

Khuman Khamba

"*Khamba*" *redirects here*. For other uses, see [Khamba \(disambiguation\)](#).

Khuman Khamba	
Khuman Khamba capturing the wild feral bull	
Information	
Aliases	Moirang Khamba
Gender	Male
Occupation	Leiloi Hanchapa (Leiroi Hanjaba) (Floriculture department minister)
Affiliation	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Meitei folklore (Manipuri folklore)■ Meitei mythology (Manipuri mythology)■ Khamba Thoibi■ Moirang Kangleirol■ Moirang Saiyon■ Khamba Thoibi</div></div>
Title	Amudon Nongyai
Family	Khuman clan ^[1]
Spouse(s)	Moirang Thoibi ^[2]
Relatives	Khamnu (elder sister)
Religion	Meitei religion (Sanamahism)
Origin	Khuman kingdom
Home	Ancient Moirang ^[3]

Khuman Khamba ([Old Manipuri](#): Khuman Khampa) or **Moirang Khamba** ([Old Manipuri](#): Moilang Khampa) is a man of the [Khuman clan](#) and the hero of the [epic poem](#) the [Khamba Thoibi](#). Khamba is in the [Moirang Shayon](#) legend in the [Moirang Kangleirol](#) stories from [Ancient Moirang](#).^{[1][4][5][3]} He is the son of nobleman Puremba of Ancient Moirang kingdom.^[1] He was orphaned at a very young age.^[3] So he was raised by his sister [Khamnu](#). He grew up as a poor man.^[4] Later, he married princess [Thoibi](#) of Ancient Moirang kingdom.^{[2][3]}

This plot summary may be **too long or overly detailed**. Please [help improve it](#) by removing unnecessary details and making it more concise.

Name

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The word "Khamba" means ultimate or fullness.^[6]

Early life

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Orphan Khamba and his sister [Khamnu](#) were taken care of by [Kao \(bull\)](#) for a long time until Khamnu set it free.

Khamba's parents died when he was very young. For a time, their father's friends Nongthonba and Thonglen took care of him and his sister [Khamnu](#). But the two children were not happy with them. So they left and went back to the house they had lived in with their parents. They were happy there even though no one came to help them.^[7]

Khamba was brought up by his sister [Khamnu](#). His sister went from place to place to find help and work. She husked paddy for some people. In payment, the women breastfed the infant Khamba. The two siblings grew up. To earn a living, [Khamnu](#) sold wood in a market in Moirang. One day, Princess [Thoibi](#) met [Khamnu](#). The two became friends. Thoibi asked Khamnu many things. She gave Khamnu food and jewelry. Thoibi asked Khamnu to come with her on a fishing trip in [Loktak lake](#). The king heard that the princess and her companions were to sport on the lake. So he ordered that no man should go to the lake. Khamnu told Khamba about the king's order. On the day of the fishing trip, she left him at home.

Khamba had a dream.^[7] In his dream, Goddess [Ayangleima](#) (either [Panthoibi](#) or [Koiren Leima](#)) made herself look like Khamnu and asked him to get [green plants to eat](#). The god [Thangjing](#) made him think that the real Khamnu had really told him to go get food. So, he rowed to the lake on a boat. He went in the wrong direction. The god Thangjing made a storm. It blew the boat towards where Thoibi was fishing. Thoibi saw Khamba standing close to her. She asked Khamnu if she knew the strange man disobeying the king's order. Khamnu said no. Khamba did not know what to do. Hearing his sister's voice, he went closer. Thoibi saw that he was handsome, manly, muscular and well fashioned. Khamba was also amazed at Thoibi's beauty and glamour. It was God's will that they should be lovers. Khamnu worried that her brother might be punished for coming to the lake even though the king had ordered all men to stay away. Thoibi saw that the cloth in Khamnu's clothes was the same as the cloth in Khamba's headdress. She also saw Khamba wearing the bracelet she had given to Khamnu. Later, Khamnu told Thiobio the truth, that Khamba was her brother. Then, Thoibi became kind to Khamba. She offered him food. She told him to go home before the King saw and punished him.^[8]

Lover

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Khamba and Thoibi meeting at a place

Once Princess [Thoibi](#) visited [Khamnu](#)'s house. Khamnu's old house was full of holes. So, Khamba hid himself within a mat. Thoibi asked Khamnu about the very mat. Khamnu said that it was where she worshipped the god [Khuman Pokpa](#). Thoibi knew Khamba was hiding there, but she pretended she did not know. She asked if she could pray to the God. She prayed aloud to the God to allow her to worship him daily in the house. Khamba heard her and laughed. Khamba sent his sister to the market to get fruit. When they were alone Thoibi gave Khamba gifts. The made promises before God [Khuman Pokpa](#). Both drank water in which a golden bracelet had been dipped. They vowed to be lovers forever.^{[8][9]}

Things he did

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Khuman Khamba is famous for being the very best. He was [what a man should be](#). He had many adventures.

Some of his feats are:

1. Lifting up a heavy stone slab in a village called Kabui (Nung Thaang-gatpa)
2. Herding the prince's ox (San Senba)
3. Wrestling with [Nongban](#) (Mukna Saanaba)
4. Finding [orchid](#) flowers (Lei Langba)
5. Winning an unfair race (Pana Lamchel)
6. Catching the a dangerous bull ([Kao Phaba](#))
7. Hunting in the Torbung region (Torbung Sadaanba)
8. Killing the [Khoirentak tiger](#) (Kei Phaba)

Wrestling with Nongban: Khamba's identity and fame

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Khamba wrestling with his opponent

Khamba went out among the menfolk. He joined a [wrestling](#) club. Nongban was the best wrestler in the kingdom. He asked Khamba to wrestle with him. To everyone's surprise, Nongban lost to Khamba. Minister Nongthonba asked Khamba his name. At first, Khamba did not want to say who he was. He had already warned by his sister not to tell anyone about his true identity. Later, he told his name. But he did not tell his father's name.^[9] Minister Nongthonba became angry because Khamba would not tell him his father's name. Khamba said his father died when he was a baby. He said his

sister took care of him. Minister Nongthonba saw that Khamba looked like Purenba. Nongthonba and Purenba had been friends.^[9]

"True is indeed that the elephant knows not his own brother, and kings forget their sons. Your father died ere his prime, even as a tree dies when men strip it of its bark."

Nongthonba dearly loved Khamba.^[9] In happiness, he told his wives of the lad he had met. He told them to prepare for fine clothes and an delicious foods for Khamba and Khamnu. Nongthonba took Khamba to the market place. Chingkhue Akhuba, the King's brother, was in the marketplace. Nongthonba introduced Khamba to Chingkhue Akhuba. Then, they introduced Khamba to the King. The King was pleased to see Khamba. The King's brother was also kind to Khamba. He told his people about Khamba and his late father Purenba's high official position, status and glories.^[10]

Finding the orchid flowers

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Khamba and [Thoibi](#) danceing

King Chingkhue Telheiba made Khamba the "*Khuntak Leiroi Hanjaba*" (Floriculture Minister). This meant it was Khamba's job to find flowers in the hills and bring them back.^[10] Thoibi gave Khamba food for his trip. The next day, Khamba and [Angom Nongban Kongyamba](#) went to find flowers. Nongban Kongyamba lied and said they were on his father's land. Khamba did not know that it was a lie and asked where his own father had found flowers. Kongyamba pointed to the southern hills, but he was only pretending to know the answer to Khamba's question. Khamba went there but found no flowers. So, he prayed to God [Thangjing](#). The God decided to help Khamba by putting the scent of flowers on the wind. Khamba found a tree with many flowers. On the way back to the palace, Nongban smelled the food the princess had packed for Khamba. He wondered how Khamba got such good food.^[11] Kongyamba sent his men to learn how Khamba got the food. In the Palace, they asked the "*Ningon Lakpa*" (women affairs minister) if there had been a feast.^[11] But there was no feast. Then, Kongyamba thought of evil plots against Khamba. So, he gathered many people in front of Khamba's house. He announced that everyone should wear dresses of luxury and jewels of gold and silver in the festival of the Gods. He lied that it was the King's order. Everyone believed him. Khamnu asked him about what he was saying. Kongyamba scolded her if she has no ears for not listening to the King's order. She wept of shame. Khamba fell sad because he did not have such clothes. In that night's dream of the two siblings, their parents told them about the presence of their clothes of honor in Thonglen's house. Immediately, they woke up. Even in the night, they went to Thonglen's house. The guards seized them thinking as thieves. They presented Khamba and Khamnu before Thonglen in the morning. But Thonglen knew the children of his old friend Purenba. He gave them the clothes. He even taught them the dance. Besides, he sent men and women to serve Khamba and

Khamnu. He also built them a new house. Thoibi and Senu came to Khamba's house with gifts. But they did not know the house. It was because the house was so well built. Thoibi was shocked to see Khamnu and Khamba wearing rich clothes. It was because she thought that Khamba might have married a daughter of some rich man. Later, she knew the truth. Kongyamba offered the flowers to the royalties and the nobles. First, he offered some to the King. Secondly, he offered some to the Queen. Later, he offered the rest to the High Officers of the kingdom. It was then Khamba's turn. He feared about the code of conducts. So, he humbly asked the counsel of priestess. For Khamba, they first offer the flowers to God Thangjing. After that, Khamba presented the flowers to the King, to the Queen and then to the High Officers of the kingdom. Everyone was pleased with the flowers of Khamba. So, they gave him rare gifts. Gifts received by Khamba were many times more valuable than the customary presents received by Kongyamba. [\[12\]](#)

Khamba and Thoibi dancing

During the dancing ceremony, Kongyamba and his noble wives danced first. Later, Khamba and Thoibi danced before God Thangjing's holy shrine. The latter's pairing was great. The audiences shouted with joy during the dance. Finally, Khamba and Thoibi knelt before God Thangjing. [\[13\]](#)

Winning the race: Annual Sports Championship

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Nongban Kongyamba was jealous of Khamba. Every year, the rulers of each Pana (State Province) chose a man to go to the kingdom's sports contest. Khamba's ruler chose him. Nongban's ruler chose him. That year, the contest's [foot race](#) was longer than it had been before. Khamba and Nongban both ran a race: Khamba ran very fast with his chest low. Nongban ran fast with his head high. Nongban could not run fast for as far as Khamba could. [\[13\]](#) One night, Kongyamba planned with his men how to defeat Khamba. [\[13\]](#)

"Many are the races I have won, and heavy will be my disgrace if this year I am second to Khamba."

Khamnu worried that someone else in the contest might hurt Khamba out of jealousy. [\[13\]](#) On the next day, Nongban Kongyamba said to the people,

"It is evil for land if a poor man win the race. It might bring scarcity more than the people can bear. Let's say this among the people before the race begin."

This words spread among the public. Khamba was stopped and told that his name was not in the list of the contestants. Khamba believed them. So, he sadly returned home. He told everything to Khamnu. The two siblings told Nongtholba about it. Nongtholba went to the king. The king told Khamba to go and be in the contest if it was not still late to join. [\[13\]](#) Khamba joined the

foot rate. He ran as fast as he could. But Kongyamba's men tried to stop him while he was running. But Khamba pushed them out of the way. At last, he ran up to Kongyamba. Kongyamba was running slowly because he was tired. Suddenly, fifteen of Kongyamba's horsemen stopped Khamba. But Khamba kicked all of them away.^[14] Khamnu shouted "Run on Khamba, for your father's honor." Finally, Khamba ran to the end of the race. He was the winner, and Kongyamba was second. Both saluted the king. The king was more pleased with Khamba. He gave Khamba a coat with gold thread in it. The queen gave Khamba very good clothes. The ministers also gave him gifts. Khamba and his sister Khamnu offered many of the clothes to the old men and women.^[14]

Capturing the dangerous bull

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See the main article: [Kao \(bull\)](#)

Khamba capturing the feral bull

Nongban Kongyamba wanted something bad to happen to Khamba. When he heard the [Kao \(bull\)](#) was in the [Khuman kingdom](#), frightening people, he had an idea. He went to the king and pretended to have had a message from the god Thangjing. He told the king that Thangjing wanted Khuman to catch the bull.^[15] Kongyamba told the King,

"God Thangjing had spoken in my ears and I have his behest upon me. Verily said the God, I am sated with offerings of flesh and fish, but this year, my heart longs for the sweet savour of the flesh of the mighty bull that lurks in the reeds that border the water of the lake. My servant Khamba vows that he will bring it for my honor and for the welfare of the State."

The king of Moirang told Khuman he could marry Princess Thoibi hand if he caught the bull. Then the king of Moirang and the king of Khuman both agreed the people could come watch. They built a large arena and many people came.^[15]

Then Khamnu told Khamba a secret. She said that the Kao bull had once been their father's tame bull. She told him how to catch the Kao bull.^[15] She said,

"This great bull was once the Lord of your father's herd. Go to him, speak your father's name in his ear, and show him this Rope of silk."

In the arena, Khamba stood bravely while the bull ran toward him. He caught it and it carried him away to the woods.^[16] Khamba did everything as his sister told him to do. The wild bull became calm. Khamba put a rope on the bull and began to walk back to the arena. But Kongyamba came and pretended he had caught the bull. He lied to the people. He said he had caught the bull and not Khamba. The two kings did not know who told the

truth. So they asked Kongyamba to fight the bull again, where people could see. Kongyamba was afraid of the bull and climbed away. Khamba faced the bull bravely. He once again captured the bull.^[16] Both the Kings honoured Khamba. They presented him many gifts. Since Khamba belonged to Khuman blood, the Khuman king asked the Moirang king to let Khamba live in the Khuman kingdom. The Moirang King did not agree.^[16]

Killing the Khoirentak tiger

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See the main article: [Khoirentak tiger](#)

Khamba killing the Khoirentak tiger

Princess [Thoibi](#) was exiled by her father to Kabaw chiefdom.^[17] After some time, her father changed his mind. So, Thoibi was asked to come back from the exile. Meanwhile, Thoibi's father secretly told Nongban Kongyamba to forcibly elope his daughter from her return journey.^[18] Thoibi met Nongban. She pretended to be friendly with him. She asked him to let her ride on his horse. He agreed. So, Thoibi rode Kongyamba's horse.^[19] Surprisingly, Thoibi galloped off on the horse towards Khamba's house. Khamba received her from the long time exile at his house. They wept for their reunion.^[19] Minister Thonglen and Minister Nongtholba sent men to guard Khamba and Thoibi.^[19] Kongyamba was angry for being tricked by a girl. He set the matter before the King in the Royal Court. The king wanted to solve the issue by the trial of the spear. During the discussion, an old man came to meet the king. The old man informed him that a ferocious tiger was a great threat to the villagers of Khoirentak region.^[19] The King changed his mind. He announced that the tiger will be the determining point of the matter. He added that the killer of the tiger will marry Princess Thoibi.^[19]

Khamba and [Nongban Kongyamba](#) during the tiger hunt

The trackers and scouts fenced around the very forest. On the said day, the King and his ministers gathered there in the stadium. Audiences gathering in the stadium resembled a white cloth spread on the ground. Khamba and Kongyamba showed respect to the King. The two went on and found the traces of the tiger. A body of a recently killed girl was found on the way. Then, the tiger was found. They threw spears to it. But the tiger turned the spears away. It sprang upon and bit Kongyamba. At this, Kongyamba was killed. Khamba attacked at the tiger. He drove it away. Khamba carried Kongyamba back to the stadium. Thonglen told Khamba,

"What! Are you afraid? Your father killed five tigers and you fear only one. Go or I will come and kill the beast."

Khamba re-entered into the woods. The tiger was crouching half hidden by the bushes. But it could be clearly seen from the stadium of the king. The tiger jumped upon Khamba. Khamba pierced the tiger's predating jaws with

his spear.^[19] Finally, the beast was killed.^[20] The place where Khamba killed the tiger was near a [Kom](#) village.^{[21][22]} The King offered rich gifts to Khamba. He offered him great lands. Khamba was also given the rights of fishery, clothes of honor and titles of high fame. He was made the master of a salt-well.^[20]

Lose of favour from the Prince

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Golden embroidered coat

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Annually, a Royal archery contest was held in honour of God [Thangjing](#) in Ancient Moirang. The contest was for the royalties of the Moirang kingdom. Kongyamba was selected to pick up the arrows shot by the King. Khamba was selected to pick up the arrows shot by the Crown Prince (King's younger brother). Prince Chingkhua Akhuba asked his daughter Thoibi about his Coat Of Golden Embroidery. But Thoibi had already given the coat to Khamba. So, she told him another lie.^[16] During the competition, the Crown Prince shot his arrows so swiftly. Khamba ran swiftly to pick them up. At this, Khamba's outer cloth got loosened. The Crown Prince saw the inner cloth of Khamba. It was his golden embroidered coat. He got furious. When Khamba gave him the arrow, he did not take it. He turned away from Khamba. Kongyamba took the arrow from Khamba. He gave it to the Prince. The Prince was pleased with Kongyamba. He told Kongyamba that princess Thoibi would be given to him within five days. Within five days, he planned to give away his daughter Thoibi hand in marriage to Kongyamba. Khamba and Khamnu were even told to bring him gifts on the said day. The prince ordered that no one in the kingdom should sell fruits to the two siblings.

Only Kongyamba was allowed to buy the fruits.^[23] Khamba went to a hill village of a tribesmen group. He sought help from Kabui Salang Maiba, the tribal chief. The tribal chief offered him two basketful of fruits. The chief also added some gifts for the princess Thoibi, his sister Khamnu and for Khamba himself.^[23] Khamba thanked him and came back with the fruits and the gifts. Thoibi set the fruits ready in eleven special dishes. She was promised by the Chief Queen, 10 other Queens and 10 maids that they will receive gifts from Khamba.^[24] On the day of gift reception, Kongyamba brought his gifts. At his arrival, Thoibi pretended to fell with fever. So, Thoibi's father told Kongyamba the princess' health condition. Then, Kongyamba left. Few moments later, the Crown Prince had gone to meet the King. Thoibi instantly arose. Gifts from Khamba were received by the Queens and their maids warmly.^[24] At that moment, the Prince returned home. He was very thirsty. He longed for some juices of sour fruits. Thoibi prepared the juice from the fresh fruits brought by Khamba. She poured it into a silver cup for her father. The Prince has a sip of it. He asked for the whereabouts of the fruits. Thoibi told him that the fruits were brought by his son-in-law Khamba for his marriage. At this, the Prince got furious. He threw

the silver cup at his daughter. Then, Thoibi pretended to faint. The Prince was terrified. At the same time, the Queens cried for her.^[24] He asked his daughter to get up and go to Khamba's house. Then, Thoibi arose. But her father resumed to his anger again.^[24]

Elephant plot

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Khamba was about to be killed by his enemies. But [Thoibi](#) saved him in time.

Prince Chingkhua Akhuba and Nongban Kongyamba together planned an evil plot to kill Khamba. They sent messenger to Khamba. The messengers told Khamba that he was called by the Prince. On his way, Khamba was interrupted by Kongyamba and his men.^[24] Kongyamba asked Khamba to give up Thoibi. Khamba replied that he will not give up.^[25] As a result, they fought. Khamba threw Kongyamba's men upon the ground. Khamba knelt upon Kongyamba's belly. He pressed Kongyamba's throat. He was about to kill Kongyamba. But Kongyamba's men dragged Khamba off. They beat Khamba. His clothes were torn. They bound him so that he could not move. The Prince also came up on his elephant. He told the men to beat him. They fastened him to the elephant's leg with ropes. However, the elephant driver knew that Khamba was innocent. So, he bound him leaving him some spaces to breathe. Then they stimulated the elephant to harm Khamba. But God Thangjing let it not to move. Finally, Kongyamba hit the elephant with a spear to move in pain. But it did not harm Khamba. In that night, Goddess Panthoibi told Thoibi in her dream that her beloved man was bound by her father's orders to the elephant and was nearly killed. Thoibi arose and took a [sword](#). She immediately came to the spot for Khamba. The criminals fled from the spot. She cut the ropes that bound Khamba to the elephant. She rubbed his limbs so that blood could flow through them.^[25] Khamnu, Feiroijamba, Nongtholba and Thonglen were informed about the crime. Thonglen went to the Court with all his army. Feiroijamba said to the Court three times about the harsh cruelty to Khamba. However, the Prince did not pay attention to the complaint. Nongtholba angrily proclaimed that none could kill his son-in-law when he was alive. A conflict between Nongtholba and the prince occurred and continued further. Finally, Nongtholba and Prince Chingkhua Akhuba went to the King.^{[25][17]} Before their arrival, Princess Thoibi had already informed the king all the crimes committed by her own father. King Chingkhua Telheiba proclaimed that all the criminals would be punished. So, he set Prince Chingkhua Akhuba and Nongban Kongyamba in the prison. The king told his brother prince to stay there until Khamba was well again.^[17] The King sent his own men to take care of injured Khamba. He sent him gifts every day. Thoibi personally took care of Khamba. He got well again. So, the criminals were set free. After this, Thoibi was exiled to Kabaw chieftdom.^[17]

Marriage and death

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Khamba and Thoibi got married in high state by the King of Moirang. One day, Khamba got suspicious of Thoibi if she was not faithful to him. He wanted to test her chastity. One night, he pretended to get away from home. Then, he secretly returned home. In disguise as a stranger, he pierced a stick through the wall of Thoibi's room. He was teasing Thoibi. Thoibi was not aware of all this. So, she thought it was done by a stranger. She got furious. She thrust a spear through the wall to pierce the stranger. Khamba was severely wounded. He called her. Thoibi knew his voice. She immediately went out and carried him in. Khamba was dying. She was extremely shocked. Before he died, she killed herself upon him with the same spear.^[20] Khamba and Thoibi are the incarnations of a god and a goddess. They were sent by God Thangjing. Unlike normal mortal beings, God Thangjing denied their happiness of long life and children.^[20]

In popular culture

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Khamba Thoibi Jagoi

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The [Khamba Thoibi Jagoi](#) was first performed by Khamba and Thoibi in the premise of the Thangjing temple. It is now a popular form of folk dance of [Meitei culture](#) ([Manipuri culture](#)) in [Manipur](#).^{[26][27]}

Kao, the sacred bull

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In 2010, the [Laihui Ensemble](#) produced an opera named "*Kao, the sacred bull*". It is based on the story of capturing [Kao \(bull\)](#) by Khamba.^[28]

Khambana Kao Phaba

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In 2019, a painting titled "Khambana Kao Phaba" (Lit. Khamba capturing the bull) was exhibited in the [Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya](#) (IGRMS) Museum, [Bhopal](#).^{[29][30][31][32]}

Kao Faba

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In 2020, the legend of Khamba capturing [Kao \(bull\)](#) was produced in its theatrical form named as "Kao Faba". It was displayed in the Iboyaima Shummang Leela Shanglen, Palace Compound, [Imphal](#).^{[33][34][35]}

Related pages

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- [Khamba Thoibi](#)
- [Nongban](#)

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