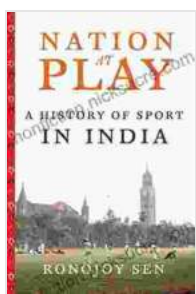


The History of Sport in India: From Ancient Times to Contemporary Asia in the World

Sport has played an integral role in Indian culture for centuries. From ancient times, Indians have participated in a wide variety of physical activities, from wrestling and archery to chariot racing and swimming. Sport was seen as a way to improve physical and mental health, as well as a way to prepare for war.



Nation at Play: A History of Sport in India

(Contemporary Asia in the World) by Ronojoy Sen

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Ancient Indian Sport

The earliest evidence of sport in India dates back to the Indus Valley Civilization, which flourished from around 2600 to 1900 BCE.

Archaeologists have discovered evidence of wrestling, archery, and chariot racing at Harappa and Mohenjo-daro, two of the largest cities of the Indus Valley Civilization. These sports were likely enjoyed by the elite, as they required specialized equipment and training.

During the Vedic period (around 1500 to 500 BCE), sport continued to be an important part of Indian life. The Vedas, the sacred texts of Hinduism, mention a number of different sports, including wrestling, archery, chariot racing, and swimming. These sports were seen as a way to improve physical and mental health, as well as a way to prepare for war.

The Mahabharata, one of the great epics of Indian literature, contains a detailed description of a chariot race. The race is won by Arjuna, one of the five Pandava brothers, who is known for his skill as a warrior and an archer. The Mahabharata also mentions a number of other sports, including wrestling, archery, and swimming.

Medieval Indian Sport

During the medieval period (around 500 to 1500 CE), sport continued to be popular in India. The Rajput kings were particularly fond of wrestling, archery, and chariot racing. These sports were often used to settle disputes between kingdoms.

The Delhi Sultanate (1206-1526 CE) also encouraged sport. The sultans were particularly fond of polo, which they had introduced to India from Central Asia. Polo is a team sport played on horseback, and it quickly became popular among the Indian elite.

The Mughal Empire (1526-1857 CE) was a golden age for sport in India. The Mughal emperors were great patrons of sport, and they built a number of sports facilities, including wrestling arenas and polo grounds. The Mughals also introduced a number of new sports to India, including cricket and field hockey.

Colonial Indian Sport

The British Raj (1858-1947 CE) had a significant impact on sport in India. The British introduced a number of new sports to India, including cricket, field hockey, and soccer. These sports quickly became popular among the Indian elite, and they are still played widely today.

The British also founded a number of sports organizations in India, including the Calcutta Cricket Club (1792) and the Bombay Gymkhana (1875). These organizations helped to promote sport in India, and they continue to play an important role in the development of Indian sport today.

Independent India and Sport

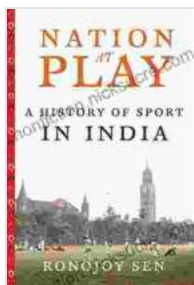
Since independence in 1947, India has emerged as a major sporting power. Indian athletes have won medals at the Olympic Games, the Commonwealth Games, and the Asian Games. India has also hosted a number of major sporting events, including the 1982 Asian Games and the 2010 Commonwealth Games.

Sport continues to play an important role in Indian society today. It is seen as a way to improve physical and mental health, as well as a way to unite people from all walks of life. The Indian government has made a number of investments in sport, and it is committed to promoting sport at all levels.

The history of sport in India is a long and rich one. From ancient times to contemporary Asia in the world, sport has played an integral role in Indian culture. Sport has been used to improve physical and mental health, to prepare for war, and to settle disputes between kingdoms. Today, sport is still a popular pastime in India, and it is a major source of national pride.

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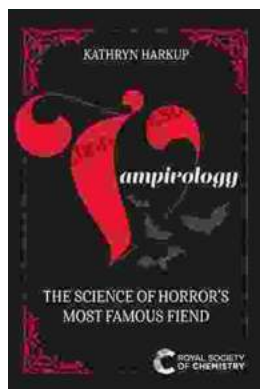


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