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Hating Korea, loving Japan: Taiwanese Sports Nationalism towards the East Asia in the age of globalization

For Taiwanese sports fans, South Korea, which was “brotherhood country” in the cold war era, has been identified as an enemy in recent years. By contrast, Japan, which was colonist in the first half of 20th century, has been seen as a relative “friend.” This paper argues that the political and economic structure of East Asian sporting field has formed such ironic nationalist emotions of Taiwanese sports fans toward Korea and Japan. First, interviews with sports fans and analysis of discussions in online forums will show how these nationalistic emotions flourish in the Taiwanese sports field. Second, this research will analyze the political economy of baseball in the East Asia in terms of the labor migration trend of professional baseball players. While the MLB in the US has successfully established its global hegemony in the baseball field worldwide, Japanese baseball has been a “sub-empire” of this region, and Korea and Taiwan have competed with each other as a “labor-exporting reservoir” for both the global empire and the regional sub-empire. The dependence on Japan and the anxiety towards Korea that are resulted from the baseball politics and economy facilitates the “hating Korea, loving Japan” discourse in Taiwan.