**Student Handout**

**The Development of the Sikh Faith**

The Second Guru - Guru Angad.

The second Guru of the Sikh faith was Lehna (1504 - 1552 CE), whom Guru Nanak had renamed Angad, meaning ‘my limb’, thus symbolizing that the new Guru was to be an extension of Guru Nanak himself. It is from here that the idea of the same spirit passing through all the Sikh Gurus had found place in Sikhism.

Guru Amar Das (1479 - 1574 CE)

The period of Guru Amar Das’ guruship was from 1552-1574 CE, thus he did not assume guruship until the age of 73. Prior to this, Amar Das had been a devout Vaisnavite Hindu.

By the period of Guru Amar Das’ guruship, there were many Sikhs who were Sikhs by convention, that is, they were born into the Sikh faith as a result of their parents having adopted Sikhism. There was thus a need for institutionalization since the Sikh faith was no longer in its initial stage.

Guru Ram Das (1534 - 1581 CE)

Jetha, who became Guru Ram Das (‘slave of God’) continued the development of the *panth* (Sikh community) with his emphasis on meditating upon the divine name as a means to liberation. Guru Ram Das’ period of guruship lasted seven years (1574-1581). He founded the new centre of Ramdaspur, which was later to become the city of Amritsar.

Guru Arjan (1563 - 1606 CE)

Guru Arjan marks a significant change in Sikhism. He was the first guru to be born a Sikh. Guru Arjan built the *Harmandir* (The Golden Temple) in the midst of the pool at Amritsar and completed the construction of the tank begun by his father. The Harmandir building had four doors, signifying that God was available to people of all castes. Guru Arjan increased the importance of Amritsar by making it his headquarters. Another very important contribution of Guru Arjan’s was his compilation of the *Adi Granth*, the Holy Sikh Scripture in 1603-04 CE.

Guru Hargobind (1595 - 1644 CE):

Guru Hargobind ensured the consolidation and growth of the *panth*; by giving the *panth* a militant nature he ensured the survival of the Sikh faith.

The Formation of the *Khalsa* by the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh:

Guru Gobind Singh is remembered for two main contributions:

(a) The formation of the *khalsa* (brotherhood of Sikhs which gave Sikhs an

outward identity),

(b) The installation of the *Adi Granth* as the eternal Guru of the Sikhs.

It was compulsory for members of the *khalsa* to wear, at all times, its external symbols, known as the 5K’s, which to this day are:

***Kesh*** - this is the uncut hair and beard of the Sikh.

***Kangha*** - this is the comb which is used to keep the hair tidy and also symbolizes spirituality.

***Kara*** - the steel bracelet which is usually worn on the right wrist, symbolizing the eternal nature of God. It also represents the Sikh’s unity with God and with the *khalsa*.

***Kaccha*** - these are shorts which distinguished Sikhs from other Indians at the time who wore long, loose garments known as *dhotis*, the *kaccha* also allowed freedom when fighting.

***Kirpan*** - in the past the *kirpan* was a proper, full-sized sword. Nowadays, it is usually worn in a smaller form of a few inches long. It symbolizes dignity, self respect and readiness to fight to protect the weak and oppressed and uphold religious liberty.