

COMMUNITY

Line of succession based on faith

Last weekend, local Sikhs observed the Martyrdom of the fifth Guru. It appears Guru Arjan Dev was destined to become a Guru. Born in 1653 he was the youngest of three sons of the fourth Guru and his mother was the daughter of the third Guru. At the time of his birth his father had not yet been chosen to succeed the third Guru.

After Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh faith, the line of succession was based on devotion. The preceding Guru would choose who he felt was capable of the type of devotion required. The second Guru was not related to the first and the third was chosen at the age of 80 because of his unshakable faith and because he had served the second so devotionally. Arjan's father, the fourth Guru, was from very humble beginnings and although an orphan he had served his Guru so

faithfully he married the Gurus daughter.

Their youngest son Arjan was a spiritually gifted child, whose grandfather predicted would some day be Guru. At a very young age he was able to recite the hymns, uttering the words God put into his mind. He served his father faithfully until 1581 when at the age of 17 he became the fifth Guru. Henceforth the tradition of succession became one of family.

Guru Arjan Dev accomplished much in his short reign. After just 25 years he was crucified at age of 42 years. Guru Arjan, in just 25 years, developed the Sikh faith into a full Sikh nation. He built Hariminder Sahib, the Golden Temple at Amritsar, in the midst of the sacred pond discovered by his father. (The gold leaf was added later by the famous Sikh Maharaja Ranjit Singh). He restored many more temples and ponds, all old



Indo Canadian
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sacred sights.

Still he is best remembered for compiling the Granth Sahib, the Sikh holy book. He collected the hymns of the first three Gurus as well as his own fathers and added his own. Half the hymns in the Granth Sahib are his own. He col-

lected sacred verses of Indian Bhagats (Mystics) both past and present. The first Granth Sahib was installed in the Golden Temple in 1604, the only one at the time.

Guru Arjan Dev is remembered as a successful organizer and nation builder of the masses. No sacrifice was too much for his peoples well being.

There could be several reasons for his crucifixion. One reason could be the jealousy of the Moslem Emperor Jahinger, father of Shah Jehan. Jahinger's father Akbar the Great had been tolerant of all religions, often visiting the Gurus as he passed through the Punjab. Unfortunately his son Jahinger harbored the idea that Islam was the only true religion. This emperor was jealous of the growing influence of the Sikh Gurus.

An opportunity to take action came when his son Prince Khurso

revolted against his father. Following his defeat he set off for Afghanistan as he passed through Punjab he visited Guru Arjan Dev and asked for money to help him on his journey.

One reason could be that the Guru's oldest brother was claiming he should be Guru because of his position as the oldest son.

Another could be the interference of his sworn enemy a Hindu Gov't. Minister named Chandu Ram who was angry because the Guru had rejected the offer of his daughters hand in a marriage to the Gurus son. The Sanghat (congregation) had advised against it.

Guru Arjan Dev was summoned to Jahinger's court to answer two charges - that he was guilty of sedition for helping the emperor's son escape and that the verses in the Granth Sahib were creating communal dissension.

The Gurus were decreasing the

emperors influence over the masses. He was ordered to change the hymns.

With regard to the first charge the Guru replied he had given Khurso charity as he would give to anyone in distress.

With regards to the second charge, he said the true king had inspired the hymns and I cannot alter the sacred word.

Jahinger had him imprisoned and left Chandu Ram to deal with him. Chandu Ram give him three choices, embrace Islam, a five of 500,000 rupees or insist his son marry Chandu Ram's daughter. The Guru refused all three. He was setting an example of heroic patience.

He was subjected to days of cruel torture. The fifth Guru is remembered for his famous last quote: Whatever Thou Givest I Treat As Happiness. Wherever Thou Place Me, There Shall be My Heaven.

The Tragic end came on May 20, 1606.

An apology is due The Lake Cowichan Khalsa Diwan Society.

In last weeks column I failed to acknowledge their partnership in the building of the crematorium on Cowichan Lake Road. The facility is now jointly operated by the Duncan, Nanaimo, Lake Cowichan and Paldi Temples. As well more emphasis should be put on the fact the use of the crematorium is available to everyone.