

José Rizal, Philippine Freedom Fighter Homage to a Hero

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In this centennial year of Philippine independence, SGI President Ikeda has begun a visit to Manila. Paying his respects to the hero of the Philippine independence movement, José Rizal, Mr. Ikeda today laid a wreath at the monument dedicated to him. Rizal is the freedom fighter whose writings helped ignite the flame of Philippine independence.

The Order of the Knights of Rizal, a cultural group that promotes Rizal's philosophy, has recognized President Ikeda in the past with their highest honor, naming him a Knight Grand Cross of Rizal for his exemplary achievements in promoting peace and human rights.

Speaking with representatives of the group after the ceremony, Mr. Ikeda shared his wish to let as many people as possible know Rizal's greatness and his hope that the members of the Order would continue to follow in Rizal's footsteps. Rizal believed in gradualist reform over radical reform, development through education and optimizing people's potential.

Later in the day, the Order gave the SGI leader its first Rizal International Peace Award, inaugurated this year. Mr. Ikeda is scheduled to receive an honorary doctorate from the University of the City of Manila and an honorary citizenship from the city of Tagaytay.

He is also scheduled to visit De La Salle University, an academic exchange partner of Soka University in Japan. (More coverage of his visit to the Philippines will appear in future issues.)

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