

About Tactical City

This is an excerpt from a larger volume of unpublished work titled 'Tactical City, Tenali Rama and other stories of Mumbai's Urbanism'.

Tactical City is a way of thinking about the contemporary third world metropolis. Its contention is that conditions in most third world cities have gone beyond the means of any rational positivist planning. One needs new EYES to see the present conditions and new TOOLS to operate and perhaps a new IMAGINATION to intervene in these contexts. TACTICAL CITY derives its name from Michel De Certeau's (1988) thesis where he distinguishes between 'tactics' and 'strategies'. "Strategy is the mode by which legitimated power operates from within a designated field; through language, political structures of representation, the assignation of gender roles, the regulation of space, and discourses of the body and so on. In short, it is the productive mode of hegemonic power. A Tactic, by contrast, has no proper site, discourse or language, of its own - it insinuates itself into the other's place. It adorns itself in the other's garb, speaks through the other's language, and because it has no fixed address or permanent mode, never consolidates its own achievements or preserves its conquests"¹. Tactics, it is understood, have a distinct latent creative energy, one that could be harnessed to address the problems of the city. Tactical City in the light of such an understanding is a new direction in imagining the city. Practice here is represented as a set of tactical negotiations that contribute to the dynamic production of the Urban. This is an attempt to formulate a methodology towards contextual investigation and intervention.

TACTICAL CITY is fictional but builds on research undertaken by the author and various constituents in the city of Mumbai. Through fictional means, it plays on the creative potential of tactics mentioned earlier and brings certain canons of architecture and planning to book with a playful troubling of its theories.

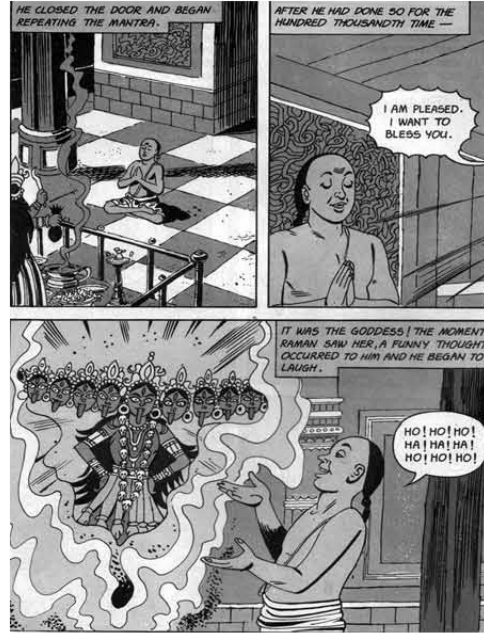
Devices

A fictitious history of Mumbai's urbanism is told here through the character of Tenali Rama. Rama as many Indian readers would know is a witty character from an Indian folklore; who was known to transform the status quo with his wit. The character of Tenali Rama is used here for specific reasons. The character's tactical nature is very useful to represent the transformations in the city by tactical negotiations. Moreover, the fact that Tenali Rama is a south Indian coming to Mumbai as a migrant is of significance. South Indians, who were the early migrants to the city, faced a strong resistance by the xenophobic local representatives of right-wing Hindu nationalism. This force has ever since been one of the shapers of the city's urbanism. The narrative allows one to dwell on a soft reading of the city, the various relations between people, their conflicts and exchanges.

The thesis analyses the dominant imagination of the city as formulated by the shifts in its political structure through the following categories (after Design Cell, K.R.V./A. 2001):

1. The Colonial Mercantile City
2. The Colonial Industrial City
3. The Independent Socialist city
4. The Global city

Tactical City is an alternative history that weaves through these political epistemes.



Original Tenali Parable Source: Amar Chitra Katha

Apart from constructing a finer, more textured context of the city from the ones read through these larger structures, the device of fiction allows one to play with the gap between analysis and design, reality and utopia. Further, all through the text, various contemporary architects, urbanists and discursive practices, appear in an anachronistic way, as part of the history of the city. This is meant to be a methodological device to open up new ways of SEEING the city, with new possibilities of INTERVENTION. Though the insertion of modern western theory of architecture and urbanism has undeniable relevance to the context of the city, whose urbanism was not constituted before the colonial, at some places in the narrative these discursive practices become props to legitimise this way of seeing at other times, paradoxically to comment on the absurdity of their use in the extreme conditions of the third world metropolis and to drive home the need for a search for local interventions. If nothing else, this is meant to be a bedtime story for architects and urbanists.

Presented below are, a small selection of stories from the book:

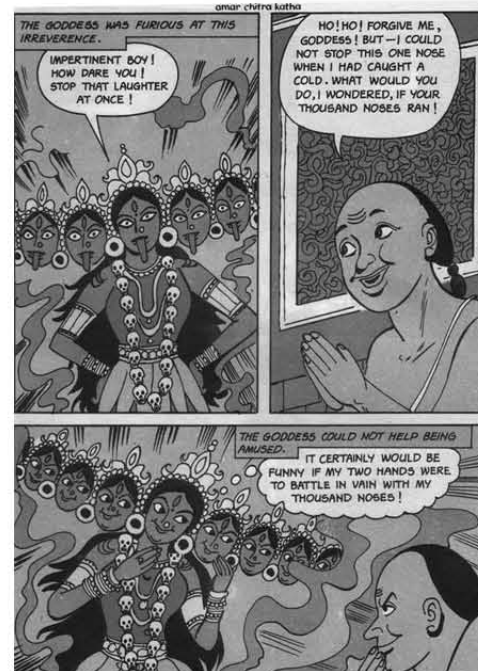
Stories

The Tenali lineage

Many centuries ago there lived a young boy named Rama in a town called Tenali. His friends, who loved him because of his unusual wit and his very helpful nature, called him Tenali Rama. And just how do I know this? Well it might suffice to say that Tenali was my great great great great grandfather. One day Tenali met a sage. The sage gave him a mantra to chant and said if he recited that thirty six thousand times, Goddess Kali would appear and if he wasn't afraid of her when she did, she would grant him a boon.

Tenali did as the Sage said because he really wanted to see what Goddess Kali looked like. At his thirty five thousand nine hundred and ninety ninth recitation, he heard a loud thunderbolt and he opened his eyes in time to see the skies part and the mighty Goddess Kali emerge from the fissure. Rama though, was not afraid to see her. Instead he started to laugh seeing the Goddess with a thousand heads. Kali was furious and asked him why he did such a disrespectful thing. To that Rama, with his stomach still aching from his laughter, managed to blurt out, "Forgive me Goddess, but I was just thinking, in spite of the mighty Goddess that you are, you could never enter a beauty pageant, one that is organised by those big

corporations these days because their norms of beauty are generally very rigid. But then I thought again and said maybe if they saw you they would change their norms, you would be their Ideal beautiful woman, because you have a thousand lips to apply their expensive lipstick on and two thousand eyes to decorate with that stuff they call eye shadow. Maybe they would encourage their sophisticated genetic engineers to make the future beautiful women grow a thousand heads like you have. I was laughing, not at you dear goddess, but at the thought of having beautiful women with a thousand heads walking around our cities". Kali was impressed at Rama's wit. She had emerged from the cult of matriarchal societies where women were the bosses and wasn't very happy with the way women were being objectified in the current patriarchal societies across the globe. Besides, she was only used to people bending down to her power and couldn't help but laugh at Rama's presence of mind and his very imaginative thinking. Arjun² had so far been enjoying his elitist modernity and his adolescent years at the Elphinstone college and dreaming of going to the United States to pursue higher studies and she couldn't yet convince him to write about the role of the 'imagination' in contemporary society, in a book she thought



2 Arjun Appadurai in Modernity at large: "Imagination, especially when collective can become the fuel for action. It is the imagination, in its collective forms, that creates ideas of neighbourhood and nationhood, of moral economies and unjust rule, of higher wages and foreign labour prospects. The imagination is today the staging ground for action, and not only for escape."

1 Michel de Certeau, Practice of Everyday Life

he should title, 'Modernity at Large'. And here was this simple Rama, talking about such profound things through his very simple humour and sharp imagination. She granted him a boon. She said, "You will be the wittiest person in the world and all your sons and daughters will be as witty as you. You will become the official jester in the Vijayanagar kingdom in the court of Krishnadevaraya. You have to promise me though that you will make sure that all your children are called 'Tenali Rama'. Well, we'll put an accent on the Rama for the daughters. You will all use your wit and tact to the benefit of society and always help build a parallel *TACTICAL CITY*, for you will see that the dominant discourse all through history will always be that of the powerful, who will build cities only for the elite. The naming of all your sons and daughters 'Tenali Rama'", she said, "will be to ensure that each one remembers that he/she has a higher purpose than just privately advancing their own careers. Promise me all this, and I'll grant you the boon that will last for centuries to come, except if any one of your children shuns the responsibility of the intellectual, that Noam³ will soon write about."

He served the office of jester at Krishnadevaraya's court and named all his sons and daughters 'Tenali Rama' and taught them to call their sons and daughters 'Tenali Ramas' too. And so, though there was an immense confusion at home as to who was being addressed, the father, the son, the daughter, the uncles, the aunts or their sons and their daughters in the extended family, they were always involved in helping the rest of the society with their wit. The large Rama family cut through the various phases of Indian history, from the colonial era to the quasi socialist phase of its independence to the days of a neo liberal world. The Tenali Rama lineage spread through the Indian society and you would find a Rama in almost every situation spreading the methods of tact and negotiations that helped build *TACTICAL CITY*. The multitudinous Tenali Ramas became tactical practitioners all through history (and geography).

**1. Tenali in the Colonial Mercantile City:
as a migrant in Mumbai
March 1857**

This is the story of a Tenali Rama sibling who decided to migrate to Mumbai in the year 1857. These days the country



File photograph of the 'Native' town
(Source: Bombay the Cities Within,
Rahul Mehrotra and Sharada Dwivedi)

Colonial Documentation of the native
other (Source: Bombay the Cities
Within, Rahul Mehrotra and Sharada
Dwivedi)

Meat shop on Lamington Road, 'Here
is mutton shop'
A Herbalist, 'Botanical Doctor'
Umbrella Repairer at Dhobi Talao,
'Ombrellas Hospital'
Shoemaker on Churchgate Street,
'Boots and shoes made to order of
best leather of ladies and gentlemen'
Sweetseller who moved his location,
'Original G Barfivala get up from
there and seaten here'
Shop selling false teeth, 'Teeth are
useful to all religions'
Barber at Kalbadevi, 'Poor children's
free haircut'
Baker at Dhobi Talao, 'Confectioner
of the Celestial Empire Weddings and
christenings made to order'

was ruled by some handsome white men, who had come to the country for trade, but stayed on when they saw that the siphoning of wealth from this place required more sophisticated machinery. The Sepoy Uprising was just over. They say it had been suppressed. Rama settled in the native town just outside the colonial town where the white men lived with their lovely white horses and their lovely white ladies sometimes indistinguishable from each other. He lived with a relative who had migrated before him in search of greener pastures. To his surprise he found no green pastures - only a brown town segregated from a white one. Recently the white men had taken up a new project.⁴ They were meticulously documenting the brown natives as if they were specimens in their biology laboratories. Tenali often imagined himself bottled in little vials of formaldehyde or as an object on a white man's mantle-piece.

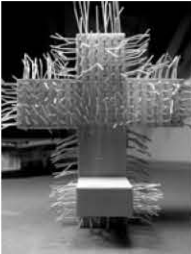


Christian migrant, Vicchu
(Source: Bombay the Cities
Within, Rahul Mehrotra and
Sharada Dwivedi)

"Ombrellas Hospital"
Tenali, to survive in the native town built himself a shop selling false teeth because "teeth are useful to all religions". He then set about the task of inspiring his neighbours and other fellow natives. Vicchu, who repaired umbrellas, called his shop 'Ombrellas

Hospital⁵ He simply didn't know how to spell 'umbrella'. Though Macaulay had already introduced English education in the country by 1833, it had not yet percolated beyond the class of *babus*, who were bred to be "Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect". Vicchu, who was a lower caste Hindu, was tired of being looked down upon by the members of the higher caste.

He found redemption in the missionaries who came with the colonialists. He was impressed with the services of the Red Cross and the humanitarian ideals they stood by. He held the same ideals when it came to being a doctor to all those battered umbrellas. The shop that he made came from the hopes he pinned on his newfound religion and the ideals of the Red Cross he stood by. His shop would be a cross. However, his own experience at the local hospital was a hairy one and the mere memory of that would give him goose bumps. The shop that he finally designed had all his memories, hopes and desires packed into it. His shop was a big hairy cross. Vicchu built it with material salvaged from the surplus wooden mango cartons that



Hairy Cross-shop ▲
Source: Author (bass wood
model 6"x6", side elevation)

Hairy Cross-shop in the native town
(Source: Author's collage using image published in
'Bombay the Cities Within', Rahul Mehrotra and
Sharada Dwivedi) ▼



swamped the newly built Crawford market. The hair would be used to hang his umbrellas from. Sometimes he would hang his own umbrella that would shade him and also act as his signage. On some days when the weather was bad and torrential rains cut the bazaar streets, Vicchu would open all the umbrellas that hung from the cross and would protect passers-by caught without their umbrellas. The umbrella hospital soon became an integral part of the life of the bazaar.

**2. Tenali in the Industrial Colonial City
Marriage of toilets**

Another uncle of mine, needless to say a Tenali Rama, arrived in Mumbai with a bus-full of people from his village to work in the mills in Mumbai. He was attracted by the new job prospects in the city and the housing that the mill owners had built to attract migrant labour. These were called chawls: a typology with shared toilets, where one room tenements were strung along a large common verandah. The chawls in the city became settings for a large number of urban festivals. This became a milieu for political organisations and also places to plot out the

freedom struggle.

In course of time the mill owners stopped building new housing stock, which could not keep up with the continuous flow of migrants from nearby villages and towns. The existing units began to be shared by an increasing number of people. This living style and typology he saw changed the daily lives of people. The typology that was once used by a smaller number of people and hence sufficed having fewer toilets now had toilets being shared by many more people.

Well, this managed to have a major effect on people's physiognomy in their early morning routines. In some cases it extended the idea of extended family across community structures, forming new community patterns, at other times it caused tempers to rise and factions being created on the basis of who used the toilets for the longest times. Tenali found that the neighbouring housing block had the same story. But apart from that he was noticing how in the new urban condition, people were drifting apart. The alienation of the metropolis was overbearing. He decided to flip the problem around its head. Rama had been told by Damodar,⁶ who studied the trajectory of compatibilities of various cult groups through a study of the



Colonial Industrial City
Source: Bombay the Cities Within,
Rahul Mehrotra and Sharada Dwivedi

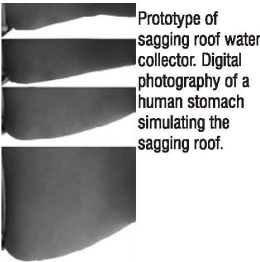
Documentation of Natives as recorded in Bombay the Cities Within, Rahul Mehrotra and Sharada Dwivedi. Here the British had documented the native attempts at making a livelihood in the new colonial towns. The documentation is at the same time rife with a sense of power over the native being documented on the part of the colonizers and a sense of awkwardness on the part of the natives who no longer remained self-determining subjects attempting to mimic their colonizers' language and ways (My emphases).

An excerpt from colonial documentation of native Indians published in "Bombay the Cities Within", Rahul Mehrotra and Sharada Dwivedi.

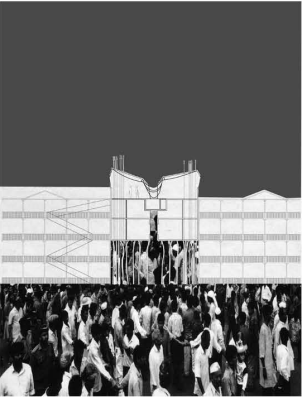
"Shiva grew out of rather primitive and aniconic cult stones along several parallel tracks, into a sublimated highest god- for some people. At one stage his equivalent came into violent conflict with the various mother goddesses who had previously been the senior deities. We find a naked three faced god on Mohenjodaro seals who might easily be a prototype of the modern Siva; but that deity wears buffalo horns on his head dress. It cannot be a mere accident that the pastoral buffalo- god Mhasoba is also identified with the Mahisasura whom goddess Parvati crushes to gain her title Mahisasura-mardini. At times Parvati as Yogeshwari is married to an equivalent of Mhasoba who begins to resemble a diluted form of Siva-Bhairava" - Damodar Kosambi, Myth and Reality.

3 Noam Chomsky, 'Responsibility of the Intellectual' In his 1967 essay, which marked a watershed in the development of opposition to the Vietnam war, Noam Chomsky wrote, "Intellectuals are in a position to expose the lies of governments, to analyse actions according to their causes and motives and often hidden intentions. In the Western world, at least, they have the power that comes from political liberty, from access to information and freedom of expression. For a privileged minority, Western democracy provides the leisure, the facilities and the training to seek the truth lying hidden behind the veil of distortion and misrepresentation, ideology and class interest, through which the events of current history are presented to us... It is the responsibility of intellectual to speak the truth and to expose lies... it is also his duty to see events in their historical perspective... The question, 'what have I done?' is one that we may well ask ourselves, as we read each day of fresh atrocities in Vietnam as we create, or mouth, or tolerate the deceptions that will be used to justify the next defence of freedom." Chomsky studied the role of leading American intellectuals in the construction of pro-imperialist ideologies and propaganda, their justification of the use of force by the United States to impose its writ on the rest of the world, especially the third world.

representations of their gods, how on occasions Gods who had been represented as warring, had reconciled through marriage. This is symbolic of the warring groups or the cults themselves uniting. Much like modern surrealists, the mythological imagery showed a changing reality through such juxtapositions. Tenali had been thinking about what his friend had told him. He wondered what it would be like to have the toilets of the two neighbouring buildings marry. The marriage was planned thereafter and with great pomp and celebration the toilets came together in wedlock and with them their respective buildings and the respective inhabitants. The marriage of the two helped use up side open spaces, brought together the resources of the two buildings and their inhabitants and allowed them to build more toilet seats with the pooling of resources. A big water tank was shared between the newly weds, who made it a point to capture runoff from rainwater to fill it. He built a prototype of the roof water collecting devise which was modelled after the human stomach. As water collected on the roof, it sagged into the community space below. The roof was alive and pregnant with the water they harnessed.



Prototype of sagging roof water collector. Digital photography of a human stomach simulating the sagging roof.



Marriage of toilets: chawl conservation Collage using image published in 'Bombay the Cities Within', Rahul Meherotra

Tenali charted out a funding mechanism and found out who the interested actors and agencies in the city would be, who could fund the project. He found many interested parties. He found a way to involve the local government, the local moneylenders (some of who morphed into the world bank a few years later with this work experience) the local business owners and the residents themselves, who were always ready to spend lavishly on the

weddings of their kin. This was a strange Indian mentality at work that liked to spend on marriages but not on their environment. Tenali capitalised on this trait.

The toilets had always hated being called 'servant spaces' as the modernist architect Kahn⁷, who spent his time asking the brick what it wanted to be, would often call their kin. They liked the fact that Tenali and his neighbours re-instituted them as members of their extended families.

The Bombay skies that day were red with the spirit of celebration that marked the day of the marriage. Celebration was in Tenali's scheme of things a means of organisation; an organisation that would challenge the patron depend nature of architecture, one that would allow a community to be the client. Festivals had been used before as in the case of the Ganesh festival to organise for political means. Here was Tenali using this powerful tactical tool to rethink architecture and the problem of conservation.

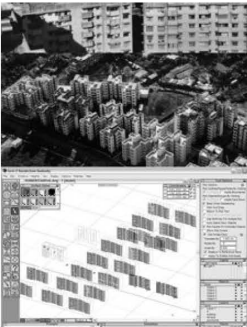
3. Tenali in the Independent (Socialist) City August 15 1962

It was August 15, the Independence Day of India. It was 15 years since the country had received its independence. This progeny of the Tenali family was returning home from his job as a clerk at the Life Insurance building at Nariman point. As he walked though his housing complex, provided to him by MHADA (Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Board), he felt suddenly disoriented. He would generally identify his own building from the number on it as all the buildings were similar and there were so many of them marching along that there was no telling which one was his. It was as if someone had hit the continuous copy button in the 3D programme and had forgotten every other command. Perhaps if they had ventured for the slightly more complex nurb tools or the various mesh commands, there would be some variation in the built landscape around; probably blobs of various sizes and shapes would dot the landscape. But here, either it was a very old version of 'form z' that only had the cube parameters or it was that old architect called Corbusier in Chandigarh who was obsessed with cubes and a movement called Cubism that was responsible for the burgeoning cuboid housing blocks around him. Maybe it was

Nehru's⁸ love for Corbusier and modernism and cubes. One couldn't tell. Today somebody had covered the numbers on the buildings with some political posters and he couldn't manage to locate his own building

Modernist Planning, Maps and tracings

The planners of the era, Tenali noticed, started incorporating these cubes as rectangles in their development plans. After a point there were so many rectangles that they were completely



Independent socialist city Source: Top: Bombay the Cities Within', Rahul Meherotra and Shrada Dwivedi, Bottom: Author screen shot of a 3d software rubber using the rubber stamp tool to recreate the landscape above



Bombay Development Plan Source: Bombay Municipal Corporation

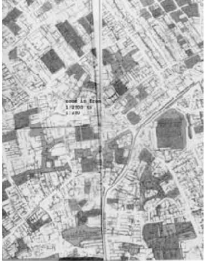
confused with which was what. After all they couldn't just treat these drawings as non-hierarchical post-modern drawings where the slippages in the way one would read the drawings would inform another way of thinking. Deleuze and Guattari⁹ would love these supposedly confusing set of drawings. But the planners of the socialist city did not want to please Deleuze or Guattari. They thought of them as confused souls who talked about maps as against tracings. Tracings after all were irreplaceable. How else would the young draftsmen trace the old colonial maps to mark new additions on? Were Deleuze and Guattari out of their minds? The planners were sure that tracing was the right medium for them. It conveyed the right message. All they needed to do is colour these in reds, blues, yellows and browns to designate zones of public, residential, commercial, housing and utility places. It was as simple as that. After all, the great Parisian architect had talked about the need to segregate these functions. One was not to mix residential with work areas as the traditional towns used to be. Modernity was against everything that was traditional and retro. Fixed regulations rendered everything and everyone equal. Everyone was so equal that they all became numbers. They didn't have names anymore. They became known by their professions, their gender and their castes and became entries in the census reports, all trapped in reams of paperwork as numbers, not humans anymore.

That night Tenali had a dream; all the people trapped in the maps as numbers now came alive as desires and aspirations, the reams of paper became a soft city, a book of maps from where

peered body parts of all those featureless numbers, now coming to life as unalienated beings; the eroticism of the body parts, at the same time reinforcing and defying the alienation of the metropolis. Tenali knew this was the TACTICAL CITY he had to build and understand. This was the soft city hidden behind the featureless maps.

Urban Bedroom

Tenali started scanning through the development plans of the city. He found that they were made in parts; rectangles that would have to be joined to make the entire city. Tenali out of curiosity started looking for his house on the 1:2500 scale plans. His finger ran over the familiar streets until it slipped from the edge of the sheet. He tried to locate it on the adjoining street and found only a part of it there. Excited by this discovery he started examining the plans more closely. He found one particular instance where a small wedge was missing in the sheet at the point where two sheets joined. It seems the socialist architects had forgotten to trace some part of the colonial maps. At 1:2500 scale the fractional wedge was a hairline. Not



Development Plan Mistake (Source: Author collage using Bombay Development Plan)

at 1:100 scale he thought. He checked with the Land and Estate Department and found that the mistake was carried forward there. He had found a wedge of land in the city that was not documented or measured. He appropriated it. He decided to build an Urban Bedroom on it.

When faced with the task of designing this bedroom, Tenali started looking up the Time Savers Standards for the layout, something his architecture school had taught him. Everyone learnt the right proportions and layouts of bedrooms from these graphic standards, no matter if the standards were

9

"Make a map and not a tracing. The orchid does not reproduce the tracing of the wasp; it forms a map with the wasp, in a rhizome. What distinguishes the map from the tracing is that it is entirely oriented toward experimentation in contact with the real. The map does not reproduce an unconscious closed in upon itself; it constructs the unconscious." Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, 'Introduction: Rhizome', from A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia

7

The modern architect Louis I. Kahn (1903-1974) first posed a question in the early 1970s that has since attained legendary status within architectural circles: "What do you want, brick?" The answer, according to Kahn, is that brick wants to be an arch and not merely an infill or cladding material with no structural role.

"Let this be a new town, symbolic of the freedom of India, unfettered by the traditions of the past, an expression of the nation's faith in the future..." Jawaharlal Nehru, when he visited the Chandigarh project on April 2, 1952.

8



European or American. Standards were universal after all. But when it came to fitting the bedroom in the swatch of land he had got by default, Tenali had some trouble. So he went to the Adobe Photoshop programme and distorted the standard bedroom to fit onto his site. The transform command in Photoshop gave him a large urban bed. The stretching in Photoshop made one flanking wall and its doorjamb 5 feet wide and the longitudinal wall taper at its other end. The sitting spaces were elongated to uncanny proportions and the bookshelf became a line in the plan, a relief on the wall, and a dysfunctional element in the city. Perhaps this was an extreme interpretation of form follows function: it reflected the functionality in a city where pavements became bedroom spaces in the night for the city's multitudinous migrants, for whom bookshelves had no meaning.

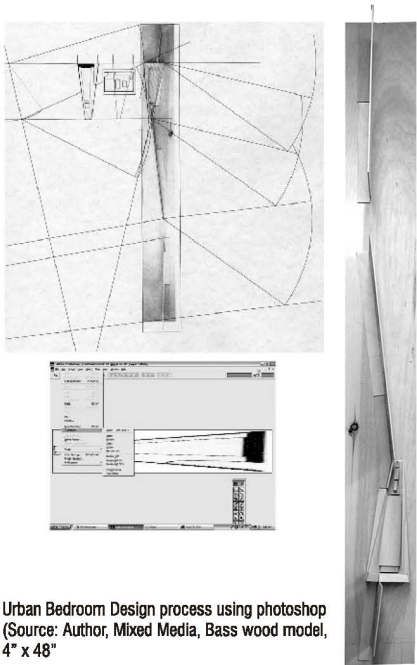
4. Tenali in the Global City
November 1991

It was the year 1991. This was no ordinary year. It was the year India had liberalised. Liberalisation had an alchemical reaction on the city. Glass and concrete towers started growing everywhere from seeds of green money that were sown in the city. At the base of the towers grew the weeds of the informal economy that serviced these towers. Tenali Raman lived in such a settlement. One day a powerful gust of wind broke the sodium vapour lamp that stood between his shack and the Essar building that stood towering in front of it. Tenali installed a light bulb in his house to compensate for the loss of the streetlight. The little bulb that lit Tenali's shack now proudly extended its light to the tower that stood in front of it. Being on a much lower level, the light bulb was blocked by Tenali and his family's moving bodies. As Tenali looked up, the large facade caught the shadows of Tenali and his son with his night school bag-pack. Tenali and his family, otherwise invisible, now gained larger than life proportions in the city.

Tenali, Gods and Globalisation

It was the year 1992, one year after the country had opened its economy to the world under great international pressure. They say it was a 'universal path to progress'. This gave rise to a spree of infrastructure projects for smooth functioning of global money. Tenali Rama owned a plot of land where a major expressway was to be built. The expressway was a state initiative to attract foreign direct investment. The land acquisition act called for Tenali Rama's land to be acquired for the purpose. A restless Rama couldn't sleep all night the day he received the letter from the government informing him of the same. He shuddered with the thought that part of his property would be taken away by some foreigners. Tenali had a vision that night. Goddess Kali appeared in his dream and asked him to build her a temple at the edge of his land, where the road would cut through and to do this before the break of dawn. Tenali, delighted with the goddess, because he saw through her wit, did as she instructed. Ayappa and Sudama were the engineers who lived in the nearby district and worked for the Swiss company that was building the infrastructure with money from the World Bank. The next day, they came by to inspect the land. Both recent migrants to the city, god-fearing Hindus, refused to touch the temple, lest the Goddess curse them.

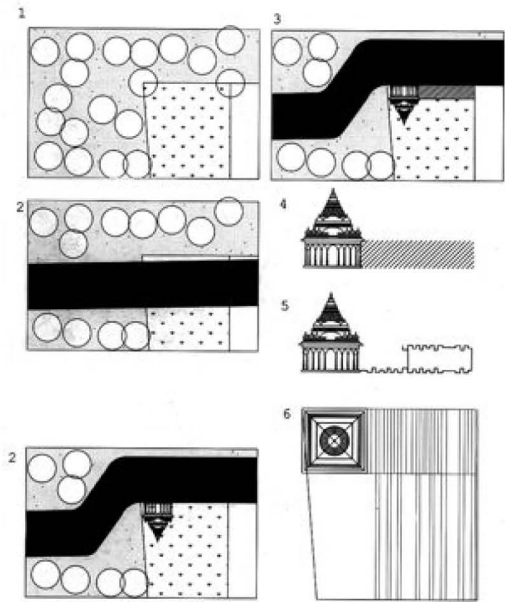
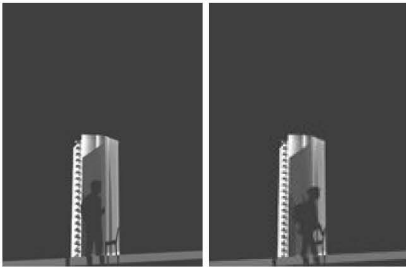
The new road, a global initiative, was built with a bend in it, which housed the temple for Goddess Kali. Santa and Banta, the truck drivers who would drive to and fro delivering goods for the new companies along the expressway would never fail to pray to the goddess on their journeys or stop to have a cup of tea and meet other fellow truck drivers. The tea stall and the temple were responsible for many bonds of friendship. The temple attached to the tea stall helped because



Urban Bedroom Design process using photoshop
(Source: Author, Mixed Media, Bass wood model, 4" x 48"



Urban Bedroom Design process using photoshop
(Source: Author, Mixed Media, Bass wood model, 4" x 48"



Gods and Globalisation: Incremental urban process of creating a public space (Source: Author)

objects in becoming 'signs' of identity. The fact that a tactic does not have, as De Certeau says, "a proper site, discourse or language of its own and insinuates itself into the other's place, adorns itself in the other's garb and speaks through the other's language" becomes the basis of this project. Moreover the intervention becomes an extreme reflection of an otherwise suppressed subjectivity.

The second project, based in the colonial industrial city, *Marriage of toilets*, is a critique of the single affluent- patron dependent nature of architectural practice, which is here subverted through community patronage and financing, made possible by formulating an event around the project. The intervention further opens up new avenues of thinking of conservation projects through a nuanced understanding of programmatic needs.

The third project based in the Independent (Socialist) City, *Urban Bedroom* brings out the multiple idiosyncrasies of the discipline such as the absurdity of aphorisms like "form follows function" and the blind reliance on standards that architects work with in the intense context of inequalities in the city. The project further pokes some fun on the increasing reliance of architecture on digital 3d media to generate forms, perhaps a conspiracy of the media producing corporations, by the use of the most easily piratable and ubiquitous programme of photoshop to design the Urban Bedroom.

The fourth story, based in Global City, *November 1991* is a comment on the increasing inequalities in the city and the aligning of architects as agents of the powerful. In the project we see a realignment of expression and identity taking place in the urban realm.

The fifth story *Gods and Globalisation*, also based in Global City, exemplifies an incremental urban process as against the recent trends of large interventions in the name of generating 'public spaces' that invariably cause gentrification. Here the building of a temple becomes a tactical catalyst in the urban process, one that manages to change the design of a global project for local needs.

In a nutshell Tactical city is an imagined city made of a set of tactics of innumerable interests that manifest themselves in different forms in the city. Tactical City is metaphorical. It is nevertheless a real position.

Some Concluding Notes

Tactical city calls for a nuanced understanding of the context of third world urbanism. This involves mapping various cultural aspects, which are overlooked both by the technocratic discipline and its theoretical critiques, unfortunately imported from the West. Tactical City adopts a distinct position of opportunistic realignment with those left behind by the dominant imagination.

The argument in the first story based in the Colonial Mercantile city, *Ombrellas Hospital* is that in the project the colonial documentation of the "other" gains a whimsical presence in the city. It hijacks the form of colonial representation and becomes an assertion of native identity. Its object-like nature is also important to the tactic because of the insidious nature of

Tactical city is not a manifesto
Tactical city is opportunistic
Tactical city is deceitful
Tactical City is a constant becoming