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Comments on Japan and suggestions for  
Rockefeller Foundation policy there

Memorandum by Charles B. Fahs  
January 26, 1948

## INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

FROM: CBF

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TO:

REF		RM4
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COMMENTS:

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SUBJECT: COMMENTS ON JAPAN AND SUGGESTIONS FOR ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION POLICY THERE

I. General Assessment of the Occupation

The occupation of Japan has been extraordinarily successful in some ways. There has been no serious disorder or violence, disarmament of Japan is complete, many national reforms have been promulgated, and on the whole the Japanese have carried out the various tasks assigned to them. Perhaps most important, the impression left by American troops has been generally good - better than is to be normally expected of occupying forces. The over-all situation in Japan appears to be immensely better than that in Germany.

On the other hand, the occupation has as yet failed to influence Japanese thought and social organization very deeply. Many of the significant changes which have occurred - eg., the improved status of women and the revulsion against the Japanese military and police - are attributable more to war and defeat than to occupation. In reorientation and the development of new leadership, the occupation has accomplished only a fraction of what might have been accomplished during these two years. Moreover, economic problems for which SCAP has tried to disclaim responsibility are becoming more urgent and may impinge seriously on all social, political, and educational phases of occupation program. The American government and public have not been given

the understanding which is needed if new crises are to be met effectively.

If the United States remains politically, economically, and militarily pre-eminent in world affairs these failures of occupation in Japan may not prove serious. Japanese international politics is a mixture of realism and emotion with realism prevailing when the balance of forces is clear. For the same reason, if it becomes clear that the United States is going under in the world political struggle the best possible occupation would not keep Japan on our side. If, however, as seems likely, the issue of world organization and leadership hangs in the balance for years to come, then the failure of the occupation in matters of basic education may prove decisive in an orientation of Japan to the disadvantage of both the United States and the United Nations.

Why this combination of superficial success and basic failure? To begin with, of course, there were many difficulties: army organization and routines not suited to occupation needs and made more inefficient by post-VJ-Day demobilization and reorganization; the distance of Japan from the American base; the multiplicity of MacArthur's responsibilities; shortage of United States personnel with any knowledge of Japan; inefficiency in the Pentagon and the Department of State; the need to clear basic policies through international discussion; and lack of understanding in Congress. That the occupation has gone so well despite these handicaps is due in considerable measure to the cooperative attitude of the Japanese and their strong tradition of respect for authority. It is also due to the general decency of United States troops, to a sound basic decision on use of the Emperor's prestige to secure initial compliance with surrender, and to the personal prestige and leadership of General MacArthur.

As far as one can judge who has not met him, MacArthur has some of the characteristics of a prophet. He is dynamic, magnetic, sincere and deeply convinced

of the importance and inevitable success of his mission. His convictions with regard to Japanese reactions to occupation are naive -- MacArthur knows little about economics or sociology generally and less about the forces inside Japanese society. But those convictions are generally flattering to the Japanese and tend to make the occupation shorter and more benevolent. Consequently they help to win Japanese praise for MacArthur and cooperation with his program.

MacArthur is also vain, is intolerant of all criticism, and has a deep-seated persecution complex vis-a-vis Washington. As a result he immures himself among the Bataan clique, discourages possible sources of independent information, and is ungenerous in relations both with the Civil Affairs Division and the Department of State in Washington. Both his naivete and his vanity channel occupation energies into creation of an imposing but shallow facade.

There are three major reasons for failure in reorientation. The first is the shortage in the military administration of personnel with adequate understanding of the problems they are dealing with. There are, of course, many cases of outstanding ability but there are also far too many who were appointed to responsible positions not only with no knowledge of Japanese institutions but also without comparable experience in America. This failure was in part inevitable, but much better use could have been made of the few qualified persons available. Most of the civil affairs officers trained during the war for work in Japan were, after surrender, shunted into unimportant positions while responsibility was given to officers whose only qualification was their status as veterans of New Guinea, Leyte, and Okinawa.

The second major reason for failure has been inability to recognize and utilize Japanese intellectual resources and the resultant imposition of American methods or systems even where they are inappropriate. There is too much of a tendency for military government officers -- and many Japanese -- to assume that our victory



proved the superiority of American institutions. It is more accurate to say victory proved rather that the economic resources of the United States and those of Japan are of different orders of magnitude and this difference is alone sufficient to require different economic, social, political, and educational policies in the two countries.

Finally, military government has failed almost entirely to make available the printed materials from democratic countries which all evidence shows the Japanese have been avid to read. The reasons for this are complex: fear of communist propaganda and unsophisticated notions with regard to Japanese intellectual life; petty haggling by both military government and American publishers with regard to copyright; military underestimation of the importance of books; fear of Congressional hostility to appropriations. Whatever the reasons, the Japanese, under allied occupation, have less opportunity to learn about the United States and other democracies than they had when under the control of Japan's pre-war military machine. This failure on the part of military government was the least necessary and therefore the most inexcusable.

Depending on one's point of view one can be enthusiastic about Japan because of the very real opportunities which still exist there for developments which will benefit both the Japanese people and the world community or one can be discouraged because of the degree to which the occupation fails to give these developments the encouragement they deserve and need.

What can and should The Rockefeller Foundation do to promote the realization of more of the opportunity? What should the criteria for Foundation action be?

## II. Criteria for Rockefeller Foundation Action

Neither punishment nor relief seems to me to be a satisfactory motive for our action. Japan has already been severely punished. Only Kyoto of all her important

cities escaped the fire raids; she has lost most of the international gains achieved with much effort during seventy years, and her people are suffering from inflation and malnutrition. She will unavoidably suffer further results of Pearl Harbor for many years to come. On the whole, however, Japanese have been brought up to accept stoically the misfortunes resulting from their own errors and from natural calamity. The fact that there is little evidence of resentment against the United States even on the part of those who lost homes and families in the Tokyo fires or were mutilated at Hiroshima will make international reconstruction easier. But the countries Japan overran have suffered too and with less cause. No Japanese university suffered physical damage comparable to that at the University of the Philippines in Manila or at Nankai University in Tientsin. Japanese professors are suffering severely from food shortage and inflation but they are better off than their Chinese colleagues. Japanese students are undernourished and yet further from starvation than the students of Yenching and Peita. Japan should be given the opportunity to sweat her way back up the road to higher standards of living but there is no need to pamper her. If there is any claim on The Rockefeller Foundation under the heading of relief it comes from other countries in Asia.

I am also skeptical of reconstruction and development: claims that we should help the Japanese restore their laboratories and research institutes to pre-war levels of scholarly production or that we should at this time invest in Japanese research primarily for its possible contributions to world knowledge. These arguments seem to overlook the fact that in Asia as well as Europe one of the pre-war causes of trouble was the uneven development of science and technology which gave one country disproportionate military strength. There is much to hope for from Japanese scholarship in the future. But, surely, if our aim is the welfare of mankind through the extension of knowledge, we should give more attention to the development of other

centers of scholarship in Asia than to the re-establishment of Japan in her prewar leadership.

Reorientation should be our principal justification and objective. It is true that reorientation is also a recognized function of the occupation and may in large measure be furthered by military government personnel with United States government funds. But the occupation stresses only the most obvious means of reorientation - revision of school curricula and texts, the purge, and appeal to the masses through press, radio, and film. Higher education and research - fields in which The Rockefeller Foundation has most to offer - are almost entirely neglected. The intellectual foundations of reorientation are too subtle for most military administrators. Their influence seems too remote to justify emergency appeals for government funds. Moreover, there is a hidden yet fatal conflict between the basic training in independent thought which is needed and the customs and assumptions of military occupation. If work on the intellectual foundations for democracy and international orientation in Japan is not to be dangerously postponed, the help of private and independent American educational institutions is needed. We should aim at reorientation and primarily through higher education.

### III. Specific Proposals

My itinerary and program in Japan were planned for exploration of possibilities in the field of the Humanities. Because of my previous studies in Japan - in the faculty of Economics at Kyoto Imperial University and the Faculty of Law at Tokyo Imperial University - I also made some contacts in the social sciences. But I had neither an assignment nor previous acquaintance in the natural or medical sciences and any comments in those fields must remain superficial.

There is doubtless much work which needs to be done in public health in connection with the occupation program. Moreover, the economic stability without which

there is little hope for democracy in Japan cannot be achieved without scientific research. These are, however, problems which the military authorities in charge of occupation understand and which they can be expected to support. Medical supplies are, for example, accepted as essential imports while books are not. I am, therefore, not inclined to recommend major programs for Japan in public health, medical sciences, or natural sciences. If help is to be given, I suggest that the principal emphasis be placed on the establishment of international contact in these fields through access to current publications and foreign travel.

#### HUMANITIES

Language Teaching. A Japan moving toward dependence on an international community rather than autarchy and aggression needs more foreign language teaching rather than less. Yet it seems unlikely that Japan will ever again be able to hire foreign instructors in the numbers employed before the war. The development and utilization of new methods of foreign language instruction making full use of mechanical aids - records, film strips, and sound film - in lieu of foreign instructors is imperative. Further work on the problem of teaching the Japanese written language is also necessary for further democratization of the educational system. The Civil Information and Education Section of GHQ is sympathetic to improvement of language teaching but will not be able to provide the books and equipment needed from the United States. This is a field in which Humanities in The Rockefeller Foundation has been active and one in which I think we should extend our activities to Japan. The Institute for the Study of Language Teaching Methods, in Tokyo, is likely to prove the most promising center for research work but it is still desirable to explore further any possibilities for active interest within the universities. Humanities has already made a grant in aid to the University of Chicago for the selection and shipment to universities and research institutes in the Far East, including about ten in Japan, of small sets of



the most recent American works of importance on language teaching. The possibility of further assistance to research on language teaching in Japan should be explored as soon as a new officer visit there is possible.

Libraries. Military government in Japan is already actively trying to improve standards of library administration and to broaden the concept of the public library. A new library school has been organized at the National Ueno Library. Books for study use have already been supplied to this school by the American Library Association with funds from a Rockefeller Foundation grant. More books may be needed and at a later date it will probably be quite important for The Rockefeller Foundation to grant several more fellowships in librarianship. One of our former fellows - Hiroshi Kawai - is now one of the most important young leaders in library work.

Committees in both houses of the Diet are at work on plans for a Diet Library. This is important to reorientation not as a new national public library but primarily through the inclusion in the plan of a research service modeled after the Legislative Reference Service of the United States Library of Congress. Such a service is essential for the strengthening of the legislature in Japan vis-a-vis the administration, one of the most important aspects of reorientation. Partly as a result of my suggestions GHQ, SCAP has recently invited to Japan several American experts to advise on the question of the Diet Library. For the moment no Rockefeller Foundation help seems necessary but at a later date it may be important to bring two or three Japanese to this country and perhaps to England in order to enable them to plan for a Diet Library more effectively.

History. Reorientation in Japan requires the rewriting of Japanese history and of world history as taught in Japanese schools. Textbook revision as thus far carried out under occupation orders has been largely negative. Because of the peculiar role which early mythology has played in Japanese nationalism, it may be important to

encourage and hasten archaeological research and publication in order to provide a public base of facts which cannot subsequently be easily destroyed. I have, however, nothing immediate to suggest in this line. With this possible exception, the Japanese can probably rewrite their history with little help except the stimulus provided by the work of American and other non-Japanese in the same field which will be provided by Rockefeller Foundation programs in Far Eastern studies in other parts of the world.

For Japanese scholars to reformulate world history and find therein a modest yet satisfactory place for Japan will, without help, be a much more difficult problem. On the next officer visit the question of helping through provision of recent books should be explored and fellowships for foreign study should be granted when occupation rules make this possible. Although I discussed the rewriting of history at most of the institutions I visited I am not yet satisfied as to where we should look for leadership in this field. At Kwansai Gakuin, near Kobe, I found the most interest.

Philosophy. Each time I inquired about developments in philosophy in Japan I was told that prior to the war only two schools of philosophy had flourished and were well represented in Japanese libraries: Marxist materialism and German idealism. This statement is corroborated by what I have myself seen in libraries and bookstores. Japanese scholars are now interested in exploring other lines of philosophical development but will not be able to do so without help in acquisition of recent British, American, and Western European books and without some help in terms of fellowships. I was not able to satisfy myself with regard to promising centers or students; further exploration will be necessary. In the meantime, however, I recommend that a grant in aid, perhaps to the American Philosophical Association, be made for the selection, purchase, and shipment of some fifty recent titles in philosophy to each of ten or fifteen Japanese institutions. The use to which these books are put will provide one indication of desirable directions of future aid and development.

Literature. Japanese literature, Chinese literature, and Western literature are all widely taught in Japanese universities but they are segregated in departments even more isolated than are those in the average American institution. Very interesting developments in comparative literature should be possible and, if associated with the greater emphasis on general education which GHQ is attempting to stimulate, should make an important contribution to Japanese intellectual adjustment to a world community. However, I found little in Japan to build on. Most promising is probably the work in drama at Waseda University centering around the Drama Museum founded by Tsubouchi, the Japanese translator of Shakespeare. Moreover, the United States has little to offer in the way of models for the type of instruction in comparative literature which is needed. For the moment, therefore, I can only suggest this as a field of possible interest at a later date.\*

#### SOCIAL SCIENCES

In my opinion the most important and urgent opportunities in Japan are in the social sciences. There are some obstacles to work in these fields but I believe they are not insuperable.

Political Science. It is no accident that the systematic and realistic description of political life has developed only in the Anglo-Saxon democracies. Books like Ogg and Ray's standard text on American Government can be found only in the United States, Great Britain and the British Dominions. Nothing comparable exists in Japan. The only general descriptions of how the Japanese political system operates are in English. Japanese universities follow the continental European pattern and, even when they have programs in "political science," deal only with public law, administrative law, political history, and sometimes public administration. The result is that college trained administrators and people alike have theoretical concepts of

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\*On my next visit I hope to learn more about contemporary writing in Japan--a field of great importance but one which it may not be practicable to assist during occupation.

government which are inconsistent with the tolerance, compromise, give-and-take, and pluralistic initiative essential to democratic life. In my opinion there is nothing The Rockefeller Foundation could do of more importance for the strengthening of democratic life in Japan than encouragement to the teaching and study of political activity: party organization, elections, public opinion, lobbying, legislative processes, relations between executive and legislature, etc. Encouragement should begin with gifts of books, possibly through the American Political Science Association. Later fellowships and grants for travel will be needed and eventually assistance to new chairs and programs should be considered. Kwansai Gakuin near Kobe (because of Professor Takeuchi), Kyushu University in Fukuoka (because of Professor Imanaka), and Hokkaido University in Sapporo (because of early American influence) may be significant centers outside of Tokyo for development.

Public Administration. Under occupation policy Japanese local government, formerly controlled in all essentials by the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Prefectural governors, is being decentralized. Japanese local elective bodies and officials are being required to assume responsibilities comparable to those of the councils and officers of American municipalities but without comparable experience. This is an important step in the democratization of the Japanese monolithic state but its success will be in question for many years. A non-official expert consultative organization serving functions like those of the Public Administration Consultant Service in the United States would be a great help. Fortunately the nucleus for such an organization exists in the Tokyo Institute of Municipal Research, founded on the advice of Professor Charles A. Beard in the early twenties and privately endowed. The Institute has an extraordinarily fine library and some competent and experienced personnel. It will probably not be possible to organize a public administration consultant service in Japan as long as military government continues: military government officials,



even though frequently incompetent, cannot be expected to relinquish their monopoly of advice to local government. In the meantime, however, the foundations for such a service can be laid by enabling the Tokyo Institute of Municipal Research to bring its library up to date and by training half a dozen young Japanese in this country.

Sociology and Anthropology. Work in these two subjects is also urgent because they offer both us and the Japanese the means to assess the social and cultural changes which are taking place in Japan. Japanese scholarship in these fields is, however, far advanced, particularly in rural sociology. Moreover, the major factor in further development during the next several years is likely to be the program of sociological and public opinion research being developed within the CI&E Section of GHQ. Small scale assistance now in the form of books and later in terms of fellowships for Japanese to study abroad is, however, needed.

International Relations. Area studies (discussed below) seem to me to deserve priority in development over international relations because the latter too frequently stops with study of international law and organization and does not give sufficient depth of appreciation for the political and economic forces at work in international affairs. However, the problem of Japan's eventual admission to the United Nations and the role which she will play there is so important that the possibility of assistance to the newly formed Japan United Nations Association should be seriously considered. Roger Baldwin should be consulted on this.

Population. Japan has competent students of population and before the war published a monthly journal devoted to population problems. I do not know the present status of these studies but, needless to say, they are essential to the solution of Japan's domestic and international problems. I recommend that a small grant-in-aid be made to the Princeton Office of Population Research for selection, purchase and shipment

to Japanese institutions most concerned of recent publications on population. Dr. Irene Teauber of the Office and the Library of Congress worked intensively on Japanese population statistics during the war and would, no doubt, welcome the opportunity which such a grant would give for establishing contacts with Japanese scholars.

Economics. My guess is that the Japanese need little help in economics outside what the staff of GHQ are able to give. Economic statistics is a possible exception for which fellowship assistance a year or two hence may be justifiable. The most promising candidates are likely to be found among young Japanese now employed on statistical work by GHQ.

#### INTER-DIVISIONAL PROGRAMS

Area Studies. Japan has never had the integrated social science and humanistic study of other countries which is aimed at in American "area" programs. It is badly needed to give depth of understanding and appreciation of other cultures as a basis for international relations. Most needed are American, Russian, and Chinese studies. Russian studies probably cannot be developed systematically under occupation. There is already a good base for Chinese studies in Japan but new development may also encounter political difficulties. Humanities has already proposed a grant-in-aid as an incentive for the consolidation at Tokyo University of several private Tokyo Sinological libraries which are now without means of support. ~~But any reply from Japan has been long delayed.~~ An American Studies Association has been organized in Tokyo and would welcome aid. There is, however, some question whether we should encourage a development outside the universities. Japan already has more independent research institutes than is good either for them or for the regular institutions of higher learning. It is also desirable that Japanese educators give some thought to an inter-institutional division of labor before major area programs are undertaken at specific institutions. While I think that area studies in Japan may eventually

deserve our support I do not recommend any further immediate action. In the meantime the Social Science Research Council report on area studies by Professor Hall of Michigan and the Scarborough Commission report from England are being included in the list of books on problems of higher education being sent to Japanese institutions by the American Council on Education under a Humanities grant-in-aid. They will provide a minimum basis for further discussion of area studies by Japanese educators.

Reorganization of Higher Education. Many of the needed developments in scholarship discussed above cannot be achieved without major rethinking of the role of the universities and major reorganization of their curricula and teaching methods. Other reforms in higher education are also essential to the democratization program in Japan. It is for these reasons that Humanities has already made the grant-in-aid to the American Council on Education mentioned above. Later, after the American Council on Education selection of some fifty titles has reached Japan, we shall wish to consider further help for books or for foreign travel by University administrators.

Mass Communications Media. Under occupation directives the old centralized controls over press, radio, and film previously exercised through the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Information have been abolished. Policy looks towards the establishment of free competition, smaller units, and less government control in all three fields. In practice, however, the change has been less significant than planned because military government restrictions have replaced those of the Japanese government. Censorship is now probably more pervasive and more arbitrary than it was during the war. There is real danger that when we withdraw our forces the Japanese will be less accustomed to free speech and discussion than they were when we went in. Under these circumstances encouragement to Japanese thinking on the role of communications in democratic life is both urgent and difficult. Books and other publications can be provided with better grace to the Civil Liberties Union which

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Christian University. The primary purpose seems to be to provide a center of graduate studies which is beyond the present capacity of the several Christian Colleges and "Universities" now functioning in Japan. There is as yet, however, no agreement as to whether undergraduate instruction should be included, what the relations to the existing Christian institutions should be, or where the new institution should be located. Nor is there, as yet, any assurance as to sources of support either in Japan or in the United States. I do not think that The Rockefeller Foundation should give special support to this project merely because of the religion of its sponsors. Nor should we become committed to long-term general support in any case. Initial steps in the development of such an institution might, however, offer opportunities to accomplish some of the things which I have already argued are desirable with greater freedom than is possible through existing institutions. It is possible, for example, that the best immediate step for the sponsors of the new institution would be to organize small advanced seminars led by foreign professors for selected teachers from the existing Christian colleges on such topics as the role of higher education in democracy, recent trends in philosophy, culture and personality, or parties and elections. Such seminars would develop leadership for a new graduate school of significance and would help to overcome inter-institutional jealousies. The cost would be moderate and support could be justified in terms of immediate gains without commitment to long-term plans. This possibility I discussed with both Dr. Soichi Saito and his committee in Japan and with Mr. Fieser, secretary of the Mission Board committee in New York, in both cases without any specific indication of possibility of Rockefeller Foundation assistance. I recommend that these initial discussions be followed up and that support be given if a practicable short-term program is submitted.

#### IV. Obstacles

Military Government Regulations. Present regulations do not permit Japanese to go abroad for any purpose. I have been assured by officials of both GHQ in Japan and the Department of State in Washington that they favor opportunities for Japanese to study abroad, that such study would assist the reorientation program, and that they are doing everything in their power to secure revision of the regulations. The difficulty appears to be neither in GHQ in Japan nor in the United States Government but in the Far Eastern Commission where, I am told, other nations, probably Australia and New Zealand, have argued that it was improper to permit Japanese to travel abroad until a peace treaty has been signed. The international character of the occupation in Japan gives the United States somewhat less freedom in this than we can exercise in the American zone in Germany. I cannot predict when this situation will change. In the meantime any fellowship program for Japan involving study abroad is impracticable.

There are two obstacles to direct financial aid to students or programs in Japan. First, the arbitrary exchange rate would force the Foundation to pay in dollars five or more times the value of the goods or services which the yen so acquired would purchase in Japan. In my opinion this is prohibitive. It is possible that the development of private trade begun last August will force a revision in exchange regulations. If it does the situation should be re-examined. The second difficulty is less specific. Under present arrangements any gift of money by the Foundation to a Japanese institution will not result in an increase in the imports which Japan can make. The dollars will be impounded by the United States Treasury and applied to the general deficit incurred for general costs of occupation. In Japan GHQ will order the Japanese Government to supply the equivalent in Yen which will come from the printing presses and add only so much more to Japanese deficits and inflation. If GHQ was sufficiently interested in the project in question it

could accomplish the same thing with no more burden to the Japanese economy and no cost to the Foundation by direct instruction to the Japanese government. This situation is not, I suppose, an absolute obstacle to Rockefeller Foundation aid but it makes it difficult for me to recommend large expenditures with any enthusiasm.

It is only through aid in the form of goods from outside Japan that these two obstacles can be avoided. For programs related to reorientation the most important import need is books and periodicals and it is for this reason that most of the recommendations I have made are for book shipments. Printed matter of any sort can be sent to Japanese institutions or individuals only through the Civil Information and Education Section of GHQ. The purpose of this regulation is, of course, censorship. It is probable, however, that any gifts of books or periodicals which I have recommended or which The Rockefeller Foundation might sponsor will be passed without difficulty.

Japanese Educational Patterns. Heretofore Japanese higher education has been dominated by Tokyo Imperial University to much the same degree that French higher education has been dominated by the Sorbonne. A more equal distribution of intellectual leadership would undoubtedly be healthier for democratic life. While the quality of staff, library, and administration at Tokyo University cannot be ignored, if possible the total effect of Rockefeller Foundation assistance in Japan should be in the direction of decentralization rather than greater centralization.

Japanese higher education, like its German prototype, has been remote from the day-to-day life of the Japanese people in both content and spirit. University teaching and research has placed undue emphasis on theoretical problems and has disclaimed responsibility for improvement in standards of primary and secondary education through the training of teachers. Rockefeller Foundation aid whether through books, fellowships, or grants should be carefully aimed to encourage persons and

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emphasis to Rockefeller Foundation aid to Japan.

On the other hand, I hope that these Japanese proposals can be more than balanced by programs which we can develop in other countries of the Far East: Korea, China, the Philippines, Siam, and India. The fact that Japan has more to build on and is under United States control must not give her a disproportionate share of our attention.

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