

«Hikifuda» or what Japanese advertising looked like at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries.  
The collection from the Russian State Art Library.

引札。19世紀と20世紀の変わり目に日本の広告が  
どのように見えたか。

ロシア国立芸術図書館のコレクション。

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2021 EAJRS conference in Saint Petersburg

- About the collection
- The stamps on the reverse
- What is hikifuda?
- Origin & production
- Why RSLA's stock is particular?
- Subjects
- Symbols, legends & signs
- Conclusion



# About the collection

- 94 items
- landscape- or portrait-oriented
- black-framed
- «90 lists with the models of Japanese costumes» came into the library in 1949 from the used bookstore №79.



Museum of the 28th Siberian Rifle  
Regiment (1903–1918).



22,5 cm.

33,8 cm

# The stamps on the reverse



Sunday  
No 325



Monday  
No 408



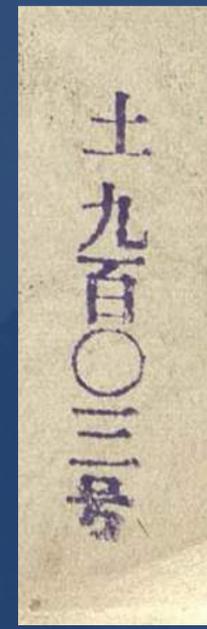
Tuesday  
No 505



Thursday  
No 702



Friday  
No 803



Saturday  
No 903

Numeration is according to the order of the days of the week (Sun - Sat):

日 - NoNo 301, 304-311, 313-322, 324-326

月 - NoNo 403, 405-409, 411, 412, 414

火 - NoNo 501-503, 505, 506

木 - NoNo 701, 702

金 - NoNo 802

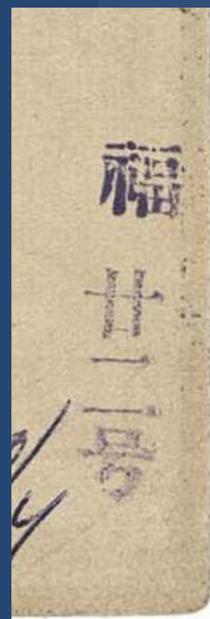
土 - NoNo 901-903

Additional hieroglyph:

福 - NoNo 1, 3, 4, 6-13, 15-24

德 - NoNo 101, 102, 105, 111-113, 115, 117

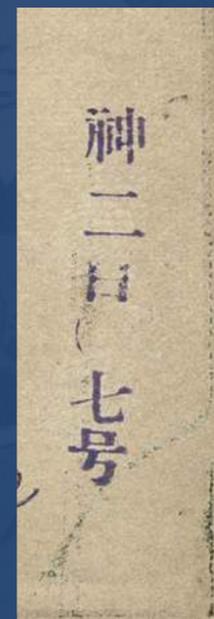
神 - NoNo 201, 202, 204-207, 209-212, 214-219



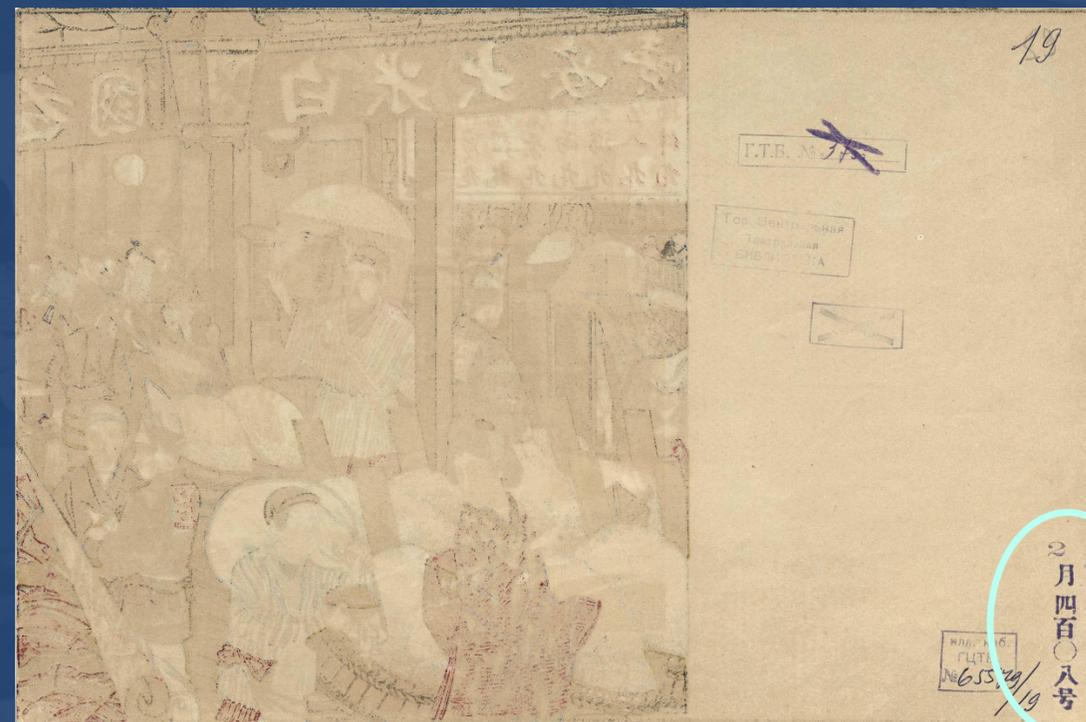
"Good fortune"  
No 22



"Virtue"  
No 102



"God"  
No 207



# What is it?

*Hikifuda* – are woodcut or lithograph prints that retailers and wholesalers, mercantile agencies, and other organisations in Japan of the Meiji era (1868–1912) used as advertising materials. With brightly illustrated woodcut leaflets began a new stage in Japanese advertising development.



# Origin

For the first time, they used handbills as an advertising method in the “Etigoya Mitsui” shop as early as 1683. Japanese etymologies the word “hikifuda” (引札/引き札) as “tickets to attract visitors” or “handouts”, as it comes from the word “hiku” (引く) — “to pull, to attract”



# Production

They made most of the hikifuda in the following way: the main printing workshop in Osaka printed the pictorial part on about two-thirds of the sheet, and small local workshops entered various information on the same sheets at the request of the customer. They placed all these structural elements in predetermined positions.

Different stores could use a leaflet with the same image and even in different cities.



# Not used for their intended purpose



From RSAL's stock

"Japanese and Chinese sugar, kitchen utensils, bags, tobacco from different countries, tea, Nagano, Nishimachi, Shimotakai district, Shinshu [pref. Nakano] Minami Shop", Japan Post Museum, 1904



"Help in the works with raw lime, Kyoto, Higashinotoindori, Tahara Kunizo". Private collection, year unknown



# Subjects

The subjects resembled traditional Japanese Ukiyo-e engravings: women in kimono, children, the Gods of Fortune Ebisu and Daikokuten, dragons and mount Fuji, crane and turtle (the symbol of longevity) and many others.





МУЗЕЙ  
23-70  
О. К. С. П. П. П. П.

RUSSIAN STATE  
MUSEUM  
ART  
LIBRARY

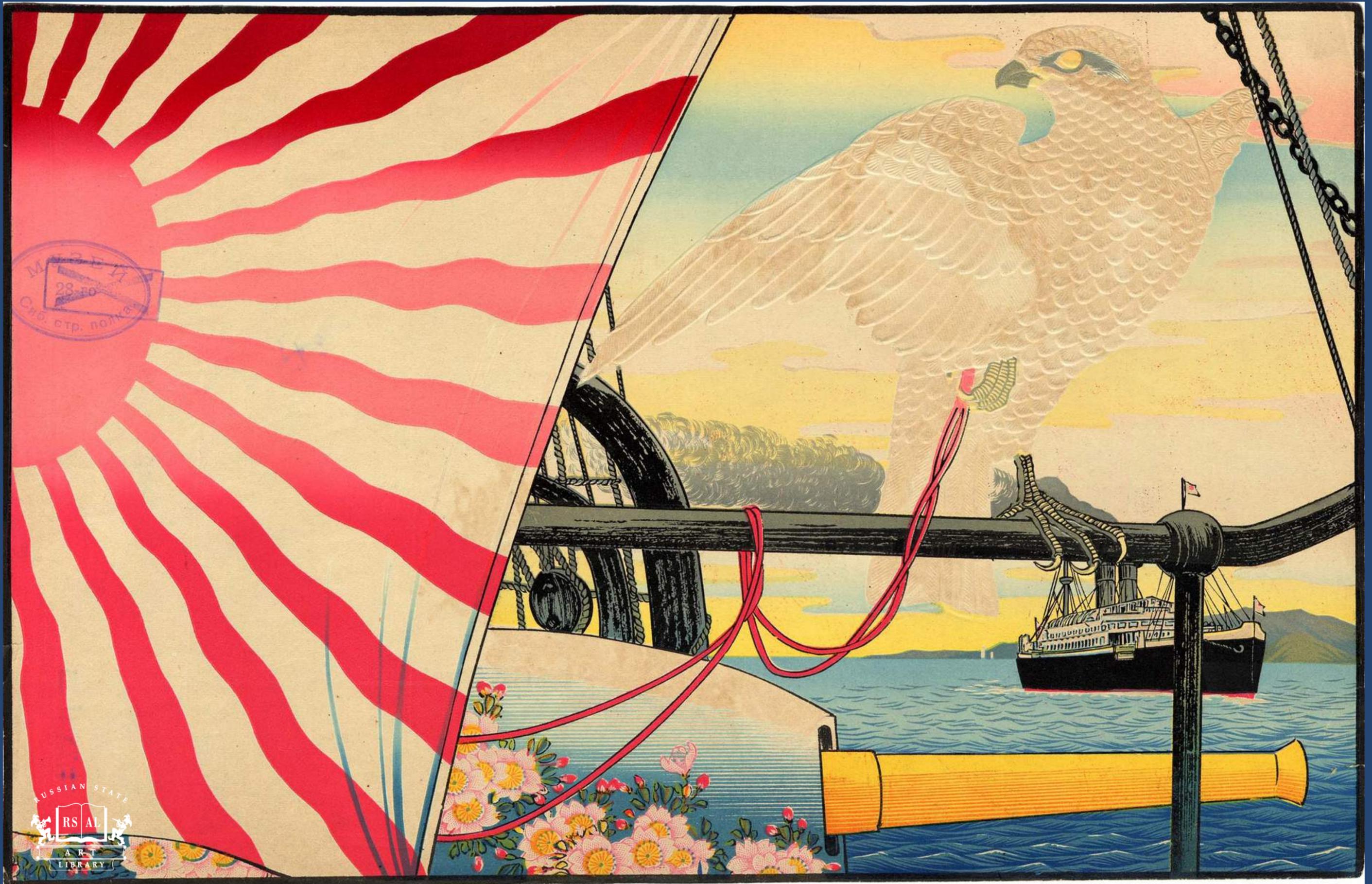




# NAIGAIZATSUKWA & CO.







M 12 17  
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Спб. стр. полк. 8

RUSSIAN STATE  
RSAL  
ART  
LIBRARY

# The subjects in RSAL's stock

- 24 sheets – women
- 12 – women with children
- 4 – men
- 11 – scenes from urban life
- 15 – gods of happiness
- 2 – Daikokuten as a postal delivery officer
- 4 – landscapes
- 5 – animals
- 2 – Kabuki actors
- 15 – other topics



# The Gods



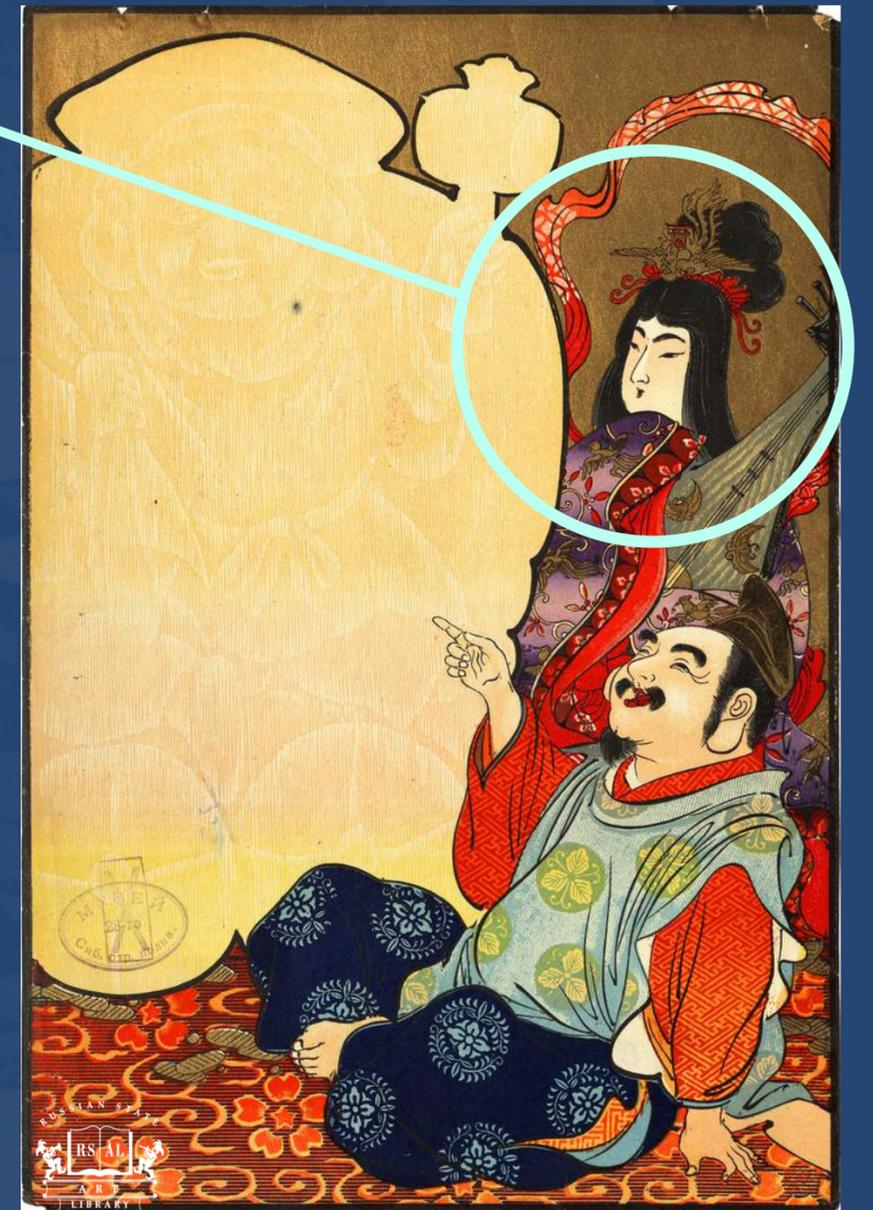
Ebisu



Daikokuten

Daikokuten & Ebisu

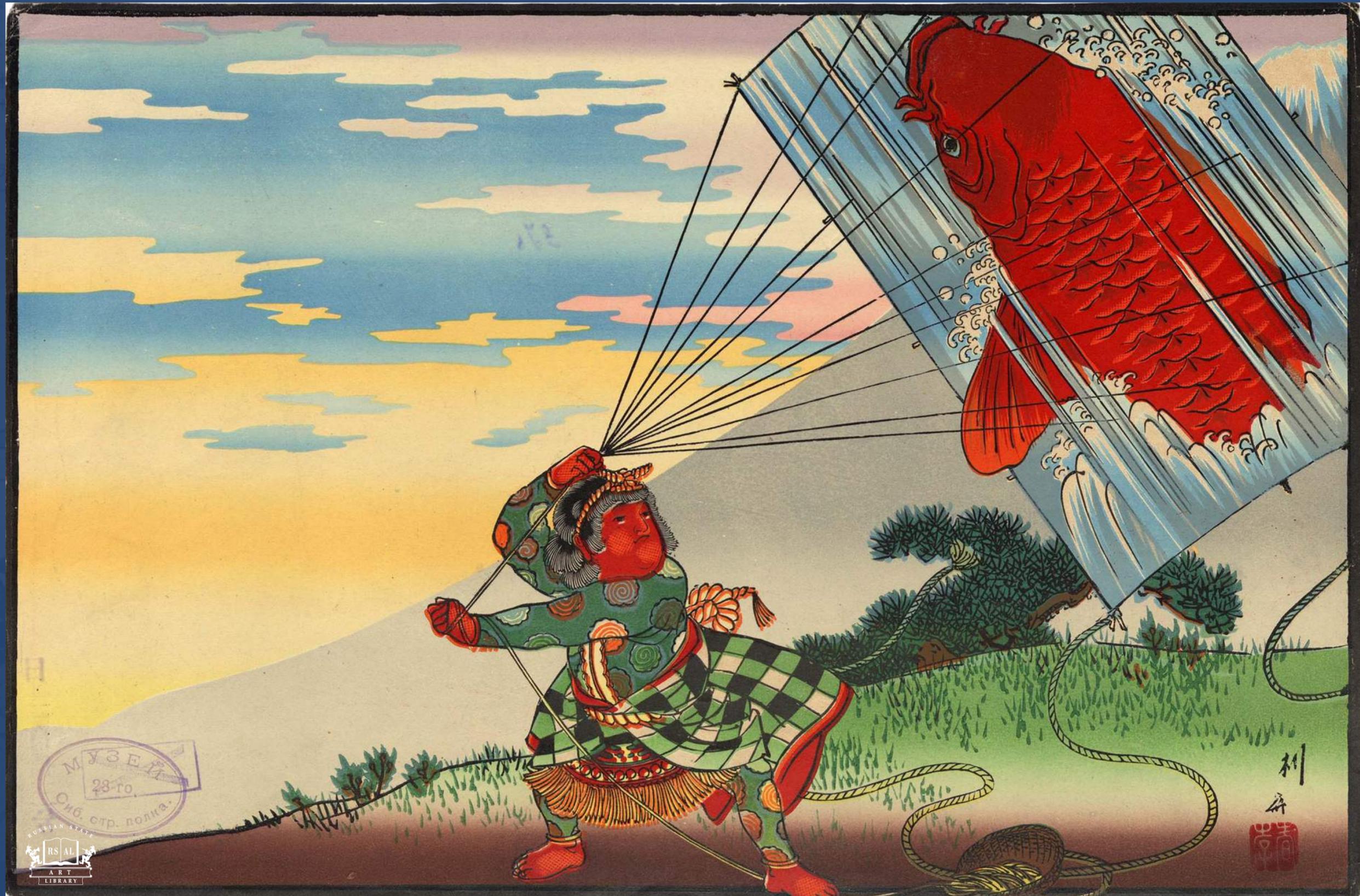
# Benzaiten



# Urashima Taro & the Turtle



# Kintaro & the Koi



# The dance of the pearl diver (Ama-no mai 海士の舞)

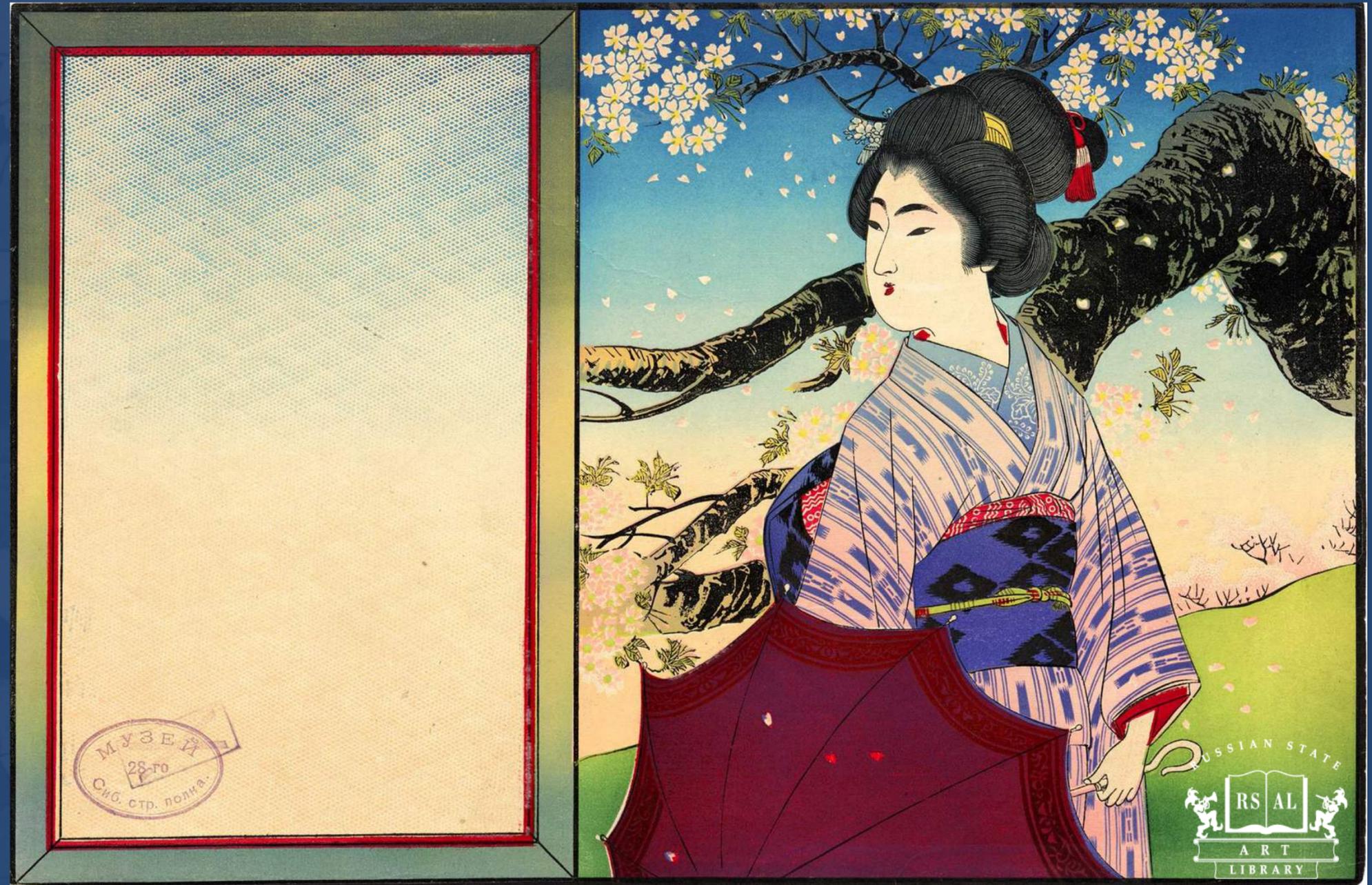


# New Year hikifuda



# To sum up...

- As a result of the research I established that RSLA collection of the Japanese woodcuts are the samples of hikifuda advertising leaflets
- Presumably, they were produced in the early XX century by Osaka printing workshop
- They have a great variety of subjects, which contain deep symbols & signs related to Japanese history and culture



# Conclusion

- Studying the collection of Japanese hikifuda prints and giving the interpretations to the images' subjects will allow its scientific cataloguing and expand the possibilities of its use
- Japanese advertising leaflets in the RSLA collection represent an interesting, but yet little-studied layer of urban art in Japan at the turn of the XIX-XX centuries



# Thank you for your attention!

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