

Nichiren Shu News

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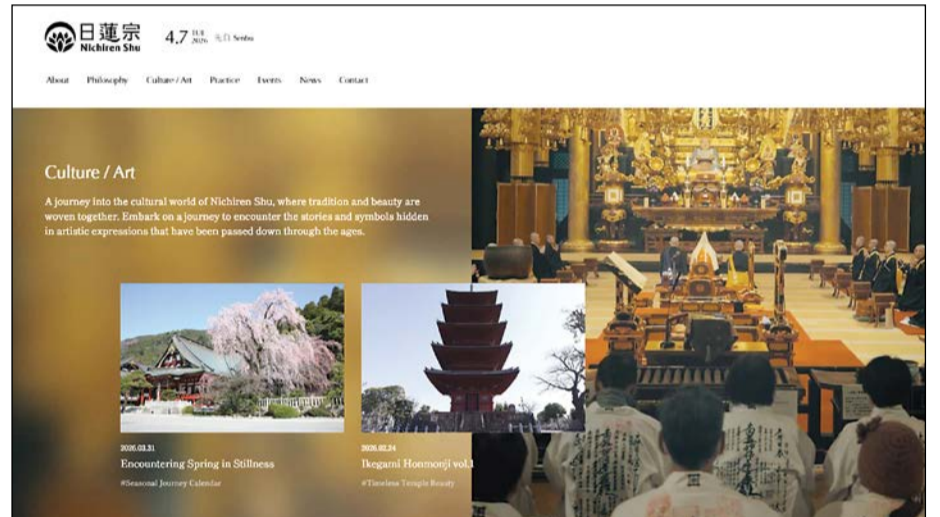
No. 271

Spring 2026

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NEW GLOBAL WEBSITE LAUNCH A Digital Gateway to 800 Years of Wisdom

nichirensyu-global.jp/en



By Rev. Keiji Oshima

We are pleased to announce the launch of our new global website (nichirensyu-global.jp/en), a digital platform designed to share the teachings, culture, and living traditions of Nichiren Shu Buddhism with audiences around the world. The site, which went live in February, represents a significant milestone in Nichiren Shu's ongoing efforts to connect and meaningfully engage with people across borders and cultures.

The global website is part of a broader international branding initiative that has been under development since 2024, guided by the tagline "With You, For All." This tagline gives international expression to Nichiren Shu's propagation philosophy of "Inochi ni Gassho"—a principle rooted in the spirit of Never-Despising Bodhisattva. It calls us to honor all life—not only living beings but all existence, animate and inanimate—across the three periods of past, present, and future. "With You, For All" carries this vision forward: every life is precious and connected to each other, making the path of awakening one we share. The website brings this spirit into the digital sphere, offering an entry point for anyone curious about Nichiren Shu, whether they are encountering the tradition for the first time or deepening an existing interest.

Unlike the existing Nichiren Shu English portal site, which serves as a

comprehensive resource for those already studying the tradition in depth, the new global website takes a distinctly different approach. It is conceived as a magazine-style platform—emphasizing visual storytelling, cultural context, and emotional resonance rather than exhaustive doctrinal explanation. The goal is to move visitors from curiosity to understanding, and from understanding to experience—ultimately inspiring them to visit a temple and experience the tradition firsthand.

The website is organized around three main content pillars. "Philosophy" features a series called "Lotus Teachings," which draws on the wisdom of the Lotus Sutra to offer practical perspectives on the struggles and anxieties of modern life. "Culture/Art" presents "Timeless Temple Beauty," a curated exploration of Nichiren Shu temples—their architecture, sacred art, and seasonal landscapes. "Practice" includes a "Temple Visit Etiquette Guide," a friendly and accessible introduction to the customs and manners of visiting a Japanese temple.

Each of these pillars is supported by articles that function as independent entry points into the world of Nichiren Shu. Whether a reader arrives through an interest in Japanese architecture, a search for contemplative practices, or a philosophical question about the meaning of compassion, the site guides them naturally toward deeper

engagement. The design philosophy reflects a balance between visual appeal and intellectual depth—the idea that the site's presentation should be as considered as the ideas it conveys.

The website also features a "Seasonal Journey Calendar" that highlights the landscapes, traditional observances, and cultural events that unfold throughout the year at Nichiren Shu temples across Japan—many of which are open to international visitors. Separately from the new website, the official Nichiren Shu International Instagram account (@nichirensyuinternational) shares video teachings and temple photography regularly, and the two platforms are linked to create a seamless connection between long-form content and social media posts.

From a design perspective, the global website embodies a philosophy of "harmony between tradition and innovation." The layout is clean and spacious, drawing on the Japanese

aesthetic principle that empty space itself carries meaning. Photography and smooth scrolling create an immersive experience that reflects the contemplative spirit of temple life. Navigation is intuitive, and the site is fully responsive across devices.

The "About" page offers an invitation that captures the spirit of the entire project: "800 years of teaching offers multiple doorways. It does not matter where you enter. Follow what attracts you, go where you're invited." This openness reflects Nichiren Shu's commitment to meeting people where they are—not demanding adherence but offering pathways for exploration and personal discovery.

The launch of the global website is just one element of our ongoing international branding strategy that began in 2024 with the creation of the global logo, tagline, and official Instagram presence. Further initiatives, including video content and expanded media outreach, are planned as the project continues to evolve and expand.

We invite all readers to explore the new global website at nichirensyu-global.jp/en and to share it with anyone who may be interested in learning about Nichiren Shu. The doorways are always open. We look forward to walking this path together—with you, for all.



IN MEMORIAM

It is with deep sadness that we report the passing of two ministers who devoted themselves to Nichiren Shu's international mission.

Rev. Myojitsu Nagakubo passed away on December 24, 2025, at the age of 75. Rev. Nagakubo served as an inter-

national missionary since 2014 and was stationed in India as Chief Minister of Nichigatsuzan Horinji Dharmachakra Temple in Sarnath.

Rev. Gakugyo Matsumoto passed away on February 17, 2026, at the age of 56. Rev. Matsumoto served as an international

missionary from 1994 to 2004, during which time he was stationed at the Nichiren Mission of Hawaii in Honolulu and the Hilo Nichiren Mission. He also dedicated himself to supporting our new Nichiren Shu mission in London. After his retirement, Rev. Matsumoto

served as a member of the International Propagation Committee.

They will both be long remembered for their service and their lifelong dedication to spreading the Lotus Sutra beyond borders. May they rest in the eternal light of the Wonderful Dharma.

LIFE OF NICHIZO SHONIN 1269-1342



Nichiren Shonin entrusting Nichizo with the important mission of spreading the True Dharma in Kyoto.



Myokenji Temple in Kyoto was established by Nichizo Shonin in 1321.

By Rev. Sensho Komukai

Kyoto has an influx of tourists visiting every day and night all year round. Do you know how many Nichiren Shu temples there are in Kyoto? There are 143. It was Nichizo Shonin who laid the foundation for the development of all these Nichiren Shu temples and for the large growth of followers in Kyoto.

Nichizo Shonin was born in Chiba Prefecture in 1269. In 1275, when he was seven years old, he became a disciple of his older brother, Nichiro. Nichiren Shonin must have perceived Nichizo's remarkable ability as a monk. When Nichiren was about to pass away in 1282, he called Nichizo to his bedside and entrusted him with the mission of spreading the True Dharma in the imperial capital of Kyoto. This was when Nichizo was just 13 years old.

Nichizo studied Nichiren Shu teachings under Nichiro in Kamakura

for over ten years. At the age of 24, he decided to go to Kyoto to concentrate his efforts on the mission that had been given to him by Nichiren. He expected many hardships and persecutions would fall upon him. To overcome those sufferings, to train a strong mind, and to cultivate indefatigable power of perseverance, he decided to practice ascetic discipline. From the end of October of 1292, he recited and copied the Lotus Sutra in Myohonji Temple during the day, while he soaked in seawater up to his waist at Yuigahama Beach in Kamakura to recite the Jigage part of the Lotus Sutra 100 times from midnight toward daybreak every day for 100 days in succession. This is said to be the origin of the 100 Days Aragyō Ascetic Practice of Nichiren Shu today.

In February of 1293, with his ascetic practice accomplished, he made a pilgrimage to Kominato, Kiyosumi, and Minobusan, before traveling to Kyoto

by way of the Hokuriku area along the coast of the Sea of Japan. He arrived at Kyoto on April 14, 1294. He engaged in street-corner preaching every single day. His persuasive power and enthusiasm attracted people, especially those engaged in commerce and industry.

Over more than ten years in Kyoto, Nichizo gained many followers. As the religious power of his following increased, the reactions from people in other Buddhist sects became more extreme and violent. On May 20, 1307, Nichizo was exiled due to a false charge based on a deep-seated grudge and envy. Though he was pardoned and able to return to Kyoto in 1309, he was exiled again in 1310. He was exiled a total of three times, but he never became discouraged. Indeed, the number of his disciples and followers increased. Thanks to the great contribution from many influential tradespeople of Kyoto, he was finally able to establish Myokenji

Temple in 1321. This was in the 28th year since he had first come to Kyoto. Then in 1334, Myokenji Temple was designated by Emperor Godaigo as the temple for the imperial family to pray. This was the first Nichiren Shu temple officially approved by the central government.

On November 13, 1342 Nichizo passed away. He spent 50 years in Kyoto solely to spread the teachings of Nichiren Shonin and the Lotus Sutra.

His achievements in the expansion of Nichiren Shu temples in Kyoto command our profound respect. His genuine courage and indefatigable perseverance, along with energy and wisdom, are worthy of our profound respect. Furthermore, we cannot overlook the idea that our Founder Nichiren Shonin was able to see the extraordinary talent of a 13-year-old boy and to have the keen foresight to task Nichizo with the important duty of spreading Nichiren Shu Buddhism in Kyoto.



Statue of Nichizo Shonin at Hokkeji Temple in Kyoto.



As those who practice the True Dharma, you will inevitably be protected by various deities. My disciples and followers should therefore have a mind of the king of lions and should not be afraid of any threat. As the king of lions is not afraid of any animal, its offspring are the same. Those who abuse Nichiren are like a fox howling at a lion while we, Nichiren Buddhists, are like roaring lions.

—Persecutions Befalling Nichiren Shonin,
Shonin Gonan Ji (ST 405)

Throughout his life Nichiren verified the teaching of the Wonderful Dharma both by those who threatened him and those who helped him. He assured us who follow him of the protection we enjoy and the capabilities we have in our determination to benefit all beings.

—Rev. Shinkyō Warner

STUDY CLASS ON THE LOTUS SUTRA AND NICHIREN SHONIN'S TEACHINGS

Kanjin Honzon-sho

By Rev. Sensho Komukai

ETERNAL PURE LAND WHERE THE BUDDHA EXISTS FOREVER:

The following passages are key sentences of *Kanjin Honzon-sho* as well as the main body of Nichiren Shu Buddhism, showing what the Buddhist world based on the Lotus Sutra, especially Chapter 16, is like and expounding how the Saha world can become the land the Eternal Buddha resides in forever: “Now, when the Eternal Buddha was revealed in the essential section of the Lotus Sutra, this world of endurance (Saha World) became the Eternal Pure Land, indestructible even by the three calamities of conflagration, flooding, and strong winds. It transcends the four periods of cosmic change: the *kalpas* of construction, continuance, destruction, and emptiness. Shakyamuni Buddha has never died in the past, nor will He be born in the future. He exists forever throughout the past, present, and future. All those who receive His guidance are one with the “3,000 modes of existence” and the “three factors,” namely, all living beings, the land in which they live, and the five elements of living beings (matter, perception, conception, volition and consciousness).”

Now, when the Lotus Sutra is expounded for the sake of those living in the time of Degeneration, the Eternal Buddha revealed in Chapter 16 is proven to exist forever throughout the past, present, and future. When you understand the eternal existence of the Original Buddha, accept the Lotus Sutra and devotedly recite the *Odaimoku, Namu Myoho Renge Kyo*, the Saha World immediately becomes the Eternal Pure Land of Tranquil Light where the Buddha resides to expound the Dharma all the time. When you accept and keep the true teaching of the Lotus Sutra, the Buddha-nature you inherently possess will be revealed, and the place where you live will be the eternally peaceful Pure Land without any disaster or cosmic change.

You may wonder where the Pure Land is. Is it in the West? Or is it a life after death? Or can it be achieved inside yourself after you improve yourself through hard practice? The Lotus Sutra, especially in Chapter 16, has completely different point of view: this world of endurance (Saha World) can become the Eternal Pure Land. All living beings possess Buddha-nature.

We can cultivate our own Buddha-nature by keeping a devoted faith in the Original Buddha so that this world filled with endurance may be changed into the Eternal Pure Land, where there is a glorious life without worries or distress. This can be possible in the place you live in. The Saha World can become nothing less than the land of tranquil light. This is the essential teaching of the Lotus Sutra.

It is important to rely absolutely on the true teaching of the Lotus Sutra to change this Saha World into the Pure Land. Unless we keep faith in the



The altar in Minobusan Kuonji Temple's Main Hall embodies all the elements of the Great Mandala Gohonzon.

Original Buddha, the foundation of our faith cannot be solidified enough.

Shakyamuni Buddha expounds in Chapter 16 that He has never died in the past, nor will He be born in the future. He exists forever throughout the past, present, and future. He always lives here in this world to expound the Dharma. We must realize through Chapter 16 that the Original Buddha has an eternal life as He says, “I shall never be extinct.”

We as ordinary beings will be able to become the Buddha, because we receive His ultimate teaching. According to Chapter 16, we possess Buddha-nature. As the Buddha-nature becomes more cultivated through our faith and practice, we attain a state of Buddhahood. We will become the Buddha who has an infinite life, absolute wisdom, and immeasurable compassion. It may be hard to believe this immediately, but once we improve ourselves, we will be able to acquire an infinite life, an absolute wisdom, and an immeasurable compassion, because all of us have a precious Buddha-nature.

Why can this be possible? Why can we reach the same high stage as the Buddha? It is because we are endowed with “3,000 existences contained in one thought” (*ichinen sanzen*). Our true nature of Buddhahood is entirely contained in our mind.

The eternal Buddha in Chapter 16 says, “I say that I pass away even though I shall not.” Those who reside in the other nine realms are naturally involved in the Buddha world, because we are endowed with *ichinen sanzen* and the Buddha who eternally exists throughout the past, present, and future is beside us in this Saha world through the teaching of the Lotus Sutra.

The “Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Dharma” is not merely the name of a Buddhist scripture. It represents the very existence of the Eternal Buddha expounded in Chapter 16. By reciting *Namu Myoho Renge Kyo* with devotion, we can be united with the Eternal Buddha. This is our great aim as practitioners of the Lotus Sutra.

WHAT IS THE MOST VENERABLE ONE? It is best to recite *Namu Myoho Renge Kyo* with our devout faith to reach the stage of the Buddha, but it needs to be clarified on what we should be focusing on while chanting, and what part of the Lotus Sutra we should put our faith in. Nichiren Shonin says about what the Most Venerable One is like: “Suspended in the sky above the Eternal Buddha Shakyamuni’s Saha World is a stupa of treasures, in which Shakyamuni Buddha and the Buddha of Many Treasures sit to the left and right of *Myo, Ho, Ren, Ge, and Kyo*. They are waited on by four bodhisattvas including Superior-Practice (Jogyo) representing the original disciples of the Eternal Buddha called up from underground. Four more bodhisattvas including Manjusri and Maitreya, take lower seats as followers, other great and minor bodhisattvas, those converted by the Buddha in the theoretical section and those who came from other lands, resemble numerous people sitting on the ground and looking up at court nobles. Also lined up on the ground are Buddhas in manifestation (*funjin Buddhas*) who gathered together from all the worlds in the universe in praise of the Buddha’s preaching.”

Finally, on July 8, 1273, two months after Nichiren Shonin released *Kanjin Honzon-sho*, he expressed the tranquil world relieved by the Eternal Buddha, known as the Most Venerable One. “The Most Venerable One based on the Lotus Sutra has not been revealed for more than 2,200 years after the Buddha entered Nirvana. I, Nichiren, clearly described this for the first time.” The Buddha’s preaching scene up in the sky on Mt. Sacred Eagle in Chapter 15 through 22 is expressed in the Most Venerable One, the Great Mandala.

The stupa of treasures with the seven characters, “Na Mu Myo Ho Ren Ge Kyo,” written in the center of the Great Mandala. On both sides are Shakyamuni Buddha (left) and Many Treasures Buddha (right), accompanied by the Four Great Bodhisattvas—Superior Practice,

Limitless-Practice, Pure-Practice, and Steadily-Established-Practice. Other representatives of the Ten Realms are arranged in the lower parts of the Great Mandala. The extended lines of the seven characters represent rays of light. The compassionate light completely illuminates all the Ten Realms. When we, wherever we are in the Ten Realms, recite *Namu Myoho Renge Kyo* for the Most Venerable One, all of us are illuminated by the Original Buddha and bring forth our Buddha-nature, which we all possess.

Whether we are in hell or in heaven, we are all inside the Most Venerable One. Illuminated by the sacred light of *Namu Myoho Renge Kyo*, we will be able to have an august figure, entering the stage of the Buddha.

We can become a Buddha not by some extrinsic factor but by cultivating our Buddha-nature inside us through the recitation of *Odaimoku*. We will be able to grow our Buddha-nature.

Therefore, to do reverence before the Most Venerable One means to pay respect to your true self, because a noble Buddha-nature is contained in you. An absolute power of the Buddha will appear in your mind.

There is no doubt about the life-saving light illuminating all Ten Realms. The Most Venerable One shows that all of us can become a Buddha through the light of *Namu Myoho Renge Kyo*. Furthermore, when we sit in front of the Great Mandala, all present conditions of our minds are shown like a mirror. This is why it is important not to see a Buddha far in a distance but to find that we are compassionately enshrouded by the Buddha and other attendants. Thus, we can be reassured by the Eternal Buddha that we, though ordinary beings for now, are getting closer to the realm of the Buddha.



The Most Venerable One revealed and described by Nichiren Shonin.

PASSING THE BATON – PART 2: THE OKUSHIRI TSUNAMI

By Rev. Kanjo Bassett

(We continue with Rev. Ryuken Mita's Dharma Talk, Passing the Baton) Some say we are becoming detached from temples and priests due to the lack of mental space and energy in our lives, but I absolutely do not believe that the heart of gratitude, repayment of kindness, and memorial service towards those who have passed life onto us is diminishing. My current self exists because of my parents and ancestors. The eternal Buddha is always, everywhere, thinking of how to save us from the sufferings of life. This most important heart of the Buddha is the very baton that we receive and pass on to the next person. In doing this, we also pass on life.

After the Great East Japan Earthquake, those who had to evacuate were allowed to briefly return and were told they could only take as much as would fit in a small plastic bag. Among important items like seals, bankbooks, and medicine, that people brought back, there were small photographs of ancestral tablets and portraits in those bags. I cannot forget this. I do not believe that the heart of memorial service, born from gratitude towards those who have passed life onto us, is fading away, nor will it fade in the future.

Having seen these connections first-hand is what motivated me to become a Nichiren Shu priest.

Currently, I am in charge of Hoeiji Temple in Yayoi Town (in Tokyo's Nakano District) but my hometown is on Okushiri Island, located in the southwestern part of Hokkaido, in the Sea of Japan. Okushiri Island, known for its fishing and tourism, is rich in marine products like sea urchin and abalone, attracting many tourists.

There, my mentor serves as the head priest of Nitcho-ji Temple. Some of you might have heard of Okushiri Island before. It became nationally known from the devastation it suffered from



The destruction was massive. Much of the town of Okushiri was leveled or swept into the sea.



The Southwest Hokkaido Earthquake in 1993, along with the tsunami, landslide, and fires that followed, killed 202 people and nearly completely destroyed the town of Okushiri. 28 people were never found.

the Southwest Hokkaido Earthquake on July 12, 1993 at 10:17 p.m.

Many people have suffered due to earthquakes occurring in various places. In recent years, there have been devastating earthquakes in Kumamoto and Ishikawa prefectures. Some of you might know people who are still going through tough times, but now I will share about Odaimoku from the perspective of someone who was a disaster victim. Please forgive me for this.

On July 12, 1993, Okushiri Island was hit by a massive tremor that felt like the ground was being struck from directly below. About two and a half minutes later, the tsunami arrived. It's said that the maximum height was 30 meters, which is about the height of a seven-story building, and it moved at a speed of 500 kilometers per hour, about twice as fast as a bullet train. It engulfed the town of Okushiri multiple times.

The earthquake caused almost all the buildings in the town to collapse. Then, a tsunami completely swept the town into the sea. After that, fires engulfed the entire town, and the wind generated by the fire carried sparks that fell like a winter blizzard over the heads of those who had taken refuge on higher ground. Many people who could not evacuate to higher places lost their precious lives.

Nitcho-ji Temple also burned down completely, leaving nothing of the main hall or the priest's quarters. Including my younger brother beside me, the temple family managed to escape safely by running up the mountain behind the temple, but across Okushiri Island,

about 200 people were lost, including 22 members of Nitcho-ji Temple.

With nothing left of us or the temple, we thought, "Isn't it impossible to rebuild the temple's dojo for chanting sutras?" However, we soon received support and encouragement from people with the same connection through the sutras. At that time, the head temple of Nichiren Shu was also calling for disaster relief donations, and thanks to the support from other temples, priests, and parishioners from across the country, the reconstruction of Nitcho-ji Temple was accomplished ahead of other sects. We were able to hold the consecration ceremony safely three years after the earthquake in 1996. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who supported us and to all of you who are listening today. Thank you very much.

From right after this disaster, I have seen many people who wanted to convey their current feelings of devotion and the sound of the sutra to the loved ones they lost. They believe that their current selves exist because of their family and parents. They cannot give up on the life on the island that their family has worked hard for. While sincerely offering prayers through the sutra, they must continue to strive on this island for the sake of the children. I have witnessed the inheritance of this relay of life through the baton of the sutra, which is the true heart of the Buddha.

The town is gradually moving towards recovery. However, even now, 33 years after the disaster, there has not been

enough time to heal the emotional wounds. Every time disasters occur, the traumatic memories and images from those events never fade away.

Four months after the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011, in July, just before the month of Obon, I received a phone call at Nitcho-ji Temple from my childhood friend, Hiroko Tanaka.

Hiroko is the daughter of one of our temple's parishioners. She is three years younger than me. Before the earthquake, she lost her father, who was a fisherman, in a sea accident, and was raised by her mother.

In the small town of Okushiri, age differences didn't matter. All the children, including Hiroko, played together. After the earthquake, she was taken in by relatives, and we lost touch.

Over the phone, Hiroko said "I just want someone to listen to my feelings that I don't know who to talk to about," and she later visited the temple.

At first, we talked about memories from when we played together as children, but her tone suddenly became heavy, and she began to talk about the day of the earthquake, when she had to evacuate from the tsunami.

"After the earthquake, they said a tsunami was coming, so my mom and I hurriedly got into the car and headed towards the lighthouse hill. As we were driving up the hill to get to higher ground, we got stuck in traffic and couldn't move. A tremendous sound came from the ground. Realizing we wouldn't make it in time to escape the tsunami, we got out of the car. I tried climbing the mountain by grabbing the grass with my hands, but I kept slipping and couldn't climb up. Then, from behind, my mom shouted, "Go!" She pushed my behind so hard that I finally reached the top. When I looked back, my mom, who had been right behind me, was no longer there. There was only the pitch-black sea."

(Part 3 continues in the next issue)



Nitcho-ji Temple was destroyed by fire following the earthquake in 1993. The current temple structure was rebuilt in 1996.

Spring 2026

APR 8	Hanamatsuri (Buddha's Birthday)
APR 15-18	Nakayama Hokekyoji Senbu-e (1,000 Recitations of the Lotus Sutra)
APR 27-29	Ikegami Honmonji Senbu-e (1,000 Recitations of the Lotus Sutra)
APR 28	Rikkyo Kaishu-e (Anniversary of the Founding of the Order)
MAY 12	Izu Honan-e (Ceremony commemorating the Anniversary of the Izu Persecution)

MAY 31	Wesak Day in Southeast Asia (Buddha's Birthday, Enlightenment, and Nirvana Observed)
JUNE 15-17	Minobusan Kaiso-e, Commemoration Day of Nichiren Shonin Entering Minobusan
JUNE 25	Nitcho Shonin Memorial Day
JULY 13-16	Obon (Western Calendar)

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Nichiren Shu

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