

A CRITICAL REVIEW ON YAPANA BASTI: CONCEPT, COMPOSITION, AND THERAPEUTIC UTILITY IN AYURVEDA

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1. ABSTRACT

Background: Basti is regarded as the principal therapeutic intervention for Vata disorders in Ayurveda and is described as *Ardha Chikitsa* because of its extensive therapeutic applicability. Among the various forms of Basti, Yapana Basti occupies a distinctive position due to its combined *Shodhana* and *Brimhana* attributes, allowing simultaneous purification and nourishment. **Aim:** To critically review the classical concept, probable mechanism of action, and contemporary clinical relevance of Yapana Basti through an integrative analysis of Ayurvedic and modern scientific perspectives. **Materials and Methods:** The present narrative review was carried out through an extensive evaluation of classical Ayurvedic literature, including *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, and *Ashtanga Hridaya*, along with relevant peer-reviewed scientific publications retrieved from electronic

databases. Classical references were systematically analysed and correlated with contemporary biomedical concepts wherever appropriate. **Results:** Classical descriptions indicate that the *Yapana Basti* possesses *Rasayana*, *Balya*, and *Vrishya* properties and is particularly indicated in chronic *Vata* predominant disorders, *Dhatu Kshaya*, infertility, neuromuscular conditions, and degenerative diseases. Its unique composition enables both eliminative and nourishing actions without causing excessive depletion. Contemporary scientific understanding suggests that mechanisms such as rectal mucosal absorption, modulation of the enteric nervous system, gut-brain interaction, neuroimmune regulation, and systemic bioavailability of lipid-soluble constituents may partially explain its systemic

therapeutic effects. **Conclusion:** *Yapana Basti* represents a distinctive therapeutic approach that integrates nourishment, rejuvenation, and purification within a single intervention. Its potential utility appears especially relevant in chronic degenerative, neuromuscular, reproductive, and debilitating conditions where both tissue depletion and Vata aggravation are predominant. Although classical Ayurvedic literature provides substantial conceptual support for its therapeutic importance, contemporary scientific evidence remains limited. Further pharmacological investigations, mechanistic studies, and well-designed clinical trials are required to establish standardized protocols and strengthen evidence regarding its therapeutic efficacy.

2. KEYWORDS: Yapana Basti, Panchakarma, Gut-Brain Axis, Rectal Drug Delivery, Vata Disorders.

3. INTRODUCTION

Among Panchakarma procedures, *Basti* occupies a central role in the management of *Vata* predominant disorders due to its systemic therapeutic action. Classical Ayurvedic texts describe *Basti* as having preventive, curative, and restorative functions. Among all Ayurvedic treatment modalities, *Basti* is considered *Chikitsardha*.^[1] (half of all therapeutic measures), and some Acharyas have described it as a complete therapy due to its wide spectrum of therapeutic applications. It is effective not only in the management of *Vata* disorders but also in conditions involving *Samsarga* and *Sannipata*.^[2]

Yapana Basti is a specialized form of *Basti* therapy described in classical Ayurvedic literature for promoting longevity, sustaining vitality, and nourishing body tissues.^[3] In classical Ayurvedic literature, the term ‘*Yapana*’ denotes sustenance of life, nourishment of body tissues, alleviation of disease, and maintenance of physiological homeostasis.

According to *Sushruta*, *Yapana Basti* is considered synonymous with *Madhutailika Basti* and is also referred to by other names such as *Yuktaratha* and *Siddha Basti*.^[4] It is mild (*Mridu*) in action, promotes the formation and nourishment of *Dhatu*s, and remains in the *Pakwashaya* (colon) for a comparatively longer duration. This type of *Basti* can be administered across different seasonal conditions.

Yapana Basti is suitable for administration in healthy individuals, diseased patients, and the elderly. It enhances reproductive vitality and sexual health, acts as an aphrodisiac, improves

muscle bulk and strength, and assists in the management of various chronic disorders. It is beneficial in both male and female infertility and exhibits the combined actions of *Niruha* (primarily *Lekhana*) and *Anuvasana* (primarily *Brimhana*) *Basti*.^[5] Because of its combined eliminative and nourishing properties, separate administration of *Anuvasana Basti* is often not required. It is neither excessively *Ruksha* (dry) nor excessively *Snigdha* (unctuous), and hence is described as *Napumsaka Basti*, performing both *Brimhana* and *Lekhana* without being exclusively either.^[6]

The inclusion of *Madhu* (honey) in *Yapana Basti* contributes to its *Ati-Vrishya* (highly aphrodisiac) property, helps prevent complications such as *Ayoga* and *Atiyoga*, and facilitates better retention of the *Basti*.^[7] Among the various types, *Rajayapana Basti* is considered superior and is indicated in conditions such as emaciation, cough, *Gulma*, abdominal pain, *Vishama Jwara*, *Udavarta*, urinary disorders, gynaecological conditions, skin diseases, neurological disorders, and metabolic disorders like *Prameha*. It promotes *Bala*, *Mamsa*, and *Shukra*, acts as a *Rasayana*, and provides immediate strength (*Sadyobalajanana*).^[8] Additionally, it is *Balya*, *Vrishya*, *Sanjeevana*, and *Chakshushya* in nature.^[9]

Although *Yapana Basti* is extensively described in classical Ayurvedic literature, comprehensive scientific reviews integrating classical concepts with contemporary biomedical understanding remain limited. Therefore, the present review aims to critically analyze the classical concept, therapeutic utility, probable mechanism of action, and modern scientific relevance of the *Yapana Basti*.

4. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Aim- To critically review the classical concept, therapeutic utility, probable mechanism of action, and contemporary scientific relevance of *Yapana Basti*.

Objectives-

1. To review classical references of *Yapana Basti*.
2. To analyze its therapeutic properties.
3. To explore the probable biomedical correlations.
4. To assess its clinical applications in chronic disorders.

5. Conceptual Definition of Yapana Basti

Yapana Basti is described in Ayurveda as a therapeutic intervention that sustains and supports life through multiple mechanisms. The term *Yapana* encompasses several functional meanings explained in classical texts

1. *Dharana* (Maintenance of Life): Derived from the phrase “*Yapayati iti dharaya,*^[10]” *Yapana Basti* helps in sustaining life by supporting the vital functions of *Vayu* and maintaining physiological stability.
2. *Poshana* (Nourishment): As indicated by “*Yapayati iti vriddham, ksheeyamana dehatvat,*^[11]” it nourishes and replenishes the body tissues, particularly through the proper functioning of *Rasadhatu*, thereby preventing degeneration.
3. *Roga Shamana* (Disease Alleviation): From the reference “*Yogan yapanartham vakshyamah,*^[12]” *Yapana Basti* plays a curative role by helping in the management and mitigation of diseases such as *Arsha* and other chronic conditions.
4. *Yatrakara* (Supportive/Palliative Role): The expression “*Yatrakaram yapanakaram*^[13]” indicates its role in supporting life, especially in conditions that are difficult to cure, by improving the quality of life.
5. *Deerghakalanuvartanam* (Promotion of Longevity): As per “*Ayusho yapanam deerghakala anuvartanam karoti,*^[14]” *Yapana Basti* contributes to longevity by sustaining life processes over an extended period.

In summary, *Yapana Basti* performs functions such as *Pranadharana* (maintenance of vital life force), *Dharana* (sustenance), *Poshana* (nourishment), *Roga Shamana* (disease alleviation), and *Yatrakara* (supportive care), thereby playing a comprehensive role in preserving and promoting life.

6. Synonyms of Yapana Basti

1. ***Madhu Tailika Basti***: This type of *Basti* is characterized by the predominance of *Madhu* (honey) and *Taila* (oil) as its main components, so it is called *Madhutailik Basti*.^[15] It is especially suitable for individuals of delicate constitution, including royalty, women, children, and the elderly. It helps in eliminating vitiated *Doshas* while simultaneously enhancing strength and complexion, reflecting its *Mridu* (mild) nature. It does not require strict dietary or lifestyle regimens, can be administered at any time, is generally free from complications, and yields effective therapeutic outcomes.

2. **Yuktaratha Basti:** In this variety of *Basti*, there are no post-procedural restrictions on activities such as riding a chariot, horse, or elephant. This indicates that the therapy is mild and well-tolerated, allowing the patient to resume normal physical activities without limitation after administration.
3. **Siddha Basti:** Siddha Basti involves the use of drugs with *Mridu Veerya* (mild potency) and is administered in a reduced dose, typically three-fourths of the standard *Niruha Basti* quantity. It does not necessitate strict dietary regulations or specific timing. It is regarded as therapeutically effective due to its mild action and broad clinical applicability. It is termed “Siddha” because of its effectiveness in managing a wide range of diseases while promoting strength and improving complexion.

7. Composition and Therapeutic Properties of Yapana Basti

7.1 Major Ingredients of Yapana Basti: Yapana Basti contains a combination of *Madhu*, *Ghrita*, *Taila*, *Ksheera*, and other *Brimhana* and *Rasayana* drugs that contribute to its nourishing and restorative therapeutic actions.

7.2 Therapeutic Properties and Probable Pharmacological Actions:

Table 1: Therapeutic Properties and Probable Pharmacological Actions of Yapana Basti.

Ayurvedic Action	Pharmacological Actions	Probable Role in Yapana Basti
Yogavahi, Lekhana, Sandhana	Antioxidant, antimicrobial	Enhances bioavailability
Rasayana, Medhya, Vata-Pitta Shamana	Neuroprotective, lipid drug delivery	Lipid-mediated absorption
Snigdha, Vatahara, Brimhana	Anti-inflammatory	Lubrication and nourishment
Brimhana, Balya	Nutritional and immunomodulatory	Tissue nourishment

7.3 Integrated Therapeutic Significance

The combination of lipid-rich, nourishing, and bioavailability-enhancing ingredients in Yapana Basti may contribute to its systemic therapeutic effects, including tissue nourishment, neuroprotection, immunomodulation, and Vata Shamana.

8. Classical Superiority of Yapana Basti^[16]

Classical Ayurvedic literature describes *Yapana Basti* as superior to conventional *Basti* formulations due to its combined *Shodhana* and *Brimhana* properties. Unlike other *Basti* therapies, it can be administered in healthy individuals, diseased patients, and elderly persons with comparatively fewer complications.

1.स्वस्थानामातुराणां च वृद्धानां चाविरोधिनाः- *Yapana Basti* is safe and suitable for a wide range of individuals, including healthy persons, patients, and the elderly, as it does not produce adverse effects in these groups.

2.अतिव्यवायशीलानां शुक्रमांसबलप्रदाः- It enhances reproductive health by improving the quality of *Shukra* (semen) and *Mamsa Dhatu* (muscle tissue), particularly in individuals with excessive sexual activity.

3.सर्वरोगप्रशमनाः सर्वेष्वृतुषु यौगिकाः- This type of *Basti* has a broad therapeutic spectrum, helping in the management of various diseases, and can be administered effectively in all seasons.

4.नारीणामप्रजातानां नराणां चाप्यपत्यदाः- It supports fertility by aiding both men and women in achieving healthy progeny, especially in cases of infertility.

5.उभयार्थकरा दृष्टाः स्नेहबस्तिनिरूहयोः- *Yapana Basti* possesses dual functionality, as it can be effectively used in both *Sneha Basti* (unctuous enema) and *Niruha Basti* (decoction enema).

9. Precautions and Contraindications during Yapana Basti Therapy^[17]

- Avoid strenuous physical activity (*Vyayama*): Heavy exercise should be restricted as it may disturb the therapeutic effect of *Basti*.
- Refrain from sexual activity (*Maithuna*): Sexual indulgence is contraindicated during the course of therapy to preserve strength and support proper action of the treatment.
- Avoid alcohol consumption (*Madya*): Intake of alcoholic substances can interfere with digestion and the efficacy of *Basti*.
- Do not consume cold food (*Sita Bhojana*): Cold or refrigerated foods should be avoided as they can hamper *Agni* (digestive fire).
- Avoid cold water (*Shita Jala*): Drinking cold water is discouraged, as it may reduce digestive efficiency and affect treatment outcomes.
- Avoid excessive travel or jerky movements (*Rathakshobha*): Activities involving vibration or strain, such as long travel, should be minimized to maintain stability during therapy.

10. Complications Associated with improper or Excessive Administration^[18]

Although *Yapana Basti* is generally regarded as safe and mild in action, improper administration or prolonged use without assessment of *Agni* and *Rogi Bala* may produce complications. Therefore, proper patient selection and individualized therapeutic planning are essential.

- *Sopha* (Swelling): Development of edema or inflammatory swelling in the body.
- *Agninasha* (Loss of digestive power): Impairment or weakening of digestive fire (*Agni*).
- *Panduta* (Pallor): Appearance of anemia-like symptoms such as paleness and weakness.
- *Udara Shoola* (Abdominal pain): Pain or discomfort in the abdomen.
- *Arsha* (Haemorrhoids): Development or aggravation of piles.
- *Parikartika* (Cutting pain in the anal region): Severe pain in the rectal or anal area.
- *Jvara* (Fever): Rise in body temperature indicating systemic disturbance.
- *Atisara* (Diarrhoea): Frequent loose stools due to disturbed digestion.

11. Probable Mechanism of Action of Yapana Basti

11.1 Classical Basis of Action of Yapana Basti

According to Ayurvedic classics, *Basti* acts predominantly on *Pakwashaya*, which is considered the principal seat of Vata Dosha. Since Vata governs the movement and regulation of other Doshas, proper administration of *Basti* helps in maintaining systemic physiological balance. Classical texts describe that the Veerya of *Basti* Dravyas spreads throughout the body through Srotas after administration into the *Pakwashaya*. Due to the presence of Sneha, Ksheera, Ghrita, Madhu, and Rasayana Dravyas, *Yapana Basti* promotes *Vata Shamana*, *Dhatu Poshana*, *Bala Vriddhi*, and Rasayana Karma.

The combined actions of *Lekhana*, *Brimhana*, *Rasayana*, and *Yogavahi* properties present in *Yapana Basti* may contribute to tissue nourishment, strength promotion, and restoration of physiological functions, especially in chronic Vata predominant disorders associated with *Dhatu Kshaya*.

11.2 Probable Biomedical Basis of Yapana Basti

The probable mechanism of *Yapana Basti* may be explained through modern concepts related to rectal drug absorption, enteric nervous system interaction, Gut-brain communication, immune modulation, and systemic bioavailability of lipid-soluble substances.

11.2.1 Rectal Mucosal Absorption

The rectal mucosa possesses rich vascular and lymphatic networks that facilitate rapid systemic absorption of administered substances. Drugs administered through the rectal route may partially bypass hepatic first-pass metabolism, thereby improving systemic bioavailability.^[19]

The lipid-rich components of *Yapana Basti*, such as Ghrita and Taila, may enhance mucosal permeability and facilitate absorption of lipid-soluble phytoconstituents. Honey (Madhu) may act as a *Yogavahi*, improving dispersion and absorption of active components.

11.2.2 Interaction with Enteric Nervous System

The gastrointestinal tract contains an extensive enteric nervous system (ENS), often referred to as the “second brain,” which communicates bidirectionally with the central nervous system through neural, endocrine, and immune pathways.^[20]

Administration of *Yapana Basti* may stimulate enteric neural receptors present in the rectal and colonic mucosa, thereby influencing autonomic regulation and neurohumoral responses. This may partially correlate with the Ayurvedic concept of Vata regulation.

11.2.3 Gut-Brain Axis Modulation

Recent biomedical studies have demonstrated the role of Gut-brain interaction in neurological, metabolic, inflammatory, and psychological disorders.^[21] Modulation of intestinal signalling pathways and gut microbiota may influence systemic inflammatory mediators, neurotransmitter regulation, and neuroendocrine function.

The nourishing and Rasayana properties of *Yapana Basti* may help maintain gut homeostasis and neuroimmune balance, thereby contributing to its beneficial effects in chronic degenerative and neuromuscular disorders.

11.2.4 Immunomodulatory and Anti-inflammatory Action

The colon contains gut-associated lymphoid tissue (GALT), which plays an important role in immune regulation.^[22] Bioactive constituents present in *Yapana Basti* formulations may interact with mucosal immune pathways and contribute to immunomodulatory responses.

Ingredients such as Ghrita, Taila, Madhu, and Ksheera possess antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and tissue restorative properties reported in contemporary studies.^[23] These

actions may support the classical Ayurvedic concepts of *Rasayana*, *Balya*, and *Dhatu Poshana*.

11.2.5 Nutritional and Rejuvenative Effect

Unlike conventional *Niruha Basti*, *Yapana Basti* contains nourishing components such as Ksheera, Ghrita, and Sneha Dravyas that may contribute to anabolic and restorative effects. These components may support tissue repair, improve nutritional status, and help in conditions associated with chronic tissue depletion and neuromuscular weakness.

The *Rasayana* effect described in Ayurveda may partially correlate with antioxidant activity, immune regulation, neuroprotection, and maintenance of tissue homeostasis.

11.3 Integrated Probable Mechanism of Yapana Basti

The therapeutic action of *Yapana Basti* may therefore involve:

- Rectal absorption of active phytoconstituents
- Partial bypass of hepatic first-pass metabolism
- Enteric nervous system stimulation
- Gut-brain axis modulation
- Neuroendocrine regulation
- Immunomodulatory activity
- Vata Shamana
- Dhatu Poshana
- Rasayana effect

These combined actions may explain its utility in chronic degenerative disorders, infertility, *Vata Vyadhi*, neuromuscular diseases, and conditions associated with *Dhatu Kshaya*.

12. Probable Mode of Action of Basti

1. Eliminative / Purificatory Action^[24]: When *Basti* is administered into the *Pakvashaya* (large intestine), it helps in expelling *Dosha* and *Mala* from the entire body, extending from the feet to the head, due to its inherent potency (*Veerya*).

2. Systemic Action^[25]: The active properties (*Veerya*) of the drugs introduced through *Basti* are absorbed and circulated throughout the body via the *Srotas* (body channels).

3. Nutritive / Strengthening Action^[26]: *Basti*, especially *Anuvasana Basti*, provides nourishment and promotes strength.

13. Clinical Applications of Yapana Basti

Classical Ayurvedic literature describes Yapana Basti as beneficial in various chronic and debilitating disorders predominantly associated with Vata Dosha and Dhatu Kshaya. Due to its combined Shodhana and Brimhana properties, it is considered particularly useful in conditions requiring simultaneous elimination and nourishment.

13.1 Vata Vyadhi

Yapana Basti is widely indicated in *Vata* predominant disorders such as *Pakshaghata*, *Gridhrasi*, *Sandhivata*, *Katigraha*, and neuromuscular diseases. The *Snigdha* and *Brimhana* properties of Sneha, Ghrita, and Ksheera may help in reducing dryness, stiffness, degeneration, and functional impairment associated with aggravated Vata.^[27]

13.2 Infertility and Reproductive Disorders

Classical texts describe Yapana Basti as *Vrishya*, *Shukrala*, and *Garbhasthapaka*. It is indicated in both male and female infertility associated with Dhatu Kshaya and Vata Dushti. The nourishing and rejuvenative properties of Yapana Basti may contribute to improvement in reproductive tissue health and hormonal balance.^[28]

13.3 Degenerative and Geriatric Conditions

Because of its *Rasayana* and *Balya* properties, Yapana Basti may be useful in age-related degenerative disorders, generalized weakness, muscle wasting, osteoarthritis, cervical spondylosis, and chronic debilitating conditions. The therapy may help improve strength, mobility, and quality of life.^[29,30]

13.4 Neurological Disorders

The probable interaction of Basti with the gut-brain axis and enteric nervous system may explain its utility in neurological disorders. Contemporary studies on Basti therapy have suggested possible neuroprotective, anti-inflammatory, and neuromodulatory actions.

13.5 Metabolic and Chronic Systemic Disorders

Classical references also indicate the use of *Yapana Basti* in conditions such as *Prameha*, *Gulma*, *Udavarta*, and chronic urinary disorders. Its combined eliminative and nourishing action may help maintain systemic balance while preventing excessive tissue depletion.

13.6 Contemporary Clinical Relevance

Recent Ayurvedic clinical studies have explored the role of *Basti* therapy in osteoarthritis, cervical spondylosis, lumbar spondylosis, infertility, and neurological disorders. Although the available evidence remains limited, the findings suggest potential benefits in pain reduction, functional improvement, and enhancement of quality of life.

14. DISCUSSION

Yapana Basti represents a distinct Ayurvedic therapeutic approach due to its simultaneous restorative and eliminative actions. Classical Ayurvedic texts describe it as mild in action, nutritionally supportive, Rasayana in nature, and suitable for prolonged administration in selected individuals. Unlike conventional Niruha Basti, which primarily performs eliminative action, Yapana Basti also provides nourishment and tissue support due to the presence of Sneha, Ksheera, Ghrita, Madhu, and other Brimhana Dravyas.

The unique composition of *Yapana Basti* may explain its clinical utility in chronic Vata predominant disorders associated with *Dhatu Kshaya*, neuromuscular weakness, infertility, degenerative diseases, and generalized debility. Classical references indicating its role in promoting Bala, Mamsa, and Shukra suggest its possible anabolic and restorative effects on body tissues.

From a contemporary biomedical perspective, rectal administration offers an effective route for systemic drug delivery because the rectal mucosa possesses an abundant vascular and lymphatic supply. Partial avoidance of hepatic first-pass metabolism may improve the systemic availability of active constituents.^[31] Lipid-rich substances such as Ghrita and Taila may further facilitate the absorption of lipid-soluble phytochemicals and enhance mucosal penetration.

The therapeutic effects observed with Yapana Basti in neurological and chronic degenerative disorders may partially correlate with modulation of neuroimmune and gut-mediated regulatory pathways. Bidirectional interaction between the enteric nervous system, intestinal microbiota, immune pathways, and central nervous system contributes to regulation of inflammatory, metabolic, endocrine, and neurological functions.^[32,33]

The concept of *Vata Shamana* may also be interpreted in relation to neurohumoral regulation and autonomic stabilization. Since *Vata* is considered responsible for movement, neural

communication, and regulation of physiological activities in Ayurveda, therapies acting on *Pakwashaya* may influence systemic regulatory mechanisms. The enteric nervous system and vagal pathways may therefore provide a possible biomedical correlation for the systemic actions of Basti therapy.

Another important aspect of the *Yapana Basti* is its probable immunomodulatory and rejuvenative action. Gut-associated lymphoid tissue (GALT) plays a significant role in mucosal immunity and systemic immune responses.^[34] Bioactive compounds present in ingredients such as Madhu, Ghrita, Taila, and Ksheera may contribute to antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and tissue restorative actions. These effects may partially correlate with the Ayurvedic concepts of *Rasayana*, *Balya*, and *Dhatu Poshana*.

Compared to conventional Shodhana therapies, *Yapana Basti* appears comparatively safer and more nourishing, making it potentially beneficial in debilitated patients, elderly individuals, and chronic conditions associated with tissue depletion. This may explain why classical texts describe its utility in healthy individuals, diseased patients, and elderly persons.

However, despite extensive classical descriptions, the available modern scientific evidence regarding the *Yapana Basti* remains limited. Most contemporary explanations are theoretical and based on probable correlations rather than direct experimental validation. Standardization of formulations, dosage, duration, therapeutic indications, and administration protocols is still lacking. Furthermore, high-quality randomized controlled trials and pharmacological studies evaluating its efficacy and mechanism are insufficient.

Therefore, future research should focus on:

- Standardization of *Yapana Basti* formulations
- Pharmacokinetic evaluation of rectal absorption
- Experimental studies on gut-brain interaction
- Clinical trials in neuromuscular and degenerative disorders
- Biomarker-based assessment of immunomodulatory effects
- Comparative studies with other Basti formulations

Well-designed interdisciplinary research integrating Ayurvedic principles with modern biomedical approaches may help establish stronger scientific evidence for the therapeutic role of *Yapana Basti*.

15. Limitation

The present review is primarily based on classical Ayurvedic literature and theoretical scientific correlations. Limited availability of standardized clinical trials and experimental studies restricts definitive validation of the proposed mechanisms and therapeutic efficacy of *Yapana Basti*.

16. CONCLUSION

Yapana Basti is an important Ayurvedic therapeutic modality with significant clinical relevance in chronic Vata predominant disorders, degenerative diseases, and conditions associated with Dhatu Kshaya. Classical Ayurvedic descriptions, along with contemporary biomedical concepts, suggest possible systemic effects through rectal absorption, neuroimmune regulation, and physiological modulation. However, further pharmacological studies, experimental research, and well-designed clinical trials are necessary to establish standardized protocols and scientific validation of its therapeutic efficacy.

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