bridge symbolizes modern development, the historical memory beneath it deserves equal recognition and preservation. He emphasized that the banquet seeks to transform cultural memory into a lived experience, allowing history to be felt rather than merely read.

The banquet features ten themed dishes, with Chi-Lin Lee serving as the narrator to explain the historical symbolism behind each course. Structured around the progression of the battle, the menu begins with “Four Warships in Volley” (「四艦連發」) and “Fire from the Sky” (「天降火雨」), recreating the dramatic outbreak of conflict. It then moves through “Strategizing behind the Scenes” (「運籌帷幄」), “Smokey” (「煙霧瀰漫」), “Radiant Blessings” (「佛光萬丈」), and “Messages from the Foreign Firms” (「洋行傳聲」), depicting pre-battle preparations and the intensity of the battlefield stalemate. The banquet concludes with “Ambush on All Sides” (「十面埋伏」), “Scuttling the Ships and Hurling Stones” (「鑿船投石」), “Soaring to Victory” (「一飛衝天」), and “Imperial Decree Arrives” (「聖旨駕到」), symbolizing the successful repulsion of French forces and the subsequent commendation from the Qing court.

Among them, “Fire from the Sky” symbolizes falling artillery shells, using ingredients such as cuttlefish, meatballs, scallops, and prawns to recreate explosive imagery. Another dish, “Strategizing behind the Scenes,” features a grilled tomahawk steak representing Qing soldiers in battle, paired with red wine sauce to evoke the leadership of General Kaihua Sun.

Po-Hung Chen, General Manager of Fullon Hotel Tamsui Fisherman’s Wharf and a graduate student in Tamkang’s Department of Management Sciences, noted that the collaboration successfully transformed historical narratives into tangible culinary designs. Ingredients were carefully selected from

Tamsui, the North Coast, and Bali, supporting local agriculture while aligning with ESG sustainability principles. Executive Chef Chia-Hsing Lu added that the greatest challenge was translating complex historical battles into visually and gastronomically compelling dishes, requiring simplification while preserving symbolic meaning and ensuring palatability. During the event, media representatives documented each dish and actively engaged with questions about the historical connections and creative design. Blogger Li-Fei Yan remarked that the experience of storytelling through cuisine was rare and impressive, effectively merging history and gastronomy into what felt like a vivid, immersive history lesson. She was particularly impressed by several vividly symbolic dishes, including “Messages from the Foreign Firms,” which creatively uses an ice cream cone to represent communication, and “Imperial Decree Arrives,” symbolizing fulfillment and grace, both offering a refreshing and memorable experience.









