

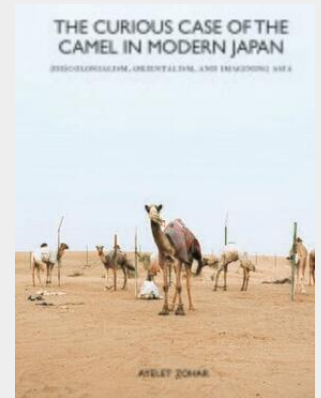
Zohar

The Curious Case of the Camel in Modern Japan

(De)Colonialism, Orientalism, and Imagining Asia

In *The Curious Case of the Camel in Modern Japan* Ayelet Zohar critically analyzes camel images as a metonymy for Asia, and Japanese attitudes towards the continent. The book reads into encounters with the exotic animals, from nanban art, realist Dutch-influenced illustrations, through misemono roadshows of the first camel-pair imported in 1821. Modernity and Japan's wars of Pan-Asiatic fantasies associated camels with Asia's poverty, bringing camels into zoos, tourist venues, and military zones, as lowly beasts of burden, while postwar images project the imago of exotica and foreignness on camels as Buddhist 'peace' messengers. Zohar convincingly argues that in the Japanese imagination, camels serve as signifiers of Asia as Otherness, the opposite of Japan's desire for self-association with Western cultures.

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