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Pattern Research Project

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# Pattern Research Project: An Investigation of The Pattern And Printing Process - Asanoha

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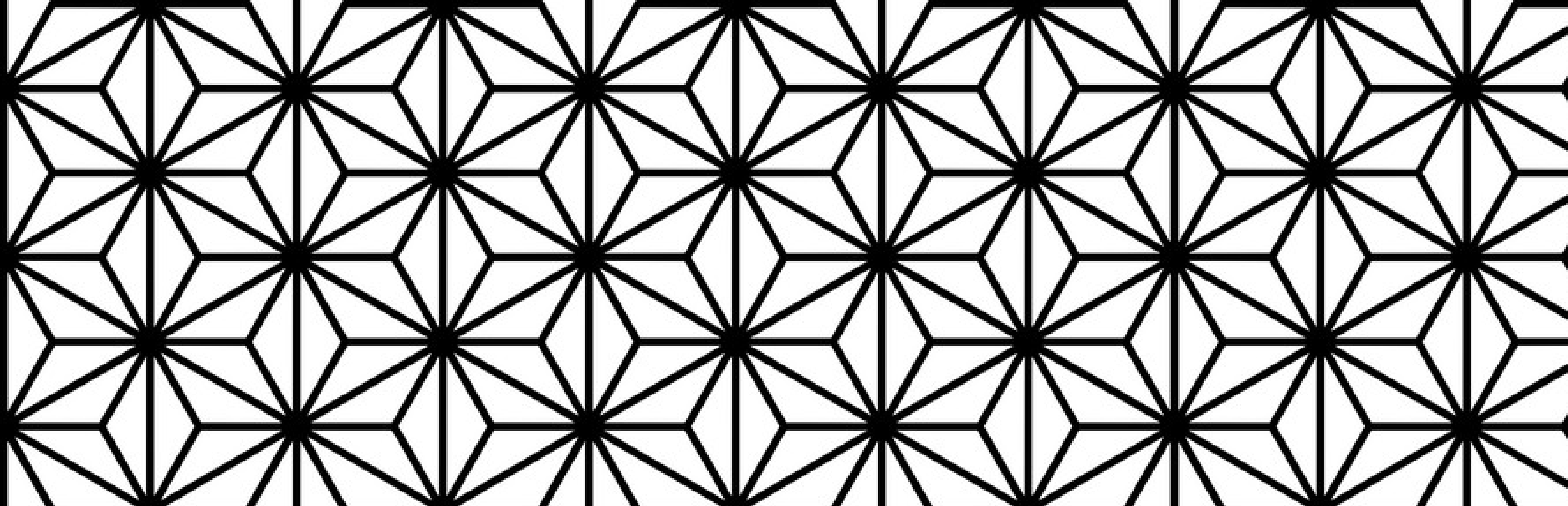
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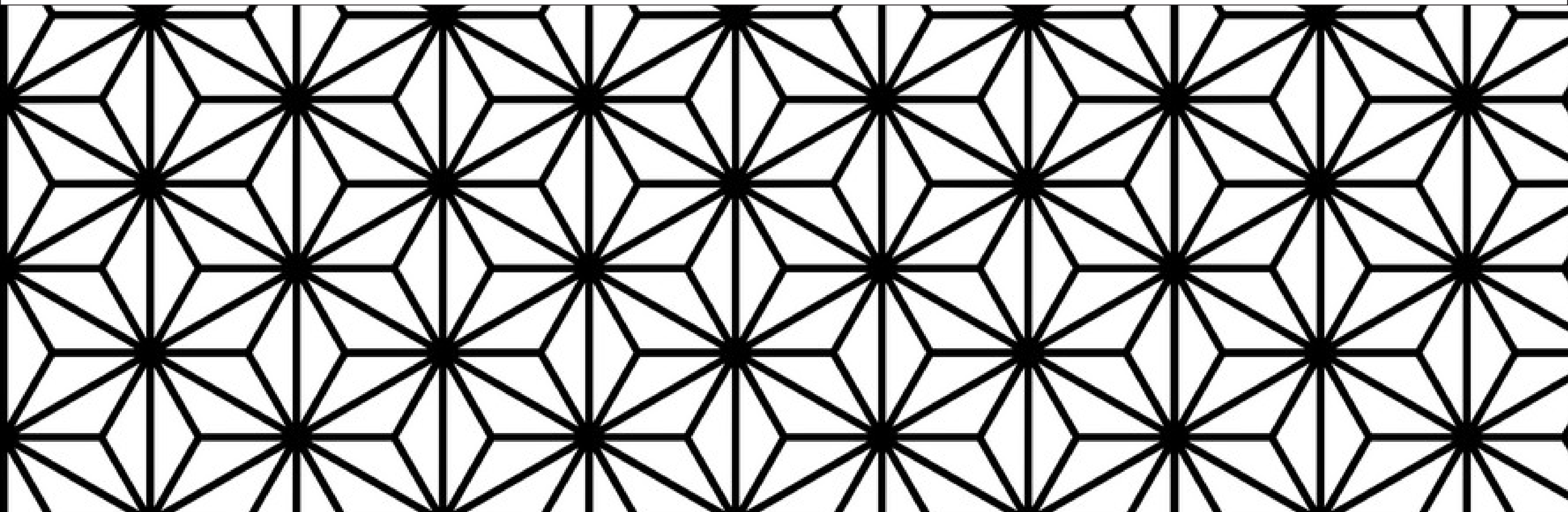
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Asanoha



## CULTURE + HISTORY

Asanoha is a traditional pattern of Japan and its roots span back centuries, making it difficult to pinpoint a specific date or period. Its origins are most likely rooted in rural villages where farmers and peasants in the countryside of Japan would practice *sashiko*, a simplified sewing method that resembles embroidery, that allowed them to piece together various fabrics to create new clothing, and in turn, creating pattern motifs.

Hemp was a significant crop in Japan because it was easily grown and was the country's primary fiber for making textiles until the 17th century when foreigners introduced cotton. Like many other traditional patterns, the hemp plant is an important symbol of Japan's history and holds meaning in Japanese culture. It not only symbolized healthy and rapid growth, but also was believed to ward away evil spirits and provide protection.

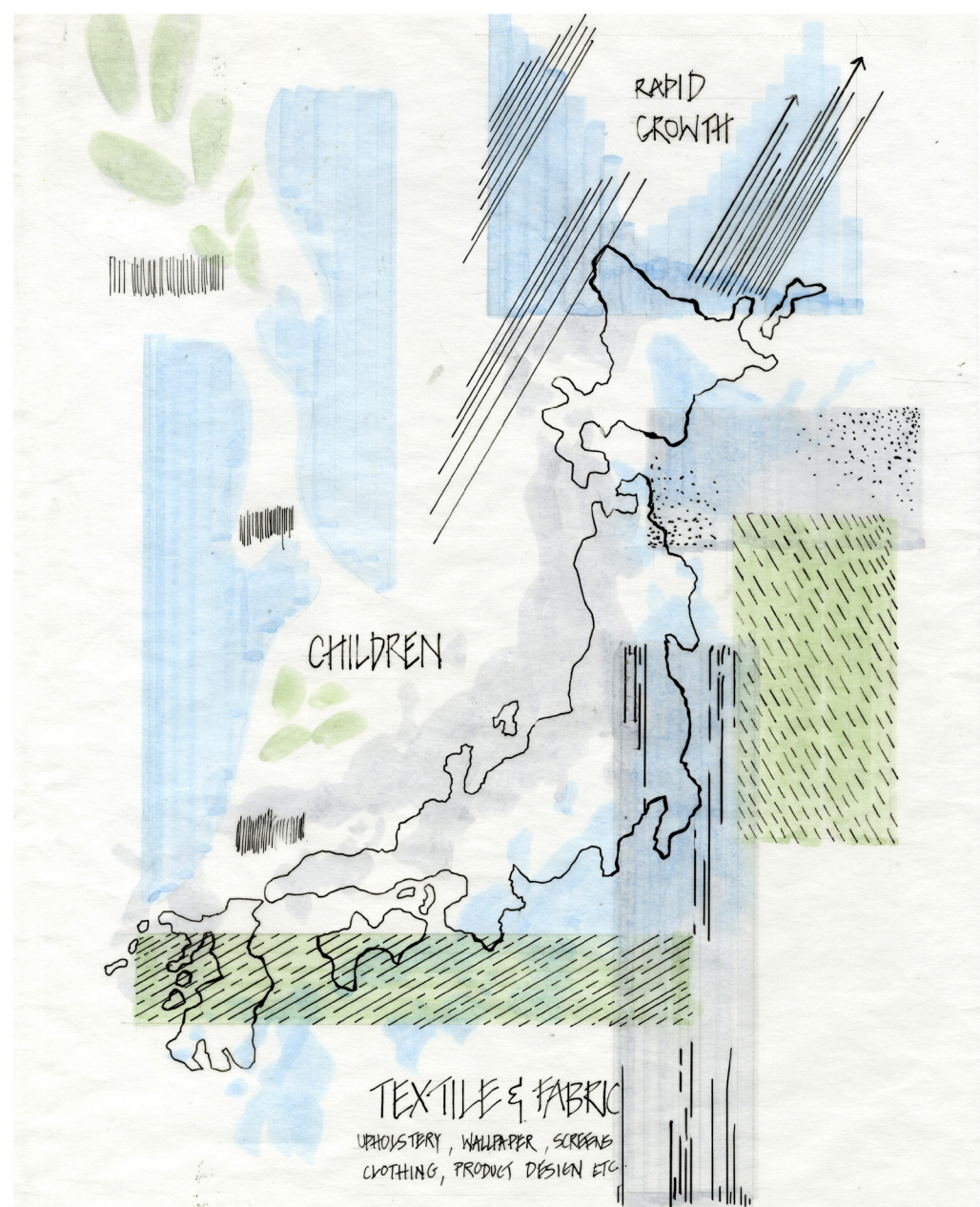


Diagram of research into the symbolism and history of asanoha. Media: marker, technical pens on trace paper

## USE + APPLICATION

Asanoha is often worn by children or young girls due to the superstitious belief that it would protect them as well as promote quick and healthy growth. Clothing with asanoha on them were often given as gifts to children.

This practice still exists today but the use of the pattern has developed into a more aesthetic purpose. It is produced on a variety of objects and textiles, such as cushion upholstery, wallpaper, accessories, and handkerchiefs called 'tenugui'.



The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Farmer's Jacket.

Example of a traditional farmer's jacket- cotton or linen that has been embroidered using sashiko.



Example of traditional kimono with asanoha pattern woven into the design on dyed silk. Worn by a young woman or girl, indicated by the long sleeves.

Virginia and Albert Museum. Kimono: V&A Swatch the Collection.

## CRAFT + MATERIALITY

Tenugui is very representative of how the asanoha pattern was crafted both historically and contemporarily. It was woven in plain weave and the edged left frayed to allow for water drainage and quick drying properties. This type of product is most likely industrially woven today, but it was originally hand woven. If the pattern was being applied to clothing meant for someone of higher status, such as kimonos, it was hand embroidered or woven on silk.

Depending on the application, asanoha was woven using 100% cotton or linen, dyed to produce the desired colored, or embroidered on silk. At its most early stages, the textiles would have been made of hemp, until around the 17th century when hemp fibers were almost entirely replaced with cotton. This remains true even today, most textile productions of asanoha are on 100% cotton.

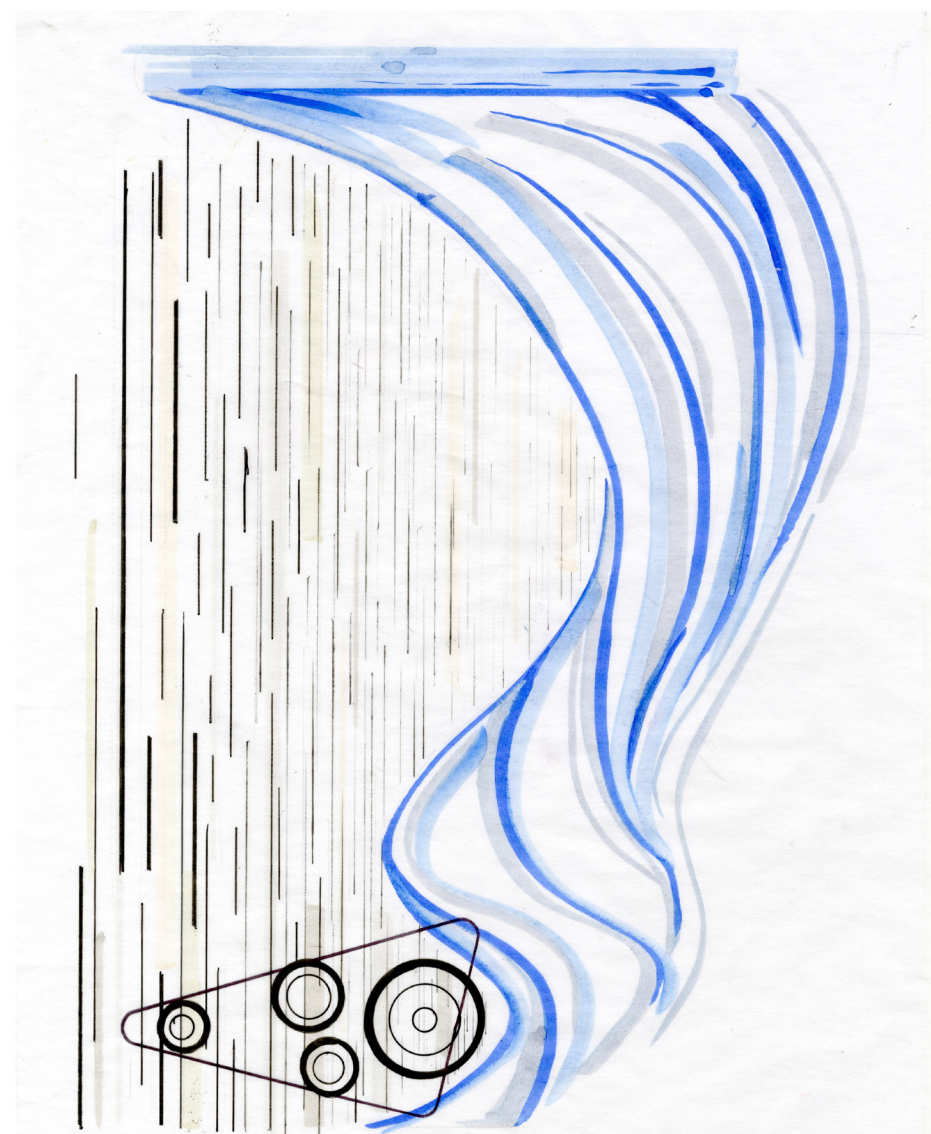


Diagram of research into craft and materiality of asanoha, depicting silk and cotton. Media: marker, technical pens on trace paper

## PATTERN DESIGN + COLOR

As its name suggests, the geometric lines of this very simple pattern is meant to resemble the hemp plant. The triangular shapes created by the lines represent the individual leaves on the stem. This single unit of the hemp plant is repeated on a grid at a small scale.

The specific sample I have obtained is colored white and dark blue of dyed cotton. Blue is historically derived from indigo which also acts as a medicinal remedy for cuts and wounds, further emphasizing the symbolism of asanoha as a protector against harm and evil. This is the most traditional and common colors associated with this pattern however because of the simplicity of asanoha, it has been produced in a variety of colors especially in kimonos. Its contemporary uses also include more variety of colors depending on its application

# ASANOHA

“ASA”- HEMP || “NO”- OF || “HA”- LEAF

PATTERN RESEARCH PROJECT

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