

# Nichiren Shu News

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## OESHIKI

By Sandra Seki

The Oeshiki celebration commemorating the passing of Nichiren Shonin is held every year beginning October 12 and continuing through October 13 at Honmonji Temple in Ikegami, Tokyo. The parade is more like an energetic festival since it draws a huge crowd every year. Nichiren Shu followers from all over Japan come to Ikegami with their own fraternal associations, displaying their original *mando*, ten thousand lanterns placed on a pagoda, adorned with pink and white paper cherry blossoms. They also beat their *uchiwa daiko*, fan-shaped hand drums, while chanting the Odaimoku in unison. Their purpose is to pay homage to their Founder, Nichiren Shonin, who founded Nichiren Shu more than seven centuries ago.

According to historic documents, Nichiren Shonin died at the age of 60 on the 13th day of the 10th month of the lunar calendar in 1282 at the residence of Lord Ikegami Munenaka in present-day Tokyo. He was on his way to the hot springs in Hitachi, present-day Ibaraki Prefecture, to treat his deteriorating health. Unfortunately, his condition worsened, and he could not go any further.

While resting at Lord Ikegami's residence, he appointed six senior disciples from among his retinue to continue his propagation. They were: Nissho, Nichiro, Nichiko, Niko,



Nitcho, and Nichiji. He is said to have distributed his personal belongings, a small statue of the Buddha, and a copy of the Lotus Sutra with many footnotes he had compiled, to the members of his retinue, relatives and major believers. The funeral service was solemnly performed at the residence of Lord Ikegami at midnight the following day attended by major members of his retinue and samurai patrons.

To this day, more than 100 *mando* come to Honmonji Temple on the eve of October 12th accompanied by young men, women and children hoisting the *matoi*, Japanese firefighters' banner, dressed in happi coats representing each fraternal association. Members of each group chant the Odaimoku with their *uchiwa daiko*. The parade begins around 7:00 p.m. reaching its peak at 9:00 p.m. Since followers come from all over Japan, the last *mando* doesn't leave until after midnight.

On the following day, October 13, a solemn memorial service is held early in the morning. This service is completely different from the energetic festivity of the night before. Priests from many parts of Tokyo join in prayer to commemorate Nichiren Shonin.

These two days are one of the major festivals of Nichiren Shu. Please come and join us for Oeshiki at Honmonji this year to commemorate Nichiren Shonin's 734th memorial.

### PILGRIMAGE TO NICHIREN SHU MAIN TEMPLES, CHIBA PREFECTURE

From the Nichiren Shu Shimibun Translated and Compiled by Rev. Sensho Komukai

Nichiren Shu has designated 57 Honzan, or Main Temples, as historically significant. In this issue, we begin a series on these Main Temples in the hope it might interest Nichiren Shu followers around the world and maybe inspire some to come and see them in person. By visiting these Honzan, you can better understand the lives and hardships faced by Nichiren Shonin and his disciples. Until then, please join us in this virtual pilgrimage.

**GUHOJI TEMPLE:** A 15-minute walk from Ichikawa JR Station, 18 minutes from Tokyo Station

Guhoji Temple was founded in 737 CE by Priest Gyoki to pray for the repose of Tekona's soul. Tekona was a beautiful young lady who lived in this area. Many men fought over her. She was so hurt by these fights that she took her own life by jumping into the river. The tragedy of Tekona was described in *Manyo-shu*, the Anthology of a Myriad Leaves:

*When I see the well at Mama of Katsushika,  
It reminds me of Tekona  
Who stood here oft, drawing water.*

The well from which Tekona drew water still exists in the neighborhood. She is enshrined in the Tekona Reishin-do, the shrine dedicated to Tekona as a protective deity for women.



Tekona Reishin-do was built by Rev. Nichiyo in 1501. It is dedicated to Tekona, a goddess of pregnancy, childbirth and protecting children.

**HOKEKYOJI TEMPLE:** A 10-minute walk from Shimoosa Nakayama JR Station

Hokekyoji Temple was established in 1260 CE from the private residence of Nichiren's devotee, Toki Jonin. The original versions of the *Kanjin Honzon-sho*, Treatise Revealing the Spiritual Contemplation and the Object of Worship, and the *Rissho Ankoku-ron*, Treatise on Spreading Peace Throughout the Country by Establishing the True Dharma, both designated as national treasures, are kept in the *Shokyo-den*, the Sanctum of the Sacred Teachings of Buddhism, in the temple.

The temple is known for its statue of Hariti, also known as Kishimo-jin, a Buddhist goddess of childbirth and children. Nichiren Shonin carved the statue of Hariti and gave it to Toki Jonin as a guardian deity. The statue is enshrined in this temple.

Each year Aragyo training is held here. Priests who complete the training can perform Kito Blessings.

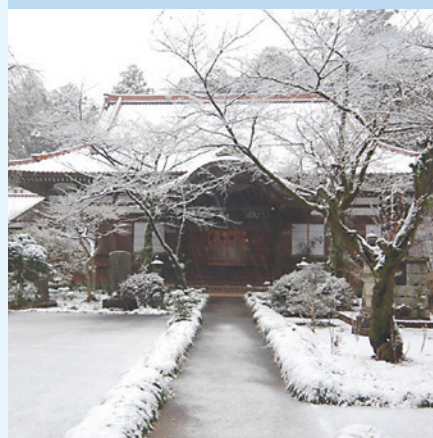


Shokyo-den houses sacred Buddhist texts and some important writings of Nichiren Shonin.

**MYOKOJI TEMPLE:** A 45-minute bus ride from Chiba JR Station

Myokoji Temple grew in prosperity as a learning center for Nichiren Buddhism, and was called Noro Danrin, a Buddhist center for study and practice. In 1661, when the great scholar Rev. Nichiko gave a lecture on the *Hokke Gengi*, Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra, and *Hokke Mongu*, Words and Phrases of the Lotus Sutra, novice priests came together from all over the country for their study.

However, in 1666, the government disagreed with the doctrines of Nichiko, and he was exiled to Miyazaki Prefecture. There was a movement to rebuild the study center but the whole area was burnt down in a forest fire in 1834. It took seven years to rebuild the present temple which was completed in 1863.



The Hondo or Main Hall of Myokoji Temple in winter. The temple was originally founded in 1275.

**SHOBOJI TEMPLE:** A 6-minute bus ride from Oami JR Station and 8-minute walk from Midorigaoka bus stop

Shoboji Temple was established in 1458. Tokugawa Iyasu, the first Shogun of the Tokugawa Shogunate, made a donation to build the lecture hall and the central gate of the temple. He also gave permission to open a learning center for Nichiren Buddhism here in 1580. The school was called Konishi Danrin. Over 900 monks studied in the center during the Golden Age.

In 1671, Tokugawa Ietsuna, the fourth Shogun of the Tokugawa Shogunate, donated the main hall of the temple. He also donated a huge sum of money to build an inner gate going to the main hall.

Due to a new law passed by the Meiji Government, the Konishi Danrin was closed in 1872.



The Hondo or Main Hall of Shoboji Temple was converted from a lecture hall that was used for the Konishi Danrin School.



# Temples Affiliated with Nichiren Shonin in the Izu Peninsula

By Rev. Kanshu Naito

The Egawa family originally came from Uno, Nara Prefecture, in the 11th century and moved to Izu at the end of the Heian period, about 1185. They were successful there as magistrates controlling Sagami, Izu, Suruga, Kai and Musashi areas until the end of the Tokugawa Period in 1868.

There is an interesting legend that Hidechika of the 16th generation, later known as Nichikyu, happened to meet Nichiren Shonin while studying at Hieizan. Immediately recognizing Nichiren Shonin as an excellent priest, Hidechika earnestly asked him to come to his residence at Izumi and to stay with them because the following day would be his ancestor's memorial service. Nichiren Shonin accepted the invitation and conducted the memorial service at Hidechika's home. The entire family was deeply moved and conceived aspiration for Buddhahood. Unfortunately, the time in this story does not correspond with the time when Hidechika's family lived at Izumi. This episode suggests the deep relation between Nichiren Shonin and the Egawa family.

In the first year of the Kocho period, 1261, it is said that Hidechika came

and saw Nichiren Shonin after he had been exiled to Ito. Nichiren Shonin was very glad to see him and preached the Buddha Dharma.

Hidechika often visited Nichiren during his exile to serve him. On Hidechika's request, Nichiren Shonin visited Nirayama, presented the "Mandala for preventing fire," prayed for the health and longevity of his family, and preached to the locals. They

earnestly listened and became devotees of the Lotus Sutra and followers of Nichiren Shonin.

Later on, Hidechika visited Minobu-san and was granted the Buddhist Name "Upasaka Nichikyu" and given a Mandala written by Nichiren Shonin. Hidetomo of the 17th generation, Hidechika's son, became a priest, changed his name to Honryuin, and built Daijo-an on his premises.

Hidemori of the 24th generation moved Daijo-an and built Honryuji Temple. He invited Rev. Emmyoin Niccho to be the founder. Niccho belonged to Honkokuji Temple in Kyoto and spread the teachings of Nichiren Shu Buddhism throughout the Kanto Region. On Hidemori's request, Niccho built the main temple, and enshrined Nichiren Shonin's image, hand-sculpted by Rev. Nippo, a direct disciple of Nichiren Shonin. Niccho then performed the eye-opening ceremony for the statue, and named the temple Daijozan Honryuji. Thus, the history of Honryuji Temple is tied with that of the Egawa family.



Honryuji Temple in Izu enshrines an image of Nichiren Shonin sculpted by his direct disciple Nippo Shonin.



The Egawa Family Grave in Honryuji.

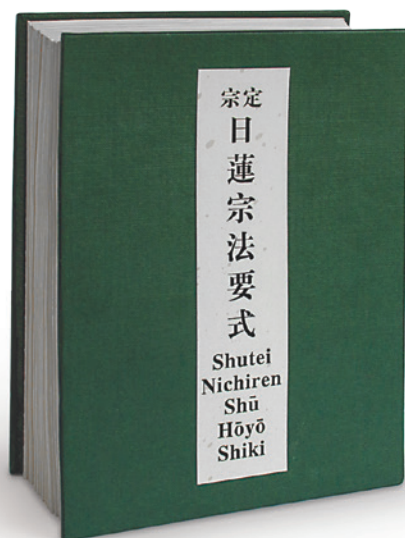
## Thoughts on Translating the Hoyo Shiki: From Form to Principle

By Rev. Ryuei McCormick

From 2007 until 2013, I assisted Bishop Chishin Hirai with translating the *Shutei Nichiren Shu Hoyo Shiki*. It was many years of hard work, with me traveling several times a month from my home in San Francisco to NBIC in Hayward where then Rev. Hirai was director. It was a truly satisfying experience, and I am happy with the result.

The book's title in English is *The Standard Nichiren Shu Ceremonies and Protocols*. Since it contains the criteria for training ministers, having it available in English is a huge step for the transmission of Nichiren Shu to the English-speaking world. It is intended both for use by novices to assist with face-to-face training with a master, and by fully ordained ministers working with others to improve their skills.

The book has five parts. Part one provides liturgies for standard daily morning and evening services, commemorations of the events in the life of Shakyamuni Buddha and Nichiren, the eye-opening ceremony, Gohonzon bestowal and several others. Part two describes the attitudes, methods, and movements that ministers need to bring to life when performing services. Part three covers the theory and practice of *shomyo*, the sung short verses used in ceremonies. Part four contains



selected passages from Nichiren's writings and other reflections. Part five is a reference section for platform preaching, different forms of prayers for ceremonies, and how to inscribe *toba* or memorial tablets.

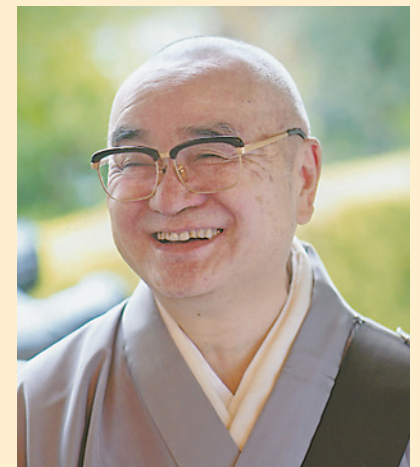
I appreciate many things about this book. Its description of the attitude to bring to our practice is not just beneficial for ministers; it should be shared with lay people also. The *Hoyo Shiki* emphasizes how reverence and solemnity bring dignity to our practice. It also cautions us not to try too hard since this leads to nervous blunders.

The idea is to master the techniques and perform them calmly. This is how we can delight the Buddhas and enable those attending the service to joyfully experience the exaltation and intensification of their faith. By performing ceremonies with dignity, we can contemplate deeply the principles of Buddhism through performing these practices, by the forms, actions, and utterances of the ceremonies themselves. Ceremonies should never be mere formalities. They are a practice to calm the mind, contemplate the Wonderful Dharma, and lead all beings to Enlightenment.

## REVEREND KANNO PREACHES (38)

*"Resolute in mind, they [the Bodhisattvas from Underground] always sought wisdom, and expounded various wonderful teachings without fear."*

—Lotus Sutra, Chapter XV,  
The Appearance of Bodhisattvas  
from Underground



### Resolute in Mind

"Resolute in mind" means to have strong determination for keeping one's aim in mind by all means until its accomplishment and defying any delusion. "Without fear" means "to have the strong will not to yield to slander, jealousy and all other oppressions" to achieve one's aim.

The phrase gives a feeling of reliance and a great deal of encouragement to us as those whose faith is in the Odaimoku. On the other hand, the phrase gives a warning: "Even if you have established your aim by sheer determination, it is most likely you may change or give up your aim by yielding to bullying, slander, jealousy, envy or other malicious assaults."

However, we should never overlook Shakyamuni Buddha's assurance lying in the background of this phrase. Here He assures, "I am always protecting you. Anywhere you will be, I am always with you." Take care of yourself and devote yourself to Odaimoku chanting, perceiving that you are being watched over by Shakyamuni Buddha.

In October, please join us for the ceremony at your temple to celebrate Nichiren Shonin's 734th anniversary and express our appreciation to Our Founder who transmitted to us this supreme teaching of the Lotus Sutra.

Rev. Nisso Kanno, Bishop of Ikegami Honmonji Temple, Tokyo



# Peace Prayer in Hiroshima

From the Nichiren Shu Shimbun

Nichiren Shu Shumuin along with Chu Shikoku District, Middle Shikoku Area, hosted a special peace prayer service for the Hiroshima atomic bomb victims on Friday, August 21 at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park. Hundreds of priests and lay followers from all over Japan attended the service.

The Peace Monument in the park was built in 1955 to enshrine the

remains of about 70,000 victims. Before the service, Rev. Junko Kobayashi, Chief Administrator of Nichiren Shu, along with members of the Nichiren Shu Cabinet, offered flowers at the monument.

A thousand colorful paper cranes, *senbazuru*, made by the kindergarteners of the Nichiren Shu Childcare Union decorated the grounds. The ceremony began with songs sung by the Hiroshima Hokke Wasan Group.



Koyo Watanabe, a fourth grade elementary school student read “A Prayer for Peace.” He said, “This world should be reborn as a Buddha land. We should all learn the meaning of Hiroshima and pass down the true facts of Hiroshima to the generations to come and the world.”



Rev. Kobayashi officiated the service, and the participants joined in prayer and chanted the Odaimoku in unison. Everyone prayed for world peace. Several incense tables were set up outside the monument so that tourists and visitors from all over could offer incense to the Hiroshima victims.

After the service, Rev. Kobayashi, representing Nichiren Shu, gave a message: “In 1954, Nichiren Shu began the Rissho World Peace Movement, before any other religion. We should continue this spirit of *Inochi Ni Gassho*, placing your palms together to life. Abolishing nuclear weapons, not beginning wars, not allowing war and not supporting war, these are the keys to peace. To spread prayers for peace throughout the world is most important. To realize Rissho Ankoku, we must continue this peace movement. This will be a memorial service for all the war victims.”

—Translated by Sandra Seki

# Memorial Service for War Victims at Chidorigafuchi National Cemetery

From the Nichiren Shu Shimbun

On August 15, 2015, the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, Nichiren Shu held a memorial service at the Chidorigafuchi National Cemetery. It was conducted by Honorable Rev. Nisso Uchino, Archbishop of Nichiren Shu. The service has been celebrated the same day every year since the cemetery was established in 1959.

With the Great Mandala enshrined inside the hexagonal building, where the remains of the war dead are interred, about 1,000 people attended, offering a sincere prayer for the souls of all war victims and for world peace.

A thousand *origami*, folded paper, cranes, sewn together in colorful cascading forms, decorated every corner of the cemetery to symbolize the

hope for permanent peace throughout the world.

According to Shigehide Wakamatsu, Chief Director for the preservation of the Chidorigafuchi National Cemetery, the number of remains in the cemetery amount to 362,570. He expressed his thoughts, “It is estimated that remains of approximately 1,130,000 people are still left behind overseas. I deeply feel that the remains of the war dead, not yet repatriated from the battlefields, must be recovered as soon as possible.”

Rev. Junko Kobayashi, Chief Administrator of Nichiren Shu, stated, “It is important not to forget how disastrous war is and how it can bring tragedy to us. It is our duty to pass on the importance of a peaceful world to the next generation. Nichiren Shonin said, in his *Rissho Ankoku-ron*, Spreading Peace



throughout the Country by Establishing the True Dharma, ‘If all the people take up the true teachings of the Lotus Sutra, this world will become the Buddha Land.’ Let us bring the peaceful Buddha Land together all over the world.”

—Translated by Sensho Komukai



**ABOUT THE CHIDORIGAFUCHI NATIONAL CEMETERY**

According to the official Japanese government web site, “the Chidorigafuchi National Cemetery was established in 1959 by the Japanese Government to house the remains of the many unknown Japanese who died overseas during World War II.”

The remains include both servicemen and civilians, and the cemetery currently houses the remains of more than 350,000 people that cannot be identified. The cemetery is not affiliated with any religion.

Nichiren Shu has held a memorial ceremony every year on August 15th since the National Cemetery was completed. The memorial ceremony is dedicated to the souls of all victims of the war everywhere, and the ceremony concludes with an earnest prayer for world peace.





### Nichiren Buddhist Sangha of Texas

**Bishop Myokei Caine-Barrett**

#### 2015 International Dharma Teachers Retreat

In 2011, then Rev. Myokei Caine-Barrett attended the International Dharma Teachers Retreat. She was so impressed by the gathering, she volunteered to help organize this year's retreat. Thirteen different countries and nearly 200 individuals representing Theravada, Mahayana, Vajrayana, Ekayana, as well as Insight Meditation and Mindfulness were represented. Rev. Ryuoh Faulconer and Rev. Ryusho Jeffus joined Bishop Myokei in leading a shodaigyo for the participants as a form of healing. The sound of the Odaimoku resounding in the room in various harmonies was wonderfully vibrant and astonishingly powerful. Many had never had the opportunity to chant the Odaimoku and many comments were made about its power.



#### White House Gathering of Buddhist Leaders

On May 14, Bishop Myokei Caine-Barrett participated in the First White House-U.S. Buddhist Leaders Conference, sponsored and organized by Soka Gakkai International (SGI). There were about 130 participants, representing all branches of Buddhism in the United States. The conference focused on issues related to climate change and social justice and presented a statement concerning these issues to the Obama administration.



### Honolulu Myohoji Temple Rev. Takamasa Yamamura

#### The End of Aloha Buddhism and Socializing Buddhism in Hawaii

Despite the growth of Buddhism throughout America, it is declining in Hawaii. Buddhist temples in Hawaii, including Myohoji Temple, were built by Japanese-Americans. Since before World War II, temples were used as centers for communication and socializing for Japanese-Americans. By going there, the *issei*, first generation, gained a sense of security in the new cultural environment, different from where they were born and raised. Today, however, existing members of the temples are aging, and many have passed away. Their children have discarded their cultural consciousness and are assimilating into the larger society. Furthermore, on Sundays, there are other activities that provide a social life besides going to the temple.

Temples that have been built by immigrant communities are difficult for other ethnic groups to join. Today, people are too busy, and many dislike becoming members of a religious group. More people are doing what interests them, and they avoid becoming involved with other activities or organizations.

What should we do now? First, I believe it can be difficult for other ethnic groups to enter a temple. Therefore, we should welcome everyone to the temple. Next, the temple should be a place not only for socializing but also to study about human life.

The temple should teach methods for mental and physical health. We should learn from American Buddhism and make meditation the temple's central activity. Lastly, we need to practice Engaged Buddhism. How can Myohoji serve Hawaiian society? For example, we could have preschool education, provide scholarships, promote peace, and set an example for interfaith peace gatherings through attendance by ministers and members.

Let us think about these new methods together.

### Nichiren Buddhist Temples in Southeast Asia

**Rev. Ervinna Myofu**

#### Urabon Services

We, the members of Nichiren Shu in Southeast Asia, observe the Ullambana or Urabon service every year to honor our ancestors and also offer the merits of chanting the Sutra to save all the souls in the universe who have lost

their lives in natural disasters, wars and unfortunate accidents.

This year at Myohosan Rengeji, Jakarta, Klang Sangha, Kannonji Temple Kuala Lumpur, about 15-30 members and followers attended the Ullambana ceremony with pure and sincere hearts. We offered flowers, fruit, incense, many kinds of foods and drinks to all the souls and erected stupas for the ancestors and, of course, offered the merits of chanting the Sutra and Odaimoku to them.



The Ullambana Ceremony is an offering to everything that supports our lives. It could therefore be considered an offering for ourselves. The significance of the Ullambana offering ceremony can be found by first examining our own hearts which may be full of greed and desire, reflecting upon our misdeeds, recapturing our true selves, and making a commitment to a new start.

### Nichiren Buddhist Kannon Temple

**Rev. Shoda Kanai**

#### Moving Forward

First and foremost, I would like to continue the work that my father has laid before me in creating a place for peace of body, mind and soul. Secondly, I would like to realize Nichiren Shonin's goal of bringing the Lotus Sutra to the world, thus ensuring peace and harmony. Through His major treatise, *Rissho Ankoku-ron*, Spreading Peace throughout the Country by Establishing the True Dharma, we learn that by truly believing in the Lotus Sutra we can affect change in this world. We can bring calmness instead of fighting and happiness instead of suffering. This world is the Buddha Land. We just need to realize it as such.

Here are some of the ideas that I am considering:

Incorporating more Japanese and English style chanting.

Creating lay leaders within the Las Vegas congregation as well as developing lay leaders for NONA.

Explaining many of the traditions and esoteric teachings within Nichiren Shu.

Eventually taking over study classes, most likely within the next five years. My goal is to raise everyone's awareness and begin to move out of the Sravakabuddha stage and into the Bodhisattva state. If you do not understand these terms, don't worry. I will reveal them to you when the time is right.

### Renkoji Temple, Italy

**Rev. Shoryo Tarabini**

#### Mandala Eye-Opening Ceremony in Vercelli

After several months of hard work, local students completed the great mandala in Vercelli. As the city is known for the cultivation of rice, the mandala is made entirely of rice and shaped like a lotus flower. In the Eye-Opening Ceremony, we chanted the Lotus Sutra and Odaimoku and held a brief sermon in front of the citizens of Vercelli.

The "rice mandala" was recognized by the *Guinness Book of World Records*. It was featured in both local and national newspapers in Italy. The Italian national public broadcasting company, RAI, also televised the service.

The ceremony started with purification using salt and rice wine, followed by *shasui*, water sprinkling, *sange*, flower strewing, *shomyo*, singing and chanting the Dharma, *jigage*, sutra chanting, *shodai*, Odaimoku chanting, and prayers for the welfare of all beings.

The Mayor of Vercelli was present, and the service impressed the attendees so much that we were asked to include it with those of other religious groups, such as Catholics, Jews, and Muslims, as an annual event in Vercelli. The event will also be part of EXPO Milano 2015. You can find more details on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/shoryo.tarabini](http://www.facebook.com/shoryo.tarabini)



### Calendar for October 2015–November 2015

<b>OCT 1</b>	Ceremony of Changing the Robes on the Statue of Nichiren Shonin, Minobusan
<b>OCT 10</b>	Ceremony in Memory of the Founder's Exile to Sado Island
<b>OCT 11-13</b>	Oeshiki
<b>OCT 12</b>	Minobusan and Ikegami Mando Parade

<b>OCT 13</b>	The 734th Memorial Service for Nichiren Shonin
<b>OCT 24</b>	35th Anniversary of San Jose Myokakuji Betsuin
<b>NOV 12</b>	Commemoration Day for the Komatsubara Persecution
<b>NOV 13</b>	Memorial for Nichizo Shonin
<b>NOV 24</b>	Grand Ceremony at Dragon Palace Temple, India

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