



FANNING THE FLAMES

Fans and Consumer Culture
in Contemporary Japan

Edited by
William W. Kelly



Fanning the Flames

*Fans and Consumer Culture in
Contemporary Japan*

EDITED BY WILLIAM W. KELLY

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK PRESS

Published by
State University of New York Press, Albany

© 2004 State University of New York

All rights reserved

Printed in the United States of America

No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission. No part of this book may be stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means including electronic, electrostatic, magnetic tape, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise without the prior permission in writing of the publisher.

For information, address State University of New York Press,
90 State Street, Suite 700, Albany, NY 12207

Production by Kelli Williams
Marketing by Michael Campochiaro

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Fanning the flames : fans and consumer culture in contemporary Japan / edited by
William W. Kelly.

p. cm. — (SUNY series in Japan in transition)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-7914-6031-2 (alk. paper) — ISBN 0-7914-6032-0 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. Popular culture—Japan—History—20th century. I. Kelly, William W. II. Series.

DS822.5b. F36 2004
306'.0952'09049—dc22

2004041740

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Sense and Sensibility at the Ballpark

*What Fans Make of Professional
Baseball in Modern Japan*

WILLIAM W. KELLY

It's like when your child is running in a foot race in kindergarten. Even more than winning a first-place ribbon, you cheer your kid on fervently hoping that she or he will at least do well and get through without an injury. That's what cheering the Tigers is all about!

—Anonymous “Tiger-crazy” fan

Whew! The season's over! We got through another year without incident! I can't tell you what a relief it is; I feel like a huge burden's been lifted from my shoulders!

—Comment by Fujita Kenji, executive officer of one of the outfield fan clubs, upon leaving Kōshien Stadium at the close of the final home game on September 30, 1997

“Omaera wa gomi ya” [You're all just trash]

—Comment by stadium official to officers of the Private Alliance of Hanshin Tiger Fan Clubs

Meeting the Fans: Kōshien Stadium and the Hanshin Tigers

About fifteen minutes by train west of the city center of Osaka is the most famous baseball stadium in Japan—Kōshien. To New York Yankee fans, Yankee Stadium has long been known as “the House that Ruth Built,” but Japanese fans know Kōshien as “the House that Ruth Played In.” It was the only real baseball stadium in Japan at the time of Babe Ruth’s barnstorming tour of the country in 1934, and the two games he, Lou Gehrig, and the rest of the Branch Rickey All-Stars played at Kōshien are memorialized by a large plaque at the stadium entrance. Kōshien’s origins go back ten years before that. It was built and opened in 1924 as Asia’s largest stadium, a steel-and-concrete colossus that seated almost 50 thousand, nearly rivaling Yankee Stadium itself, which had opened the year before with a capacity of 62 thousand.

Amid the burgeoning metropolitan mass culture of the 1920s, Kōshien drew immediate national attention for its flush toilets, its vendor food, and the national middle school baseball tournaments held there each April and August. Flush toilets were still rare at the time, and they impressed and scared spectators and players coming from all parts of the country. Visitors were also immediately taken by what the concession stands sold as Kōshien “coffee and curry rice.” Curry rice was made at home, but its preparations were lengthy, and there was a boom in this menu at the stadium and in restaurants. During the school tournaments, upwards of 15 thousand coffee and curry rice meals were sold daily.

Baseball was already the most popular spectator sport in Japan at the time of Kōshien’s opening. It had first developed as a club sport in the late 19th century at the elite higher schools and early universities—of particular note were the clubs of First Higher School and of Waseda and Keio Universities. By the early 20th century it spread to middle schools across the country. National middle school tournaments were begun by the two major Osaka rival newspapers, Asahi and Mainichi, in 1915 and 1916, respectively, and it was their fast-growing popularity that encouraged the Hanshin Electric Railroad Company to join them in sponsoring the construction of Kōshien, midway along its single trunk line between Osaka and Kobe.¹

Today the stadium is still owned by the Hanshin Company, and it remains the sacred site of amateur baseball as the home to the two national high school tournaments. However, Kōshien is also home to the company’s professional baseball team, the Hanshin Tigers, which was organized for the inaugural professional season in 1936, two years after Babe Ruth’s visit. The name was selected from a public competition and mimicked the Detroit Tigers, from another city built on manufacturing. For decades, the Hanshin Tigers and their arch rivals, the Yomiuri Giants in Tokyo, have been the twin poles defining the force field of the Central League.² For most of the post-World War II era, there were four professional teams in the Kansai region, all owned by private railroad companies—the Tigers,

the Hankyū Braves, the Nankai Hawks, and the Kintetsu Buffaloes. In the late 1980s, Nankai's team was sold to Daiei and moved to Fukuoka, and Hankyū sold its Braves to Orient Leasing a year later; the latter team remains in Kobe as the Orix BlueWave. Kintetsu has a far larger rail network than Hanshin, and the BlueWave, with superstar Ichirō, enjoyed enormous success in the 1990s. However, despite their mediocre record (only one Japan Series victory in the postwar half century), the Tigers remain the overwhelming sentimental favorite in the region, for reasons that will become evident in this chapter.

Orix plays in the aptly named Green Stadium, a spacious suburban ballpark west of Kobe; and Kintetsu moved several years ago to Osaka Dome, a city center extravaganza ringed with shopping and entertainment arcades. Kōshien remains little changed over seven decades of use. Additional seating was added along the first and third base lines in 1929 to accommodate the school tournament throngs.³ But otherwise, its ivy-covered brick walls, the still natural-grass outfield, the open wooden press box behind home plate, and the dingy locker rooms all sustain an aura of timelessness and keep vivid the memories of past contests, amateur and professional.

Getting off the Hanshin train at Kōshien Station and walking across the plaza, the stadium looms before you, impressive despite the construction of an elevated expressway that cuts some of your sight line. Immediately facing the ticket windows, you can pay from 2,200 yen to 3,500 yen (about \$20–\$35) to enter one of the several infield seating sections. But if, instead, you walk all the way around the outside of the stadium to a smaller shed in the back, you can buy a 1,400 yen (about \$13) ticket to the unreserved outfield bleachers and make your way by a separate rear entrance to a very different part of the stadium.

This is the territory of the Hanshin Tiger fan clubs (which is how I render in English the term *ōendan*), which fill the right-field stands and spill over into the left-field stands and into the right-side infield “Alps” section (see Figure 4.1). Tiger paraphernalia and motifs are everywhere. It is a throbbing sea of yellow-and-black face paint, Tiger happi coats, Tiger uniform shirts, jerseys, and headbands. It seems as if everyone is wearing a Hanshin baseball cap and beating together a pair of miniature plastic baseball bats to accompany their lusty chants—“Kattobase Yamada!” “Kattobase Hiyama!” “Kattobase Wada!” Kattobase is the all-purpose cheer: “Let it rip, Yamada!” “Let it rip, Hiyama!” “Let it rip, Wada!”

Those who pay attention to some combination of Japan and sports have a fairly predictable set of understandings about the forms and feelings of baseball in that society. There is a constant circulation in journalist reports and academic literature of mutually reinforcing images about grueling overpractices, abject obedience to coaches and managers, timid strategies, and abiding prejudice against foreign players. There is enough truth to each of these to explain their durability and popularity, but like most exaggerated images, they poorly capture the variety in the game and its considerable changes over a long history in Japan. Our stereotypes even

Figure 4.1

The right-field bleacher fans at Kōshien Stadium. Copyright The Asahi Shimbun Company. Used with permission.



extend to the fans as well, who tend to be dismissed as hysterical groupies, slavishly following their team through maniacal and monotonous collective cheering.

There may be no smoking gun for the ultimate source of such durable and popular imaginings, but there is a smoldering keyboard, belonging to Robert Whiting. Because of his long experience on the Japanese baseball scene, his prolific and astute writings in English and Japanese, and his impressive way with words, he has been consulted, quoted, misquoted, and plagiarized by two decades of reporting and commentary. Whiting has portrayed the Japanese fan coming out to the ballpark and quickly shedding his usual “restraint”: “Spurred on by energetic cheerleaders, and the pounding rhythms of taiko drums, horns, whistles, and other noisemakers, he becomes a veritable wildman, yelling and screaming nonstop for nine solid innings” (1989:114).

This may be an understandable initial impression. The raucous noise and swaying bodies may well remind an American visitor less of New York Yankees baseball than of the frenzied student and alumni crowds at a Big Ten college football game. But we must be careful not to take this view too literally—not only because it can conform too neatly to certain stereotypes about an alleged Japanese character of mindless collectivism (their “individualism” we might say), but also because it can quickly play into a more general dismissal of fans as undiscerning and overly emotional sports boors.

A more charitable appraisal supposes that fans emerge out of mass culture audiences in search of intensified meanings and pleasures through acts of social and aesthetic discrimination. Fans selectively appropriate from among the personalities, products, and productions of this mass culture, and creatively rework their selections into a stylized matrix of practices and identities. This is a theme I have developed in the introduction to this volume, and it is the basis of my own understanding of these Tiger baseball fans. Much time in the Kōshien bleachers over three seasons (1996–98) and extended conversations with fan club members, stadium personnel, and others in the baseball world have shown me that there is more to Kōshien cheering than first assaults the ears. Based on that fieldwork, this chapter analyzes aspects of the Kōshien fan experience that both illustrate more general characteristics of fandoms and distinguish these baseball fans from other cases in this volume.

The reader might properly wonder at this point why such Tiger fans are worth analytical attention and in what ways they are either instructively representative or strategically distinctive as sports fans. First, I readily acknowledge that passionate followers of other sports in Japan like the recently organized J.League professional soccer (Horne 1999; Takahashi Yoshio 1994:41–101; Taniguchi 1997) or sumo (Tierney, chapter 5, this volume) or Western-style professional wrestling (Thompson 1986) cannot be characterized in precisely the same terms as those of baseball. Nonetheless, there are several features of mass sporting spectatorship

that set it apart from other consumer activities and that are common conditions of sports fandoms.⁴

Sports fans, for example, have a stronger oppositional identity than many other mass culture fans. Unlike a rock concert or a comic book fanzine fair, sports present spectators with a contest, which ends in victory or defeat. A baseball game is a continuous series of tests between pitchers and fielders versus batters and runners over several hours, and games themselves are units in seasons of struggles among leagues of teams. There are player rivalries and league rivalries and national rivalries, but most of all, there are enduring rivalries between teams. Certainly Hanshin's longest and bitterest rivalry is with the Tokyo-based Yomiuri Giants; to be a Hanshin Tiger fan is, and has been since the league's founding in 1936, to be an anti-Giants fan. As I will discuss later, the oppositional quality embedded in sports fan identity allows Tiger identity to symbolically condense broader rivalries, especially those between the national center and the second city.

Team rivalries and local identity are fostered by the home and away structure of games and the permanent location of teams in stadiums. Team support and local identity can be mutually affirming. Kōshien spectators may become Tiger fans because they are Ōsakans and the team is invested with Osaka pride, but as they become Tiger fans they may become more ardently and reflectively Ōsakans. Similarly, one may join a fan club because of previous connections to its members, but the club experience may create and sustain bonds among members as well.

Contestation has several other corollaries, including the ever-present possibility of violence—fighting with other fan groups and spectators, invading the field, accosting umpires and players. This is an issue I will consider. Equally important is the problem of self-esteem in the face of losing. As with any sport organized around league play, there is only a single victor at the end of the game and a single Japan Series champion at the end of the season; 11 of the 12 teams lose, year in and year out, and they and their fans must live with defeat. What does it mean to invest so much of one's identity in a frequently “losing” cause? This is another element of special relevance to the Hanshin case because the team has been woefully unsuccessful; since the two-league structure began 48 years ago, the team has only won the Central League title four times. It has won the Japan Series championship only once in the last half century, in 1985, and in the 17 seasons, 1986–2002, it finished in the league cellar ten times and in next-to-last place three times (it also finished in third place twice and in fourth place twice).

And within sports, certain characteristics of baseball lend distinctive qualities to cheering and supporting. First, all professional sports have proven to be highly quantifiable, but baseball in particular is densely calibrated and exhaustively recorded. The annual *Japanese Professional Baseball Official Record Book*, for example, records individual pitcher statistics in 22 categories and individual batting statistics in 19 categories. Such a continuously quantified and recorded sport

deepens the knowledge possible, and perhaps necessary, to follow, interpret, and evaluate players' and teams' performances. Moreover, baseball is an interval sport, a game of pulsating oscillations of fast action and slow preparation. Its physical and mental rhythms are thus quite different from continuous flow sports like soccer and basketball, and this obviously influences spectators' modalities of engagement. In sum, these and other qualities distinctive to sports and particularly to professional baseball significantly shape the experiences of the Kōshien Stadium bleacher fans.

Yet I must also acknowledge that these fans are rather special even in the arena of baseball. Indeed, even at the stadium, the vocal and organized denizens of the outfield bleachers represent only one type of stadium experience. The larger numbers of spectators in the infield sections may follow the fan club cheers but are seldom as noisy or as organized. And, of course, those who come to the stadiums are only a small percentage of those who regularly follow baseball. Many self-described fans seldom get to the ballpark; instead, they keep up with their favorites by nightly television or radio, and by close reading of a daily sports paper, often as they commute by public transportation to and from work. There has been much theorization about how media (especially television and sports papers) interject themselves between the action and the audience, packaging the former as spectacle and creating the latter as indirect spectators (see, e.g., Whannel 1992). Fandom, it is argued, is largely eroded by such near-total mediation.

I doubt that, but clearly the husband who sprawls in the family room of his south Osaka apartment every evening at 7:30 after work with a cold beer taking in the Tigers' game on television or the company man packed in a crowded commuter train who avidly reads about the previous night's Tigers' contest in his favorite sports daily on his way to work are very different "fans" from those who come out to Kōshien every night. This is not because the stadium experience offers an intimacy, immediacy, and spontaneity that cannot be matched by the visual and print mediums, but rather because these qualities are transmuted by these mediums. Sports on television create some of the same "quasi-intimacy" that Andrew Painter (1996) has argued for Japanese daytime variety shows; indeed, baseball viewers peer right over the shoulder of the pitcher, are given multiple camera angles and replays on the action, and are privy to the authoritative commentary of announcers who speak directly to them. And the vivid color graphics, exploding font shapes and sizes, and multiple stories, stats boxes, and sidebars by which sports dailies dramatically report Tiger games make the experience more akin to reading a *manga* (comic art magazine) than a news story. Kōshien bleacher fans are not the only fans of Tigers baseball, then, but I would claim that the sociality and the organized influence of the bleacher fans are distinctive among baseball fandoms. I focus on them here because they usefully demonstrate the dynamics of collective appropriation also true for other arenas of leisure and entertainment.

It's Not All "Kattobase!" The Choreography of Cheering

It is certainly the case that one's first impression of the Kōshien bleacher sections is that all this constant cheering is not only excruciatingly loud but also exceedingly monotonous. All they do seem to be chanting, over and over, to a thumping percussive beat, is "Kattobase! Ya-ma-da" or "Kattobase! Hi-ya-ma," or Ma-ko-to, or whichever player is at bat. But there turns out to be more to Kōshien cheering than first assaults the ears. When one starts to listen a bit more closely, it is possible to discern small differences, in the lyrics and the beat. Each starting player and regular substitute has his own "hitting march," and the most fundamental cheering, then, is singing a version of the hitting march of whoever is up to bat with a kattobase refrain (there is a generic hitting march for others). Following are the 1997 hitting marches for rightfielder Hiyama Shinjirō and catcher Yamada Katsuhiko:⁵

この一打に賭ける	The game rides on the swing of your bat
気合いで振り抜けよ	Hit it with all your might!
だれもおまえを止められぬ	Nobody can stop you;
楡山よ突っ走れ	Run, Hiyama, Run!
守り抜く	Home plate is all yours to defend;
ホームベースは俺のもの	Show us again your strong arm;
今日も見せるぞ鉄の肩	It's you, Yamada—
山田まかせたぞ	We're countin' on you.

The hitting march cheer begins when the batter steps into the box and continues until his at-bat is finished—no matter how many pitches or foul balls. Then, if he reaches base safely, either by hitting or being walked, he is rewarded with another quick chant. If Hiyama, for example, has singled in a run, he will be greeted with "taimurii, taimurii, Hi-ya-ma" (Timely, timely, Hiyama; "timely" being a fabricated term for a clutch hit).

The chants are accompanied by a noisy choreography of trumpets, bugles, whistles, Japanese *taiko* drums, Western bass drums, flags, and banners. Each has a distinct location and an orchestrated role. The *taiko* drummers (see Figure 4.2) are below in the first row of seats while the trumpeters and bass drummers play in the upper seats; huge flags are waved from the upper tier skillfully and precariously just above the heads of those seated below, and player banners are tied along the walkway between the lower and upper seating tiers. Rights to the banners, one per player, are held by individual fan clubs.

Figure 4.2

A Private Association drummer in the right-field bleachers at Kōshien Stadium. Copyright The Asahi Shimbun Company. Used with permission.



Larger cheering routines create a game pace. For example, there are pregame chants and opening player name calls; when an opposing pitcher is removed from the game, he is serenaded with “Auld Lang Syne”; in the middle of the “Lucky seventh” inning, when the Tigers come to bat, a spirited rendition of the Tigers fight song concludes with the release of tens of thousands of balloons (tagged “condom balloons” for their distinctive shape); and at the end of victories, everyone stands to sing a cycle of the hitting marches and then the Tiger anthem, “Rokkō oroshi,” with a bansai cheer.

There is, then, a variegated choreography, a structured flow to fan club cheering—from batter to batter, through the innings, over the stretch of the game. True, the lyrics are not inspired; they combine the exaggerated heroics of a praise song with the polite imperatives of an encouraging command. And I don’t want to exaggerate the inventiveness or sophistication of this structured flow. It is not like following Bach’s Goldberg Variations or the Paul Taylor Dance Company. But it does miss the intent and the effect of the outfield cheering to dismiss it as mindless, repetitive droning.

Rather, this constant, collective chanting is a way of claiming an active role in the game. Sitting in bleachers a distant 250–300 feet from the main action at home plate, it is nearly impossible for them to follow the subtleties of pitching, to judge the close umpire calls, to hear the dugout chatter, or otherwise share the intensity of the game as those in the infield seats can. Rather, with their cheering, the outfield fans participate as “mood makers.” More precisely, they become mood “remakers,” because this particular cheering pattern assertively layers the normally punctuated rhythms of the game on the field with the continuous rhythms of vocal chants and body sways. They convert (or perhaps divert) the game from interval to flow. This participatory intervention is a key dimension of their role and identity as fans.

Indeed, there may be an even deeper structure to cheering. Takahashi Hidesato (1995), a sociologist at the Nara University of Education, has studied both Hiroshima Carp and Hanshin Tiger fan club cheering and argues that the fundamental rhythmic pattern of these cheers is a three-seven beat that is reminiscent of agricultural song cycles that date to the medieval centuries. These songs were appeals to the gods for fertility and harvests, and he contrasts them structurally with two-beat patterns of other chants and songs that were messages from the gods to the human world, such as the fire warnings called out with clappers by the night watchmen who made the rounds of urban neighborhoods at night. If this is true, it implies that, symbolically at least, the fan club cheering is *for* the players but *to* divine agents. It is active supplication on behalf of the team, in particular, to the goddess of victory, the deity of outcomes being coded feminine in Japanese sports cosmology.

I find Takahashi’s hypothesis implausible at face value; I have asked many fans and others in the stadium audience to whom they are cheering when they urge Hiyama to “let it rip,” and not surprisingly all find my question rather silly. Of course, they are directing their support to Hiyama. At the same time, though, the goddess of victory is a folk belief of wide salience, and it is equally unsurprising that chanting patterns should bear symbolic association, however unrecognized, with such rhythms.

They Haven’t Been Sitting There Forever— A Brief Organizational History of Kōshien Fan Clubs

It may also strike a first-time observer that apart from a few yellow-jacketed, white-gloved leaders down in front, there is an anonymous uniformity to the bleacher crowds. It turns out, however, that there is a rather elaborate structuring of the fans, which has both deep historical resonance and some fairly recent organizational initiatives.

Well-known in the urban commoner society of the Edo period, especially from Genroku on, were the *teuchi renjū* (hand-clapping clubs) from commoner neigh-

borhoods or fire squads or guild workers who organized around particular kabuki actors and sumo wrestlers and who exhibited their loyalties with color-coded scarves and seat cushions. These *clagues* were celebrated for their precisely timed shouts and elaborate and distinctive hand-clapping routines whenever their actor or wrestler appeared—and castigated for their often violent encounters with rival clubs in the theaters, in the temple grounds on sumo days, or in the streets (Kelly 1994; Raz 1983).

Baseball cheerleading origins, however, are as foreign as the sport. When the Waseda and Keio baseball clubs toured the United States in the early 20th century, they were so impressed with American collegiate cheering (especially football) that they made extensive notes of the patterns and instruments, which they then introduced back home. Cheerleading became its own club activity, a flamboyant and disciplined display of school spirit that remains prominent today at the high school and university levels.

Professional teams, from the start of the first league in 1936, were sponsored and owned by major corporations. They faced a skeptical public, wary that playing for pay would sully the amateur ideal that it associated with school baseball. Thus the teams adopted a number of elements of school baseball in an effort to allay these suspicions. For promotion and support, most of the early clubs organized *kōenkai* (fan supporter groups), which were often just groups of their own employees given free tickets and encouraged to lend their voices to the company team. Flags, megaphones, and cheer songs were used for color and cohesion, although records of the early decades indicate that most spectators were not part of organized groups.

Thus the lineage of fan support is long, but the current structure of *Kōshien* fan clubs emerged in the mid-1970s after a decade in which professional baseball's appeal greatly broadened to a national audience of viewers and readers. This was precisely the period, as the introduction to this volume argues, when defusing political strife, double-digit economic growth, the spread of television, and other factors combined to accelerate and “massify” metropolitan consumption. Of particular stimulus to baseball were the proliferation of sports dailies, the popularity of several series of baseball comic books, and especially the Yomiuri Giants' nine-year run as Japan Series champions from 1965 to 1973 (earning them the title, the “V-9 Giants”). Television, and Yomiuri's ownership of a national network, made the Giants organization and its success emblematic of corporate nationalism and economic resurgence (Kelly 1998). Polls identified its star third baseman, Nagashima Shigeo, as the most popular public figure in Japan.

However, the stadiums themselves, especially the outfield bleachers frequented by the working class, remained rowdy places, not quite fit for prime-time television. Small clubs of ordinary fans shared the bleachers with bookies and gangsters. Betting was still common, and at least some fan support—and anger—focused on whether the team was making or not making the betting spread. Inebriation and fights were common, often between rival gambler groups. Incidents

of spectators jumping out onto the field to accost umpires and players were not uncommon. I interviewed a number of people, now in their seventies and eighties, who were involved in initial efforts from 1974 on to create some regular cooperation among the ordinary fan groups at Kōshien, in what amounted to an effort to take back the stands from rowdies and gamblers, to widen the base of spectators, and to alter the participatory spirit.

This gentling of spectator behavior can be related to larger societal trends in law and order. The early postwar period was marked, of course, with considerable turbulence. Labor union strife in the 1950s, massive demonstrations against the U.S.–Japan Security Treaty renewal in 1960, anti-Vietnam protests and the large-scale student unrest of the 1960s, and consumer movements, youth motorcycle gangs, and the Narita Airport agitations in the 1970s were among the public expressions of constant social discontent. I do not believe—and have found no one who has argued—that there were direct connections of these to the (quite apolitical) sports rowdiness of the era. At the same time, the rowdiness was one more anxiety for corporate and official Japan. What is remarkable here, however, is that it was the ordinary spectators themselves who acted independently of the stadium and ball team to redirect the energies and attentions of the crowd.

Throughout the seasons that I observed, in the front row of the outfield bleachers, near the foul line pole in the lower extreme right corner of the stands, sat an elderly gentleman in the yellow jacket of a fan club official. This was Moritani Kazuo, who was 77 in 1998, and the fan clubs' evening performances began only when he stood to shout "Ikee!" [Let's go!], and initiated their pregame chants. By then, Moritani had had overall charge of outfield cheering for 12 years. He was a Waseda University graduate and with his wife ran a small bar, Ta'ichi, near one of the Hanshin stations about a ten-minute ride from the stadium. The bar, with just one long counter, celebrated its 25th anniversary in 1997 and has long been an information center for Hanshin fans. Mrs. Moritani ran the bar during all of the season's home games when her husband was at the ballpark.

It was Mr. Moritani and several others who worked for a number of years to build what is now called Hanshin Taigaasu shisetsu ōendan (the Private Alliance of Hanshin Tiger Fan Clubs). The alliance's origins date to 1973, when Moritani, Fujiwara Katsumi, and Matsubayashi Noboru (who also remain as top officers) began talking with the hundreds of small fan clubs about creating an umbrella organization to try to bring an end to the fighting that constantly erupted and which gave Kōshien a "scandalous" name (*fushōji* was the term Moritani used). They met with little initial success because many fans did not want to give up their own styles of cheering. In February 1975, the Fierce Tiger Club, the Young Tiger Club, and two others merged into what they called optimistically the Private Alliance, but which only totaled 120 members. It was not until 1980 that a large enough number of clubs joined to give it a presence in the left-field bleachers. In that year,

the association was legally constituted with an 11-clause “club regulations” and a 28-clause “rules of conduct.”

One serious difficulty for the organized fan groups was that all outfield and Alps seats were unreserved; club members had to line up with everyone else for every game. Often club members and nonmembers were mixed together, and that led to squabbling and fighting, especially when drinking and during key contests. Older club and stadium officials recall that *yakuza* (organized crime) groups were prominent and constant troublemakers. They simply displaced ticket holders from choice spots, including the seats at the walkways and the railings for hanging banners.

The major impetus in alliance growth was the Tigers’ championship year of 1985, the only time in team history that it captured the Japan Series. The region was engulfed in Tiger pride, demand for tickets was far beyond capacity, and the exuberance of the spectators greatly concerned stadium officials as the season progressed. This apparently convinced them to create large blocs of season ticket seats in the right outfield and to give the association some advance preference in requests. This, in turn, made fan club membership and alliance participation immediately attractive for individuals and clubs.

The Private Alliance has now grown into a quite elaborate association. Its constituent Tiger fan clubs stretch from Hokkaido to Okinawa and claim over 10 thousand members in four branches and 40 clubs. There are over one hundred officers in parallel administrative and stadium hierarchies. The former handle alliance organizational matters and the latter orchestrate the cheering at the stadium itself. Moritani’s title is general head of stadium affairs, and as the title suggests, he has overall authority for everything that happens at the stadium. He is assisted by two vice heads. Under them are a club head and five vice heads, below which is a chief of cheerleaders, who in turn has 11 vice chiefs, who finally supervise and evaluate the 66 “leaders” who do the actual cheerleading. There are also officers and instrumentalists for the trumpet and drum brigades. Club membership is surprisingly diverse in age, class, and gender, but the club and association leadership is overwhelmingly male. Even at the lowest levels, there were only two women among the 66 cheerleaders.

The Private Alliance, complex as it is, does not exhaust the organizational map of the right-field stands. There are a great many small fan clubs that remain outside this Private Alliance, 24 of whom joined together in 1989 as a second association, the Middle Tiger Clubs Association. Relations with the Private Alliance are generally cordial, and Moritani and several others sit on the advisory board of the Middle Tiger Clubs Association. And there are an estimated two hundred other fan clubs throughout the country who belong to neither, although usually cooperate with their efforts.

All of this has created a well-defined, albeit historically shallow, social ecology and procedural order. Cheerleading initiative is retained by the Private Alliance

officers, the so-called *ki-jyaji kumi* (yellow jackets) because of their yellow-and-black uniform waist jackets, who occupy the seats across the bottom rows. Officers serve for two-year terms, and there is constant movement up, down, and across the organizational charts. Cheerleaders and instrumentalists are licensed by the alliance officers, and they all must meet and practice before each game in the grounds of the temple adjacent to Kōshien.⁶ Composition of the hitting marches is also a Private Alliance prerogative. They are usually drafted by several of its music consultants, who are music professors at local universities, and vetted and approved at the several levels of meetings that are held throughout the year—of the general membership, of all leaders, and of the top officials.

Clubs in the Middle Association occupy many of the seats along the walkway between the lower and upper tiers and certain left-field bleachers and Alps sections. They and some Private Alliance clubs control the support banners for all regular players and the large club flags that are waved from the upper tier. The flag waving and all other elements of cheering comportment are worked out in meetings between the two associations and stadium officials. For example, until 1992 or so, clubs were waving their flags during much of the games; this not only obstructed the view of many of the spectators, but also meant that individual clubs could not stand out. Thus, it was agreed in one of the negotiation sessions to restrict flag waving to the hitting songs of players the club supports and certain other moments in the game.

Thus, in looking around the right-field bleachers, one must be aware that there is a rather complicated two-decade history of organizing that has created the complex social structuring of this time-space. It is notably ironic that while they are often criticized for a perceived rowdiness, the clubs were organized for precisely the opposite reason: to bring some order and decorum to the outfield stands. Its own charter announces that the purpose of the Private Alliance is “to love the Hanshin Tigers and to support the team in a decorous and orderly fashion.” Like the “red beret” resident patrols in minority neighborhoods in New York City in the 1980s, this self-policing carries an ambiguous political charge. It is an initiative to stake out and regulate a zone within the private corporate space of the most famous stadium in all of Japan. And yet they are regulating—shaping the spectator experience toward a proper metropolitan sensibility.

It's Not All Cheering—The Sociality of Ōendan

At the same time, however, what goes on in the right-field stands is not nonstop chanting, but a pulsating rhythm of frenzy and calm. That is, a cardinal tenet of cheering is that you cheer when your team is at bat, but not while it is in the field. There are hitting marches but no “fielding marches.” Of course a good play is applauded, and groans and jeers can be elicited by an opposing team’s home run.

But when the visiting team is at bat, the cheering initiative shifts to the visiting team fans in the left-field stands.

So what does go on when one's team is in the field? Drinking and eating, of course; almost all games now are at night, beginning at Kōshien at 6 p.m., and most people come right from work. There is also some prepping for the next at bats. But mostly what goes on is schmoozing. Half the game—the top half of each inning—is spent talking, sharing news, chatting up fellow club members, visiting with other fan clubs, flirting, gossiping, pushing deals, and so on. For many of the denizens of the bleachers—especially those from the small-business sector—fan clubs and baseball games are substitute activities for the hostess clubs and quasi-obligatory drinking that fill the watery evening zone between workplace and home. It is the layering of another, quieter flow over the interval action on the field.

Consider the Namitora-kai (Roving Tigers Club), a representative club in the Middle Tiger Clubs Association. The Roving Tigers Club currently has about two hundred members, mostly in its headquarters Kobe club but also in five branches in Kyoto, Okayama, Nagoya, Tokyo, and Toyama. These are all places where the Tigers play a couple of times during the season; this allows reciprocal hospitality and guaranteed seats. At Kōshien, the club purchases a ten-seat block of season tickets in addition to the seats purchased by individual members. Club officers occupy the seats and railings along a section of the middle walkway, where they have designated cheering responsibility for two players, Hiyama and Yamada, and have two trumpet players and a drummer. Also from a walkway perch, one of the experienced members waves the large club flag precariously low over the heads of spectators seated in the seats below.

The club's executive officer through the 1990s was Fujita Kenji, who turned 50 in 1996 and is president of a small Kobe marine trading company that supplies repair parts to ocean ships. Several of his ten employees come to the game at his expense, and everyone piles into his minivan for the one-hour drive to the stadium. Before entering, they stock up on food and drinks at their favorite local shops to carry in for their evening dinner and refreshment. Fujita pays for all of the purchases, about 10,000 yen (\$100) per game, out of his own pocket.

Among the club members are a number of Fujita's business associates—from the air freight and trucking companies he uses and from other ship parts companies. Like many other fan clubs, the Roving Tigers Club is a venue for maintaining business ties. This is especially so for the medium and small businesses that are the bulk of the Kansai economy, but large workplaces are also in evidence. Adjacent to the Roving Tigers is a block of seats for Love the Tigers Club from the labor union of the Central Osaka Post Office, and to their side is group seating for the Tiger-Crazy Alliance, a club from the giant Mitsubishi Heavy Industry and Mitsubishi Electric, and another block for the Strong Tiger Guys from Nittō Electric.

For businessmen of small companies and corporate managers, the fan clubs offer an alternative to business socializing that is at once easier and more burdensome

than more customary expense-account entertainment in bars. The season and each game set a predictable framework to such obligations that limits both drinking and expenses. At the same time, there are considerable costs of this club fandom on the efficiency of small companies like that of Mr. Fujita. To arrive at the ballpark requires his closing the office around 5 p.m., in order to drive the hour to Kōshien and then stock up on supplies; he and the other Kobe members get home around midnight, making it difficult, they acknowledged, to come to work the next morning at peak effort. It is only 65 nights a year, and he says they work until 7 p.m. on nongame nights to make up for lost time, but, year after year, that is a lot of travel and drinking. And pressure—both the sense of obligation out of which some employees participate and the very heavy responsibility that Fujita himself frequently expressed for insuring, game after game, a safe and enjoyable experience for members and those around him. No wonder he was so visibly relieved at the end of the final game of the season, when I went with him and other officers for a long celebratory night of drinking in the Osaka bar district—at an establishment managed by a Roving Tiger club member. When he exclaimed it was a season “without incident,” in the quote at this essay’s opening, he was referring to his fan club’s fortunes and not those of the ball team.

However, not all Roving Tiger members are business related. In the late 1990s, there was a young woman who worked as a Yamaha electric organ teacher, a fellow who worked for a janitorial service, a JR railroad conductor, some Osaka college kids (who usually played the club’s two trumpets and bass drum), and others. But all showed up, and were expected to show up, regularly. Miss 30 games or so in a season, and they would find themselves dropped from the rolls—and from the access to the club’s reserved seating, trips to away games, and the several social events and club assemblies held throughout the year away from Kōshien.

While workplace groups predominate, neighborhood and other kinds of social networks are also bases for Tiger fan clubs. There is, for example, the Tiger Ladies Club of about thirty-two middle-aged women and the Fierce Tiger Club of the Civil Engineering Department of Kyoto University. And the association network fosters social ties among the clubs as well. To the right of the Roving Tiger Club is a club whose members are predominantly *tekiya* (itinerant stall operators and hucksters at markets and carnivals). Given their peripatetic schedule, the club is often short-handed and Fujita and his members lend a hand in hoisting the banners and flag. Fujita is also generous in providing beer and food to younger adult members of adjacent clubs “because they just don’t have the pocket money.” And during a game one evening in late 1997, a club director accompanied two of his members, a father and son, around the bleachers; introducing them to officers of various other clubs, they distributed invitations to the son’s upcoming wedding reception. More substantially, following the devastating 1996 Kobe earthquake, the Private Alliance and constituent clubs provided much logistical and financial assistance to those many clubs and members who had suffered (often enormous) losses.⁷

But whatever the principle of formation, I have come to appreciate that, for these outfield fans, of equal importance to the coordinated high-energy emotion is the quieter, routinized sociability of a time and place that is somewhere between work and home. It may not be immediately obvious that schmoozing is an appropriate dimension of baseball fan conduct. Here at Kōshien, however, it is central to what Grossberg (1992) calls the “affective sensibility” of the fans’ space–time, whose rhythms are both distinct from and intimately attuned to the field of play it overlooks.

*Neither Insiders nor Outsiders—
Whose Side Are the Fan Clubs On?*

Fans are by definition “fanatics,” maniacs, and mania is a schizoid condition. It expresses itself, on the one hand, in abiding devotion to their object of loyalty, even the most hapless of teams. A Tigers’ fan is *tora-kichi* (Tiger-crazy), with the same depth of feeling that English football fans are “supporters” and Italian fans compose *la fede calcistica* (the football faithful), as suggested by the Tiger-crazy fan quoted at the outset of this chapter (from Rokusai-sha 1996:60).

At the same time, and in apparent contradiction, Tiger fans are ever vigilant for any slip or mistake by the objects of their adulation, quick to criticize for any expectations not met. Tiger players, managers, and club officers have all been vulnerable to sudden swings of fan support. At several moments in games during the recent seasons of dismal Tiger teams, the fan clubs have even boycotted the team by refusing to cheer.

The audiences at Kōshien are famous for their *yaji* (jeers), and even in the midst of the fan club cheering, one can hear heckling and catcalls. Heckling ranges widely, from boorish catcalls (“Yoshida, you idiot!” or “Get the bum out of here!”) to more witty satirical barbs, phrased in Osaka dialect and thrown out with the timing and pitch that recalls the *akegoe* (audience interjections) from kabuki aficionadas. In fact, a group styling itself the “Crazy-About-the-Tigers Heckling Research Group” published a collection of jeers heard during the 1994 season at the stadium (Hanshin Taigāsu ni nekkyō suru yaji kenkyūkai 1994). Like an annotated poetry volume, each was identified by date and moment, given in original dialect, and the circumstances and substance were explained. Interestingly, when I asked players and front-office people why so few of the player wives attended Hanshin games, they very often voiced concern that the wives would be upset by the booing and jeering. (This is questionable because most heckling cannot be heard from the backstop box seats in which wives and other favored guests sit and because the wives themselves more often cited the difficulties of bringing young children to night games. Still, I do not doubt the sensitivity of the team to jeering.)

Fandom in sports, then, like other fandoms, is a peculiar combination of attachment and fickleness, of long-suffering patience and a demand for instant

gratification. Just whose side the fans are on is never entirely clear—or at least never stable. First, one must realize that what one sees in the right-field stands of Kōshien is not only solidly organized but also resolutely independent of the Hanshin team—hence the “private” (*shisetsu*) in its title. This is not always true of fan organizations of other teams. The Yomiuri Giants, among others, rather tightly control the association of Giants fan clubs, and in 1989 a number of the fan organizations of Pacific League teams, embarrassed by the rowdy image of Hanshin and other fans, came together in an Association of Pacific League Fan Clubs that is recognized by the league office.⁷

But at Kōshien, the years have witnessed considerable mutual antagonism between the fan clubs, stadium officials, and the Tigers club. To be sure, there are some obvious converging interests. The fan clubs have sought and benefited from certain concessions by the stadium, especially in shifting of the 6,000 right-field seats to a season-ticket basis, to which fan club members have special access. For their part, the fan clubs provide intangible but essential color and background for stadium ambiance and television and radio broadcasts.

Nonetheless, their colorful, constant presence is a mixed boon to the Hanshin club, and fan club practices do not always reinforce the stadium company's and the club's own marketing efforts to attract and appeal to audiences. The official promotion days, team mascots, and scoreboard-led cheers are only lukewarmly met by the fan clubs. In a real sense, the outfield sections are a separate territory, largely self-disciplined by the fan club alliance with only circumspect oversight by stadium guards. As I have mentioned, there are periodic meetings between fan club alliance leaders and stadium officials to discuss rules for banners, seating, flag waving, drinking, and concessions. The baseball club, for its part, refuses to get involved in any way with the fan clubs. When I made my initial introductions to the Hanshin front office in 1996, for example, I expressed an interest in contacting the fan club officials. I was quickly informed that the team had no relationship to the fan organizations, and I would have to approach them on my own. An even less guarded front-office opinion is quoted at this chapter's outset.

The small issue of beer coolers is illustrative of this tension. They are not allowed in the stadium. And yet, packed with cans of beer (and cans are not allowed either, their usefulness as projectiles having been demonstrated on more than one occasion), cooler after cooler is carried through the turnstiles right past the stadium guards and left in open display on the walkways filled with beer and whiskey to quench the thirst and lubricate the hospitality of the fan club officers and their guests. But as long as the association officials can control their members' drinking behavior, the stadium company silently concedes them the right. It even sends around a senior employee at the end of every game to bow and offer words of thanks to the head of each and every fan club “for their cooperation” that evening.

The fan clubs also harbor skeptical, even hostile, attitudes toward the media as well. Modern sports are “spectator sports,” opening up a distinction between

those who do and those who watch; this is reflected in stadiums that create barriers and arenas and also in the media (radio, television, print) that do just that—inter-mediate, transmit, interpret the doers to the watchers. Actually, though, media do not simply passively report the play, but intervene more actively than their name suggests to frame and dramatize the sporting event (see, e.g., Ariyama 1997; Nagai 1997; Sugimoto 1997; and Taniguchi 1997). Radio and television, especially, often need and encourage spectators as animated participants in the drama presented; the cameras pan the stadium crowds and microphones are fixed in locations throughout to pick up the cheers and groans and catcalls. The organized fan clubs obviously offer the most desirable camera shots, and the clubs take some pride in the show they provide. At the same time, many members feel misused and misrepresented because those broadcasts associate the clubs with the more zany and sometimes violent behavior of fans who are often not even members. An article in the Private Alliance regulations requires members to channel all media requests through association officers, who even object to pictures taken of them and their clubs in the stands without their permission.

Given these tensions, the potential for fan violence is never far below the surface, although its extent is difficult to gauge. On the one hand, sitting in the right-field bleachers in over fifty games over three seasons, I only saw three fights erupt among bleacher fans (and they were quickly broken up by club officers). The general level of fighting and posturing is well below an average Sunday afternoon National Football League crowd. Nonetheless, there are enough occasional incidents to keep team and stadium officials and fan club officers anxious. On June 1, 1996, for example, during my first year of observation, a slump in May angered Hanshin supporters, about fifty of whom surrounded the hotel in Chiba where the team was staying; they accosted several players leaving the hotel to go to dinner and surrounded another in a threatening manner in the hotel elevator. Then in August, a drunken fan club member beat up a stadium guard outside the ticket entrance after another loss. And throughout the disappointing season, constant fan jeering and grumbling was directed at the manager and the front office. Midway through my fieldwork, in June 1998, the Tigers again fell into last place and the sports papers began reporting and railing against Tiger fan “hooligan behavior.” In Shizuoka on May 16, a scoreless game with Yokohama was interrupted in the eighth inning by Hanshin fans who pelted the outfield with trash and bottles; after the game, five fans jumped the fence and ran around the outfield trying to stir up the spectators. Two days later, against Yokohama in that city, angry Hanshin fans threw their megaphones at the team bus as it left the stadium. This prompted the stadium to add 50 extra guards to the normal complement of 200 for the crucial Giants series on June 19–21 (two of the games were rained out and the third was a close victory for Hanshin, with no reported incidents).⁸

Much more common, of course, are the moments of exuberance that could, but seldom, become ugly. For example, returning to Osaka’s central Umeda Station

from a game at Kōshien against the Yakult Swallows on a sweltering August night in 1997, I happened to ride in a packed train car into which, at the last moment, spilled a spirited fan club of young males. They drew worried looks from the other passengers as they moved through the car, aggressively although not threateningly demanding expressions of Tiger support. However, they soon had most passengers entertained and involved in a nonstop series of chants for the 20-minute ride. They began with the fan club chants for each Hanshin player before shifting to a series of insult chants against Yakult. Then they announced that “Because the wave is banned at Kōshien, let’s do it here,” and they got most of the passengers in the car to bob up and down three or four times in a back-to-front wave, before launching into another series of insult chants against arch rival Yomiuri Giants—attacking the players, Giants manager Nagashima, Yomiuri’s sports daily *Hōchi shimbun* (“only good as toilet paper”), and the Yomiuri television network NTV (“idiot-TV”). They then sang some insult verses directed to Hanshin’s next opponent, Yokohama BayStars, by which time the train was pulling into the station to their pulsating chant of “Umeda, Umeda, Umeda.” The group poured out of the car, rushed down the platform, and reassembled in the main foyer for a final round of chants and songs before disbanding. Station personnel and fan club officers who happened to be riding the train looked on with a skeptical bemusement, ready to gently intervene.

These and many other incidents sustain a wary standoff between the fan clubs, the rest of the stadium audience, the Kōshien stadium company, and the Tigers baseball club. The fan clubs do not officially condone violence or even rude displays against the team or its opponents; indeed, they actively patrol and monitor. And most of the serious reported incidents appear not to involve association members. Nonetheless, members can be quite vocal in their dissatisfaction with the team and its performance and occasionally express this in gestures and demeanor. In short, the fan clubs are neither *uchi* nor *soto* (neither insiders nor outsiders). Like fans everywhere (and like some anthropologists), they are participants and observers in an ambivalent zone, more passionate and partisan than ordinary spectators, but quick to assert their independence from the team itself.

Fanning the Flames of Mass Culture

The noisy and colorful presence of fan clubs is certainly one of the key features distinguishing professional baseball in Japan from its older sibling in the United States. Yet in appreciating this difference, we must be careful to avoid orientalist exaggerations and essentialist explanations. For example, while organized fan cheering is absent from professional baseball in the United States, it is certainly a crucial and occasionally disruptive element of other Western sports, including American football and European and South American soccer.⁹ And in highlighting the outfield fan clubs, I have neglected the more numerous infield spectators,

who may add their voices at suspenseful moments and important games but which by and large behave rather like crowds at American ballparks. To them, indeed, the fans clubs are a curious spectacle and something of a mystery.

Surely, then, we cannot dismiss the Japanese fan as “a veritable wildman, yelling and screaming nonstop for nine solid innings.” The Kōshien fan clubs have created and sustain a distinctive and discriminating time-space in the right-field bleachers—and this chapter has attempted to explicate ethnographically the historical conditions and social processes and cultural elements by which they have, for a time at least, been able to do this.

First, we have seen that it was not an inevitable Japanese collectivist urge but some historically particular circumstances that prompted the Private Alliance at Kōshien. These and other organized fan clubs for professional baseball in Japan owe something to the sport’s early development there in schools, whose cheer-leading squads offered a model of fan support and whose prestige (as the spirit of “amateurism”) was inducement to borrow. More recently, as the professional leagues’ strove for respectability and television share in the national markets of the 1960s and 1970s, some teams sponsored fan organizations to exert control over stadium crowds. Now, for public relations, marketing, and managing the stadium show, all teams pay some attention to “fan service.”

Nonetheless, great differences remain among the Central and Pacific League teams in the fan clubs’ scale, showmanship, volubility, internal organization, and relations to the ball club. The Tiger fan associations reflect the determinedly autonomous efforts of certain fans to convince a great many others to create and to elaborate organized and self-regulated routines of cheering that invest enthusiasm and commitment in the fortunes of the team and in the pleasure of their own company while claiming both the space and the voice to do that amid the sometimes heavy-handed corporate interests of the team and its parent corporation.

I have suggested that the particular structure and style of the Kōshien clubs are, in part, a function of the medium- and small-business character of the local economy—a significant working class with a taste for spectator and gambling sports (there is a horse track and a speedboat stadium nearby Kōshien); a direct, even blunt, style of business dealings; and patterns of business socializing beyond the upscale, expense-account hostess bars that cater to white-collar management and upper civil servants.

Consequential also is the enormous emotional charge given the Tigers for symbolically bearing the pride and determination of the Kansai region in its intense rivalry with the formidable concentrations of the Kantō capital. The other two area teams have both done better than the Tigers in recent years, but they play in the Pacific League and do not confront the Yomiuri Giants 26 times a season like the Tigers. One of the grand themes of 20th-century Japanese state making has been the dramatic shift in the Kantō-Kansai balance of power, especially Osaka’s loss of economic parity with Tokyo and its postwar subordination in the Tokyo-centrism of

the present political economy. In a circulation of rhetoric, local media commentators and ordinary fans alike are quick to recite a litany of contrast pairs (Tokyo versus Osaka, national bureaucrats versus local businesspeople, national imperviousness versus regional pride, and big powerful big corporations versus vulnerable small business) that are symbolically condensed in the Giants–Tigers rivalry.

This helps us understand, too, the local resolution of the universal sports challenge of coping with losing—for half of each game’s participants and their followers, for all but a single team in any league in every season. Hanshin’s baseball success came in pro baseball’s early years, in the 1930s and 1940s, when Osaka itself was the rough equal of Tokyo. In the postwar decades, as Osaka’s power ebbed, so did the fortunes of the Tigers. Many fans feel inevitability—and injustice—in the declining success of the Tigers. This does not incline them toward passive resignation but rather toward a certain arch cynicism about Giants (i.e., Tokyo) domination, which can veer menacingly toward the Hanshin company when it is suspected of failing to fight with proper resolve and resources, despite the odds. Again, the distinctive and defended autonomy of the Tiger fan club associations derives from this freighted sensibility.

In the end, though, perhaps the most striking contradiction may well be the contrast of an initial impression of the outfield fans’ wild abandon and the later realization that there is an authoritative order that quietly but effectively imposes itself on these fans. This might well lead the reader to think I am, finally, reaffirming the crush of the collective in this as in other areas of Japanese life. If the screaming fans are not veritable wildmen, are they not then obedient automatons, mindlessly chanting the choreographed lyrics?

I think that this too would be mistaken because it neglects both the pleasures of these fans and the perplexities they present to the media and the baseball world. Despite the gendered and age-graded administrative hierarchies of the clubs and their determined orchestration of fan sentiment, the mood among the thousands who nightly fill the right-field stands is not as militaristic and routinized as the structures suggest. People pay close attention to batting (having to cheer constantly focuses attention) and some attention to the other team’s at bats. However, rather than the regimented mass spectator formations of the Chinese National Games that Brownell (1995) describes, Kōshien games remind me much more of the delicately balanced “mood” of festivals I have attended, with their mix of the choreographed and the spontaneous, of knowledge and passion (e.g., the Kurokawa Festival; see Kelly 1990). There are wide swings of deeply felt emotion at the ever-changing fortunes of the team and great evident enjoyment in sharing a summer evening with friends (and strangers). It is simply fun to be out there, although both exhilarating and exhausting. The highly conventionalized forms of expressing such emotions less compromise than enable the sharing of feeling. It is perhaps one more illustration of a cultural presumption (which is not a national character) that social forms can enable as effectively as restrain personal feeling.

Fan club cheering is also about Moritani's thrill of shouting "Ikee!" to start the evening; the head leader proudly waving his tasseled baton to start the inning; the syncopated, white-gloved clapping of the leaders stationed throughout the stands; the drummers and the trumpeters putting their all into the beat; and so on. The right-field crowd, then, can easily feel a sense of participating, of "losing" oneself in the mass cheering, but all down the line one can also have a sense of leading—Moritani opens the proceedings, the baton starts the cheers, the drum leads the trumpet, the trumpet leads the chants, and everyone's chants lead and motivate the players.

To see the fans as automatons also belies the constant anxiety and perplexity of stadium and team officials and even fan club officers at the unpredictable course that such high emotion and deep knowledge can take. Thus, rather than treating baseball fans in Japan as some noisome aberration of proper sports spectatorship, we should instead understand them as bearing witness to the central role of fandom in mass culture everywhere today. It is a commonplace observation that modern societies offer highly commercialized and "massified" forms of entertainment and leisure, and profit motives rather than performance standards more typically motivate the culture industries that produce what we watch and listen to. Japan, with its manga and *pachinko* (pinball) and karaoke, is an exemplar and not an exception.

Clearly too, the old "bread and circuses" complaint that mass culture only induces passivity and stultification ignores the many ways that some viewers and readers and spectators creatively consume and actively reproduce. Out of audiences, whether at stadiums or theaters or video arcades, emerge some "fanatics" seeking to intensify their experience. It is these fans who are the unstable center of this commodified culture, because they are so poised between the forces of production and the sites of reception. Fans, here in the form of the Kōshien outfield fan clubs, are paragons of exemplary consumption, embodying with their money and time and energy a commitment to the professionalized spectacle of sport. And yet they are also creative agents, interrupting the spectacle and diverting its messages with their own appropriations of meaning and interventions of energies within the space and time of the sport.

It would be wrong to exaggerate the disruptive and oppositional potential of fans, especially in a sport that has come to be so imbricated in the institutions of mainstream postwar society. Yet to a significant degree, the outcomes of games, the careers of individuals, and the profits of corporations are dependent on the barely manageable sensibilities of those segments of the audience who insist on cheering on and jeering at their own terms and to their own beat.

Acknowledgments

I appreciate especially the comments of Ian Condry on a draft of this chapter.

Notes

1. For the development of the school baseball tournaments and Kōshien Stadium in the context of the Osaka metropolitan economy, see Ariyama 1997, Kelly 2000, and Kiku 1993, 1994.

2. Until 1950 there was a single professional league; that year professional baseball was reorganized into two leagues, the Central and the Pacific Leagues, each now with six teams. The 135-game regular season is somewhat shorter than U.S. Major League Baseball's 162-game schedule, but is played over the same seasonal calendar, from the beginning of April through early October. In mid-October, the winners of the two leagues meet in the championship Japan Series.

3. This expanded seating in the outer infields along the right and left sides were soon tagged the "Alps" sections by a newspaper journalist. This was not just because of their steep pitch but because the home and visiting team supporters were seated there during school tournament games, and the sea of white blouses worn by the girl students reminded him of the snowy upper slopes of the Matterhorn.

4. The most comprehensive treatment of Japanese sports fans is the 1997 volume by members of the Kansai Sports Sociology Research Group (Sugimoto 1997).

5. Audio recordings of player hitting marches, the Tiger anthem "Rokkō oroshi," and other fan songs from Kōshien Stadium may be sampled at http://research.yale.edu/wwkelly/ht/audio_sampler.htm. *Rokkō oroshi* refers to the famous winds that blow down off the slopes of the Rokkō Mountains that are the backdrop to the Osaka-Kobe corridor and which can be seen from the stadium. A library of hitting march lyrics can be found at http://research.yale.edu/wwkelly/ht/ht_lyrics_catalog.htm.

6. Ordinary membership requires recommendation by one officer of at least assistant club leader rank and two leaders; club regulations stipulate that all responsibility for the conduct of the new member shall be borne by his or her sponsors.

7. Indeed, one very common complaint of Hanshin fans has been the way that the Kobe-based Orix BlueWave seized the public relations initiative after the earthquake. The Orix club sponsored numerous benefits and dedicated its 1996 season to reviving the civic spirit of the city; its players still wore a "Gambarō, Kobe!" (Let's Fight On, Kobe!) patch on their uniform sleeve. However, the working-class and small-business neighborhoods of downtown Kobe that were the hardest hit by the quake and subsequent fires have long been strong supporters of the Hanshin Tigers, and the Hanshin railroad sustained the most serious damages among regional transport companies.

8. Despite the borrowed term, these "hooligans" bear little resemblance to their English football namesakes, about which there are now some fascinating anthropological accounts (especially Armstrong 1998; Giulianotti 1997, 1999:39-65; Hognestad 1997; Robson 2000) as well as sociological-historical studies (Dunning et al. 1988, 1991) and literary portraits (particularly Hornby 1992).

9. Indeed, there are intriguing parallels between the Private Alliance and certain supporter associations of Italian soccer clubs, as suggested by the ethnographic research of Bromberger 1993, Dal Lago and De Biasi 1999, Lanfranchi 1995, Portelli 1993, and others.