Democracy via. 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games

& 1988 Seoul Olympic Games

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1. Introduction

The Olympic Games is a worldwide phenomenon that occurs every four years to bring multiple countries together. Using sports as a soft power has provided the International Olympic Committee (IOC) an opportunity to build international cooperation. This is represented through the Olympic rings as the design represent the five continents: America (North and South), Asia, Africa, Europe and Oceania. The different colors in the rings were specifically chosen as the colors red, blue, green, black or yellow can be found in any country’s flag around the world. The Olympics have contributed in spreading world peace through the participation of all humankind.

Not only are the Olympics great for promoting unity between countries, but it can also assist in building a country's national image. Cha states that “Sports can be a powerful symbol of nation building because it promotes a sense of unity and identity in young nations or newly formed ones.”¹ This allows a nation the chance of overcoming problems from their past and focusing on how they want to be portrayed in the future. This is especially seen in Japan as they

¹ Cha (2009: 41)
use the 1964 Tokyo Olympics to change the way they are viewed internationally. After losing in World War II, Japan wanted to become a country that symbolized modernization as they moved away from the narrative of being a fascist and ultranationalist regime to a developing democracy. Japan wanted people to know that they have become a progressive, peaceful, and friendly country.

South Korea is another nation that has utilized their hosting of the 1988 Seoul Olympic games to improve their national image. After suffering from becoming a divided nation, South Korea wanted to prove that they were no longer a poor, war-torn country, but that they had become a strong, modern nation. South Korea hoped that the Olympic games would legitimize them in world affairs as they proved that they had become a “success story.”² Not only had they overcome the aftermath of war, but they had expanded their economy tremendously.

In this paper I will answer two questions, 1) How did the government of Japan and South Korea use the 1964 and 1988 Olympics in Tokyo and Seoul respectively to promote their countries as a democratic/advanced countries? 2) How/why was their nationalist use different?

Japan and South Korea were two nations developing democracy after being affected by war, but they were still successful at hosting the Olympic games. It was necessary for both countries to host the Olympic games to become the powerful economies that they are today as the Olympics lead to their rapid growth and globalization as both nations used it as a platform to improve their national image.

This paper will analyze both the 1964 Tokyo Olympics and 1988 Seoul Olympics as separate case studies. First the importance of national image will be explained to accentuate the

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² Cha (2009: 55)
impact it has on countries that host the Olympic Games. The history of each country will be introduced as it paves the path to the democratization of each nation. The significance of Japan and South Korea hosting the Summer Olympics will be explained as the impact they each had in further democratizing and developing their prospective country will be analyzed. Furthermore, the influence the Olympic Games had in Tokyo and Seoul will be compared to evaluate how each country used the Olympics to build their national image. In conclusion, I will argue that although hosting the Olympic games served South Korea as a platform for its “coming out party” as they celebrated the nations arrival, the same could not be said for Japan as they used the Olympic Games as a chance to reintegrate themselves as a reformed global leader.

2. Importance of National Image

National image is defined as “the image founded in one’s head about a foreign country.”

A country’s national image can influence the perception of its people, the culture, and its products. A country with a positive national image can help enlarge a country’s international influence by attracting a person to its culture. A negative national image can cause problems between countries resulting in a crisis or military conflict. Diplomacy between countries is important because “the objective of public diplomacy in is to improve the understanding of a specific country, construct an appealing national image, and ultimately influence the policies of foreign governments by affecting their citizens opinion towards the nation.” Through public diplomacy people become an active agent of the relationships between countries. The Olympic

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3 Kinsey and Chung (2013: 2)
4 ibid.
Games in Asia played an important role in revamping and reshaping the national image of both Japan and South Korea as they were Asia’s first to host the Summer Games.

3. 1964 Tokyo Olympics

“The stimulus of massive public works associated with the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games spurred growth beyond ambitious targets while the success of those Games was taken as confirmation that Japan had recovered from the war and reentered the community of nations.”


3.1 Pre-War Japan

In the late 19th century, Japan had escaped its feudal past as it started to modernize by expanding and conquering other countries. Through the Meiji Restoration Japan began to rapidly develop and increase their armed forces. Through the first Sino-Japanese War, Japan and China were in disagreement of who would take over Korea. Japan viewed Korea as an equal as they claimed to “dispatch troops to guard against an unexpected mishap, to rescue Korea from turbulence, and to preserve peace in East Asia.”6 Japan broke out into war with China and took complete control over Korea, Manchuria, Taiwan and parts of Beijing. Japan had a major influence on Korea after the war, but allowed it to be an independent nation.

After the Sino-Japanese War was over, the Russo-Japanese soon began in 1904 as the Japanese attacked a Russian harbor at Port Arthur.7 The Russians then landed their forces into Manchuria, but they were not there long as Japan forced the Russians to retreat. A peace treaty

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5 Kingston (2001:43)
6 Rhee and Kim (2001: 180)
7 Murray (2013: 129)
was signed in 1905 as Russia recognized Korea as part of Japan’s sphere of influence. This lead to the colonization of Korea in 1910.

With the start of World War I, “Japan saw the World War as an unprecedented opportunity to advance in its standing among the powerful nations.” Japan soon formed an alliance with Great Britain against Germany. With an agreement between Japan and Great Britain, Japan was given control over the Marshalls, Marianas, Carolines, and Palaus that once belonged to Germany. With the rise of power in the United States, Japan was starting to feel threatened by their tie in economic fate as they did not like the idea of America expanding their market in Asia. As the war ended, Japan continued their role as a world power as they continued to expand their market.

World War II was the start of Japan’s desire to further their imperialist expansion. As Germany started invading Europe, the United States works on helping Britain. The relationship between the United States and Japan is strained. As Japan had been growing, The United States encouraged “oil companies in the Dutch Indies not to cooperate with Japan.” This angered the Japanese as the United States was also demanding that Japan would leave China and Indochina. This led to Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor on December 1, 1941. This was the start of America’s involvement in the war as the dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6, 1945.

The end of World War II brought the downfall of Japan and the start of the Cold War as the United States and the Soviet Union wanted to spread their influence around the world. The United States wanted to stop the spread of communism that the Soviet Union wanted. During this

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8 Burkman (2008: 4)
9 Burkman (2008: 7)
10 Gompert, Binnendijk and Lin (2014: 97)
time, Japan was being rebuilt by the United States as democracy was seen as a counterpart of communism. Japan soon became an ally to the United States in the Asia-Pacific region. The Korean War combined with the Cold War were the turning point for Japan as a security pact made with the United States allowed them to focus solely on their industry.

3.2 Road to Democratization in Japan

The end of World War II called for “disarmament and demilitarization of Japan’ and the revival and strengthening of democratic tendencies” by the United States. A new constitution was constructed to replace the Meiji Constitution implemented in 1889. The enactment of a new constitution created by the United States became a symbol of democratization after post-war Japan. This has characterized Japan as a “top-down democracy” as their democracy was made to mimic that of the United States and has not been amended since it was promulgated.

Article Nine of the new Constitution promoted pacifism in Japan as they were not allowed to have armed forces and had to “renounce war as a sovereign right.” This meant that they was not allowed to start or engage in war. Not only was the Constitution modernized, but many changes were also brought to Japan such as the land reform passed to redistribute land to farmers that were actually working in the land. The educational system was changed to steer away from teaching imperial ideology and the government was adjusted to become representative of the people. This ceased the role of the zaibatsu, family-owned industrial conglomerates, as they were eradicated due to their strong influence in the politics and economics of pre-war Japan.

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11 Masuda (2012: 210)
12 Umeda (2006)
Through the rise of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) which has dominated since its establishment in 1955, Japan was on a new rode of becoming a democratic country. With the rise of the Korean War and the Cold War, the help of Japan was needed, but they had become proud of their newfound national identity as a peaceful country. Through the Yoshida Doctrine, Japan was given the liberty to “focus on economic growth and rely on the US for its security.”13 As a newly democratized nation, Japan was trying to overcome the role they played as an ultra nationalist regime before the war. Japan’s national image had been tarnished, but in 1946 they were given the chance of a lifetime to mend the mistakes of their past.

3.3 Significance of Olympic Games in Tokyo, Japan

It was the year 1955 when Japan bid to host the 1960 Summer Olympic Games, but the memories of war were too fresh in the mind of many as multiple countries were against this idea. It was not until Japan applied for the 18th Olympic Games that Tokyo was chosen as the city to host the games. The Olympics offered “a way to write a new postwar narrative for Japan: Japan was no longer an aberrant actor in the international system but a peace-loving, affluent, and supportive member of that system.”14 Japan was using the Olympics as a way to cultivate a new image. This was a turning point for Japan as they became the first Asian country to host the Olympics.

The 1964 Olympics also served as a factor of reconciliation for the United States and Japan. After the U.S. dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the US-Japan relations were strained. The Olympic Games played an important role in re-establishing the

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13 Kingston (2001: 22)
14 Cha (2009: 51)
bilateral relationship between the two nations as the entrance of the Olympic torch was carried by Yoshinori Sakai. Sakai was a young Japanese runner born in Hiroshima on August 6, 1945 minutes after the atomic bomb was dropped. Having him light the torch to start the summer games was the perfect way of symbolizing the end of pre-war Japan.

Figure 1: Yoshinori Sakai lighting the torch at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics.


Not only were the games used to improve the relationship Japan had with other countries, but it also invoked a change in the infrastructure of the country. New building were designed for the Olympics as they became “main token of modernity, along with masterpieces of technical development such as the Shinkansen bullet-train.”15 As Tokyo was developing rapidly, it became a modernized city. Although today the Olympics is scrutinized as it has become criticized for its politics and infrastructure, this was not the case in Tokyo “where symbolic politics and the burdens of history called for image management not simply in order to enhance marketing

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15 Tagsold (2010: 290)
opportunities but to reconstruct national identities.”\textsuperscript{16} This is especially seen on the first day of the games as the city’s appearance was utilized as a backdrop for the torch relay in order to showcase the rebirth of Tokyo.

In preparation for the Olympic Games, the government had implemented new security measures to make Tokyo a safe place. They also created a “brighter and crime-free town” by making sure that popular locations where youth loved to visit would remain open all night with a certain levels of lighting to keep them off the streets late at night.\textsuperscript{17} In 1963 Japan aimed to sanitize Tokyo along with their crime rate by increasing police surveillance. This involved focusing on the action of the citizens as they prohibited “posters without permits, illegal dumping of trash, obstruction of traffic, illegal construction… and the crime of urinating in the street.”\textsuperscript{18} The Tokyo Metropolitan Police made sure that the environment in Japan was being respected as they wanted the world to see how they had modernized.

To strengthen the connection between other countries and Japan, the Japanese prepared for tourism. They sent multiple citizens abroad to help travelers plan their trips to Japan for the Summer Olympics. As their ticket sales increased, Japan prepared to accommodate the people coming by building up various hotels. “Accommodation was highly appraised by the international community as a Japanese national characteristics.”\textsuperscript{19} As their national image was recuperating, 1964 was a great year for Japan as they had joined the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) as a true advanced country and applied for Article 8 of the IMF (International Monetary Fund).\textsuperscript{20} After the Olympics, tourism turnout in Japan was

\textsuperscript{16} Tagsold (2010: 291)
\textsuperscript{17} Igarashi (2000: 152)
\textsuperscript{18} Igarashi (2000: 153)
\textsuperscript{19} Yu and Liu (2011:2292)
\textsuperscript{20} ibid.
about 17,000 instead of the predicted 130,000 foreign visitors. Although Japan had lost money from their overprediction of visitors, the “long-term prospects of urbanisation and nation building have greatly outweighed the immediate economic gains.” Japan had successfully hosted the Olympics Games in 1964 as they were able to demonstrate to the world their emergence as a global power.

4. 1988 Seoul Olympics

“Once known as the “hermit kingdom” Korea’s games represent a kind of coming out party, for which Seoul’s final countdown is already in progress today, Monday, September the twelfth, nineteen-eighty-eight.”

- Victor D. Cha. Beyond the Final Score. 2009.

4.1 History of Korea

Korea underwent massive changes in history as it was once a three kingdom dynasty: Baekje, Goguryeo, and Silla. In 676 Korea was ruled by a Unified Silla but it was not until 918 when Goguryeo took full charge of the peninsula and was renamed Goryeo. Fast forward a few years to 1392, the start of the Joseon Dynasty. Under the Joseon Dynasty, Korea developed further as the creation of the Korean alphabet was made by King Sejong and social class was been raised by the emergence of the yangban class, landowning Korean aristocracy. Soon Russia and Japan became interested in Korea which sparked the start of the Russo-Japanese War

\[21\] ibid.
\[22\] Cha (2009: 54)
\[23\] Kim (2014: xviii)
\[24\] Peterson and Margulies (2010:110)
in 1904. Japan was quick to land their forces in Korea and aimed to dominate its politics. The year 1910 marked the end of the Joseon Dynasty as Japan took full annexation of Korea.

The March First Movement inspired many Korean students to protest to overthrow the Japanese government, but it was not successful. With the new administration, political parties, meetings and talk against the Japanese were forbidden. Koreans were expected to learn Japanese and take on Japanese names as it was made the national language in Korea. It was not until August 15, 1945 that Korea was liberated from Japanese colonialism.

After World War II, the Soviet Union and the United States were the two leading countries, this proved to be problematic as the Soviet Union was trying to expand communism. In order to prevent the spread of communism, the Cold War was started in 1947. It was not long after Korea’s liberation from Japan that the Korean War started in 1950 after the Soviet Union rushed troops to the North of Korea and the United States stepped in to prevent the spread of communism as they landed in the South. The Korean War caused a split in Korea as the North was being led by communist leader Kim II Sung, and the South by an anti-communist leader Syngman Rhee. The Korean War created a platform for the two major powers, the Soviet Union and the United States to fight and was the set up for the Vietnam War.

The constant invasion from North Korea over the South with the help of the USSR and China, and the repossessing of the South over the North with the help to of the United States lead to the end of the Korean War in 1953 as the country was separated at the 38th parallel. An armistice was signed on July 27 as the United States and the Soviet Union decided where Korea would be officially separated into the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the
Republic of Korea (ROK) as the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) was created.\textsuperscript{25} With the end of the
Korean War the end of the Cold War followed in 1989. the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe had
collapsed leaving South Korea to no longer be “a shrimp between whales’ but ‘a dolphin in the
oceans.”\textsuperscript{26} Although an armistice agreement was signed, South Korea and North Korea are still
at war as a peaceful settlement has yet to be achieved.

\textbf{4.2 Road to Democratization in South Korea}

After Japan’s colonization of Korea from 1910 - 1945, Koreans were determined to
prevent another country from claiming power over them again. This lead to the rise of Korean
socialism as it offered powerful criticism of imperialism. This created different ideological
factions of what the people of Korea wanted. The Korean provisional government was then made
of three different factions; the right, left and gradualist. The factions ranged from leaders like Yi
Tong Hwi, a member of the Korean Communist Party, and Kim Il Sung, a Manchurian guerrilla
fighter who strongly supported a communist economy to Syngman Rhee and Kim Ku which
strived for a democratic nation. The conflicting ideals for Korea led to its separation at the 38th
parallel as the United States supported South Korea under the leadership of Syngman Rhee and
the Soviet Union supported North Korea under the leadership of Kim Il Sung. “Syngman Rhee’s
political ideology was absolute anticommunism and based on American democracy” which
gifted him the support of America.\textsuperscript{27}

With the separation between the North and South, a difference in political paths
developed between the two countries. In South Korea, Syngman Rhee soon became President.

\textsuperscript{25} Peterson and Margulies (2010:204)
\textsuperscript{26} Kim (2014:15)
\textsuperscript{27} Kim (2014:184)
This lead to the Student Uprising on April 19th as the citizens of South Korea strived for a democratic nation. Rhee was angered by the people’s actions against him and ordered his soldiers to shoot if necessary. Since the citizens weren’t backing down at this protest, “the soldiers fired until about 125 student were dead and 1,000 students more were wounded.” 28 This paved the path for Park Chung Hee to become president.

After the resignation of Rhee in April 1960, Yun Bo Seon became President in 1961, but his presidency was not long lasting as a coup d'etat was lead by major general, Park Chung Hee. When the first elections were held in Korea, Park Chung Hee was elected President as the citizens had hope that he would lead a democratic government, but instead he took advantage of the people’s trust and lead a formal authoritarianism. “Park dissolved the National Assembly, forbade all political activity, and severely censored the press” in order to remain in control. 29 Park created the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA) and made his military partner Kim Jong Pil the leader of this secret police organization. Park Chung Hee established industrial conglomerates known as chaebols (similar to the zaibatsu in Japan) to help improve the economy. Although Park Chung Hee was an aggressive authoritarian ruler, he brought forth the economic miracle in South Korea. Many students were against the strict rule Park had on South Korea as he passed the Yushin Constitution and claimed any act against him as “anti-democracy” and labeled criminals “communist”. It was not until Park Chung Hee’s death in 1971 that people were liberated from his authoritarian rule.

Chun Doo Hwan became the next President of South Korea through a coup, but he was not favored by the citizens as he was no better than Park Chung Hee. This was particularly seen

28 Peterson and Margulies (2010: 214)
29 Peterson and Margulies (2010: 217)
in 1980 as citizens in Kwangju gathered to protest against martial law. Chun ordered his military to stop protesters, the people were tired of false democracy in South Korea and fought back. This resulted in the massacre of hundreds of civilians. Danielle Chubb states, “the Kwangju uprising lit the fuse of the dynamite stick of democracy… It was the birth of citizenship.”\(^{30}\) The Kwangju uprising helped call attention to South Korea. In 1987 it was discovered that “a student had been tortured to death by the police”, this lead to the rise in protests in South Korea which worried the United States.\(^{31}\) This lead to the next presidential election of 1987 as Roh Tae Woo became president and South Korea was finally on the road to a genuine democracy.

### 4.3 Significance of Olympic Games in Seoul, South Korea

South Korea became a member of the IOC in 1947 as they participated in their first Olympics in the 1948 London Summer Olympic Games.\(^{32}\) The idea of bidding for the Olympics was first introduced in the Park Chung Hee regime as “Park’s contemplation of an Olympic bid was motivated by his desire to emulate the 1964 Tokyo Games but also by the need to legitimate a flawed authoritarian regime.”\(^{33}\) Before Park Chung Hee could bid, he was assassinated. Chun Doo Hwan reintroduced the bid to host the Olympic Games in South Korea as he viewed the Summer Games “as an opportunity to demonstrate to the world the ROK ‘success story’” as it would allow people all around the world see how South Korea had gone from being a war-torn, poor country to a strong, modern, prosperous, and cosmopolitan nation.\(^{34}\) Hosting the Olympic

\(^{30}\) Chubb (2014: 78)
\(^{31}\) Peterson and Margulies (2010: 232)
\(^{32}\) Black and Bezanson (2004: 1250)
\(^{33}\) Cha (2009: 55)
\(^{34}\) ibid.
Games in Seoul would allow people to witness South Korea’s economic miracle as they had moved away from being the poorest of the two Koreas at the end of the Korean War.

The Olympics served South Korea as a “coming out” story as they had been the second Asian country to hold the Summer Olympic Games and was the first in twelve years to have full participation after the continuous boycotts seen in prior years. South Korea had become proud of being chosen as the country to host the Olympics because they were chosen instead of their past colonizers, Japan. Korea’s national pride was increased as it showed that they were overcoming their colonized past. This was further demonstrated at the start of the Olympic Games as Sohn Kee Chung was given the honor to light the torch at the Seoul opening ceremony. He was participated in the 1936 Berlin Olympics where he won gold, but was forced to compete for Japan under a Japanese name. His emergence in the Seoul Olympics under his Korean name was a representation of a new liberated Korea.

Figure 2: Sohn Kee Chung lighting the torch at the 1988 Seoul Olympics.


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35 Cha (2009: 55)
Hosting the Olympics, South Korea also wanted to remind the world about the aggressors in the North. By hosting the Summer Games they hoped that North Korea would become more time under the eye of the public and result in the security of the South. Seoul had also done a great job of hosting the games as it had helped the country to have an annual growth rate of 12 percent. That same year, the ROK had made $100 billion in total trade.\(^{36}\)

The 1988 Seoul Olympic Games marked a turning point for South Korea as they had become stronger than their counterpart in the North. They had expanded their relations with Eastern Europe, the USSR, and the People’s Republic of China which contributed to regional peace and stability.\(^{37}\) The international influence South Korea held as a nation was enlarged. As KBS remarked, “The 1988 Seoul Olympic Games, which took place in our capital, was one of the most significant Olympics ever in the sense that not only did it enhance our national pride but it also declared the end of ideological conflict and of the Cold War.”\(^{38}\)

As the Olympics served to represent national pride in South Korea, it also served as a catalyst for democracy as it rebuilt Korea’s national identity. The government of South Korea was hoping to use the Olympic Games as a pressure to maintain control over the people, but this proved to be ineffective as it did the opposite. With the rise of student protestors in the South and the pressure to properly democratize from the United States, the Olympics “became a source of pressure for controlled change to maintain stability in the country.”\(^{39}\) The government had to change in favor of what the people wanted to maintain a good national image. As Black and Bezanson mention, it was not the Games itself that was important, but the anticipation of the

\(^{36}\) Cha (2009: 57)
\(^{37}\) Yu and Liu (2011:2294)
\(^{38}\) KBS (2004)
\(^{39}\) Black and Bezanson (2004: 1253)
Games that served an importance in helping Korea democratize as it did not want to “taint the Games with military dictatorship, street riots and tear gas.”\textsuperscript{40} This was later proven “in October 1988… a nationwide public opinion poll showed that, generally, the citizens of South Korea felt that the Olympics had had a positive effect on democratization. Around 56% of respondents thought that the Olympics gad stimulated democratisation; 53% agreed that they had helped improve human right; and 50% said that they had contributed to freedom and fairness of the press.”\textsuperscript{41} The Olympics created effective pressure for change.

5. Conclusion

The Olympic Games are a great method for countries all over the world to improve their national image as “sport also becomes a way to represent the birth or rebirth of a nation.”\textsuperscript{42} Host of the Olympics hope to represent a rapidly developed country instead of an underdeveloped nation. This can be seen in both the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games and the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games.

As the two nations hosted the Olympics, they made sure to focus on a common theme, harmony. Japan uses the theme of harmony to unveil a peaceful rising as they try to overcome their feudal imperialist past. South Korea uses the theme of harmony to show that although they have been a country separated by war, they want peace for the peninsula. These two Asian countries have a similar goal to revamp their national image to help their economies rise to the top. Both South Korea and Japan proved to be successful at completing their goals as they are

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{40} Black and Bezanson (2004: 1254)
\item \textsuperscript{41} Black and Bezanson (2004: 1254)
\item \textsuperscript{42} Cha (2009: 40)
\end{itemize}
top leading economies today. Although the results of hosting the Olympics in Seoul and Tokyo are very similar with the increase in tourism, modernization, infrastructure and much more, the platform they each used to showcase their nation image and identity are very different.

The 1964 Tokyo Olympics served Japan as the perfect opportunity to showcase their revival to the world. As Cha states, the Olympics did not only serve Japan as the opportunity to overcome their “fascist and ultranationalist regime”, but it “also represented the culmination of the country’s long awaited return to the center stage.”43 The Games provided Japan with the opportunity to reintegrate themselves into a reformed global power.

Unlike Japan, South Korea was never a global leader throughout history. This is further seen in South Korea’s history as they overcome the Russo-Japanese War, Japanese colonization, the Korean War, and the division of their country in 1945 by the United States and the Soviet Union. Korea has always been a “hermit kingdom” waiting for its debut into society. The 1988 Seoul Olympics provided South Korea the chance to showcase their rapid economic growth and their new found democracy after the war. By hosting the Olympic Games, South Korea was able to become closer to road of fully democratizing with a government that is about the people and for the people.

Hosting the Olympic Games provided Japan and South Korea with the opportunity to transform their prospective cities and to reshape the perception people have of their nation. They were both able to reconstruct their national identity to become the leading powers they desired to be. Without hosting the Olympic Games, both nations would not be the global powers that they are today. Through the unity created by the Olympic Games, all countries are able to come

43 Cha (2009: 54)
together for a once in a lifetime event that celebrates peace despite the wars and conflict occurring all around the world. The Olympics is not only building a better world through sport, but it also allows countries a chance to transform to powerful nations.
Bibliography


