

## MOSAIC UNVEILED AT LOS ANGELES FRIENDSHIP CENTER

Shining brilliantly, the grand mosaic adorning the outer wall of the Los Angeles Friendship Center was unveiled on Oct. 2.

A portion of SGI President Ikeda's poem "Sun of *Jiyu* Over a New Land," dedicated to the members of Los Angeles in 1993, is engraved on a plaque beside the mosaic: "Beloved Los Angelenos! / I want you each to be / like the California sunshine, / showering on all people / the bright light and warmth /of your compassion. / Be people who extend hope and courage, / who inspire respect and gratitude / wherever you go."

Eiji Miyamoto, veteran SGI stage crew member and fine artist, was commissioned to create the 11 ft. x 17 ft. mosaic, displaying brightly colored figures and flowers, each uniquely designed to signify the diversity of American society. The five dancing figures, depicting the five characters of Myoho-enge-kyo, leap toward the sun; the golden figure embodies the limitless power of the individual. "To me," Eiji said, "the 'Sun of *Jiyu*' represents joy and the stand alone spirit. America is joyful. Our Buddhist practice is joyful. I wanted to encourage the SGI members based on this spirit."

The mosaic is made of more than 65,000 1-sq.-inch ceramic tiles from countries as far as China, Italy and Mexico, and is surrounded by a marble border. Accenting the various flowers are pieces of jewels, stones and glass donated by SGI members and volunteers — one stone was donated from a member from Scotland.

The project, which began a year ago, came to fruition on Aug. 24, with the help of more than 130 volunteers — all of which whose names are etched inside the bottom of the mosaic. "I wanted a lot of people to get involved. One hundred thirty-six people's *ichinen* is in this mosaic. Each person took care and treated it as if it were their personal artwork."

The dedication of a beautiful fountain, made of high desert slate and 2-ton granite rocks, was held in the atrium. Numerous members tirelessly dedicated their time and effort to erect the fountain and plant the splendid garden encircling its perimeter. The heart of the Los Angeles Friendship Center, the atrium, has flourished into a warm and embracing respite for everyone who visits.

—STEPHANIE CELANO