

SGI President Welcomes Cuban Delegation
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The Buddhist view of the eternity of life is reflected to a considerable degree in the poetry of Cuban patriot José Martí, said a noted Martí authority in talks with SGI President Ikeda today. Dr. Cinto Vitier, founder and president of the Center for the Studies of José Martí, said that Martí had a profound understanding of Buddhism.

Dr. Vitier had previously sent President Ikeda materials that showed Martí's interest in Shakyamuni's perspective on the fundamental sufferings of birth, old age, sickness and death, the nature of negative influences within human life, as well as the priesthood's corruption after the Buddha's death.

Dr. Vitier was in Japan with the Cuban Minister of Culture Armando Hart Dávalos. Both received received honorary doctorates from Soka University. To commemorate the occasion, Dr. Hart lectured to the student body and university faculty on the role of ethics and spirituality in the modern age.

President Ikeda and the Cuban dignitaries also discussed the subject of bilateral exchange between Cuba and Japan. To that end, Dr. Hart said that although people may differ in their culture and thinking, at the most essential level human beings are the same. He then praised Mr. Ikeda's efforts in fostering communication between the East and the West.

The SGI leader, quoting Martí (1853–95), said people of true spiritual freedom are braced by persecution and regard unjust authorities as ephemeral as soap bubbles. Mr. Ikeda also shared his observation that the Cuban people continue to embrace Martí's spirit. A nation's true greatness, the SGI leader said, depends, not on its material wealth, but on the depth and profundity of its people's spirit.

When the SGI leader expressed concern over the decline in spirituality among the Japanese, Dr. Hart noted that a similar tendency exists throughout the world due to ideological and philosophical schisms. The culture minister added his opinion that culture and ethics will play a significant role in uniting and harmonizing disparate ideologies and philosophies. Mr. Ikeda articulated the SGI's role in addressing such matters, including the very important role human revolution plays in the process.

Mr. Ikeda used this occasion to express his profound appreciation for the warm welcome he received from Cuba's President Fidel Castro and other Cuban officials during his first visit to the Caribbean republic last June. Details of an ongoing Martí dialogue between President Ikeda and Dr. Vitier, slated for eventual publication, were also discussed.

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