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A Study on the Sports Industry in Edo: Preface to a Study of the History of the Sports Industry in Early Modern Japan

Hironori Tanigama[※]

Note

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Abstract

This study discusses what sorts of industries developed in Edo during the early modern period and their characteristics, with a specific look at the sports industry. The results of this study are as follows.

1. In the 17th century, the sports industry in Edo targeted the ruling samurai class. Samurai in Edo were fond of sumo tournaments and archery exhibition competitions; both were heavily influenced by the Kyoto area (then the capital). At the time, traditions carried on since the Middle Ages remained strong in the world of sports.
2. At the end of the 17th century, various urban sports industries targeting ordinary people arose as a result of a sharp increase in the number and economic clout of ordinary people in Edo. The manufacture and sale of sports equipment flourished, and the sports venue industry (supplying venues for events such as benefit sumo tournaments and archery games) also grew.
3. At the start of the 19th century, popular culture flourished, and the sports industry in Edo matured. The massive population of Edo, the increased economic clout of ordinary people, and the preservation of domestic tranquility promoted the further development of the urban sports industry. As the money economy of the city spread to farming villages in the countryside, the wave of Edo's sports industry reached the countryside, as exemplified by traveling benefit sumo tournaments.

Keywords: Sport History Urban Sports Industries, People in Edo, Sumo, Kemari

1. Introduction

Historical research on the Japanese sports industry includes numerous studies since the Meiji era. As the modern sports industry mostly targets sports that originated in Europe and the United States, these historical narratives began in the Meiji era, the period that marked Japan's transition to modernity.

However, examining the tradition of sports developed in Japan, that is not limited to modern sports, the existence of craftsmen who manufactured sports equipment in the Middle Ages (Note 1), and of a sports culture dating back to early Japan are confirmed. Thus, the industry was flourishing.¹⁾ Specifically, the development of urban sports in the early modern period (Note 2) was remarkable. In this period, as

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common urban citizens gained economic power that surpassed that of the samurai, a variety of sports that could be enjoyed by paying money began to thrive. The center of this boom was Edo, which is the main focus of this study.

There has not been extensive research on the sports industry in Edo. Research on history of Watanabe's kicking equipment²⁾ and the sumo wrestling room system of Oinuma³⁾ explore the industrial side, but subsequent studies focus on the modern age. Thus, the research has not diversified adequately.

According to Kojima, the foundation for an advanced industrial society that contributed to the modernization of Japan after the Meiji era existed in early modern Japan.⁴⁾ Applying this view to sports, the foundations for accepting Western sports and nurturing the related sports industry after the Meiji era were already laid in Edo society. Regarding the theory of "parallel evolution," which states that Japan and the West developed similarly but separately since before the Meiji era, it is no surprise that a high-level sports industry was established in modern Japan.⁵⁾ If "questioning the past leads to questioning the roots of the present,"⁶⁾ as the field of history suggests, investigating the pre-Western Japanese sports industry will shed light on modern-day Japan. This will provide useful insights into the ideal way forward for the sports industry.

Therefore, this study focuses on the sports industry in Edo in the early modern period and explores the type and characteristics of the industry that developed over time.

The definition of "sports" in this paper is based on Tanigama's view, which considers the history of sports in Edo. The etymology of "sports" involves "playing." However, expanding the scope of the paper to all the forms of "play" that existed in Edo would make it incomprehensible in the modern sports industry. Therefore, in this study, sport is defined as "play involving physical exercise," similar to the general idea prevalent today.⁷⁾

To better review the sports industry of Edo from a long-term perspective, this study classifies the time under consideration into the following divisions: the early modern period from the beginning of the Edo shogunate (1603) to Genroku (1688–1704) as the "sprouting period"; the mid-early modern period, from Genroku to Kasei (1804–30), as the "development period"; and the latter part of the early modern period, from Kasei to the end of the Edo period, as the "maturity period."

2. Emergence of the sports industry in Edo (sprouting period)

In the early modern period, the reign of samurai continued, as in the Middle Ages. However, when the Edo shogunate strengthened the political system, leading to stability, the samurai abandoned their military garb to engage in public affairs to serve the shogunate and the domain. Subsequently, in Edo, where many samurai from various nationwide clans gathered due to a change in attendance, a sports industry for samurai emerged.

2.1 Birth of Kanjin Sumo as entertainment in Edo

Since the beginning of the early modern period, the Kanjin Sumo was held in Edo as a form of paid entertainment to solicit funds by collecting admission fees from spectators. Kanjin originally meant fundraising activities for the construction and restoration of temples and shrines,⁸⁾ but the history of the Kanjin Sumo goes back to the Middle Ages. According to Fushiminomiya Sadafusa's *Kanmon Nikki*, on October 3, 1419, a Kanjin Sumo event was held in Yamashiro Koku Fushimi-go, a suburb of Kyoto, to raise funds for the construction of Hoanji Temple.⁹⁾

Shiganosuke Akashi was first performed in Edo's Yotsuya Shiomachi in 1624,¹⁰⁾ although this is debatable, given the lack of clarity about the existence of Shiganosuke. Subsequently, the Kanjin Sumo was often banned in Edo by the shogunate because of the ensuing moral disorder and was finally allowed to resume in 1684.

Kanjin Sumo in the early modern period was held in Edo, Kyoto, and Osaka, and initially, Osaka was the most popular, followed by Kyoto. Edo did not promote sumo as actively as Kyoto and Osaka before the mid-18th century¹¹⁾.

Sumo wrestling was a popular pastime among samurai who lived in Edo in the early modern period.¹²⁾ Edo's population was dominated by the samurai due to the change in the attendance system. This form of business for samurai influenced the characteristics of the Kanjin Sumo in Edo.

A factor that gradually determined the growth of Kanjin Sumo in Edo, Kyoto, and Osaka was the existence of samurai residences of various clans.¹³⁾ This is because the various daimyo (feudal lords) often summoned sumo wrestlers to the samurai residence for entertainment. In the early modern period, the clan's summoning of wrestlers signified their encouragement of martial arts, but after Genroku, wrestlers were promoted as representatives of their clan. Due to the strong sense of opposition among the clans, they participated in Kanjin Sumo.

The daimyo also saw the wrestlers' victory or defeat as an important indicator of the clan's power. According to the Edo-period memoir *Edo no Yubae*, participation in sumo promotion was a major event for the clan.¹⁴⁾

Thus, the spectator sport of Kanjin Sumo emerged in Edo in the early modern period. However, the main target of the box office was still the samurai class because it had not developed into a large-scale sporting event involving the common people.

2.2 Tradition of sports equipment craftsmen

Equipment is required in sports that presuppose the manipulation of objects. However, most people in Edo could not create high-performance sports equipment, and sports in Edo would not have been possible without the presence of craftsmen who undertook this task.

Sports equipment craftsmen rose to prominence in the mid-early modern period, although the tradition of craftsmen who manufactured equipment was established in the early modern period through the kicking ball, which was enjoyed by ancient aristocrats and medieval samurai.

In the Middle Ages, craftsmen, whose livelihoods depended on handicrafts, were socially recognized and gradually became established. The development of the city, a political hub of aristocrats since ancient times, expanded consumer life and significantly increased the demand for handicraft production. Riding this wave, from around the 14th century, the "Mari-kukuri" who manufactured balls became popular.¹⁵⁾ "Mari-kukuri," and "Kutsu-tsukuri," who made special shoes for Kemari, appear in *Shichiju Ichiban Shokunin Utaawase* from the beginning of the 16th century.¹⁶⁾

There were specialized ball and shoe craftsmen for the Kemari ball game. The existence of these craftsmen indicates how Kemari was well established in medieval society, as the suppliers' survival would not be possible without sufficient demand.

Against the backdrop of tradition since the Middle Ages, the existence of craftsmen who manufactured Kemari equipment was confirmed in the 17th century. The above painting depicts the figures engaged in the Kemari industry. For example, Shichiju Ichiban Shokunin Utaawase¹⁷⁾ (1657)

depicts “Mari kukuri,” who manufactured Kemari, and *Kyo Suzume*¹⁸⁾ (1665) mentions “Mari-ya,” who sold Kemari equipment. Kemari, which developed as an elegant Kyoto-style sport, was centered around Kyoto and Osaka in the early modern period. Stable product distribution by shipping was established in this era from the production centers of Kyoto/Osaka to the consumption center of Edo.

After the mid-early modern period, the culture of Kemari spread to Edo and stores selling related equipment began to appear in the city.

2.3 Construction of Sanjusangendo in Edo and development of Toshiya

When the world became peaceful and war a far cry, a method to compete for victory while using weapons but without killing people was devised.¹⁹⁾ Martial arts, originally a killing method, veered into the path of competition, which involved comparing techniques safely within the rules. Miyamoto Musashi's *Gorin-no-sho* further describes how various martial arts had become unsuitable “entertainment” for warfare around the mid-17th century when the book was written.²⁰⁾ Martial arts were promoted as a self-preservation method in the new era.

In response to these times, Toshiya, a competition that decided the best archer in the world, started at Sanjusangendo in Edo. Sanjusangendo was the famous main hall of Rengeoin in Kyoto, and from before the early modern period, Toshiya became a part of a samurai's archery training practice. Sanjusangendo was built in Asakusa, Edo, in 1642, modeled after the one in Kyoto. The Toshiya competition, in which the superiority or inferiority of the technique was indicated by numbers, was a good place for samurai to test their skills. In effect, Sanjusangendo in Edo was a long-awaited sports facility.

As with the Kanjin Sumo, the gathering of the samurai of each clan in Edo triggered the development of Toshiya. Initially, it was a place for samurai archery training, but when the title “Tenka-ichi” was awarded to the highest record-holder, the rivalry among the clans began. The influential clans were eager to have excellent archers among their ranks, and wanted to be known as the “Tenka-ichi” clan. Thus, Toshiya developed into a major sporting event involving the prestige of the clans, not just as a test of individual skill.

A perceptive bow maker, Bingo, who lived in Ryogaecho, Asakusa, was instrumental in the construction of Sanjusangendo in Asakusa, by guessing that if Toshiya became popular in Edo, those who pursued records would buy high-performance bows and arrows, which would significantly increase their sales. Thus, Sanjusangendo's construction was because of the management strategy of this Edo bowmaker.

Although Sanjusangendo in Kyoto later used the temple where the Buddhas were enshrined as a launch site, the one in Edo was built initially as a stadium for Toshiya. Therefore, started as a private stadium run by a bow maker, it turned into a large-scale sports facility run as a semi-private and semi-government venture due to the public interest in martial arts and huge maintenance subsidies bestowed by the shogunate.²¹⁾

Eventually, Sanjusangendo in Asakusa was destroyed by fire, but it was rebuilt in Fukagawa in 1701. Figure 1 depicts Fukagawa Sanjusangendo published in *Edo Sanjusangendo Yasu-cho*.²²⁾

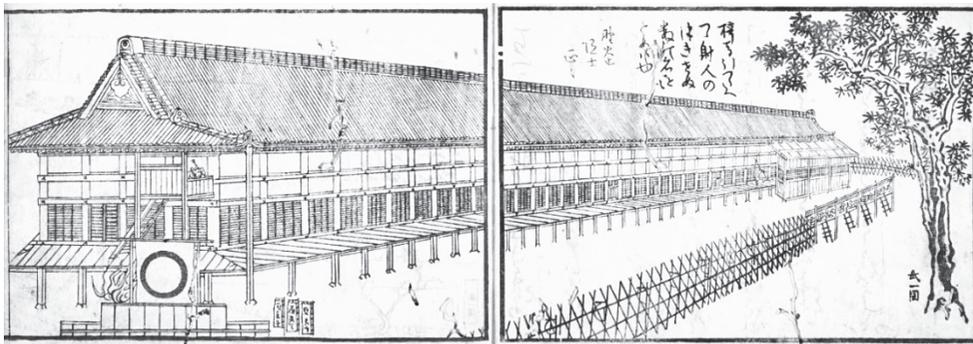


Figure 1 Fukagawa Sanjusangendo in Edo
Yoshinao Miyabe; *Edo Sanjusangendo*, Takekawa Tobei, 1821.

Since then, despite being damaged by a series of fires and collapses due to wind and rain, Sanjusangendo in Fukagawa was repeatedly revived, supported by the deep-rooted popularity of the powerful clans. Hence, the sports industry, which targeted the samurai of various clans, emerged in Edo in the early modern period.

As mentioned above, the target of the sports industry in the early modern period was the samurai who took control of the government after the Middle Ages, thus influencing the sports industry in Edo. It was a time when the world of sports was characterized by traditions inherited from the Middle Ages.

3. Economic rise of the common people of Edo and growth of the sports industry (development period)

Edo sports in the early modern period were influenced by Kyoto and Osaka, but after the advent of Genroku, Kyoto and Osaka's sports culture, owing to the economic growth of their common people, aligned itself to that of Edo. Many sports industries flourished against the backdrop of what became the world's largest population.

3.1 Population growth and economic rise of the common people of Edo

In the mid-early modern period, the population of common people in Edo City increased rapidly. It was 140,000 in the first half of the 17th century, exceeded 350,000 during the Genroku era, and reached 500,000 in Kyoho (1716–36) when the official survey by the shogunate began.²³⁾ By this time, Edo became one of the largest cities in the world with a population of one million, including an estimated 500,000 samurai population.²⁴⁾ This increase in the population of common people formed the basis of the sports industry.

As the population of the common people increased in Edo, their economic growth progressed simultaneously. In Eibian Kato's *Waga Koromo*, which describes the social situation of Edo, the common people, who had minimal economic power around Tenna (1681–84) and Jokyo (1684–88), grew economically after Genroku.²⁵⁾ As the population of Edo rapidly expanded, the common people who controlled commerce and industry gained economic power that surpassed that of the samurai.

Therefore, when the population of the common people increased rapidly in the 18th century, along with their economic power, the sports business in Edo targeted them rather than the samurai as it had

done so far.

3.2 Development of sports equipment manufacturing and sales business

As mentioned earlier, the sports equipment industry developed mainly at the beginning of the early modern period, but in the mid-early modern period, the sales industry also developed in Edo.

Since the 18th century, craftsmen, who manufactured sports equipment, emerged in Edo. The book *Imayo Hyakuninisshu Syokunin Utaawase*²⁶⁾ by Kiyoharu Kondo, an ukiyo-e artist from Edo in Kyoho (1716–36), depicts the business style of sports equipment craftsmen among those who were active in Edo (Fig. 2). The book also depicts “Yumi-shi” and “Yokyu-shi” who manufactured bows, “Mari-ya” who manufactured balls for Kemari, and Yokyu (Note 3). All the products were made with tools, as seen below.



Figure 2 Sports equipment craftsmen in Edo 18th

Kiyoharu Kondo; *Imayo Syokunin Zukushi Hyakuninisshu*, In: Kiyosaku Yamada(Eds.) *Imayo Syokunin Zukushi Hyakuninisshu*, Yoneyama-do, 1928.

Moreover, according to *Komo Zatsuwa* published in 1787, the manufacturing of Western-style racket sports equipment, which was popular among the Dutch in Dejima, Nagasaki, was ordered by an Edo craftsman, Yohei Sasaki.²⁷⁾

In the mid-early modern period, a store in Edo sold sports equipment. The depiction of a fishing tackle shop can be seen in the painting *Unemegahara* in the *Edo Meisho Zue*, which depicts Edo until the end of the 18th century.²⁸⁾ In 1824, a guidebook called *Edo Kaimono Hitori Annai* was published, which listed establishments related to shopping, eating, and drinking in Edo city. The book introduced at least two fishing tackle stores²⁹⁾ and three kicking gear stores,³⁰⁾ indicating that this sports equipment was available in stores throughout Edo city.

Specifically, when Yohei Sasaki became a powerful Kemari equipment merchant, he had a close relationship with the Iemoto (head of school) who reigned at the top of the Kemari world, and under his authority, Yohei Sasaki took on disciples and instructed them in Kemari.³¹⁾ The Kemari Iemoto aimed to expand the Kemari market by entrusting new disciples and technical guidance to a merchant who could supply equipment and customer information.

3.3 Growth of the sports venue industry

In the middle of the early modern period, the sports venue industry grew rapidly. The following sections will explore Kanjin Sumo and Yokyu as representatives of this growth.

3.3.1 Development of Kanjin sumo

In the Horeki (1751–64), an organization called Sumo Kaisho (currently the Japan Sumo Association) was formed to manage sumo events, and performances were held in stables. The box office was transformed into a venue for professional sports for commercial purposes, although, initially, it was maintained as a venue for procuring resources for the restoration of temples and shrines.³²⁾

In 1791, the Joran sumo held in front of Shogun Ienari in Edo Castle marked the establishment of Edo's promotion of sumo as a performing art involving rules and prestige. Popular sumo wrestlers such as Tanikaze, Onogawa, and Raiden also participated, and it became a major sporting event in Edo society.

As mentioned above, from the early modern period, the daimyo of various clans summoned wrestlers, and the Kanjin Sumo developed, spurred by rivalry among influential clans; this phenomenon gradually became common among the people. In 1711, the shogunate issued a decree prohibiting the Edo people from summoning wrestlers, stating that it was unsuitable for commoners.³³⁾ This shows that the common people of Edo, who became cash-rich in the thriving monetary economy of the big city, were trying to imitate the samurai's enjoyment of sports.

In Edo's Kanjin Sumo, a sumo stadium was temporarily set up in the precincts of temples and shrines twice a year (10 days each in good weather). In the late modern period, in 1850, in the Kanjin Sumo held at the Ekoin Temple, on both occasions, the vacant lot in the precinct had a frontage of 18 m (about 32 m), a depth of 20 m (about 36 m), and an area of approximately 1166m². A sumo stadium was built³⁴⁾ and inside it, tiered seating was created, and ground seating was set up on the first floor. Although temporary, the level of civil engineering and construction skills of the craftsmen who built these large-scale sports facilities at each event is remarkable.

According to Yoshizo Sudo, a second-hand book dealer in Edo, the sumo stadium at Ekoin Temple in the fall of 1856, accommodated more than 10,000 people.³⁵⁾ It cannot be confirmed if 10,000 people showed up, but the number of spectators was close to it.

Figure 3 shows the *Ryogoku Ozumo Hanei-no-zu*,³⁶⁾ which depicts the promotion of the Kanjin Sumo of the Ekoin Temples. The tiered seating around the sumo stadium had high-class seats, and the customer base was wealthy. Meanwhile, the admission fee for the ground seats, which was packed with customers, was affordable even for ordinary people in the middle and lower classes.³⁷⁾ Thus, the Kanjin Sumo in Edo was a spectator sport that targeted a diverse range of people, regardless of their loyalties.



Figure 3 Kanjin sumo of the Ekoin Temple

Kunisato Utagawa; *Ryogoku Ozumo Hanei-no-zu*, Wakasa-ya Yoichi, 1856.

3.3.2 The prosperity of the Yokyū industry

The industrialization wave also affected the sports in which the common people of Edo participated as players. Specifically, Yokyū, which could be easily enjoyed indoors with a small bow, steadily gained popularity. *Ehon Azuma no Hana*, published in 1768, states that the Yokyū of Yamashita in Ueno, which was the red-light district of Edo, was actively performed in Edo at that time³⁸⁾.

The areas where Yokyū prospered in Edo city were the precincts and downtown areas around famous temples and shrines, such as Asakusa, Nihonbashi, Ryogokubashi, Atagoyama, Kanda Myojin, Yushima Tenmangu, and Shiba Shinmei. The business of Yaba (Yokyū Stadium) was based on its ability to attract customers in the red-light district.

Every year, on May and September 25, a Yokyū competition called Kekkai Sokai was held. According to *Toto Saijiki* published in 1838, the winner was awarded the title “Edo ichi,” and their name was prominently displayed on the Yaba signboard in Edo.³⁹⁾ This tournament was a measure for Yaba’s management to work together to fuel the competitive tendencies of the common people of Edo and win popularity for Yokyū. If Yokyū prospered, the Yokyū masters of the manufacturing craftsmen profited.

In 1802, the management rights for a Yaba with a store in the precincts of Sensōji Temple were sold to a person named Gohei from Onigoe Village, Katsushika District.⁴⁰⁾ This is an example of the management of Yaba in the precincts of Sensōji Temple, which landed in the hands of a powerful person in Onigoe Village, far from Edo, to be run as a business that could earn profits, and thus worth acquiring management rights for.

It must be noted that Yokyū prospered not only due to its competitiveness but also because there were many male customers who were expected to play with female employees working in Yaba. However, such a multidimensional management situation is not within the scope of this discussion.

Hence, the mid-early modern period witnessed the growth of various sports industries targeting the common people due to their rapid increase in numbers and their economic growth, too, in Edo. Eventually, the conditions for the urban sports industry to mature in Bunka Bunsei (1804–30), when the common people’s culture flourished, were created during this period.



Figure 4 Yokyū in Yamashita Ueno

Shigemasa Kitao; *Ehon Azuma-no-Hana*, In: Masamichi Kurokawa (Eds.), *Nihon Fuzoku Zue 11*, Nihon Fuzoku Zue Kankokai, 1914

4. The heyday of the urban sports industry (maturity)

By the time of Bunka Bunsei (1804–30), the economic power of the common people had exceeded that of the samurai. The exclusive culture of the upper echelons of common society spread to the middle and lower levels, and the Kasei culture prospered. Further, the Kasei period is considered one of change in which aspects of “the maturity of feudal society” as well as “the emergence of modern society” coexisted.⁴¹⁾

Sports in Edo peaked in this era. The development of the city’s monetary economy, made it conducive for Edo’s middle and lower classes to enjoy sports. By including the common people, who accounted for a large proportion of the city of Edo, the sports population expanded and various industries related to sports were revitalized. The common people of Edo were ready to pay for “playing” and “watching” sports as part of their daily lives, which ushered in a new sports era.

However, sports became prominent during this period not only because of the economic growth of the common people, but for the reason explained in the preface of Kitamura Intei’s essay “Kiyu Shoran.” The world is peaceful because everyone from the upper to the lower levels of society can enjoy playing. It is described as a body.⁴²⁾ The realization of a peaceful world, therefore, guaranteed an environment in which the common people of Edo could immerse themselves in sports.

4.1 Development of a sports education industry

The latter half of the early modern period witnessed the rapid development of an education industry related to sports. One of them was kenjutsu dojo.

Originally, swordsmanship was an essential part of samurai culture, but as society became peaceful in the early modern period, the samurai moved away from the battlefield. Subsequently, those who had good swordsmen and business acumen established several schools and dojos to teach swordsmanship to disciples. The killing method, formerly taught as a military method, was transformed into a material for the sports education industry better suited to peacetime.

In Edo, many town dojos were born, including prestigious dojos such as Shigaku kan (Kyoshin Meichi style), Genbu kan (Hokushin Itto style), and Renpei kan (Shindo Munenryu). Initially, it was rare for different schools to meet each other, but after the end of Tenpo (1831–45), most schools and dojos lifted the bans on others, and exchanges between schools became more common. According to *Bakumatsu Hyakuwa*, which comprises memoirs of the Edo people at the end of the Edo period, around Ansei (1855–60), swordsmanship training was actively pursued by visiting the dojos in different towns.⁴³⁾

When dojo management became popular, opportunities to learn swordsmanship expanded throughout Edo city, and the number of ordinary people who attended the swordsmanship dojo increased. A textbook with a picture called *Kendo Hitori Geiko*⁴⁴⁾ for individual practice of swordsmanship at home was also published, and this practice as well as swordsmanship, which had been exclusive to samurai, became familiar to the common people.

Meanwhile, the shogunate was worried that ordinary people in Edo, who should be devoted to commerce and industry, were practicing martial arts, including swordsmanship. In June 1843, they issued a ban on martial arts instructors providing guidance to commoners⁴⁵⁾.

However, this ban was not necessarily a manifestation of the oppression and decline of the common people sweating in the town dojo. Considering the principle of criticism of historical materials that

“wherever there is a ban, there is a fact that corresponds to it,”⁴⁶⁾ it could be interpreted that the promulgation of this ban established that the common people could easily hone their martial arts at their town dojo. Moreover, it was highly possible that the dojo culture was so lively that it was subject to regulation.

In any case, there is no doubt that martial arts instructors were training the general public in Edo in the late modern period. Furthermore, the sports education industry, which targeted many economically powerful people, was prospering in Edo in the latter half of the early modern period.

4.2 Rise of spectator sports

4.2.1 Management strategy of Kanjin Sumo

During this era, the Kanjin Sumo in Edo was booming. As the restaurant industry was well established in Edo, food and drinks were sold to the audience at the sumo stadium, and the space for watching sports was similar to that of the present. Its success was counted as one of the “three major entertainments in Edo” along with Kabuki and Yoshiwara Yukaku, in *Edo Hanjyoki*, published in 1832.⁴⁷⁾

Behind the stable position of the Kanjin Sumo were the management skills of the Sumo Kaisho, that controlled profits with a keen sense of balance. In some cases, the show was canceled because of the small number of spectators. For instance, a document submitted by the management to the temple and shrine delegation stated that the performance in the spring of 1850 would not be worth considering as business because of the small number of visitors⁴⁸⁾ Hence, attempts were made to control losses.

After Tenpo (1830–143), many sumo stables were set up in both countries. The sumo room is a “training institution for professional athletes that existed before modern sports were introduced to Japan,”⁴⁹⁾ where masters and disciples practiced sumo while living together. Therefore, the Japanese-style sports industry was established.

In the early modern period, the publishing industry flourished with the development of printing technology, leading to an increase in the sports-related information industry and the issuing and sales of sumo banzuke (a sumo ranking chart). The publisher, Mikawaya Jiemon, was the exclusive contractor for the issuance of sumo banzuke. (The February 1862 sumo banzuke mentions “Hanmoto Mikawaya Jiemon” at the end⁵⁰⁾). The number of printed copies and the price range are unknown, but it can be surmised that the number of copies printed for people in Edo city made it profitable for the publisher.

Moreover, the development of printing technology allowed many popular wrestlers’ to print bromides (Nishiki-e) in color and sell them, and the goods sales business, the equivalent of modern sports merchandise, became active.

4.2.2 The era of street performers

Spectator sports in the latter half of the early modern period were not limited to the Kanjin Sumo. During this period, many street performers of popular performing arts appeared in Edo. They commercialized the arts, regardless of status or origin, and were able to make a name by producing high-level performances that delighted the masses and won them high praise.

Acrobatics that made full use of the entertainers’ bodies fascinated spectators. Dynamic acrobatics performed in the precincts of temples and shrines and in the downtown area, such as the Kyoku-mari, which showed exceptional lifting techniques, light work with intricate acrobatics, and acrobatics while

riding, were performed in Edo along with the Kanjin sumo and formed the basis of spectator sports. It was a ruthless world where only the most advanced arts survived, and attracted people to the extent that they were even willing to pay to view such sports.

Kyoku-mari was a spectacle that involved manipulating a ball using an extraordinary lifting technique. In March 1841, a Kyoku-mari event was held in the precincts of Okuyama to coincide with the opening of the Sensoji Kannon. Reportedly, the song performed by an entertainer named Kikukawa Kunimaru from Osaka soon became popular, and the number of spectators increased by the day. This situation has also been described in *Buko Nenpyo*.⁵¹⁾

The essay collection *Kasshi Yawa* by Seizan Matsuura of the Hizen Hirado Domain relates the entire story of this performance, although it is based on details collected from others. According to the book, Kunimaru performed more than 10 types of acts, including some that would be difficult even for today's soccer players to match, such as kicks as well as headers and taps received on the back.⁵²⁾



Figure 5 Kunimaru's Kyoku-Mari ("Kikukawa Kunimaru-no-Kyokumari")

Suchu-shi Bijutsu-kan(Eds.); *Utagawa Kuniyoshi Ki-to-Warai-no-Mokuhanga*, Tokyo Bijutsu, 2015.

4.3 Regional development of urban sports industry

4.3.1 Ripple of urban sports industry into rural areas

Confucian scholar Ogyu Sorai explained in his *Sei dan* that after Genroku, there was an economic growth in rural areas of the country, and the monetary economy, in which money was used to buy and sell, became prevalent.⁵³⁾ Technological innovation increased agricultural productivity, and selling surplus products to city dwellers also helped farmers earn cash income. The penetration of the monetary economy meant that the preconditions for sharing the urban sports industry with local farmers were in place.

In the latter half of the early modern period, cases of local farmers visiting Edo and enjoying sports using money were recorded. For example, Shigeo Akutsu, who went to the Ise pilgrimage from Kamimiyori Town of the Aizu Domain in 1848, stopped at Edo during his trip and wrote down in his travel diary that he enjoyed watching Kanjin Sumo.⁵⁴⁾

Meanwhile, the reverse movement also occurred: traveling to rural areas and performing urban sports. The most typical example is the local tour of the Edo Kanjin Sumo.

Edo wrestlers had been touring rural areas since the end of the 18th century. An early example is Aizuwakamatsu's tour. A record shows that the Edo Sumo, in which a viewing fee was collected, was held at Sumiyoshi Shrine in Timber Town in October 1787 and in Ma City in Muikamachi in July 1789⁵⁵⁾. Moreover, in Gorobee-shinden Nitta Village in Shinshu, a performance called Amagoi Sumo was held in 1848 by inviting four wrestlers from Edo/⁵⁶⁾

Thus, the spread of the monetary economy brought the urban sports industry to rural areas as well.

4.3.2 Development of travel culture and related industries

In the early modern period, travel was popular among the common people. The most popular nationwide trip was a few months of worship at Ise Jingu. At that time, most of the itinerary involved traveling on foot, so the average walking distance covered by travelers was approximately 35 km per day for men and a little less than 30 km for women.⁵⁷⁾

Taking advantage of this walking practice, farmers set up the business of manufacturing and selling straw sandals on the highway. Farmers had various sales channels, such as wholesale of their straw shoes to teahouses in the post station, retail sales to travelers on the street, and door-to-door sales at the inn. The post station had a point for the collection of straw shoes that were worn out or were no longer needed, so occasionally the straw shoes collected from there were dismantled and renewed. The eco-cycle around the straw shoes is shown here:

This benefited travelers who did not have to carry a large amount of straw sandals and could purchase them when needed. Travelers who visited the Ise Grand Shrine from the Kanto region in the latter half of the early modern period repeatedly purchased new straw sandals after walking about 40 to 50km.⁵⁸⁾ A farmer on the road manufactured and sold sports shoes.

This journey was supported by a religious figure or Oshi, who belonged to the shrines and temples in various places. The master regularly traveled across the country to advertise the benefits of the temples and shrines he belonged to, and also explained how to cover travel expenses.

According to the *Annual Event of the House* written by Yajuro Oba, the deputy officer of the Setagaya territory of the Hikone Domain, the messenger of the Oshi (Ryu dayu) who visited Ise every October, was entertained in Setagaya.⁵⁹⁾ Moreover, because of his enthusiastic solicitation, many people from Setagaya in the early modern period organized a tour called Ise Ko and traveled to Ise Sangu, and stayed at Ryu dayu's mansion.⁶⁰⁾ Kunisaburo Tanaka, who departed from Kitami Village in 1845, visited Ryu dayu's mansion after arriving in Ise and wrote in his travel diary that he paid a large amount of money for it.⁶¹⁾ The Oshi also played the role of a tour conductor and doubled as the inn's business representative.

Oshi from Ise, Mt. Fuji, and Oyama regularly visited Edo and encouraged common people to travel. With the growth of the monetary economy, the travel industry, which actively transported people to remote areas, formed its base in Japan in the late modern period.

As the travel culture grew in the latter half of the early modern period, a new era of sports exchange

that transcended clans and schools was fostered through swordsmanship. The number of travelers involved in warrior training increased rapidly, and swordfighters visited dojos across the country and challenged games in other styles. One of them was Fuminosuke Muta, a vassal of the Nabeshima clan of the Saga domain, who traveled to various counties for swordsmanship training from 1853 to 1855. According to the diary of Fuminosuke, he visited more than 70 dojos involved in games in other styles during this training.⁶²⁾

Hence, this was a new era in which people living far away, who had never met before, deepened cross-cultural exchanges through sports. As seen, Japan was a pioneer of sports tourism in the early modern period.

5. Summary and future issues

In the following section, the results of this study are summarized along with the findings. In the early modern period, the target of the sports industry in Edo was the samurai who took power. The Edo samurai were enthusiastic about Kanjin sumo and Toshiya competitions, but these sports were strongly influenced by Kyoto and Osaka. During this time traditions from the Middle Ages persisted in the world of sports.

The chief characteristic of the “development period” in the middle of the early modern period was that various urban sports industries targeting the common people, who prospered due to their rapid population increase and economic rise in Edo. The manufacturing and sales of sports equipment flourished, and sports venue industries such as Kanjin Sumo and Yokyu also grew.

With the rise of a mature common people’s culture in the latter half of the early modern period, the sports industry in Edo also entered a “maturity period.” The massive population of Edo, the improvement of the common people’s economic power, and the realization of a sustainable peaceful society supported the further development of the urban sports industry. When the monetary economy of the city permeated the rural areas of each region, the wave of the urban sports industry in Edo, including sumo wrestling tours, reached rural areas, partly due to the popularity of the travel culture.

Since the Meiji era, the Japanese sports industry has been based on the fields of the sports equipment industry, sports service/information industry, and sports venue/facilities industry⁶³⁾, but as seen, Edo in the early modern period had all these elements. Thus, prior to the introduction of modern sports, the world of a wide range of sports industries was thriving in Edo. However, it is necessary to further verify whether the Japanese sports industry has developed continuously since the modern era.

This is an introductory study targeting Edo in the early modern period, which clarified the characteristics of the sports industry developed in each era based on relevant social and economic backgrounds. Future studies should design individual research that narrows down the target eras and regions and delves into individual sports industries.

(Note 1)

In general, the Middle Ages is an era that combines the Kamakura and Muromachi periods. There are various views on the beginning and end of each era, but the period from the establishment of the Kamakura shogunate at the end of the 12th century to the destruction of the shogunate in 1333 is the “Kamakura period,” and the period from the establishment of the Muromachi shogunate in 1336 to the destruction of

the shogunate in 1573 is often called the “Muromachi period” (Heibonsha(Eds.); *Nihon-shi Jiten*, Heibonsha, pp.55-63, 2001 (in Japanese).

(Note 2)

The early modern period generally refers to the Oriho period and the Edo period (Naohiro Asao; “*Kinsei*”-*towa-nani-ka*, In: Naohiro Asao(Eds.), *Nihon-no-Kinsei 1*, Chuo Koron-sya, p.7, 1991). Therefore, in the early modern period, in a broad sense, it started when Nobunaga Oda entered Kyoto (1568) and ended with the repatriation of the Taisei Hokan (1867). During this period, this research focuses on the “Edo period,” which began with the opening of the Edo period in 1603.

(Note 3)

Yokyu is a competition in which a small bow made of willow is used to hit the target. The Yang bow, which was launched from a sitting position, was performed in an elongated and compact indoor space without the need for a vast site. From the front side of the hut, he shot an arrow at the target set in the back and competed for points according to the number of hits (Hironori Tanigama; *Edo-no-Supotsu Rekishi Jiten*, Kashiwa Shobo, pp.159-160, 2020.

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