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# Kolkata Chinese makes it big with Tangra-style food in London

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**KOLKATA:** A Kolkata-born Chinese who took Tangra-style cuisine to London is planning to leverage the popularity of the Indo-Chinese food that he serves at his restaurant in Harrow to start a chain across UK.

Steven Lee, whose father had migrated to India in the 1940s from Guangdong province in China, was born in Kolkata in 1971 and grew up in Tangra, the Chinatown that once housed tanneries that have now been converted to restaurants.

Like most Chinese living in Kolkata, Lee had bland Chinese food at home. But it was the spicy Indian-Chinese served in Chinese restaurants that he loved.



"Indo-Chinese food is a Tangra creation that is now a worldwide sensation. This fusion is unique on its own and loved by foodies all over. It is different because this fusion is prepared by using Indian ingredients while still accepting the Chinese cooking technique," explained Lee, who started Indo-Chinese kitchen bar Hakkaland named after the Tangra's Hakka community.

While Lee left Kolkata to work in at China Garden — a popular Chinese restaurant by Nelson Wang in Mumbai — nearly 20 years ago, he still visits his relatives in Kolkata annually during the Chinese New Year.

Around 17 years ago, celebrity chef Udit Sakhel invited him to London to work at his restaurant Dalchini. There, Lee used his experience and knowledge of Tangra-type Chinese to introduced Indo-Chinese food. "I infused many new dishes to this fusion and Asian taste which was widely accepted in the UK and the restaurant was a huge success in early 2000s. "Keeping the

multi-cultural diversity of UK in mind, I introduced Hakka Chicken, Ginger Chicken, Fish Pepper Salt, Tai Pai Paneer, Soya Chilli and a lot more," Lee recounted.

After working for Dalchini at Wimbledon, Spice n Ice at Croydon and Bombay Wok at Hounslow, Lee teamed up with partners to launch Hakkaland a year ago. During Durga Puja, Lee's restaurant served to Bengali patrons at the Ealing Town Hall.

Encouraged by the customer response, Lee now plans to make Hakkaland UK's first Indo-Chinese restaurant chain with joints in Manchester, East London, Leeds, Leicester and Birmingham. Lee isn't sure yet but if things go his way, he even has eyes on bringing his brand home to where it all started, Tangra.