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Last Order: 9:30 pm
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SANSAI
Tropical Modern Home

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Editorial

We have dropped the status quo for this issue. In lieu of our typical rotation of themes, the makers of Traidhos Quarterly have asked contributors to share with us their passions, as told through whatever genre they feel best depicts them. Whether it be a personal memoir, an analytical essay, or advocacy piece, the idea was to hear from the voices of the Traidhos and Chiang Mai community about what motivates them each day.

Through the following pages, you will get acquainted with the diverse range of interests of our contributors, as told by them in a candid and honest manner. Whether someone sets out each day on their bike (page 15) or the inner depths of their soul (page 18), we learn about passions on an intimate scale. Others take an outward look with their passions, looking at the future world economy (page 12) or how we honour historical authenticity in the present day (page 6). Others realise their passions through physical therapy (page 14) or offer a cautionary tale about being just a bit too passionate (page 20).

Though not officially listed as a core value of education at the Traidhos Three-Generation Community for Learning, it is impossible to imagine how one’s learning goals could be met without the inner flame that is passion. It both motivates our desires and sustains us as we turn them into reality. As it evolves, so too do we. Ultimately, at a time when so much value is placed on external achievements and results, it has never been more important to stop and acknowledge what matters to us the most. If we were left with nothing else, what is it that we would devote ourselves to?

The Three-Generation Community is a unique educational centre. It offers Prem Tinsulanonda International School (an IB World day and boarding school), a dynamic Visiting Schools Program, the exciting Traidhos Camps, an artists’ residency program, an educational farm and a converted rice barge used for educational environmental studies on the Chao Phraya River in and around Bangkok.


Contact us

Editor
Nick Reale
editor@threegeneration.org

Advertising
Ramlah Jafri
ram.pc@chiangmaiheritage.com

Prem School
www.ptis.ac.th
facebook.com/PTISchool

Admissions
roxanneh@ptis.ac.th

Traidhos
www.threegeneration.org
vsp.threegeneration.org
barge.threegeneration.org
http://camps.threegeneration.org/
Experience, Checked

Teacher and Environmental Educator Lynda Rolph lets us sit in on the environmental education activity Sunset Watch.

We check the box for blue sky. It is easy. Ever since kindergarten we have known that the sky is blue. How many times as a preschooler did we paint a satisfying, heavy-blue streak across the top of the paper as our young brains made sense of the world? There is something reassuring to frame the paper with that blue band at the top and a green one at the bottom. It defines our four-year-old view of the world.

Now we are at it again.

5.50 ☑ Blue sky.

A slight breeze disturbs the leaves of a nearby tree. Its presence is noted and heads bow again to check the appropriate box.

5.52 ☑ Moving leaves. Check.

A white-throated kingfisher lands on a nearby fencepost. Its dazzling blue plumage catches the attention of a few children, causing some to look towards me for confirmation that I had noticed that they knew the bird was there. I smiled and nodded.

5.54 ☑ Birds resting.

It is sad that many simply record this stunning kingfisher as “bird”, unaware of even the most frequent visitors and backyard neighbourhood species. I hope that the beauty of its feathers, the elegance of its stance, its long beak and all-seeing eyes have not been lost on them.

There is a stillness in this group. As an educator, this is what excites me. These fifth graders have lived through thousands of sunsets, yet today many of them are experiencing something for the first time.

5.15 ☑ Mountains turn pink, check.

These children who have lived in numerous cities by their tenth birthdays, who know about international travel and luxury hotels are connecting for maybe the first time with a pulse and rhythm that connects them to the ancient civilizations they read about. I imagine an Inca child puzzling the fiery ball as it disappears each evening and recognize the same wonder in some of these sophisticated youngsters.

5.20 ☑ Sun becomes a red ball. Check.

In our fast-paced electronic world, we need to feel reassured by connecting to the rhythms that the natural world provides us. These patterns and cycles still offer people reassurance when so many other parts of life are in flux – even the young lives of primary children.

We need to experience the awe and wonder deep inside us and feel the calm generated by watching a sky settle into its night time hue. We need the space to ponder unhurriedly the big questions of the universe, the ones that are only partly answered in science and geography books.

6.21 ☑  First bat appears. Check.

6.22 ☑  Sky turns pink and orange. Check.

6.23 ☑  Mountains turn grey. Check.

In a results orientated society, people sometimes question the value of sensory activities and learning in informal settings. However, there is a growing body of research suggesting that young people cope better with the stress of exams and achieving benchmarks, if they also have time away from conventional learning. That time immersed in the natural world, contributes to both healthy physical and emotional development.

Our view is changing quickly now.
I smile as I watch the kids point excitedly, desperate to exclaim out loud but following the guidelines given for this activity. Bats have flown around us on our way to dinner each evening, but their passage has gone mainly unnoticed. Tonight it is different and I feel rewarded. My motivation for working in a job that demands long hours, hot days and constant interactions with children is fulfilled.

Experiencing first hand often challenges your perceptions. Such new learning is powerful and not easily forgotten.

6.34 ☑ The sun vanishes below the horizon. Check.

Suddenly the quiet is disturbed by what seems like an army of cicadas. Their short-lived music penetrates the sound waves. I ponder their life. They spend years in a gloomy underground world before they break free of their bodies, mature, then mate and die. Learning outside of the classroom provides students with a similar release. It frees them to take control of their learning, the things they notice and to be guided to learn more about the things that grab their attentions. Learning outside of the classroom allows many students to break free of the casing they previously believed to form the boundaries of learning.

6.40 ☑ Nighttime creatures heard. Check.

I feel passionate about experiential learning. When children experience something authentic, they notice more of the world they are connected to. They will ask questions that the teacher did not imagine the lesson would discuss. It matters less that they watch a TV documentary or read about the most exotic and soon-to-be-extinct species, but rather that they connect to the ordinary and witness the everyday. They will appreciate the amazing relationships that quietly take place moment by moment and recognize their connections to these natural cycles.

6.45 ☑ Trees make silhouettes. Check.

It is dark now, too dark to record anything else on our papers. Our eyes have adjusted minute by minute to this new darkness. We have become part of the twilight world, the mysterious time of day that bridges day and night.

It is exciting for an educator when students make personal discoveries, when they notice an aspect of the environment for the first time or reflect in a new way. If just one child experiences a “wow” moment or a deeper connection, the time outside the classroom is worthwhile.

A red-wattled lapwing, masked by night shadows, calls out, alerting us that night is full of life too. Nearby a frog strikes up its courting song. It is time for us to talk again as well.

We gather together and the hands shoot up even before I pose a question.

"Did you see that bat? It was awesome!” exclaims one student.

"The mountains looked like they moved nearer,” says another.

"The sky was beautiful, like a mermaid’s tails.”

"The green colour of the grass went away.”

These comments, as random as they might seem, reveal the students’ attentiveness during the activity and some deep scientific understandings that will help a future science class.

“What surprised you?” I venture when the first wave of spontaneous sharing passes. The children comment on the different sounds they heard, the size of the setting sun and the speed at which the Asian sun had sunk below the horizon.

Our shared experience was special. The children could have gone on for much longer.

"Is there a final amazing observation?” I enquire, “Something you will remember when you go back home?”

"The sky was amazing. It had so many colours. It was not just blue.” I heard one say.

I smile as I hear their responses. It justified the energy spent working in environmental education and the learning that takes place.

Lynda Rolph is Head of Community at Traidhos Three-Generation Community for Learning and has been working with the company for nearly twenty years. She is a highly respected environmental educator, with teaching experience in United Kingdom and Thailand. She is the former director of the Three-Generation Barge Program.

Photos provided by JMarg, Nick Reale and the author.
Does Chiang Mai Play Itself? (excerpt)

Traidhos Quarterly editor Nick Reale takes us on a tour of a city known for its rich cultural history in search of authenticity.

Those who come to Chiang Mai from places far afield often report being struck by some divine, intangible force when they first arrive. They swiftly become attracted to the place. The narrative often goes somewhere along the lines of, “I planned to stop by just for a couple of days and ended up staying several months,” or even years, they note wistfully. Many cite some nurturing, almost mystical quality of the place, often linked to the Buddhist lore that the city is often associated with. This wasn’t the case for me.

Before my arrival I researched all that I could about Chiang Mai’s attractions—sacred temples, authentic handicraft factories, posh cafés, bustling markets, zip line tours, elephant sanctuaries and more. There was also plenty of literature to be had on the city’s agreeable pace of life, framed by idyllic countryside, delectable cuisine, low cost of living and modern conveniences. In short, it read to me as the Southeast Asian equivalent of Austin, Texas or Portland, Oregon—a mid-sized provincial city that was in no way about to take the world by storm but subscribed to its own brand of idiosyncrasy that rubbed off onto seemingly everyone who paid a visit. It was no wonder the city provided a haven for expats from all over the world. I had just moved away from a cosmopolitan epicenter of all that was cutting edge and was averse to finding myself in another place subject to the tides of consumerism, cultural appropriation and runaway gentrification. Several signs pointed to discovering that here.

Tourism in the numbers

At first glance Chiang Mai appears to be disproportionately inundated with tourists. If it feels like they are everywhere, that’s because they are. The city drew over 14 million of them in 2013, about 4.5 million from abroad. To compare, New York drew in only 11 million foreign tourists in the same year; for a city that is over 60 times the size of Chiang Mai, it managed only 2.5 times the number of foreigners. And these tourists in Chiang Mai all appear to be willing to throw their money at anything that moves or entertains them—as tourists do pretty much everywhere.

What distinguishes Chiang Mai is its heavily marketed reputation as a bastion of authentic, well-preserved culture. In its introduction to Chiang Mai, Lonely Planet encourages you to, “...discover a city that is still firmly Thai in its aspect, atmosphere, and attitude.” Chiang Mai Local Tours describes it as, “...a cultural and natural wonderland with ethnic diversity, a multitude of attractions, and welcoming hospitality.” Nearly every travel site mentions the city’s three hundred temples and seven hundred year heritage that can be passed on to foreigners through cooking and massage schools or witnessed at umbrella factories and other handicraft shops.

Over the last three decades the city has capitalised on its cultural attractions so well that it has begun to see tangible gains off its 16.8 billion baht-per-year (nearly $500 million) tourism industry, which accounts for 35% of the province’s GDP. High rises now dot the landscape of the upscale Nimmanhaemin district; high-speed wi-fi abounds, even in curbside canteens; and private automobile ownership has skyrocketed to nearly 1.7 million registered vehicles—more than the number of people living in Chiang Mai Province. Much of this explosive growth has been reinvested back into either improving existing tourist attractions or opening up new ones. The last decade alone has seen the opening of Tiger Kingdom, Chiang Mai Night Safari and the Flight of the Gibbon.

Postmodern high-rises now dominate the skyline of Chiang Mai, in place of older temples and historic sites.

What about cultural preservation?

But these type of adventure-focused tourist attractions, you would hope, one would not conflate with actual cultural preservation; therefore, I never paid them a visit. Where I was taken more aback by the way the city presented itself was in the “Old City”—the centrally located square mile bound in a box by the moat. Upon my first walk through it one cheerfully dry January day, it came across as hardly anything old. I entered it through the Thapae Gate on the eastern side and walked down Ratchadamnoen Road, home to the famous walking street every Sunday. I was immediately greeted by chain coffee shops, Toyota and Honda dealerships and karaoke bars blasting American rock music à la Bruce Springsteen or one of his contemporaries. And then there...
were the boutique guesthouses, adorned with pseudo-limestone façades evincing Chicago Style architecture. The only things “old” about this part of the city were the streets; the narrow arteries snaked like knotted chords through a landscape that provided very few obstacles and therefore any real necessity for such a haphazard layout.

A tuk-tuk whizzes by a block of Chicago Style rowhouses on Ratchademnoen Road.

I got the overall impression that I was walking through a city that did not know what it really wanted to communicate and didn’t really seem to care. As long as business was good, it would passively accept whatever those with the money to sway its fortunes decided to do. Even the city’s prominent temples, many of which proudly claim to hail from the 14th century, were not as they seemed. And while the land upon which they stand might have been occupied since that time, the structures themselves are generally far younger. Hardly any temples, regardless of their age, have any remains whatsoever from that time period; even Wat Chedi Luang’s embattled stone-faced façade, which appears to have withstood the tests of time, only dates from the 1990s, when UNESCO and the Japanese government financed a complete renovation of the superstructure. Though even that only replaced a structure that dated to the mid-16th century; the original temple is thought to be two hundred years older than that still.

What nearly every temple does have, whether or not it claims to be ancient, are wiharns, places of worship, and ubosots, ordination halls. This is standard throughout all of Thailand, and recent decades have brought about drastic changes to the look and composition of these two types of structures in Chiang Mai’s temples. As more and more money has come in, older temples have been retrofitted to appear more Central Thai in form, with elaborately decorated gables, gold-crusted bargeboards and the addition of multiple tiers whose function are secondary to their aesthetics. In her book, Sustainable Cities in Chiang Mai, D.A. Charoenmuang notes that, “At present [in Chiang Mai] it is nearly impossible to find buildings over 100 years old in temple areas,” further adding that both abbots and temple-goers prefer to demolish older structures in favor of newer ones due to their belief that they are making merit for future lives—not to mention the general bent towards modernism in contemporary Thai architecture.

What it points to

Perhaps the average tourist to Chiang Mai could not care less whether the city’s temples subscribe to an authentic brand of architecture or not. But should the city continue to evolve to the runaway whims of development for its own sake, it will lose the very reasons why it attracted so many people in the first place. Not every tourist will hold each and every attraction to the snobbiest standards of scrutiny, but as a collective whole they will quickly get a sense rather quickly that a place is peddling them for their money exclusively.

This is what makes the tourism industry such a potent force to be reckoned with—not just as economic generator, but as a standard bearer for a city’s reputation, image and historical narrative. When people want to be informed on where to go and, in many cases, where to stay, they will consult sources that are based on the Internet, not a library, and whose reason for informing is based on the purpose for enterprise, not solely for the sake of education. It is no wonder that misinformation and skin-deep narratives populate these resources; to the reader with a short attention span, their main concerns are what will entertain them in the cheapest, most efficient way possible. Whether the tourism industry wears their responsibility with a badge of honour or not, they are undeniably linked to Chiang Mai’s—and many cities’—contemporary views of themselves.

Nick Reale is a former tour guide, professional storyteller, artist and the editor of Traidhos Quarterly magazine. He was born on a busy archipelago off the coast of mainland America and has found a cozy home made of teak wood in Chiang Mai. He has an impressive collection of maps.

Photos provided by the author.
The grounds of Wat Chiang Man (1297), the oldest known temple in Chiang Mai, is today occupied by mostly new or refurbished structures.
Conversation: The Cheapest Souvenir

Writer, poet and lifelong explorer Mulv Jones reminds us that some of the most valuable aspects of travel come from basic human connection.

He was an older gentleman, maybe in his mid-to-late forties. He was dressed in a button-up shirt, a silk tie and shoes giving off an air of business. He was not adorning a sports coat, yet it looked as if he would be wearing one shortly. The contrast to me was uncanny; my body was filthy, sporting the same clothes as the previous day, topped with disheveled hair from a sleepless night on an airport floor. Yet, this contradiction did not halt nor inhibit the gentlemen from accepting my invitation for conversation. The physical disparity held no weight over the shining similarities which linked two strangers on a sky train in a foreign land; the medium of conversation toppled societal pretensions.

While I had no agenda, I found myself eating at a local Thai restaurant. As my meal arrived, a soft spoken, elderly, Thai monk asked if he could share my bench. Still reeling in new found hardiness from India, I reluctantly obliged. He asked me where I was from, and I responded, “The States.” He asked again, I responded, “Colorado.” Again, he asked, so I told him “Boulder.” Once more, he asked the same question, and I said “Arapahoe and 7th.” He replied in broken, yet intelligible, English, “Oh, bottom of Hill, much more quiet than where I lived on College.” I stared in disbelief. He laughed and then proceeded to take us down the path of the wildest tale I have ever heard from any holy man to grace this earth. Sharing stories of stints of homelessness, failed interracial relationships, guided meditations, “pushing” 880 pounds of “fronted” illegal gemstones, and preparing for a 6-month meditation job in LA starting in December, I found that hours of my time had been whisked away in the most desirable manner. My mind was blown. I don’t know what attracted this man to my table, but it is not every day that you meet a monk on the opposite side of the world with whom you can joke about the merits and demerits of “The Bus Stop”, which you can Google if you are not from Boulder.

Whether it be talking with another Westerner about psychology on top of your favorite waterfall, or sharing a table with a gem-smuggling Thai monk, conversation is the most sacred and treasured facet of travel. Like any precious commodity, finding ones that shimmer, shine, and endure the elements is not always easy. With some practice, sifting through the silt becomes easier. While preparing for your journey, remember to leave your rushed existence at home, and leave room in your bag to pack in as much human connection as possible. You never know who is waiting down the road to change your life with their words.

Mulv Jones is a career tumbleweed, hailing from the U.S. state of Colorado. His writing consists mostly of poetry and fiction. When his hand isn’t filled with a pen or, you can find him rock climbing, biking or abscending in nature.

The Conversation by Arnold Lakhovsky

One stereotype often cited for the infamous American abroad is that we have a hard time slowing down. In the United States life is rushed. As we market the idea of “on the go” so well, us folks from the states are not always known for savouring the moment. Traveling at high velocity, though, is one of the biggest mistakes any traveler can make while abroad. The truth is, while attractions and activities may be the initial pull to a destination, the most impactful aspect of travel does not exist in guidebooks. It is conversation, and it is free. To find it, one needs only to take a moment, settle down, and let their guard take a much needed vacation.

Having just left India, I had almost forgotten the potential and enjoyability of random conversation. It isn’t to say that Indians don’t indulge in conversation (in fact, I can’t remember ever being silent in India). The sad truth
Researcher Jack Killen questions the status quo of intellect within our educational systems with a frame of mind that focuses on growth.

The story of genius has always been deceptively compelling to us. We envy and idolize those who we believe to simply be born with this gift. Oh if only we could have won the lottery of genius. Life would be so effortless then, and success would be guaranteed. You either have the gift or you don’t, so this story goes.

But is it really that simple? Current psychological research is chipping away at this pervasive myth. We are beginning to realize that there are other, more crucial variables to our success. How we view the process of attaining knowledge is integral to our achievement. Research shows that individuals who believe that knowledge is a growth process gained through time and effort tend to find more success in life. Those who believe knowledge reflects fixed ability fair far worse. We must stop perpetuating the fixed mindset of knowledge and begin to actively promote the growth mindset to our young students.

Psychologist Carol Dweck has championed the growth mindset approach after years of in-depth research bolstering her claims. Dweck gave several ten-year-old students a puzzle that was slightly above the typical skill of this age group. While most students struggled with the puzzle, some expressed excitement for the challenge and relished in the opportunity to learn more. They understood that their ability could grow. Another portion of students expressed frustration with the difficulty of the puzzle. They perceived their failure to solve it as a reflection of their lack of intellectual worth. Dweck tracked these students over time and saw clearly that those who practiced a growth mindset experienced more success in both grades and in life.

Luckily, for the fixed mindset students, hope is not lost. The power of the growth mindset is backed by strong neuroscience. When we exert effort and time our brain reshapes its neural pathways. This is the growth mindset in action. Tasks and modes of thinking that once seemed impossible are performed with ease. Dweck tracked students who had been taught this empowering science. They were more likely to believe in their ability to improve and this belief created great success in their lives.

It is quite easy to believe that a student who performs poorly is inherently less able and that one who excels is destined for greatness. It is much harder to trust that, despite coming from different starting points, the potential for success is determined by the student’s persistence and the proper outlook. This is the bedrock philosophy of education that is too often forgotten. As educators, we must be vigilant in promoting the growth mindset so that our students may face challenges with strength and fortitude and achieve even greater success.

Jack Killen is an educator, life long student and occasional arm chair philosopher living in Chiang Mai. He is always eager to discover more about how we learn, think, and make decisions in this confusing and fascinating world.

Photos provided by Bengt Lenartsson and IAEA Imagebank.
We are the Economy

Economist Amanda Janoo lays out her vision for what a new global economic paradigm can—and should—look like, and it begins with you.

I spent much of my life looking in horror at all of the various problems and crises that plague our world: from crippling environmental destruction to rampant poverty in the face of obscene wealth to unjustifiable warfare. About a decade ago, I came to realization that all of these various tragedies were just symptoms of an unsustainable economic order.

The way we produce and consume things affects every aspect of our lives and our world. But the reverse also holds true: every aspect of our lives and our world affects the way we produce and consume things.

This reciprocal and mutually reinforcing relationship between people and the economy was an incredibly empowering realization for me. Too often “the economy” is presented as some abstract phenomena that happens “out there,” beyond our daily lives and thus our control. For most, the economy is seen as some kind of omnipresent professor who controls our lives through numbers and complex terms such as interest rates and derivatives.

For this reason, most people rightly have little interest in economics and fail to see how they personally relate to it. I believe this is one of the most brilliant tricks ever played on humanity. By making economics appear so complex and boring, most of us just accept that its management should be left to “the experts.”

I’m here to call them out.

We are the economy and therefore we have a right and responsibility to mold and direct it according to our values and objectives.

The very first definition of economics was coined by Sir James Steuart in 1767. He defined the economy as the, “art of providing for all the wants of a family and society.”

The three notions of this definition.

First, we must understand the idea that an economy is a work of art. This is beautiful because it helps us to immediately recognize that no two economies are the same and that over time the style and medium of that art is apt to change. In this way, we can accept that the economies of a subsistence community, a small town, a city or a nation will all look different and that there is no inherent hierarchy because their relative merit is in the eyes of the beholder.

The second important notion in this definition, is the idea that the purpose of the economy is to provide for others. For most of us, this idea might seem a bit strange at first since nowadays we mostly speak about the economy’s function for our own consumption. But in reality, this old notion does not feel so radical if we consider that when someone asks you what you do, you generally respond by describing your job or the ways you provide for others. We do not normally answer by listing the things we buy.

This notion of providing also opens us up to consider all the important ways that we provide for others wants, even when it is not monetized. Our roles as caregivers, friends, community members and mentors are all vital to an economy, and it is something of a historical fluke that this unpaid work was excluded from our system of economic accounts and has therefore been relegated as inferior.

The important thing to take away that we can understand our vital role in the economy by looking at what we provide to others.

The final important notion within Steuart’s definition is the idea that the economy’s function is to fulfill society’s wants, as this immediately raises a red flag and has us consider, “What do we want?”

Most economic policy advisors would immediately answer this question by saying that people want more cheap stuff and so we develop policies that deliver on this, even at the expense of all else.

At the time of writing Steuart assumed that the purpose of economic policy or economics, was to ensure that all people’s basic needs were met and to create a stable economic system so that this basic need fulfillment would not be threatened.

Now some 250 years later, these still seem like pretty valid policy objectives and we should be a little ashamed that we have yet to achieve either of them. Our people and planet can no longer afford for us to keep blundering along without
a clear idea of where we are going. Each community and society must decide for themselves what their real wants are and then mold and direct the economy towards those ends.

Most economists would adamantly disagree with this idea that each economy is a unique work of art, they would argue that across space and time all economies are governed by the same principles. The following conclusion is therefore that each economy can be managed in the same way, regardless of a society’s culture, history, values or objectives.

In economics, the only legitimate objective is to maximize economic efficiency. But few ask the question, “to what ends?” Obviously if one society wants to reduce inequality and another has prioritized improving public health, the economy will need to be structured differently to achieve these aims.

The economy is entirely what we make of it.

Today, most people are debating the relative merits of capitalism vs. socialism. But I believe we must stop limiting ourselves to these two options, as ultimately an economy can look like anything!

Each economy is a work of art which is made of up a variety of different colors or factors that mix together to create our economic tapestry.

The blueprint of all economies.

Every economy from the most local to the most global is made of:

One part ethics, or what we accept to be fair and just action.

One part culture. What is valued and in what way.

One part external influence in terms of the pressures from outside corporations, organizations or nations that push for an economy to be organized in a particular way.

One part historical context and the unique conflicts and alliances.

One part social trust and the degree to which we believe someone else will hold up their end of the bargain.

One part education and the knowledge and experience we inherit from preceding generations.

One part natural environment, and the plants, animals, and minerals we have access to.

One part political will and our collective power to push and transform our economy in a different direction.

One part consumer preferences, what we want and what we are willing to exchange for it.

One part work, what we decide to produce and provide to others and at what cost, if any.

Finally, it is one part stewardship and how much we strive to preserve and protect and conserve our social and natural environment.

An economy of decisions.

Each of these various factors produce the content and framework of any economy. We can therefore easily see how each of these works of art, from towns to nations, will look very different because the shade and prominence of the colours vary. It also helps us to realize that there are so many different ways that we can influence and change our economic system. Whatever your passion is, I’m certain it’s relevant to building a better economy.

The economy is not given; it is formed by you and me and billions of people around the world. The purpose therefore is not so much to figure what our economy is like right now, but rather to think about what it could be. That requires us to consider what we want as individuals and as a society.

Once we are clear on our objectives we can then shape these various factors to organize our economic system in a way that all of us end up providing for others in the manner that fulfills our real wants.

The economy is a broad thing and, just like politics, it is determined by individual and collective decisions. My goal is to demystify the economy and get idealistic people, who might otherwise feel intimidated to engage in these important debates about our economy.

I truly believe that once we realize we are the economy, we realize we can change it. And once we change it, we change the world.

Amanda Janoo is an independent economic policy advisor to governments and development organizations. With a special focus on industrial policy, she believes that governments have a right and responsibility to mold and direct their economies in line with society’s vision. She has worked throughout Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa promoting greater economic self-determination and empowerment. Amanda graduated from Cambridge University with an MPhil in Development Studies.

Photos provided by Followtheinstructions, BEIC Digital Library
**Therapeutic Passions**

By Global Issues Network Exploria (Sersang, Om, Leczin, Debbie, Deki, Jigme, Alysha and Ajarn Kailash)

“The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well.” – Ralph Waldo Emerson

Global Issues Network is a network of international schools participating in various community service projects worldwide. At Prem School, the Exploria programme hosts an after-school branch of Global Issues Network. During meetings and events, our main goal is to make a positive impact on our local community here in Chiang Mai.

To work towards this goal, we have been assisting a local foundation, the Dulabhathorn Foundation, which aids physically disabled children in the San Sai area and provides them with various learning opportunities. It was founded in 2007 by Brian and Marianne Doberstyn in memory of their parents Edward and Delphine Doberstyn. The foundation was named by Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn.

The staff at Dulabhathorn Foundation show commitment to their work by showing up for nine hours a day, five days a week. They are hardworking in their pursuit of helping the children who rely on the foundation for support. Khun Tuk, the programme director, has been working at Dulabhathorn Foundation full-time for nearly five years. She works in the field Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC), a subject which she trained for in the United States. Khun Tuk works with a team of four others: Khun Nok, who has been working for two years; Khun Ann, who has been working for one year in; and Khun Pitak, who has volunteered at Dulabhathorn for five years and is now working full time.

Khun Tuk says that she loves watching the children progress in many aspects of their lives as they grow as individuals. She stated that some children come to the foundation unable to talk or formulate words. After a few months of working with them, she sees their conditions improve—they even manage to formulate sentences. Seeing the children make achievements and progress, she says, is one of the most rewarding aspects of her life at Dulabhathorn. The staff at Dulabhathorn’s passion for helping and caring for others is what drives them to dedicate themselves to their work.

One of the opportunities Dulabhathorn Foundation offers to disabled children is hippotherapy, during which riding horses is used to promote coordination and balance. The foundation takes the students to the Equestrian Education Center Chiang Mai, a non-profit organization located in Saraphi district. Students there work with physical therapists and an equestrian instructor to perform various exercises, such as balancing, stretching and hand coordination. These help to improve muscle strength and control. Riding horses also instills a sense of confidence in many of the children, and it provides them with opportunities to work with others as part of a team.

Our role in this activity is to help motivate the kids by talking with them and encouraging them in their exercises. We participate in their activities, walking beside them and making sure they do not fall off the horses. For example, when the kids are given directions to lift their arms, we assist them to do so when necessary. We count with them and praise them when they have completed a drill. If they slouch while sitting on the horse, we help support their lower backs so they sit up with a better posture. The kids only go to the hippotherapy session once a week and they look forward to it; we are there to make it as productive and enjoyable as we can.

We also play different games with the kids. In one game, “Tigers and Cows”, we stand in a circle holding each other’s hands. The chosen kids run as fast as they can inside the circle, trying to catch one another while they giggle loudly. We also competed in a relay race in which the contestants on the two teams had to run one-by-one while wearing ankle weights. It was a really dynamic way for us to strengthen our legs and compete as teams. Playing these games with the children was a very enjoyable experience; seeing them smile made us genuinely happy.

Assisting the children in hippotherapy is an extremely rewarding experience for us as Prem students, and we are lucky to be able to have the opportunity to interact with people from all walks of life. Though our mission is to help the children, in reality they are helping us to see the beauty in the little things in life. We witness the kids finding great pleasure in spending time socializing and enjoying simple pleasures, such as eating snacks, together. Working with these kids helps us to appreciate and become aware of our own blessings and gifts. The rewards of seeing joy on the children’s faces reignites our passion to help others.

If you would like to learn more about supporting Dulabhathorn Foundation, please visit http://www.dulabhatornfoundation.com

Photos provided by Kailash Mani.
Hospitality teacher and culinary artist Luke Macann discusses his passions, both in the kitchen and on the bike path.

Although I miss the hustle and bustle of the kitchen, as a chef-turned-teacher I am sure I have made the right career decision. After working in kitchens around the world for twenty-three years and then eventually opening my own restaurant, teaching hospitality gives me the opportunity to pass on knowledge to the next generation. I find it immensely rewarding. Plus, working here at Prem School allows me to pursue my other passions, such as biking.

Hospitality is more than service.

As a subject, hospitality teaches young people how to look after themselves. Hospitality is not just about serving others and being a servant. It gives young people the confidence to interact with others and to develop social skills. I think many people underestimate the value of hospitality. A student of hospitality will be able to make the most out of their academic qualifications by confidently applying for a challenging position or marketing themselves as they climb the career ladder. The better they can manage themselves; the better they will function in society; the better they will do as an employee. And they learn the importance of service, because serving can be a very glamorous and rewarding act.

I have always had an interest in cooking, and my parents were both great cooks. I associate cooking with the same feeling of warmth and security I felt when I came home from school as a child. Watching Jacques Pepin on television was also a source of inspiration, as he was so humble and passionate. Cooks weren’t preening around like peacocks like they are now.

However, I was unsure of what career path to take once school finished. A co-worker suggested to me that cooking would be ideal, since I spent all of my time reading recipes. I applied to a local polytechnic but the course I wanted to take had already started. I begged and hounded them until I eventually got an interview.

Cooking is a job if you like to travel, and I have worked in London, San Francisco, China and Melbourne before my present job in Thailand. Traveling helps me immensely with my cooking. It helps you connect with the spirit of different people. You have a deeper appreciation for their culture and way of life. Traveling is one of the best things you can do. The experience of living and working in different countries has helped me to see foods of different cultures in context. You’re coming from a more authentic place.

During this time while working in England in the late 1990s I encountered a young Jamie Oliver. He was just one of the lads in the kitchen—we all were.

In 2009, I became an ambassador chef for Trade and Enterprise New Zealand in Beijing, which was a real honour. It felt like being a part of the Olympics.

I truly believe that anyone can become a great cook. It takes an appetite, and it takes a will. The two most important things you need are good feedback, and someone to feed.

One of my favourite movies is the Disney film Ratatouille, which tells the story of a rat who turns a hapless kitchen hand into a brilliant chef. It proves this point.

Although I keep my hand in by catering for friends and family, as well as the occasional catering event, I have no doubt that teaching is my calling. I love it.

The benefits of teaching go beyond the classroom.

Working as a teacher allows me the time to pursue my other big passion, which is cycling and bicycle racing. Most of my friends and work associates have seen me on either a road or a mountain bike on occasion.
Cycling is freedom, I like to say. Chiang Mai and Northern Thailand lend themselves to this activity very well. The Thai people have gone crazy for the bike. Even in the two years since I have moved to Chiang Mai, I have seen the number of bikes grow noticeably.

Almost every weekend it is possible to travel only a short distance for a bike event. I am a mountain biker at heart, I must confess. But a lot of my training is done on a road bike. The main reason for this is convenience. With many good roads around Mae Rim it is easy to jump on a road bike and ride immediately. Also road bikes require less maintenance, and in the rainy season a damp road is easier to tackle than a muddy trail.

I love the competition side of it. It is exhilarating. A combination of fear, excitement, focus, pain and reward all become mixed together. The battle of competition satisfies the competitor in me.

Before and after the races there is a lot of kinship and camaraderie throughout all of the events, but during the actual races it’s all about winning or at least trying to win.

I have been cycling and competing in mountain bike races for nearly twenty five years now, although in the last four or five years I have had a much stronger focus on racing.

Other positive aspects of this passion are that you get to meet a lot of bicycle enthusiasts and see vast amounts of the countryside. In the two years I have been living in the Chiang Mai area I have competed in close to thirty events all over Northern Thailand. My wife Noi and I really enjoy the ritual of packing up the car and heading off on an adventure somewhere. After two years of racing mountain bikes in Northern Thailand, I have earned the title of Northern Thai champion for my age group.

A balance of passions.

I believe it is important to have some balance in life. It is very easy to see examples of the importance of balance in cookery. Sweetness balances sour; crunchy balances soft; textures and bright colour balances bland.

The bike for me balances working primarily indoors, the connection with the environment that I ride through for ten to fifteen hours per week grounds me.

It is not my intention to create chefs, or expert exponents of the hospitality industry. I merely wish to educate and to motivate the new generation in the kaleidoscope of experiences, benefits and life skills that hospitality as a subject contains. As teachers we are urged to collaborate with our colleagues and to link the interdisciplinary elements of our subjects creatively.

Just like any other subject—psychology, algebra, language, or economics—hospitality links our knowledge and social skills together. The most important ingredient in the kitchen is knowledge.

Luke Macann joined the Prem International School in August 2015, coming from Queen Charlotte College, Picton, New Zealand. His many years as a professional and award-winning chef, and his formal Graduate Diploma in Tourism and Hospitality Management (Teaching), are invaluable as he heads the IBCP Hospitality unit at Prem.

Photos provided by the author.
Prem students winning the Flux Film Festival Awards 2017

Students across the Prem Senior School recently submitted films they made as either part of their Explorias or in English class to the Flux Student Film Festival in Beijing. We just found out that three of our films won!

The Flux Film Festival is a student-run film festival hosted by Beijing City International School in Beijing, China. They receive hundreds of submissions from across Asia and the world, making the achievement of our students even more impressive.

The films were judged by industry professionals who were extremely impressed by the work we created.

The winners were:

Middle School Documentary:
Animation and Film Exploria Promotional Film
By Filmmaking Exploria students

Middle School PSA:
“Littering”
By Grade 7 English class students

Open category Documentary:
“Prem Art”
By Prem Film Collective

We will be entering more films next year. If you are interested contact Ajarn Alan.
alanf@ptis.ac.th
Journey Through the Chakras

Poet and healer Charlie Wilson takes Traidhos Quarterly on a journey through his day-to-day experiences at the Mahasiddha Yoga and Tantra School’s seven-day chakra retreat.

Editor’s Note: In Buddhist and Hindu beliefs, chakras are energy focal points in the subtle body, which can be energized and mastered through conscious meditation. This retreat focused on opening one chakra per day, from root to crown.

Day 1, Muludhara chakra

I feel rooted and centered in the first chakra. It focuses on survival on the earth and is the most grounded of the chakras. During meditation my body becomes very hot and pulses with energy. Roots reach down into soil. It feels heavy and dense.

Day 2, Svadisthana chakra

This chakra focuses on one’s social and romantic life, realised through each person’s charisma and attraction. I get triggered into a lot of wounding around romance. There have been some behaviours I have enacted over the past year that I do not feel happy with and have previously spent a lot of time ruminating over. Earlier this year I had a throat infection and could not speak to another human for two weeks, which forced me into some deep soul searching about the values I want to embody and the way I want to treat others in my relationships. Here it all resurfaces. I get pulled into a lot of mental content and self judgement. I shut down to the external world and find communication very difficult when difficult emotions arise.

Day 3, Manipura chakra

I wake up in the state of mind that I was in yesterday. I feel very distracted and unable to be present. The first yoga and meditation of the day transforms my previous feelings of discomfort into anger. Rage feels like a more dynamic energy that I can work with and actively move. I begin to feel my willpower. It creates structure, manifestation. I master my physical plane. As the day progresses my anger turns into powerful enthusiasm; I feel fired up all day. I enjoy pushing my willpower with the extreme yoga session that we enact. There is a lot of active energy for me in this centre. I go swimming and sing and play music into the night. I find it difficult to sleep as I feel full of vitality.

Day 4, Anahata chakra

My heart cracks open. During meditation I see the whole room fill with sky. This chakra transcends ego, opening the heart to all beings with love. Everything as far as I can see is sky blue, dotted with clouds. White light energy pours in through the top of my head and fills my brain and my face. I am expecting it to come down into the heart, but it just stays in the area above the neck. During an ‘angel tunnel’ exercise in which we are showered with love from the other members of the group, I feel some very small places within me that feel absolutely unlovable and untouchable, rising to the surface. It’s like reaching my hands into a dark cave to rescue a small child that has craved tenderness for so long. He emerges, blinking into the sunlight, where a torrent of love pours down onto him from all sides. He cracks and floods of tears come pouring out of him. Deep, old tears. It feels very healthy.
Day 5, *Visuddha* chakra

Stillness. Silence. Presence. Alone with your own soul. Here, the power of expression, the song of your life, opens you to senses beyond. I begin a three-day fast on this day as I feel it will help me to access the more refined energy of the upper chakras. We do not speak for a large part of the day, but turn our focus inwards.

One third of the way through meditation I feel my body become very light, as if I could just lift right up off the floor. I feel like I have ears on the inside and they are opening up to hear these vast benevolent beings that surround, love and support me through everyday of my life. It is a much more subtle experience than yesterday’s “room full of sky.” It has an intangible quality but feels very refreshing. In the evening we share poems, stories and songs. Writing and performing poetry is my life passion; it is where my heart soars and I grow wings. I am so grateful to be able to share my soul language in such an open, receptive space.

Day 6, *Ajna* chakra

I begin meditating. Almost immediately I feel a light, subtle energy coming through the top of my head and into my body. Through the release of this chakra’s powerful vision and insight, I begin to understand myself and the universe. For a while it stays in the top half of my body. Then it comes down into the lower part of the body and fills the three lower chakras. After a few short minutes I come out of this state and feel nothing for a long time, but I retain a sharp focus.

Sometime later the energy shoots back up into my body. I become completely filled with white light and ecstasy. I am in an immersive state that saturates every cell of my body. My body is tingling all over, I am getting hot flushes and I am having spasms of intense energy flow. This continues for what seems like a long time. Midway through this experience my hands become balls of energy. I can no longer identify them as ‘hands’ but instead I feel like I have two glowing orbs at the end of my arms. I remain immersed in this state.

At some point the time for meditation ends, and I become aware that everyone is sitting down for the lecture and feedback. I feel the social pressure to sit down, and the experience begins to dissipate. The world of the senses seems like a mere shadow compared to the strength of the inner experience that has been unfolding for me. My eyes stay closed while everyone speaks, and then the room clears. I go somewhere to sit alone and digest the experience. This energized feeling stays with me for a couple of hours. As it starts to fade I feel completely drained. I could sleep for days.

Day 7, *Sahasrara* chakra

I am wiped out. I am on day three of a water fast. I have just had the most intense and long lasting Samadhi experience of my life. I struggle to concentrate during meditation. I say my long and emotional goodbyes to the group and go home to rest. Tomorrow morning I will have a light breakfast. What remains is a oneness with all that is, a complete mastery on all levels.

Charlie Wilson is a dynamic performance poet who writes cathartic, spiritually imbued verse. Charlie sees the role of the artist as a conduit for reconnecting us with the timeless, spiritual dimension beyond the comings and goings of the world. He has run writing workshops at festivals and for charities aiming to reach disadvantaged youths. He runs shamanic journeys and holds ceremonial space under the moniker Sacred Love. You can find more of his work at www.sacredlove.online.

Photos provided by the author and Emmanuel Heredia.
Here are many pressures on young people today. Among other demands, they must keep up with the latest trends, look fashionable, own the newest gadgets, succeed at school or work, and earn a lot of money. On top of all of that, everyone is expected to have a hobby that they are great at and passionate about. All of this is so overwhelming to me. I am not a passionate person – I have many interests, but I would not say that I am passionate about any of them. And you know what, Society? That is okay!

I love food. Or maybe I love eating. I am currently counting down to a visit to my home in Australia, where I will be able to have juicy, tender steak on the barbeque, and aromatic, melt-in-your-mouth lamb cooked at my favourite Greek restaurant. I anxiously await each month for my husband to request pizza for dinner. If it was my choice, I would probably pick to eat it everyday. The slight crisp of the sauce, cheese and oil on the crust, the smokiness of bacon and sharpness of the pineapple, and the smooth, oozing taste of cheese. Yum! But while I get excited and feel a true emotional uplift when I eat amazing food, I would not say I am passionate about food. Passion suggests a devotion; with food, I just get a temporary rush.

I enjoy spending my weekends doing handicrafts such as knitting, sewing and cross stitch. It is slow and, at times, tedious, but I keep tucking away at various projects that can take me up to six months at a time. I recently finished an A4 paper sized cross stitch of a peacock that took about that long. It gave me a headache, eye strain and a constant hand cramp. And despite all that effort and hard work, I would not say it is a passion of mine. I actually do not think I am that good at the handicrafts. My knitting ability only extends to a scarf, and for sewing I can follow simple patterns or sew squares together, but it still has that homemade quality to it. I am not going to be getting any admission to fashion design school. But I do like having something that keeps me occupied.

Nowadays school students do so many extracurricular activities, and they are expected to excel at and be passionate about all of them. These are very high expectations to put on these young people who are still developing and discovering what they enjoy. I appreciated my parents support as a student. They did not push me to do things I did not enjoy; they let me try new things and were okay with my decision to stop if I did not like it. I played cricket in my last few years at school and loved it, even though I was not great. It was a fantastic experience to have a group of friends to be active with, win or lose, and to have fun. While I was not going to be joining a national team any time soon, the time spent training and playing are some of my strongest memories from my last years at school.

So, it is my advice to kids (and adults too) to get out there, try things and find out what you like and what you do not like. Avoid feeling pressure from others to be the best or commit to that one thing. Most importantly you should have fun. Do not worry about being great. Make sure you are trying, you are enjoying and that you are smiling.

Perhaps if I keep following this rule, one of those things I enjoy may become a passion after all.

Erin (Stan) Stanley is Head of Barge Program and has been working with the program for eight years. She has a Bachelor of Applied Science in Environmental Management from the University of South Australia and has been involved with education since 2003.

Photos provided by the author and Cade Martin.
On a cold Quebec evening, I walk into the restaurant with him, and when his students see him they get all excited.

"Hey professor Zyl, how's it going?"

"Hey Prof Zyl is here!"

As the evening goes on, I am amazed at how much they seem to respect him, admire him, even love him. That is so different than my experience with this man, my father, Jacques Zylberberg.

My father was a very polarizing figure; people either loved him or hated him. He constantly talked about his enemies and yet he also had very loyal friends. As a university professor, his student loved him and respected him. I fell in the latter camp, and was often hurt and embarrassed by him.

I have always felt lucky that I did not grow up with him; my parents divorced when I was four years old and I did not see him again until I was ten. We did some fun things, but we also fought a lot—usually over petty things. One time we were playing ping pong and we started arguing over a point. He began to chase me around the table to smack me, but he was unable to catch me. So he started yelling at me, "You filthy cheating Arab! Just like your mother..." My mother, who is Lebanese, never uttered a bad word about him. I resented him for insulting her.

A few years later at an airport, we began talking about my mother again, though this time over a completely benign topic. After my father claimed he had seen my mom with two friends at a salon together, we began to fight again after I called him out for making the story up. I got up from the table and began to walk away when—smack! I got hit from behind. I turned around and stared him down, yelling, "That is the last time! You ever hit me again, and I will kill you!" At seventeen and now taller than him, I was feeling my true power and my hate for this man.

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Life circumstances led me to seek therapy, and I began to understand myself better by figuring out what makes me tick. I came across the book *The Road Less Traveled* by Scott Peck, which changed me as it introduced me to the idea that, although life is suffering, I do not have to suffer through my suffering. I can deal with the pain and I can be responsible for my actions.

Love, too, consists of more than just romantic love or about "falling in love", the latter of which is basically an illusion.

In January 1995, when I visited my dad in Quebec, I arrived with the book in hand.

"Here Dad, I brought you this book, it's really great!"

He looked at it and said, "Hmmm...no thanks."

I'm crushed. This book was supposed to heal our relationship. But I’m mystified at the same time. Why would anyone not want to read a book that could help them grow and get closer to their son?

The next day, during a moment of sweetness, I took him in my arms, hugged him and...he froze. After a bit he went outside and when his wife came back in she told me that he was lost—he just did not know what to do.

I wrote him a ten-page letter containing all my desires for better communication between us while trying to be as non-judgmental as possible. I handed it to him when I left. When we spoke on the phone a few days later, he said, "Thank you for the letter, now let's talk about something else."

At this point I realized that I was probably never going to get the kind of relationship with him that I craved. But I continued to wonder: what is so hard about sharing your feelings with your son?

In the next decade as I learned more about childhood wounding and trauma, I began to understand the effect the Holocaust had on my dad. Before World War II, his parents escaped Eastern Europe and the rise of the Nazis before ending up in Belgium. He was born in 1939, just before the war began. He recalled to me that many Belgians would host Jews before taking their money and then giving them up to the Germans. That was what had happened to my grandmother, and she was taken to Auschwitz. My father was hidden away in convents and private homes in the countryside for five years, finally coming out of the nightmare to find that his mom has died in a concentration camp.
Through the bits of information I was able to piece together, I know that he had a sister and bad stepmom until he was about fifteen. Then his father had to escape Belgium after a shady business deal, which left him truly alone. Though he did not finish high school, a priest helped him to get his GED (Graduate Equivalent Degree) and to attend university, where he would meet my mom. He was very smart intellectually and would later become a well respected university professor. But he did not fit in with a generation who valued emotional growth, hence the resistance to the book I brought him or even simply talking about his feelings.

Tell me who you are,” my partner asked.

“Tell me who you are,” my partner asked.

“I am.”

That was it. No more story, no more ego, no more chatter in the mind; I just was. Everything stopped annoying me, and I took it all in with love. I was “Love.” At some point, I walked gingerly to the cafeteria and looked outside, my eyes falling upon a tree. As I stood there loving that tree, I realized that I loved everything, and that included my father. I love my dad. I do not have to like him; I can just love him. It made perfect sense in that moment.

Six months later, I was on the phone with my dad and he needed to go in for heart surgery. His body had been failing him for a long time after battling diabetes all his life and this surgery could save him or do him in. Somehow I got the feeling this would be the last time I talked to him. I told him I loved him and cried on the phone. And two days later he had passed away due to the surgery.

I now know that there is nothing to forgive my dad for; I’m just so grateful for this amazing life he gave me. I thank him for everything, and I love him.

I, on the other hand, was on a path of self-growth, due in large part for a need to connect with my father in some way, even indirectly. This connection came about in various ways, both through formal help and by chance.

I remember watching Schindler’s List, a film about a man who helped Jews escape from the Warsaw, Poland, ghetto during Nazi occupation. My father had told me of family members dying in that ghetto while fighting for their lives. I was truly touched by these tales and seeing this film helped me to connect with his pain. I cried a long time that night grieving for my people and my father.

But I began to notice real change while attending workshops, such as the Sterling Men’s Weekend, which focused on men’s empowerment. At some point in the middle of the night, Justin Sterling dropped a bomb on us.

“Men, it is time to forgive your fathers.”

What? Are you kidding? I thought to myself. I could never forgive that guy!

“You are not forgiving him for his own sake or for what he did; you are doing it to free yourself.” We were then asked to walk up to the mic and publicly forgive him. I don’t remember if I actually did this or not, but a seed was planted that night.

But I reached a new level of growth at the “Illumination Intensive”. During this workshop the participants sat in pairs, faced each other and took turns asking, “Tell me who you are.” As we answered the same question over and over, we aimed to shed all the labels and roles we had taken on over the years in order to get to the core essence of who we are. Each pairing lasted forty-five minutes and we did about nine per day. If you were lucky, at some point you popped out of your ego. And sure enough about a day and a half in I popped. All of a sudden I just “was.”

Bernard Zylberberg originally hails from Belgium. At seventeen he went to California to learn English for three months and ended up living there for thirty-five years. More recently he has made Chiang Mai his home where he helps people cultivate their inner freedom.
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