Struggle for Banners SHINKISOUDATU: Tradition and Acculturation

Yasushi Sakuma*

*Department of Business and Management, Tokyo Management College
625-1, Futamata, Ichikawa, Chiba 272-0001 Japan
sakuma@tmc-ipd.ac.jp
[Received February 18, 2005 ; Accepted December 6, 2005]

The Wild Horse Chase in Soma called Soma Nomaoi, which has a 1000-year history, is a traditional sport that has existed overcoming many challenges to its survival and changing its style repeatedly as it adjusted to the changing historical periods. It has also become an important source for tourism. The style and tradition of the Nomaoi developed by the Soma clan in Oshu was established by around 1700, and has been held as a sacred ritual by three shrines, Nakamura, Ota and Odaka. Originally a samurai festival, a change in organizers prompted the inclusion of commoners. A lack of the wild horses also caused the festival to evolve into the contest for the sacred banners. Nomaoi was once dedicated to the god Myoken; however, it is treated as a sacred festival for the god Ame no minakuni nushi no mikoto. The scheduling of the festival has also changed to make accommodate the practicalities of modern life while focusing on the inheritance of traditional culture. The cavalry that carries out the festival and the audience that observe the festival also play roles which dramatize the tradition of the festival.

Keywords: contest for the sacred banners, Nomaoi, Myoken belief, Samurai culture

[International Journal of Sport and Health Science Vol.4, 161-170, 2006]

1. Introduction

Nomaoi, the Wild Horse Chase in Soma, in which a few hundred mounted samurai fight for sacred Shinko banners fired into the air, was designated as a significant intangible folk cultural asset in Showa 53. It is a traditional event that has been passed down in Soso, Fukushima Prefecture for over one thousand years.

Nomaoi has been inherited through the changes of time with some changes to its content. The change from the Edo to the Meiji Period especially affected whole concept of Nomaoi.

Industrial development and high economic growth after the war caused a reduction in the number of work horses raised, affecting the continuing existence of traditional cavalry sports.

Therefore, Nomaoi is a traditional sport that has overcome many challenges to its survival, adapting itself repeatedly to changes throughout its long existence.

Information and brief descriptions regarding the history of the Nomaoi can be found here and there in local newspapers and local historical materials though there are few academic studies or literary documents concerning this festival. In addition to this, there is the 600-year Soma clan domination over the Oshu area that influenced the development of Uda, Namekata and Shineha counties, the area now known as Soso, Fukushima Prefecture, until the abolition of clans and the establishment of prefectures in 1871, and the tradition of Nomaoi has become an every day affair in modern life.

This article provides an overview of the Nomaoi in Soma and examines the tradition of Soma that has continued without interruption throughout its long history.

Where no special note is made, the information provided was obtained through interviews.3)

---

1 Soso is an elongated area lying north-south facing the Pacific Ocean along with the Soma and Futaba areas of Fukushima Prefecture and the Abukuma Highlands.

2 Some of the historical material concerning Nomaoi has vanished, but much remains. Such material is included in the "History of Haramachi City, Volume 1...Special Edition III, Nomaoi", which was published in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Haramachi City, with other related materials and pictures.

3 This fieldwork was performed on the 24th and 25th of July, 2003, and the 22nd of January and 24th of December, 2003.
2. The Current Nomaoi Festival in Soma and the Contest for Shinki

Currently, the Nomaoi festival in Soma is held jointly by Nakamura Shrine (Soma City), Soma Ota Shrine (Haramachi Town) and Soma Odaka shrine (Odaka Town in Soma County), for three days from July 23rd to 25th. This traditional event is supported by two cities, six towns and two villages (Haramachi City, Soma City, Shinchi Town, Kashima Town, Odaka Town, Namie Town, Futaba Town, Okuma Town, Iitate Village and Katurao Village) called the five Go (Uda go, Kita go, Nakano go, Odaka go and Shineha go) (Figure 1).

This festival is organized by several Go, administrative districts in the Hansei Period, each dedicating the festival to their own shrine (Table 1). The Go in the Hansei Period were similar to the present districts that hold Nomaoi; however, Tamano in Soma City, Iitate Village in Soma County, Namie Town in Futaba County and a part of Katurao Village incorporated in Shineha Go and Shinchi Town in Soma Country were in Date territory, which was outside Soma territory during the Hansei period.

This festival begins with Shutujin, The Entry to War, and Yoinori, The Departure for the Front, on July 23rd. The main festival takes place on the 24th (Highlighted by the Kacchu Keiba, a race of mounted armored knights, and the Shinki Sodatsu, a contest for sacred banners) and finishes with the Nomaoi, a Wild Horse Chase and the Nomakake a Dedication, on the 25th (Table 2).

The Entry to War Ceremony on the 23rd is first held in each Go, where participants gather at each shrine. Participants then line up on either side of a Mikoshi, or portable shrine, and carry it up to the Hibari-ga Hara Grounds. The events and movements from the Entry to War, led by the Commander-in-Chief in Uda Go and the Deputy Commander-in-Chief in Kita Go, to the Departure from Soma Nakamura Shrine are especially reminiscent of samurai society. After arriving at the Hibari-ga Hara Grounds, a purification ceremony for the riding ground is performed. This is followed by an Eve of the Ride, ridden in by cavalry knights wearing a coat of arms, hakama riding pants and a white headband.

On the morning of the 24th, a parade of armored cavalry knights, foot soldiers carrying guns and bows, and squires from each of the shrines will charge forward to the Hibari-ga Hara Grounds. After they enshrine the Mikoshi at the Daimyo’s stronghold, the Nomaoi Ceremony takes place. In it, armored cavalry knights, carrying banners, run in a race followed by the contest for the sacred banners, in which banners from each of the three shrines are launched into the air on fireworks, and participants compete to capture them.

On the 25th, the last day of the festival, the Wild Horse Chase and Nomakake dedication, both of which keep the traditional style of the Nomaoi, take place at the Soma Odaka Shrine. This is a sacred festival during which a sacred horse is chosen. Cavalry knights chase the chosen horse into the Odaka Shrine, where, after young people called Okobito catch it with their bare hands, it is dedicated to the shrine. Nowadays, the actual horse has been

Figure 1 The districts that are members of the Nomaoi conservation committee and the region of the former Soma Nakamura Clan
replaced by votive pictures of a sacred horse. Horses that weren’t chosen are put up for sale at an auction called Oseri; however, this is ceremonial and the horses are not actually bought or sold.

The Okobito at the Nomakake dedication are horse owners from Katurao Village. In other words, they are chasing and catching their own horses, horses that play the role of wild horses.

A ceremony and post-festival celebration bring the events of the Soma Nomaoi to an end. In addition to the main festival, smaller ceremonies and festivals, such as a miniature contest for the sacred banners, take place in each city, town and Go.\(^4\)

By the way, this Nomaoi is also called the Banner Festival so that the use of many banners is a characteristic of the festival.\(^5\) The banners used in Nomaoi are called Hatajirushi. They are classified broadly into categories, such as banners of the domain lord, banners that cavalry knights use called Sashi-hata, and banners that indicate position, Go and shrine.

The Sashi-hata banners carried by cavalry knights

---

\(^4\) In Kita Go, the Kita Go knights’ association and the tourist association hold a pre-festival party on the eve of the festival. In Shineha Go, the Shineha Go Nomaoi festival is held by the Shineha Go Nomaoi Management Committee, including a contest for the sacred banners at Namie Central Park and a miniature Nomaoi contest for the sacred banners in Futaba town held by the knights’ team of Futaba town, Shineha county. Some of the historical material concerning Nomaoi has vanished, but much remains. Such material is included in the "History of Haramachi City, Volume 1., Special Edition III, Nomaoi", which was published in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Haramachi City, with other related materials and pictures.

\(^5\) In the folk song "Soma Nagare Yama", developed with Nomaoi as the military song (national anthem*) of Soma Nomaoi, there is a part which says that the flowers on the knights’ banners bloomed in the blue field of wild horses overnight. This indicates that various colors of banners were used for the Nomaoi and that these colors were symbols of the Nomaoi.

The folk song "Soma Nagare Yama" was written by Soma Shigetane, the sixth head of the Soma clan, when he moved into Namakata county in Oshu from Shimousa no Kuni. He poured his nostalgia for his hometown into this song and it was passed along among samurai as the military song and national anthem of Soma (Fujita, Kai, "Thoughts of Soma Nomaoi" p.80 1972.5). Currently in the Nomaoi, this song is sung everywhere throughout the festival as the military song and the national anthem of Soma. And because the words of the song describe the Nomaoi, it is obvious that this song was handed down along with the Nomaoi tradition. However, no historical material indicating the time of the creation of this song or documenting this song as being the military song or national anthem of Soma has been found. Even in "Thoughts of Soma Nomaoi", the song was described only as an old man’s old story.

---

\(^4\) In Kita Go, the Kita Go knights’ association and the tourist association hold a pre-festival party on the eve of the festival. In Shineha Go, the Shineha Go Nomaoi festival is held by the Shineha Go Nomaoi Management Committee, including a contest for the sacred banners at Namie Central Park and a miniature Nomaoi contest for the sacred banners in Futaba town held by the knights’ team of Futaba town, Shineha county. Some of the historical material concerning Nomaoi has vanished, but much remains. Such material is included in the "History of Haramachi City, Volume 1., Special Edition III, Nomaoi", which was published in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Haramachi City, with other related materials and pictures.

\(^5\) In the folk song "Soma Nagare Yama", developed with Nomaoi as the military song (national anthem*) of Soma Nomaoi, there is a part which says that the flowers on the knights’ banners bloomed in the blue field of wild horses overnight. This indicates that various colors of banners were used for the Nomaoi and that these colors were symbols of the Nomaoi.

The folk song "Soma Nagare Yama" was written by Soma Shigetane, the sixth head of the Soma clan, when he moved into Namakata county in Oshu from Shimousa no Kuni. He poured his nostalgia for his hometown into this song and it was passed along among samurai as the military song and national anthem of Soma (Fujita, Kai, "Thoughts of Soma Nomaoi" p.80 1972.5). Currently in the Nomaoi, this song is sung everywhere throughout the festival as the military song and the national anthem of Soma. And because the words of the song describe the Nomaoi, it is obvious that this song was handed down along with the Nomaoi tradition. However, no historical material indicating the time of the creation of this song or documenting this song as being the military song or national anthem of Soma has been found. Even in "Thoughts of Soma Nomaoi", the song was described only as an old man’s old story.
symbolize the carrier’s house and clan, and they help the domain lord to identify his knights’ movement on the battlefield [The Soma Nomaoi conservation committee. (1994)]. They also make it easy to find the cavalry knights carrying sacred banners among the more than 500 cavalry knights participating in the contest for the sacred banners.

The contest for the sacred banners began replacing...
the Wild Horse Chase during the medieval and modern ages. More than 500 armored cavalry knights fight for Goshinki, sacred banners whose color represent the three shrines, red for the Soma Ota Shrine, blue for the Soma Nakamura Shrine and yellow for the Soma Odaka Shrine.

The sacred banners are 30 cm wide and 140 cm long. The cavalry knights will capture them using a 97 cm long (3 shaku, 2 sun by the old Japanese system of measurement is the standard length) riding crop. Cavalry knights who obtain the sacred banners run up a slope called Sheep Casing Slope that leads to the Daimyo’s stronghold. They receive an award from the Chief of Staff and others seated at a judgment table in exchange for the captured banners.

The main event ends with the launching of 20 firework rockets, each carrying two sacred banners for a total of 40 sacred banners, into the air.

3. Organizations that support the contest for sacred banners

Currently, the traditional event of Nomaoi held as a sacred festival by three shrines in Soma is led by cavalry knights. Each knight is assigned and performs a separate role in the festival. Therefore, the Nomaoi performance by cavalry knights depends on the knights’ association of each Go. The Soma Nomaoi Executive Committee, established in 1959 as the administrative organization of Nomaoi and festivals in Soma, takes the position of festival organizer. This organization consists of the mayors of two cities, six towns and two villages, commercial and industrial group leaders, the knight’s association and others, with the mayor of Haramachi City holding the position of committee chairman and the leaders of cities, towns and villages each holding the position of vice-chairman of the committee. They hold a meeting in June of every year to discuss and decide matters of budget, the content and scheduling of events. They also select a general director, called Chief of staff 6), at the meeting who presides over the management of Nomaoi.

In response to Soma Nomaoi being designated as a National Significant Intangible Folk Cultural Asset on May 24th, 1978, the Soma Nomaoi Preservation Association was established along with an Executive Committee and a Knights’ association on June 30th in 1987.

Frequent crisis related to the continuing existence of Nomaoi prompted the establishment of such an administrative organization. Consequently, momentum for continuation and restoration was gathered, and the Executive Committee and the preservation association were established.

Festival management costs are supported by contributions from participating cities, towns and villages, subsidies from the Foundation for Horse Culture and others, and sales of festival admission tickets. Of the 2003 Nomaoi administrative organization budget, approximately 35 million yen is supported by incentives from Fukushima Prefecture and the Foundation for Horse Culture 7), sales of festival admission tickets 8), contributions from sponsors 9) and others. The supplementary prize for the Eve of the Ride, the horse race by riders in classical armor and the contest for sacred banners are provided by corporations and others.

Among the items included in the budget, the subsidy for cavalry knights and the attendance honorarium for participants other than cavalry knights are provided to each knights’ association and participants by the executive committee. Considering the size of the festival, however, the total amount of the budget is small and the subsidy for cavalry knights is inadequate at present. The subsidy for cavalry knights is different in each area, though generally ¥7,000 to ¥13,000 per horse. The cost of raising horses was once provided in the past; however, this cost is now borne by the individual.

I would like to briefly describe the role of the cavalry knights, the main participants of the festival, and the cavalry knights’ association which controls the cavalry knights.

6 The Chief of Staff oversees the management of all events at the festival for three days as the leader of all teams. He is the head of the Nomaoi management committee. The Chief of Staff is selected by election at the selection committee of the knights (consisting of 10 people, two from the knights’ association of each Go). Recently, the leader of the Nakanogo knights’ association is selected.

7 For 2004, approximately ¥3,500,000 was provided as a subsidy from Fukushima Prefecture and the Horse Promotion Foundation.

8 Today’s general admission tickets are sold for ¥1,000 ($800 in advance) for adults, ¥500 ($400 in advance) for children (elementary and junior high school students), and reserved seat tickets for groups are ¥1,200 (groups of more than twenty people need to make an appointment in advance).

9 240 business establishments support the festival, and the support is between 10,000 and a few million yen.
The Commander-in-Chief is the chief representative of all Go teams. Executive Committee Regulations Article 9\(^{10}\) is applied to the selection of the Commander-in-Chief [The compilation committee of the history of city, Haramachi City, The school board cultural asset department (2004)]. Unless there are special reasons, the head of the Soma family, who was the former domain lord, is usually asked to be Commander-in-Chief by the priest at Nakamura Shrine and the representatives of shrine parishioners.

The selection of the Chief of Staff that presides over the festival is as mentioned above; however, instructions are given to each Go team through a messenger known as an Otsukai-ban, who uses a conch to trumpet the instructions to the Vice Chief of staff, Chiefs of the Go, Chief of Samurai, Squad Leaders and Sub-squad Leaders, and the cavalry knights move according to these instructions.

Each Go team includes important posts, the top of which being the Go Commander; however, as Uda Go has the Commander-in-chief and Kita Go has the Commander-in-deputy chief, these Go do not have Go Commanders. The Deputy Commander-in-Chief is a new position, given to the Endo and Ebihara clans for their contributions to the re-establishment of Nomaoi after the Meiji Period. This post was held by these two families in turn; however, it has been inherited by the Ebihara clan because the Endo clan has not participated for a few years.

The Vice Chief of Staff is selected for each Go as the person who is responsible for conducting the festival. Because this post was instituted after the war, it was not seen in the Hansei period.

The cavalry knights belong to the knights’ associations of the five Go supporting this festival. Generally, they control all matters relating to the Nomaoi in each Go. The cavalry knights holding special posts for the festival are selected by each Go; however, the means of selection differ among the Go. These posts are not hereditary or ancestral, but are assigned to different individuals every two or three years.

Anybody can be a member of these associations regardless their status, background or residence. Everyone is allowed to participate in the Nomaoi; however, they are required to have actual equestrian skill and experience, and be in possession of a horse and the variety of equipment required for participation in the festival, such as armor, banners and etc. Recently, even if participants don’t have their own horses and armor, they can borrow what they need from others. Therefore, as long as they meet the conditions, even people from abroad can participate in the festival. There is no age limit, so small children can participate. However, only unmarried women under twenty can participate [Sakuma, Y. (2004pp.237-238)].

The Nomoi festival parade is made up of 2,000 participants, including not only the cavalry knights but also gun teams, foot soldiers with bows and spears, people carrying various kinds of banners and Mikoshi bearers from each shrine. Elementary school students participate as foot soldiers, and junior high school and high school students are hired part time to act as foot soldiers. Recruiting is left to each shrine and Go.

4. Revival of Samurai Culture

According to legend, the Nomaoi derives from the story of Taira no Masakado, who practiced fighting against a wild horse, and then dedicated it to the god Myoken at Koganehara in Shimousa, what is now Nagareyama City in Chiba Prefecture.

From this legend, the Soma clan in Oshu, descendants of Taira no Masakado, developed the style and tradition of Nomaoi which has been passed down to the present day. The complete content of the Nomaoi, from the Entry to War and the Departure for the Front on the first day of the festival to the Nomaoi on the second day and the Nomakake on the third day, had already been established by 1700 [The compilation committee of the history of city, Haramachi City The school board cultural asset department (2004)].

The Nomoi in the Hansei period was a local festival for the god Myoken that was organized by

---

\(^{10}\) In Article 9 of the Executive Committee Law, it says that the Nakamura Shrine and Soma City ask the head of the old Soma clan for its recommendation for Commander-in-Chief, and the director of the committee makes the final decision. The Commander-in-Chief is not a descendant. After the Meiji Period, not only relatives and senior statesmen of the Soma clan, but also the Nakamura town mayor and Soma city mayor have served as the Commander-in-Chief. In the Hansei period, they sometimes didn’t have a Commander-in-Chief because of the daimyo’s alternating attendance in Edo. The head of the family did not always serve as the Commander-in-Chief.
the local lord. The festival was also used as military 
training. Participation was limited to the warriors 
who lived in the town surrounding Nakamura Castle 
and warriors who lived in villages in the territory 
of the Nakamura clan in Soma. However, it seems 
that farmers in the area were also marshaled to 
prevent horses from escaping at the Nomaoi festival. 
The military at that time was made up of lower 
ranking warriors who lived in the town surrounding 
Nakamura Castle, and the warriors who lived in the 
villages in the territory of the Nakamura clan were 
put under the command of a Sub-squad leader for 
each team. It is said that participation in the Nomaoi 
is based on this military organization (Figure 2).

With the abolition of clans and the establishment of 
prefectures in 1871, after the Meiji government was 
instituted, the Nakamura clan disappeared and the 
wild horses in the Nomaoi field were caught, leading 
to the end of the Myoken ranch for the Nomaoi. 
Consequently, the Nomaoi that had been organized 
by the domain lord also came to an end; however, 
they continued holding a downsized version of the 
Nomaoi following unofficial Nomaoi rules[11] [Nishi, 
T. (1997)].

In 1872, the Nomaoi was organized as a sacred 
festival by the Ota Shrine and along with a change 
of organizer, Iwamae Prefecture[12] it was decided 
to allow not only warriors but also commoners to 
participate in the Nomaoi. It is said that for a while 
after the Myoken ranch was closed, they used horses

---

**Figure 2** The military organization of the Nakamura feudal clan in the Edo period.
that had been raised specifically for the Nomaoi instead of wild horses; however, because there is a document from the Otani clan from 1883 with, "we had a fight for banners," written on it\(^\text{13}\), it is believed that the contest for the sacred banners replaced the Nomaoi.

Citing a picture of "horses at the three shrine festivals in Soma of Iwaki" (at the Fukusima Prefectural Library) showing the names of the Ota Shrine, Odaka Shrine and Nakamura Shrine written in the Daimyo's stronghold along with the depiction of banners that had been launched into the air by fireworks falling down and only cavalry knights, not wild horses, a study has indicated that the festival organization was transferred from the Soma clan to the three shrines, and that the contest for the sacred banners with fireworks started during the middle of the Meiji Period [Endo, K. (2002)]. The second day, on which the contest for the sacred banners is held, is still called the Nomaoi, and on the third day, the traditional Nomakake is held at the Soma Odaka Shrine (Table 3). This was the festival dedicated to the god Myoken; however, the Myoken hall was transferred because of the Shinto and Buddhism Separation Act of 1868 so that the current Nomaoi festival organized by three shrines should be thought of as a sacred festival for Ame no Minakanushi no Mikoto, the god of the festival. As Ame no Minakanushi no Mikoto is the god of the North Star and the Big Dipper, the belief in Myoken is passed along even now.

The scheduling of the festival, determined by the old calendar, was in May, on the day of the Monkey. After the change to the new calendar, July 2\(^\text{nd}\), the day of the Monkey in May by the old calendar, was chosen. It was changed, however, to a more practical day, focusing on the succession of traditional culture (Table 4).

Cavalry knights participate in the Nomaoi in the full armor of their ancestors and with ancestral practice. The audience must follow the respectful custom of not crossing the parade of knights and of not looking down on the parade from above. In other words, the Nomaoi is thought to be a cultural device that purposely creates a distinction of positions by cavalry knights fulfilling the role of hierarchical dominance and the audience playing the role of farmers and townspeople during the Hansei period.

Each cavalry knight wears a tag with his name and rank and serves as a member of the cavalry knights’ team commanded by the Commander-in-Chief. This symbolizes the samurai culture in the Hansei period and shows the hierarchical structure and division of roles of knights and the Deputy Commander-in-Chief in Nomaoi society [Sakuma, Y. (2004 pp.236-237)]. This hierarchical society reminds us of the Hansei period; however, the structure of the Hansei period itself was not adopted. Festival organizers achieve a realistic dramatization of the Nomaoi tradition in samurai culture with the help of participants who take on the role of knights, spectators who resemble townspeople and by asking a member of the Soma family, the clan that actually held dominion during the Hansei period, to act as Commander-in-Chief.

References
The compilation committee of the history of city, Haramachi City The school board cultural asset department (2004). Nomaoi, History of Haramachi city vol. 10, Special Issue III. Haramachi City Government.

\(^\text{11}\) When the domain lord was present in the area, he performed the role. When the domain lord was in Edo for the daimyo’s one-year attendance, somebody else from the clan represented him and held an informal Nomaoi, skipping some events. In years of poor harvest, war, or national crisis, many parts of the festival were skipped, but it was never canceled.

\(^\text{12}\) The name of the prefecture, including the Nakamura clan in Soma, used from November, 1871 to August, 1876. The Nakamura clan in Oshu became Nakamura Prefecture with the abolition of clans and establishment of prefectures in 1871; however, it was integrated into Taira Prefecture in November of that year and soon after that its name was changed to Iwamae Prefecture. In August, 1876, Fukushima, Wakamatsu and Iwamae Prefectures were united into Fukushima Prefecture.

\(^\text{13}\) Although the method used for launching them into the air has not been confirmed, the possibility exists that fireworks were used in the middle of Meiji Period. During the war, it seems that arrows were used.
Table 3  A comparison of the schedules for the Nomaoi in the Edo period and the Nomaoi today.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The 1st day</th>
<th>The present age (2003)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yoi-Nori</td>
<td>(Excerpted from the event overview of the Souma Nomaoi in 2003.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Edo period [The middle of the 18th century]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The followers were 100 samurai riders and 1,000 or more infantrymen.</td>
<td>Departure for the Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Oshu-Sawa-Ki was includ [The compilation committee of the history of city, Haramachi City The school board cultural asset department (2004).])</td>
<td>※ Welcoming of the Commander-in-Chief (Kita-go : Kashima Town)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The inspection of the racecourse in Nomaoi-hara[Nomaoi-Field] by the seigneur. Eve of the Ride (The announcing of equitation at Naka No Hama-road in Hara.) Wearing hakama riding pants, and a coat of arms.</td>
<td>Purification Ceremony (Haramachi City, Hibari-ga Hara Grounds)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takes the field from the Nakamura castle. (Haranomachi - juku stays)</td>
<td>Eve of the Ride (Haramachi City, Hibari-ga Hara Grounds)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The 2nd day</th>
<th>Assembling the Full Force (Under the commander's supervision, each regional force queues for the march to the front.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nomaoi</td>
<td>Commencement of the Procession (The forces will march in the following order: Naka no Go, Odaka Go, Shineha Go, Kita Go, and Uda Go.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kake-Hiki (Military training in Nomaoi-Hara.) ※Native samurai join the main force. Nomaoi (Samurai Riders drive a wild horse into an enclosure at the Odaka Miyogen shrine from Nomaoi-hara.) ※ Farmers are mobilized as the helpers called “Tachi-Kiri”.</td>
<td>Ceremonial Rites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse Race by Riders in Classical Armor Contest for the Sacred Banners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>※ Banners will be shot from a cannon, 20 shots, each containing 2 banners for a total of 40 banners ※ Prizes consist of a main prize and a number of additional prizes. The latter include &quot;governor prizes&quot;, contributions from businesses, and gifts from each of the festival's sponsors.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The 3rd day</th>
<th>Odaka Fire Festival(Odaka Town)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Noma-Kake : Wild horse chasing and dedication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wild horses are corralled, and at the commander's signal White robed, purified men called &quot;Okobito&quot; thrust themselves into the frenzy of untamed horses and capture them bare handed for dedication to the shrine. Sets a horse free after pressing a brand at the horse after Noma-Kake ends. Wild horses return to Nomaoi-hara[Nomaoi-Field]</td>
<td>Noma-Kake : Wild horse chasing and dedication[The site of the Odaka Castle (within the Odaka Shrine complex)]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tens of samurai riders gather in Odaka Town, Iwa no Saku, at the ancient site of Odaka castle to take part in this event. Wild horses are corralled, and at the commander's signal, white robed, purified men called &quot;Okobito&quot; thrust themselves into the frenzy of untamed horses and capture them bare handed for dedication to the shrine.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4  The date change of Soma Nomaoi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Japanese Era Name system</th>
<th>The schedule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The 5th year of Meiji</td>
<td>May 13 [This day is the day of [Naka no Saru] in May of the lunar calendar.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 7th year of Meiji</td>
<td>July 1・2・3 [The day of &quot;Naka no Saru&quot; in May of the lunar calendar is July 2nd in the solar calendar.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 11th year of Meiji</td>
<td>July 2・3・4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 37th year of Meiji</td>
<td>July 11・12・13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 36th year of Showa</td>
<td>July 16・17・18・19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 38th year of Showa</td>
<td>July 17・18・19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 41st year of Showa</td>
<td>July 23・24・25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4  The date change of Soma Nomaoi

Name:  
Yasushi Sakuma

Affiliation:  
Department of Business and Management, Tokyo Management College

Address:  
625-1 Futamata, Ichikawa, Chiba 272-0001 Japan

Brief Biographical History:  
1992- Lecturer, Department of Business Administration and Computer Science, Tokyo Management College  
1999- Associate Professor, Department of Management and Taxation, Tokyo Management College  
2005- Professor, Department of Business and Management, Tokyo Management College

Main Works:  

Membership in Learned Societies:  
• Japan Society of Physical Education, Health and Sport Sciences  
• Japan Society of Sport Anthropology  
• Japanese Academy of Budo  
• The Japan Society of Sport history