

TITLE

From Sacred Cow to Kobe Beef: Japan's Bovine Revolution

ABSTRACT

'Kobe beef' has recently become a globally recognized synonym for culinary extravagance. But how was it that a port town in Japan, a country in which the killing of cattle had been outlawed for centuries, came to have such a strong association with the production of beef? This presentation will attempt to provide answers to this question by delving into the history of animals, agriculture, shipping, and the idea of untouchability. In the process, it will also offer a new perspective on the far reaching changes that swept Japanese society in the middle decades of the nineteenth century.