Daw Aung San Suu Kyi receives UNESCO prize

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DAW Aung San Suu Kyi has finally taken receipt of the UNESCO-Madanjeet Singh Prize for the Promotion of Tolerance and Non-Violence, 10 years after being declared the winner.

Mr Ryuhei Hosoya, executive director of the Office of the Director-General of UNESCO – the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation – presented the trophy to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi at her home on February 10 on behalf of the organisation’s director general, Ms Irina Bokova.

UNESCO awarded her the prize in 2002.

Mr Ryuhei Hosoya also passed a message to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on behalf of Ms Bokova that said: “UNESCO and the director general herself stand ready to assist in the process of reform and reconciliation in this country”.

The UNESCO-Madanjeet Singh Prize for the Promotion of Tolerance and Non-Violence is dedicated to advancing the spirit of tolerance in the arts, education, culture, science and communication. The prize is awarded every two years to individuals or institutions for outstanding contributions to the promotion of tolerance and non-violence. It is named after Madanjeet Singh, a writer, diplomat, UNESCO goodwill ambassador and founder of the South Asia Foundation. Mr Singh instigated the prize in 1995 on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of the birth of the Mahatma Gandhi.

Mr Hosoya told The Myanmar Times that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was a more than worthy winner. “It’s about recognising the struggle that she has conquered and also looking forward to the future of the country and the statue itself signifies the beginning of eternity,” he said. “It represents tolerance and non-violence from the past and to the future.”

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi also received a US$100,000 cash prize with the award, which has already been donated to a foundation she has established in Myanmar.