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In Pursuit of Knowledge: A Pashtun's Life from East to West

A highly sensitive, wide ranging, often funny but interesting,
informative autobiography by Dr. Sher Mohammad Khan
Nuclear Medicine specialist

Dr. Sher Muhammad Khan Swati Paindakhel hails from Swat and belongs to Paindakhel Yusufzai tribe. I have known him since many years and since he is also a founder member of Pakistan Aspirin Foundation, it provided me an opportunity to travel with him quite a few times. During my recent visit to Peshawar he was kind enough to provide me a copy of his autobiography "In Pursuit of Knowledge: A Pushtun's Life from East to West" which despite an overdose of sex, I have found extremely informative, revealing and interesting. It helps the reader to familiarize with Pukhtunwali, the Pukhtun Code of Ethics besides shedding light on numerous important medico political issues besides educating the readers about the Pukhtun culture. Not only has that it also helps the reader to clear some of the misgivings which the younger generation has been fed over the years about some important political leaders of Pakistan.

The Book is divided into three parts i.e. A Pashtun's Life, A Pashtun in England and Return to the National Health Services. The Foreword of the book has been written by two eminent personalities i.e. Paula Rubel and Abraham Rosman Professors of Anthropology from Columbia University. They have described the book a very sensitive, wide ranging and often very funny autobiography. Apart from the Values of Pukhtunwali- the code of conduct, another theme covered in the book relates to

dishonesty, favoritism, intellectual corruption and profiteering which prevails in Pakistan.

While reviewing this book, I have tried to summarize some of the important messages which it contains though it was quite difficult to cover everything. Recalling his early childhood days in the village, Dr. Sher Muhammad Khan admits that he was a willing partner with the older girls from the neighborhood in the night games though he has not specified the nature of the games. Quail fights, cockfights, dogfights and bull fights were the popular entertainment in those days. While going through the book I also came to know for the first time that the term Khan is given to Pukhtun simply means that one is a land owner and member of a Khel or tribe. Hostility between fathers and son, he says, is common in Pukhtun society. The probable reason is that fathers are autocratic and keep their sons dependent.

He has specially mentioned about one Mohammad Nisar Khan who he says was a paragon of Pukhtun virtues handsome, intelligent, courageous and generous. Pukhtun, he writes, have always been great travelers and adventures moving far and wide in search of work and opportunity. They become merchants, truck drivers, taxi drivers, night watchmen, body guard, labourers, sailors, businessmen. They do almost any job where hard work and perseverance leads to success. That is one of the reasons that one can find Pukhtun almost everywhere in the world.

In our Hujra in Swat, there was entertainment almost every night as musicians performed on the Rubab, Sitar, Harmonium and Tabla. The dancers both boys and girls wore expensive dresses as well as jewelry. He recalls one of the popular songs "*Laar sha pekhwar ta, kamis tor mala rawra*" wherein a girl beseeches her lover to bring her an embroidered shirt from Peshawar.

Another song he remember meant "Grow flowers so that your world becomes a garden. Don't grow thorns for they will prick your own feet".

He like many others has lot of good words to say about the Wali of Swat State who used to look after the population,

providing health and education services. Miangul Abdul Wadud was staunchly religious, intelligent, and clever and used all his skills to stabilize the anarchic conditions in Swat. He with his son and eventual successor Jehan Zeb concentrated on bringing education, healthcare and better communications system to the valley. To large extent they succeeded in their ambitions until 1969 when Swat State was fully amalgamated into Pakistan which resulted in deterioration, instability, corruption and militancy.

For Swati's, friendship Dr. Sher Muhammad Khan says was and is considered to be much more important and binding than relations with sons or brothers which are often hostile due to rivalries over property. Wali allowed Afzal Khan to return to the valley in return for his support. Later Afzal Khan became a leader of NAP and a powerful figure in national politics. Hostilities between various tribes are also discussed in detail.

It was Sher Khan's sons who tried to keep his political authority but ended up feuding among themselves. However they acted together to take revenge on Jehan Zeb the Wali of State actively supporting the centralization and amalgamation of Swat with Pakistan thus helping to end his family rule. Prince Aurangzeb, Captain in Army was ADC to General Ayub Khan who later got married to Ayub Khan's Daughter Naseem. Mianguls still remain powerful in Swat.

In the good old days in Pukhtun society, Dr. Sher Muhammad Khan write, Mullahs were not well respected and were often the butt of jokes. In those days the young Talibs came from underprivileged families. Following Pukhtun custom whenever there was a stranger staying in the mosque or Hujra, he was automatically provided with food, tea and shelter without any questions being asked. Under the rule of Badsha one seminary was built and funded in the capital Saidu Sahrif. This was the beginning of the gradual rise empower and authority of the religious classes in Swat. In Swat State, Ruler's tight control over Swat was supplemented with emphasis on development in education, health and infrastructure. However, as soon as Swat State became part of Pakistan, corruption and bribery became

rampant. Justice was for sale and rules were not made for the benefit of the masses.

A new kind of religious revival began in Swat in 70s. A religious person in Shangla inspired many people who came to him for his blessings. The Badsha saw him as a threat to his authority and had him dropped into a dry well and killed. After these developments, one of the political leaders said in March 2012 “Khanism is finished. There is also a proverb in Pashto which means Mullah should not be your role model. From his personal experience about the activities of a man with beard working at Director Office at LRH, Dr. Sher Muhammad Khan writes that long beards and marks on the forehead because of prayers are no guarantee of good behavior towards the fair sex.

After initial schooling gaining further education in Swat and achieving a respectable position in Swati society was dependent on three things, scholastic ability, family background and financial status. It was due to Taliban threat who raided his house, took away medical instruments and other items that he and his family had to stop going to Swat. Laying emphasis on proper planning, he says that if you do not plan, you are planning to fail. Pashtun’s Dr. Sher Muhammad Khan says behave differently when they are away from home and they become far more peaceful, friendly and hardworking on the whole. Writing about Pashtun traditions and culture, Dr. Sher Muhammad Khan says that anyone seeking refuge had to be given protection with no questions asked. In Pukhtun society you usually blame others for mistakes but take credit yourself if there is a victory.

While in Paris with a Waziri friend, he recalls they met a lady selling ticket for a show in the evening. When asked about the show she said it was very Hot. My Waziri friend who later became a radiologist asked me what is meant by Hot, I said, I do not know. We decided to go to the show. It turned out to be a nude show and my Waziri friend kept his eyes shut most of the time. When he opened his eyes, he looked at his watch and said, it is time for prayers. Which direction is Mecca? In the meantime a girl reached to us and asked my Waziri friend to pull down her pants which he did but with closed eyes.

Pukhtun brought up in their own surroundings, Dr. Sher Muhammad Khan says think everything can be achieved with force. Moreover in Pukhtun society female are not supposed to inherit property hence male child is always preferred. Pukhtun also blame his wife if anything worth keeping is missing while Jealousy goes hand in hand with generosity in Pukhtun culture. Pukhtun are generally highly individualistic but if there is a threat from outside, they unit. Pukhtun are usually impatient in their work and dealings. Using both hands for clasping is a mark of respect in Pukhtun tradition. A bear hug is normal if you know the person very well.

Safi is a clan of the well-known Momand tribe that straddles the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. They are known for their love of independence and self-respect and for supporting each other. When Pukhtun get together they mainly give sarcastic accounts of the bad points of others but during my ten years of stay in England serving in NHS I rarely encountered people talking in this manner.

While studying at Murree, Dr. Sher Muhammad Khan recalls his chance meeting with Ghaffar Khan in the Bazar. When he came to know that I speak Pashto and was studding here, he patted me on the back and said “Education is the best.” Now Ghaffar Khan is almost forgotten though it was he who led the successful Pukhtun struggle against British colonialism with his organization Khudai Khitmatgars, the Red Shirts. Since he opposed the partition of Pakistan from India, his memory has almost been erased form the official memory.

Ghaffar Khan was known to be a friend of non-Muslims. For these reasons his loyalty to Pakistan was questioned and the work of Red Shirts was forgotten. He quotes Mr. Ghani Khan (GK) a poet philosopher and sculptor who was admitted in the Bolton Block of Lady Reading Hospital at Peshawar. According to Mr. Ghani Khan, when Pakistan came into being Baacha Khan was peaceful man who wanted to devote the rest of his life to the welfare of human beings and the new country. So he

wrote a letter to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and gave it to GK to be delivered. GK was stopped at the right bank of Indus River near the Attock Bridge. The letter was confiscated and he was sent to prison. The history of Pakistan tarnished by military coups, assassinations, dismemberment, insurgency, targeted killings, corruption and power shortages would have been different if these two great leaders of the subcontinent, Jinnah and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan had come together in their pursuit of uplift of the people and the region.

Wali Khan son of Ghaffar Khan once said, he was first Pukhtun and then Muslim by which he meant that Pukhtun have been living for centuries while Islam came later. However this was exploited by official and non-official elements leading to deleterious effects on the nonviolence movement among Pukhtun.

It is the quality education, imparted to students overseas as well as due to character building by their educated teachers which makes them good human beings. For peace and prosperity and progress, good institutions with good teachers, he says, are essential. However, our education is completely examination oriented. To produce better graduates it has to change to a more knowledge oriented approach.

Dr. Najib Ullah Khan whose parents came from Punjab and settled in Swat played a vital role in establishing quality healthcare in Swat State. He also had a great influence on me and was my mentor as well.

Omar Khayyam said “Life is like a bridge there are holes at the beginning into which one falls, followed by fewer holes in the middle. But at the end of the bridge there are chasms which one cannot escape”. During my younger days in Swat there were many holes. Common diseases in the village at that time were loose bowel motions and fever, coughs colds pneumonia, Whooping cough, measles, chickenpox, smallpox, goiter and intestinal worms were also common. Though I got admissions both at King Edward Medical College and Khyber Medical College, I finally decided to study at Peshawar since it was near. When admitted

to KMC in Peshawar I was delighted as I was going to study in a place where there were smart single girls. Fake domiciles were used to get admission in medical colleges on seats reserved for Waziristan and other tribes. Material corruption such as bribery was uncommon among the tribal people but smuggling was simply considered to be free trade.

Writing about the Missionary Hospitals, he says that their real objective remains conversion to Christianity. They also do good work in the medical field. One of these Missionary doctors told him that despite his twenty years of medical and missionary work in the Pukhtun region, he could only convert two persons and they too were killed by their relatives. However, in China where he had also gone as a missionary, he was pleased to report that he had converted hundreds to Christianity. Once a Hindu remarked to me that what a religion Islam is?. When you want to join, they chop off a part of your penis and when you want to leave, they chop off your head.

Rigging in elections Dr. Sher Muhammad Khan says stated immediately after the creation of Pakistan. Winning at any cost is ingrained in our culture. There is a famous saying "Give Gold to become a Khan, when you are Khan then there is plenty of Gold."

In the college I took part in a skit labeled "Da Wache Khan" the good for nothing Khan. The Pukhtun are known to be good administrators who get work done because they use harsh measures to punish failures. We found many of our teaches in basic sciences boring, they used to put no effort into making these subjects interesting and their own formal training was usually lacking. Prof. Inayat Khan Prof. of Pharmacology was an exception who knew how to make the subject interesting. While I was a medical student, Dr. Sher Muhammad Khan says, medical students used to go to Karachi or Lahore to see childbirth. As expected in the final year Jauhar Khatoon won the Gold Medal as she was not only a pretty face but also brainy.

City of Peshawar, he says, has produced many good doctors like Prof. Qazi, Dr. Saeedul Majeed, Dr. Sher Ahmad, and Dr.

Amjad Hussain. Dr. Naseem Ashraf became President of APPNA. He had close relations with Senators and Congressmen in USA, became friendly with General Pervez Musharraf who appointed him a minister and later he also became Chairman of Pakistan Cricket Board.

Dr. M.K. Afridi a world renowned malariologist was Vice Chancellor of Peshawar University. How Dr. Afridi handled the student when they went on strike for recognition of their college by the PM&DC is interesting. He recalls that Dr. Afridi addressed the students in pathology department. We thought he will announce some harsh measures but he said, students had strengthened his hands, we cheered and strike ended. Then he went to see Health Minister Gen. Burki and President Ayub Khan and Khyber Medical College was recognized.

Writing about the psychology of the patients, Dr. Sher Muhammad Khan says that a patient is never satisfied unless the doctor makes use of the stethoscope. Patients need their blood pressure recorded and some investigations done. They love ultrasound which is known as TV examination. He recalls that once he took a friend for consultation to urologist. He examined the patient and gave him prescription. The patient refused to pay consultation fee as no medicine were given or prescribed. At this the surgeon replied, "If you consent to fondle my balls, I will pay you double my Fee". Regarding reluctance of the Pukhtun in general to examine their back passage, he says, there are certain areas in Afghanistan and Khyber PK which are known for homosexuality. He also shares a joke that "when the birds are flying over Kandahar and Bannu, they cover their back passages with their wings for fear of molestation". Some people say that Allah Raziq hai but we must remember that a stray dog is provided food from the garbage pit.

As per our traditions, a Pukhtun has to attend the guest first and provide hospitality. A Pukhtun also has to be helpful to whomever seeks help or protection and is obliged to be generous and to provide sanctuary. These are the fundamental principles of Pukhtunwali the Pukhtun code of honour.

At one time Dabgari area in Peshawar where many doctors' clinics are located was known for its brothels. Once, Dr. Sher Muhammad Khan writes, he heard someone say that the "Sex workers have been replaced by medical prostitutes." Greed is common in every profession and medical profession is no exception though it is called the Noble profession.

Strained relations between Prof. Raza and Prof. Nasir were known to all the students. Prof. S.A. Raza was senior to Prof. Nasir and used to make lot of money in private practice. We were careful not to take sides as for us passing was most important. I topped the university examination in Third year which was a surprise for every one as they had expected Jauhar Khatoon or Ismael Mahmudi to grab the top position. I was happy as I came to the attention of the girl student's in our class including some senior girl students.

Prof. Feroze Shah was a very skilled surgeon. Once after a clash with another group of students, I went to apologize to Prof. Shah. Dr. Shah accepted my apology and said that "in losing one's temper, one's pulse races, one's blood pressure rises and one does not gain anything." It is a fact that countries with high standards of living have low Affability. Generally Pukhtun does not believe in making apologies. In fact there is no known original word in Pukhtun for sorry. Perhaps Pukhtun feel one must suffer if he does something wrong or perhaps his pride mean she can never admit to wrongdoings. But in a British run school our teacher taught us to say Sorry.

Ahmad Shah Abdali was one of the greatest conquerors who ever appeared in Asia. He was the creator of independent Afghanistan. Another king who belonged to this region Afghanistan and NWFP and who is considered to be the greatest which the world has ever produced and will produce as per Deputy Director of India Office Library of London was Sher Khan who became Sher Shah Suri. Like Ahmd Shah Abdali he was all the time concerned with making the lives of his subjects easier and better. The present political leaders in Afghanistan and

the ISAF/NATO forces can and should emulate the character and habits of successful past rulers like Ahmad Shah Abdali and Sher Shah Suri. They put welfare of their people first and acted without arrogance. Winning the hearts and minds of people in this region would be conducive to lasting peace which in turn will lead to progress and prosperity. The world Dr. Sher Muhammad Khan says has not yet learnt to deal with Pukhtun. Force and military solutions have never succeeded in the past. It is high time for fresh thinking and a new approach to be adopted. There is no dearth of scholars in the world.

Dr. Sher Muhammad Khan did internship at Saidu Hospital with Dr. Najib Ullah who had graduated from King Edward Medical College in 1949. Najib once wrote about Dr. Sher Muhammad “Sher had learnt his dictum that medicine has to be a scientific, logical and diagnosis oriented adjustable to local social and economic circumstances.” Dr. Sher Muhammad Khan recalls that while at night duty in an emergency, it was from Dr. Najib that he learnt that one can sometimes cure madness with multivitamins injections. We had a patient with pellagra, which is a vitamin deficiency disease consisting of three Ds, diarrhea, dermatitis and dementia. I rang up Dr. Najib who said “Give him some vitamins which I did and the patient became alright”.

Writing about his days in London, Dr. Sher Muhammad Khan says that London is a real welfare state. British National Health Service which is envy of the entire civilized world was started in the 1940s by the Labour Health Minister Aneurin Bevan. It was further encouraged later by other likeminded people and it has so far sustained despite some difficulties. One black Jamaican speaker was very popular in Hyde Park. Once I had gone there and he said to me “Some people look white but their hearts are with the Black”. In UK most of the immigrants, rightly or wrongly, feel they were discriminated and seeing the features of Boxer Mohammad Ali, I was convinced that “Black can be beautiful”. In London I learnt from my teachers that there are three indications for dong

the tests. One is medical, the second is academic interest and the third is because some bloody fool has told you to do it. Accountability is well in place in UK hospitals whereas in Pakistan one can get away with murders.

During Registrar-ship in UK I learnt from Dr. McDonald how to write a recommendation letter. I also learnt there how to write a report for a lawyer in a legal case, the longer the text, the higher is the fees, I was told. In UK responsibilities and ethics are inculcated in the medical students. There were no formalities. He also recalls that while preparing a patient for sigmoidoscopy one of the senior house officers said to me do you want him to face Mecca or Jerusalem by which he meant the knee/elbow position? I said I would prefer him to face Rome meaning the lateral position. These rare exchanges about patients were never mentioned in front of them. A sense of humor, he says, is essential if one is supposed to remain humble in dealing with others

Recalling another incident while working in NHS, Dr. Sher Muhammad Khan says that I asked a nurse to give me lignocaine for injection which at that time was the standard for heart irregularity. After injection the patient started having fits but recovered. It turned out that the dose was ten times more than recommended. I had forgotten an important lesson which was to check the medicine before injecting the patient. One learns from one's mistakes but mistakes by doctors and nurses are sometimes very costly.

Discussing another incident he writes that "I was fond of dogs and was accustomed to all sorts of howling in my village but I did appreciate that on a compliant, my Neighbor's dog was taken by police because another neighbor had complained of disturbances through excessive barking. It showed that neighbors also have some rights.

Writing about his marriage, Dr. Sher Muhammad Khan says that my refusal to marry a girl from the family had created a lot of problems and rift in the family. Eventually I got married to an Iranian girl who hails from Isfahan. It so happened that Shehnaz

who later became my wife, had come to learn English in an English Language school in Bournemouth. I jokingly told her I will teach her English and she should teach me Persian. As I was fond of Persian books Gulistan and Bostan by Saadi. We fell in love with each other and despite the reluctance of our parents eventually got married. First time we got married in a local church. Second time in the Iran embassy in London. At the time of our marriage in Iranian embassy in London, an official told me “We have given you a beautiful Iranian girl”. I answered and you have got a handsome Pakistani boy. Third time Nikah ceremony was performed by Maulana Abu Ala Maudoodi who was on a visit to UK. Shehnaz has always been a good mother a good wife, very understanding and supportive to my extended family.

While in UK for postgraduate studies, Dr. Sher Muhammad Khan had every desire to come back to Pakistan and serve his country. This is reflected from the letter which he wrote in BMJ (April 19, 1969) in response to leading article about overseas doctors . It said, “Doctors from overseas especially from underdeveloped countries should remember that the poor people in their own countries may not be able to offer them material benefits but a doctor is still held in high esteem there, and is highly respected in these communities. The present conditions in the countries of origin of these doctors should act as a challenge and not a deterrent.

Working in NHS I also observed that English people are cold and do not express their emotions in public and ignorance about other people and cultures can breed all sorts of misunderstandings. English people are too polite to say no, unlike in Pukhtun areas where one can straight away refuse to do something.

In UK, Dr. Sher Muhammad Khan writes, I tried my luck at different centers but could not get through MRCP Exam. Eventually before returning I managed to pass MRCP examination. I did not want to return without any postgraduate qualification as it would be a shame for me as I was brought up in Pukhtun family where one had to succeed at any cost. I was very much impressed with Dr. McCready’s Secretary; polite,

smartly dressed and shapely. McCready was one of the pioneers of nuclear medicine in UK with whom later I worked for my MSc in Nuclear Medicine. In UK seeing a person with hemiplegia giving lecture was a new experience and a lesson for me. We need to have research minded teachers and seniors to inculcate the spirit of research in juniors.

When I returned to Pakistan, I had MSc and MRCP and thought it will be easier to get a job in Khyber Medical College but I had not foreseen the difficulties and was not aware of medical politics. I later learnt that Dr. Amjad Hussain on return could not find a job. But as it is said, if you have talent then sky is the limit. It was perhaps Amjad's ambition, straightforwardness and lack of humility of which his seniors in the surgical department at LHR had become jealous. He was bitter about his seniors Dr. Feroze Shah and Prof. Kabir in the surgical department. They had lucrative practice and did not want competition. Dr. Kabir was intelligent and clever doctor who succeeded in establishing lucrative practice, established medical college and then university in the private sector. Political and business connections , national connections, futuristic thinking enable him to achieve what he wanted for the benefit of his own family and other people.

Pashtun's he complains have often been ignored. To give some examples he writes that rulers in Pakistan had removed a popular Governor, Azam Khan a Pukhtun who had done a lot for East Pakistan and wanted their rightful share in development. Again first Mr. Z.A. Bhutto ignored the deserving Pukhtun Army General and appointed General Ziaul Haq as Army Chief because he was thought to be a weak and malleable. Later same Gen. Ziaul Haque executed him. Another Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif ignored the deserving senior most General from NWFP Ali Kuli Khan for Army Chief but appointed Musharraf. He had to pay with imprisonment and asylum for having ignored the senior most General.

Dr. Sher Muhammad Khan also refers to one MA who had refused to accept an award when Ziaul Haque was Martial

Law Administrator and President of Pakistan because he said, he had executed Mr. Bhutto an elected Prime Minister of Pakistan. MA believed that the greatest harm to Pakistan has been done by military dictators. Suppressive governments and society and weak leadership make countries less developed. Empowerment of people at grass root level makes things better. Decentralization has also proved better for countries and their people but one wonders why these proven methods are not adopted in Pakistan.

Dr. Sher Muhammad Khan visited Iran many times and he recalls once in Iran I tried to speak Persian and my first victim was a person at a petrol station where I wanted to check the air in the tyres. I asked him "*Agha Hawadari*". He looked at me but did not say anything. I had in fact asked him whether the man had gas in his stomach for expulsion through his back passage. Iranian food is healthy salad, vegetables and fruit. Rice is staple with Dough fermented sour milk (Lassi) is the favorite drink. In Persian showing admiration for an object is thought to mean that the person wants the object. Hence be careful. He also recalls his visit to Mashhad where the eighth's Imam Raza has a shrine which is visited by millions of Muslims each year. Temporary marriages also take place in Mashhad and this is exploited as a form of prostitution. Cleanliness and tidiness are instilled in Iranians from childhood. Sacrifice is built into the culture of Persians. In Isfahan which is called Nisaf Jehan the old bridges over the rivers in the city, the carpets and the intricate work on the silverware and on wood is fascinating.

Dr. Sher Muhammad Khan in his autobiography also quotes a story narrated to him by a doctor who accompanied General Ayub Khan and Sikandar Mirza when they went to see the then Governor General Ghulam Muhammad who was seriously ill. He was unconscious because of a serious disease affecting the brain. Ayub Khan came nearer to the Governor General and said in a loud voice " Sir, we will miss you" The governor General opened his eyes at which Ayub Khan said to Sikandar

Mirza “the bastard is still alive.” The dictators in Third world countries, he says, need to be exposed regarding their medical history so that the world becomes a more peaceful place to live in.

Since Mullah Omar was a student of Maulana Nizamudidn Shamizai in Karachi, it was thought that perhaps he will listen to his teacher. Hence, Lt. Gen. Moinuddin Haider along with Maulana Nizamuddin Shamizai, Dr.Sher Muhammad Khan writes went to Mullah Omar in Kandhar and asked him to hand over Osama Bin Laden but Mullah Omar could not be convinced because Panah or protection to a stranger or guest is built in in Pukhtunwali.

In the West Children are assessed in schools and groomed and helped in their career according to their aptitudes. All this of course depends on properly educated and trained teachers. Having seen them working successfully in every sphere of life, Dr. Sher Muhammad Khan believes that putting the fair sex in charge of certain departments should also remove material corruption in the developing countries.

In a letter to Dr. Sher Muhammad Khan which is published in the book, Dr. Gena Lee Nolin says that one should always think outside the box in terms of the diagnosis and treatment of your patients. Listen to your patient and look at their clinical presentation when they tell you their symptoms and how they are feeling. They know their body better than anyone.

He also talks about how he eventually managed to get a job at IRNUM, his strained relationship with the Director IRNUM which eventually led to his transfer to Multan. He also shares his experience and has a word of advice for every one that “Remember in Pakistan people can collect false evidence to implicate you in serious crime.” Medical doctors are by and large poor managers because they are not taught management skills during their undergraduate studies. On the other hand they are also averse to being controlled by non-medical personnel because of their ego. A multidisciplinary approach is the best to manage a medical problem but I found that most doctors wanted to work in isolation.

The book also carries a detailed interview with Charles Lindholm published in October 2003 about the conflict in Afghanistan Pakistan and how to solve the problem of militancy and what role world powers can play. Dr. Sher Muhammad Khan has done a great service to the Pukhtun community by writing this autobiography which is much more than his personal story. He has been very truthful and courageous to share some very personal and family stories. However, it has also put some people in a difficult situation. One of the senior professors remarked that having gone through Dr.Sher Muhammad Khan's autobiography, I have decided not to write mine because if I also try to be as truthful, it will make the life of many individuals and families who are still alive miserable and I am not prepared to take this risk.

This 422-page book which narrowly crosses the figure of 420, is published by Mereo Books, The Memoirs Publishing Group Ltd in Great Britain in 2015. E mail: info@mereobooks.com.

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Important Points

1. Swat used to be a peaceful valley. Wali of Swat State used to look after the population, providing health and education services
2. For Swati's, friendship was and is considered more important and binding than relations with sons or brothers which are often hostile due to rivalries over property
3. Pashtun's behave differently when they are away from home and they become far more peaceful, friendly and hardworking

Important Points

4. Pukhtun brought up in their own surroundings think everything can be achieved with force and Jealousy goes hand in hand with generosity in Pukhtun culture
5. Give Gold to become a Khan, when you are Khan then there is plenty of Gold.
6. In losing one's temper, pulse races, blood pressure rises and one does not gain anything - Prof. Feroz Shah
7. Ahmad Shah Abdali creator of independent Afghanistan was one of the greatest conquerors who ever appeared in Asia
8. Doctors are poor managers and averse to being controlled by non-medical personnel because of their ego
9. World has not yet learnt to deal with Pukhtun. Force and military solutions have neither succeeded in the past nor will it in future
10. Amjad Hussain could not get job because of his ambition, straightforwardness and lack of humility of which his seniors in the surgical department at LHR had become jealous
11. Accountability is well in place in UK hospitals whereas in Pakistan one can get away with murders.
12. Decentralization and Empowerment of people at grass root level makes things better but one wonders why these proven methods are not adopted in Pakistan.
13. Governor General Ghulam Muhammad opened his eyes at which Ayub Khan said to Sikandar Mirza "the bastard is still alive"
14. Always think outside the box in terms of the diagnosis and treatment of your patients - Dr. Gena Lee Nolin