A Translation of the New Edition of the Suśrutasaṃhitā

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The Suśruta Project is producing a new Sanskrit text edition of the *Suśrutasaṃhitā* based on the early Nepalese manuscripts. As we gradually transcribe and edit the manuscripts, we are producing this new translation of the classic work.

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The Manuscripts used in the Vulgate editions by Yādavaśarma Trivikrama Ācārya

Yādavaśarma Trivikrama Ācārya produced three successive editions of the *Suśrutasaṃhitā* with the commentary of Dalhaṇa, in 1915, 1931 and 1938. These editions, especially the last, are considered the most scholarly and reliable editions of the work, and have been constantly reprinted up to the present day.

The 1915 edition was based on three manuscripts. The 1931 edition used another nine. For his final 1938 edition, Ācārya used a further three.¹

The manuscripts of the 1915 edition

- 1 Calcutta, Royal Asiatic Society. Covers the sūtra, nidāna, śārīra and kalpa sthānas.
- 2 Jaipur, Pandit Gaṅgādharabhaṭṭaśarman, lecturer at the Royal Sanskrit University. Covers the cikitsāsthānna and the uttaratantra.
- 3 Bundi, my great friend the royal physician Pam. Śrīprasādaśarman Covers the uttaratantra.

The manuscripts of the 1931 edition

- 1 Vārāṇasī, professor of literature, the great Gaurīnāthapāṭhaka. With the *Nibandhasaṅgraha*. Covers the nidānasthāna and uttaratantra.
- 2 Ahmedabad. My friend Sva. Vā. Vaidya Raṇachoḍalāla Motīlālaśarman. With the *Nibandhasaṅgraha*. Covers the śārīrasthāna.
- 3 From the library of my great friend Sva. Vā. Vaidya Murārajīśarman. Extremely old. No commentary. Covers the śārīrasthāna.
- 4 Puṇe, BORI library. With the *Nibandhasangraha*. Covers the śārīrasthāna.²
- 5 Puṇe, BORI library. With the *Nibandhasaṅgraha*. Complete. With some damaged folia.

¹SS 1938: 22.

²Not one of the three MSS of the *śārīrasthāna*described in **shar-vaid**.

6 Bombay, Asiatic Society. Incomplete.³
7
8
9

The manuscripts of the 1938 edition

1 2 3

	Manuscripts														
edition		1915	5					19	35					193	38
sthāna	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3
$s\bar{u}$.	•							•	?		•	●1-43	•		•
ni.	•			•				•	?		•	,,	•		•
śā.	•						•	•	?		•		•		•
ci.									?		•		•		●1-9
ka.	•								?				•		
utt.									?		lacktriangle				

³Possibly MS Mumbai, AS B.I.3 or MS Mumbai, AS B.D.109 (Velankar 1925–30: v. 1, # 212 and 213). But both these have the *Nibandhasaṅgraha*. The first covers only the śārīrasthāna; the second may be complete, but Velankar calls it only "disorderly."

Sūtrasthāna, adhyāya 1

- 1 Now I shall narrate the chapter on the origin of this knowledge.4
- 2 Now, as is well-known, Aupadhenava, Vaitaraṇa, Aurabhra, Puṣkalāvata, Karavīra, Gopurarakṣita, Bhoja, Suśruta and others addressed Lord Divodāsa, king of Kāśi, the best of the immortals, who was in his ashram surrounded by an entourage of sages.⁵
- "O Lord, distress arose in our minds after witnessing people thrashing about with cries, assailed by different kinds of pain and injury (*vedanā-bhighāta*), feeling helpless in spite of having friends, because of diseases arising from the body, the mind and external sources.
- 4 "To quell the illnesses of those who seek happiness and for our own purpose of prolonging life, we desire the science of life (āyurveda) that is being taught. Welfare, both in this world and in the next, depends upon it. Therefore, we have come to the Lord in pupillage."
- 5 The Lord said to them:
 - "Welcome to you! My children, all of you are beyond reproach and worthy to be taught.
- 6 "As is well known, Ayurveda is the name of what is said to be the subsidiary part of the Atharvaveda. Before creating people, Svayambhū composed it in hundreds of thousands of verses and a thousand chapters and, after observing the short lifespan and low intelligence of people, he presented it again in eight parts.⁶
- 7 "Surgery, treatment of body parts above the clavicle, general medicine, knowledge of spirits, care of children, and the disciplines of antidotes, rejuvenation and aphrodisiacs.

⁴Dalhaṇa understood the word "knowledge (*veda*)" as specifically "medical knowledge." He said that the word "longevity" (*āyur*) had been elided. After this opening statement, later manuscripts and commentaries include the attribution, "as the venerable Dhanvantari stated." The absence of this statement in the early Nepalese MSS is highly noteworthy because it removes the outer narrative frame of the *Suśrutasaṃhitā* (Wujastyk 2013: 148; Klebanov 2021a: § 3.1.2). On the figure of Dhanvatari in medical literature, see HIML: IA 358–361.

⁵On these persons, see HIML:IA 361–363, 369 ff. The authority Bhoja does not appear in the list as published in the vulgate edition (SS 1931:1), and was not included in HIML amongst "authorities mentioned in the *Suśrutasaṃhitā*." Meulenbeld gathered textual evidence about Bhoja at HIML:IA 690–691. Klebanov (2021*b*) has discussed these authors in the context of an anonymous commentary on the *Suśrutasaṃhitā* that cites them.

⁶Svayambhū is another name for Brahmā, the creator.

- 8 "Now, a collection of the characteristics of each component of Āyurveda.
- 9 "Among them, [the component] called surgery has the goal of extracting various grasses, wood, stone, dust, iron (?), soil, bone, hair, nails, discharge of pus, malignant wounds and foreign bodies inside the womb, and of determining the application of surgical instruments, knives, caustics and fire by means of sixty definitions.
- "[The component] named the doctrine of treating body parts above the clavicles has the aim of curing diseases situated above clavicles that is, diseases located in ears, eyes, mouth, nose and so on.
- "[The component] called general medicine has the goal of curing illnesses established in the whole body and [diseases] such as fever, tumour, swelling, hemorrhagic disorders, insanity, epilepsy, urinary diseases, diarrhoea and the like.
- "[The component] called knowledge of spirits is for appeasing demons by pacification rites and making food offerings for those whose minds have been possessed by gods, their enemies, Gandharvas, Yakṣas, demons, deceased ancestors, Piśācas, Vināyakas, Nāgas and evil spirits that possess children.
- "[The component] called care of children is for bearing children and purifying defects in a wet-nurse's milk, and curing diseases that have arisen from bad breast milk and demons.
- "[The component] called the discipline of toxicology is for [knowing] the signs of poison from snake and insect bites and for neutralising various combinations of poisons.9
- "[The component] called the discipline of rejuvenation is maintaining youth, bringing about a long life and mental vigour and for curing diseases.
- "[The component] called the discipline of aphrodisiacs brings about the increase, purity, accumulation and production of semen for those

 $^{^{7}}$ Dānavas. The insertion marks ($k\bar{a}kapadas$) below the text at this point appears to be by the original scribe.

⁸The vulgate doesn't have *vināyaka*s but does add *asuras*, probably under the influence of Dalhaṇa. Cite Paul Courtright, Ganesha book.

⁹The scribal insertion marks (crosses) above the line at this point in MS K appear to be in a later hand and their referent is lost in the damaged part of the folio. Although MSS N and H include spiders ($l\bar{u}t\bar{a}$) and creepy-crawlies ($sar\bar{i}srpa$) in the list, it does seem that MS K had a shorter list, and the vulgate edition adds rodents ($m\bar{u}sika$).

- whose semen is minimal, bad, depleted, and dry [respectively] and for inducing an erection.
- "Thus, this Ayurveda is taught with eight components."

 "Among these [components], tell us which is for whom."
- 18 They said, "After you have conveyed the knowledge of surgery, teach us everything."
- 19 He said, "so be it."
- They then said, "Having considered the view of all of us, when we are unanimous, Suśruta will question you. We too will learn what is being taught to him."
- 21 He said, "so be it.
- "Now, as is well-known, the aim of Āyurveda is eliminating the disease of one who have been assailed by disease and protecting the healthy; āyurveda is [that knowledge] in which they find a long life, or that by which long life is known. Learn its best component (i.e., surgery), which is being taught in accordance with tradition, perception, inference and analogy.
- "For this component is first, the most important, because it is referred to first; it cures wounds and joins together the most important thing, Yajña's head. For, just as it has been said of old, 'the head that had been cut off by Rudra was joined again by the two Aśvins.'
- "And also, of the eight disciplines of \bar{A} yurveda, [surgery] alone is the best because of the quick action of its procedures ($kriy\bar{a}$), its application of blunt instruments, knives, caustics and fire, and it is common to all disciplines.
- 25 "Therefore, [surgery] is eternal, meritorious, leads to heaven, brings renown, bestows a long life, and affords a livelihood.
- 26 "Brahmā said this, 'Prajāpati learned it. From him, the Aśvins. From the Aśvins, Indra. From Indra, I. In this world, I will transmit to those who desire it for the benefit of people.'
 - [There a verse about this.]. 10
- For, I (i.e., Brahmā) am Dhanvantari, the first god, the remover of old age, pain and death of mortals.

Having understood surgery, the best of the great knowledge systems, I arrived on earth again to teach it here.

¹⁰This is an expansion of the scribe's abbreviation *bha* for *bhavati cātra ślokaḥ* "There is a verse about this" (sometimes plural).

In this context, as far as this discipline is concerned, a human being (puru
otin a) is called an amalgam of the five elements and the embodied soul. This is where procedures (kriy
otan) apply. This is the locus. Why?

Because of the duality of the world, the world is twofold: the stationary and the moving. Its nature ($\bar{a}tmaka$) is twofold, depending on the preponderance of Agni and Soma.¹¹ Alternatively, it can be considered as being fivefold. The multitude of beings in it are fourfold: they are termed "sweat-born, stone-born, caul-born and egg-born".¹² Where they are concerned, the human being is the main thing; others are his support. Therefore, the human being (puruṣa) is the locus.

Diseases are said to be the conjunction of the person and suffering (duḥ-kha). There are four of them: invasive, bodily, mental and inherent. The invasive ones are caused by an injury. The bodily ones are based on food, caused by irregularities (vaiṣamya) in wind, bile, phlegm and blood.¹³

The mental $(m\bar{a}nasa)$ ones, caused by desire $(icch\bar{a})$ and hatred (dveṣa), include: anger (krodha), grief $(\bar{a}śoka)$, misery (dainya), overexcitement (harṣa), lust $(k\bar{a}ma)$, depression $(viṣ\bar{a}da)$, envy $(\bar{i}rṣy\bar{a})$, jealousy $(as\bar{u}y\bar{a})$, malice $(m\bar{a}tsarya)$, and greed (lobha).

The inherent $(sv\bar{a}bh\bar{a}vika)$ ones are hunger, thirst, old age, death, sleep and those of the temperament (prakrti).

These too are located (adhiṣṭhāna) in the mind and body.

Scarification (lekhana), nourishment (bṛṇhaṇa), purification (saṇśo-dhana), pacification (saṇśamana), diet ($\bar{a}h\bar{a}ra$) and regimen ($\bar{a}c\bar{a}ra$), properly employed, bring about their cure.

Furthermore, food is the root $(m\bar{u}la)$ of living beings as well as of strength (bala), complexion (varna) and vital energy (ojas). It depends on $(\bar{a}yatta)$ the six flavours (rasa). Flavours, furthermore, have substances as their substrate $(\bar{a}\acute{s}rayin)$. And substances are remedies $(oṣadh\bar{u}-)$. There are two types: stationary $(sth\bar{a}vara)$ and moving

¹¹See Wujastyk 2004.

¹²This fourfold classification of beings is paralleled with closely-related vocabulary in *Bhelasaṃhitā* 4.4.4 (Bhela 2000: 206; Bhela 1921: 81).

¹³Note that four humoral substances are assumed here.

¹⁴Pāṇini 6.3.132 provides that the final vowel of the noun oṣadhi may be lengthened $(\to oṣadh\bar{\iota})$ under certain conditions. These conditions require that the word be used in a Vedic mantra and not in the nominative. Neither condition is met in this passage, yet the

(jaṅgama).

- Of these, there are four types of stationary ones: fruit trees (*vanaspati*), flowering trees (*vṛkṣa*), herbs (*oṣadhi*) and shrubs (*vīrudh*). Amongst these, the "fruit trees" have fruit but no flowers. The "flowering trees" have flowers and fruit. The "herbs" die when the fruit is ripe. "Shrubs" put out shoots.
- As is well known, moving remedies are also of four types: those born in in a caul (*jarāyuja*), those born from eggs (*aṇḍaja*), those born of sweat (*svedaja*), and shoots (*udbhid*). Amongst these, those born in a caul include animals (*paśu*), humans, and wild animals (*vyāla*). Birds, creepycrawlies (*sarīṣṛpa*) and snakes are "born of eggs." Worms (*kṛmi*), small insects (*kunta*) and ants (*pipīlika*) and others are born of sweat. ¹⁷ Shoots include red velvet mites (*indragopa*) and frogs (*maṇḍūka*). ¹⁸|
- In this context, among the stationary remedies, skin (tvak), leaves (patra), flowers (puṣpa), fruits (phala), roots ($m\bar{u}la$), bulbs (kanda), sap ($kṣ\bar{t}ra$), resin ($niry\bar{a}sa$), essence ($s\bar{a}ra$), oil (sneha), and juice extract (svarasa)¹⁹ are useful; among the moving remedies pelt (carman), hair, nails, and blood (rudhira) and so forth.
- 34 And earthen products (*pārthiva*) include gold and silver.²⁰
- The items created by time $(k\bar{a}lakrta)$ are clusters (samplava) as far as wind and no wind $(niv\bar{a}ta)$, heat and shade, darkness and light and the cold, hot and rainy seasons $(vars\bar{a})$ are concerned. The divisions of time are the blink of the eye (nimesa), a trice $(k\bar{a}sth\bar{a})$, minutes $(kal\bar{a})$, three-quarters of an hour $(muh\bar{u}rta)$, a day and night $(ahor\bar{a}tra)$, a fort-

author uses the form $oṣadh\bar{\iota}$. This form is in fact not uncommon in medical literature as well as in epics, purāṇas, smṛtis, and other parts of Sanskrit literature.

¹⁵Ca.sū.1.71–72 also describes these four types of medicinal plant in similar terms but with slightly differing names: *oṣadhi* is a plant that ends after fruiting, *vīrudh* is a plant that branches out, *vanaspati* is a tree with fruit, and *vānaspatya* is a tree with fruit and flowers.

¹⁶The MSS agree in reading *phalavantyaḥ* "having flowers" which is grammatically non-standard. This form is also found in the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* (1.92.27, 1.92.27 Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa: 56r).

¹⁷The word *kunta*, though marked as "lexical" in most dictionaries, is in fact found in literature, commonly as a compound with *pipīlika*; the compound sometimes seems to be understood a type of ant (*tatpuruṣa* compound) rather than as a pair of insects (*dvandva* compound).

¹⁸On *indragopa*, see Lienhard 1978.

¹⁹On juice extract (*svarasa*) see CS 1.1.73, 1.4.7; SS 4.10.12.

²⁰The flow of concepts in the treatise seems to be interrupted here.

- night (pakṣa), a month ($m\bar{a}sa$), a season (rtu), a half-year (ayana), a year (samvatsara), and yuga (yuga).²¹
- These naturally cause accumulation (*sañcaya*), irritation (*prakopa*), pacification (*upaśama*) and alleviation (*pratīkāra*) of the humours (*doṣa*). And they have practical purposes (*prayojanavat*).

[There are verses about this:]²²

- This fourfold category is taught by physicians as a cause for the agitation and quelling of bodily diseases.²³
- There are two kinds of invasive diseases. Some certainly²⁴ affect (nipat-) the mind, others the body. Their treatment (kriyā) is of two kinds too.
- For those that affect the body there is physical (śārīravad) therapy, whereas for those that affect the mind there is the collection (varga) of desirable sensory experiences like sound that bring comfort (sukha).
- 40 Along these lines (*evam*), this brief explanation of the four factors (*catuṣtaya*) is given:
 - human being (puruṣa),
 - disease (vyadhi),
 - remedies (oṣadhi),
 - the time for therapies (*kriyākāla*).

In this context,

• from the mention of the word "human," the collection of substances that arise from it, such as the elements, and the particulars of its major and minor parts (aṅga) such as skin (tvak), flesh (māṃsa), ducts (sirā), sinews (snāyu), bones (asthi) and joints (sandhi) are meant.

²¹These units are presented at SS 1.6.5 and discussed by Hayashi (2017: § 59).

²²See footnote 10.

²³On the topic of the "group of four," the commentator Dalhana considers them to be "food, behaviour, earthen products and items created by time." He refers to the author of the lost commentary entitled $Pa\tilde{n}jik\bar{a}$, and to Jejjaṭa (HIML:IA, 372–3, 192). In his view, these early commentators do not agree that the fourfold grouping (caturvarga) refers to the quartet of stationary ($sth\bar{a}vara$), moving (jangama), earthen products ($p\bar{a}rthiva$) and items created by time ($k\bar{a}lakrta$) (SS 1938²:9a).

²⁴The text uses an archaic interjection here, ha.

- From the mention of "diseases," all diseases caused by wind, bile, phlegm, congested humours (*sannipāta*), external factors (*āgantu*) and inherent factors (*svabhāva*) are intended (*vyākhyāta*).
- From the mention of "remedies," there is the teaching of substances, tastes, potencies, post-digestive tastes.
- From the mention of "procedures $(kriy\bar{a})$," therapies (karman) such as oiling and excision (chedya) are taught.
- From the mention of the word "time," every single teaching about the times for procedures is meant.

[There is a verse about this:]²⁵

- This seed of medicine has been declared in brief. Its explanation will be given in one hundred and twenty chapters.²⁶
- There are one hundred and twenty chapters in five sections (*adhyāya*).²⁷ In that regard, having divided them, according to their subject matter, into the Ślokasthāna, the Nidāna, the Śārīra, the Cikitsita and the Kalpa, we shall mention this in the Uttaratantra.²⁸

[There is a verse about this:]29

Someone who reads this eternal proclamation of the King of Kāśī, that was declared by Svayambhu, will have good karma on earth, will be respected by kings and upon death will achieve the world of Śakra.

²⁵See footnote 10.

 $^{^{26}}$ This is the number of chapters in the first five sections of the work, namely the $S\bar{u}tra$ -, $Nid\bar{a}na$ -, $S\bar{a}r\bar{t}ra$ -, $Cikits\bar{a}$ - and Kalpa-sth $\bar{a}na$ s. These have 46, 16, 10, 40 and 8 chapters respectively. The Uttaratantra has 66 chapters.

²⁷On *vimśa* in the sense of "greater by 20" see P.5.2.46 *śadantavimśateś ca*.

 $^{^{28}}$ The end of this sentence reads oddly. The vulgate edition adds an object: "[we shall mention] the remaining topics [in the Uttara]" which smooths out the difficulty, but this is supported in none of the Nepalese MSS. At the start of the Uttaratantra (SS 1938: 1.3–4ab) there is indeed a statement that picks up the point about there being 120 chapters.

²⁹See footnote 10.

Sūtrasthāna, adhyāya 16

- 1 Now we shall expound the method for the piercing of the ear.
- One may pierce a child's ears for the purpose of preserving and decorating.
 - During the first half of the sixth or seventh lunar month, during a renowned day, half day, hour and constellation the child who has received a benediction (krtamangala), blessings pronounced (svastivacana) should be placed on the lap of a wet-nurse.³⁰ For a boy, do the right one first; for a girl do the left one. Use a needle on a thin ear; an awl ($\bar{a}r\bar{a}$) on a thick one.
- 3 If there is excess blood or pain one should know that it was pierced in the wrong place. The absence of side-effects is a sign that it has been pierced in the right place.³¹
- In this context, if an ignorant person accidentally pierces a duct (*sirā*) there will be fever, burning, swelling (*śvayathu*), pain, lumps (*granthi*), paralysis of the nape of the neck (*manyāstambhā*), convulsions (*apatānaka*), headache or pain in the ear.
- Having removed the wick (*varti*) in it, one should smear it with a paste of the roots of barley, liquorice, Indian madder (*mañjiṣṭhā*), and the castor oil tree (*gandharvahasta*), thickened with honey and ghee. When it has healed well, one should pierce it again.
- 6 One should treat the properly-pierced ear by sprinkling it raw sesame oil. After every three days one should apply a thicker wick (*varti*) and sprinkle oil right on it.³²
- 7 Once the ear is free from humours or side-effects, one should loosen it with a light dilator (*pravardhanaka*) in order to enlarge it.

³⁰The syntax here is unclear. The expression *svastivācana* may have been a gloss inserted into the text at an earlier period to clarify *maṅgala*. But as it stands, it is not syntactically connected to the rest of the sentence. The Vulgate records a reading in which the words are united in a compound that reads more naturally.

³¹From here on, witness K is missing a folio, so the text is contstructed on the basis of witnesses N and H.

 $^{^{32}}$ The manuscripts support the reading $sth\bar{u}latar\bar{t}m$ that is either a non-standard form or a scribal error.

Sūtrasthāna, adhyāya 28

Thus, living creatures and their strength, complexion (*varṇa*) and energy (*ojas*) are rooted in food. That (food) depends on the six flavours (*rasa*). Thus, the flavours depend on substance (*dravya*), and substances depend on medicinal herbs. There are two kinds of them (herbs): stationary and mobile.³³

³³SS 1.1.28 Sharma 1999–2001: I, 21, SS 1938²: 7.

Abbreviations

Bhela 1921

Mookerjee, A. and Ananta Krishna Shastri, V. (1921) (eds.), *The Bhela Samhita. Sanskrit Text* (Calcutta: University of Calcutta), ark:/13960/t3sv3157j; Based on two copies made of the Thanjavur codex unicus (MS Thanjavur TMSSML 10773, Burnell 1880: 63–4, Sastri 1933: #11085).

Bhela 2000

Krishnamurthy, K. H. (2000), *Bhela-saṃhitā*. *Text with English Translation, Commentary and Critical Notes* (Haridas Ayurveda Series, 8; Varanasi: Chaukhambha Visvabharati).

HIML

Meulenbeld, G. J. (1999–2002), A History of Indian Medical Literature, 5 vols. (Groningen: E. Forsten), ISBN: 9069801248.

SS 1931

Ācārya, Y. T. (1931) (ed.), सुश्रुतसंहिता, वैद्यवरश्रीड-ल्हणाचार्यविरचितया निबन्धसंग्रहाख्यव्याख्यया समुष्ठसिता, महर्षिणा सुश्रुतेन विरचिता, सूत्र-निदान-शारीर-चिकित्सा-कल्पस्थानोत्तरतन्त्रात्मकः. आचार्योपाह्वेन त्रिविकमात्मजेन याद्वशर्मणा संशोधिता = The Sushrutasaṃhitā of Sushruta with the Nibandhasangraha Commentary of Shree Dalhaṇāchārya (2nd edn., Mumbayyāṃ: Pāṇḍuraṅga Jāvajī at the Nirṇayasāgaramudrāyantrālaye), ark:/13960/t9j41sg94, accessed 09/06/2020; HIML:IB, 312 edition *v.

SS 1938

Ācārya, Y. T. and Ācārya, N. R. (1938) (eds.), श्रीडल्हणाचार्यविरचितया निबन्धसंग्रहाख्य-व्याख्यया निदानस्थानस्य श्रीगयदासाचार्यविरचितया न्यायचिन्द्रकाख्यपञ्जिकाव्याख्यया च समुष्ठसिता महर्षिणा सुश्रुतेन विरचिता सुश्रुतसंहिता (3rd edn., Bombay: Nirṇayasāgara Press); HIML: IB, 313 edition cc.

SS 1938²

Ācārya, Y. T. and Ācārya, N. R. (2004) (eds.), महर्षिणा सुश्रुतेन विरचिता सुश्रुतसंहिता, श्रीडल्हणाचा-यंविरचितया निबन्धसंग्रहाख्यव्याख्यया निदानस्थानस्य श्रीगयदासाचार्यविरचितया न्यायचन्द्रिकाख्यपञ्जिकाव्याख्यया च समुल्लसिता (Vārāṇasī: Caukhambhā Kṛṣṇadāsa Akādamī); Reprint of the third, 1938 edition (SS 1938), with changed pagination.

SS₁₉₁₅

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Glossary

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