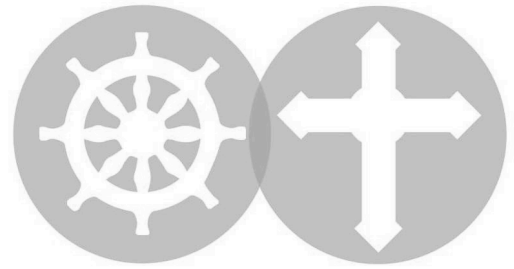


# Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies



Vol. 62

Fall 2018

## *News of the Society*

### **In this Newsletter**

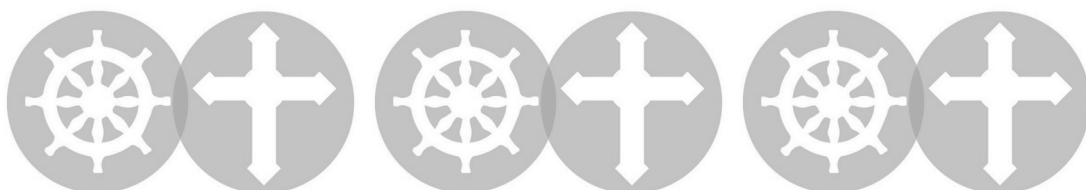
The Annual Meeting next month is an opportunity to meet, to reconnect, and to share our work. This year's meeting is in Denver, and there will be:

- Board and Member Meetings
- Two SBCS panels ("*Saving Action in Shin Buddhism and Christianity*" *Resources from Buddhist-Christian Dialogue for Addressing Racism and (In)difference*) as well as a related panel ("*Problematizing Buddhist Identities*")
- Info on the 2018 Parliament of the World's Religions in Toronto beginning next week

In this newsletter also find

- A report from the Japan Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies
- A call for papers for the 13<sup>th</sup> Conference of the European Network for Buddhist-Christian Studies (ENBCS)
- Conference notices, including Denison University's Godspeed Lecture Series, which this year is "Confronting Mars and Mammon: Buddhist-Christian Dialogue on Spirituality and Resistance"

Jonathan A. Seitz, SBCS Newsletter Editor



## 2018 Annual Meeting

Denver, MA

*Our annual meeting typically includes a Board Meeting, two panels, a member meeting, and often some related panels. Descriptions below come from the AAR Online Program Book.*

### Board Meeting, Friday November Friday - 9:00 AM-3:30 PM

*Sheraton Downtown-Director's Row E (Plaza Tower - Lobby Level)*

This is our annual organizational meeting for elected board members and officers to discuss and plan. There is also a business meeting Saturday at 11:30 open to all members.

### Friday Evening Trip, 6:40-9pm

*We often offer a Friday evening trip—write to the newsletter editor with any questions.*

## SBCS Panels

### Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies Panel

**Theme: *Saving Action in Shin Buddhism and Christianity***

**Friday - 4:00 PM-6:30 PM**

*Sheraton Downtown-Director's Row I (Plaza Tower - Lobby Level)*

This session will explore how Christians can rethink the meaning of saving action in light of dialogue with Shinran's perspectives and also how recent readings of Paul might help Shin Buddhists in coming to an understanding of Shinran and his Buddhist path.

#### Panelists:

Leo Lefebure, Georgetown University

Dennis Hirota, Ryukoku University

Responding:

Karen Enriquez, Loyola Marymount University

Hsiaolan Hu, University of Detroit Mercy

### Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies Panel

**Theme: *Resources from Buddhist-Christian Dialogue for Addressing Racism and (In)difference***

**Saturday - 9:00 AM-11:30 AM**

*Sheraton Downtown-Director's Row I (Plaza Tower - Lobby Level)*

This session will address how Buddhists and Christians in dialogue can draw on the resources of their traditions to respond to the contemporary challenges of racism and indifferences.

#### Panelists:

Mark Unno, University of Oregon

Peter C. Phan, Georgetown University

Judith Simmer-Brown, Naropa University

Amos Yong, Fuller Theological Seminary

Aizaiah Yong, Claremont School of Theology

Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies

Theme: *Business Meeting*

**Saturday - 11:30 AM-12:00 PM**

*Sheraton Downtown-Director's Row I (Plaza Tower - Lobby Level)*

### Related Panel: Buddhist Critical-Constructive Reflection Unit

Theme: *Problematizing Buddhist Identities*

Abraham Velez de Cea, Eastern Kentucky University, Presiding

**Monday - 5:30 PM-7:00 PM**

*Hyatt Regency-Centennial G (Third Level)*

Buddhist traditions have problematized notions of self and identity that presuppose a permanent and

independent reality. Both persons and phenomena are said to be empty of a self-like identity because they are impermanent and dependently originated. Yet some Buddhists today engage in exclusionary “identity politics” in order to preserve the “absolute” identity of Buddhist nations and the Buddhist religion. This panel problematizes attempts to transform the identity of Buddhist nations and Buddhist traditions into permanent, independent, self-like realities. Specifically, the first paper uses the Buddhist doctrines of non-self and dependent co-origination to criticize recent Buddhist concepts of a nation state in Sri Lanka and Myanmar. The second paper applies the Buddhist concept of the gift of fearlessness to the global refugee crisis and emerging nationalistic policies. The third paper investigates the possibility of having a dual Buddhist-Christian identity, following George Lindbeck’s three ideal types of theological approaches to religion and doctrine.

Victor J. Forte, Albright College

*Buddhist Nationalism and Marginalizing Rhetoric in a Dependently Originated World*

Christina A. Kilby, James Madison University

*Global Refugee Crisis and the Gift of Fearlessness*

André van der Braak, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam

*Buddhist-Christian Dual Belonging: Three Approaches*

Business Meeting:

Sid Brown, University of the South

Hsiaolan Hu, University of Detroit Mercy



*Dear Colleagues in the Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies,*

*I would like to invite you to attend the upcoming Parliament of the World's Religions, which will meet in Toronto from November 1 to 7, 2018. Some of our colleagues have organized a series of sessions relating to Buddhist-Christian relations, which are listed below.*

*At each of the Parliaments, beginning with the historic 1893 Parliament in Chicago, there have been important Buddhist-Christian conversations, and the next Parliament promises to continue this tradition.*

*For more details, please see*

*<https://www.parliamentofreligions.org/parliament/2018-toronto/2018-powr>*

*I hope to see you in Toronto!*

*Leo Lefebure*

**Sessions Related to the Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies at The Parliament of the World's Religions**

**Toronto, November 1-7, 2018**



## Scholar/Practitioners or Practitioner-Scholars?

Joel Daniels, Guttorm Gunderson, Leo Lefebure,  
Ben Van Overmeire, Judith Simmer-Brown

The academic study of religions is a strange field. As Jeffrey Kripal, among others, has pointed out, many of us have a double identity. Different perhaps than historians or literary critics, as practitioners many of us are part of the very phenomena that in our scholarship we try to explain. This puts us in an interesting and--we argue--productive position to question the stance of empirical objectivity and distance that some other fields in the humanities and natural sciences try to imitate. This panel attempts to explore that position for Buddhism and Christianity. Our presenters share their experiences "crossing" (if it can be called that) from scholar to practitioner and vice-versa. How academic perspectives enhance one's experience as a practitioner? Vice-versa, how does a practitioner perspective alter one's scholarship? How do both these perspectives affect our teaching?

### Multiple Religious Belonging: Promises and Perils

Ruben L.F. Habito, Kristin Johnston Largen,  
Eleanor Ponteriero, Jonathan Seitz

Monday November 5 2018, 2:15 PM - 3:45 PM  
Room 104D

This session is a panel by practitioners who either identify with more than one religious tradition, are scholars of the phenomenon of multiple religious belonging, or both. Most panelists identify as Buddhist-Christian. They will share their personal as well as academic perspectives. Far from the "scandal" that some people think it to be, practicing in more than one tradition not only offers many modern people rich opportunities for spiritual growth but also has occurred in many cultures for centuries. Presenters will speak directly and intimately about the challenges and opportunities of sincerely engaging in more than one tradition.

## The Planetary Environmental Crisis through Buddhist and Christian Eyes:

### A Conversation

Joel Daniels, Theodore Dedon, Nan Kathy Lin,  
Teng-Kuan Ng, Karen Sherlock

Sunday November 4 2018, 12:15 PM - 1:45 PM  
Room 706

In the spirit of Buddhist-Christian dialogue, this panel brings together five voices to discuss the tremendous challenge of the ecological crisis. In an attempt to contribute to the Parliament's 1993 Global Ethic, we will discuss the inter-connected issues of economics, media, population, technology, and models of decision-making from Buddhist and Christian perspectives. The conversation will specifically address the challenges of communication and dialogue around the problems of ecological care and responsibility for the future.

### Divinity with Respect to Love in Christianity and Buddhism

Sak Dhammadipa, Leo Lefebure, Matthew Regan,  
Wil Tyrrell

Sunday, November 4<sup>th</sup>, 12:15-1:45 PM

Room 602B

Buddhism and Christianity have a sharp focus on the teleological imperative of human existence. In Christianity a *process of spiritual growth* and in Buddhism a *suitable path for general contemplation* propose pragmatic methods for reaching the *telos* of final union with God in Christianity and for purifying the consciousness in Buddhism. In this dialogue, we propose a framework by which Christians and Buddhists can explore and learn from each other's respective paths to spiritual perfection without compromising the very different truth claims at the heart of Buddhism and Christianity.

## Examining the Deep Roots of the Ecological Crisis:

### Toward a Spiritual Ecology

Dharma Master Hsin Tao, Maria Reis Habito, Mary Evelyn Tucker, John Grim, Ruben L.F. Habito

Sunday November 4 2018, 2:15 PM - 3:45 PM  
Room 701B

Spiritual Ecology is a developing field responding to the ecological crisis based on spiritual awareness. This panel will look into the deep roots of the ecological crisis, reexamining attitudes and world views shaped by our religious traditions that have contributed to the present crisis of our Mother Earth. It will explore resources from our spiritual traditions to find new ways of relating to the Earth, both as individuals and in community. A project in Myanmar initiated by Dharma Master Hsin Tao will be highlighted as a concrete way of addressing these issues and finding new strategies towards saving the Earth.

## Cultivating Interfaith Understanding:

### Three University Case Studies

Friday November 2, 2018, 6-7PM

Room 704

Judith Simmer-Brown, Ruben L.F. Habito, Leo Lefebure, Students from Georgetown University, Naropa University, and Southern Methodist University

Essential to any global ethic is interfaith understanding. In university and theological school settings, a variety of approaches are employed to engender understanding of religious diversity and dialogue, each with their own emphasis and pedagogies. In this cross-university panel, we will explore how three religiously affiliated universities—Jesuit, Protestant, and Buddhist—engender interfaith understanding. We will explore interfaith theology, social justice, dialogue, and contemplative practice, with interactive examples. Presenters will be graduate

students from Southern Methodist, Georgetown, and Naropa Universities.



## Japan Society

Japan Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies  
2018 Annual Meeting

Kunihiko Terasawa  
Associate Professor of Religion at Wartburg  
College, Iowa. [kunihiko.terasawa@wartburg.edu](mailto:kunihiko.terasawa@wartburg.edu)

The 2018 annual conference of the Japan Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies was held on August 5-7 at the Palace Side Hotel, Kyoto. Five presentations were given on the theme of “Eastern and Western Understanding of Nature in terms of Environment, Life, and Ethics.” This year, the conference invited Shinto and Islam scholars.

Presentations:

August 5, 2018

”A Buddhist’s agreement and some questions concerning *Laudato Si’*—*De Communi Domo Colenda*” by Shōten Minegishi, Chōrakuji Temple. (commentator: Yutaka Tanaka)

A Sōtō Zen priest, Minegishi respects the progressive nature of *Laudato Si’* and discussed that further discernment is needed about difference between Christian understanding of the distinction between the self and the nature, as well as a Buddhist understanding of the self and the nature as interdependent co-arising.

“The Islamic View on God and Nature” by Kō Nakata, Dōshisha University. (commentator: Yoshio Tsuruoka)

This was the first attempt by the Japan Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies to invite a Muslim scholar. We learned the Islamic understanding of God, human, and nature. The resulting impression was that, more than we thought, Islam has a very inclusive nature.

August 6, 2018

“The Opening for Encounter Beyond Dialogue” by Katsuyuki Takahashi, Nanzan Research Institute. (commentator: Manabu Watanabe)

Discussed why true encounter between Buddhism and Christianity has not happened in spite of many dialogue events and true encounter might occur if one goes beyond the objective logic by recovering the logic of a mediopassive voice.

“Toward a Religious Foundation for Ethics Concerning the Crisis of the Realm of Global Environmental Life” by Yūji Nagamachi, Sophia University (commentator: Eiko Hanaoka)

Discussed the way of inquiry by dialogical examinations among Hans Jonas, Martin Heidegger, and Kitarō Nishida.

“Shinto’s View on Life” by Tōji Kamata, Sophia University (commentator: Masako Keta)

Discussed the idea that Shinto is not monolithic or homogeneous but diverse and sees Japan as a crossroad of spirituality, plates, ocean currents, and ethnicity.



**13<sup>th</sup> Conference of the European Network for Buddhist-Christian Studies (ENBCS) in partnership with the World Council of Churches**

## **Buddhist-Christian Encounter: A Visionary Approach**

**A Conference Inspired by Lynn A. De Silva (1919-1982) on the centenary of his birth**

**To be held at the Arch Abbey of St Ottilien, near Munich, Germany: 27 June – 1 July 2019**

### **CALL FOR PAPERS**

The theme of the 13th ENBCS conference concerns our vision for Buddhist-Christian encounter. The topics that will be addressed by invited speakers are inspired by the work of Revd. Dr Lynn A. de Siva, Sri Lankan Methodist minister, Pāli scholar, artist, philosopher, theologian, and pioneer of Buddhist-Christian dialogue, at the centenary of his birth: May Dialogue change our Self-Understanding and View of the Religious Other? May Dialogue Change our Understanding of the Human Being? May Dialogue Change our Understanding of Death and Life after Death? May Dialogue Change our Understanding of Ultimate Reality? May Dialogue Change Our Understanding of the Buddha and the Christ? May Art Inspire Dialogue – May Dialogue Inspire Art? May popular religion alter the Course of Dialogue? Our speakers include: Wesley Ariarajah, Perry Schmidt-Leukel, James Fredericks, Amos Yong, Andreas Nehring, Elizabeth Harris, Gudrun Löwner, Anniewieke Vroom, Rasika Pieris and Jude Lal Fernando.

Academics involved in Buddhist-Christian Studies, independent researchers and others committed to Buddhist-Christian understanding are welcome to attend the conference.

In addition, papers from postgraduate research students and experienced researchers are invited for parallel sessions on Saturday and Sunday evening. The Network places great importance on giving postgraduate research students the opportunity to share their research and gain feedback. It also welcomes papers from

experienced academics working within Buddhist-Christian Studies.

Proposals need not be on the themes of the conference but should relate to Buddhist-Christian Studies. Each paper will be allocated 30 minutes.

It is expected that the actual paper will not last longer than 20 minutes leaving 10 minutes for discussion.

Proposals should include: your name, address and academic position/affiliation (if you have one); title of paper; a synopsis of the content of the paper that demonstrates its relevance to Buddhist-Christian Studies.

Proposals for the consideration of the Network's Management Committee should be e-mailed to Dr Elizabeth Harris, President of the Network, by February 28th 2019: E.harris.2@bham.ac.uk

Further details about the conference programme and registration details are available on the Network's website: <http://www.buddhist-christian-studies.org>



### **Confronting Mara and Mammon: Buddhist-Christian Dialogue on Spirituality and Resistance**

Denison University

The Department of Religion

Goodspeed Lecture Series

Feb. 13<sup>th</sup>—16<sup>th</sup>, 2019

#### Overview

Through its Goodspeed Lectureship, Denison University (Granville, Ohio) sponsors the conference, **Confronting Mara and Mammon: Buddhist—Christian Dialogue on Resistance**

**and Spirituality** from February 13<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019. The conference will bring eighteen Buddhist and Christian scholars and activists grounded in Engaged Buddhism and Christian Liberation Theologies to Denison campus. For three days, the invited participants will critically analyze the global issues such as ecological crisis, war, poverty, racism, sexism, and so on through their respective traditions intersected with race, gender, and class. Together, they will contemplate spiritual and religious paths to healing, justice, and peace. Most programs including a half day retreat are open to the public. For inquiries, please, contact K. Christine Pae, Chair of the Religion Department at Denison at [paec@denison.edu](mailto:paec@denison.edu).

#### **The List of Participants in Alphabetical Order**

##### Planning Committee

- Ruben Habito (Southern Methodist University, Perkins School of Theology)  
[rhabito@mail.smu.edu](mailto:rhabito@mail.smu.edu)
- Paul Knitter (Emeritus, Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York)  
[pknitter@uts.columbia.edu](mailto:pknitter@uts.columbia.edu)
- Kyeongil Jeong (Saegil Christian Institute for Culture, Seoul, Korea)  
[jungkyeongil@gmail.com](mailto:jungkyeongil@gmail.com)
- K. Christine Pae (Denison University, Department of Religion/ Women's and Gender Studies)  
[paec@denison.edu](mailto:paec@denison.edu)

##### Participants

- Claudio Carvalhaes (Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York)  
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- Jan Willis (Emerita, Wesleyan University, Connecticut)  
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### I. Purpose and Themes

In our global society of the twenty-first century, the cries of sentient beings have become louder and more widespread. Millions of refugees have fled their homelands due to threats of violence on their lives, as well as due to dire socio-economic conditions that bar them from being able to live decent human lives for themselves and for their children. Once again we live under a constant threat of nuclear war. There is animosity, tension, and violent confrontations among peoples, due to many causes, among which religion is a major factor. Added to all this, the ever-worsening global ecological crisis is threatening the very

survival of sentient beings on this planet Earth. All the above testify to the fact that we are living in a situation of grave structural evil, wreaking havoc on the lives of all of us in this Earth Community. In tracing the roots of this evil, Buddhists and Christians are able to point to *Mara* and *Mammon*. Mara is the Buddhist personification of the *Three Poisons*—greed, ill-will, and ignorance—and Mammon the Christian personification of material greed, which also breeds ill-will and ignorance. Many point to neo-liberalism or the global free-market economy as the institutional form of Mara and Mammon, which prioritizes competition over cooperation, price over value, private wealth over public welfare and wellbeing, and the individual over community. It creates and is sustained by greed to have and by the fear to not have or lose. The system of Mara and Mammon today is so omnipotent and omnipresent that it tempts and terrorizes everyone and everything, even religions. In a certain sense, the worldview and human attitude that breed Mara and Mammon constitute the most powerful and universal *religion*. It has no borders and boundaries; it is every-where and every-time.

Mara and Mammon dominate and destroy both society and the mind, and therefore confronting them is not only a social matter but also a spiritual matter. It calls for socio-spiritual resistance. Furthermore, it is important to realize that today's Mara and Mammon have well organized and trained armies: financial capital, military-industrial complexes, transnational corporations, as well communications and entertainment media that fan consumerism, materialism, and greed and so influence even the good-willed among us. Therefore, socially engaged and responsible Buddhists and Christians have an urgent need to cultivate interreligious and international solidarity in order to confront and resist the armies of Mara and Mammon, both within ourselves as well as in the structures and institutions that they dominate.

### Based on the abovementioned perspectives, the themes of the conference will be:

1. Spiritual and social understandings of the signs of the times.
2. Buddhist and Christian understandings of the roots of our global malaise.
3. The insurgence of far-right political movements and religions.
4. Listening to the voices from the



margins.

5. The relationship between spiritual practice and social action.
6. The enriching possibilities of Buddhist and Christian dialogue and collaboration for the sake of eco-human well-being.

## II. Participation

1. The participants of the conference are mostly scholar-activist-practitioners who read and respond to the social and spiritual signs of our times.
2. All participants are asked to write an original essay on a chosen topic that is related to the purpose and themes of the conference. (Topics to be determined in collaboration with conference organizers.)

## III. Format and Structure

1. The conference will consist of closed meetings of the participants and open public events.
2. The public events will include lectures, workshops, and sessions for spiritual practice.
3. Some participants will attend and participate in classes for Denison students during the conference.

## IV. Future Outcomes

1. Out of the general insights and inspiration that will be gained by the participants, we hope to explore possibilities of forming a network of Socially Engaged Buddhists and Christians.
2. A book containing the contents and fruits of the conference will be published, consisting primarily of the papers (revised in the light of discussions at the conference) and perhaps summaries/transcripts of critical conversations.



**LING JIOU MOUNTAIN  
MANHATTAN CENTER**

The Ling Jiou Mountain Buddhist Society's new Manhattan Center is hosting a short visit of Master Hsin Tao, our Founder, during his brief stay in New York before his departure for the forthcoming Parliament of World Religions' Meeting in Toronto, Canada. He will lead a Peace Meditation and deliver a Dharma Talk on October 28th, 3:30-6:30 p.m., at the LJM-Manhattan Center, 219 East 60th St., New York, N.Y. 10022 (email: 093NYC@gmail.com). The building is still undergoing renovation, the completion of which is expected in January, 2019, at which time a more formal opening party will be announced.

--Dr. Robert Magliola, Interfaith Advisor, Ling Jiou Mountain



**Streng Prize 2018**



The winner of the 2018 Frederick Streng Book Award for excellence in Buddhist-Christian

Studies is Massimo A. Rondolino's *Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Hagiographical Strategies: A Comparative Study of the Standard Lives of St. Francis and Milarepa*. London and New York: Routledge, 2017.

The completed form may be sent electronically to Abraham Vélez de Cea ([abraham.velez@eku.edu](mailto:abraham.velez@eku.edu)), who will respond to all nominations.

### To Nominate a Book for the Streng Prize

The book must have been published within the last five years. Nominations can be made by any person other than the author(s) or editor(s), using the [downloadable nomination form](#) or the [online form](#).

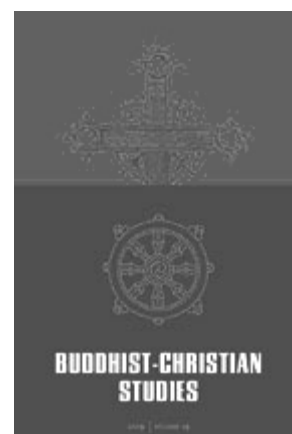
Self-nominations are not permitted. Publishers of books must be willing to supply review copies to members of the committee for evaluation in order for the book to be considered.



## *Buddhist-Christian Studies 2018*

The 2018 issue should be in mailboxes next month. To receive the journal, update your membership or subscribe.

The Journal Editors normally receive submissions until October 1 for the subsequent year.



## Membership & Website

If you haven't renewed for 2017, please do so now. Membership includes our newsletters, our journal, and other benefits. [You can renew via our website.](#)

Visit our site:

<http://www.society-buddhist-christian-studies.org/>

Check out our Facebook page and give it a like—it is becoming our best way to communicate news:

<https://www.facebook.com/BuddhistChristianStudies/>

We also will begin using a general email for mailings, RSVPs, and other announcements:

[societybuddhistchristianstudy@gmail.com](mailto:societybuddhistchristianstudy@gmail.com)

**CONTRIBUTE A REPORT TO THE NEWSLETTER**

The *Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies Newsletter* is published twice annually: in the spring and the fall. Please contact the Editor to share information with our readers. The deadline for the spring issue is March 15.

In addition to reports on our annual meeting (concurrent with the American Academy of Religion) and calls for the Frederick Streng Book Award for Excellence in Buddhist-Christian Studies and for the Graduate Student Essay Prize, the *Newsletter* also publishes information on conferences, retreats, lectures, and other events. We welcome obituaries or reports on major figures in the field of Buddhist-Christian Studies.

Your contributions ensure the continued existence of our newsletter. Submissions may be edited for clarity and length. Send items to Jonathan Seitz [jaseitz@gmail.com](mailto:jaseitz@gmail.com).

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**SOCIETY FOR BUDDHIST-  
CHRISTIAN STUDIES NEWSLETTER**

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