

“Dream-besotted” Musui

21H.154, Session 18

Discontents

- Bakufu ideals vs. realities
 - Erosion of status system
- Growing wealth gap
 - In the villages
 - In the cities



Environment

- Agricultural revolution: massive ecological pressure
- Even marginal land > vulnerability to climate, etc.
- Famines and *uchikowashi* (riots)
 - Tenmei Famine (1783~87)
 - Tempō Famine (1833-37)

Tempō Crisis (1830s)

- “*Naiyū gaikan*”: “Troubles at home, dangers from abroad.”
- Famine: 1833-37
 - Millions die
 - Rice price increases 500%
 - Massive disorder

Rural Uprisings (*ikki*)

Period	Total	Annual rate
1601-1650	209	4.2
1651-1700	211	4.2
1701-1750	422	8.4
1751-1800	670	13.4
1801-1850	814	16.3
1851-1867	373	22

Oshio Heihachirō's Rebellion (1837)

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Bakufu Response

- Piecemeal reforms
 - Tax reduction
 - Secure food for cities, esp. Edo
 - Rations to needy
 - Debase currency
 - Price control on staples
- Favorite: moral regulation > back to the “golden age”

Reassertion of Authority

- Ban on merchant and daimyo monopolies (1841 and 1842)
- 1843: Nikkō Procession



Endemic Problems

- Samurai consumption on credit
- Heavy exploitation of resources
- Lack of financial policies/understanding
- Each *han* expected to fend for itself AND support the bakufu

Bad Samurai: Katsu Kokichi (1802-1850)



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An 1884 print of a kabuki actor as a “*hatamoto ruffian*” (*hatamoto yakko*)



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Katsu Kaishū, a.k.a Rintarō
(1823-1899)

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