



The book *Revisiting Banda Singh Bahadur and His Times* comprises research papers on the life of great Sikh general presented at two seminars organized by Baba Banda Singh Bahadur Chair, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra. This book reveals that historiography on Banda is diverse and rich. Contemporary Mughal court historians and chroniclers of their ilk seem to be clearly biased if we see the ton and tenor of their narrative. They abused and criticized Banda for alleged cruelty and barbarism. Sikh historians of early nineteenth century also vilified Banda. Some of them were ill-informed, while others condemned him only to glorify their ancestors who betrayed Banda. British historians

of nineteenth and early twentieth century had their own agenda of dividing the country on the basis of religion and culture. It was only in the twentieth century that objective assessment of Banda with the modern historical tools and methodology was taken up.

The enormity and diversity of literature on Banda Singh Bahadur, coupled with surfacing of new sources, provides opportunities to reassess and revisit Banda and his times and this is what has been attempted in these papers. The scholars have scanned the vast source material to reconstruct the image of Bairagi Madho Dass, a celibate recluse, into a socially and politically committed Sikh, faithful to his master till his martyrdom.

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BANDA SINGH BAHADUR
Tri-Centenary of Martyrdom

Edited by
AMARJIT SINGH

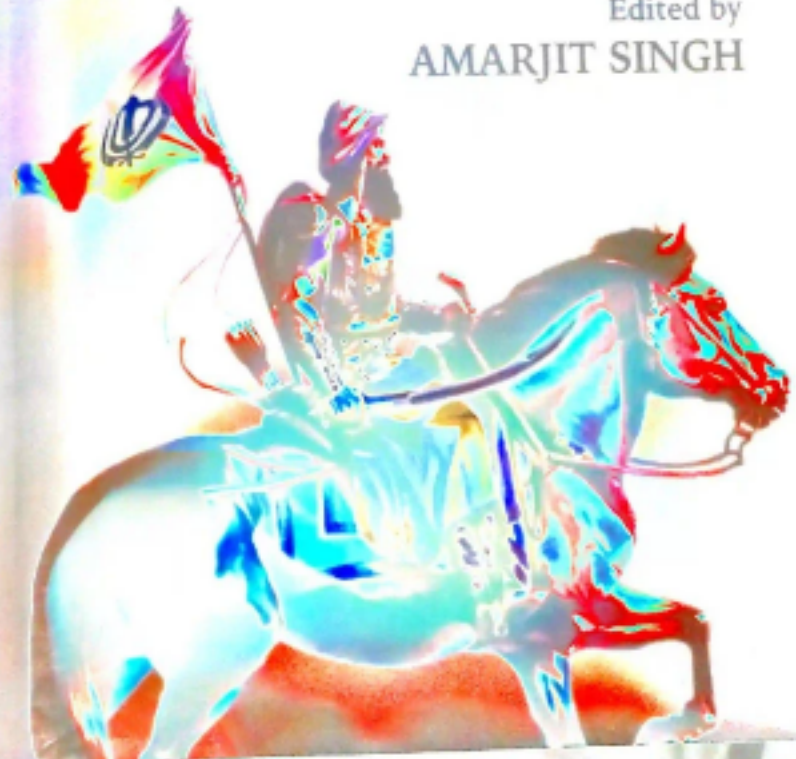


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BANDA SINGH BAHADUR
A Narration of the Martyrdom

DR. SUMAN SIWACH *

Banda was born on October 16, 1670 at Rajauri in the Poonch district of Western Kashmir. While a child, he was called Lachhman Dev. His father's name was Ram Dev.¹ He trained Banda Singh in wrestling, horseback riding and hunting.² At the age of fifteen, an incident is said to have occurred which changed the whole course of his life. As a young man, Banda shot a pregnant deer and was shocked to watch the mother and her aborted doe die painfully. This gloomy scene changed his heart. He left his home and became a Sadhu. He took the name of Madho Daas.³ Like the Sadhus of this order, he wandered from place to place until he came to Nasik on the bank of Godavri, where he entered the hermitage of an old yogi, Aughar Nath and learnt occultism from him. Aughar Nath was much impressed by the service of Madho Das and as a token there

* Assistant Professor, I.G. National College, Ladwa, Kurukshetra