

Birth of the Rosicrucian Fellowship

The History of its Inception

BY **Mrs. MAX HEINDEL**

An Account of Max Heindel's Preparation
and Work in the Occult Field



The Rosicrucian Fellowship

MT. ECCLESIA
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Max Heindel, spiritual Initiate and messenger of the Rosicrucian Brotherhood, was born in Denmark on July 23, 1865. He became a shipping engineer and eventually immigrated to the United States. By 1905 he had become seriously interested in the study of metaphysics and spent the next few years consciously working and searching for spiritual Truths. When he was visiting Germany in 1907, the Elder Brother of the Rose Cross who became his Teacher made contact with him on the inner planes. He was instructed in the etheric Temple of the Rose Cross, receiving the occult Teachings that he eventually incorporated into *The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception*, published in November 1909. He founded *The Rosicrucian Fellowship* in August 1909, and spent his remaining years, until January 6, 1919, writing, lecturing, establishing Fellowship Headquarters in Oceanside, California, and generally spreading the Teachings of Esoteric Christianity—the pioneer spiritual Teachings which will prepare all humanity for the New Age of Aquarius, when all nations will join in Universal Brotherhood.

EARLY YEARS OF MAX HEINDEL

Max Heindel, Rosicrucian Initiate and founder of The Rosicrucian Fellowship, was born on July 23, 1865. His father was Francois L. Von Grasshoff, of a noble family connected with the German Court during the time of Prince Bismarck. After emigrating to Copenhagen, Denmark, he met and married a Danish woman, three children being born to them. The oldest of these was Carl Louis Von Grasshoff, who later adopted the pen name of Max Heindel.

At the age of sixteen Max Heindel entered the shipyards of Glasgow, Scotland, where he learned engineering. As Chief Engineer of a trading steamer he took trips into many lands, thus gaining a wide knowledge of the world and its people. For a number of years he was Chief Engineer on a large Cunard Line passenger ship plying between America and Europe.

Between the years 1895 and 1901, he was a consulting engineer in New York City. During this time he married, the marriage being terminated by the death of his wife in 1905. A son and two daughters were born of this marriage.

After going to Los Angeles, California, in 1903, Max Heindel became interested in the study of

metaphysics, joining the local branch of the Theosophical Society and serving as its vice-president from 1904-1905. During this time there began to grow within him an increasingly intense desire to understand the cause of the sorrows and sufferings of humanity and to help alleviate them. He began the study of astrology, which he found to his delight gave him the key by means of which he found he could unlock the mysteries of man's inner nature.

The events in Max Heindel's life immediately subsequent to 1905 are given in the following account of the birth of the Rosicrucian Fellowship. Until his transition on January 6, 1919, he was active in doing the pioneer work of launching the Fellowship, including the acquisition of land for the establishment of International Headquarters in Oceanside, California, the building of necessary buildings, publishing of books, etc.

THE BIRTH OF THE ROSICRUCIAN FELLOWSHIP

In order to make the origin of the Fellowship clear to our readers we will give a history of how and when Max Heindel met the Elder Brothers of the Rosicrucian Order. We will, moreover, use his own words at times to make the matter more clear.

During the summer of 1905, through overwork on account of his extreme desire for spiritual knowledge, Max Heindel was taken seriously ill in Los Angeles with heart trouble, so ill that for months his life was despaired of. Much of the time during this illness he spent out of the body, consciously working and seeking for the truth as he might find it on the invisible planes. He was undaunted by sickness, however, and as soon as health permitted, he went on the lecture platform to spread his occult knowledge.

In May, 1906, this work was cut short in San Francisco by the great earthquake, and his lecture tour led him to Seattle and the northern part of the country. After a course of lectures in that city he was again forced to spend some time in a hospital with valvular heart trouble. Still undaunted, he once more took up his work of lecturing in the northwestern part of the United States.

In the fall of 1907 during a most successful period in Minnesota, there came to Mr. Heindel a friend who had for months been begging him to go to Berlin to meet a man whom she claimed to be a most wonderful lecturer and teacher. Failing by correspondence to induce him to leave his work in America, she had come to Minnesota for the express purpose of personally urging him to go. She was successful at last in persuading him to make the trip.

After reaching Germany he attended lectures and had several interviews with this teacher. But in a short time he found that this man had little to give him, and that what he gave out was not new to him. In disappointment he was ready to go back to America. As he sat in his room in great dejection, feeling that he had given up a big work in America to take this trip, a being, who he later learned was an Elder Brother of the Rosicrucian Order and who afterward became his Teacher, appeared, clothed in his vital body, and offered to help him on certain occult points. The information which the Teacher gave him was concise and logical and beyond anything Mr. Heindel was capable of writing. On a later visit the Teacher offered to impart to him the teachings which he desired, provided that he keep them secret. Max Heindel had for several years searched and prayed that he might find something wherewith to appease the soul hunger of the world. Having suffered and known the longings of his own heart, he could not give the promise to the Elder

Brother, and refused to accept anything that he could not be permitted to pass on to his soul-hungry brothers. The Teacher left him.

Can you imagine the feeling that would naturally come over a starving man who had been denied food for some time to have someone offer him a piece of bread but before he could taste of it to have it snatched away? The last condition would be more wretched than the first. So it was with Max Heindel. About a month later, however, the Teacher appeared in his room again and told him that he, Max Heindel, had stood his test. He stated that if he had accepted the offer, namely, to keep the teachings a secret from the world, he, the Elder Brother, would not have returned. He was told of the candidate whom they had at first chosen, who had failed to pass his test in 1905; also that he, Max Heindel, had been under the observation of the Elder Brothers for a number of years as the most fit candidate should the first one fail. In addition he was told that the teachings must be given out to the public before the close of the first decade of the century, which would be the end of December, 1909.

At this last interview with the Teacher he was given instructions as to how to reach the Temple of the Rose Cross, which was near the border between Bohemia and Germany. At this Temple Max Heindel spent a little over one month in direct communication with and under the personal instructions of the Elder Brothers, who imparted to him the greater part of the

teachings contained in *The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception*. The first draft of this book, which was made while he was in the Temple, the Teacher told him was but an outline. The heavy psychic atmosphere of Germany was particularly adapted to the communication of mystical thought to the consciousness of the candidate, but he was told that the three hundred and fifty pages of manuscript which he had written would not satisfy him when he reached the electric atmosphere of America, and that he would then wish to rewrite the entire book. In his great enthusiasm he at first doubted this. He felt that he had received a wonderfully complete message. But the Elder Brother's predictions were true. After Mr. Heindel had spent a few weeks in New York City, what the Elder brothers had told him proved to be a fact. The style in which the manuscript was written did not then please him, and he set about the work of rewriting.

He rented a cheap hall bedroom on the seventh floor of a rooming house, and during the hottest summer months of 1908 he sat in this hot room typing from 7 A.M. until 9 and sometimes 10 P. M., when he would go out for his dinner. After a walk through the hot streets of New York he would again resume his work on the manuscript, continuing until after midnight. The heat becoming too intense, he moved to Buffalo, New York, where he finished the manuscript about September, 1908.

The next problem which faced him was how to get the book published and where he was to procure the means for its publication. On account of the heat of that season of the year he was unfortunate in starting lectures and classes in Buffalo. But later he found a good field for his work in Columbus, Ohio, where Mrs. Rath-Merrill and her daughter assisted him in the drawing of diagrams. In this city he spent a number of successful months in lecturing and teaching, and then formed the first Rosicrucian Center, November 14, 1908. After each lecture he distributed free mimeographed copies of the twenty lectures of the Christianity Series. Starting with Lecture No. 1, *The Riddle of Life and Death*, he gave to each one present a copy to take home to study. These copies he ran off on his mimeograph machine at night after the lecture. With a small hammer, a packet of tacks in his pocket, and his advertising cards under his arm, he walked miles each day to place these cards where they would reach the eyes of the public. He wrote his own newspaper articles and placed them in the hands of the editors, who were sometimes very prejudiced against the new teachings. Mr. Heindel, however, with his pleasing personality, could usually win them over, sometimes getting a full column write-up which brought a goodly crowd.

After delivering twenty lectures in Columbus, his path led him to Seattle, Washington, where he had made many friends in 1906. He hoped to interest some friend there in assisting him to print his book. This friend proved to be William M. Patterson, who

not only assisted him to get the book into the hands of the publisher but, being a printer and editor himself, was able to give him much valuable advice as to the publishing. Mrs. Bessie Brewster and Kingsmill Commander were also most helpful in assisting him in the editing of the manuscript. Following this, and accompanied by William M. Patterson, he took the manuscript of the *Cosmo-Conception* and the twenty lectures to Chicago, where they were later published.

We will give here a few of Max Heindel's own words descriptive of his work in Chicago: "*The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception* was published in November, 1909, about five weeks before the end of the first decade of the century. Friends had edited the original manuscripts and had done splendid work, but I had of course to revise it before giving it to the printer; then I read the printer's proof, corrected and returned it, and reread it after mistakes had been rectified. I read it again after the type had been divided into pages, and gave instructions to the engravers about the drawings and to the printer about placing them in the book, etc. I was up at 6 A.M. and toiled until 12, 1, 2, or 3 in the night during all those weeks, amid endless confusion, with tradesmen and the roar of Chicago about my ears, sometimes almost to the limit of nervous endurance. Still I kept my faculties together and wrote many new points into the *Cosmo*. Had it not been for the support of the Elder Brothers, I must have gone under. It was their work,

however, and they saw me through. Yet I was almost a wreck when the strain was past.”

While in Chicago the entire edition of the *Cosmo-Conception*, with the exception of a few hundred copies which were taken to Seattle, was stored with a woman who conducted a publishing house. Being in debt this woman used the *Cosmo-Conception* copies stored with her to pay her indebtedness to other publishers. When the request was later made from Seattle for more books, it was found that the first edition of two thousand copies was exhausted. This necessitated the ordering of the second edition. A sixty-page index was then added.

While it might seem that the loss of two-thirds of the copies of the *Cosmo-Conception* must have been a calamity to one of limited means, it was far from it. It proved to be a godsend, for the woman had been associated with New Thought, Theosophy, and various other advanced thought movements for a number of years and had furnished them with books she procured from large publishing houses. She induced them to accept the *Cosmo-Conception*, which up to that time had been comparatively unknown. Thereby she created a demand which was one means of spreading the Rosicrucian teachings to many parts of the world. It was a cloud which truly had a silver lining.

After having established Fellowship Centers in Columbus, Seattle, North Yakima, and Portland, Mr.

Heindel returned to Los Angeles in November, 1909, to start work in that city.

To continue with this story it is now necessary that the writer bring in her own associations. Previous to Max Heindel's leaving Los Angeles and between the years of 1898 and 1906 the writer, who was then Augusta Foss, and Mr. Heindel had been close friends, spending much time together in the study of occultism, astrology, and kindred subjects. When he returned to Los Angeles in 1909 with the Rosicrucian Teachings, the writer found in the *Cosmo-Conception* that which she had been seeking for a number of years. It satisfied the inner longing. It was the food for which her soul had hungered. She at once threw herself heart and soul into the work, and assisted Mr. Heindel with his lectures and classes.

Between November 29, 1909 and March 17, 1910, he conducted classes and gave lectures in Los Angeles. Giving three public lectures a week, he filled a hall holding one thousand full to the door each night. By March his health would not permit him to go on. Shortly afterward he was taken ill with the usual heart trouble, and while in the hospital at the very point of death he had a most remarkable experience. We will append his description of it in his own words:

“On the night of the 9th of April, 1910, when the New Moon was in Aries, my Teacher appeared in my

room and told me that a new decade had commenced that night, and that in the coming ten years it would be my privilege to give to the world a science of healing such as later described. The Fellowship would furnish helpers in the great work.

“This was the first intimation I had had that such work was contemplated. The night before, my work with the newly formed Los Angeles Fellowship Center had terminated. I had traveled and lectured six out of seven nights, and several afternoons a week besides, since my Chicago publishing experience. I was sick and withdrawing from public work to recuperate. I knew it was very dangerous to leave the body consciously when ill, for the etheric body is then unusually attenuated, and the silver cord breaks easily. Death under such conditions would cause the same sufferings as suicide, so the Invisible Helper is always cautioned to stay in his body when it is suffering. But at my Teacher’s request I was ready for the soul flight to the Temple, and a guard was left to watch the sick body.

“As we have stated previously in our literature there are nine degrees in the Lesser Mysteries of whatever country, and the Rosicrucian Order is no exception. The first of these corresponds to the Saturn Period, and the exercises having to do with it are held on Saturn’s day at midnight. The second degree corresponds to the Sun Period, and that particular rite is celebrated at midnight on Sunday. The third degree, corresponding to the Moon Period,

is held on Monday at midnight; and so on with the remainder of the first seven degrees; each corresponds to a Period and is held on the day appropriate thereto. The eighth degree is celebrated at the New Moon and the Full Moon; the ninth degree at the summer and winter solstices.

“When a disciple first becomes a lay brother or sister, he or she is introduced to the rite held on Saturday nights. The next Initiation entitles him also to attend the midnight services at the Temple on Sunday nights, and so on. It is to be noted, however, that while all lay brothers and sisters have free access in their spiritual bodies to the Temple during all days, they are barred from the midnight services of the degrees which they have not yet taken. Nor is it a visible guard who stands at the door and demands a password of each as he desires to enter, but a wall is around the Temple, invisible yet impenetrable to those who have not received the ‘Open Sesame.’ Every night it is differently constituted, so that should a pupil by mistake or through forgetfulness seek to enter the Temple when the exercises are above his status, he would learn that it is possible to bump one’s head against a spiritual wall and that the experience is by no means pleasant.

“As already said, the eighth degree meets at the new and full moon, and all who have not attained to it are debarred from that midnight service, the writer among them; for these degrees are no mere

mummeries to be obtained by the payment of a few paltry coins, but require a measure of spirituality far beyond my present attainment, a stage to which I may not attain in several lives though not wanting in effort or aspiration. You will therefore understand that on the night of the New Moon in Aries, 1910, when the Teacher came for me, it was not to take me into that exalted gathering of the eighth degree but to another session of a different nature.

“Besides, though this session was held in the night as it occurs in California, the time being different in Europe, the exercises of the New Moon had been held in Germany hours before, so that when I arrived at the Temple with my Teacher, the sun was already high in the German heavens.

“When we entered the Temple, some time was devoted to an interview with my Teacher alone, and in it he outlined the work of the Fellowship as the Brothers would wish to have it carried out.

“After the interview we entered the Temple, where the twelve Brothers were present. It was arranged differently from what I had seen it before, but lack of space forbids a detailed description. I shall only mention three spheres, suspended above one another in the center of the Temple, the middle sphere being about half way between floor and ceiling; also it was much larger than the two others, which hung above and below it.

“The various modes of vision above the physical are: etheric or X-ray, color vision, which opens up the Desire World; and tonal vision, which discloses the Region of Concrete Thought, as explained very fully in *The Rosicrucian Mysteries*. My development of the latter phase of spiritual sight had been most indifferent up to the time mentioned, for it is a fact that the more robust our health, the closer we are enmeshed in the physical and the less able to contact spiritual realms. People who can say, ‘I never had a day’s sickness in my life,’ at the same time reveal the fact that they are perfectly attuned to the physical world and totally incapable of contacting the spiritual realm. This was nearly my case up to 1905, though I had suffered excruciating pain all my life, the effects of a surgical operation on the left limb in childhood. The wound never healed until I changed to a meatless diet; then the pain also ceased. But my endurance during all the previous years was such that it never showed by a line on the face, and in every other respect I had perfect health. It was noticeable, however, that when blood flowed as a result of an accidental cut, it would not coagulate, and a great quantity was always lost; whereas after two years on a clean diet the accidental loss of an entire nail in the morning resulted in the loss of only a few drops of blood; I was able to use the typewriter the same afternoon; there was no festering as the new nail grew.

“Upbuilding of the spiritual side of the nature, however, brought disharmony to the physical body; it became more sensitive to conditions around it; the result was a breakdown. This was all the more complete because of the before-mentioned endurance that kept me on my feet for months after I should have given in, with the result that I came very close to death’s door.

“Out of this precarious condition, however, has come an increasing ability to function in the spiritual world. While, as said, my tonal vision and the ability to function in the Region of Concrete Thought here related were indifferent and chiefly confined to the lowest subdivision thereof, a little assistance from the Brothers that night enabled me to contact the fourth division, where the archetypes are found, and to receive there the teaching and understanding of that which is contemplated as the highest ideal and mission of the Rosicrucian Fellowship.

“I saw our Headquarters and a string of people coming from all quarters of the world to receive the teaching. I saw them issuing thence to bring balm to afflicted ones near and far. While here in this world it is necessary to investigate in order to find out about anything, there the voice of each archetype brings with it as it strikes the spiritual consciousness a knowledge of what that archetype represents. Thus there came to me that night an understanding which is far beyond my words to express, for the world in which we live is based upon the principle of time, but

in the high realm of the archetypes all is an eternal Now.”

You will note in the above article that Max Heindel was able by the help of the Teacher to function in the fourth division of the Region of Concrete Thought, where the archetypes of physical form are found. This can only be accomplished after passing through the fourth Initiation, or fourth degree, which corresponds to the first half of the Earth Period. Only after passing through the third stratum of the earth can a man function in the fourth division of the Region of Concrete Thought.

At the time of this Initiation into the deeper Mysteries the Brothers imparted to him the knowledge that an Ecclesia or Temple was to be built on Mt. Ecclesia, where a Panacea was to be prepared. The spiritual outpouring obtained in such a place by the use of a certain formula given to Mr. Heindel on that memorable night in the Temple will be combined with a suitable physical substance to facilitate transmission. This Panacea cannot be prepared until the right conditions are made for it in the Ecclesia by the Probationers.

Our Temple was erected and dedicated on December 25, 1920, before the second decade of the century had closed. This Temple, the Ecclesia, was erected for the purpose of affording more powerful means for the healing of disease. Healing meetings

are held in this holy place at a regular time each day by the Probationers who have consecrated their lives to this work. Assistance is rendered by the Elder Brothers, who are using Headquarters as a focusing point. Added to this is the work of the Invisible Helpers, who are Probationers located in many parts of the world. The healing power generated in the Ecclesia has increased the efficiency of the work of the Invisible Helpers so that the cures effected are frequently quite miraculous, and our work of healing is spreading over the entire globe.

The Rosicrucian Fellowship teaches that the wonderful organism called the human body is governed by immutable natural laws. All disease results from willful or ignorant violation of Nature's laws. People are ill because in this life or in a previous one they have disregarded the fundamental principles on which the health of the body depends. If they wish to regain and to retain health, they must learn to understand these principles and regulate their daily habits in conformity with them.

THE ROSICRUCIAN ORDER

The Rosicrucian Order, founded in the 13th century, is one of the schools of the Lesser Mysteries. The other Lesser Mystery schools are variously graded to meet the spiritual requirements of the most precocious among the earlier races of the eastern and southern people with whom they work. Christian Rosenkreuz is the 13th member of the Rosicrucian Order. Only the Brothers of the Order have the right to speak of themselves as "Rosicrucians."

Seven of the Brothers of the Rosicrucian Order go out into the world whenever occasion requires, appearing as men among other men, or working in their invisible vehicles with or upon others as needed. But it must be strictly kept in mind that they never influence anyone against his will or contrary to his desires, but only strengthen good wherever found. When any of the seven Brothers are working in the world, they have and use material bodies just as other people do, and they live in a house which people in general might consider the house of some well-to-do but not ostentatious person. They hold offices or positions of distinction in the community where they live, but it is only to give a reason for their presence and not create any question as to what they are, or who they are, or as to there being anything out of the ordinary in them. Outside of the house in which they

live and in that house and through that house there is what may be called the Temple. This is etheric and is different from our ordinary buildings. It might be likened to the auric atmosphere that is around the Pro-Ecclesia at Headquarters. This is much larger than the material building and is etheric. Manson's word picture of a spiritual church gives an idea of what such structures are. They are around and through buildings and churches where people are devoted to spiritual things, and of course they differ in color. The Rosicrucian Temple is extraordinary and not to be compared with any other structure. It surrounds and interpenetrates the house in which the Elder Brothers live. This house is so permeated with spirituality that most people would not feel very comfortable or at ease there.

Five of the Brothers of the Rose Cross never leave the Temple, and although they possess physical bodies, all their work is done from the inner worlds. Though the Elder Brothers are human, they are vastly exalted above our own status.

A considerable period of intensely zealous life as a visible helper must be lived by the aspirant before he has evolved his soul body to such a degree of luminosity that it attracts the Teacher. (Note: At the same time the pupil is building his soul body, he is also accumulating a power within in like proportion.) No listless, easy-going study or dreamy contemplation will bring the Teacher. He is himself a servant in the highest sense of the word, and no one

who is not serving with all his soul need expect to meet him. When he does come, he will need no credentials, for the very first sentence spoken by him will carry conviction, and so will every other word he ever speaks to the pupil, for being endowed with the consciousness which we shall all possess in the Jupiter Period (a self-conscious picture consciousness) each sentence will bring before the listener a series of pictures which will accurately illustrate his meaning. For instance, if he undertakes to explain the process of death, the pupil sees inwardly the passing Spirit leaving the body; he may note the uncoiling of the silver cord; he sees the rupture of the seed atom in the heart and how its forces leave the body and cling to the Spirit. The Elder Brother is able to accomplish this with his pupil in the following manner:

First, he, the Elder Brother, fixes his attention upon certain facts which he wishes to convey to the mind of his pupil. The pupil, who has become fitted for Initiation by evolving within himself certain powers (which are still latent, however), is like a tuning fork tuned to a pitch identical with that of the vibrations of the ideas sent out by the Elder Brother in the pictures. Therefore, the pupil not only sees the pictures, but he is able to respond to their vibration. Thus vibrating to the ideal presented by the Elder Brother, the latent power within the pupil is converted into dynamic energy, and his consciousness is lifted to the level required for the Initiation which

he is being given. This is the reason why the secrets of true Initiation cannot be revealed. It is not an outward ceremonial but an inward experience. This description is the nearest to what Initiation really is that can possibly be given to one who has not experienced it himself. There is no secret about the pictures in the sense that one would not tell it, but they are secret because no earthly words are coined which could adequately describe such a spiritual experience. It is true that the Initiation takes place in the Temple particularly suited to the needs of a certain group of individuals who vibrate within a certain octave, and that there are others present. But it is not what they do or say which constitutes Initiation, for Initiation is an inward experience whereby the latent powers that have been ripened within are changed to dynamic energy, which Initiation teaches the pupil to use.

THE ROSICRUCIAN FELLOWSHIP ITS RELATION TO OTHER ROSICRUCIAN SOCIETIES

The Rosicrucian Fellowship, founded by Max Heindel under the direct guidance of the Elder Brothers of the Rosicrucian Order, is the authorized representative for the present period of the ancient Rosicrucian Order, of which Christian Rose Cross, or Christian Rosenkreuz is the Head. This Order is not a mundane organization, but has its Temple and headquarters on the etheric plane. It authorized the formation of the Fellowship by Max Heindel for the purpose of carrying the Western Wisdom Teachings to the Western people. In earlier ages the Order carried on its work through various secret societies in Europe and elsewhere; but the growth and advancement of the people of the United States have in recent years reached such a point that the Order deemed it advisable to establish an exoteric center here for the extension of its work. The Rosicrucian Fellowship is its latest manifestation in physical form, putting out the most up-to-date version of the Rosicrucian Teachings, in twentieth-century scientific terms, which are at the same time simple and devoid of technical abstractions.

The particular work of the Fellowship, now (1966) being governed by a Board of seven Directors elected from among its Probationers by the voting members

(Mrs. Heindel passed on in May of 1949), is to disseminate the esoteric doctrines of the Christian religion, since the Rosicrucian Philosophy is an esoteric Christian philosophy. It is destined to become the universal religion of the world, because the Christ is to have charge of human evolution during the present Great Sidereal Year of approximately 25,000 years. Anyone who is willing to conform to the regulations of the Fellowship, the Preparatory School for the Rosicrucian order, and who is not a hypnotist, or professionally engaged as a medium, palmist, or astrologer, is eligible to enroll and study its Teachings by correspondence. There is no fixed price on any of the lessons. The work is carried on by means of freewill offerings and the income from the sale of books.

Other Rosicrucian societies in the United States claim, we believe, lineal descent from earlier branches of the ancient Rosicrucian Order in England, France, Egypt, or other countries. The Rosicrucian Fellowship has no lineal connection with these organizations, but represents a renaissance of the Order in the Western World.

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By

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