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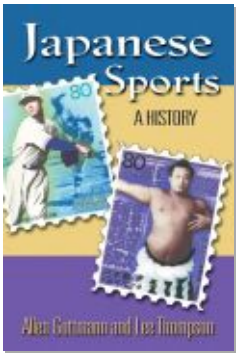
Japanese Sports

Guttmann, Allen & Lee Thompson



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woodblock prints, sumō wrestlers were seen by the Japanese, then as now, as an embodiment of their culture.[48]

A summary comment is in order. Although there is some truth to the claim that sumō is an ancient rite, the form of sumō that emerged in the middle ages, established itself during the Edo period, and survived—with modifications—into the twentieth century was not the same as the sumō alleged to have been performed by the gods and by the inhabitants of prehistoric Japan nor was it the same as the politically inflected court sumō of the Heian period. Edo-period professional sumō was looked down upon by most of the warrior class as useless in battle and akin to begging. In response to samurai scorn, the men involved with sumō performances in Edo and elsewhere sought to raise the status of their sport by stressing its allegedly ancient origins. They sought to enhance their own status and authority by claiming to have arcane knowledge of the "ancient practices" surrounding sumō. Like their contemporaries who were forging the myths of the emerging modern state, the creators of modern sumō were "inventing tradition."[49]

KEMARI

How It Was Played

There are many accounts of sumō in English and other Western languages, but the game of kemari (kick-ball) remains almost completely unknown in Europe and the Americas. The game's cultural importance requires extended treatment.

No one knows exactly when the Japanese began to play kemari. The earliest writings on kemari are from the twelfth century. They allege that the game, like so much of Japanese culture, came from China. That allegation has been accepted by most works on kemari to this day, but the style of play of Chinese kemari is different from the Japanese version of the game and a different ball is used. Emphasizing the Japanese contribution, Kuwayama Kōnen, asserts that there are no cases where Chinese sources can be shown to have influenced the rules, techniques, or customs of Japanese kemari. None of the old Japanese treatises on kemari refers to the Chinese texts.[50]

The earliest reference to kemari—in the *Nihongi*—seems to date the game from the year A.D. 644.[51] From the twelfth century, reigning and retired emperors as well as the highest levels of the nobility attended

and participated in what Watanabe Tōru calls *hare no marikai* (formal ball games). As kemari took root, its field of play, equipment, techniques, customs, and costume were standardized. From the late thirteenth century, the rules of the game were systematized and codified in various treatises.[52]

It was not only the nobility that contributed to the development of the game. Treatises on kemari and other records of the time show that the more skillful players tended to be of lower social status, and they were the ones who initially exerted the greatest influence on the game's development. In time, however, the nobility adapted the game to their own beliefs and institutions. Their courtly version of the game, what Watanabe calls *kuge mari* (courtiers' ball), became the standard and subsequently spread throughout the country.[53]

Kemari deserves detailed consideration because it was the first Japanese game to achieve a high level of development, because it provides an interesting contrast to the development of other sports in Japan, both indigenous and imported, and because it is very little known outside Japan.

The game seems to have been a secular rather than a religious activity. A text dated 1593 referred to kemari performed as a supplication for rain during a drought in 1215[54] and kemari also seems occasionally to have functioned as a ceremony of appeasement designed to dispel the accumulation of misfortune,[55] but these are rare instances of kemari as *shinji* (religious ritual). For the most part, kemari seems to have been played solely for the enjoyment of the players and the spectators.

Watanabe has described kemari as it was played in the thirteenth century. The game was played outdoors on a square earthen court with sides about 6 or 7 meters in length, depending on the space available. At each of the four corners of the court there was a tree. These trees were so central to the game that playing kemari was often referred to as "standing under the trees." The ball, made of deerskin, was hollow. Existing balls are about 20 centimeters in diameter, and weigh around 100 to 120 grams. These light balls were so delicate that they were liable to collapse if kicked too hard. The balls were coated with albumen (egg white). Some were then given an additional coat of white face powder mixed with glue; still others were dyed yellow by smoking them over a pine-needle fire. The "smoked" and white balls were sometimes said to symbolize not only the sun and the moon but also the opposing principles of yin and yang.[56]

Other items of equipment needed for kemari included poles (for

retrieving balls caught in the trees), nets (for keeping the ball off roofs and from under the verandas of nearby buildings), and blinds (to block the rays of the setting sun).

We do not know when trees first appeared as constituent elements of kemari or when the specific kinds of trees were first stipulated. The first mention of *kakari no ki* (the trees on the court) is from around 980. It was apparently still the custom in the tenth century to locate the kemari court among trees that had grown naturally. In the eleventh century, however, trees were purposely planted for use in kemari. Four different kinds of trees were considered appropriate: cherry, willow, maple, and pine. "Especially high status was accorded to courts marked by four pine trees, but these were allowed only within the palace grounds . . . and at the courts of the Asukai and Namba houses."[57] In ordinary games, the plum tree was sometimes substituted for one of the other four. Each tree was assigned a corner of the court: northeast, southeast, southwest, and northwest. Which tree belonged in which corner was an important component of kemari's "ancient practices" (kojitsu). Like many aspects of traditional sports, the placement of the trees was a contentious issue for the competing "houses of kemari." Trees were either *motoki* (rooted to the spot) or *kiritate* (stuck in the ground like a post and destined to wither).[58]

Whether a tree was permanent or temporary, it was important to prune it with an eye to the possible paths taken by the ball as it tumbled down through the branches. A good pruning job left a pattern of branches that created a variety of interesting courses for the ball to take during its descent.[59] Although a modern observer is likely to compare this descent to that of the metal balls in a pinball machine, the irregularity of the branches also resembled the irregularities—architectural rather than arboreal—that were a fascinating part of medieval European court tennis.[60]

In the ninth century, players seem to have worn *kariginu* (hunting dress), which was certainly more suitable for vigorous activity than courtly garb, but the players' costumes underwent a process of refinement and elaboration. By the thirteenth century, ceremonial attire, including the Heian courtier's distinctive tall black hat, was worn. "In their choice of kimono and in the combination of colors, players had to conform to strict rules."[61] Tucked into the players' belts were the decorated paper fans that normally indicated a courtier's rank—the more ribs the fan had, the higher the rank. Needless to say, the clogs worn for everyday use

were inappropriate for a kicking game and special shoes, made of leather and bound to the calf by cords, were also required.[62]

Eight players normally participated, one on each side of the four trees.[63] The player enjoying the highest court rank stood closest to the pine tree. He was the first to kick the ball, which he was required to pass to the player with the next highest rank.[64] Once play began in earnest, the eight players moved freely to follow the ball, but they returned to their original positions whenever play was interrupted. The ball was kicked with the right foot, often several times in succession, before it was passed to another player. The object was to keep the ball in the air for as many kicks as possible.

When a formal count was kept, the game was called *kazumari* (number ball) and an official was designated to keep score. He counted silently until 50 and then announced every tenth kick. Sometimes, when a player executed a particularly skillful kick, the official awarded a bonus. Counting silently, "51, 52, 53," he saw an especially impressive kick and shouted "60!"

At most *marikai* (ball meets), there was an upper limit—usually set before the game—at which a volley was to be discontinued. One treatise mentions limits of 120, 300, 360, 700, and 1,000. These numbers, which might at first glance be thought to anticipate the modern craze for quantifying sports, actually came from astrology.[65]

Played in this way, kemari had no winners and no losers, but contests could be and were arranged. Two teams of eight players each performed a preset number of trials, and the team with the most kicks in a single trial was the winner. This contest was called *shōbu mari* (competitive ball).

The number of times a player kicked the ball before passing it on was not fixed, but three was considered most appropriate. One kick to receive the ball and bring it under control, one kick to send the ball straight up (often high above the player's head), and one kick to pass the ball on to another player. Gender distinctions appeared in the terms used for these three kicks. The first and third kicks—slow, low, and easily handled—were *meashi* (a woman's kicks). The second kick—quick, high, and gracefully performed—was *woashi* (a man's kick).

These terms raise an intriguing question. Did women play kemari? If ladies of the court did play, it was a rare event. This can be inferred from *The Confessions of Lady Nijō* (1307). In this memoir, Lady Nijō reported a game of kemari suggested by the priest Sukesue: "Let's select eight court ladies . . . and dress them in the attire of . . . kickball players.

Then we can set out the traditional trees in the garden and have the ladies act out a kickball game. That certainly would be a rare sight." Although the women whom Sukesue selected were allowed to catch the ball in the sleeves of their kimonos rather than to keep it in the air, they found the whole affair "acutely embarrassing."[66]

To keep the ball in the air, team play was very important. The players coordinated their movements with a variety of calls. There were three calls, one for each of the three kinds of kicks. Receiving the ball from another player, one called out "*Ooh!*" when the ball was at the peak of its arc. If more than one player called out, the one who called the longest received the ball. For his second kick, which propelled the ball straight up, the player cried "*Ari!*" On his third kick, passing it to another player, he called "*Ya!*" Some treatises describe various patterns of movement the players should take in following the ball.[67]

A player was evaluated on the basis of what were called the "three virtues of the ball" (*mari no santoku*): proper posture; swiftness and skill; and mastery of the strategy, "ancient traditions" (kojitsu), and etiquette of the sport. Excellence in any one of these three virtues was an attribute of expertise. There were also three techniques, any one of which was considered the sign of a skillful player. Reaching for a ball coming down at a difficult distance was called *nobiashi*. Since it was considered bad form to kick with one's back to the center of the court, a player would catch an errant ball on his shoulder, then turn quickly as it rolled down his body to face the center, a move called *kaeriashi*. The third acclaimed technique was *mi ni sou mari,* absorbing the force of a hard-kicked ball with one's upper body and controlling it as it rolled down to the foot.[68]

Records of the number of kicks (presumably including bonuses) date from the beginning of the tenth century. In 905, eight courtiers reached a count of 206. At a game played in 953, the count rose to 520.[69] Watanabe, commenting on the way that each score surpassed the previous one, suggests that the author he consulted understood the concept of the sports record and provided only the numbers that surpassed the previous quantified achievement. If this was indeed the case, the author anticipated what is widely thought to be the uniquely modern concept of the quantified sports record.[70]

Although kemari was played throughout the year, spring was considered to be the most appropriate season. Play started in the early afternoon and lasted until dusk. At games attended by a reigning or a retired emperor, there were certain prescribed procedures to inaugurate and

end play, beginning with *tsuyuharai,* in which real or metaphorical dew was shaken from the trees. The proper form for these procedures was an important component of the "ancient practices" transmitted by each of the "houses of kemari." They were the subject of much dispute.[71]

There were three stages in a day's marikai. These divisions apparently came from *bugaku,* a form of music and dance that was performed at court. The first stage (*jo no dan*) is the warm-up. The players practice the basic moves and kick the ball into the trees to see how it falls. Once they are warmed up and have a feel for the trees, they move into the second stage (*ha no dan*), in which they demonstrate their skills to the admiring spectators. When the sun begins to set and shadows start to lengthen, the players enter the third and final stage (*kyū no dan*). They move into the center of the playing area, away from the trees, and begin to play kazumari, aiming for a high number of volleys. Here the point is to show teamwork rather than individual skill. The players try to keep the ball out of the trees, and to make good passes. When darkness approaches, it is time for *torimari.* The best player calls for the ball, kicks it once, and then gracefully catches it in his kimono sleeve, ending the day's meet with aristocratic flair.[72]

Commenting in her famous *Makura no sōshi* (*Pillow Book*) on what scholars have taken to be a game of kemari, the tenth-century writer Sei Shōnagon was unimpressed by the players' attempts to comport themselves elegantly. She wrote that their movements were "interesting" (*okashi*) but an "unpleasant spectacle" (*sama ashi*).[73] In her even more famous *Genji monogatari* (*Tale of Genji*), Sei Shōnagon's slightly younger contemporary, Murasaki Shikibu, renders a similar assessment. In Chapter 34, Genji's son Yūgiri and his rival Kashiwagi indulge in this "less than genteel sport." "Spring mists enfolded trees in various stages of bud and bloom and new leaf. The least subtle of games does have its skills and techniques, and each of the players was determined to show what he could do. Though Kashiwagi played only briefly, he was clearly the best of them all."[74] As ladies of the court, Sei Shōnagon and Murasaki Shikibu seem to have had standards of elegance that were even more lofty than those of their male counterparts.

History

The retired emperor Shirakawa (1053–1129) was apparently quite fond of kemari (although it is not known whether or not he stood under the

trees himself). From the end of the eleventh to the beginning of the twelfth centuries, emperors and regents—the most prestigious members of court society—held many kemari meets.[75]

Kamo Narihira (1081–1136) may have been the first recognized master of kemari. Trained from a young age by his father, he, in turn, taught Fujiwara Narimichi (1097–1162), known to posterity as the "saint of kemari."[76] Narimichi, whose passion for the game is described in *Kōden nikki* (1197), boasts of having dedicated seven thousand days to the practice of kemari, two thousand of them without a break in the sequence.[77] "During this time, when I was unwell, I kicked the ball while lying down. When there was a pouring rain, I went to the Taikyoku Hall and played indoors. Was there ever anyone who loved the game as much as I do?"[78] Narimichi is said to have mounted the rail of the high balcony of Kiyomizu temple, built on the slopes of the mountains on the eastern edge of Kyoto, and to have walked the rail—like some daredevil tightrope artist—while kicking a kemari ball, first from west to east, then east to west.

Narimichi taught Fujiwara Yorisuke (1112–1186), the founder of two of the main houses of kemari, Namba and Asukai, and wrote the oldest known treatise on kemari, *Sanjū kajo shiki*. Although this work no longer exists in complete form, it can be pieced together from references and quotations in later works. Compared to these later works, Narimichi's offers a rather lighthearted approach to kemari. Narimichi does not stand on ceremony. For him, kemari is a game that should be enjoyed without excessive attention to proper etiquette. When asked about the origins of the yellow (smoked) ball, he ignored the opportunity for esoteric analysis and replied that it came about by accident.[79]

Later commentators criticized Narimichi for his informality. He wrote mainly about technique, they complain, and little about appropriate manners. Watanabe interprets this complaint to mean that kemari had not yet become, in Narimichi's time, a solemn ceremonial occasion.[80] Since *Sanjū kajo shiki* contained no instructions for different forms of dress for players of differing status, Kuwayama concludes that the early-twelfth-century version of the sport had not yet developed into the status-marker that it subsequently became.[81]

The first emperor or retired emperor identified by Watanabe as a kemari player rather than merely a spectator was the retired emperor Goshirakawa (1127–1192). Goshirakawa was quite fond of the game, held meets during his reign, and even stood under the trees himself, which was a significant factor in establishing the popularity and status of

kemari at the court. Fujiwara (Namba) Yorisuke, Goshirakawa's kemari instructor, provided a detailed description of Goshirakawa's involvement with the game in his *Kemari Kōdenshū*. Whether or not his praise for the ex-emperor's skills was exaggerated is impossible to decide.[82] Yorisuke's accolades, like those that flattered Henry VIII as a tennis player, may have been merely politic.

Apart from the account of Goshirakawa's prowess, the *Kōdenshū* is a treatise on the techniques and traditions of kemari. Yorisuke related and assessed the achievements of Narihira, Narimichi, and other illustrious players. While accomplished players of relatively low status were included in Yorisuke's book, Watanabe notes that the frequent appearance of emperors, retired emperors, regents, and other representatives of the courtly elite served to legitimize the traditions and customs Yorisuke propounds and to raise the social status of kemari. There were at the time other established houses of kemari and other accomplished players, but they are given only a minor role in the *Kōdenshū,* as Yorisuke emphasized the importance of his own circle.

The retired emperor Gotoba (1180–1239) was an even greater fan of kemari than his grandfather Goshirakawa and he, too, was an accomplished player. According to his diary, during the fourth month of 1214 he played kemari sixteen out of thirty days. In 1208, while at the Minase Imperial Villa, he participated in a kemari meet that had important repercussions for the later development of the game. In the first round, the count reached 980 and in the second round the group kept the ball in the air for over 2,000 kicks. Gotoba was so pleased that he bestowed an official court rank on the ball, one that conferred the right of access to the palace. Shortly afterwards the three individuals most prominent in court kemari of the day—Narimichi's heir Yasumichi, Namba Munenaga and Asukai Masatsune (the latter two, the grandsons of Yorisuke)—awarded Gotoba the honorary title of "Patriarch of kemari" (*kono michi no chōja*). Watanabe believes that the three men bestowed this title in order to elevate the game's status at the court.

Three years after becoming "Patriarch" of the sport, Gotoba contributed to kemari's traditions and customs by issuing the "Regulations Governing Stockings" (*Tabi no teihin*). These regulations stated that the color and pattern of the stockings worn inside the players' shoes, which were also quite special, should indicate the status and skill level of the player. The color and pattern that denoted the highest rank were reserved to players honored by the "Patriarch" himself.

What the original colors and patterns were cannot be said for certain,

but, predictably, they soon became the subject of conflict among the different houses. The Mikohidari house, which dominated kemari in the capital from the mid-thirteenth to the late fourteenth centuries, based its claim to precedence on the fact that Mikohidari Tame'ie had received Gotoba's permission to wear the highest rank of stockings in 1214. The Kamo line, on the other hand, whose superb players had done much to promote kemari in the past, were denied permission to wear the most coveted stockings. The reason was apparently the family's relatively low social status. Watanabe considers the "Regulations" and their selective use—providing legitimacy for some houses while denying it to others—to have been important in the development of the courtly version of the game.

At the same time that the retired emperor Gotoba acted to enhance the status of kemari in Kyoto, the Kamakura shogunate had its own enthusiast in the form of Minamoto no Yoriie (1182–1204), the eldest son of the first Kamakura shogun, Minamoto no Yoritomo (1147–1199). Between Yoriie's accession in 1199 and his death in 1204, the *Azuma kagami,* which chronicled the events of the Kamakura shogunate, recorded sixty-three instances of his engaging in sport. Kemari was mentioned thirty-five times compared to eleven mentions of mounted archery, eight of hunting, and five of standing archery. In 1201, Yoriie's kemari team achieved counts of 700 and 950. In 1202 he played kemari three times in one day, in the morning, afternoon, and evening. After only two years as shogun, Yoriie was forced to surrender his position. Implying that a man obsessed by a mere ball game was obviously unsuited for the onerous obligations of political leadership, the *Azuma kagami* may have emphasized Yoriie's involvement with kemari in order to justify his removal from office. His successor as shogun, his younger brother Minamoto no Sanetomo (1192–1219), almost never played kemari.[83]

The popularity of kemari in Kyoto and Kamakura intensified the endemic quarrels among the three great thirteenth-century houses of kemari, the Mikohidari, the Namba, and the Asukai, each of which claimed sole legitimacy for its traditions. The Mikohidari house was preeminent in kemari in Kyoto from the mid-thirteenth century. The Namba house also had some influence in the capital. In Kamakura, on the other hand, the Namba and Asukai houses competed for influence. Namba may have had an advantage because it was the older house. (Asukai was a branch of Namba.)[84]

By the time of the establishment of the Tokugawa shogunate in 1600, however, the Asukai all but monopolized the right to transmit kemari's

"ancient traditions." The Namba and Kamo families were allowed by the Tokugawa shoguns to acquire disciples and to teach kemari, but the Asukai effectively controlled the authoritative "texts of transmission" and they dominated kemari until the end of the Edo period in 1868.[85]

Differences concerned such matters as the arrangement of the trees, the colors and patterns of the stockings, and the proper way to tie (or not to tie) the *hakama* (the divided skirt worn by men). From the perspective of someone who takes modern sports as the norm, the space given to such matters in the records of the time seems totally disproportionate—especially in light of the sparseness of detail about the way the game was actually played. For both the Heian courtier and the Kamakura warrior, form took precedence over content.[86]

Sometime around 1291 Asukai Masaari compiled the *Naige sanjisho*. The motive for his labor was probably the desire to preserve certain house secrets for oral transmission by the hereditary head of the house. Whatever Masaari's motive, Watanabe notes that his compilation represents a systemization of kemari not found in earlier treatises. It is organized into regular categories to a degree that earlier treatises were not.[87]

During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, both nobles, who had lost their political power but clung to their superior social status, and samurai, who ran the country but never overcame their sense of social inferiority, looked to the Asukai as kemari's ultimate authority. The Asukai house began to issue "texts of transmission" (*densho*) to those who enrolled as formal pupils of the game. After the Ōnin War (1467–1477), which destroyed much of Kyoto, the culture that had developed in the capital in the five hundred years since its foundation was carried to the provinces by the city's fleeing residents. As a result of this diffusion, the Asukai house issued its "texts of transmission" to followers scattered far and wide, from the Tōhoku region in the northeast to present-day Kagoshima on the western tip of the main islands. A kind of social diffusion paralleled kemari's geographical diffusion. Urban merchants were among the recipients of the "texts of transmission" and records from the Edo period show that urban merchants, rural landlords, priests, and others all indulged in regular games of kemari.[88]

Although the Kamo family was allowed to teach a form of kemari to the common people, various restrictions were placed on the sport as played by the lower classes. Some who violated the restrictions were sent into internal exile, but this did not hinder kemari's diffusion among city dwellers and even among the peasantry.[89]

We can catch a glimpse of the commoners' game in the diary of Sejimo

Yoshitada, who lived in Shinano, in the mountains of central Honshu, far from the ancient capital of Kyoto and far from Edo, seat of the shogunate. Yoshitada was a devotee of kemari, which he mentions often in his diary. The first reference came in 1715 and the last in 1782, the next-to-last year of the diary and a few years before Yoshitada's death.

In the spring of 1751, a kemari court was set up on the grounds of a temple in the village of Nozawa, where kemari was performed "almost daily from summer to fall." Samurai and townspeople also gathered to play the game at a local official's house. Yoshitada specifically mentions the construction of no fewer than five kemari courts in the village. Every year, on the seventh day of the seventh month, a special meet was held in Nozawa, at which individual rankings were determined.[90]

Yoshitada writes that the heir of the domain lord played kemari at a local temple. Just as the second round started, rain began to dowse the players. The young heir was disappointed but resourceful. He ordered that the tatami mats in the main hall of the temple be removed. The game then resumed on the temple's wooden floor.

In 1754 Yoshitada visited the regional capital, Matsumoto, where he received instruction in kemari from a local representative of the Asukai family. On a trip to Edo in 1759 he played more than twenty games of kemari with prominent players. This devotion to kemari in one small corner of Shinano Province suggests that the game was popular in a myriad of local variations throughout Edo-period Japan.[91]

DAKYŪ

Dakyū is a team game in which the players, either on foot or on horseback, swing sticks in order to propel a ball into a goal. The word, made from the Chinese characters for "strike" and "ball," is often translated as "Japanese polo," but the translation is a misnomer because the game resembled modern lacrosse as well as modern polo.[92]

Like polo, dakyū originated in Persia, came to China by way of the Silk Road, and was then introduced to Japan, probably sometime in the seventh century. From the *Man'yōshū*, an eighth-century collection of poetry, we know that dakyū was played by court aristocrats in Nara in 727. For the next five hundred years, the game was popular among the court nobility.[93] During the Heian period, samurai guards at the imperial court included the game among the annual events of the fifth lunar month. With the rise to power of provincial samurai, however, the power and

11. Colin D. Howell, "On Metcalfe, Marx, and Materialism," *Sport History Review,* 29:1 (May 1988): 96, 100.

12. For a more detailed response, to which we subscribe, see Melvin L. Adelman, "Modernization Theory and Its Critics," in *Encyclopedia of American Social History,* ed. Mary Cupiec Cayton et al., 3 vols. (New York: Scribner's, 1993).

13. Richard D. Brown, *Modernization* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1976), p. 19.

14. Peter N. Stearns, "Modernization and Social History," *Journal of Social History,* 14:2 (Winter 1980): 189.

15. See the papers in Steven Vlastos, ed., *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

16. Pierre Bourdieu, *La Distinction* (Editions de minuit, 1979).

17. Joseph Strutt, *The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England,* 2nd ed. (London: Thomas Tegg, 1838), pp. xvii–xviii.

Chapter 1. Sumō, Ball Games, and Feats of Strength

1. Carl Diem, *Weltgeschichte des Sports,* 3rd ed., 2 vols. (Frankfurt/Main: Cotta, 1971), 1:3.

2. Wolfgang Eichel, quoted in Horst Ueberhorst, "Ursprungstheorien," in *Geschichte der Leibesübungen,* ed. Horst Ueberhorst, 6 vols. (Berlin: Bartels & Wernitz, 1972–1989), 1:17; see also Dieter Voigt, *Soziologie in der DDR* (Cologne: Verlag Wissenschaft & Politik, 1975), pp. 29–31.

3. Research into the origins of these rituals is especially difficult because the Japanese had no written language before the sixth century A.D., when Chinese characters (kanji) began to be widely used.

4. P. L. Cuyler, *Sumo: From Rite to Sport* (New York: Weatherhill, 1979), p. 21.

5. Jörg Möller, *Sumō: Kampf und Kult* (Sankt Augustin: Academia, 1990), p. 37.

6. These issues are discussed in Lee A. Thompson, "The Modernization of Sumo as a Sport" (Ph.D. dissertation, Osaka University, 1989). The most widely referenced standard history of sumō is Sakai Tadamasa, *Nippon sumō shi,* 2 vols. (Tokyo: Baseball Magazine, 1956, 1964). See also Ikeda Masao, *Sumō no rekishi* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1977); Cuyler, *Sumo;* Lora Sharnoff, *Grand Sumo,* rev. ed. (New York: Weatherhill, 1993).

7. Jörg Möller, *Spiel und Sport am japanischen Kaiserhof* (Munich: Iudicium, 1993), p. 38; *Nihongi,* trans. W. G. Aston, 2 vols. (Rutland, Vt.: Charles E. Tuttle, 1972), 1:173–174.

8. *Nihongi,* 1:361–362.

9. Wakamori Tarō, *Sumō ima mukashi* (Tokyo: Kawade shobō shinsha, 1963), p. 22.

10. Cuyler, *Sumo,* pp. 28–30.

11. Ibid., pp. 30–32; Harold Bolitho, "Frolicking Dragons: Mythic Terror and the Sumō Tradition," *ASSH Studies in Sports History,* 2 (1987): 14.

12. When Japanese scholars insist that religious origins are what distinguishes sumō from European sports, they seem unaware of Carl Diem's assertion—quoted above—that *all* sports have cultic origins.

13. Nitta Ichirō, *Sumō no rekishi* (Tokyo: Yamakawa shuppansha, 1994), pp. 45, 55, 60, 62, 128–129.

14. Eiko Kaneda, "Trends in Traditional Women's Sumo in Japan," *International Review of the History of Sport,* 16:3 (September 1999): 113–119.

15. Nitta, *Sumō no rekishi,* 60, 64, 129–130.

16. The Tanabata Festival occurs when the stars Vega and Altair seem to converge. They are said to be lovers allowed to meet once a year.

17. Louis Frédéric, *Daily Life in Japan at the Time of the Samurai,* trans. Eileen M. Lowe (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle, 1973), p. 28.

18. Möller, *Spiel und Sport am japanischen Kaiserhof,* pp. 34–41.

19. *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes (Eiga monogatari),* trans. William H. and Helen Craig McCullough, 2 vols. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980), 1:391–392.

20. Our main source for this and the next six paragraphs is Obinata Katsumi, *Kodai kokka to nenjū gyōji* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1993), pp. 91–93, 96, 109, 113–115.

21. John Whitney Hall, *Japan: From Prehistory to Modern Times* (Tokyo: C. E. Tuttle, 1971), pp. 65–66. See also G. Cameron Hurst III, *Insei: Abdicated Sovereigns in the Politics of Late Heian Japan, 1086–1185* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976).

22. Obinata, *Kodai kokka to nenjū gyōji,* p. 126.

23. Ibid., pp. 126–127.

24. Scharnoff, *Grand Sumo,* p. 40; Gordon Daniels, "Japanese Sport," in *Sport, Culture and Politics,* ed. J. C. Binfield and John Stevenson (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), p. 171; Imamura Yoshio, *Nihon taiiku shi* (Tokyo: Fumaidō, 1970), p. 97.

25. Sharnoff, *Grand Sumo,* p. 40.

26. Nitta, *Sumō no rekishi,* pp. 168, 184–185.

27. On the evolution of soccer and rugby, see Eric Dunning and Kenneth Sheard, *Barbarians, Gentlemen and Players* (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1979).

28. Nitta, *Sumō no rekishi,* pp. 93–95.

29. Ibid., pp. 158, 165–169, 193–195.

30. Ikeda, *Sumō no rekishi,* pp. 94–97.

31. Takahashi Yoshitaka, *Ōzumō no jiten* (Tokyo: Sanseidō, 1985), p. 37.

32. Nitta, *Sumō no rekishi,* p. 185.

33. Cuyler, *Sumo,* p. 59.

34. Suzuki Toshio, "Tokugawa bakufu shohōrei ni mirareru shomin no yūgi tōsei ni tsuite," *Nihon taiiku gakkai dai 30 kai taikai gō,* 1979, p. 86.

35. The diminution of expressive (as opposed to instrumental) violence is at the core of what Norbert Elias refers to as "the civilizing process." For this process as it relates to sports, see Dunning and Sheard, *Barbarians, Gentlemen and*

Players; Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning, *Sport im Zivilisationsprozeß* (Münster: LIT, 1983); Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning, *Quest for Excitement* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986); Eric Dunning et al., *The Roots of Football Hooliganism* (London: Routledge, 1988); Eric Dunning, *Sport Matters* (London: Routledge, 1999).

36. Nitta, *Sumō no rekishi,* pp. 190–192.

37. Ibid., pp. 198–99.

38. Ibid., p. 202.

39. Cuyler, *Sumo,* pp. 89–90.

40. Oinuma Yoshihiro, "Ōzumō ni okeru heyaseido no rekishi," *Tōkai daigaku taiikugakubu kiyō,* 10 (1980): 12–13. For the role of the Jockey Club in English horse-racing, see Wray Vamplew, *The Turf* (London: Allen Lane, 1976); Mike Huggins, *Flat Racing and British Society, 1790–1914* (London: Frank Cass, 2000).

41. Nitta, *Sumō no rekishi,* pp. 229–232.

42. Cuyler, *Sumo,* p. 81.

43. Nitta, *Sumō no rekishi,* pp. 246, 255–256.

44. Hall was also upset by a match at a temple festival "between a girl twelve or fourteen years old and a boy of similar age, both naked except [for] a narrow strip of cloth that barely saves the last outrage in [sic] decency"; Francis Hall, *Japan through American Eyes,* ed. F. G. Notehelfer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 127, 285, 422, 500. (Not in this order.)

45. Basil Hall Chamberlain and W. B. Mason: quoted in Bolitho, "Frolicking Dragons," pp.15–16.

46. Ibid., pp. 17–19. Many such prints can be seen in Lawrence Bickford, *Sumo and the Woodblock Print Masters* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1994).

47. Hall, *Japan through American Eyes,* pp. 124–28, 262, 500.

48. Soon Hee Wang, "Bunka to shite no shintai: rikishi no ba'ai," *Supōtsu shakaigaku kenkyū,* 4 (1996): 23–33; Soon Hee Whang, "The Body as Culture: The Case of the Sumo Wrestler" (paper presented at a conference on "Sports and Body Culture in Modern Japan," Yale University, March 31–April 2, 2000). Our comments are not meant to imply that Edo-period Japanese thought in terms of "Japanese culture."

49. Nitta, *Sumō no rekishi,* pp. 222–225. For the concept of "invented tradition," see Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

50. Watanabe Tōru and Kuwayama Kōnen, *Kemari no kenkyū* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1994), pp. 5–6, 125.

51. Möller, *Spiel und Sport am japanischen Kaiserhof,* p. 87.

52. Watanabe Tōru, "Kemari no tenkai ni tsuite no ichikōsatsu: Edo jidai no sōron wo chūshin to shite, kemari ni okeru iemoto sei ni tsuite," *Taiikugaku kiyō,* 3 (1966): 13–22.

53. Watanabe in Watanabe and Kuwayama, *Kemari no kenkyū,* pp. 7–8.

54. Kuwayama adds that the religious explanation for the calls made when

passing the ball was a later addition to kemari lore. See Kuwayama in Watanabe and Kuwayama, *Kemari no kenkyū,* pp. 153–154.

55. Watanabe in ibid., p. 19.

56. Ibid., pp. 8–13.

57. Möller, *Spiel und Sport am japanischen Kaiserhof,* p. 92.

58. Watanabe in Watanabe and Kuwayama, *Kemari no kenkyū,* pp. 13–15.

59. Ibid., pp. 16–17.

60. On court tennis, see Heiner Gillmeister, *Tennis* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1997).

61. Möller, *Spiel und Sport am japanischen Kaiserhof,* p. 89.

62. Ibid., pp. 90–91.

63. Players other than the principal eight also sometimes participated. These were called *nobushi.* Nobushi were either assigned to a position or to a player. Those assigned a position covered areas that were difficult for the main eight to reach, for example, open areas outside the square. Or they were assigned to elder or noble players whose skills were no longer equal to the challenge. A nobushi stood behind the player he was assigned to and helped him with balls too difficult for him to handle. This took as much tact as it did skill. *Kabeshiro* refers to a practice by which a lower-status player was allowed into a game to which he might not normally be invited. An especially skillful player of lower status might be invited to play at the palace or some other venue not normally accessible to someone of his social class. In this case, a nobleman of appropriate standing was the nominal player while the lower-status player took his place under the tree. See Watanabe in Watanabe and Kuwayama, *Kemari no kenkyū,* pp. 29–30.

64. Möller, *Spiel und Sport am japanischen Kaiserhof,* p. 88.

65. This and the next two paragraphs are based on Watanabe in Watanabe and Kuwayama, *Kemari no kenkyū,* pp. 19–22.

66. *The Confessions of Lady Nijō,* trans. Karen Brazell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976), pp. 92–95.

67. Watanabe in Watanabe and Kuwayama, *Kemari no kenkyū,* pp. 24–25.

68. Ibid., pp. 21–23.

69. Möller, *Spiel und Sport am japanischen Kaiserhof,* p. 87.

70. Watanabe in Watanabe and Kuwayama, *Kemari no kenkyū,* pp. 37–38. On the concept of the sports record, see Richard Mandell, "The Invention of the Sports Record," *Stadion,* 2:2 (1976): 250–264; Allen Guttmann, *From Ritual to Record* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), pp. 52–55.

71. Watanabe in Watanabe and Kuwayama, *Kemari no kenkyū,* pp. 27–28.

72. Ibid., pp. 28–29.

73. Sei Shōnagon, *Makura no sōshi,* ed. Ikeda Kikan, Kishigami Shinji, and Akiyama Ken, NKBT 19 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1958), p. 249.

74. Murasaki Shikibu, *Genji Monogatari,* trans. Edward Seidensticker (New York: Knopf, 1976), p. 581.

75. Watanabe in Watanabe and Kuwayama, *Kemari no kenkyū,* pp. 43–44.

76. Ibid., pp. 46–49.

77. Watanabe, "Kemari no tenkai," p. 14.

78. Fujiwara Narimichi: quoted in Möller, *Spiel und Sport am japanischen Kaiserhof,* p. 105.

79. Watanabe in Watanabe and Kuwayama, *Kemari no kenkyū,* pp. 46–50; Watanabe Tōru, "Kemari no tenkai ni tsuite no ichikōsatsu: Edo jidai no sōron o chūshin to shite, kemari ni okeru iemoto seido ni tsuite," *Taiikugaku kiyō,* Tōkyō daigaku kyōyōgakubu, 3 (1966), p. 14.

80. Watanabe in Watanabe and Kuwayama, *Kemari no kenkyū,* p. 51.

81. Kuwayama in Watanabe and Kuwayama, *Kemari no kenkyū,* p. 132.

82. This and the next four paragraphs are based on Watanabe in Watanabe and Kuwayama, *Kemari no kenkyū.* pp. 51–72.

83. Ibid., pp. 76–77; Imamura, *Nihon taiiku shi,* 102. Over seven centuries later, the novelist Mishima Yukio, himself an advocate of the martial tradition, used kemari as a metaphor for the fatal indecisiveness of the aristocratic class. In *Spring Snow,* the fictional Count Ayakura, upon hearing that his daughter, the fiancée of an imperial prince, is pregnant by another man, does nothing. His response, writes Mishima, "had a great deal in common with *kemari,* the traditional sport of the Ayakuras. No matter how high one kicked the ball, it would obviously come down to earth again at once. . . . Since all the solutions left something to be desired in terms of good taste, it was better to wait for someone else to make the unpleasant decision. Someone else's foot would have to stretch out to intercept the falling ball. . . . The Count was never one to be long vexed by worries, and as an inevitable consequence, his worries always ended up by vexing others." See Yukio Mishima, *Spring Snow,* trans. Michael Gallagher (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle, 1972), pp. 294–295.

84. Watanabe in Watanabe and Kuwayama, *Kemari no kenkyū,* pp. 84–86.

85. Kuwayama in Watanabe and Kuwayama, *Kemari no kenkyū,* pp. 126–127. The authority to issue licenses to followers (*monjin*) was a significant source of income. In particular, the licensing of costume according to social status gave the pastime an aristocratic atmosphere. Issuing licenses was also a way for the aristocrats, who had lost political power to the samurai, to enjoy a sense of superiority. See Watanabe Tōru, "Kemari no tenkai ni tsuite . . . ," *Taiikugaku kiyō,* pp. 20–21.

86. Watanabe in Watanabe and Kuwayama, *Kemari no kenkyū,* pp. 77–79, 81.

87. Our description of the early history of kemari is derived mostly from the *Naige sanjisho,* which has two chapters on practice, or training, for kemari. The first is devoted to individual practice. It starts with advice on the proper mental approach or attitude toward training. Between the discussion of posture and footwork and the discussion of the various kicks there is a section that explains how to deal with the trees. The chapter concludes with a summary. The second chapter on practice is about application of the techniques learned in the first.

It discusses team play and how to handle various situations that arise during the game. Summarizing the book seven hundred years after its first appearance, Watanabe marvels at the systematic and rational presentation of its topic. Another remarkable characteristic of the *Naige sanjisho* is that it presents its teachings in stages. Watanabe comments that, to the best of his knowledge, this is the only kemari treatise that does so. See Watanabe and Kuwayama, *Kemari no kenkyū,* pp. 8, 97, 100, 103.

88. Ibid., p. 7.

89. Ibid.

90. Machida Ryōichi, "Shinano ni okeru kemari no ryūkō," *Shinano,* 3:12 (1951): 45–46, 49.

91. Ibid.

92. Vivienne Kenrick, *Horses in Japan* (London: J. A. Allen, 1964), pp. 107–109. Kenrick also points out that modern polo did not arrive in Japan until 1952, when the Hawaii Polo Association invited Keishi Hamano to visit Hawaii.

93. Möller, *Spiel und Sport am japanischen Kaiserhof,* p. 80.

94. Iwaoka Toyoma, "Dakyū," *Saishin supōtsu daijiten,* ed. Kishino Yūzō (Tokyo: Taishūkan shoten, 1987), pp. 752–754.

95. On medieval folk-football, see Francis P. Magoun, *History of Football* (1938; Bochum-Langendreer: Kölner Anglistische Studien, 1966).

96. Sōgawa Tsuneo, "Gitchō," in *Saishin supōtsu daijiten,* pp. 201–203.

97. Itō Akira, "Tōkyōto Suginamiku Ōmiya Hachimangū no chikaraishi no kenkyū," *Taiikushi kenkyū,* 2 (March 1985): 6–11; Itō Akira, "Tōkyōto Daitōkunai no chikaraishi no chōsa-kenkyū," *Taiikushi kenkyū,* 4 (March 1987): 1–10; Itō Akira, "Chikaraishi," *Saishin supōtsu daijiten,* pp. 782–83; Itō Akira, "Tōkyōto Itabashikunai no chōsa-kenkyū," *Taiikushi kenkyū,* 5 (March 1988): 34–40.

98. Arnd Krüger and Akira Ito, "On the Limitations of Eichberg's and Mandell's Theory of Sports and their Quantification in View of Chikaraishi," *Stadion,* 3:2 (1977): 244–252.

99. For specific replies to Krüger and Ito, see Henning Eichberg, "Recording and Quantifying Is Not Natural," *Stadion,* 3:2 (1977): 253–256; Thompson, "The Modernization of Sumō as a Sport, " p. 71.

Chapter 2. Pre-Meiji Sports

1. G. Cameron Hurst III, *Armed Martial Arts of Japan* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), p. 103.

2. Jörg Möller, *Spiel und Sport am japanischen Kaiserhof* (Munich: Iudicium, 1993), p. 41; Koyama Takashige, "Nihon kyūdō gairon," in *Gendai kyūdō kōza,* ed. Uno Yōzaburō (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1970), pp. 11–12.

3. Hurst, *Armed Martial Arts,* pp. 105, 107.

4. Ibid., p. 104.