

Letter to Niida



IT was extremely kind of you to send a messenger to this place. The sutra you uphold is the Lotus Sutra, the foremost teaching among all the exoteric and esoteric doctrines. The Buddha is Shakyamuni Buddha, the foremost among all the Buddhas. And the votary you are following appears to be a votary of the Lotus Sutra. Thus all three concerns are fully met. As a sup-

porter of the teachings, you may be certain of fulfilling your aims.

With my deep respect,
Nichiren

The twenty-ninth day of the fifth
month

Reply to Niida
and to his wife



Background

The recipients of this letter were Niida Shirō Nobutsuna and his wife, followers of Nichiren Daishonin who lived in Izu Province. Niida was an elder brother of Nichimoku, the successor of Nikkō who directly inherited the Daishonin's teachings. Niida's mother was an elder sister of Nanjō Tokimitsu. Thus he converted to the Daishonin's teachings through his connection to the Nanjō family. Along with Nanjō Tokimitsu, Niida served the Daishonin and supported and protected other believers.

While this letter makes no reference to a year, it is thought to have been written at Minobu in 1280. The Daishonin refers to the Lotus Sutra, Shakyamuni Buddha, and himself, the votary of the Lotus Sutra, saying that "all three concerns are fully met." These refer to the three treasures of Buddhism, the Buddha, the Law, and the Buddhist Order (the last represented by the votary who fulfills the teachings of the Lotus Sutra). Niida's faith in these three, the Daishonin says, will ensure that his goals are fulfilled.