

**JAPANESE SAINTS IN HAWAII AND JAPAN:  
VALUES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR BAPTISM**

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**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND 1850-1941**

It was in 1850 that the first LDS missionaries arrived in the Sandwich Isles or Hawaii to preach the gospel. At that time, the population was approximately 98% Hawaiian, 1% Caucasian, and the remaining were mostly Chinese immigrants working on the sugar plantations (Odo & Sinoto, 1985). Three years later, Commodore Matthew Perry sailed into Tokyo Bay and opened the doors of Japan to the west. In 1868, the first boatload of 148 contract laborers from Japan arrived in Hawaii to work on the sugar plantations (Odo & Sinoto, 1985). The next boatload was not to arrive until 1885. The general population, Mormons included, knew very little about Japan or the Japanese until "Nagasaki, Ambassador and Prince of Japan" toured the island of Oahu in 1882 (Clement & Tsai, 1981). From 1885 to 1924, thousands of Japanese migrated to Hawaii, many of whom were earmarked for the sugar plantations (Odo & Sinoto, 1985). By 1920 the Japanese made up 42% of the total population in the Territory of Hawaii (Odo & Sinoto, 1985).

However, very little attention was paid to the Japanese as prospects for conversion to the LDS Church. Most of the missionary effort was geared first towards the Caucasians and then the native Hawaiians. In 1882, the Mission President Edward Partridge wrote that "our mission is principally for their (native Hawaiians) benefit" (Clement & Tsai, 1981). It was not until 1892, a year before the Hawaiian kingdom became a republic, that the first Japanese, Brother Toko, then 43 years of age, was baptized (Clement & Tsai, 1981). Brother Toko was born in Tokyo in 1849 and at the age of 17, he worked his way to Hawaii and arrived here in 1866. In 1879 at 30 years of age, he married a Hawaiian Kalala, they had

a large family, and he earned an honest living by raising taro, the Hawaiian vegetable used in making poi.

The next Japanese convert in Hawaii appears to be Dr. T. Katsunuma (Clement & Tsai, 1981). When he arrived in 1898, he was a graduate of the Utah State Agricultural College and a priest in the Aaronic Priesthood. Dr. Katsunuma attended services regularly at Auwaiolimu for several months but became discouraged because services were held entirely in the Hawaiian language. For many years he attended church only at conference time. While President Heber J. Grant was on his way to preside over the Japanese Mission, he met with Dr. Katsunuma and the latter offered his services as a missionary.

Just after the turn of the century, the LDS contracted with Mr. Yamada, who was Japanese, for minor building contracts. From 1908 to its end in 1930, The History of the Hawaiian Mission includes records of baptisms and ordinations of members with Asian surnames with increasing frequency. However, the main missionary target seems to have remained the Hawaiian. As recently as 1948, only 42 years ago, the mission president encouraged his missionaries to put more effort into mastering the Hawaiian language despite the fact that the Japanese made up about one-third of the population of Hawaii (Britsch, 1989).

The first recorded instance of proselyting among the Japanese in Hawaii appears in the mission of October 12, 1919: "proselyting work had begun among the Japanese of Kauai."

In 1920, there were 11,078 members of the Church in Hawaii and they were primarily Hawaiian with a smattering of other peoples, especially Chinese who had married Hawaiian women and were then introduced to the Church (Britsch, 1989). However, the missionary target group expanded on Oahu to the Japanese in the 1920s when missionary sisters who taught at the Church school in Laie converted Ochie Matsumoto, Otokichi Matsumoto, Hisashi Ogawa, and Haruichi Matsumoto. Furthermore, retiring mission president E. Wesley Smith reported a considerable membership among the Chinese, Filipinos, and Japanese population and that the Hawaiian Mission was the logical training school for missionary work in the Orient. In 1924, while the main proselyting target remained the native Hawaiian, Mormons began actively proselyting Chinese, Japanese, and Filipinos in Hawaii.

During the Great Depression and war years (1930s and 1940s) the Mission in Hawaii struggled as did other missions. Financial problems and

the decrease in number of missionaries had to be contended. However, several changes were underway in Hawaii that lifted the spirits of the Saints. First, on June 19, 1932 the first group of Japanese were officially organized by Hawaii Mission president Castle H. Murphy (1977). Special classes were organized for Chinese and Japanese members. Clement and Tsai claim that in 1934 the first Japanese class was initiated in the Kalihi Sunday School with the strong support and leadership of Sister Tsune Nachie and Brother Kay Ikegami, a newly arrived Japanese businessman who had lived most of his life in Utah. On the other hand, Castle H. Murphy claims that "the first Chinese and Japanese classes organized in Hawaii used the building which occupied the site (for the forthcoming Honolulu Tabernacle) for a classroom or school and the Japanese held their first meeting in the Tabernacle, when it was constructed, on May 26, 1935" (Murphy, 1977).

Second, a month later, in June 1935, the first stake outside the Continental U.S.A. was established by President Heber J. Grant--the Oahu Stake (Britsch, 1989). The distribution of Church offices among various racial groups in the new stake, wards, and branches "was essentially proportionate to their relative numbers." At the time the stake was being formed, Edward L. Clissold, then a member of the district council who was working closely with the Japanese Sunday School, asked President Grant to confirm nine Japanese individuals as members of the Church. President Grant complied and admitted that he had not confirmed so many Japanese during his entire mission in Japan. President Grant's entire Hawaiian experience in 1935 led him to conclude that work had to be seriously undertaken among the Japanese and other Asians in Hawaii (Britsch, 1989). Already there were various ethnic Sabbath schools in Honolulu, but the Japanese organization, which held all of its meetings in the Japanese language, seemed to impress him most.

President Grant's experience with the Japanese Saints in 1935 led to the third major development prior to the war--his establishing the Japanese Mission which began to function on February 4, 1937 with President Hilton and Matron Hazel Robertson at the helm. President Grant admonished them to train the Japanese in Hawaii to prepare for missions in Japan. He said, "a strong colony of Japanese Saints in Hawaii could operate from there (Hawaii) into their homeland (Japan) in a way that might bring many Japanese to a knowledge not only of Christianity, but of the restored Gospel" (Britsch, 1989). In October 1937 the first three

missionaries arrived, and by the end of 1937 there were 17 members of the Japanese Mission, nine men and eight women; but four converts had been baptized and a good beginning made.

#### JAPANESE SAINTS IN HAWAII 1941-1980s

When World War II started, the number of missionaries in Hawaii began to drop until by late 1944 there were no young men serving missions in the Pacific area. On May 14, 1944, the name of the Japanese Mission was changed to the Central Pacific Mission. There were several couples and local men who had been called to the Japanese Mission during the war years, some of them Japanese, but they numbered only a few (Horiuchi, 1990). The following table shows the growth pattern of the Japanese/Central Pacific Mission (Britsch, 1989):

Year	Membership
1937	17 members
1938	30
1939	60
1940	101
1941	150
1942	302
1943	375
1944	437
1945	484
1946	522
1947	532
1948	604
1949	671

As can be seen, the membership growth among the Japanese in Hawaii was slow and difficult, particularly when one considers that the Japanese during the above-mentioned period (from 1937 to 1949) made up more than one-third of the entire population of Hawaii. For example, in 1940 there were a total of 423,330 people living in Hawaii, of which 157,905 were Japanese (Odo and Sinoto, 1985); however, during that year only 101 persons were members of the Church in the Japanese Mission (Britsch, 1989). Indeed, one might even say that in terms of number of baptisms, the Japanese/Central Pacific Mission was not very successful

during its existence (the CPM merged with the Hawaiian Mission to form the Hawaii Mission in 1950).

In communicating with Japanese Saints who were active young adults during the Japanese/CPM years, they cite experiences indicative of an active, close-knit group which enjoyed testimony-building as well as social activities. Russell Horiuchi, the current president of the Tokyo Temple, recorded, "Overall, it may be said that the Japanese Saints fared rather well with lots of spirit and enthusiasm. While the group was small, it was active and happy. Since most of the members at that time were young, in high school, just out of high school, working or going to the university, they had a reasonably normal life, albeit under wartime conditions. Their parents continued to work as usual, so the changes were not drastic. Little branches were located here and there and the activities were well-attended with servicemen included.

Then there is a separate chapter that can be considered. American of Japanese Ancestry (AJA)-LDS servicemen began to enter the armed forces--first with the 100th Infantry Battalion. They did so well in Europe that the 442nd Regimental Combat Team was formed and many Nisei (second generation Japanese)-LDS served. The 442nd fought so valiantly from North Africa, Sicily, up the Italian Peninsula to Western Europe that it became the most highly decorated unit in the annals of U.S. Military History with over 6,000 Purple Heart awards. Additionally you have a group that ultimately ended up in Japan with the Allied Occupational Forces as military intelligence specialists. The returning veterans became the leadership core during and immediately after the war and thereafter...there was no mass relocation..., one major reason being purely economics. Without the Japanese workers on the sugar and pineapple industry, things would have come to a halt" (Note: In 1940, the Japanese comprised 37% of the total population of Hawaii, Odo and Sinoto, 1985).

There were about 800 members of the Central Pacific Mission when it merged with the Hawaiian Mission to form the Hawaii Mission in 1950. By this time the increase in Asian investigators being baptized was changing the racial mixture of the church due largely to the fact that the second generation and in some cases third generation Chinese and Japanese in Hawaii were becoming Americanized (Britsch, 1989). These investigators, who were born to immigrants, could read and speak English fluently, making it finally possible for LDS missionaries to teach them the

gospel in English.

Today, 98 years after the first recorded baptism of a Japanese person in Hawaii, we find a couple of things that haven't changed too very much. First, Japanese Saints are still underrepresented in the LDS Church in Hawaii relative to their size in the overall State population. In 1986 there were 1,022,745 people in the State of Hawaii, of whom 23% were Japanese. According to the December, 1989 Membership and Statistical Report (as reported by the Finance and Records Department of the Management Information Center, LDS Church), there were a total of 49,000 Saints in Hawaii. There is no exact count of how many Japanese Saints live in Hawaii; however, based on a random sample of 814 of the 49,000 members living in Hawaii, 68 members had either Japanese given names or Japanese surnames. Therefore, it is consonant with the statement that at the 95% confidence level 6-10% of the Saints in Hawaii have either Japanese given or surnames or both, according to the Finance and Records Department of the LDS Church in Utah. To say that 6-10% of the LDS population in Hawaii is Japanese while 23% of the State population is Japanese leads one to conclude that the Japanese Saints continue to be sharply underrepresented in the State of Hawaii.

But what about the Japanese in Japan? How readily do they accept the gospel and are baptized? The Japanese in Japan are also slow to enter the waters of baptism. In a simple comparison of Japan with the U.S. and Brazil in terms of membership in 1983 and then again in 1987, this is what we see (Kikuchi, 1990):

	<u>1983</u>	<u>1987</u>	<u>% Increase</u>
Japan	70,998	85,000	19.7%
Brazil	128,148	249,000	94.3%
United States	3,049,965	4,100,000	34.4%

The above figures reflect that on the average between 1983 and 1987, approximately 67.3 investigators per week were baptized in Japan; 581.0 in Brazil; and 5,048.2 in the U.S. When one considers that in 1983 Japan had a population of about 119 million people (Colliers, 1985a) ; Brazil 131 million (Colliers, 1985b); and the U.S. 234 million (Colliers, 1985c) then we see that proportionately speaking, there were .56 per million baptisms per week in Japan, 21.57 per million baptisms per week in Brazil, and 4.44 per million baptisms per week in the U.S. A mission president who served in Japan from 1984-1987 explained that on the

average from 5-10 baptisms were performed per week in each of the nine missions in Japan (Goodwin, 1990). Clearly our missionaries struggle when teaching the gospel to the Japanese in Japan.

### BARRIERS TO BAPTISM

Given that the Japanese in Hawaii and Japan are slow to be baptized, one might surmise that the same holds true for the Japanese living on the continental U.S.A. According to the 1980 census, the 716,331 Japanese make up one of the largest Asian groups in the U.S. (U.S. Bureau of the Census). Add this humble figure to the 119 million Japanese in Japan, and we do come up with a sizeable total which invites us to answer the question, "Why is it that so few Japanese in Japan and Hawaii are LDS?" Certainly there are many reasons which can be cited, a review of which may help us better understand the Japanese in Hawaii yesterday and today as well as the Japanese in Japan today (It should be noted that while the Japanese in Hawaii and other parts of the U.S.A. have been described as being "completely westernized," research exists that there is a residual of "Japanese-ness" in descendants of immigrants particularly in their value system):

1. Religious reasons: There is no strong religious sense (Goodwin, 1990), no Christian tradition, and the Japanese people find it difficult to accept a Christian religion (Horiuchi, 1990).

a. Investigators have a difficult time believing many LDS concepts, most of which have never been heard of before (Makise, 1990; Hatono et al., 1990). For example, the pre-existence is a new concept which has no equivalent in Japanese religion; Jesus Christ looks western and not Asian whereas the Japanese Sun God (Amateresomekama) and Buddha are both Asian (Shimizu, 1990; Soma, 1990); and the Joseph Smith story sounds like sheer fantasy, and dreams and visions are not given much credit (Soma, 1990; Amano, 1990).

b. The LDS religion is considered to be restrictive (Hatono, 1990; Makise, 1990), unlike Shintoism, the religion indigenous to Japan, and Buddhism, the religion which entered Japan by way of China centuries ago (Hatono et al., 1990). For example, a member of the LDS religion should not gamble, smoke, commit adultery, drink alcoholic beverages, etc. while members of Buddhism and Shintoism are, very simply stated, merely encouraged to be good, try your best, etc.

2. Cultural reasons. The Japanese culture includes many values which discourage one from being baptized (Hatono et al, 1990).

a. Filial piety, while highly regarded in most societies, is keenly honored in traditional Japan (Soma, 1990). Children and young adults readily relinquish responsibility for decision-making and oftentimes prefer that their parents make major decisions (Hatono, 1990). Parents are responsible for telling their children what to do and children, even as young adults, readily obey (Hatono, 1990). The family name rather than the individual is important. Disgrace and disloyalty are very serious cultural crimes. Baptism is considered to be disloyal not only to living family members but also to ancestors who have passed away (Shimizu, 1990; Miyazaki, 1990). The family worries about who will care for the o butsudān. Filial piety even extends to the work place and the boss (Soma, 1990). Baptism means the individual is breaking away from his family and relatives in addition to his co-workers (Soma, 1990).

b. Group orientation and authoritarianism dominate over individualism and free agency in Japan (Horiuchi, 1990). In a tradition bound authoritarian society, there is a grave need for the Japanese to obey the group or their "superiors" and be like others in the group--including religious membership. Since 98% of the families in Japan are Buddhists or Shintoists, then at this time it is quite difficult for Mormonism to get a firm hold (Goodwin, 1990).

c. Buddhism and Shintoism are seen not as religions per se but rather as a way of life, a lifestyle, or cultural elements (Makise, 1990; Hatono et al., 1990; Uyehara, 1990; Soma, 1990; Kajiyama, 1990; Asano, 1990; Shimizu, 1990). For example, it is not uncommon for Japanese in Japan to be married in a Shinto shrine and then to have their funeral services in a Buddhist temple. Holidays throughout the year (such as New Years Day, Shichigosan, Children's Day, etc.) are related to Buddhism or Shintoism and are considered to be cultural holidays rather than religious holidays. In addition, schools as late as in the 19th century, were housed in Buddhist temples and taught by Buddhist monks (Soma, 1990). Today Buddhism is still taught in the public schools and most teachers are only vaguely familiar with Christianity (Hatono et al., 1990).

### 3. Social reasons.

a. The Japanese have been accused of being overly ethnocentric. The Japanese are a very proud people in a quiet way, and they regard their lifestyle as being equal to if not beyond that of other



countries. The term barbarian, used to describe foreigners, the economic miracle following World War II, and Japan's current world status all attribute to high scaled ethnocentrism such that for years it has been and perhaps shall be difficult for the Japanese to accept another country's religion. Also, given what many people consider to be the comfortable lifestyle of the Japanese, there is little hardship and therefore a corresponding low level of need to search for comfort in religion (Horiuchi, 1990; Miyazaki, 1990; Kanzaki, 1990; Amano, 1990). Many youth of today are known to believe in themselves or education rather than in God for their answers (Miyazaki, 1990).

### STATUS OF JAPANESE LDS IN HAWAII TODAY

With so many reasons why it's difficult for the Japanese to become converted, one wonders what has become of those baptised and where efforts should focus when proselyting the Japanese. In answer to the first question, what has become of the Japanese members that were baptized, in May and June 1990 I randomly selected seven wards on Oahu, one from each stake (Waimanalo, Kaneohe; Pearl City I, Waipahu; Nuuanu, Honolulu West; Makiki, Honolulu; Laie VI, Laie North; Hauula I, Laie; and Mililani III, Mililani). I asked the bishop and ward clerk two questions: how many members in your ward are at least 50% Japanese and what positions do they hold in the ward and/or stake.

The total membership for these seven wards was 3,134, of whom 300 were Japanese (194 adults and 106 children). A total of 114 or 38% of all Japanese members were considered to be "less active."

<u>Ward</u>	<u>Total Members</u>	<u>Total Jpse. Members</u>
Hauula	400	6
Laie VI	375	21
Makiki	560	61
Mililani III	491	71
Nuuanu	530	67
Pearl City I	319	67
Waimanalo	<u>459</u>	<u>2</u>
	3,134	300

If one were to project the total number of Japanese Saints in Hawaii from the data drawn from the random sample, one would conclude that the

total number of Japanese Saints in Hawaii would be approximately 4,600 or 9% of the total LDS population in Hawaii. This percentage appears to be consonant with the data provided by the Finance and Records Department of the Church Headquarters in Salt Lake City. The Finance and Records Department stated that at the 95% confidence interval, approximately 6-10% of the LDS in Hawaii have either Japanese given names or surnames or both.

When I tallied the number of Japanese Saints holding "significant positions" in the seven wards, I found the following:

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Head</u>	<u>Coun.</u>	<u>Sec.</u>	<u>Teach.</u>	<u>Clerk</u>
Bishopric	3	3	2	NA	1
Sunday School	0	2	1	6	NA
Relief Society	2	1	2	2	NA
Primary	3	2	0	5	NA
Young Men	0	1	0	0	NA
Young Women	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>NA</u>
	10	11	6	15	1

In the seven wards, there are a total of 42 heads (bishops and presidents) in the above organizations, of which 10 are Japanese. In other words, 23% of the heads in the sample surveyed are Japanese, which is more than twice the percentage of Japanese Saints in the same wards (9%). In terms of counselors in the above organizations (of which there are 84), 11 are Japanese for 13%, still above the 9%. The 6 secretaries (out of a possible 42) compute to 14%; the 15 teachers (out of a possible 63 regular course teachers) compute to 23%; and the 1 clerk (out of 7 computes to 14%. From these percentages, it is clear to see that while persons of Japanese ethnicity in Hawaii are underrepresented as members of the LDS Church, nevertheless, as active members, Japanese Saints are called to "significant" ward positions far beyond their proportion as members of the Church.

In addition, it might be interesting to note the number of AJA LDS who were of high school or college age during the War and who later became Temple presidents (Horiuchi, 1990) {Adney Y. Komatsu, Sam Shimabukuro, and Russell N. Horiuchi}; Mission Presidents (Horiuchi, 1990) {at least 14: Adney Y. Komatsu, Sam Shimabukuro, Russell N. Horiuchi, Tomosue Abo, Arthur Nishimoto, Roy Tsuya, Edward Okazaki, Richard Kwak, Kenji Akagi, Kotaro Koizumi, Satoru Sato, Ralph Shino, Walter Teruya, and

William Nako}; and of course the General Authority Adney Y. Komatsu. In addition, we should mention the sisters that accompanied their husbands on mission calls and Sister Judy Komatsu and Sister Chieko Okazaki, who were members of several Church General Boards. In March 1990, Sister Chieko Nishimura Okazaki was sustained as the first counselor of the Relief Society General Presidency.

In the seven wards, three persons were Family History Program Specialists; two persons were Primary Music Directors, Sunday School Ushers (Greeters), YW Ward Representatives, and Assistant High Priest Group Leaders, each; one person was a Den Leader, Scoutmaster, Pianist, Elders Quorum Counselor, Librarian, Assistant Librarian, Public Communications Director, Sports Representative, Chorister, High Priest Group Leader, High Priest Teacher, Activity Committee Chairman, and Employment Specialist, each.

Japanese Saints in the seven wards served on the stake, island, and regional levels. Four Japanese members were temple workers, three were serving full-time missions, two were high councilmen, and two were stake missionaries. One each were serving in these positions: executive secretary to the regional representative (Kotaro Koizumi), Island-wide Building and Maintenance Director, Cub Scout Commissioner, Stake Counselor, stake clerk, and primary in-service leader.

Given the above description of activity level of Japanese Saints in the Church, it becomes clear that the active Japanese as a group can be considered to be leaders in the Church. There are some who view this as being another reason for proactively seeking out the Japanese as investigators and then strengthening them once they become converted. Let us now turn our attention to implications which can be drawn in terms of proselyting and baptizing Japanese investigators.

#### IMPLICATIONS FOR PROSELYTING JAPANESE INVESTIGATORS

There are a number of implications which can be drawn from the above information as far as proselyting Japanese investigators is concerned. The approach I am taking today is a cultural one. Hall (1959) is one of many who espouse the significant impact the environment, including culture, make on one's attitude and behavior. Many believe that everything we think and do are due to one's culture or are culturally derived.

Overall, we need to use a "steady-slow" but sure approach with a

minimum of ups and downs when working with the Japanese. As the membership base increases, more will be attracted (Horiuchi, 1990). This approach would work well as missionaries and members alike attempt to chip away at the religious, cultural, and social reasons mentioned earlier.

Specific recommendations that are related to the Japanese culture follow:

1. Given the fact that there is no strong religious sense amongst the traditional Japanese and that there is no Christian background in Japan, then we must slowly fill this void. Attention should be focused not only on proselyting and baptizing converts but also on strengthening the current members. One person estimated that the less active rate in Japan is as high as 80% (Amano, 1990). The Japanese members need models, but members need to remain long enough in the Church to get a confident knowledge of the gospel and operations of the ward before they can feel comfortable as the models.

We need to build a Christian tradition in Japan to make Mormonism less foreign. Buddhism and Christianity are taught in the school system. Teachers, who are almost always Buddhist, can easily explain about Buddhism but know almost nothing about Christianity. We need to apprise teachers of the LDS Church so that they can teach their students (Soma, 1990; Hatono et al. 1990).

2. Japanese values should be at the forefront when proselyting. For example, while some investigators may feel they cannot be baptized due to filial piety to their family and ancestors, on the other hand they need to understand the purpose of temple work and the plan of salvation.

Group orientation is another Japanese value; therefore, optimal use should be made of referrals from members, and members should be present when their friends are being taught. Parental permission is still oftentimes sought before one is baptized (even adults), therefore parents should be involved with missionaries and members as early as possible.

3. Holidays are celebrated around Buddhist ceremonies, and most of the people participate in these holidays as a way of life. It almost seems that in order to become LDS you need to surrender much of your culture. Therefore, wards and stakes must provide rich and varied activities and experiences for all ages--sports, drama, music, culture, arts, education, etc.

4. Today the middle-aged Japanese parents are still familiar with

the traditional Japanese system as taught by their parents and the American system, which was introduced after the War. While they appear to be somewhat westernized, they are not--at least according to the American standards. Mothers are busy teaching their children and fathers are busy earning a living. Both parents take their roles very seriously and spend many more hours than Americans do in teaching their children in the home and, for the fathers, in employment. Mothers traditionally cater to the child's needs (even an adult child) and spend much time helping them with schoolwork. Fathers leave home early in the morning and do not return home until after the children are in bed. Saturdays are spent in school and employment; therefore, there is little time available for attending church meetings, which could be seen by some to be another time-consuming obligation (Horiuchi, 1990; Goodwin, 1990). Since so much effort is spent on the children and employment, missionaries should attempt to relate religion to the family and employment

Currently in Japan, it is the children who seem to be more ready for the gospel and its accompanying knowledge and answers than their parents (Hatono, 1990; Miyazaki, 1990; Goodwin, 1990; Horiuchi, 1990; Kanzaki, 1990). Missionaries need to show the youth and young adult investigators how the gospel can help them as they aspire for further education and employment. Missionaries need to encourage faith promoting experiences for investigators.

The above comments have been more geared for the Japanese in Japan. Nevertheless, many of the recommendations also hold true for the Japanese living in Hawaii, who continue to have a residual of Japanese-ness, particularly in their values, attitudes, and behaviors.

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