The language of globalization is a crucial one in Taiwan. Indeed, perhaps nowhere is there as much at stake as there is in Taiwan in proving to the world the inherent value of one’s nation, society and culture to a globalized 21st century. As evidence, one need do no more than note the People’s Republic of China’s recent “Anti-Secession Law” (“反分裂国家法,” or literally, the “Anti-Nation-Splitting Law”), which promises to “promote cross-Straits relations and the prospect of a peaceful reunification” by threatening supporters of an independent Taiwan with future prosecution. This is just the latest crisis in which the leaders of Taiwan find

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themselves urgently trying to convince their allies of the global relevance of their independent island nation.²

The presidentialese terminology above is thus very telling. Notions of “cultivating Taiwan while reaching out to the world,” or “cultivating localization while promoting globalization,” are now as crucial to the national survival of Taiwan as they have been for years to notions of culture. Four decades of authoritarian Chinese Nationalist (Guomindang) rule, combined with the fear of real military action by an increasingly volatile People’s Republic of China, have led Taiwanese to fervently and enthusiastically celebrate their uniqueness, cultural, linguistic, political, social and otherwise, vis-à-vis the “Chinese mainland.”

Pride in the unique aspects of Taiwanese culture, and in the unique contributions that an independent Taiwan can make to today’s world, justifies a place for Taiwan in the international community. (See, for example, the innocent smiles of the Taiwanese children, despite their government’s long-stalled bid to join the World Health Organization, below in Figure 1.)

Likewise, the pursuit of “international” (even if this often is shorthand for American or Japanese) trends and symbols can also be understood as solidifying a status for a Taiwan independent of the PRC and its threats of forced reunification. This dialectic between the uniquely Taiwanese and the international or universal has been a notable characteristic of virtually any cultural, social, commercial, or political enterprise in Taiwan since the early 1990s.

Professional baseball in Taiwan is a perfect instance of this self-conscious, ideological combination of the global and the local, the cosmopolitan and the provincial, private enterprise and the public sphere, the international and the Taiwanese. Baseball is a colonial legacy that was planted and sunk deep roots, during the fifty-year Japanese occupation of the island from 1895 to 1945. Today, the professional version of the game is experienced as a reminder of the profound influence of American and Japanese culture, and indeed, of transnational capitalism on Taiwan at the beginning of the 21st century.

Roland Robertson has written on “the simultaneity --- the co-presence --- of both universalizing and particularizing tendencies” that appears so often in, and complicates our understanding of, the newest forms of globalization. He and others have begun to use a somewhat playful term to explain this dual nature of globalization, instead calling it
“glocalization.” This term has its roots in 1980s corporate lingo, although it fortunately has been salvaged for productive scholarly use by many students of late capitalism.

Sony co-founder Akio Morita coined the phrase “global localization,” which one observer describes as “brand strategy at one side of the spectrum and customer expectations the other.” Likewise, an internet dictionary defines “glocalization” as “the creation of products or services intended for the global market, but customized to suit the local culture.” While our interests are hardly so mercenary, it is important to see how the term has also come to apply more broadly to cultural trends of hybridizing across local and global meanings and settings. In his study of Tokyo Disneyland, Aviad Raz uses the term “glocalization” to describe the tension between global cultural production and local acquisition, and “the more colorful and playful themes characterizing the (usually ingenious) local practices of consumption.”

A television commercial for Kentucky Fried Chicken that aired (to great public pleasure) in Taiwan in August 2004 can actually help explain this “playful” tension and hybridity. The advertisement had a Taiwan tour guide haplessly attempting to impress a group of tourists from the PRC with the sights of the small island. After Sun-Moon Lake (日月潭) and Jade Mountain (玉山) failed to stir these boastful and condescending mainlanders, the resourceful tour guide decides to feed them KFC chicken strips that are even spicier than Sichuan cuisine. Finally the

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guide wins respect for the island when the loudest-mouth of the bunch (incoincidentally, a dead
ringer for former president Jiang Zemin 江泽民) proclaims in caricatured PRC Mandarin, “Now
we must not look down on Taiwan. (我們不能小看台灣.)”

When the innovative recipes of Chicken Capital USA serve the purposes of breakthrough
“state to state” diplomacy between Taiwan and China, we know that there is more at work than
simple descriptions of “Cocacolonization” that impress American ways on vulnerable Others.7
Habibul Khondker’s definition, which builds on Robertson above, is helpful in calling
glocalization “the notion that removes the fear from many that globalization is like a tidal wave
erasing all the differences.” Instead, the term helps us to understand the cultural movements and
institutions that simultaneously “mak[e] some local ideas, practices, institutions global …
[and] … incorporat[e] certain global processes into the local setting.”8 Understanding baseball’s
crucial role at several different moments in modern Taiwanese history requires that we take
seriously this model of local-global interplay, exchange, accommodation and desire.

Yakyū in the Colony

It is fitting with regard to this study that much of this discussion of “glocalization”
originates in Japan. The native term that Robertson associates with this discourse is dochakuka
(土着化), which has historically been used to describe the act of adjusting to regional markets.

The Japanese colonial regime which ruled Taiwan from 1895 to 1945, and which, after the early

7 Brian Moeran, “Commodities, Culture and Japan’s Corollanization of Asia,” in Marie Söderberg and Ian
8 Habibul Haque Khondker, “Glocalization as Globalization: Evolution of a Sociological Concept,”
Bangladesh e-Journal of Sociology 1.2 (July 2004), http://www.bangladeshsociology.org/Habib%20-
1920s, enthusiastically encouraged the spread of baseball among the Taiwanese people, used language which in many ways anticipated this postwar notion of *dochakuka*. Official colonial policies of “impartiality and equal favor” (*isshi dōjin 一視同仁*) seem to predict with great accuracy Morita’s seven-decades-hence Walkman and the move to match “brand strategy” to “customer expectations.” Baseball, or *yakyū* (野球, literally “field-ball”), from the very moment of its introduction to Taiwan, has represented this tension between imperialist / globalizing forces and the “expectations” and demands of a Taiwanese population.

Yu Chien-ming has discussed how, even from the earliest years of Japanese rule, colonial planners felt responsible for making use of “globalized notions of physical education to transform Taiwanese bodies.” At the same time, however, the topic of baseball presents unique problems with any analysis of global-local linkages at this time. *Yakyū* – so typically of the Meiji period in Japan – arrived in Taiwan as the national sport (*kokugi, 国技*), but with a history in Japan of only two decades. Baseball had been introduced to Japan by American teachers and missionaries in the 1870s. In 1896, just one year into Japan’s occupation of Taiwan, the game became a national phenomenon when Tokyo’s elite No. 1 High School (*Ichikō*) team bested a team of Americans from the Yokohama Country Athletic Club.10

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Thus, the very fact of Japan’s introduction of the game to Taiwan indicates that any
treatment of the game must account for this double-layer of imperialism / colonialism wound
tightly within the Japanese baseball. The situation only becomes more complicated when one
considers the begrudging nature of this “globalized” sharing of cultures: neither the Americans in
Japan nor the Japanese in Taiwan originally wanted to see the “natives” playing “their” game.
Ichikō players, the first Japanese ever to enter the Americans’ Yokohama field, were greeted
with howls and taunts that temporarily unnerved them before they destroyed the YCAC Yankees,
29-4. Likewise, the notion of Taiwanese people playing baseball under Japanese rule just a
few years later seemed just as impossibly ludicrous. Taiwanese were in fact banned from
playing baseball in the first 25 years of the colonial experiment. Tonmatsu Ichizō (屯松一造)
in 1916 remembered happily how turn-of-the-century Taiwanese shunned baseball and sport in
general and how “ignorant islanders would watch with closed minds and look on the [baseball]
heroism of we Japanese as strange.” Neither example strikes the observer as the outrageous
instances of “cultural imperialism” that we have come to expect of our Japanese and American
protagonists!

11 Roden, pp. 523-524.
12 Lin Dingguo 林丁國, “日治時期台灣中等學校棒球運動的發展：以「嘉義農林」為中心的探討
(1928 ~ 1942)” (The development of Japanese-era Taiwanese middle school baseball: A study centered
on the Jiayi Agriculture and Forestry Institute, 1928-1942), paper presented at 第五屆兩岸三地歷史學論
文研討會 (The 5th Cross-Straits Historical Conference), 南京大學 (Nanjing University), 8 September
2004, p. 3.
13 Chang Li-ke 張力可, “台灣棒球與認同: 一個運動社會學的分析 (Taiwan Baseball and Identities: an
After the end of World War I, however, a growing Japanese understanding of Taiwan as a genuine part of their nation – in fact an “extension of the homeland” (naichi enchō 内地延長) – and also Wilsonian-inspired demands for “local autonomy” (chihō jitsu 地方自治) led to new modes of colonial rule. In 1922, elementary education was integrated. The notion of Taiwanese young people playing Japan’s “national game” now seemed to make colonial sense. Now, all of a sudden, commentators were writing that “Sports should be encouraged more. More baseball and tennis teams should be established, allowing homelanders [Japanese] and islanders to join together in groups, being active together in the sunlight and outdoors.”

Nearly three decades of Taiwanese calls – some armed, some intellectual, never both – for more humane treatment and new post-WWI international expectations were the context for Japan’s first experiment in dochakuka (literally, “localization”). In 1925, just two years after the West Indies cricket tour of England immortalized by C.L.R. James in Beyond a Boundary, this transformation in Japanese colonial rule was made spectacularly clear by a similar visit to Japan of a baseball team from far-off Hualian on the east coast of Taiwan. The Nōkō (能高) Baseball Team, made up of Ami Aborigine boys and named for a mountain in central Taiwan, was invited to play series of games all around Taiwan and then on the Japanese “mainland” itself. The team was sponsored by several Japanese corporations and by Hualian Harbor Subprefecture Magistrate Eguchi Ryōzaburō (江口良三郎). Eguchi had much riding on the success of this

team, having boasted to local elites in 1923 that the “raw savages” in his subprefecture had been “washed and imperialized … [a product of] correcting their customs and violent blood and letting them understand the true spirit of sport,” and that this process had transformed the “brutal savage … [into] a kind brother.”

What really allows us to see this colonial moment as part of the “glocalizing” history of Taiwan is when we consider – once again in Morita’s words – what Taiwanese “customer expectations” were with regard to the empire’s “brand strategy.” Four of the best players on this Nōkō team were recruited to stay on in Japan and play for Heian Middle School (平安中學) in Kyōto. A-xian (阿仙, or using his Japanese name, Inada Teruo 稻田照夫), Luo-dao-hou (羅道厚, or Itō Jirō 伊藤次郎), Luo-sha-wei (羅沙威, or Itō Masao 伊藤正雄), and Ji-sa (紀薩, or Nishimura Kazō 西村嘉造) led Heian to the famed Kōshien High School Baseball Tournament in 1927 and 1928, and the first three of these players went on to play and study at Hōsei University (法政大學). These Ami Aborigine men are remembered as the pioneers among the many Taiwanese players who went on to fruitful collegiate and professional baseball careers in the “home islands” of Japan. The latter half of Japan’s half-century rule of Taiwan saw

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17 Zeng Wencheng 曾文誠 and Yu Junwei 孟峻瑋, 台灣棒球王 Baseball King of Taiwan (台北: 我識出版社, 2004), p. 42.
increased opportunities for Taiwanese to study in Japan and ascend towards truly “Japanese” status within the empire – although baseball and military service stood as the only avenues in this direction for members of non-elite socioeconomic classes, both Aborigine and Han Taiwanese. Clearly, then, we must see baseball’s position in Japanese Taiwan as a cultural institution that could be manipulated for personal advantage by colonial subjects just as nimbly as it was for the national projects of elite colonial administrators.

In 1930, the notion of a contented Taiwan under Japanese rule was shattered when a band of Tayal Aborigines ambushed a school sports meet in Musha, deep in the mountains of central Taiwan, and massacred some 134 Japanese in attendance. This “Musha Incident” (霧社事件) and the reemergence of the “brutal savage” whom the regime figured it had already turned into a “kind brother” was a traumatic event for the Japanese. Leo Ching has documented very skillfully how this violent uprising “deeply shook, [and] momentarily destabilized, Japanese rule” and how Japanese cultural producers reacted by creating stories and films that reordered the relationship between colonizer and “savage.” The realm of baseball, by this time crucial to notions of modernity and nationalism in Japan, is another cultural space in which both Japanese colonizer and Aboriginal subject addressed the implications of the Musha Incident.

One of the most famed of Taiwanese baseball teams came from the Tainan District Jiayi Agriculture and Forestry Institute (abbreviated Kanō, 嘉農) in southern Taiwan in the late 1920s. Under the guidance of Manager Kondō Hyōtarō (近藤兵太郎), a former standout player who had toured the United States with his high school team, Kanō dominated Taiwan baseball in the

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decade before the Pacific War. What made the Kanō team special at this post-Musha moment in history was its tri-ethnic composition; in 1931 its starting nine was made up of two Han Taiwanese, four Taiwan Aborigines, and three Japanese players. This 1931 Kanō squad won the Taiwan championship, earning the right to play in the hallowed Kōshien (甲子園) High School Baseball Tournament held near Osaka. In becoming the first team ever to qualify for Kōshien with Taiwanese (Aborigine or Han) players on its roster, this Kanō team also became a powerful symbol of how Japanese colonialism was supposed to be working – producing colonial subjects who could work together in performing the cultural rituals of the Japanese state.19

When the tournament began, Kanō thrilled the Japanese public by sweeping their first three games by the combined score of 32-9. Newspaper reporters fawned on these Taiwanese “barefoot spirits” and their “lion-like spirit of bravery and struggle” that marked them as the newly- (if just barely-) civilized product of a successful colonial model.20 In rooting for these exotic and exciting new subjects of the Emperor, Japanese fans also found a convenient way to exhibit sympathy for the less developed peoples of Asia (and indeed at the very moment of the beginning of Japan’s war on/for Asia).21 All of Japan was captivated when Kanō made it to the

19 The Kōshien tournament, founded in 1915, began inviting Taiwan representatives in 1923. From 1923 to 1930, the Taiwan teams that qualified for Kōshien were all-Japanese teams from Taihoku (Taipei).


championship game before finally losing to the powerful team from Chūkyō Business School (中京商業高等学校), 4-0.

Bert Scruggs has used Homi Bhabha’s notions of “colonial mimicry” to explain that “[t]he colonizers want the colonized to resemble them but still remain different, leaving a clear distinction between the [Japanese] metropolitan and colonial.”22 Clearly, the Taiwanese team beating the finest team from the Japanese “mainland” would have been too much for even the most enthusiastic colonizer to accept. But a hard-fought loss in the championship game – one which allowed the Taiwanese to exhibit all the properly Japanese values of sacrifice and teamwork, to be (in Scruggs’s words) “virtual Japanese” while not defeating the real Japanese – was the perfect ending for this first post-Musha national tournament. It is for this reason that this 1931 Kanō team is still a very popular nostalgic symbol even today in Japan.23 (As one example of this, when Asahi Shimbun CEO Nagayama Yoshitaka [永山義高] visited Taiwan in 1998, he told reporters that his longtime wish was to run just once around the bases of the Kanō baseball diamond.)24 The Kanō legend lives on still because just months after the horrible massacre at Musha, this team of Han, Aboriginal, and Japanese players “proved” in an extremely visible fashion the colonial myth of “assimilation” (dōka) - that both Han and (more importantly) Aborigine Taiwanese were willing and able to use the modern opportunities provided by the


24 Zeng Wencheng 曾文誠, “從1931年嘉農棒球隊看日據時代台灣棒球發展(二).”
Japanese state to transform themselves into imperial subjects. Of course, the irony is that the six
Taiwanese players on the starting roster probably also saw their victories as a statement of
Taiwanese (Han or Aborigine) will and skill that could no longer be dismissed by the Japanese
colonizing power. But the fact that this Kanō triumph could be understood in such very different
ways is merely proof of the important and liminal position that baseball held in the Japanese
colonial administration of Taiwan.

This precocious usage of baseball by colonizing masters and their colonized savages
some 70-80 years ago, while different from contemporary models of glocalization driven by
multinational capitalism, is still important to understand as an earlier mode of Robertson’s “co-
presence of both universalizing and particularizing tendencies.” Or, indeed, to use Raz’s terms
of “the tension between global cultural production and local acquisition,” few interactions could
have been more tense than the Japanese campaign to “civilize” Taiwan’s Aborigines, many of
whom were just decades removed from earlier careers in headhunting. Baseball, a sign of
commitment to modern notions of discipline, sportsmanship, fair play and citizenship, was by the
1920s an important field of negotiation for colonizer and colonized alike in Japanese Taiwan.

The Guomindang and Chinese Baseball

The Chinese Nationalist Party (Guomindang), after “recovering” Taiwan in 1945, had
little patience for, or understanding of, this negotiation between the Japanese colonizing power
and their Taiwanese subjects. Many have questioned the seriousness with which Chiang Kai-
shek and his armies resisted the Japanese during their eight years of war. Nevertheless, after
arriving in Taiwan, the Guomindang seldom failed to describe themselves as “victors” over the
Japanese. The Taiwanese people, on the other hand, were shameless collaborators, a “degraded
people” lacking the heroic instincts of their mainland cousins, and simply confused and disoriented by the “slave life” they led under the Japanese for half a century. In 1945, the Party’s Taiwan Investigation Committee could only recommend that “after the takeover the cultural policy should be focused on promoting national consciousness and eradicating the slave mentality.”

The tense and complicated relationship between Taiwanese people and Japanese culture, exhibited as clearly as any by the case of baseball, defied perfectly these one-dimensional models of “resistance,” “collaboration,” “hero” and “slave” that the proud Nationalist conquerors came spouting. It is surely no coincidence that among the many thousands of Taiwanese elites murdered in 1947 by government “anti-communist” forces was Lin Guixing (林桂興), coach of the great 1920s Nōkō teams described above. This “glocalized” relationship, negotiated in complicated dialectical patterns over decades, between Japan’s modern “national sport” and the Japanese imperial subjects of Taiwan was incomprehensible in the official Nationalizing discourse on Taiwan after 1945. It also serves as a very accurate and helpful reminder of what exactly the GMD was killing after the February 28 Incident and throughout the bloody summer of 1947.

However, the game of baseball proved harder to sinicize or Nationalize than the GMD may have expected. The official name of the game changed virtually overnight, from yakyū (野球)
球, “field-ball”) to the Mandarin *bangqiu* (棒球, “bat-ball”). People actually playing the game would have been little affected by this, however. The Japanese name lives on as *yagyu* among many Taiwanese speakers even today. The on-field terminology of the game was unchanged, consisting of a jumble of English-Japanese-Taiwanese terms like *picha, kecha, homuran, striku,* and *outo* that hopelessly betrayed baseball’s glocalized history. One of Taiwan baseball’s most celebrated scholars and coaches is Jian Yongchang (簡永昌), who has been associated with the game for some seventy years. When I interviewed Mr. Jian in the summer of 2004, I asked him about Taipei baseball in the 1950s, the pressures to speak Mandarin throughout so much of society, and whether the large banks that sponsored baseball teams attempted to enforce any sort of language policy on the field. Mr. Jian looked at me blankly and explained, as if to a child, “There’s no Mandarin in baseball.” (*棒球沒有國語.*)

During the 1950s-60s, baseball survived mostly as a casual activity for (mostly southern) Taiwanese boys and young men. The game exhibited little presence among the official cultural or educational apparatus of the Nationalist government – as one author put it in 1969, “baseball has always been the sport that has to eat the cold rice, because the Chinese [mainlanders of the GMD regime] do not understand it.”28 Clearly, the awkwardness of baseball’s “glocalized” culture made it unfit for any role in the popular culture of this oppressive one-party era.

This changed with the rise of Taiwan’s Little League Baseball (*Shaonian bangqiu* 少年棒球, or *Shaobang* 少棒) program in the late 1960s. Even though the Nationalist government

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28 Chen Wenfa 陳文發, “台灣少年的光榮, 台灣人的勝利” (*Glory of Taiwanese Youth, Victory of the Taiwanese People*), 台灣青年 (*Taiwan Youth*) 106 (5 September 1969), p. 3.
invested very little into developing the game, international victories in the late 1960s proved that the game could have real domestic uses for the regime. In August 1968 the Maple Leaf (Hongye) Village team, made up of Bunun Aborigine youth representing their tiny school of just 100 students, earned the right to play a visiting team from Wakayama, Japan after winning the island-wide Students’ Cup tournament held in Taibei. They then became superstars after two victories over Wakayama at the Taipei Municipal Stadium. The 20,000 fans who managed to get tickets for each of these historic games were joined by an island-wide television audience treated to more than 13 hours of Taiwan Television broadcasts on the first game alone. To this day, the Maple Leaf’s 1968 victories against Wakayama are cited as a defining moment in the history of Taiwanese nationalism.

The next year, 1969, was Taiwan’s first entry into the Little League World Series, operated by the U.S. Little League establishment and held in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. The youth of Taiwan spared no time in making this tournament a yearly blowout of any and all challengers. In fact, Taiwanese teams won ten Little League World Series titles between 1969 and 1981, and sixteen in the 27-year period from 1969 to 1995.

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30 See Andrew D. Morris, “Baseball, History, the Local and the Global in Taiwan,” in David K. Jordan, Andrew D. Morris, and Marc L. Moskowitz, eds., The Minor Arts of Daily Life: Popular Culture in Taiwan (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2004), pp. 182-184. Unfortunately, the jubilation at these victories was soon dampened by an unfortunate revelation. On their roster of 11 players, the Maple Leaf team included nine ineligible boys who were playing under false names. Months after these victories, the Maple Leaf Elementary School Principal, Coach and Head Administrator were all sentenced to a year’s imprisonment by the Taidong County Local Court for these gross violations. Wang Huimin, pp. 5-6, 79.
31 Foreign teams were not allowed to compete at Williamsport in 1975, so the Taiwanese boys won 10 titles in 12 years of competition.
Still, Chiang Kai-shek’s regime oddly did very little to support the game that created such a lasting identity for his island. In 1969, a Taiwan all-star team, the Golden Dragons (台中金龍), was sent to Japan to compete in the Pacific Regional Championships – but when they won, Xie Guocheng (謝國誠) had to raise on his own the NT$1,700,000 (US$42,500) needed to take the team to the world Little League championships in Williamsport. The national sports budget had just been cut by some 20%;32 indeed, the Chiang-era budget that dedicated 80-85% of national resources to military expenditures left little room for these sorts of affairs. In the end, global and cultural Cold War hierarchies were reinforced when the US Military Advisor Group in Taiwan ended up donating a large portion of the requisite funds to Xie.33

But the Golden Dragons’ victory in Williamsport became the ultimate free lunch. One radio DJ remembered 30 years later, how “the Taipei night nearly boiled over. When the game finished at 3 a.m., the streets of the city erupted with the constant banging of firecrackers, as ordinary citizens opened their windows and yelled out to the night sky, ‘Long live the Republic of China!’”34 Out of nowhere had appeared an incredibly potent source of free nationalism for the mainlander-dominated regime! After two-plus decades of enforced Chineseness – from Mandarin language to the Nationalist-centered education system to the infinitely repeated vows to “retake the mainland” – this weird Japanese sport had the Taiwanese public, of their own will, waving ROC flags, taking to the streets to proclaim their loyalty to Sun Yat-sen’s Republic,

33 Zeng and Yu, pp. 156-157.
forgetting about the ethnic and political tensions of the time, and embracing the notion that these 12-year-old boys’ victories truly reflected some virtues of the nation.

The government’s official thoughts on these triumphs were awkward, unsophisticated, and unoriginal. Some propaganda reassured the people of Taiwan that these Little League championships showed the world that “Chinese were no longer the ‘Sick Man of East Asia’ (東亞病夫)” – a cliché that had been part of sporting discourse dating back to the late Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). One official chronicler repeatedly tried to describe the significance of these victories by using an essay written by Chiang Kai-shek for the national Sports Day holiday on September 9, 1942. In 1971, Chiang Kai-shek told the Tainan Giants kids before they left for America to “be true and pure Chinese” (做個堂堂正正的中國人). After they won the world championship – an event viewed on early-morning television by some ten million people in Taiwan, an incredible two thirds of the island’s population – the only way Chiang had of phrasing his enthusiasm was by pointing out, “I trust that all the compatriots of the nation will be moved and excited by the Giants Little League team, in each person’s own way, to work to quickly retake the mainland and restore glory to the motherland.”

Obviously, to most of the people of Taiwan, the attraction of this Little League championship run had little to nothing to do with Chiang’s unimpressive ideological

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performance. The championships won by Taiwan’s Little Leaguers during the 1970s came at the exact same time as two other significant developments – the flowering of Taiwan’s “economic miracle” and the island’s increasing isolation on the international stage. Taiwan was becoming an economic powerhouse in its own right, a proud Little Dragon that had made the most of the billions of dollars of American aid sent its way, but the Chiang regime quickly found that fewer and fewer people around the world viewed their rule of Taiwan as legitimate, let alone moral or humane. The sting and humiliation of forfeiting a United Nations seat and being sold out in Nixon and Kissinger’s election-year junket to China could be lessened somewhat by the fact that, at the very least, Taiwan’s pre-teens played the most skilled and disciplined baseball the world had ever seen.

By 1971, American fans began to boo the Taiwanese youngsters whom they originally cheered two years earlier, before they became what the New York Times called the “big yellow machine.” A 1974 article in the Philadelphia Inquirer was titled, “Taiwan Plays Ball Like It’s Tong War,” its author citing a popular belief that “Chiang Kai-Shek had hired a band of professional midgets just to humiliate the U.S.” But these sour grapes meant little to fans in Taiwan who were ecstatic to see this rare international demonstration of Taiwanese / ROC superiority.

This particular question – of the direction of this baseball nationalism – soon became a crucial one, and this is once again where we can start to see baseball during this period of Taiwanese history as a realm of “glocalization.” Whether it is Raz’s “local acquisition” or Morita’s “customer expectations,” the behavior of fans lucky enough to attend these games in

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38 Bill Lyon, “Taiwan Plays Ball Like It’s Tong War,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 25 August 1974, pp. 1-E.
Pennsylvania tells us much about how this international sphere was incorporated into the particular circumstances of Chiang-era Taiwan. Williamsport soon became a “new battlefield” for Taiwanese dissidents and independence activists.\(^{39}\) In 1969, frenzied Taiwanese fans shouted upon the Golden Dragons’ victory, “The players are all Taiwanese! Taiwan has stood up!”\(^{40}\) Taiwanese supporters soon raised the stakes in this implicit protest against the Nationalist government, in 1971 hiring an airplane to fly over the stadium towing a bilingual banner reading, “台湾独立万岁 (Long Live Taiwan Independence), Go Go Taiwan.”\(^{41}\)

The Taiwan teams’ games attracted fans from all points of the political spectrum, so each Taiwan Independence flag or banner was matched by pro-Nationalist mainlander fans waving national flags and cheering for the “Chinese” team. The pro-state fans – even if they seemed not to understand the game so well, cheering for “touchdowns” when the Taiwanese boys scored runs\(^{42}\) – had an advantage, however, in the dozens of New York Chinatown thugs hired by the Nationalists to identify and rough up Taiwan Independence activists at the games. In 1971, the championship game was interrupted when a dozen of these toughs ran across the field to rip down a banner reading in English and Chinese, “Team of Taiwan, 加油台灣隊(Go Taiwana).”\(^{43}\)

The next year, some 70-80 military cadets training in the US were also recruited to Williamsport,

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\(^{40}\) Guo Yuanzhi 郭源治, 熱球 (Hot Ball) (Taipei: Xin zhongyuan chubanshe 新中原出版社, 1998), p. 48.

\(^{41}\) And for maximum antagonization, the Chinese on the banner was written in mainland-style simplified characters that were illegal to use in Taiwan! *Taiwan duli jianguo lianmeng de gushi*, p. 58.

\(^{42}\) Chen Wenfa, p. 6.

\(^{43}\) *Taiwan duli jianguo lianmeng de gushi*, p. 58; Taipingshan 太平山, “威廉斯堡觀球記” (A Record of Watching the Game at Williamsport), 獨立台灣 Viva Formosa 38 (1971), p. 54-55.
as they shouted while beating Taiwanese male and female supporters with 4-foot wooden clubs, to “Kill the traitors (殺死漢奸)!” This war was only quelled by the intervention of police helicopters,\(^4^4\) but not before making a distinct impression on fans around the world just how hotly and violently disputed this Taiwanese / Chinese identity was at the time. The joy that Taiwanese fans seemed to exhibit in challenging Nationalist hegemony in Taiwan reminds us that more was at stake here than Chiang Kai-shek’s dated “Free China” ideology, and also that these fans were merely continuing a contest over the significance of Taiwanese baseball that was then half a century old.

**Homu-Ran Batta: Professional Baseball in Taiwan**

> “I am sure that the league will enhance the nation’s baseball standards.”
> – ROC President Lee Teng-hui, on the founding of the Chinese Professional Baseball League, 23 October 1989\(^4^5\)

> “Bad league. Good pitchers, though. They gave me a lot of money.”
> – Melvin Mora, ex-Mercuries Tigers player then playing for New York Mets, October 1999\(^4^6\)

In August 1987, P.P. Tang (唐盼盼) of the Chinese Taipei Amateur Baseball Association told an Indianapolis audience that the Republic of China would “strive to promote international friendship, mutual understanding and cultural interflow through baseball … [and] to promote

\(^4^4\) Yi wei Taiwanren 一位台灣人, “賓州球賽場邊武打小記” (A Short Record of the Fighting Outside the Ballpark in Pennsylvania), 獨立台灣 Viva Formosa 50 (1972): 45-46; Van Auken and Van Auken, p. 164.

\(^4^5\) “ROC Establishes Professional Baseball League,” Central News Agency (Taiwan), 23 October 1989.

\(^4^6\) Mark Whicker, “Mets want some Mora: The Valentine favorite, who once played in Taiwan, helps keep them alive,” Orange County Register, 17 October 1999, p. D1.
Just four months later, the ROC Baseball Association organized a conference to investigate the possibility of founding a professional league in Taiwan, and by the end of 1989 the Chinese Professional Baseball League (中華職業棒球聯盟) had been established.48

I have written elsewhere on professional baseball in Taiwan as a powerful, self-conscious and dialectical hybrid of globalizing forces and local cultures. Discussing this history in terms of “glocalization” actually helps us to see much greater continuities between the Japanese, KMT-centered, and professional eras that I cover in this paper. Baseball in Asia (like contemporary culture in general) is often analyzed using more classically-defined categories of “globalization” that focus on how “Cocacolonized” peoples are affected by Western / American forces. For example, Cvetkovich and Kellner, in their Articulating the Global and the Local, describe how “countries like Japan play baseball but in ways that reinforce traditional Japanese values and structures.”49 Guevara and Fidle write on Major League Baseball’s history of “rapacity toward Latin children,” and discuss Japanese and Korean agreements with MLB designed to “[protect] the Asian leagues from ‘American baseball imperialism.’”50 MLB.com itself published an article

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48 Tang, who was also President of the Broadcasting Corporation of China (BCC), was elected as the first league commissioner (會長). “ROC Establishes Professional Baseball League,” Central News Agency (Taiwan), 23 October 1989
describing several of its teams that salivate over Taiwan as “the prime area” for recruitment of
Asian talent to the big leagues.51

Indeed, as Craig Stroupe writes,

“[G]lobalization” is often used as a term to suggest the historical processes
leading to a more one-way relationship between the “global” realm inhabited by
multinational corporations, the entertainment industry, CNN, the Web, etc. and a
subjugated “local” realm where the identity-affirming senses of place,
neighborhood, town, locale, ethnicity, etc. survive (if just barely) against the
global onslaught of global capitalism, media, and network identities.52

However, this brand of analysis (usually phrased sympathetically for the poor denizens of
Place X who have no choice but to enter into “our” cultural and economic forms) ill fits a
place like Taiwan, where domestic films are often seen as exotic oddities and young
people now use terms like “Taiwanese” (simply “台”) or “local” (in English) to poke fun
at peers or celebrities whose behavior, wardrobe or diction are not cosmopolitan or
hybridized enough for their long-jumbled and untidy tastes. Indeed, in the end an
examination of Taiwanese baseball shows that attention to, in Gabardi’s words,
glocalization’s “development of diverse, overlapping fields of global-local linkages”53 is
a much more profitable and accurate picture of the ways in which the game functions in
contemporary Taiwan.

The Chinese Professional Baseball League (CPBL), which began play in Taiwan
in 1990, had two ideological purposes. The first was to define a unique identity for the

51 Joe Connor, “Teams investing in Taiwan,” MLB.com, 23 June 2004,
(accessed July 2004).

(accessed 24 February 2005).

Chinese-but-not-really-Chinese island nation. This “uniqueness” in turn would aid in the second, the scramble to ensure Taiwan’s inclusion in a new globalizing world order more and more defined by PRC diplomatic fixations.

The league consisted of four corporate-owned teams – the Weichuan Dragons, Brother Elephants, President Lions, and Mercuries Tigers – with, appropriately enough, no official tie to any locality in Taiwan. These teams’ uniforms also betrayed the lack of any official “rootedness,” as they sported a pleasurable mix of English and Chinese lettering in displaying team and player names and a crazy quilt of corporate sponsor patches and logos. Another important element of the new Chinese Professional Baseball League was the presence of foreign players (usually called *yangjiang* 洋將, or “foreign talents”) culled from the rosters of American Double-A minor league teams. Sixteen American and Latin American players were selected to join the CPBL (with a league limit of four *yangjiang* per team).\(^{54}\) The presence of these players was meant to add an international flavor to the league, and also to provide an external stimulus for the improvement of the quality of CPBL play. In a 1993 conversation, Jungo Bears pitcher Tony Metoyer described to me how these foreign players also served as “silent coaches” who could share their knowledge of American strategies and training methods with the Taiwanese players.\(^{55}\) Their many contributions allowed the Taiwanese game to become closer in strategy to the more open or risky style of baseball played in the Americas, and less like the conservative game that suited Taiwan so well in its years of Little League dominance.

\(^{54}\) Of the 19 foreigners who played during the CPBL’s first season, only two had major league experience: Tiger infielder Jose Moreno (1980 NY Mets, 1981 San Diego Padres, 1982 California Angels) and Elephant pitcher Jose Roman (1984-86 Cleveland Indians).

\(^{55}\) Interview with Tony Metoyer (Jungo Bears pitcher), 31 August 1993.
Steps were also taken to Sinicize the identities of these foreign players as well; each of them was given a “Chinese name,” usually sounding something (if only vaguely) like the player’s original name, and one which usually bestowed fine and admirable qualities on the foreigner. Freddy Tiburcio, the Elephants’ star Dominican outfielder, was called “Dibo,” or “imperial waves and billows.” Luis Iglesias, the Tigers’ home run champion from Panama, was called “Yingxia,” or “chivalrous eagle.” These players were photographed for magazine covers dressed in “traditional” Chinese scholars’ caps and robes, as Taiwan’s baseball public came to
thrill in the unexpected mixtures of “East” and “West” that made the game much more complicated than either of these Kiplingian categories.

This two-way “assimilation” was often subject to the very crassest of corporate motives, as many of the foreign players’ “Chinese” names were just advertisements for products sold by their team’s parent corporation. The Mercuries Tigers inflicted names of noodle dishes from their chain restaurants onto pitchers Cesar Mejia and Rafael Valdez. The President Lions, whose parent company specialized in convenience stores and prepackaged foods, did the same with the names of “阿 Q”-brand instant noodles and “百威” (Budweiser) for pitchers Jose Cano and Ravelo Manzanillo. Later, the China Times Eagles resourcefully used names from their minor corporate sponsors, dubbing pitcher Steve Stoole “美樂” (Miller Beer), and calling the Afro-Dominican outfielder Jose Gonzalez “美樂黑” (Miller Dark!). The Sinon Bulls, owned by the huge Sinon Agrochemical Corporation, in 1997 cleverly named several of its foreign players, including former major leaguers Luis Quinones and Joe Slusarski, after the conglomerate’s best-selling pesticides!56 Clearly, much more is going on here than could be described by efforts to classify these trends as “global” or “local.”

Many of these “foreign talents” became fan favorites in Taiwan – typically solid but not-quite-talented-enough players like Iglesias, Tiburcio or Dragons pitcher Joe Strong, who played for many years in Taiwan rather than ditch the island for another chance in Japan or America. When the Taizhong Robots of the Taiwan Major League (founded in 1997, see below) cut second baseman Lonnie Goldberg in 1998, members of a Goldberg Fan Club wrote enough letters

56 Chang Li-ke, p. 83.
to the team and league to convince the team to re-sign him to a contract. However, many fans seemed to tire of this foreign (usually American and Dominican) presence as teams became too visibly dependent on these foreign networks – or that is, when baseball became more a problem of one-way “globalization” than the fun complication of “glocalization.”

Teams began to see recruitment of the yangjiang as the quickest path to improvement - it was certainly easier to waive money at a foreigner with proven skills than to dedicate several years to developing a Taiwanese player from scratch. By 1995, 44% of the players on CPBL rosters came from outside Taiwan! Many of these yangjiang made the situation even worse by admitting far too candidly to being baseball mercenaries in Taiwan solely for the relatively high salaries they could demand there. Others alienated local society with their promiscuous and even sometimes brutish behavior; in fact, an entire book entitled Foreign Pro Baseball Players’ Sex Scandals was published in 1997 on the topic. In 1998, commenting on the dominance of foreign pitchers in the CPBL, a Liberty Times columnist summoned up other ugly images from modern Chinese history in calling the league’s pitching mound a “foreign concession” (外國租界). Indeed, the predominance of foreign pitchers that season reached ridiculous heights. Of the 100 CPBL pitchers who took the mound that year, only 22 were Taiwanese. The 1998 CPBL champion Weichuan Dragons carried 12 foreign pitchers on their roster (combined record 56


58 Gu Hong 區紅, 職棒洋將性醜聞: 揭發女球迷與洋將的桃色交易 (Foreign Pro Baseball Players’ Sex Scandals: Exposing the Illicit Relations Between Female Baseball Fans and Foreign Players) (Taipei: Rizhen chubanshe 日臻出版社, 1997).

wins, 48 losses, and one tie), but only two Taiwanese pitchers (combined record 0-0-0). This, in fact, is when the more one-sided picture of “globalization” — an impersonalized far-off assembly-line process, in this case creating an endless string of “foreign talents” without the least connection to Taiwan’s cosmopolitan society — began to become more relevant (as the league began to seem less so).

Balance to the dominance of these “foreign talents” was provided by the presence of former Little League heroes who had won such great honors for Taiwan in the 1970s. During their prime years in the 1980s, before the Chinese Professional Baseball League was founded, these heroes could only play in Japanese or Taiwanese semipro leagues; indeed one of the reasons often cited for founding the CPBL was to “[stem] the import of Taiwan’s best players by Japanese teams.”60 The league was extremely fortunate to have begun play while this celebrated group still was in command of most of their skills; after a few years of play, it was obvious that the careers of some of these ex-child stars were heading south. But their presence in the CPBL’s first years of play — and the reminder that they provided that baseball was about a multidirectional connection to Japan, the US and the world in general — was crucial in making the league a viable enterprise.

In December 1995, a new chapter in the story of Taiwan baseball began. A group of investors, led by Qiu Fusheng (邱復生) and Chen Shengtian (陳盛沺) of the Era Communications and Sampo Electronics dynasties, announced the formation of a Taiwan Major League (台灣大聯盟, or TML) to begin play in 1997. The league, which lasted for six years before being merged

60 “ROC Pro Ball In 1990,” Free China Journal, 8 September 1988; “Four Pro Baseball Teams To Be Formed In Taiwan,” Central News Agency (Taiwan), 21 November 1988.
into the CPBL in 2003, was designed to trump the CPBL, not with better quality baseball, but with a media-savvy and authentically “Taiwanese” approach, which also helps clarify our “glocalized” approach to the game.

The name of the Naluwan (那魯灣) Corporation which ran the TML, and the names of the four teams - Agan (Robots), Fala (Thunder Gods), Gida (Suns) and Luka (Braves) were taken from languages of Taiwan’s several Aborigine tribes. Team uniforms were designed to reflect “the special characteristics of the Aborigine peoples,” but also only after “consideration of the colors and design of professional baseball uniforms of other nations” – a move that speaks to nothing better than the swirling environment of “global” and “local” forces that the term “glocalization” represents. TML teams made a rule of playing “Take Me Out To the Ballgame” during the middle of the seventh inning of each game, but the league made no secret of its preference for what it calls a “Japanese way” (和式風格) or “Oriental wind” (東洋風) in recruiting Japanese coaches and players. These gestures to a shared Taiwanese-Japanese past and future served not only as a claim to a proud supranational Asianism for the 21st century, but also as a self-conscious marker of the multi-layered cosmopolitan nature of Taiwan baseball.

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61 “Qiuyuan quan chong mote’er: zhanpao shanliang xianshen” 球員權充模特兒，戰袍閃亮現身 (Ballplayers Moonlighting As Models – Battle Gear Unveiled In Its Glory), 那魯灣週報 Naluwan Weekly 7 (1 February 1997), p. 3.

62 Xu Liyu 許麗玉, “兄弟將重回和式風格” (Brother to bring back the Japanese way), Taiwan ribao 臺灣日報 (Taiwan Daily), 14 August 1998, p. 20; Zheng Zhengdun 鄧政敦, “渡邊久信轉戰那魯灣” (Watanabe Hisanobu moves to the TML), Taiwan ribao 臺灣日報 (Taiwan Daily), 30 December 1998, p. B7.

In recruiting foreign players, TML team officials admitted their fondness of Japanese players, praising their skill and personal discipline that make them “more manageable” than Latin American ballplayers. Huaxun xinwenwang 華訊新聞網 Taiwan Today News Network, 13 June 2000.

63 Leo Ching, “Globalizing the Regional, Regionalizing the Global: Mass Culture and Asianism in the
Yet, the league was also careful to emphasize what it called a “territorial philosophy” (屬地主義), which dictated that teams take local connections as seriously as the global. Before the 1997 season, teams took part in New Years’ ceremonies in their home cities, and took oaths before city officials to serve as loyal and morally upright representatives of these cities. These hometown loyalties took on more significance with the tragic earthquake that struck central Taiwan in September 1999. The Robots quickly dubbed themselves “The Disaster Area Team,” and set up their own Robots Van that delivered disinfectants, vitamins, and medicines to the residents of the quake’s epicenter.\(^{64}\)

The league’s ability to present a cosmopolitan image at the same time it boldly celebrated the local, the authentic, the Taiwanese – including holding their Opening Game on February 28\(^{th}\), the anniversary of the Nationalist massacre of Taiwanese elites in 1947 – paid off. Even though the new league offered an inferior quality of baseball than the old CPBL, the Taiwan Major League consistently outdrew its rival at the gates. One random (but telling) example was a night in September 1998, when 14,385 Jiayi fans attended a TML Braves-Robots game, compared to crowds of 629 and 1,113 that showed up for CPBL games in Taipei and Gaoxiong!\(^{65}\)

Finally, the Taiwan Major League’s official theme song, “Naluwan - True Heroes” (那魯灣 — 正港的英雄) was perhaps the finest example of the fascinating mixture of historical and cultural legacies that makes Taiwan society so unique and dynamic, and so difficult to fit within

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most standard models of historical, economic, cultural, social or political development. The TML anthem, supposedly based on rhythms and patterns of several types of Aboriginal tribal songs, consisted of lyrics (see below) in Mandarin, Taiwanese, English, Japanese and Aboriginal languages:

“NALUWAN -- True Heroes”

Take charge - the fervent spirit of the rainbow,
Our hearts are filled - with great fire shining bright,
Struggle on - with hopes that never die,
Start anew - a space for us alone.
Fight! Fight! Fight, fight! Speed just like the wind,
K! K! K! Power stronger than all,
_Homu-ran batta_ - truly strong and brave,
Aaa ... Na-Lu-Wan, the true heroes!67

Each singing, each playing of this league anthem became a neat and tidy re-creation of the last several centuries of Taiwan history and culture. To be sure, little room for critical analysis of, or retrospection on, this history was allowed in this rousing, commercialized theme song. But the tune was one more way in which the TML sought to portray itself as the true heirs, and “the true heroes,” of the proud, complicated, indeed glocalized history of Taiwan.

Conclusion

One of the most celebrated events in the recent history of baseball in Taiwan was the hosting of the 34th Baseball World Cup in 2001. The tournament was marred by quibbles both international – the PRC insisting that Taiwan not be allowed to display the ROC flag during the

67 The first four lines of the anthem are in Mandarin, the fifth in Taiwanese, the sixth in English and Taiwanese, the seventh in Japanese and Taiwanese, the eighth in “Aborigine” and Taiwanese. Huang Jianming 黃建銘, “那魯灣 – 正港的英雄 (那魯灣職棒聯盟主體歌曲)” (“Naluwan – True Heroes” [Taiwan Major League Theme Song]), 那魯灣週報 Naluwan Weekly 5 (4 January 1997), p. 5.
tournament – and domestic – President Chen Shui-bian’s (陳水扁) public suggestion that the recently defeated Nationalist Party should learn about sportsmanship and “polite behavior” from the games.68 Most media attention was devoted to Taiwan’s thrilling bronze-medal victory over Japan. But the Liberty Times took a larger view, concluding that the tournament “serves as a reminder that Taiwan’s entry into the global community cannot place hope on China’s goodwill, but rather Taiwan must rely on its own strengths. This not only applies to sports, but universally across the board to politics, diplomacy, and military affairs.”69

Taiwan’s perilous status as an independent democratic society is never far below the surface of most contemporary discussions of society and culture, including baseball. The way that Taiwan’s national game comes to figure in geopolitical calculations vis-à-vis their rival on the Chinese mainland is just the latest manifestation of baseball’s glocalized legacy and significance. Once again, instead of discussing the game as part of the trend of “globalization … like a tidal wave erasing all the differences,” it is much more helpful to see how events like the 2001 World Cup above “[make] some local ideas, practices, institutions global … [and] … [incorporate] certain global processes into the local setting.”70

Understanding the different “global” influences on baseball in Taiwan – Japanese, and today, PRC Chinese every bit as much as American – helps us to see more in these complex 21st-century cultural projects than a bleak (and oddly, ethnocentrically-conceived) America-centered “Cocacolonization” of the world’s culture. Indeed, a time when histories, “traditions,” commodities and cultures are so fluid deserves more nuanced consideration than discussions of

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essentialized and static conceptions of “local” and “global.” For nearly a century, baseball in Taiwan has been both an intensely local aspect of Taiwanese culture and an avenue of engagement with Japan, the U.S., the PRC and the world – truly a national pastime worthy of the name.

70 Khondker.
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