

Protests, Rebellion, Mass Hysteria

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Woodcut illustrations of peasant riots.

Agrarian Economy and Beyond

- *Kokudaka* (measurement of wealth in rice)
- Importance of merchants in exchange
- Self-sufficiency to cash crops and specialization
- Stratification of countryside
- Peasants work in factories (soy sauce, sake, ceramics)

Agrarian Economy and Beyond

- Proto-industrial economy develops: silk, tea, textiles
- Technological improvements increase productivity of land
- Commercial revolution lays basis for industrial revolution (1850s)

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Reality

- Enormous inequalities
 - Peasant protests and riots in cities
 - Infanticide rampant
- Debt system putting pressure from top-down
 - Daimyo cut stipends
 - More taxes demanded of village headmen

Great Peace?

- Internal village disputes: 3,200
- Protests against feudal authorities: 3,212
- Urban disturbances: 488

Types of Rebellion

- Absconding as individuals or en masse
- Disorderly rallies, minor riots
- Appeal to higher authorities
- Mass or mob protest
- Violent demonstrations
- “House wrecking”
- Massive regional insurrection
- World-renewing mass movements

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Painting of peasants rioting and dancing as money falls from the sky.

Economic Hardship and Samurai Protest

- IDEALS
 - *Sankin kôtai*
 - *Daimyo* instruct samurai and commoners to enrich soil and be diligent in literature and military arts
 - If samurai perform duties correctly, no poverty

Realities

- ALL *Daimyo* were in debt to merchants
- *Daimyo* select officials who increase burden
- Some *daimyo* allow merchants to take over reign
- *Daimyo* in debt could no longer “protect and nurture” farmers

Famine of 1783

- Many ghost villages with abandoned fields
- Number that starved to death exceeded 2M
- Infanticide: 'great evil.' Appalled at this and looking for solution to stop.
- Call for 'enlightened ruler.' Dissent towards existing leadership
- Suggestion that daimyo give two bags of rice each year to mother of new child in order to stop infanticide.
- Daimyo blamed for starvation

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Illustration of emaciated, ravenous peasants.

Taxes

- Taxes in range of 50, 60, 70 percent
- vacant lots and gardens, buildings, doors, windows, girls who have reached a certain age, cloth, sake, herbs, and sesame seeds
- Fear of tax officials
- Corvee labor