Typology and Characteristic Analysis of Korean War Heritage: A Focus on the Republic of Korea

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Abstract The Korean War (1950.6.25 to 1953.7.27) originated in the transition period of the Cold War of the 20th century. This war lasted about 65 years after the Ceasefire Agreement, and it is the longest surviving war that has not ended. During this time, the memories of war are gradually being forgotten, and unfortunately the traces of the war are gradually being dismantled or extinguished. This study aims to list and classify the traces and memories of Korean War in these times—that is, the Korean War heritages remaining in South Korea—in order to conduct a survey on the people’s recognition about them and to explore the values inherent in them. As a result, this study discovered a total of 413 heritages and revealed the fact that the people were aware of DMZ-related heritage, Korean Wartime Capital Busan-related heritage, Operation Chromite-related heritage, and Geojje/Tongyeong Prisoner of War (POW) Camp-related heritage as the representative Korean War Heritage. This study has an academic significance as the baseline data for a comprehensive survey on Korean War heritages in South Korea and North Korea may be used in the era of unification in the future.

Keywords Korean War Heritage, War Heritage, Cold War, De-Militarized Zone (DMZ), Korean Wartime Capital Busan

1. Introduction

Korean War (June 25, 1950 to July 27, 1953) was a tragedy of a fratricidal war that led to the fixation of the Division at the great turning point in world history in the 20th-century cold war era (1945-1989). In addition, Korean War was the war in which the United Nations (UN) entered for the first and last time since it was organized on October 24, 1945, after the end of World War II. E.g.: [9]

In other words, the Korean War was an international war in which major countries in more than 60 countries around the world decided for an international aid to intervene in various forms, and it was the outcome of suffering and trials of the whole human race; in particular, 1.94 million persons from 21 countries belonging to the UN Forces entered the war and provided medical aid, and about 37,000 died. E.g.: [10] The UN’s decisions on aid and participation in the Korean War became the starting point of “collective security principle” on an international level and, thus, Korean War is a special physical evidence of love for humanity, which contains the historical value of the result of the first collective action through international consensus. However, the Korean War is recorded as the longest war in existence, which is still ongoing as of March 2019.

In a period of truce which has transpired for 65 years since 1953, the Republic of Korea has transformed itself from an aid recipient to an aid donor through an economic boom called “Miracle on the Han River.” This economic leap was accompanied by great sacrifice. In the process of national reconstruction and economic development, the overall national land has been rapidly developed, and the battlefields and military relics related to the Korean War have been destroyed or damaged fast. Of the Korean War-related Heritages (Hereafter, “Korean War heritage”), there are places or facilities that have been designated as cultural assets and protected but, overall, as the memories of Korean War are forgotten, its physical traces perish. This is in line with the trend of a rapid decrease in the generations that entered or experienced the war.

Meanwhile, since the 20th century, the U.S, France, and Germany, etc. which experienced World War I and World War II, events that changed the flow of world history, have systematically managed various types of “war heritage” and utilized them as educational materials for future generations, such as lesson, remembrance, and memorial. France has integrated and managed war heritage in the name of Lieux de Memoire while Germany, which was divided like the Korean Peninsula, has utilized
war heritage as materials for national harmony and introspection after unification. As shown in these cases, the conservation of war heritage can serve as a symbol of war recurrence prevention and international peace, as well as memorial of the victims. From this point of view, the arguments that the heritage should be understood as 'a process to be handed down to the next generation' rather than 'a result of being left over' is gradually expanding around Smith (2006), Lee (2019) and Logan (2019). E.g.: [6, 8, 13]

In April 2018, President Moon Jae-in and Chairman Kim Jong-un declared “April 27 Panmunjom Declaration”. There have been concentrated interests in the Demilitarized Zone (Hereafter, “DMZ”) including Panmunjom, with various plans for security tourism sought. It is currently time to strongly require judging the value of Korean War heritage and seeking a directing point.

This study began with the basic questions to give new roles to the Korean War heritage; in other words, what Korean War heritages are, where they are, and how they are left.” In this perspective, this study has three purposes as follows: first, to understand the present condition of Korean War heritage through their listing and classification from a general viewpoint; second, to conduct a survey on the Korean people’s recognition of Korean War heritage; and third, to explore the possibility of overcoming the ideological conflict inherent in Korean War heritage and use them as an instrument of peace.

2. Materials and Methods

Korean War-related studies are divided broadly into three types. The first is studies of political and social approaches from a war ideological perspective. The second is reports aiming to investigate a variety of physical evidence directly related to the Korean War which are centered on the discovery and investigation of the battlefields where the battles were directly fought, supporting facilities in the rear, refugees’ lives, and war-related works of art. This paper also used the results of these studies as the basic data. Third is reports and presentation materials expressing reference to the center of war heritage and the development of the location as tourist attraction. Recently, by a few local governments, policy studies have been produced to look at Korean War heritage as world heritage. However, there are very few basic studies overall to understand the actual status and situation of the war heritage.

This study would be conducted in three stages based on the following. First is the stage of “the listing of heritages” according to the definition of the concept of Korean War Heritages. This stage first divides heritages into hardware, software, and human-ware and lists the heritages through the complete enumeration of bibliography, including records on cultural heritage administration, records on patriots and veterans administration agency, Korean War-related academic journals, reports on the investigation of modern cultural heritage by each local government, reports on the investigation of nationally protected historic sites, and newspaper articles for 65 years since the Ceasefire Agreement. As a result, the study cataloged a total of 413 heritages. The significance of this stage is the extracts of heritage other than the 84 heritages protected as cultural property, especially the heritages which are unknown but remain as places or ruins.

Second is the stage of “the classification of types” based on the result of the listing. The current status of each heritage was investigated through several field surveys over 2016 and 2017 after classifying the surveyed heritages into five categories (see Figure 1) according to the birth time and regional distribution characteristics. However, software and human-related heritages that were not reshaped in form or space were subjected to field surveys at museums. Based on the results, 413 heritages were typed as follows. Hardware was classified into direct type, indirect type, and influence type according to the impact of the relevant heritage on the war; software into culture/art type and record type born during the wartime; and human-ware into combat action type and non-combat action type. Based on this, the characteristics were analyzed according to the time of the birth of heritages and their regional distribution; then, through an on-site survey, the conservation condition of each heritage was analyzed.
Figure 1. Distribution Characteristics of Korean War Heritage
The third stage is the investigation of the degree of recognition about Korean War heritage. For the purpose of reliable research, five Delphi experts were selected as subjects of the Delphi method, including one majoring in Korean history of war, two researchers of Korean War heritage, one majoring in negative heritage, and one majoring in world heritage. Throughout two surveys, 30 heritages, which were appropriate for the survey of recognition, were selected from 413 heritages. The 30 heritages were classified into spatial heritage in the shape of an area (Hereafter, “spatial heritage”), individual unit type heritage centering on war-related events (Hereafter, “individual unit type heritage”), and people-related heritage related to war activities (Hereafter, “people-related heritage”), subdivided into 10 places, respectively. With the results of the survey of recognition, the total score and ratio were calculated on a rank scale (5 points for 1st rank; 3 for 2nd rank; and 1 for 3rd rank).

As a result of a pilot survey, there was a problem that a majority did not know Korean War heritage or was indifferent. For an accurate and in-depth survey of recognition, this study found the need to conduct the survey by limiting the subjects to the persons who were interested in Korean War heritage and, accordingly, conduct a survey with the persons who had visited the representative symbolic spaces of Korean War: the Seoul Yongsan War Memorial Of Korea and the Busan UN Memorial Cemetery in Korea. The survey was conducted with a total of 150 persons (Men: 47%, Women: 53%), three times from September through November 2017.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1. List and Types of Korean War Heritage

Through the complete enumeration of Korean War Heritages, 413 Korean War heritages were extracted in total. The “hardware” consisting of direct type, indirect type, and influence type included a total of 189 sites. The direct type is defined as heritages directly related to the Korean War, including places where a substantive battle occurred, or damaged by a battle, defense facilities to get ready for a battle, and places where indiscriminate slaughters occurred, which includes 56 sites, including Steam Locomotive at Jangdan Station on the Gyeongui Railroad Line, Paju and Lighthouse on Palmido. Of them, 43 sites are the state-designated cultural properties. The “indirect type” includes a total of 66 sites, such as the Korean Workers’ Party Headquarters in Cheorwon, which covers facilities that supported military operations, though no direct battle took place, government facilities, and refugee protection facilities that managed prisoners of war and injured individuals. Of them, the state-designated cultural properties are 34 sites. The “influence type” refers to places that are not directly related to the events of the time of the Korean War but symbolizes the North-South Division, or remembrance and memorial facilities formed during or after the war, which include 67 sites, including the UN Memorial Cemetery in Korea, and seven state-designated cultural properties.

The “software” is classified into culture/art type that born during the war and record type that records the war field and contains the war veteran’s testimony, which includes a total of 131 sites, including Lee Jung-seop’s Silver Paper Drawings. The culture/art type mainly consists of literary magazines issued by the state, like Front Line Literature, which contain poems and essays about the horror of war and those that long for the end of the war and peace, and works written by writers born of refuge such as in Busan, Daegu, or Jeju. The record type includes the Cabinet Council Records during the war and various videos related to the Search Campaigns for Separated Families. The representative is the Archives of KBS Special Live Broadcasting Finding Dispersed Families, listed as a Memory of the World in 2015. This heritage was produced upon the celebration of the 30th Anniversary of Ceasefire Agreement. 10,189 separated families were reunited for 138 days, and the total time of live broadcast was 453 hours and 45 minutes, which was listed in the Guinness Book (1993).

There were 93 sites of “human-ware” consisting of combat action type and non-combat action type. The combat action type consists of the major figures of the South Korean Armed Forces and the UN Forces, who exhibited outstanding competence at the combat sites like General MacArthur, while the non-combat action type consists of war correspondents who let the world know the horror of war like Marguerite Higgins, performers in morale-boosting concerts, and child welfare International charity and civilian charity, which lead the relief and protection of refugees, like Bertha M. Holt, Holt Children’s Services Inc., and Compassion International.
| Classification       | Details                                                                 | Representative Photos                                      |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| **Hardware (189)**   |                                                                         |                                                            |
| Direct Type (56)      |                                                                         |                                                            |
| Combat sites (29)     | Places where battles directly took place or facilities that have their traces | Steam Locomotive at Jangdan Station                        |
| Defense facilities (8)| Facilities utilized for defense in battles                              |                                                            |
| Slaughter areas (4)   | Places where civilians or missionaries were murdered mercilessly        |                                                            |
| Munitions (15)        | Individual goods and military equipment for supporting combat during the war |                                                            |
| Indirect Type (66)    |                                                                         |                                                            |
| Military facilities (23)| Structures and military bases that support military operations         |                                                            |
| Military facilities (North Korea) (9)| Facilities used by the North Korean People’s Army of the military facilities |                                                            |
| Medical facilities (6)| Facilities for the treatment of the injured soldiers or civilians during the war |                                                            |
| Government facilities (5)| Facilities that functioned as government facilities during the time of refuge |                                                            |
| Religious facilities (3)| Religious facilities established by the army or related to major incidents during the Korean War | Korean Workers’ Party Headquarters, Cheorwon |
| POW Camps (6)         | Facilities that accommodated the prisoners from the North Korean People’s Army and Chinese People’s Volunteer Army during the war |                                                            |
| Refuge facilities (14)| Facilities to accommodate and protect refugees                         |                                                            |
| Influence Type (67)   |                                                                         |                                                            |
| Symbols of Division (17)| Facilities and places that symbolize the North-South Division on the Korean Peninsula |                                                            |
| Remembrance/memorial facilities (28)| Cemeteries and memorial facilities for the commemoration of the soldiers and civilians who passed away during the war (parks, etc.) |                                                            |
| Other                | Memorial halls and observatories established for education after the Ceasefire Agreement | UN Memorial Cemetery in Korea                               |
### Typology and Characteristic Analysis of Korean War Heritage: A Focus on the Republic of Korea

| Software (131) | Literature (35) | Frontline literature issued by people belonging to the army during the war and works of refugee writers |
|----------------|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                 | Art (40)       | Works by war artists belonging to the army, active during the war, and works of refugee writers                      |
|                 | Music (7)      | Works by the Daegu Oriental Record Company that produced representative songs during the war                         |
| Culture/Art Type (82) | Video materials (14) | Records of Reunion of War-separated Families, a documentary film shot by a person belonging to the army during the war |
|                 | Testimony records (4) | Testimony of Korean War Veterans published in The Korea Defense Daily                                               |
| Record Type (49) | Presidential documents (15) | Presidential record type of those related to the Korean War                                                        |
|                 | General documents (16) | General record type of those related to the Korean War                                                               |
| Human-ware (93) | South Korean Armed Forces (60) | People to whom the Taeguk Order of Military Merit was awarded in the major literature published by the Ministry of National Defense |
|                 | UN Forces (5) | Major commanders of UN Forces in the major literature published by the Ministry of National Defense                   |
| Combat Action Type (65) | War correspondents (12) | War correspondents who won a Pulitzer Prize or were related to a specific incident                                    |
|                 | Performers in morale-boosting concerts (7) | People who performed in a morale-boosting concert on the front or became an issue; e.g., releasing an album after entering the war |
| Non-Combat Action Type (28) | Philanthropists/charities (5) | Soldiers or charities that conducted withdrawal operations and actions for supporting war orphans                    |
|                 | Civilian volunteers (4) | People who directly volunteered for a battle or provided help for the operations of the Korean Armed Forces          |
3.2. Analysis of the Characteristics of Korean War Heritage

As a result of a survey, it turned out that the distribution of Korean War Heritage differed depending on the region and time with the development of the war. First, the combat sites where fierce combats took place after January 4th Retreat in 1951 centered around the Nakdong River Defense Battle (August 1, 1950 to September 23, 1950). Operation Chromite (September 15, 1950) and the military contiguous close areas where fierce fights for highlands took place centered around the 38th Parallel, and combat sites and defense-related heritages belonging to the direct type are concentrated. A considerable number of heritages in these areas are managed as designated cultural properties or memorial facilities, which are left as the symbols representing the pain of division.

Second, in the Busan area protected by Nakdong River Defense, there are provisional government facilities for the maintenance of the state functions even during the war, such as military supporting facilities for military command and transportation of goods and refugee protection facilities. In Busan that served as Wartime Capital (1,023 days) during most of the wartime, there are various heritages like government facilities and the world’s only Cemetery for UN Forces.

Third, in the Geoje and Tongyeong areas, where POW Camps were installed because of the spatial characteristic that it was the hindmost area and island area where it is hard to access from the outside, there are a number of prisoner internment-related heritages. In addition, there are various training facilities for South Korean armed forces in the Jeju-do area in the southernmost part of the country.

Fourth, in Cheorwon-gun and Hwacheon-gun, and Gangwon-do and Hwacheon which belonged north of the 38th Parallel before the war, there are a number of facilities utilized by the North Korea Army, while in Paju, Gyeonggi-do, there is the Cemetery for the Enemies.

The results of an analysis of the conservation conditions of heritages are as follows. First, of the 413 Korean War Heritages surveyed, even for the hardware, easy to designate as cultural assets, those protected as designated cultural properties are only 84 (44%) out of 189 sites, and a considerable number of heritages is not officially protected by the state. For example, war heritages that played very important roles are excluded from those subject to protection, such as the Norwegian Army Wartime Hospital, POW Camp in Moseul-po, Jeju, POW Camps on Chubong-do and YongCho-do, and Refugee Settlements in Busan (Uam-dong Somak Village, Ami-dong Monument Village, etc.).

Second, there are very poor measures for the management of heritages which had been utilized temporarily due to the sudden war. A considerable number of political and administrative systems in Wartime Capital, school facilities that temporarily supported refugees, religious facilities, administrative facilities, and military facilities are torn down or transformed in the process of rapid urban development. Heritages with this characteristic are concentrated in the Busan area that was Wartime Capital, and it is urgently necessary to prepare a measure for this.

Third, there are a considerable number of heritages that do not remain as actual sites or places, which were memorial battlefields during the war or major combat sites, since they are destroyed or damaged now. Concerning this, it is necessary to make a systematic approach to secure the space in the form of a memorial hall which can record and describe the memories of the field. In addition, it would be possible to convert the sites to those of dark tourism with the characteristic of an eco-museum.
3.3. Analysis of the Recognition of Korean War Heritage

Heritages selected through the Delphi method are as follows. First, place-related heritages included 10 sites, such as the Defense Combat Site in Nakdong River, Combat Site in Operation Chromite, Partisan Subjugation Site in Mt. Jirisan, Battlefield of Chosin Reservoir in Changjin County, North Korea, Combat Site in the Baekma Highland, DMZ, Geoje/Tongyeong POW Camp, Korean Wartime Capital Busan, Site of Massacre of Civilians in Nogeun-ni, and Jeju Military Training Site.

As individual unit type heritages, the Iron Bridge in Chilgok/Waegwan, Lighthouse on Palmido, Norwegian War Hospital, Broken Bridge on Amnok River, UN Memorial Cemetery in Korea, Freedom Bridge, Geoje POW Camp Heritage Park, Provisional Government of Korea, Daejeon Prison Watchtower, and Jeju Maritime Training Facility were selected. Lastly, people-related heritages included the Commander-in-chief of the UN Command General MacArthur, Eighth US Army Commander General Walker, Refugee Artist Lee Jung-Seop, Navy Children’s Choir Captain Dean E. Hess, Commander Russell, Medical Doctor Hyeon Bong-hak, Popular Singer Hyun In, Unarmed A-frame Army, and Bertha M. Holt of Children’s Services.

The results of a survey of recognition through questionnaires are as follows. For place-related heritages, there is high recognition among the DMZ (20.2%), Combat Site of Operation Chromite (15.8%), Korean Wartime Capital Busan (15.3%), Geoje POW Camp (13.3%), and Defense Combat Site of Nakdong River (9.6%), whereas the major commonality of the top five heritages is that they are places that are associated with the core events that symbolize Korean War. The characteristics of the survey of the recognition of the place-related heritages are as follows: The recognition of DMZ was very strong comprehensively, and the ratio of selection of the Combat Site of Operation Chromite as the 1st rank was relatively very high. In addition, the ratio of selection of the Korean Wartime Capital Busan and Geoje/Tongyeong POW Camp as the 2nd and 3rd ranks was higher than the 1st rank, which is a singular point as well.

![Recognition Evaluation of Place-related Heritage](image)

Figure 3. Recognition Evaluation of Place-related Heritage
The recognition of individual unit type heritages was as follows: UN Memorial Cemetery in Korea (19.1%), Provisional Government of Korea (12.9%), Freedom Bridge (12.9%), Lighthouse on Palmido (12%), Geoje POW Camp (10.9%), and Broken Bridge on Amnok River (10.0%). A main characteristic of the individual unit type heritages is that the recognition of the UN Memorial Cemetery in Korea is remarkable. Next, there is high recognition of the Freedom Bridge, Lighthouse on Palmido, Broken Bridge on Amnok River, and Geoje POW Camp, which provided a momentum related to fierce combat and which left various scars of ideologies. In addition, there is a characteristic that there is high recognition of the Broken Bridge on Amnok River that has a direct correlation with the January 4th Retreat, though it is in North Korea now.

The recognition of people-related heritages were in the following order: Commander-in-chief of UN Command General MacArthur (27.1%), Artist Lee Jung-Seop (12.7%), Captain Dean E. Hess and Commander Russell (10.2%), A-frame Army (10%), and General Walker (9.1%). The biggest characteristic of the people-related heritages is the overwhelming recognition of General MacArthur. Also, the strong recognition of Refugee Artist Lee Jung-Seop is highly characteristic, and it seems that it is because his image as an artist who speaks for the time of refuge since the 1980s has consistently become stronger and also because of the artistic quality of his works which are highly rated in the international communities. Another characteristic includes the high recognition of the heritages highly related to human stories during the war, such as Captain Dean E. Hess and Commander Russell, A-frame Army, and General Walker.

3.4. Summing up the Analysis

As a result of summing up the results of the survey of recognition, Korean people recognized four heritages (groups), including DMZ-related heritage, Korean Wartime Capital Busan-related heritage, Operation Chromite-related heritage, and Geoje/Tongyeong POW Camp-related heritage as the representative Korean War heritage. The results of the verification of the results through the Delphi method are as follows. The experts’ opinions were almost the same on the four heritage groups where the participants had the highest recognition, and the reasons for the selection of each heritage (group) have been inferred as follows:
The reason for the selection of DMZ-related heritage as the first was that it was a great combat site where there was the largest number of deaths while battles were fought for two years. In addition, it is the area of interest where various symbolic icons of division are concentrated, including 45 sites, such as the Freedom Bridge, Four Underground Tunnels, and Panmunjom. Another reason for the selection was its strong placeness showing the inter-Korean relations that have been changed in various ways from physical conflicts between South Korea and North Korea, which occurred continuously since the Ceasefire Agreement on July 27, 1953 up until the 2018 Panmunjom Declaration. Lastly, it has been verified recently that it is also related to the academic presentations and public relations of the fact that DMZ is a huge natural ecological zone (1/250 of the entire Korean peninsula) conserved for about 65 years.

“Operation Chromite-related Heritage” was selected because the people consistently remember its symbolic meaning that it reversed the war, put in a defensive corner, and had a strong image of General MacArthur who commanded the operation. Additionally, the film “Operation Chromite,” which dramatically described the situation at the time of the Incheon Landing, was released in 2016, and showing on Cable TV till now, also affected that.

For the selection of the Korean Wartime Capital Busan-related Heritage, the most important reason was shedding new light on the role of the Korean Wartime
Capital Busan as a city of peace, where there were no battles even during the war, and which has recently been discussed actively. Also, the promotion of listing “the Sites of Korean Wartime Capital Busan” as a world heritage, which started from about three years ago was highly related. E.g.: [1] It was also verified that the heritage was selected because the value of Busan which protected one million refugees was reevaluated as a symbolic city of diaspora, and the world’s only UN Forces Cemetery is located in Busan.

Figure 7. Scene of the Busan Wartime Government Complex

Geoje/Tongyeong POW Camp-related Heritage was selected mainly because of the private conservation activities in the area, which have been developed, centering around Geoje-do Island POW Camp Heritage Park, understood as a security sightseeing spot for about 20 years since the opening in 1999 and the POW Camp Restoration Project Promotion Committee organized in 2015. E.g.: [11] In addition, it was verified that other reasons included that Geoje/Tongyeong POW Camp is the first case in which the Geneva Convention on the Treatment of Prisoners of War was applied and it has a characteristic as a heritage that strongly showed the ideological conflict concerning the prisoners of war.

4. Conclusions

Since Korean War heritages are distributed in North Korea, as well as in South Korea, it has been impossible to make a comprehensive approach to both regions till now. Fortunately, discussions on unification have begun since 2017, so it is necessary to prepare an earnest survey. Considering this situation of the times, this study has a significance as the baseline data for the survey on Korean War heritage in both South Korea and North Korea.

First, through the complete enumeration of Korean War heritage in South Korea, this study listed 413 heritages. Through the classification of the heritage types, a survey of the people’s recognition of these heritages was conducted. It was found out that the people’s interest was concentrated in four heritages (regions) including, DMZ-related heritage, Korean Wartime Capital Busan-related heritage, Operation Chromite-related heritage, and Geoje POW Camp-related heritage. Overall, rather than the fierce combat sites, they had a strong recognition of the DMZ, the symbol of the North-South Division, Korean Wartime Capital, Busan, which shows the traces of one million refugees, and the POW Camp, which was the second battleground related to ideologies. This result is consistent with a recent international perspective on war heritage from new perspectives, such as international peace, reconciliation, and cooperation, breaking from the sense of a simple physical conflict. In addition, since there is an expanding tendency now to look at war heritages as subjects of education and lesson and to utilize them as educational places for future generations, there is a need for a systematic conservation of the Korean War Heritage.

In conclusion, it would be necessary to urgently promote a precision survey and listing of Korean War heritages that remain in South Korea on a national level and to build up the foundation for the survey of Korean War heritages located in North Korea in the future.

The earnest survey process of Korean War heritages throughout South Korea and North Korea is an expression of the will that this national tribulation shall not be repeated. The time of this survey foreshadows the creation of a heritage with a new meaning that should be understood as the outcome of the process. E.g.: [13] In addition, it is judged that this process is the essential meaning of Korean War heritages; that is, the first step preparing unification in the future, which will serve as a creative device for international peace, reconciliation, and war recurrence prevention.

Acknowledgements

This work was supported by the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF) grant funded by the Korean government (No.NRF- 2016R1A2B4013455).

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