

## They Thought I Was a Girl!

June 1

Dear Takuya,

Thanks for sending me photographs of you and your family. All of you look really cool in kimonos.

I am glad that you have a lot of fun with your little sister. But I don't really like babies, Takuya. I find them very annoying. I don't think I will love her like you love your sister.

I liked hearing about *Bon-oduri*, the Japanese dance festival. It sounds like a lot of fun. We have a dance called *Bhangra*. It is very fast and a lot of fun, too. We wear colorful costumes when we perform *Bhangra*.

No, I am not the tallest kid in the class. But I do have the longest hair. Sikhs do not cut their hair. My mom ties my hair into a knot on top of my head and covers it with a *patka*, a scarf with strings. It is tied snugly around my head to keep my hair in place.

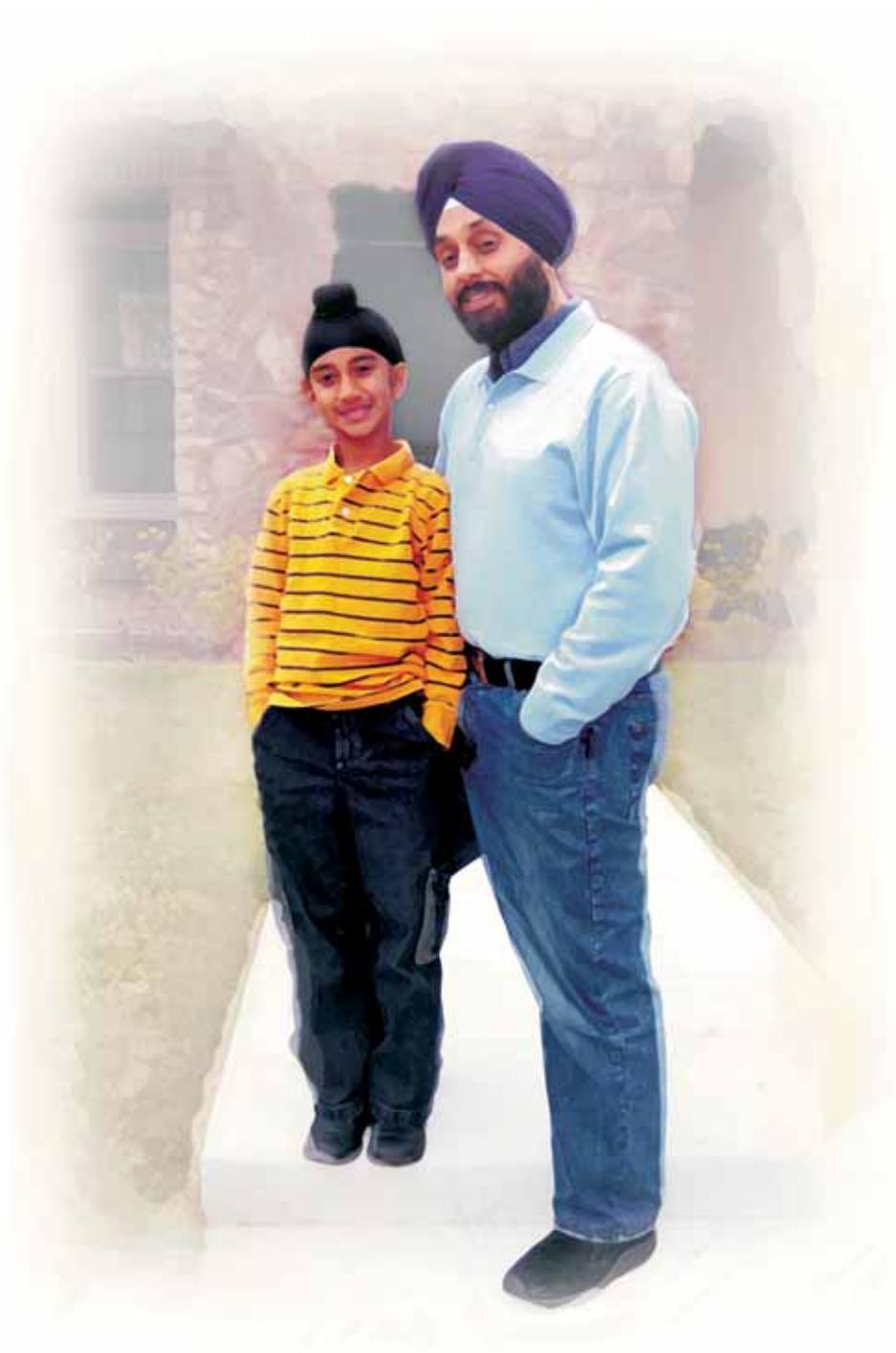
When I grow up, I'm going to wear a turban, like my dad. The turban is tied from a long piece of cloth that wraps around the head.

Sometimes, when my dad removes his turban, I try it on. I look kind of silly, because the turban is too big for my head. But I like doing this, because it makes me feel all grown up.

In India, kings used to wear turbans in the olden days. My dad has a scrap-book of turbans of different kinds. Some turbans look very fancy. Rich people wore them. Important people wore very large and beautiful turbans.

I am the only longhaired boy in my school. Some kids thought that I was a girl. Even when I told them I was a boy, they would tease me and tell me to go to the girls' bathroom. I wanted to punch them, but I was too scared of being sent to the principal's office.

One day, when I came home really upset, my mom decided to come to my school. She gave a short lecture on Sikh history and culture to my class.



When I grow up, I am going to wear a turban, like my dad.

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