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PREFACE

Ever since Taiwan captured its first Little League Baseball world series title in 1969, baseball has been a sport in which the Taiwanese people have taken deep pride. Over the next twenty-seven years Taiwan appeared in the annual tournament twenty-one times and captured seventeen titles.

I have followed Taiwanese national teams since I was small. Like many fellow islanders, I watched live Little League tournament games on television late into the night as I sipped instant noodles, a favorite snack in Taiwan. Thankfully, tournaments were held during summer vacations so that I didn't have to worry about school. I was filled with excitement and joy at that time, but as I grew older and learned more about the inner world of baseball, I found the game no longer as simple and beautiful as it had once seemed.

My interest in baseball research was sparked by playing amateur baseball during senior high school. As with just about every high school in Taiwan, mine did not have a formal baseball program. Thus for three years my classmates and I organized games in the sports fields behind our school until one day the principal posted a sign on the fence that read "Baseball, softball, and other dangerous sports are forbidden." Such signs are frequently posted in Taiwanese schools, the common notion being that baseball, unlike running or swimming, is quite unsafe.

Unable to play the game I loved, I found alternative ways to be around the diamond. At many amateur baseball games I had the opportunity to talk extensively with players, coaches, and other individuals who were deeply involved in the sport. In 1997 I was the scorer for the under-16 International Baseball Federation competition, which was my first contact with government officials involved in the game.

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In 2001, thanks to help from friends, I was fortunate enough to be the U.S. team's interpreter during the baseball World Cup.

Eventually my deep fascination with all things baseball led to my adoption of the game for my PhD dissertation, in which I explored politics in Taiwanese baseball. This current book has been adapted from that work, as well as drawing upon recent events in Taiwanese baseball and from my lifelong obsession with the sport. Relying on thousands of hours of formal and not-so-formal research and interviews, I present an alternative perspective on Taiwanese baseball to the one commonly held on the island. The Taiwanese public tends to view governmental intervention in sports, specifically baseball, as good and special physical education classes as normal. But in this book I argue that it is such practices that led to the decline of Taiwanese baseball.

To understand fully the development of Taiwanese baseball, one must have some knowledge of the island's history. Taiwan's geographic location has made it a strategic base for those who sought access to China and for China when it wished to exert its influence over the Pacific Rim. Consequently, the island has changed hands many times. Because each ruling people possessed a different culture and language and represented a different ethnic group, each period of Taiwanese history has had its own unique characteristics.

It was one such ruling people, the Japanese, who introduced baseball to Taiwan in the early twentieth century. By the time Japan had ended its Taiwanese rule, thousands of islanders played the game.

The sport continued to gain popularity after the Kuomintang regime arrived. The level of participation was highest during this era, especially for adult baseball. Still, antiphysical Confucian ideas did prevent some parents from allowing their children to play baseball but not all since schools required athletes to study.

Grassroots baseball reached its peak in the 1970s because of the success of Little League teams at Williamsport and to the fame and fortune bestowed on successful Little League players, thanks in large part to the baseball policies of the Kuomintang. Despite these factors, another decline in baseball's popularity followed, with the lowest level of baseball participation occurring during the 1980s. During this decade many of the incentives disappeared, Confucian ideas resurfaced, and

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widespread reports of corruption in baseball soured parents' attitudes toward the game.

Against such a complex background, baseball, the largest spectator sport on the island, has been given specific meaning and purpose according to who has been in power. Thus, an overarching goal of this book is to trace the development of the game and the cultural and political forces that have influenced public perception of the sport. I chose to take a chronological approach because it best illustrates the dramatic swings in popularity of the game. Each chapter therefore covers a period in Taiwanese history that profoundly affected the game.

To date no academic work has explored Taiwanese baseball in its social, cultural, and political settings. In this book I will present a balanced view of Taiwanese baseball, even discussing thoroughly the cheating and corruption that have plagued the game. Because of the latter portrayal I have already felt pressure from island baseball authorities telling me not to expose the underbelly of our national pastime. However, I believe that my actions are justified and that only by seeing the dark side of the sport can the baseball world begin taking this negative side seriously, rather than turning a perpetual blind eye to the problems of baseball on Taiwan.

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INTRODUCTION

The first Europeans to reach Taiwan came in the early sixteenth century and were Portuguese sailors, who called the place *Ilha Formosa* (Beautiful Island). The island's name was possibly more appropriate in the days when it was covered by virgin forest and not by the factories of the present day.

Taiwan lies off China's coast, separated from the mainland by the Taiwan Straits. Shaped roughly like a tobacco leaf, the island is about two hundred and fifty miles long and at its broadest point around ninety miles wide. The Central Mountain Range bisects Taiwan from north to south, and about two-thirds of the island is covered with forested peaks. The island enjoys an oceanic and subtropical monsoon climate influenced by its topography. Summers are long and accompanied by high humidity, while winters are short and usually mild. Generally speaking, weather and climate render the place eminently suitable for baseball.

From the popular pickup games in the eastern provinces to the professional outings in Taipei of such teams as the Brother Elephants, island baseball has developed a culture that is uniquely Taiwanese. At the ballparks, which are comparable in size to Minor League stadiums in the United States, players chew watermelon seeds, fans bang drums, and cheerleaders sing songs through a microphone for the entire game. Fans also hang pineapples outside the home team's dugout when the team suffers a losing streak. This custom derives from the Taiwanese for "pineapple," *wanglai*, which means "bring us good luck." Sometimes whole teams are brought to Buddhist or Daoist temples to worship and ask for good luck. One may label this practice as superstition, but it is a part of Chinese culture. Large groups of diehard Internet fans, such as the Internet Elephants, attend games together. Alcohol

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is rarely consumed at Taiwanese games; vendors sell local Taiwanese delicacies, such as Taiwanese fried chicken, oyster omelets, pigs' blood cakes, Taiwan sausages, and pearl milk tea (tapioca milk tea).

Uniquely Taiwanese is also the custom among players of making and drinking tea to calm their nerves after an exciting or exhausting game. Some players spend large sums of money for tea sets that produce a high-quality tea. Typically one player prepares the tea, and his teammates surround the table, talking and chatting. The occasion becomes a small social gathering.

In the clubhouse players rarely use Mandarin, the island's official language, but rather speak Taiwanese, which is a dialect of Chinese. The reasons for using this dialect can best be understood from an outline of Taiwanese politics and culture.

Demographics

Taiwan has a population of roughly twenty-three million, making the population density the second highest in the world after Bangladesh. About fifty-nine percent of the population is concentrated in four cities: Taipei, Gaoxiong, Taizhong, and Tainan. Four ethnic groups inhabit the island: aboriginal peoples, Fujianese, Hakka, and mainlanders. The latter three belong to the same Han-speaking family of immigrants.

The eastern part of Taiwan has the highest proportion of aborigines on the island. These people, who came from southern China and Austronesia, comprise thirteen ethnic groups, with their population of four hundred and fifty thousand accounting for only about two percent of the total Taiwanese population. There are large differences in the size of each aboriginal group, which are spread over a large area.

The aboriginal peoples have been marginalized and isolated politically, economically, and culturally. Indeed, it was only a century ago that the tribal societies were integrated into the system of the modern nation. Consequently, the aborigines constitute an underclass and are overrepresented in the ranks of the socially and economically disenfranchised. For them baseball has become a means for social and economic advancement.

Spread throughout the rest of Taiwan are the Fujianese and the

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Hakka, descended from Chinese settlers that began arriving on the island some six hundred years ago. The fourteen million Fujianese make up approximately seventy percent of Taiwan's population, and the three million Hakka account for around fifteen percent.

The final group, the mainlanders, are Taiwan's newcomers. The mainlanders arrived in 1949 when Kuomintang or Nationalist Party (KMT) military troops and their followers from every province in China migrated to the island in what may be the largest elite immigration of the last century. The mainlanders' two and a half million account for eleven percent of Taiwan's entire population.

The Han Chinese imported their culture with them. Thus the religious and cultural life of Taiwan is dominated by a polytheistic blend of ancestor worship, Buddhism, Daoism, and folk religions. Buddhism is the most popular religion, with approximately three and a half million followers and over four thousand temples. Daoism is viewed as an indigenous religion and has around four and a half million practitioners.

Although viewed by many foreigners as a religion, Confucianism is more a philosophy than a religion. Accordingly, Confucian temples are halls to honor Confucius rather than places of worship. A main tenet of Confucianism is respecting seniority in the family. Further, social roles and children's obligations to do well in academic study are strongly emphasized, especially in Han Chinese families. As a result, Confucianism cultivated an antiphysical or sedentary culture that profoundly affected the development of sports in Taiwanese society. The Confucian influence will be thoroughly examined in later chapters.

History

The root of Taiwanese population and cultural diversity lies in the island's history, marked by the arrival of several waves of immigrants. Taiwan was originally settled by the ancestors of the aborigines, who inhabited the low-lying coastal plains of the island. They called the island Pakan. From the fourteenth century through the eighteenth, the aborigine peoples were joined by large numbers of Chinese settlers from the Holo-speaking province of Fujian and the Hakka-speaking province of Guangdong. Although they were Han Chinese, their pur-

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pose for emigrating was not for territorial expansion of China but to flee local living conditions and taxes.

Throughout the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) Taiwan was insignificant in the eyes of the imperial government, who had no intention of claiming sovereignty over the island. The imperial court was busy countering the threat posed by the northern nomads, especially the Mongolians.

This lack of mainland interest permitted foreign powers to set up trading stations in Taiwan. In 1642 the Dutch East India Company, for example, as a part of Holland's expanding global mercantile activities, established a fortress named Fort Orange on Taiwan. First, however, the Dutch had to drive out the Spanish, who had occupied the northern part of Taiwan.

Two years later a leading Ming general named Zheng Chenggong (also known as Koxinga) decided to cross the straits to occupy Taiwan. Zheng had suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Manchus, who then established the Qing Dynasty in China in 1644. Zheng planned to use Taiwan as a base from which eventually to recover the mainland. His fleet landed on the island and eventually drove out the Dutch in 1662. Zheng's motto, "Overthrow Qing, Restore Ming," made him a sacred symbol and a national hero for the KMT three centuries later. The reign of the Zheng family on Taiwan finally ended when they surrendered to the Qing Dynasty, who launched a surprise attack on the island in 1683.

Over the next two centuries the increasingly sinicized Manchus promoted Confucian practices on Taiwan. As Han Chinese families and permanent settlements grew during the nineteenth century, life on the island gradually came to resemble that of the mainland. Some island families had their sons trained in classical learning in order to enable them to take civil service examinations and thereby enter the state bureaucracy, which held the most cherished status in Chinese society.

After nearly two hundred years of peace and self-sufficiency, China suffered a series of humiliations inflicted by foreign powers. Most importantly for Taiwan, in 1894 China was defeated by Japan and ceded the island to the victor. As a result, Taiwan's development diverged from that of China, and it was during the fifty-year Japanese occupa-

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tion that the notion of modern sports was introduced to the island's population. Thanks in large part to an aggressive assimilation plan by the Japanese, baseball took root on the island and gradually won over a skeptical public.

Japan's reign on Taiwan was brought to an end with the Japanese defeat by the allied forces in World War II, and on October 25, 1945, Taiwan was officially handed back to the Chinese KMT government, which had overthrown the Qing Dynasty in 1911.

Relations between the KMT and Taiwan's inhabitants soon ran into trouble. The 2/28 incident occurred less than a year and a half after Taiwan was returned to China. It erupted when antitobacco-smuggling KMT agents attempted to confiscate black market cigarettes from an elderly Taiwanese woman. She resisted and was pistol-whipped by the agents. As a result, a crowd gathered, and a warning shot fired by one agent went astray killing an onlooker.

This incident led to a petition by the people of Taipei to demonstrate on February 28, 1947, thus the name 2/28. On that day government troops shot at the petitioning crowds, and the demonstration turned into a fight against the government and went on to become a bloody conflict between Taiwanese and mainlanders. Once fighting had broken out, it spread across the island like a fever. The islandwide program of arrest and slaughter that followed became known as country sweeping. Many of the native elite of Taiwanese society were killed, and there were other heavy Taiwanese causalities, with a death toll somewhere between ten and twenty thousand (figures vary).

On the mainland the KMT was faced with another crisis when war broke out in China between the KMT and the Communists. In October 1949 Chairman Mao declared victory, formally establishing the People's Republic of China (PRC). General Chiang Kai-shek and his remaining six hundred thousand troops and over one million loyalists fled to Taiwan, which was declared to be an anti-Communist and free China.

As a government in exile the KMT essentially displaced the entire governmental and social infrastructure that had previously existed on Taiwan. Those who fled to Taiwan were for the most part ultrapatriotic soldiers and members of the government who viewed their retreat as a

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temporary setback. It was their belief that they would soon reclaim the mainland and return to their rightful positions. But months turned into years and then into decades. Yet the KMT still clung to the firmly held belief that there was only one China. Its leaders believed that they were the legitimate rulers of all of China (even Mongolia). The PRC, likewise, viewed itself as the only legitimate government of China. Both sides, however, agreed on one point: Taiwan was part of China.

The issuing of the "Temporary Provisions Effective During the Period of Communist Rebellion" on May 9, 1948, and the imposition of martial law on May 20, 1949, put Taiwan under the thumb of extreme authoritarianism and compromised the rights of Taiwan's people—freedom of assembly, freedom of association, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of movement. Military rule would drag on for thirty-eight years—the longest continuous martial law rule in world history.

The KMT's first cultural objective in Taiwan was to eradicate any vestige left by the Japanese and to make the Taiwanese people Chinese. Thus the educational system that was established and the values that were promoted came from China and contained no trace of Taiwanese culture. It is understandable that the mainlanders wanted to transplant Chinese thinking to Taiwan. In so doing, they not only integrated the Taiwanese into the Chinese system but also suppressed the possibility of a call for Taiwanese autonomy or even independence. The aim of the KMT was to instill in the public an affection for the Chinese homeland and a filial loyalty to the paramount leader. Consequently, beginning in extreme youth, children were taught to be "righteous Chinese"; otherwise, they risked shaming themselves, their families, and their country. The implementation of an official language policy that called for the speaking of Mandarin and prohibited the speaking of Holo in public was also intended to compel the Taiwanese to think of themselves as Chinese.[1]

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s the KMT government promoted the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Movement. This movement restored traditional Chinese culture and articulated that Taiwan was the sole legitimate representation of China in order to counterbalance the Cultural Revolution trumpeted by Mao on the mainland. The purpose of

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the Cultural Revolution was to destroy Confucianism, which Maoists accused of being a feudal philosophy that would obstruct the creation of a Communist society. The Chinese Cultural Renaissance, on the other hand, tried to restore traditional Confucian culture by emphasizing family and ethics. An integral part of the movement was overseas cultural propaganda, which sought to solicit members of the Chinese diaspora to identify with the Republic of China (ROC). In these years Taiwan's first Little League Baseball championships provided the perfect arena for the KMT to manipulate and control Taiwanese national identity domestically and internationally by using the myth of the world championship won by Taiwanese teams.

International Pariah

After the Korean War began in 1950, President Truman pledged that the United States would protect Taiwan against possible attack from mainland China. However, American foreign aid would not last forever. In April 1971 the PRC invited the American national team playing at the World Table Tennis Championship in Japan to visit China. This invitation was dubbed "Ping-Pong diplomacy," and it produced extensive U.S. press coverage that proclaimed this step as the precursor of China's opening itself to American visitors. Henry Kissinger visited the PRC and announced that President Nixon would visit the following year.

These visits presaged a change in Taiwan's international image and relations. And indeed, those changes were soon in coming with the United States announcing that it favored United Nations membership for PRC-run China. Shortly thereafter, Taiwan was voted out of the UN via Resolution 2758.

Taiwan suffered further setbacks. Beginning in the mid-1970s, it became an international pariah as most nations chose to recognize the PRC as the sole legitimate government of China. Taiwan even lost U.S. recognition in 1979.

After the PRC normalized relations with the United States, it proposed "one state, two systems." But Chiang Ching-kuo, then the leader of the KMT, countered with the "three nos" (no negotiation, no contact, and no compromise). Despite these differences, the two sides began developing a peaceful relationship.

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During this time economic development moved to the top of the KMT's national development agenda. Taiwan adopted a more reflective and pragmatic approach to its foreign policy. Chiang Ching-kuo outlined a strategy of total diplomacy in February 1973. He envisioned a mobilization of every kind of resource—political, economic, scientific, technological, cultural, and sporting—in order to develop substantial links with other states with which Taiwan no longer had official relationships.[2]

As the situation deteriorated after the United States withdrew recognition in 1979, the KMT no longer vied for the governance of China. Taiwan began adopting so-called sporting diplomacy in order to enhance its international visibility. In this way it reminded the international community that the ROC still existed in the world. Thus the KMT started to intervene politically and financially in baseball in order to create a myth of Taiwan as home to world champions, and consequently, baseball teams in one sense became diplomatic vanguards to the rest of the world.

Additionally, the government used satellite transmission to make the Taiwanese people feel that they were part of the competition and, most importantly, to be proud that they were Chinese. Even though international society had already chosen the PRC as the sole legitimate government of China, the KMT used Little League Baseball (LLB) triumphs to solicit overseas Chinese support and to comfort domestic Taiwanese.

The Separation of Taiwanese Identity

Even as the KMT wrestled with bolstering its international image, it faced domestic challenges. In the late 1980s President Chiang was forced to reevaluate the continuation of martial law. Externally a popular revolt expelled Philippine President Marcos, and government opponents in South Korea were calling for elections there. Domestically in 1985 political and financial scandals occurred that tarnished the KMT's image. As a result, Chiang allowed retired soldiers to visit their relatives in mainland China. Subsequently, on July 14, 1987, the government lifted martial law. The move ultimately paved the way for the formation of the island's first professional baseball league.

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Further changes followed. When Li Denghui came to power in 1988 after Chiang's death, he announced that the KMT could not exercise authority over mainland China and should admit to that fact; he argued that from such an admission pragmatic policies could result. In May 1991 Taiwan terminated the "Temporary Provisions," thus formally ending the forty-two years of civil war with the PRC and recognizing the Communist regime on the mainland. The PRC was more than willing to broaden relations with Taiwan, but it refused to denounce the possible use of force against the island. The two sides reached an impasse when the Democratic Progressive Party candidate Chen Shuibian, who supports Taiwanese independence, was elected president in 2000.

Despite being less dogmatic and more agile than in the past, Taiwan could not hide the difficulty of its diplomatic status, which has official relations with only twenty-four countries. Being shut out of major international organizations, Taiwan focuses on second-track diplomacy, that is, taking part in economic, social, sporting, and cultural organizations that would not provoke protests from the PRC. Thanks to the International Olympic Committee (IOC), Taiwan was able to participate in sporting events under the name Chinese Taipei, a policy later known as the Olympic formula. To this day, Chinese Taipei adorns the uniform of Taiwanese squads playing abroad.

The KMT's acceptance of baseball was eventually accompanied by a more general shift in the government's attitude toward things Taiwanese. This alteration—an abandonment of de-Taiwanization and de-Japanization—began with the lifting of martial law in 1987. The governmental about-face sharply accelerated when President Li took power and began to launch programs of Taiwanization. In 1992 the legislature passed a resolution that newborn children would have their birthplaces registered instead of their provincial homes.[3] This measure was designed to diminish ethnic division and to promote social integration. In 1997 an educational reform was announced that required junior high students to study Taiwanese history and culture in their first year. Courses on China and the rest of the world would be in the second and third years, respectively. This step was a bold one in the process of sweeping pan-Chinese or greater-Han chauvinism aside.

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Under the leadership of proindependence presidents Li Denghui and Chen Shuibian, baseball became a useful tool for the construction of a Taiwanese national identity that is distinct from that found in the PRC, which prefers soccer and basketball. More evidence of the growing sense of nationalism on Taiwan is the reform of banknotes, which traditionally only bore portraits of Chiang Kai-shek and Sun Yat-sen. The new banknotes contain strong images of Taiwanese identity and local flavor, such as Formosan sika deer, Mount Morrison, and, of course, baseball, with notes showing the players of Nanwang Elementary School jumping in delight after winning the national championship.

Like the history of Taiwan, the history of Taiwanese baseball has had a number of distinct periods, each possessing a slightly different character and all contributing to the current state of the game. The first of these periods was the introduction of baseball to the island by the Japanese.

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