

SHĪRANG-SOFLĀ : THE ECONOMICS OF A NORTHEAST IRANIAN VILLAGE*

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The village of Shirang-Soflā, located in the Gorgān region of northeast Iran, has had its predominantly agricultural economy revolutionized over recent years by significant increases in the percentage of cotton, tobacco, and other cash crops planted by its peasants, paralleled by a tightening of the grip of commercial capital upon the small producer. In this paper, I propose to examine the impact of these revolutionizing changes upon the structure of the agricultural economy, using the material gathered during a field study of the village of Shirang-Soflā carried out by the author in August of 1963.

PREFACE

AN AGRICULTURAL CENSUS undertaken by the Iranian government in 1960 revealed that, of the total arable land currently under cultivation in this middle-east state, some 80 percent was given over to wheat cropping. It would, however, be a mistake to conclude that the central position of wheat in the Iranian agricultural economy derives from a favorable market for this commodity. The preponderance of wheat farming is tied directly to the survival of traditional landlord-tenant relationships in the great majority of rural districts (especially in the highland areas of the country). Such a social structure has contributed little or no incentive to challenge the limitations presented by the natural environment.

A refreshing contrast to the rural enterprise in the majority of villages in the Iranian countryside is shown, however, by the farming communities of the Gorgān district, which lies along the east bank of the Caspian Sea. In this district, traditional wheat cropping is supplemented by a large and steadily increasing variety of non-cereal cash crops—notably cotton, tobacco, and melons. Not surprisingly, the exceptional character of the farming economy in this area is paralleled by a rather unusual set of landlord-tenant relationships, quite at variance with the pattern common in other sections of rural Iran. In this report, the author shall attempt to give the reader an overview of the novel situation of agriculture in the Gorgān district through an in-

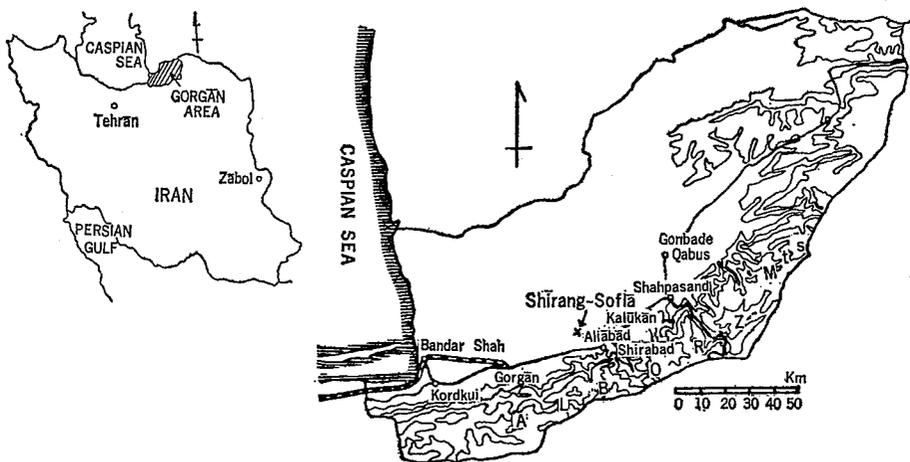
* The author would like to express his personal thanks to the various personnel of the Gorgān Development Bongah (*Bongāhe Omrāne Gorgān*) of the Ministry of Interior and of the Institute of Economic Research of Tehran University for their generous help in the critical task of gathering information in the field.

depth study of the farming village of Shīrang-Soflā, by all appearances a village typical of those to be found in the area.

I. THE GORGĀN REGION

Bounded to the north and south by the Turkmenistan Republic and the Alborz mountains respectively, and to the west by the Caspian Sea, the Gorgān district has generated over the last several decades a kind of agriculture otherwise unfound in the Iranian countryside. Up until the third decade of the current century, the broad plains of Gorgān were controlled by a nomadic Turkomen peoples, who frequently carried out bandit raids on the peasant settlements in the area that somehow managed to wring a sustenance existence from the soil. The situation began to change rapidly, however, after the Rezā Shāh succeeded in pacifying and disarming the Turkomen tribes in the Gorgān area in 1925. The stability thereby brought to the farming population of the region provided the setting for an unprecedented expansion of the agricultural resources of the Gorgān plain. Farm produce dealers, with their eye on the Russian market—and especially those who settled in the city of Gorgān itself—undertook the reclamation of hitherto unfarmed lands in the Gorgān plain on a massive scale.

Location of Gorgān District and Site of Shirang-Soflā



The pace of rural development in the area even further accelerated when in 1934 the Rezā Shāh made the whole of the Gorgān district, together with Gilān and Māzandarān, to crown land,¹ and began to pour large amounts of state funds into the development of the promising new area. Under the Shāh's new program, large new areas were opened to cultivation. At the same time, *qanāts* (underground water channels) were dug to irrigate

¹ Ann K. S. Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia: A Study of Land Tenure and Land Revenue Administration*, London, Oxford University Press, 1953, pp. 256-257.

them, cotton ginning factories were set up to process locally produced cotton, and foreign technical advisers were brought in to advise on the most up-to-date methods of agricultural production. As a result, the total amount of land under cultivation, as well as total regional production, increased dramatically, and the Gorgān district became a significant producer of cotton, tobacco, and wheat.²

Another leap forward occurred in the postwar period. A sudden skyrocketing in the late 1940's of the price of wheat (both in domestic and nearby middle-east markets),³ provided the incentive for Tehran and Gorgān merchants, landlords, and high-ranking officials to invest in mechanized wheat farms on the Gorgān plain, leasing land from the large stockpile of uncultivated crown land that still existed at the time. The plentiful rainfall and rich soil of the Gorgān plain proved ideal for large-scale wheat planting, and the success of the wheat crops planted during those first trial years in the late 1940's initiated a period of prosperity for the region that saw a continued opening of new farms, both large and small, through the 1950's. As we have remarked above, most of the larger farms were opened and run originally for mechanized wheat planting. But in the mid-1950's, a rising demand, both in domestic and foreign markets, for cotton and cottonseed oil led many farm-owners to convert portions of their lands to the more profitable cotton cropping, with the result that today cotton is the main agricultural product of the Gorgān region.⁴

Taking their cue from the successful cotton cropping ventures of the larger farm-owners, village peasants began to apply their energies increasingly to opening up new fields and converting their old fields from wheat to cotton planting. The consequent boost in total cotton acreage has brought the Gorgān province to the position of leading cotton producer in Iran. Occupying a scarce 1.5 percent of the total land area of the country, this tiny province is nevertheless responsible for some 40 percent of Iran's total cotton production.

Tobacco growing was, as had been remarked above, also begun under the rule of the Rezā Shāh, but a real boom in tobacco growing did not materialize until recent years. Gorgān tobacco production now ranks the district as fourth largest tobacco producer in Iran, surpassed only by Azerbāijān, Gilān, and Kordistān. Melon production, aimed at the Tehran market, has likewise become popular among both large farm-owners and small-scale

² For more on the activities of the Rezā Shāh, see Amin Banani, *The Modernization of Iran, 1921-1941*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1961, pp. 123-124. Another source informs us that the total amount of land used for cotton planting increased from a paltry 5000 hectares in 1934 to a substantial 17,000 hectares by 1937 (Ṭāqī Bahrāmī, *Farhange Rūstā'ī* [Dictionary of Agriculture], Tehran, 1316-1317/1937-1938, p. 308.)

³ On the Iranian market, for instance, the average price of 1 kg of wheat in 1947 was 4.3 *riāls*, as compared with an average price the subsequent year of 6.5 *riāls*. Cf. Shōkō Okazaki, *The Development of Large-scale Farming in Iran, The Case of the Province of Gorgan*, Tokyo, The Institute of Asian Economic Affairs, 1968, pp. 26-27.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 28-32.

peasants, and total melon output has climbed considerable over recent years. The distinguishing trend of agriculture in the Gorgān area, we might conclude, is for cash crops to occupy an increasingly larger share of both the total land planted and total product output of the region. Agricultural enterprise in this district has become, in other words, to a very great extent dominated by market-oriented, commercial considerations.

In 1956, the Agricultural Machinery Development Bureau (*Bongāhe Towseh-ye Māshīnhā-ye Keshāwarzī*) began a program of five-year annual installment loans to peasants for the purchase of agricultural machinery. The aim of the program was to make it possible for peasants short of capital to be able to buy and own their own tractors and combines. Using the funds provided by this program, many small peasants and wage laborers who had formerly worked as tractor drivers for the large farm-owners in the area were able to buy their own tractors and combines. They used them both to work their own holdings and as a source of additional income ("custom" fees) earned by using their new equipment to work the holdings of peasants still without the means to purchase their own machinery. Sparked by the success of these pioneer "custom" workers, mechanization of farm production forged ahead at a rapid pace, particularly as we enter the 1960s. With the gradual decline of "custom" fees accompanying the spreading of the system, more and more peasants were able to switch to mechanized plowing and harvesting, with the result that today Gorgān agriculture is the most highly mechanized and modernized in Iran, having at its disposal some 35 percent of all the tractors and 55 percent of all the combines currently in use in that nation.⁵

The Gorgān region is distinct also in its pattern of landlord-tenant relationships. In the highland regions of Iran, it is generally the case that the landlord figures, either directly or indirectly, in the production carried out on the land he owns—that he is, in other words, the "sole organizer of production." In the Gorgān district, by contrast, the landlord is of the *rentier* variety, totally removed from the process of production, the responsibility for which devolves upon tenants. These tenants are guaranteed the right to work their holding by the *haqqe būmī*, or perpetual right of tenancy, a privilege afforded them by virtue of their role in reclaiming the plot they are currently working. As most of the land under cultivation in the plains of Gorgān is newly reclaimed land, the *haqqe būmī* is generally in force, providing a basic stability in landlord-tenant relationships, and hence a solid foundation for agricultural production.

Still another advantage enjoyed by Gorgān peasants is a relatively low level of rents, compared with other areas of Iran—this in spite of the rela-

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 36–38. A rapid swelling in the size of the force of "custom workers" forced themselves to seek employment in districts other than their home region—in some cases in places as far removed from Gorgān as Azerbāijān and Ahwāz, over a 1000 km from Gorgān. The steady drop in wages that paralleled this increase in the size of the "custom worker" labor force likewise made it impossible for many to make a living. For more on the impact of mechanization, cf. *ibid.*, pp. 43–45.

tively higher productivity of the land.

To recapitulate, Gorgān agriculture is carried out under a set of conditions to a greater or lesser degree at variance with the norms for Iranian agriculture. The land is, for the most part, newly reclaimed; large-scale farms are numerous; cotton, tobacco, melons, and other cash crops occupy a high proportion of the total farm output; mechanization of plowing and harvesting has advanced to an unusually high level; the indigenous landlord class has become almost completely absentee; and tenants are able to work their holdings under stable lease conditions.

II. THE VILLAGE OF SHĪRANG-SOFLĀ

The village of Shirang-Soflā lies in the township of Aliābād (*Bakhshe* Aliābād), being situated some 11 km from the center of the township, the town of Aliābād itself. At the time of our survey, the village had a population of 156 persons, divided between twenty-three household units. Of these twenty-three households, all but two held land in one form or another; and of the twenty-one landholding households, all but one worked at least a portion of the land they held rights to. Only in the case of one household we find all the land in the possession of the family being leased out for rent.

With the exceptions of one household that runs a business in Aliābād, two families that run shops in Shirang-Soflā itself, and one peasant who breeds sheep as his main source of income, all the remaining landholding households, sixteen in number, depend exclusively upon farming for their livelihood. In addition to the above enumerated households, there are some seven migrant farm worker households in the village.

The total area of cultivated land worked by members of the village amounts to 130.5 hectares; most of this land is planted with cotton, tobacco, and wheat, although a certain amount consists of paddy-fields, vegetable gardens, and fruit orchards. Cotton, which brings in a return per planted hectare of 8,780 *riāls* (more than double the figure for wheat, 3900 *riāls*/hectare),⁶ was, at the time of our study, raised by all of the twenty households in the village which planted some or all of their holdings. Together with the even more profitable tobacco crop, the two principle non-cereal crops occupy some 53 percent of the total planted acreage (see Table 1). Clearly

Table 1. Planted Acreage and Number of Planting Households of Main Crops

Crop	Planted Acreage (ha)	Planting Households
Wheat	61	12
Cotton	43.5	20
Tobacco	26	12
Total	130.5	20

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

reflected in this statistic is the disparity between agriculture in Shīrang-Soflā, with its unusually high proportion of cash crops, and the norms for Iranian agriculture as a whole, in which some 80 percent of all land under cultivation is used for planting wheat.⁷

Among the twenty-three households engaged in farming activity in the village, there are some seventy-two adults who work their own holdings (see Table 5). An additional fifteen seasonal laborers are hired to help bring in the tobacco crop (nine of whom are villagers, the rest migrant workers), while some eighteen families (by the minimum estimate, thirty-six adults), all but two of which are migrant labor, are employed on a seasonal basis for cotton growing. Excluding temporary day-labor hired in considerable number during the cotton and tobacco harvest seasons, this gives the village a minimum labor force of fifty-one seasonal hired workers to supplement domestic labor resources. Hired labor has become, in other words, almost as important as domestic labor as a source of manpower in the village; its role in the village economy has become decisive.

Shīrang-Soflā, like most other villages in the Gorgān plain, is a relatively new settlement. Its short history can be divided into three stages—(1) reclamation and settlement; (2) development under the rule of the Rezā Shāh; and (3) emergence of modernized, large-scale farms in the area. During the first phase—reclamation and settlement—we find village lands first being opened to cultivation by enterprising merchants in the 1920's. Some time in 1928, a Gorgān-based farm produce dealer arrived in the area currently known as Shīrang-Soflā in the company of several peasants from the mountain village of Shīrābād, whom he put to work clearing and opening the land for the growing of rice, which he hoped to unload on the favorable Russian market. Conditions in the Shīrābād area from which most tenants were recruited at that time seem to have been extremely harsh for tenants who suffered under high rents, a kind of forced labor service known as *bigārī*, and high taxation. Under the circumstances, the promise of the enterprising Gorgān rice-dealer to supply to his rice-farm recruits all the necessary capital to run their farms and exempt them from rent for the first several years of the venture must have sounded very favorable indeed. In any case, a sizable number of volunteers were eventually won over to the scheme, and left their Shīrābād homeland to come with the rice-dealer to settle on the Gorgān plain.

At the time of initial settlement, the person who provided the capital for reclamation was entitled to the *haqqe tasarrof*, or right of holding; it wasn't until 1930, when a land registration law went into effect, that the rice-dealer who founded the original settlement was able to register as legal owner of the village land. Under the arrangement that eventually emerged, the migrants brought in to reclaim and work the land were expected, after several years' exemption, to pay a tenancy rent known as *manāl*. Formalization of their

⁷ Shōkō Okazaki ed., *Agricultural Statistics of Iran, 1339/1960*, Tokyo, The Institute of Asian Economic Affairs, 1965, p. 41.

status as tenants brought with it recognition of their perpetual right of tenancy (*haqqe būmī*) to the plots they were working. Thus holding rights were from the outset stabilized.

Under the sovereignty of the Rezā Shāh, the number of original settlers was rapidly swelled by immigrants from Rasūlābād and other villages.⁸ State funds financed the construction of a network of *qanāts*, or underground water canals, through which the productivity of the plain soil was greatly increased. In addition to the traditional rice and wheat crops, peasants were encouraged to grow cotton under the watchful eyes of Russian and Armenian technical advisers invited by the Shāh, while a number of peasants were commissioned to raise tobacco. The proportion of market-oriented cash-crops grew rapidly.

The abdication of the Rezā Shāh in 1941 brought about the automatic reversion of all crown land to its original owners. But the landlords to whom these lands were reverted were, by 1941, a very different group from the original pioneering entrepreneurs whose ownership had derived from their involvement in managing the reclamation and utilization of their land. The land-owners of the post-Shāh period were already well on their way toward becoming a *rentier* class, concerned only with collecting their rents, and having no interest in the management of their property. Landlord abdication of responsibility for production seems to have resulted in a temporary stagnation of agriculture in the Gorgān area during the immediate postwar years. But the situation in Shīrang-Soflā took a turn for the better after the mid-1950's, when, as part of a trend sweeping the Gorgān area, peasants began to realize the economic advantages of increasing their cotton production, and set about converting fallow and uncultivated fields into cotton acreage. At the same time, other enterprising peasants set about increasing their tobacco production. Profit-oriented cash-crop output was again on the rise.

Further progress was occasioned by the purchase, in the early 1960's, of tractors by two households in the village. These tractors, as it developed, were not used simply for plowing the lands worked directly by the two tractor-owning households; their new owners used them as well to "custom-work" the lands of other peasants in the village. Harvesting likewise became mechanized (at least for wheat growers) when a peasant in a nearby village

⁸ During the initial period of settlement of Shīrang-Soflā village, all the settlers came from the Shīrābād area. During the period of rule by the Rezā Shāh, however, immigrants began to arrive from Kalūkān, Rasūlābād, Shāhrūd, and other districts. In the post-war period, the influx of new settlers slowed, and only one family each from Azerbāijān and Shīrābād joined the village population. At present, immigrants from Shīrābād and Kalūkān form the two major groups among the village residents. Between these two groups a kind of factional tension appears to exist.

The rapid reclamation of large numbers of new fields during the initial period of settlement of the Gorgān plain seems also to have generated a significant shift in population distribution in the Gorgān region as a whole. Most notably, large numbers of peasants poured into the plain from their poor and overcrowded mountain villages, evidently with significant effect on the state of landlord-tenant relationships in the region they left behind.

purchased a combine, and started "custom working" in Shirang-Soflā. Animal- and human-powered wheat harvesting has, as a result of this latter innovation, disappeared completely in Shirang-Soflā.

III. LAND OWNERSHIP

As we have explained earlier in this report, tenants in the village of Shirang-Soflā possess an unqualified perpetual right of tenancy to the land they work;⁹ their plots are not subject to reapportionment among other tenants, or to confiscation at the will of the landlord. Tenants are entirely free to manage their holdings as they see fit; nor are they bound to the landlord by any secondary bonds, such as debt, etc. Between the landlord and tenants, in other words, there obtains a strictly one-dimensional lessor-lessee relationship.

The actual contract between landlord and tenant is negotiated by word of mouth. Rents are generally as follows:

wheat 10 percent of harvest

cotton

 irrigated land 6 *pout*¹⁰ (98.4 kg) per hectare

 un-irrigated land.... 4 *pout* (65.6 kg) per hectare

tobacco 7.5 percent of cash value of harvest

The wheat crop rent, now collected on a share-crop basis, was, up until 1960, set at 6 *pout*/hectare. But bad harvests in 1960 and 1961 led to tenant demands for conversion to a crop share rent, which was eventually fixed at 1/10 of the total harvest—a rate which would be equivalent, in a normal harvest year, to the former 6 *pout*/hectare quota.

Neither wheat nor tobacco rents exceed the level of 1/10 of the total harvest, as we have seen above. In the case of cotton, one hectare of un-irrigated land can be expected to yield, in an average year, about 600 kg of the raw product, thereby putting the 4 *pout* (65.6 kg)/hectare rent collected on this crop in the same 10 percent-or-under range as tobacco and wheat rents. By comparison with rents current in other parts of Iran, this figure must be considered extremely low.¹¹

⁹ The perpetual tenancy right (*haqqe būmi*) is alienable: it can be mortgaged or sold. The one instance of sale of the perpetual tenancy right recorded in the village for the year 1963 indicates a transaction value of some 20,000 *riāls*/hectare (equivalent to about 3 tons of wheat/hectare, or almost 4 years wheat crop.) In the case of irrigated land, the sale price of the *haqqe būmi* runs as high as 50,000 *riāls*, almost at a par with the value of the land itself. Some indication of the economic significance and stability of the right of tenancy is perhaps to be glimpsed from the enormously high price this right fetches when it is put on the market.

¹⁰ One *pout* is 16.4 kg.

¹¹ According to traditional practice in the Iranian countryside, the harvest is supposed to be shared out between landlord and tenant in proportion to the relative value of the land, irrigating water, plow animals, human labor, and seed contributed by each (the so-called "five parts rule"). In most locales, this formula is the basic determinant

Collection of rents is entrusted to a local agent known as *kadkhudā*. Cotton, rice, and tobacco crop rents (in cash) are deposited with this rent-collector at his village residence; wheat rents (payed in kind) are turned over at the threshing floor. After he has completed the collection of rents due from the village farmers, the *kadkhudā* will in turn make payment to the landlord he represents. The use of an agent to collect rents is common practice in all parts of Iran (excepting certain areas lying along the south bank of the Caspian Sea). But the *kadkhudā* seems to play a much more important role in the highland villages than he does in the village of Shirang-Soflā. In the highland districts, the *kadkhudā* functions, in effect, as the landlord's private bailiff, an agent of the landlord's control over his tenants, a supervisor and enforcer of all the rules and obligations that bind the lessee to the lessor. In the Gorgān region, however, the *kadkhudā* seems to be no more than a minor functionary, payed a commission by the absentee landlord to collect rent from his tenants.¹²

The relative tameness of the *kadkhudā* figure in Shirang-Soflā and the Gorgān district in general must be understood as but another reflection of the peculiarity of the type of landlord-tenant relationships in force in the area. For whatever prestige and authority the *kadkhudā* enjoyed in the village derived, not from his connection with a powerful landlord apparatus, but rather from the fact of his delegation as local constable by the district head (*bakhshdār*), and from the fact that it has become customary to select the *kadkhudā* from among the most successful and influential peasants in the community.¹³

The land reform program initiated by the central government in 1962 was never really put into effect in Shirang-Soflā; but the impact of the program did not go unfelt locally. There were numerous outbreaks in the Gorgān area of resistance against landlord power, including repeated firing of landlord cars which carried rent-collectors into the area. In 1963,

in computing land rents. Unqualified application of the "five parts rule" to the situation in Shirang-Soflā would justify a rent in the area of 20 percent of the crop (in the case of unirrigated land, the comparative figure would be 25 percent); yet actual ground rent does not exceed 10 percent. Nor is the situation in Shirang-Soflā in any respect unusual for the Gorgān area: rental rates for other villages in the district are comparable. One concludes that the rents in the newly settled Gorgān region are significantly lower than those collected in older, more backward areas, and that the method of their computation is quite distinct from the traditional "five parts rule."

¹² In Shirang-Soflā, the *kadkhudā* was payed an annual commission (in kind) of some 50 *pout* (820 kg) of wheat, 30 *pout* (492 kg) of cotton, and 10 *bār* (1,312 kg) of rice.

¹³ The *kadkhudā* is in fact appointed to his post by the order of the district head (*bakhshdār*), in accordance with the recommendation of the villagers. The man chosen for this position is generally a man of wealth, who enjoys the confidence of his fellow villagers. At present the post is alternated between the Muhājirwatan family (which migrated to the village from Shirābād during the early days of settlement) and the Soleimāni family, which moved to Shirang-Soflā from Kalūkān during the days when the Rezā Shāh ruled Gorgān as a crown possession.

several Shirang-Soflā tenant farmers, angered by attempts of their landlord to collect rent on lands which had been cleared and reclaimed by the tenants themselves without any assistance from the landlord in question, refused to pay the rent due on their rice, cotton, and tobacco crops. The landlord had to make due, in the end, with only the rents from his wheat acreage.¹⁴ Under the influence of the nationwide land reform movement, the already unfirm authority of the landlord in the Gorgān area seems to have been even further eroded.

IV. SUBLEASING AND UTILIZATION OF LAND

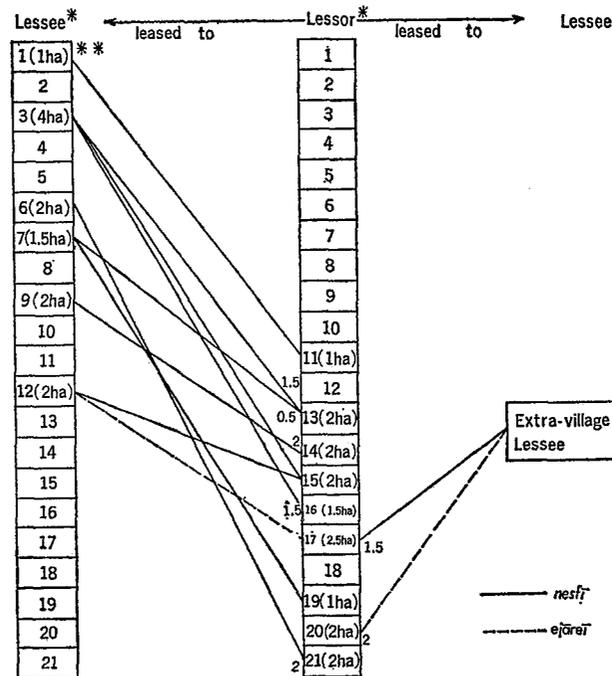
As has been mentioned above, none of the peasants in the village actually possess the land they work; in this respect, their resources are equal. But subleasing between tenants, by adding lands to some holdings while subtracting it from others, has brought about significant inequalities in the size of the cultivating unit among the various peasants of the village. Rents payed by the sub-lessee to the sub-lessor generally take one of two forms: (1) the fixed-quota *ejārei*; or (2) primarily in the case of wheat land, a fifty-fifty sharing of the harvested crop—an arrangement known as *nesfi*. Of the 134 hectares of land held by the villagers, 3 hectares are sub-leased as *ejārei*, while a total of 13 hectares are shared out as *nesfi*. In this way, over 10 percent of the land resources of the village are leased out by their regular tenant-holders to a third party which actually farms them.

Of the twenty-one farming households in the village which actually hold land, we found that as many as nine households lease out a portion of their holding to other households: these lessor households are, it was also found, predominantly small-scale landholders, as is shown in Fig. 1. Subleasing, in other words, functions as an instrument to permit further increase in the scale of enterprise for those peasants whose larger scale of enterprise makes possible a higher level of efficiency in production. The result, as Table 2 shows, is a concentration of real landholding power in the hands of the larger peasants of the village, with 78 percent of all the village land being worked by only 35 percent (eight households) of its total population—while, at the other end of the spectrum, a scarce 2 percent of the village land is worked by the 26 percent of the village population which operate farms of 3.5 hectares or less in size.

The poor wheat harvest of 1960 and 1961 had the effect of drastically increasing the amount of land leased out by smaller-scale peasants for a share rent (*nesfi*). Small holders, most of whose wheat crops usually went for home consumption and seed, found themselves, as a result of bad crops, crippled by a shortage of seed and of the capital necessary to cover the cost of hired labor used in plowing, and consequently were forced to lease out substantial portions of their land to peasants with larger holdings. Mechanization of wheat cropping made it possible for these larger-scale peasants to

¹⁴ He collected, in the end, a mere 7,590 kg of wheat (value: 53,000 *riāls*), while losing over 100,000 *riāls* worth of uncollected cotton and tobacco revenues.

Figure 1. Subleasing Relationships between Households of Shirang-Soflā



Notes: * The households are listed in order from top (1) to bottom (21) according to the size of their holdings.
 ** Figures enclosed in parentheses indicate amount of land leased.

Table 2. Scale of Holdings in Shirang-Soflā

Scale of Holding (actually worked)	% of Farm Households	% of Total Village Land Held	% of Total Village Land Worked
Under 3.5 ha	26	6	2
3.5 - 8 ha	39	25	20
Over 8 ha	35	69	78
Total	100	100	100

work the additional holdings that they acquired through *nesfi* with no more additional cost than a proportional increase in seed and plowing expenditure. Consequently, though all peasants in the village hold perpetual tenancy right to the land they work, it is clear that the smaller peasant stands in constant danger of having his holding eroded out from under his feet as shortage of capital forces him to lease out more and more of his land.

Let us turn next to an examination of land utilization practices. As Table 3 shows, there are two basic patterns of crop combination: (1) single-cropping of cotton; and (2) simultaneous planting of cotton, tobacco, and

wheat. All of the eight peasants who single-crop cotton are small holders, with plots under three hectares in size. With the exception of only one of the households in this category (household number 18), all of these single-crop cotton farmers lease out a portion of their holdings as *nesfî* or *ejâreî*. Further examination of the data shows that, of the total subleased acreage in the village (some 16 hectares), land leased out by these seven households amounts to 94 percent of the total, or some 15 hectares (see Table 5). There is, in other words, an almost exact correspondence between those tenants who single-crop cotton and those who are forced to lease out portion of their holdings.

Table 3. Relationship of Land Utilization Pattern and Size of Holding

Size of Holding	Number of Peasants Planting				Total Acreage Planted with . . (ha)		
	Wheat	Tobacco	Cotton	Total	Wheat	Tobacco	Cotton
Under 3 ha	0	0	8	8	0	0	11.5
3-8 ha	4	4	4	4	8	4.5	4.5
Over 8 ha	8	8	8	8	53	21.5	27.5
Total	12	12	20	20	61	26	43.5

What is reflected in this correspondence is but another aspect of the impact of the hard years of 1960 and 1961. It was in these two years that the small planters were compelled to abandon wheat raising altogether; since then the kind rents (wheat) from the share-leasing (*nesfî*) of a portion of their holdings have become a major source of family income for these peasants. For cash income, these same peasants have become completely dependent on the returns from the marketing of their cotton crop.

The situation is somewhat more complex among the more prosperous peasants who triple-crop their holdings with wheat, cotton, and tobacco. Among the peasants whose holdings range in size from 3 to 8 hectares, wheat acreage averages no more than 2 hectares per household, and is intended chiefly for home consumption.¹⁵ The rest of the holding (in fact a larger share than that given over to wheat planting) is given over to cotton and tobacco, which are grown essentially as commercial crops.

In the case of peasants with holdings of over 8 hectares in size, wheat acreage averages 7 hectares, and has obviously become an important cash crop. Cotton acreage is also substantial for peasants in this bracket, ranging from 2 to 6 hectares per household (average: 3.5). But the most unique aspect of the land utilization pattern of the eight households in this category is the large-scale planting of tobacco. Although the average tobacco acreage per planter (2.7 hectares) falls below the equivalent figure for cotton and wheat, tobacco planting by peasants with holdings in excess of 8 hectares accounts for a total of 21.5 hectares of village land, or over 80 percent of all the to-

¹⁵ In an average year, the wheat crop from a 2 hectare holding will be sufficient to feed a family of six.

bacco acreage in the village (see Table 3). Tobacco is, of course, more subject to blight or parasitic damage than wheat or cotton. But tobacco growers are eligible for advances from the state-owned processing factories that are the sole buyers of this crop, and the profit margin on tobacco is well above that returned by other crops. Consequently, for those peasants with sufficient land and capital to undertake tobacco planting, the importance of this crop far outweighs that of the wheat and cotton that occupies the bulk of their holdings.

Under the Rezā Shāh's rule, tobacco was grown only by a handful of franchised tenants. After the war, however, and especially since the advent of the present decade, the number of tobacco growers has increased substantially. The latent economic strength of the mechanized, large peasants in the Gorgān area has made itself felt in an impressive increase in both the number of households planting tobacco and the total acreage planted (Table 5). While there are no qualitative disparities between the various strata of landholders in so far as cotton planting is concerned, the advantage of a large-scale holder (over 8 hectares) over a medium-scale holder (between 3 and 8 hectares) proves to be a decisive one indeed. The disadvantage of the latter derives from his lack of access to mechanical drying equipment for curing his harvested tobacco, and his consequent reliance upon open-air solar drying.¹⁶ As sun-dried tobacco is much inferior to the artificially-dried product, its market price is somewhere in the neighborhood of half that of the rival product. The upper stratum of tobacco growers find their quantitatively superior position enhanced by a qualitative, technical advantage over their smaller competitors.

V. LABOR

Wheat planting and harvesting have become almost completely mechanized, as we have suggested above. Tobacco and cotton plowing is handled completely by tractor-driven equipment, though there are some cultivating operations which are still performed by manual labor. Cotton requires a much heavier manual labor input: weeding and hoeing require the services of an average of sixty men per hectare over a fifty-day period, while harvesting (carried out in several cycles) needs about forty men per hectare over a total harvest season of about 120 days. In terms of full-time, non-seasonal labor, cotton fields require the constant attentions of at least two men per hectare all year round. Tobacco, with its double weeding and three-month harvesting and curing operations, requires an even greater input of labor per unit area than cotton. Furthermore, the planting seasons for the two crops overlap.

¹⁶ Large-scale peasants are able to purchase mechanical drying equipment with the help of interest-free, 8-year loans provided by the government to the amount of 80,000 *riāls*, which is about the cost of one unit. In the village of Shirang-Soflā, as a result of this loan program, every tobacco grower who plants over 2 hectares of this crop owns his own drying equipment.

Consequently, the planting of more than 4 hectares of any combination of cotton and tobacco necessitates the employment of hired labor.

In addition to day-laborers, longer-term, seasonal arrangements are also used to secure labor for cotton and tobacco growing. In the case of cotton, a kind of share-cropping system is employed. From immediately after germination (late April-early May) until the completion of harvesting (mid-December) the share-cropper is entrusted with the responsibility for carrying out all necessary cultivation tasks for a specified area of his employer's holding. In return for his labor he receives a specified share of the crop that is harvested from his area (either 1/3 or 2/5). By contrast, the female labor employed by tobacco growers from transplanting to curing of the crop (late March to late September) is usually paid on a daily wage basis.

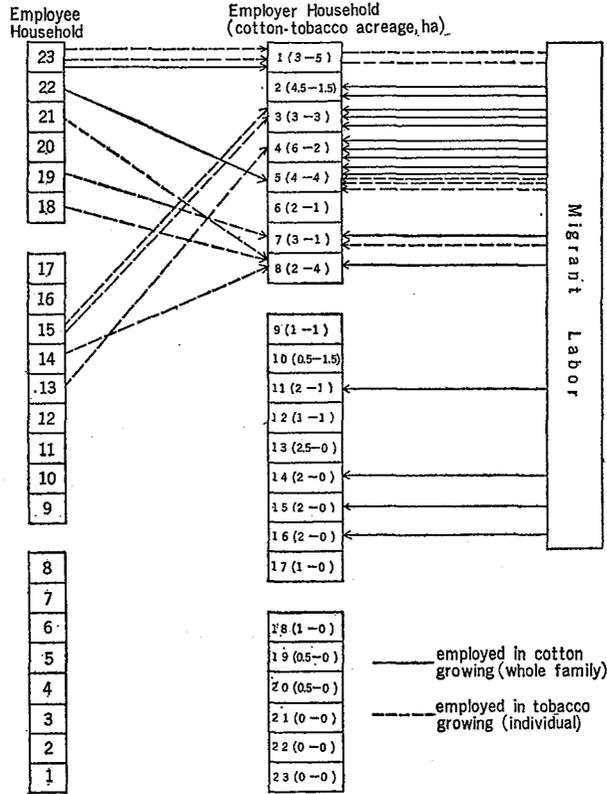
The small cotton grower cannot, of course, find work as a cotton share-cropper: he and his family's labor must be applied to his own cotton acreage. Cotton share-croppers, therefore, must be recruited from the families in the village which have no holdings of their own—which means, in practice, that most share-croppers are migrant workers (see Fig. 2). Most of the share-croppers employed by the larger cotton planters in this region migrate on a yearly basis from the Zābol region (in southeast Iran), arriving in the Gorgān district at the beginning of the cotton growing season,¹⁷ and departing again for their native district after the harvest. It is these migrant laborers who provide most of the labor used in growing and harvesting cotton in Shirang-Soflā (sixteen out of eighteen share-croppers are migrant laborers). It seems evident, furthermore, that the large supply of migrant labor attracted by the larger cotton planters has benefited smaller planters as well, making it possible for them to expand their production through hiring extra help.

By contrast, the majority (nine out of a total of fifteen) of the laborers employed by tobacco growers are natives of the village—a situation which is explained by the fact that all the help hired by tobacco growers is female labor, which is in ready supply from those small households in the village whose holdings can be worked by the male members of the household alone.

A glance at Fig. 2 will reveal the fact that almost all the households in the village which employ non-domestic wage-compensated labor (notably households 1-8) are in possession of tobacco and cotton lands in excess of 3 hectares. These eight households are, furthermore, responsible for the hiring of most of the seasonal labor employed in the village for cotton and tobacco growing: fourteen out of the eighteen cotton share-cropping families in the village are employed by them, and the entire force of fifteen female laborers engaged on a seasonal basis to work the tobacco crops is in the employ of these eight large planters, hired to supplement a limited domestic female labor force of some fifteen women available to these planters. In

¹⁷ The majority of large and medium planters recruit their share-croppers through "private" employment offices located in the garages and plazas of the local urban centers. Cf. Okazaki, *Large-scale Farming*, p. 20. For a more comprehensive discussion of the labor situation, see *ibid.*, pp. 20-21, 33.

Figure 2. Employer-Employee Relationships in Shīrang-Soffā



addition to the seasonal labor force enumerated above, these same eight households employ a sizable number of day-laborers during the busy season—some amongst them (household number 6, for instance) hiring no seasonal laborers at all, but rather depending completely upon this latter source for the labor necessary to raise their cotton and tobacco crops. Whatever the particular form it takes, however, it is clear that wage-compensated, non-domestic labor is absolutely essential to the cotton and tobacco economy of the larger-scale peasants of Shīrang-Soffā.

The situation of the small peasants is quite the reverse. None of the six households in the group 18-23 are able to hire any wage labor at all; quite the contrary, with the single exception of household 20 (a widow), each of the households in this category serve as providers of labor employed by other village households. In the extreme case, households 22 and 23—which hold no land at all—and household 21—which leases out all its holdings as *nesfi*—have become completely dependent for their livelihood on the wages earned from selling their labor. Household 20 still works a half-hectare cotton field with domestic labor, but the greater portion of the family income derives from the wages earned by family members working as day laborers for other

peasants. In the cases of households 18 and 19, family-worked cotton fields prohibit the family from engaging in share-cropping for another household, but female domestic labor earns a considerable income working as seasonal laborers in the tobacco fields. For the lower stratum households of Shīrang-Soflā, one concludes, the income from wage labor constitutes the most important section of the family budget.

Among the nine households comprising the middle stratum of peasant in the village (households 9-17), investigation discloses four instances of share-croppers being employed as a supplementary labor force to work cotton fields. Tobacco planting among this stratum is, however, handled completely by family labor; and three households in this category even provide female labor for larger-scale planters, mainly for work as seasonal laborers in the tobacco fields.

VI. MARKETING OF FARM PRODUCE

As all tobacco must be sold to the state-run tobacco processing factories, commercial capital has no chance to intervene in the marketing of this important crop. In the case of wheat, the fact that only large-scale planters have a sufficient surplus to market this commodity insures a degree of uniformity on the selling end of the market and reduces the importance of commercial capital as an underwriter of production.

Cotton, planted by every farm household in the village, and constituting as it does the principal cash crop of the village economy, presents a somewhat different picture. There seem to be two different types of procedures used in selling the cotton crop. First, of course, there is the standard, post-harvest sale. But there is also a procedure by which crops are bought before harvest, on credit (called *salaf*). In this latter case, the cotton crop is sold generally before the New Year (March 21), during the period when debts from the previous year have to be liquidated, and, as a result, expenses are their annual peak. Pre-harvest buying is carried out by both village merchants (households 3 and 7) and buyers from Aliābād (mostly agents of Gorgān cotton dealers). Needless to say, those tenants who are forced to sell their crops to buyers before harvest time are at a disadvantage in the transaction; the pre-harvest cotton market is a buyer's market. One *pout* (16.4 kg) of cotton—which during harvest (Sept.-Dec.) will fetch a price of 230-260 *riāls*—will, in the *salaf* market, sell for only 140-160 *riāls*. Figured in terms of principal and interest, this pre-harvest price represents a yearly interest rate on loan capital of between 70 and 130%.

The fleecing of small cotton growers by commercial capital is thus of considerable proportion. As Table 4 shows, *salaf* sale is the exception for households 1-10; the larger cotton growers sell almost all of their crop after harvest. By contrast, the five peasants who grow less than one hectare of cotton, and who are completely dependent on it for their cash income (i. e. households 18, 19 and 20), must sell all but a small portion of their crop in

March. Far from being able to realize the profitability of their cotton crop, a slightly under-average harvest exposes them to the danger of going into debt, or, even worse, being forced to surrender their holding right to a portion of the family lands.

Table 4. Pre- and Post-Harvest Sale of Cotton Crop (*salaf*)

Household Number	Post-Harvest Sale	Pre-Harvest Sale	Portion of Crop Sale Before Harvest
1	○		
2		○	marginal
3	○		
4	○		
5	○		
6	○		
7	○		
8		○	marginal
9	○		
10	○		
11		○	half
12		○	about 20%
13		○	about 40%
14	○		
15		○	half
16		○	half
17	○		
18		○	most
19		○	most
20		○	most
21			(family holds no cotton fields)
22		—	—
23		—	—

Salaf sale accounts for a substantial portion of the cotton crops of the medium-scale peasants in the village as well, with the exception of household 14 and the stock-farming household 17. From household 13 on down, all the households in this median group single-crop cotton. Consequently, the effect of their reliance on pre-harvest sale has been a serious downgrading of the profitability of their enterprises.

A government-operated cotton ginning factory in Aliābād pays advances to cover plowing and weeding labor expenses as well as supplies seed to cotton growers who contract to sell their harvested crop to it: under this arrangement, the planter is allowed to pay back the loan in kind after the harvest has been brought in. At first glance, it would seem that contracting to sell to the government ginnery thus offers a somewhat advantageous alternative to dealing with private buyers. But for the small-scale cotton growers (households 18–20) who have already, by March, sold all of their anticipated crop to *salaf* agents in order to pay off accumulated debts, getting a contract with

the Aliābād ginnery is, of course, out of the question.

VII. CLASS STRATIFICATION

Our analysis of subleasing relationships, land utilization, labor supply, marketing of crops, and other aspects of the economic life of the village has revealed a considerable stratification among the various households comprising the village population. If, for the sake of further analysis, we reduce the disparities brought to the surface in the preceding section to their simplest pattern, the following three strata may be identified within the village.

(1) Upper Stratum. Includes the eight families in the village (households 1-8) which hold and farm over 8 hectares of land. Dependence on hired labor is very great—so much so that the *paterfamilias* no longer performs any physical labor himself, serving rather as an organizer of and supervisor over the labor of hired workers. In addition to cotton and tobacco, these peasants also plant a certain amount of wheat for sale on the market. A large scale of enterprise, and consequent capital sufficiency, tends to keep these upper stratum tenants out of the toils of profiteering cotton merchants, and enables them to realize the high profitability of cotton as a cash crop. In addition, generous advances from government tobacco-processing factories, a high and steady price for the finished and cured product, and financing enabling them to buy the equipment necessary to produce the higher-priced artificially-cured tobacco leaf, make tobacco growing a major source of cash income, and indeed a distinguishing feature of the enterprises run by these eight households.

The high profitability of cotton and tobacco cropping for these upper stratum peasants also makes possible a steady enlarging of the scale of the family enterprise. Such an enlarging takes place not only by opening new fields, but by subleasing land from impoverished, smaller-scale peasants, the scale of which latter practice was sharply increased in 1960 and 1961 when bad harvests compelled many small peasants to abandon wheat-growing and lease out their former wheat acreage as *nesfi*.

“Custom working” and commercial ventures represent two more areas monopolized by the upper stratum peasant. Both households 1 and 3 possess their own tractors (purchased in 1960 and 1961 respectively); these tractors are not simply used to work domestic plots, but used to “custom-work” the holdings of other village tenants. Households 3 and 7 run shops in Shirang-Sofā village, while household 1 operates a similar enterprise in Aliābād. In addition to the retailing of sundry daily necessities, a large amount of the capital invested in these enterprises goes into pre-harvest cotton buying; in fact, the greater part of cotton sold before harvest in the village is purchased by these three locally-run commercial ventures.

(2) Middle Stratum. Includes the nine households (households 9-17) which plant from 2 to 6 hectares.¹⁸ Reliance chiefly on domestic labor is a chara-

¹⁸ Household 17 works only one hectare of land. But, as its main enterprise is stock farming, I include it in the middle stratum category.

cteristic of all the households in this group. But among these nine households, we find two rather different patterns of enterprise being carried on. In the first type (characterizing households 9-12), wheat is grown in sufficient quantity to satisfy home consumption needs, while tobacco and cotton are raised as commercial crops, and are the main source of cash income. Almost no land is leased out to other households: of the 14 hectares held by these four households, only one hectare is so subleased. On the contrary, two of the households within this group (9 and 12) each lease 2 hectares of land from other peasants, which they cultivate under the *nesfī* (share-rent) arrangement, in order to supplement their own holdings.

An alternative pattern is exhibited by the households 13-16, all of which are single-crop cotton growers. Each of the households in this group leases out a portion of its holdings to other households: abandonment of wheat-cropping and sole dependence on the cotton crop has brought about a considerable reduction in the amount of land which these families can work with their limited capital and labor. The total dependence of these five households on the sale of their cotton crop for their cash income notwithstanding, the proportion of this crop sold before harvest is higher than it was in the case of the four multi-crop farmers (households 9-12) described above—the figure for the former group averaging about 1/2 of the total crop. Among these single-crop cotton planters one sees, in addition, a certain amount of hiring out of domestic labor to other households on a seasonal basis. In summation, the economy of the single-crop cotton farmers among the middle-stratum households in the village is a stagnant one, offering no prospect for the expansion of the scale of enterprise of income.

(3) Lower Stratum. Includes those six households which farm less than 1 hectare of land (households 18-23). Because of the small scale of their farming enterprise, households 18-21 find it necessary to supplement their income from cotton farming by selling a good portion of their domestic labor. In the case of households 22 and 23—pure rural proletariat—this latter is in fact the only source of income. Penetration of a market economy as well as the disastrous wheat harvests of 1960 and 1961 have discouraged these lower stratum peasants from growing wheat: their land is now used entirely for growing cotton, a crop which a chronic shortage of capital forces these peasants to sell the bulk of at unfavorable pre-harvest prices to profiteering dealers. This same shortage of capital likewise compels the leasing out of a portion (in one case all) of the family holdings to more prosperous peasants in return for a *nesfī* or *ejāreī* rent; recent years have seen a sudden and drastic reduction in the acreage actually worked by this poorest stratum of peasants. There can be no doubt, furthermore, that this trend is but the prelude to the proletarianization of all the lower stratum tenants in the village.

The process reflected in the stratification of village economic life depicted above can ultimately be seen as the splitting of the farming households into bourgeois and proletarian segments. The upper stratum households are clearly on their way to becoming a bourgeoisie, while the tenants in the lower stratum

households are equally clearly on their way toward pauperization and complete proletarianization, being forced more and more to rely on the sale of their labor as a source of income. And even among the middle stratum peasants the pattern repeats itself: the four more prosperous households in the group like the upper stratum tenants work more land than they hold, while the four less prosperous, single-crop cotton growers in this stratum are being forced to sell more and more of their family labor to other households and to lease out more and more of their holdings to other tenants.

Turning, next, to the reasons for the emergence of this classical pattern of development, let us observe first that the land ownership system current in the Gorgān area, making possible as it does a stratification of agricultural enterprise, plays a very important role in the situation. In other parts of the Iranian countryside, a much more direct system of landlord control, in conjunction with other factors, acts to prevent the kind of stratification among farming households that our study of Shirang-Soflā has revealed. In these "normal" areas, barring the implementation of a rather drastic land reform program, agricultural production will continue to be carried out with only a minimum of class or stratum development. In the Gorgān area, by contrast, an absentee, *rentier* landlord class has for all practical purposes abdicated responsibility for the management of its lands to the small-proprietor tenant, who is protected from the interference of his landlord by the perpetual tenancy right (*haqqe būmī*).

But what, we must then ask, was the concrete situation which gave rise to the actual pattern of stratification as it exists currently in Shirang-Soflā? In answering this question, we might first point to the fact that all of the farming households which are at present in the upper stratum immigrated to the village during the period of its original settlement, from which time onwards their large-scale enterprises served as pioneering and pace-setting ventures in the newly-opened region. Under the rule of the Rezā Shāh, most of their number were designated by the government to grow cotton and tobacco. During this period, the larger scale of their enterprise distinguished them from that of the medium and small peasants in the village. But the stratification was still only quantitatively defined: these larger peasants differed from their less successful fellow villagers only in the *size* of their enterprise, not in the efficiency of their management.

The impetus for an upgrading of production and marketing techniques among the upper stratum peasant did not come until a sudden rise in the domestic and international demand for cotton and other local products opened up new possibilities for profit. Those peasants who were able to reap maximum advantage from the new market were able to do so because of the favorable base that the peculiar type of agriculture characteristic of the Gorgān area afforded them, with its many large-scale farms, a ready supply of wage labor, and an already fairly advanced degree of mechanization of production.

As large-scale farming became increasingly efficient and successful, smaller-scale peasants were forced gradually to reduce their scale of operations, and

Table 5. Comprehensive Data Chart

Household Number	Total Area Planted	Size of Holding	Land Utilization (ha)				Rice ³	Land Leased from Other Households	Sublease Relationships to Other Households
			Wheat	Tobacco	Cotton	Rice ³			
1	18	17	10	5 (1947) ²	3	X	1 ha (11) ⁴		
2	16	16	10	1.5 (1962)	4.5	X	{ 1 ha (15) 1.5 ha (16) 1.5 ha (13)		
3	14	10	8	3 (1960)	3	X			
4	12	12	4	2 (1961)	6	X	2 ha (21)		
5	12	12	4	4 (1958)	4	X	{ 1 ha (19) 0.5 ha (13)		
6	12	10	9	1 (1962)	2	X			
7	10	8.5	6	1 (1962)	3	X			
8	8	8	2	4 (1956)	2	X	2 ha (14)		
9	6	4	4	1 (1962)	1	X			
10	4	4	2	1.5 (1961)	0.5	X			
11	4	5	1	1 (?)	2	X		1 ha (1) ⁵	
12	3	1	1	1 (1962)	1		{ 1 ha (15) 1 ha (17) <i>ejāret</i>		
13	2.5	4.5			2.5	X		{ 1.5 ha (3) 0.5 ha (7)	
14	2	4			2	X		2 ha (9)	
15	2	4			2	X		{ 1 ha (3) 1 ha (12)	
16	2	3.5			2	X		1.5 ha (3)	
17	1	3.5			1			{ 1.5 ha (to a non-village farmer) 1 ha (12) <i>ejāret</i>	
18	1	1			1			1 ha (7)	
19	0.5	1.5			0.5	X		2 ha: <i>ejāret</i> (to a non-village farmer)	
20	0.5	2.5			0.5			2 ha (6)	
21		2							
22									
23									
Total	130.51	134.01	61	26	43.5	16 households	12.5 ha	16 ha	

1. Figures do not include paddy or vegetable field acreage. Totals do not match because 3.5 ha of land is leased to non-village farmers.
 2. Figures in parentheses indicate year tobacco cultivation began.
 3. X indicates rice-growing household.
 4. Numbers in parentheses indicate no. of household from which land is subleased.
 5. Numbers in parentheses indicate no. of the subleasing household.

Table 5. (Continued)

Number of Family Members	Labor Resources										Year of Installation of Tobacco Curing Equipment	Comments
	Labor Resources					Labor Sold to Other Households						
	Domestic Labor		Hired Non-domestic Labor		Labor Sold to Other Households	Family Members		Year of Purchase of Tractor		Year of Installation of Tobacco Curing Equipment		
Total (Male-Female)	Cotton Workers (unit: family)	Tobacco Workers (unit: individual)	Employ (X) or Doesn't Employ (—) Day Laborers	Cotton Workers (unit: family)	Tobacco Workers (unit: individual)	Hired (X) Not Hired (—) as Day Laborers	Year of Purchase of Tractor	Year of Installation of Tobacco Curing Equipment	Comments			
1	5	3(1-2)	1	4	X	—	—	1960	1947	family member currently serves as <i>kadkhudā</i>		
2	8	2(1-1)	2	—	X	—	—	—	1953	family runs commercial enterprise		
3	9	6(3-3)	3	2	X	—	—	1961	1960	family member serves as village councilor		
4	6	5(2-3)	3	1	X	—	—	—	1962	family runs commercial enterprise		
5	3	2(1-1)	3	3	X	—	—	—	1960	family member serves as village councilor		
6	8	3(2-1)	?	—	X	—	—	—	1960	family member was previous <i>kadkhudā</i>		
7	2	2(1-1)	1	2	X	—	—	—	1960	family member serves as village councilor		
8	4	4(1-3)	1	3	X	—	—	—	1959	family runs commercial enterprise		
9	11	6(3-3)	—	—	?	?	?	?	?	family member currently serves as <i>kadkhudā</i>		
10	10	5(2-3)	—	—	?	?	?	?	?	family runs commercial enterprise		
11	5	3(1-2)	1	—	?	?	?	?	?	family member serves as village councilor		
12	8	4(2-2)	—	—	X	—	—	—	—	family member was previous <i>kadkhudā</i>		
13	6	4(1-3)	—	—	—	—	1	1	1	family member serves as village councilor		
14	3	2(1-1)	1	—	—	—	2	—	—	family runs commercial enterprise		
15	6	3(1-2)	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	family runs commercial enterprise		
16	4	2(1-1)	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	family runs commercial enterprise		
17	7	2(1-1)	—	—	X	—	—	—	—	family member currently serves as <i>kadkhudā</i>		
18	3	2(1-1)	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	family member works as combine operator in neighboring village		
19	6	3(1-2)	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	family member works as combine operator in neighboring village		
20	3	2(1-1)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	family member works as combine operator in neighboring village		
21	5	3(1-2)	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	family member works as combine operator in neighboring village		
22	5	2(1-1)	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	family member works as combine operator in neighboring village		
23	2	2(1-1)	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	family member works as combine operator in neighboring village		
129	72	31-41	18	15	2	2	9	—	—	family engages in stock farming		

to become increasingly dependent on the sale of their labor as a source of income. If this tendency had existed before, it came into focus most rapidly after the poor wheat harvests of 1960 and 1961 compelled many small peasants to abandon wheat farming and to turn to single-crop cotton planting.

At the marketing end, the trend among smaller peasants toward single-cropping of cotton was accelerated by pressures from farm produce dealers. Starting in the mid-1950's, but reaching truly significant proportions only in the early 1960's, a skyrocketing domestic and international demand for raw cotton and cottonseed oil¹⁹ led to sharply increased buying on the regional market level by cottonseed oil manufacturers (as well as big cotton exporters), which was in turn reflected in a rise in buying by commission merchants at the village level. Pre-harvest cotton sales rose rapidly, with the chief impact falling on the small peasant, who, forced to sell his crop early in the spring, had to bear the brunt of squeezing by local dealers.

¹⁹ Okazaki, *Large-scale Farming*, pp. 31, 34-35.