

SPORT IN THE GLOBAL SOCIETY CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES



Sport, Memory and Nationhood in Japan

Edited by Andreas Niehaus and Christian Tagsold

Routledge

This book clarifies and verifies the role sport has as an alternative marker in understanding and mapping memory in Japan, by applying the concept of *lieux de mémoire* (realms of memory) to sport in Japan. Japanese history and national construction have not been short of sports landmarks since the end of the nineteenth century. Western-style sports were introduced into Japan in order to modernize the country and develop a culture of consciousness about bodies resembling that of the Western world. Japan's modernization has been a process of embracing Western thought and culture while at the same time attempting to establish what distinguishes Japan from the West. In this context, sports functioned as sites of contested identities and memories. The Olympics, baseball and soccer have produced memories in Japan, but so too have martial arts, which by their very name signify an attempt to create traditions beyond Western sports. Because modern sports form bodies of modern citizens and, at the same time, offer countless opportunities for competition with other nations, they provide an excellent ground for testing and contesting national identifications.

By revealing some of the key realms of memory in the Japanese field of sports, this book shows how memories and counter-memories of (sport) moments, places, and heroes constitute an inventory for identity.

This book was originally published as a special issue of *Sport in Society*.

Andreas Niehaus is head of the Department of South and East Asian Studies at Ghent University, Belgium and has published on judo, the history of sports and body culture in Japan.

Christian Tagsold is research fellow at the Institute for Modern Japan, Düsseldorf University, Germany. He has published on Tokyo Olympics 1964, aging society in Japan, Japanese Gardens in the West and Japanese diasporas.

Sport, Memory and Nationhood in Japan

Remembering the Glory Days

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and Christian Tagsold

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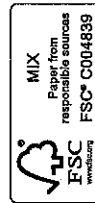
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The publisher would like to make readers aware that the chapters in this book may be referred to as articles as they are identical to the articles published in the special issue. The publisher accepts responsibility for any inconsistencies that may have arisen in the course of preparing this volume for print.

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SPORT IN THE GLOBAL SOCIETY –
CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES

Series Editor: Boria Majumdar

SPORT, MEMORY AND NATIONHOOD IN JAPAN
Remembering the Glory Days

Sport in the Global Society – Contemporary Perspectives
 Series Editor: Boria Majumdar

The social, cultural (including media) and political study of sport is an expanding area of scholarship and related research. While this area has been well served by the *Sport in the Global Society* series, the surge in quality scholarship over the last few years has necessitated the creation of *Sport in the Global Society: Contemporary Perspectives*. The series will publish the work of leading scholars in fields as diverse as sociology, cultural studies, media studies, gender studies, cultural geography and history, political science and political economy. If the social and cultural study of sport is to receive the scholarly attention and readership it warrants, a cross-disciplinary series dedicated to taking sport beyond the narrow confines of physical education and sport science academic domains is necessary. *Sport in the Global Society: Contemporary Perspectives* will answer this need.

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- Remembering the glory days of the nation: sport as lieu de mémoire in Japan**
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The French historian Pierre Nora introduced the theoretical framework for mapping *lieux de mémoire*, the places of remembrance that shape both our knowledge of history and our history-shaped identities.¹ The concept has been used to describe inventories of memory for different countries in the last two decades.² Nora's work was translated into Japanese in 2002/03, and several publications concerning Japanese realms of memory in Japanese as well as in English subsequently followed. The publications on memory in Japan so far focus on war and war responsibility. But the Japanese *lieux de mémoire* are certainly not limited exclusively to these issues, as Sven Saaler and Wolfgang Schwentker have suggested.³ By applying the concept of *lieux de mémoire* to sport in Japan, this issue hopes to clarify and verify the role sport has as an alternative marker in understanding and mapping memory in Japan.

Japanese history and national construction has been full of sports landmarks since the end of the nineteenth century. Western-style sports were introduced into Japan in order to modernize the country and develop a culture of consciousness about bodies resembling that of the Western world. Japan's modernization has been a process of embracing Western thought and culture while at the same time attempting to establish what distinguishes Japan from the West. In this context, sports functioned as sites of contested identities and memories. The Olympics, baseball and soccer have produced memories in Japan, but so too have the martial arts, which by their very name signify an attempt to create traditions beyond Western sports. Modes of memory in Japan act in two ways: they are engaged in trying to ascertain Japan's place in modernity, while simultaneously asserting her singularity against the West. Because modern sports form bodies of modern citizens and at the same time offer countless opportunities for competition with other nations, they provide an excellent ground for testing and contesting national identifications. But it is not only international competition that serves as a *lieu de mémoire* in sports. National tournaments, which begin with local competition then proceeded to regional and finally national elimination rounds, have also been influential in shaping the conception of national territory, just as the Tour de France, for example, has served to shape the domestic conception of France.⁴

In analysing the realms of memory in Japanese sports, five dimensions serve as focal points: identity, tradition, body, commodification and irony. The first four of these dimensions prove that realms of memory are closely linked with the transformation of