

One Horseload of Taros



I HAVE received the one horseload of taros and fifty bundles of ginger that you sent.

As for these mountains of Minobu, to the west is Shirane Peak, where we always see snow; to the east, the peak of Tenshi, where the sun appears each day; to the north, Minobu Peak; to the south, Takatori Peak. We are in the bottom of a box, as it were, surrounded by these four mountains. From the northwest direction a river comes flowing, heading off toward the southeast. It is no ordinary spot, cicadas shrilling on the peaks, monkeys crying in the ravines, trees growing as thick as reeds, underbrush as dense as rain.

In such a place, no taros such as you sent are to be found, and no ginger grows. Taros are like rocks but somewhat softer; ginger is like other plants but tastier.

I have reported your gifts to the Lotus Sutra, and I am sure that Shakyamuni Buddha will take cognizance of your kind intentions.

With my deep respect,
Nichiren

The fourteenth day of the eighth month

A reply



Background

This letter is a reply to a follower who sent offerings of taros and ginger to Nichiren Daishonin at Minobu. The year and recipient are unknown, though it traditionally has been regarded as having been written in 1278. Describing the rugged mountain setting of Mi-

nobu, the Daishonin paints a picture of his isolated location and refers to the rarity and preciousness of the gifts. He says that because he has reported them to the Lotus Sutra, Shakyamuni Buddha will be aware of the recipient's kindness.