

## DISTINGUISHED ABORIGINES OF INDIA

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**The Jarawa people of the Andaman Islands are known as Great Andamanese people and the major tribes of islands. Great Andamanese people on Strait Island are still depends on hunting, fishing and gathering for survival, other tribes found in Andaman islands are Jangil, Sentinelese and Onge.**

In many parts of India there exist, as is well known, rude and even savage tribes, differing widely in manners, customs, religion, and not unfrequently even in language, from the great body of the civilised inhabitants. People in this state of society are found only in hilly or mountainous districts, more or less inaccessible to conquest, and by their comparative sterility holding out little temptation to conquest and occupation. They are never seen in the fertile and well-watered alluvial valleys of the great rivers, which, on the contrary, are inhabited by civilised nations, however differing among themselves in manners and language. Linguists and craniologists have invented a theory to account for this state of things, which supposes the rude mountaineers to be the sole aborigines of India, while it imagines the civilised inhabitants to be intrusive strangers, who in a remote antiquity invaded India, conquered it, and settled in it under the imposed names of Aryans for Northern, and Turanians for Southern India. This view appears to me utterly groundless, and the object of this essay is its refutation.

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In the first place, then, to suppose so great and fertile a region of the earth, and one consequently so favourable to the promotion of an early civilisation, to have been within the historical period destitute of any other original inhabitants than the few rude tribes now confined to its least favourable localities, until it came to be peopled by immigrant strangers from remote countries, is contrary to what is known to be the case in all other great portions of the globe. For my own part, I am satisfied that both the mountaineers and the inhabitants of the open plains and valleys are alike natives of the soil and of the same race, allowance made for such varieties of type as are found to exist in other large regions of the earth, as for example in Europe and in Western Asia. With such allowance, a common character distinguishes the people of India from all the other races of man just as complete as that which distinguishes the European, the Chinese, and the Malayan race. The Hindus in person, and more especially in physiognomy, may be fairly described as Europeans with a complexion more or less black. In intellectual and moral qualities they are peculiar and distinct from all the other races of man, and their peculiarity is developed in the institutions which have sprung from it, so widely different from those of all other races of man placed under similar conditions of physical geography.

But wholly independent of the argument to be derived from the physical and mental peculiarities of the Hindus, the utter impossibility of the great mass of the people of India being the descendants of remote strangers will appear transparent when we consider the conditions under which an immigration of remote strangers must have taken place, and those under which their settlement must have been effected. No one even ventures to conjecture when or how the so-called Turanians, supposed by the theory to have been of a Turkish or Mangol race, came to invade Southern India, and to form the forefathers of the present civilised inhabitants of that region, who bear no likeness whatever in features, person, form, or colour, to their imagined ancestors. But the Aryans, supposed to be the ancestors of all the people of Northern India except its mountain tribes, are asserted to have emigrated from some part of what is now Persia, and the event to have taken place some thirty ages ago. Let it be seen, then, how an invasion from Persia to India must have taken place. From the nearest point of Persia to the nearest of India, there intervene ten degrees of longitude, or as the crow flies about ten hundred kilometers, but to this must be added the windings of a mountainous road, if there was a road or even a path at all.

The emigrants must have taken of the characters of migratory shepherds in possession of horses, oxen, sheep, and camels, and they would consist chiefly of cavalry. They would have to fight, as all their successors have had to fight, all the way to India through hostile and warlike tribes of barbarians.

The emigrants must have been an army, or, at all events, an armed multitude subject to a rude discipline. Like all armies, rude or civilised, the women would from necessity be few, and the few would not be of the class which contributes to the increase of population. The Aryan emigrants would certainly not have invaded India unless they had heard of its wealth, for they could have no motive in invading a country without wealth to plunder, and which is the same thing a country without any other inhabitants than the rude mountaineers called by the theory the aborigines. The plains and valleys of India must at the time of this remote emigration have been inhabited and cultivated by Hindus who had already acquired a considerable measure of civilisation. The invaders would have found them no more difficult of conquest than did all their historic successors in the same enterprise. The conquerors arriving without families would necessarily intermarry with the Hindus, and in four or five generations their descendants, in conformity with the known laws of the commixture of races, would not be distinguishable from them. Such has been the course followed by all conquerors in all ages and countries. The Turks, the Persians, and the Afghanis who have continued to make conquests in and to establish themselves in India itself from the end of the tenth to the beginning of the eleventh century and down to the middle of the eighteenth, followed this indispensable course, and their descendants are now but rarely to be distinguished from the native Hindus. It has been the same with the Jews, the Syrians under the name of Nestorian Christians, and the Arabs, who have formed peaceful settlements in India. In all these cases, the adventurers came to seek their fortunes in India, and reaching it by difficult and tedious voyages, they came, at least for the most part, without their families, and intermarrying with the native inhabitants became in a few generations not distinguishable from them. Hence we have the descendants of Jews, Syrians, and Arabs, as black as the Hindus they are living among. The only exception to this rule is found in the Persian emigrants who, a thousand years ago, emigrated from Persia after its invasion, conquest, and conversion by the Arabs, settling in the

western part of India. These alone were accompanied by their families, and steadily refusing to intermix with the natives of India, they continue the same Persians they were when they quitted their parent country; a result arising from the same cause that Anglo-Americans are English as well on the western as on the eastern side of the Atlantic, namely, that the emigrants consisted of both sexes, and that with almost imperceptible exceptions they declined intermixture with the native inhabitants. In all emigrations the males far exceed the females in number, and when the adventurers have to fight their way, the latter must be a mere fraction. Such is the case even in modern emigration, when a voyage to America can be performed with safety and convenience in a few weeks, and even to the Antipodes in a few months. Thus in the annual migrations from our own country, the men are to the women, children included, in the proportion of two to one.

The great mass of the people of India consisting of its civilised inhabitants are Hindus with a few inappreciable drops of foreign blood in their veins, and the supposed aborigines are also equally Hindus without any foreign blood. The difference between them is one arising from physical geography. The inhabitants of the plains and valleys have increased in civilisation and in numbers owing to the auspicious conditions of their local position, while the mountaineers have continued to be rude and few from the unfavourable nature of theirs.

The wild tribes of India are chiefly distinguished from the civilised nations by adventitious or supervenient characters, such as manners, language, and religion. Now and then they are found to speak a patois of the languages of their more civilised neighbours, indicating encroachment on the part of the latter, but more frequently they speak peculiar languages of their own. They have not adopted the religion of the Hindus, but follow their own gods and their own superstitions. In their social condition there is much diversity arising from differences of opportunities, a few being little better than savage hunters, while the majority have made considerable advances in civilisation. As to physical form, they partake of the general Hindu type, and differ no more from it than one nation of the civilised people of India does from another, than does, for example, a native of Bengal from a native of the Punjaub, or than does a Kashmerian from a Tamil of Southern India.

The general accordance of the wild tribes in the Hindu type is, indeed, admitted even by those writers who have adopted the hypothesis of their being the only aborigines of India. Among these is Colonel Dalton, who has so accurately described the hill tribes of the Central Plateau of India under the general name of Kols, an abusive epithet given to them by their civilised neighbours, the people of Bengal, and which embraces several distinct tribes speaking different languages. I take as examples two of the most considerable and most characteristic of these tribes, namely, the Mundas and the Oraons.

They are the most compact, the purest, most powerful, and most interesting division of the Kols, and in appearance decidedly the best looking. In their erect carriage and fine manly bearing, they look like a people who have maintained and are proud of their independence. Many have features of sufficiently good cast to entitle them to rank as Aryans, high noses, large but well formed mouths, beautiful teeth, and the facial angle as good as in the Hindu race. The figure, both of the male and female, freely displayed by the extreme scantiness of their costume, are often models of beauty, but this description applies only to the people of the highly cultivated part of the country who have seldom been subjected to severe privation, and who generally fare right well. The inhabitants of the imperfectly reclaimed hill forests are more savage-looking, but they seldom deteriorate to the almost simian physiognomy which characterises the Oraon found under similar circumstances. When the face of the Munda varies from the Aryan or Caucasian type, it appears to me rather to merge into the Mongolian than the Negro. High cheek-bones, small openings for the eyes, having in some rare instances a tendency to the peculiar oblique cut of the Mongolian and flattish faces, without much beard or whiskers. The Mundas are of average stature, and in colour vary from brown to tawny yellow.

After stating that between the language of the Oraons and the language of the Mundas we could trace no similarity either in pronunciation, formation, construction, or general character," Colonel Dalton gives the following account of the personal characteristics of the Oraon :—



**Distinguished expression of tribal Art**

"Their physical peculiarities are as different from those of the Munda as are their linguistic characteristics. The Oraon must be regarded as a very small race, not short and squat like some of the Indo-Chinese stock, but a well-proportioned small race. The men and women have light graceful figures, and are as nimble as monkeys. Their complexions are, as a rule, of the darkest, but if we take as our type those who dwell in mixed communities we find great variety in features and colour. If we take those who, living in isolated positions, may be supposed to offer us the purest blood, we find them generally dark and ill-favoured. They have wide mouths, thick lips, and projecting maxillary processes, nostrils wide apart, and no elevation of nose to speak of, and low, although not generally very receding foreheads. I have seen among them heads that in the woolly crispness of the hair completed the similitude of the Oraons to the Negro. It may be said that the class I am describing have degenerated in features from living a wilder and more savage life than others of their class, but I do not find this degeneracy of feature amongst the Jashpur Korewahs who are to the Mundahs of Chota-Nagpur what the Jashpore Oraons are to the Oraons of the same district. In the more civilised parts of the province both Oraons and Mundahs improve in appearance. The former, indeed, still retain their somewhat diminutive appearance, but in complexion they are fairer, in features softer, some even good-looking, and the youthful amongst them all pleasing from their usual happy contented expression and imperturbable good humour."

But of all the wild tribes of India, the most remarkable are those inhabiting the mountain range of Southern India, well-known as the Nilgiris, a Sanskrit compound which signifies " Blue Mountains." The Nilgiris lie between the tenth and eleventh degrees of latitude, embrace an area of about 10,000 square kilometer, contain plateaus, some of which attain the elevation of from 2000 to 3000 meter , while the highest mountain peak is 4500 meters above the sea level.

The inhabitants of this range consist of five different tribes, four of which have each their own separate and independent language, while the fifth, the most numerous and the most industrious, speaks the Canarese tongue, that of their nearest civilised neighbours, a fact from which we may be

disposed to consider them as stranger immigrants. It is this tribe alone which has adopted the manners, institutions, and religion of the Brahmins.

All the five tribes possess the usual features and bodily form of the Hindus of Southern India; but this character is most remarkably pronounced in the small tribe called the Todars, whose number is computed not to exceed six hundred, and who occupy the highest of the mountain uplands. They are herdsmen, as their name, which is the corruption of a Tamil word having this meaning, implies; their only cattle being the buffalo, the milk of which forms their chief aliment. All European observers agree in considering the Todars as a handsome race, above the average stature of Hindus, with regular features and elevated countenances—in short, Greeks with black skins. But the same account might be very faithfully given of several other Hindu peoples; such, for example, as the Seiks and the Kashmirians.

The believers in the Aryan theory are much puzzled by the Todars. They ought, were they aborigines, to have, according to the theory, Negroid features; but, on the contrary, they happen to have European, and therefore, in despite of their small numbers, their low social status, and their geographical position in a remote corner of India difficult of access, they pronounce them to be a race of foreign Caucasian conquerors, without being able even to guess of whom they came, where they came from, or when they settled in the upper plateau of the isolated Nilgiri mountains.

It is an opinion very generally entertained by Indian ethnologists, that the races which they suppose to be the aborigines of India partake of a Negro character, in contradistinction to the civilised people of the low lands; but this is a notion for which I am satisfied there is no ground whatever. Throughout the continent of India—indeed, throughout the entire continent of Asia—no Negro or Negroid race has ever been found to exist, the only exception being a few pigmy Negroes in the interior of the Malay peninsula, which is rather a portion of the neighbouring archipelago than of the Asiatic continent.

Wherever Negritos or Negroid races really exist, their presence is unmistakably pronounced, as in the case of the Andaman islands, in the mountains of the Malay peninsula, in several of the Philippine islands, and in the long range of islands which extends from New Guinea to the Fiji group in the Southern Pacific. Everywhere their peculiar physical character is clearly indicated. Sometimes they have whole islands to themselves, as in the instances of the Andamans, New Guinea, and some of the islands of the Southern Pacific; but even when they are joint occupants with other races, as in the Malayan peninsula and the Philippines, they dwell isolated in the mountains, never intermixing with the fairer and more highly endowed races their neighbours. All, it will be seen, that so careful and faithful an observer as Col. Dalton can say of his most ill-favoured race of mountaineers, the Oraons, is that he has "seen amongst them heads that in the woolly crispness of the hair completed the similitude of the Oraons to the Negro." He finds no such resemblance in the better looking Mandah tribe. "When," says he, "it varies from the Aryan or Caucasian type, it appears to me rather to merge into the Mangolian than the Negro." No doubt such heads and features as Col. Dalton describes would be found among the Kols; but they are also to be found in every race of man. Thus Col. Dalton would certainly find occasionally among his own countrymen heads and faces that, with the addition of a black skin, would bear a considerable resemblance to an African Negro, and other heads which, with a yellow skin superadded, might readily be mistaken for Mangols. Rules are not to be deduced from exceptions.

But the existence of rude and even savage tribes dispersed among a civilised people, although both may be of the same race of man, is far from being confined to India. The countries which border India to the east, and lie between it and China, afford many examples. These are Burmah, Siam, Cambodia, and Anam. Within our own portion of the first of these, embracing 150,000 square kilometers, there exist five rude tribes, numbering little short of 400,000, or near one-fifth part of the whole population. They will be found to be numerous in the inverse proportion to civilisation, as evinced in this example, for in the social scale the Burmese are far below the Hindus, and the fact implies that all would be equally civilised if all had the same opportunities. Such tribes exist, also, in Siam, in Cambodia, and in Anam. While the more civilised nations occupy the well watered plains and valleys, the ruder tribes, just as in India, are found only in mountain or hilly regions, or in jungles.

They speak languages which not only differ among themselves, but also from the languages of the civilised nations. Their social condition varies from that of arrant savages to that of peaceful but rude

agriculturists. As the wild tribes of India have rejected the religion and the institutions of the Brahmins, those of Indo-China have rejected the Buddhist. The rude tribes of India are wholly ignorant of letters, and so are those of Indo-China. As the languages of the rude tribes of India resemble the cultivated tongues of the same region in being polysyllabic, so do the languages of the rude tribes of Indo-China resemble those of the civilised nations of the same country in being monosyllabic.

As to physical form, the rude Indo-Chinese tribes differ in no essential respect from the civilised nations among whom they are dispersed. Like them, they are of short squat stature, of brown, but never black, complexion, with noses never elevated, and chins nearly destitute of beard. But similar wild tribes to those of India are found to exist even among the Chinese, who have made a more substantial progress in civilisation than the Hindus. There they are absent in the central and eastern provinces, so favoured by well watered extensive plains, but are abundant in the mountainous and comparatively sterile western provinces, such as Quangsi, Sechuen, and, above all, the great province of Yunan. No doubt they differ in every province, or even district of a province, in language and manners, and are probably as numerous as in India or the Indo-Chinese countries; but we possess no special knowledge respecting them, and all we know is that they are generally mountaineers, that they have rejected the language and institutions of the Chinese, that in race they are essentially Chinese, and that they are known to the Chinese by the common appellation of Myotse, which signifies " children of the soil", or aborigines; the Chinese in this case seemingly embracing the theory of our own Indian ethnologists, that these wild tribes alone are aboriginal, while the millions of the civilised Chinese must be strangers. They do not, however, venture to call them immigrants, for they have no convenient Aryana to refer to.

Of a similar condition of society with that existing in India, we have good examples in some of the great islands of the Malay and Philippine archipelagos. The question here, as in India, is one of physical geography. If the land be fertile and well watered, the civilised predominate; and if the contrary, the wild tribes do so. In Sumatra, in Celebes, in the peninsula, and in Luc, on, the civilised inhabitants—men possessed of corn, and cattle, and letters—form the bulk of the inhabitants; while the wild tribes are a small minority. In Borneo, from its unsuitableness to the promotion of civilisation, wild tribes, hardly on a level with the South Sea Islanders, form the great majority; while in Java and the small islands lying immediately east of it, owing to their extraordinary fertility, all the inhabitants are civilised, the wild tribes having been long extinguished or converted. In all these cases the civilised and the wild are of the same race of man, save in the few cases where there exist negroes, which, although always among the rude tribes, cannot be confounded with them.

We need not, however, go beyond Europe for illustrations of a state of society similar to that of India, in so far as concerns the existence in one and the same country of men in very opposite conditions of social progress, although of the same race of man. The Gauls were already a numerous and tolerably civilised people when, 2,000 years ago, they were invaded and conquered by the Bomans, who in course of time succeeded in imposing upon them their own laws and language. The Italian and other subjects of Borne, no doubt settled in considerable numbers in France; but they could not have colonised it in the modern sense of colonisation, for there was no room for it in a country already peopled, and whom the conquerors certainly neither exterminated nor displaced. The majority of the Bomans must have consisted of soldiers and camp followers, and necessarily they were few in numbers in comparison with the native inhabitants of a great country. They must have intermarried with the native inhabitants, and in time been absorbed into the mass of the population. The proportion of foreign settlers to the native inhabitants would, no doubt, be greater in this case than it was in India, since the facilities for emigration were much greater, and France but a small country with a small population as compared to India. France was afterwards successively invaded by several Teutonic tribes, the most recent of which gave its own name to the country and people. It is probable that the influence of the Teutonic invaders on the native inhabitants was still less than that of the Boman settlers, for they did not, like the Bomans, succeed in substituting their own language for that which they found. All they did in this matter was to infuse a few Teutonic words into the existing language, just as the last conquerors of India mixed words of their own tongues with the native idioms of India. Notwithstanding, then, the frequent infusions of foreign blood which have taken place in France, the certainty is that it has produced but little effect, and that at this day the French are, as to race,

essentially the same people as their forefathers the Gauls; just as the Hindus are not less Hindus after a small infusion of Aryan, Persian, Turkish, and Arabian blood.

Tribes must always have existed in France which, from the unfavourable localities in which they were placed, would be inferior in civilisation to the people of the open fertile plains; and we have the remains of them still in the mountaineers of Brittany and Gascony, where their retention of their ancient and rude languages bears sufficient evidence of their resistance to the inroads of civilisation. These people are to the French, and must have been also to the more advanced Gauls, what the wild mountain tribes of India are now to the cultivated Hindus.

Modern Spaniards have assuredly far more of the blood of ancient Iberians in their veins than they have of the blood of Celtic, Phoenician, Roman, Teutonic, or Arabian conquerors or settlers; for all these strangers came from great distances, consisted mostly of soldiers and male camp followers, and must have been few in number compared to the ancient and aboriginal inhabitants of so extensive a region as Spain. The people of the Basque provinces, still retaining their very original language, while the native idioms of the open parts of Spain have given way to an Italian tongue intermixed with Teutonic and Arabic words, are the representatives of the hill tribes of India.

Our own island affords another good illustration. Some two thousand years ago, the people of the more fertile parts of Britain were very far from being savages, although certainly barbarians; for they possessed corn and cattle, and the useful metals, and were tolerably clothed and housed. The Romans never produced in Britain the same social revolution which they had effected in France. They did not succeed, as there, in substituting their language for those of the conquered; and the mountainous parts of the country they never conquered at all, for from their position they would be difficult to conquer, and, if conquered, profitless to occupy from their poverty. The Roman occupation seems to have chiefly consisted of the legions and their followers, and to have been confined to a few military stations.

Four centuries of Roman domination, although it destroyed the native virtues of the Britons, seems to have ensured such an amount of peace and order as must have increased their material wealth and consequently their number; for the legions had hardly retired when the poorer people of the northern part of the island, and pirates from Northern Germany, thought it profitable to invade and subdue them. The Britons, then, when invaded by the Teutonic nations of the North, must have been a comparatively numerous people; and such of the invaders as had to cross the German ocean in open boats hardly as respectable in point of safety and accommodation as Malay pirate prows, must in proportion to them have been few in number, and consisted, as usual, chiefly of the male sex. They continued, however, to pour in for several centuries by boat-loads, and their union and superior military prowess enabled them ultimately to substitute their own language, name, and institutions, for those of the Britons, over all the fertile and easily accessible parts of the island. The mountaineers they never subdued; and in the Welsh and Highlanders of Scotland, still speaking their own original languages, we recognise the analogues of the wild tribes of India. The Scandinavian tribes who invaded Britain, made their way to it in the same manner as the people of Northern Germany, and, like them, must have been few compared to the natives.

The Norman conquest probably produced, physically, little or no effect on the mass of the previous population, already amalgamated as one nation under the common name of Angles or English. The invaders, already a mixed race themselves, consisted of a succession of military adventurers far more civilised than the conquered. They added to the civilisation of the conquered, and improved their language by an intermixture of a language which was but a recent acquisition to themselves; but the conquerors, comparatively few in number, could not have produced any appreciable effect on the blood of the previous inhabitants.

We, with our relatives on the opposite side of the Atlantic, are pleased to call ourselves, or are called by others, English or Angles and Saxons, as if we were all pure descendants of the Angles and Saxon invaders of the fifth and sixth centuries; whereas it is certain that the British blood in our veins is the paramount one, and that Britons would be a far more appropriate name in so far as pedigree by race is concerned.

But I may add that even America, such as it was when first discovered, exhibited a state of social existence similar to that which still obtains in India. Its inhabitants consisted of savage or wild tribes and of civilised nations, although here the proportions were reversed, the civilised being the few, and the wild or savage the many. Here the race was one and the same throughout, and therefore

no claim of aboriginality could be made for any one party. The first attempt towards civilisation in America, and it was so probably everywhere else, began in open grassy plains, abounding in pasture, and therefore in wild animals yielding food and clothing for man, and probably also wild grain and roots adapted for human food. Such efforts certainly could not have been commenced in forest-clad lands, and this for obvious reasons. These are always deficient in wild animals fit for human use, the only creatures abounding in them being monkeys, insects, and reptiles; no nutritious grasses, no esculent roots, and no wild fruits growing under the deep shade of forest trees. But independent of this primary obstacle, the clearing of the land of forest would be a labour beyond the skill and means of rude man, armed only with fire and stone axes. Hence come the primeval forests which still cover the best part of the American continent, and the extensive forests of India, which are probably coeval with the time when the earth first assumed its present form. On the contrary, the open forest-free plains would yield wild animal and vegetable food for man, while their fertile soils would be ready for the first rude attempt at husbandry. Those of America would yield only beasts of the chase, and their vegetable products adapted to future cultivation would be confined to such plants as maize, the manioc, and the yam, with such fruits, in tropical regions, as the guava, the pine-apple, the coco-palm, and the banana. The plains of India would be far more productive. Among their wild plants we should find rice, various millets and pulses, the yam, the banana, the sugar-cane, the mango, and the orange. Among its animals amenable to domestication, there would certainly exist, as they still exist in the wild state, the ox, the buffalo, the dog, the hog, the elephant, and even the ass; giving India in this matter a vast advantage over America, a priority which goes far to account for its earlier and more advanced civilisation.

The first efforts towards civilisation in America were consequently made by the mound-builders of the prairies of the Mississippi and Ohio, and by the builders of such monuments as those of Palenque, although both proved abortive, having probably been overthrown by some tribe of warlike savages. The next, and more permanent and ultimately more advanced civilisations, originated in the forest-free valleys of the Andes, and consisted of the civilisations of Mexico and Peru.

The mind may safely carry us back to a time in which the social state of India was similar to that of America, when the civilised tribes were few in number, and the wild or savage formed the majority. The Hindu is, beyond all question, a far more highly endowed race of man than the Red man of America; and civilisation would probably spring up earlier, at more points, and attain a higher maturity in India than it did in America. We may even point at the localities in which civilisation is most likely to have had its earliest seats. Separate and independent civilisations would probably spring up in the plains watered by the "Five Rivers"/in the upper valleys of the Yamna and Ganges, in the central and in the lower valley of the Ganges, and in the valleys of the rivers of Southern India, such as that of the Narbada, the Godavari, the Krishna, the Kaveri, and the Taptee, These nascent civilisations would be independent of each other, and for a long time be as unknown to each other as were the Mexican and Peruvian. All this most probably happened long before there was an Aryan invasion, or a religion of Bramah. The state of India at such a time would be a parallel to that of America on its discovery: the wild and savage tribes would be numerous, and the civilised few in number. Proportionate to its extent, it would have as many small tribes, speaking as many distinct languages as America itself. India has still a score of nations with written languages, but the number of its wild tribes have not yet been counted.

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