

Research on Urban Renewal and Ancient Buildings Conservation

Jiaqi Yang

Department of Public and International Affairs, City University of Hong Kong, 518057, Hong Kong
Jyang334-c@my.cityu.edu.hk

1. INTRODUCTION

Ancient buildings are the historical, unique and regional buildings that have developed over time in the city. These buildings link the city's past, present and future. Currently, urban renewal projects are evolving as a result of urbanisation. The urban renewal and renovation boom has led to many historical and cultural monuments being included in demolition plans. The heritage left behind by history is not only facing an existential crisis, but the city is also losing its regional, traditional and diverse cultural identity.

1.1 Concepts Related to Urban Renewal and Ancient Buildings Conservation

The concept of modern urban renewal can be traced back to the middle of the last century. Mumfor (1946) put forward the theory of "sustainable development" for urban development. In August 1958, the world's first conference on urban renewal was held in the Hague, Netherlands, marking the formal formation of the concept of urban renewal.

In China, in the 1980s, Chinese urban planning master Chen Zhanxiang defined urban renewal as the process of urban 'metabolism'. This process not only emphasised the redevelopment of buildings, but also the restoration of old buildings and the preservation of historic districts (Zhai & Wu, 2009). In the new century, the importance of architecture in urban renewal has received more attention. Yu (2011) argues that urban renewal is not only about the transformation of objective entities, but also about the continuation of the cultural environment brought about by architecture, emphasising the importance of the impact of architecture on social networks.

The importance of building conservation for urban renewal can be traced back to the end of the last century. Brolin (1980) argues that there is not only a direct physical relationship between different buildings and the city as a whole, but also a historical continuity. Rossi (1984) argues that urban renewal should be approached from a human perspective. The emphasis should not only be on a visually continuous and harmonious landscape of old and new buildings, but also on maintaining urban spaces that are full of cultural connotations, psychological identity and *joie de vivre*. In China, Zhang (2004) argues that urban renewal is not only a technical tool or an economic act, but it also has deep social and human connotations. Renewal that ignores the interests of the community, lacks humanistic concerns and discrete social networks is not urban development in the true sense of the word (Zhang, 2004).

In general terms, ancient buildings refer not only to buildings with a long history, but also to the urban space they form together with their surroundings. Ancient buildings carry multiple connections between people, nature and society, and are a reflection of the interaction between the city and its environment during its long-term development.

1.2 The Neglect and Exclusion of Ancient Building Conservation in Urban Renewal

The concept of ancient buildings in urban renewal has evolved over time. In this process, many typical problems have arisen in the conservation of ancient buildings based on different concepts. The study of these typical phenomena can show the contradictions between urban renewal and the conservation of ancient buildings, and also help to understand the real state of urban renewal.

Firstly, due to the convergence of modern concepts and urban planning, many cities have adopted the same approach to renewal by demolishing old buildings and building new modern ones. This has led to the phenomenon of "one size fits all". The most direct effect of this phenomenon is the disappearance of traditional houses and

historic districts in cities with distinctive regional characteristics. As Sun (2010) notes, over the past twenty years or so, the individual characteristics and cultural charm of many cities have been removed, resulting in the loss of urban memory.

The second problem is the decay of ancient buildings due to neglected management. In some cities, the government has emphasised planning but neglected the actual management of the buildings. This has led to the deterioration of some ancient buildings, the continued deterioration of infrastructure and even the theft and sale of ancient buildings (Ji, 2001).

The third issue is the so-called "drop the real, build the fake" problem. Due to the emphasis of some urban regeneration on improving the economic efficiency of buildings, many ancient buildings have been misdeveloped or even lost (Li, 2017). For example, a large number of protected buildings in the historic and cultural district of Daowai in Harbin were demolished in order to improve economic efficiency (Zeng, 2011). These urban memories that should have been left behind were transformed into fake cultural districts used to increase the commercial value of the area.

1.3 Literature Views and Arguments in this Paper

Urban renewal and the conservation of ancient buildings are closely linked conceptually, yet in practice they often produce contradictory results. Ghertner (2011), in *World-class City Making in Delhi*, explains the relationship between urban renewal and existing architecture (in the article, slums in particular) in relation to this complex situation. These explanations can be used to provide insight into the conservation of ancient buildings in the context of urban renewal.

In Ghertner's paper, the Delhi government wants to develop the city into a world-class city and identifies the presence of slums as the most obvious obstacle. However, in actual urban development, the complete removal of slums by the government has been extremely difficult to achieve. The government has taken a completely leading role in urban renewal, but is hampered by statistical difficulties, confused implementation, ambiguous property rights and an inability to rehouse residents. For the citizens, despite their anger at the demolition of slums, they understand the government's desire for so-called quality urban regeneration. Both the government and the people are caught in a contradictory situation of action and psychology. The complete dichotomy between urban development and the existing buildings makes the whole project seem very contradictory.

For this complex situation, Ghertner argues that 'planned-ness' (p.280) is the key concept that defines urban space. City building is not just (or even primarily) an economic issue, but has to do with the vision of the city's future and the public psyche. He argues that old buildings (in this article, slums) are an integral part of the development of world-class cities, and that popular aspirations and participation are also integral to urban regeneration. The intersection of political institutions influences how people understand urban renewal and put their ideas into practice.

Based on these arguments, this paper argues that ancient buildings, as an important part of the city, are closely linked to government planning in terms of the different outcomes. This governmental planning influences how different groups participate in urban renewal and practise different concepts. This multi-participant (or single-party) practice ultimately influences the urban renewal process and the condition of ancient buildings. The practice of removing ancient buildings from the urban renewal process, even in opposition to it, may not lead to sustainable urban renewal and development. Based on these views, this paper proposes two arguments:

A1: The concepts and objectives of the different participants in ancient buildings determine what happens to them in urban renewal.

A2: Using ancient buildings as an economic tool or neglecting their conservation can lead to unsustainable urban development.

In the next part of this paper, the different concepts, practices and outcomes of the treatment of ancient buildings in urban renewal will be analysed. This will validate the arguments and lead to final conclusions.

2. CASE STUDY ON JIEYANG

Jieyang Ancient City was built in 1140 and was the political, economic and cultural center of ancient Jieyang. The Ancient City of Jieyang is located within the enclosed area of the old town (Rongcheng District) along the city wall. According to the Jieyang government, there are 9 provincial-level cultural relics protection units, 56 municipal-level cultural relics protection units, 4 historic cultural districts and 39 traditional-style buildings within the Ancient City area (Government of Jieyang City, 2020). In addition to ancient buildings such as the Academy, there are also religious buildings such as the City God Temple and the Mazu Temple, as well as numerous residential buildings from the Ming and Qing dynasties.

Rongcheng District is the central area of Jieyang, with many residential areas surrounding the Ancient City. The population density in the area is high and public spaces are narrow. The previous urban planning has lagged behind the current development needs. Meanwhile, a large number of shops, mainly selling clothes, food and daily necessities, settled on the area around the ancient city, further complicating the local environment. The renovation of the old town has long been a priority for the local government.

In 1997, the Jieyang government issued the "Interim Regulations for the Protection and Management of Jieyang Historical and Cultural Ancient City", which mainly regulated the protection scope, protection objects and protection measures of Jieyang Ancient City. This was the first ancient city protection system issued by the government of Jieyang since its establishment in 1992. Despite the relevant policies on ancient city protection during the transformation of the Ancient City, ancient buildings in the Ancient City were still repeatedly destroyed. The Mazu Temple, built in the Ming Dynasty, has preserved many cultural relics since the Song Dynasty and was listed as a cultural relics protection unit in Jieyang City in 1993. In 2010, the Rongcheng District Government disregarded the regulations of the "Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Cultural Relics" and carried out the renovation of the old town within the area of Mazu Temple, causing serious damage to the temple. General Lin Bao's Mansion, built in the Qing Guangxu period, was one of the relatively well-preserved Qing Dynasty buildings in the area. However, this ancient building was destroyed during the renovation of the old town in 2011 (Huang, 2016).

2.1 Government's Total Domination and Neglect of Ancient Building Conservation

In these two examples, we can see that the government's actions are in opposition to the protection of cultural heritage. Firstly, the government of Jieyang has long placed economic development above the importance of heritage conservation. In some cases, protection has been sacrificed for the sake of construction. As the party directly responsible for the old town renovation project, the local government might chose to destroy or tear down ancient cultural buildings in violation of the law for economic or performance reasons, and the resulting losses are difficult to measure simply in economic terms. Second, Jieyang's cultural heritage protection system has significant shortcomings. As a city with over 200 cultural heritage protection units, before 2010 Jieyang only had one official document, the 1997 "Interim Regulations for the Protection and Management of Jieyang Historical and Cultural Ancient City", as a standard. The relevant systems had not been improved until the 2019 "Jieyang Ancient City Protection Regulations" were officially published and implemented.

In addition, the chaotic management system is also a major barrier to cultural heritage protection in Jieyang. Jieyang had never established a dedicated functional department for cultural heritage management. The Jieyang Municipal Administration of Culture, Radio, Television, Press and Publication is responsible for the management of historical and cultural sites and heritage. Rongcheng District government is responsible for the renovation and management of the historic and cultural block of the Ancient City and its surrounding area. The promotion and publicity functions are handled by the Municipal Tourism Bureau. There is a lack of unified coordination and management. The lack of management departments and the shortage of staff have seriously affected the progress of cultural heritage protection and management (Zheng, 2020). There were nearly 200 registered aged trees in the Ancient City, 70 of which were over 100 years old. Due to the disorganized management system and insufficient management funds, some of the trees were cut down (Li and Liu, 2013).

The protection of ancient buildings requires significant financial investment. The level of economic development in Jieyang City is not outstanding, in 2010 Jieyang's GDP ranked only 14th out of 21 cities in Guangdong Province (Local Records Office of the People's Government of Guangdong Province, 2011). Many of the local heritage sites require significant financial investment from the government, but this need has not been met. The lack of funding has resulted in many ancient buildings in the Jieyang Ancient City not being rescued, protected and repaired in time, leaving them endangered or even destroyed.

2.2 The Absence of Public Participation

The level of public participation in the protection of ancient buildings in Jieyang is also low. Firstly, the government has not effectively guided the public's participation in decision-making on urban planning and the protection of ancient buildings, but only limited it to inviting experts to carry out protection planning demonstrations, public opinion surveys, interviews and other aspects. The public is only superficially involved in the process of protecting ancient buildings, without any real participation in the decision-making and implementation process. The government continues to maintain absolute dominance and the process remains at the stage of "the government speaks and the people listen". On the other hand, there is a lack of atmosphere in society for the protection of cultural heritage. The public believes that the protection of cultural relics is the responsibility of government departments and that they do not need to be personally involved. By 2015, there were more than 200 legally registered non-governmental organizations in Jieyang, but there were only a few academic organizations involved in the protection of cultural relics or ancient buildings, and there was no related foundation (Huang, 2016).

The absence of civic power not only leads to unsupervised government behavior, but also means that the method of funding by civilian organizations is not feasible in Jieyang (Zheng, 2020). Because of the Ancient City's age, widespread location, and extensive damage, business funding may have doubts about participating due to economic benefits. In addition, enterprises may demand renovation of ancient buildings or surrounding areas for profit, which may cause immeasurable damage to ancient buildings. Due to various reasons, the problem of lack of funds in the Ancient City continues to grow, resulting in the continuous deterioration of the protection of ancient buildings in Jieyang.

3. CASE STUDY ON BEIJING

Nanluoguxiang is a famous hutong in the old city of Beijing, showing the culture of "Old Beijing." Nanluoguxiang has a long history and rich cultural heritage, keeping its former "fishbone" street structure and many traditional ancient buildings. After the reform and opening up, Nanluoguxiang has developed a strong tourism industry. However, in developing tourism in the Nanluoguxiang area, the old buildings have yet to be effectively protected. At the same time, the street space of Nanluoguxiang has been damaged by long-term policy influence, commercial erosion, man-made demolition, and other factors, and the ancient buildings, represented by the courtyard, have fallen into disrepair and become defective in appearance and image. The streets are noisy and dirty, the area lacks the necessary infrastructure, traffic congestion, parking spaces are scarce, and the old bungalows are a severe fire safety hazard.

3.1 The Positive Change in Government Concept

Once under the direct guidance of the local government, Nanluoguxiang developed its cultural tourism industry, and various bars and snack stores appeared in large numbers, transforming Nanluoguxiang from a traditional residential area into a creative cultural district full of culture. However, in this process, the old buildings have not been well protected, especially the old streets other than the main street have been left cold and unused.

To promote the protection of ancient buildings in Nanluoguxiang, the government has taken a small-scale gradual transformation mode along the hutongs as an entry point. It has started the "repair, improvement, and evacuation" principle to resettle residents and protect courtyards through leasing, housing exchange, and redemption. At the same time, the government encourages the cultural industries that truly meet the positioning of the neighborhood to move in and grow the scale of business through adjustment, restriction, and renewal, and give a fixed amount of financial support to the supported industries.

3.2 Active Participation of the Citizens and Institutions

Nanluoguxiang carries a high density of residents, residents are not aware of the protection of old buildings and ignore the protection of the buildings while living and using them. The local government innovates the community governance model, actively promotes the construction of community residents' self-governing organizations, and introduces a series of policy measures to guide public participation, forming a multi-body participation governance model, with multiple parties cooperating and governing together to achieve complementary and interactive public and government.

The concentrated improvement and renovation of Nanluoguxiang in recent years have also provided opportunities for the participation of social institutions. For example, Peking University and other institutions have participated in the preparation of the "Jiaodaokou Street Community Development Plan" and the "Nanluoguxiang Protection and Development Plan," which are based on the principle of "focus and priority on protection" to carry out protective repairs to the neighborhood. At the same time, the local street office, as the main body of historical district management, fully enjoys the initiative and decision-making power to make independent choices of investment projects in line with the concept of conservation and development, giving full play to the role of social decision-making and social investment.

Although the development and preservation of Nanluoguxiang have reached a certain scale, there is still a lot of space for progress in raising the awareness of residents' participation, improving the quality of citizens, and better integrating history and modernity. To achieve sustainable development, all parties should adhere to conservation as the core rather than blindly developing new things. While striving to achieve commercial development, people cannot forget the protection of ancient buildings with courtyard architecture as the core. It is meaningless to destroy the protection of cultural heritage and the foundation on which development depends. All parties need to pay attention to architectural restoration in preserving ancient buildings: "Architectural restoration refers to the restoration of the original architectural features. The restoration of ancient buildings in terms of materials and visual effects is a respect for history and culture." (Wang, 2018) Proper restoration of ancient buildings in the area is necessary, and the original style and flavor of old buildings must be preserved due to contemporary restoration. In addition to the protection and development of ancient buildings to maintain a balance: "only focus on landscape protection and eliminate all commercial, will make the street lose popularity and vitality; the development of commercial and neglect of landscape protection, will cause damage to the historical heritage and thus lose their characteristics and charm of the neighborhood." (Sun, 2020)

4. CASE STUDY ON KYOTO

After World War II, Japan's economy experienced a period of rapid growth and many historic districts was at risk of destruction (Tang, 2014). However, in the present, many historical and cultural districts and human landscapes in old cities in Japan have been well preserved. Japan attaches great importance to the conservation of ancient buildings in the process of urbanization. Although Japan has taken some detours, it has generally achieved better results.

4.1 Long-term Government Attention and Conservation of Ancient Buildings

According to Kyoto government documents, Kyoto's urban landscape preservation work began in 1930, when an area of about 35 square kilometers was designated as a "style area." In 1967, Japan enacted the "Ancient Capital Preservation Law" to designate a "special preservation area for historical customs" within the urban area."

In 1972, Kyoto was the first city to introduce the "Kyoto City Streetscape Improvement Ordinance", which set out "aesthetic areas" and "special preservation and scenic areas". In this ordinance, the government especially designated some historical districts with traditional local characteristics of Kyoto. In order to protect the historical appearance of the areas where traditional buildings are preserved from being destroyed in the modern society, Kyoto City stipulates that any construction work in the conservation areas needs to apply for permission from the mayor and the Board of Education in advance. After obtaining the permit, the construction activities must ensure that the character and appearance of the traditional area is maintained and that no damage is caused to the historical landscape. The following year, most of the downtown area of Kyoto was designated as an urban building height control area. The height of buildings in the central part of the city was restricted to 45 meters or less (the 45-meter rule was based on the 45-meter height of the Toji Five-storied Pagoda, a National Important Cultural Property of Japan).

And from 1995 to today, the laws and regulations of Japan's landscape policy have been revised and overhauled every once in a while. For example, according to the document of Kyoto Information Center, the scope of "Special Preservation Area of Historic Landscape" has increased from 117 hectares at the beginning to 2861 hectares now. In 2007, the Kyoto government revised the regulations on building height, which further lowered the height limit of buildings and subdivided them according to the geographical characteristics. In the same year, the Kyoto government also established the Overlook Landscape Creation Ordinance, in which 38 landscapes were selected for preservation from literature, citizens' opinions collected and the provincial council.

At the same time, since most land and buildings in Japan are privately owned (Du, 1997), the responsibility for repairing and maintaining the appearance of buildings has been put on the shoulders of the residents. The Kyoto government has also implemented a housing support system to promote the participation of every household in the preservation of the historical features of the old capital. The government provides subsidies for the repair of buildings that are considered as traditional structures, as well as for the repair of parts that affect the overall streetscape and can be seen from public places such as roads.

Although the subvention system in Kyoto City is helping to protect and preserve old houses, many buildings are still facing high vacancy rates (Himeno, 2018), abandonment due to high safety hazards or high maintenance costs, and the number of old houses decreases as urban modernization accelerates. To reduce the vacancy rate of ancient houses, the Kyoto city government has facilitated the travel of residents and tourists by improving water, transportation, and educational facilities. At the same time, according to the information given by the Kyoto government, the government will not only hold lectures related to the prevention of the occurrence of vacant houses and the inheritance of connected issues on a regular basis but also send experts to form a corresponding consultation window free of charge to answer the residents' questions about the use of vacant houses and make suggestions.

4.2 Active Participation of Society

In addition to the government's financial support for owners who participate in the development and use of their homes, some private companies are also involved in the renovation of stores and hotels in Kyomachi homes. The source of the above-mentioned auxiliary funds also comes mostly from corporate and individual donations. The fund is managed by an independent agency, and the government is only the policy implementer and does not directly manipulate the acceptance and distribution of the auxiliary funds, thus ensuring the dedicated use of the special funds and avoiding corruption. (Tang, 2014).

5. CASE STUDY OF FURUKAWA

As urbanization progresses, more and more people move from villages to cities. The communities in villages and small towns are becoming weaker. In the 1970s of Japan, the population loss caused by a draft made the communities worse. (Onitsuka, K., & Hoshino, S. 2018) there was a similar story in Furukawa. The town used to be the town of craftsmen in west Japan but it declined because of many reasons, and many people moved away. When the Japanese government decided to revitalize villages and towns, the local government in Furukawa was too poor to do something. Therefore, the leaders of all projects, including protecting ancient buildings, are residents' council and social workers. The role of government in the projects is offering consultants and auditing project plans.

The community revitalization is a theory about how to save the fading communities in modern society by building the same identity among the residents again. The methodology can be summarized as the combination of people, culture, building, production and landscapes. Among the five elements, the "people" is the most important element. As for the case in Furukawa, although the leaders of all projects are residents' council and social workers, the task of social workers is nurturing the community leaders. Because only the residents know exactly what the problem is and find out their own ways to solve the issues. (Xue et al., 2018) Before starting the ancient buildings protection projects in Furukawa, social workers had spent several years mobilizing the citizens and cultivating leaders. It is the local people who become leaders that finally find out the culture behind other elements.

The north area in Furukawa used to be a nobles and temple district. There were three temples which were not protected well. The council did not directly raise money to rebuild the temples, they wanted to link the temples closely to their community rather than regard the ancient buildings as landmark buildings. More than rebuilding the temples, the residents resumed the ancient festival. The Furukawa Festival had been held for 4 hundred years in this region but was banned during world war two. The festival consists of two parts. The first one is a Japanese style float parade. The floats look like a magnificent sacrificial terrace and children kabuki dance on them. The other one is the battle of Kitaiko Drum. The taiko drum battle is held at the temple, it not only attracts tourists to the town and the temples but also builds a strong link among the residents. In the theory of community revitalization, this methodology is called the combination of culture and buildings. By holding the traditional activities at the old places like their ancients, the residents can build the same identity, heirs of old traditions, with their neighbors and the connection between people and community will be built. As for protecting ancient buildings, this method can not only raise money to repair the buildings but also mobilize the residents to protect them and explore more useful

information behind it.

Furukawa used to be called the town of the craftsmen four hundred years ago, and most craftsmen lived in the east area. However, like many fading towns which are famous for their handicrafts, the issues for Furukawa are economic recession and loss of craftsmen and their techniques. In order to rejuvenate the neighborhoods, the council decided to combine the product and culture. The residents luckily find out the technique of making ancient crafts, an old wood carving. The crafts are not competitive in the market, but the technique of making them becomes the business cards for outsiders. The experience of doing the craft is more important for Furukawa nowadays. The old workshops in this area now are repaired and extended as an experience hall. More than a museum showing how the ancient craftsmen work, the new function of the building is guiding tourists to make their own crafts. The prime purpose of the combination is restoring traditional technology and attracting tourists. For traditional tourism, the investments can only have a positive effect in the most popular tourist areas and it takes a long time to cover the investment in infrastructure. (Kim, H., & Kim, E. J. 2021) Therefore, the other new towns which want to make profit by tourism need to find something special to attract tourists. The new tourism is the combination of tourism and forestry and the income of the experience hall is very high. In this way, the old workshop can make profit and make a great contribution to tourism. This is a good example for other ancient building preservation projects whose prime purpose is making money. In a sense, the workshop in Furukawa still works as their design: a workplace for making wood carving.

6. CONCLUSION

The analysis of the four case studies reveals that urban renewal is a complex process. In this process, the issue of conservation of ancient buildings moves towards different outcomes based on different urban concepts and practices. Based on the arguments and the above case studies, this paper summarises them in three dimensions, namely purpose, effect and problem.

In terms of purpose, the government's purpose and philosophy towards ancient buildings influences how various parties participate in ancient building conservation. The concepts and practices of the different parties involved ultimately determine the condition of the ancient buildings. In the case of Jieyang, the government played a completely dominant role. Due to the neglect of ancient buildings and the lack of community participation, the ancient city continued to decline during the urban renewal process. In the case of Beijing, the government's initial idea was to use the ancient buildings to develop the economy. This economically oriented approach did not consider the conservation of ancient buildings as an important part of urban renewal. This philosophy ultimately led to the decay of the buildings. Thankfully, however, thanks to the change in government philosophy and the establishment of participatory mechanisms, different institutions and citizens have been able to participate in the conservation of old buildings in urban renewal under the concept of preservation. This change has directly led to a new hope for old buildings in the midst of decay. In the case of Japan, the government has approached old buildings with the aim of conservation in the last century and has emphasised the preservation of the overall environment around them. The government has continued to establish mechanisms for social participation in the process, and this has led to the emergence of successful cases like that of Furukawa. Residents have taken a leading role in urban renewal and the revival of old buildings, allowing both to achieve a better situation. As can be seen from the Japanese case study, the conservation concept and participation of multiple parties has not only resulted in the preservation of the old buildings in good condition, but also in the orderly development of urban renewal.

In terms of effectiveness and problems, urban development models that neglect conservation or simply emphasise economic development through ancient buildings will not achieve results. Urban renewal models that neglect the conservation of ancient buildings not only fail to achieve sustainable development, but also create new and more problematic issues. In the case of Jieyang, ignoring the uniqueness of ancient buildings to promote an approach to old city regeneration not only failed but also left the old city development in a disorderly situation. The renewal of the old city was not assisted by social institutions and left the citizens disconnected from the ancient buildings. Neither has the condition of the ancient buildings been preserved, nor has the complete renewal of the old city been achieved. In the case of Beijing, although the character of the ancient buildings fuelled economic development, this model of development soon declined. The aim of developing the economy was not achieved, and it also allowed the original ancient buildings to decay, impacting on their history, culture and role in maintaining social networks. However, the government soon established the concept of conservation of old buildings and set up mechanisms to involve the community and citizens. Urban regeneration quickly moved towards an orderly path. In the case of Japan, the role of ancient buildings was focused on conservation from the outset and a fairly well-developed legal and conservation system was set up. The model of urban regeneration focusing on the

conservation of old buildings has led to the involvement of social institutions and has also shaped a model of citizen participation represented by community revitalisation. This approach has achieved the dual purpose of conservation and urban renewal of ancient buildings, and it has also achieved a kind of virtuous cycle of urban development. It is an inspirational approach to the important theme of urban renewal and the conservation of ancient buildings in the current rapid urbanisation.

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