

# Baseball and Politics in Taiwan during the KMT Regime, 1945-2000

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## Abstract

This research has illustrated how the KMT government, directly after setting up their base in Taiwan, saw no use for and paid scant attention to sport as a means of achieving any political aim. However the research shows how the government, once recognising the potential of baseball, clearly manipulated the sport at several crucial phases during its history. Firstly to legitimise itself in the eyes of the Taiwanese people by generating a national pride by the creation of national hero's and 'champions', then by using sport as its major tool to gain international legitimacy; baseball became a major diplomatic tool in enabling Taiwan to maintain international contact with many countries that it would otherwise have had no relations with. Finally, the government needed to manage the leisure time of the people and as such needed the investment of the private sector to create an environment where the mass of the people could take part in this sport, either as players or as spectators. Whilst utilising baseball as a means to maintain the struggle for political control and power in Taiwan, it was essential to win the people's consent and further assist the reproduction of hegemony.

Keywords: baseball, Taiwan, politics, hegemony

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## Introduction

This research offers a socio-historical dimension in analyzing the relationship between baseball development and the Kuomintang (KMT) government and more specifically how the Kuomintang government utilized baseball as a means to achieve its political objectives between 1945 and 2000. A range of secondary source materials (such as official histories published by the Baseball Association) is used here to ‘set the scene’ of the historical development and the context of baseball and politics in Taiwan during the period of KMT rule. This initial developmental analysis is then followed by the exploration of more substantive documentary evidence drawn from newspapers, the official archives of the Chinese Taipei Baseball Association (CTBA)<sup>1</sup>, the Physical Education Department of the Education Ministry (PED), and the National Council of Physical Fitness and Sports (NCPFS)<sup>2</sup>. In combination, this range of evidence is designed to represent a valid interpretation of the development of the inter-linkage between baseball and politics.

The paper is divided into four sections. The first section focuses on baseball development during the 1950s and 1960s. The second section focuses on baseball development during the 1970s and looks at how the government utilized baseball as a nationalistic means to rouse ‘patriotism’ and create and then strengthen ‘national identity’ in order to come to the aid of its political legitimacy problem and more specifically, to demonstrate how the government manipulated the ‘dream of world champion’ and ‘heroism’ as the strategies to assist the promotion of nationalist ideology in order to achieve its political aims. The third section

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<sup>1</sup> The CTBA (Chinese Taipei Baseball Association) was formed in 1973. It is a non-governmental sports organization and its aim is to develop amateur baseball and to organize national and international baseball competitions.

<sup>2</sup> The PED was the highest level of sports governing body in Taiwan and was formed in 1973. It has become the governing body of physical education in all levels of school since 1997 when the NCPFS was formed. The NCPFS replaced the PED and became the highest level of sports governing body in 1997.

illustrates what occurred when international political factors led the Taiwanese government to face major problems of international recognition and looks at how the government shifted its political strategy on sport during this period. Baseball became the best means to expand and maintain diplomacy with other countries. This was so-called 'sports diplomacy' and was the main focus of the government during the late 1970s and the early period of the 1980s. In the late 1980s there was a significant change in domestic politics, (martial law was lifted in 1987) from an 'authoritarian' system towards a more 'normal' democratic system and, given that the economic situation had seen huge improvements, people's demand for meaningful leisure time became greater and this saw the government coordinating with business enterprises and forming a professional sports system in order to achieve satisfaction of the people's demands. This is the main focus of the fourth section, looking at how the professional baseball league was formed.

### **Marginalized Process in the 1950s and 60s**

Although there is some research<sup>3</sup> which attempts to show that the game of baseball had been seen in Taiwan as a part of the Japanese cultural product, and, as part of the efforts to get rid of Japanese culture<sup>4</sup>, the game had been relegated and forbidden under the 're-Sinolisation' policy of the new government (KMT), there is not sufficient evidence or documentation to support this view [Unlike language, play, literature, and

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<sup>3</sup> Chao-tang Huang (1989) *Taiwan Governor*, Taipei: Freedom Era. Tsung-rung Yang (1992) *Culture Construction and National Identity: Sinolisation of Post-war Taiwan*, National Ching-Hua University. Su-ling Liang (1993) *Social Development, Power and the Formation of Sports Culture: An Analysis of Taiwanese Baseball Society, History and Culture (1895-1900)*, Taipei: National Taiwan Politics University.

<sup>4</sup> Everything that was connected with Japanese culture was prohibited such as Japanese language, books, literature, plays, the names of road, temples (religion), and schools etc. Baseball was introduced into Taiwanese society by Japanese, therefore, it was also seen as a legacy of Japanese cultural products (Liang Su-ling, 1993: 44-5).

religion which had been put under strict policy control (Lee Huei-min, 2000: 11-2)]. There is no evidence showing that the new government used any action or policy to stop the development of baseball. It might just, at best, be explained that the new government ignored the majority of its people's wishes and feelings, and gave its conscious concern to the development of basketball instead<sup>5</sup>, and left the game of baseball to a 'laissez-faire' development (Lin Chi-wen, 1995: 26). This was the so-called 'marginalized process'. As Jarvie (1992: 183-200) points out that sports which had already been played in a previous regime would not simply die out when a new government came to power. (They might be gradually eroded by new sports, implemented systematically by the new government such as implementing through the education system). One could, therefore, argue that the development of baseball was thus 'marginalized' rather than 'prohibited' in the beginning period of the KMT regime.



### **Dream of the World Champion in the 1970s**

In 1968, the Wakayama primary school baseball team from Japan, which was reported as a 'World Champion' team by Taiwanese media<sup>6</sup>, came to visit Taiwan (Liang Su-ling, 1993: 64). Before the competition the Red Leaf (Hung-Yeh) team had already won the domestic championship twice in Taiwan's provincial competitions. Thus, this competition (Taiwan Champion vs. 'World Champion') was raised up to a 'high stakes' game by the media. A crowd of 20,000 went to watch the competition. The Taiwan Television company, (TTV), which was the only TV station in Taiwan at that time, broadcast the whole match, live, to the whole of the Taiwanese society. Finally, the Red Leaf team defeated

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<sup>5</sup> Basketball was originally introduced into mainland China from the US by Dr. Willard Lyon in 1895 and rapidly became one of China's most popular sports. The KMT took basketball with them when they move into Taiwan and thus saw it as 'their' sport as opposed to baseball which was viewed by the KMT as Japanese (Yang Tsung-rung, 1992: 94).

<sup>6</sup> Wakayama baseball team was not in fact the team which represented Japan and won the champion title in Williamsport 'Little League World Series' (Wang Huai-min, 1994; Lin Chi-wen, 1995).

Wakayama team by 7 : 0. The greatest meaning to this event was that the confidence and enthusiasm of the Taiwanese people towards baseball was boosted. As a result of this, in 1969 the '1<sup>st</sup> National Primary School Baseball Championship' attracted five or six hundred teams to participate (Wang Huei-min, 1994: 83). At the same time, this great popular impact brought the game to the attention of the political establishment. For instance, the Taiwan Provincial Governor, Hung Jui, not only sent a telegram to congratulate the Red Leaf team on their victory, but also instructed the Taiwan Provincial Education Department to allocate NT\$100,000<sup>7</sup> to Hung-Yeh Primary School to improve their sports facilities (ibid.: 23, 89). The Minister of Education, Ian Jen-shing, and the head of 'Chinese Youth Corps for Anti-Communism and Saving the Country', Chiang Ching-kuo, received the players personally (*Taiwan News*, 27<sup>th</sup> August 1968: 3). The other significant impact derived from this event was that the KMT government now fully realised that the game of baseball had a great force to mobilize people within the society and that they could utilize this fact.

The Hung-yeh (Red-leaf) event not only led the game of baseball to re-gain its popularity within Taiwanese society, but also meant the sport gained the recognition of the KMT government. Especially during the 1970s when the legitimacy of the ROC in the international arena started to be challenged, and internally, people lost their confidence in the regime, 'baseball was, at that time, the most prominent 'objective' which provided a means for the government to condense people's loyalty by mobilizing the "Chinese" ROC nationalism to foster a significant national pride, consciousness and identity through the great accomplishments in these international sports competitions' (Chan said to me in interview, 4<sup>th</sup> June 2000, Taipei). Simultaneously, internally, by promoting the Taiwanese game, baseball became a bridge to re-heal the division between Taiwanese (islanders<sup>8</sup>) society and the government itself.

<sup>7</sup> At that time the administration fees for Hung-Yeh primary school was only NT\$840, NT\$100,000 was huge amount of money for them.

<sup>8</sup> Islanders who see themselves came before 1945 (not came with the KMT government after 1945) to live in Taiwan.

## Legitimacy Crisis' & The KMT's 'Chinese' Nationalism

Given the 'Red Leaf' victory, the country now believed that the team which had defeated the 'World Champions' could expect to win the next major title. Much of Taiwanese society started to hold this hope and, of course, for the government, this was the best opportunity to gain more political power and to maintain its political legitimacy. In 1969, the Taiwanese 'Golden Dragon' baseball team won the first 'World Champion' title of the 'Little League World Series' in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, USA. This was the most incredible victory in Taiwanese baseball history (Lin Chi-wen, 1995: 35).

This victory reverberated around the whole country. When those players who 'won the honour' for their country came back to Taiwan<sup>9</sup>, they were treated as 'national heroes'. Not only did many Ministers go to the airport to welcome them, but also the President, Chiang Kai-shek, called them in to meet him in his official residence<sup>10</sup>. Even the main Military Headquarters offered military vehicles to drive the 'national heroes' around Taipei City (Liang Su-ling, 1993: 67), and millions of people swarmed into the streets to welcome the 'great warriors' (Lin Chi-wen, 1995: 36). Not only were the Taiwanese stimulated by this victory, but also the overseas Chinese community were excited about it and contributed their money to welcome these 'little great warriors'<sup>11</sup> who had 'brought the highest honour for their country'<sup>12</sup> (*Chinese Daily*, 2<sup>nd</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Not only was the 'Golden Dragon' team the recipient of this type of treatment. In the 1970s, teams who represented Taiwan at any level (Senior, Junior, or Youth levels) who won a 'championship' would be treated as 'national heroes' when they came back to Taiwan. For instance, in 1972 when Mei-heo won the Youth Champion title, many Ministers and politicians all went to the airport to welcome them and drove them around the city with police protection (Lai Shu-ming, 1991: 114-5).

<sup>10</sup> In Chinese terms, this was the highest honour that could be bestowed.

<sup>11</sup> The 'build-up' of these 'great warriors' is discussed in detail later in the chapter.

<sup>12</sup> The Overseas Chinese Association in Japan commented, 'We are very happy

September 1969: 4).

Much was made of winning this 'World Championship', even though, outside of Taiwan, everyone knew that the 'Little League World Series' was little more than a glorified 'Summer Camp' baseball invitational tournament (Lin Chi-wen, 1995: 36). Thus the 'World Champion' title is not a real title but the people in Taiwan had been led by the State controlled media to believe that Taiwan's Junior Level Baseball Team was the number one in the world.

An accomplishment at a 'major' sports competition was seen as equivalent to a victory at a war. These victories were not just to prove that no one could compete with Taiwan in baseball competitions, but also they represented the, 'Never Give In' trait of the Chinese characteristics and manifested the outstanding traditions of the 'Chinese nation' (*The Central News*, 13<sup>th</sup> September 1971: 3; 15<sup>th</sup> September: 1). There is little need for in-depth analysis of the exaggerated terms used by the media to describe these victories; they are self-explanatory. Calling this junior team 'Great Little Warriors', a term used by the media to describe this team, one could understand that they were not just simply seen as a team participating in a few international sports competitions, but their image was built up as soldiers joining a war, representing this emerging and strengthening nation of Taiwan. Not only was the 'Golden Dragon' team expected to win, but also the many other emerging teams such as the 'Seven Tiger' team, the 'Giant' team, and the 'Taipei City' team were also expected to produce such results. They were all expected to win at home before they went abroad. There were only two results from competitions, 'Champion' or 'Not Champion'. Playing baseball was not for health or fun, it was to become a 'champion', to prove that Chinese were the best 'nation' (Yang Chao, 1992: 37). The whole pride, honor, hope and reviving of the nation was placed on the Little League's competitions and on these 11- and 12-year-old children's shoulders (Yen Shan-long, 1992: 33). This was the essence of the 'world champion dream' and the whole picture of

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to give any contributions to continue to cultivate those players who won the honour for our nation. They brought the most incredible prestige for our country. We admire them' (*Chinese Daily*, 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1969: 4).

Taiwanese baseball development in 1970s<sup>13</sup>.

International sporting competition has been likened to, as George Orwell said, a 'war without shooting'. In a sports competition, which is divided into two individuals or two groups who confront each other, it is seen just like a war, which has not only the soldiers involved in the war but the citizens as well. The sports competition is the same, it lets the audiences or the people who have related in some way to the groups, sense themselves as a team member and be involved themselves in the competition. Their senses will be strengthened through a dramatic game or an announcement of the game results and this may engender emotional surges. The power of senses and emotion like this emanates from the ability to engender sentiments of belonging to a particular community or team. This is the so-called 'identification'. In any international sports competition or war, no matter victory or loss, both sides will try to use their spoils to effectively enhance their people's national identity. The winners will use the victory to prove that firstly they are better than the others (national strength); secondly, in order to gain people's confidence and enhance their national identity to their country (Caldwell, 1982: 173-83).

Identity building is expected to reduce conflicts and help to stabilize the political situation for any regime. Even the strong countries, such as many western countries, cannot ignore this<sup>14</sup>. In the post-war period, enhancing abilities in competitive sports and using sports victories to enhance national identity or to heal divisions within society were used by many regimes in the world. Especially, for a newly independent or post-colonial country, in which the politics, economy, and culture are still not mature, it is vital to foster a new national identity with the people and

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<sup>13</sup> It is worth while to note that many of the junior stars went on in the later years to become star players in the senior leagues and national team. For instance, the players Lee Chu-ming, Yi Ch-hsien, and Tu Chung-nan were in the 1971 champion team of the Little League and were also the main players in the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games (Liang Su-ling, 1993: 147-8).

<sup>14</sup> During the 1980s, the US was spending an estimated US\$ 1 billion per year for promoting national unity through sport (Sage, 1990: 81).



victory in the international sports arena assists in achieving this. Of course, accomplishment in the international sports arena is important not just for a new independent country, but also for a country or regime which suffers political and economic problems. In other words, when the legitimacy of a country or regime is challenged, no matter how long this country or regime has been established, the government will manipulate the sports accomplishments to mobilize its people's patriotism and feelings of national identity to maintain its political power. Many researchers have studied politically and economically unstable countries such as Chile, Cuba, Egypt, Indonesia, Nicaragua, and Tunisia, and they prove these countries all used sports achievement to build their national identity (Stevenson, 1989: 299-313). Even such rich and political stable countries as Canada and Australia, which had been British colonies for a long time, also used sports accomplishments to mobilize and reaffirm their new national identity (Caldwell, 1982: 173-83).

Taiwan formally returned to Chinese sovereignty in 1945, but in 1949 it was separated from mainland China when the fleeing Nationalists moved into Taiwan and set up their 'government' in exile. This KMT government also faced the same problem as mentioned above. Especially, after the 228 Incident in 1947, which caused the KMT legitimacy in Taiwan to be challenged by its people (islanders). Furthermore, in the 1960s, the legitimacy of the KMT polity, which regarded itself as the sole representative of all Chinese, started to be questioned and challenged by many countries, even the biggest outside supporter, the US, had significant changes on its 'US - Taiwan' policy. In 1961, the US's President Kennedy actively implemented 'One China, One Taiwan' policy. President Johnson also wanted to solve the 'Taiwan Problem' with 'Two Chinas' as the main aim in 1965. However, the 'Taiwan Problem' was laid aside by the US as a result of the Vietnam War, the Chinese Cultural Revolution and the aggravated relations between the PRC and the former USSR (Yang Tsung-rung, 1992: 25-36). In 1965 the US stopped economic aid to Taiwan. In 1971 the United Nations recognized the PRC as a member of the United Nations and expelled the ROC (Taiwan) from the United Nations. The following year, US President Richard Nixon visited mainland China and negotiated closer trade and economic relations with

Deng Chou-ping. During the same year on the 29<sup>th</sup> of September, Japan severed diplomatic relations with the ROC and established diplomatic relation with the PRC. Furthermore. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1979 the US severed ties with the ROC. These actions showed that the KMT's polity of legitimacy was challenged by most countries in the world, even the closest country to Taiwan – the US. Thus Taiwan become one of a few countries which had no recognition in the international arena and the KMT regime faced a very difficult situation as the people lost confidence in the regime and the people's loyalty became severely tested.

When a country has been challenged and the people feel the whole environment is unstable, the desire for victory in any field is extremely important, therefore, any competition, especially international competition, can become a highly emotive and sensitive issue. It is the most useful way to achieve international recognition and regain a feeling of 'nation'. Just at the right time, the Taiwanese Junior's baseball team, the Golden Dragon, won the champion title in the 'Little League World Series' in the US in 1969. This 'triumph' not only gave a great opportunity for the KMT regime to reinforce its power (see next section), but also diminished the uncertainty which the population felt for their future. When Taiwan was expelled from the United Nations in October 1971, 'the anger within the whole population of Taiwan was reaching the highest point' (Liou Bo-gy, 2001: 101) and the game of baseball was promoted by the KMT even further. For instance, from 1972 the government no longer arranged individual welcome parties in the airport for teams which won victories abroad, but arranged huge and serious welcoming parties that included the senior and most important politicians (Minister of National Defence, Education, Foreign Affairs, Taiwan Provincial Governor, Taipei and Kaoshoung Mayor et al.) who personally came to welcome them. From this evidence one could see that the KMT government deeply sensed its legitimacy crisis.

Every country or regime always tries to define its main features and strengths in order to prove its value and its legitimacy. These features or strengths may come from its history, strong military power, strong economics, or maybe its remarkable sports achievements. When the country cannot find any strength to win the people's other beliefs, sports

achievement is often the easiest means to build up the people's loyalty and to create the sense of 'nation'. In the 1970s, Taiwan was exactly in this position and the government tried to use the achievements of baseball to foster people's national identity, to gain international recognition, to help dampen the divisions within the society, to rescue its political legitimacy, and even further to maintain its political ideology.

## Heroism

... For if any political ideology can advertise itself through sport, this in itself shows that on this level there is nothing at all distinctive about the relationship which obtains between sport and any given ideology. On this level, sport functions as an undifferentiated vehicle of self-assertion by the state. The specific form it takes as a culture is inconsequential; that it should serve the greater glory of the state – any state – is the sole criterion for its appropriation and use.



(Hoberman, 1984: 1)

A polity tries to use or even control sports events to assist in persuading its people to believe its legitimacy and future. By doing so it is essential to find or to produce something that can really touch its people's feelings and arouse their pride. Certainly, in a sports event there are many opportunities which can be used politically. On such occasions the national symbols and the pageantry are vividly brought into play by weaving them into the sportive occasion. 'Emblems such as flags, colours, uniforms, opening and closing ceremonies, parades, national anthems, hymns, martial music, victory accolades and presentation ceremonies, all form a constituent part of a political ritual to remind its people to think about their country' (Hargreaves, 1986: 199). If governments want to manipulate these symbols to arouse their people's patriotic sentiments, they need to produce or to find a 'glory event' or element to catalyze the patriotic sentiments. A victory in sports competition itself is such a 'glory event', but it is just temporary. For a government whose legitimacy has been challenged, it is more important to keep its people high in patriotic sentiments in a 'no victory' or 'no competition' period. To achieve this it might use media promotions to exaggerate a minor victory, to invent a

story, to revise the history, or to operate a glory welcome party or even call in 'national heroes' from previous events. This is the utilization of 'heroism' which is the essence of sportive expressionism<sup>15</sup> (Hoberman, 1984: 8-9).

When an ideology is put on sport, of which the ultimate value is not health, fun, the experience of teamwork, or even education, sport can be seen just as a drama<sup>16</sup>. When a legitimacy of polity is challenged, the people need to be comforted. Every detail of a victory or situation will be also be exaggerated or repeated. Even the characteristics of the people who participated in the victory will be exaggeratedly promoted to show that they are 'different to everybody' and represent something special. Furthermore, any inconsequential story may be chosen to be promoted in order that everyone can find the excitement within the whole event, further to arouse their emotions. These actions, which are purposely exaggerated to enhance the spectators' impression of the victory, are no different to a drama that tries to attract the audiences through a dramatic plot and a prominent actor or actress. These expressive forms of sport and drama which try to promote or exaggerate any situation of even a small and inconsequential victory are what is known as expressionism. The difference between drama and sport is that in drama the prominence might be the evil side of humanity, but in the sports arena the exaggeration will show the good side of humanity, good person, that is the so-called 'hero'. Therefore, as Hoberman believes, 'who captures the essence of sportive expressionism in his definition of 'heroism'(ibid.: 9). So the essence of sportive expressionism is to create and manipulate the 'hero'.

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<sup>15</sup> Hoberman states, 'sport can be considered a form of expressionism, by this I mean that sport can take the form of a drama for which an ideology of dynamism in the service of human self-expression becomes the ultimate value' (1984: 9).

<sup>16</sup> Revolutionary dramatists like Bertolt Brecht and Antonin Artaud saw sport, in fact, as an analogue to avant-garde theatre. They believe, 'if only someone could take those buildings designed for theatrical purposes... and treat them as more or less empty spaces for the successful pursuit of sport', it shows that the expression forms of sport and drama are the same (ibid.: 9).

Taiwanese baseball won the government's attention at a time when the KMT government required a miracle. It was because baseball might have a 'promoting national prestige' feature, with victories at that time, that it became a new version of the discourse of 'national hero mythology'. The important elements of creating the 'national hero mythology' were to combine the media promotion, which enabled these players or victories that had nothing to do with the nation's future to become part of the majority of people's life and at the same time to manipulate their consciousness or even to control their sentiments<sup>17</sup>. This 'creative' process could be divided into two parts, to broadcast the whole competition on one hand and to create the hero image of players or staff, (managers, coaches), on the other. Television plays a hugely important role by broadcasting the whole competition and, through satellite transmission, lets people feel that they were part of the competition, no matter in what part of the world or time of day the competition is taking place, their emotions were affected by the game's changes. The 'victory', real or part imagined, brought a feeling of fun and let Taiwanese begin to feel that their nation had in fact got a basis to have pride in itself and its achievements.

Newspapers, magazines and television, which were all under the

<sup>17</sup> It has been suggested that the media reports came from individual journalists, not connected with the government. However, at this time of 'Maintaining Secrecy, Defending against Communist', all information was highly monitored and every TV programme was checked by the government. All sports programmes were checked by government. Furthermore, in 1972 three TV stations even broadcasted the live Youth level's baseball championship in the US without any advertising, which cost them NT\$180,000 in 50 minutes. In the same year, the CTV station broadcasted the Infant level world series which cost CTV NT\$5,800,000 with an income of only NT\$2,400,000. In addition, the CTV also spent NT\$735,000 of air fares for the national team to go to the US (7<sup>th</sup> Aug. 1972, ROC Baseball Association: minutes No. 1380). The total loss in 1972 was approximately NT\$ 4,000,000. The three TV stations were controlled by the KMT government. It might be asked, how could they make these decision, if they did not get an order from the government?

KMT government's control during the martial law period, played an important role in creating the image of players (Liang Su-ling, 1993: 63). Reporting players' rousing stories created a sportive hero model. The media were not just focused on exaggerating the accomplishments but they also exaggerated the players' characters. The Red Leaf legend is perhaps the best example created and promoted by media. For instance, the Red Leaf team had no funding to go to Taipei from the Eastern region to participate in the Junior Level Championship. 'They could stay anywhere and only have two meals per day', 'owing to the hardworking spirit, they got the donation to compete in the championship' (Wang Huei-min, 1994: 55-7). This kind of 'hardworking story' aligned with their subsequent victory was published and glamorized. Immediately, an image was created of this team as 'high techniques and skill' and 'hardworking' heroes. When later the Red Leaf team defeated the Japanese representative team, this kind of 'hero-making' story became more and more prevalent the contexts were even more exaggerated such as 'they trained using a wooden stick as a bat' and 'using stones as balls' for practicing (ibid.: 27-9).

Utilizing media reports could certainly create a hero, but controlling media *not* to report also had an important strategic function. For example, the media did not report that the Japanese Wakayama team were not actually the world champions at the time the Red Leaf players beat them. Neither did they report that five of the Red Leaf squad were over the age limit to take part in the competition (Morris, 2000: 15). Furthermore, there was no reporting of the fact that the Red Leaf team eventually were sued because they substituted nine players who falsely assumed the names of younger registered players. The government 'indicated' to the 'judiciary' to open a night court session to hear this case in order to avoid people's attention<sup>18</sup>. The Red Leaf team was the 'national hero' and to openly criticize this team would affect 'national honour' (Wang Huei-min, 1994: 79-81). In addition, in 1978 when the Junior Level's representative

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<sup>18</sup> Months after these victories, the Red Leaf elementary school's Principle, Coach and Administrator were all sentenced to one year's imprisonment, (suspended for two years) by the Taidong County Court (Wang Huei-min, 1994: 5-6, 79).

team won the champion title in the US, before they returned to Taiwan they were scheduled to go to Korea to participate in another competition. However, they were told by the government to come back to Taiwan directly, because ‘the government considered that if the champion team lost the game to Korea, that would affect our reputation’ (CTBA meeting minutes, 15<sup>th</sup> June 1981: No. 197). This, and similar actions also tried at all costs to maintain the heroes’ image.

Having created the ‘hero image’, it was then important to put this image together with the concept of ‘nation’, into people’s consciousness. Many high-level politicians made speeches which linked the government’s political ideology with the victory, such as General He Yeng-chen when he stated, “your victory which has indeed reached the President’s notice, indicates to all, the issues of ‘Self-respect, Self-reliance and Courage’ which have not only boosted all of our people’s morale, but also aroused their confidence and expectation for another victory. I believe that the whole nation will be inspired by your victory which will reinforce their position to contribute all their efforts to achieve our aim – return to our fatherland, China.” (*Central Daily*, 13<sup>th</sup> September 1971: 3). In addition, the government also arranged for high level political figures and statesmen to visit the teams during training and to go to the airport to see them off and receive them back with much triumph and celebration. For instance, in 1969 and 1971, President Chiang Kai-shek called in the Golden Dragon and Giant teams; the Vice-chairman of Executive Yuan Chiang Chin-kao also in 1970 went to the airport to welcome and encourage the Seven Tiger team even though the team was only runner-up and failed to reach the whole society’s wishes – ‘champion’ (Lai Shu-ming, 1991: 207-9). By using such methods, the players and their achievements became nationally famous and they became ‘national heroes’. The government even issued commemorative stamps and postcards and arranged for players’ parents to come to the capital city, Taipei, to visit them with free transportation. It was even arranged for the parents to celebrate the victory of their children at the Presidential Palace and the parents and the team took part in the National Day Gala Parade (Lin Chi-wen, 1995: 47). Internationally, the government arranged for them to wear badges with the national flag, and

produced small size versions of national flags for distribution, and gave them to the overseas Chinese<sup>19</sup>. The Taipei Representative Office in the US would arrange the welcome party dinner for the players and overseas Chinese (Lai Shu-ming, 1991: 108, 160-2). At this time, these players were Taiwan's ambassadors and represented the whole concept of the 'ROC nation' and the government continued to build and maintain a very close relationship with them and to remind them of the existence of 'Our' country, the ROC. There is further evidence of mobilizing students who studied abroad to go to the competition stadium to cheer on the players and to sing the national anthem and to wave the national flags, to acclaim and demonstrate 'patriot slogans'<sup>20</sup>. These movements not only tried to gain the support and recognition from the overseas based Chinese community regarding the ROC's legitimacy, but also tried to demonstrate that these players represented the whole 'ROC' nation, so their victory on the baseball field would represent the victory of the ROC government<sup>21</sup> (Lai Shu-ming, 1991: 108, 160-2; Chien Yung-chang, 1993: 194-201).

Wenner (1989: 157-64) points out that using the 'drama' or 'story' style to exaggerate the performance of sports tries to interpret or to create a false phenomenon by using the fantasy construction in order to release the tension from the reality. The 'National Hero' concept, which may be an exaggerated creation, can represent a great and incredible emblem of victory. In fact, it is 'the mask of inner defeat' (Hoberman, 1984: 12). Chiou Jin-sung (1988: 174, 183) also points out, 'the so-called 'small

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<sup>19</sup> Overseas Chinese in this context means Chinese who lived abroad from mainland China and Taiwan.

<sup>20</sup> In 1975 there were 150 large national flags and 6,000 small national flags taken to the US (5<sup>th</sup> August 1975, Taipei Representative Office meeting minutes, No. 12725). (Lin Chi-wen, 1995: 48).

<sup>21</sup> At that time the KMT government sent a lot of national flags to the competition stadia with the aim of reinforcing in the overseas Chinese their Chinese dignity. Through satellite-broadcasting, the whole nation could see the patriotic feeling demonstrated in the baseball field. This was to reinforce that 'the victory in the baseball field represented Chinese honour' and 'the meaning of baseball was to gain the honour and dignity for all the Chinese nation' (Chien Yung-chang, 1993: 194-201).



countries' will exaggerate 'more' about the achievements of their sportsman' and he gives the example that in 1968, the US athlete Al Oerter, who had won the discus gold at the Olympics for the fourth consecutive time, was welcomed home only by his wife and his children. In contrast, the Ethiopian athlete, Abebe Bikila, who had won his second successive Olympic gold in the marathon, was welcomed home by a crowd of many thousands. Similarly, Taiwanese society exaggerated the achievements in baseball, and accepted the legendary title of 'world champion'. All of these were a natural reaction associated in the Taiwanese mind at a time when the country was struggling against international isolation. The association between sports achievements and nation-building gave the KMT government an opportunity to arouse its people's recognitions when its legitimacy was challenged. As result of this, the government, which had never thought of fostering or promoting a 'world champion' before, actively started to connect the victories of sport and every national emblem, ceremonies, heroic characteristics and legend. Thus, in the era during which the greatest meaning of baseball was to gain national honour, the 'world champion' was the only goal and the ultimate value, and the notion of heroism was used to connect national honour and 'world champion', all of these were the most profound signs in the history of baseball development in Taiwan.

### **Baseball as a Diplomatic tool in the 1980s**

To briefly recap, from 1952, the People's Republic of China (PRC) campaigned to be recognized as the 'Chinese' member of the IOC. In 1954 the IOC accepted the NOC of the PRC, while maintaining its recognition of Taiwan's Chinese Olympic Committee. In 1956 the PRC asked that the Taiwan Olympic Committee be erased form the list of NOCs. This proposal was turned down by the President of the IOC, Avery Brundage. Later in the year the PRC withdrew from the Melbourne Games in protest at Taiwan's continuing membership and in 1958 withdrew from the Olympic movement and from all international federations (Hill, 1996: 44-5). During the 1960s the PRC was submerged in the throes of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution and as result of this, attention on sports affairs diminished.

At the beginning of 1979 the US established diplomatic relations with the PRC; this represented a great victory for formal diplomacy in the international arena for the PRC. In addition, in the same year the PRC also won the 'informal' diplomatic victory after the IOC board meeting in Nagoya, Japan, in that the PRC was recognized as the Chinese Olympic Committee by the IOC (Hill, 1996: 50-2). Clearly, these two events created a diplomatic predicament for Taiwan in the international arena. Under the PRC's pressures and threats, Taiwan had great difficulty to establish formal diplomatic relations with many countries and as such, 'diplomacy' through informal contact became an alternative way to maintain relations with the other countries and sport was used by the KMT government to maintain this informal diplomacy with many other countries. This concept of 'sports diplomacy' is a well recognised phenomena, [Kropke (1876), Stoddart (1986), Keech (1999)], and proposes that cultural and political links derived from sport and sporting competition can be of major influence in maintaining contact between countries where formal political ties have weakened. This 'Sports Diplomacy' became an important diplomatic strategy for the KMT government in the 1980s as recognition of Taiwan by many major nations was withdrawn.

## **Sports Diplomacy**

Since the 1960s the economy of Taiwan went through a transition from primarily an importer to a balance of payments firmly in the black with a very high degree of economic growth being achieved. In the 1970s Taiwan also went through the oil crisis and the testing time post expulsion from the United Nations. By the 1980s Taiwan had become the 16<sup>th</sup> largest exporter in the world (Lin Chi-wen, 1995: 63). These experiences enhanced the Taiwanese people's confidence in their future, and they no longer required the comfort and feeling of well-being achieved through sports accomplishments. This period of relative success also gave the KMT government other success stories that reflected on more substantial administrative, political and economic achievements, rather than having to rely solely on sporting prowess.

The consequences of the establishment of US – PRC diplomatic

relations was not only a big shock for all of Taiwanese society, but also had a significant impact on Taiwanese diplomacy. In 1971 when Taiwan was expelled from the United Nations, Taiwan still maintained its position in many international organizations. It was not until the US severed diplomatic relations with Taiwan that, not only the organizations which were 'related' to the United Nations were barring Taiwan from participation but now Taiwan found itself expelled from many other international organizations. For instance, in April and May 1980, Taiwan was expelled from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Lin Chi-wen, 1995: 64).

With a diplomatic disaster on one hand and a strengthening economy on the other, the KMT government saw as a priority not only to continue to win and maintain the trust of the people but also it saw expanding international relations as an extremely important objective in order to maintain current achievements. Therefore, in these circumstances, 'substantial diplomacy'<sup>22</sup> became the first priority in the 1980s (Wang Jen-huan, 1989: 92).

Although the substantial diplomacy would still be resisted by the PRC, the KMT government believed that sport would be easier than more formal diplomatic means to breakthrough the resistance from the PRC. Therefore, sport became the most important part of the substantial diplomacy strategy in the 1980s (Lin Guo-dung, 1987: 43). In 1979 the Minister of Education indicated the principle of education to focus on enhancing 'patriotism education'. Especially, he emphasized, that in the development of physical education and sport it was important 'to align with the current stage requirements in international affairs' and 'increasing the numbers of visiting teams or participation in international sports events and actively to strive for holding international sports events in order to advance the national diplomacy' (Ministry of Education, 1979). Therefore, in the 1980s sport was manipulated by the KMT government to achieve the aim of substantial diplomacy.

In April 1981 the Olympic problem was resolved with the flag and

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<sup>22</sup> Substantial diplomacy: maintaining links with countries with whom you do not have any formal diplomatic relations.

emblem of the 'Chinese Taipei Olympic Committee' being approved (Hill, 1996: 53). In addition, other international federations also facing the 'two Chinas' issue found, after the IOC's decision, that they were able to follow the IOC's line and that particular crisis was at an end (ibid.: 54-5). From then on, this 'IOC model' was used in any international sports events by Taiwan. The PRC joined the Amateur International Baseball Association (AINBA) in 1981 and as a result of the 'IOC Model', Taiwan was not expelled from the AINBA. (Which now is called the International Baseball Federation, IBAF). Along with the KMT government policy demands in the 1980s, which was to actively promote substantial diplomacy, sport became ever more important for Taiwan to gain international political mileage (ibid.: 54).

### **The Crisis and the Turning Point**

The researcher notes that things had certainly changed. Looking back to June 1973, the Baseball Association published a press release which effectively said that owing to the strength of the other countries' baseball teams participating in the Youth Level of World Championship that year, Taiwan would not be entering a team (*Central Daily News*, 8<sup>th</sup> June 1973: 3). It is worth recapping on an event mentioned earlier that in 1978 the government cancelled a forthcoming junior game in Korea for fear that the team may lose. These two things showed that, at this time, winning was the main aim; if they could not, or might not win the competition, they would not participate. In contrast, ten years later in one of the meetings in 1984, which was discussing the issue of participating in the World Cup, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs made the decision that 'no matter what the circumstance, the priority was to take part in the games' (The 3<sup>rd</sup> Jai 8<sup>th</sup> of Board meeting minutes of CTBA, 1985: 6). It was now seen that winning or losing was not the major issue; whether the teams could take part, or not, had now become the main priority. The view now was, winning is important but participation is the priority. This showed that the political utilization of sport had shifted by the 1980's from one based on 'national identity mobilizing by making national heroes' to 'sports diplomacy' on the international stage to improve Taiwan's status in the international

community.

Although the utilization of the 'sports heroism' concept (for reinforcing national pride and identity) had diminished from the early 1980s, as can be seen from the above, it did not mean that the government gave up manipulating the game of baseball, just that the form and aim of the intervention was now different. In the 1970s, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, the aim of 'champion above everything' led to the government providing big subsidies to schools to encourage them to produce 'champion teams'. Major incentives were given to the students in guaranteeing places in higher education without having to qualify academically, if they obtained 'high achievement' in sports. By the late 1970's the 'downside' of this policy was becoming apparent and it led to many schools not wanting to form baseball teams and many students not wishing to participate in 'high level' sports. Schools realized that they needed to spend a lot of time and money if they were to stand any chance of producing teams or individuals to 'championship' level, and only those schools which produced individual or team 'champions' could get the major rewards and subsidies. Students (and schools) realized that only the 'champion' students could have any chance to be recommended for admission to the higher level of schools (Lee Ren-de, 1986: 34). The Ministry of Education set the scheme of 'recommending school admission for the student who is well-performing in sports' in 1966 which was revised in 1969 and 1973. The qualification for applying to this scheme was limited, only students who participated in any International Championship, the National Sports Championship, and the Provincial Sports Championship and had 'a good performance' in any of these competitions could apply for this scheme (*ibid.*). This left the huge majority of students who had been encouraged to neglect their studies for two or three years, failing to become 'champion' sports persons and then failing to be in a position to pass the examinations which led to the next stage in their education (Lin Chi-wen, 1995: 86; Lee Ren-de, 1986: 35). Seeing the potential problem, as less and less schools decided to attempt to participate in this 'champion making' concept, in the early 80s the government changed its policies so that the 'rewards' would apply to more people and not just the 'champions'. Members of any team which

participated in any invitational tournaments or championships, no matter what the results, would get the subsidy and training funding and the 'assistance' to further education (The 4<sup>th</sup> Jei 6<sup>th</sup> of Board meeting minutes of the CTBA, 1987: 8). However, underneath these policies, in the late 1970's, the focus was still on reproducing the 'World Champion'. Using the big 'rewards and incentives' style could only attract the people who had already participated in the game or who were already well down a 'training channel' but it could no longer attract people who had not yet started to participate in a sport or who realized they did not have a high chance to win 'championship' level; unfortunately, the majority of people were in this category and the number of people participating in baseball and the number of schools or organizations forming teams began to decline (Lin Chi-wen, 1995: 90).

By the early 80s, Taiwan's baseball had seen significant improvements in its organization and thus training skills and techniques, through the huge funding brought about by the 'sports diplomacy policy'. Taiwan's baseball had undoubtedly reached world class level. However, along with continuing political and economic changes and the decrease in the number of baseball teams, the government and society started to realize that to solve the problems of the development of baseball and to maintain world class status of this and other sports needed another solution.

### **Leisure Demand in the 1990s**

During the late 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, the political and economic situation in Taiwan had seen significant changes. In politics, the new 'freedoms' of emerging from a long period of martial law and the formation of opposition parties for the first time, together with government tolerance of dissenting groups, led inevitably to problems of social disorder and strikes. For instance, in the mid-1980s, students strove for freedom of speech in their schools, this was the start of the 'politicalisation' of the student's social movements. Radical students further demanded rights to publish their own literature and they demanded a greater democratization in schools with the abolishing of the mandatory 'military training instructor system' and they insisted that the

KMT party stayed out of school life. There were many protests at the universities with one of the largest taking place on the 16<sup>th</sup> March 1990. This was organized by the 'Ye Bai Heo' social movement and led to a five day strike by over 10,000 students in Taipei who were demanding changes to the way people were elected onto the National Assembly<sup>23</sup>. During the 1990s, this student's social movement expanded from school into society in general. Many students joined the opposition parties which now had wider aims than just being concerned with reforms in the universities. Social reform moved up the agenda and the opposition parties now started to openly challenge the authority of the state.

In economics, owing to the very successful growth of exports since the mid 1960s, Taiwan consistently produced a very favorable balance of payments surplus which in turn led to the building of substantial foreign reserves (*Freedom News*, 12<sup>th</sup> Dec.1994: 1). In 1983 the foreign exchange reserves stood at US\$ 47 billion, in 1984 it was US\$ 86 billion, in 1985 it was US\$ 225.5 billion and by 1989 the reserves stood at US\$ 732 billion (Peng Huai-en, 2000: 234). By the year 2000, Taiwan had 3rd largest foreign exchange reserves in the world, US\$ 220 billion. This caused a huge increase in monetary supply and had a significant impact on the housing market and stock market at the beginning of the 1990s (Tzen Shiu-cheng, 1992: 64-8). By October 1986 the Taiwan stock market index was just over one thousand points, but on the 12<sup>th</sup> February 1990 the index reached to 12,684 point (Peng Huai-en, 2000: 236). The Government concluded that this 'shallow style of economics' wherein the expansion of export trade was not matched by a similar growth of imports to balance it would lead to serious financial and social problems in Taiwan (*Freedom News*, 12<sup>th</sup> December 1994: 1).

The government, under these circumstances, found itself in the

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<sup>23</sup> The first National Assembly Members were elected in China before 1946. The term of office of a National Assembly Member was 6 years. During the period of the Communist Rebellion these member were allowed to extend their term of office. It was not until Dec.1991 that the second National Assembly members were elected by the Taiwanese people and they changed the term of office from 6 years to 4 years.

position of many that had gone before in trying to put in place policies and infrastructures to 'control' the people but now, with more of their consent. The KMT government realised that it was going to need to change many of its policies in order to maintain this fragile hegemony.

### **Sport as a 'New Right'**

The use of sport as a 'controlling' function has been much researched and debated by Western writers. Hargreaves warns against the simplicity of thinking that sport can simply be used as a means to control the masses when he states 'Nor can their [sports] social role be explained simply as a means whereby the masses are manipulated into conformity... capitalist or otherwise... for to do so is to regard the people as passive dupes' (1986: 3). However, Hargreaves goes on to give many examples of the 'ruling classes' in the UK attempting to do just that.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s much was changing in Taiwan. Martial law had gone, the Constitution had been revised and updated, (by 1992 the Second major revision had been adopted), the economy was strengthening and people were openly debating 'democracy' and dates for elections (Chu Yun-han and Lin Jih-wen, 2001: 121-2). Although people were still working long hours, they had money in their pockets and they had leisure time in which to spend it. Hargreaves notes (1986: 182), 'It was recognized that the increasing demand from the population as a whole for greater possibilities to enjoy leisure-opportunities which working class people had been denied, had to be met concretely if their consent was to be won and the structure of hegemony to remain intact'. This was with reference to the situation in the United Kingdom in the 1950s. The parallels to 1990s Taiwan are there to be seen and the potential solutions to be sought, the same.

The KMT government realized that one of the serious consequences of the rapid economic growth that had occurred was the potential for an increase in social conflict and that providing the opportunities for people to take part in leisure and sports activities could diminish the dissatisfaction of subordinate groups. In 1987 the chief Minister of the Executive Yuan drafted the 'Mid-term Sports Development Scheme'. The reasoning behind this policy was not simply to achieve the best



performance in sporting accomplishments, (as had been the prime reason of most earlier policy) but to provide the opportunities for the youth to take part in the 'right' sports activities, i.e. those deemed to be 'healthy outdoor pursuits'; ('Wrong' sports were defined as snooker or any sports which involved gambling), in order to avoiding the growing levels of violence and to control social order (Ministry of Education, 1989a: 32). This showed a significant change in direction from the government, with the emphasis no longer just on enhancing competitive sports ability, but now very much to also have a value on leisure supply. The budget spend gives some indication of the importance the government attached to promoting 'sport for all' as opposed to the earlier emphasis on creating champions. In 1986, the stated budget for 'sports for all' was NT\$30,000,000. By 1989 this had risen to NT\$8.3bn (Physical Education Department, 1990: 13-45). In 1989 the Ministry of Education further drafted the 'Leisure Education Implementation Scheme'. This scheme clearly indicated the recognition that leisure had become a very important part of modern social life and it introduced into schools, for the first time, a level of 'leisure education' (Ministry of Education, 1989b: 5-6). As such the government not only encouraged people to take part in all sports activities, but also provided free admission or easy accesses to attract people. It was very obvious that the government led everybody to believe that they had a "right" to participate in these sports activities.

## **The Formation of the Professional Baseball League**

When the foreign reserve rapidly increased in the late 1980s, facing this new economic situation the KMT government raised the slogan of 'Internationalization and Liberalization of Economics' in order to avoid foreseeable financial and social problems (Yu Chung-hsian and Wang Chin-Li, 1999: 78-85). Encouraging people's consumption was now seen as just as important as encouraging an increase in productivity. For the government, increasing consumption was seen to have two major benefits: Firstly, it would effectively accommodate people's residual money and secondly, encouraging leisure consumption would occupy people's leisure time and go some way to solving the growing problems and social

disorder (Lin Chi-wen, 1995: 115). A secondary effect is seen as a general improvement in the nation's health. The huge economic growth in the 70s and 80s had given people more money in their pockets which a significant proportion of the population spent on food, hence increasing their weight and producing a general decline in physical fitness. Encouraging participation in physical leisure activities was seen as a way of addressing this problem and thus leading to a reduction in the cost of health care in the longer term (ibid.).

In 1980, the 'Actively Implementing Sports-for-All Scheme' had already started to develop professional sports, with the main aim being to improve sporting abilities and skills (Ministry of Education, 1980). As a result of the achievements in international baseball competitions in the past, and more recent accomplishments (in 1984, demonstration game bronze medal, the Los Angeles Olympic Games; in 1986, runner-up, the 29<sup>th</sup> Baseball World Cup in Netherlands; in 1987, champion, the 14<sup>th</sup> Baseball Asian Cup in Japan), it was the first sport considered for professionalization. In the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games, although the game of baseball was still a 'demonstration game' the Taiwanese government had a strong ambition to win a medal. Unfortunately, the Chinese Taipei baseball team failed in this event. As a result of this failure, the government saw even more reason to support the formation of professional baseball. Not only would it create the people's demand in leisure, with the associated spending, it would regenerate a flagging interest in sports with potential associated health benefits and also assist with the social disorder problem and enhancing winning ability in international competitions but it would also bring much needed private money into the game.

In 1989 the government implemented a four-year scheme, the 'National Mid-range Sports Scheme'. The scheme not only tried to utilize the promotion of 'Inter-schools and Inter-cities League-match System' by providing more sports facilities to increase the amount of sports participation in general, but the scheme actively sought to encourage business enterprises to form professional sports teams (Hsu I-hsiung et al., 1999: 148). The government perceived that several benefits could be derived from promoting the formation of professional sports. Firstly,

participating in professional sports provided a more effective way for the government to control the people's leisure and thus avoid the violence and social disorder which was occurring. Lin Chi-wen (1995: 121) indicates that for the government, the implementation of professional sports could supplement the 'leisure time control' which the existing amateur league-match system in school and society could offer, mainly because the league match system could only really reach into the student level of the population and then, only the male segment. On the other hand it was hoped that professional sports would not only provide a means to cultivate the passion of the masses in sport, but provide an efficient means to start effective control of the leisure time of the masses. The third benefit of promoting professional sports was to enhance competitive sports ability (Executive Yuan, 1989: 1-3). The fourth benefit of promoting professional sports was to share the responsibility (and thus cost) of service provision between the government and industry. The government also had an economic welfare motive for the development of professional sports industries. When any professional sport is successfully established, sports related businesses also benefit and in addition, all employed staff involved in leagues, including the players, coaches, managers and administrative staff could support their families and reduce the rate of unemployment and related social problems; professional sport had the potential to create a significant number of jobs.

For the private sector, a sound prospect of increasing markets and profit-maximization are normally the main factors for business enterprises and entrepreneurs to put their investments in professional sport (Lin Chi-wen, 1995: 116). The professionalization of sport seemed to be able to provide numerous commercial niches for private corporations beyond their original business. Beside economic profits, there are a lot of non-direct 'profits' such as promoting the brand of goods, promoting the outstanding image of the enterprise or individual and good public relations. As Hargreaves points out, 'business (may) also invest in sport for non-economic reasons: to gain prestige from being associated with a popular cultural activity, individual businessmen's commitment to a life-style and to exert social and cultural influence..... It is often difficult in practice to differentiate economic and non-economic objectives: both may be

pursued at the same time, in that prestige and influence is pursued at least cost and investment for profit may incidentally enhance the image of the investor' (1986:115).

In the Taiwanese case, the previous victories in international baseball competitions convinced the private sector that the professional baseball concept could potentially be a profitable market. Furthermore, in the late period of the 1980s, due to rapid economic growth, the divergence between rich and poor in Taiwanese society has become more significant than earlier (Peng Huai-en, 2000: 236). This in part led to a growing 'anti-enterprise' feeling being formed within Taiwanese society (Lwu Yen-chang, 1993: 18-25). In order to convert the anti-enterprise feeling, the sponsorship of sport became one of the choices for many businesses who not only could gain economic profits, but also could promote their social image (ibid.). A study conducted by Lwu in 1993 to investigate whether 1000 private corporations in Taiwan were willing to sponsor sports activities showed that 55.7 % of private corporations were willingly to do so. Only 11.4 % of companies held the negative view. The others were neutral. Out of all of the sports in Taiwan, baseball became the most popular sponsors' choice for private corporations to invest in. This was because baseball had significant accomplishments in international competitions and also had a strong supporting fan base within Taiwanese society (ibid.: 97, 109-10). Under these perceptions and factors, a professional baseball league in Taiwan was formed in 1989, the Chinese Professional Baseball League (CPBL). It originally consisted of four clubs, Brother-Elephant, Weichuan-Dragon, President-Lion, and Mercury-Tiger. The debut matches took place in Taipei in 1990 (Chen Tzu-hsuan, 1999: 32).

## **Conclusion**

This research investigated the relationship between baseball development and the KMT government in Taiwan after the Second World War, specifically looking at how the KMT government adopted different strategies in different periods of time, utilizing baseball as an aid to maintaining its political power from that time up until the year 2000. Whilst utilizing baseball as a means to maintain the struggle for political

control and power in Taiwan, it was essential to win the people's consent and further assist the reproduction of hegemony. Gruneau (1993: 85-109) and Hargreaves (1986), investigating social developments in sport under capitalism saw social classes as defining, delivering, improving and enforcing sport-related norms, values and functions within hegemonic processes on the basis of their ideological and political power positions, including the economically, culturally and socially reproduced values. Yet, it is not determinism that results from this process but the contrary: 'Hegemony is never guaranteed: it must be worked for continually and renewed by the hegemonic class or class fraction' (Hargreaves, 1986: 220). This hegemonic process has also reflected on the development of baseball in Taiwan under the KMT regime (1945 – 2000). To analyze this hegemonic process the delimitation should be the latter period of 1980s when Taiwan's political structure was gradually changed towards a more liberal and democratic system.

This research notes two significant areas within the context of sport and the political power struggle. The KMT realized that the potential of the game of baseball as a means of maintaining its power lay within the history of the game in Taiwan and its links with the social transformations which had taken place and which were currently taking place. To analyze what sort of meaning the KMT government could enforce on the game of baseball it is necessary to understand and contrast the domestic and international political, economic and social situation surrounding Taiwan during this period. Secondly, the maximum benefit to be gained by reinforcing meaning upon the game of baseball was to lead the people subconsciously to agree with the meaning given by the dominant group such that they responded with consent to the wishes of the dominant group without any conscious knowledge or thought.

The game of baseball was part of an assimilation policy in colonial times and so it has a very strong foundation in today's Taiwanese society. Although, in the post-war time more and more modern sports were introduced into Taiwan, the game of baseball remained one of the most popular sports in Taiwanese society. There are two advantages the game of baseball possessed which aided it in its popularity. One was that the game was the most memorable sport for Taiwanese society (attached with

colonial sentiment, good and bad). Secondly was that Taiwan won many international accomplishments in the game. The popularity is based on feeling, memory and accomplishments which are attached to the game of baseball by the majority of Taiwanese people. So, when the government faced the challenges to its legitimacy and people lost confidence for their future, baseball provided the best means for people expressing their patriotism and for the government demonstrating its political achievements. When the social class conflict became stronger and stronger and the use of force (as earlier) could no longer be used to suppress or manipulate people's beliefs, the game of baseball again became the best choice for the government to utilize to achieve people's demands for greater leisure provision and for people to escape from their routine of hard work and long hours, hence the formation of the professional league. Here, it should be noted that there is no 'zero-sum' situation between the political aims of seeking national honor, (success in sporting competition, achieving recognition) and leisure provision to achieve social demands, or mobilizing sentiment and controlling leisure time to maintain power struggle. They are just an interchange of priorities. It can be seen from the tendency in the world, no matter which set of demands and interests had been emphasized, the consideration on another set of demands and interests would not necessarily be reduced.

No matter if it is the development of capitalism, the changes of Taiwan polity or the changes/development in Taiwanese baseball history, the resistance and rejection to the dominant groups can be seen everywhere. These resistances or rejections appear one after another to force the dominant groups (governments, capitalists etc.) to revise or reform themselves. However, no matter whether it is governments or capitalists, they will always primarily pursue their own interests. It is impossible for them to disobey their own interests when they take part in the sports sphere. Their interests are the same – domination.

Hegemony has been shown as a contingent operation. As Keech (1999: 72) states, '...a period of instability and transition occurs during which time alliances that form the basis of hegemonic rule undergo changes, and at times restructuring in order to survive'. Its establishment is not simply a question of ideological domination, but also domination of

processes whereby social agents actively and consciously accommodate each other in pursuit of their perceived interests and that coercion and the threats of coercion are important aspects of the process (Hargreaves, 1986). Hegemony is never guaranteed: it must be worked for continually and renewed by the hegemonic class or class fraction (ibid.: 220). Thus, it is impossible to find an absolute solution for the development of baseball in the Taiwanese case; and it is impossible to expect a 'peace' under the control of the dominant class or capitalist class. As Rigauer points out, 'one can find this phenomenon repeated in every era of the capitalist development of sport. All groups involved in sport, that is, dominant as well as subordinate groups, compete with each other and struggle for the sports-practical realization of their aims, cultural values, social functions, organizational and material framework' (2000: 43).

This research has illustrated how the KMT government, directly after setting up their base in Taiwan, saw no use for and paid scant attention to sport as a means of achieving any political aim. This situation did not last for long however and the research shows how the government, once recognizing the potential of baseball, clearly manipulated the sport at several crucial phases during its history. Firstly to legitimize itself in the eyes of the Taiwanese people by generating a national pride by the creation of national hero's and 'champions', then by using sport as its major tool to gain international legitimacy; baseball became a major diplomatic tool in enabling Taiwan to maintain international contact with many countries that it would otherwise have had no relations with. Finally, the government needed to manage the leisure time of the people and as such needed the investment of the private sector to create an environment where the mass of the people could take part in this sport, either as players or as spectators. The creation of professional teams brought huge investments by the private sector which created in a very short space of time a sport which captured the nation and led to soaring attendances at games and an interest level never before seen. This satisfied the governments desire to provide an outlet for the people's demands for leisure from the private sector.

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