

## **DIALOGUES ON EDUCATION EDUCATION SHOULD BE ABOUT CREATING HAPPINESS AND PEACE**

**‘The heart of education is imparting the skills or know-how for creating a happy and peaceful society. That is why it is imperative that educators possess compassion and wisdom.’**

Carlos Albizu University in San Juan, the capital of Puerto Rico, recently awarded SGI President Ikeda an honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters in Behavioral Sciences, recognizing his contributions to peace and human happiness. CAU Board of Trustees President Antonio Vázquez-Febres, CAU President Salvador Santiago-Negrón and his wife, Dr. Carmen Albizu-Garcia, and CUA Vice President Teresa Albizu-Garcia traveled to Japan for the presentation, which was held on May 8 at the Soka University Central Tower in Hachioji, Tokyo.

Carlos Albizu University, San Juan (formerly known as the Puerto Rico Institute of Psychology) is dedicated to training professionals in psychology and related fields. The school carries on the ideals of the eminent psychologist Dr. Carlos Albizu-Miranda, its founder and first president. Dr. Albizu-Miranda, who earned his degree in clinical psychology in the United States, founded the school in San Juan in 1966 out of a desire to train experts in psychology who possessed a thorough understanding of the country’s ethnic and cultural background.

The school has awarded doctorates in clinical psychology since 1972. In 1980, it also established an affiliated institute of psychology in Miami. And on Jan. 1, 2000, the two schools became a single university named after the founder.

President Santiago-Negrón, who follows in Dr. Albizu-Miranda’s footsteps as an “activist scholar,” has instituted a community hot-line program and family counseling centers to address the needs of citizens. Through these and other initiatives, he has greatly expanded the availability of mental health care in the community.

At the conferment ceremony, Mr. Vázquez-Febres read the honorary degree citation, which pays tribute to the SGI leader’s “outstanding commitment and selfless dedication to the welfare and advancement of humanity, and...noble contributions to world peace, universal understanding and the promotion of tolerance for diversity and pluralism in the achievement of global harmony.”

Introducing the SGI leader’s achievements, Dr. Carmen Albizu-Garcia remarked that President Ikeda’s educational philosophy closely accords with that of Dr. Albizu-Miranda and with the ideals of the university he founded. She added that she is confident President Ikeda’s work will continue to attract growing interest and attention around the world.

In conferring the honorary degree, President Santiago-Negrón said: “In a world in which violence is prevalent in most societal relations, the clear and enlightened thinking of Dr. Daisaku Ikeda serves as an inspiration to those who subscribe to the valued principles of equality and justice.”

In his acceptance speech, President Ikeda cited CAU founder Dr. Albizu-Miranda to the effect: “Education that is bereft of love is fruitless. Learning that focuses exclusively on logic and reason robs people of their humanity and will not serve the interests of human beings. Education that is guided by love emphasizes social good not competition between

individuals; it is cooperative learning not competitive learning.”

The SGI leader said that he found in these words an extremely profound and lofty philosophy. “The true purpose of learning is human happiness and world peace,” he said. “The heart of education is imparting the skills or know-how for creating a happy and peaceful society. That is why it is imperative that educators possess compassion and wisdom.”

To celebrate the occasion, the noted Puerto Rico-born jazz flutist and SGI-USA member Nestor Torres performed “Morigasaki Beach” and “Miami Beach Rumba.”

Prior to the presentation of the honorary doctorate, President Ikeda met with the party of educators from CAU at Soka University. On May 3, the group attended the dedication of Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo, Calif. After their arrival in Tokyo, they visited the Soka International Women’s Center, the offices of the *Seikyo Shimbun*, the Soka Gakkai’s daily newspaper and the Min-On Culture Center, which are all located in Shinanomachi.

In a June 2000 interview with the *Seikyo Shimbun*, CUA President Santiago-Negrón, who is a renowned psychologist, discussed the need of restoring human compassion to modern society. He explained that the job of a psychologist demands continual learning. To help those who are suffering, it is not enough to simply acquire a mastery of techniques or new technology, he said.

The key, he emphasized, is to keep striving for one’s continuing personal growth and development. He stated that people who can truly bring comfort to others are those who can communicate with and connect with the harmony and peace that exist within the depths of the other person’s life.

He explained that he frequently tells his students that developing their own inner balance and cultivating a rich spiritual connection with patients will ultimately be more important for their success as psychologists than the mere mastery of techniques. One cannot truly free the human heart through education alone, he said, stressing that education must be grounded in a love for humanity.

President Ikeda commented that these insights resonate with the principles of Soka education. “It is crucial that we pursue the path of compassionate education for the happiness and welfare of humanity in the 21st century,” he said.

Noting that Dr. Santiago-Negrón teaches classes at the undergraduate and graduate levels on such topics as drug addiction, abnormal psychology and learning disabilities, President Ikeda mentioned that “the essence of Buddhism is also psychology. Buddhism is the highest ‘psychology of life.’” Touching on the upsurge in violent crime in Japan in recent years, the SGI leader predicted that psychology would become an increasingly important area of study in the future in Japan and around the world.

He also applauded the efforts of CAU to promote research and understanding of human behavior from an integrated perspective in an effort to raise specialists who are sensitive to cultural diversity. Noting that the university this year celebrates its 35th anniversary, he said: “Young universities have an important role to play. While universities with long histories and traditions have many strengths, they can also often have a tendency to become set in their ways. In a time of such enormous flux as today, it is important to have young universities that can rapidly respond to change.”