China 2

Description

Go back to the first part of the trip through China.

Lhasa to Gyangtse (265 km)

After riding for 10 days without a break it certainly was nice with a rest day in Lhasa, and today people, including me, were ready for another day on the road. To get out of Lhasa took the usual crazy manoeuvres but we did it without mishaps. As we have traveled weâ??ve seen a lot of engineering projects being done or that has been completed. Amazing concrete pillars for the construction of new high speed railways over deep valleys, or bridges for the road. I didnâ??t manage to photograph some of the more impressive ones but here is a nice looking bridge we passed early in the day.

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Bride over the river at Lhasa.

The road was in good condition and we rode by some scenic lakes before starting the climb to higher elevations reaching 4800 m later in the day.



Mountains and water look nice on a sunny day.



Reflecting lake by the road.



Surrounded by dark looking mountains.



Glacier.



Sheep and rocks.



Impressive rock formations.



Interesting geology. Looks like sandstone brechsia?



Close to the glacier.



Beautiful lake nestled in between the mountains at around 4500 m.

After a very scenic day of riding we reached the destination around 5.30 and were to meet for a walk to the local fortress but I did my own thing staying at the hotel and having a nice meal of onion soup and spaghetti bolognese. Back to my room I worked on this missive. As we travel further west and north daylight lasts longer and today it got dark a bit after 9.

Gyangtse to Tingri (320 km)

We saw Everest for the first time today! However, it was far in the distance.



Mount Everest in the far distance.

Otherwise the ride was similar to yesterdayâ??s one, a little bit longer, but only one high pass which was at 5200 m which is higher than the Mt Everest base camp where we are going tomorrow.



Snow by the roadside.



Cereal or grass fields at a high altitude.


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Interesting gathering of colourful indians. Some of them were riding their horses up and down a stretch.

May 22, 2019 Tingri to Everest base camp (90km)

We are getting close to Everest! Tingri is a small town by any standards of 500 people and tiny by Chinese standards. Itâ??s basically a town with a hotel or two and a petrol stationâ?¦ At the hotel we

met up with another biker tour group that started the ride in Kathmandu and were also going to Everest base camp today. They were all riding Royal Enfield bikes and they claimed they were good for the riding they had done.

Back to Everest â?? we had an easy ride crossing one mountain pass at 5200m with amazing views of 5 peaks above 8000m. The 20km road up to the pass was made up of beautiful switchbacks on nice smooth road surface â?? pure joy on a motorcycle!



5 peaks above 8000m. The photo does not give justice to the amazing view.



Interesting geologic layering.



Mount Everest in all itâ??s glory.

Tonight weâ??re sleeping at a guest house close to the base camp, there is no heating so Iâ??m afraid itâ??s going to get cold with a biting wind and sub zero temperatures.

Everest base camp to Xigaze (320 km)

We started the day very early and got up at 6 for breakfast at 6.30 and bus transport from the lodgings to the place where the bikes were stored. In previous years you were allowed to ride the motorcycle all the way, but now, because of environmental concerns, you have to take the electric bus. By 8 we were down by the bikes and made sure they would start since the temperature had been sub-zero during the night and we had to scrape some frost off the seats. Also scrambling to change into riding gear, that was stored in the service van during the night.



Mount Everest just before sunrise.

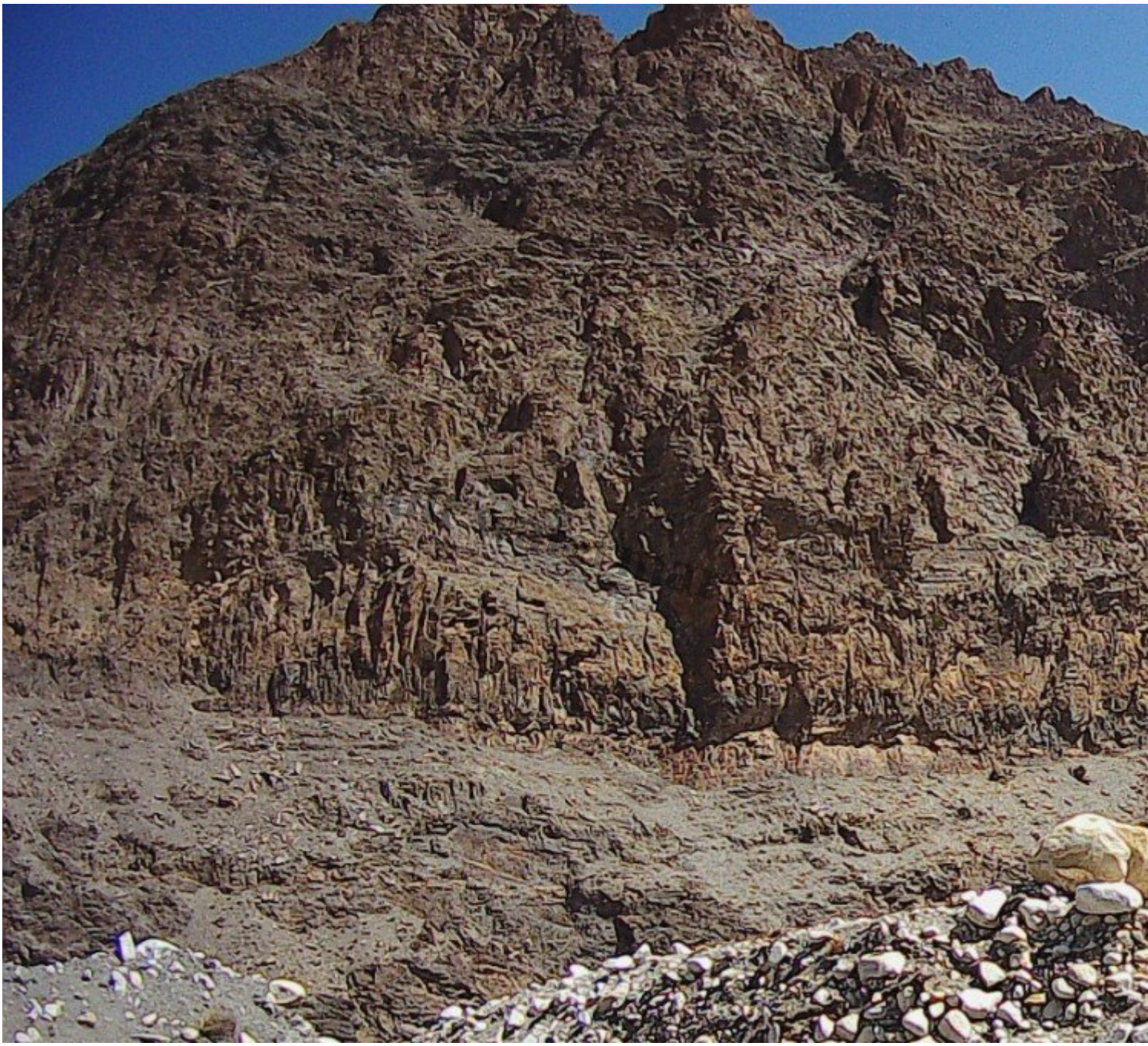
Well, we finally got away without incident and started riding in the cold morning â?? brrrâ?¦ Today we would ride the same way we came â?? in the other direction. We again rode the amazing switch-back road, it must be one of the best roads in the world for a motorcycle. Itâ??s close to 40 km going up and then coming down.



Race track or mountain road? The road leading to the Tibetan Everest base camp.



Itâ??s not easy to get trees to grow at an altitude above 4500m.



Maybe not so easy to image this with seismic?



Desolate. Very inhospitable in winter.



We reached the hotel in Xigaze early â?? for a change around 4.30 and had time for a snooze before diner.

Xigaze rest day

Some people went to the famous and large local monastery, some worked on their bikes and I took it easy working on the blog to keep it to date. Anyway, it was very nice with a rest day before starting the last 2500km to **Khasgar.**

May 25, 2019 Xigaze to Saga (400km)

Before setting off we took farewell of 3 people in the group, they were going back to Lhasa to catch a flight either home or other vacation destinations. It was the third time we rode the first 150 km of todayâ??s route and the rest was on the G219 that will lead us to northern Tibet and Khashgar. The ride went without problems although there were stretches with big pot holes that we had to navigate carefully. As we got closer to Saga the wind got much stronger and you had to ride at a lean angle to go straight.




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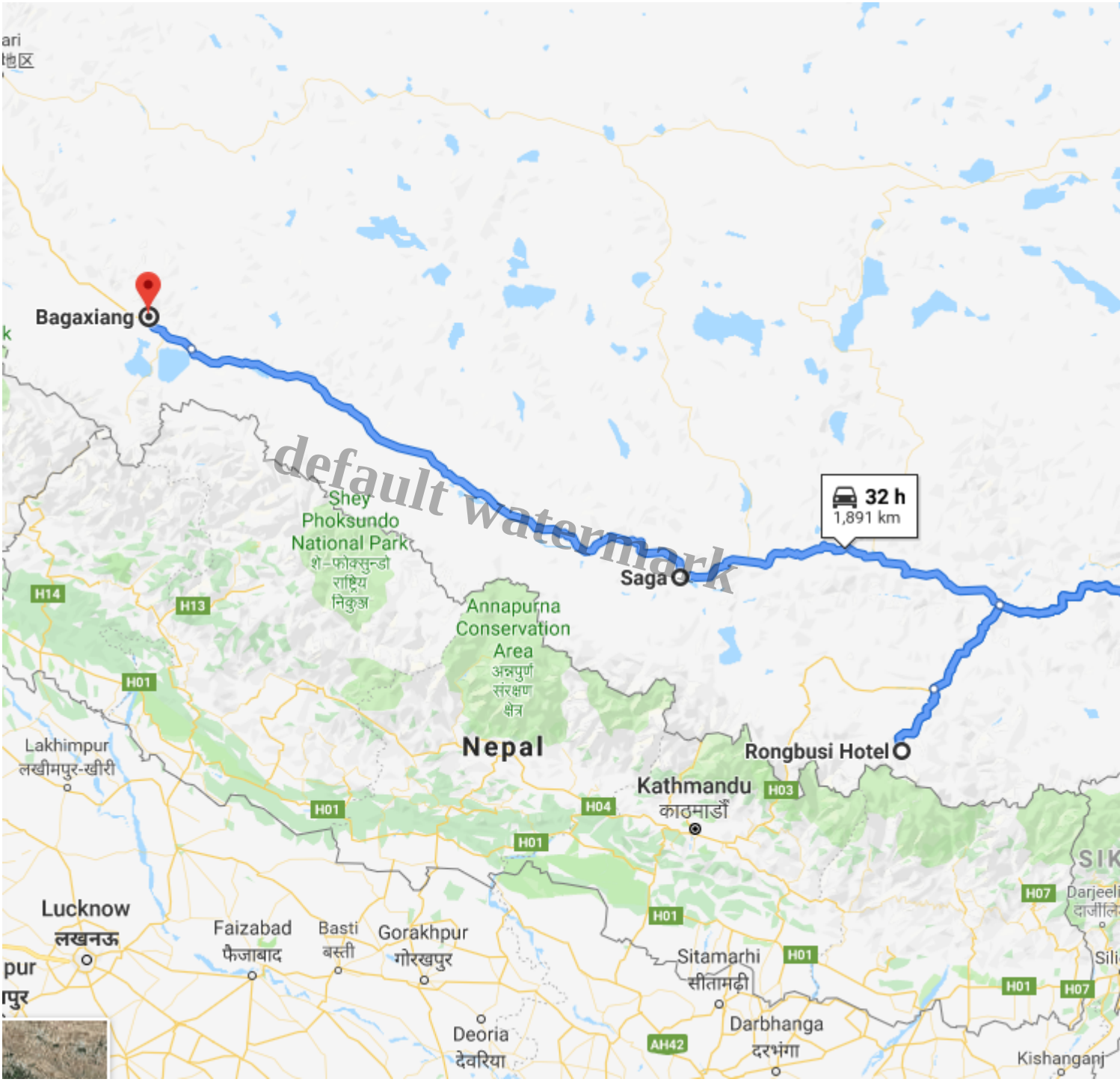

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Saga to Bagaxiang (490 km)

Nice views for the entire ride of the Tibetan landscape. Itâ??s incredible grand with new mountains showing up all the time . The road was in general in good condition. One problem was that there was a distance of around 250km between petrol stations and some of the bikes could not handle that distance, the strong wind making the fuel consumption go up as well.



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Map showing route from Lhasa to Everest base camp, back to Xigaze and onwards to Bagaxiang.



The vastness of the Tibetan high plateau can only be experienced by being thereâ?¦



This is close to 5000m elevation and it was cold.



At the highest point of every pass there is colourful bunting.



Golden bull and a black tiger.



Ice on the water.


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And it was cold! In the morning below freezing and at noon below 4C. Luckily I have electrically heated pants and jacket to help me keep warm but itâ??s still chilly.



Mountain on the Chinese side â?? still the Himalayas.

Bagaxiang to Tsaparang (540 km)

This was to be a day of true adventure! The ride was supposed to be a short one but me and Andy pulled out in front, got into a good rhythm and followed the main road, we had a great time without

thoughts of if we were going the right way. After 170 km we stopped at a check point and sat down to wait for the rest of the group to arrive. We waited and waitedâ?¦ Finally I messaged Jah, the tour leader. He informed me we missed a turn off and were far away from where we should be and he had sent Mike to â??retrieveâ?• us. Mike arrived but the problem was we were out of fuel and to get to the petrol station we had to cross the check point.

We approached the police officers who turned out to be very nice (they even offered us a can of Red Bull) and after showing scans of our passports (the passports were carried by the Tibetan guide) and after various discussions we were let through to find fuel. Then we had to go back for 250 kms to find our nightly stop. After 130 km we turned off onto the X705 road that led us through some very scenic areas. The last part went through an area of clay-rock that displayed various colours and were amazingly beautiful.



Amazing views along X705 road.



Clay rock formations flanked by snow covered mountains â?? beautiful!


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Tsaparang rest day

A beautiful day with glorious sunshine and blue skies, and at 3700 m much lower than the usual 4500 m so the outside temperature was higher. Some people went to look at some local site but I decided to stay at the hotel and relax â?? itâ??s so nice not being on the bike for a full day!

May 29, 2019 Tsaparang to Rutog (330 km)

We backtracked the 250 km we went wrong two days before. Since we were leaving Tibet and entering into a new province, Xinjiang, there was a long holdup before we could continue the last 120km to our hotel in Rutog. The hotel was not nice, no heating and in a rather dilapidated state, however, with

electrically heated blankets it was still possible to keep warm. It got to -5 C during the night because the altitude was still large at around 3600m.



Filling up 12 motorcycles with petrol always takes time since the rules requires the use of a 2-stage proces
SOmetimes, we were allowed to push the bikes to the pump and fill.



Always beautiful scenery in the mountains of Tibet.

Rutog to Da Hong Liu Tan (580 km)

A long day on the road involving riding but also stops at check points which were starting to take even longer time. There was 370 km between petrol stations and we had to fill spare tanks with fuel for some of the bikes that did not have the required range using their â??built inâ?• tanks. We all made it so someone had made the right calculations.



India on the other side of the lake.



Colorful bunting in many places. Nice or an eye sore?



We arrived at the hotel town which turned out to be more of a military town late and was subjected to a thorough investigation to make sure we were the same person as shown in the passport. This took a considerable amount of time and, of course, we had to take it with a smile. So late in the evening we were finally in the hotel which turned out to be the worst on of the trip. There were no showers and heating and the toilets were broken. At night it got to several degrees below zero so the rooms got

chilly during the night.

May 31, 2019 Da Hong Liu Tan to Kashgar (600 km)

This is the last leg of the trip through China and the longest day, both in terms of kilometers and hours. We started at 6 am while it was still dark and the first few hours were extremely cold â?? some people reported their bike thermometer as saying -8 C. We climbed to an elevation of 5000 m when the sun had just come up with the views from the top of the pass being fantastic. The road was really rutted with big pot-holes in places and, although some people love these conditions, I feel with my motorcycle for all the hard hits it takes when hitting the pot holesâ?¦ As it turned out I had hit one so badly that the front wheel rim was badly bent, luckily, not so bad that the air leaked out.

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View from the 5000 m pass early in the morning.



The road leading up to the pass. It was in a bad state of repair.


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Camels in China? Oh yes! I was told the people here come from eastern Turkey originally and they brough

After many stops for petrol and security check points we arrived in Kasgar at the hotel around 10.30, pm, any later and it would have been dark. We had ridden for 16.5 hours!

Kashgar rest days

There was a lot of work to be carried out on our bikes including oil and filter changes as well as other repairs. My front rim was miraculously bent back to itâ??s original shape without problems â?? I was really pleased to see that it could be done so well! We were originally planning to stay for 2 days but

because the required work on the bikes could not be completed in that time we are staying for an additional day.

Kashgar, or Kashi, as itâ??s also known, has a history stretching back to 200 BC and with a current population of 500,000 it has served as a trading post and strategically important city on the silk road between China, the middle east and Europe. Itâ??s modern day layout is pleasant with wide avenues lined with trees â?? so different from our travels through Tibet which showed very little greenery and was more dessert like. Kashgar is at an altitude of 1200 m and is nice and warm with daytime temperatures in the 30â??s. So nice after the freezing temperatures we;ve seen the last few weeks.

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The old bazaar.


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Lots and lots of electric mopeds going at pretty high speed in their designated lanes. Itâ??s an efficient an



Tree lined wide avenues. In the middle the car lanes, to the side of that the moped lanes and at the edges

Since leaving Singapore I have ridden 10301 km in one month. The first 3000 km from Singapore to the Boten China border were easy with good roads and took no more than 5 days in the saddle. The

7000 km in China has been hard work with the first 10 days without a break. Weâ??ve had more breaks since then but we did 7000 km in around 21 days on, at times, bad roads and 15-20 mountain passes. The Tibetan scenery has been breath taking â?? no doubt about that! However, somewhat sterile and very brown.

The RideChina company with Jah, itâ??s leader, did a brilliant job of putting together the trip and organizing hotels etc. The hard schedule could very well be because of the Chinese authorities putting a lot of restrictions on what they would accept. The group was not very disciplined with people disappearing for some time but Jah never let that affect his temper but remained calm throughout. I donâ??t think I could have in the same situation.

Category

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