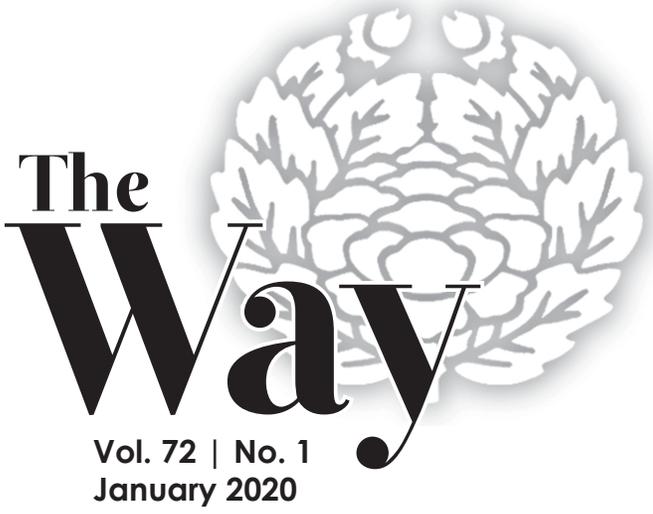


HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

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HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE | LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

TEMPLE SCHEDULE

JANUARY

- 12 10:00am Sunday Service
Discussion Group
- 19 10:00am Family Service
- 26 10:00am Eitaikyo Service
New Year Luncheon

FEBRUARY

- 2 10:00am Shotsuki Service
- 9 10:00am Sunday Service
Discussion Group
- 16 10:00am Family Service
- 23 10:00am Sunday Service

MARCH

- 1 10:00am Shotsuki Service
- 2 9:00am Betsuin Golf
Tournament
- 8 10:00am Sunday Service
Discussion Group
- 15 10:00am Spring Ohigan Service
- 15 1:00pm Spring Seminar
- 22 10:00am Sunday Service
- 29 10:00am Sunday Service

HAPPY NEW YEAR

2020

YEAR OF THE RAT



The Way



Volume 72 | Number 1 | January 2020

HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE • LOS ANGELES BETSUIN

New Year Greetings

Chōyū Ōtani
Overseas District Abbot,
Shinshū Ōtani-ha
(Higashi Honganji)



To all of our fellow followers in the overseas districts, I wish you a Happy New Year. It is with great pleasure that I can share the joy of welcoming the new year together

with you as a member of the sangha.

As you may know, I am to assume the position of Abbot of the Shinshū Ōtani-ha as of July 1 this year. In the past years since I was appointed as Overseas District Abbot, I have been given precious opportunities to meet many of you in overseas districts. From then on, while bearing those experiences firmly in mind, I will take on the new responsibility as Abbot to welcome all of you to the Shinshū Honbyō (our mother temple), the spiritual focus for us Shinshū followers. As we sit together with our hands in *gasshō* in front of the image of Shinran Shōnin, I will continue to reflect deeply on the spirit of his teaching which says “throughout the world, we are all brothers and sisters.”

In April this year, the 13th World Dōbō Gathering will be held at the Shinshū Honbyō. I sincerely look forward to seeing all of you again at this event to share the joy of listening to the teaching of the *nenbutsu* with you.

I wish to conclude my New Year’s message by expressing my wish that each of us will be awakened to the calling of the *Tathāgata*.

Thank you.

Bishop Hiroshi Tajima
Chief Administrator,
Shinshū Ōtani-ha
(Higashi Honganji)



I wish to first extend my warmest New Year’s greetings to all of you in our overseas districts. I would also like to express my deepest appreciation for the support and under-

standing you continue to give to our Sangha.

Since July last year, our denomination has been actively preparing for the 850th Celebration of Shinran Shōnin’s Birth and the 800th Anniversary of the Establishment of Jōdo Shinshū to be held in 2023. I have heard that the planning for many kinds of preparatory activities for the main event has begun in each district.

The purpose of holding those anniversaries is primarily to realize our debt of gratitude for our having been able to encounter the teaching. It is my heartfelt wish that this celebration will be an opportunity for us to deepen our appreciation that Shinran Shōnin was born into this world and that subsequently, Jōdo Shinshū, a most profound form of Mahayana Buddhism, was established.

It is no exaggeration to say that those events will play a crucial role in shaping the future of our denomination. I sincerely wish that all of us who have had the opportunity to encounter the teaching of Shinran Shōnin will reconfirm our commitment as members of

(Please see *TAJIMA*, page 4)

Rinban Noriaki Ito
HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Happy New Year to everyone! I hope you and your family were able to enjoy a wonderful year-end holiday and welcomed in 2020 in good health and spirits. On behalf of our temple staff and leadership, I thank you for the support you extended to us during the previous year.

It’s hard for me to believe this year will mark the 20th year since we entered the new millennium. Now firmly entrenched in my 70’s, it seems that a year passes so quickly. I am happy to be alive and to enjoy relatively good health. But as Shakyamuni Buddha reminded us, aging is one of the principal causes of our challenges. So, what I try to do is to think about what I *can* do now as opposed to regretting what I can no longer do when I was younger.

Because of the capable care of our
(Please see *ITO*, page 4)

.....
Ron Sato, President
Board of Directors

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

I want I to wish everyone a very healthy and prosperous new year and I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season.

I would like to thank all of you for your support to the Betsuin during the year. Thanks to the many volunteers that came out to help at our many fundraisers and events throughout the year. Many thanks to the property committee and gardeners in helping the temple to maintain its beauty and function. Thank you Rinban Ito, Rev. Hata, and our NAD ministers for your Dharma messages, assistance and advice during the year. To our Board of Directors, thank you for all

(Please see *SATO*, page 4)



Betsuin News



New Year Greetings

Rev. Peter Hata

As we look forward to 2020, is it just me, or did 2019 seem to just fly by in a blur? Many thanks are due to all of you who've worked hard through all the fundraisers, as well as in the behind the scenes, yet essential work of the temple's office staff. In this regard, I also want to thank my wife Diane for helping me with the regular task of maintaining the altar flowers.

There were many activity highlights, but especially significant to me as a Betsuin minister has been my involvement with our Dharma Seeds and of course, with the participants of the Wednesday Night Study Class for their continued enthusiasm. Not only do they contribute to our Dharma School, Coffee & Dharma Discussions, Sunday Discussion Group, and most recently, our well-attended Mindfulness Seminar, they've also helped me immensely in stimulating my own study of Buddhism.

Incidentally, for the musician in me, Summer 2019 had two especially memorable highlights, which were playing guitar with Kazue Funai and the Otani Gakuen choir, and also with my former Hiroshima bandmates at the Obon Festival. I hope to continue to contribute musically at the temple in the coming year.

Of course, as is true every year, the temple faces new challenges. These include the increasing ethnic and cultural diversity of the temple membership, as well as generational change. Actually, for the most part, these aren't entirely new, but meeting them arguably becomes more urgent each year. I hope that in 2020 we can continue our dialog and creatively address these challenges together.

What is always key is to continue to listen to the Dharma and look to it for guidance. It is the Dharma which energizes all our efforts on behalf of the temple.

Higashi Honganji
North America District
2020 Report

Happy New Year everyone. I hope that the year 2020 got off to a wonderful beginning for you and your family. On behalf of our staff, Revs. Masashi Fujii, Akiko Okada, Ryoko Osa, and Tomoyuki Hasegawa, I wish to thank you for your guidance and support during the previous year.

On June 30, 2020, the current Abbot Chōken Ōtani, the 25th Abbot of our Shinshū Ōtani-ha denomination will retire and will be replaced by the current Successor to the Abbot and Overseas District Abbot Chōyū Ōtani will assume the position as the 26th Abbot on July 1, 2020.

This year, we will be participating in the 13th World Dōbō Gathering to be held at our mother temple in Kyoto from
(Please see NAD, page 5)

Rev. Tomoyuki Hasegawa
Higashi Honganji USA Headquarters

Happy New Year! I wish to express my deepest gratitude for your continued support of the activities of the Higashi Honganji Los Angeles Betsuin, North America District, and Shinshu Center of America. I greatly enjoyed all the activities held last year. In April this year, the 13th World Dōbō Gathering will be held mainly at the newly-renovated Dōbō Retreat Center of our mother temple in Kyoto. I am looking forward to participating in the event together with you.

Even though our society has changed in many ways, we should always go back to the original spirit of Mahāyāna and study Shinran Shōnin's teaching. There is always everlasting truth in the teaching and people always seek the truth from the bottom of their heart. That's the tradition of Shinshū followers. Let's continue to walk the broad path of Mahāyāna together.

Rev. Masashi Fujii
Higashi Honganji USA Headquarters

Happy New Year! I am grateful to all of you for all of the assistance we received from you last year. My son who was born here in the United States started to walk. It amazes me everyday to see how much he grows. Thanks to you, we were able to spend a nice fourth year in America. I'd like to express my gratitude for your kindness and look forward to your continued guidance and support.

Rev. Akiko Okada
Higashi Honganji USA Headquarters

Happy New Year! I really appreciated your help over the past year. This year is my second time to celebrating the New Year in Los Angeles. I finally feel that I'm getting to be a resident of the United States. Thanks to your support, I went to many wonderful places in the United States last year. Those experiences gave me a new way of thinking. I look forward to having meaningful conversations in English with our members much more than I was able to last year and I am really happy to listen to Shinran Shōnin's teachings with all of you. I greatly appreciate your continued guidance and encouragement.

Rev. Frederick Brenion

*A New Year Thought or Two for
Twenty-Twenty*

It's still true what Zen Master Ryōkan wrote: "Last year a foolish monk. This year, no change." I'd like to be more than I am. Yet at the end of the day and the end of the year I am still the same. Now it is the start of a new day and a new year. Will it be any different? Will I be any different? Hope spring eternal, but then so does reality. I sometimes think that where hope and reality meet
(Please see BRENIION, page 5)

New Year Greetings

Fujinkai

A very happy 2020 New Year to all from Fujinkai! We thank you, temple members and friends, for helping to support Fujinkai activities in 2019, through your participation and generous donations. We started off 2019 with our annual memorial service in January, where we honored the memory of past members, followed by the general meeting and luncheon. In May, Fujinkai and toban members prepared the delicious chirashi otoki for the Tanjo-e service. We also supported the Little Tokyo Sparkle, volunteering to clean up the trash and graffiti in Little Tokyo. For Obon, as in past years, we depended on many members and friends to help prepare our popular kurimanju and osushi. In September, Fujinkai and toban supported the temple with a different vegetarian otoki, the salad bar, for the Hoonko service. In November, Rinban

Ito, Rev. Hata, and Rev. Imahara, along with Fujinkai, made the annual visit to temple members residing at Sakura Gardens, ICF, Kei-Ai, and Hollenbeck Palms, everyone enjoying these reunions with old friends. As the year drew to a close, Fujinkai supported the temple with year-end activities such as temple clean-up and mochitsuki. We welcome new members of all ages and returning members to strengthen ties and honor the legacy of our Issei and Nisei Fujinkai ladies. Please join us at our annual memorial service, meeting, and luncheon on February 9, 2020.



DHARMA SCHOOL UPDATE

Happy New Year from Dharma School!

We have been participating in the various temple year-end and New Year activities. Our favorites are mochitsuki and toshikoshi soba! During mochitsuki, we helped pound, shape, and of course, eat lots of yummy mochi. We love making mochi in many different colors! Yum! We also love slurping soba noodles on New Year's Eve!

We are all looking forward to learning more new things in 2020 and welcome you to join us for special talks from our ministers and activities twice a month! Please email hhtkids@gmail.com for a schedule of Dharma School weeks!

In gassho,
Dharma School



ABA

Happy New Year!!!

On behalf of the Adult Buddhist Association we would like to thank you for your continued support of the temple and ABA activities in 2019. As in past years the ABA was involved in the year-end temple clean-up on December 15 and our annual Mochitsuki on December 27. Also, thank you for those who supported the Hōonko Gathering in September. We were pleased that the Overseas District Abbott was able to join us for the Hōonko service and gathering.

In 2018 ABA initiated the Garden Maintenance Toban Project. Since then there have been periodic garden projects. Recently our members were asked to trim trees and install a drip irrigation system in the garden area at Central and Third St. Thank you to Mr. Maehara and Mr. Kawahira for their continuing efforts!

In anticipation of Obon, ABA members were involved in the planning, preparation, set-up, and take-down for our 2019 Obon Festival. ABA and

Sangha members began Obon preparation months earlier by trimming trees, fixing tables, repairing electrical outlets, applying for the many city permits and special parking, scheduling performance, arranging for LAPD and LTPSA security, and providing a new refrigeration system.

From 6:30 a.m. on Obon Friday morning through 6:00 p.m. Monday evening, members and support groups were responsible for setting up the electrical system, sound system, booths, yagura, and stage. By 6:00 Monday evening all of the above had been taken down and stored for Obon 2020. Thanks also to the NAD ministers who again assisted with moving tables, chairs, produce, plants, and supplies.

In late June, ABA members sponsored the ring toss booth at the West Covina Obon Festival. ABA members were also asked to assist in bingo, the shaved ice booth, and food preparation. In May, we hosted the annual Mother's Day breakfast. Also in May, a large "Team Higashi" joined over 300 members of Little Tokyo organizations,

(Please see ABA, page 5)

Jr. YBA News

*On behalf of Higashi Jr. YBA,
HAPPY NEW YEAR!!*

I am really looking forward to all of the great events that are going to take place in 2020. I am especially looking forward to meeting new people and making new friends in the Jr. YBA seminars. I am also looking forward to learning new things about Buddhism. So far the seminars I have been to have done a really good job at showing the importance of accepting differences and connecting with people in general. As a senior I am really hoping to make the most out of this year as I graduate and move onto college together with my other senior friends.

-Calvin, Jr. YBA member

LUMBINI CORNER

Happy 2020! We cannot believe how fast the year came to an end and another one has begun! We hope everyone enjoyed the winter holidays with family and friends.

In December, we had our annual Holiday program in the hondo. All of the classes sang holiday songs for their family and friends and we celebrated downstairs with refreshments and a visit from Santa!

Later in the month, the children had a chance to participate in Mochitsuki alongside temple members. This event is a fun time for the kids to experience a cultural activity and for our members to get to know the children and teach them how to make mochi. The kids all had a good time shaping and molding mochi, and of course, eating lots of it, too.

Each year, Lumbini strives to encourage its students to learn to their fullest abilities. With the support of a caring staff and caring families, the students are able to succeed each year and grow into the next.

On behalf of the Lumbini Child Development Center Staff and Commissioners, we would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a happy and healthy new year. Thank you to everyone for your generous support and donations for our teachers and cooking staff. We are looking forward to another successful year.

In Gassho,
Leslie Nicho, LCDC Director



(ITO, cont. from page 1)

gardening staff of Mr. Tad Kawahira, Mr. Hirokichi Maehara and also Mrs. Aiko Okamoto and son, Mickey, our property committee led by Steve Murata and Ted Oyama, and our maintenance manager, Benard Wallace, the temple continues to impress as one of the architectural highlights of Downtown Los Angeles. Although this year is our 44th year here, we continue to receive praise from the many guests that come to visit.

It's so nice that we now have an active Dharma School and Junior YBA program. We have been successful in including active younger members into our committees and even to our Board of Directors. Our religious committee meets regularly to shore up our present programs. Our program committee has started to be involved in community outreach programs on a regular basis to benefit those who are facing challenges in their lives.

I wish to thank our ministers, our office staff, our lay leadership, and our volunteers who continue to work hard to maintain our temple as a place where the teachings of Buddhism can be accessed.

I sincerely hope that 2020 will be a year filled with happiness and meaning for all of you and all of us. I look forward to continuing to listen to and to learn from the Buddhadharma together with all of you.

Gassho,
Noriaki Ito

(TAJIMA, cont. from page 1)

our denomination and take firm steps forward to deeply reflect on the main theme of this celebration, "Namu Amida Butsu—To Discover the Meaning of Being Born as Human Beings."

In closing, I wish to ask for your continued support and cooperation.

Thank you.

(SATO, cont. from page 1)

your advice and support over the past few years. Thank you Susan, Mika, and Nancy for your help and guidance in the temple's many functions.

This year the World Dobo Gathering is being held in Kyoto, Japan in April. I hope many of you will consider attending.

Again, thank you for all your support to both myself and the Betsuin.

Gassho,
Ron Sato, President
Board of Directors

Our deepest condolences

to the family and relatives of ...

Mrs. Chiyoko Namekata (97)
October 28, 2019

Mr. Thomas Tsutomu Masada (74)
November 27, 2019

Mrs. Fumiko Aoki (98)
November 27, 2019

Namu Amida Butsu

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SUBMISSION DEADLINE!

Submissions for *The Way* are due the 10th of each month for the following month's issue. Articles and announcements for our February / March 2020 Issue are due January 10th, 2020. Submissions may be subject to printing restrictions and staff approval. Thank you and we look forward to hearing from you!

20TH ANNUAL BETSUIN GOLF TOURNAMENT

The 20th Annual Higashi Honganji Golf Tournament will be held on Monday, March 2nd at the Via Verde Country Club.

The tournament will have a shotgun start at 9:00am and the fee will include green fee, cart, range balls, prizes, and a Western BBQ buffet. The Callaway System will determine the tournament's order of finish. In addition to what the fee covers, there will be special prizes announced during lunch.

This year's proceeds will go toward our youth programs and temple maintenance. You and others you know can support us by being a tee sponsor for the tournament. Tee sponsorships are \$125 per hole; Tournament sponsorships are \$1,500 and include a foursome of golfers, Gold level sponsorships are \$500, and Silver level sponsorships are \$300. If you would like any further information about the golf tournament or being a tee sponsor, please contact the temple office.

.....
(ABA, cont. from page 3)

businesses, and volunteers to clean-up the sidewalks, gardens, and store windows of Little Tokyo.

During the year, members were able to support most all of the temple events including services, funerals, tobans (work groups), charitable food banks, and special events. Finally, members were involved in many property repair and temple renovation projects including graffiti removal and the naijin exhaust fan project. These projects helped to significantly reduce our temple's maintenance expenses. This year we were "extremely" fortunate to have some of our new member's volunteer to help the "old guys." Please e-mail dkikeda@aol.com if you would be interested in joining us and supporting the above activities.

Thank you and we hope you had a wonderful Holiday season!

In gassho,
ABA

(NAD, cont. from page 2)

April 20~22. The theme of the gathering is "Namu Amida Butsu – To Discover the Meaning of Being Born as Human Beings." The keynote speaker will be Rev. Dr. Michael Conway.

In 2019, we continued our educational programs with local seminars in both Southern and Northern California, and had two retreats of our 2nd generation Dharma Seeds educational program in the Spring and Fall. The last session will be held in February of this year with members of both 1st and 2nd generation groups participating. We also had our Youth Hōshidan in June and our Hōonkō Hōshidan study tours to Japan with representatives from all of our temples. Being able to stay at the facilities of our mother temple in Japan have left a lasting impression on all who have participated.

We wish to take this opportunity to thank you for your support and participation in our district's activities. We ask for your continued support during 2020 as well.

As you know, at our office in Los Angeles, we also have the Shinshu Center of America (SCA) which is the educational arm of our English-speaking districts. Its role is to introduce the Shin Buddhist teachings to members and to

.....
(BRENION, cont. from page 2)

is where the Pure Land might be found. The land of accepting myself as I am, of being accepted as I am, accepting others as they are because they're in the same boat as me. In short, we're all in this together.

Shinran talks about us being fellow travelers. We walk, help each other up when we trip and fall, have good talks together. We may take in the view of what's around us, and take in the view of each other and ourselves as well. Sometimes we don't talk, we just listen. But we keep walking, even with a lot of rest stops these days!

So now we're walking together into 2020. I'm still a foolish priest, no change there! You may feel the same way. But when we see each other as we are. When we see ourselves as we really are, a bit of wisdom may yet pop out. We're getting

newcomers to our tradition. A major part of our work is to publish books on our teaching in English. Because of the cost savings, most of our books are currently in the form of digital publishing (eBooks). Currently we have books being sold on Kindle which is the popular bookstore on the Amazon website. Two books that were published during the past year are: *The Primary Object of Veneration for Shinran's Followers*, written by Rev. Kōtatsu Fujita, and *When We Entrust to the Long-Held Wish* by Rev. Daiei Kaneko. For all of the books available in both print and eBook formats, please go to our website, shinshucenteramerica.org. The books currently on Kindle are being sold at the affordable price of \$2.99 each. So they are easy to share with family and friends.

The important work of our temples, the North America District, and the Shinshu Center of America can only succeed with your support and encouragement. We ask for your continued guidance and support of the important work of sharing the teaching of the Nenbutsu with your family and friends, and with those who are yet unfamiliar with our tradition. Best wishes for a wonderful 2020.

Gassho,
Noriaki Ito
Bishop/Director

.....
real about ourselves. And maybe when we wise up we find a bit of compassion also for ourselves and each other too! I guess that's all I've got to say, and I guess even after this, I'm still foolish, no change. Walk anyway. Just keep on truckin' as they say!

Help The Way

The Way needs your help and welcomes your contributions. With the cost of printing and postage steadily increasing, we request your support in helping to make our newsletter available in the years to come. Please consider making a donation to *The Way* to offset some of the cost. Thank you for your continued support and readership.

Onegai-shimasu!

THE YEAR OF THE RAT

According to the Asian zodiac, 2020 is the year of the rat. Although generally despised in the West, the rat has traditionally been a highly respected animal in Asia. The Chinese thought highly enough of him, in fact, to give him first place in their animal zodiac, where he is declared to represent the beginning of things, or the first cause. According to Buddhist legend, however, the rat earned his lead-off position in the zodiac through typical craftiness and guile.

The story goes that when the Buddha lay dying, he summoned all the animals to his bedside to say farewell. The faithful ox got a head start and was leading the lengthy procession when the rat, scampering along, caught up to him and begged for a ride on his back. The patient, good-natured ox agreed to this. But when they reached the entrance to the pavilion where the Buddha lay, the rat suddenly leaped from the back of the ox and raced inside ahead of him, thereby becoming the first arrival at the

bedside. As a reward for such respect, the Buddha honored the rat with the first position in the zodiac.

People born in the year of the rat are noted for their charm. However, they are fussy about small matters and have a tendency to pinch pennies. When rat people want something very much, they will work hard for the thing desired. Because they are thrifty, they are able to save a great deal of money.

Although people born in this year can maintain an outward show of control, they are easily angered. Their value lies in the fact that they are able to control their discontent or anger. Small-minded as these people are, they are quite honest and ambitious and have a tremendous capacity for pursuing a course to its end. They love to spend money on themselves, denying themselves nothing, but they don't lend. They love to gossip, and because of this characteristic they are apt to have short-term friends.

The year of the rat is considered a

time of hard work and constant activity, but one that will assure abundant food for everyone. It is a year for steady gain, a little at a time, after the fashion of the rat, who is never idle, who is always seeking food, but who transports it a little at a time over the course of the day, never in large bulk. The rat year also stands for timidity and humbleness, a year in which everyone works steadily and patiently but remains humble about success. Because of the rat's proclivity for rapid multiplication of its species, his year also anticipates quick expansion in every field of human activity.



Happy New Year! Have a wonderful year of the rat!

(excerpted from *The Japanese Fortune Calendar* – Reiko Chiba, and *The Asian Animal Zodiac* – Ruth Q. Sun)

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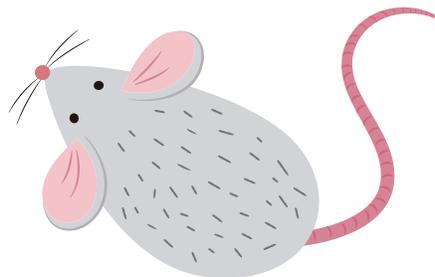
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Have you heard?!

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YOGA | WED 6:15pm
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FRI 6:30pm

JOIN US!

correction

In a previous issue of *The Way*, we inadvertently omitted the following donor. Our apologies to:

MEMBERSHIP DONATION

\$175 Ogimachi, Bunny (2019 Membership)

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