

THE SITUATION OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN PHUTHO PROVINCE, VIETNAM

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Abstract

PhuTho is a province with plentiful of potentials for tourism development, although PhuTho tourism has not really matched its potential. Since the Resolution 14-NQ / TU of PhuTho Provincial Party Committee on tourism development in PhuTho province has been issued and put on implemented, tourism also has significant changes. The article clarifies the current status of tourism development in PhuTho province in the period of 2016 - 2018, thereby proposing some solutions to bring PhuTho tourism to become a breakthrough in the socio-economic development of the province.

Keywords: PhuTho, Sustainable Tourism, Tourism development

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INTRODUCTION

PhuTho is the original land of Vietnam. It has many historical and cultural relics that are valuable and meaningful in many aspects, especially the cultural heritage associated with the period of Hung Vuong and the special national park of Hung Temple. The diversity and plenty of tourism resources, favorable geographical location are the basis and important conditions for PhuTho to become one of the focal points of national tourism and develop tourism into a spearhead sector of the province.

Since Resolution No. 01-NQ/TU of January 2, 2006, of the Standing Committee of the Provincial Party on tourism development in the period 2006-2010 and the orientations for tourism development tasks in the period 2011-2015, the Provincial Party and the People's Committee of PhuTho province have paid attention to concretizing and promulgating many documents to develop tourism to become a real breakthrough in socio-economic development. The tourism development planning has been given special attention and closely directed, up to now 100% of localities in the province have built plans and integrating tourism development tasks to be carried out together with the other professional tasks. The implementation of incentive mechanisms and policies to attract investment in tourism development has been strengthened. Promotion activities to advertise the tourism image of PhuTho ; attracting investment in tourism were conducted in a focused way and oriented into the potential and strengths of key tourist destinations of the province, etc. The building of trademarks and brands of the featured products serve for tourism development has been paid more and more attention. Physical facilities and infrastructure of tourism in the province have increasingly improved and upgraded.

However, the tourism growth rate was still low and unstable; tourism products were so poor; the tours and tourist routes were not really clear, lacking attraction to visitors, and the exploitation efficiency was still low. Tourism activities have caused a lot of negative impacts on tourism resources and on the natural environment; on the preservation and promotion of tangible and intangible cultural values, etc.

In order to develop tourism sustainably and become the key

economic sector of the province, the article analyzed the situation of tourism development in PhuTho province, thereby proposing the solutions to develop tourism in the next time.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism in various parts of the world is proven to be a sector that contributes a substantial income to a region and country besides the manufacturing industry, natural resource products, and the tax sector (Lee & Syah, 2018; Mustafa, 2019). Besides, related to tourism development, stakeholder involvement is required, which is summarized in stakeholder theory. Definition of stakeholders, according to Freeman (1999), is any group or individual that can influence or be affected by the achievement of organizational goals.

Sustainable tourism is planned and carried out using the concept of stable growth, namely tourism that answers the needs of the

current generation, without depleting the capacity of the next generation, in a way that does not have a negative impact on the environment, economy, and culture of the community at the tourist destination (Zolfaghari, 2010). Tourism is a central component in the development of the world economy and is one of the primary sources of income for developed and developing countries (Costa, 2017; Mason, 2015)

According to Chan and Wong (2006), Pintassilgo (2016), green tourism is an alternative form of tourism often associated with rural tourism, which is a form of nature tourism, environmentally friendly and hardly impacting the ecology at a travel destination. Thus, in this sense, green tourism has been used instead of concepts such as ecotourism, nature tourism, and rural tourism (Pintassilgo, 2016). Many businesses have embraced the idea of green tourism with a broader meaning: any tourism activity in an environmentally friendly manner is considered to be green tourism (Pintassilgo, 2016).

The above researches have studied the sustainable tourism development in the world. However, there has been no research yet that fully examine the sustainable tourism development in PhuTho province, Vietnam. This study clarifies the current status of tourism development in PhuTho province in the period of 2016 - 2018, thereby proposing some solutions to bring PhuTho

tourism to become a breakthrough in the socio-economic development of the province.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research subject: The subject of this research is tourism industry in PhuTho province.

In order to clarify the current status, the limitations and difficulties in the tourism development process in PhuTho province, Vietnam; the article used methods of analysis, synthesis and data processing. The research results mainly used secondary data that were collected from the reports, books, magazines, and provincial statistical yearbooks.

Besides, this research used a qualitative research methodology based on some in-depth interviews with three (3) lecturers with extensive experiences in tourism industry of the National

Economics University and HungVuong University. These are the two leading universities in Vietnam in training tourism. At the same time, three (3) experts were also interviewed who are business manager in tourism firms.

RESULT RESEARCH

Regarding sustainable economic growth: Total revenue from tourism services at accommodation sites in PhuTho province in 2017 reached 2.350 billion VND, increased 12% compared with the plan and 18% in the same period last year (2016). In 2018, tourism and restaurant service revenue reached 3.000 billion VND, reaching 100% of the year plan; The average growth rate in the period of 2016 - 2018 was 12.2% /year. (In the period 2006-2015, the average growth rate of tourism revenue reached 20.52%/ year; the average growth rate of added value reached 16.01%/ year).

Table 1: Summary of indicators of tourism activities period 2016-2018

STT	Content	Unit	2015	2016	2017	2018	Average growth rate/year(%)
1	Number of visitors	1000 times	7,500	7,800	8,000	8,100	0.6
2	Number of visitors stay overnight	Times	391,405	455,035	500,126	580,000	12.9
	Abroad visitors	Times	5,435	5,718	6,512	7,200	12.2
	Domestic visitors	Times	385,970	449,317	493,614	572,800	12.9
3	The average length of stay	Day	1	1	1	1.1	-
4	The capacity of using a chamber	%	32	33	37	41	-
5	Revenue of hotel and restaurant	Billion VND	2,166	2,381	2,682	3,000	12.2
6	Number of accomodation	Unit	265	274	308	300	4.6
	Hotel	Unit	30	32	32	33	1.6
7	Total number of room	Room	3,445	3,646	3,746	3,850	2.8
8	Total of labour	People	11,615	11,918	12,505	13,270	5.5
	Direct labour	People	3,315	3,418	3,505	3,790	5.3

Source: Summary of tourism activity period 2016-2018: PhuTho Provincial People's Committee (2016), PhuTho Provincial People's Committee (2018)

The number of tourists has come to PhuTho increased continuously, in 2015 reached nearly 8,3 million people. The average annual growth in the period 2006-2015 reached 11.1%/year. In 2017, PhuTho welcomed 8 million visitors per day, reached 100% of the plan. The number of stayed visitors increased by 8.6% compared to the plan and 9.8% compared to 2016; in which, welcomed and served 6,500 international visitors increased by 10% compared to the plan and increased by 14% compared to 2016. In the period of 2016 - 2018, the number of visitors in the day increased by an average of 0.6% per year, from 7,800 thousand visitors in 2016 to 8,100 thousand in 2018. In 2018, served 580,000 visitors stayed overnight, the average growth rate of this period reached 12.2% per year, and increased 5.4% compared to the plan (550,000 visitors); Welcomed 7,200 international visitors, increased 10.7% as plan (6,500 tourists); The average growth rate in the period of 2016 - 2018 is 12.2% per year. In 2018, the numbers of tourism accommodation were about 300 businesses (in which 33 hotels with 5 hotels from 3-5

stars); room usage capacity was about 41%, with an average stay of 1.1 days (PhuTho Provincial People's Committee, 2018).

Creating jobs: The number of jobs created by tourism tends to increase every year, from 6,700 in 2006 to 11,600 in 2015. In 2018; 13,270 employees were employed in the tourism industry (go up 5.7 % compared to 2017), including 3,790 direct employees, an increase of 1.1% compared to the plan; The average growth rate in the period of 2016 - 2018 was 5.5% / year (PhuTho Provincial People's Committee, 2018). Due to the small scale of PhuTho tourism industry, the total number of labor directly generated from tourism accounts for a small proportion of the total labor force of the economy.

The investment for protection, embellishment, and development of tourism resources. The total mobilized capital invested for tourism development in the period of 2016 - 2018 was 4,355.96 billion VND (reaching 63.75% of the plan), in which: State budget is 1,035.98 billion VND(accounting for 23, 78%), socialized capital and other legal capital sources reached 3,321.98 billion VND (accounting for 76.22%).

Table 2: Summary of funding for tourism development in the period of 2016-2018

TT	Content	The total expense as the plan of 2016-2020	Total gathered funds for the period 2016-2018	Classified			
				Central budget	Provincial budget	The budget of districts, cities, and towns	Capital of socialization; other capital sources
	Total expense (I+II+III+IV+V)	6,832.80	4,355.96	644.54	373.22	18.22	3,321.98
I	Invest in tourism infrastructure development in 04 provincial tourism centers	6,505.80	4,322.86	644.54	345.22	17.42	3,315.68
II	Review, adjust, and build new plannings, schemes and programs on tourism development in PhuTho	6.50	1.50	0.00	1.50	0.00	0.00
III	Tourism product development	240.50	12.21	0.00	11.41	0.30	0.50
IV	Tourism promotion activities	53.00	5.95	0.00	5.65	0.00	2.30
V	Organizing training courses to improve the quality of tourism human resources	27.00	13.44	0.00	9.44	0.50	3.50

Source: Summary of tourism activity period 2016-2018: PhuTho Provincial People's Committee (2016)

Up to now, there have been more than 30 enterprises conducting surveys, researching, evaluating and seeking investment opportunities in the province; more than 10 investment projects have been decided to invest by the province. such as Ao Vua Joint Stock Company invested in a project of Dao Ngoc Xanh (500 billion VND); Vingroup Corporation invested in Vincom Trade Center (403 billion VND); Song Thao Co., Ltd (215 billion) invested in La Phu resort projects; Xuan Truong construction enterprises invested in Xuan Son - Hung King temple tourist project (170 billion VND); Viet Han Real Estate Trading, Advertising, Real Estate Construction Co., Ltd invests in Tam Nong ecological urban area, tourist resort, sport center (40 billion VND); Thang Long Investment Group Joint Stock Company invests in King Garden Resort (159 billion), etc. Investment resources from the state budget for tourism development were mainly integrated with socio-economic infrastructure development programs and priority investment in localities which has advantages in tourism development at 4 key tourist centers of the province. The capital for tourism product development, tourism promotion, promotion, etc was mainly based on the local budget, other sources were quite limited, with 31.6 billion VND, accounting for about 1%.

Development of specific tourism products of the province: base on exploiting the value of two intangible cultural heritages that recognized by UNESCO as "Xoan singing" and "Hung Vuong worship beliefs", the others humanities resources of the province were also interested in investing in construction and development such as Hung Lo temple, Loi Len shrine (Viet Tri), Au Co mother Temple (Ha Hoa) , etc. Products of spiritual cultural tourism were increasingly completed synchronously, relics are renovated, cultural and festive activities are restored. In the period of 2016 - 2018, the province has renovated 122 relics, restored 51 relics related to Xoan singing and Hung Vuong worship belief, 09 festivals were restored PhuTho Provincial People's Committee (2018), basically meeting the needs of tourists, thereby contributing to affirming the brand of spiritual cultural tourism products of the fatherland tourism, which has attracted a large number of pilgrims (from 6.5 to 7.5 million visitors each year).

Products and services on resorts, entertainment and eco-tourism continue to develop and improve the quality, such as Ngoc Island

Resort, Vuon Vua and Thanh Lam tourist areas (Thanh Thuy); Van Lang park, Hung Vuong square and the central area of Viet Tri city; "Xuan Son flower road", Tan Son tea hill (Tan Son), etc. Besides, the province has also supported the Dao and Muong ethnic to build a model of a standard homestay that can serve about 400 guests and 1,500 dining and sightseeing tourists, contributing to diversifying products and services to attract more and more tourists. In 2018, the number of tourists visited Xuan Son National Park reached more than 25,000; 2.5 times as 2015 (PhuTho Provincial People's Committee, 2018).

Gift products, souvenirs, village products associated with tourist routes such as: vegetables in Tan Duc, tea in Dich Qua, Van Luong; brocade clothes in Kim Thuong; corn wine in Xuan Son; sour meat in Thanh Son; knitting in Thanh Uyen; carpentry in Hien Quan and Van Du; ornamental creatures in Tan Phuong; noodles in Hien Da and Hung Lo; grapefruit in Doan Hung; conical hats in Sai Nga and Gia Thanh, etc. were being exploited in association with experienced tours, that was attracting a large number of visitors. Xuan Son community eco-tourism program; Eco-tourism in Thanh Thuy - Xuan Son; Discover heritage - natural experience in Viet Tri - Xuan Son; Weekend eco-tour, hot mineral water in Thanh Thuy; The program of linking tourism "Arc Northwest", spiritual tourism along the Red River in the three provinces of PhuTho - Yen Bai - Lao Cai , etc. initially left a good impression on visitors.

Attracting community participation in tourism development: Cultural preservation activities connected with the development of eco-tourism and community-based tourism have achieved certain results (such as restoring and maintaining community gongs in some villages in Thanh Son, Tan Son, and Yen Lap districts; restoring ancient Xoan singing guilds in Viet Tri, recognizing 28 Xoan clubs in the province (bringing the legacy of Xoan singing out of emergency protection status); original restoration of traditional festivals and promoting the role of community in organizing festivals such as Tro Tram in Tu Xa, wrestling in Cao Xa, etc.). Some households and communities have directly participated in the activities of serving visitors, building farms, community-based tourism facilities (such as agricultural farms in combination with tourism in Lam Thao and Thanh Thuy; tourism in a hat village and a red carp village in Cam Khe, etc.).

Table 3: Summary of tourism human resources quality in PhuTho province

S T T	Content	Total	Classified by type of organization				
			State agencies	Business units	Business		
					Hotel, Restaurant	Business travel tour operators	Other services
	Total	3,530	33	604	2,315	258	320
1	Classified by training level	3,530	33	604	2,315	258	320
	- Postgraduate	51	06	37	05	01	02
	- University	609	26	258	172	48	105
	- Colleges	112	01	31	58	10	12
	- Intermediate	288	0	27	242	08	11
	- Primary	146	0	0	146		0
	- Other	2,324	0	251	1,692	191	190
2	Classified by foreign language proficiency	3,530	33	604	2,315	258	320
	- Postgraduate	0	0	0	0	0	0
	- University	28	01 A, T	05A	15A, 02T	03A, 01P	01A
	- Colleges	02	01A			01A	
	- No qualifications / certificates	2,706	01	309	2,029	208	159
3	Classified by computer skills	3,530	33	604	2,315	258	320
	- Know how to use a computer	1,260	33	400	477	102	248
	- Do not know how to use the computer	2,270	0	204	1,838	156	72

Source: Report No. 06 / BC-SVHTTDL, assessment of the situation and human resource needs of PhuTho province: PhuTho Provincial People's Committee, Tourism Development Steering Department (2018)

Human resource development in tourism: At present, PhuTho tourism attracts about 13,270 workers, including 3,790 direct employees; The average growth rate in the period 2016-2018 was 5.5% per year (the period 2006-2015 was 6.29% / year). The rate of untrained labor accounts for about 55% of the whole labor PhuTho Provincial People's Committee, Tourism Development Steering Department (2018). During this period, the Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism organized propaganda and dissemination conferences to guide the implementation of legal documents on tourism, guidelines, and orientations for tourism development of the province for more than 700 turns of students; coordinated with the EU project, Hanoi Tourism College and other units to organize 22 training, coaching and fostering courses to improve professional qualifications according to the standards of tourism department for more than 1,000 students who are the managers of districts, cities, towns, and employees of tourism units, that contribute to increasing the percentage of being trained labor to 45%.

Human resources training facilities in the province have been expanded: There were 04 universities and colleges opened tourism training codes (Hung Vuong University, Viet Tri Industry University, Vocational College, Intermediate School of Culture, Arts & Tourism) with a total of over 400 students. However, the enrollment of the schools was very difficult, the number of students declines year by year.

Tourism promotion: Tourism service businesses in the province have cooperated with state agencies to carry out tourism promotion activities: Participating and organize a showroom to advertise and introduce products at the northwest tourism open fair, VITM tourism fair, the Conference of promoting investment and tourism in the Northwest provinces in Ho Chi Minh City, etc. The Steering Committee organized direct investment promotion with over 30 business, domestic and foreign investors; Thereby it has invited a number of investors in tourism and real estate such as Trung Nam Group, Sungroup, Song Hong Thu do group,

Vingroup, etc. The building of trademarks and brands of some specific products for tourism development was increasingly concerned and supported such as: Geographical indications for Doan Hung grapefruit, collective brands for Chua Ta tea, the soy sauce in Duc My, the kettle in Son Vy, etc. the products that were being supported to build a collective brand such as multi spurs chicken of Tan Son, Hung Lo rice noodles, Song Da cage fish, safe vegetables in Tan Duc, peach in Gia Thanh, etc. The province's specific tourism products were in-depth development in order to improve the quality and to attract tourists. In 2018, received and supported information, tourism promotion, guidance, introduction for more than 500,000 visitors about PhuTho tourism PhuTho (Provincial People's Committee, 2018).

Ensuring security, social safety and a healthy environment for tourism development: All tourist areas and sites have developed regulations on management of natural resource exploitation activities and environmental protection regulations. Tourism investment projects have environmental impact assessment reports or environmental protection commitments under regulations. The inspection, examination, and reorganization of tourism business activities have been strengthened, especially during the festival times. In 2018, more than 15 specialized and interdisciplinary tests were organized; inspect and guide over 500 organizations, individuals and over 1,000 enterprises of cultural activities, cultural services, sports and tourism in 13 districts, cities and towns.

Discussion

Limitations and difficulties

Tourism growth was mainly in width and low quality. The growth rate of added value is lower than the revenue growth of the tourism industry. Lacking tourism products with high added value.

The total number of visitors increased rapidly but the average length of time to stay and average spending was very low. International tourists were few. Revenue from accommodation services, tourist spending increased slowly.

The contribution of tourism to improving people's lives and reducing poverty was still not commensurate with the potential

for tourism development. The total direct labor created by tourism accounts for a small proportion of the total provincial workforce.

Attracting the community to participate in tourism activities is limited, there were no suitable solutions to mobilize the widespread participation of local people in tourism activities.

The sense of responsibility for environmental protection in the business activities of tourism facilities was quite limited. The implementation of regulations and commitments on environmental protection in most accommodation and eating establishments was not good; wastewater from tourist areas, tourist spots, business establishments has not yet been collected and treated, but discharged directly into the environment; The majority of tourism projects and tourism facilities during the construction process have not fully complied with the specific regulations on environmental protection.

The cause of the limitations

Lack of specific mechanisms, breakthroughs in incentive policies, creating an environment and conditions for mobilizing resources, attracting investment, building infrastructure, developing tourism products to promote strong and breakthrough in tourism development. Attracting investment from off-budget resources is limited. The ability to socialize resources is low because of PhuTho 's local businesses were little, small in scale, low competitiveness and business efficiency. Lack of strategic investors with financial capacity and have long-term investment plans. The investment structure from social sources was not sustainable. Projects from social resources mostly focus on the fields that bring immediate benefits for investors (such as building hotels, restaurants, trade centers); general items to build destinations, entertainment areas, aiming to diversify and upgrade the quality of tourism products account for a small percentage.

Awareness, responsibility, and the business capacity of some tourism businesses were still low. The inspection and urging in accordance with the law have not been conducted regularly. Many violations of the laws about the regulations on the protection of natural resources and the environment have not yet been detected and handled timely.

Due to the characteristics of humanistic tourism resources, that highly influences on the seasonality of PhuTho tourism and cannot be overcome in the short term. Products of cultural and spiritual tourism attracted domestic tourists but were still not enough to attract international tourists.

The quality of human resources was low, professionalism, discipline was still poor, knowledge, skills, experience in tourism activities did not meet the professional requirements and sustainable development requirements.

Propaganda to upgrade awareness of tourism enterprises, people, tourists and other stakeholders on the content and meaning of sustainable tourism, about roles and responsibilities in tourism activities have not been focused regularly and fully. The perception of authorities and people about sustainable tourism was limited, without consensus. Most of all still only care about tourism from an economic perspective. The socio-cultural aspects, the protection of natural resources and the environment in tourism development have not been focused properly, so the synergy has not been created to develop tourism in a sustainable and long-term direction

Solutions for sustainable tourism development in PhuTho

Improve the capacity and efficiency of state management to meet the requirements of sustainable tourism development. Strengthening inter-sectoral coordination between the state agencies, especially in the formulation of plans, development of policies for tourism development, in organizing the use and

promotion of effectiveness, conservation, and protection of natural resources. And focusing on promoting the responsibility of the community and society in tourism development. Formulate appropriate guidelines, policies and legal documents to create a favorable environment for tourism development. Focusing on adjusting the documents on Incentives; Management and protection of tourism resources; and Raising the sense of responsibility of tourism enterprises, tourists, local people, and stakeholders in tourism development

Formulate the plans to use and protect natural resources in the province. Zone highly diverse resources such as natural landscapes areas, lagoons, lakes, mountain forest ecosystems, cultural and historical relics have been ranked , etc. that were vulnerable and influenced by the impact of tourism activities and other economic activities.

Strict management of tourism activities and other socio-economic activities that possibly affect tourism resources. Complete the regulations on environmental protection in tourist destinations. Organize for tourism enterprises to study and sign implementation commitments. Strengthen supervises of implementation of environmental protection regulations of tourism enterprises.

Needing preferential policies for mobilizing and attracting investment in protecting and embellishing tourism resources. Encouraging investment projects with specific commitments. Encourage tourism enterprises to apply low-energy and environmentally-friendly technologies (such as using appropriate design solutions to avoid energy consumption or using the solar system to provide hot water , etc.). Strengthening the arrangement of resources and promote the development of socio-economic infrastructure serve for tourism development. Encourage investment promotion, call for and enlist the central investment in major infrastructure projects and key national tourist projects (such as Hung King Temple and Xuan Son tourist area); actively coordinating the integration of resources for multi-sectoral projects, (such as irrigation projects in combination with tourism, craft villages combined with tourism , etc.). Along with the implementation of key infrastructure projects, it is necessary to attract investment from non-state economic sectors, from the community for projects of high-class accommodation and dining establishments, commercial centers, shopping centers, etc. in planned tourist areas and destinations.

Training and developing high-quality human resources to meet the requirements of sustainable tourism development. Regularly organizing training and retraining, in which, focus on training and developing a team of experts in the tourism industry; improve the quality, vocational skills, professionalism and foreign language skills for the tourism workforce on demand of work. Advance awareness and responsibility of staff and workers on sustainable tourism development. Paying attention to strengthening the training capacity of training institutions in the province. Improving the quality of teachers, supporting the strengthening of facilities and teaching conditions. Support training and guide the development of household economy, development of small and medium tourism enterprises; vocational training to restore and develop traditional crafts to create new tourist sites and produce souvenirs for tourism.

Developing featured tourism products and diversifying tourism products in association with developing the basic services for tourists. Focus on investing in transport infrastructure to raise the ability to access to tourist destinations, and create linkages of tourism resource chains to diversify products simultaneously. Invest in research to create and develop typical souvenir products of PhuTho, local products and specialty goods for tourism. Formulating long-term and annual strategies, programs on tourism; promoting the contents of the province associated with the promotion of regional and national tourism to create a

synergistic effect. Enhancing the information provision and guidance for tourists; building a system of guide points and provide information to tourists at important transport hubs and especially at tourist sites and travel centers.

Improve the sense of community responsibility and awareness of enterprises about sustainable tourism development. Implement well and synchronously solutions to stabilize prices, customer care, appropriate promotions, etc. to stimulate consumer demand and reduce the seasonality of tourism, reduce pressure on tourism resources. schedule. We need to strictly manage business activities to restrict the situation of cheating customers. Promote the role of tourism associations, business associations, and consumer protection organizations, etc. in order to protect and create healthy competition between tourism enterprises, protect the benefits of tourists, thereby attracting more and more tourists to come to the province.

CONCLUSION

Nowadays, tourism has become the most thriving industry with great potential and contributions. Tourism creates jobs, raises budgets, contributes strongly to the economic development of each country, region, and locality. It is an effective tool to reduce poverty, promote cultural development, society. In addition, tourism also has negative impacts on the environment, society, and the economy. The requirements for the countries are to research and orient to develop sustainable and efficient tourism on all three sides: economic, social and environmental resources protection. Therefore, sustainable tourism development is the right direction of the tourism industry of PhuTho province.

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