

**SPORT CULTURE IN JAPAN AND THE  
CHALLENGE OF GLOBAL PROCESSES: THE  
SPECIFIC CASE OF JAPANESE BASEBALL AND  
LABOUR MIGRATION**

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**by**

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## Abstract

This thesis concerns itself with how sport culture in Japan — especially, baseball — has been transformed under the influence of globalisation. Globalisation, defined as the ‘borderless’ world, is a key term in describing the state of affairs in the contemporary world. In sporting world, globalisation embodied itself in the forms of international (or transcontinental) labour migration, international sporting contests.

Globalisation has tended to be analysed from a Western point of view because of Western domination in political and economic affairs as well as cultural ones for the past few centuries. This thesis tries to undertake the research of globalisation also from a non-Western point of view. There are many forms of global processes at work and globalisation has been conceptualised from various angles. After reviewing different approaches to the concept of globalisation, attention is shifted to the formation and the growth of sport culture in Japan in connection with globalisation. Modern sport culture was quite foreign in Japan before 1868, but with the Western influences dominant after 1868, Japan grew to be one of today’s sporting powers. The growth of sport culture in Japan had marked characteristics according to social changes, which was reflected mainly in the form of Japaneseness and Westernness. This thesis classifies these social changes into four historical periods — the pre-modern (before 1868), the modern (1868-1945), the modern (1945-1990), and the post-modern (after 1990) — and explores sport culture in Japan in this historical framework.

Subsequently, this thesis directs its attention specifically to Japanese baseball and traces the way in which the Japanese game grew in the face of American influences, specifically labour migration from America. Baseball, as the ‘national’ sport in Japan, has been taken as an epitome of Japaneseness (observable in specific individual styles of play and attitudes to the game) since its inception. The tensions of between Japaneseness and American influences are fully discussed as an aspect of global processes. This thesis also assesses the significance of the immigration of Japanese players to American baseball especially from the 1990s on, more complex nature of labour migration in baseball Japanese baseball and the accompanying fall in the popularity of Japanese baseball. Finally, looking to the future, this thesis discusses possible trends to come. This thesis embodies original data collected from past American (and some other foreign) players, baseball journalists, and from documentary sources. Original translations from Japanese into English have been made to make it possible to use Japanese publications.

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## List of Abbreviations

<b>BBC</b>	<b>British Broadcasting Corporation</b>
<b>EU</b>	<b>European Union</b>
<b>IOC</b>	<b>International Olympic Committee</b>
<b>MLB</b>	<b>Major League Baseball</b>
<b>NBA</b>	<b>National Basketball Association</b>
<b>NFL</b>	<b>National Football Association</b>
<b>NHL</b>	<b>National Hockey League</b>
<b>UEFA</b>	<b>Union of European Football Association</b>

## Glossary and Abbreviation of Baseball Terms

<b>Ball</b>	A pitch out of strike zone. When a batter gets four balls, he gets a free trip to first base.
<b>Batting Average</b>	The standard statistics by which batters are judged. It is calculated by dividing a player's base hits by the number of his batting opportunities.
<b>Bunt</b>	A batting play in which a hitter sticks his bat into the hitting zone just to make contact with a pitched ball.
<b>(Sacrifice) bunt</b>	A bunt in which the bunter's job is to advance the runner at the expense of himself.
<b>(Squeeze) bunt</b>	As the pitcher begins his pitching motion, the runner on third base breaks for home. The batter's job is to bunt the ball far enough from home plate that the runner can score.
<b>Double Play</b>	A single defensive play that results in two outs made.
<b>ERA</b>	Earned Run Average. The basic statistical measures of a pitcher that calculates the average number of scores lost against every nine innings.
<b>FA</b>	Free Agency. A player who is not under contract with any team is free to negotiate with whoever wants to pay the right money.
<b>Hit</b>	A ball struck so that the batter reaches base safely without benefit of defensive misplay.
<b>Hit-and-run</b>	An offensive play involving a baserunner and the batter. When the pitcher goes into pitching motion, the runner takes off for second base, and the batter is obligated to make contact with the pitch in the hope of sending the ball into right field so that the baserunner can take an extra base.
<b>Hit by pitch</b>	A pitch that hits a batter. He can get a free trip to first base.



<b>Home run</b>	A fair ball that goes over the outfield fence
<b>Japan Series</b>	Japanese version of the World Series.
<b>MVP</b>	Most Valuable Player.
<b>Out</b>	Becoming disqualified. With three outs, a half-innings is complete.
<b>Stolen base</b>	A legal manoeuvre where a runner advances while the pitcher is in his motion.
<b>Strike</b>	A pitch that either (a) a batter fails to hit or (b) crosses the plate in the strike zone. With three strikes, a batter becomes disqualified.
<b>Triple Crown</b>	A mythical crown awarded to a player who leads the league in batting average, home runs, and RBIs.
<b>World Series</b>	The yearly postseason series to determine the championship of major league baseball.

Most data are borrowed from Martinez (1996).

# Chapter 1 Introduction: How This Research was Launched

## 1.1 Introduction

The main focus in this thesis is how sport in Japan — specifically baseball — has responded to the globalisation of sport. Most research about the globalisation of sport has been from a Western point of view arguably because of recent Western hegemonies in the world (see Horne 1998: 171; 1999: 212; 2000: 73). However, an alternative assessment makes it possible to see local resistance from a non-Western location to Western-led globalisation at work. This thesis will help to make up for a paucity of sport globalisation research undertaken from a non-Western point of view.

It may seem surprising that baseball has been chosen as the focus of research in this thesis, while there are two other major sports in Japan — namely association football (soccer) and sumô — both of which have also been influenced by global processes. Since the establishment of a professional league in 1993, soccer emerged as one of the major sports in Japan. After Japan appeared in the 1998 World Cup for the first time, some top players migrated to European clubs. That Japan became one of the best 16 in the 2002 World Cup reflected the improvement of the quality of Japanese soccer and intoxicated fans. Compared to sumô and

baseball, Japanese soccer, although having the quota system on foreign players in place, has been more willing to recruit foreign players and has become a symbol of the international and modern game in Japan. Japanese soccer players' fashion-conscious attitudes, like those of foreign players, are generally accepted, and in this sense soccer stands as the symbol of 'openness' in sport in Japan. But soccer is still a very young sport in Japan and it is too soon to assess fully its global dimensions.

In contrast to soccer, sumô symbolises pure 'Japaneseness' (Reader 1989) with its emphasis on "order and hierarchy, its highly mannered [behaviour], its unyielding respect for elders and traditions" (Kattoulas and Wehrfritz 1999), making it an interesting topic of research. Not surprisingly, the sumô world is xenophobic. When Konishiki, a Hawaiian wrestler, who became the first-ever foreign *ôzeki* wrestler (the second highest rank), won his second victory in three tournaments in 1992, it was thought that the Sumô Association would name him the first-ever non-Japanese *yokozuna* (the highest rank). After the Association announced that his promotion to *yokozuna* would depend on his performance in the next tournament, one of the Association members published an article called, 'No Need of Foreign Yokozuna' in which he claimed that "What makes sumô different is its own peculiar characteristics of civility, which



is the basis of Japanese morals and values”<sup>1</sup> (Kattoulas and Wehrfritz 1999). Konishiki attacked the author as a racist<sup>2</sup> and U.S. papers also accused the sumô world of racist exclusivity in connection with the difficulty of foreign access to the Japanese market in international trade (see Yoshioka 1995). Konishiki failed to prove himself in the next tournament, missing *yokozuna*, but, in 1993, Akebono, another Hawaiian wrestler, was promoted to *yokozuna* without controversy. After him, foreign *yokozuna* were accepted as common and since early 2003, there has been no Japanese *yokozuna* (only one Mongolian *yokozuna*), which is for the first time in sumô history. Therefore, Konishiki is credited with eliminating the Japanese xenophobic view to some extent and laying the groundwork for foreign *yokozuna* getting accepted (e.g. *Sankei Shinbun* 23/11/1997; Yoshioka 1995). But it remains unchanged that the sumô world does not generally welcome foreign wrestlers, as illustrated in its introduction of an informal ban on the new recruitment of foreign wrestlers in 1992. In addition, it is common that most sumô wrestlers, after their retirement, become *oyakata* (sumô teachers). But the Sumô Association stipulates that *oyakata* should be Japanese, which means that foreign wrestlers are obliged to obtain Japanese nationality to be sumô teachers. Because the Japanese government does not permit dual

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<sup>1</sup> In naming someone *yokozuna*, consideration is given not merely to his wrestling ability but also his character and whether he is able to be a suitable representative for the sumô world (Reader 1989: 288-289).

<sup>2</sup> It is also said that another Hawaiian wrestler’s comment was cited as Konishiki’s (see *Sankei Shinbun* 23/11/1997).

nationality, foreign wrestlers can obtain Japanese nationality only when they abandon that of their homeland (Chiba, Ebihara, and Morino 2001: 212). While the sumô world is eager to demonstrate sumô as a cultural product to the rest of the world by making overseas sumô tours, it takes quite an opposite policy about receiving foreign wrestlers. In addition, it is necessary to point out that the sumô world is the one in which sex discrimination is explicit and the Association calls the ring (*dohyô*) 'the male sanctuary', not permitting females to enter there (see Kattoulas and Wehrfritz 1999). As suggested so far, the reaction of the sumô world to global processes is interesting in that it localises foreign wrestlers by coercion. But fundamentally, sumô is an individual 'sport' and, in terms of global dynamics, is too local in focus for global processes to have had as marked an effect on it as on other sports.

Baseball, although not as old as sumô, has more than one century of history and is therefore also thoroughly rooted in Japanese society. According to the opinion poll conducted in early 2003, three baseball players were among the top three favourite national sport athletes (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 6/3/2003). Baseball, as a team sport, requires 'self-sacrifice' for team victory, which seems to be in accord with the ethos of a group-oriented society. Therefore, the sport has been considered to be synonymous with company management, influencing business leaders, which makes it symbolically and ideologically interesting. Guttman and



Thompson (2001: 89) quoted an American player who visited Japan in 1922 as saying that baseball “is more the national sport of Japan than it is of America”. To date, this recognition has been shared by Japanese people as well. While soccer and sumô are ideologically at opposite poles, it is possible to say that baseball is located between the two sports. The baseball world has received foreign players much more willingly than the sumô world, but, at the same time, has tried to maintain what is called the ‘Japanese style’ (e.g. sport as serious business; sport as an educational means). It is true that the ‘American style’ of some American immigrant players changed Japanese baseball revolutionarily, but the power to maintain the ‘Japanese style’ was strong as well. To most American immigrant players who were proud of their national game, the Japanese version was of quite a different quality, which produced a lot of intercultural disputes between the two peoples. Therefore, most of the successful foreign players are those who localised themselves. It was stated earlier that Japanese soccer players are fashion-conscious, but the Japanese baseball world does not tolerate players’ fashion-conscious attitudes so much, expecting them to devote themselves to baseball. Hoshino Sen’ichi,<sup>3</sup> a former manager, insists that, “a player, no matter how talented, who tries to attract fans by making the way he looks showy is second-rate” (Hoshino 2000: 113). This opinion is shared by Nomura

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<sup>3</sup> Japanese people conventionally get their surnames followed by their given names. This thesis follows this convention in citing the names of Japanese people.



Katsuya, another former manager, who claims that, “a professional player’s selling point is his excellent baseball plays, quite different from show business people whose selling point is the way they look” (Nomura 1998: 74).

Entering the 1990s, phrases such as ‘the era of individualism’, ‘a respect for one’s individuality’ became popular in Japan arguably resulting from American economic success and Japanese economic stagnation. This social change spread to the sporting world in Japan and the athletes in the 1990s are said to have been more self-assertive than those in early generations. On the other hand, there is a strong perception in East Asia that “Western-style individual freedom has degenerated into an ‘anything-goes’ mentality that...has resulted in massive social decay — soaring rates of crime, divorce, teenage pregnancy and single-parent families” (Powell 1993). Japanese journalists have reported that there were some cases in which young stars in the American professional sporting world who were garnering huge salaries failed to discipline themselves because of their social and mental immaturity, becoming involved in criminal cases (see *Kahoku Shinpô* 21/2/1997 evening issue; see also *Tokyo Shinbun* 3/2/2000 evening issue). Considering this, a main focus of this research is to investigate the apparent contradiction of ‘Japaneseness’ and ‘Westernness’ in the specific context of baseball. During the research, the following key questions will be raised: ‘Are Japanese

philosophies really outdated in the face of the pervasiveness of Western values’?; ‘How are Japanese philosophies significant in the postmodern era?’

## 1.2 The Role of the Researcher

I have been involved in sporting activities since childhood. I would play baseball with my classmates after school and did sumô wrestling with them as well. I continued to enjoy some sports throughout my junior and senior high school days. In addition, my father was always watching baseball games, which increased my interest in sports in general and in baseball in particular. I also enjoyed reading many baseball books. However, I was quite a stranger to the academic study of sports until recently. My interest in the academic study of sports can be traced back to when I was reading Peace Studies at Bradford University. When I was wondering which topic to choose for my MA dissertation, my Canadian classmate said to me, “What about ‘mediation in fights in ice hockey games’?” We had often talked about the North American Ice Hockey League (NHL) and although I was not especially interested in the specific topic suggested to me, its sport-related focus further aroused my interest. As a result, I wrote about ‘sport as a political tool’ for my dissertation. I found myself only the second person who chose sport as a topic in the history of the department. In the process, my interest in the academic

study of sport grew. The names of baseball players were (and still are) more the household names in Japan than those of any other sports athletes and baseball has always been the closest sport to my heart. I therefore turned my attention to baseball for my doctoral study.

I knew that doing research on baseball in a British university was a most unusual project, rather like doing research on cricket in an American or a Japanese university. But I was very keen to pursue further academic study in Britain and my supervisor sympathised with this 'unorthodox' topic. As a result of talking to some British people, I found baseball not entirely foreign to British people, partly because baseball games (the U.S. Major League) are broadcast on Channel 5. But I had to face the reality that popular interest in, and media coverage of, Japanese baseball are practically non-existent in Britain.

It was the Buddhist philosophy (Mahayana Buddhism,<sup>4</sup> especially) which encouraged me to pursue my idea of a baseball-focused Ph.D. One of my friends, who is a Mahayana Buddhist, lent me a lot of books about Buddhism. I learned that what underlies Mahayana Buddhism is that, "The significance of human life consists in how much you act for other people's sake, not for your own sake", which came home to me. I applied

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<sup>4</sup> Sanskrit for "Greater Vehicle".



this philosophy to my research, interpreting it as “I am doing this research for British people who want to know about Japan culturally. Even if there is only one person who is interested in baseball, I feel honoured to help him/her”. Thinking in this way, I carried on.

Robert Whiting, an American author and baseball journalist, is the author of *The Chrysanthemum and the Bat* (1977) and *You Gotta Have Wa* (1989), both of which refer to cultural friction between the U.S. and Japan in the context of baseball. As far as I know, there are no other books which have spelt out Japanese baseball more clearly, more straightforwardly, or more elaborately than these two books. Some European academics, when they have written about sport culture in Japan, make reference to them (e.g. Horne 1999: 212-229; Stokvis 1989: 13-24). In other words, it is possible to say that Whiting’s books are indispensable when inquiring into sport culture in Japan. Whiting completed these works after having interviewed a lot of American immigrant players and a lot of Japanese baseball men. But it seemed to me that most of the American players’ comments he cited in the books were complaints about the Japanese game (this is especially conspicuous in *You Gotta have Wa*). Therefore, I got a negative image of Japanese baseball. It is clear that the complaints of the American players can be traced back to the difference in the philosophical approaches to baseball between the two peoples. Whiting notes that baseball is understood as ‘a



way of life' in Japan, which is quite the right comment. But it seemed to me that his argument put too much emphasis on the 'eccentricity' of Japanese baseball by citing American players' complaints (I think he made a more profound analysis of the Japanese approach in *The Chrysanthemum and the Bat*). As Americans have enough reasons to love 'their' game, the Japanese also have enough reasons to love 'their' game. In this thesis, I am trying to spell out reasons why and the way in which the Japanese see baseball as 'a way of life'.

### 1.3 Methodology

#### 1.3.1 Philosophical View about Social Research

Research is carried out in order to discover 'truths' about something under investigation. There are relatively few problems when reference is made to 'discovering truths' in the natural sciences. For example, the phenomenon of the sun rising in the east and setting in the west seems obvious for everyone to acknowledge. Natural phenomena appear to be ontologically so obvious (what is reality) that there is resistance to partial and political interpretations. Therefore, 'truths' in the natural sciences are interpreted as the ultimate truths. But complications arise in the case of 'truths' in the social sciences, because social phenomena which are unobvious and intractable ontologically are more likely to be interpreted in different ways by different people. Because of this ambiguity, social

research has been deeply connected with philosophy. As philosophy concerns itself with the foundation of all existing things, what social research depends on philosophy for is the foundation of knowledge, what is called 'foundationalism' (Hughes and Sharrock 1997: 4).

Our interpretations of what are described as 'social realities' are built on an accumulation of empirical knowledge (epistemology). We depend on plenty of bases including reference to experimental methods, correct procedures of analysis, authoritative sources, spiritual inspiration, age, experience, etc. for our claim to know something (Hughes and Sharrock 1997: 6) and establish our perspective of what are described as 'social realities'. At a practical level, these bases, considered to have authoritative status, are valid, but at foundational level, their validity as authoritative epistemological sources can be challenged. For example, when consideration is given to what is described as 'economic recession', we know that such indexes as stock price, unemployment rates, interest rates measure an economic situation, putting confidence in those indexes as authoritative epistemological indexes. However, in terms of foundationalism, there is no guarantee that those indexes form the reality of the world correctly. It is quite possible that we are 'brainwashed' into believing the validity of those indexes just because everyone else has said so generation by generation.

The uncertainty of our epistemological positions becomes more conspicuous when a cross-cultural understanding is involved. Japanese people, in general, bank on what is translated into Japanese for understanding foreign cultures. But the Japanese language can be characterised as a situational language. For instance, in English, 'I love you' remains as 'I love you' under different situations. But when this expression is translated into Japanese, there are dozens of variations of meaning in accordance with age and social differences between speakers (e.g. Reischauer 1989: 381-394). *The Chrysanthemum and the Bats* and *You Gotta Have Wa* are both translated into Japanese and I read the Japanese translation of the latter as well. I found that foreign players' comments were translated into various language manners. Some comments (normal comments and soft complaints) were translated in a relatively polite language manner in which the speakers' self-addressing term ('I' in English) was *boku* (a gentle form of the self-addressing term for men). On the other hand, for the translation of strong complaints, a relatively unrefined (vulgar or sarcastic, in some cases) language manner was used and *ore* (an informal form of the self-addressing term for men) was attached to such comments. In addition, there was a tendency in which the comments made by players who had reputations as 'role models' were translated in a polite language manner and those by players who were reputed to be 'outlaws' were cited in an unrefined language manner.



Personally, I found it appropriate for the translator to select a language manner according to particular contexts because this helped in animating players' comments. I recognised most of the players cited in the book and my image of them was quite in tune with various situational language manners. But, in terms of foundationalism, this indicates that the Japanese ontological positions about foreign cultures are conditioned by translators' personal prejudices and political partialities.

Social life is never free from partiality. Max Weber, a German sociologist, notes:

There is no absolutely 'objective' analysis of culture — or perhaps more narrowly but certainly not essentially different for our purposes — of 'social phenomena' independent of special and 'one-sided' viewpoints according to which — expressly or tacitly, consciously or subconsciously — they are selected, analysed and organised for expository purpose...All knowledge of cultural reality, as may be seen, is always knowledge from particular points of view (cited in Hughes and Sharrock 1997: 133).

Nevertheless, there have been many attempts to pursue objective, value-free, and impartial data, which has been reflected in the debate about qualitative and quantitative research. For reasons of supposed academic rigour, quantitative research which analyses social phenomena statistically has been more preferred than qualitative research which examines human consciousness, thoughts and experiences directly, and is allegedly dubbed political and subjective (Silverman 2000: 1-2).



However, qualitative research has an aspect of providing a deeper understanding of social phenomena than would be obtained from purely quantitative data (Silverman 2000: 8). Further, Maykut and Morehouse (1994: 20) defends qualitative research, defining 'subjective' as being "synonymous with agency or with the actor's perspective", while arguing that being objective is being cold and distant, and adds that researchers are "subjects or actors and not outside of the process as impartial observers". Denscombe (1998: 73), specifically mentioning ethnography, one type of qualitative research methods, notes the importance of being a part of things under investigation:

Ethnographers tend to be very sensitive to the matter of reflexivity and the way it affects their perception of the culture or events they wish to describe. What concerns them is that the conceptual tools they use to understand the cultures or events being studied are not, and can never be, neutral and passive instruments of discovery...We can only make sense of the world in a way that we have learnt to do using conceptual tools which are based on our own culture and our own experiences. We have no way of standing outside these to reach some objective and neutral vantage point from which to view things 'as they really are'. To an extent, we can describe them only 'as we see them', and this is shaped by our culture, not theirs.

In Japanese baseball, philosophical differences over baseball between the Japanese and Americans have produced different ontological positions. It is essential to take account of their life experiences in order to get to grips with what underlies their philosophies. Moreover, epistemological positions are different not only between the Japanese and Americans but also between the Japanese themselves. Therefore, being epistemologically multi-dimensional in data gathering can lead to a fuller understanding of

a certain cultural group. In order to investigate different epistemological positions in relation to baseball, I needed to collect data from American sources as well as Japanese ones. I split my time between Britain and Japan, and while in Britain, I spent my time mainly in searching for English language written sources. My time in Japan was dedicated to finding Japanese language written sources. The methods of investigation employed in this thesis are documentary searches, interviews, email correspondence, and conventional correspondence.

### **1.3.2 Research Methods (1) Documentary Search**

In undertaking academic research, while original data from interviews, participant observation, questionnaires, etc. is required, it is arguably data from documentary evidence on which all researchers mainly depend for structuring their own theories. Documentary sources, Mason (Mason, J. 1996: 72-73) argues, are ontologically “meaningful constituents of the social world in themselves” and epistemologically “can provide or count as evidence of these ontological properties”. Denscombe (1998: 158) argues about the validity of documentary sources that, “All investigations that lay claim to being ‘research’ should start off with a literature review...What is unacceptable in terms of good research is to offer no such location of proposed research within the existing knowledge in the area”. In other words, written documents demonstrate the existing state of knowledge (Denscombe 1998: 158), providing the researcher with a starting point. In



this thesis, in addition to the secondary sources — for example, books and articles written by other authors about past events and social contexts — I also used original documentary source material — for example, contemporary books, newspapers, magazines and web sites produced by people at the specific period being discussed. Most of the original sources were Japanese.

### *Books*

It is undeniable that books are fundamental information sources. I gave much of my time to searching for books in Brunel University Library, the British Library, and SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London) Library. For the completion of the theory of sport globalisation (Chapters Two and Three), I gathered as many books as necessary in Britain. But for the investigation of Japanese baseball (Chapters Four, Five, Six) which is so marginalised in Britain, there was an absolute paucity of books in Britain. Only a very few Japanese baseball-related books written by English-speaking authors were available in Britain. Furthermore, I wanted the opinions and analyses of Japanese people themselves and my major source of books was Japan.

While in Japan, the search for Japanese baseball-related books was my main concern. I used university libraries, public libraries and major bookshops. Baseball literature is more abundant than other sports

literature and consequently I was able to secure sufficient material for my project. I collected approximately 40 baseball-related books. They are roughly classified into three types according to authors. The first type is characterised as works written by former players. Most of these authors link their baseball experiences to life philosophy, group management, and human development (e.g. Kawakami 1991; Nomura 1995; 1998). The second type is characterised as works by baseball journalists, most of which describe players biographically or convey behind-the-scenes episodes (e.g. Hamada 1997; Kondô 1998; 1999; 2000). The third type can be characterised as academic texts. Baseball is discussed sociologically, historically, or in terms of business administration (e.g. Kiku 1993; Kitaya and Kimura 2001; Nagai and Hashizume 2003).

### *Journals*

Denscombe (1998: 159) notes that journals as well as books should be the first call for academic research and I looked on journals to be as important as books. Brunel University Library contains a large collection of sport-related journals that I referred to. Sometimes I visited neighbouring university libraries in order to gain access to the journals which were not available in Brunel Library. Mainly, I made reference to the following journals:

American Historical Review  
Body and Society  
Culture, Sport and Society



Current Research on Peace and Violence  
International Review for the Sociology of Sport  
Journal of Sport and Social Issues  
Journal of Sport History  
Media, Culture and Society  
Sociology of Sport Journal  
Sport History Review  
Quest  
The International Journal for the History of Sport

All these journals are refereed with a high standard of scholarship and the articles are based on original research.

### *Newspapers and Magazines*

It is possible to say that newspapers and magazines show the 'latest' state of knowledge about the topic under investigation. What helped me, in particular, were *Newsweek* and *Time*, influential American weekly magazines. Fortunately, Brunel University Library provided me with early issues of both these magazines. *Newsweek*, especially, produced more Japanese affair-related articles than expected. In addition, with the increase in the number of Japanese immigrant players in U.S. Major League Baseball after 1995, *Newsweek* included articles about Japanese players and Japanese baseball more frequently than before. Needless to say, Japanese newspapers were essential information sources as well. Early issues of some Japanese newspapers were accessible in SOAS Library and I could collect ample data there.

## *The Internet*

As a result of the development of communication technology, the Internet emerged as an important information source for qualitative data. Besides, it enables a person's ideas to be transmitted to the rest of the world freely, and a lot of groups and people take advantage of this facility. Once having mastered basic computer operations, everyone can gather necessary information at home. But in terms of academic rigour, the validity of Internet documents is controversial. For example, Mann and Stewart (2000: 7) raise the following questions:

...do data gathered in this way have a different quality from those collected orally, in handwriting, or in print form? Second, what is the impact of disembodied interaction on issues of power, gender and presentation of 'the self'? Might these phenomena have implications for data? Finally, taking everything else into account, can it be claimed that the Internet allows us to develop *new* forms of research?

Furthermore, there is a fundamental question, which is, 'How authentic and credible are Internet documents?' Because there are few restrictions on what is placed on the Internet (Denscombe 1998: 160), everyone is relatively free to convey any information. At worst, false information can be in circulation in the name of freedom of speech. Accordingly, researchers are required to deal with Internet documents even more carefully than with books and journals (Denscombe 1998: 160; see also Mann and Stewart 2000: 39-64).

In this thesis, I checked website pages extensively, but mainly

depended on website pages maintained by public bodies in terms of academic rigour. I made reference to the home pages of each baseball club, which provide fans with club information. In addition, the websites of newspapers gave me important data and those of some daily sports specialist newspapers were of great help. They provide rapid news coverage and also analysis and comment about Japanese sports including baseball, which aided me in seeing things multi-dimensionally. I have noted earlier that I avoided the websites maintained by individuals, but baseball players' homepages were the exception. Recently, the number of baseball players, active or retired, who have their own homepages is increasing. What is put on the pages ranges from memoirs and diaries to opinions about the baseball world today.

In addition to gathering textual data, another laborious job was to translate publications written in Japanese into English, which was a main feature of this project. Tokitsu (1998: 101) notes that, "Those who claim that a language can be translated into another foreign language straight have never worked on a foreign language seriously". I fully agree with this comment. Traditionally, the Japanese tended to put emphasis on something intangible in sporting activities such as spiritual power, the cultivation of the soul, as opposed to Western people who were used to thinking rationally and scientifically. The difference between the Japanese and Western approaches to body culture was the key issue in



this thesis and translating such very Japanese concepts into English was the most painstaking job.

Although I could not avoid using baseball terms, I tried to be cautious in using them. I got the impression that British people, in general, know something about baseball and baseball terms. But this does not mean that they understand all baseball terms and the nuances of the game. Therefore, I have provided a 'glossary and abbreviations of baseball terms' (page ix and x) in which those used in this thesis are defined, and I have sometimes put some terms into easier forms of expressions.

### 1.3.3 Research Methods (2) Interview

I interviewed just one person, Iwata Kenji. Iwata is a veteran baseball journalist whose career started in 1956 and who has written a lot of baseball-related books. He was the only journalist who agreed to be interviewed for free. I adopted a semi-structured interview mode to enable him to speak his mind about Japanese baseball but without going off track too far. Denscombe (1998: 113) has defined semi-structured interviews as follows:

...the interviewer is prepared to be flexible in terms of the order in which the topics are considered, and, perhaps more significantly, to let the interviewee develop ideas and speak more widely on the issues raised by researcher. The answers are open-ended, and there is more emphasis on the interviewee elaborating points of interest.

I dressed up to the nines and met him in a hotel lobby. After introducing ourselves, we moved to the hotel tearoom, where the interview started. He agreed to have his comments tape-recorded. We talked over coffee in a relaxed mood and he answered my questions politely. This interview lasted one hour. After the interview was complete, I talked to him about my access to Japanese baseball men. Unfortunately, his reply was pessimistic. He said that I would be required to pay more than 30,000 yen (150 pounds) for each thirty minute interview in addition to paying travel costs (10,000 yen = 50 pounds), which was financially too much for me. I also made contact with baseball clubs, but their answers just endorsed Iwata's advice. But I gathered a lot of materials from print media from other sports journalists covering Japanese baseball, which compensates for the paucity of interview data from Japanese participants.

#### **1.3.4 Research Methods (3) Email and Conventional Correspondence**

Instead of interviewing Japanese baseball men and Japanese journalists, I turned my attention to collecting personal statements from American baseball players who played in Japanese baseball. The purpose was to make sense of Japanese baseball — in particular the relations between 'Japaneseness' and American influences — in part through the expressions and opinions of players themselves. It would have been best to travel to the U.S. and interview American players there, but my financial situation did not permit me to do this. This research was funded by my

personal savings (living expenses in Britain as well). Besides, as a non-EU student, I was restricted to work part-time only by the Home Office and income from my part-time job covered rent and living expenses at best. Under this financial situation, I found it impossible to make an interview tour to the U.S.

An alternative method of collecting data was to use email exchanges. Gathering personal statements via email were expedient and productive, making it possible to collect data from participants from different parts of the U.S. But, at first, I had no information about the email addresses of potential participants, and so I had to mail letters conventionally, asking them to help me with my research. I learned that an American autograph collector had an address list of American baseball players in circulation and I bought one copy from him. The next question to sort out was who to ask for co-operation. As detailed in Chapter Five, the number of American (or foreign) players who migrated to Japanese baseball after 1952 when the quota system for foreign players was formally introduced, amounts to approximately seven hundred, and nearly eighty percent of them left Japan after one or two seasons. This indicates that Japanese baseball was not necessarily a comfortable place for foreign players. Sport labour migrants are required to 'pass' two tests — to get adjusted to a different culture and to prove themselves in the games. Therefore, foreign players who played in Japanese baseball for more than three seasons are



extraordinary, being judged successes in Japanese baseball (or having a less partial view about Japanese baseball). I picked out ninety-three of these players whose addresses were listed in the address list mentioned above as the potential participants.

Email correspondence (or online interviewing) is a symbol of the new technological age has been the focus of academic attention as a new method of generating data. Computer networking allows researchers to have quick access to potential participants transcending time and space barriers, minimising time taken and costs incurred and making it easier to handle data (see Mann and Stewart 2000: 17-38). In addition, computer networking offers participants the potential to communicate in a familiar and physically safe environment, which is especially important in the case of women, older people and socially marginalised groups (Mann and Stewart 2000: 25). But, as is the case with Internet documents, this method is not without contestation. The main issue is that the interviewer and the interviewee cannot talk face-to-face. Mann and Stewart (2000: 126) notes:

Traditionally, this [developing rapport with participants in qualitative interviews] has been associated with a mutual reading of presentation of self. In any social situation there is a swift appraisal of age, gender and ethnicity; of accent, dress and personal grooming; of conventionality, eccentricity and subcultural markers; of confidence levels, physical attractiveness, friendliness or restraint. In addition, oral dimensions of language (pitch, tone and so on) might identify whether what was said was spoken from a position of confidence, doubt, irony and so forth. The sense of the other attained by such means allows

each person to assess (a) how others are interpreting what they say and (b) the genuineness of intent in a query or a response. If, as a result of this delicate interaction, participants come to trust in the sincerity and the motivation of the interviewer, they may be prepared to share in-depth insight into their private and social world. At the same time, the interviewer will increasingly be able to sense the appropriateness of questions and the meaningfulness of answers.

In order to develop rapport with participants online (or in conventional correspondence), the least the researcher can do is to disclose him/herself (see Mann and Stewart 2000: 137). How much personal information he/she should disclose is a contentious matter, but, in this thesis, I disclosed basic personal information such as 'who I am', 'what I am doing', 'the outline of my research', and 'why I need your data' in polite ways (see Appendix 2). I believe that this attitude established trust between the researcher and the participants. For example, James Kingston's reply started with, "Thank you for [your] interest in Japanese baseball and for respecting me enough in this field to ask for my opinion" (*email communication 28/9/2003*). Charles Jones's greeting was, "I am flattered and [honoured] to be asked to take part [in] your academic research" (*postal communication 24/8/2003*).

I sent written enquiries to the participants by post with my greeting letter (see Appendix 2) and asked them to reply via email. In consideration of non-computer network users, I did not forget to enclose answer sheets, a return envelop, and a reply postal stamp, in an attempt to ensure a response. In addition, what is important is that I asked the participants



for their views on condition that I would not disclose their names without permission. I believe that this helped the participants to provide sensitive information and to 'speak' their minds. Exceptionally, I used Darryl Spencer's comments under his real name with his consent.

Unfortunately, however, the response rate was not high. I sent reminder notes after two months to those who failed to respond to my first communication and I finally received replies from eighteen participants. At first, I had wondered whether these baseball players would help me, because they had been celebrities in Japan and I found it unlikely that they would provide information and ideas to an ordinary person. But the participants were in generous spirit and co-operated with my research and some of them gave me valuable and interesting material. Darryl Spencer's co-operation was especially reassuring, because he is reputed to be someone who changed Japanese baseball revolutionarily and his name stands out in the history of Japanese baseball.

In addition to foreign players, I obtained personal statements from Richard Baines, Jack Gallagher, and David Wiggins, all of whom are American journalists covering Japanese baseball. The former two have their own homepages and I got into contact with them at their email addresses mentioned in their homepages. The latter often contributes articles to Japanese newspapers. I entered his name in an Internet search



and found his email address. All of them agreed to my request willingly. Of course, I disclosed myself in the same way as I did in asking for players' co-operation. I asked Wayne Graczyk and Marty Keuhnert, both of whom are American journalists covering Japanese baseball, for their co-operation as well, but the former did not reply despite a couple of reminders. The latter was teaching at a Japanese university, replying to me that he was too busy to help me.

#### 1.4 The Structure of this Thesis

This thesis consists of two main 'pillars'. One is the theory of sport globalisation and the other is Japanese baseball in the global processes.

#### *Chapter Two*

Chapter Two examines how globalisation is theorised academically. Globalisation can be equated with the idea of a 'borderless' world in which people, goods, and services go beyond national boundaries, and the way in which this phenomenon is interpreted varies in accordance with time and place. Some define globalisation as multiculturalism, taking it positively, while others see it as threatening to their personal identities. Sociological studies of globalisation, in most cases, reduce to two arguments: whether it is a homogeneous one-way process or a contradictory and differential process (Osborne and Van Loon 1996: 125).

This chapter focuses on the two distinct approaches — first, the belief that Western political and economic domination has fundamentally influenced world history for the past few centuries and its influences have spread to the cultural sphere, going so far as to produce what is described as ‘global culture’. Especially the U.S. influences from the twentieth century onwards were so enormous that there is a tendency to identify globalisation with Americanisation. That is one way that globalisation is understood as a homogeneous one way process from ‘established’ groups (the West) to ‘outsider’ groups (the non-West) and cultural imperialism is the word often used to explain this process (e.g. Guttman 1994), as discussed in this chapter.

Second, the alternative argument to the idea of homogenisation also discussed in this chapter is that globalisation is a contradictory and differential process. This approach puts emphasis on the passage of time, which means that a homogeneous one-way process from ‘established’ groups to ‘outsider’ groups is nothing but temporary. As a result of two (or more) different cultures getting mixed, cultural influences from ‘established’ groups become weaker and those from ‘outsider’ groups become stronger, which result in the emergence of new patterns of culture. In other words, this approach indicates that globalisation is a multi-way and long-term process.

### *Chapter Three*

Based on the theory of sport globalisation, Chapter Three explores how modern sport culture in Japan took shape. After 1868, when Japan-Western diplomatic relations became full-scale, Japan was desperate to catch up with the West out of fear of becoming colonised, importing Western culture greedily. In this chapter, it is also argued that sport culture was one feature of this development. The Western concept of sport was that it was 'fun' and a 'pastime', but the Japanese reinterpreted it as serious business, which justified repetitive and torturous practices and the image that sport was painful was established. After World War II, there was a move to spread the Western concept of sport, but a return to international society (Japan was driven out of it for starting the war) and the reconstruction of the nation were put above anything else. This chapter goes on to analyse how, under this circumstance, sport continued to be 'serious business' as a vehicle to inspire people. But in the 1990s, the Japanese economic and social system which had sustained postwar prosperity failed and a drastic reform of the system was discussed everywhere. In the sporting world, the concept of sport as painfulness was called into question and the concept of sport as fun and pastime gradually penetrated Japanese society.



## *Chapter Four*

In Chapter Four, the discussion is narrowed down to Japanese baseball and the way in which the game grew is explored. This chapter covers the game from its introduction to Japan in the middle of the nineteenth century to 1950. The year of 1950 is the turning point in the history of Japanese baseball. Before 1950, amateur baseball formed the baseball culture of Japan but after 1950, professional baseball predominated.

This chapter traces the way in which baseball was welcomed by elite students as one of the most 'advanced' cultural products. However, local resistance to Westernisation was in progress as well, amid modernisation programmes, and baseball was used as a suitable tool for demonstrating 'Japaneseness'. As a matter of fact, instead of finding the fun in baseball, elite students grasped the game as an educational means for spiritual development and self-sacrifice and spread it nationwide as such. This chapter goes on to discuss how, in the early twentieth century, student baseball (college baseball, in particular) was in its prime, winning the nation's heart. Amateurism was so dominant that the establishment of professional baseball had to wait until 1936. Even after its inception, professional baseball was regarded as socially lower than college baseball and baseball men in professional baseball had to struggle against social prejudice.

## *Chapter Five*

Chapter Five focuses on the growth of baseball culture after 1950. As already suggested, the baseball world after 1950 can be characterised as the era of professional baseball. In addition, it was after 1950 that baseball labour migration from the U.S. to Japan became full-scale. In other words, Japanese baseball after 1950 onwards was significant in global processes in a fuller sense. This chapter discusses further how the history of Japanese baseball after 1950 went hand in hand with baseball labour migration and witnesses various cultural conflicts between the two games. This chapter divides the post-1950 period into each decade, detailing how Japanese baseball was influenced by labour migration.

## *Chapter Six*

Chapter Six provides information about specific features of the Japanese approach to the game. Information about the character of baseball is given in Chapter Five to some extent, but it is only a fragmentary part of the whole chronological history of the game. This chapter, therefore, gives a fuller analyses of the Japanese approach to baseball. Reference is made to three factors — ‘A Good Player is Made’, ‘Group Harmony’, and ‘Overcoaching Culture’.

## *Chapter Seven*

Chapter Seven investigates the Japanese version of baseball from a particular angle — in the form of the Robert Whiting-William Kelly baseball debate. Both of them are well-informed about the Japanese version of baseball, but their respective approach to it is different. Whiting interprets the Japanese version of baseball as particularly Japanese, while Kelly, a university professor of anthropology whose research interests include the Japanese version of baseball, dismisses Whiting's approach as 'orientalist exaggerations' (Kelly 2004: 98), analysing the Japanese game relativistically. In this Chapter, the following four topics are the focus of the discussion within the framework of the Whiting-Kelly debate: i) high school/amateur baseball; ii) the varieties of baseball club culture; iii) supporter formation; and iv) the response/adaptation of Japanese baseball to sport science.

## *Chapter Eight*

Chapter Eight brings this thesis to a conclusion, seeking to make some comments as a whole about what has been discussed. As a result of the globalisation of Japanese baseball, the game was criticised as unexciting because of sticking too much to the ideology of winning too much and because the manager's initiative was very strong. Criticism of the Japanese game became severer as soccer emerged as the sport of dynamism and players' initiatives. In addition, the increase of the



immigration of Japanese players to American baseball deepened the sense of crisis among baseball men. As a result, there is a move to respect the initiative of players in Japanese baseball, while some traditionalists argue that such 'free' baseball will provide shallow games, degrading what baseball really is. This chapter considers how the idea of organising the 'World Cup of Baseball', which is supposed to start in 2006, may grow, in the face of ongoing ideological tugs-of-war caused by the ongoing globalisation of the game.

### 1.5 Terminology

I often uses the term 'Japanese approach to baseball' or equivalents in making reference to Japanese baseball. It means what is conspicuously Japanese in character in the game of baseball, not simply baseball in Japan. The 'American' approach' can also be observed in Japanese baseball games. Similarly, the 'American approach' to baseball is something conspicuously American in character, in terms of the philosophical approach to the game, the way in which the game is played, relations of power within the game, and so on. These terms symbolise the origins of and continuity of struggles and complexes in relation to the nexus between local and global.

## **Chapter 2    The Theory of Sport Globalisation: How Globalisation is Studied in the Context of Sport**

### **2.1    Introduction**

Globalisation can be characterised as one of the most fashionable terms in today's world (Harvey, Rail and Thibault 1996: 258). Supranational organizations such as the United Nations, the European Union and the World Trade Organization weakened the nation-state system which had been in place for centuries and deepened interdependences between the nation-states. But what makes it conspicuous today is that people experience a compression of temporal and spatial distances at an individual level because of technological innovations. In particular, the development of computer networks, beyond governmental regulations, has resulted in the instant circulation across the world of various information, messages, and ideologies and has facilitated international financial transactions. These developments create the impression more than ever that the earth is one single place where each person can be a recipient of different cultures and, at the same time, a supplier of his/her own culture, which arguably has pulled the term globalisation closer to us.

Globalisation is a common term in today's sporting world as well. Since the British invented modern soccer in the nineteenth century (Mason, T. 1996: 368; see also Radnedge et al. 1997), it grew to maintain the position today as the most globally popular sport. The soccer World Cup is the largest international sporting event, intoxicating people of all classes across the globe every four years. The 1994 Final between Brazil and Italy reportedly attracted approximately 1.5 billion TV viewers worldwide, which accounted for 30 per cent of the world's population. According to Miller, Lawrence, McKay and Rowe (2001: 27), the UK Manchester United Football Club has 100 million fan-club members worldwide and is the most recognised sporting brand in the world. Of American sports, basketball is globally the most successful. As in 1994, the US NBA (National Basketball Association) games were broadcast on television in 141 countries, up from 40 a decade before, and NBA retail sales overseas for everything from magazines to hats had been doubling every year, ahead of retail sales of American football and baseball (Emerson 1994). Michael Jordan, who is counted as one of the best basketball players in the history of the NBA, was the most popular athlete in France, England, Australia and the second most popular public figure in China after Deng Xiaoping, the then-national leader (Emerson 1994). Inevitably, the global dissemination of sports has induced sports athletes to move transcontinentally for better contracts, producing a particular form of



multiculturalism. For example, in 1998, Real Madrid, a famous Spanish soccer team was under German managership, but had only four Spanish players, with one Italian, one Brazilian, one Argentinean, one Dutch, one French, one Yugoslavian and one Croatian (Osumi 1998: 6). In the ice hockey league in North American (NHL), the percentage of Canadian players fell from 97 per cent in 1967 to 66 per cent in 1993, which resulted from the labour migrations from European countries (MacGregor quoted in Maguire 1999: 109). In particular, the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 allowed the excellent ex-Soviet hockey players to move to North American Ice Hockey League (NHL), increasing the range of foreign players. In common with the general trend of labour migration, in some Far Eastern and some Latin American countries to which Americans expanded their cultural sphere of influence, baseball labour migrations from those countries to America and vice versa were — and still are — in progress.

Research about sport globalisation concerns itself with how globalisation processes influence human society. Although economic matters are tremendously important in human society and have been argued to form the fundamental basis of modern globalisation processes (e.g. Wallerstein 1974), Robertson (1992: 4) puts cultural matters before economic matters in his analysis of modern globalisation development. Robertson explains as follows (1992: 4).

Even more relevant in the present context, it is becoming more and more apparent that no matter how much issues of 'naked' national self-interest may enter into the interactions of nations there are still crucial issues of a basically cultural nature which structure and shape most relations, from the hostile to the friendly, between nationally organized [sic] societies. In any case, polyethnicity and multiculturalism have become increasingly significant internal and external constraints on foreign policy formation.

If economy is essential in sustaining human life materially, culture is essential in sustaining human life spiritually. It is not rare that pictures, songs, films, music, literary works etc. go beyond time and space, comforting and entertaining people in different parts of the world and sport, specifically baseball can be seen to have these characteristics.

There are many forms of global processes at work and globalisation has been conceptualised from various angles. But the most common perspective about globalisation, as Nederveen Pieterse (1995: 45) has noted, is the standardisation of the world through a technological, commercial and cultural synchronisation emanating from the West (or 'established' groups). This brings about a fear about a possible destruction of local cultures among those that, in particular, are politically/economically weak. For example, sport labour migration and the excessive influx of foreign talents is thought to undermine local talents (e.g. Maguire 1994b; 1999). Or the global campaign of the luring of local talents by rich clubs is alleged to result in the demise of suppliers' cultures. There are some cases in which traditional ideologies yield to new



ideologies as part of a process of rationalisation, as is the case in jūdô. Accordingly, globalisation is believed to give more advantage to 'established' groups, which underlines a 'one-way' process of 'cultural homogenisation' or 'cultural imperialism' (e.g. Guttmann 1994).

However, it is possible to find some examples of cultural flows from 'outsider' groups as well. For example, the global spread of jūdô from Japan to the West, the loss of Canadians' euphoria over their own ice hockey in the face of Soviet and European style hockey (MacSkimming 1996), indicate that globalisation is not altogether a 'one-way' process from 'established' sides. In response to the reality that a 'two-way' process is at work, a certain intellectual view of globalisation puts the cultural power of 'established' groups and that of 'outsider' groups on a more equal footing. It is further argued that globalisation contains Europeanisation, Americanisation, Orientalisation, Africanisation, Hispanicisation etc. (e.g. Maguire 1999), full details of which will be discussed later.

## **2.2 Globalisation as Homogenisation**

Sport-like activities have been practised everywhere since ancient times, but it is said that Englishmen transformed these activities into what was called modern sport for the first time in the nineteenth century (e.g. Guttmann 1978: 57; Maguire 1999: 57). From then on, sport grew to



be one of the global cultures. But the globalisation of sport did not merely mean that some types of sport came to be played by people all over the world or that sporting competitions were held at global level. It also induced transcontinental labour migration and produced multiculturalism in sport. It contributed to the globalisation of spectator sport as well. Because of the advancement of telecommunications, major sporting events can now be transmitted all over the world. In parallel with the growth of spectator sport, sport was commodified by multinational corporations for their global advertisement strategies (e.g. Whannel 1992). In addition, with the intensification of sporting competitions, research on sport medicine and training methods were undertaken vigorously and the findings were globally shared.

Although the globalisation of sport can be argued to be multidimensional, the Occidental influence has played the central role in its promotion and expansion. Taki (1995: 80) has argued that, "With the modernisation of society, the British produced sport culture and the Americans made it more suitable for modern society". To put it specifically, the British exported their original sports to their colonies as part of an educational and unifying policy, whereas the Americans were committed to making sport into global entertainment, relying on the power of the media and global corporations. In the process, various international sport organisations were founded, contributing to the global diffusion of sports

by the hosting of international sporting contests. But these campaigns were Occidental-led and it was no wonder that there were Occidental philosophies behind them. Harvey, Rail and Thibault (1996: 274) point out that the globalisation of sport is the “homogenization [sic] of sport through Western commodified sport forms”. This opinion is supported by Galtung (1982: 137), who argues that sports are the carriers of “the message of Western social cosmology”. For example, it is undeniable that the Olympic Games provide the best potential to introduce local sports globally, but except for jūdô, the sport disciplines adopted in the Games are exclusively of European and North American origin, in spite of the fact that indigenous Asian sports are practised by millions all over the world<sup>5</sup> (Eichberg 1984: 98; see also Miller, Lawrence, Mckay and Rowe 2001: 26-27). As is well known, Olympism originated in the West and, not surprisingly, reflected Western philosophies. Eichberg (1984: 99) notes that the growth of Western Olympic sport was based on the imperative of ‘quicker, higher, stronger’. In other words, raising the limit of human athletic ability little by little was what Western people were in pursuit of. In the process, the scientisation of sport advanced rapidly. As a result, the scientific study of the sporting body developed rapidly and ways to heighten athletic functions became integral to a highly organised, politicised and commercialised sport industry. But challenging the limit of

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<sup>5</sup> Taekwondo (originally Korean) was officially adopted as an Olympic sport discipline at the Sydney Games of 2000.



human athletic ability went so far as to incorporate the use of harmful performance-enhancing drugs and other agents (e.g. Hoberman 1992). The scientisation of sport was so costly that those who could benefit from it the most were inevitably from rich countries and athletes from rich countries were more likely to win in international contests. In addition, standardised sport facilities were necessary for fair competitions, but the construction of these facilities was too costly for poor countries, which gave rich countries more chances to host the Olympic Games and other international sporting contests (Eichberg 1984: 99). Under the circumstance in which those who ran (swam) quicker, jumped higher (further) and were stronger were extolled, and sport-like activities which were not compatible with the Olympic philosophy were marginalised. For example, there was the 'ancient style of swimming' in Japan. This style developed as a martial art and a lot of schools of swimming came into existence. Unlike the modern competitive style which make one physically exhausted, the ancient style was said to allow swimmers to move in a natural way and to carry on swimming for a day or two. But the modern style which put an emphasis on speed was imported from the West, becoming mainstream, and the ancient style became a relic of the past. Today, the ancient style is known only to a very small number of people (*Yumiuri Shinbun* 29/6/1995; Nakamura 1998: 237-247). It is needless to say that the same phenomenon is going on in various other parts of the world. Even if a certain local culture survived by getting adopted as



modern sport, it was compelled to obliterate some traditional parts so that it meets the philosophies of modern sport. For example, jūdô, which has received academic attention among sport globalisation theorists as an example of the global sport diffusion from the non-West, allowed Western enthusiasts in the early days to learn the spiritual aspect of the 'sport', but young practitioners had more interest in technique and the thrill of conquest (Guttmann 1991: 188-189; see also Carr 1996: 209) and, in a sense, jūdô became redefined to accommodate to the highly competitive structures of the Western style of sport. For example, as the survival of modern sport depended on financial aid from TV and commercial sponsors, so jūdô was required to step in line. In 1997, mainly Western modernists argued for the introduction of a coloured outfit for jūdô because it could: (a) make it easier to distinguish one competitor from the other, (b) make a good visual image leading to more televising, and (c) reduce referees' wrong decisions. Opposition from Japanese traditionalists was based on an emotional appeal that 'white symbolises the spirit of jūdô', while the Western modernist side put an emphasis on the practical advantages which the introduction of a colored outfit would produce. Unsurprisingly, this argument ended in the victory of Western modernists and the art of developing a logical argument on the Japanese side was questioned (see *Asahi Shinbun* 8/10/1997; Takiguchi 1997; see also Nakamura 1998: 230-234).

While the development of modern sports did not go without assimilation to Western philosophies, another conspicuous feature about modern sports was the very specifically American impact on them. Throughout the twentieth century, American influences have marked themselves in politics and economics as well as culture (sport) and American ideologies, products, and cultural forms have taken root all over the world, even in the Islamic world where anti-American sentiment has been strongest. With the arrival of the era of audio visuals, American influences established the maxim that sport is entertainment. Donnelly (1996: 246) notes about the American conceptualisation of sport that:

What is important is that the American style of sport has become the international benchmark for corporate sport “show-biz”, spectacular, high-scoring, or record-setting superstar athletes; the ability to attract sponsors by providing desired audiences; and having characteristics necessary for good television coverage.

This philosophy was reflected in the style of television coverage. According to Goldlust (quoted in Maguire 1990: 218), British television, especially the BBC tended to emphasise notions of accuracy and objective reporting of events, while American network sports production was geared toward constructing an entertainment package. For example, an American baseball presenter described the scene in which a Japanese outfielder threw the ball to the third base man to get a runner out in the following way:



This is a beautiful and perfect throw. What an amazing arm this Japanese guy's got! He throws an amazing fast ball, laser beam-like strike ball. It goes straight into Bell. He just waited. A new superstar was born in Mariners. Such a big play! Thank you Ichirô! (quoted in Toyoda 2002: 170-171 translated from Japanese)<sup>6</sup>

In addition, the Americanisation of sport overthrew the established idea that sports are played only outdoors (Taki 1995: 92). Since the first domed baseball stadium was constructed in 1965,<sup>7</sup> baseball became an indoor sport, and Japanese baseball followed suit. This was the case also with American football. The 'indoorisation' of sport also spread beyond American sports. Indoor athletic meetings are common worldwide today as well. While the Americanisation of sport got rid of a stereotype about sport and transformed it into something appropriate for the era of mass society, there is no doubt that sporting athletes were exploited at the mercy of television and commercial sponsors. It is commonplace for the main events in the Olympic Games to be scheduled at prime time in America in exchange for a huge television fee (Ikei 1992: 215). The rivalry between commercial sponsors is so great that players being used as advertising vehicles are sometimes pressurised into playing even if they are out of shape, and there is a rumour that some sponsors have even interfered

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<sup>6</sup> This is a re-translation from Japanese into English, because the original transcript was not available.

<sup>7</sup> The Astrodome in Houston. In this area, the temperature rose to more than thirty-seven degrees Centigrade during the summer season. Besides, there was damp ground around the area and a large swarm of mosquitoes bothered spectators and players (Itô and Madate 1991: 145).



with the formation of a team lineup (e.g. Stevenson 1998).

The 'Americanisation' of sport can be observed in sport labour migration as well. Maguire (1994b: 224-255) explored the way in which English basketball witnessed indigenous players being marginalised by American immigrant players, who were valued not merely as basketball teachers but also as advertising vehicles. Klein (1991: 79-85) investigated how Caribbean baseball was exploited by the U.S. Major League Baseball, which resulted in the desolation of Caribbean baseball. However, Japanese baseball minimised American influences by limiting the number of American (foreign) players (see 5.1) but the immigration of Japanese players to American baseball in recent times and fans' increasing attention to American baseball games are feared as another form of 'Americanisation' of Japanese baseball (see 5.10).

However, equating globalisation with 'Americanisation', or a 'one-way' process is counter-arguable. Wagner (1990: 400) has avoided the use of the term 'Americanisation', arguing that it is not the key process and, has put forward as an alternative, the concept of 'mundialisation' (internationalisation), which, with reference to sport, means the "blending of sport traditions and aspects of Americanization [sic]". He refers to martial arts and notes that their traditional ethos (honour and respect) and the techniques have been disseminated around the world with the

help of the American media and sports organisations (Wagner 1990: 400).

While globalisation as homogenisation or Americanisation tends to be linked with cultural imperialism, an alternative position is that it is up to local people to accept or not to accept 'foreign' culture. Baseball, despite being the national sport in the U.S., has established itself as the 'national' sport in Japan as well. Even when Japanese antagonism against the U.S. was the strongest (during the Pacific War of 1941-1945), the Japanese love for baseball remained unchanged, although American baseball terminology was banned (see Whiting 1989: 46). Culture can be defined as an embodied form of an accumulation of local people's acts, memories and ideologies. Wagner (1990: 402) claims that, "it is the people themselves who generally determine what they do and do not want..." He concludes that while globalisation will lead to greater homogenisation, there is nothing necessarily bad or imperialistic about this trend, because it ultimately must be the reflection of the will of people (Wagner 1990: 402). However, it is also true that all people are not satisfied with the homogenisation process going from the 'established' groups to the 'non-established' groups, and counter-homogenisation campaigns (or local resistances) can be observed everywhere (e.g. Maguire 1994a; 1999; 2000). In the face of this reality, the analysis of globalisation as heterogenisation came into the limelight. In the next section, focus will be on how globalisation is grasped in terms of heterogenisation.

### 2.3 Globalisation as Heterogenisation

World domination by Europe and America is nothing but a phenomenon over a limited span of time in human history, because even before the historical emergence of the 'West' non-Western cultural forms, people, technologies and knowledge had permeated all areas of the Western world (Maguire 2000: 362). Globalisation has in a sense repeated itself since ancient times. The groups which are classified as the 'non-established' groups today led the globalisation as the 'established' groups in an earlier period of history. Therefore, what looks universal can be challenged (see Featherstone 1993: 183) by taking the concept of time into consideration in studying globalisation. The key term relating to recent globalisation is Western modernity, as symbolised in industrialisation, urbanisation, commodification, rationalisation, differentiation, bureaucratisation, the expansion of the division of labor, and the growth of individualism and state formation processes — social changes occurred on a global scale characterised as 'universal' (Featherstone 1993: 170-171). However, Featherstone shifts attention from globalisation to postmodernism. He argues that postmodernism refers to the end of our awareness of history as a unitary process and points to a greater awareness of the plurality of history (Featherstone 1993: 171). Referring to the plurality of history, he argues that, "With postmodernism,...there is



a return to local cultures, and the emphasis should be placed upon local cultures in the plural, the fact that they can be placed alongside each other without hierarchical distinction” (Featherstone 1993: 179). Robertson (1992; 1995: 25-44) shares Featherstone’s view, arguing that globalisation should not concern itself with the debate about homogenisation versus heterogenisation, but instead the ways in which these two tendencies are combined. Robertson signifies this with the concepts: the ‘universalisation of particularism’ and the ‘particularisation of universalism’. But Nederveen Pieterse (1995: 45-68), while taking issue with globalisation as Westernisation or modernity, is not satisfied with globalisation as polycentrism. He claims that what really is at work is a process of hybridisation which gives rise to a global *mélange*. What he means by hybridisation is that “centuries of South-North cultural osmosis has resulted in an intercontinental crossover culture” (Nederveen Pieterse 1995: 53).

The three theorists mentioned above refer to globalisation or postmodernism in the framework of society as a whole, not referring specifically to sport, but it is possible to find resistance to dominant culture by local interests (or the ‘non-established’ groups) in the sporting world. Eichberg (1984: 102) has argued in the context of sport that, “The age of Western colonial dominance is coming to an end — and with it the predominance of Olympic sports. New physical cultures will arise...from

the different traditions of the world”. But the predominance of Olympic sports has continued and in some ways even strengthened in significance since Eichberg made this comment in 1984, a trend that co-exists with the growth of alternative sport cultures. This observation supports the idea that it is essential to recognise the complexities and contradictions of sporting forms in accordance with time and space.

### **2.3.1 Hegemony and Sport Globalisation**

The study of sport is embedded in sociological theory (Maguire and Young 2002: 2), and, with others, the cultural studies perspective has been employed in analysing sport globalisation. The concept of hegemony, which was used by Antonio Gramsci, the Italian political theorist, has been especially influential in cultural studies (see Hargreaves and McDonald 2000: 48-60). Although sport was not regarded primarily as the object of cultural studies, the latter concerns itself with “activities that people take part in, feelings engendered by them, and meanings associated with them”, which shares common ground with sport that “touches the lives of millions and millions of people across the world” (Hargreaves and McDonald 2000: 48). Gramsci used the concept of hegemony in articulating the centrality of culture within relations of power and noted that in Western societies the power of the dominant classes rests mainly not on physical force and coercion through military-police apparatuses, but on ideological leadership exercised through a



network of voluntary institutions that pervade everyday life such as political parties, trade unions, the mass media, the family, schools, churches and all cultural processes (including sport) (Hargreaves and McDonald 2000: 49). In other words, hegemony is “a process of experience, negotiation and struggle by individuals in real-life situations, rather than one in which subordinate groups are simply duped by dominant ideologies” (Hargreaves and McDonald 2000: 50). Therefore, the concept of hegemony indicates that social affairs are determined by the interaction of many factors, not by a single factor, in particular, economism (Hargreaves and McDonald 2000: 50).

Guttmann (1991; 1994) applies the concept of hegemony to the ability of the ‘non-established’ group to reinterpret dominant culture in sport. Putting the concept of cultural hegemony in parallel with the concept of cultural imperialism, Guttmann argues:

I concede that the concept of cultural hegemony provides more than a merely cosmetic improvement over the concept of cultural imperialism because Gramscian theory correctly stresses the fact that cultural interaction is something more complex than the domination by the totally powerful of the entirely powerless (1994: 178).

As a result of the global diffusion of modern sports, winning or losing in international sporting competitions has become of public interest and an index for the ranking of national strength. In particular, this was the case for culturally dominated groups. For them, emulation was a powerful motivator (Veblen quoted in Guttmann 1994: 179) in coping with their



dominators. Accordingly, above all, defeating the dominators in their own sports gave the dominated the chance to enhance their self-esteem (Guttman 1994: 179), which contributed to national integration, for example, in former colonial countries. Regarding the impact on realpolitik by sport emulation, Guttman quoted Arbena as saying that "...imported sports had a partially imperialistic impact in that they helped to shape local elites and their values in ways at least initially beneficial to the Europeans...(but imported sports, in time, became) the agent of anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism" (Guttman 1994: 181). Following this argument, it is possible to say that the development of Japanese baseball did not go without Japanese baseballers' intense rivalry with Americans.

### **2.3.2 Figurational Approach to Sport Globalisation**

The concept of hegemony which explained that "people are not passive recipients of culture" (see Hargreaves and McDonald 2000: 50) developed out of cultural studies, but a similar concept can be found in figurational/process sociology, which originated in the work of Norbert Elias, the German sociologist. The figurational approach is based on the fact that each human individual is part of a process and that humans are bound by ties of interdependence or 'figurations' (Dunning 1999: 242). Elias argues that the lengthening of interdependency chains increased the dependency of powerful groups on those over which they were dominant, hence increasing the power chances of the latter and leading not to a

equality but to a shift towards lesser inequality in the relations between them (Dunning 1999: 46).

Maguire employs the fugurational approach in analysing the globalisation of sport (1994a; 1999; 2000). Noting that globalisation processes are very long-term in nature, he points out three conceptual snares in researching globalisation (Maguire 2000: 356-357). Firstly, he refers to the tendency towards recourse to dichotomous thinking. He argues that globalisation is not a matter of universalism versus particularism; homogenisation versus differentiation; integration versus fragmentation; centralisation versus decentralisation; or juxtaposition versus syncretisation. Secondly, he points out that the monocausal logic and explanation which focuses on either the technological, the economic or the political must be avoided. Accordingly, he takes issue with the idea that globalisation is a homogenisation thesis or reflects the triumph of the West. What he points out as the third conceptual snare is the tendency to view globalisation processes as governed by either the intended or the unintended actions of groups of people. He notes that, "While the globalisation of sport is connected to the intended ideological practices of specific groups of people from particular countries, its pattern and development cannot be reduced solely to these ideological practices. Out of the plans and intentions of these groups something that was neither planned nor intended emerged" (Maguire 2000: 357). He uses the concept



of 'diminishing contrast and increasing varieties' and explains the mechanism of the concept in the following way:

(The globalisation process) is not a simple process of homogenization [sic]. Nor does the spread or diffusion of styles of behavior [sic] solely depend on the activities of established groups. A multiplicity of two-way processes of cultural interaction crisscross the semi-permeable barriers that established groups, within Western societies, and between Western and non-Western societies, deploy to maintain their distinction, power and prestige. The more they become interconnected with outsider groups, the more they depend on them for social tasks. In so doing, the contrasts between them diminish...The power ratio between these groups moves in an equalizing [sic] direction. Concomitantly, new styles of conduct emerge (Maguire 1999: 45).

To put it simply, when a certain culture is shared by different peoples (diminishing contrast), the culture transforms itself into something rich in local color (increasing varieties). Therefore, what is at work on the global stage, he argues, are the processes of Europeanisation, Orientalisation, Africanisation, Hispanicisation etc. rather than those of homogenisation by a particular group (Maguire 1999: 45). Jûdô is a typical example for the figurational process. As mentioned in the previous section, jûdô made a debut on the world stage as an agency for spiritual development, but with the sportisation of jûdô in progress, it was deprived of some of its traditional features so that it would become suitable for the era of globalisation. Besides, a tendency to win by accumulating small points rather than by scoring one full point (*ippon*) became the mainstream, because, in terms of win or defeat, trying to win *ippon* was risky and many jûdô practitioners avoided the risky tactics. However, the attempts of Japanese jûdô practitioners to win by scoring one full point without



depending on the accumulation of small points became re-recognised as 'essential' jūdô again especially in European countries (*Nishinippon Shinbun* 8/4/1995). Figurational processes can be observed in Canadian ice hockey as well. Canadians were euphoric in that ice hockey was the Canadian original sport and Canadian ice hockey was the best on the planet until 1972, when Canadian professionals met the Soviet 'amateur' team which had been powerful in international ice hockey tournaments for the first time. Although Canadian professionals defeated the Soviet team,<sup>8</sup> their euphoria was dashed in reverse: they found that European and Russian hockey had gone ahead of Canadian hockey in coaching and training methods (See MacSkimming 1996: 242-252). MacSkimming (1996: 247) notes that, "The truth was, we Canadians had been an insular, isolationist, self-protective, ignorant lot when it came to 'our' game. We needed the shock and comeuppance the series provided, if only to open our eyes to the transforming world around us". Afterward, the ice hockey world witnessed an influx of former Soviet players into the NHL as a result of glasnost (information disclosure) and perestroika (reform), a move to launch the European Hockey League dreaming of a World Series playoff against the NHL, and the participation of NHL and other professional players in the Winter Olympic Games, all of which, MacSkimming notes, would have been difficult to happen without the

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<sup>8</sup> Both sides played eight matches on a home-and-away basis. The result was the victory of Canadian professionals (4 wins 3 losses 1 tie) (see MacSkimming 1996).

1972 series (MacSkimming 1996: 252). He concludes that “Canada is no longer permitted to pretend it owns hockey. The world owns hockey now...” (MacSkimming 1996: 252).

Amid the conventional perception that the dominant culture becomes the ‘global culture’, what is really at work is not that simple. The hegemony and figurational approaches put an emphasis on relativising all cultural powers. In other words, tugs-of-war among all cultures are occurring and the cultural dominance by one culture is conditioned by social circumstances in a particular context and period. The next chapter explores the ways in which sport culture in Japan took shape through tugs-of-war between ‘Japaneseness’ and ‘Westernness’ (or Americaness).

### **Chapter 3 Sport Culture in Japan: A Non-Western Point of View**

The focus of the foregoing discussion is about ways in which sport globalisation is grasped academically. Now the focus of the discussion is turned specifically to the sport environment in Japan in connection with globalisation. It is undeniable that Japan is regarded as one of today's sporting powers. Both American and British sports are extensively accepted, foreign athletes are part of Japanese sporting teams especially in soccer and baseball, and Japanese athletes have more chances to play overseas.

For the Japanese, modern sport culture was one of the symbols of the most advanced cultures (Westernness) and at the same time, the vehicle for demonstrating 'Japaneseness'. The main theme in this thesis is Japanese baseball, but it is useful to observe how sport culture generally got reinterpreted and grew in Japan. In this chapter, the exploration of sport culture in Japan will be made in accordance with four historical periods: — the pre-modern (before 1868), the modern (1868-1945), the modern (1945-1990), and the post-modern (after 1990).



### 3.1 The Pre-Modern Era (Before 1868)

Although Japan was geographically separated from the Korean Peninsula and China by the sea, there had been a heavy flow of cultural influences into Japan from the nearby continent from early days (Reischauer 1989: 42). For example, in religion, while there had been Shintô as the indigenous religion, Buddhism and Confucianism were introduced to Japan from the Korean Peninsula and China respectively at approximately the same time (the sixth century AD) and these three religions existed together and played a crucial role in leading the nation spiritually. Shintô was associated with the mythology of Japan's creation and the supernatural ancestors of Japan's imperial line, serving as the very foundation of Japan's identity as a nation (Hendry 1995: 116-117). During the warring years (1930-1945), Shintô doctrine, designated as the state religion, inspired Japanese people with nationalistic fervor (Hendry 1995: 117). Shintô influences became weak after World War II, but it is possible to find some Shintô vestiges even now. For example, it is common that each professional baseball club visits Shintô shrines at the start of baseball season and prays to win the championship title. Buddhism concerned itself with the afterlife and the salvation of the individual, and produced many sects by the thirteenth century (see Reischauer 1989: 204-207; Hendry 1995: 119-122). Zen, well-known to the West, was one of them. Kawakami Tetsuharu, arguably the most influential baseball man

and a Zen practitioner, spread the concept of '*kyûzen ichi'nyô*' (baseball and Zen in oneness) (see 6.1). Confucianism was influential in justifying codes of conduct and moral behaviour. Confucian precepts taught that an individual needed training in the virtues of benevolent action, loyalty and filial piety in order to participate properly in five basic relationships, which were those between ruler and subject, father and son, husband and wife, elder brother and younger brother, and friend and friend (Hendry 1995: 126). The only dyad in the group in which relations were equal was that between friends (Hendry 1995: 126). Human relations based on Confucianism are reflected in coach-player relations and specifically in young player-old player relations.

Modelling its law and government on China's, by the eighth century Japan formed a system of a centralised state governed by the emperor's court (Ikegami 1995: 15). With the decline of the authority and power of the central government, various groups of local leaders in the provinces banded together for mutual protection (Reischauer 1989: 52). Because of the strong Japanese sense of hereditary authority, nothing was more prestigious than imperial descent and many of the groups came to be led by cadet branches of the imperial family that had received the family names Taira or Minamoto (Reischauer 1989: 52). These groups are said to have been the origin of the samurai warrior class. They armed themselves to protect their own interests, slowly growing in the provinces to dominate



the central government. Toward the end of the twelfth century, as a result of some civil wars having originated at a succession dispute between the main aristocrat and the imperial line, the Minamoto family emerged as the undisputed military master of the land and established the first military government (Reischauer 1989: 53). Following this development, the Japanese mainland became war-laden, witnessing power struggles among samurai warrior families until the end of the sixteenth century. In the early seventeenth century, Tokugawa Ieyasu, another samurai warrior, was successful in unifying Japan and established another military government. He and his successors were resolute in creating a peaceful and stable society, eliminating all sources of possible challenge (Reischauer 1989: 68). Domestically, the regime divided the population based on occupation, putting samurai warriors at the top, farmers second, artisans third and merchants fourth. Samurai warriors were allowed to carry swords. The division of the population functioned to control social mobility which could have led to social instability. In addition, to maintain the subjugation and support of the local warrior lord, the regime set up a system whereby each had to spend part of the year in the capital city, Edo (ancient name of Tokyo), leaving his family there when he returned to his local province (Hendry 1995: 15). This system helped to prevent other samurai warrior families from becoming powerful and emerging as rivals of the regime. Internationally, the regime viewed the nationwide spread of Christianity, which had been introduced in the middle of the sixteenth



century by Spanish missionaries and had been increasing the number of Japanese Christians, as a menace and the religion was banned from Japan by 1640. In addition, overseas Japanese were prohibited from returning to Japan for fear that they might reintroduce the 'virus' of Christianity (Reischauer 1989: 68). This anti-Christian campaign had a lot of influence on foreign trade, finally leading Japan to embark on more than two centuries of self-imposed seclusion.<sup>9</sup> The policy of seclusion, in general, was taken as negative by future generations because it delayed a scientific way of thinking taking root in Japan, which was believed to have been a handicap for modernisation processes in the future. But Tokitsu (1998: 87-109) saw it in a different way. He compared the policy of seclusion with witch hunts in Europe in medieval times and argued that the development of scientific rationalism valuing something clear and visible resulted from a closed society caused by witch hunts because it suppressed something unclear and invisible such as mysticism, supernatural power, the 'sixth sense'. On the other hand, the policy of seclusion, he claimed, helped to cherish the sensibility for something intangible in a closed society. He concluded that the tendency of physical culture being linked to spiritual development derived from this historical background.

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<sup>9</sup> But Japan continued to have foreign trade with China and the Netherlands.

Entering the nineteenth century, Western ships appeared in Japanese waters, demanding access to Japanese ports. The Japanese system had already failed to function effectively politically and economically, and dissatisfaction among commoners had been growing. A series of foreign pressures divided public opinion into two: one supporting the continuation of the Tokugawa regime and the other supporting the abolition of the regime and the restoration of the Emperor. This ideological war developed into political assassinations and deadly crackdowns on anti-Tokugawa campaigners, but eventually, in 1868, the regime fell and a new central government putting the Emperor at the top was established. The policy of seclusion was discontinued, putting an end to seven centuries of political domination by the samurai warrior class having commenced with the Minamoto family. In the pre-modern era, what was described as sport culture did not exist, but the martial arts that the samurai warrior class practised for war preparation were to be influential in the formation of a sport culture in Japan which was to commence in the middle of the nineteenth century.

### **3.2 Sport Culture in the Pre-Modern Era (Before 1868)**

Guttmann (1978; 1996) points out that one of the factors differentiating ancient sports from modern sports was that the former were religious and ritualistic and the latter secular. One typical sport-like



activity in ancient Japan was sumô wrestling that later became more secular. Sumô wrestling had long been a major element in local village festivals, but in the seventh century it was introduced into the imperial palace (Daniels 1993: 170). Every year, palace officials recruited strong men from the provinces to wrestle in celebration of the Star Festival (Daniels 1993: 170). In local communities, boat races and sumô wrestling matches were organised each year to please the gods and increase the prospects of successful farming and fishing (Daniels 1993: 170-171). In the era of military rule and civil war, sport-like activities such as sumô wrestling, horseback riding, swimming, and swordsmanship were done for military training purposes rather than for ceremony or pleasure (Daniels 1993: 171; Whiting 1989: 28). However, after a peaceful and stable society was established and serious warfare became unlikely under the Tokugawa regime, military arts lost their practical purpose and were used instead for mental conditioning (Daniels 1993: 173). On the other hand, with economic growth and urbanisation, pleasure-loving merchants in metropolitan cities constituted a market for mass entertainment and attempted to make sumô wrestling a secular spectator sport (Daniels 1993: 173). However, the regime, which had seen it as a military art, a preserve of the samurai warrior class, attempted to ban sumô wrestling as popular entertainment by issuing decrees many times. However, ironically, it intruded into the Tokugawa family (Daniels 1993: 173-174). In the process, traditional or quasi-religious elements (Shintôism) were added to



sumô wrestling including the wrestling ring with a sacred bough, which contributed to the rise of prestige of sumô wrestling and demonstrated its superiority over all other forms of popular entertainment (Daniels 1993: 174-175). Thanks to religious trappings, sumô wrestling was appealing to the Tokugawa family and was designated as a *kokugi* (national sport), which gave it a quasi-political significance (Daniels 1993: 175). When Commodore Perry, the American envoy, visited Japan in 1854 demanding formal diplomatic relations, the Tokugawa authorities demonstrated cultural displays including weight-lifting and wrestling by twenty-five sumô wrestlers (Daniels 1993: 175). While sumô wrestling was to bloom fully as a national 'sport' later, the influx of Western culture to Japan as a result of re-opening its doors to the world was to bring the concept of organised, modern sport to the country for the first time.

### **3.3 The Modern Era (1868-1945)**

In the pre-modern era, Japan had received cultural influences from China and the Korean Peninsula for nation-building, but she turned to Western countries for nation-rebuilding after 1868. After the Tokugawa regime fell, the new government embarked on a lot of drastic social reforms, one of which was the abolition of the division of the population based on occupation. By this, all citizens became equal socially and the warriors' privilege (possessing swords) was abolished. In the process of

establishing diplomatic relations with Western powers, Japan was forced to sign unequal treaties (see Reischauer 1989: 79). Faced by a possible colonisation of the land, Japan needed to be recognised as a civilised and modern nation, and began an all-out modernisation effort to catch up with the West. She imported many facets of Western civilisation including political and economic systems to culture (see Whiting 1989: 28). Japan's modernisation effort was so remarkable that by the end of the century, a Western-style political and economic system was established. In addition, Japan got involved in two wars over control of the Korean Peninsula — one was against China (1894-95), the other against Russia (1904-05) — and won both wars against expectations, thus establishing herself in international politics. Japan's imperialist campaign in East Asia continued during World War I, forcing new concessions from China via what was called Twenty-one Demands, seizing the German rights in China while Western powers turned their attention to European affairs (Reischauer 1989: 90). At the Versailles Peace Conference of 1919, Japan sat as one of the five major victors, the first non-Western nation to have made it into the club of the Western great powers (Reischauer 1989: 90). From the 1920s toward the 1930s, in line with the trend of armament reductions in the world, Japanese policy shifted from a military orientation to a trading one with the outside world (Reischauer 1989: 93-94).

But the outbreak of the world depression in the 1920s shrank international trade, hitting Japan hard, because unlike Western powers which had vast continent-wide territories or huge overseas possessions, Japan had neither (Reischauer 1989: 97). Furthermore, the exclusion of Japanese nationals on racial grounds from the United States and the British Dominions was going on (Reischauer 1989: 97-98). To make a breakthrough, Japan expanded militarily into the nearby continent resulting in the 'Manchurian Incident' in 1931 (the foundation of the puppet state of Manchukuo). The League of Nations did not recognise the 'state' and condemned Japan's action, and Japan withdrew from the League of Nations in protest. Subsequently, Japan signed pacts with Germany and Italy. The Japanese army's advance carried on and Japanese hegemony in East Asia (what the Japanese called 'the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere' = *Dai Tôa Kyôeiken*) and Hitler's hegemony in Europe emerged as twin menaces to American hopes for a more open world order (Reischauer 1989: 101). The United States responded to Japan's expansionism by economic sanctions, but finally, they went to war in 1941 (the Pacific War). Initially, things were in favour of Japan, but the United States gradually overpowered Japan and the war ended in victory for the American side in 1945.



### 3.4 Sport Culture in the Modern Era (1868-1945)

As a consequence of discontinuing the policy of seclusion, foreigners were allowed to move freely in Japan and set up their own cultural enclaves, often including sport (Roden 1980: 512-513). Sport was taken seriously by Western imperialists. Roden (1980: 512) argued about the relation of sport to imperialism:

While sport was gaining recognition as a symbol of national strength and elitist pretension in late nineteenth century England and America, the absence of sport in any foreign land could be interpreted, conversely, as a sure signal of cultural weaknesses and even racial inferiority...Destitute of these hearty attributes [such as self-reliance, endurance, courage, and pluck which were cultivated and developed via sports in English institutions], the "lesser races" had little hope of rising above a feeble state of subjugation. It is little wonder, then, that colonial settlements from Shanghai to Algiers had a share of sportsmen whose conspicuous club activities could be construed as evidence of superior "breeding" and vindication of imperialism.

Foreign settlers organised a sporting club named the Yokohama Athletic Club in a suburb of Tokyo and enjoyed their own sports such as cricket and baseball. But this sporting club forbade Japanese people from entering the place where the playing field was located until the early 1890s (Roden 1980: 518).

Initially, Japanese national leaders had an idea that the quick and efficient dissemination of practical knowledge in the form of Western studies would be the best policy for catching up with the West quickly, but

physical education, which was judged to have nothing to do with the modernisation programme, was dismissed (Roden 1980: 514). As suggested so far, there was no groundwork for physical culture to be accepted in Japanese society throughout the history of Japan as it had been in Western societies. Nakamura (1998: 49-57) refers to the following four social factors which supposedly prevented the popularisation of physical culture in Japan. The first social factor was that the daylight hours throughout the year in Japan were much longer than those in Europe. Sunshine was indispensable for health and European people inevitably became outdoor-oriented for sunshine, which popularised physical culture easily in Europe. On the other hand, in Japan, people enjoyed sufficient sunshine in winter as well as in summer, not being induced to go out and do outdoor activities to the same extent as European people. Secondly, he notes that physical culture was treasured in Europe as part of colonial policy. Colonial administrators, Nakamura argued, needed to be well-built in order to overpower those they were colonising and sport activities were useful for that purpose. Nakamura added that the idea of building up the body for dominating other peoples, as a legacy of colonialism, was implanted in the subconscious of European people underpinning the routinisation of sport. The third social factor to which Nakamura refers is that European people had a history of living in multiracial societies and felt psychological tensions, but Japanese people did not. In order to overcome psychological tensions and to lead a peaceful



life, socialisation via parties, festivals, and sports played an important role. That was the way sport was grasped as a means of deepening communication between diverse groups. But, in Japan, people considered their society to be 'racially homogeneous', not feeling psychological tensions, and the idea of sport for socialisation was not relevant. As the fourth social factor which allegedly prevented the pervasiveness of sport in Japan, Nakamura made reference to the different eating habits between Western society and Japanese society. Traditionally, Westerners enjoyed meat-oriented substantial meals and consumed the energy that they produced by taking exercise. On the other hand, in Japan, the eating habits of three meals a day is said to have been established in the fourteenth century, and people lived on rice-oriented frugal meals. This was the case with warriors who were typical manual labourers who always trained themselves so that they could cope with destitution. Nakamura hypothesises that, under this circumstance, it is no wonder that taking exercise on a daily basis did not take root in Japanese society as a social custom.

Therefore, before the new government was established in 1868, the western concept of sport had been virtually unknown in Japan and the idea of athletics for fun was an alien one (Whiting 1989: 28). However, foreign teachers who were employed by the Japanese government for the modernisation program noticed that a passion for intellectual



development hampered an accompanying development of the body (Dixon in Roden 1980: 514). In reality, in the foreign teachers' eyes, Japanese students were of delicate physique and susceptible to frequent sickness and foreign teachers argued for the introduction of physical education into the school curriculum (Roden 1980: 515). In response to their requests, the government founded a Gymnastics Institute in which physical education instructors for primary schools were trained (Roden 1980: 515; Daniels 1993: 176). George A. Leland, a recent graduate of the Department of Hygiene and Physical Education at Amherst College, was appointed as the first director of the institute. He sought the development of a universal and compulsory program of physical education in Japanese schools, which was to be realised after his return to America, while he believed that rigorous team sports such as baseball or football would be physically too much for Japanese youth and recommended bean bags and hoops as the most suitable equipment for Japanese children in primary schools (Roden 1980: 515.; Daniels 1993: 176). But unlike Leland's pessimistic view of Japanese students' physical strength, a few American educators in Japan had a quite different opinion, introducing baseball to their older students, appropriating for the Japanese a sport which had previously been played exclusively as a symbol of extraterritorial privilege and unique cultural identity (Roden 1980: 519). Ironically, the very sport which was originally considered to be unsuitable for the physical strength of Japanese students was to grow as the 'national' sport of Japan.

As Western culture was perceived to be the symbol of modernisation and was studied among the Japanese elite such as university students, Western sports spread among them before a nationwide diffusion occurred. It was university students who made nationwide tours for baseball coaching. This was the case for soccer, too. According to Horne (1999: 216), soccer was taught at the Tokyo Teacher' Training College and played by some students at Tokyo University, and it was graduates who taught soccer all over Japan in middle and high schools. As will be detailed later, when baseball started to win the hearts of Japanese people around 1890, local resistance to Westernisation was occurring and baseball became the symbol of two quite different ideologies — of Western modernisation and of 'Japaneseness'. With the help of the political philosophy of 'catching up with the West', sport was taken to be something serious — victory or defeat — and the Western concept of 'sport for fun' did not in general take root in Japanese society. Besides, from around 1895 on, there was an increase in the media coverage of sporting events (Inoue 1998b: 225). Inoue (1998b: 225-226) adds that sporting competitions against foreign sides, and the victories of Japanese teams in particular, were played up in the newspapers and concludes that beating Westerners at their own sports was a newsworthy event. There was media coverage of Japanese athletes



playing in a foreign land as well. For example, when Keiô University<sup>10</sup> baseball club made a baseball tour to Hawaii in 1908, a newspaper reported that, “This tour is at the invitation of the American side, because Japanese baseball valuing spiritual power was recognised, which is a great honour for us” (see Inoue 1998b: 227).

While Western sports were becoming widespread nationwide, Japanese traditional ‘sports’ (that is, martial arts) were becoming marginalised as out of date. However, the traditional ‘sports’ revived because “Western notions of sport as a source of health, strength and discipline (fused) with samurai skills to produce new martial arts for a broad public” (Daniels 1993: 178). It was Kanô Jigorô, an educator, who played the significant role for this transformation. Kanô is known as the figure who transformed *jûjutsu*, a martial technique, into jûdô, the modern style of *jûjutsu*. This successful transformation stood as the role model for the modernisation of other martial arts (Inoue 1998b: 228). Kanô’s motivation for mastering *jûjutsu* was that he just wanted to be strong because there were many fights and the weak were often bullied (Sakota 1999b). But *jûjutsu* contained many techniques which endangered life and he wondered if he could eliminate dangerous techniques from *jûjutsu* and transform it into a form of physical culture in tune with the contemporary world. Kanô founded his school of Kôdôkan

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<sup>10</sup> One of the most prestigious private universities.



jûdô in 1882, executing the transformation. One of the selling points in this transformation was his emphasis on character-building (Inoue 1998b: 230). He believed that “the ultimate aim of jûdô was the perfection of the individual so as to be of benefit to society and that the two principles of mutual welfare and utilitarian scientific rationality would remodel the present society and bring greater happiness and satisfaction to this world” (Carr 1996: 208). Besides, he introduced the grade system, which was useful in giving trainees encouragement and heightening their motivation (Inoue 1998b: 230). When Kôdôkan was set up, there were only a few pupils, but by 1901, the pupils increased in numbers to more than six thousand nationwide and some of them spread jûdô to foreign lands as Kanô also did (Sakota 1999c). Kanô had become not only a nationally-known figure, but jûdô was being presented to the West as a symbol of Japan’s spiritual strength and self-discipline (Daniels 1993: 179). In addition to the invention of jûdô and its worldwide dissemination, Kanô paved the way for the participation of Japan in the Olympic Games. He had learned from the then-French ambassador to Japan that Baron de Coubertin, the founder of the modern Olympic Games, wished for the proliferation of the Olympic movement to the Far East and was asking Japan for co-operation. In 1909 he became the first International Olympic Committee (IOC) member from the East. His achievement in jûdô and his resolute policy in physical education for youth were thought highly of (see Ikei 1992: 9). He sent two athletes to the Stockholm Olympic Games of

1912 for the first time. Although the result was miserable, Kanô was euphoric because he found the Olympic philosophy — the healthy development of youth, the refinement of morals — was sharing common ground with jûdô philosophy (Sakota 1999a). In fact, he wrote about his impression of the Olympic Games that, “The Olympic Games moved me so much. Foreign athletes were well-built, polite, and acted in an orderly manner. Besides, they had fervid love for their own countries” (Sakota 1999a). Afterwards, the Japanese made much of the Olympic movement for the development of their own sport culture. Because baseball remained outside the Olympic movement (until 1992), the U.S.-Japan Goodwill Games mainly gave the Japanese the chance to play internationally.

As suggested so far, there were two different tendencies in the development of physical culture in nineteenth century Japan: one was the greedy import of Western sports and their subsequent ‘Japanisation’ and the other was the Westernisation of martial techniques (the transformation of martial techniques into martial arts). But Inoue (1998b: 233) argues about these two different tendencies:

While the modernisation of martial techniques was indebted to Western sports and Western sports were influenced by martial arts ideologies, Western sports and martial arts, basically, worked mutually in forming and strengthening national consciousness. Western sports helped to form national consciousness in response to the world in which things changed rapidly, while martial arts were the symbol of the continuity of tradition, maintaining national cultural identity. In that sense, Western sports and martial arts ‘divided the work’ (translated from Japanese).



But entering the 1930s, when militarism became full-scale, gradually leading Japan to war, martial arts in Japan marginalised Western sports. The former got mixed up with nationalism and were used as part of the rightist ideology for the total mobilisation of the nation to war (Inoue 1998b: 233). Martial arts were adopted in school curriculums, which meant that the educational values of martial arts were officially endorsed by the state (Inoue 1998b: 234). However, what the state expected from them was not the perfection of the individual so as to be of benefit to society, but the development of the attitude of devoting oneself to the state (Inoue 1998b: 234). Under this circumstance, there was a growing opinion that Western sports should be Japanised and the concepts such as the 'Way of sport', 'Japanese way of sport', 'Japanese way of physical education' were born (Inoue 1998b: 234). It was argued that Western sports were ruled by a pleasure-oriented ideology based on liberalism and individualism and that the ideology had to be replaced with a martial art ideology (Inoue 1998b: 234). This move was most evident in the replacement of the English language terminology of Western sports with Japanese vocabulary and many baseball terms which had been of common use in Japanese speech were abandoned in favor of highly formalised Japanese equivalents (Daniels 1993: 184). For example, 'out' which means 'becoming disqualified' was called '*dame*' (meaning 'no good' in Japanese) (Matsuki 1985: 260). But Japan's war defeat turned what was thought to



be quite right in Japan upside-down.

### 3.5 The Modern Era (1945-1990)

From 1945 to 1952, Japan was under the occupation of the Allied Forces consisting predominantly of Americans, and demilitarisation and democratisation were driven forward under their leadership. While Western European countries were the role models for the reconstruction of Japan in the post-Tokugawa era, America took over the major role for the reconstruction of Japan in the post-World War II period. In the process of the reconstruction, Japan and the United States concluded a separate peace treaty and security treaty without the participation of the Soviet Union or China. The security treaty permitted the retention of American military bases in an independent Japan and committed the United States to Japan's defence (Reischauer 1989: 352). This meant that Japan would function as one of the strategic bases for Americans in handling the Cold War in East Asia, while the Japanese would be able to concentrate on economic growth. In other words, the division of labour — the United States responsible for Japan's defence and diplomacy, and Japan for her national economy — was established between the two countries. By the late 1960s, Japan became the largest or at least the second-largest trading partner of almost every country, capitalist or Communist, in East Asia and the Western Pacific (Reischauer 1989: 115-116). In parallel with the

accelerating economic growth, the Olympic Games in Tokyo in 1964 and the Osaka International Exposition of 1970 worked as other opportunities to show off Japan's economic power to the rest of the world, aiding Japanese people in recovering spiritually from the serious damage of war defeat (Reischauer 1989: 115). In addition, the huge success of the Giants (winning the Japanese baseball championship title consecutively from 1965 to 1973), the oldest and the most popular professional baseball club, secured baseball as the 'national' sport in Japan. But as Japan's trade surplus stood out, the United States and some European countries responded to Japan's economic expansion with hostility and trade friction became a major element especially in Japanese-American relations (Reischauer 1989: 119). America charged that the Japanese were continuing their earlier restrictionist policies through less visible nontariff barriers of petty administrative regulations and long-established business practices that tended to exclude foreigners (Reischauer 1989: 119). On the other hand, the Japanese referred to the inefficiencies of American industry, the failure of Americans to learn either the Japanese language or Japanese business practices, and the general Japanese feeling that most American-manufactured goods were inferior to Japanese products (Reischauer 1989: 119). In addition, the Japanese were proud of the Japanese system of company management characterised by lifetime employment and the seniority system of pay, high money saving rates, and low unemployment rates, while they offended Americans as lazy (Omae

1997: 179). The euphoric mood hanging over Japan was such that the then-Prime Minister made the following comment in 1986, which provoked Americans further:

Japan is now a highly educated and fairly intelligent society, much more so than America on average. In America, there are quite a few black people, Puerto Ricans, and Mexicans. . . On the average, the *chiteki* [= intelligence] level is still very low. In America, even now, there are many black people who do not know their letters (Whiting 1989: 109).

This period witnessed many American migrant players in Japanese baseball failing to meet Japanese expectations. In Japanese eyes, their American style of self-management just proved that they were lazy, which strengthened the Japanese distrust of American players.

Toward the end of the 1980s, Japan witnessed the arrival of the 'bubble economy', producing an unparalleled speculation boom. This boom involving companies and commoners was seen as the chance to become rich. But finally the bubble burst and Japan's economic euphoria was dashed.

### 3.6 Sport Culture in the Modern Era (1945-1990)

After World War II, Japan was isolated from the international sporting world for starting the war and banned from participating in international sporting contests. Domestically, the predominance of martial arts over



Western sports was upset. Under the leadership of the U.S.-led occupation forces, a full-scale democratisation campaign started in Japan and because of their close connection with Japanese militarism and ultranationalism, martial arts were prohibited (Inoue 1998a: 91) and Western sports were encouraged as the form of physical culture suitable for a peaceful and democratic society (Inoue 1998b: 235). In parallel with this trend, there was a move to develop a sport culture rooted in the grassroots. Kiyose Saburô, the then-chief director of the Japan Amateur Sports Association, argued about the mission of the Association that:

Sport policy in our country, essentially, has put an emphasis on developing top athletes rather than on popularising sport. The development of top athletes is helpful for the popularisation of sport, but not a direct means. The sporting world in our country has been a 'pyramid' whose apex was so high. But from now on, sport culture in Japan must be rooted in the grassroots. We must create the environment in which ordinary people enjoy sport and our Association must drive this campaign forward (quoted in Nakamura 1998: 39 translated from Japanese).

However, this campaign was diluted with the reality that people who had been in the depths of misery were encouraged by the performances of top athletes in sporting events. For example, when Japanese swimmers broke world records in the U.S. swimming championships in 1949,<sup>11</sup> their successes were a source of encouragement for Japanese people and helped to soothe anti-Japanese sentiment in America (Nakamura 1998: 82; Ikei 1992: 116-117). This placed the supporters of elite sport in an

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<sup>11</sup> The Japan Swimming Association had been allowed to return to the international governing body earlier in 1949.

advantageous position and with the help of the media, the development of elite athletes, a return to international society, and participation in the Olympic Games became the mainstream (Nakamura 1998: 82). Between 1949 and 1951, most of national sporting bodies were readmitted to each international sporting body (Nakamura 1998: 85) and Japan participated in the Olympic Games of 1952 for the first time after World War II (the Helsinki Games). Sport was viewed as the 'spiritual pillar' in overcoming the national crisis of isolation from international society.

Following a campaign for sport elitism, a return to international competition was established and the spiritual revival of the nation culminated in hosting the Olympic Games of 1964 in Tokyo. Overlapping with the period of economic growth, the Tokyo Games demonstrated Japan's economic power in terms of the completion of facilities and infrastructures, and was successful in terms of Japanese athletes' performances (Ikei 1992: 130-133). But, on the other hand, the Tokyo Games, as home Games, put the national prestige at stake and the athletes were placed under a huge pressure. One gold medalist weightlifter recalled:

Winning the gold medal was a must for me. If I had missed it, I could not have seen the nation. I felt I would nearly die. One thing I did to overcome the pressure was spending nights getting surrounded by numberless skulls in a mountain temple. Of course, I was far from getting sleep. But it was possible to compete after having spent a sleepless night and I had to win under whatever circumstances. Therefore, I sometimes practiced without sleeping. In my house, I did



barbell lifting over my wife's legs. I created the situation in which I could absolutely not drop it (quoted in Oda 2002: 149 translated from Japanese).

It was the women's volleyball team which attracted the public interest most. Daimatsu Hirofumi, the team manager, drove his team so hard that practice was six hours a day seven days a week all year (Trevithick 1996: 437). Amid the criticisms of his methods, the team, nicknamed 'Witches of the East' (*Tôyô no Majo*), won the gold medal and its successful performance became a major highlight in Japan's sport history.

It is undeniable that sport elitist ideology made victory the ultimate goal, justified the repetition of hard practice and promoted 'will power' or 'spiritual power' (see *Shinano Mai'nichi Shinbun* 16/6/1995 evening issue), and this was not confined to the Olympic athletes. For example, while many baseball leagues for boys were in operation nationwide, there were many cases in which instructors, in quest of immediate victories, made the pitchers pitch too much. As a consequence, they developed elbow or shoulder troubles at an early stage, and it was not rare that some of the injuries proved incurable (see Miyake 1999). Besides, a quest for immediate victories tended to encourage instructors to teach victorious tactics rather than the fun of baseball and it was commonplace for boys who failed to play as instructed to be told off (e.g. Oda 2002: 173-176). There was a case in which one female marathon runner, when she could not run because of having a period, was advised by her male coach that



enough practice could have prevented her period coming (*Shinano Mai'nichi Shinbun* 16/6/1995 evening issue). On occasion a telling-off escalated into physical punishment, and foreign people sometimes condemned this culture (e.g. Nakamura 1995: 14-17). Nevertheless, according to a questionnaire conducted with four hundred and eighteen university students about corporal punishment disclosed in 1986, an overwhelming majority of respondents were, in general, in favor of corporal punishment during extracurricular sporting activities, while their replies split as to its degree (Nakamura 1998: 16). In addition, 80.9% of respondents replied that the corporal punishment they had received was convincing (Nakamura 1998: 16). In professional baseball, it was also the case that managers inflicted corporal punishment on their players. For example, Sumi Mitsuo, a former pitcher, suffered iron fist punishment from his manager because of his poor pitching after a game. But he took the punishment positively, feeling that the manager thought of him seriously (Sumi 2002: 64-67).

With the pervasiveness of the Olympic movement and other international sporting contests and the growth of sports labour migration, Japan rode on the wave of the globalisation of sport, while at the same time she maintained 'Japaneseness' in sport philosophy. The idea that sport was painful remained dominant. Of course, sport athletes had to go through painful practices for winning, but in foreign eyes, Japanese

athletes did it with a 'must-do' attitude, not a 'going-to-do' attitude. (e.g. Ikei 1991: 130). As a matter of fact, those who did precisely as instructed were commended, which was positively conspicuous in baseball in which the manager's initiative was especially influential. But the stagnation of the Japanese system in the 1990s necessitated new ideologies such as creativity, independent-minded attitudes, and thinking on one's feet. In the sporting world, there was a shift from a 'must-do-sport' attitude to a 'going-to-do-sport' attitude.

### **3.7 The Post-Modern Era (1990-)**

After the collapse of the 'bubble economy', land and stock prices plummeted, and many companies suffered financial losses. To make matters worse, many banks found themselves stricken with bad loans and became reluctant to provide finance. As a consequence, Japan went into a serious economic recession while the American economy which had been in a slump in the 1980s revived. When conventional measures such as government tax cuts and the adjustment of interest rates did not work anymore, Japanese methods were on the receiving end of intense criticism as anachronistic and there was a growing opinion that structural reform in corporate culture should be executed and American (or Western) methods based on individualism, rationalism and meritocracy were in the limelight. In addition, the United States pressurised Japan, as locomotive

for the world economy, into pushing structural reform forward. In line with this trend, challenging the 'taboo' (lifetime employment, pay rise with age) started, leading Japanese business world into the Western style of competition. Especially, the emergence of the IT (Information Technology) industry represented by Internet business became the symbol of a 'new' era and two Internet companies were seen to embark on club management as new owners of Japanese baseball teams, as if to destroy the symbol of the 'old' era (detailed in 5.11).

However, needless to say, not everyone was in favour of the transformation of Japan into a Western-style competitive society. For example, Kawai Hayao, a psychotherapist, argued that, "The Western style of competitive society is cruel in that it ignores the weak. Rather, it is better to create a society in which the weak can compete properly by successfully conflating Western and Japanese elements" (quoted in Hirao 2001: 47-48).

### **3.8 Sport Culture in the Post-Modern Era (1990-)**

The change of social mood was reflected in the sport culture of Japan as well and the idea that sport is essentially for fun spread. As a result of the spread of scientific training, torture-like unscientific training gradually disappeared from the scene. Athletes had many chances to get coached in



foreign (Western) countries and were surprised at the difference in coaching between Japan and other countries. One swimmer who got coached in America reportedly said that, "Coaches do not tell their pupils off in America, trying to make them love swimming. They praise their merits but do not point out their demerits" (see Nakamura 1995: 19). Attitudes to the Olympic Games also changed. As stated earlier, the Olympic athletes in the previous generation carried national prestige on their shoulders and were obliged to win the gold medal, but those in the current generation, as demonstrated in the Sydney Games of 2000, are said to know how to enjoy the Games (Terauchi 2000).

In referring to the change of mood in the sport culture in Japan, what is noteworthy is the foundation of a professional football league in 1993 (J League). The distinctiveness of the J League was symbolised by its attempt to create a local community-based sport culture, as opposed to an elitist sport ideology, allowing each club to use the name of the local community to which it belonged, not the name of the sponsor. The names of professional baseball clubs in Japan include those of their own parent companies (Maitland 1991: 12). Kawabuchi Saburô, the founder and the first chairman of the J League, reportedly decided to found the league when he saw disabled people enjoying sports with the help of volunteers during his football tour to Germany in the 1960s, a scene which was not conceivable in Japan in those days (see Nakamura 1998: 71). He

reminded about his dream of taking a chance on the J League:

I made the J League local community-based because I wanted football to trigger the creation of the environment in which people would enjoy various sports. People can find grounds, gymnasiums, good instructors for doing sports in each local community and strong teams will be born from this environment...that is what I am after...The sport culture surrounding schoolchildren today tends to encourage them to be engaged in a single sport, which is absurd. What is necessary is to encourage them to do various sports and choose their favourite one. I want to create such an environment nationwide (quoted in Omae 1997: 124-125 translated from Japanese).

Creating local community-based sport cultures was quite a radical venture, attracting public attention, and the first three years made an initial boom. But after the boom, average attendances gradually dropped (see Horne 1999: 222). In addition, when the economic recession deepened, some of the main sponsors withdrew support. In view of the decline in average attendances and sponsors' withdrawal from support, there were growing pessimism about the future of the J League (see Horne 1999: 224). Nevertheless, as the slogans of the J League illustrate, 'A 100 year project' and 'A happier nation through sport' (Horne 1999: 224), the J League started as a large-scale and long-term project and was expected to change the Japanese view of sport. Certainly, the evidence suggests that the J League took a leading role in forming quite a radical trend of sport culture in Japan, which puts emphasis on players' initiatives. Unlike baseball which allows each player to have some time enough to think about what to do next, relying on the signs from the bench, soccer is a sport in which each player must choose the 'best' play on the spot and textbook theories



are not so useful (see Gotô 1995: 175-176). Improvement in the level of soccer is said to be conditioned by the development of players who have flexible and creative (or individualistic) thinking rather than textbook-bound thinking (see Gotô 1995: 186-201). In reflection of this, in most schools, soccer, as the symbol of an international and modern game in which individual skill is emphasised, witnesses players who are far more likely to have dyed hair and dreadlocks, making a striking contrast to baseball in which, as the symbol of the spirit of sacrifice, hard work and team loyalty, the players are almost militarily regimental, often sporting uniform skinhead haircuts (Watts 2001). Apart from their outward appearance, it is reported that successful athletes in the new era have strong individualistic dispositions in common (*Hokkaidô Shinbun* 21/2/1995).

While this recent Westernisation trend in the sport culture in Japan is viewed favorably by the media (e.g. *Hokkaidô Shinbun* 21/2/1995), there is an opinion that what Japanese athletes do is just to copy Westerners. For example, Tokitsu (1998: 90-92) argues about Japanese athletes' recent tendency of showing their feelings as Western athletes do:

When I was watching sumô matches with my French martial arts pupils, one pupil wondered, "Every wrestler keeps a straight face whether he wins or loses...But deep inside, the winners are in joy and the losers are mortified, I guess." Another pupil said, "It is amazing for them to control themselves to such a degree. Europeans would not do so without showing their feelings in whatever forms. Is sumô a type of martial art?" For them the attitude of sumô wrestlers seemed to be the



model of the martial arts they are learning...Not showing one's feelings has been counted as a virtue in Japan, but as Japan became wealthy, the perception grew that Japanese people concealed what they really thought, which led some critics to criticise this attitude as deceptive. Similarly, in the sporting world, showing joy openly like Western athletes has been favourably viewed as a natural human reaction, which has influenced the behaviour of the Japanese. But is their 'Western' style of behaviour really based on their own principles? It seems to me that they are just lost in an international mood...If not showing one's feelings like sumô wrestlers were to be the international norm, Japanese athletes would follow suit soon...Like French martial arts pupils mentioned above, there are also many Westerners who put spiritual development above victory or defeat and they do not necessarily take the 'Westernisation' of sports and martial arts in Japan positively (translated from Japanese).

Gotô (1995: 195-197) makes the following candid comment about Japanese footballers:

It is a common scene that Japanese footballers, despite the perfect moment for shooting, choose to give a pass rather than to shoot...Their self-assertiveness is too weak...Recent J leaguers behave confidently in interviews, but what matters is showing their self-assertiveness in the play, not in the word. Another common scene is that a defender, although he should leave his position to cover the other side, does not dare to do so...If getting scored against by doing something extra, the player in question will be blamed severely by his coach, but if getting scored against by failing to do something necessary, he will not be blamed so severely. Such an attitude encourages 'don't-rock-the-boat' plays. This is true of Japanese coaches. They cannot alter the team formation according to game situations...Like players, they are scared of being criticised by the media and fans when getting defeated as a result of adopting different tactics (translated from Japanese).

Additionally, Gotô points out that weak self-assertiveness was common to the Confucian bloc of East Asia where a seniority system was established: he tended to be hesitant to give a shot where he should when an older player than him turned up (Gotô 1995: 197). Gotô calls the playing style of Japanese soccer players textbook-bound and concludes that textbook-

bound soccer would not improve the level of Japanese football overall (Gotô 1995: 194). The same perspective is shared by Hirao (2001), the former manager of the All Japan rugby team. He points out that Japanese athletes are so used to the top-down instruction such as 'Play in this way in this situation' that they are puzzled when they are told to judge by themselves, which is why Japanese sportsmen are considered to be poor in the games which necessitate players' initiatives such as soccer, rugby, handball, and basketball. (Hirao 2001: 167-173).

On the other hand, baseball is a manager's initiative-oriented game which establishes the division of labour, game making and playing. Amid his emphasis on the development of individual initiatives, Hirao (2001: 38-39) claims that some Japanese elements can be merits in the new era and puts forward 'the quest for details and subtlety' as one of them. According to him, for example, in response to the instruction 'move back (or move up) a little', foreign rugby players interpreted 'a little' as one metre, and Japanese players as one centimetre (Hirao 2001: 38-39). Such sensibility for details and subtlety makes it possible for Japanese players who are smaller than Western players to use small spaces effectively and to move forward by using many short passes<sup>12</sup> (Hirao 2001: 39-40).

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<sup>12</sup> Traditionally, using the big space was a common tactic in Japanese rugby, but Hirao judged that this tactic would not work when opponents were big (Hirao 2001: 40). But he stepped down as manager of the All Japan team before he could prove himself.



Richard Baines, an American baseball journalist covering Japanese baseball, refers to the quest for details as the merits of Japanese baseball (*email communication 9/7/2003*). Baines adds that, “Japanese players are drilled mercilessly in fundamentals and in the belief that it is the way to win. This is something that most (American) major league managers are rather envious of”. Charles Jones, a Puerto Rican player in Japanese baseball, who shares Baines’s view, observes that, “The main merits of Japanese baseball methods [were] and still [are] the solid fundamentals of the game. For example, they are excellent bunters and baserunners, and exhibit solid pitching” (*postal communication 24/8/2003*).

### **3.9 The Concluding Remarks Relating to Chapters Two and Three**

Chapters Two and Three have sought to demonstrate how the study of sport globalisation has been in progress and in particular how sport culture took shape historically in Japan. Roughly speaking, two types of arguments can be observed. One argument is that globalisation has led to homogenisation. When the global development of sport culture is reviewed, it is pointed out that Western countries took the lead in its development. The Olympic Games were a key symbol of the globalisation of sport, and also the symbol of Western ideology. Accordingly, local sports were required to transform themselves so that they would meet Western ideologies for their own global spread. If they did not, they had to remain



as local sports. The global development of sport culture promoted labour migrations transcontinentally, but in most cases, strong clubs were concentrated in wealthy areas such as Europe, the United States, and many talents were lured to European or American clubs. This tendency brought about the underdevelopment of the local suppliers. It was also the case that sport athletes from the West who migrated to certain countries to aid the diffusion of a particular sport resulted in the underdevelopment of local talents because the local clubs depended on the teacher migrants for better performances and greater publicity. In view of these developments, globalisation was discussed in connection with the political and economic forms of cultural imperialism focusing specifically on the Americanisation of sport.

But it has also been argued that globalisation does not merely lead to homogenisation but also to heterogenisation, which means that the 'local' side was not at the mercy of the 'established' side but that, in practice, there was local resistance occurring in various ways. One merit in globalisation as heterogenisation is that it is grasped as a long-time process. Therefore, it can be said that Americanisation or Westernisation is nothing but a process in a limited span of period of human history and that other-'isations' could emerge as globalisation processes in the future.

Based on the theory of globalisation, the process in which sport culture developed in Japan was the focus of discussion. It is possible to say that the development of sport culture in Japan was the history of the 'tug-of-war' between Westernisation and localisation. This had a lot to do with international scene in which Japan was put. When sport culture was imported to Japan in the middle of nineteenth century, Japan faced a national crisis (possible colonisation of Japan). Under this circumstance, sport culture was used as a means of whipping up nationalism and phrases such as the 'Japanese way of sport' and the 'Japanese way of physical education' became popular. As detailed in the next chapter, baseball was regarded as the best sport to demonstrate 'Japaneseness' because of a top-down systematic order (from manager to players) and because of its similarity to martial arts (a one-on-one battle between pitcher and batter). After World War II, when Japan was on the way to a huge economic success, a top-down systematic team management in baseball became the role model for business leaders. But with the malfunctioning of the Japanese system, the idea that sport is essentially fun started to spread and respect for the individuality of each person was preferred. The definition of teamwork changed from the team operating under the command of the leader to the team operating by an accumulation of each member's imagination (Kawai quoted in Hirao 2001: 41). This idea is conspicuous in recent baseball as well, but teams operating under the command of the manager have in general been more

successful.

In the following chapter, the discussion will be narrowed down exclusively to baseball, the most popular, influential 'national' sport of Japan. The discussion will focus on the relation between Japanese baseball and global processes.



## **Chapter 4 Japanese Baseball in the Global Processes: The History and Growth of Japanese Baseball (up to 1950)**

### **4.1 Some Basic Information about Japanese Baseball**

Before exploring Japanese baseball in the global processes, it is necessary to give some basic information about the game for the benefit of those who are unfamiliar with it. Much of the following detail is borrowed from Whiting (1989: 1-3).

1. There are two professional leagues, the Central and the Pacific, each of which includes six teams. Each team plays a 140-game schedule that begins in early April and ends in late September each year. The pennant winners from each league meet in October in the Japan Series. The teams are as follows:

**Table 1 The Teams in Japanese Professional Baseball**

<b>The Central League Teams</b>	<b>The Pacific League Teams</b>
The Hanshin Tigers	The Fukuoka Softbank Hawks
The Yakult Swallows	The Seibu Lions
The Chûnichi Dragons	The Rakuten Golden Eagles
The Hiroshima Tôyô Carp	The Nippon Ham Fighters
The Yokohama Bay Stars	The Chiba Lotte Marines
The Yomiuri Giants	The Orix Buffaloes

2. Nominally, teams are independent private companies, but in reality, they are under parent companies, serving as public relations agencies for them. The Hanshin Tigers and the Kintetsu Buffaloes are owned by private railway companies. The Yomiuri Giants and the Chûnichi Dragons belong to newspapers. The parent companies of the Yakult Swallows, the Nippon Ham Fighters and the Chiba Lotte Marines are a healthy food maker, a pork producer and a chewing gum maker respectively. The Orix Buffaloes is owned by a financial firm, while the Fukuoka Softbank Hawks is owned by an Internet service. The Rakuten Golden Eagles, which entered professional baseball in late 2004, is owned by an Internet operator. The Hiroshima Tôyô Carp is jointly owned by the citizens of Hiroshima and a car manufacturer. The Yokohama Bay Stars is owned by a commercial broadcasting

station.

3. Each team is allowed to sign up not more than seventy players per season including those in its own farm team and foreign players.
4. Since 1965 the teams have filled with their rosters with high school, college, and semipro stars in an annual player draft. But because, under this system, players did not have the right to choose the team with which to play, the FA (free agency) was introduced in 1993. Players who have played in the major league for nine seasons can declare FA and choose another team.
5. Since 1995, Japanese players migrating to American major league baseball are increasing in numbers year by year. While this trend, in general, is treated favourably, there is a growing opinion that Japanese baseball will turn into a 'minor league' of the American major league game.
6. It is Yomiuri Giants which has been the most dominant and the most popular team in Japanese baseball. Especially, their nine year consecutive victory in the Japan Series (1965-1973) is called V9 and counted as one of the highlights of sport history in Japan.



## 4.2 Introduction

Baseball is undoubtedly the most popular sport in Japan, although it was originally foreign. The nation's love for baseball is such that one writer reportedly commented that, "Baseball is perfect for us. If Americans hadn't invented it, we probably would have" (quoted in Whiting 1989: 51). It is next to impossible to find any theoretical explanation for why a certain country prioritises one of many foreign cultures. The British settlers enjoyed cricket just after Japan ended the policy of seclusion, but the sport was not appealing to Japanese people although it looked somewhat like baseball (see Roden 1980: 518). Considering *kemari*<sup>13</sup> was played among the aristocrats as a traditional recreation in Japan, soccer could have been the most major sport. There was a large soccer population, but the sport did not receive much public attention before the professional league was founded in 1993.<sup>14</sup>

Baseball originated in America and the underlying philosophy behind the sport was that baseball was a hitting game because hitting was more fun than fielding (see Sayama 1998: 94-116). 'Strike' used as a baseball

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<sup>13</sup> The game in which the players kick a leather ball among each other so that the ball does not touch the ground (Daniels 1993: 169)

<sup>14</sup> Before the foundation of the professional league, the Japan Soccer League (JSL) featuring company teams, sustained Japanese soccer from 1965 (Horne 1999).

term meaning a 'good pitch' also means 'hitting', which symbolises the game's orientation. Certainly, baseball in its early days encouraged a pitcher to throw easy balls so that a batter could hit properly (Sayama 1998: 94-116). Victory or defeat became a matter of importance, and because of the sportisation of recreation the throwing of easy balls to hit disappeared from the scene. But hitting remained the backbone of American baseball. American players, in general, are willing to hit at the first pitched ball and a genuine power clash between a pitcher and a batter is considered to be what baseball really is: the former throws a ball at full strength and the latter hits it at full strength. But this philosophy was ignored in Japan amid the nationwide dissemination of the sport. Instead, what was respected in Japan was 'not hitting', which meant waiting for an opponent pitcher's errors by letting him make as many pitches as possible (Sayama 1998: 117-146). This cautious style (or passive style) was applied to other game tactics, shaping what Japanese baseball would become.

As the growth of a certain sport in a foreign land is indebted to players from the birthplace of the sport, Japanese baseball depended mainly on American players for its early growth. From the 1950s on, labour migration from the U.S to Japan became active. American players were much better-built and more powerful than Japanese players and Japanese sides, in most cases, depended on them for home runs. Some American



players assimilated themselves to Japanese baseball, contributing to its growth. But the Japanese style of baseball, in most cases, perplexed American players. Above all, as Japanese clubs became rich enough to recruit big names from U.S. major league baseball from the 1970s on, there were many cases in which the pride of American players clashed with the Japanese style of baseball. One former U.S. major leaguer who played in Japan referred to Japanese baseball as, "Not baseball, just looking like it" (quoted in Whiting 1989: 58). For example, Japanese pitchers prefer defeating batters by attacking their weak spots thoroughly rather than trying a genuine power clash, which frustrates American players. Another factor which puzzled American players is that the strike zone in Japanese baseball is different from that in American baseball. James Kingston, an American player in Japanese baseball, notes that, "For a foreign pitcher the strike zone was a lot smaller and for [foreign] hitters it grew a lot larger" (*email communication 28/9/2003*). Therefore, there were a lot of cases in which a pitched ball that American players let pass as 'not strike' was called a 'strike ball'. In addition, the overuse of the bunt was incomprehensible for American players. Bunt is a common play both in Japanese and American baseball, but the former tends to employ this play from early in the innings to secure a minimum score, while the latter, regarding early innings as the big innings, tries to make massive scores by hitting out (see Ikei 1991: 134-135). In American eyes, the overuse of the bunt makes Japanese baseball more predictable and



therefore less exciting (Baines, *email communication* 9/7/2003; Davis, *email communication* 5/4/2003). Iwata Kenji, a Japanese baseball journalist, notes about the use of the bunt that:

As a baseball fan, a game is interesting when the bunt is used less because hitting baseball makes the game dynamic. But as a baseball journalist, it is interesting to watch the bunt technique and it also is to watch the technique to thwart the bunt (*Personal Interview* 24/10/2002 translated from Japanese).

On the other hand, Japanese players became fed up with the American players' self-assertive behaviour, their aggressive playing style and the many cases in which American players did not perform as well as expected in spite of receiving huge salaries. An accumulation of philosophical disagreements between Japanese and American baseball went so far in 1984 that there was a club owner-led campaign for driving all foreign players out of Japanese baseball (e.g. see Kuehnert 1998).

Entering the 1990s, Japan went into a chronic economic recession and was expected to carry out structural reforms. There was a growing idea that Japanese methods would not work anymore and should be replaced with Western methods which nurture the entrepreneurial spirit. In line with this mood, some philosophical changes were seen in Japanese baseball. With the spread of scientific training methods, originating in America, traditional torture-like training conducted under the name of 'the cultivation of soul' was called into question. For example, 'one-thousand consecutive fielding of ground balls' (*senbon nokku*, detailed

later) was known as a special 'product' of Japanese baseball, but some clubs regarded this practice as a nonsense, not forcing their players to do it anymore (Bartholet 1996). Recent players are said not to follow readily the coaches' unscientific advice because they have been armed with baseball theories and scientific methods since their childhood (see Sumi 2002). Some players who were fed up with the Japanese style migrated to American baseball. Their performances in American baseball increased the opportunities of having American baseball games transmitted to the households of Japan, making American baseball closer than ever to Japanese fans (see 5.10). Under this circumstance, there was an increase in the number of attempts to compare American and Japanese baseball among fans and players and in many cases Japanese baseball was on the receiving end of getting criticised because of its perceived powerlessness and use of predictable orthodox tactics. The comparison was not confined to playing style. As a result of studying the management of American baseball, many pointed out that there is a lot to learn from the Americans for better management of Japanese baseball (e.g. Hiro'oka 1997). Such comparisons were the case regarding players' rights as well. Traditionally, players had not been granted the rights to choose the team for which to play, not allowed to sign multi-year contracts and not allowed to negotiate contracts via an agent, all of which were commonly practised in American baseball, but, in the 1990s, Japanese baseball won FA (see 4.1) and the signing of multi-year contracts and doing contract negotiations via an



agent became available. Nevertheless, it is difficult to say that the system overall functions in favour of Japanese baseball at the moment. Iwata

Kenji comments:

Doing contract negotiations via an agent is a player's legal right, because he, who is amateur in contract negotiation, can be on a par with his employer. Besides, this system is needed in terms of strengthening club management. But I must say that agents' knowledge about the baseball world is poor. A multi-year contract, while securing players' status, could spoil them by making them think, "No good this year, but I've still got next year" (*Personal Interview 24/10/2002 translated from Japanese*).

It is clear that Japanese baseball has been integrated into global sport processes and has been hugely influenced by the 'Americanisation' of the game. In addition, the Japanese professional soccer league, influenced by world soccer, has witnessed many fashionable players running across the pitch, symbolising 'openness' and distancing the game from the traditional austerity image of sport in Japan. The 'openness' of soccer has influenced Japanese baseball as well. However, this does not necessarily mean that the mentalities of Japanese players have become fully Americanised. In response to an increase in the number of Japanese players in American major league baseball, some former American major leaguers who once played in Japan have admitted that recent players have become more independent-minded and learned to assert themselves (see Kuehnert 1998). However, it is also true that the number of such players is still small, limited to a few top players. Some retired baseball men commented that recent players just do what they are told to do and that Japanese



baseball is still manager-oriented. (see Nagatani 1997: 61; Toyoda 2002: 53). The 1990s saw some Korean players join Japanese baseball. Koreans, in general, are said to be much more independent-minded than the Japanese and one of them reportedly commented that, "In Korean baseball, players lead the team. But the manager leads the team in Japanese baseball. This difference is interesting for me" (quoted in Hoshino 2000: 102). Amid the criticism of American players, their professionalism is highly regarded in Japanese baseball. They must go through severe competitions under severe circumstances in order to reach American major leagues. American minor leagues are a vast lower branch of the major league teams, containing a huge number of promising players who wait for the major leaguers to be put on the disabled list. Having this background, American players (or non-American players in American baseball) know how to take care of themselves, maintaining a high motivation and fighting spirit, and they do not miss the games readily even if they get injuries. However, this professionalism, according to some Japanese baseball men, is possessed by only a handful players in Japan (e.g. Mori 2001; Hoshino 2002).

The aforementioned FA was supposed to be a system which would make it possible for players to move to another club freely, but the reality is different. A player in Japanese baseball is regarded as being in debt to his club and his fans, because the club pays his salary including during

the period he was developing his skills as an unknown player. His baseball life does not develop without encouragement from his fans, either. In other words, there is a strong perception that each player is 'brought up' by his club and his fans. Therefore, FA in Japanese baseball is sometimes in connection with 'repaying the debt' to the club and the fans, and it is not rare that a player who moves to another club by exercising FA leaves with emotional comments such as, 'I am sorry to betray the fans who have supported me'. It is not rare either that a manager talks his player who has declared FA into staying in the club. If he lets an FA leaver go without persuading him to stay, the manager is likely to be criticised as heartless (e.g. Komada 2001).

In his inquiry into the Americanisation of Latin American and Caribbean baseball, Alan Klein (1991; 1994), employing dependency theory, studied the circumstances in which American major league baseball clubs lured local talents to the American major leagues, leading to the underdevelopment of local baseball and resulting in the occurrence of local resistance. In contrast, there were few cases in which Japanese talents were recruited by American major league clubs (just one case before 1995). But after 1995, top players migrated to American major league baseball, which produced concern about the possible underdevelopment of Japanese baseball for the first time. Furthermore, with Japanese players' successful performances in American major league

baseball, there is a move by American major league clubs to turn to Japanese high school hopefuls for scouting activities (see Hoshino 2000: 93). Accordingly, it is likely that local resistance to the Americanisation of Japanese baseball will grow more and more in the future. However, traditionally, it is possible to say that local resistance to Americanisation mainly resulted from the philosophical differences between the two games and fear about the marginalisation of Japanese philosophies. Reischauer (1989: 396), in his analysis of the process of the formation of Japanese culture, notes that the heavy borrowings of foreign cultures became part of Japanese culture, but nevertheless did not change the uniqueness of Japan. This is true of Japanese baseball, which was willing to import something new and, at the same time, tried to maintain 'Japaneseness'.

In this chapter, how these attitudes have influenced Japanese baseball will be the focus of exploration, beginning with the description of the history of Japanese baseball up to 1950. In the next chapter, the development of Japanese baseball from 1950 to the present will be discussed in connection with labour migration.



### 4.3 The History and Growth of Japanese Baseball

#### 4.3.1 The Era of Ichikô Baseball

Baseball was introduced to the Japanese in the middle of the nineteenth century by American teachers who taught English language at colleges<sup>15</sup> (Hirai 1996: 30; Kiku 1993: 76-77; Whiting 1989: 27; Sayama 1998: 47-48). There had been no popular concept of modern sport in Japanese history before that time and Japanese students in those days were considered to be poorly built and not outdoor-oriented. Worrying about the health of their students, American teachers thought that playing baseball together would help to improve their health and remove cultural barriers (Sayama 1998: 59). Starting in schools and colleges, the game won the hearts of Japanese people and, subsequently, baseball clubs were formed nationwide formally (as an extracurricular activity in schools) and informally (as enthusiasts' clubs) (see Kusaka 1987: 266-267). The imported form of American baseball was characterised as fun, but the Japanese interpreted the game in quite different ways: in Japanese eyes, baseball was found to have "the one-on-one battle between pitcher and batter similar in psychology to sumô and martial arts. It involved split-

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<sup>15</sup> Not merely American teachers but also some Japanese who came back from America were responsible for the introduction of baseball to Japan (Kiku 1993: 76-77; Whiting 1989: 27; Sayama 1998: 53).

second timing and a special harmony of mental and physical strength” (Whiting 1989: 28). Accordingly, it was not surprising that the martial arts philosophy of endless training, self-denial, and emphasis on spirit was applied to baseball (Whiting 1989: 29). In fact, Nakano Takeji, a former Ichikô player (the most dominant club in the early days, detailed later), made the following comment symbolising this philosophy:

Now that it has been in the hands of Japanese youth, baseball, even if originally foreign, must be impregnated with the Japanese spirit and mentality of Japanese bushidô. Baseball in Japan becomes meaningful when it is reinterpreted in accordance with the physical constitution and the morale of the race (quoted in Sayama 1998: 60 translated from Japanese).

In addition, baseball was judged to be the best sport for national policy because of its game style. With the war against China imminent,<sup>16</sup> a request for a national game that would symbolise the collectivist ideal and fighting spirit of the nation was made and Western team sports were considered to meet the requirements (Roden 1980: 519). Of them, baseball was preferred, because it seemed to emphasise “those values that were celebrated in the civic rituals of the state: order, harmony, perseverance [sic], and self-restraint” (Roden 1980: 519).

Overshadowed by the possibility of becoming colonised, Japan was pressed to catch up with the West quickly by modernising its society.

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<sup>16</sup> Japan and China were in a political confrontation over the control of the Korean Peninsula and finally went to war in 1894 (The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895). The war ended in the victory of Japan, which became the first step for Japanese imperialism in Asia.



Therefore, hard work became the maxim in Japanese society, and baseball was likened to this approach (Nakamura 1995: 10). Of the baseball clubs in the early days, it was the First Higher School of Tokyo (better known as Ichikô)<sup>17</sup> that led the development of baseball in Japan. Kinoshita Hiroji, the then-headmaster, deplored the Westernisation-related deterioration of the Japanese social environment and cautioned his students to discipline themselves. As part of his campaign, he made them live in school dormitories so that they would protect Japanese traditions against the flood of foreign culture washing over Japan (Kiku 1993: 84-85; Whiting 1989: 29). The school dormitories strengthened a solidarity among students to cherish their love for and loyalty to the school. Their school patriotism was enhanced by interscholastic sporting competitions (Kiku 1993: 88). Under this circumstance, baseball practice in Ichikô was so intense that it was called 'the practice of death':

In one drill, a pitcher stood a mere 20 feet away from home plate and fired fastballs at the catcher with all his might. By the end of the exercise, the pitcher was exhausted and the catcher's body black-and-blue. Ichiko [sic] players were forbidden to use the word *ouch!* — no matter how much a ball stung their hands on a frozen winter's day or how badly they bruised their bodies during sliding practice. Those who could not suppress the pain were allowed to use the word *kayui* (it itches)...Ichiko's [sic] pitchers each threw several hundred pitches a day in practice. Their pitching arms frequently became badly bent from throwing too many curveballs. To straighten them out, they would hang from the branches of the cherry trees that bordered the field...(Whiting 1989: 32).

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<sup>17</sup> The most elite preparatory school for entering the prestigious Imperial University, which trained future national leaders (see Whiting 1989: 29).



In addition, Ichikô players played barehanded, because the use of a glove was thought to make catching and throwing form bad (Nakamura 1995: 11). Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the use of a glove was judged necessary, but Chûma Kanoe,<sup>18</sup> the Ichikô manager, was not enthusiastic about it, claiming that the use of a glove was a manifestation of cowardice and hesitation, far from the 'essence' of baseball (Nakamura 1995: 11).

The origin of Japanese baseball being characterised as a 'hitless' game arguably can be traced back to Ichikô baseball. As stated, Japan was trying to catch up with the Western powers, and the social mood was one in which errors were not tolerated. Errors in baseball meant getting scored against and it followed that fielding practice was placed above batting practice. Besides, baseball, in essence, was a sport in which a batter was much more likely to get defeated than to hit home runs and, in Ichikô baseball, it was preferred that a batter waited for the opponent pitcher to make errors such as giving four balls or throwing the ball at the batter by accident.<sup>19</sup> This self-restrained play was respected as team play (see Sayama 1998: 120-121).

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<sup>18</sup> He gave birth to the Japanese translation of baseball, *yakyû*

<sup>19</sup> In both cases, the batter can have an unconditional trip to first base.

However, not every baseball club adopted the Ichikô style of practice. For example, Meiji Gakuin, a Christian educational institution, was known as the most Americanised school and baseball practice in this school was comparatively casual and carefree (Whiting 1989: 29). While the import of foreign culture was welcomed, a cultural resistance was occurring as well, and the Ichikô-Meiji Gakuin baseball meeting was taken as not simply a matter of victory or defeat but as a test of the cultural system itself (Whiting 1989: 29). Their rivalry was so intense that their very first meeting produced an incident which put Japan-the U.S. diplomatic relations at risk (the Imbrie Incident).<sup>20</sup> After this incident, they played two more games and the Ichikô team beat Meiji Gakuin on both occasions, which was claimed to demonstrate the 'superiority' of the Japanese cultural system.

Unrivalled among Japanese clubs, the Ichikô players aspired to play against foreign clubs and after a series of unsuccessful negotiations, the meeting between Ichikô and the Yokohama Athletic Club (see page 66) in 1896 was the first-ever baseball game between American and Japanese teams (Whiting 1989: 33). While the Yokohama side, which had enjoyed

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<sup>20</sup> While the game was in progress in the Ichikô ground, William Imbrie, the American professor of theology, entered the campus by jumping over the fence because all gates had been closed. This scene was spotted by the members of jûdô club who had been upset by the poor performances of Ichikô. They judged his conduct as trespassing on the 'sacred' place and attacked and injured him. This incident was played up, developing into a political problem between the two nations (see Sayama 1998: 56-58; Whiting 1989: 29-32).

their own baseball as a pastime, not caring about Ichikô baseball, did not take this meeting seriously, the Ichikô side likened it to the biggest event since the nation's foundation (Sayama 1998: 66). The result was, thanks to high motivation and the 'practice of death', that Ichikô defeated the Yokohama Athletic Club by 29 to 4.<sup>21</sup> This victory put the Ichikô students in an ecstasy of joy, making the student president proclaim that, "This great victory is more than a victory for our school; it is a victory for the Japanese people!" (Roden 1980: 524; see also Sayama 1998: 69). As a matter of fact, this victory was equated with the restoration of national prestige in the public psyche. One Japanese historian reportedly wrote that:

Foreigners could not hope to understand the emotional impact of this victory, but it helped Japan, struggling toward modernization [sic] after centuries of isolation, overcome a tremendous inferiority complex it felt toward the more industrially advanced West (quoted in Whiting 1989: 33).

Ichikô baseball became the role model, inducing educational institutions nationwide to organise baseball clubs and the Ichikô players, as instructors, gave technical instruction at the school from which they had graduated. Needless to say, in addition to technical instruction, they did not forget to teach the spiritual meaning of baseball — baseball for the cultivation of the soul. In fact, the baseball club in a junior high school

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<sup>21</sup> Ichikô won two more games in a row over the Yokohama Athletic Club and got defeated at the fourth meeting partly because the latter put a professional player on the lineup (see Whiting 1989: 33).



made it a club principle to learn courage, perseverance, indomitability, and teamwork via baseball (Sayama 1998: 86). The nationwide dissemination of baseball encouraged some schools to challenge Ichikô for the hegemonic position and two university clubs — Waseda and Keiô University — overtook Ichikô, arousing national enthusiasm for baseball even more.

#### 4.3.2 The Era of College Baseball

The first half period of the twentieth century was the heyday of amateur baseball and, in particular, the Tokyo Six Universities League (Waseda, Keiô, Meiji, Hôsei, Rikkyô, and Tokyo), which was organised in 1925, made the stadiums packed and millions of people across Japan reportedly listened to the games on radio (Hirai 1996: 31). The Tokyo Six Universities League had been at the top of Japanese baseball before the professional league was founded in 1936. Besides, the attitude of playing baseball for the genuine love of baseball (amateurism) was still respected and many excellent players chose to play in the Universities League rather than the professional league (Aota 1996: 160).

After Ichikô, it was Tobita Suishû, former Waseda manager, who was the 'spiritual pillar' of student baseball. By the time he died in 1965, he had been respected as the god of Japanese baseball (Whiting 1989: 36). Although he did not care about professional baseball, his philosophies

permeated professional baseball as well. When he played against Chicago University in 1910 as a Waseda player, his team suffered crushing defeats. This disgraceful experience is said to have made a great deal of impact on the rest of his life. (Whiting 1989: 37). He quit the team, taking responsibility for the losses, while he reportedly said that, "I'll beat Chicago if I have to die to do it" (Whiting 1989: 37). Nine years later, he made a comeback in the Waseda baseball club as the manager and got the chance to put his promise into practice.

Tobita was such a sympathiser of Ichikô baseball and claimed that sport without spiritual development did not deserved to be called sport (Tobita 1974: 113), and under this philosophy he imposed harsh practices on his players. He made his players catch ground balls until they were half dead and motionless with froth coming out of their mouths (Whiting 1989: 38). In Western thinking, what matters most is demonstrating the best performances in competition, and practice is nothing but the means for this purpose. Therefore, pushing oneself to extremes in a practice session is viewed as wasting one's power. But Tobita had a different idea:

Without your determination to throw in your lot with a ball, you cannot endure the practice or become an excellent player. This is what is called 'practice of death', the starting point of Japanese baseball. It seems that this practice treats players cruelly, but this trial is inevitable for mastering bushidô baseball. Sometimes, you may feel you are dying. You drop with all of your sweats emitted and with froth coming out of your mouth — this is the real practice...How could you cope with difficulties on the occasion of an emergency if you are alienated from training yourself?...Japanese baseball takes the baseball spirit more



seriously than technique and you can master the former via 'practice of death' (Tobita 1974: 42-45 translated from Japanese).

In addition, Tobita noted that players who did not shed tears over getting defeated had avoided 'practice of death' (Tobita 1974: 30), emphasising again the significance of practice. Of course, his philosophy, especially 'practice of death', is extreme by today's standards, but as the slogan, 'Cry in practice, laugh in the games' was preferred, Japanese baseball has been characterised as 'practice after practice' irrespective of amateur or professional status, and 'practice for the sake of practice' has stood as a custom in the Japanese sporting world. In fact, the idea is still dominant that those who cannot prove themselves in a practice session cannot do so in a game either. As a result of the execution of 'practice of death', Tobita achieved huge successes (see Whiting 1989: 39).

Since 1905 when Waseda made a baseball tour to America for the first time in Japanese sport history (see Kiku 1993: 113-114), a baseball exchange between the two countries was promoted and American players including some prominent professional players visited Japan for a baseball tour. Their impression of Japanese baseball was that their fielding technique was good but their batting technique was poor (Sayama 1998: 131). While these exchanges gave the Japanese side the chance to receive technical advice from American players, providing the latest knowledge and equipment, Japanese players did not cease to preserve



their own style. As Ichikô players did, college players also travelled nationwide for coaching during their off-season period. The nationwide diffusion of baseball and accompanying technical improvement were paralleled by the organisation of various baseball tournaments.

The soaring of baseball popularity contributed to urban development, which laid the foundation for the birth of professional baseball. Entering the twentieth century, as a result of the influx of the workforce to urban areas from provincial areas, the increase of newly born babies in numbers, and the reorganisation of neighbouring towns and villages, urban populations increased rapidly (Nagai and Hashizume 2003: 15). But a state-run urban development to meet urban problems was behind schedule, which invited the emergence of private developers and, in particular, private railway companies took the initiative (Nagai and Hashizume 2003: 15). Their goal was securing as many passengers as possible along the railways and they provided various services such as housing, the establishment of department stores in their areas, and sport was included as a service as well (Nagai and Hashizume 2003: 16). They constructed sports grounds, where not only sporting events but also exhibitions, concerts, and circuses were held (Nagai and Hashizume 2003: 16). Baseball, at first, was nothing but one choice for urban development based on sport, but the companies gradually took the sport seriously and made a start on the construction of baseball grounds (Nagai and

Hashizume 2003: 16). This was the start of an infrastructure from which railway companies could organise professional teams in the future.

### **4.3.3 The Birth of Professional Baseball**

As stated earlier, student baseball, equated with school education, concerned itself with moral discipline and was at odds with money and entertainment symbolising professionalism. Tobita (1974: 20-21) argued that the purpose of entertainment baseball consisted of providing fun and spectacle for spectators by using game-fixing-like tactics, but that it degraded the spirit of student baseball. However, with baseball exchanges between Japan and America in progress, the question of how to cover the travelling expenses to America or how to pay the guarantee to American teams which visited Japan came to surface as an issue. To tackle this revenue problem, the idea of collecting gate money from spectators was put into practice, which paved the way for the popular acceptance of the professionalisation of baseball (Kiku 1993: 104-122). In addition, in response to the repeated defeats of Japanese teams, there was a growing opinion among baseball men that technical improvement had reached its limit within the domain of student baseball, and professional baseball should be organised as the leading form of Japanese baseball technically and spiritually in the future (Kiku 1993: 131). Some leading baseball coaches observed professional baseball in America firsthand and were in favour of the policy of entertaining spectators with a high level of baseball



technique (Kiku 1993: 120-122). Finally, the first-ever professional baseball club in Japan, named *Nippon Undô Kyôkai* (the Athletics Association of Japan), was founded in 1920. What is notable is that this club was professional in terms of paying the members for their baseball skills, while attempting at the same time to preserve the ideology of student baseball (Kiku 1993: 133). One former member looked back:

During the games, we often got booed '*shôbai!*' [professionals]. When we made an error, we got yelled at, 'Your salary will be cut'. As was the case with the circus, no matter what excellent athletic ability one had, those who demonstrated it professionally were despised as performers and we were treated as baseball performers (quoted in Kiku 1993: 135 translated from Japanese).

While professional baseball in America had been successful as a business and had been accepted in society, as this comment indicated, there was no room for accepting professional baseball in Japanese society as early as 1920. Therefore, it was necessary to train the professionals as future leaders in Japanese baseball with noble character so that they would not be regarded as just 'baseball performers'. For that purpose, the ideology of student baseball became the model (Kiku 1993: 135).

As a matter of fact, the members stayed in a training camp, leading an ordered group life. In addition to baseball practice, they were assigned to study academic subjects for human development (Kiku 1993: 134-135). However, the club went into financial decline and was compelled to disband in 1929 before it could raise the social status of professional



baseball significantly.

In 1931, Shôriki Matsutarô, president of the *Yomiuri Shinbun*, a national newspaper, invited American major league all stars to Japan as a promotional device for his newspaper (Matsuki 1985: 10; Whiting 1976: 222; 1989: 40-41). In those days, the *Yomiuri Shinbun*, had been in the thick of keen competition against other newspapers, suffering from a small circulation. In order to address the situation, the company tried to obtain readership by using baseball popularity. Although the Japanese side (university team) was no match for the visiting Americans, this tour was a huge success, attracting large numbers of spectators in spite of economically bad times. In 1934, Shôriki sponsored another tour of American major league all stars and, this time, was successful in inviting Babe Ruth, the biggest name in American baseball, well-known to the Japanese as well. But the Ministry of Education had promulgated the Baseball Control Act for the healthy development of student baseball in 1932, which prohibited student players from playing against professionals (Hirai 1996: 30; Matsuki 1985: 13). Therefore, the All-Japan team had to consist mainly of graduates of the Tokyo Six Universities League and semi-professionals (players of company baseball teams) (Matsuki 1985: 14).<sup>22</sup> While this tour ended in a one-sided victory to the American side,

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<sup>22</sup> The team contained two senior high school students. They were made to stop schooling halfway through their course for joining the team.

one game witnessed a Japanese senior high school student pitcher almost defeat the American side, which became the big rationale for the foundation of full-scale professional baseball (Matsuki 1985: 14).

Baseball business enabled the *Yomiuri Shinbun* to increase its circulation and avert its financial difficulties. Based on the All-Japan team, Shôriki signed up top Japanese stars professionally and in 1934 founded the first successful professional baseball club, *Dai Nippon Tokyo Yakyû Kurabu* (the Great Japan Tokyo Baseball Club) just after the American major league tour had ended (Whiting 1989: 44). Because the members including the manager were mainly graduates of the Tokyo Six Universities League, the ideology of the Club reflected their spirit, which was to create the 'true' way of baseball impregnated with Japanese spirit (Kiku 1993: 160-161). During their baseball tour to America the following year, the American side claimed that the name of the Club was too lengthy for publicity and recommended another name, the Tokyo Giants, which was to be used up to today (Kiku 1993: 160-161; Matsuki 1985: 16). While the Giants became solid as a professional club, Shôriki called for the foundation of other professional clubs for baseball business. In response to his request, six more professional clubs came into existence by 1936 and in the same year the Japan Professional Baseball League was organised, making possible the professional clubs' meeting as a regular fixture. The seven clubs were all sponsored by newspapers or private railway



companies (four by the former and three by the latter) (Nagai and Hashizume 2003: 26).

With the intensification of World War II, Japanese militarism gradually eroded baseball in Japan. In 1940, the use of the English language was prohibited in baseball. Accordingly, the clubs which employed English names were forced to change them into Japanese equivalent names and American baseball terminology was translated into Japanese as well (Matsuki 1985: 235-236; Whiting 1989: 46). Under this policy, Victor Starffin, the Russian who immigrated to Japan to avoid the aftermath of the Russian Revolution and who later became one of the greatest pitchers in Japanese baseball, changed his name to Suda Hiroshi (Matsuki 1985: 236). In addition, players were referred to as soldiers or warriors and games were often preceded by grenade-throwing contests (Whiting 1989: 46). The Japanese were eager to get rid of the enemy language but, on the other hand, to keep the enemy sport. This paradox can be interpreted in many ways, but one conceivable reason is that baseball which was played nearly everyday was taken as the best recreation for people having a hard time from war. In 1940, the League made public its new policies and one of them went, "The League aims at providing the healthiest recreation by demonstrating model games" (Matsuki 1985: 235). The League adopted another policy, "The League aims at spreading the principle of 'cheerfulness', 'fighting bravely', and



‘unity’, all of which are the essence of baseball” (Matsuki 1985: 235). But the continuation of war made the shortage of commodities more serious, which affected the production of baseball goods and baseball players were sent to battlefields. Therefore, the quality of baseball dropped, and with the war situation unfavourable for Japan, the League finally disbanded in the middle of 1944.

After World War II, amid the chaos nationwide, baseball people went into action for the resumption of baseball league competition and the first postwar game took place just three months after the war defeat. It was between players from the teams in the Tokyo area and those in the Osaka area (The East-West baseball game). There were three more games, which advertised the revival of professional baseball and gave each team the opportunity for rebuilding, and in 1946, the league competition resumed. In 1949, the idea of setting up a two-league system emerged. Shôriki (President of the Professional League in those days), who was planning to invite other new teams, and subsequently to divide the League into two for better competition, looked for candidates. However, the existing teams were divided on the question of League expansion. Both advocates and opposers made plausible arguments, but emotional feelings were involved as well. No amount of discussion broke the deadlock, which resulted in the division of the League into two along the lines of the pro-expansionists and the anti-expansionists, the Central and the Pacific. After 1950 on,

while some teams merged and others became defunct, the two-league setup was to sustain baseball in Japan in the future.

## Chapter 5 The History and Growth of Japanese Baseball (after 1950): Labour Migration in Japanese Baseball

After 1950, sport labour migration from American baseball (or other baseball worlds) to Japanese baseball became full-scale. However, as stated earlier, the approaches to baseball in both countries were quite different. Of course, the language barrier was also a fundamental problem. Most Japanese coaches were not proficient enough in the English language to communicate with foreign players properly and few foreign players had any intention of studying the Japanese language. Differences in racial characteristics also caused cultural clashes, making matters complicated. The Japanese image of American players was not good in general and the American players' image of Japanese baseball was not good either. Whiting (1989: 97) commented that, "Of Japanese baseball...the Americans were unanimous in their dislike. It was like nothing they had ever encountered before and when they got together for drinks, what would start out as a social evening would become a nonstop bitch-and-moan session". But it is also true that American migrants contributed to the improvement of Japanese baseball and team victories. At the same time, the Japanese steadily established the 'Japanese version of the sport'. This chapter will seek to explore the growth of baseball in Japan after 1950, paralleling it with baseball labour migration.



## 5.1 Overview

According to 'An Encyclopaedia of Foreign Players in the Professional Baseball of Japan' (*Nippon Puro Yakyû Gaikokujin Senshu Taikan*), published by the *Baseball Magazine Sha* (2002), six hundred and eighty-one foreign players migrated to Japanese baseball between 1952 and 2002. Foreign players had been part of Japanese baseball since its inception because of the absence of the quota system, but the quota system was officially introduced in 1952 for the first time (*Baseball Magazine Sha* 2002: 80-82) (see also page 45). The introduction of the quota system is said to have resulted from Wally Yonamine's outstanding performances (detailed 5.2). His performances encouraged other teams to recruit foreign players, while the opinion that their recruitment should be restricted became dominant (*Baseball Magazine Sha* 2002: 80-82). Not surprisingly, the majority of immigrant players were U.S. players. From the 1980s on, some other alternatives to the U.S. were opened up as suppliers of players, but the situation remains that by far the largest number of players are still from the U.S., as Table 2 shows.

**Table 2 Nationalities of Foreign Players in Japanese Professional Baseball between 1952 and 2002**

Nationalities of Players	The Number of Players
American	541
Dominican	45
Puerto Rican	22
Venezuelan	13
Taiwanese	13
Korean	8
Cuban	8
Mexican	7
Panamanian	5
Canadian	5
Brazilian	4
Australian	2
Chinese	1
Others	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>681</b>

Compiled from *Baseball Magazine Sha* (2002: 84-145)

As this Table indicates, some areas which seem to have little to do with baseball culture supply players to Japanese baseball. For example, Brazil stands as the mainstream ‘soccer kingdom’, while baseball is popular among Japanese-Brazilians (*Baseball Magazine Sha* 2002: 66). But baseball players in Brazil have no environment in which to continue to play after they have reached the age of 18 (*Baseball Magazine Sha* 2002: 66). The Swallows, who had gathered information about baseball fever in Brazil via the parent company’s local branch, opened up a baseball player-market in Brazil in the late 1990s (*Baseball Magazine Sha* 2002:

66).

In the 1950s and the 1960s, the level of Japanese baseball was below that of American baseball and, in many cases, American players who were unable to reach the level of the American major league, or American major leaguers whose prime had passed, migrated to Japanese baseball. The Japanese sides expected home runs from American players, because of the constant perception that Japanese players were not well-built and were lacking in power. While American and Japanese sides shared common interests in this way and baseball migration became so common that Japanese baseball was never without foreign players, things did not progress easily in terms of multiculturalism. Maguire (1999: 106) classifies sport labour migrants into five types (pioneers, settlers, returnees, mercenaries, and nomadic cosmopolitans) and the general position of foreign players in Japanese baseball can be symbolised by one American player's following comment: "We're mercenaries, pure and simple. Our job is to do well and let the Japanese players have the glory and take the blame when things go bad" (quoted in Whiting 1989: 263). Foreign players in Japanese baseball are called '*suketto*' [helpers]. It is said that they do not like to be called so, because they feel they are not treated as equal members of the team and media professionals, including broadcasters, have no hesitation in using the term '*suketto*' in referring to foreign players (Tamaki and Whiting 1991: 41-42). Foreign players are



required to prove themselves immediately in compensation for huge salaries and if they fail to play well, they are sacked after one season or less. Nor is it rare that foreign players with past successful careers whose performances deteriorate in subsequent years are dismissed because of 'physical decline'.

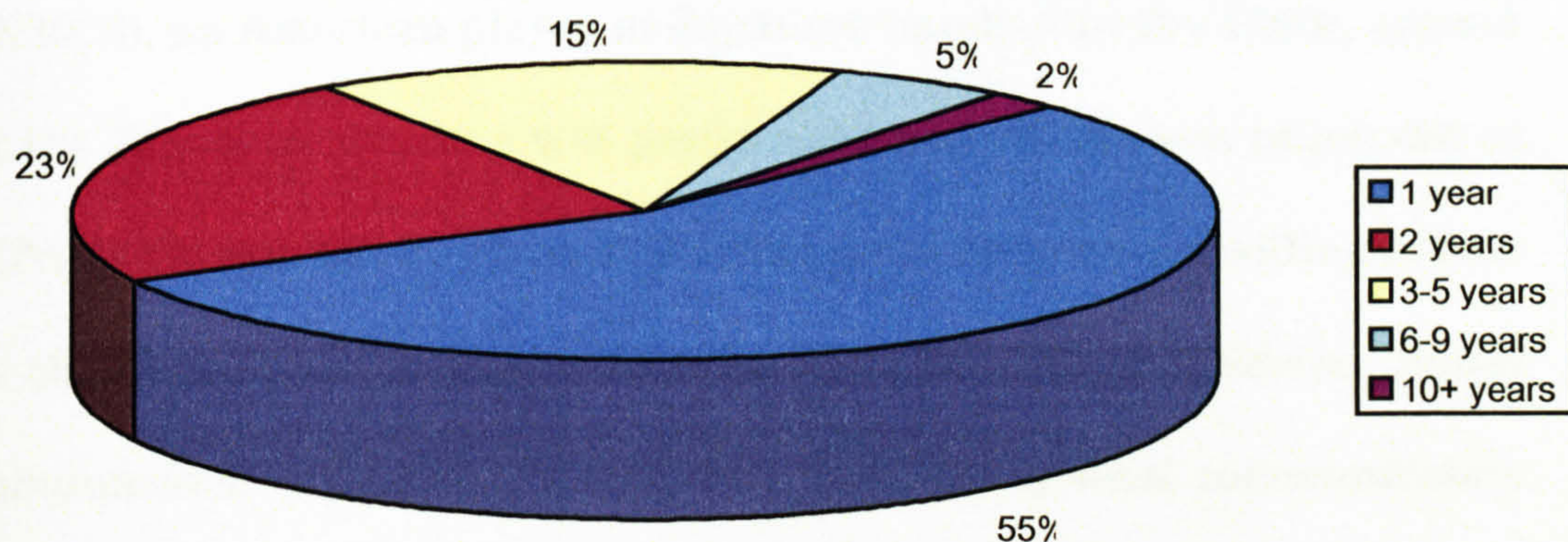
The Japanese clubs tend to expect perfection from foreign players. There is no guarantee that a player can continue to play in Japan for the next season even if he has smacked many home runs. He could be released because of his weaknesses such as low batting average or poor fielding. Ochiai Hiromitsu,<sup>23</sup> from his experiences of playing in teams both from the Central and the Pacific Leagues (see 4.1), notes that a player who moved from one league to another league needed not less than one year for storing up data about opponent pitchers. Considering this, foreign players were handicapped to a great degree, but the Japanese sides did not take this handicap into consideration. Unfortunately, there were many cases in which foreign players failed, which increased the Japanese distrust of them. The following is a circle graphic record of foreign players' playing period in Japanese baseball between 1952 and 2002:

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<sup>23</sup> He is the only player who won the Triple Crown title three times.



Figure 1 Playing Period of Foreign Players in Japanese Professional Baseball between 1952 and 2002



Compiled from *Baseball Magazine Sha* (2002: 84-145)

What can be read from this circle graphic is that a foreign player's playing period in Japanese baseball was, in general, so brief. More than half the players left Japanese baseball after one year (season). There were a few cases in which the player's asking price could not be met, but in most cases, players were unable to prove themselves quickly enough. Incidentally, the foreign player with the longest career in Japanese baseball so far is Ku Tai-yuan (known as Kaku Taigen in Japan), the Taiwanese man who played for thirteen years. Among American players (including Central and South Americans), Wally Yonamine, the American of Japanese descent, played for twelve years in Japanese baseball, followed by the eleven year careers of Robert Barbon (Cuban), Bobby Marcano (Venezuelan), and Leron Lee (American). While foreign players were expected to play well,



their playing well to the point of winning a title could put them in an awkward position. For example, Kenneth Baldwin (*postal communication* 1/12/2003), an American player in Japanese baseball in the 1960s, argued that the Japanese situation was pretty nationalistic. He was in pursuit of the Triple Crown, but he claimed that the umpires were not willing to give him the benefit of the doubt on close balls or strikes (Baldwin, *postal communication* 4/4/2004). In addition, Baldwin (*postal communication* 1/12/2003) felt that many fans were sorry that he was keen on pursuing the Triple Crown.

Another factor which strengthened Japanese baseball xenophobia was the American players' self-assertive behaviour. The American sporting world was the pressure-cooker world in which temper outbursts were considered acceptable and even regarded as a salutary show of spirit (Whiting 1989: 71). As a result of American players' behaving in such a way in Japanese baseball, Whiting (1989: 80) was made to comment about them that, "Although few Americans hold Japanese batting or pitching records, many have established new lows in the area of bad conduct. Records for most smashed batting helmets, ejection from games, and broken clubhouse windows, for example, are all held by individual [foreign players]". In Japan, temper tantrums along with practical joking, bickering, complaining, and other norms of American club house life are viewed as unwelcome incursions into the team's collective peace of mind



(Whiting 1989: 71). In addition, in American baseball, it is not thought of as bad that players criticise the manager or coaches, while, in Japanese baseball, players who criticise them are treated as villains whatever the circumstances and suffer a heavy penalty. As mentioned earlier, Japanese society has been under the influence of Confucianism and what managers and coaches say is 'always right'. Accordingly, American players are regarded as troublesome for the Japanese style of team management.

However, in contradictory manner, traditionally, the Japanese sides took a benevolent attitude toward American players by, besides paying huge salaries, giving them exceptional treatment such as booking first-class tickets for their journeys to Japan, and providing them with high-class accommodation. Such beneficent treatment not merely spoiled American players but also made them impudent and scornful of Japanese baseball (see Hiro'oka 1997: 174-178; Mori 2001: 173-175). With these advantages in mind, some immigrant players conspired with dishonest agents and concealed their injuries when signing the contract, and were then found to be useless (Ochiai 1998: 218).

For success in a foreign land, a player's character, his impression of Japanese baseball, and his family's attitude toward living in Japan, as well as his baseball skills and his past achievements, are important factors. Jim Lafebvre, an American player in Japanese baseball, gives the

following advice about which type of foreign players should be recruited by Japanese clubs:

Firstly, non-pitchers are better than pitchers, because the former can play every game. Secondly, left-handed batters are better than right-handed batters because most Japanese pitchers are right-handed. Plus, players who swing powerfully have difficulty meeting Japanese pitchers' skilful pitches. Thirdly, players who have played in American major leagues for more than five years and noted players, in particular, should be avoided. They are so used to being treated as 'state guests'. Fourthly, players who have strong-willed wives are advisable. Players' wives must face more language barrier-related problems in everyday life than players. Therefore, the player with the wife who tries to assimilate herself to life in Japan without becoming homesick is better. Finally, the player whose family is small with little children is better. Little children become accustomed to life in Japan quickly. Besides, they can make friends with the neighbourhood children, easily mastering Japanese language, which also makes it possible for the player's wife to get acquainted with Japanese mothers (quoted in Ikei 1991: 136-139 translated from Japanese).

The Japanese believed naively that foreign players would make it in Japanese baseball without considering their families and their ability to get adjusted to different cultures. But even after the Japanese gradually learned the know-how of recruiting good foreign players, their big name worship remained unchanged, wasting huge money.

American players' temper tantrums not only resulted from their own poor performances but also from their complaints about the Japanese approach to baseball. To Americans who were used to the notion that "an individual is responsible for himself and that performance on the field is the only thing that matters", the Japanese approach seemed incredibly restrictive (Whiting 1989: 60), in relation to game tactics, team practice



and, sometimes, personal life. The question was whether American players should adjust to the Japanese approach. Most successful American players (and other nationals) in Japanese baseball referred to adjustments to the Japanese approach and flexibility as the tip-off for success in Japanese baseball (Campbell, *postal communication* 19/12/2003; Davis, *email communication* 5/4/2003; Howard, *email communication* 5/4/2003; Joey, *email communication* 5/4/2003; Jones, *postal communication* 24/8/2003; Kingston, *email communication* 28/9/2003; Parker, *postal communication* 15/10/2003; Walker, *email communication* 7/10/2003). Leon Lee, one of the most successful foreign players, leaves more specific advice for newly arrived Americans:

Try to be as humble as you can, especially if you have a good season. Because acting like a big star just causes more trouble for you. Americans have to understand that managers will test you to see if you're a team player. They single you out. Take you out of a game, or make you bunt just to put you in your place and make sure you don't get a big head. When that happens try not to get angry. I've been blamed for errors that were some other guy's fault. I just nod and say I'm sorry in front of everybody and it's okay. And it makes my teammates happy because it takes the load off of them. In my first year in Japan, our batting coach kept trying to show me how to hold the bat whenever reporters or managers were around. I told him, "I'm just fine with my own style". He said, "You don't have to listen to anything I'm saying, but just act as if you are. I have to look like I'm doing my job". The Japanese are very face-conscious, so you should at least let the coaches pretend they are teaching you something (quoted in Whiting 1989: 95).

It remains to be seen if managers really test foreign players. They will deny it if they are questioned. But it is true that they sometimes manage their teams in incomprehensible ways in foreign players' eyes. For example, James Kingston, an American player in Japanese baseball, saw



a new American player play well including hitting a home run in a game, but he found the player on the bench in the next game. The reason, he suggested, was known only to the manager (*email communication 28/9/2003*). Kingston (*email communication 28/9/2003*) continues that, “Some players just accepted this weird [approach] and stayed over there for a long time, but others couldn’t and either went home or [were] released”. The following comment made by Conrad Slater (*email communication 4/1/2004*), another American player in Japanese baseball, supports Lee’s advice:

I had one [foreign] player before me tell that to be successful there you needed to always remember it’s the Japanese game [and] we’re just there for [a] while playing it. Don’t try to figure everything out you don’t understand. Just play the game hard. Work as hard as you can and respect their ways. Once I [understood] that I enjoyed myself greatly.

But it is misleading to make American players take full responsibility for the difficulties of multiculturalism. For example, a Japanese man who once worked as an interpreter for a baseball team made the following comment:

I think the Japanese expect too much. Reporters criticize [sic] the *gaijin* [foreigners], saying they should try to be more a part of the team. That makes me mad. I think it’s nonsense. [The] Japanese don’t really mix with the *gaijin*. They stay separate. Why should Americans have to do everything the Japanese way? Americans come here to play ball, so let them alone to do it [sic]. Why have them attending all meetings and being together with the Japanese all the time? Stop trying to make Japanese out of them (quoted in Whiting 1989: 133).

But not every Japanese baseball man stays separate from foreign players. Some Japanese players do make an effort to mix with foreign players,

which may be more important than expecting them to adjust to the Japanese approach to baseball. Miyata Yukinori, an experienced pitching coach, describes the following episode (2002: 122-123):

One day, May started a game, but he was off-form. Although our team was still in the lead, we benched him. He, thinking that he could go farther, behaved violently by screaming and kicking chairs and flung a bath towel at me. I flung it back, saying, "Do your own job properly if you do not want to be benched. Otherwise, go back to America!"...It was because our relationship had been established that I could take a strong attitude toward him...Foreign players' tantrums result from their not being understood properly. I invited foreign pitchers and their wives to a restaurant with a relaxing mood and talked to them about the team and my coaching policy. Sometimes, another pitcher who studied English conversation joined us, which was helpful. Making ourselves understood made it possible to speak my mind. They did not oppose if what I said was reasonable. In fact, May apologised later, saying that, "I was out of my mind" (translated from Japanese).

In addition to the effort of mixing with foreign players, what is expected from the Japanese in present-day Japan is the ability to reply properly to American players' doubts about the Japanese approach. For example, Conrad Slater asked why it is necessary to field 200 ground balls in a row, he was simply told that it was the 'Japanese way' (*email communication* 4/1/2004). Slater points out that that answer was given for a lot of questions asked by him and his teammates (*email communication* 1/4/2004). Japanese coaches (or the Japanese in general) have not been trained to speak persuasively and logically and, in most cases, terminate the discussion with phrases such as, 'This is the Japanese way' or 'Follow the Japanese way now that you are in Japan'. But recent coaches and managers are required to send messages to their players convincingly,



which is reflected in Nomura's following episode regarding Tom O'Malley, an American player:

With the runner on first base, the batter was O'Malley. After I successfully let the runner steal second base, the pitcher gave him four balls intentionally, and was successful in defeating the next batter. After the game, O'Malley came to me with an interpreter, protesting about the stolen base. I replied, "I told you before that the team does not exist for you. I would not have let the runner steal the base if your hitting success had been guaranteed one hundred percent. But the next batter could have hit successfully. Baseball is a team game. Two runners put more pressure on the pitcher than one runner did". After the argument, he became obedient (Nomura 1995: 98 translated from Japanese).

Attitudes about the behaviour and play of foreign players are linked to the quota system — a method of limiting the influence of un-Japaneseness (see page 123). Needless to say, there are many debates about the quota system in Japan. The Players' Association argues for the continuity of the quota system, because they fear that the abolition of the quota system would deprive Japanese players of game appearance opportunities (Toyoda 2002: 145). Meanwhile, those claiming for its abolition insist that free competition would induce competition among players, producing a higher quality of players and baseball games and that fans would want to see excellent baseball games by players of any nationalities (e.g. Aota 1996: 18-23; Ochiai 1998: 216). Arguments for the retention of the quota system have become less persuasive since the American baseball world has witnessed Japanese baseball migrants increasing in numbers since 1995. American baseball has not got a quota system in place and players of any nationalities who are competent can play there. Accordingly,



retaining the quota system in Japan can be judged to be unfair.

The limit on foreign players also has to do with Japanese ethnicity awareness. In common-sense thinking, Japanese ethnicity tends to be attributed to natural factors such as racial 'homogeneity' resulting from Japan's geographical isolation, but Kelly (1998a: 99) provides the following explanation based on an ideological approach:

[The] making of ethnicity in baseball was a result of ethnicity's new role as a basis for postwar national identity. It is much remarked that, after Japan's defeat, official and mainstream versions of national identity have shifted from explicit religious foundation [the state Shintô] to more overtly ethnic bases. This "Japan Theory"...is ...a discursive formation — a loosely branded but still powerfully conditioning field of claims, formulas, and models of ethnic markers, shared personality traits, and behavioral [sic] imperatives. In "Japan Theory", Japaneseness becomes a matter of psyche, not politics; it is an identity that we are, therefore, you cannot become...This is precisely what professional baseball came to reflect...

But there is a reality that some "Japanese" baseball greats, who are of mixed parentage, stand as national heroes. Kelly (1998a: 102) notes that:

[They were recognised as Japanese], I believe, through the understanding that whatever their blood-ethnic backgrounds, they all shared the experience of coming up through baseball in the Japanese school system. This is hardly a resolution because it directly contradicts the postwar premise that Japanese ethnicity is a matter of *being* rather than *becoming*.

Ethnicity awareness is embodied in the discourse of the Japanese calling foreign players *suketto* (helpers). Kelly's statement that players of mixed parentage all shared the experience of coming up through baseball in the Japanese school system is synonymous with sharing the same culture. It

is true that foreign players tend to be counted as 'outsiders', but those who tried to share the same culture with Japanese teammates were successful in being accepted as part of the team (see Chapter 6.2 for details).

## 5.2 Baseball Migration in the 1950s

According to Ikei (1991: 115), the main foreign baseball workforce in the 1950s was composed of Japanese-American players. Forty-seven foreign players joined Japanese baseball in the 1950s and twenty-two of them were Japanese-American players (see *Baseball Magazine Sha* 2002: 84-145). Of the foreign players in the 1950s, it was Wally Yonamine who had the greatest impact on Japanese baseball. Originally, he was a promising gridiron player, but gave up playing the sport because of injuries and turned to baseball (Kuehnert 1998: 96-100). Although he was an excellent minor league player, he was judged unfit physically for American major league baseball owing to his old injuries. Lefty O'Doul,<sup>24</sup> who, at the request of the Yomiuri Giants that had been looking for an American player fit for Japanese baseball, recommended Yonamine to the Giants and Yonamine came to Japan in 1951 to play with them as the first migrant player after 1945 (Kuehnert 1998: 101). But Japan still was in the postwar confusion and the environment surrounding baseball for

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<sup>24</sup> He contributed to baseball interaction between the U.S. and Japan and to the foundation of the professional league in Japan.



foreigners was terrible. Yonamine felt in this way:

I went through hell that first year. I couldn't count the number of times I heard the phrase "Yankee Go Home". The Japanese didn't like me because I was a Nisei [an American or Canadian whose parents immigrated from Japan] and because they thought I was a dirty player. But I knew I had to make them change their minds — for others after me as well as for myself. I tried to do everything exactly the same way as the Japanese. I ate at the training table with them. I ate the same food they did — *tamago meshi* (a mixture of eggs and rice) three times a day. I lost a lot of weight that first year. It was cold in the early months of spring...There were no gas heaters in the rooms; only a *hibachi* [= ancient type of heater]. And we'd have those long train rides — 12 hours to Osaka, 18 hours to Hiroshima, 26 hours to Sapporo. The team always travelled third class. We'd sit on hard benches in cramped coaches, huddled around *hibachi*. Sometimes it was so cold we had to put our uniform on over our clothes to keep warm. In the summer time, it was even worse. Hot and humid. I'd get a big block of ice and put it in front of the fans and just lie there. The players were really good to me. I remember the first night I got to Japan. I stayed up all night talking with a few of them. I couldn't speak any Japanese, and they couldn't speak any English, but we communicated with sign language and baseball terms. After three months, I could do without an interpreter (quoted in Whiting 1977: 144).

But, in spite of these circumstances, he proved himself from his first year, playing in Japanese baseball for the next twelve years, during which period he won a batting average title three times and was selected as the league best player once. Later, he became the only foreign manager who won the league championship title. In addition to his individual baseball achievements, Yonamine was said to have revolutionised Japanese baseball. In prewar baseball, hitting a strong grounder was a hard-and-fast rule and hitting a fly was seen as disgusting, because a grounder required the opposing side to complete three processes in order to getting the batter disqualified — catching a grounded ball, passing it to first



baseman, and catching it<sup>25</sup> and in the process, the opposing side was likely to make errors (Aota 1996: 178). But one home run batter created a home run boom and other players followed suit (Aota 1996: 181-182). Therefore, when Yonamine migrated to Japanese baseball, Japanese baseball was in a power baseball boom. Amid power baseball, Yonamine was reputed to have spread the joy of 'inside baseball' and help to improve the technique of base running, the hit-and-run and the bunt in Japanese baseball (Keuhnert 1998: 103). Okazaki Mitsuyoshi, a sport writer, extols his plays with the following comments (1986c: 142-143):

He demonstrated that baseball was a sport not merely of hitting, throwing, fielding, but also of base running. He did not have great speed, but his militant base running was attractive...When he was on first base as a runner, he stayed as far away from the base as possible. When the pitcher made a quick throw to first baseman to get him disqualified, he returned to base by sliding, whirling up the sand. His sliding plays having a narrow escape from becoming disqualified were quite radical (translated from Japanese).

But, the base running-related technique in Japanese baseball was to develop further with the help of other American migrant players in the 1960s.

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<sup>25</sup> When the opposing side catches the hit ball before it touches the ground, the batter becomes disqualified unconditionally. But when the batter hits a grounded ball, the opposing side must get him disqualified by passing the ball to first baseman before the batter reaches first base.

### 5.3. Japanese Baseball in the 1950s

One of the criticisms made against Japanese baseball today is that the Japanese game is still too manager-oriented. Interestingly, during the 1950s, the Japanese game went through a period when it was relatively player-oriented. For example, Toyoda Yasumitsu, a former Lions player, recalled his playing days in the 1950s:

There were no batting coaches. Every player was in quest of his own batting style by himself. After the games, we would get together in someone's room and sit in a circle, talking about our batting performances of the very day over a beer. This was the 'batting education' in the Lions (quoted in Okazaki 1986b: 92 translated from Japanese).

This was a scene in the Lions, but there were no great differences in other teams. Hiro'oka Taturô, a former Giants player, had the following experience when he was a rookie

In double play practice, I passed the ball to Chiba, second baseman, but when my ball passes were bad, he did not catch the ball, which rolled into outfield. I took his attitude to be bullying at the beginning. In due course, I learned from my teammate's plays that Chiba would not catch the ball if my ball passes were not quick and missed the spot for his next smooth move. Chiba was trying to teach me a successful double play not by words but by attitude, which included the aspect of making me think and study on my own feet (Hiro'oka 1997: 38-39 translated from Japanese).

In those days, in most cases, veteran players doubled as coaches or assistant managers and had no time to coach rookies (Hamada 1997: 186). Plus, even rookies were taken as a menace for veteran players and players



kept their own techniques and knowledge to themselves (Hiro'oka 1997: 32-33). In other words, rivalry among teammates was more intense in the 1950s. Besides, it is common today that managers or coaches give signs to their players, but in the 1950s, there were many cases in which players swapped signs among themselves and executed various tactics independently (Tamaki and Whiting 1991: 20).

As stated earlier, criticising the manager and coaches is not acceptable at all today, but many players in the 1950s were not hesitant to speak out. For example, when Bessho Takehiko, the Giants' ace pitcher in the 1950s, ended a season with 21 wins, he snapped at the manager, saying that, "I am able to amass more than 25 wins. But I won only 21 games because you did not give me enough pitching opportunities. This will affect my salary. You should pay me the salary for four missed wins" (quoted in Aota 1996: 126). Kaneda Masaichi, nicknamed 'Emperor', the record holder pitcher of winning games, was said to determine his pitching days by himself (Aota 1996: 200).

Their extraordinary behaviour and statements reflect a strong form of professionalism and some former baseball men look back on baseball in the 1950s with nostalgia (e.g. Aota 1996; Hiro'oka 1997; Mori 2000). An accumulation of individual ability shaped team play, quite different from what was described as 'controlled baseball', which was later to become the

symbol of Japanese baseball (see 5.5). This change had a lot to do with the development of baseball theories, because, in the process, baseball strategies became more rationalised. In Japanese baseball, rationalisation was embodied in the form of controlled baseball.

Clark, a noted Japanologist, although not mentioning baseball specifically, analyses this change in terms of the social history of Japan. According to him, the meaning of the modernisation programme after 1868 (see 3.3), was to replace the tribal values that the Japanese had embraced — gut feeling, direct human relations, instinctive groupism, familial style of management, taboos, rules, traditions and animalistic legends — with ideologies and principles on which Western societies were built in order to cope with Western powers (Clark 2000; see also Clark and Takemura 1980: 79). But getting defeated in World War II, Japan became disoriented, reverting in many ways to the past (Clark and Takemura 1980: 79). As evidence, Clark refers to the fact that Japanese athletes before and just after 1945 were more excellent in individual sporting events than those in later generations who became materially and financially well off, arguing that that is because the former were all cool-headed individualists, able to compete effectively against opponents (Clark and Takemura 1980: 79). It is possible to find a similar tendency in the baseball context. For example, it was common that a player blamed his teammate face-to-face for poor play in the 1950s (Mori 2000: 116), but



today, this is recognised as a taboo, because it could spilt up a team (Sumi 2002: 199-202). In concert with this cultural change, 'individualistic' baseball was to be taken over by 'systematically structured' baseball (controlled baseball) in the 1960s and after.

#### 5.4 Baseball Migration in the 1960s

Ikei (1991: 115) describes baseball migration in the 1960s as the era of American minor leaguers. American minor leaguers were not competent enough to play as major leaguers, but they liked baseball so much that they did not mind playing in Japan if they could play in the presence of a large number of spectators. In addition, playing in Japan guaranteed them much higher salaries than staying in America (Ikei 1991: 115). Some big names were part of Japanese baseball, but they went home after one season with unimpressive records, while players with little or no major league play like Joe Stanka, Gene Bacque, and Jack Bloomfield won titles, making an impact and enlivening Japanese baseball. However, the quality of Japanese baseball improved year by year and average American minor leaguers found it increasingly difficult to prove themselves in Japan (Whiting 1977: 146).

It is Daryl Spencer who was the American player who had the reputation of revolutionising Japanese baseball the most in the 1960s.

Spencer was a typical American player, insisting on following his own training routine (Whiting 1989: 80). Under the policy that playing well in the games was what mattered, he turned up late for practice sessions, often coming into collision with the manager (Hamada 1997: 155). In addition, there were many bad conduct episodes such as tearing up a scorekeeper's scorebook out of anger with an umpire's judgement, reappearing on the bench wearing Bermuda shorts after getting replaced, and practising rough plays (Hamada 1997: 156; Nozawa 1986: 245).

But on the other hand, Spencer rendered remarkable service to the development of Japanese baseball. He notes about his impression of Japanese baseball that:

The main difference I found between American and Japanese baseball was [that] the Japanese didn't understand about how to play 'Percentage Baseball'. They knew all the fundamentals and executed them very well, but they didn't use them in the right situations. They would bunt in the first innings. Apart from late innings in a close game, bunts were not used in American baseball. I found some other tactics and play styles unreasonable or unappealing. No amount of my advice changed the inflexible attitude of the manager and coaches. So I decided to demonstrate my intentions not by words but by plays (*postal communication* 4/4/2003).

Spencer not only contributed to team victories by his batting performances but also became famous for his fierce sliding plays to avoid double plays.

He adds:

I was amazed that no one ever slid hard into infielders on double play chances. It took me nearly [a] half-season to convince our team that you could win games in other ways than just pitching + hitting. It was not uncommon for a runner on first to almost stop or veer off to the right of



second base when a potential double play grounder was hit to an infielder. They would just let the second baseman or shortstop make an easy pivot and get an uncontested double play (*postal communication* 4/4/2003).

As a result of practising fierce sliding plays, he was labelled a 'dirty player' because the American sliding style executed just to wind up an opponent player was quite new in Japanese baseball and produced many wounded players and fights (Kuehnert 1998: 206). However, Spencer's plays gradually convinced Japanese players that aggressiveness and hard plays were important factors in winning and his reputation got better and better every year (Kuehnert 1998: 208). Besides the development of 'physical baseball', he was credited with the development of 'intellectual baseball'. Aota Noboru, the coach who worked with Spencer, talked about him as follows: "He was so intellectual that he deserved to be called a 'Doctor of Baseball'. His taking notes of opponent pitchers' pitching patterns and habits was silent advice to other teammates. He frequently changed his fielding place, helping the pitcher. His powerful sliding plays matched Yonamine's and contributed to the improvement of double play technique in Japanese baseball" (quoted in Hamada 1997: 156).

Analysing opponent pitchers' pitching patterns and habits is common in Japanese baseball today and Spencer was one of the pioneers of what is described as 'intellectual baseball'. His reputation reflected the growing acceptance of American players and differing styles of play, and a

lessening of relations of power that centred on the domination of 'Japaneseness'.

### 5.5 Japanese Baseball in the 1960s

The 1960s were the turning point for Japanese baseball because 'individualistic' baseball was taken over by 'organised' baseball. It was the Giants under the managership of Kawakami Tetsuharu<sup>26</sup> who took the central role in this change. The Kawakami-led Giants won the Japan Series nine years in a row from 1965 to 1973 and this winning streak called 'V9' is one of the highlights in the sport history of Japan. Giants' baseball became the role model for success in Japanese baseball.

When Kawakami became the manager in 1961, he and the Giants studied the Los Angeles Dodgers' strategy, which put an emphasis on defence and team play (Ikei 1991: 96). Kawakami had been known as an exceptionally egoistic player and far from being a team player. He reportedly said about his policy that: " 'For the team', I do not care about it. I am happy just to amass hits. I am able to amass a hit per three batting opportunities. It is the manager's responsibility to decide how to use my batting skill for team victories. None of my business" (quoted in Aota 1996:

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<sup>26</sup> He played with the Giants from 1938 to 1958, nicknamed 'The God of Batting' for his batting excellence.



22). In addition, while he was so engrossed in batting that he occupied the batting cage without considering other teammates, he had no passion for fielding and did not venture to catch the balls which were difficult to catch because his errors would have been officially recorded if he had failed to catch them (Ikei 1991: 94-95), which in turn would have affected his salary. However, as a manager, he made a 180-degree turn and emphasised the importance of teamwork. Another important factor which influenced Kawakami was Zen Buddhism. After his retirement, he became a devout Zen practitioner, seeing baseball in terms of a way of life. He notes that:

...just hitting successfully, throwing successfully, catching successfully and winning are not enough. These must be connected to a way of life and are. Helping each other is the core of teamwork applicable to baseball. It is not good to claim that 'my home run' or 'my good pitching' led the team to victory. That is not true. When consideration is given to what produced 'my home run' or 'my good pitching', there had been an accumulation of other teammates' plays before 'my home run' or 'my good pitching' was produced. Therefore, it is natural to owe success not only to one person but also to everybody else concerned (Kawakami 1991: 19 translated from Japanese).

He defined teamwork as being considerate toward other teammates and claimed that you could not practise this properly in a game without practising it in everyday life (Kawakami 1991: 153-154). In order to get his policy to reach his players, he routinised team meetings in Japanese baseball for the first time (Mori 2000: 113). Besides getting the team operating systematically, routinised meetings promoted information disclosure in the team. As noted earlier, it was common that early players

kept their own baseball techniques and knowledge to themselves, but Kawakami put an end to this custom, encouraging information sharing among his players. According to Kawakami, this information disclosure removed the psychological wall between players and laid the foundation for the Giants' teamwork (Okazaki 1986a 13-14).

Kawakami also introduced a new system of salary assessment. Salary assessment in the early days had been rough, but Kawakami assessed his players' performances in detail, putting emphasis on process rather than result (Ikei 1991: 97). Even if a player's batting performance was unsuccessful, his batting was assessed in terms of how it influenced the game situation. Accordingly, the Giants' players had to play in all situations without being able to relax their minds. This new assessment system threw light on non-leading players and brought in fairness in assessing players' performances. In baseball, home run was the cream and, traditionally, every player, irrespective of his physical strength, wanted to hit home runs, which is still true today. But a success as a home run batter was limited to a small number of players and Kawakami called non-home run batters 'supporting pillars', saying that, "A house is sustained not merely by the central pillars but also by supporting pillars, and in the baseball context, the latter are the team players. You put your heart and soul into being a team player. As a team player, you can be as successful as home run batters" (Kawakami 1991: 72). With his advice, each of the



Giants' players recognised what he should do for the team and fulfilled his own duties willingly.

As suggested so far, Kawakami subjected his players to strict and systematic rules for effective teamwork and his approach, called '*kanri yakyū*' (controlled baseball), achieved tremendous success and this approach was therefore taken as the norm for success in company management as well as baseball team management. After he retired from managership, Kawakami had many chances to speak to business groups on company management. His advice was that: "Most players are lazy. It's a manager's responsibility to make them train hard"; "Courteous players make for a strong team. It's a manager's responsibility to teach them proper manners"; "Leaders who are thought of as 'nice people' will fail"; "Lone wolves are the cancer of the team"; "If your leading salesman opposes you, fire him. For if you allow individualism, it will surely spoil your organization [sic]" (Whiting 1989: 74).

Fifteen players including coaches who had worked with Kawakami later became managers themselves (as of 2004) and these Kawakami-influenced baseball men took the central role in leading Japanese baseball. But his method of 'controlling players' was exaggerated and 'controlled baseball' was seen as the synonymous with suppressing one's individuality. For example, Okazaki (1986d: 222) describes the Kawakami

Giants as follows:

Mizuhara [Kawakami's predecessor manager] believed that professionals should behave in a gentlemanly way on and off the ground and treated them as such. They were free after the games. But under Kawakami's managership, the Giants turned into a workaholic group...They were 'educated' just to concentrate on winning without minding anything else (translated from Japanese).

In addition, 'controlled baseball' was believed to make Japanese baseball boring because of using cautious tactics too much as a result of being obsessed with winning. Kawakami (1991: 156-158) refutes this criticism as follows:

Unlike amateur players, professional players should put 'winning' first. Doing whatever you can for winning, I think, produces sporting excitement. It seems to me that someone criticising 'controlled baseball' has a fixed idea that it puts a brake on players' judgement or kills players' technique. In my opinion, controlling a team for winning is a means of developing player's ability, not killing their individuality...There is no proper team play without the team being controlled. If controlling is to be taken as accumulating each person's excellent points for success, the image of 'control' will be better...In other words, controlling a team means educating the team (translated from Japanese).

It is clear that Kawakami's approach maintained some of the characteristics of the traditional 'Japanese' game — sport as education and a baseball 'way of life'. On the other hand, he introduced rational, scientific, and rigorous ways of assessing players' game performances, successful in managing the team effectively. Therefore, it is quite right to argue that the Kawakami-led 'controlled baseball' was the blend of something local and something global. Nevertheless, as noted, 'control' was taken as negative and foreign managership was to emerge as if to



respond to Kawakami's controlling method.

## 5.6 Baseball Migration in the 1970s

Ikei's analysis of baseball migration in the 1970s was that American major leaguers whose prime has passed were seen to be part of Japanese baseball on a larger scale than before (Ikei 1991: 116). Japan was becoming wealthier because of her economic growth and, accompanied by the rise of baseball popularity, each club became rich enough to recruit American major leaguers. There were a lot of cases in which trouble occurred because Japanese baseball philosophy did not cohere with American major leaguers' pride (Ikei 1991: 116). For American players with little or no big-league experience, Japanese baseball was the final option and they were more likely to follow the Japanese way. But American players with big-league experience had played in their own way for years, and resisted change. In addition, American major leaguers had enjoyed excellent resources in the U.S. so much so that the baseball environment in Japan, in their eyes, was far below standard. For them, club facilities were poor, the dressing rooms were small and dirty, and carrying their own equipment as Japanese players did was incredible (Whiting 1977: 170).

However, amid many unsuccessful and troublesome American players, it is possible to find someone who played a revolutionary role in the development of Japanese baseball in the 1970s. He was Don Blasingame, a former St. Louis Cardinals' player, who played for three seasons with the Hawks at the end of his career. He showed himself at his best when he was working as a Hawks' coach in the 1970s. His achievement was the spread of the scientisation of baseball to the Japanese game, defining it as 'thinking baseball'. Nomura Katsuya (1985: 18-20), the then Hawks' manager, recalls what his 'thinking baseball' specifically was:

When I became the Hawks' manager, Japanese baseball was shifting from 'spirit' baseball to 'rational' baseball. Prior to 'rational baseball', the Hawks' batters, in the case of 'hit-and-run', had just tried to hit a grounder. But Blasingame taught us a higher level of baseball: "The decision of hitting a grounder to the right or the left direction depends on which space will be wider, first baseman-second baseman space or second baseman-short stop space and it is possible to know this in advance. If the base runner on first makes a fake start for second base, either second baseman or short stop will make a step toward second base, which will make it easier for the batter to know which space will be wider. If the base runner helps the batter in this way, you are more likely to get successful 'hit-and-run' plays". The Hawks players were amazed to know that baseball was such a 'thinking sport' (translated from Japanese).

As a result of practising 'thinking baseball', the Hawks won the league championship title in 1973. Nomura was to emerge as the most successful manager in the 1990s by practising 'ID baseball'. ID stood for 'Imported Data', meaning data-oriented, statistical information about opponent players' batting and pitching patterns and performance tendencies. In other words, 'ID baseball' was a developed form of 'thinking baseball',



contributing to the further scientisation of baseball in Japan.

During the 1970s, individual playing styles and attitudes to the game can be seen to be a reflection of continuing tensions between the local and the global — i.e. an essential Japaneseness embodied in baseball and American influences. These tensions were to become more pronounced in the future.

### 5.7 Japanese Baseball in the 1970s

The Kawakami-led Giants failed to win the league championship for the 1974 season and their V10 ambition was dashed: the Dragons took away the championship title by a narrow margin for the first time since 1954. Kawakami stepped down as the manager and some key players also retired from active play, which demonstrated that one historic episode in Japanese baseball had come to an end. Consequently, the strength of different teams became equalised more than before and Japanese baseball shifted from a single-polar era to a multi-polar era.

What is noteworthy as a symbolic event in the 1970s was that three foreign managers piloted Japanese baseball teams for the first time: Wally Yonamine (1972-1977 for the Dragons), Joe Lutz (1975 for the Carp), and Don Blasingame (1979-1980 for the Tigers). Considering the past history

of foreign players in Japanese baseball, foreign managership, unsurprisingly, was not welcome news, reflecting again changing tensions between Japanese power and control, and 'outsider' influence. The anti-foreign managership lobby claimed that, "Understanding Japan involve an ability to feel what is going on, and this takes a lifetime to nurture", "The cultural requirements are too complex and the tissue of team unity too delicate to entrust to the heavy hand of the *gaijin* [= foreigner]" (Whiting 1976: 204; 1989: 143).

What the three U.S. managers did in common was not to overwork their own players in training. According to Blasingame, Japanese players "tend to give everything they have in practice, then get tired and lose concentration in the games — particularly in the second half of the season" (Whiting 1989: 147). In addition, Lutz and Blasingame drove the American approach forward, for example, respecting players' initiatives (Whiting 1977: 207; 1989 147). But as a consequence, Although Yonamine became a successful manager (winning the league championship title in 1974), both Lutz and Blasingame submitted their resignations before their contracts expired. There were immediate reasons for their resignation, but essentially, it is said that it was because both of them tried to change their own teams too drastically. Lutz's 'Americanisation' of the Carp made one observer comment that, "He didn't seem to realize he was in a foreign country" (quoted in Whiting 1989: 144), and Blasingame's policy of cutting



practice sessions short was criticised as lax by his own players (Whiting 1989: 147). Besides, that they did not learn the Japanese language was considered to be disadvantageous for their own team management, while Yonamine spoke fluent Japanese (Whiting 1977: 206). In response to the failure of foreign managership, pro-Japanese critics commented that, “*Gaijin* [= foreign] managers are just not suitable for Japan”; “The rational-minded American manager could not understand the Japanese way of thinking”; “Only the Japanese can understand the Japanese heart” (Whiting 1989: 158).

These episodes indicate that introducing something new in a foreign land was not easy just because it looked better than what had previously been in place. What looked better could not be accepted easily unless consideration was given to what had previously been in place. For example, in Japanese soccer in which foreign managership is more commonplace, successful foreign managers studied Japanese culture for their team management. Dettmar Cramer,<sup>27</sup> former West German manager who piloted the Japanese national team in the 1960s, taught his squad to keep a constant eye on the ball even after having taken a shot by using *zanzō*<sup>28</sup> (Odajima 1998). He was looking for the ‘best’ soccer for

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<sup>27</sup> He made the national team squad a quarter finalist in the Tokyo Olympic Games of 1964 and the bronze medal winner in the Mexico Olympic Games of 1968.

<sup>28</sup> A kendō term. The attitude of preparing oneself for the opponent’s further attack after the sticks met each other.

Japan by means of studying kendô (Odajima 1998). Hans Ooft, the Dutch manager in the early 1990s, whose national team squad nearly achieved Japan's first-ever appearance in the World Cup of 1994, read the English translation of 'Miyamoto Musashi', the best-selling swordsman novel which describes the life of the legendary swordsman (Odajima 1998). One of his tactics was the eye contact, the communication via players' eyes, which is said to have derived from bushidô (a way of samurai warrior) (Odajima 1998). Odajima (1998) concludes that, "What is required of managers now and then is to grasp the hearts of the players". Arguably, understanding local culture is the key for that purpose. But Japanese-foreign tensions were always under the surface, and have remained a feature of the influences of global processes on Japanese baseball until the present day. A sensitivity to difference and to tradition, at a personal level, was a prerequisite for foreign managers (and players) to successfully avoid cultural clashes and to negotiate good leadership.

## 5.8 Baseball Migration in the 1980s

The 1980s saw baseball friction between Japan and the U.S. reach boiling point. Fed up with the poor performances of most American players, Shimoda Takezô, the then Japanese baseball commissioner, made the following remark when interviewed by a foreign reporter in 1983:

I think that Japanese baseball should belong to Japanese players only.



Foreign players have contributed to the improvement of the quality of Japanese baseball, but their job is over. In addition, eighty percent of foreign players are useless. It is not necessary to pay physically declining foreign players enormous salaries. They will be unnecessary in five years time (quoted in Kuehnert 1998: 6 translated from Japanese).

Before expressing this view, Shimoda had made similar statements on other occasions. His idea shocked Americans in Japan at that time partly because trade friction between Japan and the U.S. resulting from the U.S. accusation about scarcity of Japanese imports from abroad was at its peak. In the eyes of American baseball players working in Japan, Japan's foreign trade policy overlapped with the Japanese campaign for driving foreign players out of Japanese baseball (see Whiting 1989: 274-275). Shimoda's idea was a personal one, dying out in the course of time without becoming known to the public. However, the idea of 'no-need of foreign players' stayed in the minds of Japanese baseball men. In 1987, Takeuchi, Juhei, the new commissioner, expressed his view about foreign players:

If Japanese baseball keeps trying to acquire high-priced [players], we'll be thrown into chaos. There isn't so much we can learn from foreigners anymore and it's time we stopped trying. Is there any foreign player who has ever taught the Japanese anything of value? Besides, there are too many troublemakers among foreigners. In the future, pure-blood baseball is ideal. We have to have a real World Series in the future between the U.S. and Japan. We can't do that with foreign players here (quoted in Whiting 1989: 276).

However, from the 1980s on, foreign players had more chances to win batting titles partly because Japanese stars retired from active play or had passed their prime. In the Central League, this tendency was remarkable after 1985. Between 1985 and 1989, foreign players won the highest

batting average title three times, home run title five times. and RBI title four times. Before 1985, apart from 1954, 1956, 1957, and 1979, foreign players had failed to win any batting titles. The same tendency can be found in the Pacific League as well. Between 1980 and 1989, foreign players won the highest batting title three times, home run title four times, and RBI title five times. In the Pacific League, the 'foreign invasion' of batting titles became full-scale after 1976. Unlike previous decades, there was nobody from abroad who was said to have revolutionised Japanese baseball in the 1980s, but in this decade, foreign players did make an impact in terms of batting performances. For example, Leron Lee, who played with the Orions (currently the Marines) from 1977 to 1987, is the lifetime highest batting average record holder in Japanese baseball. Furthermore, he was respected as 'the Godfather of the *Gaijin* [= foreigner]' and everyone turned to him for advice about batting and personal matters (Kuehnert 1998: 21; Whiting 1989: 265). Greg "Boomer" Wells, having played with the Braves (currently the Blue Wave) and the Hawks from 1983 to 1992, became the first-ever foreign player to win the Triple Crown title in 1984. Randy Bass, who belonged to the Tigers from 1983 to 1988, won the Triple Crown title in 1985 and 1986. The batting average which he achieved for the 1986 season still stands as the Japanese record. In addition, foreign players were selected as the league best player four times in the 1980s. Before the 1980s, there were not more than three foreign league best players, while there were two in the 1990s.



Another important point regarding baseball migration in the 1980s was that Taiwan emerged as another supplier of players to Japanese baseball. They were accepted favourably into Japanese baseball. Unlike with American players, there was less trouble with Taiwanese players (Whiting 1989: 309). There was an opinion among some club owners that Taiwanese players should be placed in the same category as Japanese players because they were fellow Asians (Whiting 1989: 308-309). Nevertheless, in reality, the quota system still applied to all non-Japanese players. From the 1990s on, more countries other than the U.S. and Taiwan were to emerge as the supplier of players, while the Japanese 'invasion' of American baseball was to start.

### 5.9 Japanese Baseball in the 1980s

Japanese baseball in the 1980s witnessed the dominance of cautious and controlled baseball once again. In the Central League, the Giants re-emerged as the most dominant team (but not as dominant as the V9 Giants). The Giants were led by Fujita Motoshi, one of Kawakami's pupils. Known as an ardent lover of the use of the bunt, He gives details about his baseball philosophy as follows:

Sending the base runner to the second base is the key for winning, because you can score with a single successful hit. In addition, the opposing pitcher is placed under huge pressure with the base runner on

the second base. You can practise exciting games but, ultimately, you are required to win as professionals. Exciting games without winning are not professionals. Critics accuse the overuse of the bunt as making the games boring, but it is absolutely true that the use of the bunt brings you to success most efficiently (quoted in Kondô 2000: 142 translated from Japanese).

On the other hand, in the Pacific League, the Lions established hegemony. The team was piloted by Hiro'oka, another of Kawakami's pupils. He practised controlled baseball so thoroughly that he even meddled in his players' sex lives and eating habits. Mori, Hiro'oka's successor manager and another of Kawakami's pupils, also followed cautious baseball, valuing the use of the bunt like Fujita. During their managership, the Lions overpowered the Giants and other Central League teams in the Japan Series and emerged as the No.1 team. The management of these successful teams proved that the cautious and controlled approach was the maxim for success in the Japanese game. But this maxim became less omnipotent in the 1990s. With the diversification of entertainment, baseball popularity dropped relatively and controlled baseball was regarded as the main cause. Mori, although carrying on winning (eight league championship titles in his nine years of managership) was sacked because his controlled approach was held responsible for the drop of attendance (Hamada 1997: 111-112). In other words, the idea that just winning is not enough emerged and baseball as entertainment started to be emphasised. But in the society in which they were sensitive to errors, it took courage to practise 'spectacular baseball'



as entertainment at the cost of winning games. Besides, thanks to the stability-oriented life style of the Japanese, failing to win by adopting new approaches resulted in receiving harsher criticism than failing to win by adopting conventional approaches. Nevertheless, there was a move to get over conventional baseball.

#### 5.10 Baseball Migration from the 1990s on

The 1990s and after saw baseball globalising on a larger scale than ever before. Since the Barcelona Olympic Games of 1992, baseball was adopted as an Olympic sport and in order to comprehensively globalise the game, the U.S. Major League International came up with the idea of a 'World Cup of Baseball' allowing top professionals full participation. While players themselves continue to discuss the pros and cons of the World Cup, the first-ever tournament is to be held in 2006. If the World Cup becomes the reality, as Bud Selig, the U.S. Major League commissioner, notes, "There will be a real World Series winner" (quoted in Broom in 2003).<sup>29</sup> Unlike world soccer, there have been few 'horizontal' relations among baseball countries. However, the World Cup of Baseball has the potential to create multi-lateral relations, making the game more fully globalised. In addition, the export of local games abroad is another sign of baseball

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<sup>29</sup> See [http://mlb.mlb./NASApp/mlb/mlb/news/mlb\\_news\\_index.jsp](http://mlb.mlb./NASApp/mlb/mlb/news/mlb_news_index.jsp)

globalisation. For example, the U.S. Major League began the 2000 and the 2004 seasons in Japan. Two Japanese teams played some regular games abroad (in Taiwan), which was for the first time since 1940 (Nagai and Hashizume 2003: 298).

This dynamic globalisation of baseball is mirrored in baseball migration. In addition to traditional suppliers, Korea, China, Australia and Brazil also started to send players to Japanese baseball. There are some cases in which former successful foreign players returned to their own teams as coaches or signed with a broadcasting station as commentators.

What has been the most notable development of baseball migration in the 1990s and the early years of the new century is that Japanese players have migrated to American baseball. There was only one previous case. This did not necessarily mean that Japanese players did not meet American major league standards. In fact, some American players who had played in Japan in the 1950s and 1960s cited some top Japanese contemporaries as potential major leaguers in American baseball (Kingston, *email communication* 28/9/2003; Pearson, *postal communication* 10/10/2003). But most Japanese players were not positive about working and living in a different culture. In addition, as Whiting (1976: 113) points out, there was a mood that leaving one's team to play in



America would be regarded as an act of national disloyalty. There was and still is the strong perception that a player in Japanese baseball is 'brought up' by his club and fans. Murakami Masanori, who became the first-ever Japanese major leaguer in American baseball in 1965, wished to play longer there, but he was torn between feelings of loyalty and disloyalty (see Whiting 1977: 114-120).

After Murakami, it was Nomo Hideo who migrated to American baseball, becoming in 1995 the second Japanese major leaguer. Nomo had joined the Japanese Buffaloes in 1990 and had proved himself as the best pitcher of the 1990s. He received public attention for his unique pitching form and powerful pitching and enlivened the unpopular Pacific League. After having spent an unsatisfactory 1994 season because of shoulder problems, he demanded that the club give him the security of a multi-year contract (Gordon 1995). When the club refused, he brought up the idea of migrating to American baseball. Such a move would have been a breach of contract, because a player could not be free from his club's rights to him until he was eligible for FA after nine years or unless the club released him (Ishikawa 1997). But after a nasty contract dispute, the club gave up its rights to him, which enabled him to sign with the Los Angeles Dodgers. Not surprisingly, the Japanese media attacked him and some commentators branded him as a traitor (Bartholet 1997). Despite many pessimistic opinions about his potential success in America, he made a

mark for himself and was named the Rookie of the Year in 1995. In the previous year, in American baseball, players went on strike in opposition to the introduction of a 'salary cap' (setting up the maximum wage) and the strike cancelled hundreds of games and wiped out the entire postseason (division championships and the World Series) (Martinez 1996: 211). Therefore, the popularity of baseball in America was at the lowest point when Nomo made a debut. His powerful and excellent performances appealed to American fans and to some extent helped American baseball regain its popularity, making him a hero in America (Gordon 1995). His success promoted the idea that Japanese baseball was the 'real thing' and American baseball turned its eye to the Japanese market for talent searches (Kuehnert 1998: 52). In addition, the games which he pitched were aired live on Japanese TV, which got American baseball into the homes of Japanese people. In 1999, Japan's television and cable stations aired more than 550 American games, or 23 per week. In comparison, in 1994, during the regular season, there were only four American major league games per week (Wehrfritz 2000). The Japanese media treatment of him changed in his favour.

After Nomo, Japanese emigrant players to American baseball increased in numbers and some of them were also successful. Especially when Suzuki Ichirô (better known as Ichirô), the first-ever Japanese non-pitcher moved to the Seattle Mariners in 2001. That was sensational. He



had won the highest batting average title seven years in a row and had been a superstar. Unlike pitchers, Japanese batters' successes in American baseball were thought to be unlikely,<sup>30</sup> and so the superstar received public attention. He claimed the highest batting average title in 2001 and 2004 and was selected as the league best player in 2001.

The good performances of Japanese players in American baseball are good news for Japanese fans. Some of them are in favour of this development in order to prove the merits of Japanese players. But others are fearful about the underdevelopment of Japanese baseball. What fuels the fear is that top players have left Japanese baseball one after another. Toyada Yasumitsu (2002: 88-89), a baseball commentator, notes that, "The global recruitment campaign by American major league clubs lured Japanese stars and the Japanese Central League teams attracted other stars from the Japanese Pacific League teams in order to make up for their drained stars, which resulted in the underdevelopment of the latter". As with European soccer, American major league baseball attracts the best players from all over the world, producing the best baseball games. The more excellent a player's baseball ability is, the stronger his professional acquisitiveness becomes. It is self-evident that he wants to try his baseball

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<sup>30</sup> Generally speaking, a batter who can hit 300 (three successful batting performances per ten batting opportunities) is a first-rate batter. A batter who can hit more than 30 home runs (one home run per 20 batting opportunities) is a home run batter. Therefore, baseball is a disadvantageous game for a batter.

ability at a higher level. This is the main reason why top Japanese players migrate to American baseball. But what is interesting is that many Japanese players claim that migrating to American baseball has been their long-cherished dream. Some players have even turned down lucrative contract offers from their Japanese clubs and chosen to find their own 'dream' in America at the rookie minimum wage (Gordon 1995; Kitaya and Kimura 2001: 13-14).

Behind their professional acquisitiveness and dream to play at the highest level of the baseball world is the absence of a dream to play in Japanese baseball (Kitaya and Kimura 2001: 14). There are many factors which allegedly make the Japanese players think that there is 'no dream at home', ranging from structural problems involving the management of Japanese baseball, Japanese approaches to the game, and the role of fans. But the continuation of the quota system on imported players can be counted as one of the main factors (see page 134). Currently, the quota system allows each team to have an unlimited number of foreign players, but not more than four foreign players can play in a major league game at a time, which indicates that, in a real sense, there is still no free competition in Japanese baseball. When consideration is given to why American games have won popularity among Japanese fans, the answer is simple: they follow those Japanese players who are successful at the top of the baseball world. Thinking this way, it is essential to make Japanese



baseball a more competitive world by introducing full free competition to Japanese major league games in order to regain the popularity of Japanese baseball. Nevertheless, the voice of free competition is small and the Players' Association, while keen on claiming players' rights, is not positive about the introduction of free competition (Japan Professional Baseball Players Association 2001). In response to the claim that Japanese players will be jobless, Iwata Kenji, a baseball journalist, refutes the idea as follows:

There is a growing opinion that the discontinuation of the quota system would produce teams full of foreign players, but it is fans who decide to accept them or not. Japanese players can migrate to American baseball without restriction in numbers, but Japanese baseball continues to have the quota system in place, which prevents Japanese baseball from growing in the right way. Those who fit into Japanese baseball should be welcome, but if fans do not like the influx of foreign players, that will automatically cut down their influx (*Personal Interview 24/10/2002 translated from Japanese*).

While public attention turns to American baseball, there are some cases in which Japanese players have migrated to Korean and Taiwanese baseball. But despite the geographical proximity of Korea and Taiwan, the Japanese media rarely report their baseball affairs. Unlike American baseball, Japanese players who have migrated to Korean and Taiwanese baseball were, in most cases, released by their Japanese clubs, and the Japanese media are not keen on reporting their performances in Korea and Taiwan and sometimes tend to be scornful of baseball in those countries. For example, some Japanese emigrant players to Taiwan and Korea have been dubbed 'exiles from Japanese baseball' (Mori 2001: 177).

On the other hand, it is also true that Japanese baseball still gives a 'dream' to Korean and Taiwanese superstar players who have migrated to Japan. It is arguable that Japanese baseball needs to nurture the game in the neighbouring baseball countries so that it could develop at a high level throughout Asia.

### 5.11 Japanese Baseball from the 1990s on

As illustrated by Japanese players' 'invasion' of American baseball, globalisation surrounding Japanese baseball has become much more dynamic. Japanese baseball from the 1990s on is said to have entered the era of crisis, because there have been some signs indicating the fall in popularity of the sport. As mentioned earlier, the launch of J League soccer in 1993 created a blizzard of excitement. The scene of fashionable players running around the pitch was said to change the traditional image of sports in Japan. Earlier, it was common that the front page of sport newspapers had featured baseball news, but soccer news sometimes drove baseball news off the front page. The massive influx of information about American baseball enabled Japanese fans to compare it to domestic baseball and critical opinion about the latter grew. The Japan Series of 2000 received much public attention because two former Giants superstars went on to lead their own teams as managers. The Series recorded thirty-nine percent as the highest in TV ratings, but according to



the TV ratings survey for children and teenagers, the figure dropped to ten percent (Kitaya and Kimura 2001: 18-19). These figures were reversed on the occasion of the Japanese national team's international soccer matches (Kitaya and Kimura 2001: 19).

The bottom line is that the popularity of baseball is sustained mainly by middle-aged supporters who were influenced by the V9 Giants, and there are indications that the sport is not appealing to young generations (Kitaya and Kimura 2001: 19). In addition, children's baseball leagues nationwide, which are the source of supply of future hopefuls, have suffered a decrease in numbers (Kitaya and Kimura 2001: 20). An official of the children's baseball association was quoted as saying that, "While the low birth rate and soccer popularity partly contribute to a decrease in the baseball population, kids who are sensitive and honest, turn away from baseball if they fail to find attractive star players in the professional games" (quoted in Kitaya and Kimura 2001: 20-21).

Under this circumstance, it was controlled baseball which was on the receiving end of criticism. Controlled baseball, the best approach to winning in Japanese baseball, was interpreted as neutralising players' abilities in the name of team play in the new era, which was believed to make the Japanese game boring. Ohgi Akira, former manager of the Buffaloes and the Blue Wave, cautions against the continuity of

traditional baseball in view of the success of J League soccer (1997: 14-17):

Not only J League soccer but also traditional baseball are responsible for the fall in the popularity of baseball. The strong and powerful team employed cautious tactics such as trying to get a minimum score by using the bunt from the first innings, which failed to convey the thrilling and exciting aspect of baseball...Players were required to act faithfully on signs from the bench and fewer players were appealing to fans. On the other hand, J Leaguers are those of marked individuality. When they are told to do what is not convincing for them, they are not hesitant to complain, going so far as to criticise the coaches and the manager...The success of J League made me realise that the era shifted from a respect for 'control' or 'uniformity' to a respect for individuality and that Japanese baseball would be left behind the times if it continued to stick to traditional baseball (translated from Japanese).

Ohgi found fame mainly because he paved the way to stardom for Nomo (see 5.10) and Ichirô (see 5.10). Both of them had played in an 'unorthodox' style which would have been rectified by coaching staff. Instead, Ohgi gave them some autonomy. As a consequence, they grew to be big names in American baseball as well as in Japanese baseball. Besides Ohgi, Gondô Hiroshi emerged as an iconoclastic manager and created the 'new' baseball. Gondô respected his players' initiatives by declaring "Three no-policy" — no meeting, no bunt, and no need to address him as 'Mr Manager'<sup>31</sup> (Kuroe 2002: 28). This iconoclastic approach to team management enabled the team (the Bay Stars) to win the league title and the Japan Series crown in 1998 for the first time since 1960.

As foreign managership in the 1970s showed (see 5.7), a 'giving-

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<sup>31</sup> Commonly, a manager addresses his players by name, but they address him by title (*Kantoku* = Mr Manager).



players-autonomy' approach to the game was not new in Japanese baseball. Behind a cry against 'controlled baseball' in the 1990s and beyond was a serious economic stagnation in Japan. Japan's postwar economic success was sustained by the teamwork based on a top-down systematic order, which harmonised with 'controlled baseball'. Because this conventional approach was enormously successful, there was no room for a radical approach to replace it. But a long-term economic recession in the 1990s, which is called a 'lost decade' in Japan, made Japanese people recognise that a radical approach could combat this crisis and the Western approach based on a respect for individuality started to be valued. This approach signalled a shift in player-manager relations of power with a move away from a 'dictatorial and uncompromising' approach that previously reflected the early Japanese baseball style. In other words, the teamwork in the new era was understood as functioning by an accumulation of each member's ideas (see 3.9).

However, it is also true that giving players autonomy is risky. One of the biggest issues in the 1990s and beyond is whether Japanese baseball should be 'winning baseball' or 'spectacular baseball'. Club sides want managers who control a winning team and can attract spectators, but, in reality, there are no such perfect managers. A manager who fails to win soon becomes an easy target of the media and fans and, at worst, finds himself jobless and he tries to avoid risky tactics, therefore choosing

orthodox tactics in order to raise the probability of winning. On the players' side, they have been so used to a top-down instruction since childhood that most of them have difficulty thinking on their own feet. As a matter of fact, the most successful manager in the 1990s was Nomura Katsuya who practised 'ID baseball' (see 5.6). His baseball was manager-oriented, putting data above players' intuitions. When Mori (see 5.9) took over the Bay Stars managership from Gondô in 2001, Mori was surprised at the players' comment that they wanted clear directions (Kuroe 2002: 41). This has a lot to do with school education in Japan which has encouraged students just to cram academic knowledge rather than to develop a critical approach to learning.

Dynamic globalisation from the 1990s onwards has had a huge impact on the business of baseball in Japan and the year of 2004 is remembered as the particular year of upheaval. All started with the announcement of the merger of the Buffaloes and the Blue Wave (both from the Pacific League) because of their dire financial conditions. This merger put the foundation of Japanese baseball management at stake, possibly resulting in the loss of hundreds of jobs for players and team personnel (*The Japan Times* 24/9/2004). In response to the announcement, the Players' Association, after being unsuccessful in their request to team officials for a one-year freeze on the plan, went on strike, which was the first-ever strike in the history of the sport in Japan (*The Japan Times* 18/9/2004). Unlike



American major leaguers, Japan's baseball players had settled disputes without resorting to strikes, putting the benefits of fans first. Therefore, staging a strike, although only a two-day strike, was such a radical move by Japanese cultural standards.

While the merger of the two teams went as planned, management promised that a new team would be allowed in for next season (*The Japan Times* 24/9/2004). In response to this proposition, Rakuten, an online shopping mall operator, was allowed to enter Japanese professional baseball by founding a new team. The entry of a new team to Japanese professional baseball occurred for the first time since 1954. In addition, later in 2004, Daiei, the parent company of the Hawks, transferred ownership of the team to Softbank, an Internet service provider, because of financial problems, and the Softbank Hawks came into existence.

The year of 2004 was called 'the year of the re-formation of the Japanese baseball world'. What marked its re-formation was that the Internet industry, the symbol of globalisation, became the epoch maker. It was unsurprising that the owners' attitude was based on global standards. For example, Son Masayoshi, Softbank President, expressed his globally-minded view at a press conference as follows:

While soccer established a huge TV rights business via the World Cup, Japanese baseball world's perspective has been parochial. In addition to strengthening my team, I want to join forces with other club owners so

that a real 'World Cup of baseball' containing the U.S. major leaguers will be organised (*Asahi Shinbun* 1/12/2004 translated from Japanese).<sup>32</sup>

Mikitani Hiroshi, Rakuten President, is said to take pride in the fact that his company's success exists behind the effort of young employees whose average age is 31, which is a culture quite different from the traditional one where age speaks volumes (*The Japan Times* 3/2/2005). Based on this, the Rakuten baseball business style, according to Mikitani, is that "the front office, players and all who share a common goal are treated with equal respect regardless of position" (*The Japan Times* 3/2/2005).

As suggested so far, a series of incidents during the 1990s and into the twenty-first century challenged what has been in place, giving baseball men and fans the opportunity to shift their viewpoint from local standards to global standards. It has been said that baseball men have been so euphoric with baseball's popularity that they have ignored the fans. These incidents, or crises, became a wake-up call for baseball men. But this wake-up call should be intended for fans as well because they are also responsible for creating a 'dream at home'. In Japanese baseball, it is common that the outfield stands in a ballpark are occupied by a cheering group who play trumpets and drums noisily, and wave large flags, and this occurs while they are among ordinary relatively quiet and serious

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<sup>32</sup> He is putting forward the idea of a 'World Club Cup of Baseball'.



fans. The cheering group's behaviour is nothing more than noise pollution to other fans who want to enjoy watching a game and it prevents players making a proper judgement based on the sound of a hit ball and on the vocal communications among the players (Kitaya and Kimura 2001: 158). In 2000, when the Giants set up 'the day for enjoying the baseball sound' by asking their cheering groups to refrain from using noise-making instruments, the players and fans responded favourably. Players' comments such as "Fans' applause has never reached my ears so clearly and freshly" and "I realised that that is what cheering really is" were positive (Toyoda 2002: 69) and fans' voices were supportive as well. For example, "The sound of a pitched ball colliding with the catcher's glove came home to me..." and "Applauding fine plays and booing poor plays, the entire stadium was as one. I enjoyed one pitch by one pitch in excitement, feeling the field closer to the stand than usual..." (Toyoda 2002: 69-70). It is said that the mission of professional athletes is to guide ordinary people who are tired from their stressful daily life to a 'fictional' (dream) world, but fans are also required to make efforts to create this 'fictional' world by shifting their parochial stance (me-ism) to a global stance (other-ism) so that players can find their dream.

## Chapter 6 What Characterises Japanese Baseball: the Japanese Treasures

In describing the history and the growth of Japanese baseball in chronological order from its origins up to the present day, its character and analysis has been fragmented. In this chapter, careful consideration will be given to what are the essential characteristics of Japanese baseball, specifically focusing on three factors — ‘A good player is made’; Group harmony; and Overcoaching culture.

### 6.1 A Good Player is Made

Whiting (1989: 60) notes about the Japanese approach to baseball that, “For Americans baseball is a job. For the Japanese it is a way of life”. A former American player who played with a Japanese club was quoted as saying that:

In the U.S. we believe that a player has a certain amount of natural ability and with practice he reaches a certain peak point, but after that no amount of practice will make him better — because after a certain point your ability reaches its limits. But the Japanese believe there is no peak point. They do not recognize [sic] limits (quoted in Whiting 1989: 52).

It is Tobita Suishû (see 4.3.2) who connected baseball with a way of life for the first time. He invented the word, *Junsei Yakyû-dô* (pure way of baseball) and contributed to the dissemination of the ‘Japanese version’ of



baseball (Sayama 1998: 124). As mentioned in the previous section, he regarded the practice session as the opportunity for developing moral discipline and assigned fierce practice to his players. What has been described as the 'Japanese version' of baseball can be traced back to traditional ideas and practices in Japanese culture.

Power struggles among warlords were a central feature of the early history of Japan until the late sixteenth century and there was groundwork enough for *bujutsu* (martial technique or practical combat skills) to develop among the warrior class. But as the cycle of violence came to an end and peaceful times arrived, *bujutsu* as practical combat skills became unnecessary. Instead, *bujutsu* was transformed into a means of "spiritual educational training that emphasised the personal development of the participant" (Hyams 1979: 2). Akagi (2001: 177) argues in more detail that "a swordsman, in essence, took life and death seriously. The unpredictability of death and the wonders of nature were recognised as something beyond human power, which produced the feeling for fearing and worshipping God. This drove *bujutsu* practitioners to finding God in themselves". It was no wonder that such a spiritual aspect in *bujutsu* was reinforced as an indicator of a 'way of life' in peaceful times. This was how the suffix meaning technique, *jutsu*, was replaced with the one meaning notional way, *dô*, as *kenjutsu* and *jûjutsu* became transformed into *kendô* and *jûdô* respectively (see Draeger and Smith 1969: 90; Hyams 1979: 2).

It was Zen Buddhism which took a crucial role in emphasising the spiritual meaning in *bujutsu*. Unlike other Buddhist sects which sought *tariki* (help from another), Zen aimed at *jiriki* (self-help).<sup>33</sup> It meant that “potential strength...lies only within oneself, and by one’s own efforts can one increase it”, which was viewed to be in accord with the ethos of the warrior class (Benedict 1967: 170). The ultimate goal of Zen was to reach the state of ‘*muga*’ (freedom from all thoughts) and this stage was thought to be the highest point in spiritual life, where one could display one’s ability or technique to the fullest extent (Akagi 2001: 180). Benedict (1967: 165) explains about *muga* that:

In people who have not attained expertness, there is, as it were, a non-conducting screen which stands between the will and the act. They call this the ‘observing self’, ‘the interfering self’, and when this has been removed by special training the expert loses all senses that ‘I am doing it’...The act is effortless...The deed completely reproduces the picture the actor had drawn of it in his mind.

To illustrate this philosophy, there once was a common scene in which a man meditated, getting showered with icy water from a waterfall during a winter night. His object was to train his conscious self up to the stage where he would not feel the pain and when the coldness of water and the shivering of the body departed from his consciousness, he was thought to be ‘expert’, having reached *muga* (Benedict 1967: 171).

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<sup>33</sup> For religious practice, there are two methods. One is a physical practice called *zazen* (sitting leg-crossed in silent meditation) and the other is an intellectual practice called *kōan* (answering questions) (Yanagida 1985: 17). But there are no *kōan* questions which can be answered rationally.



It is needless to say that reaching the state of *muga* was not an easy job and constant practice and cultivation was required. While it is undeniable that *muga* is a mystic concept, running counter to Western rationalism, a German scholar's following experience can help us to understand what the state of *muga* is (Herrigel 1953). Eugen Herrigel was a philosophy teacher who taught in a university in Japan. Having preoccupied with mysticism for a long time, he decided to learn Zen when he was given a teaching post in Japan. To do so, he chose the art of archery on the assumption that his experiences in rifle and pistol shooting would be advantageous for him and he became an archery master's pupil. For years, he struggled against his master's instructions such as, "You must not loose the shot. Wait at the highest tension until 'it' shoots. For this, you need to let go of yourself, leaving yourself and everything yours behind you"; "Put the thought of hitting right out of your mind" (Herrigel 1953: 47; 73). In response to Herrigel's suspicion, the master demonstrated his art of archery for him, hitting the target which was placed far away in the darkness twice in a row, which made Herrigel dumb struck. However, after years of labour, he finally reached a mastery level himself. When Herrigel said that, "Bow, arrow, goal and ego, all melt into one another, so that I can no longer separate them. And even the need to separate had gone. For as soon as I take the bow and shoot, everything becomes so clear and straightforward and so ridiculously simple...", the master replied, "Now at last, the bow

string has cut right through you” (Herrigel 1953: 86). Undoubtedly Herrigel reached the state of *muga*.

While the idea is dominant in Western societies that a good player is born, the idea is dominant in Japan that he is made, which can be said to have justified incessant and hard training irrespective of whether the context was professional or amateur (see Whiting 1989: 60). The idea that a good player is made and *jiriki* are the same and it was no wonder that Zen and martial arts philosophy won the hearts of baseball players. As a matter of fact, the players whose names are remembered in the history of Japanese baseball all experienced the state of *muga* via rigorous practice. Kawakami Tetsuharu (see 5.5 and notes 26) notes about his practice that, “There were no coaches or no pre-game practice in my days. People thought professionals would go without practice. Therefore, I practised frantically behind the scenes...A big blister formed on my right palm because of my swing practice and I cut it off with a razor every night” (quoted in Okazaki 1986d: 211-212). As a result of his obsessive pursuit of the art of batting, he developed his concentration to a state where, he said, a pitched ball would ‘stop’ for him before he went into a swing (Whiting 1989: 60). Later, as a swordsman established the concept ‘swordsmanship and Zen in oneness’ (*kenzen ichi’nyo*), so he invented the concept ‘baseball and Zen in oneness’ (*kyûzen ichi’nyo*), driving this concept forward (Kawakami 1991).



Oh Sadaharu, career home run record holder and the key player with the Giants after Kawakami, devoted himself to batting as well and practised based on Zen philosophy and martial arts. His devotion to batting was such that he employed a real sword for his practice. He got a piece of paper suspended from the ceiling with a string and tried to shear the paper in half. But the paper was so light that it swayed to and fro and he had to wait patiently for the moment when the swaying paper would stop for just a fraction of a second. Therefore, a correct swing (technical) and proper concentration (mental) were required for a successful slash (Oh and Falkner 1984: 160-167). Oh recalled:

I took my pose before this sliver of swaying, twisting paper. I could feel my irritation grow as it swayed and swayed and swayed. It was an effort to keep calm, to hold my concentration steadily in my abdomen. So much time seemed to pass. I could now stand coiled comfortably on one foot for over three minutes. But I barely gave this a thought. I was no longer striving to achieve this. Everything was now suddenly poured into this single act of waiting. For waiting, I understood in this moment, far from being something passive, was the most active state of all. In its secret heart lay the beginning and the end of all action. In it lurked the exact moment to strike. The paper was suddenly still. Or I somehow sensed that it would be, *just an instant beforehand*, so I was able to start my swing and sever the paper just as it came to stop...I was perspiring and almost breathless from the effort of concentration (Oh and Falkner 1984: 168).

Later in his playing days, when he was off form, he was seen to apply his energy to intensive batting practice as pre-game practice from early afternoon in mid-summer days. In response to the advice that working so hard would exhaust him considering his age, he replied, "I know I will be

exhausted. But I have overcome my bad condition by hitting, hitting and hitting. I am encouraging myself that I can make it because I have practised to such an extent. I am looking for mental reassurance in practice” (Aota 1996: 289-290). His attitude toward baseball became the model. When the government decided to establish the National Hero Award (*kokumin eiyo shô*), he became the first-ever winner. Baseball success became a symbol of nationhood of national identity. He explained that skill is improved by repetition, as fundamental to any Zen practice (Oh and Falkner 1984: 165) and when he signed his autograph, he reportedly added the word, *doryoku* (effort) (Whiting 1989: 60).

While Oh is all-time leader in most of the batting categories, it is Harimoto Isao who is all-time leader in successful hits. Like the practice that Kawakami and Oh carried out, his practice was no less than a religious austerity. His policy was that the way to mastering the art of batting would be open only for those who would go on swinging the bat incessantly, thinking frantically about batting (Taki 1986: 112). His following practice scene embodied his policy about batting:

(Many swings produced blisters on the palm) and when they were broken, bleeding, I put the ointment on the cuts. With more bleeding, I got my hand and the bat bound firmly with a bandage. In time, the bandage cut into the flesh, making the hand numb. In order to avoid letting the bat slip off and the deal with the numbness of the hand, I got my hand and the bat bound firmly with an inner tube and carried on swinging. It was a tough job to remove the bandage which cut into the flesh of the palm. With the help of running water, I removed it little by little, bleeding from the cuts. This was the end of my practice on the



ground. I went on swinging before going to bed. Although I was worn out from the afternoon practice, I forced myself to do it (quoted in Taki 1986: 115).

He carried on this atrocious practice for five years, rising to stardom (Taki 1986: 118). After his retirement, he commented that, "I stood in the batter's box with a genuine desire for hits until amassing 2,000 hits. But such a desire gradually departed from me when I reached 2,500 hits. Free from all thoughts, I was able to stand in the batter's box with presence of mind. Each time I amassed a hit, I felt something emotional grow inside of me" (quoted in Taki 1986: 118).

While the experiences of the three baseball greats mentioned above were extreme, their message was that hard work would make you a great. As a matter of fact, the autobiographies of the players whose names are remembered were filled with stories of hard practice and, for some, accompanied by mystic experiences. Accordingly, the idea that 'a good player can be made' is convincing.

It is needless to say that anybody must go through hard practice to improve his/her own skills, but there is no doubt that hard practice in the Japanese context tended to be grasped in terms of challenging the limit of physical strength or soul cultivation. Therefore, for Americans (or Westerners) who were accustomed to a scientific method of practice, the Japanese style of hard practice looked crazy. Peter Louis, an American

player in Japanese baseball, leaves his comment:

I believe that practice makes perfect and repetition will create motor memory, but sometimes the body needs time off. Practising everyday before games for 2-3 hours in the heat of the day takes all the energy away that you need for the game. I know that practice is important but isn't winning the game the more important thing [sic] (*email communication* 16/6/2004).

An example of the 'making' of a Japanese baseball player is a practice named 'one-thousand consecutive fielding of ground balls' (*senbon nokku*). Literally, a trainee had to catch one thousand ground balls consecutively, most of which are not easy to catch. During a couple of hours, he has to jump and dive right and left. This practice, among the Japanese, was believed to be effective for the cultivation of the soul leading to the improvement of baseball technique (Ikei 1991: 131). In addition, the scene of key players engaging in the practice was silent advice for young prospects, making them recognise that even key players practised so much. The aforementioned Kawakami commended this practice, arguing that it is not until he is too exhausted to be aware of what he is doing that his body reacts to the balls in the most natural way (Tamaki and Whiting 1991: 123). Undoubtedly he referred to *muga*. However, in American eyes, the practice would not help technical improvement and would do nothing but make players more prone to injuries (Ikei 1991: 131; see also Tamaki and Whiting 1991: 123). Blasingame (see 5.6 and 5.7) was quoted as saying that, "The Japanese style of fielding practice may be of help for developing physical strength, but not for technical improvement in



fielding. For developing physical strength, there are better ways. For fielding practice or whatever, there is no effect unless players are physically in shape” (Nomura 1985: 99). In fact, as a coach, Blasingame made his players catch easy ground balls repeatedly, but not imposing the same practice for longer than forty minutes. But the manager admitted that the players’ fielding had improved (Nomura 1985: 67-68).

Mental concentration was also studied academically in connection with athletic physiology. According to the research (quoted in Nakamura 1988: 47-48), those who believe that they concentrate on only one thing, free from other thoughts (*muga*), do not actually achieve *muga*. A trainee who believes he concentrates on nothing but catching balls thinks about various things unconsciously. Based on this research, Nakamura (1988: 51) notes that, “While practice is most productive when players have achieved mental concentration in the highest degree, the Japanese style of practice means that they get exhausted before they reach the ideal state of mental concentration, which is inefficient”.

Another feature of Japanese baseball tradition was to value quantity when applied to pitching practice. Since the days of amateur players, traditionally, pitchers trained themselves by making as many pitches as possible almost everyday. In addition, it was not rare that an ace pitcher pitched for two or three days in a row without rest. Therefore, most of

them got a sore arm and it was common that players who made a professional debut as pitchers had to give up their career as pitchers early on. While the perception that the shoulder and elbow are expendable has been pervasive and the number of pitches came to be checked strictly on a daily basis, a pitcher who claimed that he would not pitch on the day was regarded as lazy as recently as two decades ago (Oda 2002: 64).

In response to the Japanese style of practice which emphasised quantity, there were some who tried to go against the tradition. But most players were 'brainwashed' into believing that baseball has to be a laborious job. Bobby Valentine, another American manager and the only foreign manager in the 1990s, made practice sessions short as his predecessors did in the 1970s (see 5.7), but his players were not happy with this and did extra practice voluntarily (see Hiro'oka 1997: 158-159). His 'soft' policy gradually became incompatible with the policy of coaches and players, and he was sacked. Kondô Sadao, a former manager, tried to stop his pitchers from pitching too much in the practice sessions and made them spend the extra time for muscle building training. But one promising pitcher, who had emerged as a key pitcher by doing traditional practice, did not welcome Kondô's policy. Consequently, while his policy had a good effect on some pitchers, his pitching staff as a whole could not perform as well as the year before and his method was called into question by traditionalists (see Hamada 1997: 270).



The two examples mentioned above demonstrate that there was a big gap between American and the Japanese approaches to baseball practice. American players tried not to waste power in practice sessions so that their physical condition would be the best in games. Therefore, they did not do excessive pre-game practice (Ikei 1991: 131). On the contrary, Japanese players satisfied themselves by practising in whatever circumstances. Especially when they were off form, it was common that they tried to overcome the problem by doing extra practice (Ikei 1991: 131). The difference in the approaches to practice between the two peoples can be connected to cultural differences. In the case of Japanese players, they went through junior and senior high school days devoting themselves to practice. Besides, the Senior High School Baseball Championship Tournament, the most prestigious sporting event in Japan in which all senior high school players nationwide longed to participate, encouraged them to practise. In addition, they believed their technique would improve via practice after practice since their childhood and it can be imagined that they were given little time to think about resting. They arguably felt uneasy doing nothing. This psychology was shared by Japanese businessmen in earlier generations. What sustained the postwar economic prosperity was the industry and the perseverance of Japanese businessmen. They dedicated themselves to work, not caring for the family, having no hesitation to work late everyday and were ridiculed as 'worker

bees'. But when the use of leisure was emphasised and they were free from work, they did not know how to spend their spare time. They found themselves having no other motivations but work. Returning to baseball, it was no wonder that the American style of practice was not easy to accept in the Japanese baseball world. Another conceivable reason is that sticking to traditional methods is convenient for turning a way criticism when results are poor. Frank Joey, an American player in Japanese baseball, points out that:

Many of the players and managers have said, "They want to, and will, play the game more USA method'. However, when they become managers, they stay with the old style. One reason for that is to stay away from criticism (*email communication 5/4/2003*).

Even if they have failed, those who practised in traditional ways do not suffer such severe criticism. If a new method fails to bring about success after one year, the method is turned down as no-good. Interestingly, even if a new method brings about success, it is marginalised unless it can prove itself again the following year.

This thesis does not altogether argue that the Japanese style of practice is bad. As noted earlier, the fact remains that there were successful players who used the Japanese style of practice. In addition, Ueda Toshiharu, a former manager, said that it is necessary to make players believe that they will win because they have practised so much for an immature team (quoted in Hamada 1997: 108). The aforementioned Oh



was quoted as saying that, “The hot weather does in those players who haven’t trained hard all along” (quoted in Whiting 1989: 59). Nevertheless, it is also true that every player, no matter how much he practises, cannot be a success. Ochiai Hiromitsu (see notes 23) (2001: 42) comments about this paradox that, “When players could not prove themselves, people say they did not practise enough. But there must have been many players who practised so hard and who were more gifted than me. I think their failure consisted in their having practised in the wrong way”. He was known as an outspoken iconoclast, reportedly saying on one occasion that, “The history of Japanese baseball is the history of pitchers throwing until their arms fall off for the team. It’s crazy. Like dying for your country...yelling ‘Long live the Emperor!’ with your last breath. That mentality is why Japan lost the war. Spirit, effort, those are words that I absolutely cannot stand” (quoted in Whiting 1989: 204). But this did not mean that he did not make an effort. He found his own ‘right’ way of practising and reached the top. On another occasion, he added that, “I did not cut my sleep for practice. I just did what I thought was necessary. But it is certain that you fail unless you do what is necessary” (Ochiai 2001: 42).

The environment surrounding the sport culture in Japan has changed and hard practice has tended to be seen as outdated and as unfashionable in recent times (Hamada 1997: 108). But this does not indicate that recent players have found their own ‘right’ and more efficient way of practising.

Ochiai (2001: 130) points out that recent players do not dare to put their heart and soul into baseball to the point of being called 'baseball freaks' (*yakyû baka*), which, he guesses, leads to the fall of baseball popularity. Oh, from a manager's eye, refers to recent players as easily setting up the limits of their own abilities and being satisfied with a modest position and a modest salary (quoted in Hamada 1997: 247). It is said that fans today are looking for sexiness in sport images, represented by showy and good-looking athletes (*Shinano Mai'nichi Shinbun* 16/6/1995 evening issue). But it is also true that fans are ultimately looking for plays produced by athletes who are single-minded about their own sports.

## 6.2 Group Harmony (*Wa*)

The second feature to be picked up in this chapter about what characterises baseball in Japan is group harmony. Whiting (1989: 70) notes that the concept and practice of group harmony or *wa* is what most dramatically differentiates Japanese baseball from the American game.

Furthermore, he adds:

(Group harmony or *wa*) is the connecting thread running through all Japanese life and sports. While "Let It All Hang Out" and "Do Your Own Thing" are mottoes of contemporary American society, the Japanese have their own credo in the well-worn proverb, "The Nail That Sticks up Shall Be Hammered Down". It is practically a national slogan (Whiting 1989: 70).

Group harmony is considered to be indispensable in management of



baseball. For example, Nomo (see 5.10) notes about the Dodgers that, “We are in disunity in our everyday life. Spanish-speaking players are in a group. But we unite ourselves as soon as we enter the clubhouse for games” (quoted in Hamada 1995). Nevertheless, the reason why group harmony in Japanese society came into limelight was that, in the eyes of non-Japanese people, it looked as if it homogenised all people, not tolerating exceptions.

In order to clarify the character of group harmony in Japanese society (*wa*), this thesis refers to Nakane Chie’s written work entitled ‘Japanese Society’ (1970)., which is highly valued in academic analysis of Japanese society. Nakane, an anthropologist, has characterised Japanese society as a vertical society.

### *Japanese Society (A Review of Literature)*

Nakane points out that there are two types of social groups in human society. One is based on the individuals’ common attributes, the other on the situational position in a given frame. The first type refers to ‘who the individuals are’, for example, ‘professor’, ‘office clerk’ or ‘student’. The second type refers to ‘where they are’ such as ‘men of Z University’. Japanese society is that of the second type. According to Nakane, the Japanese have a tendency of stressing situational positions in a particular frame, which can be traced back to the Japanese *ie* system of family or

household. It is argued that what marks the Japanese *ie* system is that human relationships within this household group are more important than all other human relationships. This means, for example, that the wife who has come from outside has greater importance than the family's own daughters who have married and are living in other households. This Japanese *ie* system demonstrates the possibility of including members with different attributes. Unlike the group based on the commonality of attributes, which can produce strong solidarity, the group based on frame is nothing but a herd at the first stage and some measures must be taken to produce solidarity.

According to Nakane, while people with the same attributes can have a rational feeling of 'one-ness', people with different attributes share nothing but the frame in common and an emotional approach is needed to develop sentimental ties between them. This approach requires continual human contact, which can often intrude into one's private and personal spheres. Some take this as an encroachment on their dignity as individuals and others as security based on total-group consciousness. The Japanese mostly take the latter stance. This emotional approach can be typically observed in Japanese companies. Unlike Western companies based on the contract between employer and employee, the relations between them in Japanese companies are based on a family-like model. The employee can receive benefits such as company housing, hospital benefits, monetary gifts on the occasion of marriage, birth or death, and



advice about family planning from the company. The employee is a member of the 'family' and all members' families are naturally included in the 'family'. Built on this system, Japanese management has made enormous successes. On the other hand, this familial society allows the members to believe that the social life within the group is everything and their localism is conspicuous.

Nakane notes that the groups whose solidarity is reinforced by the members' total emotional participation share a common internal structure which she describes as vertical. What she means by 'vertical' is like the parent-child relation or the superior-inferior relation. On the other hand, 'horizontal', according to her, is like the sibling relation. What occurs from the vertical structure is the formation of ranking. People with the same qualification are placed 'vertically' in accordance with relative age, years of entry into the company or length of continuous service so that the solidarity between colleagues (horizontal) is relatively weak. Nakane claims that this is true of the academic context where the solidarity between a professor and his pupils (vertical) is stronger than that between the professor and his colleague professors. In a vertical society, the contract in the Western sense does not function because human relations are based on personal, emotional human contact. For example, in organising a scientific investigation consisting of Europeans, the leader selects the members who he/she thinks best fits the purpose of the investigation and those who the leader does not know can join the team.

The leader's instruction is absolute as far as the job is concerned, but when off duty, members of the team can do whatever they like. In contrast, when the commission consists of Japanese people in a Western-style contract, it fails in most cases, because the leader must spend more time in maintaining good human relations between the members than in completing the investigation. But if a veteran professor organises a group consisting of his pupils only, the group is likely to be successful. In this case, the pupils can demonstrate their dedication to the leader in whatever situations and are encouraged by the leader's love for them. What is required of the leader is having an understanding of his members rather than possessing a genius ability. While human relations in an European type of commission come to an end with the completion of the investigation, those in the Japanese type of commission are likely to go on for good. Accordingly, the lifeline of the group in a vertical society, under whatever ideologies or doctrines it is organised, is human relations between the members rather than the members' belief in the group ideologies or doctrines. Those who fail to share the atmosphere produced by the group members are not accepted as members even if they are in sympathy with the group ideologies or doctrines.

A baseball team is a group with common attributes (baseball skills) and players' salaries are assessed in accordance with merit, and in this sense it can be said that the baseball world is Western in style and quite



different from a typical group in Japan. However, the internal structure in a Japanese baseball team is closer to vertical and human relations based on the members' total emotional participation can be observed. For example, it is common that the pennant champion team takes a trip abroad in commemoration of winning the pennant and that the travelling team contains the families of players, coaches, the manager, and supporting staff (batting pitchers, game scorers etc.). (e.g. Hoshino 2000: 134-135). Managers are expected to be the symbolic 'father' and sometimes to give proper advice to players about their personal matters as well as to be familiar with baseball. It is not rare that managers handle players' love tangles or financial matters (e.g. Hoshino 2000; Nomura 1985). Paternalistic care is expected from managers when players are notified of dismissal as well, because their failure to give proper care to leavers puts scouting activities in the future at stake (Hamada 1997: 90). Aforementioned Ueda Toshiharu, who is reputed to be a proper care provider, was known as someone on whom leavers and their families depended many years later (Hamada 1997: 90). Such emotional human relations can be viewed as beautiful and some foreign players have taken a fancy to them. However, prioritising human relations can sometimes disturb team management. For example, American major leaguers can think that they are traded because their merits are rated (see Hiro'oka 1997: 84), but on the contrary, in Japanese baseball, trading often gets mixed up with emotional sentimentalism such as 'this player is disliked by

the manager' or 'that player is rebellious'. If a manager attempts to trade key players, his attempt sometimes invites opposition from the team's parent company, local business group, fans, or the media, and it is not rare for a trade project to be scrapped (see Hiro'oka 1997: 84). Therefore, as advice for trading players, Hiro'oka notes that it is crucial to explain respectfully and not in a businesslike way not only to players but also to their families why this trade is necessary (Hiro'oka 1997: 86).

In addition, valuing emotional human relations so highly results in the homogenisation of people. For example, it was stated earlier that salary assessment is based on meritocracy, but as a matter of fact, each club is conscious of group harmony, reluctant to make one player 'stick out'. Ochiai (2001: 132-133) opposes this group harmony-oriented policy, claiming that making one player 'stick out' would be an encouragement to other teammates. While this may be a 'professional' way of thinking, it causes problems in the Japanese baseball context. Komada (2001: 163), a former Bay Star player, describes how the team in the next season after having won the Japan Series championship title was disunited by money (see page 169). Amid a remarkable rise of players' salaries, a wage differential between them widened. There was a growing dissatisfaction such as, "Why does he get so much?" among some players, which, Komada claims, prevented the players from concentrating on baseball (Komada 2001: 164). The shared atmosphere and culture (low wage and losing the



championship title for forty decades) and sense of homogeneity were ruptured by widening salary inequalities.

Such dispositions of the Japanese become more conspicuous in the handling of foreign players. As stated earlier, in addition to garnering much higher salaries than their Japanese counterparts. American players enjoy exceptional treatment, claiming their own training routines, which is enough to make the Japanese feel as if they are the 'outsiders'. Furthermore, their self-assertiveness and aggressiveness strengthens the tendency. Considering that a team's goal is winning, what counts is how well to play in the games, but that is not enough for them to be accepted by the team as a whole. They need to share the culture that the Japanese members have in order to be an organic part of the team. The best way is arguably to study the Japanese language and to commune with Japanese culture, although few foreign players have ever tried. Conrad Slater, one of them, describes his experience:

I [tried] to learn [the] Japanese language as quickly as I could. I was not fluent by any stretch but I could understand about half of what was being said most of the time. When my Japanese teammates saw that I was willing [to] make the effort to try to speak their language, it opened up a lot of opportunities for friendship and respect (*email communication 4/1/2004*).

Orestes Destrade, a Cuban immigrant player, was a home run batter for the Lions in the early 1990s and contributed greatly to team victories. He was successful in being part of the team to the point of making his

manager, Mori, say that he was proud to have worked with him (Kuehnert 1998: 254). What helped him to be part of the Lions was mastering 'bad' Japanese taught by his Japanese teammates (Mori 2001: 74). Another example was Randy Bass who asked one of his teammate to teach him how to play *shôgi* (Japanese chess). The teammate recalled that, "I told him he'd have to treat me like a teacher and give me a proper bow. He did. He understands Japanese feelings" (Whiting 1989: 296).

Following the Japanese life style and custom also makes a difference even if foreign players have no interest in learning the Japanese language.

The following is Ed Pearson's experience:

I [spent] the first 4 months living with the players and eating the same as they did. [I] got to know what was expected of me. I didn't complain and kept [thoughts] to myself...I enjoyed the closeness of the team sticking together...I obeyed all the rules and did whatever was asked of myself. This opened the door to a better understanding of our relationship (*postal communication* 10/10/2003).

Generally, speaking, Japanese players do not have open minds until foreign players make their attitude clear. Suzuki Takao, a linguist, inquired into this psychological mechanism in terms of socio-linguistics. Suzuki (1999) focused on a conversational phenomenon in which terms for self change in the Japanese language related to specific situations, while those in European languages remain unchanged in whatever situations. For example, when a father speaks to his child, he addresses himself as 'father' (or words meaning father) like "Follow father's advice" (not 'my')



advice). To a nephew or a niece, he addresses himself as 'uncle' (or words meaning uncle). A schoolteacher says to his/her students, "Turn to teacher". On the occasion of general conversation, personal pronouns meaning 'I/You' are used, but the speaker is required to use different types of personal pronouns, according to the context or relationship. In view of this language mechanism, Suzuki drew the conclusion that self-definition in the Japanese language is conditioned by others in comparison with European languages in which self-definition always belongs to the speaker. He detailed his position as follows (1999: 198-203).

Self-definition depending on others in the Japanese language seems to have something to do with the Japanese mode of behaviour: not liking to speak in a friendly manner to someone unknown. This is because the speaker cannot decide his/her attitudes if it is not clear who 'someone unknown' really is. In other words, the speaker's self remains unstable, which makes it difficult to establish stable relations with someone else...Seemingly, the Japanese are good at adjusting their own stances based on others', but they are poor at making their own stances clear at first. Or it is not rare to sense what others think before they make it clear, which can be counted as a virtue in Japan (self-assimilation to others)...This type of communication functions well between the Japanese, but not between the Japanese and foreign people...This results in Japan's inability to take the lead in dealing with international affairs because she cannot define her position without understanding the general trend (translated from Japanese).

Such Japanese attitudes result from a culture that prioritises emotional human relations and there is a tendency for the Japanese to refrain from asserting themselves. It is said that they have developed a high level in the art of suppressing what they mean (*hon'ne*) in favour of what they say (*tatemae*) in order to maintain social harmony (Whiting 1989: 96). Typically, Japanese people are sceptical of what others say, likely to

translate a phrase such as “I love Japan” from the mouth of a foreign player to “I can’t stand this place, but the pay is good” (Whiting 1989: 96). If foreign players show that they love Japan in a specific action, their attitudes are more likely to be accepted.

Some American players’ following comments indicate how tough it is to play in a foreign land, especially, in Japan: “Playing well is a necessity but there is a lot more to being successful than just that (Slater, *email communication* 4/1/2004); “I had nearly no problems as far as personal or professional relationships [were concerned] because I respected those around me, and respected the fact that ‘I’ was the foreigner” (Campbell, *postal communication* 19/12/2003).

### 6.3 Overcoaching Culture

The third feature to which this thesis refers regarding what characterises Japanese baseball is the ‘overcoaching culture’. Whiting (1989: 66) notes:

In Japan, the word for individualism...is almost a dirty word. The only ones who know what’s best are the manager and the coaches. They have the virtues Orientals most respect — age and experience, hence knowledge. Their word is law. And they demand that everyone do [sic] everything their way. The traditional Japanese ideal is a humble, uncomplaining, obedient soul...

The original meaning of coaching is a horse-drawn carriage and the



fundamental concept of coaching is 'carrying the passenger to the destination' (Hirao 2001: 15). Accordingly, considering that the passenger is the 'player', it is the player who decides his 'destination' and what the coach should do is to 'carry him to the destination in the safest and the quickest way' (Hirao 2001: 15). Nomo's following experience in American baseball indicates a typical coach-player relation:

A coach in American baseball praises players by uttering "excellent" many times and I was praised as well, although I wondered if I really was excellent. He does not refer to their shortcomings. That is what players must notice. Or he comes over, saying, "Shall we talk?" But this is not compulsory. When I was off form, my coach offered me a meeting. He said, "I am going to tell you a few things I noticed. You speak your mind". I told what was in my mind candidly. Quite unlike Japanese coaches who talked to me unnecessarily even if I was okay (quoted in Hamada 1995 translated from Japanese).

In Japanese baseball, in most cases, coaching is taken as imposing advice on players rather than mutual talk between the coach and the player. To make matters worse, some coaches believe that there is only one correct way to throw, field, hit, and coach (Campbell, *postal communication* 19/12/2003). In addition, the 'demerit system' — putting an emphasis on rectifying shortcomings — is dominant in Japanese baseball (and the entire Japanese society), which justifies coaches' technical education of players by telling players off because their shortcomings are easier to spot than their strong points. As a result of rectifying shortcomings as coaches instruct, it is said that most Japanese players look like a carbon copy of every other player, one of the factors, which arguably made Japanese baseball boring (see Whiting 1989: 67; Aota 1996: 9-23). Kawai points out

that the method of mastering traditional Japanese arts — valuing a form — is reflected in Japanese baseball (quoted in Hirao 2001: 26). In traditional Japanese arts, a pupil is said to spend two or three decades mastering the basic form and, subsequently, someone who has established his/her own form is called the 'master'. As a consequence of applying this method to baseball, something quite different from traditional Japanese arts, coaches have dedicated much time to making players master the textbook form rather than helping them develop their own forms (quoted in Hirao 2001: 26).

There are three factors which explain the overcoaching culture in Japanese baseball. Firstly, it has a lot to do with the Japanese 'taking-advantage-of-shortcomings' approach to baseball. With the pervasiveness of VTR, and computers, each team's search for the shortcomings of opponents is so thorough that a pitcher, for example, had his pitching habit detected from the wrinkles in his trousers (see Akatsu 2000: 217). Therefore, rectifying one's shortcomings tends to be put before developing one's strong points. The second factor, which supposedly justifies the overcoaching culture, is the shortage of players. Unlike American baseball where there are many minor leagues, each major league club in Japanese baseball owns only one minor league club. Therefore, careful coaching is practised in Japanese baseball so that players will not dropout. The final factor is to do with emotional human relations between the coach and the



player. As comments indicate, such as “I feel such an attachment to my players” (Miyata 2002: 79; Nomura 1998: 72); “I love my players as my ‘sons’” (Hoshino 2002: 163), coach (manager) - player relations tend to be emotional. Coaches’ ‘love’ for players means that the former expect much from the latter, an attitude which is embodied in the form of overcoaching.

It is not easy to judge which method is better, the minimal coaching method or the overcoaching method, because both methods have produced successful players. Considering that an immediate effect is required, it is more efficient and more time-saving for coaches to take initiatives in coaching. But, in the long run, it is doubtful if this method will benefit players. Jack Gallagher, an American baseball journalist covering Japanese baseball, cites the following point as a demerit of the Japanese game:

There is too much instruction from coaches/managers. This affects the fluidity and creativity of the players. Professional players don’t need that much instruction. They should know what they are doing (*email communication 20/10/2004*).

Ochiai’s following advice about players endorses this comment and is persuasive in terms of a long-term goal:

...in professional baseball, he must establish his own style physically and mentally so that he does not have to study the faces of coaching staff. By this, he can play in his own fashion whichever clubs he will play with in the future...Therefore, it is crucial that coaching staff lead players to cultivate his own willingness by making them think on their own feet (2001: 73-74 translated from Japanese).

In Japan, baseball-related books written by former players are abundant. While many of them focus on group management, those referring to coaching theories are increasing as well (e.g. Kuroe 2002; Ochiai 2001; Sumi 2002). There is also a trend for the Western approach to coaching to be recommended — commending players' strong points, leading them to think on their own feet. But in view of the shortage of players in Japanese baseball, Ochiai (2001), for example, recommends that coaches should take the initiative with players who could not prove themselves for more than five years while making rookie players do it in their own ways, which indicates the mix of Western and Japanese approaches (hybridisation).

#### **6.4 The Concluding Remarks Relating to Chapters Four, Five and Six**

These chapters have sought to demonstrate how baseball grew in Japan and, subsequently, how global processes are in progress in Japanese baseball in connection with labour migration. From what has been argued in these chapters, it is possible to say that global processes have brought two types of 'crises' to Japanese baseball. One is a philosophical crisis which results from differences between Japanese and American approaches to baseball. Some American players helped to develop Japanese baseball with an American style, while the Japanese obsession with quantity-oriented and unscientific practices and manager's initiatives remained strong. From 1950 on, the history of Japanese



baseball reflected a philosophical clash between Japaneseness and the American style of baseball. The other crisis is the possible underdevelopment of Japanese baseball caused by a talent drain of Japanese players to American baseball, a conspicuous phenomenon after the 1990s. In addition to testing their baseball skills in the toughest world, Japanese emigrant players crossed the Pacific to find their 'dream' there, which increased a sense of crisis among Japanese baseball men. There is a growing pessimistic view about the emergence of star players in the future in Japanese baseball because of a decline in children's athletic ability, the lingering dominance of manager-oriented baseball in Little League baseball, and the rise of football popularity (see Aota 1996: 9-23). In response to this situation, there is a growing opinion that a free competition system should be introduced to Japanese baseball. This opinion is important in terms of Asian regionalisation. The 'World Cup of Baseball', planned for 2006, will enhance the importance of international games, and is likely to lead to the launch of an 'Asian League of Baseball', which will promote the 'Asianisation of the game'. An Asian version of the European Union ('Asian Union') is still far away, but the 'Asianisation' of baseball could contribute greatly to the materialisation of an 'Asian Union'. Such a development would require the media to increase Japanese people's awareness of Asian baseball without being partial to American baseball.

## Chapter 7 The Debate between Whiting and Kelly about Japanese Baseball (or Baseball in Japan)

The preceding chapters have investigated the transformation of the Japanese version of the American game of baseball with particular attention paid to the processes of globalisation. This chapter provides some concluding remarks about the character and the development of the Japanese version of baseball, directing attention to the recent debate between Robert Whiting and William Kelly. As stated in the Introduction (1.2), Robert Whiting authored *The Chrysanthemum and the Bat* (1977) and *You Gotta Have Wa* (1989) on which this thesis depended, detailing the Japanese version of the game mainly in journalistic style. William Kelly, on the other hand, is a university professor of anthropology whose research interests cover Japanese studies including Japanese baseball (e.g. 1998a; 1998b; 2002; 2004a; 2004b). However, their respective interpretations of the Japanese version of baseball are quite different. Whiting focuses on the ‘uniqueness’ of the Japanese version of baseball in connection with the national character, while Kelly argues against such an approach as ‘orientalist exaggerations’ (e.g. Kelly 2004b: 98). For example, Whiting notes:

At first glance, baseball in Japan appears to be the same game played in the U.S.— but it isn’t. The Japanese view of life stressing group identity, [co-operation], hard work, respect for age, seniority and “face” has permeated almost every aspect of the sport. Americans who come to play in Japan quickly [realise] that Baseball Samurai Style is different. For some, it is fascinating and exciting; for others, exasperating, and occasionally devastating (from Foreword 1977).



Whiting published a new book in 2004 entitled *The Samurai Way of Baseball*, describing the post-1990s development of baseball in Japan. As the title indicates, his approach to the Japanese game remains unchanged.

On the other hand, Kelly refutes Whiting's opinion in this way:

This is baseball reduced to an extension of national character, asserting that the Japanese play baseball the way they lead their lives — by following others, by submerging themselves in the grinding Japanese collective, and by not insisting on asserting themselves as individuals. Such a character portrait is obviously simplistic. How could a society of 125 million and a sport history of 125 years be summed up by the notion these are latter-day samurai playing with bats instead of swords? It's illogical as well; all team sports, especially baseball, demand complex mixes of teamwork and individual effort. Most of all, the point of view is troubling for its disparaging tone. It suggests the Japanese can copy the form of the sport, but they miss its true feeling. For real fans of baseball, the wrapping of the sport in national character garb precludes a real appreciation of just how the game is played in Japan and what is at stake — to the players, the teams and the spectators (2002: 49).

Kelly, on another occasion, argues that “national character is not an *explanation* for [behaviour] but a *substitute* for [analysing] that [behaviour]” (1998a: 97).

The dispute between Whiting and Kelly is complex and difficult to resolve. It is certainly impossible to say that the present generation and that of centuries ago share the same thinking and behavioural patterns. But it is also true that some of what is described as national character dies hard. For example, Itasaka Gen, scholar of Japanese literature, observes

that, "It is rare to see Japanese people hug in airports even after Japan has become modernised, and Japanese-Americans in Hawaii and California hug in an awkward manner or few of them do it. It is amazing that the third or the fourth generation Japanese-Americans who do not speak Japanese share common ground about physical contact with their Japanese ancestors" (1971: 122).

Whether the imported form of the American game should be described as 'Japanese baseball' or 'Baseball in Japan' is examined in this chapter within the framework of the Whiting-Kelly debate, focusing on the following four topics: i) high school/amateur baseball; ii) the varieties of baseball club cultures; iii) supporter formation; iv) the response/adaptation of Japanese baseball to sport science.

## **7.1 High School/Amateur Baseball**

It has been argued that amateur baseball (especially, college baseball) was the front-running sport in Japan before 1950 and professional baseball took it over after 1950. However, the National High School Baseball Championship Tournament remains second to none in terms of driving the nation temporarily wild. This event is a twice-annual one (spring and summer). The spring tournament, which started in 1924, is an invitational one (the teams which performed excellently in regional



competitions are invited), while the summer tournament, which started in 1915, embodies “single-elimination affairs involving forty-nine teams called from nearly four thousand participating schools in regional preliminaries” (Whiting 1989: 240-241). Accordingly, the summer tournament is larger-scale and more prestigious. Because both spring and summer tournaments are held in the Kôshien stadium, the Hanshin Tigers home ground, these sporting events are called ‘Kôshien’.

The Kôshien tournament is sponsored by two national newspapers (the spring tournament by *Mai'nichi Shinbun* and the summer one by *Asahi Shinbun*). Especially, *Asahi Shinbun's* sponsorship of the Kôshien tournament is especially remarkable, because in the 1910s the newspaper once launched an anti-baseball campaign by running an editorial series entitled ‘The Evil of Baseball’. However, for the purpose of public relations, the newspaper made a 180-degree turn, going so far as to establish the Kôshien tournament (see Whiting 1989: 34-35). In addition to high school baseball, a variety of other sports were also viewed as publicity vehicles of mass appeal in the 1910s, which was advantageous for national newspapers, and they organised various sporting events (Kelly 2000: 108). Corporate sponsorship of sporting activities is credited with the growth of modern sport culture in Japan and *Asahi Shinbun's* sponsorship of the Kôshien tournament is one of the earliest examples. Importantly, Sugimoto (1994: 21) notes that spectator sport was triggered by the

## Kôshien tournament.

There are many analyses of the national enthusiasm for the Kôshien tournament (e.g. Whiting 1989: 239-262; Esashi and Komuku 1994; Kelly 1997). Putting these analyses together, however, it is possible to say that the following two factors mainly induce national enthusiasm for the tournament. The first factor is that the Kôshien tournament is considered to symbolise amateurism and youth. Whiting (1989: 244) notes that “Japanese writers tend to wax maudlin where high school baseball is concerned. They have [eulogised] the sport as an ‘ode to fighting spirit’; the tourney as ‘the ultimate crucible of youth’; and Kôshien Stadium itself as a ‘temple of purity’”. Fans have sympathy for players’ dedication toward the game — poor or excellent plays — under the ‘that-is-the-end-if-lost’ perspective. Based on this sentiment, players’ performances are dramatised with the addition of behind-the-scene episodes, which is the way many heroes have been produced and marketed. The influences of the Kôshien tournament are so huge and long-standing that the Kôshien heroes-related incidents, even if they are of little real importance, are exaggerated and reported with the addition of the title, ‘former Kôshien players’. The second factor is that the Kôshien tournament provides an opportunity to evoke regional identity. The participating teams represent their own regions and, significantly, are regarded as the pride of their hometowns. The introduction of the participating teams and their



hometowns is televised before each contest, arousing fans' association with 'home' and inducing a sense of homesickness (Sugimoto 1994: 25). The transformation from *Gemeinschaft* (community) to *Gesellschaft* (interest society)<sup>34</sup> — a consequence of modernisation — became conspicuous in Japan after World War II. The Kôshien tournament is considered to be one of the few opportunities that stands to remind most Japanese people living in what is now an 'interest society' of their hometowns as the symbol of 'community'. Kelly (1997) and Komuku (1994: 168) argue that the Japanese seek a sentimental identity with their roots through support of their hometown teams.

Playing in a Kôshien tournament can guarantee their future for aspiring players because the tournament is the 'treasure house' of talent for professional clubs. Even if young players fail to be scouted by professional clubs, they can still wind up as well-paid employees of corporations that maintain teams in Japan's industrial leagues (Whiting 1989: 251). Japan was (still is) a society of academic hierarchy and the idea has been dominant that entering a prestigious university secures a position in a prestigious corporation, which has been considered to be a success in life. Accordingly, the top academic high schools which send their students to prestigious universities have been rated highly. But most of the prominent baseball teams come from the commercial or technical

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<sup>34</sup> The concept of social groups invented by Ferdinand Tonnies, a German sociologist.

high schools or the private high schools at the bottom of the normal school status hierarchy (Kelly 1997). Therefore, playing a Kôshien tournament has been considered to be another path to success in life.

It has been stated that baseball in Japan grew as an educational tool rather than as recreation, and the Kôshien tournament embodies this policy most faithfully. Whiting (1989: 242) details:

Dubious umpiring calls go unchallenged. Hit batsmen receive an apologetic bow from the offending pitcher and the sacrifice bunt is laid down at every conceivable opportunity. At the end of each contest, the participants immediately dash to home plate, where they line up, remove their caps and bow deeply to one another. In the post-game interview area under the grandstand, amidst a logjam of reporters and TV camera crews, the sweat-soaked athletes answer questions with ramrod deference of military academy plebes.

What is meant by human education via high school baseball is the encouragement of politeness or deference for authority rather than the development of a critical way of thinking. Furthermore, Sawada (1994: 114) dubs the Kôshien tournament a 'textbook-oriented event', arguing that:

Baseball is said to be an unintended drama. It is true that the game result is unintended, but things go according to the 'textbook' and fixed behavioural patterns are observable everywhere. For example, the opening and the closing ceremonies, managers' and players' actions, cheer groups' actions, sport casters' and commentators' comments, the media report etc., are all stereotyped. In addition, these stereotyped behavioural patterns are accepted as a matter-of-course without being doubted (translated from Japanese).

It is possible to argue that what is at the root of this perspective and Whiting's comment are the same. Therefore, high school baseball tends to



be dismissed as “rigidly-regulated, conservatively played, entirely predictable — so much so that it has lost the very excitement that is the essence of sport” (Kelly 1997).

But Kelly counters this stereotypic image of high school baseball. He continues.

If that were all that [Kôshien] high school baseball was about, it is unlikely it would have become the celebrated national event that it has been and remains today. Rather, what seems remarkable and compelling about [Kôshien] tournaments are the intended tensions and unintended ironies that lie just below their seemingly imperturbable and predictable surface (1997).

In order to prove the volatility of the Kôshien tournament, Kelly (1997) mentions a fierce pressure and scrutiny that young players have never faced before, the fluidity of the teams — made up of different players each year — and the announcement of the game pairings only shortly in advance. He adds that “[Kôshien] baseball, which in tightening the regulations of play only heightens the suspense of the outcome, is a quintessential expression of that sporting sensibility” (Kelly 1997).

In addition to what Kelly points out, when attention is diverted to the root of the Kôshien tournament, sporting sensibility becomes more conspicuous. Kôshien players are exposed to an audience of 40,000-50,000 and TV viewers who count for many more than that, under which circumstance they are required to make each play successful. In addition,

they are amateurs who are still technically immature, which means they are more susceptible to errors than professionals are. Sugimoto (1994: 24), referring to 'Relax for play' (*nobi-nobi to purei*) which is used as a catchword for the Kôshien tournament, notes "Relax for play' means the freedom from the pressure of victory or defeat. Behind this there is an implicit understanding that technical immaturity is the culture of the Kôshien tournament and spectators look forward to players' errors". The technical immaturity of the players can function to heighten the unpredictability of what happens next. Furthermore, the reality that each contest is a 'one-off' places players under extreme pressure and makes unintended effects more likely.

The interpretation of the Kôshien tournament as a well-ordered script resulting in the alleged absence of sporting excitement gives the impression that the tournament is particularly Japanese, but considering that all official sporting events are well-ordered scripts, it is unconvincing to emphasise the particularity of the tournament as such. In addition, amateur players' performances, no matter how conservatively played and entirely predictable, can raise the probability of the occurrence of unexpected incidents. What marks the tournament and high school baseball out as essentially Japanese is its philosophy — human development via baseball (see Whiting 1989: 239-263). Under this philosophy, players are educated in various ways. For example, on most



teams, the junior members are assigned to such edifying tasks as scrubbing floors or cleaning toilet (Whiting 1989: 248). Collective responsibility is a general rule and if one player becomes involved in a scandalous incident, it is not rare that the entire team is suspended from play as punishment (Whiting 1989: 248). In addition, corporal punishment is another colourful feature of high school baseball (Whiting 1989: 248). Of these examples, the first one is becoming history, but the other two still remain deep-rooted. Kelly's analysis teaches how foreign and even Japanese views about the tournament and high school baseball are stereotyped, but it is undeniable that the absence of his reference to the philosophy sustaining high school baseball dilutes his relativistic argument.

## **7.2 The Varieties of Baseball Club Cultures**

The second topic to be mentioned in this chapter is the varieties of baseball club cultures. As was the case with the growth of amateur sports, the growth of professional baseball in Japan did not occur without corporate participation. The world of professional baseball is the one in which corporate participation embodies itself in the most explicit manner, as illustrated in the inclusion of the parent companies' names in club names (see 3.8). It has been stated that professional soccer (J League) was launched with its emphasis on the creation of a local community-based

sport culture in opposition to corporate baseball culture. But this does not mean that professional baseball was not local community-based. Each club remained as the pride of its own hometown and mixing with the hometown character made each club different from the others, adding excitement to baseball contests. This section focuses on two clubs, the Giants and the Tigers. Both of them belong to the same League (the Central League) and their contest has been called the one between the 'traditional rivals' (*dentô no issen*). In addition, their meeting has been equated with Tokyo (the Giants) - Osaka (the Tigers) regional rivalry, enlivening baseball in Japan. Their rivalry caused one incident in the 1985 season, which triggered the debate about Japanese baseball. This will be discussed later in the next section.

### 7.2.1 The Tokyo (the Yomiuri) Giants

It is indisputable that the Giants are the most dominant and the most popular club in the history of Japanese baseball. Between 1950 and 2005, the club won the league championship titles thirty times. From the beginning, the club has attracted the best players. According to Hiro'oka, a former Giants' player in the 1950s and 1960s, the image of 'the ever victorious Giants' (*Jôshô Giants*) was established as early as the 1950s (Hiro'oka 1997: 36). Hiro'oka adds that, "A senior player, after we lost the games', would lecture me that the Giants are destined to win" (Hiro'oka 1997: 37). This 'destined to win' became a symbol term for the Giants.



Furthermore, the club is owned by the Yomiuri conglomerate — a vast media complex including the *Yomiuri Shinbun*, a major daily newspaper, the *Hôchi*, a leading sports daily, and the Nippon Television Network Corporation (NTV), a major TV network (Whiting 1977: 213; 1989: 236). The Giants continued to occupy prime time TV on NTV every single night while at home and on other channels when away (Whiting 1989: 236). In addition to excellent team performance, this strong media complex-led campaign established the ‘Giants-centrism’, aiding in making the most prestigious team sporting brand in Japan. Not surprisingly, most of baseball players wished to play with the Giants. Whiting (1989: 161) notes what the popularity of the Giants means to the nation:

About 60 percent of all Japanese, it is generally believed, are Giants fans and the range of Giants fandom is so wide [that] the team’s performance has been held responsible for everything from economic recession in Japan to the national suicide rate.

In the history of the Giants dominance, Whiting claims that many Giants fans’ favourite era was the ‘pure-blooded period’ from 1958 to 1974 during which time the team won thirteen pennants with no foreign players at all (Whiting 1989: 162).<sup>35</sup> Because this period included the period of V9 (winning the Japan Series championship titles nine years running = 1965-1973), the Giants were understood as the team of a ‘pure-blooded policy’. At the end of the 1974 season, Kawakami, the V9 manager,

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<sup>35</sup> Precisely, it was between 1963 and 1974 during which time there were no foreign players in the Giants (see *Baseball Magazine Sha* 2002: 82).

and some key players announced their retirement, which caused a decline in team strength (see 5.7). This prompted the club to put a 'pure-blooded policy' to an end, turning to foreign players for the immediate workforce. Therefore, the 'pure-blooded policy' is history, but the club remains obsessed with a 'pure Giants-blooded ideology'. Shôriki, the founder of the club, issued two decrees about the Giants management at its foundation: 1) a Giants' manager must be a lifetime Giants' player who was a star; 2) a Giants' manager is not allowed to take managership twice (Kondô 1999: 73). Although the second decree was broken, while the first decree still remains untouchable. At the end of the 2005 season, in response to the team's bad performance and a recent decline in the popularity of the Giants, there was an attempt to install a non-Giants' ex-player as the next manager. But after a lot of twists and turns, the management finally made the decision to stick with a 'pure Giants-blooded policy'. It is not rare that a club appoints its lifetime star player as the manager in baseball culture in Japan, but no other clubs but the Giants are so obsessed with a 'pure club-blooded' policy. This indicates that the Giants' elitism still remains strong.

The Giants, as the most victorious and the wealthiest club, have been influential in baseball business to the point that they has come to symbolise the essential 'Japaneseness' of the game throughout the country. To borrow Kelly's phrase (1998a: 107), the Japanese both condensed



professional baseball into the Giants image and symbolised natural prosperity and unique achievement and success with the style of this dominant and domineering team. Whiting (1989: 198) shares this view, mentioning how the club is desperate to protecting its social image:

...no publication could interview anyone on the Giants without first obtaining the formal permission of the front office. To obtain that permission, the publication had to submit a list of questions it wanted to ask to [the person in charge], and when the article was finished it also had to be submitted for approval...Those that [criticised] the organisation were scolded and usually denied further access.

The club took advantage of this position, changing business and management rules drastically and iconoclastically (to the benefit of the club). But, at the same time, ideologically, it is possible to say that the Giants are also the most traditional-bound.

### 7.2.2 The Hanshin Tigers

The Hanshin Tigers are the second most-traditional club after the Giants. Owned by Hanshin Railways, the Tigers have been considered to be the club representing the Osaka area.<sup>36</sup> Unlike the Giants who have been portrayed as posh gentlemen, the Tigers have tended to be portrayed comically. Osaka was (still is) the centre of comedy culture and the club was regarded as part of it.

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<sup>36</sup> Precisely, the hometown of the Tigers is Hyôgo, next door to Osaka. There were three other clubs in the Osaka area, but those three clubs belonged to the Pacific League which had no regular meetings with the Giants. As the popularity of the Pacific League went on decline, the Tigers emerged as the club representing the Osaka area.

As stated earlier, the Tigers have been the traditional rival of the Giants although, in most cases, the former played second fiddle to the latter. What fuelled their baseball rivalry was the regional rivalry between Tokyo and Osaka which Kelly (2004b: 99-100) details as follows:

One of the grand themes of 20th-century Japanese state making has been the dramatic shift in the Kantô [the Tokyo area]-Kansai [the Osaka area] balance of power, especially Osaka's loss of economic parity with Tokyo and its postwar subordination in the Tokyo-centrism of the present political economy. In a circulation of rhetoric, local media commentators and ordinary fans alike are quick to recite a litany of contrast pairs (Tokyo versus Osaka, national bureaucrats versus local business people, national imperviousness versus regional pride, and big powerful corporations versus vulnerable small business) that are symbolically condensed in the Giants-Tigers rivalry.

However, for some Tigers, the Giants-Tigers rivalry was not as simple as baseball rivalry. For example, Enatsu Yutaka, the Tigers ace pitcher in the 1970s, likened the Giants-Tigers rivalry to the battle of Sekigahara:<sup>37</sup>

The Western army's grudge against the Eastern army has not disappeared for four centuries since the battle of Sekigahara. The Tigers' (the Western army) hostility toward the Giants (the Eastern army) can be traced back to the battle of Sekigahara. Because this four centuries-running grudge was passed down to us, the Tigers must win over the Giants no matter what (quoted in Kondô 2000: 226-227 translated from Japanese).

Not only Enatsu but also every other non-Giants follower showed strong rivalry with the Giants, but what marked Enatsu out is that he expressed his rivalry with the Giants with the uncommon language, 'a grudge'. In

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<sup>37</sup> A power struggle between two warlords, Tokugawa Ieyasu and Ishida Mitsunari in 1600. Tokugawa and his allies (the Eastern army) defeated Ishida and his allies (the Western army). This victory was the major step for the Tokugawa family to govern Japan for the next two centuries as the national leader (see 3.1).



fact, his pitching performance embodied his extreme ideology, which enhanced Osaka fans' regional pride. But what cannot be discounted is that the Tigers' rivalry toward (or the Tigers' grudge against) the Giants depends on the Giants being victorious. What has motivated the Tigers (and other clubs) was the victorious Giants. In other words, the victorious Giants created the very reason for non-Giants' existence.

The Giants-Tigers meetings continued to be the major meetings in Japanese version and drew more audiences than any other meeting, producing many dramas. Of them, one incident in the 1985 season fuelled the debate about Japanese version.

### 7.2.3 One Incident in the 1985 Season

The 1985 season was the one in which the Tigers won the league championship title for the first time since 1964. Their rare success put the Osaka area in an ecstasy of joy. It was Randy Bass, an American player, who was the driving force behind the Tigers success. Bass produced home runs at a remarkable pace, approaching the single-season record (55) held by Oh (see 6.1), former Giants and the lifetime home run record holder, who piloted the Giants for this season. Bass had reached number 54 before the Tigers met the Giants for their two final games. Needless to say, fans' attention was on whether Bass would overcome Oh. But all the Giants but one avoided delivering balls within the strike zone so that he would not hit

home runs. This tactic paid off and, as a result, Oh's record was protected

This incident was interpreted as an extension of indelible national character by the American press (Kelly 2002: 50). The message was "the Japanese are simply a clannish people and will never treat foreign players equitably, so national character trumped sportsmanship" (Kelly 2002: 50). An American pitcher who played for the Giants that season was cited as claiming that the team's pitching coach had threatened his pitchers with a hefty thousand-dollar fine for every strike they threw to Bass (Whiting 1989: 295). In addition, Whiting gathered the statement from Bass that, "Perhaps, [Oh] himself didn't directly order his pitchers to [avoid] me. But then again, I'm sure that in the back of his mind he didn't want his record broken" (Whiting 1989: 294). Whiting refrained from expressing himself directly over this incident, but putting his interviewees' statements together, he implies that the play reflected a form of Japanese xenophobia (e.g. Whiting 2004: 155).

But Kelly has a different perspective, arguing that "this interpretation of Bass's treatment solely as an outgrowth of national pride doesn't take into account other factors (Kelly 2002: 50). His argument is based on the fact that the passionate Giants fans booed the pitchers, not Bass, and that a popular columnist was quoted as deploring the pitchers' actions as disgraceful in an American newspaper, which prompts him to claim that



not 'the Japanese' [avoided] Bass but rather the Giants pitchers did (Kelly 2002: 50). Furthermore, in addition to the Giants' being desperate for a victory based on the bitter rivalry accompanied by city pride, Kelly notes that Oh's personal history was part of this incident as well (Kelly 2002: 51).<sup>38</sup>

#### 7.2.4 The Sequel

As suggested so far, Kelly sticks with 'baseball in Japan', but his effort seems to have been diluted when Oh's record was threatened by two different foreign players in the 2001 and the 2002 seasons. After hitting number 54, both of them met the Oh-managed Hawks (a Pacific League team). History repeated itself in both seasons, but they both produced number 55, qualifying for a share of the record. Not surprisingly, in both cases, Oh denied that he gave a directive to the pitchers to avoid them, but one Hawks coach admitted it had all been his doing, being quoted as saying that, "...if Rhodes [the protagonist in the 2001 season] broke the record I would have felt sorry for Oh. I doubt Oh wants to see Rhodes break the record in front of him. I just didn't want a foreign player to break Oh's record" (Whiting 2004: 156). This statement suggests that Japanese baseball still tends towards xenophobia. Kelly does not mention

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<sup>38</sup> Specifically, Kelly (2002: 51) refers to a famous incident on the occasion of a Giants-Tigers meeting in 1965 in which Oh was thrown at twice by the Tigers pitcher who was American, which led to a fist-fight between his batting coach and the pitcher, and to the belittlement of Oh's career home run record by the American baseball world (Baseball parks in Japan were smaller than those in America).

these two incidents, but he would probably argue that considering that foreign players commonly win batting or pitching titles and some of the national records are held by them, judging Japanese baseball as xenophobic is a superficial interpretation. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that Oh's home run achievement is considered to be special. Oh is the baseball icon for Japanese fans and this feeling is strong also for Oh's contemporary players who are currently working as managers or coaches. They know that Oh's achievement resulted from his total dedication to batting and his ceaseless self-improvement (see 6.1). In addition to a genuine desire to secure Oh's prestige, arguably, they do not consider foreign players, who seem to be relatively easygoing, to be qualified to get even with Oh. Even if a foreign player (or an undeserved Japanese player) overcomes Oh, Oh's supporters will claim, "Oh's contemporary pitchers were more excellent". Furthermore, it is an important factor that Oh's achievement is associated with the Giants. But there is a growing opinion against Japanese baseball men's xenophobic attitudes among baseball men among younger players especially.

American baseball, which is proud of fair play and openness, witnessed two home players treated unfairly when they were breaking Babe Ruth's, the baseball icon, home run records (one pursued his single-season record, the other his lifetime record). Whiting (2004: 160) asks what would happen if Ichirô achieved 55-game hitting streak (hitting successfully



more than once 55 games running), threatening Joe DiMaggio's, a former Yankees and another baseball icon, six decade-standing major league record (56-game hitting streak), and then came up against the Yankees in Yankee Stadium, where he is perpetually booed. Admitting that it is an intriguing question, Whiting (2004: 160) notes that, "given the increased [globalisation] and ethnicity of the U.S. game, the answer is, probably, nothing".

As Kelly insists, it is necessary to take some complicated situations into consideration in relation to the alleged xenophobic tendency. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that Japanese supporters become nationalistic regarding Oh's home run achievement. It is quite doubtful if young generation players who are supposedly less 'Oh-bound' and critical of Japanese xenophobic attitudes can be consistent in their attitudes when they hold responsible positions such as managers or coaches in the future.

### **7.3 Supporter Formation**

The third topic to which this thesis direct attention is supporter formation. The mass of spectators are indispensable in sporting contests, multiplying sporting excitement. In most cases, the mass of spectators can be divided into two: one is 'ordinary' spectators and the other supporters, or fans. The former can be defined as those who genuinely enjoy a sporting

contest and the latter as those who, in particular, collectively cheer their favourite team to victory. Jensen (cited in Kelly 2004a: 1) notes about fans that, “fans emerge out of mass culture audiences in search of intensified meanings and pleasures. They selectively appropriate from among this mass culture, and creatively rework their selections in to a [stylised] matrix of practices and identities”. But to many nonfans, these ‘creators’ are either the “obsessed individuals” or the “hysterical crowd”. Japanese baseball, irrespective of professional or amateur status, has been inseparable from supporters, but they have been characterised negatively as hysterical groupies (Kelly 2004b: 83). According to Whiting (Whiting and Tamaki 1991: 208-210) and Kelly (2004b: 98), organised cheering groups are absent from American baseball. The cheering behaviour in the Japanese game overthrows foreign image of the Japanese game— they are shy, low-key — and arouses Whiting’s and Kelly’s acquisitiveness. But they develop their respective argument.

### *The Origin*

Supporters’ formation in Japanese baseball can be traced back to the era of Ichikô baseball (4.3.1), but their presence became a major factor during the era of college baseball (4.3.2) in the early twentieth century (Whiting 1989; Nagai and Hashizume 2003; Kelly 2004b). The two leading university teams — Waseda and Keiô — were so impressed with American collegiate cheering (especially at football matches), that following the



occasion of their baseball tour of the U.S. in the early twentieth century, that they introduced the American style of supporting back home (Kelly 2004b: 89). Participating in a supporting group, which grew to be highly organised, extremely loud, and more than a little militant, was considered a way of demonstrating school loyalty, and postgame confrontations between rival cheering groups were a vivid adjunct to the athletic activity on the field (Whiting 1989: 114). The intensification of confrontations between rival cheering groups grew to be a social problem, becoming one of the factors for the launch of the nationwide anti-baseball campaign by a newspaper (the Evil of Baseball, see 7.1) (Nagai and Hashizume 2003: 108). Therefore, university authorities were prompted to place restrictions on cheering groups' performance. In the Kôshien tournament, organising authorities issued decrees restricting cheering groups' performance on several occasions (Nagai and Hashizume 2003: 110).

### *Supporter Formation in Professional Baseball*

As discussed so far, organised fan cheering was part of baseball culture in Japan from the beginning. Professional teams feared a sceptical public respect for amateurism. For promotion and support, most of them organised a supporting fan group consisting of their parent companies' employees (Kelly 2004b: 89). As seen in college baseball, flags, megaphones, and cheer songs were used for colour and cohesion (Kelly 2004b: 89), but given the fact that Waseda or Keiô graduates were

committed to the formation of professional teams, it was no wonder that the cheering style in college baseball was reproduced in professional baseball (Nagai and Hashizume 2003: 119). According to Nagai and Hashizume (2003: 119), the Braves (a defunct team owned by the Hankyû Electric Railroad Company) organised the brass band and the supporters sung the company song and the cheering songs in concert with the brass band's performance. But the brass band-led cheering discontinued because of the war. With the popularity of professional baseball soaring after World War II, the cheering groups were organised voluntarily in the outfield seats and gradually made their presence felt. The cheering style in the 1950s and 1960s mainly consisted of drum-hitting (a three-three-seven beat) and jeers or heckling (Nagai and Hashizume 2003: 149). As to jeers or heckling, Kelly (2004b: 95) details about them, specifically mentioning the Kôshien stadium (the Tigers fans):

The audiences at Kôshien are famous for their *yaji* (jeers), and even in the midst of the fan club cheering, one can hear heckling and catcalls. Heckling ranges widely, from boorish catcalls ("Yoshida, you idiot!" or "Get the bum out of here!") to more witty satirical barbs, phrased in Osaka dialect and thrown out with the timing and pitch...

This description indicates the Tigers fans' behaviour in the 1990s, which, however, is similar to the cheering style of the 1950s and the 1960s. As noted in 7.2.2, the Osaka area was the centre of comedy culture and a high quality of jeers and heckling were required there in particular. Nagai and Hashizume (2003: 148-149) notes further:

Jeers or heckling was one of the pleasures for spectators. Just



badmouthing or throwing out discriminatory terms were not accepted. The idea seems to have been dominant that jeers and heckling which could raise a laugh were the good ones in the ballparks in the Osaka area. Those who jeered or heckled wanted to make the entire stadium including players on the field laugh and this was possible in those days. The absence of noise-making instruments created 'soundless timing' in the games. Jeers and heckling were delivered at the moment of the 'soundless timing' (translated from Japanese).

But this relatively quiet cheering style turned into a loud one, which was influenced by college baseball. As was the case with college baseball in the early days, the cheering groups in the 1960s were considered to be troublemakers because of their belligerent attitude. There was an attempt to turn their belligerent attitude into a more mild one. As a consequence, music was introduced into their cheering style, which established a style in which spectators screamed in tune with the brass band's performance (Nagai and Hashizume 2003: 232). In other words, spectators' random screams were structurally managed and this cheering style became successful and mainstream in Japanese baseball (Nagai and Hashizume 2003: 233).

In professional baseball, the brass band-led cheering style took the form of playing the trumpets loudly, which is said to have originated with the Hiroshima Tôyô Carp cheering groups (Nagai and Hashizume 2003: 233). In addition, they are also credited with inventing various cheering styles (i.e. the invention of a cheering song for each player) which were to be shared in other ballparks (Nagai and Hashizume 2003: 233-234). But to

some spectators, such performances were nothing more than antics, producing noise pollution. In order to tone the cheering groups down for the benefit of fans who might wish to watch a game in peace and quiet, Shimoda Takezô, former baseball commissioner, made three requests: 1) Do not force others to root for teams; 2) Do not use drums and other noise-making instruments; 3) Do not wave large flags or banners (Whiting 1989: 116). But his requests were not met, because the cheering groups, who were affiliated to different clubs, were composed of fans who effectively policed the outfield stands 'voluntarily' (Whiting and Tamaki 1991: 210). In addition, for the Pacific League clubs which had suffered chronic low attendances, the absence of flags and noise-making instruments in cheering would have made the stands look even more bare (Nagai and Hashizume 2003: 245).

There is a tendency to view the cheering groups in the Japanese version of baseball as further proof of Japanese society's addiction to group activity and regulation (Whiting 1989: 117) and Whiting is partial to this hypothesis. He explains as follows:

The typical fan, left alone and to his own devices, will sit quietly through a nine-inning game, behaving with proverbial Japanese decorum, eschewing the sort of loud and vulgar conduct common in many U.S. major league ballparks...Yet, put him in one of the highly [organised] cheering groups that can be found at all baseball stadiums in Japan, and he quickly sheds his traditional restraint. Spurred on by energetic cheerleaders, and the pounding rhythm of drums, horns, whistles, and other noisemakers, he becomes a veritable wildman, yelling and screaming nonstop for nine solid innings (Whiting 1989:



113-114).

Furthermore, Whiting, comparing spectators in American baseball to those in the Japanese game, adds that, "In American baseball, jeering and throwing words of cheer out are the basic cheering style. In Japanese baseball, carrying on singing the cheering songs all together with the megaphone in hand became the mainstream" (Whiting and Tamaki 1991: 210).

On the other hand, Kelly (2004b: 98) admits that "the noisy and [colourful] presence of fan clubs is certainly one of the key features distinguishing professional baseball in Japan from its older sibling in the United States". But he regards Whiting's view not only as partial to stereotypes about an alleged Japanese character of mindless collectivism but also as an general dismissal of fans as undiscerning and overly emotional sports boors (2004b: 83). Kelly carried out ethnographic fieldwork in the Kôshien stadium for three seasons (1996-98). As a result of being part of the Tigers fans, he received the impression that there was something more complex than what was on the surface in the cheering behaviour in Japanese baseball. He gives his impression in the following way:

Despite the gendered and age-graded administrative hierarchies of the clubs and their determined orchestration of fan sentiment, the mood among the thousands who nightly fill the [outfield] stands is not as militaristic and [routinised] as the structures suggest. People pay close attention to batting (having to cheer constantly focuses attention) and

some attention to the other team's (batting opportunities). However, rather than the regimented mass spectator formation of the Chinese National Games...Kôshien games remind me much more of the delicately balanced "mood" of festivals I have attended, with their mix of the choreographed and the spontaneous, of knowledge and passion...It is simply fun to be out there, although exhilarating and exhausting (Kelly 2004b: 100)

Additionally, Kelly concludes (2004b: 101)

To see the fans as automatons...belies the constant anxiety and perplexity of stadium and team officials and even fan club officers at the unpredictable course that such high emotion and deep knowledge can take. Thus, rather than treating baseball fans in Japan as some noisome aberration of proper sports spectatorship, we should instead understand them as bearing witness to the central role of fandom in mass culture everywhere today. It is commonplace observation that modern societies offer highly [commercialised] and "massified" forms of entertainment and leisure, and profit motives rather than performance standards more typically motivate the culture industries that produce what we watch and listen to. Japan...is an exemplar and not an exception.

In response to Kelly's relativistic approach to the cheering behaviour in Japanese baseball, Whiting produces a counter-argument. For example, he argues that "to suggest that there may be more going on in the grandstand than mindless groupthink or cathartic transformations from salaryman to screaming savage is hardly an epiphanous leap toward the understanding of the subject" (Whiting 2004: 285). Whiting gathered the pro-Whiting statements from thirteen people consisting of baseball writers, Japanese and non-Japanese fans, Japanese players in American baseball etc (Whiting 2004: 284-288). One of the interviewees is a New Zealand-born Tigers' fan, calling himself a 'semi-permanent resident' of the outfield stands in the Kôshien stadium. Arguably, he can be considered to be as



qualified as Kelly for saying something definite about the cheering behaviour because of spending much time as part of the Tigers' fan culture. Noticing the difference between the quietness of spectators in infield stands and the hyperactivity of those in outfield stands often oblivious to game situations, he guesses those in outfield stands are carried away by the mob's spirit (see Whiting 2004: 287-288).

It is quite difficult to judge which hypothesis correctly mirrors the cheering groups in Japanese baseball. Given the fact that some advocates of Whiting — especially, baseball writers — are long time Japan-based, Whiting and his supporters' hypothesis seems persuasive as well. But Kelly (2004b: 98) argues that organised fan cheering is “certainly a crucial and occasionally disruptive element of other Western sports, including American football and European and South American soccer”, toning ‘orientalist exaggerations’ down. It would be necessary to execute a Kelly-style fieldwork project in each ballpark in order to better assess the similarities and differences between ‘orientalist exaggerations’ and relativist interpretations (see Nagai and Hashizume 2003: 241).

#### **7.4 The Response/Adaptation of Japanese Baseball to Sport Science**

What this chapter picks up as the fourth topic concerns itself with the response/adaptation of Japanese baseball to sport science. Throughout

this thesis, it has been argued that Japanese version grew as ‘spiritual baseball’ (*seishin yakyū*) and that this spiritual baseball caused cultural friction with immigrant players (especially, American players) who were accustomed to rational and scientific baseball. But Kelly (1998a: 104) argues that ‘spiritual baseball’ has surfaced in Japanese version only at certain institutional sites and during certain historical moments, rejecting the idea that it is the universal theme of the Japanese game.

To put it simply, spiritual baseball is based on the idea that one’s inner power is able to make the impossible possible. In addition to ‘spirit’, there are some keywords which put their emphasis on one’s inner power in the vocabulary of the Japanese version of baseball. These are quite alien concepts for non-Japanese (especially, Western people), but Kelly (1998a: 104) explains the mechanism of spiritual baseball skilfully:

*Konjō* [= fighting spirit] combines passive, stoic endurance with active, all-out drive. It is the application of effort (*doryoku*) to temper the spirit (*seishin*). The spirit — which is to say the mind/body indivisible — is honed through repetitive, imitative practice, hyperconditioning, and a tight managerial control that channels that fighting spirit into collective ends. It is the spirit of *ganbaru*, which is *not*, as it is usually glossed, doing one’s best, but doing *more* than one’s best. *Ganbaru*, or *gattsu*, [= borrowed English synonym, ‘guts’] is an ethos of overachievement and superhuman effort. Pitching day after day, the 1000-fungo drill [= fielding drill in a row], other felt manifestations of fighting spirit are a reaching beyond one’s normal limits and rational expectations.

Kelly claims that ‘fighting spirit’ is an ideological theme in Japanese baseball which resulted from particular social environments in particular



times. He refers to three occasions (1998a: 104). The first occasion he mentions is the late 1880s and the 1890s, during which time Ichikô baseball was dominant. As noted in 4.3.1, Ichikô was a preparatory school for the Imperial University and functioned as the symbol of 'Japaneseness' in opposition to the alleged Westernsation-related deterioration of the social environment in Japan, achieving a huge baseball success by imposing the 'practice of death' on the players. Kelly (1998a: 105) notes about the social background that "...this was...a time when elite youth fell under the critical gaze of a populace suspicious of their moral and physical fitness for the prestigious positions soon to be theirs".

Kelly picks out the late 1910s and 1920s as the second occasion in which a fighting spirit ran through Japanese baseball (1998a: 105). This period was the era of college baseball and witnessed the emergence of Tobita Suishû as the central figure (see 4.3.2). Based on the idea that sport without spiritual development did not deserve to be called sport, Tobita, former Waseda manager, trained his players to the point of their being half dead and motionless with froth coming out of their mouths (see 4.3.2). Kelly (1998a: 105) comments that his obsession with a fighting spirits countered the pervasiveness of the corporate exploitation of sport (sport commercialism). Kelly adds that "Tobita's stern amateurism was used to temper this emerging [commercialised] popularity, especially of middle-school and Tokyo-area college baseball" (1998a: 105).

Kelly (1998a: 105) hypothesises that the fighting spirit became ideologically central in professional baseball when it was adopted by the V9 Giants (1965-1973). In parallel with Japan on the way to economic prosperity, the Giants were “presented as supremely talented, tautly disciplined, and relentlessly efficient, and its success was celebrated as a powerful synecdoche for the confident, industrious society and competitive, resurgent economy that Japan itself was becoming” (Kelly 1998a: 106). As a matter of fact, Kawakami, the then-manager, demanded iron discipline, arduous practices, stolid teamwork, and a conservative playing strategy (Kelly 1998a: 106).

But Whiting (2004) does not satisfy himself with Kelly’s hypothesis that the fighting spirit was neither natural nor universal — especially, the argument that the fighting spirit did not become ideologically central before the arrival of the era of the V9 Giants (Whiting 2004: 280). He refers to a training camp held by the Giants for the 1936 autumn season (Morinji Camp) as evidence.<sup>39</sup> According to Fujimoto, the then-manager, “The truth was that Sawamura [= the key player in those days] was the prime target of that camp. He was scouted for American baseball, which

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<sup>39</sup> The 1936 season consisted of spring and autumn league matches and multiple summer tournaments. The Giants, who were absent from the spring matches because of their baseball tour of the U.S., attended the summer tournaments. But their performances were not impressive. Therefore, they were very eager to win the autumn matches. Morinji is a temple located in the outskirts of Tokyo.



made him conceited. The entire team was in the same mood. At that rate, we could not have won. We were losing our willpower. Other teams were ganging up on us” (quoted in Aota 1996: 300). Young hopefuls were bombarded with 1,000 fielding balls in a row so fiercely, until they collapsed vomiting (see Whiting 2004: 60). During the same period, the Tigers were engaged in 1,000 fielding practice in a row as well. The then-Tigers manager, Ishimoto, was famous for his Spartan training and was such an advocate of spiritual baseball that his student who later became one of the biggest named managers in professional baseball was made to walk barefoot on a real sword in the name of spiritual development (Matsuki 1985: 110).

Whiting also illustrates his argument pointing to pitchers in the 1950s and the 1960s, who pitched for many more games than those today, as another disproof (2004: 280). Many pitchers were very prone to damage to their arms and shoulders, which shortened the baseball careers of young prospects. One of such players reportedly put it that, “The code of Bushido was strong...Many times my fingers and arms hurt, but I could not refuse my manager’s request” (quoted in Whiting 2004: 280). But it is necessary to note that a great affection for a manager as well as the code of Bushido made the players tick. Unlike today’s players who choose which team to play for within the terms of popularity, those in early generations were more interested in which manager to play for (Nomura 1987: 52-54).

Accordingly, to early players, the euphoria over working for the manager was more enormous than the feeling that they were the sacrifice of fighting spirit baseball (see A Review of Literature of 'Japanese Society' in 6.2 for further reference).

Kelly's argument is built on the fact that there were also many professional and amateur teams which employed a less spiritualised and more rationalised approach (sport science) (Kelly 1998a). Sport science, in which the U.S. takes the lead, studies the sporting body scientifically and is reportedly able to heighten athletic ability effectively and efficiently. The recent progress of sport science is such that it is becoming more specialised, as illustrated in various sport science-related disciplines such as sport nutrition, sport psychology, exercise physiology, kinesiology, and statistics. In more recent years, sport science has been defined more broadly to include medical interventions, such as massage therapy, physiotherapy, chiropractic, and podiatry. 'Alternative' therapy have also become popular. Whiting (1989: 318) describes the situation in the U.S. as follows:

Sports training techniques have developed greatly over the years in the States. In one big-league clubhouse, there is a box filled with water in which the player lies in the dark, listening to soothing music and watching videos of himself at [the batter's box]. Lots of players also use hypnosis.

Nomura Katsuya describes a transformation of the Japanese game, as follows: "The Japanese game once was the game of fighting spirit before it



transformed itself into the game of brain. Now, it is the game of information". In line with this development, Nomura practised what is described as 'ID baseball' (a statistical analysis of rival teams' performances) and became the most successful manager in the 1990s (see 5.6). However, he was appointed as manager of the newly formed Rakuten Eagles in 2004 which finished at the bottom of the league in the 2005 season. There is also a move to introduce top American major leaguers' workouts for body conditioning among today's players (Whiting 2004: 283). Today's players are well-informed about up-to-date training methods and practise them regularly (see Ochiai 1998: 198-203). The growth of sport medicine in Japanese baseball is also influenced by its use in American baseball. The idea had been dominant in Japanese baseball that operating on hurt shoulders or arms would mean the end of his playing career. Depending on folk remedies, a pitcher who got a sore arm had to try to increase the number of pitches with the belief that the pain would disappear. But when one pitcher broke the 'taboo' and got his sore arm operated on in the U.S. and made a comeback in 1984, Japanese baseball lost touch with a superstition (see Whiting 1989: 52-58).

Not surprisingly, given that scientific methods — spearheaded by the U.S. — have been applied to all aspects of all types of sports all over the world in an effort to secure the best chances of winning matches and races and medals, all sports in Japan, including baseball, are influenced by this

approach.

Kelly relates his hypothesis about Japanese approach to the game to the scale and structure of baseball organisation in Japan (Kelly 1998b). Baseball organisation aims at the smooth management of baseball business that incorporates talent recruitment and talent identification. As was the case with the growth of sport science in Japanese baseball, the Japanese game learned the scientific management of baseball business including talent recruitment and identification from American baseball. According to Kelly (1998b), the small scale of baseball organisation in the Japanese game has justified a 'quantity-oriented' approach. The following section outlines Kelly's approach to talent recruitment and talent development.

### *Talent Recruitment and Talent Development in Japanese Baseball*

The Japanese version of baseball has depended on the draft system (the teams pick up hopefuls among high school, college, and semipro players) for rookie talent recruitment since 1965. Before the introduction of the draft system, it was common that young talent was concentrated on the most popular and the most dominant club, the Giants. This produced the cycle in which the club had a large stock of promising players, continuing to win, receiving the massive media attention, and attracting other promising talent. In order to address the imbalance of power, the



draft system was introduced under the slogan of 'co-existing in prosperity' (*kyôson kyôei*) at the cost of players' freedom to choose the team to play with. Ironically, the start of the draft system overlapped with the start of the Giants' V9, but the imbalance of power was rectified after V9 to some extent.

For talent recruitment among existing players, trading was the major way, but in 1993, free agency (FA) was added as another way for talent recruitment. Free agency allows Japanese major leaguers who have served the parent team for nine full seasons to exercise the right to move to another team. But compensation to be sent to the team losing the player in question from the team employing him is so huge that this system is said to benefit the Giants only. In fact, the club is eager to recruit star players from other clubs via free agency.

Both American and Japanese versions of baseball employ the draft system, trading, and free agency as the main ways for talent recruitment. What sets the Japanese version apart from American baseball is the scale of talent development (Kelly 1998b: 28). There are twelve professional teams in two leagues in Japan, compared with thirty teams in six divisions of two leagues in American major league baseball (Kelly 1998b: 28). Furthermore, while each Japanese major league team has only one minor league team, there are four levels of minor leagues in American

baseball — 3A, 2A, 1A, and rookie — for a total of more than two hundred professional minor league teams (Kelly 1998b: 28). Accordingly, an American major league manager can assume that his players have already been taught professional fundamentals in the process of their going up to the major league team (Kelly 1998b: 28). In Japanese baseball, however, because of player shortage resulting from one minor league team per one major league team, even at the major league level, there is a far wider talent spread (the mix of FA level and rookie level players) than on an American major league team (Kelly 1998b: 28). Therefore, a Japanese manager and his coaches must do much more basic training of their players even at a major league team level (Kelly 1998b: 28). There is a growing opinion among Japanese baseball men that the area of player development in Japanese baseball is the biggest problem (e.g. Hiro'oka 1997). But this indicates the limitation of corporation-led baseball management. Whiting (1989: 321-322) notes:

American major league clubs are business franchises. They are highly profit oriented and dependent on the cultivation of strong regional loyalties for their continuing success...In Japan, however, since nearly all teams exist as public relations vehicles for large business enterprises, they are, in many cases, administered by men who know nothing about running a baseball team. Prohibitive budgets allow each club one farm team...greatly limiting opportunities for young players and aspiring coaches to learn and polish their skills.

Specifically mentioning Japanese soccer, Gotô credits German soccer for its contribution to the growth of Japanese soccer especially in the 1960s. He characterises German soccer as a 'never-give-up' attitude and a



'never-relax-mind-throughout-the-game' attitude, arguing that these attitudes and Japanese sport philosophy were in tune (Gotô 1995: 72-73). On the eve of the 2002 soccer World Cup Final between Germany and Brazil, the German team captain was quoted as saying that "It is not enough to do our best for beating Brazil. We need to risk our lives" (Mercier 2002). These German attitudes toward sport indicates that the spiritualised approach is not altogether particularly Japanese or oriental. Therefore, it is true to a point for Kelly to argue that the scale and structure of baseball organisation and particular social environments in particular times formed the spiritualised approach in Japanese baseball. But what is a shame is that Kelly does not mention Japanese baseball greats' mysticism, which can be interpreted as specifically Japanese. As represented by Kawakami's comment that a pitched ball 'stopped', Japanese baseball greats referred to their own mysticism (see 6.1). According to Whiting and Tamaki (1991: 93) "(As of 1991), there has been nobody in American major league baseball who said that a pitched ball 'stopped'". It is an intriguing question how Kelly interprets mysticism in Japanese baseball.

## 7.5 The Concluding Remarks Relating to Chapter Seven

This chapter has thrown the light on the imported Japanese form of American baseball from a particular angle — in the form of the Whiting-

Kelly baseball debate. Both of them are American, having made themselves familiar with the Japanese version of baseball in detail. Kelly tries to understand the Japanese version of the game relativistically, while Whiting tends to interpret it as something particular.

Immigrant players' repeated complaints about the Japanese game indicates that it is particular, which endorses Whiting's argument. But what should be noted is that his orientalist approach is based on a limited comparative study between baseball in Japan and America. It is no wonder that one's own culture is characterised as 'universal' and the other's as 'particular' if just two different cultural spheres are involved. In addition to the U.S. and Japan, baseball is played in some Central American countries, some East Asian countries, and some European countries. Given this reality, the orientalist approach is far from comprehensive and Kelly's relativistic approach can correct this weakness. Some of his arguments are fresh, overthrowing stereotypes of Japaneseness. However, the absence in Kelly's position of any reference to any style of play or behaviour in the game that can be interpreted as particularly Japanese tends to weaken his argument. For example, as noted earlier, why a pitched ball 'stops' in Japanese baseball, but not in American baseball is an interesting theme for further investigation.



Nevertheless, Kelly's relativistic approach can be credited with intercultural understanding. Comparisons are usually reduced to the argument that one's own culture is superior to the other's, which has been the groundwork for wars at worst. The aforementioned Itasaka (1971: 194) argues that cultural differences are nothing more than a matter of degree, which is in tune with Kelly's approach. More importantly, with the globalisation of sport culture, so many sports are shared by so many different people that a bilateral comparative study via one sport is inadequate. It can make the argument one-sided, ending in emphasising particularism. Alternatively, a multilateral comparative study via multiple sports is needed in order to understand fully the nature and scale and progress of sport globalisation.

## Chapter 8 Conclusion: How to Respond to Globalisation

This thesis is a comment on global processes in Japanese sport from a non-Western point of view. Because since the nineteenth century the global diffusion of modern sport was driven forward by the West, modern sport epitomises Western ideology — faster, higher, and stronger — and analyses of globalisation tend to be Western-centric. Early analyses of globalisation were based on economism, and later came recognition of the importance of culture and development of the argument that the dominant side (the West) underdeveloped (or homogenised) the dominated side (the non-West) culturally. On the other hand, the approach represented by cultural studies and process sociology views cultural power relations between the dominant side and the dominated side as fluid so that their cultural clashes produce a new cultural pattern rather than one in which the dominant side marginalises the dominated side unidirectionally. Furthermore, it was also argued that globalisation is a long-term process during which time non-occidental ancient civilisations interacted with occidental civilisation (see Maguire 1999: 63) which implies that the Western side's current predominance over the non-Western side is nothing but an occurrence in a limited period in human history. This perspective opens the way to understanding the global processes multidimensionally without falling into Western-centrism.



In studying global processes from a non-Western point of view, Japan is arguably one of those countries which can provide the most interesting data in that both British and American-originating sports are popular there (cricket is quite minor). But more important and interesting is that three major sports in Japan — sumô, baseball, and soccer — take their own specific and different stance in the face of global processes. While the sumô world is resolute in maintaining ‘Japaneseness’, the soccer world welcomes its Westernisation. But the baseball world witnesses two different tendencies — to maintain Japanese style and to accept Americanisation. These different responses to global processes can be attributed to the characteristics of each sport. Soccer is a dynamic sport and game situations change constantly. Players must decide what to do instantaneously, which is at odds with manager-initiative style, a common sport philosophy in Japan. Soccer players are required to be independent-minded, creative, individualistic, and self-assertive, all of which symbolise Western dispositions. In addition, international games teach how important such Western dispositions are for soccer success. On the other hand, baseball is “an interval sport, a game of pulsating oscillations of fast action and slow preparation” (Kelly 2004b: 85), a characteristic which sumô shares. Baseball enables the manager, as the game maker, to give his players instruction about what to do next. Accordingly, in baseball, players who respond to the manager’s will are rated more highly rather

than those who act on their free will. Such characteristics of baseball were in accord with corporate culture which sustained a high-growth economy — perseverance, the ability to practise according to instructions. Besides, unlike soccer, it is possible to say that the absence of international events makes sumô and baseball localised and tradition-bound.

In this thesis, consideration has been specifically given to baseball in Japan as part of investigating global processes. While in the nineteenth century Americans introduced the game in schools and colleges for health and enjoyment, the Japanese found other values in the game and reinterpreted it. Baseball spread nationwide as an educational vehicle teaching group cohesiveness, perseverance, order, and self-restraint. This was reflected in the playing style in which the attitude of ‘not hitting’ (waiting for errors by making the opponent pitcher throw many pitches) was appreciated rather than that of hitting the first pitch. This playing style remains unchanged to the present day alongside American influenced features. After the professional baseball league was launched in 1936, Japanese baseball was influenced by global processes in the form of labour migration from foreign countries, mainly the United States. In most cases, foreign players were treated as ‘mercenaries’ rather than as intrinsic members of the team. American and Japanese approaches to baseball were so different that there were many troubles. To Americans who were used to be a relatively easy-going style, Japanese baseball was



restrictive and inflexible. To the Japanese who were group cohesiveness-conscious, American players were selfish and rebellious. While some American immigrant players were credited with improving the quality of Japanese baseball by pioneering the American style of play, Japanese baseball men, in most cases, were obsessed with the traditional style. Despite some important advice by American players about what should be done, their opinions were rarely adopted. This is arguably because 'controlled baseball' emanating from the Kawakami-led Giants (1961-1974) — putting players under strict and systematic rules — achieved huge success and became the role model for success. Besides, the fact that most great players in Japan reached the top by repeating endless practice strengthened the belief that good players are made, not born. Between 1908 and 2004, the Japan-U.S. baseball series has taken place thirty-six times (visits to Japan by U.S. Professional Teams) (see Whiting 1989: 331-333) and this baseball meeting has been used as the index for Japanese baseball men to evaluate the quality of their game. Considering that this event was (still is) a post-season goodwill event, it is doubtful if game results were worth taking seriously. Nevertheless, using them as data, the American side overwhelmed the Japanese side apart from the 1970 and the 1990 series, which indicated that the Japanese style was inferior to the American style. The 1971 series, especially, is said to have been the most painful setback for the Japanese side (Whiting 1989: 313). The Baltimore Orioles (the American League champions in 1970) went 8

wins 0 loss 3 ties in their eleven games against the Kawakami-led Giants, even although the Giants had been thought of as getting level with the Orioles (Whiting 1989: 313; see also Whiting 1977: 241). But, instead of changing their approach drastically, the Japanese baseball men, thinking that their underachievement resulted from the lack of practice, went on in traditional style. Such inflexibility was not specific to the baseball world, but part of Japanese culture. For example, Aida Yûji, a historian, explains this disposition in the context of Japan's war tactics (1972: 25-27):

Night attack was what the Japanese Navy was good at. The Navy trained the soldiers with good eyesight. When they spotted the enemy ship, the search light was played on it and it was destroyed instantaneously by torpedoes etc. Because the search light was put out as soon as it caught the ship, the enemy were blind temporarily, unable to strike back. But with the advent of radar, these tactics became useless. Although it turned out that night attacks were not advantageous anymore for Japan, the Navy continued night attacks instead of shifting to daylight attacks and suffered defeat after defeat as if they had engaged in battles to be defeated. In brief, the Japanese army did not change their tactics throughout the war. In addition, there was no sign that this failure was recorded as a hard lesson. This inflexibility is true of business strategies. They are obsessed with one method which produced little success, not modifying it under whatever situations. They do not reform it, while they improve it (translated from Japanese).

'Improving but not reforming' can be interpreted as making what is at heart untouchable.

But the 1990s finally saw the Japanese view about sport change drastically. The belief that sport is fun, not painful, started to penetrate Japanese society and soccer emerged as a fun and fashionable sport,



winning the hearts of youngsters. In other words, it is possible to say that the Westernisation of Japanese sport was progressing. Hirao (2001: 67-68)

notes about it that:

Sport can be a good educational tool for talent development and team management. But not in a Japanese sense...Today's society is looking for someone who is rich in creativeness and imaginativeness. This type of talent can be developed via sport, because good performances in sporting contests have a lot to do with creativeness, imaginativeness, an independent-mind, and a voluntary spirit. But because, in reality, emphasis is placed on patience or harmony, things go awry (translated from Japanese).

'Controlled baseball' is now judged as going against the times and there is a growing opinion that Japanese baseball should be more dynamic and more player-oriented. Richard Baines, an American baseball journalist, expresses his opinions about Japanese baseball.

In my opinion, the concept that details win games is true to a point. Players must be dedicated to winning games and taking advantage of opponents' mistakes. The problem in Japan is that this translates into managers asserting their will into the tiniest decision of the game and doing so in unimaginative ways. This keeps players from developing the skills [needed] to win games by thinking on their feet and learning on their own how to exploit [the] opposition's mistakes and how to pressure opponents into making mistakes (*email communication 9/7/2003*).

In response to this type of criticism, there is a move to use players' initiatives in some situations (e.g. letting the base runner steal the next base on his own decision). It remains to be seen how popular the 'World Cup of Baseball' will become, but the 'World Cup' will be a good occasion to test more fully the Japanese and the American approaches.

But it is also true that such 'reforms' tend to be cosmetic, which hampers a more essential reform. Western influences on Japanese baseball materialised most remarkably in the form of the fall in the popularity of Japanese baseball. With the immigration of top Japanese players to American baseball, public attention shifted to American baseball games in which they appear and Japanese baseball games suffered a fall in attendance and viewing figures. There are a lot of opinions about how to regain baseball popularity in Japan and besides the criticism of controlled baseball, detailed fan services are a significant issue. While there is no doubt that these opinions are important in their own ways, a more essential reform is to make the Japanese baseball world more competitive through the introduction of free competition. Hirose (2004: 51), specifically mentioning the growth of Japanese soccer, argues that, "As football can be considered as a leader in the international sports world, the issues of how to popularise and improve football domestically can no longer be solved within the domestic market alone". In view of a pending 'World Cup of Baseball', his advice applies to Japanese baseball.

Finally, this thesis concludes with reference to the alleged bad influence of the Westernisation of sport in Japan. That is, that a respect for individualism is liable to be equated with the expansion of me-ism. Recent team squads in Japanese sport are said to suffer the absence of a leader who can inspire the team. A columnist comments that:



Young players admire 'outlaw' players more than the leader. Is it because they have the image of the leader as an 'honour student', which makes them feel awkward? Or is it because inspiring the team by yelling makes them feel like being the 'pawns' of the manager and coaches? It is said that the American sporting world, which produced legendary leaders such as Michael Jordan, Joe Montana, witnesses selfish players increasing in numbers...There are some players who deserve to be called superstars in Japanese baseball, but they are not leaders. This is the case with the soccer national team. It is true that the American style of free education helped to improve the quality of Japanese sport, but developing a team leader should not be neglected either (Yamane 2004 translated from Japanese).<sup>40</sup>

Hayashi Michiyoshi, a psychoanalyst, calls Japanese society these days a 'paternity-free' society (1996). According to him, as a result of fathers' failures in fulfilling paternal missions — unifying the family, holding the philosophy up, passing cultures down, and teaching social disciplines — and of their being friend-like fathers instead, more and more children cannot judge what is right and wrong, becoming self-centred or apathetic. It is possible to argue that the absence of the leader in sport can be traced back to the development of a 'paternity-free' society. As stated earlier, 'controlled baseball' has been criticised in the new era, but Kawakami gives the following refutation, referring to paternity.

I thought of my team as a family. The manager is just like the father and coaches the mother...I thought that my responsibility was, as the father, to train my players so that they could be useful for the baseball world not only during their active days but also even after their retirement...[He referred to frequently inviting coaches, players and their families to promote friendship.] Those were days when human relations in the workplace were identified with those of the family and I think my Giants could improve harmony and strengthen solidarity. Is this idea outdated?...But considering that parents or family are

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<sup>40</sup> See <http://www.sanspo.com/top/am200404/am/0404.html>

responsible for today's deplorable society and especially for youngsters' senseless behaviour, the 'outdated' idea is worth reconsidering. Unless both parents bring up their children with discipline and love, a decent family or team cannot be produced. This is particularly true today when individualism is more preferred. My baseball was dubbed 'controlled baseball', but I tried to make individualistic baseball a team sport and, as a team sport, to set up fair standards. I tried to be the father of a decent family and the manager of a decent team, although my methods were allegedly outmoded (Kawakami 2000 translated from Japanese).<sup>41</sup>

It is true that something new needs to be introduced into Japanese baseball to break the present situation of decline, but that does not necessarily mean that everything old is of no use. On the contrary, what is required in a globalising era is the fusion of what is good in both the new and the old. The ongoing debate between Whiting and Kelly, discussed in Chapter 7, brings attention to the importance of seeing developments in Japanese baseball relativistically. The debate between these two authors highlights the very complex and constantly changing processes of Japanese baseball under the influence of globalisation.

We have seen in this thesis a fusion of local traditions and global influences throughout the history of Japanese baseball. The significance of cultural flow is clear, embodying personal reactions to the global world and influencing individual styles of play and attitudes to the game. In other words, not only the relationship between the local and the global is significant in Japanese baseball but also between the personal and the global.

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<sup>41</sup> See <http://www.nikkansports.com/news/baseball/kawakami/001117.html>



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## **Appendix 1**

**Brief Details of Participants (All names except for David Wiggins, Jack Gallagher, and Darryl Spencer are pseudonyms)**

### **Richard Baines**

American sport journalist. He has contributed his articles to Japanese newspapers.

### **Kenneth Baldwin**

Played with the Atoms [currently the Swallows] and the Buffaloes in the 1970s. One of the few foreign players who studied Japanese.

### **Henry Campbell**

Played with the Fighters and the Carp in the 1990s as a pitcher. Currently, working as a scout for the Carp.

### **Ben Davis**

Played with the Tigers and the Swallows in the 1990s. He won the highest batting average title once and was selected as the best league player (MVP).

### **Jack Gallagher**

American sport journalist. He works as a sport columnist, promoter, and broadcaster in the sports media field for 20 years.

### **Ted Howard**

Played with the Buffaloes from the late 1980s to the early 1990s. He won the home run title three times and was selected as the best league player.

### **Kenji Iwata**

Japanese baseball journalist. His career started in 1956. He wrote many books about Japanese baseball.

### **Frank Joey**

Played with the Hawks and the Whales [currently the Bay Stars] as a pitcher in the 1960s. He won most wins title and was selected as the best league player.

### **Charles Jones**

Played with the Whales [currently the Bay Stars] in the 1980s. He won the home run title once



**James Kingston**

Played with the Buffaloes in the 1960s as a pitcher. He was commended as a pitcher who earned wins despite the team's poor performances.

**Bob Parker**

Played with Marines from the late 1990s to the early 2000s. He contributed to team victories as a home run batter.

**Ed Pearson**

Played with the Lions and the Buffaloes in the 1960s. He demonstrated his excellence both in batting and fielding.

**Peter Louis**

Played with the Blue Wave in the 1990s as a pitcher. He became popular for his pitching form.

**Daniel Taylor**

Played with the Orions [currently the Marines] and the Tigers from the late 1960s to the early 1970s. He won one of the batting titles.

**Guy Thomas**

Played with the Hawks in the 1960s. He was well-known for his fielding excellence.

**Conrad Slater**

Played with the Buffaloes and the Blue Wave in the 1990s. He proved himself for his powerful batting.

**Darryl Spencer**

Played with the Braves [currently the Blue Wave] in the 1960s. He is reputed to have changed Japanese baseball revolutionarily.

**Leslie Walker**

Played with the Buffaloes and the Hawks in the 1960s. He won the highest batting average title twice.

**Nick Weltz**

Played with the Lions in the 1970s. His fielding was highly commended.

**David Wiggins**

American sport journalist. He has contributed his articles to Japanese newspapers.

**Kirk Wilkins**

Played with the Dragons in the 1970s. He contributed to team victory as the key player.

**Jarvis Wyatt**

Played with the Fighters from the late 1980s to the early 1990s.



## Appendix 2

### Letter of Co-operation Request to Participants

Dear XXXX

Re: A Request for Your Co-operation for My Academic Research

I hope you will excuse my sudden mail. I am Masa Ishido, a Ph.D student in the Sport Sciences Department at Brunel University, UK. Currently, I am studying Japanese baseball in the global processes.

As you know, baseball, as the most popular sport in Japan, has been influential in the formation of national character. For example, the time-honored, restrictive, group-oriented methods were seen as the norm for success in Japan, which were at odds with American methods valuing individualism. In game tactics, much use of the bunt, trying to defeat a batter by attacking weak spots etc. is counted as a characteristic of Japanese baseball, making a contrast to MLB emphasizing a genuine power clash. These differences produced baseball friction between the two peoples.

You are one of the few successful players in Japan. I would like to collect your opinion about what you went through when you were playing in Japan. I would appreciate it if you could spare some of your time for answering the questions on the attached sheet. I enclose a self-addressed envelope, together with an international reply coupon which you can exchange for stamps in your country. Alternatively, you can send your answers via email to: xxxxxxxx

Please note that the information you give me will be treated confidentially. I will not disclose your name unless you specifically authorize me to. I am dependent on the co-operation of foreign baseball players in order to successfully complete my research, and I do hope that you will be able to help me.

Yours Sincerely

Masa Ishido

## Questions

1. What perplexed you the most (or what was your impression of Japanese baseball) while you were playing in Japan?
2. What do you think were the merits of Japanese methods?
3. What do you think were the demerits of Japanese methods?
4. What in your opinion are the problems faced by foreign players playing baseball in Japan?
5. What do you think made you a success in Japan, while many other foreign players failed?
6. What about your teammates', coaches', and manager's treatment of you?

Some pieces of papers are enclosed as answer sheet. You can use them. Please feel free to make any comments about other issues and ideas connected to foreign players in Japanese baseball.