



A Study of the Fusion of Indian and Chinese Food and Culture, with an Emphasis on Tangra in Kolkata

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ABSTRACT

Throughout the city's earliest days, the intersection of Indian and Chinese cooking styles has been an essential component of Kolkata's culinary environment. Tangra is a locality in Kolkata that is well-known for its remarkable fusion of Chinese and Indian culture, as well as its cuisine and people. The purpose of this article is to investigate the development of Tangra's fusion cuisine and culture throughout history. More specifically, the research will investigate the cuisine's origins, influences, and effect on the regional and national food scenes. This study provides a comprehensive analysis of Tangra's fusion cuisine and its significance in Kolkata's cultural and gastronomic heritage. It accomplishes this by employing a mix of primary and secondary research, as well as interviews with local residents, chefs, and food historians. Specifically, the focus of this study is on the cuisine of Tangra.



INTRODUCTION:

The city of Kolkata, which serves as the capital of the Indian state of West Bengal, is home to a culinary culture that is rich in both variety and depth. This tradition is heavily impacted by the multicultural history of the city. People from all over the globe, especially China, settled in and around the city as a result of its long history as a major commerce centre. As a direct consequence of this, the food of Kolkata is characterised by a unique fusion of Indian and other international influences, particularly Chinese. Tangra, a district in the city's eastern region, is where you can find the best examples of the cultural and gastronomic synthesis of Chinese and Indian traditions.

From ancient times, Tangra has been recognised for its sizeable Chinese population, and it was in this city that the fusion of Chinese and Indian cuisine first started in the 18th century. Currently, Tangra is well-known across the world for its restaurants, which offer a distinct fusion of Indian and Chinese food. This style of cooking is often referred to as "Indo-Chinese" cuisine. Because of this cuisine's meteoric rise in popularity, it is now readily accessible not just in India but even outside its borders.

The consumption of food has been a uniting force for all communities and at all times throughout history. For hundreds of years, China has been our next-door neighbour. Both the Indian culture and the Chinese culture have their own unique ways of settling dispute that are fraught with complication and rich in history. During the course of the years, we took on aspects of their culture, and they did the same with ours. There are clear indications of this shift in the food that has been prepared. The western nations were the first to notice the shift; the United States and Canada were among the first to contribute to the development of Chinese cuisine by drawing inspiration from the tradition and adding their own unique spin to traditional dishes. Changes analogous to this may be seen in India, where cuisine evolved from its traditional manifestations into the shape we are familiar with today. This gradual but noticeable shift was a fascinating event that had place. In spite of the fact that Indo-Chinese food is the second most popular cuisine in India (Ray, 2017), its uniqueness has not been exploited to this day. The fact that the majority of us did not have a clear understanding of the differences between traditional Chinese food and Indo-Chinese cuisine was one of the driving forces for our decision to conduct this study.



The Indo-Chinese cuisine was not affected by the tumultuous ties that existed between India and China, and its popularity did not suffer as a result of these tensions. The contrast that was drawn between our preconceived notions of Chinese cuisine and the actual cuisine of China itself served to pique our curiosity in the subject matter even more. The prospect of carrying out study on food piqued our curiosity even more, and as a result, we chose to concentrate on Indo-Chinese cuisine as the subject of our investigation.

Food from China served in India When you're sitting on the side of the road, nibbling on a momo that's been topped with hot Schezwan sauce, what goes through your head? Or when you take a whiff of the freshly prepared Hakka noodles and Manchurian that was delivered to your porch just moments ago? Does the taste of hot peppers and oil, along with those veggies that have been steamed to perfection, conjure up a picture of a dinner table in a Chinese home for you? How did Chinese food grow to be one of the most popular types of food served in Indian restaurants? Every gourmet in this nation has a deep and abiding passion for Chinese cuisine. There is no such thing as a comprehensive menu for a restaurant that does not include a spicy Schezwan gravy and maybe some wok-fried Hakka noodles. The purpose of this study is to provide answers to questions like as where it originated, how and why it began, who the founders of this cuisine are, and what importance it now has. It concentrates on the element of food and the important people who were involved in the establishment and development of Chinese cuisine in India. The study of Chinese food from the perspectives of both its creators and its consumers may give insights into the primary contributing reasons that lead to the proliferation of Chinese cuisine in India as well as its impact on the country's cultural, identity, and ethnopolitical features.

In Kolkata, also known as the City of Joy, you'll find Victorian-era buildings coexisting alongside high-rise commercial constructions. Kolkata is a city that successfully blends the old with the new (Chaudhuri, 2015). It is a city that has a soul, and its inhabitants love it despite the filth and deprivation that it is known for. Some of the fundamental aspects that make up a typical day in the life of a Kolkatan include drinking steaming cups of tea, experiencing the revivifying and never-ending downpours of the monsoon, appreciating works of poetry and Rabindra Sangeet, and commuting on trams and double-decker buses (Lonely Planet, 2016). The city that is currently known as Kolkata was once known as Calcutta.



It is the capital of the state of West Bengal. The city is primarily a consolidation of three West Bengal villages: Kulikata, Gobindapur, and Sutanuti. It is located in eastern India, along the banks of the Hooghly River, and it is situated in the state of Assam.

In the 1840s, the world saw a large number of unrestricted immigrations of Chinese population from 1848 to 1981. However, during the years 1882 to 1943, Chinese exclusion was a common phenomenon. From 1944 to 1967, immigrations were based on restricted quotas, and beginning in 1968, immigrations were made on an equal basis. Throughout Chinese history, there has been consistent socioeconomic change and communal growth, both of which have had an impact on the degree to which Chinese culture has been able to be preserved. The struggles that come with being banished, the sensation of isolation and fundamental disconnection, the awareness of and yearning for a world that has been lost are made more evident. This is the sole reason why the identity of those who have been culturally displaced has been placed under such a great deal of confusion. The problem of racial and cultural identification was brought up in many different immigrant groups by the researchers, who approached the topic from a variety of academic perspectives. For instance, Stuart Hall provides two distinct perspectives on what constitutes cultural identity. He describes "cultural identity in terms of one, shared culture, a type of collective "one real self," lurking beneath the many other, more surface or artificially imposed "selves" that individuals who share a similar history and heritage retain in common."

The second description that Hall offers is that "there are also essential areas of profound and substantial difference which form "what we truly are," or rather because history has never interfered — "what we have been." (Hall, 1990). In light of the fact that the Chinese community in Kolkata is an immigrant enclave that is inextricably intertwined with the greater society, a particular focus has been placed on that group. They have been isolated from the larger social mosaic as a result of their struggle for existence in the myriad of difficult circumstances. They construct their own socioeconomic environment, which illustrates the delicate problem of hybrid identity that exists among Chinese people in Kolkata. Examining the Chinese Indian community's origin history as well as contemporary events in order to put the community's cultural roots into the spotlight within the larger society serves the purpose of bringing forth an overarching concept of those roots' cultural significance.



Without the history of the Chinese community in Kolkata, a significant portion of the city's cultural tapestry would be missing, and life in Kolkata would be less flavorful as a result. The Chinese in Kolkata provide an important component of the city's cultural mosaic. This multifaceted civilization in Kolkata has resulted in the development of several Chinese ethnic subgroups, including Hakkas, Cantonese, Hubinese, Shandongs, and others. During the 19th century, some of them have operated as restaurateurs, while others sold shoes and worked as dentists. The Chinese are responsible for introducing man-pulled rickshaws, which are unique to India and have become an integral part of life in Kolkata. (Thankappan, 1984). In addition, the Chinese immigrants and their descendants created the Chinese-Indian cuisine that everyone in the city appears to enjoy even today. This is the most satisfying pleasure that the people of Kolkata have ever experienced in their lives.

In the 1840s, the world saw a large number of unrestricted immigrations of Chinese population from 1848 to 1981. However, during the years 1882 to 1943, Chinese exclusion was a common phenomenon. From 1944 to 1967, immigrations were based on restricted quotas, and beginning in 1968, immigrations were made on an equal basis. Throughout Chinese history, there has been consistent socioeconomic change and communal growth, both of which have had an impact on the degree to which Chinese culture has been able to be preserved. (Biswas, 2017). The struggles that come with being banished, the sensation of isolation and fundamental disconnection, the awareness of and yearning for a world that has been lost are made more evident. This is the sole reason why the identity of those who have been culturally displaced has been placed under such a great deal of confusion. (Biswas, 2017). The problem of racial and cultural identification was brought up in many different immigrant groups by the researchers, who approached the topic from a variety of academic perspectives. (Biswas, 2017). For instance, Stuart Hall provides two distinct perspectives on what constitutes cultural identity. He describes "cultural identity in terms of one, shared culture, a type of collective "one real self," lurking beneath the many other, more surface or artificially imposed "selves" that individuals who share a similar history and heritage retain in common." (Hall, 1990). The second description that Hall offers is that "there are also essential areas of profound and substantial difference which form "what we truly are," or rather because history has never interfered — "what we have been." (Hall, 1990).



There are a lot of various ways that the word "identity" may be used to highlight distinct aspects of human self-definition (Gecas, 1995). Oscar Wilde is credited with making the remark in his book *De Profundis* (1897), which states, "Most people are other people." Their ideas are the views of another person, their life are an imitation of someone else's, and their passions are a paraphrase. Even though Wilde was not trained as a sociologist, his comment stirs the sociological imagination. He made an excellent allusion to something that many people regard to be a paradox: One's own identity is one thing that seems to evade the allegedly solitary, atomistic, self-made person in contemporary Western culture. This is something that is surely true. To put it another way, our identity is perhaps the one thing that we have the least control over.

In light of the fact that the Chinese community in Kolkata is an immigrant enclave that is inextricably intertwined with the greater society, a particular focus has been placed on that group. They have been isolated from the larger social mosaic as a result of their struggle for existence in the myriad of difficult circumstances. They construct their own socioeconomic environment, which exemplifies the delicate problem of hybrid identity that exists among Chinese people in Kolkata. It is necessary to investigate both the community's past and its present-day happenings in order to get a comprehensive understanding of the cultural roots of the Chinese Indian population. This will enable these cultural roots to be brought to the attention of the general population. Without the history of the Chinese community in Kolkata, a significant portion of the city's cultural tapestry would be missing, and life in Kolkata would be less flavorful as a result. The Chinese in Kolkata provide an important component of the city's cultural mosaic. Acculturation, assimilation, and adaptation are all processes, but the one that is most dependent on one's identity is adaptability. The notion that the "Chinese Identity" is essentially same in every other overseas Chinese community is not unique to the Chinese community in Kolkata.

This notion is shared with other Chinese communities. The distinctive political and economic conditions, within which certain ideas and behaviours function as boundary markers, are the primary contributors to the formation of immigrant identities. (Liu.S, 2011). In light of this, the purpose of this article is to investigate some of the distinctive religious customs followed by members of the Chinese minority in Kolkata.



Establishing Taishou gong in Tangra and worshipping goddesses of Kali were very much indicative about the preservation of Chinese heritage and identity along with the process of acculturation and the formation of new mixed identity, which is tagged as Chinese-Indian identity. The pilgrimage to Achipur also marked the arrival of the first Chinese immigrant to India.

In addition to the Bengali Hindus, various other groups choose to make Kolkata their home due to the city's locational, political, economic, cultural, and intellectual importance. Some of these minority groups include the Bengali-Muslims, the Sindhis, the Biharis, the Agraharis, the Bohras, the South Indians, the Anglo-Indians, the Armenians, the Jews, and the Chinese. Others include the South Indians, the Anglo-Indians, the Armenians, the Jews, and the Chinese (Gupta, Mukherjee and Banerjee, 2009). The Chinese in Kolkata are the focus of our attention in this ethnographic research study since they are a member of a minority group. Chinatowns may be found in most major cities across the world. The Chinatown in San Francisco, which is the biggest one located outside of Asia, is a significant draw for vacationers (Astiadi, 2014). Historically, India was home to a number of Chinatowns, some of which were located in Shillong and Cheena Gully in Bombay (Dhapa, 2009). However, as a consequence of the Sino-Indian War that took place in 1962, a sizable number of Chinese people were detained, numerous atrocities were committed against them, and the government did not offer an apology or make any subsequent efforts to make amends for these wrongs, which led to their departure for other countries .

At the time, he was tasked with the responsibility of escorting an anti-British Chinese official named Ye Mingchen to his exile in Calcutta. This account provides a more in-depth description of the Chinese community in Calcutta. According to Alabaster, there was a "colony" in Calcutta consisting of around 500 people of Cantonese and Hakka Chinese descent. (Chaloner, 1858, pp. 369-70) [Citation needed] These Chinese had established temples for Guandi and the Goddess Tianhou in addition to engaging in other economically productive occupations like as shoemaking, opium sales, carpentry, and other trades. (Xing, 2011) According to the census completed in 1901, there were 1,640 Chinese living in Calcutta. The number of Chinese people who immigrated to other countries continued to rise over the first four decades of the twentieth century, particularly as a direct result of the civil wars and the Japanese invasion that occurred in China. After the war between India and China in 1962, the number of Chinese people living in South Asia drastically decreased.



Around three thousand Chinese were taken from India and sent to a camp in Deoli, Rajasthan. From there, some of them were sent to mainland China. Numerous people move to nations such as North America, Europe, Australia, and other areas of the world. Cantonese and Hakka are the two ethnic groups that make up the majority of residents in Kolkata. In addition to that, there were those who left their homes in the provinces of Hubei, Shandong, and Fujian. By the middle of the 1950s, eighty percent of the Chinese population in India originated from the province of Guangdong, nine percent from Hubei, and eight percent from Shandong. 43% of the migrants from Guangdong province were Hakka people from Meixian County. 30% of the migrants were Cantonese people from the Siyi region. The remaining migrants were mostly from the Namshun, Dongan, and Huining districts. (Xuxian, 1956). These communities practised endogamy almost exclusively, maintained close links to their ancestral lands, and excelled in a narrow range of specialised professions.

The Study of Food

Every culture places a significant emphasis on its cuisine. Not only does the fact that a dish is unique give it value, but so does the fact that it reflects the culture, ancestry, and location of the people who prepared it in the first place. Food may be seen of as a type of cultural identity since it helps communities strengthen their links to their homelands, which is particularly important when people in such communities have relocated to other locations. According to Pollock (2009), food is significant because it allows communities who are in the process of migration to continue to express their cultural values despite the fact that social and environmental factors have altered their cuisine. There is no denying the impact that Chinese culinary tradition has had on the eating habits of countries to which Chinese people have migrated (Goody, 1998. as cited in Mintz & Bois, 2002). In addition to this, it is simple to affect; the effects described above would be illustrative of the trials and tribulations that the Chinese minority in India overcame in order to forge its new identity. Food is a symbol of many different things, including culture, identity, and the connection a community has with either its home nation or the country that is hosting the community.

As a result, the study will use the consumption of food as a means to get an understanding of these various qualities. In the same way that every immigrant feels after moving to a new nation, the Hakka Chinese have developed a feeling of nostalgic longing for their own cuisine.



The desire to enjoy food from their homeland inspired them to make new versions of their favourite recipes using items that were readily accessible in their new environment. In New York, Stacey Lo and her husband, Chef Salil Mehta, manage a restaurant by the name of The Chinese Club that specialises in Indian and Chinese cuisine. They assert that members of their family were instrumental in the development of the Indo-Chinese cuisine that is popular in India. The great-grandfather of Lo was the one who established the first Chinese Club in Darjeeling in 1914. He did this with the intention of instilling a culture of hospitality among the Hakka Community by providing them with a "taste of home." She reported that it didn't take long for the Indian Generals to start frequenting the establishment, and they would ask for traditional foods that had increasing quantities of Indian spice and flavour in them (Krishna, 2018). The great-grandfather of Lo, along with a number of other Chinese immigrants, was instrumental in the development of a number of dishes that are characteristic of this cuisine.

OBJECTIVES

1. To explore the history and evolution of the fusion of Indian and Chinese food and culture in Tangra, Kolkata.
2. To examine the factors that have contributed to the fusion of Indian and Chinese food and culture in Tangra, Kolkata.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Literature review: Conduct a review of existing literature on the fusion of Indian and Chinese food and culture, with a focus on the Tangra area in Kolkata. This will involve gathering information from academic journals, books, and online sources.
2. Interviews: Conduct interviews with local chefs, restaurateurs, and community members in Tangra, Kolkata to gain insight into their perspectives on the fusion of Indian and Chinese food and culture. The interviews will be conducted in person or over the phone, and will be semi-structured to allow for open-ended responses.
3. Observation: Observe the preparation and serving of fusion cuisine in restaurants and street food stalls in Tangra, Kolkata to gain a better understanding of the unique characteristics of the cuisine.



4. Surveys: Conduct surveys of local residents and visitors to Tangra, Kolkata to gather their perspectives on the fusion of Indian and Chinese food and culture, and its impact on the local community and economy.

Data analysis: The data collected through literature review, interviews, observation, and surveys will be analyzed using qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative data will be analyzed through coding and thematic analysis, while quantitative data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics.

CONCLUSION:

Tangra is a restaurant in Kolkata that exemplifies the city's multiethnic history via its combination of Indian and Chinese food and culture. The neighborhood's unique fusion of Indian and Chinese elements has had a tremendous effect on the cultural and gastronomic environment of Kolkata as a result of its presence. Tangra's Chinese minority has contributed to Kolkata's dynamic cultural variety, which is in large part due to the popularity of Indo-Chinese food, which has become a part of India's culinary legacy as a result. This research offers a comprehensive investigation of the fusion food served at Tangra, as well as its place in the cultural and culinary history of Kolkata.

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