Russian-trained architects operate in China, especially Harbin and Dalian, in the early twentieth century? What was the influence of Beaux-Arts in the redevelopment of Manchukuo, especially Changchun? Shanghai gets a good deal of attention throughout the volume, but what of other colonized or semi-colonized cities such as Qingdao or Tianjin?

I hasten to acknowledge, however, that those questions only occur because of how well this beautifully illustrated volume succeeds in demonstrating the sweeping influence of the Beaux-Arts school. There is much work yet to do on this topic, but Chinese Architecture and the Beaux-Arts should change the way we look at Chinese cities, and it will stand as a benchmark in the burgeoning field of Chinese urban studies.

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Baseball has long been integral to Taiwanese national identity, evident in the 2000 decision to replace the image of former President Chiang Kai-shek on the NT$500 bill with that of an indigenous youth baseball team. With a history going back to Japanese colonial administration (1895-1945), baseball provides a narrative thread spanning Japanese colonialism, the transfer of Taiwan to the Republic of China (ROC), decades of Cold War, democratization and the rise of Taiwanese identity in official discourse. As Morris writes, “a history of Taiwanese baseball is an appropriate and crucial window for understanding the complicated histories and cultures of modern Taiwan” (149). The use of the plural is absolutely correct, as Taiwan presents to researchers a tangled web of conflicting histories, cultures and ethnicities.

Morris organizes the book in chronological order, with two chapters on the Japanese period, three chapters on ROC rule during the Cold War, and one chapter on the professionalism of baseball after democratization. In captivating prose, Morris covers a wide variety of baseball, from colonial sportsmanship through Little League tournaments to professional leagues with corporate sponsors. The historical detail of the book, based on a thorough reading of primary sources in Japanese and Chinese, is remarkable. The chronological divisions are logical and reveal important historical dynamics. In the Japanese period, for example, baseball began as the sport of the colonizers, but was transformed into an arena for transforming members of all ethnic groups into loyal subjects of the Emperor. After the ROC arrived on Taiwan, bringing with it a large cohort
of Mainlanders from China, baseball marked a social divide between native Taiwanese and politically dominant newcomers.

Readers interested in local interpretations of cross-straits geopolitics will not be disappointed. The history of Taiwan’s victorious Little League tournaments in the US in the 1970s is particularly interesting, as it provides a creative prism for reviewing the period when the ROC lost its United Nations seat and most countries switched diplomatic recognition to the People’s Republic of China (PRC). The conclusion also takes on contemporary subjects, such as the Olympics and PRC insistence that Taiwanese teams call themselves “Chinese Taipei” and refrain from displaying their own national flag.

The book is most noteworthy as an ethnic history of Taiwan. The Japanese used the sport to promote ethnic harmony between the Japanese, Han “Native” Taiwanese and some indigenous communities. After the war, ethnicity continued to mark the game, as the Taiwanese imbued the game with colonial nostalgia, Mainlanders tried half-heartedly but unsuccessfully to transform it into an arena for Chinese nationalism, and the indigenous players translated their athletic success into ethnic pride. This ethnic divide, in which Native Taiwanese celebrate baseball but Mainlanders prefer basketball, endures and explains why Mainlander politicians seem insincere when they use baseball to reach out to Taiwanese voters. By teasing out these ethnic differences, as well as related national imaginations, Morris writes a captivating narrative of Taiwan’s nationalist yearnings.

As a history of indigenous Taiwan, there remains the question of difference between indigenous groups, i.e., which indigenous groups were selected for integration via baseball during the Japanese period. A cross-reading of the book suggests that the Japanese promoted baseball among the more peaceful southern tribes (*nanban*, 南番, e.g., Amis, Puyuma, Bunun) rather than among the “fierce tribes” of the north (*kyöban*, 凶番, e.g., Atayal, Saisiat, Seediq, Truku), who were better known for their armed resistance against Japan; and that this contributed to subsequent domination of the sport by members of the southern tribes. Morris’s book will serve as a foundation for future research on the local sports history of different indigenous areas.

The book is lightly spiced with contemporary social theory, with passing references to such post-colonial gurus as Edward Said, Stuart Hall and Homi Bhabha. The main theoretical contribution is a reflection on Michael Herzfeld’s notion of “cultural intimacy,” demonstrating that Taiwan is also a case of “yesterday’s embarrassments [as] today’s proud boast” (157). This explains why even the flawed history of Taiwanese baseball, with scandals ranging from cheating in the selection of players in Little League tournaments to mafia fixing of professional baseball games, can become a source of national pride. The complex shifts in Taiwanese baseball history show that assumptions of globalized homogeneity, or
“Cocacolonization” of the world’s cultures, are deeply flawed. Instead, baseball, “an intensely local aspect of Taiwanese culture, has succeeded most as an avenue of engagement with Japan, the United States, the PRC, and the World” (162). In the final analysis, history, even of a global sport, is always intimately local.

This book will appeal to different readerships. Historians of sport may find in it an interesting alternative to more American-centred narratives of baseball, but only if they can wade through the specificities of Taiwanese history and what may be unfamiliar debates on national identity. Those who will appreciate the book most are readers in the emerging field of Taiwan Studies. In an academic world usually drawn more to the grand civilizations of China and Japan, Morris provides a much-needed view from the margins. A Taiwan-centric history is an appropriate way to understand the tensions and conflicts between these greater nationalist narratives as they encounter one another on the local playing field.

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Every now and then major events transform the underlying research agenda for a region or country’s political economy. This has happened at least twice during the past twenty years for Japan. After the economic bubble burst in 1991, the inquiry into aspects of Japan’s miraculous growth shifted to understanding how it experienced such slow growth for so long. And in 2009, the question of why the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) retained power since 1955 morphed into why it decisively lost power in 2009.

Japan Transformed, by political scientists Frances Rosenbluth and Michael Thies, and Japan’s Political Economy, by economist Toshihiko Hayashi, appeared shortly after the 2009 shift. Positioned as introductions to Japan’s political economy accessible to the non-specialist, they provide broad overviews as well as specific, pointed arguments in highly readable prose. Their contrasting approaches make them excellent complements; Rosenbluth and Thies, to overstate slightly, attribute most of Japan’s modern political economic development to incentives created