

News for contributors and friends of The National Bonsai Foundation

Volume XIII, Number 2

Please Join The National Bonsai Foundation

As we announced in the Summer 2002 issue of the *NBF Bulletin*, beginning in January 2003 the National Bonsai Foundation will become a membership organization. Since 1982 NBF has relied exclusively on the generosity of benefactors to support the work and construction of the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum. These contributions have enabled us to expand and improve the Museum beyond our dreams of 1982. We are very grateful to everyone who has helped in this effort.

Winter 2002

At the same time we have added to our mailing list not only financial contributors but everyone who has expressed an interest in the Museum and the love of bonsai. Over the past twenty years this circle of friends has become very large and thus so have our mailing costs for the **Bulletin**. The Board of Directors has decided that now is the time to ask everyone who receives the **Bulletin** to contribute directly on an annual basis to NBF so that we can better support the Museum in its work.

In the Summer issue, we asked you to complete a survey about membership in NBF. The response to that request was very heartening. Over 98 percent of those who completed the survey indicated that they would become a dues paying member of NBF. Even more revealing was that most respondents indicated they would become members for only two reasons: (1) to receive the *Bulletin* and (2) just because they wanted to offer financial support for the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum. This kind of response indicates to us that we are moving in the right direction in asking for annual dues.



The basic amount of membership dues will be \$35. However, until March 1, 2003 it will be possible to become a Charter member of NBF for \$25. If you made a contribution of at least \$25 in response to our membership request in the last issue, we will consider your membership dues for 2003 to be paid. Other categories of membership will include a special student membership (\$15) for students enrolled in high school through college. There is also an organization category (\$50) for regional groups.

In addition to membership, we are continuing to seek funding at higher levels to continue the all important work on the completion of the interior courtyard in the Museum. Therefore we are asking all members to also consider an additional donation. The Contributor level is now 50-\$99, while the Sponsor (100-\$249) and Benefactor levels (over 1,000) remain the same. NBF is a section 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization and all contributions to NBF over the basic membership fee are tax-deductible.

Members will receive, in addition to the *Bulletin*, a 10% discount on sales items (please see insert page), invitations to special events at the Museum and the NBF member decal pictured here, which was designed by Pennsylvania graphic artist Lia Marta.

Please join NBF and help to maintain the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum as the best Museum of its kind in the world. Thank you for all your support in the past and welcome to the NBF of the future.

New Assistant Curator for Plant Collections

Jim Hughes, the new Assistant Curator of Plant Collections, first became involved with the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum seven years ago. After moving to Washington, D.C. from Minneapolis, Minnesota, he signed on as a volunteer at the Museum shortly before **Bob Drechsler** retired as Cura-

tor in 1996. For the next few years, he was fortunate to have the experience of working under the leadership of **Dan Chiplis, Warren Hill,** and, most recently, **Jack Sustic.** Their artistic talents, guidance and instruction proved to be an inspiration as his interest in bonsai grew. Jim first became interested in bonsai over thirteen years ago while gardening in Minnesota. An active member of the Minnesota Bonsai Society, he took advantage of the many programs and workshops offered by this well-run Midwest organization. *(Continued on page 3)*



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President's Letter



The year 2002 marks the 20th anniversary of the National Bonsai Foundation. Over these twenty years, with your generous and abundant

financial assistance and abundant good will, we have accomplished many things on behalf of the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum. Millions of dollars have been donated to build the John Y. Naka North American Pavilion, the Dr. Yee-sun Wu Chinese Pavilion, the Kanishiro Tropical Conservatory, the Mary E. Mrose International Pavilion and, in this year, the Maria Vanzant Upper Courtyard. We are very proud of this work, especially because it was accomplished with contributions from individual donors like you from all over the United States and many countries around the world.

In 2003 NBF will become a true membership organization and will ask for annual dues. We hope that all of you who receive this Winter 2002 issue of the **NBF Bulletin** will become dues paying members of the Foundation in 2003 and that your name will remain on our list. By doing so, you will continue to play an important role in maintaining the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum as the best museum of its kind in the world.

As a member you will continue to receive this **Bulletin.** You will also receive advance information on new exhibits and programs, as well as invitations to special events. Over the last few years NBF has expanded its work by publishing books that advance the art of bonsai or document the Museum's history and collections. These books and other sales items will now be offered at a 10% discount to members. Our new decal, which all new members will receive, will permit you to show your membership in NBF, but more importantly it will proclaim your affinity and support for the treasures of this wonderful national museum.

Now that the renovation of the Maria Vanzant Upper Courtyard is nearing completion, we are seeking donations totalling \$250,000, which will be matched by the federal government, to renovate the lower courtyard area. This presents a unique opportunity for major donors to establish a lasting legacy which, both literally and figuratively, will pave the way toward a greater appreciation of the art of bonsai.

This year we also celebrated the 88th birthday of John Naka, one of the patrons of the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum. His forest planting "Goshin" (or "Protector of the Spirit") is John's signature bonsai in the Museum and is probably the most famous bonsai in the world. On the occasion of this milestone birthday, the North American Bonsai Federation dedicated the premier issue of its on-line newsletter to John (see www.bonsai-wbff.org/nabf/newsletter.htm). In that newsletter, people from all over the world paid tribute to this special person whom we all call our friend. At this time of the year, the following words of wisdom from John are particularly apt:

"There are no borders in bonsai. The dove of peace flies to palace as to humble house, to young as to old, to rich and poor. So does the spirit of bonsai."

May the spirit of bonsai be with you. Thank you for your support in the past. Please join us in 2003 and beyond.

Feliz

Meet Volunteer David Garvin

David Garvin's first interest in bonsai began through a course taught at the U.S. National Arboretum by **Jim Newton** and **John Hrea** in 1975. As Dave puts it: "I have been watering ever since!"

He joined the Potomac Bonsai Association, and began viewing and admiring the new bonsai collection acquired by the Arboretum from Japan in 1976. After a 15 year apprenticeship his services were requested as a volunteer in the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum where he joined volunteers **Ruth** Lamana and Janet Lanman.

Dave follows the first law of volunteers: "Doing what I'm told to do." His general duties include pruning, wiring, potting as well as conducting friendly arguments with staff and fellow volunteers. As a former member of the Board of the National Bonsai Foundation, he has had long personal experience in the struggle by NBF to fund and build the North American, Chinese and Interna-



David Garvin

tional Pavilions and he takes great pride in the work that NBF has accomplished on behalf of the Museum.

Formerly a physical chemist with the U.S. government, now retired, Dave grows, trains and shows bonsai chrysanthemums which are frequently on display in the Administration Building lobby during the autumn of the year. If you have seen one of these, you know how lovely they are. Now you know that they are the work of Museum volunteer and bonsai artist Dave Garvin.

NEW ASSISTANT CURATOR

(Continued from page 1)

The Minnesota Bonsai Society regularly brought in such American experts as **Dave DeGroot** and **Warren Hill**, as well as international figures such as **Harry Tomlinson** from England. While in Minnesota, Jim's first years in bonsai were nurtured by those guest instructors and **Randy Clark**, who offered instruction locally.

While living in the Washington, D.C. area, Jim has been an active member of the Brookside Bonsai Society and the Potomac Bonsai Association. In addition to taking locally offered workshops and symposiums, he has taken advantage of courses offered at the Rosade Bonsai Studio in New Hope, Pennsylvania and the symposium programs offered by Mid-Atlantic Bonsai Societies. In 2001 Jim joined the NBF Board of Directors, and served as Treasurer in 2002.



In September of this year, on behalf of the National Bonsai Foundation and the American bonsai community, NBF President Felix B. Laughlin presented **Kazuya Morita** of the Nippon Bonsai Association a suiseki from the collection of **Marybel Balendonck.** The stone was originally collected by **Harry Hirao** and is described by Mrs. Balendonck as

"A quintessential Eel River stone. Its hardness, very good skin, natural flat bottom and river given sheen are among its superb qualities."

The daiza for the stone was made of cherry wood by **Richard Conrad** of Pennsylvania.

In the letter of presentation, Felix said:

"The Foundation and the American bonsai community are extremely grateful to you for all of the warm and friend-



Mr. Morita's New Suiseki

ly hospitality that you have shown to so many American bonsai enthusiasts when we have visited Japan, and for all your efforts on behalf of the Nippon Bonsai Association to foster international friendship, good will and understanding through bonsai."

The suiseki is now displayed on Mr. Morita's desk at NBA headquarters in Tokyo.



Jim Hughes, Assistant Curator of Plant Collections

In his new position, Jim is honored to be a part of the staff at the National Arboretum and to have the opportunity to assist Jack Sustic and the volunteers maintain the national collections. In addition, he hopes to use his teaching background to help introduce bonsai and penjing to visitors when they visit the Museum. He is looking forward to many years of service in his new position at the Museum.

Correction

In the last issue we misspelled **Kenichi Oguchi's** name. Our sincere apologies to Mr. Oguchi. *The Editors*

A Word from the Curator

By Jack Sustic

Earlier this year, Stanley Chinn, a local Penjing master died. Last year I went to visit him at his Wheaton Maryland home. There, tucked in his backyard, were hundreds of penjing. Actually I should say penzai because penjing literally means potted landscapes while penzai means a plant growing in a shallow pot. Mr. Chinn had invited the Museum staff to select trees from these *penzai* and we were eager to do this in an effort to improve the quality and diversity of the Museum's Chinese collection. So ten of these penzai were chosen from Stanley's collection for accessioning into the collection.

Prior to this donation only one school was represented in the collection which was the Lingnan or "clip and grow" school. Now we have the ability to display and to educate the public in other schools of the Chinese art. Not only will these trees enrich the Chinese collection but they will also enrich visitor experience as people who come to the Museum will



Jack Sustic with Stanley Chinn penzai

have the opportunity to compare and contrast the art of *penzai* and *penjing*.

One of the trees that we acquired is a root-over-rock Trident maple (*Acer buergerianum*) in the formalistic style representing a dragon that is reminiscent of the dancing dragon style of the Sichuan School. Another is a naturalistic forest of Chinese elm (Ulmus parvifolia). A third is Stanley's classic tree, a very impressive Trident Maple (Acer buergerianum) root-over-rock that has the Chinn family name carved into one side of the rock and the words trident maple on the other side. This penzai is particularly impressive because there are five trees planted on the rock and all are grafted together at different locations. At first glance you wouldn't notice these details but on closer inspection the intricate complexity and the artistic beauty of the tree is revealed.

Often we come to a better understanding of a bonsai, a penzai or a penjing when we understand the artist who created it. Please read the following testimonials about Stanley Chinn from two people who knew him. Unfortunately Stanley's talents were overlooked during his life by many people, including me. Fortunately, for all of us, his talented work will live on in his trees that are here at the Museum. Please come and see them.



My Memories of Stanley Chinn

By Janet Lanman

In 1976 after moving to the Washington area, I soon became involved with the **Brookside Bonsai Society** and then I was fortunate to become a volunteer at the National Arboretum working on the bonsai collections. One day I was there trimming on a Japanese maple when a man stopped to watch and soon made several comments about my technique. I asked him his name and it was Stanley Chinn.

A short time thereafter, a member of the Brookside club asked me if she could bring someone over to see my own trees, and again it was Stanley Chinn. At that time I knew literally nothing about Chinese bonsai as I was totally oriented to Japanese bonsai. So Stanley came and spent the time critiquing my trees one by one. I am ashamed to say I was not as receptive as I wish I had been and so I missed a chance to learn.

Several years later, I went to Stanley's home as I was beginning to know more about Chinese bonsai. I was so impressed by his wonderful trees, particularly the root-over-rock trees. They were different, dramatic and exciting. Subsequently, I urged Stanley to come and talk to our club. It was a spellbinding evening. He spoke about his forefathers coming to the U.S. to work on the railroad and how Chinese bonsai were gradually being introduced, understood and accepted in the west. We were hypnotized by his dramatic story. Several of us discussed the possibility of persuading Stanley to write down his reminiscences, and I talked to him about doing this but sadly we moved too slowly and now the opportunity has passed.

Stanley Chinn: Master of Penjing

By Tony Meyer



His fingers flutter along branches as if he were a bird at home, plucking spent flowers and misplaced shoots according to a vision he was born with.

"The Japanese learned bonsai from the Chinese during the Tang Dynasty," he would say, "bringing only one of *six* schools with them. We are doing this one Lingnan style, pinch and grow, without wire." He nods to his right, "that boxwood is Yangzhou School, foliage in cloud formation."

Stanley Chinn, "spelt with two *n*'s", is from China, proud of six early years at his uncle's penjing nursery, wounded deeply by Mao's destruction of penjing as a rich man's art, by the sale of thousands of his country's masterpiece trees in Europe to earn foreign exchange for bankrupt policies. "And *here* no one will ever pay enough for my trees, for twenty, thirty years of hard work, watering every day ... America will never take bonsai seriously! No one sits still long enough. Until they retire and then they do not have enough money or years left to become bonsai masters." Stanley has not learned English perfectly. His social analyses and shared observations are often trapped in frustration, felt as dogmatic by his American friends. He has been a chef to earn a living and taught penjing at Chinese clubs and churches up and down the East coast, nurturing his beautiful wife and son with books, old wisdom and sweet fruit from the trees in their yard so that at least *they* have flourished.

And so have his trees, a forest of two hundred penjing bringing a thousand years of aesthetic judgment from one empire to the capitol city of another also threatened by its short term policies. "Training bonsai is like driving a car down the middle of the road," Stanley would say, "too much to the right, too much to the left and you are in trouble. Too much water, fertilizer, cutting back at the wrong time, and you will kill it."

As Stanley's hands worked magic with the trees, his and mine, I knew I was working with a master of penjing, a master of the truth of trees. Today, in his absence, I admire his trees and listen. What do the dragon trunks, corky bark pines and spiraling branches have to say , the trident maple roots spidering down over rock faces in web-like display all perfectly placed to stretch the imagination upward to the skies and beyond?

I have lived, and my spirit soars. In my trees, my friend, I will stay to work with you today.

Latest Plans for the 5th World Bonsai Convention

By Glenn Reusch and Chris Yeapanis

T he 5th World Bonsai Convention will be held May 28–31, 2005, in Washington, D.C., at the Washington Hilton Hotel. The host is the North American Bonsai Federation (NABF), the member of the World



Washington Hilton

Bonsai Friendship Federation (WBFF) representing North America, and the three convention sponsors are the National Bonsai Foundation, the Potomac Bonsai Association and the U.S. National Arboretum. Other major bonsai organizations are also supporting this world event in significant ways, and we are actively soliciting support from other groups to help assure this event will be the biggest and best bonsai convention in modern memory.

Peace through bonsai is the theme of this World Bonsai Convention. With this theme in mind, the site selection of Washington, D.C. for the 2005 convention seemed appropriate. Our hope is that this theme will have an impact far beyond bonsai.

We have now assembled a team of committee chairs, and nominations for bonsai masters for the various demonstrations and workshops are still coming in from each of the nine WBFF regions of the world. The names proposed so far constitute an exciting and diverse group. Our task of making the final selection will not be easy with such talented nominations but it is our goal to select representative masters that will have wide appeal for bonsai enthusiasts from all international regions. In the next NBF Bulletin we hope to be able to tell you who our choices will be.

Hospitality of The Hawaii Bonsai Association

by Dr. Karl and Sue Green (Potomac Bonsai Association—Brookside Bonsai Society) and Glenn and Eunice Corp (Sakura Bonsai Society of Northern Michigan and the Ann Arbor Bonsai Society)

For a long time we, the Greens and the Corps, have felt that the Hawaii Bonsai Association (HBA) sets the ideal example of how bonsai clubs can obtain and hold members while continuing to foster the art of bonsai. We have always wanted to share our thoughts with other bonsai lovers so we responded with delight and enthusiasm when we were invited to write about the hospitality of HBA for the NBF Bulletin.

Our association with this group began when Eunice Corps attended an HBA bonsai show at the Academy of Arts in Honolulu. After signing the guest book, **Tim Liu**, the editor of the HBA newsletter, welcomed her and her guests. When she revealed that she was a bonsai enthusiast, the two began exchanging newsletters. Later this was followed by an invitation from the HBA president, **Jane Yamashiroya**, to contact her personally on the next visit to Hawaii. When the Green and Corp families returned to Hawaii in 2001 they made contact with Jane and her husband **Roy Yamashiroya** and were escorted to a number of private collections. At each home we were welcomed with an Alohoa greeting, refreshments and club pins. Two of the hosts were sensei of smaller bonsai component clubs and at these places we were generously offered assistance, advice and even supplies.

Later this was followed by the Yamashiroyas' hosting all of us and other guests at the Oahu Country Club with a spectacular view of Honolulu at night. We felt doubly honored to have **Ted Tsukiyama**, NBF Board member, in this group. The accomplishments of Ted are well known, especially his effort, along with others, to form the World Bonsai Friendship Federation (WBFF) and the North American Bonsai Federation (NABF).

Yet even more honors were forthcoming for us on this visit as we were permitted to have a special associate membership in HBA. This was very wonderful for us as we were invited to be guests at local meetings of the group. Jane also extended her friendship beyond bonsai by assisting us to make contacts with people who shared our other interests and hobbies.

Later last year when the Greens returned to Hawaii they arrived in time for the Okinawa Bonsai Festival and were greeted with leis. Karl was highly impressed with the exhibits, demonstrations and workshops. Education is a main tenet of the HBA's work in the community through bonsai shows at the Honolulu Academy of Arts and the Okinawa Festival as well as bonsai classes for high school students.

We hope that bonsai clubs around the country will replicate a similar standard of hospitality and generosity as does the Hawaiian Bonsai Society when bonsai lovers visit their regions and contact them.

Museum Calendar of Events • January–June 2003

January		April	
11	Workshop: Bonsai Wiring (Jack Sustic)	5	Sakura Matsuri (Cherry Blossom Festival)
18	Reopening of Bonsai & Penjing Museum		National Bonsai and Penjing Museum
	Complex		Display—Washington D.C.—Mall
	Continuing Exhibit—Mary E. Mrose	10	Dedication of Upper Courtyard
	International Pavilion:	11	National Bonsai Foundation Board Meeting
	"Bonsai: Test Your Knowledge"		(Yoshimura Center)
18-26	Bonsai Winter Silhouettes Show	12	Bonsai Demonstration
	(Special Exhibits Wing)	13	Workshop: Bonsai Repotting (Jim Hughes)
February		18-24	Ikebana Show (Special Exhibits Wing)
15	Curator Jack Sustic—Bonsai Presentation—	May	
	Cheju-do Island, Korea	2-4	Potomac Bonsai Association Show
March		2-11	Bonsai inSites Exhibit
8–16	Potomac Viewing Stone Group Show	17 & 18	Bonsai Demonstrations
	(Special Exhibits Wing)	24–1 June	Satsuki Exhibit (Special Exhibits Wing)
16	Lecture by John Carlson:	June	
	"Suiseki: The Art of the Viewing Stone"	14-22	Visiting Club Exhibit (Special Exhibits Wing)
22	Bonsai Styling Workshop		

For more information on Museum programs, please contact Jennifer Lebling-Program Coordinator at leblingj@ars.usda.gov

Construction Concluded in Upper Courtyard

planted in honor of long time Arbore-

tum staff member, Louis Williams who retired at the end of November. In addi-

tion, there are now more places for

guests to pause, rest and reflect. When

leaving the upper level a gracious stair-

way leads one to the lower courtyard.

Finally the Museum now has a large

growout area adjacent to the complex

where plants from the collection can be

than anticipated, the heralded Bonsai

inSites exhibit will now open on May

2, 2003 during the annual Potomac

Bonsai Association Show and con-

Pavilion has been repainted and the

Tokonoma enlarged. A new orientation

map of the Museum complex will be

mounted so that visitors can clearly

identify destination points in the

Museum, and an exhibit—Bonsai: Test

Your Knowledge—will help neophyte

The interior of the International

clude on May 11th.

Because construction took longer

cared for when they are not on display.

After a year of work, construction has been completed on the Maria Vansant Upper Courtyard of the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum. The process has been arduous but the end result is not only handsome but very enticing. A new stone path guides visitors through the Cryptomeria Walk to new gateway and out into the courtyard area. Here one is greeted by a bubbling pool and a large stone marker etched with the museum name and logo. Four plinths will allow for the display of large bonsai on either side of the marker.

The Kato Stroll Garden (leading into the Japanese Pavilion) and the Mary E. Morse International Pavilion have beautifully designed new entrances. The Japanese entrance, named in memory of H. William Merritt, has a large pagoda gate topped by lovely blue tiles, while the International Pavilion is graced by a long front arbor to shade visitors. New plants have been installed including a Japanese umbrella pine (Sciadopitys verticillata)

Museum Notes

- Hirosumi Ichihara, Chairman of the Japan Satsuki Association, died November 17, 2002, in a car accident. Mr. Ichihara, a prominent Tokyo business man, was the bonsai leader who organized the gift of the seven outstanding satsuki azaleas to the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum in March 2000. Last year during the 25th anniversary celebration of the Museum, he and the other donors were honored for this extraordinary gift.
- In early November, Japanese Ambassador Ryozo Kato hosted Japanese Culture Day at his beautiful residence on Nebraska Avenue in D.C. Janet Lanman represented the National Bonsai Foundation at the event. Here is her report:

"When Felix Laughlin invited me to represent the National Bonsai Foundation I of course said YES. And then the cultural attache called and asked me to bring a bonsai. Panic! After getting an

estimate on the size of the allotted space (small) I pondered on what to bring. Interest in viewing stones has greatly expanded in recent years; hence, I decided I would like to incorporate a stone in my display. I was able to borrow a beautiful two-tiered stand from the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum and after much shuffling I used a natal plum cascade from my own collection and an Eel River stone that had been given to me by Harry Hirao many years ago. Among the other exhibits was an Ikebana arrangement done by Sachiko Furlan (she often does arrangements at the Museum) and an interesting collection of origami which were displayed on a long table backed by elegant gold leaf screens. The Ambassador was gracious, the several hundred guests were interesting, the food was superb and the residence, complete with tea house overlooking the pond garden, is beautiful. It was a privilege to be there."

Tree Planting in honor of Louis Williams. Left

Photo: Jackson Tanner

to right, Louis and his wife Betty, Arboretum Director Thomas S. Elias and Education and Visitor Services Unit Leader Nancy Luria

bonsai enthusiasts learn more about the art form.

While the upper courtyard area will reopen to visitors on January 18, 2003 it will not be formally dedicated and the donors honored until April. Refurbishment of the lower courtyard, including the construction of the Melba Tucker Arbor, will begin when funding is raised for this effort.

■ Would you like to share your knowledge of bonsai and the Asian arts with visitors to the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum? If so the Museum is now recruiting volunteer docents. Candidates must have demonstrated experience in bonsai and an interest in the Asian arts. Volunteers should have excellent communication skills, enjoy interacting with people and be willing to volunteer a minimum of 6 hours one weekend day each month. Training will be conducted by the Museum staff. For additional information or to receive an application, please contact: Mary Ann Jarvis, Volunteer Coordinator, at 202-245-4565 or jarvism@ars.usda.gov. You may also send your resume with a cover letter to Mrs. Jarvis c/o of the U.S. National Arboretum, 3501 New York Ave., N. E., Washington, D.C. 20002.



New Memorial Funds

Memorial funds recently have been established to honor the memories of two California supporters of the Museum: **Alyce Hirao** and **Sherwin Mitchell.** Alyce and Harry Hirao, a leader in suiseki and in collecting and training California juniper in whose honor the **Harry Hirao Reception Area** at the Museum is named, were married for 62 years. Sherwin organized and greatly contributed to the fundraising drives to build the **Yamaguchi Garden** and the library at the Museum.

Donations to these funds, with checks made out to the National Bonsai Foundation and designated to either the **Alyce Hirao Memorial Fund** or the **Sherwin Mitchell Memorial Fund**, can be sent to either of the following persons:

or

Felix Laughlin *NBF President* 1775 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W. Washington, D.C. 20006 Cesar Portocarrero *NBF Treasurer* 3501 New York Ave., N.E. Washington, D.C. 20002

Visit NBF's Website: www.bonsai-nbf.org

To support NBF, please mail your contribution with your name and address to:

Cesar Portocarrero NBF Treasurer 3501 New York Ave., N.E. Washington, D.C. 20002

An envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Categories of Support

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