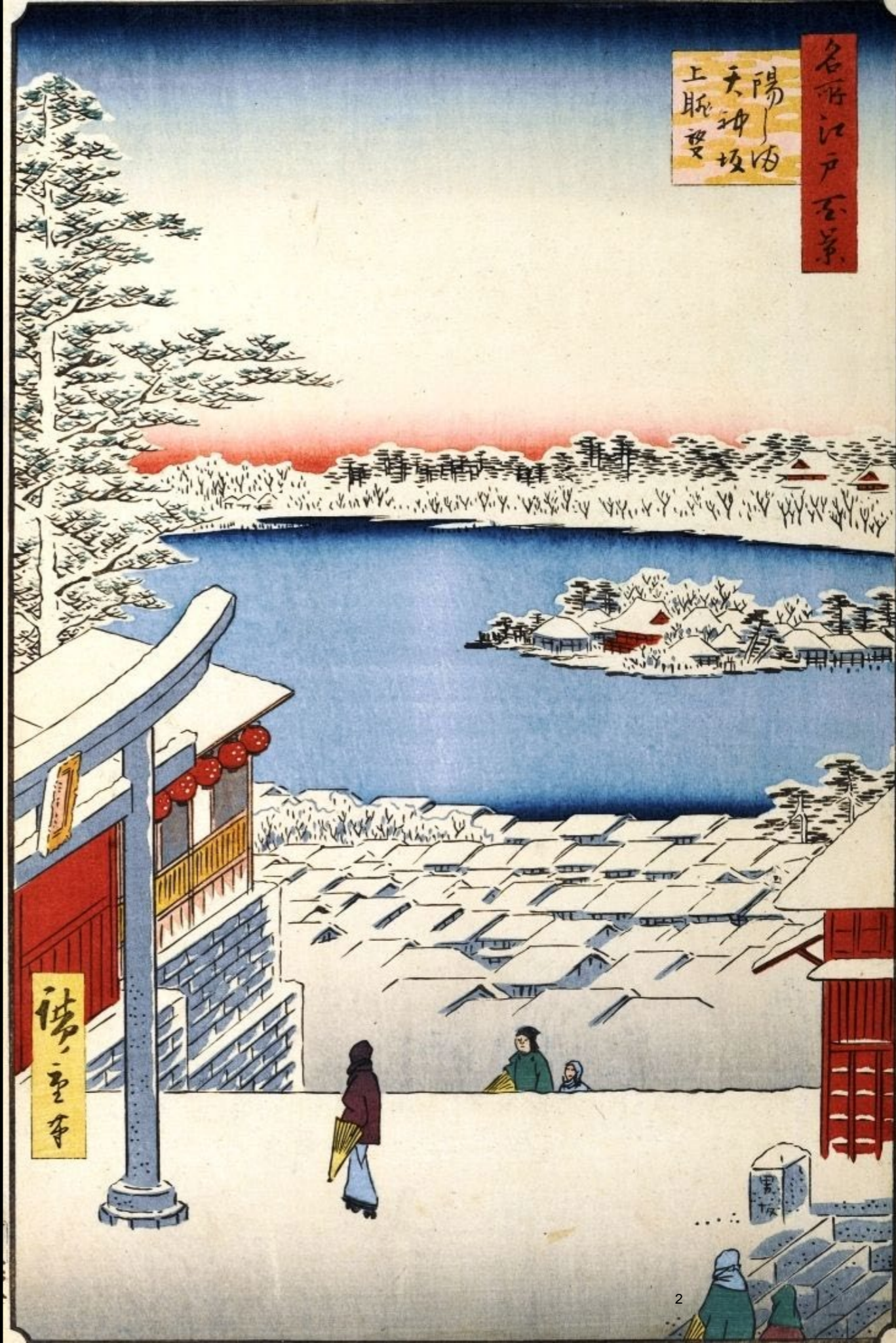


Samurai Corruption

21H.154, Session 17

Tsuneno in Edo



Nihonbashi (Japan Bridge)

© Source unknown. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.



House of Mitsui

- Mitsui Takayasu, “Lord of Echigo” (Ōmi)
- son, Sokubei (?-1633): opens “Lord of Echigo’s Brewery”
- Shuhō, Sokubei’s wife: the real brains
- Rise of Mitsui in Ise



Mitsui Takatoshi (1622-94)

- From pawn shop to rice brokerage
- 1673: opens Echigoya (kimono shop)

“Cash Only,
Fixed Prices”



© Source unknown. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.

This image is in the public domain. Source: [Wikimedia Commons](https://commons.wikimedia.org/).



Echigoya=Mitsukoshi



© Source unknown. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.



Image courtesy of [toyohara](#) on Flickr. License CC BY-NC.

Tsukiji Honganji



© Source unknown. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.

Tsukiji Honganji Today



Image courtesy of [senngokujidai4434](#) on Flickr. License CC BY.

Iwai Hanshirō V (1776-1847)



A Tale of Two Economies

- 1560-1710: dramatic change and growth
 - Key dynamic: role of politics in growth
- 1710-1850s: stagnation and adjustments
 - Key dynamic: role of economy in politics

Tokugawa Village

- Inherent inequality
- Taxation as unit on fixed volume (*koku*) of rice
- Autonomy+technology=massive growth
 - Paddy acreage increase
 - 1450-1650: +70%
 - 1600-1720: +140%



© Source unknown. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.

Not So Rosy?

“Sesame seeds and peasants are very much alike: the more you squeeze them, the more you can extract.”

-attributed to an 18th century Tokugawa official

From 1721 letter to domain officials:

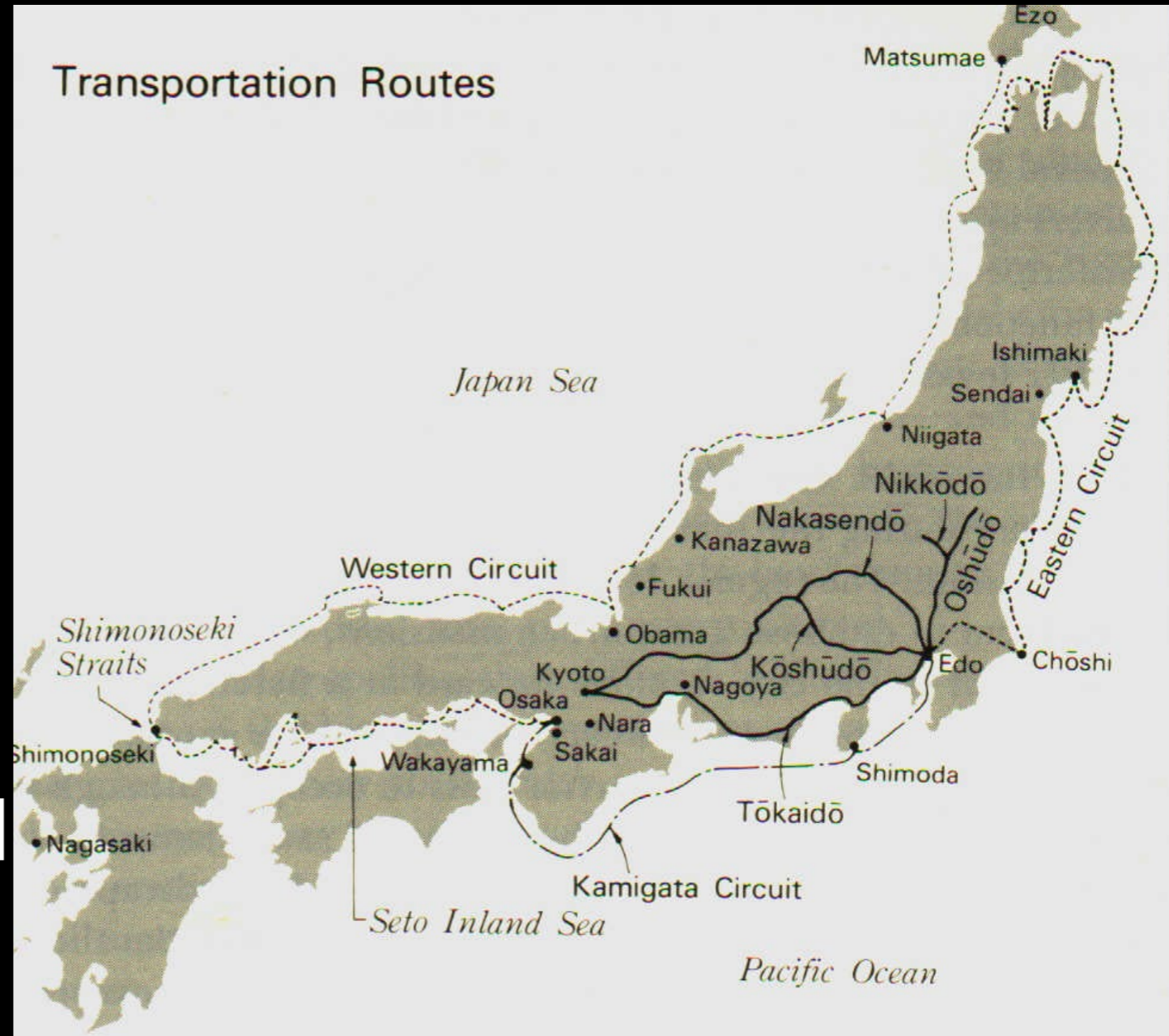
“You relentless thieves! Monstrous exploiters! From now on we shall do as we please. If your punishments are severe, we won’t pay taxes.... We shall choose under whom we shall serve according to the severity of his punishments.”



© Source unknown. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.

Undeniable Growth

- Proto-industrialization: “increased scale of operations and specialized production networks serving long-distance markets” (Gordon, p. 31)
- Change in social relations and increased inequality



© Source unknown. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.

Demographic Growth

- 12 million Japanese in 1600
 - 30~33 million in 1720
- Edo: from 1000 (1590) to 1 million+ (1750)
 - Kyoto, Osaka, London, Paris: ~350,000
- Mutually reinforcing trends
 - Agricultural output, population growth, increased production

Other Developments

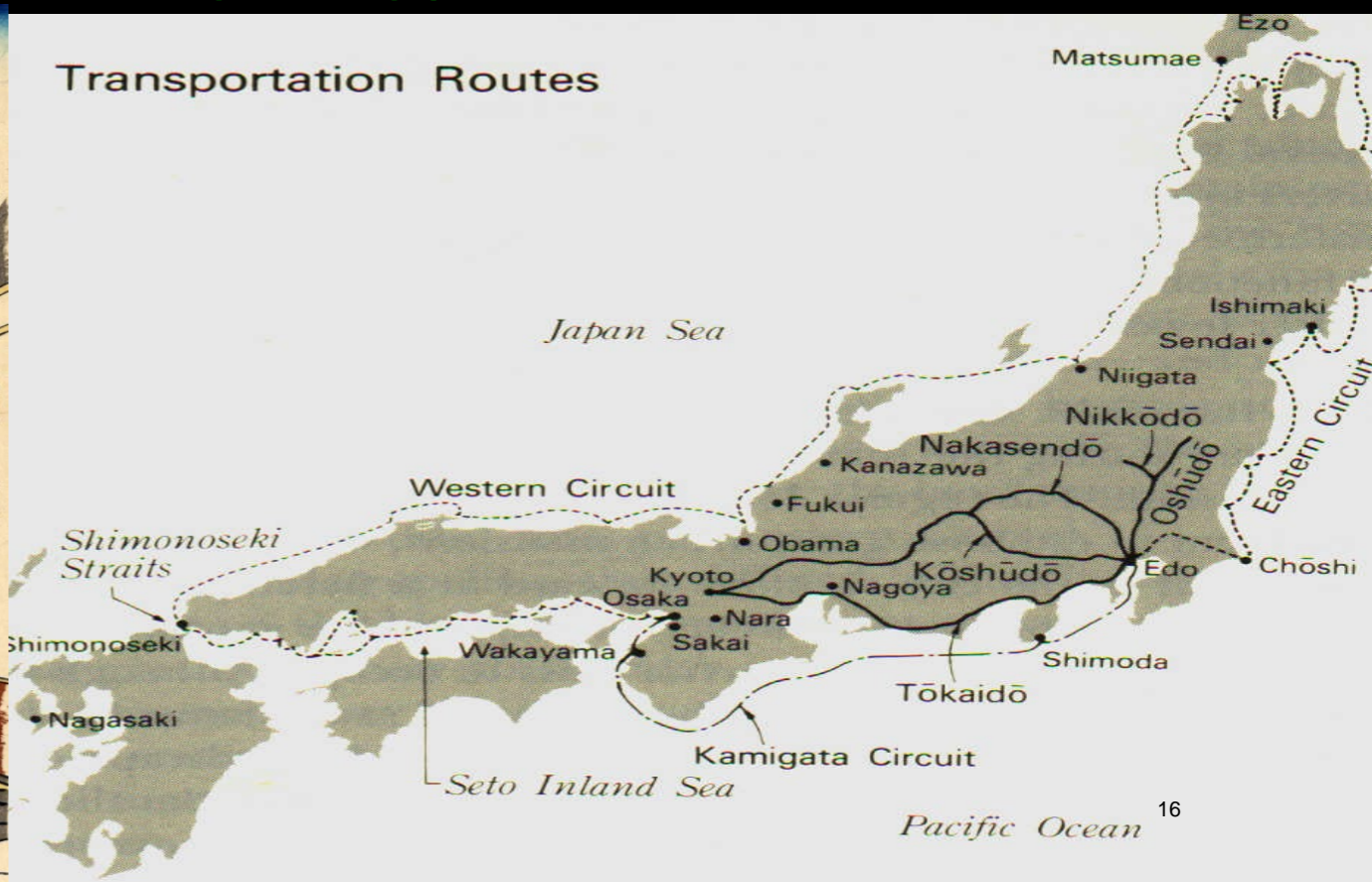
- Literacy: as high as 50% of men and 20% of women by early 1800s
- Mobile population: social and physical
- Erosion of status system
- Emergence of a dynamic but increasingly volatile society

Samurai Consumption

- Commercialization > production and consumption of specialized goods
- Daimyo and samurai as consumers
- Rise of Osaka rice merchants
 - Emergence of rice futures market

This image is in the public domain. Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#).

© Source unknown. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.



Tokugawa Paradox

- Efficient use of resources
- Financial institutions > commercialization
- Transportation and information networks
- Improvement of living standards (including villages)
- Emerging money economy
 - BUT
- Ruling class paid in rice
- Growing merchant power beyond status

内憂外患

(Naiyū gaikan)

“Troubles at Home,
Dangers from Abroad”

Samurai Corruption

- Luxurious Living of Samurai (1816)
- Corruption of Samurai (1855)
- Family Budget of Hatamoto (1845)
- Decline of Samurai Morale (1796)
- Honda Toshiaki (pro-western scholar): Economic Conditions in Edo and in the Countryside (1798)
- Matsudaira Sadanobu: Tax Burdens Suffered by the Farmers (1781)

Oshio Heihachirō's Rebellion (1837)

This image is in the public domain. Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#).



MIT OpenCourseWare
<https://ocw.mit.edu>

21H.154 / 21G.554 Inventing the Samurai
Fall 2022

For information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit: <https://ocw.mit.edu/terms>.