CHAPTER V: Field Areas

My field areas are centered around the main road of Chandni Chowk, Delhi University, Hakikat Nagar, and the Delhi Metro. I selected these field areas for various reasons.

First, Chandni Chowk is a famous wholesale market. The space is interesting in that it has been dramatically changed by a series of historical events and, as a result, it
becomes the city characterized by multiple cultures. Second, the Delhi University is a large scale public space. The space helps us understand the characteristics of public space. Third, Hakikat Nagar is a residential area near Delhi University and shows the everyday life of the ordinary people. Lastly, the Delhi Metro is the westernized space that has been transplanted in a relatively short time and its landscapes are contrasted with those of the level streets. In this chapter, I will look at the history and the landscapes of these diverse areas. Sometimes, I narrate my journeys through these regions in order to present my itinerary.

5.1 Chandni Chowk

(From my fieldnote) On February 16th, 2011, I go to Chandni Chowk by the Delhi Metro. As soon as getting out of the Chandni Chowk Metro Station through Gate No.5, I come across a few of beggars in front of the small canteens. They seem to know exactly that it is profitable to ask for alms when people open their purses. I quickly pass them. As I go further, the road bifurcates into two directions. Now I have to choose one of them. If I turned right, I would see the mandir with the running horses drawing a chariot through the air. Every Hindu knows that it is the chariot of Surya who is the Sun God. If I went ahead passing the mandir, I would reach the dark and narrow lane known as Natraj Gali. The lane is between the shoes-fixer’s work platform and the toilet only for men built by the MCD. In summer, the toilet highly stinks as being half-opened and being used without water. After passing through the lane, I can see on the left side the golden domes of the Sisganj Gurdwara, or the famous landmark of the Chandni Chowk.

I can choose another way. When I go straight without turning right, I will get to the boulevard of H.C. Sen. Here, I have to turn right and to pass a dumping ground whose smell in order to reach the main road of Chandni Chowk. The smell of dumping ground is stronger than that of the toilet in Natraj Gali. The open dumping ground reveals its existence olfactorily as well as visually.

17 In the gali, there is a sweet shop, or Natraj Dahi Bhalle Wala. It is very popular for its
delicacies. It gives the road the name, *Natraj Gali*.
The main road of Chandni Chowk is used by many kinds of people who have different destinations. Some people are going to temples for prayer, and other people, to markets for shopping. The road is connected to many specialized markets: *Nai Sarak* is famous for stationery items, wholesale *saris*, and textbooks; *Ballimaran*, for glasses and shoes; *Paranthe Wali Gali*, for restaurants; *Kinari Bazaar*, for ceremonial items; *Lala Bhagirath Place bazaar*, for electronic goods. On the other hand, tourists are generally interested in famous sites like Jama Masjid or Red Fort.
In the chapter, ‘the main road of Chandni Chowk’ means the road from the Red Fort to the Fatehpuri Masjid and ‘Chandni Chowk’, the larger area including the road. The main road of Chandni Chowk is stretched straight from the Red Fort to the Fatehpuri Masjid. Its width and length is respectively 480 and 1520 yards. I directly gauged the road using by my footsteps. It took around 1900 steps from Jain Temple to Fatehpuri. The width of the road was of about 50 steps.

Nowadays, the road is known for many great historic temples. From the east side of it, there are the Lal Jain Mandir, the Gauri Sankar Mandir, the Central Baptist Church, the Sisganj Gurdwara, the Sunheri Masjid, and the Fatehpuri Masjid. These have large size buildings. Especially, Sisganj Gurdwara occupies the biggest site of them and in that size, we can get a glimpse of how influential Sikhs are in the areas. These big temples respectively emphasize their own identity through the dress code of devotees, the style of building, the sound from the inside, and so on. It gives the road a variety of religious colors.

Besides, small mandirs and masjids are dotted inside narrow lanes. Also, we can see a ‘street mandir’ called ‘Sri Hanuman Mandir’. It is built on the parking lot near Town Hall. According to a pujari of the mandir, it was built a few decades ago. There was a peepal tree on the site but it was fell down. A great man(baba) came and placed an idol. From the time, people started to pray in front of the idol and gradually, the place became a place for worship. Then a wealthy merchant built the building of the mandir on the site, that is, on the parking lot between sidewalk and carriageway. Thus, there are many kinds of worship places in the road which make the area look like a religious museum.

In the streets, shops are normally open from 11 am to 8 pm. When shopkeepers close their shutters, the homeless start to lay themselves on the sidewalks in front of the shutters. The ‘middle barrier’ between the boulevards also supply the homeless with places to lay themselves down. The dark road looks dangerous. Only the lights of the Sisganj Gurdwara brighten up the dark space like a light house all night long.

However, in the period of Mughal Empire, the landscape of road was very different from that of today. The main road of Chandni Chowk was designed by Janaanara.

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18 Indian people consider peepal trees as sacred.
Begum who was the daughter of Shah Jahan, in 1650. She made a canal flowing in the middle of the road and it was called as ‘Nahr-I-Bahisht’ (a canal of paradise). The canal was connected by two pools to be posited in the centre of chowks (squares). One was an octagonal pool and the other, a square one. Especially, the former was very famous for moonlight reflected on water and therefore, people called the square as Chandni Chowk (moonlit square). Now, Chandni Chowk gives the name to the whole road and sometimes, even to larger area beyond it. The landscape of the road is compared with the present one as follows.

Today, Chandni Chowk no longer has trees lining it, nor does it have the Nahr-I-Bahisht flowing through its centre; there is no longer Jahanara’s pool to catch the reflection of the moon; no longer are there the eateries for people to sit and wile away their hours. (Singh, 2010: 247)

Returning again to the story of Mughal Empire Period, from time to time, a horrible scene was made in the space. The City Magistrate or Kotwali was located in near today’s Sisganj Gurdwara, and the condemned were tried and punished in public at the City Magistrate’s Platform. (Blake, 1986: 158) For instance, the ninth Sikh Guru Tegh Bahadur was martyred in the place and because of this, the Guru’s shrine was founded in the place.

After the Indian Rebellion of 1857, the area was dramatically changed by the British. First of all, the given clearance of 100 yards around the Red Fort was enlarged to 300 to 400 yards. (Noe, 1986: 245) At present time, a few Ramlila performances are staged in the yard, the Red Fort Ground, on Dussehra festivals. The colonial government also confiscated many havelis in Chandni Chowk and sold them dividing into small sections. In that time, many new buildings were built in the main road of Chandni Chowk, for example, the Central Baptist Church(1858), the Lal Digambar Jain Temple(1870s), the Nortonbrook Fountain(1876), the Town Hall(1864), and so on. (Barton & Lavraine, 1988; Goel, 2003: 163) It was surely the time that non-Muslims expanded their forces in the area.

Especially, the space around the Town Hall shows the British’s trial to have
transplanted a European city in the road.(Noe, 1986 : 245) The colonial government built up the Town Hall on the place of Begum Sarai(Hosagrahar, 2005 : 54), and the famous octagonal pool(Nahr-I-Bahisht) was replaced by a neo-Gothic Clock Tower, *Ghanta Ghar*, built by E.J. Martin, executive engineer of Delhi Municipality.(Barton & Lavraine, 1988 : 89 ; Goel, 2003 : 163) The Clock Tower symbolized the appearance of new culture or power in the space, considering the fact that many Eastern civilizations had flourished on a loose basis in time and especially, Hindus had in fact been so indifferent to time that they lacked even an authentic chronology of the years.(Mumford, 2000: 123) The Clock Tower collapsed during an earthquake after the Independence of India and was never rebuilt.19

< Picture 3 : Nai Sarak and Clock Tower in front of Town Hall>

Around the Town Hall, new broaden and straight roads was paved. One of them is the Nai Sarak(New Road). It was contrasted to the narrow lanes of the Muslim period. But, the most biggest change of the area was caused by the construction of the Delhi Junction that, today, is called the Old Delhi Railway Station. It was built by the

19 “The mystique of clock towers” (The Hindu, Mar. 26, 2007)
British Indian Government and was open for public in 1903. It brought a dramatic increase in commercial activities in the walled city. The city became one of the leading wholesale business and then residential areas experienced severe commercial encroachment. Eventually, almost all areas were commercialized by the demands of business and storage space.

Nowadays, the area is known as one of the biggest wholesale markets. Nonetheless, it is amazing that the area is packed with small shops and street vendors without a big mall or department store. In the spaces, both merchants and peddlers are given a chance to ‘create’ their own workplaces. The forms of shops and stalls are very various. There is even a shop with a narrow width as much as only one person can pass through it. A vendor displays his commodities in the shelf which was attached on the outside wall of a building. Another vendor uses the corner of stairway for business. Anyone who can occupy a small space, can use it.20

5.2. Delhi University

The University of Delhi is composed of numerous colleges and faculties which have also function autonomacy. Both colleges and faculties respectively have their own campuses which are connected by the broad pavements forming the North Campus of the University of Delhi. A few colleges have their own unique symbols on the steel entry doors, which gives the clue about its independent characteristic. For instance, Ramjas College has the mark of a Hindu emblem; St. Stephan College, of a crown and a star; and Khalsa, of a Sikh emblem. The Khalsa College places even a big board to announce that the college was established by a Gurdwara Management Committee.

The University of Delhi was intended to be a unitary, residential and teaching university.(Basu, 1986: 402) This scheme, however, had to be modified because each college demanded to preserve their own culture and self-governing system.(Ibid.: 417-

20 The Indian Government decided to allow the Foreign Direct Investment in retail sector in September 2012. It is interesting to study how the vendors and small shop keepers adjust or overcome the new situation.
As it developed, it was mainly an affiliating and examining body. It functioned largely as a collection of associated colleges loosely federated together. The university have developed remarkably since 1938 when Sir. Maurice Gwyer
was appointed as Vice-Chancellor. Gwyer hoped that the University would be an intellectual and cultural centre as a National University (Ibid.: 420). He devoted himself to get the financial support. He was immensely influential in the development of the university as a Vice-Chancellor for 12 years and his achievement is still remembered by Gwyer Hall and Miranda House. Gwyer Hall is the oldest residential hostel for men in the Delhi University. It was founded in the year 1937 and was called ‘Law Hall’. But the name was renamed as ‘Gwyer Hall’ to commemorate Maurice Gwyer in 1948.21 At the same year, Miranda House was founded, too. It is a women’s college. It is said that Miranda was his favorite Shakespearean Character and was also the name of his daughter. (Ibid.: 425)

21 http://www.du.ac.in/index.php?id=288
Another characteristic is that there are ‘street gardens’ along with the streets. It is amazing that the width of gardens is as long as that of carriageways. The green space supplies pedestrians with shadow, vendors with ‘street shops’, and birds and squirrels with habitats. In addition, there exists several parks inside the University. These parks are open to the public. Especially, the ways from the park before the Anthropology Department, through the garden of the Vice Chancellor House, to the Kamla Nehru Ridge, are crowded with many joggers every morning. Many of them arrive in the parks by vehicles like cars or motorcycles. Therefore their vehicles make a long line in front of the gates of parks. A lot of male-joggers are in nice sports wear and sports shoes, and walk in groups. On the contrary, women normally wear kurta (a kind of tunic), chunni (long cloth putting on shoulder such as a scarf), and sports shoes. In Delhi, sports shoes are considered as an expensive product. These are not their necessities as people usually wear slippers or sandals.

With these joggers, fruit vendors also appear near these gates early in the morning. The vendors sell high quality fruits and its price is relatively high. They disappear after 9 o’clock in the morning and then students storm in the streets with new vendors like chai-walla, 22 cholekulcha-walla, masala soda-walla, iceream sellers, and so on. The University reserves almost 50% of entry seats for the handicapped, Scheduled Tribe, Scheduled Caste, and Other Backward Caste, and so on. Therefore students have diverse backgrounds in caste, economic condition, race, and so on. For example, students from the North East India look like Chinese and put on the Western style dresses such as blue Jeans and T-shirts. However, many female students still stick to their traditional dresses like shalwa-kammez, kurta-pajama, and so on. The Muslim girls go to school in black headdress such as chador or hijab. Male Sikhs are always wearing turbans.

5.3 Hakikat Nagar

Hakikat Nargar is a town in the North West district, that is to say, one of 9 districts

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22 The Hindi word walla means worker or seller.
in NCT. At the same time, the nagar(neighborhood) is included in the Civil Line zone of MCD. Hakikat Nagar is a part of Guru Tegh Bahdur(GTB) which is one of the 21 wards in the Civil Line zone. GTB was called as Kingsway Camp because it was used as the site for the British army during British Raj. However, after the Partition of India, the site was provided with resident areas refugees from Sindh, Kashmir, Punjab, and so on. The population of the neighborhood is estimated over 4,000 as of 2011.

The housing blocks of the Nagar have same size and same shape because all of them were built by the Delhi Government in 1950s. The south boundary of the neighborhood or nagar are bordered on the River Yamuna. There is a tall red wall between the river and the neighborhood. Along the wall, there are a few dhobis' stalls, two cement benches, a mandir, a public school, a gurdwara, etc. In the neighborhood, there are two Welfare Residents Associations(RWAs) as a kind of self governing Block Club. Both of them have the same name, or Hakikat Nagar Residents Welfare Association. I term one of them as ‘RWA-A’ and the other, ‘RWA-Bha’. The RWA-Bha is registered under the Bhagidari program. RWA-A uses the public park for their religious functions and the other, the place in front of two cement benches near drain.(see Figure 6) The cement benches were built by the president of RWA-Bha and he refers to the reasons to have built the chairs as follows.

“Because there is traffic and congestion, that is why we made the two benches. All people, washerman or vegetable vendors sit the benches. Even we sit here sometime, Now, it is winter. But during summer, there is shade here…This is near our house, safe and is now covered on three sides.”

The morning scene of the street is very noisy. Some residents go towards a mandir holding silver bowls, sweepers clean the lanes, a few men move quickly their hands in order to finish car-washing before their employers go to work, and school vans are busy picking up children and housewives make a noise bargaining with vendors in the vegetable fair(sabji mandi) in front of the two cement benches. The bustle and hustle seems to ‘wake up’ the neighborhood every morning.
Figure 6: Hakikat Nagar surrounded by Banda Bahadur Marg\(^{23}\) and The Mall Road

\(^{23}\) ‘Marg’ is a Hindi word that means ‘road’ or ‘avenue’ in English.
Especially, I feel that the sabji mandi is one of most important elements to make the neighbor ‘healthy’ and ‘vigorous’. Residents go to buy some vegetables in the sabji mandi almost everyday. Nonetheless, I can not find any dullness or negligence in their behaviors. Everybody is busy selecting good vegetables with nimble fingers and with limpid eyes. Sometimes, customers add a tomato or a potato into their carry-bag or try to make cut-price deal with a rotten vegetable. They aggressively bargain for beating down just 2 or 3 rupees of the price. The space also is a meeting place where residents say hello each other. I often sees persons to touch the ‘feet’ of seniors with two hands to pay homage : ideologically, feet but actually, around the mid-calf. Some housewives continue to chat even over half-hour with a few carry-bags in their hands.

I chose Hakikat Nagar as a field area to observe landscapes of residential area. it was decided more or less by accident. When I had stayed in Outram Lines during my pilot research term, I used to pass through Hakikat Nagar even a few times in a day because it is located between the Delhi University and Outram Lines. During the time, I found several interesting scenes such as the informal sabji mandi, washermen's worktables, a public primary school, and so on. It affected that I selected the nagar as one of my field areas.

5.4 Delhi Metro : a global space

After I decided my field areas, I stayed in the hostel in the university campus, or the University Hostel for Women(UHW). There is a metro station, Vishwavidyalaya\textsuperscript{24} Station, near the host. Whenever I went to the Chandni Chowk, I used the Station. First, in order to enter into the gates of the station, I have to pass through the security section that a female security guard frisks my body. I am never getting used to the process that a stranger touches me up. My bag has to be checked in the X-ray machines, too. After the check, I can get back my bag and go down to the underground platform.

Except for such a security check, the station is very comfortable. It is open from 5

\textsuperscript{24} Vishwavidyalaya is the Hind word to mean ‘University’.
o’clock in the morning to 11 o’clock at night and always maintains a comfortable temperature regardless of the seasons. It also has smooth floors and many kinds of facilities like elevator, escalator, electric bulletin boards, and so on. On the other hand, the inside of metro coaches is filled with metallic silver poles and chairs. The poles in the middle of the coaches are stretched far such as two-dimensional mirror images. In my opinion, the poles seems to advertise the beauty of uniformity and repetition.

‘Metro’ is the most common term for an urban, electric passenger transport system. Many cities count on this system for public traffic and they follow similar designs and rules. That is to say, ‘Metro’ can be referred to a ‘global space’. Except for its security systems such as a scanning equipment and a body search, the Delhi Metro is almost the same with the Metro of Seoul, my hometown. Therefore, I never lose my direction in the space, unlike in the ground streets.

The Delhi Metro is a rapid transit system serving Delhi. The network consists of six lines, namely Red Line, Yellow Line, Blue Line, Violet Line, Orange Line, and Green Line. The Red Line was the first one to open among them. The first stretch of Red Line, from Shahdara to Tis Hazari, was inaugurated by Indian Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, on December 24, 2002. The project has been continued until now under the leadership of Manmohan Singh who has served as Indian Prime Minister since 2005.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase I (completed in 2006)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Line No.1 : Shahdara-Tri Nagar-Rithala</td>
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<tr>
<td>Line No.2 : Vishwa Vidyalaya-Central Secretariat</td>
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<td>Line No.3 : Indraprastha-Barakhamba Road-Dwarka Sub City</td>
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25 Wikipedia – List of Metro Systems
The first phase of project composed of Line 1, Line 2, and Line 3 and was completed in 2006. The second phase was set to complete total 10 lines before the Commonwealth Games in Delhi, in 2010. Financially, both of them largely counted on international funding sources, or Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). For Phase I, JICA invested about 60 per cent of total cost, and for Phase II, about 49 per cent of total cost. Also, they were constructed through technical transfer from many international firms like Japan, Korea, France and the US (Siemiatycki, 2006: 280). The loan payback period for both Phase – I and II is 30 years with a moratorium of 10 years. Hence, Delhi Metro Rail Corporation has to pay back the loan for Phase – I by 2035 and for Phase – II by 2040. Consequently, the Delhi Metro resulted from combining the foreign labourers, capital, and techniques, and the neatness of the space is sharply contrasted to the discursiveness of the level streets.

26 “Delhi Metro pays back loan to Japanese agency” (The Hindu, 7 Aug. 2010).