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CONTINUITY IN ABAI STUDIES: M.AUEZOV'S TRADITION AND K.MUKHAMEDKHANOV'S SOURCE-BASED APPROACH

Abstract. This article examines continuity in Abai studies through the scholarly tradition established by Mukhtar Auezov and the source-based approach developed by Kaiym Mukhamedkhanov. This study examines the nature of scientific succession between teacher and student in Abai studies and identifies their methodological coherence in Abai studies and to identify their methodological coherence. The research employs historical-literary, comparative-typological, source studies, and textological methods of analysis. The findings suggest that the theoretical concepts formulated by M.O. Auezov were substantiated and further developed with concrete evidence in the works of K.Mukhamedkhanov, thereby elevating Abai studies to a new analytical model. In addition, the study analyzes the introduction of the concept of "Abai's poetic school" into scholarly discourse and determines its place in the history of national literature. The scientific novelty of the article lies in the systematic examination of academic succession in Abai studies, conceptualized through the paradigm of mentor-disciple continuity. The results contribute to a deeper understanding of the mechanisms underlying the formation of scholarly traditions in national literary studies and help define a methodological model for studying literary heritage. The article also analyzes the historical and social factors that shaped the development of Abai studies, as well as the specific features of scholarly inquiry under conditions of ideological pressure. The findings can serve as a basis for developing methodological directions in contemporary Kazakh literary studies, forming new scholarly interpretations in Abai studies, and improving comprehensive approaches to the study of national literary heritage.

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Keywords: Abai studies, Mukhtar Auezov, Kaiym Mukhamedkhanov, source studies, textual criticism, literary school, scientific tradition.

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АБАЙТАНУ ҒЫЛЫМЫНДАҒЫ САБАҚТАСТЫҚ: М.ӘУЕЗОВ ДӘСТҮРІ МЕН Қ.МҰХАМЕДХАНОВТЫҢ ДЕРЕКТАНЫМДЫҚ ҰСТАНЫМЫ

Аңдатпа. Мақалада абайтану ғылымындағы сабақтастық мәселесі Мұхтар Әуезов қалыптастырған ғылыми дәстүр мен Қайым Мұхамедханов еңбектеріндегі деректанымдық ұстаным аясында

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қарастырылады. Зерттеудің мақсаты – абайтану ғылымындағы ұстаз бен шәкірт арасындағы ғылыми мұрагерліктің мәнін ашып, олардың әдіснамалық үндестігін айқындау. Зерттеу барысында тарихи-әдеби, салыстырмалы-типологиялық, деректанулық және мәтінтанулық талдау әдістері қолданылды. Нәтижесінде М.О.Әуезов негіздеген теориялық концепциялар Қ.Мұхамедханов зерттеулерінде нақты деректермен толықтырылып, абайтану ғылымының жаңа сапалық деңгейге көтерілгені анықталды. Сонымен қатар «Абайдың ақындық мектебі» ұғымының ғылыми айналымға енуі мен оның ұлттық әдебиет тарихындағы орны сараланды. Мақаланың ғылыми жаңалығы – абайтану ғылымындағы сабақтастық мәселесінің ұстаз-шәкірт байланысы негізінде кешенді қарастырылуында. Зерттеу нәтижелері ұлттық әдебиеттанудағы ғылыми дәстүрдің қалыптасу механизмдерін түсіндіруге және әдеби мұраны зерттеудің әдіснамалық үлгісін айқындауға мүмкіндік береді. Сонымен бірге, мақалада абайтану ғылымының қалыптасуындағы тарихи-әлеуметтік факторлар мен идеологиялық қысым жағдайындағы ғылыми ізденістердің ерекшеліктері де талданады. Зерттеу қорытындылары қазіргі қазақ әдебиеттануындағы әдіснамалық бағыттарды дамытуға, абайтану саласындағы жаңа ғылыми интерпретацияларды қалыптастыруға және ұлттық әдеби мұраны кешенді зерттеу тәжірибесін жетілдіруге негіз болады.

Алғыс: Мақала ҚР Ғылым және жоғары білім министрлігі Ғылым комитетінің BR31715839 «Әдебиеттану мен өнертану саласындағы іргелі зерттеулер: академиялық сабақтастық пен жаңа парадигмалар» атты жобасы аясында жазылды.

Кілт сөздер: абайтану, Мұхтар Әуезов, Қайым Мұхамедханов, деректану, мәтінтану, әдеби мектеп, ғылыми дәстүр.

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ПРЕЕМСТВЕННОСТЬ В АБАЕВЕДЕНИИ: ТРАДИЦИЯ М.АУЭЗОВА И ИСТОЧНИКОВЕДЧЕСКИЙ ПОДХОД К.МУХАМЕДХАНОВА

Аннотация. В статье рассматривается проблема преемственности в абаеведении в контексте научной традиции, который сформированной Мухтаром Ауэзовым, и источниковедческого подхода в трудах Кайыма Мухамедханова. Цель исследования – раскрыть сущность научной связи поколений между учителем и учеником в абаеведении и определить их методологическое единство. В ходе исследования были применены историко-литературный, сравнительно-типологический, источниковедческий и текстологический методы анализа. В результате установлено, что теоретические концепции, разработанные М.О.Ауэзовым, получили конкретное фактологическое подтверждение и развитие в исследованиях К.Мухамедханова, что способствовало выходу абаеведения на качественно новый уровень. Кроме того, проанализировано введение в научный оборот понятия «поэтическая школа Абая» и определено его место в истории национальной литературы. Научная новизна статьи заключается в комплексном рассмотрении проблемы преемственности в абаеведении через призму взаимоотношений учителя и ученика. Результаты исследования позволяют глубже понять механизмы формирования научной традиции в национальном литературоведении и определить методологическую модель изучения литературного наследия. Вместе с тем в статье анализируются историко-социальные факторы становления абаеведения, а также особенности научных исследований в условиях идеологического давления. Полученные результаты могут способствовать развитию методологических направлений современного казахского литературоведения, формированию новых научных интерпретаций в области абаеведения и совершенствованию комплексного изучения национального литературного наследия.

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Ключевые слова: абаеведение, Мухтар Ауэзов, Кайым Мухамедханов, источниковедение, текстология, литературная школа, научная традиция.

1. Introduction

The field of Abai studies in Kazakh literary criticism serves as a fundamental pillar for the scholarly perception, systematization, and transmission of national spiritual heritage. It is well established that the systematic formation of this discipline is primarily associated with the name of Mukhtar Auezov. According to G.Kurmangaliyeva, the academic structuring of the field is inextricably linked to Auezov's foundational activities: "Starting from M.Auezov, who brought Abai studies into a systematic framework, it is necessary to revise the history of this field's formation and analyze it from a new perspective" (Kurmangaliyeva, 2024). However, while Auezov's decisive role in establishing the field is widely recognized, the transformation of his methodological principles into a structured research approach remains insufficiently explored.

Despite the extensive documentation of Kaiym Mukhamedkhanov's contributions, a significant research gap exists in the comprehensive analysis of how Auezov's theoretical framework was transformed into a formalized source-based school. Kaiym Mukhamedkhanov most consistently extended this tradition by developing a more structured and evidence-based research approach. Remaining faithful to the scholarly direction established by his mentor, Mukhamedkhanov solidified a methodology grounded in empirical evidence and evidentiary integrity. His primary distinction lay in the precise identification of literary works from a philological perspective, the meticulous verification of historical data, and the introduction of new materials into academic circulation. His core principle of maintaining analytical rigor through the use of primary sources laid the foundation for a documentary-philological approach within Abai studies.

The scholarly activity of Kaiym Mukhamedkhanov was not limited merely to the study of Abai's works; it was characterized by a multifaceted examination of his literary circle, disciples, and historical context. He established the concept of "Abai's Poetic School" as a textually grounded framework, introducing a previously unsystematized direction into Kazakh literary scholarship. Yet, the scholarly discourse has often treated these achievements as separate milestones rather than a unified evolutionary process of scientific continuity. The intellectual lineage between mentor and student is evident not only as a theoretical progression but also as a harmony of spiritual, civic, and source-based validation. Mukhtar Auezov's programmatic principles became the foundation of Kaiym Mukhamedkhanov's entire academic career. Thus, the "Abai – Mukhtar – Kaiym" continuity emerged as a unified methodological contribution.

In this article, we address this research gap by examining the issue of succession in Abai studies through the synthesis of Auezov's tradition and Mukhamedkhanov's empirical principles. We analyze their methodological alignment and distinctions, considering the scholarly heritage between mentor and student alongside the broader developmental trends of Abai studies.

2. Methods and materials

2.1. Methods

The study adopts a comprehensive approach to examine the development of Abai studies from multiple perspectives. Historical-literary analysis was employed as the primary method, through which the works of Mukhtar Auezov and Kaiym Mukhamedkhanov were

evaluated within the context of the history of national literature. This method allowed for the identification of the evolutionary formation of their scientific conclusions and their mutual succession.

Through the comparative-typological method, the research principles, theoretical concepts, and methodological features of the two scholars were compared, highlighting their similarities and distinctions. This approach facilitated the demonstration of the convergence between theoretical and source-based directions in Abai studies.

Furthermore, the source-based analysis method was extensively applied. This method was implemented based on archival materials, manuscripts, memoir data, and textual versions found in the works of Kaiym Mukhamedkhanov, enabling the identification of scholarly principles that ensure precision and reliability in the study of literary heritage.

The textual analysis method was used to examine the original character, variant differences, and issues of authorship concerning the works of Abai and his literary circle. This method played a crucial role, particularly in revealing the essence of Kaiym Mukhamedkhanov's research methodology.

During the research, the interpretative analysis approach was also utilized to re-evaluate the content of key concepts and categories (literary circle, poetic school) within academic texts based on modern literary theory.

2.2. Materials

The primary scholarly works and sources related to the formation and development of Abai studies were utilized as research materials. Specifically, the fundamental studies by Mukhtar Auezov on the biography and creative works of Abai served as the foundation (Auezov, 2007).

Furthermore, the multi-volume collected works of Kaiym Mukhamedkhanov, his doctoral dissertation on "Abai's Poetic School" as well as academic reviews and transcripts related to this work, were employed as the main research sources (Mukhamedkhanov, 2007; 2008; 2011; 2012). These materials facilitated the demonstration of the formation of the source-based direction in Abai studies and the academic substantiation of the literary school concept.

In the course of the study, historical data and scholarly conclusions from Dina Mukhamedkhan's work "Mentor and Student: Mukhtar and Kaiym", as well as contemporary academic research on Abai and Auezov studies, were also utilized (Mukhamedkhan, 2023). These works provided a foundation for a comprehensive examination of the intellectual connection and spiritual continuity between the mentor and the student.

Additionally, a review was conducted of monographic works and academic articles concerning the history of Abai studies, including research addressing issues of literary schools, textual criticism, and source studies. The compiled body of research facilitated a multifaceted exploration of the topic and a systematic analysis of intellectual continuity and succession within Abai studies.

3. Discussion

In examining the intellectual lineage within Abai studies, the connection between the two scholars is not merely chronological but reflects a shared methodological and intellectual framework. The essence of this scholarly succession lies in source-based validation and the principle of empirical fidelity in mastering literary heritage

As the founder of Abai studies, Mukhtar Auezov was the first to substantiate the need for a comprehensive study of Abai's literary circle and historical context, viewing his legacy not only as part of national literature but as a constituent of global human culture. His principles regarding the "collection, preservation, and systematization of literary heritage" became a scientific beacon for subsequent researchers. These principles find their clear implementation in the works of Kaiym Mukhamedkhanov. In particular, Auezov's instructions on collecting and verifying folkloric and historical data were directly continued in Mukhamedkhanov's research methodology.

A key feature of Kaiym Mukhamedkhanov's scholarly activity is his empirical rigor and textual meticulousness. In studying literary heritage, he adhered to the principle that "evidence speaks, not assumptions," placing special emphasis on determining the authentic nature of every text. For instance, comparing different versions of the poet's works, identifying textual distortions, and proving that certain lines were added later demonstrates that he established a textual school. In this regard, Mukhamedkhanov's works laid the foundation for a qualitatively new stage in Abai studies.

Another crucial issue identified during the discussion is the introduction of the concept of "Abai's Poetic School" into academic circulation. Although this notion was initially proposed and systematically developed by Mukhtar Auezov, it was Kaiym Mukhamedkhanov who supplemented it with concrete data and elevated it to the level of an established scholarly category. He sought to collect the creative heritage of Abai's disciples and to clarify the place of each within literary history. Through this, the issues of personology and the literary environment were further developed within the field of Abai studies.

Furthermore, the intellectual lineage between the two scholars is evident not only in their research orientations but also at a spiritual and moral level. Kaiym Mukhamedkhanov regarded his mentor's scholarly authority as the highest standard and considered it his life's mission to extend Auezov's conclusions. Even during periods of political pressure, his steadfast adherence to Auezov's tradition and the preservation of academic integrity demonstrate the enduring strength of this intellectual succession.

However, it is insufficient to view Kaiym Mukhamedkhanov's research merely as a derivative expansion of the Auezov school. He advanced the research trajectory established by his mentor to a higher degree of methodological formalization, transforming source-based and philological inquiries into a systematized academic tradition. This is a significant phenomenon reflecting the incremental evolution of Abai studies. While Auezov provided the theoretical scaffolding of Abaiology, Mukhamedkhanov reinforced that foundation with robust empirical evidence and established a research culture characterized by analytical rigor.

In the history of Kazakh literary scholarship, Kaiym Mukhamedkhanov's 1951 dissertation, "Abai's Poetic School," was not merely an individual achievement but a milestone demonstrating the vitality of the scholarly school established by Mukhtar Auezov. In the early 20th century, Auezov provided a well-founded interpretation in his article "The Environment of Abai's Poetry," arguing that Abai was not an isolated figure but part of a broader literary milieu (Auezov, 2007: 25). Mukhamedkhanov further developed this concept through the use of factual evidence, archival materials, and textual analysis. As

reflected in Auezov's reviews of his student's dissertation in 1945 and 1951, he not only endorsed the work but also evaluated it as "a study that transformed abstract ideas in Abai studies into concrete academic discourse" (Mukhamedkhan, 2023: 92). This represents a synthesis of the mentor's theoretical insight and the student's source-based approach.

The primary innovation in Mukhamedkhanov's dissertation was granting scientific status to the term "Abai's Poetic School." He proved that poets such as Akylbai, Magauyiya, Kokpai, Arip, and Aset were not merely imitators but independent figures who continued the mentor's aesthetic principles and formed new genre types (romantic poems, narrative verses) (Pirali, 2025). Classifying the disciples of the Abai school into two groups (poets and singer-composers) and defining each one's role in national spirituality was a novel step in systematizing the history of Kazakh literature.

He "confessed" his inner secrets—which he did not yield under interrogation in the Almaty detention center in 1952 nor during the turbulent years—in the collection "Abai's Poet Disciples":

"We heard and understood Mukhtar Auezov's thoughts and opinions about the poets Arip, Aset, and Muka back in 1940 from his own lips. And according to Mukhtar's advice, we specifically researched the life history and literary heritage of these poets, including them in our work titled 'Abai's Literary School,' completed in 1950. In subsequent years, the research on Abai's poet disciples did not cease; newly found works were added and supplemented." (Mukhamedkhanuly, 1995: 8).

In his principle of researching from the roots and origins, the scholar clarified which works of Abai's disciples had not yet been pulled into scientific circulation and the underlying reasons, often pointing out religious-enlightenment works that remained neglected due to political expediency. He noted that Arip's qissas written in the tradition of Oriental literature, such as "Ziyada-Shahmurat" and "Qozha Gafan", "Qissa Tahir", "Qissa Nurgizarun", "Qissa Baharam" remained unstudied and were excluded from collections due to a lack of textual work. This clearly shows that he did not rush to submit textual versions for publication just because they were available; he insisted on careful textual, source-based, and artistic-cognitive work. This is a scientific requirement and ethics that every researcher of literary history must internalize.

In this regard, Kaiym Mukhamedkhanov's work in identifying and mastering individual heritage within the requirements of science constitutes a school of its own. The scientific connection between Auezov and Mukhamedkhanov was realized not only at a theoretical level but also within the space of artistic creativity. Specifically, Kaiym Mukhamedkhanov's contribution to the genesis of the epic novel *The Path of Abai* is evaluated as a substantive embodiment of the documentary-philological tradition within Abai studies.

As research materials indicate, acting as Auezov's scientific and literary secretary, Mukhamedkhanov played an essential role in collecting, systematizing, and clarifying the historical events and figures that formed the basis of the novel. Comparing biographical information about Abai's environment with archival documents ensured the durability of the historical foundation in the writer's artistic text.

For instance, the collection and systematic organization of data regarding Abai's disciple, Muka Adilkanuly, is a significant aspect of Mukhamedkhanov's research. His biographical

data and historical information about Muka directly influenced the creation of this character's artistic image in *The Path of Abai*. The portrayal of Muka in the novel is grounded in an actual historical figure, reflecting the rigorous documentary research undertaken. Furthermore, the inclusion of information about Muka found in Alikhan Bokeikhan's writings about Abai into the novel's text is closely linked to Mukhamedkhanov's archival quests. By finding archival materials and presenting them to the writer, the researcher contributed to increasing the historical accuracy of the events in the artistic work.

From this perspective, it is established that several episodes in *The Path of Abai*, including the meeting between Muka and Azimkhan Tore, are connected to concrete historical facts. The introduction of these data into scientific circulation and their use in the writer's creativity are directly related to Kaiym Mukhamedkhanov's research activities. Overall, it is insufficient to view Mukhamedkhanov merely as an assistant or a provider of data. He was a scientific partner who supplemented Auezov's artistic concept with historical materials and formed the factual basis of the epic. While Auezov shaped the world of Abai artistically, Mukhamedkhanov defined its historical-source structure and proved its authenticity.

Regarding the writer's "creative laboratory," Kaiym Mukhamedkhanov knew and shared much about the life and historical foundations of *The Path of Abai*. This remains a history awaiting separate, dedicated research. He provided significant help in collecting and clarifying materials, such as the names of many people and events from the Abai era in Semey that were integrated into the novel's artistic structure. We hypothesize that Mukhamedkhanov found and handed over documentary data concerning the lives of Alikhan Bokeikhan and the singer Muka to the writer.

The transcript of the Scientific Council dated April 7, 1951, reflects the battle between the "vulgar sociological" views of that period and pure science. Auezov and Mukhamedkhanov's efforts to integrate Marxist-Leninist teachings into the work were a means of preserving scientific truth (the Abai School) (Mukhamedkhanov, 2012: 10). This discourse serves as a historical example of how Kazakh intellectuals protected their national heritage under political pressure.

Mukhamedkhanov's research serves as the scientific justification for the artistic truth in Auezov's epic. If Auezov revived the world of Abai with artistic language, Mukhamedkhanov established its historical-literary documentary foundation. In analyzing the issue of Abai's poetic school, the common position of both scholars is to view literature as a historical process. The creativity of Abai's disciples is evaluated not just as a manifestation of individual talents but as a continuation of a specific literary tradition and the beginning of new artistic directions.

At the same time, this intellectual lineage demonstrated its resilience under turbulent socio-historical conditions. The scientific disputes and political pressures surrounding Mukhamedkhanov's dissertation show that Abai studies were not just a scientific matter but also an ideological one. Nevertheless, Auezov and Mukhamedkhanov did not waver from their positions, demonstrating persistence in protecting the national literary heritage. This proves the unity of their scientific and civic positions.

Thus, the findings identify three core dimensions of academic succession within Abai studies: first, the theoretical framework established by Mukhtar Auezov; second, the

empirical and philological methodology advanced by Kaiym Mukhamedkhanov; and third, the unified scientific tradition emerging from the synthesis of these two foundational trajectories. As a result of this continuity, Abai studies evolved into a field of science with a solid factual foundation and an established methodological system.

4. Results

As a result of the study, the study shows that the theoretical concepts founded by Mukhtar Auezov were further developed with factual precision in the works of Kaiym Mukhamedkhanov, thereby elevating Abai studies to a qualitatively new level. The methodological alignment of Mukhamedkhanov's research with the framework established by Auezov identifies a distinct analytical model of academic succession in Abai studies.

Specifically, the concepts of "literary environment" and "poetic school" introduced by Mukhtar Auezov reached the level of full-fledged scientific categories, substantiated by concrete historical data in Kaiym Mukhamedkhanov's research. Consequently, issues of personology and the literary environment became independent research directions within Abai studies, consistently examined through a systematic lens. This direction allowed for the recognition of Abai's creativity not merely as an individual authorial phenomenon, but within a broad historical-cultural context.

The research identified that Kaiym Mukhamedkhanov's empirical and philological methodology formed the foundation for a new scientific school in Abai studies.

The scholar's research approach, relying on archival materials, manuscripts, and textual comparisons, paved the way for a scientific reappraisal of literary heritage and the restoration of its authentic character. This, in turn, contributed to the establishment of textual research within Kazakh literary scholarship.

Furthermore, an analysis of the writing process of the epic novel *The Path of Abai* clarified Kaiym Mukhamedkhanov's significant role in shaping the factual basis of the literary text. Acting as Mukhtar Auezov's research and literary secretary, he collected and verified the historical figures and events that underpinned the novel, ensuring their authenticity. In particular, the systematic organization of data concerning Muka Adilkhanuly strengthened the life-based foundation of the novel's characters and enhanced the historical accuracy of their artistic representation.

On this basis, the interconnection between artistic creation and empirical data was identified: while Mukhtar Auezov implemented the artistic concept, Kaiym Mukhamedkhanov provided its historical and factual foundation. This study argues that Abai studies represent an organic synthesis of theory and source-based research.

Additionally, the research findings demonstrate that the development of Abai studies occurred under complex historical and ideological conditions. Despite scholarly inquiry unfolding alongside political pressure, the steadfastness of Auezov and Mukhamedkhanov's intellectual positions proved to be a crucial factor in preserving and systematizing the national literary heritage. The scientific tradition established by Mukhtar Auezov continued with source-based depth in the works of Kaiym Mukhamedkhanov, providing the foundation for Abai studies to rise to a new analytical model from methodological, theoretical, and historiographical perspectives.

5. Conclusion

In the course of the research, this study reinterprets intellectual succession in Abai studies from a new perspective. The scholarly synergy between Mukhtar Auezov and Kaiym Mukhamedkhanov functions not merely as a unidirectional influence or linear inheritance, but as a mechanism for the formation of a foundational paradigm in national literary criticism. It was established that within this methodological alignment, the ideological foundation, research principles, and scholarly culture coalesced into a unified academic tradition.

During the development of Abai studies, the conceptual model proposed by the mentor and the factual systematization implemented by the student acquired a mutually complementary character. Auezov's idea of recognizing the literary environment as a holistic cultural phenomenon was deepened with concrete historical facts in Mukhamedkhanov's works, transforming into a scientifically proven structure. Through this, Abai studies shifted from a science of a purely interpretative nature toward an analytical direction firmly rooted in concrete data.

Furthermore, this research demonstrates that scientific inquiries in Abai studies were carried out under complex historical conditions. Despite the inherent tension between scholarly truth and ideological mandates, the researchers' commitment to national heritage and their evidentiary integrity remained the foundational pillars of their work. This phenomenon suggests that Kazakh literary scholarship was not only an academic field but also a vital tool for preserving spiritual independence.

The study of the "Abai School" issue is also evaluated as a productive manifestation of this continuity. It was proven that the transmission of literary tradition from generation to generation, the continuation of artistic principles, and the emergence of new genre forms are essential factors defining the internal developmental laws of national literature. This conclusion allows for a comprehensive examination of the literary process, moving Abai studies beyond the scope of researching an individual personality's creativity alone.

The consideration of Abai's legacy within such a broad cultural-historical context facilitated the establishment of the methodological foundations of Abai studies. While Mukhtar Auezov systematized this direction and formalized it into a cohesive research framework, subsequent scholars, notably Kaiym Mukhamedkhanov, enriched this tradition through rigorous source-based substantiation. Research aimed at uncovering the Turkic and Oriental roots of Abai's creativity serves as an extension of this scholarly lineage (Zhumatayeva, 2025). Thus, it was established that succession in Abai studies is not merely a preservation of the past, but a continuous process of critical reappraisal within an evolving analytical model.

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