

*Japanese Sports: A History.* By Allen Guttman and Lee Thompson. University of Hawai'i Press, 2001. ix + 309 pages. Hardback \$50.00; paperback \$24.95.

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This is a highly informative, lively, and comprehensive social history of sport in Japan. It traces the lineages of indigenous Japanese sports like sumo wrestling, the martial techniques, and the aristocratic *kemari* kickball. It follows the introduction and incorporation of a wide range of Western sports, including baseball, soccer, swimming, gymnastics, skiing, golf, and tennis. And it describes the history of physical education in the school system, the emergence of amateur and professional sports leagues, the involvement of business and the media in sports promotion, and Japan's century-long participation in the Olympics.

*Japanese Sports* thus takes the analytical form of two intertwined "narratives," the vicissitudes of longstanding Japanese sporting practices and the introduction of Western sports, set in a larger context of Japanese history. The specific fates of individual sports prove to be surprising and varied, but there are some general patterns and larger lessons that may be drawn. Time and again, the particular sports' histories demonstrate that Japanese "modernity," whatever else it is, is a composite. It combines preexisting practices that have been deliberately and strategically "traditionalized" even as they are "modernized" (e.g., rationalized and sport-ified) with Western forms that have been aggressively incorporated and domesticated, especially by being embedded in a spiritual idiom. The authors admit that the concept of "modernization" is frequently disparaged these days in social theory, but they demonstrate that it is still useful in thinking about and conceptualizing sports. The emergence and proliferation of sports in twentieth-century Japan is here shown to involve a dynamic tension between the modernizing imperatives of record-keeping, rule-making, classification, and bureaucratization, and the traditionalizing impulses of nationalist sentiment. Thus, plebeian wrestling became Grand Sumo and military training exercises became Martial Arts, while baseball was samur-ized and golf became an exhausting Japanese corporate ritual ("greens work" to Anne Allison's "Nightwork," we might say).

This is the first book of its kind in a Western language, although there are a number of such sport histories in Japanese (both academic and popular). There are some scattered academic articles and a few dissertations in English and German, and a couple of well-known popular books in English on individual sports (Robert Whiting on baseball and several on sumo and martial arts). The authors have used all of these as sources to create what we have heretofore lacked: a synthetic, broad-ranging survey. It is primarily a work of secondary scholarship rather than archival research, but that hardly detracts from (and very possibly adds to) what should be its broad appeal to both scholars and students.

The two authors are especially qualified and effectively complementary. Allen Guttman is one of the most prolific and influential sports historians in the world; his books have covered a staggering range of historical periods and sports-related topics. Lee Thompson is an American who took advanced degrees from one of Japan's top sociology departments with theses on pro wrestling and sumo and who now works closely with leading Japanese sports sociologists. Their joint text is clearly written and moves crisply. It is considerably enhanced by well-chosen illustrations.