



Review Article

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FORMULATIONS OF *GHRITA* IN CHARAKA SAMHITA: A SYNOPTIC VIEW

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda can be defined as a system, which uses principles of nature to promote, preserve health and eradicate diseases. This system focuses on keeping body, mind and spirit of an individual in equilibrium with nature. The Materia Medica of Ayurveda comprises of resources of plant, animal, metal and mineral origin, which have been advocated for use in different pathologies. In Ayurveda, drug therapy has great importance. Besides the five basic formulations viz. 'Swarasa', 'Kalka', 'Kwatha', 'Hima' and 'Phanta', there are many secondary preparations, descriptions of which is comprehensively explained in the classics. Medicated oils and Ghee are one such important category; where ghee is boiled with prescribed decoctions and paste of drugs. This process possibly ensures absorption of the active therapeutic properties of the ingredients into the oleaginous base. In such oleaginous preparations, three ingredients are essential - (1) ghee, (2) liquid, (3) fine paste of the ingredients. Description of standard methods of preparation, different stages of cooking, ideal characters of good preparations, utilization, limitations, dose, mode of utilization etc. have been explained systematically in the literature. Considering the importance of *Ghritha Kalpana*; a large number of formulations have been mentioned in Charaka Samhita. As no information is available on the numbers of *Ghritha* formulations in the classical literature; an attempt has been made to review Charaka Samhita and place information at one place.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Charaka Samhita, *Ghritha*

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda can be defined as a system, which uses principles of nature to promote, preserve health and eradicate diseases. This system focuses on keeping body, mind and spirit of an individual in equilibrium with nature. It is systematically documented oldest medical system of the world is existing in Indian scenario since time immemorial. This science influenced many other medical systems of the world, hence, is referred as Mother of all sciences. Rigveda and Atharvaveda, the most ancient compendia of Indian culture and wisdom replete with references of health, diseases and treatment with natural resources, which subsequently developed into an organized knowledge called Samhitas. The Charaka Samhita is the first recorded treatise fully devoted to the concepts and practice of Ayurveda; its primary focus was therapeutics. It is an important compendium of Ayurveda containing systematic description of fundamental principles, basic concepts, causation and genesis of diseases, diagnosis, prognosis, modes and modalities of treatment etc. This system is attracting attention of developing countries as an alternative or adjuvant to synthetic drugs. The science is not merely a compendium of drugs but, is actually a way of life, perhaps is partly medical and partly social, cultural and laid down definite laws of healthy-living, personal cleanliness, good dietetic habits etc., is something which India has to be proud of and make every effort to retain and popularize it.

The Materia Medica of Ayurveda comprises of resources of plant, animal, metal and mineral origin, which have been advocated for use in different pathologies. Often, these resources have been used as ingredients of poly-herbal, herbo-mineral and metallic

compound formulations by the seers, who have documented their clinical experiences and passed on the knowledge to further generations.

In Ayurveda, drug therapy has great importance. The formulations are developed based on classical fundamental principles and five basic formulations have been explained viz. 'Swarasa', 'Kalka', 'Kwatha', 'Hima' and 'Phanta'¹. Besides these, there are many secondary preparations, descriptions of which are comprehensively described in the classics. Medicated oils and Ghee are one such important category, where oil or ghee is boiled with prescribed decoctions and paste of drugs. This process possibly ensures absorption of the active therapeutic properties of the ingredients used, into the oleaginous base. In such oleaginous preparations, three ingredients are essential - (1) ghee or oil, (2) liquid, (3) fine paste of the ingredients². In general, oil will be used in four parts, one part of paste and sixteen parts of liquid³ (with several exceptions). Description of standard methods of preparation, different stages of cooking, ideal characters of good preparations, utilization limitations, dose, mode of utilization etc. have been explained systematically in the literature.

Considering the importance of *Ghritha Kalpana*; a number of formulations have been mentioned in Charaka Samhita. As no information is available on the numbers of *Ghritha* formulations in the classical literature; an attempt has been made to review Charaka Samhita⁴ and gather and place information at one place.

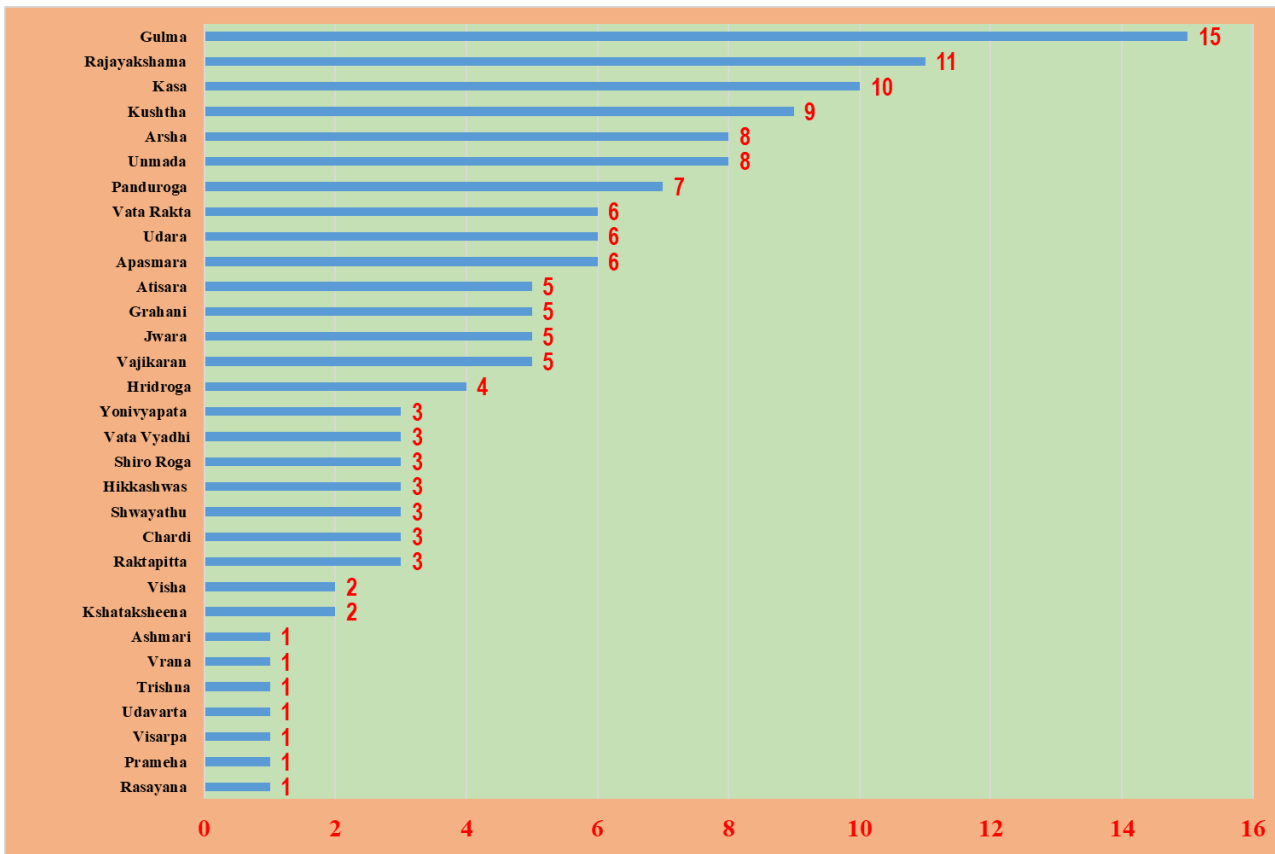
The *Ghritha Kalpanas* found in the management of different diseases is placed at Table 1 and Graph 1.

Table 1: Disease-wise list of Ghrita Kalpanas

	Ghrita Kalpanas	References
Rasayana Chikitsa		
1.	<i>Amalaka Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 1-2/4
Vajikaran Chikitsa		
1.	<i>Vajikaran Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 2-1/35
2.	<i>Vrishya Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 2-2/21-22
3.	<i>Vrishya Shatavari Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 2-3/18
4.	<i>Apatyakara Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 2-4/25-26
5.	<i>Apatyakara Ghrita II</i>	Ch. Chi. 2-4/28-29
Jwara Chikitsa		
1.	<i>Pippalyadi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 3/219-220
2.	<i>Vasadi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 3/222-223
3.	<i>Baladi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 3/226
4.	<i>Sahasradhuta Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 3/257
5.	<i>Shatpala Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 3/298
Raktapitta Chikitsa		
1.	<i>Vasa Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 4/88
2.	<i>Shatarvaryadi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 4/95
3.	<i>Panchapanchamoola Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 4/96
Gulma Chikitsa		
1.	<i>Tilavaka Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 5/35
2.	<i>Trayushanadi Ghrita I & II</i>	Ch. Chi. 5/65-66
3.	<i>Hingusovarchaladya Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 5/69-70
4.	<i>Hapushadya Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 5/71-72
5.	<i>Pippalayadi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 5/74
6.	<i>Nilini Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 5/105
7.	<i>Nilinadya Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 5/106-107
8.	<i>Rohinayadya Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 5/115-116
9.	<i>Trayamanadya Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 5/118-120
10.	<i>Amalakadya Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 5/122
11.	<i>Drakshadya Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 5/123-124
12.	<i>Vasa Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 5/126-127
13.	<i>Dashmooli Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 5/142
14.	<i>Bhallatakadya Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 5/143-145
15.	<i>Ksheera Shatpala Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 5/147-148
Prameha Chikitsa		
1.	<i>Trikantakadya Sneha Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 6/38-39
Kushtha Chikitsa		
1.	<i>Vipadikahar Ghrita-Taila</i>	Ch. Chi. 7/120
2.	<i>Tikta Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 7/134
3.	<i>Khadir Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 7/135
4.	<i>Nimba Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 7/135
5.	<i>Darvi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 7/135
6.	<i>Patola Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 7/135
7.	<i>Tiktashatpalaka Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 7/140-142
8.	<i>Mahatiktaka Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 7/144-150
9.	<i>Mahakhadir Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 7/152-156
Rajayakshama Chikitsa		
1.	<i>Dashmoolayadya Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 8/93
2.	<i>Rasna Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 8/94
3.	<i>Bala Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 8/94
4.	<i>Kharjuradi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 8/96
5.	<i>Dashmoola Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 8/97
6.	<i>Pancha Panchamoola Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 8/99
7.	<i>Duralbhadya Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 8/106-110
8.	<i>Jivanyadi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 8/111-113
9.	<i>Mansa-sadhita Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 8/167
10.	<i>Panchkoladi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 8/169-170
11.	<i>Rasna Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 8/170-171
Unmada Chikitsa		
1.	<i>Hingvadya Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 9/34
2.	<i>Kalyanaka Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 9/35-41
3.	<i>Mahakalyanaka Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 9/42-44
4.	<i>Mahapaishachika Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 9/45-48
5.	<i>Lashunadya Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 9/49-51
6.	<i>Lashunadya Ghrita II</i>	Ch. Chi. 9/52-56
7.	<i>Purana Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 9/59
8.	<i>Siddharthaka Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 9/72 1/2

Apasmara Chikitsa		
1.	<i>Panchagavya Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 10/17
2.	<i>Mahapanchagavya Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 10/18-24
3.	<i>Brahmi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 10/25
4.	<i>Vachadi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 10/27
5.	<i>Yamaka</i>	Ch. Chi. 10/28
6.	<i>Amalakadi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 10/31
Kshataksheena Chikitsa		
1.	<i>Amritprash Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 11/35-43
2.	<i>Shvadanshradi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 11/44-47
Shwayathu Chikitsa		
1.	<i>Chitrakadi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 12/55-56
2.	<i>Dwitiya Chitrakadi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 12/57
3.	<i>Chitraka Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 12/58-59
Udara Chikitsa		
1.	<i>Rohitaka Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 13/83-85
2.	<i>Panchakola Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 13/112-113
3.	<i>Nagaradi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 13/115
4.	<i>Chitraka Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 13/116-117
5.	<i>Yavadi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 13/117-118
6.	<i>Snuhiksheera Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 13/138-140
Arsha Chikitsa		
1.	<i>Pippalyadi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 14/104
2.	<i>Apar Pippalyadi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 14/106
3.	<i>Chavyadi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 14/107-109
4.	<i>Nagaradya Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 14/110-112
5.	<i>Tritiya Pippalyadi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 14/113-118
6.	<i>Kutajaphaladi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 14/197
7.	<i>Hriberadi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 14/230-233
8.	<i>Sunnishamaka changeri Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 14/234-242
Grahani Chikitsa		
1.	<i>Dashmooladya Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 15/82-86
2.	<i>Tryushanadya Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 15/87
3.	<i>Panchamooladya Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 15/88-91
4.	<i>Chandanadya Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 15/125-128
5.	<i>Kshara Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 15/171-172
Panduroga Chikitsa		
1.	<i>Dadima Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 16/ 44-46
2.	<i>Katukadya Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 16/47-49
3.	<i>Pathya Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 16/50
4.	<i>Danti Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 16/51
5.	<i>Draksha Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 16/52
6.	<i>Haridradi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 16/53
7.	<i>Vyoshadya Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 16/119-120
Hikkashwas Chikitsa		
1.	<i>Dashmooladi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 17/140
2.	<i>Tejovatyadi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 17/141-144
3.	<i>Manahshiladi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 17/145
Kasa Chikitsa		
1.	<i>Kantakari Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 18/35
2.	<i>Pippalyadi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 18/36-38
3.	<i>Triushnadi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 18/39-42
4.	<i>Rasna Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 18/43-46
5.	<i>Dashmooladi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 18/123-124
6.	<i>Kantakari Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 18/125-128
7.	<i>Kulatthadi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 18/129
8.	<i>Dwipanchamooladi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 18/158-160
9.	<i>Guduchyadi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 18/161-162
10.	<i>Kasamardadi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 18/163-164
Atisara Chikitsa		
1.	<i>Changeri Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 19/43
2.	<i>Chavyadi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 19/44
3.	<i>Darvyadi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 19/80-81
4.	<i>Shatavari Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 19/97
5.	<i>Nyogrodhadi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 19/99-100
Chardi Chikitsa		
1.	<i>Kalyanaka Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 20/47
2.	<i>Triushnadi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 20/47
3.	<i>Jeevaniya Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 20/47
Visarpa Chikitsa		
1.	<i>Tikta Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 21/47

Trishna Chikitsa		
1.	<i>Jeevaniya Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 22/41
Visha Chikitsa		
1.	<i>Nagdantyadi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 23/241
2.	<i>Amrita Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 23/242-249
Vrana Chikitsa		
1.	<i>Shatadhauta Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 25/64
Udavarta Chikitsa		
1.	<i>Sthiradi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 26/23
Ashmari Chikitsa		
1.	<i>Swadanstradi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 26/74
Hridroga Chikitsa		
1.	<i>Haritakyadi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 26/83
2.	<i>Triushnadi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 26/87-89
3.	<i>Drakshadya Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 26/93
4.	<i>Kasherukadi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 26/94
Shiro Roga Chikitsa		
1.	<i>Mayur Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 26/163-165
2.	<i>Mahamayur Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 26/166-174
3.	<i>Yashtyahwadi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 26/179
Vata Vyadhi Chikitsa		
1.	<i>Dashmooladi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 28/121
2.	<i>Chitrakadi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 28/122
3.	<i>Baladi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 28/123
Vata Rakta Chikitsa		
1.	<i>Shravanyadi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 29/55
2.	<i>Bala Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 29/56-57
3.	<i>Parushaka Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 29/58-60
4.	<i>Jeevaniya Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 29/61-70
5.	<i>Sthiradi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 29/76-78
6.	<i>Padmakadi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 29/146
Yonivyapata Chikitsa		
1.	<i>Kashmaryadi Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 30/52-53
2.	<i>Vrihat Shatavari Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 30/64-68
3.	<i>Jeevaniya Ghrita</i>	Ch. Chi. 30/148



Graph 1: Disease-wise distribution of Ghrita Kalpanas

DISCUSSION

In Ayurveda, *Ghrita* is considered to be the healthiest source of edible fat with added beneficial properties. *Ghrita* is said to promote longevity⁵ and protect the body from various diseases. It increases *Agni* (digestive capacity) and improve absorption and assimilation. It nourishes *Dhatus* (body's tissues), improves memory and pacifies *Vata* and *Pitta*.⁶

References where plain administration of Ghee was prescribed have been omitted in this screening limiting to enlisting only compound formulations. The gathered information reveals that large number of medicated ghee formulations is prescribed for majority of the disease conditions. However, though the use of *Ghrita* is mentioned, its formulations are not found in the management of *Madatyaya* and *Urustambha*. More than 200 *Ghrita kalpanas* have been mentioned in the classics with an objective to promote health and treat diseases. *Ghritas* have been implicated in increased prevalence of cardiac diseases. But references of medicated ghee are found in the management of *Hridaya roga*⁷ (cardiac diseases) in this classic of Charaka Samhita. Researches of current scenario also do not support harmful effects of *Ghrita* utilization inferring that medicated fats are therapeutically useful.⁸

The general method of preparation and proportion of ingredients in the manufacturing of *Ghritas* is not explained in detail at a specific place. However, formulation specific methods have been mentioned at respective instances.

In general, paste and liquids of mentioned drugs were used in the manufacturing. The liquids were single at few instances while multiple at other. The nature of liquid was ranging from plain water to fresh juices (*Swarasa*)⁹, decoctions (*Kwatha*)¹⁰ of specified herbs. In addition to such herbal extracts, liquids like meat juice (*Mamsa rasa*)¹¹, milk (*Kseera*)¹², buttermilk (*Takra*)¹³, curd (*Dadhi*)¹⁴ have also been used. References were also found where *Kanji*¹⁵ (Sour gruel), *Mutra*¹⁶ (Urine) of various animals were used as the liquid media. Usually different formulations are prepared using *Jala* (water) as *Drava dravya* (extracting liquids). Transfer of the medicinal properties of any *Dravya* (drug) is done by the virtue of *Drava dravya*. Use of *Dravyas* like *Kseera*, *Mutra*, *Takra*, *Kanji*, etc. in preparation of different formulations infers that the seers were familiar with usage of alkaline and acidic Medias for ideal extraction of useful and needful active molecules from the herbs on scientific basis.

Such examples infer that the pharmaceutical technology during the Vedic/ Samhita period was fairly advanced. The seers were well-versed with different functional groups present in various herbs. They were familiar and knew about the nature/ type of therapeutic molecules that can be extracted through different media like aqueous (*Swaras*, *Rasa*, *Manda*, *Peya*)¹⁷, alkaline (*Kshara*)¹⁸, oleaginous (*Go-Dugdha*)¹⁹, *Mahishi Ksheera*²⁰ *Ghritamanda*, *Purana Ghrita*²¹, *Mahish Ghrita*²², etc. Using salts²³ and alkaline powders²⁴ in the preparations is also an example of such vision. Use of poisonous drugs²⁵ (of schedule E-1) in preparations infer the sophisticated and advanced scientific methodologies that nullified possible toxicity of such plants.

CONCLUSION

This synoptic review reveals significance of *Ghrita* formulations during the period of Charaka Samhita. The information collected in the screening reveals that the concepts of fat-soluble drugs, their utilization in therapeutics were well established during the period of Charaka Samhita. For thousands of years Ayurveda has considered *Ghrita* as the healthiest source of edible fat. Though

many researches of the current times support the beneficial effects of *Ghrita* emphasized in Ayurvedic classical literature and their utilization as therapeutic agents in the management of various diseases, still there is a need to understand the mode of action of all such formulations in the management of different pathologies.

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