

SIGN POSTS: A Determining Factor
By JEFF FARR
SGI-USA Youth Division Study Committee

What matters is one's heart. ("The Drum at the Gate of Thunder," *The Major Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, vol. 5, p. 289)

At the end of this 1278 letter to Sennichi-ama, the Daishonin explains that the greatest happiness is found in our hearts. Indeed, our hearts determine whether we can become happy — whether we can share our happiness with others and make a difference in the world. Our hearts decide everything.

Sometimes, though, when I hear "What matters is one's heart," my mind goes blank. I've heard the expression so many times that I sometimes forget what a profound teaching it is. So I have to keep reminding myself of the importance of "What matters is one's heart."

I always associate this expression with the first time I heard SGI President Ikeda speak. It was exactly 10 years ago, on April 4, 1988, at a dinner at Soka University in Japan. Calling it a family gathering, President Ikeda said that although the cherry blossoms were not in bloom, in his heart there were cherry blossoms in full bloom welcoming us. He then asked us to keep chanting for our happiness and for peace where we lived. They were simple but deeply moving words — words from his heart and about the importance of the heart. I will never forget them.

I began to realize that Buddhism's starting point is the heart, which is what I feel I'm realizing even more 10 years later.

How powerful just a few words from the heart can be! Seven hundred years ago, the Daishonin first said "What matter's is one's heart," and today millions of SGI members are touched by the warmth of his simple message. When President Ikeda said that night that the cherry blossoms in his heart were in full bloom, his words went straight to my heart and have stayed there. They're still echoing in there 10 years later.

So I want to keep developing my heart, to keep trying to express it in a simple way that will touch others. I guess that we all face this challenge — to live the principle that "What matters is one's heart."

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