

*Japan, Korea, and the 2002 World Cup.* Edited by JOHN HORNE and WOLFRAM MANZENREITER. London and New York: Routledge, 2002. xvii, 219 pp. \$19.99 (paper).

Any questions about the importance of soccer in East Asian culture were answered this past summer with the staging of a successful and dramatic 2002 World Cup. This volume, published before the finals took place, is an attempt to present the heritage and development of soccer in modern South Korea and Japan and to demonstrate the utility of soccer in understanding questions of geopolitics, business, the media, and the cultural production of modern ideology. The editors, in an introductory chapter, promise attention to center-periphery relations; power relations among nation-states, sport associations and business; the media-sport-business connection; and the production of ideologies of soccer as the true “people’s game” in contemporary South Korea and Japan.

The topic covered most thoroughly and interestingly in this volume is the role of the World Cup in the recent history of Japanese–South Korean diplomatic relations. Essays by Gavan McCormack (the only contributor who is not a sport studies specialist) and Oliver Butler describe quite vividly the great tensions that still dominate any affair involving these two nations. During the bidding process, Chung Mong-Joon, president of the Korean Football Association (and candidate for president of South Korea in 2002), regularly hit below the belt, hinting that his Japanese competitors were continuing their nation’s “barbarous and brutal” recent history by trying to spoil the Korean entry (p. 46). Once decided, the Japanese side took issue with the official event title, “2002 FIFA World Cup Korea/Japan” (this sequence determined by French alphabetical order) and, rather than list Japan after Korea, decided not to mention the countries’ names at all in Japanese-language materials (p. 41)!

One fascinating observation here is Butler’s point that FIFA’s unprecedented vote for a cohosted 2002 World Cup “presented a means of re-orienting Japan’s relations with South Korea towards the future without having to make the apologies and compensation that South Korea demanded as a prerequisite.” In other words, being “sportsmanlike” and generously “sharing” the World Cup—although, as Butler also

points out, both sides in fact privately *hoped* to cohost in order to lessen the economic and structural burden of the event—“would gain Japan moral authority . . . in much the same way as apologies and compensation measures would” (p. 52). Yet, one weakness of this volume is that it never interrogates sporting ideology closely enough to get to the question lurking behind Butler’s point: namely, why does a bureaucracy’s ability to knock down houses, pave over farmland, and build huge cement sports stadia necessarily win a nation international admiration and goodwill?

After this absorbing beginning, the volume loses much analytical momentum. A chapter on the bidding wars of the 1990s to host the 2002 and 2006 finals adds little to the drama already described by Butler. Four essays on the history of soccer’s development in Japan and South Korea, although informative and valuable to avid soccer fans, do little to maintain the volume’s analytical direction.

Three essays then address Japanese and Korean “civil society” in the context of the World Cup. This set of subjects—soccer fans, volunteers, and grassroots participants—has the most potential to illuminate the ways in which contemporary Koreans and Japanese use soccer to shape their identities as modern citizens. Indeed, the sad and baffling case of the thirty-nine-year-old Korean man who committed suicide just before play began in June (in order to “become a ghost and the 12th player on the pitch and do my best for our team” [Reuters 14 June 2002]) only emphasizes the importance of soccer culture in Korean and East Asian society. Shimizu Satoshi’s piece on Urawa Reds’ fans’ strategic use of discourses of masculinity, delinquency, and Japaneseness is fascinating, although his reflections on their relevance to “the Japanese work environment in general” (p. 142) are too brief to explain this connection. Other essays seem to take far too seriously the very ideologies, such as “Sports for All,” that the editors promised to examine more critically. For example, one author’s conclusion is that “[t]he World Cup is therefore a good opportunity to . . . improve the quality of life for citizens” (p. 171). Yet, McCormack, Nogawa Haruo, and Mamiyu Toshio directly contradict this sport-sociology faith with their excellent discussions of who *really* pays for the World Cup (taxpayers) and what they *really* get out of it (seasonal low-wage jobs, heavy public deficit, and huge stadia that could never be filled again).

In 1999 London’s Frank Cass Publishers put out a collection of essays, *France and the 1998 World Cup*, which included discussions of events during and after the World Cup itself. The present volume, completed and published before the 2002 finals, is unfortunately weaker for not doing this. Finally, this very fact makes the reader suspicious that this volume, for all of its strengths, is one more example of the media trend toward constructing “mega-events” which, again, the editors promised to problematize here (pp. 22, 196).

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