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## The administrative Policy in Gīlān by Shah ‘Abbās I

Nobuko Hasebe

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During the reign of Shah ‘Abbās I (1588-1629), the Safavid government adopted a local policy that made regions of rich production *xāṣṣe*, namely they were placed under the direct control of the central government. The royal treasury received all of the revenues from the *xāṣṣe* lands. Thus, this policy was conceived as one of general financial policies of the Safavids.

Parts of the district of Gīlān, south of the Caspian Sea, were appointed as *xāṣṣe* in 1597. Since then, they were retained under the administration of a vazir who was a civil officer dispatched from the central government. Gīlān was famous for its production of rice and raw silk, and one of the most affluent districts in the Safavid Iran. And the district that was not within Safavid's effective control till conquered by Shah ‘Abbās I. Before that the influence of the local political power had been very strong.

In the course of operation of the *xāṣṣe* policy in Gīlān, Shah ‘Abbas I thoroughly reduced its local military powers, and has taken various measures to make Gīlān a district which would be major incomesupplier for royal treasury. Consequently the administration of vazir showed a tendency to concentrate on reinforcement of collecting taxes rather than activating local economy, and eventually brought oppression and extortion to local society.

In addition to the fact that *xāṣṣe* policy had a structural defect that led to severe extortion of local population, destruction of the existing local ruling system bore various social contradictions in the Gīlān society.

Against this oppressive policy, local people of Gīlān start a popular movement immediately after the death of Shah ‘Abbas I, and showed offensive reaction to reject the Safavid rule. This movement was soon put down without any effect to the Safavid policy in Gīlān. On the contrary, the central government further strengthened its policy toward it.

This movement indicates the defects and contradictions originated from the local policy of Shah ‘Abbās I, which has been reputed as successful in modern historical researches. And this reaction of the Gīlān people well reflects Shah ‘Abbās I's reign and his policy from a different perspective.