REGARDING this Lotus Sutra of ours, the essential teaching and the theoretical teaching combine to bring forth benefits boundless in number. And you two brothers should be the same. If the two of you are one in mind and succeed in constructing the Great Palace, the governor's residence, the Lotus Hall, Hachiman Shrine, and other buildings, you should regard this as due to the beneficent power of the Lotus Sutra.

The fact that the two of you are one in mind may be likened to the two wheels of a carriage, or the two wings of a bird. Though your wives and children may have their disagreements, there should never be any disharmony between the two of you.

Though I may seem presumptuous in saying so, you should join together in paying honor to Nichiren. If the two of you should fail to act in harmony, then you may be sure that you will cease to enjoy the protection of the Lotus Sutra.

Beware, beware, for there are persons who clearly would like to do harm to you both! Should you fail to act in harmony, you will be like the snipe and the shellfish who, because they were locked in combat with one another, fell prey to the fisherman.

Recite Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and take care how you behave! Take care how you behave!

Respectfully,

Nichiren

The twelfth day of the eleventh month

Reply to Hyöe no Sakan

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Background

This is a reply to Ikegami Hyöe no Sakan Munenaga, the younger of the Ikegami brothers, followers of Nichiren Daishonin in Musashi Province.

One view suggests that it was written in the eleventh month of 1280 because it mentions the reconstruction of Hachiman Shrine, which had been destroyed by fire in the tenth month of that year.

The essential message of this letter is the importance of unity. The brothers had assumed their father's responsibilities in construction work after his
death in 1279. Their family had been put in charge of various construction projects, and this may have aroused the jealousy of others. Another letter, *The Reconstruction of Hachiman Shrine* (p. 949), written the following year, addresses this point. It advises them not to blame their lord, to whom they are indebted, for not entrusting them with the reconstruction of the shrine. Their father, Yasumitsu, had converted to the Daishonin’s teachings prior to his death, but his associates were still devoted to the priest Ryōkan, who hated the Daishonin. Such persons would see disharmony between the brothers as an opportunity to discredit them. By “paying honor” to him, and following his instructions to maintain unity faithfully, the Daishonin says, the brothers will overcome any obstacle.

**Notes**

1. Here the Daishonin refers to the theoretical teaching (the first fourteen chapters) of the Lotus Sutra and the essential teaching (the latter fourteen chapters) as the two halves that together form the Lotus Sutra, the source of boundless benefit, and encourages the two brothers to be so united.

2. The Great Palace here refers to the retired shogun’s palace, the governor’s residence to the residence of the lord of Saga-mi, or the regent Hōjō Tokimune, and the Lotus Hall to the place for the practice of the Lotus meditation.

3. According to a history of ancient China, Su Tai used this story to stop his lord, King Hui of Chao, from attacking the state of Yen.