

Ma encounters protest at Longshan Temple

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President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) was heckled in Taipei's Wanhua District (萬華) yesterday when he attended a ceremony marking the 270th anniversary of the establishment of Longshan Temple (龍山寺).

About 30 protesters shouted “Ma Ying-gao, step down” (gao means “dog” in Taiwanese) outside the temple. The temple was closed yesterday morning because of Ma's visit. While the president left at around 11am, the temple was not open to the public until 1:30pm.

Ma visited the temple to attend the ceremony marking the 270th anniversary of the temple's construction and the completion of the renovation of the temple's Tung Pao Hall (鐘鼓樓) and its bell and drum towers.

Built in 1738, Longshan Temple was designated as a second-class national historic heritage site in 1985. An earthquake on Sept. 21, 1999, destroyed some of the stone pillars of the Tung Pao Hall, while some of the hall's wooden structure had rotted over time.

The “921 Earthquake” and the earthquake on March 31, 2002, also dealt a blow to the temple's bell and drum towers.

The temple was placed under tight security yesterday, with law enforcement officers forming a human chain to block the entrances.

An old married couple from Taoyuan said the temple manager told them that they had posted the announcement that the temple would be closed about a month ago, but they had no way of knowing because they lived in Taoyuan.

The temple manager told them the information was also available online, but they said they did not know how to use a computer.

Ma, who spent his childhood in Wanhua District, said Longshan Temple has been the center of religious worship since he was little. The temple has become one of the city's world-renowned landmarks, which include Taipei 101, the National Palace Museum and Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall, he said.

During his tenure as Taipei mayor, Ma said the city decided to open a Mass Rapid Transit System station at Longshan Temple, hoping to blend the old and new.

The city hoped the temple would continue to bless the region and ensure its prosperity, he said.

Source: [Taipei Times 2009/12/15](#)