

MARRIAGE KINSHIP IN THE CUSTOMARY MARRIAGE INSTITUTION IN SEITH NEGERI, AMBON ISLAND

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Abstract

Traditions in indigenous communities on Ambon Island are found in various aspects of life. Relatively, traditions become rules or guidelines for the community to carry out their life activities in the economic, political, legal, socio-cultural, and other fields. Of course, the ancestors placed this effort to avoid irregular living behavior so that the community would feel peace and comfort. Therefore, the basis laid for generations will become a reference for acting and building a life together, such as marriage kinship in the traditional marriage process in Negeri Seith, Ambon Island. Seith, as a Muslim negeri, provides space for the mechanism of customary practices of its community, especially in the tradition of marriage. Therefore, marriage kinship receives recognition and is integrated into marriage religiously. This reality illustrates that traditional and religious institutions do not compete but together contribute to strengthening society and its people who want to build a new household. This research aims to reveal, discover, and analyze the value and meaning of marriage kinship in the traditional marriage process in Negeri Seith. The research method used is qualitative, using interview and observation data collection techniques. Indeed, this is important to show the objective reality of the community carrying out customary rules regulated by ancestors and the provisions of God Almighty through religious institutions. The marriage kinship is the marriage guardian, and the bride-to-be's father's relatives determine that religious marriage will be carried out if it is by these provisions.

Keywords: Siblings, Customary Marriage, Negeri Seith

Abstrak

Tradisi dalam masyarakat adat di Pulau Ambon terdapat dalam berbagai aspek kehidupan. Secara relatif, tradisi menjadi aturan atau pedoman bagi masyarakat untuk menjalankan aktivitas kehidupannya baik di bidang ekonomi, politik, hukum, sosial budaya, dan lain sebagainya. Tentu saja, upaya ini dilakukan oleh para leluhur agar tidak terjadi perilaku hidup yang tidak teratur sehingga masyarakat merasa tenteram dan nyaman. Oleh karena itu, dasar yang telah diletakkan secara turun-temurun akan menjadi acuan dalam bersikap dan membangun kehidupan bersama, seperti kekerabatan perkawinan dalam proses perkawinan adat di Negeri Seith, Pulau Ambon. Seith sebagai negeri yang beragama Islam memberikan ruang bagi mekanisme praktik adat masyarakatnya, khususnya dalam tradisi perkawinan. Oleh karena itu, kekerabatan perkawinan mendapat pengakuan dan terintegrasi dalam perkawinan secara agama. Realitas ini menggambarkan bahwa lembaga adat dan agama tidak saling bersaing, tetapi bersama-sama

memberikan kontribusi untuk memperkuat masyarakat dan masyarakatnya yang ingin membangun rumah tangga baru. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap, menemukan, dan menganalisis nilai dan makna kekerabatan perkawinan dalam proses perkawinan adat di Negeri Seith. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif, dengan menggunakan teknik pengumpulan data wawancara dan observasi. Memang hal ini penting untuk menunjukkan realitas objektif masyarakat yang melaksanakan aturan adat yang diatur oleh leluhur dan ketentuan Tuhan Yang Maha Esa melalui lembaga agama. Kekerabatan perkawinan adalah wali nikah, dan kerabat ayah calon pengantin perempuan menentukan bahwa perkawinan agama akan dilaksanakan jika sesuai dengan ketentuan tersebut.

Kata Kunci: Saudara kandung, Perkawinan Adat, Negeri Seith



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INTRODUCTION

The indigenous people generally understand traditional marriage traditions as sacred, as well as guidelines for them when building a new household.¹ Tradition is understood as a form of culture inherited from generation to generation by the community in a certain area based on the belief system adopted by the community.² Of course, the ancestors place these as basic values and essences to guide the realization of the order of community life in each generation. The uniqueness of these diverse cultures has implications for mindset, behavior, and personal character as a tradition that lives in society.³

In the Batak family, culture is closely related to humans in every daily activity.⁴ Society and culture in Indonesia are very diverse and have different characteristics. As is known, diversity includes language, traditional ceremonies, norms, ceremonies, traditional clothing, art, and so on.⁵ Culture and its existence can be seen in indigenous communities that, until now, still strongly hold and practice customary rules in social life. One of these rules is the marriage ceremony.⁶ Traditional marriage ceremonies that are considered sacred are always related to traditional

¹ Rifai Rifai, Nunuk Suryani, and Akhmad Arif Musadad, "Kalwedo Culture in the Traditional Marriage of the Southwest Moluccas Community," *International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding* 6, no. 1 (2019): 367–72, <https://doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v6i1.622>.

² Abigail Casas Muñoz et al., "Associations between Mental Health Problems and Adverse Childhood Experiences ACEs in Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Mexican Adolescents," *Child Abuse and Neglect* 147 (2024): 1–8, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2023.106595>.

³ Elizabeth Swift, "Narrative Traditions of the Digital St/Age: Learning from Indigenous Cultures," *New Techno Humanities* 30 (2024): 1–8, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techum.2024.01.003>.

⁴ Sri Redatin Retno Pudjiati, Sri Hartati Dewi Reksodiputro, and R. Urip Purwono, "Family Resilience Model: The Influence of Cultural Identity, Coping, Family Strain, Socioeconomic Status, and Community Support on Family Resilience among the Batak Toba Ethnic Group," *Makara Human Behavior Studies in Asia* 25, no. 2 (2021): 153–69, <https://doi.org/10.7454/hubs.asia.1131121>.

⁵ Endang Fatmawati, "Strategies to Grow a Proud Attitude towards Indonesian Cultural Diversity," *Linguistics and Culture Review* 5, no. S1 (2021): 810–20, <https://doi.org/10.21744/lingcure.v5ns1.1465>.

⁶ Elsina Titaley and Aholiab Watloly, "The Cultural Values of the Island'S Indigenous People," *Sosiohumaniora* 23, no. 3 (2021): 313, <https://doi.org/10.24198/sosiohumaniora.v23i3.28235>.

ceremonies.⁷ As is known, a customary marriage is considered valid and recognized by the community if it has been marked as a traditional marriage.⁸

As is known, marriage is an important moment in every human life. Marriage itself is formed by natural elements of human life, including biological needs and functions, giving birth to offspring, the need for affection and brotherhood, and nurturing these children into perfect members of society.⁹ Likewise, in the Minangkabau customary tradition, marriage is an important event in the human life cycle. It is a very meaningful transitional situation to form a new small family group of descendants.¹⁰ The existence of indigenous peoples with their various traditions and environments established and inherited by their ancestors does not ignore the existence of modern religion as a form of belief and trust in the almighty God. Therefore, the community is individually institutionalized and integrated into itself, such as the marriage of the Banjar people in South Kalimantan, where these three institutionalized elements are integrated into a unified view of their life.¹¹

In Lampung culture, the relationship between Islamic religious beliefs and local community culture is like two sides of a coin that cannot be separated.¹² Therefore, this form of fusion shows the characteristics of a syncretic culture.¹³ According to Islamic teachings, marriage is a form of worship for a Muslim because a person is assumed to be able to carry out the mandate to bring and direct his family to the right path in marriage.¹⁴ Islamic teachings also provide space for the role of customs in carrying out marriage events to their adherents.¹⁵

⁷ Rashwet Shrinkhal, “‘Indigenous Sovereignty’ and Right to Self-Determination in International Law: A Critical Appraisal,” *AlterNative* 17, no. 1 (2021): 71–82, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1177180121994681>.

⁸ Robert Charles G. Capistrano, “Reclaiming the Ancestral Waters of Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines: The Tagbanua Experience with Fishing Rights and Indigenous Rights,” *Marine Policy* 34, no. 3 (2010): 453–60, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2009.09.012>.

⁹ Guy C. Charlton, Xiang Gao, and Da Wei Kuan, “The Law Relating to Hunting and Gathering Rights in the Traditional Territories of Taiwan’s Indigenous Peoples,” *Asia Pacific Law Review* 25, no. 2 (2017): 125–48, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10192557.2017.1403792>.

¹⁰ Akhyar Hanif et al., “Sociological Studies Minangkabau Traditional Marriage,” *Melayu Arts and Performance Journal* 6, no. 1 (2023): 96, <https://doi.org/10.26887/mapj.v6i1.3739>.

¹¹ Prayudi Rahmatullah et al., “Maantar Jujuran Tradition in Banjarnese: Increasing Social Status or Maintaining Values,” *MEDIA SYARIAH: Wahana Kajian Hukum Islam Dan Pranata Sosial* 25, no. 1 (2023): 51–66, <https://doi.org/10.22373/jms.v25i1.14921>.

¹² Hardika Saputra et al., “Islamic Acculturation and Local Culture (The Symbolism of the Community Life Cycle Ceremony Lampung Pepadun),” *International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding* 8, no. 11 (2021): 679–85, <https://doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v8i11.3455>.

¹³ Francis Marimbe, “Exploring Cultural Hybridity Branded by Convergence and Syncretism in the Characteristic Features of the Pentecostal Charismatic Churches in Zimbabwe: Implications for Spiritual and Material Well-Being,” *Religions* 15, no. 1 (2024): 1–23, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15010102>.

¹⁴ Faurani Santi Singagerda, “Islamic Integralism and Muakhi Culture: The Relevance of Philosophical Values of Local Culture and Lampung Community Development,” *International Journal of Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity* 11, no. 3 (2020): 1880–92.

¹⁵ Syahril Jamil et al., “Changes in Islamic Society and Culture in Customary Marriage Within the Uluan Musi Community,” *Journal of Population and Social Studies* 32, no. December 2023 (2023): 107–29, <https://doi.org/10.25133/JPSSV322024.007>.

It resembles the traditional marriage ceremony in Negeri Seith, Ambon Island. All people of this region adhere to Islam. In Negeri Seith, the customary marriage tradition known as "Malua Ela-Maina Ulu" is considered sacred by the local community. The meaning of this tradition is recognized as a form of rules laid down by the ancestors for the benefit of the community in the past, present, and future. The process of traditional marriage tradition in Negeri Seith has a uniqueness that is somewhat different from other Negeri on Ambon Island. Before marriage, both bride and groom are required to have a marriage kinship. The initial observations found that if the bride and groom had not found or determined a marriage kinship, the traditional marriage process could not be carried out. This shows that marriage kinship is a special and mandatory prerequisite for traditional marriage in Negeri Seith. This condition certainly illustrates that for the local community, this prerequisite is important and has become institutionalized in the socio-cultural system of their lives.

Based on the above reality, this research explores the community's understanding of marriage kinship. The intended understanding is that the perspective, process, meaning, and cultural values contribute to the community's behavior, which continues to obey, inherit, and preserve today. On the other hand, this research also seeks to analyze the socio-cultural life of the indigenous people of Negeri Seith so that it can get a concept of the construction of people's thoughts on marriage kinship in the customary marriage institution.

This research focuses on the existence of siblings and their role in the traditional marriage tradition of the Negeri Seith community. Referring to the focus of the research, the achievements and objectives to be studied are as follows: 1) How is the status of marriage kinship determined in traditional marriage? 2). What is the role and function of marriage kinship in traditional marriage? 3). What is the cultural value of marriage kinship in traditional marriages?

The first research question was raised to discover the mechanisms and ways the community determines marriage kinship. Exploring this question will provide an overview of the background and origin of marriage kinship in customary marriage. These questions will also be the basis for further exploring the role and function of marriage kinship and finding the cultural value of marriage kinship in the reality of community life towards traditional marriage in Negeri Seith.

RESEARCH METHODS

The approach used to reveal the objective reality of this research is qualitative. The qualitative approach was chosen because this research aimed to explore the information and knowledge of the Negeri Seith community about siblings in traditional marriages. It uses an emic perspective, namely the perspective from the side of the community under study, to capture what

they do and experience, what they feel, and even what they think. This perspective is needed to trace the reality of the Negeri Seith community.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Mechanism for Determining Marriage Kinship

Marriage kinship, in the tradition of the Negeri Seith community, is a special prerequisite for young couples who want to agree to build a new household. Even if this prerequisite is agreed upon together, it becomes a custom carried out by the local community. It is known that this provision has been practiced since the life of ancestors, even though this practice took place before the presence of religion adopted by the local community. Therefore, marriage kinship in the Negeri Seith Community is part of the customary institutional tradition and is a provision that must be obeyed by people living in the Negeri's territorial area. Marriage kinship is generally found only among the people of Negeri Seith who live in the local area. Negeri Seith's people who live outside the territorial area of this Negeri are not required to practice it unless the marriage ritual is implemented in the Negeri.

The interpretation of the status of a marriage kinship is generally understood by other communities in the marriage process, such as a marriage guardian or a witness to the marriage. However, marriage kinship is not usually determined by the general community. The habit of determining the marriage kinship/guardian/witness of marriage occurs with the consent of the prospective bride and groom who will marry. Therefore, it is found that the determination is based on friendship relationships, close relationships outside of kinship, and so on.¹⁶ For this reason, the mechanism and substance of the marriage kinship in Negeri Seith can be explained as follows.

1. Determination of Marriage Kinship

Determining marriage kinship in Negeri Seith is an obligation that the bride-to-be must fulfill. This means that determining the marriage kinship takes place in the nuclear family of the bride-to-be. When the two prospective couples agree to unite in the bonds of the household, the engagement process is carried out by the prospective groom's family to the prospective bride's family. At this stage, the agreement between the two families takes place; the agreement is in the form of determining the date of marriage and the payment of the dowry.

Based on the agreement, the woman's nuclear family determines the time of the meeting of families with kinship ties, both to the male and female parents. At this stage, in addition to discussing various preparations for the wedding ceremony, the most important thing is to

¹⁶ M Yasin Soumena et al., "Pemberlakuan Aturan Perkawinan Adat dalam Masyarakat Islam Leihetu-Ambon (Analisis Antro-Sosiologi Hukum)," *Jurnal Hukum Diktum* 10, no. 1 (2012): 40–51.

determine the marriage kinship as a prerequisite for the wedding ceremony. Therefore, the determination of the marriage kinship is generally played more by the relatives of the father of the bride-to-be.

By the mechanism of the customary traditions of the local community, the specified marriage kinship comes from the female lineage of the father's relatives 2 (two) or more generations above. This can be exemplified by at least one male descendant (son/grandson/great-grandson and so on) of the grandfather's sister or above who has married into another clan and is felt to have psychological abilities or maturity in behavior and action so that he can be used as a role model for the couple who will marry. Usually, those chosen as marriage kin are relatives who almost no longer know and recognize each other. Therefore, the agreement to trace the genealogy of female descendants from paternal relatives is carried out carefully. The determination of marriage kinship based on this description can explain the Maluku community in general, and even Seith adheres to the patrilineal lineage, where the male lineage is the heir to the identity of the next generation. It can be seen in the inheritance of identity from descendants. Ideally, the child's surname in the family uses the father's surname.

2. The Request For Willingness To Be Marriage Kinship

After passing through the stages of meeting paternal relatives, tracing female descendants, and determining the marriage kinship, the next step is to ask for the willingness of the person concerned based on the results of the agreement. The process of requesting willingness is carried out by the father and mother and the father's siblings of the prospective bride by visiting the prospective marriage kinship to convey the purpose of the results of the collective agreement. At the meeting, there were 2 (two) main things conveyed: first, informing that the daughter would get married and the time of her marriage, and second, asking for willingness to become a married kin.

At this stage, it is relatively common that when someone is asked for willingness, there is never a refusal, even though the status of a marriage kinship implies a big responsibility for the bride and groom's household journey forever. According to the local community tradition, when the bride and groom are legalized in the marriage contract process, the marriage kinship is fully responsible in addition to the bride's biological parents. Responsibility is meant both in moral and material aspects, meaning that the joys and sorrows or household problems in the future will also be part of what is faced and felt by the marriage kinship. On the other hand, this willingness to accept is also a form of awareness of the existence of the status of the kinship relationship between them according to the lineage based on the rules of the traditional customs of the Negeri Seith community, as previously explained. For this reason, at this stage, the marriage kin will be proud of the trust given to him.

In addition, the reality of the trust and responsibility given is not only individual but the collectivity of relatives of the marriage kinship. It means that the extended family of the marriage kin shares the future household journey of the bride-to-be.¹⁷ Therefore, after being asked for the willingness to take the initiative step, the marriage kin gathers other relatives based on their lineage to convey this information and prepare various things to welcome the marriage ceremony. This is the first step in the form of a sense of solidarity from the relatives of the marriage kin towards the household journey of the bride and groom who are getting married.¹⁸

3. Enforcement of Sanctions For No Marriage Kinship

Determining marriage kinship in the customary tradition of marriage in Negeri Seith is an obligation when the community is about to get married. Generally, this obligation has been known and recognized as an absolute prerequisite for generations, so when the daughter of a negeri girl gets married, the parents and core relatives will discuss and determine the girl's marriage kin.

Determining the marriage kinship through the mechanisms and provisions set by the ancestors has become a habit before the wedding; for this reason, usually in addition to preparing for the implementation of the marriage reception, the most important thing is to identify and search for the determination of the marriage kinship in advance.¹⁹ This step is in addition to being aware of the bond as a child of the Negeri's customs to its customary traditions. However, the most important thing is that marriage kinship is determined according to customary mechanisms, which is a special prerequisite for the marriage contract process to take place in religious institutions. If this has not been done, then the marriage contract cannot be implemented. According to the provisions of the religious institution in Negeri Seith, the marriage will be postponed until the marriage kin is determined and the marriage kin jointly follows the process.

This reality shows the ability of the people of Negeri Seith to see the importance of the customary traditions of the local community being given space in the practice of religious institutions. The existence of people who have dual status, both as customary children and religious believers, gives recognition to each other's existence. In this regard, this reality is relatively not found in other indigenous communities on Ambon Island, especially in the Leihitu jurisdiction, where building a new household by the community is based on the provisions of local institutions that are adhered to and believed to be an inseparable value unit.

¹⁷ S. Sadiani, "Duit Turus: A Solution to Conflicts in Dayak Traditional Marriages," *Utopia y Praxis Latinoamericana* 25, no. Extra 6 (2020): 249–56, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3987616>.

¹⁸ D. H. Currie, "'Here Comes the Bride': The Making of a 'modern Traditional' Wedding in Western Culture," *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 24, no. 3 (1993): 403–21, <https://doi.org/10.3138/jcfs.24.3.403>.

¹⁹ Jessica Feinburg, "Exposing the Traditional Marriage Agenda," *Northwestern Journal of Law & Social Policy* 7, no. 2 (2012): 351.

The practice has been maintained until now. Therefore, the reality of the life of the people of Negeri Seith from the past until now shows the level of compliance and illustrates the community's regularity in behaving towards customary rules and religious teachings (Islam). Negeri Seith is also recognized as a negeri with strong customary resources to maintain and practice it according to its implementation designation compared to neighboring negeri. It also has other traditions that are consistently practiced.

The Role and Function of Marriage Kinship.

The marriage kinship determined for the bride-to-be at the time of the marriage contract has a role and function. The status of the marriage kinship according to the concept built in community knowledge according to customary traditions can be identified in 2 (two) parts, namely the role and function during the process and after the implementation of the marriage ceremony. The details are as follows:

1. The Role and Function of the Marriage Kinship Before and During the Marriage Ceremony

According to religious institutions in Negeri Seith, one of the requirements for implementing the marriage contract is having a marriage kinship. The status of a marriage kinship has the function and role of being a guardian or witness in marriage, as is known to determine the marriage kinship through a real mechanism. The fundamental thing is to play a role in accompanying the prospective bride and groom who will get married. The form of assistance is to support and assist in later fulfilling the needs of marriage. When asked, the awareness of this has become an obligation, and he expressed his willingness to become the marriage kinship.

Therefore, as the wedding approaches, the marriage kin and their relatives will be involved in preparing the wedding event, thus showing that the burden or responsibility of the event is not only handled by the core relatives of the bride-to-be. Even though they are related by origin, their joint involvement is a form of moral responsibility arising from their status as marriage kin.

In addition, the role of the marriage kin in implementing the marriage contract ceremony is to accompany the bride-to-be. This role is carried out in addition to fulfilling religious institutional requirements, namely being accompanied by marriage kin according to custom. The most important prerequisite for legitimizing the marriage contract process as a witness is That marriage kin plays a very important role and function because its presence in the process supports the official formation of a new household, both in formal law and religion.

2. The Role and Function of Marriage Kin after Marriage

After the marriage contract process, the status of marriage kinship will still be maintained, and a relationship will be formed with the newly formed household. The common bond between the new family, the married kin, and their relatives is not limited by time and even involves subsequent descendants; this relationship will last forever.

The initial role and function of the marriage kin after the marriage ceremony is to provide nine necessities to the husband and wife who have just built a household. The necessities come from relatives (younger siblings, older siblings, children, and parents) of the marriage kin; this action takes place by mutual agreement so that the material given is the responsibility of each of them. This action shows the role and function of the wedding relatives in providing a guarantee of physical life underlying the household's journey, which is their responsibility in addition to the biological parents of the two husband and wife.

Other roles and functions will continue at subsequent times in the form of moral and material assistance. Moral assistance can be explained in the form of the involvement of married kin in providing encouragement or motivation and assistance when, at certain times, they are faced with household problems. Providing reinforcement and solutions is a concrete act of implementing moral assistance; of course, in this section, the problems faced by the household are the joint responsibility of the married kin with their relatives. Meanwhile, material assistance is generally in the form of assistance with objects of economic value when carrying out circumcision events, weddings, and others. Usually, actions in the form of moral and material assistance are carried out by relatives of married kin but reciprocally when relatives of married kin face the same thing. The assistance provided is voluntary and not forced according to the family's economic situation.²⁰

The Cultural Value of Marriage Kinship in the Perspective of the People of Negeri Seith

The meaning of marriage kinship in the customary marriage tradition has cultural values or concepts as part of the perspective of the people of Negeri Seith towards the traditions established by their ancestors in the past. The importance of the practice of marriage kinship can be found in several ways. **First**, it restores the social relations of kinship and forms new social cohesion. The mechanism for determining the marriage kinship is according to the kinship relationship of sisters in 2 (two) generations or more from the lineage of the father of the prospective bride whose kinship relationship is felt to have weakened. It means that the intimacy of kinship relations is relatively invisible. Therefore, the determination of marriage kinship is

²⁰ Bakadzi Moeti, Setlhom Koloi-Keaikitse, and Hildah L. Mokgolodi, "Married Women's Lived Experiences on the Value of Traditional Premarital Counseling 'Go Laya' on Marital Stability in Botswana," *Family Journal* 25, no. 3 (2017): 247–56, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1066480717710951>.

generally aimed at descendants who hardly know each other. In this form of cultural value, the Negeri Seith community, in its tradition, considers the existence of the female lineage. **Second**, community customary traditions are accommodated as prerequisites for religious marriage. The form of unification and the level of acceptance to complement each other can be seen in the marriage process in Negeri Seith. The religious marriage process cannot be carried out if the marriage partner is not present at the wedding; of course, this reality illustrates the integration of local institutions to mutually recognize the mechanisms of marriage rules in each institution. Of course, this provides a value that 2 (two) local institutions that live and are obeyed by the community show the concept of accepting each other in the marriage process.

CONCLUSION

Determining the marriage kinship in a traditional marriage in Negeri Seith is an obligation carried out by the bride-to-be. Based on the customary traditions of the Negeri Seith community, the marriage kin is determined from the descendants of female relatives of the father 2 (two) or more generations above. The marriage kin's responsibility for the journey of the newly married bride and groom's household, both morally and materially, lasts forever. This responsibility applies not only to a person who has the status of a marriage kin at the time of the implementation of traditional marriage but, collectively, to the relatives of the marriage kinship. Determining marriage kin based on customary mechanisms is a prerequisite for marriage in religious institutions. The cultural value of the marriage kinship is to provide a form of rebuilding kinship and social cohesion towards the lineage of female relatives from the father of the bride-to-be. Therefore, the chosen marriage kin generally tends to be reserved for those who seem to have relatively diminished kinship interaction relationships.

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