

Former Philippines President Visits Tzu chi in Hualien

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Fidel Valdez Ramos, former President of the Philippines, visited the Tzu Chi Foundation in Hualien on March 9 and met Master Cheng Yen. He praised her and her volunteers for their work in human development and environmental protection, which he called a model for others.

Born in March 1928, Ramos had a distinguished career in public service. From 1986 to 1991, he was Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces and Secretary of National Defense. He then served as president from 1992 to 1998, a period of political stability and rapid economic growth. He is the only Filipino to receive an honorary British knighthood, in 1995, for his services to politics and government.

Accompanied by Mr. Huang Shu-Ken, president of the Taiwanese Chamber of the South Philippines, and Alfredo Li, the CEO of Tzu Chi Foundation in the Philippines, Mr. Ramos arrived in Hualien at 9:30am and visited the Jing Si Abode and Jing Si Hall. In the Jing Si Abode, he had a brief meeting with Dharma Master Cheng Yen. She thanked him and Taiwan businessmen in the Philippines for supporting the foundation's branch in the country. "Tzu Chi volunteers carry out charity work with the ideal of 'using local materials for local people,'" she said. "This not only supports the poor but also inspires their hearts to love and be spiritually enriched in spite of their material poverty." She said that she encouraged Taiwanese businessmen in the belief that being wealthy means not only enjoying life materially, but also doing good through giving back to society: "this is the treasure of wealth."



Mr Ramos said that he founded the Ramos Peace and Development Foundation after he left office: it promotes world peace and development. He said that, during this visit, he had felt Master Cheng Yen's spirit of modesty and compassion. He admired the Master's principle of sharing: to give is more to receive; as a charity organization, Tzu Chi is very efficient. It is worth to learn by his foundation.

He also visited the exhibition of Tzu Chi's four missions in the Jing Si Hall. He saw its history and how it was founded 46 years ago, a difficult time when it had no resources. He also saw how recycled bottles are turned into blankets and other products by Da Ai Technology. At the end, he praised the foundation for its contribution to the environment and human development.