History of the Construction of the Capital of Kazakhstan First Experience: Service and its Outcome

Abstract: The article focuses on the construction of the new town of Ak-Mechet (Kyzylorda). Following the decision of the Council of People's Commissars (SNK) KazASSR of shifting the center of the Republic of Orenburg city Ak- Mechet, the government decided to create a building committee of the SNK and construction bureau for the new building in the city of Ak-Mechet for the state and its economic institutions. The new building of the city was a priority for the country, as the city of Ak-Mechet as it was wasn't prepared for the staff and apparatus of state institutions. Authors, using archive materials, have opened new chapters of history in the building of the capital of Kazakhstan. The history of the capital transfer is a hot topic in the history of Kazakhstan. Since the process of the transfer went chaotic order and there are many controversial question about the reasons to shift the center of the country. Some researchers say that the reason was political in nature, it is believed that it was necessary, as in the population of the Orenburg was mostly Russian. In the case of disagreement between the Communist Party of Kazakhstan there were Kazakh and Russian political leaders. When it was decided to make a capital from the small town Kyzyl-Orda, there was question: how to equip the city to match the status of the center of the country. The process of construction came with difficulties: a shortage of money and running out the lines that outlined in Moscow. After the construction of some buildings were poor qualified. The process of investigation, many prominent intellectuals of the Kazakh were convicted and executed.

Key words: Russian, Federation, Ak-Mechet, The Council of People's Commissars (SNK), Building committee, Construction offices, Procurement of materials, Kyzylorda, Shifting the story

Introduction. One of the most significant events in the history of the Kazakhstan is a transfer of the capital of Kazakhstan. The capital of the Kazakhstan was replaced three times: from Orenburg to Kyzylorda, from the Kyzylorda to Almaty, from Almaty to Astana. The first translations were in the period when Kazakhstan was part of Russia. The last transfer was made in the years of independence our country. The most difficult process when the transfer was initiated by the Kazakh intellectuals of the decision to transfer the capital from the city Orenburg to the Kyzylorda. The most difficult question was about the tools and about the construction of new buildings with apartments for government agencies and their employees. In the history of the world have been several cases of moving the capital to another city. In western historiography was considered an issue about transfer of the capital [1-4], about the process of building cities [5, 6] and about the social and political reasons [7-10].

At the second session of the Kazakh Central Executive Committee in October 1925, the President of Kazakh Central Executive Committee, Zh.Munbaev, reported a brief history of the decision to transfer the capital [11]. According to him, this idea first appeared in 1922, when Ak-Mechet was still in the Turkestan ASSR.

The city had attracted those who stood on the main railway line and was in an area populated mainly by Kazakhs. This was indeed the case, since in Kyzylorda district in 1925, there were 22,000 households, out of which only 476 farms were Russian [12].

The republic's leadership intended, in connection with the process of national-territorial processing of Kazakhstan, to create a true Kazakh center. In April 1925, Secretary of Regional Committee of the RCP C.Hodzhaev said: "The meaning of the transfer to a center at Ak-Mechet is not merely for the sake of it, but the desire to establish a necessary Kyrgyz center" [13]. It had to wait for the transfer of the provinces of Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Republic in KazASSR

for this idea to be realized. After registration of the transfer in February 1925 the process of moving the capital began.

Shifting of the Center of the Kazakh ASSR from Orenburg to Kyzylorda (Akmechet): Shifting of the center of the Kazakh (Kyrgyz) Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic from the city of Orenburg to the provincial town of Ak-Mechet (Kyzylorda) in the Syrdarya region was the decision of the Kyrgyz Central Executive Committee, 9 February 1925. The decision considered it necessary to shift the center from Orenburg KazASSR to Ak-Mechet and execute the instructions of the Council of People's Commissars KazASSR. To survey and explore the city and to realize the vision of the capital, a special commission was created by SNK, whose chairman appointed Abylai Sergaziev as Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars.

At the session of the Kyrgyz regional committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) on the development of measures for shifting the capital of the KazASSR from Orenburg to Ak-Mechet (Kyzylorda) it was decided to establish the technical commission of the SNK KazASSR. The Technical Committee consisted of 5 people and Aspandiyar Kenzhin was appointed chairman. It was decided to allocate 200 thousand rubles to the Commission. The duty of the commission was to provide a full report on the work done by 10 March 1925 to the Kyrgyz Regional Committee of the RCP (B.). The commission was to examine the municipal buildings, city water supply, heating and street lighting [14].

Aspandiyar Kenzhina's Commission arrived in the city on February 23, 1925 and began its work of making a cursory inspection by reviewing the locations and conditions of the buildings available in the city. After a brief preliminary assessment of the problems involved, the Commission made a tour of the city to examine the size of the largest buildings, the municipal and nationalized houses and their premises and equipment. As a result of discussion and the exchange of views, a committee attended by representatives of the local administration and technical senior officials made a brief outline [15].

The main work of Aspandiyar Kenzhina's commission was compiling records and the survey of municipal and nationalized houses and buildings that needed repair. The commission's work on the survey of Ak-Mechet ended in March 1925. But the repair work continued and was led by a technical committee, which for this purpose had entered into an agreement for repairs with two workers' cooperatives.

After moving the state and government agencies to Kyzylorda, it was decided to start a new building in the capital. The Council of People's Commissars of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic heard at the meeting of 5th June 1925 a report of the People's Commissariat of Finance on the amount of funds needed for the construction of buildings for the government agencies KazASSR. SNK RSFSR, in order to approve the total amount of the expenses associated with the transfer of government agencies Kyrgyz (Kazakhs) ASSR from Orenburg to Ak-Mechet in the amount of 1,186,000 rubles. The first half of more than 600,000 as follows: for the construction of public buildings, 325,000 rubles; strengthening of the Syr Darya, 85,000 rubles; to repair water pumps, 30,000 rubles; to build a power plant, 150,000 rubles; to develop a telephone exchange, 106,000 rubles [16].

Organization of Transfer: Difficulty in moving the capital from Almaty to Astana was nothing in comparison with the difficulties faced by the transfer of the capital to Kyzylorda. Astana had been quite a big city with an established infrastructure, while Ak-Mechet on the eve of the event did not have anything like an organized urban economy. It was a small town with a population of about 15,000 people in desperate lack of everything. February 23, 1925 the Ak-Mechet

commission arrived for the transfer of the capital and the first thing it was faced with was the fact it had to look for rooms in which it could work.

After the commission had placed its members, it needed to inspect the houses and set up placement agencies for their employees. Appropriate buildings in the city were very few and they were in poor condition and needed repair. Meanwhile, the new capital needed to accommodate 49 agencies and 1,150 employees.

The Commission had to hastily arrange repairs in order to house the majority of institutions in the renovated buildings.

Apartment housing was even more difficult because the housing stock of the city could only accommodate the existing population and had no reserves to accommodate more than a thousand newly arriving people. Because, according to Zhalau Munbaev: "The Commission has to adjust for agency staff and apartments in collapsing barns, kitchens, baths..." [17]. It resulted even in the eviction of residents from their homes in order to provide for apartment housing for government staff. Repair work covered 98 buildings and 1,500 homes - a significant part of urban development.

But it was not enough. Already in September 1925 they had to organize a construction committee and begin construction of 50 new buildings, including 15 homes, as the housing crisis had not abated. In August 1925, 200 people were still waiting for apartments [18].

Many institutions were moving into Kyzylorda before the government had done the necessary preliminary work. Thus, the newspaper "Soviet Steppe" moved from Orenburg to Kyzylorda on June 6, 1925, but a new issue did not come out until 7 July 1925. However, formal transfer took place July 17, 1925, when the government in the early morning train arrived at the station of Kyzylorda.

Community Problems: Members of the government and employees faced enormous difficulties with infrastructure. Kyzylorda at that time was a city economy and residents were provided essential public services only with great difficulty. For example, the city did not have electric lighting and a small generator was used only in the movie theater. Illumination was provided by kerosene lamps. Before the arrival of the government the streets at night were quite dark, which led in August 1925 to the purchase of 22 street lamps and kerosene lamps for 400 homes to provide at least the minimum coverage required for the streets [19]. The first newspaper article was about kerosene lamps and the newspaper colorfully described the difficulties that accompanied the purchase of lamps and kerosene. Employees were forced to carry a bottle and then went to work for kerosene oil depot. "Queues for kerosene were slightly shorter than they were in the years of famine for bread" and employees constantly smelled the aroma of kerosene [20].

Water was scarce and this problem was hardly solved by urban canals and small water pumps, which pumped water from the Syr Darya, with two extremely worn engines that were constantly being repaired. The population of the city turned to the canals in a very unorganized manner, forcing the county City Executive Committee in September 1925 to introduce rules for using water [21].People poured sewage and threw garbage into urban canals and often dammed the canals to water their livestock (Figure 1), using clay and cement for their construction and using the water for the manufacture of bricks, which were placed on the streets (Figure 2). In the end, funds were allocated for the construction of new and more powerful water pump.

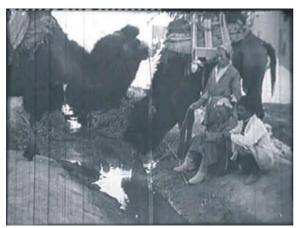


Fig. 1: Workers building committee using canals for watering camels. (Kyzylorda, 1925). Source: TsGAKFDZ RK



Fig. 2: Drying bricks in the middle of the city. (Kyzylorda, 1925) Source: TsGAKFDZ RK

A huge problem was garbage in the streets, which homeowners threw anywhere. Garbage-clogged streets were not compatible with the capital city status and the government began to fight against this phenomenon. At first they tried to exhort and to convince, but that was no help. This problem was solved by the introduction in August 1925 of neighborhood stewards, entrusted with the duty to monitor the cleanliness of streets, houses and the sanitary condition of the quarters [22].

Creating Construction Committee under the Council of People's Commissars KazASSR: July 1925 had great importance to the building of new Kyzylorda; the Kazakhstan Council of People's Commissars decree of June 19 organized the building committee of the Council of People's Commissars. It consisted of representatives from the Council of People's Commissars of the State Plan, the People's Commissariat of Finance, Department of the Kazakh VTSSPS, Working Peasants' Inspection, the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs and State Insurance [23].

The resolution of the KazCNK of June 10, 1925 established a building committee for new construction and the resolution was adopted on 17 June. The building committee oversaw all construction and a construction bureau was established for repair work.

Construction Bureau staff was funded by an estimated 4% of the budget [24].

Chairman of the building committee Abylai Sergaziev appealed in a letter to Alexander Budassi in Leningrad for guidance in developing the building and construction bureauof Kyzylorda [25].

Leningrad engineer Alexander Budassi accepted the offer to head the office [26], with an office staff consisting of 26 people. Chief Engineer Mukhammedzhan Tynyshpaev, who was also deputy chairman of the building committee on the technical side, was a member of the construction office; T. Nikolsky (also academic secretary of the State Planning Commission) was the accountant and secretary; and T. Merkulov; the rest of the organization consisted of technical staff.

M. Tynyshpaev, until his appointment as deputy chairman of the building committee and the engineer of the SNK KazASSR Commission, worked in the People's Commissariat of Agriculture in the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic and after the national delimitation in Central Asia, as a senior specialist in nomadic areas. A March 23 decision of the special committee of the Executive Committee of All-Russia excluded him from the list of employees of the Commission on the nomadic economy and he was transferred to the Kazakh Central Executive Committee on 1 May 1925.

Mukhamedzhan Tynyshpaev pushed the idea of establishing an office for the building committee of the Council of People's Commissars. In a letter which he addressed to the deputy chairman of the CPC KazASSR A.Sergaziev, he pointed out the need to create a special government unit for new construction. Thus, in a letter M.Tynyshpaev wrote that "recent construction goes very slowly, due to disorganization and the lack of materials....". Because of the importance and urgency of this issue, it was decided to send a report to Orenburg on the matter to the Council of People's Commissars and to the head and members of the technical part of the CPC committee on the observations of Ak-Mechet (Kyzylorda) engineer M. Tynyshpaeva [27].

The Construction Bureau under the Building Committee coordinated with the construction committee of the Council of People's Commissars. Construction work, not only for the institutions in the government budget, but also for the government itself, was assigned to the construction bureau [28].

Construction Progressof Kyzylorda: Difficulties and Problems: After organizing the office building and its technical committee they held a meeting on the building and on its prospects. These meetings focused on issues of building materials and construction methods. At a meeting of the building committee at the Kazakh Council of People's Commissars of June 18, 1925 they discussed the mode of construction work in the city of Kyzylorda. The representative of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs engineer V.Kohanovsky suggested construction work based on a mixed (semi-agricultural) method and legal advisor GCOS A.Gintsburg who previously headed the construction work in Turkestan came to conclusions about the most convenient and least troublesome ways to deal with contractors. The method of production with careful monitoring provided many more safeguards to prevent misuse, although much more difficult to achieve in a purely economic way of working. There were suggested three ways of construction work: contracting, economic, or a mixture of the two. After a lengthy exchange of views and weighing pros and cons of all three methods, it was decided to employ mixed construction methods [29].

General characteristics of the three modes of production can be seen in the following comparative analysis:

- Contract (construction through public enterprises) - faults in the timing, poor quality, high pricing and failure, the use of advances other than as directed, the loss of about two months in the invitation to tender and other formalities, which may result in failure of secured loan in

whole or in part and the short time period before the closing credits. A beneficial side was the lack administrative and accounting.

- Economic method had weaknesses related to the complexity and bulkiness of service staff in terms of merit and accountability; difficulties quickly gain a foothold in terms of practically experienced workers serving the machine. Best side was able to immediately begin work on the opening credits, not waiting for the deployment of additional staff.
- Half-way to the economic method (by means of the Building Committee): cash-ready frame of selected professionals can immediately get to work, the entire organization stays in Kyzylorda without making accounts of itself to Moscow and other centers and to minimize the administrative and financial reporting [30].

The Committee decided to limit the cost of farm buildings for each house to no more than 1,500 rubles and reduce costs for the construction of houses, allowing for 251,000 rubles to build a house; The Committee provided for the construction of 14 municipal-type houses and 56 apartments with a total of 198 rooms [31].

Also at the meeting of the technical engineering office building, which was held August 17, 1925, they discussed the types of homes for the public servants. They adopted six types of buildings to accommodate staff arriving in Kyzylorda.

Special attention was given to different types of buildings for public institutions and homes for the employees of the state organization. At a meeting of the building committee the issue was raised about what type of needs to provide for and several options were offered, but the preference was given to one-story buildings. It was decided that buildings of two or more floors, due to the climate characteristics of Kyzylorda, were unsuitable. In a study of the city was found that ground water was at a depth of 18 meters and if you build a two-or three-floor buildings, the heating would have to use a basement depth of 8 meters, but because of the water table the walls of the room itself would be damp.

A meeting of the Technical Board discussed the issue in detail. The representative of the NKVD V. Ershov engineer said: "We should not dwell on the question of what material we will be usingwhether kiln-dried or sun-dried bricks. It is necessary to decide which are the best buildings-one-story or two-story in terms of convenience of accommodation. I definitely stand for the one-story building and from the sanitary point of view and in the eastern climate it is much easier to live in a one-story building. After all, American billionaires made to climb to the sky due to a lack of space, but when they get away from their skyscrapers and have their own structures, they build one-storey buildings. Being forced to climb to the sky due to a lack of space in Kyzylorda, this cannot happen for 50 or even 100 years. All the eastern cities have a definite character to their buildings, it's their nature, their style and I think that in terms of floors-either one or two floors-the one-story building is desirable" [32].

Construction was planned to divide the city into two parts: the old town and the new town. In the new part of the city planned to build a building for public institutions and homes for the staff of these institutions. Redevelopment of the city took into account the requirements of safety and sanitation, as well as the future of cultural and educational values for the population of the city. New streets were laid out parallel and perpendicular to each other. Width of streets would not be less than 20 fathoms (42.7 meters) and the lanes no less than 18 fathoms; some lanes would have a width of 20 fathoms. The width of streets was determined by the need for tree plantings on either side of the street and to have a roads wide enough for a tramway, as well as equestrian and motor movement [33].

The city streets were not paved and therefore dust was everywhere in Kyzylorda. The city was choking in dust, which settled into any corner, despite cleaning. This was a problem the city could not solve as funds for paved streets were not at the disposal of the republic. One solution was watering the street, but water was not always available. As a result, the problem began to dealt with on an ad hoc basis. Homeowners had to build paved sidewalks in front of their houses and the owners of stalls in the market paved the marketplace.

Ak-Mechet (Kyzylorda) had several small bathhouses, which were barely enough for the needs of the population of the city. The government commission on Relocation requisitioned two bathhouses and rebuilt them on their premises. As a result, a growing crisis was averted in Kyzylorda in 1925, reflected in the fact that the baths had always been crowded, there was always a queue and tickets were on sale two days in advance.

To top it off, it was not always possible to buy goods in the city. Immediately after the 2nd session of Kazakh Central Executive Committee, October 12, 1925 in the city there were shortages of flour and bread. It turned out that the flour wagons from Orenburg had not arrived on time and there was no flour mill in Kyzylorda. The County City Executive Committee promised through the newspaper that within two to three days the bread shortage problem would be solved [34].

Materials for New Construction: In the East, 90% of the buildings erected use only raw materials such as wood. Although it is difficult to understand the technical reasons, from conversations with experts in the field it appears that monuments constructed of raw wood are quite strong; Tamerlane's tomb and others have lasted for over a thousand years and the city of Tashkent itself was built using 90% raw wood and has endured to this day. Climatic conditions of Kyzylorda differ little from Tashkent. Because Kyzylorda stands in the desert and the heat can be terrible, life could be unbearable if you build a two-storey building with no shade on the top floor [35].

In the course of procuring building materials Aspandiyar Kenzhin reported that the site made the following types of materials: adobe brick, kiln-dried brick, iron-ore brick for foundations, limestone, alabaster, sand, clay and reeds. There was a very bad situation with regard to the placement of the water supply, because of the poor condition of the water tower. A meeting of the construction committee of the SNK Kazakh ASSR held on July 29, dealt with the water pump because, first of all, it was necessary to solve the problem of water supply for the needs of the urban population and in particular for the construction. It was proposed that executives of the county committee do a 3-day study to examine the Kyzylorda water tower, outline a future work plan and report back to the building committee [36]. But prior to complete repair, the building committee resolution of 14 September 1925 authorized leasing a pump from a citizen of Belyaev to provide water for temporary construction jobs produced by the construction committee. The pump was delivered to the SyrDarya River, the site of the city water tower.

Proceeding from these general guidelines, Aspandiyar Kenzhin reported the following information on materials:

- Basic production performed by labor cooperatives, of which there was no shortage, but because the commission had not freed up the funds, there were two months of no production.
- Kiln-dried bricks 3 broken kilns that were available to the Commission had been restored and were supplemented by 7 additional kilns. Then the Commission has allocated a further 80, 000 rubles to the kiln budget. The town had a total of 22 kilns.

- Iron ore- necessary for laying the foundations; a very low percentage was smelted. Currently, iron ore was not available and you need it to avoid delay in the construction of foundations.
- Lime 28,000 pounds had been procured and 10,000 pounds were still available. There was no shortage of lime and the quality was very good.
- Alabaster -30,000 pounds had been procured and 10,000 pounds remained; It could not be manufactured and needed to be purchased.
- Reed -20,000 sheaves had been procured and 5000 sheaves remained. Reed was necessary and funds needed to be allocated for its purchase.
- Sand and clay can be purchased in any amount and with no delay [37].

The question about the lighting of the city was still considered to be one of the most important issues for the city. At first the most crowded streets and the streets which were scheduled for paving were lighted and it was necessary to distribute the lights so that the trees did not obscure the light. Chairman of the county executive committee K.Rustemov was instructed to immediately begin preparations to install the newly arriving gas lights so as to have covered the main streets [38].

A total 1.605 million bricks (5,000 iron ore bricks, 460,000 white bricks and 1.09 million red bricks) were procured for beginning construction. Third grade brick - kiln-dried and dark-brown (iron ore), was used only on the foundation. Cost of production in the brick factory was 27 rubles 89 kopecks per 1,000. The bricks were made economically by 8 plants which were located within Kyzylorda and were owned by the building committee.

Construction materials which were procured directly from within the city, such as sand, stucco, brick and lime were sufficient, but the materials which were brought in from other regions, such as wood, cement and glass were lacking. For example, materials for insulating concrete walls were not readily available and they were needed in order to complete the first concrete buildings (the primary and secondary schools, a house and a diesel storage unit.

In order to complete the buildings on schedule, they used the local method of insulation, which involved using two rows of bundles of reeds layered with mortar [39].

By October 31, they had received 42 carloads of wooden poles; a telegraph message was sent to Tashkent and they sent an additional 12 carloads. Fifty-four carloads of wooden poles accounted for 25 percent of the total demand for new construction [40].

Bricks for construction were produced by cooperatives, which employed local people. These bricks were transported by camels, which were specifically used for construction work. Bricks and other construction materials were transported by camels because the committee for equipment had not allocated enough funds to buy trucks. Production of necessary materials and construction was done under difficult conditions; this was the construction of the new capital of Kazakhstan and the speed with which it had to done made conditions even more difficult.

The entire 1925 construction season 1925, faced many difficulties. First of all, was the lack of building material for new construction. In order to save money, the government of Kazakhstan had to quickly reduce the cost of construction of the residential buildings. The technical meeting

notes of the building committee in 1925 indicate that Alexander Budassi and Abylai Sergazy proposed to reduce the cost of houses and that this would be achieved by utilizing common latrines, wells, barns and other out buildings for several adjacent buildings, as well as the construction of farm buildings in the indigenous manner without foundations. In an exchange of opinions it was found possible to limit the cost of farm buildings for each house to no more than 1,500 rubles each and to reduce the cost of building houses, allocating 251,000 rubles to build a municipal type house. That is, 15 buildings included 11 houses and 56 apartments with a total of 198 rooms [41].

Construction work in the city resumed at the end of autumn 1925. In the initial phase, buildings were constructed for public and government agencies, schools and homes for the employees of the state organization. The solution of many problems in connection with the construction of new buildings had been discussed in the Council of People's Commissars KazASSR and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR. These plans included not just Kazakhstan, but the whole Union. The most difficult period in the construction and repair was during the first months of the construction season, since there were problems with the lack of funds for materials and labor. Repair and construction work were considered to be of great importance to the national and state organization.

Conclusion. Shifting the capital of the Kazakh Autonomous Socialist Republic from the city of Orenburg to the provincial town Ak-mechet (Kyzylorda) was made out of necessity. The city itself was not suitable for the capital and there was no well-established infrastructure to include the building for public institutions. To give the appearance of a capital city, new construction had to begin. If construction and size of the former city Perovsk reflected its administrative importance and the conditions of life as the county town, then moving to the capital of Kazakhstan it is natural to require construction on a more improved and enlarged scale. Kyzylorda's original territorial limitations made it too small to serve as a capital which would include not only the seat of government, but also all the major institutions and agencies as well as their staff.

According to a survey of land adjacent to the old city boundaries, the commission identified the territory of the future new town, to link up with existing town and its extension. They photographed the area integral to the plan and took care to develop planning regulations for the future city, taking into consideration not only architecture but also a projected growth over a period of 40 years.

During the construction season in 1925 decisions were made relevant to allocation of staff and institutions. New buildings were created by the building committee and construction bureau of the Council of People's Commissars of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic. All civil work involved the construction bureau at SNK (Council of People's Commissars). The construction of new buildings for public agencies was completed by the end of 1925. A total of 29 buildings (including housing for civil servants) were constructed during the period from June to December of 1925.

Construction was under the control of the offices of the building committee. The building committee operated for a year and in the following year of 1926 all civil work was under the control of the city municipal committee.

Archives and Abbreviations:

- 1. KazASSR- Kazakhs Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic
- 2. TurASSR Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic

- 3. KazCEC (KazTsIC) Kazakh Central Executive Committee KazSNK (KazCPC) Council of People's Commissars NKVD (Narodnyy Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del) Peoples Commissariat for Internal Affairs
- 4. RCP (B)- Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)
- 5. Central State Archive of cinematic, photographic and audio documents of the Republic of Kazakhstan-Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Kino Foto dokymentov i zvukozapisi Respubliki Kazakhstana[TsGAKFDZ RK]
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