Representation of Heritage in Museums of Sikh History: A Case Study of the Museum at Sis Ganj Gurdwara, Delhi

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Contents

1

Introduction

A number of museums on Sikh history have been established in India since Independence. Some of them are only small collections of manuscripts, paintings, weapons and items of daily use connected to the Sikh Gurus and kept within *gurdwara*, the Sikh shrine. Most museums however, do not have many artefacts on display. Their display is overwhelmingly made up of modern paintings which illustrate the history of the Sikh community. These are oil paintings on canvas, made in western realistic style. They show events from lives of Gurus and their followers. Sometimes portraits of notable Sikh chiefs and personalities are part of the display. This work examines one such museum—Bhai Mati Das Museum at Sis Ganj Gurdwara, Delhi. It focuses on representation of heritage in museums of Sikh history in general and Bhai Mati Das Museum in particular.

My interest in Sikh museums comes from working for the well known mega-museum in Punjab, the Virasat-e Khalsa or the Khalsa Heritage Complex (KHC, henceforth) at the town of Anandpur Sahib. In 2008, I was employed as a researcher in the design company which was creating the display for the museum. At the time, my responsibilities were to collect material—visual, audio, textual—which could be used by the designers to create the display. This provided me an opportunity to observe how history is deployed in a popular sphere, outside of a classroom and a strictly academic sphere, and allowed me an insider's view on how this museum came into being. There were massive amounts of research material to collect and examine: monuments, paintings, oral traditions, manuscripts, photographs, and not the least, interacting with people who would tell me more about Punjab and the Sikhs. As a student of history, I had read about the politics of representation, and it was fascinating to see the process unfold and also to participate in it. The concerns of the government, those of representatives of religious bodies, notions of academic integrity, the need for attractive and communicative design—all came together in

creating the *virasat* (heritage) of the *Khalsa* (pure). This experience also gave me a theme for further research. I wanted to examine the process of the creation of heritage through museums and the natural choice for a case study was KHC. I started digging up material on Moshe Safdie's[1] work, history of the Sikhs, and museums in India. However, a visit to Sis Ganj Gurdwara nudged me in a new direction. Sis Ganj is located in the older part of Delhi, in the neighbourhood of Chandni Chowk. There is large modern building across the road from the gurdwara which houses Bhai Mati Das Museum (spread over the ground floor and basement), a charitable dispensary and a *serai* (rest house) for pilgrims to the gurdwara. The museum has paintings on Sikh history—portraits of the Gurus and stories of their life. Some canvases were of recent make (first decade of twenty-first century), but a majority of them were commissioned during the last decades of twentieth century. While the workmanship in some paintings is crude, on the whole it is impressive. These paintings have an ability to engage with the viewer and draw them into their world—the history of the Sikhs. The dynamism of the characters is so vividly depicted in the paintings that I could feel both the gentleness of the Gurus' expression and the energy of Khalsa. Since then, I have made several visits to the museum, and each time, I find myself having a mental conversation with the characters in the paintings, at times, even smiling back at them. What is it about these paintings that engages a viewer? Where did these paintings come from? Who made them and why? And, what is the story they tell? This thesis is an attempt to understand these questions. As I looked for more information on Bhai Mati Das Museum, it emerged as an ideal case study to explore the history of the paintings in parallel with history of Sikh museums. The paintings in Bhai Mati Das Museum have a particularly interesting trajectory. They were not made for display in a museum but commissioned over a period of three decades for reproduction in calendars. Tracing the history of these paintings revealed the underlying threads of interconnected phenomena: the networks of patronage behind paintings and Sikh museums; the agency of the artists in bringing Sikh stories to life; the world of popular Sikh art; Sikh politics and interpretations of history, and the rhetoric of Sikh history and identity. The following chapters will examine these themes and the interconnections between them.

[1] Moshe Safdie is the architect of KHC. He is known around the world for designing mega-museums. For more information on his work, see http://www.msafdie.com/.

Museums on Sikh History

In this study, the term 'Sikh museum' refers to museums which by nature of their display define Sikh history as the narrative of the development of Sikh *Panth* (community). Typically, the display begins with stories of the Gurus and their disciples, and may include other Sikh personalities who lived much after the Gurus, such as military commanders who fought the Mughals, Sikh rulers of princely states, reformers of the Singh Sabha in nineteenth century Punjab, political activists from colonial times and independent India, and any other notable Sikh personalities. These museums are mostly found as adjuncts of a gurdwara, but some also exist independent of it. Museums on Sikh history came up in India post-1950. The first museum of this kind was Kendri Sikh Ajaibghar (Central Sikh Museum), established in 1958 at Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple), Amritsar. Other important museums on Sikh history include Baghel Singh Museum at Gurdwara Bangla Sahib in Delhi, Dashmesh Ajaibghar at Gurdwara Mehdiana Sahib near Ludhiana, Anglo Sikh Wars Memorial at Ferozepur, Guru Teg Bahadur Museum at Anandpur Sahib, and Bhai Mati Das Museum at Sis Ganj Gurdwara, Delhi. Each of these museums uses modern paintings to narrate episodes from Sikh history. These 'history paintings'[2] can also be identified as calendar art or popular art. They enjoy tremendous popularity and are widely reproduced in posters, calendars, books and animation. Figure 1 is an example of a history painting at Bhai Mati Das Museum, Delhi that shows Mata Khivi (1506–82),[3] wife of Guru Angad, preparing *langar* (food for community kitchen).

[2] History painting refers to a genre of painting in seventeenth century Europe which had subjects drawn from classical history and mythology. See more at http://www.tate.org.uk/learn/online-resources/glossary/h/history-painting. Here, I use to term to refer to paintings which illustrate events from Sikh history. The paintings are intended to be and are accepted as accurate narrations of Sikh history.

[3] Mata Khivi is the only woman mentioned in *Guru Granth Sahib*, the sacred scripture of the Sikhs.

FIGURE 1. Mata Khivi preparing langar. Painting at Bhai Mati Das Museum, Delhi. Photo courtesy of Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee.

In large museums, the narrative typically starts with Guru Nanak (1469–1539), the first Guru, followed by his successors till Guru Gobind Singh (1666–1708), the tenth and the last Guru. The history paintings depict commonly known stories of Sikh Gurus' lives such as the episodes from *Janam Sakhis* (stories of Guru Nanak's life); or identification of the ninth Guru, Teg Bahadur (1621–1675) at Bakala by a merchant called Makhan Shah.[5] The display is usually personality-centric and follows a chronological timeline, from the oldest to the latest events. The paintings are accompanied by captions which describe the illustration. Figure 2 shows the display of canvases at Bhai Mati Das Museum.

[5] These stories are elaborated in chapter 5.

FIGURE 2. Display of paintings at Bhai Mati Das Museum. Photo by author.

Heritage in Museums in India

This thesis locates the study of Sikh museums within the broader context of museums in India and visual representations of history in the Sikh tradition. The most prominent museums in India are government-run institutions which were first planned and built during colonial rule. The Indian Museum, Calcutta and Government Museums in former Presidencies (such as at Madras and Patna) are most notable examples. The histories and collections of these museums are closely associated with the colonial policy and development of the practice of archaeology in India. With this background in mind, the colonial museum and the archaeological museum may be considered as institutions involved in shaping public opinion and creating discourses. In case of colonial museums, this takes the form of production of knowledge and interpretation of history by a colonial power to maintain its control over 'natives', and for a nation-state, over its citizens. The close relationship of archaeology with the institution of museum also contributed to development of the idea of a national heritage that was particularly located in art objects such as sculptures (which were excavated or conserved through efforts of archaeologists). Thus, the museum is seen

as a tool and a medium for identifying national heritage or the lack of it. The discourse of nationalism and its relationship to museum has been a subject of enquiry and debate among scholars. The most prominent works are those of Guha-Thakurta (2004), Singh (2003) and Ray (2008). Guha-Thakurta and Singh underline the influence of nationalism on museums which in turn influenced and defined the idea of 'national' heritage. At the same time, Guha-Thakurta recognises the gap between the intent of the museum and its reception and use. She demonstrates this in case of the Indian Museum and also suggests a re-examination of the value of the National Museum, New Delhi in this light. H. P. Ray however, considers nationalism a non-issue and argues that other concerns, such as that of conservation, shaped National Museum much more than any idea of 'national' culture.

The twenty-first century has seen the entry of new kind of museum in the cultural landscape of India. The most spectacular and well-known of these are the Akshardham Cultural Complex in Delhi and KHC in Anandpur Sahib. These are mega-museums, notable for their awe-inspiring architecture, the use of multi-media and latest technology to create experiential displays. This new genre of museums has been welcomed as the kind of museum which is informative and entertaining, in contrast to the dull and static displays in older museums. Akshardham and KHC draw huge crowds; they are different from older museums, both in popularity and display. They are comparable to theme-parks, complete with joy-rides, photo opportunities, food courts and souvenir shops. The rise of mega-museum complexes in India is seen as part of a world-wide pattern of museum building in a globalised world (Mathur and Singh 2007; Singh 2015). This globalised world is a post-modern world where nation-states or colonial governments no longer have a monopoly over cultural representations. Identity groups (as a result of rise of identity politics) now have resources and the consciousness to stake a claim in the national cultural space (see Appadurai 1996). Museums then become instrumental in the construction and visualisation of a community's narrative of its heritage.

The nature of museum too, has transformed in today's globalised world. Scholars have particularly highlighted the blurring of difference between the realm of secular museum and religious shrines, and the emergence of museum as an avatar of the shrine. During the modern period in the West, museums became institutions that embodied the secularity of nation-states, distinct and removed from the influence of

the Church (Duncan 1996). This distinction existed in museums built in the colonies of European nation-states, and continued to be followed when colonies like India became independent nation-states with their own national museums. However, museums like Akshardham, by virtue of being created by a religious group, result in collapsing of boundaries between the secular and the religious. Museums then combine faith with secular authority. This also leads to 'heritagization' (Brosius 2011) where religious claims specific to a particular group or community are presented as heritage for a larger section of society. For instance, the story of Swaminarayan sect and its rituals are presented at Akshardham, not as heritage particular to the sect but as India's cultural heritage. Similarly, museums like the KHC establish the Khalsa identity as the sole Sikh identity thereby marginalising other significant narratives of identities and practices within Sikh tradition. All recent scholarship on museums points towards the dangers of such representations. Museums on Sikh history are a part of this larger phenomenon.

While existing scholarship is useful in understanding the development of museums in India, the politics of museums, and heritage as a social construct, it does not fully explain the phenomenon of Sikh museums. The Sikh museum as an institution, and the Sikh understanding of its past, both are particular to the nature of the community. Museums on Sikh history appeared in the middle of the twentieth century and the first such museums were located within gurdwaras.[6] The museum is not necessarily located in the same room as the Guru Granth Sahib; they are mostly located in independent buildings, but within the sacred landscape of the gurdwara. In addition to this, one has to follow a discipline while entering the museum—barefoot and head covered—as in a gurdwara. As will be shown in chapter 2, a visit to the Sikh museum is as much an affirmation of faith, as it is an exercise in learning history. Therefore, the sacred nature of the Sikh museums is not a result of globalisation's effect on cultural sphere. Sikh museums were always a combination of the religious and secular. Further, the Sikh museum does not fit into the narrative of the nation-state either. Some Sikh museums, in fact, strongly contest nationalist versions of history and appear as institutions, critical of the Indian nation-state.[7] The first Sikh museums were not projects of Indian government's nationalist agenda. They were

[6] Central Sikh Museum in Darbar Sahib, Amritsar was the first Sikh museum, opened in 1958.
[7] For instance, the way the events of 1984 are memorialised at the Central Sikh Museum, Amritsar, and more recently, the construction of Operation Bluestar Memorial at Darbar Sahib.

commissioned by the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (henceforth, SGPC), a trust that manages gurdwaras and religious affairs of the Sikhs. Soon, in the 1970s, the government too started building Sikh museums. Here the networks of patronage are entwined to bring together the nation-state and community interest. This is another reason for the blurring of boundaries of secular and the sacred. This is evident in case of modern representations of Punjabi freedom fighter, Udham Singh (1899–1940) in sites such as martyrs' gallery at Jallianwala Bagh memorial, Amritsar. Modern paintings or sculptures of Udham Singh show him as a Khalsa Sikh, despite the fact that existing photographs of his show him clean-shaven. While such representations of Udham Singh are expected of religious groups who believe that only Khalsa Sikhs can be true Sikhs and martyrs, the Punjab Government too did not hesitate to show Udham Singh as a Khalsa Sikh (Fenech 2002). The state's support and patronage to representations of history by dominant religious groups also consolidates identity claims to secular spaces.

The display at Sikh museums combines history and heritage, from the point of view of both the creators of the museum, and the audience. The painters who depict Sikh history on canvas, and the patrons who commission the paintings and create museums, both claim that these representations are based on rigorous historical research. In addition, there is a clear desire to share Sikh history within a museum. Thus, the historical narrative draws upon the authority of the museum as a teller of truths, in combination with sanctity of the museum by virtue of its location within the sacred gurdwara and its sacred narrative. For the audience too, the fact that the paintings depicting Sikh history are in a museum located within a sacred compound is confirmation of their truth. At the same time, a walk through the museum is a journey in faith. This aspect of Sikh museums perhaps derives from the nature of Sikh history itself. Murphy has argued that the Sikh historical consciousness is not just a terrain of the past, separated from the present; in fact, it is part of the present (Murphy 2007). This is because the Panth and its commemorative practices (such as *gurbani,* the words of the Gurus present in the Guru Granth Sahib) are considered as the Guru. Thus the nature of Sikh historical is reflected in the Sikh museum as well. Sikh museums therefore commemorate and consolidate social memory. By incorporating Sikh history within its portals of a museum, the Sikh museum institutionalises Sikh social memory. Sikh museums communicate Sikh memory not only to members of

the community, but other social groups as well and the authority of the museum is most effectively put to use here. The museums become a medium to institutionalise what McLeod called 'myth of the Sikh Past,' i.e. interpretations of the past which are popular and believed in by people (McLeod 1992). The myth of the Sikh past, explains McLeod, is not opposed to factual history. Rather, it combines "factual history with traditional belief, selective in terms of specific content and heavily glossed in order to reinforce its distinctive interpretation" (350).

It is also important to note that what we know as Sikh history is heavily influenced by the interpretation of nineteenth century Singh Sabha reformers. The Singh Sabha was instrumental in creating a particular notion of Khalsa Sikh history, derived from an exclusive Sikh identity, which remains prevalent to this day in Sikh institutions of faith and learning. In the Singh Sabha understanding, the Sikhs were a distinctive group separate from and devoid of any influence from other religions particularly Hinduism. This was considered to be true from the time of foundation of Sikhism under Guru Nanak. The only true Sikh identity according to them was the Khalsa. Any variations from this ideal were considered external influences of Hinduism and therefore unacceptable. The Sikh past, in Singh Sabha view, was a saga of struggles of the Khalsa in defence of the faith. This notion of history became so dominant that the Sikh political struggles in the twentieth century (and indeed, those of the present) such as the Gurdwara Reform Movement and the struggle for Khalistan invoked this very Khalsa ideal and Khalsa history to press for their demands. It is therefore important to consider the influence of Singh Sabha in studying representations of Sikh past in museums.

A Study of Bhai Mati Das Museum

Bhai Mati Das Museum, the case study for this thesis has over 170 items on display out of which 166 are modern paintings in oil. These history paintings were originally commissioned for calendars published by Punjab and Sind Bank (PSB) between the 1970s and early 2000s. I trace the patronage of history paintings within the Sikh community and argue that their presence in museums is of significance in understanding how the Sikh community looks at its past. There are a number of museums on Sikh history which use these images. They are a very visible form of

Sikh identity and heritage. This thesis analyses the notion of Sikh heritage represented through the display at the Sis Ganj museum. An examination of these questions would give us insight in to dynamics of the Sikh community specifically, what leads it to patronise this art, particularly in museums. The choice of Bhai Mati Das Museum was both accidental and conscious. This was clearly a typical Sikh museum, like many others in India, located close to a gurdwara and displaying history paintings. A little probing into the history of the museum revealed its unique association with PSB, an institution which is extremely significant to production of popular Sikh history in independent India. Thus, Bhai Mati Das Museum provided an entry into both history of Sikh museums and history of history paintings. It revealed channels of patronage and the process of creation of paintings; the links between concerns of Sikh politics and Sikh identity; and an underlying thread of production of Sikh history which connects popular art, Sikh identity and Sikh politics.

I have pursued the following lines of enquiry in this thesis:

The primary object of study in this thesis is the history paintings housed in Bhai Mati Das Museum. These paintings are analysed for visual elements—depiction of different themes and people in the paintings. To understand the development of these paintings historically, I have surveyed popular Sikh art from late nineteenth century till the present. These include woodcuts, lithographs, chromolithographs, and digital prints. A historical survey of this nature was the key to understanding the visual representations of Sikh heritage, and the modern nature of paintings in Sikh museums. Secondly, I trace the patronage of Sikh history paintings by individuals and institutions. Most notable is role of PSB, which commissioned these paintings for printing in their annual calendars for more than three decades. I trace connections among secular institutions like banks, with religious institutions like the gurdwara management committees, and political developments affecting the Sikh community. These paintings are seen as part of a larger project of the making of historical tradition and identification of heritage among Sikhs. The context of patronage also explains the overlap of secular and religious domains in case of Sikh museums. Thirdly, I have studied the Sis Ganj museum in the context of development of museums on Sikh history in independent India. Sikh museums have been built by both governments as well as gurdwara management committees, giving rise to an official version of Sikh

heritage. Finally, I have analysed the narrative of the Bhai Mati Das museum, the story of Sikh Panth that it seeks to tell. This is done with particular reference to the depiction of Sikh military commander Baghel Singh.

Chapter 2, Representations of Sikh Past, locates the study of Sikh museums in the larger context of scholarship on museums in India along with historiography on making of historical tradition in Sikh community. It examines the nature of Sikh museum and considers different approaches which could be used to understand the emergence of Sikh museums and its display. The scholarship surveyed includes different perspectives on how the Sikh community created or lived with varying notions of its history, and how these notions of history were shaped by the larger socio-political concerns of the community. This chapter makes a case for situating individual Sikh museums as part of a larger pattern of intersecting phenomenon–of popular art, Sikh history, Sikh politics and Sikh identity.

Chapter 3, Visual Representations of Sikhs, traces the history of development of Sikh themes and iconography in popular art. The first section of this chapter provides an overview of historiography of Sikh art. The objective is to examine how has art been understood as part of Sikh heritage and what are the themes identified as Sikh art. This scholarship reminds us of the limitations of the use of the term 'Sikh art' and therefore the need to contextualise the term. The second section of this chapter is a survey of popular Sikh art from late nineteenth century till the present. For the purpose of this thesis, I have used the term 'popular Sikh art' to denote paintings which depict the Ten Sikh Gurus, events from their life, the shrines associated with them, and their followers. These are Sikh religious themes in visual culture, which are reproduced widely and have a tremendous reach. This selection of popular Sikh art for this survey is based on the observation that Sikh museums overwhelmingly feature modern history paintings depicting Sikh religious themes. Moreover, these paintings are copied and reproduced in large numbers and in different media; therefore, are widely popular. The survey of popular Sikh art starts from late nineteenth century, the time when new printing technology of lithography and woodcut came to be used increasingly to produce posters and books in large numbers and at cheap rates. Within the larger field of Sikh popular art, I have chosen to study how select Sikh themes—the depiction of Ten Sikh Gurus and their followers—have evolved visually over a

period of time. The purpose is to demonstrate the changes or continuities in (a) themes related to Gurus and their followers, and (b) depiction of Gurus and their followers. This survey therefore provides a historical context to popular art in Sikh museums, and Bhai Mati Das Museum in particular. I must clarify that this survey is not an attempt at identifying or defining Sikh art [which could include much more than the Ten Sikh Gurus (see chapter 3)]; nor is it a study of Sikh art as a reflection of Sikh rule and Sikh identity. The sources examined include woodcuts and lithographs from late-nineteenth century which were produced in Punjab. They are found both in public archives as well as personal collections of artists' families, publishers and collectors. The illustrations existed as single prints, as well as in sets. I have also included illustrations which are found in printed manuscripts, sometimes as part of the title page and colophon, and at other times, appearing in between text. Some of these are printed in black and white, with a dash water colour added later by hand. With the growth of printing technology, coloured prints by commercial printing presses made their appearance. The artists who drew these chromolithographs also illustrated books, magazines and popular tracts. The survey takes into consideration all such visual material.

Chapter 4, Situating Sis Ganj: A Background, outlines the context of creation of Bhai Mati Das Museum. It follows the development of Sikh museums in the decades after Indian's independence, and particularly examines the role of Punjab and Sind Bank in popularising representations of Sikh history. Gurdwara management committees were the first to establish Sikh museums but soon the Government of Punjab also began to set them up. It is notable that irrespective of patronage, all Sikh museums have history paintings (made by the same group of artists) on display. Further, the patrons subscribe to the Singh Sabha understanding of Sikh tradition. I argue that this has important implications for the spread of history paintings and the narrative of Sikh history depicted in them. This chapter further examines the different spheres of circulation of history paintings, such as print, audio-visual and even performances. I suggest that this is crucial to understand the influence of history paintings in creating notions of Sikh heritage and therefore, lends them tremendous significance as evidence of history. I elaborate on the role of PSB in popularising *Tat Khalsa,* the pure Khalsa version of Sikh history (popularised by the Singh Sabha), through production of calendars, exhibitions, books and *kirtan* (devotional music sung in

congregation). I consider PSB's institutional patronage crucial to spread of history paintings and depiction of specific themes in particular. An enquiry into PSB's work also provides insights into the sphere of activity and ideas of the people involved, and the process of creation of paintings and the Sikh museums. This information was gleaned from interviews of artists who created history paintings, officials of PSB and gurdwara management committees who commissioned history paintings for calendars, museums and books. There is a variety of material—painted, printed and digital—where history paintings are reproduced. These sources were procured at public archives and personal collections of artists and PSB officials.

Chapter 5, Analysis of Display at Bhai Mati Das Museum, provides a detailed analysis of the display at the Sis Ganj museum. It begins by outlining the narrative of the museum—the story of Sikh history as told by its paintings. Previous chapters established the background of development of history paintings, the process of their creation and the network of their patrons. This chapter examines the content of the history paintings: who are the people and which episodes from the Sikh past are depicted? What, according to the paintings, is their role or significance in Sikh history? What is the notion of Sikh heritage presented in the museum? These are some of the questions this chapter seeks to answer. I argue that the display conforms to the Singh Sabha version of Sikh history, where the all personalities are epitome of Sikh faith and their actions are influenced by and are dedicated to the defence of faith. I also comment upon the selective nature of commemorations done through Bhai Mati Das Museum, where the notions of Sikh heritage are firmly located in the medieval period (that under Mughal rule) of Indian history. While sacrifices of Sikhs in Delhi made during Mughal rule are invoked and remembered, the association of the gurdwara with events of nationalist movement are not referred to anywhere. Further, the chapter specifically looks at the depiction of Sikh military commander, Baghel Singh, in the museum. According to history paintings in the museum, Baghel Singh conquered Delhi in 1783 and raised the Khalsa flag at Red Fort, the seat of Mughal Empire. I examine different representations of Baghel Singh in the Sikh tradition from nineteenth century onwards to reveal the contemporary nature of representation in the museum and how it varies from other memories of Baghel Singh. The paintings on Baghel Singh in Bhai Mati Das Museum and the performance of this event at Red Fort are compared with Ratan Singh Bhangu's nineteenth century text, *Prachin Panth*

Parkash. The use of Baghel Singh's example shows that Sikh heritage is not an understanding of past which has remained fixed. Rather, like all notions of heritage, it is constructed and used in relation to particular needs of the community. This chapter also considers two important instances of opposition to nature of history depicted in such paintings. The objections in both cases were raised against depiction of Muslims in history paintings. The defence of history paintings by representatives of Sikh community in these cases confirms their widespread acceptance as evidence of Sikh history.

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THESIS CERTIFICATION PAGE

The thesis of Kanika Singh, titled "Representation of Heritage in Museums of Sikh History: A Case Study of the Museum at Sis Ganj Gurdwara, Delhi" has been duly examined and approved for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, School of Liberal Studies**.**

Dr. Yogesh Snehi
(Thesis Supervisor)
Date:

Prof. Denys P. Leighton
Dean of the School of Liberal Studies
Date:

2

Representations of Sikh Past

This chapter discusses the historiography on making of historical tradition in Sikh community with particular reference to scholarship on Sikh museums. It begins with surveying different approaches to studying museums in India and locates the scholarship on Sikh museums in this context. The following section covers historiography on how the Sikh community created or lived with varying notions of its history, and, how notions of history were shaped by the larger socio-political concerns of the community. This historiography especially considers the twin processes of consolidation of a historical tradition along with consolidation of Sikh identity, from the late nineteenth century till the present.

Historiography on Museums in India

In Indian context, museum as an institution has traditionally been a subject of study within the discipline of museology. Most writings cover issues related to management of collections in museums, such as techniques of display, conservation of different materials, labelling, transportation, storage and security. There are a number of examples of this kind of scholarship including works of Agrawal (1973), Morley (1957), Banerjee (1990), Baxi and Dwivedi (1973) all of whom are individuals involved in running of museums. These are descriptive accounts of individual museums, which include a brief history of the museum, its building, the founder(s) and the process of making the collection. These writings also try to trace the development of the museum as an institution. The museum most frequently cited as the prototype of the present-day museum in these writings is the museum at Alexandria, founded in c. 280 BC. It was a centre for advanced research and frequented by scholars from Greece and supported later by Roman emperors. It also housed a collection of objects along with a botanical garden and a zoological park. There are several instances of collecting in Classical Antiquity, Islamic societies and

the Orient. The collections which came into being during the Renaissance are considered to be predecessors to the modern museums. These writings, while providing factual details of museum collections, do not throw light on the politics of the museum. The differences in the nature of and motives for different kinds of collections are not considered. Further, in such scholarship on museums, the institution is seen as a natural and inevitable result of the urge to collect. Thus, museums and collections in different historical periods are seen as direct ancestors of the modern museum, rather than understanding them in their specific historical context.

In the last decade or so, there are a few notable writings on the politics of museums in India and they show two broad trends. The first trend is represented by works of Guha-Thakurta (2004) and Ray (2008) where museums are studied as part of history of archaeology in India. The second is the art-historical approach as evident in Mathur and Singh (2007). The symbolism of the architecture of the museum and its display is the main concern of their studies. Recent works such as Singh (2015) particularly study the museum as an expression of identity politics.

Tapati Guha-Thakurta's (2004) work *Monuments, Objects, Histories* looks at the parallel and converging histories of the institution of the museum and the development of archaeology in colonial India, particularly the nineteenth century. Her work focuses on the Indian Museum, Calcutta. She points out that despite official laments about lack of coordination between the two departments, they closely affected each other's functioning. She explains that museum collections were tapped for international exhibitions and items sent out for exhibitions were permanently housed in museums. This was especially true of 1850s when museums in Madras and Bombay presidencies were busy selecting best samples of art manufactures for display in international exhibitions such as 'The Great Exhibition of the Industry of All Nations' held in 1851 at London. Because of this, the museums worked closely with schools of art during the 1860s and 1870s. The schools trained artisans in traditional design and craftsmanship, and museum stored samples of those. The museums stored "best examples of Oriental design and processes, in instructing the working artisan in these, and restraining them against the facile imitation of European designs and methods....museums stand as a register of progress and improvement as well as a repertoire of traditional forms and designs" (Guha-Thakurta 2004, 50). It

was because of its role as a repository of tradition and a platform for visual instruction that the museum came to be situated within an "extensive institutional network of conservation and collection" (50). This also led to the museum's role in shaping a particular definition of art in Indian context. It created a category of Indian 'art', as distinct from 'antiquities.' Objects of decorative and craft value were given the category of industrial art. Antiquities were useful for the historical information that could be gleaned from them and therefore placed under the care of archaeology (52).

Further, the museum remained at the centre of archaeological survey's exercises of illustration and reproduction of historical sites. It was an archive of images, a forum for presenting these images, acted as supplier and receiver of models, casts, drawings and photos of historical remains. Ironically, at a time when museums began looking for systematic archaeological collections of original pieces of history, the archaeological project emphasized the *in situ* preservation. The *in situ* preservation, argued the archaeological survey, provided the historical context which gave value to these remains of history which meant that the agency put more value in retaining material on the site, rather than distributing them across government museums in Presidencies. Guha-Thakurta argues that this approach resulted in conversion of the colony in an open-air museum, "a landscape of ancient sites, each identified, described, classified and consumed" (61). Therefore, "the archaeological project was, in essence, framed by the ideology of the museum collection. Rendering monuments into sites—photographing them, classifying and conserving them, attaching histories to them, providing them with copious textual descriptions and annotation—amounted to their effective museumization" (61).

While examining this relationship, one must go beyond studying museums in colonial India only as expressions of power of the empire and the latter's project of knowledge production to justify its own rule. She suggests that there is a gap between the intended use of the museum and its actual role which can be understood not as the failure of the institution of museum but its hybridity in colonial context. This is apparent in the difference between its intended purpose of educating its audience, and the museum being perceived as a source of wonder, amazement and amusement by the audience. Guha-Thakurta argues that the museums' "very identity as popular institutions appeared to contradict the intended educational role of the museums" (81). There were a large number of visitors to museums and the numbers increased on

festival occasions treating museums as a place for sightseeing and entertainment. The museums had intended to attract the discerning scholar and expert who would visit the museum to contemplate on the display and improve their knowledge. While the museum was extremely popular with the local population, the museum authorities were not impressed by the large numbers. Instead, they were dismayed at the lack of 'quality' of viewership. The nature of the popular did not sit well with the intended educational role of the museum (81).

In another section of the same work, Tapati Guha-Thakurta has discussed the Exhibition of Indian Art organised at Government House (current Rashtrapati Bhawan), New Delhi in 1948. She considers it the point of transformation which effectively led to the idea and creation of the National Museum at New Delhi. She argues that the nation invoked itself in art history through this Exhibition, and considers the National Museum as the natural outcome of the display at the Exhibition. She says this in light of Donald Preziosi's formulation: "As with the term 'history', denoting ambivalently a disciplinary practice of writing and the referential field of that spiritual practice, art is the metalanguage of the history...fabricated by the museum and its museographies" [quoted in Guha-Thakurta (2004, 184)]. Using this idea, she argues that "the 1948 exhibition is representative of how ideas of nation and history were fabricated within the body of an art display. The art historical frame that surrounds it was deeply embedded within a nationalist discourse that had for a long time, shaped the subject of Indian art on its own terms" (184). While art objects always are set up in museums and exhibitions as evidence and representations of some 'real' history, they constitute a particular mode of fiction: "one which has become an indispensable component of statehood and of national identity" (184). She considers the 1948 exhibition the "enactment of theme of a national art history" (188). The plan for a 'Central National Museum of Art, Archaeology and Anthropology' existed before the Exhibition, however, she maintains that the 1948 exhibition effectively gave birth to the National Museum at New Delhi. She points out that the location of the Museum on the Rajpath is also symbolic of transformation of power from a colonial government to an independent nation-state. At the same time, she cautions against replicating our understanding of Western art museum and their ritual of citizenship, to the Indian context. The 'national' in National Museum, she writes, is

an official claim, success of which needs to be verified in the context of India's post-colonial history (204).

The National Museum is also the subject of two important studies: Kavita Singh's article, "The Museum is National" (2003b), and Himanshu Prabha Ray's book (2008) on colonial archaeology which looks at the National Museum as legacy of Sir Mortimer Wheeler. Singh examines the display at National Museum to examine its claim of being 'national'. She argues that creation of this museum was an act of symbolic importance for a newly independent India—it was representative of a nation-state which could identify, collect and preserve its own heritage. National Museum, therefore, was a shrine to '*national* culture' [emphasis original]. She studies categorizations of artefacts and their placement in the museum to understand their symbolic value. The Museum, she points out is a combination of colonial practices of museumization. It provides a chronological narrative of India's ancient past, through a display of its sculptures which echoes the nationalist argument of indigenous origins and development of India's art. Further, in another gallery, three rows of sculptures are depicted—Gandhara sculptures along the left wall; panels from Nagarjunakonda on the right wall; and images from Mathura are in the central axis. The display which is located in the centre of the room physically is also symbolic of the mainstream tradition in Indian history (Singh 2003b, 179).

Singh also illustrates the changing typology of the museum—the display of sculptures representative of ancient period of Indian history is a derivative of archaeological collections in colonial India. The objects which were produced in Islamic contexts (traditionally considered the medieval phase in Indian history) are categorized in a manner which follows the typology of an industrial museum: as textiles, ornaments, weapons, metal work and so on. In the nineteenth century, 'industrial arts' were collected and displayed in museums for the purpose of trade in these items. The National Museum, she argues, continues to draw upon the colonial categories of understanding India's past; therefore, the 'national' character of the Museum comes not from its narrative but from the fact of its existence—its existence as a repository of a new nation's history (194).

Ray (2008, 117–8) is critical of scholarship on Indian museums which only sees museum as part of colonial enterprise in the field of art education and industrial

design. Her book focuses on Mortimer Wheeler (Director General of Archaeological Survey of India, 1944–48) and his contribution to archaeological practice and museums in India. She contends that our picture of history of museums will change if we focus on the institution's role as a centre for learning and research. She maintains that this aspect of the museum was important in colonial India as is evident from the several museums which came up in educational institutions: museum established by William Carey in 1818 at Serampore, the zoological museum in Madras Christian College in 1838, Ashutosh Museum in Calcutta University in 1937, Bharat Kala Bhavan in Banaras Hindu University in 1920s.

Particularly examining the case of National Museum, New Delhi, Ray argues that it is erroneous to consider it a product of nationalist feelings of a newly independent state. Noting Mortimer Wheeler's role in development of the museum, she traces its history outside the paradigm of Independence and compares the institutional objectives before and after the establishment of the museum. Wheeler proposed setting up of a Central Indian Museum of Art, Archaeology and Anthropology—an institution which would maintain a representative collection of cultures of India and provide necessary facilities for appropriate research (123–4). Ray further talks of Grace Morley's role in shaping the objectives of the National Museum as its first Director, from 1960–1966. She points out that Morley placed great emphasis on improving conservation facilities at the museum and setting up a dedicated conservation lab. The National Museum under her also tried to initiate dialogue between urban and rural communities and focussed on the museum's role in education. An important issue pursued by the Museum was repatriation of cultural property as guaranteed by UNESCO. Therefore, according to Ray, the new museum did not acquire collections or organise display for 'national' symbolism.

Moreover, she cites reports of declining number of visitors and lack of public knowledge about the National Museum and its collection, to question the relevance of the museum in the country's 'national' consciousness. She maintains that nationalism is a non-issue because the majority of visitors to the museum are exclusively urban residents and foreigners. Also, there is a lack of initiative by the museum to involve larger public. In such a scenario, it would be more useful, she suggests, to study the role of museum in education and the politics of formation of collections (133).

Institutions like Indian Museum, Calcutta and National Museum, New Delhi have historical associations with the discipline of archaeology and its colonial roots, as is shown by the three studies discussed above. This is true for most museums which are under the Government of India or State governments. There are new kinds of museums in independent India which have particularly attracted attention of scholars: the Akshardham Cultural Complex, Delhi and the Virasat-e Khalsa (KHC) at Anandpur Sahib, Punjab.

An important study which considers both these institutions as part of a globalised cultural economy is by Saloni Mathur and Kavita Singh (2007). Their article looks at three mega-museum projects in contemporary India: the Maitreya Project in Kushinagar, Akshardham and KHC. They note that it is insufficient to understand museums in twenty-first century India through the prism of national or state culture. Rather, these museums are representative of 'postnational' claims made by different communities. These museums, they argue, have been used by religious groups to further their claim of identity politics. Further, these museums particularly illustrate the changing nature of the institution of museum itself. The Maitreya Project is envisaged as a giant statue of Bodhisattva Maitreya (the Buddha yet to come), about 500 feet tall.[1] The statue and its base, it is proposed, will incorporate shrines, exhibition halls, meditation rooms and a museum. A particularly important room is the shrine located at the level of the statue's heart which will contain rare relics of the Buddha and other important Buddhist preceptors. Mathur and Singh argue that this proposed project inverses the relationship between museum and shrine. Traditionally, objects are uprooted from their context (including sacred use) and put on display in the museum as an object of art or history—a de-sacralized display. By locating the relics and the museum in the body of the Maitreya, the developers have achieved the de-secularization of the museum (152–3). It is notable that the Uttar Pradesh government made a very generous offer of free land (much exceeding the space requirement of the project) to get the project located at Kusinagar in the State. This interest is explained by the fact that the state government was led by leader of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Mayawati. The BSP has the Dalit population as its major

[1] The Maitreya Project is still in planning stage.

support base and establishing a Buddhist monument of this proportion would be counted as a step towards recognition the Dalits.[2]

The second case study in their article is Akshardham Complex inaugurated in 2005 and built by the Bochansanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayana Sanstha (BAPS),[3] and supported by the Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) government at the Centre. The complex presents itself like a museum which gives its audience a spectacle to look at—it has awe-inspiring architecture, incredible displays of technology in dioramas and film screenings, a food court and a gift shop. The complex is open through the day, unlike a temple. The actual shrine regulated by the Hindu custom of time and audience of a deity is located in a small room within the complex. The authors note that in "mimicking the museal mode, and in the interest of visibility and access, the complex must even de-sacralize the "temple" that lies at its very heart" (160). The complex presents a narrative of glorious Hindu past which finds a resonance in the ideology of the then ruling right-wing political group, the BJP. The final example studied in this work is KHC. It is another example of a mega-museum project incorporating global trends in architecture. This article (Mathur and Singh 2007) appeared before the KHC opened to public and the authors have restricted their comments to the symbolism of the architecture and the significance of the KHC as a storytelling museum, symbolic of globalization of holocaust discourse (163). I shall discuss KHC in greater detail in next section of this chapter which specifically deals with historiography on Sikh museums.

Using these examples, Mathur and Singh have highlighted the changing nature of museum in the twenty-first century India. They argue that the museum is no longer the secular institution developed by the nation-state, separated from religious authority.[4] They maintain that these examples show how the authority of the secular museum (as a teller of truths) has now been appropriated by religious groups to forward their own claims. And, this is a phenomenon particular to the globalised world where post-national forces such as identity claims have influenced cultural

[2] Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the leader of Dalits, left Hinduism and converted to Buddhism with his followers.
[3] BAPS is a group within the larger Swaminarayan sect of Hindu tradition.
[4] The rise of modern museums in the West occurs in the context of rise of nation-states. Like the state itself, the museums were a secular tool of the state, separate from religious authority held by the Church (Duncan 1996).

institutions. The museums have therefore changed in response to the changing cultural economy in a globalised world.

An important study on Akshardham by Christiane Brosius (2011) examines the heritage politics at play there. She notes that claim to heritage is a competitive one and the success of a group in claiming to be sole custodian of heritage is usually a matter of resources and influence acquired by that group. She studies the theme-park like spiritual complex of Akshardham as representative of idea of heritage believed by followers of the BAPS; and argues that rituals both public and those held amidst a specific gathering are integral part of Akshardham. In her article, the site of Akshardham and the narrative it promotes converts a religious ritual (specifically upper caste Hindu) into heritage (of Indian society). And for the nation-state, this seems a desirable transformation as ritual converted to heritage is easier to use; it gives way to cultural harmony (by claiming to represent the cultural heritage of all Indians) rather than cultural tension (if it were representative of only a particular caste and religion). In addition, "rituals as cultural heritage also emerge as a platform of distinction and self-articulation for new Hindu middle classes who have, in course of the last years of economic liberalisation, come to revitalise ritual performance as a source of national pride and social status. In many instances, 'Hindu' is identified with 'Indian' " (Brosius 2011, 100). A mega cultural complex like Akshardham allows religion to enter "through the backdoor of tourism and economic growth, altered into a universal value, spiritual and cultural 'item' " (103). This is a way to create "an alternative form of secularism and modernity" (121). Mathur and Singh's (2007) argument that the blurring of distinctions between museum and shrine is in response to the needs of the new cultural economy, is reflected in Brosius's work where she calls this phenomenon "heritagisation," i.e. "the creation of and conscious reference of a particular social group to a cultural heritage in order to position itself firmly, or to improve its position, within a particular field of discourse. This refers us to the phenomenon of cultural heritage as a phenomenon of late modernity and capitalism and also as an expression of agency" (Brosius 2011, 120–1). These critical perspectives also help situate the emergence of museums on Sikh history.

Historiography of Museums on Sikh History

There are two museums on Sikh history which have been subject to critical enquiry by scholars: KHC and the Central Sikh Museum at Darbar Sahib, Amritsar. The KHC is a spectacular museum complex built near the historic gurdwara Keshgarh Sahib in the city of Anandpur Sahib. Its architect is Moshe Safdie, the internationally acclaimed creator of mega-museum complexes such as the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa and Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial in Israel. This Sikh museum was commissioned by the Chief Minister of the state of Punjab, Parkash Singh Badal and it opened to public in 2011. The museum is located on a hundred acre site and comprises of a series of display galleries, their architecture reflecting in a vast pool of water; a research library, an amphitheatre, a restaurant and a souvenir shop. The museum galleries were initially designed by National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad, and its final designs were created and completed by AB Design Habit, a company based in New Delhi.[5] The museum offers a multimedia immersive experience which narrates the story of Sikhism beginning from the life of the Gurus, right up till the Partition in 1947. The KHC can be considered one of the most spectacular modern buildings in the country, and the sheer scale and technical prowess of the building combined with the experiential narrative it shares, makes it an interesting subject of study.

The Central Sikh Museum was the first museum of Sikh history, commissioned by the SGPC and opened in 1958. It is located within the Darbar Sahib complex, the most important shrine of the Sikhs. Its significance comes from its location as well as the fact of it being the first museum of its kind depicting Sikh history. Its display mainly consists of modern history paintings done in western realistic style showing scenes from the Sikh history and portraits of important Sikh personalities.

In Mathur and Singh (2007), KHC is considered among a new series of mega-museums which have come up in twenty-first century India. Its architecture and inclination to use of the institution of museum to tell the story of a religious community are characteristic of a new cultural economy where post-national claims, such as religious identities have now begun to represent themselves using this

[5] For more information on AB Design Habit, see http://www.designhabit.com/.

institution. KHC, argue the authors, therefore is a symbol of identity politics, a post-national phenomenon. While this argument may be valid for the KHC, it does not adequately explain the phenomenon of Sikh museums in India. The first Sikh museum was established in 1958 much before the era of globalisation. In addition, it was built by the SGPC, a religious body of the Sikhs. Mathur and Singh (2007) argue that the distinction between secular space of the museum and religious space breaks down in the twenty-first century museum existing in a transformed cultural economy of a globalised world. In Sikh context, however, the religious and secular were always together. Thus, the identity claims, and the use of the secular authority of the museum by religious formations, is present in Sikh museum much before the era of globalisation. Sikh museums are perhaps better understood in context of religious nature of Sikh history and the network of patronage supporting the museums. This point is discussed in chapter 3 which traces the growth of Sikh museums in India.

While Sikh museums did not start as initiatives of the nation-state, the latter brought them into its fold especially from the 1970s. A large number of state-sponsored Sikh museums exist in India now and they can be understood in context of political relations between the Sikhs in Punjab and the larger nation-state. It is notable that Sikh museums both by the SGPC and the state are representative of the dominant Khalsa identity. This is evident in the nomenclature of KHC, which is a state project. The state sanctioned Sikh museums may be seen as an attempt to counter growing Sikh discontent against the secular Indian state from the late 1970s. Guru Teg Bahadur museum at Anandpur Sahib and a memorial of Udham Singh at Sunam are part of this pattern where the Congress government at the Centre, in an attempt to placate the Akali Dal, instituted museums and practices which united the narrative of secularism as against Sikh rhetoric of the latter.

Returning to the discussion of scholarship around Virasat-e Khalsa, some other scholars have also problematised this museum's role in Punjabi society and questioned its effectiveness in presenting the history of Sikhs. Anne-Colombe Launois (Sat Kaur)'s (2003) article questions about relevance and reception of such an ambitious project. The issues are related to both logistics and resources required for the project as well as questions of Sikh identity and its representation in the museum. The project was awarded to Moshe Safdie without any competitive bidding and at an exorbitant fee of US $ 21.7 million. Questions were raised about priorities

of the state government, to finance such an expensive enterprise given the financial difficulties of Punjab. Moreover, such a hi-tech project would imply high maintenance costs. The appropriateness of the site chosen by Safdie was also an issue as the Shivalik hills were prone to erosion and were considered unsuitable for such a building project. The fact that no study was carried out to assess the impact of this project on the historic fabric and economy of the city of Anandpur Sahib is also objectionable. Launois also grapples with the question of representing a religion in a museum. She wonders if such an attempt is possible at all, in a situation where a museum has always presented religious objects in a de-sacralized manner. She is aware of the possibility of presenting a singular, homogenous Sikh faith instead of showing the diversity of religious practices, and dangers of such a representation. The name of the project, she points out, specifically refers to the heritage of the Khalsa; and Launois questions if the name will be the defining feature of the display, i.e. equating Khalsa with the entire Sikh community. She stresses on the need for the KHC to be in inclusive pace which recognises the plural character of the Sikh tradition (Launois 2003, 142).

William Glover's (2014) work on KHC locates it within the larger context of monumental architecture and shrines in modern India and then goes on to see its value in the context of the state of Punjab and further, within the local context of the town where it is situated. Among examples of monumental architecture in modern India, he particularly notes the parks built by former Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Mayawati, and the Akshardham Complex. As noted by other scholars, he too remarks upon the blurring of boundaries between the religious monument and the secular museum and argues that architectural forms are vital in merging a neutral public space with politically charged communal space. Glover uses Mathur and Singh (2007) to suggest that KHC is representative of use of the museum by a religious community to make its own history part of a *national* history [emphasis mine]. His reading of their work is, in my opinion, incorrect. They attribute rise of mega-museums like KHC to post-national processes. They note that the focus on identity and its visibility in cultural institutions is part of the post-national processes in a globalised world and these could well challenge the national history by making alternative claims.

Glover also considers the KHC in context of trends in the state of Punjab. He observes that the SAD (Badal)[6] government led by Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal has shown great energy for commemorating events from Sikh history, through memorials and diverted extensive resources for such projects. For instance, the memorial at Chhapparchiri, marks the victory of Bada Bahadur and his forces; another one near Sangrur remembering the *Wadda Ghallughara* (greater holocaust);[7] and one commemorating the *Chhota Ghallughara* (lesser holocaust),[8] built near Gurdaspur. The common theme in these memorials is celebration of Sikh courage, valour and perseverance against oppression by Muslims. This theme, notes Glover, is particularly used by Sikh political groups, especially, SAD (Badal) to argue that oppression of Sikhs continues in present times. The memorials, including KHC are therefore, reminders to Sikh perseverance on face of tremendous odds (Glover 2014, 445). In the context of the town of Anandpur Sahib, the KHC reflects the continued use of the town as a memory site. There are several *havelis* (mansions) and gurdwaras in the town and their reconstruction and remodelling, argues Glover, is indicator of their continued importance to everyday Sikh life. He observes that KHC brings together two modes of understanding the past, which are traditionally considered distinct. He states that the visitors to the museum take off their shoes and drop coins (as offerings) in the pools outside the galleries, as they would do in a place of worship. This, according to him, is people's understanding of their past as heritage—a past which continues to exist in the present as a legacy. At the same time, 'history' too is present at the KHC—as a form of past which is lost and is up to the historian to recover it objectively through the study of evidence. Glover feels that KHC brings together heritage and history and considers this phenomenon the defining feature of the complex (447).

It should be noted that this combination of heritage and history has always existed in all museums of Sikh history—both from the point of view of the makers of the museum and the audience which views it. The people involved in the making the museums have always stressed that extensive historical research was carried out to create the paintings for display. At the same time, the intent of the creators of the museum and their expectations from the viewers is that the history paintings and

[6] Shiromani Akali Dal (Badal), a political party in Punjab.
[7] The carnage of Sikhs at Kahnuwan in 1746 by forces of Lakhpat Rai, Minister of Governor of Lahore.
[8] The killing of Sikhs by army of Ahamad Shah Abdali in 1762.

museums are an expression of faith. This is discussed in greater detail in chapter 4. And, this is perhaps particular to the Sikh community as a whole, rather than the one institution of KHC. Anne Murphy (2007, 2012) has argued that the Sikh community is built around commemorative practices. Remembering its history, for instance, though visiting the historic gurdwaras or through saying the *ardas,* the daily Sikh prayer, are the ways Sikhs express their faith, daily. This combined with modernity's concern to remember the past in an institutionalised way, possibly explains the Sikh community's patronage of museums and the particular nature of Sikh museums. Therefore, the museum can be seen as a modern way—with KHC being the most spectacular—of expressing the same relationship between community and history.[9]

Kavita Singh's (2015) recent article talks about the presence of holocaust museum paradigm in India, with reference to KHC and the Tibet Museum in Dharamsala. She talks of the proliferation of holocaust museums worldwide where in a post-modern world communities are trying to bring forward their own stories in contrast to the official narratives which had often suppressed them. And this is often done by recourse of "memory—which is personal, embodied—as opposed to the impersonality and inevitability of official *history*" (Singh 2015, 29; emphasis original). The desire to have their own holocaust museum was expressed by both Parkash Singh Badal (Chief Minister of Punjab) and Dalai Lama (spiritual head of the Tibetan community) who felt that their respective communities had suffered, and the story of this suffering and their communities' fortitude should be told to the world. In case of KHC, not only was Parkash S. Badal moved by his visit to Yad Vashem, he commissioned the architect of Yad Vashem, Moshe Safdie to build the Sikh museum which would narrate the story of the Sikhs. Kavita Singh also observes that holocaust museum has developed as a genre of museums which uses a particular type of architectural form "which evoke a sense of discomfort and disorientation" and uses immersive displays which allow the audience to experience the story (30). She suggests that in a post-modern world the holocaust museum may transform into a new kind of national museum which allows the community to share experiences, build themselves around these shared pasts and even enable them to transcend the trauma and start a new phase (56). Singh recognises that construction of museums by societies with a traumatic past

[9] I am grateful to Anne Muphy for this insight.

is often seen as a way of fulfilling society's need to mourn, bring about reconciliation and closure. However "the greatest value of such memorialisation lies not in its relationship with the past, but in its instrumentalisation of the past to intervene in the present and shape the future...to press for tangible gains" (30-1).

Further, Singh argues that the KHC is different from other Sikh museums, such as the well known Central Sikh Museum, Amritsar (CSM, henceforth). The message of KHC is not as 'divisive' as could have been expected in a holocaust museum and especially when Sikh identity places great emphasis on martyrdom. Rather, Singh maintains, its display celebrates Sikh history within the broader scope of Indian civilization. She argues this is one with official heritage discourse of the secular Indian state (42). She further states that even though KHC and CSM are both museums of Sikh history, they serve different purposes. According to her, KHC tells the story of victimhood suffered by Sikhs and in contrast, the CSM narrates the story of their martyrdom. The difference is that the martyrs are glorious and their story is complete; they have achieved heaven after suffering on earth. In case of victims, their stories end abruptly and there they call upon us to complete their saga by avenging them in present. This is what makes the memory of victims in KHC dangerous (45).

She elaborates that there are two reasons for the difference between KHC and CSM. KHC being a state-funded institution is obliged to tell a story consistent with the official version of harmony. CSM, on the other hand, is a private museum run by SGPC and therefore can have its own version of history. The second reason is nature of space. KHC is a state sponsored museum, near but not in a gurdwara. In a museum (non-religious setting) the dead are reduced to being victims, rather than martyrs (44–5). Towards the end of her article she compares the inspiration and final outcome of the KHC and the Tibet Museum. She observes that even though both were commissioned to be holocaust museums, the Tibet museum is more acceptable and less dangerous form since the focus is on spirituality. KHC's memorialisation of Sikh victimhood is dangerous as its political manifestation, the demand for separate state of Khalistan, threatens the Indian nation state.

Singh's article raises several points of interest especially with regard to relationship between patronage and display, and the power of museum's display to invoke memory. She also comments upon the potential of different representations of history

in same kind of museums (made by different people on the same theme). Let us examine the reasons given by her for the difference between KHC and CSM. She argues that KHC is state-institution, obliged to present a secular official narrative. However, this association is not a straightforward one, as I have demonstrated in the third chapter of this thesis. I examine the networks of patronage between state museums and private museum of Sikh history and have shown that they intersect and overlap, producing a similar visual vocabulary and content in their display. In addition, her focus on the secular setting of the KHC as distinct from religious setting of CSM, is in opposition to her argument in her article (Mathur and Singh 2007) where KHC is representative of a new kind of museum where the secular and the sacred merge. Further, the nature of the museum should also be gauged from the way it is used by visitors. We have noted earlier that the public tends to treat KHC as a sacred complex. While Singh argues for contrasting representation of Sikh history in KHC and CSM, she has not shared any evidence which attest to depiction of victimhood in KHC as opposed to martyrdom in CSM. At present, I think, this difference remains conjectural. We do not know how the difference expresses itself in display. Moreover, her conclusion that KHC "memorialises a separatist movement that failed" (Singh 2015, 57), appears inconsistent with another statement in the same article where she calls CSM a "shrine to the memory of Khalistan" and considers KHC to be in contrast to this narrative (44). The two statements are inconsistent in light of her general argument.

The memory of Khalistan and events of 1984 are also discussed in Chopra (2010, 2013). She examines the practices of commemoration in the Sikh community particularly with respect to the Darbar Sahib and the events of 1984. Her work also analyses the significance of the Central Sikh Museum within the holiest shrine of the Sikhs and the symbolism of these paintings with specific reference to Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale[10] and destruction of *Akal Takht* (the timeless throne) at Darbar Sahib (Chopra 2013). Chopra makes note of the Akal Takht Museum in Darbar Sahib with respect to commemorative practices followed by visitors to Darbar Sahib on the occasion of *Ghallughara Diwas*. The Ghallughara Diwas or the day of holocaust is

[10] Jarnail Singh Bhindrawale (1947–1984) was the head of Damdami Taksal, a radical Sikh seminary. He was leader of the movement for Khalistan, a separate state for the Sikhs. He was killed in Operation Bluestar by Indian Government at the Golden Temple in June 1984.

marked each year on 6 June by the SGPC to remember the destruction of Akal Takht and lives lost during the military operation (named Bluestar) mounted by the Indian Government in 1984. Operation Bluestar was meant to neutralise the Khalistani militants led by Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale who had barricaded themselves inside the shrine. He and his associates were killed in battle. In the same operation, the building of the Akal Takht was destroyed and many innocent pilgrims were killed. 1984 is remembered by the Sikh community for Indian government's violence on their religion and their person. To avenge this hurt, two Sikh bodyguards of then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi (who had ordered the military assault), assassinated her at her residence in Delhi, the same year.

The paintings of men involved in assassination of individuals responsible for Operation Bluestar are displayed in the gallery of martyrs in Akal Takht Museum. The Indian state punished them and put them to death. For the state, they were traitors and assassins. But for the Akal Takht museum, they are *shaheed* i.e. martyrs. The paintings are portraits, almost like passport photographs where the subject looks directly at the viewer. She notes that this direct gaze establishes a "relationship of reciprocal resemblance between contemporary martyrs and modern viewers" (Chopra 2010, 138). A lineage of martyrs from the medieval period to the modern period is created by a sequence of galleries which regulate the flow of visitors from one historical period on display to another. There are paintings of eighteenth century carnages—the Chhota and Wadda Ghallughara; the sacrifices made during the struggle for Punjabi Suba in 1950s and 1960s leading to the gallery of 1984 martyrs. Another connected gallery leads to a corridor where walls are inscribed with names of individuals who were killed in the army action and whose bodies were found in the complex. These were those bodies which could be identified or were not cremated by the army. For family members of those people, the name inscribed on the museum wall allows them to remember those who were violently killed, and mourn them. This is both personal and collective mourning. According to her, the museum transforms ordinary individuals into martyrs, by acting as "heterotopias of memories of sacrifice" (138). Memories preserved in the museum clearly indicate what should be remembered. The museum in combination with practices of commemoration of 1984 at Darbar Sahib, create a shared memory. The practices and events marking the

Ghallughara Diwas enable the conversion of personal memory into social memory because the process of remembering is shared (137–8).

Radhika Chopra has also commented on the significance of CSM within the holy precincts of Darbar Sahib. And, within the Central Sikh Museum, she studies the symbolism of the portrait of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. She argues that the Central Sikh Museum is a sacred space for it is a memorial for sacred beings (Gurus and martyrs) and objects. The museum thus, presents a visual chronicle where belief and history are woven together. At the same time, the display at CSM has a political nature. The visitors are moved by belief and memory, and at the same time engage politically with the display. While exploring this function of the museum, Chopra specifically looks at the symbolism of the museum with respect to the representation of events of Operation Bluestar, destruction of Akal Takht and death of Bhindranwale. She refers to the controversy in the year 2012 over setting up a memorial in the Darbar Sahib complex to commemorate those who died in Bluestar. The critics of the memorial argued that it would invoke the divisive politics of Khalistan and bring back the traumatic times when Punjab suffered from terrorism. The Punjab Government did not try to prevent the construction of the memorial and tried to allay these fears by stating that the memorial will be in form of a gurdwara, without having anyone's photographs. Their reference here is clearly to Bhindranwale, even though he is not named. In May 2013, this memorial, in form of a gurdwara, was inaugurated and the inscription over the doorway explicitly mentioned his name. Earlier in 2007, a large portrait of Bhindranwale was installed in the Central Sikh Museum, again a controversial step. Chopra argues that this controversy over Bhindranwale's visual and memorial presence in the sacred complex, reveals the power of the charismatic Khalistani leader to define memory. The paintings of the destroyed Akal Takht and portrait of Bhindranwale in the museum continue to remind the viewers of the destruction and death suffered by the community. CSM therefore acts both as a museum and a memorial, invoking emotional responses from the viewers while sharing information with them (Chopra 2013, 6–8).

Chopra also examines the iconography of the portrait of Bhindranwale and suggests that the painting is imbued with symbolism which suggests his spiritual significance. The portrait shows him standing, "barefoot on the bank of clouds, in white *choga* and blue *pag* (knee length garment and turban)...He bears the *kirpan*, one of the symbols

of Sikh identity, but also touches the hilt of the sword in its elaborate scabbard, a weapon revered for its signification of authority. Across his body he holds a *barsha* or arrow, a weapon he was frequently photographed carrying. Floating in celestial sphere, from where Gods in Indic paintings beam blessings upon mortals, are images of the Harmandir and the Akal Takht... Between the Takht and the Temple are the triangular saffron flags—*nishan*—that demarcate sacred space. The flags are a crucial inclusion: on the face of it they denote the two sacred structures that hover on either side of the central figure. At the same time, they signify the portrait itself as a sacred space" (Chopra 2013, 12). She perceives a subtle reference to the authority of *miri-piri*, 'the temporal and spiritual', by showing the arrow cross the scabbard of his sword. "...painting Akal Takht and Harmandir in the clouds above the image of Bhindranwale is analogous to cosmic blessing being bestowed upon the person of Bhindranwale by these symbols of spiritual and political authority" (12). Further, placement of Bhindranwale's portrait next to the painting of the destroyed Akal Takht, is seen by Chopra as 'evidence' of Bhindranwale's martyrdom and his death as the "primal wound suffered by the Sikh nation" (15). She argues that the positioning of Bhindranwale's portrait is simply spectacular, so much so, that is has the potential to act as a counter memorial and to elevate his personality into a divine figure. This is the significance of the painting and the museum, according to Chopra (16).[11]

I agree with her assertion that CSM is significant as a sacred space. Even when not located within a gurdwara complex, Sikh museums are very much part of a sacred landscape—physically as well as in a spiritual sense. In case of KHC, is it located next to the gurdwara at Anandpur Sahib which is one of the major sites of pilgrimage in Punjab. Bhai Mati Das Museum at Delhi, is located outside the Sis Ganj Gurdwara building, yet within the larger sacred landscape of the Chandni Chowk where the *Kotwali* and Fountain Chowk are located and are at present, Sikh shrines. The Kotwali was the Mughal police station where Guru Teg Bahadur is believed to have been held captive before his beheading. It is now the community kitchen (*langar khana*) of the gurdwara. The Fountain Chowk (literally the fountain square) is named so after colonial period fountain on a roundabout opposite Sis Ganj Gurdwara. It has

[11] Her argument does not clarify why flags alone should signify the portrait as a sacred space. If that alone was the intention of the painter, wouldn't the pictures of Darbar Sahib and Akal Takht suffice?

recently been renamed Bhai Mati Das Chowk[12] and converted into a shrine dedicated to three disciples of Guru Teg Bahadur who were imprisoned with him and killed at this spot. The museum's sacred nature is also notable in the fact the one enters the museum barefoot and head covered. So visitors enter the museum as believers; it is not a space for critical inquiry but belief. And this quality, argues Chopra, enables the CSM to evoke the memory of 1984 as one representing the tyranny of the Indian state. While the significance of the Sikh museum upon social memory is clear, it must be kept in mind that this memorialisation is not a recent phenomenon, or particular to 1984. The CSM was established in 1958 and since then a number of Sikh museums have come up in gurdwaras as well as locations close to important gurdwaras. They were to be repository of the memory of the Gurus and martyrs even before 1984. Chopra also remarks upon the notices in the museum prohibiting photography of Bhindranwale's portrait. She states that it "reflects the fear of street art and internet communications creating an unpredictable crossing of passion with politics, a destabilisation of authorized memory" (Chopra 2013, 15). While the argument about anxiety over Bhindranwale's pictures is acceptable, it should also be kept in mind that reproductions of Bhindranwale's portraits and photographs already exist in street art, books and the internet even before his painted portrait was installed in the Central Sikh Museum in 2007. Moreover, this prohibition over photographing paintings seems to exist in all museums—irrespective of presence of Bhindranwale's portrait. This is also true for Bhai Mati Das Museum, the case study for this thesis.

In case of Sikh museums, the historiography so far tends to look at individual museums, such as the KHC and CSM. The tendency then is to treat them as unique institutions. In case of KHC, the coming together of secular and religious realms is considered a unique post-national phenomenon of a globalised cultural economy. However, when seen in background of growth of Sikh museum since the 1950s (in chapter 3), KHC appears to be a modernized and dazzling hi-tech manifestation of a phenomenon which has existed several decades ago. Similarly in case of CSM, what Chopra notices as special features of the museum with specific reference to 1984, is often present in other museums. All scholars have commented upon merging of secular and religious; history and faith in Sikh museums, which explains their power

[12] The chowk was renamed at the initiative of the Delhi Gurdwara Management Committee. I have not seen any official notification announcing the renaming of the site.

to invoke and shape the notion of heritage in Sikh community. In the next section I discuss scholarship which has primarily examined textual traditions to examine the notion of history in Sikh tradition.

Writing Sikh History

There is a vast corpus of literature which examines the process of making of Sikh historical tradition and the factors that have influenced the interpretation of Sikh past. This section explores this historiography, the different approaches and sources used by scholars; perspectives on how the Sikh community created or lived with varying notions of its history, and how notions of history were shaped by factors affecting the community. The literature surveyed considers the process of consolidation of Sikh identity as entwined with consolidation of historical tradition among Sikhs. The underlying assumption of this opening statement therefore is that the notion of heritage is a construct. Societies choose elements of the past and representation of those elements to suit their contemporary concerns. Therefore, the notion of heritage is particular to a group of people and it is particular to a time. It is not fixed and like other social formations, the notion of heritage too is a product of human activity. I do not intend to suggest that this is necessarily a project of creating fictitious versions of past. The process of creation of heritage can be both, conscious or unconscious. I wish to emphasize that because history and notions of heritage are human creations, they are shaped by their context and therefore can be made subject to critical analysis. Studying the context of creation of heritage helps us understand its message, its intended audience, its impact on society and its role as agent of change in society. Further, by extension, changes in society also change the notion of heritage cherished by that society.

The most important sources for studying Sikh tradition have conventionally been textual and include analysis of religious texts such as the *Adi Granth*, *Dasam Granth*, the *Gurbilas* (pleasure of the Guru) texts, Janam Sakhis; literature produced under the patronage of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1780–1839), the ruler of Punjab, and his court; histories written for colonial rulers in the nineteenth century; histories and reports written by British scholars and administrators; literature produced by Singh Sabha reformers including books on history; newspapers and pamphlets. The most notable

studies in this field include works by Ganda Singh (1962), Fauja Singh (1978), J. S. Grewal (1997, 1998), W. H. McLeod (1980), S. S. Hans (1988), Pashaura Singh (2006), Harjot Oberoi (1994), Gurinder Singh Mann (2001), Louis E. Fenech (2000), Arvind Pal-Mandair (2009), Purnima Dhavan (2012) and Anne Murphy (2007). The latest work by Anne Murphy (2012) has extended the scope of study to include the role of objects associated with the Gurus and significance of gurdwaras, in making of Sikh history. The writings discussed in this section examine the process of creation of elements of Sikh tradition which have been considered to have always been part of the tradition: the spirit of martyrdom; the oppression faced by Sikhs from 'Muslim' rulers; hostility between the Mughals and the Khalsa because of religion; Khalsa as the normative Sikh identity and others as deviants. The historiography discussed here has developed as a critique of the Tat Khalsa historiography. Tat Khalsa is a school of history writing inspired by ideas of the Singh Sabha. It believes in origin and existence of Sikhs as a distinct religious group, without any influence of any other religious or cultural traditions, especially Hinduism. It focuses on internal factors (such as teachings of the Gurus) to understand Sikh tradition, rather than broader context of social, political factors which also shape a community. The well known historian Harbans Singh's (1994) work *Heritage of the Sikhs* is an example of the Tat Khalsa approach. He writes that Sikhs are

> a unique people in the religious civilization of the world. Practical and progressive in their outlook, they are deeply attached to their faith. Religious belief is their living impulse and the mainspring of their national characteristics and history.... The Sikhs are a deeply devoted people and faith is an essential trait of their nature. An immense reserve of spiritual energy has been their strong asset in many a crisis during their 500-year-old journey....A firm and unflinching faith was their sole support in that most trying situation (1947). Rather than produce any truculent or fanatical spirit, the Sikhs' religious zeal has resulted in some shining deeds of heroism and sacrifice. For, at the root of their history lie simple virtues such as tolerance, compassion and service, so sedulously inculcated by their Gurus, or prophet-teachers....The Sikhs' outward symbols have played a significant part in their national history. They impart to them unity and a distinctive individuality and have preserved them from being assimilated within the larger Indian complex of Hinduism, a

> ready absorbent of races and creeds. Important as this external form is, the essential fact about the Sikhs is the moral prestige they have acquired from their steadfast, and often, severely trying adherence to their religious faith. (1994, 1–3)

The role of Sikh ideology as the sole factor influencing the development of Sikh society is evident in Harbans Singh's argument. The works discussed below question the Tat Khalsa assumption of unchanging nature of ideology; the focus of these writings is on evolution of ideas and dynamics of the Sikh tradition and examination of factors shaping it. I have not traced the entire debate here and have only discussed works which have most influenced my understanding of Sikh history in museums.

The most prominent intellectuals of the Tat Khalsa vision of Sikh history is Bhai Vir Singh (1872–1957). A Singh Sabha reformer and a prolific writer, his works continue to inspire generations of historians. It is useful to examine his writings to understand the production of Sikh history by Singh Sabha reformers. Bhai Vir Singh edited Ratan Singh Bhangu's *Panth Parkash*, a text written in 1841 which was a verified narration of history of the Sikhs (Bhangu [1841] 1993). He made several changes to the text while editing it. An important change introduced by him was use of the term 'Sikh.' Bhangu uses the word 'Hindu' to denote the followers of the Gurus and Bhai Vir Singh's version substitutes 'Hindu' with the word 'Sikh' (Chopra and Hans 1988). This was in keeping with his view of Sikhism as a religion separate from Hinduism, therefore the text was modified to present a version of Sikh tradition where Hinduism had no role to play and which Singh Sabha reformers believed to represent true Sikhism.

Similarly, the idea of martyrdom by Sikhs in defence of their faith, which is essential to Tat Khalsa historiography, can also be seen as a concept which developed over a period of time and became especially prominent in history writing by Singh Sabha. Today, martyrs are one of the most revered people in the Sikh religion, perhaps next only to the ten Gurus. They are acknowledged in the ardas; there are commemoration events to mark the days of their martyrdom; and they are frequently featured in posters, animation, videos and songs. In such a narrative, Sikh history comes across as a saga of struggle and sacrifices of the Khalsa against tyrants who were out to destroy Sikh faith. Louis Fenech's (2000) work has shown how the notion of martyrdom

which is so dominant today developed over a period of time. He notes that the common understanding of a shaheed in Sikh tradition today—that of Sikhs who sacrifice their life in defence of Sikh faith—was not the only way the term was understood in nineteenth century Punjab. Supernatural entities such as a malevolent ghost which required propitiation or a powerful supernatural being whose shrine was visited for blessings, were also referred to as shaheed. He argues that the notion of shaheed as a Sikh martyr who laid down his or her life for the faith, was not inherent to the nascent Khalsa tradition. It was the Singh Sabha reform movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century which moulded the concept of shaheed into exclusively that of Khalsa variety, removing it of all its other meanings (Fenech 2000, 14). In pre-Singh Sabha texts, such as that by Ratan Singh Bhangu, the Khalsa are shown sacrificing their life for Hindu gods. In Bhai Vir Singh's edition of the text, the Khalsa are shown sacrificing their life for the 'Sikh Guru' and the 'Sikh faith' (189–93). The Singh Sabha adopted 'rhetoric of martyrdom' which constantly invoked the sacrifices made by Sikhs in the past to defend their faith—they had their scalp torn off to protect their hair, had been burnt alive and sawn into two for their refusal to give up their faith (as described in the ardas). Further, it lamented that contemporary Sikhs in early twentieth century were not adhering to the ideals of Sikhism which martyrs had died defending. The rhetoric of martyrdom was effectively propagated through printed tracts which were read out aloud in gurdwaras and printed posters of martyrs which were sold cheap in bazaars. By putting together Sikh martyrs from seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with contemporary Sikhs (especially the Akalis), a symbolic bond between the two and a single 'imagined' community was created. The rhetoric of martyrdom was especially useful during the Akali agitation and Gurdwara Reform Movement.[13] The movement to liberate historic gurdwaras from non-Sikhs was led by Akalis who were inspired by the Singh Sabha rhetoric of martyrdom. Their fight became a continuation of the fight which the Sikhs had carried out in defence of their faith against Muslim oppression. Fenech points out that there continue to be sections among the Sikh community, such as the *Udasis* (the followers of Baba Sri Chand who was the son of Guru Nanak), for whom martyrdom is not a central value or rather, has no value at all (21–3). The Singh Sabha placed Tat Khalsa identity over all others and

[13] Gurdwara Reform Movement was the struggle undertaken during 1920-25 by the Akalis in Punjab, to liberate gudwaras from the control of corrupt caretakers (*mahants*) and to establish Sikh community's control over the shrines. It led to the establishment of SGPC.

this interpretation of Sikh tradition has continued to dominate the present understanding of the community. According to Fenech, mmartyrdom was not new within the Sikh tradition, but it rose to prominences under the Singh Sabha. "It was through the rhetoric of martyrdom, moreover, that the Singh Sabha achieved the dramatic success it did" (16).[14]

Fenech also briefly refers to Sikhs museums' importance in propagating the tradition of martyrdom. He specifically talks of the CSM where the introductory panel explains the display in the museum as accurately depicting Sikh history:

> Through the (various) paintings in this museum the artist Sardar Kirpal Singh has effectively captured the distinctive behavior (of the Sikhs) and the manners of the Singhs and the Singhnis who gave their heads for the faith, who were torn limb from limb, were scalped, broken on the wheel, who had their bodies sawn asunder, who were boiled in cauldrons, sacrificed for the upkeep and service of the sacred gurdwaras, and who protected to their last breaths the sacred hair of Sikhism. Thanks to these paintings we possess knowledge regarding the courage and tolerant nature of the Singhs. In this museum the endeavour is to make widely known through these paintings Sikh history, culture, traditions and the martyrdoms the Sikhs contributed in the struggle for the country's freedom. (43–7)

The museum and its paintings therefore not only invoke the ardas, but provide a place where the ardas can be pictured and contemplated. Thus the museum, he suggests, has a profound impact on the audience where the latter can have a darshan of their Gurus and martyrs.

In another work, Fenech continues to explore the significant role of Singh Sabha in interpreting the famous *Zafarnama*[15] of Guru Gobind Singh (Fenech 2012). His reference is to the famous line from the text: *When all strategies brought to bear are exhausted, it is then lawful to draw the sword*. He argues that today the whole understanding of the *Zafarnama* is centered upon this line, and therefore the text is read as a sanction for the Sikh ideals of miri-piri and *dharma yuddha* (righteous battle

[14] Also see, Oberoi (1994).

[15] *Zafarnama* is the letter sent by Guru Gobind Singh to Mughal Emperor, Aurangzeb in 1705, after the Battle of Chamkaur. It is in Persian verse.

against tyranny) and this interpretation is an influence of Singh Sabha. He points out that this bait in *Zafarnama* is a direct borrowing of a couplet of Sadi's[16] *Bustan* and *Gulistan* texts which goes: *When the hand is foiled at every turn it is then permitted to take the sword in hand*. In addition, the early nineteenth century commentaries on the *Zafarnama* do not specifically refer to above line with any particular significance (70–2). In both his works (first referring to the evolution of concept of martyrdom and the second, about *Zafarnama*) Fenech makes note of the context of Singh Sabha movement and its need to interpretation of the past in a particular way. This was necessary, he states, in a colonial and modern environment, where identifiable groups within Punjab competed for resources and privilege.

The hegemonic influence of Singh Sabha's interpretation of Sikh past is also discussed by Anne Murphy. In her latest work, she studies Sikh sacred objects or relics and historical gurdwaras as supplementing the narrative of Sikh history produced in texts (Murphy 2012). Her work is significant in that it goes beyond the textual study of Sikhism to include material representations of history and role of objects and sites for the Sikh community to maintain a tangible link with their past. Murphy argues that the Sikh community is a living embodiment of its past, and the community is constituted through the memory of the Guru. The Guru is not present in body, but remains amidst the community in the Word (*shabad* from Guru Granth Sahib). The relics in Sikh context, she explains, are not embodiment of the Gurus. Instead, they are evidence of associations with the Guru. These are objects which were used by the Gurus or were gifted to their followers. She gives the example of sacred objects held by the Dalla family at their house near Takht Damdama Sahib (Bathinda, Punjab). Tradition goes that Dalla's ancestors were followers of Guru Hargobind Singh[17] and Dalla himself had been blessed by Guru Teg Bahadur when the former was about five years of age. Dalla had served Guru Gobind Singh and exchanged gifts with the Guru and his wife. The same objects are now held by Dalla's descendants. The objects and clothes of the Guru are displayed to the visitors daily by a family member. Dalla is said to have worshipped these objects and his descendants continue to honour them. Murphy observes that objects prove the strong relationship of the family with the Guru and attest to the family's service to the Guru.

[16] Famous Persian poet and Sufi from Shiraz who lived in the thirteenth century.
[17] Guru Hargobind (1595-1644) was the sixth Guru of the Sikhs.

Additionally, they also show the importance of Dalla family in the spread of Sikhism in the region (Murphy 2012, 43). Thus sacred objects constitute evidence for stories of the Guru and narratives of the Sikh community's past. The history which is described in the text appears in material form in the relics (31–2). The relics along with the texts which preserved the memory of the Guru became especially important after Guru Gobind Singh's death i.e. at the end of human guru-ship. She notes that the production of the Panth's history with both objects and texts has been an important activity undertaken by the Sikhs ever since, to preserve the memory of the Guru (64–5).

Along with the objects, the sites too attest to the past presence of the Guru. The representation of the past embodied in textual historiography is supported by the evidence that the relic and site provide, as part of a single historiographical project. The Gurdwara Reform Movement of the 1920s was the field where ideas about history and its relationship to the community evolved, in the colonial environment (151–2). During this movement, the idea of a Sikh history and Sikh identity was shaped through the gurdwaras.

The debates over gurdwara reform which took place within the Punjab Council demonstrate how the case was made for creating a governing body for gurdwara and how this process in the context of colonial governance produced a particular motion of the Sikh community. This process manifests itself both through administrative terms and in representation of the past through the Sikh gurdwara (191). By studying the Gurdwara Reform Movement, Murphy shows that to consolidate the Sikh claim to gurdwara, it was necessary to prove the association of the site with Sikh history and therefore by implication identify who a Sikh is. She gives the example of a group of mahants in Haridwar who argued that the "term Sikh is too vague and liable to misinterpretation. Sikh at present connotes Hindus who are followers of Guru Nanak forming a vast majority as well as those who call themselves Tat Khalsas and non-Hindus" (217). In contrast, it was also argued in the Council that the agitation was not intend to claim any temple or shrine where the Granth might be kept; it specifically claimed "only those historical places, which are regarded sacred by all the Sikh and which are the common property of the whole of the Sikh community" (217). Thus, the Sikh community claimed rights over management of gurdwaras, from those who were now classified as non-Sikh custodians (the mahants). The Gurdwara Reform

Movement of the 1920s and the resultant Sikh Gurdwara Act of 1925 linked identity, land and history together in political and administrative terms. The reformers built upon and also transformed existing ideas of the past and its representation in material and geographical forms i.e. changed the way past could be imagined in material terms (224–5). The Sikh Gurdwara Act of 1925 distinguished between a Sikh gurdwara and any other gurdwara. A Sikh gurdwara was (a) established by, or in memory of any of the Ten Sikh Gurus, or in commemoration of any incident in the life of any of the Ten Sikh Gurus, and is used for public worship by the Sikhs; or (b) owing to some tradition connected with one of the Ten Sikh Gurus, is used for public worship predominantly by Sikhs; (c) was established for use by the Sikhs for the purpose of public worship and is used for such worship by Sikhs; and (d) owing to some incident connected with the Sikh religion is used for public worship. Therefore, history becomes the chief determinant of whether a gurdwara is Sikh. Further it was important to ensure that the gurdwara should also be used by Sikhs. Therefore, it became necessary to define both history, and who a Sikh was. This process of bringing together land, identity and history was unprecedented in Sikh tradition when governance of gurdwaras was not tied up with inheritable private property. These processes are specific to the colonial context where identity is related to specific political and economic gain (such as communal electorates) (227–8). The 'historical' therefore in this case, is a modern legislative category of governance, and also an administrative construct. The ownership of sites was determined on the basis of distinct and defined communities and this was validated by historical evidence. Murphy suggests that this association of history and identity with territoriality is also seen in contemporary Sikh politics.

The demand for an exclusive territory for the Sikhs, the Khalistan, and its relationship to construction of Sikh past and identity has been discussed in Das (1995). Writing in the 1990s, she explains that Sikh community was emerging in India's political culture as a political actor which seeks to reshape not so much 'face-to-face intimate relations of the private sphere, but control over law and history in the predominantly public sphere of life'. The representation of history is then a process of creating 'collective memories' by both nation-states as well as communities, the latter in the process of their emergence as political actors (Das 1995, 17). Das gives examples of how various events of the past were whipped up by those espousing the cause of Khalistani

militancy. A key component of achieving this is to create contemporaneity between non-contemporaneous events, to see modern struggles continuing the same struggles which their ancestors had waged in the medieval times (121). These reconstructions necessarily involve a systematic forgetting of the past. The Sikh community is spoken of as devoid of all evil. For instance, there is no mention of violence by Sikhs during the Partition of India, whereas violence suffered by the Sikhs is frequently invoked to recount the trauma the community faced in 1947; or, there is no reference to the common practices and influences shared by Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims. Further, all violence done by the Sikhs is presented as a response to injustice faced by the community and as a path to martyrdom. Also, current events are seen a repetition of past heroic deeds: the assassination of Indira Gandhi by two Sikhs to avenge Operation Bluestar was seen as parallel to the killing of Massa Rangar[18] in eighteenth century, by Mahtab Singh and Sukha Singh, two Sikh warriors who killed him to avenge the desecration of Darbar Sahib. Das notes that none of the above ways of reconstructing the past consider transformations in the Sikh community over a period of time. It also ensures that the narrative of the past remains homogenous and there is no scope for different voices.

One of the most effective ways to regulate collective memory, according to Veena Das, is by suppression of individual memory or incorporation of individual biography into social text. She points out the use of extensive local knowledge by Khalistani militants to achieve this. Atrocities committed by the police on individuals, small towns and villages in Punjab, were invoked by Bhindranwale as sign of oppression of the state over the Sikh community and the slave-like position of the Sikhs from the medieval period to the modern times. Das argues that it its significance lies in the fact that through this act, the experience of the individual becomes the experience of the community. It further leads to justification of violence by the Sikhs, as a fight against tyranny (131). Thus, on one hand, the demand for Khalistan and the tool of militancy to achieve it is justified by invoking Sikh militant struggles in the past. On the other, she demonstrates that the movement was framed in the language of modern nation-states; it consisted of terminology which continuously referred to rights of minorities,

[18] Massa Rangar was a small Muslim chieftain.

internationals covenants, centrality of territory as the means of preserving nationality (121).

The paradigm of the nation-state is one of the approaches to understand the Sikh expression of sovereignty through reconstructions of the Sikh past. Anne Murphy (2007) suggests that one could also view Sikh history outside of a modernist and nationalist frame. She argues that the "Sikh 'historical' takes place within an explicitly religious frame—that is, it is organised around the soteriological teachings of the Gurus and the formation of the community as a central institution of authority in relation to the Guru" (Murphy 2007, 351); and not all expressions of Sikh historical are connected to state-formation or demand for political or territorial sovereignty. Her arguments are based on a study of Sainapati's early eighteenth century text, *Gur Sobha* where she demonstrates that it is the Panth—as an organisation of Sikhs—which is the subject of history. She notes that *Gur Sobha* is written at a time just after the death of Guru Gobind Singh, and the transition of authority to the Granth and the Panth. The development of the Panth then was not the same as statist forms of sovereignty. Murphy observes that the text uses three narrative tools. The first is description of the Tenth Guru and events during his guruship. They describe the Guru's actions especially his political conflicts with the Hill States of Punjab and the Mughals. The second mode is inclusion of theological and doctrinal injunctions of the Guru. The third element is narratives of interactions between the Guru and his followers. Sainapati uses the past to show the role of the Guru in both action and ideology. The Guru's actions in the text are narrated within theological concerns of the Sikh community. Thus, the text becomes both a biography of the Guru and history of the Sikh community. Murphy also argues that Sainapati's sense of history in *Gur Sobha* could be more accurately described as 'historicity'. She differentiates it from the term 'history' used in the European sense, to denote the past, distinct from the present. She elaborates that in the Sikh case, the living Guru was in the past, but he is embodied in the Granth and Panth, in the present. Therefore, the past continues to exist in the present. This historical sense among the Sikhs, allows for "relating not only the teachings of the Guru by means of certain past events, but for creating the community itself as the continuation of this past into the present" (361). The history of Sikh community at this time, she maintains, is not in terms of formation of a territorial, nation-state, but the formulation of the Sikh community in relation to the

Guru. And, these forms of reconstruction of history are different from modern forms of construction of history by the Sikhs.

In independent India, production of Sikh history has taken many forms. The Punjab Government's enthusiasm for historical projects is especially noticeable since the 1970s. I discuss below, the writings of Louis Fenech (2002) and Robin Jeffery (1987) who have commented on the government's involvement in commemorating Sikh history. Fenech's article examines the concerns of the Sikh community and Punjab Government over representation of Punjabi freedom fighter, Udham Singh. He argues that Udham Singh's popularity spurted in the 1960s and 1970s in context of the creation of Punjabi Suba, and traces the factors leading to Udham Singh's representations as a martyr during this time. Udham Singh (1899–1940) spent his childhood at Central Khalsa Orphanage (CKO) in Amritsar. The CKO was founded by the Chief Khalsa Diwan, an associate body of Singh Sabha in 1904. Fenech writes that given the practices of CKO one can infer that Udham Singh was raised as a baptised Sikh to follow the ideals of a Khalsa Singh.[19] There is little evidence for Udham Singh's life trajectory, but popular accounts tells us that he was profoundly affected by the brutality of the British at the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in 1919.[20] He plotted his revenge, travelled to Europe and finally shot dead in London, the former Governor of Punjab, Michael O'Dwyer under whose governorship the Jallianwala Bagh massacre took place. After shooting O'Dwyer, Udham Singh did not try to run away, instead gave himself up to the authorities. He was given a death sentence in London. According to most accounts, "Udham Singh's 'most courageous' feat of murdering O'Dwyer in public for all to see restored the honour and self-respect of the nation, an honour which had been severely blemished by the Jallianwala Bagh massacre" (Fenech 2002, 833). Even though very little is known of his life, in popular accounts he is remembered as heroic, determined, defiant of oppression, fearless, true to his vows, someone who places his country's interest over his own. Fenech argues that the government's interest in commemorating Udham Singh, permanently impressed these qualities in popular mind. Moreover, this popular memory of Udham

[19] All residents of CKO was educated in Sikh theology and history, and baptised.

[20] Jallianwala Bagh massacre refers to the brutal firing upon an unarmed and nonviolent gathering of people in an enclosed park called Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar on 13 April 1919. They were fired upon by British troops under the command of Colonel Reginald Dyer. The figures of dead vary, some reports counting more than 1200 people dead. The event shocked the entire nation and invited widespread and strong condemnation of the British government. Rabindranath Tagore, the well known poet, returned his knighthood in protest.

Singh is shaped by discourse of martyrdom in Sikh tradition.[21] These characteristics are also found in Sikh martyrs and Fenech particularly comments on the role of Sikh religious nationalism in remembering Udham Singh as a Khalsa Sikh.

The keenness with which Udham Singh was commemorated in the 1960s was part of a political game where self-interest of Punjab government competed with Sikh religious nationalism. Fenech elaborates that there was a constant tussle between the Congress government in Punjab led by Giani Zail Singh (then Chief Minister of Punjab, who later went on to become the President of India) and the Akali Dal (the regional political party which claimed to be the only true representative of the Sikhs). The Congress were trying to beat the Akalis at their own game, by using Sikh religious symbols and invoking Sikh history to show that they alone were true to the Sikh tradition and therefore could best safeguard Sikh interests. The collective efforts of Zail Singh and the Union Government led by Indira Gandhi (the Prime Minister of India, and leader of the Congress Party) led to return of Udham Singh's remains from London to India. His remains arrived in India in 1974 and Fenech talks about the reception accorded to them was that of a national hero. Udham Singh's remains were draped in the Indian national flag, homage was paid by the Prime Minister of India, along with minsters of the government and national leaders; the remains travelled from Delhi through Haryana and Punjab where people were allowed to have *darshan* (religious viewing). After cremation of remains at Udham Singh's hometown, Sunam, the ashes were placed in seven urns, out of which three were sent out to sacred sites associated with Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism. Fenech notes that such a division of Udham Singh's ashes was typical of the 'secular' approach taken by Congress government, done to ensure that his was remembered both a defender of India as well as that of Punjab. The government's "pageantry helped to construct an image of a man by bringing tougher whole series of individual and group memories of Udham Singh himself, of what it means to be a Sikh, and of Sikh martyrs and their profound role in the celebrated history of the Sikhs. This last memory certainly included Sikh contributions to independence and post-independence India, generally" (848). But the context of Sikh religious nationalism affected the physical representation of his memory, as Fenech discusses, through the paintings and statues of Udham Singh in

[21] This is the same as the rhetoric of martyrdom in Fenech (2000).

Punjab. And any representation of Udham Singh would therefore have to be an expression of all these factors.

It should be noted that existing evidence of Udham Singh's appearance as an adult is from photographs taken in the last decade of his life. In these, he appears as a clean shaven man and there is no evidence of him maintaining the symbols of the Khalsa as an adult.[22] However, contemporary physical representations of Udham Singh have shown him in the Khalsa ideal with an uncut beard and turban. Fenech explains that this is the influence of Singh Sabha's version of history and the discourse of martyrdom which flows from it. The Singh Sabha reformers believed the Khalsa identity to be the only true Sikh identity and any deviation from it meant, that person was no longer a Sikh. He notes that this thought is so dominant in the Sikh community that modern representations of even those Sikh Gurus and individuals who lived before the formation of Khalsa, are in the ideal Khalsa form, with beard and turban. The Singh Sabha emphasized that martyrdom was integral to the Sikh tradition. History of Sikhism, in popular perception, is the history of martyrdom. Moreover, only those Sikhs who were baptised and followed the Khalsa norms could be considered martyrs, as they died in defence of the pure Khalsa ideals. Thus, the idea created a seamless identification between martyrdom, Sikh history and the Sikh community. And this ideal is also inherited by Sikh religious nationalism in post-Independence India which is manifest in public representations of Udham Singh (854–5). The representation of Udham Singh as a Khalsa Sikh (despite evidence for the lack of it) is shaped by the Singh Sabha discourse of martyrdom and concerns of modern Sikh identity politics. This is manifest in Udham Singh's statue at Sunam and at Gandhi Gate, Amritsar, and also his portrait in the martyrs' gallery at Jallianwala Bagh, all showing him as a Khalsa Sikh. At the same time this representation is not uncontested. There are two statues of Udham Singh at Sunam, the second one showing him as a clean shaven man. Moreover, there are two paintings of Udham

[22] A similar problem appears in case of representations of Bhagat Singh (1907–31), the revolutionary from Punjab. Bhagat Singh is an extremely popular figure from Indian nationalist movement. He was born in a Sikh family but later renounced religion. A well known pamphlet written by him is titled *Main Nastik Kyun Hoon* (Why am I an atheist). He was involved in the assassination of J. Saunders, a British police office, and was hanged for it. The most popular representations and existing photographs of Bhagat Singh show him clean shaven, but more recent representations of him, especially in Sikh museums and paintings by Sikh artists, show him in a turban with a beard. Sikhs also believe that he returned to the Khalsa fold before his death. Representations of both Bhagat Singh and Udham Singh in the Khalsa form, show the Sikh community's desire to claim them, and claim them in a particular form.

Singh in Jallianwala Bagh, again, one of which depicts him clean shaven. These material manifestations of Udham Singh's memory show the contestations over how he is remembered, the value of his memory, and can also be read as signifying the place of Sikh community in India (864–5).

The pressures of Sikh religious nationalism are also commented upon by Robin Jeffery who writes about the necessity of Sikh politicians to resort to the past to garner support. Even though invoking the past for political and other reasons is common to all societies, in Sikh case, he points out, the domination of the Khalsa tradition makes it necessary for anyone seeking support from the community to pay obeisance to this idea. This is why successive governments in Punjab have profusely celebrated anniversaries of Sikh gurus and martyrs and commemorations of Sikh personalities since the creation of the Punjabi Suba in 1966.[23] This also makes democratic politics difficult as it leaves no space for compromise; the Sikh position in this case often comes to complete victory or martyrdom (Jeffery 1987).

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The above discussion recognises the need to study the notion of heritage as a construct and particularly looks at museum's role in knowledge production. In the Sikh case various studied have shown how production of Sikh history (through texts, gurdwaras and objects) is specific to the context. In case of Sikh museums, the museum's authority as an institution providing correct or true knowledge to the visitor is combined with its quality as a sacred space. The above discussion also makes a case for studying Sikh museums as part of a larger pattern of production of Sikh history. To understand the role of Sikh museums within the Sikh community and even outside, it is necessary to study the history of Sikh museums and history of history paintings. When studied in such a background, it is seen that Sikh museums are not a project of Indian nation-state but an initiative of the Sikh community itself. Further, the Sikh museum's quality as a combination of secular and sacred is not a result of a globalised cultural sphere. Rather, it is particular to the nature of the Sikh community's relationship with its past. As different forms of commemoration of Sikh history are studied, the dominance of Singh Sabha version of Sikh past and its presence even in

[23] Creation of the Punjabi Suba made Sikhs a majority in Punjab. The functions by the Punjab Government include celebrations of tercentenary of Guru Gobind Singh's birth in 1967 and Guru Nanak's quincentenary in 1969.

contemporary India, also becomes evident. The following chapters examine how this affects the production of Sikh heritage in museums.

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3

Sikhs in Popular Visual Culture

This chapter discusses the scholarship on Sikh art and surveys popular Sikh art from late nineteenth century till the present. The purpose is to see how art has been understood as part of Sikh heritage—what are the themes identified as Sikh art. This will help us understand the popular art in Sikh museums and Bhai Mati Das Museum in particular.

To start such a historiographical survey, it is important to clarify the use of the term 'Sikh' art. It is hard to define what constitutes the Sikh tradition and what within paintings, constitutes Sikh themes. To be able to identify Sikh art, one must be able to identify 'Sikh.' There is a large body of scholarship which has grappled with the question of who is a Sikh.[1] This issue is much debated not only in the realm of intellectual scholarship but politics too.[2] There also exists scholarly work on Sikh art, and some of which recognises the need for a nuanced understanding of context when using the term 'Sikh painting' or 'Sikh art'. Others have used the term freely without understanding the implications or underlying assumptions of such nomenclature. This chapter will discuss the use and scope of 'Sikh art' in different works of scholarship and attempt to locate the visual display at Bhai Mati Das Museum in context of development of popular Sikh art.

Most writings on Sikh art focus on paintings done before mid-nineteenth century. The kind of art covered in this period includes works which represent stories from Janam Sakhis, Pahari style portraits of Sikh Gurus and Sikh notables and artistic production under the rule of Ranjit Singh, his successors and nobility associated with the royal court. The focus is largely on art done on paper or as part of manuscripts, but there is

[1] For example, Oberoi 1994; Grewal 1998; McLeod 1998.
[2] For instance, the debate over granting voting rights to gurdwara elections, to Sehejdhari Sikhs. The Sehejdharis are considered ineligible as they do not maintain the five identifiers of the Khalsa. Some sections do not even consider Sehejdharis to be Sikhs.

some discussion on murals as well. These paintings were patronised by a limited group of people belonging to the ruling class, and their visibility was limited. The manuscripts and albums of paintings mostly remained in the hands of families and individuals who patronised them. Murals on public buildings would have had a wider audience. Even though this thesis is concerned with popular Sikh art in form of history paintings in modern India, a background discussion of scholarship on Sikh art is important to understand what is considered part of Sikh heritage and also, what is considered 'Sikh' itself. The first section of this chapter discusses the historiography on Sikh art.

The second part of this chapter is a survey of popular Sikh art from mid-nineteenth century to the present time. The survey starts with the nineteenth century because new printing technology at this time introduced a new variety of art which was accessible to the masses. Earlier, paintings and manuscripts were created in limited numbers and only among those who could afford them. New printing technologies allowed for creating multiple copies of a text or illustration at a considerably lower cost. This art was also easily available in the bazaars and enjoyed a wide circulation. The survey of Sikh popular art in this chapter incorporates woodcuts, lithographs from late nineteenth century, chromolithographs of early and mid-twentieth century and history paintings which are now digitally reproduced in massive numbers. The objective of the survey of Sikh popular art is to observe elements of change and continuities in visual representation of Sikh religious themes and personalities.

Sikh Heritage in Art: A Historiographical Survey

This section will discuss some important works of scholarship which have been influential in developing our understanding of Sikh art. The purpose is to examine how is Sikh art defined and what kind of art is considered part of Sikh heritage.

W.G. Archer's (1966) book *Paintings of the Sikhs* is a classic reading for students of Sikh art and has tremendously influenced subsequent historiography on Sikh and Punjab art. It is a catalogue of the collection of Sikh paintings at Victoria and Albert Museum in London which comprises of Pahari paintings, sketches made by European

travellers to Punjab, woodcuts and lithographs dating from second quarter of nineteenth century to early twentieth century.

Archer has studied the development of Sikh art in context of rise and fall of political fortunes of the Sikhs. Archer argues that Sikh art is a product of nineteenth century and mostly concerned with portraiture. And to understand this art, he says, one must study the context in which it emerged: characters of personalities depicted, the rise and fall in their fortunes, European influence, British expansion and Sikh politics in the region. However, according to him, Indian sources are too tactful to be relied upon. This is because, according to him, local sources do not provide an honest opinion or a balanced view of the conditions, given their involvement in and dependence on local situation. His arguments on development of Sikh art are therefore based exclusively on European accounts, particularly those of travellers to the kingdom of Ranjit Singh (Archer 1966, xix).

Archer does not try to define the term 'Sikh art'. For Archer, no painting that is truly Sikh can be said to exist before the second quarter of nineteenth century (19–20). He argues that this art was a result of patronage provided to Pahari artists by Sikh generals of Ranjit Singh i.e. Desa Singh Majithia, his family and Sher Singh. When the Sikhs first conquered the hills, their presence was resented by (former) Rajput rulers and the locals alike. However, some of the Sikh administrators were warm and kind towards the locals, which contributed to a thawing of attitude towards Sikhs. With this, Archer argues, painters were more open to depicting Sikh subjects in their works and gradually even working under the patronage of the Sikhs. This can be considered the beginning of Sikh art. Portraits of Gurus and local administrators were commissioned. The subjects were Sikh and the treatment was Pahari (18–22). Later in his book, when Archer discusses painting patronized by British in Punjab, he talks about an album commissioned in 1838–39, on British supplied paper, which has 'Sikh themes' as well, such as portraits of rulers, military pictures.

It appears that Archer's use of the term Sikh art is for portraits of Sikh personalities. This includes the Gurus, but also a very large number of political personalities who were often patrons of these paintings. The patrons could be Sikh, mostly generals and courtiers associated with the court of Ranjit Singh or British. The style could be Pahari or Company.

Archer sees Sikh art as a reflection of political fortunes of the Sikhs. That is why he locates the beginning of Sikh art in the second quarter of nineteenth century with the expansion of Ranjit Singh's kingdom in the hills. He considers Ranjit Singh a reluctant patron of art and maintains that the real growth of art takes place only under Sher Singh (1807–1843).[3] Archer especially discusses the work of European travellers to the court of Punjab, sketching Sikh rulers and notables. Here identification of art as Sikh, is in the form of content as well as patronage i.e. in form of portraits of Sikhs, mostly commissioned by Sikhs. Archer maintains that Sikh art is overwhelmingly made up of portraiture and this is because of the new found power of the Sikhs. Portraiture fulfilled the need of a new Sikh power in Punjab, to be recognised (18–22).

By the same logic, Archer argues that the art during the decline of Lahore Durbar and annexation of Punjab by the British represents the declining state of the Sikh community. In British Punjab, there are a number of paintings of Sikh Gurus, personalities of Ranjit Singh's time and Sikh heroes, done in watercolour on ivory. These include paintings of Dalip Singh (1837–1893),[4] his mother Rani Jindan (1871–63) and generals of the Sikh empire, like Sham Singh Attariwala. Archer considers these paintings as evidence of nostalgia felt by the Sikhs, for their former glory. He shows us how insignificant characters acquired great importance. In this art, they were given credit for resisting the British or depicted as victims of British politics. Thus, Dalip Singh became a ruler wronged by the British and Rani Jindan, a symbol of resistance in face of cunning politics. These ivory paintings later served as models for woodcuts and lithographs. The woodcuts of Gurus (showing all the Ten Gurus together) and that of 'twelve Sikh heroes' or the twelve associates of Ranjit Singh became very popular. Archer explains that such depiction of Gurus, were a manifestation of desire for lost glory as well as reaffirming the roots of the Sikh energy and power. Archer notes the popularity of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh in these paintings and woodcuts and interprets this as the moral which Sikh community is communicating to itself. And this moral continued from British Punjab into modern or independent Punjab. He interprets it as the Sikh community's tenacity

[3] Sher Singh was the son and successor of Ranjit Singh.
[4] Dalip Singh was another son of Ranjit Singh. He succeeded the throne after Sher Singh, as a child under the guardianship of his mother, Rani Jindan (wife of Ranjit Singh).

to fight combined with an ability to compromise, to move forward towards the goal of modernity. Archer says that when Guru Gobind Singh failed in his war against the Mughals, he patched up with them and died fighting for them. “In 1849, the Sikhs were vanquished, their national ideal had collapsed but by cooperating with the new conquerors, the modernizing British, it seemed that for a second time their goal might be attained” (69). As they approached twentieth century “Sikh came increasingly to value modern forms of expression. They discarded the painting which had expressed the fugitive glories of the first Sikh state and it was rather in a partnership with the West that they moved into the modern age” (70). He cites the architecture and planning of Chandigarh and the art of Amrita Sher-Gil as examples of triumph of this spirit. So, according to Archer, Sikh art in first half of nineteenth century is a symbol of the rise to power of the Sikhs and in second half of nineteenth century, it is a reflection of their undying spirit which warmly embraces modernity under colonial rule. In his discussion of growth of School of Art in Lahore, Archer mentions Sikhs who adopted western techniques (use of water colours and oil on canvas, and techniques of perspective) in their work. Here, his definition of Sikh art is limited to the religious identity of the artist.

K.C. Aryan’s (1975) work on painting traditions of Punjab, starts off where Archer’s work ends. *Punjab Painting: 100 Years Survey of Punjab Painting (1841–1941)* draws upon Archer’s book for background information on painting in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century and shares with it many arguments on Sikh painting. Aryan uses the term ‘Sikh school’ for paintings made under Sikh rulers, by artists who were trained in Pahari style. This consists of miniatures made during the reign of Ranjit Singh and his successors. Aryan agrees with Archer that there was no painting in Punjab before the rise of Sikh power. It was only after the displaced Pahari painters settled in Punjab, attracted by the wealth of Ranjit Singh’s court, that artistic activity started (Aryan 1975, 13). So, the logical conclusion of Aryan’s argument is that for the first half of nineteenth century, when Ranjit Singh and his successors ruled, the ‘Sikh school’ of painting comes to denote painting done in all of Punjab during this time. By the same logic, painting done after the end of Sikh rule, does not fall under the category of Sikh school.

Moreover, both Archer and Aryan argue that there was no art in Punjab before Ranjit Singh's rule. The period before his rule has been classified as a 'dead blank.' It was only with the establishment of Ranjit Singh's kingdom in Punjab and its spread in the hills that artistic activity began. This is considered beginning of Punjab art and also Sikh art. Both these terms are used synonymously, which is problematic.

Aryan discusses art in Punjab till the middle of twentieth century including portraits of Sikh Gurus and Sikh personalities. He classifies as 'Sikh', all the artistic activity done in Punjab during the rule of Ranjit Singh and his successors till the British annexation of Punjab. Therefore, all art in Punjab during this time is Sikh art, according to Aryan. He is also critical of all artistic activity which existed after British annexation, and considers it poor in quality. Thus, in Aryan's work, both Sikh heritage in art, and artistic heritage in the region of Punjab, is identifyable with 'Sikh' rule. but none of it is classified as 'Sikh.' All art in Punjab during the rule of Ranjit Singh and his successors and before British annexations is, Sikh art (it is also all of art in Punjab during that time). So, Sikh heritage in art, in Aryan's work, is firmly located in 'Sikh' rule. By implication, artistic heritage of Punjab, is also located in 'Sikh' rule.

As will be discussed in following pages, several scholars have demonstrated that painting tradition in Punjab is not limited to Sikh painting and that Sikh painting itself can be a very wide field. Further, the survey of popular art in this essay will show that Sikhs continued to be patrons of art under colonial rule and depiction of Sikh Gurus was very much part of popular art (and did not end with Ranjit Singh's rule). Aryan ignores this possibility in his work.

The term Sikh school of painting is also used by R. P. Srivastava (1983) in his book, *Punjab Painting*. In this work, Sikh school refers to art in Punjab in the nineteenth century under Ranjit Singh and his descendants (a period between 1799–1850). Srivastava's criterion for this nomenclature is the dynasty rather than artistic influences. He maintains that Ranjit Singh's rule and its spread into the hills was not the beginning of artistic activity in Punjab. He points out that artistic traditions in the region existed during the Sultanate as well as Mughal rule. He further argues that

paintings of Ranjit Singh's rule (or dynasty) should not be considered a decadent version of Pahari style,[5] rather, they should be recognised as "distinctly Punjabi in tone, temper and character" (Srivastava 1983, 27). There are always external influences in a painting style and subject matter, he argues. He gives example of Mughal painting with its Persian and Mongolian influence, and points out that despite these external influences, it is called Mughal and not Iranian or Mongol painting. He adds that even though there were Pahari artists working in Punjab, there were numerous local artists too, like Kehar Singh, Bishan Singh, Kapur Singh, Ishar Singh, Hari Singh, Mohd. Bakhsh, Peer Bakhsh, Karm Bakhsh, Lahora Singh, Thakur Lal Singh (27). He therefore argues that a distinct school of art began in the nineteenth century Punjab, which included influences from existing traditions, but was still distinctly Punjabi in "tone, temper and character" (27) and that it should be designated the Sikh school of painting. Sikh School, according to Srivastava includes artistic production done under Ranjit Singh and his darbar, the princely states such as Kapurthala and Nabha, illustrations in manuscripts, single folio paintings, portraits and murals. This approach is more inclusive and considers different aspects of the regional tradition in Punjab, than had been previously considered.

At the same time, Srivastava's nomenclature should be problematised. He makes a case for a regional school of art, but calling it a 'Sikh school of art' could be its limiting feature. 'Sikh school of art' can easily be identified with Sikh religious themes alone. He is himself prone to this in his book, when discussing themes which fall under this school of art. He points out that some themes like Vaishnava and Shaiva bhakti, Ragas and Raginis, cult of Devi were Pahari influence (rather than being part of the local tradition). He further says that under new Sikh rulers, Sikh themes were also taken up, such as portraits of Sikh Gurus, Rajas and officers (27). So here he identifies Sikh themes as portraits of Sikh Gurus and Sikh notables with the exclusion of Vaishnava and Shaiva or Devi themes. Further, when he discusses works of artists at Amritsar (especially Kehar Singh, Kishan Singh, Bishan Singh and Kapur Singh) they are said to be working on 'Sikh themes: religious and secular' (51). However, he does not explain what he means by Sikh themes which include both secular and religious subjects. One can only speculate that he is referring to portraits

[5] K. C. Aryan (1975) considers them a poor version of Pahari style.

of Gurus and events from their lives as religious themes and portraits of important Sikh personalities as secular themes. In Srivastava's work, the term 'Sikh School of art' seems to stand for all art in Punjab in the nineteenth century, which is acceptable for its scope and content but not nomenclature. Even though Srivastava includes a variety of art under this term, within modern debates of twentieth and twenty-first century, the work 'Sikh' itself refers to specific theme and identity. Notably, Srivastava's book is titled *Punjab Painting* and not Sikh Painting.

Another important work of scholarship on Punjab arts is Kanwarjit Singh Kang's (1985) book *Wall Paintings of Punjab and Haryana* which discusses murals from the nineteenth century. The buildings studied include *deras* (seminaries), *akharas* (centres of Udasi sect), gurdwaras, *thakurdwaras* (Hindu temples) and *samadhs* (memorials built after death) of important saints and personalities, and havelis. His work reflects upon the relationships of Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims in the realms of arts. He does identify themes of paintings as Sikh or Hindu but Kang does not use the phrase 'Sikh art' or 'Sikh painting.'

Kang introduces the scope of his work by stating that the Sikhs' belief in single, formless God and the ban against image-worship left very little scope for the development of visual art for needs of religious worship. Yet, he elaborates, Sikhs helped its promotion, primarily because they were as fond of decoration as the Hindus were and spent large sums of money for the beautification of their shrines. He goes on to state that in Maharaja Ranjit Singh's time Sikhism had royal patronage and the Sikhs started devoting themselves to the magnificence and splendour of their shrines. "And now the cult of the Gurus and the Sikhs' passionate adoration of these spiritual leaders were demanding an artistic expression. The walls of over 700 shrines were available for embellishment. Endowments given, contributions in form of money, produce and labour by the Sikhs for the construction of these shrines came in vogue" (Kang 1985, 3).

Kang goes on to say that the difference between Hindus and Sikhs was more of form—the latter keeping uncut hair while the former did not. He points out the Sikhs freely made use of Brahmins and performed rituals identified with Hindus and that idols of Gods were kept in Sikh shrines. Moreover, Sikhs built Hindu temples with portraits of Gurus painted as part of the decoration, and Hindus built gurdwaras where

Hindu deities were painted on the walls of the shrine. In fact, many Sikh shrines had Hindu priests and Sikh priests presided over many Hindu shrines. Kang argues that interaction with the Hindus was a major factor contributing to Sikhs patronising arts such as painting. According to Kang, the Sikh religion does not permit use of visual art for religious worship, but, the Sikhs ended up doing so, firstly because, they were as fond of decoration as anyone else. Secondly, Sikhism got state patronage under Ranjit Singh and Sikhs had the necessary resources to invest in fine arts. Thirdly, interaction with Hindus helped develop Sikh patronage of painting, because Hinduism was full of pictoral depictions of gods. That is why buildings built by Sikhs often had paintings of Hindu gods. It is thus implied in his argument that this interaction modified the earlier orthodox attitude of the Sikhs against pictoral depictions of their Gurus for its associations with image worship. He further elaborates, portraits of Sikh Gurus began to be painted on walls as well as on paper. The building of Hindu temples by the Sikhs and installation of idols in the new *shivalas* (temples of Lord Shiv) by them, resulted in the appearance of Sikh themes in the wall-paintings of temples devoted to Hindu gods. Similarly the building of gurdwaras by Hindus led to Hindu themes being painted on the walls of Sikh shrines. The fact that there were Hindu priests at certain Sikh shrines and Sikh priests at certain Hindu shrines, also caused this exchange of themes which did not extend only to mural paintings but also percolated in other areas like Janam Sakhi paintings and wood carving (3–5).

Kang's argument is important for it notes similarity of practices among Sikhs and Hindus. The same has also been demonstrated in Oberoi (1994). However, Kang's line of reformist argument assumes that in the formative years of Sikhism or early years of development of Sikh community this was not the case. It assumes that in the early centuries of its development, the Sikh community was free of Hindu influences which is why there were no pictoral arts. And his argument of close association between Sikhs and Hindus assumes a particularity to the reign of Ranjit Singh and the nineteenth century. The sense is that the purity of early Sikh tradition is diluted as a result of interaction with Hindus. That is why, according to him, Sikhs start to become patrons of pictoral art. The idea of purity of early Sikh tradition has been critiqued in scholarship (see Oberoi 1995) and shown to be a creation of the Tat Khalsa school of history writing. It is reasonable to consider that we get evidence of murals in the nineteenth century and onwards because this was the time that Sikhs (among other

communities in Punjab) grew in prosperity and consequently in a position to patronise high arts. There might have been earlier instances of art too, but it did not survive or there were no particular distinguishing factors between being a Sikh and a Hindu until Guru Gobind's establishment of Khalsa. Kang himself has elaborated that this interaction among people of different communities included Muslims as well: Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims visited tombs of Muslims saints; there were Muslim *dhadhis* (singers) and *rababis* (musicians who play on the instrument *rabab*) who worked at the Darbar Sahib.

The terms 'Sikh art' is discussed in details in W. H. McLeod (1991). His work titled *Popular Sikh Art,* traces the development of Sikh art over a period of time, before looking specifically into popular Sikh art. McLeod begins by introducing the problem of defining 'Sikh' art. He elaborates that the term could mean to include works of artists who are Sikhs; or art produced in an area governed or dominated by Sikhs; or carried out under the patronage of the Sikhs; or depicting Sikh subjects; or it may manifest a style distinctive by its content or artists being Sikh. The most commonly understood criteria are the works done under the patronage of Sikhs and depicting Sikh subjects. But McLeod rejects this as a narrow definition and points out that there are examples of Sikh art even two centuries before Ranjit Singh's reign. It is content, rather than patronage which according to him, is at least one essential condition to categorise art as 'Sikh'(McLeod 1991, 3).

He rightly observes that the bulk of paintings under the rule of Ranjit Singh and his successors are portraits of royalty and aristocracy. These are individuals who happen to be Sikh and the portraits were made because they were important people. Only a very small portion of tart during this time is dedicated to Janam Sakhis and portraits of Gurus. So if the definition of 'Sikh' art were to give priority to content over everything else, then most of these paintings (of important personalities) do not qualify. And yet, he points out, they are typically considered part of Sikh artistic heritage and labelled as Sikh art in works of scholarship. In the same vein, McLeod points out that paintings executed in Pahari style have very few Sikh religious themes. Most work is portraits of important people, who happen to be Sikh. In case of art by Europeans, the patronage is by Sikhs, the subjects are Sikhs but the template is European. So if painters like Schoefft are eliminated from the category of Sikh art, he

argues, then Pahari too should be kept out, because both styles are foreign to Sikh kingdoms. To settle the argument, he proposes a notion of marginality. He says that since Pahari traditions are geographically closer to Sikhs, culturally, they can be considered on the margins of Sikh art. "It can neither be embraced as authentically Sikh not dismissed as totally alien...(because) in the case of Pahari artists we do at least have Janam Sakhi illustrations and portraits of the Gurus, and there is some degree of adaption in Pahari style" (10–11).

McLeod's work seems to be the first to question the use of the term 'Sikh art' and the problem of using a religious denominator i.e. Sikh—which has particular associations with identity in the modern India—to refer to paintings. He raises the question whether the religious nomenclature denotes paintings of religious nature or does it denote paintings by those who follow the particular religion. Also, religious nomenclature assumes that religion is the main motivating factor or primary cause for this art, and ignores several social, political and economic factors influencing art.

McLeod also observes that representations of Guru Nanak especially in Janam Sakhi literature are very much part of the Sikh tradition, but at the same time, their aesthetics—style and iconography—are not uniquely Sikh. They form part of other hagiographical traditions too, especially that of the Sufis. The standard look of adult Nanak is that of a Sufi. He wears a loose robe (*jama)*, tight fitting toursers (*pajama*), a distinctive crown-shaped hat (*mukat*) and slippers (*desi juti*). He has fakir's cord (*seli*) on a shoulder and carries a rosary (*mala)* in one hand. This image, argues McLeod, is part of established Sufi tradition (6).

An important point raised by McLeod is the difference in the template and content of courtly art from popular traditions in the nineteenth century. He notes that Pahari influence is predominant in courtly art—the portraits, whereas murals rely heavily on Janam Sakhi traditions and stories of gurus. Even though the latter are not completely absent from courtly interests, they occupy a relatively minor position compared to portraits in Pahari style. He points to illustrated manuscripts and the murals created in the nineteenth century (second quarter onwards) which use the aesthetic template of the Janam Sakhis. The content is religious, including stories of Janam Sakhis, portraits of gurus, Sikh martyrs (especially sons of Guru Gobind Singh and Baba Deep Singh) and scenes from Hindu mythology. Therefore, the style of the

aristocratic circles differ from what local piety produced. And, while the latter is distinctively Sikh, McLeod argues that one must be careful denoting the former as 'Sikh' (15–6).

McLeod's argument leads to two possibilities: firstly, a broadening of definition of Sikh identity and secondly, a narrowing of definition of Sikh painting. The art connected with religious practices under Sikhism is easily classified as Sikh art. At the same time, religious practices of Sikhs were varied. McLeod has pointed out that much of the content in the murals was 'Hindu,' including murals at Darbar Sahib completed under Ranjit Singh's time.

Some more works of scholarship which engage with the term 'Sikh' art are discussed below. *The Arts of the Sikh Kingdoms* edited by Susan Stronge, begins on the note that 'Sikh' art is an impossible to define. The patrons of arts as well as the artists belonged to different religious communities: Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Christians. So, for instance, the famous throne of the Sikh ruler Ranjit Singh was made by a Muslim artisan. The book also argues that 'Sikh' art has come to be identified with portraiture, because the characters depicted in those paintings are easily recognised as Sikhs (Stronge 1999, 10). The same book has an article by B. N. Goswamy on painting tradition in Punjab. He explains that 'Sikh' themes were of interest to not only the Sikhs but a larger constituency. Moreover,

> what are rather loosely defined as 'Hindu themes', as distinct from Sikh, were widely produced throughout the period and the region....The whole matter of what constituted Sikh themes and Sikh patronage, or Hindu themes and Hindu patronage needs re-examined in the light of the context of the times, which needs to be clearly understood. There seems to be little doubt that what are, rather ahistorically, defined as 'Hindu themes', as distinct from Sikh, were being treated on an extensive scale throughout the period and the region. The sharp distinction between Hindu and Sikh themes that is sometimes perceived seems in fact to belong almost certainly to a period much later than that of the Maharaja (Ranjit Singh). The evidence in this respect is considerable and worth being taken seriously into account. One reads again and again about the widespread reverence paid to the Sikh Gurus and Sikh shrines by Hindus and Sikhs alike and about the Maharaja and the Sikh nobility paying homage to

> Hindu shrines and texts: all those devout pilgrimages to Haridwar, the gifts made to the Brahmins of Kashi and Gaya, the ordering of silver-doors at the shrine of the Goddess, and so on. There is clear, visual extension of this in the form of lack of any sharp demarcation between Sikh and Hindu themes when one examines the evidence of the murals on the walls of Sikh royal palaces and other structures—all those descriptions of scenes based on the 'Prem Sagar', the vernacular translation of the Bhagavata Purana, of which Lieut. Barr speaks, or the surviving panels on the walls of the Sheesh Mahal at Patiala with engaging renderings of the incarnations of Vishnu, the many deeds of Krishna, illustration based on the satsai of Bihari, and so on—whether in the first half of the nineteenth century or the second. When a view like this is taken, the whole issue opens up, and many things fall into place: the Rasikapriya series featuring so prominently Radha and Krishna from the Kapurthala collection; the famous 'Kangra' Gita Govinda with texts inscribed at the back not only in Sanskrit but also translated into Punjabi and written in Gurmukhi characters; illustrated nayaka-nayika series; 'Pahari' looking erotic sets with Sikh figures. It would appear as if, at least for a few decades, sets of portraits of the great Gurus and Janamsakhi series were being produced in as many numbers, and with as much feeling, in the Pahari areas as works based on classical Sanskrit and Hindi texts were being made by painters active in the Punjab plains, and not for Hindu patrons alone. (Goswamy 1999, 110)

The same argument is presented in another important work by Goswamy and Smith (2006), *I See No Stranger: Early Sikh Art and Devotion,* published as a catalogue to an exhibition organised in New York. This work talks about development of iconography of Sikh Gurus, especially Nanak, from traditional imagery developed in Janam Sakhi stories, as well as what the artists could see around them. Goswamy and Smith (2006) make an important point about paintings in Sikh tradition with reference to Adi Granth manuscripts. They write about an Adi Granth manuscript commissioned by Sodhi Bhan Singh in 1839 (in collection of National Museum, New Delhi):

> One folio shows ten Gurus, each with family members of his own, their figures placed inside the petals of a full blown twelve petaled lotus. The two

> extra petals at the top have images of Suryavansh and Kashyap Rishi, apparently some reference to lineage and ancestry of the Sodhi who appears himself at the heart of the lotus, performing worship and offering oblations to the Goddess Mahakali and Shiva in the form of Mahakala. Another folio has a large image of the great God Vishnu recumbent on Shesha; a third shows Vishwarupa—cosmic form of Vishnu—being worshipped, flanked by Arjuna on one side and Bhan Singh one the other. On other pages on the manuscript the sacred syllable Om appears again and again, with images or Shiva, Vishnu, and the Goddess accommodated inside it, in the manner that one is used to seeing in Kashmiri work. The presence of so many Hindu gods and goddesses among the illustrations in this manuscript, takes one initially by surprise. It has been suggested that Sodhi Bhan Singh was a descendant from the Minas, a group earlier 'stigmatized by the mainstream Sikh community due to the family's contention that they constituted a separate lineage of Gurus. To this is added the observation that 'Mina writing and scriptural exegesis displays a strong affinity with classical Indic tradition and mythology,' and that displaying the Adi Granth to the followers was part of Mina practice. Perhaps there are simpler explanations, that in some cases, like the introduction of Ganesh and Saraswati in invocatory sections, for instance—as in another brilliantly illuminated and illustrated manuscript of Adi Granth at Bagrian in Punjab—this was done because 'it had always been done' by Kashmiri painters and scribes, most of whom were Muslims. Or that the sharp divisive lines that were seen as separating Sikh from Hindu themes belong to a later point of time in history. Or, again, that there was no hostility toward other faiths in early Sikh devotion, only toward false practitioners of those faiths. (Goswamy and Smith 2006, 39–40)

While both these books were created from exhibitions on Sikh art, they also explain the limitations of using the modern categories of 'Hindu' or 'Sikh' to distinguish art from a pre-modern period. The argument is clear—what we understand to be boundaries of Sikhism today, were not always so.

Kavita Singh (2003a) also contributes to the debate on Sikh art by problematising the typical assessment of fine arts under Sikh rulers–Ranjit Singh and those after him

including the Phulkian states. These rulers are considered great patrons of art but at the same time it is believed that they were unable to give art a distinctive character. Therefore, under them art was a continuation of Mughal and Rajput traditions. Singh argues that this view reflects the bias common in Indian art history according to which only objects deriving from a courtly setting were considered 'art'; thus the assumption that 'Sikh art' only consisted of those things that were made when there were Sikh rulers. Moreover, later-period objects were accorded an inferior status in comparison with earlier ones. Thus work done for Sikh patrons by nineteenth century Pahari painters would be considered inferior against the work done by the ancestors of these painters for hill rajas a hundred years before. And, a relatively narrow range of objects had been studied even among the courtly arts (K. Singh 2003a, 10–1).

Singh has argued that we must try to expand our definition of 'Sikh art' beyond the time frame of Sikh rulers' reign, and consider the following. Firstly, given that Sikh community continues to exist today, the term must be seen as a category which changed over a period of time and context. Secondly, Singh explains that in pre-modern period, a reference to the arts of a community whether Buddhist, Jain or Vishanava, usually refers to the ritual and religious objects commissioned by that community. So in this sense, Sikh artefacts would be objects connected with the observance of Sikhism. She proposes that in the Sikh case, the term also applies to secular objects made for Sikh kingdoms. The artists making these could come from any community. This however would not be the situation in the modern where "in the modern world the artist and his production would have a different place. The artist is expected to speak from his own subjectivity and what he says is as valuable as his manner of saying it....Here, Sikh art would mean the art made by artists who are Sikh" (12–3). Further, she suggests that paintings, photographs and other artefacts that depict Sikh subjects, can be studied for the ways in which Sikhs were represented in art.

I agree with Singh's argument in so far she identifies 'Sikh' art as that produced or used for religious purposes by members of that community. However, it is difficult to accept the extension of the term for secular objects made for Sikh kingdoms. She does not explain why this argument holds good for Sikh case. Also, identification of Sikh art with Sikh artists in modern period would be problematic. Given that modern artists

are understood to express their subjectivities through art, are we to assume that an artist's religion is his primary motivating force? And would we then call M.F. Hussain's work as 'Muslim art'? Also, with reference to the artists whose works are discussed in this thesis, while most artists working on Sikh history paintings in independent India are Sikhs, we also have the case of the artist Bodhraj in Delhi who is a Hindu (see chapter 4).

Surveying Popular Sikh Art: Mid-nineteenth Century till the Present

The discussion above makes two things clear: (a) limits of the modern understanding of the label 'Sikh', and therefore (b) the need to contextualise the use of the word with reference to time, content, patrons, and consumers of the art. Keeping this in mind, I shall now explain my selection of Sikh popular art for this thesis.

The objective of this thesis is to examine the notion of Sikh heritage as propagated by museums. These museums are built by the Sikh community and display modern history paintings depicting events and personalities from Sikh history. These paintings are widely reproduced in different media and are a very visible and popular form of Sikh heritage. The same type of paintings are also present in the case study for this thesis, Bhai Mati Das Museum at Sis Ganj Gurdwara, Delhi. I will attempt an analysis of the display at Bhai Mati Das Museum at two levels: (a) the storyline, or the narration of events, and (b) a visual analysis of the paintings on display. For an enquiry along these two lines, it is necessary to study the display at Sis Ganj in the background of development of popular Sikh art. The narration at Sis Ganj revolves around the life of the Sikh Gurus, and their followers. There are a few paintings on persecution of Sikhs in the eighteenth century, and then the rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. There is very little of Sikh history after the decline of Ranjit Singh's kingdom. Thus, Gurus and their life, are the main constituents of the narrative of the museum at Sis Ganj.[6]

[6] This is discussed in detail in chapter 5.

Hence for the survey of popular Sikh art, I have chosen to examine the development of the iconography of the Sikh Gurus, and choice of themes related to the Gurus. The starting point of this survey is middle of nineteenth century, when introduction of printing technologies enabled multiple reproductions of a single work, at low cost. Because of this, popular prints could reach a large number of people, which was not the case with art or books before printing was introduced. The popular art surveyed includes lithographs and woodcuts sold as single folios or sets, illustrations from printed manuscripts, posters, and paintings displayed in museums. The purpose of this survey is to examine elements of change and continutity in depiction of the Ten Sikh Gurus and their disciples and themes related them. I would like to clarify that my attempt here is not to define the Sikh tradition or Sikh artistic tradition, but to show how a particular element (i.e. representation of the Gurus and their followers, which is central to display at Sikh museums) has evolved visually over a period of time.

Evolution of Sikh Iconography

One of the most popular motifs of Sikh tradition is Guru Nanak. As will be shown in the survey, he is the most widely reproduced Sikh figure over centuries. The earliest Sikh art is present in Janam Sakhi manuscripts, available from middle of seventeenth century. The paintings in these manuscripts depict the life of Guru Nanak: his childhood, education, marriage, travels all over the Indian subcontinent and beyond. An examination of Janam Sakhi paintings is beyond the scope of this work, but I will briefly discuss scholars who have examined these for understanding the development of Guru Nanak's iconography.

As discussed earlier, McLeod had noted the similarities between Janam Sakhis and Sufi hagiographical literature. He points out that in some early Janam Sakhi illustrations, Nanak's depiction is very similar to that of a Sufi. He wears a jama, pajama, mukat and is often shown with seli and mala—a typical image of a holy man which is part of Sufi tradition as well. He thus argues that while the earliest Janam Sakhis[7] depict Sikh content, but they draw upon a wider aesthetic tradition— they use

[7] *Bala Janam Sakhi* (1658 AD), *Bagharian Janam Sakhi* (1724 AD), *B 40 Janam Sakhi* (1733).

visual elements which were present in other hagiographical traditions as well (McLeod 1991, 6).

A comparison of images of Nanak is done by Kerry Brown in the introduction to the book, *Sikh Art and Literature*. He discusses three images of Guru Nanak in the Kapany Collection, made in three different centuries. He remarks that these are not of historic Nanak, but of Sikhism of the time (Brown 1999, 7). The first illustration is from Lucknow, dated c. 1770. In this image, Nanak's headgear suggests that he is a pious Muslim man. The second image is from a nineteenth century Janam Sakhi and Brown notes, "we still do not see before us a man whom we would recognise today as Sikh. Sikhism had yet to build its separate and visually distinct identity. This time, as it happens, Guru Nanak looks more like a Hindu" (5). The third image is an oil portrait of Guru Nanak made by Sobha Singh in the twentieth century. Here, Guru Nanak looks like a modern day elderly Sikh.

Variations in depictions of Guru Nanak is also noted by other scholars. B. N. Goswamy and Caron Smith (2006) argue that Nanak's iconography would have been worked out over a period of time from the images of Guru Nanak carried by artists in their mind. These artists, the authors note, were working in the eighteenth century, much after Guru Nanak's demise. Their view of Nanak, they suggest, must have been shaped by earlier versions of Janam Sakhis, which talk of what he wore and carried "a strange motley of Hindu and Muhammadan religious habiliments: a wandering recluse's cloak to cover the body; a loose sheet of cloth thrown over it like a 'safa' or 'angavastra'; a Muslim qalandar's cap over his head; a necklace of beads slung across the body; a tilak mark on the forehead" (Goswamy and Smith 2006, 33–4). The artists who drew Nanak would have had such descriptions in mind, and would have also drawn upon the images of holy men they could see around themselves—yogis, Sufis, sanyasis, sadhus. They further argue that the popular image of Nanak, as a venerable sage, with grey beard, head slightly tilted to one side, looking thoughtful and serene, probably emerged only in late eighteenth century. Nanak is typically shown sitting cross-legged on a mat or a low throne under a tree. He holds a rosary in his hand which may lay on an armrest. A pair of wooden sandals, a book and a staff compelte the picture. Nanak's comes across as 'Babaji,' a term of affection and respect to a grandfatherly old man. He is often accompanied by Bala and Mardana (33–4).

For other Gurus, it seems that some time in the first half of eighteenth century, a board iconography of Guru Hargobind, Guru Harkishan (1656–1664) and Guru Gobind Singh was established. Guru Hargobind was shown with a falcon and two swords of miri and piri, identifying him as both a spiritual and material sovereign. Guru Harkishan is shown as a child and Guru Gobind is shown riding a horse. The latter is armed, has a falcon perched on his arm, and often an aigrette adorning his turban, identifying him as the *kalgidhar* (one with the aigrette). The other Gurus are not easy to distinguish from one another (32–3).

Popular Sikh Art: Late Nineteenth Century

Late nineteenth century was the time of introduction of woodcuts and lithographs for reproducing both images and text. As far as images are concerned, they are available as single folios or in sets, and as illustrations in printed manuscripts. They are both black and white, and coloured. Western influence on print culture was not restricted to techniques of printing, but also transformed drawing styles. This period saw the beginning of use of perspective and watercolours. The most well known collection of popular prints from Punjab is the Lockwood Kipling Collection at Victoria and Albert Museum, London. It has images of Sikh Gurus, *bhagats* (saints, other than the Sikh Gurus, whose saying are part of Guru Granth Sahib), scenes from darbar of Ranjit Singh including portraits of him and his contemporaries. Both Archer (1966) and McLeod (1991) have discussed this collection as part of their works on Sikh art. Popular art in Punjab was by no means limited to Sikh subjects alone. As Jaya Appaswamy has shown, the themes in popular art in Punjab range from religious subjects to folk lore and ballads, from satire to romance. She gives example of a line-drawing colour-tinted by hand, in which a sardarni is shown holding her husband by the beard and raining blows on him with her juti. Other popular themes included illustrations of well-known Punjabi folk romances such as *Hir Ranjha* and *Sohni Mahiwal*. Railways were a very popular theme, and are representation in the Lockwood Kipling Collection as well. Religious themes included those of Sikh Gurus and Radha Krishna (Appaswamy 1983). For the purpose of this thesis, we will concentrate on Sikh themes.

McLeod (1991) considers the woodcuts of the late nineteenth century as ancestors of modern bazaar prints. He analyses the Lockwood Kipling collection for both themes represented and iconography. He lists thirty-eight prints which are of interest for studying popular Sikh art and the maximum number of prints are on Nanak and in prints where all the Sikh Gurus are shown, he is depicted most prominently. Also, the Gurus after Nanak and before Gobind Singh are not represented at all, except as part of a gathering. The bhagats whose sayings were included in Guru Granth Sahib are also frequently shown. He suggests that bhagats were popular not only among Sikhs but many other sects as well, and this could explain their greater presence in popular art (McLeod 1991, 22–24). A common template in these woodcuts was that of head-and-shoulders portraits surrounded by an oval frame, or figures seated on oval rugs. Ranjit Singh and his associates were depicted in this manner, in sets made for British clientele. This format was also used to show the Ten Sikh Gurus together to depict the idea that the same divine spirit illumines ten separate bodies (19–20).

The popular Sikh art considered for this study has been listed in appendix 1. It includes all the paintings and prints considered for this study. This list is illustrative of popular Sikh art rather than exhaustive. Serial numbers 1 to 60 cover popular Sikh art in late nineteenth century and numbers 61 to 94 are examples of popular Sikh art in early and mid-twentieth century. The images were accessed at libraries, archival collections as well as personal collections of artists. Items in appendix 1 include examples of both mass produced prints (woodcuts and lithographs) as well as drawings made by hand, which were still being painted and sold in the local bazaars, either as single folios or as sets. Some of the illustrations listed here are part of a manuscript i.e. they illustrate specific incidents described in a text. Illustrations in manuscripts sometimes occur only on the cover page followed by the colophon including the name and location of the printer, date, name of the patron, calligrapher and artist and sometimes, the number of copies printed and price. The cover page of *Pothi Gurbilas ki*[8] at Panjab Digital Library (PDL), shows a drawing of Guru Gobind Singh riding a horse. A nihang walks behind him waving a flywhisk. The Guru is shown with all the symbols of sovereignty as well as that of a warrior. He is haloed, holds weapons, a falcon is perched on his arm and a dog runs alongside the horse. The

[8] Accession no. at PDL is BK-001146; No. 23 in appendix 1.

cover page gives us the date at 1882 and mentions the price of the book, the cost of binding and post. The folios from Lockwood Collection too often give us such information on the margins of the drawings.

The manuscript of *Ati prachin Janam Sakhi*[9] published in 1884 from Guru Singh Sabha, India Press is available in digitised form at PDL. It has a single illustration on the cover page, a black and white drawing of Guru Nanak and Mardana. Another manuscript in the PDL collection, *Janam Sakhi Sri Guru Babe Nanak Di*,[10] dated 1883 and printed at Victoria Press, Lahore, has 167 black and white illustrations throughout the text. These include a drawing of Guru Nanak, Bala and Mardana on cover page; a cobra in the field providing shade to a sleeping Nanak; his sister, Bibi Nanki's marriage procession; and Guru Nanak at Mecca.

Most printing production in Punjab seems to have been concentrated at Amritsar and Lahore. There are also references to drawings being sent to Germany for mass printing. We get names of artists from both individual prints and books. There are several examples of popular art by Sobha Singh, Lahora Singh,[11] Puran Singh and Gian Singh Naqqash (1883–1953).[12] All of them worked between late nineteenth and early twentieth century and in more than one medium. There survive examples of watercolour on paper, lithographs and woodcuts made by them.

*

It is evident from the examples of popular art listed in appendix 1 that Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh are the most popular among Sikh themes in late nineteenth century. They are also most easily recognisable. Nanak appears as a venerable old Baba seated under a tree, head slightly tilted to a side. The development of this image of Nanak has already been discussed in the previous section about evolution of Sikh iconography. Many of the late nineteenth century prints show a caged parrot hanging from the tree under which Nanak sits. He supports his arm on a yogi's crutch (*bairagan*), his wooden sandals and water pot (*lota*) are kept around him. McLeod

[9] Accession no. BK-000328; No. 20 in appendix 1.
[10] Accession no. BK-000327; No. 21 in appendix 1.
[11] Lahora Singh was an artist based in Lahore. He was a disciple of Mohd. Bakhsh Musawwar (*musawwar* is an illustrator).
[12] Gian Singh Naqqash trained as a fresco painter and worked at Darbar Sahib, Amritsar. He is the father of artist G. S. Sohan Singh. The term *naqqash* refers to an illuminator.

(1991, 24–5) points out, the caged parrot is a motif associated with the Nathpanthis[13] and the other two indicate renunciant aspects of his life (figure 3). In some prints, Bala appears waving a flywhisk behind Nanak and Mardana is shown with his rabab. Scenes from life of Guru Nanak i.e. episodes from Janam Sakhis were commonly depicted, mostly as part of the Janam Sakhi texts, to illustrate particular episodes. Among these, Nanak's discourses with the Siddhas (figure 4), his visit to Mecca, incidents from his childhood are popularly illustrated themes. Guru Nanak is also shown with his two sons, Sri Chand and Lakhmi Chand.

FIGURE 3. Guru Nanak in timeless conclave (no. 1 in appendix 1). Photo courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

[13] Nathpanthis are followers of saint Gorakhnath. This monotheistic sect had large following in parts of north India, especially Punjab and Uttar Pradesh.

FIGURE 4. Nanak with Siddhas (no. 7 in appendix 1). Photo courtsey of Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Guru Gobind Singh is most commonly shown armed, with a hawk on his wrist, and a prominent *kalgi* (plume) on his turban. He is often riding a horse and hunting with his followers. He is also shown sitting on a throne, administering *amrit* (nectar) to the *panj pyare*, the five beloved.[14] Figure 5 shows Guru Gobind Singh enthroned, stirring amrit in a bowl with his dagger. The Guru is easily identifiable by the throne, the kalgi and weapons he wears. A follower stands behind him waving the flywhisk and his wife sweetens the amrit by adding sugar plums (*batashe*) to it. The five chosen ones stand with hands folded, awaiting baptism. The panj piare wear shorts which end above the knees (*kachh*), the kirpan (associated with symbols of the Khalsa) but not all of them have uncut hair.[15]

[14] The first ones to be initiated into the Khalsa.
[15] There are 5 symbols (*kakkars*) of Khalsa—k*esh* (uncut hair), *kacch* (undergarment), *kangha* (comb), *karah* (steel bracelet), kirpan (dagger).

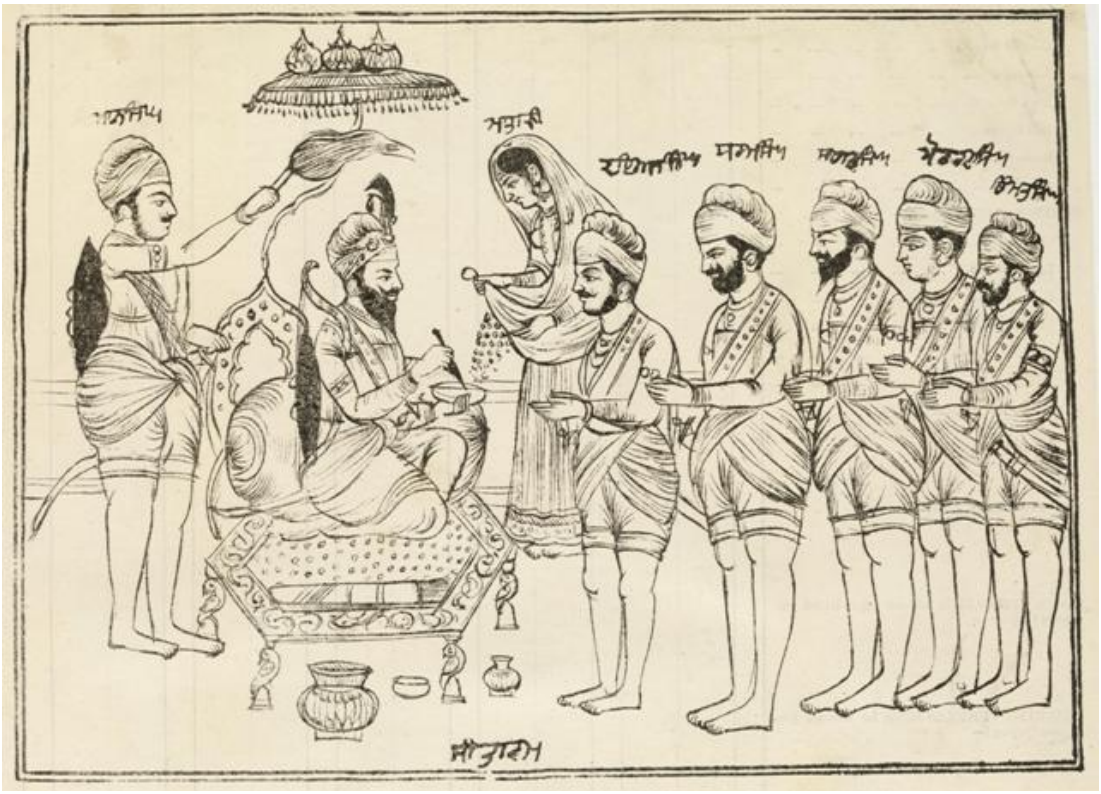

FIGURE 5. Guru Gobind Singh and panj piare (no. 10 in appendix 1). Photo courtsey of Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Another popular illustration in the late nineteenth century is that of the Ten Gurus together. Archer (1966, 69) has called this gathering the 'timeless conclave.' Nanak dominates this gathering, and after him Guru Gobind is the most prominent. Gurus from the second to the ninth do not appear independently in late nineteenth century popular Sikh art. They are always shown as part of the gathering of ten Gurus. In this conclave, some of the Gurus are identifiable, indicating that their iconography was popularly accepted. Guru Amar Das (1479–1574) the third Guru, is shown as an old man with a white beard, sitting next to Nanak. He is dressed simply and does not have the paraphernalia of flywhisk, tree, mukat, seli etc. Nanak is distinctive in his appearance and dominant in the gathering. Two Gurus are depicted with martial characteristics: the sixth Guru, Hargobind, who encouraged Sikhs to take up arms and the last Guru, Gobind Singh. Both are shown armed, and with a falcon. Guru Gobind Singh is distinguished with a more prominent kalgi and also by the fact that he often appears directly below or opposite Nanak, in the conclave. Guru Harkishan, who died when still a child, is shown smaller in size and beardless. All the other Gurus are

shown as adults, bearded men. Besides Nanak, Guru Gobind is the only one on whom individual prints are found in the late nineteenth century.

Another frequent theme in popular art of this time is depiction of Darbar Sahib and appendix 1 lists seven such illustrations. Most of these show the Darbar Sahib in the middle of the *sarovar* (water tank), and pilgrims in it or in the *parikrama* (footpath around the tank). A coloured woodcut engraving (figure 6) published by Bhai Wasava Singh, bookseller in Bazar Mai Seva, Amritsar is dated c. 1875. It shows Udasis sitting on the parikarma, and pilgrims (mostly women), talking to them. A man with long hair tied in a topknot can be seen taking bath in the sarovar. The drawing also includes a brahman who seems to be performing worship on the parikarma.

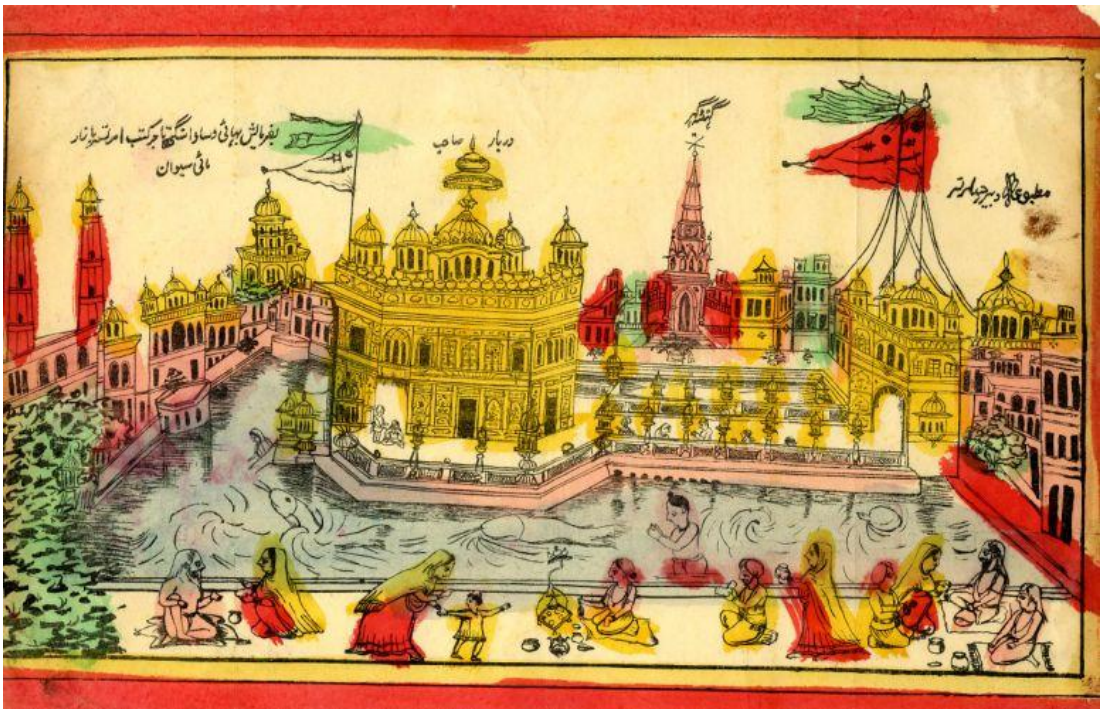

FIGURE 6. Golden Temple and pilgrims (no. 16 in appendix 1). Photo courtesy of The British Museum, (no. 1994, 1216, 0.1.IND).

Another *naksha* (map) of Golden Temple (no. 11 in appendix 1), shows a mix of people in the shrine such as Khalsa Sikhs, Hindus and an Englishman. This was printed in 1874–75 by Bhai Gujjar Singh of Faiz Printing Press, near Akal Banga in Amritsar and is part of the Lockwood Kipling Collection. As pointed out by McLeod, the flag of the Khalsa, the *Nishan Sahib*, in the late nineteenth century prints is not the

same as the modern Nishan. The Nishan Sahib in late nineteenth century prints is usually made up of a sword, *katar* (dagger) and shield (McLeod 1991, 128).

One can conclude from this survey that the most popular themes in late nineteenth century were Janam Sakhis of Guru Nanak, depictions of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh, both independently and in a gathering of all Sikh Gurus, and the Golden Temple. McLeod has argued that the choice of subjects indicates a popular view of Sikh tradition, as opposed to Singh Sabha movement's version, which was mostly propagated in a documentary form (McLeod 1991, 17–8).

However, we do get some examples of art which has been designated as part of Sikh school (by the collectors) and dated to late nineteenth century, and which depict a greater variety of themes within the Sikh tradition—themes which are not found in popular Sikh art discussed above. A series of paintings in Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh include scenes depicting popular stories from the Sikh tradition, such as the meeting between Baba Buddha and Mata Ganga when the latter went to seek blessings for a son; fight scene between Mai Bhago and the Sikhs led by Guru Gobind Singh on one hand and the Mughals on the other hand; Bibi Sulakhani's leper husband being cured from water at Amritsar; and Baba Deep Singh Shahid. The set also includes familiar illustrations like that of Guru Nanak's Janam Sakhis, or Guru Gobind Singh hunting. These drawings are stylistically similar to woodcuts or lithographs produced in the same period. However these are not prints, but watercolour drawings on paper. All the folios have a deep red border around the page, which probably indicates that they were created by the same artist, as a set. There is no evidence that these were printed. But, it is possible that they were made for sale in common bazaars, at cheap rates, that is why they have been included in the list of popular Sikh art of late nineteenth century. They also lack the fine quality of art which noble or royal patronage produces (no. 29–48, and no. 50, in the appendix 1) and are stylistically similar to popular Sikh art of late nineteenth century. While most of the images in the set conform to the pattern of themes evident in late nineteenth century, it was important to note some exceptions to it as well.

Some more examples of late nineteenth century Sikh art include paintings from the collection of the royal family of princely state of Nabha (no. 53–60 in appendix 1). Each folio is a full page coloured illustration and they include scenes like Nanak

meeting Mughal Emperor Babur; Guru Teg Bahadur's martyrdom, Guru Gobind Singh being appointed Guru after his after's death; birth of Guru Gobind Singh; Guru Teg Bahadur holding *darbar* (court); the Sikhs fighting the Mughals; Mehtab Singh and Sukha Singh entering Darbar Sahib to kill Massa Rangar; Mughal Emperor Akbar meeting Guru Amar Das. A line drawing of Bhai Taru Singh's execution, dating to late nineteenth century also survives in National Museum, New Delhi. These paintings are of better quality, with finer drawing and stylistically closer to the Pahari style, than the set in Chandigarh Museum. They also indicate that Sikh art in late nineteenth century depicted scenes of warfare and martyrdom even if in very few numbers. These were probably produced for a private patron and there is nothing to suggest that they were reproduced and widely distributed at this time. The style and themes of these paintings are clearly distinctive from popular Sikh art of this period (no. 49, 51 and 52 in appendix 1).

However, it is still useful to study the iconography in these late nineteenth century paintings and compare them with the modern representations. I will focus on only one aspect i.e. representation of the Mughals. In late nineteenth century Sikh popular art, any notion of enemy or particularly that of conflict with Mughals is not present. But this does appear in a few examples of Sikh paintings (not popular Sikh art) discussed in the paragraph above and I will compare them to history paintings in independent India. A painting in Nabha Collection, by artist Basahathullah shows Sikhs fighting the Mughals (no. 60 in appendix 1). The Mughals are dressed in red, white and grey and the Sikh army is dressed in white, blue, yellow, even black. The latter are wearing kachha. Each side has distinctive turbans (distinctive by style, not colour). The Mughal army is better equipped, being on horses, while Sikhs are on foot. A painting in Toor Collection, also dated to late nineteenth century shows a scene of battle between Sikhs and Mughals (no. 52 in appendix 1). The Mughal army is in red, and some are also wearing a deep shade of blue, a colour today solely associated with the Khalsa. The Sikhs are in garments of different colours, including white, yellow, blue, green, red. In the painting of Mai Bhago and Sikhs fighting against Mughals (no. 50 in appendix 1), in the collection of Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh, there is little difference between soldiers of opposing sides. The clothes worn by both sides are a combination of red, green, yellow. Turbans look different for

Mughal soldiers[16] and it's the Mughals whose severed heads are shown lying on the battlefield. This is vastly different from popular Sikh paintings from 1950s onwards, and their depiction of enemy. This is in contrast to the depictions of Mughals in popular Sikh art later in the twentieth century.

FIGURE 7. Sikhs and Mughals fight (no. 60 in appendix 1). Source: Singh and Singh (2012).

[16] In fact, Mughal turbans look like modern Sikh pag, worn with an inverted 'V' shape above the forehead.

FIGURE 8. Sikhs clash with Mughals (no. 52 in appendix 1). Source: Madra and Singh (1999, fig. 11).

FIGURE 9. Mai Bhago and forty muktas fight the Mughals (no. 50 in appendix 1). Source: Madra and Singh (1999, fig. 13).

Popular Sikh Art: Early to Mid-twentieth Century[17]

One of the most popular representations of the Sikh Gurus in early twentieth century were the portraits drawn by Thakur Lal Singh Musawwar for M.A. Macauliffe's book, *The Sikh Religion.* The book was published in 1906 in English and offered a traditional account and life history of the Sikh Gurus. Lal Singh drew ten portraits for this book which were reproduced subsequently in many other publications, well into the 1940s (figure 10). For instance, popular Punjabi magazine, *Phulwari*, continued to published Lal Singh's images such as the portrait of Guru Harkishan in March 1929 issue; June 1929 issue had images of Guru Nanak, Guru Angad, Guru Amar Das and Guru Ram Das; Guru Arjan's portrait appeared in May 1931 issue.

Lal Singh's illustrations in this book become espeically interesting in light of McLeod's (1991) arguments about influence of Singh Sabha on popular art of this period. He argues that there is very little popular Sikh art in the first half of twentieth century because of the growing influence of Singh Sabha, which disapproved of visual representation of Gurus. Thus, educated Sikhs who had been nurtured in Singh Sabha tradition were likely to discourage popular Sikh art. McLeod (1991, 28–9) gives the example of two works by a very influential Singh Sabha reformer, Kahn Singh Nabha (1861–1938)—*Mahan Kosh* and *Gurmat Martand*—to illustrate his point. Out of eighty–one illustrations in *Mahan Kosh*, McLeod points out, fifty–eight are photos and seventeen are maps and there are no representations of Gurus. He highlights Nabha's disapproval of representation of Gurus as expressed in *Gurmat Martand*. Nabha argues that no authentic, contemporary representations of the Gurus exist, therefore any current paintings would be purely a work of imagination. The existing pictures, according to Nabha, were false, ahistorical and outright foolish for they depict the Gurus in finery which would have been spurned by them. Nabha, therefore, rejects all paintings existing at his time as they stray from the teachings of the Gurus. He is however, open to the idea of creating new portraits in consultation

[17] The list of early and mid-twentieth century popular Sikh art is included in appendix 1 (serial no. 60– 94).

with historians and artists, which would accurately communicate the Gurus' spiritual qualities.[18]

McLeod thus argues that paintings of Sikh Gurus were actively discouraged by Singh Sabha leaders. He does not give much credence to the concern for historical accuracy as the reason for this attitude. Rather, he maintains that one of the reasons for disapproval of visual representation of Gurus was Singh Sabha's anxiety to distance itself from Hindu practices particularly including idol worship. Singh Sabha might be apprehensive that the paintings of Gurus might lead to their worship as idols. In addition, Sikh tradition's formulation of *Akal Purakh* (the supreme one) as formless, also rendered any material representation of the Gurus, such as in paintings unacceptable. Therefore, McLeod considers it likely that educated Sikhs looked down upon popular art. In fact, he argues, Sikh art in this period, had no chance of survival in Punjab, but might have been allowed to continue in places outside the immediate sphere of influence of Singh Sabhas such as Patna and Nanded. McLeod argues that there was a decline in Sikh popular art, though it was not completely wiped out. (McLeod 1991, 28–9).

I feel this link between Singh Sabha and decline of popular bazaar art is not quite straightforward. The Singh Sabha movement started in 1873 at Amritsar and the second branch emerged in Lahore in 1879. It was the Lahore Singh Sabha (specifically identitifed with Tat Khalsa), which tried to create a Sikh identity distinct from Hindus. The question of Sikh identity remained a point of contention between the Amritsar and Lahore factions well into the early twentieth century. In addition there exist several examples of representations of Gurus in the late nineteenth century, such as the murals at Baba Atal Gurdwara, and many other buildings in Punjab (as shown in discussion of Kang's work). Moreover, many painters in Punjab began their work on Sikh themes in the first half of twentieth century. These include Sobha Singh (1901–1986),[19] S.G. Thakur Singh (1899–1977), Kirpal Singh (1923–90), Jaswant Singh (1918–91). Many of Sobha Singh's popular works were painted during this time, including *Nativity of Nanak* (1934) and *Nam Khumai Nanaka* (1937). In fact, a

[18] Incidentally, this exactly is the claim of artists and patrons who create history paintings for museums and calendars. They argue that the paintings are not products of one's imagination, which could be fictitious; but are created after rigorous historical research so that they are accurate representations of the Gurus and their times.
[19] Sobha Singh is the most famous painter of the Sikh Gurus. His work is discussed later in the chapter.

biography on Sobha Singh credits the agitation on Sikh shrines (Gurdwara Reform Movement, which was inspired by the ideals of Singh Sabha) as inspiring him to paint the Sikh Gurus. Sobha Singh was in Amritsar when the agitation to free gurdwaras from mahants was picking pace (Khokhar 2001, 74). So, it is equally tempting to see the work of artists like Sobha Singh being inspired from Singh Sabha ideas. McLeod had placed these artists in independent India, but it seems that their popularity had begun well before that. Also, Fenech notes that pictures of Baba Deep Singh and Sikh Gurus appeared the advertising columns in the *Khalsa Advocate* and Baba Amar Singh of Khalsa Agency, Lahore published the prints. These were also adverstised for sale, on back cover of popular tracts on Sikh martyrs (Fenech 2000, 198). If we accept that Singh Sabha discourages pictoral representation of Gurus, we must also consider that there exist several instances of the same in the second half of nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Could it be that while the Singh Sabha was at its height, the popular Sikh art was frowned upon, and the successive decades drew upon the political legacy of Singh Sabha Movement but chose to manifest it in exactly opposite way i.e. by encouraging representations of Sikh Gurus and Sikh history?

Returning to Lal Singh's illustrations in Macauliffe's book, it is noteworthy that this book was written by Macauliffe in consultation with Kahn Singh Nabha. In fact, the book was welcomed by the Singh Sabha as the true representation of Sikh history who had been particularly unhappy with Ernest Trumpp's account of Sikh history published in 1877. McLeod explains that portraits of Gurus in Macauliffe's book were acceptable because Lal Singh's style was completely westernized, and made to cater to an English-speaking audience, rather than a native of Punjab (McLeod 1991, 82–3). In our consideration of popular Sikh art, Lal Singh's portraits of Gurus cannot be overlooked simply on the basis of their style. Even though the book was published in English and therefore reached a limited audience, the Singh Sabha actively approved of it. And I have shown above how these images went on to be reproduced for a very long time in Punjabi print culture. Moreover, these images are stylistically very close to mass produced popular Sikh art of this time and shared visual elements with photography and theatre, as was typical of popular art during early and mid-twentieth century.

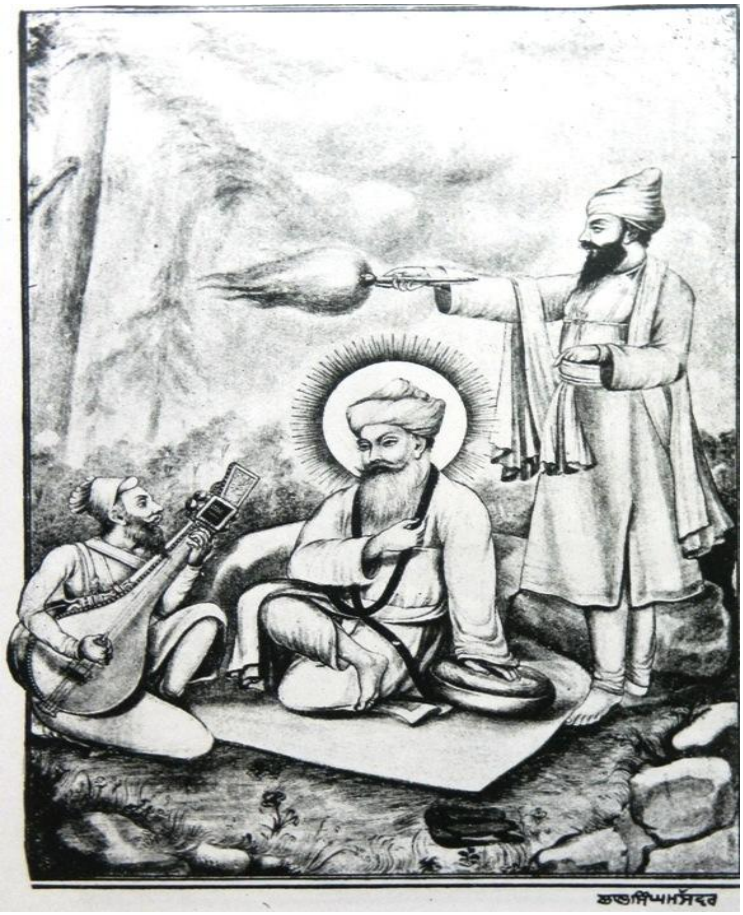

FIGURE 10. *Guru Nanak*, by Lal Singh Mussawar (no. 61 from appendix 1). Source: Macauliffe (1909).

Besides Macauliffe's book, evidence of representation of Gurus in early twentieth century can be seen in two photographs listed in appendix 1. Figure 11 is a photograph of a bookseller at Amritsar taken in 1908 which shows him selling books and framed pictures of Sikh Gurus. Another photograph from 1903 (no. 63 in appendix 1) shows a holy man at the Golden Temple (probably on the parikarma) reading the Guru Granth Sahib. A drape covering the holy book has a painting (either on cloth or paper, it is unclear from the picture) of Guru Nanak with Sri Chand and Lakhmi Das and Bala.

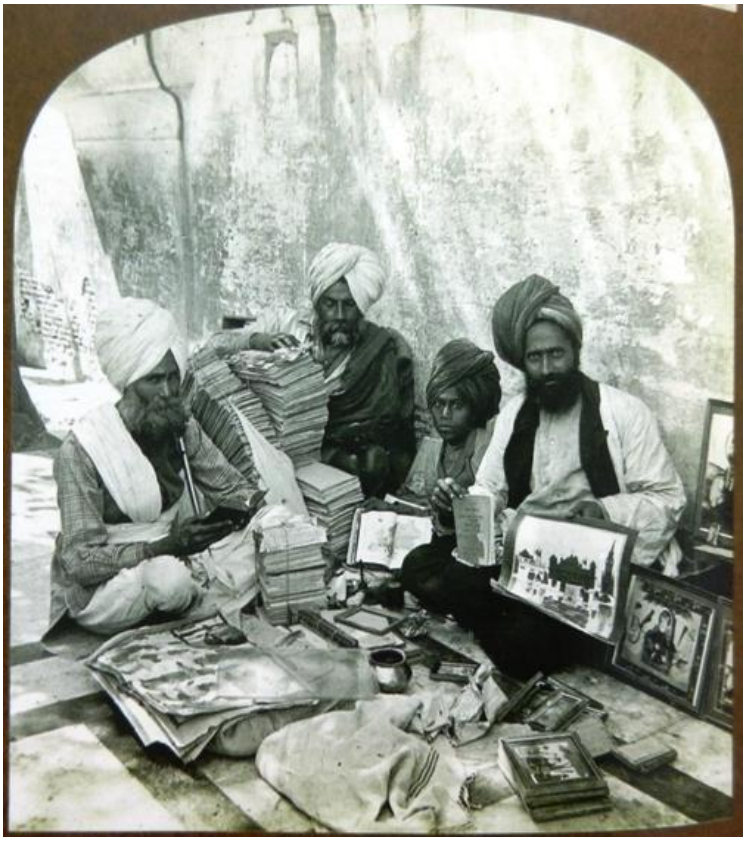

FIGURE 11. Photograph of a bookseller with pictures of Sikh Gurus (no. 62 in appendix 1). Source: Madra and singh (2011, fig. 249).

There are three developments that influence popular Sikh art in this period. First is the growth of theatre; second, the growth of photography, and third, the spread of chromolithographs. Christopher Pinney writing about popular art in India talks about these influences and their 'interocularity.' Though he does not specifically discuss Sikh art, his observations are useful in this context. He gives examples of how popular pictures frame the deities within the visible paraphernalia of theatre. In illustration number 12 of Ganga Devi in Pinney's book, the Devi appears as central part of a stilted tableau within a draped proscenium arch (Pinney 2004, 35). Further, Pinney shows that often the subject matter of chromolithographs and plays in late nineteenth century Calcutta were same. The same had earlier been pointed out by K. C. Aryan (1975) in his work on Punjab painting. He argues that popularity of theatre encouraged the growth of bazaar style of art in Punjab. Many painters were involved in making of backdrops and sets for plays. Aryan gives example of a painting depicting Mughal Empress Nurjahan's meeting with Guru Hargobind (figure 12). The setting is typically that of a stage: note the curtains, the painting of houses in the

backdrop and the entry of Nur Jahan and her companions into the scene. Aryan attributes this to Lohara Singh.[20] Many artists from Punjab had experience in working in theatre in Bombay and Calcutta. The most notable among those are Hari Singh (1894–1970),[21] G. S. Sohan Singh (1914–1999),[22] S. G. Thakur Singh (1899–1977).[23]

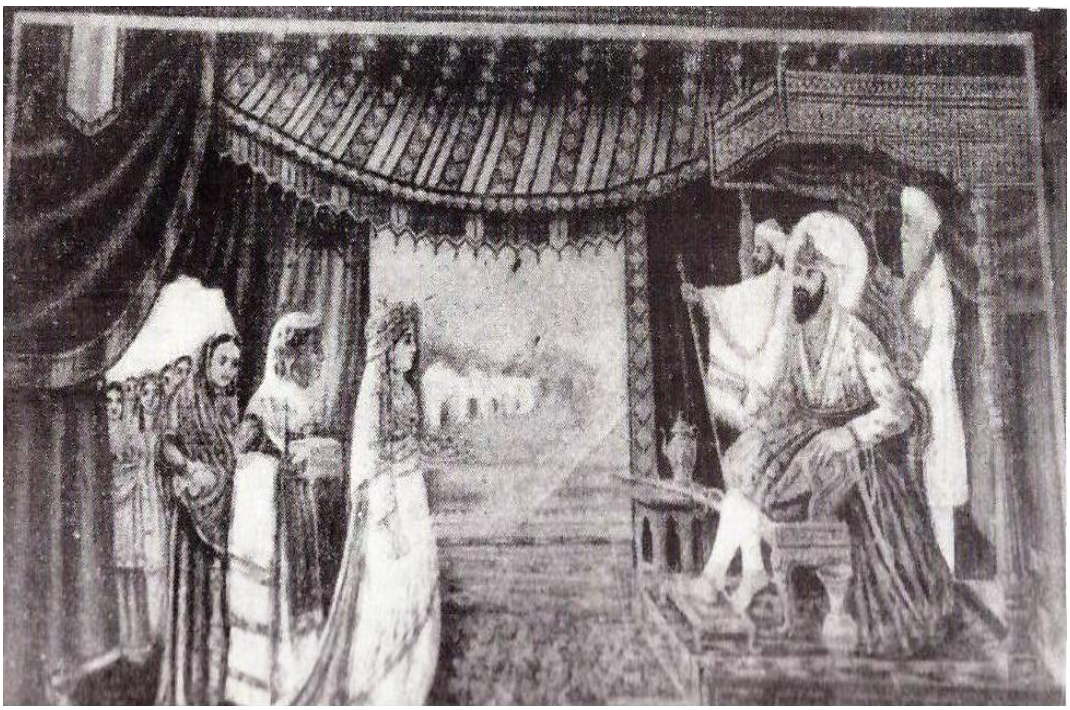

FIGURE 12. Bazaar style painting of Guru Hargobind meeting Nur Jahan (no. 91 in appendix 1). Source: Aryan (1975, fig. 58).

The influence of photography is visible in chromolithographs published in this period. Pinney has reproduced two prints of Hem Chander Bhargava,[24] dated c. 1920 to show how photographic traditions of the time, found their way into chromolithographs. Incidentally both cover Sikh themes. A print on the fifth Guru, Arjan Dev (1563–1606), shows episodes from his life framed in medallions, as often seen in photographic albums. The borders of the medallions are decorated with floral patterns. In another print on Guru Gobind Singh, norms of photographic portraiture

[20] I have not been able to verify if he was referring to Lahora Singh, whose work we have already seen in late nineteenth century or if this is a different artist.
[21] Hari Singh worked with Madan Theatrical Company, Calcutta as a scene setting artist for 14 years. He designed a set for the first Hindi movie, *Alam Ara*.
[22] G. S. Sohan Singh was the son of Gian Singh Naqqash. He was well known for commercial prints on Sikh themes as well as those made for Udasis akharas. He too worked at Madan Theatrical Company.
[23] S. G. Thakur Singh was known for painting landscapes and women. He was President of Indian Academy of Fine Arts, Amritsar from 1932–76.
[24] Hem Chander Bhargava is a well known publisher of calendar prints. They are based in Dariba Kalan, Delhi.

are followed (figure 13). The surfaces are decorated in detail, with minute patterns; the props include pillar, plant pots and landscape vista, which were commonly found in photographs (portraits) of the time (Pinney 2004, 77–8).

FIGURE 13. *Guru Gobind Singh*, print by Hem Chander Bhargava (no. 69 in appendix 1). Source: Pinney (2004, fig. 52).

The same photographic conventions are visible in portraits made by Lal Singh. His portrait of Ranjit Singh depicts the Maharaja within an oval decorated frame and the background has a Greek column, like a studio prop (figure 14). The paintings of Gurus by the same artist, in Macauliffe's book, too betray the influence of photography. Guru Amar Das sits on a low *takhat* (raised seat) and looks out toward the view provided by the window to his left. The window provides a vista to the landscape and activities outside. Guru Harkishan sits on a round carpet and the background had heavy drapes. On his right is a window which provides a view to the vegetation outside (incidentally, pine trees). Guru Teg Bahadur too sits in a richly decorated room, with heavy drapes and rich tassels holding them (figure 15).

FIGURE 14. *Ranjit Singh*, by Lal Singh Musawwar (no. 92 in appendix 1). Source: Aryan (1975, fig. 37).

FIGURE 15. *Guru Teg Bahadur*, by Lal Singh Mussawar. (no. 1 in appendix 1). Source: Macauliffe (1909).

There are a number of examples of popular prints on Sikh themes published by commercial presses. Appendix 1 includes five examples from Delhi-based printer from Hem Chander Bhargava including a reproduction of Golden Temple, dated c. 1930–5; the Khalsa initiation ceremony showing Guru Gobind Singh and panj piare (figure 16); Guru Gobind Singh seated (c. 1920); Guru Arjan Dev (c. 1920) and a print titled *Guru Pranth Prakash* (c. 1920). The list includes two prints by Chitrashala Press, Pune: one showing Guru Hargobind riding a horse and another is a portrait of Ranjit Singh.

FIGURE 16. *Panj piare*, print by Hem Chander Bhargava, Delhi (no. 88 in appendix 1). Source: Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh.

Like in popular Sikh art of late nineteenth century, Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh are easily identifiable in early and mid-twentieth century too. However, their iconography undergoes a slight modification. Guru Nanak still appears as a venerable old man, however many items of use are not found around him anymore. For instance, in the print *Guru Granth Prakash* (c. 1920 published by Hem Chander Bhargava), Nanak still sits under a tree, wearing a loose robe and mukat like headgear. However, the yogi's crutch, the caged parrot (a symbol associated with Nathpanthis) are absent (no. 68 in appendix 1). In case of Guru Gobind Singh, the distinctive feature associated with him, the conical turban with its end hanging loose, develops in this period. In all the images of Guru Gobind Singh listed here, this distinctive turban is present. This was not present in the early years of twentieth century but becomes common in the 1920s and remains till present, a feature identifiable with the last Guru.

This period also sees the beginning of themes of martyrdom in popular art. A print by Hem Chander Bhargava on Guru Arjan shows the latter's martyrdom (no. 70 in appendix 1). The print shows episodes from Guru Arjan's life depicted in five decorated medallions. The large central medallion shows the Guru sitting on a hot iron plate while burning sand is poured over him. Out of the four medallions at the corners of the print, one shows Guru Arjan with the holy book and the other three show stages of his torture. A painting by Sri Ram (1876–1926)[25] shows execution of Guru Teg Bahadur (figure 17; no. 79 in appendix 1). The picture was published in Phulwari in 1934 but the painting would have been made before 1926, the year when Sri Ram passed away.

FIGURE 17. Martyrdom of Guru Teg Bahadur, by Sri Ram (no. 79 in appendix 1). Source: Phulwari (Nov–Dec 1934).

The examples given here specifically show martyrdoms of two Sikh Gurus: Arjan and Teg Bahadur, and no other Sikhs (warriors or disciples) are shown as martyrs. This is a major shift from earlier representation of these Gurus. In popular art of late nineteenth century, the intermediate Gurus (between Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind

[25] Sri Ram was born and trained in Madras. He moved to Lahore while working with Dadabhai Addesser Theatrical Company. He worked in oil, tempera and watercolours.

Singh) were rarely shown independently. They were always part of a conclave of the ten Gurus. This is the first time they appear independently. In mural art of late nineteenth century, the Gurus were sometimes shown independent panels (but mostly as a group). In this case too, the depiction of Gurus was in form of portraits, often seated and in profile. What we see in 1920s is presence of independent prints on Gurus, and Guru Arjan and Guru Teg Bahadur specifically being depicted as martyrs. Hence, the torture and death of Guru Arjan is shown, and Guru Teg Bahadur is shown sitting under a tree, about to be beheaded. Such illustrations also necessitate depiction of the other party—the one perpetuating the torture and execution. Thus, popular Sikh art in this period also sees beginning of depiction of Muslims.

Another theme traced to this period by Fenech (2013) is the depiction of Guru Gobind Singh writing the *Zafarnama*. Fenech notes that while there are a number of popular prints of Guru Gobind Singh, they all highlight his martial qualities alone and do not cover his literary achievements despite the fact the Guru was a most prolific composer. He notes that the only instance where the Guru is shown writing is him composing the *Zafarnama*, and argues that we find this depiction in popular prints only because of the martial nature of the text. *Zafarnama* is an epistle of war; it proclaims the Guru's victory of a cruel and deceiving Mughal king, Aurangzeb and therefore, highlights the former's martial qualities just like in all the other known prints (Fenech 2013, 126-8).

By the 1930s we hear of popular prints by both Sobha Singh and G. S. Sohan Singh. The latter is said to have made a portrait of Sikh hero, Banda Bahadur (1670–1716), which brought him great fame in 1932. Encouraged by its success G. S. Sohan Singh prepared three designs every years and got their blocks prepared at Lahore and then published them.[26] Sobha Singh published a print of Guru Nanak in trance with the title *Nam khumari Nanaka chardi rahe din raat* in 1937, which went on to become very popular. Earlier in 1935, he had published a print of Mughal Empress Nurjahan meeting Guru Harkishan. Some Muslim groups had protested over the depiction of Nurjahan. This print is discussed in greater detail in chapter 5.

[26] http://art-heritage.com/GS_Sohan_Singh_Artist.aspx. Accessed on 24 September 2014.

Through the third and fourth decades of twentieth century, Sikh themes were commonly illustrated for books and magazines. Many illustrations remained in circulation and continued to be reproduced, well after they were first made. The list of popular paintings given in appendix 1 has several examples of illustrations procured from magazines and books. For instance, a portrait of Guru Gobind Singh, painted in 1920 by Lahora Singh, was published in Phulwari of January 1929 (figure 18). And it has already been mentioned that Lal Singh's drawings of Sikh Gurus for Macauliffe's book continued to be reproduced through the first half of twentieth century.

FIGURE 18. *Guru Gobind Singh*, by Lahora Singh, 1920 (no. 65 in appendix 1). Photograph Source: Phulwari (Jan 1929, cover).

The representation of Sikh Gurus was not in context of Sikh history or religious themes alone. The April 1928 issue of *Phulwari*, on caste, had two black and white drawings—one of Mother India chained by caste inequalities and appealing to Guru Nanak; another showed low caste followers of Guru Gobind Singh ready to face death for him. Another *Phulwari* edition, on peace, used a coloured illustration of Nanak.

Another common reproduction of the Gurus' was on commercial labels. A label published by Manilall Mooljee Vadgady, Bombay, 'Importers of all kinds of Anilin Fast Colours' shows Guru Gobind Singh with retainers (no. 84 in appendix 1). Another one by Karam Chand Kishan Chand, Amritsar shows Guru Gobind Singh on horseback with two retainers (no. 85 in appendix 1). Both are dated to 1930s.

Popular Sikh Art: Mid–late Twentieth Century[27]

The second half of twentieth century sees a proliferation of popular Sikh art in this period. The most famous artists in the third quarter of twentieth century (1950s–70s) were Sobha Singh, Kirpal Singh, G. S. Sohan Singh and Gurdit Singh (1900–1981).[28] Though their work was not confined to Sikh subjects alone, these artists are most readily identified with popular Sikh art. Not only did they produce a large number of paintings on Sikh themes, but these paintings also went on to become extremely popular. Their works continue to be reproduced in popular bazaar art as well as copied by other artists. According to Urmi Kesar (2003), these Sikh painters in the twentieth century were heavily influenced by the Singh Sabha movement. She argues that for these artists "the question of Sikh identity became a central concern throughout their careers" (Kesar 2003, 122).

A painting of Guru Nanak which is perhaps the most widely reproduced image of him was created in this period. Sobha Singh made a portrait of Nanak, hand raised in blessing which was printed by the SGPC (figure 19). The date of its publication is not clear. M. S. Randhawa (1985) [29] writes that it was in late 1950s. Other sources mention that it was published in 1969. The image's popularity had a profound impact on the way modern India imagines Nanak.

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[27] Examples of popular Sikh art from mid and late twentieth century have not been listed by me in Appendix 1. This is because they were too many in number and therefore representative images have been included in the text. Also, examples of popular art from this period will be used frequently in chapter 4 and 5.

[28] Gurdit Singh was a well known artist from Amritsar. He was trained at The Royal School of Arts, London and he founded the Indian Academy of Fine Arts in Amritsar.

[29] Mohinder Singh Randhawa (1909–1988) was an administrator and scholar of Indian miniature painting. He was also Chief Commissioner of Chandigarh and responsible for establishing many museums and cultural institutions in Punjab.

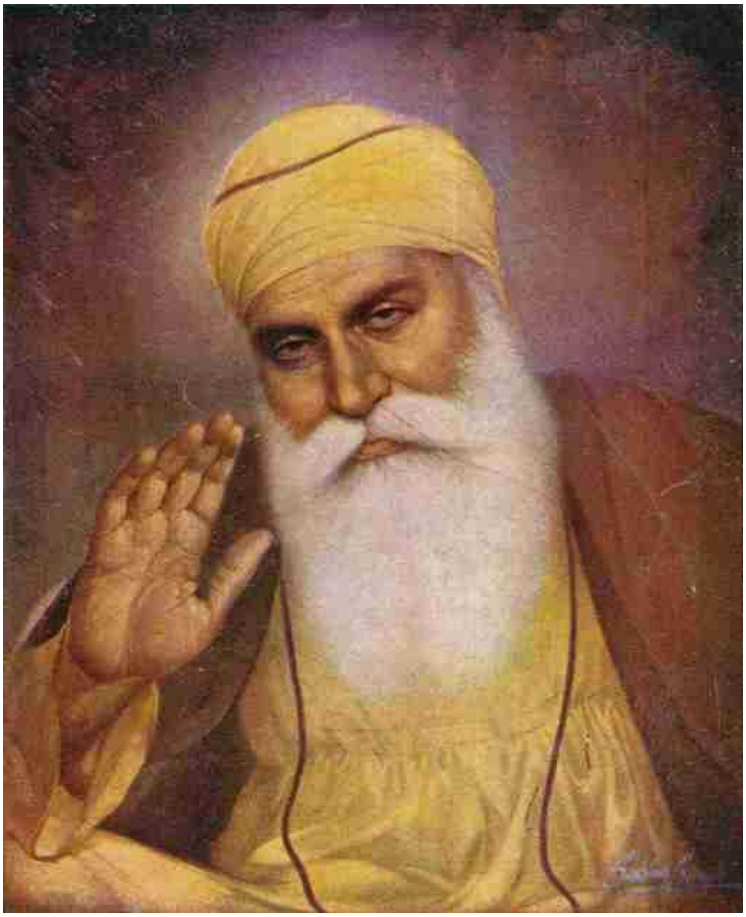

FIGURE 19. *Guru Nanak*, by Sobha Singh. Photograph by author.

There are many ways in which this image draws upon the older iconography of Nanak, developed from late nineteenth century onwards. Nanak is still the venerable old Baba, dressed in a loose robe and wears a turban wrapped around his forehead. The beard however is pure white and longer, probably symbolic of the Khalsa ideal. A series of paintings by Sobha Singh under the title of *My Meditations on Guru Nanak* were purchased by Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh in the 1960s. Other famous prints by him include one showing Guru Gobind Singh on horseback with Shivalik hills in background (painted in 1967) and another depicting Guru Teg Bahadur meditating in Bakala, with nine candles lighted around the hilt of a sword shown in the foreground. [30]

McLeod (1991) briefly comments upon Sobha Singh's work in his book on popular Sikh art. He argues that Sobha Singh is projecting the same messages as the cruder

[30] Published by Prasad Press, Madras.

bazaar prints and that he only differs in quality of his technique. Sobha Singh, McLeod says, adopted a superior technique which attracted a different clientele from the purchasers of cheap prints. This distinguishes him from the bazaar artist while maintaining the link between the two. He notes that Sobha Singh's work has been widely copied by artists working for commercial printing companies (McLeod 1991, 32–3). Kesar (2003) argues out that Sobha Singh's early work shows combined influence of Janam Sakhi traditions and western realism. A painting of Guru Nanak done by him in 1924 shows Nanak sitting under a tree and flanked by Bala and Mardana, which is typical template of Janam Sakhis. At the same time, this template is presented in western style. A 1934 painting, *Nativity of Nanak* is very similar to European nativity scenes showing baby Jesus and mother Mary. In his later work, according to Kesar, Sobha Singh left these two influences behind and developed a template of his own- one in which the representation of the Gurus was his personal vision of him: Nanak is shown eyes half closed, in the attire of a sadhu, with loose robes, rosary, the background of the painting remaining undefined. Singh develops this template further in *My Meditations on Guru Nanak* where Nanak is shown lost in ecstasy, eyes almost closed, the colour becoming incandescent and formless (Kesar 2003, 122–4).

Another artist who was active in this time is Kirpal Singh. He particularly painted scenes of action and warfare and martyrdom from Sikh history. His work first comes to light in a couple of exhibitions in 1950s. In June 1955, he exhibited his work at Dyal Singh College, Karnal and subsequently in January 1956, he displayed his paintings in Lyallpur Khalsa College, Jalandhar. His most famous history paintings are displayed at the CSM where he was also the Chief Artist. Some of his earliest works on display there include *Bidhi Chand Chhina* (1957), *Bhai Kanhaiya* (1957), *Battle of Chamkaur* (1959), *Bhai Mati Das* (1957), *Sikhs Being Killed at Gurdas Nangal* (1958), *Reward for Killing Sikhs* (1959), *Bhai Taru Singh* (1956), *Faith Above Family* (1959), *Bhai Mani Singh* (1957), *Baba Deep Singh* (1958), *Banda Bahadur* (1958), *Sikhs Supporting Canon at Multan* (1958). All of these depict the valour of the Sikh community and the sacrifices made by them in defence of their faith. For instance, the painting of Baba Deep Singh shows the well known story from Sikh history, where he proceeds towards the Darbar Sahib with the handful of Sikhs to avenge the insult to the sacred shrine by Afghans. On the way, he tests his

followers by drawing a line on a ground and challenging them to cross it only if they were ready to give up their life in defence of faith (figure 20). In Kirpal Singh's painting, Baba Deep Singh is an epitome of a Sikh warrior: fierce, majestic and unwavering in his commitment to the faith. It is this quality, points out Urmi Kesar, which renders "a historical event beyond its physically measurable context and the image becomes a part of ethnic memory" (Kesar 2003, 126–7).

FIGURE 20. *Baba Deep Singh*, by Kirpal Singh, 1958. Photograph by author.

Another painting by Kirpal Singh, *Faith Above Family* (figure 21), shows Sikh children being hacked to death. The foreground shows an evil looking man holding a sword in one hand and his other hand holds a child upside down, ready to be killed. Nearby, another child is being tossed in the air to be caught on a spear, held by another Mughal executioner. The mothers (Sikh women) are witness to this cruel scene and are further tortured by having their children's limbs garlanded and put around their necks. This is a gruesome scene and few could claim to remain unaffected by such paintings.

FIGURE 21. *Faith Above Family*, by Kirpal Singh, 1959. Photograph by author.

It is easy to see the contrast in themes of Kirpal Singh's paintings and those of Sobha Singh. Sobha Singh has been called the 'painter of the Divine'; his paintings express spiritual ideals and beauty of teachings of Sikh Gurus. His work almost exclusively concentrates on portraits of Gurus. In his autobiography (Singh 2001), *Kala Wahe Guru di,* he says that he does not want to paint scenes of violence from Sikh history as there is already a lot of violence and pain visible in daily life. His mission, he says, is to spread the message of peace, beauty as evident in the Gurus' teachings. In contrast, Kirpal Singh's paintings have become famous for depicting the heroic aspects of Sikh history and are particularly notable for scenes of violence and repression faced by the Sikhs. In an interview with M. S. Randhawa (n. d.), Kirpal Singh says that he was inspired by the bravery and fighting spirit of the Sikhs especially after reading Bhai Vir Singh's well known novel, *Sundari* and Bhai Khazan Singh's *History of Sikhs.* Kirpal Singh's paintings, McLeod points out, have an easily understandable message—that of Khalsa ideals of heroism, loyalty and martyrdom, which appeal to a wide range of audience from village dwellers to students at a university (McLeod 1991, 32–3).

Kirpal Singh's work marks a radical change in content of popular Sikh art, particularly in introducing new themes.[31] The survey of popular Sikh art from late nineteenth century reveals that portrayals of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh have been the most common, till the present. While in the late nienteenth century scenes from Janam Sakhis and portrayals of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind dominated, there is a change in early twentieth century. Now, Guru Arjan and Guru Teg Bahadur begin to be shown as martyrs, in popular prints. The second half of twentieth century however sees introduction of completely new themes: repression faced by Sikhs in the eighteenth century from the Mughals and Afghans emerged as the most important theme in paintings done during the 1950s and 1960s. Scenes of warfare, sacrifice by soldiers of Khalsa in defence of faith became common. In addition, besides the martydom of Gurus, now Sikh followers as martyrs came to be depicted individually, accepting torture and death over conversion to Islam by Mughal authorities. Depictions of Banda Bahadur, Bhai Mani Singh and Bhai Mati Das, Baba Deep Singh gain popularity in this period. And, Kirpal Singh's work has a significant contribution to this change.

Paintings of martyrs existed earlier as well, such as in murals of late nineteenth century, including those at Baba Atal Gurdwara, Amritsar. However, there is a vast difference in the way they were depicted in late nineteenth century and middle of twentieth century. For example, figure 22 is a mural depicting Baba Deep Singh on the walls of Baba Atal. Here, he is shown seated, cross-legged, his back supported by a balustrade. He is dressed like a warrior, wears armour, holds two swords and his deep blue coloured turban (as worn by Nihangs) is decorated with quoits. There is no action or violence depicted. This is a portrait of Baba Deep Singh. Modern representations of Baba Deep Singh however, invariably show his headless body, his severed head held in an arm and dripping blood (figure 26). Sometimes he is shown as a man in action, charging into the battlefield, sword drawn.

[31] It must be noted here that Kirpal Singh did not paint for commercial publishers. His paintings were patronised first by SGPC and then other organisations interested in working on Sikh history. Still, his work (along with that of other contemporary artists) should be considered part of popular art. His works set the template for many other artists to follow. In addition, Sikh institutions, including SGPC and other groups working within the community reproduced these paintings in posters, pamphlets, textbooks, banners and in every forum possible. So even if these paintings did not start out as part of the commercial print network, they soon entered it (by result of being copied by other artists). And in addition, these had increased circulation in religious and secular forums because of being reproduced by Sikh groups.

FIGURE 22. Baba Deep Singh, mural at Bata Atal Gurdwara, late nineteenth century. Source: Madra and Singh (1999, fig. 22).

FIGURE 23. The sons of Guru Gobind Singh, murals at Baba Atal Gurdwara, late nineteenth century. Source: Madra and Singh (2011, fig. 450, 451, 453, 454).

Similarly, the sons of Guru Gobind Singh are also depicted in the murals of Baba Atal. They too are shown in profile—seated, dressed as warrior kings, a junior version of Guru Gobind Singh (figure 23). In modern history paintings, the elder sons are shown in action against the Mughals in the battlefield (remembered as Battle of Chamkaur) and the junior sons are shown being bricked alive in a wall, again by Mughal authorities.

In all modern paintings depicting battles or repression faced by Sikhs, it is easy to identify the oppressor as Muslim. They have distinctive turbans and clothes, often painted in green (a colour which is now associated with Muslim community)[32] and have a particularly cruel expression. Their beard and moustache is distinct from those shown on Sikh men. Sikhs are identifiable by full beards, have hair tied up in a turban, they are dressed in blue or yellow (traditional colours of the Khalsa) and occasionally in white. Not only the depiction of Mughals has changed in modern paintings, the depiction of Sikhs too is different. The followers of the Gurus in late nineteenth century paintings, including Pahari paintings and murals, are not always shown to be bearded men (i.e. representative of orthodox Khalsa ideal). Attendants could be clean shaven or with short beards (as shown in figure 5). This is never the case in modern depictions of Guru's followers or attendants. In case of warriors, men are typically shown as broad-shouldered, muscular, having an impressive physique.

Another artist whose work on Sikh history comes into prominence in middle of twentieth century is Master Gurdit Singh. He was also employed by SGPC as the Chief Artist at Central Sikh Museum, Amritsar. A number of paintings by him are on display at the same museum and most depict scenes of violent action and martyrdom of Sikhs through the medieval times and the modern period (colonial rule). His paintings include *Guru ladho re* (1966), *Parakh with Dalla* (1970), *Valour of Moti Mehra* (1965), *Chhota Ghallughara* (1966), *Bhai Dyala* (1968), *Bhagat Singh* (1966), *Udham Singh* (1970), *Jallianwala Bagh* (1968), *Sacrifice at Nanakana Sahib* (1966), *Sacrifice at Panja Sahib* (1975). The Central Sikh Museum also has many portraits of modern Sikh political leaders painted by him. Figure 24 is Gurdit Singh's painting of

[32] The association of green with Muslims is a modern one. There is no evidence from all the visual material available from medieval times (paintings, artefacts, architecture), that the Mughals or any other Muslims particularly favoured green.

the martyrdom at Panja Sahib which occured in 1922. Some Sikhs who were arrested after Guru ka Bagh morcha[33] were being transported to the prison on train. The community at Panja Sahib decided to serve the prisoners langar, however the station master refused to stop the train. The Sikhs decided to sit on the rail tracks to make it stop. Some Sikhs were crushed under it, and the train finally stopped enabling the rest of the Sikhs to serve langar.

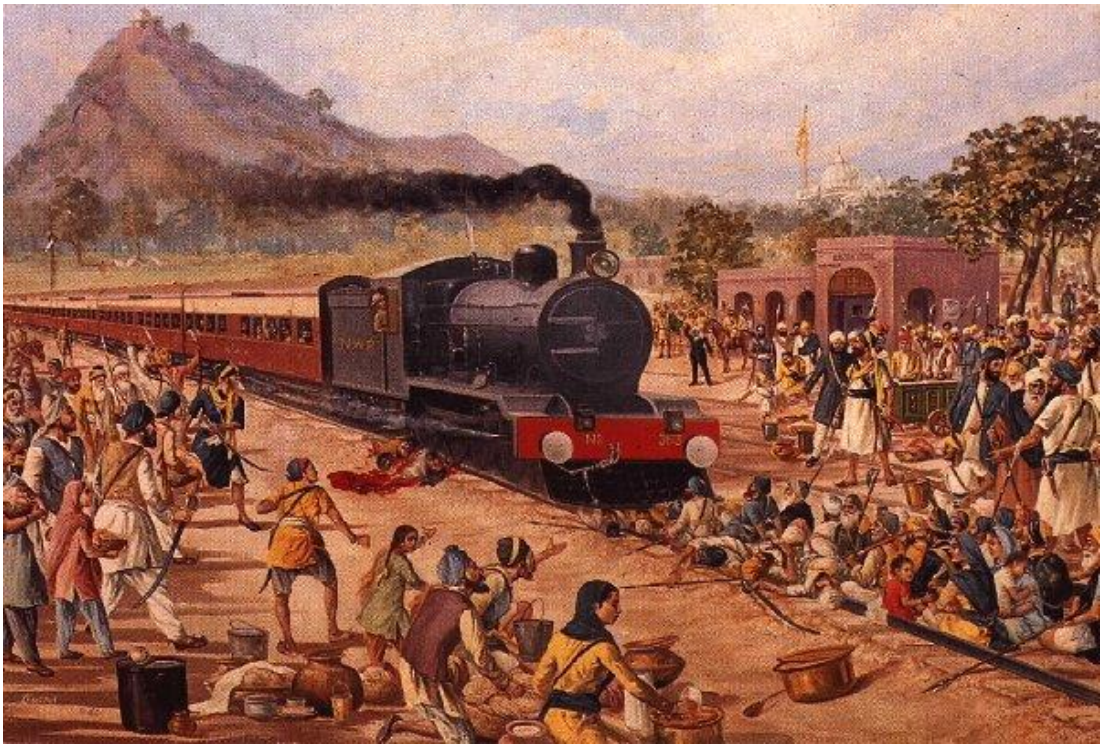

FIGURE 24. *Sacrifice at Panja Sahib*, by Gurdit Singh, 1975. Photograph by author.

A large number of popular prints by G. S. Sohan Singh are available from this period. He had started producing popular prints in the 1930s and continued to do so in the 1950s–60s. He was the son of Gian Singh Naqqash (who had worked in late nineteenth century on the frescoes of Darbar Sahib). His sons Surinder Singh and Satpal 'Danish' are both artists and run a studio 'Art Heritage' in Amritsar.[34] Most of Sohan Singh's prints were released sometime around 1950–60s[35] and the printers include Anantram Gupta of Nai Sarak, Delhi and Ajanta Art Calendar Art

[33] Guru ka Bagh morcha was one of the major campaigns of Gurdwara Reform Movement. Gurdwara Guru ka Bagh which is located about twenty kilometres from Amritsar.
[34] They have a large collection of original work of Gian Singh and G. S. Sohan Singh.
[35] Date confirmed by Art Heritage. Also, McLeod purchased those prints at Amritsar in 1965 and reproduced them in his book *Popular Sikh Art* (1991).

Manufacturing Co., Delhi. G. S. Sohan Singh's work includes prints showing scenes from life of Guru Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh and sometimes intermediate Gurus such as Guru Ram Das. In prints depicting life stories, the main protagonist is usually placed in the centre and scenes from their life are drawn around the central figure. For instance, the print called *Nirankari darshan* (figure 25) Guru Nanak and his birth place Nanakana Sahib gurdwara are shown in the centre. In the surrounding scenes, we see infant Nanak in his mother Tripta's lap, Nanak being protected against the sun by a cobra, young Nanak feeding the sadhus, Nanak squeezing milk from Bhai Lalo's food and blood out of Malik Bhago's offering. The lower space has portraits of Nanak's sons Sri Chand and Lakhmi Das.[36]

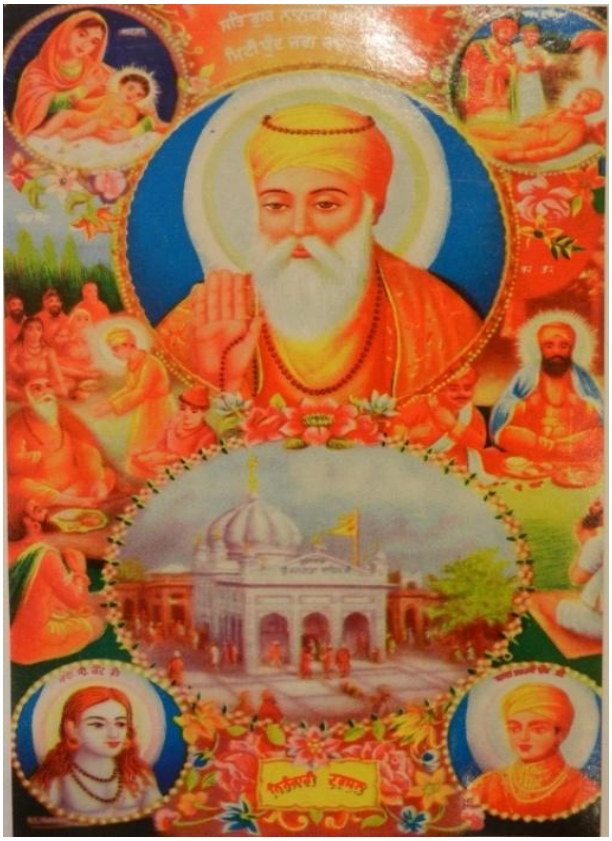

FIGURE 25. *Nirankari darshan*, by G. S. Sohan Singh, c. 1960. Source: McLeod (1991, fig. 16).

McLeod's (1991) work on popular Sikh art contains many examples of G. S. Sohan Singh's work along with those of other commercial artists like Anil Sharma and Mukesh. Regarding these modern prints, McLeod observes that the traditional

[36] G. S. Sohan Singh also created many prints for Udasi akharas.

emphasis on Guru Nanak's spiritual power and Guru Gobind's martial prowess is sustained in modern prints[37] but at the same time there is some shift in emphasis. He argues that there are many more prints of Guru Gobind Singh compared to earlier bazaar art. In addition, prints on intermediate Gurus are now available. Among them, it is Guru Ram Das who figures most often, perhaps because of his association with Darbar Sahib. McLeod noted that Guru Arjan who had put together the scripture and is considered the first martyr in Sikh tradition or Guru Hargobind who established the Akal Takht and introduced the martial tradition in Sikh community, do not figure prominently. McLeod also points out that Maharaja Ranjit Singh is no longer a popular figure in bazaar art. It is prints of Baba Deep Singh and Chhote Sahibzadas which show Sikh bravery against Muslim oppression which are increasingly popular. He elaborates on why both these are powerful symbols for Sikh community. Deep Singh combines the elements of both Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh. He represents Khalsa loyalty, Jat bravery, militant actions, resistance to oppression and martyrdom. In G. S. Sohan Singh's very popular print of Deep Singh (figure 26), the head crowned with Khalsa insignia is a model of pious composure. McLeod points out that features associated with Guru Nanak are thus joined with those of Guru Gobind Singh, the two united in the ideal of martyrdom. The emphasis is upon heroism. McLeod argues that Deep Singh of popular art is much more significant than historical Deep Singh. The former is a symbol which is particularly potent when the community is believed to be under serious threat. In case of sons of Guru Gobind Singh, it is the two younger ones, Chhote Sahibzade, who are more popular in popular prints rather than the two elder ones. When the latter are shown, they are mostly in company of their younger brothers. McLeod suggests that this popularity is not solely because of their heroic death in face of Mughal tyranny. In case of the bricking up of the younger sons, the story is dramatic as well as horrifying. It highlights their innocence as well as trust in the Guru, his ideals and the community and their ability to accept martyrdom. This is in stark contrast to the treachery of the Mughals. McLeod argues that martyrdom as theme is the underlying reason for the popularity of the prints of Baba Deep Singh and Chhote Sahibzade. He however points out that

[37] McLeod collected the prints studied in his book at Amritsar in 1965. So his collection can be considered to represent bazaar art in the 1960s.

by the same logic Bhai Mani Singh and Banda Bahadur should also be seen in popular bazaar art but this is not the case (McLeod 1991, 38–9).

FIGURE 26. *Baba Deep Singh*, by G. S. Sohan Singh. Source: McLeod (1991, fig. 53).

McLeod notes that in these prints the later Gurus are especially dressed in great finery. They wear rich fabrics, heavily embroidered and are often shown with jewellery. Their accessories such as turban, sword or the setting in which they are shown (sitting on a throne or supported by a balustrade) are also finely decorated. He suggests that the gorgeousness of the Gurus reflects popular ideas and aspirations of a traditional martial ideal who appears in a kingly garb. This is not peculiar to Sikh popular prints and is visible in other dressed up religious and cultural icons. McLeod concludes that "iconography associated with Guru Gobind Singh is in fact the distinctively Sikh expression of a much larger phenomenon" (46). He also notes that the Khalsa symbol is frequently depicted in modern prints, particularly in association with Guru Gobind Singh and there is a dramatic difference from its earlier depictions. The symbol had evidently changed over a period of time. More significant is the

proliferation of its use. Some late nineteenth century prints too showed the older Khalsa emblem, but it was only drawn on the flags at Darbar Sahib. In modern prints, Khalsa symbol could be a decorative margin on the poster, a badge on turban or belt, a decorative motif on *rumal* (cloth covering the Granth). The symbol expresses militancy, ability of the community to defend itself from evil and oppression (48). Modern gurdwaras are frequently depicted in popular art. They usually appear in association with a particular Guru and events from his life. While discussing the early twentieth century, McLeod had tried to explain the absence of popular art in context of the emergence of Singh Sabha movement. However, a similar context is not provided by him to explain the resurgence of Sikh art in independent India.

Another scholar who has analyzed modern Sikh popular prints is Patricia Uberoi. She studies these prints with reference to (a) the relationship of Sikh religion with Hinduism, (b) relationship of the Sikhs to the nation-state, and (c) idea of secularism in the Indian nation state. One of the prints discussed is that of a holy cow and within its body are depicted the ten Sikh Gurus, other saints, martyrs, bhagats and Adi Granth. This was published in 1973–4 at Ludhiana. She points out that the use of the motif of holy cow—a Hindu motif, to incorporate Sikh Gurus within it—is itself significant. The figures depicted inside the body of the cow include Sri Chand (son of Guru Nanak and founder of the Udasi order), Ram Singh (of Namdhari sect) and Vadbhag Singh (founder of Baba Vadbhag cult), none of which have approval of Sikh orthodoxy. All the three sects mentioned above also continue to recognise living Gurus. Sri Chand chose the path of asceticism and was bypassed for succession after Nanak. The Udasis controlled many gurdwaras for a long time, till they were ousted by the Akalis in early twentieth century through the Gurdwara Reform Movement. Baba Vadhbagh cult is well known for miraculous practices such as exorcism and granting of boons. Uberoi argues that the figure of the cow "envisages a reconciliation of several strands of *sanatan* and popular Sikh faith and practice that the Singh Sabha and later Akali movements had sought to suppress over the last century or more of religious reform... (for orthodox) Sikhs this amounts to elimination of Sikhism as a separate religion through its reabsorption within the fold of an all-embracing Hinduism" (Uberoi 2003, 217). This was the concern, she points out, behind Kahn Singh Nahba's famous tract *Ham Hindu Nahin* published in 1899. Further, the loss of distinct Sikh identity is perceived as a loss of status as a political force in Punjab

considered by Sikhs as their 'own' state, as well as in the nation state of India. "...this dilemma of cultural and political identity in relation to Hinduism as the 'majority religion of India provides a major explanation for the unrest in the Punjab in the late 1970s and 1980s" (217).

She suggests that the role of Sikhs in defence of the motherland seems to be quite popular in calendars of independent India. She gives example of a print which has Guru Gobind Singh (depicted with a hawk and a sheaf of arrows) in the foreground. The inset on one side shows the Guru leading his forces against the Mughals, and the other side shows a Sikh regiment marching under the Indian flag. This print was released in 1966, a year after the war with Pakistan (1965). As she acknowledges, the study of individual prints is insufficient to trace a general pattern, still, the attempt is to see the representation of Sikhs in the social and political context.

Both McLeod (1991) and Uberoi (2003) have suggested that in independent India, the self image of the Sikhs was reconstructed around a martial ideal, that of a martyr—those who suffers for the faith and do not hesitate to give their life in defence of righteousness and faith. McLeod sees this in the popularity of prints of martyrs especially Baba Deep Singh and the Chhote Sahibzade. He argues that "both respond to current circumstances, attracting particular attention during periods when the Panth is believed to be under threat. If they advance in popularity, then it means that a sense of grievance is aboard and deep-seated Khalsa ideals will be invoked to deal with it. In more settled times their popularity can be expected to recede to some extent though never to the point of insignificance" (McLeod 1991, 40). Uberoi suggests that the decades of 1970s and 80s, including the events around Operation Bluestar in 1984, saw the popularity of the figure of martyr and militant Sikh, over that of the protector of the Indian nation (Uberoi 2003, 226).

Both McLeod and Uberoi have analysed bazaar art i.e. prints, calendar, posters which are commercially produced. In fact, the publishers such as Hem Chander Bhargava, Anantram Gupta (both in Delhi), Chitrashala Press, Pune and other commercial presses publish a variety of themes including Sikh religious themes. The survey above has discussed the work of these prints produced by commerical presses and artists like G. S. Sohan Singh. At the same time, I wish to emphasize that in Sikh case there is not much difference between the informal sphere of the bazaar where the commerical

prints exist and the formal sphere of the museum where history paintings are situated. In fact, they overlap. The following chapter shows that the history paintings available inside the museum also exist in the realm of the bazaar and further in the realm of popular literature, educational tracts and even audio-visual media. And, therefore, the history of history painting in the museum should be considered in context of history of popular Sikh art. The survey of popular Sikh art in this chapter has revealed the changes and continuities in depiction of Sikh themes. We can see that representation of martyrdom was not always part of visual culture. Even though in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Sikh identity was partially created in opposition to Muslim identity (Fenech 2002, 839), this idea is not present visually. Themes of martyrdom came to be visually depicted in popular Sikh art only in the 1920s. This is when two Gurus (Arjan and Teg Bahadur) were shown as martyrs. Further, stories of bravery and martyrdom of Sikhs (Gurus' followers) became art of popular print culture only around 1950s. Perhaps, the most obvious explanation of these changes can be found in corresponding political situations. 1920s is the decade of the Gurdwara Reform Movement, and Akali *jathas* (bands) motivated themselves to fight and prepared to give up their lives in defence of faith, in inspiration from stories of martydom which exist in Sikh history. The trauma and bitterness of 1947 can perhaps explain the gory depiction of martydom in history paintings. However, I feel this association provides very broad contours within which we can understand the visual depictions of Sikhs. A more definitive explanation can perhaps be obtained by tracing the networks of patronage for these history paintings. It may allow us better insight into motivations and working processes of indivudals and institutions which patronise history paintings. The following chapter is an attempt to locate history paintings and museums within such a network.

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4

Situating Sis Ganj: A Background

This chapter provides a context to the study of Bhai Mati Das Museum at Sis Ganj Gurdwara. To understand the display at Sis Ganj museum it is important to understand the processes leading to the creation of both the museum and the display. The background to history paintings, such as that on display at Sis Ganj museum, has been provided in the chapter 3. This section will look at development of museums on Sikh history in independent India. In addition, I have discussed the institutions and people contributing to creation of Sis Ganj museum. I have particularly focussed on the Punjab and Sind Bank and its employees. The paintings which we see in Sis Ganj museum today were originally commissioned by PSB for its annual calendars in the 1970s. The Bank went on to patronise artists to create paintings for its calendars for about three decades. Significantly, these three decades coincide with the some very crucial phases Punjab and Delhi passed through—the newly reorganised state where Sikhs became a majority community; the rising tide of difficulties between Delhi and Punjab leading to movement for Khalistan; Operation Bluestar at Amritsar and the subsequent riots in Delhi during 1984. It will be useful to understand how this phase and earlier debates on identities in colonial India define the contours of Sikh history and popular Sikh art. It is therefore, important to understand the role of PSB in shaping our understanding of Sikh heritage.

Museums on Sikh History in India

By museums on Sikh history, I refer to museums which cover the life of the Sikh Gurus and their followers. The display is mostly made up of modern and contemporary paintings—made by artists like Kirpal Singh, Sobha Singh and Devender Singh (b. 1947).[1] These paintings depict scenes from the life of the Sikh

[1] Devender Singh began his career illustrating Amar Chitra Katha comic series, going on to make pictures on Sikh Gurus' life for PSB, Markfed and many gurdwaras and museums on Sikh history. His works are found in Central

Gurus, the dedication of their followers and portraits of notable Sikh personalities. None of these museums is artefact based. Wherever artefacts are made part of the museum display, they are very few in number compared to the paintings. Thus, museums on Sikh history have a predominantly narrative value. Traditionally museums have displayed artefacts for their aesthetic value or their antiquity, thus historical value, as evidence of past. This is not the case in Sikh museums. At the same time, I argue that history paintings in Sikh museums have acquired value as evidence of Sikh past. Additionally, considering that Sikh historical understanding is deeply entwined with the religious, Sikh museums combine the secular authority of the museum with the conviction of belief. This makes the display in Sikh museum especially powerful in propagating a particular version of the Sikh past. To understand the role of history paintings in shaping our notions of Sikh heritage, it is important to understand their presence in different popular domains as well as their patronage.

Museums on Sikh history were established in India only after Independence. The first was Central Sikh Museum at Darbar Sahib, Amritsar which opened to public in 1958. CSM was built by the SGPC and they employed Kirpal Singh as Chief Artist in 1956, to create paintings on Sikh history. The person instrumental in bringing Kirpal Singh into this project was Principal Satbir Singh (1932–94). Satbir Singh studied at Khalsa College, Amritsar. He was the younger brother of Inderpal Singh, one of the founders of All India Sikh Students' Federation (AISSF).[2] Satbir Singh was a member of AISSF and its president in 1954. He taught history at Lyallpur Khalsa College, Jalandhar and later became principal of Khalsa College, Karnal. He was also actively involved in Punjabi Suba agitation.[3] He was a member of the Dharam Parchar

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Sikh Museum, Amritsar; Anglo-Sikh War Memorial, Ferozepur, and the museum at Sis Ganj Gurdwara as well as gudwaras outside India. His most popular works have been on Sikh history although he has also painted Hindu gods and scenes from village life. His father, Sewak Singh was also an artist who had a commercial studio in Bombay. Sewak Singh had worked with Gurdit Singh. He currently lives in Chandigarh.

[2] AISSF was formed in 1944 at Lahore as Sikh Students' Federation. It shifted to Amritsar after Partition. It was an organisation for Sikh youth, with the objective of promoting Sikh values and "to counteract the corrosive influence of Muslim and other groups which were forcing their identity issue..." The 1940s is considered a dynamic phase of the SSF where camps organised by it became very popular and influential. Senior Sikh politicians considered it a privilege to join and address these camps. Many eminent Sikhs were influenced by the activities of SSF. The Government of India banned the AISSF in 1984 for its radical stance in favour of Khalistan.

[3] Punjabi Suba movement was a long drawn political agitation by Sikhs in independent India, demanding creation of a separate Punjabi speaking state.

Committee[4] of SGPC and involved in production of popular religious tracts. He was deeply involved in spreading awareness of Sikh history and it was his idea to establish CSM in Amritsar and invite Kirpal Singh to make paintings on Sikh history for the museum.[5] He was also consultant to PSB for production of calendars and books on Sikh history. Master Gurdit Singh, a prominent painter from Amritsar (whose work was discussed in chapter 3) was the Chief Artist of CSM, after Kirpal Singh. The museum continues to employ artists to make paintings on Sikh history for display.

Other important museums on Sikh history include Baghel Singh Museum in Gurdwara Bangla Sahib in Delhi, built in the 1970s.[6] The paintings for this museum were initially made by Kirpal Singh, his son Jarnail Singh (b. 1956),[7] and G. S. Sohan Singh. Dashmesh Ajaibghar at Gurdwara Mehdiana Sahib near Ludhiana which includes works by Devender Singh, Kirpal Singh and Jarnail Singh; Anglo Sikh Wars Memorial at Ferozepur opened in April 1976 and Kirpal Singh and Devender Singh created paintings for its display; Guru Teg Bahadur Museum at Anandpur Sahib was inaugurated in 1983 and has paintings by Jaswant Singh (d. 1991), Kirpal Singh and Devender Singh. More recently built museums include the Bhai Mati Das Museum at Sis Ganj Gurdwara which was inaugurated in 2001 and KHC which was inaugurated in 2011.

All these museums on Sikh history have been made by two distinct authorities: one, the gurdwara management committees like the SGPC and the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee (DSGMC), and secondly, the Punjab Government. The SGPC and DSGMC manage historic gurdwaras[8] and gradually most prominent of these gurdwaras have built museums within their complex. Some display history paintings or printed reproductions of those in a small room; others have dedicated museum buildings with large gallery for display of paintings. If we leave out the most

[4] Dharam Parchar Committee, literally, the committee for promotion of religion, is a sub-committee of the SGPC.
[5] This information is based on interviews with PSB officials and artists.
[6] It has been renovated, redesigned and opened to public in 2014 as Baba Baghel Singh Sikh Heritage Multimedia Complex.
[7] Jarnail Singh lives in Surrey, Canada. He is the son of Kirpal Singh and was introduced to painting by his father. He started assisting him on various projects and became a full time artist. He specialises in scenes of rural Punjab, portraits of Sikh rulers and scenes from Sikh history. His has worked for several institutions of importance including PSB, Central Sikh Museum at Amritsar, Baghel Singh Museum at Delhi, Bank of Punjab, Punjab MARKFED. He has also painted murals on Sikh history at Singh Sabha Gurdwara and Komagata Maru Memorial, both in Surrey, Canada. He has written on Punjab museums and painters for Punjabi dailies.
[8] A historic gurdwara is associated with the past presence of a Guru i.e. a historical association with the Gurus. See Murphy (2012).

recently built museums like KHC or the renovated Baghel Singh Museum, in all the older museums, the display is overwhelmingly made up of a gallery of framed history paintings which are made by artists like Kirpal Singh, Sobha Singh, G. S. Sohan Singh, Gurdit Singh, Devender Singh, Mehar Singh (b. 1929)[9] and Jarnail Singh.

The second patron is the Punjab Government. More particularly, in the 1970s, scholar and administrator, M. S. Randhawa was instrumental in creating museums in Punjab and encouraging artists to create paintings for display in museums. He was an IAS officer who was also scholar of Pahari miniature paintings. He was the Chairman of the committee to plan the new city of Chandigarh in 1955 and many features of the city are to his credit, such as the Rose Garden. He went on to become the Chief Commissioner of Union Territory of Chandigarh from 1966 to 1968. He was responsible for creating many cultural and research institutions in Punjab such as the Government Museum and Art Gallery at Chandigarh and the Punjab Agricultural University at Ludhiana. The museums on Sikh history built by him are Anglo-Sikh Wars Memorial at Ferozepur in 1976 and Guru Teg Bahadur Museum at Anandpur Sahib, in 1983.[10]

Another administrator from Punjab who was involved in making Guru Teg Bahadur Museum at Anandpur Sahib was Tarlochan Singh (b. 1933). Tarlochan Singh has played an active role in promoting work on Sikh history. He was a Secretary-level officer at Punjab MARKFED[11] from 1970 to 1977. During his tenure, one of the calendars released by MARKFED proved to be controversial. This calendar on Sikh martyrs was published in 1974 and some members of Parliament objected to the negative depiction of Muslims in the paintings reproduced in the calendar.[12] He encouraged publications of special editions on Sikh history in *Marg* magazine: one was on the city of Amritsar (published in 1977) and another issue focussed on Maharaja Ranjit Singh (published in 1981). He also collaborated with W. G. Archer to

[9] Mehar Singh was a student of Sobha Singh. He was educated in Lahore. His family members were employed at School of Art in Lahore as craftsmen. His father was a craftsman who worked on wood and was employed at School of Art, Lahore as a teacher. His cousin (father's elder brother's son) was also a craftsman. He has painted for PSB calendars and books on Sikh history. Mehar Singh's work is displayed at White House, Washington and President's House, New Delhi. He currently lives in Chandigarh. He had an accident some years ago and does not paint anymore. He also suffers from memory loss.

[10] See Randhawa (1984).

[11] Punjab State Cooperative Supply and Marketing Federation Limited, one of the largest agricultural cooperatives in Asia.

[12] This is discussed in detail in chapter 5.

catalogue Sikh relics lying in the United Kingdom. As Joint Director of Public Relations Department, Government of Punjab (1977–80), his department republished an early nineteenth century lithograph of Golden Temple in 1978 and made it popularly available.[13] He was Additional Director, Department of Tourism, Culture and Museums, Govt. of Punjab from 1980 to 1982 where he was involved in setting up of museums such as the archaeological museum in Sanghol, a museum in Khatkar Kalan on Bhagat Singh and his associates (established in 1988) and Guru Teg Bahadur Museum in Anandpur Sahib. He is also advisor to the recently renovated Baba Baghel Singh Multimedia Museum at Gurdwara Bangla Sahib, Delhi.

There is a noticeable pattern here. The museums on Sikh history were first commissioned by gurdwaras management committees in late 1950s. Punjab Government too contributes to making of these museums particularly in the 1970s. So, Sikh museums initially were not a project of the Indian nation-state, although, the state too eventually begins to use them and participate in commemoration of Sikh history through museums. The present SAD (Badal) government in Punjab[14] is known for its encouragement to museums and memorials but this trend is not new and can be traced back a few decades. I argue that museums by both these agencies are similar in many levels. Firstly, there is a common interest in highlighting the Sikh past. Secondly, there are similarities in the display. All museums on Sikh history use modern history paintings to depict select episodes from the past to narrate their story. Thirdly, it is the same set of artists who work for both the gurdwaras as well as the government: Kirpal Singh and Devender Singh can be considered the most popular artists in this regard, whose work was in great demand both from religious and secular bodies in India and even in the Diaspora. Devender Singh has created paintings for gurdwaras in Singapore, and for international organisations like the Sikh Foundation (based in United States of America), for their calendars. Thus visually, these displays are remarkably similar in all museums on Sikh history, irrespective of who makes them. This has important implications for the spread of this kind of art. I argue that such art—modern paintings on Sikh history—patronised by the Sikh community is significant in developing a specific understanding of Sikh heritage. Therefore, the fact

[13] The lithograph was available in a collection in London. I could not gather specific information on it. This information is from interview with Tarlochan Singh on 30 May 2014.

[14] SAD (Badal) government has been continuously in power in Punjab since 2007 with Parkash Singh Badal as Chief Minister.

that this art is acceptable as well as actively patronised by secular agencies such as the state government and MARKFED, lends it additional popularity as well as acceptability.

The most recent museums on Sikh history such as the Baba Baghel Singh Sikh Heritage Multimedia Museum are an interesting manifestation of this popular art. This museum was built in Gurdwara Bangla Sahib, New Delhi, sometime in the 1970s and originally displayed history paintings. It has now been renovated into a multimedia museum and reopened in 2014. It uses a variety of media such as paintings, installations, videos and audio guides to narrate the story of the Sikh community. Many popular paintings on Sikh heroes and martyrs have been digitally printed, framed and displayed at the museum. Figure 27 shows part of the display at the Baghel Singh Museum. The frame on the left is a digital reproduction of Kirpal Singh's painting of Baba Deep Singh (figure 20) and the frame on the right too, is a digital reproduction of Kirpal Singh's painting of Banda Bahadur. This is evidence of the iconic status these paintings have acquired that they are being reproduced decades after they were first made.

FIGURE 27. Display at Baba Baghel Singh Sikh Heritage Multimedia Museum. Photo by author.

Further, the videos used in the museum too overwhelmingly use the iconography of history paintings. For instance, the museum has a video, *Do badiyan kimti jindaan* (Two very precious lives) featuring martyrdom of Chhote Sahibzadas. It combines performances by live actors, with animation. The latter is used to represent the family of the Guru.

FIGURE 28. Screenshot from the video *Do badiyan kimti jindaan* at Baba Baghel Singh Museum. Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3b3VWVoBqdA.

A comparison of the video with the illustration children's book, *Nikkiyan jinda vadda saka: Chhote Sahibzadiyan di shahidi di sachitra sakhi* (Illustrated story of the sacrifice of Chhote Sahibzadas) will show that the video exactly reproduces the illustrations (figure 28 and 29). The book was published by SGPC in 1976 and the illustrations are by Devender Singh.

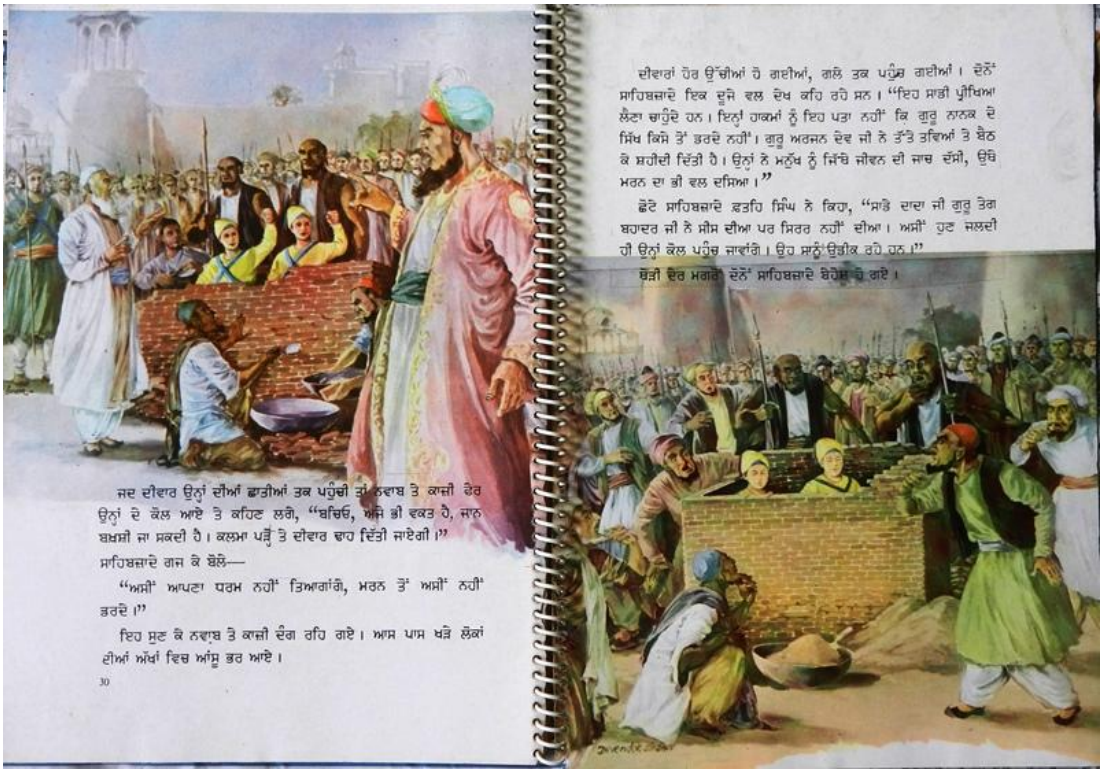

FIGURE 29. Devender Singh's illustrations in *Nikkiyan jinda vadda saka.* Photograph courtesy of Devender Singh.

Thus, even if paintings do not constitute objects on display, they are nevertheless used as a common resource or template to create other kinds of display. They inform the making of the museums on Sikh history well into the twenty-first century. While popular printed material constitutes the most widely used medium to popularise these paintings, they are also central to non-visual modes of representation of Sikh history, such as the *dhadi* (ballad) performances. Nijhawan (2006) notes the similarity of descriptions of martyrdom in the popular print on Bhai Mani Singh (made by Kirpal Singh) and the dhadi songs. In the well-known print, Bhai Mani Singh sits on the ground facing the executioner and looks the latter in the eye instructing him to follow the orders given to him of dismembering Bhai Mani Singh at each joint. Bhai Mani Singh presents his fingers to the baffled executioner who holds the chopper in his hand. The same details are incorporated in the songs, which provide a blow-by-blow account, a graphic description of the martyrdom just as depicted in Kirpal Singh's painting. Nijhawan argues that "[the image] gives concreteness and symbolic plentitude to particular historical events and experiences that mere literal representation would not achieve. If we move from the conventional image of Mani Singh to the engenderment of such an image in dhadi compositions, we find that the

symbolism in the image is multiplied by linguistic tropes and sonic images" (2006, 156–7).

Another dimension of use of these paintings is visible at Gurdwara Mehdiana Sahib, near Ludhiana. This gurdwara too is associated with Guru Gobind Singh. It is said that this is the spot where the Guru stopped to rest as he escaped Mughal forces dressed as a Muslim *pir* (holy man). The gurdwara complex has a museum (Dashmesh Ajaibghar) and a school within its complex. The complex also has a rather startling display of sculptures. These life size sculptures are three-dimensional representations of events from Sikh history. They particularly depict events of torture and martyrdom of Sikhs. The sculptures were created by Tara Singh of Rai Kot who uses the paintings of Kirpal Singh as template to create them. Thus, the scenes created by Kirpal Singh on canvas are now available in 3D at Mehdiana Sahib (figure 30).

Figure 30. Bhai Dyala boiled alive by the Mughals, sculpture at Mehdiana Sahib. Photograph by author.

The analysis of content in all these museums is outside the scope of this study. However, given the similarity or rather the complete reproduction of same visual elements in different museums in different forms, it seems reasonable to argue that the narrative content too would be similar. Or at least SGPC would exercise some manner

of regulatory control over the content of these museums.[15] Indeed, SGPC's control over all representations of Sikhs is increasingly apparent. For instance, the case of illustrations on Sikh Gurus in popular comic series Amar Chitra Katha.[16] The comic on Guru Nanak was first published in early 1970s and it was illustrated by Devender Singh.[17] The inside cover states: Script approved by Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, Amritsar. Similarly, Anne Murphy notes the regulatory control exercised by the gurdwara management at Takht Damdama Sahib over narration of history of the gurdwara. Takht Damdama Sahib is associated with Guru Gobind Singh and some of his followers are also commemorated at the site, for their service to the Guru including Dalla, the village headman. Dalla's *samadh* (funerary monument) is located within the gurdwara. Murphy points out that the SGPC literature available about the gurdwara does not mention Dalla's shrine in the gurdwara. Her interactions with the head *granthi* (custodian of Guru Granth Sahib) of the gurdwara indicated that for the gurdwara management, it was Dalla's arrogance and pride which led him to construct his own samadh in a shrine dedicated to the Guru. Clearly, for the custodians of the gurdwara, the narrative of the site's historical significance does not include Dalla. On the other hand, Dalla's descendants who continue to reside near the Takht Damdama Sahib, remember his role quite differently and invoke the family's service and association with the Guru (Murphy 2012, 31–44). SGPC is also known to stall films on Sikh Gurus or regulate public use of Sikh symbols. It objected to the release of *Nanak Shah Fakir*, a film on the life of Guru Nanak, released in 2015. They also objected to the title of Hindi film, *Singh Saab The Great* released in 2013. The SGPC insists that any representation of Sikhs has to have its approval.[18] These examples suggest that the SGPC and gurdwara managements are in a position to exercise control over the version of history which is propagated at historical gurdwaras and museums.

[15] I would like to thank Radhika Chopra for this suggestion.

[16] Amar Chitra Katha is a very popular Indian comic series on historical and mythological figures and stories such as Mughal Emperor Akbar, popular Hindu god Krishna, sepoy Mangal Pandey, to name a few.

[17] Devender Singh started his career illustrating for Amar Chitra Katha before making paintings for calendars or museums.

[18] See http://www.hindustantimes.com/bollywood/sgpc-sikh-groups-see-red-in-sikh-related-films/story-o5AkBNZv7QkxNIaA8huYzL.html. Accessed on 15 April 2015.

PSB, Popular Art and Museums: A Background to the Study of Bhai Mati Das Museum

Bhai Mati Das Museum has a total of 166 oil paintings. Most of these were not prepared for the purpose of exhibition in a museum. They were made over a period of three decades from 1970s to early 2000s by PSB for publication in their annual calendars. These were subsequently donated by the Bank to DSGMC for display in Bhai Mati Das Museum (figure 31).

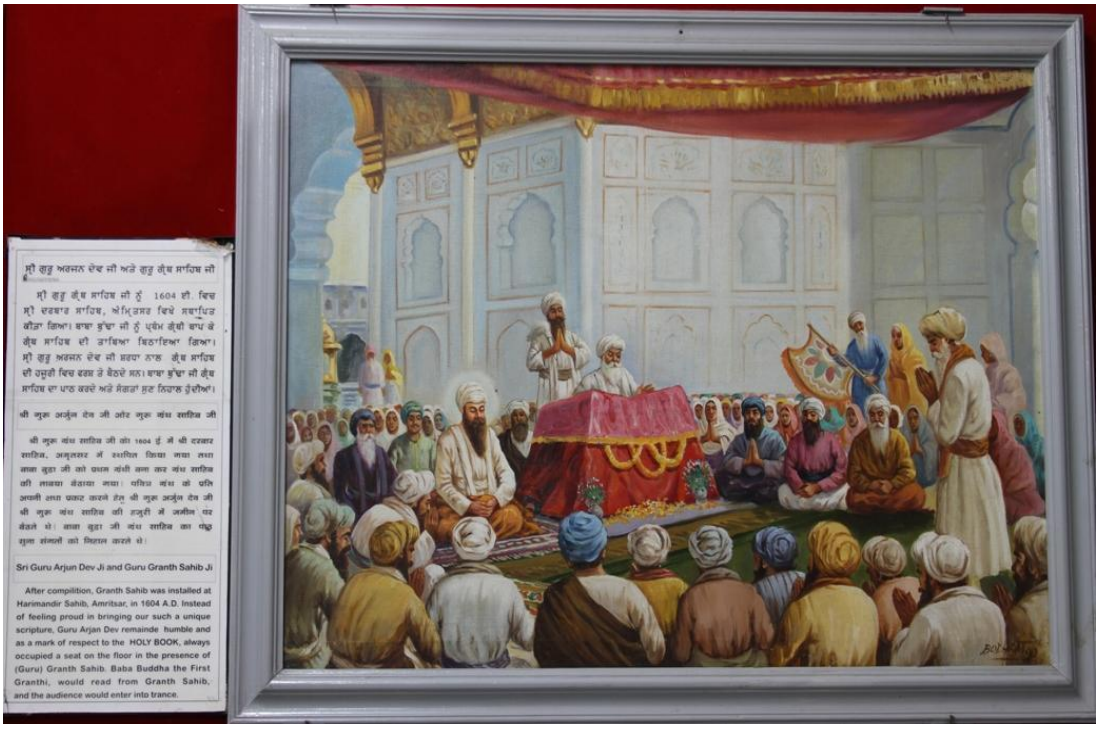

FIGURE 31. A painting produced for PSB calendar, now in Bhai Mati Das Museum. Photo courtesy of DSGMC.

It is noteworthy that a bank should consistently produce paintings and material on Sikh history. Such a project would have acquired a large measure of acceptability and perhaps even prestige among the members of the Sikh community. That is why it becomes very important to study the role of PSB, and this section will discuss the activities of the Bank in producing material on Sikh heritage. Since these paintings were not conceived for any museum, they have a separate history and trajectory of coming into being. Each painting was part of a themed calendar and each year's calendar introduced a new theme on Sikh history. I have tried to bring this complexity in the story of production of Sikh history at this museum. It is also significant to understand the very process of production of paintings: what were the themes chosen

by the bank, who were the people involved and what was the extent to which the bank or the artist were able to influence the outcome of a painting. This chapter will discuss these issues.

PSB and Creation of Sikh Heritage

Punjab and Sind Bank was founded in 1908 by a group of three prominent Sikhs: Bhai Vir Singh, Sardar Tarlochan Singh and Sir Sunder Singh Majithia. Bhai Vir Singh is considered the father of modern Punjabi literature. He was a key figure in Singh Sabha reform movement and established many institutions for the Sikh community. He started the Wazir-i-Hind Press in Amritsar in 1892 and the Punjabi weekly, *Khalsa Samachar*. He was the key person behind establishment of Khalsa College Amritsar, the Khalsa Tract Society and the Chief Khalsa Diwan.[19] His novel, *Sundari,* is considered the first modern Punjabi novel and is an extremely popular and influential text. Sardar Tarlochan Singh (1872–1947) was a lawyer based in Amritsar. He joined Bhai Vir Singh's Khalsa Tract Society in 1895. He remained the Managing Director of PSB from 1908 till 1947 and worked closely with both Bhai Vir Singh and Sunder Singh Majithia to promote education among the Sikhs. Sunder Singh Majithia (1872–1941) was one of the biggest landowners of Punjab and also an important politician. He was member of Singh Sabha at Amritsar and was the founder member and honorary secretary of Chief Khalsa Diwan for several years. He also started the English monthly, *Khalsa Advocate.* He was the first president of SGPC in 1920, which he left to join the Punjab Legislative Council. He was knighted in 1926. He was also a member of Punjab Executive Council from 1937, till his death.

PSB was a private bank, incorporated as Punjab and Sind Bank Limited. It started in Hall Bazaar, Amritsar and had a number of branches in undivided Punjab. After Partition in 1947, it was left with only two branches in Indian side of the border and it grew gradually from this position. It remained a private company till the year 1980 when it was nationalised by the Indian Government.[20] The name was then changed to

[19] Chief Khalsa Diwan was established in 1902. It was the main council of Sikhs to supervise on matters of religion and education. Any Singh Sabha or Sikh society could be affiliated to it. It was particularly active in preaching Sikh tenants, Sikh history and advocating rights of the Sikhs to the colonial government. Its membership was open to baptised Sikhs who could read and write Gurmukhi. It had an important role in institutionalising the Singh Sabha view of Sikhism being a religion, separate from Hinduism.

[20] This was the second round of nationalisation. The first was in 1969.

Punjab and Sind Bank. In independent India, PSB is very well remembered in the Sikh community for its calendars depicting scenes from Sikh history. The first calendar was issued in 1974, and paintings for calendar continued to be commissioned for printing till the early 2000s. The Bank still publishes calendars, except that now photographs have replaced paintings. The key people behind PSB's famous calendars were Inderjit Singh, Satbir Singh and Makhan Singh.

Inderjit Singh (1911–1998) was a well known and greatly respected member of the Sikh community. Born in a Hindu family, he converted to Sikhism and made his name as a scholar, philanthropist, banker and educationist. He was General Manager of PSB from 1960 to 1968 and then its Chairman till 1982, when he retired. Under his chairmanship, PSB started publishing calendars and books on Sikh themes. Each year the calendars covered different themes from Sikh history. The books drew upon stories from the life of Gurus, their teachings and were written in simple language and illustrated. These were mainly published for young readers. For example, *Guru Teg Bahadur ji ka sachitra jivan* (Illustrated life of Guru Teg Bahadur) published in 1975, to commemorate the tercentenary of martyrdom of Guru Teg Bahadur.[21] Inderjit Singh also developed an archive of devotional music at PSB. Later, in the year 1985, he floated a private venture called PSB Finance and launched the Bank of Punjab in 1995. He continued to commission paintings to be reproduced in calendars of these two firms.

Before its nationalisation, PSB was envisaged as a community bank for the Sikhs, and Inderjit Singh was known to be generous in his support to the poor and needy members of the Sikh community. He was concerned about the welfare of the Sikh preachers, hymn-singers, *sevadars* (those employed in the gurdwaras), and their family members were given employment in the bank.[22] He motivated the people of the Bank to work together as a family and to consider it a joint venture: the only banking institution for the Sikhs in the country (Kaur 2011, 30). His commitment to the Panth and its economic development comes through in this story from his life: at a high level meeting of PSB, an outside observer asked Inderjit Singh, "Why do we see

[21] This booklet was printed in Hindi, English and Punjabi. The first edition was issued in 1975 and distributed in schools and among children. On popular demand the second edition was published in 1976. The illustrations are by Devender Singh. The historian who developed the content was Satbir Singh.

[22] For anecdotes from Inderjit Singh's life, I have relied on Kaur (2011), and interviews with people who worked with him. Kaur's book is also based in interviews of people who had observed Inderjit Singh and his life closely.

only Sikhs in your bank?" Inderjit Singh responded, "First tell me the reasons, why can I not see any Sikh in other banks. Since you folks never recruited Sikhs in your banks, Sikhs have now built a bank of their own" (Kaur 2011, 54).

Inderjit Singh was keen to spread the teachings of Sikhism and promote the *gursikh* (true to the Guru) way of life among the Sikhs. There are many anecdotes from his life which attest to his firm emphasis on being a gursikh. In one instance, a young Sikh man appeared for a job interview at PSB and Inderjit Singh noted his 'dishonoured beard.'[23] He told the applicant, "Son, it seems you are not your father's son. Next time when you reappear for the interview, be like your father." The boy was later told by an employee of PSB that without his hair and beard a man cannot be the son of his father. The young man was filled with deep remorse. He realised his mistake and was reborn as a true Sikh, after baptism by the sacred amrit. A year later, he reappeared for interview at PSB and wrote in his application, "Now I am my father's son." And, he got the job. In yet another incident, an employee who came to the office with his beard shaved was sent off on a month's leave by Inderjit Singh. The latter explained, "I cannot allow the environment of my office to be corrupted. You may join once you have discovered yourself" (Kaur 2011, 40). Thus, Inderjit Singh was deeply influenced by Singh Sabha ideals of Sikhism and tried to mould the PSB and its employees in the same spirit. He was also closely associated with the activities of Chief Khalsa Diwan. He died in 1998 and was awarded *Panth Rattan* (jewel of the Panth)[24] on the tercentenary of establishment of the Khalsa at Sri Anandpur Sahib in 1999.

Inderjit Singh worked closely with Satbir Singh to produce calendars and educational material on Sikh history. Satbir Singh was a historian who has written numerous books on Sikh history. As mentioned earlier, he was part of SGPC and involved in the establishment of CSM. He was a prolific writer who started writing in the late 1950s and continued till the end of his life. His works focus on life history of Gurus and other important Sikhs such as Baba Buddha and Banda Bahadur, and are mostly written as stories, in easy to read language and are often illustrated. The stories emphasise the fine qualities of the Gurus and their followers, such as kindness, humility, equality, bravery and desire for justice and the strength to stand up to

[23] A reference to his trimmed beard.
[24] Panth Rattan is the highest honour given by the SGPC to members of the Sikh community.

oppression. Some of his works are *Sadda itihas: 1* (1957), *Sadda itihas: 2* (1962), *Gur bhai: Guru Hargobind Sahib ji* (1968), *Nikkiyan jinda vadda saka* (1975), *Sikh rahit mariyada ate is di mahanta* (1980), *The Immortal Story of Chamkaur Sahib* (1979), *Childhood of the Gurus* (1980), *Ardas* (1990), *Sau sawal* (1983), *Janga Guru sahiban diyan* (1992), *Baba Buddha ji* (1992), *Ashtam balbira: Jiwani Guru Harikishan ji* (1980). Many of these remain in print currently, which attests to their great popularity as sources of Sikh history. He was consultant to PSB for production of calendars and books on Sikh history. The calendars carried an introduction by PSB Chairman, Inderjit Singh and among others, credited Satbir Singh for providing the historical background. Other credits included those for publishing, writing, painting and printing (figure 32).

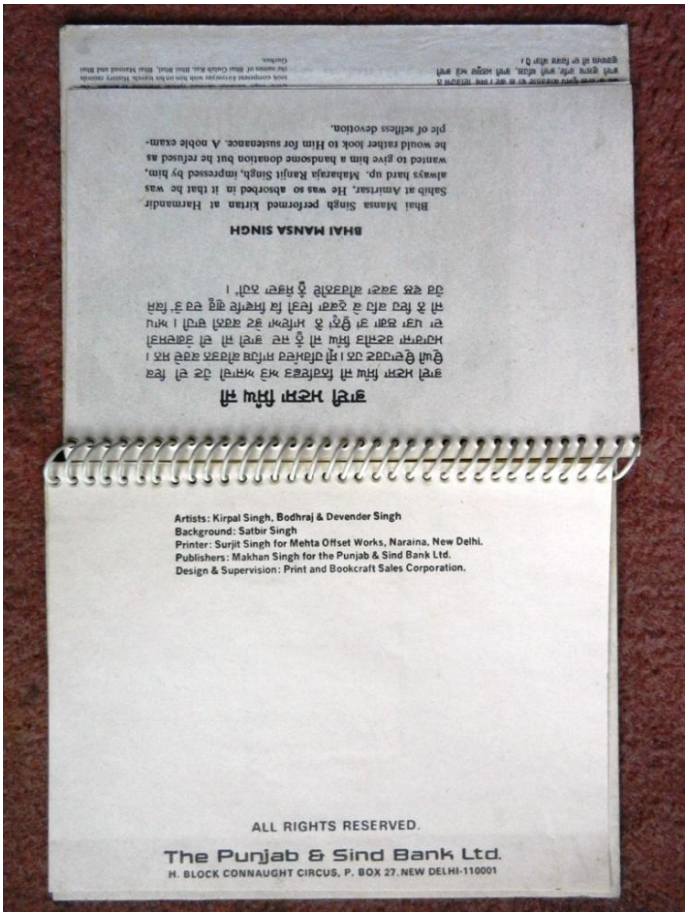

FIGURE 32. Credits page of PSB's 1976 calendar. Photo courtesy of Devender Singh.

An important member of PSB team for producing calendar was Makhan Singh (b. 1936). Makhan Singh retired from PSB in the year 1994 as Deputy General Manager. He studied at Government College, Ludhiana and was actively involved in the Punjabi Suba agitation. He was also President of AISSF during 1963–67. He joined

PSB in 1970 and worked in close association with Inderjit Singh and Satbir Singh. He was responsible for publishing the calendars and coordinating among historians, artists and printers at PSB. Even after retirement he continued his association with the Bank in advisory capacity and was involved in several activities associated with the spread of Sikhism. He was actively involved as an advisor to PSB in 1999 for organising the celebrations for the tercentenary of establishment of the Khalsa. On this occasion, PSB had organised *kirtan darbars* (programmes for congregational singing) all over the country for promotion of the sacred bani. Every year on *Gurpurab* (birth anniversary) of Guru Nanak, PSB organised exhibition of its painting collection at Gurdwara Bangla Sahib, New Delhi.[25] Makhan Singh was instrumental in organising this exhibition and often spent time at the venue leading guided tours of the paintings. He is actively involved in the field of education and was Chairman, Guru Nanak Public School, Pushpanjali Enclave, New Delhi from 2001 till 2006 and later Chairman of Guru Arjan Dev Institute of Technology, Pitampura, New Delhi from 2006 till 2009. He currently lives in Punjabi Bagh, Delhi and regularly writes about Sikh art and history.

FIGURE 33. Makhan Singh (*far right*) explaining paintings on Sikh history at PSB exhibition organised at Gurdwara Bangla Sahib in 1998. Photograph courtesy of Makhan Singh.

[25] The exhibition of PSB paintings is still organised at Gurdwara Bangla Sahib, on Gurupurab every year.

PSB's closeness to Singh Sabha programme is evident in its roots, the world-view of its Chairman, its functioning as a bank, as well as its activities in promotion of Sikh heritage. PSB's role as an institution of Tat Khalsa is also noted by Harjot Oberoi in his work on Sikh identity (Oberoi 1994, 411). Thus, PSB's calendar became an important medium of propagating the Tat Khalsa version of Sikh heritage.

It is important to note that PSB was not the first to publish calendars on Sikh history. Punjab MARKFED had released their first calendar on Sikh history in 1971. Their calendar of 1974 on Sikh martyrs, reproduced paintings made by Kirpal Singh and Gurdit Singh which were housed in CSM. MARKFED continues to publish calendars on Sikh history.[26] Private companies like Dunlop and Mohan Meakin had reproduced history paintings on calendars and greeting cards. And portraits of Sikh Gurus by Sobha Singh and scenes from their life by G. S. Sohan Singh were already part of popular bazaar art. The CSM too had a number of paintings on Sikh history. Thus, the Sikh community was already familiar with popular art depicting the life of the Gurus and history of the Panth. Still, PSB's role is significant in many ways.

Firstly, they published calendars on Sikh history, for a period of about three decades. Thus, it was not a random, standalone event, but a consistent effort on the part of Inderjit Singh, Satbir Singh and Makhan Singh to sustain this activity. Secondly, it was not simply a public relations exercise on part of the bank, but an educational activity. The calendars included introductory notes on the calendar's theme by the Chairman, Inderjit Singh, and gave credits to a historian (Satbir Singh, mostly) for the information (figure 32). The inclusion of a historian in making of the calendar lent the whole activity an academic credibility and therefore, authority as evidence of Sikh history. Thirdly, the Bank had tremendous reach among members of the community. The annual calendars became a source of education as well as artistic pieces for those who received them. PSB official and artists who were interviewed often remember how paintings in PSB calendars were cut out and framed for display. Moreover, a whole new series of themes were introduced through paintings commissioned for the calendars. We have seen in the survey of popular Sikh art in the previous chapter that themes chosen for illustration changed over a period of time. The most consistently popular themes through the late nineteenth and twentieth century were Guru Nanak,

[26] Though at present, I cannot say if all calendars are on Sikh history. There might be other themes as well. The MARKFED Punjab calendars of 1978, 1980-1 and 2004, which are with me, are on Sikh history.

scenes from his Janam Sakhis, and Guru Gobind Singh. It was in independent India that we see more popular art on intermediate Gurus, and their followers—not only portraits but narrative scenes depicting stories from their life and site associated with them. PSB had an important role in bringing out the stories associated with intermediate Gurus and making them visually available to a larger audience.[27] PSB calendars presented from the Sikh tradition in themed calendars such as those on women in Sikh history; Sikh Gurus as children, and *kirtaniyas* (the hymn-singers; see figure 34). PSB not only popularised these paintings through annual calendars, it printed illustrated books, and held exhibitions of these paintings which increased the area of circulation of history paintings manifold. The artists who were employed by PSB, too acquired greater popularity through these calendars. There was increasing demand for similar works from institutions and individuals. Lastly, these images became templates for many more reproductions, for instance, in different museums as shown in previous section of this chapter. The same scene could be painted by an artist several times for different customers. Also, different artists would copy the same template and make reproductions. Many subjects and paintings first published by PSB became so popular that they established the template to be followed by other artists for decades to come.

Thus, for PSB, the annual production of calendars was not simply an administrative or routine public relations exercise. This was an educational activity in service of the Sikh community and production of calendar was a significant event. Each calendar was officially released, sometimes by an important administrator or politician. Makhan Singh showed me photographs of calendars being released, in one instance, by Yashwant Sinha (a prominent leader of BJP who was Finance Minister in 1990–91 and later in 1998–2002). Another photograph in Makhan Singh's collection shows PSB officials commemorating twenty-five years of release of their annual calendar, from 1974 to 1999, in an official function. Figure 35 shows Inderjit Singh with artists Bodhraj and Devender Singh releasing the calendar for the year 1979. Makhan Singh and Satbir Singh too are in the photograph.

[27] As was pointed out in chapter 3, the intermediate Gurus between Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh were rarely represented in popular Sikh art from late nineteenth century. Their representations existed in murals and courtly miniature paintings, but not in popular art. It was the first time in the 1920s that two of the intermediate Gurus, Guru Arjan and Guru Teg Bahadur, appear in popular prints as martyrs. And, it is only in mid–late twentieth century that representation of intermediate Gurus becomes popular. New subjects associated with the Gurus and their life stories came to be printed in large numbers and PSB had an important role to play in their dissemination.

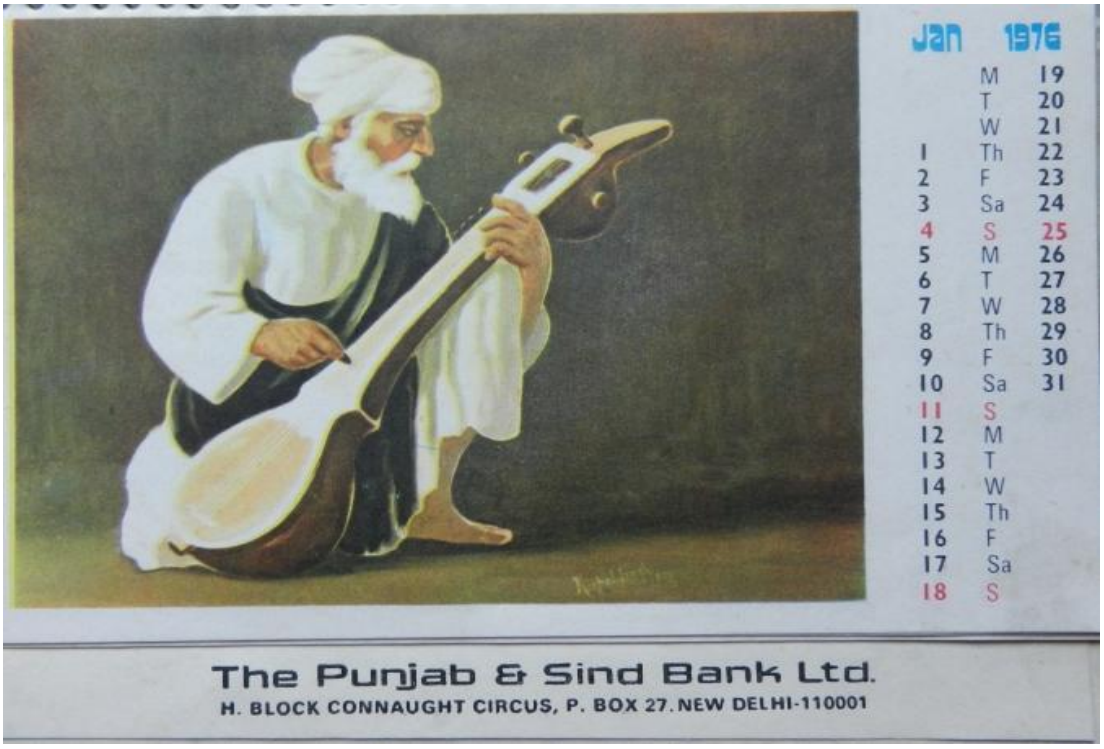

FIGURE 34: A page from PSB calendar of 1976 on kirtaniyas, showing Bhai Mardana with his rabab. By Kirpal Singh. Photo courtesy of Devender Singh.

FIGURE 35. Release of PSB calendar for 1979. *Left to right*: Satbir Singh (a bit of face visible), Makhan Singh, publisher of the calendar (name not known), artist Bodhraj holding the calendar, artist Devender Singh, Chairman Inderjit Singh, his daughter and wife. Photograph courtesy of Makhan Singh.

Creation of the PSB Calendar[28]

PSB calendar were based on a single theme each year. A few themes from Sikh history were shortlisted by Makhan Singh and presented to the Board of Management of the bank from which they would choose one. Sometimes Inderjit Singh chose the theme himself. Then, several events which would represent the larger theme were chosen. For instance, one of the themes was bhagats, who had contributed to Guru Granth Sahib. So, the calendar would have portraits of Shaikh Farid, Kabir, Ramdas and other bhagats. Besides portraits, events associated with the life of the Gurus and their followers were also illustrated. Another calendar depicted the role of women in Sikh history who were represented as ideals of Sikh faith. The pages in the calendar showed Bebe Nanaki, who is considered the first Sikh in history to recognise Nanak's spiritual qualities; Mata Khivi, who is the only Sikh woman to find mention in Guru Granth Sahib and whose generous langar was always open to all; Mai Bhago leading the forty muktas in battlefield in support of Guru Gobind Singh; Sikh women plying heavy grindstones in Mir Manu's prison, as punishment for their steadfast faith; Sardarni Sada Kaur challenging the Afghans before Lahore fort; a brave Sikh woman sacrificing her infant to participate in Jaito morcha; Mata Sahib Devan helping prepare the amrit; Mata Sulakhni seeking blessings from Guru Hargobind; Guru Amar Das recognising organisational capacity of women giving them responsibility as preachers; Mata Gujri, along with younger Sahibzadas imprisoned in Thanda Burj, Sirhind; Maharani Jindan, the last queen of Punjab. These episodes were illustrative of basic principles of Sikh faith i.e. *seva* (community service), langar and kirtan. The paintings would illustrate stories which would bring out the qualities of Gurus such as their just nature, equal treatment of and kindness towards all, humility and bravery, and ardent devotion of their followers. In the year 1976, the PSB calendar featured paintings of kirtaniyas, followers of the Gurus who kept alive the tradition of kirtan. The paintings included that of Bhai Mardana (figure 34), Bhai Satta and Bhai Balwand by Kirpal Singh and that of Bhai Babak, Bhai Abdulla and Bhai Nathmal by Devender Singh. Some other themes which featured in PSB calendars included quotes from Guru Granth Sahib, 'Nehru's birth centenary in 1989'; morals such as, 'if you want to be respected, serve the needy and the poor'; '*Nischay kar apni jeet karo*'.[29]

[28] The information in this section is based on interviews with PSB officials and artists.

[29] *Nichay kar apni jeet karo* is a line from a verse attributed to Guru Gobind Singh, and is also the motto of Sikh regiment in Indian Army.

One of the PSB calendars featured historical Sikh gurdwaras illustrated in monochrome line drawings. A list of some of the themes depicted by PSB calendars is provided in appendix 1. This list is based on interviews of PSB officials and artists who made the calendars; dates mentioned on original paintings in PSB collection; and pages of calendars which exist in personal collections. There is no complete public archive of PSB calendars.

It is interesting to note that many of the modern concerns were incorporated by PSB in their calendars. Events from Sikh history, particularly life of Gurus were presented as ideals for the world to emulate. The United Nations declared 1975 as the International Year of Women and the same year PSB issued a calendar on Sikh women. According to Makhan Singh, these women are not only unique in Sikh history, but also the rest of the world. He gives example of Bibi Bhani, who according to him has a unique position in the history of mankind by virtue of her being the mother of a Guru, wife of a Guru and daughter of a Guru.[30] In 1979 when the UN celebrated the International Year of the Child, PSB issued a calendar focussing on the Gurus' childhood. It showed "various episodes and anecdotes from the life of the revered Gurus during their childhood, including their playful activities, miraculous and divine actions, acts of bravery and firm determination, spirit of humility and dedicated service."[31] The introductory note to the calendar was written by Inderjit Singh, Chairman of PSB who pointed out that while UN's celebration of the International Year of the Child put stress on our duty towards children, people rarely thought of guiding forces in children's lives. The calendar emphasised the role of the Sikh Gurus as source of inspiration for children and that the life of the Gurus was the spiritual heritage of children, one they must emulate. Here, examples from Sikh tradition are not ideals for the Sikhs alone, but for the whole world. The message seems to be that what the world is concerned with now, the Sikh community had already envisaged and put into practice centuries ago. Reading modern values in Sikh past is typical of Tat Khalsa narrative of history. This tendency is also visible at Bhai Mati Das Museum (see chapter 5) where for example, a follower of Guru Gobind Singh, Bhai Kanhaiya, is celebrated as a precursor of Red Cross, for helping the wounded in the battlefield. As Fenech notes, the tendency to use modern principles to

[30] Interview with Makhan Singh on 15 February 2013.
[31] Quoted from the introductory note published on the calendar and written by Inderjit Singh, Chairman, PSB.

explain events from the past fits well with the Tat Khalsa version of a glorious Sikh history. He says this in context of representations of Guru Teg Bahadur's martyrdom in Tat Khalsa scholarship, where it is stressed that the Guru's sacrifice is unparalleled in history of the world for he sacrificed himself to protect right to practice a faith (Hinduism), which was not his own. Fenech explains that this image of Guru Teg Bahadur assumes that Hindus and Sikhs were distinct religious groups in seventeenth century, whereas there is no evidence to suggest so. Further, this interpretation of Guru Teg Bahadur's martyrdom is also used to suggest that defence of 'human rights' (a very modern term and part of UN's charters) was integral to Sikh faith (Fenech 2000, 151–4).

According to Makhan Singh, he spent about three months doing research on the theme picked by the Board of Management of PSB. He chose ten topics from the material collected and distributed the topics among artists commissioned to work on the calendars. Once the paintings were completed, they were displayed to the Board, which then selected six out of the ten. The selected paintings were further scrutinized by him, to see if nothing objectionable is depicted in them; whether the costume and other details are correct.[32]

The artists who worked for PSB include Kirpal Singh, Devender Singh, Mehar Singh, Bodhraj (1934–1992),[33] R. M. Singh (b. 1965),[34] Jarnail Singh, Amolak Singh, Vijay[35] and Mohinder Bodhraj (d. 2013),[36] Among the artists I interviewed, Mehar Singh, Mohinder Bodhraj, R. M. Singh, Jarnail Singh and Devender Singh's works comprise the majority of paintings at Sis Ganj museum. In case of Kirpal Singh and Bodhraj, I was able to talk to their sons, who too are artists. Amolak Singh, another painter many of whose works are displayed at Sis Ganj Museum, is no longer alive. He was employed by the DSGMC and worked at Sis Ganj Museum as its Chief Artist and was later engaged with Paonta Sahib Gurdwara to paint themes on Sikh history.

[32] Interview with Makhan Singh on 11 March 2013.
[33] Bodhraj was a Delhi based artist. He designed the PSB logo in 1972 and made many paintings for their calendars. He is well known for his work on Sikh history and has illustrated many books on this theme. His sons Mohinder Bodhraj and Vijay also work as artists. He was awarded by the President of India, Giani Zail Singh in 1983.
[34] R. M. Singh was born in Bharoli Kalan, Punjab. He currently lives in Chandigarh and specialises in portraits, scenes of Punjab life and Sikh history. He has illustrated for books, magazines and newspapers including The Tribune. His work is at President's House, New Delhi, Parliament House, New Delhi, University of California, USA, Punjabi University Patiala and many other private collections. He is Secretary, Punjab Lalit Kala Akademi.
[35] Vijay is son of Bodhraj. He is an artist based in Delhi.
[36] Mohindar Bodhraj was the son of Bodhraj, and lived in Delhi. He was also an artist who worked for PSB.

It is not clear whether the sketches made by artists were subject to the approval of PSB or they could submit a finished painting straightaway. The artists and the administrators differ on extent of the bank's influence on the creation of a painting. In Makhan Singh's opinion, artists lacked proper historical knowledge. According to him, only Kirpal Singh had knowledge of Sikh history but for most others, Makhan Singh had to meet and guide them several times. He provided them with historical background and information on life of the people during the time of the Gurus. In case of a mental block, where the artist was unable to visualize a subject, Makhan Singh or Satbir Singh, again acted as a guide. Makhan Singh describes how once Bodhraj was asked to paint a scene based on a particular bani of Baba Farid: *Farida, shakkar khand nivaat gur, makheyo maanja doodh, sabbe vastu mithiya, rabb na pujan haot*, i.e. sugar, honey, jaggery, milk–all these items are sweet, but God still, is the sweetest. According to Makhan Singh, Bodhraj simply couldn't visualize it, despite encouragement from him and simple gave up in frustration. Finally, Makhan Singh was the one who visualized these words and directed Bodhraj to paint accordingly.[37] The result was the painting reproduced as figure 36.

FIGURE 36. God is the sweetest of all, by Bodhraj. Photo courtesy of DSGMC.

[37] Interview with Makhan Singh, 11 March 2013.

I asked the artists specifically about their association with PSB and the process of creation of calendars. They accepted that difference of opinion would arise between PSB officials and artists, on depiction of a particular person or a theme. But, they maintained that artists had an upper hand in making this decision. According to Mohinder Bodhraj, the artists had to prepare a sketch and get it passed by the bank. He elaborates that he and his father (Bodhraj) were based in Delhi, as was the bank and all the paintings came to Delhi for printing. In case any correction was required on the paintings, often he and his father ended up doing it, even on paintings of other artists.[38] Kirpal Singh is known to have painted directly on the canvas, without even drawing a sketch for his own reference. Jarnail Singh, his son, says he follows the same practice. In case a client asks for a preliminary sketch, he assures them to have faith in his ability to paint and so far, Jarnail Singh assures me he has not had a dissatisfied client. He remembers that representatives of the bank, especially Satbir Singh would discuss the subject to be depicted in detail with his father, Kirpal Singh. The latter had a good command on history and would often suggest ways to illustrate a story. For instance, Jarnail Singh recalls that once, the scene of Mughal emperor Akbar's meeting with Guru Amar Das was to be illustrated and someone suggested that the painting should show people receiving Akbar on a red carpet, but Kirpal Singh argued that one should show Guru Amar Das in a position of greater prominence and show Akbar bowing before him in the court, rather than giving importance to Akbar. This way the painting would enhance the personality of the Guru.[39]

R. M. Singh pointed out that sometimes the bank came up with an objection, such as, in one instance, when he had painted a young Guru Nanak and hence painted the beard black. The bank objected that it should be white otherwise no one might identify the figure as Guru Nanak. R. M. Singh says he tried to reason with them, that Guru Nanak did not always have a white beard, but still they were not convinced.[40] Mehar Singh explains that paintings were corrected or modified because different people have different ideas about how historical personalities should look. People form images of historical personalities in their minds, according to the attributed qualities of that personality; and that is what they would like to see in the painting

[38] Interview with Mohinder Bodhraj on 1 October 2012.
[39] Interview with Jarnail Singh on 9 December 2013.
[40] Interview with R. M. Singh on 26 February 2013.

(refer to discussion on evolution of Nanak's iconography in chapter 3). People ask artists to depict able bodied men, prominent moustaches and similar traits. Because of loss of memory, Mehar Singh was unable to give specific examples.[41]

I was surprised to know that despite the fact that the artists worked on same themes, there was no discussion among them regarding their work. Even in the case where paintings were commissioned by a single patron (PSB) for a single project (annual calendar) there was no meeting of all artists and administrators to discuss work. All interviewees are unanimous about intense rivalry among the artists.

All artists maintain that they had to do immense amount of research in history, especially reading up on history to be able to paint on Sikh history. They emphasised that they had to know the landscape, dress, food etc of the times they were painting about. All of them say that they read up extensively to be able to depict historical events accurately. As far as I can see, there is hardly any written material which provides this information. It is more likely that their visual cues were paintings done under the Mughal and those of Pahari style as well as works done in under the patronage of court of Punjab, including murals in gurdwaras and temples. It seems to me that a visit to a museum or an art gallery which has these paintings would be much simpler and more helpful than reading about dress of people from gazetteers (colonial period) or other contemporary material. And, for those who have formally studied fine arts, their training may have included a study of traditional painting in Punjab, in combination with being trained in western academic style. However, no artist acknowledges this. All of them claim to derive their visual clues from texts which mention the Gurus and their life stories. McLeod's observation on iconography of Guru Gobind Singh in late-twentieth century popular prints is of relevance here. He points out that representation of the tenth Guru as a royal figure, dressed in finery and expensive clothes, bejewelled and riding a horse, is not unique to the Sikh tradition. Rather, it a particular Sikh manifestation of a popular martial ideal where men are shown as regal and heroic figures (McLeod 1991, 46).

This argument helps us understand that the visual elements or iconography used in modern paintings on Sikh history are not necessarily particular to Sikh history. The artists in all probability draw upon the visual tropes acquired through professional

[41] Interview with Mehar Singh on 25 February 2013.

training as well as through a process of socialization in modern society which is full of such visuals. It is also important to note that the paintings are done in a western realistic style and all painters discussed above mostly worked in this style—whether it is scenes from Sikh history or images of gods, or scenes from rural life in Punjab. All artists acknowledged the power of realistic depiction of Sikh history. It allows for easy communication of message to the audience which was the underlying concern in paintings on Sikh history. Both Mehar Singh and R. M. Singh credit Sobha Singh's influence on their own work and a whole generation of artists in general. Realism in fact was considered the reason for popularity of paintings on Sikh history. Thus it becomes almost inevitable that their paintings will use visual elements and realism understandable to a lay person. Here, communication of the story is the main objective rather than historical accuracy in depiction.

In addition, interviews with PSB officials have suggested that there were situations where artists' interpretation was considered incorrect. Makhan Singh narrates an incident where Devender Singh was asked to illustrate the verse, *Baramaha* by Guru Arjan. According to Makhan Singh, the Baramaha states that in the rainy month of *Sawan,* snakes come out of their holes and behave aggressively, hissing, spitting and fiercely fighting. Makhan Singh explains that Devender Singh showed the snakes entangled which suggested 'romantic feelings.' The people who saw the painting considered it inappropriate and not the correct interpretation of gurbani so the illustration was altered.[42]

It is notable that none of PSB's calendars featured scenes of explicit violence such as those present painted by Kirpal Singh for the CSM. PSB calendars also do not at all feature some of the most traumatic times faced by the Sikh community in independent India, such as during Partition in 1947, events of 1984 (Operation Bluestar and the anti-Sikh riots) and the killing of innocent Sikhs during the years of terrorist activity and the State's violent response to it. Makhan Singh was the only interviewee who could offer an insight into this. According to him, the Bank made a conscious effort not to cause offence to a particular community. That is why, he explains, no scenes of martyrdom were published by PSB even though Sikh history is full of instances of oppression of Sikhs by Muslims. Being a commercial organisation, which was later

[42] Interview with Makhan Singh, 29 May 2013.

nationalised, he says that the bank did not wish to create tensions or controversy. Even though the story of Guru Teg Bahadur's martyrdom was published by the bank, in an illustrated book, doing the same in the calendar would have greatly highlighted it. According to him, the calendars had larger circulation than books and the bank had to keep in mind its Muslim customers too; publishing scenes of martyrdom would have been a totally unabashed religious propaganda.[43]

It seems a plausible explanation that PSB in independent India did not want to get into conflict with the state or attract controversy—neither when it was a private commercial entity, nor when it was nationalised in 1980. This would be particularly true with regard to representing the state-sponsored violence against Sikhs in 1984.[44] It is also possible that the controversy generated by MARKFED calendar of 1974 may have cautioned PSB against depiction such images at least through the institutional platform of the bank. It is however noteworthy that people associated with the Bank and in production of its calendars were active in other Sikh forums such as the SGPC and AISSF, which were used to make and disseminate paintings of Sikh being tortured by Muslims.

Makhan Singh also shared an instance where PSB's interests conflicted with that of the Indian government over the theme of the calendar. He says, when Indian government decided to celebrate the birth centenary of Jawaharlal Nehru in 1989, it issued an order to all government institutions to publish calendars and stationary, for that year, with a focus on Nehru. According to him, this was a difficult situation for PSB: the Chairman at that time was an officer of Indian government and could not refuse to obey orders. At the same time, he was sensitive to Sikh sentiment as those were the days of militancy in Punjab and the relations between the central government and the region were extremely hostile. A solution to this dilemma was provided by Makhan Singh when he suggested themes which showed Nehru's association with the Sikh community. These included, Nehru visiting Darbar Sahib and making a speech; Nehru being arrested at Jaito morcha; Nehru at the inauguration of Bhakhra Nangal dam in Punjab, where the reservoir was named Gobind Sagar, after the tenth Sikh

[43] Interview with Makhan Singh on 27 October 2014 and 10 November 2014.
[44] Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi was killed in October 1984 by her Sikh bodyguards. In retaliation, workers of the ruling Congress party (to which Gandhi belonged) targeted and killed Sikhs especially in the capital city of Delhi. This targeted killing of Sikhs and destruction of their homes and shops went unchecked by the State and the perpetrators of this violence have been actively protected by the Indian state as well as the Congress party.

Guru; Nehru appreciating the Guru ka Bagh agitation as an exemplar of non-violent agitation by Akali jathas; and Nehru at the inauguration of Komagata Maru memorial in West Bengal.[45]

Publications by Punjab and Sind Bank

PSB's initiatives for the promotion of Sikh history were not limited to the publication of calendars. It also published books, especially illustrated ones for children, which had stories on life of Gurus. *Guru Teg Bahadur: sachitra jivani* was published by PSB in 1975 to mark the tercentenary of martyrdom of the Guru (figure 37). It was published in English, Hindi and Punjabi. The historical information was provided by Satbir Singh, Inderjit Singh wrote a preface, Devender Singh was the artist, and Makhan Singh published it on behalf of PSB. The book became so popular that a second edition was printed in 1976.

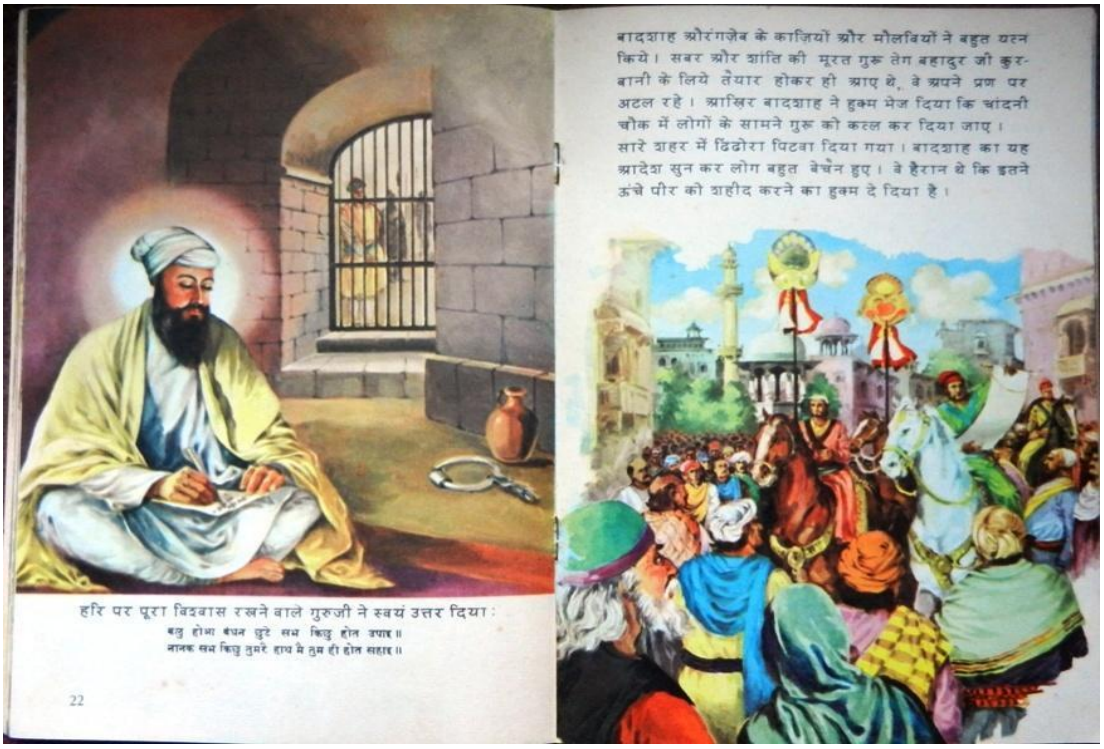

FIGURE 37. A page from *Guru Teg Bahadur* published by PSB. Photo courtesy of Devender Singh.

[45] Interview with Makhan Singh on 10 November 2014. This information is solely based in the interview. I have not been able to verify it.

Another illustrated book, *Guru bal gatha*, which had stories of Gurus as children was published by PSB in 1978-9. Artists who worked for the book were Devender Singh, Bodhraj, Kirpal Singh and Amolak Singh. Satbir Singh was the writer for the book and Makhan Singh the publisher. Inderjit Singh and Satbir Singh also supported publication of illustrated books on Sikh history by SGPC and other Sikh groups. Some of the books where this trio was involved are listed in table 1. These books are still widely available, more than three decades after their first publication.

TABLE 1. Popular books on Sikh history

S. No.	Title	Publishing details	People involved
1	*Guru Teg Bahadur-sachitra jivani*	Dec 1975 Makhan Singh for PSB	Preface: Inderjit Singh Historical information: Satbir Singh Artist: Devender Singh
2	*Guru bal gatha*	1979–80 By Makhan Singh for PSB	Preface: Inderjit Singh Writer: Satbir Singh Artist: Kirpal Singh, Devender Singh, Bodhraj, Amolak Singh
3	*Amar sakhiyan*	1974 Guru Nanak Foundation, New Delhi	With support of Inderjit Singh Art: Devender Singh
4	*Nikkiyan jinda vadda saka: Chhote Sahibzadiyan di shahidi di sachitra sakhi*	Dec 1976 SGPC	Chief advisor: Inderjit Singh Historical background: Satbir Singh Artist: Devender Singh
5	*Shahidi parampara*	Oct 1983 SGPC	Chief advisor: Inderjit Singh Historical background: Satbir Singh Artist: Devender Singh
6	*Baba Banda Singh*	Oct 1993	Chief advisor: Inderjit Singh

	Bahadur	SGPC	Historical background: Satbir Singh Artist: Mehar Singh
7	*Album, Kendri Sikh Ajaibghar, Shri Darbar Sahib, Shri Amritsar*	1991 SGPC	Expert Advice: Inderjit Singh Writer: Satbir Singh
8	*Illustrated Life of Guru Amar Das*	1979 Published by Makhan Singh for PSB*	Chief advisor: Inderjit Singh Artist & calligrapher: Devender Singh
9	*Saka Chamkaur: Sachitra sakhi*	2015	Chief advisor: Inderjit Singh Historical background: Satbir Singh Artist: Bodh Raj

* I have not seen this book. This information is from Makhan Singh (interview on 10 November 2014).

Thus, annual calendars, illustrated books, outreach programmes like exhibitions were all part of PSB's initiatives to popularise Sikh history. There is a great emphasis on the visual and the same pool of artists was used for these projects. Some paintings from the collection of PSB were also reproduced in a coffee-table book *Sikh Heritage in Paintings,* published in 1995 and edited by Makhan Singh.

PSB's collection of paintings found its way in Bhai Mati Das Museum through the efforts of Baba Harbans Singh Kar Seva Dilli Wale (1920–2011). He was a well known personality who organised *kar seva* (voluntary service) at many places for construction of gurdwaras. These include all the historic gurdwaras in Delhi (hence his name, Dilli Wale, or belonging to Delhi), and at Darbar Sahib, Gurdwara Tarn Taran, Gurdwara Paonta Sahib, among others (Khatri, n.d.). It was on his initiative that the building of Majestic cinema at Fountain Chowk in old Delhi was purchased by DSGMC and replaced by a museum. He asked PSB to donate the paintings for the purposes of display and that is how the museum came into being.[46] The process of

[46] This information was shared by Makhan Singh (interview on 11 March 2013) and subsequently confirmed by other people interviewed.

selection of paintings, organising the display, writing captions for the museum is not clear at present. I have not been able to find out who was responsible for the display. Baba Harbans Singh's role was limited to construction of the building. For some time artist Amolak Singh was in charge of the museum at Sis Ganj. At present, there is no artist or curator associated with the museum. The caretakers are sewadars of the gurdwara whose role is limited to opening, cleaning and closing the museum.

Not all the paintings at display at Sis Ganj museum were commissioned by PSB. The canvases which came from PSB usually have a sticker with PSB logo in a corner on the canvas or the frame. And the description panel includes PSB's name and logo. The Sis Ganj museum has thirty two paintings which were commissioned or created independently of PSB. Some of the paintings were brought here from Baghel Singh Museum while it was shut for renovation. These particularly include scenes of martyrdom of Guru Teg Bahadur and his followers painted by Kirpal Singh in 1984.[47] Some undated canvases were painted by Amolak Singh particularly for display at the museum. I have considered them part of the narrative in the next chapter where the display at Sis Ganj museum has been analysed.

*

The acceptance of paintings as evidence of glorious heritage of the Sikhs and their tradition of sacrifice and martyrdom has developed over a period of time. Both Sikh institutions and government agencies have patronised such paintings for museums and calendars steadily in the decades post-Independence. There have been objections on representation of Muslims in these paintings. On 3 April 1974, Shamim A. Shamim, a member of Parliament raised an objection in the Indian Parliament against an illustrated calendar distributed by the Parliament Secretariat. The calendar was published by Punjab MARKFED and showed seven paintings of Sikhs being tortured by Mughals, and five paintings on Sikh participation in freedom struggle against the British.[48] A few more MPs objected to the depiction of atrocities on Sikhs by Muslims and called the calendar communal and against the secular spirit and national integration. The Speaker, G. S. Dhillon responded to these objections by saying that

[47] While it is tempting to read these paintings as a response to the events of 1984, there is no indication that this was actually the case. Kirpal Singh's son Jarnail Singh also did not highlight any association of 1984 with the paintings.

[48] These paintings were not commissioned for the calendar, but were prints of already existing paintings (interview with Tarlochan Singh, 30 May 2014).

such pictures were circulated widely, were present in museums and were historical reproductions. Shamim objected that his would be lending justification to the calendar and of writing history in this manner. The Speaker responded that the calendar depicts only a few individuals who were tyrants, and the Sikhs have very good relations with Muslims.[49] This issued remained a subject of controversy for a few days and was reported in the media. Zail Singh, the then Chief Minister of Punjab stated that the calendar was a historical document.[50] G. S. Tohra, then President of SGPC, too claimed that it was a vivid depiction of historical events.[51] I had an opportunity to interview Tarlochan Singh, was then worked for MARKFED and was involved in making this calendar. He elaborated that there was in enquiry committee on this issue where he was called in to give a statement. He explained to the committee that "it was necessary for the Maulvi to stand when tortures were happening, during the time of punishment, so they could give the prisoners the option of conversion. This was a historical fact."[52] Thus, 'historical' nature of these paintings seems to be easily accepted, despite the fact that they are modern *representations* of past events. Also, putting the Sikhs' fight against the Mughals and later the British together is a clear statement that Mughals and British were foreigners who ruled by oppression, and Sikhs, in fact, upheld their martial tradition and love for freedom and justice, by fighting them both.

Earlier, the Civil and Military Gazette in its annual number for the year 1936, published a coloured plate of Guru Hargobind and the Mughal Empress Nur Jahan. This was reproduction of a painting by artist Sobha Singh which showed Guru Hargobind seated on a throne-like chair, on a platform, with a fly-whisk bearer behind him. The Empress greets him by bowing prostate before him. There are three female servants with her. The Gazette provided the following caption for the painting: *The Sixth Guru Hargobind Sahib, Receives a Visit From Nur Jehan: This Incident Occurred When Guru Hargobind Sahib Was Travelling With His Great Friend, the Emperor Jehangir, From Agra to Kashmir*.[53] It seems that there were a few articles in Lahore newspapers about this painting. An article in Urdu newspaper, *Inquilab,* dated 26 November 1935, published at Lahore called the painting "*napaak"* (indecent) for

[49] Lok Sabha Debates, vol. 37, No. 26–30, 27 March–3 April 1974, pp. 195–206.
[50] "Punjab not to ban 'Moghul calendar' ". 1974. *Hindustan Times,* April 7.
[51] "Taura defends calendar". 1974. *Hindustan Times*, April 9.
[52] Interview with Tarlochan Singh, 26 October 2014.
[53] F. No. 37/11/35-Poll. Home Political. National Archives of India, New Delhi.

its representation of Noor Jehan without purdah, before the Guru. The article also questioned Sobha Singh's intent behind making this painting especially at a time when relations between Muslims and Sikhs were extremely hostile.[54] It reminded Sobha Singh that Jahangir did not hold Guru Arjan or Guru Hargobind in high regard. Thus, it called this painting a mischievous attempt on part of the artist and demanded that the government punish both the publisher and the artist. From the files at National Archives of India, it does not seem that the government pursued this matter and the controversy around the painting died down soon.

This painting and its versions by other artists continue to circulate in Sikh circles. Bhai Mati Das Museum has a painting on the same subject by Amolak Singh (no. 54). The title of the painting is, *Guru Hargobind Sahib Gives Audience to Nurjahan* and the description tells us: 'Queen Nur Jahan (1591–1645 AD) who was an ardent disciple of Sant Mian Mir, once she went to Lahore to seek the blessings of Guru Hargobind Sahib. Answering one of her queries Guru Sahib enlightened her by saying he never forgets death and always remembers God. Guru Sahib counselled her not to engage herself in pursuits of worldly things but instead she should try to comprehend truth and discharge the duties of a true wife.' This painting seems to be from the PSB collection. The descriptive panel has a PSB logo. Makhan Singh explains the history behind the painting:

> The painting showed Nur Jahan paying her respects to the Guru by lying on the ground before him. This caused an international controversy in fifteen countries, where people found this unacceptable. Then it was explained to them, by historians, that it was Saint Mian Mir (who laid the foundation stone of Darbar Sahib) who had advised Nur Jahan to visit Guru Hargobind to find peace of mind. Nur Jahan has gone to Mian Mir to ask for peace of mind. He directed her to Guru Hargobind. She asked the Guru for a private audience, which was declined. She then appeared in his darbar and asked three questions to the Guru: (a) What is this incandescence on your face?, (b) You are so handsome, what crosses your mind when you see a beautiful woman like me?, (c) What is the key to happiness? The Guru replied: (a) This is the Lord's incandescence, (b) Death will come to both of us, (c) You should remain loyal

[54] This was the time of Shahidganj gurdwara agitation in Lahore. Both Sikhs and Muslims claimed it as a gurdwara and mosque, respectively. There were bitter communal clashes over this site.

to one man. Later when all history and Mian Mir's reference was given to people, then they understood. Sobha Singh then painted the same theme again."[55]

Makhan Singh also showed me a photograph of him holding a painted framed picture of Guru Hargobind giving audience to Nur Jahan. This framed painting was a gift from DSGMC to a writer on the occasion of release of the latter's book.[56]

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Tracing the patronage of history paintings reveals the connections between government (therefore, secular) institutions like Punjab and Sind Bank and MARKFED, and religious institutions like gurdwara management committees. The particular nature of Sikh museums as combining the secular and sacred realms has been discussed previously in chapter 2. This coming together of sacred and secular in the Sikh museum is also a result of the intersecting threads of patronage. Sikh museums which began as a project of a religious community were soon supported and actively promoted by the State too. Government's patronage lends authority to history paintings which are reproduced in calendar issued by the government, books published by government bodies and even in government advertisements.[57] This phenomenon gives rise to museums and a version of history which cannot be critiqued. The individuals and institutions active in producing history paintings and museums have close association with the Tat Khalsa version of Sikh history. And, PSB's role is especially notable, both in context of history of Bhai Mati Das Museum, as well the Bank's contribution to popularization of Sikh history. Looking at patronage of history paintings also provides insight into different realms where the paintings were active as evidence of Sikh past, such as the museum, bazaars and books.

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[55] Interview with Makhan Singh, 29 May 2014.
[56] Interview with Makhan Singh, 27 October 2014.
[57] On 17 September 2013, the Delhi Government renamed a city square after Bebe Nanaki, sister of Guru Nanak. The state government carried a huge advertisement in the dailies, which used part of a painting by artist Bodhraj. The painting shows Bebe Nanaki, Nanak and Mardana. It was painted in 1974 and it is on display at Bhai Mati Das Museum.

5

Analysis of Display at Bhai Mati Das Museum

Bhai Mati Museum is housed in a building standing on Fountain Chowk, in old Delhi, across the road from Sis Ganj Gurdwara. There are a total of 166 oil paintings on display spread over an area of two floors. Three are printed posters—one of Baba Ram Singh, the founder of Namdhari Sect; the second of Namdhari Sikhs being blown by canons; and the third of martyrdom of the Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Sati Das and Bhai Dyala. These 169 items have been considered for the purposes of this study.

The museum is named after one of the three disciples of Guru Teg Bahadur who were killed at Chandni Chowk in 1675. Sikh tradition informs us that Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb (1618–1707) was forcing a group of Kashmiri *pundits* (brahmins) to convert to Islam and they approached Guru Teg Bahadur for help. The Guru declared that if Aurangzeb could convert him, everyone else would convert, otherwise the Emperor should leave them alone. The Guru along with three of his disciples—Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Sati Das and Bhai Dyala—was captured and imprisoned at the Mughal kotwali in Delhi (the present day langar khana of Sis Ganj Gurdwara). These three Sikhs were tortured in presence of the Guru to scare him into converting to Islam. It is said that Bhai Mati Das was sawn in half, Bhai Sati Das was wrapped in cotton and burnt alive and Bhai Dyala was boiled alive. Even after witnessing the torture and death of his followers, Guru Teg Bahadur refused to convert to Islam. As a result, he was beheaded. Sis Ganj Gurdwara on Chandni Chowk marks the spot of the Guru's martyrdom. A colonial period fountain stands at the roundabout on Chandni Chowk which is believed to be the site of martyrdom of the three followers. It is called Fountain Chowk (popularly known by its Hindi name, *fawwara*). Recently, a shrine commemorating the three followers of the Guru has been established at the fawwara and it has been labelled as Bhai Mati Das Chowk. The shrine has a flex banner printed with history paintings showing the brutal tortures of the three Sikhs. Devotees offer prayers and flowers at the shrine. Bhai Mati Das Museum stands in a different building, on the fawwara roundabout. In Sikh narrative, Guru Teg Bahadur's sacrifice

is considered unique in history as an example of a person's sacrifice to defend someone else's faith (the Hindus). Guru Teg Bahadur is thus also popularly called '*Hind di chadar'* or 'shield of India.'

Narrative of the Museum

This section describes the content of the display at Bhai Mati Das Museum. The paintings depict the Ten Sikh Gurus, their portraits and scenes from their life. The followers and family members of the Gurus are also shown. There are paintings of bhagats, the leaders of the Sikh *misls* (confederacies which emerged in the eighteenth century), episodes of repression faced by the Sikhs in the eighteenth century, portraits of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and scenes from his darbar, of Sikhs fighting against colonial rule and Sikhs in the army of independent India. A list of all paintings on display at the museum has been provided in appendix 3. The description of paintings in this chapter is accompanied by their corresponding serial number as given in the appendix, for easy reference.

It must be kept in mind that these paintings were not made for display in a museum. These paintings were created for publishing in annual calendars of PSB. Therefore, this is not a pre-planned collection, but something that emerged over a period of three decades and was put together as a single display. Those paintings which are displayed here, are out of a larger collection of PSB. Also, the narrative of the museum is not necessarily the same as narrative of the PSB calendars. The latter were published on themes from Sikh history, and each year saw a different theme illustrated. This creative process (of creating exhibits) was not followed for the museum. Therefore, there are gaps in the narrative and the story seems abrupt at some places.

Moreover, not all paintings here are those commissioned by PSB. PSB paintings can be identified by a sticker on the canvas, depicting the bank's logo. The information panel next to a painting which gives its description also has the logo of PSB. Some paintings (thirty two in number) and their information panels do not have this logo or, had the logo on them, which has now been removed. Out of these, some canvases were made for another museum—Baghel Singh Museum at Bangla Sahib Gurdwara,

New Delhi—set up much before the one at Sis Ganj came up.[1] This is the case with the following paintings made by Kirpal Singh on Guru Teg Bahadur's martyrdom (no. 82 and 83), the martyrdom of Bhai Mati Das (no. 79), Bhai Sati Das (no. 80) and Bhai Dyala (no. 81), the victory of Baghel Singh at Red Fort of Delhi (no.132) and the martyrdom of Banda Bahadur (no. 129 and 138). The scenes of martyrdom of Guru Teg Bahadur and his followers were painted by Kirpal Singh in 1984.[2] Painting no. 126, made by Jarnail Singh, depicting the victory procession of Baghel Singh is also from the museum named after the latter. So is no. 8, on Guru Nanak's travels, made by Amolak Singh.

Some paintings seem to have been made specifically for the purposes of display at Sis Ganj museum. This seems to be the case with some portraits of Gurus made by Amolak Singh. These are all dated after the year 2000 and Amolak Singh was employed by DSGMC to make paintings for the Sis Ganj museum. Further, not all PSB paintings are found in Sis Ganj. PSB still has a small collection of paintings which are displayed every year at Rakabganj Gurdwara, New Delhi, on the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak. Also, it is quite possible that some paintings with PSB were damaged over a period of time.

Out of 169 paintings, 104 depict the Gurus and events of their life. The time of the Gurus is covered chronologically—it starts with the first Guru, Nanak, followed by the other Gurus in the order of their succession, ending with Guru Gobind Singh. I have also indicated a few examples as evidence of the reproduction of these paintings and their stories in popular tracts. There are twelve paintings on Guru Nanak (no. 1–12) illustrating well known stories from Janam Sakhis and his encounters with the world during his travels. The first painting shows Nanak as a young lad and his meeting with Mardana. There is a painting which shows Nanak asleep in the fields and a cobra shielding him against the sun (no. 2). In his interactions with those around him, Nanak's wisdom, kindness and sense of equality stand out. He is shown curing a leper, and eating at an outcaste's residence. During his first *udasi* (travels) Nanak chooses to live in the house of a leper, who had been shunned by everyone, including

[1] As identified by Jarnail Singh, son of Kirpal Singh. These painting also appear in a catalogue of old Baghel Singh museum (Baghel Singh 1998).
[2] While it is tempting to read these paintings as a response to the events of 1984, there is no indication that this was actually the case. Kirpal Singh's son Jarnail Singh also did not highlight any association of 1984 with the paintings.

animals and eventually cures him of the disease (no. 4). In the second case, he chooses to dine at Bhai Lalo's residence who was a carpenter, thereby, challenging the caste divisions of Hindu society. Nanak's honesty and fair dealings stand out during his employment at the grain stores of Daulat Khan Lodi (no. 5). Nanak is shown visiting a village which was full of garbage and dirty slums. He helped the residents reconstruct the village and build clean settlements (no. 7). In another painting he condemns the massacre caused by Babur's army at Aminabad (no. 10). This is followed by a painting which shows Nanak's first meeting with Baba Buddha. According to the story, a child named Bura, impressed Guru Nanak with his wisdom. Nanak declared that he possessed the wisdom and knowledge of an old man and hence called him *buddha* (old). From then, Bura became Bhai Buddha and later Baba Buddha (no. 11). Guru Nanak's ability to win over people is shown in a scene where he is performing kirtan at Baghdad and transforms the hostility of people into love (no. 12).

Guru Angad's life is depicted in four paintings (no. 13–16) including a portrait. He is shown tending to the needy, poor and ill. In painting no. 14, he is surrounded by beggars and cripples as he blesses a sick child. The next painting shows the first meeting between Guru Angad and Baba Amar Das (who was later made the Guru). Another painting shows Mata Khivi (wife of Guru Angad) preparing the langar (no. 16). According to Sikh tradition, Mata Khivi's langar was never in short supply and she served all with great humility. Her langar was a source of unlimited bounty and she also finds a mention in the Guru Granth Sahib.

Guru Amar Das's life is shown in eleven paintings (no. 17–27). He is an exemplar of sewa, kindness and humility. He is shown tirelessly serving the needs of his Guru, Angad; he does not resort to harsh words nor does he retaliate, even when people seek to humiliate him. A painting depicts Amar Das carrying water for his Guru, in a story night (no. 17). He falls in the darkness and is taunted by a woman as being a homeless person. Guru Angad, impressed by his tireless service even under most trying circumstances, calls him the 'shelter of the homeless.' Guru Angad also honoured Amar Das by giving him the *siropa* (robe of honour) seven times (no. 18). Guru Amar Das's humble nature is depicted through his encounter with Datu, who wanted to succeed Angad as the Guru. In this story, Datu was deeply frustrated after failing to achieve Guruship and hits Guru Amar Das with his foot. The Guru simply expresses

concern for Datu's foot, which he says might have been hurt after contact with his hard bones (no. 24). He is also concerned about women's position in society. He forbids the practice of immolation by a widow on her husband's pyre (*sati)*, (depicted in painting no. 23) and selects women as preachers. He establishes parishes for women, known as *pirhian* (no. 27). The Guru was also impressed by the charitable nature of Bhai Jetha who went on to become his successor with the name, Ram Das. Bhai Jetha earned his livelihood by selling boiled grains, but would often distribute them free to the poor and hungry. Guru Amar Das married his daughter, Bibi Bhani, to Bhai Jetha (no. 19). Guru Amar Das is also associated with the construction of a *baoli* (step well) at Goindwal. There are two paintings which depict this (no. 20 and 21). It is explained that the water of river Beas was not fit for consumption, so the Guru decided to dig a baoli. The Guru used the water at Goindwal to cure a man afflicted with leprosy. The latter had come to seek Guru's help when no one would come near him. The Guru bathed him with his own hands and he was gradually restored to good health. He was renamed Murari, by the Guru (no. 22). One of the followers of the Guru, Bhai Paro was exemplary in his dedication. He is depicted in painting no. 25. He would visit the Guru daily by crossing the river Beas to reach Goindwal, even when it was flooded. His unwavering faith greatly impressed Guru Amar Das who offered him the Guruship, but Bhai Paro turned it down saying that the honour of being the Guru's devotee was enough for him. Yet another follower of the Guru, Gangu Shah had flourished as a banker with the Guru's blessings. One day, he turned away a needy person, sent by the Guru, and from that day onwards, his business was adversely affected. Realising his folly, he visited the Guru to ask for forgiveness (no. 26).

Guru Ram Das' portrait is the only painting on him in the museum (no. 28). There is another painting which shows him as a young man distributing grains to the hungry (no. 19) when he is noticed by Guru Amar. This has been included under the section on Guru Amar Das.

The fifth Guru, Arjan is shown serving the langar to the *sangat* (congregation) which had travelled from Kabul to Amritsar (no. 29). In another painting, he is shown serving the lepers at Tarn Taran where he established a hospice for them (no. 36). He also constructed a large well at Chheharta to relieve drought like conditions in the countryside of Punjab (no. 41). Painting no. 31 depicts an incident from his marriage

to Bibi Ganga. The bride's side were worried when they saw a saintly looking man as the bridegroom. They decided to test him and camouflaged a tree to look like a peg in the ground and the Guru was asked to pull it out using a spear, while on horseback. Guru Arjan was successful in uprooting the peg, thereby demonstrating that his saintly character was not a weakness (no. 31). One of the most important contributions of Guru Arjan was compilation of Guru Granth Sahib and there are two paintings on this theme (no. 37 and 43). In no. 37, he is shown dictating the bani as Bhai Gurdas notes it down. In no. 43, the Granth is shown installed in the Harimandir, as Baba Buddha sits nearby as the granthi and the Guru himself sits on the floor besides the Granth. There is a portrait of Bhai Gurdas (no. 35) who assisted Guru Arjan in compiling the Granth. A few paintings also illustrate the devotion of followers of the Guru who were in turn praised by the Guru for their selfless service. For instance, in one painting, Bhai Buddhu breaks down the wooden door of his house to provide fuel to prepare langar, since firewood could not be procured from outside as it was raining (no. 46). In another painting, Bhai Manjh falls into a well while carrying wood for langar. He still manages to save the wood from getting wet, despite being in the well (no. 47). Bhai Bahilo's service is depicted in no. 42. When Harimandir was being constructed, he used to collect all the rubbish from the town and burn it at the brick kiln to keep it going longer and thereby ensuring better quality bricks.

The narrative here also includes paintings on Baba Buddha. He is shown planting saplings around Darbar Sahib (no. 45). There are two more paintings on Baba Buddha, one that shows him tending the horses (no. 39), and another which shows him living in a forest, and creating a peaceful environment there (no. 38). A portrait of Sain Mian Mir (no. 34) is part of the display at Sis Ganj museum. He is shown as a follower of both Guru Arjan and Guru Hargobind and also for the important fact that he laid the foundation stone of Darbar Sahib. There are a total of twenty paintings which depict the time period of Guru Arjan (no. 29–48). Not all of these twenty depict the Guru himself. For example, a painting shows Baba Buddha blessing Mata Ganga (wife of Guru Arjan) with the birth of a great warrior (no. 32). Painting no. 33 shows Bibi Rajni, with her husband, who was a leper. She was married to him by her arrogant father, when she showed more gratitude towards god than her father. She had complete faith in god and her husband was cured of illness after a dip in the pool at

Harimandir. The story of Bhai Bahilo is also illustrated. He was a follower of Sakhi Sarvar[3] and therefore reluctant to join Guru Arjan's efforts to construct the tank at Harimandir. He accompanied the sangat to Amritsar and they had to cross a river on the way. The river was in spate and Bahilo thought that if the Guru is truly great, the river would subside. It did and Bahilo became a follower of the Guru (no. 48). A painting in this sequence shows child Hargobind, the son and successor of Guru Arjan, fighting off a poisonous snake which had been released to kill him (no. 40). These paintings have been put together in a series in this museum to illustrate the events in the life of Guru Arjan. Hence, even when he himself does not appear in a painting, in my tally, I have counted them under his name (a total of twenty paintings).

Guru Hargobind's life is shown in eighteen paintings (no. 49–66).[4] Guru Hargobind's time marks a change in the community's history. He introduced martial tradition to the Panth by combining miri with piri, in the person of the Guru. Guru Hargobind is shown sitting on the Akal Takht both as a child (no. 49) and as an adult (no. 51). There are eighteen canvases on his Guru-ship, out of which nine show incorporation of martial aspect to the Guruship. There are scenes of war; his disciples going great lengths to perform their duty to the Guru (which in Guru Hargobind's case, has to do with martial duty, or procuring horses, for example). A painting depicts the battle of Kartarpur where his son, Tyag Mal showed exemplary skill with the sword and was given the name 'Teg Bahadur' or one fearless with the sword (no. 60). In painting no. 52, Bhai Sadh, a follower of the Guru is given news of his son's illness while he is on his way to procure horses for the Guru. He refuses to turn back without completing his duty to the Guru and sends a message to his family that in case his son dies, he should be cremated in his absence. In addition, there are two paintings which show the skill and determination of Bidhi Chand in getting horses for Guru Hargobind from Mughal forts. These horses were intended as gifts for the Guru and had been snatched away by Mughal forces. Bidhi Chand tricked his way into the imperial fort and

[3] Sakhi Sarvar is a popular pir in Punjab whose shrine is located in Dera Ghazi Khan, now in Pakistan. During the days of Singh Sabha, reformers actively discouraged Sikhs from visiting Sakh Sarvar, as they considered it a deviation from pure Sikhism. An important Singh Sabha reformer and writer Giani Ditt Singh (1853–1901) wrote a popular tract *Gugga gapora te sultan puwara* ridiculing the saint (Singh 1976). It is not surprising that this story and painting shows a worshipper of Sakhi Sarvar transforming into follower of the Guru.

[4] I have not included painting no. 40 which shows child Hargobind controlling a snake, under this. I have considered it part of the narrative under Guru Arjan. However, another person looking at these images may wish to consider the painting differently. If the filters of analysis change, the reading of the display will also change.

brought back both the horses (no. 57 and 58). Another painting shows Bhai Babak who was both a great warrior and an excellent musician. He carried his instrument even in the battlefield (no. 59).

Guru Hargobind's imprisonment at Gwalior fort and his subsequent release with fifty-two other prisoners is also depicted in a painting no. 50. The description accompanying the painting tell us that Mughal Emperor Jahangir ordered his imprisonment, but was forced to release him because of public sympathy in favour of the Guru. The latter refused to leave the prison unless other fifty-two inmates of the prison too were released. The Emperor ordered that all those who held Guru's cloth as walked would be free to go. In response, the Guru wore a garment with fifty-two strings attached to it so that all the prisoners could eventually be free. For this, he is considered a great liberator (*Bandi chhor*) in Sikh tradition. The Sikhs celebrate Diwali as the Bandi chhor Diwas. There are two more paintings showing Guru Hargobind's interaction with Mughal royalty. In one, Jahangir is shown visiting Harimandir Sahib and listening to kirtan there (no. 53). In another, Guru Hargobind gives audience to Mughal queen, Nur Jahan (no. 54).

Introduction of martial spirit in the person of the Guru, does not take away the legacy of Guru Nanak, and Guru Hargobind is shown embodying both. He is just, kind and humble. His large-heartedness is depicted in a painting where he is shielding a dying Painde Khan from the sun. Painde Khan was an orphan who was brought up and trained in the art of warfare by Guru Hargobind. Painde Khan joined the Mughal forces against the Guru and died at latter's hands. He begged Guru's forgiveness, which was granted and the Guru showed his kindness by using his shield to protect his dying follower-turned-enemy from the sun (no. 64). The Guru is also humble before the venerable Baba Buddha, who has seen the succession of five Gurus (no. 56). In another incident he enlightens the sangat that by feeding the poor, one serves the Guru and the community. In this story, the Guru refuses gift of honey from a rich merchant. Upon being asked the reason for this refusal, the Guru points out that on his way to meet the Guru, the same merchant was approached by a poor and hungry man for food and the merchant refused to share the honey. The Guru explains that had the hungry man been fed, the Guru would have received the gift directly (no. 55). In another instance of kindness and humility, Guru Hargobind tells his grandson, Har Rai, to take care while walking the garden and not damage the plants (no. 66). He also

blesses Bibi Sulakhani with seven sons (no. 62) who later sacrificed their life fighting for the Guru. In another painting, Guru Hargobind is shown explaining the concept of miri-piri to Ramdas, the guru of Shivaji.[5] Ramdas asks Guru Hargobind the reason for wearing swords when he was the inheritor of the legacy of Guru Nanak. The Guru replies that the swords were meant to defend truth and justice and to fight against tyranny. This inspired Ramdas to give the same teachings to Shivaji as well (no. 61). In another painting (no. 65), he is seen admonishing the yogis who were trying to destroy a shrine to Guru Nanak and reclaim it as a site for their own sect.

There are two paintings on Guru Har Rai (no. 67 and 68). One is a portrait, the other illustrates his efforts to develop the town of Kiratpur, full of parks and gardens. Guru Harkishan had a short life; he passed away when still a child. There are two paintings on him (no. 69 and 70). The first is a portrait, with a palm raised in blessing. The second illustrates his visit to Delhi, during an epidemic. He visited those suffering from disease to provide them relief.

There are thirteen paintings giving us the story of Guru Teg Bahadur (no. 71–83). The narrative starts with the story of a trader, Makhan Shah Lubana, who discovers the real Guru, among several imposters, at Bakala. According to the story, Makhan Shah's ship carrying goods was caught in a storm. He prayed to the Guru promising a gift of 500 gold coins, if he and his cargo were saved. The storm abated and Makhan Shah reached Bakala to fulfil his promise to the Guru. But he saw that there were many claimants to Guru-ship at Bakala. He offered each only three gold coins as he reasoned that the real Guru would know of his promise. Finally, Guru Teg Bahadur asked him to fulfil his promise, by demanding the whole amount. Makhan Shah shouted from the rooftop that he had found the real Guru (no. 71). In one painting, the Guru is shown in Assam, where he brokered a truce between the Mughal commander and the ruler of Assam (no. 73). Another painting depicts the positive influence of the Guru on those who met him. He is able to convince a group of peasants to desist from smoking tobacco (no. 77).

The story of Guru Teg Bahadur in the museum also includes events from the life of his son, Gobind Rai, before the latter came into Guruship. There is a painting

[5] Shivaji is the famous Maratha ruler who lived in seventeenth century and was often at loggerheads with Mughal authorities. He is often present at defender of the India against the oppressive Muslim rulers.

depicting first meeting of child Gobind Rai with his father (no. 76). There is another which depicts Pir Bhikham Shah's visit to Patna to see child Gobind (no.74). In this story, Pir Bhikham Shah of Thaska, offered prayer in the east, when Gobind Rai was born. He reached Patna to see the child and offered two bowls to him. One was filled with milk, another with water. The child Gobind put his hands on both bowls, signifying equality of all humans. In yet another painting, child Gobind throws both his gold bangles in the river Ganga, because he believed steel to be more sacred than gold (no. 75). There is a painting which shows Kashmiri pundits appealing to Guru Teg Bahadur for help against forced conversion to Islam by Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb. The Guru observes that sacrifice by a great soul is called for against this tyranny. Child Gobind who sits besides his father spontaneously remarked that none other than the Guru himself could serve the cause better (no. 78).

The most significant event for which Guru Teg Bahadur is remembered in Sikh tradition is his martyrdom in Delhi. There are five paintings depicting torture and killing of the Guru and his three disciples. These show Bhai Mati Das being cut into half (no. 79), Bhai Sati Das burnt alive (no. 80) and Bhai Dyala boiled alive (no. 81). After the execution, Guru Teg Bahadur's body and head lay on the road and no one was permitted to perform the last rites of the Guru. In one painting, Bhai Jaita is depicted taking away the separated head of the Guru, from the site of execution in Chandni Chowk, under cover of a storm (no. 82). Then, Lakhi Shah Vanjara daringly took possession of the Guru's body from the same site and cremated it in secret (no. 83). There is a flex banner showing martyrdom of Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Sati Das, Bhai Dyala (no. 148). This is a print of calendar art and therefore has been considered for this study. It is however displayed in the basement, separately from the narrative for Guru Teg Bahadur. It is quite possible that the flex was prepared for a particular event and eventually placed in this museum. If we include no.148, the total number of items for Guru Teg Bahadur will be fourteen.

There are twenty one paintings on Guru Gobind Singh (no. 84–95, 119 to 121, 135–137, 165). Some canvases depict incidents from his childhood. These have already been mentioned above, in the paragraph on Guru Teg Bahadur and are therefore not included here. The narrative for Guru Gobind Singh includes portraits of the Guru and Mata Sahib Kaur, his wife. Guru's meeting with Banda Bahadur at Nanded and latter's conversion to Sikhism, is also depicted (no. 84 and 134). There is another

painting which shows Bhai Jaita bringing Guru Teg Bahadur's severed head to young Gobind Rai at Anandpur Sahib and Gobind Rai embracing him as his own son (no. 85). Yet another painting shows the association between Guru Gobind Singh and Pir Buddhu Shah. The latter's sons had sacrificed their life in the battle of Bhangani (1688), fighting for the Guru (no. 90 and 91). The Guru emerged victorious in the battle of Bangani and wanted to present a robe of honour to the Pir. The latter requested the Guru to grant him Guru's hair entangled in his comb, as that would be a greater legacy of the Guru than any siropa (no. 90). There are two paintings on the first ceremony of initiation into the Khalsa at Anandpur Sahib in 1699. One shows Gobind Singh as both, Guru and disciple. He first baptised five followers into the Khalsa and called them the panj pyare and then sought his own baptism at their hands. This incident is famous in Sikh history as *'ape gur chela'* (Guru and disciple in one; no. 92). In second painting, the four sons of Guru Gobind Singh are shown accepting baptism by the panj pyaras (no. 93). There are two paintings showing Bhai Kanhaiya, a follower of the Guru (no. 94 and 95). He served drinking water in the battlefield, to both the Guru's soldiers and well as the opposition. This was not liked by some Sikhs and they complained to Guru Gobind Singh, who asked Bhai Kanhaiya for an explanation. The latter submitted that he saw the Guru alone in all persons. The Guru was so impressed that he asked Bhai Kanhaiya to carry out the dressing of the wounded on the battlefield too. The paintings hail him as the forerunner to the modern Red Cross.[6]

This completes the display on the ground floor of the building. The narrative in the basement starts with Maharaja Ranjit Singh and includes events associated with Sikh military commanders during the misl period, the period of repression faced by the Sikhs from the Afghans and the Mughals (eighteenth century), paintings of bhagats, and Sikhs fighting against the colonial rule and their role in the army of free India.[7] The sequence of paintings is mixed up and they no longer follow the chronological order. Some attempt has been made to group similar subjects together, for example, all the paintings on bhagats appear together, or those on freedom movement are displayed together. Even this thematic unity is frequently interrupted. The display

[6] The Tat Khalsa tendency to present Sikh tradition as anticipating modern values and institutions (for instance, human rights and the Red Cross) is discussed in chapter 4.
[7] None of the paintings are dedicated to Sikh participation as soldiers in army of British India during the First and Second World War.

starts with Ranjit Singh, followed by misl sardars, many of whom lived before Ranjit Singh. There are a few canvases on Guru Gobind Singh as well, which follow the paintings on bhagats. A few paintings on Ranjit Singh make an appearance after the paintings on Sikh soldiers in Indian army.

I have described the paintings in this part of the museum theme-wise else the narrative would be difficult to follow. The canvases in the basement which describe the period of Guru Gobind Singh have been considered together with paintings on him displayed on the ground floor (total twenty-one paintings). There are portraits of Guru Gobind Singh seated on a throne (no. 121), and another where he is shown wielding a bloody sword before the sangat at Anandpur Sahib just before the selection of panj piare (no. 119). In one painting, he is training blind men in the art of music so that they could improve their life (no. 120). In painting no. 124, the saint-soldier created by Guru Gobind Singh is shown as an enlightened being and a brave warrior who would not hesitate to take on many opponents single-handedly The reference to the popular saying attributed to Guru Gobind Singh, '*sava lakh se ek ladaun*' i.e. I shall have one Khalsa soldier fight with one lakh twenty five thousand soldiers. This painting refers to the battle of Chamkaur where the Mughals heavily outnumbered Sikhs. The first meeting of Banda Bahadur and the Guru is shown again (no. 134). There are two paintings on Mai Bhago (no. 135 and 136). She was responsible for bringing back those Sikhs who had deserted Guru Gobind Singh in battle, desperate due to extreme hardship faced by them. Persuaded and challenged by her, they came back and died as martyrs in defence of the Guru. One painting shows the Guru and his poet and follower, Bhai Nand Lal Goya at the latter's langar. The Guru found this langar to be the best among all those run in the city of Anandpur Sahib (no. 137). The painting on Mata Gujari (mother of Guru Gobind Singh) and two Chhote Sahibzadas is also on display. It shows the three imprisoned by the Mughals in the cold tower *(thanda burj)* before they sacrificed their life in defence of faith (no. 165).

There are twenty-one paintings which depict the repression faced by the Sikh community in the eighteenth century at the hands of the Mughals and the invading Afghans. The leaders of the misls are also depicted (no. 102, 104–109, 122, 123, 125–133, 138–140). Among these, there are four paintings on Baghel Singh and his conquest of Delhi (no. 102, 108, 126 and 132). He is shown riding through Chandni Chowk in a victory procession, with a group of Sikh fighters, and the yellow Nishan

Sahib is shown atop Red Fort, the palace of the Mughal King in the capital city of Delhi. There are two paintings on Kapur Singh, who was known for his selfless service. When the Mughals approved a grant for the Sikhs, he was chosen to accept it and was hence called Nawab Kapur Singh. In one painting, he is shown cleaning the horse stables (no. 104), in another he is fanning the congregation (no. 107). There is a painting depicting Jassa Singh Ramgariah, who was a military commander of the Mughals, but sided with the Sikhs during the siege of Amritsar (no. 105).[8] There are two paintings on Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, one showing his conquest of Lahore fort and how he was welcomed by all inhabitants of the city irrespective of their religion. (no. 106); in the second painting, he is shown pushing back the Afghan forces across the river, after freeing girls captured by the Afghans.

Even under stress and extreme hardship, Sikhs are shown adhering to the ideals of their faith. In painting no. 109, they share their meagre supply of food with strangers, even though they themselves are living in forests, escaping the repression of authorities. Baba Deep Singh's resolve to fight the Afghans who had disrespected the Harimandir is shown in painting no. 122. He sets out to fight the Afghans with only a handful of Sikhs. On the way, many others join him. At a crucial junction, he draws a line on the ground and challenges his companions to cross it only if they were ready to give up their life in defence of faith. Sikh tradition records that in the fighting that ensued Baba Deep Singh was fatally injured in the neck. He continued to fight with one hand supporting his severed head and the other wielding the sword against the enemies. He died as he reached the tank of Darbar Sahib, after having taught Afghans a lesson. The painting at Bhai Mati Das Museum shows him going into the battle, challenging his Sikhs to cross the line. Another painting deals with the cruelty of Afghans and the Sikhs' role in repelling them. In painting no. 127, Sikhs are shown freeing women captured by the army of Ahmad Shah Abdali.[9] There is a painting of battle scene which shows Charat Singh Shukarchakiya fighting against the forces under Abdalis (no. 140). The torture faced by Sikhs in 1748 under Governorship of Mir Mannu at Lahore is depicted in painting no. 123.

[8] See Dhavan (2012) for the nuances of relationship between Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, the other Sikh misaldars and the Mughal authorities. It was not a simple fight between the good Sikhs and the evil Mughals, as is often presented in Tat Khalsa histories and history paintings.
[9] Abdali was a powerful Afghan ruler who invaded north India in eighteenth century.

There are a series of paintings on Banda Bahadur and his followers which depict their valour and bravery in face of brutal torture by Mughals. A painting shows Banda Bahadur and his soldiers who had been captured by the Mughals at Gurdas Nangal, held prisoners and being led in procession in Delhi. Severed heads of Sikhs were held on spears carried by Mughal soldiers. A dead cat was also speared and held aloft to demonstrate that no Sikh had been spared in the fighting (no. 138). The torture and killing of Banda Bahadur in Delhi is shown in painting no. 129. His four year son was first killed and his flesh put in Banda's mouth. Then, Banda's own flesh was torn from his body till he was dead. The systematic killing of Banda's followers is shown in paintings 130 and 131. The first shows Sikhs lined up for execution in Delhi and a young man about to be beheaded. His mother obtained his release from the Mughal King on the ground that he was not a Sikh. But when she tried to get him free, he called her mother's lie and proclaimed himself a Sikh (no. 130). There is a portrait of Banda Bahadur, in military gear, ready for battle, outside Lohgarh fort (no. 133). In another painting, he is shown holding a darbar after establishing the first Sikh empire, on the principles of equality and justice (no. 139).

There are sixteen paintings which depict the rule of Ranjit Singh (no. 96–101, 103, 110–115, 166, 167, 168 and 169). There are darbar scenes, portraits of Ranjit Singh, his queen, Rani Jindan and his son Dalip Singh. The paintings on Ranjit Singh emphasise the secular and tolerant nature of his rule. In one painting he is shown accepting a Quran from an artist and rewarding the latter handsomely for it (no. 96). In another, he gives a copy of Sikh scriptures to Sindhis (no. 97). Paintings of his darbar show people of diverse backgrounds such as Europeans, Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs, as part of his administration (no. 100). There are three portraits of Ranjit Singh (no. 101, 166 and 168). Painting no. 166 shows his face in the foreground, while the background has outlines of different religious shrines—a Hindu temple, a Sikh gurdwara, a Christian church and a Muslim mosque. Another canvas shows Ranjit Singh's mother-in-law, Sada Kaur on horseback at Lahore fort (no. 103). She was the one who inspired and encouraged Ranjit Singh to conquer Punjab and unify all the territories. Painting no. 110 shows the signing of a treaty between Ranjit Singh and the British at Amritsar. A painting of Ranjit Singh's general Hari Singh Nalwa shows him interacting with residents of Kashmir (no. 112). A battle scene depicted in painting no. 113 shows how Sikhs were willing to sacrifice their life for the sake of

their leaders. In this incident, the canon which was firing at the fort lost one of its wheels and therefore could not function. The Sikhs of the army offered to support the canon on their back, despite known that its recoil would kill them. Many Sikhs died this way, but their sacrifice ensured that the wall of the fort was breached. There are two paintings of Darbar Sahib at Amritsar. One is shows the shrine, the sarovar and the parikarma (no. 99), another shows the kar sewa of cleaning the tank of Harimandir (no. 149).

There are ten paintings on the freedom movement and the Sikhs' fight against the colonial rule (no. 155–164). These include portraits of revolutionaries like Udham Singh (no. 155), Bhagat Singh (no. 156), Kartar Singh Sarabha of the Ghadar Party (no. 157) and Ajit Singh (no. 158). Two prints (no. 159 and 160) refer to Namdhari contribution to the freedom struggle. One is a portrait of founder of Namdhari sect, Baba Ram Singh. He is called one of the pearls of freedom struggle. The second shows Namdharis being blown up by cannons for revolting against British rule. The incident relating to a ship named *Komagata Maru* is depicted in painting no. 161. In this the Sikhs aboard the ship were trying to enter Canada but were returned by the authorities there, because of their bias against non-whites. When the ship reached Budge Budge in Bengal and the people disembarked from the ship, they were fired upon by British troops. The agitation to regain control of gurdwaras by Sikhs, including at Gur ka Bagh are depicted in two paintings. In the first (no. 162) a British officer is shown handing over the keys to Harimandir Sahib, Amritsar, to Baba Kharak Singh. The second (no. 163) shows the sacrifice made by Sikhs at Panja Sahib. Another painting depicts a Sikh woman, Bibi Balbir Kaur at Jaito morcha[10] (no. 164). She carried her infant child in her arms, who died of bullet wounds in the agitation. She put the baby's body down on the road and continued to protest, till she herself succumbed to firing by the British.

A few paintings show role of Sikhs in Indian army (no. 150–154). There is one painting depicting the famous Battle of Saragarhi (no. 154) where a handful of Sikh soldiers of the British Indian army stayed put at their post to repel the attack by the Afghans on Saragarhi fort, in 1897. Other scenes depicted include Sikh soldiers taking pledge before the holy Granth; the conquest of Raja Hills by the men of Sikh

[10] Jaito morcha refers to the agitation by Akali jathas to take over Gurdwara Gangsar at Jaito in 1923. This agitation was part of the Gurdwara Reform Movement.

regiment, during the Indo-Pak war in 1965. A painting shows the surrender by the Pakistani commander to Indian army officer Lt. Gen Aurora, after former's defeat in Bangladesh War (no. 152).

There are a few paintings which show the bhagats whose compositions are part of the Guru Granth Sahib. (no. 116–118 and 141–147). This includes two paintings on Ramanand and one each on Surdas, Ravidas, Trilochan, Pipa, Baini, Dhanna, Baba Farid and Kabir.

Sikh Heritage in Bhai Mati Das Museum

One enters the Bhai Mati Das Museum with head covered, and without shoes, as one would in a sacred space of a gurdwara. The museum is treated as any other part of the gurdwara, such as the langar hall, where too, people enter with shoes off and heads covered. In practice therefore, the museum space is sacred.[11] This is true of all Sikh museums which exist as adjuncts of a gurdwara. As discussed in chapter 2, the sacred nature of the Sikh museum is a result of both the religious framework of Sikh history as well as the location of the museum in a gurdawra. Bhai Mati Das Museum is part of the larger sacred landscape of Chandni Chowk where the Kotwali and fawwara are located and are at present, Sikh shrines. The Kotwali was the Mughal police station where Guru Teg Bahadur and his three followers were imprisoned. It is now the langar khana of the Sis Ganj Gurdwara. The roundabout on which the fawwara stands has now been renamed the Bhai Mati Das Chowk by the gurdwara authorities. It is believed that this was the spot where Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Sati and Bhai Dyala were martyred and a shrine has been established on the fawwara in their memory. Most importantly, Sis Ganj Gurdwara itself is one of the most important of Sikh shrines associated with the memory of Guru Teg Bahadur and along the Bhai Mati Das Museum, Bhai Mati Das Chowk and the langar khana create a scared landscape, both in physical and spiritual sense.

[11] At the same time, it becomes important for gurdwara authorities to put down guidelines to discourage idol worship. A notice at the Sis Ganj museum informs us that these paintings of Gurus are not to be worshipped: 'Sikh religious principles and practice permit the painting of portraits of the gurus and depicting the events concerning Sikh history in paintings. But the garlanding of the portraits of the Gurus, offering worship or touching the feet of the Guru as shown in the paintings is not allowed. Every Sikh should avoid doing so. To indulge in such practices is to go against the basic tenets of Sikhism.'

The information plaque at the entrance to the museum informs the visitors of the spiritual significance of this landscape. The text is in Gurmukhi and it explains the purpose and motivation of the museum. It tells us that 'museum (ajaibghar) is a place where the Sikh community's glorious historical treasures are housed.' It goes on to tell us a story:[12]

> Once a Pathan was seen holding a paint brush in his hand. Someone remarked that it does not suit him and he should hold a sword instead. The Pathan replied that with this paint brush he will make such paintings that those who see and feel them will be inspired to take up the sword. This is the hope that motivated the establishment of the museum….Chandni Chowk saw the sacrifice of Guru Teg Bahadur and his three followers…Banda Bahadur's companions were killed here in batches of hundred. The museum is constructed to preserve the memory of this sacrifice forever in history. The building stands on a site which is enriched with the blood of martyrs [*shaheedon ke khoon se rangi dharti*]. The paintings have been displayed so that people in India and abroad come to know of the glorious historical legacy, sacrifices and achievements [of the Sikhs]. We are confident that this museum dedicated to martyrs will inspire the young generation to become Sikhs, Singhs and Khalsa, true to the faith.

The inspiration and purpose of the museum is clear from the above text.[13] The site of the museum is significant as this is the very place where Sikhs were martyred, their blood enriching the land. The museum is in memory of those very sacrifices. And the paintings displayed in the museum help people to know of this history and the achievements of the Sikhs. The purpose is to inspire young Sikhs to follow the path of their ancestors, be true to their faith, uphold its traditions and be prepared to defend the faith for which so many sacrifices were made. Bhai Mati Das Museum commemorates Sikhs who were killed by the Mughals in Delhi: Guru Teg Bahadur, Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Sati Das, Bhai Dyala, Banda Bahadur and many other Sikhs killed with him.

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[12] Translation from Gurmukhi is mine.
[13] Although I find it curious that a Pathan (i.e. a Muslim, the traditional enemies of Sikhs) was used as an example.

The historical legacy on display in the museum largely draws upon the Guru period, from Nanak to Gobind. There are 104 paintings (out of 169) depicting the life of the ten Gurus and their families and followers (see table 2). The most visible among them are Guru Gobind, Guru Arjan and Guru Hargobind, followed by Guru Teg Bahadur, Guru Nank and Guru Amar Das. The misl period and Ranjit Singh's secular rule also have major presence in the museum. The trajectory of Sikh history is as follows: Gurus from Nanak to Gobind, the misl period characterised by rise of Sikh chieftains in Punjab; followed by the rise of Ranjit Singh as the ruler of the region. We can consider Ranjit Singh's rule as the end of the story as far as the museum is concerned. After Ranjit Singh's rule, the museum has very little to tell us about what happens to the Sikhs. There are a few portraits of Sikhs involved in the national movement for freedom, and then a couple of canvases on their participation in army of free India. There are ten paintings of Sikhs freedom fighters and five on Sikhs in Indian army. It is almost as if Sikh history came to a stop with the end of Ranjit Singh's rule. Or at least the glorious period did. This gives us an insight into the chief sources for inspiration—the Sikhs are being asked to learn from, emulate and draw inspiration from the time of the Gurus, the struggles during the misl period and the bravery of their chiefs and the secular credentials of Ranjit Singh. It is also notable that the events of Partition are not at all referred to in the museum. Neither are the events of 1984. With specific reference to the Partition, Brass (2006) has discussed the inability of the Sikhs to memorialise this phase of their history as it is inconsistent with their narrative of a glorious tradition of martyrdom. Brass has pointed out that while Sikhs were victims of the violence in 1947, they were also the perpetuators of violence on other communities, especially the Muslims. While on the one hand, presenting themselves as victims goes against the pride the Sikhs have in their martial tradition, on the other hand, there may exist guilt of being complicit in violence of the Partition. This may explain why we do not find any mention of Partition in Sikh museum.[14]

[14] The story of the Sikhs as planned in the KHC includes the Partition. At present the KHC galleries which are open to public cover the Guru-period. The next phase covering post-Guru period till the Partition is under development. I do not know of any other Sikh museum which discusses the Partition.

TABLE 2. Theme-wise breakup of paintings at Bhai Mati Das Museum

Theme	No. of paintings
Guru Nanak	12
Guru Angad	4
Guru Amar Das	11
Guru Ram Das	1
Guru Arjan	20
Guru Hargobind	19
Guru Harkishan	2
Guru Har Rai	2
Guru Teg Bahadur	14
Guru Gobind Singh	21
Misl period (including Banda Bahadur, 18th cent. repression of Sikhs, Misl leaders)	21
Ranjit Singh	16
Freedom struggle	10
Indian army	5
Bhagats	10
Golden Temple	2

As was discussed in chapter 2, the iconography of the Sikh Gurus and the themes depicted have changed over a period of time. In the Sis Ganj museum, Guru Nanak

continues to be represented as the venerable sage. Guru Hargobind and Guru Gobind Singh are typically shown as warriors. All Gurus after Guru Arjan are shown dressed as kings with bejewelled clothes and accessories, which is similar to representation of martial ideals in popular art in general. The Gurus and their companions are perfect representations of the modern Khalsa ideal, both in action and their appearance. All Sikhs featured in the history paintings—the Gurus, their family members, followers—are shown with uncut hair and are dressed in colours now associated with the Khalsa (blue and yellow, and sometimes white). The men have long flowing beards and wear turbans. This is true even for personalities who lived before the Khalsa was formed. As Fenech (2002) has noted in his work on Udham Singh, the Singh Sabha's Tat Khalsa version of history is so dominant that Sikh history and Khalsa history are considered to be the same. All of Sikh history has now come be represented visually in ideal form of the Khalsa, even when there is no evidence to support such a representation. This is true for representation of Gurus and martyrs in history paintings and museums, as well as memorial statues for freedom fighters like Udham Singh.

The display in Sis Ganj Musuem is typical of mid- and late twentieth century popular Sikh art. Portraits of Sikh Gurus remain popular and in case of Nanak, Janam Sakhis continue to be illustrated. However, Bala is no longer part of the paintings. There are a large number of history paintings which show episodes from life of each of the Gurus. This is a change from the late nineteenth century when Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind were the only Gurus to be presented individually. Sis Ganj museum has anecdotes and stories from not only life of the Gurus, but their followers and even their antagonists, who ultimately became devout followers of the Guru. This focus on such themes can be explained by Bhai Mati Das Museum's association with PSB. Most paintings at this museum are from PSB's collection, hence the visitor is introduced to stories like, Mata Khivi's bountiful langar (no. 16); or Bhai Manjh protecting firewood from getting wet even after falling in a well (no. 47).

The display at Sis Ganj Museum is also a change from the early to mid-twentieth century phase, which saw beginning of visual representation of martyrs. In the 1920s Guru Arjan and Guru Teg Bahadur appeared in popular prints are martyrs. There are a number of paintings in Sis Ganj depicting the Sikhs' struggle against the Mughals and Afghans in the eighteenth century which is typical of history paintings in independent

India. And, depiction of the Sikh martyrdom necessitates depiction of the oppressor or the enemy. The latter are overwhelmingly shown as Muslims. This is indicated by the green colour for their clothes and turban; their beard and moustache is shown distinctive from those of Sikhs and their faces are depicted with particularly cruel expressions. This particular depiction of the Muslim community does not have a precedent in popular art in late-nineteenth century.[15]

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Bhai Mati Das Museum particularly invokes Sikh sacrifices in Delhi. As the plaque at the museum says, the museum is built on land enriched by the blood of martyrs. A number of paintings in the museum depict events from Sikh history in relation to Delhi: the sacrifice of Guru Teg Bahadur and his three followers; the capture and martyrdom of Banda Bahadur and his followers at Delhi. It is notable that the 1930 firing incident at Sis Ganj, finds no mention in the narrative of the museum or in the commemoration activities in the gurdwara.

The larger context for this incident is the Civil Disobedience Movement of the 1930s when Gandhi broke the Salt Law at Dandi and was later arrested. At Delhi, on 5 May 1930, people gathered at Chandni Chowk and organised a *hartal* (strike) in protest. The protests continued on 6 May, and several thousands marched through Delhi. The law courts were picketed by women who cordoned the building and prevented lawyers from entering. A European police officer claimed to have been attacked. Police forces were sent in response to the news of such attacks. There were several reports of baton charges and violence by the police against the protestors. The same day, police reinforcements were returning to the headquarters (Kotwali) in Chandni Chowk, in five lorries. The lorries were greeted by stone throwing by people stationed at the local cinema (Majestic) and the Sis Ganj Gurdwara, both near the Kotwali. The fifth lorry was trapped at the Kotwali square and Senior Superintendent of Police, named Jeffreys, led a force to rescue the policemen in the lorry. The rescue squad itself was trapped and the police ordered open fire from the Kotwali on the crowd in Chandni Chowk. Four locals were killed and one hundred and ninety were injured. No policemen died. The British government's enquiry report defended the police officers' actions as done in self-defence. The SGPC too published an enquiry report on the

[15] See chapter 3 for details.

incident, *Report on the Firing into the Gurdwara Sisganj, Delhi on May 6, 1930* calling the firing vindictive, indiscriminate and excessive (Gurdwara Sis-Ganj 1930). It reported 685 bullet marks on the Sis Ganj gurdwara; the police entering the gurdwara wearing shoes and desecrating the holy book; they disturbing the hair and turbans of men inside; the Sikh flag, Nishan Sahib and the images of Sikh Gurus being hit by bullets. The report stressed that the religious site had been violated and insulted. The Sis Ganj Gurdwara became a potential site for further mobilising protest against the government. Gandhi address a meeting here on 26 February 1931 in which he stressed that the struggle was not only for a single gurdwara but a larger gurdwara, i.e. total independence, which would be for all the countrymen. The gurdwara became a site of commemoration to inspire future movements. In May 1939, the gurdwara management committee wrote to the Chief Commissioner demanding recognition of their version of events (and not the police report). The Sis Ganj firing incident was again invoked during Quit India Movement agitations in 1942 (Legg 2005).

The DSGMC has a full calendar where they commemorate both happy and traumatic events from Sikh history. The monthly magazine of DSGMC, *Sis Ganj,* lists events of historic importance for Sikh community in each issue. The landscape around Sis Ganj Gurdwara invokes memory of Guru Teg Bahadur, his followers, Banda Bahadur and now Baghel Singh (since 2014). The gurdwara has, in fact, expanded its complex manifold. As discussed earlier, the Kotwali, from where the police came out to fire (in 1930) and where according to Sikh tradition, Guru Teg Bahadur was imprisoned, is now the langar hall. The fountain around which the crowd must have gathered in 1930, is a shrine for the three followers of Guru Teg Bahadur and the roundabout has been named after Bhai Mati Das. The Museum building stands on the site of the Majestic cinema from where too stone pelting was carried out. So even if we consider that the 1930 firing incident was not a major agitation in the larger context of nationalist struggle, it certainly had great role to play in mobilising the locals and the gurdwara committee had shown serious concern over it. And yet, the 1930 incident is missing from the contemporary commemorations at Sis Ganj Gurdwara and the museum.[16] Thus, the Bhai Mati Das Museum's story of Sikh heritage is firmly

[16] This contrast is especially notable in light of recent attempts to celebrate Baghel Singh's presence in Delhi as Fateh Diwas as elaborated in this chapter.

located in the medieval period where sacrifices by Sikhs were made in resistance to Mughal rule.

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The narrative in the museum is personality-centric; we get stories of the Sikh Gurus, incidents from life of their followers; there is Ranjit Singh and Rani Jindan, heroes like Banda Bahadur and Baba Deep Singh, misl sardars like Baghel Singh, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and Jassa Singh Ranghariah; freedom fighters like Bhagat Singh and Udham Singh. These individuals are exemplars of Sikh faith. They embody everything that is dear to the Sikh faith: selfless service, bravery, sacrifice, humility, kindness, secularism. Gurus from Nanak to Arjan are known for their wisdom, humility, kindness and sense of justice. They condemned inequality in society and were critical of cruelty and injustice meted out by the powerful against the weak. It is surprising that Guru Arjan who enjoys the status of the first martyr in Sikh tradition, does not have a painting in this museum, showing his torture at the hands of the Mughals. The Guru, it is said, was made to sit on a burning iron plate and hot sand was poured over him. This scene is commonly picturised in popular art easily available at Sikh shrines, but is not present in this museum. Guru Hargobind and Guru Gobind combine the best of both spiritual and martial qualities. The Gurus are brave in face of injustice and tyranny (especially by the Mughals) and are willing to bear torture and sacrifice their life in defence of truth and faith. The same is true for the followers of the Gurus: they have shown commitment to Guru and Panth and ability to sacrifice their life for Guru and Panth. This spirit of sacrifice and goodwill is not limited to members of their own community alone (i.e. the Sikhs). Guru Teg Bahadur died for protecting Hindus; Sikhs even during times of great scarcity and distress, shared their meagre resources even with the enemy; Bhai Kanhaiya treated wounded Sikhs and enemy soldiers alike.

However, these ideal personalities however do not appear in their social context. They are shown as exemplars of faith, but without telling us the milieu in which they worked.[17] Since this context is not provided, the sole motivating force of history and the life of people depicted in the museum, is faith. All actions of individuals are thus

[17] The debate over role of Sikh ideology in development of Sikh community is an old one. For an overview see Grewal (1998).

inspired by ideals of faith or are in defence of faith. Such a narrative also strips away all associations and context for individual and group actions. Sikh history in the museum then emerges as a long saga of Sikh bravery inspired by Sikh ideology. This is in contrast to the events as they actually unfolded. Take the case of the museum's representation of Gurdwara Reform Movement. The movement drew support from nationalist groups like the Indian National Congress and its leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Lala Lajpat Rai regularly wrote for the newspaper, *Akali.* The articles which appeared in this newspaper exhorted the Sikhs to use Gandhian ways such as boycott of British goods and wearing home spun cloth, during their struggles (Fenech 2000, 280–1). None of these associations emerge in the museum.

The following section will use the example of representation Sikh leader Baghel Singh, at Bhai Mati Das Museum to discuss and argue for (a) the changing nature of Sikh heritage and its relationship to contemporary concerns of the Sikhs, (b) need to understand the context for individual actions and events, and (c) importance of history paintings in museums as historical evidence and therefore their role in creating a particular notion of Sikh heritage.

Baghel Singh's 'Conquest' of Delhi: The Fateh Diwas

On 8 and 9 March 2014, a grand event called *Fateh Diwas* (day of victory) was celebrated at the Red Fort in Delhi. Organised by DSGMC, on the lawns around the Red Fort, this was a massive public function organised to mark the conquest of Delhi by Baghel Singh[18] and his act of unfurling the Khalsa Nishan Sahib at Red Fort in the year 1783. The programme included a march through streets of Delhi culminating at the Red Fort. Called the *jarnaili march* or the march of the Khalsa generals, it had a large group of Sikhs on foot, vehicles, horses and even elephants (figure 38). Some were dressed as medieval warriors, others performed *gatka* (martial exercises with weapons) and the *Nihangs* (armed Sikhs) were the most prominent among the crowd. They were armed with kirpan, swords and modern rifles.[19] A replica of a medieval canon was carried in procession, atop a vehicle, and the canon burst out confetti (in

[18] Baghel Singh (d. 1802) was the leader of the Karorsinghia misl and a prominent Sikh chief in the late eighteenth century. He succeeded Karora Singh as the chief of the misl in 1765. He controlled portions of Jalandhar Doab and Karnal.

[19] I cannot say whether they were real or fake.

imitation of canon fire) at regular intervals. The two day celebrations included performance of a play *Raj Karega Khalsa* (The Khalsa Shall Rule), gurbani recitations, kirtan and gatka performances. Langar was arranged at the venue. The following year the event was celebrated again on 21 and 22 March 2015.

I consider this an extremely significant public celebration both for the location of the event and the historical legacy it seeks to commemorate. Before I discuss this, let us analyse the content of the Baghel Singh story.

FIGURE 38. Jarnaili march. Fateh Diwas, 2014. Source: http://sikhsindia.blogspot.in/2015/03/delhi-fateh-diwas-jarneli-march-virasti.html

Bhai Mati Das museum has four history paintings depicting Baghel Singh's entry in the Mughal capital of Delhi (then, Shahjahanabad). Each painting is accompanied by a descriptive text in English, Hindi and Punjabi. Details of these paintings are given in table 3.

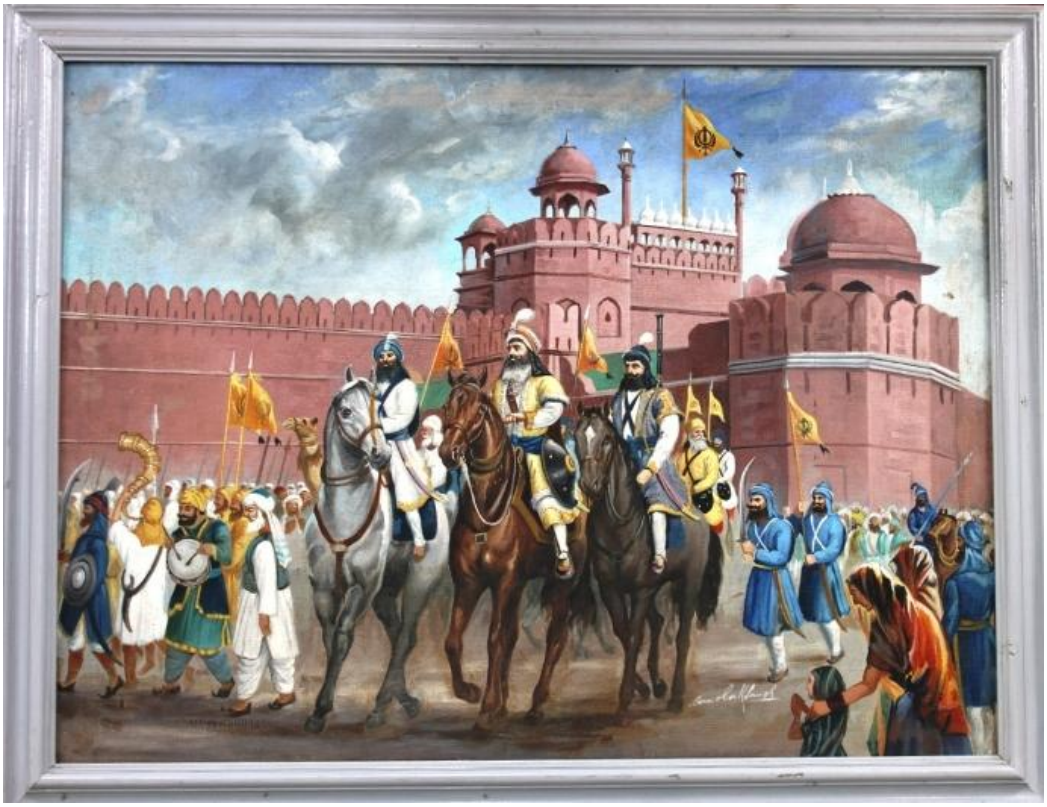

FIGURE 39. Sardar Baghel Singh (no. 102 in table 3). Photo courtesy of DSGMC.

FIGURE 40. Sardar Baghel Singh enters Delhi (no. 108 in table 3). Photo courtesy of DSGMC.

FIGURE 41. Sardar Baghel Singh enters Delhi (no. 126 in table 3). Photo courtesy of DSGMC.

FIGURE 42. Five Sikhs at the Red Fort of Delhi (no. 132 in table 3). Photo courtesy of DSGMC.

TABLE 3. History paintings on Baghel Singh in Bhai Mati Das Museum

S. No.	Title	Artist	Date	Description
102	Sardar Baghel Singh ji	Amolak Singh	—	Sardar Baghel Singh ji Karor Singhia was jathedar of missal [misl]. Between 1765–1783, the Sikhs conquered Delhi 15 times. 11 March 1783, Sardar Baghel Singh unfurled *kesari* (saffron) flag on the Red Fort. Hindus Sikhs and Muslims willingly joined his victory procession from the Red Fort to Fatehpuri
108	Sardar Baghel Singh ji, enter in Delhi (11 March 1781 AD)	Amolak Singh	—	The picture depicts jathedar of Karor Singhia missal [misl] Sardar Baghel Singh along with the other Sikhs Missals entering Delhi after conquering it in 1781 AD.
126	Sardar Baghel Singh enter in Delhi (11 March 1781)	Jarnail Singh	1993	The picture depicts jathedar of Karor Singhia Missal Sardar Baghel Singh along with other Sikh missals enter Delhi after conquering it in 1781 AD
132	Five Sikhs at the Red Fort of Delhi	Kirpal Singh	1976	(March 11, 1781) The Sikhs conquered Delhi and captured the Red Fort. They established their supremacy. However the five Sikh Chief (including S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and S. Baghel Singh) accepted the entreaty of Begam Samru and agreed to leave Delhi but retained the right to raise memorials to the Gurus. Sardar Baghel Singh got the gurdwara built. The Sikhs proved that their desire to serve the Gurus was greater than their desire to rule over Delhi

Note: The titles and descriptions have been reproduced as they appear in the museum. There is an inconsistency in the captions over the year of conquest; 1783 is the commonly accepted one. The name of the painter and date are taken from the signatures on the canvas. The serial number given here is the same as in appendix 3.

These paintings and similar versions (repainted by different artists) are frequently used in publications, pamphlets and banners. *Sis Ganj* the monthly magazine of DSGMC also uses them accompanied by articles which describe Sikh victory over Delhi. The reproductions of these paintings were given away as mementoes at the Fateh Diwas celebrations.

The first painting, figure 39 (no. 102 in table 3) shows three Sikh chiefs (the one in the centre presumably being Baghel Singh) leading a victory procession. In the background is the Lahori Gate of the Red Fort with the Nishan Sahib atop. The Khalsa soldiers (dressed mostly in blue) follow the chiefs on horseback, camels and on foot. There are two men playing drums and other instruments in front of the procession. The painting shows a man wearing white Pathani suit with green waistcoat and a matching turban. This is an obvious reference to a Muslim, who is depicted as a willing participant in the celebratory procession. On the right lower corner, a woman is shown standing with a little girl, telling her to greet the Sikh chiefs, and the girl does so with folded hands. The second, figure 40 (no. 108 in table 3) shows the Khalsa army led by Baghel Singh on horseback entering the Red Fort through the Lahori Gate. The kesari Nishan Sahib is displayed prominently at two points on the ramparts of the Fort. The third, figure 41 (no. 126 in table 3) shows Sikh army on horseback marching through the streets of Delhi. The fourth painting, figure 42 (no. 132 in table 3) shows five Sikh chiefs (with Baghel Singh presumably in the centre) sitting on the Mughal throne in Diwan-i Aam, the hall of public audience of the Mughal King. Sikh soldiers are seated in attendance in the darbar. The deposed Mughal Emperor Shah Alam and with Begum Samru[20] are shown pleading for mercy. Both are shown appealing to the Sikh chiefs with open arms.

To summarize, following is the story of Baghel Singh's conquest as represented in the Bhai Mati Das museum: Baghel Singh was jathedar of Karorsinghia misl and between 1765 and 1783, the Sikh misls conquered Delhi fifteen times. On 11 March 1983, Baghel Singh and some other misl leaders (including Jassa Singh Ahluwalia) conquered Delhi and the Red Fort. They raised the Khalsa flag over Red Fort and led a victory procession in Delhi from Red fort to Fatehpuri Masjid i.e. along the main street of Chandni Chowk. This procession was joined by Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs

[20] Begum Samru (c. 1753–1836) was the ruler of the principality of Sardana, near Meerut.

as they welcomed the Sikh forces. The Sikhs established their domination over the city and Begum Samru had to plead to them to spare the Mughal throne. They agreed to leave the city on the condition that they be allowed to construct gurdwaras in Delhi. This shows that Baghel Singh and other Sikh leaders were more concerned about serving the Gurus rather than occupying the Mughal throne.

I argue that these paintings when seen in the context of the celebration of Fateh Diwas, mark a departure from the earlier representations of Baghel Singh's role in Sikh history. The paintings seen together with the Fateh Diwas have two points of emphasis: (a) Baghel Singh conquered Delhi and raised the Khalsa Nishan Sahib over it, and (b) Sikh conquest over Delhi was a welcome relief to the inhabitants of the city. It freed them from Mughal oppression and tyranny. This emphasis is a modern one, which comes into popular Sikh historical imagination only after 1970s. The most popular medium of spreading this history was the popular tracts and pamphlets issued by SGPC, and significantly, the history paintings. These history paintings were displayed in museums and also reproduced widely in different media. The Fateh Diwas in 2014 is the most spectacular manifestation of this claim.[21]

To illustrate my point about the modernity of this claim (that Baghel Singh unfurled the Khalsa flag on Red Fort) I would like to offer two texts in comparison. One is Hari Ram Gupta's *History of Sikhs* published in eight volumes. H. R. Gupta (1902–1992) was a well known historian who taught at Punjab University Chandigarh. The third volume of the *History* is titled *Sikh Domination of Mughal Empire (1764–1803)* and describes Baghel Singh's entry in Delhi (Gupta 1980). The second source is Ratan Singh Bhangu's *Sri Guru Panth Prakash* (Bhangu [1841] 2006).[22] This is chronicle of Sikh history in verse, completed in 1841. Ratan Singh Bhangu wrote this to inform the British of Sikh history and to establish that the Sikhs were a sovereign community who had a right to rule Punjab. There is a rationale behind the choice of above mentioned texts. The most well known histories of Sikhs, such as those by J. S. Grewal (1990) and Khushwant Singh (1999) do not mention Baghel Singh's conquest of Delhi. Neither do any of the histories of Mughal rule in the eighteenth century. Hari Ram Gupta is a recognised authority on eighteenth century Sikh polity and in

[21] It is important to note that this celebration took place when DSGMC came under the control of SAD (Badal) for the first time in 2013. The SAD (Badal) government in Punjab has inaugurated a number of Sikh memorials in the state.
[22] Also known as *Prachin Panth Prakash*.

contemporary scholarship he is considered sympathetic to the Tat Khalsa cause. And, for this particular episode of Baghel Singh's entry into Delhi and Red Fort, Gupta's chief source is Ratan Singh Bhangu.

The well known *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism* edited by Harbans Singh (1992) has an entry on Baghel Singh, written by Hari Ram Gupta. The following excerpt tells us about Baghel Singh's entry in Delhi's Red Fort:

> When on 11 March 1783, Sikhs entered the Red Fort in Delhi and occupied the Diwan i Am, the Mughal emperor, Shah Alam II, made a settlement with them agreeing to allow Baghel Singh to raise gurdwaras on Sikh historical sites in the city and realize six annas in a rupee (37.5 %) of all octroi duties in the capital. Baghel Singh stayed in Sabzi Mandi, with 4000 troops, and took charge of the police station in Chandni Chowk. He located seven sites connected with the lives of the Gurus and had shrines raised thereon within the space of eight months, from April to November 1783. (H. Singh 1992, 250)

Hari Ram Gupta's *History of the Sikhs*, vol. 3, gives a more elaborate account of this event, in a section titled 'Sikh ravages in Delhi, March 1783':

> On 9 March great panic prevailed in the city (of Delhi). Fazal Ali Khan came out to oppose them. In the engagement the son of Rao Dhiraj Ram of Pahari Dhiraj lost his life....Sikhs broke through Ajmeri gate and ravaged the whole area of Hauz Qazi. The Government decided to recruit a force to cope with the situation. On 10 March Abdul Ahad Khan Majd-ud-daulah rode through the city and ordered the clerical establishment to record the script rolls of fresh recruits. The inhabitants of the city were so much alarmed that they took shelter inside the fort. ...It was considered essential to invite Begam Samru to Delhi to negotiate with the Sikhs....She was a faithful and a loyal subject of the Mughal Emperor.... She was equally devoted to the British Government, and was employed in negotiations with the Mughal court and the Sikhs. The Sikh sardars were so charmed by her personality that a request from her seldom went unheeded. (Gupta 1980, 164–66)

The following except from H. R. Gupta's book is titled 'Jassa Singh Ahluwalia unceremoniously sits on the throne in the Red Fort, March 11, 1783':

> Meanwhile the Sikhs continued plundering various parts of the city. The booty seized was deposited at Majnu-ka-Tila under a strong guard. Just at this time Jassa Singh Ramgarhia arrived at Delhi from Hissar. A few years previously he had been expelled from the Panjab by a combination of Sikh sardars headed by Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. He had built his fortune in the Hissar region. On hearing the news of the presence of the Sikhs in Delhi, he came there to share in the spoil. He commanded a force of 10,000 men. The Sikhs made for the Red Fort on March 11, 1783. The Emperor and his courtiers hid themselves in their private apartments. The Sikhs entered the Diwan-e-Am. In a fit of enthusiasm they fulfilled the prophecy of Nawab Kapur Singh who had called Jassa Singh Ahluwalia Padishah. The Sikhs made him sit on the throne and waved peacock feathers tied in a knot over his head. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia condemned this action. He was joined by several other Sikh chiefs in the protest. Both sides drew out swords and were going to attack each other. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia did not like the fratricidal conflict to take place in the imperial capital, as it would have ruined their prestige completely. He immediately declined the highest honour thrust upon him. The Sikhs then seized on whatever they could lay their hands. Small canons were taken possession of by many of them. They loaded their goods in carts and on camels and nearly half of them retired to their homes. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia captured four guns and a large variegated slab of stone... (Gupta 1980, 166)

Gupta goes on to describe how Begum Samru and Baghel Singh negotiated to make peace. The terms of settlement included that (a) a large portion of Sikh army would immediately leave for Punjab, (b) Baghel Singh would remain in the capital with 4000 troops at Sabzi Mandi, (c) he was allowed to build seven gurdwaras in Delhi, and (d) to meet the expenses of troops and the construction of the gurdwaras he was allowed to levy 37.5 % of all income from octroi duties in the capital.

Bhangu ([1841] 2006) has two episodes on Baghel Singh's presence in Delhi and his encounter with the Mughal Emperor, Shah Alam.[23] Following is my summary of the events as described in the two episodes:

[23] For these episodes Bhangu ([1841] 2006) version is the same as that of Bhai Vir Singh's edition of Ratan Singh Bhangu's text (Bhangu [1841] 1993).

Episode 161: After punishing the wicked Sayyid at Luhari-Jalalbad, the Khalsa Panth moved towards Delhi. This news filled the Mughal King, Shah Alam and residents of Delhi with great fear. They knew that the Khalsa Panth would not spare the Mughals and would ransack the territory around Delhi. The Mughals did not have an army large enough to face the Khalsa. They knew that the way Mughals had tortured the Gurus and the Khalsa Panth, the same treatment would be meted out to them. The Mughals must either abdicate their throne or find a way to combat Khalsa, else they would perish. They realised that if they vacated Delhi, their rule would not survive. Shah Alam sent for Begum Samru for help. She advised that Mughals must talk to some of the Sikh chiefs. The King said he did not trust the Sikhs as they might still kill him in the guise of peace. Begum Samru reasoned that not all Sikhs were the same and Baghel Singh would be willing to protect her as a brother, and Mughals must seek the protection of Baghel Singh. Begum Samru sent elephants loaded with gold to Baghel Singh, asking his protection of Mughal ruler. Mughal messengers brought back Baghel Singh with them and latter put his camp near Delhi. She visited him and negotiated a payment of one-sixth of the revenues of Delhi. Baghel Singh got a signed deal by Shah Alam, permitting the construction of seven Sikh shrines. The Mughal king requested Baghel Singh to save Delhi from loot and plunder by sending back Khalsa forces. Baghel Singh devised a plan to this effect. He asked the King to camp the Mughal army outside Delhi, and he then wrote to Khalsa Dal telling them of the mobilisation of forces against them and that the Mughals had sought Maratha help. He suggested that it would be better to back off for now, and the Khalsa Dal retreated.

Baghel Singh put his camp at Sabzi Mandi and obtained the promised share of Delhi's revenue. His ran throughout Delhi and many Mughal custodians paid obeisance to him. He started the construction of shrines. He raised a memorial at the place where two wives of Guru Gobind Singh had stayed (Mata Sahib Dewan and Mata Sundari), then the site where Guru Harkishan had been cremated. Three Khalsa flags were thus planted on the Yamuna bank. Fifth Khalsa flag was planted where Guru Harkishan had his seat (Gurdwara Bangla

Sahib, at Jaisinghpura). He easily identified five Sikh shrines and karah parshad was distributed there after planting five Khalsa flags. At the two sites associated with Guru Teg Bahadur, he saw that mosques had been constructed. He ordered that mosques should be destroyed to enable memorials for the Guru. This was not acceptable to the Muslims and they approached the King accusing him of being a heretic who had permitted demolition of mosques. Where would they pray now, they complained and threatened that they would not allow the mosques to be demolished while they were alive; mosques would be destroyed only after Delhi had been destroyed. The King said that they should have pointed this out to him earlier and, now he could not go back on his promise, or Baghel Singh may conquer and sack Delhi. Baghel Singh saw that there was trouble brewing and asked Khalsa armies to keep a vigil around Delhi. He identified the territories of Muslims who had objected to his plans, and had them raided by Khalsa Dal. Muslims were thus subdued and begged him to stop plunder of their lands. Baghel Singh withdrew the Khalsa armies in return for written letters of consent for demolition of mosques. Some were bribed, others subdued through force and imprisonment, and gradually, everyone was made to fall in line. He compiled all the letters in a file and had them presented to the King through Ram Dyal. The King was relieved that Baghel Singh had saved him from being declared a heretic. He gave permission and Baghel Singh read it out to the whole Khalsa panth. The mosque at Rakabganj was demolished with the will and grace of divine Guru. He constructed a shrine and planted the sixth Khalsa standard at the site where Guru Teg Bahadur was cremated. Large quantities of karah parshad was prepared and distributed. Muslims were crestfallen and Hindus felt comforted after this development.

The site of Sis Ganj was yet to be reclaimed. It was in a congested locality and had a well and a mosque on either side. It was difficult to trace the spot associated with the Guru. An old woman who was a water-carrier identified the site. Her father and many other people had seen where the Hindu pir sat and was beheaded. That spot had been covered by part of a mosque wall. The Sikhs came to demolish the wall and a riot ensued. Ram Dayal came to pacify

the crowd. He asked them to stop the demolition and assured then that he would meet Baghel Singh next day and whatever the Chief ordered, would be done. Baghel Singh allowed for retaining a front portion of the mosque (as a symbolic gesture) and the rear portion was demolished. The seventh Khalsa flag was established at this site and karah parshad distributed with the beat of war drums. Baghel Singh established great historical landmarks of Sikhs and rendered great service to the community (Bhangu [1841] 2006, 720–32).

Episode 162: Another episode about Baghel Singh where he met Delhi's king and demonstrated the Khalsa's way of ransacking.

Whenever the Khalsa forces approached Delhi, Baghel Singh would negotiate with the Mughal king to send them back. The latter would agree to send presents to Khalsa Panth to keep them away from Delhi. The king had heard great things about Baghel Singh's many qualities and expressed a wish to meet him. Baghel Singh told the King's representatives that a meeting would not be possible because Singhs as part of the Khalsa Panth have vowed to never bow before a Muslim. The protocol of audience with the King required one to appear with folded hands, unarmed and to bow before him. Moreover, the Khalsa Panth when they pass through the streets of Delhi might indulge in some sort of harassment. If the King was ready to bear all this, then alone was a meeting possible. The King agreed and promised to confer presents and titles on Baghel Singh and asked him to bring his force with restrain. King summoned Ram Dyal to fix the meeting. The latter warned him that no butcher should be seen on the streets on that day as the Singhs would instantly kill him which would lead to riots. The King agreed and made a proclamation to that effect. Baghel Singh invited his commander and marched with his force. A herald kept announcing their approach and many standard bearers and ushers led the procession. Baghel Singh's turban held a plume and he sat under a canopy, a flywhisk being waved around his head. Minstrels in the procession sang hymns in praise of the Gurus. Horses which were pride of the Khalsa, were in the front of the march. Baghel Singh dismounted from his elephant upon reaching the Red Fort and mounted his horse. He went inside the fort so confidently as if he was already familiar with it. Baghel Singh dismounted as he approached near the King. There were two Singh chiefs with

him—Dulcha Singh and Sadda Singh. All their forces remained seated on horses, only five or six people were asked to dismount. The chiefs, fully armed, walked towards the king's darbar. The king had asked his Hindu ministers to greet Baghel Singh with Khalsa greetings. The approaching chiefs returned their Khalsa greetings. Baghel Singh greeted the king with a khalsa greeting. Shah Alam was delighted to meet him and asked his minister to offer chair to Baghel Singh and other chiefs. Baghel Singh offered a bow and arrow to the emperor who accepted it with raised hands. Baghel Singh sat in front of the king on a chair. The king gave him the highest title of the land, an elephant fitted with palanquin, war drums were beaten in his honour and other presents were made. Many gifts were exchanged. The king expressed his desire to witness the famed plundering raids of the Khalsa. Baghel Singh agreed to give a demonstration of it at the sugarcane fields opposite the fort. The Emperor watched from the fort and was delighted.

Baghel Singh's forces stayed in Delhi for many years, receiving payment from surrounding territories and also forged alliances with the Marathas. He returned to Amritsar to take a dip at the holy pool (Bhangu [1841] 2006, 733–44).

A comparison between the museum version of the Baghel Singh story and those of the texts is provided in table 4. The purpose here is not to verify the factual validity of the episode or to establish 'what actually happened'. The purpose it simply to show that how representations of Baghel Singh's role within Sikh history have changed over a period of time and also to establish the contemporariness of the latest version of the story as evident in Bhai Mati Das Museum.

TABLE 4. Comparison of narratives on Baghel Singh's presence in Delhi

Bhai Mati Das Museum version	**Hari Ram Gupta version**	**Ratan Singh Bhangu version**
Sikhs conquered Delhi	More like a raid	Sikhs dominated Delhi
Baghel Singh sat on Mughal throne in Diwan-i Aam	Probably not. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia does, and that too rather unceremoniously. This is not liked by many Sikhs in the raiding party	Baghel Singh met the Mughal emperor and was seated in his presence
Kesari Nishan Sahib unfurled.	No mention of this	No mention of this. Nishan Sahib installed at sites where gurdwaras built in Delhi
Got right to build gurdwaras	Same	Same
Begum Samru pleaded. Shown with her hands spread in a begging posture	She was recognized as a competent political negotiator by all players, including the Sikhs. She negotiated the terms of peace	Begum Samru sent elephants loaded with gold to Baghel Singh, asking his protection for Mughal emperor. She visited him and negotiated a payment of one-sixth Delhi's revenues
Victory march form Red Fort to Fatehpuri	No victory march	No victory march. Baghel Singh's forces marched through streets of Delhi (like a royal procession) to meet the emperor, at the latter's invitation
Victory march joined by inhabitants who were Muslims and Hindus. They welcomed the liberation of the city from Mughal tyranny. Images show Muslims-in green & wearing pathani suits in the procession	Sikh raids, like any other raids struck terror in the inhabitants. Many fled, migrated to safer parts of the country.	Sikh raids terrified inhabitants of Delhi. Butchers were to be kept off the streets or else the Khalsa forces might kill them.

Clearly, both the claims (i.e. Baghel Singh unfurled the Khalsa flag at the Red Fort and that Sikh forces' entry in Delhi was welcome) are modern. Anne Murphy (2012. 151–2) has suggested that Baghel Singh was an inspiration during the Gurdwara Reform Movement. In the 1920s, he was a symbol of Sikh struggle to identify and claim spaces sacred to it, and those which had 'historical' value for the community. The relationship between history and idea of community still remains, except, in the present context, the emphasis has shifted. Now the focus of paintings and the celebration of Fateh Diwas emphasize on raising the Nishan Sahib at the Red Fort, a clear and powerful claim to sovereignty. This emphasis has been around for a few decades, but a grand public celebration at the Red Fort grounds—the very site of 'conquest'—is the most recent and most spectacular manifestation of this claim. I believe this celebration has a tremendous significance. It is conquest of a site which was associated with Mughal tyranny which the Khalsa forces had vanquished and where the Khalsa forces had once emerged victorious. It is also a claim for a place, a pride of place in the larger narrative of Indian history. Indeed, the DSGMC in its press interviews this year demanded that Baghel Singh's conquest of Delhi and his raising the Khalsa flag over Red Fort be made part of the sound and light show at the Red Fort.[24] It is noteworthy, that his contribution of building gurdwaras, as noted in traditional Sikh histories, is missing from the whole celebration.

It should also be pointed out that scholars have noted the claim for Sikh sovereignty in Ratan Singh Bhangu's text as well. Bhangu wrote this history to inform the British of the independent status of the Sikhs; that they were not feudal lords subordinate to the Mughals, but always meant to be sovereign. According to Bhangu, it was in fact the Mughal Empire which owed its right to rule to the Sikh gurus. Babur, the first Mughal emperor had approached Guru Nanak with folded hands and the latter pleased with his humility, gave him seven handfuls of *bhang* (a traditional Indian preparation of cannabis) representing seven Mughal emperors, up to Aurangzeb. However, the Mughals turned ungrateful and began persecuting the Sikhs. That is why, Guru Gobind Singh had to snatch away their rule and he then vested the Khalsa Panth with sovereignty (Hans 1975). However, the symbols used to express Khalsa sovereignty in Bhangu's text are different from those used in the museum. Bhangu shows us that Mughals feared the Khalsa as they realised that they had tortured the Gurus and the

[24] "Make Lal Qila conquest a national event: DSGMC." 2015. *Tribune*, 20 March.

Panth and now they would meet the same fate at the hands of the Khalsa. The Mughals therefore sought the protection of the Khalsa to retain their rule, which was granted by Baghel Singh. Baghel Singh went on to build gurdwaras in Delhi, planting the Khalsa flag at those sites. Also, Baghel Singh tells the Mughal king that the Khalsa have vowed never to bow before a Muslim and later, arrives to meet the latter, on his own terms. Baghel Singh wears a turban with a plume, and sits under a canopy, on an elephant. The Khalsa march through the streets of Delhi in a royal procession, and Baghel Singh enters Red Fort, the seat of Mughal king, on horseback, fully armed. He remained fully armed and sits on a chair in presence of the king.

The modern claim of DSGMC regarding Baghel Singh's conquest of Delhi and therefore sovereignty of the Sikh Panth, differs in its emphasis. The key symbol of sovereignty here is the Nishan Sahib atop the Red Fort. This particular claim to sovereignty is also different from the demand for Khalistan where the Sikhs had demanded sovereignty from the Indian nation-state. Moreover, the story of Baghel Singh's conquest of Red Fort is different from typical Sikh engagements with Mughals. Usually, the narrative is one of resistance and moral triumph; the Sikhs achieve martyrdom fighting the Mughals in defence of righteousness and faith. The Sis Ganj museum and Fateh Diwas versions of the story present actual conquest and military triumph over the Mughals. The current version of the story remains within the Singh Sabha narrative. Baghel Singh and the misl sardars are presented as brave and fearless in their fight against Muslim tyranny; they are the liberators of the suffering masses (mostly the Hindus); and they consider serving the Guru more important than worldly gains. At the same, time the Bhai Mati Das version of the story differs in its emphasis and modifies the significance of Baghel Singh in Sikh tradition. It also presents a new claim by the Sikh community on heritage of the India nation (where Mughals and Red Fort figure prominently). At present, I cannot speculate on the concrete political demands which may arise out of the Baghel Singh story. However, I would like to stress that this claim and its manifestations should be understood in their specific context.

The museum and the Fateh Diwas, especially the historical enactment *Raj Karega Khalsa*,[25] also fail to give us the context of eighteenth century Delhi and north India. They project Sikhs as liberators of people from oppressive Mughal rule. *Raj Karega Khalsa* shows that the sole motivation of Sikhs for attacking Delhi was to avenge the wrongs done to Sikhs by the Mughals. This could only be done by dethroning Mughals and unfurling the flag. The Mughals and Pathans are shown as looters of wealth and women, and who became rulers by force and oppression. A study of scholarship on eighteenth century politics and situation in Delhi tells us this is far from the truth. Hari Ram Gupta (1980), Jadunath Sarkar (1964) and most recently Purnima Dhavan (2012) have shown how different players like Sikhs, Jats, Marathas, Rohillas and the English were active in north India, each vying for power. The Mughals had effectively lost all power and had little resources to control state income or army. This was a period of shifting loyalties and changing coalitions among the various parties involved; not for the purpose of religious merit but in one's political and economic interest. This was the milieu in which Baghel Singh and other Sikhs operated. The paintings in the museum overlook and strip away the context of Baghel Singh, his actions and events around him, so that it appears that he was an ideal military commander who conquered Delhi for the faith. This is an extremely limited view of understanding history or indeed understanding human society.

*

[25] Video of this play is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LfzfUJ1X0HU. Accessed on 19 February 2015.

6

Conclusion

This thesis makes a case for studying Sikh museums as part of a larger phenomenon of production of history by the Sikhs, and understanding them as institutions successful in bringing together different materialities of historical production—visual and textual—and presenting them as an authoritative version of Sikh history. The display in Sikh museums consists of history paintings which are referred to as popular art or calendar art because of their cheap availability, easy reproduction and widespread presence. Popular Sikh art has been in circulation since late nineteenth century in the form of lithographs, woodcuts and chromolithographs. However, since the 1950s, history paintings (oil paintings on canvas) have seen a tremendous growth and are found in museums, magazines, scholarly books, children's literature, calendars, films, animation, merchandise and even advertisements issued by governments. Thus, to understand the representation of heritage in Sikh museums, it was necessary to begin our enquiry with a study of history paintings. This thesis has examined the paintings for their themes and iconography; the processes leading to creation of paintings including networks of patronage which commission these paintings and the artists who make them; and, finally, the narrative of Sikh heritage presented by them. What made the exercise of studying history paintings difficult and interesting at the same time was their presence in several domains which are traditionally considered distinct—the formal sphere of the museum and academic scholarship; the informal sphere of the bazaar and the popular realm of stories and performances; the secular space of the museum and the sacred space of the gurdwara. On the one hand, it opened up the possibility of considering the institution of museum as part of a popular and informal network; a shift from existing understandings of the museum as a regulated, formal institution. On the other, we may also consider the popular sphere as influenced and regulated by dominant discourses of Sikh history. To understand the influence of Sikh history paintings in and across these realms, it was necessary to engage with a variety of sources and methodologies.

This thesis argues that history paintings enjoy popular acceptance as evidence of Sikh history. They are not seen as *representations* of Sikh past, but as proof of Sikh past. To be able to question their historical status, it is necessary to study modern history paintings in the background of development of popular Sikh art. A survey of representation of Sikh themes in popular art since nineteenth century reveals the modern nature of history paintings in Sikh museums. The themes and subjects depicted in popular Sikh art have changed over a period of time. This allows us to question both the narrative and the symbolism of the paintings.

During the late nineteenth century, the most popular Sikh prints were those of Guru Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh and the Ten Gurus together. Independent prints of intermediate Gurus did not exist; neither did graphic depictions of martyrdom. Paintings of martyrs existed in murals in gurdwaras; but they were not depicted as engaging in violent action. Rather, they were presented in portraits. The prints of intermediate Gurus appear only in the first two decades of the twentieth century. And the 1920s is also the first time that Guru Arjan and Guru Teg Bahadur are depicted as martyrs in popular prints. They are shown being tortured and killed. Such depictions also made it necessary to show the oppressor. Thus, Muslims began to be depicted in popular Sikh art as the enemy against whom Sikh struggles were directed. This may be seen in the context of the Gurdwara Reform Movement and the colonial administrative milieu which sharpened the division between identities and led to the production of the 'other.' Still, there were hardly any prints of followers of Gurus, the Sikh heroes who died as martyrs. Their representations and gory scenes of violence depicting martyrdom were not always part of visual culture and became popular only in independent India. The Partition of 1947 and the violence which followed may have only reinforced the process of othering of Muslims which can be clearly seen in modern history paintings. While suggesting that the Partition may explain the especially gory paintings on violence on Sikhs by Muslims, it is noteworthy that the trauma of the Partition is never depicted (see Brass 2006).

The iconography of Sikhs and Muslims too has undergone a change since late nineteenth century. In the first woodcuts and lithographs, Guru Nanak would appear as a venerable old man, sometimes with a *tilak* (mark on the forehead, identified with Hindus) and often accompanied by symbols of renunciation such as the caged parrot. The modern history paintings have stripped these associations and Guru Nanak's

portraits now show him as an ideal Khalsa, with a long, flowing beard. In fact, all Sikhs are shown in the Khalsa ideal of uncut hair, and mostly dressed in colours of the Khalsa (blue and yellow). This is true even for those people who lived before the formation of the Khalsa. In addition, Muslims are mostly shown with trimmed beard and moustache, dressed in green and with cruel expressions on their faces. In paintings which show Sikhs and Muslims in the same frame, it is easy to notice the contrast in their representations. The Sikhs are distinguished by their impressive physique, erect frame and a look of calm determination and moral righteousness in their expression. They almost glow with the power of their faith in the Sikh Gurus. Muslims, in contrast, appear cunning, ill-tempered and cruel, clearly the villains in each case.

Thus, modern history paintings are a visualisation of the Tat Khalsa ideal where Khalsa history alone is narrativised as the history of Sikhism. Such a belief necessitates depiction of all Sikhs in the physical ideal of the Khalsa and also confirms the belief that Sikh history is the story of bravery of the Sikhs against relentless persecution by Muslims. With respect to history paintings of martyrs Nijhawan (2006) has argued that what is visualised in the image is also reproduced in the "figurative language and musical metaphors of the dhadi genre... [and therefore] both modes of representation become intrinsically linked" (2006, 155). And when "neither the experiential world nor social collectives are directly accessible as objects but only by means of representational media and practice (when they are objectified), then...these images play a formative role within cultured processes that mediate both ends of the spectrum, the experiential and the social imaginary" (158). Further, the discussion on representation of Baghel Singh in Bhai Mati Das Museum also reveals that the emphasis of the stories from Sikh past can be changed, while keeping the narratives within the larger Tat Khalsa paradigm. Even when objections were raised over history paintings, especially about biased representations of Muslims in them, both the government and religious institutions defended the history paintings as evidence of Sikh past.

I argue that history paintings come to acquire such authority and significance because of the network of patronage supporting it. This thesis traced the connections between secular institutions like the central government, the state government of Punjab, government organisations like MARKFED and Punjab and Sind Bank, and religious

bodies like gurdwara management committees. It revealed that the seemingly distinct threads of patronage compete, intersect and overlap to contribute to the larger project of the making of historical tradition and identification of heritage among Sikhs. Governments have supported production of history paintings by using them in advertisements, calendars and commissioning them for museums. This has important implications for the spread of history paintings and through them the acceptance of Singh Sabha versions of Sikh heritage as the true and authoritative narrative. The most significant contribution in the popularity of history paintings has been that of Punjab and Sind Bank. The bank was founded by Singh Sabha reformers as an institution for the Sikh community and it has remained close to the Singh Sabha ideals ever since, even after its nationalisation. PSB also has a direct connection with the phenomenon of history paintings and Sikh museums. PSB officials worked closely with Sikh forums which propagated Khalsa tradition as the only heritage of the Sikhs. More importantly, PSB actively promoted, through its own platform, the Tat Khalsa ideal of Sikh heritage. The bank produced calendars which printed history paintings, consistently over a period of three decades from 1974. PSB's calendars were tremendously popular and became a reference point for Sikh history to all those who saw them. They also established a template of history paintings (both in themes depicted and style) which continues to be followed till the present.

Paintings commissioned by PSB now form the display at Bhai Mati Das Museum. The museum is thus located, for the purposes of this study, in the network of patronage where history paintings were the principle tools of propagation of Sikh heritage. The museum's particular association with PSB made it an ideal choice as a case study. In addition, Bhai Mati Das Museum is also typical of the larger phenomenon of development of Sikh museums in India. Sikh museums are part of a sacred landscape of a gurdwara and given the religious framework of Sikh history, the journey into the museum is not only an exercise in seeking knowledge of the Sikh past, but also an affirmation of Sikh faith. The Sikh museum is a space which consolidates and reaffirms—through history paintings—Singh Sabha version of Sikh heritage which have now become dominant in the Sikh community. Even those people and stories which were a challenge to Tat Khalsa idea of Sikhism have been moulded into Khalsa framework, using history paintings. This can be seen in case of representations of Udham Singh and Bhagat Singh who have been incorporated into

the Khalsa pantheon of martyrs despite lack of evidence of their conformity to it. Such a notion of Sikh heritage is extremely limited in nature because it presents Sikh history only as a saga of triumph of the faith against all odds. It does not acknowledge the nuances of the context in which Sikh individuals worked or how was the Sikh community affected by larger socio-political processes and how did they in turn influence them. This approach of representing heritage in Sikh museum also completely ignores a variety of practices and beliefs within Sikh tradition.

The fact that the dominant Singh Sabha narrative of the Sikh past has been selectively co-opted by the secular institution of the government is significant. While Sikh museum did not begin as a project of the Indian nation-state, the latter began to utilize it particularly from the 1970s. On the one hand Sikh museums can be seen as an affirmation of community's claim over its past and its representations. Sikh museums did not begin as projects of the nation-state, nor were they cultural expressions specific to a post-modern globalised world. The growth and significance of Sikh museums can perhaps be understood in context of relationship of Sikh politics (led by the Akali Dal, which incidentally emerged out of the Gurdwara Reform Movement), with the Indian nation-state. If the history paintings at Central Sikh Museum were the manner in which the dominant tradition within the Sikh community chose to present their history, the nation-state too did not hesitate to utilize the medium to present itself as the champion of Sikh interests. The late 1960s and through the 1970s in particular, there were a number of commemorations and memorials of Sikh history, such as the Guru Teg Bahadur Museum in Anandpur Sahib (see Randhawa 1984) and memorials on Udham Singh (see Fenech 2002). This phase of museum building coincides with the rule of the Congress party both in the state of Punjab and at the centre. It should be noted that museums by both agencies (government and gurdwaras) have similar display—of history paintings—by the same set of artists. Thus, they also conform to the Singh Sabha ideal of Sikh history. At the same time, it seems the symbols of commemoration differ in their emphasis. So, for instance, the Congress led government have highlighted Udham Singh (memorial at Jallianwala Bagh and Sunam), Guru Teg Bahadur (museum at Anandpur Sahib) and Ranjit Singh (museum at Amritsar)—all individuals whose legacy can be claimed not for Sikhs alone but for the entire nation-state. The Akali political formations (both when in and out of government) have celebrated all of these as Sikh heroes—and, in addition, have

installed Bhindranwale's portrait, established Khalsa Heritage Complex, and celebrated the Fateh Diwas. The celebration of Fateh Diwas in 2014 coincides with the establishment of SAD (Badal)'s control of DSGMC for the first time. The claims of sovereignty at Fateh Diwas can then have two meanings: When seen in context of the Sikh struggles with the Mughals in the medieval times, this celebration monumentalizes Sikh triumph over an oppressive power. When seen in context of relations between the Sikh politics in Punjab and the Indian nation-state, it is a statement of triumph of a regional power [SAD (Badal)] over the oppressive centre at Delhi, the Indian nation-state; that has allegedly always deprived Punjab of its resources, invaded the Golden Temple and caused 'hurt' to the Sikh community (see Chopra 2010). This claim of sovereignty is also different from the claim of sovereignty made during the 1970s; an inversion of the twentieth century rhetoric of Indian nation-state towards the Sikhs, in the twenty-first century. From the point of view of the state, the desire to build Sikh museums may be understood as an attempt to present itself as a protector of Sikh interests while keeping the regional assertion of political groups such as the SAD in check. From the point of view of the Sikh community, the museum can be seen as the most authoritative manifestation of processes of production of history which then becomes the basis of making tangible political claims.

This thesis has thus made a case for studying Sikh museums in particular context of : (a) the nature of community's relationship to its past, (b) studying Sikh museums as part of a larger phenomenon of production of history in the Sikh community, rather than seeing them as individual institutions responding to a particular event in history, (c) ability of the history paintings to mould themselves to contemporary contexts, and (d) networks of patronage which commission history paintings and create museums and therefore contribute to the consolidate the Tat Khalsa notion of Sikh heritage.

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Satpal Danish, Amritsar

Surinder Singh, Amritsar

PSB employees

Makhan Singh, New Delhi

J. P. Singh, New Delhi

Kuldeep Singh, New Delhi

Kulmohan Singh, New Delhi

Others

Harbans Singh Chawla, New Delhi (scholar, script-writer at Baba Baghel Singh Museum)

Tarlochan Singh, New Delhi (member of Parliament; officer at MARKFED)

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Appendix 1: List of Popular Sikh Art

Popular Sikh Art: Late Nineteenth Century					
S. No.	**Title**	**Date**	**Artist/writer**	**Publishing details**	**Details/source**
1	Guru Nanak with nine successors	c. 1870	—	Amritsar or Lahore	Woodcut. South and South East Asian Collection (SSEA), Victoria and Albert Museum, London (V&A). No. IM.2:11-1917
2	Ten Gurus	c. 1870	Naqqash Soba Singh	Amritsar or Lahore	Woodcut. South and South East Asian Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum, London. No. IM.2: 88-1917
3	Family making an offering at Baba Atal shrine	c. 1870	—	Amritsar or Lahore	Woodcut on paper; SSEA, V & A. No. IM.2:145-1917
4	Sri Darbar Sahib	c. 1870	—	Amritsar or Lahore	Woodcut on paper; SSEA, V & A. No. IM.2:153-1917
5	Guru Nanak with Mardana and Bala in Mecca	c. 1875	—	Amritsar or Lahore	Partly coloured woodcut. SSEA, V&A. No. IM.2: 161-1917
6	Guru Nanak with Mardana and Bala	c. 1875	—	Amritsar or Lahore	Coloured woodcut. V&A. No. IM.2: 125-1917
7	Nanak discoursing with Siddhas	1875 AD (S. 1932)	—	Amritsar	SSEA, V&A. No. IM.2:40 -1917
8	Guru Nanak hearing kirtan in the presence of his two sons	1874–75	—	Gujjar Singh of Faiz Printing Press, near Akal Banga in Amritsar	SSEA, V&A. No. IM.2:33-1917
9	Guru Gobind Singh hunting	1874–75	—	Gujjar Singh of Faiz	SSEA, V&A. No. IM.2:21-1917

				Printing Press, near Akal Banga in Amritsar	
10	Guru Gobind Singh initiating the first five members of the Khalsa	1874–75	—	Amritsar or Lahore	SSEA, V&A. No. IM.2:179-1917
11	The Golden Temple	1874–75	—	Bhai Gujjar Singh of Faiz Printing Press, near Akal Banga in Amritsar	SSEA, V&A. No. IM.2:50-1917
12	Double print: one panel with a Sikh family paying homage to shrine of Baba Atal; second showing Brahma and Shiv worshipping Bhagauti	1874–75	—	Gujjar Singh of Faiz Printing Press, near Akal Banga in Amritsar	SSEA, V&A. No. IM.2:49-1917
13	Ten Sikh Gurus	c. 1880	—	—	Collection of Kumkum Singh, New Delhi. Source: Daljeet (2005)
14	NKS Darbar Sahib	c. 1875	Sobha Singh	—	Woodblock on paper. Source: Madra and Singh (2011, fig. 121)
15	Painting of Sri Darbar Sahib Amritsar ji	c. 1875	—	Published in Guru Nanak Prakash (1890)	Coloured engraving. Source: Madra and Singh (2011, fig. 122)
16	The Golden Temple complex and pilgrims	c. 1875	—	Published by Bhai Wasava Singh, bookseller, Bazar Mai Seva, Amritsar	Woodcut engraving. The British Museum (no. 1994, 1216, 0.1.IND)
17	City Amritsar	1875	—	—	Woodblock on paper.

					Source: Madra and Singh (2011, fig. 124)
18	Bhai Mehtab Singh & Bhai Sukha Singh bring the head of Massa Rangar	c. 1875	—	—	Private Collection. Source: Madra and Singh (2011, fig. 18)
19	*Pothi panj granthi*	Vikram S. 1941; 1884 AD	Written by Lahora Singh	Lala Sham Das & Ram Chand, Lahore	8 b&w drawings. Panjab Digital Library, Chandigarh (PDL). No. BK-011999
20	*Ati prachin Janam Sakhi*	1884	—	Guru Singh Sabha, Indian Press	1 b&w drawing cover page. PDL. No. BK-000328
21	*Janam Sakhi Sri Guru Babe Nanak di*	1883	—	Victoria Press, Lahore	167 b&w illustrations. PDL. No. BK-000327
22	*Gosht Janam Sakhi*	1880s–90s	—	—	47 b&w illustrations. PDL. No. BK-000145
23	*Pothi Gurbilas ki*	1882	Writer Baba Sumer Singh Valoki	Lahore	1 b&w illustration on cover page. PDL. No. BK-001146
24	Ten Gurus	1882	Puran Singh of Amritsar	—	Coloured drawing. Govt. Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh. McLeod mentions that this format is extremely popular at the turn of the century. He dates it to 1890. Source: Daljeet (2005)
25	Painting of Sri Darbar Sahib	1881–2	Sobha Singh	—	Woodblock on paper. Source: Madra and Singh (2005, fig. 125)
26	Paintings on Ten Gurus	1891–1905 (?)	Gian Singh Naqqash	Germany	A popular set. Source: www.ramgarhiakom.com-/2005/l_doc/03_mar.html
27	Guru Nanak's life history	Late 19th cent.	Lahora Singh	—	Monochrome. Patiala Archives. Source: Srivastava (1983, fig. 130, 131)

28	Guru Nanak, Bala, Mardana, Srichand and Lakhmi Das	Late 19th cent.	Gian Singh Naqqash	—	Govt. Museum and At Gallery, Chandigarh. No. 2639. Art Heritage dates a similar painting, showing Ten Gurus, to 1911 AD.
29	Guru Gobind Singh hunting tiger	Late 19th cent.	—	—	Watercolour drawing on paper. Govt. Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh. No. 2599
30	Baba Deep Singh ji Shahid	Late 19th cent.	—	—	Watercolour drawing on paper; not print. Govt. Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh. No. 2600
31	Creation of Khalsa: Guru Gobind Singh calling upon the sangat with drawn sword	Late 19th cent.	—	—	Watercolour drawing on paper. Govt. Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh. No. 2601
32	Guru Gobind Singh riding, with followers on foot	Late 19th cent.	—	—	Watercolour drawing on paper. Govt. Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh. No. 2602
33	Battle scene	Late 19th cent.	—	—	Watercolour drawing on paper. Govt. Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh. No. 2604
34	Four sons of Guru Gobind Singh riding	Late 19th cent.	—	—	Watercolour drawing on paper. Govt. Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh. No. 2605
35	Panj piare taking amrit from Guru Gobind Singh	Late 19th cent.	—	—	Watercolour drawing on paper. Govt. Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh. No. 2606
36	Sikh Guru riding a horse	Late 19th cent.	—	—	Watercolour drawing on paper. Govt. Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh. No. 2607
37	Ten Gurus	Late 19th cent.	—	—	Watercolour drawing on paper. Govt. Museum

					and Art Gallery, Chandigarh. No. 2608
38	Conversion of Mardana into a ram & his reconversion in human form by Guru Nanak	Late 19th cent.	—	—	Watercolour drawing on paper. Govt. Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh. No. 2609
39	Guru Nanak meeting gods & Nirankar	Late 19th cent.	—	—	Watercolour drawing on paper. Govt. Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh. No. 2610
40	Bibi Rajni's leper husband cured	Late 19th cent.	—	—	Watercolour drawing on paper. Govt. Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh. No. 2612
41	Ten Gurus	Late 19th cent.	—	—	Watercolour drawing on paper. Govt. Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh. No. 2613
42	Guru Hargobind	Late 19th cent.	—	—	Watercolour drawing on paper. Govt. Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh. No. 2617
43	Guru Nanak and Vali Kandhari	Late 19th cent.	—	—	Watercolour drawing on paper. Govt. Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh. No. 2619
44	Baba Buddha and Mata Ganga	Late 19th cent.	—	—	Watercolour drawing on paper. Govt. Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh. No. 2620
45	Guru Hargobind	Late 19th cent.	—	—	Watercolour on paper; probably Guru Gobind Singh; has a paunch; Flag is yellow with blue streamers- had blue coloured sword, dagger & shield. Govt. Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh. No. 2621
46	Golden Temple	Early 20th	—	—	Watercolour on paper. Govt. Museum and Art

		cent.			Gallery, Chandigarh. No. 2635
47	Guru Nanak, Bala, Mardana	Late 19th cent.	—	—	Watercolour on paper. Govt. Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh. No. 2637
48	Guru Gobind Singh and panj piaras	Early 20th cent.	—	—	Watercolour on paper. Govt. Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh. No. 2638
49	Guru Arjan oversees the construction of the original Harimandir Sahib	1890–95	—	—	Gouache on paper; Toor Collection. Source: Madra and Singh (2011, fig. 186)
50	Mai Bhago and forty liberated ones	Late 19th cent.	—	—	Gouache. Govt. Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh. No. 2604
51	Bhai Taru Singh	Late 19th cent.	—	—	Pencil drawing. National Museum, New Delhi. Source: Madra and Singh (1999, fig. 19)
52	Sikhs clash with Mughal army	Late 19th cent.	—	—	Toor Collection. Source: Madra and Singh (1999, fig. 11)
53	Nanak and Babur at Saidpur	Late 19th cent.	Mohd. Sharif	—	Royal Family Nabha. Source: Singh and Singh (2012)
54	Guru Teg Bahadur's martyrdom	Late 19th cent.	—	—	Royal Family Nabha. Source: Singh and Singh (2012)
55	Gobind Rai being appointed Guru	Late 19th cent.	Basahath-ullah	—	Royal Family Nabha. Source: Singh and Singh (2012)
56	Akbar meets Guru Amar Das in 1597	Late 19th cent.	—	—	Royal Family Nabha. Source: Singh and Singh (2012)
57	Birth of Guru Gobind Singh	Late 19th cent.	—	—	Royal Family Nabha. Source: Singh and Singh

					(2012)
58	Guru Teg Bahadur holding darbar at Anandpur	Late 19th cent.	Basahath-ullah	—	Royal Family Nabha. Source: Singh and Singh (2012)
59	Mehtab Singh and Sukha Singh kill Massa Ranghar	Late 19th cent.	–	–	Royal Family Nabha. Source: Singh and Singh (2012)
60	Sikhs fighting the Mughals	Late 19th cent.	Basahath-ullah	–	Royal Family Nabha. Source: Singh and Singh (2012)
Popular Sikh Art: Early to Mid-twentieth Century					
S. No.	**Title**	**Date**	**Artist/writer**	**Publishing details**	**Details/source**
61	Individual portraits of Ten Gurus	1906	Thakur Lal Singh or Lal Singh Musawwar	OUP, Amritsar	Line drawings in b&w. Source Macauliffe (1906)
62	A book seller at Amritsar	1908	—	—	Photograph. Source: Madra and Singh (2011, fig. 249)
63	Holy man in the Golden Temple reading from his sacred book, Granth Sahib	1903	—	—	Photograph. Source: Madra and Singh (2011, fig. 215)
64	Banda Bahadur	1915	Writer Bhai Sohan Singh Sher-e Babar of Gujrawala	Bhai Narain Singh Gyani, Lahore	Monochrome, of Banda standing. PDL No. BK-001259
65	Portrait of Guru Gobind Singh	10 Dec 1920	Lahora Singh, Lahore	Phulwari 1929	Coloured painting of Guru Gobind Singh with falcon. PDL No. PI_008775
66	Ten Gurus in conclave	1911	Gian Singh Naqqash	—	Watercolour. Source: Art Heritage, Amritsar
67	Guru Nanak, Bala, Mardana, Sri	1911	Gian Singh Naqqash	—	Govt. Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh. No. 2639. This dating is by Art

	Chand and Lakhmi Das				Heritage. Chandigarh Museum dates it to late 19th cent.
68	Guru Granth Prakash	c. 1920	—	Hem Chander Bhargava, Delhi	Chromolithograph. Source: Pinney (2008, fig. 51)
69	Goroo Gobind Singh	c. 1920	—	Hem Chander Bhargava, Delhi	Source: Pinney (2008, fig. 52)
70	Guru Arjan Dev	c. 1920	—	Hem Chander Bhargava, Delhi	Source: Pinney (2008, fig. 53)
71	Guru Granth Sahib Tika vol 3	1929	Gyani Bishan Singh	Giani Bishan Singh, Wazir i Hind Press, Amritsar	8 b&w drawings. All images signed G.S.P.A. PDL No. BK-000002
72	Adbhut Shikari	—	Motiram, Lahore	Phulwari, Feb 1930	PDL No. PI_008814
73	Neela Bana	—	M. L. Chopra	Phulwari, Jan 1929	
74	Guru Harkishan	—	—	Phulwari, Mar 1929	Reproduction of drawing of Guru Harkishan from Macauliffe's book. PDL
75	Guru Gobind Singh in *Nirale darshan*	c. 1930s	—	Gurmat Tract Society, Lahore	3 images on Guru Gobind Singh. Monochrome. PDL No. BK-000739
76	Guru Arjan	—	—	Phulwari, May 1931	Reproduction of Guru Arjan's drawing from Macauliffe's book. PDL
77	Guru Teg Bahadur's execution	—	Sri Ram	Phulwari, Nov–Dec 1934	Painting not dated. Sri Ram died in 1926. PDL No. PI_008878
78	Guru Nanak	—	—	Phulwari, Nov 1939	Coloured painting of Guru Nanak
79	Guru Gobind Singh	—	Sobha Singh	Phulwari, Jan 1940	PDL

80	Guru Gobind Singh and Sahibzadas	—	G. S. Sohan Singh	Phulwari, Jan 1940	PDL
81	Nur Jahan meets Guru Hargobind	1935	Sobha Singh	—	National Archives of India, New Delhi
82	Guru Nanak in trance	1937	Sobha Singh	—	Nam khumari nanaka charhi rahe din raat; seems to be the one of the earliest prints of his, which became very popular
83	Golden Temple, Amritsar	1930–35	—	Hem Chander Bhargava, Delhi	Toor Collection. Source: Madra and Singh (2011, fig. 412)
84	Guru Gobind Singh with retainers	1930s	—	Manilall Mooljee Vadgady, Bombay, Importers of all kinds of Anilin Fast Colours	Label. PDL No. PI_013840
85	Guru Gobind Singh on horseback with two retainers	1930s	—	Karam Chand Kishan Chand, Amritsar	Label. PDL No. PI_013852
86	Panj piare	Early 20th cent.	—	Hem Chander Bhargava	Govt. Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh
87	Ranjit Singh	Early 20th cent.	—	Chitrashala Press, Pune	Govt. Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh
88	Guru Hargobind miri piri da malak	Early 20th cent.	—	Chitrashala Press, Pune	Govt. Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh
89	Nur Jahan meets Guru Hargobind	Early 20th cent.	Lohara Singh	—	Source: Aryan (1975, fig. 58)
90	Portrait of	Early	Lal Singh	—	Source: Aryan (1975, fig.

	Ranjit Singh	20th cent.	Musawwar		37)
91	Guru Gobind Singh with elephant gifted by hill chiefs	1933	G. S. Sohan Singh	—	—
92	Banda Bahadur	1932	G. S. Sohan Singh	—	—

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Appendix 2: Themes in PSB Calendars

This information is based on interviews, dates mentioned on original paintings in PSB collection and pages of calendars which exist in personal collections. The list below gives the year, theme and descriptions of paintings in the calendars. The description of paintings is as they appear in the calendars. There is no complete public archive of PSB calendars. All scenes refer to history paintings unless otherwise mentioned.

1974 Important Personalities

Bhai Vir Singh, Bhai Nand Lal Goya, Bhai Gurdas, Sant Mian Mir, Baba Buddha, Bhai Kanhaiya

1975 Women in Sikh History [To mark the UN International Year of Women]

First Disciple: Bebe Nanki

Soul of Sacrifice and humility: Mata Khivi

Mata Sahib Devan contributing womanly sweetness to amrit

Mai Bhago leading forty muktas in the battlefield at Muktsar

Bibi Bhani: Guru's daughter, Guru's wife and Guru's mother

Women plying heavy grindstones as punishment for steadfast faith in Mir Manu's prison

Sardarni Sada Kaur challenging before the Shahi Fort Lahore

The brave mother of Jaito Morcha sacrificing love of child for faith

Mata Sulakhni seeking blessing from Guru Hargobind

Guru Amar Das recognising organisational capacity of women giving them responsibility of *parchar* (preaching)

Mata Gujri, along with younger Sahibzadas imprisoned in Thanda Burj, Sirhind

The brave last queen of Punjab, Maharani Jindan

1976 Kirtaniyas

Kirtaniyas of Guru Teg Bahadur: Guru Teg Bahadur devoted special attention to kirtan. He took competent kirtaniyas with him on his travels. History records the names of Bhai Gulab Rai, Bhai Bhail, Bhai Mansud and Bhai Gurbux.

Bhai Mardana: He accompanied Guru Nanak on the rabab for fifty eight years. He has rendered inimitable service to kirtan and is regarded as the doyen of kirtaniyas.

Bhai Balwand and Satta: The two inimitable kirtaniyas who sang the divine compositions during Guru Angad's time. Their composition, a *var* in *Rag Ramkali* has been enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib showing the high dignity and respect accorded to kirtaniyas by the Gurus.

Bhai Babak: Bhai Babak was a unique romantic figure in Guru Hargobind's time. He was a melodious kirtaniya and an acknowledged warrior.

Bhai Abdullah and Nathmal: Both were noted authors of some soul stirring *vars* which they sang to the accompaniment of dhadh and rabab during Guru Hargobind Singh's time. They had the distinction of performing kirtan at the Akal Takht.

Jassa Singh Ahluwalia: He learnt kirtan at the feet of his mother. Both of them performed kirtan at Mata Sundari's residence in Delhi. Later S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia gained fame as Sultan-ul Quom i.e. the Chief of the Nation because of his political wisdom and gift of leadership.

Bhai Mansa Singh: Bhai Mansa Singh performed kirtan at Harmandir Sahib at Amritsar. He was so engrossed in it that he was always hard up. Maharaja Ranjit Singh, impressed by him, wanted to give him a handsome donation but he refused as he would rather look to Him for sustenance. A noble example of selfless devotion.

1977 Bhagats

Shaikh Farid, Surdas, Trilochan, Dhanna, Parmanand, Beni, Pipa, Ravidas, Namdev, Jaidev, Ramanand

1978 Baramaha

Baisakh, Jeth, Ashadh, Sawan, Bhadon, Assu, Katak, Maghar, Poh, Magh, Phagan, Chet

1979 Guru as child [On occasion of UN International Year of the Child]

Cobra provides shade: When Guru Nanak was born in Talwandi (Nankana Sahib) the whole atmosphere of the town appeared to have undergone a peculiar change. Once the young Nanak had taken his cattle for grazing in the fields. As he lay resting, the sun rays fell on his face after some time. A cobra crawled out of its hiding place and spread its hood wide to provide shade over young Nanak's divine face. The local official of the village, Rai Bhular, noticed this miracle as he was passing that way. He went straight to the house of young Nanak's father, Mehta Kalu, and told him, "My village survives and will live forever because of this divine messenger, your son. You are very lucky indeed!"

The Divine Scribe: Nanak was the repository of all spiritual knowledge. His father, however took him to the village teacher for getting knowledge of the alphabet. As the teacher wrote the first letter S on the wooden board (takhti) the child Nanak spontaneously recited a psalm which meant, S-supreme Lord

who has created the entire universe. The teacher was thrilled. The tray of brown sugar which Mehta Kalu was carrying dropped from his hands. All the students started picking up these sweets. The teacher observed delightedly: "This child is going to provide sweetness to everyone!"

Spreading the message through booklets: Guru Angad Dev ji gave a new form to Gurmukhi alphabet. Guru Arjan Dev ji had the holy psalms written and sent these for wide distribution among devotees. His grandson, Sansar Ram, son of Baba Mohan ji, wrote small booklets of these psalms, under Guruji's guidance, for distribution.

The Lord raised me from the lowliest position: (Guru) Ram Das ji had shifted to Goindwal during his early youth. He used to earn his livelihood selling boiled grains and was then occupied throughout in service. Very often he would freely give away the boiled grains to the needy and to the poor labourers. Guru Amar Das ji was highly impressed with his charitable nature and blessed the young boy. Ultimately the ecclesiastical succession was bestowed upon him and Guru Amar Das ji installed him as the fourth Guru.

Cursed be the hands and feet which do not serve the others: (Guru) Arjun Dev was blessed with the title *A treasure-house of bani.* (Guru) Arjun recited the Gurbani to the accompaniment of instrumental music every morning, listened to others' recitations and thereafter he was completely absorbed in service in the *langar*. While cleaning kitchen utensils he got into a state of divine ecstasy.

Presents dear to me—armaments and youth: Guru Hargobind was installed as the sixth Guru at the age of 11. Guru Arjun Dev had become a martyr and those were hard times. But Guru Hargobind's discourses and his divine acts instilled so much enthusiasm in his devotees that each one of them resolved to sacrifice his body, mind and wealth for the protection of the faith. His command to his devotees was: "The presents which are dearest to me are- all types of armaments and virile youth."

Guard your dress: Guru Har Rai ji had a very delicate and tender nature. One day as he was strolling down the garden, a flower got stuck in the loose

flowing dress and fell down on the ground. When this came to the notice of Guru Hargobind ji, he advised Har Rai to guard his dress properly. Thereafter he always held the loose ends of his dress in his hands. He continued this habit throughout his life and thus displayed a profound spirit of humility. Guru Har Rai ji succeeded the *gaddi* at the age of 14.

When we are in his divine presence, all our ailments are cured: Guru Harkishan ji ascended the ecclesiastical throne at the age of 5 years and 8 months. He was possessed of the divine spirit. When Guruji came to Delhi, the city was in grip of an epidemic. Guru Harkishan ji went all over the city, even in narrow lanes and by-lanes. He gave succour to those in anguish. His very presence and divine look would rid the patients of their suffering and disease.

The protective sheet spread over the entire universe: With the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the honour and prestige of India, which was on decline, was restored once again. As a young boy (Guru) Tegh Bahadur fully dressed up, was on the way to the wedding of his elder brother, Baba Gurditta. He saw his playmate roaming around all naked. (Guru) Tegh Bahadur at once took off his costly and beautiful dress and gave it away to him. Thus Guru ji covered the naked body of an indigent boy during his youth. While seated on Guru Nanak's ecclesiastical throne, he sacrificed his life to save the honour of his country. Sainapati observed: Guru Tegh Bahadur provided a protective sheet to the whole universe.

All human beings are equal: The moment child Gobind Singh was born in Patna, Pir Bhikam Shah of Thaska offered his prayer facing East instead of West contrary to his daily practice. He left for Patna immediately. On arrival at his residence, Pir placed two bowls of milk and water before the child. The new born Prophet put his hands on both the bowls thus signifying: the entire humanity springs from the same divine fountain; how can some be good and others be evil?

The Sikh faith is to be protected at all costs even if it means sacrificing one's head: 698 devoted companions of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur were assassinated in Delhi in March 1716. One of them was just a budding young boy and had been married only recently. His mother approached the Moghul

authorities and secured orders for his release on the pretext that her son was not a Sikh. On hearing this, the young boy shouted, "My mother is telling a lie. She is not my mother. I am the son of Mata Sahib Dewan. I will now marry the bride of death only."

The sacred kirpan: During the Akali Movement (1925–30) the kirpan was banned by the British government. A young boy wearing his kirpan entered the packed law court in Jullundhur [Jalandhar] and greeted in a loud voice, "Sat Sri Akal." He was convicted but upheld the right of wearing his religious symbols. India's constitution has now guaranteed this right to the Sikhs. They are allowed to carry and wear the kirpan, irrespective of its length, everywhere.

1989 Jawaharlal Nehru's association with Sikhs [On birth centenary of Nehru]

1992 Bhagats

1994 One shall obtain honour only by sacrifice of self and rendering service

Baba Buddha ji called Guru Hargobind ji to village Ramdass after he had a premonition of death. On receiving the message Guru Sahib went to the Baba and made obeisance to him in the manner done to Guru Nanak and to which Baba took an exception. On Guru Sahib's request Baba Buddha ji explained to him the sublime teachings of the first five Gurus. The Guru described Baba Buddha ji as the absolute epitome of 'Sikhi' (teaching).

Bhai Bahilo, first and foremost: During the construction of Harimandir Sahib, Guru Arjun spotted bright red bricks and inquired how these had been produced. He was told that Bhai Bahilo had carried all the rubbish of the town on his head to the kiln to prepare the bricks in such a perfect manner. Guru Arjun Sahib summoned Bhai Bahilo and uttered, "Bhai Bahilo, the first and foremost."

Manjh is beloved by the Guru and Guru by Manjh: Bhai Manjh an ardent disciple of the Guru used to bring dry wood every day for langar to be cooked. One day while carrying the wood he tumbled into a well following a storm. Guru Arjun found that despite his predicament Bhai ji had saved the wood from getting wet. Guru honoured his disciple by saying "Manjh is beloved by the Guru and Guru by Manjh."

Isko kis bidh kaho na koi: During the Battle of Anandpur Sahib the followers of Guru Gobind Singh complained to him that his Sikh Bhai Kanhaya was offering water to wounded enemy soldiers and thus again made them fighting fit. Asked by the Guru, Kanhaya said that he found Guru's image in every wounded soldier. Guru Gobind Singh praised his views and said that Bhai ji had actually gained wisdom. He instructed his followers not to prevent Bhai Kanhaya from doing his work.

1999 ***Nischay kar apni jeet karo***

2002 Women in Sikh History

Sri Guru Nanak Dev ji had taken four long journeys to reform the humanity. Before leaving on his long journey from Sultanpur Lodhi, Guru Sahib's family members, his parents, Bebe Nanaki (sister) were sad. Bebe Nanaki offered to look after Guru Sahib's family and children. Guru Nanak preached that all men are equal in the court of the Lord. Religion, castes and languages are all man-made barriers. He preached his golden principles: Meditate his Name, Share your earnings with others, and Earn truthful living.

Mai Bhirayee (Virayee) was related to Sri Guru Angad Dev as his aunt (sister of his father). After Guru Nanak Dev ji's soul mingled with the eternal light, Sri Guru Angad Dev ji came down to Khadoor Sahib and he stayed for a few days with Mai Bhirayee. Before he became Guru, (Guru) Angad Dev went into hiding. During this period, Mai Bhirayee served Guru Sahib in all

respects. Today at Khadoor Sahib, there is a beautiful gurdwara in the memory of Mai Bhirayee. Guru Angad Dev remained Guru for a period of 13 years.

Mughal King Farrukhsiyar (1713–19) was ruling over India. After the Battle of Gurdas Nangal, Baba Banda Singh Bahadur, along with his companions, was brought to Delhi as prisoners. His wife Sheel Kaur and four year old son Ajay Singh were also among the prisoners. Both of them were brought to the Red Fort and forced to embrace Islam but they refused to please the Mughals. At last in June 1716, Banda Singh Bahadur, along with his companions, along with his wife and son Ajay Singh, were brutally executed.

Sri Guru Gobind Singh fought the last battle of his life at Muktasar. In this battle Bhai Maha Singh and his 40 soldiers also took part. During the battle of Anandpur Sahib, these 40 soldiers had deserted Guru Sahib. Mai Bhago persuaded these deserters and brought them back at the feet of Sri Guru Gobind Singh. He herself took part in the battle of Muktsar, with great courage and continued dressing the wounds of wounded soldiers during war. She did great job of spreading Sikhism in Maharashtra.

2003 *Jithey Baba pair dharay puja aasan thaapan soa*: Wherever the Guru Set His Foot that Place Became Sanctified

Guru Nanak Dev ji in Kabul (Afghanistan): On his way back from Mecca, Medina and Baghdad, Guru Nanak Dev ji reached Afghanistan. In his sacred memory many gurdwaras were established in Kabul, Jalalabad and Sultanpur. Gurdwara 'Chashma Sahib' or 'Chauha Sahib' is of paramount importance. To solve the water problem of local people Guru Sahib brought into being a spring of pure water. Guru Nanak Dev ji gave the message of Oneness of God, Brotherhood and Love.

Guru Nanak Dev ji in Jagan Nath Puri: During his travels in eastern India in the year 1509, Guru Nanak Dev ji stayed at Jagan Nath Puri. When Guru Nanak saw the local people singing arti with lighted diyas (lamps) on a tray he sang following spiritual shabad: *gagan mein thaal rav chand deepak bane taaraka mandal janak moti*. It means the whole world is singing his arti. Here

there is Baoli sahib Gurdwara which was constructed in the seventeenth century by Udasi preacher, Bhai Almast.

Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji in Dhubri (Assam): Guru Tegh Bahadur ji visited Assam in 1666–67 with Raja Ram Singh who was deputed by Aurangzeb to crush the rebellion caused by Chanderdhwaja, a local ruler. Guru ji stayed at Dhubri at that time, where these days there is Gurdwara Thara Sahib, Damdama Sahib. He prevailed upon both the warring sides and negotiated peace between them. To commemorate the occasion soldiers from both sides raised a Thara here, where a beautiful gurdwara stands these days.

Guru Tegh Bahadur ji in Dhaka (Bangladesh): During their journeys to eastern India, Guru Nanak Dev ji and Guru Tegh Bahadur ji reached Dhaka (Bangladesh). Here Gurdwara Nanak Shahi is located behind Dhaka University's Public Library. Another Gurdwara known as 'Sangat Tola' is situated in the Bangla Bazaar. Knowing Guru Sahib's arrival devotees came here from far flung areas to pay their respects. Guru Sahib's devotee Bulaki Das's aged mother presented a handmade long robe to Guru Sahib here.

Guru Tegh Bahadur ji in Benaras: Gurdwara 'Bari Sangat', Benaras (Varanasi) has had the touch of three Guru Sahib's personal bliss. Guru Nanak Dev ji, Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib ji, Guru Gobind Sahib ji stayed over here. Guru Sahib advised the local residents to liberate themselves from clutches of caste system and blank rituals and meditate God's 'Naam Simran.' Guru Tegh Bahadur's written commands, hand-written copy of Guru Granth Sahib and Guru Sahib's long robe have been kept here in safe custody. Guru Sahib established a baoli known as 'Baoli Ganga Pargat.'

Guru Gobind Singh ji in Rawalsar, Mandi: Gurdwara Rawalsar in Himachal Pradesh is situated 15 kms away from Mandi. There was a natural lake called Rawalsar which was given the shape of a sarovar. Guru Gobind Singh ji came here with his respected mother and family on an invitation from the hillock king Sidh Sain. On the Baisakhi Day, many hillock kings who desired to have Guru's glimpse, came to his Court. This is a sacred place for Hindus and Buddhists. Lakhs of people visit this place to have a dip in sarovar.

2004 Guru Granth Sahib and Contributions of Different Gurus to it

The foundation for compilation of the great work Sri Guru Granth Sahib ji began with Sri Guru Nanak Dev ji who after penning down the Divine message in book form preserved it with great care. When he visited Mecca along with Bhai Mardana while on his tour (udasi) for spreading the divine message, the Kazi [Qazi] asked the Guru ji who is a better human being according to his book. Guru ji said, only that person is a human who not only thinks good but also acts accordingly. Sri Guru Nanak Dev ji breathed his last in 1539 AD at Kartarpur situated at the banks of river Ravi. 974 hymns penned down by him in 19 ragas form the base of Guru Granth Sahib ji.

Sri Guru Angad Dev ji born at Matey Di Sarai (District Ferozpur) in 1504. Being his fifth centenary year, his birth anniversary is being celebrated all over the world with great respect and enthusiasm. He served Guru Nanak Dev ji and Sikh Sangat for 7 years at kartarpur (Pakistan). Founding him competent, Sri Guru Nanak Dev ji handed over the Gurgaddi along with his book, in 1539 AD. Sri Angad Dev ji guided the Sikh religion for 13 years. 62 hymns penned down by him are a part of Sri Guru Granth Sahib ji.

Sri Guru Teg Bahadur Sahib ji was martyred along with three Sikhs, Bhai Mati Das ji, Bhai Sati Das ji, and Bhai Dyala ji at Chandni Chowk in 1675 AD. They got martyred for upholding the human rights of every individual to exercise one's own faith. 59 shabads and 57 shlokas, were penned down by Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur ji and were included in the Guru Granth Sahib by Sri Guru Gobind ji. Much of these hymns were written by Guru ji during his imprisonment at Chandni Chowk kotwali.

Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji breathed his last at Nanded (Maharashtra) in 1708 AD. Before his death he bestowed the gur-gaddi onto Sri Guru Granth Sahib ji. The present form of Sri Guru Granth Sahib ji in every gurdwara was compiled by Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji. Sri Guru Granth Sahib is a volume in 1430 pages in 31 ragas. It is secure common heritage of mankind which binds

every human being with a bond of love and understanding and its fourth centenary is being celebrated all over the world.

2005 The Gurus' Nature: Where They Hear Their Devotees' Call and Appear Before Them

2006 Barahmaha by Arjun Dev [On the occasion of fourth centenary of his martyrdom]

2007 Overseas Gurdwaras [Photographs]

2008 Gurdwaras in Delhi [Photographs]

Gurdwara Nanak Piao: Gurdwara Nanak Piao is the oldest Sikh shrine in Delhi which was built in memory of Guru Nanak Dev's visit to Delhi. During one of his travels he camped here for a short period of time and this place became a pilgrim. The gurudwara has a very big sarovar (holy water tank). It was originally called 'Piau Sahib'. Nowadays it is called Gurdwara Nanak Piao

Gurdwara Bangla Sahib: Gurdwara Bangla Sahib is famous for Guru Harkrishan Sahib's visit to Delhi. When Guru Harkrishan Sahib ji became the eight guru, his elder brother Ram Rai didn't agree to the claim and complained. Emperor Aurangzeb summoned Guru Harkrishan Sahib ji to his court which Guruji refused. But when Raja Jai Singh, one of the noble of the court came with the request, Guruji agreed to come to Delhi. In Delhi, Guruji stayed at the bungalow of Raja Jai Singh, where a large number of devotees came to pay their respects. During the stay Delhi was gripped with small pox and people were cured with the blessings of Guruji.

Gurdwara Sisganj Sahib: Situated in the heart of Chandni Chowk, Delhi, this shrine is witness to the supreme sacrifice of the ninth Guru, Guru Teg Bahadur Sahib. Guru ji gave his life in order to save Kashmiri pundits. After being arrested at Agra, Guru ji was brought to Delhi by Mughal forces. After due

deliberations, Guru ji was asked to either accept Islam or face death. When Guru ji didn't bow under the threats, three of his Sikh disciples, Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Sati Das and Bhai Dyala ji were brutally put to death in front of Guru ji.

Gurdwara Damdama Sahib: Gurdwara Damdama Sahib near Humayun's tomb Delhi marks the site, where a meeting of Bahadur Shah and the tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh ji took place. Here they not only discussed war strategies, but also witnessed bull fighting and elephant fights. Hola Mohalla the festival of spring season is celebrated with enthusiasm at this gurdwara every year.

Gurdwara Moti Bagh Sahib: Gurdwara Moti Bagh Sahib is built in memory of Guru Gobind's stay in Delhi near Dhaula Kuan. In those days it used to be a garden (bagh) which used to be owned by a trader named Moti. According to Suraj Parkash, Guru Gobind Singh shot an arrow from here to Red Fort, informing the emperor of his arrival. Every year, on 1st September, First Parkash Diwas of Sri Guru Granth Sahib is celebrated here.

Gurdwara Rakabganj Sahib: This gurdwara is again a tribute to Guru Teg Bahadur Sahib ji. Lakhi Shah Vanjara, a devotee and a businessman, by defying the emperor of the day, brought the body of Guruji from Sis Ganj, where Guru Teg Bahadur was martyred and performed his last rites by putting the whole house on fire. He then, buried the ashes in a copper urn. Now it is a hub of all the religious functions and other functions as well.

2009 Bhagats

Bhagat Kabir ji, Sheikh Farid ji, Bhagat Ravidas, Bhagat Trilochan, Bhagat Namdev, Bhagat Dhanna

2010 Banda Bahadur and Sites Associated With Him [Photograph of a gurdwara on calendar page. Paintings inset, illustrating the event associated with that site]

Gurdwara Banda Ghat, Nanded: Gurdwara Banda Ghat Nanded was the ashram of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur (Madho Das Bairagi). In 1708 AD the first meeting of Sri Guru Gobind Singh with Madho Das bairagi took place at this very spot. With the blessings of the great Guru, Banda Singh Bahadur entered the portals of Sikh faith, took on the Sikh form and proceeded to Punjab to tame the tyrants.

Gurdwara Shahidganj, Maidan Chappar Chiri. Gurdwara Shahid Ganj, Maidan Chappar Chiri (Greater Mohali, Sirhind) is the place where the teeming troops of the Sirhind governor, Wazir Khan were encountered by the dedicated force of Banda Singh Bahadur, which claimed Wazir Khan's life, but at the same time a large number of Sikh men and women met their martyrdom.

Gurdwara Fatehgarh Sahib, Qilla Sirhand: Sri Guru Gobind Singh's two younger sons, Baba Zorawar Singh and Baba Fateh Singh were bricked alive at this spot. In combat, Baba Banda Singh Bahadur conquered this fort. The Gurdwara at Fatehgarh Sahib is a monument to this unparalleled sacrifice.

Gurdwara Gurdas Nangal, Gurdaspur: Gurdwara (Garhi) Gurdas Nangal is situated 6 kms away from Gurdaspur. The Mughal forces were relentlessly pursuing Baba Banda Singh Bahadur and they laid siege to Gurdas Nangal Garhi for eight months at the end of which Baba Banda Singh Bahadur was captured along with his companions.

Gurdwara Baba Banda Singh Bahadur, Mehrauli, Delhi: Baba Banda Singh Bahadur along with his family members and 740 Sikh soldiers were brought in captivity from Garhi Gurdas Nangal to Delhi. Baba Banda Singh Bahadur and his four year old son Ajay Singh along with 26 eminent Sikhs were martyred here.

Gurdwara Qilla Lohgarh Sahib, Sadhaura: Baba Banda Singh Bahadur laid the foundation of the capital of the first Sikh state at a place earlier called Mukhlis Garh, about 20kms from Qilla Lohgarh, Sadhaura. From this hallowed placed he set up the seal and struck coins in the name of Sri Guru Nanak Dev and Sri Guru Gobind Singh.

2012 Remember and Meditate on Sri Har Krishan Sahib ji Whose Very Sight Dispels All Sorrow: Gurdwaras Associated with Guru Harkishan

[Photograph of gurdwaras with paintings inset]

Gurdwara Sis Mahal Sahib, Kiratpur Sahib: Guru Harkishan Sahib ji was born here on 7th July 1656 to Guru Har Rai ji and Mata Krishan Kau ji. This place also commemorates the birth of Guru Har Rai ji the Seventh Guru of Sikhs. It is situated in Kiratpur Sahib in Roopagar district of Punjab. Guru Hargobind Sahib ji moved to this place in the year 1635. This place remained the principal seat of Gurus till 1665 when Guru Teg Bahadur Sahib ji shifted to Chakk Nanki (Anandpur Sahib) in Roopnagar district of Punjab. This place is called Shish Mahal probably because it was built on the model of Sheesh Mahal (Glass Palace) of Jaipur. This is also the place where the Persian scholar Mohsin Fani, who wrote the contemporary history of Sikhs, met Guru Hargobind Sahib ji.

Gurdwara Takht Kot Sahib, Kiratpur Sahib: This holy place in Kiratpur Sahib, in Roopnagar district of Punjab, is where Guruship was vested on Guru Har Krishan Sahib ji in the year 1661 when he was just over 5 years and 2 months old. The anointing ceremony of Guru Har Rai ji was also held at this place when he was 14 years of age. Guru Har Krishan Sahib ji assumed the spiritual office upon the death of his father on 6 October, 1661. He sat on the throne a small figure very young in years. To quote Bhai Santokh Singh (*Sri Gur pratap suraj granth*) "The early morning Sun looks small in size, but its light is everywhere. So was young Guru Har Krishan's fame without limit." Indeed, spiritual enlightenment does not depend upon age. God has the power to enlighten any person at any time, irrespective of age. He possessed inborn divine powers. Despite his young age he guided the Sikh community with great tact & wisdom in the face of threatening challenges. Here Guru Hargobind Sahib, Guru Har Rai ji and Guru Har Krishan Sahib held their courts to dispose off secular matters. The layout of the Gurdwara is almost similar to other Takhts.

Gurdwara Panjokhra Sahib, Ambala: This gurdwara commemorates the stay of Guru Har Krishan Sahib ji in Panjokhra, a village near Ambala (Haryana) in

February 1664 while on his way to Delhi from Kiratpur Sahib in Roopnagar district of Punjab, when he was summoned by then Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb. To avoid any wrath of Aurangzeb on Sikhs, Guru Sahib raised with his own hands a small flag on a sand mound here & told large number of his followers who have joined him on hearing news about Aurangzeb's summons, not to follow him beyond the line of the flag. The Sikhs obeyed and stayed back with a heavy heart. This is also the place, where Guru Har Krishan Sahib ji humbled the pride of Pandit Lal Chand, who heavily weighed under his learning, spoke with derision and challenged Guru Sahib to interpret the hymns from the sacred Bhagvad Gita. Guru Sahib got this done through Chhaju Ram, an illiterate, dark skinned village water supplier, who with His blessings astonished everyone with his lucid commentary on the sacred Bhagvad Gita. Pandit Lal Chand later entered the fold of Khalsa and sacrificed his life while fighting for Guru Gobind Singh in the battle of Chamkaur Sahib on 7 December, 1705.

Gurdwara Teesri, Chhevin and Athvin Patshahi, Kurukshetra: After starting from Panjokhara, Guru Har Krishan ji stopped at this place, in Kurukshetra (Haryana), the ancient place of pilgrimage visited earlier by Guru Amar Das ji and Guru Har Rai ji. The holy men of various Hindu Sects met his here. They were all deeply impressed by his magnetic personality, unique courage, fearlessness, as well as by his knowledge and spiritual gifts. At a time, when Aurangzeb's ruthless treatment of his own kith and kin had struck terror in the minds of the Hindus, and compelled many saints and hilly men to move to inaccessible hills and caves in Himalayan ranges, the very sight of Guru's determined & challenging march to Delhi inspired such awe and reverence for him that all holy men bowed before him with all aw and humility. A gurdwara common to the memory of the three Gurus has been built over here.

Gurdwara Bangla Sahib, Delhi: This sacred shrine situated in the heart of New Delhi commemorates the stay of Guru Harkrishan Sahib the eighth Guru of Sikhs in Feb–March 1664 when he came to Delhi to meet the then Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb. The place where he stayed was the bungalow of Mirza Raja Jai Singh of Amber. At that time, Delhi was in the grip of severe cholera and small pox epidemics. Guru Sahib got constructed a chaubacha (trough) at

this place from where 'charnamrit' and herbal medicines were given to the people suffering from cholera and small pox which has miraculous healing effect on their minds, soul and body. His selfless service, compassion & charity charmed and attracted everyone. As both happiness & sufferings are a part of life and what is ordained must happen, while nursing the sick, he himself was infected with Small pox which ravaged his tender body in a few days. He breathed his last here on 30 March 1664. Raja Jai Singh dedicated this place to the sacred memory of Guru sahib. A Gurdwara was built here by Sardar Baghel Singh in the year 1783.

Gurdwara Bala Sahib, Delhi: Gurdwara Bala Sahib is built in the sacred memory of Guru Har Krishan Sahib ji. When Guru ji came to Delhi in February 1664, the city was in the grip of deadly and highly contagious disease of cholera and small pox. This is the place, on the banks of River Yamuna in Delhi, where most of the people who suffered from cholera and small pox were shifted to prevent the disease from spreading to other places. Guru Sahib camped at this place and spent last two weeks of his life looking after these poor and destitute people regardless of their religion, caste and creed. The Muslims and Hindus were so impressed with the purely humanitarian outlook of the Guru, that they nick named him as 'Bala Pritam' (Child Prophet) and 'Bal Mukand' (Child Guru). The mortal remains of Guru Har Krishan Sahib ji were cremated here after he left for his heavenly abode on 30 March 1664. The last rites of Mata Sundriji & Mata Sahib Devanji's were also performed at this place. The gurdwara was built by Sardar Baghel Singh in the year 1783.

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Appendix 3: List of Paintings at Bhai Mati Das Museum, Sis Ganj Gurdwara, Delhi

The paintings in Bhai Mati Das Museum have descriptions written in English, Hindi and Gurmukhi. I have provided the English captions alone. The titles and description given below are as they appear in the museum. The name of the painter and the year of making the painting have been taken from each canvas. The paintings are numbered here in the order they appear to the visitor. No numbering is done at the museum itself.

No.	Title	Painter	Date	Description
1	Sri Guru Nanak Dev ji meeting Bhai Mardana for the first time	Devender Singh	—	One day while meditating under a tree outside village Talwandi Guru Nanak heard the music of rabab. On tracing the source Guru ji found a young boy playing the rabab. Appreciating Bhai Mardana's knowledge of ragas, Guru ji gave him the divine knowledge. Impressed by Guru ji's views Bhai Mardana ji accompanied him. After giving Guru ji the company on all the four wordly tours he breathed his last in Guru's lap.
2	Cobra providing shade on child Nanak	Bodhraj	c. 1970	Once the young Nanak has taken cattle for grazing in the fields. There he went asleep under the shadow of the tree. After some time the sun-rays started falling on his face. A cobra crawled out of his hiding place and spread his hood to provide shade over young Nanak's divine face. When passing that way, local official of the village, Rae Bular, noticed this miracle. He called on Nanak's father Mehta Kalu ji and told him not to curse & scold the young Nanak, as he is a great being. Our village survives because of his grace and we are lucky to have him in our village."
3	Sri Guru Nanak Dev ji on his first missionary travel	Bodhraj	1974	In order to establish peace tranquility and universal brotherhood Guru Nanak Dev ji spread the massage of love during all

	(1497 AD)			his missionary travels across the world. In the picture you see Guru Nanak Dev ji taking permission from his parents and relative before embarking upon the first series of world travel from SultanPur lodhi. Bhai Mardana ji, the musician, can also be seen in the picture.
4	Curing a leper	Amolak Singh	—	During his first udasi (preaching odyssey) Guru Nanak Dev ji (1469–1539 AD) along with Bhai Mardana visited Goindwal where he called on a leper and asked him to permit them to spend a night in his cottage. The leper got got amazed and filled with joy and said, "Even animals would not come nearby, it is because of the Grace of God that I have come across a human being". With Guru Sahib's blessings the leper got cured of leprosy. Such are the ways of 'Men of God' who by way of compassion cure the ills of humanity.
5	Sri Guru Nanak Dev ji at Daulat Khan's store	Kirpal Singh	1976	Guru Nanak Dev ji worked as a *modi* (storekeeper) of Daulat Khan Lodi at Sultanpur. Everyone hailed Nanak for his fair dealings. He used to say that an honest shopkeeper alone can have a balanced personality and his works do carry weight. What one requires is integrity and one can achieve it by being true to one's vocation.
6	Guru Nanak Dev ji at Bhai Lalo's residence (1504 AD)	Kirpal Singh	1975	Guru Nanak Dev disparagingly condemned caste prejudices. To do away with this social malady he set an example by visiting Bhai Lalo, an outcaste and by having his meals there Guru ji gave a shocking surprise to village folk. Bhai Mardana ji was also present along with him.
7	Reconstruction of the village	Bodhraj	1976	Sri Guru Nanak Dev ji preached that poverty can be eradicated by self-help and initiative alone. Once he went to a village and was distressed to see the dirty slums. After ordering the setting up of the basti on fire he helped in rebuilding of new and clean village in its place.

8	Jeh Jayeeay Tahan Suhele	Amolak Singh	—	In order to do away with darkness of ignorance Guru Nanak Dev ji, enlightened the people with divine message of love. He undertook long and arduous journeys travelling on foot for thousands of miles to put misguided humanity on path of Virtue. Whereever he went to brought solace to the starving souls and spread harmony and eternal peace all around.
9	Sri Guru Nanak Dev ji	Amolak Singh	—	1st Guru Sahib Date of Birth: 15-4-1469 Place of Birth: Talwandi Rai Bhoi (Nankana Sahib) Duration of Guruship: 1469–1539 Father : Sri Mahta Kalu ji; Mother: Mata Tripta Ji Wife: Bibi Sulakhni ji Children: Baba Shri Chand, Baba Lakhmi Chand Date & Place of Exp. : 22-8-1539
10	Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji at Eminabad (Saidpur) 1520	R. M. Singh	—	Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji condemned Babur's invasion of India resulting in the massacre of innocent people which he witnessed at Eminabad.
11	Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji's first meet with Baba Budha Ji	Mehar Singh	—	Bura was grazing cattle outside his village when he first met Guru Nanak in the forest, Bura went up to him and made obeisance by offering milk. He prayed to the Guru for salvation. After listening to him the Guru blessed him and pronounced, "You are not a child; you possess wisdom of an old man." Since then Bura came to be known as Bhai Budha and later on Baba Budha. He didn't digress from his chosen path and kept serving the Gurus till the last. He had the unique honour of anointing all next five successor Gurus of his times. He was the first head granthi of Sri Darbar Sahib Amritsar.
12	Kirtan at Baghdad by Guru Nanak Dev ji	Mehar Singh	—	During his fourth worldly tour Guru Nanak Dev ji visited Baghdad and camped outside the city. Despite the ban on music in the area Guru ji started the kirtan. On hearing the music people got

				furious and came running to the place with sticks and stones in their hands but the divine presence of the Guru ji completely transformed them. Guru ji explained them the importance of divine music. Guru Nanak Dev ji enhanced the spiritual understanding of Behlol, a renowned Muslim saint, by making him understand the vastness of the infinite universe.
13	Sri Guru Angad Dev ji	Amolak Singh	—	Sri Guru Angad Dev ji 2nd Guru Sahib Date of birth: 31-3-1504 Place of birth: at Srain of Mata, Dist Firojpur Duration of Guruship: 1539–1552 Father: Sri Pheru Mal ji Mother: Mata Daya Kaur Wife: Bibi Khivi ji Children: Dasu ji, Datu ji, Bibi Amro ji, Bibi Anokhi ji Date & place of expiry: 20-3-1552, Khadur Sahib
14	Sri Guru Angad Dev ji, The Support for supportless (1504–1552)	Bodhraj	1980	The first thing that Guru Angad Dev ji used to do after his morning prayers and listening to kirtan (singing the glory of God in congregation) was to tend the sick and succor the needy. His healing touch and loving compassion relieved many of their pains and distresses.
15	First meeting of Baba Amar Das ji with Sri Guru Angad Dev ji	Devender Singh	—	When Baba Amar Das ji bowed before Guru Angad Dev ji during his first meeting, Guru ji embraced him. Baba ji served the Guru Angad Dev ji by bruinging water from a far place for his bath. After the death of Guru ji in 1552, Baba Amar Das ji was blessed with Guruship.
16	Mata Khivi ji (1582)	Devender Singh	—	Guru Angad Dev ji's wife Mata Khivi was a very humble lady. Serving Guru ji his Sikhs with utmost humility she used to supervise the making of the langar and serve it to everyone with her own hands. The Guru ka langar in her hands was a source of unlimited bounty and the harbinger of a new social consciousness.

17	Sri Guru Amar Das ji (1479–1574)	Bodhraj	Un-clear. 1973 or 1978	According to Sikh tradition service (sewa) is regarded as supreme worship. Wading though rain and storm Guru Amar Das ji served his master Guru Angad ji for twelve years. When weaver's wife made a sarcastic comment, "Amru, the homeless" Guru Angad Dev ji honuerd Guru Amar Das ji by hailing him as the shelter for the homeless.
18	Guru Angad Dev ji giving the robe of honour to Baba Amar Das ji	Mehar Singh	—	As examplified through the life of the Gurus, seva in one of the main tenant of Sikhism. Baba Amar Das ji served Guru Angad Dev ji with utmost devotion and dedication. Besides fetching water every day from river Beas for Master's bath he used to serve the langar as well. Guru acknowledged his services by conferring upon him robe of honour. Baba Amar Das was decorated with the Siropa wrapped around his head for seven times.
19	The Guru Raised me from the lowliest position	Bodhraj	—	Bhai Jetha ji used to earn his living by selling boiled grains. Very often he would freely give away the boiled grains to the needy and to the poor labourers. Impressed by his charitable nature Guru Amar Das ji got him married to Bibi Bhani ji. After giving him the new name of Ram Das, Guru ji bestowed upon him the responsibility of the Sikh panth Thus making him the fourth Guru in succession.
20	Construction of the Baoli Sahib, 1560 AD	Devender Singh	—	Realising that the water of Beas river was not fit for consumption, Guru Amar Das ji ordered the construction of the Baoli at Goindwal and planted sapling around the entire area. Thus in this way he not only provided safe drinking water to the people but also helped create an eco friendly environment.
21	Goindwal Sahib 1560 AD	Bodhraj	1975	Realising that the water of Beas river was not fit for consumption, Guru Amar Das ji ordered the construction of the Baoli at Goindwal and planted sapling around the entire area. Thus in this way he not only provided safe drinking water

				to the people but also helped create an eco friendly environment.
22	Blessing, Sri Guru Amardas ji	Bodhraj	—	On being inflicted with leprosy, Prema Chaudhari came to Guru Amar Das ji and fell at Guru ji's feet. Guru sahib blessed him by giving him a bath with his own hands and restored him to good health. Guru ji used to call him "My son, Murari". He got him married to Matho and blessed the two of a happy married life.
23	Sri Guru Amar Das ji, forbid's Sati practice	Devender Singh	—	Disapproving the gender discrimination, Guru Amar Das ji conferred equal status to men and women. He forbade the practice of sati (burning of wife at the pyre of husband) as he considered it to be an insult to human dignity.
24	Guru Amar Das ji, an example of humility	Bodhraj	1970	Datu (born 1537) son of Guru Angad Dev, considered himself to be a claimant of 'Gurgaddi', which he however could not ascend to. Deeply frustrated, one day Datu struck with his foot to Guru Amar Das ji, who at that time was seating on the Gurgaddi'. Displaying exemplified sweetness and humility, Guru ji kept seating on the 'Gurgaddi' and did not utter a word of anguish. Rather he observed, "Hope your foot is not hurt by my hard bones." Hearing this Datu felt ashamed.
25	Contendedness of Bhai Paro Paramhans	Kirpal Singh	1978	Come what may, Paro Paramhans used to go daily from Dalla (sultanpur, doaba) to Goindwal Sahib for paying his respects to Guru Amar Das ji. The Nawab of Jalandhar, Abdullah, marveled at Bhai Paro's determination and forbearance when he saw him crossing heavily flooded Beas. The Guru ji also got so impressed by his dedication that he decided to make him his successor. But Bhai Paro refused the offer and said, "For me it is a great honour to be the Guru's devotee."
26	Blessings of Guru Amar Das ji	Devender Singh	1976	Gangu Shah sought Guru Amar Das Sahib's help for his livelihood. With the

				Guru ji's blessings he flourished as a banker in Delhi. One day when he turned away a needy person sent by Guru ji, his business thereafter started showing downward trend. Realising his mistake Gangu went to Goindwal Sahib and fell at Guru ji's feet. Thereafter he never sent back any needy person empty handed.
27	Sri Guru Amar Das ji establishing women parishes (1479–1574)	Devender Singh	—	In one of the verses of Asa Di Var it is said "Why demean them who give birth to kings among men?" (p. 474). Guru Amar Das, the Third Guru appointed women to conduct Sikh missionary and parish work. Districts under the charge of men are known as *Manjian*, from *manji* or string bed. Those incharge of women were known as *pirhian* from *pirhi* or low sitting stools on which they sat to minister the disciples. The selection of women for this important task indicated the faith of Guru in the capacity of women for organizational work.
28	Sri Guru Ram Das Ji	Navdeep Singh	2005	4th Guru Sahib Date of Birth: 24-9-1534 Place of Birth: Chuna Mandi, Lahore (Pakistan) Duration of Guruship: 1574–81 Father: Hari Das ji Mother: Mata Daya Kaur ji Wife: Bibi Bhani ji Children: Prithi Chand ji. Maha Dev ji, Arjun Dev ji Date & Place of expiry: 2-9-1581, Goindwal Sahib
29	Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji serves the sangat	Devender Singh	—	When the Guru Arjan Dev ji came to know that the Sikh sangat which was coming from Kabul to pay obeisance at Harimandir Sahib has reached near Amritsar, Guru ji along with his wife Bibi Ganga ji carried the langar with them and reached the outskirts of the city where now stands the building of Gurdwara of Pipli Sahib. After receiving the sangat there, Guru ji served langar with his own hands.
30	Sri Guru Arjun Dev	Amolak	—	5th Guru Sahib

	ji	Singh		Date of Birth: 15-4-1563 Place of Birth: Goindwal, Amritsar Duration of Guruship: 1581–1606 Father: Guru Ram Das Ji Mother: Mata Bhani Wife: Bibi Ganga ji Children: Hargobind ji Date & Place of expiry: 30-5-1606, Lahor (Pakistan)
31	Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji pull out the peg with his spear	Amolak Singh	—	After seeing the sadhu saint and noble looking persons in the marriage gathering of Guru Arjan Dev ji, the family members of Bibi Ganga ji and the villagers were in dilemma. They tried to stop the marriage by setting a hard condition to pull out a peg which was actually a jiant tree camouflaged to look like a peg. But Guru ji pulled out the peg with his spear in a single trial which thrilled the spectators.
32	You will give birth to a great warrior	Devender Singh	—	Baba Buddha ji used to mind the cattles in a sanctuary near Amritsar. One day Mata Ganga ji who was the wife of Guru Arjan Dev ji, very humbly brought him food. Impressed by her humbleness Baba ji gave her a blessing that very soon Waheguru will fulfill her wish and she will give birth to a son who will prove to be a great warrior with unmatched powers.
33	Bibi Rajni Ji, a devoted wife	Bodhraj	1980	Because of her firm belief in God Bibi Rajni ji was married to a leper by her arrogant and rich father. Without losing her faith she accepted her father's decision and wholeheartedly served her husband. Eventually her leper husband was cured of his illness by a dip in the sacred pool of Amritsar.
34	Sain Mian Mir 1531–1634	Gudit [Gurdit?] Singh	Feb 1975	Sain Mian Mir was born at Sistan and was a descendant of Khalipha-Umar. He laid the foundation stone of Harimandir Sahib. He was a great devotee of Sri Arjan Dev ji and Sri Hargobind Sahib ji.
35	Bhai Gurdas ji 1543–1637	Gurdit Singh	Feb 1975	Bhai Gurdas ji was the first preacher in Sikh tradition. He assisted Guru Arjan

				Dev ji in the compilation of (Guru) Granth Sahib. His poetry was upheld by Guru Arjan Dev ji as a guide book to (Guru) Granth Sahib.
36	Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji (1563–1606) serving lepers at Tarn Taran	Bodhraj	1987	It is a tradition in Sikhism to provide help and protection to the sick, poor, needy and helpless. Keeping in mind the plight of the lepers, Guru Arjan Dev ji established a leper home near the sacred sarovar of Tarn Taran Sahib. Guru Sahib used to personally looked after the lepers by providing them medicines, dresses and even showering his blessings on them.
37	Compiling of (Guru) Granth Sahib 1604	Amolak Singh	—	This picture depicts Guru Arjan Dev ji engaged in the compilation of Granth Sahib. Bhai Gurdas ji is and Bhai Manu ji can be seen helping him in the compilation work. After the compilation Guru Granth Sahib was installed at Sri Darbar Sahib, Amritsar.
38	Baba Budha Ji 1506–1631	Mehar Singh	—	Blessed by Guru Nanak Dev ji, Baba Budha had the unique distinction of anointing five succeeding Gurus. After doing active service he retired to a Bir (Rakh of forest) where he created such an idyllic environment that tiger-goats, peacocks and snakes all existed in harmony amidst lakes and vast stretches of verdure.
39	Baba Budha ji 1506–1631	Bodhraj	1977	Baba Budha ji was the only person in Sikh history to have the previlage of seeing the 8 Guru sahiban in person. During his life time he witnessed the pontification of 5 Guru sahiban.
40	Child Guru Hargobind Sahib ji (1594–1644) killing the snake	Amolak Singh	1977	Several unsuccessful attempts on the life of (Guru) Hargobind right from his infancy. A snake charmer was hired for killing the child Hargobind. Guru Hargobind overpowered and killed the poisonous snake let loose by him.
41	Multipurpose well 1596 AD	R. M. Singh	—	To mitigate the suffering of drought affected people, Sri Arjun Dev ji ordered the digging up of wells. A multipurpose

				well constructed in the village of Chheharta was so wide that six Persian wheels around it could be operated simultaneously. Availability of water and greenery in the area brought relief to the people and cattles alike.
42	Bhai Bahilo Ji	Simran Kaur	—	When during the construction of Harimandir Sahib Guru Arjan Dev ji spotted bright red bricks he inquired from the sangat as to how these had been made. People told Guru ji that Bhai Bahilo carrieds the rubbish of the whole town on his head and puts it in the furnace because of which the fire keeps on burning for a longer time and the bricks get properly baked. On hearing this Guru ji applauded Bai Bahlo by saying "Bahlo the first and the foremost."
43	Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji and Guru Granth Sahib ji	Bodhraj	1990	After compilation Granth Sahib was installed at Harimandir Sahib, Amritsar in 1604 AD. Instead of feeling proud in bringing such a unique scripture, Guru Arjan Dev remainde humble and as a mark to respect to the HOLY BOOK, always occupied a seat on the floor in presence of (Guru) Granth Sahib. Baba Budha the first granthi would read from the Granth Sahib, and the audience would enter into trance.
44	Guru Sahib's Foresight 1563–1606	Kirpal Singh	1976	Foreseeing the necessity of good horsemen in the fight for freedom and justice Guru Arjan Dav ji encouraged the Sikhs to take up horse trading as a profession so that they were able to assess the quality of good horses. Guru ji resisted the onslaught on 'Freedom of Religion by Emperor Jahangir (1605–1626 AD) and as a result sacrificed his life and thus became the first martyr in Sikh tradition.
45	Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji with Baba Budha ji	R. M. Singh	—	This picture depicts Baba Budha ji implanting saplings in the surrounding of Golden Temple in the presence of Guru Arjan Dev ji.

46	Bhai Buddhu ji	Devender Singh	—	Seva Panthi Bhai Buddhu ji exemplified the spirit of selfless service by breaking the doors of his house for using them as firewood to prepare langar for the sangat. He did this because it was raining heavily and firewood could not be procured to cook food for langar.
47	Bhai Manjh ji	Devender Singh	—	Bhai Manjh, an ardent disciple of the Guru Sahib, used to bring dry wood everyday for the langar. Carrying wood one day due to the storm he tumbled into a well. When Guru Arjan ji found that despite his predicament Bhai Manjh had saved the wood from getting wet, he honoured him by saying "Manjh is beloved of the Guru and the Guru of the Manjh."
48	Sakhi Sarwar follower Bahilo's devotion for the Guru	Mehar Singh	—	Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji called upon the sangat of Phaphare village to join the service of excavating a holy tank and constructing the Harmander Sahib. Bahilo a follower of Sakhi Sarwar reluctantly joined in. On reaching Hari-ke-pattan the Sangat found the river in spate, Bahilo thought if the Guru was truly great the river would subside, it did and Bahilo became a convert the moment he saw the Guru. He dedicated his entire life to the Guru who lauded his selfless service.
49	Guru Har Gobind Sahib ji at Akal Takhat Sahib	Amolak Singh	1977	As per the wishes of his father Guru Arjun Dev ji, Guru Hargobind Sahib established the Akal Takhat and armed the Sikhs for fighting against the injustice and tyranny of the Mughals.
50	Data Bandi Chhodh 1613 AD	Devender Singh	—	As per the wishes of his father Guru Arjun Dev ji, Guru Hargobind Sahib established the Akal Takhat and armed the Sikhs for fighting against the injustice and tyranny of the Mughals. This annoyed Emperor Jahangir who ordered the imprisonment of Guru Sahib in Gwalior fort for twelve years. Due to the public sympathy towards Guru Sahib Jahangir ordered his release. But Guru Sahib refused to accept this offer till all

				the other innocent fifty two rajas imprisoned with him in Gwalior fort were released. Instructions were issued that whoever came out holding Guruji's cloth will be released. Guru Sahib wore a special apron with fifty two strings attached to it. Each one of the rajas held one such and walked into freedom. Guru Sahib came to be known as "the Great Librator" for this act of generosity.
51	Guru Har Gobind Singh ji at Akal Takhat Sahib	Devender Singh	—	As per the wishes of his father Guru Arjun Dev ji, Guru Hargobind Sahib established the Akal Takhat and armed the Sikhs for fighting against the injustice and tyranny of the Mughals.
52	Bhai Sadh ji a dedicated Sikh	Amolak Singh	—	Bhai Sadh ji, a native of Kabul, was a simple and austere soul. Bhai Sadh ji was on his way to Balkh for procuring Iraqi horses for Guru Hargobind, when he received the news of his son's serious illness and urgent summons to return. He returned the messenger with these words 'I am on my way to render service to the Guru, now I cannot turn back empty handed, so if my son dies do cremate him with the wood available at home." History testifies to this fact that his son died but he did not turn from his duty.
53	Jahangir's visit to the Golden Temple	Mehar Singh	—	To pay obeisance to Guru Hargobind Sahib, Emperor Jahangir visited Amritsar. On entering Darbar Sahib he bowed before Adi Sri Guru Granth Sahib and made an offering of 500 mohras (ginnies). On listening to the Kirtan (devotional song) sung by Bhai Satta and Bhai Balwand, he got so engrossed that he sat there for a long time listening to the holy recitation of the Gurbani.
54	Guru Hargobind Sahib gives audience to Nurjahan	Amolak Singh	—	Queen Nur Jahan (1591–1645 AD) who was an ardent disciple of Sant Mian Mir, once she went to Lahore to seek the blessings of Guru Hargobind Sahib. Answering one of her queries Guru Sahib enlightened her by saying he never forgets death and always remembers God. Guru Sahib counseled her not to

				engage herself in persuits of wordly things but instead she should try to comprehend truth and discharge the duties of a true wife.
55	Garib da Mukh, Guru ka Golak	Bodhraj	1975	In order to have blessings and darshan of Guru Hargobind Sahib ji, the Sikhs used to come from far and near. Once the leader of the sangat offered honey as a gift, which Guru Sahib declined to accept saying, "I had asked for the same on the way and you had refused" This shocked the Sikh and he begged for enlightenment. While pointing towards Bhai Kattu Guru ji said, "he was part of your group and despite his request you refused to give him the honey." Guru ji thus enlightened the Sikhs that by contributing towards the need of the poor they in a way contribute towards the Sikh cause.
56	Baba Budha ji An Epitome of Sikh Ideology 1506–1631 AD	Devender Singh	—	On premonition of his death Baba Budha ji in a message sent to Guru Hargobind Sahib at village Ramdas, expressed his desire to see him. On receiving the message Guru Sahib went to him and made obeisance to him in the same manner as he would made to Guru Nanak Dev ji. On Guru Sahib's request Baba Budha explained to him the sublime teachings of the first five Gurus. Guru Sahib described Baba Budha as the epitome of Sikh ideology.
57	Bhai Bidhi Chand jump from the fort with horse	Devender Singh	—	Two Brothers Gurbax Rai and Tara Chand complained to Guru Hargobind Sahib that the two fine horses which they had brought from Kabul as gift for him had been snatched away by Nawab of Lahore. Guruji consoled them and said that Bidi Chand would be sent to bring them back. Bhai Bidhi Chand tricked his way into the royal fort, first as glass cutter and then as astrologer, and with cleverness escaped out with the two horses by jumping the high wall of the fort and thus brought the horses Dilbagh and Gulbagh back in guruji's domain.

58	Bhai Bidhi Chand brought the horse to Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji	Amolak Singh	—	Two Brothers Gurbax Rai and Tara Chand complained to Guru Hargobind Sahib that the two fine horses which they had brought from Kabul as gift for him had been snatched away by Nawab of Lahore. Guruji consoled them and said that Bidi Chand would be sent to bring them back. Bhai Bidhi Chand tricked his way into the royal fort, first as glass cutter and then as astrologer, and with cleverness escaped out with the two horses by jumping the high wall of the fort and thus brought the horses Dilbagh and Gulbagh back in guruji's domain.
59	Bhai Babak Ji		—	Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib's disciple Bhai Babak ji was a great warrior and a good musician. He used to carry his instrument even in the battlefield where in the free hours he used to sing the hymns along with the instrument. So sweet was his voice that the other warrior despite being tired used to congregate around him.
60	Battle of Kartarpur 1634 AD	Mehar Singh	—	Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib ji won all the four battles of his life. During his fourth battle in 1634 Ad Kartarpur Guru Hargobind Sahib ji was actively supported by his son Tyal Mal. Impressed by the great skill in the use of weapon of his young lad Guru ji changed his name from Tyal Mal to Teg Bahadur,
61	In Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib ji's court Samrath Ramdas ji	Amolak Singh	—	During his meeting with Sri Hargobind Sahib ji at Srinagar Garwal, Samrath Ramdas asked Guru ji as to why he was wearing the Sowrds despite being the inheritor of Guru Nanak's philosophy. Guru ji told him that the Sowrds were meant for upholding the rule of law as per Guru Nanak's philosophy and safeguarding the poor from the tyranny of unjust rulers. On understanding the importance of arms Samrath Ramdas went to Maharashtra and armed his disciple Chhtrapati Shivaji after giving him the due training.
62	Sri Guru Hargobind	Bodhraj	1974	Bibi Sulakhni is remembered in history

	Sahib ji blessing Bibi Sulakhani			as woman of deep faith and piety. Here she is seen seeking the blessings of Guru Hargobind. She was childless. She implored Guru Sahib by saying "you decided my fate before I was born, you alone can rewrite it." She received the blessings of Guru Hargobind Sahib and had seven children who later on sacrificed their lives for the cause of the Guru which she accepted with faith and resignation.
63	Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji	Amolak Singh	Dec 2000	6th Guru Sahib Date of birth: 14-06-1595 Place of Birth: Guru ki Vadali, Amritsar Duration of Guruship: 1606–1645 Father: Guru Arjan Dev ji Mother: Mata Ganga ji Wife: Damodhri ji, Nanki ji, Mahadevi ji Children: Gurdita ji, Ani ji, Atal Rai, Tag Bahadar ji, Surajmal, Bibi Veero ji Date & place of expiry:03-03-1644, Kiratpur (Punjab)
64	Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib, an emblem of forgiveness	Vijay	1994	An orphan Pathan lad, Painde Khan was brought up and trained in the art of warefare by Guru Hargobind Sahib and was made the commander of the Pathan regiment. However after leaving the Guru ji Painde Khan led the Mughal forces against Guru sahib and died at the hands of Guru ji at the battle of Kartarpur. Before his death he begged from Guru ji for forgiveness. Guru ji forgave him and covered his face from the burning sun rays with his shield.
65	Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib ji chastising the yogis of Nanakmata (1634)	Amolak Singh	—	Bhai Almast, a prominent preacher of Sikhism went to Nanak matta where Guru Nanak had a discourse with a nath yogi under an old papal (tree) where a shrine dedicated to him had later been established. Yogis were trying to reoccupy the place. They razed the shrine and set the papal (tree) on fire. Almast sent a message to Guru Hargobind for help. Guru ji reached there in 1634 and chastised Nath intruders and restored the shrine to Bhai Almast. It is believed he sprinkled saffron on the burnt tree and rejuvenated it.

66	Tread with care	Bodhraj	1990	Once, the child (Guru) Har Rai was strolling in the garden.A rose fell down when it got struck with the fringe of his robe. Guru Hargobind Sahib symbol of sympathy and humility, told his grandson (Har Rai) to take care while strolling since flowers and plants are also living organism, lest the act is repeated. (Guru) har Rai followed his advice throughout his latter life.
67	Sri Guru Har Rai Sahib Ji 1630–1661	R. M. Singh	—	Sri Guru Har Rai ji developed Kiratpur as a town of park and gardens. Located around the bank of the river Sutlej the area was implanted with flowers and fruit bearing trees. This created a salubrious environment, attracting beautiful birds to the town and turning it into an idyllic place to live in.
68	Sri Guru Har Rai ji	Amolak Singh [?]	—	7th Guru Sahib Date of birth: 26-02-1630 Place of birth: Kiratpur Sahib (Punjab) Duration of Guruship: 1645-1661 Father: Baba Gudita ji Mother: Mata Nihal Kaur ji Wife: Kaleyani ji, Krishan Kaur ji Children: Har Rai ji, Har Kishan ji Date and place of expiry:06-10-1661, Kiratpur (Punjab)
69	Sri Guru Harkrishan Sahib 1664 AD	Amolak Singh	—	*Contemplate the spirit of Harkrishan because of which all sorrow and suffering are disphelled.* When Guru Sahib came to Delhi the city was in a grip of an epidemic. Guru Sahib went all over the city and gave solace to those in anguish
70	Sri Guru Harkrishan ji	Amolak Singh	—	8th Guru Sahib Date of birth: 07-07-1656 Place of Birth: Kiratpur Sahib (Punjab) Duration of Guruship: 1661–1664 Father: Sri Guru Har Rai ji Mother: Krishan Kaur ji Date & place of expiry: 30-03-1664, Bhogal Delhi (Gurdwara Bala Sahib)
71	Bhai Makhan Shah Lubana	Amolak Singh	—	Bhai Makhan Shah Lubana, on finding his ship full of costly merchandise,

				sinking, prayed that if his ship was saved he would offer one-tenth to the Guru. But when he came to Baba Bakala to make the offering he found there were too many claimants to guruship. Presuming that the Guru would himself know and ask him to make the promised offer, he went around placing two crowns before each one of them. When the ninth guru did ask for the offer, Bhai Makhan Shah went to the rooftop of a temple and declared to the world, "Come all ye followers of the Guru, I have found him."
72	Sri Guru Teg Bahadar Sahib ji	Amolak Singh	2000	9th Guru Sahib Date of birth: 01-04-1621 Place of Birth: Sri Amritsar (Punjab) Duration of Guruship: 1664–1675 Father: Sri Guru Hargobind ji Mother:Mata Nanki ji Wife: Gujri ji Children: Gobind Singh ji Date & place of expiry: 11-11-1675, Chandni Chowk, Delhi, Gurdwara Sis Ganj Sahib
73	Guru Teg Bahadur ji in Assam	Amolak Singh	—	In Assam, Sri Guru Teg Bahadur ji brought about truce between the commander of Mughal forces Raja Ram Singh Jaipuria and Maharaja Chakkar Dhuj of Amoh (Assam). Today a historical Gurdwara Sri Damdama Sahib stands at the place.
74	Guru ji's message of universal brotherhood	Devender Singh	—	When Guru Gobind Singh ji was born in Patna, Pir Bhikhan Shah of Thaska, contrary of his daily practice offered his prayers facing East instead towards the West. After completing his prayers he left for Patna where on arrival at (Guru's) residence he placed two bowls, one filled with milk the other with water before the divine child. The child (Guruji) put his hands on both the bowls thus signifying: the entire humanity springs from the same divine fountain: How can some be good and others evil.
75	Child Gobind Rai	Kirpal	1978	Child Gobind Rai, once happened to

	throw the gold bangle in Ganga river	Singh		throw a gold bangle in the Ganga river. On an enquiry by the diver as to where the gold bangle had dropped into the water, he (Guru) flung into the river the second gold bangle at the same spot saying, "There. Steel is more sacred" was the Guru's edit.
76	First meeting of Child Gobind Rai with Sri Guru Teg Bahadar Sahib (1672 AD)	Amolak Singh	2001	After living his family at Patna Sri Guru Teg Bahadur went to Assam for preaching the teachings of Guru Nanak. Soon after his departure Mata Gujri gave birth to his son Gobind Rai. The picture dipicts the first meeting of Guru Teg Bahadar Sahib with his child Gobind Rai.
77	Sir Guru Teg Bahadur Sahib Ji (1621–75)	Devender Singh	—	On being informed about Guru Teg Bahadur's arrival, a group of peasants smoking in the nearby fields stopped smoking and kept their tobacco filled pipes on the side. Guru told them of the ill-effects that occur due to the use of tobacco. On hearing Guru ji's thought provoking advice peasants vowed to give up smoking.
78	Sri Guru Teg Bahadar and Kashmiri Pandits (1675)	G. S. Sohan Singh	1976	A delegation of 500 kashmiri Brahmins led by Pandit Kripa Ram met Guru Teg Bahadur Sahib at Anandpur Sahib. Pandit Kripa Ram told the harrowing tales of torture initiated at the orders of Aurangzed (1658–1707 AD) for converting them to Islam. Guru Sahib was mentally occupied with the issue when child Gobind Rai happened to be there and asked as to what was the matter. Guru Sahib told him that the sacrifice of some great soul is called for. "Who else than you can serve the cause?" was child Gobind Rai'ss spontaneous reaction.
79	Martyrdom of Bhai Mati Das ji (9 Nov 1675)	Kirpal Singh	1984	Bhai Mati Das was cut into two vertical halfs with the saw before the martyrdom of Sri Guru Teg Bahadar Sahib at Chandni Chowk in Delhi.
80	Martyrdom of Bhai Sati Das ji (9 Nov	Kirpal Singh	1984	Bhai Sati Das was wrapped around with cotton and burned alive before the

	1675)			martyrdom of Sri Guru Teg Bahadar Sahib at Chandni Chowk in Delhi.
81	Martyrdom of Bhai Dyala ji (9 Nov 1675)	Kirpal Singh	1984	Bhai Dyala ji, real brother of Bhai Mani Singh was boiled alive in the cauldron of boiling water before the execution of Sri Guru Teg Bahadar Sahib by at Chandni Chowk in Delhi.
82	Bhai Jaita ji 'Rangretta son of Guru'	Kirpal Singh	1984	Despite the strict vigil by authorities to stop the Sikhs from performing the last rites of Guru Teg Bahadur, Bhai Jaita daringly took possession of the severed head of Guru Teg Bahadur Sahib and carried it all the way to Anandpur Sahib. Complimenting him for his sterling bravery Guru Gobind Singh ji took him to his bosom and exclaimed 'Rangretta, my son'. After baptism, Bhai Jaita was given the new name, Jiwan Singh. When the Mughal forces made a sudden attack on Anandpur Sahib he fought fearlessly and held back the enemy attack till the time the Guruji safely retreated across the river Sirsa.
83	Bhai Lakhi Shah Vanjara, 11 November 1675	Kirpal Singh	1984	Aurangzeb ordered the execution of Guru Teg Bahadur Sahib by severing his head from his body. After the martyrdom strict vigil was maintained by his forces to stop the Sikhs from performing last rites of the mortal remains of Guru ji. Taking advantage of the dust storm, Lakhi Shah Vanjara, a devout Sikh, risked his life and put Guru ji's body in one of his bullock carts and rushed to his home where he cremated the body by setting his house on fire. Today a beautiful building of Gurdwara Rakabganj Sahib stands there.
84	First meeting of Guru Gobind Singh with Baba Banda Singh	Amolak Singh	—	Madho Das Bairagi was born at Rajouri (J & K) on 13th of Kartik Sundhi 1672. After becomeing the disciple of Aughar Nath he attained perfection in the tantrik knowledge (Ridhiyan-Sidhiyan) which enabled him to perform some miracles. Later he made an ashram in Nanded along the bank of Godavari. There he earned a lot of fame. Passing through

				that way one day Guru Gobind Singh ji sat on his cot outside his hermitage without his permission. He got annoyed and used all his tantric knowledge to unseat the Guruji. But when all his tricks and knowledge failed herealised his mistake and fell at Guru ji's feet. Guru ji blessed him by initiating him in the Sikh brotherhood and gave him the new name, 'BANDA SINGH'.
85	Rangretta Guru ka Beta, 11 Nov 1675	R. M. Singh	1995	Despite the strict vigil by authorities to stop the Sikhs from performing the last rites of Guru Teg Bahadur, Bhai Jaita daringly took possession of the severed head of Guru Teg Bahadur Sahib and carried it all the way to Anandpur Sahib. Complimenting him for his sterling bravery Guru Gobind Singh ji took him to his bosom and exclaimed 'Rangretta, my son'. After baptism, Bhai Jaita was given the new name, Jiwan Singh.
86	Sir Guru Gobind Singh ji	Amolak Singh	—	10th Guru Sahib Date of birth:22-12-1666 Place of birth: Sri Patna Sahib (Bihar) Duration of Guruship: 1675–1708 Father:Sri Guru Teg Bhadar Sahib Mother: Mata Gujri ji Wife: Ajit Kaur, Sundar Kaur, Sahib Kaur Children: Baba Ajit Singh, Baba Jujhar Singh, Baba Joraver Singh, Baba Fateh Singh Date & Place of expiry: 17-10-1708, Hazoor Shib, Nanded
87	Sir Guru Gobind Singh ji	Amolak Singh	1977	10th Guru Sahib Date of birth:22-12-1666 Place of birth: Sri Patna Sahib (Bihar) Duration of Guruship: 1675–1708 Father:Sri Guru Teg Bhadar Sahib Mother: Mata Gujri ji Wife: Ajit Kaur, Sundar Kaur, Sahib Kaur Children: Baba Ajit Singh, Baba Jujhar Singh, Baba Joraver Singh, Baba Fateh Singh Date & Place of expiry: 17-10-1708, Hazoor Shib, Nanded

88	Mata Sahib Kaur ji	Amolak Singh	1999	Guru Gobind Singh recited the holy hymns and churned the holy amrit on March 30, 1699 as he prepared to initiate the Khalsa. His Mahal, Sunder Kaur poured sugar-plum into the vessel. By this gesture she implied the humility and sweetness which were to be essential traits of the martial order of the Khalsa. She guided form Delhi its affairs after the Guru's passing away at Nanded on Oct 7, 1708.
89	Guru Gobind Singh ji's horse jib's at tabacco fields	Amolak Singh	—	Once Guru Gobind Singh ji's horse balked near the tabacco fields. At that time a farmer who was working in the tobacco fields came up to Guru ji and seeked Guru ji's blessings for peace of mind. Guru ji while citing the example of the horse told the farmer that he could not strive to attain peace unless he resolves not to cultivate tobacco anymore. On hearing Guruji's advice the farmer pledged to cultivate wheat instead of tobacco.
90	Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji with Pir Buddhu Shah	Simran Kaur	—	During the battle of Bhangani when 400 Pathan warrior had deserted Guru Gobind Singh it was Pir Buddhu Shah who stood by him steadfastedly. Two of his sons, younger brother and nephew fell in action. After his victory when Guru Gobind Singh wished to present a 'siropa' to Pir Buddhu Shah, the latter only expressed a desire to possess Guru's hair entangled in his comb. Guru Gobind Singh honoured him and proclaimed Buddhu Shah as a true 'Pir'.
91	Battle of Bhangani April 1687	Devender Singh	—	When Guru Gobind Singh was making preparation at Paonta Sahib to face the problems which were likely to arise in future. The Hill chiefs got disturbed by his growing influence and attacking Guru ji at Bhangani. Accompanied by his brave Sikhs Guru Gobind Singh ji bravely fought and won the first battle of his life. While fighting bravely for Guru ji Pir Buddhu Shah lost his sons along with 700 disciples in this battle.

92	Guru and Disciple in one 13 April 1699	Kirpal Singh	1975	Sri Guru Gobind Singh laid the foundation of Khalsa Panth in 1699 AD at Takhat Keshgarh Sahib in Anandpur Sahib. He baptized the five beloved ones namely, Bhai Daya Singh, Bhai Dharam Singh, Bhai Mokham Singh, Bhai Sahib Singh and Bhai Himmat Singh. Afterwords, Guru Sahib begged of the Five to duly baptise him, in turn. Thus he became a Guru and a disciple at the same time. Such an unprecedented example of unique humility is not found anywhere in the history of mankind.
93	The Panj Piaras Baptizing Sahibzadas	Devender Singh	—	After baptizing the first five Sikhs as Panj Piaras on the day of Baisakhi 1699. Guru Gobind Singh himself got baptized from the hands of Panj Piaras. On the request of Guru j, Sahibzada Ajit Singh and Sahibzada Jujhar Singh were baptized by the five beloved ones. Seeing this a wave of enthusiasm swept through the congregation and the people stood in long rows for getting baptized. Because of the large number of people the ceremony went on for days together.
94	Bhai Kanhiya ji-forerunner of Red Cross	Kirpal Singh	1977	Bhai Kanhiya ji used to serve drinking water to the wounded Sikhs and the enemy soldiers. Some Sikhs complained Guru ji on this account. When Guru Gobind Singh enquired from Bhai Kanhiya about this, he humbly said, “I see you alone my master in every person.” Guru ji got so impressed with Bhai ji’s answer that he gave him some money to buy medicines and bandages and ordered him to carry on with the dressing of the wounded as well. Hence Bhai Kanhiya ji is rightly called the forerunners of the modern Red Cross.
95	Bhai Kanhiya ji serving water in battle field	Kirpal Singh	1984	Bhai Kanhiya ji used to serve drinking water to the wounded Sikhs and the enemy soldiers. Some Sikhs complained Guru ji on this account. When Guru Gobind Singh enquired from Bhai Kanhiya about this, he humbly said, “I see you alone my master in every person.” Guru ji got so impressed with Bhai ji’s answer that he gave him some

				money to buy medicines and bandages and ordered him to carry on with the dressing of the wounded as well. Hence Bhai Kanhiya ji is rightly called the forerunners of the modern Red Cross.
96	Maharaja Ranjit Singh taking the Koran	Devender Singh	—	A Muslim calligraphist spent the best part of his life preparing a copy of the Koran. Failing to sell his work to the Muslim chiefs of India he came to Lahore. Maharaja Ranjit Singh paid a fabulous price for this work. While giving donations to religious places he never made any discrimination.
97	Bhai Lalvani receiving pothis from Maharaja Ranjit Singh	R. M. Singh	—	The places were Sahib Guru Nanak Dev ji went during his preaching odysseyes around a world became a centre of his teachings. Impressed by Guru Nanak Dev ji's philosophy the inhabitants of Sadhu Bela in Sindh which is one of the most important centres of the hindus, became devotees of Guru Nanak. In order to spread the message of Sikhism, Maharaja Ranjit Singh gave a copy of the Sikh scriptures to the Sindhi leader Bhai Lalvani ji who took them to Sindh and further spread the message of Guru Nanak.
98	Maharaja Ranjit Singh ji	Amolak Singh	—	Maharaja Ranjit Singh ji crossing the River Attak [Attock] along with his army.
99	Sher e Punjab, Maharaja Ranjit Singh	RM Singh	—	13 Nov 1780–27 jun 1839. Head of the soverign Sikh state of Punjab, Maharaj Ranjit Singh ji is popularly known as Sher e Punjab. He gave the due attention of reconstruction of various shrines and also issued currency in the name of Guru Shahi.
100	Darbar of Maharaja Ranjit Singh	Amolak Singh	—	After establishing a vast kingdom Maharaja Ranjit Singh brought peace and prosperity to his people. Leaving aside his distinction of caste creed and religion used to appoint his officers and ministers on the basis of merit alone. In keeping with the Guru Nanak's principal of universal brotherhood he even engaged

				French, Italians, Americans and Russian nationals in his military set up.
101	Sher e Punjab, Maharaja Ranjit Singh	Gudit [Gurdit] Singh	1970s. un-clear	13 Nov 1780–27 jun 1839. Head of the soverign Sikh state of Punjab, Maharaj Ranjit Singh ji is popularly known as Sher e Punjab. He spent a lot on the reconstruction of shrines and ran currency in the name of Guru Nanak Dev ji.
102	Sardar Baghel Singh ji	Amolak Singh	—	Sardar Baghel Singh ji Karor Singhia was Jathedar of Missal. Between 1765–1783, the Sikhs conquered Delhi 15th times. 11 March 1783, Sardar Baghel Singh unfurled Kesari (saffron) flag on the Red Fort. Hindus Sikhs and Muslims willingly joined his victory procession from the Red Fort to Fatehpuri.
103	Sardarni Sada Kaur at Shahi Fort of Lahore	Kirpal Singh	1974	The vision of Maharaja Ranjit Singh to unitl all the twelve Sikh 'Misals" into a single unified empire was inspired by Sardarni Sada Kaur. The wise fearless and intrepid leadership she provided during the assault and capture of Lahore fort was primarily instrumental in laying the foundation of Sikh Raj.
104	Sardar Kapur Singh 1697–1753	Bodhraj	1990	Sardar Kapur Singh was a very humble personality. He used to look after the horses of the Sikhs and also serve the people gathered in the congregation. On the representation of Zakariya Khan in 1773, the Rulers of Delhi approved of a grant of a jagir to the leaders of the Sikhs with the title of Nawab, it was suggested by Sikh leaders that this honour may be given to someone noted for the service. So ultimately S. Kapur Singh was selected for the honour and there after he came to be known as Nawab Kapur Singh.
105	Sardar Jassa Singh Ramgharia (1723–1803)	R. M. Singh	—	Sardar Jassa Singh Ramgharia used to work as one of the Commander of the Mughal Faujdar at Jallandher. Once the forces of the Mughal ruler besieged the fort at Amritsar and ordered the capturing the fort. On hearing the war

				cry of the Sikhs from inside the fort S. Jassa Singh immediately decided to help the fellow the Sikh brethren. He sent the message to them through a letter attached with arrow. Later he join the other Sikhs held inside the fort and fought the Mughals. After winning the battle S. Jassa Singh Ramgharia was made the jathedar of the fort which later came to be known as Kila [Qila] Ramghar.
106	Conquering of the Lahore Fort 1761 AD	Devender Singh	—	S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia conquered the Shahi Fort of Lahore after defeating its Afghan Governor. Hindus, Sikhs and Muslim inhabitants of the city opened the gates without much resistance and accorded them a hearty welcome. S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was proclaimed the king of Lahore with the title of "*Sultan-ul-Quaum*".
107	Service From Nawab Kapur Singh (1697–1753)	Devender Singh	—	Sardar Kapur Singh was a very humble personality. He used to look after the horses of the Sikhs and also serve the people gathered in the congregation. On the representation of Zakariya Khan in 1773, the rulers of Delhi approved of a grant of a jagir to the leaders of the Sikhs with the title of Nawab, it was suggested by Sikh leaders that this honour may be given to someone noted for the service. So ultimately S. Kapur Singh was selected for the honour and there after he came to be known as Nawab Kapur Singh.
108	Sardar Baghel Singh ji enters in delhi (11 March 1781 AD)	Amolak Singh	—	The picture depicts jathedar of Karor Singhia missal Sardar Baghel Singh along with the other Sikhs Missals entering Delhi after conquering it in 1781 AD
109	Those who shared with others the fruit of their labour	Kirpal Singh	1979	There are three basic gems of Sikhism:- First. Kirat karo. Do hard work for your livelihood. Second. Vand ke chhako. Share food with others. Third. Naam japo, contemplate on god's name. This scene is from those exilic days when Sikhs, reduced to hardships and to an utterly frugal living, shared their

				belongings with others without discriminating even strangers.
110	Maharaji Ranjeet Singh ji with Lord Jangi Lart [General Lord?]	Jarnail Singh	1998	In 1808 AD after the signing of the treaty between the Britishers and Maharaja Ranjeet Singh at Amritsar
111	Darbar of Maharaja Ranjit Singh	Amolak Singh	—	This painting of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's court highlights the glory and enormity of the mighty Sikh emperor. While on one side the ruler at Delhi condescended to join hands with him, Kabul prostated to him might on the other.
112	Jeneral [General] Hari Singh Nalwa 1791–1831, in Kashmir	R. M. Singh	—	Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa was one of the top Commanders of the Khalsa forces. He conquered Kashmir and then brought Kabul under his control. Besides being proficient in Arabic and Punjabi and fairly good in English. In this picture he is giving land to poor farmers in Kashmir.
113	The victory of Multan fort, 1881	Devender Singh	—	During the battle of Multan a canon lost one of its wheels. The gunner insisted that they could still break into the castle if someone gave support to the canon. A number of Singhs immediately volunteered their shoulders. The cannon went on battering the castle and finally blew up the wall, but not before it had crushed many of its supporters with its recoil. Gulam Jilani, a spy in the Sikh forces and witness to the episode describes this supreme sacrifice in glorious terms.
114	A benign regime Maharaja Ranjit Singh	Devender Singh	—	Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Sikh soverign of the Punjab, treated all alike and made no discrimination between men on the basis of their colour caste or religion. In his court, Muslims, Hindus and Christians received equal treatment. The Lion of the Punjab had even issued an edict in the name of Faqir Nuruddin that he (the Faqir) could reverse his own royal order if it in any manner impinged in the rights of the common citizen.

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116	Swami Ramanand Ji blessing Bhagat Peepa Ji with the divine enlightenment	Bodhraj	1991	Swami Ramanad Ji is considered a pioneer of the Bhakti Movement in northern India. He is regarded as a bridge between Bhakti Movements of the South and North. Though a Brahmin by caste, he did not entertain any sense of pride because of his birth. One Shabad (Hymn) each of both the Bhagats, Swami Ramanand Ji and Bhagat Peepa Ji is included in the Holy Granth Sahib.
117	Baba Sheikh Farid ji (1173–1266 AD)	Bodhraj	1991	Baba Sheikh Farid was a great sufi saint. He was very sweet of tongue and lived an austere life. He asks for only one blessing from God, viz. a life of prayer and meditation. His following salok forms the subject of the painting-"Sweet are candy and sugar and honey and buffaloes' milk yea, sweets are these. but sweater by far is god." 116 of his hymns and salokas are included in Guru Granth Sahib.
118	Bhagat Kabir Ji (1398–1494)	Bodhraj	1991	Bhagat Kabir ji was revolutionary saint poet of bhakti movement. He emphasized the equality and fraternity of mankind. Once Bhagat Kabir was going to sell cloth made by him. He met some sadhus on the way to whom he gave the entire cloth free of cost. 541 hymns and saloks of Kabir are included in Sri Guru Granth Sahib.
119	Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji	Devender Singh	—	Sri Guru Gobind Singh laid the foundation of Khalsa panth in 1699 AD at Takht Kesgarh Sahib in Anandpur Sahib. He baptised the Five Beloved ones namely, Bhai Daya Singh, Bhai

				Dharam Singh, Bhai Muhkam Singh, Bhai Sahib Singh and Bhai Himmat Singh. Afterwords, Guru Sahib begged of the Five to duly baptise him, in return. Thus, he became a Guru and a disciple at the same time. Such an unprecedented example of unique humility is not found anywhere in the history of mankind.
120	Guru Gobind Singh ji, helping the hopeless	Amolak Singh	—	Guru Gobind Singh ji helped the handicapped overcome their disabilities. For instance, he taught several blind people the art of music and made them expert in playing of instruments such as saranda, rabab and taoos. Keeping in line with the tradition, the Sikh institutions even today help the handicap people in learning the vocal and instrumental music. Thus helping them became accomplished exponent of Sikh music.
121	Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji on chair	Gurdit Singh	April 1975	10th Guru Sahib Date of birth: 22-12-1666 Place of birth: Sri Patna Sahib (Bihar) Duration of Guruship: 1675–1708 Father: Sri Guru Teg Bahadar Sahib Mother: Mata Gujri ji Wife: Ajit Kaur, Sunder Kaur, Sahib Kaur Children: Baba Ajit Singh, Baba Jujhar Singh, Baba Zorawar Singh, Baba Fateh Singh Day and place of exp.-07-10-1708, at Hazoor Sahib, Nanded
122	Baba Deep Singh at Sanghrana Sahib	R. M. Singh	—	When Baba Deep Singh come to know that Jahan Khan, a general of Abdali have violated the sanctity of Darbar Sahib he immediately set out in that direction with only eight other Sikhs. On the way, large batches of Singhs joined him. At Sanghrana Sahib he drew a line and asked the Sikhs to cross over if they were keen to lay down their lives. Everyone without hesitation crossed the line. During the battle Baba Deep Singh got a severe cut on his neck and his head got tilled to one side but he, supporting his head with one hand kept on fighting his way to the periphery of Darbar Sahib where he finally breathed his last.

123	Martyrdom at Lahore 1763 AD	Amolak Singh	—	During the reign of Mir Mannu (Muin-ud-din) large number of Sikhs were captured everyday and brought to Lahore where they were beheaded. It was the policy of the government to exterminate Sikhs. Mir Mannu was the son of Karamuddin who was a minster to the Emperor. He was appointed the subedar of Lahore. In 1751 AD he approached the Sikhs through Deewan Kaura Mal to Support him. The Sikhs fully supported him. Bhim Singh beheaded Shah Nawaj. After the death of Deewan Kaura Mal he subjected the Sikhs to extreme atrocities and mercilessly put them to death, everyday in Nakhas Bazar Lahore.
124	Sikh fight bravely against Leaks [lakhs]	Kirpal Singh	1979	Just as a small source of light can dispel a large area of dark. Every Sikh engrossed in the philosophy of love given by Guru Nanak Dev ji can destroy the ignorance of the fellow beings. In keeping with the same ideology Guru Gobind Singh created a saint cum soldier in every individual Sikh who in turn proved detrimental on more then lac of unjust people. Upholding the same spirt every Sikh fought bravely against lacs of the Mughal force at the battle of Chamkour [Chamkaur].
125	Bhai Tara Singh Van	Bodhraj	1989	The resident of village Van Bhai Tara Singh along with his family was always eager to serve the Sikhs even at the cost of his life. Apart from making langar he also used to do dressing of the wounded Sikhs and look after the injured animals.
126	Sardar Baghel Singh enter in Delhi (11 March 1781)	Jarnail Singh	1993	The picture depicts Jathedar of Karor Singhia Missal [misl] Sardar Baghel Singh along with other Sikh missals enter Delhi after conquering it in 1781 AD.
127	Sikhs freeing Indian Jewellery enslaved by Nader [Nadir] Shah	Kirpal Singh	1963	Nader Shah was a bandit. He would attack India, indulge in loot and pillage, capture Indian women, chain them and take them along with booty in order to sell them in Bazars of Ghazni (1762 AD). The Dal Khalsa would attack the

				invaders on their way back, free these helpless daughters of India and restore them to their homes.
128	Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia pushed back across the river	Amolak Singh	—	Sikh General Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was designated with the honour as Sultan ul Quam. When Singhs came to know that Ahmad Shah Abdali had abducted 2200 young girls after winning the Battle of Panipat, they immediately attacked the Abdali's forces and after defeating them they rescued them and made them reach back their homes safely sometimes as far as in Maharashtra. Historian MJ Brown acknowledges that such as act of Sikhs the greatest example of chivalry and kindness.
129	Martyrdom of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur (27 Oct 1670–19 Jun 1716)	Kirpal Singh	1984	After 740 brave Sikhs who had fought for Banda Bahadur had been beheaded on 19 June 1716 Banda Bahadur was taken to the shrine of Khawaja Qutab ud din Bhaktiyar Kaki. Then he was taken to the tomb of Emperor Bahadur Shah. His four years old son Ajai Singh was placed on his lap and he was asked to kill the child. The child was done to death by his tormentors. His heart was pulled out and pushed into the mouth of Banda Singh Bahadur. The eyes of Banda Singh Bahadur were pulled out of the sockets and flesh plucked from his body. He was subjected to atrocities and done to death. Banda however remained undisturbed. He accepted the Lord's will and attained martyrdom.
130	"My mother is telling a lie" Executed in Chandni Chowk, March 1716	Kirpal Singh	1985	Out of the 740 Sikhs imprisoned with Banda Bahadur at Gurdas Nangal, 100 Sikhs were executed daily on the orders of Farukh Siyar. The mother of a newly married youngman captured along with Baba Banda Singh obtained the release order of her son from Farukh Siyar on the ground that he was not a Sikh. On hearing this the youngman raised his voice and said, "I am a humble Sikh of the Guru, my mother is telling a lie. So please do execute me along with my other Sikh brethern's."

131	Executed in Delhi 1716	Kirpal Singh	1985	Out of the 740 Sikhs imprisoned with Banda Bahadur at Gurdas Nangal, 100 Sikhs were executed daily on the orders of Farukh Siyar and everyone from the Sikhs would like to be executed along with other Sikhs.
132	Five Sikhs at the Red Fort of Delhi	Kirpal Singh	1976	(March 11, 1781) The Sikhs conquered Delhi and captured the Red Fort. They established their supremacy. However the five Sikh Chief (including S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and S. Baghel Singh) accepted the entereaty of Begam Samru and agreed to leave Delhi but retained the right to raise memorials to the Gurus. Sardar Baghel Singh got the Gurudwara built. The Sikhs proved that their desire to serve the Gurus was greater than their desire to rule over Delhi.
133	Baba Banda Singh Bahadar at Lohgarh Fort (10 May 1710)	Amolak Singh	2001	After winning his way through the area of Kaithal, Sonepat, Samana, Kaddam, Thaska, Mustafabad, Kapoori, Radhore and Banud Baba Banda Singh Bahadar conquered the strategically located fort of Muklisgarh build by General Mukhis Khan. After renameing the fort at Lohgarh he made it the first Sikh capital and issued coins in the Name of Guru. Having consolidated his position he marched towards the conquest of Sirhind.
134	First meeting of Sri Guru Gobind Singh with Baba Banda Singh	Jarnail Singh	1995	Madho Das Bairagi was born at Rajouri (J & K) on 13th of Kartik Sundhi 1672. After becomeing the disciple of Aughar Nath he attained perfection in the tantrik knowledge (Ridhiyan-Sidhiyan) which enabled him to perform some miracles. Later he made an ashram in Nanded along the bank of Godavari. There he earned a lot of fame. Passing through that way one day Guru Gobind Singh ji sat on his cot outside his hermitage without his permission. He got annoyed and used all his tantric knowledge to unseat the Guruji. But when all his tricks and knowledge failed he realised his mistake and fell at Guru ji's feet. Guru ji blessed him by initiating him in the Sikh brotherhood and gave him the new name,

				'Banda Singh'.
135	Mai Bhago Ji 1705 AD	Kirpal Singh	1974	Faced with prolonged starvation, some Sikh deserted Guru Gobind Singh and returned to their homes. Chided and challenged by the extremely pious Mai Bhago, they were led back to the battle field where the all died as martyrs. By doing so they washed the stigma off their ignominy and were blessed by the Guru with the glorious appellation of 'The 'Muktas'. The forty redeemed ones
136	Mai Bhago Ji 1705 AD	Mehar Singh	—	Faced with prolonged starvation, some Sikh deserted Guru Gobind Singh and returned to their homes. Chided and challenged by the extremely pious Mai Bhago, they were led back to the battle field where the all died as martyrs. By doing so they washed the stigma off their ignominy and were blessed by the Guru with the glorious appellation of 'The 'Muktas'. The forty redeemed ones.
137	Langar, Bhai Nand Lal Ji	Amolak Singh	1974	Institution of *langar* is an integral part of Sikh tradition. All the gurus contributed towards more systematic development of this institution and bestowed a great responsibility towards upon the Sikh community to serve food to everybody without any discrimination. During the times of Guru Gobind Singh ji, a directive was issued at Anandpur Sahib for making available the langer at all hours to anyone who may come even at any odd hours. One day Guru Sahib personally inspected all the *langars* and found the *langar* run by Bhai Nand Lal the most well maintained where *langar* was available to pilgrims and no hungry person was ever sent back. Bhai Nand Lal was a great Sikh theologian and an eminent poet of Guru Gobind Singh's darbar.
138	A unique procession 1716 AD	Kirpal Singh	1985	Banda Bahadur and seven hundred and forty of his brave soldiers were captured by the imperial forces after the fall of fortress at Gurdas Nangal. They had fought all the Mughal forces ferociously

				despite the shortage of food and water in the fortress which had been under siege for eight months. On 18the June 1716 the streets and of Delhi witnessed a horrible procession. Banda Bahadur dressed in saffron was shut in a cage and the cage was placed on an elephant. Heads of 2000 brave Sikh soldiers who had fought for Banda Singh Bahadur were placed on spears held aloft by Mughal soldiers. A spear piered through the dead body of a cat to convey the message that no Sikh had been left alive. This was a heart rending scene.
139	The First Sikh Empire	R. M. Singh	—	After getting the blessings of Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji, Banda Singh Bahadar reached Punjab and established the first Sikh empire. People loved him because of his humble upright and just personality. Even the Muslim youths gathered around him in thousands. He treated them equally without any discrimination.
140	Sardar Charat Singh Shukarchakiya	Devender Singh	—	Sikh general Sardar Charat Singh Shukarchakiya used to be in the forefront of every Sikh expedition against unjust. Despite twenty two wounds on his body as battle scars there was not a slightest dent in his determination. When he alongside with his fellowmen challenged Abdali right in his camp, Abdali shocked by the sheer determination of the Sikhs is reported to have said, "O God, my throne is shaking right in my lifetime, what would happen after me?"
141	Bhagat Surdas Ji	Bodhraj	1991	Date of Birth: Sament 1586 Father's name: Brahmin Ramdas Ji His hymn is included in Guru Granth Sahib
142	Bhagat Ravidas Ji	Amolak Singh	—	Date of Birth: Sament 1433 bikrami Place of birth: Mandurgarh near Banaras Father's name: Raghu (Mann Das) Mother's name: Karma Devi 40 of his hymns are included in Sri Guru Granth Sahib

143	Bhagat Trilochan Ji (1267 AD)	Devender Singh	—	Bhagat Trilochan always gave more importance to Bhakti in preference to self. He always said that anyone who is always occupied with problems relating to money and property can never become happy. He used to serve the saints with utmost dedication and humility. Four of his hymns are included in the Guru Granth Sahib.
144	Bhagat Ramanand Ji	Devender Singh	—	Date of birth: sament 1423 Father's name: Bhuri Karma ji Mother's name: Sushila ji His one hymn is included in Guru Granth Sahib
145	Bhagat Pipa Ji	Devender Singh	—	Date of birth: sament 1483 His one hymn is included in Guru Granth Sahib.
146	Bhagat Baini Ji	—	—	His one hymn is included in Guru Granth Sahib.
147	Bhagat Dhanna Ji (1415 AD)	Devender Singh	—	Right from his childhood Bhagat Dhanna ji was a very simple, straightforward and hard working person. He always enjoyed the company of saints and scholars. The picture depicts Bhagat ji serving the needy as well as holy men with devotion and humility. Three of his hymns are included in Guru Granth Sahib .
148	*Khalsa Panth ke mahan shaheed*	—	—	A flex banner showing martyrdom of Bhai Sati Das, Bhai Mati Das & Bhai Dyala.
149	Kar Sewa of Sri Harimander Sahib	Devender Singh	—	Sri Darbar Sahib at Amritsar, popularly known as Golden Temple, is one of the most sacred place of Sikhs. The Golden Temple complex is an example of liberal religious tradition, consecrated by noble deeds of piety, sacrifice and heroism. It is a living symbol of spiritual and historical traditions of Sikhism. It is a paragon of religious architecture symbolising devotion, love, peace and universal brotherhood of mankind. Maintenance of the buildings of the complex, its history and traditions and deslliting of sarovar (holy tank) are some

				of the very important tasks which are collectively taken care of by the Sikh from the world around by way of their personal contribution often known as KAR SEWA.
150	Sikhs in the Indian Army	Harjeet-pal Singh	—	Showing exemplary courage the Sikhs fought bravely against the Pakistani forces during 1971 war and won the battle.
151	Nische Kar Apni Jeet Karon	R. M. Singh	—	The Battle to capture the Raja hills in 1965 in the war against Pakistan became a point of honour and prestige for men of Sikh Regiment. They succeeded. They also liberated a part of Pakistan held Kashmir. Thus they lived gallantly up to their lofty tradition and glorious motto "*Nische Kar Apni Jeet Karon"*.
152	Pakistan Army Surrending	R. M. Singh	—	Pakistan army officers surrending before Indian army officer Lt. Gen. Jagjit Singh Arora.
153	The Sikhs of Indian Army and Sri Guru Granth Sahib	R. M. Singh	—	The Sikhs of Indian Army taking pledge before Guru Granth Sahib to uphold the truth fight for the just.
154	Saragharhi post	—	—	On 12th of September 1897, while displaying an exemplary courage during nullification of attack by Pattans [Pathans] on Saragarhi Post, all the 20 young Sikh soldiers of the Sikh regiment under command of Havaldar Isher Singh laid down their life in the discharge of their duty. Their valour impressed the world so much that even Britain's Parliament paid special tribute to them. The battle of Saragarhi also figures in the UNESCO publication.
155	Shahid Udham Singh (26/12/1899–31/7/1940)	R. M. Singh	—	Agitated by the massacre of innocent people at Jallianwala Bagh at the order of then Governor of Punjab General Michael O' Dwyer, the innocent child in Sardar Udham Singh decided to take the revenge and bring the Governor to justice. He followed Michael O' Dwyer to London and killed him there in full view in a public meeting. And after

				punishing the General for atrocities committed by him Udham Singh surrendered before the police whereupon after a brief trial he was hanged to death in 1940.
156	Shaheed e Azam S. Bhagat Singh (Sept 27, 1907–Mar 23, 1931)	Mehar Singh	—	S. Bhagat Singh belongs to that galaxy of freedom fighters in India who considered no sacrifice too great for the sake of the Motherland. A man of unrivalled patriotism and matchless courage, he laid down his life at the altar of the nation in the prime of his youth. He was only 23 years old when he made the supreme sacrifice for India's freedom. He was hanged on 23rd of March 1931 along with his two companions Sukhdev and Rajguru. His single-minded devotion to the cause of the Country's freedom, his organizational skill, his qualities of leadership and finally his death is an unforgettable saga in the history of the struggle for Indian freedom.
157	(Shaheed) Sardar Kartar Singh Sarabha 28 May 1896–16 Nov 1915	Jarnail Singh	1997	Sardar Kartar Singh Sarabha was the youngest martyr in the history of the independence of India. The compositions rendered by him during the meetings of Gadar Party used to bugup the people to fight for independence of India.
158	Freedom fighter Sardar Ajeet Singh	Jarnail Singh	1997	Sardar Ajeet Singh was the paternal uncle (chacha) of S. Bhagat Singh. He also as like his nephew made a great contribution in the freedom struggle.
159	Jang-e- Azadi de moti	—	—	Namdhari Baba Ram Singh Sikh philosopher, reformer and first Indian to use Non-Cooperation and boycott of British merchandise and services as a political weapan (Encyclopedia Britannica, vol 8, Page 142).
160	Azadi laher ke pehle Sikh shaheed	—	—	A spectacle of 66 Namdhari Sikhs being blown to pieces by cannons by British rulers for revolting against British rule, on 17 January 1872 AD at Maler Kotla Punjab.
161	The Voyage of The	—	—	The Voyage of Koma Gata Maru was a

	Koma Gata Maru			remarkable and determined attempt by a group of Sikh peasants to challenge the Canadian immigration laws. In May 1914, 400 Sikhs who left for British Columbia under the leadership of Baba Gurdit Singh were finally persuaded to return to India. On their disembarkation at Calcutta, troop open fire on them.
162	Non violent agitation at Amritsar	Devender Singh	—	In Nov. 1921, the keys of the Golden Temple Amritsar were taken away from the Manager by the District Magistrate on the instructions of British Government. Angered over the interference from the Government in the Gurdwara affairs the Sikhs started a non-violent agitation. Ultimately the Britishers conceded and the keys were returned back to the Sikhs. The picture depicts Baba Kharak Singh receiving the keys from British officer.
163	The Sacrifice at Panja Sahib 30 Oct 1922	Devender Singh	—	On hearing that the wounded Singhs arrested at Guru ka Bagh were being escorted without any food or water in a train to Naushera jail (Attock), the Sikhs of Panja Sahib, under the leadership of Bhai Partap Singh and Bhai Karam Singh decided to serve food and water to them at all cost. When the station master expressed his inability to stop the train, Bhai Partap Singh and Bhai Karam Singh, along with hundreds of others laid themselves on the rail track. The train stopped and the langar was served but not before the train had crushed both of them under its wheels.
164	Bibi Balbir Kaur	Devender Singh	—	During the anti British agitation at Jaito, 21st of February 1924, Bibi Balbir Kaur joined ranks and file on the other Sikh agitators. While marching along when one of the bullet killed her baby she left the dead body of the child on the road side and kept on the forward march. Later when more bullets were fired at agitators she also attained martyrdom along with other agitators.
165	Mata Gujari Ji	Devender	—	Mata Gujari ji, wife of Guru Teg

		Singh		Bahadur Sahib ji, was detained in a tower at Sirhind along with her son Guru Gobind Singh's two minor children, Baba Zorawar Singh (9 years) and Baba Fateh Singh (7 years). On their refusal to give up their faith, the two minor children were bricked alive on the order of the Mughal Governor. She died on hearing the gruesome incident.
166	No title/description	Sukhpal Singh	—	(Portrait of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the background has all four major religious symbols)
167	No title/description	Amolak Singh	Nov 2001	(Maharaja Ranjit Singh on horseback outside Lahore fort)
168	Maharaja Dalip Singh	—	—	Maharaja Dalip Singh was the youngest son of Maharaja Ranjeet Singh. British Govt. betrated him and got his signatures on the papers and acquired Punjab, and took him away from Sikhism. After meeting with his mother, Maharani Jinda[n] he regained Sikhism. On 15th of May, 1893 Dalip Singh died in Paris.
169	Maharani Jindan 1817–1863	Bodhraj	—	Maharani Jindan, wife of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, made a valuable contribution towards the Independence of India. After Second Sikh War, Lord Dilhousie treacherously obtained the signature of (minor) Maharaja Dalip Singh on the instrument of abdication and brought the Sikh empire under the British rule. On 19th Aug 1847, Maharani Jindan, Regent for the young Maharaja, was interned at the fort of Shakhupura. Later on 16th May 1848, Maharani was shifted to Banaras fort where she breathed her last on 1st Aug 1863.

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STUDENT STATEMENT OF THESIS PREPARATION

1. Thesis title: Representation of Heritage in Museums of Sikh History: A Case Study of the Museum at Sis Ganj Gurdwara, Delhi

2. Degree for which the thesis is submitted: PhD

3. Specifications regarding thesis format and organisation have been closely followed.

4. The thesis has been prepared without resorting to plagiarism

5. All sources used have been cited properly and data is properly presented

6. The thesis has not been submitted elsewhere for a degree.

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