

NORTHEASTERN ZONE FAMILY YOUTH FESTIVAL BY JOHN KASAHARA, NEW YORK

The excitement of the members can be felt everywhere. The youth have been meeting every Sunday for rehearsals from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and various committees have also been meeting on weeknights and Saturdays.

One such committee is the graphic arts committee. About three weeks ago, they were given the mission to create what would be the logo for the entire Northeastern Zone Family Youth Festival. Several days later, after struggling for hours, they narrowed the list down to four. After much dialogue with all the youth representatives and leaders, they were able to finalize the logo to one incredible design. It is titled "Emerging of the Bodhisattvas of the Earth." The primary designer of this logo was a young man named Justin Durongsaeng. Justin has been practicing Buddhism all his life and through this family festival activity, has been able to reignite his commitment to kosen-rufu.

The rehearsals each Sunday have been held at the New York Culture Center. However, as of June 3, they have been held at a local elementary school. The school was picked solely because of its close proximity to the culture center.

At the practice, one Byakuren member noticed a pile of books sitting on a desk outside of a classroom. When she looked closely at the top book, she realized that it was the children's book *The Princess and the Moon* written by SGI President Ikeda. It was so amazing that at a regular school, there would be a book by President Ikeda. A few people looked at the book and saw that it was quite worn and obviously a favorite among the many young people at this school.

This family festival has proven to be an opportunity for all of the Northeastern Zone to gain so much with our primary mission being to empower the younger youth who will shoulder the responsibility of kosen-rufu. It is the chance for everyone to set personal goals, break through their own struggles, unite as one under the leadership of President Ikeda and cry out on July 14 that the youth of the Northeastern Zone have achieved a tremendous victory!