“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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Annual rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1601-1650</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1651-1700</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1701-1750</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>8.4</td>
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<td>1751-1800</td>
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<td>13.4</td>
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<td>1801-1850</td>
<td>814</td>
<td>16.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>1851-1867</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>22</td>
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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)

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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