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SIKHISM IN GLOBAL CONTEXT

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Preface

This volume grows out of a three-day international research seminar hosted by the Dr Jasbir Singh Saini Endowed Chair in Sikh and Punjabi Studies and the Religious Studies Department of the University of California from 4 to 6 December 2008. Addressing the theme of the seminar, 'Sikhism in Global Context', twenty-two participants from four continents focused on Sikh life and thought as a global community. The plenary session of this seminar began on Thursday evening, 4 December 2008, with a reception held at Riverside's Mission Inn, a National Historical Landmark. At this event, conference participants and guests were greeted by Professor Stephen Cullenberg, Dean of the College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (CHASS) at the University of California, Riverside.

In his welcome address, Dean Cullenburg appreciated the theme of the seminar from a global angle: "The theme of this conference meets broadly with the type of college we are trying to build here, as international in its scope, and I am very glad to be a part of this conference on Sikhism in global context. Many of our departments focus on South East Asian Studies [with a focus on] texts, rituals and performance [SEATrip]; we also have growing departments of Middle-Eastern Studies, Islamic Studies, Latin-American Studies, and Global Studies. We have adopted a motto this year, "At Home in the World", showing the diversity in Riverside and that this is the most diverse campus in UC California and in the country."¹

As the organizer of the seminar, I showed the audience a beautiful bouquet of flowers that was sent from New Zealand especially for the occasion with a brief note: "To Pashaura Singh, Baljeet and all assembled for the gathering. Greetings! Best wishes from Hew McLeod and Margaret." The audience acknowledged the gift with a thunderous