

INVISIBLE CHINESE

Revealing an ethnic enclave

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Revealing an ethnic enclave

ABSTRACT

It is difficult for one to understand the intangible mysteries of the Chinese microcosm proclaimed as Chinatown. A central theme is how Chinese avoid assimilating into mainstream society by alternatively providing means of incorporation into society that does not conflict with cultural distinctiveness. Chinatown is an urban phenomenon that is not characteristic of Kolkata alone, but one that is hosted in cities all over the world. In this context, therefore, we examine how an ethnic enclave orchestrates itself within a society, while at the same time shielding itself from it. Focusing specifically on Kolkata's Chinese community, one that was established in the late 1700s, we present a study of the immigrant enclave as a socioeconomic system, distinct from, but intrinsically linked with, the larger society.

BACKGROUND

This research offers the reader a narrative about the cultural roots of the Chinese Indian community by examining both history and current events. As architects it is essential to perform analysis at various scales. Within the given contents, the selected scales present a zoom-in of Chinatown Kolkata; beginning on a global scale followed by urban and street scales accordingly.

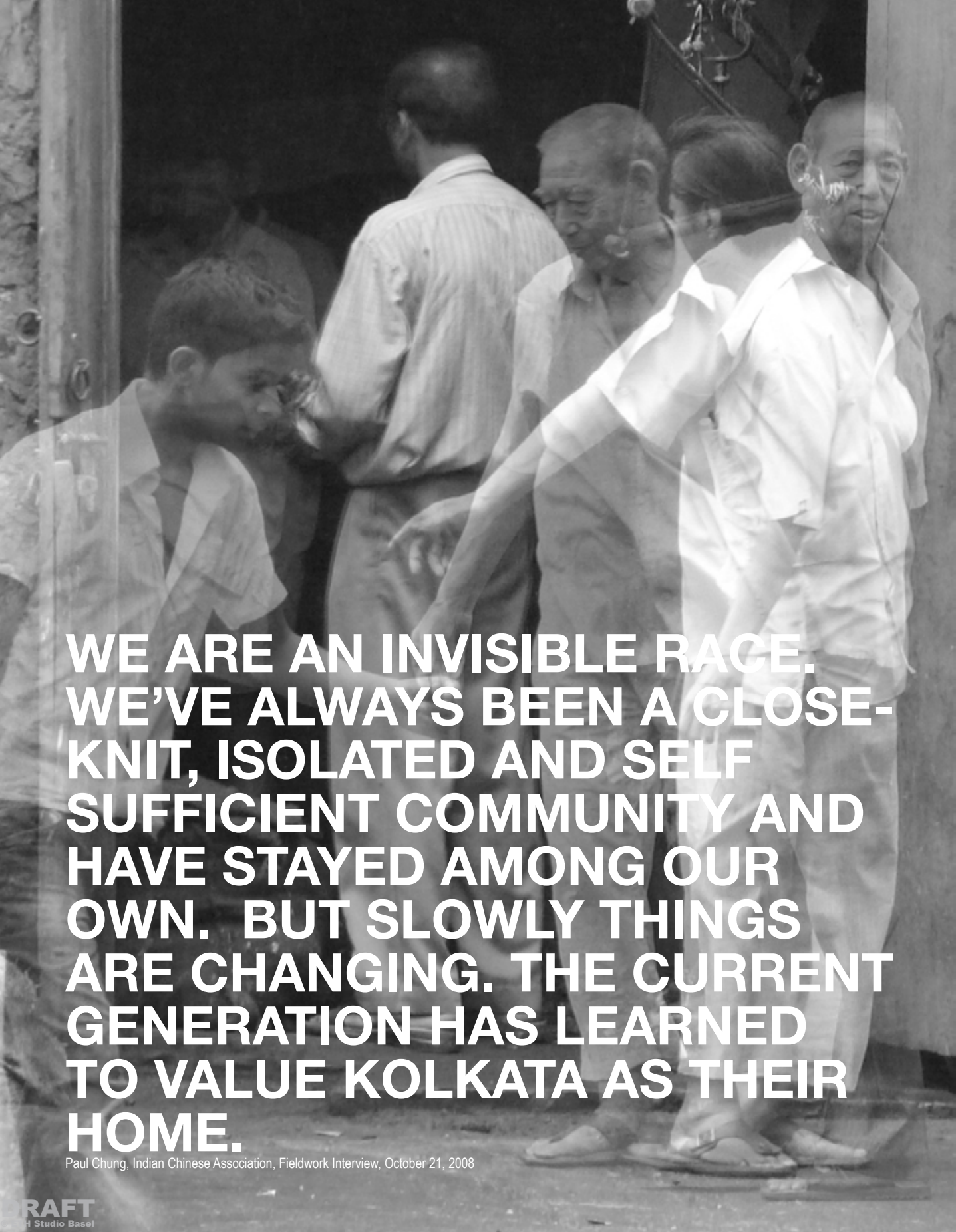
Three fundamental provocations become apparent in the research from a progression of description through analysis to theorization: **Tangra as City Center, Significance of a Minority and Space of Place vs. Space of Concept.**

This research was complimented by experiencing some aspects of the topic first hand by means of on site fieldwork.

Lukas: They don't perceive it as a place?

(40:30) Paul: **THE CHINESE ARE SO INVISIBLE...THEY ARE NOT RECOGNIZABLE.** In their mind, they know: Chinese stay there... but there is no social structure... no political structure... no financial structure... to enforce the government to take an action of recognition.

Paul Chung, Indian Chinese Association, Fieldwork Interview, October 21, 2008



**WE ARE AN INVISIBLE RACE.
WE'VE ALWAYS BEEN A CLOSE-
KNIT, ISOLATED AND SELF
SUFFICIENT COMMUNITY AND
HAVE STAYED AMONG OUR
OWN. BUT SLOWLY THINGS
ARE CHANGING. THE CURRENT
GENERATION HAS LEARNED
TO VALUE KOLKATA AS THEIR
HOME.**

Paul Chung, Indian Chinese Association, Fieldwork Interview, October 21, 2008



Two Chinese men meeting in the street
Tiretti , Kolkata

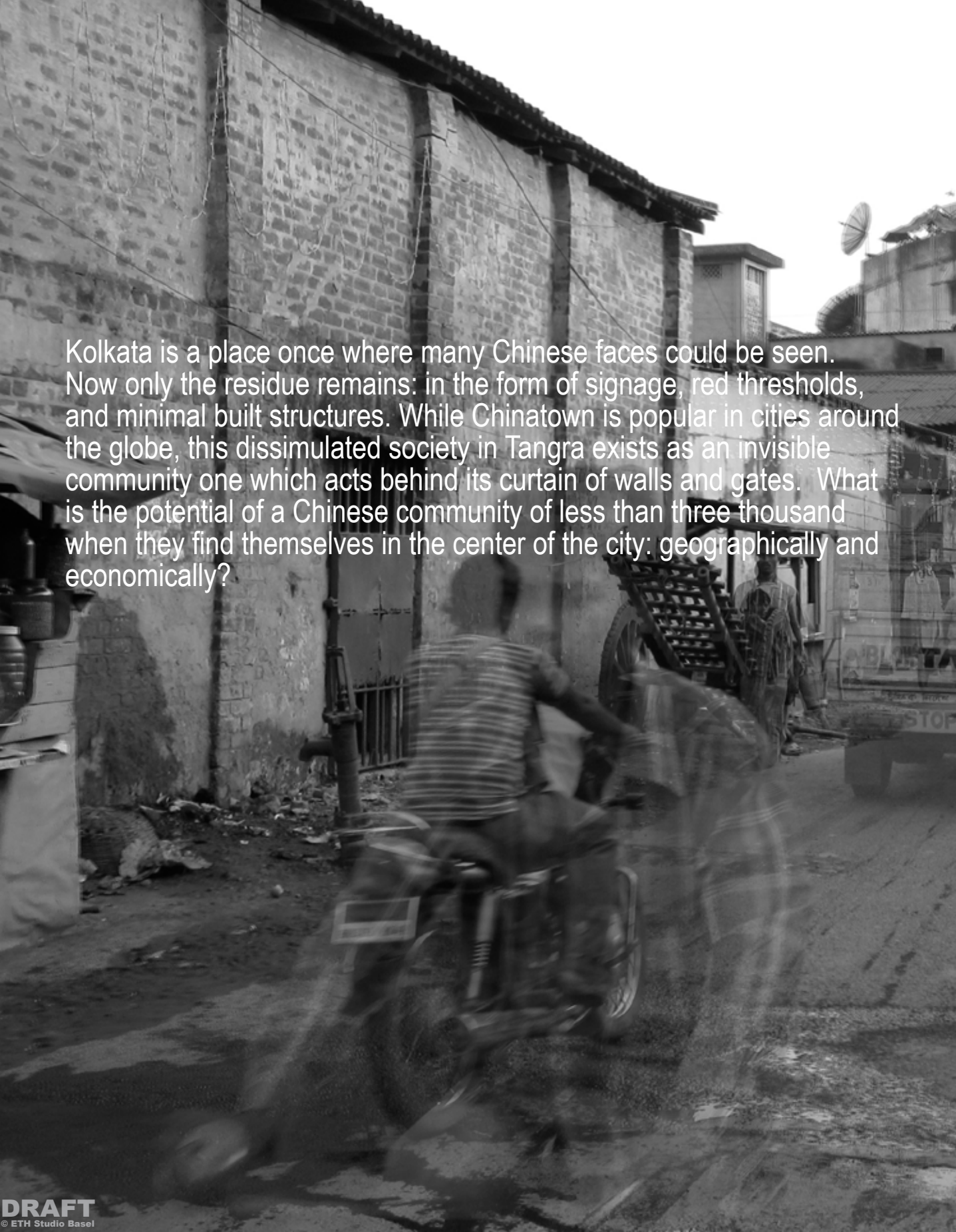


**WE DO NOT MIX WITH THE
INDIANS. WE HAVE OUR OWN
WAY OF MOVING AROUND.**

Paul Chung, Indian Chinese Association, Fieldwork Interview, October 21, 2008



Streets of Old Chinatown
Tiretti, Kolkata



Kolkata is a place once where many Chinese faces could be seen. Now only the residue remains: in the form of signage, red thresholds, and minimal built structures. While Chinatown is popular in cities around the globe, this dissimulated society in Tangra exists as an invisible community one which acts behind its curtain of walls and gates. What is the potential of a Chinese community of less than three thousand when they find themselves in the center of the city: geographically and economically?




TANGRA AS CITY CENTER

p 34

Matheswartala Rd
Tangra, Kolkata

DRAFT
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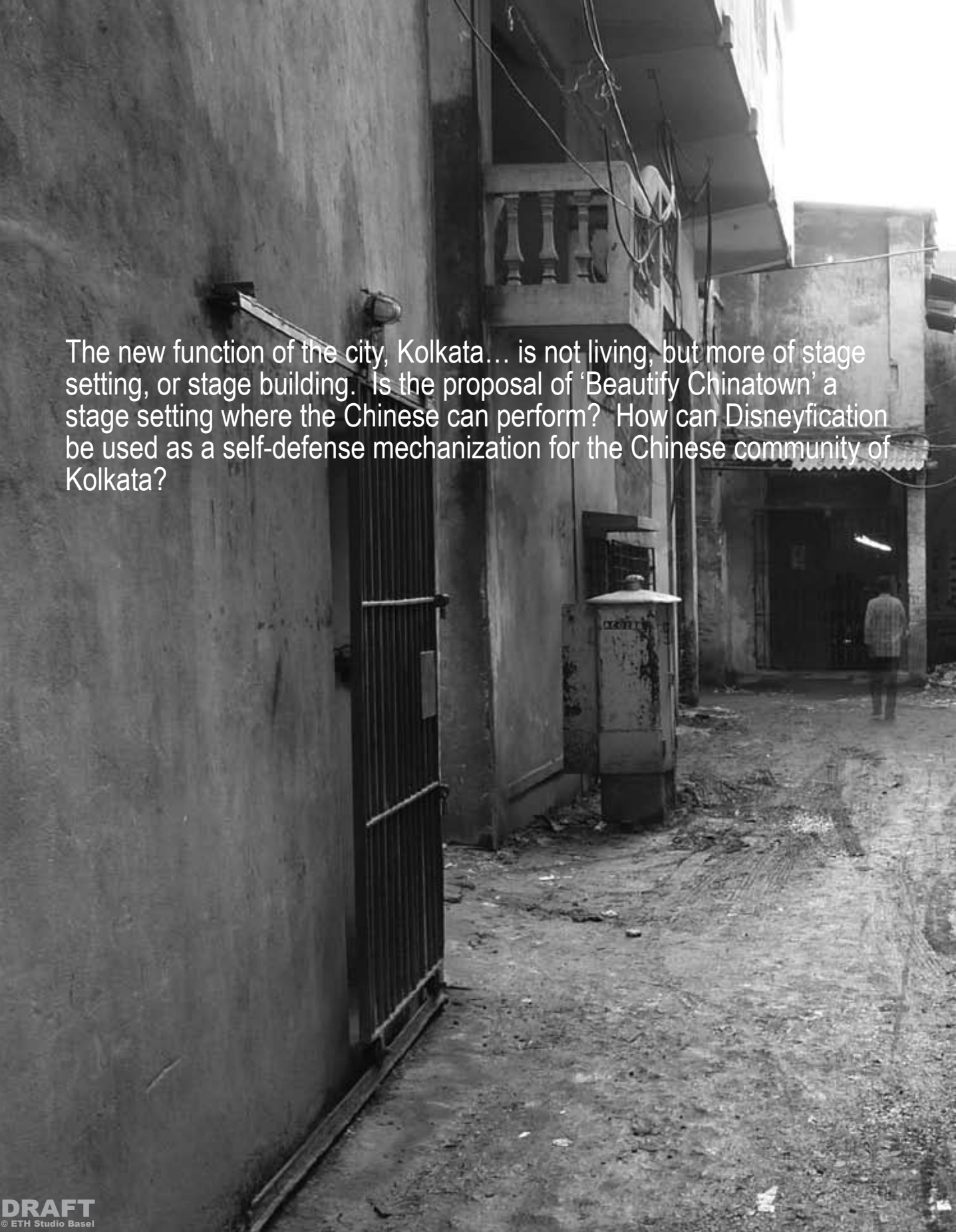
How does such a culture function within a Megacity? Or perhaps a more critical question is how can this study of a typical minority help us to better understand the growth of a city?



SIGNIFICANCE OF A MINORITY

p 104

Chinese boy playing basketball at Pei May School
Tangra, Kolkata



The new function of the city, Kolkata... is not living, but more of stage setting, or stage building. Is the proposal of 'Beautify Chinatown' a stage setting where the Chinese can perform? How can Disneyfication be used as a self-defense mechanization for the Chinese community of Kolkata?

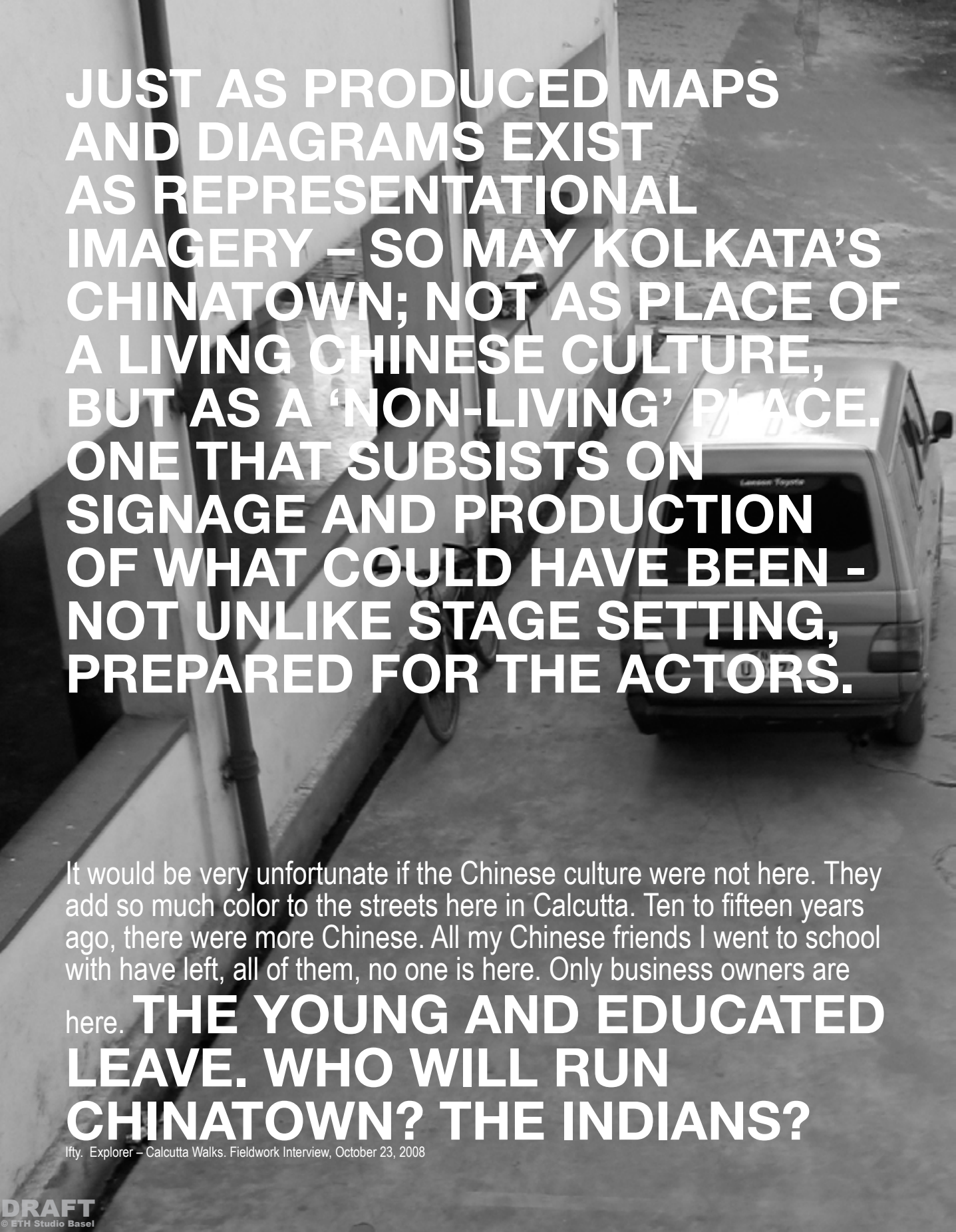


**SPACE OF PLACE VS.
SPACE OF CONCEPT**

p 108

Chinese tannery owner
Tangra, Kolkata

DRAFT
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**JUST AS PRODUCED MAPS
AND DIAGRAMS EXIST
AS REPRESENTATIONAL
IMAGERY – SO MAY KOLKATA’S
CHINATOWN; NOT AS PLACE OF
A LIVING CHINESE CULTURE,
BUT AS A ‘NON-LIVING’ PLACE.
ONE THAT SUBSISTS ON
SIGNAGE AND PRODUCTION
OF WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN –
NOT UNLIKE STAGE SETTING,
PREPARED FOR THE ACTORS.**

It would be very unfortunate if the Chinese culture were not here. They add so much color to the streets here in Calcutta. Ten to fifteen years ago, there were more Chinese. All my Chinese friends I went to school with have left, all of them, no one is here. Only business owners are

here. **THE YOUNG AND EDUCATED
LEAVE. WHO WILL RUN
CHINATOWN? THE INDIANS?**

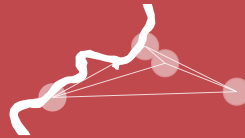
lfty. Explorer – Calcutta Walks. Fieldwork Interview, October 23, 2008



Chinese children playing in the courtyard of Pei May School
Tangra, Kolkata



Evolution



Morphologies

Demarcation



Specificity

唐人街

Physiologies
Physical Landmarks
Social Networks

Beuatify Chinatown

Iconographies

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GLOBAL SCALE

History	Cultural Roots and Routes	22
	Geopolitics	24

URBAN SCALE

Footprints of Chinatown	Teritti	32
	Tangra	23
	1 TANGRA AS CITY CENTER	34
Chinatown Tangra Urban Fabric		54
Walk of Chinatown Tangra	Walls, Gates and Signage	56

STREET SCALE

Chinatown Tangra Urban Fabric		78
Catalog of Tangra	Ingredients of an Indian Chinese Typology	80
Case Studies	Tannery and Restaurant	88

URBAN SCALE

Social-Spatial Comparison	How social uses, relations and businesses have spatial impacts.	96
	Chinatown Tangra Mental Map	98
	Chinese Social System	102
	2 SIGNIFICANCE OF A MINORITY	104
	Participants and Projects	106
	3 SPACE OF PLACE VS. SPACE OF CONCEPT	108
	Authenticity vs. Simulation	114

VICTORIA MEMORIAL OR THE GREAT WALL?

Paul Chung, Indian Chinese Association, Fieldwork Interview, October 21, 2008

The Victoria Memorial, Metro Railway and New Market are closer home than the Great Wall of China, Beijing or Tiananmen Square. Puchkas, jhaal muri, and Biryani it seems, are exciting most times, more than steamed fish, chicken soup or stir-fried vegetables. Atal Behari Vajpayee, Jyoti Basu, and Mamta Bannerjee are more familiar than Jiang Zemin and Li Peng. (Heard of them?) Yet, our hearts blow up with pride when China wins medals at Olympics, goose-pimples come up hearing the Chinese national anthem, the modern good-looking China that we see in magazines and pictures makes us feel great. What then are we? Indian or Chinese? At some point, each one of us must have wondered how we came here to be in India and what brought us here... What would life be like if we had not come here to India? When and what was it that made our forefathers come here?

The question: Indian Chinese or Chinese Indian?

'They are Calcuttans, they just have Chinese faces.'

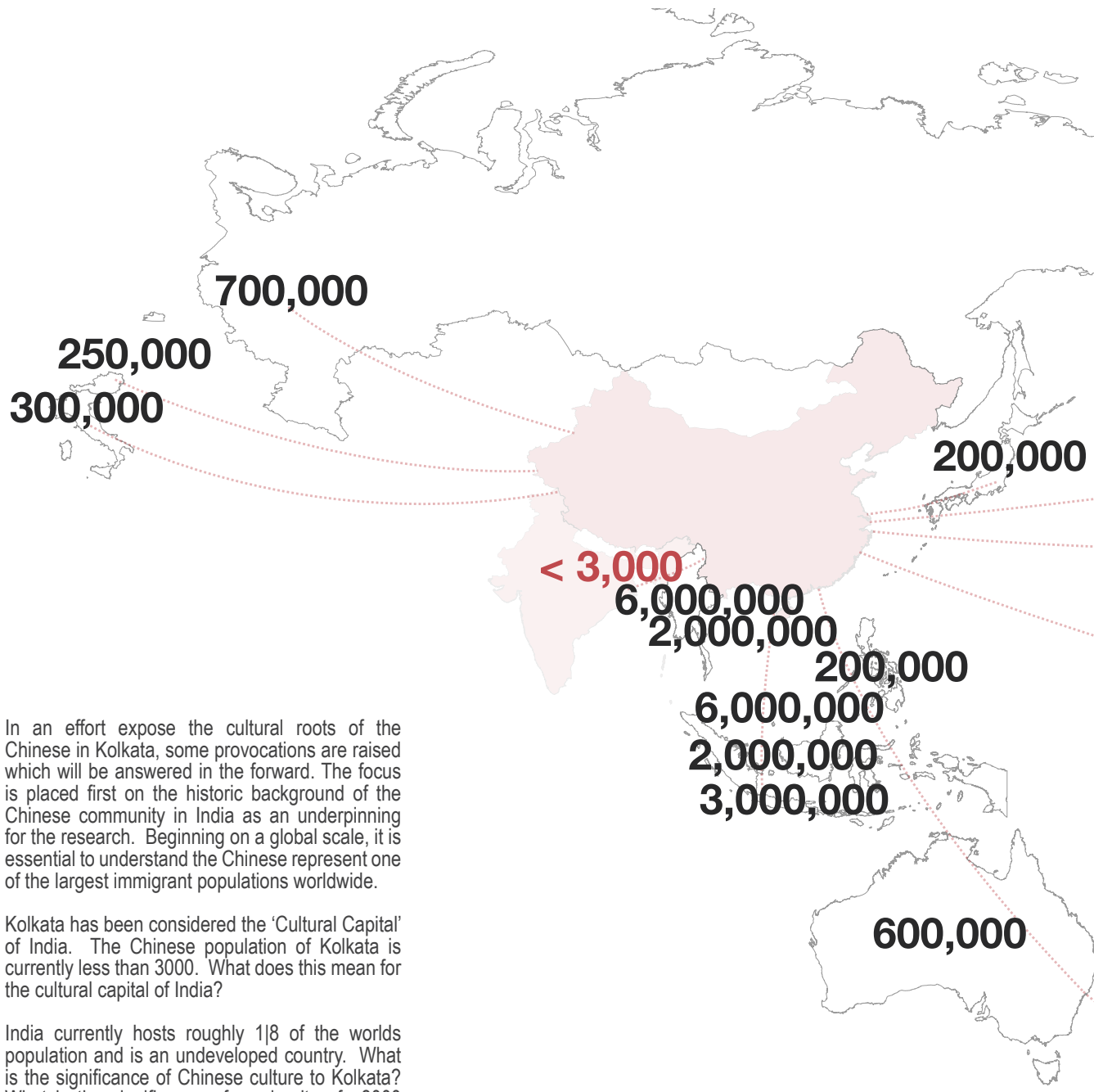
Iffy. Explorer – Calcutta Walks. Fieldwork Interview, October 23, 2008

Puchkas - type of Indian street food
Jhaal muri - spicy puffed rice salad
Biryani - rice dish with meat and spices





GLOBAL CHINESE MIGRATION



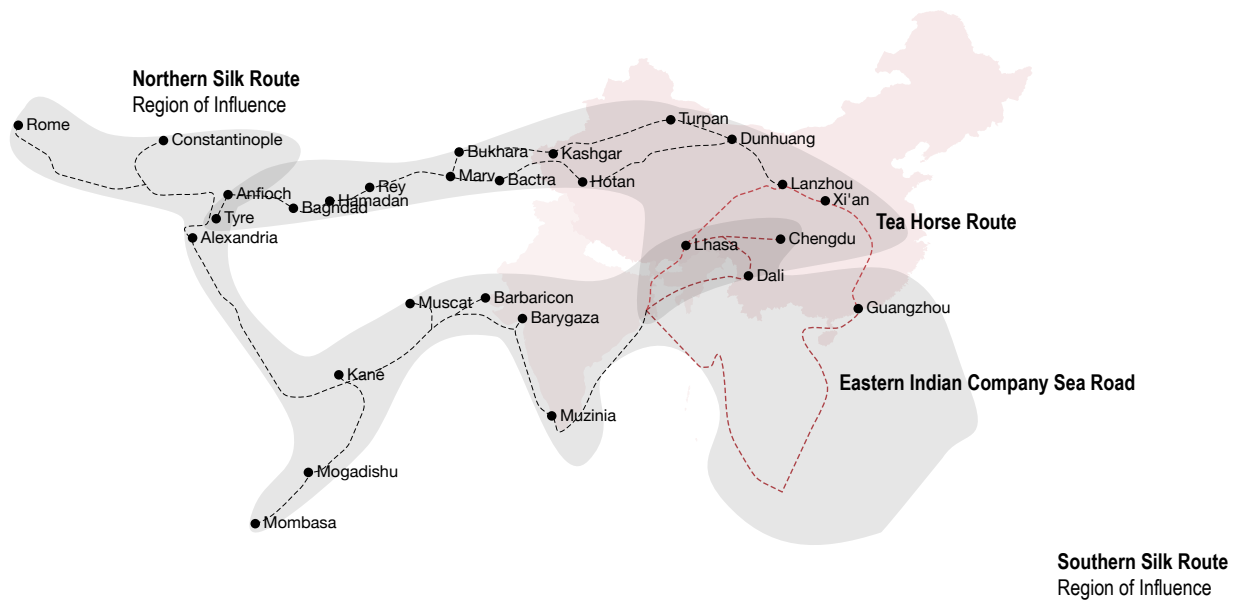
In an effort to expose the cultural roots of the Chinese in Kolkata, some provocations are raised which will be answered in the forward. The focus is placed first on the historic background of the Chinese community in India as an underpinning for the research. Beginning on a global scale, it is essential to understand the Chinese represent one of the largest immigrant populations worldwide.

Kolkata has been considered the 'Cultural Capital' of India. The Chinese population of Kolkata is currently less than 3000. What does this mean for the cultural capital of India?

India currently hosts roughly 1/8 of the world's population and is an undeveloped country. What is the significance of Chinese culture to Kolkata? What is the significance of a minority of <3000 Chinese in a city of 16'000'000?

This diagram illustrates the global migration of Chinese from China indicating the current populations for each country. Notice Kolkata, India's sole Chinatown, hosts less than 3000: <1% of the global Chinese population.





European Chinatowns Clusters

Global Trade Routes

To better understand this enclave, it is first important to look at how its different actors arrived in India's sole Chinatown in Kolkata. Why Kolkata at a global scale? At the time, Kolkata, formerly Calcutta and capital of India, was a central port city offering trading access to the rest of the world.

The primary routes utilized for Chinese immigration were the Horse Tea trade route, the Eastern Indian Company's sea road as well as the famous Silk Road. By providing a map of the trade routes and critical regions, one can better understand the economical and therefore geopolitical importance of the greater region of Kolkata as far back in the 18th century.

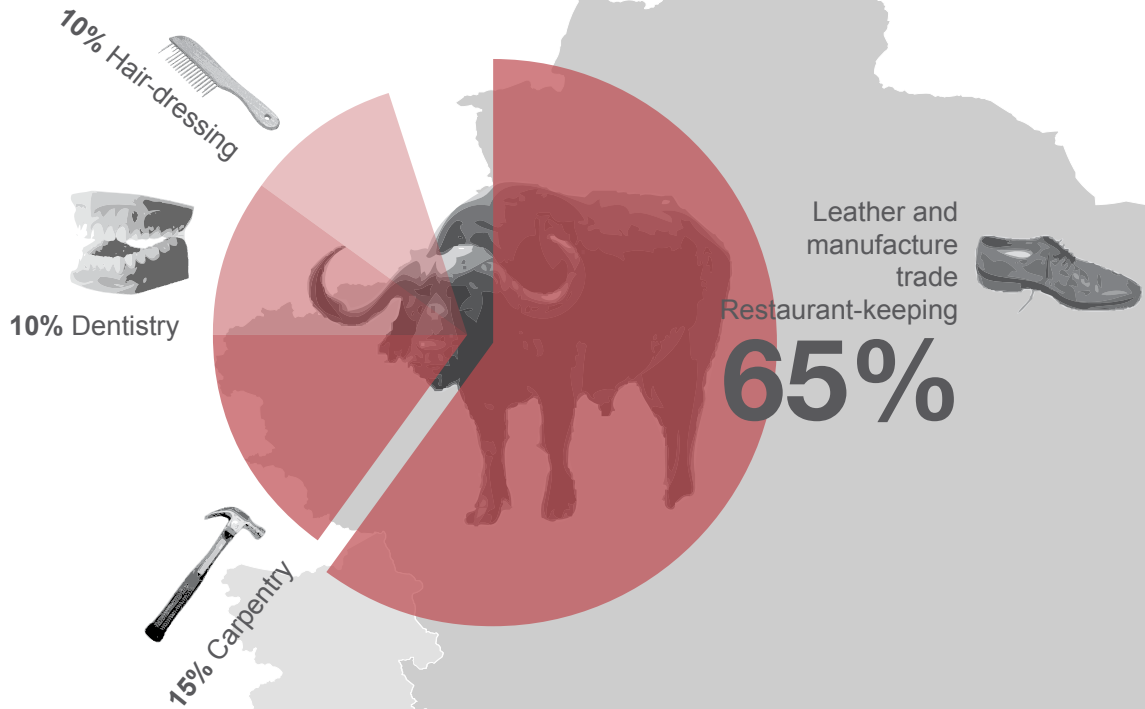




CHINA'S SURGING ECONOMY COMPELS CITIES WORLDWIDE TO EMPLOY AN EXTREME FORM OF REVERSE COLONIZATION. A RACE IS IN PROGRESS TO BUILD THE WORLD'S LARGEST CHINATOWN. ST. PETERSBURG AND DUBAI'S ARE UNDER CONSTRUCTION. LONDON IS TALKING ABOUT IT.

IS KOLKATA ABLE TO COMPETE IN THIS GLOBAL RACE?

KOLKATA CHINESE MIGRATION



Exposing the cultural roots of Chinese in Kolkata

While today, less than 10% of people with Chinese origins in Kolkata still own a Chinese passport, 45% of them originally came from the region of Fujian, being trained in leather making and tanning mostly. Cantonese people from Guangdong and Jiangxi are nearly as numerous as the Hakka, trained mostly in carpentry and restaurant-keeping. Other groups are Hupeh and Shanghai, while rickshaws in Kolkata have originally been introduced by a small group of people from Shanghai.

All counted for, there are about 60 Shoe Shops, 54 Restaurants, 50 Tanneries, 33 Beauty Parlors and a couple of hundred rickshaws that are partially responsible for the functioning and identity of a 16'000'000 Metropolitan Region.

The question: Is Chinatown Kolkata only known for it's products and could it be reduced to a franchise?

Indian Chinese Association

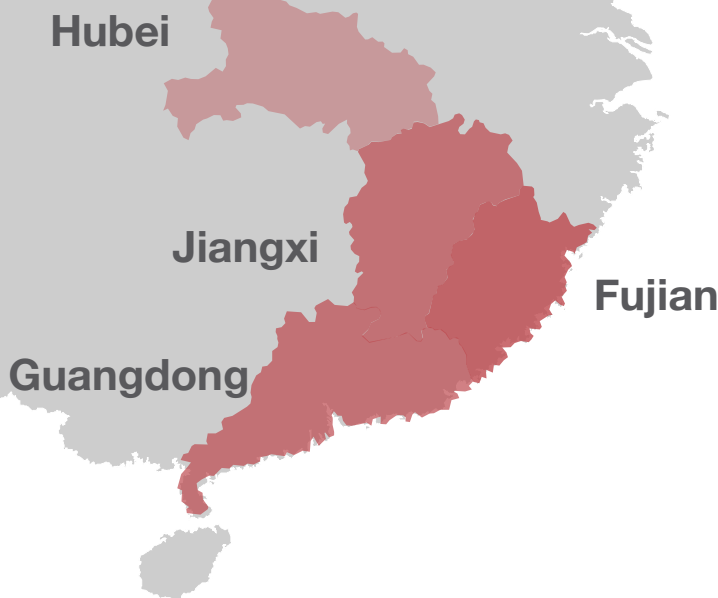
West Bengal



CHINESE IN INDIA ARE A SELF PROCLAIMED SOCIETY. SOCIALLY, WE ARE NOT A PART OF INDIA.

We live in India. We are a minority. We are Indian citizens. We have Indian citizenship. We are no longer Chinese. We are Chinese Indians.

Paul Chung, Indian Chinese Association, Fieldwork Interview, October 21, 2008



45%

Hakka
tanning
shoemaking

40%

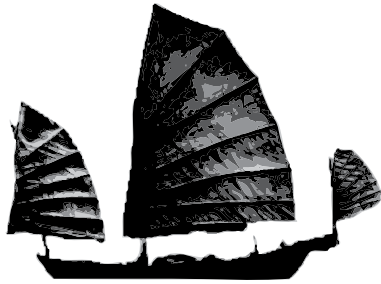
Cantonese
carpentry
restaurant-keeping

10%

Huveh
dentistry

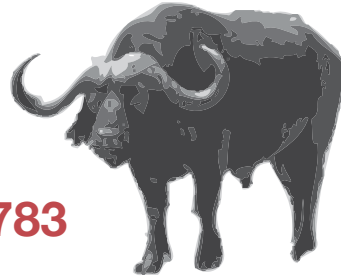
5%

Shanghai
laundry



A According to the story,

the British governor general agreed to give as much land to Atchew as could be covered on horseback in a day. The governor general it seems had severely underestimated the riding abilities of Atchew who by the end of the day managed to secure a large tract of land on the banks of Hooghly River. He built his sugar mill and brought in workers from China.



1783

B2 Yet another twist in the tale is provided by a story, which states

[...] Atchew discovered two stowaways hiding in his ship, and when confronted the two stowaways magically transformed themselves into pieces of wood. Atchew at once realized that they were deities and he took these pieces ashore and placed them on the land and built a temple for them. To this present day, Chinese families visit this temple to evoke the magic and blessings of the two deities of the Chinese Settlement in Kolkata.

B1 Another story tells of how

the huge storm was going to drown a trade boat led by sailor Atchew and which was carrying tea and sugar from China. The sailors in fear and helplessness started praying to the image of the two wooden deities that the boat was carrying. Miraculously, the boat was blown safely to the shores. Atchew took this as a sign from heaven and decided to settle [on the shore near Kolkata] and built a temple in honor of the two deities the Tudigong and his consort his Tidiphow to whom he and his crew owned their lives.

1778
1780
1804

1700

1750

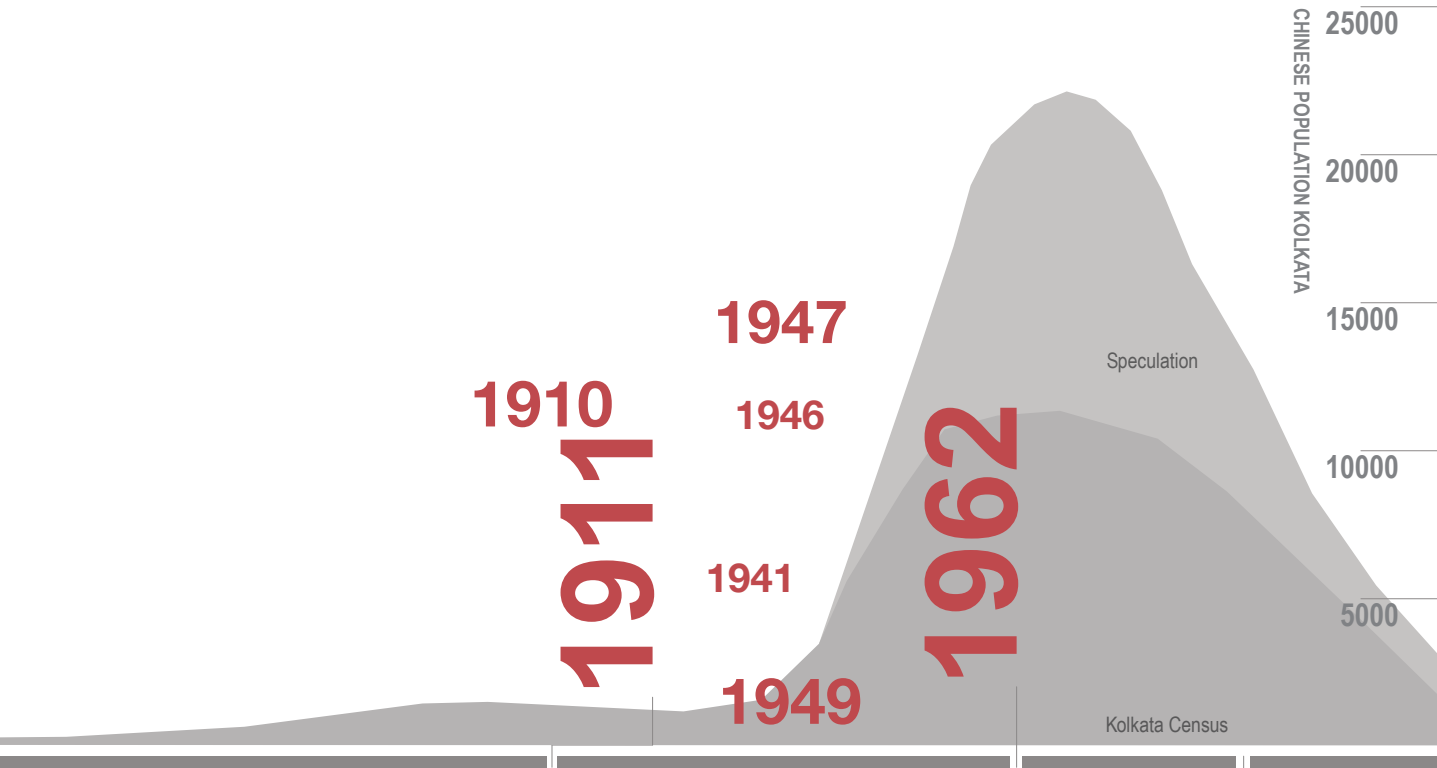
1800

1850

Timeline: History of Chinese in Kolkata

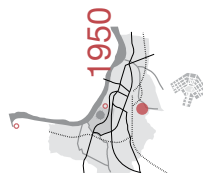
A zoom-in is necessary to take a closer look at what used to be one of the first and biggest Chinatowns in the world: From 1750 to 2008 – analyze the layers of population data and spatial shifts. Beginning in the days of the scholars Fa Hein (4th Century) and Huen Tsang (7th Century), the Chinese have been coming to India and some might even have stayed back and made India their home. But it was not until 1778 that written history of the first Chinese settler in India can be found of a man named Atchew. Atchew set up a sugar mill in Achipur with 110 Chinese men. The British not only encouraged Atchew to settle in the suburbs of Kolkata, but also gave him and his group all kinds of protection: "Chinese who have been deserted from Macao ships and have remained in [Kolkata] without apparent means of subsistence." The first Chinese to start settling in Kolkata were thought to be runaway sailors and the indentured servants mentioned in Atchew's complaint to Warren Hastings. Kolkata, being a major port had started playing host to many Chinese sailors on their way either to or returning from another country. They would stop in Kolkata and wait for the ships to carry them to their destination. Journeys by sea being slow and the ships infrequent, at times many months had to be spent ashore. While they waited for their ships, they had to work and therefore the Chinese men

must have started offering their skills to the people there. The fact that most of the sailors were trained in carpentry and mechanical work could explain why the first Chinese settlers in Kolkata were into carpentry or did low mechanical "fitters" jobs. While working, some of the sailors may have got more permanent jobs and eventually stopped their seafaring ways and started living in Kolkata. 1783 Atchew dies. 1804 In November, sugar mill of Atchew along with land, plant, and machinery, were advertised for auction in the Kolkata gazette. The successors of Atchew's sugar mill thus moved to Cheenapur, today's Teritti Bazaar, Kolkata and the community further developed there. First structures to support the temporary Chinese sailors as well as the permanent residents were built. 1910 The Chinese community was pushed to the fringes of the city, where they established leather gardens for the production of leather. This place would later become known as Tangra, (also known as Dhapa or the New Chinatown near Eastern Bypass) was conceived and a second Chinatown was born. 1911 Due to the high level of political unrest generated by the partition, the eastern and western parts of Bengal reunite. Capital of British India moves from Kolkata to Delhi. War with Japan, the Civil War, constant conflict and increasingly tough times back home drove many thousands of Chinese to India. By the 1930s, the number of women and children in the community increased. The increase of Kolkata Chinese women was due partly to the turbulent first quarter of this century in China saw the Chinese men bringing their families out of



1939 **1962**
 'If you lived in China at this time – you went to another place...we are known for running. You go to India, Australia, Canada, or USA. If you live in India – it was simply to survive, nothing more.'
 Paul Chung, Indian Chinese Association, Fieldwork Interview, October 21, 2008

1996



China. Therefore, the number of women and children suddenly increased in the Chinese community in Kolkata. **1939** Japanese air raids upon the Kolkata docks cause damage and loss of life. **1941** World War II in Asia interrupted the flow of Chinese migrants to Kolkata. **1946** During the Kolkata riot, the Chinese community checked the violence and tried to maintain peace in Old Chinatown. The Muslims from Colootola Lane were not allowed to enter the area, thus protecting the Dusadhs and Mochis who were living in Chattaguli Lane. **1947** Partition of Bengal: India gains independence. Bengal is divided; Kolkata becomes the capital city of the state of West Bengal in India. Kolkata and surrounding places were flooded with people from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) as a result of the partition. According to official estimates, more than 700,000 people poured into Kolkata. **1949** After decades of conflict and strife, the communists took over China and changed the course of life of the Kolkata Chinese. **1962** The Indo-Sino dispute turns into open war between India and China at the end of September. The event marks a turning point, which would change the face of the Chinese community in India forever. This period saw Chinese in Kolkata even suspected to be close to the communist government of China being arrested, restrictions placed on free movement of the Chinese, revoking of citizenship of those who had acquired Indian citizenship, not being allowed to leave their residence for more than 24 hours. For the Kolkata Chinese, life in every way (social, cultural, religious and most

important economic) was disrupted: there was a stop to traditional ways of celebrating festivals (dragon and lion dances disappeared from the streets for many years), marriages were low key, Chinese temples, burial grounds, clubs, schools lay neglected as a blanket of fear and insecurity covered the community. **1962** The great disruption hit the Chinese community at its peak. The Chinese carpenters had fairly stable jobs and given their expertise were much needed in building the newly Independent India: the shoe business had acquired a reputation of their own, many were getting trained in hairdressing, Chinese laundries were ruling the roost, the leather trade was coming up and the Chinese community was carving a niche for themselves in economy of Kolkata. Lead by a time of crisis through the shift of India's capital from Kolkata to Delhi, the takeover of the Communist party and finally the Indian Chinese war in 1962, many Chinese were forced to leave or carried on living in fear. **1995** The policy of the West Bengal Government to shift the existing tanneries of Tangra to Bantola, in order to stop pollution and by banning the tanning operation is another the contribution, we see the number further shrink as individuals and entire families continue to leave India for better prospects in Canada and other Western countries. A large chunk of the Kolkata Chinese can also be found in Taiwan; many of who use the place as a launch pad toward the West. **1996** Tanneries banned in Tangra! Issue of Supreme Court order. New Leather Complex established in Bantala.



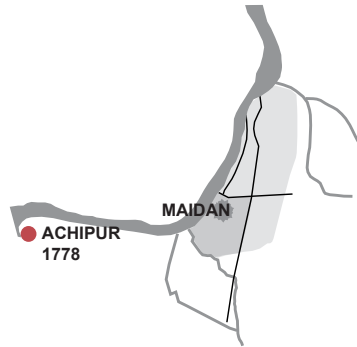
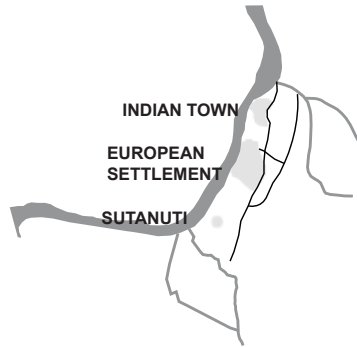
KOLKATA CHINESE SETTLEMENT

A closer zoom-in is necessary to take a closer look at what used to be one of the first and biggest Chinatowns in the world: spatial shifts from 1750 to current

The first Chinese settlers saw Kolkata as an opportunity to make money, to have a better life, arriving as sailors and skilled workers. Chinese came to India for work, literally to earn a better life, but intend to go back to China. Returning with money meant a better name for the family achieving a higher status in Chinese society.

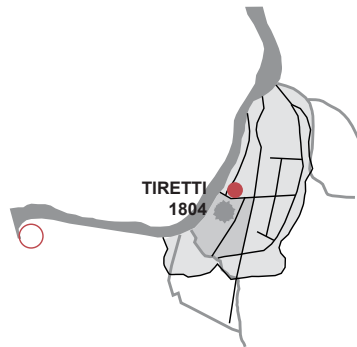
1778

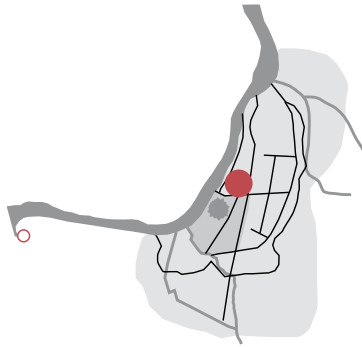
It was not until 1778 that written history of the first Chinese settler in India can be found of a man named Atchew. Atchew set up a sugar mill in the outskirts of Kolkata with 110 Chinese men. While one may notice that the Chinese population is dispersed in Kolkata, it's important to state that this first spot of arrival has constantly been used as a place to gather during the Chinese New Year by the Chinese community.



1804

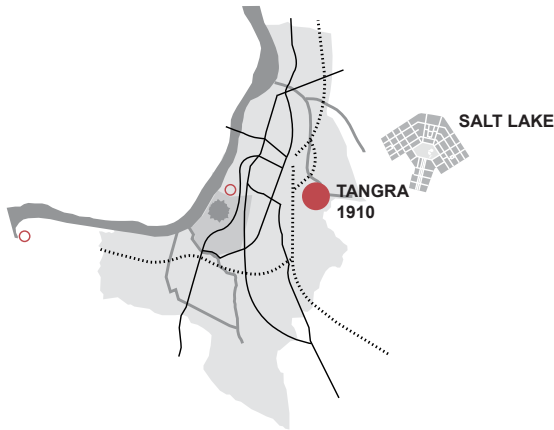
In November, sugar mill of Atchew along with land, plant, and machinery, were advertised for auction in the Calcutta gazette. The successors of Atchew's sugar mill thus moved to Cheenapur, today's Teritti Bazaar, Calcutta and the community further developed there. First structures to support the temporary Chinese sailors as well as the permanent residents were built.





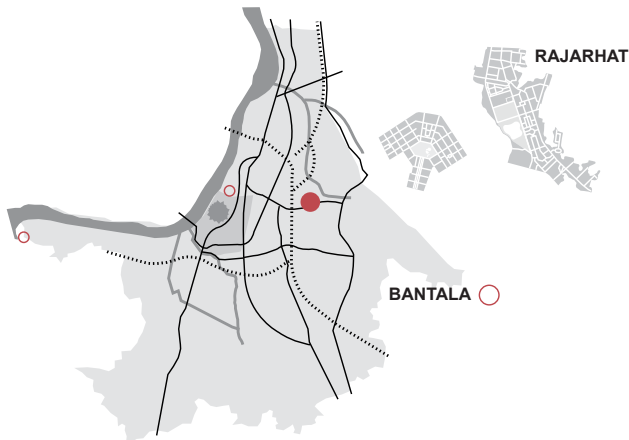
1840

As they stayed, worked, earned, multiplied and raised their families, the Kolkata Chinese always thought of themselves as “sojourners”. They always felt that they would return back to their country once the troubles were over. Till then they felt that they were on temporary journey. The communists taking over China and the turbulent period thereafter sealed the fate of the Kolkata Chinese. With the problems in China on the increase, it started sinking in that they were here to stay in India and that they now had to think of Kolkata as their home. This was the first real “settlement” of the Chinese in Kolkata.



1910

The Chinese community was pushed to the fringes of the city, where they established leather gardens for the production of leather. This place would later become known as Tangra, (also known as Dhapa or the New Chinatown near Eastern Bypass) was conceived and a second Chinatown was born.



1996

Tanneries banned in Tangra! Issue of Supreme Court order. New Leather Complex established in Bantala.

FOOTPRINTS OF CHINATOWN



Kolkata is a city which has hosted many cultures in its past, just as others have in this globalised present. Here we will trace for you the origins and remains of the Chinese communities.

1778 ACHIPUR

1804 TIRETTI

1910 TANGRA

1996 BANTALA



CHINATOWN TERRIT





- 1 Interior of Hap Hing - Chinese provisions and medicines_1934
- 2 Two Chinese men at Chinese temple
- 3 Interior of Nam Soon Church





CHINESE BREAKFAST





- 1 Ying enjoying a bun - 8:30am Sunday morning
- 2 Many Indians gather around a table to enjoy the hot Chinese soup
- 3 Few Chinese actually participate in the famed Chinese Breakfast - there are increasingly more Indian vendors





SEAIP TEMPLE



DRAFT
© ETH Studio Basel



- 1 Three Chinese men meeting - 6:00am Sunday morning
- 2 Primary worship space displaying cultural artifacts including weaponry
- 3 A more intimate secondary worship space







- 1 Chinese family - Own and operate a traditional Chinese paper crafts business
- 2 Their home functions as a place of living, making and storage
- 3 The entrance living space displays religious artifacts, various traditional Chinese paraphernalia, and notably a photograph of family who have moved to Toronto








CHINATOWN TANGRA





- 1 Chinese students in a classroom at Pei Mei Chinese School
- 2 Hot Wok: Example of a tannery cum restaurant
- 3 Demarcation: Tangra hosts many fortress-like structures





- 1 Drum label from tanning chemicals
- 2 Chinese leather garden
- 3 Neglected structure that once functioned as a tannery is flooded by the inadequate drainage system of Tangra



RESTAURANT

Big Boss
Restaurant

大寶思餐廳



- 1 Sign which greets you on the way into most Tangra Chinese restaurants
- 2 Indian-Chinese fusion food: Hakka Noodles and Chili Chicken
- 3 China Gardens: typical name for a Chinese restaurant, but what distinguishes Tangra from other Chinatowns is that many of its now restaurants were once leather tanneries.





Adam: So while we were there, we were interested in the tanneries, we wanted to see the tanneries. But then we sort of felt shut out.

Paul: No, no. They don't want you to see it because according to the Supreme Court judgment, they are supposed to have shifted.

Adam: So why don't they cut the tannery industry off?

Paul: They cut it off, but the government realized they made a big mistake. The mistake was...the person who wanted them to remove from there, was looking at the property, land property. And these people are so short sighted. There is no justice in their minds. There is only advantage in their mind. If they would have made a proper replacement, which that could have been done. But they are looking for profit now. The easier I can get the land, the more profit I make. So they say that this is pollution from the tanneries and the chemicals that



are there. Because of the pollution you have to shift. But actually, it is not like that. If there is pollution you have to do something; a treatment plant. But the government says 'no, you can't treat it. You have to shift out.' That cannot be.

Adam: Is that just because they wanted to obtain the land.

Paul: Ah, they want it because **THAT IS THE CENTER OF THE CITY NOW.** You have the Salt Lake on the other side, now it is the center, before it was the fringe.

Adam: We have also noticed this, that geographically it is the center.

Paul: (with a smile) Now it's the center. **BEFORE... NOBODY WANTED IT.** There was a swamp there, nobody wanted that place. Now, geographically, with the bypass...there was nothing on the other side. It was just fields and ponds.

(51:10) Adam: So that then is probably a better reason for the Chinese to maintain that...their place there.

Paul: They want to maintain it. They are trying to maintain it. The only thing is that the cooperation isn't there. We (Chinese) can only do the planning. But I find that they (perhaps the government or officials) are not building. So why should I break my head. There is no point in breaking our heads. I can use the energy for something else.

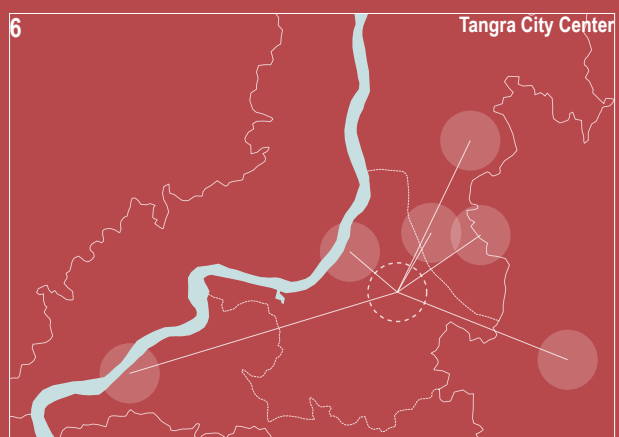
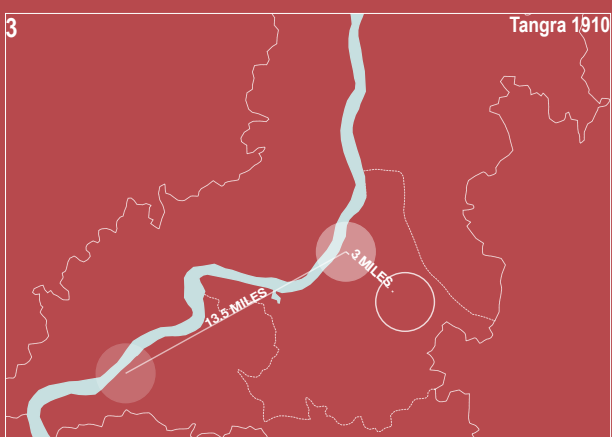
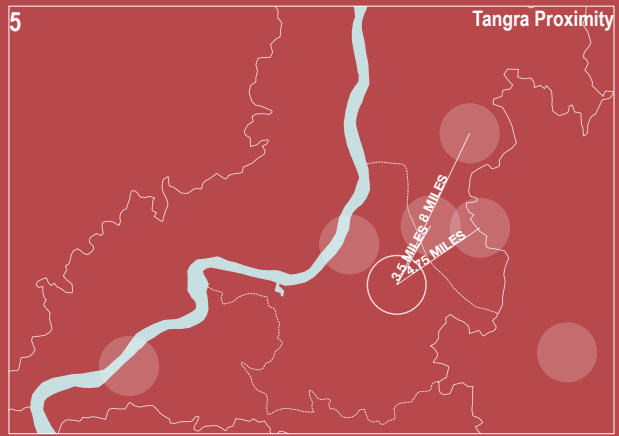
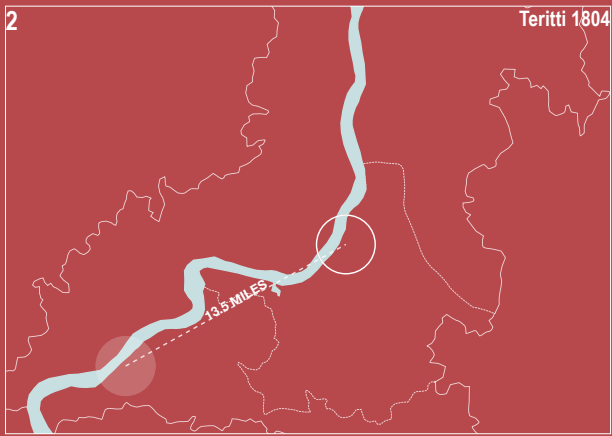
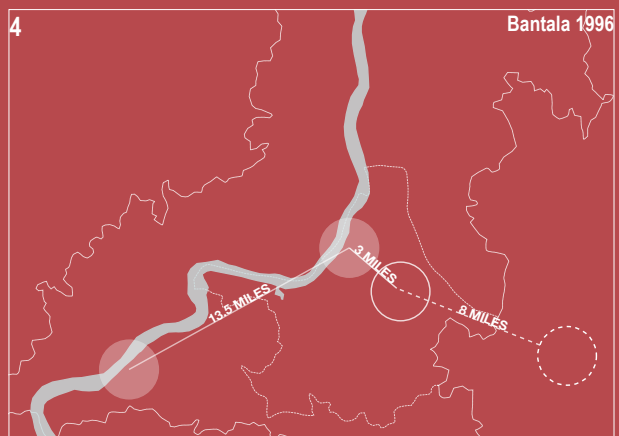
The basic thing is that you (officials) are trying to take away my things. The persons who are serving...like everywhere else...everywhere is the same. I become the Prime Minister because I have other interests...not governing the country. I fill my pocket; I fill my party's pocket. Not the people, local people. That is everywhere.

Paul Chung, Indian Chinese Association, Fieldwork Interview, October 21, 2008



- 1 Achipur_First Chinese settlement SW of Kolkata : 1778
- 2 Cheenapara (Teritti)_Second Chinese settlement in center of Kolkata: 1804
- 3 Tangra_Third Chinese settlement on fringe of Kolkata: 1905

- 4 Bantala_Proposed Calcutta Leather Complex (CLC): 1996
- 5 Tangra_Proximity to Kolkata Airport and developments: Salt Lake City and Rajarhat
- 6 Tangra_Center of Kolkata



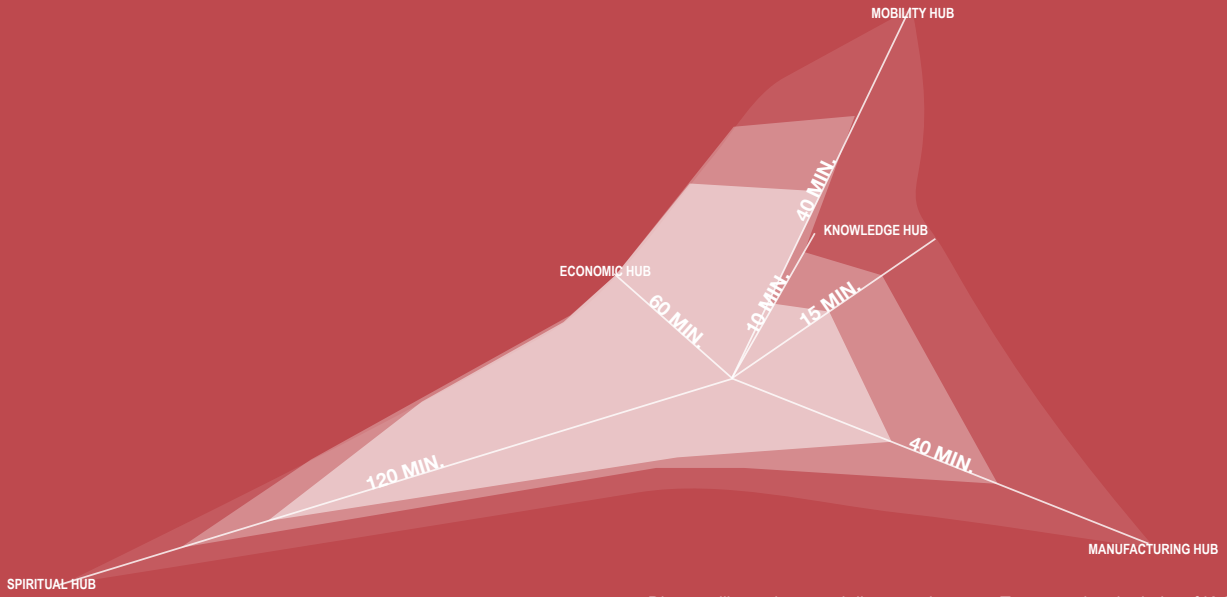


Diagram illustrating travel distances between Tangra and major hubs of Kolkata

TANGRA AS THE CENTER OF THE CITY



唐人街 = Chinatown

CHINATOWN TANGRA URBAN FABRIC

Urban Fabric
Leather on the Rooftops

100 m



ECONOMIC CHINATOWN

- 33 Beauty Parlors
- 07 Chinese Provisions (Medicines, Sauces)
- 01 Computers
- 13 Dentists
- 03 Doctors
- 03 Dry Cleaners
- 02 Handicraft (Jute & Leather goods)
- 04 Interior Decorators, Furnishers, Carpentry
- 03 Leather Chemical & Manufacturing Machineries
- 01 Newspaper
- 01 Photographer
- 02 Printers (screen printer)
- 54 Restaurants
- 60 Shoe Shops
- 50 Tanneries

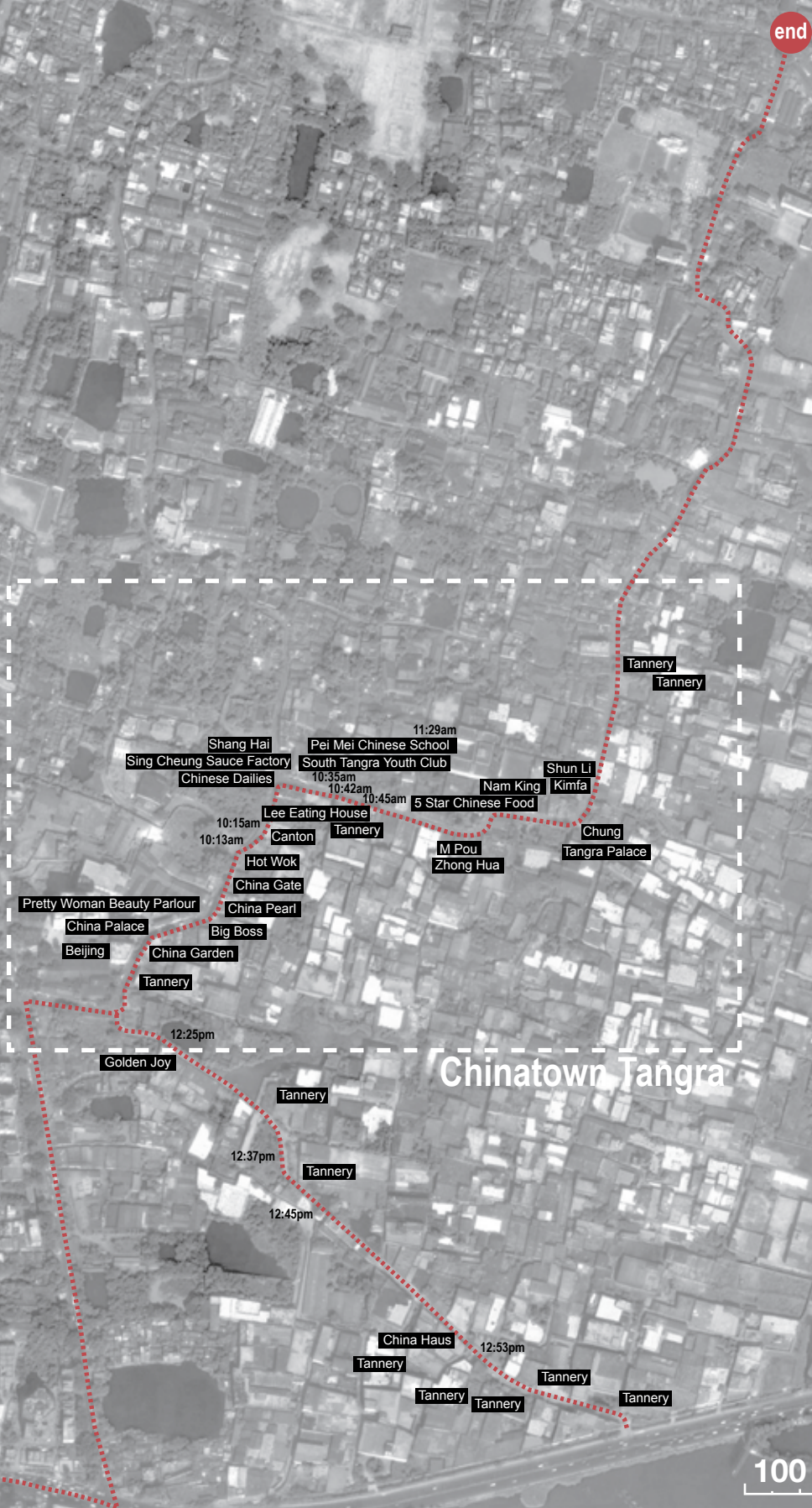
Idian Chinese Association Yellow Pages 2008



This section produces a study of a particular Chinese community at different scales.

Community scale – Tangra
Street scale – Tangra Walk
Block scale – Tannery Walk
Building scale – Case Study

CHINATOWN TANGRA WALK



Chinatown Tangra

100 m

start

end

TANGRA

I STAND AND STARE AT MY DESERTED TOWN
CHILDHOOD MEMORIES FLASH BY TO HOLD ME ON.
THE RUMBLING MACHINES HAVE NOW DIED DOWN...
ITS LIKE A WESTERN GHOST TOWN NOW,
GONE ARE THE DAYS WHEN CHILDREN RUN..
ALL THAT MATTERS NOW IS THE SETTING SUN.
THE OLD SCHOOL IS AT THE TRESHOLD OF CLOSING
IT'S NOW LIKE AN OLD MODEL POSING!!
THE CHIMNEY'S SMOKE IS SEEN NO MORE....
TANGRA NOW IS NOT AS BEFORE....
TANNERIES ARE NOW BEEN SOLD AT HASTE
NEW NEIGHBOURS COMES IN WITH A DARKER FACE...
PEOPLE NOW MOVE TO THE OTHER WORLD
ONLY LEAVING BACK THEIR 'UNDESERVING OLD'
LANGUAGE AND TRADITIONS ARE FADING OUT
WESTERN CULTURE IS IN AND THAT'S NO DOUBT.
THE COLOURED DRAINAGE STILL FLOWS ON;
SO DOES THE ELDER'S STORIES STILL LIVES ON...
THE FAMOUS WOMEN GOSSIPS ARE FADING DOWN...
BUT NOW....ITS' REBIRTHING IN THE FOREIGN TOWN!!

BENJAMIN KUO

SETTING SUN= SHUTTING DOWN OF TANNERIES
OLD SCHOOL= PEI MOI
DARKER FACE= NON CHINESE (WUU QUI!!!)

MATHESWARTALA RD 10:13 AM





MATHESWARTALA RD 10:15 AM





MATHESWARTAL RD 10:35 AM





MATHESWARTALA RD 10:42 AM





LEE EATING HOUSE
AIR CONDITIONED CAFE & RESTAURANT
SAITE, MATHESWAR TOLLA ROAD, KOLKATA

Goods

CARRIAGE

CARRIAGE

angel

I LOVE MY MUM

MATHESWARTALA RD 10:45 AM





MATHESWARTALA RD 11:29 AM





MATHESWARTALA RD 12:25 AM





MATHESWARTALA RD 12:29 AM





MATHESWARTALA RD 12:37 AM





MATHESWARTALA RD 12:45 AM





MATHESWARTALA RD 12:53 AM





It is understood this catalogue does not represent all examples of each typology – only the ones that were located from personal field study.

Mapping the identity of Chinatown Tangra, a spatial catalog in the specificity of Kolkata's agglomeration would enhance the checklist for Global Chinatowns:

As urban regions containing a large population of Chinese people within a non-Chinese society, Chinatowns usually include the parent city with metropolitan older Chinatown and newer satellite Chinatown(s) in the suburban (almost rural) communities. Would Chinatown Tangra in Kolkata share similar characteristics in a checklist for Global Chinatowns?

Does Tangra maintain relative ties to its original roots?

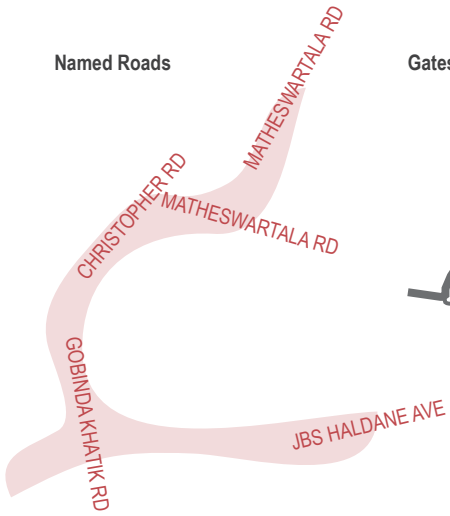
Is the older Chinatown about to be officially recognized as Chinatown by local governments and historical societies?

Are Chinese-style arches about to serve as entrance markers?

Is it the center of community trade as a self-sustaining and concentrated community with goods and services, serving as a major cultural and commercial hub for foreign-born and native-born overseas Chinese?

Is the density of family and regional associations and community organizations as well as the regularity of traditional rituals and dances in public high enough?

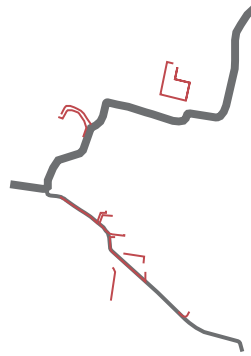
Named Roads



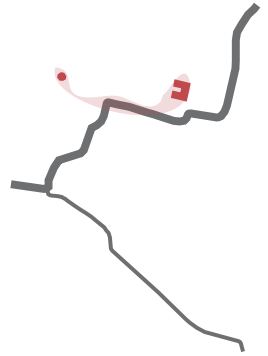
Gates



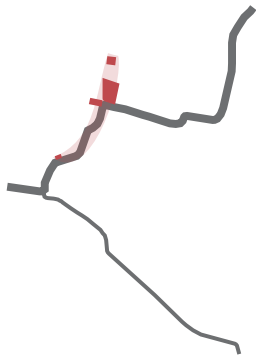
Walls



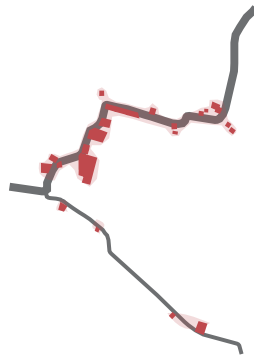
Religion|Education



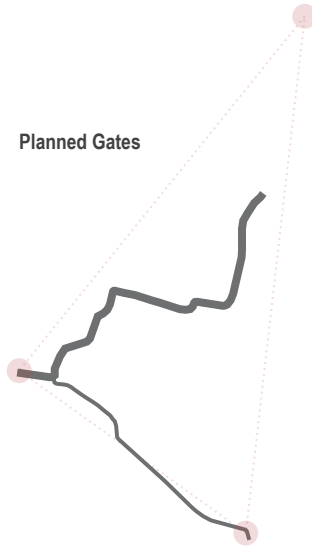
Other Businesses



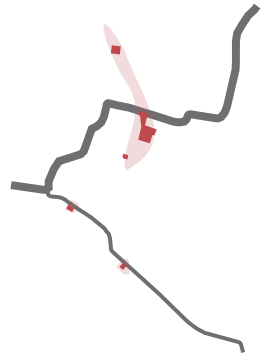
Restaurants



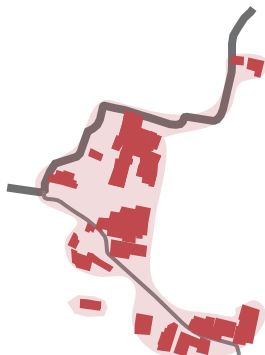
Planned Gates



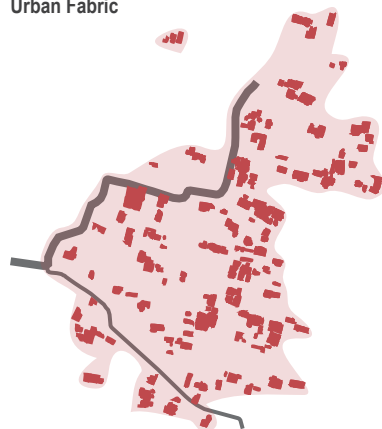
Residences



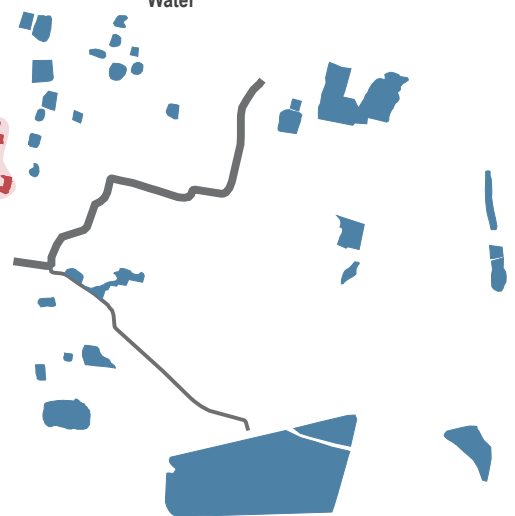
Tanneries



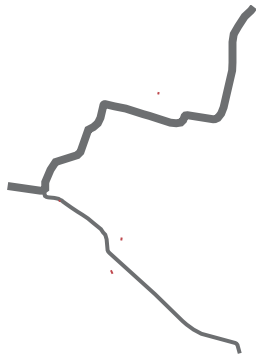
Urban Fabric



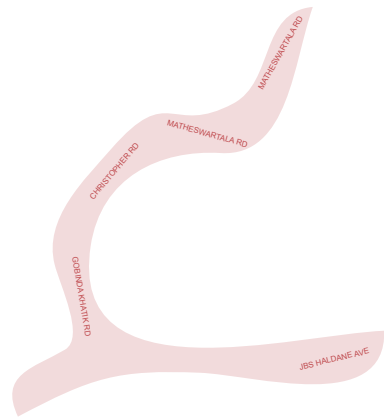
Water

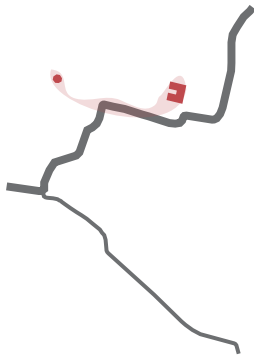


GATES

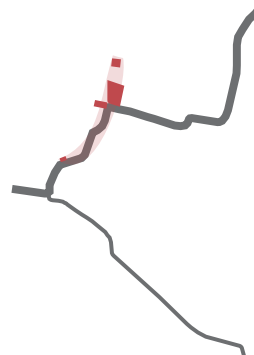


NAMES ROADS





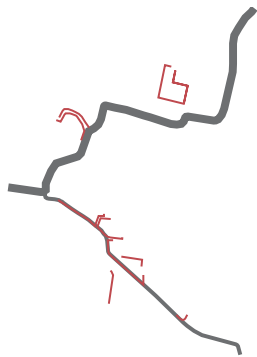
RELIGION | EDUCATION



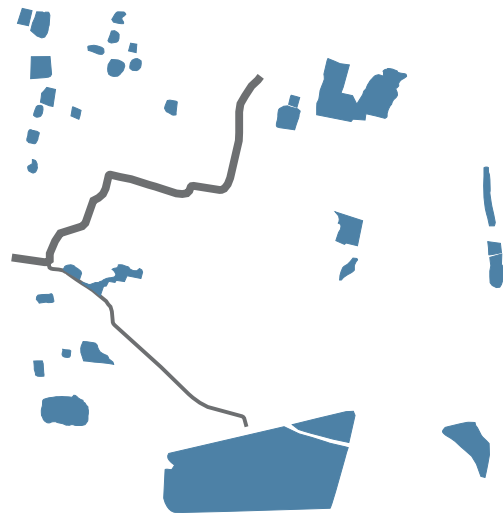
OTHER BUSINESSES

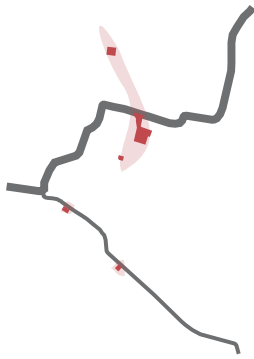


WALLS

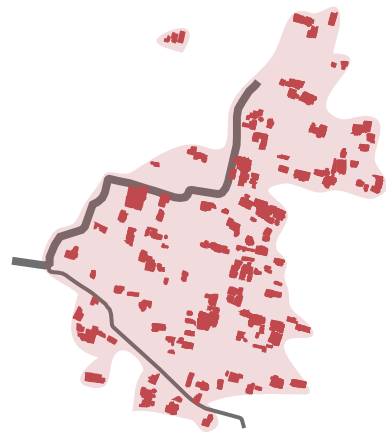


WATER





RESIDENTIAL



URBAN FABRIC



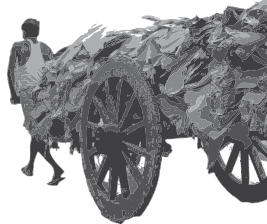
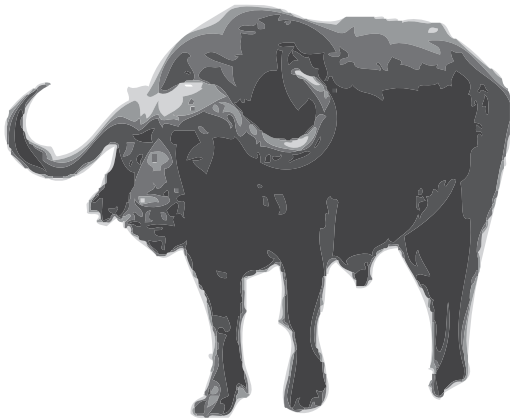
01 WAREHOUSING AND SORTING
In the raw material area the skins are preserved in salt, stored in controlled cool rooms and before processing, presorted for quality and weight.

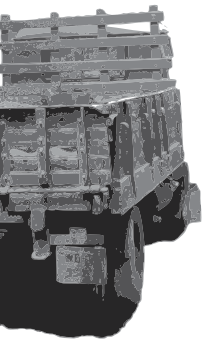
02 SOAKING
The skin is soaked to remove dirt and salt.

03 DE-FLESHING
During this process tissue flesh and fat remnants are removed by a roller-mounted knife.

04 LIMING
By adding lime and sulfur compound the hair is removed from the skin.

05 BATING, PICKLING AND TANNING
During bating and pickling the skins are treated with acid and salt in preparation for tanning. During tanning the skin fibers absorb the tanning agents. That's when the skin becomes leather.





06 SAMMING

During this process water is removed.

07 SPLITTING

In order to achieve an even specified thickness the leather is reduced in substance. The resulting split-leather can than be processed further as suede.

08 SKIVING

The grain leather is brought to an even thickness. Irregularities are removed from the reverse side and the leather is separated into color-batches.

09 SORTING

The leather is sorted into various quality grades.

10 NEUTRALIZING, FILLING OUT, DYEING AND GREASING

The acid resulting from the tanning process is neutralized. Dyeing than takes place, where appropriate with aniline-dye-stuffs. The greasing procedure will finally achieve the correct softness.

11 DRYING

Two methods are used to dry leather. The vacuum process during which moisture is removed by suction and the hanging process, when leather is hung and taken through ovens.

12 STAKING

Following drying the leather is mechanically staked in order to soften it. Further processes take place in preparation for finishing.

13 FINISHING

Here the leather is given its final surface treatment and look. Through processes of base coat, coloring, embossing, ironing the leather becomes, depending on the demands of fashion, matt or shiny, two-tone or uni-colored, smooth or grained. The art of finishing lies in working in wafer-thin layers without disturbing the natural look of the leather and its characteristics such as suppleness and breathability.

14 QUALITY CONTROL

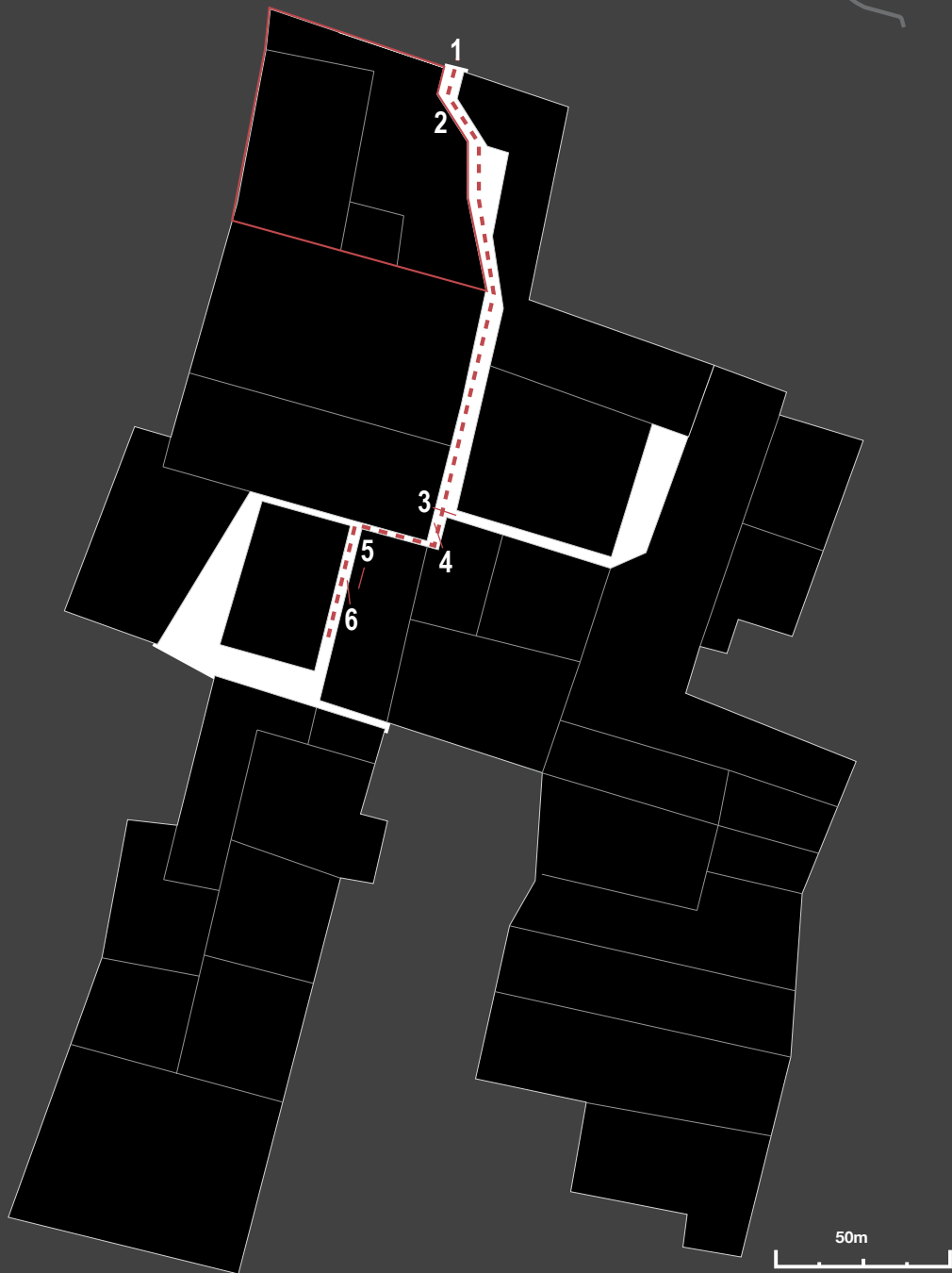
In between every process quality is controlled. Final control checks to ensure each individual production is to specification for the various trades.

15 DISPATCH

The leather is measured electronically, wrapped and dispatched.



TANNERY CASE STUDY



- 1 Gated entrance of tannery
- 2 Density and clustering of concrete structures
- 3 Indian woman carries loads of the unwanted trimmings: ears and snouts



- 4 The unwanted trimmings are dumped into a truck and later hauled to a local dumpsite: Dhapa
- 5 Indian tannery workers gathered in front of Chinese residence
- 6 Abandoned tannery structure with open drainage system filled with the blue stream of tannery runoff





The lowest members of the caste system, known as the ‘untouchables,’ make up the workforce of Indian leather industry. The caste system does not allow them to work their way up or out of the oppressed

and disenfranchise conditions they’re born into. **THEIR LOW STATUS CONDEMNS THEM TO LIFELONG EXPOSURE TO NUMEROUS TOXINS AND UNSAFE WORK CONDITIONS WHICH ARE DETRIMENTAL TO THEIR HEALTH AND THE HEALTH OF SUBSEQUENT GENERATIONS.**

Srivstava, August 23, 2001

- 1 Young tannery worker unloading dried hides
- 2 Barrel and storage of chemicals
- 3 Soaking and trimming of raw hides



- 4 Sorting and storage of skins
- 5 Tannery worker is sorting skins and then taking them to the skiving machine
- 6 Tannery workers operating the skiving machine





TANNERY POLLUTION

INDIA IS CITED AS ONE OF THE GREATEST VIOLATORS OF WORKERS RIGHTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT WITHIN THE LEATHER INDUSTRY ... The implications of workers' lifelong exposure to the tanning process in a country with no safety standards would be unthinkable to most consumers in developed countries. The problem is most consumers aren't aware of these conditions.

Tannery units in Tangra are located in highly congested habitations and thickly populated residential areas, offering little or no scope for future expansion, modernization or installation of ETPs...

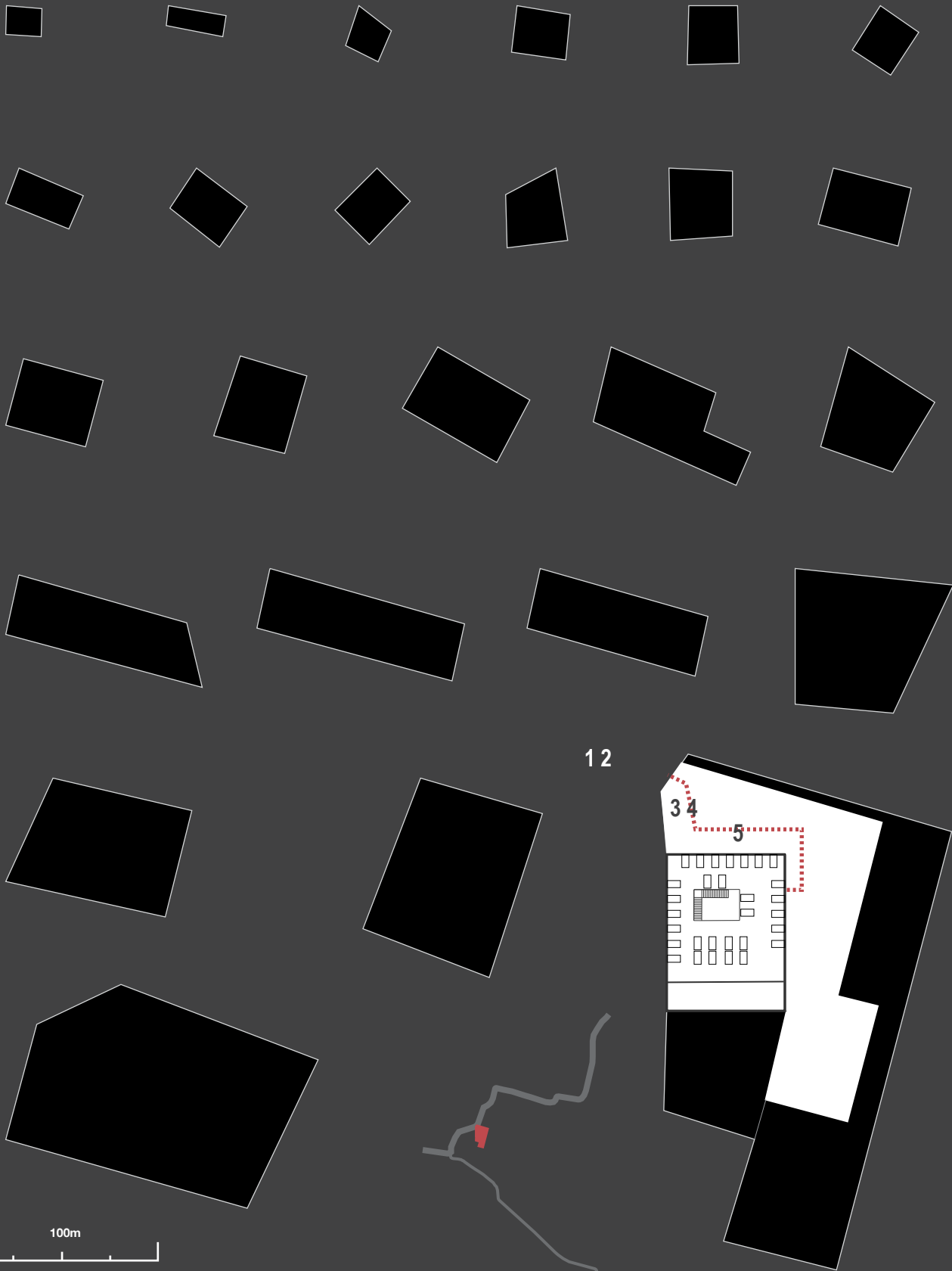
SURROUNDINGS OF THE TANNERIES ARE EXTREMELY UNHYGIENIC DUE TO DISCHARGE OF UNTREATED EFFLUENTS IN OPEN DRAINS, STAGNATION OF WASTEWATER IN LOW LYING AREAS AROUND THE TANNERY UNITS, AND ACCUMULATION OF SOLID WASTE IN TANNERIES...

Tanneries situated in Tangra are operating for a considerable period of time with no regard to environment pollution control... Needless to say that

THE STATE OF WEST BENGAL AND THE WEST BENGAL POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD ARE WHOLLY RE-MISS in the performance of their statutory obligations to control pollution and stop environmental degradation.

Supreme Court of India: Case of Pollution caused by Tanneries, 1996

RESTAURANT CASE STUDY



100m

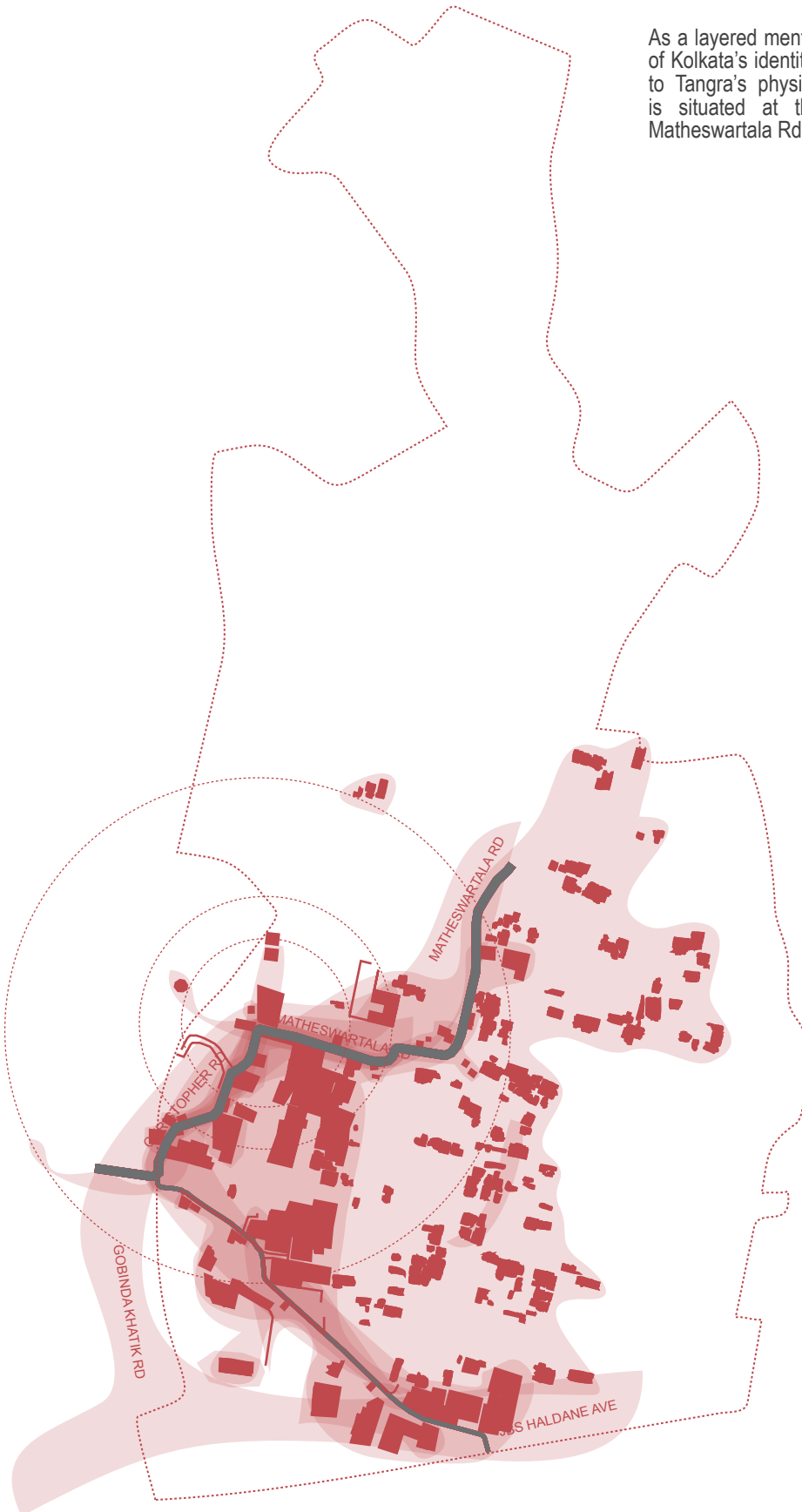
- 1 Gated entrance of Big Boss Restaurant at night
- 2 Gated entrance of Big Boss Restaurant during day
- 3 Inside gated entrance of Big Boss Restaurant at night - view toward street

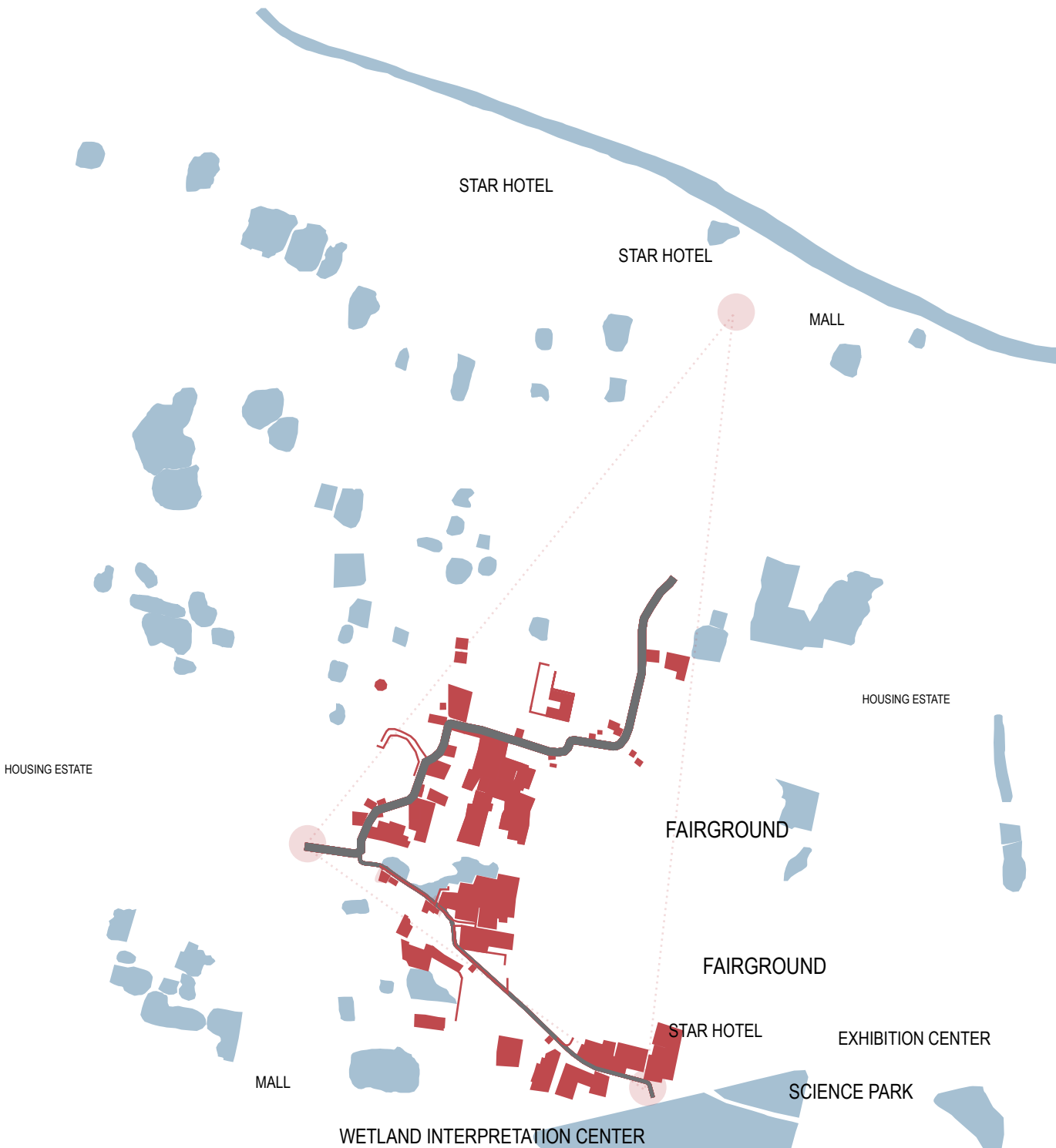
- 4 Inside gated entrance of Big Boss Restaurant during day - view toward street
- 5 Front entrance Big Boss Restaurant at night
- 6 Interior of Big Boss Restaurant



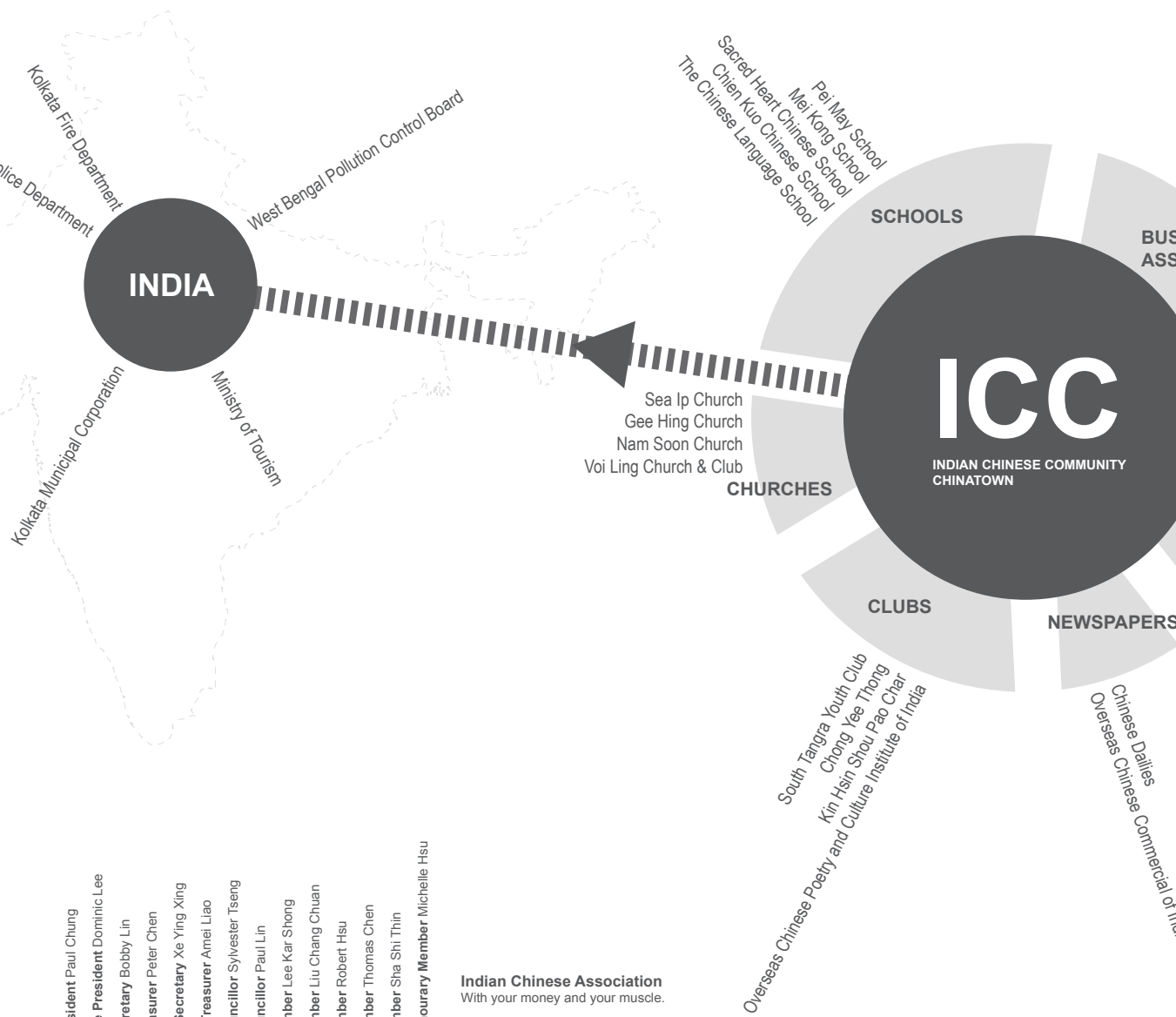
CHINATOWN TANGRA MENTAL MAP

As a layered mental map of the urban landscape of Kolkata's identity, the point of closest proximity to Tangra's physical landmarks and institutions is situated at the border of Chinatown on Matheswartala Rd.





CHINATOWN SOCIAL SYSTEM



- President Paul Chung
- Vice President Dominic Lee
- Secretary Bobby Lin
- Treasurer Peter Chen
- Jt. Secretary Xe Ying Xing
- Jt. Treasurer Amei Liao
- Councillor Sylvester Tseng
- Councillor Paul Lin
- Member Lee Kar Shong
- Member Liu Chang Chuan
- Member Robert Hsu
- Member Thomas Chen
- Member Sha Shi Thin
- Honourary Member Michelle Hsu

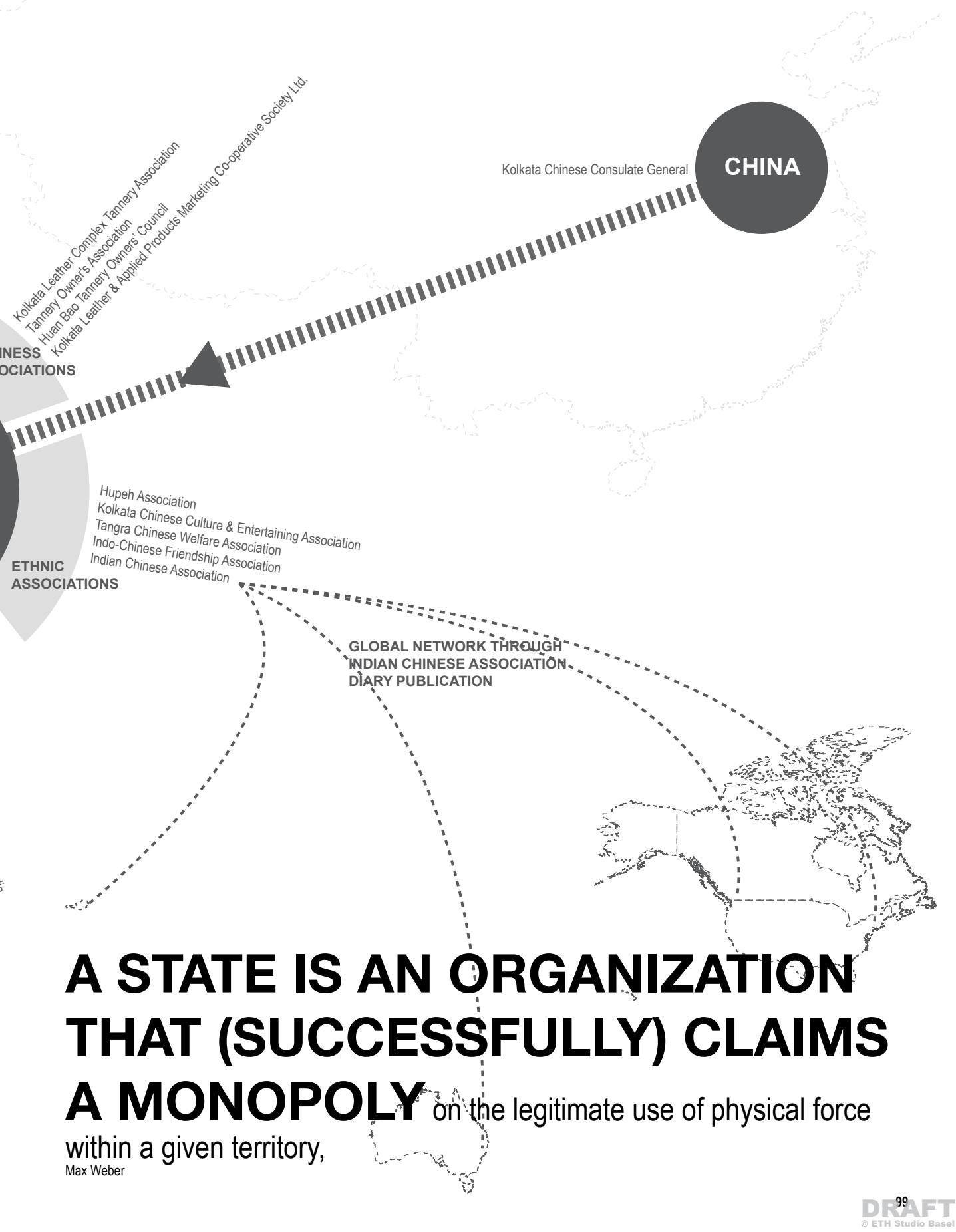
Indian Chinese Association
With your money and your muscle.

- The main goals of the ICA are:
- Linkup of Indian Chinese all over the place
 - Work for the promotion of culture
 - Work at looking after welfare needs of the Indian Chinese community
 - Help for the community to develop and grow
 - Assistance and hospitality to our visiting brethren in the aspect of culture



Kolkata Municipal Corporation
We have a vision.

- In its vision, the KMC will be:
- Providing service to its customers in a professional, economical, timely, useful and helpful manner
 - Assuring service to all its citizens including the vulnerable and deprived groups in a fair, just and reasonable manner
 - Developing a sense of involvement and participation in all its stakeholders by pro-actively addressing their concerns and providing complete customer satisfaction
 - Reducing KMC's dependence on state funds by optimising and efficiently managing its revenues
 - Providing an accountable and transparent civic administration for the benefit of external users as well as internal employees



Kolkata Leather Complex Tannery Association
 Tannery Owners' Association
 Huan Bao Tannery Owners' Council
 Kolkata Leather & Applied Products Marketing Co-operative Society Ltd.

Kolkata Chinese Consulate General

CHINA

BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS

Hupeh Association
 Kolkata Chinese Culture & Entertaining Association
 Tangra Chinese Welfare Association
 Indo-Chinese Friendship Association
 Indian Chinese Association

ETHNIC ASSOCIATIONS

GLOBAL NETWORK THROUGH INDIAN CHINESE ASSOCIATION DIARY PUBLICATION

A STATE IS AN ORGANIZATION THAT (SUCCESSFULLY) CLAIMS A MONOPOLY on the legitimate use of physical force

within a given territory,
Max Weber

Home Manners

- Be a person of proper behaviour, one must not get up late: settle your own bedding and be alert and clear minded both at dusk and dawn.
- One must not take the centre seat; while walking do not walk in the middle.
- One must inform when leaving, disagreement must occur in the face-to-face situation.
- When receiving from the elder, accept it respectfully with both hands.
- While walking with the elders, one must walk slowly behind the elder/elders, not walking before them hastily.
- In the presence of elders one must remain standing till they are invited to sit or till they are seated. It is proper to stand when the elders come in.
- Do not walk up and down in the presence of elders.
- Do not stand in the middle of the doorway; when crossing the door do not tread on the doorframe.
- While standing, always stands on both the legs, do not stand on one leg; while seated do not stretch your legs out in front of you.
- Your sleeping posture should not be facing upward or lying prostrated, lie on your left side and let your body be in the form of a bow.
- While eating together on the table, no additional preparation of dishes for personal consumption be put forth.
- Eat all the dishes on the table; do not pick and choose your favourite or disliked dishes.
- During eating time, do not sigh or scold the younger members.

Ways of Associating with people around you

- Do not speak about the weakness of other and do not praise one's own strength.
- Matters of the family must not be told to outsiders.
- Remember well, the mouth is the door of fortune or disaster. It is worthwhile to speak only after due consideration. Get into the habit of thinking over the matter before you speak.
- Do not discuss serious matter with the mere acquaintances.
- Do not use rough or harsh words when dealing with people in difficulty.
- Do not speak of other's success and happiness while dealing with people who are dejected.
- While speaking to elderly people, do not speak about the matter concerning growing weak or losing one's health.
- If you do not want to insult or show disrespect to elders, do not play pranks or make fun of others in their presence.
- When dealing with persons with deformity, one must be especially respectful towards them.
- Do not seek small advantages from peddlers and labourers.
- Do not remind or ask people to recall the benefits they have received from you. Reciprocate the benefit you received; the blame on other must be explained;

One must increase one's forbearance towards the person who blames you.

- To the kind-hearted, one must keep them close and show proper respect; while to the wicked, respect them but keep far away. :
- When things happen, be calm; do not give any assurance or offer false hopes when one cannot do anything about it.
- To avoid suspicions, it is better to be sure that the plums are better protected.
- To make sure that matters are reasonably and intellectually dealt with, one must not be emotional in making decisions.
- To make sure that matters are reasonably and intellectually dealt with, one must not be emotional in making decisions.
- Do not do to others what you do not want others to do to you.
- Whenever you seek advice on personal matter, you must make the query yourself.

Outside Home

- When going out, one need not be dressed in a gorgeous manner, but make sure that one is dress in a neat and clean way.
- When you are at a high location, it is inappropriate to call out loudly; avoid pointing and beckoning others.
- While walking on the road, do not eat or chew food and do not sing.
- While travelling, if you meet an elder, one must stand up and offer the place. If you meet a junior, one must express the joy of seeing him.
- One must make the effort to be at home before dark (the night) Be certain to inform the family if one is unable to reach home due to some business engagement.
- In a crowded traffic, do not greet or salute others.
- Avoid speaking for a long time when you are standing on the road.
- Do not stand in the middle of the road; when crossing the road, one must look left and then right before crossing the road.
- Avoid competing with the vehicles.
- Before taking a step forward, make sure you are standing in a firm and steady position. It is advisable to have a correct body posture; that is, mouth closed, open chest and your eyes focussed in front at you.
- Always give way to ladies, the aged and the weak.
- When giving direction to people, one must make certain the information is relayed in a caring and clear manner.
- When on a moving vehicle, do not extend your hand outside the window or spit.

Meeting Visitors

- Welcome and greet visitors. To your close friends, exchange a few words of greeting; to strangers, exchange names and addresses.
- At the door, allow the visitor to enter first as a mark of respect.

- When going out of the house, the elder or senior person must be given the honour of going out first.
- Make sure that the guest is seated comfortably.
- If there are other guests present in the same place, introduction must be made. Introduce the young to the elder; the humbler to the most honoured ones; people close to you to those who are more distant; and among equal, those who are in front to those who are at the back.
- While offering tea or snack, always start the elder then move on to the younger; to the guest first and then to close friend.
- The host must rise from his/her seat to fill cup or glass of the guest.
- Departing guest must be sent off with respect. Those who are from far off places should be seen off at the crossing or to the edge of the village.
- Arrangement for food, lodging or proper rest places with toilet facilities must be made for those guests who came from far places.
- Guests who came from very far distance, should be reached to the point of departure, and leave only when they go out sight.
- When other people are in conversation, do not speak in the midst of their conversation.
- When two people are in conversation, do not walk between them.
- Do not speak in a loud manner or shout so as to create confusion among the people around you or disturb their concentration.
- One must sit upright, do not sit cross legged or put

- your hand on your foot.
- Do not speak to a person, when there is another person sitting between you.
- Do not tilt the chair forward or backward that you sit on.
- Do not put your coat or hat on top of another person's coat or hat.
- Do not spit or throw out water in the front of people.
- Do not yawn, stretch or sneeze before other people.
- When two people are in conversation, do not walk between them.
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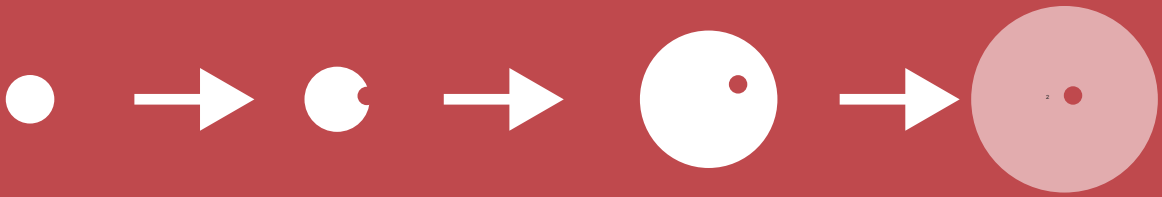
Lukas: Chinatown Kolkata has its own culture, language, unwritten rules, vehicles and water drainage system?

Paul: **IT IS SELF-GOVERNMENT - A MINI-STATE. THEIR LAW IS NOT THE LAW OF A LAND, BUT OF A CHINESE CULTURE... A SOCIAL SYSTEM.**

Lukas: But Chinatown doesn't have its own properties and police system.

Paul: Any dispute is solved by the client officers to solve problems by themselves and if they can't, they can go to the ICA.

**IS CHINATOWN
KOLKATA A MOBILE
ECONOMY, SHAPING
KOLKATA'S IDENTITY,
WHEREBY THE CITY
IS ONLY DEPENDANT
ON ITS PRODUCTS?
IS KOLKATA PROFITING
FROM AN URBAN
ENCLAVE?**



FROM THE CENTER OF
KOLKATA TO ITS FRINGES
WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
THE KOLKATA LEATHER
COMPLEX (KLC) IN 2009

SERIOUS
ENVIRONMENTAL,
HEALTH AND
HYGIENE PROBLEMS
CAUSED BY
OPEN DRAINS

NEGATIVELY PERCIEVED SIDE EFFECTS

The effluent discharge
from a tannery is



10x

noxious than domestic
sewage water.

90%

use chrome based tanning
than vegetable-tanning process.

89%

of tannery workers suffer
from work-related ailments.

NO

appropriate wastewater drainage and
collection systems in any tannery cluster.

BYPRODUCTS WASTE + POLLUTION

risks of contracting anthrax and
developing cancers

skin diseases
gastritis
asthma
edema
diarrhea
dysentery
frequent dizziness
nausea
vomiting
headache
respiratory problems

- 01 Newspaper
- 01 Photographer
- 01 Computer
- 02 Jute & Leather Handicrafts
- 02 Printers (screen printer)
- 03 Doctors
- 03 Dry Cleaners
- 03 Leather Chemical & Manufacturing Machineries
- 04 Interior Decorators, Furnishers, Carpentry
- 07 Chinese Provisions (Medicines, Sauces)
- 13 Dentists
- 33 Beauty Parlors
- 50 Tanneries
- 54 Restaurants
- 60 Shoe Shops



PRODUCTS FUSION FOOD + LEATHER

RESTAURANT
KEEPING

HAIR-DRESSING

DENTISTRY

CARPENTRY

LEATHER TRADE
AND MANUFACTURE



POSITIVELY PERCIEVED SIDE EFFECTS

INTERNATIONAL
EXPORT TO THE
USA, UK, FRA ETC.
CONTRIBUTING
TO THE IDENTITY
OF KOLKATA

Supreme Court of India: Case of Pollution caused by Tanneries (1996)
National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI): Examination
Report (1995)

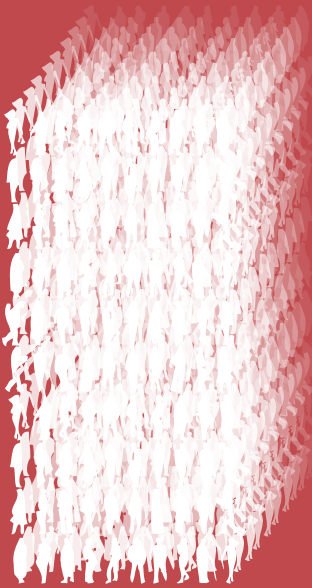
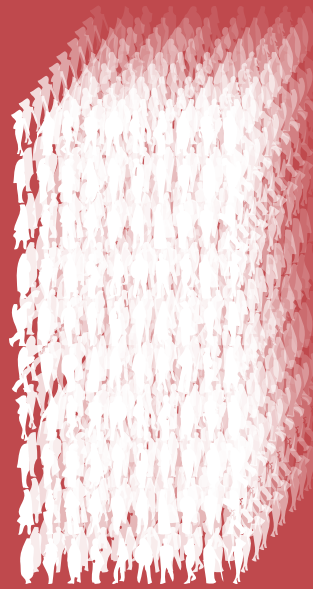
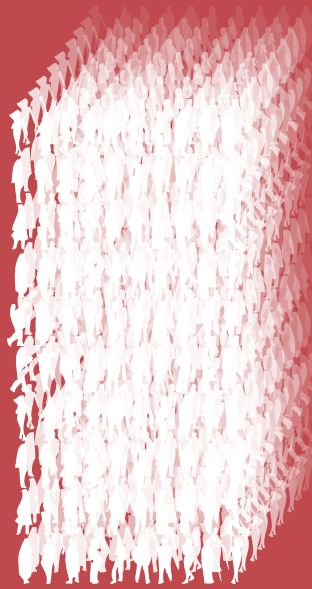
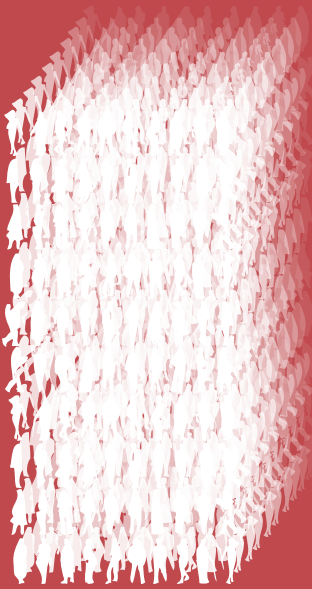


3'000

(INVISIBLE) CHINESE IN A

16'000'000

MEGACITY OF KOLKATA



Kolkata has been considered the 'Cultural Capital' of India. The Chinese population of Kolkata is currently less than 3000. What does this mean for the cultural capital of India?

India currently hosts roughly 1/8 of the worlds population and is an undeveloped country. What is the significance of Chinese culture to Kolkata? What is the significance of a minority of <3000 Chinese in a city of 16'000'000?

**SIGNIFICANCE OF A
MINORITY OF <3000
IN A CITY OF 16
MILLION? CHINESE
OWN 60% OF
KOLKATA'S TANNERY
INDUSTRY WITH
A WORKFORCE
OF 500,000. IF THE
TANNERY INDUSTRY
WOULD COLLAPSE,
THIS COULD RESULT
IN A LOSS OF
500'000 JOBS.**

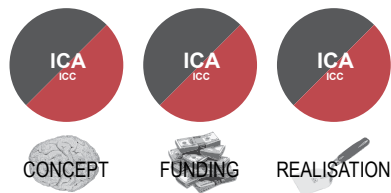
Politically Indian, for more than two centuries part of the city's population, but culturally Chinese and thus having traditionally shied away from merging with the mainstream, May 2005 brought a shift of identity for the demographically highest concentration of Chinese people in India: The first official Indian roadsign featuring other scripts than official ones (in this case English, Hindi and Bengali) was spotted in Kolkata, introducing Tangra in Chinese.

As an avil part of its Destination Kolkata 2007 project, the West Bengal Tourism Development Corporation (WBTDTC) chalked up plans for a 10 Mio. Rs rejuvenation project of both old and new Chinatown in order to "trade its shabby, unkempt look" for a more "graceful exterior, complete with elegant gateways and dazzling signages."

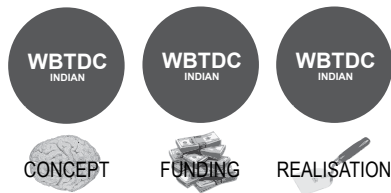
Decorated with traditional Chinese symbols, idols and dragons, a total of three arches will portray ethnic Chinese architecture on the south, north and east gateways to Tangra. Besides the pair of arches on Park Circus connector and Gobinda Chandra Khatik Rd, the setup of a China Gate at the entrance to Tangra, is an attempt to mark out "traditional landmarks and well known restaurants" by featuring a map each and furthermore to prevent confrontation with "overflowing drains, slushy roads and stinking garbage".

While an Interpretation Centre in Tangra is said to host kiosks, shops selling Chinese artifacts, a gymnastics centre and a martial arts school, a Cultural Centre in Cheenapara is planned to feature language classes (for Mandarin, Cantonese, Chinese and Hakka), a cookery school for ethnic Chinese cuisine, a training centre for Chinese handicraft aswell as an exhibition hall and two auditoriums. During the Chinese New Year, tourists will get to see unique shows and dragon dances through special programmes at both locations, including tours of Tiretta Bazaar and monastery.

Collaborating with the KMC, a three-point-scheme has been sketched out by the tourism department in 2007 in order to "project Chinatown as tourist destination": First, roads have to be developed, second, the drainage system needs to be upgraded to avoid waterlogging during the monsoon and third, dumping of garbage at street corners by restaurants and locals needs to be stopped.



Chinese Roadsign 2005
ICA



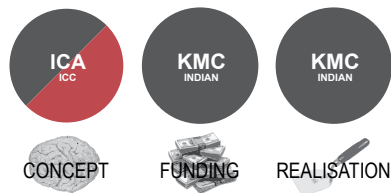
Destination Kolkata 2007
WBTC

- 1 Road Development
- 2 Drainage System Upgrade
- 3 Waste Site

THE STATE IS READY TO FINANCE WHATEVER IT TAKES TO REVAMP CHINATOWN.

Manab Mukherjee, Tourism Minister, October 2008

Having its own approach in order to trigger visitors, the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) is planning to organize daylong trips through its Alley Tourism 2007 project: By beginning with Chinese breakfast in Cheenapara, meandering through the monastery, eight Chinese temples, churches and museums, stopping by the tomb at Achipur, the temples at Anandanagar, the cemetery at Beliaghata and finally finishing the day with a sumptuous dinner at a Chinese restaurant in Tangra, KMC sees the dispersion of the Chinese diaspora as an integral part in understanding its identity.



Alley Tourism 2007
WBTC

Ah! Tangra Chinatown can then be developed on a grander scale!

WHY NOT TWO REVITALIZED CHINATOWNS IN KOLKATA WHEN TORONTO CAN AFFORD SIX!

I could already imagine the influx of both tourists and investors as well as the return of Indian Chinese from abroad.

Paul Chung, Indian Chinese Association, Fieldwork Interview, October 21, 2008

KMC broke its slumber due to a Metro Newspaper report on the realty threat to the building that houses the now defunct Nanking gourmet restaurant and a shrine, what eventually lead to several sub-projects that had been layed out in an action plan during the Chinese Embassy Conference 2008 on the Revitalization of Nanking. In order to create more awareness of the presence of a Chinese community and culture in Tiretti (Old Chinatown), the following plans were formulated to make a modest but constructive beginning in view of achievable goal:

Guided tours of Tiretti: A plan was proposed to offer guided tours of Old Chinatown with the help of a knowledgeable local guide, time saving and indispensable for a "time bound discerning tourist". With prior consent, a visit to an Indian Chinese home could be arranged complete with a simple or sumptuous Chinese dinner and a lively interaction with the family.

Bust of Lu Hsun at Lu Hsun Sarani: A proposal was submitted to Mr. Alapan Bandyopadhyay, the High Commissioner of the Kolkata Municipal Corporation and is under consideration. The Indian business community in Shaoxing city, the birthplace of Lu Hsun has agreed to donate a bronze bust of Lu Hsun There is a proposal to make Kolkata and Shaoxing sister cities. There is great scope to develop cultural and economic ties between the two cities.

Designation of Morning Chinese Market and Dr. Sun Yat Sen Street: The design for the road sign to mark the Morning Chinese Market and Dr. Sun Yat Sen Street has already been made, the sanction to install the signpost is still missing.

Designation of Morning Chinese Market and Annual Lion Dance and Cultural Show: The proposal to name the nameless road connecting Dr. Sun Yat Sen St and Lu Hsun Sarani as Zhongshan Square has already been submitted, but the corporation mistakenly thinks the proposal is to rename Tiretti Bazar, which has an Italian history, linked to it. Three buildings, Poddar Court, C.I.T. Building and a residential building, flank the unnamed road.



Revitalization of Nanking 2008

ICA

Setup of a Night Market: The plan to set up a Night Market with the permission of the City Fathers drew very keen interest among the community. A lot of people who cannot make it to the early morning market for a feast of authentic homemade dimsums will get an opportunity to satisfy his voracious appetite in the evening. It is said to be a paradise for Chinese food lovers and gourmets alike.

Construction of two Chinatown Gates in Cheenapara: According to the ICA, a Chinatown without a China Gate is "like Agra without a Taj Mahal. [...], a landmark feature of almost all Chinatowns all over the world". It's the idea of a China Gate as a memorial and a tribute to the a "thriving community, which once throbbred with life".

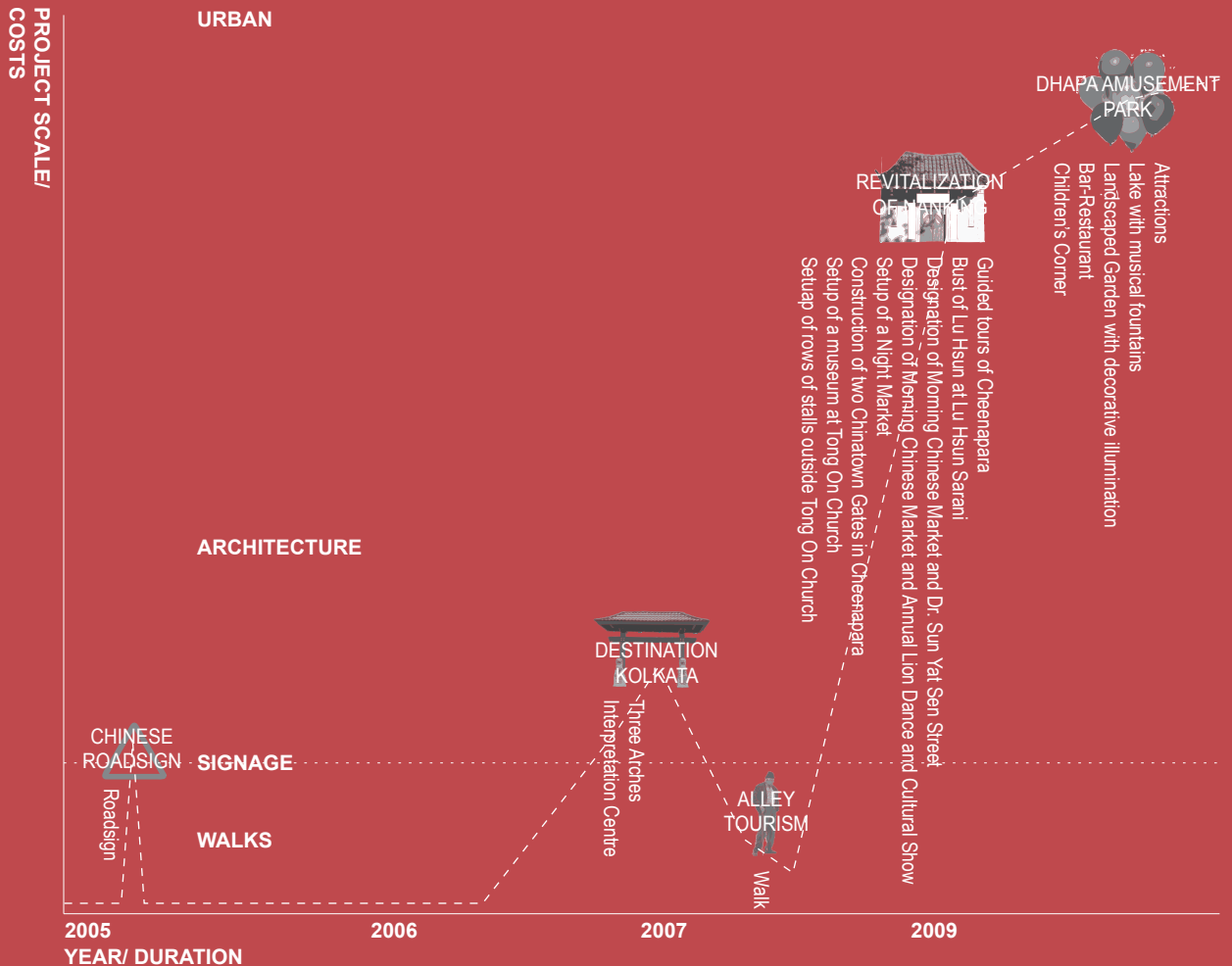
Setup of a museum at Tong On Church: Be it some "nostalgic photographs of a simple wedding or a strange and unusual Chinese ritual of the bygone era", a museum at Nanking is seen as an ideal place for information as well as preservation of Indian Chinese cultural heritage once the "rightful ownership" of Nanking is restored to Tong On Church.

Setup of rows of stalls outside Tong On Church: Presently the road outside Nanking is jam-packed with goods vehicles. Once the museum is activated, rows of stalls with typical Chinese designs could be set up on this stretch. The two China Gates can be built on either sides to add to its overall beauty and attraction.

THE CITY'S GROWTH HAS SKIPPED CHINATOWN, BUT NOT FOR LONG.

TVN Rao, Managing Director WBTD, October 2008

KMC chalked out the ambitious plan following the chief minister's advice. Funds will come under the Calcutta Environment Improvement Project (CEIP). The CMC will engage a private company to implement and fund the project, while it will be allowed to keep the revenue from the park. Part of the project will be a lake, musical fountains, a landscaped garden, decorative illumination, a bar-restaurant and a children's corner. The company entrusted with the responsibility of setting up the new dump will build the amusement park, but apart from the park, no major construction will be allowed.





Lukas: Do you perceive Tangra as a Chinatown?

Monica: **CHINATOWN IS A WORD OF MOUTH.** The locals say Chinatown is in Tangra. But there is no map; no good map acknowledges or represents the place. The Chinese represent themselves.

Liu, Monica. Owner – Beijing Restaurant. Fieldwork Interview, October 24, 2008

Deserving students with outstanding ability, dedication and comprehension/grasp of Mandarin would thus create an energy

in the classroom and find the opportunity to **JOIN THE REVOLUTION IN THE MAKING.**

Mao Siwei, Chinese Consul General, opening ceremony of the Chinese School of Language in Kolkata, July 8 2008

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©HINATOWN KOLKATA IS AN ETHNIC ENTERPRISE. AS A SPACE OF CONCEPT, RATHER THAN A SPACE OF PLACE, IT IS HIGHLY CONSTRUCTED AND MEDIATED. AS A DENSE AND CLOSED-IN SPACE RATHER THAN A TOURIST SPOT, IT IS A NEGOTIATION OF AUTHENTICITY AND SIMULATION.

唐人街



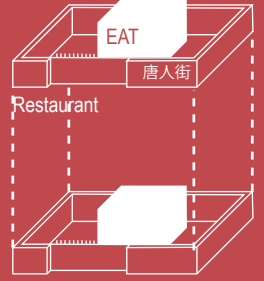
Marshland



Leather Garden



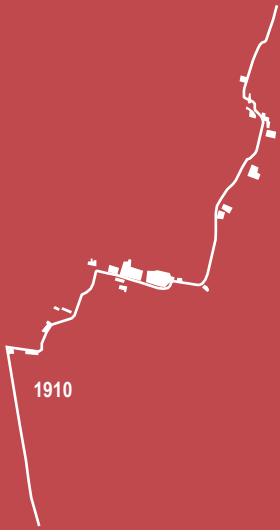
Bamboo Wall with Steel Gate



Restaurant

Concrete Wall with Steel Gate

Evolution of a Tannery in Tangra



1910



1950



2008



2020

Growth and Density of Tangra



1850



1910
Development



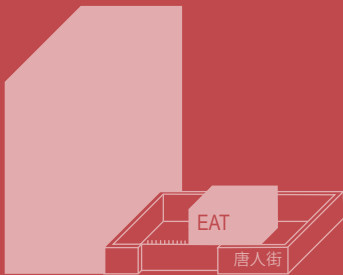
2008
Growth



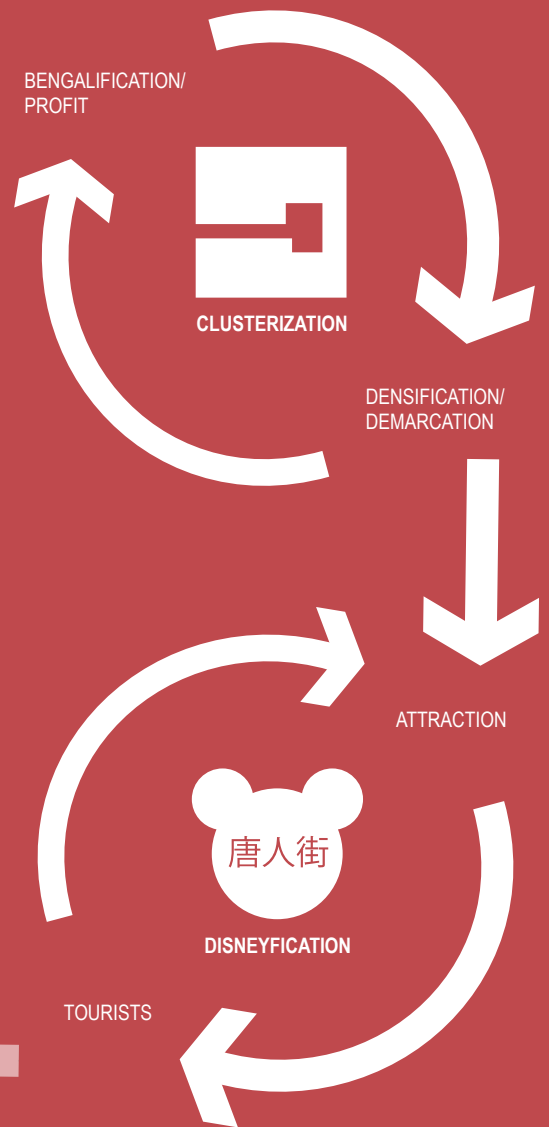
2020
Prognostication

Growth of Kolkata: Chinatown Tangra as City Center

唐人街 = CHINATOWN



Real Estate



Monica: **WE WANT A PLACE WHERE TOURIST WILL WANT TO VISIT. BUT RIGHT NOW, IT IS NOT CHINATOWN.** Chinese live here and open restaurants, that's all. Not Chinatown. Tangra needs car parking. But acquiring land is difficult as everything is private. Cleanliness is also of concern. But when we approach the city about maintaining Tangra roads, they are not interested.

Liu, Monica. Owner – Beijing Restaurant. Fieldwork Interview, October 24, 2008

DISNEYFICATION AS A SELF-DEFENSE MECHANISM

They (Chinese) built up their own defense system.

Paul Chung, Indian Chinese Association, Fieldwork Interview, October 21, 2008



(21:05) Lukas: We've been in Tangra and what we have seen is a lot of walls and gates. Do you think the people in Tangra feel insecure?

Paul: The Chinese are like that. We don't want outside interference and we don't believe other people will be helping us for no consideration.

People are not going to be charitable. They need their cut. When things happen, we withdraw. We don't have trouble and we don't want trouble.

This is an international problem - in a smaller scale:

We want to do the work ourselves. We want to grow ourselves. And when we find hostility outside, the more hostility comes, the more we enclose.

Tangra was not a prosperous place. It was nothing... only marshland. The Chinese moved there to run tanneries. The walls then, were only bamboo.

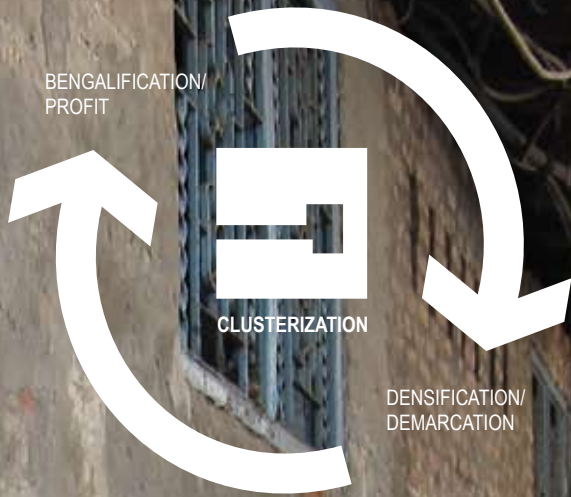
Tanneries became factories. Slowly, when people began to realize the Chinese were doing very well, people began to come in and rob.

STOP

Paul: See, if a place is not prosperous...no chance of getting

money...nobody comes there. **SO, WHEN THE INDIANS CAME, THE CHINESE BUILT THEIR WALLS...THEY BUILT UP THEIR OWN DEFENSE SYSTEM.** Secure circle.

Paul Chung, Indian Chinese Association, Fieldwork Interview, October 21, 2008



BENGALIFICATION:

Chinese are simulated by Indian culture. Particular examples of this are both the food the language. Chinese food has been Bengalified in the way which it takes on Indian flavors and spiciness. Also, Chinese of Kolkata are likely to speak either Hindi, Bengal or English rather than traditional Chinese languages such as Hakka or Cantonese.

95% of the business is Indian. “This explains the flavor of the

food. **IT IS BASICALLY INDIAN CHINESE FOOD.** Chinese food is not spicy enough. Indians love spicy food you know?”

Xing, Xie Ying. Owner - Big Boss Restaurant. Fieldwork Interview, October 24, 2008

DENSIFICATION

Adam: So, where does the water come from?

Paul: They pump it up.

Adam: Is this the same for Tiljala?

Paul: (with a shrug) Tiljala is for the Muslims.

Adam: Is it legal to pump the water?

(48:40) Paul: **LEGAL OR NOT LEGAL,
YOU DON'T EVEN COME
INSIDE. THEY ARE NOT
INTERESTED IN COMING
INSIDE.**

They want to sleeping tiger at rest. Or let's say in this case... let the sleeping dragon sleep. When they get up... maybe some problems.

Paul Chung, Indian Chinese Association, Fieldwork Interview, October 21, 2008

Adam: So while we were there, we were interested in the tanneries. We wanted to see the tanneries. But then we sort of felt shut out.

Paul: No, no. **THEY DON'T WANT YOU TO SEE IT BECAUSE ACCORDING TO THE SUPREME COURT JUDGMENT, THEY ARE SUPPOSED TO HAVE SHIFTED**

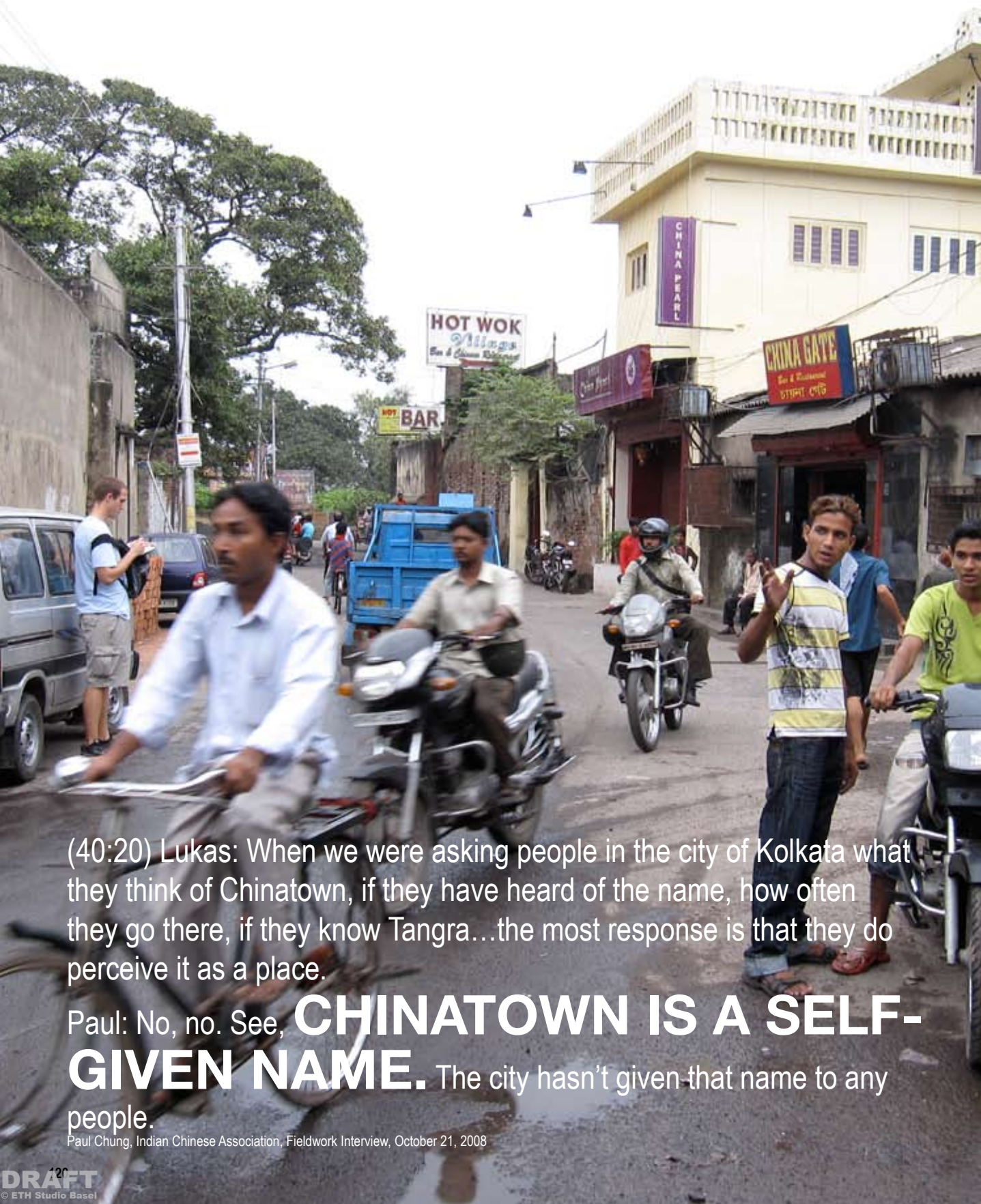
Adam: So why don't they cut the tannery industry off?

Paul: They cut it off, but the government realized they made a big mistake. The mistake was... the person who wanted them to remove from there, was looking at the property, land property. And these people are so short sighted. There is no justice in their minds. There is only advantage in their mind. If they would have made a proper replacement, which that could have been done. But they are looking

for profit now: **THE EASIER I CAN GET THE LAND, THE MORE PROFIT I MAKE. SO THEY SAY THAT THIS IS POLLUTION FROM THE TANNERIES AND THE CHEMICALS THAT ARE THERE.**

Because of the pollution you have to shift. But actually, it is not like that. If there is pollution you have to do something; a treatment plant.

BUT THE GOVERNMENT SAYS 'NO, YOU CAN'T TREAT IT. YOU HAVE TO SHIFT OUT.' That cannot be.



(40:20) Lukas: When we were asking people in the city of Kolkata what they think of Chinatown, if they have heard of the name, how often they go there, if they know Tangra...the most response is that they do perceive it as a place.

Paul: No, no. See, **CHINATOWN IS A SELF-GIVEN NAME.** The city hasn't given that name to any people.

Paul Chung, Indian Chinese Association, Fieldwork Interview, October 21, 2008



DISNEYFICATION

The act of taming the world to make it all safe, clean, and completely similar to a theme park. An act of creating a facade which when looked at from the outside appears happy, serene, and safe, but still, its purpose is to draw us close, take as much of our money as they can, and give us and our children a false sense of security, joy and happiness. To remove the sharp edges and darkness that is life.

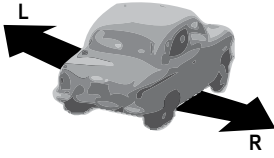
“KOLKATA IS AN EXTREMELY IMPORTANT CENTRE IN CHINA’S FOREIGN POLICY, AND WE WILL TRY TO FACILITATE BETTER DIALOGUE WITH CHINA’S BUSINESS CAPTAINS.”

Mao Siwei, Kolkata Chinese Consul General in 2008





唐人街



Night footage - Matheswartala Rd
Chinatown, Tangra.
1 Taxi
2 Students
2 Cameras - both sides of the street
Saturday Night, 9:47pm

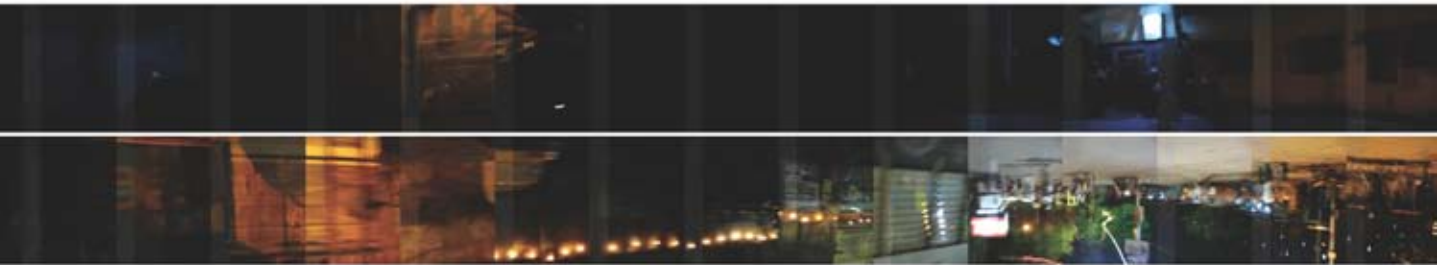




Tangra is a non-living city...not a warm place...not a place you want to live. That is why all Indians **ONLY COME AT NIGHT.**

Ifty. Explorer – Calcutta Walks. Fieldwork Interview, October 23, 2008







唐人街



HYPE

GENTRIFICATION

REAL ESTATE

HYPE

A fad. A clever marketing strategy which a product is advertised as the thing everyone must have, to the point where people begin to feel they need to consume it.

WILL HISTORY REPEAT ITSELF?

**JUST AS PRODUCED MAPS
AND DIAGRAMS EXIST
AS REPRESENTATIONAL
IMAGERY – SO MAY KOLKATA’S
CHINATOWN; NOT AS PLACE OF
A LIVING CHINESE CULTURE,
BUT AS A ‘NON-LIVING’ PLACE.
ONE THAT SUBSISTS ON
SIGNAGE AND PRODUCTION
OF WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN -
NOT UNLIKE STAGE SETTING,
PREPARED FOR THE ACTORS.**

It would be very unfortunate if the Chinese culture were not here. They add so much color to the streets here in Calcutta. Ten to fifteen years ago, there were more Chinese. All my Chinese friends I went to school with have left, all of them, no one is here. Only business owners are here. The young and educated leave.

**WHO
WILL RUN CHINATOWN? THE
INDIANS?**

Ifty. Explorer – Calcutta Walks. Fieldwork Interview, October 23, 2008

- Widening of Roads
- Proposed Arterial Roads
- Proposed Expressway



Proposed Ringroad
2025

Tangra
唐人街

EM Bypass

唐人街 = CHINATOWN



Paul Chung in his Canada T-shirt.

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Revealing

Concerning the technique used for the presented images:
Color is never enhanced; only subtracted with the intention to
simplify the background and create a selective focus - revealing
the subject.