

OUR SINGAPORE:

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A Sikh Gurdwara

A Gurdwara is a place of worship for Sikhs, a small religious community in Singapore.

Most Sikh men wear a turban to wrap their uncut hair. The turban and beard are a way of declaring their Sikh identity. Another symbol that they wear is a metal bracelet, which is meant to remind Sikhs to do the right deeds.

Devotional singing, or kirtan, is an important part of Sikh prayers. The singing is accompanied by the tabla, a kind of Indian drum, and stringed instruments invented by the Sikh Gurus.

All devotees worship together sitting on the floor, signifying that they all have equal status.

The teachings of the Sikhs are found in the 1430 pages of the Guru Granth Sahib. This is a compilation of hymns from the great Sikh teachers, called Gurus. Sikhism was founded by Guru Nanak in India in the year 1469. At that time, Hinduism and Islam were the main religions in India. So, the Guru Granth Sahib also contains verses from Hindu and Muslim holy men respected by the Gurus.

The Khanda is a Sikh symbol made up of a double-edged sword, a circle and two swords on either side. It symbolises God's power.

During prayers, the scriptures are housed under a palanquin-like structure, the highest platform in the hall.

These words "Ek-Onkar" are an important Sikh symbol found around the Gurdwara. The words mean "There is one God". In their daily prayers, Sikhs are reminded to be tolerant and respectful of other religions, and to work for people's common good. Sikh temples even have kitchens serving free food. To be considerate to visitors whose religions have strict dietary rules, the temple kitchens only serve vegetarian food.

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