

Essay Writing of Buddhas' Practice Incorporated



On Dust and Dirt --Centered on "Monks are Free from Dust and Dirt"

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I. Introduction

I have been a monk for many years, but I have not devoted myself to studying, so my Taoism has been abandoned, and my afflictions have not diminished. I am very ashamed. Today I thought, how to start from the root to make rapid progress on the path of practice? After being reminded by the kind mentor, I looked up the Tripitaka carefully, and saw the record in *Cheng-Tao-Ko:* " Cut out directly the root of it all, this is the very point of the Buddha-seal. I can't respond to any concern about leaves and branches." ¹So, I thought about what is the root, and what is the root of practice?

When I saw the volume 4 of *The King of the Foremost Shurangama* at the Great Buddha's Summit Replete with the Myriad Practices (Hereafter, it will be collectively referred to as "The Shurangama Sutra), it said: you must maintain your distance from the defilements of the manifestations of thinking and the emotional states of consciousness. Then your Dharma-eye will accordingly become pure and bright. And how can you fail to realize Unsurpassed Enlightenment?²

Only then did I realize what the mentor has always taught to "stay away from dust and dirt "so that you can directly penetrate the root, which is also the foundation of learning. Because the most fundamental point is the self-nature, and the self-nature is the supreme knowledge and supreme enlightenment. If you stay away from dust and dirt, you can achieve supreme knowledge and supreme enlightenment.

Therefore, this article attempts to focus on how monks can "keep away from dust and dirt" in their daily lives, in the hope that we can get onto the right track of practice as soon as possible and start practicing from the root, so that we can quickly "keep away from dust and dirt" and enhance the practice.

¹ Compiled by Xuan Jue: Cheng-Tao-Ko, Dazheng Store, vol. 48, p. 395.

² Translated by Paramiti: the Shurangama Sutra, Dazheng Store, Vol. 19, p.124.

This article is mainly based on the sutra literature and is divided into three chapters.

- (1) The definition of "dust and dirt".
- (2) The "dust and dirt" of monks. This chapter mainly focuses on the "dust and dirt" of "greedy for fame and fortune".
- (3) How to "keep away from the dust and dirt" in the daily life of a monk. This chapter is analyzed from three aspects.
 - 1. To explain in general how to "keep away from dust and dirt".
- 2. To analyze "keeping away from dust and dirt", mainly from the perspective that monks should keep away from "greed for fame and fortune".
- 3. The main point is to explain the "Five Views on Food Storage" and the "Four Immaculate Qualities" of a monk, which is to "keep away from dust and dirt". In other words, as a monk, in terms of clothing, food, shelter, medicine, how to achieve "keeping away from dust and dirt" and purify one's behavior.

The final conclusion part is mainly a summary of the previous chapters. It is hoped that we can practice from the root as soon as possible, so as to achieve "staying away from dust and dirt" in practice, get the pure Dharma eye, achieve supreme enlightenment, and increase Taoism.

II. The definition of "dust and dirt"

If you want to be "free from dust and dirt", you have to understand what is "dust" and what is "dirt", so let's see how it is defined in the scriptures.

In Volume 4 of the Shurangama Sutra, it is said, you must maintain your distance from the defilements of the manifestations of thinking and the emotional states of consciousness. Then your Dharma-eye will accordingly become pure and bright. And how can you fail to realize Unsurpassed Enlightenment?³ According to this passage, combined with the entire Shurangama Sutra, the Buddha's teachings: The body and mind of the five aggregates of all living beings (form, feeling, thought, action, and consciousness) are the fivefold delusions.⁴ The so-called "delusion" is the illusory appearance of the past, you are thinking.⁵ Because sentient beings consider delusion to be true and integrate it into their thoughts, the delusion becomes more and more muddy, and this is "dust". Simply put, this kind of "thinking" of sentient beings is "dust", and "thinking delusion as truth" is the root of "dust".

It is also recorded in volume 7 of *the Mahayana Precious Rain Sutra*: The Sramanas said: "It is greed, hatred, and ignorance, which are neither internal, nor external, nor in-between. If there is no thought and illusory distinction, greed, hatred, and ignorance will not be born." Based on this, we can know that "thinking" connects with affliction demons (greed, hatred, ignorance, arrogance, doubt, etc.) " If you continue to exert your emotional awareness and practice repeatedly, the "dust" of this "thought" will become more and more solid, and it will be difficult to remove. This is the "dirt", which "becomes consciousness after it has been firmly cultivated ", and it is the root of the "dirt".

³ Translated by Paramiti: the Shurangama Sutra, Dazheng Store, Vol. 19, p.124.

⁴ Translated by Paramiti: the Shurangama Sutra, Vol. 10, Dazheng Store, Vol. 19, p.154.

⁵ Translated by Paramiti: the Shurangama Sutra, Vol. 1, Dazheng Store, Vol. 19, p.108.

⁶ Translated by Sangha Brahma and others: Mahayana Precious Rain Sutra, Vol. 7, " Dazheng Store, vol. 16, p.282.

If one does not "recognize delusion as truth" and leaves delusion, emotional consciousness, and vexation, one can achieve "far away from dust and dirt" and purely relying on the Self-nature to feel all the clear and bright realms, this is the supreme wisdom and supreme enlightenment. Therefore, it can be summarized as follows: delusion, emotional consciousness, and vexation are "dust and dirt". The root of the "dust" is "recognizing delusion as truth", and the root of the "dirt" is "cultivation of consciousness".

In the *Theory of the Diamond Immortals*, Volume 5, it is said, "Dust is called either annoyance, or dye, or entanglement, or boundary, or nature, or dirt, or dust, or stain, and there are various names for it. ⁷This scripture classifies "dust" and "dirt" equally, that is, "dust" is "dirt".

It is also recorded in volume 25 of *The Theory of Abhidhambiposha*: "Furthermore, these three unvirtuous roots are called dust. For example, it is dust of greed, dust of hatred, and dust of delusion. It is like dust, dirt, arrows, fire, bayonets, and poisonous diseases, you should know that it is the same." ⁸ This scripture directly points out that greed, hatred, ignorance, and afflictions are "dust" and "dirt".

To sum up, without finely distinguishing the situation, we can define "dust" as: all living beings "recognize delusion as truth", and all the "afflictions" created by "delusion" and cultivated are called "dust", called "dirt".

⁷ Translated by Bodhiliuzhi: Mahayana Precious Rain Sutra, Vol. 5, " Dazheng Store, Vol. 25, p.831.

⁸ Translated by Bhutuovarman, Gong Daotai, etc.: The Theory of Abhidhambiposha, Dazheng Store, Vol. 28, p. 188.

III. The "dust and dirt" of monks

From the previous chapter, we can see that all living beings "recognize delusion as truth", all the "afflictions" created and cultivated by "delusions" are "dust". Specifically, in the practice of monks, how does the "dust" manifest itself? It is recorded in volume 113 of the *Great Treasure Accumulation Sutra*:

What is Samana Dirt? Kasyapa! There are thirty-two kinds of recluse dirt, and those who become monks should stay away from them. How about thirty-two? Desire is a kind of recluse, hatred is a kind of recluse, anger is a recluse, self-praise is a recluse, slandering others is a recluse, evil pursuit of profit is a recluse, Seeking profit because of profit is a kind of sramana, harming others is a kind of sramana, hiding sins is a kind of sramana, being close to lay people is a kind of sramana, being close to monks is a kind of sramana, It is a kind of sramana being willing to be happy with others is a kind of sramana, it is a kind of sramana to seek convenience for self-cultivation without gaining benefits, it is a kind of sramana to cultivate desire for others, it is a kind of sramana to be jealous of oneself, it is a kind of sramana to often seek others' faults, Not seeing one's own faults is a kind of Samana dirt, not persevering in getting rid of precepts is a kind of Samana dirt, ignorance of shame is a kind of Samana, lack of respect, arrogance and lack of shame are kinds of Samana, violating the twelve causal conditions is a kind of recluse's dirt, absorbing the limit view is a kind of recluse's dirt, not dying and not leaving desire is a kind of recluse's dirt, being happy in life and death, not happy with Nirvana is a kind of recluse's dirt, liking outside the Buddhist scriptures is a kind of Samana dirt, the five-hidden aggregates is a kind of Samana dirt, and the karmic retribution is a kind of Samana dirt. Disrespect on the Three Jewels is a kind of Samana dirt. Kasyapa! It is the name of Samana Thirty-two Stains.

If one can get rid of these defilements, one is called a Samana.⁹

This scripture lists all kinds of "dust" of monks in great detail, mainly including following afflictions, praising oneself and destroying others, greedy for profit, incapable of keeping the precepts, having no shame, not seeking liberation, not being able to dwell in the self-nature, not believing in karmic retribution, Disrespect to the Three Jewels, etc., are the "dust" of monks.

In the following, the author will focus on "greeding for fame and fortune" and further explain why "greeding for fame and fortune" is the "dust and dirt" of monks. In Volume 92 of *The Great Treasure Accumulation Sutra*, it says:

The bodhisattva who has just begun to be mindful of this kind of nurturing can give rise to greed, it can destroy righteousness and give rise to anger. It also makes one foolish when one thinks of its gains and losses. It also gives rise to jealousy, and it makes you stingy and deceitful in the homes of friends and relatives. It also creates love of taste and flattery, and it causes you to abandon the four holy species without shame. This kind of nurturing is forbidden by all the Buddhas, and the practice of it gives rise to arrogance and haughtiness. It can't even lead to meditation and liberation from samsara; it can make your mind withdraw from these fixations like a lustful woman. It can cause you to give up your wisdom and resolve and fall into hell. Hungry ghosts and animals. The realm of Yama. All the evil paths, therefore. This kind of lucidity is the same as that of the Tipitaka and Uttaraka, which fall into the evil path despite the Buddha's teachings. 10

It can be seen that "greedy for fame and fortune" is aggravating afflictions, which will destroy the good dharma and cause you to fall into

⁹ Translated by Shi Daogong: Great Treasure Accumulation Sutra, Dazheng Store, vol.113, p.639.

¹⁰ Translated by Bodhi Liuzhi: Great Treasure Accumulation Sutra, Dazheng Store, vol.11, p.523-524.

the three evil paths, which runs counter to true practice. "Greed for fame and fortune" is the "dust" of monks. It is also recorded in volume 91 of the *Great Treasure Accumulation Sutra*:

In the past, you became a monk in the Krakucchanda Dharma, and you believed that you had learned a lot and practiced the pure precepts, and you always had a heart of arrogance and haughty. You also practiced austerity and contentment, and in this virtue you still clung to it. At that time there were two bhikkhus who spoke the Dharma and had many friends and relatives who went to fame and fortune. You then, with cynicism, slandered and defamed these two bhikkhus for practicing lust. Then, when thou hast spoken of the grave faults of the Venerable Master's relatives and friends, thou hast made them doubtful and unconvinced, and they have not been obedient to the Venerable Master and have cut off all goodness. Therefore, because of this evil deed, you have been born in the hell of Abhinaya in the year 60,000, and from this death, when the Dharma is about to die in the last five hundred years of your life, you will be born in a poor home in the borderlands, destitute and hungry, slandered by others, forgetting the righteousness of your mind and not practicing the good Dharma, and having many difficulties in trying to practice. For a while, though wisdom and wisdom are illumined, they return because of karmic obstacles. After 500 years, all these karmic obstacles will be eliminated and you will be born in the blissful world of Amitabha Buddha, who will then grant you the Bodhi of Avalokiteshvara.¹¹

The bodhisattvas mentioned in this passage are those who, because of their "greed for fame and fortune", have committed slanderous acts against other bhikkhus in the past, which have led to infinite suffering. It is clear that for monks, "greed for fame and fortune" is a terrible "dust and dirt".

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¹¹ Translated by Bodhi Liuzhi: Great Treasure Accumulation Sutra, Dazheng Store vol.11, p.519-520.

IV. How to "keep away from dust and dirt" in the daily life of a monk

(I) A general description of how to "keep away from dust and dirt"

In the *Shurangama Sutra*, the Buddha said: The five skandhas are all delusions, and this world is also established because of delusions. ¹²All living beings are living in their own delusions, and recognize these illusory phenomena as real, not knowing that the self-nature is the real self, and they are firmly attached to their own delusions. So sentient beings chase after eating, drinking, and having fun all day long, paying a lot of suffering, and using a little blessing from creation to exchange for instant happiness, but this happiness cannot be obtained at all. This is how all sentient beings recognize the illusory as the real, lose themselves and pursue things, and go through the cycle of life and death. ¹³

As we have analyzed earlier, "thinking delusion as real" is the root of "dust", and " inculcating into consciousness" is the root of "dirt". Then, since all sentient beings regard everything as "delusion as true" and create according to "delusion", they are all creating in a reversed way. Therefore, as long as one develops a good habit of no longer "taking delusion as truth" and keeping oneself from following "delusion", one can achieve the purpose of "keeping away from dust and dirt", which is also the general rule. This is also the general rule. However, we need to be careful not to let go of the "stare" here. Because afflictions expand very quickly, if you relax your stare a little and follow your delusions, you will have a chain effect of troubles and create countless bad karma. This is cutting off the good karma and destroying everything in the subtle way, and even bringing terrible obstacles to the future.

¹² Translated by Pramita: Shurangama Sutra, vol.5, Dazheng Store, vol.19, p.125.

 $^{^{13}}$ Translated by Pramita: Shurangama Sutra, vol.1, Dazheng Store, vol.19, p.110.

The following examples will be given to illustrate how sentient beings "recognize delusion as truth" and follow "delusion", which increases the "dust". For example, in the world of couples, the woman said that she had gained weight recently, and the man said that she should exercise more to lose weight. After the woman heard this, she began to have delusions: The man dislikes me for being fat. Could it be that he has a new love outside and doesn't like me anymore? ... If the man doesn't say anything, and doesn't speak, the woman will think: This man doesn't care about me, so indifferent... If the man says, it doesn't matter whether you are fat or not, that's fine. Women will think again: who likes a fat woman, you are lying to me...This is how women "recognize delusion as truth", follow their own "delusion", integrate afflictions, and increase "dust and dirt" repeatedly. In fact, the man is just telling the truth, and the woman follows the "delusion" of that thought, thinking that there is something in the man's words, and exerts afflictions, creating bad karma right now, and destroying the relationship and karma between husband and wife. Therefore, many couples in the world are so close at first, but later become strangers, or even turn against each other. It is because they "recognize delusion as reality", recognize the body as themselves and real existence, follow "delusion", and destroy each other's condition.

Such examples of "recognizing delusion as truth", following "delusion" and increasing "dust and dirt" almost happen to everyone. If a woman doesn't follow that thought of "delusion" at the beginning, and doesn't think what the man said is meaningful, but just advises herself to exercise more to lose weight, then she won't follow the "delusion" to create bad karma, and won't increase the "dust and dirt", and will not cut off the good relationship between husband and wife. This is just like the example of playing Yan Ruo Da Duo listed by the Buddha in the Shurangama Sutra. The first time Yan Ruo Da Duo looked in the mirror, he realized that his head had no face and eyes and thought he was a ghost, so he ran wildly, which is "recognizing delusion as truth", following the first thought "Delusion".

All sentient beings "recognize delusion as truth", and on the basis of following the first thought of "delusion", they go to communicate with afflictions. If you are compatible with greed, and when you are in harmony with greed, you will continue to be greedy; When it is in conflict with greed, it will cause hatred; coupled with non-stop thinking, merging whatever comes to mind, repeatedly merging with afflictions, and at the same time exerting ignorance and artificiality of body, speech, and mind, this is repeatedly strengthening the "dust and dirt". "The process will inevitably bring endless bitterness to oneself.

This principle is also recorded in volume 4 of *The Shurangama Sutra*: You only need not follow discriminations about the three kinds of continuity of the world, beings, and karmic retributions. By cutting off those three conditions, the causes will not arise. Then the madness, like Yajna Datta, will cease by itself. Once it ceases, Bodhi appears. The supreme, pure, bright mind originally pervades the Dharma Realm. It is not something obtained from anyone else. Why, then, toil at cultivation making yourself bone-tired trying to gain certification? ¹⁴ The Buddha is warning: as long as you don't follow "delusion", bodhicitta will naturally appear, and you can "stay away from dust and dirt", and feel the pure and wonderful virtue inherent in the self-nature.

Also, in volume 51 of *the Flower Adornment Sutra*, it is said: "The wisdom of the Tathagata is everywhere. Why is it so? There is no sentient being who does not have the wisdom of the Tathagata, but they do not get it because they reverse their attachments with delusion; if they are away from delusion, all wisdom, Natural wisdom, and unobstructed wisdom will be present." ¹⁵If all living beings no longer "recognize delusion as true" and do not follow "delusions", they will be able to "meditate" themselves. After the "Meditation" comes down, the wisdom, merits, supernatural powers, and transformations inherent in the self can be awakened from the "Meditation". Just like the six pure merits and virtues

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¹⁴ Translated by Pramita: Shurangama Sutra, vol.4, Dazheng Store, vol.19, p.121.

¹⁵ Translated by Shicha Nanda: Flower Adornment Sutra, Vol.51, Dazheng Store, vol.19, p. 272.

mentioned in the "Master's Merit and Virtue" in the *Lotus Sutra* it is the original merits and virtues that are displayed after the root dust falls off through "meditation".

(II) A monk is free from the "greed for fame and fortune", that is, "free from dust and dirt"

Continuing the content of the third chapter, the following will analyze "staying away from dust and dirt " mainly from the point that monks should stay away from "greed for fame and fortune ". In Volume 91 of *the Maharatnakuta Sutra*, it is said:

If a Bodhisattva performs Dharma giving with a hopeless mind, does not hold on to the fruits of fame and fortune, but always proclaims the righteousness of the Dharma for all sentient beings, he or she will attain twenty kinds of benefits. What are the twenty kinds of benefits? They are right-mindedness, full wisdom, perseverance, dwelling in purity, enlightened mind, worldly wisdom, freedom from demons, less greed, no anger, and no ignorance. ... Maitreya! This is the bodhisattva who achieves the twenty kinds of benefits, who does not cling to the fruits of fame and fortune, who performs the most beneficial deeds, and who always speaks the Dharma for all sentient beings with a pure and hopeless mind. 16

From this scripture we can know: As long as you have no hope, don't be greedy for fame, wealth and nourishment, and preach the Dharma for all living beings, you will be able to achieve all the above-mentioned extraordinary benefits, and you will simultaneously subdue afflictions (as it is said in the scriptures: less greed, no hatred, nor ignorance), is also "away from dust and dirt". It is also recorded in the

¹⁶ Translated by Bodhi Liuzhi: Maharatnakuta Sutra, vol.91, Dazheng Store vol.11, p.521.

scriptures:

When a Bodhisattva practices Dharma with a hopeless heart, he does not pursue the retribution of fame, benefit and nourishment, and takes benefit as the most important thing. He often preaches the righteous Dharma for all living beings and can achieve twenty kinds of benefits. What are the twenty kinds of benefits? The so-called non-existent eloquence can arise now; the eloquence that has been born will never be forgotten; always practice diligently to attain Dharani; With a few functions, one can skillfully benefit countless sentient beings; with a few functions, all living beings will be respected; the body, speech, and mind will be pure and disciplined; surpassing all evil ways and fears... All difficult actions will be completed; Initiate diligent efforts to protect the righteous Dharma; Quickly transcending the ground of irreversibility; dwelling obediently in all actions.¹⁷

This sutra goes on to talk about the twenty extraordinary benefits that can be achieved by a hopeless mind, by not greedy for fame and fortune, and by speaking the Dharma purely for all sentient beings. As in the previous passage, it is clear that not greedy for fame and fortune, and speaking the Dharma purely for sentient beings, are simultaneously subduing vexations and "keeping away from dust and dirt". On the contrary, if one is "greedy for fame and fortune", even if one is preaching the Supreme Dharma, one is still nourishing one's own vexation with the merits of preaching, which is adding to the "dust and dirt". Therefore, to be free from "greed for fame and fortune" is to be "free from dust and dirt.

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¹⁷ Translated by Bodhi Liuzhi: Maharatnakuta Sutra, vol.91, Dazheng Store, vol.11, p.521.

(III) The "Five Views of Food" and "Four Immaculate Natures" of monks are "to keep away from dust and dirt".

The previous section dealt with the "dust and dirt" of " greed for fame and fortune" in the context of Buddhism alone. In the following section, we will discuss in detail how a monk's daily practice is to "keep away from dust and dirt".

It is written in the *Sutra and Precepts Almsgiving Ritual* that "The Buddha made it a rule for bhikkhus to keep the five views of food, if you distract your mind and talk, it is difficult to accept the offerings. You should keep the five views when accepting offerings.¹⁸

The Buddha made a rule: when monks receive food, they should "keep the five views on food". That is to think when eating: Is the merit you have cultivated worthy of the offerings of the Vegetarian Lord, and you should not eat for the sake of satisfying greed and other afflictions. When receiving food, it is like taking medicine, it is just to feed the body and achieve better Taoism. If you have not practiced meritorious deeds and still accept offerings, you will have to wear fur and horns to repay the debt of the Vegetarian in the future, and even bring disaster to the Vegetarian. ¹⁹It is also said in Volume 2 of *The Book of the Incense and Milk of the Vishnu Daily Use*: "If the five visions are preserved, a thousand pieces of gold can be easily transformed. ²⁰ It is clear that if a monk is not able to "keep the five visions of food" when taking food, he is increasing "dust and dirt"; if he can "keep the five visions of food", he can afford to eat whatever he eats, which means he is "free from dust and dirt".

¹⁸ Compiled by Ruxin: Sutra and Precepts Almsgiving Ritual, New Continuing Store vol.60, p.799.

¹⁹ Compiled by Ruxin: Sutra and Precepts Almsgiving Ritual, New Continuing Store, vol.60, p.799.

²⁰ Recorded by Shu Yujian: The Book of the Incense and Milk of the Vishnu Daily Use, New Continuing Store, vol.60, p.193.

It is also stated in Volume 5 of *The Mahayana Sutra of Previous Lives and Contemplation of the Mind-ground*:

What are the four immaculate natures? These are the four things: clothing, bedclothes, food, and medicine, which are free from greed, whether coarse, fine, or desirable. All bhikkhus and others! For what reason are these four actions called the nature of impurity? Zhiguang should know that the thirty-seven bodhichitta of the Buddhas and Tathagatas are all born from this. The Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha are always incessant and unbroken, so they are called the Four Immaculate Natures.²¹

In this sutra, the Buddha asked that monks should be free from greed in their daily clothes, bedding, food, and medicine, in order to have a clean and pure practice. The scripture also says:

A Buddhist monk always observes day and night as such, does not crave the five worldly pleasures, diligently practices without temporarily giving up, like a head on a rock, like saving a burning head, always repents of past sins, abides in the four immaculate natures, single-mindedly practices the twelve austerities, and subdues his mind like a chandala, such a Buddha is called a monk.²²

In conjunction with the previous passage, we can see that a monk who abides in the "Four Immaculate Natures" is "free from dust and dirt" in order to be called a true monk.

In summary, the practice of the Five Views of Food and the abiding in the Four Immaculate Natures is a daily practice for monks to "keep away from dust and dirt".

²² Translated by Pramita: The Mahayana Sutra of Previous Lives and Contemplation of the Mind-ground, vol.5, Dazheng Store, vol.03, p.313.

²¹ Translated by Pramita: The Mahayana Sutra of Previous Lives and Contemplation of the Mind-ground, vol.5, Dazheng Store, vol.03, p.313.

V. Conclusion

This paper first defines "dust and dirt": without subtle distinction, all the "vexations" created by sentient beings who "recognize delusions as true" and are cultivated by "delusions" are called "dust" and "dirt". Next, I analyze the "dust and dirt" of monks, which is "greed for fame and fortune". This is followed by a specific analysis of how monks can "keep away from dust and dirt" in their daily life: in general, they should not "recognize delusion as truth" and not follow "delusion" to achieve the purpose of "keeping away from dust and dirt". Specifically, we should stay away from "coveting fame and fortune", accept the "Five Views on Food Storage", and abide in the "Four Immaculate Natures". To do these things well is to "keep away from dust and dirt", and this is the focus of this paper.

Although this paper mainly analyzes how monks "keep away from dust and dirt", it mainly focuses on "food" and does not extend to clothing, housing, medicine, and even the details of every single thought, word and deed, how to think and act correctly. The evidence is not rich enough in this aspect, This is where the author's bottleneck lies, and I hope to work hard in the future to improve all aspects.

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