The Feminine Side of Senthong

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Abstract

Senthong is a part of space in a traditional Javanese house which is divided into three rooms, namely senthong kiwa, senthong tengah, and senthong tengen. Senthong Tengen is used for men (family leaders), while Senthong Kiwa is for women (Garwa). Senthong Tengah is a room flanked and has a function to store rice seeds (farmers), as a place of meditation and to praise Dewi Sri so that this space is private and sacred. This makes Senthong have a room that is dark, cool and closed. Javanese women are synonymous with gentle, polite and have an essential role in taking care of the household. Women's strength in managing a single home is a form of support for their husbands to build an ideal household. Senthong and Javanese women are two things that have an important role related to the existence of traditional Javanese houses. Both occupy central positions as privacy centres based on the spatial system. This paper discusses the feminine side of senthong using a symbolic analogy approach as a form of conveying meaning. It is interesting to study. After all, it is a form of helping to preserve the local wisdom of Javanese house architecture, because it sees the development of the current culture that brings Javanese society's view of the vital role of women.

Keywords: senthong, feminine, symbolic analogy

INTRODUCTION

Nusantara architecture is a form of culture that has its own metaphysics, because it is built on the awareness of its owner through local wisdom that is always oriented to truth, beauty, and goodness in maintaining natural violence and living space with the community. Various forms of symbols are expressed in traditional Javanese houses, ranging from the spatial concept to the physical elements of the building. It is intended that the architectural work can express self-orientation and reflection on his life. Furthermore, the message contained therein can be expressed freely by anyone and at any time, without the need to be received at once.

The form and sphere which the conditions for values must be maintained and maintained, because it is interesting to be studied in depth. Senthong is one part of the interior of a Javanese traditional house. Senthong is seen as a portrait of the internal dynamics of Javanese society in expressing space, how the influence of Senthong architecture on the development of Javanese society, especially for women whose existence continues to this day. The concept of senthong space is interesting to be
discussed by various parties, because it has an intimate connection with the daily lives of Javanese women in particular.

Senthong has three parts of space in the form of symmetrical quadrilateral chambers that have different functions and meanings. Spatial form involves physical aspects such as spatial composition, application (material choices, furniture settings, circulation, body size / anthopometry, decoration, color and texture), while non-physical forms will relate to aspects of norms, mystical kejawen, philosophies and myths that accompany the existence of senthong interior appearance.

Javanese people traditionally adhere to the patriarchal concept of social gender. The general implication is that women become male subordinates. Therefore the heir to the throne of the kingdom is the crown prince not the princess. Broader implementation can be understood from the separation of social activities and rituals for men and women. So space is a difference between spaces for men and spaces for women.

Historically, gender relations in Javanese society were also presented through architectural space, this is shown in the traditional Javanese house layout concept in the past which was still influenced by gender restrictions. Architecture is one of the products of human culture that is implemented from the social and psychological conditions of society. The shift in position and gender relations of Javanese society at the present time is partly due to modernization, the emancipation of women and the influx of Western cultural influences which leads to equality and position. The shift in the pattern of gender relations, especially those that occur in Javanese families, has slowly shifted the concept of gender in homes.

Senthong is phenomenologically closely related to the development of Javanese women, where in this case gender relations are still very close and used, so this is very interesting to study as a form of helping to preserve the local wisdom of Javanese house architecture. This paper will examine the essence of senthong as a form of conveying the symbolic meaning of women which is focused on the subject matter of the Feminine Side of Senthong.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Marbangun Hardjowirogo (1980), explained that traditionally the Javanese always gave a more important and greater role to women. However, this is a form of respect for women towards men. S. De Jong (1985: 69-77) explains that Javanese society is structurally divided into a hierarchical social order, not only in the order of one vertical line, but also in relation to relations between men and women.

Ivan Illich (1982: 60-80) revealed that the relation of nature to spatial patterns has differences in space on the basis of gender, between women and men related to the different functions and equipment used. Gender itself by Illich is understood not merely to be a difference in sex, but rather a difference in the way of view inherent in every human being. According to Trisakti Handayani and Sugiarti (2006: 5), the concept of gender is the nature of men and women formed by social and cultural factors, so that some functions and roles are born in various fields of life.

Christina S, Handayani, Ardhian Novianto in the book "The Power of Javanese Women" (2004), explained that men place themselves in a dominant, superordinate position, while women are subordinate. But in this subordinate position, women prove that they are able to give an important role and share in the household.

The relationship in a house, for a woman is where can play a bigger and more free role, fully controlled, including managing and maintaining the house. Success in fulfilling
these assignments will be assessed (usually by neighbors, family and friends). Difficult for every woman because behind her there is always the image of the "ideal home". Domestic ideology that explains how things should be and look, will always influence what is done, although always limited by space and time. Though usually the house is built by men who are generally more often without consultation with women who will later have the most role in the home.

THE ESSENCE OF SENTHONG

The residence is one of the products of culture that produces all activities and interactions that are staged in spaces. Space configuration is conceptualized as power and authority in giving rules in each room. Occupant's understanding of the meaning formed in his house will be realized as a spatial arrangement and reflected in everyday behavior. The relationship between the arrangement of space and body is expressed in a spatial order that positively articulates its center and negatively defines its boundaries. Tjahjono (1989: 71) put forward the concept of Javanese housing that center and duality, explained about activities that take place in the realm of the house is divided into routine activities (daily activities) and non-routine (ritual activities). Gender differences in spaces do not apply strictly to routine activities involving all residents except the kitchen (women's area), the south-east corner (men's area). Usually in routine activities residents avoid the middle senthong because it is believed to be the spiritual center of the house and ritual activities.

Important aspects of senthong are the presentation of cultural values which have certain philosophical and symbolic meanings as the hallmark of the existence of traditional Javanese houses. Senthong is divided into three rooms namely senthong kiwa, senthong tengen, and central senthong, which are lined up on the back side of the palace ageng. Senthong is surrounded by senthong kiwa and tengen, which are spatial compositions that apply the principle of balance, which is one of the principles of organizing space that prioritizes symmetrical balance. Symmetrical balance in spatial planning has a basic planning related to worldview and has the function of authority level in accordance with the level of privatization. Every room from front to back has a philosophical meaning of Javanese life, which is able to be seen visually in the form of visual expression (spectacle), but also implies a philosophical meaning that is able to guide or direct behavior (living behavior) for its owner (guidance).

Prijotomo explained that senthong is a space that has important meaning for Javanese people, both in function and meaning. Krobongan as the living room is a sacred area of the whole room. In addition, this room is also a place for praying, ritual or meditation activities, while sending soul and tengen as a family bed at night. (Prijotomo 1992,40). Wibowo et al. In his research on traditional architecture in the Special Region of Yogyakarta shows that the arrangement of the rooms, in the house of the deepest residence consists of "senthong kiwa" (left room), "middle senthong" (middle room), and "senthong tengen" (right room). For farmers, "senthong kiwa" functions as a place to store weapons or sacred items, "central senthong" to store seeds and seeds (roots and grains), and "senthong tengen" for beds. Sometimes "middle senthong" is also used to silence and pray to God or used as a place of worship to Dewi Sri as a goddess of fertility and household happiness. Therefore "middle senthong" is called pasren (place of Sri) or "patanen" (place of agriculture) (Wibowo et al., In the Study of Ancient Cultural Values of Cariyos Dewi Sri, Dra. Suyami 1988: 2-3)

Myths about the origin of rice plants in Java are often associated with the story of Dewi Sri, an angel who is considered a bearer of rice seeds derived from heaven or a place of life of the gods. Even Dewi Sri is often identified as a rice goddess who is highly
respected in the farming community. Dewi Sri is also often identified as a goddess of wealth, a goddess of fertility and prosperity, a goddess of prosperity, who can provide longevity, health and many children (Subroto, 1983, 2-12). Goddess Sri is also considered to be the goddess of the earth and mother of all beings (Zimmer, 1972, 92). Therefore in general the Javanese people are very respectful and reluctant to question the figure.

The trust and respect of the Javanese community towards the existence of the figure of Dewi Sri is clearly seen in the Javanese tradition and cultural traditions, especially among the farming community. One of the traditions that reflects the belief and respect for Dewi Sri can be seen in the attitude and treatment of the people of rice, namely by giving special space to the traditional Javanese house layout system.

The existence of the middle senthong in a Javanese house illustrates the Javanese world that cannot be separated from an understanding of the balance of the macrocosm and the microcosm. Everything is always associated with the forces of nature, something metaphysical as the Javanese understand their Javanese house. The cosmological balance is built on an understanding that is always in the form of duality, such as day and night, heat - cold, north-south, male-female, besides that there is also a symbolic meaning that refers to three, four or five poles.

THE ESSENCE OF JAVANESE WOMAN

Javanese people often refer to women as wadon, woman, estri, or daughter. The term has its own meaning and even has its own ideological consequences. The following is a description of women in terms of Javanese culture (Seri Dian, 1996):

1. Wadon, the word wadon comes from the Kawi language "wadu", which literally means servant or servant. This term is often interpreted that women are destined to become "servants" (servants) of the male teacher (husband).

2. Woman, the word woman is composed of two Javanese languages namely "wani" (brave) and "governance" (regular). In this sense, women have two meanings, namely wani arranged (brave or want to be regulated) and wani nata (brave or willing to regulate). The term wani arranged means that women must remain submissive and want to be regulated by their husbands, while the term wani nata a woman must have the courage to manage the household, educate children, and most importantly, fulfill the biological needs of the husband.

3. Estri, the word estri was born from the Kawi language "estren", which means penjurung (booster), from the word "estren" formed the word hangestri which means to push. So it can be seen that an estri must be able to provide encouragement to the husband, especially if the husband is in a weakened spirit.

4. Putri, which means daughter, in traditional Javanese, this word is often said as an abbreviation of breaking up tri perawis (the death of three cases), ie a woman in the position of daughter is required to carry out her obligations, either as wadon, woman, or estri.

Meanwhile, according to the Big Indonesian Dictionary, the word woman means adult woman. In this case the writer uses the term woman because the use of the word woman is closer to the practical awareness of Javanese society. So, Javanese women are people who dare to be regulated, but that does not mean passive and dependent on the people who regulate it (Handayani, 2008). UGM philosopher Damardjati Supadjjar in Handayani (2008) also revealed that the word woman also comes from the words wani (brave) and tapa (suffering), meaning that a woman is someone who dares to suffer even
for others. In everyday life there will be many women who practice asceticism by fasting or abstaining from their children and husbands. While the term woman is not enough to describe the practical reality of everyday Javanese women. The root of the word woman is the master meaning of the teacher, the meaning of this word describes normative reality rather than everyday practical reality.

The character of Javanese women is very identical with Javanese culture, such as speaking fine words, calm, quiet or calm, do not like conflict, prioritizing harmony, upholding family values, able to understand and understand others, polite, high self-control, endurance to suffer high, loyal or high loyalty. A Javanese woman can accept all situations even the bitterest (Handayani, 2008). While the attitude of a wife after becoming the legal wife of the husband is as follows:

1. Gemi (thrifty), that is to say, a wife maintains her husband's property well, and is not used excessively.

2. Wedi (fear), namely a wife must surrender surrender, and do not like to denounced her husband, and obey the husband's command with all my heart.

3. Gumati (love), is a wife must guard against what her husband likes, both in his wife and accessories in the household.

**POSITION AND ROLE OF WOMAN**

Various layers of society and places where different views about women's position emerge. This is inseparable from the factors that influence the emergence of this view, as well as men who are described as being stronger than women. Physical men are more muscular and robust so that it is described as having more strength compared to women. So that in the end this physical condition also influences the concept of division of roles between men and women. Men are conceptualized as workers outside the home (public area), while women are conceptualized as workers inside the household (domestic area). Concepts like this are already embedded in society, especially Java, which is then isolated in the community and finally known as "gender".

There are several paternalistic conceptions developed in Javanese society, some of these terms are already embedded in the hearts of the community and are considered as terms that put women in a lower position than men. Especially in families where Javanese women become wives with the term kanca wingking. Why in a Javanese family is a wife also called kanca wingking? (regarding those handling domestic work) the gender attributes of men and women in Javanese culture are realized or do not have different articulations. Thus the results of research conducted by Christina S, Handayani, Novianto (2004). But in this subordinate position, Javanese women in fact are able to contribute or an important role. So konco wingking which means being the person behind is not always worse, lower, and less decisive (Handayani, 2008). The term Javanese woman's role as wife is garwa in addition to the term konco wingking. The conception of a garwa (wife) is not just a wingking conflict, but is also referred to as a sign of life (soul mate or half of the soul). The meaning of this life signification clearly gives a picture of a parallel position and is more egalitarian than the five wingking. Because husband and wife are two who have become one, each is half of one entity (Handayani, 2008).

Javanese women who are educated in Javanese culture are able to influence the private world and public policy with their emotional intelligence and feminist strength. So that Javanese women are skilled enough to take the right position in social conditions without disturbing the existing harmony (Handayani, 2008). Since they were little girls have been taught with domestic chores in the well, kitchen and mattress areas. While
waiting for a mate, they were taught how to dress up, cook and serve their husbands. The period of preparation for marriage in Javanese culture is known as the "pingitan", which is a prohibition on leaving the house.

The image, role and status as women have been created by culture. An image for a woman as idealized by interpersonal culture, gentle, obedient, not arguing, may not exceed men. The idealized role is like the household manager, as a supporter of the husband's career, a submissive wife and a mranting mother. Images made for men, among others, are all-knowing, as role models must be more than women, rational, aggressive. The ideal role of men is as family breadwinner, protector, nurturing, while the ideal status is the head of the family (Raharjo, 1995).

ANALOGY OF THE MEANING OF THE SENTHONG SIDE

Analogy is one of the form approaches used in architectural design. In his book, Design in Architecture, Geoffrey Broadbent said that "... the central mechanism in translating analyzes into synthesis is analogy". This statement intends that the analogy approach is not merely tracing the shape of an analogous natural object, but the processes of analysis and arrangement are needed to produce a new form that still has a visual resemblance to the object being analogized.

The analogy approach has an important thing that is the equation between buildings and objects that are analogous. The equation here is not really similar to the object and is only enlarged in size, but what is meant is the equation in the form of the message to be conveyed. Therefore, the analogy is very valuable because it is very personal, meaning it can be understood by everyone. Broadbaent in the book Design in Architecture explains that the analogy approach is divided into three types, namely personal analogy, direct analogy, and symbolic analogy.

Javanese traditional houses, in this case especially senthong architecture will be examined using symbolic analysis. An architect uses a symbolic analogy to solve problems in design by implicitly entering certain meanings, this analogy is an indirect form of analogy. The elements included can be symbolic of something, local mythology or other symbols. The analogy of a traditional Javanese house is drawn horizontally, for example the front is compared to hair buds, pendhapa as the head, pringgitan as the neck, the palace as a woman's stomach, senthong as a sacred place, fertility due to the symbol of womanhood, the kitchen as a butt that has a lot to deal with cooking and the remains of cooking which is eaten is fed as a place to dispose of poop (Subiyanto, 2009: 273).

The situation in the palace is closed, it is usual to accept relatives who are close or close, and as a space for women's activities. This indicator reinforces that the palace is personal and feminine (femininity), in contrast to the masculine pendhapa. The sacred traditions and profane pendhapa show harmony, as a symbol of the vertical relationship between God and the horizontal to fellow human beings. Another room that is considered sacred and most private is senthong. There are three spatial structures, senthong left, senthong right and central senthong. This space stretches from east to west facing south. Between the other two senthong is dark and sacred. Senthong Central is not used for bedding, but Senthong Tengen for father's sleeping location is the westernmost, Senthong Kiwa for sleeping mothers and children who are immature is the easternmost. (Fisher, 1994: 7).
Based on the spatial system, Senthong’s architectural manifestation has special properties and functions, including the following:

1. *Senthong kiwo* has a private space, because only female families have the right to enter and sleep. Spatial structure is formed from furniture settings for sleep and wardrobe in defensive patterns, meaning that the bed is in a position on the side of one corner of the room, indicating the level of domestic authority for the space user in accordance with the appropriate social distance. Circulation flow that directs in and out of one door shows that the personality in activity.

The height of the door is also measured based on the height of the Javanese, so carefully applying the size to the compatibility with the body size (anthropometry) of the Javanese. The variety of ornament seen in the panel (gebyok) in the house is the type of Lung which has the meaning of fertility and beauty. The meaning of fertility in every *senthong* is because it shows the sacred activity of reproduction (intercourse) which is indeed the true function of the space.

2. Senthong Tengah (krobongan) has a very private space, related to ritual activities, worship of Mbok Sri, Dewi Sri, the goddess of rice. The spatial arrangement with elements of space fillers such as a set of beds complete with bolster pillows, as well as offerings and two bundles of rice which have symbolic meaning indicate a representation of the ritual area. Conditioned with dim lighting, the natural ventilation of a couple of boling the size of two kilan will have an effect on natural light entering from the side of the back wall, while the decorative variations in the gebyok area are lungs with slight stylation. Lung-lungan means fertility which refers to the intended pattern of activity (reproduction) in carrying out offspring and comfort of body and soul.

3. *Senthong Tengan* has a private nature because it is only allowed for male families. Almost the same as senthong kiwa this room is set. The use of a defensive
pattern of sleeping areas in one corner of the room with the circulation flow in and out of one door. The decoration is also the same among senthong-senthong, Lung-lungan, which means fertility. More emphasis on sacred activity as a basic function for survival (Puger 2019).

The traditional view of Javanese women arose because of the principle of Javanese society, namely maintaining harmony and respect. Javanese values that have been known since childhood will not easily disappear over time even though the culture is dynamic can change with time. The position of married Javanese women is the focus of this study because in Javanese culture patriarchy is very visible in Javanese women's marriages. As Warto wrote in the book "Sangkan Paran Gender" in 1997 that a woman must be good at reading, cooking, cooking, if these three things fail to be implemented, there is no longer any value either in the family or in the community. A woman who cannot cook or has children is considered strange in society and family disgrace. In addition, women are no longer seen as individuals alone, but have received a new designation, namely wife or garwa or konco wingking, in Javanese culture has a responsibility towards her husband and children. Javanese culture has the concept of cancùt and wanda nunut warga, in order to support and bring the glory of the husband. The concept of women in Javanese culture is that women should not exceed men so that what women do is to be a supporter of men (Handayani, 2008).

![Figure 2. Chart of the Symbolic Approach to the important role of senthong with women](Source: Siti Badriyah)

Based on the above explanation phenomenologically, the important role of Javanese women in the family can be analogous to the important role of Javanese houses especially centered on senthong. According to Arya Ronald (2005), Javanese life outlooks are reflected in the way they inhabit and choose a place to live, including the ability of the place to accommodate all the belief needs held, increase knowledge, accommodate social ethics, and aesthetic sense. Just like Javanese women who must be able to track down, cook, cook, homes must also be able to meet the needs of clothing, food, shelter which is nothing but a spiritual, spiritual, and symbolic need for its inhabitants.
Every culture has different concepts about women, because cultural influences are directed at the personal development of women according to a certain pattern of life and ideas. This development is adapted to the talents and abilities of women, and partly adjusted to general opinions or traditions according to certain feminist criteria (Kartini Kartono, 2006).

This study intends to examine the relevance and important role of women with the presence of senthong in traditional Javanese homes. Based on the Senthong spatial system, it is located at the back of the house, so it is closely related to the term woman as wingking conco. Symbolically, even though senthong is located in the back, it does not mean that the space is less important or is considered a dirty room, instead senthong is one of the central parts of the house that is central and has a very private function. Central Senthong is the most considered sacred room, namely as a place of silence to God and as a place of worship of Sri Sri. There are some assumptions that konco wingking which means the wife who is behind lacks freedom because it is placed behind.

![Figure 3. Chart of Senthong's Symbolic Analogy Approach with women based on the spatial system](Source: Siti Badriyah)

It turns out that when looking at the function of senthong women actually get a position that is highly respected because it lies in the central position of the house. Women placed in the right center can be said to have more power to participate in protecting and protecting the existence of the middle senthong, so in this case women must have the strength and firmness of attitude as a wife. Therefore, the mindset about konco wingking can be used as a role that has a positive impact on Javanese women in carrying out the mandate as a wife, as in accordance with the symbolic function of the Tenghong Kiwa Tenghong.

Javanese culture has also shown the role of women in maintaining local wisdom that is in the traditions of Javanese society and is still being carried out. Women have a specificity in life because it plays an important role in educating, and at the same time also plays a role in maintaining the culture that exists in the family and in society. This specificity is manifested in maintaining good manners that will bring benefits to both
himself and in supporting his social activities when interacting with the wider community. The courtesy or courtesy of Javanese women also applies to all groups and ethnicities, so that the influence is very large in forming a nation of moral and ethical people. Therefore, the formation of a developed and civilized nation can be started from the smallest community, the family.

The local nature of Javanese society is also identical with the nature of women who have attractive characteristics. The strength of Javanese women is not felt as a threat or violence to both the husband and the wider community, but instead the strength is always felt by others as tenderness, warmth, patience and understanding. In this position Javanese women will largely determine the decisions of their husband's public world. Based on the concept that developed in Javanese culture, that the mother is a symbol of morality whose spirit lives in her husband and children as well as the extraordinary power of femininity to sustain, protect and source of inspiration for her husband and child (Christiana S. Handayani and Ardhian Bovianto, Power of Power Javanese woman, cet, -1, 2004, 202). Maintaining cultural heritage is also one of the roles of a woman. When a husband is busy working for a living, the wife's job is to protect the property of her husband and family. This basis makes a woman also shows her role in maintaining the customs and culture left by her husband or more broadly is to maintain the heritage of a community group.

Based on this explanation, the existence of senthong can be analogous to a woman figure. Senthong kiwa and tengen are the two rooms which are centered on the middle senthong, which functions as a sleeping room, physically having a door leaf. So that the two spaces can be analogous to a woman’s thigh which must be sturdy and closed. If it is not sturdy and tightly closed, then the existence of the middle senthong which is only covered by a white curtain and functioned to save superior seeds of agriculture will be very threatened. The existence of the middle senthong can be analogous to a woman’s womb protected only by the membrane of virginity, therefore symbolically the message to be conveyed that a woman will be able to maintain and give

![Figure 4. Chart of the Senthong Symbolic Analogy Approach with women by function](Source: Siti Badriyah)
birth to superior seeds if "senthong soul and senthong tengen" are sturdy and protected, so that "senthong middle" is not easily torn, so the seeds stored in it can be maintained and not not taken by" wild birds "which in time can be planted, cared for and provide the best results.

Following the development of the times, social constructs that are built in the community are no longer strictly following the tradition of only matters relating to (Javanese) beliefs that are still developing. Social behavior and the use of Javanese houses do not merely refer to the concept of gender. The tendency that occurs is closer to practical considerations. The first determining factor is the internal aspect, in the form of family awareness (father) about equality of position and opportunities (access) for women. Second, the external aspects of the social and educational environment.

Access for women is open in many ways, but the control aspect remains in men. In principle, activities are not always divided into feminine or masculine activities, but tend to be measured by the value of appropriateness.

CONCLUSION

The main knots in this study are some of the catholic analogies about senthong with women who have close links as follows:

1. *Senthong* has several important roles that can accommodate all the needs of the trust of its inhabitants, increase knowledge, teach social ethics and have a good sense of ethics as a Javanese society. The role of *senthong* can be analogous to a woman who has an important role to accommodate in the household, which is a very genderless situation which means that a woman as a wife must be able to read, cook, this is positively as a form of support and respect for men (husband), organizes the household.

2. Based on the Javanese traditional house layout system, Senthong is located in the back core of the house because it is a center of privacy in the family and is sacred. Senthong location can be analogized as a woman who bears the status of kanca wingking which means taking care of all household affairs behind. If understood in depth, although women also get a position behind, this can be used as a positive influence for Javanese women, because as a wife who is behind it actually becomes more respect and power to regulate her household, so it is not a limitation to carry out her role. Behind is the right position for women because it is a place of protection from all the temptations in the front of the house, where the front is the area of men who helped maintain the existence of the core house.

3. Senthong can also be analogous to a woman figure. Senthong kiwa and tengen physically have door sits flanking the middle senthong, the middle senthong is covered with a white cloth as a place to store superior seeds of agriculture. So senthong kiwa and tengen can be analogous to a woman's thigh which must be sturdy, strong and tightly closed by a membrane of virginity, so that it can produce superior seeds in the family that maintain manners as a Javanese woman.

*Senthong* and women in different traditional Javanese houses have the same implied meaning that can be understood as important, private, elements in the home. Senthong, if an analogy is later understood, it can be used as a reference that a woman with all the images, roles and functions in the house. Senthong spatial system actually makes a woman to be a good person based on the courtesy of Javanese culture by still understanding and running according to nature.
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