

**SGI-USA CELEBRATES CHINESE NEW YEAR
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On Jan. 28 at East Los Angeles College, a celebration was held in commemoration of Chinese New Year, the beginning of the 4,699th year of the Chinese calendar. Similar SGI-USA events were held in San Francisco, New York, Chicago, Honolulu and Washington, D.C., to open the Year of the Snake.

In his message to the gatherings, SGI President Ikeda encouraged the participants to devote themselves to their Buddhist practice. “Those with a devout, consistent practice,” he said, “will attract fortune from 10,000 miles away.”

In Los Angeles, more than 800 people enjoyed the seventh annual celebration. After the presentation of gifts from President Ikeda, SGI-USA Senior Vice General Director Frank Nakabayashi expressed his appreciation for the Chinese members’ “continuous contributions to SGI-USA’s advancement while always providing colorful Chinese culture in our diverse organization. Because of your effort, we are so fortunate to be able to witness the opening of the Soka University of America and welcome this new century together with President Ikeda.”

Then it was on to the performances, which included many traditional dances, two choruses, a poem and a moving experience.

This year’s event was planned primarily by youth. “This new generation of bilingual youth,” said Mr. Nakabayashi, “will be crucial in our movement’s advancement in the Chinese–American community in the 21st century.”

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