

## The Qadian Ahmadiyah in Riau: History, Existence, and Development in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

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### Abstrak

Fokus tulisan ini merekonstruksi kembali bagaimana sejarah dan siapa pembawa aliran Ahmadiyah Qadian pada masa awal masuknya ke Provinsi Riau dan menelisik daerah-daerah persebarannya. Serta menjelaskan perkembangan eksistensi Jema'at Ahmadiyah Qadian di Provinsi Riau, yang menghadapi tekanan dari pemerintah dan masyarakat. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah metode sejarah melalui empat tahapan yaitu pertama, heuristik yaitu tahap pengumpulan data berupa dokumen atau buku, artikel, jurnal, dan wawancara. Kedua kritik sumber yaitu melakukan pengujian data dengan melakukan kritik internal dan eksternal terhadap data berbagai sumber. Ketiga interpretasi yaitu penafsiran data sehingga menjadi fakta yang bermakna. Tahap terakhir yaitu historiografi atau penulisan sejarah. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa masuknya ajaran Ahmadiyah Qadian ke Provinsi Riau dipengaruhi oleh orang-orang Ahmadi asal Sumatera Barat karena Provinsi Riau merupakan daerah perantaraan dari Sumatera Barat. Sebagai hasilnya, ajaran Ahmadiyah tersebar di wilayah ini melalui hubungan erat antar perantau tersebut. Kedua, masuknya ajaran Ahmadiyah Qadian di Provinsi Riau juga dipengaruhi oleh orang-orang Ahmadiyah Qadian dari Yogyakarta yang bertransmigrasi dan menetap di Desa Kota Bangun, Kampar, Riau.

**Kata kunci:** ahmadiyah, riau, eksistensi.

### Abstract

The focus of this paper reconstructs how the history and who was the carrier of the Qadian Ahmadiyah sect in the early days of its entry into Riau Province and examines its distribution areas. As well as explaining the development of the existence of the Qadian Ahmadiyah Jema'at in Riau Province, which faced pressure from the government and society. The research method used is the historical method through four stages, namely first, heuristics, which is the stage of collecting data in the form of documents or books, articles, journals, and interviews. Second, source criticism, namely testing data by conducting internal and external criticism of data from various sources. Third, interpretation, which is the interpretation of data so that it becomes a meaningful fact. The last stage is historiography or historical writing. The results showed that the entry of the Qadian Ahmadiyah teachings into Riau Province was influenced by Ahmadi from West Sumatra because Riau Province is an overseas area from West Sumatra. As a result, Ahmadiyah teachings spread in this region through close relationships between these migrants. Second, the entry of Qadian Ahmadiyah teachings in Riau Province was also influenced by Qadian Ahmadi from Yogyakarta who transmigrated and settled in Kota Bangun Village, Kampar, Riau.

*Keywords:* ahmadiyah, riau, existence.

### INTRODUCTION

The history of Ahmadiyah in Indonesia, including in Riau Province, reflects the dynamics of diversity and social development in society. The existence of

Ahmadiyah as a religious sect has contributed significantly to the cultural and religious richness of Indonesia. Riau Province, as one of the religiously

heterogeneous regions, witnesses the history of Ahmadiyah.

In the history of Indonesia, the existence of Ahmadiyah Qadian has brought its own dynamics, including in Riau Province. Ahmadiyah Qadian, as a religious movement originating from India, has a rich history and existence, especially in the 20th century. This research aims to record the journey of the Qadian Ahmadiyah in Riau Province, reveal the history of the movement's entry, and analyze its existence in various social and political contexts in the 20th century.

During this period, the Qadian Ahmadiyah in Riau not only became the subject of history, but also played a role in shaping and changing the dynamics of local society. Through this research, the author will explain how Ahmadiyah Qadian developed, adapted, and interacted with its surrounding environment. Historical sources, both written and oral, will be the main foundation in reconstructing the long journey of this movement in Riau.

The track record of the Qadian Ahmadiyah in Riau not only covers religious aspects, but also involves social, political and cultural dimensions. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of the existence of the Qadian Ahmadiyah in Riau in the 20th century will make an important contribution in seeing the role of this movement in the dynamics of regional and national history. This research is expected to thoroughly

describe the role and journey of the Qadian Ahmadiyah movement in Riau society during the 20th century and provide insight and understanding of the complexity of diversity in Indonesia.

This paper aims to explore the history of Ahmadiyah in Riau Province, as well as identify factors that influence the existence and development of this sect in the local context. Through an in-depth understanding of the history of Ahmadiyah in Riau Province, it is hoped that this paper will provide new insights into Ahmadiyah's contribution to religious and social diversity, while detailing the challenges and opportunities faced by the Ahmadiyah community in the region. It is important to understand that this research not only covers historical aspects, but also details the current existence and development of Ahmadiyah in Riau Province. Thus, this research not only provides a retrospective picture, but also presents a contemporary understanding of the dynamics of Ahmadiyah in the lives of people in this region. All the information gathered in this research is expected to be an important contribution to understanding religious diversity in Indonesia, especially in Riau Province.

## **METHOD**

This research method uses the historical method which involves heuristics, criticism, interpretation, and historiography. Heuristics is used for data

collection from sources such as libraries, field data, and interviews with Ahmadiyah communities. The next stage is source criticism, which involves evaluating the physical authenticity and content of sources through external criticism and internal criticism. Primary sources include Ahmadiyah archives, while secondary sources involve Ahmadiyah books and works by non-Ahmadiyah authors such as journals. After the critical stage, interpretation of the historical facts from the archives and relevant books is carried out, followed by the historiography stage which creates a chronological narrative of the interpretation.

The Ahmadiyah Congregation, founded by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in India in 1889, recognizes Ghulam Ahmad as the Imam Mahdi and Al Masih promised by the Prophet Muhammad at the end of 1890 (Kunto Sofianto, 2014). His followers believe Ghulam Ahmad to be the fulfillment of God's promises in various major religions. They view him as the Messiah awaited by Christians, the Imam Mahdi expected by Muslims, and even as the Krishna awaited by Hindus. Although it shares similarities with Muslims in general, the Ahmadiyah distinguish themselves by recognizing the existence of a prophet after the Prophet Muhammad. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad founded the Ahmadiyah with a focus on the renewal of Islamic thought. After his death, internal disputes over Ghulam Ahmad's prophetic status led

to a split into the Lahore Ahmadiyah and Qodian Ahmadiyah in 1914. The Lahore Ahmadiyah rejected prophet status for Ghulam Ahmad, while the Qodian Ahmadiyah considered him a prophet who should be obeyed (Dwi Rendy Maulana, 2010). The Lahore Ahmadiyah group was introduced in Indonesia in 1924 by Mirza Wali Ahmad Baig and Maulana Ahmad. First recognized by three Sumatran Twalib students in 1922, the Ahmadiyah developed in Indonesia after they invited its leader, Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad, to come. In 1925, M. Rahmat Ali brought the Ahmadiyah to Sumatra, marking an important stage in the movement's history in Indonesia. Although faced with resistance, Ahmadiyah continued to grow, especially in Aceh and West Sumatra (Resti Febi Ramadani, 2020).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The beginning of the spread of Ahmadiyah teachings in Riau Province

#### a. Pekanbaru City

From West Sumatra, Ahmadiyah teachings began to spread to various regions, including Riau Province. In July 1947, the beginning of Ahmadiyah development in Riau Province, precisely in Pekanbaru City, began when an Ahmadiyah member named Mansur Sutan Saidi was involved, he was a civil servant working in Bukittinggi, Central Sumatra. At that time, he was transferred and assigned to the

Pekanbaru Public Works Department. Previously, Mansur Sutan Saidi was already a follower of Ahmadiyah. Before leaving for Pekanbaru, Mansur Sutan Saidi had received information that there was a family of Ahmadiyah followers living in Pekanbaru. The family came from Padang City and one of its members was named Husian Marasutan, after their meeting, they deliberated on how to develop the Ahmadiyah congregation in Pekanbaru (Interview with Muslim Mubaligh Ahmadiyah Pekanbaru 19 February 2023).

In short, the two discussed steps to expand Ahmadiyah influence in Pekanbaru. One aspect they focused on was introducing Ahmadiyah to their own families, especially to their children, so that they would understand Ahmadiyah teachings and could become an active part of the Ahmadiyah community in Pekanbaru. Since there were initially only two families who embraced Ahmadiyah in Pekanbaru, they agreed to start with an internal approach, namely by educating their own families. One of the ways they implemented was by performing congregational prayers as a way to strengthen their understanding of Ahmadiyah teachings and to build a more solid Ahmadiyah community in Pekanbaru. Narulyas, an employee of PT Pelindo who works in Pekanbaru City, was interested in joining the Ahmadiyah studies in the city. This led to an increase in the number of Ahmadiyah congregations in Pekanbaru.

Around 1949, many people were looking for work in Pekanbaru City, and some of them were interested in joining Ahmadiyah studies. Some of them were Ahmadiyah followers who had long been involved in the Padang city branch committee, but then migrated to Pekanbaru City and became congregants there. At first, there were three heads of families who joined, namely Maulana, a religious teacher who studied at the Ahmadiyah center, Muis who came from Padang and was a longtime member of the Padang Ahmadiyah congregation, and Syarif. Since then, the Ahmadiyah congregation's beliefs have been strengthened, and they began to hold Friday prayers and religious studies. These activities were initially held at Mr. Husein's house, but were later moved to Mr. Sultan Syahidi's house on Jalan Cempaka, previously known as Jalan Padang Bulan (Interview With Muslim Mubaligh Ahmadiyah Pekanbaru 19 Februari, 2023).

With the growing number of Ahmadiyah congregations, there was a desire to establish a mosque, considering that previously worship activities were carried out in homes. Then a man named Mr. Bagindo decided to buy a piece of land and grant the land for the construction of the mosque. Mr. Bagindo, gave a grant and built a mosque called the An Nasir Mosque. The construction of this mosque began around the beginning of 1960. Over

time, the structure of this mosque has developed from a stage building to concrete. Since 1960 until today, the An Nasir Mosque in Ahmadi Lane has stood firmly. In 1953, due to the increasing number of Ahmadiyah congregations and the request to have a board, the management of the Ahmadiyah congregation in Pekanbaru was formed. With the formation of this board, the Ahmadiyah congregation officially had a secretariat in that year. In the same year, the Ahmadiyah organization in Pekanbaru was also legally legalized, with serial number 38, indicating that this was the 38th Ahmadiyah branch. The chairman of the board was Sutan Saidi, while the General Secretary in correspondence activities was Muis, with additional members such as Husein, Zainal, Bagindo, Talud, Mr. Bachtiar. They are the first administrators of the Ahmadiyah congregation in Pekanbaru City who are recognized by the Indonesian Ahmadiyah congregation (Interview With Muslim Mubaligh Ahmadiyah Pekanbaru 19 February, 2023).

In 1954, an Ahmadiyah preacher from Pakistan named Mirza Rafi Ahmad arrived in Indonesia. Mirza Rafi Ahmad's visit became very important because the social and political conditions at that time gave Ahmadiyah a better opportunity to develop. In that year, the Ahmadiyah movement had grown into a fairly large organization, with 26 branches spread

across various parts of Indonesia, and with a total membership of around 10,000 people. While in Riau Province, more precisely in the city of Pekanbaru, there is only 1 branch located in Ahmadi alley Jl. Jend. Sudirman Pekanbaru city. Mirza Rafi Ahmad's visit aims to establish friendship with the Ahmadiyah Congregation in Indonesia. In this year, Ahmadiyah had a greater opportunity to carry out its activities more freely due to the lack of significant rejection from the community and the government. The reason is that at that time, the government and society in general had not given much attention to the existence of Ahmadiyah in Indonesia. This situation opened opportunities for Ahmadiyah to expand its influence and activities freely.

In 1980, MUI issued a fatwa stating that the teachings of Ahmadiyah are heretical and misleading so that all forms of Ahmadiyah activities in the midst of society are prohibited (Khoiruddin Nasution, 2008). In the fatwa, the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) asked the Regional Ulema Council, scholars, and da'i throughout Indonesia to provide explanations to the public about the misguidedness of the Qadian Ahmadiyah, which is considered outside Islam (Direktorat Urusan Agama Islam dan Pembinaan Syariah, 2018).

Furthermore, MUI also requested that people who have been involved with Ahmadiyah to return to the true teachings

of Islam, and for the entire community to remain vigilant against Ahmadiyah so as not to be influenced by its teachings. MUI's decision at that time became news that was very difficult to accept for all Ahmadiyah members (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, 1980).

Although MUI issued this fatwa in 1980, it did not produce significant effects in the form of stopping Ahmadiyah activities or further action from the government. At that time, the fatwa was not fully realized. Ahmadiyah activities continued, and there was no significant public opposition to Ahmadiyah when the fatwa was issued. There were no significant conflicts involving Ahmadiyah, and no clear negative impacts on either Ahmadiyah or non-Ahmadiyah communities

Furthermore, in 2005, MUI fatwa number II/MUNASVII/MUI/15/2005 was issued again about the prohibition of following Ahmadiyah activities, and for those who continue to follow Ahmadiyah activities are apostates, and for those who have already gone back to the teachings of the Koran and hadith, and the government is obliged to prohibit any spread of Ahmadiyah understanding. In the fatwa, MUI stated that Ahmadiyah is a sect that is considered heretical and outside Islam. This fatwa prohibits the Muslim community from following Ahmadiyah activities or teachings. This fatwa is MUI's response to the presence and activities of Ahmadiyah in Indonesia which are

considered contrary to Islamic teachings. In this fatwa, MUI calls on all scholars, da'i, and Muslims in Indonesia to explain to the public about the heresy of Ahmadiyah and so that people do not get involved in the teachings (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, 2005).

Then in 2008 a Joint Ministerial Decree was issued which also banned the spread and practice of Ahmadiyah activities in Indonesia. The emergence of the Joint Ministerial Decree was expected to bring about an improvement in the situation involving the Ahmadiyah and the community as a whole (Kementerian Agama RI, 2018).

This is largely because since the issuance of the fatwa by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) in 2005, acts of violence against Ahmadiyah members have occurred frequently. The issuance of the decree has elicited mixed views from the community, with some indicating that the government is supportive and recognizes the view that the Ahmadiyah is heretical and misleading, and needs to be eradicated. Meanwhile, others think that the decree actually aims to regulate the activities of the Ahmadiyah group so as not to cause conflict and to maintain harmony between religious communities (Dezi Asti Megasari, 2012).

#### **b. Kampar, Tapung Hilir Kota Bangun Village**

Then, another version of the origin of the development of Ahmadiyah congregations

in Riau Province came from trans-Javanese people who settled in the Kampar area on July 23, 1985, more precisely in Kota Bangun Village. At first, some of these congregations followed the government program, and their origins came from the crowded Yogyakarta area. Along with the density, on July 23, 1985, we joined the government transmigration program and moved to Kota Bangun Village, Bangkinang Regency. Initially, there were three family cards, all of which came from fellow relatives. However, over time, the congregation has now come from various regions such as Medan, Java, Sukabumi, and so on. The Regional Leadership Council is in Pekanbaru, Ahmadi Street. At present, the number of Ahmadiyah family cards in Kota Bangun Village is approximately 10 (Interview With Supyanudin Amir Ahmadiyah Riau, 19 February 2023).

Education for Ahmadiyah congregation members is carried out internally first by emphasizing moral education, such as reciting the Koran, tahajud, and training. Tahajud in the mosque is prioritized, in line with religious teachings that call for tahajud.

Meanwhile, the construction of the Mubarak Mosque was carried out using personal funds from fellow congregation members. Although there are those who consider Ahmadiyah heretical here, we consider it reasonable because it may be a lack of understanding. Ahmadiyah is

considered different and heretical, so when we pray we are peeped at, our tahajud is peeped at. We try to show Islamic morals and respond to abuse with kindness. In addition, we are active in social activities and lead blood donation activities. Although not many people wanted to join at first, many are now involved. In terms of government, we still obey the government, but in terms of faith and aqidah, we obey the Ahmadiyah imam. Many people do not understand, so misunderstandings often occur.

Therefore, we try to help as much as we can, even though there are only a small number of us here. In Riau Province, the Ahmadiyah movement is divided into two regions, namely Riau Region 1 and Riau Region 2. Riau Region 2 covers the areas of Kampar, Rengat, Tanjung medan and Kerinci, but has a limited number of members. This region stretches from Rokan Hulu, Rokan Hilir, to the border with North Sumatra. Riau Region 1 is located in the cities of Pekanbaru and Kampar ( Interview With Supyanudin Amir Ahmadiyah Riau, 19 Februari 2023).

### **Track Record of Ahmadiyah Qadian Riau: Challenges and Dynamics of Social Interaction in the Reality of Contemporary Society.**

***"MUI invites Ahmadiyah congregation in Riau to repent "***

"With the issuance of the Joint Decree (SKB) on Ahmadiyah, the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) Pekanbaru invites

Ahmadiyah followers in Riau to immediately return to the teachings of Islam. MUI Pekanbaru Chairman, Ilyas Husti, said, 'We invite Ahmadiyah followers to return to the right path. This is intended to anticipate any action to dissolve Ahmadiyah. This statement was delivered to okezone on Tuesday (10/6/2008). Ilyas Husti explained that in the SKB issued by three ministers, there is no explicit explanation of the status of Ahmadiyah. "That is because the SKB does not include Ahmadiyah to be dissolved, but only asked not to disseminate the flow," he explained.

MUI Pekanbaru even urged the decree to include the dissolution of the Ahmadiyah sect to prevent anarchist actions from the community. Ilyas stated, "I think the government is not firm enough to dissolve Ahmadiyah, even though it is clear that its teachings are deviant, such as the existence of a prophet after the prophet Muhammad SAW. This can create confusion among the people." After the issuance of the decree, ulama in Pekanbaru continued to approach the Ahmadiyah congregation. Ilyas emphasized that this approach aims to make the Ahmadiyah congregation willing to dissolve themselves with their own awareness, without having to go through dissolution by other organizations. He added, "Especially if in an anarchic way, it can harm all parties. Because Ahmadiyah is

also our brother (Banda Harudin Tanjung, 2008).

### **Exclusion of Ahmadiyah Congregation in Pekanbaru**

"Buyung Yanwar, with a wry smile in his eyes, described the story of the hateful treatment experienced by Ahmadiyah members in Pekanbaru. Yanwar, who joined Ahmadiyah in 2004 after previously exploring other Islamic sects, shared his experience at Mubarak Mosque, Jalan Cipta Karya, Pekanbaru, on Sunday (07/28/2019). In Yanwar's words, "So I used to search, which one suits me. The good thing is that I made many new friends during that search.

"However, his decision to become part of the Ahmadiyah brought quite heavy social consequences. Yanwar felt a change in the attitude of his friends, especially those who had been together with him attending the recitation of Islamic sects that were not Ahmadiyah. "Most of them cut off their friendship with me," says Yanwar, who occasionally takes a drag on his cigarette to ease his emotional state. Although he expressed joy at having friends from other Islamic sects, Yanwar was devastated when many of them broke off contact after learning he was an Ahmadi. "Like everyone else, they said Ahmadiyah was misguided, and I had become a misguided person too," he says.

In answering his friends' questions about his relationship with Ahmadiyah,

Yanwar is always honest and firm. For him, matters of faith are his business with God. He asserts that Ahmadiyah is not a religious sect that threatens the state, but rather emphasizes positive contributions to the country where they are located, including social programs and humanitarian activities. Despite facing pressure and rejection, Yanwar is increasingly convinced of the goodness he recognizes. He expressed his belief that differences should not be a reason to break off friendships, let alone reach the level of hatred. Despite being faced with a difficult situation, Yanwar along with other congregants have maintained their faith, creating a space for togetherness amidst social challenges.

Aswadi Setiawan (23) and Riswandi Ahmadi (23) also shared similar experiences of disapproval and rejection from their friends as Ahmadiyah followers. Despite their trials, they remain steadfast in their beliefs and continue to contribute positively to society, explaining that Ahmadiyah teachings pose no threat to the state. These stories reflect a spiritual journey fraught with challenges, yet pursued with strong conviction amidst the complex dynamics of social life (Bagus Pribadi, 2019).

### **Pekanbaru Community Seals Ahmadiyah Mosque**

Dozens of members of the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) together with the

community took action to seal the mosque used by the Ahmadiyah congregation in Pekanbaru, while the Pekanbaru City Government took steps to cut off the electricity supply to the place of worship. This incident took place without any clashes on Tuesday, April 19, 2011. In this sealing action, FPI together with the community came to the Ahmadiyah mosque located on Jl Sudirman, Pasar Pusat, Pekanbaru. The action was carried out in response to the lack of a firm stance from the Riau Provincial Government which has not banned Ahmadiyah activities in Riau.

FPI together with the community sealed a musala in the middle of a densely populated area. The sealing action was carried out by attaching a seal that read, "This Place of Worship is Sealed by the Muslims of Pekanbaru." Although some Ahmadiyah followers were present, they could not prevent the sealing action. The head of FPI Riau, Zulhusni, explained the reason behind the action, "We were forced to seal this place, because there is no firm stance from the Riau Provincial Government. We are disappointed with the Riau Provincial Government for not prohibiting Ahmadiyah activities. If they are still doing their activities again, we will send more people." Along with that, the Pekanbaru City Government also went to the location to prevent anarchy during the FPI and community demonstrations. A team from the municipal government's

Infokesbang office monitored the action and reminded the Ahmadiyah congregation not to carry out any activities in the mosque, in accordance with a circular letter from the Mayor of Pekanbaru, Herman Abdullah, which had been issued two months earlier. Desvi, Head of Infokesbang of Pekanbaru City Government, explained the situation to the Ahmadiyah congregation, "The Mayor of Pekanbaru issued a circular two months ago so that the Ahmadiyah congregation would not conduct any activities in the mosque. This is according to the request of the local community."

After the circular letter, the mosque had stopped all its activities. However, in April, the Pekanbaru City Government received a report that the Ahmadiyah congregation resumed its activities. "Therefore, we again ask the Ahmadiyah congregation to comply with the Mayor's circular letter," Desvi said in front of the Ahmadiyah congregation, FPI, and the local community (Detik News, 2018).

## CONCLUSION

Ahmadiyah, a sect within Islam, is notorious for its teachings that are significantly different from the true teachings of Islam. Despite this, the sect has been able to penetrate into Riau Province, which is known for its religious diversity. There are two versions that explain the development of Ahmadiyah in Riau Province. The first version states that

the development of this sect in the province was influenced by Ahmadiyah pilgrims from West Sumatra who moved to Pekanbaru in July 1947.

Mansur Sutan Saidi, one of the main figures, pioneered the first Ahmadiyah branch in the province, successfully establishing a mosque in Gang Ahmadi on Jalan Jenderal Sudirman, Pekanbaru City. The second version highlights the development of the Ahmadiyah sect in Riau Province, especially in Bangkinang Regency, which cannot be separated from the role of Supyanudin alias Ujang. As a migrant from Trans Java, Ujang settled in Kota Bangun Village, Tapung Hilir, Bangkinang Regency, on July 23, 1985, through a government transmigration program. Although initially there were three family cards that came from fellow relatives, over time, Ahmadiyah congregations in the area came from various regions such as Medan, Java, Sukabumi, and so on.

The entry of Ahmadiyah into Riau Province initially caused opposition and rejection from community leaders because of its teachings that are contrary to Islam. However, the efforts of the leaders and the community to restrain the spread of Ahmadiyah were unsuccessful, so that this sect managed to spread to other areas in Riau and its surroundings. Some areas that have been successfully entered by Ahmadiyah in Riau Province include Pekanbaru City, Kota Bangun Village,

Tapung Hilir, Kampar Regency referred to as Riau 1, and Rengat, Kerinci, Tanjung Medan, referred to as Riau 2.

Differences in religious understanding have generally not created disharmony in social relations in Pekanbaru and Kota Bangun Village, even when the FPI intervened and triggered conflict. Nonetheless, the Ahmadiyah congregation of Riau remains a very active actor, having its own power and strategy to engage in gaining influence. And the inconsistencies in Indonesia's legal framework, which on the one hand protects and on the other hand restricts their organization, provide opportunities for Ahmadiyah to fight back through constitutional channels. In addition, Ahmadiyah congregations in Riau also try to maintain harmonious relations with their neighbors, making visits to nearby government offices to get attention.

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