
PERILOUS WAGERS

Studies of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute, Columbia University

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PERILOUS WAGERS

Gambling, Dignity, and Day Laborers
in Twenty-First-Century Tokyo

Klaus K. Y. Hammering

CORNELL UNIVERSITY PRESS ITHACA AND LONDON

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First published 2024 by Cornell University Press

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Hammering, Klaus K. Y., 1980– author.

Title: Perilous wagers : gambling, dignity, and day laborers in twenty-first-century Tokyo / Klaus K. Y. Hammering.

Description: Ithaca : Cornell University Press, 2024. | Series: Studies of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute, Columbia University | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2023046111 (print) | LCCN 2023046112 (ebook) | ISBN 9781501776410 (hardcover) | ISBN 9781501776427 (paperback) | ISBN 9781501776434 (epub) | ISBN 9781501776441 (pdf)

Subjects: LCSH: Masculinity—Social aspects—Japan. | Unskilled labor—Social aspects—Japan. | Gangsters in popular culture—Japan. | San'ya (Tokyo, Japan)—Social conditions—21st century. | San'ya (Tokyo, Japan)—Economic conditions—21st century.

Classification: LCC HN723.5 .H2664 2024 (print) | LCC HN723.5 (ebook) | DDC 306.0952—dc23/eng/20240129

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2023046111>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2023046112>

Cover image: Design of Okinawan *shisa* superimposed on satellite image of Tokyo by Anson Wigner, ansonwigner.com, 2023.

For my parents:
Reiko Yamamoto and Keld Hammering

Well, what is gambling, I should like to know, but the art of producing in a second the changes that Destiny ordinarily effects only in the course of many hours or even many years, the art of collecting into a single instant the emotions dispersed throughout the slow-moving existence of ordinary men, the secret of living a whole lifetime in a few minutes—in a word, the genie's ball of thread?

—Anatole France, quoted in Benjamin, *Arcades Project*