

Call For Papers: Religion and Sport in Japan

In 2020 the Summer Olympics and Paralympics will be held in Tokyo. For a brief moment the world's attention to sport will be intensely focused on Japan. Given this unique situation, there is perhaps no better time to delve into an often overlooked, but critical aspect of sport in Japan—namely religion.

Sport has long played a central role in Japanese religion, from the ritualized sumo bouts of Shugendo practitioners as an offering to the gods, to soccer players praying for success at Shinto shrines, to meditation and ritual practices as a means to gain focus or superhuman powers, to religious organizations sponsoring sporting events, teams, and school sport clubs.

In this vein, contributions are now being accepted for a workshop and edited volume tentatively titled “Beyond the Five Rings: Religion and Sport in Japan.” The purpose is to bring together experts from a variety of fields including, but not limited to: religious studies, history, sport studies/sports management, sociology, tourism, anthropology, economics, visual/material culture, and political science.

This call imagines both sport and religion as broadly defined phenomena. For example, papers that include topics in exercise and fitness, e-sports, or traditional games such as kemari are welcome. Likewise, papers that problematize religion as a given or treat religion as a theoretical or conceptual analytic are also welcome. In allowing the borders and boundaries of these concepts to remain open, the editors hope to draw in a wide range of theoretical perspectives.

Possible topics might include (but are certainly not limited to):

- Sport and missionary or chaplaincy efforts in Japan (e.g., the YMCA; denominational missionary efforts; or entities like FCA or Baseball Chapel)
- Sport, religion, and Japanese national identity
- The role of athletic bodies in religious ceremonies
- Sport at religious institutions of education
- Sport shrines, such as Shiramine
- Athletic practice and/as religious practice

Abstracts of no more than 250 words are due by September 20, 2018. The editors will notify contributors of acceptance by October 10, with initial manuscript drafts of 6,000-7,000 words (including references) due February 1, 2019. Those selected

for inclusion will be invited to participate in a workshop March 1-3, 2019 at Western Michigan University. Manuscript drafts will be pre-circulated to all participants. Each presenter will be allowed 10 minutes to introduce their work (with the expectation that all participants will have pre-read the full paper). This will be followed by a 10-minute response from the respondent. Following the response, the floor will be opened for 30 minutes of discussion. In addition to the paper authors, we plan to invite other scholars to serve as respondents and discussion participants in order to get the broadest feedback possible.

Participants will be asked to revise their manuscripts based on workshop feedback and submit a revised manuscript to the editors by June 1, 2019 with the goal of submitting the book manuscript to the publisher by September 2019, and expecting publication in the fall of 2020.

The editors for this project are Zachary Smith (PhD Student, Kinesiology, Recreation, and Sport Studies, University of Tennessee), Dr. Stephen Covell (Chair of Comparative Religion and Professor of Japanese Religions at Western Michigan University), and Dr. Dennis Frost (Associate Professor of East Asian Social Sciences at Kalamazoo College). Abstracts and queries should be directed to Zachary Smith at zsmith23@vols.utk.edu.