

THE HISTORY OF INTERACTION BETWEEN THE NATURE AND NOMADS: THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE PROBLEM OF ETHNOECOLOGY FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: The article highlights the problems of historiography in the history of studying the interaction between nomads and nature and subsequently the formation of a separate scientific discipline as ethnoecology. The entire historiographic complex is divided into periods. Each period is distinguished by the unique nature of researches both as the notes of travelers, on the example of Chinese ones, and serious studies of ethnologists, anthropologists and ecologists of the XIX-XX centuries. Within the period from the Middle Ages to modern times, researchers tried to study the life, social system and occupation of nomadic breeders, as well as the causes of the birth of nomad studies.

Keywords: Ethnoecology, ethnoecosystems, interdisciplinary researches, nomad studies, Central Asia.

INTRODUCTION

The history of formation of ethnic ecology or ethnoecology occupies a special place in interdisciplinary researches of ethnologists, culturologists, ecologists, philosophers and politologists. A great contributor and founder of ethnoecology in the post-Soviet space is V.I. Kozlov (Kozlov, 1983). According to V.I. Kozlov, ethnoecology "... aims to study the characteristics of traditional life-support systems for ethnic groups and ethnoses as a whole in the natural and socio-cultural conditions of their habitat, as well as the influence of existing ecological interrelations on human health; the study of the specifics of natural environment use by the ethnoses and their interaction on this environment, the traditions of rational nature management, the patterns of formation and functioning of ethnoecosystems" (Kozlov, 1994).

In the period of formation of a new direction as ethnoecology the following concepts were developed:

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1. economical-cultural types and historical-cultural areas;
2. culture as a means for ethnic communities to adapt to the conditions of natural and social environment (including the ideas about the culture of life support, ecophilic and ecophobic features of culture, etc.);
3. anthropogeocoenosis or ecosystem (i.e., concepts about local communities with traditional culture as components of a sole ecosystem associated with its biotic and abiotic components, primarily with the flows of matter and energy passing through food chains);
4. population longevity as an indicator of successful adaptation of local community to the natural and social conditions.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Scientific and local lore literature was used as source of research, including historical documents; historical chronicles, newspaper and magazine publications; reference books; internet sources; scientific research on history, culture, ethnology, anthropology, ethnic ecology of pre-revolutionary, soviet, domestic, Russian and foreign researchers.

The research is based on the principles of scientific historical knowledge - historicism, objectivity, comprehensiveness; empirical methods were used: the study of documents and literature; theoretical methods: historical, logical; analysis, synthesis, explanation and generalization.

DISCUSSION

The existence of domestic ethnoecology should be counted from 1983, when the relevant article of V.I. Kozlov was published (Kozlov, 1983). A similar conclusion follows directly from his reference-review article (Kozlov, 1994).

So, at the first stage of its development, ethnoecology of the 1980s was actually limited to the staff of Ethnography Institute of Academy of Sciences of the USSR.

Since the mid-1990s the next important stage in the development of ethnic ecology begins, marked by its exit beyond the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of Russian Academy of Sciences (IEA RAS), as well as by new fundamentally important studies of the Institute's staff. Thus, the doctoral candidate from Kazakhstan N.E. Massanov, who later returned home, finished his thesis research at the IEA RAS. His consultants were S.A. Arutyunov and V.I. Kozlov.

During the same period, active use of ethnoecological approaches in the studies of the peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East begins, but a separate large-scale study would be required for their review, especially since such works continued actively in the 2000s, and the authors became not only the staff of the IEA RAS.

RESULTS

The entire historiography on the problem of formation of interaction between nature and man, and then a separate science - ethnoecology can be divided into several groups:

1. Studies devoted to the period of the Middle Ages - oriental publications and works of medieval researchers;
2. Pre-revolutionary Russian historiography;
3. Soviet historiography;
4. Foreign historiography;
5. Modern Russian and Kazakhstan historiography.

The first group is the studies of the early Middle Ages. The theme of interaction between the man and nature has regularly sounded in works on art of the East countries as one of the most important sources of inspiration for artists, writers, and poets (Chinese, 1984).

The significance of nature in the writings of historians was more modest: as a rule, it was considered by them as nothing more than a resource base of human society. Only in the last two decades, when, against the backdrop of the rapidly deteriorating quality of the natural environment, environmental problems have become seriously worried not only by professional ecologists, but also by humanitarian scholars, including historians, culturologists, ethnologists and philosophers. In Russia, as well as in the West, their opinions about the cultural causes of ecological crisis and the need to investigate and use the cultural potential of Asia began to be expressed by orientalists: "Studying the heritage of Oriental culture from ecological positions leads us to realize the need for a radical change in habitual thinking, that the ecologization of science, in this case the oriental studies, is the imperative of time. The duty of Orientalists is to contribute to the discovery of ecological potencies of the East culture for the mankind survival, for the sake of creating the life itself" (Lapina Z.G., 1991).

In recent years, the number of Oriental publications touching on the issues of nature management, environmental crises of the past, the adaptation of human collectives to the natural environment, has grown rapidly. The Department of Oriental History of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences prepared a collection of articles devoted entirely to the issues of man's perception of nature in the East (Man and Nature, 2004). Nevertheless, the problem of the influence of society on the environment in a historical retrospective has not yet been fully studied. Central Asia in this respect is still a "white spot", although a lot has been published about it.

Observations over the life of Central Asian nomads began long before the emergence not only of ethnic ecology as a branch of knowledge, but also of

ethnography in general. The first to record and, in their own way, try to explain the regularities observed in the steppes were Chinese historiographers and philosophers. The authors of the Han period were very fruitful, who coincided in time with the unification of nomadic peoples in the powerful empire of Xiongnu: Sima Tsian (145-87 BC) (Kuner N.V., 1961) and Ban Gu (32-92), and later Fan E (368-445). As it is known, the Chinese ideology recognized as real people only inhabitants of the "Middle State", and considered others as "barbarians", only outwardly like people, but with the hearts of wild animals. From this worldview platform, Chinese thought studied nomadic neighbors. Despite the emphatically disparaging attitude, more or less objective records were made in China about the lifestyle and beliefs of nomads of the Northern Desert, the names of the lands to the north of the Great Wall. The nomadic life was designated by the standard phrase applied to various peoples of the steppes, Turkic and Mongolian: "They roam with their cattle in search of grass and water." Characteristics of nomads changed little in Chinese writings over the centuries. In Europe, this information became available rather late thanks to translations (often not very accurate retellings) of J. Maya (chronicle of "Tongjiangangmu", the XII century), S. Julien, N. Ya. Bichurin, V.P. Vasilyev, E. Shavann, P. Pelliot, L. Viger. There were many ethno-ecological materials in the excerpts from Chinese writings published by these authors, although the term "ecology" itself appeared only in 1866. From the point of view of nomad studies, for Russian and part of Western scholars of the time they were not a revelation, since the researchers could directly observe the nomadic life on the southern and south-eastern borders of the growing Russian empire: in the Kalmyk and Kazakh steppes, in Altai and Buryatia. However, in this way, the world of ancient and medieval inhabitants of Central Asia, their customs, legends, beliefs and their history were discovered for science. In the second half of the XX century along with the publications of Chinese chronicles in the original language, their selective commentary translations into European languages appeared with information about the Central Asian nomads (Malov S.E., 1983).

Additional information is provided by the socio-political, philosophical and other literature of ancient and medieval China. From authentic sources, there are inscriptions of ancient Turks and Uighurs. The events of the First Türkic Kaganate were reflected in the Sogdon-speaking Bugut stele from Central Mongolia. The inscriptions on the Kosho-Tsaidam monuments of the Second Turkic Kaganate, erected in honor of Bilge-kagan and Kul-tegin, as well as on the stele in honor of Tonyukuk, discovered to the east of Nalaih, are very informative. Since the decipherment of the ancient Türkic runic writing by the Danish scientist V. Thomsen in 1893 and the classical works of V.V. Radlov, P.M. Melioranskiy, V. Bang, G.I. Ramstedt, H.N. Orkun, the world Turkish studies has accumulated a vast amount of knowledge (Klyashtorniy S.G., 1964). A significant number of runic inscriptions have been published, translated and thoroughly analyzed by S.G. Klyashtorniy.

Runes rendered invaluable assistance in the reconstruction of world picture of the rulers in Central Asian steppes in the 6th – 9th centuries. It also contains information on the life of nomads, not distorted by Chinese historiography.

The data of written monuments of this epoch are supplemented by ethnolinguistic materials of Mahmud Kashgarskiy (Mahmud al-Kashgari, 2005) (the XI century), in addition to the interpretation of Turkic words and expressions, the poems by different authors, folklore, and sometimes stories on this or that subject are cited. There is considerable interest in his description of certain concepts (Tengri, 12-year calendar cycle, yat – fortune-telling with the help of special stones), and the vocabulary articles themselves disclose the smallest details of the life of Turkic peoples, although more often they speak of settled Turkic-speaking inhabitants of East Turkestan, Middle Asia and Semirechie. Scientists often involve materials contained in the runic “Book of Fortune-telling” (“Yurbitig”) which was discovered in Dunhuang by the expedition of A. Stein.

The Europe met medieval Mongols within much less “academic” circumstances. During the Mongol invasion in Russia and Eastern Europe, the need to confront the threat forced the Europeans to collect reliable information about these uninvited “horsemen of the devil”. In the second half of the XIII century Plano Carpini, Rubrouck, Marco Polo and other Europeans who visited Central Asia provided unique information, and these people, as representatives of a different culture, carefully looked at the way of life of nomads and noted all its nuances up to trifles. We owe these authors the most important information, among which there was also some place for describing the relationship of nomads with nature: the features of their nomadic life, hunting and animistic representations (Travels to Eastern countries, 1997).

Rashid ad-Din preserved very valuable information about the life and customs of the ancient Mongolian tribes. Having access to information, both verbally transmitted and, probably, kept in not-reached records, he was able to depict the legendary past of the Mongols and give a very realistic picture of their way of life before unification under the rule of Genghis Khan, and also left extremely informative notes about the nomads of his time (Rashid ad-Din, 1952).

Not less informative, although later introduced into science the primary source - “The Secret History of the Mongols”, rightfully deserving the epithet of “encyclopedia of nomadic life,” allows us to see the steppe of the XIII century as seen by the eyes of a Mongol. There is no systematic description of the Mongolian customs, but what is present is a real storehouse of information not only about the personality of Genghis Khan himself, about military campaigns and the formation of a unified Mongolia, but also about the everyday life of Mongolian nomads, their livestock, hunting and side uses. There are several dozen editions of The Secret History in different languages; the translation of S.A. Kozin still does not fade in importance in domestic science (Kozin S.A., 1941). A valuable addition to this

work is the “Golden Legend” by Lubsan Danzan (mid-17th century), two-thirds consisting of a retelling of the “Secret Legend”. Additional information can be found in the writings of the Arab historian Ibn al-Athir (1160-1233), the personal secretary of the last from the dynasty of Khorezmshahs Shihab al-Din Muhammad al-Nasavi (the XIII century), a Persian official at the Mongol service Ata -Malica Juvaini (1225-1283) and some other Arab and Persian authors.

Although the history of nomad studies is more than 250 years old, for a long time environmental issues have been given little place in it. Researchers were most likely occupied with understanding the reasons for the formation of nomadic empires and the onslaught of nomads on cultivated land (Yakubovskiy A.Yu., 1953). At the same time, negative for the cultural landscapes, the consequences of the invasions by the nomads did not cause doubts (Pershitz A.I., 1998), although for the sake of objectivity it should be noted that the appearance of nomads did not necessarily entail destruction. For example, Uighurs, coming to the south of Siberia, built fortresses, laid roads, created irrigation canals and cultivated land.

If the information about the consequences of the invasion of nomads into the sedentary world was available in sources that were gradually put into circulation, what was happening in those days with the wild nature of the steppes themselves remained unclear. Very little was known about what was happening in Central Asia and in the Modern Times, when the second group, pre-revolutionary Russian historiography, was taking shape.

In the pre-revolutionary period, a significant contribution to the discovery of the internal parts of the Asian continent was made by the great Russian traveler N.M. Przhevalskiy, who in 1870-1885 carried out four expeditions in Central Asia with a total length of about 31,550 km and collected colossal natural science and ethnographic material. Then followed the expeditions by G.N. Potanin, the brothers G.E. and V.E. Grumm-Grzhimailo, M.V. Pevtsov, V.I. Roborovskiy, P.K. Kozlov, A.M. Pozdneev, V.A. Obruchev and other Russian researchers. Since 1873, European and American specialists began to study Central Asia. In the initial period of research, figuratively called as “epic” by N.M. Przhevalskiy, the peoples inhabiting it still used traditional methods of management, which were documented by travelers (Przhevalskiy N.M., 1946). Good training and erudition allowed the pioneers to accurately interpret the features of the way of life and economy of the nomads of this vast territory on the eve of decisive socio-economic changes.

Turning to the third group of studies for the Soviet historiography, it should be noted here that a revision of the prevailing views occurred in the first third of the twentieth century in connection with the penetration of Marxist methodology into the Soviet nomad studies. It was also dictated by the needs of practice: the building of the material base of communism and the upbringing of a man of a new formation required mass collectivization and familiarization with proletarian culture. Nomadism went against these requirements. In Soviet historical science

prevailed the doctrine of formations, greatly underestimated the importance of the environment. Published in those years and became a chrestomathy by B.Ya. Vladimirtsov (Vladimirtsov B.Ya., 1934) described in detail the nomadism, but its causes were not revealed. Science tried to distance itself from biologic manifestations and geographical determinism, trying to explain the phenomenon of nomadism by the weak development of productive forces. It was believed that their strengthening should lead the nomads to a settled way of life. The arguments of P.N. Lukyanov in his response to the work of M. Tubyanskiy and other scientists who understood the causes and mechanisms of the nomadic way of life of the Mongols were demonstrative. Quite in the spirit of the times, distorting the facts and juggling with citations arbitrarily chosen from the publications of his opponents, the author in particular wrote: "All countries passed the nomadic phase, then settled in a certain place, began to engage in agriculture and other branches of labor" (Lukyanov P.N., 1939). With regard to nomad Mongols, he expressed the same ideas that owned the minds of many of his contemporaries in the USSR: "We must create conditions for a higher, cultural system of livestock (pastures, watering, etc.) and this need to obey the nature, escape from its forces and not to fight with it will disappear and Mongolian peasants will not be subordinated to nature, escape from its forces, but will fight with nature, subordinate it to itself and force it to serve man" (Kradin N.N., 2007). Basically, a person is able not only to re-design the nomadic economy to fully sedentary, but also to create a magnificent garden in the desert. The question is only in price. However, the visibility of success is easier to create by methods of violent sedentarization. In regions where traditional nomadic cattle breeding was the foundation of society's livelihoods - in Mongolia and Kazakhstan - this attempt to ignore the laws of nature entailed innumerable human, economic and environmental losses. In the Marxist literature, the nomads were not very popular, as they did not fit into the doctrine of formations. Disputes about them broke out in connection with the discussion about the "Asian mode of production" in the mid-1950s. At the same time, the attention of most nomadic scholars was focused on the problems of social system of nomads and the question of what to regard as a means of production in nomadic societies - land or livestock.

The fourth group of studies is foreign historiography. Being less ideologically charged, Western science did not diminish the role of the natural factor in existence of nomadism. In the 1950s works appeared in the West specifically dedicated to the environmental conditioning of the nomadic way of life. Subsequently, the subject of research in this area has expanded; domestic experts involved in its development.

In modern historiography, the theme of interconnection between people and nature in a nomadic way of life received more or less complete coverage in Russian and Kazakh works by G.E. Markov, S.A. Pletneva, N.E. Massanov, A.M. Khazanov, D. Kshibekov and other nomadic scholars who approached these questions from various methodological positions. Among the researchers there is no consensus on

the self-sufficiency of the nomadic economy or its fatal dependence on sedentary neighbors, but what practically all of them agree is that the nomadic way of life does not contribute to the accumulation of material goods. According to the famous aphoristic expression of O. Lattimore, the real nomad is a poor nomad (Lattimore O., 1936). The limiting role of the environment in this social phenomenon has become obvious long time ago.

Basically, almost every historian, and, especially, an ethnologist studying the life of the peoples of Central Asia, in one way or another, affects the problem of the impact of a nomadic ethnos on the environment and the role of nature in the formation and development of its material and spiritual culture. Since the nomadic cattle breeding of the Eurasian steppe zone, as a special economic and cultural type, is to a great extent conditioned by natural and climatic conditions, a number of researchers devoted their work to the search for relationships between the characteristics of nomadic management and pasture resources. Ecologists and scientists of other specialties calculate the capacity of various types of pastures, their productivity and resistance to pasture loads, the rate of degradation and self-restoration of vegetation, etc. The typical composition of the herd, the ways of grazing of certain breeds of cattle, various types of nomadism, the causes of mass winter-spring death of cattle (steppe murrain) are analyzed. The example of Mongolia found that both the number of nomads and the number of cattle on its territory changed little over the course of many centuries and averaged from one to one and a half million people and about twenty million conventional head of cattle (conventional sheep). It is calculated that the horse can be equated to 5.9 conventional sheep, and the camel - to 11.8. Taking into account that the average dietary rate for an adult in a temperate climate is 2.5-3 thousand kilocalories, 36 standard sheep can be taken as a standard. Hence, it is easy to calculate the index of food security by dividing the number of cattle (in conventional sheep) per 36 conventional sheep per person. The value of more than one indicates a sustainable economy, less than one - to the fact that the farm is unable to exist only at the expense of cattle breeding. Knowing the total number of cattle and the size of the herd per person, you can calculate the minimum ecologically permissible population. Similar calculations were carried out for several nomadic ethnoses of Central Asia (Tortika A.A., Mikheev V.K., Kortiev R.I., 1994).

The stalking hunting of the medieval inhabitants of the steppes received special attention, since large-scale raids on the beast actually played the role of military exercises. This function is related to many researchers who talk about the lifestyle of nomads and especially about their military art. A.K. Kushkumbayev established the existence of four main functions of the institute of stalking hunting among the Central Asia nomads: (1) economic, (2) indent, (3) military, (4) spiritual-physical. According to the author, this military-social institute led to the development of the natural environment first, and then, with the emergence of statehood, and the

military-political world space (Kushkumbayev A.K., 2009). The connection between the hunting of the Mongols of the 13th century and the traditional Buryat stalking hunting was traced by N.T. Munkuyev. The article by A.P. Okladnikov is devoted to the origin of agriculture in Central Asia.

Ethnic ecology (roughly the same as “cultural ecology” or “ecological anthropology” of Western authors) is a young science that has developed in our country over the past 25 years at the intersection of ethnology and ecology (Kozlov, 1994). Within sight of this science there are, first of all, ethnic traditions of nature use and adaptation to the environment, i.e. unique ecological experience of mankind, accumulated in the culture of various ethnic groups, including those that have already left the historical arena. However, like any undertaking, ethnic ecology is not yet free from organizational ambiguities, and even the range of its problems varies greatly in the understanding of different specialists. It is difficult to welcome today’s tendency to grow excessively the content of this science, which in its form and essence leads to duplication of ethnology, and partly of medicine, which studies the morphophysiological adaptation of people to natural and climatic conditions.

On the one hand, the breadth and lack of clarity of the concept of ethnic ecology formally allow us to attach to it a wide range of issues related to the material and spiritual culture of ethnic groups. The first thematic collection of works of scientists studying the adaptation of ethnoses from the biological, demographic, medical, geographical and psychological points of view is an indicative of the diversity of approaches (Ethnic ecology, 1991). V.I. Kozlov later pointed to this breadth of views, as a methodological feature inherent in this scientific discipline (Kozlov V.I., 2004). Even with the emergence of ethnic ecology, it was obvious that the spiritual culture of the ethnos plays an important role in adaptation. This issue was discussed in a compilation prepared, like the two previous ones, by the staff of the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Russian Academy of Sciences. A review of the Western methodology of ethnoecological research in comparison with domestic approaches was published by N.Ch. Taksami (Taksami N.Ch., 1999). In fact, almost all aspects of the life of any ethnos are connected in one way or another with interaction with the environment, and almost every stroke of its culture can be interpreted from the point of view of adaptation to it: food, clothing, economic activities, beliefs and cults, morphophysiology, games and ceremonies. Despite the fact that, according to some authors, recently there has been a decline in interest in ethnoecological research (Yakupov R.I., 2004), there are methodological developments on ethnoecology problems. The book of O.A. Zakharova and D.Yu. Doronin presents theoretical foundations, practical experience and recommendations on the conduct of ethnoecological research, addressed primarily to local lore specialists and students. Particular attention is paid

to the method of collecting materials on toponymy and microtoponymy (Zakharova O.A., Doronin D.Yu., 2008).

On the other hand, not all researchers studying the adaptation of ethnoses to landscapes use the term “ethnic ecology” in relation to the subject matter of their work. A lot of works, ethnoecological in their nature, have been carried out, where the very term “ethnic ecology” is not used. There were also related disciplines, for example, the so-called historical ecology, designed to study the patterns of interaction between society and nature, the features of historical and ecological development of various ethnic groups, the experience of nature management and nature conservation. The research subject of this science should be socio-ecosystems (socio-ecological areas) - limited to a certain territory of the population (Istomina E.G., 1996). Some authors work in this sense, for example, L.G. Bondarev, who wrote a textbook on this subject, which contains many examples from the history of the countries of the East (Bondarev L.G., 1998). The monographs by S.V. Kirikov are devoted to the history of interaction between people and nature in the forest-steppe and steppe zones of Eastern Europe (Kirikov S.V., 1979). Very significant and diverse is the work of V.D. Blavatskiy, illustrating the role of nature in the life of ancient society and its impact on the environment. The negative consequences of underestimating the role of nature in the historical process are indicated by T.B. Grieger (Griger T.B., 1998).

The periodization of the ethnic ecology of the nomadic peoples of Central Asia is still poorly developed. We can only say that it does not completely coincide with the ethnic history of this region. One and the same ethnos in the course of its development could change places of settlement, methods of nature use, attitude to nature, etc. and, on the contrary, different ethnic groups as life sustenance had nomadic cattle breeding, supplemented by hunting and sometimes primitive agriculture, and had a similar picture of the world. If the commonplace of many works has been the statement (either expressed directly or in veiled form) that Central Asian culture as a whole can rightly be considered “ecological”, or ecophilic, i.e. aimed at preserving the environment, then it is usually overlooked that the measure of its ecophilicity could naturally vary in time. Sometimes in the formation of ecological culture of the peoples of Central Asia and Siberia three stages are distinguished: (1) archaic (pre-shamanistic) with its peculiar early forms of religion - animism, fetishism, totemism and magic; (2) shamanistic; (3) Buddhistic (47). The same stages for the Buryat are singled out by T.V. Ivanova, a little concretizing the characteristics of the typical economic structure for each of them (Ivanova T.V., 1997).

CONCLUSION

The problems discussed in this article are of considerable interest not only to the scientific community, but also to journalists, local lore specialists, teachers and culture clerks. This has its pros and cons. On the one hand, the horizons of cognition

expand, original hypotheses are born, and unique information is raised. On the other hand, genuinely scientific research is sometimes replaced by the search and random sampling of facts (and sometimes rumors and legends) in support of the a priori idea of the innate ecological wisdom of the Central Asian nomads, as well as any other inhabitants of Asia. One of the largest experts of the peoples of the North I.I. Krupnik warns that the idea of “harmony” and “primordial environmental compatibility” of aboriginal societies is a modern idealization (Krupnik I.I., 1989). The above mentioned will be fully true and in relation to the indigenous peoples of Central Asia. Judgments about their “unsurpassed ecological wisdom”, poorly supported by factual materials, and sometimes simply contrived, quite often penetrate even into scientific literature, not to mention journalism. This phenomenon can easily be attributed to the so-called “cross-cutting subjects” of ethnocentric myth-creation, considered in detail by V.A. Shnirelman (Shnirelman V.A., 2000).

So, one can conclude that for today there is not yet an integral picture of the ethnic ecology of the nomadic peoples of Central Asia. Despite the abundance of facts accumulated by science, the completeness of the coverage of various ethnic groups is not the same, historical stages of the same ethnic group – the Mongols -have been worked out with different depths. The degree of study of the two aspects of the adaptation of culture, both spiritual and material, is also different, with an obvious predominance in the works of researchers of the latter.

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