

# THE VOICE



March/April 2014

Martial Arts USA is an organization dedicated to bringing martial artists regardless of style under a single banner to promote learning and fellowship. Promotions are currently provided for a variety of martial art systems.

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## *QUOTES AND WORDS OF WISDOM*

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“Be like water making its way through cracks. Do not be assertive, but adjust to the object, and you shall find a way around or through it. If nothing within you stays rigid, outward things will disclose themselves.

Empty your mind, be formless. Shapeless, like water. If you put water into a cup, it becomes the cup. You put water into a bottle and it becomes the bottle. You put it in a teapot, it becomes the teapot. Now, water can flow or it can crash. Be water, my friend.”

~This is often referenced to Bruce Lee, but did you know that it was from a script for the TV show Longstreet? Was it direct from Bruce Lee’s mind to the page? Perhaps, perhaps not, the important thing is it is true.

“Never respond to an angry person with a fiery comeback, even if he deserves it...Don't allow his anger to become your anger.”

~Bohdi Sanders

“The primary thing when you take a sword in your hands is your intention to cut the enemy, whatever the means. Whenever you parry, hit, spring, strike or touch the enemy's cutting sword, you must cut the enemy in the same movement. It is essential to attain this. If you think only of hitting, springing, striking or touching the enemy, you will not be able actually to cut him.”

~Miyamoto Musashi

## ***ARTICLES***

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### **The Characteristics of a Great Instructor**

*The following is an excerpt from the first session of AKF Athens Martial Arts Certified Instructor Training Course, provided by Master Ken Blumreich, AKF Athens, GA.*

When we talk about what makes a great teacher or a great martial arts instructor, it is important to be perfectly clear that excellence in teaching is emphatically *not* something that anyone is born with. The attitude and skill set that teachers bring to the classroom are developed through training and experience; these are skills that everyone can learn.

If you ask a dozen people to consider a teacher or mentor that really stood out as excellent for them, and ask them to describe some of the characteristics of that teacher, you'll notice that there is a lot of overlap in what people list. This indicates that there are certain traits that are viewed kind of across the board as important. What we're going to do now is take a moment and look at a few of those traits that are especially important to martial arts instruction, and discuss them in a little greater depth.

#### **Enthusiasm**

This cannot be stressed enough. The attitude and enthusiasm that you bring to a classroom, or to an individual interaction with a student will almost invariably be mirrored back at you by the student or students' attitudes toward their training. Enthusiasm and a positive attitude are perhaps the single most important thing that you can bring to a class or to a school.

Again, the importance of this cannot be overemphasized. If you take nothing else from today's class, take this: when you are teaching martial arts, do it with a smile on your face and a spring in your step.

#### **Confidence**

As an instructor, or as a student in a leadership role, you must be confident both in your knowledge, and in your lack of knowledge. You know the material that you will be instructed to teach; no one will ever put you in the position of trying to teach someone something that you haven't learned.

Nevertheless, there will be times – many times – when students want to know something that you don't know, don't fully understand or don't have a clear answer for. In those cases, what should your response be?

The proper response is, of course, "I don't know, but I'll find out."

Too many instructors seem to feel that they have to have all the answers, and this can very easily lead into providing inaccurate or incomplete information, which can then lead to students losing respect for and trust in

their teacher. Don't do that. If you don't know the answer to something, have the confidence in yourself and the resources of your school and instructors to just say "I don't know."

## **Respect**

A good instructor has respect for his or her students, and requires that respect be given back as well. We are martial artists; a certain level of formality and propriety is expected. We expect our students to observe proper school protocol by not swearing, by addressing others as sir or ma'am, by using surnames rather than first names and by conducting themselves politely and respectfully. As instructors, we need to model that behavior, and, when necessary, we need to enforce the school standards.

Modeling the behavior is easy, but how do we enforce the respectful behavior of others, especially when they are similar rank to us? How do you correct someone for, for example, swearing in class if you're the only one who heard it? Or how do you correct someone for calling you by your first name (assuming that is against the protocol of your particular class) without coming across as arrogant sounding?

There are two easy, effective ways of making these corrections. First is the fact that if we are all consistent in our own conduct, that makes breaches of propriety among our students far less common. In short, if the culture of the school is always focused on respect and propriety, everyone will, by nature be more likely to adhere to those standards.

Secondly, if you do need to actively correct someone, correct them in your role as a representative of the school and as a representative of your head instructor. The easiest way to enforce the rules is by appealing to a higher authority.

As an example, if Mr. Bishop is running class, and he asks me, a newer student, a question, and I don't say Sir at the end of my answer, all he has to do is say "remember to always say sir or ma'am when you answer – if you goof that up when one of the black belts or Master Blumreich are around, they might have you do pushups."

That's an easy correction, it doesn't position you as the bad guy or the person who's cracking down, but it clearly communicates the expectations we have of our new students.

Similarly, back up your fellow instructors and senior students. If Ms. Durden is running class and a student addresses her by her first name, it's a lot easier and more comfortable for me, or for another student to correct that than it is for her. Do that for each other.

## **Responsibility**

This is something that I feel every student should always be thinking about, but it's especially important as an instructor. You must take responsibility for everything.

Stated simply, if your purpose is to grow as a person, there is no room for making excuses for your mistakes. The only thing that excuses do is allow you to feel justified in continuing to make the same mistake. An excuse

is basically a way of saying "what just happened was not my fault." But the only way you can actually improve is by acknowledging your faults and overcoming them.

As martial artists, as people who are committed to personal growth, we should always step up and take responsibility for everything that happens to us. When something goes wrong, our response should never be to try to find a scapegoat, but rather to try to determine what we could have done differently to prevent the problem.

“But,” you might say, “what if what happened really wasn’t my fault? What if I have a legitimate excuse for what went wrong, or what if the blame really should be placed somewhere else?” Whether your excuse is legitimate or not isn’t really relevant, and it certainly isn’t helpful to you. Think about the following example: Jon is sparring with Mike, who is going way too hard and being far too aggressive. Mike ends up kicking Jon in the hip and leaving a nasty bruise.

It is easy for Jon to say, “well, that was Mike’s fault, plain and simple. I didn’t do anything wrong. Mike should have been going lighter, or the person running the match should have slowed him down.” While that attitude is technically correct, it isn’t helpful to Jon, to Mike or to the school. While Jon didn’t do anything *wrong*, by denying any responsibility for the error, he is preventing himself from doing anything that might prevent this sort of thing from happening to him in the future.

You cannot completely control your environment or the people with whom you train; the only variable you can control is yourself. If you respond to every mistake by asking yourself “what could *I* have done to prevent that?” you will rapidly find that you are preemptively taking steps to take control of your own life. I absolutely guarantee that your skill as a martial artist will improve as a result of this attitude.

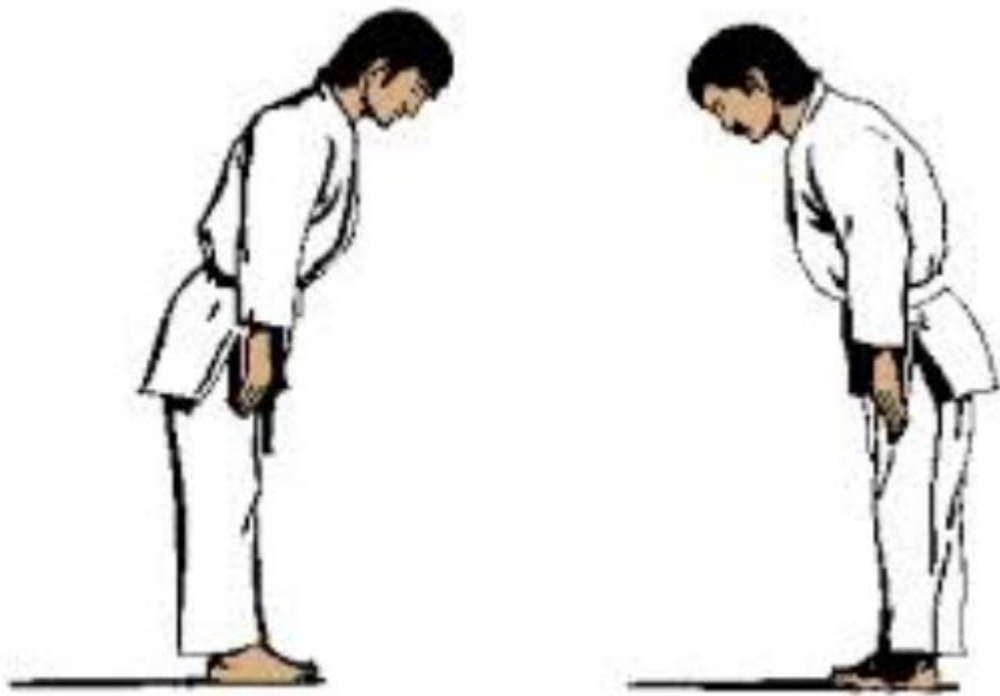
I want you all to think about this during the course of your training. When you make a mistake – whether that mistake is arriving to class late, forgetting part of a form, throwing a bad kick, hitting someone harder than you intended, or being hit harder than you intended – you should step up and accept responsibility for it. Ask yourself “what could *I* have done differently?” The answer may frequently surprise you.

If everyone approaches their training with an attitude of personal responsibility, the entire school will benefit. Note that I am emphatically *not* stating that you need to take the blame for everything that goes wrong; I am stating that the more responsibility we take for what happens, the more control we can exercise over what happens, and as instructors and teachers, we need to be in control.

### **Competence**

Finally, a good instructor must be competent. You must know the material that you are teaching. I saved this one for last because I think it’s the one thing that most of the readers of this article will require the least amount of work on. You have an understanding of the material required for the rank that you are at. Competence is not an issue.

I do want to leave you with one final thought in regards to competence: competence does not mean exemplary ability. In the same way that tremendous skill at the martial arts doesn't necessarily make someone an effective teacher, being an effective teacher doesn't require you to be the pinnacle of technical perfection. One of the best martial arts instructors I know, in a discussion on sparring technique said this: "I may not be a great fighter – but I can teach you to become a great fighter."



## **Below the Event Horizon by Victor Smith**

*(The following is an interesting viewpoint from FIGHTINGARTS.com,  
<http://www.fightingarts.com/reading/article.php?id=294>)*

One of the most powerful tools of Karate is its ability to strike below the “event horizon” of an opponent’s awareness. The flip side of this is to develop our own skills of awareness (zanshin) to the extent that you are not caught off guard by a surprise attack.

A very sad example of getting below the event horizon was the ease with which the 9/11 hijackers worked their way beneath the event horizon of the security forces in place. If there is any positive value to be gained from such horrific examples, it is that we do need to consider such tactics as part of our training programs.

Striking below an opponent’s event horizon is a sound tactical strategy, and a concept that underlies all of our training. But I suspect far too often our training focuses instead on developing the tools, not the optimal strategy for using them. This is hardly surprising, because without the development of correct technique, knowing how to use the technique is of little help.

Below the horizon tactical skills might include:

- 1 - Not giving an opponent signals to which he might respond. This might include learning how appear docile and/or unthreatening, unsure of yourself, or afraid so not to trigger an opponent’s awareness or preparedness to respond.
- 2 – Creating a distraction that causes an opponent to momentarily lose or change focus, thereby creating a momentary opening. Included is using a loud shout (kiai) to create a startle reflex in your opponent, getting the opponent to talk thereby occupying his or her mind, distracting the opponent’s attention by a hand or other movements, or using a glance to the opponent’s rear or side to draw his attention in that direction.
- 3 - Learning the best zones of counter-attack -- the study of angles of insertion (attack) to confuse the opponent and his or her awareness. Examples might include: using an unseen uppercut hidden behind a hook punch; or using a low hook-punch angled from the side to an opponent’s ribs (under his arms) that is first set up by a frontal assault.
- 4 - Understanding your targeting options. This includes the optimum choice of targets for your punches or kicks, strike points that will produce the optimum response. This requires a 360 degree awareness of targets of opportunity based on your location and the choice of responses.
- 5 - Being able to move and position yourself so your opponent momentarily loses track of you perceptually and/or is unable to hit you with his or her weapons. This might include angling, turning or shifting your position so you are to the opponent’s side or back or placed at a distance which is to your advantage.

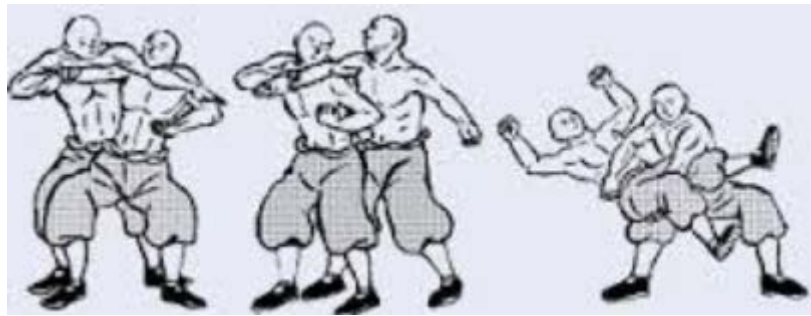


6 – Being aware of, and adjusting to, the range, location and movement of the other opponents who are involved in the “situation,” or who might get involved. This means learning how to move and place yourself in an optimal protective location vis-à-vis others in a multiple person situation.

This study becomes a never-ending challenge to your abilities, mental and physical, as you change, adapt and develop.

In addition to training passed on to you from your instructors, another source of information may be found in classical martial literature: The Okinawan “Bubishi”, “The Book Of Five Rings”, and “The Art Of War” can readily be adapted for lesson study. Other more esoteric texts can also be considered; “The Tao Te Ching” and the” I Ching” are examples. Many modern works also exist which suggest tactics of personal combat that can be explored.

Finding a way to use the different tools of our craft is a necessary part of our training which should not be neglected. This includes using the concept of keeping below an opponent’s event horizon.



## News from our Members

*From Kawa Shi Judo Kai: Ernie Doss, Sensei*

It's natural to find something you enjoy, and wonder if you're any good at it, but few people get the opportunity to test themselves against the best. Four young men from Decatur got to do exactly that when they traveled to Louisiana for the National Freestyle Judo Competition. Freestyle Judo attracts athletes from judo, sambo, BJJ, catch wrestling and submission grappling. Judo for them is a way of life, not just a hobby. The mental clarity, the confidence, the respect for themselves and others doesn't just stay on the mats. Anthony Morgan, Blake Weikert, Justin Jackson, and William Schrimsher traveled to Louisiana to put their training to the test, and fought over 20 fights against fighters from over 15 states, and brought home four national titles: two bronze, a silver, and a gold medal. Coach Ernie Doss, a former national judo champion himself, had this to say about the successes: "It is so good to see your students find out for themselves that they are as good as you tell them they are".



Anthony Morgan /Under 210-silver  
William Schrimsher/ Under 165-gold and a bronze in the open class  
Blake Weikert/Under 178-bronze

*From Fighting Spirit Dojo: Sean Schenker, Sensei*

Photos from recent advancement test



“The Sempai’s”

# 2014 Tennessee State Judo Championships & Open Judo Tournament

Hosted by Columbia Judo Club, Sanction #2014-59-05 Sponsored by USA Judo

**Saturday, May 31st, 2014 – Spring Hill, TN**

- Online Info/ <http://tennesseejudochampionships.com>
- Registration:
- Contacts: Tournament Director, Terry Spencer, [terry.spencer0007@hotmail.com](mailto:terry.spencer0007@hotmail.com) Phone: 615 -714-5153
- Location: UAW Local 1853 Hall, 125 Stephen P. Yokich Pkwy, Spring Hill, TN 37174
- Registration: Saturday May 31st, 2014 8:00 Am to 10:00 AM CST (Registration & Weigh-ins)
- Cost: Online Preregistration - \$25.00 (by PayPal only – must be received by midnight CST on Feb. 9<sup>th</sup>)  
Onsite Registration - \$35.00 (Make checks payable to Tennessee Judo Inc.)
- Eligibility: Competitors not required to be residents of Tennessee. Must be a member of the USJA, USJI, USJF. Applications are available at contest. **Proof of valid national membership must be presented by all participants; no exceptions.** USJI applications will be available at the tournament.
- Match Times: Juniors (4 to 16 yrs): 3 minutes. Masters: 3 minutes. Seniors : 5 minutes  
Current IJF rules (Modified). Modified double elimination (sometimes called Texas modified Double) for pools of 4 or more players, round robin for three players, and best 2 out of 3 for two players. Round robin results determined by record, then points. 2-way ties play one match; 3-way ties will play another round robin.
- Awards: State Championship Medals for 1st, 2nd, & 3rd place in each division.

**Divisions\*:** Junior Boys: ages: 5-6, 7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16 (\*Light and Heavy).  
Junior Girls divided by age & weights group after registration\* (based on entries numbers).  
Sr. Men (kilograms): 60, 66, 73, 81, 90, 100, 100+  
Sr. Women (kilograms): 48, 52, 57, 63, 70, 78, 78+\* (based on entries numbers).  
Master Men ages: 30-39, 40-49, 50+ (Light & Heavy\* based on entries numbers).  
Master Women: 30+ divided by age & weights after registration\* (based on entries numbers).  
  
\*To be determined after registration to conform with IJF weight & safety rules

**IJF Rules:** Modified International Judo Federation rules. Pre-1994 safety zone. Shime-Waza (Choking techniques) not allowed in 12 & under divisions. Kansetsu Waza (Joint Locks) not allowed in Junior divisions. IJF medical rules in Senior divisions. All competitors must have a white gi to compete.

**Directions:** From east or west of Nashville follow I-40 until it connects to where I-65 & I-24 are merged & running north & south together. Take I-65 south of Nashville to exit 53, Hwy 396, Saturn Parkway. Take Saturn Parkway west to Highway 31 going North toward Spring Hill. At the first red light on hwy 31, turn left (by McDonalds). UAW Hall is ¼ mile on the left (Across from Home Depot). [Tournament Hotel is Best Western Inn and Suites, 104 Kedron Pkwy, Spring Hill, TN 37174. Call toll free 877-486-2234 Mention Judo tournament for a special rate.](#)

\*TOURNAMENT DIRECTORS RESERVE THE RIGHT TO ALTER AGE & WEIGHT DIVISIONS, DEPENDING ON THE NUMBER OF ENTRIES IN EACH DIVISION. JUNIORS MAY ONLY ENTER ONE JUNIOR DIVISION. JUDO GI REQUIRED, (WHITE or BLUE). NO MIXED OR TAPERED GIS. ALL COMPETITORS MUST HAVE A WHITE GI TO COMPETE.



**WARNING!**

**WAIVER AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY AND AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE**

In consideration of being permitted to participate in any way, including travel to and from, the Tennessee State Judo Championships and related events and activities of United States Judo, Inc., United States Judo Federation, United States Judo Association, Tennessee Judo, Inc., State of Tennessee, Columbia Judo , UAW Local 1853 I hereby:

1. Acknowledge that I am familiar with the sport of Judo and understand the rules governing the sport of Judo.
2. Agree that prior to participating, I will inspect the mats, equipment, facilities, competition pools or divisions and the elimination or scoring system to be used, and if I believe anything is unsafe or beyond my capability, I will immediately advise my coach, supervisor, and/or a tournament official of such conditions and refuse to participate.
3. Acknowledge and fully understand that I will be engaging in a contact sport that might result in serious injury, including permanent disability or death, traumatic head or brain injury, and severe social and economic losses due to not only my own actions, inactions, or negligence, but also to the actions, inactions, or negligence of others, the rules of the sport of Judo, or conditions of the premises or of any equipment used. Further, I acknowledge that there may be other risks not known to me or not reasonably foreseeable at this time.
4. Knowing the risks involved in the sport of Judo, I assume all such risks and accept personal responsibility for the damages following such injury, permanent disability, or death.
5. Release, waive, discharge and covenant not to sue the United States Judo, Inc., United States Judo Federation, United States Judo Association, Tennessee Judo, Inc., State of Tennessee, Columbia Judo Dojo, Olympus Gym, together with their affiliated clubs, their respective administrators, directors, agents, coaches and other employees or volunteers of the organization, event officials, medical personnel, other participants, their parents, guardians, supervisors and coaches, sponsoring agencies, sponsors, advertisers, and if applicable, owners, lessors, and lessees of premises used to conduct the event, all of whom are hereinafter referred to as "releasee", from any and all claims, demands, losses, or damages on account of injury, including permanent disability and death and damage to property, caused by or alleged to be caused in whole or in part by the negligence of the releasee or otherwise to the fullest extent permitted by law.

**I HAVE READ THE ABOVE WARNING, WAIVER AND RELEASE, UNDERSTAND THAT I GIVE UP SUBSTANTIAL RIGHTS BY SIGNING IT, AND KNOWING THIS, SIGN IT VOLUNTARILY. I AGREE TO PARTICIPATE KNOWING THE RISK AND CONDITIONS INVOLVED AND DO SO ENTIRELY OF MY OWN FREE WILL.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS OF PARTICIPANTS OF MINORITY AGE  
(UNDER AGE 18 AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION)**

This is to certify that I, as parent/guardian with legal responsibility for this participant, do consent and agree to his/her release, as provided above, of all the Releasees, and, for myself, my heirs, assigns, and next of kin, I release and agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Releasees from any and all liabilities incident to my minor child's involvement or participation in these programs as provided above, even if arising from their negligence, to the fullest extent permitted by law. I have instructed the minor participants as to the above warnings and conditions and their ramifications.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian's Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Note to coaches, parents, and competitors. This form MUST be signed by all parties before a junior competitor will be allowed to compete in Senior Divisions. ABSOLUTELY NO JUNIOR WITHOUT THE CONSENT FORM SIGNED BY THE COMPETITOR, COACH, AND PARENT WILL BE ALLOWED IN SENIOR DIVISIONS.**

## Consent for Junior Player to Compete in Senior Divisions

This certifies that \_\_\_\_\_ (name of competitor) is at Least 15 years old and of sufficient skill, aptitude, and maturity to compete in the *senior open belt division* at the Tennessee State Judo Championships. The competitor, coach, and parent certify that they understand that the junior competitor will be competing under the rules governing the senior division competitions and may be subjected to all techniques allowable in that division.

_____ Printed name of competitor	_____ Competitor's signature	_____ Date
_____ Printed name of competitor's coach	_____ Coach's signature	_____ Date
_____ Printed name of competitor's parent/guardian	_____ Parent/Guardian's signature	_____ Date

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## REQUEST FOR JUNIOR DIVISION CHANGE

I/we the undersigned parent(s) or legal guardian(s), and I, the coach of \_\_\_\_\_ (contestant), Hereby express our consent and approval that he/she may enter the ( ) next higher weight group, in the same age group, or ( ) next higher age group, at the same weight group in the Tennessee State Judo Championships. We are fully aware that this is not the normal age/weight division for him/her. We are further aware that persons entering this division may be older, heavier and/or more experienced than him/hr and that there will be no age waiver for chokes if he/she is allowed to enter the divisions for 13 and older.

_____ Printed name of competitor	_____ Competitor's signature	_____ Date
_____ Printed name of competitor's coach	_____ Coach's signature	_____ Date
_____ Printed name of competitor's parent/guardian	_____ Parent/Guardian's signature	_____ Date

Instructors must complete the following Certificate for competitors who are competing in the **Senior & Masters Divisions** and do not hold the rank of at least 1<sup>st</sup> Degree Black Belt:

### **CERTIFICATE REGARDING NON-BLACK BELT CONTESTANTS**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, a Judo Instructor, who has been awarded the Judo rank of Shodan or higher, recognized by United States Judo, Inc., hereby certify that, \_\_\_\_\_, although not having been awarded the Judo rank of Shodan or higher, is of sufficient aptitude and skill in Judo to compete in the Senior and/or Masters divisions.

**A copy of my proof of rank (rank certificate or my USJI membership card having the verification Symbol “(V)” printed following my rank) is attached.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Judo Instructor

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