NAMOLUK ONOMATOLOGY: TWO CENTURIES OF PERSONAL NAMING PRACTICES

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MY CONCERN IN THIS ARTICLE is with personal names and related naming practices as they are found on Namoluk Atoll, located in the Mortlock Islands southeast of Chuuk Lagoon in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). Nearly fifty years ago, Ward Goodenough published a chapter titled "Personal Names and Modes of Address in Two Oceanic Societies" (1965), wherein he compared the naming practices of Romónum, Chuuk, FSM, with those of the Lakalai of New Britain, Papua New Guinea. Goodenough argued that every Chuukese individual was distinguished by a unique personal name, that these names were used in address, and that this convention compensated "for the suppression of individuality in Truk's [Chuuk's] social system. A person's name emphasizes his uniqueness as a person, and whenever anyone addresses him, his individuality is acknowledged" (1965, 273). Goodenough's observation about the singularity of Chuukese personal names receives general support from the Namoluk data, and the evidence for this will be provided below. The singularity of personal names in Chuuk and on Namoluk contrasts with the Vanuatu cases described in this set of papers by Lindstrom (2013) for Tanna and by Wood (2013) for Aneityum. In those places, "name sets" comprised of a fixed, limited set of names are "recycled" and passed on from one generation to the next such that the same names recur for different persons through time.

Drawing on kinship genealogies I collected during field research on Namoluk, on subsequent censuses I have conducted of the atoll's population,

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and on recent Internet communications with Namoluk people, I examine below the different patterns of personal names that have been used as these have altered over time.¹ In the process, I will comment on other aspects of naming, such as the bestowal of nicknames and baptismal names, the creation of surnames at the insistence of the colonial powers, and the recent use of unique self-ascribed monikers in social media, such as Facebook.

Naming and Identity

Following Feinberg (1983), I begin by exploring how a Namoluk person would answer the question "Who am I?" To begin with their response would be *ngang emen aramas*, "I am a person" and, more specifically, *emen mwáán*, "a man," or *emen chopwut*, "a woman." Our respondent would go on to indicate that he or she was a *chon Morshulok*, "Mortlockese"² and then more particularly a *chon Namoluk*, "citizen of Namoluk Atoll." As this person reflected on his or her identity, he or she likely would mention the village in which he or she resides (Pukos, Lukelap, or Sópwonewel); his or her *ainang*, "named matriclan";³ and possibly the particular *faal*, "canoe house," owned by his or her kinship group. Finally, he or she would provide the unique personal name that distinguishes him or her from all others in the Namoluk community. For example, a woman might be known as a *finen Pukos* (female resident of Pukos village), *finen Wáánikar* (of *Wáánikar* clan), from *faalen Falukupat* (attached to the canoe house named Falukupat), and have the personal name of Natiliren.

Names of all sorts (for persons, places, things, and so on) are called *iit* in the Chuukese language. To ask, "What is your name?," one inquires, "*Ifa iitom*?" Typically today, people's personal names are chosen by their parents or grandparents, although occasionally a name may be bestowed by some-one else. To give a name to—*itenngeni*—is an honor although sometimes an undeserved one. For example, I inadvertently named a newborn girl on the atoll during a visit there in 1995. My son's name is Kelsey, and in discussing his name with this girl's parents just after their daughter was born, I mentioned that Chelsea often was a comparable name given to females (although more recently Kelsey has become as common a girl's name as a boy's in the United States). I learned later that the couple chose the name Chelsea for their daughter.

The personal (or given) names used on Namoluk have undergone substantial change over the past 150 to 200 years (for more details concerning Namoluk ethnography, see Marshall 2004). These shifts in naming practices reflect larger events in the community's history, notably, four successive colonial governments and the late nineteenth century introduction of Protestant Christianity (for a cogent discussion of the interplay in any society among three basic elements of discourse-onomasticon, lexicon, and history-see Arno [1994] and Waterson [2012], who comments on "the political shifts that have transformed naming practices over the longue durée" for Asian societies). Spain was the initial colonial power in Micronesia (officially from 1886) to 1899), although that country had almost no direct influence on Namoluk. But when Germany supplanted Spain at the end of the nineteenth century, the outside world began to intrude on Namoluk in several ways: a German copra trader resided on the atoll for several years, a number of Namoluk men signed on as contract laborers to mine phosphate for German companies on Nauru and Angaur, German Capuchin priests brought Catholicism to the Mortlocks (but not to Namoluk, which remained a Protestant stronghold until 1949), and the first ethnographic research was carried out on the island by German scholars (see, e.g., Girschner [1912] and Kramer [1935]). The increased visibility of and contact with the German colonial enterprise was echoed in the adoption of German personal names for some community members born between 1899 and 1914. In the present set of papers, both Lindstrom (2013) and Wood (2013) comment on the introduction of biblical and European names on Tanna and Aneityum beginning with Christian missionization in the mid-nineteenth century, so this process of incorporating new names may be widespread in Oceania.

At the outbreak of World War I, Japan moved swiftly into the political vacuum created when Germany recalled its colonial officers to help defend the fatherland in Europe. At the war's end, Japan was given a League of Nations mandate over former German Micronesia, and by then Japan's influence in the islands already was profound. Japan sent numerous settlers to the main islands of Micronesia (e.g., Palau, Pohnpei, and Chuuk Lagoon), established primary schools throughout the region to teach the Japanese language, and bolstered the economy, among many other things. Shipping contacts with Namoluk grew substantially, and visits by Namoluk people to the administrative center in Chuuk became more common. More men than in German times signed labor contracts to work for the Japanese on Angaur, Pohnpei, and Satawan. Three employees of Nanyō Bōeki Kaisha (South Seas Trading Company) married Namoluk women and fathered children. One consequence of Japan's prominent presence was a substantial adoption of Japanese personal names by members of the Namoluk community, a practice that continues to a modest degree even today.

Following Japan's defeat in 1945, the United States became the fourth and final colonial power in Micronesia, first under a postwar military government and then with a UN Trusteeship. After the FSM achieved independence in 1986, the new country remained in Free Association with the United States. The strong influences of an American-style educational system, television and videotapes, the Peace Corps, and the freedom to travel, live, and work in Guam, Hawai'i, and the U.S. mainland have been mirrored in an ever-greater use of English-language personal names.

The Precolonial, Pre-Christian Period

This period preceded the establishment of Spanish hegemony over Micronesia in 1886, which is a year that approximates the early presence of Protestantism on Namoluk. In those days, Namoluk people had only a single name, usually one bestowed by a community member with a reputation for creativity in inventing new names. Ideally, each name was unique, although occasionally when a named child died young, its name might be recycled to a later sibling. Unlike on Anuta (Feinberg 1983, 30), Namoluk personal names are always gendered, and this was true even in the period before extensive contact with foreigners. These gendered names varied widely, and only occasionally could names be translated into other words (e.g., Langimaram, "heavenly moon"). Many female names began with Li- or Ine- or Na-/Ne- prefixes, all of which are gender markers.⁴ A few examples of these from the genealogies are Liairam, Likapin, Limich, Lirakum, Inechiu, Inefiol, Inemaleta, Inetaureng, Naiselia, and Necheng. Examples of other female names from that period that did not employ the above-mentioned prefixes include Chipenia, Elieisa, and Meira. Male names lacked gender marking prefixes, and some examples of these from the time before colonial control and the introduction of Christianity are Achutip, Emelios, Itamin, Mwachitem, Seladier, Soram, and Tok. Both Seladier and Soram are now used as surnames by people from the community (see below).

The Arrival of Christianity and the German Colonial Period (ca. 1880–1914)

During this period in the community's history, preexisting naming practices continued, but outside influences began to appear in the choices of some people's names. A few women acquired "foreign" names, such as Piula (Beulah), Mipil (Mabel), Toris (Doris), Nansi (Nancy), Roberta, Litia (Lydia), and Lois, and even more men did so. Among the "foreign" male names from this period are Agrippa (from the Bible), Ruben (Reuben), Thomas, Sam, Nason, Stan, Chochi (Georgy), and Kotlip, although my favorite is Sepelin from the German word *zeppelin*. While such names as these began to creep into everyday discourse, most people from this era continued to have names comparable to those from times that preceded much outside intrusion. For

example, women born in this period had such names as Inesukureng, Inouel, Limumwi, Naiforou, and Naile, and their male age-mates carried names like Aitofel, Pwochuk, Siwi, and Tiliol.

The Japanese Period from 1914 to 1945

During the Japanese colonial administration, a significant alteration occurred in Namoluk naming practices via an increased use of Japanese personal names for males and females alike. For Namoluk males born during this time, we have Fukumichi, Iachime, Ichiro, Iokichi, Isauo, Istaro, Kachuo, Kasio, Kichi, Kimuo, Kiyosi, Koichi, Kokoichi, Kotaro, Maketo, Mangkichi, Moteichi, Sachuo, Sapuro, Teruo, Tokoichi, and Tosio. Female names were equally influenced by Japanese examples, and on Namoluk they included Arieko, Arisako, Asako, Chieko, Echiko, Haruko, Harusang, Hasie, Iko, Insako, Isko, Kachuko, Kenako, Kiko, Kimiko, Kumie, Maruko, Misiko, Namiko, Nasiko, Natisiko, Nauko, Neruko, Rieko, Sichie, Simako, Simiko, Tamiko, Teruko, and Tesiko. The Japanese era in Micronesia also saw a continuation of use of indigenous names along with a smattering of biblical and German names intermixed with the Japanese-derived personal names just listed. So, for females from this time period, we find Pileter, Erewinta, Marisina, Liwik, and Ketterina but also Reikina (Regina), Mata (Martha), Erta, Marie, Ana, Kuechen (Gretchen), and Monika (Monica).⁵ Similarly, for Namoluk males, such indigenous names as Lipwei, Fitierung, Alingar, Aun, and Ienis occurred alongside biblical and German names, such as Joseph, Daniel, Esekiel, Rainer, Timoti (Timothy), Ifraim (Ephraim), Keor (George), Apiner (Abner), and Roy.

Post-World War II: American Colonialism and National Independence in 1986

World War II was a highly traumatic event for the people of Chuuk State. With one small exception that did no serious damage, Namoluk was not directly affected by the bombing and shelling that occurred elsewhere in Chuuk, but because of conscript labor in the run-up to war and to hardships endured as supplies became ever more scarce as the war dragged on, the community certainly was affected. With the Allied victory in 1945, the U.S. presence quickly began to influence Micronesia's people, with naming practices among those influences. But while American English personal names have now become common, Japanese names and even a few older indigenous names continue to be given to children, and some inventive new fashions have taken root as well.

Those members of the Namoluk community born after 1945 have acquired a wide variety of American English names. Female names of this sort include Alisha (Alicia; named after my mother, Alice), Angkela (Angela), Anita, Arlin (Arleen), Betty, Chelsea, Cindy, Dandy, Dorothy, Easter (who was born on Easter Sunday), Erika (Erica), Erna, Hana (Anna), Jina (Gina), Josfin (Josephine), Joslin (Jocelyn), Joyce, Julia, Julie, Katrina (Katarina), Keretsel (Gretel), Leslie (my former wife's namesake), Lillian, Linda, Lisa, Loreta, Makarita (Margaret), Maryjane, Matlita (Matilda), Mercy, Mona Lisa, Naomi, Perenta (Brenda), Rejoice, Rose, Rosie, Ruth, Sohana, Sosana, Susan, Susiana, Teiena (Diana), Teresita, and Urisila (Ursula). Male names from American English are also many and diverse: Andrew, Antonio, Apollo, Barry, Benjamin, Brown, Brusly (Bruce Lee; named after the kung-fu hero), Charles, Charlie, Chester, David, Elston (named after the best man in my first wedding), Emanuel (Immanuel), Enjoy, Erpet (Herbert), Fraity (Freddy), Francis, Francisco, Gabriel, George, Georgy, Henry, Jackson (after the rock star Michael Jackson), James, Jano, Jason, Jeff (Geoff), Jefferson, Jerry, Jimmy, John, Johnny, Johnson (after President Lyndon Johnson), Jolius (Julius), Joseph, Josua (Joshua), Judah, Junior, Kasnofa (Cassanova), Kasper (Casper), Larry, Lucky, Mac (my namesake), Mario, Max, Memory, Michael, Nelson, Noha (Noah), Patrick, Paulino, Peter, Pressly (after Elvis), Repeat, Rigen (Reagan; after President Reagan), Robert, Robinson, Smith, Stephen, Tobias, Walter, Wesley, Whiskey, Willy, and Xavier.

Several of these names require some comment to understand how they came about. Apollo was born on the day that the Apollo 12 moon rocket was launched. Lucky had a twin brother who died shortly after birth, and so he—the survivor—was the lucky one. Memory's father perished at sea before the boy was born when a canoe lost its course and drifted for many days. Repeat was born on the same day exactly twelve months after a previous sibling who died at birth, and so, naturally, he was a repeat! Robinson's father had just finished reading a classic comic book about Robinson Crusoe the day before this boy was born, hence the name. Whiskey's father had an affinity for drink and was often inebriated. And Xavier's name was taken from that of the Jesuit-run high school located on Wééné Island, Chuuk.

I mentioned above that Japanese personal names continued to be given quite frequently in the post–World War II years, and there are many examples of these. For girls, some are Aiko, Akieko, Akiko, Chimie, Eruko, Fichiko, Fisako, Fumie, Fumiko, Ikiko, Itiniko, Karumi, Kieko, Kikiko, Kosie, Maiyumi, Miako, Misiko, Nachiko, Naiako, Nasako, Risae, Risako, Sachiko, Sasako, Siako, and Simiko. For boys, some are Aichi, Aisauo, Akino, Eichi, Ioichi, Iosi, Iosta, Iotaka, Itoshi, Keichi, Kenchi, Kino, Kisauo, Koachi, Kokichi, Kokiu (Japanese for the number 6—he was the sixth child in his family), Koshi (Japanese for the number 5—he was the fifth child in his family and the older brother of Kokiu), Masaichi, Masasuo, Michuo, Misae, Reichi, Reisi, Resauo, Risauo, Simauo, Seichi, Soichi, Taichi, Taikichi, Tatasi, and Techuo.

Although fewer in number than either American English or Japanese personal names, certain indigenous names also continued to be bestowed on some post–World War II children. Here are a few examples of such names for females: Aita, Aketa, Andelin, Indaless, Leisita, Luretis, Machipen, Pilanis, Retein, Sterna, and Termotis. For males in relatively recent times, some are Akapito, Alaster, Amelong, Chechemeni,⁶ Kerat, Kilaiser, Sikiler, Swaiter, and Theophil.

The Past Quarter Century

Over the past quarter century since the FSM achieved independence and began a new political status of free association with the United States, patterns of personal names given to members of the Namoluk community have changed yet again.⁷ Japanese personal names have all but disappeared in this cohort of the community's population, and while numerous recognizable American English personal names have been chosen, many newly minted names have appeared that follow certain designs of their own. This is especially so for female names, as can be seen from the following examples: Kaikai, Nainai, Taitai; Erleen, Gladleen, Jaereen, Jefferleen, Joyleen, Kayreen, Marleen, Marleena, Mickleen, Redeena, Sheena, and Sueleen. (Both Gladleen and Jefferleen seem to be feminized versions of male names found in the Namoluk genealogies: Gladwin and Jefferson.) Other unusual recent female names include Abo, Aslin, Coolsy, Danty, Didy, Ilu, Jare, Jercy, Kesa, Ketary, Kayris, Kiara, Korea, Krishly, Lobo, Lovah, Mairenda, Melda, Mian, NiiAnne, Patsipa, Rensina, Rilanna, Savelyn, Siesta, Skani, Slova, and Teylyn.

This most recent cohort of Namoluk female names contains some that are familiar American English ones: Andrea, Audrey, Brianne, Carlina, Carly, Christine, Danielle, Genalyn (Jenna Lynn), Helen, Ivone (Yvonne), Jane, Jenna, Jessica, JoAnne, Joy, Joyce, Kayann, Kimberly, Laurie, Leah Ann (Leanne), Lulu, Madlyn (Madeleine), Makenzie (McKenzie), Merlyn (Marilyn), Myah (Maia), Renae (Renée), Roxy, Sasha, Serina, Siralyn (Sara Lynn), Sophia, and Victoria. Other recent female names are less familiar from the perspective of American English but still seem to have been influenced by connections to the United States. These include Diamond, Honesty, Kiana (Hawaiian influence?), Maja (her mother's name is Mary Jane), Melinani (Hawaiian influence?), and Tender. A couple of names appear to have simply been made up anew: Chitana and Nahvaihope. Three religious/biblical names are to be found—Lourdes, Maria Mari, and Salome—and while not biblical in the strict sense, the name Faith carries a religious message as well. Remarkably, only a single Japanese personal name is represented: Norie. Finally, a handful of what we might call "old-timey" Namoluk names also appear: Fenitom Chok (literally, "just under your name"), Ina, Jepetiom (literally, "your kick"), Leina, Lipi, Maramar (a woven flower garland similar to a Hawaiian lei), Mwele, and Weipas.

Male names selected in recent years include Adam, Alvin, Brendan, Bruce, Byron, Ceasar (Caesar), Clark, Daniel, Darwin, Ely (Eli), Erson,⁸ Glenn, Grant, Gregorio, Jake, Jason, Jude, Katson (his mother is named Katlita), Kayson, Kipson (Gibson), Randy, Ricky, Scott, Thomas, and Zachary, all of which are recognizable American English given names. Along with them come Keanu (after Keanu Reeves), Maverick and Texan (a bit of a Wild West theme?), Rocky (from the Sylvester Stallone movie), Xerxes (after the Persian king), and Greck (from the *Star Wars* movie). Twelve names seem to have been invented anew: Acetery, Ambely, Bayrus, Brokey, Dureng, JayRay, Jopete, Jumong, M-Chuo, Rino, Theno, and Tiwait. The lone Japanese personal name that occurs (Amansio) has been altered by the person who carries that name to Manxz. Elijah is the lone biblical name bestowed on a male youngster.

Other Aspects of Namoluk Names

A pattern that has emerged with considerable frequency after World War II is to give several members of a sibling set names that either begin with the same letter or have a similar sound. For instance, several siblings in one family are named Mike, Maikawa, Mac, Max, and Moria. In another family, the father's name is Anter, and the mother's is Kerna; one son is named AK (for Anter + Kerna), and some of the daughters are named Berna, Merna, and Terna. A brother and sister are named Daniel and Danielle. A man named Alexander named one of his sons Lexan, and a woman named Tomrissa named her son Thomas. Still other examples of this kind of name play are a foursome named Perenta, Peresenta, Perekita, and Pressly and the children of a man named Koichi who are called Keichi, Reichi, Kokichi, and Ioichi. The suffix -ita (which today indicates a female name) appears in the names of four full sisters: Konsita, Leisita, Telesita, and Ursita.

Those who are Catholic have a baptismal name given them by a priest, and in some cases, people go by both their given personal name and their baptismal name. To illustrate, a man named Pinno also was called Marino, a man named Mokita also answered to Markus, and another named Ienis was baptized as Simon.

Namoluk Naming

Nicknames are attached to people often as a consequence of a particular trait or occurrence. One little boy was called Rokom ("land crab"; *Cardisoma* sp.) because when he began to crawl, he always moved sideways like a crab. Another unfortunate was nicknamed Monki ("monkey") because it was felt that his face resembled one. I acquired the nickname Likeriker ("long-nosed butterfly fish") after spearing one of those on a spearfishing expedition with some teenage boys (the joke was on me, as no one in his or her right mind would spear such a fish, as they are merely skin stretched over bone and have no meat on them). One boy who was born mentally slow was nicknamed Sardine after the canned fish that have no head (the same name is applied to drunks who are said to act as if they had no head/mind/ conscience).

Names can be a source of humor, as when something that sounds like a person's name is mentioned. My then wife was teaching eighth-grade science when we lived on Namoluk, and one day she mentioned asteroids. The class erupted in laughter because two of the students therein had a relative whose name was Aster. Names can also be "laden," especially so in earlier times and perhaps somewhat less so today. For instance, it is considered extremely inappropriate to utter the name of a deceased person in the presence of her or his relatives. It is also very bad form to use the personal name of someone's opposite-sex parent in their presence. In fact, doing so can quickly lead to a fight, whether between two boys or two girls.

Beginning with the German administration, people were urged (and sometimes required) to have a surname following their personal name. Since in times past Namoluk people had no surnames, a pattern developed in which either one's father's name or one's father's father's name was taken as a surname. Until after World War II, such names shifted with each generation, but by the 1980s and perhaps a bit earlier, some of these became fixed as family surnames. Some examples of contemporary Namoluk surnames are Elieisar, Elymore, Lippwe, Reuney, Ruben, Samuel, Seladier, Setile, Soram, and Yechem. Note that all of these originated as personal names.

Internet Names

Finally, the Internet—and especially social media, such as Facebook—has provided an arena in which a new kind of personal name has blossomed. As with the Wampar practice of self-naming described by Bacalzo (2013), many Namoluk participants on Facebook have invented unique new names for themselves, and these online monikers may involve considerable creativity. A number of these self-attributions mix English and Chuukese. Here are a few examples: Wadkouz Araun Kamzaround Pwal, "what goes around also comes around"; Lien Stay-Look Chok, "girl who just stays and looks"; Nuff U, "enough of you"; and Loilam Kapu Chariot (Loilam—from Namoilam—is an alternate name for Namoluk; this seems to be joined with the Hawaiian word *kapu*, "keep out," and the English word *chariot*; the overall meaning is opaque). A young woman who resides in California goes by ChuuCali Eka (Chuuk + California). A young man masquerades as Rustie Smile. Along with a smile, another young man breathes: J-Ngasangas (*ngasangas* is the Chuukese word for "draw or emit breath"). One enterprising person has taken the name Ying Yang from the Chinese yinyang, "the interdependence or interconnection of seeming opposites." Still other online names derive solely from Chuukese words, and these include Mesemesepat Felux Mesepat, Lienlerong, Lipepennumong, Relukeisanop, Kon, Ina Remw Ngawan, Slyz Zoj, and JayJays JayJong. Each of these unique online names emphasizes individuality and distinctiveness in relation to others.

Conclusion

Namoluk personal names have never been fixed and have changed over time in response to outside influences and to people's own inventiveness. Now in the twenty-first century, Namoluk personal names remain in flux with new ones being adopted by the new generation. It is difficult to predict the future of personal names in the community except to be sure that they will continue to evolve, perhaps eventually in ways now found in Brazil, where names like Batman, Chiang Kai Xeque (Chiang Kai-shek), James Bond, Jimmi Carter, John Kennedy, Ladi Gaga, MacGyver, and Obama are among names of political candidates (*New York Times* 2012). Indeed, with some of the names noted above (e.g., Johnson, Keanu, Maverick, Reagan, Robinson, and Rocky), Namoluk people may already be moving in this direction. For the immediate future, however, we may expect to see an ever-greater adoption of American English personal names accompanied by a playful inventiveness that draws on creativity and a desire to bestow—as Goodenough put it nearly fifty years ago—personal uniqueness and individuality.

NOTES

1. I have carried out research with Namoluk people off and on since 1969 with support from various sources, including the U.S. National Institute of Mental Health, the U.S. National Science Foundation, the American Philosophical Society, the University of Washington (Department of Anthropology), and the University of Iowa (Faculty Developmental Assignment, Center for International Rural and Environmental Health, Arts and Humanities Initiative Grant, and Career Development Award). 2. This cover term refers to people from the set of communities who inhabit a string of islands to the southeast of Chuuk Lagoon: Nama, Losap, Piis Emwar, Namoluk, Ettal, Oneop, Lukunoch, Moch, Kuttu, Ta, and Satowan.

3. There were seven matriclans represented on Namoluk. Subsequent to my initial fieldwork there from 1969 to 1971, the last two members of one of these clans (Inemarau) died, so the atoll now has only six clans (Wáánikar, Katamak, Sór, Fáánimey, Souwon, and Sópwunupi).

4. Goodenough and Sugita (1990, 248) list a variety of feminine prefixes in traditional personal names, including Ina-, Na-, Ná-, Ne-, Né-, No, Nó-, and Neyi-. In the Mortlockese language spoken on Namoluk, the letter L is an allophone for N.

5. Both the -ina and the -ita suffixes indicate a female name.

6. This word means "remember" in Mortlockese, and the name was bestowed by his mother after his father died shortly before he was born.

7. I have obtained many of these names from a closed Facebook listserv of which I am a member called Falen Chon Namoilam.

8. The -son suffix appears to be a male name marker. With one exception (Lobo), American English names that end in -o also are exclusively male (e.g., Antonio, Gregorio, Jano, Mario, and Paulino).

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