



The Maltwood Far Eastern Collection

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Riding a Donkey Over Frosty Bridge

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Introduction

In 1919, Katharine and John Maltwood made their first recorded purchase of Oriental art objects from a London dealer; it consisted of the large Tang style tomb figurine of a standing dignitary that is in this exhibit, in addition to several small Chinese porcelains.

After John Maltwood retired in 1921, the Maltwoods travelled extensively, visiting India, China, Korea and Japan, among other places, making further purchases on these trips, as well as from London dealers, and eventually accumulating a large collection of Oriental art. This is the first exhibit devoted solely to Oriental objects in the Maltwood Collection and it includes only a portion of the Oriental collection. The objects have been chosen to give the viewer an introduction to a number of areas in which the collection is particularly strong, such as Chinese painting and Asian ceramics. As well, the collection has considerable strength in Buddhist art and Oriental textiles; its holdings in these areas are augmented with loans from the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.

Chinese Painting

Painting is an ancient tradition in China; the earliest paintings so far discovered date from the fifth to third centuries B.C. and are done in ink on silk. The unique character of Chinese painting has been created by its materials and formats; the brush and fluid ink on silk and paper produce painterly works, while the handscroll, hanging scroll and album leaf contribute to the distinct Chinese vision of ordering space and imagery. The same materials, techniques, and formats are also used for calligraphy, recognized as a fine art long before painting. Calligraphy stressed linear quality and the importance of each individual brush stroke, and therefore has been very influential on the aesthetics of Chinese painting. When used, colours are vegetable or mineral pigments in a water and glue base medium; like the ink stick made of pine soot and glue, they are ground and mixed with water to obtain the varying tones desired by the artist. The traditional date for the invention of paper is 105 A.D., but silk remained the favourite support for painting and calligraphy through the Sung dynasty (960-1279) and generally remained the material chosen for highly coloured paintings, because the relatively heavy pigments adhered better to that surface. Also, silk was traditionally the material chosen most frequently by professional artists, while paper was preferred by the scholar-

amateur artists of the literati tradition.

The long, horizontal handscroll, represented in this exhibit by *"Dwelling of the Immortals"*, was the first format to be used in Chinese painting. A handscroll was never meant to be seen as it is displayed in a Western museum context. It was placed on a horizontal surface and viewed in sections of about two feet at a time, moving from right to left like a written text, with the first section rerolled as the next was unfurled. This format helps to explain the development of multiple viewpoints within a Chinese painting, as the Western style fixed point vanishing point perspective system is totally unsuitable in such a format. Chinese painting also deals with generalized and idealized settings and time so that a single light source and shadows are not to be found.

A. Academic Painting

In the Sung dynasty, painting was the province of professional artists, especially those under the patronage of the Imperial court. The Emperors Hui-tsung (reigned 1101-1125), himself a painter and calligrapher as well as connoisseur and collector, and Kao-tsung (reigned 1127-1162) were instrumental in establishing the style of the Sung Academy, which was basic to the later professional traditions in Chinese painting. This style stressed elegant and highly finished paintings; the paintings were lyrical and evocative, inviting the viewer to participate and respond to the emotions of the figures in their surroundings. The settings were reduced to a few elements, with distant landscapes shrouded by mists and clouds, suggested by the superbly controlled ink line and wash.

The Yuan court (1279-1368) of the Mongols was less involved in art patronage than the Sung. The surviving Sung professional artists were dispersed, and the literati or scholar-amateur tradition came to the forefront, remaining the most innovative and exciting painting tradition from that time on. However, a conservative style, based on the Sung Academic painting of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, survived in the ateliers of numerous minor professional artists in various urban centres, especially in South China. The restoration of Chinese rule, with the founding of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), brought a revival of interest in this conservative tradition; the Ming emperors gave preference to the old Sung Academy derived style when they established an informal painting academy at the court, awarding rank and patronage to professional artists, such as Pien Wen-chin, Shih Jui and Li Tsai. Ming versions of the Sung Academy style tended to have fuller,

busier compositions, but stressed the same elegant professional techniques and evocative subjects. This conservative tradition became more dynamic in the hands of Ming artists, such as Tai Chin, who generally did not work formally at the court. He and his followers, including Wu Wei and Chang Lu, are often grouped as the Che School, a reference to the southern Chinese province of Chekiang, where so many of these conservative professional artists lived and worked.

The Ming period was the last great period of the conservative Academic tradition, but it never completely disappeared. In the Ch'ing period (1644-1912), it formed the basis for the style of some Manchu court painters, as well as for other painters outside court circles. From the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, this style continued to be passed along in a relatively pure form, though on a lower artistic level, by innumerable minor artists, who produced attractive decorative paintings for patrons with conservative, less intellectual tastes. These works survive today by the thousands and have also appealed strongly to western collectors, who found the more intellectual abstract works of the literati tradition too austere. The Maltwood Collection is one of those in which the Academic tradition is heavily represented, with some ten paintings in that style, four of them appearing in the current exhibit, compared to only one in the literati style, the landscape by Ming-chung, also on view.

M964.1.10

Dwelling of the Immortals

Anonymous. (spurious signature of Chao Po-chu, Sung dynasty, early 12th Century)

Ch'ing dynasty, Academic "blue-green" style

Handscroll, ink and colours on silk

31cm x 502cm

Seals: seven, including spurious seals of Hsiang Yuan-pien, 16th Century collector.

Chao Po-chu, a descendant of the first Sung emperor, was noted for his landscapes in the "blue-green" manner of T'ang dynasty painters, who had used heavy colours in their paintings to render realistic landscapes. In later times, the literati artists used the "blue-green" mode in deliberately archaistic ways, whereas Academic artists used it in a generally more straight-forward manner. Here, the heavy pigments and finely detailed figures recall the paintings of the late Ming professional artist Ch'iu Ying, while the contorted landscape and expressionistic trees suggest the influence of other late Ming artists, such as Cheng Chung, Ku-I-te, and Ch'en Hung-shou.

M964.1.1

Two Magpies on a Branch

Anonymous

Late Ming-Ch'ing dynasties, Ming Academic style

Hanging scroll, ink and white pigment on silk

82cm x 37.8cm

The bird and flower subject genre dates back to the Five Dynasties and Sung periods, but it enjoyed a considerable revival under the Ming Academic artists, such as Pien Wen-chin, Lu Chi, and Lin Liang. Lin Liang was particularly noted for his ink monochrome paintings of birds in which single strokes were adapted to the shape of a leaf, a feather, a branch, and so forth. The silk of this painting has darkened, but it is still a handsome example of the sixteenth century Ming Academic style, although it may be considerably later in date.



M964.1.522

Scholars and Servants in a Landscape

Anonymous, after the style of Chang Lu, 16th Century Che School painter

One unidentified seal

Late Ming-Ch'ing dynasties

Hanging scroll, ink on silk

154.5cm x 95cm

In the sixteenth century, professional artists, such as Chang Lu and Chiang Sung, carried on the Che School style in an even looser style, with often rather "slap-dash" brushwork. Chang Lu is particularly known for the stereotyped figures-in-a-landscape paintings that he turned out in great numbers. Following his approach, the landscape setting is pushed to the edges of the painting; it is greatly simplified and the figures are brought closer to the viewer. However, the willows and buildings appear too suddenly and awkwardly out of the "blank-silk-as-mist" area behind the figures for this painting to be accepted as a work by Chang Lu; also the brushwork, as a whole, is less powerful. The faces of the figures are drawn softly and delicately, while the brush strokes defining the garments are often quick and dramatic. This is a fine painting in the Che School style and its recent restoration has not only saved it from further deterioration, but has also made it possible to enjoy the full beauty of the painting once again.

M964.1.3

Boating by a Cliff

Anonymous, Che School tradition

One seal, unidentified

Ch'ing dynasty

Hanging scroll, ink and some colours on silk

115cm x 54.1cm

B. Literati Painting

Painting of the Chinese scholar forms the greatest part of art history in China. Chinese scholars prided themselves on being "amateur" artists, whose paintings did not have a professional finish, but instead strove to be artless and bland, while expressing a wide range of human emotions, an understanding of nature, and a deep involvement with the art and literature of past masters. Literati painting is one of the most intellectually complex art forms.

Literati painting is represented in the Maltwood Collection by only one work, "*Riding a Donkey Over Frosty Bridge*", by Ming-chung, a monk-painter active in the eighteenth century. It is a monochrome ink painting that alludes to the Northern Sung monumental landscape of Fan K'uan (early eleventh cen-

ture); it is also stylistically reminiscent of the seventeenth century Orthodox literati painters, such as Wang Chien and Wang Hui. To enjoy this work, identify yourself with the two figures crossing the bridge and follow the direction of their gaze, through the mist, up to the temples and mountains, then down the stream and waterfall. Take note of the accomplished brush work and the play of wet and dry ink. This painting is not so much a realistic portrayal of the world, as it is a distillation of human feelings and thought transformed into landscape elements, invoking great artistic figures of the past.

M964.1.42

Riding a Donkey Over Frosty Bridge

Ming-Chung

Ch'ing dynasty, 18th century, literati style

Hanging scroll, ink on paper

Seal under inscription: Ming-Chung, 2 inscriptions

167cm x 60cm

Ceramics**A. Functional Wares**

Ceramic art in the Far East has a long history; the earliest ceramics known at present come from Japan. The Chinese produced fine high-fired stonewares and porcelains many centuries before such wares were made in Europe. It would be impossible to show the full range of Far Eastern ceramics in one exhibit, even if all were represented in the Maltwood Collection, but even a few examples can reveal the skill of Oriental craftsmen and the variety in their wares. The Maltwood Collection is particularly strong in the area of celadon wares, displayed here in the greatest numbers, but it also includes outstanding examples of white ware, Tz'u-chou, and other ceramic types.

There are many types of celadon. The name, a non-Chinese designation, refers to a pale green or grey-green glaze produced by a minute quantity of iron in the glaze. The production of this colour is a delicate process, requiring a smokey kiln and careful control. The presence of too much oxygen in the kiln during firing turns the glaze brown. In China, celadon was reserved for the Imperial Household for four centuries. In later years, celadon was exported to the West, where it was believed to reveal the presence of poison in food. Chinese celadon is often compared to jade, while Korean celadon is likened to seawater. Celadon was probably the first glazed pottery produced by the Koreans, who borrowed their techniques from the Chinese.

Chinese potters have produced a number of white wares. Some are glazed in white over a red clay body, while others have a white or clear glaze over a white porcelain body. Ting ware, named after the kiln district, is a famed white pottery, being finely made with molded and incised decorations under the glaze. Tz'u-chou, again named after the kiln area, is the name applied to painted pottery. It is considered a peasant ware and began a thousand years ago, continuing up to the present day. Tz'u-chou is most often painted in a dark glaze over white and was the prototype for decorated porcelains, which are painted under or over a transparent glaze. Blue and white became the popular colour scheme for decorated porcelains, because the blue, produced by powdered cobalt oxide applied under the transparent porcelain glaze, is easy to control. Blue and white is well known in the West; the most famous example is the export trade "Willow" pattern and its many imitators.

M964.1.19

Vase

Chinese, Sung dynasty (?)

Lung Chuan ware, celadon glaze on stoneware

20.5cm x 15cm

This vase was made at the Lung Chuan kiln area in South China; the blue-green glaze is difficult to produce and is highly prized.



M963.1.20

Vase with Lid

Chinese, Sung dynasty (?)

Northern celadon glaze on stoneware

34cm x 16cm

M964.1.25

Flower pot

Chinese, Ming dynasty

Celadon glaze on stoneware

25cm x 32.5cm

This pot is somewhat Persian in style and was probably made for export.

M964.1.285

Libation cup

Chinese, Ch'ing dynasty (?)

Celadon glaze on porcelain

21cm x 13.5cm

M964.1.297

Bowl

Korean, Koryo dynasty (918-1392)

Celadon glaze over stoneware

8cm x 18.5cm

M964.1.294

Korean, Koryo dynasty (918-1392)

Celadon over stoneware

6.5cm x 19cm

M964.1.35

Bowl

Chinese, Ming dynasty

Enamel on biscuit-fired porcelain

9cm x 18cm

This style, called "Ming Fa Hua", is also known as "cloisonne", because of the fine threads of clay used to prevent the spread of the different coloured glazes.

M964.1.385

Incense Burner

Chinese, T'ang or Sung dynasties

White glaze on stoneware

11cm x 14.5cm

The shape of this censer seems to be Sung, but the style of the eyes may be closer to that of the T'ang period.

M964.1.30

Plate

Chinese, Sung dynasty

Ting ware, white glaze over porcelain

32cm diameter

M964.1.22

Vase with phoenix motif

Chinese, Ming dynasty (?)

Tz'u-chou ware, brown glaze painted over white on stoneware

35cm x 32cm

M964.1.18

Vase

Chinese, Ming dynasty (?)

Tz'u-chou ware, dark brown glaze over stoneware

38cm x 18cm

M964.1.17

Wine jar

Chinese, Ming dynasty (?)

Tz'u-chou ware, brown glaze over white glaze on stoneware

41cm x 33cm

The translation of the inscription is: "The wine in this jar is sweet and fragrant" and on the reverse

"The smell will knock you off your horse".

M964.1.76

Plate

Chinese, Ch'ing dynasty (?)

Transparent glaze over cobalt blue decoration, stoneware

33.2cm

M964.1.525

Plate

Chinese, Ch'ing dynasty (?)

Transparent glaze over cobalt blue decoration, stoneware

35cm

M964.1.28 a & b

Horse-shaped roof tiles

Chinese, Ch'ing dynasty

Lead glaze over

40cm x 45cm

Decorative tiles, in the shapes of real and mythical animals, deities and other auspicious symbols have long been used to cap the ends of roof ridges on Chinese, Korean, and Japanese tile-roofed buildings.

B. Tomb Wares

The custom of placing grave goods in burial sites dates to the Neolithic period (c. 6000-2000 B.C.) in China. During the Shang dynasty (c. 1500-1027 B.C.) human beings and animals, as well as bronze vessels, jades, ceramics and other daily and ceremonial use objects were sacrificed to accompany members of the royal clan after death. By the late Chou period (1027-222 B.C.), living sacrifices were replaced by figures made of bronze, clay, wood or straw. The most famous tomb figures of this type are the recently discovered life-size clay soldiers and horses associated with the tomb of the first emperor of the Ch'in dynasty (221-207 B.C.). Other low-fired pottery "ming chi" (spirit objects), made specifically for tomb burial and reproducing objects in more expensive materials, became common with the Han dynasty (206 B.C. - 220 A.D.); by the T'ang dynasty (618-906 A.D.) their use was so popular that govern-

ment authorities attempted to regulate the size and number of "ming-chi" attendant figures permitted in tombs according to the rank of the deceased. Tomb robbers in China had from the earliest times looted tombs of objects made of precious materials, ignoring clay and wood "ming-chi". Railroad construction in China in the early twentieth century went through a number of ancient cemeteries, bringing the ceramic tomb figures to the attention of Western collectors; these figures, particularly those of the T'ang dynasty, gained great popularity.

M964.1.13

Hill jar

Han dynasty

Grey pottery with iridescent glaze

14.5cm x 20cm

This vessel is a copy of a common bronze type, itself a combination of two forms—the cylindrical flat-topped *lien* and the mountain shaped incense burner. The mountain and wave form of the lid of this hill jar in all probability represents Mount P'eng Lai, the Great Central Mountain of the Taoist paradise that rises out of the Grey Jade Ocean. A mythical landscape is shown in low relief on the sides of the jar.

M964.1.66

Horse head

Han dynasty

Grey earthenware with red pigment

15.5cm x 10cm

Such horse head busts, in jade and other materials, as well as pottery, are frequently found in the Han period, but are less characteristic of later tomb wares in which the whole animal is more commonly represented.

M964.1.14

Horse head

T'ang dynasty type

Buff earthenware with red and black pigment

26cm x 20.5cm

M964.1.16

Standing dignitary

T'ang dynasty type

Buff earthenware

73.9cm

This piece is made of buff coloured earthenware. It is partially covered with green and cream coloured lead glazes, while unglazed areas were once painted.

M964.1.24

Funerary vase

Chinese, Sung dynasty

35cm x 16.5cm



M964.1.15 a-1

Cyclical calendar animals

Late Wei to early T'ang dynasties (6th-7th Centuries A.D.)

Red earthenware with traces of slip

23.8cm (average height)

These part human and part animal figures represent the twelve animals associated with the Chinese zodiac. These figures not only symbolize the months of the year, but are also part of a repeating calendrical pattern (1982 is the year of the dog). This group appears to have been assembled from two or three sets placed in tombs.

M964.1.121 a & b

Funerary vases

Yuan dynasty

Grey stoneware body with grey-green glaze

65.6cm x 20cm

These storage jars, their lids now missing, are almost identical in decoration and style to vases recently excavated from two tombs in South China, dated 1291 and 1315. (See plate 24, J.M. Addiss, *Chinese Ceramics from Datable Tombs*, London and New York, 1978)

Buddhist Art

A. China and Japan

In the sixth century B.C., a man named Gautama appeared in India to teach the people about the Middle Path of Life; his teachings became known as Buddhism. Early Buddhism was not theistic and did not encourage an artistic tradition. Buddha, "The Enlightened One", died without putting his teachings in writing, but his many followers remembered and elaborated upon his teachings, encouraging the development of art to make his teachings more appealing and approachable. Numerous fundamental issues divided Buddhism into two major groups—Mahayana and Hinayana. Mahayana, the Greater Vehicle, spread through Central Asia, reaching China in the first century A.D. and Japan in the sixth century. Central to Mahayanist religion is the belief in the bodhisattva, the unselfish being who defers his own Nirvana for the sake of humanity.

Among the Japanese and Chinese Buddhist art objects in the Maltwood Collection, images of bodhisattvas outnumber those of the Buddha. The chief function of these objects is to promote worship and to invoke the aid of the deities represented. The most popular bodhisattva is Kuan-yin or Kannon (Avakitesvara), the personification of mercy. Take note of the gentleness and femininity of this deity, who is often portrayed as a woman in the Far East. The

larger shrine box is an example of a "butsudan", a Buddhist altar kept within a private home. The smaller box is part of a Japanese traveller's paraphernalia, carried for good luck on a journey, rather like a St. Christopher's medal. The paintings are also Japanese in origin. The Raigo Trinity and Jizo Raigo belong to the Pure Land sects, populist movements, particularly strong in medieval Japan.



M964.1.70
Kuan-yin (Avalokitesvara)
Chinese
T'ang-Sung dynasty (?)
Bronze
32cm x 21.5cm

The mitre crown depicting Amida Buddha identifies this piece as Kuan-yin. This head was probably part of a larger piece, perhaps kept in a temple, but through the years of religious and social turmoil in China, this piece, like so many others, became dismembered, and the head was acquired by this museum.

M964.1.36
Amida Raigo Trinity
Japanese

Muromachi period, 14th-15th Centuries
Hanging scroll, colours on indigo silk
102cm x 42cm

The word 'raigo' means the descent of deities to welcome and escort a dead devotee to heaven. Raigo painting is of the Pure Land tradition of Buddhist painting, particularly dominant in Japan in the Kamakura period (1185-1332). Trinity representations were painted largely due to the influence of the monk Honen (early 14th Century). Amida Buddha, the Buddha of the Western Paradise, is the large central figure; he is flanked by the bodhisattvas Seishi (Mahasthamaprabha) on the left and Kannon (Avalokitesvara) on the right, offering the lotus vehicle to the soul of the devotee.

M964.1.388
Travelling shrine box
Japanese

Lacquered wood with brass
13.5cm x 5cm

The figure in this shrine may be tentatively identified as Jizo (Kshitagarbha), the patron of travellers in Japan. The right hand has a hole in it, indicating that this figure may have held a staff, as seen in the Jizo Raigo painting on loan from the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. This staff is an attribute of Jizo, while the left hand carries the sacred jewel. In Japan, Jizo is commonly depicted as a monk with a rather benevolent or benign appearance. He became exceptionally popular in the Kamakura and Muromachi periods, because it was thought that he could help even those who were beyond Amida's saving grace.

M964.1.87
Shrine box
Japanese

Lacquered wood with brass
25.5cm x 10.5cm

The iconography of this box is rather perplexing. The sword is a common attribute of Fudo and the pearl is usually carried by Fugen, but the central figure here is too sedate and feminine to be either. Kannon may hold the sword and the jewel in his various forms, usually as Juntei or Cintamani when multiple arms are manifested, but the crown does not depict Amida Buddha, the identifying iconographic trait of Kannon. Quite likely this is an esoteric image of the Japanese Shingon or Tendai sect.

65-176A

Jizo Raigo

Japanese

Muromachi period, c. 14th-15th Centuries

Hanging Scroll, colour and cut-gold on silk

(Loaned by the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria)

Jizo (Kshitagarbha), a bodhisattva, is shown in the raigo tradition, descending toward the believer on a cloud. The stencilled and gilded decorations of a phoenix and butterfly found under the painting indicate that the material was probably originally intended for secular purposes.

B. Southeast Asia

Both Hinayana and Mahayana Buddhism were introduced to Southeast Asia. In the thirteenth century, the Thais, driven out of Southwest China, took control of Indochina west of the Mekong River and established the basis for the later kingdom of Siam, modern day Thailand. They were soon converted to Hinayana Buddhism which gave great prominence to images of the Buddha. The art that developed over the next four to five hundred years absorbed influences from the earlier Mon sculpture of the Mekong area, from Cambodia, Ceylon, and China. Today a number of individual styles or schools are identified within the Thai Buddhist art tradition and, as a whole, the Buddha images of Thailand are among the most elegant and refined in the world.

M964.1.288

Buddha head

Thailand

Ayuthya School, c. 16-18th Centuries

Bronze

9.5cm x 8cm

The Buddha is shown here wearing a crown; this is a format that developed in the late Pala-Sena Mahayana Buddhist art of India and appeared in Southeast Asia by the twelfth century.

M964.1.85

Buddha head

Thailand

Sukhothai style, c. 16-18th Centuries

14cm x 7.5cm

The ushnisha, a rounded protuberance on the head, is one of the thirty-two marks of the Buddha. The flame finial on top of it is associated with the theme of the transcendent quality of the Buddha, but its exact meaning and place of origin are unclear.

Textiles

From the first century B.C., when China began world trade, silk fabrics became a favourite trade article. The Chinese were known as the "Seres", the "silk people", in the West. Silk is made by unwinding the cocoons of silk worms. The best silk is produced by worms fed mulberry leaves. Each cocoon yields about a mile of thread, which is very strong and makes excellent weaving yarn, even when spun very fine. Silk fabrics were woven in solid colours with raised designs or in multi-coloured patterns. Fabric was also embroidered in silk thread or in thread wrapped with gold or silver paper. The Chinese used many natural dye stuffs and created innumerable shades of colour. Silk dyes readily but fades quickly when exposed to light so when synthetic dyes were invented in the nineteenth century, the Chinese took advantage of their brilliance and permanence.

When the Manchus, a northern nomadic kingdom, conquered China in the seventeenth century, establishing the Ch'ing dynasty, Manchu national dress was adopted for all official and court robes whether worn by native Chinese or by Manchu officials. The Chinese maintained their native dress outside the government system. The symbolism used for the decoration of Manchu court costumes, as well as Chinese style garments, was that which had been developed by the Chinese over many centuries. These symbols, some of which appear on the garments in the exhibit, include the dragon (the natural world, the emperor), the phoenix (the empress), bat (good fortune), mountain (earth), bird in red disk (sun), rabbit in white disk (moon, flaming pearl or wisdom), crane (long life), fungus (long life), pair of fish (domestic felicity and fertility from the rebus Yu—fish and yu—abundance), flowers of the four seasons (tree peony—spring, lotus—summer, chrysanthemum—autumn, prunus—winter), and variations on the Chinese character "shou" (long life). All are auspicious symbols.

76.12

Dragon robe

Ch'ing dynasty

(Art Gallery of Greater Victoria)

111.2cm x 188.5cm

58.34

Child's robe

Chinese

Ch'ing dynasty

(Art Gallery of Greater Victoria)

58cm x 39cm

M964.1.526

Apron

Chinese

Republic of China, c. 1920s

96cm x 210cm

M964.1.527

Chinese woman's informal coat

Chinese

Ch'ing dynasty, last quarter of the 19th century.

137.5cm x 98.5cm

M964.1.528

Woman's semi-formal overcoat

Chinese

Ch'ing dynasty, last quarter of the 19th century

146cm x 108cm



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