

# Context:

## Southeast Asians in California

Volume 11, Number 87, January, 1991

Folsom Cordova Unified School District  
2460 Cordova Lane,  
Rancho Cordova CA 95670  
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Judy Lewis, Editor

## Year of the Yáng

The Chinese, Vietnamese and Mien all follow the Chinese lunar calendar, and February 15, 1991, is the first day of the new year, *Year of the Ram* (or *Year of the Goat*, or *Year of the Sheep*, depending on the way *yáng* is translated into English).


















*Yáng* the way that Mandarin Chinese say 'sheep' or 'goat' and there is a Chinese family name for this character. However, there is also *Yeung* (Cantonese family name) and *Duong*, a Sino-Vietnamese name, but the character for those names has a meaning other than sheep/goat. The Mien also have a Yang clan (*Saeyang*), but it is represented by the character that in Chinese means 'yellow': *Wang* (Wong, Vang, Vong). The Vietnamese do not have 'Yang' as a family name, but the

(continues on p. 3)



On Lok Sam Restaurant,  
333 South Sutter Street,  
Stockton, CA 95203  
209 466-4561



	<b>Your year</b>	<b>Are these your traits?</b>	
	<b>Year of the Rat</b> 1948, 1960, 1972, 1984	• You are charming, fussy, and a penny-pincher. Only through love will you become generous.	
	<b>Year of the Ox</b> 1949, 1961, 1973, 1985	• You are quiet and patient until angered. You inspire confidence. You are also stubborn.	
	<b>Year of the Tiger</b> 1950, 1962, 1974, 1986	• You are courageous. Sometimes you are selfish. Though sympathetic, you can be suspicious.	
	<b>Year of the Rabbit</b> 1951, 1963, 1975, 1987	• You are fortunate and well-respected. Sometimes you are a daydreamer.	
	<b>Year of the Dragon</b> 1952, 1964, 1976, 1988	• You are healthy, energetic, short-tempered, and stubborn. You are honest and brave.	
	<b>Year of the Snake</b> 1953, 1965, 1977, 1989	• You are independent. You talk too much. You are popular; sometimes you trust the wrong people.	
	<b>Year of the Horse</b> 1942, 1954, 1966, 1978	• You are quiet and wise and like to dress up. You help other people but tend to overdo it.	
	<b>Year of the Sheep</b> 1943, 1955, 1967, 1979	• You are gentle in your ways. Sometimes you are pessimistic. You are a very cultured person.	
	<b>Year of the Monkey</b> 1944, 1956, 1968, 1980	• You are a genius, but you are not steady. Though clever and skillful, you can be impatient.	
	<b>Year of the Rooster</b> 1945, 1957, 1969, 1981	• Only sometimes are you fortunate. You work hard, but you often take on too much.	
	<b>Year of the Dog</b> 1946, 1958, 1970, 1982	• You have a deep sense of loyalty and duty. Your tongue is sharp, but you keep secrets well.	
	<b>Year of the Boar</b> 1947, 1959, 1971, 1983	• You are brave and can do anything you decide to do. You have few friends, but they last for life.	

恭  
禧  
發  
財





**New Year's Here**

*New Year's here!  
I wear a flowered hat,  
I wear a flowered dress,  
And eat a big "year cake".*

新年到了

新<sub>一</sub>年<sub>二</sub>到<sub>三</sub>了<sub>四</sub>，  
頭<sub>一</sub>戴<sub>二</sub>花<sub>三</sub>帽<sub>四</sub>，  
身<sub>一</sub>穿<sub>二</sub>花<sub>三</sub>袍<sub>四</sub>，  
口<sub>一</sub>喫<sub>二</sub>大<sub>三</sub>年<sub>四</sub>糕<sub>五</sub>。



	<p><b>YANG</b></p> <p>sheep; goat</p>	
<p>Because of its mild and gentle nature, the sheep (羊) is a fitting symbol for meekness. Its pictographic representations take on well-balanced forms. Early versions show frontal views of the head; later modifications fill in the horns, ears, legs and tail. When combined with other components, the tail is often left out: 羴.</p>		
		

Sheep/goat/lamb expressions in English:

- make *sheep* eyes at him
- may as well be hanged for a *sheep* as a *lamb*
- separate the *sheep* from the goats
- to get his *goat*
- in like a *lamb*, out like a lion

Hmong do. In Hmong *yang* (*yaj* or *yaa*) translates as 'sheep', as in Chinese; however, Hmong has a different word for 'goat': *tshis*.

In Chinese *yáng* refers to the group of animals that contains both goats and sheep. The goat is *shan yàng* or 'mountain sheep', and the other is *mien yáng* or 'woolly sheep'. There is no special word for male (in English *ram*) or female (*ewe*); nor is there a different word for sheep that is eaten (*mutton*). In English, a baby sheep has its own word (*lamb*), but in Chinese, it is 'child-sheep' or *yeu-yáng* or *yáng-tsai*.

From Chinese come these idioms containing the sheep/ goat character:

yáng zhì hu pí  
goat substance tiger skin

*yáng*

*a goat in tiger's skin*

wáng yáng bu lǎo  
lose sheep repair pen

*shan yàng*

*mending the fold after losing the sheep  
(better late than never)*

Hmong say:

*mien yáng*

qí lù wáng yáng  
forked road lose sheep

Muab luag toj yug yaj  
Muab luag tais rau kua-ntxhai.

*a sheep going astray on a forked road (the impossibility of finding the truth if one goes in the wrong direction)*

take—others—mountain—raise—sheep  
take—others—bowl—put—rice-soup

*Hmong do not have a homeland.*

Saeyang, Saewang

## A Story About Sheep for the Year of the Sheep

Another new year is almost here. According to the twelve animals of the Chinese zodiac, this is the Year of the Sheep.

For the Chinese, the sheep symbolizes good luck, and represents gentleness and meekness. Several history stories and folk stoies have sheep in them, for example, "Su Wu Tends Sheep" and "Losing the Sheep on a Forked Road".

In addition, several nicknames of people and places contain the character for sheep. The Eastern Han scholar Jen Yu was nicknamed the "Skinny Sheep Doctor", and the city of Canton is also known as the "City of Sheep", or "The City of Five Sheep".



表，溫和在羊年。羊在中國人的觀念中，象徵吉祥的動物。

二歲生宵來說，是「羊」。

將次「辛辛」，是「羊」。

結到來辛辛，民國十九年即。

# 羊年說羊的故事

國都歧路。蘇武牧羊。此等事，一。

故事，也。有許多傳。

沒有一得高祖劉邦。

一個夢，天見他作了一。

一隻羊，夢見他把羊。

角和尾巴，都切掉了。

劉邦醒來，不知這夢。

好是不安，醒來不知這夢。

訴他，「羊」字去頭。

去尾，「羊」字去頭。

字嗎？這是象徵他。

後漢天子。稱王。成。

甄宇是漢時官。

名甄宇，字士。

到冬時，光武帝。

敬表示對博士的。

有羊，就賞賜。

大家有小羊，有肥瘦。

都，據說，羊年。

五羊，各一個。

還從此以後，大。

稱廣州為「羊城」。

五羊，各一個。

仙顏，每。

仙顏，每。

仙顏，每。

亂成一團。

甄宇，字士。

差愧他瘦。

其對武帝，知爭吵。

事並對甄宇，知爭吵。

博，事並對甄宇，知爭吵。

Taken from the monthly newsletter for teachers of Chinese students in English speaking countries.

## The Goat Who Could Not Be Tricked

A farmer raised a flock of goats in his pen. The wild wolf, who liked to eat goat's meat, thought many times about getting into the pen, but the goats had closed it tightly and there was no way he could do it.

One night the wild wolf put on farmer's clothing and disguised himself as the goatkeeper, thinking he could trick the goats into coming out. The wild wolf walked over to the pen and knocked on the door.

"Good little goats," said the wild wolf in a tiny little voice while pinching his nose, "see how fresh is the newly mown grass in the field! Quick, open the pen and I will take you there to graze."

When they heard the wild wolf say this, many of the young goats wanted to go with him. Then there was an old goat who said, "Get away from here! You evil wolf! You thought that by disguising yourself as the goatkeeper you could trick us? The goatkeeper wouldn't take us to graze in the middle of the night. And we can tell from your voice that you are not the goatkeeper, but the bad wild wolf."

### Moral:

The old goat in this story had a cold, clear mind. He could distinguish between good and bad and could think on his own. He could tell that the phony wearing the goatkeeper's clothes was the evil wild wolf and wasn't fooled. The old goat's method of distinguishing between good and bad can enlighten us.

Tung Chung-shu, *Chinese Fables Number 2004*. Taipei: The Overseas Chinese Library, 1985.

## The Monkey Judge

There was a wolf who, while looking in the forest for things to eat, fell accidentally into a hunter's trap. No matter what he did he couldn't think of a way to escape, so he began to yell,

"Help! Help!"

Just at that moment there happened to be a sheep passing by. Through his tears and sniffles the wolf cried, "I beg of you! Kind sheep! It doesn't matter if I die, but my poor children will starve to death!"

The sheep said, "No way! After I've saved you, you'll eat me."

The wolf said, "I swear to you, I will not harm you."

The sheep couldn't stand the wolf's persistent pleading, so he used a rope to pull the wolf from the trap.

After the wolf was free, he wanted to eat the sheep.

The wolf said, "It is natural that the sheep be eaten by the wolf. Consider yourself dead."

Crying, the sheep said, "I'm angry at myself for being tricked, and I don't want to go along with it. There is a monkey over there. We can ask him to judge the matter. Mr. Monkey! Mr. Monkey! Come over here a minute!"

After he had heard what the wolf and the sheep had to say, the monkey said, "You both have good arguments, but I don't see how a single sheep was strong enough to pull a wolf from the trap. Why don't you act it out once again, so that I can watch and then reach a decision."

So the wolf again jumped into the trap, and the sheep prepared to save him with the rope.

"You still want to save him? Why don't you let the ungrateful creature wait for the hunter's rope!"

After the monkey had spoken, he and the sheep left together.

### Moral:

No matter what style this story takes, it has a soft-hearted animal who saves a wolf, after which the wolf wants to eat him. Fortunately they run into another animal, who uses a clever plan to take revenge on the wolf. This story tells us at least three things. First, ungrateful people will always be punished. Second, you can't be kind to evil people. Third, when you run into trouble you have to use your mind.

Ban Mae Sot, November 30, 1990. Pua District, Nan Province, Thailand.  
Woman and village children outside a house, talking to the the videocamera.

*Riam Vaaj*

Of the many Hmong villages we visited in Northern Thailand, Ban Mae Sot made an impression on me because there were so many children anxious to learn new things—they came as a group to watch this visitor. The village school went as far as sixth grade, and after that, these children would have to live in another town to study more.

Pak Klang villagers are Hmong, Mien, T'in, and Karen. They each try to earn a living—to obtain cash to buy things at market. The Mien do silverwork, T'in and Karen weave baskets, and the Hmong make long batik panels. In one day, a Hmong batik-er could make a complete 4-meter section, including the dyeing, peeling the wax, and drying. One piece sells for 100 baht, equivalent to \$4.00.

*Lue will present at the Southeast Asia Education Faire on March 2, 1991—he'll show more about the villagers he met. See page 9.*

Ban Pak Kang, November 29, 1990. Pua District, Nan Province, Thailand.  
Woman drawing batik designs in wax, for eventual sale to the tourists and Thai traders.

*Lue Vang*

From

*Creative Conflict Resolution: More than 200 Activities for Keeping Peace in the Classroom K-6*

William J. Kreidler, Scott-Foresman, 1984.

About teaching tolerance:

“Merely presenting information about ethnic or minority groups, for example, seems to effect little or no change in student attitudes. On the other hand, contact with ethnic group members in a positive and cooperative context does seem to improve attitudes.

There is evidence, too, that children who are more sophisticated in such cognitive skills as problem solving and concept formation are less likely to exhibit prejudiced attitudes and behavior.

Also, research indicates, with striking regularity, that people who feel good about themselves and have strong healthy self-concepts are much less likely to be prejudiced or intolerant than others.

Whether or not people hold intolerant or prejudiced attitudes often depends on the prevailing attitudes in the group to which they belong.

## Activity

### *Talking to Yourself* (elementary)

Draw a flow chart on the board:

1. *What's going on?*
2. *What's the truth?*
3. *Why did they say that?*
4. *How do I feel?*
5. *What will I do?*

Tell the students: When someone “puts you down”, it helps to talk to yourself, following these steps in your mind.

Walk the students through an example like the following:

1. *Barbara called me a fat liar.*
2. *The truth is that I am a little heavy, but I'm not a liar. I told her the truth.*
3. *She doesn't want to hear the truth right now. It upsets her, so she wants to upset me. She feels better putting me down.*
4. *I feel a little hurt, but I'll survive. I know I'm truthful.*
5. *I'll walk away and play with some other kids.*

(Use puppets with younger children.)

Taken from Chapter 8: Teaching Tolerance.

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Mien  
New  
Year

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## California on the Move: Creating Strategies for the 90s

is the theme of the twenty-second annual conference of California Teachers of English as a Second Language (CATESOL). This year's conference will be held at the Santa Clara Convention Center and Doubletree Hotel, April 11-14, 1991. Featured topics of the more than 150 presentations, workshops, speakers, and panels are Reading and Vocabulary, Cultural Diversity, ESL in the Workplace, Learning Styles and Strategies, and Whole Language. Up to two units of academic credit are available through San Jose State University. For further information, contact Kara Rosenberg, (415) 493-1236 or (415) 858-0367.

## *Prisoner in Vietnam*

Asia Resource Center  
PO Box 15275  
Washington, DC 20003  
202 547-1114  
\$12.50 (includes shipping)

*Prisoner in Vietnam* is the story of Marc Cayer, a Canadian voluntary worker who was captured during the Tet Offensive of 1968, marched north to Hanoi, and released five years later in February, 1973. His story—translated from French by Stuart Rawlings—is full of a non-combatant's insights about people, prison, Viet Nam, and the war.

## *Immigrant America: A Portrait*

A. Portes and R. G. Rumbaut  
Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.

Topics include: immigrant origins, settlement patterns, ethnicity, economic adaptation, political participation, mental health, and language acquisition.

## New at the SEACRC

- 2601-5 Rearing Children in America (video: Lao, VN, Hmong, Engl)
- 2615 A Life Apart (Boyes, Piraban)
- 2616 Hmong Voices (Boyes, Piraban)
- 2619 Golden Triangle: Frontier and Wilderness (Yang)
- 2625 Political Struggles in Laos (Gunn)
- 2629 SEAn Tribal Groups and Ethnic Minorities (Cultural Survival Proj, Harvard)
- 2630 When Heaven and Earth Changed Places (Hayslip)
- 2655 The Russians in America (Eubank)
- 2656 The Ukrainians in America (Kuropas)
- 2657 The Koreans in America (Patterson)
- 2658 The Mexicans in America (Pinchot)
- 2659 The Armenians in America (Avakian)
- 2660 The Chinese in America (Jones)
- 2662 The Brocaded Slipper...(Vuong)
- 2672 The Challenges of the Hmong Culture: A Study of Teacher, Counselor, and Administrator Training... (Walker)
- 2683 Dara Reads Lao 4 (Luangpraseut)
- 2695-2704 Math, Cambodian, Levels 1-5 (IRC)
- 2705-7 Science, Cambodian, Forms 1-3 (IRC)
- 2708 Physics, Cambodian, Form 4
- 2709 Physics, Cambodian, Form 5
- 2710-13 Reader, Cambodian, Grades 1-4 (UNHCR)
- 2728 Boat to Nowhere (Wartski)
- 2733 Moving Mountains (video: Mien)



For information about the SEA Faire, call (916) 635-6815.

Very tentative schedule (use this to get an idea of what will be offered and who will be presenting—the actual order will be somewhat different)

Hmong women: changing roles— May Kou Vang	World of Difference— activity (Cynthia Estey)	Cham history & culture— Hassan Poklaun	Education in Cambodia, 1990— Konthal Cheng	Vietnamese for English Speakers: Names— Nguyen Dinh Hoa	2nd Language Writing: Focus on VN Learners— Chuong Chung	Refugee & Immigrant Numbers and Trends	Bilingual Education Handbook— Clara Chapala	QEP: Parent Involvement Program— Tom Williams
Learn Hmong in 1 Hour—Annie Jaisser	Wendy Walker	Cham Music— Hassan Poklaun	Roam Vong (Cambodian Folk Dance)— Mory Ouk	Amerasians: Spec. Prob. in Educ— Mary Nguyen	Images that Speak (video)— David Gilbert	Armenians & Ukrainians— Salpy Ghazarien	Jeffrey Munks	Sheltering Regular Sec. Content Classes— Sue Rocha
Thai Hmong villagers 1990 (slides)— Lue Vang	Wendy Walker (repeat)	Teaching Southeast Asia— Eric Crystal		VN Reeducation Camp Detainees	Intro to "Tale of Kieu"— Nguyen Dinh Hoa	Sacto's Soviet Refugees— Panel	Communication in a Multicultural Setting— Huynh D. Te	ESL student produced video (Hmong folktale)— Steve Moore
May Kou Vang (repeat—in Hmong)	Annie Jaisser (repeat)	Moving Mountains (Video)	Samsara (video)— Ellen Bruno	Mary Nguyen (repeat)		English as a Common Language— Khamchong Luangpraseut	Sue Rocha (repeat)	Setting up a parent literacy program— Dusty Ward

Exhibits, displays, things for sale:

Laotian Handcrafts Center of Berkeley, Tran Dac (Vietnamese water color), Billy Chou (Chinese calligraphy), People of the Far Mountains (photo exhibit)—Eric Crystal, 3 Hmong ladies—paj ntaub (stitchery), Lincoln Title VII, Washington Title VII, Southeast Asia Community Resource Center.

Lunch by Andy Nguyen's Restaurant.

# 7th annual Southeast Asia '91 Education Faire '91

• Saturday • March 2, 1991 • Sacramento City College •

## Tết Customs

### Tết

Tết Nguyên Đán is the lunar New Year Festival and it is the most important Vietnamese holiday. Tết is the celebration of the beginning of spring as well as a new year. It is the time for family reunions, exchanging gifts, best wishes and the beginning of a new year.

Literally, Tết Nguyên Đán means the first morning of the first day of the new period. Officially, it marks the beginning of a new year on the lunar calendar. In reality, it is a friendly, festive, family holiday. Painstaking care is given to starting the new year out right, since it is believed the first day and the first week of the new year will determine the fortunes or misfortunes for the rest of the year.

In order to start the New Year right and set the best precedent,

Vietnamese houses are painted and cleaned. New clothes are purchased for the first day of Tết and old debts should be paid, and great care is taken to avoid arguments. Families exchange visits. The first visitor to the house on the first morning of Tết is very important. Particular care is taken to arrange in advance to have the visitor be rich, happy, and prestigious.

The holiday is also observed by a

family visit to the church or pagoda to pray for good fortune and happiness. A sprig of the yellow blossomed *hoa mai* is used to decorate the home. Tết officially lasts for seven days and ends with the *lễ khai hạ* ritual during which the *cây nêu* is taken down.

### Lễ Táo Quân

The Feast of the Household Gods falls on the twenty-third day of the twelfth lunar month, the last month of the year (January 20 to February 20 on the Western calendar). This holiday marks the day on which the chief guardian spirit of the kitchen returns to heaven to report on the activities of the family. A new spirit is then assigned to the family for the coming year to replace the previous one. On the day of the Lễ Táo Quân, each family pays tribute to the kitchen god. This includes burning sacrificial gold paper and offering a carp for him to ride on his journey to heaven.

### Lễ Giao Thừa

The transition hour between the old year and the new year is one of the most important times of the Tết holidays. Giao Thừa is the time when a family ushers out the spirits of the old year, a ritual called Lễ Trừ Tịch. It is especially important to give a warm welcome to the Spirit of the Hearth, Táo Quân, who has been to visit the Jade Emperor. Drums, gongs, and firecrackers announce the hour of Lễ Giao Thừa.

### Cây Nêu

A bamboo pole become the New Year's Tree when it is stripped of all its leaves (except a tuft on the top) and decorated with red paper. It is planted outside the house for the duration of the Tết holidays to ward off the evil spirits while the household is unpro-

Girls wearing the áo dài of the south.  
Drawing by Halinka Luangpraseut, *Dara Reads Lao 3*.





Áo dài of the north. From  
Nguyễn Thị Nhuận, editor:  
*Tám Cám*.

Brocade with an embroidered dragon was originally reserved for the Emperor. High-ranking mandarins wore purple, and blue was the color worn by lower-ranking mandarins.

1991 is the Year of the Sheep—*Nv̄m Nam Dương* or *Nv̄m Mùi*—and Giao Thừa will arrive at midnight as February 14 becomes February 15, 1991.

(Taken in part from *Hoi Tet '89*, published by the Asian Yellow Pages, San Jose CA)

tected by the Spirit of the Hearth.

#### Câu Đối

A literary art form of Chinese origin is used to convey good wishes during Tết. Câu đối means “sentence pair”, and is a specialized kind of poetry. The two sentences match in tone pattern and meaning—overall meaning as well as individual word meaning.

#### Áo Dài

Áo dài means literally “long dress”, and is the national dress of Vietnam. For women is a contoured full-length dress split to the waist on each side and worn over black or white loose fitting trousers. There are many variations in color and collar design. Originally, the áo dài was loosely tailored with four panels, two of which were tied in the front; that style is now typical of north Vietnam (central Vietnam also has its own variation of the áo dài). The men also wear the áo dài, but it is knee-length and more loose-fitting.

#### Câu Đối Tết

Gió Mùa Xuân, Mưa, Hợp Thời  
wind-season-spring,-rain-just in time

Gió hòa mưa thuận, tiết xuân làm  
t/ưng và tươi thêm ơn huệ của đất.  
wind-soft-rain-gentle,-weather-spring-make-  
more-fresh-more-gratitude-from-soil

Thầy nghiêm trò cẩn, trường học mở  
và chỉ rõ cho biết đạo thường của  
người ta.  
Mr.-teacher-strict-student-respect,-school-  
open-and-show-clearly-for-know-behav-  
ior-proper-from-person-other.

*Just as the spring rain and breezes bring  
forth bounty from the soil,  
A teacher's discipline and guidance  
develops each student's potential.*

(From Lạc Hồng, *Xuan Kỳ Ty* 1989)



**Community  
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2460 Cordova Lane,  
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**Make payable to Folsom Cordova USD/SEACRC—**

- #S8801 *Handbook for Teaching Hmong-Speaking Students* Bliatout, Downing, Lewis, Yang, 1988. \$4.50 (carton discount for lots of 58: \$3.50)
  - #S8802 *Handbook for Teaching Khmer-Speaking Students* Ouk, Huffman, Lewis, 1988. \$5.50 (carton discount for lots of 40: \$4.50)
  - #S8903 *Handbook for Teaching Lao-Speaking Students* Luangpraseut, Lewis 1989. \$5.50 (carton discount for lots of 42: \$4.50)
  - #S8904 *Introduction to the Indochinese and their Cultures* Chhim, Luangpraseut, Te, 1989. \$9.00 (carton discount for lots of 32: \$8.00)
  - #S8805 *English-Hmong Bilingual Dictionary of School Terminology* Cov Lus Mis Kuj Txhais ua Lus Hmoob Huynh D Te, translated by Lue Vang, 1988 \$2.00 (no carton price)
  - #S9006 *Vietnamese Language Materials Sourcebook* Huynh Dinh Te, 1990 \$2.00 (no carton discount; one copy free to educational institutions or student associations)
- Add California tax if applicable. For orders under \$30.00 add 1.50 per copy shipping and handling. For orders over \$30.00, add 10% shipping/handling. If you wish UPS for quantity orders, please request it.
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- \_\_\_ #R007 *Mong-English English-Mong Dictionary (Xiong)* \$20.00
- Add applicable tax. Add 2.00 per item shipping/handling up to \$40.00. Over \$40.00, 10% s/h.

**Make payable to Lue Vang,**

PO Box 423, Rancho Cordova  
CA 95741-0423.



*Grandmother's Path,  
Grandfather's Way* (Vang &  
Lewis, revised printing 1990)

**\$14.95**, plus \$2.00 shipping/  
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**Context:**

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