

This Sporting Life

Sports and Body Culture in Modern Japan



Edited by

William W. KELLY

With

SUGIMOTO Atsuo



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Yale University

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Introduction

Sports and Sport Studies in Japan

William W. Kelly

The organized sports of contemporary life are high public drama and grinding anonymous routine. They are imbued with deep emotion, constant mental calculation, and enormous physical exertion. Sports are watched and played throughout the world with passion and partisanship. They are pursued for profit, patriotism, and personal compulsiveness. They are spontaneous moments of pure action and visceral performance, but they are always embedded in long chains of stories and statistics. And sports are everywhere implicated in structures of power, both personal and collective—the variable powers of an athlete to compel her body with her spirit, of an owner to command a team with his financial clout, of fans to will a victory with their cheers. For any scholar of modern life, they offer splendid conjunctures of embodied actions and institutional forces.

This is as true in Japan as in the West. Despite prevalent images of a nation resolutely and exclusively at work, modern Japan has also been a nation at play. And within the worlds of leisure, recreation, and entertainment, sports have loomed large throughout the twentieth century. The broad contemporary sporting landscape includes indigenous sports that have been significantly reshaped from premodern practices of village and temple rituals (like sumo wrestling and field day events), from aristocratic pursuits (such as archery), and from martial training (like kendo). Equally prominent in contemporary Japan are sports that have been introduced from the West, sometimes in their original form and sometimes strikingly domesticated and reformed (like bicycle racing, mountaineering, baseball, and soccer).

Sports have long been embedded in community life, the educational system, the mass media, the corporate structures, and the nationalist sentiments of modern Japan. For over a century, they have been a crucial intersection of school pedagogy, corporate aims, media constructions, gender relations, and patriotic feelings. The chapters in this book highlight a wide range of sports, and together, they offer a significant window on to the ways that the sporting life animates the institutions of modern Japan.

The Japanese sportscape

National sportscares can be roughly divided into those few countries in which a number of spectator sports vie more or less equally for attention and pres-

tige and those more numerous countries where a single dominant spectator sport overshadows others of more limited attraction. The United States is an example of the former type, as baseball, basketball, and football rival one another as “center sports” for time and resources. Japan is one of the many more numerous nations that have a single dominant sport and a penumbra of secondary sports. For much of the world, this center sport is soccer; occasionally it is cricket (as in South Asia and some Caribbean nations), even more rarely, ice hockey (for Canada).

For Japan, like several non-cricket Caribbean nations, the center sport has been baseball for the last sixty years, played at the youth level as Little League and secondary school teams, in universities and in semi-pro industrial leagues, in the Japanese professional leagues, and as adult recreation across the country. In participation, spectatorship, and media attention, then, baseball has dominated the sportscape as soccer dominates England and Brazil and cricket dominates India.

Nonetheless, we must immediately recognize this center sport is surrounded by a vast periphery of spectator and participant sports—perhaps most notably, sumo, whose year is organized around six fifteen-day tournaments, and more recently soccer, especially the J.League. Beyond this, the longstanding popularity of swimming, track and field, and other Olympic-inspired sports, together with tennis, golf, Formula-1 motor racing, and motocross remind us that despite national stereotypes of group-consciousness, Japanese have long been attracted to individual sports as enthusiastically as team sports!

Even this does not exhaust an enumeration of sports that have been popular in education and entertainment for over a century, including team sports of limited followership at the college and company level (rugby, American football, volleyball, ice hockey); outdoor adventure and endurance sports like mountain climbing, Arctic exploration, and sailing; martial art sports like judo and karate; and professional wrestling, both men’s and women’s. Finally—and at many points in the twentieth century the most popular and lucrative of all—there is the shadow sector of the Japanese sportscape, the unholy trinity of gambling sports: horse racing, velodrome cycling, and motorboat racing (e.g., Furukawa 1998).

The state of sport studies in Japan

Given their centrality in modern life, it is odd that sports, and what Susan Brownell (1995) has called more generally “body culture,” were neglected for so long by mainstream social theory in the West. In Japan, too, the earliest

academic attention to sports was limited to those working in physical education, whose priorities were practical, pedagogical, and policy-related. The National Research Institute of Physical Education was formed in 1924, but its studies and surveys were intended to assist physical education policy planning and coordinate the training of teachers. Only recently have sociologists and historians taken the lead, broadening the focus on school physical education to sports and body culture across the society and shifting the perspective to critical, academic research.

Modern sports studies in Japan may be traced to the 1950s after a Faculty of Physical Education was established at the Tokyo University of Education in 1949.¹ The impetus for this was the postwar educational reforms, one of which was to require two years of physical education at the university level (in addition to its place in primary and secondary school curriculums). This created an immediate demand for PE graduates, and the first class (of what was called “sports sociology”) graduated in 1952. In 1950, the Japan Society of Physical Education, Health and Sport Science (JSPEHSS) was formed, and much of its members’ early research related to exercise and recreational programs for schools and corporate settings.

It wasn’t until the 1960s that specialist sports research and advanced training emerged. In 1962, a Physical Education Sociology Section was created within the JSPEHSS, and with the rapid expansion of university education in this decade, graduate programs were established in a number of universities across the country. In 1965, Takenoshita Kyūzō and the urban sociologist Isomura Eiichi co-edited the first text, *Sport Sociology*. Asai Asa’ichi of Nara Women’s University used the small-group dynamics of social psychology to explore the group dynamics of physical education instruction. However, there was little research on cultural or historical topics at this stage.

The 1964 Tokyo Olympics were a major impetus to sport studies as well as to national sports awareness and to government and corporate investment in sports and leisure facilities and programs. This national sports boom meant that much of this early research and publishing were shaped (and funded) by government policy directions. Especially common were surveys and analysis of sports activities and facilities in cities, especially Tokyo, in order to formulate effective citizen and school sports policies. Takenoshita’s survey of academic research (1967a, see also 1967b) is instructive of the state of the field in that decade; much of the essay is an effort to distinguish a nascent sociology of sport from the dominance of physical education.

Thus serious academic work in sport sociology was not common until the 1970s, and it was influenced in part by translations of two classic European

texts. Roger Caillois's *Man, Play and Games* (French original, 1958) appeared in 1970, and Johan Huizinga's *Homo Ludens* (German original, 1944) in 1971. Both books directed Japanese scholarship to the cultural meanings of sports as play, and this was reflected in works such as Sugawara's *Introduction to Physical Education Sociology* (1975). Through the decade, university departments initiated graduate courses in sport sociology and sport history, and in 1972 the Research Journal of Sport Sociology was begun as an annual by the Physical Education Sociology Section.² Representative publications of the decade were Kinoshita's comprehensive history of sports (1970), Takenoshita and Sugawara's *Physical Education Sociology* (1972) and Takenoshita's 1972 *Play, Sports, and Physical Education*. Much of the research on the time was statistical analysis of survey data using Parsonian systems theory to analyze sports as a social subsystem. An exception was Tatanō Hideo, who was the first to propose a cultural model of sports.

The 1980s saw an impressive increase in the volume of research and in the range of more cultural approaches, including semiotic, phenomenological, and symbolic analyses and structuralism. We can see this reflected in the comprehensive three-volume series on sports sociology published in 1983 (Kumeno 1983, Saeki 1983, and Sugawara 1983) and in the later survey by Morikawa and Saeki (1988). Translations of books by important Western scholars like Allen Guttmann and Eric Dunning stimulated international comparisons and historical sociological inquiries (see, for example, Nakamura 1981 and Odagiri 1982).

In 1991, the Japan Sport Sociology Society (JSSS) was organized, marking the full ascendancy of academic sociological approaches to sport, leisure, and exercise. The first JSSS president was one of Japan's most eminent cultural sociologists, Inoue Shun. The Society has included scholars from social science and humanistic disciplines, including sociology, cultural anthropology, media studies, and philosophy. Its annual journal, *Supōtsu shakaigaku kenkyū* (its English title is *Japan Journal of Sport Sociology*), quickly became the leading outlet for critical sports studies. Many of the Japanese scholars represented in our conference and in this volume have been active in JSSS. The Society has been especially committed to enhancing international academic exchange, especially through hosting foreign scholars at its annual meetings and publishing their work in the meetings proceedings (e.g., JSSS 1998).³

This was the decade, then, when a mature social science of sport developed in Japan, centered on the JSSS and within the disciplines of sociology and history, but also including scholars from other perspectives (see Fujita and Ichimura 1993, Inoue 1993, and Kiku 2000 for brief overviews). Several of most well-known studies of the last ten years or so that offer some flavor

of range of interests are Kiku Kōichi's 1993 study of the professionalization of baseball in the early twentieth century, a striking application of Norbert Elias's figurational sociology; Sugimoto Atsuo's deployment of Goffman's frame analysis in analyzing recent transformations of modern sports (1995); Inagaki's historical approach to the postmodernization of sports (1995); Shimizu Satoshi's 1998 ethnographic study of a small rural high school that made it to the national high school tournament at Kōshien; Takahashi Yoshio (1994) overview of soccer sociology; Kuroda Isamu's 1999 study of the origins of the national radio broadcast morning exercises; and Yoshimi Shun'ya's cultural historical analysis (1999) of the school and community athletic field days that have been important physical competition festivals since the Meiji period. Two representative collections that draw together these and other scholars are those edited by Inoue and Kameyama on sports culture (1999) and by Sugimoto on body culture (2001). Kameyama's edited volume (1990) demonstrated the power of a phenomenological approach, Taki Kōji (1995) is a more speculative essay on sports cultural history (1995), and Tatano (1997) offers a broad introduction to method and theory in sports studies.

Given their creative deployment of Western social theory and critical sports studies, it is surprising that so little of this scholarship has appeared in English. One exception is Abe Ikuo, who has published a number of articles through the *International Journal of the History of Sport* (e.g., Abe 1991, 2006; Abe, Kiyohara, and Nakajima 1992; Abe and Mangan 1997, 2002), but this is changing rapidly, in part occasioned by the 2002 World Cup (e.g., Kiku 2002; Nogawa and Maeda 1999, 2002; Ogasawara 2004; Shimizu 2002; Yamashita and Saka 2002). Of particular note is a recent volume edited by Joseph Maguire and Nakayama Masayoshi (2006), which samples Japanese sports work through ten short contributions, including chapters by several of the authors here (Kiku 2006, Takahashi 2006, and Yamashita 2006). The appearance of that volume and the present collection should finally make accessible to English-language readers something of the breadth of Japan sport studies.

The state of Japan sport studies outside of Japan

Foreign research and writing on sports in Japan have also accelerated significantly in the last decade or so, but many of the publications are so recent that they have yet to have much impact either in Japan studies or sport studies. William R. May (1989) and Gordon Daniels (1993) have provided useful articles that survey Japanese sports, based on both Japanese- and English-language

sources. Most importantly, Allen Guttman and Lee Thompson (both of whom contribute here) have written a comprehensive book (2001) of sports history that is now the essential reference. Two recent articles by John Horne (1998, 2000) survey Japanese sports in terms of body culture and national policies of physical training, and in a more recent paper (2005), he offers a valuable overview about sports and the media in Japan.

Given baseball's place as center sport, Western fascination with sumo, and the international spread of Japanese martial arts, these three have long drawn most scholarly and journalistic attention. For baseball, the prolific writings of Robert Whiting for thirty years, in English and in Japanese, have had enormous influence on interpretations of the sport (see especially 1977, 1989, and 2004). Among more academic studies is the 1984 article by Brian Moeran that analyzes idioms of spirit and effort in the national high school baseball tournament and several valuable essays by another anthropologist, Charles Springwood (1992, 2000). Donald Roden's study of Ichikō, the First Higher School (1980a), contains a wealth of material on the emergence of sports clubs at the school in the 1880s and 1890s. His companion article (1980b) has been much cited for twenty-five years for its details of the exploits of the famous Ichikō baseball club, whose victories over American teams in the late 1890s essentially made baseball Japan's national pastime and defined the first era of the sport in Japan. An article by historian Sayuri Guthrie-Shimizu (2005) is a fascinating account of the trans-Pacific world of baseball in the early twentieth-century, and my own work is centered on the history and contemporary forms of baseball in the Kansai region, especially through a case study of the Hanshin Tigers professional baseball club.

Sumo and the martial arts have also drawn enormous popular attention in the West. If Japanese baseball is of interest for how Japan has absorbed a Western sport, these practices are of inverse curiosity as Japanese contributions to modern sporting form. Among the few academic studies of sumo in English are the articles by Harold Bolitho on sumo's role in Tokugawa popular culture (1987, 1988) and Yamaguchi's essay (1998) on its place in contemporary mass culture. Kenji Tierney and Soon-Hee Whang, contributing to this volume and elsewhere, are also doing important scholarship. The fascination of the so-called "martial arts" is suggested by the oxymoronic term; even in their original forms as military training practices many of them had aesthetic and spiritual overtones, and as modern body disciplines, they now conflate self-defense, sporting competition, and spiritual training. Several of Inoue Shun's writings on the creation of martial arts as organized regime of physical discipline in the late nineteenth century have appeared in English (see especially 1998). Among so-

cial science studies, John Donohue's ethnographic study (1991) of dojo training in several different martial arts schools is especially insightful. Richard Friman (1998), Stephen Chan (2000), and Kris Chapman (2004) offer recent analyses of violence and gender, Andreas Niehaus (2006) analyzes the cultural politics of including judo in the Olympics, and Frühstück and Manzenreiter's chapter (2001) is an example of another major theme in martial arts studies—the proliferation of hybrid and local forms as these practices globalize.

Soccer is yet another way in which Japan is inserted into a global sporting scene. Soccer actually appeared in Japan as baseball was developing, but it languished for much of the twentieth century as a minor school and company sport. The formation of a full professional league in 1991 with much commercial fanfare has raised its profile (Horne 1996, Moffett 2002, Watts 1998). The journalist Jonathan Birchall (2001) wrote an engaging account of following the Shimizu S-Pulse team over the 1999 season. The recruitment of several Japanese stars by European clubs and Japan's co-hosting of the 2002 World Cup with Korea have placed the sport on an even firmer footing, and recent frictions in matches with China portend ever more fervent interest in the run up to the 2008 Beijing Olympics. The collections edited by Horne and Manzenreiter 2002 and Manzenreiter and Horne 2004 are especially valuable for recent scholarship on Japan soccer.

Japan has been sending athletes to the Olympic Games since 1912 and won the rights to host the 1940 Games in Tokyo until its military aggression forced its withdrawal from sponsorship. The Games it later hosted in 1964 were hugely important in marking a self-confident return to a normal position in the international sports world, and it later hosted the Winter Olympics twice, in 1972 at Sapporo and in 1998 in Nagano. There is surprisingly little foreign scholarship thus far on Japan's participation in the Olympics and in the Asian Games, although there is some useful discussion in the Guttman and Thompson history and in articles by James McClain (1990) and Morris Low (1999). Sandra Collins has written recently on the Olympics Games that weren't—the “missing” Olympics of 1940—and other aspects of Japan's early Olympism (2006, in press). Igarashi Yoshikuni's book on “bodies of memory” (2000) is a far-reaching exploration about the politics of memory in quarter of a century after World War II, and especially how the body was constructed and deployed for temporal (wartime and postwar time) and diplomatic (Japan/US) realignment across diverse arenas, including sports figures like the pro wrestler Rikidōzan, sports teams like the Yomiuri Giants, and sports mega-events like the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. The 1964 Olympics is also the subject of a German-language study by Christian Tagsold, who analyzes the intersections of ritual, politics, and cultural nationalism at the Games and beyond (2002, see Niehaus 2004 for an English-language review).

As an example of sports and leisure studies more generally we should note the ethnography of a Japanese mountain basin village that was the site of a ski development that was done by the Korean anthropologist Ok-pyo Moon. A recent series of articles by Richard Light on high school and university rugby in Japan explored its role in shaping and demonstrating notions of masculinity (1999a, 1999b, and 2000). Thomas Blackwood's 2005 dissertation also analyzed gender socialization through the lens of high school baseball clubs, and Peter Cave (2004) places school sports clubs in a more general context of extracurricular (but nonetheless required) activities. Apart from Spielvogel's work on aerobics (this volume and 2003), anthropologist Eyal Ben-Ari has examined sports as body culture in preschool activities (1997), in school sports days (1986), and in corporate golf (1998).

Finally, Wolfram Manzenreiter's published German-language dissertation (2000) on Japanese mountaineering is of great value (see Guttman 2000 for an English-language review). Historian Kären Wigen (2004) looks at Meiji mountaineering as sporting adventure, scientific ambition, and religious tourism. The anthropologist Nagashima Nobuhiro is one of the few to treat gambling and gambling sports in Japan, and his 1998 article is a rare English language view of horse racing and its aficionados.

While this brief survey does not exhaust the existing academic work on Japanese sports and does not include work of the volume contributors that will be noted in the next section, it does attest to an increasingly sophisticated range of critical sports studies. Unfortunately, almost all of the Japanese scholars remain unfamiliar to English-language readers, even those within sports studies. And Western-language work is only now appearing in sufficient range to attract wider attention. What is emerging are channels of communication, a full comparative perspective, and a mutual conditioning of Western and Japanese sports research, and this is where this volume seeks to play a role. Let me now introduce the chapters of the volume and some of their main themes.

The contributions of the volume

The fourteen chapters of this volume are divided very roughly into those that emphasize some of the central questions in the emergence of sports and body culture in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Japan ("Modern Themes") and those that offer more detailed analysis of particular sports at the present time ("Contemporary Cases"). Underlying much of the debate about the history of sport in modern Japan has been the understanding that two processes were occurring in tandem in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. On the

one hand, certain indigenous practices (especially *sumō* and martial exercises) were reshaped into rule-governed physical competitions; at the same time, new Western sports introduced during the Meiji period (especially baseball) were spiritualized with newly articulated Japanese values. Sportification and samurai-ization went hand in hand. In an important sense, this is merely the sports version of *wakon yōsai*, the selective adaptation of Western practices and their ideological domestication with Japanese “spirit.” But lest it be dismissed as yet another instance of Japanese particularism, it is worth remembering that the same tensions were evident in England and America, where folk games and gambling contests became regularized and regulated physical competitions appealing to new national populations, and, when they were located in schools, often imbued with a moralizing ethos of personal character. Muscular Christianity and muscular Confucianism shared much, including being equally unsettled by the competitive pressures (and pleasures) that were enabled by the new sporting practices themselves.

The volume actually opens in premodern times, with **Allen Guttmann’s** chapter on archery. Guttmann is one of the preeminent historians of sports in the West, and his Weber-inspired formulation of modern sports as a process of instrumental rationality, a “quest for records,” has been enormously influential across all sports scholarship. He applies the same insight to Japan’s experience, and locates archery’s “anticipatory modernity” in the evidence that abstract targets, quantification of results, and a quest for records are to be found in some of its forms even in the medieval and early modern centuries. Archery is an apt choice given the popularity in the West of the religious and ritualized image of archery through Herrigel (1953).⁴ Guttmann offers other applications of his perspective in his recent co-authored history mentioned above. He suggests that this predisposition for sports is an important factor for rapid acceptance of Western sports in the late 19th century, a clear parallel to arguments made about Japanese modernization by other historians

A second major orientation in sports studies was pioneered by the historical sociologist Norbert Elias and his student-colleague Eric Dunning, for whom sports emerged in the nineteenth-century as part of what Elias called “the civilizing process.” Elias proposed that in the societies of Western Europe from the medieval centuries through the early modern period up to the beginning of the twentieth century, there was a successive elaboration of codes of personal conduct and standards of etiquette as emerging states pressured subjects and citizens to exert self-control and restraint in their conduct and feeling. Civility was an imposed standard and a socialized virtue.

For Elias and Dunning, sports were an important locus of this broad process by which rudeness and violence were not eliminated but rather regulated. Thus, earliest in England and later elsewhere, sports became more rule-governed, the rules became standardized, and timekeepers, umpires and referees were introduced, with “penalties” and “free kicks” at their disposal to punish. At the same time, spectators began to be separated from the field of play, confined behind ropes or in seats, and expected to exercise more self-restraint.

Sport sociologist **Kiku Kōichi** skilfully applies this formulation to reinterpret a perennial issue in Japan sport studies: the role of martial spirit, encoded as Bushidō (the “Way of the Warrior”), in shaping sports in twentieth-century Japan. The sociologist Inoue Shun has identified two patterns in the development and modernization of sports in the Meiji era (1998: 225-235). The first he called “the modernization of budō,” by which older military practices (“bugei” and “bujutsu”) were reconfigured to the modern era⁵; the second, he termed the “invention of traditions,” in the sense that Western sports were subject to “Bushidō-ization,” or **injection with a Bushidō spirit. Through these parallel processes, the Japanese developed a national consciousness through sport, allowing them to have contact with Western nations while continuing to preserve elements of what they considered to be an indigenous martial ethic.**

A number of scholars have written of the former process. Inoue himself has an instructive article on Kanō Jigorō, the Meiji figure who systematized and codified earlier Tokugawa practices. Kiku here takes up the second process, by which this “modernized” notion of a warrior spirit was then used as an idiom for adopting Western sports—or rather for taming them in Dunning’s notion of providing civil frames for their potentially disruptive violence.

Even today at any Japanese school, when a teacher or visitor enters a classroom or assembly, the students will be called to attention with the command ‘Kiotsuke! (Attention!).’ The third chapter, by sport sociologist **Shimizu Satoshi**, profiles the Meiji educator, Nagai Michiakira, who created the command, as well as its body posture. At the outset of the new Meiji state, organized calisthenics (*taisō*) had strong associations with military drills, and given official concern for a strong soldier-citizenry, calisthenics were introduced into the schools as physical training. Mori Arinori, who became Japan’s first Minister of Education in 1885, mandated gymnastics as a required subject in school curricula through the Normal Schools Act of 1886. Shimizu shows Nagai, whose manual on *taisō* gymnastics became the template for most physical training, was at odds with a narrow military objective. Nonetheless he fashioned a format that created strong resonances between school *taisō*, military *taisō*, marching, Field Days, and school fieldtrips that continued into wartime mobilization.⁶

Shimizu then takes his argument in a very intriguing direction, by finding further parallels (a “synergism”) between disciplining of the body as part of the state’s educational project and the self-fashioning of young urbanites as they consumed the gaze of others and watched themselves moving through the burgeoning metropolitan avenues of early twentieth-century Tokyo and Osaka.

The anthropologist **R. Kenji Tierney** begins his chapter with a dramatic moment in the Opening Ceremonies of 1996 Olympics Winter Games at Nagano: the appearance of a Hawaiian-born sumo wrestler, the then-Grand Champion Akebono, in the specially constructed sumo ring to demonstrate the entrance rituals that a champion performs at tournaments. But Tierney shows that what many now see as Japan’s national sport was neither national nor a sport in its origins and history—first as shrine ritual and later as a rather gaudy but decidedly plebian spectacle among urban commoners. Much of sumo’s modern history has been the process of fashioning it into a respectable national showcase and into a rationalized competitive sport. And as Akebono’s presence demonstrated (and replaced by the Mongolian grand champion Asashoryu), sumo now must rework itself to incorporate and domesticate foreign wrestlers at the highest levels.

Like Kiku, the sociologist **Sugimoto Atsuo** relies on the **Elias-Dunning** perspective that the modern sports spectator is placed in a precarious emotional balance between agitation and control. The modern stadiums became zones for what Cas Wouters (1989) termed the “controlled decontrol of emotions,” although the modalities of expression and control vary across societies according to political circumstances. Thus, what Sugimoto finds distinctive about the development of sports body culture in Japan was how intensely the state utilized sports as an educational means for shaping “modern emotions” of affiliation, loyalty, and regret. In particular, he draws attention to school programs of physical education and the importance of cheering squads and clubs in the history of sports.

It is a very long step from the thuds of sumo titans and the student cheering of amateur athletes to the grunts and groans of professional Western-style ring-wrestling. However, professional wrestling has been an enormously popular mass entertainment in Japan since the early 1950s (with an earlier pre-World War II history as well). In fact men’s professional wrestling was Japan’s biggest spectator sport in the 1950s; even more than baseball it was the vehicle for early television’s rapid spread. Women’s professional wrestling (known in Japanese as *joshi puroresu*) developed more slowly and more unevenly, but it too has been enthusiastically received in arenas and on television.

But is it really a sport? As **Lee Thompson** describes, the analytical fascination of professional wrestling is that it pushes the limits of what we usually call sports (as organized physical competitions). It is organized like a sport (with

matches, teams, tournaments, and titles) and it requires well trained, highly skilled athletes, whose training and matches are physically demanding, often brutally so. However, unlike amateur wrestling and sumo, these matches are almost always rigged and their outcomes predetermined (“choreographed” is a more charitable term). So is it a sport? Not really. It elides sporting practices and show business in a gaudy, immensely popular, and hugely profitable form of entertainment. And do fans see through the pretense of open contests? Some do and some don’t, Thompson finds, although for most the attraction is the spectacle and skill by which the athletes act out certain morally-marked roles in contest narratives.

And in Japan, much of the morality on display in pro wrestling was nationalistic, and it is in this sense that it was an important vehicle in the sportification of nationalism. Thompson profiles the legendary “father” of professional wrestling in Japan, Rikidōzan. His battles with North American opponents in the 1950s electrified a population eager to regain world respect—and anxious to overlook the Korean birth origins of their new national hero. In this elision, Rikidōzan embodied many of the paradoxical demands of Japanese identity in the postwar decades, when Japaneseness was presented as a matter of naturally “being” Japanese but really required strenuous efforts at “becoming” Japanese.

The modern Olympics, as envisioned by Baron de Coubertin, were intended to be counterweights to the contentious European nationalisms at the end of the nineteenth century—a world gathering of the best individual amateur sportsmen. Yet from the start, they were embroiled in international politics and imbued with patriotic pride and state agendas. Japan was no exception from its earliest participation in the 1912 Stockholm Games. Among studies of the Olympic Games, a number of Western scholars have analyzed the opening ceremonies as an especially strategic field of symbolic meaning, especially in how host countries try to simultaneously showcase and bracket their nationalist sentiments and ambitions.

In the final chapter of Part One, the sociologist **Yamashita Takayuki** takes up the opening ceremonies of the 1998 Winter Olympics in Nagano, which presented a seemingly paradoxical spectacle of indigenous Japanese themes in the first half and an equally striking transnational *mélange* of images and performances in the second half of the ceremonies. His own view is that these were successfully symbolically mediated as a representation of that moment in Japan’s relationship with the world, when a domestic-centered capitalism was trying to adjust to an intrusive and demanding global capitalism.

The themes of Part One are hardly absent from Part Two—they continue to shape sports and body culture in Japan—but the emphasis in this second set of seven contributions shifts to the internal dynamics of particular sport cases.

Japan is an archipelago of mountains, and it was also in the early twentieth century that mountaineering became a prestigious club activity at elite universities. Anthropologist **Wolfram Manzenreiter** has written about this social history in an important German-language monograph (2000). Here, he focuses more on the sociological processes by which this world of Japanese mountaineering is organized. Despite its popular image as a solitary contest of climber and natural obstacle, Manzenreiter appreciates its intensely social nature—the group coordination required for success and survival and the interpersonal rivalries that drive the climber athletes. He draws particularly on the American sociologist Amitai Etzioni to elucidate distinctive types of social control at work in the mountaineering world and on Anthony Giddens’ concept of structuration to identify the interactions of structure and individual agency that have brought constant change to this world.

Gender is also crucial to the dynamics of fitness clubs in Japan, as anthropologist **Laura Spielvogel** shows in the next chapter. Influenced by the exercise boom in the U.S., fitness programs like aerobics and health clubs spread rapidly in Japan in the 1980s and early 1990s. As the popular notions of “working out” and “going for the burn” suggest, recreational exercise is an oxymoronic transgression of the boundaries of work and play. How much fun and relaxation is there in pushing oneself to the limit of exhaustion in a jazzercise routine or a 50K cycling event? Still, given the quite explicit work ethic in Japanese corporate culture at all levels and for men and women, one might well expect that “working out” for health and recreation would resonate effectively (and for the fitness business, profitably). But Spielvogel found otherwise, and the chapter reveals the contradictions at play in these clubs.

In stark contrast to the trim and buff body of the fitness fanatic, the corpulence of the sumo wrestler seems to stand at even greater distance from conventional Japanese body culture. How could such a gross exaggeration of physical form be taken to be so emblematically “Japanese” by the Japanese themselves? This is the question that the cultural sociologist **Soon Hee Whang** addresses, and she locates an answer in the several ways that the sumo body is read, directly and metaphorically, to reflect and to represent national body culture. Among the interpretive threads of her argument is the finding that the sumo physical archetype—huge, round and squat—could be devalued as an expression of indolence and neglect (the anti-athlete!). Instead it represents ideals of training and discipline appropriate to the physical balance and emotional control required by

the peculiar confrontation of the sumo face-off. Furthermore, the exposed body and its massiveness resonate with ritual notions of good fortune and nationalist sentiments of power. The larger lessons of the chapter, then, are the symbolic and ideological support that body culture lends to national identity.

The American anthropologist **Elise Marie Edwards** returns us to soccer but from the particular vantage point of gender. In Japan as in much of the world, sports, especially elite organized sports, have remained a male preserve, and women's participation has been limited—restricted in numbers and marked discursively. There is “soccer” and there is “women's soccer,” and Edwards is concerned here with the language and policies by which educators, scientists, coaches, and the media have defined the possibilities and limitations of women playing soccer in the L-League, the top semi-professional women's soccer league in Japan. From the organization of practices and drills to coaching styles and manuals, there is a very determined and determinative gendering of women players' development and identity as athletes. A fixation on gender and sex differences not only deforms the sporting experience, but, Edwards notes, reinforces a wider gender order, one more way in which sports help to constitute society.

The irony is that the most “Japanese” of sports, sumo, more thoroughly integrates foreign athletes than those sports that Japan has adapted from the West, including soccer and baseball, the subjects of the next three chapters. Soccer is by most measures the world's most global sport, whose English origins are erased by an international organization, FIFA, with more members than the United Nations, a World Cup format, global migrations of players, and transnational corporate financing. Japan has only come lately to full and avid participation in the “world's game,” as English sociologist **John Horne** explains, and there are several distinctive features to this engagement. In particular, Horne finds, Japan has embraced soccer as spectacle (to watch and support at the elite level) more immediately than it has embraced soccer as practice (to play as a popular recreation and local contest). Whether the former will lead to the latter is a fascinating, important, and still open question for future study.

Much of soccer's difficulties in establishing itself in Japan are due to the long-standing popularity and entrenched interests of baseball, which has truly been Japan's national sports pastime for over a century. Located between the national particularities of sumo and the transnational identity of soccer, representations of baseball have been framed by an exaggerated binational contrast: American baseball versus Japanese baseball, same game, antithetical styles. This is a deeply felt contrast in both societies, but this gross simplification has clouded nuanced analyses that seek to specify both the shared and distinctive features of the sport

in the two national experiences. In **my own** chapter, I am trying to identify the particular organizational characteristics of Japanese professional baseball clubs that result from factors generic to sports teams and to baseball everywhere and factors specific to Japan's modern educational and business history.

In the final chapter, the sport sociologist **Takahashi Hidesato** offers a complementary perspective on professional baseball, this time of the fans rather than the players. One reason that mass spectator sports are central to modernity is their capacity to collectivize loyalties around teams that simultaneously produce and contain solidarity and antagonism: “our” team hates “your” team though we both “love” the sport! In a society that values collective affiliation, sports team fandom would seem to be an unproblematic manifestation of the same spirit. But the organized booster clubs and supporter associations of baseball teams are actually rather different—voluntary associations rather than institutional givens, formed from and as leisure activities rather than normative obligations. They draw upon, Takahashi suggests, a late modern imperative for lifestyle affiliation rather than institutional identity, and the loyalty they incite is based on the special emotional tone and social forms of conviviality that cheering stirs (soccer fans have also drawn research; e.g., Shimizu 2000, 2001, and 2002 and Taniguchi 1997).

Collections of scholarship are just that—samplers of current research and surveys of new perspectives—and I do not wish to claim more coherence and consensus for this volume than is justified. Rather, its value lies precisely in its variety of topics and analyses, especially of a field, Japan sports studies, that has so much to offer both Japan studies and the social science of sport. One of the unanticipated pleasures of the collaboration of authors was to discover just how mutually dependent we already were on one another's work; we Western scholars were relying importantly on Japanese scholarship for guidance as much as the Japanese sports scholars were inspired by Western work. A genuinely international as well as interdisciplinary field of inquiry is opening up, and we are happy to share it with an even wider readership here.



Endnotes

- ¹ The Tokyo University of Education was reorganized as Tsukuba University and remains one of the main centers for sports research and teaching, in both Physical Education and Sociology. In drafting this section, I have been much helped by discussions with Professor Sugimoto Atsuo.
- ² The literal translation of the journal is *Research in Physical Education Sociology*, but the Society signaled its movement toward a broader conception of its program with a freer English translation.
- ³ The 1990s also saw several regional research groups, especially the Kansai Sports Sociology Research Society, which has been very active in the Osaka-Kyoto-Nara-Kobe area and which has produced a series of important collaborative volumes (especially Esashi and Komuku 1994 on high school baseball and Sugimoto 1997 on sports fans).
- ⁴ Kushner (2000) offers a recent participant's experience, but it is important to consult the scathing critique by Yamada Shoji (2001) of Herrigel's misunderstandings and misrepresentations.
- ⁵ Inoue's 1998 article focuses on Kanō Jigorō, the Meiji figure who systematized and codified earlier Tokugawa practices into a modern conception of "martial arts."
- ⁶ From about 1931, *Radio Taisō Clubs* were promoted by the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Education and Culture in conjunction with block associations and National Youth Association groups. By 1937 they blanketed the country (Kuroda 1999). Radio taisō remains today, in communities and workplaces. In the 1980s, when I was living with a rural family in northeastern Japan, the grandmother would rise at 5 a.m. to do piecework sewing in the family room and take a break every morning at 6:30 a.m. for the national radio taisō.

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