

Family FEST
By DEBORAH GOODWIN
Santa Monica, Calif., March 14–15

The Global Family Festival, commemorating March 16, Kosen-rufu Day, represented the artistic and spiritual accomplishments of each of the five Los Angeles regions. The cross-regional effort was both a moving and authentic testament to the vitality of the Los Angeles youth division.

Written by Shan Serafin, the three-act musical extravaganza was based on SGI President Ikeda's poem "Sun of *Jiyu* Over a New Land." It engaged young performers and behind-the-scenes participants by the hundreds and played to standing-room-only audiences for two days.

Featuring a multicultural, multi-ethnic ensemble cast, representing Los Angeles in all its diversity, the main characters' personal dilemmas collided with a defining moment in the city's history, the Rodney King incident and ensuing civil unrest. Their journey through their community and inward into their lives resulted in each character awakening the spirit to challenge his or her weaknesses and pursue his or her strengths.

Pim Bomrungchati, originally of Thailand, said: "I know I'm not the only one going through a crisis or insecurity. Everyone is. I want the audience to feel the spirit that "'Sun of *Jiyu*" is me' and not just leave the auditorium and let that spirit fade away."

Yoshiko Nakamura expressed her hopes that "lots of youth division members will become active again in the organization, especially during the next three years leading up to the new century. I hope this March 16 is a real turning point."

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