

plicated. In perhaps one-third of Japan, forms of corporate farming under “joint ownership” coexisted with private family farming (p. 96). Shares of land (both paddy and dry fields) were periodically redistributed on the basis of equal shares per family, per capita, or the level of preexisting cultivation rights. The initiative for such “land division” (*warichi*) arrangements came from the villagers themselves, or in some cases (such as Kaga and Satsuma), the domain.

Brown discusses various explanations for the persistence of *warichi* throughout the Tokugawa era and even beyond the Meiji Land Reform of 1873. These include the desire to share risk in regions where landslides frequently destroyed crops, preserve equitable tax burdens, and maintain cooperative management of cooperatively reclaimed lands. But there is no single explanation for the widespread phenomenon. Brown’s deployment of topographical maps indicates only a thin correlation between the practice of *warichi* farming and the susceptibility of a region to flooding and landslides. He concludes it “impossible” to directly compare the “geographical conditions” of “*warichi* and non-*warichi* villages” (p. 43) and “no consistent, direct relationship between redistribution intervals and natural hazard risk” (p. 144). There were myriad reasons to maintain collective lands and reassign them periodically.

While at pains to note that “the socialist principle of allocating resources . . . based on need” was never operative (p. 69), Brown writes the “study of Japan’s experience reminds us that nonmarket and nontechnological social solutions have been viable and may remain viable today” (p. 5). Although he leaves it to the reader to draw any lessons, this perspective is valuable and the entire discussion of the complexity of landholding in Tokugawa Japan is engrossing.

This is not, however, a reader-friendly book. Space prohibits even a summary of the complex arguments and descriptive material Brown presents concerning the origins and rationale of *warichi* systems, the disputes they produced, and the nature of their twentieth-century persistence. The writing style is occasionally awkward to the point of obscuring meaning. For example, “From the standpoint of *warichi*’s potential to retard economic growth or to accommodate commercial crops, how long-maturing crops with potential commercial value were treated holds potential interest” (p. 163).

The haphazard unfolding of vital chronological detail may puzzle those unfamiliar with Japanese history (among those whom Brown wants to reach). The crucial fact that “samurai were forbidden from residing in villages or owning land” is mentioned only parenthetically, after Brown has substantially outlined his argument (p. 31). The whole issue of tenancy—rising throughout the Tokugawa era—is addressed only at the end of the book, in relation to the impact of the Meiji Restoration and the new land tax system. Here we learn, for example, that a “dispute settlement” in Kawaji village in 1786 “specifically notes that tenants were to be included in the *warichi* process.” Brown tells

us that thereafter “rents were to be set village-wide” but does not explain how this happened (p. 182).

Given the many references to primary sources, one might have hoped for direct quotations to add color and depth to this work. But these are few and far between. The citation form is minimalistic, and sometimes the references are frustratingly vague. For example, when Brown adduces an example of a village official stopping a request for redistribution, he refers in a footnote to another above, cited to document peasants’ gift-giving to village officials “in many parts of Echigo.” The note refers to an archival primary source (*monjo*)—likely a cache of documents—“for sources” (p. 247). This is not very helpful.

The reader comes away from the work fully convinced that many early modern peasants embraced and preserved joint ownership systems for good reasons; that they made common lands increasingly productive and receptive to market forces; and that the *warichi* systems left a legacy that might (for example) “have made it easier to form tenant unions” in the early twentieth century (p. 187). All of this is important, and the work deserves the energy required to engage it. But one might have hoped for a clearer, more streamlined presentation.

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DENNIS J. FROST. *Seeing Stars: Sports Celebrity, Identity, and Body Culture in Modern Japan*. (Harvard East Asian Monographs, number 331.) Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center. 2010. Pp. xi, 337. \$39.95.

Dennis J. Frost outlines the development of “modern sports celebrity” in Japan through a “transnational history” focused largely on four “stars” from sumo, track and field, baseball, and boxing. By looking at the discourse of celebrity surrounding figures ranging across the 1910s, 1920s, wartime, and the 1970s, each chapter thus opens onto a dense and distinct socio- and cultural-historical scene, offering the possibility of a novel perspective on the global articulation of modern regimes of sports, celebrity, and commodification as they intersected with transformations in bodies, gender, discipline, mass culture, nationalism, and identity.

Frost traces the advent of sports celebrity in Japan back to the seventeenth century, rapidly narrating the advent of popular ad hoc wrestling spectacles and body exhibitions that, through patronage, regulation, and ideological investment, were transformed into the invented tradition of sumo. The “stars” of this system emerged from new ranking practices and publicity, and from intertwined “big body” exhibitions (often without any athletic component). Frost’s account passes rapidly over this history; readers wishing for a fuller understanding of Edo-period body politics and spectacle, or of this transitional process, will need to look to the cited literature (R. Kenji Tierney in particular). Frost focuses his analysis in his first two chapters upon Hitachiyama Taniemon (1874–1922), locating this cham-

pion as a “transitional figure” into modern, mass cultural sports celebrity. Enhanced by the ideological cachet of his “samurai” background, and spread through new forms of mass publicity, Hitachiyama’s public image in the early twentieth century, Frost argues, both set narrative standards for the “sports star” paradigm generally and facilitated the rewriting of sumo as an exemplary, and exclusively male, “national sport.” The focus upon celebrity, however, allows Frost to consider less “star”-focused phenomena only in passing: particularly, the contemporaneous dominance of university sports, including baseball, part of the late nineteenth-century energetic promotion of physical culture and athleticism throughout Europe and America, as well as Japan.

Chapter three, on Hitomi Kinue (1907–1931), a track and field star, considers the range of contentious issues invoked by Japan’s first female Olympian. Embraced as “Japan’s first international woman,” Hitomi was simultaneously the source of gender anxiety and speculation via her international victories, androgynous appearance, economic independence, and long-term same-sex cohabitation—a legacy summarily dismissed by heteronormative biographical reimaginings in the 1980s and 1990s. While her victories and life became bound up within mass cultural debates and the fantasy of the “modern girl,” her premature death in 1931 energized ongoing contention over women’s physical education, “abnormality,” and state regulation of women’s bodies.

Chapter four treats Sawamura Eiji (1917–1944), the star pitcher, war casualty, and namesake for the eponymous pitching prize. Frost situates Sawamura’s rise at the moment of baseball’s professionalization and corporate promotion, after decades of highly popular amateur university and secondary school leagues. Sawamura’s initial fame, for three strikeouts of the visiting Babe Ruth, fits within a larger story of promotional tours between Japan and the United States instituted by the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, the newspaper sponsoring Sawamura’s team, which developed the Yomiuri Giants as Japan’s first professional baseball team. Frost explores these exchanges through contemporaneous media accounts; again, the focus upon the public as opposed to institutional level of celebrity leads away from the convergences that made such cultural exchanges feasible and profitable.

Detailing both Sawamura’s and baseball’s propaganda involvements, Frost’s account finds both sport and star fully integrated within national military commitments; Sawamura played a wartime role comparable to those of Ted Williams and Joe DiMaggio. In Sawamura’s case, his willingness to make personal sacrifices cost him first his vaunted pitching ability and finally his life. Frost identifies both the myth of a persecuted sport, and the “postwar re-remembering of baseball’s wartime past” free of militarism, as a continuation of American wartime propaganda under the supervision of the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers. He describes this process as part of an effort to divert blame onto “warlords” while promoting a racially pa-

ternalistic reformist political agenda. But Frost’s account of this reductive propaganda is itself all too brief: it gives scant attention, for example, to the interested self-rehabilitation of some of the same media institutions central to his narrative. Frost passes too quickly over the immediate postwar context for Sawamura’s re-imagining into a generalized “postwar” context that encompasses biographies produced in the 1980s. Thus, Frost misses an opportunity to fit Sawamura’s 1947 memorialization within a broader pattern of cultural promotion by newspapers seeking to distract their readers from both recent war boosterism and postwar labor conflicts. Shōriki Matsutarō, owner of both the *Yomiuri Shimbun* and the Yomiuri Giants, who was still in Sugamo Prison as a Class-A War Crimes suspect in 1947, exemplifies this conjunction of interests.

In the final chapter, on boxing champion Gushiken Yōkō (1955-), Frost briefly describes Okinawa’s marginalization in order to give context to Okinawan expressions of pride in Gushiken’s victories and to biographical accounts of Gushiken himself. Frost notes how such expressions indexed both fraught identification with and against mainland Japan, and “dramatic differences” internal to Okinawa itself. For Frost, the figure of Gushiken helped mediate and tame such differences—and their concrete political accompaniments (military bases, inequity)—by making them consumable as a form of “spectacular difference.”

A brief epilogue considering Ichiro Suzuki (1973-), inadvertently underlines the book’s weaknesses. Frost’s examples seem too spread out, leaving obvious gaps between his rapid expositions of the topics at hand. As a consequence of Frost’s focus on the publicity aspect of celebrity, his trope of “transnational co-constitution” frequently flattens into reflective forms of positionality against either a generic “West” or the United States. We miss the coevalness inherent in, for example, Hitomi’s participation in the international expansion of women’s sports and physical education, and the inherent transnationalism of commodification and professionalization. In following the formulaic biographical narratives of the sports stars, Frost does not always provide much guidance in contextualizing the particular effectiveness of specific narrative choices in a given historical moment. While this may be the “first critical examination of the history of sports celebrity outside a Euro-American context,” Frost’s book only begins to sketch the outline of an adequate understanding of this history.

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E. TAYLOR ATKINS. *Primitive Selves: Koreans in the Japanese Colonial Gaze, 1910–1945*. (Colonialisms, number 5.) Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. 2010. Pp. xv, 262. Cloth \$60.00, paper \$24.95.