

Russian Japanology Review, 2026, 1, pp. 5–29

DOI: 10.55105/2658-6444-2026-1-5-29

About the Liebig Company's Advertising Card Collection *History of Japan* (1938)

D. Kiknadze

Abstract

This article examines a little-studied visual source: a series of advertising cards, *History of Japan*, included with packages of meat extract from The Liebig Company; the series was released in 1938 in Switzerland. The company was founded by German chemist Justus von Liebig, whose achievements were primarily related to organic chemistry, new technologies in the field of nutrition, and popularization of chemistry in general. The products were advertised using cards that introduced the buyer to life in different countries across the world.

This study focuses on a series of 12 cards dedicated to different milestones in the political history of Japan. In addition to the visual material, the accompanying texts on the back of each card are of particular interest: they reflect not only the undying interest of Europeans in Japan, but also the special rhetoric that recognized the victory of the Japanese imperial army in China and Korea.

This article is a brief study and a full translation of all 12 cards from French. The material of the research is intended primarily for historians studying different periods of Japanese history, its ideology and politics, card collectors and art historians, as well as for the general readership.

Keywords: Justus von Liebig, The Liebig Company, meat extract, chromolithography, advertisement cards, History of Japan, colonialism, orientalism, Japonisme.

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Conflict of interests

The author declares the absence of the conflict of interests.

For citation:

Kiknadze, D. About the Liebig Company's Advertising Card Collection *History of Japan* (1938). *Russian Japanology Review*, 2026, 1, 5–29

DOI: 10.55105/2658-6444-2026-1-5-29

The Liebig Company was an English firm that began mass production of “meat extract” after its invention by the renowned German chemist Justus von Liebig (1803– 1873). He is widely known among chemists for his significant contributions to the development of organic chemistry and is one of the founders of agricultural chemistry and the creator of the system of chemistry education. Liebig held professorships at the Universities of Giessen and Munich and was president of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences. One of the scientist's goals was to provide the poor with an affordable source of nutrition. Based on his theory of the nutritional value of meat liquids, Liebig developed an extraction process that concentrated and preserved the essential nutrients and flavors of beef in the form of paste or stock cubes. Two spoons of this extract could be diluted with hot water to form the base for a serving of soup.¹

The English company that owned large livestock farms in South America decided to begin producing meat extract in 1850 and named

¹ Liebig meat extract. *Long History*: <https://longhistory.ru/liebig-meat-extract/>

it after its inventor. “Liebig meat extract” (*Liebig Fleischextrakt*) quickly became a worldwide hit [Kiknadze 2024, p. 399].

The company initially advertised its product as “meat tea,” emphasizing its medicinal properties and nutritional value. Doctors embraced this gastronomic novelty, praising the meat extract in scientific journals as a cheap and nutritious alternative to meat. Furthermore, the convenient form and packaging facilitated the nutrition of hospitalized patients, as well as soldiers and sailors. A little later, doctors were joined by cookbook authors who created recipes based on meat extract and wrote whole publications focused on this new product [Rennie 2015, p. 43]. After J. von Liebig’s death, when additional research showed that the multi-stage extraction method destroyed the nutritional value of the extract, The Liebig Company’s products came in for criticism. And yet, scientists unanimously emphasized the convenience and taste of meat extract, not prohibiting its sale as a convenient food.

Under the circumstances, the company had to adopt a new marketing strategy to advertise the new product. At the time, it was common for merchants to advertise their goods using cards illustrated with lithographs on popular themes. In 1870, The Liebig Company launched the first series of advertising cards, which became a kind of “textbook” for learning about the world and a coveted find for card collectors. The company began producing sets of picture cards and including them with each package of meat extract [Kiknadze 2024, p. 399]. The cards were also distributed as promotional gifts in large stores that sold The Liebig Company products. The cards were divided into series on various themes in sets of six or twelve. The back of the cards featured either an advertisement for the company’s product or a recipe for a dish that could use the meat extract.

Some researchers have a sarcastic opinion of the idea of such advertising: “Curious propaganda methods were also used, for example, stock cubes sold under the brand name ‘Liebig meat extract’” [Sokhranyeva 2008, p. 83]. Nevertheless, for its time, the method of promoting products using advertising printed by the new method of chromolithography played an important role. The cards were popular

in Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, and England; there were also Russian, Hungarian, Swedish, and Bohemian editions. There were also other methods of promoting the product, including postcards, board games, calendars, posters, paper toys, and cookbooks.

Many card sets are essentially mini-encyclopedias on various topics. Some are informative, while others are simply attractive thanks to their design.

The last series of chromolithographs was released in 1939, but the sets were edited and reproduced throughout the 1970s. Card production ended only in 1975, with over 11,000 different series and themes. When The Liebig Company ceased its collectible card production in 1975, it was decided to issue thousands of card sets from previous years. The high quality of the printing and design made them collector's items from the very beginning [Kiknadze 2024, p. 400–402].

The Liebig Company was well-versed in all current trends, and the surge of European interest in Asian and African countries could not be ignored. In the midst of Japonisme – the fashion for all things Japanese, especially Japanese art – a wide variety of information was published in European countries for both young and adult readers. These could be short notes in the “customs” category or extensive articles that detailed and quite truthfully illuminated various aspects of the “exotic,” “mysterious,” and “magical” countries of the Orient. Successful colonial policies generated a huge number of stories and themes from the lives of non-European peoples. Far Eastern countries – their society, government, everyday life, holidays, crafts, customs – all these topics were in great demand among inquisitive Europeans.

The *History of Japan* series was first published in Switzerland in 1938 and consists of 12 cards, covering everything from the legendary ruler Jimmu to the major milestones of the Meiji era. Unfortunately, we have not yet been able to identify the author of the card texts, however, based on the detailed facts (not everywhere, but in the overwhelming majority of cases) from the history of Japan, Korea, and China, it should be assumed that the author or group of authors was competent in these matters.

In the texts of the 12 cards, the narration of an unknown author leads the reader step by step through the most significant stages in Japanese history.

1. Emperor Jimmu on the expedition led by the Sun Raven.
2. Empress Jingu (169–269 AD) directs her husband to the West.
3. Prince Shotoku issues the “Code of Culture.”
4. Saint Kūkai’s travel to China.
5. Two samurai.
6. Yoritomo declares himself the first shogun.
7. Battle scene.
8. Destruction of the Mongol fleet.
9. The Korean Campaign. Hideyoshi, the Unifier.
10. Daimyō’s cortege.
11. Negotiations on the Japan-U.S. Treaty.
12. Emperor Meiji’s entry into Tokyo.

The ancient history section begins with historical figures more “relevant” to wartime Japan, who conquer the indigenous population of the islands and free up land for the expansion of their possessions – the Yamato state. Not only on Card 2, but also further on, there often appears the image of the wise Empress Jingu pointing her husband, Emperor Chūai, in the direction of the “Western States,” that is, China and Korea (Baekje).

The desire to embrace the great achievements of Chinese civilization occupies a significant place in the cards’ texts. Much emphasis is put on distinguishing the Japanese – the purposeful and ambitious – from the rebellious aborigines, who are here emphatically “different,” with their spade beards. By showing the long-standing aspirations of the Japanese rulers towards the mainland, the author indirectly justifies the military “exploits” of militaristic Japan in China and Korea in the 1930s as the result of long-standing political aspirations that allegedly arose during the time of the legendary or semi-legendary rulers of Yamato. The cards, which largely served an educational function, conveyed the recognition of a new force in Asia by European powers.

The theme of religions is also important. The Shinto belief system is described in Card 4 as “the primitive religion of ancient Japan.” However, thanks to the efforts of the far-sighted Empress Jingu, Confucianism spread from Korea, and it “perfectly suits the Japanese mentality.” Buddhism, however, does not find such a lively response; Kōbō Daishi’s activities seem almost harmful, detrimental to Japanese identity. “It was only in the 17th century that this religion (this passage speaks about Shinto-Buddhist syncretism and the creation of a specifically Japanese form of Buddhism) ... purged itself of its Buddhist admixture, only to return to primitive Shinto” in the 19th century. Episodes from the history of ancient Japan seem to reflect all the major transformations of the Meiji era: the construction of state Shinto, the oppression of Buddhism, the policy of discrimination against the Ainu, which continued in the first quarter of the 20th century, and the development of the *Nihonjin-ron* theory.

The following cards describe the rise of the samurai to power. Step by step, they recount important events in the political life of medieval Japan, such as the struggle between the Taira and Minamoto houses, the Mongol invasion, the activities of the three unifiers of the country, the first contacts with Europeans, and the expulsion of the Jesuits. The text is full of admiration for the military valor and discipline of the samurai, who are contrasted with the effeminate aristocrats of the “Fujiwara era.”

A sarcastic commentary on Card 5 explores the artistic and compositional features of Japanese *ukiyo-e* prints. The author draws the reader’s attention to discrepancies in proportions, noting the “strange appearance of the warriors” and describing their horses as “ponies,” but adds: “Our artist tried not to introduce the European style into all twelve cards in this series, but to adhere to the original style of old Japanese prints.” The artists of the *History of Japan* series are known: Adolf Münzer (1870– 1953) and August Unger (1869– 1945). Münzer, in addition to painting in the classical style, also successfully worked in book illustration; Unger made a name for himself as an advertising and graphic designer, and also experimented with interior design, fresco painting, and stained glass. As can be seen, The Liebig Company hired

famous artists who were not afraid of experiments and new techniques to create their advertising products, at least in the *History of Japan* series.

Cards 11 and 12 speak of the first unsuccessful attempts to negotiate the opening of the country in 1853, the westernization of Japan, and the new policy of Emperor Meiji. The text on Card 12 ends with a passage that reveals a completely understandable fear caused by the successful military operations of militaristic Japan on the mainland: “Today, the rising sun of Japan has turned into a large question mark hanging over the Asia-Pacific region.”

The text of the cards has been translated by us from French.² For the illustrations, we have taken cards from Diana Kiknadze’s collection which contain the same text (with minimal variations) in Flemish. The author of the article proposes a translation of the cards’ text for their subsequent introduction into scholarly circulation as a new source that captures the European view of Japanese history as it emerged by 1938 – the time of the Imperial Japanese Army’s successful militaristic actions. The information in the text of the cards can often be distorted and inaccurate, which, in the opinion of the author of the article, is of interest from the point of view of the formation and existence among Europeans of a specific perception of certain aspects of the history of ancient Japan, which could ultimately form the “correct” impression of the Land of the Rising Sun.

Card 1

Front: Emperor Jimmu on the expedition led by the Sun Raven

Liebig products: Improving the [quality of] food.

Reverse: Liebig products: improving [the quality of] food!

1. Emperor Jimmu on the expedition led by the Sun Raven (660 BC). The founding of the empire and the divine origin of the emperors

² Liebig 1938 Histoire du Japon. *NJWV*. 06.12.2023. <https://njwv.wordpress.com/2023/06/12/liebig-1938-histoire-du-japon/>



The modern Japanese Empire extends across 3,000 islands and islets scattered around old Japan, including the four largest main islands. Nippon means “Origin of the Sun.” We call it the “Land of the Rising Sun.” – In ancient times, Japan was inhabited by the Ainu, a white race of bearded, light-eyed people who spoke an Aryan language. Subsequently, tribes originating from Malaysia immigrated to the southern islands, and over the course of ten centuries BC, the southwest was conquered by the Mongol-Manchus, the future masters of Japan, who came from Korea. In the 7th century BC, the Great Kamu (later named Jimmu Tenno) united the invading tribes and, driven by an irresistible attraction to the East, subjugated much of the country. He established his throne in Yamato in 660 BC, marking the beginning of the Japanese imperial history. Thus, he will turn 2,600 years old in the year of the upcoming Tokyo Olympics, 1940. For the Japanese, Jimmu Tenno is the great-grandson of the goddess Amaterasu, whose descendants have been on the throne ever since, and the dynasty remains ongoing to this day. The current emperor is a direct descendant of Jimmu

and Amaterasu. The Japanese also refer to their emperor as the “Sun Emperor” (Tenni) or the “Son of Heaven” (Tenshi). And only foreigners use the name Mikado. – Legend has it that Jimmu lost his way during his campaign to the East, but his divine grandmother Amaterasu sent him the Sun Raven, who guided him and ensured victory.

The Liebig Company, established in 1865.

Card 2

Front: History of Japan. Empress Jingu of Japan (169–269 AD) directs her husband to the West

Liebig products: reduce costs.

Reverse: Liebig products: reduce costs!

2. Empress Jingu of Japan (169–269 AD) directs her husband to the West. Consolidation of conquests and first contacts with Korea

The proclamation of the Yamato Empire by [sovereign] Jimmu did not mean the end of the war, as the local tribes tirelessly resisted the conquerors. The Ainu, in particular, continued their warfare for centuries



until they were finally driven out in the 11th century. (Today, only a few thousand of them remain in northern Japan.) – In the 2nd century AD, Emperor Chuai heroically led this struggle, driving them out, thus continuing the work of his predecessors.

His wife, Empress Jingu, would have preferred to see his efforts directed toward the fabled Land to the West (China, which was then experiencing its greatest prosperity). Jingu received news of this from Korea, which serves as a bridge between the mainland and Japan. Every evening, she directed her husband's gaze to the West, where the sun sets, and urged him to direct his efforts toward the legendary land. But Chuai saw nothing but smoke over the coastal houses and fog over the ocean, dreaming of continuing to conquer his island empire. The gods punished him and took his life, and then Jingu, having ascended the throne (201–263 BC), finally initiated the much-desired contacts with Korea. – It is not proven whether this was a military invasion or peaceful relations: from that time onwards, many Chinese and Koreans were constantly arriving in Japan, and the first signs of Chinese civilization appeared there.

The Liebig Company, established in 1865.

Card 3

Front: History of Japan. Prince Shotoku issues the *Code of Culture*

Liebig products: Power and flavour of beef.

Reverse: Liebig products: power and flavour of beef!

**3. Prince Shotoku issues the *Code of Culture* (620 AD).
Introduction to Chinese Civilization. – The Fujiwara era**

After the first contacts with Korea, established thanks to Empress Jingu, advisers considered it advantageous for Japan to spread the superior Chinese civilization. Many envoys and students were sent to China, and at the same time, Chinese leading scholars and craftsmen came to Japan. Thus spread Chinese administrative and military sciences, architecture, painting, literature, as well as Chinese writing in hieroglyphs, but not the spoken language, as it remained Japanese. –



Shotoku Taishi, a great scholar and prince regent to Empress Suiko, was one of main promoters of this movement. In 620, he issued 17 articles which, among other things, proclaimed Buddhism as the state religion.

These 17 articles are the first written document of Japan that we know of. The subsequent history of Japan is based on two traditional written monuments that still exist today: the *Kojiki*, 712, reflects the spirit of ancient Japan, and the *Nihongi*, 720, is influenced by Chinese ideology. These two documents were created during the first major period of Japanese history: the Fujiwara era. – This era began fifty years after the promulgation of the 17 Articles with the accession of Emperor Temmu in 673 and the first ruling clan, the Fujiwara, which ruled for four centuries. This era is characterized by a tremendous development of the economy and culture, an evolution that occurred mainly during the reign of Kammu (782– 802), one of Japan's greatest emperors. He moved the capital to Kyoto in 794.

The Liebig Company, established in 1865.

Card 4

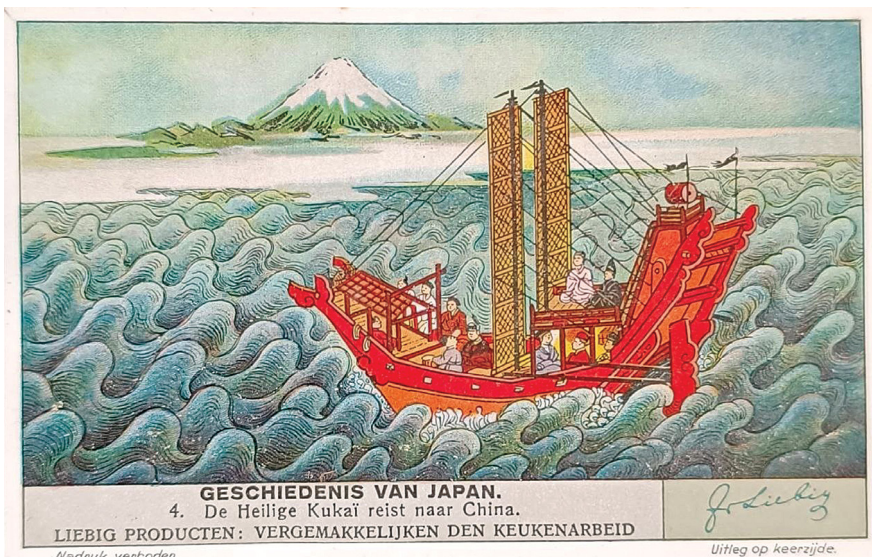
Front: History of Japan. Saint Kukai's travel to China

Liebig products: simplify cooking.

Reverse: Liebig products: simplify cooking!

4. Saint Kukai's travel to China (804). The evolution of cults in Japan

The primitive religion of ancient Japan was Shinto ("Way of the Gods"), a blend of ancestor and nature worship with veneration of the sun and the sun goddess Amaterasu. During the reign of Empress Jingu, Chinese Confucianism was introduced from Korea; it perfectly suited the Japanese mentality and easily spread. Buddhism, on the contrary, having Indo-Chinese roots and a completely different origin, had a hard time penetrating the soul of the Japanese, even though it was proclaimed the state religion. Saint Kukai also went to China in 804 on a court mission to study in depth the new Chinese culture, which was then experiencing its second great upsurge; – this was the Tang Dynasty, which favoured Confucianism very much. (Kukai, named Kobo-daishi after his death, was a priest, scholar, and artist who lived under the great Kammu, a relative



of the Fujiwara). When he arrived in 810, he introduced many reforms that fundamentally had a more significant place in the intellectual sphere for the spirit of ancient Japan, since this sphere was entirely under Chinese influence.

Later, after the invention of the Japanese syllabary, which corresponded to Chinese characters, Kukai reinterpreted Buddhism and combined it with Confucianism and Shintoism. This mixture became Shinto-Buddhist syncretism, a form of Buddhism in its Japanese form. It was only in the 17th century that this religion finally purged itself of its Buddhist admixture, only to return to primitive Shinto and become the state religion during the 19th-century restoration. The Liebig Company, established in 1865.

Card 5

Front: History of Japan. Two samurai, from an old Japanese print

Liebig products: best beef.

Reverse: Liebig products: best beef!

5. Two samurai, from an old Japanese print. Formation of the military class

While the Fujiwara reign saw economic and intellectual prosperity, the formation of the famous military class, the samurai, also began. Starting in the 8th century, the military became aristocrats and stood socially above other city dwellers. Gradually, this formed the classic type of samurai, a professional warrior with a certain character and morality, whose line of conduct is prescribed in the famous Bushido (“The Way of the Warrior”) code of honor. These were representatives of the elite, valiant in battle, glorifying honor and loyalty, ready for self-sacrifice and full of devotion, despising death and pain (hara-kiri!). Their primary weapons were a bow and two masterfully crafted swords.

Their armor was developed using a method unique in its protective effectiveness, without being adapted to the human body: we judge from the strange appearance of the two warriors depicted on our card, along with the appearance of a distorted, disproportionate horse (here:



pony) painted by a Japanese artist. (Our artist tried not to introduce the European style into all twelve cards of this series, but to follow the original style of old Japanese prints.) – Samurai and their families served the feudal lords and had only one privilege: the opportunity to fight. They also had taste and collected art and calligraphy. Civil wars between feudal lords were frequent and brought increasing hardship to the military class, while the Fujiwara aristocrats wallowed in pleasure and luxury. Eventually, the military seized power and established the shogunate.

The Liebig Company, established in 1865.

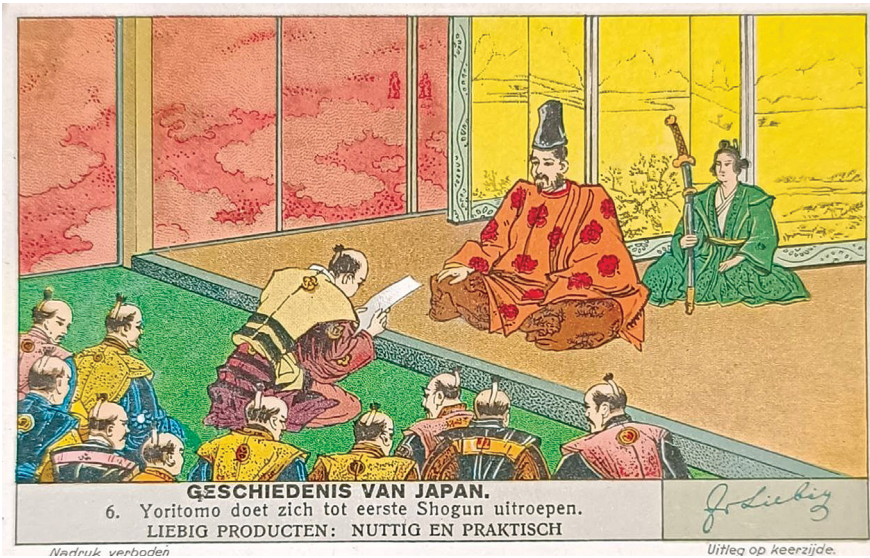
Card 6

Front: History of Japan. Yoritomo declares himself the first shogun

Liebig Company: convenient and practical.

Reverse: Liebig Company: convenient and practical!

6. Yoritomo declares himself the first shogun. Temporarily, power passed into the hands of the generalissimos



Between the 9th and 19th centuries, Japan's history was dominated by four major noble clans: the Fujiwara, Taira, Minamoto, and Tokugawa. The Fujiwara clan ruled the country in the 7th to 12th centuries, becoming more or less closely connected to the Kyoto throne through matrimonial and other ties. But the radical changes in regard to the throne in the 12th century were provoked by various important factors: the emergence of democratic Buddhism, which gradually replaced Shinto, so suitable for the heavenly emperors; the impunity of the effeminate Fujiwara, which unleashed internal feudal wars; the growing prestige, influence, and wealth of the two great military houses of Taira and Minamoto.

These two clans fought for the throne throughout the entire Fujiwara period. The Taira eventually seized the throne, but for a long time were unable to implement the necessary reforms and, after a 22-year reign, were deposed by two military geniuses of the Minamoto clan: Yoshitsune and Yoritomo. Power was temporarily taken away from the emperors, who were reduced to the status of religious functionaries in Kyoto, while Yoritomo was proclaimed dictator in 1192 under the name of shogun

(generalissimo) – the title that became hereditary in the Minamoto clan. Yoritomo established his headquarters in Kamakura and embarked on many positive reforms. While retaining the court aristocratic clans and the Buddhist clergy, he united the country and centralized the administration, making large feudal lords directly dependent on the General Headquarters.

The Liebig Company, established in 1865.

Card 7

Front: History of Japan. A battle scene, from an old Japanese print

Liebig products: improving the [quality of] food.

Reverse: Liebig products: improving the [quality of] food!

7. A battle scene, from an old Japanese print. Feudal Wars. Three Rival Administrations

After Yoritomo's death in 1198, feuds between the ruling lords resumed with increasing intensity, which subsequently led to the weakening of the shogunate's authority. Soon, the shoguns themselves



suffered from the same actions they had previously inflicted on the emperors: instead of the shoguns, power was now exercised by regents and shikken – a kind of palace mayors. The shikken operated so skillfully that both the imperial throne in Kyoto and the shogunal throne in Kamakura were almost always occupied by young children, whom they deposed as the children grew up. This was the era of the Hojo clan (1219– 1334) from the Taira clan.

Their rule, initially successful, became increasingly brutal and was finally overthrown by the rebellion of Emperor Go-Daigo, who temporarily restored imperial power. Go-Daigo left no heirs, and after the emperor's death, his lieutenant Ashikaga Takauji returned to power, establishing the Ashikaga shogunate in 1335, which maintained good relations with China.* But internecine wars continued to ravage the country. Sometimes there were two emperors on the throne. – Only once did the rivalry cease: this happened in the face of the threat of the Mongol invasion (more on this in the next issue) during the reign of the Hojo regime.

The Liebig Company, established in 1865.

**Note:* For more information on the Chinese civilization mentioned in this text, please see our *History of China* series published in 1933.

Card 8

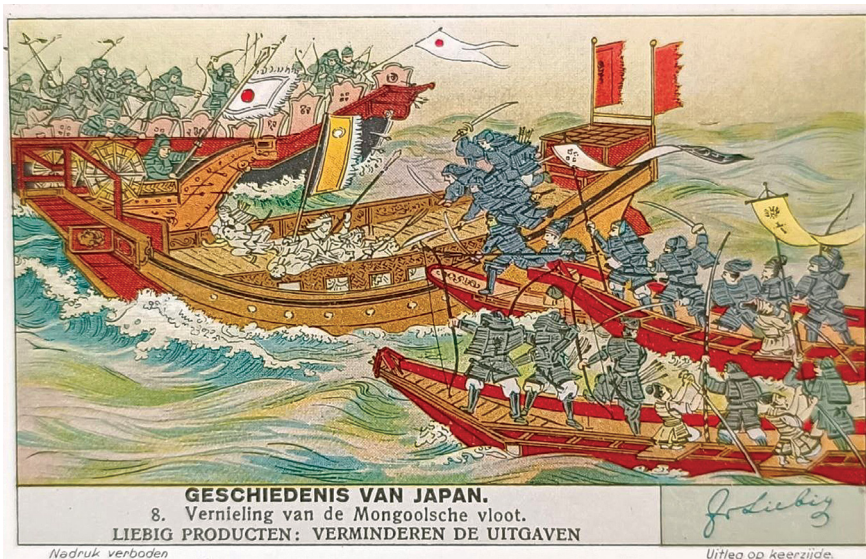
Front: History of Japan. Destruction of the Mongol fleet

Liebig products: reduce costs.

Reverse: Liebig products: reduce costs!

8. Destruction of the Mongol fleet (1281). Disembarking on the mainland. Three unifiers

We've already seen that the Ainu aborigines and later the tribes of Jimmu the Conqueror arrived from the Asian continent, and that Japan subsequently established friendly relations with Korea and China. For the first time since then, Japan faced a threat from the mainland due to the unstoppable Mongol invasion in the 13th century (Genghis Khan, Kublai Khan), as the Mongols had already conquered all of China. After the first landing on Kyushu in 1274, which had no lasting consequences, Kublai Khan created an excellent fleet for the conquest of Japan.



Shortly before this invasion, the ruling lords forgot their quarrels and united to fight the terrible enemy, while the Japanese emperor offered prayers to his heavenly grandmother, the goddess Amaterasu. She heard the sovereign's pleas and summoned a terrible storm. (Remember the typhoons and natural disasters that often occur in these regions.)

The hurricane smashed and scattered many ships of the Mongolian fleet, and those that attempted to escape were destroyed by the Japanese. This happened in 1281. From then until now, Japan has never been threatened by foreigners. (Much later, the Mongols were expelled by the Chinese.) – This danger had barely passed when feudal wars resumed. And they did not cease until, towards the end of the 15th century, there emerged three great statesmen who put an end to them. These three geniuses were Lord Oda Nobunaga of the Taira clan, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, the son of a peasant, a stable boy and later a lieutenant under Nobunaga, and Ieyasu Tokugawa of the Minamoto clan. Let's look at their successes and tribulations in the following card.

The Liebig Company, established in 1865.

Card 9

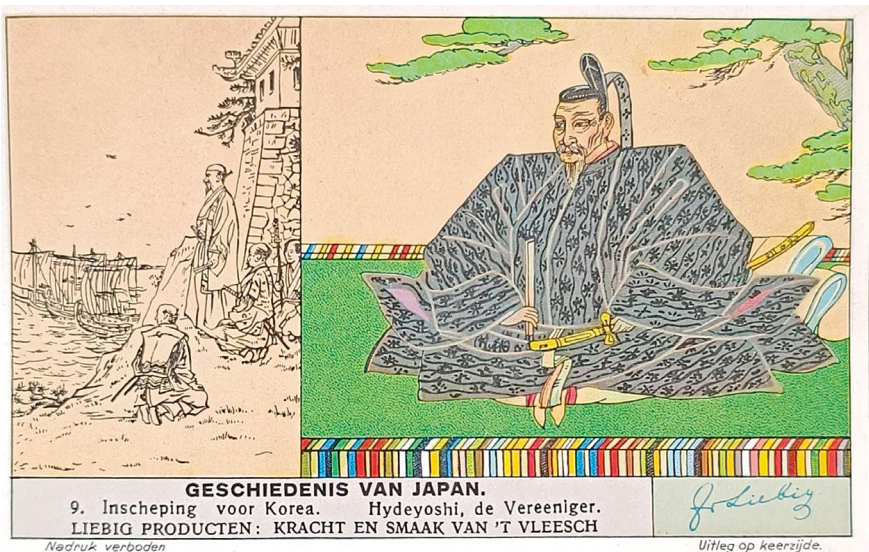
Front: History of Japan. Hideyoshi the Unifier. The Korean Campaign (1592)

Liebig products: power and flavor of beef.

Reverse: Liebig products: power and flavor of beef!

9. The Korean Campaign (1592). Hideyoshi the Unifier. Napoleon and Caesar of Japan

In 1575, the emperor summoned Lord Nobunaga, and he, along with his assistant Hideyoshi, subjugated one feudal leader after another until he was treacherously killed. But he was succeeded by Hideyoshi (in 1582), who, thanks to his military genius, quickly completed the pacification of the country. Instead of continuing to fight Ieyasu, who was an equal and influential figure in the shogunate, he secured his cooperation. Hideyoshi became an all-powerful dictator and ultimately achieved the unification of the empire. Soon, Hideyoshi planned to conquer Korea, and from there, China, to take advantage of the period of anarchy reigning in China. He assembled a strong army at the port



of Nagoya (see left side of the card), and in a short time, all of Korea was conquered.

But the Koreans, meanwhile, had built covered boats that protected the crews from the samurai's fighting might, and the Japanese fleet was routed. After the death of Hideyoshi in 1598, when it was cut off from its bases, the Japanese abandoned their conquests and began peace negotiations. (China, however, was soon conquered, but by the Manchus.) After Hideyoshi's death, a short war of succession broke out between the feudal lords, but in the decisive battle at Sekigahara in 1600, Ieyasu won and became shogun. This historic battle, along with the Battle of Osaka in 1615, which resulted in the death of Hideyoshi's wife and son, destroyed the power of the feudal lords, ended the perpetual civil wars forever, and established a regime that would last until the Restoration in the 19th century.

The Liebig Company, established in 1865.

Card 10

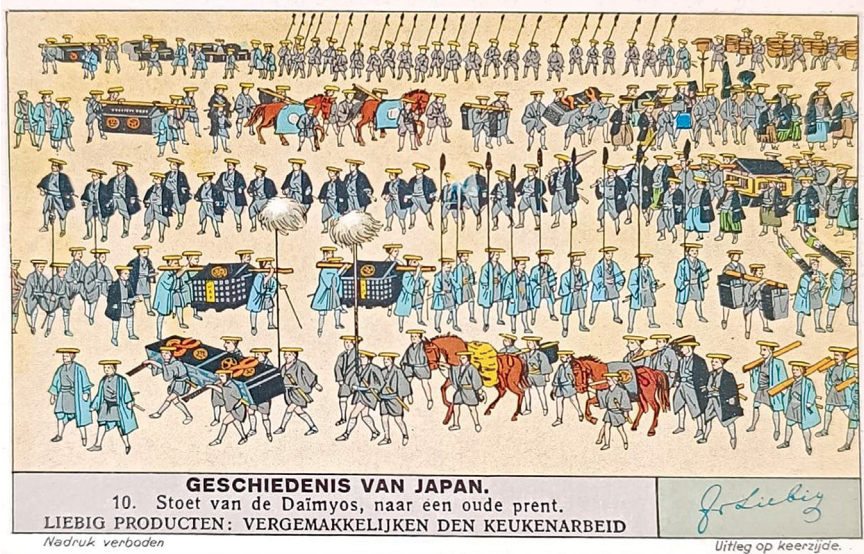
Front: History of Japan. Daimyo's cortege, from an old Japanese print

Liebig products: simplify cooking.

Reverse: Liebig products: simplify cooking!

10. Daimyo's cortege, from an old Japanese print. The Tokugawa era: peace and prosperity; the closure of the country

Following his victory, Tokugawa Ieyasu established the shogunal headquarters in Edo (Tokyo), ushering in the Edo period (1603–1867), an era of peace and prosperity, which led to a great upsurge in economic and intellectual life. Ieyasu carried out sensible reforms and organized a well-coordinated administration. All provinces became state property, and the country was divided into domains ruled by daimyo (“great name”). They were obliged to maintain numerous samurai and appear annually at the shogun's court. From then on, endless processions passed through the entire country, bringing tribute and offerings for the shogun, as we see on this



card. It was under his rule that the country was closed to foreigners and Christianity was banned. Europeans had contact with Japan in 1542 through Portuguese traders, and later through the Spanish and Dutch, while Jesuit missionaries (St. Francis Xavier, 1549) had hundreds of thousands of followers and built churches. But cruelty and intolerance created numerous obstacles. After the first expulsion of missionaries in 1597 under Hideyoshi, Christianity was completely banned under Ieyasu in 1614, and from 1624 to 1634, Ieyasu's successor, Iemitsu, banned the Japanese from leaving the country and foreign ships from entering Japanese harbors (with the exception of Dutch and Chinese ships). This was done with the aim of protecting the country from harmful foreign influence, an example of which was seen in China.

The Liebig Company, established in 1865.

Card 11

Front: History of Japan. Negotiations on the Japan-U.S. Treaty

Liebig products: best beef.

Reverse: Liebig products: best beef!

11. Negotiations on the Japan-U.S. Treaty (1854). Opening of the country and abolition of the shogunate

In 1842, China was forced to open several of its ports to world trade, and in the same year, the American Admiral Biddle tried to persuade the Japanese government to do the same, but in vain. The Americans, determined to open Japan to international trade, sent Commodore Perry in 1853 to make another attempt, again unsuccessful, but the following year Perry returned with a strong squadron, and this time he insisted on negotiating a trade treaty. The shogunate government relented, and the Japan-U.S. Treaty was concluded. Naturally, other Western countries followed suit.

This was the beginning of the end for the shogunate. The lords and samurai felt humiliated by the arrogance of the foreigners to whom



the shogunate administration was subservient. Meanwhile, studies of ancient Shinto, which had once again become fashionable, portrayed the shoguns as usurpers and the emperor of heavenly descent as the only possible ruler of the country. The prestige of the imperial court in Kyoto rose, while that of the shogunate in Edo declined, as the desire to abolish the centuries-old dual power grew. In 1867, the last shogun, Keiki, an enlightened patriot, decided to follow the aspirations of the nation and handed over his power and rule to Emperor Meiji, with the feudal lords and samurai following his example. Thus ended the shogunate and the Restoration began.

The Liebig Company, established in 1865.

Card 12

Front: History of Japan. Emperor Meiji's entry into Tokyo

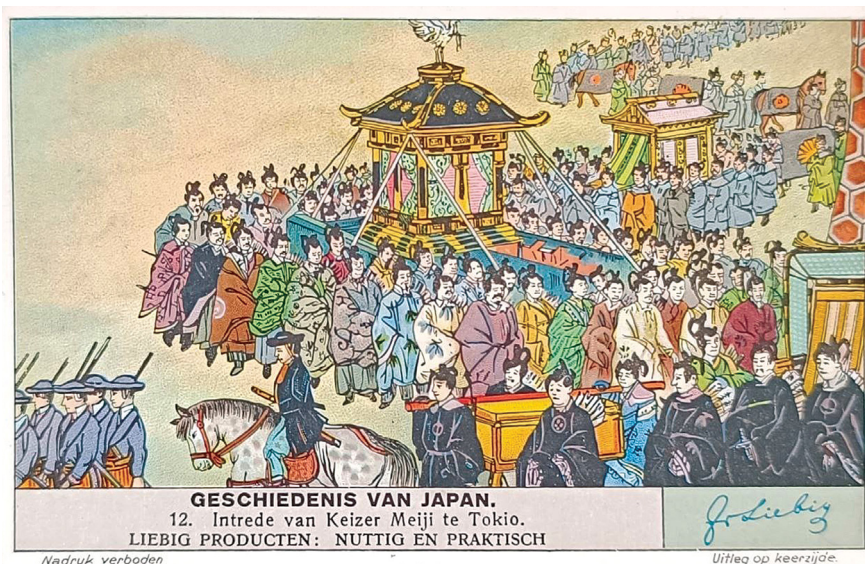
Liebig products: convenient and practical.

Reverse: Liebig products: convenient and practical!

12. Emperor Meiji's triumphal entry into Tokyo (1868). Restoration of imperial power. Modernization and expansion of the empire

Despite the voluntary resignation of Shogun Keiki, civil war broke out, but Emperor Meiji, the 120th descendant of Jimmu Tenno, assumed full power and triumphantly entered Edo (Tokyo), the capital of the shogunate, in 1868. The long period of peace during the Tokugawa era weakened Japan's defenses and made it vulnerable to intervention by contemporary foreign powers. Realizing this, the Japanese began energetically transforming themselves into a modern nation. Feudalism and the samurai were abolished, the army and administration were centralized, and industry, a navy, railways, and other modern institutions were established. Numerous European and American professors were invited to work in Japan, and countless Japanese students travelled to Europe and America, just as they had travelled to China ten centuries earlier.

In 1890, a Western-style constitution was adopted: a constitutional monarchy and a parliament with imperial prerogatives. (However, some



military clans, in which the spirit of the samurai was preserved, never ceased to be hostile to this constitution, which did not correspond to their Shinto ideal of the heavenly emperor, the sole head of the nation.) Japan soon began its expansion. Forty years after Perry's arrival, the Japanese conquered Formosa (1894–1895) and Korea (1904–1905) from China, driving the Russians out of southern Manchuria; in 1914–1918, they acquired several strategically important islands. And today, Japan's rising sun has become a large question mark looming over the Asia-Pacific region.

The Liebig Company, established in 1865.

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This article was originally published in Russian. The reference for primary publication is as follows: Kiknadze, D. (2025). O kollektzii reklamnykh kartochek The Liebig Company «Istoriya Yaponii» 1938 g. [About the Liebig Company's Advertising Card Collection "History of Japan" (1938)]. *Yearbook Japan*, Vol. 54, pp. 89–107 (In Russian).

DOI: 10.55105/2687-1440-2025-54-89-107