

From the “opening” of its ports by Commodore William Perry in 1853, Japan as a nation has struggled to carve out an identity for itself amid a world dominated by Western countries whose cultures, institutions, and values are so different from its own. Alternately prioritizing rapid Westernization and cautious traditionalism, the story of Japan’s last 150 years has been that of a complex Asian state trying to maintain its own individuality while at the same time functioning and excelling in a world that is otherwise still dictated by the nations of Europe and North America. What has resulted in many cases has been a conscious recasting of Japanese history in literature and popular opinion that has driven the events of the last century and a half.

Bushido has been the subject of this recasting perhaps more than anything else, especially in the past 100 years. Translated as “way of the warrior,” *bushido* was originally a Tokugawa-period term coined during an era when the samurai as a group were searching for their roles as military men in a period of prolonged peace. They became teachers and physicians, priests and even criminals, moving into every walk of life. Others became bureaucrats in the employ of the families they had been hereditarily bound to, living on stipends provided by their lords.¹ Some even continued practicing the martial arts, though there were no wars to fight, and wrote down what they had spent a lifetime learning.²

Among the important works to come out of this period, the *Hagakure* by Yamamoto Tsunetomo and Musashi Miyamoto’s *The Book of Five Rings* stand out.³ The *Hagakure* in particular makes heavy use of the term *bushido*, emphasizing loyalty, duty, and courage as being the core values that a warrior should embody, to any end. “The way of the samurai is found in

¹ Thomas Cleary’s introduction to Miyamoto Musashi, *The Book of Five Rings* trans. Thomas Cleary, (Boston: Shambhala, 1993), xvi.

² G. Cameron Hurst III, “Death, Honor, and Loyalty: The Bushido Ideal,” *Philosophy East and West* 40, no. 4 (October 1990): 514-516.

³ For the purpose of this paper, the convention of using the family name first and given name second for has been followed for Japanese individuals.

death,” he wrote, a line that found countless expressions during WWII centuries later but oddly was ill-received and considered outdated when he composed his piece in the early 18th Century. Even samurai for the most part were enjoying the peace in the middle of the Tokugawa era, and those in the mainstream abhorred the reckless, irrational death favored by Yamamoto.⁴ His work became a favorite of samurai in *Saga-han*, for whom it was originally intended anyway, even though its scope nationally was more limited.⁵

Musashi Miyamoto, who finished his book in 1645, may have been more in line with moderate samurai thought even though his book, perhaps because it was a martial training manual first and a work of philosophy second, had little influence in the century after its publication. Musashi had been born before the rise of the Tokugawa Shogunate, and was almost certainly affected in some way by the chaos of the warring states period, unlike the men who criticized Yamamoto in the middle of the 1700s. Having actually seen war influenced him to tread carefully, and he cautioned his readers to “keep inwardly calm and clear even in the midst of violent chaos...and not forget about the possibility of disorder in times of order.”⁶ It also turned Musashi into a practical man who said, “People usually think that all warriors think about is being ready to die. As far as death is concerned, it is not limited to warriors. Mendicants, women, farmers, and even those below them know their duty, are ashamed to neglect it, and resign themselves to death; there is no distinction in this respect.”⁷ Instead, he taught “the martial way of life practiced by warriors is based on excelling others in anything and everything. Whether by victory in an individual duel or by winning a battle with several people, one thinks of serving the interests of one’s employer, of serving one’s own interests, of becoming well

⁴ Hurst, “Death, Honor, and Loyalty,” 515-516.

⁵ David John Lu, *Japan A Documentary History* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1997) <<http://www.netlibrary.com/urlapi.asp?action=summary&v=1&bookid=1642>>, 261-262

⁶ Cleary’s introduction to Musashi, *The Book of Five Rings*, xvii.

⁷ Musashi, *The Book of Five Rings*, 5.

known and socially established.”⁸ He was also obsessed with arduous practice of orthodox form as a means to obtain results. “A thousand days of practice for training and then thousands days of practice for refinement,” he would say, but “for the art of swordsmanship to be a real science, such as to win victory in battle with adversaries, no change whatsoever is to be made in these principles. When you attain the power of knowledge of my military science and put it into practice in a straightforward manner, there can be no doubt of victory.”⁹

After the Meiji restoration, the biggest boost to *bushido* as a uniquely Japanese ideology came in the form of a book by Nitobe Inazo, a westernized Japanese who became Christian, spoke English fluently, and took an American wife. His *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*, first published in 1899 in English, became an international bestseller and helped define and popularize the term for Western and Japanese alike. Ironically, however, Nitobe may have been “the least qualified Japanese of his age to have been informing anyone of Japan’s history and culture.”¹⁰ Sent to an English school run by Americans in Hokkaido in 1877 at the age of fifteen, Nitobe became versed in Western literature and history but learned and read very little about his own country. His presentation of *bushido*, though claiming to present a Japanese national character, in fact equates it with European chivalry in an attempt to set Japan and the West on the same plane in a Social Darwinian hierarchy. “Chivalry is a flower no less indigenous to the soil of Japan that its emblem, the cherry blossom; nor is it a dried-up specimen of an antique virtue preserved in the herbarium of our history.”¹¹ The characteristics that he felt samurai should, and did, embody were justice, courage, benevolence, politeness, sincerity, honor and loyalty, which were the titles of seven of his chapters. From the upper classes, “*Bushido* filtered down...and

⁸ Ibid., 5.

⁹ Ibid., 32, 48.

¹⁰ Hurst, “Death, Honor, and Loyalty,” 511.

¹¹ Inazo Nitobe, *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* (Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1969), 1.

acted as leaven among the masses, furnishing a moral standard for the whole people. The Precepts of Knighthood, begun at first as the glory of the *élite*, became in time an aspiration and inspiration to the nation at large.”¹²

To some modern scholars, the greatest danger of Nitobe’s work is how unquestioningly his *bushido* has been accepted, on both sides of the Pacific, as an accurate description of actual samurai behavior.¹³ Rather, samurai were ordinary men who cannot have been expected to act with any more courage or loyalty than their contemporaries in Europe. To take one example, battlefield defections, where a samurai vassal is deliberately disloyal and changes sides in the middle of a battle, have been the deciding factor in the most crucial battles in Japanese history. Constant exhortations to loyalty throughout the medieval period should be interpreted not as evidence that samurai were loyal, but rather as evidence that they were not and ought to be. In the words of an American reviewer of Nitobe’s work, “To our mind the whole thesis is singularly destitute of historical support.”¹⁴ Yet for better or worse, Nitobe’s book became the definitive book on *bushido*, with consequences reaching far into the 20th Century.¹⁵

In this paper, I will try to examine how *bushido* has been applied to baseball, a quintessentially American institution that was adopted in Japan as part of its effort to westernize, and then was infused with Japanese values until, in the eyes of an American player, it “[wasn’t] baseball. It only [looked] like it.”¹⁶ The man who has done more than any other to popularize Japanese baseball in English has been Robert Whiting, a journalist who has lived in Japan on and off since the 1970s and wrote *The Chrysanthemum and the Bat* and *You Gotta Have Wa*, the

¹² Ibid., 163-164.

¹³ Hurst, “Death, Honor, and Loyalty,” 512.

¹⁴ Ota Yuzo, “Bridge Across the Pacific—An Evaluation of Nitobe Inazo’s Self-Imposed Role as a Mediator of Japan and the West” (Vancouver: Paper presented at Nitobe Conference, October 1983), 5. Quoted in Ibid., 513.

¹⁵ Ibid., 513, 517.

¹⁶ Reggie Smith. Quoted in Robert Whiting, *You Gotta Have Wa* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 58.

seminal books on the subject. In both, he is liberal with his use of samurai and of *bushido* to describe the way the Japanese play the game. From the loyalty they show supposedly to their manager and organization to the hours of intense effort and training they put in from January through November, Whiting sees Japanese baseball players as modern samurai wielding baseball bats, re-enacting the battles of old on the ball diamond.

The subject's other major author, William W. Kelly, is an anthropologist at Yale who has been writing on Japan since at least 1976 and on baseball there since 1997. He disputes using "samurai" and "*bushido*" because they belie "a tendency to exaggerate the differences [between the American and Japanese games] and attribute them to indelible, underlying radical contrasts in the American and Japanese character."¹⁷ He notes that a country of 125 million people cannot be reduced to a single "national character." He also points out some of the same arguments G. Cameron Hurst made about Nitobe Inazo's *Bushido* above, that samurai acted out of their own self-interest, that loyalty could be tenuous at best, and that few were as enthusiastic about rushing headlong into certain death as they were made out to be.¹⁸ These facts, he claims, prove that despite what modern players profess, the behavior of medieval samurai does little to explain *bushido* in modern Japanese baseball.

Ultimately, both men make important points. It is incorrect, as Kelly points out, to brush over the entire Japanese baseball establishment with the *bushido* ideology. Such broad stereotyping closes inquisitive minds to other possibilities and actually curtails scholarship on the subject. We miss the unique subtleties, nuances and personalities that make baseball great everywhere if we become too caught up in classifying it as a "samurai" game. However, to take

¹⁷ William W. Kelly, "Baseball in Japan: The National Game Beyond National Character" in *Baseball as America* (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 2002), 47.

¹⁸ William W. Kelly, "Samurai Baseball: The Vicissitudes of a National Sporting Style," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 26, no 3 (March 2009): 430-434.

this approach too seriously ignores the fact that Japanese players view themselves as samurai, that fans idealize them as samurai, and that managers and owners expect them to act like samurai. *Bushido* has, without a doubt, played an essential role in creating *Japanese* baseball and endearing it to the public since at least the 1890s.

Nitobe's book idealized *bushido* and samurai warriors for a generation of Japanese citizens, in much the same way, Kelly points out, that Americans have idealized the cowboy. By applying the doctrine to baseball and expecting their ballplayers to follow the *bushido* code, the Japanese have subsequently allowed Nitobe's re-envisioning of history to drive their perceptions of 20th Century events. Moreover, as the Japanese have had to confront new realities, their conception of *bushido* has changed, grown, and evolved to accommodate a value system that is significantly different at the end of the century than it was at the beginning. *Bushido*, however, is still being applied to baseball, so it has been Japanese baseball players that have had to change to fit with the changing Japanese cultural idealization. This paper attempts to discover how *bushido*, as it is applied to baseball, has changed in the century and a half since baseball's introduction, how baseball has affected and embodied that change, and what it tells us about how the Japanese would like to view themselves. In a way, it turns Whiting's argument on its head. Rather than claim that all Japanese play baseball like timeless old samurai, I believe that Japanese baseball players are integral parts of the continued evolution of *bushido* in the modern period. As they change, they redefine *bushido* for the rest of society, thereby helping create what becomes a Japanese cultural ideal.

The Origins of Baseball in Japan

The fundamentals of baseball were first introduced to the Japanese by Horace Wilson, an English and history teacher at what is now Tokyo University, in the early 1870s, and another teacher named Albert Bates organized the first formal game in Tokyo in 1873 at Kaitaku University. In 1876, Hiraoka Hiroshi, who had studied in New England and was a strong supporter of the Boston Red Sox, formed the first team from workers at his railway company.¹⁹ At first, however, there was little to suggest that baseball would ever become popular, let alone Japan's pre-eminent sport. In fact, at the beginning of the 1870s, sport and physical exercise seemed undignified to the Japanese, as they would to the Koreans and Taiwanese a generation later. To the horror mostly of Western educators, civilization was associated with intellectual development while physical growth was deemed a lower-class pursuit.²⁰ Students were "docile," lacking in "fire, energy, and manly independence" wrote one educator. They had "no clear idea, often none at all, of the absolute necessity of exercise, in the open air and sunshine, for young persons of both sexes."²¹ In 1872, when a new school system law was devised in an effort to bring Japanese students up to par with their Western counterparts, physical fitness was accorded a priority so low that it was entirely optional, "depending on local conditions," in primary schools and ignored altogether in secondary and post-secondary schools. Finally, in 1881, compulsory physical education was introduced at the primary school level, and in 1886 Japanese educators instituted more elaborate physical education, including military-style drills, which

¹⁹ Robert Whiting, *You Gotta Have Wa*, 27.

²⁰ Donald Roden, "Baseball and the Quest for National Dignity in Meiji Japan," *The American Historical Review* 85, No. 3 (June 1980) 514.

²¹ William E. Griffis, "Education in Japan," *College Carousal* 14, (1874) 97, 170. Quoted in *ibid.* 514-515

turned daily exercise into a national duty. Baseball was one of many Western sports brought to Japan during the 1800s, but its surge in popularity would have to wait until later in the century.²²

This all happened during a peculiar period in Japanese and world history. A unique confluence of nationalism, Social Darwinism, and neo-traditionalism in the late 19th Century tugged Japan, and its nascent baseball institution, in many different ways. At all levels of society after the Meiji Reformation, Japan underwent drastic changes in an effort to redefine itself along the lines of Western nations, particularly the United States and Great Britain. Robert Whiting points out that “when the shogun relinquished power [in 1868] he was clad in formal samurai robes and a traditional topknot hairstyle. A scant two years later, the Emperor Meiji was holding court in a three-piece suit and top hat.”²³ The 1871 Iwakura Mission was only one of many missions sent to the United States and Europe, but among its members were some of the highest-ranking individuals in the Japanese government. Their stated purpose was goodwill and the possibility of renegotiating some of the treaties imposed on Japan by Commodore Perry and others in the 1850s. However, given the composition of the group and the writings they left behind, their most important goal may have been a firsthand study of the West and the institutions and technologies that allowed it to dominate the rest of the world. They came back amazed. “Japan’s present civilization is not true civilization, our present enlightenment is not true enlightenment” wrote senior councilmember Kido Takayoshi in 1872, while Finance Minister Okubo Toshimichi remarked while in England that “everywhere we go, there is nothing growing in the ground, just coal and iron. Factories have increased to an unheard-of extent, so that black smoke rises to the sky from every point of the compass. This is a sufficient

²² Ibid 514, 515-516, 517

²³ Whiting, *You Gotta Have Wa*, 28.

explanation of England's wealth and strength."²⁴ These men returned to Japan determined that it should change according to the example set by the nations of Europe and North America.

By the 1880s, the almost inevitable reaction to that change began to make itself known. Many academics in Japan began searching for elements of the pre-Meiji Japanese past that fit with notions of modern Western civilization, and in the process found a new, discrete national identity in which the people could take pride. As a result, the Japanese came to feel secure enough to adopt Western ideas and institutions piecemeal, evaluating each addition individually for where and how it would fit in to Japanese culture, rather than assimilate Western ideas wholesale as had been the case earlier.²⁵ Newly aware of the past yet still perfectly conscious of its weakness relative to the Western powers, the Japanese set out on a path of economic and military modernization and westernization while retaining a sense of its being unique among the nations of the world.

The indigenous sense of Japanese uniqueness readily nourished Western concepts of cultural hierarchy, which arose in throughout the world in response to Charles Darwin's Theory of Evolution. "Survival of the Fittest" was applied to entire societies, where the fittest, manliest, strongest societies would overcome, conquer, and colonize weaker, less vigorous ones. Social Darwinism, as it was called, was a primary impetus towards the establishment of physical education programs in the United States and Great Britain, and in the 1870s and 1880s was the context for some criticism of Japanese customs. Visitors to the American port at Yokohama contrasted "the rough and aggressive Anglo-Saxons" with "a nation whose men flew kites, studied flower arrangements, enjoyed toy gardens, carried fans, and manifested other effeminate

²⁴ W.G. Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), 369-370.

²⁵ Roden, "Baseball and National Dignity," 519

customs and behaviors.”²⁶ Japanese educators moved quickly to correct what they saw to be a flaw with Japanese spirit, and by the middle of the 1880s they began to lead the charge against the docility of some students. “They are contemptuous of their bodies, as if strength of physique were tantamount to savagery or animalistic power.” wrote Hiraiwa Nobuo of students in the higher schools, for whom physical education had yet to be introduced. “They just sit at their desks absorbed in their studies, failing to realize that their brains might expire with the oil in their lamps.”²⁷

By the turn of the century, physical education had caught hold at every level of education in Japan. Teddy Roosevelt’s exhortation that Americans “shrink from no strife, moral or physical, within or without the nation...for it is only through strife, through hard and dangerous endeavor, that we shall ultimately win the goal of true national greatness” had caught on, particularly at the same higher schools that Hiraiwa had criticized two decades before which but now equated idleness with sin.²⁸ By the 1890s, Donald Roden writes that at the First Higher School, called Ichiko, students were “conspicuous in their exertions...whether they were strutting back and forth between classes, slamming their rice bowls on the cafeteria counter for refills, or scribbling Chinese couplets on the ceiling of Independence Hall.”²⁹ He quotes another student, an athlete at a different school, who claimed, “People who devote their lives to scholarship are inanimate objects. We must be adventurers, never succumbing to the life of

²⁶ Edward S. Morse, *Japan Day by Day*, 2 (New York, 1917), 433. Quoted in Roden, “Baseball and National Dignity,” 513. Roden points out that Morse was summarizing Victorian opinions of Japan, and even quoted the 1857 *Encyclopedia Britannica*, but by 1917 he himself no longer accepted this view.

²⁷ Imamura Yoshio, *Nihon Taiikushi no kenkyū*, (Tokyo, 1967), 103. Quoted in Roden, “Baseball and National Dignity,” 516.

²⁸ Teddy Roosevelt, *The Strenuous Life: Essays and Addresses* (New York: The Century Co, 1902), 21. And Roden, “Baseball and National Dignity,” 511.

²⁹ Donald Roden, *Schooldays in Imperial Japan*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1980), 113.

scholarly lassitude.”³⁰ Social Darwinism, with its doctrine that physical fitness gave one group the right to stand above another less fit, racially inferior group held the same appeal in Japan as it did in the West, and became one of the most important ways of viewing the world in the last third of the 19th Century.

At the same time that it encouraged groups like the late 19th Century Japanese to become manly and virile in the image of the United States and Great Britain, Social Darwinism also forced those groups to distinguish themselves from the cultures they were trying to emulate. The Japanese wished to maintain part of their own cultural heritage, but there was no place for ties in Social Darwinism’s rigid hierarchy. Cultural or societal differences necessarily either made a nation better or worse than the ones around it. Consequently, it became extremely important that those cultural differences were either emphasized to be better than their Western alternatives or that the Japanese accept cultural inferiority. This second option, naturally, was unacceptable.³¹

In large part because the students at higher schools were generally affluent descendents of the old samurai class, one major difference that was particularly important to emphasize was *bushido*.³² Nakagawa Gen, onetime headmaster at the Fifth Higher School, loved his school’s location for the values it helped instill. “Our school has an unmistakable spirit of warrior heroism since the area around us was once the stomping grounds of great medieval heroes...who fought so valiantly for the Emperor.”³³ And at Ichiko, the founders of the kendo club considered themselves the guardians of Ichiko’s school spirit, which honored “diligence, thrift, and the

³⁰ Shugakuryoshi Hensanbu, *Shugakuryoshi*, (Kumamoto: Dai Go Koto Gakko Shugakuryo, 1938), 364. Quoted in Roden, *Schooldays*, 129.

³¹ Roden, “Baseball and National Dignity,” 532.

³² Yuko Kusaka, “The Development of Baseball Organizations in Japan,” *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 22, no. 4 (1987): 267-268.

³³ “Nyugakushiki ni okeru Nakagawa Gakkocho enzetsu taii hikki,” *Ryunankai zasshi* 3, no. 24 (Oct. 1, 1894): 3. Quoted in Roden, *Schooldays*, 67.

martial ethos.”³⁴ *Bushido* became the Japanese response to Western cultural imperialism, albeit a newly re-envisioned *bushido* that stressed some values over others that were equally important in the medieval period. William Kelly acknowledges “loyalty to authority rather than sincerity to self-honour, hyper-exertion rather than self-restraint and formal patterns over execution and results” as the redefined essence of the samurai.³⁵ By placing *bushido* in the context of Social Darwinism, the Japanese took a Western idea and made it fit their own history. In the process of selectively remembering the samurai way, they also created a new vision of their future.

For baseball, re-envisioning *bushido* meant taking a game that was patently American and imbuing it with unique characteristics that turned it into the Japanese national sport. Nowhere was this more evident in the late 19th Century than at Ichiko, where devotion to athletics epitomized the student’s abhorrence of laziness and their new warrior mentality.³⁶ Baseball, in particular, embodied the perfect blend of physical strength and mental fortitude that harkened back to the samurai gentlemen the students were trying to emulate.³⁷ Ichiko students turned to baseball with the same zest that they turned to running between classes, eating, and studying, and their extreme approach has become legendary in Japanese baseball lore. In year-round practices, from sunup to sundown, the students forged a team from fanatical exertion and unwavering devotion. Their “Bloody Urine” practices, so called because players were said to have actually urinated blood when they were through, involved such drills as a pitcher standing 20 feet from a catcher and throwing as hard as he could until he collapsed from exhaustion and the catcher doubled over in pain. Pitchers could be distinguished from other students on campus by their crooked arms, deformed, it was claimed, by throwing too many curveballs and

³⁴ *Koryoshi*, 369. Quoted in Roden, *Schooldays*, 116.

³⁵ William W. Kelly, “Samurai Baseball: The Vicissitudes of a National Sporting Style,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 26, no 3 (March 2009): 434.

³⁶ Roden, *Schooldays*, 113.

³⁷ Roden, “Baseball and National Dignity,” 520.

straightened out again by hanging from the branches of the cherry trees surrounding the field. To complete the image of their new samurai style, players were forbidden to say “ouch,” having instead to mumble “it itches” when the pain was too intense.³⁸ The training paid off, however, and by 1891 the team claimed, correctly, that “there are no [worthy] opponents in the land.”³⁹

For the Ichiko team, once the available stock of Japanese teams had been exhausted and proven absolutely unable to compete, the next logical move was to prove themselves against competitors from baseball’s homeland by challenging a team of Americans from the port at Yokohama. By this point, baseball in Japan had already become more than the innocent American game Horace Wilson had introduced 20 years earlier. William Kelly uses the term “uncanny mimicry,” by which he means something instantly recognizable yet entirely foreign, to describe how the Japanese played baseball. On purpose, the Japanese model fell short of the American original and yet simultaneously exceeded it, changing it and molding it to fit with, in this case, the newly re-envisioned *bushido* ideal.⁴⁰ In the Social Darwinian context, the baseball game scheduled between Ichiko and the Americans at Yokohama became an issue of national pride, pitting the Japanese style against the American one and for many finally signaling the beginning of cultural equality for Americans and Japanese after decades of discriminatory treatment on the American part.⁴¹

In 1896, after being rebuffed for five years by the Yokohama club, which expressed fear that Ichiko students were culturally and physically unfit for international competition, the two sides finally agreed to play. One student had complained, “The foreigners in Yokohama have

³⁸ Whiting, *You Gotta Have Wa*, 32.

³⁹ *Koryoshi*, 647. Quoted in Roden, “Baseball and National Dignity,” 520.

⁴⁰ William W. Kelly, “Is Baseball a Global Sport? America’s ‘National Pastime’ as Global Field and International Sport,” *Global Networks: A Journal of Transnational Affairs* 7, no. 2 (2007): 194.

⁴¹ Roden, “Baseball and National Dignity,” 520, 521.

established an athletic field in their central park into which no Japanese may enter. There, playing by themselves, they boast of their skill in baseball. When we attempt to challenge them, they refuse, saying ‘Baseball is our national game’ or ‘Our bodies are twice the size of yours.’⁴² Now, he and the rest of the school finally had their chance to prove themselves against the huge Americans, and, on a clear May 23rd, they went to Yokohama and not only beat the Americans, but embarrassed them in a 29-4 rout that left little doubt as to which team could really compete in international competition. A second game was quickly scheduled for June 5, which Ichiko again won going away, 32-9, as was a third, this one at Ichiko on June 27 in front of nearly ten thousand fans. The Japanese high school won again, 22-6, sending their fans into delirium and setting off ecstatic celebrations through the entire nation. “This great victory is more than a victory for our school; it is a victory for the Japanese people!” exclaimed the student president, while a later Japanese historian wrote, “Foreigners could not hope to understand the emotional impact of this victory, but it helped Japan, struggling towards modernization after centuries of isolation, overcome a tremendous inferiority complex it felt toward the more industrially advanced West.”⁴³

By standing up to and defeating the West at its own game, the boys at Ichiko and their victory became symbolic of the new Japanese national spirit embodied within the martial ethos. “[The Americans] have fought against a ‘little people’ whom they ridicule as childish, only to find themselves swept away like falling leaves...The aggressive character of our national spirit is a well-established fact, demonstrated first in the Sino-Japanese War and now by our great

⁴² “Yokohama ensei kiji,” *Dai Ichi Koto Gakko Koyukai zasshi furoku*, no. 58 (1896): 1. Quoted in Roden, “Baseball and National Dignity,” 521.

⁴³ “Yokohama ensei kiji,” 4. Quoted by Roden, “Baseball and National Dignity,” 524; and Whiting, *You Gotta Have Wa*, 33.

victories in baseball.”⁴⁴ It also changed the opinions of Americans at Yokohama, who were increasingly willing to show respect to Ichiko players as the series progressed, and, in the students’ eyes at least, was the final act of revenge against the United States for the unfair treaties that had governed Japanese-American relations since the middle of the century. If the humiliations of unfair treaties, extraterritorial settlements, and Western condescension had to be avenged, then victory in baseball, the consummate Western game, was surely the best way for the Japanese to take pride in the society they had slowly built over the preceding half century.⁴⁵ The warrior mentality had proved its worth in the modern age, had allowed Ichiko students to recapture Japan’s “National Dignity,” and had ensured that Ichiko-style baseball would remain a fixture in Japan for the next century.

Early Resistance to Baseball

Though it was used as a device by Ichiko players and others to justify playing baseball, *bushido* nevertheless remained an ambiguous, poorly defined term. It was understood to have characterized “the soul of Japan,” as the title of Nitobe Inazo’s book suggests, but in a complex, stratified, developing, dynamic country, the meaning of “soul” and even “Japan” was constantly open to interpretation. As a consequence, *bushido* was also used by some commentators to suggest that baseball *did not* fit with the Japanese character, and that it was incorrect that the nation’s youth should take part in a foreign game. Baseball has been criticized in Japan for a variety of other reasons, as it was during a wave of anti-western sentiment that swept the country in the lead-up to the second world war in the 1930s, but in the early years concerns centered on

⁴⁴ *Koryoshi* 649. Quoted in Roden, “Baseball and National Dignity,” 529.

⁴⁵ Roden, “Baseball in Meiji Japan,” 530.

its fitness as a game for the Japanese character and were not critical specifically of its being a Western import.

The most vociferous attack on the new sport was published in a series of editorials written in 1911 for the conservative newspaper, *Asahi Shimbun*, collectively entitled “The Evils of Baseball.” Commentators postulated a wide range of arguments against the sport, citing mental harm because of the pressure to win and physical harm due to lopsided arm development or because the shock of catching a baseball caused the brain to vibrate. A high ranking official in the Ministry of Education said, “Baseball doesn’t fit the Japanese school system” and that only “pure” Japanese athletics like judo and kendo were appropriate, while another writer somewhat emotionally claimed, “Those who like baseball are those who think prostitution is good.”⁴⁶

Elsewhere, the newspaper lamented,

Baseball is harmful to the students and detrimental to the larger society. Baseball players skip too many classes for practice and games, which means that their schoolwork suffers. Students should not charge admission to their games, nor should they waste money on fancy uniforms. Players are vulgar and have bad manners. Baseball breeds vanity and conceit...and is unhealthy.⁴⁷

The range of arguments given over the course of the series, which lasted six months, is particularly telling in that many, though not all, assumed that baseball was already a part of Japanese life. Some of the “Evils” that came to be associated with it in 1911 had more to do with its increasing commercialism and the vanity of its star players than any complaints about its impurity.⁴⁸ This debate continued at least into the following decade, when authorities at Japanese baseball colleges protested loudly to a suggestion by the government that it would tax gate receipts. “There was no desire [at the college] to do more than meet expenses...to tax gate

⁴⁶ Whiting, *You Gotta Have Wa*, 34-35.

⁴⁷ Allen Guttman and Lee Thompson, *Japanese Sports: A History* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), 88.

⁴⁸ Thomas Blackwood, “Bushido Baseball? Three ‘Fathers’ and the Invention of a Tradition,” *Social Science Japan Journal* 11, no. 2 (September 2008): 232.

receipts would necessitate a raise in prices, with a consequent reduction in the number of attendants.”⁴⁹

One important detractor was Nitobe Inazo, whose turn-of-the-century book on *bushido* gave it many of the same characteristics as were then in vogue to describe a European gentleman. Although he generally carried a pro-Western outlook, to him baseball was one thing that Japan was better without.

Baseball is a pickpocket’s sport where players try to swindle their opponents and steal bases. It is therefore suitable to Americans, but not Englishmen or Germans...It is impossible for the Americans to play a brave game like rugby, the national sport of the British, in which the players hang on to the ball even though their nose is being crushed and their skull dented.⁵⁰

What every argument had in common was that baseball, for one reason or another, was unfit for Japan or the Japanese character. The doctors who thought that Japanese would be physically unable to play ball may have agreed with philosophy professor Inoue Tetsujiro when he said the Japanese were “greatly inferior to Westerners in intelligence, financial power, physique, and all else.”⁵¹ To them, the Japanese would have been not good enough to play baseball, and that though *bushido* was valuable to the Japanese psyche, it was holding the nation back relative to more advanced ones in the West. Nitobe and others would have taken the opposite view, that *bushido* and the legacy of samurai behavior was above baseball. “‘Sneaks’ and ‘cowards’ are epithets of the worst opprobrium to healthy, simple natures” he wrote, saying in no subtle terms that a game where stealing bases was celebrated and physical contact was discouraged had no place in the *bushido* code.⁵²

⁴⁹ “Japan May Levy Taxes on Games.” *Christian Science Monitor*, 30 June 1926, p. 6.

⁵⁰ Whiting, *You Gotta Have Wa*, 35.

⁵¹ Inoue quoted in Kenneth B. Pyle, *The New Generation in Meiji Japan; Problems of Cultural Identity, 1885-1895* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1969) 110.

⁵² Nitobe, *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*, 9.

In either case, the debate reflected the ambiguity of the term.⁵³ Then, as now, there was no written, codified sense of *bushido*, unless one counts the Yomiuri Giants' "Gaijin Ten Commandments," which set out a list of ten rules intended for foreign players on the team. They generally dealt with obeying the manager, respecting team equipment and personnel, and maintaining group harmony, but the extraordinary thing about them is that, although every rule certainly would have applied to native Japanese players, they were intended solely for the foreign players, the "*gaijin*."⁵⁴ Apparently no Japanese needed to be reminded. *Bushido*, while it was never written down, has come to encompass mundane aspects of Japanese life, like manners or rules governing relationships, that are easily taken for granted until a foreigner enters the scene.

As a further demonstration of *bushido*'s flexibility, the defenders of baseball in the face of the *Asahi Shimbun*'s sustained opposition turned it back around and used it to speak in favor of the game. Tobita Suishu, whom the Japanese Baseball Hall of Fame remembers today as "the mentor of student baseball,"⁵⁵ published numerous articles, along with his Waseda University coach Abe Iso and teammates Hashido Shin and Oshikawa Shunro, attesting to baseball's "physical, mental and moral benefits."⁵⁶ They also pointed out that baseball emphasized sacrificing oneself for the good of the whole, and that many of the era's luminaries had played baseball in their youths, with little deleterious effect.⁵⁷ Nitobe himself would have been proud of the sacrificial sentiment, quoting Edmund Burke's writing on the French Revolution when he wrote about the old form of paternal government in Japan. "That proud submission, that

⁵³ Blackwood, "Bushido Baseball?" 232.

⁵⁴ Whiting, *You Gotta Have Wa*, 84-85.

⁵⁵ Japanese Baseball Hall of Fame, "Tobita, Chujun," http://english.baseball-museum.or.jp/baseball_hallo/detail/detail_011.html (accessed January 15, 2011).

⁵⁶ Guttman and Thompson, *Japanese Sports*, 89.

⁵⁷ Whiting, *You Gotta Have Wa*, 35-36

dignified obedience, that subordination of the heart which kept alive, even in servitude itself, the spirit of exalted freedom.”⁵⁸ In some ways, this quote characterizes baseball. The fundamental battle, between the pitcher and the hitter, is individual, and each “combatant” requires a certain amount of individual freedom from the manager if he is to be successful. However, for a *team* to win, each member ultimately has to submit himself to the collective good. This was *bushido*’s contribution to the Japanese game; the amount to which the player was subservient to the team distinguished it from the American game as far back as the Ichiko era and continues to characterize Japanese baseball.

Purity and the Amateur Game

Nowhere is this subservience to the team more evident than in amateur baseball, which oftentimes remains more popular than its professional counterpart. Especially at the high school level, baseball is as much about building character as it is about actually playing baseball. As one coach put it,

Of course we’re playing baseball, but when you get down to it, we’re educating them as people. The training is really a spiritual practice. The more they suffer now, the happier they’ll be when they win. Technique is really a secondary matter. For high school students what’s important is physical strength and heart.⁵⁹

Even in high school, the team becomes a community in and of itself at some schools, especially private ones that scout junior high prospects and entice them to attend with the promise of scholarships and the prestige of playing at a “baseball factory.” In a way reminiscent of athletics at some major American universities, players at baseball schools are put up in dorms, secluded from even their families, and encouraged to focus entirely on baseball. Robert Whiting writes

⁵⁸ Nitobe, *Bushido*, 39.

⁵⁹ Interview with Chiben Academy coach Takashima Hitoshi in *Kokoyakyu: High School Baseball*. dir. Kenneth Eng, 2003; Brooklyn, NY: Projectile Arts, 2003. Takashima is known for running rigorous practices and is one of the most successful high school coaches in history, but the Chiben Academy baseball team, by the admission of one player, “doesn’t do a lot of studying.”

that Ichiro Suzuki, now a successful player in the American Major Leagues, when he arrived at the high school that had recruited him, “gaped in amazement at the gleaming three-story ferro-concrete [dorm], compared by many to a modern hotel. On the first floor was a huge kitchen and laundry room area, on the second were rows of bunk beds and on the third a huge, cavernous *tatami* room used for weight lifting and shadow swings before bedtime.”⁶⁰

All of this was, and is, meant to preserve the tradition of purity in the high school game. From the time of Ichiko’s relentless dedication to what they believed was *bushido* baseball, amateur athletics have held a special place in Japanese hearts because the player’s motivation has ideally been a pure, naïve, almost boyish desire to win. And not for themselves, but rather for their teams, their schools, and their compatriots. School uniforms, nearly all of them white or off white, symbolize this purity.⁶¹ Naturally, not all players hold themselves to such high standards, especially because success at the high school level can ensure enormous professional signing bonuses and legions of devoted (female) fans, but even still, the spirit of amateurism runs strong at the high school level. As the high school baseball oath goes, “We, high school baseball players, will never forget the appreciation to those who have supported us, we will believe in our teammates and believe in ourselves as long as our strength lasts, we will put everything we have into every pitch, and every swing. This I swear.”⁶²

Of particular importance is the annual summer high school tournament at Koshien Stadium in Osaka, where the Hanshin Tigers play their home games but are forced to take an extended road trip every year in early August to make way for legions of high school teams and fans. Described as “America’s Super Bowl and World Series all rolled into one,” Koshien, as it

⁶⁰ Robert Whiting, *The Meaning of Ichiro: The New Wave from Japan and the Transformation of Our National Pastime* (New York: Warner Books, 2004), 9.

⁶¹ Whiting, *You Gotta Have Wa*, 242.

⁶² High school player reciting the oath in *Kokoyakyu*, DVD.

is called, is the single largest sporting event on the Japanese calendar.⁶³ Originally organized by the *Asahi Shimbun* in 1915, the very newspaper that had published the “Evils of Baseball” editorials only four years earlier, the first tournament began with only 20 teams in a single-elimination, win-or-go-home format. Over time, although the tournament has swelled to over 4000 high schools representing the entire country, the single elimination format has been retained. Even more, each of the twelve games required to win the tournament are still played on consecutive days, requiring Herculean displays of strength and stamina in order to emerge victorious. Such displays, naturally, remain couched in the *bushido* ideology that the Ichiko team created at the end of the 19th Century.⁶⁴

Bushido, though, has not been a stagnant idea throughout Japanese history, or even 20th Century Japanese history. It has been constantly redefined to suit whatever role baseball needs it to play, and in the early 1900s, mind-numbingly excruciating practice and self-validating exertion were, at times, found wanting. Abe Iso, baseball team manager at Waseda University beginning in 1899, first defeated Ichiko in 1904, ushering in what Blackwood calls the “Waseda-Keio” era. A Christian who had studied in the United States and spoke fluent English, Abe believed as much in sportsmanship and fair play as in winning at all costs. In this sense, he was closer to Nitobe’s *bushido* version of the Western Gentleman than he probably was to a real samurai, who, one assumes, would not let his opponent get up to keep fighting in the heat of a battle, but his success at Waseda and the success of his players ensured that his *bushido* would become an important part in its continuous process of redefinition.⁶⁵

⁶³ Whiting, *You Gotta Have Wa*, 240.

⁶⁴ Blackwood, “Bushido Baseball?” 233-234.

⁶⁵ Blackwood, “Bushido Baseball?” 228-230.

It was one of Abe's charges, Tobita Suishu, a diminutive second baseman who played for Waseda under Abe and then succeeded him as coach in 1919, who truly came to exemplify student baseball. Born into a conservative samurai family in a conservative Japanese prefecture, Tobita created a system that came to be known as "death training," claiming "a manager has to love his players, but on the practice field he must treat them as cruelly as possible, even though he may be crying about it inside...One must suffer to be good."⁶⁶ Upon his death in 1965, Tobita, already known as the consummate Japanese manager, was just the eleventh man elected into the Japanese Baseball Hall of Fame.⁶⁷ His writings, as prolific as they are influential, have left an indelible mark on both English and Japanese-language baseball scholarship, and have played essential roles in the 20th Century creation of *bushido*-baseball. Undoubtedly one of the most important foundational characters of the Japanese baseball, his disciplinarian management style still dominates at every level of the game.

To the *bushido* of hard work and undying loyalty forged on the practice fields at Ichiko were added, by Abe Iso, Tobita Suishu, and other luminaries of the early game, especially in defense of baseball in the "Evils of Baseball" debate, the new ideals of purity, fair play, and strict amateurism. When the Koshien tournament was founded, these new traits were emphasized as much as the old ones. Thomas Blackwood even noted that the *Asahi Shimbun* "'sold' the non-commercialism," and old traditions that emphasize these sentiments remain today.⁶⁸ Before a game, players still line up along the baselines and bow to their opponents, and when they lose they still pull out plastic bags to collect a little of the sacred Koshien dirt before walking off the field for the last time. Tears that would make Tobita proud flow unabashedly from players,

⁶⁶ Quoted in Whiting, *You Gotta Have Wa*, 38.

⁶⁷ Whiting, *You Gotta Have Wa*, 36-39; and Japanese Baseball Hall of Fame, "Tobita, Chujun."

⁶⁸ Blackwood, "Bushido Baseball?" 233.

coaches, and fans after victories and defeats, and, because playing baseball is an exercise in youth character building, Koshien players are “honored for life” in Japan, winning inside tracks to well-paid jobs in the corporate world even if their professional baseball careers are unsuccessful.⁶⁹ *Bushido*, now emphasizing purity of spirit in addition to hard work, was created in the rigorous settings of amateur athletics, which have continued to instill the way of the samurai in the generations of players that have come and gone since it was first realized by Abe and Tobita.

The Age of Touring

Following Ichiko’s success against American teams put together at Yokohama, Japanese clubs became interested in traveling to the United States to play in baseball’s homeland. “Hitherto the Japanese have measured themselves by the pickup teams of the ports from the foreign warships...Of late years the [Japanese] players have usually been easy victors over their American or English opponents.”⁷⁰ Increasingly disappointed by the level of competition offered by Americans in Japan, trips abroad to face semi-professional or collegiate teams became an important way for the Japanese to gauge their own improvement in the sport. The first such tour was made by a Waseda University team in 1905 that had won the Japan college championships the year before.⁷¹ In compiling a 7-19 record, the team made many favorable impressions on the locals, especially for its base running and fielding. R. W. Barrett, the manager of Stanford University’s baseball club, said of the Japanese team, “The Japs appear to be fine fielders, very fine fielders indeed. They are fast on their feet, handle a ball quickly and

⁶⁹ Whiting, *You Gotta Have Wa*, 239-251; Blackwood, “Bushido Baseball?” 232-234; and *Kokoyakyu*, DVD.

⁷⁰ Fred Merrifield, “Love Baseball in Japan” *Chicago Daily Tribune* April 23, 1905, pg A1

⁷¹ Robert Whiting, *You Gotta Have Wa* 34; “Baseball Challenge from Japan” *NY Times* December 1, 1904, pg7

seem to have good throwing arms.”⁷² Batting was the weak point of this Waseda team, Barrett and others noted. “What they will do to Stanford pitchers I cannot say, as the Jap twirlers have only put ‘em over straight in practice.”⁷³ However, even then, the modern Japanese hallmarks of hard, daily practice, hustle and spirit made critics notice. “I have seen the Waseda players do considerable practicing at Stanford, and if I am any judge, they will make us hustle to win.”⁷⁴ The American coaching the Japanese team wrote, “The pitcher had been working so hard to master his new finger movement and ‘locate’ his batter that he all but did the opposite to his fellow player. That is Japanese persistence and eagerness, just a bit of it.”⁷⁵

The initial tour was well-received in the United States, but was invaluable to Waseda. Upon returning to Japan, the team manager embarked on a book project about baseball in the United States, focusing heavily on the trip, while his team took to coaching high school players the intricacies of the American game. They also quickly expressed their desire that Stanford, the first team they had played on the tour, come to Japan during the next summer for a tour of their own.⁷⁶ The Cardinal were unable to come, but the University of Washington replaced them in 1908, taking three of four from Waseda but losing three times to Keio. Stanford finally visited in 1913, winning five of nine games, though by that time baseball tours had already become a yearly occurrence. The University of Wisconsin came in 1909 with great fanfare in Japan and in Madison, and the University of Chicago toured Japan in 1910. In 1911, both Keio and Waseda traveled to the United States, and Keio at least enjoyed much success playing collegiate teams in Chicago and on the Atlantic seaboard.⁷⁷ Though the Japanese teams lost more than they won in

⁷² “Japs Team Can Scoop ‘em Up” *LA Times* April 30 1905 pg III4

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Merrifield, “Love Baseball in Japan,” pg A1

⁷⁶ “Japs as Ballplayers” *Washington Post* October 29 1905 pg S2

⁷⁷ Harold Seymour, *Baseball: The People’s Game* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 168-172.

these early baseball tours, they nonetheless showed themselves well against strong American college teams. There was no serious talk of a professional “world series” between the American and Japanese champions until the beginning of the 1930s, in part because Japan had no professional teams until one was organized in 1934 to play a team of American professionals led by Babe Ruth, but Keio and Waseda proved that at the college level, pre World War I Japanese teams were every bit the equals of their American counterparts.⁷⁸

Baseball’s skyrocketing popularity in early 20th Century Japan was well documented by American newspapers. “The crowds of students and business men that followed the [1905 Waseda] team to...Shinbashi station proved that there was intense interest in this new undertaking”⁷⁹ wrote one correspondent. Already in 1905, “The universities, colleges, middle schools, and even those of lower grade, all had their champions or their skillful players.”⁸⁰ By 1926, college baseball had become a serious enough endeavor that the government considered revising its tax scheme to include baseball tickets.

Because baseball has become a revenue-producer in Japan, the Government authorities are contemplating levying a tax on gate receipts for baseball and possibly for other games also...Four years ago when the taxation program was revised the Government scoffed at the idea of taxing baseball...The intervening period has seen a tremendous increase in Japan’s interest in the American sport.⁸¹

Coverage of these events in American papers is a testament to the infectious excitement about baseball in the United States, and suggests a firm conviction that baseball could bridge the divide between America and Japan.

⁷⁸ Joseph A. Reaves, *Taking in a Game: A History of Baseball in Asia* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), xix.

⁷⁹ Merrifield, “Love Baseball in Japan,” pg A1

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ “Japan May Levy Taxes on Games,” *Christian Science Monitor*, June 30, 1926, pg 6

For a time, these tours did generate significant goodwill between the two countries. Japan had joined with the Allies in World War I, adding German possessions in the South Pacific to its empire, and afterwards was an important player in post-war peace treaties concerned with the future of East Asia.⁸² The level of cooperation achieved at these conferences served to heighten feelings of goodwill between the United States and Japan, to the benefit of international baseball. Baseball, in fact, was an important piece of international diplomacy in United States interests throughout the world. President Warren Harding himself, in a letter to the *New York Sun*, spoke of his belief that baseball “had real diplomatic value,” and that a tour in 1922 would “be one more of those appealing international competitions in athletics that have done so much toward bringing about exactly the right kind of emulation and promotion of good feeling and making better understandings possible.”⁸³

The Sporting News, which at the time dedicated itself entirely to reporting on baseball, was even more fervent in taking up the cause of using the game as an instrument of diplomacy. “All the so-called ‘peace conferences’ that may be held won’t have as much real effect toward reaching an understanding as one season of baseball in which Americans and Japanese can meet on the common ground of the diamond.” The magazine also quoted a Japanese sporting goods official, who noted that the Japanese generally shared this sentiment with their baseball-playing brethren. “As long as Japan and the United States have something in common like baseball, there is bound to exist nothing but the best of feelings and relations between these two

⁸² John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999), 21.

⁸³ “President Harding Sees Value in Tour,” *New York Times*, 6 October 1922, p. 29. Quoted by Robert J. Sinclair, “Baseball’s Rising Sun: American Interwar Baseball Diplomacy and Japan,” *Canadian Journal of History of Sport and Physical Education* 16, no 2 (1985): 47.

countries.”⁸⁴ In 1934, official relations between the United States and Japan were becoming increasingly strained by Japanese aggression in Manchuria. “The United States would not acknowledge the legitimacy of Japan’s military conquests since that nation had violated existing treaties and had made a mockery of accepted norms of international conduct” proclaimed Secretary of State Henry Stimson in 1932.⁸⁵ However, *The Sporting News*, forever optimistic about the power of baseball, held firm. “When [the American and the Oriental] meet on the diamond, they have something in common...we are all brothers. Once that conviction becomes universal, all of us, whether we live in Tokyo or Opelousas, can sing together ‘Take me out to the ball game,’ and in doing so forget the trivialities that from time to time threaten to disrupt our friendly relations.”⁸⁶

The subject of the latter piece was the final pre-war professional tour of Japan by American major leaguers. The notoriously racist baseball commissioner Judge Kennesaw Mountain Landis had determined to avoid the embarrassment of a single loss to a Japanese team, so he assembled the best group of all stars he could find from among the many great players of the early 1930s to make the trip.⁸⁷ Babe Ruth, Charlie Gehringer, Lou Gehrig, Jimmie Foxx, Lefty Gomez and Early Averill, each of whom would be inducted into the American Baseball Hall of Fame, played a team of Japanese all stars assembled by Shoriki Matsutaro, the owner of Japan’s largest newspaper, the *Yomiuri Shimbun*. The entire tour was in 1934 and played amidst great fanfare, drawing crowds of as many as 75,000 people.⁸⁸ Gates opened at 6 in the morning

⁸⁴ “In Real Peace Conference,” *The Sporting News*, February 16, 1922, page unknown. Reaves, *Taking in a Game* p. 56-57

⁸⁵ Paraphrased by James McClain, *Japan: A Modern History*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc, 2002), 417.

⁸⁶ Clarence E. Glick, “Good-Will Tour of Orient,” *The Sporting News*, November 1, 1934, p. 4. Quoted in Reaves, *Taking in a Game*, p. 73.

⁸⁷ Reaves, *Taking in a Game*, 64-65

⁸⁸ Whiting, *You Gotta Have Wa*, 42

for mid-afternoon games, and people traveled for a hundred miles to get tickets, just to see the Americans play.⁸⁹ Fred Lieb, one of the tour's American promoters, wrote, "Unless one has been in Japan, it is difficult to appreciate the tremendous enthusiasm for baseball on the island."⁹⁰ The Babe, in particular, was enormously popular. He hit 14 home runs over 17 games, and a bust in his honor was erected at Koshien Stadium in Osaka, where it still stands.⁹¹ In his autobiography, Ruth had only positive things to say about the Japanese.

Despite the treacherous attack the Japanese made on us seven years later, I cannot help but feel that the reception which millions of Japanese gave us was genuine. They lined the streets of the Ginza, the Broadway of Tokyo, for miles and greeted us as if we were real heroes. Everywhere we went, they feted us and tried to make our stay pleasant. No doubt there were plenty of stinkers among them, but looking back at that visit, I feel it is another example of how a crackpot government can lead a friendly people into war.⁹²

Despite Ruth's popularity, and the fact that the Japanese team did not manage a single victory in 17 games against the Americans, the real hero of the tour for the Japanese was 18 year old Sawamura Eiji. In one of the defining moments in Japanese baseball history, Sawamura struck out Gehringer, Ruth, Gehrig and Foxx in succession, held the American all stars without a hit for five innings, and struck out nine in a complete game five-hitter. The Japanese lost the game 1-0, on a home run by Gehrig in the 7th, but Sawamura had cemented his place in history. He wound up being elected into the Japanese Baseball Hall of Fame's inaugural class, and today the prize given to the best pitcher in the Japanese Professional League is called the Sawamura Award in his honor.⁹³

⁸⁹ Reaves, *Taking in a Game*, 68

⁹⁰ Frederick G. Lieb, "All Japan Ready to Hail Ruth and His Team of Stars," *The Sporting News*, October 18, 1934. Quoted in Reaves, *Taking in a Game*, 68.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 42

⁹² Reaves, *Taking in a Game* 43

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 69

After the 1934 tour, barnstorming was strongly discouraged by Commissioner Kennesaw Mountain Landis and a group of baseball owners, and there would be no more professional tours of Japan until after World War II.⁹⁴ However, there were still some pre-war visits back and forth between representatives from the baseball leagues of each nation. N. Yamaguchi, a Japanese umpire who visited in 1935 for the American World Series, “painted a glowing picture of the popularity of baseball in his own country, attributing the growth to the visits of America’s big league stars on exhibition tours.” Yamaguchi went on to note that a Japanese professional league had been created, with teams in Tokyo, Nagoya, Yokohama, and Osaka, but that the biggest draw in Japan was still college baseball, where “crowds seldom were less than 50,000 and sometimes [were] larger.”⁹⁵ Though the crowd numbers were almost certainly an exaggeration, Yamaguchi confirmed baseball’s popularity and his visit spoke to continuing goodwill brought on by baseball.

The final pre-war professional tour of any kind was the 1935 return stateside of the Japanese all-star team that had played the Americans in 1934. Shoriki Matsutaro survived an assassination attempt in spring 1935 and kept his team intact, calling it the Dai Nippon Tokyo Yakyu Kurabu (the Great Japan Tokyo Baseball Club).⁹⁶ Renamed the Tokyo Giants, they won 93 of 102 games against minor league and semi-pro competition, impressing American enthusiasts on the way with their base running. “The Japanese player is down with the pitcher’s arm and seems to appear magically on the next sack.” Hitting was the Achilles Heel of this team, as it had been for many others. “‘Unfortunately we cannot steal first base’ laughed [the

⁹⁴ “Barnstorming” refers to playing tours outside the regular league schedule. It was common for American players to go on barnstorming tours before free agency and subsequent higher salaries as a way to supplement their income. Japanese pro teams still regularly tour the Japanese countryside after their season finishes.

⁹⁵ “Baseball Gains in Japan” *New York Times*, January 5, 1936, p. S5.

⁹⁶ Edward Uhlan and Dana L. Thomas, *Shoriki: Miracle Man of Japan*. A Biography, New York: Exposition Press, 1957 p 7.

Japanese manager],” but with future Hall of Fame pitchers Sawamura Eiji and Victor Starffin holding down opposing batters, the tour was an unqualified success.⁹⁷ When they returned to Japan in 1936, seven other corporations capitalized on their popularity and formed professional baseball clubs of their own, giving birth to the Japanese Professional League.⁹⁸

Ultimately, baseball proved itself unable to forestall the events of 1941, and from a modern vantage it seems easy to dismiss *The Sporting News* and other baseball people in Japan and the United States for naively believing in baseball’s power to heal the nationalist and imperialist ills that led to Pearl Harbor. However, as Babe Ruth pointed out, Japanese feeling toward the visiting US players was genuine. The tours that took place between the world’s two greatest baseball playing nations did generate a significant amount of international goodwill, certainly impressed American onlookers in terms of the quality of games played, and contributed mightily to the popularity of baseball in Japan.

Baseball in the Japanese Empire

Perhaps the greatest example of Japan’s drive to emulate Western powers in the early 20th Century was that nation’s great desire to acquire an overseas empire. James McClain paraphrases Tokutomi Soho in *Japan: A Modern History*, when he wrote, “Imperial expansion presented Japan’s last good chance to earn the respect of the Great Powers, ensure its security and survival as a nation, and even bring civilization to other countries in East Asia.”⁹⁹ Having an empire became a matter of national pride as much as an issue of defense, as the government often claimed, and with large scale support among the population, the Japanese were quick to

⁹⁷ “Japanese Players Enjoying Invasion of US,” *Christian Science Monitor*, April 10, 1935.

⁹⁸ Reaves, *Taking in a Game* 77.

⁹⁹ John D. Pierson, *Tokutomi Soho, 1863-1957: A Journalist for Modern Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 229-237. Quoted in James L. McClain, *Japan: A Modern History* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2002) 294.

expand their empire wherever possible in era before World War II.¹⁰⁰ Perhaps the greatest example, then, of the Japanification of baseball before the war comes from the fact that Japan, when it colonized other nations, brought baseball along as part of its civilizing mission in the same way that American missionaries had brought the game to Japan in the middle of the 1800s. In both Taiwan and Korea, baseball exploded in popularity under Japanese encouragement when those nations were brought into the fold of the Japanese Empire.¹⁰¹

The Japanese presence in Taiwan began in 1874, when a group of Japanese fishermen from the Ryukyu Islands was massacred there after being shipwrecked. Talks with China, of which Taiwan was then a part, were unable to bring a resolution, and a punitive expeditionary force was dispatched.¹⁰² It quickly put down local resistance before returning to Japan, until Japan's victory in the Sino-Japanese War in 1905, when China formally ceded the rights to the island in the Treaty of Shimonoseki.¹⁰³ The event marked the first time in history that a non-Western nation became an imperialist power, and the acquisitions of Taiwan and, later, Korea, were great sources of pride in Japan. The Japanese took Taiwan's incorporation into the empire to indicate that their nation had achieved first-class status among the world's great powers.¹⁰⁴

As was the stated case of nearly every colonial power, the Japanese supposedly entered into Taiwan with a civilizing mission. Baseball, first played in Taiwan in 1897, was part of these efforts to "Japanify" the island, and today it maintains its Japanese heritage in many ways, from

¹⁰⁰ Jonathan G. Utley, *Going to War with Japan, 1937-1941* (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1985), 136-137.

¹⁰¹ Reaves, *Taking in a Game* 116. And Andrew D. Morris, "Taiwan: Baseball, Colonialism, and Nationalism," in George Gmelch, ed., *Baseball Without Borders: The International Pastime* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2006) 66.

¹⁰² McClain, *Japan: A Modern History* 289-290.

¹⁰³ S. C. M. Paine, *The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895: Perceptions, Power, and Primacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 274, 277.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 298.

its conservative style to its use of Japanese terminology.¹⁰⁵ However, for a time the only baseball played in Taiwan was played by Japanese teams and Japanese schools. To the Japanese, “the existence of a baseball team at our school is a small issue. But if the game ignites the awareness of the colonized youth, it will be a big problem.”¹⁰⁶ Late in the 19th Century, the Japanese had finally gained the right to re-write the unfair treaties imposed upon them after Commodore Perry opened the nation in 1854. They were also well aware that the Ichiko club’s baseball success against American sailors in Yokohama had helped stir up the patriotic sentiment and national willpower to make this possible. Sports in the late 1800s were part of a new Social Darwinist mentality that likened success on the athletic field to masculinity, strength, and the right not only to survive, but to dominate other nations.¹⁰⁷ The Japanese had consciously embarked on an imperialist mission, and were determined that the Taiwanese would not use baseball to come to the same level of self-awareness that the Japanese had.

Further hindering baseball’s early development was that the Taiwanese themselves had no desire to play sports. Confucianism was the dominant philosophy among the island’s elite, and in contrast to Social Darwinism, it discouraged athletics or indeed any activity that cultivated the body. A Confucian saying went, “Those who labor with their minds govern others, and those who labor with their strength are governed by others,” and it was under this mode of thought that Taiwan had developed for centuries.¹⁰⁸ When the Japanese arrived, the older generation still viewed sports with disdain, as fit for the lower class, and they were skeptical of its introduction

¹⁰⁵ Andrew D. Morris, *Colonial Project, National Game: A History of Baseball in Taiwan* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2010) 2-3.

¹⁰⁶ Cai Zongxin, “Riju Shidai Taiwan Bangqiu,” Master’s Thesis, (Taiwan Normal University: 1992) 92. In Junwei Yu, *Playing in Isolation* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2007) 14.

¹⁰⁷ Donald Roden, “Baseball and the Quest for National Dignity in Meiji Japan,” *American Historical Review* 85, no. 3 (June 1980)

¹⁰⁸ Yu, *Playing in Isolation*, 11-12

into society. The younger generation, educated by the Japanese, was ready to take to baseball, but their parents and grandparents won out in the early years of the occupation.¹⁰⁹

In 1915, the Japanese Colonial Government formed the Taiwan Baseball Federation for school teams, but baseball at this time was still only Japanese.¹¹⁰ However, the colonial government was already encouraging it among the youth, and a new more liberal trend in colonial attitudes on the home islands after World War I was helping make baseball an important piece of the Japanese assimilation strategy.¹¹¹ In this environment, the first Taiwanese teams began forming themselves beginning in the early 1920s, and by later in that decade a Taiwanese high school team was given the right to attend the national tournament at Koshien every season.¹¹² One of these teams, the Jiayi Agriculture and Forestry Institute (abbreviated Kanô), achieved legendary status in Taiwan and in Japan for making it all the way to the championship game in 1931 with a multi-ethnic team of aborigine, Han Taiwanese and Japanese players. The 1931 Kanô team is still remembered in Japan as a symbol of colonial assimilation, that the Taiwanese and Japanese could live and play alongside each other in what had become a Japanese sport. As Andrew Morris points out though, “the irony is that the six Taiwanese players on the starting roster probably also saw their victories as a statement of Taiwanese (Han or aborigine) will and skill that could no longer be dismissed by the Japanese colonizing power.”¹¹³

The Japanese colonization of Korea officially began when the Japanese forced the Koreans into the Korean-Japanese Convention of 1905, which allowed Japan to dictate Korea’s

¹⁰⁹ Ibid 14.

¹¹⁰ Morris, “Taiwan: Baseball, Colonialism, and Nationalism.” In Gmelch, *Baseball without Borders*, 66

¹¹¹ Yu, *Playing in Isolation*, 17.

¹¹² Morris, “Taiwan: Baseball, Colonialism, and Nationalism.” In Gmelch, *Baseball without Borders*, 66

¹¹³ Morris, “Taiwan: Baseball, Colonialism, and Nationalism.” In Gmelch, *Baseball without Borders*, 67

foreign relations and allowed Japanese troops to maintain order domestically.¹¹⁴ Much had changed for Japan in the ten years since the colonization of Taiwan, however. Most importantly, the Japanese had emerged victorious in the Russo-Japanese War in 1904-1905. Where becoming an imperialist power in Taiwan enhanced Japanese sense of self-worth on a world stage, there was still a feeling in the west that Japan had not yet arrived into the elite club of nations. But outright victory against Russia, one of Europe's major powers, and the way Japanese diplomats won concession after concession from the Russians at the Treaty of Portsmouth, confirmed to everyone within and without Japan that the time had indeed come for Japan to be a major actor in international affairs.¹¹⁵ Awash in self-confidence, and adopting what had been a uniquely western disdain for uncivilized cultures, Japan rode into Korea looking more to enforce their will exploiting the peninsula's economic potential than to engage in the civilizing mission of earlier times.

Baseball in Korea also began under slightly different circumstances than it had in Taiwan. The Confucian notion of the ideal sedentary life had existed earlier, but had been discouraged by American missionaries in the years leading up to Japanese occupation, so that when the first game was organized by Americans at a Seoul YMCA in 1905 it quickly spread among the younger generation of Koreans.¹¹⁶ The Japanese saw the game already being played and quickly incorporated it into their colonial scheme. This process was especially accelerated after 1910, when Japan formally annexed the peninsula, and games back and forth became regular events.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ McClain, *Japan: A Modern History*, 307.

¹¹⁵ Ibid 306

¹¹⁶ Reaves, *Taking in a Game*, 114.

¹¹⁷ Ibid 119-120.

Baseball was given another boost in Korea after the Samil Independence Movement, which sought to throw off Japanese colonial rule. Students read a declaration of independence, Syngman Rhee set up a government-in-exile in Shanghai, and over a million Koreans joined the protest before the Japanese police brutally suppressed the insurgency. By the end of the summer of 1919, seven thousand Koreans had been killed and another 50,000 were in prison.¹¹⁸ Many in Japan were shocked that the colonial administration could have been received so poorly and recognized the event as a stain on their efforts internationally, and many of the harshest colonial practices were rolled back as part of a new strategy to placate and peacefully assimilate the Koreans.¹¹⁹ Baseball came into its own in this milieu. It was seen as a tool for national reconciliation, and contests between Japanese and Korean teams became even more vigorous in the following decade.¹²⁰

In the years immediately before World War II, Japan's overseas empire had to be mobilized for the war effort. The home islands needed the manpower and resources of its colonies, and had to lean heavily upon them to support the army. As a result, baseball throughout the empire, including in Taiwan and Korea, was put on hold beginning in the mid 1930s. However, years of Japanese rule ensured that baseball's strong foundation in both nations would not be undone, either by communism or authoritarianism. Baseball's ties to the mainland remained strong as well, with a constant moving back and forth even up to the present of Korean and Taiwanese players to the Japanese Professional League. However, the most essential fact of baseball in the colonial experience is that it happened at all. Baseball was only introduced to Japan in the 1870s, but by 1897 it was a strong enough force there that it was brought to the

¹¹⁸ McClain, *Japan: A Modern History*, 341-342.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid* 342-343.

¹²⁰ Reaves, *Taking in a Game*, 121.

fringes of the empire. By 1920, baseball had become so thoroughly japanified that it actually became an essential element of Japanification. It was now a new means to carry out the colonizer's "civilizing mission." As one Japanese headmaster put it, "I want to correct these barbarians born with violent blood and let them feel the true spirit of sport. In addition this will demonstrate extensively to the world that we had a positive effect of teaching and civilizing the barbarians."¹²¹ Baseball remains an integral part of the sportscape of Taiwan and Korea, but the power that it held in Japan, even then, is crucial to understanding the game's history.¹²²

Baseball During World War II

The Second World War was the most traumatic and formative event in the 20th Century history of the Japanese nation. The war began, for Japan, in 1931 with the invasion of Manchuria and ended fourteen years later with the dropping of the atomic bomb. Along the way, it claimed 2.5 million Japanese lives, civilian and military, witnessed the definitive end of the Japanese empire, and laid the home islands in utter ruin. By the war's conclusion, 25 percent of Japan's houses had burned along with 40 percent of Osaka, 50 of Tokyo and Kobe, and the entire city of Sendai. There were severe shortages of food and clothing, the economy's foundations had been destroyed, and the situation in government was chaotic.¹²³ As late as 1948, 3.7 million families still lacked housing and living standards were still falling when compared to prewar levels.¹²⁴ In such a dark period, everything was mobilized for the war effort and few institutions of any kind survived exactly as they had before 1931, or even 1941. Baseball, certainly, did not escape the central government's mandate to coerce unity and patriotism in ordinary Japanese life. Its mere survival is remarkable, but the modern legends of the Japanese game that the war gave

¹²¹ Cai, "Riju Shidai Taiwan Bangqiu," 108. In Yu, *Playing in Isolation*, 17.

¹²² See Yu, *Playing in Isolation*, 20, 21, 24; Morris, *Taiwan*, 69,70; Whiting, *You Gotta Have Wa*, 273

¹²³ McClain, *Japan: A Modern History*, 506-7

¹²⁴ Dower, *Embracing Defeat* 115.

birth to are proof that by that time, no amount of anti-American rhetoric could disassociate baseball from the fabric of Japanese life. Baseball had unequivocally become a Japanese game.

A host of reasons have been advanced to suggest Japan's motivations leading into World War II. These include dire need for raw resources, the civilian government's losing control over the army, the general public's overwhelming support for the acquisition of empire, and a general sense of hubris among the ruling elite all contributed. However, the most threatening reason as far as baseball was concerned was a growing sense that racist Western nations, particularly America, were determined to relegate Japan to second-class status. Many agreed with Ishiwara Kanji, a writer and fervent Japanese patriot, who believed as early as the late 1920s that a war between the United States and Japan would eventually destroy the world's status quo and usher in a long period of peace under the domination of the victor.¹²⁵ His life's mission became preparing Japan for that war, and at the head of the Kwantung Army in Manchuria in the early 1930s he set about the process of capturing and harnessing that land's resources for a Japanese military buildup.

As the decade continued and the Japanese government came to be more at ease with imperial expansion, a feeling that war with the United States was inevitable became more widespread throughout the nation and at every level of government as the rivalry between the two nations hardened. Some publications, such as the *Sporting News*, still thought that baseball could bridge the gap, but larger events had made that impossible. Economic sanctions imposed by the American government began in 1937 as an attempt to convince moderates in Tokyo to come to terms. Rather than deter the Japanese, this only increased the importance of overseas

¹²⁵ Mark R. Peattie, *Ishiwara Kanji and Japan's Confrontation with the West* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975) 43-44, 46-47.

possessions, and in 1940 Japan decided to move into Northern French Indochina. Another round of sanctions followed, and was answered by more imperial expansion farther into Indochina and Indonesia. By 1941, the two sides had reached an impasse.¹²⁶ To the Americans, there could be no peace unless Japan would pull entirely out of China and recognize Chiang Kai-shek's government. Japan adamantly refused. Finally, at an imperial war conference on December 1, 1941, Hara Yoshimichi, a confidant of the emperor Hirohito and president of the Privy Council, summarized government feelings.

In negotiating with the United States, our Empire hoped to maintain peace by making one concession after another. But to our surprise, the American position from beginning to end was to say what Chiang Kai-shek wanted her to say. The United States is being utterly conceited, obstinate, and disrespectful. It is regrettable indeed. We simply cannot tolerate such an attitude.

If we were to give in, we would give up in one stroke not only our gains in the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars, but also the benefits of the Manchurian Incident. This we cannot do. We are loath to compel our people to suffer even greater hardships, on top of what they have endured during the four years since the China Incident. But it is clear that the existence of our country is being threatened, that the great achievements of the Emperor Meiji would all come to naught, and that there is nothing else we can do. Therefore, I believe that if negotiations with the United States are hopeless, then the commencement of war is inevitable.¹²⁷

The virulently anti-American mood did not entirely escape baseball either. Pitching great Sawamura Eiji nearly fell victim in 1935 to a plot hatched by a Pittsburgh Pirates scout posing as a fan seeking an autograph. Suspicious of the print on the paper, Sawamura took it to a translator who realized that in fact it was a contract to play for the Pirates. Looking back on the incident, Sawamura said, "My problem is I hate America and I cannot make myself like Americans...People like myself can not possibly survive where such uncomfortable customs

¹²⁶ Utley, *Going to War with Japan* 107, 126.

¹²⁷ Akira Iriye, *Pearl Harbor and the Coming of the Pacific War: A Brief History with Documents and Essays* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1999), p. 94 (modified). Quoted in McClain, *Japan: A Modern History*, 481.

exist.”¹²⁸ While he later claimed that he only intended to comment on customs, and not necessarily on the United States or its people, the comment clearly exemplifies the misunderstanding and mistrust that characterized official relations between the two nations.¹²⁹

At the outbreak of hostilities on December 7, 1941, attitudes between the baseball establishments of the two nations naturally hardened considerably. *The Sporting News*, which had touted baseball’s ability to ease tensions and build peace between Japan and the United States, quickly embarked on a campaign to explain why baseball had failed. “Never would Americans stab an ‘honorable opponent’ in the back, or crush out his brains with a bat while he is asleep. It is obvious to the careful observer that the Japanese, although they had acquired some skill in the game, had never acquired the soul of [baseball.]”¹³⁰ Another observer noted, “To win this war, we’re going to have to forget a lot of the lessons taught us by generations of association with sports... We were put behind the 8-ball in Hawaii and Manila by dirty pool. But it is the rule under which this war will be fought. None of the yardsticks of right and wrong—as we have learned them—now apply.”¹³¹

One of the first wartime hints that baseball was not universally popular in Japan came just following the Babe Ruth tour in 1934, when the organizer of that tour and the founder of the Tokyo Giants baseball club, Matsutaro Shoriki, endured an assassination attempt by a member of a nationalist group called the “Warlike Gods Society.” The would-be assassin claimed that the tour had been unpatriotic, particularly in light of the national crisis brought about by the Great

¹²⁸ Whiting, *You Gotta Have Wa*, 44-45.

¹²⁹ Reaves, *Taking in a Game*, 69.

¹³⁰ “It’s not the Same Game in Japan” *The Sporting News*, December 18, 1941, p. 4. Paraphrased in Richard C. Crepeau, “Pearl Harbor: A Failure of Baseball?” *Journal of Popular Culture* 15, No 4 (Spring 1984): 72.

¹³¹ Bob Considine, “On the Line with Considine,” *The Atlanta Constitution*, 10 December 1941, p. 23.

Depression.¹³² Shoriki bore a scar on his head for the rest of his life, but survived the attempt and the war and was eventually inducted into the Japanese baseball Hall of Fame.¹³³ The first official step towards restricting baseball made in Japan came in 1937, when it was replaced by kendo and judo in the physical education curriculum.¹³⁴ Shortly thereafter, American-borrowed terms like *besuboru* and *sturiiku* were dropped in favor of Japanese ones. “Yakyu” became baseball’s new, Japanified name. Pitches were “yoshi” or “dame” (“good” or “bad”), players were referred to as soldiers, and team names were changed to reflect Japanese militarism. During the war, radio broadcasts of professional games were banned by the government, although the league itself only shut down for the 1945 season, when Japan needed every available man for the war effort.¹³⁵

However, the significance of this is that the government did not, in fact, ban the game of baseball. Changing terms from English to Japanese certainly would not have constituted a fundamental re-structuring of the rules in ordinary Japanese opinion. Instead, it would have taken responsibility for the game’s introduction out of American hands and gone even farther to portray it as a uniquely Japanese institution. The most lasting and legendary stories about baseball in the war created heroes that are still revered in Japan today.

Sawamura Eiji, for one, had already made a name for himself by striking out four American Hall of Famers in succession in a game in 1934. He went on to become the best pitcher in the nascent Japanese professional league before the events at Pearl Harbor, when he joined the navy. He eventually lost his life in Spring 1945 when his ship was torpedoed during

¹³² “‘Patriot’ Stabs Noted Publisher in Tokyo for Sponsoring Babe Ruth’s Tour in Japan,” *New York Times*, 22 February 1935, p. 1.

¹³³ Japanese Baseball Hall of Fame, “Matsutaro Shoriki,” List of Hall of Famers, http://english.baseball-museum.or.jp/baseball_hallo/detail/detail_001.html (accessed 8 December 2010).

¹³⁴ McClain, *Japan: A Modern History*, 466.

¹³⁵ Reaves, *Taking in a Game*, 78-79

the Battle of the Ryukyu Islands, but in the end, giving everything for his country only enhanced his prestige.¹³⁶ Though he only played baseball for a few years, he was among the inaugural class elected to the Japanese Hall of Fame, where his plaque reads, “Outstanding pitcher in the early stage of pro baseball. His pitching duels with the All-Americans in 1934 are eternal in the memory of ball fans. The Sawamura Award, Japan's equivalent to the Cy Young Award, was set up in honor of him in 1947.”¹³⁷

Another Hall of Famer, Koizumi Shinzo, made his mark as the president of Keio University from 1933-1948.¹³⁸ Traditionally, and for the first part of the war, students were exempt from the draft in order to continue their studies and contribute to the war effort in ways other than on the front lines. However, as the war dragged on, the government was gradually forced to incorporate them into the armed forces, beginning with students in the liberal arts in 1943 and moving on to all students by 1945.¹³⁹ Though the entire country understood that students had to be mobilized, and that the Tokyo University Baseball League had to be disbanded, in 1943 Koizumi organized one last match between archrivals Keio and Waseda. It was a touching final tribute to the departing students, many of whom lost their lives on the front lines.

Less known but perhaps more dramatic was the account of Ishimaru Shinichi, who died in a kamikaze attack in 1944. As Ikei Masaru relates in his book, *White Ball Over the Pacific*,

Ishimaru completed a final letter to a naval attaché. Its contents were as follows: “I’m very happy to have chosen baseball as my profession. There have

¹³⁶ Ibid., 69.

¹³⁷ Japanese Baseball Hall of Fame, “Eiji Sawamura,” http://english.baseball-museum.or.jp/baseball_hallo/detail/detail_008.html (accessed 8 December 2010).

¹³⁸ Japanese Baseball Hall of Fame, “Shinzo Koizumi,” http://english.baseball-museum.or.jp/baseball_hallo/detail/detail_052.html (accessed 8 December 2010).

¹³⁹ Ben-Ami Shillony, “Universities and Students in Wartime Japan,” *Journal of Asian Studies* XLV No 4 (August 1986) 778-780.

been many hardships, but also great joy. I'm twenty-four and I have nothing to regret. I'm finishing my career as a ballplayer and it is my destiny to die as a navy officer. My life will end with the word of *chuko* (fidelity to Emperor and one's parents).

Prior to his departure at ten o'clock in the morning, he played a game of catch with a fellow navy man Koichi Hondo, who had been a first baseman at Hosei Daigaku.

Sohachi Yamaoka, a navy reporter, served as the umpire.

"I'll get in the plane after I throw ten strikes," said Ishimaru in a voice choked with emotion.

With grave sorrow, Yamaoka began calling the balls and strikes.

Ishimaru pitched his last strike, then threw the ball on the ground, tied a *hachimaki* (cloth) around his head and put on his flying gloves.

Then he got in his plane and started the engine. The plane began to move down the runway and the nose lifted skyward, with a great sound. It disappeared into the southern sky. And it never returned.

His glove and ball were later returned to the Ishimaru family in Saga.¹⁴⁰

This stirring account, of a man who would certainly have considered himself an ardent Japanese patriot playing an American game in the hour before he flew his plane into an American warship, suggests that baseball had taken a new meaning in the Japanese Islands.

Far from die out, baseball during the war became another expression of Japanese nationalism and *bushido* manliness in a time when there were many. Terminology underwent a major shift, but served to underscore how the game by this time had become something that was uniquely Japanese. It was certainly special enough to Ishimaru Shinichi, who played catch before his suicide mission, and must have been to seventy one other professionals who lost their lives in the war and countless other ordinary citizens and soldiers who played in prison camps, occupied territories, and final games on the home islands.¹⁴¹ One curious anecdote related by the New York Times tells the story of a Japanese soldier who, upon being captured in Guadalcanal by a man from Worcester, Massachusetts, asked in English who had won the most recent World

¹⁴⁰ Ikei Masaru, *White Ball Over the Pacific*, (Tokyo: Chuko Shinsho, 1976). Translated by and quoted in Whiting, *You Gotta Have Wa*, 46-47.

¹⁴¹ Whiting, *You Gotta Have Wa*, 46.

Series. As it happened, the soldier had played for Hosei University and had been on an American tour that stopped at Holy Cross University.¹⁴² In the end this probably was not typical. A couple anecdotes certainly do not point to a mass movement, and baseball during the war was strongly discouraged by government authorities. However, it is still true that baseball by this time was an inextricable part of the Japanese identity. Its post-war role helping to mend a broken Japan and bridge the gap between that nation and the United States was a product of the foundation laid by its early development and the feeling, throughout and especially after the war, of an athletic heritage shared on either side of the Pacific.

Rebuilding and Healing After the War

In the immediate aftermath of World War II, the mood of ordinary Japanese citizens was characterized by *Kyodatsu*, a mixture of “exhaustion and despair.” They had been asked by Emperor Hirohito to “endure the unendurable,” which, in his speech on August 15, 1945 meant accepting defeat and occupation but which came to include dejection, disillusionment, starvation, and humiliation as the occupation wore on. It was also, however, a time when common Japanese were forced to create new identities and worldviews that deliberately counteracted militarist wartime propaganda. The Japanese had to recreate an identity that fit with the vanquished and occupied post-war reality, and, newly liberated from the militarist government, many found that they had a considerable amount of freedom to do so. Out of the devastation, the Japanese people reinvented themselves, emphasizing healing, reconciliation, anti-militarism and pacifism, in ways that showed an indomitability of spirit and a determination never to let the war happen again.¹⁴³

¹⁴² “Japanese a Baseball Fan,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 30 June 1943, p 4.

¹⁴³ Dower, *Embracing Defeat* 118-123.

Quite naturally given the American occupation, the immediate postwar period also marked a high point for Japanese-American relations. It was the second time in a century that, for an extended period, the most effective way to rebuild the country following a national crisis seemed to be embarking on a process of Westernization. The benefits of Americanization, specifically, could be easily seen. “There was always a crowd of Japanese outside the PX watching the customers come in and out, flattening their noses against the show windows, gazing in silent awe at the display of merchandise: the souvenirs, candy bars, cameras, milk shakes, shoes, wool sweaters, silk kimonos and guaranteed curios of the Orient.”¹⁴⁴ As the American occupiers engaged in conspicuous commercialism, a thirty-three-year-old Tokyo judge named Yamaguchi Yoshitada, who presided over a court that mostly handled people accused of purchasing goods on the black market, died of starvation because of a principled stand he took against buying black market goods to feed himself.¹⁴⁵ It was clear to everyone that the system that shipped milkshakes to soldiers thousands of miles away was somewhat more desirable than the one that could not provide enough rice for a respectable civil servant to live.

As it had been during the first period of Westernization in the 19th Century, baseball was an important way for the Japanese to reclaim some sense of national dignity and set themselves on an equal plane with the occupiers. Hall of Fame inductee and future president of the Central League Suzuki Ryuji, who was instrumental in re-forming the professional leagues after the war, said, “America is occupying Japan. We are wondering what will happen to our people’s life if we fail to get along with America. Baseball is the best thing. We are going to reorganize a

¹⁴⁴ Quoted in Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 209.

¹⁴⁵ Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 99.

professional baseball team. That will build a bridge between Japan and America.”¹⁴⁶ The *New York Times* resumed its Japanese baseball commentary almost immediately, noting on November 10, 1945 that the Japanese professional leagues planned to restart for the following season.¹⁴⁷ The more important leagues at the time were the high school and college ones, and they had begun their discussion of resumption even earlier, in September, as the *Times* noted, “the people are thirsting for amusement.”¹⁴⁸ There was still the matter of getting approval from the occupation authorities, but it happened that General MacArthur was an avid fan intent on bringing the game back, and play was able to resume in the summer of 1946.

Baseball’s most instrumental figure in SCAP, the Supreme Command for the Allied Powers, which had General MacArthur at the top and led the occupation of Japan, was a major general named William Marquat. MacArthur appointed Marquat chief of the Economic and Scientific Section, which gave him responsibility for “nothing less than supervising all developments in finance, economics, labor, and science.”¹⁴⁹ In practice, this meant that the major general also controlled an account known as the M-Fund, which came from property and treasures the Japanese military had acquired as it stormed through the Pacific. Re-appropriated by Marquat, the years of accumulations came with no paper trail and no obligations. They were off the books, and so available for use without legislative action in Japan or the United States. A perfect example of the general’s priorities, and the fund’s largesse, came after the 1946 season when Marquat mentioned to an official of the professional league-champion Nankai Hawks, who were sharing a stadium with another team, that a victorious team should have their own stadium.

¹⁴⁶ Suzuki Ryuji, *Suzuki Ryuji Kaikoroku* (Tokyo: Basuboru Magajin Sha, 1980), p. 211. Quoted in Reaves, *Taking in a Game*, 83.

¹⁴⁷ “Japan Revives Baseball Loop,” *New York Times*, 10 November 1945, p. 18.

¹⁴⁸ “Japanese Plan 1946 Resumption of Important Baseball Leagues,” *New York Times*, 29 September 1945, p. 20.

¹⁴⁹ Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 210.

Informed that there were not enough materials to build one, Marquat simply smiled and said, “Well, let me help you.” By 1950, the Hawks had a gleaming new facility in Osaka.¹⁵⁰

Marquat, of course, used the M-Fund for projects other than building baseball stadiums, and it became an important part of many aspects of the post-war rebuilding process. His aide-de-camp, Tsuneo “Cappy” Harada, had no such compunctions. Assigned the project of rehabilitating sports in Japan, Harada sheepishly admitted, “I revived the Olympic committee and other things like that, [but] since baseball was my favorite, I worked on it first.”¹⁵¹ Among his first tasks were cleaning out stadiums, which were being used as motor pools, and finding old Japanese professionals stuck in prison camps abroad. Later, he recalls,

General MacArthur asked, “What can we do to get the morale of the Japanese people back?” I was only a first lieutenant, but I just popped up and said, “I think baseball would be a wonderful thing.”

“Why do you think baseball’s important?” he responded.

“Well, the Japanese people love baseball, and I think if we brought an American baseball team here, the Japanese people would love that, and it would really help bring the morale up.”

“So what are you waiting for?” he said.¹⁵²

Harada quickly contacted Lefty O’Doul, who had been part of the 1931 and 1934 professional tours of Japan, and organized for his San Francisco Seals minor league team to renew the trans-Pacific baseball rivalry. The tour was a resounding success, so much so that at the end, Douglas MacArthur himself called it “the greatest piece of diplomacy ever.”¹⁵³ Harada was quickly asked to bring a major league all star team, and in 1951 he talked to O’Doul again, and they arranged another tour that, again, was wildly popular. For Harada, the American occupiers, and the

¹⁵⁰ Reaves, *Taking in a Game*, 80-82.

¹⁵¹ Robert K. Fitts, ed., “Tsuneo ‘Cappy’ Harada,” *Remembering Japanese Baseball: An Oral History of the Game* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2005), 3.

¹⁵² Fitts, *Remembering Japanese Baseball*, 3.

¹⁵³ Richard Leutzinger, “Lefty O’Doul and the Development of Japanese Baseball,” *The National Pastime: A Review of Baseball History* 12, p. 33. Quoted in Reaves, *Taking in a Game*, 84.

Japanese occupied, baseball was fulfilling its pre-war promise as an engine for fostering close connections and mutual understanding between the two countries.

In a particularly touching story, Harada remembers the 1949 tour, when it was still forbidden in many places by the Allied authorities to sing the Japanese national anthem.

I had General MacArthur's permission to raise the Japanese flag and play the anthem at the same time. It was the first time after the War that the Japanese flag had been raised together with the Stars and Stripes, so it was a very historical moment. The Japanese people were very surprised, and a lot of them were moved to tears...Being in the military, I automatically saluted the flag. Of course, that drew a lot of criticism...but the general said that he gave me permission to do it...So in all the cities on the tour, the commanders also saluted the flag...In the 1970s, Ryuji Suzuki mentioned that the most significant thing that I contributed to the Japanese morale was arranging to have the Japanese flag and anthem played at the same time. And that I saluted it.¹⁵⁴

Still proud more than 50 years later, Harada was the perfect example of baseball's power to transcend national differences in the war's aftermath.

However, just as the reconstruction could not have been what it was without active Japanese input and implementation, baseball could not have made the comeback it did had there not been millions of Japanese eager to play the American game. One player, Naito Hirofumi, described post-war ball in an interview with Robert Fitts. He remembers playing on the Yomiuri Giants in Tokyo with Kawakami Tetsuharu, Bessho Takehiko, and Chiba Shigeru, all legends of the game. He recalls how Wally Yonamine, a Japanese-American from Hawaii who was the first American to play in Japan, came and taught the Giants how to hustle, slide with their spikes high, and play with an aggression that revolutionized the Japanese game and helped the Giants become the most popular team in the country.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ Fitts, *Remembering Japanese Baseball*, 4.

¹⁵⁵ Fitts, "Hirofumi Naito," *Remembering Japanese Baseball* 11-20.

Mostly, though, Naito looks back and recalls his own moral education and the ways in which the Giants struggled to be accepted by a suspicious populace. “[At first], I didn’t want to be a professional baseball player. I wanted to be the captain of a ship...The public had a very low image of baseball players. Their names were pretty well known, but everybody thought that all they did was fool around. They were treated as something like *yakuza*.”¹⁵⁶ As his career went on, Naito was surprised to discover how the senior players on the team acted. Once, he jumped in the bath before the regulars had had theirs, and Aota Noboru, a home run champion, smacked him saying, “To take a bath before the regulars, who were working hard for you, is not the correct thing for a human being to do.” At another instrumental point in his early career, Naito relates the story of how he fielded a double-play ball at shortstop, but threw a little to the right of the second baseman coming to cover the bag. Rather than try to catch it, the other fielder, hall of famer Chiba Shigeru, let it go past him to the wall in right field. “I’m teaching him what it is to be a professional player,” Chiba replied when asked why he had been so hard on young Naito. “To do such a play as he did today is inconsiderate to the people who came to see the game. If Naito understands from such a lesson what it really is to be a Giants player, then it’s even worth losing one or two games.” Respect extended even to doing laundry under hotel faucets, where the seniors would “come, stop the water, and say, ‘Is this how you use water in your homes?’” Naito explained their behavior, noting that “if we used water too lavishly, there would be a huge water bill, and the hotel employees would have to work that much harder to make up for it.”¹⁵⁷

Recovering from World War II required a phenomenal amount of cooperation among many different elements of Japanese society, which enhanced the feeling of collective suffering

¹⁵⁶ Fitts, *Remembering Japanese Baseball* 11-12.

¹⁵⁷ Fitts, *Remembering Japanese Baseball* 14.

and collective reconciliation. To be sure, there were people who used positions of influence to benefit enormously from the post-war situation, but by and large there were few Japanese who found an easy way out of the suffering of the occupation years. Baseball players were certainly no exception, and what Naito really described is how he and his teammates did their part to aid in an enormously painful time. In the process, they helped re-define what it meant to be a baseball player in post-war Japan. To gain public acceptance, they were, “gallant and serious,” and he says that the Giants remain the most popular team in Japan because “such values are handed down from generation to generation.”¹⁵⁸ They created a new *bushido*, devoid of the militaristic overtones present even back to Ichiko, but filled with *Kyodatsu* and a sense of gravity. Even when America reached its zenith in Japanese popular opinion, baseball never went back to being an “American” game. It was the foundation laid decades earlier, when Ichiko found national dignity and Waseda finally beat the University of Chicago, when Sawamura Eiji refused to sign with the Pirates and Ishimaru Shinichi threw ten strikes before flying his last mission, that made baseball into Japan’s national sport. In the wake of war, it was not *readopted* in an American image. Rather, like everything else that was distinctly Japanese, it was *remade* under the circumstances of the new reality.

Effort in the Modern Game

During and after the post-war reconstruction, Japan embarked on an economic renaissance otherwise unheard of in modern history. From 1945 to 1975, the nation went from utterly ruined to among the ranks of the world’s economic superpowers. Gross national product grew annually at nearly ten percent (by 1975 it was higher than that of Great Britain and Italy), wartime inflation was brought under control, and the nation was at the forefront of innovation

¹⁵⁸ Fitts, *Remembering Japanese Baseball* 14.

across a number of different industries. Though it only made up three percent of the world's population and took up .3 percent of its landmass, Japan accounted for ten percent of the world's economic activity, and many, within and without the country, were talking about the "Japanese economic miracle."¹⁵⁹

The reason many in Japan gave for this unprecedented boom was what some businessman called the "Three Sacred Treasures." Lifetime employment in one company, wages based on seniority, and enterprise unionism, so went popular thought, were the foundation upon which the entire economy was built.¹⁶⁰ Chalmers Johnson argues that the three treasures explanation is overly generalized and simplistic, and that there were a number of other institutions in Japan that helped drive the economic surge.¹⁶¹ However, no matter their actual importance to the economy, their *perceived* importance influenced behavior at all levels of society. For better or for worse, unflinching loyalty to the company in exchange for a lifetime of stability and abhorrence of labor disputes in exchange for fair working conditions came to be the Japanese way of doing business, all vindicated in the end by the nation's economic performance. "Confucian corporatism," as it came to be known, went from being "an inefficient, tradition-bound anachronism [to a] Japanese accomplishment and an effective positive alternative to Western corporate forms."¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ Yutaka Kosai, "The Postwar Japanese Economy, 1945-1973," in Kozo Yamamura, ed., *The Economic Emergence of Modern Japan* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 159-202; and Chalmers Johnson, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1982), 6.

¹⁶⁰ Enterprise unionism refers to unions formed in one factory or group of factories, comprising all of the workers at all levels in that factory. It contrasts with the sort of unionism where all of the workers engaged in a specific craft or occupation come together to bargain across multiple corporations.

¹⁶¹ Johnson, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle*, 11-12.

¹⁶² William Kelly, "Men at Work or Boys of Summer? The Workplaces of Professional Baseball in Contemporary Japan" in *This Sporting Life: Sports and Body Culture in Modern Japan* ed. William Kelly, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 251.

From their workers, Japanese companies demanded long hours, intense effort, and personal sacrifice, but in the process Japan turned itself into a nation of successful, solidly middle class citizens. In baseball, demands were no different. Indeed, as *doryoku*, or effort, became the most popular word in Japan according to a 1979 survey, pitchers on some teams were being asked to run 20 miles daily, in addition to between five and nine hours of ordinary baseball drills, in the dead of winter, in order to get in shape for the following season.¹⁶³ Leron Lee, who played ten seasons in Japan, said of some of the training camps his team went through, “some of the drills would put players in the hospital for two or three days because of dehydration.” As Murakami Masanori remembered, “To practice, you had to have guts. They wouldn’t even let us drink water during practice. So we would think of devious ways to get a drink... There used to be rice patties around the baseball field, so some outfielders would drink from there.”¹⁶⁴ When a player for the Seibu Lions, a team known through the 1980s for having one of the most intense training regimens, was asked, “Seibu is just like the army, isn’t it?” he replied, “No. It’s just like an average Japanese company.”¹⁶⁵ Baseball and corporate value systems went hand-in-hand. Strategies seen to be successful in one were taken and applied across the other, Japanese baseball became a sport that was more evidently “worked” than “played,” and effort became even more tightly woven into the game’s fabric.¹⁶⁶

Effort had, of course, been part of the baseball lexicon before. But while Ichiko players straightening their bent arms by hanging off cherry trees and Tobita Suishu’s charges after going through one of his “death camps” had characterized effort in earlier decades, beginning in the early 1960s that mantle passed to the Tokyo Giants and their manager Kawakami Tetsuharu.

¹⁶³ Whiting, *You Gotta Have Wa* 61 and Robert Whiting, *The Chrysanthemum and the Bat: Baseball Samurai Style* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1977), 44.

¹⁶⁴ “Leron Lee” and “Masanori Murakami” in Fitts, *Remembering Japanese Baseball*, 135 and 85.

¹⁶⁵ Whiting, *You Gotta Have Wa*, 61 and 231.

¹⁶⁶ Kelly, “Men at Work,” 247-248.

The “God of Hitting,” as he was known, impressed teammate Naito Hirofumi during his running days by running laps around the field when games were rained out, and carried a similar philosophy into managing when the Giants hired him in 1961. With all time greats Nagashima Shigeo and Oh Sadaharu, Kawakami and the Giants won nine straight Japan Championships from 1965-1973. Oh, for his part, remembered the manager fondly in his autobiography. “I was not at all sure at the time that my critics were wrong [about my batting style]. But what mattered most was that my manager, Mr. Kawakami, who could have called a halt to this experiment, allowed it to continue.” But Oh also made it clear that Kawakami demanded more than most managers for the privilege of being a Giant. “We were invariably out of bed shortly after sunup and at it through the day and into the night, till just before bedtime at ten o’clock.”¹⁶⁷ After retiring, Kawakami went on the lecture circuit, where he explained his philosophy. “Most players are lazy. It’s a manager’s job to make them train hard...Leaders who are thought of as ‘nice people’ will fail.”¹⁶⁸

The Giants also had the advantage of the Yomiuri conglomerate, which owned the team and, indeed, a large part of Japan. In the middle of the century, Yomiuri controlled the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, one of the world’s most circulated newspapers, the *Hochi Shimbun*, a top Japanese sports daily, and Nippon Television, the third largest television network in Japan. Every Giants game could be seen on TV, the team was relentlessly reported on in Yomiuri papers, and, as if the publicity was not enough, owner Shoriki Matsutaro’s wealth allowed him to buy the greatest players Japan has ever produced.¹⁶⁹ Yomiuri also knew how to capitalize on Kawakami and his style of baseball, aggressively depicting him and his team as ultimate examples of unity,

¹⁶⁷ Oh Sadaharu and David Falkner, *Sadaharu Oh: A Zen Way of Baseball* (New York: Times Books, 1984), 146, 73.

¹⁶⁸ Whiting, *You Gotta Have Wa*, 74.

¹⁶⁹ Whiting, *The Chrysanthemum and the Bat*, 213.

discipline, loyalty, and harmony. In short, the Yomiuri media machine created the image of the Giants after the pattern of the idealized Japanese corporation. William Kelly argued that their strategy was met with mixed success, noting particularly that relationships between players on the team, especially Oh and Nagashima, could be distant or even tense. However, the baseball-team-as-corporation image took on a life of its own, and was eventually copied to some degree by nearly every other team in professional Japanese baseball.¹⁷⁰ Everyone wanted to imitate and share in Kawakami's success, and though no other team has come close to rivaling the Giants in popularity, their place at the top of the baseball world has been challenged over the decades by numerous teams playing Kawakami-inspired baseball.

Though forever outshined by his more illustrious and outgoing teammate, Oh Sadaharu was and is the best player to have played the Japanese game. Playing mostly for Kawakami, Oh ended his career in 1980 with a lifetime .301 batting average and 868 home runs, the most of any player in any league in history. He even won two triple crowns, a feat accomplished even once by very few men.¹⁷¹ To him, effort was an inseparable part of baseball. "Hard work is a professional's obligation. He has no business taking credit for it any more than a musician should take credit for practicing scales."¹⁷² Oh spent the first three years of his career, from 1959-1961, mired in a slump that threatened to end it early before he developed a radically different batting stance under the mentorship of Arakawa Hiroshi.¹⁷³ When he did, Oh took to

¹⁷⁰ Kelly, "Men at Work" 250-252 and William Kelly, "Blood and Guts in Japanese Professional Baseball" in Sepp Linhart and Sabine Früstück, eds., *The Culture of Japan as Seen Through its Leisure* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1998) 106-107.

¹⁷¹ A "triple crown" is where one player captures the titles for most home runs, RBI, and highest batting average in a single season. It has happened only 15 times in over 130 years of American major league baseball, last in 1967.

¹⁷² Oh, *Sadaharu Oh*, 72.

¹⁷³ Oh named his style "flamingo batting" for the way he would stand on one foot, balancing, until the pitcher threw the ball. The point of the stance was to eliminate a "hitch," where he would sub-consciously bring his hands back just as the pitcher threw, throwing off his timing. The flamingo stance was designed so that if he hitched he would simply fall over.

practicing his new style hundreds of times every day, on game days and in the off-season, with Arakawa watching closely. When he finally became comfortable in his stance, Oh began using a samurai sword to cut in half a tiny piece of wet paper hanging from the ceiling. If he hit it right, in precisely the right fashion and with perfect timing, he would cut the paper in half. Otherwise, it would turn to the side and stick to his blade. Oh became legendary for cutting paper, over and over again, perfecting a stroke over the course of his entire career that nobody ever imagined would work.¹⁷⁴

There have been other ostentatious displays of guts and fighting spirit over the course of baseball's history in Japan. Pitchers throwing hundreds of pitches on off days horrified American observers writing even before World War II, and other drills, like the 1000 fungo drill, were meant solely to develop a player's spirit and not his technique.¹⁷⁵ Likewise, there have been some players who have refused to take part in excruciating training regimens. Mostly, those who refuse are North American, although even some Japanese have recently called for lighter workouts and, especially, more judicious use of pitchers. However, what is irrefutable is that effort has once again become an essential part of what it means to be a baseball player. Thomas Blackwood writes that Tobita Suishu's coaching philosophy in the 1920s "allowed baseball to shed its explicit link to a militaristic past," but in this case military spirit seems to have been replaced by "fighting spirit."¹⁷⁶ In the latter half of the 20th Century, Tobita's *bushido* in baseball was again redefined by adding the notion of corporate-style baseball, embodied by Shoriki's Giants and unrelenting effort, and validated by Japan's superb economic performance. The Giants, idealized by the Yomiuri media machine and consequently perceived as the most

¹⁷⁴ Oh, *Sadaharu Oh*, 168-169.

¹⁷⁵ In the 1000 fungo drill, a coach hits a player ground balls or pop flies until he literally drops to the ground in exhaustion.

¹⁷⁶ Blackwood, "Bushido Baseball?" 232.

“Japanese” of any team in the league, brought *bushido* back into fashion after the war’s end and made it synonymous with success on the field.

Issues of Race in the Modern Game

Bushido had also long been stressed in baseball as characteristic of the Japanese people. It was a philosophy which distinguished the Japanese game from its counterparts throughout the world, and, in this milieu, it came to be prevailing wisdom that foreigners could never hope to assimilate into the Japanese system. Before long, in many circles the old animosities that led to the colonization of Korea and Taiwan and eventually to the Manchurian Incident and the Pacific War began to rise up again. Pacifism was mandated in Japan’s new system by popular opinion and Japanese and international law, and there was never another threat that Japan would return to aggressively acquisitive foreign policy. However, as Japan’s economy grew, the pride that people felt in themselves lead easily into a general disdain for foreigners, especially those outside the ranks of the economic powers.

A certain sort of racism developed, born partly from Japan’s arrival in the world and partly from centuries of self-imposed isolation, which produced near-homogeneity on the home islands. It cannot be said to have been as virulent as was seen, for example, in the American South in the early 20th Century. Rather, it should be considered to be something more “naïve,” coming from a historical unfamiliarity with and subsequent mistrust of outsiders, that has manifested itself in the last century and a half through alternating periods of rapid westernization and moments of knee-jerk traditionalism. Across industry, baseball included, foreigners have been hired in Japan as *suketto*, or helpers, who were intended to come for a short while, teach what they knew, and then politely return to their home countries and to leave Japan to the

Japanese. Difficult cross-cultural relations, stemming in many cases from an inability to bridge this mode of thinking, have caused heartbreak for many outsiders who have tried to make a career in Japan.

Baseball in Japan is very much a protected industry in fact, where “tariffs” are imposed in order to help foster local talent. Each team for most of the last century has only been allowed two foreign players on their varsity roster, recently raised to four. The Japanese Players Association claimed that the limit protects the Japanese game from being overrun by foreign players, but a number of respected men, Nagashima Shigeo among them, still dreamed of fielding Japanese-only lineups.¹⁷⁷ In 1987, incoming baseball commissioner Takeuchi Juhei agreed. “There isn’t 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-blooded baseball is ideal.”¹⁷⁸ Limits on *gaijin*, as foreign players are called, certainly protect Japanese talent, but they are also almost certainly in place because “what the Japanese fans really want to see is a big home run by a Japanese star, not a *gaijin*.”¹⁷⁹

Again, at the forefront of the movement away from hiring foreign players were the Tokyo Giants and their parent company, *Yomiuri*. In 1951, with the help of Cappy Harada, the Giants hired Wally Yonamine, the first American-born player to play in Japan after World War II. He radically altered the way baseball was played in Japan, and is particularly remembered for introducing the hard slide. Eventually, he would be inducted into the Japanese Baseball Hall of

¹⁷⁷ Whiting, *The Meaning of Ichiro* 150-151

¹⁷⁸ Quoted in Whiting, *You Gotta Have Wa*, 276.

¹⁷⁹ *Sankei Supotsu*, December 5-15, 1980. Quoted in Robert Whiting, “The Samurai Way of Baseball and the National Character Debate,” *Japan Focus*, 29 September 2006, <http://www.japanfocus.org/-Robert-Whiting/2235> (accessed 15 January 2011).

Fame for his efforts. But in 1960, when Kawakami Tetsuharu became the club's manager, the Giants let Yonamine go and embarked on the process of purifying their team in preparation for what would become nine straight championships.¹⁸⁰ From then on, employing only Japanese players was rolled together with intense effort and strong discipline in official *Yomiuri* depictions of the Giants team. Achieving such success with only Japanese players added to their mystique, and was an essential part in their continuing popularity.¹⁸¹ The Giants did not sign another foreign player until Davey Johnson in 1975, and fans rue the decision to this day.¹⁸²

William Kelly, and others, of course point out how difficult it is to have an ethnically pure team in a modern cosmopolitan country. On the Giants teams of the mid-1960s were stars like Oh Sadaharu, whose father was Chinese, and Kaneda Masaichi, born in Japan of two Korean parents.¹⁸³ At times, these players were celebrated as shining examples of the Japanese system. "Oh has a Japanese heart. He was born and raised in Japan. He went to school here. He has a Japanese mother and a Japanese wife. He looks like a Japanese. He talks like a Japanese. He *is* a Japanese."¹⁸⁴ At others, however, they could be subjected to racism of the worst kind.

A teacher at school called me into his office to inform me that I would not be allowed to take part in Kokutai (a high school baseball tournament) because I was Chinese. I was stunned...What with the protest of my teammates and the immediate support and sympathy I received from my manager, teachers, and the Tokyo press, it seems hard to believe that such a rule would stand. But stand it did. There were no exceptions. Ever. It was there just for the reasons stated. Kokutai was for Japanese only.¹⁸⁵

Oh, for his part, shook off this setback. He traveled to the tournament with the team and watched every game, "sitting right behind home plate, leaning my face against the wire net," and

¹⁸⁰ Fitts, *Remembering Japanese Baseball*, 21-31

¹⁸¹ Whiting, *The Chrysanthemum and the Bat*, 210-211.

¹⁸² Whiting, *You Gotta Have Wa*, 162.

¹⁸³ Kelly, "Blood and Guts," 100-102.

¹⁸⁴ Whiting, *The Chrysanthemum and the Bat*, 211.

¹⁸⁵ Oh, *Oh*, 54.

went on to be signed the following summer by the Giants. But he writes, “I had never thought about discrimination till then, and the meaning of it for me—if there is any—is that it caused me more pain than anything else in my forty-three years of life.”¹⁸⁶

The Kokutai tournament was not the last time Oh was embroiled in a racial controversy. In 1985, with Hanshin Tigers American Randy Bass one home run shy of Oh’s single-season record going into the final game, he came up to bat five times against the Oh-managed Giants. Rather than pitch to him however, Bass was walked four times out of five, and in his other at-bat he flailed at a pitch well outside of the strike zone for a fluke single.¹⁸⁷ Kelly notes that “the Giants wanted to win that game very much...With the Giants desperate for a victory, it was obvious strategy for them to pitch around the Tiger’s most potent hitter.”¹⁸⁸ There are certainly times in a baseball game where it would make sense to intentionally walk the best player on the opposing team. However, in this case, this was *not* the “obvious strategy.” In the first place, the men hitting after Bass were Kakefu Masayuki and Okada Akinobu, two of the best players of the 1980s, and both coming off phenomenal seasons. Walking Bass with those two coming up does not take care of the problem of having to deal with a dangerous hitter. Second, the individual circumstances of his at bats never call for intentional walks. For example, with his team up 7-2 in the eighth inning and men on first and second, Bass was walked for the fourth time of the day. Normally, there would be no reason to try to keep the game close down five runs in the eighth. Moreover, loading the bases in that situation is not a way to keep the game close (the hitter after Bass got a hit and three runs scored). Robert Whiting details all of Bass’s plate appearances all in his piece, “The Samurai Way of Baseball and the National Character Debate,” but the final

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 57.

¹⁸⁷ Whiting, *You Gotta Have Wa* 302.

¹⁸⁸ William Kelly, “Baseball in Japan: The National Game Beyond National Character” in *Baseball as America* (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 2002), 50-51.

one was a gross example of either managerial ineptitude or absolute refusal to allow the record to be tied.¹⁸⁹ One player on that year's Giants team, an American relief pitcher named Keith Comstock, suggested it must have been the latter. "Said Comstock, a certain Giants coach had taken his pitchers aside and threatened them with a hefty thousand-dollar fine for every strike they threw to Bass."¹⁹⁰

Even though protecting team records and walking those threatening to break them has been a common practice through many years of Japanese baseball, Whiting, at least, believed that in this case there was something more devious afoot. He cited his own experience with the Japanese "national mood" in 1985, decidedly anti-American at the time, to refute Kelly's claim that "most [Japanese] baseball fans felt it was unfortunate that the Giants' pitchers avoided pitching to Bass," and quoted a Japanese government survey and the Japanese Baseball Commissioner to back himself up.¹⁹¹ He also brought in Tabuchi Koichi, a former Tiger's player who said in a 2001 *New York Times* interview, "I played in the same era as Oh, and we felt very strongly about his record. At the time, I would confess that people didn't want anyone other than a Japanese to break this title."¹⁹² Though Bass still won the Triple Crown and Most Valuable Player award, Whiting believes that the episode was a case of racially-driven prejudice against an American who had, unfortunately, become the best hitter in Japanese baseball.

Warren Cromartie, a black outfielder who played for the Giants in Japan for seven seasons beginning in 1984, was perhaps more in tune than any other foreigner with his racial standing. He eventually became popular, among his teammates and the Japanese public, but he never became completely accustomed to the prejudice. "We couldn't count the times [we saw] a

¹⁸⁹ Whiting, "The Samurai Way of Baseball."

¹⁹⁰ Whiting, *You Gotta Have Wa*, 294.

¹⁹¹ Whiting, "The Samurai Way of Baseball."

¹⁹² Howard French, "Japanese are Playing Favorites," *New York Times*, 15 September 2001, sec. C, p. 7.

cartoon of a black in some ad or magazine drawing, showing the big eyes, the fat lips, exaggerating our features... To us, it was demeaning. So was the Japanese politician who suggested that blacks in America seldom paid their bills. I knew a black ball player who once tried to give blood in Japan but was refused... It was insulting.”¹⁹³ Similar anecdotes color his entire autobiography. At a team reception at the beginning of the 1988 season, “the speaker, an older man with thick glasses, was going on about how they Japanese had to be consistently better than the *gaijin*... [The next speaker] exhorted the team not to rely on foreigners, as he had at every other team reception I’d attended.”¹⁹⁴ In 1987, after signing a huge three year contract but still unable find any of the endorsement deals that his Japanese teammates could, Cromartie was hard-pressed to contain his anger. “That old paranoia again... If I had been Japanese, if my name had been Kuroyama, or if my skin color were different, my picture would have been all over the place. I didn’t like it. I felt left out and cheated.”¹⁹⁵ By 1989 though, his sixth season, he had resigned himself to his situation and adjusted to Japanese baseball. “After a while, I stopped questioning the institutional racism. The slave mentality took over.”¹⁹⁶

Such episodes have, over the years, constituted something of a dark side of the Japanese game. Though they have been an almost universal part of the foreigner’s experience however, they have received little or no attention in the Japanese press. That this state of affairs was entirely natural is significant to our understanding of how baseball in Japan has defined *bushido* over the course of the last century. To our previous definitions must be added the caveat that ultimately, *bushido* is a mark of Japanese-ness, and that a person must be Japanese in order to embody it. There have been *gaijin* that have fit into the Japanese system and have thrived.

¹⁹³ Warren Cromartie with Robert Whiting, *Slugging it Out in Japan: An American Major Leaguer in the Tokyo Outfield* (New York: Signet, 1991), 300.

¹⁹⁴ Cromartie, *Slugging it Out*, 232-233.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 169.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 287.

Warren Cromartie himself is one, as his seven year career attests. However, when it ended he had to go back home. He was so obviously not Japanese that he could never fully assimilate, and in the end was unwanted.

Ethnic *bushido* does have its limits however. Oh Sadaharu and Kaneda Masaichi, though not ethnically Japanese, were born and raised in Japan, spoke Japanese, and were usually readily accepted by the baseball public though they never were as popular as their Japanese teammates. Having grown up with the Japanese experience, combined with their fantastically successful careers, was enough to qualify them for acceptance in the system. *Bushido*, in their case, was more about a process, perhaps of becoming a Japanese man. We have seen that high school baseball was as much about building character as about teaching technique. Oh Sadaharu certainly had a strenuous (and successful) high school career, and proved his fighting spirit at Koshien multiple times. There was outrage, by ethnic Japanese, from all quarters when he was refused the right to play at Kokutai, which would not have occurred if achieving manhood and embodying *bushido* was only the privilege of the purely Japanese. *Bushido* once again showed its ambiguity by refusing to be reduced to either an example of Japanese ethnic identity or a universal character trait, but in doing so reflects Japanese society's flexibility in recognizing ethnic status.

The Future of Japanese Baseball

The major shift in Japanese baseball in recent years has been inspired by a small trickle of elite players who have begun to seek to ply their trade in the United States Major Leagues. The movement began in 1994, when Nomo Hideo and his agent Don Nomura found a loophole in the standard player contract that allowed Nomo to circumvent the reserve clause, which bound

players in Japan to one team until they had played for ten years and achieved free agency. The loophole, called the voluntary retirement clause, specified that if a player who had retired wished to return to active status, he would still be subject to the reserve clause and beholden to his former team. It was also present in contracts in the United States, but whereas the American contracts specified that a team would have worldwide rights over a player returning from retirement, the Japanese voluntary retirement clause was only effective so long as the player wanted to return to play in Japan. Legally, then, a player could “retire” from Japanese baseball and then, if he were good enough, go to Major League Baseball and sign with whatever team he wished.¹⁹⁷

During the 1994 season, Nomo, upset with the way he was being used by his Japanese team, decided to exploit this loophole and become the first Japanese player since 1965 to make the switch. At the end of that season, he went to his club’s front office on the pretense of negotiating his contract for 1995, where he demanded a six year deal at 3 million dollars per year. “I knew they would never agree to the six-year deal,” he said later. “So I had made up my mind to go. If they had said yes, I would have had to sign, but I knew that would never happen.”¹⁹⁸ Upon being rejected, Nomo immediately announced his retirement, shocking his organization and the entire Japanese baseball establishment. “This is crazy! Think of what you are doing to your career,” cautioned one executive. Nomo, however, ever defiant, responded, “I am. That’s why I am leaving.” He quickly found himself up against the popular opinion from every corner of Japan as well. “Ingrate,” “troublemaker” and “traitor” were commonly used to

¹⁹⁷ Whiting, *The Meaning of Ichiro*, 103-104.

¹⁹⁸ Robert Whiting, “Contract Loophole Opened Door for Nomo’s Jump.” *Japan Times Online*, 10 October 2010, <http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/sb20101010j2.html> (accessed January 4, 2011).

describe him, and even his own father joined in, but Nomo reacted with the same cool and self-righteousness he had shown during his contract negotiations. “Let them talk. It’s just hot air.”¹⁹⁹

Nomo went on to a long and moderately successful career in American Major League Baseball. Robert Whiting even makes an impassioned plea for his inclusion into the American Hall of Fame which, though his argument ultimately falls short, demonstrates the amount of respect that many within the baseball community had for the man, his work ethic, and his ability to overcome intense pressure in Japan and in the United States.²⁰⁰ Nomo opened the door, so to speak, for an entire generation of Japanese players to see if they could be successful in what is indisputably the best baseball league in the world, and since his defection 43 players have since followed in his footsteps, with varying degrees of success. Some, like Takahashi Ken, have played one unremarkable season and either returned to Japan or retired entirely. Iribu Hideki and Matsuzaka Daisuke showed flashes of brilliance, but have also had stretches where they were as miserable as any pitcher ever. Matsui Hideki, the greatest home-run hitter in Japan in the late 1990s, has turned in eight solid, workmanlike seasons in the United States, and was recently signed to a ninth.²⁰¹

The most successful, and the only Japanese player who has a legitimate case for inclusion into the American Hall of Fame, is Suzuki Ichiro, who set the Major League record for most hits in a season in 2004 and has 2,244 hits through ten seasons. Ichiro’s success has, in the words of Whiting, “validated the national ego.”²⁰² He is living proof that the Japanese, ridiculed since the

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Robert Whiting, “Nomo’s Legacy Should Land him in Hall of Fame.” *Japan Times Online*, 24 October 2010, <http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/sb20101024j1.html> (accessed January 4, 2011).

²⁰¹ All of these figures come from the player bio pages at http://mlb.mlb.com/mlb/players/?tcid=nav_mlb_players. Any judgments about the usefulness of a particular player are the opinion of the author.

²⁰² Whiting, *The Meaning of Ichiro*, 45. In an unusual PR stunt while he was playing in Japan, Ichiro began going by his given name rather than his family name to distinguish himself from the rest of the Suzukis playing Japanese

days of Ichiko at Yokohama for being too small and frail, can indeed survive at the highest levels of professional athletics. And for his part Ichiro has assumed the mantle of standard-bearer for Japanese baseball that should be expected from the greatest Japanese player of his generation. In two World Baseball classics, for example, both won by Japan, he transformed himself from a serious, somber ballplayer into the unquestioned leader of the Japanese team, a passionate, fiery patriot delivering key hits and willing his team to victory.²⁰³ Unlike many in the Japanese public, who still exert substantial pressure on homegrown talent not to desert the Japanese league, Ichiro has also lent encouraging words to men wanting to make the switch and to the people back home worried about baseball's future. "It's impossible to control your growing desire to play in the major leagues because we all know that it's the best in the world...As an athlete, you have to compete against the world's best...In the short run, the popularity of baseball might recede a bit. But in the long term, I believe, it would have more positive effects than negative ones."²⁰⁴

The exodus of players from the Japanese professional league is but one more change in the long history of a game that has seen many, and has been forced to compete with its big brother across the Pacific for decades. Many believe that this latest trend will be the final straw that will turn the Japanese league into a feeder system for more powerful American leagues. However, baseball certainly has carved out for itself a unique niche in Japanese culture. From the days of challenging American colonizers at Yokohama to Hideo Nomo jumping to play in their league in 1995, baseball has been an important force for change and marker of national pride. The reason for this starts and ends with *bushido*, the samurai way, that I have tried to

ball. He has continued to call himself "Ichiro" in the United States, so I have decided to use his given name in this paper.

²⁰³ Robert Whiting, "Equaling Oh's HR Record Proved Difficult." *Japan Times Online*, 31 October 2010, <http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/sb20081031j4.html> (accessed January 7, 2011).

²⁰⁴ Quoted in Whiting, *The Meaning of Ichiro*, 269.

define in the context of baseball. William Kelly disdains the use of *bushido* to describe any sort of “national character,” likening it to the idealization of the cowboy in America.²⁰⁵ However, it is for precisely this reason that *bushido*, especially in the context of baseball, is so important to study. In determining what *bushido* has meant over time, we learn how the Japanese have wished to portray themselves from Meiji times onward. Kelly is correct that applying *bushido* to baseball in a blanket fashion obscures our understanding of the game’s subtleties in Japan. What this paper has tried to do is turn that around, and apply baseball to *bushido*. Players are expected by everyone, be they the youngest fan or the most senior team owner, to carry themselves in a way befitting an idealization of the samurai of old. They have become the projection of Japanese values, products of a pristine cultural image of self, that has changed over time to reflect changing Japanese opinions and principles.

The ways in which this idealization has changed, and the ways in which baseball has driven that change, have hopefully been detailed in the preceding pages. The process began with the boys at Ichiko, winning victory against Americans at Yokohama and in the process validating both their own privileged, upper-class existence and the greater Japanese nation vis-à-vis the Western powers. Iso Abe and Tobita Suishu, direct philosophical descendents of the high school boys, defended baseball to the Japanese public and added fair play and purity of spirit to Ichiko’s definition of *bushido*, while retaining the latter’s emphases on loyalty and punishing hard work. Heroes were born and great feats were accomplished in subsequent decades, when baseball tours regularly crossed the Pacific, but baseball proved unable to forestall World War II. By that time, however, the game was already as Japanese as it was American, as Ishimaru Shinichi’s story

²⁰⁵ Kelly, “Samurai Baseball,” 434.

attests. When asked to fly a kamikaze mission, the ultimate act of wartime *bushido*, he pulled out his glove and played catch on the deck of his aircraft carrier.

Following the war, *bushido* as a term, for all of its militaristic connotations, naturally declined in popularity in the wake of a crushing defeat. However, its spirit was very much alive, and returning ballplayers at every level worked hard to bring the game back. Baseball became as much public service as sport, played to distract fans from the humiliation of defeat and to give them hope that they could rebuild their lives. So successful was it that when Kawakami Tetsuharu and his Giants began their reign of dominance, baseball had turned into a national institution that people took as much pride in as the GDP. The Giants in particular, utilizing the same philosophies and training methods perfected at Ichiko and by Tobita, were relentless in their presentation of themselves as pure Japanese, hardworking, efficient, and disciplined. They realigned themselves with the *bushido* code, and clearly equated their team's personality with the idealized samurai. They also introduced ambiguity into the term, accepting as Japanese men like Oh Sadaharu and Kaneda Masaichi, who were ethnically from outside the home islands. Though *bushido* in theory leaves little space for those not of Japanese ancestry, Oh and Kaneda had undergone the rites of passage expected of young players in high school and their first years in the professional leagues. They were granted honorary samurai status, and *bushido* kept its hold on the watching public.

Finally, in later years, the exodus of players to the American professional league has necessitated yet another shift. Loyalty, it seems, has given way at the highest level to national pride. "Japanese are excited because [Ichiro's success] shows Japanese superiority over

America.”²⁰⁶ The greatest players are now expected to prove themselves on the greatest stage. *Bushido* means success in Major League Baseball and the World Baseball Classic, where the entire nation can live vicariously through the glory of a single, world-beating individual. His Japanese team, like Ichiro’s, may expect his services for ten years or until he becomes a free agent, but eventually to be hailed among the greatest he will have to star in the United States against the world’s best. And he must do it because his responsibility has expanded, and the object of his sense of duty and obligation has changed. In the end, his *bushido* spirit belongs to the people of Japan, and they expect that he will realize their dreams.

²⁰⁶ Quoted in Whiting, *The Meaning of Ichiro*, 46.

Primary Sources

Cromartie, Warren, and Robert Whiting. *Slugging It Out in Japan: An American Major Leaguer in the Tokyo Outfield*. New York, N.Y., U.S.A.: Signet, 1992.

Cromartie played seven seasons for the Tokyo Yomiuri Giants, and his 1992 autobiography is a candid, at times crass, assessment of baseball and life in Japan. I used him particularly to make a point about race, but this book could have fit in almost anywhere in this paper.

Falkner, David, and Sadaharu Oh. *Sadaharu Oh: A Zen Way of Baseball*. New York: Vintage, 1985.

Oh wrote his autobiography with the same humility and care with which he lives his life, and the book is a beautiful testament to the greatest career in Japanese baseball history. He was useful to the paper when talking about race and effort, but his commentaries on high school ball and clubhouse atmosphere were useful for my soul as I wrote.

Fitts, Robert K. *Remembering Japanese Baseball: An Oral History of the Game*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2005.

Fitts has assembled 25 short interviews, of men Japanese and otherwise, who have had experience in the Japanese game. His subjects were involved with the game from 1946 all the way to 1997, covering the most important developmental period of the professional game. If he lacks anything, it is that he has no Japanese players that played after 1974, but his interviews are nonetheless of the highest quality, and the book was invaluable.

Musashi, Miyamoto. *The Book of Five Rings*. Translated by Thomas Cleary. Boston: Shambhala, 1993.

Musashi Miyamoto wrote *The Book of Five Rings* as a manual to teach his fighting style, but the example that he set resonates through Japanese baseball to this day. The book is esoteric and open to interpretation, but is nonetheless an enjoyable read that helps illuminate the mindset of any Japanese coach, manager, or player.

Nitobe, Inazo. *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*. Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1969.

Nitobe was one of Japan's most ardent westernizers, and he wrote this book to show Japan and the world that it and the West were not so different. He helped define *bushido* at the turn of the century, and, though his definitions have been altered, the significance of this book is still hard to overstate.

Roosevelt, Theodore. *The Strenuous Life; Essays and Addresses*. New York: The Century Co, 1902. <http://books.google.com/books?id=G0EWAAAAMAAJ&printsec=copyright#v=onepage&q&f=false> (accessed January 26, 2011).

Secondary Sources

Bassham, Gregory. "Top of the Seventh: The Zen of Hitting." In *Baseball and Philosophy: Thinking Outside the Batter's Box*. Edited by Eric Bronson. Chicago: Open Court, 2004.

Beasley, W. G. *The Meiji Restoration*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1972.

Blackwood, Thomas. "Bushido Baseball? Three 'Fathers' and the Invention of a Tradition." *Social Science Japan Journal* 11, no. 2 (September 2008): 223-240.

Blackwood was an essential source in the sections on high school baseball, and his thesis in many ways is similar to my own. However, while he notes how *bushido* changes over time in baseball, he takes that as evidence that it should not be used to define an unchanging Japanese national character. I, in contrast, have tried to show how baseball has changed *bushido*, and what that has meant in Japanese society.

Brannigan, Michael. "Bottom of the Seventh: Japanese Baseball and its Warrior Ways?" In *Baseball and Philosophy: Thinking Outside the Batter's Box*. Edited by Eric Bronson. Chicago: Open Court, 2004.

Crepeau, Richard C. *Baseball: America's Diamond Mind, 1919-1941*. Orlando: University Presses of Florida, 1980.

_____. "Pearl Harbor: A Failure of Baseball?" *Journal of Popular Culture* 15, no. 4 (Spring 1982): 67-74.

Dower, John W. *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999.

Dower is one of the finest Japan historians alive, and his Pulitzer Prize-winning *Embracing Defeat* was enormously helpful in the sections on baseball during and after World War II both for its wealth of information and for its intimate readability. Assessing a "national mood" is an enormous undertaking, but Dower has put together enough primary source work that I think he fairly accomplishes just that.

Franks, Joel S. *Asian Pacific Americans and Baseball: A History*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, Inc., 2008.

Friday, Karl, "Bushido or Bull? A Medieval Historian's Perspective on the Imperial Army and the Japanese Warrior Tradition," *History Teacher* 27, no. 3 (May 1994): 339-349.

Gmelch, George, ed. *Baseball without Borders: The International Pastime*. Lincoln, NE: Bison Books, 2006.

Gmelch's book, though only giving Japan a light pass, does delve into baseball's tradition in nations around the globe and makes for an interesting read for the average baseball fan.

Goldstein, Richard. *Spartan Seasons: How Baseball Survived the Second World War*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1980.

Gordon, Andrew. *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present*. New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 2003.

Guttman, Allen. *Games and Empires*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.

Guttman, Allen, and Lee Thompson. *Japanese Sports: A History*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001.

While Whiting is skeptical of the research (he would say lack thereof) put into *Japanese Sports: A History*, I found it to be valuable as a general overview to the history of baseball, particularly of the high school variety. However, its treatment of baseball is comparatively light.

Hurst, G. Cameron III. "Death, Honor, and Loyalty: The Bushido Ideal." *Philosophy East and West* 40, no. 4 (October 1990): 511-527.

Hurst's essay on *bushido* portrays it in every way I hope this paper does—as an ambiguous, flexible, constantly evolving term that is intended to invoke some sort of timeless national character, which is valuable in the end because it offers a glimpse into the values that defined a particular time and place.

Japanese Baseball Hall of Fame. "List of Hall of Famers." http://english.baseball-museum.or.jp/baseball_hallo/list/year.html (accessed January 15, 2011).

Kelly, William. "Baseball in Japan: The National Game Beyond National Character." In *Baseball as America*, 47-52. Washington, DC: National Geographic Society <in conjunction with the National Baseball Hall of Fame>, 2002.

_____. "Blood and Guts in Japanese Professional Baseball." *The Culture of Japan as Seen Through Its Leisure*. Edited by Sepp Linhart and Sabine Frühstück, 95-112, Albany: SUNY Press, 1998.

_____. "How to Cheer a Japanese Baseball Team: An Anthropologist in the Bleachers." *Japan Quarterly*, (October-December 1997): 66-79.

_____. "Is Baseball a Global Sport? America's 'National Pastime' as Global Field and International Sport." *Global Networks: A Journal of Transnational Affairs* 7 no. 2 (2007): 187-201.

_____. "Learning to Swing: Oh Sadaharu and the Pedagogy and Practice of Japanese Professional Baseball." In *Learning in Likely Places*. Edited by John Singleton, 422-458, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

_____. "Men at Work or Boys of Summer? The Workplaces of Professional Baseball in Contemporary Japan." In *This Sporting Life: Sports and Body Culture in Modern Japan*. Edited by William W. Kelly, 242-267. New Haven: Yale University Council on East Asian Studies, 2007.

_____. "Samurai Baseball: The Vicissitudes of a National Sporting Style." *International Journal of the History of Sport* 26, no. 3 (March 2009): 429-441.

_____. "The Spirit and Spectacle of School Baseball: Mass Media, Statemaking, and 'Entertainment' in Japan, 1905-1935." In *Japanese Civilization in the Modern World XIV: Information and Communication*. Edited by Umesao Tadao, William Kelly, and Kubo Masatoshi, 105-116. Senri Ethnological Studies #52. Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology, 2000.

William Kelly has set himself up in recent years as the man to hold Robert Whiting accountable. While Whiting, a journalist, accepts his view from inside Tokyo, Kelly (probably with reason) insists that he refrain from making blanket generalizations and taking anecdotal evidence as gospel. The Yale anthropology professor's high academic standards are on full display in the articles he has written on Japanese baseball. Some points are weak however, giving me the chance to make him my own foil.

Kiku, Koichi. "The Japanese Baseball Spirit and Professional Ideology." In *Japan, Sport, and Society; Tradition and Change in a Globalizing World*. Edited by Joseph Maguire and Masayoshi Nakayama, 35-54, London: Routledge, 2006.

Kokoyakyu: High School Baseball. DVD. Directed by Kenneth Eng. 2003; Brooklyn, NY: Projectile Arts, 2003.

Kokoyakyu was the closest I was able to get to interviewing actual Japanese players. The production quality is superb, and the film flows easily. A fantastic view for anyone interested in high school baseball.

Kusaka, Yuko. "The Development of Baseball Organizations in Japan." *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 22, no. 4 (1987): 263-279.

_____. "The Emergence and Development of Japanese School Sport." In *Japan, Sport, and Society; Tradition and Change in a Globalizing World*. Edited by Joseph Maguire and Masayoshi Nakayama, 19-34, London: Routledge., 2006.

Levine, Peter. *A. G. Spalding and the Rise of Baseball: The Promise of American Sport*. New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 1986.

Lu, David John. *Japan A Documentary History*. Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1997. <http://www.netlibrary.com/urlapi.asp?action=summary&v=1&bookid=1642> (accessed January 26, 2011).

McClain, James L. *Japan: A Modern History: College Edition*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2002.

McClain's textbook on Japanese history is as authoritative as any book, anywhere. It was my rock in the early going, inexperienced student of Japan that I was, and provided much of the context for this project.

Morris, Andrew D. *Colonial Project, National Game: A History of Baseball in Taiwan*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2010.

_____. "Taiwan: Baseball, Colonialism, and Nationalism." In *Baseball Without Borders: The International Pastime*. Edited by George Gmelch, 65-88, Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2006.

Peattie, Mark R. *Ishiwara Kanji and Japan's Confrontation with the West*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1975.

Pyle, Kenneth B. *The New Generation in Meiji Japan; Problems of Cultural Identity, 1885-1895*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1969.

Reaves, Joseph A. *Taking in a Game: A History of Baseball in Asia*. Lincoln, NE: Bison Books, 2004.

Unlike Whiting or Kelly, Reaves is a historian, and his book is one of few that reflects this perspective instead of that of a journalist or an anthropologist. His book was particularly helpful as a source reference, but its inclusion of the histories of baseball in China, Korea, the Philippines, and Taiwan make for excellent reading.

Roden, Donald F. *Schooldays in Imperial Japan: A Study in the Culture of a Student Elite*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1981.

_____. "Baseball and the Quest for National Dignity in Meiji Japan." *American Historical Review* 85 (June 1980): 511-534.

"Baseball and the Quest for National Dignity in Meiji Japan" is widely regarded in the Japanese baseball literature as one of the finest pieces ever written on the game. It was invaluable, particularly in describing the triumph of Ichiko over the Americans at Yokohama.

Seymour, Harold, and Dorothy Z. Seymour. *Baseball: The People's Game*. New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 1991.

Shillony, Ben-Ami. "Universities and Students in Wartime Japan." *Journal of Asian Studies* XLV, no. 4 (August 1986): 769-787.

Sinclair, Robert J., "Baseball's Rising Sun: American Interwar Diplomacy and Japan." *Canadian Journal of History of Sport and Physical Education* 16, no. 2 (1985): 44-53.

Uhlman, Edward and Dana L. Thomas. *Shoriki: Miracle Man of Japan. A Biography*. New York: Exposition Press, 1957. <http://ia700106.us.archive.org/11/items/shorikimiraclema001551mbp/shorikimiraclema001551mbp.pdf> (Accessed November 12, 2010).

Utley, Jonathan G. *Going to War with Japan, 1937-1941*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985.

Utley's book is primarily concerned with the actions of the United States State Department in the years leading up to the war, and how it unsuccessfully tried to encourage Japan to cease its acquisitive campaign.

Whiting, Robert. *The Chrysanthemum and the Bat: Baseball Samurai Style*. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1977.

_____. *The Meaning of Ichiro: The New Wave from Japan and the Transformation of Our National Pastime*. New York: Grand Central Publishing, 2004.

_____. "The Samurai Way of Baseball and the National Character Debate." *Japan Focus* (September 29, 2006), <http://www.japanfocus.org/-Robert-Whiting/2235> (accessed January 9, 2011.)

_____. *You Gotta Have Wa*. New York: Vintage, 1989.

Robert Whiting is the first and most definitive source in English on baseball in Japan, to the point where William Kelly acknowledges a "Whiting Problem." He is, however, willing to correspond with aspiring students of the game, and all of his pieces have been essential to every phase of my research.

Yu, Junwei. *Playing in Isolation: A History of Baseball in Taiwan*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2007.