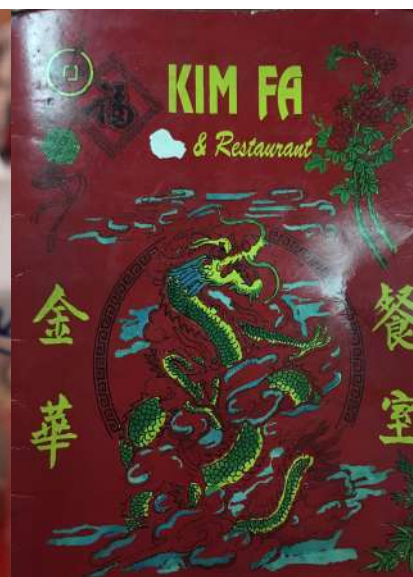




INDIANISATION OF CHINESE FOOD



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Discover India Program

2018

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the work incorporated in this report entitled “Indianisation of Chinese Food” submitted by the undersigned Research Team was carried out under my mentorship. Such materials obtained from other sources has been duly acknowledged.

Sr. No	Name of the student	Designation	Signature
1	Anvitha Ramadugu	Photographer	
2	Chaitanya Raveendran	Videographer	
3	Charvi Arora	Head Writer	
4	Freya Dave	Finance in-Charge	
5	Hanshita Rongali	Logistics in-Charge	
6	Jeeva S M	Creative Head	
7	Kanak Mahbubani	Writer	
8	Madalsa Agarwal	Creative Head	
9	Manvi Khosla	Videographer	
10	Mehr Kalra	Writer	
11	Neeharika Pasupuleti	Photographer	
12	Paul Lekhan Bethapudi	Writer	
13	Promodhni Suresh	Group Leader	
14	Raj Agrawal	Finance in-Charge	
15	Shreya Avirneni	Logistics in-Charge	

Faculty Mentor: Prof. Jasmine Hsu

Signature:

Date:

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ABSTRACT

Indo-Chinese cuisine is a unique amalgamation of the Indian and the Chinese cuisines. It consists of various unique dishes such as *Hakka noodles*, *Manchurian* and *Schezwan* which are not common to either Indian or the Chinese cuisine. However, most of the Indian population is unaware of the differences between the Indo-Chinese cuisine and typical Chinese cuisine. At the same time, there is not enough literature which explores the various dimensions that contributed to the formation of this cuisine. Therefore, the aim of this research is to explore the various factors that influenced the origin, the spread and the evolution of the cuisine over the years. The research also analyses the perceptions of authenticity and the community's identification with the food.

The research was conducted in Kolkata since it is home to India's first Chinatown and is identified as the hub for Indo-Chinese cuisine. For the purpose of gathering information, semi-structured interviews were conducted with restaurant owners of Indian origins and Chinese origins in addition to chefs, managers, waiters, and customers. The sample also included various scholars who are experienced in the fields of sociology of food and culture. We also studied the menus and the various modifications that were employed in the same over the years. Through the literature review, we found that the Hakka community was believed to be responsible for the formation of Indo-Chinese cuisine. Mr Nelson Wang was considered to be the curator of the popular dish of *Manchurian* in various newspaper and journal articles. There was excessive emigration among the Chinese community from Kolkata to countries such as the United States and Canada. The research revealed the active participation of the Cantonese community towards the creation of the cuisine other than the Hakka community, whose contributions came later. Contradictory information was found regarding the creation of *Manchurian*, as multiple sources did not agree with the claim that Mr Nelson Wang had indeed curated the dish. It was also found that Kolkata, despite being home to a majority of the Chinese population, was not the only city where this cuisine originated and evolved. It was also found that the Chinese community did not have any identification with the food which they sold in the restaurants. Further questions for research were explored where the multiple origin hypothesis, the role of Bengalis in the creation of this cuisine.

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Chapter 1

The Untold Story

*"For every community, wherever they go, food is an important way
to create a sense of belonging and familiarity"*

- Scholar



1. Introduction

Food has been a unifying factor for all societies in various eras. China has been our neighbour for centuries. The Indian culture and the Chinese culture, both have their complexities and colourful histories of resolving conflict. Over the years, we adopted parts of their culture while they adopted ours. Traces of this change are seen prominently in the food. The change was first noted in the western countries; the Americans and the Canadians took their part in the evolution of Chinese food, inspired by the cuisine they developed their own twist to the same. Similar changes can be noticed in India, as the food transformed from the typical versions to what we know today. This slow but notable change was an intriguing occurrence.

Even though Indo-Chinese cuisine is the second most popular cuisine in India (Ray, 2017), its originality has remained unexplored till date. Most of us were unaware regarding the distinction between typical Chinese cuisine and Indo-Chinese cuisine, which encouraged us to take up the topic of our research. Despite rocky relations between India and China, the Indo-Chinese cuisine remained unimpacted and witnessed no decline in its popularity. What further increased our interest in the topic was the distinction between our perceptions of Chinese food and the Chinese cuisine in itself. Lastly, the idea of conducting a food research got us interested further and so we decided to take up the topic of Indo-Chinese food.

2. Chinese Cuisine in India

What comes to your mind when you are munching on a momo garnished with spicy *Schezwan* sauce on the roadside? Or when you smell the freshly made *Hakka noodles* and *Manchurian* that you just received at your doorstep? Does the spicy, oily flavour mixed with those well-steamed vegetables provide you with an image of a dinner table at a Chinese household? How did Chinese cuisine become one of the Indians' favourite dining options? Chinese cuisine is the love of every foodie in this country. No restaurant's menu is complete without the addition of saucy *Schezwan* gravy or perhaps some wok-fried *Hakka noodles*.

This research intends to answer the questions of where it started, how and why it began, who are the creators of this cuisine and what significance it holds. It focuses on the aspect of food and key participants in the creation and development of the Chinese cuisine in India. Studying Chinese cuisine through the eyes of its makers and consumers provides clues to understand key contributing factors that led to a widespread of the Chinese cuisine in India and its effect on cultural, identity and ethnopolitical aspects.

3. The Study of Food

Food is an important aspect of any culture. The significance of food lies not only in its originality but also in its depiction of the history and geography of the community who created it. Food can be considered a form of cultural identity that helps communities reinforce their connections to their homelands especially when they have migrated to other places. Pollock (2009) considers food important as they serve as a way for migrating communities to express their cultural values even when social and environmental changes are made to their food. It is evident that the influence of Chinese food culture on the diet of its migrating country (Goody, 1998. as cited in Mintz & Bois, 2002). It is also easy to influence; these impacts would be indicative of the experiences that the Chinese community underwent to create its new identity in India. Food is representative of diverse aspects such as culture, identity and relationship of the community with its own country or the host country. Hence, the research will use food as a medium to understand these distinct characteristics.

Just as any immigrant feels after migrating to their country, a sense of culinary nostalgia was created in the Hakka Chinese. This longing for their native cuisine made them use the locally available ingredients to recreate their own beloved dishes. Stacey Lo runs an Indian-Chinese restaurant called The Chinese Club in New York with her husband Chef Salil Mehta. They claim that their family were contributors to the innovation of the Indo-Chinese cuisine in India. Lo's great-grandfather was the person who opened the original Chinese Club in Darjeeling in 1914 in order to create a sense of hospitality by bringing the 'taste of home' to the Hakka Community. She claimed that it didn't take long for the Indian Generals to start frequenting the place, asking for traditional dishes with increasing amounts of Indian spice and seasoning (Krishna, 2018). Over the years, Lo's great-grandfather and other Chinese immigrants contributed to creating various dishes for this particular cuisine.

4. History and Geography

The history of this cuisine reveals a significant amount of information regarding its formation and consequences of those innovations that are yet to be properly explored. The very names of the dishes spark a certain curiosity as they are similar to certain areas and tribes of China. The famous dish of *Manchurian* got its name from the geographical area of Manchuria - a plain area which lies in the northeast China. Hakka is a name of a minority tribe originating from the eastern parts of China, a name which contributes to the *Hakka noodles* of Indo-Chinese cuisine (Anusasananan, 2012). The famous condiment of *Schezwan*

derives its name from the central China province namely Sichuan¹, a place known for its spicy food. None of the above terms is associated with food in any part of China. However, in India, they are considered to be an archetype of what Chinese cuisine is like.

The first and the only city to house a Chinatown in India is Kolkata. In the year of 1778, the first Chinese settler in India was recorded namely Tong Atchew, whose real name was Yang Dazhao, a trader who landed near Budge Budge. Atchew set up a sugar cane plantation along with a sugar factory. Atchew then brought in a band of Chinese workers to work in his plantation and factory. This became the first Chinese settlement in India. The place came to be named Achipur after Tong Atchew. Atchew's grave and a Chinese temple are still found in Achipur. Shortly after Atchew died the Chinese settlers moved to Calcutta which led to the establishment of the 'Chinese colony' in Calcutta (Tan, 2013).

The first eyewitness account of the Chinese settlers in Calcutta came from a Vietnamese traveller called Le Van Phuc (1785-1849), who reported that there were 'several hundred' Chinese residents in Calcutta, with the majority of them coming from Fujian and Guangdong provinces of China. He also noted that the Chinese there had already established their own residential area with temples dedicated to Chinese deities (Tan, 2013).

A police report in 1788 mentioned that a sizable Chinese population settled in the vicinity of Bowbazar Street. However, one of the main settlements continued to be Achipur. In the 19th century, many Chinese people came to India and started their lives in central Calcutta near the Teretta bazaar area, this area came to be known as Chinatown. It acted as an important hub for the travellers and immigrants for the availability of Chinese commodity, restaurants, et cetera. It can be claimed that the Chinatown became an important centre for the Chinese culture in the heart of Calcutta. The Chinatown is divided into two areas, Old Chinatown (Tiretta Bazar) and New Chinatown (Tangra). Chinatown became a home away from home for the Chinese people and they brought their culture and food with them (Mukhopadhyay, 2017).

At first, Chinese households offered Chinese food services for Chinese workers alone. As the years passed a number of Indians gradually became attracted to the uniqueness of the food. Hence, one of the longest running Chinese restaurants in India named "Eau Chew", was established in 1920. Due to the change in the customer base, there arose a need for customization of the food. Therefore, the Chinese restaurant owners or/and chefs modified dishes by adding Indian spices, new ingredients, colouring, or adjusting flavours in order to cater to these requirements. This entire process is what we call the Indianisation of Chinese Food.

5. Research Questions and Objectives

The research aims to study origins and evolution of Chinese cuisine in India by tracing timing of signature dishes included on the menu the various elements of the cuisine such as ingredients, sauces, and cooking styles to study how they underwent changes over time and how these changes have impacted the popularity of the same.

The following research objectives include:

- *To understand the concept of “Indianisation” of Chinese food through the eyes of various stakeholders:* The study must focus on examining the identity that food has created from the perspectives of all the stakeholders. These include not only the restaurant owners but other contributors such as waiters, managers, chefs, consumers, etc. Chinese cuisine has been accepted by the Indian population to a tremendous extent. This level of popularity has led to the opening of several restaurants which are owned and managed by Indians with no Chinese roots. It would be insightful to understand the perspectives of both the restaurant owners of Indian origin and the restaurant owners of Chinese origin towards this cuisine. It would help us understand the identity of Chinese immigrants from their own perspectives as well as the perspectives of others.
- *To understand the cultural significance of Indo-Chinese cuisine:* The association of Indo-Chinese food with the Chinese community has largely influenced the popular perception of China and its culture. Through the means of the research, the aim is to understand the various elements used by restaurants which contribute to this perception of the Chinese culture.
- *To examine the reasons behind the popularity and unpopularity of certain dishes:* Despite the popularity of Indo-Chinese cuisine, certain dishes such as the Fish Bowl Soup, Chintoy and Bao did not receive the same level of acceptance by the Indian audience. These dishes are only famous in Tiretta Bazar or Bowbazar (the old Chinatown). By creating a spectrum of Indian and Chinese cuisine and placing particular dishes on the same, the intention is to understand the reasons behind the popularity of some these dishes or lack thereof of the other dishes.
- *To analyse how the Chinese immigrants led to the change in food culture:* The introduction of Indo-Chinese cuisine also leads to various changes in the existing food culture in Kolkata. From street hawkers to lavish restaurants, no menu is complete without *Hakka noodles* or *Manchurian*. In addition, there have also been instances such as noodle soup offerings to Durga Mata during Durga Pooja which requires a

further probe into the impact of Indo-Chinese cuisine on Calcutta's food culture and the extent to which it has been incorporated in daily life.

- *To understand the cultural attachment of older and newer generations of Chinese immigrants towards Indo-Chinese food:* The newer generations of Chinese immigrants' want to migrate to western countries to expand their business and achieve a better standard of living. However, the older generations are still keen on staying in India. Here, the aim is to understand the reasons for the cultural attachment or non-attachment of Chinese immigrants to Indo-Chinese cuisine and the identity it has created for them.

The above-mentioned aims and objects lead to the two main research questions which are as follows:

- Where do the various dishes of Indo-Chinese cuisine stand in the spectrum of Indian & Chinese cuisine? How has this positioning affected the popularity of these dishes?
- What is the significance of the authenticity³ of the cuisine to its creators and consumers?

6. Methodology

This research will follow an exploratory study path as little scholarly resources are available in the study of Chinese cuisine in India. The field of food study is still at the infancy stage and does not reside in a well-defined theoretical framework of specific disciplines (Warde, 2014). To prepare for uncertainty and new findings on the field, the design of research methods needs to remain flexible and innovative. Thus, multiple methods will be used to help capture accounts and evaluate data from the field: observation, discourse analysis, semi-structured interviews, structured interviews and in-depth interviews.

The observational method will be used to analyse and understand the ways in which certain dishes are made to help understand the difference in the cooking styles. Discourse analysis will also be conducted through the analyses of scholarly articles, newspapers articles and various cookbooks on the different aspects of the cuisine.

Semi-structured interviews will also be conducted based on a questionnaire with restaurant owners, street hawkers, chefs, waiters and consumers of the cuisine. These interviews should aid in understanding the various outlooks of the stakeholders of the cuisine on topics such as cultural changes or identity building through food. This method allows to

analyse the same aspect from different perspectives and will lead to a less biased understanding of the issues. The questions created will be based on how each of the samples relates to the food and what type of information they would be able to provide. The open-ended nature of the questions will also allow for a more in-depth analysis of the topic. The same approach will be employed with professors and scholars, who will be the key informants of the research. The findings will be qualitative in nature. Hence, importance is given to depth over breadth to conduct a proper research. So as to aid the research, the questionnaires have been designed based on the two main themes of our study:

- The characteristics of Indo-Chinese cuisine
- The effect of Indo-Chinese cuisine on the culture of the place and the people.

Based on the initial analysis of secondary data, interviews were set up with restaurant owners in Kolkata. The restaurant owners belonged to two main backgrounds - Indian origin and Chinese origin. Since they are of different origins, it will be helpful in understanding both their perspectives on the various cultural aspects of Indo-Chinese cuisine and how it might affect them. They would also be able to help us understand the features of the cuisine.

The second group of the sample consists of the workers, i.e., the waiters and chefs of the restaurants. They have been included in the research because they directly work with the cuisine on a daily basis and they might be able to answer our food-related questions better than the owners. The chefs would be more knowledgeable about how certain dishes are cooked and why they have chosen this particular style. The waiters are in direct contact with the consumers on a regular basis, so they will be able to give information on the favourite dishes amongst the consumers and also what dish is sought out more at a specific time in the day.

The third sample group is the consumers. On one hand, the waiters would be able to share information about what the consumers' favourite dishes are and the consumers can shed light upon the reason behind the same. This would provide answers about the image of Indo-Chinese cuisine. Interviewing consumers may also lead to a better understanding of why the food culture changed with the introduction of the cuisine.

The fourth sample group is composed of the scholars and other key informants. They have a more educated and well-read opinion about the cuisine, its various components and

the ethnopolitics between India & China. So, their viewpoint will be beneficial to the research as it provides the research with both credibility and a background for our analysis.

Street hawkers will also be interviewed. These people function more informally as compared to the restaurants, but they would also be able to provide a different point of view on the food and the changes it has caused in the food culture of Kolkata.

The planned sample size ranges from 25 to 30 individuals. The sample size might increase further by using the method of snowball and convenience sampling. Both of these techniques are non-probability methods where convenience sampling draws participants from the population who are easy to reach and snowball sampling chooses future participants by enlisting associates or acquaintances of the primary participants. These methods are the most applicable to our study as they are simple to use and time-effective. The hope for this study is to fulfil the aims and objectives with the help of the planned methodology and be able to answer the research questions in a more objective and thorough manner.



Chapter 2

The Indo-Chinese Cuisine

"Call it Chinese food adapted to Indian tastes, or the merger of Chinese ingredients like soy sauce and vinegar with garlic, ginger, and chiles."

- Chef



1. Historical Background

Most of the available literature was rich in exploring the history of migration of Chinese communities to India and their struggle for survival in a foreign land. Therefore, abundant research was found in Chinese communities in Kolkata. At the same time, there has been relatively lesser research done on the cultural aspects of these communities, particularly on how their traditional food got amalgamated with the Indian food. This process resulted in the formation of a new fusion cuisine known as Indo-Chinese cuisine. Even though studies have been conducted on how restaurants were opened in Toretta and Tangra, a huge gap in research was observed when it came to the aspect of food. This gap also paved the way to explore the important aspects of this food which were responsible for attracting the Indians towards this cuisine. The unexplored areas included the key ingredients in various dishes, cooking styles employed and the way the food was promoted, such as the decor and ambience which aided to the perceived authenticity, was relevant to create an understanding of this fusion cuisine which can now be found in most of the restaurants and street vendors across India.

The history of Chinese immigrants in India provided a social and cultural background to the study of Indo-Chinese food. Even in the previous chapter, it was briefly mentioned that the influx of Chinese immigrants was observed in the late 18th century. Their primary occupation was dentistry, carpentry and opening and managing restaurants. However, the Indo-Sino war of 1962 proved to be a major turning point for the community.

By 1959, the leather factories managed by Chinese immigrants in Tangra were prospering. At the same time, the Indo-Sino relations began to deteriorate. During the course of the Indo-Sino war, the Indian government seized the leather factories. This war, which was caused by border conflicts, led to the mistreatment and detention of anyone who had a Chinese name, ancestry or spouse. The Chinese workers were detained in Deoli, Rajasthan and were imprisoned there for up to 6 years. Their freedom was still heavily policed till the mid-1990s (Griffiths, 2014). The perception of China during these years among Indian citizens was majorly negative. Even though recent evidence has revealed that Indian officials had wrongly extended the boundary beyond the Macmohan line and Nehru's order of evicting any Chinese who intruded on 'our territory' had further angered China, the common misconception was that China had issued an unprovoked attack on India. This caused the immigrants to face severe hostility (Srikanth, 2012). Post-war, when some of these Chinese workers returned to Calcutta, their factories were no longer functional. Therefore, they

decided to open Chinese restaurants to serve the large number of immigrants settled in Tangra. This led to the establishment of Chinatown in Tangra.

Tangra is located in East Kolkata and houses many tanneries built by Hakka Chinese immigrants. Tangra is a major starting point for the Indianisation of Chinese Food because this is where the “Hakka style” Chinese food was introduced and proved to be a success with the Indian masses. The success of "Hakka style" Chinese food in the rest of India encouraged a migration of many Chinese families to other cities as the economic fortunes of Tangra decayed. Many landmark Chinese eateries, including Nanking, Peiping and Fat Mama have closed or changed hands and fortunes. Tangra's unique Indian-Chinese food has attracted a lot of attention and caused rapid changes as more and more dishes are either related to the banner of Chinese food or as the popularity of the Indianised Chinese food spreads not only in India but beyond borders as well (Sengupta, 2018).

It should also to be taken into consideration that this change took place only in the second half of the nineteenth century when there was a tremendous change in the material culture of the Bengali middle class. There was a refinement in food, education, music and literature which defined the middle class and affected their households. Bengali cuisine, especially during this time, refused to become national and was restricted to its domestic nature. There was a need to keep this domestic nature of the Bengali cuisine intact to save it from the vulgarity of commercialisation and to retain its familial nature and simplicity (Ray, 2012). When it came to eating outside in restaurants, Bengalis tend to choose Mughal, North Indian or European food. Kolkata’s first recognised Bengali restaurant was founded in the 1960s and the city’s first up-market Bengali restaurant was opened in the 1990s (Nandy, 2003). This created a favourable environment for the culmination and acceptance of a new cuisine such as the Indo-Chinese cuisine, which is authentic to Kolkata in the sense that the roots of the cuisine can be placed in this city.

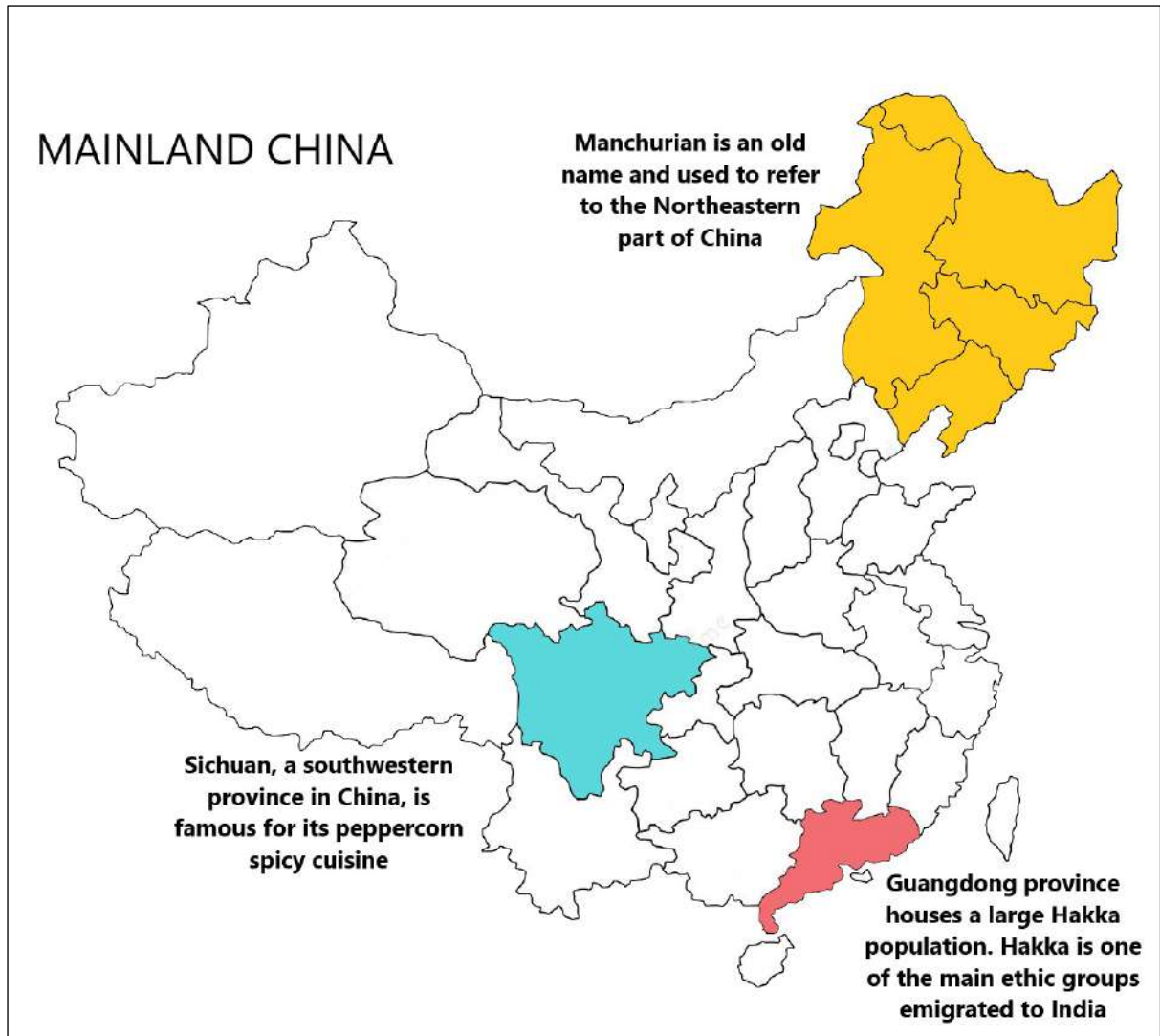


Figure 2.1: Map of China indicating the areas from which the names of the dishes are adapted from and the homeland of the Hakka community of Kolkata.

2. Tracing the Hakka Cuisine

The Hakka people is the name given to a community of people from China. They are believed to have originated from Shanxi and Henan provinces in the central plains of China. There are several theories which link them to the Han Chinese community, locals of Meixian or even a community related to Koreans or Japanese. However, none of these theories are widely accepted (Anusasananan, 2012).

It is believed that the Hakka people migrated to the south-eastern coastal regions of China and the central Sichuan province many centuries ago. The term Hakka literally translates to ‘guest’ and ‘family’. Therefore, they have been nomadic in history and are known for migrating to new regions. This pattern of migration is not limited to the boundaries

of China, as Hakka people have also been known to have migrated abroad. One can also find the Hakka people in Southeast Asia, Australia, Europe and the Americas. It is believed that it was during the fifth major migration of the Hakka during the 1870s when the survivors of an ongoing civil war, also known as the Taiping rebellion, in China migrated to the Americas, Mauritius, the Caribbean and India. When communist China opened its doors in 1979, some of these emigrants went back to their families in the mainland. Today an estimated eighty million people can trace their heritage to Hakka ancestors. Landlessness and frequent relocations have helped build this ability of survival and adaptability in the Hakka (Anusasananan, 2012).

Hakka food is described as strong flavoured, salty and fatty. Pork and Soy sauce are agreed upon as prominent features of this food. It is a diverse cuisine considered to be ‘fresh, natural, uncomplicated, satisfying and direct’. When Hakka migrated from one place to another, they also adapted their cooking according to the ingredients available in the new environments. In Jamaica, noodles soup is served with Soy sauce which is laced with local scotch. In Peru, local yucca is substituted for taro to steam with pork. In California, fish sauce or sweet Soy sauce is added to the Hakka dishes. In Mauritius, fried rice is served with Indian style tomato chutney to cater to the Creole-fusion tastes of the island. This borrowing also worked the other way around. In local restaurants of New Delhi, dishes such as *Chowmein* are served. Hakka foods retain their identity even when they are adopted by a new environment (Anusasananan, 2012).

3. Flavours, Dishes and Ingredients

Food constitutes a significant part of India’s rich cultural heritage. It is to be noted that the cuisine that is taken for granted as ‘Indian’ has been greatly influenced by multiple foreign flavours. Many of the delicacies which mark the foundation of Indian cuisine are adaptations based on the flavours and ingredients brought by the Portuguese, Dutch, British and French and before them the Italians, Greeks and Arabs. ‘Indian-ness’ of the cuisine is in the variety of its parts, it is more about the richness of the diverse flavours and not about the summation of them all (Pant, 2013). It is said that the dishes of Indian cuisine changed their character every one hundred kilometers.

Due to this pattern of the establishment of identity for Indian cuisine most foreign dishes, in order to be accepted into the Indian taste palate, have undergone various modifications. International giants such as McDonalds and KFC failed in the beginning. They

only succeeded when they tweaked their recipes with Indian flavours and ingredients, such as the elimination of beef burger and the addition of 'Aloo Tikki'. While this was done intentionally, cuisines like Chinese have performed a more gradual change, and over the years this has led to the emergence of the cuisine of Indo-Chinese cuisine.

Nelson Wang, known as the godfather of Indo-Chinese food, opened China Garden in Mumbai back in 1984. Interestingly, most of his popular dishes were created as measures to prevent food wastage. The fried creamy corn was used to avoid the wastage of congealed corn and the fried chicken lollipops were created to use up the chicken wings. Along with such dishes, he also tried to create dishes such as the date pancake to cater to the Indian sweet tooth (Lee, n.d.). His ideas and creativity have gained popularity and been adopted nationwide. Indian Chinese food is now available across the country. The flavours of Chinese cuisine have also been mixed with various Indian dishes as well to create dishes such as Chinese bhel and *Schezwan* dosa.

The Indian food palate is known for the plethora of flavours it offers in just one single bite. In many international cuisines, complementary flavours are chosen where similar ingredients are paired together to compliment a single taste. On the contrary, Indian cuisine is less likely to use common flavours. The researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology, Jodhpur collected and searched an extensive database of around 2500 recipes to determine the number of ingredients used in a dish of the Indian cuisine. The recipes used a total of 194 ingredients. On an average 7 ingredients were used in a dish but the maximum did reach 40. The results of this study were interesting. It showed that the Indian cuisine presents a strong negative correlation in the food pairing that shows that contrasting flavours are found together instead of complementary ones (Jain, N.K. & Bagler, 2015).

This complexity has been adopted by the Chinese food in India. The Indian taste palate has been exposed to the basic tastes of sweet, salty, sour and bitter. Recently, the fifth taste umami, found in 2000, has also been adopted into Indian food. As described by, Vir Sanghvi, a food writer, umami is the taste of dried black mushrooms or Soy sauce. It is the pungent presence in tomato ketchup (Sanghvi, 2013). What is interesting to note is that the Indo-Chinese food uses both Soy sauce and ketchup. This taste is found in traditional Chinese food as well where there is a use of 12 different kinds of Soy sauce.

The Japanese were the first to identify umami. They began producing Ajinomoto, a packaged umami additive. The use of this led to an important discovery; the umami flavour coats one's mouth and alters the way other food is tasted. Other tastes become sharper, more

distinct and sometimes meatier. This is the reason why the use of Soy sauce or ketchup is known to alter the taste experience. This additive, scientifically known as Mono Sodium Glutamate (MSG), has been adopted in almost every Indo-Chinese kitchen (Sanghvi, 2013).

A concern was raised in the 1970s about the health effects of MSG. Though the industry has spent huge sums on research to prove otherwise a doubt has been created in the minds of the consumers. Research proved that glutamates occur naturally in the body, but some people are allergic to MSG, and the effects kick in only when consumed in large quantities. After this concern was raised, many kitchens tried avoiding the use of MSG. However, by this point, the use of MSG has become unavoidable. It is present in the various sauces or the powders that are used in cooking Indo-Chinese cooking. Traditional Indian cooking does not use umami, but in recent years with the introduction of Chinese food, Indian palates have displayed a fondness towards this flavour. As mentioned earlier, the three basic ingredients of any Indo-Chinese dish are Soy sauce, ketchup, and Ajinomoto. The primary taste of these ingredients is umami. Indian palates have become addicted to this flavour causing this food industry to boom. Along with these dishes, most packaged noodles, which are also very popular, contain MSG (Sanghvi, 2013). Hence, umami is one of the main reasons for the popularity gained by the Indo-Chinese food industry.

The Chinese food in India has several peculiarities associated with it. While taste is the predominant one, there are others such as the presence of both food and the food outlet. The food is red, greasy, and spicy. There is the use of ginger and garlic along with the sauces mentioned earlier. This is the basic blend used in any Indo-Chinese recipe. The ingredients used with these seasonings are ones which are locally found such as bell pepper, onions, paneer, and coriander leaves to name a few. The use of corn flour as a thickener has also been adapted from Indian cooking. The use of this style of cooking is not limited anymore. Indian dishes such as dosa, bhel, pav bhaji, samosa, and so on, all have an Indo-Chinese variant. This brings it back to the need of the Indian palate to taste umami (Sankar, 2017). While Indians are not prepared to part with their traditional dishes, they have figured out a method to satisfy both their ideas and their palate.

4. Versions, Transformations and Evolution

At first, Chinese restaurants opened in Kolkata only to cater to the Chinese community and the British population that was present in India at the time. The older restaurants used to serve delicacies like shark's fin and bird's nest which are more traditional

Chinese dishes. When the Indians also began visiting, the restaurants started to serve a dish known as Chinese curry (Xing, 2009). This would have been one of the first Indo-Chinese dishes that marked the beginning of the entire industry. Nowadays, Chinese food is available on most streets in almost every city, it can even be found in places primarily serving cuisines like Mughlai or Punjabi. This increase in availability and variety was affected by many different aspects since its advent which range from the Sino-India war to changing economic conditions.

The Chinatown's popularity has been affected by the political relationship between the two countries often times. During World War II, the number of Chinese restaurants seemed to grow in parts of South Asia due to the migration of the Chinese people to these countries to avoid the war. In Kolkata specifically, the refugees started to open their own eateries which increased the total number of Chinese tea-houses and restaurants to 150. These businesses were heavily affected during the war of 1962 between India and China. While this resulted in the closure of many restaurants, it did not affect the popularity of the cuisine. In fact, by this time, the Indian palate was so used to this particular mixture of flavours that it became a part of their eating habits. The war did, however, force the immigrants to move to a new area where they opened more Chinese restaurants. The food served in this area has become a cuisine of its own. This inspired two franchises of the Indo-Chinese cuisine named 'Tangra' and 'Indian Wok' which spread to international cities such as Singapore, New York and Toronto (Biswas, 2017).

The evolution of the restaurant culture to what it is today began when the Chinese immigrants moved to Tangra. Joel Hong, grandson of the creator of *Schezwan* and owner of Eau Chew claimed in an interview that he noticed that there was a change in the way food is sold in Tangra versus how it used to be sold in Tiretta Bazar. Tangra took a more business-oriented approach and built restaurants that would provide customers with an exotic experience. The place was decorated in such a way that it always looked like a celebration was happening in order to entice the Indians. There was also the inclusion of seating for big groups and availability of alcohol to create a fun name. At the same time, the Tiretta bazar restaurants like Eau Chew and Nanking project the image of a quick place to grab a bite. He also believes that after 100 years since its conception, Chinese food has become a part of Kolkata's food culture which he credits to both the combination of ingredients and cooking styles and the intercultural marriage between Chinese men and Indian women (Deepak, 2017).

Despite the move of Chinatown to Tangra, the tradition of a hot Chinese breakfast continues to exist in Turret Bazaar. They sell dishes such as Bao, Chin toy, Lope yang, momos and fish ball soup. Momos are the only dish that is predominantly available throughout India (Deepak, 2018). This suggests that not all the dishes that the Chinese immigrants created were well accepted. While breakfast in Turret is still considered as a must-see tourist spot in Kolkata, it is not as widespread as the *Schezwan* sauce or *Manchurian*.

A key point in history for this cuisine is the introduction of the *Manchurian*. There are multiple theories on whether it was created by Nelson Wang or if he just brought the recipe from Kolkata to Mumbai. Whichever the case, it led to the popularity of Chinese restaurants in other cities. Nelson Wang first sold *Manchurian* outside a cricket stadium and it was a swift hit. Building on this momentum, he opened China Garden which quickly became a trendy place in Mumbai. It continues to be regularly filled with Bollywood starlets who have added tremendously to its fame (Shah, 2015).

Over time, the industry has been appropriated by Indian restaurant owners as well. Chinese food is now available in various formats. It ranges from typical Chinese to Indian dishes with a twist of Indo-Chinese garnishes, such as *Chinese bhel*. Other than Kolkata, a majority of these restaurants are mostly owned by Indians. Multiple franchises such as *Mainland China* and *Yo! China* has also spread across the country. This cuisine is available in street stalls and also seen in most 5-star hotels (M., 2007). This popularity and widespread liking of this cuisine happened due to the increased sales and interest showed towards Chinese food. However, how this process took place is still in question.

The future of this cuisine is also in question. In recent years, there has been an increase in the creation of dishes like *Chinese bhel* or *Schezwan* dosa. There has not been much effect of these dishes on the restaurants business as they are primarily considered to be street food but that could very easily affect in the future. A New York restaurant, Spice Symphony actually sells *Chinese bhel*, implying that these street dishes of today could be the next *Manchurian* (Mishan, 2013).

The knowledge that has been acquired so far allows understanding the origins of these dishes and the historical events that led to their spread across India. However, information regarding how the recipes were shared, why the same décor is followed and why this acceptance of Chinese food didn't extend to its creators is still vague. The intriguing nature of these questions is the reason for this research.



Figure 2.2: Showing the four generations of the Eau Chew restaurant

5. Food and Culture

The Indo-Chinese food has created an overwhelming impact on the consumers and restaurants. The food served is an amalgamation of two unique culinary worlds. Cooking might have become a way for the people to conserve their identity in order to endure hard times throughout their history. The Hakka people, for instance, have a long history of migration, throughout which they have picked up and adapted to the local cuisines.

Michael Freeman in *Food in Chinese Culture* said that any cuisine worthy of its name does not necessarily come from one single tradition and instead it “amalgamates, selects and organizes the best of several traditions”. People of different cultures share different assortments of food variables as these variables contribute to the understanding of human behaviour towards different cuisines. These variables are put forth in a form of a time perspective which gives a historical background on how the food habits change as we uncover the reasons and consequences (Chang, 1978). Perspectives on foodscapes, which includes the food, its production methods and the cultural associations, allow us to understand and showcase the mobilisation of cultural differences. Pollock (2009) claims that “Foodscapes represent different forms that gastronomies can take as a result of past and present influences.... Foodscapes underline that respect for food in the enhancement of cultural identity”. Foodscapes provide us with insights into a shifting world of modernity and identity. During the process of the spread of population, food becomes a significant means for people to tie back to their pasts. Here, there are links to the past created by food.

During the period of the creation of Indo-Chinese cuisine, the environment in Kolkata was favourable towards other cuisines. Since the Bengalis preferred to keep their cuisine domesticated, the area became open to the establishments of restaurants serving foreign

cuisines (Ray, 2012). Moreover, Calcutta was receiving an influx of immigrants from China due to their internal conflicts (Anusasananan, 2012). As the Hakka community had to flee their homeland. They had a need to retain a link to their country, for which food became a means. Therefore, it can be understood why Calcutta became the hub for Indo-Chinese food.

Authenticity entails how cultural identity is determined through food. The proper question to ask is not ‘is it authentic?’ but ‘why is it authentic?’. Here, we need to look into what it means for such a version of a dish to appear in this time and place. According to Allen Weiss (2011), Gastronomical authenticity refers to the:

The appropriateness of linking a specific ingredient, technique or recipe, or a relation between dishes... to a particular time and place.... authenticity concerns how cultural identity is determined through cuisine.... for a dish, the meaning of which is to be found through its variants, elucidated (cooked) in a particular time and place.

Here, authentic should not be confused with typical, as typical indicates the conformity of a dish to a type.

Along with the physiological aspects of taste, taste is also an aesthetic choice which is susceptible to analyses (Weiss, 2011). Here, the question of who is speaking becomes important, where the perception of different groups must be analysed according to their positioning around the cuisine. Keeping this in mind, the analysis will include the perceptions of different groups towards the cuisine.

At the same time, why did the food undergo this tremendous change in the Indian market? The hybrid cuisine which was created is foreign to both, Indian and Chinese. Do the Hakka community identify with this food? Or was it just created by them in order to make a living? Through the research, the aim is to answer such questions.



Chapter 3

Hakka Noodles, Manchurian and Schezwan

"But wait a minute. Manchurian? Is that even a dish?"

- Consumer



1. Tracing the Origin of Indo-Chinese Cuisine

The following chapter focuses on understanding the creation of the Indo-Chinese cuisine by tracing the origin of popular dishes and the changes made by restaurants owners in their menus over the years. It further maps the geographical spread of the Indo-Chinese cuisine within and outside Kolkata and the reasons that led to this spread. It goes on to explore the transition of the cuisine from traditional Chinese to Indianised Chinese food. Lastly, data for the varied perceptions of the authenticity of the cuisine have been analysed in the chapter along with the contribution of the ambience of restaurants to the feeling of ‘Chineseness’. For the purpose of conducting interviews, we chose individuals belonging to varied professions in from the locations of Tangra, Tiretta Bazaar and Park Street. Our sample included 10 restaurant owners, 6 restaurant managers, 10 chefs, 7 waiters, 15 street vendors and 19 consumers.



Figure 3.1: Map of restaurants in Tangra.



Figure 3.2: Map of restaurants in Tiretta Bazar.

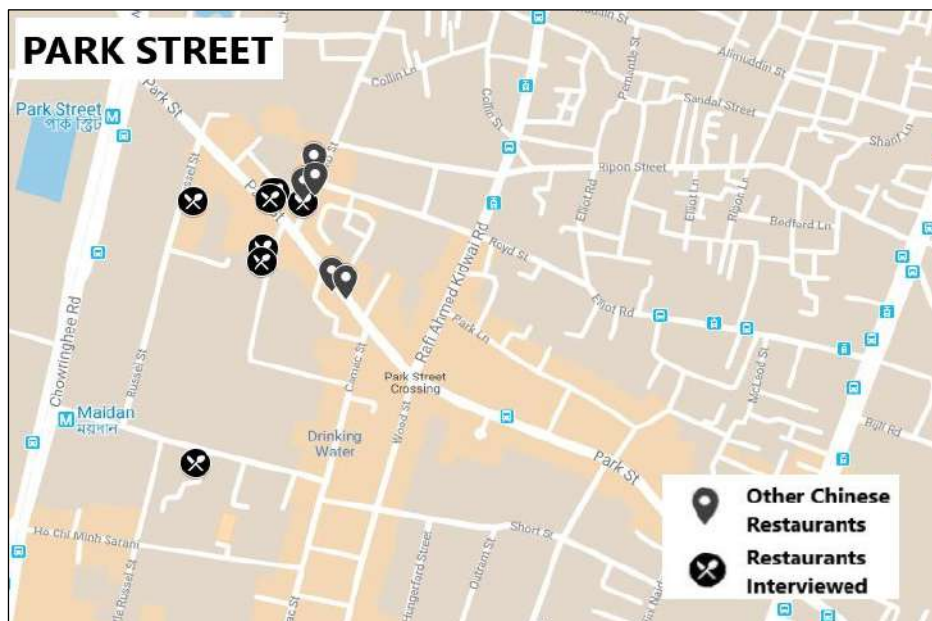


Figure 3.3: Map of restaurants in Park street.

When one thinks of the Chinese food served in India, dishes such as *Hakka noodles* and *Manchurian* are the first to come to one’s mind. Any description of the Chinese cuisine is incomplete without these dishes. Gathering the information collected through our preliminary research led us to the conclusion that the history behind the origin of these dishes played a significant role in shaping the journey of Chinese cuisine in India. In order to develop a thorough understanding of the cuisine, it was important to collect sufficient knowledge about its origin and the reasons that contributed to the creation of the same.

1.1 Origin

Through our initial interviews, we were able to infer that the Hakka and the Cantonese communities of China have significantly contributed to the creation of various popular dishes that are currently a part of the cuisine. This influence occurred during different time periods in Kolkata's food history. This was emphasized by Monica Liu, the owner of five Chinese restaurants in Kolkata, including Beijing:

Chinese food was popular in India from the sixties. The food then was different from what we consume today. It was more similar to the Cantonese style of cooking Chinese food. Nowadays, the food we serve involves a culmination of both Cantonese and Hakka styles of cooking. (M. Liu, personal communication, October 02, 2018).

The Chinese food market in India was at first taken over by the Cantonese community. The Hakka community joined the restaurant business much later. Mr Li Han Kuang, who had considerable knowledge about the history of Nanking restaurant, shared with us that during the initial years, the food served was mostly Cantonese when it comes to its style (L. Kuang, personal communication, October 05, 2018). Dishes such as *Hakka noodles* and *Manchurian* did not exist back then. Instead, people used to consume Cantonese delicacies such as *Xia Jiao*, *Chuanjaan*, *Dim sums* and *Zhou. Bird's Nest* and *Shark fins* which were the luxury dishes back then.

1.1.1 Manchurian

There exist multiple theories regarding how the widely consumed dish of *Manchurian* came into being. While conducting our preliminary research, we discovered a number of articles which stated that *Manchurian* was invented by Mr Nelson Wang. This information was further supported by Mr Joel Hong, the owner of Eau Chew, the oldest Chinese restaurant in Kolkata. Mr Joel Hong also estimated *Manchurian* to be about 20 years old (J. Hong, personal communication, October 04, 2018). Surprisingly, while conducting interviews in Kolkata, not everyone seemed to be in agreement with what was stated in the aforementioned articles. This includes the two retired chefs who were interviewed at the Sea Ip Church. According to Mr Michael Ho and Mr Michael Leong:

Manchurian, *Schezwan*, *Hot Garlic chicken*, *Hot Ginger chicken*.... all these recipes came around the mid-1970s. *Manchurian* was brought to India by a chef named Brandon, who came from Hong Kong to work at Taj Bombay in the year 1975. The Sichuan food was also brought by him to the Indian taste palate. (M. Ho & M. Leong, personal communication, October 01, 2018).

On the other hand, Mrs Sachiko, a third generation Tibetan, who owns the restaurant Blue Poppy at Park Street was unaware about the origin of *Manchurian* in India. Upon further questioning, she said, “I don’t really have an idea about the origin of *Manchurian*. All I know is that there is a province known as Manchuria in China, but I don’t think that they eat *Manchurian* there.” (Sachiko, personal communication, October 04, 2018).

We also got the opportunity of interviewing Mrs Michelle Wang, who was the wife of Mr Nelson Wang’s cousin brother. It was interesting to note that while most newspaper articles and online sources consider *Manchurian* to have been created by Mr Wang, Mrs Michelle Wang was unsure about the reliability of this information despite belonging to the same family (M. Wang, personal communication, October 02, 2018).

With respect to the reasons that led to the creation of *Manchurian*, the caretaker at the Sea Ip church provided us with useful information that stated that the Indian customers often used to ask the chefs to add some chilli or salt to their typical food. Having worked previously as a chef, he believed that as time passed, the food started changing according to the tastes and preferences of the consumers and recipes like *Manchurian* emerged to satisfy the new taste demands.

1.1.2 Hakka Noodles

Noodles are foreign to Indians. According to Mr Jawhar Sircar, a scholar and professor, Indians were initially sceptical about Chinese food and maintained distance from Chinese food (J. Sircar, personal communication, October 04, 2018). One of the reasons for the same could be that they were unable to understand how chopsticks were supposed to be used. The process of Indianisation of Chinese food also involved the adaptation of forks in the place of chopsticks. He further went on to state that around the early 20th century, that a large number of Chinese immigrants were brought to India for cheap labour and profitable business opportunities.

An information highlighted by Dr Sircar was that forced labour was quite prominent in China and surrounding areas during that time and how some of the labour decided to stay in Kolkata in order to escape doing the slave work:

You are working around in China, someone gags you, kidnaps you and sells you. Whatever it is. We can use the term forceful labour. This forceful labour used to try to escape from the ships because they were being made to do slave jobs. Those slave jobs tried to escape at the first hint. Many of them jumped ship and stayed back in Calcutta. (J. Sircar, personal communication, October 04, 2018).

When it came to the origin of *Hakka noodles*, most of the restaurant owners lacked clarity about who was behind this invention. Michelle Wang, the owner of Shun Li in Tangra responded to questions regarding the origin of *Hakka noodles* and said, “*Hakka noodles* is dry. You just need to keep frying the noodles in the wok. On the other hand, Cantonese noodles is pan-fried with gravy, vegetables, meat and prawns. That’s all I know about *Hakka noodles*” (M. Wang, personal communication, October 02, 2018).

The lack of clarity gave rise to a number of varied opinions regarding the creation of *Hakka noodles*. Mr. Chakraborty, who was the manager at Waldorf restaurant in Park Street, believed that *Hakka noodles* were invented in China. He also told us that Waldorf inherited the recipe of *Hakka noodles* from the Chinese people who used to run the restaurant earlier (Chakraborty, personal communication, October 02, 2018). One of the chefs at Carpe Diem, which is also located at Park Street, believed that *Hakka noodles* came with the migration of the Hakka community from China to India. Similar responses were received from the retired chefs who were interviewed at the Sea Ip church as well as Mr John who worked at the Golden Dragon restaurant (John, personal communication, October 02, 2018). On the contrary, Mr David Chen claimed that “Earlier we used to eat this Green *Chow*.... Cantonese *Chow* that we call it, but it was in Delhi that these two chefs came up with *Hakka Chow*. It became a good hit, people liked it” linking the origin of *Hakka noodles* to Delhi rather than Kolkata (D. Chen, personal communication, October 04, 2018). At the same time, Mr Michael Leong, one of the retired chefs, specified that the consumption of *Hakka noodles* could be traced back to the 1960s (M. Leong, personal communication, October 03, 2018). As previously mentioned, Monica Liu also happened to have the same opinion regarding the years that witnessed an increase in the popularity of *Hakka noodles* and other popular dishes (M. Liu, personal communication, October 02, 2018).

Joel Hong also placed the origin of *Hakka noodles* to his grandfather’s time. Interestingly, he also claimed that his parents had brought dishes such as *Hakka noodles* to the Indian cuisine and named them as well:

Initially, we used to serve authentic Chinese food to our customers but when my grandfather expanded the business to a full-fledged restaurant, he added certain dishes such as rice and noodles to the menu. When the demand for these dishes decreased, my parents decided to introduce dishes such as *Hakka noodles*, Steamed Rice, Fried Rice.... and that’s where *Hakka noodles* came from. (J. Hong, personal communication, October 03, 2018).

According to him, when Mr Hong's grandfather took over Eau Chew, he began to experiment with the traditional Chinese food that was then served. As the new dishes with rice and noodles gained popularity, they became a staple part of the menu. Mr Hong's parents named them as "Hakka" because that was where their families were originally from (J, Hong, personal communication, October 03, 2018).

One widely accepted opinion among various people regarding the reason for the origin of *Hakka noodles* and other popular Indo-Chinese dishes is that the typical Chinese food was not suitable for the Indian population as it was quite bland. Therefore, Indianised Chinese dishes such as *Hakka noodles* and *Manchurian* originated. According to Mrs Sachiko, who owns the restaurant Blue Poppy at Park Street:

I think dishes such as *Hakka noodles* and *Manchurian* came into being because Indian people would not have like the original Chinese food. It wouldn't suit their palate at all. It's pretty bland . . . they wouldn't pay for the food that they consider to be meant for the sick people. (Sachiko, personal communication, October 04, 2018).

1.1.3 Schezwan Style

A number of varied perspectives were found for the creation of the *Schezwan* style as well. A common notion among various restaurant owners was that the *Schezwan* dishes came from China's Sichuan province to India. The same was asserted by Eau Chew's Mr Joel Hong as well (J. Hong, personal communication, October 03, 2018). The reason for the origin of *Schezwan* in India was believed to be the Indian population's undeniable liking for spicy food. However, according to Mr Michael Ho, there exists a vast difference between the original Sichuan Peppercorn spice popular in traditional Chinese cuisine and the present day *Schezwan* style prevalent in Indo-Chinese cuisine. He also argued that the *Schezwan* style was specifically introduced to the Indo-Cuisine to cater to the Indian palate (M. Ho, personal communication, October 02, 2018).

The initial menus of a number of restaurants in Kolkata were influenced by the food history of the family which owned the restaurant. According to Mrs Sachiko, Blue Poppy's menu items always had a certain Tibetan touch to them:

My grandfather was an Army General in China and he got married to a Tibetan woman when he migrated from China to Kalimpong. . . later my mother went to Taiwan for her education. . . so all these influences have been amalgamated into our food. . . the first menu we came up with was essentially Tibetan and Chinese. (Sachiko, personal communication, October 04, 2018).

A common response received regarding reasons behind the changes in the menu was that the menus changed according to the type and taste of the consumers. Quite a few restaurants changed their menus when the number of Indian customers started increasing. They often used the menus of restaurants located in foreign countries such as Canada, Thailand and Singapore to look for new dishes that could be added to the menus. They usually took inspiration for their menus and new recipes from their relatives who own restaurants in these foreign countries. This was observed from the response given by the owner of Golden Phoenix:

The changes in the menu often depend upon the availability of customers...we make changes to the menu every 6 months depending on the popular and unpopular dishes... accordingly, we also add new dishes to the menus which we source from our relatives settled in Canada and Thailand. (P. Li, personal communication, October 04, 2018).

The restaurant owner of Eau Chew had similar beliefs:

My mother goes to Canada very often... she tries the dishes there and tells me about them... we then start preparing the dishes and make a few customers try them... and depending on the responses we decide whether to include it in the menu or not. (J. Hang, personal communication, October 03, 2018).

The customer demands also led to the creation of certain new dishes. An example of this could be the peculiar dish called Josephine Noodles which was invented by Mr Joel's mother at Eau Chew when a customer demanded something different that went further than what was available in the menu:

The first time we modified our menu would be probably 10-15 years ago... there was a noodle dish that was named after my mother, Josephine Noodles...the customer was like a family member to us and wanted to try something new...so that's how Josephine Noodles came into existence...he named the noodles after my mother as she had created them. (J. Hang, personal communication, October 03, 2018).

Monica Liu shared another anecdote regarding how she managed to create 'Fried Prawn', her award-winning dish. The dish was at first created by her cousin brother for his friends. Later, Monica Liu improved the dish and invented her own version of 'Fried Prawn':

One of my cousin brother he came back from Singapore during new year time. He said did I will make one special item for you. I say okay because I have invited some friends for the New Year's Eve so I will make prawn for you I said fine. When he's making, I didn't even go to the kitchen and see what he's making because I myself

was busy cooking other food. So, he made it's called fried prawn. Golden fried prawn. But when he give me the fried prawn, I don't like it at all because from the shrimp he made that lots of butter on top it made that small prawn become so big it looked big but don't taste nice. Then with that I have a second thought that this dish is good but I should invent that again. So, I tried my level best not once I can success so many times and I success it and it's called golden fried prawn which I have got the award in this and you can see on my outside there's a picture that's my golden fried prawn and I got award not only once I so many times its very famous. (M. Liu, personal communication, October 02, 2018).

Interestingly, some restaurants had separate menus for the Indian population and the Chinese population who were willing to eat authentic Chinese food. Such menu changes were not only observable in the case of restaurants but among the popular street hawkers as well. Mr G.D. Rao informed that initially, he used to serve momos and a few snacks at his stall, but with the increase in the demand for Chinese food, he had begun to serve a variety of Indo-Chinese dishes at his stall (G. Rao, personal communication, October 03, 2018).

First few restaurants such as Nanking and Eau Chew had given rise to the Chinese cuisine in India. The purpose of opening Nanking was to gather money which was to be used for the betterment of the church² in the future.

According to Mr Li Han Kuang, a large number of American and British residents in the city of Kolkata used to frequently dine at Nanking (L. Kuang, personal communication, October 05, 2018). Quite a few of them were army officials and police officers. Mr Joel Hong at Eau Chew also provided with similar inputs:

The name Eau Chew translates to Europe. When my grandparents came to India, a large number of Britishers were settled in Kolkata. We named the restaurant as 'Eau Chew' to serve these Britishers who used to live in the British colony located down the road which was know by the name 'Bow Barracks'. (J. Hang, personal communication, October 03, 2018).

Collectively, the origin of the Indo-Chinese cuisine in India was clearly influenced not by one but many factors. These include the migration of Cantonese Hakka and Tibetan communities to Kolkata, the invention of Indianised Chinese dishes by chefs and restaurant owners, the first menus of Indian-Chinese restaurants, the popular dishes in the menus of Indian-Chinese restaurants located in foreign countries such as Singapore and Canada, British and American immigrants settled in Kolkata and the Indo-Sino war of 1962. These factors shaped the characteristics of the cuisine not only in Kolkata but other cities in India as well. It

largely influenced the food patterns and lifestyle of the Bengalis settled in Kolkata. Moreover, the popularity of the cuisine owes quite a bit to the inclusion of these dishes in the menus of both Chinese and multi-cuisine restaurants.

2. The spread of the cuisine

Indo-Chinese dishes weren't restricted to the city of Kolkata. With the new modifications being accepted by the local audience, it had spread to other regions as well. Several observations were made to encounter the ways in which these dishes spread and also the factors that triggered the spread. While there might be many causes of the geographical spread of the cuisine, an important reason would be the movement of chefs. They had the power to change the recipes as per consumers' preferences and create new dishes as a part of experiential learning.

The major reason behind the geographical movement of chefs across India was their financial constraints. Firstly, even before spreading throughout India, it was the economic difficulties that forced Chinese immigrants to become chefs (M. Ho & M. Leong, personal communication, October 01, 2018). The caretaker of Sea Ip Church in Kolkata said, "Initially I was a carpenter but that occupation did not earn sufficient money. So, then I decided to learn cooking" (personal communication, October 01, 2018). Cooking their native cuisine with some modifications accommodated to Indian palate was necessary for their survival as immigrants. In a way, the financial constraints mandated them to become chefs and move across India in search of jobs.

Camellia Panjabi had started India's first Sichuan restaurant named 'Golden Dragon' in Hotel Taj Mahal, Mumbai by hiring a chef from Hong Kong after tasting spicy Chinese food there (Vijayakar, 2015). This is similar with the statement made by Mr Michael Ho, one of the chefs had also mentioned about the chef from Hong Kong brought *Manchurian, Hot Garlic* to India. The Sichuan delicacy came from him only to India. Junior chefs, who were working under Brandon, moved to other regions which helped in further spreading of the dishes. This cycle of chefs mentoring their juniors who further helped in spreading the dishes continued. Ultimately, these chefs contributed by creating new dishes and adding them to the existing cooking methodology in India (M. Ho, personal communication, October 01, 2018).

A number of other restaurants also hired chefs from foreign countries. As these chefs kept moving from one restaurant to another and from one city to another, they continued to cook these dishes, which led to an increase in the spread and popularity of these dishes. In

case, if some foreign chefs did not move to other places, the following generations had started migrating to other cities or states in order to set up their own businesses. Mr Jawhar Sircar mentioned, “In the ’50s and ’60s, the sons of these Chinese going to Bombay and other places and setting up shops and introducing their brand of Chinese food”. Some Indian chefs were also trained under the migrated foreign chefs. So, when these Indian chefs shifted from one restaurant to another, the same process occurred (J. Sircar, personal communication, October 04, 2018). Mrs Sachiko, the owner of Blue Poppy restaurant said, “Once, see once a person came to Calcutta and be like okay let us start this in Bombay supposedly. I guess that is how it spread”. She believed that one possible reason for the spread could be when people who observed the cuisine in Calcutta started their own businesses in other cities (Sachiko, personal communication, October 04, 2018). This might have led to the widespread knowledge of the recipes that were created initially.

Another important reason for the spread of the cuisine is due to the movement of the Chinese communities across the world. Many people of the Chinese community who stayed in India migrated back to countries like Taiwan, China, Canada and other western nations. This took the popular dishes of the Indo-Chinese cuisine to other countries. It also brought new recipes from other countries because the Chinese people who migrated to foreign countries and shared the potential recipes that they found in the migrated nations to few of their family members who remained back in India. The restaurant owner of Golden Phoenix explained that the changes that they made to their menu every six months were done so by adding new dishes which they got from their relatives in Canada and Thailand (P. Li, personal communication, October 04, 2018).

The establishment of sauce factories was a significant milestone in the spread of the cuisine as the easy availability of the sauces allowed more people get into the business. Pou Chong, one of the most popular sauce factories in Kolkata was established in the year 1958 by Mr Lee Shihchuan, which was being run by his children. Mr Shihchuan migrated to India before the second world war and eventually set up a sauce factory after noticing the popularisation of the Chinese cuisine in the city of Kolkata.

Mr Tarukdar, the present manager, had been working in the factory for 35 years. He mentioned that their best-selling sauces were chilli sauce and soy bean sauce. The primary buyers of these sauces were hotels, colleges and hospitals. He also argued that Pou Chong’s sauces were popular due to the superior quality of ingredients used and their style of preparation. Mr Tarukdar also claimed their sauces to be more authentic as compared to other factories due to the extended preservation time which gave the sauces a better flavour. Pou

Chong had recently started exporting its sauces to other cities such as Chennai, Delhi, Bangalore and countries like Sri Lanka as well (Tarukdar, personal communication, October 01, 2018). Hence, the ability of the sauce factory to export their sauces might be a possible reason for the popularity and spread of the cuisine, as mentioned before.

Since sauces take a lot of time to be prepared, restaurants and even street vendors preferred to purchase the sauces instead of making them on their own. The increase in the exporting and importing of these sauce factories helped in the spread. Apart from this, the colour of the sauces also played a huge role in the Indianisation of Chinese food. According to Mr Michael Ho, Indians usually assumed food to be undercooked if it was not coloured. “The Indians, they like the food to be little dark in colour. They like colouring, the Soy colour. The deep Soy colour”. He further mentioned that there exist three types of sauces in India - light Soy colour, medium deep and deep red colour (M. Ho, personal communication, October 01, 2018).

3. Evolution of the cuisine

Before the emergence of Indo-Chinese cuisine, the Chinese food sold in India was based on the Cantonese style of cooking. According to Monica Liu, the ‘Don’ of Chinatown, “I think the Chinese food was popular from the sixties. But that is different type of food. Little bit more towards the Cantonese style. Now is more Cantonese and Hakka mix” (M. Liu, personal communication, October 02, 2018). For the purpose of understanding the perceptions of the authenticity of the food amongst the chefs, owners and consumers and its effect on popularity, a scale of size 1-10 was adopted to measure authenticity. In addition, the factors that led to the changes in the menus was also taken into consideration.

Through the research, it can be inferred that with time the perceived authenticity or typicalness of the Chinese food reduced and as a result, it brought about a new form of cuisine that came to be known as Indo-Chinese cuisine. It’s been nearly more than five decades since Indo-Chinese cuisine was introduced to India. Yet, restaurants like Tung Fong and Eau Chew continue to serve typical or traditional Chinese food. The food served in these restaurants has almost been the same and the old recipes have been passed down the generations without any changes or adaptations. This was visibly evident especially in the case of Eau Chew. According to Mr Joel, the owner of Eau Chew, the oldest standing restaurant in Kolkata, “we cook what we eat in our house every day. Our cooking style is the

same thing what we cook in the house and my mother loves cooking and that's where we got it from” (J. Hang, personal communication, October 03, 2018).

It was also observed that over the years, restaurants like Kafulok in Tangra continued to serve Indo-Chinese food. Here, even though the recipes were passed down the generations, the originality of the recipes remained intact. Additionally, Chinese food could be categorized in two different ways. Firstly, it's the typical Chinese food which is closer to either Cantonese or Hakka cooking styles as claimed by Monica Liu (personal communication, October 02, 2018). There also exists a second category of food which cannot be considered typical Chinese food due to the addition of various flavours over the years. Instead, it is categorised Indo-Chinese food. Therefore, restaurants across Kolkata, serve Chinese food that belongs to two different cuisines.

The menus of most of the popular restaurants in Kolkata have seen multiple changes over the years. While some of these changes were done with the purpose of adding some in-house delicacies, the others were done to accommodate the increasing customer demands and changing health trends.

The evolution pattern of the cuisine as narrated by the street vendors was quite different from that of the restaurants. The restaurants, especially the ones serving typical Chinese food, were forced to add the Indo-Chinese dishes such as *Hakka noodles* and *Manchurian* to their menus to cater to the increasing demands of Indian consumers. Therefore, the restaurants had to alter their cooking styles and increase the number of spices added to the food. Some new dishes were invented and as for rest, a simple addition of spices was made to the original recipe. This can be understood from Monica Liu's interview as she mentioned, “But till today the food is absolutely the same as Chinese food but we add what little what chilli for them because Indian like chilli.” (M. Liu, personal communication, October 02, 2018).

When it came to the differences between typical Chinese food and the Indo-Chinese food, the former was observed to be bland as most of it was either steamed or boiled. On the contrary, the Indo-Chinese food brought the newly invented and popular dishes such as *Schezwan*, *Chilli* and *Manchurian* which were adopted by restaurants whose origins could be traced from the 1990s to early 2000s. These peculiar and new dishes were spicier, oilier and fried, darker in colour, stronger in smell and customised according to Indian tastes and preferences. These alterations were well received by the Indian consumers, but consumers of

Chinese origin preferred more typical versions of these dishes which had minimal spices. In addition, they preferred the food to be cooked in the traditional way to ensure that it was healthy and did not lead to gastric problems.

When Mr David Chen, the president of Mei Kuang School was asked to rate the authenticity of Chinese food that is being served currently, he said that the Chinese food varies from one to another on a personal level but he also mentioned, “I would say Tung Fong makes good Chinese food. I would say on a scale of 1 to 10. It would be 8, 8 and a half. If you give me Chung Wa, a restaurant which is close by, I will never go there to eat.” According to him, Chung Wa did not serve the typical Chinese food. He would prefer to go to Tung Fong instead, for having a more authentic Chinese food experience (D. Chen, personal communication, October 04, 2018).

There were other unique dishes invented as well which are not so popularly known. This could be observed from the responses given by the owner of Shun Li, Michelle Wang’s who said, “We have new dishes called ‘Plum Chicken’, ‘Honey Chicken’ and ‘Lemon Chicken’,” which were unique to the restaurant (M. Wang, personal communication, October 02, 2018).

While a number of restaurants added Indo-Chinese dishes to their menu, food prepared in the typical Chinese manner also gained a lot of popularity due to its various benefits to health. Increased awareness of the health benefits of ‘Tofu’ led to a spike in the number of Tofu dishes on the menus. While the demand for Tofu increased, the usage of meat such as pork and beef remained limited. Pork and Beef are extensively used in preparing typical Chinese food but aren’t served frequently in Indo-Chinese restaurants. As Jawhar Sircar had mentioned, “In fact, Chinese loved to have more of pork - it’s a pork-based civilization and in India pork was looked down upon. It was a scavengers food. They have these psychological problems.” (J. Sircar, personal communication, October 04, 2018).

To cater to the customers looking for traditional Chinese food and to those seeking Indo-Chinese versions, restaurants started offering two menus to the customers. In this manner, they not only managed to retain their original customers of Chinese origins but also provided dishes that fulfilled the expectations of new customers of Indian origins. Along with that, they added dishes to their menus that were supposed to be ordered 24 hours prior. For example, Beijing Restaurant offered Steamed Fish which must be ordered a day in advance. This service allowed the owners to include a variety of dishes on their menus. Eau Chew also

came up with a similar system wherein the customers had to call the restaurant at least 12 hours in advance and request for any specific pork, fish, prawn or chicken items.

Another reason for menu changes was the freedom given by the customers to the chefs. While the restaurant menus kept on evolving, the street vendors remained faithful to their original menus. They were unwilling to include new dishes on their menus. While they altered the spices used in the dish, but the key ingredients remained the same.

4. Menu

There was also a stark difference between the way the Indian owners presented their menus and the way the Chinese owners presented theirs. The vegetarian dishes were allotted a different column which was further divided into soups, starters and main course. The non-vegetarian dishes were divided into starters and the main course as well. But they were further classified on the basis of their key ingredients such as chicken (boneless), chicken (bone), prawn and fish. The rice dishes and noodles were classified separately.

On the other hand, a number of restaurants owned by Indians were multi-cuisine restaurants. They had a section devoted to Indo-Chinese food which included all the dishes. Rice, noodles, fish, chicken, prawn and all other dishes are under the same heading with fewer varieties per ingredient compared to the menus of the Chinese restaurants. All the starters were mentioned in the same category irrespective of the cuisine to which they belong.

Moreover, the reactions of the restaurant owners to the changes in the menu could be noted under two contrasting categories. Some had held on to their own traditional versions whereas the others had embraced the newer Indo-Chinese dishes into their menus. For example, the recipes at Eau Chew and Kafulok had been passed down unchanged from generation to generation and the family was extremely secretive about them. On the other hand, the basic formats of the dishes that most Indo-Chinese recipes followed were freely available and were an integral part of most of the restaurants. The competitive nature among the restaurants enhanced the spread of new and innovative dishes, at least among the restaurants which were more open to changes.

PORK		CHICKEN (Six Pieces)	
Chilly Pork	170	Chilly Chicken	150
Pork Manchurian	170	Chicken Manchurian	150
Garlic Pork	170	Garlic Chicken	150
Pork Hot Garlic	170	Chicken Hot Garlic	150
Ginger Pork	170	Ginger Chicken	150
Pork with Vegetables	200	Lemon Chicken	150
Sweet and Sour Pork	200	Pepper Chicken	150
Pork Shapta	200	Singapore Chicken	150
		Chicken with Vegetables	180
		Honey Chicken	180
		Rum Chicken	180
		Sweet & Sour Chicken	180
		Orange Chicken	180
		Chicken Shapta	200

NON-VEG		THIRST QUENCHERS	
(Add double Egg/Meat at Rs. 20 extra)			
Egg Fried Rice/Hakka Chow	130	Bottled Water	30
Chicken/Pork Fried Rice/Hakka Chow	140	500 ml Soft Drink	50
Egg Chilly Garlic Rice/Hakka Chow	140	Diet Pepsi	50
Chicken Egg Fried Rice/Hakka Chow	150	Blue Lemonade	70
Prawn Fried Rice/Hakka Chow	150	Green Apple Soda	70
Chicken/Pork Chilly Garlic Rice/Chow	150	Virgin Mojito	70
Mixed Fried Rice/Hakka Chow	160	Fresh Lime Soda	70
Prawn Chilly Garlic Rice/Chow	160	Masala Cola	70
Mixed Chilly Garlic Rice/Chow	170	Lime Cola	70

APPETIZER		CHICKEN	
1. Fried Wonton (Chicken or Pork)	120.00	1. Chicken Chili	150.00
2. Yuan Wonton (Chicken or Pork)	120.00	2. Chicken Manchurian	150.00
3. Fried Spring Chicken	150.00	3. Chicken Szechwan	150.00
4. Fried String Beans	210.00	4. Chicken Ginger Sauce	150.00
5. Pepper Prawns	210.00	5. Chicken Garlic (Hot or Sweet)	150.00
6. String Beans Pepper	210.00	6. Chicken Honey Sauce	150.00
7. Pepper Chicken	150.00	7. Chicken Hong Kong	150.00
8. Chicken Salt Pepper	150.00	8. Chicken with Mushroom & Baby Corn	180.00
9. Fish Salt Pepper	180.00	9. Chicken Sweet & Sour	150.00
10. Pepper Fish	180.00	10. Chicken with vegetables	150.00
11. Chicken Pakora	150.00	11. Chicken Ham Choy	170.00

SOUP		PRAWN	
1. Wonton Soup (Chicken or Pork)	120.00	1. Prawn Chili	210.00
2. Sweet Corn Chicken Soup S/L	100/170	2. Prawn Manchurian	210.00
3. Sweet Corn Egg Soup S/L	90/160	3. Prawn Szechwan	210.00
4. Hot & Sour Chicken Soup S/L	100/170	4. Prawn Ginger Sauce	210.00
5. Hot & Sour Egg Soup S/L	90/160	5. Prawn Garlic (Hot or Sweet)	210.00
6. Lung Fung Soup S/L	100/170	6. Prawn Honey Sauce	210.00
7. Manchow Chicken Soup S/L	100/170	7. Prawn Hong Kong	210.00
8. Chicken Mushroom Soup S/L	130/200	8. Prawn Mushroom Baby Corn	230.00
9. Chicken Veg Clear Soup S/L	100/170	9. Prawn sweet & sour	210.00
10. Chicken Clear Soup S/L	90/160	10. Prawn with vegetable	210.00
11. Kaptai Soup - S/L	100/170		
12. Tomato Egg Drop Soup S/L	90/160		
13. Veg Clear Soup S/L	90/160		
14. Veg Sweet Corn Soup S/L	90/160		
15. Veg Hot & Sour Soup S/L	90/160		
16. Veg Noodle Soup	100.00		
17. Noodles Soup (Chicken or Pork)	120.00		
18. Mixed Noodles Soup	140.00		
19. Kaptai Noodles Soup	140.00		
20. Wonton Noodles Soup (Chicken or Pork)	140.00		
21. Mei Foon Soup (Chicken or Pork)	150.00		
22. Mixed Mei Foon Soup	170.00		
23. Kaptai Mei Foon Soup	140.00		
24. Veg Mei Foon Soup	140.00		
25. Plain Soup	20.00		

FISH		PORK	
1. Fish Chili	180.00	1. Pork Chili	150.00
2. Fish Szechwan	180.00	2. Pork Manchurian	150.00
3. Fish Ginger	180.00	3. Pork Szechwan	150.00
4. Fish Garlic (Hot or Sweet)	180.00	4. Pork Ginger Sauce	190.00
5. Fish Honey Sauce	180.00		
6. Fish Manchurian	180.00		
7. Fish Hong Kong	180.00		
8. Fish Mushroom Baby Corn	200.00		
9. Fish Mushroom Bean Curd	200.00		
10. Fish Manchurian	200.00		
11. Fish Sweet & Sour	180.00		
12. Fish with vegetable	180.00		

CHINESE			
Pan Fry Hakka Chowmein	265	Chilli Chicken	325
Mixed chowmein	235	Chicken Szechwan	335
American chapsuey	235	Garlic prawn	430
Fried Rice - Mixed	235	Chilli prawn	430
Fried Rice - Chicken	220	Pan fried chilli prawn	450
Chowmein - Chicken	220	Chilli fish	415
Chicken manchurian	325	Pan fried chilli fish	450
Tai pai chi/fish/prawn	450	Pan fried chilli sausages	375
Let Me Kai	360	Pan fried chilli pork	375
Sesame Honey Chilli Potatoes	325	Mongolian	265
		Yeg Mongolian	265
		Vegetable fried rice	215
		Yeg chowmein	215
		Chilli paneer	325
		Chilli Potato	260
		Vegetable manchurian	325
		Chilli mushroom	340
		Fried chilli babycorn	340

Figure 3.4: Menu of Blue Poppy, a third generation Tibetan-Chinese owned restaurant; Tung Nam, a Chinese owned restaurant & Oasis, an Indian owned restaurant respectively.

5. Authenticity and Identity

Gastronomic authenticity is used to describe the linkages of a specific ingredient, technique or recipe to a particular time and place (Weiss, 2011). In layman's terms, however, authenticity might be used to refer to the 'typical' form of food which represents a cuisine. Several questions were asked to the chefs, managers as well as the customers in order to understand their perceptions of the authenticity of the Indo-Chinese food. When asked to rate the authenticity of the food on a scale of one to ten, the consumers showed a relatively higher perception of authenticity than the restaurant owners and the chefs. Here, the average rating given by the restaurant owners is 4.57, chefs' average 5.8 and the consumer's average is 6.92. Here, it is to be noted that the chefs and owners of Indian origin have given a higher rating than those of Chinese origins.

Most of the restaurant owners of Chinese origins believed that their food was not authentic. Their main aim was to cater to the needs of the customers. Even if the customers asked for authentic, they didn't realize the stark difference and tended to dislike the blandness of the typical cuisine. In an interview, a restaurant owner of Chinese origin explained:

A lot of people who come asking for authentic food don't really know what authentic food is. Typically, Chinese tea is served by pouring hot water into the tea. One of the

customers came in and said that he knows how to make Chinese tea. When I asked him how he does it he said that one is supposed to boil the tea. I told him that is not the way of the Chinese. Chinese tea is totally different. I could not say that he was wrong so instead, I told him I will give him that type of tea. So, I boiled the jasmine tea and gave it to him and he liked it a lot. Now, a lot of people like to eat authentic food but they don't know much about it and when you serve the same to them, they complain about it being bland. (J. Lee, personal communication, October 01, 2018).

Therefore, the food evolved and adjusted to the likes and dislikes of the audience, a major part of which was Indian. Some customers believed that if the chefs were Chinese the food was more authentic. However, we found that even when the chefs were of Indo-Chinese origins, their main aim was to cater to the needs of the customers which encouraged them to cook more Indianised versions of the food. Some of the restaurant owners of Indian origins believed their food to be authentic because of the sole reason that it was started by the Chinese community. Another reason highlighted for the food not being authentic was the unavailability of the ingredients used in typical Chinese food:

It is not the authentic type. In Kolkata culture, if we serve authentic Chinese people are not accepting it. In Mainland China, they are serving authentic Chinese, but in the city people like the Indian type of Chinese.... Proper Chinese the original Chinese food, the ingredients are not available in Kolkata. (V. Roi, personal communication, October 04, 2018).

6. Ambience and Perceived Authenticity

The visual outlook of a restaurant made a huge impact upon the perceptions of consumers. When one entered a restaurant, they noticed the name, the menu, the cloth on the table, the cutlery and other visual inputs. In case of restaurants offering Indo-Chinese food, a lot of these visual aids are used to inculcate the perception or experience of dining in a traditional Chinese restaurant. Many restaurant owners believed that creating a Chinese ambience was beneficial in reinforcing consumers' expectations.

To understand how ambience affects the perception of customers in contribution to the feeling of 'Chineseness', we observed the details of the decor in various Chinese restaurants. Various differences in the decor techniques used by Legendary Chinese Restaurants and the Modern or Fusion type restaurants were noted. The legendary Chinese restaurants included Eau Chew, Kafulok, Beijing and Waldorf whereas the Modern or Fusion

restaurants included Shun Li, Golden Phoenix, Sei Vui, Blue Poppy, Green View, Oasis, Golden Dragon and Carpe Diem.

The similarities in terms of decor observed in the Legendary Chinese restaurants were quite simple compared to the Modern or Fusion type restaurants. The restaurant Eau Chew had red swing doors and its exterior was covered with red bannisters while Beijing had foldable doors and red glass panels along with images of the Golden Dragon. Eau Chew also had inscriptions in Mandarin at various places in addition to antique-styled red laminated tables. Kafulok, on the other hand, had red circular tables with a rotating marble disk in the centre giving the customers an easy way to help themselves with the delicacies, which is also the traditional Chinese way of dining. The cutlery used was simple yet elegant and included chopsticks, tea set, bowls and plates. A prominent similarity in the Legendary restaurants were the posters displaying the ancestors of the restaurant owners.

The Modern or Fusion type restaurants were comparatively fancier looking since they were newly constructed. Although the element of red was present in these restaurants, they did not have any Chinese inscriptions, specifically the Indian owned Chinese restaurants. The Chinese owned restaurants were close to the food culture in China. For instance, Sei Vui had handcrafted Chinese inscriptions and the walls were decorated with paintings. Yet another observation was that the Legendary restaurants were particular about even the minute details of the paintings and the inscriptions displayed in comparison to the modern restaurants.



Chapter 4

Multiple Origins and Perceptions

*"There is always two stories about a thing - the right one
and a famous one"*
- Consumer



1. Origin of the Cuisine

Although Kolkata is home to a number of Indo-Chinese restaurants, the origin of the cuisine was not limited to Kolkata. There were other cities like Mumbai and Delhi which we found to have contributed to the origin of the cuisine. For instance, Camellia Panjabi had set up the first Chinese restaurant in Mumbai after hiring a chef from Hong Kong. Mr David Chen further supported the argument by giving the example of the two entrepreneurs named Mr Wu and Mr Hsieh who had set up a hotel in Delhi. Mr Chen believed that *Hakka noodles* were introduced here which then ultimately became a popular dish in the Indo-Chinese cuisine (D. Chen, personal communication, October 04, 2014). Sachiko, the owner of Blue Poppy, said that the spread could have resulted from an outsider observing the food in Kolkata and taking it back to cities like Mumbai and Delhi (Sachiko, personal communication, October 04, 2018).

The above findings have led us to believe that the origin of the Indo-Chinese cuisine was not focused on one particular city such as Kolkata. Instead, there were instances found from across the country which contributed to the formation of this cuisine. As a result, we came up with a multiple origin hypothesis, which states that the origin of the cuisine could not be traced to one specific location but came to be as a product of various innovations from different geographical areas. As we will move further, we will describe how the spread of this cuisine also gave us an idea of how these dishes could have been affected by migration patterns and so forth.

Although pork is a widely used component in Chinese cuisine, it did not get carried forward into the Indo-Chinese cuisine. This could be attributed to various religious, cultural and societal norms of India. Indians do not consume red meat such as pork and beef due to the various beliefs and norms pertaining to purity. Since pork is looked down upon, no pork-based dishes which might have originated in the Indo-Chinese cuisine were carried forward.

In the years before the cuisine of Indo-Chinese food became popular, dishes such as *Hakka noodles* and *Manchurian* did not exist. Eau Chew, the oldest Chinese restaurant predicted the creation of *Manchurian* to have been around 20 years ago, while chefs from Sea Ip Church mentioned the contributions of a chef who brought not only *Manchurian* but also Sichuan food and food dishes that suited to the taste palate of Indian customers. This, in turn, assisted the arrival of dishes such as *Hot Garlic Chicken* and *Schezwan* too.

However, other theories provided by the various chefs and restaurant owners as well as popular media narrated the tales of *Manchurian* being created by an individual with the

name Nelson Wong. Contrasting stories found a chef named Brandon being the creator of these dishes instead while working in the Taj Hotel, Mumbai. Interviews with Michelle Wang, the wife of Mr Nelson's cousin brother, revealed her scepticism about Nelson Wang being responsible for the dish where Monica Liu also refused to comment about it (M. Wang, personal communication, October 02, 2018). The stories about chef Brandon were, unfortunately, not verified by other sources either. Therefore, the case of *Manchurian* remained a mystery.

2. The spread of the Cuisine

Displacement of Chinese communities across the world was due to diaspora rather than voluntary migration. They were outsiders in a new land and the only thing that helped them to survive was their cuisine. One of the major findings from Cheuk Kwan's series of films based on the diaspora of Chinese communities across the globe was that many immigrants had to modify their cuisine according to local demands and then sell it. During tough times, they had opened restaurants for survival. So, the main reason for the spread of the cuisine was the diaspora of Chinese communities (Choi, 2015). It was diaspora that took people to foreign lands and the following history took place.

In India, it was particularly the Indo-Sino war in 1962 that led to the diaspora of Chinese communities within and outside India. As mentioned by Jawhar Sircar, the Marwari community and their demands for property further aggravated the anti-Chinese wave in Kolkata (J. Sircar, personal communication, October 04, 2018). They wanted to occupy the prominent properties that the Chinese owned in central Kolkata. As a result, they forcibly removed the Chinese immigrants from their properties. Latently, this led to de-ghettoization of the Chinese population which resulted in a positive impact on the spread of the food. This is because along with the people, their food also got migrated to different regions. They settled in middle-class localities where they were welcomed. Bengalis are usually described as adventurous when it comes to food. Therefore, the innovations in Chinese food were most welcomed.

Chefs also aided in the spread of the cuisine. Michelle Wang, the owner of the Restaurant Shun Li, explained that modifications in menu happened over the years. She added new dishes such as Plum Chicken, Honey Chicken and Lemon Chicken on her menu (M. Wang, personal communication, October 04, 2018). Interviews with chefs also provided with the understanding that they had to change their recipes and even dishes in the menu in

order to serve what their customers demanded. They also travelled around the world and implemented their learnings in other areas which further established Indo-Chinese food as a fusion cuisine.

Restaurants also played a huge role in the spread. If the newly modified food was restricted to households, then the knowledge about this cuisine to the outside world would not have been possible. Restaurants, irrespective of its scale size, enabled the cuisine to get a platform. The changes in the cuisine satisfied the Indian preferences. Public eating enabled by street vendors was a significant contributing factor as many of the street vendors who were interviewed told that they learned to cook Indo-Chinese dishes only through observation and not by mentors. So, when they started their own street stalls, they executed whatever they gathered from observing and added their own ideas for cooking as well. With this increase in the popularity of the cuisine, more restaurants were established that offered Indo-Chinese dishes.

One can also observe that within India, apart from the geographical spread of famous dishes such as *Manchurian*, *Schezwan* noodles, *Chilli chicken*, certain other dishes were also adapted in different ways in different regions. In southern India, their native dishes such as Dosa and Idli were modified and became *Chilli Idli* and *Schezwan Dosa*. In western and northeastern parts of India, Bhel and Pav Bhaji became *Chinese Bhel* and *Chinese Pav Bhaji*. These, in turn, gained popularity and took place in the menus of most restaurants in and around India.

In a way, with the epicenter of the cuisine being Toretta and Tangra, it had spread to other regions as well. With the gaining popularity of the modified dishes in these regions, the rate of its spread only increased. Furthermore, the chefs' innovative cooking styles, restaurants' menu modifications and its consecutive popularity only accelerated the cuisine's geographical spread.

Red chilli sauce, Green chilli sauce, Garlic sauce, Barbecue sauce, Soy sauce and Sweet chilli sauce were the most famous sauces sold by Sing Cheung in Kolkata. These sauces, in general, were the fundamental ingredients used in cooking Indo-Chinese cuisine. A worker at Sing Cheung mentioned that their major customers were restaurants. The street vendors also mentioned that they bought sauces from either Pou Chong or Sing Cheung. Mr Tarukdar, the manager of Pou Chong, mentioned that their potential buyers were also from Chennai, Delhi, Bangalore and Sri Lanka (Tarukdar, personal communication, October 01, 2018). There are two possibilities on the role of sauces in the spread of Indo- Chinese cuisine.

It was either the establishment of sauce factories that lead to the popularity and spread of the cuisine or vice versa.

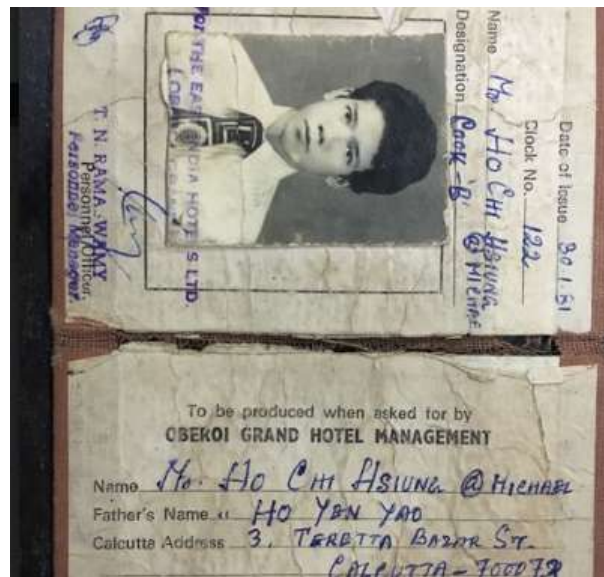


Figure 4.1: Identity Card of Hotel Oberoi Grand, Calcutta, provided by Michael Ho

3. Evolution Through the Years

The authenticity of the Indian-Chinese dishes can be understood in the form of concentric circles. The most traditional dishes were concentrated in areas such as Tangra and Tiretta Bazaar but as we moved further away, people seemed to be more willing to adapt to the new dishes. An attempt was made to quantify the authenticity or the lack of it by asking the interviewees to place Indo-Chinese food that they serve (in the case of restaurateurs) on a spectrum of 1 to 10. In many restaurants, a diversion of the food from their typical Chinese roots was found. However, this was not the case in every restaurant. There might be possible reasons for both the phenomena.

Some restaurants considered their dishes to be family legacies and were reluctant to modify them, although they might have come up with different versions of a specific dish to meet their customers' requirements. Whereas, other restaurants were more willing to adapt because they had been able to detach themselves from their familial backgrounds and integrate themselves into the Indian context. Many of them viewed this transition as a survival requirement and a way to sustain themselves in this new environment.

In some of these restaurants, such as Eau Chew even the chefs belonged to the lineage of the family that had started the restaurant. Here one can understand that the food and the recipes must have been passed down within the family. At the same time, some restaurants

were comfortable with hiring chefs which were outside of their family circles. This, in most cases, tended to speed up the process of Indianisation and spread of the food.

Another means of conceptualising the evolution of the food is by studying the changes in the menu that have taken place over the years in individual restaurants. Naturally, it can be inferred that the restaurants that have had frequent menu changes served more Indianised Chinese food whereas those that didn't change their menus often served more typical food.

Considering a business perspective, some of these old, traditional restaurants had built a loyal customer base over the years. It was, hence, natural that they wished to maintain a certain level of exclusivity. When it came to the newer establishments, their customer base and business environment were drastically different from the conditions that the older ones started off with. We can see how some of the old, traditional restaurants coped with the new business environment by having two different menus for the two kinds of customers, the old Chinese community and new Indian customers. In these two types as different business models, one is not better than the other, they just target different consumer bases. Also, some restaurants especially the older ones or the ones which are inclined towards serving more typical Chinese food have two separate menus for their Chinese customer base and Indian customer base respectively. This might be due to the fact that they do not want to lose business from either source.

Furthermore, an interesting process that is taking place currently is the theorization and solidification of the concept of Indo-Chinese food as a separate cuisine. This further led to the unification and spread of the Indo-Chinese cuisine all over the country. Most restaurants have a more or less identical menu.

4. Ingredients and Cooking techniques

Indo-Chinese dishes are known for their spice and texture, as most of the dishes have a flavourful saucy and crispy exterior which covered the soft filling providing with a flavoursome texture. Various non-noodle based and non-rice-based Indo-Chinese dishes could be described in this manner. The essence of this form of cooking is to coat the main ingredient such as baby corn, chicken, cauliflower or any other in flour and then deep fry it. Once it turns golden-brown, toss it, garnish with sauces, and serve.

While all the Indo-Chinese dishes have made a name and created an identity for themselves as Chinese food in India, upon closer observation it was found that parallels of a few dishes can be drawn alongside the traditional Indian cooking. For instance, Kofta, a

traditional Indian dish can be made with potato, cottage cheese, bottle gourd, lotus stem, mix vegetables, mutton, and many other ingredients. Grated or finely chopped pieces of these are then either mixed with gram flour, corn flour, or all-purpose flour. Once the mixture is seasoned, balls are made out of it. These are deep-fried, mixed, and served with a gravy or a curry that is prepared separately. The preparation of *Manchurian* is quite similar to this. Depending on the kind of *Manchurian* being prepared, the base ingredient is combined with corn flour, all-purpose flour, or both. The mix is then balled up and fried. The sauce is made up of oil, ginger, garlic, Soy sauce, corn flour, and other vegetables. While the sauces of both Kofta and *Manchurian* differ, the cooking style adopted for both the dishes is the same. Gillian Crowther, through his research, has theorised the following:

It can be argued that all cuisines reference the local context, and the historical influx of new foodstuffs and techniques, acquired through migrations of people and their ideas, imagined to suit the places, times, and tastes. Each cuisine takes on a unique identity, remembering some influences and forgetting others, but ultimately being a mixed or creolized amalgamation of culinary traditions and foodstuffs. (Crowther, 2013)

Manchurian uses Soy sauce and other sauces which aren't native to Indian cooking. These have been adopted from Chinese cuisine. The cooking style is Indian, and the ingredients used are used in the Chinese cuisine displaying an amalgamation of the culinary traditions.

Wilk provided a framework of creolization with reference to Belizean cuisine and these processes are namely Mixing, Submersion, Substitution, Wrapping and Stuffing, Simplification, Essentialization, and Reassignment (Wilk 2006. as cited in Crowther, 2013). "Indianization" of Chinese dishes share similar steps as "creolization." Examples of these processes can be seen in the Indo-Chinese cuisine as well. Mixing, the first process, refers to the fusion of ingredients or techniques in different combinations. This can be seen in traditional Chinese dishes which have been further fried and spiced to suit the Indian taste. Monica Liu, in her interview, mentioned, "But till today the food is absolutely the same as Chinese food but we add what little what chilli for them because Indian like chilli." (M. Liu, personal communication, October 02, 2018).

The second process is that of Submersion. The identities of the new ingredients are hidden by adding them in a manner that they cannot be identified in the dish. *Manchurian* is a classic example. It is made with different ingredients as mentioned above and often the base ingredient cannot be differentiated. The next process is Substitution where the ingredients are

replaced. Some ingredients used in China are unavailable in India and have been replaced with local produce and spices. Oyster sauce and sweet bean sauce are not used in the Indo-Chinese cuisine and are replaced with ketchup and other sauces. Sichuan red peppercorn is not available in India and black pepper is used instead.

The fourth process is Wrapping and Stuffing. An item foreign to a cuisine is wrapped into a familiar wrapping or the other way around. Examples of this process are Chinese dosa or Chinese roll where noodles are wrapped inside a dosa or a chapati respectively. The process that follows is Simplification. It refers to the simplification of the recipes so that the cooking techniques are easier to adapt. Indian cooking techniques are traditionally known to be quite elaborate. For instance, the gravy for Kofta would require several ingredients to be cooked in a specific order on a low flame so that the flavour is extracted to its most. On the other hand, the *Manchurian* sauce can be cooked in a few minutes.

The sixth process is Essentialization. It states that a few ingredients, dishes, and flavours become emblematic of a cuisine. Ingredients such as ginger, garlic, Soy sauce, green onions, chilli sauce, and ketchup are a few which are used in almost all the Indo-Chinese dishes. Dishes such as *Chilli chicken*, *Manchurian*, *Hakka noodles*, and fried rice act as representatives of this cuisine. All of them are rich in umami, the emblematic flavour of the cuisine, because of the use of Soy sauce and ketchup. The final process of amalgamation of cuisines is reassignment. In this process, a dish or an ingredient is reinterpreted to be appropriate for consumption at a different mealtime than the original. Since Indo-Chinese food has developed as street food in India, it is often consumed at different meal times depending on the consumer.



Figure 4.2: Common ingredients used in the cooking

5. Ambience and Perceived Authenticity

The names of these restaurants also played a huge role. Names such as Golden Dragon, Chinese Tandoor themselves gave the impression that the restaurants offered Chinese cuisine (John, personal communication, October 02, 2018). According to Lu and Fine (1995), it generated an "exotic hyper-reality" or "exotic experience". It made a huge impact when the name was accompanied by Chinese scripts where it did not matter whether they were comprehensible or not.

Consumers were given chopsticks over spoon and fork if they preferred. Symbols such as Chinese motifs, dragons, Buddhas, Chinese writings are considered as representations of Chinese culture. When asked about the decor and the ambience, restaurant owner of Waldorf said, "people do prefer. They expect like a Chinese restaurant should have the Chinese motifs and dragons written on the walls and things like that." (Chakroborthy, personal communication, October 02, 2018). It was noted that apart from visual aids, Chinese songs, which were not understood, also contributed to 'Chinese-ness' of the restaurant.

Even in Kafulok, the colour red was used to enhance the perception of authenticity of the restaurant. Red tablecloth, usage of red colour in menu card, displaying the name of the restaurant using red lights and so on are some examples. According to Mrs Sachiko, the red colour is considered to be auspicious and lucky by the Chinese (Sachiko, personal communication, October 04, 2018). This is why all the gates in Tangra were painted in red. Even during the Chinese New Year, gifts in the form of money are usually given in a red envelope. Employing staffs who resembled the Chinese population also played a huge role in conveying the authenticity

Apart from this, the appearance of dishes was dominated with red colour. Some of the restaurants displayed their chefs cooking with a wok which further increased the expected authenticity of the cuisine. Symbols such as Chinese lantern and words written in the font of Chinese scripts contribute in creating a "virtual China". The cultural experience of having a foreign cuisine was produced by the ambience of the restaurants. The customer's expectations were satisfied by the ambience primarily rather than the actual 'authenticity' of the cuisine (Sankar, 2017). Therefore, ambience played a huge role in attracting and staying the customers.

6. Authenticity and Identity

As discussed before, gastronomic authenticity refers to the linkages of a specific ingredient, technique or recipe to a particular time and place. Authenticity is also concerned with the way cuisine helps form a cultural identity (Weiss, 2011). The report began with the aim to seek the answer as to why this cuisine appeared at this particular historical junction and the various factors involving this process. During the on-field study, the perceptions of the stakeholders on the cuisine were studied to see if this assumption could be proven true. However, the information is hard to posit as the definition of authenticity was different for each of the stakeholders. These stark differences in the understanding of authenticity in itself led to diverse and varied opinions regarding the cuisine.

While understanding the authenticity of a particular cuisine, there is a common practice of relating it with the typical food of that cuisine. The owners of the restaurants who were of Chinese origin tied the authenticity of the cuisine by comparing it to the typical Chinese food they had. Since the Indo-Chinese food was created in India using spicier profiles of tastes, the owners were more likely to rate their food as being of lower in authenticity. However, the owners of Indian origins believed their food to be more authentic as they defined it as being cooked by someone of the Chinese community or following the recipes as left by someone from the Chinese community.

The owners of Indian origins believed that this Indian version of Chinese is authentic because they noticed the foreign elements more. Their understanding of authenticity is tied heavily to the people who prepare it. Since most of them learned the recipes from the Chinese chefs, they associated it with typical Chinese food. Indian owners, such as the manager of Waldorf, believed their food to be more authentic just because the previous owners of the restaurant were of Chinese descent and they also had a few Chinese cooks working in the kitchen.

Authenticity also concerns how cultural identity is determined through a cuisine (Weiss, 2011). The data collected from the owners suggested that the cuisine is not understood as such. The Indo-Chinese cuisine has been created as a combination of the cooking style of the Chinese cuisine and the Indian values of the tastes and usage of ingredients. The cuisine is however still understood as an adaptation of another cuisine rather than a standalone cuisine in itself. Chinese cuisine has existed in India for a long time now

and has evolved over this time by adapting to the changes in Indian trends and tastes. It is still one of the most popular cuisines in India.

The Indo-Chinese cuisine is well embroidered into the fabric of India's eating habits and could be posited as a cuisine indigenous to India. Other cuisines, such as Mughlai, have also been accepted as an authentic Indian cuisine despite their geographic origin. However, the understanding of authenticity has led most of the stakeholders believing the food is still more exotic than familiar.

Due to the improvements in various communication channels and observed reasons such as travel and tourism, the customers have become a little more aware of the differences between the typical Chinese food and Indo-Chinese food. Their knowledge regarding authenticity, which they define as being cooked similar to typical Chinese food preparations, has increased. It has led multiple restaurants to put more typical dishes on the menu.

The exotic nature of the food might have made it popular in the beginning, but in recent times, it has become more and more accustomed to Indian tastes. Upon inspection, one of the reasons for the popularity of this cuisine was that there are not many changes that take place to the tastes across geographical distance. It was mostly in Kolkata, where we had separate communities cooking their versions that we found certain dishes which were unique to a particular place. One of the customers mentioned their reason for liking this particular cuisine because it tasted similar across India and thus reminded her of home. As India is a country with multiple cuisines, it is hard to find one's own cuisine in another state but Chinese food is always available in the same manner and provides a feeling of comfort. Recently, authenticity has had little to no effect on the popularity of the cuisine. The cuisine has been ingrained so deeply that knowledge regarding its authenticity does not impact its popularity.

The link between authenticity, cultural identity and the cuisine was quite interesting to inspect. The historic juncture at which this cuisine emerged was an important time for the community as they were struggling to reintegrate after the Indo-Sino war of 1962. One assumption that was theorized before the field was that the Chinese community that created this cuisine would identify with the food. This was, however, not found through our interviews and observations in Kolkata. When questioned, most participants who were owners or chefs claimed they were in the restaurant business as it was a lucrative business for them.

There was no cultural connection between the cuisine and the people. From an outsider's perspective, a major chunk of their identity was based on the cuisine. Whereas, according to them, it was just the business that they were involved in because it was the need. The evolution of the food involved the adaptation of Indian taste through various spices which transformed it to a huge extent. They had no connection to the food because the older generations felt that the food did not reflect the typical Chinese food. Most of them admitted to cooking typical Chinese at their homes. The younger generation didn't know how typical Chinese food was supposed to be, apart from what they had been served at their homes.

The Chinese people came to India as forced labourers. Furthermore, the deterioration of the relationship between India and China caused them to be seen as outsiders and mistreated in India. Most of them left this country at the first chance they got. Those who couldn't afford to were the ones who ended up staying- Monica Liu, the owner of restaurant Beijing, mentioned that she couldn't afford the plane ticket to Canada (M. Liu, personal communication, October 02, 2018). Therefore, any form of cultural integration cannot be seen by us. Most of the chefs, managers and Chinese consumers admitted to cooking typical Chinese in their homes, which they did not include in the restaurant menus. Here, the food found in the restaurants was not a part of their identity but was essentially created for everybody else. In an interview, Jayani Bonnerjee explained:

Food is an important part in which they create a cultural identity. An identity is not always for outsiders. Identity can also be a bonding factor internally so I think if you look at the restaurant Chinese food, that may be purely a business thing. (J. Bonnerjee, personal communication, November 17, 2018).

Food which the community cooked at home might be an important part of their Chinese identity. The restaurant food which they sell might not be such an integral part of this identity. Overall, the more the food became familiar to the Indians, the less significant it became to the Chinese community.



Chapter 5

A Cuisine Overlooked

"We want the stories to pass on to next generations and that's why

I'm telling you"

- Chinese Immigrant



1. Reflections

When the pre-field literature review was undertaken, there were a few expectations that had come up from the findings. The first was the assumption that there would exist a lively and thriving Chinatown. This expectation arose as a result of the several videos and articles that the group members had come across as most of the material contained several shots of the Chinese community and that of the food. However, actual fieldwork showed that the Chinese community and food places seemed to be shrinking in geographical size as well as in numbers. This was due to the younger generations abandoning the culinary (or other) occupations for a better life in either the developed countries such as Canada and the United States or other South-Asian countries.

The second expectation harboured was that there would be an emotional connection between the Chinese restaurant owners and the chefs and the food that they made. This was realised partially. Some of the chefs and owners expressed their attachment to the food as it was passed down from generation to generation whereas others had a more business-like viewpoint. The attachment was expressed through the memories that were shared while the disconnect was apparent in the readiness of some stakeholders to change to the newer trends.

The third observation was the extent of the Indianisation of the food. As outsiders, the group members were exposed to Indo-Chinese cuisine throughout their lives in their respective cities. The general expectation was to find the same amount of Indianisation in Kolkata (at least in the Indian-owned restaurants) as well. However, it was surprising to find that Kolkata's Indo-Chinese food was slightly closer to traditional Chinese food when compared to the Indo-Chinese food from the rest of India. This connects to the inference that Indianisation of the food also took place in a concentric circle pattern and the degree of that Indianisation was higher as one moved away from the core areas. This particular point requires further research to expand the hypothesis to the rest of India.

Momos was one dish that came up repeatedly in research and fieldwork whether it was in the individual momo food places, formal restaurants or in the street shops. The centuries-old trans-Himalayan trade route is credited with bringing this delicacy to the north-eastern states and its neighbouring countries (Mulmi, 2017). A momo is essentially a dish made by preparing a flour-water mixture which is molded into packets which contain either vegetables, meat or both. These packets are then either steamed or fried and served along with different kinds of dips. From the menu analysis, it can be understood that fried momos are sometimes known as "wantons". The Blue Poppy restaurant is considered to have one of the best Tibetan style momos in Kolkata. However, it was very rare to find momos on the

menu of the classic, traditional restaurants. On the other hand, momos are a must in almost every single street shop. This shows that momos in Kolkata are considered to be street food and are only available otherwise in specialised restaurants dealing specifically in momos.

There is a need to draw a distinction between momos and dimsums as both dishes are often confused with another. The first difference is that a momo is a Tibetan dish whereas a dimsum is a Cantonese dish. Both are essentially the same thing except there might be some minor differences like a momo being made from “maida” and “atta” whereas a dimsum is made from a starch made from rice, potato or corn (“What’s the difference”, 2017). It is interesting to note that momos dominate the Indo-Chinese cuisine in Kolkata whereas dumplings are found only in highly specialised and authentic Chinese restaurants. Momos are also considered to be highly Indianised not only in terms of the ingredients (chicken, vegetables etc.) but also because of the fact that they are served with a chilli sauce as a dip. Hence, the research also showed that Momos were more of a street food phenomenon but may be served in some restaurants and dimsums were only found in very specific restaurants.

2. Conclusion

At the end of this research, there were some major points which reflected the essence of the project. The first being, the flexibility and the fluidity that characterised Chinese cuisine not only in the Indian context but also globally. Chinese cuisine is relatively more capable of adaptation and modification as a result of the geographic migration of its people. This could be contrasted with the French cuisine which is believed to be very conservative towards change compared to Chinese cuisine has a more open approach. The Chinese of India have created specialised versions of the old Chinese dishes in order to create an entirely unique cuisine which encompasses both Chinese and Indian elements like ingredients, spices, palates, preferences and cultural norms. (Weiss, 2011)

An important aspect that must be mentioned is the contribution of the Cantonese Chinese cuisine towards the formation of Indo-Chinese cuisine. Initial research yielded a very region-based outlook to the origin of certain dishes be it Hakka or Schezwan or *Manchurian*. However, the fieldwork showed the responsibility of the Cantonese cooking style for the way in which the Indo-Chinese cuisine has originated and evolved. Several chefs including Mr Michael Ho confirmed this theory. These findings also hint at the domination of the Cantonese community over the other communities in the culinary scene of China.

It can be argued that a cuisine is a product of its time and place. Certain events in history played a crucial role in shaping any cuisine. For instance, the Indo-Sino war resulted in a limitation of occupation possibilities (such as shutting down of tanneries) which eventually lead to the opening of Chinese restaurants. There was also the fact that Kolkata, with its Colonial influence, provided to be an ideal site for tracing the growth of the cuisine. Another important finding was the differences between how different generations of Chinese immigrants reacted to this process of Indianisation. The older generations preferred more traditional forms of Chinese food both at home as well as in restaurants. The younger generations, however, seemed to be fond of the Indian cuisine. They preferred the Indo-Chinese dishes when they eat out and were more willing to adapt to them. However, they may maintain the typical nature in a professional restaurant setting if required.

A generally overlooked component in many of the initial researches seemed to be the contribution of many unnamed chefs who had aided to the formation of the cuisine. Their movement (for better career opportunities), creativity and willingness to modify dishes in tune with customer requests are the silent makers of the Indo-Chinese cuisine. This research concentrated on this aspect and was partially successful in unearthing some new theories about the origins of certain dishes. In fact, it was surprising to find that pre-established information was also put to test. This drew attention to the multiple origin hypothesis. It was extremely difficult to pinpoint the specific individual or the exact time in history when a particular dish was invented. The best that could be done was listing out all the possible theories and provide a time range. Hence the legacy of many individuals, communities and establishments must be acknowledged. The origin and evolution of this cuisine was an integrative and evolutionary process.

This research also opened up new avenues for further research. For instance, some interviewees mentioned that the Bengali culture was conducive to the integration of Chinese food and culture. More specifically, the role of the Bengali community could be explored further in the spread of this cuisine. The effect of the process of relocation after the 1962 war would also be an interesting variable to study. Another line of investigation could be the study of old newspaper clippings for information on origins and evolution. The coverage of American-Chinese cuisine has been well-documented through this form. In contrast, it was difficult to do the same for Indo-Chinese food as the records were not digitised and hence they were not available to us. The multiple origin hypothesis, which stated that the dishes which constitute the cuisine have come from not one but multiple locations, proposed that Kolkata might not be the only city which contributed to the formation of this cuisine. This

can now be seen more clearly as we uncovered the origin of momos, which is an integral dish in the Indo-Chinese cuisine, to not have been Kolkata. This hypothesis could be studied and confirmed through further research.

As we have observed, the cuisine of Indo-Chinese food has certain recipes and dishes which remained unchanged across the country. Certain local adaptations of the cuisine have emerged but the dishes of Manchurian, Schezwan and Hakka noodles remain unchanged throughout the geographical expanse. Arjun Appadurai (1988) wrote about the absence of a pan-Indian cuisine in India on his paper on building a national cuisine. Here, it would be interesting to study whether the Indo-Chinese cuisine could be a pan-Indian cuisine since there are not many changes that occur with geographical differences.

3. Limitations

Like all research projects, our research wasn't optimum in nature. There exists a scope for further research and improvement. Pointing out the limitations of our study is crucial because it might inspire researchers and students to conduct research on the same or related topic in the future.

The first limitation was the time constraint faced by the team for carrying out the on-field research. As we had only one week to spend on collecting data and interviews for our research, we ended up conducting an exploratory research instead of an in-depth study of the Indianisation of Chinese food. A considerable amount of time was spent while travelling to the field and back, which further limited the time period allotted. Moreover, we were unable to approach all the potential interviewees at Tiretta Bazar weekend morning breakfast we had to leave the field before Saturday. This was particularly disheartening as a majority of them set up their stalls on Sunday and while interviewing people in the bazaar on Wednesday morning, we were suggested to visit on the weekend instead as there are comparatively more stalls with Chinese food during that time.

The time period allocated turned to be a limitation in the case of reaching out to potential interviewees as well. The reason being that Durga Puja was around the corner and a number of restaurant owners and staff were busy making preparations for the upcoming festival. As a result, the team had to prepare concise questionnaires so that the interviewees don't have to compromise much of their time.

The location was chosen for the study also limited the extent of the research. While tracing the origin of the Indo-Chinese cuisine, we realized that apart from Kolkata, locations such as Mumbai and Delhi were also significant in the creation of the cuisine. However, we were not able to collect information from these locations or verify the data which we found regarding the origin of certain dishes, such as *Schezwan*, *Manchurian*, etc., to have taken place in these locations.

Being undergraduate students, most of us were conducting on-field research for the first time. Additionally, all of us were associated with different academic disciplines but none of us had studied any food-related disciplines before. Even though we were given some training from the university before fieldwork, certain learnings are beyond the classroom setting and come with experience. Another contributing factor to the list of limitations could be our lack of access to prominent scholars and food bloggers associated with the world of Indo-Chinese cuisine. Even though we tried to get in touch with food bloggers such as Vir Sanghvi multiple times, we were unable to get a response from his side. Moreover, the topic hasn't been researched thoroughly in the Indian subcontinent. Whereas, similar researches have been conducted in the United States of America and Europe. Therefore, we had to review a large number of newspaper and journal articles compared to research papers.

The sample size of the study had restrictions of its own. Even though we were able to gather quite a bit of useful data, our total sample size was not representative enough to take all the possible perspectives into consideration.

Our initial approach of finding the origins of specific dishes like Hakka, *Chilli chicken*, *Manchurian* from the interviewees did not turn out to be very lucrative as chefs and restaurant owners were often reluctant to share their recipes or open up about the ingredients used by them to add flavour to their dishes. We also observed that as the current restaurant owners and chefs belonged to a newer generation, they were not able to share information regarding the origin of various dishes and how they were created.

Also, most of the information provided by our subjects was based on their memories or incidents or stories shared by their ancestors. The information provided was all that had been filtered over the years and therefore there could always be a possibility of it not being factually accurate. Here, various phenomenon such as selective memory, where they only recall selected events, telescoping, which causes misplacement of events in the timeline,

attribution biases and exaggeration could have taken place. However, by expanding the sample size these biases could have been reduced in effect.

We had previously assumed that the lack of Bengali speakers in the group would affect our communication with the locals. To our surprise, it wasn't Bengali but Mandarin that restricted us from acquiring useful information. While visiting the morning stalls in Tiretta Bazaar, this limitation became more prominent as a majority of people were more comfortable with communicating in Mandarin. Fortunately, our mentors knew Mandarin and were able to translate the information. We further observed that a sense of collectivity was associated with communicating in Mandarin. A number of people hadn't spoken in Mandarin for a few years and were thrilled to have met fellow Mandarin speakers.

4. Relevance

One of the most important questions to be considered before conducting a research is the relevance of the study. This section aims to understand a number of factors that contributed to the significance of our research. Firstly, our exploratory study on Indo-Chinese cuisine could be particularly useful not only for researchers but also for students and individuals who are willing to understand the distinction between typical Chinese food and the Indian-Chinese food. This study could also be of utility for uncovering the hidden stories and figures that contributed to the making of the Indo-Chinese cuisine.

As previously stated, the Indo-Chinese cuisine has remained unexplored and therefore the collected data and the inferences would add to the existing literature on the topic which could be beneficial for students in the future. Additionally, our study might also prove to be a source of direction for scholars willing to conduct further research on the topic.

The formation of a cuisine and the invention of various dishes reflect not just the creativity of the innovation but also the historical background and the situation during which the process takes place. Therefore, food is seen as an effective means to study a particular culture or society as it was and as it has evolved over time.

Our research would also lead to an appreciated understanding of gastronomy as a discipline which is dedicated to understanding the social values, meanings and beliefs associated with it that significantly affect the existing food culture. Lastly, our study on the Indianisation of Chinese food would be helpful for inspecting social relationships and cultural identities through the means of Indo-Chinese cuisine.

We hope that the research has provided with significant information regarding the origins, evolution and the spread of the Indo-Chinese cuisine. We also hope that the research has highlighted the culinary identity and the various factors which lead to the perception of authenticity among the consumers. Further research would help enrich the knowledge regarding the cuisine of Indo-Chinese food and explore this unique process of Indianisation of Chinese food.

Endnotes

1. Sichuan is the southwestern province of China. The province is known for its spicy food. Sichuan peppercorn and hot chilli pepper, the essences of this cuisine are cultivated in this region. (Si & Scott, 2017) These give the dishes the hot numbing effect the cuisine is known for. *Schezwan* refers to the red, spicy sauce used in the Indo-Chinese cuisine. The inspiration for this name came from the Sichuan province in known for its spicy food.
2. The churches are the community centers of the locality. It is an integral part in keeping the culture of the community alive in a foreign land. Few of them house Chinese Temples, libraries, and schools. (Deshmukh et al.,2017)
3. The gastronomic definition of authenticity explains a cuisine or a dish through its connections with its place of origin. However, the popular understanding of authenticity often coincides with the ‘typicalness’ or the proximity to the traditional form of the dish or the cuisine. In the paper, this perceived authenticity is termed as typical or traditional form of the dish or the cuisine.

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Appendix

Interviews		
Serial No.	Questionnaire Category	Questions
A.1.	Summarized version	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who started the restaurant and how long has it been running? 2. Can you tell us how you came to be working in this field? What is your family history? 3. What was your first menu like? How has it changed over the years? 4. Who created these dishes, <i>Hakka noodles</i>, <i>Manchurian</i>, <i>Chilli chicken</i> and <i>Schezwan</i> dishes come about? Do you have your own twist to these dishes? 5. I'm curious about how you make these dishes. What ingredients and seasonings did you use? Can you take a look at our lists and compare them to yours? 6. These dishes spread all over the country. How did they spread? 7. Certain dishes were limited to Kolkata itself. Why is that? 8. Do you think there are any changes happening in the cuisine now? What are your thoughts on it? 9. What are the most popular dishes in the restaurant? 10. How authentic you think your dishes are on a scale of 1-10?

<p>A.2.</p>	<p>Owner/ Manager</p>	<p><u>Background Information regarding the restaurant</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who started the restaurant and how long has it been running? 2. What is the most popular dish in the restaurant? 3. How many people come to the restaurant in a day? Has that increased or decreased in the recent years? 4. Can you tell us your experience in the food industry? 5. When you hire new chefs, do they have to go through some training? 6. How authentic you think your dishes are on a scale of 1-10? <p><u>History</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can you tell us how you came to be working in this field? Was your family also involved in this and can you tell us about it? 2. What are your thoughts on the changes happening in the Indo-Chinese cuisine? 3. What was your first menu like? How has it changed over the years? 4. Can you discuss the origin and evolution of Old Chinatown and New Chinatown—the Tangra and Tiretti Bazaars? 5. Could you share with us some stories of the old times/original owners <p><u>Ambience</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What exactly do these (*points to things) mean? 2. Why do you use them? 3. Who did the interior of your restaurant? Why did you choose this specific design? 4. Do you use specific cutleries for serving food to the customers?
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5. Do you think that the ambience of a virtual China in a restaurant is necessary?

<p>A.3.</p>	<p>Scholars</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Based on your knowledge, when did Indians begin to be interested in Chinese food? Indians and Chinese have very different eating cultures. So why did this interest in Chinese food start? 2. When the Indo-Sino war broke out in 1962, do you know how Indian people responded to dining at Chinese eateries or eating Chinese food? 3. How has the “composition” (People from different provinces of China like Guangdong, Hakka, Fujian, etc.) of the Chinese community in India been changed by the war? What is its effect on the food? 4. When refugees returned to Tangra after the war and started the food business, how did the local Indians feel about that? 5. We have heard instances of Indo-Chinese dishes being offered to Durga Mata during festival celebrations. What is the social mechanism behind instances like these? 6. As a historian and sociologist, how does Indo-Chinese food (or food, in general) affect people in Kolkata and what role does the food play in a multicultural city like Kolkata? 7. How do Indians view the phenomenon of Indo-Chinese food? 8. What are the roles of identity and integrations for Chinese immigrants? 9. Despite the popularity of Chinese food, we have also come across some news articles and documentaries that have described Kolkata's Chinatown as “dying” due to migration. What is your opinion on that?
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A.4.	Sauce Manufacturers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When did you start the shop? 2. Why did you or previous owner decide to start this business? 3. Can you tell us a little bit about your family history? 4. What was the first sauce that you started with? 5. Which sauces are your best-sellers and why? 6. How important is the role of sauces in Chinese cuisine? 7. What are the most important sauces in Chinese cuisine? 8. Can you describe <i>Schezwan</i>, Soy, garlic chilli, chilli <i>Manchurian</i> etc. sauces; in a few words? 9. In what way are your sauces different than others in the market? 10. Can you find most of your important ingredients in India itself? Do you need to import from China? (What are the sources of your ingredients? Imported?) 11. Where do you sell your products to? Primarily in Kolkata? Other cities/states? do you export to other places (states or countries) also? 12. Who are your primary sources of customers? Hotels, restaurants, wholesalers, retailers? 13. Have you incorporated any changes in the sauces over the years? If you have, why?
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A.5.

Chefs

Personal Background Information

1. How long have you been working here?
2. Which dishes do you prepare the most? What is the process involved?
3. What is your personal favourite dish? Why do you like it?
4. What kind of food do you eat at home?
5. Where were you trained to cook this food?
6. How did you learn the recipes? Was it oral or written down?

Dishes

1. Where does *Hakka noodles* come from?
2. When did you start to use *Schezwan* sauce?
3. When did you start to serve *Manchurian* dishes?
4. What was *Chilli chicken* inspired from?
5. If it did not start in your restaurant, how did you get the recipes?
6. Do you have your own twist to these dishes?

Ingredients (Sauce, Garnishing)

1. If we asked you what the three most used ingredients in Chinese food is, what would they be?
2. What are some of the ingredients used in preparing Indian Chinese cuisine that is common in both Indian and Chinese cuisines?
3. What is the difference in ingredients between the two cuisines?
4. What ingredients are necessary for dishes like *Hakka noodles*, *Schezwan*, *Chilli* and *Manchurian*?
5. How or why do you think these ingredients were used?
6. Has there been a change in the ingredients used since the conception of *Hakka noodles*, *Schezwan*, *Chilli* and *Manchurian*?

		<p>7. Is there any ingredient you use now that is used in more original Chinese cooking?</p> <p><u>Cooking styles</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the major differences in the cooking styles employed in preparing Indian and Chinese cuisine? 2. When you cook the food, do you use Indian or Chinese cooking styles? Do any of your cooking style resemble the authentic Chinese cooking style? 3. If they use both styles, how are they both incorporated? <p><u>Flavour</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What flavours are available in <i>Hakka noodles</i>, <i>Schezwan</i>, <i>Chilli</i> and <i>Manchurian</i>? 2. Can you describe each flavour in 3 words? 3. How is this flavour different from other conventional flavours? 4. Have you got any feedback asking to change the flavours of these dishes for any reason? If incorporated any changes, why and how?
A.6.	Waiters	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How long have you been working here? 2. What do you think consumers like in Indo-Chinese food? (taste, ambience, flavour, culture?) 3. What is the dish you serve the most? 4. Are you aware of when restaurants started to serve <i>Hakka noodles</i>, <i>Schezwan</i>, <i>Manchurian</i> and <i>Chilli</i> style dishes? If yes, could you tell us more about it? 5. How many consumers do you see in a day?

		<p>6. What is the busy time for this cuisine?</p>
<p>A.7.</p>	<p><u>Consumers</u></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do you prefer Chinese food over other cuisines? If yes, why? 2. What's your opinion of this cuisine? 3. What taste differences do you find in the Chinese cuisine when compared to other cuisines which you think makes it attractive? 4. What are your top 3 favourite dishes? Is there any specific reason other than just taste? 5. Could you share with us some memories related to Indo-Chinese food? 6. So, do you think that the food you eat is authentic Chinese? 7. Do you prefer Tangra's Chinese food or you like to eat Indo-Chinese food anywhere? 8. Do you prefer to eat in Tangra or Tiretta bazaar? Why? 9. How long have you been coming to Tangra/Tiretta bazaar, has anything changed food wise from before?

		Veg Spring Roles	Hakka Noodles	Veg American Chopsey	Veg Manchurian	Veg Manchow Soup	Sweet Corn Soup	Veg Fried Rice	Chili Paneer Dry	Schezwan Noodles	Schezwan Fried Rice	Hot and Sour Soup	Chili Chicken	Chicken Manchurian	Dragon chicken	Number of Times Used
SAUCES	Soy sauce	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	14
	White distilled Vinegar		●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●					9
	Sesame Oil	●	●		●			●		●	●	●	●	●		9
	Chilli Sauce	●	●	●			●		●			●	●			7
	Tomato Ketchup	●		●					●	●	●		●	●	●	8
SEASONINGS	Garlic	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	14
	Ginger	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	14
	Green Chilli	●			●	●		●	●							5
	Black pepper	●			●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●		9
	Red chilli flakes		●		●					●			●	●	●	6
	Sugar			●	●								●			3
	Peanuts												●			1
FLOUR	Corn flour			●	●	●	●		●		●	●	●	●	●	10
	All-purpose flour	●			●				●					●		4
VEGETABLES	Spring onion	●	●	●	●	●		●		●	●	●	●	●	●	12
	Green Bell Pepper	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●			11
	Celery		●	●	●	●	●				●	●	●			8
	Onion	●		●				●	●			●	●	●		7
	Carrots	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●				10
	Cabbage	●	●	●	●	●		●		●	●	●				9
	Green Beans	●	●	●		●	●	●		●		●				8
	Mushroom											●				1
	Cauliflower						●									1
BASES	Chicken												●	●	●	3
	Noodles		●	●						●						3
	Paneer								●							1
	Rice							●			●					2
	Egg														●	1
	Corn						●									1

Analysis of the ingredients used in common Indo-Chinese dishes

Checklist: Recipe Analysis**Schezwan Style**

Name of the Restaurant	Name of the Interviewer
Name of the Interviewee	Date and Time

	MUST HAVES	OPTIONAL	OFF THE SHELF
INGREDIENTS			
Vegetable Oil			
Garlic			
Ginger			
Shallots/ Sambar Onions			
Kashmiri Red Chillies			
Soy Sauce			
Sichuan Pepper			
Celery			
SEASONINGS			
Vinegar			
Salt			
Sugar			

Black Pepper Powder			
Others (Specify if any)			

Chilli Chicken

Name of the Restaurant	Name of the Interviewer
Name of the Interviewee	Date and Time

	MUST HAVES	OPTIONAL	OFF THE SHELF
INGREDIENTS			
Chicken boneless			
Capsicum/ Bell Pepper			
Green Chillies			
Spring Onion			
Corn Flour			
Plain Flour/ Maida			
Soy Sauce			
Garlic			
Celery			
SEASONINGS			

Chilli Sauce			
Red Chilli Powder			
Pepper Powder			
Vinegar			
Salt			
Sugar			
Others (Specify if any)			

Manchurian

Name of the Restaurant	Name of the Interviewer
Name of the Interviewee	Date and Time

	MUST HAVES	OPTIONAL	OFF THE SHELF
INGREDIENTS			
Cabbage			
Carrot			
Capsicum			
Spring Onion			
Green Peppercorns			

Ginger			
Garlic			
Corn Flour			
Maida			
Soy Sauce			
Oil			
Green Chilli			
EXTRA FOR NON-VEGETARIAN			
Chicken/ Chicken Stock			
Beaten Egg			
SEASONINGS			
Salt			
Black Pepper			
Vinegar			
Chilli Sauce			
Others (Specify if any)			

Hakka Noodles

Name of the restaurant	Name of the interviewer
Name of the interviewee	Date and Time

	MUST HAVES	OPTIONAL	OFF THE SHELF
INGREDIENTS			
Fresh Noodles			
Chicken/ egg noodles			
Onions			
Capsicum			
Carrot			
Cabbage			
Green Beans			
Spring Onions			
Green chilli			
Peeled ginger			
Powered white peppercorns			
Refined and Sesame oil			
Soy sauce			
Cloves minced garlic			
SEASONINGS			
Salt			
Ajinomoto			
Vinegar			
Chilli sauce			
Others (Specify if any)			

Authenticity ratings on a scale of 1-10

Respondent	Owners (Chinese Origin)	Owners (Indian Origin)	Chefs	Consumers
1	5	8	5.5	6
2	5	6	6	8
3	1		6	7.5
4	2			8.6
5	5			4.5

Interview of Mr. Jawhar Sircar

Culture behaves in a manner suited to its geography, its environment and its adjustment to the world at large. If you look at 4 basic types of food that the world has, obviously oversimplifying it, there are 4 basic groups. You have the Leaven bread - the European bread which will last for a long time, it can be the hard bread, the soft bread, it can be anything white bread, brown bread whatever. Then you have the Unleavened bread, that we have, that have to be consumed in a day. It is best consumed hot but can be consumed after 4-6 hours. Then after that, it undergoes a metabolic change, almost putrefies if I can use that term. So, you have the leaven bread - the European bread, the unleavened bread - that is used in the Indian subcontinent. You have rice, per se, and you have noodles. Well, if you extend it further, you have porridge. You can split the whole world into these 5 basic cereals. Now these basic cereals were chosen with adjustments that human beings made with what nature gave. The wheat that was produced in central Asia and middle east, don't look at Arabian area the Arab part is very late entry, the middle east always meant the Levant - Syria, Lebanon, Meru, Jordan, Egypt, and Macedon - That's where the middle eastern civilization grew, then Arabia came and sort off appropriated a lot of it. The bread that grew there could be made into a product by That could stay for a couple of days and be reasonably fresh and I'll use the term naan. You need a very hot fire for that, a big oven for that, naan cannot be made at home. So immediately you come to the conclusion that you can't make it at home. You need an enormous oven and you need what is called a 'Chula' a huge one where you put it inside. So that is the basic, you take the wheat and grind it, and make it automatically into the wheat by-product that you ... The same wheat when it comes to India you call for a much softer version where there is more yeast put in to fluff it up. There would more yeast effect and it would be more fluffy the chapati, the roti. That's the second basic cereal.

Now before we come to rice, jump to China. China is one of the oldest civilizations that started on the rice and the earliest rice specimens of China, Korea and Japan was a variety called '...' It is one of the oldest varieties we've seen. Now, when I talk about wheat and rice, man had seen wheat and rice in its wild form. Man took wild wheat and rice a long time before learning that you use the seeds and plant it, you can actually control the growth. So, cultivation begins much later. Now in very advanced societies, 10,000 is what we give or take 10,000 years means 8,000 BCE. 8,000 BCE is the earliest of transferred settled civilizations. Almost there are no traces of ... The first 4 civilizations in the world to take place in something like 6,000 BCE to 10,000 BCE and these 4 are Mesopotamian, Nile-Egyptian, Indus Valley, and Chinese river valley. Okay, now I am digressing. Let me come back to what I was talking about.

China gets which is very sticky. It didn't prepare sticky rice, God gave it sticky rice. With sticky rice, you need sticky solutions. When you say that these people eat by hand- that's awful, they eat by chopsticks- that's terrible, they eat by fork and knife- that's terrible. Never go for cultural comparisons without understanding what caused it. When you get sticky rice, and you get a lump you

can't use a fork, you can't use anything. You need pincers, the chopsticks are actually the first pincers in the world where the fulcrum is in your finger. You can't handle chopsticks with insertions ... On a mass scale, all you need is to clean up a bamboo. The lumpy rice would have to be had with pincers. If you try to have it with your hand, you'll have to go on licking your hand. It just doesn't work on the hand. When she uses chopsticks and I use hand.

Now we move off from the Eastern-Pacific coastline towards South-East Asia and India. The moment you cross over from Thailand you get a rice that separates itself out. Individual grainy rice. Now, the borderline is north-east. The north-east has sticky rice, it has India rice as well. You go to north-east, they'll give you both. So, it's there. So, the moment you come into the plains and the Brahmaputra, the Ganga and all there, you get the grainy rice - the dry rice if I have to use the term. So, the dry rice if you try to have it with chopsticks, it'll keep trying to fall off. If you try to have it with spoon, it doesn't make much sense so the natural thing was to use your fingers.

And in this context, we have left one thing out. You have the European bread which is for conditions like that lasts for a month or two months. If you have long bread, it will last for two months because you don't have access to fire on a daily basis. So, when you don't have access to fire, you bake the bread and keep it as long as you can. That's system 1 and system 2 is you have occasional access to fire, you make them into fluffy bread and use it for a couple of days. That means you don't need a daily access to fire. The third one is the Indian variety where you need daily access to fire at a fragmented level, at an individual level. Each house must have its own fire and each person must be capable of rolling out the bread and cooking them. Before we move on, the dry rice or the non-sticky rice of the entire Ganga peninsula and southern India and adjoining countries.

Then you move on to the sticky rice people. Okay, the other thing that you need to understand about why I am taking this route is because when China tried its wheat as well 8,000 years ago, the wheat also came up sticky. What do you do with sticky wheat, come up with a solution.

It doesn't lend itself to wonderful bread. The moment you try to use the wheat with a little bit of water, it becomes glutinous if you try to cook it. It has a natural sticky quality. So, the Chinese used this natural sticky quality to their advantage by using the kneaded bread. In other words, you grind it, mix it water and you try to make roti out of it. You can't. You try to make bread out of it, it sticks. So, the best thing is to use it as an elastic and draw it out. A noodle is not made by a sieve, it's not a jalebi. It's made by drawing, pulling. So, you go on pulling and pulling and you can bring it to a fine cultural shape and you have the advantage of having a preserved food which as ... and remains essentially natural. There is no additive. The problem of preserved food is the additive part. It naturally retains itself if you've done it the right way and they actually have a ... pull it from one side to another and wrap it around again. So, noodles came to them as an invention or a utilization of the sticky wheat. Okay?

And then the experiments began - whether you can put a little rice powder in it? Then I can have sticky rice. I can have thin Singaporean noodles. Those are all add-ons. You have the sticky rice and

the noodles. The other one that I left out was sub-Saharan Africa where the ..., millets there was only one way to eat them - boil them with something and use them like thick soup - porridge. All the African civilization survives on porridge. Europe survives on bread, middle-east survives on half-leavened bread, India survives on both chapati and rice, and China survives on noodles and sticky rice. You got the basics, right? No one superior to the other, no one is inferior to the other. It's all a question of ecological adjustment.

What happened it, Indians missed out on noodles because their rice would not give you ... So, noodles were not a part of the Indian food systems at all. At all. Noodles went over from the silk route to the middle east where it comes as the seiwai, sweet pudding that you have of thin noodles. They adopted it, don't think that seiwai is ours. We copied it from the Arabs and the Central Asians.

And then seiwai moves on. It moves on to Venice because the meeting point of the silk route, the silk route ended in Venice. Venice was the temple stone to Europe. The Venetians picked up and they made them into spaghetti. They made them into noodles. So, you have the sticky wheat noodles - spaghetti, macaroni, and others that ... in Italy. So why you have this combination of Italian spaghetti and Chinese noodles is because of the silk route.

Now Chinese food comes into India from the first Chinese settlers of modern times. I would still put Yong Atchew as the first one. Yong Atchew's period is 1784 - 1790, that's the period and he has absolutely no intention of putting up a Chinese food shop. His workers were also Chinese but what Atchew would consider a lower variety. There's was a different one But remember they were all Pacific coast. They are all what we call eastern Chinese food, we never had central Chinese food. Central Chinese food, what we call *Schezwan*, we never got it.

Obviously, when the food is not culturally not known to you, you are suspicious. So, Indians kept their distance from Chinese food and they basically never understood how to use chopsticks. I have a feeling because we have no records of Chinese food being used anywhere. I have a feeling this comes us only in early part of the 20th century. In the early part of the 20th century, it comes in as an exotic dish when the Chinese settlers, incidentally all the Chinese settlers were not the settlers from Yong Atchew. The Chinese settlements begin in large numbers at the end of the 19th century as well. As I've explained the Chinese shipping industry was much more powerful than India and they had a system of Shanghai - forcible capture, just like the British had, the British don't talk about it. British and Americans don't talk about it. They just kidnap people, bound them up, put them into ships, into the cargo and when the ship was in the high seas, you'd open them up and say work for a living. Europe did id magnificently but blamed it on China for it. The word itself is "Shanghai".

You are working around in China, someone gags you, kidnaps you and sells you. Whatever it is. We can use the term forceful labour. This forceful labour used to try to escape from the ships because they were being made to do slave jobs. Those slave jobs tried to escape at the first hint. Many of them jumped ship and stayed back in Calcutta. So, there is no cultural integration per se. In other words,

what I am trying to tell you is that the first Chinese could have been Kannada, the second Chinese could have been Malayalis, the third could have been Tamil. It is completely mixed up.

The lingua-franca was Hakka at the time and still continues. The Hakka at some point of time were the core force and everybody had to adopt that language into their fold. So early 20th century when Calcutta became a live metropolis, in Benting Street I southern Calcutta, 100's of Chinese settled down. And they were eating and cooking in the atmosphere of the Indians. So now it was not separate ghettos, they got integrated. A house would have a Chinese family and it would also have a Malayali family.

At some point of time, it started and we have not been able to date. Chung Wah was one of the first. The first ... who had Chinese food as food would not come from Indians. It came from the Americans. The Americans had a long and rich Chinese population because if you look at it, the American west coast was right across the Chinese Pacific Ocean. So, the Americans were used to a lot of Chinese food and were much more open about food. Indians have always been closed about food. If you touch this food, you will lose your caste. If you touch that food and all that. And the Chinese used a lot of beef and pork, so taboo to them. In fact, Chinese loved to have more of pork - it's a pork-based civilization and in India pork was looked down upon. It was a Scavenger food. They have these psychological problems. But what attracted the Indians to Chinese food was the noodles. That was one thing that they had not seen in their lives and once they learnt how to slurp it and eat it, nothing to stop them.

Now the problem is that Chinese food is ... let me tell you how it works. You have your own bowl of rice. You take your rice in a bowl, it's a bowl-based thing. And then you have these common bowls and you pick up what you want from the common bowl, put it in the rice, wet it a bit, pick it up once again and have it. This ... against Indian norms. The biggest dividing norm in India is Jhutta. Contamination exists very strongly in 2018. You can't touch your food with someone else's food. Even if it is your own family. Even your own family does not allow it. Picking up from somebody else's plate, expecting mother and child which continues for a small period after which the child objects. So jhutta means contamination. Whereas the soul of Chinese food is sharing - that nobody goes into individual fragmentation of having his own plate and his own stuff. It's taken from common. So again, you get a problem. You like noodles but you can't have it that way. You can't pick up your bowl of noodles, you can't pick up your bowl of rice and you can't have 4-5 bowls from where to pick up the other vegetables or meat. So, this is the basic divide. So, the first innovation made in Chinese food in maybe places other than China, I know about India, is to have separate dishes to serve separately. Somebody or at the beginning of the meal you take some and keep it on the plate, which is again pretty stupid because the food gets cold if you don't keep it in a common thing you can't retain the heat, the moment you take it in and then you add it.

Again, forget China for a minute, come back to Indian food. The basics of Indian food was one cereal and one lentil. You need boiled lentils at the right thickness garnished with some amount of spices to

make it palatable. Some chilli or whatever. Now, this is the basic food. Unless the dal itself is made excitable, even if you have cooked dal and rice, both are essentially bland. They are essentially bland. Sometimes you have it to fill our stomachs. Which is the origin of why pickle come in. Why green chilli comes in. Why a bit of onion can come in. Because otherwise, you don't get a tang in your mouth, both of them are bland food. Okay? In other words, what I am saying is that, even if you have it with chapati, you have the lentil with the chapati you split your chapati, mix it with some lentil and dal and have it. So, I am coming to the basics of Indian food, one dry, one cereal which is reasonably dry, and you have one wet lentil, one wet food. One dry, one wet mix with each other - you mix it yourself, you don't want anyone else to mix it, you lose your own purity. And then third is add-on dishes, side dishes. If you are a fish eater, you have fish coming in. If you are vegetarian, you have potatoes or something else coming. That's the third wet food. And then you have one dry cereal, one wet food and then a second wet food. The wetness will also depend upon what is the cereal you are using. If you are a roti eater, you prefer ... dal, porous dal which is thick. If you are a rice eater, you prefer something like Moong dal, masoor dal which produces a lot of liquid, you can spread it all over.

So, you can have a thin dal without losing consistency and/or you can have a thick dal because if you have a soupy dal, roti doesn't go along well. Roti requires a little thick-ish dal. So even dals are segregated into families based on who requires what. See I am almost talking like a lady. So, this is it. Now, stop Indian food and come to Chinese food. Now, this Chinese food is to be had in the Indian way. So, the first thing is that the rice and the noodles is split into different plates which doesn't happen in China. B) There is no sharing from common pots. That's the second one. The common pots are split into separate plates on the analogy of chawal and dal, it is split into. That's the second part. From this, the taste would again develop. It assumes that the noodles are bland. So here we have the noodles coming in with a little bit of excitement because you never have the rice or chapati coming in with little bits of food, noodles come in as mixed noodles, chicken noodles ... So that garnishing is the biggest excitement, that you also have the basic food with add-ons. That's not an Indian concept. The basic food is the bland food. It is essentially bland but the Chinese could put little bits add-on foods to the basic food that the noodles. First, the noodles could be the first to excite, I've already told you in terms of splitting it. What about taste? What about choice of food? Insects are taboo in India. Absolutely taboo. Most insects are treated as delicacies in China. No, you can't compare, its culture. The nearest that an Indian comes to having a thing that looks like an insect is a prawn. If you are a prawn eater, are you prawn eaters? It is the nearest that comes to having an insect.

Now you must come back to the cultural concept of India and China. Chinese civilization has been built over centuries on not wasting any time that good has produced. No waste. Everything is eaten. There is a way to find how to eat it. That's it. You have to find a way to it. So, to explain Chinese food which I went on my first trip to China 35 years ago, I was told that anything that walks, swims, flies' crawls, slides so anything will do, everything is available. This essentiality doesn't exist. In

India, the species that are had are limited both in vegetables, for instance, I am talking about the banana, very few people in India other than Bengalis and Malayalis use all the bananas. People have the banana either ripe or unripe that's the end of it. They don't have the banana flower. The banana flower is an essential thing in Bengal. They don't have the banana stalk, we have the banana stalk. So, it all depends on how much of the species do you use. On the vegetables also the species are limited, limited because of the tremendous cultural constraints in India. You can't have all the vegetables. So, the other example was the third excitement about having Chinese food was to have assorted vegetables. Behind the vegetables, all types of vegetables that came in, the excitement was that you don't have to ask per se, society if you can have. Vegetables per se are cleaner, are socially more acceptable. So, for vegetarian food, you don't need to ask your conscious all the time. So, the number of vegetables that Pork Choy, pork choy is not something that you'd otherwise have. The immediate impact of Pork Choy was that Indians started to go for green onion. Green onion if you take off the roots, it looks like Pork Choy. So there have been ...So vegetables they spread. And the vegetables were put in a thick sauce. There again I'll interrupt for a minute and explain to you the gravy sauce thing. The difference between a gravy and sauce is that a sauce is cooked independently of the food. It's a stand-alone food. It is made of tomatoes, it is made of green chillies, it is made of a lot of stuff and is made up of a lot of other stuff. It can be made fresh, it can be soured. It is not related to fish that I am having. Whereas the gravy is the boiled fish that gives out the juice of the fish onto a soup on to which you put on a lot of spices. So, the gravy essentially draws from the central object. If you are having a meat, a gravy is the flow out of the meat. If you are having a brinjal curry, gravy is the one that flows out of the brinjal. If you are having potato curry, it flows out of it and takes the gravy out of the central food and then you add some spice to it. The Chinese practically never went in for gravies, they were going for sauces which are independent of each other. So that is another thing that you need to keep in mind. Am I getting too deep into food? I am not even a food specialist.

So, gravy is not ... food. Our gravy is the soup of the item that we are making. For non-vegetarian, it comes out more strongly and for vegetarian, it comes out less strongly. Now the Chinese, they believe in sauces of different types. Europeans have only sauces. When a European is giving you something, a roast beef with Yorkshire pudding, he is putting some sauce on top of the meat. The sauce and the meat are not related to each other but makes the meat more edible. In that sense, they don't put only sauces. They have some gravies. Some gravies. Some gravies, their concentration, I mean it is not obsessive like Indians. In other words, they can have a chicken, some amount of chicken which cooks on its own and releases its own juice and after that they can put like what Indians call the curry, gravy. They can have it.

But the Chinese have another food that the Indians never touched. A soup is something antithetical to Indian thought. A soup is both European and Chinese. The Europeans made soup out of the hostility of their existence, their environment. Whatever was available chop into bits, boil it, and have it. It was a fluid dish which was neither porridge nor dry and a soup warmed people in cold climates.

Remember that China straddles two worlds. North of Shanghai, if I were to put it, is what we call the cold climates. The cultural domination of China comes from the cold north. These foods and exotic foods are contributed by the south but the south remains culturally dominated by the north. It's not a very similar climate like ours. To Kerala is the same, some little hot, some little cold. It's completely separate. You have to be in Beijing and other places to understand what cold means, what cold is - it's really cold. The part that's covered by the Great Wall of China is very cold. But there is a Chinese civilization that is south also. The great south, the southern part. There is a Chinese civilization in central part Chengdow, Shyaan. From Chengdow to Shyaan is what they call their "original empire". That is the ... empire. The domination of the northeast of China is a recent phenomenon. In other words, it happens after the establishment of Tughlai Khan and his empire, it goes on and on but the original, ancient Chinese empire was in the central, was in a plateau, which is cold. So, you have two cold and one hot. You have central China on a plateau where it'll be cold. I feel that the actual Chinese civilization ends at Shyaan. After that, it is Chinese-influenced civilization. Shin. is Chinese-influenced civilization, it's not Chinese. So, soup is essential for warming you up. The same quality that tea gives you. If you ever have tea and instantly measure your temperature, you can feel a little bit of heat coming into it. The moment you pass boiling water into your body, it heats you up for a minute. Soups for essential for cold climates but the soup culture was permeated into the south which need not have soup but had soup anyway. So, the soup becomes the other big contribution of the Chinese.

So, what were the attractions - the soup that they had never seen the biggest attraction, the noodles that they had never seen the biggest attraction, the sticky rice that they had never seen of course Indian restaurants hardly sell sticky rice unless you tell them that you want the Chinese rice, they'll give you the Indian rice. If you go there, they will give you Indian, but if you ask them, they'll make it a little sticky. But rice is almost gone because rice never excited because rice we already have, novelty is what we go after. And then you have to maintain the essential cultural barriers of India - no sharing so individual. Now taste, Indians are given to a lot of strong tastes. Strong hot food, strong sweet food. So, everything comes on a little strong. So only those dishes among huge lot of Chinese food that suited the palate stayed back. The Indians have about 1% of the Chinese menu. 1% less than 1%. I've lived in China, I've worked in China but I...

Jasmine ma'am: Where were you in China?

No, I'm just back from ... where I had Chinese food for 14 days. 14 days I had only Chinese food and I had Indians who said where is the food. This is the food. You have to understand the Indian dietary system, it starts with a sour item. Usually something exciting like a sour item. Bitter or sour. Start with a bitter to excite your gastric juices. That's the first thing. There is no such concept. We Indians usually have something fried on the side. Crunchy on the side. They don't have that concept. No, I'm trying to integrate the two. They have the concept of starting, incidentally, the soup need not be in the first. You can have it anywhere. Soup is a snack, you can have it also. But a soup is served first, we

don't have the concept of serving soup first. We get straight to the... There is nothing called ... or introductory food in Indian food. A little bit of bitter, a little fried thing and come straight to the food. There is no question of an appetizer. The Chinese can have a bit of appetizer but they also get straight to the main food. The main food, the rice or the noodles part of it is only 25% of the main food. I am quantifying in my mind, it's only 25% of the food. It the amount of cereal digestive that I need to have because the rest of the food is equally important. Whereas in most Indian cases, the rice or the cereal is 80% of my food. 80% of my food and 20% are the other dishes. That's again another... So, what stayed back was something of the Chinese dietary spread that matched finger to finger, to some extent, with the Indian dietary dictates. Preferences and dictates - no touching food, no sharing food, no nothing of the sort etc. And then the taste, as I said Indians started with something bitter, there was nothing like that. Sweetness within food, within the Indian dietary food exists only within the Gujarati's. We would like to end with a sweet food but only the Gujju's have it in the middle. We have all types, we need to have all types only the Gujarati's have it in the middle. In Chinese food you could have something of sweetish taste, like sweet and sour, in the middle. But the way that Indians look at sweet and sour, it's basically sweet hardly sour, sweet and sour, garlic dishes are all 100% Indian dishes. All these dishes even the *Chilli chicken* that they talk about is hardly ... okay another element that attracted Indians, that is Soy. They had not seen Soy before. Soy is an essential. So, if you mark out - soup, noodles, sticky rice, Soy. These and the thick chilli sauce. The way that they make chilli sauce is something that comes that is not there. We have a lot of chilli but not in that sauce manner. So, these are the attraction and what are the compliances? Well, you have to have something which is a little hottish. *Chilli chicken* or *chilli* something. I think only this girl will understand what I am talking about. That explains how the two ... come in. I can swear by all the dishes we have are essentially Indian. But you will never have *Chilli chicken* with rice at home.

Hanshita: Who were they selling it to?

The Bengalis.

Hanshita: They started with Indians itself?

Bengalis started with the Chinese food because their Shastric injunctions are the least. They are the most adventurous. They are the most adventurous of all the Indians because Brahmanical culture came down least into this place. This lady is a ... brahmin but she eats all. She eats meat, she eats fish, she eats everything so there is nothing about it. So, because of meat, fish...less of cultural constraints, adventurism was much more here and they were the ones who tried out foreign foods and everything. I know that the period of adventurism about food started from the first world war, 1920 approximately, to 1940. These 20 years things came into Bengal that you never heard of. Biscuits. Completely prohibited in the house, no English food was allowed into any Indian house anywhere in India. Your interaction with the British is outside your house. Within the house, they remain foreigners. You can't have anything. Bread comes in. Pav roti. This is the same period when adaptations were made out of food. The pav would be cut and put into Indian food to make pav bhaji.

This is the time when all types of adaptations started - pav bhaji started. But Bengalis, I know historically from Utsar's books and other books, that Bengalis were a little more adapted. Between 20 and 40, tea comes in in a big way. Or rather 20 and 30. By 40, Chinese restaurants spread. Thanks to the allied forces. The allied forces occupied Calcutta. The Americans. By 1939, by 40, 41 they occupied. They were very fond of their brand, American brand, of Chinese food which are equally horrible. Chop Suey. Nobody knows what chop suey is, the Chinese don't know what chop suey is. They have adapted chop suey, ketchup ... so they have made their own cultural mixtures with Chinese food and they insist on having it once they see Chinese in India.

Jasmine ma'am: So, there was a period of time in Kolkata...?

So, in Kolkata from 41 onwards they were here. So, this is the period of time when you had bars coming up, all the old Chinese restaurants in Kolkata, Chung Wah and everything was around that period. So, you can actually trace and these are the ones, that started in let us say 1940 in Kolkata - 40, 50, 60 there were no Chinese in anywhere else in India. It's only in the '50s and '60s that the sons of these Chinese going to Bombay and other places and setting up shop and introducing their brand of Chinese food. So, the Indian Chinese food has the distinct stamp of Kolkata. All the adventure that comes in, all of the dishes, what are the dishes you've heard of? Names?

All: Noodles, *Manchurian*

Whatever. Manchuria would get a shock if they eat *Manchurian* chicken. So, all the *Schezwan* chicken and all this is ... that 20's the adventure starts, individual houses selling little bits for adventurous people. There is a system in Kolkata that still exists, if you are here till Sunday morning, you are going to Poddar court.

All: We've been there but not on a Sunday so we didn't see a lot of vendors there.

You didn't see too many there. It's come down aa?

Hanshita: So, it was the allied forces influence and not the British?

Allied forces actually. American forces and other allied forces they increased it.

Hanshita: So, we assumed that it was the British.

The British did not popularize, the British helped the Bengalis come to chops and cutlets and fish fries. That is something essentially Calcutta. Unless you have a fish fry here or a vegetable fry here, you won't know it. The Bengalis adopted the food and made into these three dishes that I'm talking about. Fish fry because Bengalis have fish all the time, chicken cutlet and mutton chop. This is essentially Indo-British food or British-Bengali food. They didn't go in for this, they had no contact with the Chinese. Chinese were there in spite of them. The early pat that I wrote about, Yong Atchew ...

Jasmine ma'am: So, during the Indo-China aggression period, what was your...?

The 60's? There were implications of our relations with China. From the 1820s and '30s, the British countries started growing opium in India, in Bengal. They forced the farmers to grow opium, the farmer would never have rice to eat. They were just bullied and asked to grow opium. This opium was

extracted in the factories and taken off to feed China which landed in the Chinese. wars, opium wars and all that. The chilka of the opium, the little shell that comes out, the grain that comes out used to fall on the floor. Because the poor farmers and all had nothing else to eat, they started boiling and eating this and this is one of the top-most delicacies in Bengal now. It's called posto. P-O-S-T-O. It is not "tt", it's "th". Posto is just the shell of the opium seed that fell on the floor, that was picked up and now it's a delicacy. It started around say 160-170 years ago and is a religious part of Bengali food. So, there were offshoots of this thing. They were poisoning the Chinese with opium and there were by-products of this. But the main Chinese food was by those because we didn't get fresh incursion, a lot Chinese left after this 1962. I personally feel that the 1962 excitement around that Poddar Court Chinatown was because of property. Property. They were occupying prime property at the centre of the city. And this stupid Marwaris wanted them. They colluded with the gangsters and the police to drive them off. So, the exaggerated anti-Chinese wave, which I as a student, nobody was against them.

Jasmine ma'am: Do you feel that it affects the people's perception of the food?

That actually didn't come in because that de-ghettoised. In other words, they were in one square km area and since many had to be beaten off, discouraged or whatever in that area. Poddar Court, Poddar is a businessman, a Marwari businessman. That entire colony was wiped out ... and nobody talks about it.

Hanshita: Was there any effect on the food?

No, it only popularised it. I'll tell you why. Because they spread all over, they decentred, migrated to middle-class localities and in middle-class localities, they were welcome. They looked like north-easterners so there is absolutely no problem. Whereas if a European settle down, then they look upon and there was not a problem. And they learnt the language very fast. I went to ... very recently to deliver a. and the guy who is talking is obviously Chinese and I said how on earth. He said my family came here in the and you know what happened since my family went to ... he is a dentist family. Dentistry was introduced by the Chinese. The native level dentistry, dentistry was something that the British did to the British. It never affected the Indians. Indians had to find something, they just attracted the tooth. Dentistry was taken up. Among the industries that the Chinese took up - dentistry was one, shoemaking. They brought in the shoe and leather industry because the leather industry was untouchable to us. Flaying of leather was untouchable. The Chinese could start from flaying the leather to wet blur, wet blue is the next stage, to scraping, polishing, finishing and then getting to shoemaking. So, the leather industry in Bengal which is one of the biggest, Tamil Nadu and Bengal, is a direct product of Chinese intervention. So, they are behind dentists, from dentists to doctors, to shoes, to food. Three major contributions.

Hanshita: After the Indo-Sino war, the people were made to?

Oh, they were made to go through a lot of this thing but they were so horribly Indian. They don't remember anything from China. It's stupid to make them go through it. What article did you come across? Two in the telegraph?

Hanshita: Yeah, the Chinese community of Kolkata and the first china man in academia.edu from the old tales of Calcutta.

Okay, did you get a piece from Oxford University Press? Remind me, send me an sms, I'll send you.

Jasmine ma'am: The more recent community concentrated around Tangra and looks like a lot of local Indians...?

Tangra was a suburb, a slummy suburb where Calcutta's last part ended. Now, of course, there is a bypass through it and it is integrated within the town. Tangra started around after '60s and I have a big role, in the sense that Tangra became where all the tanneries were set up. Now in 2004,5,6 I was the secretary for the government of India MSME micro, small and medium enterprises and the supreme court ordered that all the tanneries should be thrown off Calcutta. There were very painful four years. Painful 4 years to tell the Chinese to leave the tanneries. You please stay here but not the home-made tanneries. The best thing was, the tanneries used to prevent people from getting into Chinatown because of the stink. Once the tanneries left, it was environmentally clear and that valuable plot of land they used for hotels. Have you been to Tangra? Have you seen the amount of hotels? But you will see that there is no street development. That's very funny.

Hanshita: Was there any resistance from Indians at any point of time to the food or to the people?

No, the food was welcome. Was always welcome.

Hanshita: To the people?

No, I've never seen it in my life.

Hanshita: We have heard of instances of Chinese food being offered to Durga Mata during the festival?

Oh, that's in Tangra.

Hanshita: Why do they do that?

That's a tendency to give whatever you consider best to the goddess. Anyway, the God or the Goddess is an excuse for you for having the food.

Glossary

Ajinomoto: A packaged umami additive, originally produced by the Japanese. Also known as Monosodium Glutamate (MSG).

Bow Barracks: Locality in Kolkata mostly populated by Anglo-Indians.

Cantonese Community: It is a subgroup of Hans Chinese in southern mainland China who originated from the province of Guangxi and Guangdong.

Cantonese Noodles: Noodles that are cooked in gravy.

Chinese Bhel: A dish made of fried noodles, cabbage, bell peppers, tomato ketchup, soy sauce, and chilli sauce.

Chopsuey: It is an American based Chinese dish that consists of vegetables and meat that has been cooked and stewed together in sauce and is served with rice.

Chowmein: A form of noodles which is either stir-fried or boiled with vegetables or shredded meat.

Chuanjaan: A Cantonese delicacy.

Deep fried: It is a cooking method where food is entirely covered in large amounts of oil or fat in a deep pan.

Dim sum: Traditional Chinese steamed or fried dumplings.

Dumplings: It is a boiled or fried ball of dough made of potato, bread or flour, filled with vegetables, meat, chicken or cheese.

Fried Prawn: An award-winning dish served at Beijing restaurant, Tangra created by the owner M. Monica Liu.

Hakka Noodles: A form of noodles that are mixed and tossed with sauces, vegetables and chicken. The name of the dish is derived from the Hakka region of China including Hunan, Sichuan, Fijian, Guangdong, Guangxi, Jiangxi, Zhejiang, and Guizhou.

Indo-Sino War: It is a war that happened between India and China in the year 1962 over the sovereignty of border regions of Himachal Pradesh.

Josephine Noodles: A popular noodles dish at Eau Chew, named after the owner, Mr Joel Hang's mother.

Kofta: A vegetable, minced meat, or cottage cheese savoury ball cooked in the Indian or Middle Eastern cuisine.

Manchuria: A province in the northeast area of China.

Manchurian: The word relates to the characteristics of Manchuria (a region of northeast China) or its inhabitants. It is a dish in the form of circular balls made either of vegetables or chicken in a garlic sauce garnished with scallions.

Momo: It is a Tibetan or Nepali dish in the form of steamed or fried dumpling made with vegetables or chicken in flour and water dough.

Multi-cuisine restaurants: Restaurants that serve more than one cuisine.

Pan-fried: A type of frying which uses minimum fat or oil on low heat in a frying pan.

Plum Chicken: A popular dish served in Shun Li, a restaurant in Tangra, Kolkata.

Sichuan: A province in southwestern China which is famous for giant pandas and spicy food.

Schezwan sauce: It is a hot, spicy and oily sauce used to supplement the Chinese dishes. The name is derived from a province in China which is known for spicy food.

Sichuan Peppercorn: Spice popularly used in the Sichuan Chinese cuisine.

Starters: Food served as the first course of a meal.

Stir Fried: A method of frying food by mixing vegetables or chicken in a very hot oil on a medium flame and moving them around quickly all the time.

Tangra: The east region of Kolkata north to the city centre, also known as new Chinatown, which was known to house a large number of tanneries owned by Chinese people of Hakka origin.

Taro: A tropical plant known for its edible corms which are popularly used for cooking.

Tiretta Bazar: It is the eastern region of Kolkata which is also referred to as old Chinatown.

Wonton: Fried momo.

Wok: A cooking vessel which is round-bottomed in nature and traditionally used in Chinese cuisine.

Xia Jiao: A traditional Cantonese dumpling.

Yuca: A tuberous, starchy root used in cooking.

Zhou: Rice porridge or gruel that is a staple breakfast dish in China.

	Beijing	Kafulok	Shun Li	Golden Phoenix	Eau Chew	Waldorf	Blue Poppy	Green View	Oasis	Golden Dragon	Chinese Indian Tandoor	Tasty	Street Vendors	Popularity
Golden Fried Prawn	●													1
Cantonese Chow	●							●		●				3
Hakka Noodles	●				●		●		●					4
Chilli Chicken	●			●	●	●	●		●				●	7
Sichuan Chicken	●													1
Crispy fish	●	●												2
Steam Fish		●												1
Lemon Chicken		●						●						2
Chilli Pork		●												1
Sweet and sour Pork		●												1
Chicken Veg			●											1
Pepper Chicken			●											1
Chowmein				●		●						●	●	4
Fried Rice					●	●	●	●	●		●		●	7
Garlic Chicken					●		●	●						3
Manchurian Chicken					●									1
Roast Pork Chilli					●					●				2
Chilli Fish						●								1
Peking Duck						●								1
Sweet Corn Soup							●							1
Momos							●							1
Chicken Lollipop								●						1
Chicken Manchurian								●						1

Popular dishes according to the Owners

A DELICIOUS SLICE OF HISTORY

INDIANISATION OF CHINESE FOOD



EARLY SETTLERS OF CHINESE COMMUNITY

1800s

The Chinese community had started to migrate to Indian Subcontinent through the thriving trade routes. Eventually, some of the Chinese immigrants settled in Calcutta, capital of Colonial India.

BEGINNING OF THE RESTAURANT ERA

1930 - 1940

Chinese restaurants, Nanking and Eau Chew opened during this decade. These restaurants provided authentic Chinese food for immigrants.

WAR AND CONFLICTS

Mid 19th Century

The process of Indianisation of Chinese food had already begun in 1940's . The World War II (1939-1945) saw the increase in popularity of the Chinese food as a result of American influence.

INDO-SINO CONFLICTS

1960s

The year 1962 saw the rising conflict between India and China. After the conflict , many immigrants migrated to America and Canada due to the inhospitable situations.

SPREAD OF RESTAURANTS

1970-1980

The first generation immigrants started entering the restaurant business. The first Schiuan restaurant , Golden Dragon at Taj opened in the year 1973. One of the major inventions in the Indo-Chinese cuisine took place in 1975. In this year, Nelson Wang invented the dish ' Manchurian'

TRAGEDIES & TRIUMPHS

2000s

The beginning of 2000s saw the ban of tannery industry in Kolkata. The post war unfavourable conditions and the ban encouraged the younger generations to shift towards the restaurant business. What followed after, is the spread of Indo-Chinese food in Kolkata and in India.