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Shahri, Jafar. *Tarikh-i Ijtima'i-yi Tihran dar Qarn-i Sizdahum: Zindagi, Kasb va Kar*. Tehran: Mu'assasah-yi Khadamat-i Farhangi-yi Rasa: Intisharat-i Isma'iliyyan, 1988/1990, 6 vols., 4344pp.

## ABSTRACT

### **The Social History of Tehran in the Thirteenth Century Life and Business**

تاریخ اجتماعی تهران در قرن سیزدهم: زندگی، کسب و کار

This work consists of six volumes comprising 4344 pages in total. It provides an extensive account of occupations during the Pahlavi era, with an emphasis on the reign of Reza Shah. The various images inserted in the volumes provide glimpses into the documents, engravings, paintings, places, and personalities of that period.

The first volume describes the neighbourhoods and physical spaces of Tehran. It also contains sections from the book *Tehran's Statistics and Census* from the years 1883, 1891, 1922, 1932, and 1933. These can be a source of inspiration for other researchers of varying interests. In fact, the index on occupations alone was the author's inspiration for writing the other five volumes which include an extensive list of occupations ranging from those at the ministry level to jobs such "cigarette stub cleaner."

The writer's style in describing the occupations generally consists of devoting several pages exclusively to one occupation such as "turmeric grinder", "candle seller", "tissue maker", and "cheap clothing maker", and the like. After describing each occupation, the author immediately covers its relevance and the cultural changes that arose from it. He then concludes by citing proverbs and compound words influenced by the particular occupation. However, some of his excesses in covering marginal issues undermine the book's documentation aspect and value as a resource. Indeed, organising the chapters based on occupations is the only order imposed on the author's rich recollections and his surprising associations. Nonetheless, the reader may find a detailed account of the causes of the Constitutional Revolution after a short description of the occupation "hat seller".

The author's detailed attention in describing seemingly unimportant occupations, however, makes his book one of the most important sources in urban sociology about one of the most sensitive periods in Iranian history when modernisation was moving forward at an increasing pace. Except for the first volume and unlike other historical books, sources are not noted and numbers, years, or months are never mentioned. Thus, it is more a book of personal narratives and experiences about a certain era than a historical work.

The book is accessible to the general public but attractive to those with specific interests and as such the audience for this work may be made of readers from all walks of life and business.

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