

Always Work Toward Your Dream, Youth Chief Urges

BY RON BAIRD, BUREAU CHIEF

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“If you have a dream, every day you should go to the Gohonzon and chant about that dream,” SGI-USA Youth Division Chief Ed Feasel said at the San Francisco Youth Division Kickoff today.

“I grew up in this practice and learned from my mother about the amazing power of the Gohonzon,” he said. “While in the Brass Band I developed a great dream about going to college. Even though my family was poor, I chanted for that dream.”

Mr. Feasel enthusiastically told how he gained a full scholarship to Yale — and how he almost flunked out. A senior in faith urged him to dream bigger. “He told me to become an ambassador from America to Europe, so I started chanting about that fantastic goal,” the youth division chief said. “One month later I met with him again and he told me to become a university president. I became overwhelmed with such tremendous goals. Finally it dawned on me that what I was lacking was a dream of my own.”

He explained that once he got to Yale he had no dream for the future and ended up floundering in his practice and his studies. “I discovered that it’s crucial to always have a dream,” he said. “SGI President Ikeda encourages us to climb the mountain where we are and to be victorious. As a result our legs become stronger. Then when we get to the top of the mountain we can see an amazing vista and see which mountain is next.”

The youth division chief also explained how to use the Buddhist practice to help others. “This is the hard part,” he said. “Recently President Ikeda said it’s important to remember why we practice and to really treasure the members. The heart is everything — the heart to help people become happy. This is the essence of Buddhism and kosen-rufu.

“The next four years are like a runway for generating a strong momentum into the 21st century,” he continued. “The 20th century has been a century of war, with the atomic bomb, massacres and killing. But the 21st century should become the century of humanity and of human rights. For youth, the crucial point is how much we can develop the heart to help people become happy.

“Sometimes we may feel that ‘I’m really struggling myself; how can I possibly help someone else?’ or that ‘If I can just focus on my problems, I can solve them,’” he said. “But in Buddhism when we strive to help others become happy, we make the greatest cause for victory in our lives. During this year of advancement, let’s work together to develop our dreams for the 21st century while also striving to help others practice and to create the century of humanity.”

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