

Peoples' Stories during the Rule of the Last Wali of Swat, Mian Gul Jahanzeb (1949-1969)

Aftab Ahmed and Mujahid Torwali

Swat is a valley and an administrative district in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province of Pakistan. It was a Princely State until it was merged with Pakistan in 1969. In ancient history, it was called Udhyana and was the center of Darada, Gandhara and Hinduism.

Mian Gul Jahanzeb (1908-1987) was the last *Wali* (ruler) of Swat, who was popular for promoting education in the region. He served as the *Wali* of Swat between 1949 and 1969, taking over from his father, Mian Gul Abdul Wadud known as Baadshah Sahib (1917-1949).

The *Wali* headed each department of his administration. His role was that of king and religious leader, chief minister and commander-in-chief, chief exchequer and head *Qazi* (judge). He personally supervised every kind of construction work in the State. He ensured that his government provided good administration and productive revenue collection; a judicial system that provided quick and free justice to all. This was a unique system of administration. He also preserved the landmarks of previous cultures and protected the ancient ruins and other relics in the valley.

After its merger with Pakistan in 1969, Swat was mostly neglected by the government of Pakistan which resulted in the deterioration of its infrastructure and administration. Today, the people of Swat pine for the old, golden days; the period of the *Wali* of Swat. The recent Taliban insurgency is also described by many as a "nostalgic reaction" by many scholars. Though this is not true, many of the people of Swat remember the rule of Mian Gul Jahanzeb as the 'golden age'.

This paper contains some of the first hand stories told by elders regarding their memory of the 'golden age' - the rule of the last *Wali* of Swat, Mian Gul Jahanzeb (1949-1969). The paper is not a technical one. Rather, it is a casual collection of stories from the people of Swat about the *Wali* and State of Swat. Since most of the informants were illiterate, these stories are the dictations of the contributors.

During the time of my research from 2004 to 2015, I visited most of the areas of Swat and discovered that 90 percent of the hospitals and schools were constructed during the time of the *Wali* of Swat. During the *Wali's* rule, Swat was a model state in South Asia, with a literacy rate of 20 percent. Tourists from all over the world visited Swat with their families as there were special hotels and clubs for international tourists. Many visitors came from England and Europe and found Swat to be as comfortable as their homeland. As a child, I remember when the English people came with our parents to our homes, feeling as though they were relatives because of their sincere nature. This was due to peace that existed in Swat. Respect was given even to the land during the *Wali's* rule when no one was allowed to litter on the road sides. There was a special staff and department for the maintenance of Main Kalam Road as well as other tourism areas. The *Wali* of Swat was in great favor of environmentalism as well as tourism.

People's Stories

Education

Abdul Wahab

Age: 75 Years

Experience: 40 years as a primary teacher

Lives in Bahrain, Swat

“Before Jahanzeb’s era, Swat did not have a modern education system. Bacha laid the foundations of the modern education system in Swat, which was rapidly developed by his son (*Wali* Swat), later on. The *Wali* founded a girls’ high school in Saidu Sharif which is the first female educational institution of the tribal belt. Jahanzeb College for Men has the importance of Alligarh College in the entire Malakand division. He also established a missionary school at Sangota for girls.

For his unending love for knowledge he was given the title of *Sultanul Uloom* (Master of Knowledge) by the people of Swat and was awarded an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws (LLD) by the University of Peshawar. The *Wali* was a talent hunter and had a knack for summoning intelligent people for services from all over Pakistan. The *Wali* would personally call those parents whose children would not go to school.

Wali Swat lived for 80 years in which he built a legacy of 800 years with

his deeds. He loved education and wished the same for his people as he did for himself. The *Wali* of Swat took interest in all parts of the State; he established schools in every village and town of Swat. One can see the buildings of those schools in most of the villages today, including Kalam and Ushu."

Between 1949 and 1969, the *Wali* ordered the construction of 3 colleges, 36 high schools, 30 middle schools and more than 270 primary and lower primary schools. Literacy rates were reportedly higher in schools for both girls and boys than other parts of the province. Abdul Wahab retold one of his stories when he was in school, stating, "Once, one of my teachers was absent for two days and when the news reached Hakim Sahib, he fined the teacher with 8 extra duty hours even after 2 pm" that is, the teacher had to teach for the whole day from 8 am to 5 pm for two days as punishment.

Health

Faqeer Kalami

Age: 80 Years

From Kalam, Swat

I was traveling from Bahrain to Mingora (central city of Swat) when I met Faqeer Kalami, an elder from Kalam Valley. I inquired about his travels. He said that he was going to Mingora for a medical check-up. I questioned him whether there was a doctor in Kalam Hospital. He said, "There is a hospital but since 1980, the hospital has been run without a doctor and physicians of any kind". He added that in 1965, he had an operation on his kidney in Kalam Hospital but today there is no doctor there. He also added that during the *Wali's* era, there were hospitals and dispensaries in every village, with full time doctors but after 1969, when Swat merged with Pakistan, all posts became vacant and the hospitals had remained ghost-like since then. The old man wished that there could be better hospitals and schools in Kalam area as these were remote areas and people cannot travel long distances in the winter because of snow and landslides.

Justice

Qazi Ghufuranuddin, the last Chief Justice (*Qazi ul Qazza*)

Born in Nawakaley area of Mingora, Swat in 1924

I made a special visit to Mingora to meet Qazi Ghufuranuddin, the last Chief Justice (*Qazi ul Qazza*) of the former Swat State, who firmly believes that a strong judicial system and speedy dispensation of justice to the people was the secret behind durable peace and prosperity in the Princely State.

Qazi Ghufuranuddin, who served Swat State first as *Qazi* and then as *Qazi ul Qazza*, still recalls and discusses the golden era of *Wali Swat* Mian Gul Jahanzeb Abdul Haq, the last ruler of the State. Qazi Ghufuranuddin received his primary education at Wadudia High School, the first educational institution in Swat State. He later went to Dehli, India in 1936 at the age of 12, when he was in the seventh grade, to receive religious education.

“I was more inclined towards religious education so I got admission in Darul Uloom Fatehpuri in Dehli. I learned a lot from Mufti Kifayatullah Dihalwi, a noted Indian Islamic scholar”, *Qazi* recounted. Continuing, *Qazi ul Qazza* recalled the golden days of the former Princely State. Upon his homecoming, Qazi Ghufuranuddin was appointed *Qazi* (judge) in the Swat State judicial system upon the recommendation of Mian Gul Abdul Wadud Badshah Sahib.

“At first, I was appointed a teacher in the newly established Government High School Banr in Mingora Swat for a monthly salary of Rs. 75. However, I didn’t accept the job as I was interested in religious affairs, so *Wali Sahib* sent me to *Darul Qaza* (Justice Department) as *Qazi*”, he said. Qazi Ghufuranuddin was later promoted to the position of *Nazim-i-Ala* to monitor the judicial system across the State.

In the days ahead, he became *Qazi ul Qazza* of Swat State. “There were 24 *Qazza* departments in Swat State, while the one in Saidu Sharif was supreme *Darul Qazza*, having the central position, where cases would come if respondent(s) or defendant(s) objected to the verdict of the judicial department at *tehsil* level”, said Qazi Ghufuranuddin. Continuing, “If either party in a case had objection to the decision of *Darul Qazza* in Saidu Sharif, the case would be sent to *Darul Uloom* for review and a final

decision. The head of *Darul Uloom*, at that time, was Maulana Martoong, a renowned religious figure”, he said. He mentioned that most cases were of civil nature during the times of the Princely State.

Describing the judicial system of Swat State, Qazi Ghufuranuddin said, “During the rule of Badshah *Sahib*, verdicts of cases were given in line with the *riwaj* (customs) and *Sharia* (Islamic Law) but in the era of *Wali Sahib*, we would examine cases and announce verdicts on them purely in the light of Islamic Law and free from any influence”. He added that a panel of *Qazis* would decide a case after thorough consultation and in the light of evidence. Even a murder case would never take more than a week for a decision.

However, he admitted that some cases of a political nature were decided directly by the *Wali* of Swat. Referring to an incident showing the strong writ of the government in the Princely State, Qazi Ghufuranuddin remembered when he and *Wali Sahib* were once on a visit to upper Swat when they found a man, with his donkey, who appeared to be in trouble. “When asked, the man told *Wali Sahib* that he was carrying salt to Kalam on a donkey and after he had laid down to take some rest, awakening, found the salt was stolen. *Wali Sahib* immediately purchased salt for him from the State treasury and ordered the elders of the area to find and hand over the thief by 9 am the next morning. He warned them of strict action in case of failure. Early next morning, the thief appeared before *Wali Sahib* before 9 am”, he recounted. Qazi Ghufuranuddin stated that written records of all cases and their verdicts of the State era are still available.

Describing the status of peace during Swat State's times, Qazi Ghufuranuddin said that the State era was truly peaceful, during which time only 24 murder incidents occurred and the majority of those had happened in mountainous areas. Quoting the *Wali* of Swat, he said, “The last ruler of the Princely State always expressed his dreams to bring Swat to the level of Switzerland in development. Apart from striving to make the educational, communication and the health departments as model institutions, the *Wali* of Swat would continually focus his attention on beautification, tidiness and cleanliness of cities and towns within the State”.

Even after Swat State had merged with Pakistan in 1969, Qazi Ghufuranuddin continued to hold his position, working in the office until 1993. Regarded as a moderate religious figure, Qazi Ghufuranuddin strongly believes modern education to be indispensable for the development of a society. Likewise, he motivates people to administer anti-polio vaccinations to their children. Currently, he lives in Kokarai Valley with his children.

Qazi Ghufuranuddin has written several books and translated some Arabic and Persian books into the Pashto language, including "*Diwan* of Hafiz Alpurai". His *Tafseer* (book of translation and explanation) of the Holy Quran, titled "*Tarjuman ul Quran*", is also ready for publishing, while his books on inheritance, as well as a translation of difficult words of the Holy Quran, will soon be published.

Peace and Security

Meraj Gul

Age: 80 years

Lives in Gurnai UC, Mankial, Swat

"There was complete peace in Swat during the State", said Meraj Gul. "*Wali* was a man of keen observation and gave equal rights to all men of Swat. During the *Wali's* era, there was a unique judiciary system with swift and egalitarian decisions. During the era of *Wali* of Swat, a murder case was solved only in one week, so, due to this fast justice, no one dared to commit murder or any kind of sin. Once, a man killed another in the town and when the *Wali* received the news, he sent his police and ordered the community to present the murderer by 2 pm of the next day otherwise he would call the entire village to Saidu Sharif and would enquire with punishment on the spot. So, the community searched for the killer and presented him before the *Wali* of Swat by the said date and time. From that day till the end of Swat State, there was not a single murder case in our village."

Security Check-up

Sherin Zada

A former policeman

Age: 53 Years

Sherin Zada said that at one time he was on duty as a security officer around the *Wali* of Swat's residence. Around midnight, he was trying to sleep on a bench. While in deep sleep someone poured drops of water on him. When he opened his eyes, "I found the *Wali* of Swat standing before me. Instead of punishing me, he sent me to get some sleep and ordered the other soldiers to cover for me, as he knew that I was sleepy and couldn't fulfill my duty."

Administration

Sultan e Rome

Age: 82 years

Professor at Jananzeb College, Swat

According to Sultan e Rome, Swat State was possibly "the only governmental machine in the world which ran without a superfluity of paper". During the early years, the *Wali* maintained a strong physical presence in the community and was easily reached by anyone who sought his attention. As the *Wali* of Swat became more powerful, particularly Jahanzeb, he relied on the use of Swat's extensive telephone lines to make calls while maintaining his position at the center of local life from his home office. The *Wali* relied on his chief secretary and private secretary in Peshawar to liaise with the colonial administration. In Swat, he was running the administration of the State with the support of Ministers and *Mushirs* (advisors). Below the ministers, *Hakims* (governors) and *Tehsildars* (revenue officer) ran the administration in towns and villages. When someone went to the *Wali* of Swat for his/her case, they were referred back to the *Hakim* and *Tehsildar*. During Swat State, there were telephone lines to each and every village far from the main city, Mingora, while today, there are no telephone lines beyond Bahrain.

Revenue Sources

Muhauddin

Age: 80 years

Aryanai UC, Balakot, Swat

When I met Muhauddin on my routine field visit, he was harvesting the crops. I asked him if they now give *Zakkat* (obligatory alms-giving) from the crops to which he replied, "Not anymore but during the *Wali* of Swat's era, we were giving *Zakkat* and *Ushar* (*zakat* on crops) to the State for its revenue. Once our father forgot to give *Ushar*; after two months a soldier came and asked my father to visit *Hakim Sahib*. When my father visited *Hakim Sahib*, he was asked why he hadn't given *Ushar* yet." "This means that during the *Wali* of Swat, the system was transparent and operated regularly", said Muhauddin's uncle.

The main source of the State revenue was *Ushar* but in actual practice, the State received 13.33 percent gross produce of the land at the threshing ground in the nature of *Ushar*. In March 1969, the rate, however, was set at one tenth. In addition to *Ushar* on crops, taxes were taken upon the milk of cows and buffalos, herds of goats and sheep, orchards, beehives and vegetables.

All the above mentioned taxes were not collected by the State itself but were auctioned and granted to the highest bidders, known as *Ijaragar/Ijaradar/Ushri*, for the particular crop of the season in case of *Ushar* and for the year in case of other taxes, of the particular area. The auctions were made by the *Wazir-e-Mal* through the *Tehsildars*. Only politically powerful persons made the bids. If they collected more, they retained the excess but if the collection was less, they would make up the difference. The *Ijaradar* was required to pay the amount of grain/*ghee*/honey, or the price thereof, just after the collection season was over. That is why it was made obligatory for the concerned authorities to give the auctions to the financially well off persons otherwise they themselves would have to pay the sum of the *Ijara*.

Conclusion

Upon concluding my research, I discovered that both Mian Gul Abdul Wadud and Mian Gul Jahanzeb were not the originators of the administrative system of Swat State. They, however, raised the super structures from the developed countries of the world, especially from England, as the *Wali* of Swat was frequently visited by the British during his Kingdom. They made developments and modifications therein and transformed the raw structure into a somewhat organized one.

In the administrative apparatus, all the appointments, promotions and dismissals rested with the rulers. There was complete autocracy and absolutism during Jahanzeb's entire reign. The *Wali* of Swat, however, energetic and hardworking, ruled firmly and benevolently. He personally supervised all the affairs of the State and administration keenly and minutely and held daily courts, except on holidays. The *Wali* of Swat kept himself informed of all the matters and cases, great or small. People, both influential and ordinary, had access to him in the office but in a visible, indiscriminative way.

The administrative hierarchy, from top to bottom, on the whole, worked quickly and effectively and so stands unique, at least among the Princely States. Direct appointments on the posts of *Tehsildars*, *Hakims*, *Mashirs*, *Wazirs* and similar other officials, had not been made during Jahanzeb's reign. On the whole, they were promoted from the clerks of the Ruler's secretariat stage wise, however, in some cases, the promotions had been given rapidly.

The technique adopted by the *Wali* of Swat to honor the local tribal traditions and aspirations, to a greater extent, in the formulation of rules, regulations and administrative machinery, worked well successfully. The contemporary British reports had endorsed the success and effectiveness of the rules and penal codes introduced and implemented in Swat State.

The collective local took responsibility of either surrendering the culprits or to pay the fine imposed in case, as the culprits and offenders were not known or not pointed out by the people of the concerned place. This was an effective measure and tool for tracing the culprits and offenders and also for minimizing the offenses, thefts and other unwanted acts of such natures. Even thieves were to be shot dead on the spot or where ever

they were to be found, before the *Wali* of Swat during Abdul Wadud's reign.

Like the civil administration, the military organization of the State exhibited its own features. The financial system too had its own unique features under the *Wali* of Swat. The Ruler was the State's exchequer. No officer, even the *Wazir-e-Mal* or *Mashir-e-Mal*, was entitled to draw a single rupee from the State treasury, except with the approval and signature of the Ruler. There was no limitation on the Ruler in disbursement from the State exchequer and there was no audit of him. In a sense, the State and private revenue and income of the Ruler, especially during Abdul Wadud's reign and afterwards, was considered one and the same and so had been used in the same manner. Taxation was heavy, which was no doubt based on taxing the fruits of the private activities.

The judicial system of Swat State was not Islamic in its essence as is commonly believed. It was a synthesis of the traditional codes, Islamic norms compatible with the traditional codes and the commands, orders and words of the Ruler. The Ruler had the final authority and supremacy and the traditional codes held secondary status. Islamic law was subservient. The Ruler was neither bound to the codes of conduct nor *Sharia*. The system, however, was an effective one. The trials were quick and cheap and the judgement properly implemented. The cases were usually decided on first hearing, or, at the latest, on the second.

Hence, the people of Swat were exceedingly happy with the overall administration and justice of the *Wali* of Swat. This is why they still appreciate the days of Swat State, especially when it comes to education, justice and peace as the people of Swat repeat, again and again, the stories of the *Wali* of Swat.