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Some Thoughts on the Ken Game in Japan : From the Viewpoint of Comparative Civilization Studies

メタデータ	言語: eng 出版者: 公開日: 2009-04-28 キーワード (Ja): キーワード (En): 作成者: Linhart, Sepp メールアドレス: 所属:
URL	https://doi.org/10.15021/00003009

Some Thoughts on the *Ken* Game in Japan: From the Viewpoint of Comparative Civilization Studies

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1. INTRODUCTION

It is no exaggeration to say that from the beginning of the eighteenth century until the early Shōwa years the finger game *ken* was one of the most popular games throughout Japan in all strata of society and among people of all ages. I would even like to state that, in spite of its Chinese origin, this *ken*, which combines the three elements “drinking, gambling, and buying (women)” (*nomu, utsu, kau*), has been a typical entertainment of the Japanese for a long time, since these three elements are said to constitute the main elements of the “play” of Japanese men. In present day Japan, of all the many forms of *ken* which were popular in former times, only *jan-ken* has survived as a children’s game or as a part of a children’s game, while the other *ken* games have disappeared from the world of adults’ entertainment almost completely. *Jan-ken*, though, is still widely used also by grown-ups as a means of decision making.

2. CLASSIFICATION OF *KEN* GAMES

Broadly divided, all *ken* games can be classified into one of the following three categories:

1. *sansukumi-ken* (*ken* of the three who are afraid of one another);
2. *kazu-ken* (numbers *ken*); and
3. all other kinds of *ken*.

In *sansukumi-ken* there are three patterns as in *jan-ken*, of which A wins over B, B over C, and C again over A. In *mushi-ken* (*ken* of small animals), which seems to be the oldest form of *ken* to have come to Japan from China, the “frog” (*kaeru*,

kawazu), represented by the thumb, wins over the slug or shell-less "snail" (*nameku-jiri*, little finger), the "snail" triumphs over the "snake" (*kuchinawa*, *hebi*, forefinger), and the "snake" wins over the "frog".¹⁾ This *ken* of small animals has been played in Okinawa and Amami until recently under the name of *būsā* or *busa*, both as a game of boys and as an entertainment at drinking parties [OKINAWA DAIHYAKKA JITEN KANKŌ JIMUKYOKU 1983, vol. 3: 343]. But while *mushi-ken* developed into a game of children, as the *Kiyū Shōran* reports: "Mushi-ken and other *ken* are only played by children" [KITAMURA 1929, vol. 2: 428], the *ken* which eventually became most popular in Japan was a *sansukumi-ken* known by a great variety of names: fox-*ken* (*kitsune-ken*), village-head-*ken* (*shōya-ken*, *nanushi-ken*) or Tōhachi-*ken* (*tōhachi-ken*). In this *ken* the fox (*kitsune*), an animal with supernatural powers, wins over the village head (*shōya*, *nanushi*) who is superior to the hunter or gun (*karyūdo*, *ryōshi*, *teppō*). The hunter can of course shoot a fox, so that the *sansukumi* circle is closed. While *jan-ken* and *mushi-ken* are played with the right hand only, in fox-*ken* both hands are used to make more interesting gestures. In tiger-*ken* (*tora-ken*), which seems to have been invented in Japan a short time after fox-*ken*, the gestures are even more interesting, because the whole body is used. This *ken* probably arose through the popularity of Chikamatsu Monzaemon's play *Kokusen'ya Kassen* (*The Battles of Coxinga*, 1715). In this *ken* the half-Japanese, half-Chinese hero Watōnai wins over the tiger (*tora*), which wins over Watōnai's old mother (*basama*) who again is superior to Watōnai, her son. *Mushi-ken*, *jan-ken*, *kitsune-ken* and *tora-ken* are the main Japanese *sansukumi-ken* games, besides which there existed many others at various times and in different regions.

However, from the Genroku (1688-1704) to the Bunsei period (1818-1830) a *ken* which was called the "original *ken*" (*hon-ken*) or "numbers-*ken*" (*kazu-ken*) was the main *ken* played in Japan. In this *hon-ken* two people sit opposite each other and show a certain number with their right hands, while shouting the expected sum of the numbers shown by both players. The one who shouts the correct sum wins. If both players shout the wrong number, or if both players shout the correct result, the outcome is a draw or *aiko*. The left hands are used to count the respective wins. If one judges simply from this explanation, only a few people will think that this is an interesting game. What made it interesting for the Japanese was the way of calling the numbers. The eighteenth-century Japanese called them in Chinese or in what they thought to be Chinese. As a result they did not shout "*ichi, ni, san*" or "*hitotsu, futatsu, mittsu*," in accordance with the usual Japanese way for saying "one, two, three." Instead they counted "*ikko, ryan, sanna*," and

1) In Shibusawa Keizō's index of depictions of the common people's life on *emakimono* there are two depictions of what he calls *jan-ken*, but I think these pictures are illustrations of *mushi-ken*. The first one is from the *Ishiyama-dera Engi Emaki* [SHIBUSAWA 1965-68: vol. 3: 228-29], and the second from the *Hōnen Shōnin Eden* [SHIBUSAWA 1965-68: vol. 5: 20-21].

everybody who wanted to join in this game had to study these numbers before he could start to participate. Since the name of this *ken*-game means "original *ken*," we can assume that it came to Japan together with the earliest *sansukumi-ken* or even earlier.

In every *ken* game, be it *sansukumi* or *kazu-ken*, the most important rule is that the loser has to drink a cup of *sake*, which stands between the players when they start to play. In a remarkably brief span of time from the beginning of the eighteenth century onwards, *ken* became the most popular game at drinking parties; for this reason the name *ken* was frequently attached to games which had no connection with *ken* but were also played at such parties to liven them up. The best known example of this third kind of *ken* games is *kendama*, which is still popular as a game for children today. It is hard to believe that this harmless game, in which one has to throw a wooden ball attached with a string to a stick into a cup on the top of the stick, was a game at drinking parties.²⁾

3. *KEN* IN VARIOUS AREAS OF THE WORLD

As becomes clear from the Chinese pronunciation of the numbers in *hon-ken*, for the Edo-period Japanese this game was a game from Morokoshi, as they called China. It is only natural that, in a closed society like that of the Edo period, a foreign game was a great attraction for many people. The most luxurious *ken* instruction book ever to be published, the two-volume *Ken-sarae Sumai Zue* of Bunka 6 (1809), contains detailed references concerning these Chinese origins of the *ken* game. One source among others cited is the Ming period essay *Gozasso* (1619) (YOSHINAMI and GOJAKU 1809, vol. 2: 2 *omote*, 3 *ura*). I think that there is no doubt that *ken* in the Far East originated in China, where it has remained a popular game until the present day. It is not so well-known that in ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome there existed a similar game. The name of the Egyptian game is not known today, but a depiction of the game itself is clearly discernible in the wall paintings of Beni Hassan. According to the ancient Greek historian Ptolemaeos Hephaestion the beautiful Helen of Troy, a famous figure from Greek mythology, was the one who dreamed up this game, the name of which was also lost. The Romans called it *micare digitis*, or simply *micare*. In ancient Rome, the person with whom one could play this game even in the dark (*quicum in tenebris micare possis*) was believed to be an honest man. It seems that the method of playing *micare* in Rome was almost identical to that of playing *kazu-ken* in China. On the one hand *Micare* was a game, but it was also a method used in decision making, as *jan-ken* is used in Japan today. There is a famous story that the emperor Augustus

2) The *Ken-sarae Sumai Zue*, which is mainly an instruction book for numbers *ken*, also contains, among other kinds of *ken*, a description of *kendama* [YOSHINAMI and GOJAKU 1809, vol. 2: 10 *ura*]. For an introduction to playing *kendama* as a sport today, see FUJIWARA 1980.

made a couple of captives, a father and son, play this *micare* to decide the death of one of them. From an edict which prohibited the use of *micare* to decide the purchase of cattle we can imagine the importance of this game in the daily life of the common people in the Roman empire. Pictorial representations of *micare* have been transmitted to us mainly on Roman ceramics. In these pictures we can see that the opponents hold a stick with their left hands, a rule about whose meaning we can only speculate. It could be that the stick was used in order to prevent the opponents from coming too close together, while another interpretation is that the players had to hold the stick with their left hands, so that the left hands could not disturb the game. Since the Italians today, when they play *morra* or *mora*, the modern version of this game, put their left hands behind their backs, we may assume that the second interpretation of the meaning of the stick is correct.³⁾

This *morra* is even today used in Italy as a kind of gambling. When in the nineteenth century many workers from Italy came to the Vorarlberg area, the industrialised western part of Austria, some Italians were always found standing at a street-corner in the town trying to persuade passers-by to play *morra* with them for money. Since they called "*Cinque, cinque!*" ("Five, five!"), the Austrian people started to call the Italian workers *Tschinker*, an indication of how common the scene was.⁴⁾ In contrast to *micare* in ancient Rome and *morra* in modern Italy, *ken* in Japan was an entertainment at drinking parties which eventually developed into a children's game as well as into one of Japan's famous "WAYS" (*dō, michi*)⁵⁾, but it seems that it never became an important part of gambling. The gambling which could have connections with *ken* is *kenni*, where the opponents had a certain number of coins in their closed fists and had to guess the sum of the coins in both fists [NIHON DAJITEN KANKŌKAI 1974, vol. 7: 347], a game similar to the *hashi-ken* (chopstick-*ken*), a very popular entertainment in Kōchi prefecture even today.⁶⁾

There is a recent report by Samukawa Tsuneo (1987) describing the different types of *ken* games played in various Asian countries. There is no need to repeat this here, but if I try to summarise his views, he says that *ken* exists in all countries east of India, and that various kind of *sansukumi*—and *gosukumi-ken* are still played today in China and Southeast Asian countries. Since *gosukumi* variants of *ken*, *ken* with five different figures, seem to be unknown in Japan, I would like to describe the one played in Malaysia. It consists of five gestures which indicate a "bird" (all five fingers put forward as if they are about to grasp something), a "stone" (the fist), a "pistol" (the thumb and forefinger are put forward), a "board"

3) The information about this game in ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome is from HEYDEMANN 1872. I am thankful to Prof. Ekkehard Weber of the University of Vienna for his valuable help in finding this article.

4) Personal communication from Dr. Manfred Zollinger, 8 November, 1991.

5) In order not to confuse the WAY in its East Asian meaning of a spiritual accomplishment, I shall use capital letters when referring to it throughout this essay.

6) On *hashi-ken*, see KATSURAI 1959: 12-21, HASHITSUME 1968, and KATSURAI 1976.

(palm of hand pointing downwards) and “water” (palm pointing upwards). The relationship of these elements is a little complicated, but the “bird” wins over the “water”; the “stone” over the “bird” and the “board”; the “pistol” over the “bird”, the “stone” and the “board”; the “board” over “bird” and “water”; and the “water” over the “stone” and the “pistol” [SAMUKAWA 1987: 5].

Since the *sukumi*-relationship is very interesting, it was natural that many variations were developed in the different cultural regions where such a *ken* was played. *Jan-ken* is now also a popular game among children in German speaking countries, but to make the original game more interesting, the children added the “well” as a new element to the three elements of “paper”, “stone” and “scissors”, thereby changing the *sansukumi*-relationship into a *yonsukumi*-relationship.⁷⁾ If one investigates the history of *ken* in Japan, it is interesting to note that no variants with four or five elements seem to have developed, while there were numerous variations of the game with three elements, especially at the end of the Edo period. There are also many variations in what parts of the body are used to indicate the same things. Besides the usual *jan-ken* which is played with the right hand, there is a variant played with the legs [NAKADA 1970: 392], another one with the tongue and a third one with the mouth, and a TV-channel even organises *jan-ken* contests between young ladies who play with their bottoms.⁸⁾ But even in these frivolous variants of the game the original concept is strictly preserved.

4. THE CUSTOM OF *KEN-ZAKE*

The already mentioned *ken* instruction book *Ken-sarae Sumai Zue* by Yoshinami and Gojaku of 1809 contains a standard speech to be given by referees at *ken* tournaments, in which there are some references to how *ken* was transmitted in Japan:

At the time of the opening of the [red-light district] Maruyama in Nagasaki in the province of Hizen, a group of Chinese came to a brothel to hold a party with some courtesans. They put up a glass of shining amber and had the eight delicacies served in front of a banister. On the one side of the *tokonoma* flutes were played and Chinese songs were recited, while on the other side drums were beaten and trumpets were played to encourage the players. To this, sweet red wine was served. At the height of the entertainment the Chinese divided themselves into two groups and in a perfectly mannered way began to play *ken* from top to bottom, and again from the bottom to the top. They fought so intensively that the sparks were flying. Those who seemed to have lost were allowed to take two or three sips from the big cup of glass and then they had to retreat to the background. Their good mannered attitude to all this is difficult

7) Personal communication from Prof. Fleur Wöss, University of Vienna.

8) The game is called *T-bakku jan-ken*. I obtained this information from my students Eckhart Derschmidt and Roland Domenig, who also kindly showed me a video of the programme “Bakuhatsu Nabeshima-beya” on Nihon Terebi of 7 October, 1992, 2.10-3.05 a.m.

to express in words. This is the beginning of what we call today *Kiyō-ken*.⁹⁾
[YOSHINAMI and GOJAKU 1809: 4 *omote* and *ura*]

From this text it can be clearly seen that *ken* was said to have been played in Japan for the first time on the occasion of a drinking party. *Ken* in Japan has the reputation of being a game enjoyed by people who like to drink *sake*; it is something to go with *sake*.

In the preface to the same book written by an unknown person with the humorous penname Naniwa kasu-chōja Dōmōso or the “Ōsaka *sake* lees’ millionaire Dōmōso,” which again is a name made up from the three characters for “young,” “ignorant” and “old,” the relation of *ken* and *sake* is expressed in a less pathetic and more funny way:

Well then, since when has this game of *ken* been played so frequently? Although among the different types of *sake* there is one called “the Saint,” the game cannot be found in the scriptures of the saints. Be that as it be, this fight is for the gentleman of the same quality as the one with bow and arrow. If you lose, you have to drink *sake* as punishment, and if you win, you have to offer the cup to the other person. That means that one has to look to oneself to lose the point, and drinking should always change from one to the other. Even the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove¹⁰⁾ enjoyed *sake*, and Santō and Ryūrei themselves raised their voices for playing *ken*. Therefore be wise at the *ken* game in order to obtain the *sake* which is called The Saint, you people with the *sake* cups in your left hands, who fight with drunken voices! [YOSHINAMI and GOJAKU 1809: foreward, no pages indicated]

It is impossible to speak of *ken* and *sake* separately. From a *haikai* on a picture of the Yoshiwara guide-book *Yoshiwara Saiken Kayou Kami* from Kanpō 3 (1743) this relation is also evident:

<i>Tōrai ya</i>	A gift!/ Ten!
<i>Kesa wa ureshiki</i>	This morning brings delight!
<i>Ume no sake</i>	Plum wine! [UROKOGATAYA 1743: no pages indicated]

Tōrai means not only “gift,” but is also the pronunciation for the number “ten” in *ken*, and the plum with its five petals is a symbol for the hand with five fingers and therefore also for the *ken* game. If you announce the number “ten,” you are very

9) *Kiyō* was the name used for Nagasaki by Japanese sinologists during the Edo period.

10) *Chikurin no Shichiken* (*Chu-lin Chi'i-hsien*), the seven Chinese sages Genseki (Yüan Chi), Keikō (Chi K'ang), Santō (Shan T'ao), Shōshū (Hsiang Hsiu), Ryūrei (Liu Ling), Genkan (Yüan Hsien), and Ōjū (Wang Jung), who, disenchanted with politics, in the Shin period around 300 AD, retreated to a bamboo grove to indulge there in cultivated conversation. They are often depicted in various art genres of the Edo period such as *ukiyo-e* or *netsuke*.

likely to lose, and therefore have to drink a cup of wine as punishment, but of course for people who like to drink, the punishment turns into a pleasurable gift.

The *ken* game quickly became very popular, and it is no wonder that from the middle of the eighteenth century onwards a new expression, *ken-zake*, appeared in Japanese popular literature. The earliest mention of this phrase that I have found is in the first volume of the *dangibon Kontan Sōkanjō* by Ishijima Masaue from Hōreki 4 (1754): "One relaxes in the parlor with music, riddles, parodies, *ken-zake* and so on" [ISHIJIMA 1978: 85]. The author of the *Haibun Uzuragoromo*, Yayū, complains in the chapter "Lamenting old age" ("Tanrōji"), which seems to have been written when he was fifty-three years old in 1755, that he is already too old to take part in the pillow fights or in drinking *ken-zake* [YAYŪ 1964: 400]. The *dangibon Fūzoku Shichi Yūdan* by an anonymous author with the comical name Donkusai from Hōreki 6 (1756) contains a sentence: "With the straw hat dressed for visiting the actors' dressing room, where one enjoys *ken-zake*" [DONKUSAI 1978: 222], and in *Hijiri Yūkaku*, which is said to be the first *sharebon*, we can find the following conversation:

Haku Rakuten¹¹⁾ (a male entertainer): "Once in my life I wanted to go to drink to Shimabara¹²⁾. When I went on the night boat and came to Hirakata, the night was very bright, and the scenery around Mt. Yawata covered with clouds was beautiful. When we had gone around this mountain with its sash of clouds, reciting poems and drinking, there appeared suddenly an old man with white hair in a boat. After he had discovered me, he rowed to my side and invited me to eat salsify and drink *sake*, and it was difficult to decline. Before we reached Fushimi, I had lost at playing *ken-zake*, and I escaped and returned home. Fatigued by this *sake*, I fell asleep at once."

*Tayū Ōmichi*¹³⁾: "If this is so, you should drink a cup of welcome!" Haku Rakuten: "I take this cup, but please excuse me for not drinking *sake*!" [NIHON DAJITEN KANKŌKAI. 1970: 447]

In this way we find the phrase *ken-zake* in four different literary works from 1754 to 1757, certainly a proof of the popularity of this custom in the middle of the eighteenth century.

In discussing *ken-zake* one must not forget the *kokkeibon Shichiken Zushiki* (*A Description of the Seven-ken*) from An'ei 8 (1779), because *ken-zake* is its main theme. This book starts with a foreword by an unknown Shuchū karōjin and an introduction by Issō Jirettei (Mr. Evermore Irsome) and a picture of a bamboo grove by a person called Ahen, on which we also see the necessary drinking utensils

11) Haku Rakuten is the Japanese name of the famous Chinese poet Bo Juyi (772-846). The use of this name is of course meant as a parody.

12) The most famous red-light district of Kyōto.

13) The courtesan of the highest rank, *tayū*, in this parody is Confucius, the man who developed the Great WAY (*ōmichi*, *daidō*) to be followed by all people.

and the referee's fan. What follows next is a Chinese poem which contains the motto of this work:

<i>Ryōnin taishaku su</i>	Two people drinking together
<i>ryōte o hiraku</i>	they open their hands—
<i>ippai ippai</i>	one cup, one cup
<i>mata ippai</i>	and one more cup!

[YOMO NO AKARA 1830: 8]

In the chapter “The Tradition of the Seven-ken” Shuraku Kankō describes humorously how Yomo no Akara, who is better known under his name Ōta Nanpō, and his drinking mates invented the game “seven-ken”:

One day in Fukagawa, Yomo no Akara with six or seven very close friends put a pole at the bottom of a *sake*-warming can and said: “If one has only those things, it is enough!” I want a barrel. The best boat to row with other people is a tea boat...¹⁴⁾ [YOMO NO AKARA 1830: 8]

This game is played according to the following rule:

One plays this *ken* by calling one name of the Seven Sages: Genseki, Keikō, Santō, Shōshū, Ryūrei, Hōjū, or Genkan. The players have to know the *haikai* which is attached to each name. It has nothing to do with the figures of the hand illustrated here. The winner is decided upon as in the usual *ken*. But the numbers eight, nine and ten are not allowed. Zero is called *moyū*. [YOMO NO AKARA 1830: 15]

In the second part of this book, which of course is made up from seven chapters, there are instructions about the correct way to drink *sake*, the things to take with *sake*, the drinking vessels, the writing utensils when drinking, and finally the best and the forbidden things at a drinking party. This somewhat humorous, hedonistic work is concluded with a postscript by one of Akara's followers, Tarunuki Jukushi [YOMO NO AKARA 1830].

Of course the expression *ken-zake* can be found also in a number of other literary works of the so-called *gesaku bungaku*, the literature of the floating world. In a parody of the famous *Kanadehon Chūshingura*, the *Anadehon Tsūjingura* of An'ei 8 (1779) written by Hōseidō Kisanji and illustrated by Koikawa Harumachi, one reads: “The judge Shioharu made them serve Chinese food (*shippoku*)¹⁵⁾ and

14) The text is full of witty connotations which makes it difficult to understand and almost untranslatable. E.g. *chirori no soko*, “the bottom of a sake-warming can,” is suggestive of *chirori no sake*, “not continuing for long time”; and *koto taru*, “be enough” continues with *taru hitotsu*, a sake barrel.

15) Since *ken* was thought to be a Chinese game, many people enjoyed Chinese food called *shippoku ryōri* with it; similarly, when they were eating Chinese food, they liked to play *ken*.

they enjoyed *ken-zake*. . . .” [HŌSEIDŌ 1984: 112] and in volume 4 of Shimizu Enjū’s *dangibon Daitōzoku Ikki Yakyō* from An’ei 9 (1780) there is the reference: “At the *ken-zake* he almost never gave in to anybody” [SHIMIZU 1980: 37], while the *sharebon Mitsu Ganawa* of Tenmei 1 (1781) by Kakurenbō (Mr. Hide and Seek) gives prescriptions for the game if played with women: “For *ken-zake* with women one should prepare *sake* in tea cups, *sushi* from the fish *kohada*, as well as Chinese cakes” [KAKURENBŌ 1981: 134]. The *Ōmugaeshi Bunbu no Futamichi* of Kansei 8 (1796), written by Koikawa Harumichi and illustrated by Kitao Masami, contains a funny conversation: “Now, look, you are so strong with your left hand, even though I hardly ever let you play *ken-zake*!” (KOIKAWA 1982: 124) referring to the idea that one usually holds a *sake* cup with one’s left hand, while one plays *ken* with the right hand. A person with a strong left hand should therefore also be a good drinker and *ken* player.

From the humorous short story “*Ken-zake*”, included in the *Buji Shūi* from Kansei 10 (1789), it becomes clear that *ken-zake* at the end of the eighteenth century was practiced by members of all classes, and not only by the better-off Edo citizens who could afford to visit the Shin-Yoshiwara.

At the Komatome Bridge of Ryōgoku, there were several *hinin*¹⁶⁾ meeting. . . . Soon *sake* was passed around in a tea cup, and what was coming along with the *sake* was unpolite talk. Hands were agitated, and: –“You are always drinking!” –“No, no, let’s do it this way, let’s play *ken*!” –“Do you even know this game?” –“Don’t make a fool of a beggar! Is there anyone who does not know *ken*? I formerly used to be a man who sat on three cushions!” –“Really? Well, now let us play differently from the time when you were a big master. The one who wins can drink.” –“Fine, we play for three wins.” –“Five.” –“Two.” –“Three.” –“Six.” –“Eight.” –“Nine.” Then the voice of the guard was heard: “On your way!” [UTEI 1966: 461-462]

The untranslatable pun in this story derives from the fact that the number ten in the *ken* game is called *tōrai*, which in the Edo dialect becomes *tōrē*, a word very similar to the rude imperative form *tōre* of the verb *tōru*, “pass.”

There are a number of *ukiyo-e*-masters who illustrated scenes of *ken-zake*, but compared to other depictions of *ken*, like *hon-ken*, *tora-ken* or *kitsune-ken*, their number is small. From the eighteenth century I found an illustration in volume 2 of Isoda Kōryūsai’s *Konsatsu Yamato Sōga* called “Shoki *ken-sakemori*,” in which the giant hero Shoki, the devil-fighter, drinks with a lovely little girl [ISODA 1781: 8 *omote* 9 *ura*], and there is also an illustration in the above mentioned *Anadehon Tsūjigura* by Koikawa Harumachi [HŌSEIDŌ 1984: 113]. In the nineteenth century such pictures became more frequent. Kikugawa Eisan’s “Toso no *ken-zake*”

16) *Hinin*, lit. “not human beings,” during the Edo period referred to a category of people outside the four statutory levels, and considered too low to be included in society: criminals, prostitutes, beggars, vagabonds and others engaged in dubious occupations. At the beginning of the Meiji period this class distinction was officially abolished.

[NARAZAKI 1988: 123] and Ikeda Eizen's "Tōse Kōbutsu Hakkei: ken-zake"¹⁷⁾ come to one's mind as well as a skilful illustration in Katsushika Hokusai's *Ippitsu Gafu* [KATSUSHIKA 1823: 8 *ura*]. On Ichiyūsai Kuniyoshi's comical picture "Asakusa Okuyama Dōke ken-zake"¹⁸⁾, Enma, the King of Hell, is playing *ken-zake* with his opponent Asahina, both figures which were exhibited as *fūryū ningyō* in Asakusa. There are, of course, many other *ukiyo-e* depicting people playing *ken* and drinking, which are not explicitly titled "*ken-zake*."

Among the *senryū* of the collection *Haifū Yanagitaru* there also some which take up the theme of *ken-zake*, or at least the relation of *ken* to drinking *sake*:

<i>Ken o ken to shite jōgo wa nonde iru</i>	He does not care for <i>ken</i> and starts to drink- the heavy drinker. [OKADA, vol. 3: 1977: 60]
<i>Ikken sebaya to sonji yori sake o tsugi</i>	I would like to play <i>ken</i> ! he says and starts pouring sake for himself. [OKADA, vol. 8: 1978: 68]
<i>Ken-zake no soba ni seiki wa terete iru</i>	Near the <i>ken-zake</i> players the good spirits get lost. [OKADA, vol. 8: 1978: 298]
<i>Orizume de koi to chagashi wa geko no ken</i>	Come with <i>orizume</i> ¹⁹⁾ ! Those with no taste for drinking play <i>ken</i> for cookies. [OKADA, vol. 9: 1978: 251]
<i>Ken no mi ni osorete geko wa nigejitaku</i>	The man who can't hold his wine, sees the figures of <i>ken</i> and prepares to run away. [OKADA, vol. 10: 1978: 32]
<i>Ken no sake tappuri koute geisha make</i>	Intensely longing for <i>sake</i> he loses to the <i>geisha</i> . [OKADA, vol. 11: 1978: 299]

17) Reprint owned by author.

18) Owned by the Museum of Ethnology, Leiden, The Netherlands.

19) *Orizume* has two different meanings: it is a way of packing food, especially sweets and tea-cakes, in a wooden box, as well as the contents of the boxes themselves, and on the other hand a way of playing numbers-*ken*. The first line of this *senryū* can therefore be translated as "Come with the cakes!" as well as "Let's play *orizume-ken*!"

<i>roma ryanken taniko</i>	six, two, one,
<i>tama san chiema sanna</i>	eight, three seven, three,
<i>harari to sake no kan</i>	ten, in the valley of <i>sake</i>
<i>onaji koto ume no hana</i>	and again, the plum blossom
<i>tōrai kyū go gō ryū sū</i>	ten, nine, five, five, six,
	four.

[TAKANO 1942: 206]

Even if this song sounds a little strange and is difficult to understand, it can be easily understood if one knows the basic numbers as they are used in numbers-*ken*, imitating assumed Chinese pronunciation.

I do not know of other *ken* songs from the eighteenth century, but if we judge from the customs followed in the nineteenth century we can say that the participants in a merry drinking round started to sing a slow song, and in the instant when the song stopped, the players had to perform a certain *ken* figure. The loser had to drink a cup of *sake* which had been prepared before. In the tiger-*ken*, which can still be observed in modern Gion in Kyōto, all participants are singing the following song, while two of them come forward from behind the two sides of a panel screen taking a certain figure from tiger-*ken*:

<i>Senri yuku yo ya</i>	Wandering a thousand miles
<i>yabu no naka o</i>	through the bushes
<i>Mina-san nozoite goranjimase</i>	-please take a look, all
	of you-
<i>kin no hachimaki tasuki de</i>	with the golden headband
	and the sleeves bound up
<i>Watōnai ga toramaemashita wa</i>	Watōnai caught the tiger
<i>tora tora tōra tora</i>	the tiger, the tiger, the
	tiger! [MITA 1982: 130]

While the song is often accompanied by a *shamisen* and a drum, the two behind the screen take up one of the following postures: Katō Kiyomasa with a spear in his hands, the tiger on all fours, or the old mother of Watōnai bent with age and therefore walking with a stick in her hand.

We can assume that most *ken* songs were only transmitted orally, but there are some which were published between the end of the eighteenth and the middle of the nineteenth century and I was able to locate the following *ken* songs in Japanese libraries or in the literature:

Shinpan ken-uta inase-bushi
Irozato ōhayari kenmawashi sessenose totonnose
Shinpan irosato ken-uta ukare-bushi
Shin monku daiichiza kitsune-ken tanto-bushi
Shinpan ken-uta Yoshiwara ondo
Yoshiwara kitsune-ken ondo-bushi
Karitaku sawagi kitsune-ken chanto-bushi

The words of these songs have very little to do with the *ken* game, but from the titles, which designate them as *ken* songs, or from illustrations of *ken* players on the title and other pages we can assume that they were sung as introductions to *ken* games. To give just two verses from the *Shinpan Yoshiwara Ondo Ken-uta Yakkora-bushi* as an example:

Yesterday evening, weren't three blind men falling down in front of the bean curd shop? When I went to see them, there were white sugar, black sugar and sugar candy, as well as a blind debt collector²⁰.

Refrain: *Yakkora makkora choi choi*.

Didn't Asahina visit hell a long time ago? When I went to see, there were a red devil, a blue devil, and a white devil, and finally as an addition a black devil.

Refrain: *Yakkora makkora choi choi*.

In the year *Kōka* 4 (1847) the Kawarasaki Theater in Edo included in its first programme in the spring a *jōruri* called *Warau Kado Niwaka no Shichi Fuku* containing a scene with *ken* games, which became very popular and attracted a big audience. This created a *ken* boom such as had never occurred before, which eventually continued until far into the Meiji period. The main attractions of this scene were a *ken* song and a *ken* dance:

Sake wa ken-zake
iroshina wa

kaeru hitohyoko
mihyokohyoko
hebi nura nura
nameku de mairimasho
janjaka janjaka jan-ken na

basama ni
Watōnai ga shikarareta
tora wa hauhau
totetsuruten

kitsune de sā kinasē

Sake should be *ken-zake*
but there are various
methods:

The frog jumps one, two,
three
the snake comes slippery.
Let us try with the slug!
Dingdong dingdong-stone
ken!

It was by his old mother,
that Watōnai was scolded.
The tiger comes a-creeping
to the sound of the
shamisen.

Now come with the fox!

[SAKURADA 1942: 413]

20) Like many other comic Japanese songs this song too relies on the many homonyms in Japanese. *Zatō* means "blind man" and *satō* "sugar." As the second part of a word *satō* becomes *zatō*. *Shiro-zatō* is "white sugar" or "white blind man," *kuro-zatō* is "unrefined sugar" or a "black blind man," and *kōri-zatō* is "sugar candy" or an "ice blind man." *Saisoku-zatō* is a blind man used to collect debts. The fun in this verse is the sudden change from blind men to sugar and vice versa; the words themselves have no coherent meaning.

On the stage of the Kawarasaki-za the three actors Nakamura Utaemon, Ichikawa Kyūzō and Matsumoto Kōshirō danced so skilfully that several different *nishiki-e* were issued showing their superb performance, the words of the song and the figures of the dance. The success of this performance was such that the other two main theaters in Edo, the Nakamura-za and the Ichimura-za also included *jōruri* with *ken* scenes in their first programmes over the next two years, the *Hōrai-ken* (*ken* of the island of eternal youth) and the *sangoku-ken* (three countries-*ken*, *ken* of India, China and Japan), and again in 1859 a *yonaoshi-ken* (*ken* of world improvement) and in 1861 a *hatsuuma-ken* (*ken* of the first horse-day in the second month) were shown on stages in Edo with songs and dances.²¹⁾

At about the same time as these latter performances, after the opening of the port of Yokohama to foreigners, in Yokohama a *ken* song and dance called *chonkina* or *Yokohama-ken* was very popular with the foreigners residing there. According to a *nishiki-e* by Yoshifusa²²⁾ the virtually incomprehensible words of the song went like this:

Chon kina chon kina
chon chon kina kina
chochon ga nan no sono
cho chon ga yoyasa

Chon tate chon tate
chon chon tate tate
chochon ga nan no sono
cho chon ga yoyasa,

but as I tried to show in another article [LINHART 1992: 269–326], there were also many other versions of this song. In the licensed quarter of Yokohama the Japanese prostitutes danced to this song before the foreign spectators, and every time the music stopped, the girls played *fox-ken*. The one who lost had to take off one piece of clothing until all of the participants were stark naked. This *chonkina* can best be compared with the modern *yakyū-ken* (baseball-*ken*), which contains the same elements, a *ken* song, a *ken* dance, a *jan-ken* game and stripping:

Yakyū suru nara
kō yū guai ni shashanse
nagetara kō utte

uttara kō ukete

If you want to play baseball,
 you have to do it this way:
 The ball thrown to you hit
 like this!
 Having hit the ball catch like
 this!

21) On all these occasions, but also on others, *ken* prints were issued, depicting either the *ken* dance given at the theater or quite another event in the form of a *ken* game. On these prints see LINHART (forthcoming).

22) Owned by the City Library of Yokohama (Yokohama shiritsu toshokan).

<i>ranna ni nattara</i>	If you are the runner:
<i>essassa</i>	Essassa!
<i>auto, sēfu</i>	Out! Safe!
<i>yoyoinoyoi</i>	Good, good, good!
<i>aiko de hoi</i>	It's a draw!
<i>hebonoke, heginoke</i>	Hebonoke, heginoke
<i>okawari koi</i>	Let's try once more!

The words of the above song were originally written by the vice-coach of the Iyo Railway Baseball Team, Maeda Goken, in 1924 in Takamatsu on the occasion of a party for enterprises' baseball teams²³), and it is still well known all over Japan today, but with the special understanding that it is a song for a strip-*ken*. From this one example of baseball-*ken* we can clearly see that the tradition of making *ken* more interesting by the inclusion of songs and dances, which was born in the amusement districts of the eighteenth century, is still alive today.

6. KEN AS A GAME FOR CHILDREN

The performance of songs and dances together with *ken* was one direction which this interesting game took in Japan. This kind of amusement with its erotic character was of course limited to the world of grown-ups. But in contrast to this development we can find another one, namely the diffusion of *ken* in the play world of children. Because children's games are not the subject of the symposium, I shall treat this aspect only very briefly.

A finger game, which might be *mushi-ken*, can be found on pictorial scrolls of the Kamakura-period, as I have already mentioned, and there is one scene where it is played at a drinking party [MASUDA 1989: 678], but when this *ken* appears in the literature for the first time, it is already introduced as a children's game. *Jan-ken*, which resembles *mushi-ken*, is similarly referred to from its first appearance in the literature as *kodomo no jan-ken* (the children's stone-*ken*). Compared to these two kinds of *ken*, number-*ken*, tiger-*ken* and fox-*ken* were apparently defined as belonging to the world of adults. Therefore the author of the essay *Asukagawa* from Bunka 7 (1810) complains that children these days are very often playing a game which clearly belongs to the closed world of amusement districts for grown-ups:

In former days children used to play red-shell horse-riding, or they competed against each other with mussel-shells. None of today's children know these games. The games which children play when they come together are telling stories such as "The old man goes to the mountain to cut wood, while the old woman goes to the river to wash" as in former times, but now they also play *mushi-ken*, fox-*ken* and original *ken*. How strange! [SHIBAMURA 1929: 419]

23) The text of "Yakyū-ken" and the information about its origin are taken from the record Victor MV-2052: *Yakyū-ken* (1979).

Children are likely to imitate everything that adults are doing, and according to Shibuzawa Seika's book *Asakusakko*, children from Asakusa at the end of the nineteenth century were even imitating the above mentioned *chonkina* strip-game of adults.

"*Chonkina, chonchon kinakina, chon* on the rape flower, *chochon ga yoiyasa.*" Two children, standing opposite to each other, after having put together the palms of their hands right and left as well as alternately, finally make one of the postures of the fox, hunter or village headman to decide the winner. The loser has to take off one garment that he is wearing every time, until one of them is stark naked. To see little children on cold winter days trembling, because one after another their garments were stripped off them, is a strange scene which can no longer be seen today. This game is a special element of downtown . . . [SHIBUZAWA 1966: 10-11]

7. KEN-ZUMŌ

In volume 5 of Santō Kyōden's *zuihitsu Kinsei Kiseki Kō* (*Reflections on Miracles from Recent Times*) from Bunka 1 (1804) he includes the following interesting comment relating to *ken*:

In the Kyōhō period the people who indulged in *sake*-drinking used to play *ken-zumō*, and it was terribly popular. It is said that Tamagiku was especially skilful. This Tamagiku from the Odawara House of the New Yoshiwara introduced the decoration for the hand as we know it today, which fits the hand perfectly. She had something like a cover for the back of the hand made from black velvet, and with a golden thread she embroidered the emblem in it which is shown here. This is the hand-cover which is used when playing *ken-zumō*. [SANTŌ 1928: 784]

According to this explanation by Santō the way of playing *ken*, which was later known as *ken-zumō*, was thus first invented by the courtesan Tamagiku from Shin-Yoshiwara in the Kyōhō period. Kitamura Nobuyo in the chapter entitled "Eating and Drinking" in volume 10 of his encyclopaedia *Kiyū Shōran* (*Smiling Contemplations of Enjoyable Pastimes*), the introduction to which was written in Bunsei 13 (1830), severely criticises Santō Kyōden, saying:

Even though he has written so, *ken* was not performed in that way in that early period, because the Yoshiwara guide book, *Tora no Fumi* from Enkyō 2 (1745), which contains a detailed description of *ken*, does not mention it. Therefore it has to be from a later period. We can say that the booklet *Tatsumi no Sono* from Meiwa 7 (1770) contains [a passage on] *ken-zumō*. [KITAMURA 1929: 428]

In spite of this criticism by Kitamura, I think that Santō Kyōden was correct as

far as the origins of *ken-zumō* are concerned. In another guide-book, *Yoshiwara Saiken Kayou Kami*, issued by the Urokogataya in Kanpō 3 (1743) two years earlier than the *Tora no Fumi* from Enkyō 2, we find a list which continues over two pages, giving the names of courtesans from the Eastern League (*higashi no kata*), followed by a two-page illustration by Nishimura Shigemasa, which shows the girls from the Eastern League playing against those from the Western League (*nishi no kata*), and as can be seen clearly in this illustration, the referee holds a fan in her right hand, while all the eight female players have *ken-mawashi* attached to the wrists of their right hands. Next comes a two-page list of the referees and the players from the Western League, one page with a picture of flowers and a *sake* cup and a *haikai* poem, an illustration of the different ways of announcing the numbers with the fingers and a written explanation of the rules. Altogether the guide-book contains nine pages on the *ken* game. At this time the referee was the *tayū* Hanamurasaki. The twenty-six players from the Eastern League were led by the *tayū* Komurasaki, and the twenty-three players from the Western League by the *tayū* Usugumo [UROKOGATAYA 1743].

Kayou Kami was the guide-book for the spring season of 1743. In the guide-book for the autumn season of the same year, *Tayū Yaman*, we find again instruction in the *ken* game at the beginning. According to Higuchi the *Kasshi Saiken* of Enkyō 1 (1744) contains also an "Oral tradition of the *ken* game" as well as an illustration [HIGUCHI 1970: 828-829]. The "*Ken'uchi no zukai*" ("Illustration of how to play *ken*") in Ōta Nanpō's *Hannichi Kenwa* [ŌTA 1979: 23-24] has the date Enkyō 3 (1746) and the publishing house's name as Urokogataya, the publisher of the Yoshiwara guide-books; therefore we may assume that it was taken from the 1746 Yoshiwara guide-book *Tora ga Fumi*, the one which is mentioned by Kitamura Nobuyo. Thus, *ken* is explained several times in Yoshiwara guide-books of the middle of the eighteenth century, from which we can estimate its importance in the amusement quarters. Especially in the form of *ken-zumō*, it became another elegant attraction of Shin-Yoshiwara and other amusement districts. From the same period dates also the first *nishiki-e* with *ken* as its main theme, namely Furuyama Moromasa's *Shin-Yoshiwara Zaho Ken-zumō*, an illustration of a courtesan and a customer playing this game [KIKUCHI and HANASAKI 1982: 53].

There are still some points to mention about *ken-zumō*. It did not stop at imitating the referee's fan and the *ken-mawashi* from real *sumō*, but finally even imitated the circle (*dōhyō*). The *ken* instruction book *Fūgetsu Gaiden*, which was published by a club of Ōsaka *ken* fanatics, the Daken enkai itchi, in Meiwa 8 (1771) and written by Kikusha Namitaka, an authority among *ken* players, contains, as far as I am aware, the earliest picture of such a fighting circle [KIKUSHA 1771]. Since it even gives the measurements of the circle, we can very well imagine what it looked like. Its height was about 6 *shaku* (182 centimetres), and each side was 2 *shaku* and 4 *sun* wide (74 centimetres), so that it probably looked quite impressive in a Japanese-style room. On *nishiki-e* up to now I have only been able to find one depiction of a *ken* circle, a very small, graceful one, namely on a picture by

Ryūryūko Shinsai, which also contains a *kyōka*-poem by a man with the comical name Nomiyoshi (Good Drinker) from the Masumoto-rō (The Origin of the Drinking Cup-Inn):

<i>Ken-zumō</i>	In the <i>ken</i> fight
<i>yubi ni mo gokyō</i>	there are also five teachings for the fingers
<i>hakohera o</i>	the hand which breaks the <i>hakohera</i>
<i>utsu te no kuse no</i>	without its strange habits
<i>nakute nanakusa</i>	the seven grasses of spring
	[NARAZAKI 1989: 257]

In the mentioned *Fūgetsu Gaiden* we find also the measurements of the fan and bow used by the referee. Furthermore it states: "The bow is the prize for the *ōzeki*, while the *sekiwake* and *komusubi* get a fan" [KIKUSHA 1771], from which line we can judge that at least at this time in Osaka the three ranks of *sumō*, *ōzeki*, *sekiwake* and *komusubi* were also used in *ken-zumō*. Therefore we are safe in assuming that ranking tables (*banzuke*) were also issued from this time onwards, but the oldest one which I have so far been able to locate was apparently printed during the Bunka period (1804-1818) [LINHART 1991: 161].

Ken-zumō certainly appears to have been a very amusing activity for *ken* fanatics, but for people who did not belong to their world, like ourselves today, what they did must have seemed very strange, even to the point of mild lunacy. The collection of satyric verses *Momejiku Daisekku* contains a verse:

<i>Chimanako de</i>	With eyes blazing in fury
<i>dōhyōiri suru</i>	they parade into the ring-
<i>ken-zumō</i>	the <i>ken-zumō</i> wrestlers!
	[NIHON DAJITEN KANKŌKAI 1974: 324]

Similarly a *senryū* from the collection *Takarabune*, issued in Kamigata in Kan'en 3 (1750), teases the *ken* players:

<i>Shiroi te de</i>	With soft and dainty hands
<i>ogamasete kita</i>	she came and made him pray,
<i>ken-zumō</i>	the <i>ken</i> wrestler!

But the *ken* players were also making fun of themselves. In the above-mentioned *Fūgetsu Gaiden* we find among many others the following verses:

<i>Toshi wasure</i>	Forgetting her age
<i>onna mo sunaru</i>	this woman makes
<i>ken-mawashi</i>	a belt for her fist.
	[KIKUSHA 1771: 2 no 1 ura]

*Furisode no
sekitori mo ari
yukimisake* There are also wrestlers
 with long and silken sleeves:
 sake while enjoying a snow scene.
 [KIKUSHA 1771: 2 no 4 omote]

*Te ni nishiki
kakete wa ichi no
hanano kana* Brocade fixed to the hand.
 One is
 a field of flowers!
 [KIKUSHA 1771: 2 no 4 ura]

which transmit to us a certain feeling of self-irony, but also at the same time of pride.

8. THE DEVELOPMENT OF *KEN* INTO A WAY

It has been often said that many of Japan's different kinds of entertainment developed from a simple entertainment to a WAY. This type of development towards becoming a WAY can also clearly be seen in the history of the *ken* game. When the *ken* players incorporated several organizational and exterior elements of *sumō* wrestling into their game from the beginning of the eighteenth century, it was clearly for fun, in order to make their game more interesting, but in the long run this developed into a drive to make this innocent drinking game of *ken* one of the famous martial arts of Japan. In the *ken* instruction book *Ken-sarae Sumai Zue* from Bunka 6 (1809) we can already detect a trend to make *ken* into an activity valued higher than a simple game, when it says e.g. on training habits:

Those who want to become good *ken* players have to play five hundred to six hundred games a day for a period of sixty days, after which they should take a rest for ten days, before they practice again diligently as before for another sixty days, until they play without thinking about their fingers as if it were quite normal. If one reflects deeply about the pattern of one's fingers in the games after that one will quite naturally become a skilled player. [YOSHINAMI and GOJAKU 1809: 1 no 13 ura]

It seems natural that everybody who practices like this can become a *ken* professional, but if one allots so much time to this activity, it has to become something more worth than just a game. The same instruction book contains also chapters such as "About the five stages of the heart in *ken*," and "How to abandon one's self in *ken*," which express the spirit of Zen Buddhism, and I would like to interpret these chapters as attempts to create for *ken* the kind of spiritual basis that exists, for example, in archery and other Japanese martial arts.

The preface to the instruction book *Ken Hitori Keiko* from Bunsei 13 (1830) by Ōsai Kisanji says that "this book [was written for] beginners in the WAY of *ken*," and "the people who play this WAY get their pride from the table of rankings and

their elegance from their fist-belts" [SAN'Ō and IKKEN 1830: 215], so that in this preface the expression WAY is used twice when referring to *ken*.

As soon as *ken* developed into a WAY, *iemoto* organizations also appeared. Matsuura Seisan writes in his *Kasshi Yawa* about the famous *ken* player Sha Ō who died in 1812 at the age of eighty-four, for whom his pupils erected a memorial stone at the Mimeguri-shrine in Edo [MATSUURA 1911: 8-9]. Even though this stone, which can still be seen there, contains the names of 108 pupils, it is doubtful whether this can be regarded as an *iemoto* organization proper. Such organizations apparently came into being around 1850 in connection with the *Tōhachi-ken* boom. In 1906 the *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun* published the following article under the headline "New and old tales about *tōhachi-ken*":

The flourishing of *ken* groups. Subsequently there appeared a master with the name Haru-no-ie Sōgan, who reformed fox-*ken* and produced *tōhachi-ken* and formed a group of players. Especially among the *hatamoto* there were many *tōhachi-ken* lovers, and in the Kōka and Kaei periods (1844-1854) groups like the Azuma-ren, the Hide-ren, the Asahi, the Azumanobori, the Kozakura, the Musashino and other substantial groups came into existence in great numbers, and it was tremendously popular. . . . In the group called Ryūō-ren there was a former retainer from the Tayasu-*han*, whose name was Kaneko Sōjirō, while his name as a player was Kigan. At the time of the Restoration he renamed himself Kiō, while he transferred his former name to his pupil Zenkyō from Iwato-chō 5, Ushigome-ku, a former *bakufu* retainer with the name Kakinuma Chōhō. He gave the name of Zenkyō to another pupil from Akagi Shitamachi 52 from the same district, who was a teacher of tea and *ikebana* with the name Seihyōan Sōgetsu, while his civil name was Kurosawa Takamasa. After that *ken* battles almost disappeared for a time, until recently when there were attempts at a revival of the old style. Kigan became Kiō II, while Kurosawa was made Kigan III, and their pupil Hamamura Tetsutarō became Zenkyō III. . . . [SHINBUN SHŪSEI MELI HENNEN-SHI HENSAN-KAI 1936: 13: 160]

This means that at the end of the Meiji period the *iemoto* organization of the WAY of *ken*, which originated at the end of the Edo period, was revived and continued until the end of the Pacific War. This becomes clear from the publication of the book *Kenzen Goraku Tōhachi Ken-dō* by Kubota Magoichi in 1941. Kubota, who himself was an *iemoto* master of the Tōkensha group under the name of Tendō, stressed the fact that *ken* was not to be seen as a game, but that it had to be included in the martial arts of Japan. Around the time of the publication of his book all *ken-iemoto* came together and founded the Greater Japan Way of *Tōhachi-ken* Association on 2 February 1941. As one can see from Kubota's book, at this time the *ken* of the *ken* WAY had become a very difficult activity, and he tried to make an explicit difference between it and the original drinking game:

Tōhachi-ken is played among the *ken* players according to very strict rules, but this is generally not widely known. Every *iemoto* had a great amount of

authority, and since it was forbidden to let others know one's *ken* name at *sake*-parties and since the better one played the more one had to restrain oneself, the general public knew it only from hearsay and imitated it out of their imagination. Therefore the *ken* which is performed by *geisha* at drinking parties is not the real *ken*; it is no more than an imitation with the hands. They have taken over also several conventions and ceremonies of which they have heard, but seen from the viewpoint of a *ken* player they are really amusing. A real *ken* game is not something which is done accompanied by *shamisen* and the like. [KUBOTA 1941: 116-117]

In Ansei 3 (1856) the *gesaku* writer Umebori Kokuga took quite another standpoint towards *Tōhachi-ken* in his *Ken Haya Shinan*, which I believe was the last *ken* instruction book published during the Edo period:

Every *ken* should be an entertainment at a drinking party and one should never think about winning or losing. One should remember everything which one has heard and seen and should never play with tricky hands. If one plays with unclean gestures, the other person feels as though his heart is being assaulted, and the mood of the party will cool down. If one loses, this is not necessarily something to be ashamed of. If one wins, this does not have to become a matter of pride for one's children, grandchildren, and other descendants. These principles should be taken to heart and women especially should be careful. The awkward gestures of *tōhachi-ken* which have become popular recently should only be remembered. [UMEBORI 1856: 5 *ura*]

9. CONCLUSION

Since there is no special equipment necessary for playing *ken*, two people who meet anywhere can play at once without making any preparations; furthermore, the rules are rather simple. Therefore I believe that this game may well have developed independently in several parts of the world. From the sources with which I am acquainted, we can divide *ken* into two major traditions, one that of ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome, and the other that of China. Japanese *ken* belongs to the Chinese tradition, but as I have attempted to demonstrate above, within the framework of Japanese culture and especially the culture of the licensed quarters of the Edo period, it developed greatly beyond the level of a simple game at drinking parties and incorporated elements of dances and songs, so that it was no longer only a primitive finger-game but an interesting and sophisticated amusement. This adult entertainment found artistic expression in Japan's *gesaku* literature, *kabuki* drama, *ukiyo-e* prints, *netsuke* carvings and other areas of cultural expression. The same *ken* also evolved into a game for children, and even today it is an important element in many children's games. As the third tendency in the development of *ken*, we have been able to establish that there were several attempts at turning *ken* into a WAY. This same tendency can be found throughout the Edo period in several other types of entertainment as well.

Ken seemed to have great importance both in ancient Roman and Chinese culture, but it apparently did not develop within their respective “cultures of play” to such an extent as it did in Japan. It seems therefore that it will be a necessary task for further research to clarify the factors and conditions that influenced this remarkable development.²⁴⁾

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24) I would like to thank Professor Ann Herring of Hōsei University, Tokyo, for checking the English of this article and making many useful suggestions.

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