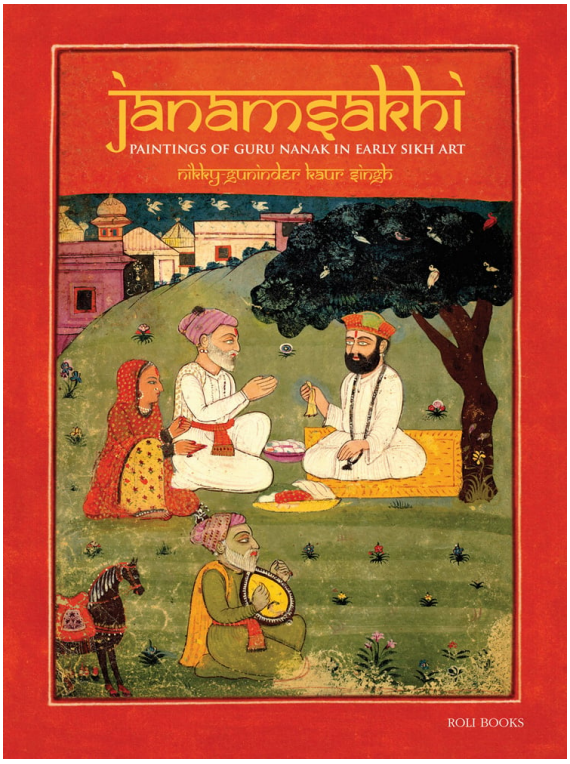
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Janamsakhi

Paintings of Guru Nanak in Early Sikh Art

Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh

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- Janamsakhis are stories about the life of Guru Nanak (1469–1539)
- B40 is one such documented artistic expression held at the British Library in London
- Its 57 beautiful iconotexts narrate the life of the first Sikh Guru from his first day at school to his final moments

'Janamsakhis' are stories about the life of Guru Nanak (1469–1539). They have been circulating orally, in writing, and in paintings and illustrations. B40 is one such documented artistic expression held at the British Library in London. Its 57 beautiful iconotexts narrate the life of the first Sikh Guru from his first day at school to his final moments. The talented artist Alam Chand Raj illustrates Guru Nanak's sensuous feel for the all-inclusive Divine, his interior and exterior journeys, his manifold inter-faith conversations, his environmental aesthetics, and his marvelous actions. In the language of vibrant colors Guru Nanak's transcendent materiality and world-affirming existentiality are exquisitely written out. The stylistic infusions of Punjabi art, Chaurapanchasika style and folk-art style of the Rajasthani Malwa School bring the historical Guru close to the viewer. Along with the artwork there is the rich text by Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh explaining the stories from a 21st-century perspective. She insightfully explores the question – how are the Janamsakhis relevant to the political, societal, economic, and environmental state of the world at present.

Dr Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh was born in India and went to America to attend Stuart Hall, a girls' preparatory school in the USA. She received her BA in Philosophy and Religion from Wellesley College, MA from the University of Pennsylvania, and PhD from Temple University. Dr. Nikky is the Chair of the department and Crawford Family Professor of Religion at Colby College in the USA. Her interests focus on poetics and feminist issues. She has published extensively in the field of Sikh Studies. Her books include*Poems from the Guru Granth Sahib, The First Sikh: Life and Legacy of Guru Nanak, Of Sacred and Secular Desire: An Anthology of Lyrical Writings from the Punjab, Sikhism: An Introduction, Birth of the Khalsa: A Feminist Re-memory of Sikh Identity, Cosmic Symphony: The Early and Later Poems of Bhai Vir Singh, Feminine Principle in the Sikh Vision of the Transcendent, The Name of My Beloved, Physics and Metaphysics of the Guru Granth Sahib*. She has lectured widely, and her views have also been aired on television and radio in America, Canada, England, Ireland, Australia, India, and Bangladesh. She has received many awards for her scholarly works. In 2022, City of Fresno in California proclaimed 26 March as 'Dr. Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh' Day.

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