

An illumination device

The present invention relates to an improvement of an illumination device. More particularly, the present invention relates to a novel interior illumination device wherein light rays propagated through an optical wave guide are used as a light source for illumination.

Recently, much attention has been given to the utilization of sunlight energy, and there have been energetic developments and researches in various fields concerning the effective utilization of sunlight energy with a view to meeting the requirements of saving energy.

In such a case, it is obvious that the most effective means of utilization of sunlight energy is the direct utilization of such energy for illumination rather than converting it into other forms of energy, such as electricity or heat, thereby avoiding loss of energy due to the process of conversion.

With a view to utilizing sunbeams as such a light source for illumination, the applicant of the present invention has proposed an illumination device capable of transmitting sunbeams collected on the exterior of a house to a place where illumination is required, e.g. the interior of a room, by means of an optical wave guide.

With this device, however, sunbeams reflected at the boundary surface of the optical wave guide propagate along the boundary surface and then are emitted from the exit end of said optical wave guide. The diffusion angle of the sunbeams as they are emitted from the exit end of the optical wave guide depends upon the critical angle of incidence of the material forming the optical wave guide and is about 45° for conventional material used to form an optical wave guide.

When the sunbeams are emitted from said exit end of the optical wave guide for the purpose of illumination of the interior of a room, such illumination will take place in a spotlight fashion. Thus, it is not necessarily suitable to illuminate a wide area in the room with sunbeams. In addition, since the concentration of the light energy of sunbeams becomes comparatively high, it is quite dangerous to touch said exit end with, for example, the hands or a combustible item.

The present invention as claimed is intended to overcome the aforementioned disadvantages of prior techniques. It does so by the fact that when a room is illuminated by light rays propagated through the optical wave guide, said light rays emitted from the exit end of the optical wave guide may be effectively diffused so as to illuminate substantially the whole room of a specific item to be illuminated and eliminates the danger due to the concentration of the light energy.

One advantage of the present invention is that the distance between the convex Fresnel lens and the exit end of the optical wave guide

can be adjusted to within a range not longer than the focal length of the convex Fresnel lens. Another advantage is that the convex Fresnel lens is constructed so as to be inclinable, thereby eliminating another disadvantage of prior techniques.

The invention will now be described in greater detail with reference to the attached drawings, which illustrate a non-limitative exemplary embodiment, in which:

Figs. 1A and 1B are schematic views showing the basic principles of an illumination device according to the present invention, respectively;

Fig. 2 is a cross-sectional view showing an embodiment of an illumination device according to the present invention.

Figs. 1A and 1B are optical drawings illustrating the basic principles of the illumination device according to the present invention, respectively.

As shown in Figs. 1A and 1B, reference numerals 1 and 2, respectively, denote an optical wave guide formed of, for example, a bundle of optical fibers covered with a protective sheath and a Fresnel lens formed of a light transparent material, such as plastic or glass.

As is well-known, on the end of the optical wave guide 1 (not shown), there is formed an optical apparatus for collecting sunbeams. Said collected sunbeams are propagated through the optical wave guide 1 and then are emitted from the exit end or end surface 1a of said optical wave guide.

These light rays (sunbeams) emitted from the exit end 1a of the optical wave guide 1 can be directly utilized to illuminate the interior of a room. As mentioned above, however, the diffusion angle of the emitted light rays is relatively small and illumination by such light rays will have a spotlight fashion. Moreover, it is dangerous to touch said exit end 1a with the hands or a combustible item. The above-mentioned disadvantages are significant shortcomings of prior techniques.

It is well-known that in prior arts attempts were made to overcome the above-mentioned disadvantages by providing a diffusing member through which light rays emitted from the exit end 1a of the optical wave guide 1 could be diffused and then utilized for illumination. However, such a diffusing member emphasizes the question of how light rays emitted from the exit end 1a of the optical wave guide 1 can effectively and uniformly be diffused over a wide area in a room, and the degree of diffusion, range of illumination and area to be illuminated etc. are not considered.

Referring to Figs. 1A and 1B, the Fresnel lens 2 is placed opposite the exit end 1a of the optical wave guide 1. The axis of the Fresnel

lens 2 may be inclined while simultaneously remaining aligned with the optical axis on the exit end 1a of the optical wave guide, and the distance between the Fresnel lens 2 and said exit end 1a is selectively adjustable by means of an adjusting means. Thus, according to the present invention, illumination in any desired direction can be obtained by inclining the axis of the Fresnel lens.

As can be seen in the drawings, the Fresnel lens 2 in Fig. 1A is formed in the shape of a convex lens. Therefore, when the distance between the Fresnel lens 2 and the exit end 1a is equal to the focal length of the Fresnel lens, the course of the light rays refracted through the Fresnel lens is indicated by the solid lines. When the distance between the Fresnel lens 2 and the exit end 1a is longer or shorter than the focal length of said Fresnel lens, the course of the light rays refracted through the Fresnel lens will be as indicated by the broken and dot and dash lines, respectively. Contrary to the above, the Fresnel lens 2 in Fig. 1B is formed in the shape of a concave lens. Under any condition, the course of the light rays will be as indicated by the solid lines with a diverging angle.

Therefore, in Fig. 1A, if the convex Fresnel lens 2 is approached to the exit end 1a, the range of illumination illuminated by said light rays becomes wider, and vice versa. However, it should be noted that when the distance between the convex Fresnel lens 2 and the exit end 1a of the optical wave guide 1 is longer than the focal length of said lens, the light rays refracted through the convex Fresnel lens 2 will converge, resulting in an unfavourable condition. Therefore, the distance between the convex Fresnel lens 2 and the exit end 1a should not be longer than the focal length of said lens 2.

Fig. 2 is a schematic constructional view showing embodiment according to the present invention. Referring to Fig. 2, an illumination device according to the present invention includes a base member 10 for introducing the optical wave guide 1, a cylinder member 20 having a holding member 40 with a joint member 30 and a convex Fresnel lens 2 therein. The holding member 40 faces the base member 10 and is connected to the base member 10 by means of the joint member 30.

The optical wave guide 1 is introduced through an aperture 10A formed substantially at the center of the base member 10; then the exit end 1a of the optical wave guide 1 is attached to an aperture 40a also formed at the center of the holding member 40. Said attaching of the exit end 1a may be effected by any suitable fastening means such as adhesives, soldering or the like in such a manner that the axis of the Fresnel lens 2 is brought into alignment with the optical axis of the exit end 1a. The other end of the optical wave guide 1 may be connected to a sunbeam collecting apparatus (not shown) installed at a suitable outdoor location. Thus, light rays emitted from the exit end 1a of the

optical wave guide 1 can be diffused toward the interior of the room by means of the Fresnel lens 2.

The cylinder member 20 is mounted at an incline on the base member 10 by means of a well-known universal joint 30, which includes, for example, two pivot pins 31 and 32 arranged perpendicularly to each other, while simultaneously maintaining said optical relation between the Fresnel lens 2 and the exit end 1a of the optical wave guide.

For the purpose of adjusting the distance between the convex Fresnel lens 2 and the exit end 1a of the optical wave guide, a curved spring member 41 is positioned on the outer periphery of the holding member 40, and a series of notches 42 is formed along the direction of the axis on the inner periphery of the cylinder member 20. Therefore, by snappingly engaging the curved spring member 41 with one of the series of notches 42, one by one, the adjusting of the above distance can easily be accomplished.

In order to restrict the displacing distance of the cylinder member 20 from the holding member 40, a hook 43 and a stop 44 are provided. The hook 43 is formed at the outer periphery of the holding member 40, and the stop is formed at the inner periphery of the cylinder member 20 in an area adjacent to the base member 10. During the unconscious adjusting of the distance between the convex Fresnel lens 2 and the exit end 1a, said hook 43 will abut said stop 44 and prevent said distance from becoming longer than the focal length of the convex Fresnel lens 2.

In the case of the concave Fresnel lens, since light rays refracted by said lens always diverge the above restriction is unnecessary.

The convex Fresnel lens used in the illumination device has two planes, i.e. a convex plane 2a and a flat plane 2b. The illuminating condition of light rays passing from the convex plane 2a into the flat plane 2b is fairly different from that of light rays passing from the flat plane 2b into the convex plane 2a. As shown in Fig. 2, light rays entering from the flat plane 2b will be diffused out of the convex plane 2a in substantially the same manner as in the case of the conventional convex lens. However, interference fringes created on such diffused light rays are relatively indistinct. On the contrary, when the plane of incidence is reversed and light rays enter from the convex plane 2a, interference fringes on diffused light rays are relatively distinct.

Whether to use light rays with distinct interference fringes or to use light rays with indistinct interference fringes to illuminate in a room depends upon the type of illumination desired. According to the present invention, the convex Fresnel lens 2 is mounted on the cylinder member 20 in such a manner that said Fresnel lens may be turned inside out so as to select the desired direction of illumination.

As will readily be understood from the foregoing description, according to the present invention, by inclining the cylinder member 20 with respect to the base member 10, light rays emitted from the exit end 1a of the optical wave guide 1 can be projected in any direction desired. Also, by approaching the Fresnel lens 2 to the exit end 1a of the optical wave guide 1, the extent of light rays projected from the Fresnel lens 2, is increased; conversely, by alienating the Fresnel lens 2 from said exit end 1a, the extent of light rays projected from the Fresnel lens 2 is decreased. Consequently, any area may be illuminated with optional illumination as desired.

Because the Fresnel lens 2 is mounted on the cylinder member 20 in such a manner that said Fresnel lens may be interchangeably turned inside out, interference fringes created on diffused light rays projected from the Fresnel lens may be optionally determined as being distinct or indistinct.

Furthermore, according to the present invention, a Fresnel lens having a desired shape and size can be manufactured from the base Fresnel lens. For example, supposing that the base Fresnel lens has been formed in the shape of a circular disk having a diameter of 30 cm, a circular shaped Fresnel lens having any diameter of less than 30 cm can be obtained by machining said base Fresnel lens, and a square or hexagon shaped Fresnel lens can be obtained from the base Fresnel lens. It should be noted that, in such a case, the size of the square or hexagon Fresnel lens obtained is smaller than the imaginal square or hexagon which inscribe the circle having a diameter of 30 cm.

Therefore, the Fresnel lens 2 shown in Figs. 1A, 1B and 2 can readily be manufactured having the desired size and shape.

The invention has been described in detail with particular reference to the preferred embodiment thereof.

Claims

1. An illumination device for illuminating the interior of a room comprising an optical wave guide (1) which transmits light rays from a light source therethrough and a convex Fresnel lens (2) for diffusing light rays emitted from an exit end (1a) of said optical wave guide toward the interior of the room, characterised in that said illumination device comprising:

a base member (10) for the optical wave guide having a first aperture (10A) for introducing therein said optical wave guide serving as the light source;

a cylinder member (20) facing said exit end of the optical wave guide and provided with a holding member (40) with a joint member (30) and said Fresnel lens;

said holding member (40) having a second aperture (40a) to which is attached said exit end of the optical wave guide and which is

connected to said base member by means of said joint member, said convex Fresnel lens being spaced from and aligned with said exit end of the optical wave guide so as to converge light rays emitted from said exit end, said cylinder member (20) also being capable of limited displacement with respect to said holding member (40) so that the distance between said end portion of the optical wave guide and said Fresnel lens can be adjusted within a range not longer than the focal length of said convex Fresnel lens.

2. An illumination device as set forth in claim 1, wherein said cylinder member (20) is inclinable with respect to said base member.

3. An illumination device as set forth in claims 1 or 2, wherein said convex Fresnel lens (2) can be reversibly interchangeably mounted on said cylinder member (20).

4. An illumination device for illuminating the interior of a room comprising an optical wave guide (1) which transmits light rays from a light source therethrough and a concave Fresnel lens (2) for diffusing light rays emitted from an exit end (1a) of said optical wave guide toward the interior of the room, characterised in that said illumination device comprising:

a base member (10) for the optical wave guide having a first aperture (10A) for introducing therein said optical wave guide serving as the light source;

a cylinder member (20) facing said exit end of the optical wave guide and provided with a holding member (40) with a joint member (30) and said Fresnel lens;

said holding member (40) having a second aperture (40a) to which is attached said exit end of the optical wave guide and connected to said base member by means of said joint member, said concave Fresnel lens being spaced from and aligned with said exit end of the optical wave guide so as to diverge light rays emitted from said exit end, said cylinder member (20) also being capable of displacement with respect to said holding member (40) so that the divergency of light rays refracted through the concave Fresnel lens can be adjusted.

5. An illumination device as set forth in claim 4, wherein said cylinder member (20) is inclinable with respect to said base member.

6. An illumination device as set forth in claims 4 or 5, wherein said concave Fresnel lens (2) can be reversibly interchangeably mounted on said cylinder member (20).

Revendications

1. Un dispositif d'illustration pour éclairer l'intérieur d'un local, comprenant un guide d'ondes optiques (1) qui transmet à travers lui les rayons lumineux d'une source de lumière, et une lentille de Fresnel convexe (2) destinée à diffuser les rayons lumineux émis par une extrémité de sortie (1a) dudit guide d'ondes optiques vers l'intérieur du local, caractérisé en



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As will readily be understood from the foregoing description, according to the present invention, by inclining the cylinder member 20 with respect to the base member 10, light rays emitted from the exit end 1a of the optical wave guide 1 can be projected in any direction desired. Also, by approaching the Fresnel lens 2 to the exit end 1a of the optical wave guide 1, the extent of light rays projected from the Fresnel lens 2 is increased; conversely, by alienating the Fresnel lens 2 from said exit end 1a, the extent of light rays projected from the Fresnel lens 2 is decreased. Consequently, any area may be illuminated with optional illumination as desired.

Because the Fresnel lens 2 is mounted on the cylinder member 20 in such a manner that said Fresnel lens may be interchangeably turned inside out, interference fringes created on diffused light rays projected from the Fresnel lens may be optionally determined as being distinct or indistinct.

Furthermore, according to the present invention, a Fresnel lens having a desired shape and size can be manufactured from the base Fresnel lens. For example, supposing that the base Fresnel lens has been formed in the shape of a circular disk having a diameter of 30 cm, a circular shaped Fresnel lens having any diameter of less than 30 cm can be obtained by machining said base Fresnel lens, and a square or hexagon shaped Fresnel lens can be obtained from the base Fresnel lens. It should be noted that, in such a case, the size of the square or hexagon Fresnel lens obtained is smaller than the imaginary square or hexagon which inscribe the circle having a diameter of 30 cm.

Therefore, the Fresnel lens 2 shown in Figs. 1A, 1B and 2 can readily be manufactured having the desired size and shape.

The invention has been described in detail with particular reference to the preferred embodiment thereof.

Claims

1. An illumination device for illuminating the interior of a room comprising an optical wave guide (1) which transmits light rays from a light source therethrough and a convex Fresnel lens (2) for diffusing light rays emitted from an exit end (1a) of said optical wave guide toward the interior of the room, characterised in that said illumination device comprising:

a base member (10) for the optical wave guide having a first aperture (10A) for introducing therein said optical wave guide serving as the light source;

a cylinder member (20) facing said exit end of the optical wave guide and provided with a holding member (40) with a joint member (30) and said Fresnel lens;

said holding member (40) having a second aperture (40a) to which is attached said exit end of the optical wave guide and which is

connected to said base member by means of said joint member, said convex Fresnel lens being spaced from and aligned with said exit end of the optical wave guide so as to converge light rays emitted from said exit end, said cylinder member (20) also being capable of limited displacement with respect to said holding member (40) so that the distance between said end portion of the optical wave guide and said Fresnel lens can be adjusted within a range not longer than the focal length of said convex Fresnel lens.

2. An illumination device as set forth in claim 1, wherein said cylinder member (20) is inclinable with respect to said base member.

3. An illumination device as set forth in claims 1 or 2, wherein said convex Fresnel lens (2) can be reversibly interchangeably mounted on said cylinder member (20).

4. An illumination device for illuminating the interior of a room comprising an optical wave guide (1) which transmits light rays from a light source therethrough and a concave Fresnel lens (2) for diffusing light rays emitted from an exit end (1a) of said optical wave guide toward the interior of the room, characterised in that said illumination device comprising:

a base member (10) for the optical wave guide having a first aperture (10A) for introducing therein said optical wave guide serving as the light source;

a cylinder member (20) facing said exit end of the optical wave guide and provided with a holding member (40) with a joint member (30) and said Fresnel lens;

said holding member (40) having a second aperture (40a) to which is attached said exit end of the optical wave guide and connected to said base member by means of said joint member, said concave Fresnel lens being spaced from and aligned with said exit end of the optical wave guide so as to diverge light rays emitted from said exit end, said cylinder member (20) also being capable of displacement with respect to said holding member (40) so that the divergency of light rays refracted through the concave Fresnel lens can be adjusted.

5. An illumination device as set forth in claim 4, wherein said cylinder member (20) is inclinable with respect to said base member.

6. An illumination device as set forth in claims 4 or 5, wherein said concave Fresnel lens (2) can be reversibly interchangeably mounted on said cylinder member (20).

Revendications

1. Un dispositif d'illustration pour éclairer l'intérieur d'un local, comprenant un guide d'ondes optiques (1) qui transmet à travers lui les rayons lumineux d'une source de lumière, et une lentille de Fresnel convexe (2) destinée à diffuser les rayons lumineux émis par une extrémité de sortie (1a) dudit guide d'ondes optiques vers l'intérieur du local, caractérisé en

ce que ce dispositif d'illumination comprend: un élément de base (10) pour le guide d'ondes optiques, ayant une première ouverture (10A) pour l'introduction à l'intérieur de ce guide d'ondes optiques qui sert de source de lumière; un élément cylindrique (20) qui fait face à l'extrémité de sortie du guide d'ondes optiques et est muni d'un élément support (40) équipé d'un joint (30) et de la lentille de Fresnel; l'élément support (40) ayant une deuxième (40a) à laquelle est fixée ladite extrémité de sortie du guide d'ondes optiques et qui est reliée à l'élément de base à l'aide dudit joint, la lentille de Fresnel convexe étant espacée de l'extrémité de sortie du guide d'ondes optiques et alignée sur cette extrémité de sortie de manière à faire converger les rayons émis par ladite extrémité de sortie, ledit élément cylindrique (20) étant également capable de décrire un déplacement limité par rapport à l'élément support (40) de telle manière que la distance entre la partie terminale du guide d'ondes optiques et la lentille de Fresnel peut être réglée dans un intervalle non supérieur à la longueur focale de la lentille de Fresnel convexe.

2. Un dispositif d'illumination comme décrit dans la revendication 1, dans lequel ledit élément cylindrique (20) peut être incliné par rapport à l'élément de base.

3. Un dispositif d'illumination comme décrit dans les revendications 1 ou 2, dans lequel la lentille de Fresnel convexe (2) peut être montée de façon réversible et interchangeable sur l'élément cylindrique (20).

4. Un dispositif d'illumination pour éclairer l'intérieur d'un local, comprenant un guide d'ondes optiques (1) qui transmet les rayons lumineux d'une source lumineuse, à travers lui, et une lentille de Fresnel concave (2) destinée à diffuser les rayons lumineux émis par une extrémité de sortie (1a) dudit guide d'ondes optiques vers l'intérieur du local, caractérisé en ce que ce dispositif d'illumination comprend: un élément de base (10) pour le guide d'ondes optiques, ayant une première ouverture (10A) pour l'introduction à l'intérieur dudit guide d'ondes optiques qui sert de source lumineuse; un élément cylindrique (20) qui fait face à l'extrémité de sortie du guide d'ondes optiques et est muni d'un élément support (40) équipé d'un joint (30) et de ladite lentille de Fresnel; ledit élément support (40) ayant une deuxième ouverture (40a) à laquelle est fixée ladite extrémité de sortie du guide d'ondes optiques et qui est reliée à l'élément de base au moyen du joint, la lentille de Fresnel concave étant espacée de l'extrémité de sortie du guide d'ondes optiques et étant alignée sur cette extrémité de manière à faire diverger les rayons lumineux émis par cette extrémité de sortie, l'élément cylindrique (20) étant également capable de se déplacer par rapport à l'élément support (40) de sorte qu'on peut ajuster la divergence des rayons lumineux réfractés à travers la lentille de Fresnel concave.

5. Un dispositif d'illumination comme décrit dans la revendication 4, dans lequel ledit élément cylindrique (20) peut être incliné par rapport à l'élément de base.

6. Un dispositif d'éclairage comme décrit dans la revendication 4 ou 5, dans lequel la lentille de Fresnel concave (2) peut être montée de façon réversible et interchangeable sur l'élément cylindrique (20).

Patentansprüche

1. Beleuchtungseinrichtung zum Beleuchten des Inneren eines Raums mit einem optischen Wellenleiter (1), welcher Licht von einer Lichtquelle durch sind hindurch überträgt und mit einer konvexen Fresnel-Linse (2) zum Diffundieren von Lichtstrahlen, die vom auslaßseitigen Ende (1a) des optischen Wellenleiters in Richtung auf das Innere des Raums emittiert werden, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß die Beleuchtungseinrichtung (folgende Elemente) umfaßt:

ein Basiselement (10) für den optischen Wellenleiter mit einer ersten Öffnung (10a) zum Einführen des optischen Wellenleiters als Lichtquelle in dieselbe;

ein Zylinderelement (20), welches dem auslaßseitigen Ende des optischen Wellenleiters zugewandt und mit einem Halteelement (40), mit einem Verbindungselement (30) und der Fresnel-Linse versehen ist,

wobei das Halteelement (40) eine zweite Öffnung (40a) aufweist, an der das auslaßseitige Ende des optischen Wellenleiters befestigt ist, wobei das Halteelement mit dem Basiselement über das Verbindungselement (30) verbunden ist, wobei die konvexe Fresnel-Linse im Abstand vom auslaßseitigen Ende des optischen Leiters und fluchtend zu diesem derart ausgerichtet ist, daß es die vom auslaßseitigen Ende emittierten Lichtstrahlen konvergieren läßt und wobei das Zylinderelement außerdem in beschränktem Maße bezüglich des Halteelements beweglich ist, derart, daß der Abstand zwischen dem Endbereich des optischen Wellenleiters und der Fresnel-Linse innerhalb eines Bereichs einstellbar ist, der nicht länger als die Brennweite der konvexen Fresnel-Linse ist.

2. Beleuchtungseinrichtung gemäß Anspruch 1, bei der das Zylinderelement (20) gegenüber dem Basiselement neigbar ist.

3. Beleuchtungseinrichtung gemäß Anspruch 1 oder 2, bei der die konvexe Fresnel-Linse (2) umkehrbar (und) auswechselbar an dem Zylinderelement (20) montiert werden kann.

4. Beleuchtungseinrichtung zum Beleuchten des Inneren eines Raums mit einem optischen Wellenleiter (1), welcher Lichtstrahlen durch sich hindurch überträgt und mit einer konkaven Fresnel-Linse (2) zum Diffundieren der vom auslaßseitigen Ende (1a) des optischen Wellenleiters in Richtung auf das Innere des Raums emittierten Lichtstrahlen, dadurch gekenn-



zeichnet, daß die Beleuchtungseinrichtung (folgende Elemente) umfaßt:

ein Basiselement (10) für den optischen Wellenleiter mit einer ersten Öffnung (10a) zum Einführen des optischen Wellenleiters als Lichtquelle in dieselbe;

ein Zylinderelement (20), welches dem auslaßseitigen Ende des optischen Wellenleiters zugewandt und mit einem Halteelement (40) mit einem Verbindungselement (30) und der Fresnel-Linse versehen ist,

wobei das Halteelement (40) eine zweite Öffnung (40a) aufweist, an der das auslaßseitige Ende des optischen Wellenleiters befestigt ist, wobei das Halteelement mit dem Basiselement über das Verbindungselement (30) verbunden ist, wobei die konkave Fresnel-Linse im Abstand vom auslaßseitigen Ende des optischen Leiters

und fluchtend zu diesem derart ausgerichtet ist, daß es die vom auslaßseitigen Ende emittierten Lichtstrahlen divergieren läßt und wobei das Zylinderelement außerdem in beschränktem Maße bezüglich des Halteelements beweglich ist, derart, daß der Abstand zwischen dem Endbereich des optischen Wellenleiters und der Fresnel-Linse innerhalb eines Bereichs einstellbar ist, der nicht länger als die Brennweite der konkaven Fresnel-Linse ist.

5. Beleuchtungseinrichtung gemäß Anspruch 4, bei der das Zylinderelement (20) gegenüber dem Basiselement neigbar ist.

6. Beleuchtungseinrichtung gemäß Anspruch 4 oder 5, bei der die konkave Fresnel-Linse (2) umkehrbar (und) auswechselbar an dem Zylinderelement (20) montiert werden kann.

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