
QUADRICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF COMPILATION OF THE AAD GURU GRANTH SAHIB

Year 2004 will witness the Quadricentennial Celebration of the Compilation of the AGGS at Amritsar, which will fall on September 1, year 2004 according to the Nanakshahi Calendar. This is very important event in Sikh history and it is the time to make the Sikh to realize to return to their roots, i.e. the basic philosophy promulgated by Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism. Philosophy of Guru Nanak, which was strengthened and taught by the nine Sikh Gurus for 239 years (1469 – 1708), has been enshrined in the AGGS along with the philosophy of Bhagats, Sufis, and Sants and the praises of the first five Gurus, composed by the Bhattas

In connection with the celebration of the Quadricentennial of Compilation of the Aad Guru Granth Sahib, first International Conference on Aad Guru Granth Sahib was held at the Guru Nanak Dev University Amritsar, from Feb 25-28, 2001. There were

nearly two dozens of scholar/participants from nine countries and four continents who visited India this time and either participated or contributed in a variety of other ways to many of the functions held there. Some of the delegates from outside India were: Dr. Balwant Singh Hansra, Rev. Robert Thompson, and Rev. Travis Rejman all from the Parliament of World Religion; Dr. Devinder Singh Chahal from the Institute of Understanding Sikhism and the journal of Understanding Sikhism, The Research Journal, Dr. Beant Singh of the Sikh Study Circle, Dr. Manmohan Singh of Sukhmani International, Dr. Balwant Singh of Hemkund Foundation of USA, Rev. Elizabeth Esperson of the World Center for Thanks Giving, Prithipal Singh Bindra of Sikh Educational Conference and Sikh Social and Educational Society, Dr. Rahul Deepandker, President Buddhist Association of USA, Inder Singh, President Global Organization of People of Indian Origin, Dr. Trichur Rukhmani, Professor of

Hinduism at Concordia University, Dr. Dhaliwal of the Association of Scientific Study of Religion.

Unfortunately Gian Singh of Pakistan was not permitted by the Government of India to participate in this conferences. He is Ex- Member of the NWFP Provincial Parliament of Pakistan and Ex-Minister for Minority Affairs in that state. He held those offices until the time of recent army take over in Pakistan. He was invited by the Vice Chancellor of Guru Nanak Dev University to speak at this conference.

The conference began with a visit to the India-Pakistan Border at Wagah. There, a Sikh prayer was performed for the success of the mission by the faculty of Guru Nanak Studies Department of the Guru Nanak Dev University. Further, Rev. Elizabeth Esperson led an interfaith prayer for the peace between two countries. The inaugural session and rest of the

organization were there to bless the Conference. Others sent messages including those from the UNO affiliated organizations. Every one there, from the management to delegates and from the audience to the press reporters, all supported the objectives of the conference and pledged to work for them. The conference consisted of invited presentations, discussions on the presentations and evening discussion groups to reflect on the presentations made with their implication in the future. Representatives of all religions were there to discuss the interfaith messages of the AGGS and take home Guru's teachings back to their communities.

The Conference ended with a multimedia demonstration of the Gurbani CD by Dr Kulbir Singh Thind of California. He and his wife Dr Khushdev Kaur were among the delegates and presenters at this conference and at many other places. The research

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Some of the foreign delegates from left to right: Rev. Elizabeth Esperson, USA; Dr. Balwant Singh, USA; Mr. P S. Khalsa, India (USA); Dr. Bhai Harbans Lal, USA (Chairperson of the Conference); Prof. Devinder Singh Chahal, Canada (Editor); Dr. B. Singh, India; Dr. Balwant Singh, USA; and Dr. Balwant Singh Hansra, USA.

conference were held primarily at the campus of the Guru Nanak Dev University. The Khalsa College, Amritsar, invited us to hold one session of the Conference there. The college management provided facilities including a reception luncheon. Another session was invited and successfully held at the DAV College for Women in Amritsar. The college held a reception for the delegates that included a sumptuous breakfast. The students from their music department recited Gurbani in original Raags for the audience at the conference.

The Amritsar Conference itself was well attended and well managed. Leaders of every major Sikh

potentials of Gurbani CD were also demonstrated at the Punjabi University Patiala and to the officials of SGPC. Around 300 copies of the CD were presented to different individuals and institutions for their use with complements of Dr Thind and other organizations. The scholar community in Punjab and Delhi had a good glimpse of the research potentials that the Gurbani CD offers.

Some of the papers presented at the Conference were published and distributed to the delegates. The detailed proceedings of the Amritsar Conference will be published elsewhere.