

# **IDENTIFICATION AND DRAWING OF TOURIST CIRCUITS IN AIZAWL AREA**

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## **Abstract**

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*Tourism is now not merely a travelling activity, nor a journey to visit some holy places. But it is an industry and one of the fastest growing economic activities with manifolds and dimensions. Success of tourism development depends upon numbers of issues. Destination reputation, tourist friendly environment, affordable travel and distinctive tourist circuits are some of the valuable factors for success of tourism industry. Tourist circuits and destinations are two most essential parameters that attract tourists from all round of the earth. A famous circuit with renowned destinations always signifies development of tourism. The present paper is an attempt to identify possible tourist circuit in and around Aizawl City area.*

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## **Introduction**

The word tourism means the travel activity or the practice of touring especially for aesthetic pleasure of human being which brings the overall satisfaction of human life. Tourism is the business activity or industry associated with providing information, accommodations and other services to the tourists. Thus, it is related with the profit making from the travellers associated with the movement of people offering an opportunity to see a new place. Tourism is directly linked with touring as the profit making business activity from traveller by pleasing them with utmost hospitability, showcasing art and culture for them, and showing them the entire beauty of the region. This is a phenomenon of modern civilization and can be summed up as the activity of visitors who visit places for recreation, pilgrimage, adventure, business, education, health etc.

Mathieson and Wall (1982) produced an excellent effective definition of tourism as “The temporary movement of people to destinations outside their normal places of work and residence, the activities undertaken during their stay in those destinations, and the facilities created to cater to their needs.” This definition implies the business associated with the services of the host communities to their guests that travel.

On the other hand Macintosh and Goeldner (1986) defined tourism as “The sum of the phenomena and relationships

arising from the interaction of tourists, business suppliers, host government and community in the process of attracting and hosting these tourists and other visitors”. It has become a significant sector that has an impact on progress of country’s financial system. The major profits of tourism are income making and production of jobs. In present day world, for various regions, and nations it is the most significant sources of welfare. For example, Nepal, Caribbean island, Thailand, Maldives etc. are some of the countries that depend on tourism industry for their economic betterment

### **Review of Literature**

Cullinan (1977) summarized the idea in “Central America Panama Circuit Tourism Study” as a pleasure tour that comprises two or more countries by an inhabitant of a third country”. According to Ministry of Tourism (2008), tourist circuit is defined as “A route on which at least three major tourist destinations are located in different areas but within such distance that tourists can and would like to cover them in a sequence”. Chowdhary (2014) has quoted after hotelmule.com (2011) that sightseeing route involves holidays to more than one destination throughout the trip away from residence. Perhaps this is the best simplified definition.

“Circuits can be developed either within a country (intra-border) or between two or more countries (cross-border). Cross-border circuits could be based on various themes or on effective transport connectivity” (Sisodia, 2011). A few forms of circuit progress can take place roughly an idea that are religious,

historical, tribal culture, traditional and heritage, art & craft, nature based tourism circuits etc.

### **Study Area**

The present study encompasses tourism around Aizawl City, Mizoram, India. Mizoram is a tiny hilly state with an area of 21087 sq km (Pachau, 2009). The state is strategically located between two foreign countries i.e. Myanmar and Bangladesh. This is the most densely populated and also capital city of the state. The city is situated in a charming setting on the edge of hills at an elevation of 1132 meter above the MSL and overlooking the valley and mountain ranges. This is a 113 years old area that stands on the ridges of steep hills with deep gorges and green mountains. Bordered on the north by the rocky hilltop of Durtlang, Aizawl overlooks the sylvan gorge of Tlawng River and blue hills away from the sight.

Aizawl literary means “A field of wild cardamom”, a name that initiated during the time of the Mizo Chief Lalsavunga and Thanruma who had lay down their village nearby the present day Governor Office in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The region, on the other hand, was abandoned when the British set up a military colony named “Fort Aijal” in the beginning of 1890.

Aizawl is linked well by roadways with the rest of the country. Silchar is the most important and nearest major railhead while Lengpui is the nearby airport that connect Aizawl (Mizoram) with Guwahati, Kolkata and Delhi. Aizawl is becoming an important tourist destination day by day. The Durtlang Hill, KV

Paradise, Science Center, State Museum, Bara Bazar, War Memorial, Assembly House, Raj Bhawan, Solomon Temple, Tlangnuam view point, Mizoram University, State Zoo and Sairang picnic spot, etc. are famous for Aizawl Tourism. These are attracting a lot of tourists every year.

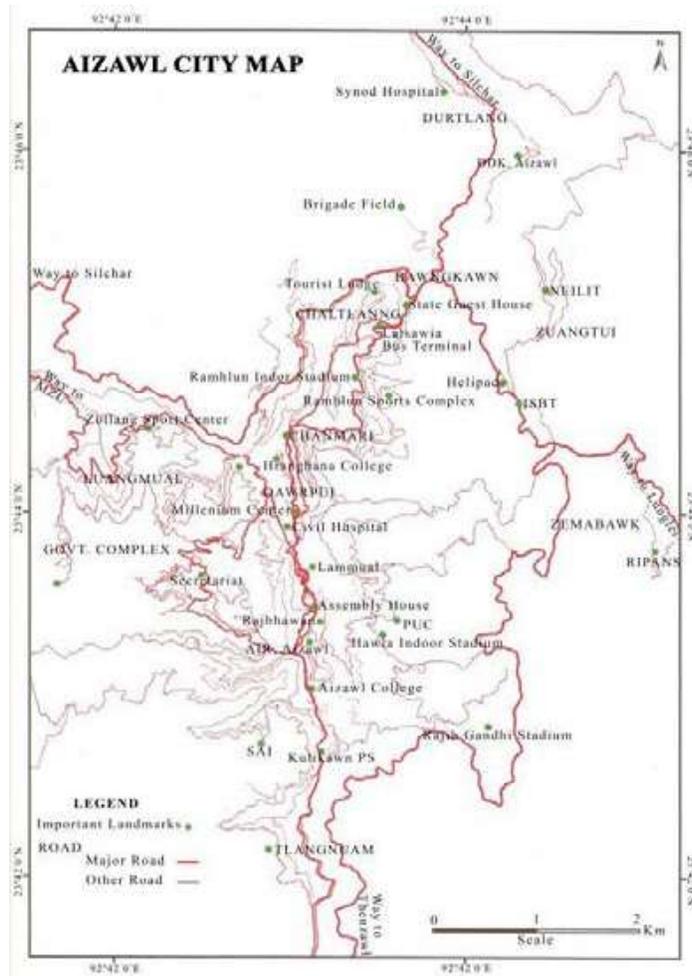


Figure 1 Aizawl City Map

Beside these destinations, there are some other nearby destinations located within the reach of Aizawl with a daylong tour. These are Ailawng-Reiek, Sairang-Lengpui, Falkawn-Hmuifang, Seling-Baktawng, Saitual-Tamdil, and Chalfilh Tlang (peak). These destinations are recognized by the state Tourism Department and can visit by the tourist from Aizawl itself. All these destinations are not too far from the city and these may be tour from Aizawl by different means of convenient transportation. Hence, Aizawl tourism may be a niche of Mizoram tourism.

## **Tourist Circuit**

“A Tourist Circuit is defined as a route on which at least three major tourist destinations are located such that none of these are in the same town, village or city. At the same time they are not separated by a long distance. It should have well defined entry and exit points. A tourist who enters at the entry point should get motivated to visit all the places identified on the circuit” (Chowdhary, 2014).

Tourist circuit designing is about the strategic planning and development of tourism skill of the planner or the host agencies. A circuit may be termed as the selling skill of tourism through a planned route that followed by the traveler. Preparation of circuit is an inclusive method for shaping where trade or tourist destination may turn into an industrial set up that the steps required to achieve that objective of tourism business. A circuit offered inclusive strategic development solutions for betterment of tourism trade and tourist spots which deals with the needs of tourists. It is necessary to realize and identify the unique and outstanding recreation desired by tourist and consider the importance of increasing tourism in a way that supplied the maximum profit to the local investors while preserving the natural resources for future.

The complete set of planning includes access and assessment of destination, master plan, land use & planning, ecological architecture, advertising strategies, selling of tourism skill, conservation and seeing the sights that help to glorify

tourism in any region. Once these characteristics are fulfilled in right way, development of tourism may be a useful tool for motivating economy, improving poverty, preserving biodiversity, safeguarding the culture and ethnicity, and creating job opportunities for the inhabitant.

### **Identification Process of Tourist Circuit**

The Circuit is to be taken up and will be recognized by the Ministry of Tourism at the commencement of every year, in discussion with the local government. While choosing the track, the tourism prospective of the destinations should be considered. It should also be guaranteed that any circuit so branded for each State/UT should be for a Plan stage. A circuit may be restricted to a State or it may be a provincial circuit casing more than a State or Union Territories. The recognition of the plan, the execution bureau, and the mode of the fund transfer could be done in discussion with the local Administration.

### **Methodology**

The present work is based on primary and secondary data. The entire work is about the tourist circuit and destinations and potentials of both in light of Mizoram tourism. The destination information, review of literature, important maps and photographs are collected from secondary sources. On the other hand, tourist demand and tourist potentiality was on the basis of primary survey conducted during the year of 2015. A total number of hundred responses were considered in the present study to reveal

the preferences and destination demand of the tourists. The primary survey took places randomly at different tourist destinations, tourist lodges, hotels, in and around Aizawl city as per the convenient.

The data was calculated to find out the tourist demand in terms of percentage and ranking weightage. Afterwards destinations were classified with four supply components namely, a) popularity, b) accessibility, c) seasonality, and d) importance. Both scores are calculated, and potential destinations were found out with average score of demand plus supply. Afterwards each destination was joined depending upon possible connectivity from the tourist map and calculated their total score depending upon the three important destination's score. Every circuit has its own value with more than two destinations with one line connectivity. Finally highest scored circuits evaluated is identified as the best tourist circuit for Aizawl Tourism. A map of circuit was prepared to display the circuit along with the destinations and roads.

### **Major Destinations in Aizawl Area**

**State Museum :** Mizoram State Museum was established in the year 1977 to give the state an ethnological museum. Today, it stores more than 2500 items, each of which is a proof of the affluent past and ethnic background of Mizoram. Indeed one would find an entire gallery especially devoted to the tribes of Mizoram providing an insight into their lives, their origin, their legacies, their beliefs, their populace and lot more.

**Reiek** : Reiek tlang is a prominent range with few caves in an around. This is located in Mamit district ( $23^{\circ}40'40.38''\text{N}$  and  $92^{\circ}36'11.89''\text{E}$ ) just 32 kms to the west from Aizawl city is a famous mount where Reiek village is situated. This is one of the must visit destination especially for the nature lovers and trekkers.

**Falkawn**: It is a medium size village located near to the Aizawl city. This is less than 30 minutes drive by taxi from the city on way to Hmuifang. The village has high literacy rate and this village has the typical Mizo houses that can give an idea about the history of the Mizos. An example of a typical Mizo village set up along with the Zawlbuk and Chief's House is being built here by the Art and Culture Department.

**Hmuifang**: It is situated at a distance of 52 kms towards south of the Capital city under the Aibawk RD block. Hmuifang Mountain ( $23^{\circ}26'53.14''\text{N}$  and  $92^{\circ}45'30.99''\text{E}$ ) with an altitude of 1619 mts is still enveloped with immense flora of various species kept reserved from the time of the Mizo chiefs.

**Tam Dil**: This is an unique and beautiful tourist spot in the state that located at  $23^{\circ}44'22.20''\text{N}$  and  $92^{\circ}57'8.24''\text{E}$ . Literally "Lake of Mustard", Tam *Dil* (lake) is located near Saitual, approximately 110 kms from Aizawl. This is recognized as a significant pisciculture hub by the Department of Fisheries and an important tourist destination with a tourist resort that constructed by the Tourism Department. Tam *Dil* is one of the most important lakes in the state that visit by a large numbers of tourists. The lake and its adjacent dense forest are home of different species of flora and fauna.

**Baktawng:** Baktawng village is located in Thingsulthliah Tehsil of Serchhip district in Mizoram, India. The village is also famous for Pu Ziona's house which is marked as World's Largest Family. From aizawl it is placed at a distance of 67 km via NH54.

### **Potentiality Analysis**

For effective circuit identification potentiality of destination is needed to be analyzed. Potentiality of destination in an area is in reality the outcome of interaction of visitor claim and supply or accessibility of tourist resources nearby. Tourist requirement in an area can be evaluated through the liking of choice of traveler towards a variety of components of its exceptional attraction with reference to tourism resources. Ferrario (1982) had initiated the comparison and compilation of existing potential resources and the demand of tourists to find the potentiality of any particular area with resource inventory. He derived the formula for potentiality index as:

$$TP = \frac{(A+B)}{2}$$

In this formula, **TP** means the tourist potential, **A**= Demand component (Appeal/ interest based on the tourist); and **B** = Local component or the supply component. Thus tourist potential is an average value of demand and supply of tourists and tourist places in together.

Based on this idea, Bhattacharya (2004) worked to find out the potentiality of different tourist spots of Assam. The

framework was based on the tourist attraction, importance, accessibility, seasonality, popularity and fragility. For assessment of the ‘local availability’ or ‘supply component’ of visitor assets he adopted nominal scale as good, moderate, bad, etc. Following the same method of potentiality determination, tourist spots and later on the circuits can be classified with the calculated score.

With the help of primary survey and interaction tourist demand was analyzed and summarized for better understanding of the attraction or the recreational demand of tourism for the state. For a better planning and development of tourism, an evaluation of the attraction (both manmade and natural) is an urgent need (Bhattacharya, 2004). At present Mizoram has limited scope for recreation tourist. Either the state is less explored from tourism view point or the tourist attractions are limited because of the connectivity, publicity and convenience. Therefore, tourists are more hesitant to visit remote places during their short span of visit (Deka, *et al.* 2014). The listing of criteria was not an easy task. After analyzing the available resources and facilities ten different areas of interest were short listed. The list was given to the tourists in the form of questionnaire to mark their desired. Based on the tourist choice, demand can be described accordingly with their priority. Table 1 shows the recreation demand of tourists with the short listed criteria.

**Table: 1.** Ranking of Tourist Demand

Sl No	Category	Rating	Total Score (in %)	Weightage	
				Score based on %	Rank Based
1	Rural Tourism	1 <sup>st</sup>	48	4.8	8
2	Aizawl Tourism	2 <sup>nd</sup>	33.5	3.35	7
3	Serchhip - Lunglei -Tlabung	3 <sup>rd</sup>	27.75	2.78	6
4	Historical/ Cultural (Champhai)	4 <sup>th</sup>	23.75	2.38	5
5	Scenic Beauty, Landscape, Lake, Wildlife, N.P., etc.	5 <sup>th</sup>	18.5	1.85	4
6	Trekking, Mountaining, Adventure, etc.	6 <sup>th</sup>	11	1.1	3
7	Interstate and International Trip	7 <sup>th</sup>	8	0.8	2
8	Southern Mizoram	8 <sup>th</sup>	4.5	0.45	1

*Source : Primary data collected by the researcher.*

The preferences were valued with percentage. Percentage of tourists favoring of each group of attraction is measured as an index to calculate the consequence of that category. Higher the percentage higher the weightage is marked here. Later on ranked based score was given to each category starting with 8 as top rank score. From the analysis it was found that Mizoram has a great value for its rural tourism. People are eager to see the rural life and traditional Mizo people during their visit.

After identification of demand, it was all about the evaluation of the existing tourist destination. The evaluation was completed with importance, accessibility, seasonality and popularity. The fifth component fragility was ignored for all the destinations considering the spots are non-fragile. In this evaluation process the highest score is 8 as aggregate top score, followed by 4, 2 and 1 in average with four categories depending upon the classification scheme. The classification is completely based on the personnel observation of the researcher and the field experiences and interactions with number of tourists (both domestic and foreigner). Table 2 shows the ranking scheme for tourist supply or local availability.

**Table: 2.** Ranking Scheme of Tourist Destination after Ferrario

Selected category	Rating scale	Weight
Importance	Best	2
	Very good	1
	Average	0.5
	Less appeal	0.25
Accessibility	Perfect	2
	Good	1
	Average	0.5
	Poor	0.25
Seasonality	All time	2
	6 to 9 Months	1
	3 to 6 Months	0.5
	Less than 3 Months	0.25
Popularity	Very popular	2
	Popular	1
	Somehow known	0.5
	Rarely visited	0.25

Afterward the destinations were classified with ‘demand’ and ‘supply’ component. It is essential to note that both the categories are important for any destinations to identify the potential score. Thus the **TP** calculation for nearby tourist spots in Aizawl city was completed accordingly. The following table (no. 3) is showing the detailed calculation of **TP** score for selected destinations.

**Table: 3.** Tourist Destinations nearby Aizawl (after TP index)

Destination	Demand Component								Total	Supply Component				Total	Index
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		A	B	C	D		
Hmuifang	8	7	6	-	4	3	-	-	28	2	1	2	2	7	17.5
Reiek	8	7	-	5	4	3	-	-	27	2	2	1	2	7	17
Aizawl	-	7	-	5	4	3	-	-	19	2	2	2	2	8	13.5
Falkawn	8	7	-	-	4	-	-	-	19	1	2	2	1	6	12.5
Baktawng	8	-	6	-	4	-	-	-	18	1	1	2	2	6	12
Tamdil	-	7	-	5	4	-	-	-	16	2	1	2	2	7	11.5
Ailawng	8	-	-	5	4	-	-	-	17	1	1	2	1	5	11
Lungleng	-	7	-	5	4	-	-	-	16	1	2	2	1	6	11
Sairang	-	7	-	-	4	3	-	-	14	1	2	1	1	5	9.5
Seling	-	-	6	-	4	-	-	1	11	1	2	2	1	6	8.5
State Museum	-	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	2	2	2	2	8	7.5
Lengpui	-	-	-	-	4	-	2	-	6	2	2	2	1	7	6.5
Saitual	-	-	-	5	4	-	-	-	9	0.5	1	1	1	3.5	6.25
Chalfilh	-	-	-	-	4	3	-	-	7	0.5	0.5	0.5	1	2.5	4.8

A total number of fourteen destinations were considered for the tourist potentiality index calculation. The potentiality table revealed Hmuifang as the best potential destinations followed by Reiek and Aizawl. Chalfilh scored least and placed at the bottom of the table. It is important to mention that accessibility and connectivity are the two major hurdles for many of the tourist destinations.

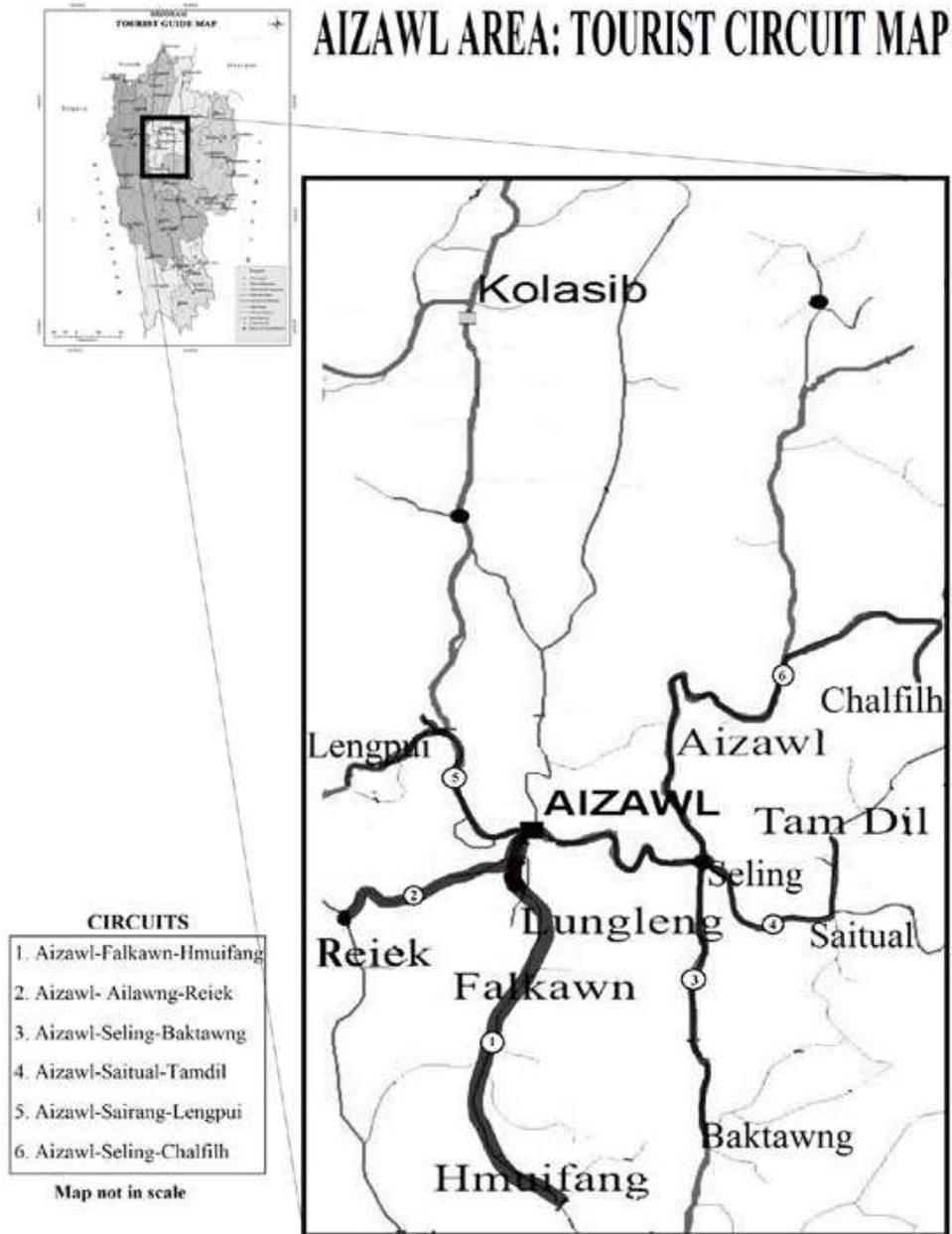
### Marking of Circuit

Based on the above definition and existing road map a circuit may be put forward for a daylong tour. It is important to mention that depending upon the tourism map only circuits are proposed here. Based on the available linkage the following circuits can be proposed:

1. Aizawl-Falkawn-Hmuifang  $(13.5 + 12.5 + 17.5 = 43.5)$  = **44**
2. Aizawl- Ailawng-Reiek  $(13.5 + 17 + 11 = 41.5)$  = **42**
3. Aizawl-Seling-Baktawng  $(13.5 + 8.5 + 12 = 34)$  = **34**
4. Aizawl-Saitual-Tamdil  $(13.5 + 6.25 + 11.5 = 31.25)$  = **31**
5. Aizawl-Sairang-Lengpui  $(13.5 + 9.5 + 6.5 = 29.5)$  = **30**
6. Aizawl-Seling-Chalfilh  $(13.5 + 8.5 + 4.8 = 26.8)$  = **27**

After calculation of the destination score Aizawl-Falkawn-Hmuifang circuit become the highest scoring among the proposed circuits. It is followed by the Aizawl-Ailawng-Reiek circuit. Of course there are many minor destinations which are ignored in the present study. Aizawl city circuit is excluded in the study as it is considered as the niche of all these circuits. On the other hand

to maintain the definition effective commercial place like Seling is considered here as a mid-way resting point in various circuits. Biasness of the destination was tried to avoid considering all major destinations only. This was in the light of govt. recommended/ identified destinations which can be connected as circuit cord.



## Conclusion

Tourism business may be judge against the selling dreams to the visitors by the local. To sell the dreams to the visitors, it must be stunning and realistic. In sponsoring of circuit tourism in Aizawl area, the difficulty is to guarantee that all the tourist spots located in the region are evenly flourishing in three key services namely: class/ quality, reliability and integrity. With the idea above, it is the liability of both private and public segments to draw closer in emerging Rural Tourism development for Aizawl as well as Mizoram with an industrial set up. This will contribute drastically to the state wealth and reduce joblessness, thereby bringing diverse welfare to the general public. The study thus highlighted a clear picture about the overall tourist demand and few probable circuits for Aizawl Tourism. The identification as a result of this study, is expected to help the tour planner as well as the government agencies to identify the possibilities of successful tourism.

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