



# LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

SEPTEMBER 2017

## Annual exhibition: sparking young minds Over 2,000 students expand their knowledge



*Students explaining 'Pi' to N Kumaraswamy District Elementary Education Officer*

In a grand initiative the theme for this year's annual exhibition was titled 'Exploration'. It was conceived by our teachers, students with valuable inputs from advisors. This year, the unique feature was that it took the visitors from the past to the present in various fields, including the Sangam age, Science and Technology, and Mathematics.

### The Exhibits

Sangam age dealt with the land, language and civilisation of people who lived Between 300 BC to 200 AD in Tamilnadu. Models depicting the types of land, livelihood, dwellings and literature in ancient times transported the visitors to the Sangam era.

The evolution of man and civilisation from Stone Age, the various modes of travel and communication methods from ancient to the modern times, seasons of the year, solar and lunar eclipse were a part of the exhibition.

At the Mathematics stall, the symbol Pi was explained. The various stages of



*S Manimala, PA to RDO viewing the origins of the universe model also in the picture Sevalaya Murali and N Annapoorna, Sevalaya Trustee*

47 students from 6 local schools participated in the Exhibition with projects of their own. 431 students from 9 other schools in the vicinity visited the exhibition, which was open for a week from 10th to 16th August 2017. In a fitting finale, the Chief Guest, N Kumaraswamy, District Elementary Education Officer lauded the efforts of Sevalaya in bringing

together various schools in the local area to conduct this unique exhibition. He told the students that opportunities sometimes do not knock on doors and that it must be sought out.

Sevalaya's alumni actively participated on all the days of the exhibition to help and guide the viewers.

measuring time and the invention of different types of clock were highlighted. Puzzle sessions were held for students to trigger their thinking.

Mesozoic era, species of the period, various types of mammals, carbon dating methodologies, various aspects of human physiology, functioning of internal and external organs and other systems were the other topics dealt with.

The agriculture stall had models depicting seasons for sowing seeds, weeding, using organic fertilisers and harvesting.

### Let us save trees

*As an organization committed to preserve our environment, Sevalaya has decided to stop printing paper copies of the monthly Newsletter Love All Serve very soon. However soft copy of the newsletter will be uploaded in the website and mailed to donors.*

*If you are interested in receiving the softcopy please send e mail to :*

[techsupport@sevalaya.org](mailto:techsupport@sevalaya.org)

[sevalayamurali@sevalaya.org](mailto:sevalayamurali@sevalaya.org)

*Thank you for your understanding and support.*

# Joy of giving: *the way of life*

Dear Friend,

Wish you a very happy *Diwali* in advance!

*Diwali* (the festival of Lights), one of the major festivals of India symbolizes the triumph of good over evil. As the festival approaches, there is a lot of celebration in the air, with people busily planning for the purchase of new clothes, sweets, savories and all the shops are flooded with new and novel varieties of clothes, sweets and of course crackers, to woo the people and make the occasion a memorable one! As donors and friends of Sevalaya ([www.sevalaya.org](http://www.sevalaya.org)), we are sure that you have included your extended family of Sevalaya also in the preparation of your *Diwali* celebrations. This extended family has 2285 poor, destitute village children and 71 poor and destitute grandpas and grandmas. These children are getting completely free education and doing very well in studies. Many of our students who completed school education have taken up higher studies and many of them are fully supported by Sevalaya. The grandmas and grandpas as well as the residents of the Children's Home which houses orphan and destitute children are

given very good, healthy and nourishing food, proper medical attention, love and affection. We estimate at least ₹ 1000 as the expense for one person and we need support from all of you to have a great *Diwali* for the 2356 people in the Sevalaya family. We are sure that as in the previous years, we will get your support. With all your unstinting support the evils of poverty and destitution which

plagued these 2356 residents are being successfully overcome. We invite you to join hands and help us celebrate this victory on the auspicious day of *Diwali*! Please do visit Sevalaya campus and join all our children and grandpas and grandmas for a grand *Diwali* celebration.

Thanks & Regards

Sevalaya Murali

## How to make a donation

Cheques in favour of 'Sevalaya', or donations in kind like clothes, crackers, sweets etc., can be sent to our city office at

Sevalaya  
54 P S Sivaswamy Salai (North)  
Mylapore  
Chennai 600004

Or money can be directly transferred to:

**For Indian Donors:**

**Account Name: SEVALAYA**  
**Account No: 218601000134**  
**Bank: ICICI BANK**  
**Branch: Mylapore**  
**IFSC Code: ICIC0002186**

**Account Name: SEVALAYA**

**Account No: 029101000008743**

**Bank: INDIAN OVERSEAS BANK**

**Branch: Dr R K Salai Branch EE Road Branch)**

**IFSC Code: IOBA0000291**

**For Overseas Donors:**

**Account Name : SEVALAYA FCRA A/C**

**SB Account NO 408048361**

**Bank: INDIAN BANK**

**Branch: DR R K Salai Branch**

**SWIFT CODE: IDIBINBBMAS**

**IFSC Code: IDIB000D035**

## Sevalaya Murali presented with lifetime achievement award



Sevalaya Murali and Bhuvanewari Muralidharan receiving the Lifetime achievement award from Kogilam Kumanan, Secretary, Soka Ikeda college. Also in the picture Dr Muthusami Kumaran, Associate Professor, University of Florida, USA and Dr Sethukumanan, Chairman, Soka Ikeda college

On 8th August 2017, Sevalaya Murali, Founder and Managing Trustee received the Lifetime achievement award, conferred by Soka Ikeda College of Arts and Science for Women, Chennai.

The award was presented at a grand function at Soka Ikeda college by the Chief Guest Dr Muthusami Kumaran, Associate

Professor, Non-Profit Management and Community Organisation, Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, University of Florida, USA. While speaking at the function, Dr Kumaran emphatically mentioned that having travelled all over the world and seen the work of many NGOs, Sevalaya was the only

organisation that provided all the services totally free of cost to its beneficiaries consistently right since inception. He further opined that the range of activities offered by Sevalaya is very unique and geared towards development of the underprivileged community.

Twenty students from University of Florida, USA, who pursue their studies in NGO Management in the University, participated enthusiastically.

### An opportunity to join Sevalaya in its mission of serving the needy

Sevalaya has an opening for a Donor Relations Officer in the age group of 20 to 25.

**Location:** Ambattur, Uthiramerur, Sriperumbudur.

**Educational Qualification:** No Bar.

**Required Skills:** Fluency in English communication, good knowledge of MS Word, Excel and PowerPoint.

Must possess a valid Two Wheeler Driving License.

e-mail : [sevalayamurali@sevalaya.org](mailto:sevalayamurali@sevalaya.org)



## Alumni take charge of Independence Day events



*G Raghavendran, Vice President, Standard Chartered-Global Business Services addressing the students and staff*

It was a refreshing sight to see the alumni getting involved in organizing and conducting the events on Independence Day at Sevalaya. Through the years, Sevalaya alumni have been a pillar of strength for the school and its activities. This year was special. The Chief Guest, G Raghavendran, Vice President, Standard Chartered-Global Business Solutions,

Chennai is an alumnus. After hoisting the national Tricolour, he reminisced about the days he spent growing up in Sevalaya. He said that he was immensely happy to witness first-hand the growth since the time he was a resident at Sevalaya home. He said that when the path chosen is straight, the goal will always be within reach. He firmly believed that the

foundation laid during his stay in Sevalaya has helped him immensely in his life.

Raghavendran also inaugurated the blood donation camp. Alumni, villagers and Sevalaya staff donated 98 pints of blood, more than twice the number collected last year. The blood donation camp was conducted under the aegis of Lions Club of Muthamizh, Chennai.

T M Vadivel, Ex-Serviceman, and a longstanding volunteer, conducted a march past with the Junior Red Cross students. He exhorted the students to be determined and possess strong willpower. He said everyone must feel proud to be an Indian. He also told the students the need of the hour is to seek unity in diversity.

Alumni and trustee G Ilayaraja, introduced himself to the current Std XII and Std X students and shared his student days experiences at Sevalaya with them. He had a dialogue with the students about the importance of education and thought process. He spoke about the importance and value of time. He finally ended by saying that interactions with people can often result in enriching our experiences.

## I Promise you mother, I will never drink alcohol...

Was the solemn promise the boys of Sevalaya's Mahakavi Bharathiyar School made to their mothers at the Day celebrations at Sevalaya campus on 5th August 2017.

The increasing instances of school children getting addicted to alcohol and attending schools and loitering in public places in an inebriated condition is alarming and raises serious concerns about the future of our country.

In an effort to make the students understand how addiction to alcohol destroys not only the person but also the family, the society and the country, Sevalaya organises Putliba Day every year.

Mahatma Gandhil left Porbander for Bombay on his way to London for Higher studies in August 1888, but not before his mother had extracted a promise from him that he would not drink, a promise which he upheld not only during the trying years in London but also till his last breath.

Mother's influence on young boys is everlasting and a promise made to the mother is one which children are bound to keep throughout their lives.

So in commemoration of the day on which young Gandhi made this promise



to his mother, Sevalaya came up with the idea of making the students promise to their mothers that they will abstain from alcohol.

The oath was administered by the Chief Guest G Ram Mohan, a staunch Gandhian and Former Safety commissioner, Indian Railways. Ram Mohan sponsored 500 T-shirts with the slogan "I promise never to drink alcohol." The Chief Guest impressed upon the students the sanctity

of this pledge, which should not be taken as a casual repetition of words but must be adhered to in all earnestness.

500 students took the oath and their mothers, many with tears in their eyes, were beside them.

S Thulasi, mother of S Sidharth of Std XI was in tears after her son held her hand and promised her that he would never drink alcohol.



## International chess day

As a part of the International Chess Day celebrations, 104 children from Std IV and Std V took part in the Chess tournament held at the Kasuva campus on 20th July 2017 where they played with the peers. This made the children understand how chess helps improve one's concentration and memory. A slide show on the evolution of chess game was presented to the children.

*Right: Sevalaya children concentrating in the game of chess*



## Unique ways to celebrate birthdays

Staff and students find unique ways to celebrate their birthdays. They gift plants that can be planted in and around the campus. V Devaraj, computer instructor at the school donated plant saplings. In his own words "When I see the plants daily, I am very happy."

S Nathique Basha, a student at the community college wanted to host a party for his friends. But, suddenly in the spur of the moment, he decided to donate plants. He feels a strong connection to the plants he has donated.



*V Devarajan, Computer Software instructor, donating tree saplings on his birthday symbolising life and growth*

## Visai shows a way to love nature and nurture it



*Volunteers from Visai explaining nature and its benefits to the students*

On 12th August 2017 a group of 12 members from *Visai*, an NGO, came to the campus and spoke about Bees and their contribution to mankind and nature. Then they conducted a Debate on "Is India taking the path to progress". All the Children from Std IX participated eagerly. The students presented a drama and mime event in the topics of forest, agriculture and lakes. The students enacted these themes very well and the show was well received. Finally they conducted a word puzzle game. They also shared many details about Late Salim Ali, the famous Ornithologist (an expert on birds). Finally students took an oath against paper wastage.

## Awareness on water conservation

19 students of Sevalaya Nxplores club from Std II, VIII and IX performed Drama, *Villupattu* (folks songs), and gave a speech about water conservation to the villagers of Pandikavanur. Most of them are daily wage labourers working in local farms, lakes and ponds. Their work is to deepen the water resources-lakes and ponds and desilting. Since the monsoon will arrive by October, Sevalaya took the initiative to create an awareness amongst the villagers. The performances highlighted the importance of water conservation,



as well as food and energy. Nearly one hundred villagers attended the events.

## Measuring the rain...



Dr Balaji Narasimhan and two students from IIT Madras visited the campus and fixed a rain gauge in the campus to measure the quantum of rainfall as a part of their project to construct a device which can be used to alert the people living close to rivers about the flow of rainfall and the flooding levels.

IIT Madras, IIT Bombay and University of Madras are jointly working on this project and will complete this project by February 2018. They will maintain the rain gauge for three years and plan to give it to Chennai Corporation or Public Works Department, Govt of Tamilnadu.

## Maiden metro train ride



On 13th August 2017, 83 girls and 86 boys along with 5 staff from the school went on a one day trip in the newly opened Metro train route, from Nehru Park to the airport. It was a novel experience for all the children, being their first visit to a Metro station as well as the airport. The trip was sponsored by Food Bank, Chennai. The students watched a 3D show and went for boating inside the park. Food Bank team treated the children with breakfast, lunch and snacks. They also gifted umbrellas to the children.

"It was very joyous day for me and I enjoyed the metro train ride and boating very much."

**C Reshma Std VI**



# BNY Mellon volunteers teach, donate and nurture

On 29th July 2017, 12 volunteers taught 25 students in Std IV the art of making household clay models (plates, pot and animals). The children were started moulding the clay with gusto. The team of volunteers then engaged the in colouring activities. The paintings and clay models were displayed in the class. This is a long term activity and will go on till the end of the year. The plan is to have a 2 hour session over the weekends and about 125 students are likely to benefit out of this.

We learnt something new today and it will be very useful to us. We will teach this clay and colouring activity to our friends and relatives near my home. This is our second session with the volunteers. We like working with our BNY annas and akkas as they are very friendly. We spent a great time with them. We thought the vegetables are used only in the kitchen, but now only we know we can use vegetables in painting activities too. It's a new experience, and we love it.

**J Abishek Std IV**



Another group of 20 volunteers went to the interior village of Velliur and planted 40 shade trees in the Govt primary health centre. Tree guards were installed around the tree for safety and upkeep. Seeing the activity, the doctor from the primary health centre planted a sapling too!! The volunteers then moved over to Saraswathy nagar near Thiruninravur and planted 20 trees. The villagers took active part in the whole proceedings and helped in moving the tree guards from each location. The villagers have promised to water the saplings regularly. 10 Junior Red Cross students and 2 alumni helped in this activity as well.

On Independence Day, 12 volunteers visited the campus and assisted in the

*Left: Children proudly displaying their colouring work*

*Right: Volunteer planting a tree*

organic farm area weeding out grass from the vegetable patch. They pitched in and supported the blood donation camp conducted by Sevalaya in association with Lions Club of Muthamizh, Chennai by filling in forms from the prospective donors and later assisted in cleaning the stage after the blood donation camp. The volunteers also donated blood.



## Love and compassion to all living beings

The central theme of Karuna Club is to disseminate the concept of love and compassion to all students.

On 6th August 2017 Karuna Club was inaugurated at Sevalaya. During his speech, the Chief Guest Shyam Sundarji Goenka, Proprietor, Meenakshi India Ltd told students that compassion is the most important aspect of life. He hoped that this idea will reach the parents of the children and spread to the rest of the society.

Suresh Kumar Kankaria, Vice-President, Karuna International, Sajjanraj Ji Surana, President Karuna club, R Murugesan, Education Department, Karuna International also participated in the event. They lauded the efforts of Sevalaya



*R Murugesan, of Karuna Club International administering the Karuna Club oath to the gathering*

in planting trees around villages as well as its concern for animals and nature.

The students took an oath to be compassionate to all living beings.

Karuna Club International distributed 300 pens and 90 sets of sports clothes to the students. A cultural event was presented by the students on the theme of 'Ahimsa'.

## ***"An Octogenarian, a romantic and an eternal optimist"***

### ***Gundu Rao***

Under the cool shade of the huge gulmohar tree sat a man with a long beard. His forehead replete with sandalwood paste and kum-kum instantly had my attention. His long silver grey hair and silvery beard that danced in the wind. Meet the Octogenarian, Gundu Rao, a longtime resident of Sevalaya.

He and his wife came to Sevalaya in September 2007. In fact he even remembers the date (11th of September). He further goes on to say it was a Tuesday and a new moon day.

He was a native of Madurai and he got to know about Sevalaya from his sister-in-law who was a resident. His wife (Indu) passed away a few years ago. He turns wistful when he talks about her, but gears himself



up and sets out helping in doing kitchen work or in the front office.

When asked why he came to Sevalaya, he reminisced about his life. With a mischievous glint in his eyes he says his was an arranged marriage, but there was an element of love! He bashfully says he courted his wife for thirteen years and used to go to her town very often under the pretext of doing some work. He proudly shows us the poems and short stories written by her. He says she had won many prizes in her school days. They did not have any children. He also speaks the skin cancer which showed up on his wife's finger and her passing away.

His daily routine begins at 3AM. He says, "I take bath in cold water and begin my prayers and I take a morning walk. I don't like taking a nap in the afternoons. I go to sleep at 9 PM. During the day, I cut vegetables in the kitchen. There were days I used to make morning coffee for all the residents at 5:30 am. If the watchman goes on leave, I take his place. Many people around the campus know me as Sevalaya thatha. I also help when there are special poojas, especially 'Gau pooja' (prayers to the cow)."

"There is no other place like Sevalaya. There are so many homes but nowhere can we find so many facilities. Mattress, bed sheets, food – always served on time – what more do you want? In fact, even my hearing aid is sponsored. This is my second one. My first one worked fine for two years. But then, something went wrong and it wouldn't work. Even the batteries for my hearing aid are bought by Sevalaya. I don't think, you can expect anything beyond this." says Gundu Rao.

When asked if he would like to see any change in Sevalaya, "Nothing. If at all, the inmates have to tweak some of their habits and attitudes. Then, it is easy to co-operate and get along – that's all." is his response.

## ***"Master of many trades"***

### ***E Ganesh Babu***

Tall and lanky and always sporting a smile, E Ganesh Babu stands out in a crowd. He is always eager to lend a helping hand and is usually relied upon to fill in the role of a driver, moving heavy objects, apart from his usual role as electrical and general maintenance technician. He has two sons, both of who study in Sevalaya School. His wife works in an Export company. He hails from Ayathur which is about 3KM from the campus.

"I've been here for four years. Initially, after about a year and a half, I had to resign, due to family issues. But, then, very soon, I was able to re-join and things have been smooth ever since. My day starts at 9AM, and there's always work



within the campus. I make it a point to check the electrical items frequently and keep a log for maintenance. During cyclone Vardah, the electrical lines snapped when the trees fell on them. We had to remove the tree trunks and rewire the campus in many places, before turning the power back on", says Ganesh Babu.

He is filled with melancholy when he talks about the senior citizens in the campus. He wistfully says, "I was raised by my

grandmother and that's probably why I love old people. I love all the grannies and grandpas and they love me equally. If ever I take a day off, they make it a point to enquire about my health. Their care means a lot to me. Sometimes, when there are emergencies, I am called to drive the ambulance."

He signs off by saying, "Sevalaya is a great place to work. I feel happy that, I am able to work in a place that is helping those in need."



## BGV values for Sevalaya management



**K Muthuramakrishnan, Advisor, Sevalaya talking about Swami Vivekananda**

Sevalaya's Trinity Bharathiar-Gandhi-Vivekananda whose principles are the guiding force for the organization was reinforced to the management team on 12th August 2017, at the campus. Sevalaya Murali spoke about Karma Yoga, and work is worship. He dwelled



**B - Bharathi; G - Gandhi; V - Vivekananda**

on the need for self-control, especially when one's patience is being tested or during times when conversations become confrontational. The need at that moment is awareness and patience. He also

stressed upon the need to concentrate on work and handle people with different temperaments in a balanced manner.

Bhuvanewari Muralidharan quoted extensively from the works of Bharathiyar and said that honesty and truth were the two most important characteristics of every human being. She also mentioned that values have to guide each person. The important takeaway was to treat others just in the way we would like to be treated.

K Muthuramakrishnan, in his address impressed on the need to overcome ego, create opportunities for each person to grow, the value of team spirit and compassion. He quoted extensively from the life of Swami Vivekananda.

## Capacity building - Sharpening the axe

Rapid strides in technology and the changing times have made it necessary for teachers to be abreast of latest developments and use innovative and varied methodologies to sustain the interest of today's children. Teachers of Sevalaya's Mahakavi Bharathiyar HSS are constantly exposed to a variety of training to upgrade their teaching skills. July saw three such training programmes being held at its campus.

Professor S Swaminathan, retired professor IIT Delhi, kick started the discussions with the teachers about the annual exhibition titled 'Explorations'. He met the different groups of teachers, had discussions on the topics related to the exhibition and gave information and guidance on various topics. His deep rooted interests in History helped in the teachers understand the architecture of the famous Shore temples as well.

Professor Subburathinam Srinivasa, Assistant Professor, University of California who has been guiding our physics teachers and students since the past few years visited the campus on 29th July 2017. He visited the science centre with the Physics teachers B Dinesh Kumar and P Ilangumaran, and gave practical lessons on teaching the subject to the students. He interacted with the science students of Std XII, gave useful tips and tricks on the subject. Ilangumaran who joined Sevalaya this year felt very happy as he got a lot of clarification on various topics.

Purna Srinivasan, Project Coordinator



**Prof S Swaminathan, Retired professor - IIT Delhi addressing the teachers**

**Below: Purna Srinivasan, Project Coordinator and faculty at I Am A Teacher, Gurugram addressing the teachers on classroom management**



**Prof S Srinivasan interacting with science students**



and faculty at I Am A Teacher (IAAT) Gurugram, gave a training on 'Classroom Management and Engaging students constructively' to 36 primary and high school teachers. She discussed the importance of meticulous lesson planning. The importance of sensorial activities related to the concept of the lessons in order to keep the children actively engaged, usage of innovative methods which engages the students actively

were some of the topics she dealt with during the session. She played a couple of videos that help understand the concepts of teaching better. She also taught the teachers playful games that could be used to engage the students constructively.

The techniques taught are interesting and am sure adapting them will make a visible change in the classroom atmosphere.

**N Thangapushpam, English Teacher**

## God in the form of bread

Swamiji used to say that to the hungry God comes in the form of bread. It is not a trite saying, but is borne out by an experience in Swamiji's life.

During his wandering days, one of the scorching summer noons Swamiji alighted at Tari Ghat station. He had very little possessions, not even a water pot. The porter drove him away from the protection of a shed. He was sitting in the open leaning on a post. There was a gentleman who was sitting in the shade. He has been travelling with Swamiji and has been teasing him throughout the travel. In his opinion it was right that the Sannyasi, a useless fellow should starve. Now also, the gentleman was mocking at Swamiji who was terribly y thirsty and hungry and was suffering the scorching heat in the open space. He, with a derisive smile curling his lips, said, "Look here, what nice Puris and Laddus I am eating!

You do not care to earn money, so you have to rest content with a parched throat and empty stomach, and a bare ground to sit on!" Swamiji was sitting calmly with very little expression on his face.

Presently a "miracle" happened. A stranger came to Swamiji with a mat, an earthen water jug and a carrier containing food. He entreated Swamiji to sit on the mat in a cool place, take water first and partake of the food. To Swamiji's protestations that he was working on a mistaken identity, he persisted that it was for Swamiji that he had rushed to provide food. He explained, " I am a sweet meat vendor and was having a nap after my noon meal. And I dreamt that Shri Ramji was pointing you out and telling me that He was pained to see you without food from the day before, and that I should get up instantly, prepare some Puris and Curry, and bring them to you at the

Railway Station, with sweetmeats, nice cold water, and a mat for you to sit on. I woke up, but thinking it was only a dream, I turned on my bed and slept again. But Shri Ramji, in His infinite graciousness, came to me again and actually pushed me to make me get up and do as He said. I quickly prepared some Puris and Curry, and taking some sweets which I had prepared this morning, and some cold water and mat from my shop , I ran here direct and recognized you at once from a distance. Now, do come and have your meal while it is fresh. You must be very hungry. Swamiji was overwhelmed with emotion and thanked him profusely. The kind man protested," No, no, Babaji! Do not thank me. It is all the will of Shri Ramji!"

The jeering man looking all this was taken aback, and was repentant, and begged Swamiji's pardon.

## Spoken English at all centres



BNY Mellon has been partnering with Sevalaya since 2016. Volunteers have been coming to the campus for several activities. Noticing the need for improving English communication skills the company has sponsored teachers for spoken English project so that all children of the High school as well as 120 students from the community colleges can benefit from the same. The teacher takes these classes through VCON from the Kasuva centre.

Since the beginning of this academic year spoken English classes are being conducted daily for the students and in all 5 community colleges of Sevalaya. The students studying in the community colleges have not completed formal schooling, homemakers and girls who want to take up some form of employment to improve their standard of living. In today's scenario where many are unemployed due to lack of proper

communication skills, these classes have come as a boon to the students. A basic working knowledge of English and good communication skills in English improves their chances of getting employed in good organizations with a higher pay scale with a hope of going up the ladder, quicker. In the last 3 months they have learnt how to introduce themselves, formulating sentences, and grammar.

### 'Marathal Thagumo' by Yuvashakthi



Sevalaya students who participated in 'Marathal Thagumo' (Can we afford to forget?) a programme on Independence day in honour of our Army personnel who guard our freedom

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