



**The Mumbai Münster Institute of Advanced Studies (MMIAS)
University of Mumbai**

Invites you to the online talk on

**The Red Turbans of Shanghai: From Colonial
Instruments to Anti Colonialists, 1885-1945**

In the **MMIAS International Interdisciplinary Lecture Series** by

Dr. Manpreet Singh
Author and Independent Researcher

Date: 23rd January 2023 | Time: 3:00 PM IST

The Sikhs are a community originating from undivided Punjab prior to the partition of the country. Sikhism was started by Guru Nanak as a reformist spiritual movement in the 15th century. Under the next nine Gurus the community grew, prospered but also got into conflict with the Mughal establishment, leading to their growth into a martial identity, which includes their bearded and turbaned bearing.

The British, during the colonization of India, militarized this martial identity, making Sikhs an integral part of their army and an instrument of furthering their colonial interests across the world. A lesser known fact is the use of Sikhs as policemen in South East Asia to further British trade interests. This lecture is about the Sikh policemen deployed in the International Settlement in Shanghai, how they used the system to their advantage, their lives outside the uniform and their dealings with the locals. It also details their eventual disenchantment with the British under the influence of the Gadhari movement around World War I, their growing sympathy for the nationalist movement in China, and their covert participation in attempts to overthrow British rule in India.

The story of these Sikh policemen would be an uncomfortable fit within the nationalist narratives, and has therefore rarely been chronicled. It calls for further research, for in it lie the trajectories of a people caught in colonial circumstances.



Dr. Manpreet J. Singh is the author of *"The Sikh Next Door: An Identity in Transition"* a work which probes the Sikh community's diverse historical trajectories, breaks through the stereotypes surrounding it, and recontextualizes it in a contemporary urban framework. The book was published by Bloomsbury in 2020. Her M.Phil in English is from Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, and Ph.D in English is from Mumbai University. She has previously taught at Mata Sundri College, Delhi University and has now relocated to Mumbai, as a full time writer. In 2014, Indo Canadian Studies Centre, University of Mumbai, awarded her the "South Asia Diaspora Fund" senior research fellowship for research on Sikh community in British Columbia. The research and field work were aided

by British Columbia province and University of Fraser Valley, Canada. She has presented papers on different facets of Sikh identity in national and international conferences. Her interests centre around contemporary literature, gender studies, ethnic identities, popular culture, postcolonial perspectives and their intersections. Her previous works include 1) *The Golden Arc: A Collection of Poems* and 2) *Male Image Female Gaze: Men in Shashi Deshpande's Fiction*.

Zoom details

Meeting ID - 835 5112 7368 | Passcode - 852481

Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83551127368?pwd=M2dMdXdmd0psemo3djR1Rkc5T3hsUT09>