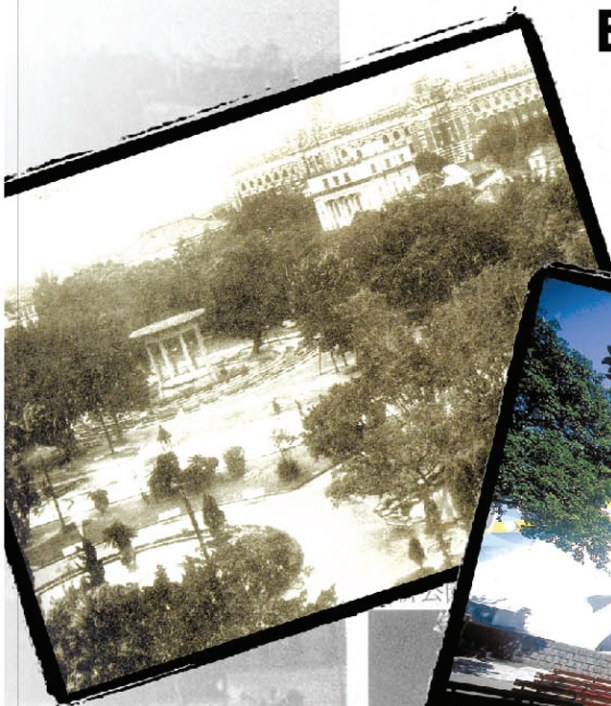


SAME SPACE, DIFFERENT POLITICS:

An Unfortunate Clash Between Taiwanese Ethical/National Identity and the LGQ Movements



1. Name Conversion in 1996:

In 1996 Lesbian, Gay and Queer (LGQ) Space Action Front launched a series of protests against Taipei municipal government's decision to convert Taipei New Park into 228 Memorial Park. Taipei New Park used to be where closeted homosexual men looked for sex in an openly secretive manner before the lifting of martial laws and popularization of the Internet.

2. The story of Taipei New Park/228 Memorial Park:

On the border between Chinese and Japanese after the takeover/restoration of Taiwan, and in between this transitional phase of the "Taiwanese Japanese" and "Taiwanese Chinese", a tragic massacre happened on 28th February 1947 in which many Taiwanese people were killed by the Mainlanders in power. Because of this 228 Incident, as it is phrased later by Mainlander historians and politicians, many Taiwanese people, especially the older generation, feel closer to the Japanese culture and people rather than to the Mainlanders who forbade their talking in Taiwanese and imposed martial law for almost 40 years.

3. Analysis of this protest:

LGQ protests at that time can be looked upon as an unfortunate and yet very real clash between Taiwanese ethical/national identity and the LGQ movements. Where as the name conversion represented delayed government recognition of the tabooed, traumatic history of 228 massacre in 1947 and a commemoration of those killed as a result of it, it also symbolically erased the memories of the park as a space of male homosexuality/public sex in the past. Although the decision was not overturned after the protest, this episode successfully revived public memories and demonstrated LGQ solidarity and camaraderie.

4. In the present:

In 2003 Pride, LGQ subjects marched from 228 Memorial Park as a way to remind people of the former Taipei New Park and what it meant before the name conversion. Instead of going into the park in the dark, they now walk out from it in the daylight. But following the protests, LGQ activists have caused conflict between lesbian/queer feminists and mainstream feminists. Whenever the activists sought to go public and raise gay-rights issues within the feminist movement, mainstream feminists, who feared that gay activists might dominate the direction of the movement, subdued them. A number of feminists also had homophobic reactions to the LGQ activists, and they then broke into a different group, against "sexual deviance", in a series of social conflicts with the other feminist and LGBT activists. Consequently, LGQ rights activists either split off into a separate organisation, or inclined toward sexual liberationist feminism. No matter which way they chose to go from there, the relation between them since then became at very least awkward, if not completely broken.

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