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# Ajar-Ajaren Simehuli Of Karo Tribe To Elementary Age Children

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Abstract. Ajar-ajaren simehuli are an oral tradition in the form of advice that is commonly given to children from an elementary age children. This article aims to examine the ajar-ajaren simehuli in the customs and religious rituals of the Karo tribe for elementary children in Serdang Village, Barusjahe Subdistrict, Karo District. The formulation of the problem in this research is what are the teachings of ajar-ajaren simehuli Karo people in Serdang Village, Barusjahe Subdistrict, Karo District, how ajar-ajaren simehuli are given to young children, and why the oral tradition of conveying ajar-ajaren simehuli is preserved. This study uses a qualitative approach with a research background in Serdang Village, Barusjahe Subdistrict, Karo District. This results of this study indicate that ajar-ajaren simehuli were entrenched for the Karo tribe community, including (1.a) mari man, ula perjat juma kalak, ula buet barang kalak, ngisahken si mbarenda, and mereken perembah, (1.b) ndahi kalimbubu mbereken kehamaten, (1.c) bujur, nggit nampati, elem-elem, motong rambai, and erpangir ku lau. Furthermore, (2) ajar-ajaren simehuli are given through oral traditions, exemplary attitudes, and cultural and religious rituals. (3) preservation of ajar-ajaren simehuli the Karo community begins with the family environment and also includes traditional, religious and government leaders believed to be guarding the ancestral messages that children need as a provision to 'wade-through' life.

Keywords. Ajar-ajaren Simehuli, Elementary Age Children, Karo.

Abstrak. Ajar-ajaren Simehuli merupakan tradisi lisan berupa nasihat yang lazim diberikan kepada anak sejak usia dasar. Tulisan ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji ajar-ajaren simehuli dalam adat istiadat serta ritual keagamaan masyarakat suku Karo bagi anak usia dasar di Desa Serdang Kecamatan Barusjahe Kabupaten Karo. Adapun rumusan masalah pada penelitian ini yaitu apa saja ajar-ajaren simehuli masyarakat suku Karo di Desa Serdang Kecamatan Barusjahe Kabupaten Karo, bagaimana ajar-ajaren simehuli itu diberikan kepada anak usia dasar, serta mengapa tradisi lisan menyampaikan ajar-ajaren simehuli tersebut dilestarikan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan latar penelitian nasihat luhur Orang Karo dalam ritual budaya dan keagamaan di Desa Serdang Kecamatan Barusjahe Kabupaten Karo. Adapun hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa ajar-ajaren simehuli membudaya bagi masyarakat suku Karo, meliputi (1.a) mari man, ula perjat juma kalak, ula buet barang kalak, ngisahken si mbarenda, dan mereken perembah, (1.b) ndahi kalimbubu mbereken kehamaten, (1.c) bujur, nggit nampati, dan elem-elem serta motong rambai dan erpangir ku lau. Selanjutnya, (2) ajar-ajaren simehuli diberikan melalui tradisi lisan, keteladanan sikap, dan ritual kebudayaan serta keagamaan. (3) Pelestarian ajar-ajaren simehuli bagi masyarakat Karo dimulai dari lingkungan keluarga dan turut menyertakan pemuka adat, agama, dan pemerintah diyakini sebagai menjaga pesan leluhur yang dibutuhkan anak sebagai bekal 'mengarungi' kehidupan.

Kata kunci. Ajar-ajaren Simehuli, Anak Usia Dasar, Suku Karo.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Ajar-ajaren Simehuli (Ginting: 2002) are moral advice and messages taught to children from an elementary age by the Karo's people. This is interpreted as an effort to educate children as early as possible as a provision to 'wade' the sustainability of his life (Landorf, Doscher, Rocco, 2008: 221-236, Harpe & Thomas, 2009: 75-85, Arbuthnott, 2009: 152-163, hägglund & Samuelson, 2009: 49). Moral advice (Zamroni, 2017: 241-264) and messages given to elementary age children in the form of oral tradition (Zuhrudin, 2017: 265-276), exemplary attitudes, (Suradi, 2018: 61-84), cultural and religious rituals that exist in the Karo community.

Oral tradition is the easiest thing for children to repeat. Because, the speech he is accustomed to hear becomes an additional 'vocabulary' automatically for his memory. The oral tradition in question namely mani man, ula perjat juma kalak pekpek nini kari nahendu, ula buat barang kalak pekpek nini kari kandu and ngisahken cerita si mbarenda. The Karo people themselves accustom this expression as an effort to train the social soul of children (interacting with others) and preventive action efforts (when children want to do something that is not appropriate).

In connection with that, exemplary attitude becomes the main *ajar-ajaren simehuli* given to elementary age children. *Ndahi Kalimbubu Mbereken Kehamaten* is an action that the Karo people give to children from the early child. This is based on the imitative attitude of children towards adults, especially in the family.

Family is the initial scope in which every child gets an education, (Rozana, 2018: 1-16) has an important role for every growth and development of children, especially in their golden age (basic age category of children). The role must be optimized in order to instill the values and principles of life in basic age children, as a provision for their lives.

The inculcation of these values is usually given in the form of exemplary attitudes, speech and actions (Ramdani, 2017: 28-37, Wening, 2012: 55-66). Because, primary children tend to be imitative of the world around them. For this reason, primary children are not merely educated in a family, they need experience, skills, and social interaction and then subsequently take responsibility for community development (Suneti, 2012: 243-258), in a broader scope, both socializing with peers in educational institutions, even in the community itself.

The need to interact with the world around them, making basic age children often come into contact with words and advice as moral messages needed by children. Moral advice and messages can take the form of oral traditions that are commonly given, as well as the practice of religious rituals that are followed by elementary age children.

Karo tribe society, as the majority tribe that inhabits Serdang Village, Barusjahe District, Karo Regency. For generations preserving oral traditions in the form of moral advice and messages to children from elementary age. This was done in an effort to carry out the customs of the Karo tribe, as well as religious rituals. In connection with religious rituals, there are similarities and differences in practice, because in the area there are 3 (three) religions that live in harmony together, namely Islam, Christianity, and Chatolicism.

Different religious rituals in their practice don't cause divisions, let alone disputes in social life in the village, but rather by preserving customs especially in the form of moral advice and messages, making children in the village live well by emphasizing tolerance towards the plurality that exists (Fitriyah, 2012) and side by side from the early child, without dividing up the fraternity as an Indonesian citizen.

Analyzing previous literature studies that discussed similar themes, *ajar-ajaren simehuli* were reviewed separately, including studies of cultural nobility in kinship systems, languages (Peranginangin & Perbawaningsih, 2016: 425-436), Karo arts (Gresia, 2017: 1-10), and Karo traditional's rituals (Suharyanto, *et.al*, 2018: 36-44, Surbakti, 2014: 95-107). Indeed, the cultivation of character from elementary age through *ajar-ajaren simehuli* is very important given to children. For this reason, it is important to further study *ajar-ajaren simehuli* in the form of language (oral-advice), traditions, culture, and religious rituals for children.

In the connection, there is a unique "empty space" for indepth study related to providing moral advice and messages for primary age children, especially in Serdang Village, Barusjahe Subdistrict, Karo District, which is summarized in the title: "Ajar-ajaren Simehuli of Karo Tribe to Elementary Age Children."

Therefore, the formulation of the problem in this research is what are the teachings of *ajar-ajaren simehuli* Karo people in Serdang Village, Barusjahe Subdistrict, Karo District, how *ajar-ajaren simehuli* are given to young children, and why the oral tradition of conveying *ajar-ajaren simehuli* is preserved.

### 2. METHOD

This study is focused on *ajar-ajaren simehuli* of Karo tribe in Serdang Village, Barusjahe Subdistrict, Karo District. This empirical research intends to examine the *ajar-ajaren simehuli* given by adults (especially parents) to children from an elementary age through oral, attitudes, and exemplary figure that are preserved as customs and become a part of existing religious rituals in the village. *Ajar-ajaren simehuli* equipped with children to speak politely and cooperate with others, and this supports the development of children's moral and religious values from the early child, therefore the use qualitative research approaches is suitable for use in expressing facts as empirical truth in this study (*field research*).

This research was conducted by observing and analyzing oral speech, attitudes, and exemplary figure given to elementary age children in the cultural rituals of the village Karo tribe community, as well as the village's religious rituals, both Islamic, Christian, and Chatolic to children from elementary age. Looking at the description above, a simple framework of the flow of *ajar-ajaren simehuli* in elementary children can be seen in the scheme below.



Figure 1. Ajar-ajaren simehuli

#### 3. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

## a. Ajar-ajaren Simehuli Karo Tribe Community

## 1) Oral Tradition

As for verbal moral advice and messages conveyed by the Karo people to children from elementary age are:

### a) Mari Man

Mari Man is one piece of advice (in the form of oral traditions) of the Karo people to everyone. Mari man itself means 'let's eat'. The phrase mari man is different from the usual expression when people want to visit home. If generally the owner of the house said to his guests 'What time did you leave home' or 'come in, please sit'. So in the tradition of the right Karo people, 'let's eat' (mari man). Thus, emotional closeness has been built since the initial arrival of guests.

This is in line with Rasid's statement when interviewed:

"Oe bang, mari man biasa kami ucapken sama orang lain, misal kam datang ke rumah bertamu. Maka yang biasa kami sampaikan itu bukan 'dari mana abang' atau 'sudah makan' karena yang kami bilang pertama kali ke abang pasti mari man bang." (Interview with Rasid Sidiq Barus, August 3, 2019, 17.22 WIB)

Typically, the Karo people are taught from the basic to say the phrase 'mari man' to anyone who visits the house. This is intended to establish a close relationship with everyone egalitarian. Even researchers when they visit are also 'treated' to phrase mari man as initial greetings. Like the phrase Matius Ginting, 'mari man lebe nak ku' (let's eat my child). (interview with Matius Ginting, August 4th, 2019, 08.00 WIB).

After eating together, Matius Ginting also explained that the prhase *mari man* is intended at to strengthen the emotional bond between humans, such as the following interview excerpt:

"kita ajak *mari man* itu maksudnya supaya antara yang punya rumah dengan tamunya akrab, kalau di kampung berarti antara orang kampung sini dengan pendatang, begitulah kira-kira maksudnya nak. Jadi, kalau makan bersama aja bisa, apalagi cerita-cerita dan bisa serasa keluarga." (Interview with Matius Ginting, August 4, 2019, 09.21 WIB).

It is understandable that *mari man* teach the Karo people not just to invite the guests in attendance, more than that how children form the basic are taught to strengthen the relationship in the oral tradition of the Karo tribe. Thus, a sense of kinship is built from the expression of *mari man* for anyone who builds relationship with Karo people.

# b) Ula Perjat Juma Kalak Pekpek Nini Kari Nahendu

Ula perjat juma kalak pekpek nini kari nahendu is translated roughly meaning 'do not stand on people's gardens, nini will to hit (Nini here means that is likened to a spirit that rebukes someone's (wrong) actions later on your feet.' This verbal advice takes the form of a prohibition aimed at primary children. This is intended so that children from the base do not carelessly step toward something that is not their right.

### c) Ula Buat Barang Kalak Pekpek Nini Kari Tanndu

*Ula buat barang kalak pekpek nini kari tanndu* means 'do not take people's belongings, *nini* hit your hand'. This messages or advice also takes the form of a prohibition on children from the early child so as not to take something that is not their right. Children are educated to protect their rights and not touch those who are not. Simply put, this category advice or *ajar-ajaren simehuli* teach children from the foundation to fulfill obligations and not take the rights of others.

### d) Ngisahken Cerita Si Mbarenda

Ngisahken cerita si mbarenda means to tell the stories of previous people to take lessons. The method of advising children with the stories of previous people is considered effective to children. This is like Jakaria Sembiring said when interviewed:

"Ngisahken cerita si mbarenda ini dimaksudkan agar anak-anak mengenal kisah-kisah cerita orangtua kita dulu-dulu bang. Mulai dari cerita yang baik-baik kayak pahlawan, orang-orang baik dari suku Karo utamanya, atau juga cerita-cerita yang buruk seperti anak durhaka. Tujuannya itu supaya anak sejak kecil udah paham orang-orang dulu, lalu anak-anak itu nanti pandai sopan santun, menjadi semangat belajar dan sukses seperti orang dulu, dan juga patuh sama orangtua bang." (Interview with Jakaria Sembiring, September 7, 2019, 16.22 WIB)

The above interview excerpts further emphasizes that the purpose of the advice by recounting past people is given to children of primary age as suggestions for the cultivation of *akhlaqul karimah*, learning motivation, and respect for older people.

#### e) Mereken Perembah

Mereken perembah is an expression communicated to a mother who has just given birth. The sentences that was delivered was enteguh kel pagi perembah kalimbubuman anak si enggo mbelin enda, ula bangger-bangger lampas mbelin. (Tarigan, 2012: 58) it means, 'be strong, carry a born child, don't be sick, so that it can grow big quickly.'

### 2) Exemplary Attitude

The exemplary attitude of the Karo community is given to children of primary age by inviting them to visit respected relatives. Efforts to exemplify this attitude are called *Ndahi Kalimbubu Mbereken Kehamaten* (visiting *kalimbubu* gives and shows respect).

Ndahi kalimbubu mbereken kehamaten usually held every holiday, religious holiday, and cultural rituals (year parties, etc.). Parents invite their children to visit relatives, be introduced and stay in touch so that children from the elementary age are smart to respect older people (Interview with Patuh Barus, September 7, 2019, 16.59 WIB).

The above expression of the interview confirms that the main purpose of exemplifying *ndahi* kalimbubu mbereken kehamaten in the tradition of the Karo tribe is to teach children how to respect elders, by visiting them (friendship), and educating children to be respectful to others.

### b. Customs and Karo Tribal Religious Rituals

#### 1) Customs

Ajar-ajaren simehuli in the customs of the Karo tribe to children from elementary age are:

### a) Bujur

Bujur is advice for the child to do good and if he is wrong he confesses. The same thing was written by S. Tarigan (2014: 152) "Bujur ertina ibas mehuli, ngaku lepak ibas la tengteng. Teridah ibas kuan-kuan keri gia min lau pola e, gelah kandi-kandina mehuli penangketken." When translated means 'bujur is a good attitude in the form of acknowledgement if it is wrong, because the Karo people believe as the saying goes even though the juice of the juice is gone, the place is at least what was returned to the beginning'.

### b) Nggit Nampati

Nggit Nampati is a generous attitude taught by the Karo community to children from elementary age. S. Tarigan (2014: 152) explain that "Nggit nampati ertina menahang ukur dingen megah pe i akap kalak Karo adi banci nampati ibas kegeluhan enda." Approximately the meaning, nggit nampati is a generous attitude for Karo people to be able to help others in life.

### c) Elem-elem

Elem-elem emekap ibas ngaloken perbahanen kalak si la bujur, pusuh kalak Karo mbages nuanken ugahna (Tarigan, 2014). The customs of the Karo people teaches children from an elementary age to be able to withstand and accept the treatment of others to him. Conversely, being able to do or reciprocate well to everyone.

## 2) Religious Rituals

### a) Motong Rambai

Motong rambai means shaving the hair. The hair-cutting ritual (shaving) is performed by the Karo community for every child born, whether Muslim, Christian, and Catholic. All three religions (Islam, Christian, Catholic) believe that shaving the hair of a born child is proof of gratitude for the child's birth into this world.

In addition to carrying out the ritual of *motong rambai* as a traditional belief in the tradition of Karo, the Karo people also believe in it as the implementation of *aqiqab* in Islam. This was stated by Serdang Village Islamic leaders when interviewed at Nurul Ikhlas Mosque:

"Jenda nakku, masjid kita sitik kel tiap desa lit sada-sada. Ni Desa Serdang awalnya pun tiga KK (kepala keluarga) yang Islam, itulah kami bangun sama-sama masjid ini. kalau untuk adat di sini kami sebagai kalak Karo lalap patuh mengerjakan pesta tahun, erpangir ku lau, ras motong rambai nakku. Tapi, kalau motong rambai itu serupa sama akikah kalau kita di agama Islam. Begitupun, untuk undang-undang keluarga dari agama lain (Kristen dan Katolik) kami bilang reh kam sesukut kerina lit kegiatan motong rambai." (Interview with M. Bino Barus, August 11, 2019, 13.14 WIB)

The interview excerpt confirms that the Karo Muslim community in Serdang Village, Barusjahe Subdistrict, Karo District believes that *aqiqah* is a form of gratitude for child birth, as well as in promoting it to every citizen, then to invite relatives and friends from other religions (Christian and Catholic) with the term *motong rambai*, because this is a hereditary culture of the Karo people.

Motong rambai for Christiany and Catholicism is a culture that continues to be carried out today. Likewise, the difference in its implementation in Christiany and Catholicism with Islam is the 'words' of prayers. Then, there are many similarities in the implementation of the ritual. This is as stated by the Christian and Catholic religious leaders of Serdang Village when interviewed.

Interview with Jastan Barus:

"Suku Karo nak, baik Kristen, Islam dan Katolik, sama-sama melaksanakan *motong rambai* kalau ada anaknya yang lahir. Karena, ini adalah budaya turun-temurun dalam adat istiadat kami. Kami juga dari Kristen biasanya juga mengundang agama Islam dan Katolik kalau ada jemaat kami yang *motong rambai*. Sebagai tebusan yang ada disebut *kitab Bible* kami ambil darah yang disembelih baru dimasukkan ke *pasu* baru darah dicelupkan tujuh kali di depan tabir." (Interview with Jastan Barus, August 12, 2019, 08.11 WIB)

This is consistent with the Christian contained in the following keluaran and imamat:

"... setiap yang sulung dari antara anak-anakmu haruslah kau tebus, dan janganlah orang menghadap kehadirat-Ku dengan tangan hampa." (Keluaran, 34: 19-20)

"imam harus mencelupkan jarinya ke dalam darah itu dan memercikkannya tujuh kali di hadapan Tuhan, di depan tabir." (Imamat 4: 17)

Interview with Swetta Ria Br Sembiring:

"Kita di Katolik menganggap semuanya adalah saudara, jadi kalau ada yang melaksanakan *motong rambai* maka kami undang *kerina* warga. Terus bedanya itu hanya doa yang diucapkan nak, kalau tujuannya sama-sama untuk syukur dipanjatkan kepada Tuhan." (Interview with Swetta Ria Br Sembiring, August 12, 2019, 13.44 WIB)

Based on interviews with Jastan and Swetta, it is understood that there is a similarity in the implementation of *motong rambai*, which is an expression of gratitude to God, by eating together, as well as prayers according to their respective beliefs so that children who are born get blessings from God in their lives.

### b) Erpangir Ku Lau

Erpangir ku lau means bath in orange water (purut's orange). This ritual is believed to provide good for those who carry it out, manifested as an expression of gratitude to God for healing or archieving a desire. This ritual is carried out by the Karo people for generations with a spesific purpose either by Islam, Christianity, or Catholicism.

The same thing was written S. Tarigan (2012: 38), "Nai-nai nari kerja erpangir ku lau enggo lit ibahan ninita. Seh pe asa jaman si gundari lit denga ibahan kerja erpangir ku lau, sinoria erpangir ku lau tentu lit sada-sada tujuanna." When translated, it means "the ritual of bathing lemon juice (purut) has existed since the time of our ancestors". To date, erpangir ku lau still implemented. Of course, the ritual has several purposes.

The purpose of Erpangir ku lau according S. Tarigan (2012: 39) namely:

- Pertama buang sial, gelah seh sura-sura. Lit enggo seh sura-sura sukut adi sinoria ibas kerja em sienterem ngidah kuga teremna kade-kade sukut enda. Masanai lit perang-perang nina musuhna ada bagohteremna kade-kadena labo pang kita musuhisa, em sada tujun erpangir ku lau.
- Peduaken, pepulung sembuyak, anak beru senina, kalimbubu ras kade-kade gelah ibas kerja e banci sempa kundul, jumpa ayo, man ras bagepe landek meriah.
- Peteluken, erpangir ku lau enda sada pesta budaya karo simehuli. Pepulun kerina keluarga, kai pe agamana pendahinna, adi sangkep enggeluh arus pulung secara adat karo, adi ertenah kalimbubu arus reh anak beru, kai pe dahinna idahi anak beru.

The above purpose means that the Karo people previously believed the ritual as an effort to 'throw bad luck', friendship and family gatherings, and are considered to be a 'cultural party' that contains a good moral message for all people who carry it out, especially educated to children of basic age, as an expression of gratitude to God.

- S. Tarigan (2012: 39) also explains the implementation of *erpangir ku lau* in *Kepercayaan Orang Karo Tempoe Doeloe*:
- Berngina enggo pulung kade-kade ibahan me sada kerja perumah begu tah pe ibahan sada persembahen man nininini ta si enggo mate. Arih anak beru senina ras sukut ku ga tata kerja ibahan wari sipagi-pagi tenang wari. (in
  the evening had been given the 'offerings' to the 'spirits' of the previous person. Anak Beru and Sukut
  carry it out on a sunny morning.)
- Enggo dung pangir berkat jabu sukut nari ku lau arakken gendang. Atur perdalan, arah lebe sukut senina kalimbubu gendang keluarga ras jelma sienterem. (if you have done so, then bathed or give a 'purut orange' to the river or running water accompanied by a drum. Stepping slowly and arranged in order, preceded by sukut, kalimbubu, and also the people).
- Seh ilau, ridi erpangir ku lau malir karina ridi sukut, anak beru, senina bage kalimbubu ras ise si atena erpangir banci ia ikut erpangir. (on arrival in the river, bathed with added 'purut orange' that is flowed by sukut, anak beru, saudara yang dihormati, and anyone who wants to drain water into a child's body is allowed).
- Dung erpangir mulih ku rumah, sukut arah lebe arakken kalimbubu ras anak beru. Ku rumah paluken gendang sienterem ikut arah pudi. Enterem singarak-ngarak seh irumah ibahan acara sukut ibahanna totona man dibatana ras begu-begu ninina. Toto em toto simehuli. (when finished, then go back home, in a sequence of sukut in front, followed kalimbubu and anak beru. Arriving home, the drum is played accompanied by others from behind. Other people who paraded made prayers taught by ancestors before. Of course, good prayers contain moral messages).

# c. Preserving "Culture" Ajar-ajaren Simehuli Karo Tribe to Elementary Age Children

Culture is the right way to minimize conflicts over all differences, both ethnicity, religion, and RAS. Each culture is clad with regional nuances to show the characteristics that are highlighted in accordance with the philosophy of a particular tribe. One of the cultures preserved by the Karo tribe to children from an elementary age is *ajarajaren simehuli*.

Ajar-ajaren simehuli are a typical culture of the Karo tribe in instilling noble values and attitudes in children from an elementary age in the form of oral expression, traditions of attitude, and also cultural and religious rituals. Oral tradition is intended as an effort to stimulate children to hear the good education from best sentences both prohibitations and orders. In addition, exemplary attitude becomes the main and important thing given to children in order to imitate the behavior exemplified by parents (adults).

Furthermore, cultural and religious rituals (Islam, Christianity and Catholicism) become something that needs to be preserved, as written S. Tarigan (2008: 179): "Pemerintah ta pe ermeriah ukur sebah isuruhna nge tiap-tiap suku melestariken budaya suku masing-masing. Maka erpangir ku lau, motong rambai, bujur, nggit nampati, ras elem-elem enda ibas kalak Karo perlu denga ilestariken tiap-tiap desa adi lit sukutna." The government in this case is seen as having a big stake in preserving cultural and religious rituals.

So far, the Karo tribal community has continued to preserve the culture of *ajar-ajaren simehuli* in their respective family. Futhermore, at the village, sub-district, district, regional and even regional levels, it is customary leaders and the government's share that can carry out cultural socialization, implementation, and optimization of preservation *ajar-ajaren simehuli*.

### 4. CONCLUSION

Ajar-ajaren simehuli are entrenched for the Karo tribe, including: (1.a) mari man, ula perjat juma kalak, ula buet barang kalak, ngisahken si mbarenda, dan mereken perembah, (1.b) ndahi kalimbubu mbereken kehamaten, (1.c) bujur, nggit nampati, dan elem-elem serta motong rambai dan erpangir ku lau. Then, (2) ajar-ajaren simehuli are given to children in the family and social life through oral tradition, exemplary attitudes, cultural and religious rituals. (3) Preservation of ajar-ajaren simehuli for Karo community starts from the family and also includes traditional leaders, religion, and government believed to be guarding the ancestral messages needed by children as a provision to 'navigate' life.

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