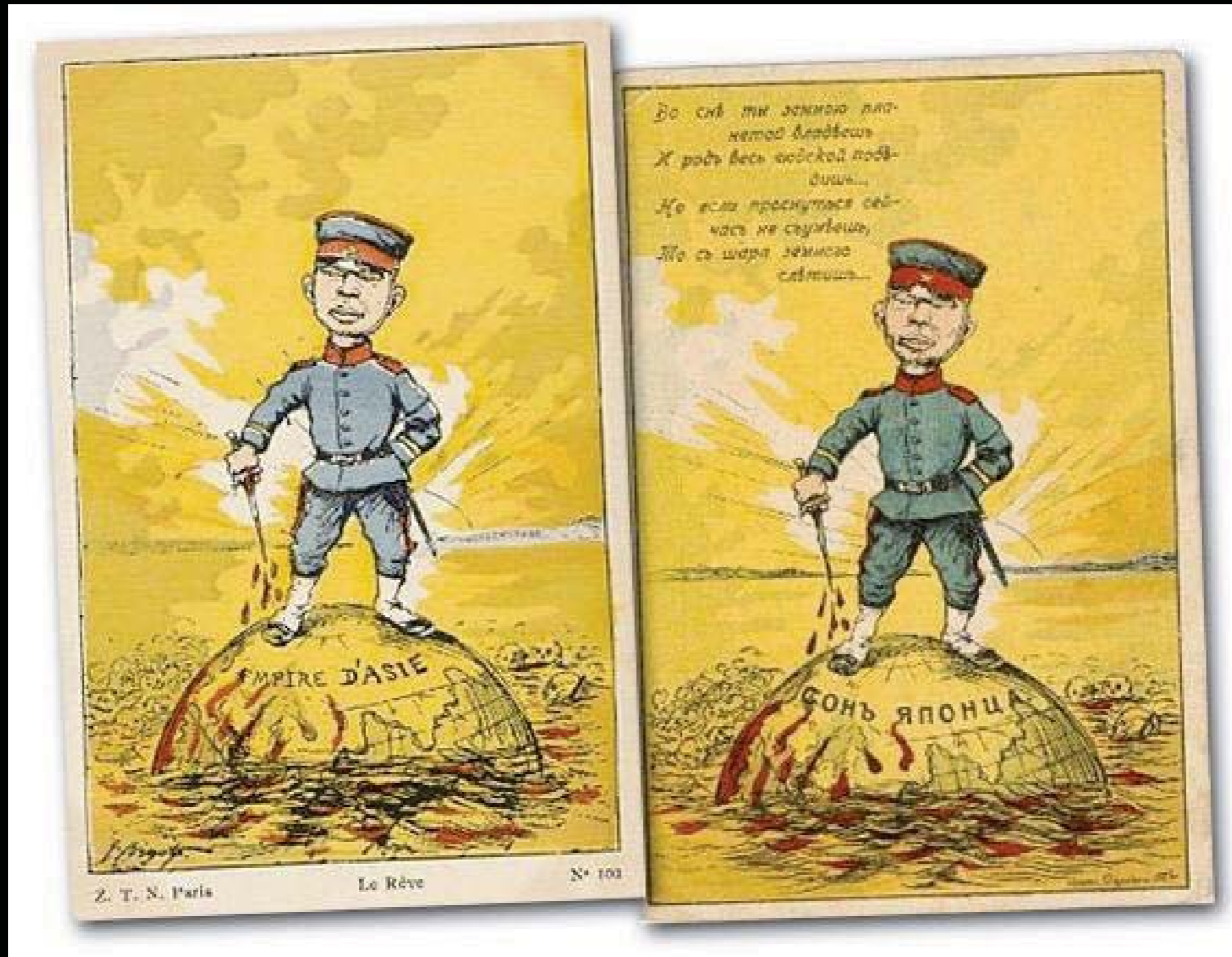


Sounds and Visions of Modernity

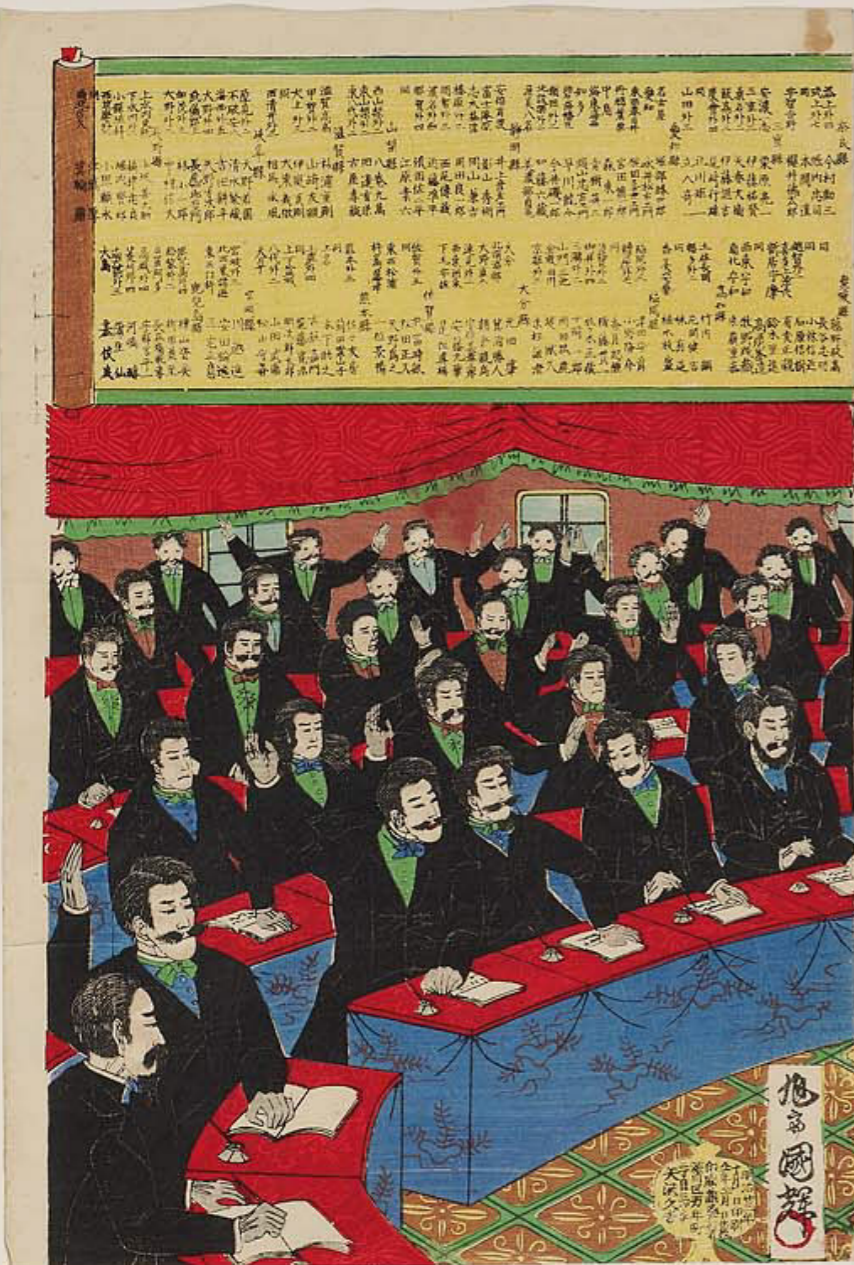
When Does an Era End?

Great Power Status



Source: The Leonard A. Lauder Collection of Japanese Postcards at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA.

Party Government



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Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#).

End of an Era



The Stern State of the Great Funeral of the Meiji Tenno.

景光ノ山桃見伏儀葬大御皇天治明

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Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#).

General Nogi



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September 1, 1923

- Changing Urban Landscape
- Great Kantō Earthquake, September 1, 1923
- Reconstruction boom, 1923-1931
 - Gotō Shinpei
- Tanizaki Jun'ichirō
 - “Now they will make Tokyo a decent city.”



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1905-1937: Overlapping Periods

- Taishō (1912-26), Shōwa (1926-89)
- “Inter-war” (1918-1937/1939 for Europe)
- “Taishō Democracy” vs. “Imperial Democracy”
- Era of “Culture” and the “*Modan*” (today)
- Converging domestic and global crises (Thursday and next week)

The Landscape of Modernity

Whose Story Is This?

- The “new middle class”
- Highly educated, salaried employees of corporations and government AND their families
- In Tokyo: 6% of those employed in (1908) > 21% in 1920

Two Words

- 文化生活 *Bunka seikatsu* ('culture life')
 - ~1926
 - rationality, efficiency, reform
- モダン *Modan* ('modern')
 - 1926~late 1930s
 - rapid pace of urban life, new forms of leisure
- Commonality
 - shared experiences with industrial West
 - consumption

Objects of Consumption



SHISEIDO



資生堂

Source: Shiseido Co., Ltd. Used with permission.

Networks: Transportation



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Networks: Mass Media

- Magazines: *Kingu* (“King,” 1924)
- Radio (1926)
- Movie industry
- Record industry
- Growth of media as a “web”

Mass Media: Music

- Victor, Columbia in Japan (1927)
- Massive capital
- New technologies and practices
- “Watashino Aozora”
(“My Blue Heaven,” 1928 hit)
 - Translated by Horiuchi Keizo (1897-1983): MIT, M.S. 1923
- Birth of *ryūkōka* (“popular songs”)

“Tokyo March” 1929

Longing for the past when the streets in Ginza were lined with willow trees

A young beauty becomes a nobody with age

Dance to the jazz music and down liquor into the night

And the rain that is the tears of the dancers will sprinkle at the break of dawn.

Maru building, the center of love

There are people writing letters in tears near that window

At least keep the rose you found left behind during the rush hour

As a memorable token of your girl.

Love makes the vast city of Tokyo small

Secret dates in the chic town of Asakusa

You come on a subway and I by bus

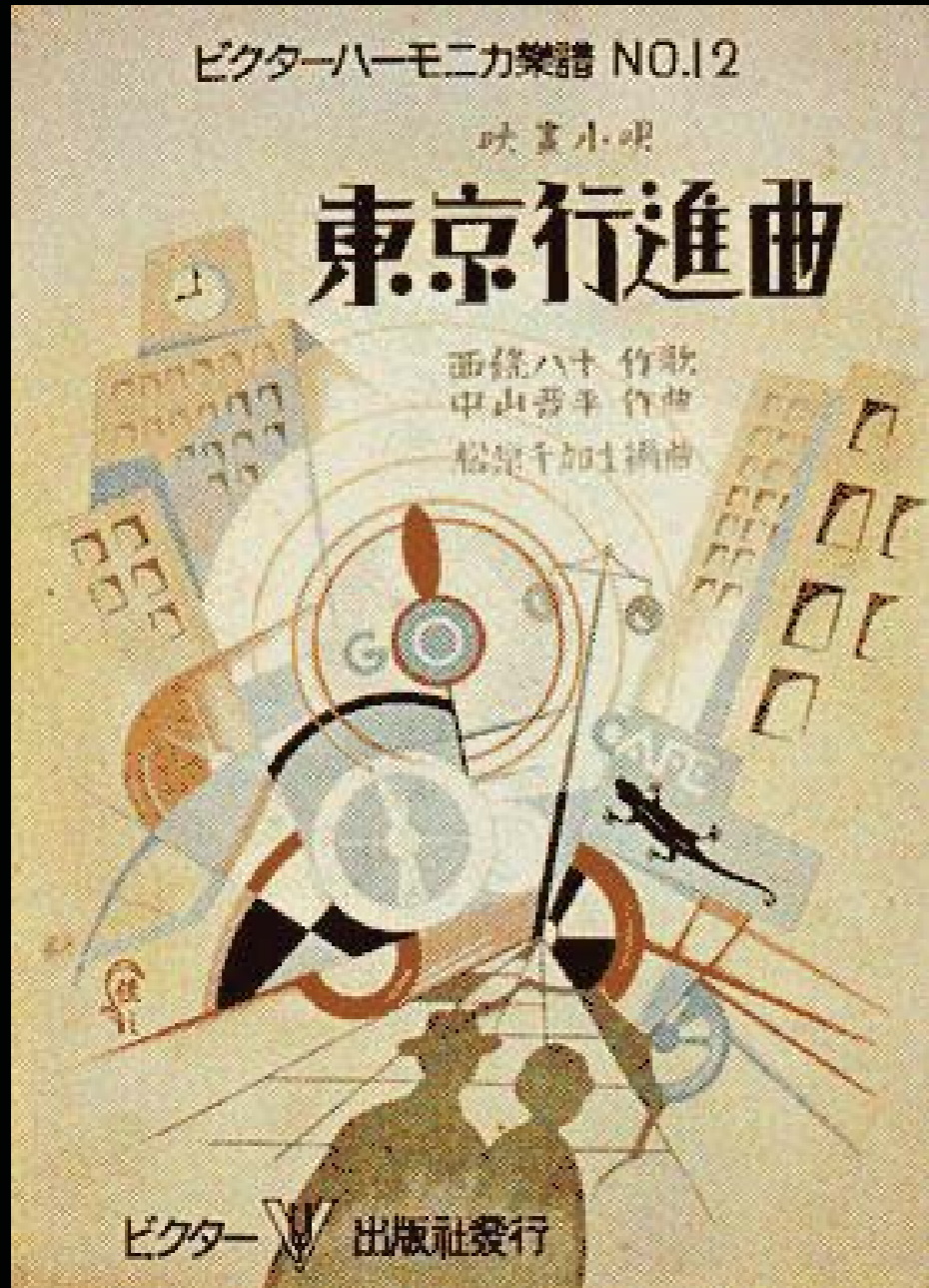
You can't put breaks on love.

Go to the cinemas? Or for some tea?

Why not we run away on the Odakyu train?

With the ever changing Shinjuku

The Moon in Musashino shines over the rooftop of the department store.



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Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#).

Modan Gāru

- Modernity as gendered phenomena
- Symbol of social, cultural, sexual liberation



Source: Shiseido Co., Ltd. Used with permission.

Media Construct? Or Reality?

- “Professional women”
 - Café waitress
 - Dancers
 - Office workers
 - Bus conductors
 - Doctors
 - Etc.} etc.} etc....

Anxieties

- Critique of *Modan Gāru* as critique of modernity itself
- Gender crisis
- Decadence, delinquency, and general moral decay
- Westernization/Americanization
- Political radicalism

More Anxieties

- Image of modernity vs. reality
- Shaky economic foundation of the “new middle class”
- Ambiguous gain for women
- Concern for urban “underclass”: poverty and social chaos
- Breakdown of imperial democracy?

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