

MOREHOUSE COLLEGE HONORS SGI PRESIDENT

On Sept. 7, Morehouse College, the alma mater of American civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., inducted SGI President Ikeda into its Martin Luther King Jr. International Collegium of Scholars. The ceremony was held at the Tokyo Makiguchi Memorial Hall in Hachioji and officiated by Dr. Lawrence E. Carter Sr., dean of the college's King International Chapel. Dr. Carter was accompanied by close friend and colleague Dr. George D. Miller, professor of philosophy at Lewis University in Illinois.

Commencing the ceremony, Dr. Carter lauded President Ikeda for promoting the unconditional love and spirit of nonviolence embodied by Jesus Christ, Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. King (see Dr. Carter's speech below). Dr. Carter then read the induction citation, which pays tribute to the SGI leader's humanistic contributions and proclaims him to be a member of the Martin Luther King Jr. International Collegium of Scholars. It states: "You are strengthening global democracy by educating us through your emphatic dedication to the mentor-disciple principle.... [Y]our voice and life echo the teachings and activism of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Mohandas Karamchand 'Mahatma' Gandhi."

After formally handing the citation to President Ikeda, Dr. Carter then presented Mr. and Mrs. Ikeda with an enlarged photograph of an oil painting of the two of them standing together with Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda, the first and second Soka Gakkai presidents. He explained that the original oil would be unveiled on April 1, 2001, in the Great Nave of the King International Chapel for induction into the school's International Hall of Honor.

In his acceptance speech, President Ikeda touched on Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech, which is regarded as one of the greatest speeches of the 20th century (see Oct. 13 *World Tribune*). Dr. King delivered the address on Aug. 28, 1963, during the historic civil rights march on Washington D.C., which was held to commemorate the 100th anniversary of President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation declaring an end to slavery. At the time, Dr. King was 34.

Before a crowd of some 250,000, Dr. King declared: "I say to you today, my friends, that in spite of the difficulties and frustrations of the moment, I still have a dream." President Ikeda observed that Dr. King, true to his words, dedicated his life to the lofty dream of social justice and died a martyr for that cause.

Relating how Tsunesaburo Makiguchi likewise died in prison in pursuit of the dream of justice and peace, Mr. Ikeda said that he wished to dedicate this honor, symbolizing the glory of the Soka Gakkai's 70th anniversary, to the founding president. The SGI leader also discussed the convictions of Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, the sixth president of Morehouse College, who had met Mahatma Gandhi in India in the 1930s and became Martin Luther King Jr.'s mentor.

Founded in 1867 and located in Atlanta, Morehouse College has a proud tradition as one of the country's leading institutions of higher learning catering chiefly to African-American students. Its graduates, who are active in all areas of society, include ambassadors, university presidents and Olympic gold medallists.

The King International Chapel seeks to raise awareness of the achievements of Dr. King and other champions of human rights, and to transmit the message of nonviolence to future generations.

Title: Morehouse College Honors SGI President

Subject: World Tribune 10/27/00 n.3317 p.5 WT001027p05 Atlanta, Georgia 09/07/00

Author:

Keywords: 09/07/00 Atlanta College Diversity Features Georgia Highlights Honors Morehouse President Special Tolerance Tribune World