

A Note on the Chinese Fragment in Tibetan Script PT1249

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Abstract: PT1249 is a fragmentary Chinese text written in Tibetan script that earlier has not yet been identified. The recent research by the writer of this paper reveals that the text is a part of the interrogation of śikṣamāṇā, who should be to receive the commandments of Buddhism. The text consists of the part of *Biqiuni jiandu* 比丘尼捷度第十七 in the 'Four-Part Vinaya' *Sifenlü* 四分律 with an introductory passage. Hitherto, no Chinese vinaya texts in Tibetan script have been known. A Chinese text that completely corresponds to this fragment also does not exist. Nevertheless, this kind of precept is indispensable for the śikṣamāṇā at the ceremony of receiving the commandments, and she had to learn the passage by heart. One may say that even an illiterate śikṣamāṇā could receive the commandments and become a formal nun. From a phonetic characteristics, the transcription system belongs to the period of Tibetan rule. A transliterated text with the corresponding Chinese characters, part of which was recovered from the transcription, is presented in this paper. The presence of the fragment provides many suggestions regarding the social realities of Buddhism and language situation in the Tibetan period of Dunhuang.

Key words: Chinese in Tibetan script, vinaya text, Tibetan period of Dunhuang, Dunhuang manuscripts.

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written in Tibetan. These were the Diamond Sutra (Thomas, F.W. & Clauson, G.L.M. 1926: 508–526) and the Amitabha Sutra (Thomas, F.W. & Clauson, G.L.M. 1927: 858–860), both of which are common Buddhist scriptures. In terms of phonetic transcription, they belong to a relatively early period based on the Chang'an dialect. However, although it is said to be 'relatively early', it was written after the end of period of the Tibetan rule and during the era of the Zhang 張 Family of Guiyi Army (*Guiyijun* 歸義軍). This was a later story, and, at that time, the research conditions did not allow for a real judgment of the ages of these two manuscripts. Later, Walter Simon discovered a large number of such documents in the British collection, as well as in the collection of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. He also compared these manuscripts with corresponding Chinese texts (Simon, Walter 1958: 334–343). His research also introduced a general overview of the content of the 'Long Scroll' in the British collection, which was a significant contribution into the study (Takata 1988¹). Later, the author almost completely restored the Chinese text corresponding to the 'Long Scroll' and found that it was based on the phonetic transcription of the Western Chinese dialect popular in the Dunhuang area (Takata 1993: 380–313). The phenomenon of using Tibetan scripts to write Chinese texts continued in Dunhuang during the *Guiyi* Army period (and even as late as the tenth century during the *Cao* Family *Guiyi* Army period). This fact deserves attention when examining the language situation in Dunhuang. The use of the Tibetan script by the Chinese undoubtedly started during the Tibetan period, but Tibeto-Chinese phonetic manuscripts confirmed to have been written during the Tibetan period are surprisingly rare. This article intends to introduce a Tibeto-Chinese phonetic fragment that the author believes to be from the Tibetan period: "Excerpts from the Four-Part Vinaya".

1. Fragment of PT1249

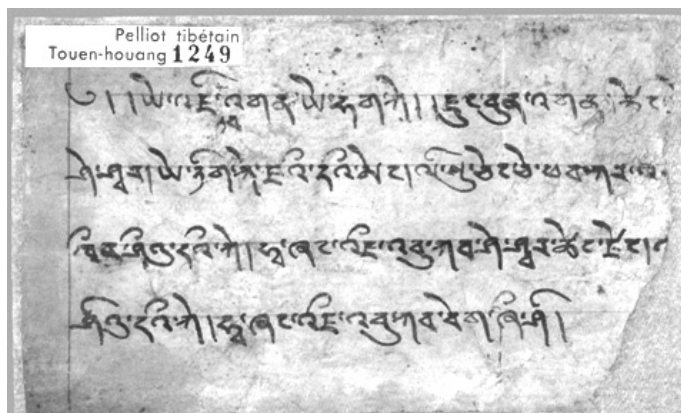
The second volume of the Catalogue of Tibetan Manuscripts from Dunhuang compiled by Marcelle Lalou (Lalou 1950), includes a collection of Chinese manuscripts written in Tibetan script. Most of them are small fragments, and it is difficult to determine their corresponding Chinese texts. The author of this paper had worked in the field (Takata 2013: 233–239). Now, I am fortunate to have been able to identify a fragment of the Chinese text, and would like to take this opportunity to present a report.

According to the Lalou catalogue, PT1249 is a 'fragment of Chinese transliteration. It is the left half of a leaf, the longest part of which is 9 by 16 cm, with four lines with rules and grey edges' (Lalou, Marcelle: 92: "Fragments de transcription du chinois. 1 morceau gauche de f. (9x16 au moins); 4 l., règl. et marges grises". The catalogue also transcribes the first two lines in front of the manuscript and the third (final) line at the back. First, the plate² and transcribed text are provided along with the corresponding Chinese characters³, as follows:

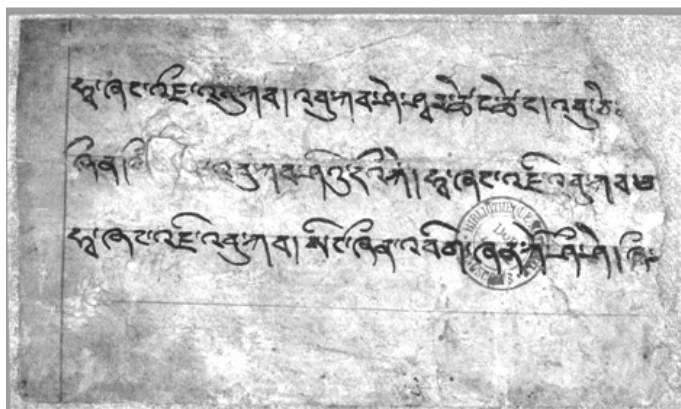
¹ The author of the monograph used these materials to divide the Chinese documents written in Dunhuang Tibetan script into two categories based on the phonological characteristics.

² Plate from *Gallica*: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/>.

³ This text is transcribed using the Wylie transliteration and also used the more common transcription method in recent years, which uses the *gi-gu inverse* transcription with a capital "I".



Pl. 1: *Recto* of PT1249



Pl. 2: *Verso* of PT1249

[*Recto*]

1. ye 'ji tab 'gan ye hag ke / jung bun 'gan tsheng []e ...
以尼答言已學戒重問願清淨
2. she shwar / ye tig ke dza'I da'I seng / li su ceng ce phab kar '[] ...
所說已得戒在大僧禮須正知法羯磨
3. khIr shI'u da'I ke / hwa zhang 'ji 'bu kab shwar tsheng dzeng / '[] ...
乞受大戒和尚尼某甲說清淨無
4. shi'u da'I ke / hwa zhang 'ji 'bu kab beg zhI shi / ...
受大戒和尚尼某甲白如是

[*Verso*]

1. hwa zhang 'ji 'bu kab / 'bu kab she shwar tsheng / 'bu c[] ...
和尚尼某甲某甲所說清淨無諸
2. zhIn / []I[] [] 'bu kab shi'u da'I ke / hwa zhang 'ji 'bu kab c[] ...
忍僧授某甲受大戒和尚尼某甲者
3. hwa zhang 'ji 'bu kab / sing zhIn 'big zhan ko shI she / zhI ...
和尚尼某甲僧忍默然故是事如

The content of the fragment is shown above in restored in Chinese characters. Examining the text, we can find that most of the text on this fragment is almost identical to the “17th chapter of *Biqiuni jiandu* 比丘尼捷度” in volume 48 of the *Sifenlü* 四分律 (translated by Buddhayaśas 佛陀耶舍 of the Later Qin 秦 Dynasty) (Taishō Tripitaka, vol. 22, p. 924, bottom column). However, the first and second lines on the front page are different from the *Sifenlü*, and there are several numbers that do not appear in the 17th chapter of *Biqiuni jiandu* of the *Sifenlü*. The text added above based on the sound-based speculation is shown in bold font⁴. One more point needs to be explained: the text in the *Sifenlü* covered in this article is also found almost entirely in the *Sifen biqiuni jiemofa* 四分比丘尼羯磨法 (Taishō Tripitaka, vol. 22, p. 1067, upper column), but the first line on the back of the fragment, 某甲所說清淨 (A certain person said that it is pure), is different from the 某甲自說清淨 (A certain person said himself that it is pure), in the *Sifen biqiuni jiemofa* (Taishō Canon, vol. 40, p. 500, upper column). In order to provide a glimpse of the context of the text, we carefully record the relevant verses of the *Sifenlü* below (words found in PT1249 are marked with an underscore):

若式叉摩那學戒已，若年滿二十、若滿十二，應與受大戒。白四羯磨，應如是與戒。將受戒人離聞處著見處，是中戒師應差教授師。『大姊僧聽！此某甲從和尚尼某甲求受大戒。若僧時到僧忍聽，某甲為教授師。白如是。』教授者應至受戒人所語言：『汝此安陀會、鬱多羅僧、僧伽梨、此僧竭支覆肩衣、此是鉢，此是汝衣鉢不？諦聽！今是真誠時，我今問汝，有便言有，無當言無。汝字何等？和尚字誰？年滿二十不？衣鉢具不？父母若夫主為聽汝不？不負人債不？非婢不？是女人不？女人有如是諸病：癩、白癩、癰疽、乾疽、癰狂、二根、二道合、道小、大小便常漏、大小便涕唾常出。汝有如是諸病不？』若答言：『無。』應語言：『如我向者所問，僧中亦當如是問汝。汝亦當作如是答。』彼教授師問已，應還至僧中，如常威儀至舒手及比丘尼處立，應作白：『大姊僧聽！此某甲從和尚尼某甲求受大戒。若僧時到僧忍聽，我已教授竟聽使來。白如是。』彼應語言：『來。』來已應為捉鉢，教禮比丘尼僧足，在戒師前胡跪合掌，白如是言：『大姊僧聽！我某甲從和尚尼某甲求受大戒，我某甲今從僧乞受大戒，和尚尼某甲。眾僧拔濟我，慈愍故。』如是第二、第三說。是中戒師應作白：『大姊僧聽！此某甲從和尚尼某甲求受大戒，此某甲今從僧乞受大戒，和尚尼某甲。若僧時到僧忍聽，我問諸難事。白如是。』『汝諦聽！今是真誠時、實語時。我今問汝，有當言有，無當言無。汝字何等？和尚字誰？年滿二十不？衣鉢具不？父母若夫主聽汝不？汝非負人債不？汝非婢不？汝是女人不？女人有如是諸病：癩、白癩、癰疽、乾疽、癰狂、二根、二道合、道小、大小便常漏、大小便涕唾常出。汝有如是諸病不？』答言：『無。』應作白：『大姊僧聽！此某甲從和尚尼某甲求受大戒，此某甲今從僧乞受大戒，和尚尼某甲。某甲所說清淨，無諸難事，年滿二十，衣鉢具足。若僧時到僧忍聽，為某甲受大戒，和尚尼某甲。白如是。』『大姊僧聽！此某甲從和尚尼某甲求受大戒，此某甲今從眾僧乞受大戒，和尚尼某甲。某甲所說清淨，無諸難事，年滿二十、衣鉢具足。僧今授某甲大戒，和尚尼某甲。誰諸大姊忍僧授某甲大戒、和尚尼某甲者默然，誰不忍者說。是初羯磨竟。』第二、第三亦如是說。『僧已忍與某甲受大戒竟、和尚尼某甲，僧忍，默然故，是事如是持。』

The *Sifenlü* here describes the ordination method for bhikshunis. More specifically, it explains the method for receiving full ordination after two years of perception in a specific subsection of the Vinaya. In Dunhuang, the content related to the use of this text will be

⁴ If the text in the first and second lines of the fragment is not in bold, it can always be found in the relevant passage in the *Sifenlü*.

described later. In this article, we first examine the nature of the sound, and the date on which this fragment was written.

2. Nature of the sound of the PT1249 fragment and its dating

The following table shows the sound of the text below the third line on the front of the fragment that can be accurately matched with the text of the *Sifenlü*⁵.

Chinese Characters	Phonological category in Middle Chinese	Tibetan transcription	Position of appearance
和	果合一平戈匣	hwa	R3, R4, V1, V2, V3
故	遇合一去暮見	ko	V3
如	遇合三平魚日	zhI	R4, V4
無	遇合三平虞微	'bu	V1
大	蟹開一去泰定	da'I	R3, R4, V2
戒	蟹開二去怪見	ke	R3, R4, V2
尼	止開三平脂泥	'ji, 'jI	R3, R4, V1, V2, V3
是	止開三上紙禪	shi, shI	R4, V3
事	止開三去志崇	shI	V3
受	流開三上有禪	shI'u	R3, R4, V2
某	流開一上厚明	'bu	R3, R4, V1(2), V2(2), V3
甲	咸開二入狎見	kab	R3, R4, V1(2), V2(2), V3
然	山開三平仙日	zhan	V3
說	山合三入薛書	shwar	R3, V1
忍	臻開三上軫日	zhIn	V2, V3
乞	臻開三入迄溪	khIr	R3
尚	宕開三去漾禪	zhang	R3, R4, V1, V2, V3
僧	曾開一平登心	sing	V3
默	曾開一入德明	'big	V3
白	梗開二入陌並	beg	R4
清	梗開三平清清	tsheng	R3, V1
淨	梗開三去勁從	dzeng, tsheng	R3, V1

⁵ The Middle Chinese pronunciation of each character is based on Ding Shengshu 丁聲樹, *Gujin ziyin duizhao shouce* 古今字音對照手冊 [A Handbook of Comparative Pronunciation of Ancient and Modern Chinese Characters] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, October 1981). The Latin transliteration of the pronunciation is given next, and the position of the character in the manuscript is listed last. For example, R3 is the third line on the *recto*, and V1 is the first line on the *verso*.

As shown in the table above, there are only 22 unique Chinese characters; however, they are indispensable for exploring the nature of their pronunciation and the era in which they were written. They are also helpful for supplementing Tibetan transcriptions of Chinese texts⁶.

As mentioned at the beginning of this article, an observation of the transcription of Chinese texts in Tibetan script from Dunhuang reveals two distinct levels: the earlier period was based on the pronunciation of Chang'an, while the later period was based on the local *Hexi* 河西 dialect prevalent in the Dunhuang area⁷. Now, an observation of the transcription of this fragment reveals that it is based on the pronunciation of Chang'an, as few elements of the *Hexi* dialect can be found. It inevitably also contains some characteristics of the *Hexi* dialect; for example, the word “ru” 如 is transcribed in Tibetan script as *zhi*. However, the Tibetan script of the *Emituojing* 阿彌陀經 (O)⁸ and the *Tiandi bayang shenzhoujing* 天地八陽神呪經 (TD) are also written in the same way, which should be the result of the influence of the local dialect on the Chang'an dialect that was popular in Dunhuang. On the contrary, the clear characteristic of the pronunciation based on the Chang'an dialect is that the nasal rhyme endings of the *dang* 宕 and *geng* 梗 rhyme groups are retained. Here are some examples:

清 *geng* rhyme group tsheng (tshe) R3, V1
 淨 *geng* rhyme group dzeng (dze) R3, tsheng V1.
 尙 *dang* rhyme group zhang (zho) R3, R4, V1, V2, and V3

The corresponding sounds in parentheses are those of the *Hexi* dialect, which appear universally in the manuscripts from the Cao 曹 Family *Guiyi* Army period in the 10th century. Such loss of nasal consonant endings appears only in the *geng* and *dang* categories, and not in the *tong* 通 and *zeng* 曾 rhyme groups, which also have soft palate nasal consonant endings. Although the character *seng* 僧 appears in the third line of the *verso* side, it is a first-grade character of the *zeng* rhyme group, and in this fragment as well, the nasal consonant is preserved in the third line of the *verso* side. This is also preserved in the *Hexi* dialect, so it cannot serve as a criterion for distinguishing between new and old pronunciations. Incidentally, the character *jing* 淨 is written as *tsheng* instead of the standard *dzeng* in the first line of the reverse side, and is likely influenced by the preceding *qing* 清 written as *tsheng*. The rhyme ending is correctly written as *-ng*. Other examples of corresponding sounds do not provide clear evidence for distinguishing between the new and old forms; therefore, we will not go into detail about individual corresponding sounds here, but overall, this fragment can be considered to be from the old form. Furthermore, considering the external characteristic that this fragment is bound in the Indian style, it is likely to date back to the Tibetan period. If this is indeed from the Tibetan period, it could be one of the oldest examples of Tibetan scripts used to write Chinese text.

⁶ For example, see the Appendix 3: “Sound table of the transcriptions”, from the work by Tokio Takata, Tonkō Siryō ni yoru Chyōgokugo-shi no Kenkyū (A Study of Chinese Language History Using Dunhuang Sources).

⁷ See the above-cited Tokio Takata, *A Study of Chinese Language History Using Dunhuang Sources*, pp. 37–38.

⁸ Abbreviations such as O and TD are also used in the above-cited work.

3. The actual situation of the ordination of śikṣamānā during the Tibetan period

This fragment is based on the *Sifenlū* and specifically records the procedures for the full ordination of śikṣamānā and the actual questions and answers that should be recited during it. This may have been performed during the ceremony.

The term śikṣamānā is explained in the *Xuanying yinyi* 玄應音義 as “zhengxue 正學, śikṣamānā in Sanskrit, meaning two-year students of the precepts.” The *Shishi yaolan* 釋氏要覽 explains it as “śikṣamānā: this means the female students of the Dharma, similar to the long hair of nuns today. The *Sifenlū* says that at the age of eighteen, young girls should learn for two years, meaning that they should train for two years their bodies and train their minds with the six methods.” Before a śramaṇerikā reaches the age of 18 and is formally ordained as a nun, she must study for two years. During this period, she is called a śikṣamānā in Sanskrit, and zhengxue or xuefanü 學法女 in Chinese⁹. Originally, a śramaṇa did not need to go through this stage to become ordained as a monk, but as a woman, she must go through this stage to become a śramaṇerikā. During these two years, a śikṣamānā must learn and practice the six precepts: no sexual misconduct, no theft, no killing, no lying, no alcohol, and no eating or drinking at inappropriate times. Only then are they qualified to receive full ordination, and pass the judgment of karma¹⁰.

During the Tibetan period, there were naturally also śikṣamānā ordinations in Dunhuang. However, there is little evidence on how these ordinations unfolded. The specific sequence and dialogue of the Buddhist ordination ceremony is translated into Chinese as “karmas (羯磨)”. The texts of the “Shichamona shou dajiefa 式叉摩那受大戒法” in the *Biqiuni jiemo* 比丘尼羯磨 (Karmas of the Bhikkhunis) translated by the *Cao Wei* 曹魏 period monk, Tandi 曇諦 (Dharmasatya)¹¹, and the text of the “Shichamona shou dajiefa” in the *Sifen biqiuni jiemofa* 四分比丘尼羯磨法 translated by the *Liu Song* 劉宋 period monk, Guṇabhadra 求那跋陀羅¹², are almost identical. In particular, the latter is almost a verbatim reproduction of the text of the *Sifenlū*, but as mentioned in the first section of this article, there is a ‘difference of one character’ between the text and the fragment PT1249.

There is no other way to examine the nature of a fragment than to carefully examine the fragment itself. The statements written in the first and second lines on the front of the fragment are not found in the *Sifenlū* or the *Sifen biqiuni jiemofa*, which is different from the extant literature, or it may be some other kind of literature. If this is the case, it is impossible to explain why the third line and below is undoubtedly an excerpt of the “17th chapter of *Biqiuni jiandu*” in the 48th volume of the *Sifenlū*. The first two lines indicate the exact location of the problem. The sentences in them, as mentioned above, are either commonly found in the same position in the *Sifenlū*, or not found at all in the *Sifenlū*. The above text is based only on phonetic deductions. If the phrases ‘nun said that she had already learned the precepts’ and ‘the ceremony must be performed with proper knowledge of the Dharma’ formulated by the author are correct, then this should be a supplement to the *bai* 白 (spoken words) made in order to guide the person receiving the precepts after the sequence of the

⁹ *Fanyi mingyiji* 翻譯名義集, vol. 1: “śikṣamānā, which means female student of the Dharma”.

¹⁰ The original meaning of “karma” was a meeting within the monastic community, but it came to refer to important issues such as the ordination ceremony, and even to the actions performed during the ceremony.

¹¹ Taishō Tripiṭaka 1926: 1061, upper column.

¹² Taishō Tripiṭaka 1926: 1066, upper column.

great precepts of the śikṣamānā in the 17th chapter of *Biqiuni jiandu* of the *Sifenlū* is abbreviated. In the large excerpt from the *Sifenlū* quoted in the first section of this text, there are questions from the teacher and preceptor interspersed, which are not found in this fragment. In this fragment, only the statement that should be made by the śikṣamānā as the ordained party is recorded, so it is speculated that it may be a manual for the śikṣamānā. It is inferred that there may have been more than one śikṣamānā preparing to take the full ordination, and this text was prepared for them.

From a different perspective, there may be another, rarer scenario: when it was time for an illiterate śikṣamānā to take the full ordination, she asked someone to transcribe the necessary content from the *Sifenlū* in Tibetan script; or perhaps she asked for the pronunciation of the relevant content and recorded it in Tibetan. However, considering that there are also phrases in this fragment that are not found in the *Sifenlū*, such as ‘*yi ni dayan yi xuecheng* 以尼答言已學戒 (as the nun replied that she had already learned the precepts)’, the above inference may not be very likely. It is more likely that there is a similar Chinese text in circulation, and this fragment was written in Tibetan.

Returning to the fragment itself, the *recto* side has four lines, which are the beginning of a paragraph, whereas the *verso* side has only three lines, which are the exact end of a paragraph. This makes us feel that the text is complete. It can be seen that the text is short and can be written on a piece of paper. In any case, it can be considered that the original Chinese text on which it is based is a very short practical fragment; in that light, its loss is also reasonable.

Conclusion

The above is a small note on the Chinese fragment in Tibetan script PT1249, which is quite interesting as an example of using the Tibetan script to write a Chinese text for the precept of śikṣamānā. On the one hand, the Dunhuang community strictly adhered to the ordination ceremony during the Tibetan period; on the other hand, the people who did not know Chinese characters could also receive precepts. From these phenomena, it can be inferred that the literacy rate in Dunhuang in the ninth and tenth centuries was relatively low. Although the literacy rate of monastics was much higher than that of the general public, there were still bhikṣu and bhikṣuṇī who did not know Chinese characters. The Tibeto-Chinese phonetic transcription in Tibetan script, the ‘Long scroll’ (IOL Tib J 1772 (C131), Cf. Takata 1993: 380–313) has 485 lines on both sides. Judging from its phonological characteristics, it was produced in the tenth century rule by the *Cao* Family of *Guiyi* Army. The front side of the ‘Long scroll’ contains questions and answers on religious teachings, while the back side contains Buddhist hymns and similar literature. It is also likely used by monks who cannot read Chinese characters to participate in daily religious activities. The author of this paper believes that the background of the fragment PT1249 discussed should be similar, and that the difference between the two lies in the different times of the manuscripts. The fragment PT1249 should be a manuscript from the Tibetan rule.

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Заметка о китайском фрагменте в тибетском рукописном документе РТ1249

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Аннотация: РТ1249, частично сохранившийся текст на китайском языке, записанный тибетским письмом, прежде не был идентифицирован. Автор статьи установил, что данный документ представляет собой часть беседы с послушницей śikṣamāñā, получающей наставления в буддийской вере. Текст содержит часть *Бицзюни цзяньду* 比丘尼捷度第十七 «Винаи из четырех частей» (*Сыфэньлюй* 四分律), сопровождаемой введением. Прежде китайские тексты винаи, записанные тибетским письмом, известны не были. Тексты на китайском языке, полностью аналогичные данному, также не сохранились. Произнесение таких заповедей было неотъемлемой частью принятия обета монахиней, и она должна была знать их наизусть. Таким образом, даже

неграмотная послушница могла быть принята в монашество. Фонетический подход к передаче китайского языка характерен периоду тибетского владычества в Дуньхуане. В статье также представлен восстановленный по транслитерации китайский иероглифический текст. Данный фрагмент дает материал для изучения бытования буддизма, а также языковой ситуации в Дуньхуане в период тибетского владычества.

Ключевые слова: китайский язык тибетским письмом, текст виная, Дуньхуан в период тибетского правления, дуньхуанские рукописи.

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