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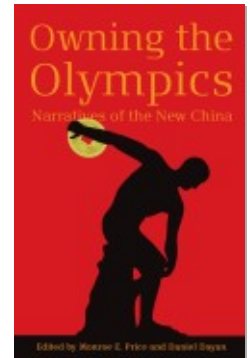
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The Fragility of Asian National Identity in the Olympic Games

Sandra Collins

But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed nor Birth
When two strong men stand face to face. (Rudyard Kipling, 1895)

Kipling's twain between the "East" and the "West" of the nineteenth century continues to haunt our modern global imagination. Nowhere is the difference between the two made more visible than in the narratives of Asian national identity that are produced for the Olympic Games.¹ These narratives begin with the bids to host the Olympics, continue through both written texts (of pamphlets, media booklets, official receptions and Web sites) and performative texts (of International Olympic Committee [IOC] receptions, marketing videos, and commercial endorsements), are broadcasted during the Olympic Games themselves, and linger long after the Olympic event is over. The common trope of the East-West dichotomy has been evoked in numerous Asian Olympiads precisely because it is a familiar and expected narrative. In the twenty-first century, the Olympic Games may be the single biggest event for "the production of national culture for international consumption" (Brownell 1995, 314), and our global ubiquitous media continues to exploit this divide for profit.² Asian cities vying to host the Olympic Games have enthusiastically employed this rhetoric of difference in their bidding campaigns. What may prove surprising is not that this twain continues, but that it retains any cultural resonance for an increasingly commodified Olympic experience in our vastly shrinking globe.

What is unique for Asian Olympic hosts—beginning with the Tokyo

bid to host the 1940 Games and continuing with the 1964 Tokyo, the 1988 Seoul, the 1998 Nagano Winter and the upcoming 2008 Beijing Olympics—are the lingering anxieties of participating in the Western hegemony of the Olympic Games. Other Olympic host cities have not carried the burden of representing their cultural heritage as unchanging to the extent that Asian hosts do.³ While most Western Olympic host cities underscore their modernity and development to promote themselves as world-class cities, Asian host cities distinguish themselves in their deliberate evocation of their *modern hybridity*: the co-existence of modern development with ancient cultural traditions. Asian Olympic hosts display this hybridity as a syncretism of cutting edge–modern technological industry anchored in the rich cultural histories and exotic civilizations of the East.

Why Asian Olympic hosts intentionally celebrate their cultural heritage and modernity as conjoined can only be understood within the historical framework of global capitalism and modern Asian nation-states. Tokyo, Seoul, and Nagano each defined and, in the case of Beijing, are defining their national identity as the unique embodiment of a timeless national culture replete with modern attributes. For the late-developing industrial nations of Japan, Korea, and China, showcasing the idea of a modern hybridity in the Olympic Games functions as a symbolic means of demonstrating that modernization does not equal Westernization.⁴ That is to say, Asian nations are capable of modernization, evidenced by their winning of Olympic bids, but retain distinct and traditional national cultures. By fusing their unique traditional culture with their present modern development, Asian Olympic hosts confirm not only that modernization and globalization are not necessarily universal, but also that the forces of modern and global development have different inflections in Asia. In the narratives of Asian Olympic hosts, the modernity of Asian host nations is not a mirror reflection of the modern development of the West but rather a self-conscious remaking of nineteenth century Orientalist discourse.⁵ Asian Olympic hosts turn the earlier assessment of Orientalists—that the Orient was frozen and could not evolve—on its head: Asian Olympic hosts' self-orientalism showcases how their cultural traditions exist conterminously with their modernity.

When Japan, Korea, and China host the Olympics, their “Eastern” civilizations are grafted onto the developmental path established and monopolized by Western powers as a result of the rapid expansion of Western colonialism of the nineteenth century.⁶ But a boundary contin-

ues to function: because relevant sites of global authority (whether the International Olympic Committee or the WTO) continue to be dominated by the West (Chow 1991), the discourses of Asian Olympics reveal the underlying power structures of the encounter between the East and the West. The representational strategies of syncretism and hybridity, which is often a form of self-orientalism, has proven successful for Asian hosts precisely because modernization is often equated with the West. Rather than argue that Asian modernities are different from those of the West, Asian Olympic hosts deliberately construct the dichotomy between the West and East as the normative of Asia entering the IOC world stage.⁷ Here, Asian national cultures are being represented as being at the center of the desired synthesis between the East and the West: the ancient civilization and culture of the orient/Asia/East symbolically positions Asian Olympic hosts as being *nearly* as modernized (industrialized, capitalized, or globalized) as the omnipotent West. Beijing 2008 has proven to be particularly interesting, because, as the fear of China looms large in the Western imagination, China's "Two System" government has represented the 2008 Olympic Games throughout its preparation process as a new iteration of the fusion of the East and the West.⁸ With the arrival of "China's Century," Beijing has achieved a level of economic power that previous Asian hosts never enjoyed; and, as the West fears the balance of global power tipping toward China and the East, the Beijing Olympic organizers have also begun to employ different rhetorical strategies to represent China's synthesis of the old and new.

Despite their differences, Asian Olympic host cities adopt similar strategies in showcasing their national identity as a modern hybrid within the context of the Olympic Games. And although the historical contexts vary, these Asian candidates are similar in their timing of joining the larger world system dominated by the West. As such, discursive strategies of representing the Asian Olympic candidates' national cultural identity manifest as the harmonious blending of ancient traditions and modern attributes, of fusing the schism between the East and West, implying that all Asian nations peacefully enter the world system monopolized by the West, the dominant power by which Asia has had to define its own modern experience.⁹ The hybrid form suspends Asian national identity safely in between the premodern (Orient) and the modern (West). As China's socioeconomic development continues, the Beijing Olympic organizers will continue to play with the established image of the traditional self-orientalized hybrid Asian nation. This is

precisely why the fear of the New China resonates so strongly as America watches its trade deficit with New China grow exponentially every year.

These discursive strategies were first articulated in the 1930s, when Japan bid for the 1940 Olympics. As the first Asian industrialized power, Japan sought to commemorate its 2,600th national birthday in 1940 with the Olympic Games. During the bidding process, the Japanese offered the alluring image of Japan as a unique embodiment of Eastern tradition and Western modernity, and argued that a Tokyo Olympics would truly universalize the Olympic movement.¹⁰ The 1940 Tokyo Games were seen as a spectacular ideological production, designed by the Japanese state specifically to challenge the Western powers' conflation of Western with universal values. The success of the Tokyo bid lay in the fact that Japan was, at the time, the only Eastern (or non-Western) industrial, independent nation state. Japan's economic success offered a counter to Western modernity and development, and thus suggested that the modernity espoused by the West was not necessarily universal.

The historical narrative of Asian Olympic hosts could follow the normative arc of modernization and development, and the impulse is to characterize 1964 Tokyo, 1988 Seoul and the upcoming 2008 Beijing Games as examples of how Asian nations entered the world arena as successful beacons of globalization. The 1964 Tokyo Olympics were a stunning spectacle of Japan's normalization and its re-entry into the world system under the careful tutelage of America as the first Asian, industrialized, capitalist, and democratic nation. The Seoul 1998 Olympics continued Tokyo's Olympic legacy in Asia by showcasing the economic and technological achievements of Korea to the world (Manzenreiter and Horne 2002).¹¹ Awarded to the then largely unknown military state, the 1988 Seoul Games exhibited the permanent reform of Korea as a more democratic and industrial capital nation-state (Ahn 2002). As for Beijing 2008, the predominant theme anticipated by the existing narrative appears to be that of China's successful entrance into—and not dominance of—the world system. In order to address the West's continuing concerns of (among other things) the rapid pace of China's economic growth, the Beijing Organizing Committee of the Olympic Games (BOCOG) has repeatedly chosen themes that emphasize harmony with the existing world system. This may change as the Beijing Olympics unfold.¹² When bidding for the Olympics, the Beijing Olympic Bid Committee (BOBICO) first lauded

“New Beijing, New Olympics” (*xin Beijing, xin aoyun*) as Beijing’s Olympic slogan. Under the IOC’s concern that this could be interpreted as an effort by China to change the Olympics into something “new,” however, the Bid Committee switched the slogan to “New Beijing, Great Olympics” (Forney 2001).

In contrast to this normative narrative of modernization for Asian Olympic hosts, however, lie the failed 1940 Tokyo and the 1998 Nagano Games. Japan canceled the 1940 Games only to embark on a brutal imperialist campaign to ostensibly liberate Asia from the West, and Japan hosted the 1998 Winter Games at the height of its economic collapse after winning the right to host the Games in 1991, just as signs that the Japanese economy was in trouble were emerging. These two Asian Olympiads, “aberrant” in their deviation from the typical narrative of positive development typically employed by Asian Olympic hosts, suggest that the self-orientalizing/mythologizing constellation of Asian national identity in the Olympic Games is ultimately a fragile and symbolic form of resistance to the West.

Narratives of Dislocation (I): The Canceled 1940 Tokyo Games

The process of constructing Asian national identities within the context of the Olympic Games is an inherently fragile process that must not only negotiate established sport and political channels of Olympic, city, and national officials, but also, navigate the global media communication complex of corporations, media officials, and spectators. By restoring the “missing Olympics” of the terminated 1940 Tokyo Games to the historical narrative of Asian Olympiads, the continued draw of Asian Olympic nations as a modern hybrid may be better grasped (Collins forthcoming).

Well aware of the western bias against Asian nations during Tokyo’s bid for the 1940 Olympics, Japanese officials proposed to commemorate the 2,600th anniversary of the founding of the nation. Although the 1940 Tokyo Games were tied to the ideological production of 1930s Japan that promoted the mythical notion of a Japanese national polity (*kokutai*) as based on the unchanging relationship between the Japanese emperor and the Japanese people, the Olympics were also considered a forum for Japanese diplomacy in an era of increasing international isolation. Throughout the bidding and later the planning

processes for the 1940 Games, Tokyo's discursive strategy focused on two key tactics: emphasizing that in order for the Olympic Games to be truly universal, they would also need to be held in the East, and representing the national culture of Japan as the unique blending of a distinct "Eastern" cultural heritage with "Western" forms of modernization and industrialization.¹³ Photographs were used to display how Japan's ancient, oriental civilization coexisted with new forms of modern Westernization. Emphasizing the key role of visuality, Tokyo/Japan was often referred to as the "rare montage of the old/new and East/West" by those Japanese involved in promoting the Tokyo bid domestically and abroad. Similarly, 1930s Tokyo was often described as "a modern city . . . a metropolis in Western fashion against the panorama of an age-old civilization" (Tokyo Municipal Office 1934, iii). Images of geisha and samurai were often presented to the West as sensational examples of Japan's self-orientalism. Japanese ideologues guided Western readers on how to see the ancient forms of Japanese culture in modern Japan; Tokyo was hailed as the unique embodiment of "the harmonious blending" of the two great cultures of the East and the West (Olympic Organizing Committee for the XIIth Olympiad Tokyo 1938, 22). However, Japanese national culture was represented as existing outside of time—and more amaranthine—compared to the West so that the idioms of cultural contact between "Japan-East-Traditional" and "World-West-Modern" implied a certain incommensurability.¹⁴

Although the specific dynamics of the harmonious blending were never defined—and remained a somewhat ambiguous encounter between the East and West when the Japanese government canceled the Tokyo Games in 1938—this idea functioned as a significant example of Japan's singular ability to successfully modernize while simultaneously retaining its unique cultural and imperial destiny.¹⁵ However, in spite of calling for the spread of Olympism and peace throughout the Orient, and lauding the Tokyo Games' ability to improve relations between the East and West, the 1940 Tokyo Games were ultimately a form of self-aggrandizement by the Japanese state. Japanese bid officials viewed Japan as uniquely positioned to host the Olympics as the premier colonial and military power of the Orient. After winning the right to host the Olympics, Tokyo Olympic Officials debated for two years over how best to import the Western rituals of the Olympics to Japan as well as how best to package Japanese culture for the world. Ultimately, the Japanese national government canceled the Games in 1938 because of the protracted war between Japan and China. Just as imperialist

Japan once boasted of its unique economic and military might, the colossal growth of its economy now positions modern China as the premier threat to the established global trade network long dominated by the West.

Normative Narrative (I): Tokyo 1964

Despite Japan's path into what many American historians of modernization theory label as the "dark valley" years, Japan emerged from World War II as the benefactor of America's aggressive campaign for containing Asian communism.¹⁶ With the advent of the Korean War in 1952, the United States actively helped establish Japan as a model democratic and industrial power. The Tokyo Olympics were seen as the symbol of Japan's successful re-entry into the international order as a normalized industrial power. Japan's avowed goal in hosting the 1964 Games was "to show the world that Japan is not just a country of cherry blossoms and geishas. The object was to demonstrate that Japan had been rebuilt after the war and that the country was willing to connect itself to the western world" (Lechenperg 1964, 137–38). Repentant of its fascist and imperial past, democratic Japan now wanted to graft its Asian civilization onto the course of Western civilization. Tokyo's bid, supported by IOC president and American Avery Brundage, was easily won, and in the official program for the 1964 Games, Tokyo was hailed as the "ideal site for holding the first Olympic Games to be held in Asia, for it can be said that she serves as a meeting-point of the East and the West" (Organizing Committee for the Games of the XVIII Olympiad 1966, 20). The success of the 1964 Tokyo Olympics made these Games the model to which subsequent Asian Olympic candidates aspired, and thus it is this Olympics that inaugurated the contemporary normative narrative of Asian Olympiads.

The planning of the Games began in 1959, and the face of the city of Tokyo would be changed in what was called "one of the most ambitious urban construction projects of the twentieth century, a five-year, 24-hour-a-day effort" (Slater 2004, 166). More than \$2.8 billion was spent on building the Olympic infrastructure which was in fact modernizing the urbanscape of postwar Tokyo itself: the Tokaido bullet train, two new subways, a monorail from Haneda airport, new metropolitan highways and expressways, sewer and water lines, hotels, a broadcasting center and communication facilities. The National Diet

passed a measure (Law No. 138 of June 8, 1961) that gave legal support to the State's involvement in hosting the Games (Organizing Committee for the Games of the XVIII Olympiad 1966, 39). The Organizing Committee's official headquarters was located at the Akasaka Detached Palace, once the residence of the Japanese Meiji emperor who modernized Japan. The then Showa emperor of postwar Japan, His Majesty Hirohito, agreed to act as the royal patron for the Games. Both motions symbolized the importance of the event to Japan's solemn nation (Organizing Committee for the Games of the XVIII Olympiad 1966, 39).

When the Games began, the "Japanese atmosphere" in the opening ceremony was decisively understated: the playing of the national anthem *kimigayo*, the large taiko drums for the Olympic Campanology and Hymn, the presence of the Japanese emperor, and the use of "atom boy" to light the Olympic Cauldron were the only true signs of Japanese difference. There were no elaborate cultural performances showcasing Japanese traditional dance, arts or theatre; these were confined to the Arts Exhibit held at various venues in Tokyo (Organizing Committee for the Games of the XVIII Olympiad 1966, 270). During the opening ceremony, Mayuzumi Toshio composed "Olympic Campanology"—a blend of modern Japanese technology and ancient cultural traditions, incorporating electronic sounds with recordings of temple bells in the nationally important shrines from the cities of Nara, Kyoto, and Nikko (Slater 2004, 169).¹⁷ The music was played as the Japanese emperor Showa took his seat in the Royal Box as "the symbols of the soul of the Japanese people, being transmitted to the world" (Organizing Committee for the Games of the XVIII Olympiad 1966, 231). After the emperor declared the Games open, the final Olympic torch runner, Yoshinori Sakai, who was born in Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, the day of the atomic bombing, arrived in the stadium and lit the sacred Olympic Fire, referencing Japan's status as the world's first atomic victim. Jet planes from the Japanese Air Self-Defense Force formed five Olympic colored circles in the Tokyo sky, as a reminder of the military might that Japan still possessed. In addition, the 1964 Olympics featured a color telecast of peaceful Japan's "distinctive culture" exemplified by the kimono-clad women giving Olympic medals to winning athletes.

For the Japanese, the 1964 Games were a reminder that the country had successfully sutured the wounds of World War II and its imperialist past and gotten back on the "correct" path of Western modernity of democracy and industrialization. For the IOC, the Games were a sign

that “The Olympic Movement . . . has now bridged every ocean and the Olympic Games at last are here in the orient proving that they belong to the entire world” (IOC 1998). After decades of U.S. Supreme Commander of Allied Powers (SCAP) censorship it is not surprising that both the opening and closing ceremonies did not display any traditional or feudal forms of Japan’s national culture, as were expressed during the 1998 Nagano Games, perhaps demonstrating that Japan in the 1960s had not yet put enough distance between its past and its present.

Despite the Tokyo Games’ success, Yashiro Yukio, a commissioner for the Protection of Cultural Properties, lamented in 1965 that Japan suffered from a poor reputation abroad due “to a still-thriving Orientalism (*orientarizumu*) born of nineteenth-century exoticism of ‘Madam Butterfly. . . .’ (Aso 2002, 18). Parallel with the U.S. (SCAP) occupation’s scrutiny of Japanese feudalistic traditions that were deemed the source of its imperialist aggression (such as martial arts and notions of a sacred and divine emperor), the Japanese were trying to define and promote their own cultural traditions. Recalling the earlier 1930s hybrid modernity, Japan’s modern identity in the postwar era was again likened to the unique combination of a timeless and thus authentic traditional culture that survived amidst the progression of Japan’s modernization: “Present day visitors to Japan are interested to find that the old and the new, the traditional and the progressive, are active side by side, and are in good accord mutually in this country” (Aso 2002, 30). Japan succeeded in accomplishing what it had set out to do some twenty years earlier: to reveal to the world its national strength and power in a distinctively Japanese fashion.

Normative Narratives (II): 1988 Seoul

Raising suspicions that he was seeking the Nobel Peace Prize, IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch was a keen supporter of hosting the Olympics in Asia again, and his close relationship with the IOC member in Korea, Kim Taek-soo, helped Seoul secure the 1988 Games. The Seoul bid was launched in 1981 by the then president of the Republic of Korea, General Chun Doo Hwan, to help promote several economic and political goals. Economically, the substantial growth of the Korean industrial economy (1975 GNP for South Korea was \$44.3 billion; 1980 GNP was \$63.1 million; Manheim 1990, 281) legitimized South Korea’s

ability, as a newly modernizing nation, to host the Olympics. The government believed that hosting the Olympics would help to promote its fledgling automotive and electronics industries internationally insofar as it would announce South Korea's successful entry into the world system. Politically, the Seoul bid was designed to cultivate domestic approval from the Korean people, who distrusted governmental authority, as well as "[expand] its relations with Communist bloc countries" (Seoul Olympic Organizing Committee [SLOOC] 1989, 34; Manheim 1990, 282).

The more than fifty-member Seoul delegation used the division of Korea along the thirty-eighth parallel to convince other IOC delegates of the validity of Seoul's candidacy: "The logic focused on the justness of an Olympiad in Seoul . . . an Olympiad in a divided country would be helpful to solidifying peace there" (SLOOC 1989, 39). In keeping with Tokyo's success in showcasing a hybrid Asia that was both traditional and modern, Seoul organizers claimed that the elaborately constructed display hall of Seoul's candidacy "effectively displayed the time-honored culture and spectacular development of Korea . . ." (SLOOC 1989, 40; Manheim 1990, 283). In keeping with the characteristic gendered subservience of Orientalism, Korean Air stewardesses and former Miss Koreas in "elegant traditional Korean costumes gracefully served visitors" (SLOOC 1989, 40). The Seoul bid campaigners also invoked Tokyo's earlier appeal as a universalizing force: "Considering the Olympic principle of universality . . . it is important to share the hosting role among nations and thus spread the Olympic Movement throughout the world. . . ." (SLOOC 1989, 42). The "unique cultural heritage and characteristics" of Seoul and the fact that South Korea had not previously hosted the Olympics helped to cement Seoul's attractiveness.

When the Games were awarded to Seoul in 1981, Seoul Olympic organizers were determined to match Japan's success but in a "distinctively Korean manner," by displaying Korea's cultural heritage as distinct not only from the West but from other Asian nations as well (Larson and Park 1993, 151-55, 162, 169). The 1987 change in the national government of Korea, however, led to a reassessment of the Seoul Olympics by the Korean government; the IOC remained largely unconcerned by the shift in governmental leadership. Korean president Chun Doo Hwan reconfirmed the priority of the Seoul Games to the nation by remarking, "The 1988 Seoul Olympics . . . will be a golden opportunity for national prosperity, thereby placing the country on the

road towards becoming an advanced country” (Larson and Park 1993, 162, 169). The IOC was relieved that the second Olympic Games to be held in Asia would continue as scheduled. IOC spokesperson Michele Verdier proclaimed, “The Games have been awarded to Seoul, and there is absolutely no change in our position.” The only condition that would change the IOC’s view would be an “act of war” (Reed 1987, 1).

The Republic of Korea spent well over \$3 billion in preparations for the 1988 Games (Reed 1987). In the most watched of all Olympic broadcasts to date, an estimated one billion international viewers watched the Han River boat parade inaugurate the opening ceremony (Larson and Park 1993, 153). Korean national culture was evoked in the ornate choreographed scenes of the opening ceremony, with traditional music, dress, folklore, and dance orchestrated along modern technological lines. The theme of the ceremony was “Toward One World, Beyond All Barriers,” which broadcasters suggested to viewers meant moving beyond the barrier or the cultural gap between the East and the West (Larson and Park 1993, 159, 207–8). Recapitulating the fusion of old and new, the broadcast of the cultural ceremonies made references to Korea’s “5,000 year history” along with South Korea’s move toward democracy, modernization, and Westernization (Larson and Park 1993, 212–14). The arcane reference to 5,000 years was a self-conscious attempt by South Korean pundits to emphasize that their culture was distinct from other Asian cultures, of China and Japan, boasting 3,000 and 2,600 years of history, respectively.

The distinctiveness of traditional Korean culture was emphasized in other ways during the 1988 Games as well. SLOOC contracted with Polygram for \$2.5 million to have the Korean vocal group Koreana sing the Olympic theme song, a song designed to have as much “Korean imagery as possible” (Larson and Park 1993, 108). The result, “Hand-in-Hand,” became a top ten song on the pop charts in seventeen countries and the most popular Olympic theme song in history. The Seoul Olympic mascot, *Hodori*, recalled the familiar figure of the tiger from Korean legends and folk art (Larson and Park 1993, 106). All women acting in an official Olympic capacity as hostesses were outfitted in traditional Korean dresses; the medal bearer escorts wore the *wonsam*, the ceremonial robe of ancient Korean queens, and the medal bearers themselves wore *hanbok*, the traditional Korean dress (SLOOC 1989, 144–45).

As a media event in the sense of the term developed by Katz and Dayan, the Seoul Olympics was a strategic opportunity for South Korea

to represent its national identity, which had hitherto remained largely unknown to a global audience (Larson and Park 1993, 238; Jaffe and Nebenzahl 1993, 445). The opening ceremony was a striking example of Korea's self-exoticization for the benefit of the foreign gaze. The opening ceremony visualized the "Korean culture characterized . . . in the form of the indigenous dances, sounds and colors" and the Seoul Olympic organizers helped to cement Korea's national hybridity by stating that the event was a "remarkable artistic creation which married the traditional Korean culture and the contemporary senses" (SLOOC 1989, 390). The national identity of South Korea was showcased as a modern hybrid that fused its 5,000-year old traditions with a modern democratic and industrial state. Seoul Organizers devoted tremendous resources to showcasing "the originality of Korean culture," utilizing some 13,625 people in fifteen cultural performance numbers during the unprecedented three-hour-long televised event (SLOOC 1989, 391). The traditional cultural performance of "Greeting the Sun" alone lasted twenty minutes and involved more than 3,300 Korean performers and four different dances and musical events. The Olympic gold medalist Sohn Kee-chung, who competed in the 1936 Japanese delegation to Berlin, brought the Olympic torch into the stadium, a moment loaded with political symbolism insofar as it featured a contemporary Korea, independent of its colonial past (SLOOC 1989, 406). In Korea's efforts to position itself as a successful (yet traditional) nation within the Western trajectory of modernization and industrialization, it did not address the traumatic division between North and South Korea. For a domestic audience, however, the opening ceremonies' complementary and glorious national narrative of a unified, healed, unchanging culture attempted to soothe the painful political boundaries formed by student protests, military coups, and the division with North Korea. Despite the Demilitarized Zone that separated North from South Korea, the opening ceremony constantly underscored the timeless and shared culture of a "Korea" that existed before modern political boundaries and simultaneously highlighted the modern technological advances made by South Korea.

The Seoul Olympics helped solidify the notion that the televised Olympic Games function not only as a media event in and of itself, but also as a point of reference for other discursive events (Larson and Park 1993, 48). Throughout the long years of Olympic planning, the fact that the national identity of the Olympic host will be communicated through global media is taken into account. The construction of this

identity involves the dual processes of broadcasters creating the media message and audiences receiving these messages and their separate and often divergent interpretations. Another communicative layer beyond sender and receiver involves the global transcultural communication systems of the IOC, National Olympic Committees, and Olympic Corporate Sponsors (Larson and Park 1993, 48).

The media event, however, involved more than just the Olympic organizers. Local Korean culture was often not elucidated for the American (or global) viewing audience during the numerous cultural performances. In fact, Korean national identity was often simply essentialized as “unique” and as possessing a “5,000 year heritage,” demarcating Korean civilization as distinct from Japan and China (Larson and Park 1993, 35). NBC, which had the U.S. broadcasting rights, frequently offered political analyses of contemporary South Korea alongside images of traditional culture. As such, the broadcasters offered little explanation of the encounter between the East and West, and focused on the sensational and troubling aspects of contemporary South Korean society. NBC detailed the recent political history of the nation as a former Japanese colony, the violence of student riots and the military dictatorship, the tumultuous relations with North Korea and the aftermath of the 1952 Korean War, as well as the black market, mistreatment of Amerasian (half-American and Korean) children, and the status of women (Larson and Park 1993, 224). Koreans were able to view NBC broadcasts aired on the U.S. Armed Forces network, and South Koreans, outraged at the nation’s portrayal on an American network, staged public protests that resulted in NBC spokesman Kevin Monaghan delivering a public apology on Korean television (Larson and Park 1993, 224).

Narratives of Dislocation (II): 1998 Nagano Winter Olympic Games

The 1998 Nagano Winter Olympics emerged as an outlier to the historical narrative of the Asian Olympiads. For Japan in the 1980s hosting an Asian Olympiad was not a condition of entering the established Western world system since the yen and stock market were already very strong. Rather, the key impetus behind Nagano’s bid was developing the infrastructure for local tourism for the Seibu Development Corporation by showcasing the 1980s Japanese discourses on Japan’s national

uniqueness, which have come to be labeled as *nihonjinron* (translated as discourses on “Japaneseness”). Nagano won the right to host the Winter Olympic Games in 1991 just as signs that the Japanese economy might be in trouble were beginning to emerge. Despite repeated budget cuts, the operating expenses for the Games were estimated to be \$792 million, an overwhelming figure for this small regional municipality.¹⁸ For the organizers of the Nagano Games, however, the timely investment in hotels, stadiums, and transportation for the required Olympic infrastructure was to transform the Nagano region, home of the “Japanese Alps,” into an attractive tourist destination.

The opening ceremony strategically emphasized Nagano as a regional attraction. Award-winning Keita Asari, chief producer for the opening and closing ceremonies, was chosen because of his intercultural fluency as evidenced by his success in adapting foreign Broadway musicals for Japanese audiences. The goal of the opening ceremony was to unite the world through the use of the latest technology while emphasizing traditional images of Nagano and Japan. Asari commented that he intentionally emphasized traditional Japanese culture in the opening ceremony:

The Olympics are not something that should be completely done in a Western style. Opening ceremonies should embrace the (host) country’s culture and tradition. The cooperation between the sumo wrestlers and the rendition of the *onbashira-tate* festival are examples of unique Japanese culture. We can make it appealing to the international audience. (Kyodo News Wire, October 29, 1997).

The sounds of the bells ringing from Nagano’s Zenkoji Temple, which marked the beginning of the 1998 Games, represented a much more traditional approach than the 1964 Tokyo Games’ use of the electronic recording of temple bells. Next, the local culture of Nagano prefecture was showcased when 1,000 Nagano residents participated in the erection of sacred Shinto pillars of the Suwa Taisha Shrine. Asari staged an elaborate *dohyo-iri*, the ring entering ritual of sumo wrestlers during the opening ceremony. Led by the 6’8”, 500-pound Akebono, the first foreign-born sumo Grand Champion (*yokozuna*) of Japan (Akebono became a Japanese citizen in 1996), the large and nearly naked sumo wrestlers wore *kesho-mawashi* (decorated ceremonial aprons). Akebono alone, as a Japanese citizen, performed the *dohyo-iri* to drive away evil spirits and purify the venue for the Olympic athletes.¹⁹ For Asari,

“There is nothing that feels more like ‘Japanese culture’ than a sumo wrestler. When everyone sees the wrestlers assembled, they will be left with the strong impression that they have truly visited (seen) Japan” (Kyodo News Wire, December 26, 1997). Ito Midori, Japanese ice-skating gold medalist, was elaborately dressed in a ceremonial kimono and lifted into the air on a platform to light the Olympic cauldron.

Asari did not just seek to portray Japan’s uniqueness. The “Westerners,” Asari revealed, “see the Japanese as a peculiar people. I want to show (also) that Japanese people have sensitivities that are similar to those people in other places in the world through the chorus of the *Ode to Joy*” (Kyodo News Wire, October 29, 1997). World famous conductor Seiji Ozawa led a worldwide chorus of Beethoven’s *Ode to Joy* for the finale of the pageant that featured five choral groups from Beijing, Berlin, Cape Town, New York, and Sydney singing together via a satellite linkup as Ozawa conducted the orchestra from the Nagano Prefectural Cultural Hall. “The significance lies in the fact that people from all over the world will sing the same song at the same time,” the Boston Symphony Conductor Ozawa mused (Kyodo News Wire, December 25, 1997). For the global viewing audience, however, the carefully orchestrated “Ode to Joy” also served as a postmodern Olympic performance at a different register: that of displaying an interconnected world based on transnational telecommunication and computerized information networks (Smith 1990, 75).

Despite Asari’s best intentions, however, the CBS broadcast often deliberately interrupted the narrative and theatrical flow of the opening ceremony. As the Japan Expert for the CBS Research Team, I had an interesting view of the decisions made by the CBS Producers for the Nagano Games. Jim Nance and other broadcasters often mistakenly referred to Zenkoji Temple, looming in the background of each CBS broadcast, as the “spiritual and cultural center of Japan,” even though Japanese would probably refer to Ise as the spiritual center and Kyoto as the cultural center of Japan. The use of traditional images and rituals to represent Japan—or any Olympic host city—is of course not new. What was surprising was the extent to which the visual nature of television determined what aspects of Japanese tradition were selected both to be broadcast by CBS and to be showcased during the Olympic Ceremonies. CBS producers admitted that they liked these traditional images of Japan rather than shots of “modernity” because they were so aesthetically appealing and so consistent with America’s imagined fantasy of an exotic and unchanging Japan. Even the executive producer

of the ceremonies, Asari, confessed that he created the ceremonies by imagining how the scenes would be represented by both the close-up shots and long pans of the television camera. For the spectacle of Nagano, what became “tradition” for Japan were those visual elements that could be best captured by the television lens and that best referenced the familiar trope of an unchanging cultural aesthetic: the kimono of Midori Ito, the colorful silk sashes against the naked bodies of the sumo wrestlers, and the majestic Zenkoji Temple. The desired orientalism of Japan by CBS producers was enthusiastically satisfied by the complicitous images of Japanese unchanging traditional culture as orchestrated by Asari.

The use of traditional national images by the global media underscores the complex process of the Olympics as a media event. Sensational and stunning images were excavated from the treasure troves of the Japanese past and selected for their ability to be successfully staged as “Japanese tradition,” which then determined what kind of “Japan” viewers and spectators were encouraged to celebrate. Local cultural practices were removed by Asari from their specific Nagano regional contexts, inserted into the opening ceremony, and then aestheticized for the Olympic viewing audience as nostalgic reminders of the ancient traces that remain in modern Japan. The Nagano Games showcased the ascent of what Joseph Nye (2004) has characterized as Japanese soft power: the worldwide demand not only for traditional Japanese art but for its modern forms of popular culture as well. Perhaps for the producers of the Olympic Ceremonies and CBS, “Japan” represents a visually stunning symbol of modern hybridity itself: the unchanging traditional culture of a nation can be found in the pockets of one of the world’s leading exponents of technology and modernity.

Coda: Locating 2008 Beijing Olympics

By analyzing the discourses that emerged from the bidding and planning process for the Beijing 2008 Games against this backdrop of these other Asian Olympic Games, it is possible to discern the image of China that is being projected thus far. In some respects, the Beijing Games fit within the normative narrative of showcasing the successful entry of a developing Asian nation into the globalized world. During the bidding process, BOBICO adopted the 1930s Japanese and subsequent Asian

Olympiad strategies of positioning the Asian candidate as a modern hybrid and as a vehicle by which the Olympic Movement is diversified.

In competition with the final round candidate cities of Toronto, Paris, Istanbul, and Osaka, Beijing accentuated its cultural traditions as an ancient, Oriental city. BOBICO officials stated that displaying the ancient culture of China was a key element to the Beijing bid, which the Mayor of Beijing, Liu Qi, also affirmed by stating that the long, 3,000 year history of Beijing would provide a truly remarkable spectacle (*People's Daily* 2001). One Beijing journalist professed, "Beijing [is] more appealing to others because we have such a long history; we have something you have never seen, something very native, something very Oriental" (Haugen 2005, 223). In the Beijing candidature video for the IOC, famed Chinese director Zhang Yimou, who was also contracted to help produce the opening ceremony with Steven Spielberg, presented the Great Wall as a monument "to the survival of a vibrant culture that has been able to combine the greatness of the past with ever-changing economic, social and technological advances of the present" (Haugen 2005, 219). Given Zhang's expertise with visually appealing depictions of Chinese culture—his film's "orientalist" and exotic representations of "China's antiquated, folkloric and superstitious cultural past" have attracted a global audience (Liu 1998, 166; Chow 2007)—one can only imagine a continuation of such self-exoticization.

Mimicking earlier Asian Olympiads as the harmonious blending of the East and West, the Beijing Olympics were also hailed as bringing "the East and West together" (*China Daily* 2001). The oriental heritage of Beijing "gives the city a strong and rich culture, which can make the 2008 Olympics unique" (*China Daily* 2001). Beijing's "otherness" is often presented visually through the traditional forms of culture that position China as simultaneously unchanging and modern. As a rapidly developing nation, Chinese bid officials were eager to stress how China wanted to enter the community of Olympic hosts and the promise of progress that would follow. Although Haugen contends that the Olympics will be a catalyst for Beijing to transcend its differences with the West by mimicry, China scholar Liu counters that China will embark on an alternative path of development (Haugen 2005, 225; Liu 1998, 182). Another Chinese scholar, Xin Xu, takes a more centrist position, claiming that "[T]he People's Republic of China (PRC) is determined to turn this sporting mega-event into the celebration of a Chinese renaissance and the harmonization of world civilizations . . ."

precisely because state policy and Beijing Olympic themes highlight “efforts to redefine China’s political identity in line with traditional and universal values of greater appeal” (Xu 2006, 90, 97).

The Beijing bid, Haugen notes, detailed China’s “faith in a glorious past, combined with images of a great future” and recalled the “restoration nationalism” promoted by official Chinese discourse in the 1990s (Haugen 2005, 222). As Japan confronted the threat of Western colonialization, the Japanese nation state also formulated a “renaissance discourse” by which Japan called upon its ancient past in order to modernize without Westernizing for the good of the nation’s future (Oguma 2002, 334). As the countdown to the Beijing Olympics nears and the repercussions of the exponentially expanding Chinese economy grow transparent, it will not be surprising if China ultimately defines its own, distinctly Chinese, path. China has evaded any appeal to universal human rights by the West, including those concerning China’s ongoing involvement in Darfur, acknowledgment of the independence of Tibet or Taiwan, or the role of a critical and independent press. In the end, the universalism espoused by the West is tainted by the history of the declaration of human rights as a power construct developed by the West for the globe. As China’s economic power grows its confidence in defining its own path will also.

Other texts on the Beijing Olympics offer insight into the developing national narrative. During the closing ceremony of the 2004 Athens Olympic Games, the Chinese created a twenty-minute performance to define the country’s national culture. Despite the brutal repression of tradition that occurred during the Cultural Revolution only decades before, the film resurrected this traditional culture, pristine and unscathed by its earlier destruction. The ceremony opened with a Chinese instrumental ensemble’s rendition of the folk song “*Mo-li-hua*” (Jasmine Flower) infused with a modern techno beat that then slowed to an unaccompanied version of the song sung by a child. Attempting to mask the vast developmental unevenness and ethnic differences within China, symbolic erasures of difference within China have emerged in BOCOG’s plan: one of the five Olympic mascots is the Tibetan antelope, which can be interpreted as an attempt to subsume a separate Tibetan culture into the dominant Han culture and erase the ongoing political conflict. There are plans for the Olympic Torch relay to traverse the historic Silk Road, including the Northwestern province of Xinjiang, a region of ethnic, religious, and political contestation. Tensions have also emerged over Beijing’s proposed inclusion of Tai-

wan in the Torch relay route. Taiwan reacted negatively to this announcement and declared that Taiwan was not consulted with BOCOG's proposal. The National Council on Physical Fitness and Sports issued a public statement protesting being included as "Taipei China":

China will most certainly publicize the transfer of the torch from Taiwan to Hong Kong as being from "Taipei China" to "Hong Kong China" and "Macau China" and then onward to other cities in China. This is an attempt by China to engineer the relay route so that Chinese Taipei is included in China's domestic relay route, *thereby obviously undermining our sovereign status*. We resolutely reject this. We therefore take this opportunity to declare to the IOC and the Beijing Organizing Committee our rejection of the relay route arrangement. (Taiwan Government Information Office Web site, April 27, 2007; emphasis added).

Tsai Chen-wei, chairman of Taiwan's Olympic Committee, also voiced his criticism that the relay route is "an attempt to downgrade our sovereignty" (BBC 2007). It would seem that the PRC is pushing a political agenda that regards Taiwan as the PRC's "foremost and vital national interest" (Xu 2006, 102). BOCOG also announced that the flame relay would pass from Mount Everest through Tibet, seen by some critics as the IOC's approval of China's military occupation of the region (Whelan 2007). IOC president Jacques Rogge announced at the unveiling ceremony that "the Beijing Torch Relay will, as its theme says, be a 'Journey of Harmony,' bringing friendship and respect to people of different nationalities, races and creeds" (BOCOG 2007). If the symbolic erasure of Taiwan and Tibet's national difference in the Torch Relay is any indicator of what China deems as a "harmonious" celebration of Chinese renaissance, many should take notice of how the New China's national identity will be projected as the Beijing Olympics plays out to a global audience.

The Beijing Olympics is shaping up to be the most sensational hybrid to date; Beijing is being marketed as a "dynamic modern metropolis with 3,000 years of cultural treasures woven into the urban tapestry" (BOCOG Web site). As for the East-West encounter, IOC member He Zhenliang reiterated the familiar theme concretized by 1930s Japan:

In 2008, it will be the first time for the Olympic Games to be celebrated in China, one of the birthplaces of Oriental Civilization. It will also be

an exceptional opportunity for the Olympic Movement to enrich itself with the Oriental Culture, thus enhancing the multicultural nature of the Olympic Movement and contributing to the exchange and symbiosis of the Oriental and Western cultures. (BOCOG 2006, 6).

The preceding discourse is subtly different from previous strategies adopted by Asian Olympic hosts: unlike previous hosts who were under the tutelage of America, Beijing is confident that the Olympic Movement will also adopt aspects of China's Oriental culture. Beijing's optimism is perhaps warranted given its exponential growth and continued unhindered development.

China represents a new challenge to the established balance of power in the current global (read: Western dominated) economy. The United States has maintained a strong military presence in both Japan and Korea since the 1950s. When Japan and Korea hosted the Olympics, Japan and Korea were firmly under America's dominance, but China, while operating within a global system of interdependence, is more independent from America (Harootunian 1993). The world system remains unsure as to how much China will attempt to accommodate itself to the established global order. Depending on how the "Two System" government of China evolves, China threatens to change the arc of development characterized by Western global capitalism. The potential of global capitalism has always contained elements of struggle, as Richard Sennett aptly reminds us in his discussion of Max Weber's trenchant analysis of the military rationality inherent in capitalism itself (Sennett 2006). Whether Samuel Huntington's predicted clash between Eastern and Western civilizations emerges or whether China forges a new reconciliation point between the East and the West remains to be seen. The flow of global capital toward New China is, as Walter Mignolo observed, the significant crossing of the colonial difference of the East/the Orient from the West (2002, 179). The new globalism of rising China will undoubtedly rework this colonial difference but how it will do so is uncertain. What is certain, however, is that the Beijing Olympics will be historically significant not only in providing a platform for the New China's national cultural identity but also for actively engaging with the IOC to rework the paradigm of Olympic political communication that has been dominated thus far by the West. In this sense, the Olympics must be seen within the heritage of defining Asian national identity extending from Tokyo in 1940 to Tokyo in 1964, to Seoul, Nagano and beyond.

NOTES

1. For further reading of the significance of sports and the Olympic Games for nation-states, see Brownell 1995; Maguire 1999; and Roche 2000.

2. See Hobsbawm 1983; see also Huntington 2003 for the clash of world civilizations.

3. As Haugen has recently pointed out, these terms (*Asia, Orient, and East*) are used interchangeably to describe an imagined area that references nineteenth century's Orientalist discourse. For further reading, see Saïd 1994 and Young 1990.

4. The seminal collection of essays, *Postmodernism and Japan* (ed. Miyoshi and Harootunian 1989) addresses this issue, especially Naoki Sakai's work "Modernity and Its Critique: The Problem of Universalism and Particularism."

5. Immanuel Wallerstein (1990) asserts that the central tenet of Orientalist discourse was that only the civilizations of the West had evolved into modernity. Edward Saïd also discusses the role of how the West institutionalized various discourses of the difference between the East and the West as a form of Orientalism (Saïd [1978] 1994, 2–3).

6. Although Samuel Huntington (2003) refers to the post-Cold War break as pitting the West against the rest, he separates Japan from other Asian nations. This separate status of Japan mirrors the treatment Japan received by the political agenda of American modernization theory to posit Japan as a separate and successful example of non-Western, noncommunist, democratic, and capitalist nation in the immediate post-World War II era. Also see Bradshaw and Wallace 1996, especially 96–101.

7. H. D. Harootunian (2000) has written about how various intellectuals in 1930s Japan self-consciously attempted to view modernity as not a Western monopoly.

8. The "Two System" style of government refers to how China is currently defining its modern nation-state. In 1992, under Deng Xiao Ping, China changed its constitution and defined itself to be a "socialist society intent on creating a social market economy with Chinese characteristics" (Collins 2002, 135). Ong comments that the reference to a unified "Chineseness" is an attempt to elicit support from the Chinese people by the Chinese state as it imposes specific reforms to benefit the state (Ong and Nonini 1997, 173).

9. For other readings on defining Asian modernity vis-à-vis the West, see Chow 1991 and 2007; Ivy 1995; and Miyoshi and Harootunian 1989 and 1993.

10. The history of the 1940 Tokyo Olympics is detailed in the forthcoming *The 1940 Tokyo Games: The Missing Olympics: Japan, the Asian Olympics and the Olympic Movement* (Collins forthcoming).

11. Jeffrey Wasserstrom (2002, 126) warns against using 1988 Seoul as an analogy to 2008 Beijing.

12. The bidding slogan for Beijing 2008, "New Beijing, Great Olympics,"

was retired when Beijing won the right to host the Games in 2001. The current BOCOG slogan, “One World, One Dream,” is meant to emphasize the common and shared dream by the world of the Olympics, although some may speculate that the Chinese characters for “one” could be also read as “the same” leading one to conclude that it is “The Same World (i.e., China’s), The Same (i.e., China’s) Dream.”

13. The most typical example is the 1933 booklet produced by the Tokyo Municipal Office, *Tokyo: Sports Center of the Orient*, which outlined specific features of the Tokyo bid and presented numerous black and white photographs of Tokyo and Japan. See Collins forthcoming.

14. This interpretation is similar to Wolfgang Iser’s notion of “dual coding” in which categories of same/different are constructed and mutually constituted.

15. My upcoming book, *The 1940 Tokyo Games: The Missing Olympics*, details this history especially in chapter 2.

16. Post–World War II American historians, typified by the work of E. O. Reischauer and A. W. Craig (1978), labeled Japan’s 1930s militarism as an aberration to its overall successful path of Westernization and modernization in order to support the United States’ political agenda of stopping the spread of communism in the East.

17. Nara was the first permanent imperial capital of Japan, established in 710. The imperial capital was later moved to Heian (today’s Kyoto) in 794, where it remained for several centuries. Nikko is the location of one of the most lavishly decorated shrines and the national mausoleum to Tokugawa Shogunate, established in 1617.

18. Atsuji Tajima states that the debt structure of the Nagano Games left the Nagano municipality with an average debt of \$45,000 per household. For further reading, see Tajima 2004.

19. Akebono was born in 1969 in Oahu, Hawaii, as Chad Rowan. He became a Japanese citizen in 1996 and retired from sumo in 2001. For further reading, see Panek 2006.

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