

# Gua Sha

## THERAPY



GLOWINGLY

# *Brief History and Definition of Gua Sha*

The **Gua Sha** (pronounced gwah-sha) therapy is an ancient Chinese therapy used to reduce the effects of aging on the skin. The old people of China made use of this therapy to treat body pains and other illnesses. They generally believed the procedure was powerful to scrape illnesses from the body. Basically, a flat tool is used on the body surface in fast scrapping motions until red marks appear on the skin like scars. The slight bruising that appears over the skin after the application is what is referred to as the 'sha'.

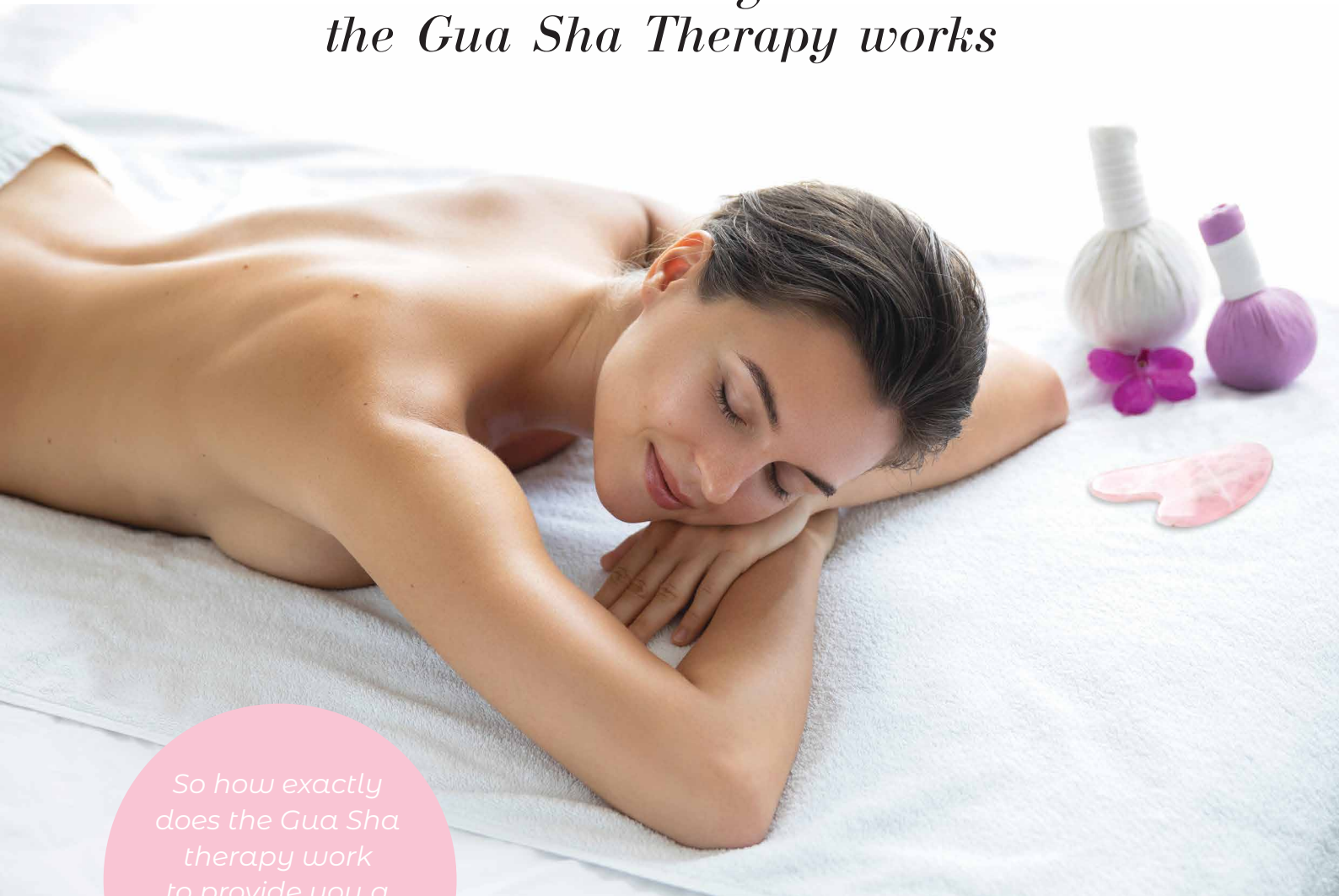


Over the years, the therapy has undergone some evolution, and at this point the process is quite different. This time the procedure has been modified to be more gentle on the skin. The therapy has a number of benefits attached to it, such as the fact that it renews skin complexion and reduces clogging in the skin pores to help them better absorb the nutrients in skin products.

'Gua' simply means scrape and 'Sha' translates into sand. The therapy basically involves scraping the skin using some special stones in continuous upward strokes. This is done to relax stiff muscles lying underneath the skin and to assist and promote the drainage process within skin tissues.



## *Understanding how the Gua Sha Therapy works*



*So how exactly  
does the Gua Sha  
therapy work  
to provide you a  
smoother and  
healthier skin?*

The ancient Chinese people had a deep understanding of the relationship between blood and oxygen, and how their movements around the body affected the skin. The blood and oxygen in the body are part of the **Qi**, a very popular concept in eastern medicine which refers to the energy that flowed through the human body. It is believed that whenever the flow of any of these body elements is altered; the skin reacts in the form of pain or slight discomfort.

**Gua Sha** is usually done to improve the circulation of the **Qi** energy around the body. The application of the Gua Sha therapy will cause an almost immediate change to the colour of the skin, but this should not be cause for an alarm. This coloration is majorly caused due to the formation of the petechaie (pronounced pe-tee-kiyaa) which are small red dots that appear in a concentrated form around an area of the skin surface. The petechaie is formed due to the entrapment of blood in the extravascular space after they have forced of the tissue bed.

# *Benefits of the Gua Sha therapy*

Some of the numerous benefits of the Gua Sha therapy include:

- ♥ Provides relief from migraines, neck and back pains.
- ♥ Relieves the muscles of the face
- ♥ Encourages blood circulation
- ♥ Tightens sagging skin
- ♥ Eliminates deep lines and wrinkles
- ♥ Helps remove dark circles appearing on the face over time
- ♥ Assists the easy flow of oxygen through essential organs
- ♥ Boosts the immune system by helping to remove bacteria and toxins from the body through the lymphatic system.
- ♥ Provides a reduction in hyperpigmentation of the skin





## *The Gua Sha Strokes*



To reap the benefits associated with the Gua Sha, you will need to understand the various techniques used on different parts of the body. For example, the technique for the facial skin is gentler than used on other parts of the body.

## *Here are some of the most common strokes used in Gua Sha*

### *1. The Sweep*

The sweep is a long continuous movement on the skin using the side of the Gua Sha tool. The side of the tool should be pressed deep into the skin, deep enough to nudge the muscles and tissues lying just underneath it. The application of the sweep does not leave the skin with any redness, but it will leave your skin feeling flushed for a short period.



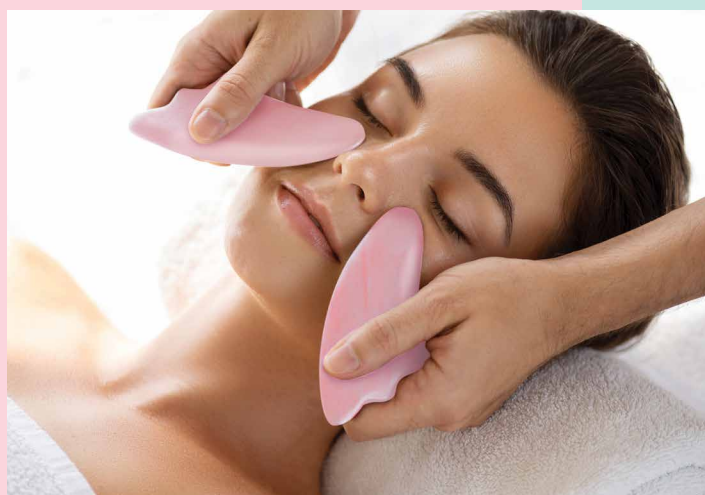
### *2. The wide stroke*

The wide stroke is done using the wider edge of your Gua Sha tool. The stroke is done by pressing and stroking the skin with firm pressure during the movement. The wide stroke is a shorter and more powerful stroke which is majorly used on the neck, the back and other parts of the skin.



### *3. The static circle*

The static circle is done using the corner of the Gua Sha tool. Here the movement is a circular one done with little pressure. It is performed on the more sensitive areas of the body such as the temple, under the eyes and close to the ear. Once the tool comes in contact with a point on the skin, it remains there throughout the stroke and the circular movement occurs in the wrists until it is successfully transmitted to the tissues and muscles under the skin.



## 4. *The moving circle stroke*

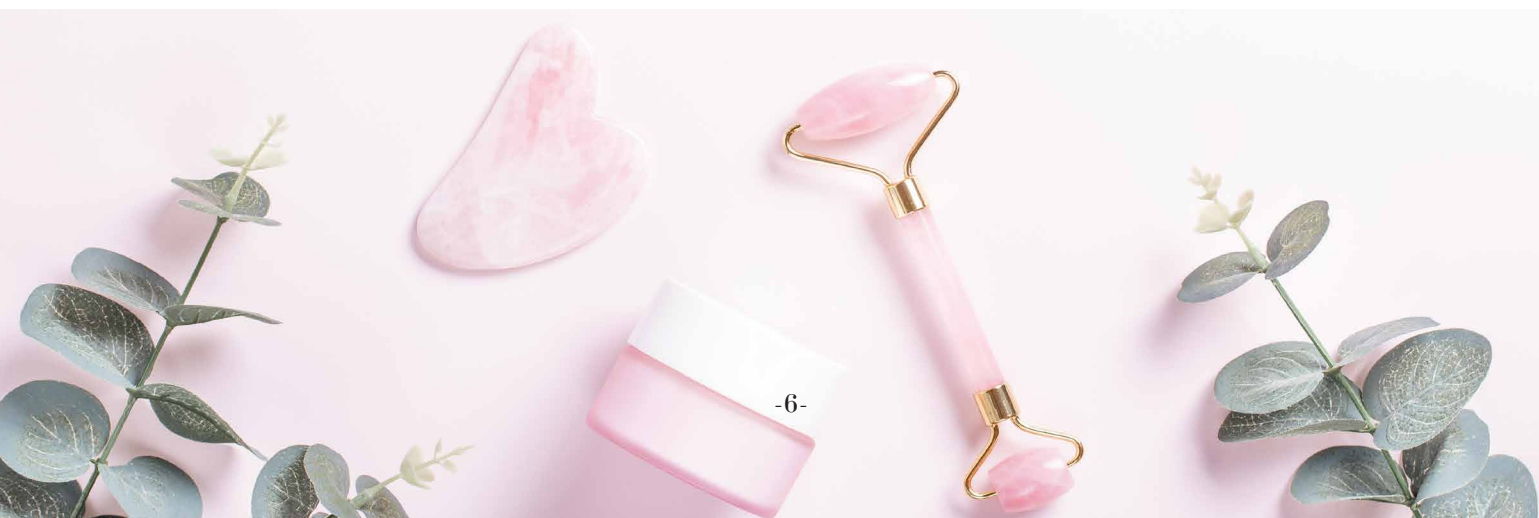


This stroke is different from the static circle in the sense that the Gua Sha tool is constantly being moved in a circular motion and with slight pressure around a particular area of the skin. A steady contact between the tool and skin is maintained throughout the whole time until the skin begins to appear flushed.

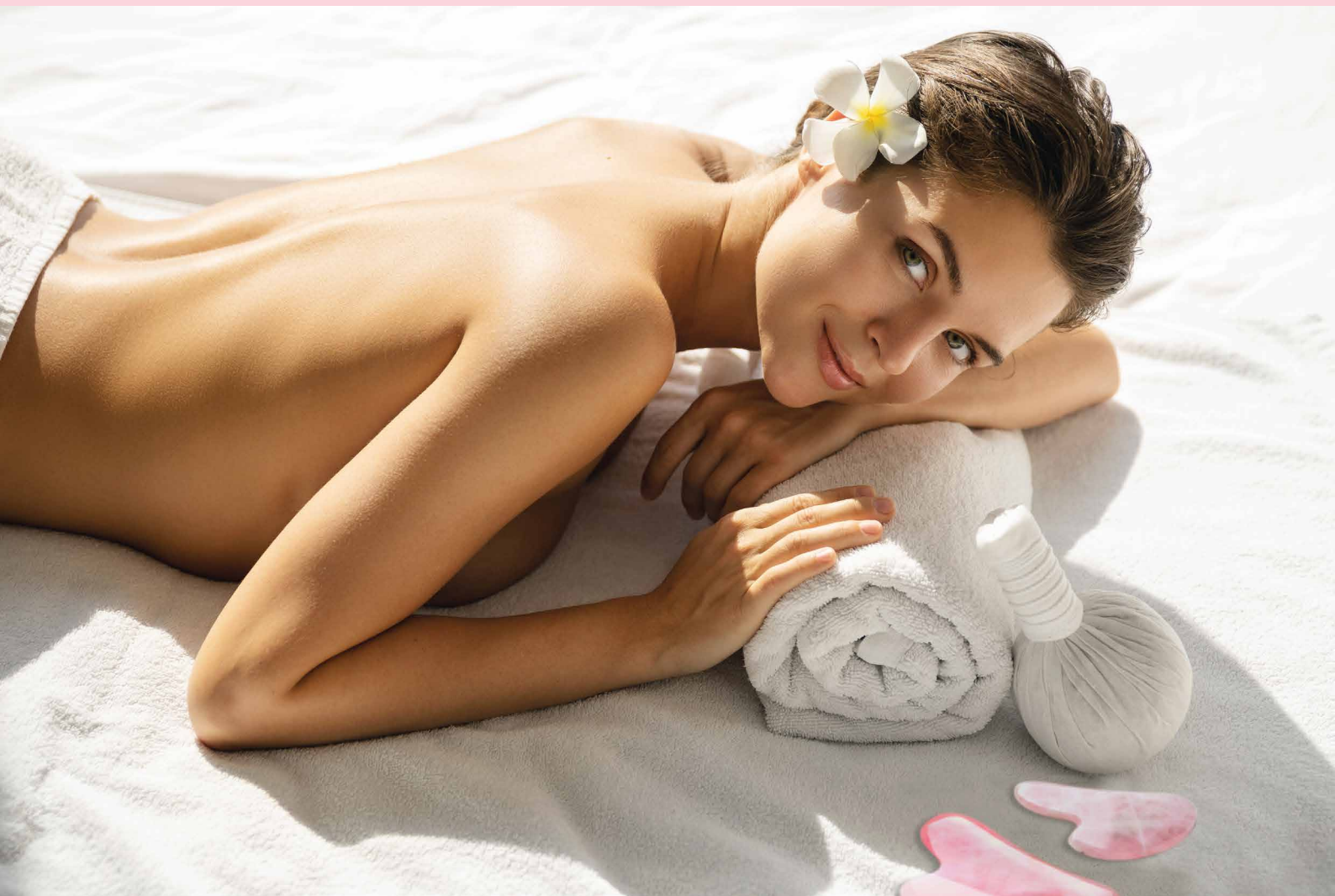
## 5. *The Narrow Stroke*



The stroke is carried out using the rounded edge of the Gua Sha tool. The stroke is quite similar to the wide and sweep stroke, only that it is narrower than the two so that the effect is more concentrated through the action path. The stroke is major applied on the other parts of the body apart from the face, and it is capable of producing the 'sha' when done correctly.



## *Applying the Gua Sha on various parts of the body*



### *Performing Gua Sha on the face*

In applying Gua Sha on the face, the first thing to do is to apply lubricant on its surface. This to help the tool move more smoothly over the skin. Keep the lubricant at minimum so it doesn't make the face too slippery. Rub it all over the face until both sides of are equally lubricated.

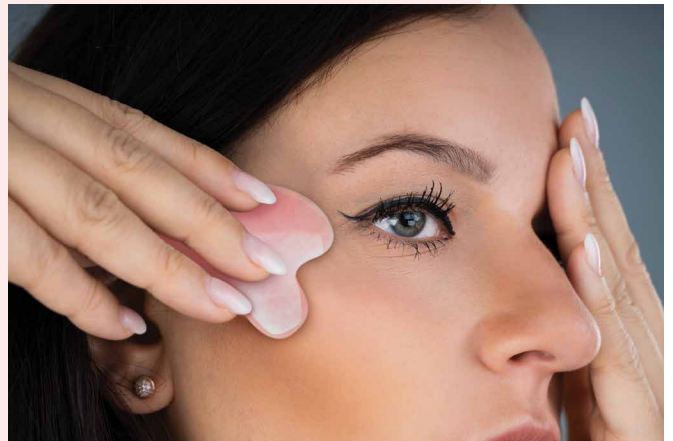




- ♥ First start by placing the rounded edge of the tool on the midpoint between the eyes. Make use of the circular moving motion on the point and ensure you remain on the forehead throughout the period you apply the motion. Make about four complete circles while going to another point on the forehead to repeat the same procedure.
- ♥ Apply the static circle on your temple area, moving upward at various points from the center of the nose up until you reach the hairline. Each static circle movement should last at least 20 seconds.
- ♥ Apply the moving circle motion at the corner side of each eye and continue until you reach the hairline at the side of the head.
- ♥ Apply the narrow stroke starting at the corner of the nose and move downwards until you reach the cheek bone.
- ♥ Apply the sweep stroke starting at the side of the lips and move upwards to the temple. Repeat this about three times, each time starting just above the initial point.
- ♥ From the midpoint of the jaw, make use of the moving circular motions to scrapen the skin from there to the base of the ear.
- ♥ Using the moving circle motion again, start from the side of the lips and work your way upwards until you reach you under the eyes, continue sideways to the side hair lines close to the temples. Repeat this movement about three times.
- ♥ Ensure you repeat all of the outlined procedure on both sides of the face.

## *The Eye Region*

- ♥ Using a narrow stroke movement, start from the edge of your eye close to your nose and travel up towards the temple forming a curvature until you reach the other edge of the eye. At this point you move sideways towards the ear.
- ♥ Repeat the above movement once again, but this time take your curvature and help it travel underneath your eye until it reaches the other edge. From there move it sideways towards the ear.



## *The Nose Region*

- ♥ Perform a static circle motion at the base and top of the nose for about 10 seconds. Make sure to target only the bony parts of your eye sockets, not places with softer tissues.
- ♥ With the wider side of your tool, move from that point towards the edge of the eye closer to the ear. Travel in an upwards curvature until you reach the hairline just above the ear.
- ♥ Perform a static circle motion just above the ear for another ten seconds and from there continue the sweeping motion down behind the ear and stop at its base.



## *Performing Gua Sha on the head*

- ♥ In applying Gua Sha on the head, the first point action should be the forehead.
- ♥ The widest part of the tool should be in contact with the head, beginning at the point closest to one ear. From there the sweep motion starts with mild pressure, running through the forehead until it reaches the other end of the forehead closest to the other ear. Repeat this motion about five times with equal amount of pressure.
- ♥ Making use of the wide stroke, start the motion just at the beginning of the hair line and scrape the head in a backward motion down to the occiput using firm strokes.
- ♥ Repeat the process but on another area of the head.
- ♥ Once you reach the occiput area close to the neck, change to the narrow stroke and continue to drag the tool down towards the neck.



## *Performing Gua Sha on the arm*

- ♥ First lubricate the arms sufficiently.
- ♥ Making use of the wide strokes, start from the top of the arm where the shoulder ends and begin to scrape down throughout the length of the arm with sufficient pressure. Target the major curvatures of the bones, the joints and the major muscle groups of the arm.



## *Perfoming Gua Sha on the leg*

- ♥ First lubricate the leg sufficiently.
- ♥ Wide strokes should be used when performing Gua Sha on the leg.
- ♥ Start close to the ankle and work your way up towards the upper body while targeting the major muscle groups of the leg as you move your tool.
- ♥ Keep your tools majorly over areas concentrated with muscles and not on areas close to the bones, such as the tibia region in front of the legs.

## *Performing Gua Sha on the back*

- ♥ Using the wide stroke, start from the upper back area and work your way down to the lower area with firm pressure to nudge the back muscles sufficiently.
- ♥ Target the two sides close to the spine and continue this until you begin to notice the appearance of the 'sha' on that area of skin.
- ♥ With the wide stroke, again start from the beginning of the shoulder close to the neck and scrape down to the arm.
- ♥ With the sweep stroke, start from the hairline close to the neck and stroke down to the beginning of the back. This stroke technique is perfect for women in the first trimester of pregnancy and also for people suffering from nausea.



## *Performing Gua Sha on the chest and abdomen*

- ♥ Start with the sweep stroke and gently scrape down the side of the neck until you reach the side of the shoulders. Keep away from the front of the neck where the Adam's apple is located.
- ♥ Next, target the front of your breast bone and move in short strokes through the gaps located the ribs. Do this just above the breast.
- ♥ With the wide stroke, move from the extreme part of the abdomen and travel forward throughout the surface until you reach the other side. Maintain light pressure as you move through this region.

*Precautions to note  
when performing  
Gua Sha on the skin*

1. Ensure that the area to be scraped is when lubricated. If not this can lead to friction capable of causing of harm to the skin.
2. Do well to keep away from bony areas of the body and reduce pressure when dealing with areas close to vital organs.
3. The Gua Sha therapy is not suitable for people suffering from medical conditions that affect the skin or the veins and people with implants such as a pacemaker and internal defibrillator.
4. People who have an infection, a tumor or a wound on the skin should not perform Gua Sha because of the tendency of causing more damage to the tumor or infection.

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