

**PERSIAN NEW YEAR CELEBRATED
BY HALEH MANSOURI
SANTA MONICA, CALIF.**

Norouz, the Persian New Year, is a celebration of the coming of spring, which began officially this year at 11:35 p.m. PST, Sunday, March 19 (in Farsi, *no* means new and *rouz* means day). With the coming of spring, the violet, which is considered “the messenger of spring” in Persian literature, shows off its beauty by appearing near flowing streams. This 3,000- to 4,000-year-old tradition, observed by Iranians across the globe, brings youth and vitality to all.

The Persian Language Group of SGI-USA celebrated *Norouz* at the Los Angeles Friendship Center on March 22 with SGI General Director Eiichi Wada in attendance. A spirit of joy and friendship permeated the main prayer room as members and guests enjoyed Persian music, dance, food and traditional costumes worn by some of the participants.

After evening prayer, there was an explanation of *Norouz* in both Farsi and English. This was followed by a belly dance; an explanation of the practice; reading of the “New Year’s Goshō”; a traditional Persian dance; words by SGI General Director Wada; and presentation of a gift to Mr. Edward Clark for his support of the Persian-language meetings. Mr. Wada explained that instead of being overly concerned about deep philosophical and theoretical matters, it is more important to chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo.

“I really enjoyed the meeting and was happy to be a part of it,” stated Rosalie Dasko. “I thought everything was really good, especially the Persian dance,” said Ned Nelson IV, a fifth grader who attended the meeting with his parents, grandparents and aunt. Mr. Rezai, who came to the meeting with his wife and son, felt that the meeting was “perfect, very nice. It was very embracing.”

For information about the Persian Language Group, please call the SGI Visitor Center at (310) 260-8978.